

# Cheat Sheet



## Definition:

Ecotourism is the responsible travel to natural areas<sup>1</sup> which promotes conservation<sup>1</sup> of the environment and benefits the local people.



## The principles of ecotourism

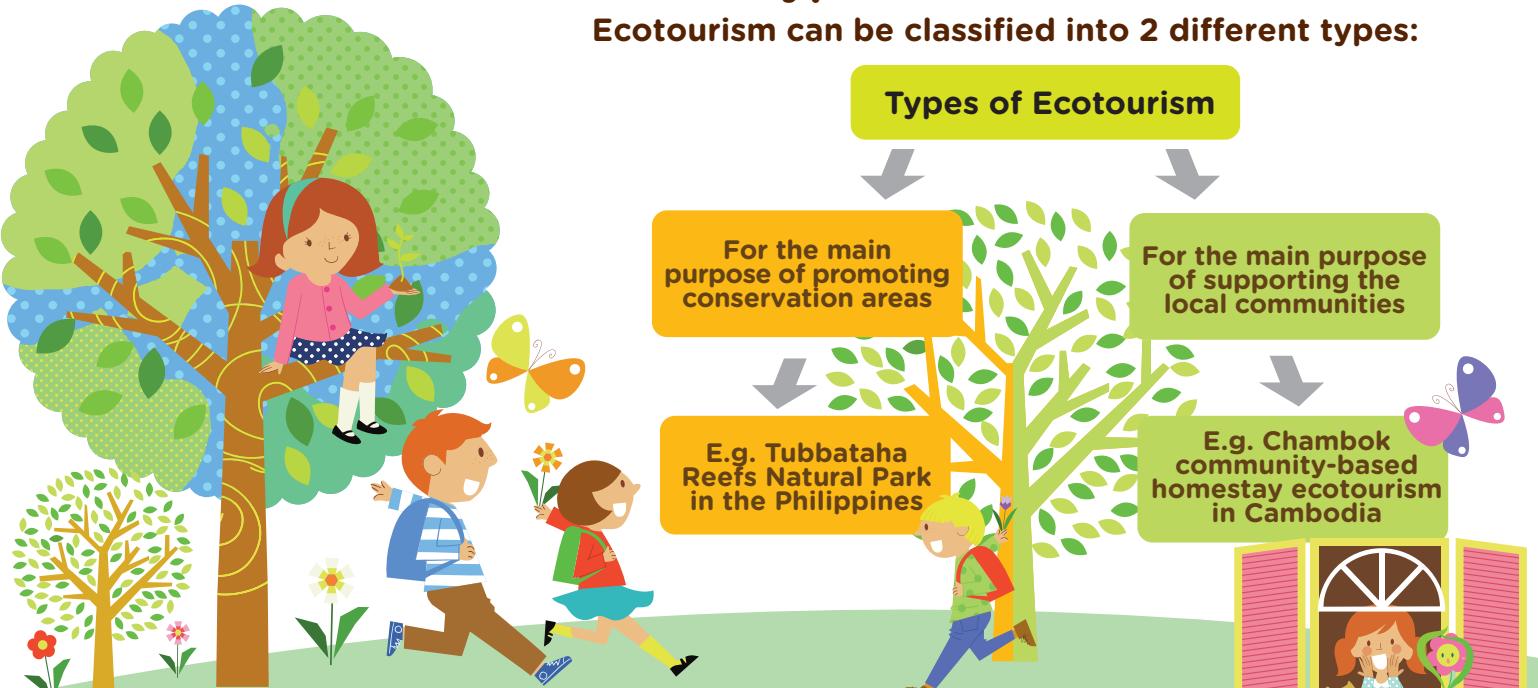
The basic principles of ecotourism are:

- Minimal negative impact on the environment and local community living in it<sup>2</sup>.
- Educates the visitor on the culture and heritage of the destination<sup>3</sup>.
- Provides benefits (e.g. financial) for the conservation of the environment and empowerment of the locals<sup>2</sup>.
- Includes the local community in the development and operation of the destination<sup>4</sup>.



