Ecotourism and Developing Countries
To Eco-wise or To Sustain-wise?
A study of principles verses reality within the realm of developing countries.

Dr. Hesham M. El-Barmelgy
Professor of Sustainable Development and Urban Design
Cairo University, Faculty of Urban and Regional Planning, Urban Design Department
Barmelgy@staff.cu.edu.eg

Abstract
In 1991 Elizabeth Boo initiated the notion of Eco-tourism into the global context, since then there is an ongoing debate around the efficiency of the term. Some argued the term to be no more than a myth or a rhetorical speech about sustaining our ‘ego’. Others see the term as a panacea from heaven presenting the tourism industry with a sensitive environmental approach. The paper argues ‘eco-tourism’ to be a highly rated sustainable form of tourism that is only applicable to specific locations of high scenic environmental, social and culture values and with specific management capabilities. Consequently, the paper aims to investigate the rhetoric discourse of ‘eco-tourism’ and how can it contribute to the tourism developments within the Egyptian context. The research methodology is to conduct a profound study aiming to analyse and study the philosophy of the ecotourism concept, defining its features and principles. Studying the link between the concept of ‘ecotourism’ and that of ‘sustainable tourism’, extending the debate to the reality of ecotourism development process within the realm of developing countries; aiming to achieve an objective answer to the question of; whether to ‘ecowise’ or to ‘sustainwise’?

Keywords: ecotourism philosophy, eco-management, ecotourist, sustainable tourism, sustainable ecotourism.

Introduction
Recently, the tourism industry has witnessed the emerging of a new type of nature-based tourism that has been gaining momentum all around the world. Tourists are seeking a new kind of experience that would allow them to escape the hustle and bustle of everyday life (WTO, 2003). An alternative form of tourism giving them the chance to enjoy the beauty and serenity of the pristine nature (Dowling, 1998). They are searching for rich landscapes, scenic nature, unique fauna and flora, and a lifetime experience getting to know indigenous cultures through direct contact with local communities.

Ecotourism nowadays is one of the fastest growing segments within the tourism industry, which is according to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), the largest industry in the world (WTTC, 1995). The Ecotourism Society forecasts that the ecotourism industry, is to account for approximately 7% of all international travel expenditures in 1989, growing to 20 – 25% in 1995 (TIES, 2004). Ecotourism represents a very powerful market to develop the biodiversity of the tourism sector being one of the strongest development sectors of the world (Wheat, 2004. Following, the years of depletion of the tourism industry where arrivals amounted to 694 million in 2003, 3 million down from the 697 million of 2000 (WTO, 2004). It has been a crucial few years for the tourism industry, to recover from the terrorist attacks of
September 11th, to the outbreak of SARS and the Iraq War. Receipts from international travel were slightly up to 514.4 billion US$ in 2003 (WTO, 2004), but it is yet to reach the boom of a few years ago. Until, few days ago the tourism industry was experiencing an upward trend which first began in late 2003. The relaxing of major geopolitical tensions and the recovery of the SARS has caused the flourishing of the industry.

To conclude, the tourism industry is expected to flourish with more revenues than ever before and great deals of these revenues are directed toward the nature-based tourism (Stein et al, 2003). The term ecotourism was raised by the industry aiming to be able to address the new market trend and to formulate the appropriate tourism product, packing and marketing it. Ecotourism could thus fuel economic growth, equitable distribution of resource and in the process to alleviate poverty. Also, community participation could guarantee local support for conservation and natural resource utilisation. Only when local communities share in the control, management and derive economic benefits from sustainable use and management of wildlife do conflicts and competitions for resources which threaten parks become minimised and sense of pride and ownership can be emanated within the local communities. Such sense is of crucial important for the long run and the successful management of any nature-based tourism activity. The real challenge awaiting developing countries would be how to filter the benefits of the ecotourism market to their local communities while at the same time being able to save their natural assets of the environment and cultural heritage for well-being of the current and the future generation. In other words the ability to enclave such ecotourism development within the wider and most important process of sustainable development through promoting a sustainable eco tourism.

Eco Tourism and Egypt
This part of the paper reports on the Egyptian tourism policies and objectives trying to define the role that ecotourism can have within the Egyptian tourism industry.

Egypt Tourism Development Polices and Objectives

Egypt as a developing country with a very fragile and weak economic sector in one hand, and a very rich and unique incomparable cultural and environmental heritage on the other hand, has led the countries policies to the important role that tourism development can have in charting the future of the country.

