

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW, ORIENTATION AND DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

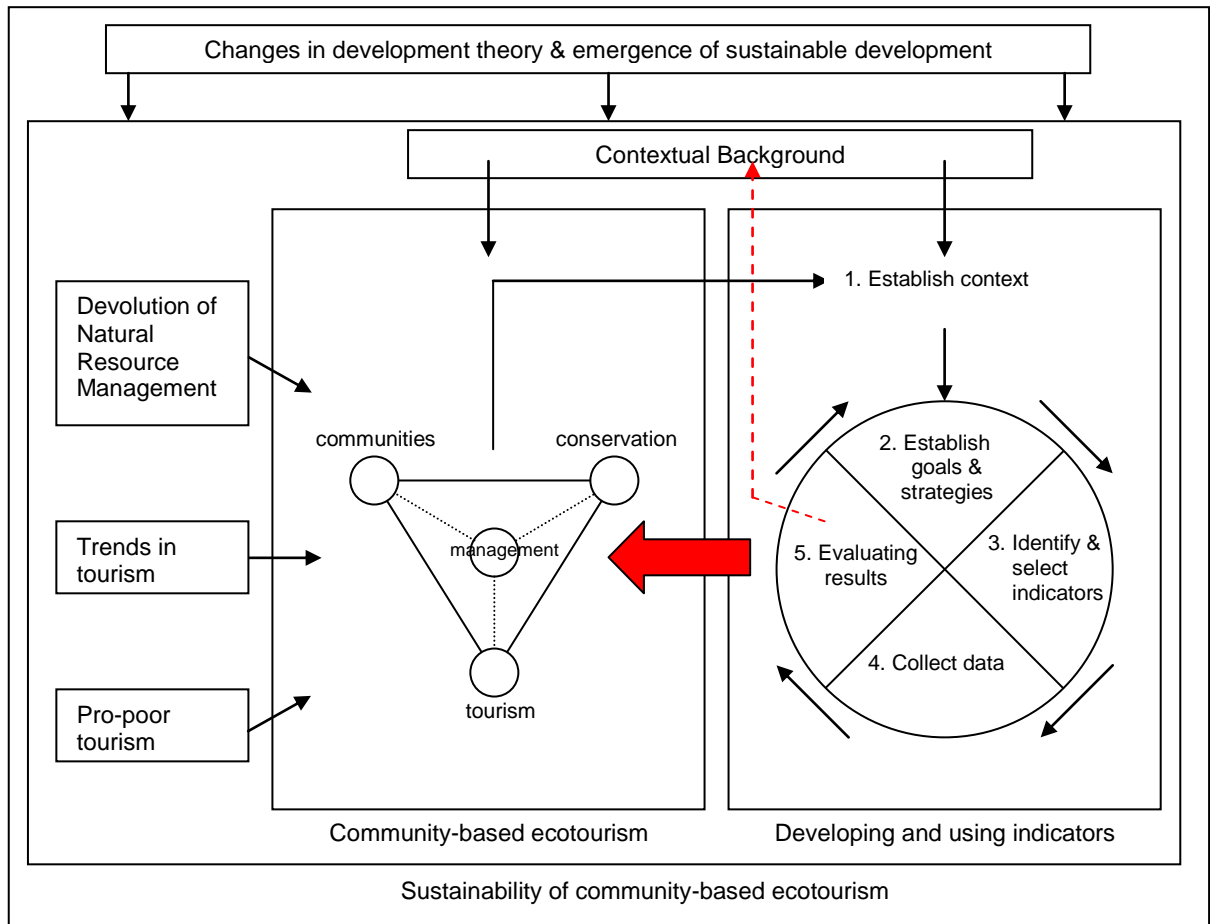
*“The adoption of the principles of sustainable development to tourism has been rapid and widespread, although implementation of the practice has been much more limited.”*  
*Butler (1998, p. 27)*

#### 2.1 Introduction: Conceptualizing the sustainability of community-based ecotourism

The purpose of this chapter is to review the relevant literature relating to the focus of the field of study, the sustainability of community-based ecotourism (CBE). The various impetuses and the conceptualization of the study are discussed in this section. The definitions, and a detailed discussion of these, follow from section 2.2 onwards.

This research is about the sustainability of community based ecotourism. Community-based ecotourism is a specific type of ecotourism in which the community has much greater decision-making responsibilities and significant benefits accrue to the community members. Specifically, the research is focused on the contribution of an evaluation framework to aid the assessment of CBE ventures. The research focus has emerged from three strong current trends. The first impetus for the investigation of the sustainability of community-based ecotourism is provided by development theories and in particular the emergence of the new paradigm in development theories: sustainable development. The second impetus is found in the devolution of natural resource management responsibilities which has led to the emergence of community-based natural resource management (CBNRM). CBNRM has resulted in communities receiving management responsibilities and rights to benefit both directly and indirectly from the natural resources. Community-based ecotourism provides valuable opportunities for communities to benefit significantly through tourism. The third impetus for the investigation relates to the worldwide increase in tourism arrivals and receipts which has sparked a significant increase in tourism in Africa and southern Africa alike. As tourists become more aware of the impact of their activities they demand more sustainable tourism products. The important role that tourism ventures may play in poverty alleviation has led to the emergence of pro-poor tourism, the fourth impetus. Community-based ecotourism ventures have been earmarked for the significant role they may play in terms of poverty alleviation.

Figure 2.1 provides the conceptual framework indicating how the theoretical aspects of the literature review are related. The aspects mentioned that provide impetus for the research of the sustainability of CBE and the resultant development of indicators are discussed in detail in the paragraphs that follow.



**Figure 2.1:** Conceptual framework of the literature review

The emergence of sustainable development has had a profound influence on the way people now perceive themselves as an integrated part of the environment: people are increasingly aware that their activities have a significant impact on the environment. In an attempt to minimize these impacts, sustainable development has called for the measurement and mitigation of these impacts and the use of indicators as a means of measuring the impacts has been recommended. All human activities, including our travel and tourism decisions, are now being investigated and carefully considered for their impacts on the environment.

