

Policy measures to promote eco-tourism in selected places

RT08/18-19
31 May 2019

1. Introduction

1.1 Hong Kong is renowned for its vast country parks (44 300 hectares or 40% of its total land area) and significant biodiversity, but its natural beauty is yet to be fully appreciated by overseas visitors. Despite enhanced promotion, **only 4% of 27.9 million overnight visitors participated in green tourism or eco-tourism (e.g. hiking and going to beaches) in 2017**, up from 3% in 2015. By and large, local eco-tourism is facing some issues of concerns, such as (a) **lack of overarching policies** to coordinate eco-tourism development across bureaus; (b) **insufficient supporting amenities** like transportation and accommodation; (c) **challenges in conserving eco-sites** amidst increased visitors; (d) **lack of qualified eco-tour guides** to provide in-depth learning experience to visitors; and (e) **inadequate promotion** to both local and foreign visitors.

1.2 To diversify the experience of visitors and to enhance the recreational potential of country parks, the Government commissioned a consultancy study in January 2017, with a public consultation just completed in May 2019 (e.g. covering proposals like eco-lodges and tree-top adventure operated by private ventures). The Hong Kong Tourism Board also obtained funding support of HK\$5 million in 2018 to subsidize the travel trade to develop five pilot "green tourism" products locally.

1.3 At the request of Hon YIU Si-wing, the Research Office has completed a research task on policy measures to promote eco-tourism in four selected places in Asia-Pacific. Australia, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan are selected for study because they are globally acclaimed for eco-tourism. The relevant documents are organized into an information pack folder, with salient features highlighted below.

2. Policy measures to promote eco-tourism in selected places

2.1 **Eco-tourism usually comprises elements of (a) nature exploration; (b) conservation of the eco-sites; (c) interpretation by qualified eco-tour guides; and (d) economic contribution to local community.** While eco-tourism aims at encouraging visitors to appreciate the nature, its scale cannot be too excessive to undermine the environment. As such, eco-tour guides with necessary training can promote sustainable and responsible tourism to tourists. Following the designation of year 2002 as the "International Year of Eco-tourism" by the United Nations, global eco-tourism has been growing fast, with its annual value estimated at US\$100 billion (HK\$784 billion), accounting for 5%-7% of worldwide tourism receipts.



2.2 To drive eco-tourism, all the selected places have **dedicated policy documents or legislation** in place. Taking Australia as an illustration, the "National Eco-tourism Strategy" was published in 1994, with a vision to develop sustainable eco-tourism. It covered aspects such as integrated regional planning, infrastructure and accreditation. In Taiwan, the government issued the "Eco-tourism White Paper" in 2002, outlining four concrete targets and six comprehensive strategies, and coordinating 14 departments on policy areas like eco-destinations management, certification, training and promotion.

2.3 On **development of eco-destinations and provision of supporting amenities**, the Australian government has invited interested ventures to develop eco-chalets and tree house within its existing National Parks in 2016-2017. These infrastructures have contributed in part to the 6.5% growth in number of visitors to terrestrial reserves in 2017-2018. For South Korea, its government turns those naturally attractive sites into new eco-sites through the use of "eco-tourism zone designation system". During 2013-2018, altogether 26 eco-tourism areas have been developed across the country.

2.4 On **conservation**, both Australia and Taiwan have included impact monitoring in their policies to ensure the eco-tourism projects are within the carrying capacity. In Japan, it empowers local eco-tourism councils to set rules to restrict tourists' access to the "specified natural resource area" for the sake of conservation. In South Korea, the transportation to eco-destinations was made to be environmentally friendly. Since July 2018, electric buses have been selected to operate in four national parks to minimize the adverse impact on the environment.