Consequently, the government issued the development of the tourism sector to be of high priority. The government strategic development plan of ‘Egypt’s Strategy for the 21 Century’ issued by the council of Prime Ministers at 15 March 1997 in the papers 94 and 95, issued a number of objectives for the development of the tourism sector to be achieved by the year 2017.

The strategy comprises the following goals:

1. Increasing the number of tourism to reach the limit of 27 million by the year 2017 from the 8,646 million achieved in 2006 (WTO, 2007).
2. Increasing the number of tourists’ night spends by the tourists to reach the limit of 237 million nights by 2017.
3. Increasing the capacity of the accommodation sector to reach the limit of 617 thousand rooms by 2017.

(Committee of media, culture and tourism, 1999: 64)
The current situation of the Egyptian tourism development can be argued to be imposing highly negative environmental impacts, unstable economic sector, serious socio-cultural problems, and highly fragile to the political situation of the region (El-Barmelgy, 2002). Therefore the need for an innovative approach is established. One that can promote the following objectives:

- fuel economic growth, equitable distribution of resource, and alleviate poverty;
- release conflict and competition for resources between the local and the industry;
- help diversifying the Egyptian tourism product;
- requires minimum capital investments mainly locally directed and owned;
- educate locals as well as visitors about the importance of conservation;
- promoting sense of pride within the local communities to safeguard theirs heritage
- improved employment opportunities for the locals and higher incomes; and
- more stable tourism product.

**Egypt and Ecotourism**

Egypt as a country of ancient history is endowed with a unique cultural heritage from the remarkable diversity of natural and human resources that were accumulated inspired and sustained for more than five thousand years. This genuine legacy of diverse natural and man-made heritage has proven to be of adherent attraction to the tourism market over the last few years. Egypt can be classified into four potential ecosystem zones including: desert, coastal, riverbanks, and wetland (TDA, 1999b). Comprising, the Red Sea, the Nile River, and the vast deserts with their unique oases, marvellous mountains and imaginary valleys (TDA, 1999c). The above few lines chart the availability of pristine natural environment in Egypt, which forms the main requirement for promoting a unique Egyptian ecotourism product, where ecotourism can be defined as a form of tourism whereby visitors seek to enjoy the natural history and environment of a destination.

Noticing, Egypt's high potential as a nature-based tourism destination, ecotourism and ecolodge are expected to play an important role in the sustainable economic development of the country. Providing foreign currency, new jobs, raising the community sense of pride thus creating the most powerful instrument through which conservation and preservation of the country heritage can be raised (TDA, 1999a).
resources in line with consumer tastes, quality and price of tourism products (Sindiga, 1999), which will always be a question of ability and qualification to developing countries. This perspective emphasises the principles of creating and maintaining a balance of tourism, conservation and culture rather than getting preoccupied by reducing the numbers of tourists. Given its unique resource base, Egypt is highly rated to offer visitors a wide range of ecotourism experience that is totally different from the rest of the world, but only if appropriate planning, management and marketing strategies are adopted. It should help the achievement of the Egyptian TD objectives defined earlier. These objectives can be acquired through being able to apply and promote ecotourism in a responsible manner in order to safeguard Egypt's natural and cultural resources for both present and future generations (TDA, 1999c). The TDA (Tourism Development Authorities in Egypt) encourages serious investors and developers seeking to accomplish ecotourism projects in Egypt.

Unfortunately, Egypt in its strive to accommodate the greatest number of international tourists has adopted an aggressive tourism development for Sinai and the Red Sea. Without adequate concerns for the well-being of the environment and the natural resources, such a situation has led to the exploitation of the resources in an irreversible manner in one of the most highly rated scenic areas of the world. For example, the resorts tourist boats of the Red Sea exert damage to the coral reefs known to be the most spectacular worldwide. Through raising awareness of such issues a more careful study for the reality of ecotourism and its principles is required in order to insure the promotion of an eco sustainable activity that would help flourishing and reviving the areas natural and cultural assets rather than depleting and consuming them.

Eco Tourism from a Notion to a Developed Market

Ecotourism Notion

The notion of ecotourism can be traced back to Elizebeth Boo in 1986, where she was working on tourism with the World Wildlife Fund. During that time a study was conducted on Latin America, a huge and growing demand for nature tourism parks there were recorded (Boo, 1990). The study found everything missing: from on entrance fee, system for training park guards, no visitors centres, no environmental education for visitors, very limited local enterprise and so many missed opportunities.

