

APEC/PATA CODE FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

The Code for Sustainable Tourism has been adopted by both PATA and APEC as a reflection of their strong commitment to tourism growth across the Asia and Pacific region that is viable and sustainable over a long-term future.

PATA, the Pacific Asia Travel Association, was established in 1951 as the body for national tourist offices, airlines, hotels, tour operators, travel agencies and other firms active in tourism to promote travel to and within the Pacific Asia region. Its Charter sets out its fundamental commitment to what is now called sustainable development:

"..to encourage and assist in the development of travel industries throughout Pacific-Asia in a manner which recognises the urgent importance to practice an environmental ethic that supports responsible conservation and restoration of Pacific Asia's unique combination of natural, social and cultural resources"

PATA has maintained that commitment for over fifty years through numerous publications, conferences and workshops, and through its consistent promotion of heritage conservation, cultural tourism and eco-tourism. PATA first adopted a code for environmentally sensitive tourism at its 40th annual conference in 1991.

APEC, Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation, was formed as a high level forum for the leaders of Asia Pacific economies in 1989. It has a particular commitment to opening the region to the freer flow of trade in goods and services, which includes tourism, and to co-operation across its economies on a wide front.

APEC established a Tourism Working Group in 1991 and convened the first APEC Ministerial Meeting in Seoul in 2000. At that meeting APEC adopted its Tourism Charter, which sets out four policy goals. One of these is to *"Sustainably manage tourism outcomes and impacts"*. This expresses APEC's clear commitment to ecologically and culturally sustainable tourism development.

Reflecting these commitments, APEC and PATA, at a meeting of the APEC Tourism Working Group and at the Fiftieth PATA Conference respectively, both in Malaysia in April 2001, adopted the Code for Sustainable Tourism to guide their own activities and to promote to their members and affiliates.

The code is designed for adoption and implementation by a wide range of tourism-related organisations and companies. By adhering to it they will be showing their commitment to the vision of tourism growth which is fully responsible in its approach to natural environments, to social needs and to cultural sensitivities. By following the Code organisations will also be positioning themselves to deal with environmental regulation, environmental accounting, environmental standards such as ISO, and accreditation schemes requiring reporting on environmental and social impacts.

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This code urges PATA Association and Chapter members and APEC Member Economies to:

Conserve the natural environment, ecosystems and biodiversity

- *CONTRIBUTE to the conservation of any habitat of flora and fauna, affected by tourism*
- *ENCOURAGE relevant authorities to identify areas worthy of conservation and to determine the level of development, if any, which would be compatible in or adjacent to those areas*
- *INCLUDE enhancement and corrective actions at tourism sites to conserve wildlife and natural ecosystems.*

Respect and support local traditions, cultures and communities

- *ENSURE that community attitudes, local customs and cultural values, and the role of women and children, are understood in the planning and implementation of all tourism related projects*
- *PROVIDE opportunities for the wider community to take part in discussions on tourism planning issues where these affect the tourism industry and the community*
- *ENCOURAGE relevant authorities to identify cultural heritage worthy of conservation and to determine the level of development if any which would be compatible in or adjacent to those areas*
- *CONTRIBUTE to the identity and pride of local communities through providing quality tourism products and services sensitive to those communities.*

Maintain environmental management systems

- *ENSURE that environmental assessment is an integral step in planning for a tourism project*
- *ENCOURAGE regular environmental audits of practices throughout the tourism industry and to promote desirable changes to those practices*
- *ESTABLISH detailed environmental policies and indicators, and/or guidelines for the various sectors of the tourism industry*
- *INCORPORATE environmentally sensitive design and construction solutions in any building or landscaping for tourism purposes.*

Conserve energy and reduce waste and pollutants

- *FOSTER environmentally responsible practices for:*
 - *reducing pollutants and greenhouse gases,*
 - *conserving water and protecting water quality,*
 - *managing efficiently waste and energy,*
 - *controlling noise levels and*
 - *promoting the use of recyclable and biodegradable materials.*

Encourage a tourism commitment to environments and cultures

- *ENCOURAGE those involved in tourism to comply with local, regional and national planning policies and to participate in the planning process*
- *FOSTER, in both management and staff of all tourism projects and activities, an awareness of environmental and cultural values*
- *ENCOURAGE all those who provide services to tourism enterprises to participate through environmentally and socially responsible actions*
- *SUPPORT environmental and cultural awareness through tourism marketing.*

Educate and inform others about local environments and cultures

- *SUPPORT the inclusion of environmental and cultural values in tourism education, training and planning*
- *ENHANCE the appreciation and understanding by tourists of natural environments and cultural sensitivities through the provision of accurate information and appropriate interpretation*
- *ENCOURAGE, and support research on the environmental and cultural impacts of tourism.*

Cooperate with others to sustain environments and cultures

- *COOPERATE with other individuals and organisations to advance environmental improvements and sustainable development practices, including establishing indicators and monitoring*
- *COMPLY with all international conventions and national, state and local laws which safeguard natural environments and cultural sensitivities.*