## Types of ecotourism

Ecotourism can be classified into 2 different types:



<sup>1</sup>'What is Ecotourism?' (2014). The Nature Conservancy. Retrieved from <http://www.nature.org/greenliving/what-is-ecotourism.xml>

<sup>2</sup>Olson, E. A. (2012). 'Notions of rationality and value production in ecotourism: examples from a Mexican biosphere reserve.' *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, Vol. 20, No. 2, March 2012.

<sup>3</sup>Somarriba-Chang, M. A. and Gunnarsdotter, Y. (2012). 'Local community participation in ecotourism and conservation issues in two nature reserves in Nicaragua.' *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, Vol. 20, No. 8, November 2012.

<sup>4</sup>Tojeiro, M. C. (2011). 'The Ecotourism Sustainable Strategy: Engagement and Overcoming.' *Journal of Coastal Research*, Special Issue, No. 61.

# Pros and cons of ecotourism

## Pros

### Conservation

Environment is protected from activities like poaching and logging as locals can now earn a living via ecotours.



### Local community

Locals can earn money by working at ecotour sites. They also have a say in how the lands should be used.



### Education and appreciation

Visitors gain awareness of conservation and local issues (e.g. poverty). They also learn to respect nature and cultural diversity.



## Cons

### Greenwashing

Tours which claim to be ecotours but are not eco-friendly can harm the tour sites as the organisers do not care about the environment.



### Destruction to nature

The presence of tourists can lead to the intrusion and even destruction of natural areas.



### Local community

Ecotours which are run by foreign organisations do not benefit the locals. In fact, visitors often intrude into the locals' homes and disrupt their lives.



## Ecotourism in South East Asia

In Singapore, the locations which tourists and Singaporeans alike can visit include Chek Jawa, Sungei Buloh Nature Reserve and the Botanical Gardens (which is Singapore's first UNESCO World Heritage site nominee). How about ecotourism sites in Southeast Asia?

### Malaysia Ma'Daerah Turtle Sanctuary

It protects sea turtles' nesting sites from poachers and raises the awareness of the protection of sea turtles through various activities such as camps.



### Cambodia Chambok

Visitors to Chambok stay in local villages in homestays and participate in activities such as rice cultivation. All revenue from tours goes to the villagers as income<sup>5</sup>.



**Philippines** **Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park**

The park was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1993<sup>6</sup> due to its abundant marine life, such as whale sharks. All revenue is used to protect organisms from exploitation.

**Thailand** **Chiang Rai**

It brings visitors to the tribal communities in Chiang Rai. Visitors stay in homestays and participate in activities like local crafts. All revenue goes back as income for the locals<sup>7</sup>.

**Indonesia** **Nusa Penida Bird Sanctuary**

It protects local species such as the critically endangered Bali starling. It ropes in local communities to help stop poaching. Visitors can participate as volunteers there.

**Indonesia** **The Dorsal Effect**

Run by a Singaporean named Kathy Xu. It provides the locals with an alternative livelihood of acting as tour guides instead of engaging in shark hunting.

<sup>5</sup> 'Chambok Ecotourism Site- Kampong Speu.'Tourism of Cambodia. Retrieved from [http://www.tourismcambodia.com/travelguides/provinces/kampong-speu/what-to-see/376\\_chambok-ecotourism-site.htm](http://www.tourismcambodia.com/travelguides/provinces/kampong-speu/what-to-see/376_chambok-ecotourism-site.htm)

<sup>6</sup> 'Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park.'United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). Retrieved from <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/653>

<sup>7</sup> 'Dive Tubbataha.'(2012). Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park. Retrieved from <http://www.tubbatahareef.org/home>

## Search tips

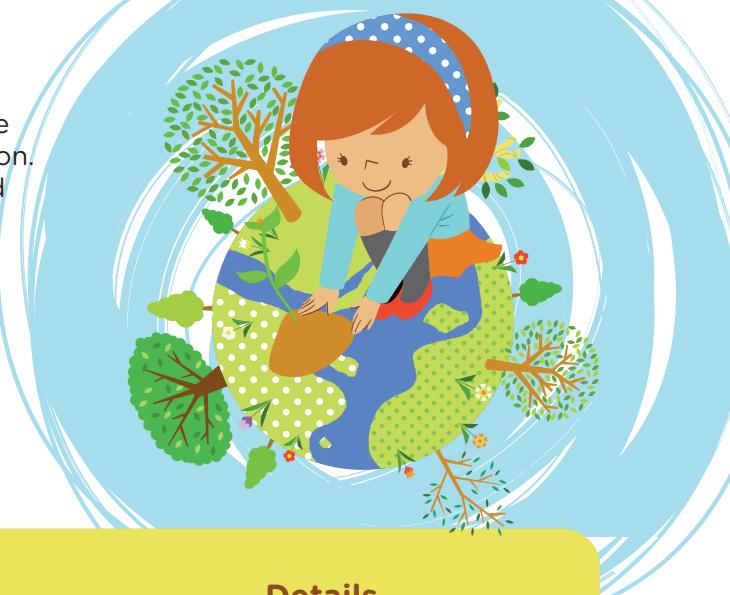
Use the AACCO checklist to determine whether information on ecotourism is credible or not!