Community-based ecotourism – a very specific form of ecotourism – has come forward as a valuable tool for poverty alleviation, biodiversity conservation and the delivery of responsible and sustainable tourism offerings. Ecotourism is a form of tourism where the needs of the tourist, the community and the conservation of the environment are mutually interdependent. This mutual interdependence is facilitated through the management of the ecotourism venture. Within a southern African context a large number of CBE ventures have emerged as a result of the devolution of natural resource management responsibilities to communities. Together with this, communities also receive the right to utilize the natural resources for the alleviation of poverty and the generation of income for rural communities. Ecotourism provides an excellent opportunity for these communities to benefit from natural resources. Ecotourism ventures

managed by communities for the benefit of communities are called community-based ecotourism ventures. The tourist offerings of CBE ventures have to be considered within the larger context of global and African tourism trends. The rapid rate at which international tourist arrivals and receipts to Africa, and more particularly southern Africa, have increased, have created very favourable circumstances for CBE ventures to capitalize on. The international demand for sustainable nature-based tourism products also creates an important niche market that CBE ventures can now fill. However, it is fundamental that these CBE ventures take place in a sustainable way in order to ensure their longevity.

In an attempt to improve the sustainability of CBE ventures a measuring tool is needed to establish their present sustainability. Sustainable tourism indicators have been identified as such a tool. The implementation and measurement of sustainability using indicators takes place within a specific contextual social, political, policy, climatic and infrastructural background over which the CBE ventures have no control. The development and use of sustainable tourism indicators through a cyclic adaptive learning approach provides for stakeholder engagement and continuous improvement. The resultant sustainability after the implementation of the sustainable tourism indicators provides important feedback for the management of CBE. The feedback needs to be carefully considered by the management of the CBE venture so that appropriate actions may be implemented to improve their sustainability performance. Through the communication of the results of the sustainability investigation and the associated actions taken for the improvement of the sustainability, community members become involved and empowered. Sometimes the results of the sustainability investigations may even result in changes in the contextual background. An example of this would be that governments bring about changes in policy as a result of the favourable results being achieved through sustainability investigations. The development and implementation of sustainable tourism indicators through stakeholder engagement and involvement within rural areas is a very expensive and time-consuming process. An alternative time- and cost-efficient approach is needed for investigating the sustainability of CBE ventures within rural settings. This study aims to develop a framework for monitoring the sustainability of CBE in southern Africa.

The sections that follow provide a more in-depth description and explanation of the components identified in the conceptual framework.

## **2.2 Changes in development theories and the emergence of sustainable development**

Community-based ecotourism (CBE) is being embraced as a potential economic saviour for many rural communities. CBE promises rural development through the provision of jobs, new business opportunities and skills development as well as the opportunity to secure greater control over natural resource utilization (Ashley & Roe, 1997). Massyn (2007) points out that

"[t]ourism enterprises based on Africa's natural attractions are today widely regarded as important drivers of development, particularly in remote areas with rich resource endowments but few other formal economic opportunities". In order to comprehend this growing interest in CBE it is important to provide a brief explanation of the evolution of development theories. Recent advances in development thinking provide a stimulus for this heightened interest in CBE and the sustainability thereof, as indicated by the World Bank (2001, p. 267):

At the start of a new century, poverty remains a global problem of huge proportions. Of the world's 6 billion people, 2.8 billion live on less than \$2 a day and 1.2 billion on less than \$1 a day. Eight of every 100 infants do not live to see their fifth birthday. Nine of every 100 boys and 14 of every 100 girls who reach school age do not attend school. Poverty is also evident in poor people's lack of political power and voice and in their extreme vulnerability to ill health, economic dislocation, personal violence and natural disasters. And the scourge of HIV/AIDS, the frequency and brutality of civil conflicts and rising disparities between rich countries and the developing world have increased the sense of deprivation and injustice for many.

The sentiments expressed above suggest not only that development and inequality are global phenomenon but also that development interventions taken since World War II have failed to deliver broad-based development in many developing countries. Instead there has been a deepening inequality both between and within countries (Haynes, 2005, Dwivedi *et al.*, 2007). The assumption that developing countries would inevitably become developed over time has been totally disproved.

It is commonly agreed that the starting point of 'development', as it has become known, is the inaugural speech of President Truman on 20 January 1949. Although this was a turning point in modern development thought, it should be remembered that development is in fact much older than this. Truman's speech for the first time created an economic division between developed and developing countries (Morse, 2004; Mowforth & Munt, 2009). After World War II development theory became a prominent new sub-discipline of political science. During this period many developing countries were emerging from colonial rule. These countries had to grapple with pressing economic and human development problems and still do today.