2.5 As regards the **supply of qualified eco-tour guides**, though most accreditation programmes for service suppliers (e.g. eco-tour guides and operators) are developed by the trade itself, governments of all selected places somehow endorse and/or technically support these accreditation programmes to enhance their credibility. For example, the Taiwanese government partners with Taiwan Eco-tourism Association to carry out certification programmes for both eco-tour guides and operators. The South Korean government even takes the lead in such certification, with its Korean Tourism Organization as the implementation agency of the "Korean Eco-tourism Standard", setting guidelines for tour guides, destinations and accommodation.

2.6 On **promotion of eco-tourism**, apart from utilizing traditional platforms, all governments of selected places also promote eco-destination online and through social media, targeting the younger generation with interest in eco-tourism. More specifically, the Australian government partnered with Google to promote its eco-destinations in the form of virtual tour in 2018, reaching out to 35 million global audiences. Besides, the South Korean government has launched a mobile application for eco-tourism in 2013 with the functions such as recommended routes, map, augmented reality and social networking.

Policy measures to promote eco-tourism in selected places

References

Global

1. EBSCO. (2009) *Sustainability Watch: Ecotourism*. Available from: <https://ebscosustainability.files.wordpress.com/2010/07/ecotourism.pdf> [Accessed May 2019].
2. United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. (2012) *Ecotourism*. Available from: <https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/20.%20OFS-Ecotourism.pdf> [Accessed May 2019].
3. United Nations Environment Programme. (2002) *Ecotourism: Principles, Practices & Policies for Sustainability*. Available from: https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/9045/-Ecotourism_%20%20Principles%2c%20Practices%20and%20Policies%20for%20Sustainability-2002518.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y [Accessed May 2019].
4. World Tourism Organization and United Nations Development Programme. (2018) *Tourism and the Sustainable Development Goals – Journey to 2030*. Available from: <https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/pdf/10.18111/9789284419401> [Accessed May 2019].

Hong Kong

5. Hong Kong Tourism Board. (2017) *Visitor Profile Report - 2016*. Available from: <https://securepartnernet.hktb.com/filemanager/intranet/ir/ResearchStatistics/paper/Visitor-Pro/Profile%202016/Visitor%20Profile%202016.pdf> [Accessed May 2019].
6. Hong Kong Tourism Board. (2018) *Visitor Profile Report - 2017*. Available from: <https://securepartnernet.hktb.com/filemanager/intranet/ir/ResearchStatistics/paper/Visitor-Pro/Profile2017/Visitor%20Profile%202017.pdf> [Accessed May 2019].
7. R2G 秘書處：《認可課程》，2018年，網址：http://www.hkr2g.net/b5_r2ge.htm [於2019年5月登入]。



8. 香港地質公園：《地質導遊》，2011年，網址：https://www.geopark.gov.hk/b5_s4e.htm [於2019年5月登入]。
9. 香港地質公園：《遊覽香港地質景點守則》，2018年，網址：<http://www.geopark.gov.hk/eleaflet/pdf/13-E-leaflet-Code-for-visiting-HKGP.pdf> [於2019年5月登入]。
10. 香港地質公園：《認識香港地質公園》，2018年，網址：<http://www.geopark.gov.hk/eleaflet/pdf/05-E-leaflet-Getting-to-Know-HKGP.pdf> [於2019年5月登入]。
11. 香港旅遊發展局：《香港郊野全接觸：登山遠足·單車旅遊指南2018-2019》，2018年，網址：http://www.discoverhongkong.com/common/ebook/HKTB_Great_Outdoors_2018_tc.pdf [於2019年5月登入]。
12. 旅遊事務署：《香港旅遊業發展藍圖》，2017年，網址：https://www.tourism.gov.hk/popup/files/Development_Blueprint_for_Hong_Kongs_Tourism_Industry_Chi.pdf [於2019年5月登入]。
13. 商務及經濟發展局：《立法會九題：大量內地遊客在本地露營地點及泳灘過夜》，2018年，網址：<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201805/23/P2018052300647.htm> [於2019年5月登入]。
14. 商務及經濟發展局：《立法會四題：發展綠色旅遊》，2017年，網址：<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201711/29/P2017112900534.htm> [於2019年5月登入]。
15. 商務及經濟發展局：《財務委員會審核二零一九至二零年度開支預算管制人員的答覆》，2019年，網址：https://www.legco.gov.hk/yr18-19/chinese/fc/fc/w_q/cedb-cit-c.pdf [於2019年5月登入]。
16. 發展局：《改善碼頭計劃》，2018年，網址：<https://www.legco.gov.hk/yr17-18/chinese/panels/dev/papers/dev20180718cb1-1242-2-c.pdf> [於2019年5月登入]。

