

# **Linking Tourism and Conservation in the Arctic: Measures for Local Initiatives, Communities and Local Authorities**

**Borgarnes, Iceland  
6-7 March 2000**

Sponsored by  
WWF Arctic Programme

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## **Workshop Summary**

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**Prepared by**

Lee Langstaff  
RESOLVE, Inc.  
Washington, DC  
USA

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## **Workshop Summary**

### **Introduction**

The sixth annual workshop on Linking Tourism and Conservation in the Arctic was held in Borgarnes, Iceland on March 5-6 2000, sponsored by the WWF International Arctic Programme (WWF-AP). The workshop was attended by Arctic tour operators of varying size and type, as well as government representatives, conservationists, and other interested individuals from ten countries (a list of participants can be found at Appendix A).

The purpose of this workshop was to identify practices in community-based Arctic tourism that ensure the greatest benefits to conservation and communities.

Specific objectives included:

- To report on progress and activities related to the Linking Tourism and Conservation in the Arctic (LTCA) since the last meeting (Husum, March 1999);
- to identify and explore best practices and underlying principles for community-based tourism planning and development in the Arctic that provide the greatest benefits to conservation and communities, and thereby address the goals of LTCA;
- to develop recommendations for the future activities and direction of LTCA, both with respect to community based tourism development and overall; and finally
- to announce the winner of the 1999 Arctic Award for Linking Tourism and Conservation, honoring the best example of a tourism operation linking tourism and conservation.

To accomplish these objectives, the structure of the workshop involved a mix of presentations and discussions, some in small groups. The primary emphasis was on presentations of case studies relevant to development of community-based tourism, and discussions to identify lessons and best practices (see Appendix B for the workshop agenda).

### **Summary**

In opening remarks, WWF Arctic Programme Director Peter Prokosch emphasized that the process of linking tourism and conservation is permanent and ongoing, requiring creative and motivating

opportunities and incentives. He noted that this group has, and should embrace, the opportunity to provide the world with a concrete example of sustainable development. He acknowledged the ongoing commitment and energy of those who have been and continue to be part of the LTCA project, and extended a warm welcome to first-time participants in this effort who bring new perspectives, ideas, and energy to the process. Finally, he briefly reviewed the history of the project leading up to this meeting. A fact sheet outlining this history can be found as Appendix C.

## **I. Update on Progress and Activities Since March 1999 Workshop in Husum, Germany**

In a series of brief presentations participants heard from WWF Arctic Programme and from Working Groups established at the March 1999 meeting. Highlights included the following:

### WWF Arctic Programme – Samantha Smith

- Pursued efforts to establish connections and gain exposure with and among other efforts with similar goals, including:
  - ~ Attended Arctic Council meeting in Anchorage, Alaska in May 1999, and presented the Linking Tourism and Conservation in the Arctic project to the Arctic Council's Sustainable Development Working Group;
  - ~ Gave a presentation about LTCA, chaired a workshop and participated in a panel discussion at a sustainable tourism seminar in June 1999, sponsored by the Northern Forum, a forum for regional governments of the North;
  - ~ Attended annual meeting of International Association of Antarctic Treaty Operators (IAATO) in Hamburg in June 1999, presented LTCA and discussed the possibility of a subgroup within IAATO for high arctic cruise operators;
  - ~ Attended Arctic Council meeting in Washington, D.C. in November 1999, and discussed LTCA and possible links with Lt. Gov. Fran Ulmer of the State of Alaska and Michael Johnson, project leader for Alaska's sustainable tourism project;
  - ~ Chaired Northern Forum meeting on sustainable tourism in the North in February 2000, in Luleå, Sweden.
- Established and administered the Arctic Award for Linking Tourism and Conservation in the Arctic, including development of the first award brochure and its distribution
- Publicized last year's pilot project awards winners on WWF Web site. A top priority for the upcoming year will be to highlight this project – including profiling different participants and good examples – starting with award winners.
- Presented the LTCA project at the Norwegian Travel Fair in January 2000.
- Published the Norwegian translation of the Principles and Codes of Conduct.