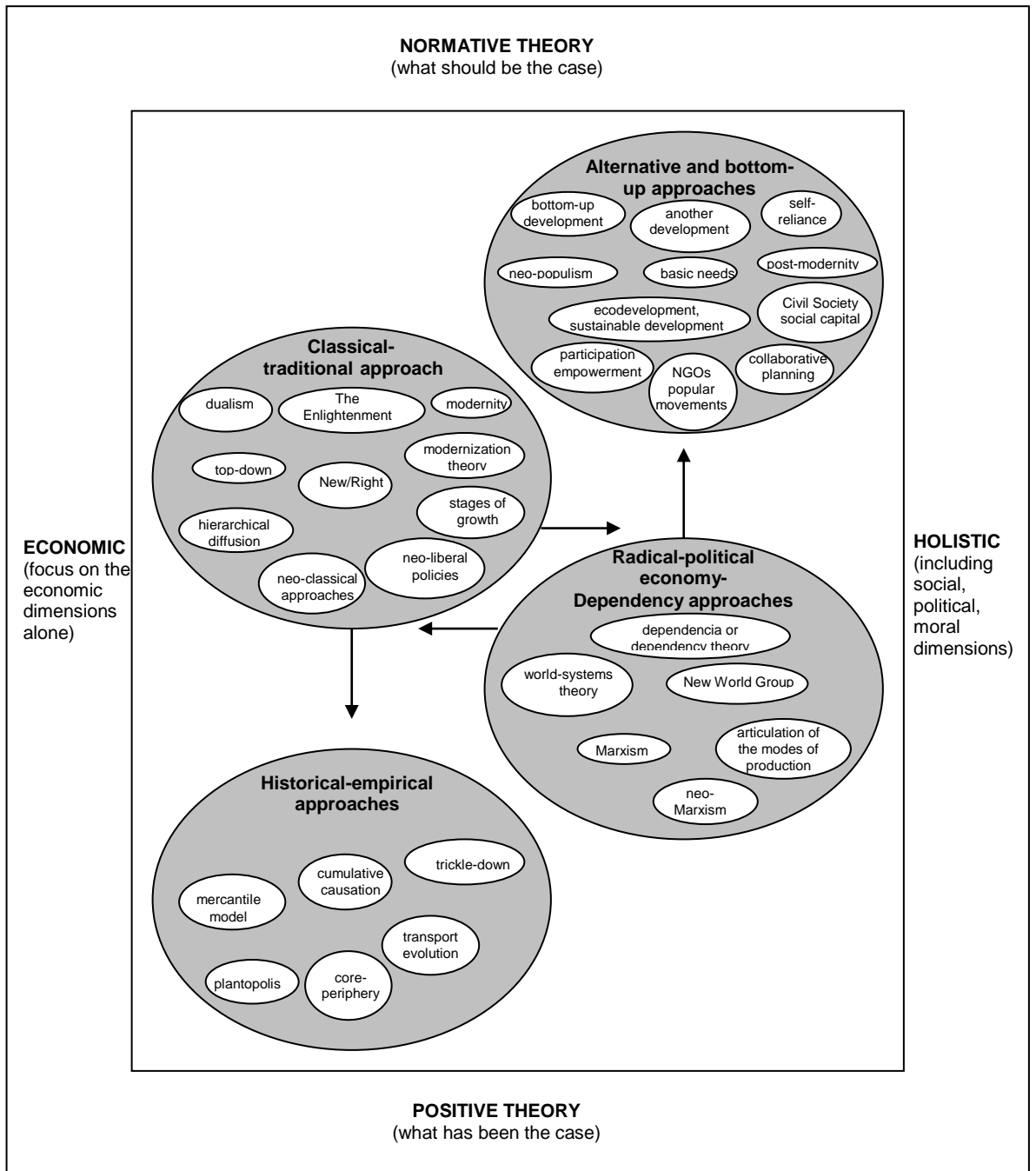
Development implies growth and expansion and, as Weaver (1998, p. 34) states, it "implies progression toward some kind of desirable outcome". During the industrial revolution development was strongly connected to increased speed, volume and size. Frank and Smith (1999), however, indicate that the concept of growth in terms of development is being questioned and that there is a general realization that 'more' is not always better, since it generally results in a lowering of levels of consumerism. According to Frank and Smith (1999) the term 'development', therefore, may not always mean growth and expansion, but it will always imply change. Stewart (1997, p. 1) states that "development may be defined as positive social, economic and political change in a country or community ... [D]evelopment is concerned with positive change in existing human societies, and the success of development efforts is measured by the results seen in society." The question arises: What is actually meant by

'positive change'? Stewart (1997) answers this question by saying that positive change is a process that occurs through a consultative and democratic process, whereby people identify and act on what they perceive as good within their particular context, while being aware of their particular constraints and opportunities. Development should be seen as "releasing the community of the poor from the poverty trap so that they can take responsibility for their own destiny" (Swanepoel & De Beer, 1997, p. xiii). Since development should lead to an improvement in the economic and spiritual welfare of the individual or community involved, it should lead to the eradication of poverty.

Potter *et al.* (2004, p. 81) regard development theories as "sets of apparently logical propositions, which purport to explain how development has occurred in the past, and/or should occur in the future". Development theories may be normative or positive, normative referring to what should be the case in an ideal world, while positive referring to what has actually been the case. The distinction between the different development theories is illustrated in Figure 2.2. Each of the major groupings of development theory will be discussed briefly in the section that follows, and the recent development of the alternative and bottom-up approach, which provides a theoretical backdrop for this study, will be discussed thereafter.

The advances in development thinking have not gone through a strict sequential temporal process, but have rather tended to stack up over time, allowing different theories to coexist. Older theories have thus not been discarded and replaced with new ones. Potter and Lloyd-Evans (1998) have proposed four major approaches to development theory: (1) the classical-traditional approach, (2) the historical-empirical approach, (3) the radical-political economy-dependency approach, and (4) the alternative and bottom-up approach, as described below.

- **The classical-traditional approach** originates from classical and neo-classical economics and has generally dominated policy thinking at the global scale. Economic development is seen as the core element in development thinking.
- **The historical-empirical approach** seeks to generalize about development through empirical and real-world observation over time. This approach gives rise to descriptive-positive models of development. It deals primarily with the colonial and pre-independence periods, also providing grounded theory discussions of development in the context of historical realities in developing countries. However, it still provides insight into contemporary patterns and processes of development.
- **The radical-political economy-dependency approach**, also referred to as the indigenization of development thinking, produces ideas that relate to the conditions that are encountered in the Third World, rather than ideas emanating from Europe.