They issued the concept of 'Eco-tourism' aiming to capture some of those benefits and also to minimise the negative environmental impacts as well as some of the cultural impacts. However, according to Boo, "we had no idea that it would become a big issue and in fact the word 'ecotourism' was not even around at that time .... It is amazing to me how popular ecotourism has become without having more concrete example of what it is and how people can participate. What are the criteria, what are the standards? How to marry or combine development with conservation or how to promote sustainable development?" (Boo, 1995:233-234). This supports the vision argued by a lot of tourism researchers stating that the term was first used by various parties of the industry to sustain their profit only by eco-marketing their same mass tourism products. Consequently, the paper aims to focus on the issue of linking the term 'ecotourism' to that of the process of sustainable development. To achieve such target a thorough profound study for the elements and principle of ecotourism is to be
conducted aiming to establish such link. It is considered to be of vital importance for developing countries to be able to link its tourism development to that of sustainable development to its wider process of sustainable development.

**Defining Ecotourism**

In order to be able to study something, you have to define it first. Searching through the discourse of ecotourism unexpectedly resulted with limited number of definitions for the term.

The International Ecotourism Society (2004), define ecotourism as "responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people" (TIES, 2004). This definition was found to be wide accepted among tourism researches and publications. However, this definition is more a hope than a real definition; it did not tell us how to have responsible travel or how to conserve the environment while applying development which has been regarded as pros and cons by many researchers. Saleh and Karwacki, (1996) presents us with a more simplified definition where they described it as: "Tourism that involves travelling to relatively undisturbed or uncontaminated natural areas with the specific objective of studying, admiring and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals, as well as any existing cultural aspects (both past and present) found in this areas" (Saleh and Karwaci, 1996:62). Basically, the definition of ecotourism includes involving in appreciation, conservation, admiration, enjoyment, benefiting to the cultures of the locals, preservation, protection, as well as education, and it should be a non-exploitive kind of nature tourism.

Ecotourism is more of a philosophy than a specific industry or product. It embraces the vast array of environmental and social benefits that might arise from using nature as a tourism and recreational resource, but it does not provide a structured method for providing those benefits. In reality, however, ecotourism can result in negative impacts to both the environment and local people if use is not planned and managed sustainable.

**Deep and Shallow Ecotourism Philosophy**

Before initiating the study of ecotourism principles and elements it's important to clarify the philosophy of the term and how is it linked to sustainability and nature-based tourism. The Ecotourism Society described ecotourism as an approach to creating nature-based tourism opportunities. Unlike ecotourism, nature based tourism does not imply sustainability, conservation, or other value-laden terms.

The nature-based tourism simply serves as broad description of ways tourism and recreation might use natural environment (Holden, 2000). Since not all nature-based tourism operations live up to the ecotourism definitions, ecotourism can be considered a small subset of the broader nature-based tourism concept (figure, 2). The second level of the concept deals with the facts of shallow and deep ecotourism. In 1998, Howard brought forward a fine contribution regarding the philosophy of the deep and shallow ecotourism (Howard, 1998). His study can be regarded as a genuine attempt to differentiate between ecotourism as environmentally sustainable form of tourism and ecotourism as a cynical way to try and attract great numbers of visitors to an area. Noticing, the fact that ecotourism can refer to a wide range of activities which might
have different environmental impacts and attracts people with different sets of values and motivations.

The term 'deep ecotourism' and 'shallow ecotourism' can be used to differentiate between ecotourism that verges inform of mass tourism and genuine attempts at environmental sustainable tourism. Within the designation of shallow ecotourism nature would be valued because of its crucial value to humans. This might be as a source of aesthetic pleasure to tourists or as a direct method for obtaining revenue. The needs of local cultures are diminished compared to profit maximisation needs. Wildlife and natural landscapes will only be protected where there is an economic reason for doing so (Howard, 1998). Deep ecology in contrast, rejects the 'human-in-environment image' for a more holistic 'total field image'. Overwhelming the idea that humans are separated from nature, replacing the notion that the world is made up of discrete separate entities with a holistic view of the environment.

Deep ecotourism therefore encapsulate ideas that emphasis the importance of intrinsic value in nature, empowerment of small-scale and community identity, calling for community participation, undermining modern large scale technology emphasising that materialism for its own sake is inappropriate. To summarise, people living in pristine natural areas have an equal right to exist alongside other elements of landscape as long as they try minimising the harm they might inflict. Removing indigenous people from a destination to preserve it would not be accepted from the philosophy of deep ecotourism. Deep ecology should be accepted as an applicable philosophy that has practical relevance to the development of sustainable sound environmental practice.