Svalbard – Ulf Prytz, Svalbard Polar Travel/Peter Prokosch, WWF Arctic Programme  
Efforts have focused on the campaign for "Svalbard- All One National Park"

### Ship-based Tourism in the High-Arctic – Barbel Kraemer, Hapag-Lloyd

- IAATO members have adopted the Principles and Codes of Conduct for their Arctic operations – most importantly those with small ship operations in the High Arctic. There is some discussion of an organization of small ship operators in the High Arctic, and establishing strong rules for operations in the Arctic as there are for the Antarctic. A

challenge is the fact that there are many more large ships in the Arctic than there are in the Antarctic, so rules limiting the size of ships and numbers of passengers (as there are in the Antarctic) could be more difficult to implement.

- Efforts this past year have focused on having WWF and local guides or experts come on board ships to provide information and real local experience for passengers. This has been well received by passengers. Communities should be encouraged to present projects and visions for linking tourism and conservation to ships passengers – either on-board, or when passengers come ashore into the communities and surrounding areas.

Nunavut - *John Laird, WWF-Nunavut*

Nunavut is in the process of developing tourism as an industry. WWF-Nunavut is trying to work with the organizations in Nunavut to integrate the conservation element into this process.

Iceland - *Arni Finnson, Icelandic Nature Conservation Association*

Efforts have focused on establishing an Icelandic Highlands park and stopping the construction of a proposed hydropower facility.

Greenland - *Elke Meissner*

Efforts in the small village of Rodebay have focused on trying to provide incentives for people to stay in the village and not move to the city – following closure of a factory that provided employment in the village. Also trying to find ways to keep visitors/tourists in the village for more than a few hours so that they can experience the local culture.

Alaska - *Laura Cooper*

Ms. Cooper established contact with the Alaska Wilderness and Recreational Tourism Association (AWRTA), by attending their annual meeting and making a presentation on the LTCA project, and succeeded in identifying participants from Alaska for this meeting in Iceland, thereby involving Alaska for the first time in this effort.

Russia - *Nina Sakharova, Ecological Travels Centre (ETC)*

The ETC has focused its efforts on identifying the most promising areas of potential interest to visitors that are easy to reach, and where it is possible to generate support of local authorities who are interested and willing to work to make positive experiences for visitors.

## **II. Identification of Best Practices for Community-based Arctic Tourism**

Prior to the workshops, case study presentations were solicited from interested individuals. Presenters were asked to describe concrete examples of community based tourism that provides economic and social benefits to the community, and that highlights conservation through awareness-raising, integration of the conservation into the tourism product or tourism planning that minimizes negative environmental impacts. A total of thirteen case studies were described at the workshop. These case studies varied widely with regard to their size and scale (very local and small scale, to regional or national-scale strategies), the extent of their development (planning stages vs. years of experience), and the extent of purposeful integration of conservation values.

The following case studies were presented:

- GRIP's Tourism Destination Project (GReen In Practice) - *Lone Lamark, GRIP (Norwegian Center for Sustainable Development)*
- Developing Sustainable Tourism in the Westfjords: Challenges and Successes - *Dorothee Lubecki, Regional Development Agency, Westfjords, Iceland*
- Eco-tourism in Iceland and Official Policy making - *Ingiveig Gunnarsdottir, Iceland*
- The Vesturlands-project: Icelandic Eco-tourism in a Nutshell - *Ari Trausti Gudmundsson, Iceland*
- Creating Tourism for a Local Community in East Greenland – *Frieda van Essen*
- Local communities and local authorities: How to contact them while planning ecotourism - *Nina Sakharova, Ecological Travels Centre, Moscow*
- Guide training and integrating tourism into community life - *Jann Engstad, Jann's Adventure Lofoten, Norway*
- Challenges in Awareness-raising Experienced in Svalbard Projects - *Ulf Prytz, Svalbard Polar Travel, Norway*
- Using National Parks to Link Heritage Conservation and Heritage Use - *Yuri Mazourov, Russian Heritage Institute, Russia*
- Scoresby Sund (Greenland) and Tourism Development - *Helena Dejak, Nonni Travel*
- Promoting best practices in community-based sustainable tourism: Alaskan initiatives - *Sarah Leonard, Alaska Wilderness Recreation and Tourism Association and Michael Johnson, State of Alaska Department of Trade and Development, United States*
- The Red Prince Nature Project: Helping Communities to Develop Sustainable Tourism - *Ulrich Kreuzenbeck, Modea Marketing/Red Prince Nature, Germany*