**Figure 2.2:** Development theories (Potter *et al.*, 2004, p. 83)

- **The alternative and bottom-up approach** results from the need for self-reliance to be seen as central to the development process. Emphasis is also placed on internal rather than external forces of change. The meeting of basic needs, while developing in an ecologically sensitive way, and the advancement of public participation, are the central driving forces of this approach. Since the mid-1970s there has been growing criticism of top-down approaches to development and the fact that development does not only refer to economic development but encompasses a broad range of issues. In 1975 a major new paradigm came to the fore in which a stronger emphasis was placed on rural-based strategies for development. This approach is commonly referred to as

'development from below'. This involves meeting basic needs through becoming more self-sufficient and self-reliant, often done through the mobilization of indigenous natural and human resources. The last advance in this theory has been the emergence of environmental consciousness and the concept of sustainable development. The fundamental component of this approach is that developing countries no longer have to look to developed countries for a blueprint on which to base their development. Developing countries should look towards their own ecology and culture to seek solutions for their own development (Potter *et al.*, 2004).

Brohman (1996) summarizes six main common elements of alternative development strategies:

- a move towards direct redistributive mechanisms, specifically targeting the poor
- a focus on local small-scale projects often linked to community-based development programmes
- an emphasis on basic needs and human resource development
- a refocusing away from growth-oriented definitions of development, towards more broadly based human-oriented frameworks
- a concern for local and community participation in the design and implementation of projects
- an emphasis on self-reliance, reducing outside dependency and promoting sustainability

Modernization and dependency theory, which came to the fore in the 1970s, did not deliver the expected development results, and this, together with the rise in environmentalism, led to the consensus that a new approach to development was needed. Since the 1990s sustainable development has become increasingly prominent as a dominant development approach, leading to the demise of other development approaches (Woodhouse & Chimhowu, 2005). With the emergence of sustainable development the pursuit of economic growth is no longer the only core value of development strategies (Dwivedi *et al.*, 2007).

Sustainable development originated from the modern-day environmental movement whose origins stem in part from 19<sup>th</sup>-century Europe where the traditional approach that humans have dominion over nature was replaced with a 'preservation ethic' (Hall & Lew, 1998). Influential publications in the 1960s and 70s such as Carson's (1962) *Silent Spring*, Hardin's (1968) *The Tragedy of Commons* and Schumacher's (1973) *Small is Beautiful*, made the world aware of the detrimental effects that human activities were having on the environment. Through the work of international organizations such as the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) humans started to be understood as part of nature and not separate from it. These organizations started to take steps to embrace social and environmental issues and to group them under one umbrella. This paved

the way for the integration of social and environmental concerns that are critical for sustainable development.

During the post-World War II period, and up to the 1970s, development policies had an almost exclusive economic focus. Development policies of the time were based on the idea that humans could overcome poverty through economic development, which would lead to an eventual trickle-down effect to the poorest people in society. Large-scale industrialization and agricultural development projects were often not suited to the environment and the culture of the countries where they were imposed. Development initiatives often left developing countries with debt, thus widening the gap between the rich and the poor, and a seriously degraded environment rather than an improvement in quality of life (Woodhouse & Chimhowu, 2005).

The failure of economic development theories and the associated environmental degradation, together with the growth in the environmental movement, laid the foundations for the emergence of sustainable development. In 1972 the United Nations (UN) conference on the Human Environment was held in Stockholm. This was the first time global environmental issues were discussed in a systematic and comprehensive manner. At this meeting, representatives of developing nations made it clear that environmental issues would not be part of their agenda until active steps were taken to alleviate poverty and bring about greater equity in trade relations, effectively linking environmental degradation and poverty alleviation (Miller & Twining-Ward 2005; Dwivedi *et al.*, 2007). Although the Stockholm Conference was of limited scope it started a new wave of environmentally conscious international conventions and treaties such as the 1973 International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships and the 1980 Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources. The UN General Assembly adopted the recommendations of the Stockholm Conference and established the UN Environmental Programme (UNEP) to serve as an environmental monitoring agency (Dwivedi *et al.*, 2007). Several years later the Stockholm Conference also led to the establishment of the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED).

Sustainable development was first popularized by the Brundtland Commission Report of the WCED entitled 'Our Common Future' (WCED, 1987), in which the integration of economic and environmental issues was highlighted. The report made statements that warranted serious attention, such as "Failure to manage the environment and to sustain development threatens to overwhelm all countries. Environment and development are not separate challenges, they are linked. Development cannot subsist upon a deteriorating environmental resource base" (WCED, 1987, p. 37). The Brundtland Report (WCED, 1987, p. 43) defines sustainable development as

**development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.**



Five years after the Brundtland Report, the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) took place in Rio de Janeiro and popularly became known as the 'Rio Earth Summit'. According to Woodhouse and Chimhowu (2005) this event may be seen as the high point of the environmental movement worldwide. In the 20 years between the Stockholm Conference and the Earth Summit, the world had changed significantly. The cold war had ended, the Soviet Union had broken apart, globalization was rapidly expanding, scientific advances had emerged at an accelerated rate, the Internet had emerged and many environmental disasters had taken place, spilling over national borders, proving that national borders have become meaningless with respect to environmental issues (Khator, 1995; Dwivedi *et al.*, 2007). The Rio Earth Summit also had a much higher level attendance: while the Stockholm Conference was attended by two heads of state, 134 NGOs and a handful of journalists, the Earth Summit was attended by 166 heads of state, 7 892 NGOs and over 8 000 journalists. The Earth Summit emphasized that environmental protection could no longer be seen as a luxury but as a necessity alongside economic and social issues. The Rio Earth Summit also succeeded in putting together five documents, one of which was Agenda 21, which outlines the basis for implementing sustainable development at local, national and international level into the twenty first century (UN, 1993). The Earth Summit also led to the creation of a new UN Agency, the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (UNCSD), which was tasked with collecting data on the environment and development and monitoring progress towards the goals of Agenda 21.

Despite the apparent success at Rio, the UNCSD reported to the follow-up meeting (Earth Summit+5) that very little progress had been achieved and that things were still moving in the wrong direction (UNCSD, 1997). The meeting called for improved international co-operation and stronger political will. Three years later, in 2000, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were signed by all 191 UN Member States. The MDGs listed eight goals that are to be achieved by 2015:

- Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger;
- Achieve universal primary education;
- Promote gender equality and empower women;
- Reduce child mortality;
- Improve maternal health;
- Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases;
- Ensure environmental sustainability; and
- Develop a global partnership for development.