Therefore, the type of ecotourism this paper is to further study and investigate is the deep ecotourism which the Ecotourism Association of Australia defined as "ecologically sustainable tourism that fosters environmental and cultural understanding, appreciation and conservation," (Sindiga, 1999:111).

**Principles and Elements of Deep Ecotourism**

Within, this vision ecotourism is seen as a catalyst for encouraging ecological sustainable development. The objectives of an ecotourism development plan should comprise: 1. all tourism activities should be ecologically sustainable; 2. it should
contribute to the conservation of both destination area and biodiversity; 3. it must provide benefits to host communities; 4. it must enhance environmental and cultural awareness; and 5. it must provide the necessary broad range of services for visitors to cater (Sindiga, 1999; Galasinski and Jaworski, 2003; and Hall et al., 1993).

Based on a number of ecotourism researches contributions and visions the researcher was able to compose a list of features and elements of ecotourism or deep-ecotourism. As presented in Table 1.

The elements of deep ecotourism were found to fit the three famous dimension of the sustainable tourism development model, comprising the environmental, socio-cultural and economic dimension. Table 1, report on elements of deep ecotourism. Elements of the two terms coincide thus proving the deep ecotourism product to be a sustainable form of tourism. As presented in figure 3, there is a slight deviation between the trends/outcomes of the two products; however, it is obvious that both of them are still within the boundaries of offering a sustainable environmentally sound form of tourism. The ecotourism product has a more

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environment Aspects</th>
<th>Socio-cultural Aspects</th>
<th>Economic Aspects</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promote positive environmental ethics</td>
<td>preserve cultural heritage</td>
<td>minimum capital investments required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It must not degrade the resources</td>
<td>concentrated on intrinsic, not extrinsic values</td>
<td>empowering wildlife and natural environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enhance bio centric, not homocentric</td>
<td>training and education courses</td>
<td>innovative marketing strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowering conservation and protection of natural resources</td>
<td>fostering preferred behaviour</td>
<td>simple and small scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovative build design principles</td>
<td>an expectation of gratification measured in appreciation and education</td>
<td>locally owned infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water and waste minimisation practices</td>
<td>promoting a high cognitive and effective dimension to the tourism experience</td>
<td>use of local materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhancing hosts and guests about sensitive environmental issues</td>
<td>stimulating the local cultures sense of pride to the native communities</td>
<td>indigenous operation enterprises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of local materials</td>
<td>indigenous operation of enterprises enhancing the sense of ownership and locality of the industry</td>
<td>fuel economic growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensitive to fragile nature ecosystems</td>
<td>sensitive to fragile cultural systems</td>
<td>alleviate poverty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementing energy saving methods</td>
<td>equitable distribution of resources</td>
<td>a very high quality product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction of alternative energy supplies</td>
<td>enhancing community participation thus insuring local support for conservation projects</td>
<td>limited number of tourists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building compatibility with nature to the degree that buildings are hardly noticed</td>
<td>a catalyst providing finance for the improvement of essential services</td>
<td>profitable and self-sustaining small scale business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>capturing tourism income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>locally, increasing multiplier factor and minimising the leakage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>direct and indirect economic benefits to local communities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1, Features and Elements of Deep Ecotourism
(Source: after; Dowling, 1993; Orams, 1996; Sindiga, 1999; Pearce, 1995; and Wheat, 2004)

Figure 3, Ecotourism and Sustainability
(Source: Researcher)
environmentally sound trend, while the sustainable tourism product may have a more economically base without diminishing the environmental dimension, proving the ecotourism to be beneficially oriented toward areas of highly scenic natural values such as coastal areas. As presented in Table 1, elements and features of the socio-cultural dimension were found to compose the greatest bulk of the concept proving the philosophy of deep ecotourism where the tourism development is directed to the benefits of the indigenous communities as part of the environment. Emphasising the philosophy of the ecotourism rejecting the 'human-in-environment image' for a more holistic 'total field image'. Based on the earlier theoretical analysis an 'eco-development' can be seen as a triangular relation ship that comprises in its vertices the ability to promote an eco-product, to have an eco-user and to apply continuous eco-management regimes (figure, 4).

Consequently, there are many practical and institutional obstacles to achieve effective promotion of ecotourism development; however, the most effective of all within the development context of developing countries, would be the ability to target and have an ecotourist and the ability to apply effective, adequate and continuous management regimes.

