



3.2 Dynamic Tours: Responsible Tourism Guidelines for Tour Guides

Description of Good Practice

Since 1992, Dynamic Tours, a Moroccan tour operator, has been heavily involved in building professional associations linked to mountain and rural tourism. The company has focused on sustainable tourism strategic planning for its European clients since 1996, a policy that has led to the implementation of ethics charters and guidelines on the environment and local communities. In 2000, Dynamic Tours developed a 'Mountain and Desert Guide's Charter' for its guides, as a mean to build awareness on their roles as liaisons between the travellers and the tour operator on:

- Environmental problems;
- Economic impacts of the groups in a given area;
- Financial resources created by the tourist activity and their allocation to the preservation of local species and heritage; and
- Social and economic development of the visited areas.

In addition to detailing the guides' responsibilities in regards to travellers, the charter offers guidelines on:

- Greeting procedures for travellers;
- Quality criteria;
- Waste control and treatment;
- Energy and water consumption;
- Behaviour with local people;
- Contribution to the preservation and restoration of cultural sites;
- Fair distribution of revenues; and
- Contribution to the local economy through travellers' purchases from local cooperatives.

The Charter was developed based on the results of an audit conducted from late 1998 to early 2000, which focused on the company's mountain and desert teams to determine:

- The impact of group travellers on the environment;
- The presence of trash on the trails and areas the groups visited;
- The level of tourist activity at visited sites; and
- Links between tourism activities and the economic development of visited areas.

Implementation

In order to support the charter's implementation by its guides, Dynamic Tours organised training sessions between 2000 and 2002, which focused on different aspects of the guide's charter, including:

- Welcome procedures;
- Animal and plant life conservation in protected areas;
- Enhancement of travellers' observation and interpretation behaviours;
- Mountain rescue procedures; and
- Conservation of rural heritage.



CAMELS IN THE MOROCCAN DESERT



A GLIMPSE MOROCCO'S RICH CULTURAL HERITAGE

Each guide gets two weeks of training sessions per year; approximately 100 Dynamic Tours guides have been trained since the beginning of the programme. The total cost of the programme, including the five training sessions, has been US\$70,000.

During each tour, the guide produces a trip report (using a standard form), outlining how well guidelines and procedures were applied in the different areas the group visited. The trip reports are assessed by the marketing and operational managers. Throughout the trip, the guides and local team meet with local authorities, non-governmental organisations and/or village association representatives, to build awareness on the environment, help in existing projects and identify actions or programmes to implement.

Benefits

Dynamic Tours' efforts to promote sustainable tourism have led to the building of a high degree of awareness among local authorities on the benefits of controlled tourism development in fragile areas. Co-operation between Dynamic Tours, its clients and local people has helped to promote clean-up operations in visited areas, waste collection and treatment and other environmental programmes. Travellers who see these good practices frequently request information on how they can contribute to responsible development efforts.

Comments

Morocco's goal of 10 million tourists by 2010 requires that all projects include an integrated development strategy for a safer, cleaner environment, and awareness of the negative impacts of uncontrolled poorly planned development is growing. Other tour operators in Morocco are learning from Dynamic Tours' experiences in promoting responsible tourism and are now adopting their own responsible practices, with the understanding that collective action is essential to sustainable development of tourism, especially in remote and sensitive areas.

The company has begun an awareness and audit campaign geared toward all parties concerned, and information will soon be available to all travellers in Morocco. In addition, regional projects for the development of tourism in protected areas (national parks) are being implemented.