The emphasis of the MDGs on poverty and human development rather than on the environment illustrates a shift in focus from Stockholm and Rio. The World Summit of Sustainable Development (Rio+10) in Johannesburg in 2002 continued this trend, building on the Agenda 21 and the MDGs. The main areas addressed in the Rio+10 Plan of implementation were poverty, production and consumption, protecting and managing the natural resource base, sustainable development in a globalizing world, health, and the means and framework for implementation.

Like the MDGs, the Rio+10 Plan of implementation was outcomes-based and placed an emphasis on establishing partnerships, networks and implementing change through clear goals, targets and indicators. The use of indicators as a means of gauging progress towards the attainment of sustainable development has gained momentum over the last 20 years (Bell & Morse, 1999, 2003; Morse, 2004). The Rio+10 Conference achieved general agreement that three main pillars of sustainability exist, namely environmental protection, social development and economic wellbeing. Through the all-encompassing nature of sustainable development (multi-disciplinary, multi-scale, multi-perspective) it has perhaps become the culmination of all development theories (Morse, 2004). Development theory would never be the same again.

Miller and Twining-Ward (2005) highlight four important lessons from the emergence of the concept of sustainable development. First, sustainable development is not a social, economic and environmental problem but a combination of all three and, as a result, requires interdisciplinary modes of enquiry. Second, complex systems such as those involved in sustainable development are inherently unpredictable and therefore require approaches based on non-linear science. Third, because of the evolutionary nature of sustainable development, policies and actions need to be continually modified and adapted to evolving conditions. Fourthly, in order to reduce the vulnerability of the Earth system to abrupt change, monitoring is required from local to global scales, enhancing systems knowledge and extending human foresight.

The emergence of sustainable development has promoted the sustainable development of tourism. Agenda 21, together with the seventh session of the UNCSD in 1999, promoted a wider focus on the sustainable development of tourism to include economic and social aspects. The development of the alternative approaches to development theory not only resulted in the emergence of sustainable development but also in a move towards the devolution of responsibility and the increased focus on the community. This is corroborated by Murphy (1985), who advocates greater community involvement in tourism. To further explain and understand CBE it is important to understand that CBE is both a type of community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) and a specific type of ecotourism (Kiss, 2004). CBNRM needs to be investigated further so as to sketch the background and theoretical context of studying the sustainability of CBE in southern Africa.

### **2.3 Community-based natural resource management and common property theory**

Governments' inability to successfully and efficiently protect and manage natural resources outside protected areas has led to the devolution of resource management rights and responsibilities back to communities (Woodhouse & Chimhowu, 2005). Over the last two decades various southern and east African countries have begun transferring rights to

resources back to communities through programmes called Community-based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM). CBNRM encourages community participation and the decentralization of benefits of wildlife use, increases local benefits and further stimulates communities' interest in resource conservation. In many cases this has led to promising results with rural communities gaining rights over land and the associated resources (Massyn, 2007; Sebele, 2010). Once communities fully participate and derive benefits, they develop a sense of ownership over resources and will use their resources sustainably as a result (Mbaiwa, 2007). According to the Government of Botswana (2000 in Sebele 2010, p. 138), "CBNRM is a development approach that supports natural resource conservation and the alleviation of poverty through community empowerment and the management of resources for long-term social, economic and ecological benefits." Although CBNRM was originally conceived as an alternative conservation approach the rural development side has become more prominent.

CBNRM owes its roots to the southern African region where there was a realization amongst natural resource managers that people living within or in close proximity to protected areas would only conserve and use their resources in a sustainable manner when they could derive benefits from them (Swatuk, 2005). Originally conceived around wildlife use, CBNRM quickly diversified into other resources such as veld products, rangelands, coastal and marine resources, resource conservation, craft production, the sustainable use of resources and community-based tourism (Sebele, 2010). Arntzen *et al.* (2003 in Sebele, 2010) define CBNRM as entailing projects and activities "where a community (one village or a group of villages) organize themselves in such a way that they derive benefits from the utilization of local natural resources and are actively involved in their use and conservation. Often (but not always), communities will receive exclusive rights and responsibilities from government". CBNRM has come about as a result of a shift from a preservationist conservation paradigm to a more integrated approach that recognizes the need for the empowerment of communities by linking their economic and social development to natural resource management (Mbaiwa, 2004).

CBNRM is, in various forms, an established policy goal of rural development, especially in Africa. It is also a simple and attractive one – that communities, defined by their tight spatial boundaries of jurisdiction and responsibilities, by their distinct and integrated social structure and common interests, can manage their natural resources in an efficient, equitable, and sustainable way. The natural resources in question are usually, though not exclusively, common pool resources. Common pool resources (CPR) include natural and human-constructed resources in which i) exclusion of beneficiaries through physical and institutional means is especially costly and ii) exploitation by one user reduces resource availability to others (Ostrom, Gardner & Walker, 1994). In southern Africa these are typically forests, open woodland or grasslands for livestock grazing, wood supply, medicines, and famine foods; farm land for gleanings, grazing after harvest, and crop residues; wildlife for game meat and safari incomes; fish in fresh-water lakes; and aquifers, tanks, and irrigation channels for domestic and livestock

water supply and irrigation (Adams, 2004; Blaike, 2006). Before investigating CBNRM further, the key concept of community needs to be explored.