**A Sustainable Ecotourism Product**

Tourist Typology and Target Market Theory

The importance of the tourist to the success of the tourism development is well recognised. First, as the main initiator of the industry where his satisfaction is considered as a part of the sustainability process and finally as the main source through which the exploitation, depletion and consuming of resources occur. In other words to promote ecotourism we need to be able to have an ecotourist. The tourist typology has to be considered and the concept of the target market has to be appreciated to fulfil such requirement, which is to be presented in the proceeding part of the paper.

**Tourist Typology and Ecotourist**

The tourist typology is a term used to express the importance of the tourists to the tourism industry (El-Barmelgy, 2002). Smith (1989), presented such an importance in a valid equation where: 

\[
T (tourism) = L (Leisure time) + I (discretionary income) + M (motive).
\]

As presented one side of the equation represent the industry while the other reports on the tourist through elements of the tourist typology, based on elements of time, money and motive. On the lowest rung of the typology ladder is the charter tourism, while at the top there is the explorer or the ecotourism (table, 2). The study here targets the ecotourist as the core requirement for the development of the required ecotourism.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Tourist</th>
<th>Numbers of Tourists</th>
<th>Adaptations to Local Norms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explorer</td>
<td>Very limited</td>
<td>Accepts fully</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elite</td>
<td>Rarely seen</td>
<td>Adapts fully</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off-beat</td>
<td>Uncommon but seen</td>
<td>Adapts well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unusual</td>
<td>Occasional</td>
<td>Adapts somewhat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incipient</td>
<td>Steady flow</td>
<td>Seeks Western amenities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass</td>
<td>Continuous influx</td>
<td>Expects Western amenities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charter</td>
<td>Massive arrivals</td>
<td>Demands Western amenities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2 Tourists Typology**

(Source: France, 1999:124)
The definition of an ecotourist is an issue of much debate. Many define ecotourist based on a list of specific requirement that the tourist must meet such as age categories, education level, income levels, and even geographic locations (Ballantine and Eagles, 1994). Generally, ecotourist are seen to be outdoor enthusiasts who are well off financially, well-educated, older people who have the free time to travel. Seeking either a social motive (travelling to learn about nature), or a site attraction motive (visiting wilderness or undisturbed areas) (TIES, 2004).

However, much a principle definition of ecotourist is advocated, it must be recognised that so-called ecotourist are not a homogenous group. The spectrum of participants embraces hard-core nature tourists through to casual day visitors. Their behaviour and consequent impact will vary accordingly. It is essential then to attempt to match numbers and types of ecotourist with destinations characteristics; here comes the role of the target market theory as an effective pro-active action oriented approach.

Requirements of an Ecotourist

Ecotourist are people who are concerned about environment, who want to travel in the best way. Looking for information about what they can do when they go into these remote areas and how they can preserve wildlife when they travel (Boo, 1995). Accordingly, among the requirement and features of the ecotourist are the following:

- need for high qualified trained and educated tour guides;
- high standards tour brochures, containing sufficient knowledge;
- a social native experience through getting in contact with indigoes communities;
- share amenities with local communities;
- have all respect to local culture heritage and trying to live a different life time experience rather than imposing their own life style;
- low requirement for accessibility since they are ready to go through an uncomfortable trip to reach the destination rather than exposing the area to the damage of direct accessibility;
- accommodation units are so simple and locally stylish utilising local materials;
- bathrooms and toilets are usually grouped in points to reduce any harm to the surrounding environment;
- they are welling to contribute to the conservation projects, they are high expenditure compared to normal mass tourist and comes from high income categories;
- they are usually highly educated groups;
- enjoy being part and participating in local activities or traditions, buying local crafts and having fun;
- they are welling to accept more danger from environmental features;
- they require maximum security from any terrorist attacks or any sort of abuse;

(after: Boo, 1995; Saleh and Karwacki, 1996; and Howard, 1998)

The Target Market Approach

The tourist typology model shows that each tourist market has its special significant features. The first sustainable proactive step for any tourism development process would be to target the appropriate tourist market, based on the development
objectives of the tourism destination. As our destination comprises the most environmental scenic attributes of the world known as ecotourism destination, therefore, it is expected to target the highest rung on the tourist typology ladder represented by the explorer or the ecotourist.

Usually the work of marketing is carried out by foreign enterprises through either wholesalers or tour operators with a profit-minded rather than an eco-environmental mind. Therefore, it should be considered as one of the crucial steps for the success of an ecotourism development to target the appropriate tourist market. Feasibility studies are valid and should be conducted in earlier stages to ensure that the tourist motivations of the targeted market match that of the destination. Such process is regarded as the first proactive step for ensuring the economic feasibility and the long run sustainability of the tourism development in a destination. Usually, undermining, such importance this pace is always diminished either to be conducted in later phases of the development process or just to be ignored.