Participants and presenters alike were asked to consider the following questions:

- How can communities, local authorities and operators integrate the planning of tourism and conservation?
- How can tourism be planned and executed so as to maximize benefits to communities, local organizations and conservation?
- What general principles should guide communities and local authorities when planning and preparing for tourism, so as to maximize benefits for both conservation and the community?
- What general principles should guide tour operators when planning community-based tourism, so as to maximize benefits for both conservation and the community?
- What are the best ways to collect and distribute information about best practices in community-based tourism?

Results of this session are summarized below.

A. *Suggestions for best practices for planning and development of community-based tourism with conservation benefits*

- Ensure that the community benefits. A basic principle emerged around the fundamental concern that benefits from community-based tourism should accrue by the community, and that they do not all go to tour operators or other service providers from outside the community.
- Development of a plan. Community-based tourism should be planned. A long-term view is critical, and is a reflection of the acknowledgement that decisions made today will shape the community and the environment in 10 or 20 years. A pro-active approach that provides an opportunity for shaping and managing the effects of development is much better than a situation in which the community is reacting to something that is happening to them. It is also far more likely to address the interests of the community and provide the mechanism for integrating conservation benefits from the beginning. The scale of the planning effort should be appropriate to the size of the community and the scale of the anticipated tourism opportunity.
- Involve all key parties in planning process. Regardless of who is initiating the process (i.e. initiated from within the community or by an outside, interested tour operator), the involvement of all key parties was emphasized as critical to successful planning. Key parties include *tour operators*, *community representatives* (government authorities, community members who wish to be involved in tourism, community members who may not wish to be directly involved, but who will be affected as members of the community; including any indigenous sub-communities); and the *conservation community*. An effort should be made to identify who these parties are, and to involve them in the process in a meaningful way. In addition, it was suggested that an effort be made to seek involvement of the scientific community where appropriate.

The involvement of all stakeholders provides an opportunity for mutual education and acknowledgement of shared interests. It creates a solid foundation for taking joint interest in and responsibility for sustainable development. It also builds or strengthens intra-community spirit, and encourages partnerships.

- Transparent and accessible process. The planning process should be open and accessible to interested parties in the community.
- What to include in a plan or planning process. Participants highlighted a number of things that should be included in a plan, or planning process. These include:
  - ~ Develop a profile of the community which includes:
    - Identification of values and assets (especially environmental and cultural) that community wants to market – and to protect in order to have a sustained economic benefit from them
    - Assessment of the “carrying capacity” for tourism that will allow for a balancing of economic and conservation benefits – and therefore the scale of desired tourism activity.
    - Assessment of infrastructure – transportation, accommodations, food, etc. needed to support desired level of tourism – and its effects on the community and environment.

- Description of the type of tourism experience the community wants to offer or be known for
- ~ Match the scale of the tourism to the carrying capacity of the community and environment.
- ~ Match the type of tourist or guest to the tourism experience. Define and describe the type of tourist or guest that is most appropriate to the tourism experience the community wants to offer. Be sure to provide this information to prospective guests and to tour operators, emphasizing the importance of matching the guest to the experience, thereby providing for informed decision-making by the potential guests, and a higher percentage of satisfied and genuinely interested guests.
- ~ Establish criteria for reputable, responsible operators.
- ~ Establish point of contact or tourism organization or network (especially if numerous small operators or providers).
- ~ Identify or train qualified local “guides” with attention to: knowledge of local culture and nature, as well as its natural and cultural history; appropriate technical skills; and appropriate interpersonal skills, attitude towards visitors, and understanding of the desired role of tourism in the community. Provide ongoing continuing educational opportunities for guides.
- ~ Integrate Principles and Codes of Conduct, and the rationale for them, into local educational programs.
- Incorporate LTCA Principles and Codes of Conduct into planning. The Principles and Codes of Conduct developed for tourists and tour operators should be considered and integrated into the plans for community-based tourism development. If these are provided to communities interested in tourism development early in the process, they can provide valuable guides for developing tourism that meets the LTCA goals. The ten principles can be used as a framework for tourism planning.