The concept 'community' is core to investigating both CBE and CBNRM in this study. Through consulting a number of sources (Welsh & Butorin, 1990; Andercrombie, Hill & Turner, 1995; Pearsall, 1998; Frank & Smith, 1999; Naguran, 1999; Denman, 2001; Mann & Ibrahim, 2002), two important aspects providing meaning for a 'community' were discerned. First, a community is a group of people living together in a particular geographical area or a specific place. Members of a specific geographical area, for example, are the citizens of a specific country, the inhabitants of a city, or members of a tribal area. Second, a community may be a grouping of people having particular characteristics in common, such as religion, race, profession, interest or attitude. Examples of these may be the Catholic community, the Chinese community, the scientific community, the Southern African Development Community (SADC), a local joint land management or ownership association, or a non-government organization (NGO) such as the Kalahari Conservation Society (KCS) or the Namibian Community Based Tourism Association (NACOBTA). To summarize, it can be said that a community has to be united by at least one of the abovementioned aspects defining a community, namely geographical location or common characteristics and interests ('communities of interest') and acting and making decisions collectively.

For the purposes of this study a community is defined as

**a group of people from either a specific geographical area or a group of people sharing common characteristics or interests, or both, and who take collective action and make collective decisions.**

How the community is defined will depend on the social and institutional structures in the area concerned, but the definition implies some kind of collective or common responsibility and approval by representative bodies. In many places, particularly those inhabited by indigenous peoples, there are collective rights over land and resources (Denman, 2001). CBE and CBNRM should therefore foster sustainable use and collective responsibility.

The collective management of common property resources always leads to the debate around the 'Tragedy of the Commons', where Hardin (1968) argues that common ownership of a resource cannot succeed, as individuals take advantage of the situation for personal gain, leading to the degradation and over-utilization of the common property resource. In a different opinion on common property, Bromley and Cernea (1989) indicate that common property regimes are not a free-for-all, as perceived by some, but are actually structured ownership arrangements within which management rules are maintained, generally through traditional authorities. Any resource degradation that does occur on the common property should therefore be seen as a breakdown of the managing institutional arrangements governing the common property. The undermining of the traditional authorities as a result of colonization and

nationalization have in many common property regimes been converted to open access regimes which have in fact resulted in the 'Tragedy of the Commons' or, more appropriately, the 'Tragedy of Open Access' (Johnson, 2009). Property may be owned in one of four ways: by the public/state; by an individual; by a group; or through open access. Within open access there are no enforced property rights, while the other three ownership types all own the resource rights and may exclude other users (Ostrom *et al.*, 1999; Johnson, 2009).

Due to the failure of the state to manage the sustainability of natural resources, together with the recent emphasis on alternative and bottom-up development approaches, new approaches to the management of non-privately owned resources have emerged. These new approaches to natural resource management have largely involved the devolution of power from the state to local communities. This may be labelled as co-management or CBNRM. Co-management involves the co-operative management between communities and the state. CBNRM enables the community to manage the resources on which they depend. These two approaches represent a significant shift in natural resource management (Jones & Carswell, 2004). Of particular importance in terms of this study is CBNRM where the community has substantial control over the management of resources. CBNRM has embraced the theory and principles of Common Property Theory (Boggs, 2000).

In recent times there has been a growing promotion of local resource management. Common Property Theory (CPT) has been central to this shift. CPT argues for the success of commonly owned resources and identifies several broad criteria crucial for success in commonly managed natural resources. These include autonomy and the recognition of the community as an institution, with land tenure rights, rights to make rules regarding resource use and the means to implement and enforce these rules so that the result may lead to increased benefits for the community involved (Ostrom, 1990; Bromley, 1992).

Ostrom (1990, cited by Fabricius, Koch and Magome, 2001, p. 17) documented these widely accepted principles for establishing lasting common property institutions:

- **Clearly defined boundaries:** Individuals or households who have the right to use resources must be clearly defined, as must the boundaries of the resource itself.
- **Rules governing use or provision of the resource:** Rules for using the resource or providing it to resource users, such as restricting time, place, technology and how much can be used, must be appropriate to the resource itself, including availability.
- **Collective-choice arrangements:** Most individuals affected by the operational rules can participate in changing the rules.
- **Monitoring:** Monitors of the rules and the use of the resource are either resource users themselves or accountable to the users.
- **Graduated sanctions:** Resource users who break the rules are likely to face various degrees of punishment, depending on the seriousness of the context of the offence.

Punishments are decided by the other resource users, by officials accountable to them, or by both.

- **Conflict resolution mechanisms:** Resource users and their officials have rapid access to low-cost local mechanisms to resolve conflicts among users or between users and officials.
- **Recognition of legitimacy:** State supports, or at least does not challenge, the rights of the resource users to devise their own institutions.
- **Nested enterprises (for common property resources that are part of larger systems):** Resource use or provision, monitoring, enforcement, conflict resolution and governance activities are organized in multiple layers of nested institutions, where rights and responsibilities are clearly defined.

These rules are valuable and have been used to promote common property associations in southern Africa (Jones, 1999). Fabricius *et al.* (2001, p. 17) state that “more rigorous social analysis of the processes of political and economic change at the country level, and the specific social, political and biological conditions at the local level, is required, rather than adopting sets of rules in a blueprint fashion”.

Another set of important guiding principles for CBNRM are suggested by Van der Jagt and Rozemeijer (2002), the National CBNRM Forum (2005) and Thakadu (2005). The guiding principles when followed will provide greater chances of success in CBNRM.

**1. Decision-making authority must be at community level:** CBNRM is about a community’s utilization of natural resources. This utilization is likely to be done in a more sustainable manner if the community has the authority to decide how and when to use these resources, and who should be involved in the process. More decision-making power will encourage (but not guarantee) more accountability to ensure an environmentally tenable use of the natural resources. History has shown that centralized authority (the State) has definitely not encouraged sustainable use of natural resources at community level.

**2. Decision-making must be representative:** The decision-making structure, which is usually laid down in the Constitution of the community organization, must encourage broad dialogue and participation of all community members. Procedures to meet and to make decisions must be transparent (on paper) and time and other resources have to be made available to give every community member an equal opportunity to contribute to the discussion. This is not simply an issue of equity: strategically it is important that all community members agree, or at least not disagree, to be able to implement decisions and have these adhered to.