Management and Deco-Tourism

The paradox about the efficiency of ecotourism forms an ongoing debate among the tourism researchers and the tourism industry as a whole. The efficiency of the concept is recognised, however, its deficiency should be carefully addressed to maximise its benefits. Researchers have been able to define a number of deficiencies that hinder the concept from promoting the desired type of ecotourism that can be categorised into two streams, as follows:

The First Stream – Greening Mass Tourism/shallow Ecotourism

The first stream of deficiencies regarding ecotourism is tied to the way that group of ecotourism stakeholders interpret the term, with a solo objective of only sustaining their business, increasing their benefits and using the term as a tool for marketing their mass tourism products. Such approach is known among tourism researchers as 'greening-mass tourism'.

The Second Stream – Deco-wising ecotourism through matters of concept deficiencies and mismanagements.

The second stream comprises a list of eco-deficiencies related to the concept, among them are:

- Ecotourism has philosophical and ethical terms, and it's very difficult to promote without paying especial attention to them, however, the ethical term is likely to remain elusive (Howard, 1998).
- Ecotourism depends on international tourists arrivals from western communities, through foreign enterprises which mean high economic leakage.
- Much criticism has been directed to the concept for the reason of its failure to enhance local livelihood (Lowman, 2001).
- Issues regarding how we judge the 'best ecotourism destination', has been central to the issue of certification (Wheat, 2004), however, today the problem is with the increasing number of tourism certification programmes leading to a market confusion problem (Font et al, 2003).
- The term does not differentiate between;
  - A large group of people on a trip gazing to nature, arriving by a train or an aircraft, staying in a luxury resort or hotel, expecting westernised holiday (shallow-ecotourism).
A low impact (eco-traveller), back-packing, pursuing a minimal impact experience (deep-ecotourism).

- Environmental depletion, resulting from the tourists activities, although they are limited in number they still exert pressure that needs to be properly managed in order to minimise its impacts (Wheeler, 1993). Wheeler (1993) put forth a very creditable criticism to the concept where he stated that, "so too are arguments that there might well be less adverse environmental impact caused by a package coach tour say 50 passengers than by 25 travellers covering the same route in their cars ... the only thing we are sustaining and enhancing in the current debate is our egos. Again, for eco-tourist or should be ego-traveller," (Wheeler, 1993: 122).

Most of these critics pointed out, that saying that we are promoting ecotourism does not mean that long-term protection of the environment is automatically supported. Even in countries with long experience in promoting what is so called ecotourism the massive need for eco-management systems are well-recognised (Wade and Eagles, 2003). Not, only that but management is regarded as an ongoing process, that needs continuous updates scientifically and educationally to cope with the high quality standards of the promoted tourism product market.

Most of the previous deco-tourism defined elements can be overcome by targeting and promoting 'deep ecotourism' rather than 'shallow ecotourism'. However, the problem of efficient management is one of the most important practical problems facing the promotion of ecotourism. Management is needed: to ensure minimum environmental impacts, to ensure maximum economic benefits directed to the local communities, and to be able to promote the cognitive and interpretation programmes both to the tourists and the local communities (Bramwell and Lane, 1993; and Orams, 1996). Management can be argued to be the most deficiency of any ecotourism development activity in developing countries. It needs highly qualified well-organised techniques and continuous up-to-date cognitive and interpretation programmes to all who are involved in the managerial team. Knowing such fact, eco-management will always be a sort of questionability for promoting eco-tourism in developing countries, or like Wheeler (1993) we are in our way to promote a deco-tourism product that is no better than the famous mass tourism (Wheeler, 1993).

**Sustainable Eco-Tourism Product**

The ecotourism industry is a multidiscipline industry including a number of key actors comprising ecotourism owners, operators, educators, trainers, researchers, natural resource managers, planners, marketers, and government agencies. All major role players in ecotourism have a stake in its sustainable development. Their present and future are linked together. Given the multitude, and diversity of stakeholders, a completely sustainable outcome, can be urged to be a very hard task to attain.