17. 漁農自然護理署：《自然導賞約章》，2012年，網址：https://www.natureintouch.gov.hk/data/files/nature_appreciation_c.pdf [於2019年5月登入]。
18. 漁農自然護理署：《提升香港郊野公園及特別地區康樂及教育潛力》，2019年，網址：https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5c0ddeb55417fcc0d6611f20/t/5c88cdd2b208fcbbdd0e7b4d/1552469602600/cp-recreation_consultation+document_chi.pdf [於2019年5月登入]。
19. 漁農自然護理署：《漁農自然護理署年報 2017-2018：二零一七至一八年度郊區的檢控數字》，2018年，網址：https://www.afcd.gov.hk/misc/download/annualreport2018/chi/appendices_14.html [於2019年5月登入]。
20. 漁農自然護理署：《漁農自然護理署年報 2017-2018：郊野公園及海岸公園》，2018年，網址：<https://www.afcd.gov.hk/misc/download/annualreport2018/chi/country.html> [於2019年5月登入]。

Australia

21. Director of National Parks. (2018) *Annual Report 2017-18*. Available from: <https://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/resources/1ab9ba54-8234-46d6-a93f-38b38769ff18/files/director-national-parks-annual-report-2017-18.pdf> [Accessed May 2019].
22. Ecotourism Australia. (2014) *Blueprint for a Sustainable Future*. Available from: <https://www.ecotourism.org.au/assets/Uploads/Policy-Paper-2014.pdf> [Accessed May 2019].
23. Ecotourism Australia. (2018) *Annual report 2017-2018*. Available from: <https://www.ecotourism.org.au/assets/PDFs/Ecotourism-Australia-Annual-Report-2017-18.compressed.pdf> [Accessed May 2019].
24. Ecotourism Australia. (2018) *ECO and Respecting Our Culture certification Essentials*. Available from: <https://www.ecotourism.org.au/assets/Program-Summary-ECO-ROC-with-Criteria.pdf> [Accessed May 2019].

25. Fennell, D.A. et al. (2001) *The Encyclopedia of Ecotourism: Policy and Planning*. Available from: http://shora.tabriz.ir/Uploads/83/cms/user/File/657/E_Book/Tourism/The%20Encyclopedia%20of%20Ecotourism.pdf [Accessed May 2019].
26. Parks Australia. (2013) *Commercial tourism operator permit guidelines*. Available from: <http://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/resources/31dc9417-7f81-40f1-a218-cffce289bc5a/files/parks-australia-permit-guidelines-web.pdf> [Accessed May 2019].
27. Savannah Guides. (2019) *EcoGuide Certification*. Available from: <http://savannah-guides.com.au/professional-development/ecoguide/> [Accessed May 2019].
28. Tourism & Transport Forum Australia. (2017) *Unlocking Our Great Outdoors*. Available from: <http://www.ttf.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/TTF-Unlocking-our-Great-Outdoors-August-2017.pdf> [Accessed May 2019].
29. Tourism Australia. (2018) *High Value Traveller Snapshot*. Available from: <http://www.tourism.australia.com/content/dam/assets/document/1/7/5/e/w/2013224.pdf> [Accessed May 2019].
30. Tourism Australia. (2018) *Traveller Snapshot*. Available from: <http://www.tourism.australia.com/content/dam/assets/document/1/7/5/e/v/2013223.pdf> [Accessed May 2019].
31. Tourism Australia. (2019) *Eco retreats for an Aussie wilderness experience*. Available from: <https://www.australia.com/en-us/things-to-do/accommodation-and-places-to-stay/eco-retreats-for-an-aussie-wilderness-experience.html> [Accessed May 2019].
32. Tourism Research Australia. (2016) *International Visitors in Australia: December 2016 Quarterly Results of the International Visitor Survey*. Available from: https://www.tra.gov.au/tra/2016/documents/ivs/ivs_december_2016.html [Accessed May 2019].