Some suggested that the term “Principles” or “Helpful Hints” be used instead of Codes of Conduct because “codes” may be perceived (rightly or wrongly) as somewhat threatening or controlling.

- Seek partnerships with protected areas. Where communities are adjacent or near to protected areas such as national parks, developing partnerships with the authorities with responsibility for the protected areas opens up great potentials.
- Tour operators should make an effort to link to local communities. Whenever possible, tour operators should establish local links. This will build support for their activities, provide more genuine local experiences for their clients, and support the community.

B. *Recommendations for next steps for the LCTA with respect to community-based tourism planning and development*

- Develop a checklist for communities to use in planning for tourism development. Most participants at the workshop supported the development of a checklist that communities could use to help them to plan for tourism that will be consistent with the goals of the

LTCA effort. The checklist must integrate the conservation benefits into the planning process, as this is overlooked in most tourism development planning. The checklist would include many of the suggestions listed above. Other sources to draw on in developing such a checklist include a GRIP handbook for Destination Projects which includes some best practices, and considerations for developing a destination profile. Also, the Alaska Division of Tourism has a Web site specifically for communities that outlines a self-evaluation process in the form of a checklist

- Strengthen outreach efforts to get Principles in the hands of Arctic communities. Ensuring that potential tourism destination communities have easy access to the LCTA Principles when they are considering tourism development is something that all participants in the LCTA effort can help with. This can be accomplished through tour operators who are interested in a particular destination community, or through government authorities, or local and regional conservation groups.
- Continue and increase efforts to create and publicize positive incentives and success stories. This can be accomplished through continuing the award program, and by highlighting success stories in public forums like Web sites, brochures, newsletters, at conferences, etc. One specific action could be to ask communities that already have “successful” tourism to review the Principles and to both critique them and to describe how they implement any or all of the principles, including their perspective on the benefits of doing so.
- Highlight the benefits and advantages that can be gained by communities. Develop a simple list of benefits that can be or have been achieved. This can make it easier for communities to see the potential benefits to them, and should also include examples of how communities can market their “good practices”.
- Highlight examples of “bad practices”. Help communities (and others as well) to recognize what they should avoid, and why.
- Seek increased representation and participation of communities in the LCTA project. Encourage development of partnerships between LCTA participants and communities.
- Encourage and facilitate partnerships. LCTA participants may be able to facilitate the forging of partnerships – such as between conservation groups and communities, or protected area managers or authorities and communities, or academic institutions, researchers, and communities or tour operators, etc. LTCA participants may have insights into resources that, if linked in partnerships with communities developing tourism activities, could increase the likelihood that the goals of LTCA would be met.
- Develop educational materials for schools based on the Principles. Incorporating the Principles into children’s educational curricula is a way of promoting long-term commitment to the principles.

### ***III. Future Direction and Activities of the Linking Tourism and Conservation in the Arctic project***



Participants were asked to provide input into helping to define the desired future strategic direction of the Linking Tourism and Conservation in the Arctic collaboration. To accomplish this, each participant was asked to answer the three following questions:

- 1- What are the good things about this project for you?
- 2- What should be the goals of this project (long term and short term)?
- 3- What should the next steps be?

Responses to these questions were quite consistent, and the major themes are summarized below (the comprehensive list of written responses are included in Appendix D – Workshop Notes):