Through the earlier analysis of ecotourism it was proved to be a highly comprehensive sustainable form of tourism. It can promote sustainable tourism development to environmentally sensitive areas, but only if, right managed (ability to achieve eco-management) and through the ability to target the right tourism market (attract the right eco-tourist sector) that fits the requirements of the eco-destination. Based on the finding of the paper an ecotourism can be said to be integration between sustainable tourism, eco-management, and the tourist typology. An equation was
formulated presenting a practical view for the realm of promoting ecotourism within developing countries. The equation is:

\[ \text{Deep Ecotourism} = \text{Sustainable Tourism} + \text{Eco-Management} + \text{Eco-Tourist} \]

Figure 4, presents a simplified diagram to the proposed vision of sustainable ecotourism product (SETP) in developing countries. The figure expresses the external factors/tools that are expected to have an effective role in the way for the achievement of the required SETP. Among these tools are: the cognitive and interpretation tools affecting the eco-tourist dimension of the process; the education, community visioning, public participation, economic strategies maximising the multiplier effect and minimising the leakage, conservation and planning as effective tools for the sustainability of the promoted ecotourism product. The figure presents a wide vision for the factors that compose and control the ability of promoting a successful SETP in developing countries. The preceding parts of the paper dealt with the important issues of operationalising the term 'ecotourism', however, the question of whether to eco-wise or to sustain-wise within developing countries is still a valid question.

**Eco-wising or Sustain-wising?**

A permanent answer to the question of whether to eco-wise or to sustain-wise, is not a valid one. The answer should vary from a case to another, from a country to another and from a destination to another. To conclude the paper attempts to address the question to the situation of Egyptian coastal tourism development of the Red Sea Region.

**Deficiencies of Egypt Red Sea coastal tourism development**

According to the TDA and the EEAA the government has promoted an intensive tourism development in the Red Sea aiming to accommodate the shearing increase in number of the international tourism arrivals to the country.

This region enjoys one of the world rare and distinctive biological and cultural diversity of the world. Its coral reefs fringing the sea bed is among the most varied and spectacular worldwide accommodating around 13 principal coral communities and a rich fish fauna of about 1,000 species, of which 15% are endemic (TDA, 1999a:11). After more than 20 years of adopting aggressive tourism development strategies for the Red Sea and Sinai, environmental concerns were raised concerning the numerous ecological threats that the region is facing nowadays. Such situation raised the awareness of the TDA for the impacts that ecotourism might have if not
being promoted in a responsible manner (TDA, 1999a). Among the recorded deficiencies of the Red Sea coastal tourism developments are:

- management problems
- contradiction of benefits (host and guests)
- unqualified tourism employees
- imported EIA methods and lists
- newly EMS untested regimes
- high negative environmental impacts
- no public participation or local concerns
- fragile industry, externally controlled
- high leakage, low multiplier
- irreversible depletion of endemic natural and cultural resources

(source: researcher based on analysis of various case studies)

Correlation analysis (Eco V. Sustainable V. Red Sea TD)

To achieve an objective reliable answer to the question of whether to eco-wise or sustain-wise, a correlation analytical study that aims to project and analyse the features of ecotourism and sustainable tourism to that of the tourism development realm in Egypt was conducted. The study aimed to investigate the opinion of selected tourism professionals based on survey selection criteria. The findings of the correlation study aimed to reveal the best practice for applying tourism development in Egypt within the predefined industry objectives, in an objective approach.

The correlation study was based on defining a set of the most effective elements in promoting sustainable ecotourism, based on the findings of the ecotourism features study conducted earlier on this paper. The defined list comprises the following elements: 1) economic benefits; 2) required capital investments; 3) environmental impacts; 4) required environmental context; 5) degree of culture interaction; 6) local communities benefits; 7) market quality required; 8) tourism product quality; 9) management qualifications required. The defined elements were retested as the first part of a limited questionnaire conducted with tourism professionals through direct interviews. The tested elements were then used as the correlation elements upon which respondents (professionals) were asked to define the correlative weights for

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlation Elements</th>
<th>Ecotourism Ecowising</th>
<th>Sustainable tourism sustainwising</th>
<th>Egypt’s current TD conditions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economic Elements</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economical benefits</td>
<td>limited economic benefits</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>high economic benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital investments</td>
<td>limited capital investments</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>high capital investments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Environmental Elements</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental impacts</td>
<td>minimum environmental impacts</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>max acceptable environmental impacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Context</td>
<td>high scenic environmental</td>
<td>-8</td>
<td>med. env. assets req.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Socio-culture Elements</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture interaction</td>
<td>high exp. culture exchange</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>limited cult. Interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local benefits</td>
<td>max marginal benefits</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>med local benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tourist (typology and target market)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market qualities</td>
<td>High marketing qualifications</td>
<td>-8</td>
<td>low/med market qualifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism product quality</td>
<td>very high TP quality</td>
<td>-9</td>
<td>attractive TP quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Management</strong></td>
<td>very high management qualifications</td>
<td>-10</td>
<td>medium acceptable management qualifications</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3, Correlation Study Results
(Source: author based on questionnaires analysis)
each type of tourism on a scale from 1 to 10. The final part of the questionnaire required the professionals to weight Egypt's tourism situation on the same scale. Table 3, presents us with the findings of the questionnaire.