Japan

33. Alduais, K. M. (2009) *Sustainable Tourism Development and Japan Policies*. Available from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270393666_Sustainable_Tourism_Development_and_Japan_Policies [Accessed May 2019].



34. Japan Ecotourism Society. (2011) *About Ecotour Comprehensive*. Available from: <http://ecotourism.jp/en/about/index.html> [Accessed May 2019].
35. Japan Ecotourism Society. (2012) *Ecotourism Certification Examination*. Available from: <http://www.ecotourism.gr.jp/kentei/> [Accessed May 2019].
36. Japan Ecotourism Society. (2013) *About JES: Japan Ecotourism Society*. Available from: <http://www.ecotourism.gr.jp/index.php/english/> [Accessed May 2019].
37. Japan National Tourism Organization. (2019) *Trends in Visitor Arrivals to Japan by Year*. Available from: <https://statistics.jnto.go.jp/en/graph/#graph--inbound-travelers--transition> [Accessed May 2019].
38. Ministry of the Environment. (2007) *Ecotourism Promotion Act*. Available from: <http://extwprlegs1.fao.org/docs/pdf/jap153728.pdf> [Accessed May 2019].
39. Ministry of the Environment. (2010) *Ecotourism Promotion Policy in Japan*. Available from: http://mddb.apec.org/documents/2010/GOS/GOS-TWG-CON/10_gos-twg_con_007.pdf [Accessed May 2019].
40. Ministry of the Environment. (2017) *Ecotourism! Let's have fun (part 2)*. Available from: <http://www.env.go.jp/nature/ecotourism/try-ecotourism/pamphlet/pdf/tanoshimou2.pdf> [Accessed May 2019].
41. Ministry of the Environment. (2018) *Annual Report 2018*. Available from: https://www.env.go.jp/en/wpaper/2018/pdf/2018_all.pdf [Accessed May 2019].
42. Ministry of the Environment. (2018) *Ecotourism Award 2017*. Available from: <http://www.env.go.jp/nature/ecotourism/try-ecotourism/pamphlet/pdf/13award.pdf> [Accessed May 2019].
43. Tanigawa-dake Ecotourism Promotion Council. (2013) *Minakami Town's Challenges for Ecotourism*. Available from: http://www.env.go.jp/en/nature/asia-parks/pdf/wg2/APC_WG2-01_Yoshimasa_Kishi.pdf [Accessed May 2019].
44. The Japan Times. (2017) *Estimated number of foreign visitors to Japan's national parks hit record 6 million in 2017*. Available from: <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2018/03/13/national/estimated-number-foreign-visitors-japans-national-parks-hit-record-6-million-2017/#.XN4aRtRuaUk> [Accessed May 2019].



45. Tokyo Metropolitan Government. (2005) *Tokyo Ecotourism*. Available from: http://www.env.go.jp/en/nature/asia-parks/pdf/wg2/APC_WG2-05_Toshiyuki_Sato.pdf [Accessed May 2019].
46. Wang, S. and Yamada, N. (2009) Comparison of Ecotourism Policies and Implications for China's Ecotourism Development. *Journal of China Tourism Research*, vol. 5, issue 3, September, pp. 259-272.
47. Yamamoto, Y. (2018) *Sustainable Tourism and Nature Conservation in Japan - Ecotourism Promotion Act*. Available from: http://nature.org.vn/vn/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/210718_Yoshika-Yamamoto_Sustainable-Tourism-and-Nature-Conservation-in-Japan-Ecotourism-Promotion-Act.pdf [Accessed May 2019].