**3. The ‘community’ must be as small as is practical:** It is obvious that distributing benefits and making representative decisions is easier in a small community. It is also obvious that the ‘right’ size of the community will depend on the value of available natural resources (to allow benefits to exceed the costs of management). The trick, as usual, is to strike the balance. The

other trick, especially in cases whereby a 'community' consists of several villages, is to design layered decision-making structures with as much decentralized authority at village or even sub-village level as practical.

**4. Leadership must be accountable:** Truly representative decision making and equal benefit sharing are prime guiding principles in CBNRM but not always very realistic. Organizations (and villages) cannot function without 'representatives' or leaders consolidating the various interests and making decisions on behalf of their constituency. In practice this always means that some people win and some people lose. This cannot be avoided. What can and should be avoided is leadership not listening to their 'voters' and/or not justifying the decisions made. Leaders, the board, committees, etc. must be accountable and responsible for their decisions. Accountability must be laid down in procedures and regulations as the membership is entitled to an explanation of decisions regarding the use of their resources.

**5. Benefits must outweigh costs:** A community is more likely to exercise management authority and show responsibility for the use of natural resources when it feels the benefits of doing so. However, it is sometimes difficult to define costs (of meetings, discussion, missed opportunities, etc.), and benefits are not always easy to measure. Sums of money and employment numbers are quantifiable, but improved skills, enhanced cultural identity, pride and strengthened community organization are not. The facilitator can clarify costs and benefits, but it is up to the perception of community members to decide whether community management pays or not.

**6. Benefits must be distributed equitably:** Communities are very complicated structures. The variety of groups in a community (poor/rich, men/women, different ethnic groups, etc.) all make use of natural resources and all these groups are entitled to benefits. This is not simply an issue of equity – strategically all groups should assume their respective management responsibilities. If one group of resource users is excluded from the benefits, why should that specific group abide by community plans and regulations?

**7. Benefit distribution must be linked to natural resources conservation:** The bottom line of any CBNRM intervention is the conservation of the natural resources, meaning, at a minimum, maintenance of the quality of the environment. Re-investing CBNRM benefits in natural resources (e.g. a management plan to reduce land-use conflicts, riparian woodland protection, purchase of valuable species, etc.) can increase the value of the environment and may yield higher returns. In the case of benefits being utilized in some other fashion, the impact of such an investment on the natural resource conservation should be well understood.

**8. Planning and development must focus on capacity building:** The M in CBNRM stands for management. The ability of a community (organization) to manage its natural resources is not something that can be acquired through a two-week course. On the contrary, developing this management capacity is something that never stops. Committee members and community leaders come and go, as do community members. It should be clear to the community that the capacity to make informed decisions on the use of natural resources is the key to sustainable

CBNRM. This means that the community has to make sufficient resources (money and time) available to build this capacity in a planned manner.

**9. Planning and development must be co-ordinated:** Communities in CBNRM never operate in a vacuum. Any community making natural resource management decisions or devising plans to re-invest benefits has an impact upon other stakeholders (e.g. district council, government department, neighbouring village). CBNRM activities have conservation, rural development and good governance dimensions that reach beyond natural resource use and beyond the community. For these to be sustained, the community must recognize other stakeholders and seek recognition from them. Co-ordination in planning and developing CBNRM-related activities is important to gain this status.

**10. The CBNRM process must be facilitated.** Applying the above principles in the community capacity-building process requires skilled third party facilitation. It is of paramount importance to have a partner that is detached from the community (to effectively act as an ‘honest broker’), yet is committed to facilitating the CBNRM process at community-level in the long term.

CBNRM can only be considered a success once it incorporates environmental, economic and social sustainability principles in practice (IUCN, 2003). Environmental sustainability implies the application of natural resources utilization that does not result in the degradation of the resource base through adverse impacts on the ecosystem, habitats, or species being harvested. It therefore entails environmentally sound harvesting processing and consumption patterns, which take into account optimization of resource use. In other words, environmental sustainability entails utilization of the resource base while maintaining its biological viability and ecosystem integrity. Economic sustainability places emphasis on resource growth, efficiency in utilization and equitable distribution of gains leading towards maximization of community welfare within constraints inherent to the resource base. This implies that gains have to outweigh the costs of exploitation clearly so that stakeholders may benefit equitably. This is important because incentives to manage the resource efficiently must be adequate and apparent to the communities managing it. Improvements in rural incomes and enhancement of food security among communities should be promoted. Social sustainability in natural resource management refers to that mode of resource management that takes into account local basic needs and practices. Social needs do not merely mean physiological needs, although these are central and dominant concerns. In addition, natural resources management and utilization must be equalitarian, benefiting all members of a community dependent on the resource without any unnecessary social differentiation. This does not merely mean giving benefits to communities, although this is an integral element without which all natural resources management remains empty. It implies, rather, the devolution and decentralization of natural resources management to local level institutions so that people are able to decide how they want to use the resource and determine who should use it. When CBNRM is able to take care of local needs and involve them in its management, it may be said to be socially sustainable (IUCN, 2003).



The success of CBNRM may depend on the value of the resource to the community, the population densities and the extent to which proprietorship or ownership is transferred to communities (Jones & Carswell, 2004). Regarding the success of community-based ventures, Boggs (2000, p. 10) says:

There are few examples of long term success of community based initiatives as these have a high incidence of degeneration through time. Many of the problems ... can be regarded as temporary. Understanding these issues and dealing with them while they are young and not yet habit forming is essential for success.

CBNRM projects must therefore be judged on the extent to which empowerment and the development of successful common property resource management institutions are achieved (Jones, 1999). CBNRM projects – and more specifically in this case CBE projects – need to be evaluated in order to understand the issues that may affect their long-term success. The overarching principle in CBNRM is that every situation or context is unique, and has to be understood in terms of its political history, ecological processes, community dynamics, and the capacity of role players to play their roles constructively.

## **2.4 Tourism**

The study of southern Africa's CBE cannot be discussed without having a clear understanding of the context of the southern African tourism industry within a global context as well as an African context. An account of tourism and worldwide tourism trends on a broad level provided an important background for the investigation of CBE in southern Africa.