*Question 1 – What are the good things about this project?*

- Provides a valuable forum for interaction. By far the most consistently noted benefit was the very fact of providing the opportunity and forum for interaction among like-minded “players” in Arctic tourism – those interested in conservation of nature and culture, and the sustainability of the tourism opportunities that these represent. The specific benefits of this interaction are many, including:
  - ~ Sharing and learning from each other’s experiences – successes, failures, new ideas and challenges. The cross-fertilization of ideas and collaborative spirit at the workshops, provides information that enables each of us to do more.
  - ~ Building a circumpolar network of support. Encourages and empowers each individual participant or organization to keep trying and to do more by knowing that there a mechanism for gaining access to each other and to the WWF Arctic Programme as resources – throughout the year.
  - ~ Makes us feel like part of a larger process that has the potential for accomplishing significant results on a circumpolar scale.
  - ~ Broad geographical and professional representation enriches and expands the opportunities for creativity and learning
- Good marketing opportunity – making new potential business connections between operators, Arctic destination communities, protected areas, conservation groups – reveals opportunities for mutually beneficial partnerships.
- Mutual recognition of good ideas and good work - by each other and by WWF Arctic Programme is rewarding and - provides a synergy that is motivating and rewarding
- Development of practical tools – like the Principles and Codes of Conduct, and best practices check-list for communities.
- Establishing a voluntary, non-governmental mechanism, through tourism, to address a real Arctic conservation need

- Identification and promotion of good examples of how to achieve combined benefits for tourism and conservation

*Question 2 – What should be the goals of this project?*

Long-term

- Protection and conservation of Arctic wilderness and cultures
- Educating people about the Arctic resources and how their behavior can help to protect them – increasing awareness that conservation can prevail hand-in-hand with an industry that relies on vulnerable environmental and cultural resources.
- Developing tourism as a vehicle for a sustained environmental movement and network for the Arctic conservation efforts
- Ensuring that the majority of those involved in Arctic tourism are aware of and support WWF conservation objectives – demonstrated conformance with Principles and guidelines for sustainable tourism
- Provide clear example of successful sustainable development
- Establish leadership in sustainable tourism - be a respected source of information, expertise, and inspiration on sustainable tourism
- Firm and lasting partnerships that build on common understanding that conservation is a goal for businesses, governments and conservation groups
- Nurture pride as well as economic benefits to local communities – pride in their nature and cultural resources, how they manage and preserve them, and their ability to expand the perspective and understanding of visitors.

Short-term

- Further develop and sustain a process for highlighting and promoting good examples of linking tourism and conservation – Web sites, perhaps a publication, etc.
- Attract more participants in the LTCA effort
- Establish more formal structure and strategic course for the LTCA effort
- Continue to provide a forum for interaction
  - ~ Annual workshops
  - ~ Organize links between Web sites
  - ~ Working groups or discussion groups for specific projects, regions, types of tourism activities, as needed
- Get greater commitment from participants who can to become active in between workshops
- Help identify potentially beneficial partnerships and facilitate their establishment
- Establish connections with other relevant initiatives or forums
- Engage more of the conservation community (not just WWF) – regional, local or international
- Further define the conservation goals and objectives
- Make decision-makers (local, state, national authorities) more aware of the work of LTCA
- Ensure active follow-up from workshops like this one

### *Question 3 – What should the next steps be?*

Responses to the questions of immediate next steps were consistent with the short-term goals above.

- Establish a process for developing a more focused strategy for the future work of the LTCA effort
- Develop a communication plan for disseminating information about the LTCA collaboration, its products, and for highlighting good examples (make better use of WWF and Operators networks to publicize good examples)
- Get more parties involved in the LTCA – widen the network and its influence
- Identify and implement partnership opportunities
- Expand Arctic Programme Web site so that it can become an interactive forum for the LTCA initiative
- Continue annual award programme – and expand its reach to more potential applicants
- Continue with annual workshops
  - ~ Could be expanded to 3 days with one day (or part of day) for working groups to meet, one day for case studies (especially involving new participants), and one day for focusing on products and ongoing business of LTCA efforts
  - ~ Bring in special speakers

## **IV. 1999 Arctic Award for Best Link Between Tourism and Conservation**

The 1999 Arctic Award for Best Link Between Tourism and Conservation was awarded to Arctic Treks of Fairbanks Alaska, operated by Carol Kasza and Jim Campbell. Arctic Treks is a family owned tour operation based in Fairbanks, Alaska that offers rafting, backpacking and hiking expeditions into remote wilderness areas of Alaska's Arctic. The company was selected to receive the 1999 Arctic Award for Linking Tourism and Conservation at the 6th annual workshop in Borgarnes, Iceland on March 6th 2000. The owners, Carol Kasza and Jim Campbell, have exhibited a long-term commitment to the conservation of arctic wilderness in Alaska and have incorporated these beliefs into the tourist experiences they offer.