South Korea

48. Global Sustainable Tourism Council. (2017) *The Korean Ecotourism Standard for Destinations, Accommodations and Tours Achieves GSTC Recognition*. Available from: <https://www.gstcouncil.org/korean-ecotourism-standard-destinations-accommodations-tours-achieves-gstc-recognition/> [Accessed May 2019].
49. Kang, M. (2010) *Shades of Ecotourism in Korea: Paradigm Shift and Responsible Action*. Available from: http://mddb.apec.org/documents/2010/GOS/GOS-TWG-CON/10_gos-twg_con_006.pdf [Accessed May 2019].
50. Korea Ecotourism Society. (2010) *Introduce*. Available from: <https://www.ecotourism.or.kr/blank-19> [Accessed May 2019].
51. Korea Ecotourism Society. (2019) *About the association*. Available from: <https://www.ecotourism.or.kr/blank-5> [Accessed May 2019].
52. Korea Ecotourism Society. (2019) *Ecotourism area*. Available from: <https://www.ecotourism.or.kr/blank-3> [Accessed May 2019].
53. Korea Forest Service. (2010) *Education Programs Operated by Korea National Arboretum*. Available from: http://english.forest.go.kr/newkfsweb/html/EngHtmIPage.do?pg=/esh/org_kna/UI_KFS_0106_030520.html&mn=ENG_06_03_05_02 [Accessed May 2019].

54. Korea Legislation Research Institute. (2017) *Forest Education Promotion Act*. Available from: https://elaw.klri.re.kr/kor_service/lawView.do?hseq=46870&lang=ENG [Accessed May 2019].
55. Korea Legislation Research Institute. (2017) *Natural Environment Conservation Act*. Available from: https://elaw.klri.re.kr/kor_service/lawView.do?hseq=46234&lang=ENG [Accessed May 2019].
56. Korean Culture and Information Service. (2012) *Korea's green tourism destinations*. Available from: <http://www.korea.net/NewsFocus/Travel/view?articleId=101766> [Accessed May 2019].
57. Lee, S.C. (2014) *Successful Green Transformation Story in Suncheon City, Republic of Korea*. Available from: <https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/RRSOED-Successful-Green-Transformation-Story-in-Suncheon-City-by-SeungChul-Lee.pdf> [Accessed May 2019].
58. Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism. (2013) *Sustainable Tourism Policy in Korea*. Available from: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/4518korea.pdf> [Accessed May 2019].
59. Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism. (2019) *2018 International Visitor Survey*. Available from: <http://kto.visitkorea.or.kr/file/download/bd/522dfda4-6d8e-11e9-b01e-c515ccf49883.pdf.kto> [Accessed May 2019].
60. Ministry of Environment. (2014) *MOE designated five places as eco-tour zones*. Available from: <http://eng.me.go.kr/eng/web/board/read.do?menuId=21&boardMasterId=522&boardId=470450&searchKey=titleOrContent&searchValue=%20Odesignated%20five%20places%20as%20eco-tour%20zones> [Accessed May 2019].
61. Ministry of Environment. (2018) *An eco-friendly electric bus to be run in four national parks*. Available from: <http://eng.me.go.kr/eng/web/board/read.do?menuId=21&boardMasterId=522&boardId=902800&searchKey=titleOrContent&searchValue=> [Accessed May 2019].
62. Ministry of Environment. (2018) *Take a look at eco-tour destinations at one stop*. Available from: <http://eng.me.go.kr/eng/web/board/read.do?menuId=21&boardMasterId=522&boardId=341924&searchKey=titleOrContent&searchValue=> [Accessed May 2019].

63. Ministry of Environment. (2019) *Sustainable Use of Natural Resources*. Available from: <http://eng.me.go.kr/eng/web/index.do?menuId=413> [Accessed May 2019].
64. United Nations Office for Sustainable Development. (2013) *Environmental Impact Assessment of Tourism Development: Case studies and experiences*. Available from: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/4603sangin.pdf> [Accessed May 2019].

