

## DCMS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY: SECTORS

### TOURISM

**Tourism is the fastest growing sector in the world economy**

**Tourism has a significant input to the economic strand of sustainable development; tourism in rural England alone supports 380,000 jobs and underpins 25,000 small and micro businesses.**

**Sustainable tourism is about adopting a long-term perspective on quality, competitiveness, impacts on the environment and local distinctiveness.**

Tourism must be managed wisely for a sustainable future. This means giving due consideration to tourism's environmental and social impact, while appreciating the economic benefits it brings.

Responsibility for sustainable tourism policy passed to DCMS from the former English Tourism Council in April 2003. DCMS encourages decision-making bodies to balance the long-term needs of residents, visitors, tourism businesses, and the environment.

Also in April 2003 the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) gained strategic responsibility for tourism in their regions. A key task for RDAs is to develop and implement new Regional Sustainable Tourism Strategies. DCMS also requires RDAs to mainstream tourism into sustainable economic growth, to link tourism with transport strategy, and to maximise tourism's sustainable growth.

**The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) has been running the Beacon Councils scheme for 5 years. Each year councils apply against one of ten themes. DCMS succeeded in getting "Promoting Sustainable Tourism" agreed as a theme for 2003-04. It has proved popular, with applications from 25 local authorities. Winners will be announced in April 2004. The scheme is an effective way of promoting sustainable tourism to local government.**

### CURRENT POSITION

1. The Government published its tourism strategy in 1999. *Tomorrow's Tourism* noted that tourism depends on the fabric of environment, heritage, culture, landscape and local communities.
2. Until April 2003 DCMS sponsored two tourism bodies, the English Tourism Council (ETC) and British Tourist Authority (BTA).
3. The English Tourism Council:
  - Published "Time for Action", a strategy for sustainable tourism.
  - Produced "Tourism and Transport", a report on improving transport access to destinations, with minimal impact.
  - Developed a set of national sustainable tourism statistical indicators.
  - Maintained a sustainable tourism website.

- Produced the "Green Audit Kit" jointly with the Countryside Agency.
- Published a rural tourism strategy jointly with the Countryside Agency, which recognised the importance of a high quality, distinctive rural environment.

4. The British Tourist Authority:

- Produced *Sustainable Tourists*, a strategy for the sustainable growth of inbound tourism to Britain.
- Had strategic aims to increase the seasonal and regional spread of tourism, and to increase public transport usage by international visitors.

5. VisitBritain was launched in April 2003 by combining the roles of ETC and BTA. In order to maintain VisitBritain's focus on marketing several policy areas transferred to DCMS, including sustainable tourism.

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT VISION

6. DCMS's sustainable tourism vision is for an effective balance between the long-term needs of residents, visitors, tourism businesses and the environment. DCMS wants to see:
  - Residents and local authorities benefiting from tourism income.
  - Residents appreciating the improved retailing, catering and leisure facilities that tourism brings.
  - Visitors having access to good quality information, accommodation, local food, attractions, and varied transport options.
  - Visitors being keen to return and to recommend destinations to others.
  - Owners of tourism businesses and their employees satisfied with their quality of life.
  - The built and natural environment getting better as a result of tourism and tourism development.
  - Tourism recognised as a positive force for conserving and improving our great cities, landscapes and attractions.

## FUTURE ACTION

7. DCMS will achieve its sustainable tourism vision by:
  - Monitoring how effectively Regional Development Agencies take up their new sustainable tourism responsibilities.
  - Deriving maximum benefit from the Beacon Councils scheme, especially from those councils who successfully apply in 2003-04 under the theme "Promoting Sustainable Tourism".
  - Targeting VisitBritain with spreading the regional and seasonal benefits of tourism.
  - Working with Government departments and associated bodies responsible for the infrastructure on which tourism depends – towns and cities, transport, cultural heritage, the countryside and the coast.
  - Persuading the industry to adopt a long-term perspective on product quality, customer service, competitiveness, environmental impact, and distinctiveness.