Evaluation criteria	What to look out for	Example
<b>Author</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The author should have the knowledge and authority on the subject of ecotourism.</li> <li>Webpages with domain names ending with <b>.edu, .org and .gov</b> are usually more credible.</li> </ul>	The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) is credible as it is a non-profit organisation which promotes ecotourism. Its domain name ends with .org.
<b>Accuracy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Content should not be inaccurate / dubious.</li> <li>Resources from credible authors should be cited.</li> </ul>	The information in Ecotourism by Peggy J. Parks is accurate as it contains citations of credible articles.
<b>Currency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The information should be written / updated recently.</li> <li>Links to webpages should be working.</li> </ul>	The report from the 2002 International Year of Ecotourism is not accurate now as it is not current.
<b>Coverage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The information should be relevant, broad in coverage, and in-depth.</li> </ul>	The Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park website contains information on the park, conservation, and even research reports on organisms.
<b>Objectivity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The information should be based on facts, not personal opinions.</li> <li>The purpose is to educate, not to advertise or entertain.</li> </ul>	The information on ecotour projects in the UNESCO website is objective as it is backed up by facts. It is mentioned to raise awareness of ecotourism.

# Resources

Due to the rising popularity of ecotourism, more and more destinations are eager to jump onto the ecotour bandwagon. However, how do you ensure that the information you find on ecotourism is credible and objective, particularly with the phenomenon of greenwashing (see page 2)? Here is a list of resources you can refer to when searching for information relating to ecotourism.



Source	URL / Title	Details
The International Ecotourism Society (TIES)	<a href="https://www.ecotourism.org/what-is-ecotourism">https://www.ecotourism.org/what-is-ecotourism</a> <a href="https://www.ecotourism.org/ecodestinations">https://www.ecotourism.org/ecodestinations</a>	TIES is a non-profit organisation dedicated to promoting ecotourism. Other than basic information of what ecotourism is, it also provides a list of ecotours classified according to their locations.
BBC Bitesize	<a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/geography/tourism/ecotourism_rev1.shtml">http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/geography/tourism/ecotourism_rev1.shtml</a>	This BBC Bitesize webpage explains the concept of ecotourism in an easy-to-read bite-sized manner. Therefore, it is suitable for younger readers who are doing basic research in ecotourism.
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)	<a href="http://www.unesco.org/culture/ecotourism">www.unesco.org/culture/ecotourism</a>	The UNESCO website describes several ecotours in developing countries which are a result of UNESCO's collaboration with the local communities. Besides a description of the ecotours, the website also explains how the ecotours benefit the local communities.
Books	Ecotourism by Peggy J. Parks (Call No.: J 338.4 PAR)	This book explains how ecotourism came about and some of its benefits and drawbacks. The book is written in an easy-to-understand manner and is suitable for younger audience.

## References

- 'What is Ecotourism?' (2014). The International Ecotourism Society (TIES). Retrieved from <http://www.ecotourism.org/what-is-ecotourism>
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- 'The Ecotours Project: from the Mirror Foundation, Chiang Rai.' Thailand Ecotour. The Mirror Foundation. Retrieved from <http://www.thailanddecotour.org/>
- 'Nusa Penida, Bali.' Friends of the National Parks Foundation. Retrieved from <http://www.fnpf.org/what-we-do/nusa-penida-bali>
- 'Sustainable Alternative Livelihood for Shark Fishermen Through Eco-Tourism.' (2014). The Dorsal Effect. Retrieved from <http://thedorsaleffect.com/>