There were also two strong runners-up for this year's Arctic Award. Jann's Adventure Lofoten AS is based in Lofoten, Norway, and coordinates activities through a network of local contractors. Jann's Adventure Lofoten shared last year's award and deserves recognition for continually seeking ways to integrate conservation into day to day operations. The organisation has shifted its focus towards non-motorised activities like hiking, skiing and kayaking. Those boat contractors that it employs for whale watching and fishing are required to operate four stroke engines and use recyclable catering materials. These tangible examples provide real world examples of how to link tourism goals with conservation. The other runner-up, the Russian Institute for Cultural and Natural Heritage, is based in Moscow and submitted a proposal to have parts of Novaya Zemlya and Frans-Josef Land declared a national park. The report draws from research and analysis done over the past decade relating to field surveys, cartographic materials and foreign and domestic literature. The proposal, presented to the Russian Government, could result in the creation of the first national park in the

Russian Arctic. Apart from a desire for conservation of the region, much value has been placed on the resulting potential for scientific, educational, ecological and sport-based tourism.

Information about all three organizations is available on the WWF Arctic Programme Web site (<http://ngo.grida.no/wwfap/tourism>), as is information about last year's award winners. The Arctic Award will be offered next year as well; announcements are available either through the Arctic Programme office ([arctic@wwf.no](mailto:arctic@wwf.no)) or on the Arctic Programme Web site.

## ***V. Next Steps and Action Items***

In identifying next steps and action items, the following working groups were identified:

### Strategy Development

*(Samantha Smith – lead, Jann Engstad, Ko de Korte, Dorothee Lubecki, Jeanne Pagnan, Ulf Prytz, Freida van Essen)* This group will meet in Oslo to begin the process of developing a strategy document for the LCTA project. There was some support expressed for exploring the possibility of establishing the LTCA as a membership organisation as the strategy is being developed.

### High Arctic Ship-Based Tourism

*(Ko de Korte, Bärbel Krämer, Ulf Prytz, Kathleen Cartwright)* This group will continue to discuss issues of particular relevance to small-ship arctic tourism activities and strategies for implementing the Principles and guidelines

### Svalbard

*(Ko de Korte, Peter Prokosch, Andreas Umbreit, Rasmus Hansson)* Continuation of the work of this group that was established last year.

### Greenland

*(Elke Meissner, Helena Déjak (will recommend another Greenlander))*

### Iceland

*(Dorothee Lubecki, Helena Déjak, Guðni Eiríksson, Arni Finnsson, Hrófuhildur Hannesdóttir)*

### Checklist Development

Support for developing a checklist for communities was strong, but it was agreed it should be addressed in the development of the LCTA strategy. In the near term, however, it was agreed that *Lone Lamark and Ann-Kristin Vinka* would review the draft checklist developed in 1998 by Margaret Williams (WWF AP will provide this document to them), in conjunction with the GRIP materials, and best practices identified at this meeting, as way of beginning to consider development of a checklist that addresses the Principles and Guidelines developed by the LCTA initiative.

### Marketing and Communication Strategy

Specific action on development of a marketing and communication strategy was deferred until the Strategy Development working group has met.

### Follow-up with Alaska Participants

*Peter Prokosch* will meet with Alaska participants when he is in Alaska for Arctic Council meetings to  
a) make a formal presentation of the 1999 Arctic Award for Best Link Between Tourism and

Conservation to Arctic Treks, b) to build relationships and discuss expanded involvement of Alaska representative in the LCTA effort.

2000 Arctic Award for Best Link Between Tourism and Conservation.

WWF Arctic Programme will administer the award program for 2000.

Plan for 2001 Workshop

WWF Arctic Programme will plan for the seventh annual LCTA workshop, and will look into the possibility of holding it in Alaska. There may be a possibility to schedule the meeting to “piggy-back” on the AWRTA meeting in February in Alaska.

## **APPENDICES**

**Appendix A List of Workshop Participants**

**Appendix B Workshop Agenda**

**Appendix C Linking Tourism and Conservation in the Arctic Fact Sheet: Spring 2000**

**Appendix D Workshop Notes**