Taiwan

65. The Standard. (2017) *Taiwan: a pleasurable experience, as always*. Available from: <http://www.thestandard.com.hk/emagazines/20170612130500magazine.pdf> [Accessed May 2019].
66. 大紀元：《台觀光局推生態旅遊認證標章》，2009年，網址：<http://www.epochtimes.com/b5/9/8/13/n2622867.htm> [於2019年5月登入]。
67. 內政部營建署：《許可使用濕地標章及回饋金運用管理辦法》，2014年，網址：<https://www.cpami.gov.tw/最新訊息/詳細資料/7572-許可使用濕地標章及回饋金運用管理辦法.html> [於2019年5月登入]。
68. 交通部觀光局：《Tourism 2020—臺灣永續觀光發展策略(106-109年)》，2017年，網址：<https://admin.taiwan.net.tw/Handlers/FileHandler.ashx?fid=8f189a29-8efa-453f-a0d5-279bb37e121a&type=4&no=1> [於2019年5月登入]。
69. 交通部觀光局：《中華民國102年來臺旅客消費及動向調查》，2014年，網址：<https://admin.taiwan.net.tw/Handlers/FileHandler.ashx?fid=16876ea8-7d7c-4258-903a-a8ee8b21d60f&type=4&no=1> [於2019年5月登入]。
70. 交通部觀光局：《中華民國102年國人旅遊狀況調查》，2014年，網址：<https://admin.taiwan.net.tw/Handlers/FileHandler.ashx?fid=b79402e9-85e7-4a43-993e-fc12beb270e2&type=4&no=1> [於2019年5月登入]。



71. 交通部觀光局：《中華民國 106 年來臺旅客消費及動向調查》，2018 年，網址：<https://admin.taiwan.net.tw/Handlers/FileHandler.ashx?fid=daadd30-037b-4b6f-ac4c-27be064bb8b9&type=4&no=1> [於 2019 年 5 月登入]。
72. 交通部觀光局：《中華民國 106 年國人旅遊狀況調查》，2018 年，網址：<https://admin.taiwan.net.tw/Handlers/FileHandler.ashx?fid=11f15ccb-e211-4cdd-8548-9b325ae2771a&type=4&no=1> [於 2019 年 5 月登入]。
73. 交通部觀光局：《生態之旅》，2019 年，網址：<https://www.taiwan.net.tw/m1.aspx?sNo=0001038> [於 2019 年 5 月登入]。
74. 交通部觀光局：《生態旅遊白皮書》，2002 年，網址：<https://admin.taiwan.net.tw/upload/contentFile/auser/d/2002eco/news/white.doc> [於 2019 年 5 月登入]。
75. 交通部觀光局：《交通部觀光局觀光統計資料庫：觀光遊憩據點》，2019 年，網址：<https://stat.taiwan.net.tw/scenicSpot> [於 2019 年 5 月登入]。
76. 金惠雯：《自主與合作—原住民族部落觀光產業的發展》，2017 年，網址：<https://web.alcd.tw/uploads/2017/12/03/0bc79c2efc130911bb5cada31881bc55.pdf> [於 2019 年 5 月登入]。
77. 臺灣生態旅遊協會：《社團法人臺灣生態旅遊協會簡介》，2015 年，網址：<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B0StHCg6sdugSIRydk5M2QxN0U/view?usp=sharing> [於 2019 年 5 月登入]。
78. 臺灣生態旅遊協會：《第六期初階生態旅遊導覽人員培訓營》，2012 年，網址：<https://www.alinsa.net/cm/down.ashx?Lang=1&SNo=10001782> [於 2019 年 5 月登入]。
79. 臺灣國家公園：《墾丁上山下海精采之旅》，2016 年，網址：http://np.cpami.gov.tw/youth/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=7568:2016-01-19-10-11-34&catid=141:2015-11-11-01-20-13&Itemid=235 [於 2019 年 5 月登入]。