**Figure 5, Correlation Study Results**
(Source: researcher based on questionnaires findings)

Figure 5, reports graphically on the survey findings. As presented some of the correlation elements are positive contributors, while others are negative, i.e. when their values increase that means more difficulties to promote the required type of tourism. Among the negative elements are: the environmental context, marketing qualities, tourism product quality, and management qualifications. Through the interpretation of the findings reported in table 3, and figure 5 final score can be calculated for each type of tourism as presented in figure 6.

**Total score =**
**sum of positive elements +**
**sum of negative elements;**

However, the negative elements have first to be reduced according to the expected level of contribution of the Egyptian tourism (figure, 6) to be left with the real negative impact according to the Egyptian development context.

**Ecotourism**

\[ \text{P.E. (2+7+6+8+4) – N.E. (8+(8-4)+(9-7)+(10-6))} \]
\[ = \text{P.E. (27) – N.E. (18)} \]
\[ = \text{Final Score 9 points} \]

**Sustainable Tourism**

\[ \text{P.E. (9+4+4+5+4) – N.E. (6+(5-4)+(6-7)+(7-6))} \]
\[ = \text{P.E. (26) – N.E. (8) + 1} \]
\[ = \text{Final Score 19 points} \]
That means that sustainable tourism will be expected to achieve as twice as much benefits compared to those achieved through promoting ecotourism. Such result is expected keeping in mind the predefined limitation of the Egyptian tourism industry. A moment of truth concerning the deficiencies of the management regimes and the marketing polices within the Egyptian tourism, confronts us with the truth that it might be better to leave the highly scenic areas of our heritage to the future generation they might have better chances, and to concentrate on promoting sustainable tourism development in areas of less fragility such as the Northwest coastal region of Egypt.

The achieved finding is based on the assumption that the entire correlation elements are of equal importance to the tourism development process. Such a situation would be considered as a limitation for the achieved result, however, according to the 'principles of ecocentrism' based on the 'total field image' all parties should have the same importance (Howard, 1998). Thus giving equal weight to the various parties would be considered as the most logical solution based on the limitation of the paper.

Findings and Conclusions

- Ecotourism is a highly rated sustainable form of tourism. It is an environmentally sensitive tourism development that is applicable for environmentally sensitive remote areas.

- The tourism industry interprets the term in various ways, however, the term that confines the requirement of safeguard the wildlife and local communities, benefits the local communities, drive incentives for conservation and upgrading the tourism destination, raising public awareness and citizens' sense of pride requires the ability to target and promote deep ecotourism rather than shallow ecotourism. Deep ecotourism was defined by the paper as sustainable ecotourism development.

- Sustainable ecotourism product is a win, win situation where all involved parties in the tourism industry are expected to acquire benefits. The ability to promote such tourism development is maintained only through effective management regimes and successful marketing strategies.

- Effective management regimes and successful tourism marketing strategies are among the most recorded deficiencies of the tourism industry in developing countries. Accordingly, the ability of developing countries to promote ecotourism is questioned.

- Ecotourism would allow environmentally highly scenic destination in Egypt to the hazard of being mismanaged or wrongly marketed, thus allowing these unique incomparable endemic nature to be consumed by what so called

![Figure 7, A Sustainable Vision for Tourism Development](Source: Researcher)
ecotourism. According to the research within the Egyptian developing realm, the ability to promote ecotourism is diminished.

- The paper provokes the ability of sustainable tourism development to maintain the objective of the Egyptian tourism industry, by accommodating the targeted 27 million by year 2017, while still maintaining the country heritage and biodiversity. In other words we should 'sustainwise' rather than 'ecowise'. Sustainable tourism development can be implemented in areas with less scenic values such as the North West coastal region of Egypt. Areas that can accommodate the shearing number of tourism while minimising the negative impacts through implementing effective sustainable tourism development. Also, such regions usually have a developed hinterland community that would benefit from such development acting as an economic node for the areas sustainable development process.

- The matter of linking the process of sustainable tourism development to the wider and more important issue of being able to promote sustainable development is a valid and proposed point for future studies.

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The International Ecotourism Society (TIES). Online information at URL: www.ecotourism.org