### **2.4.1 Defining tourism and the tourism product**

Tourism is a relatively recent phenomenon. Although tourism can be traced back to Sumerian times (4000 BC), tourism did not really take off until after World War II. Since then, however, developments have been rapid and today's world is difficult to conceive without tourism (Bennett & Strydom, 2005). According to Keyser (2002) there are three primary reasons for the growth in tourism: the ability, mobility and motivation to travel. Ability refers to having sufficient time and money to travel, mobility relates to advances in the efficiency and reliability of transport, and motivation to travel relates to an increased awareness of travel and a willingness to travel. In order to truly understand the phenomenon of tourism it has to be defined in order to appreciate what it actually means. Middleton (1994, p. 8) quotes the Tourism Society's definition: "Tourism is deemed to include any activity concerned with the temporary short-term movement of people to destinations outside the place where they normally live and work, and activities during their stay at these destinations." Cooper *et al.*, (1993) add to this definition the facilities created to cater for the needs of the tourist. Tourism therefore encompasses the following four important elements: the daily activities and routines outside normal work and life, travel to and from the destination, the activities undertaken during the stay at the destination, and the facilities provided to cater for the needs of the tourist.

The success of tourism in any destination is dependent on the tourism product that is available to attract and cater for the tourist in that specific area. The tourism product is made up of five important components, all of which need to be present for tourism to be successful in a particular area. The five components are discussed below.

- **Tourist attractions:** Attractions form the very basis of tourism, and are the major pull factor. As Ferrario (1981) indicates, attractions are things that are interesting or unusual to see or do. Three kinds exist: natural, man-made, or socio-cultural attractions.
- **Tourist facilities:** Facilities themselves do not generate or attract tourists to a particular area, but their absence can dramatically hinder the development of tourism. Tourist facilities include all the accommodation, recreational, transport and other services and facilities that are necessary to meet the needs of the tourist.
- **Accessibility:** All the elements that influence the cost, speed and ease of access of a tourist destination determine its accessibility. These include the transport infrastructure, equipment, operation and management of this transportation infrastructure.
- **Image:** The image of a tourist destination relates to the expectations and perceptions that a prospective tourist may have of a particular destination. It is the major function of a tourist marketer to sustain, alter and develop a particular image that will entice tourists to a particular area or destination.
- **Price:** Price includes all the fees and charges that are associated with a visit to a tourist destination.

The tourism product in its broader sense goes far beyond the individual destination or tourist enterprise. The need for co-operation and collaboration between the various role players in a destination region is evident. Despite differences between specific enterprises the entire tourist destination region is often seen as a collective experience (Bennett & Strydom, 2005).

## **2.4.2 Worldwide tourism trends**

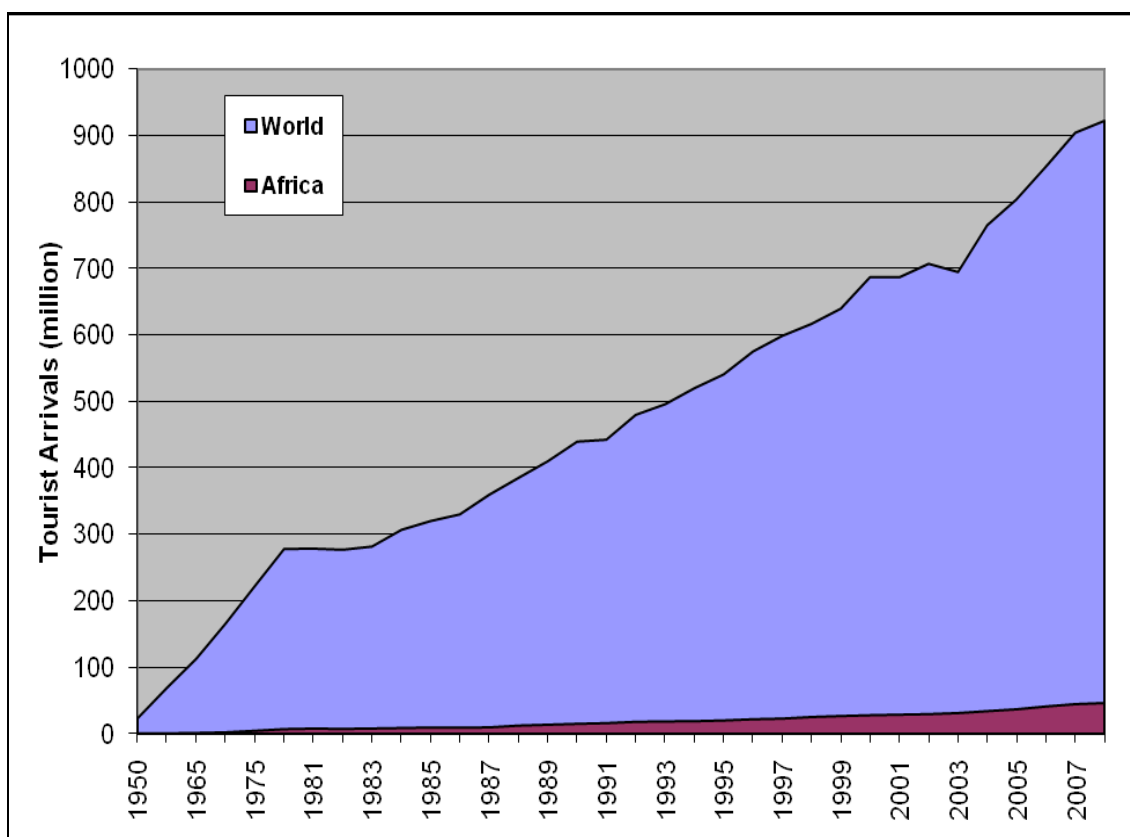
Aronsson (2000, p. 14) contends that “[t]he travel and tourism industry is currently one of the largest industries in the world together with the oil industry and building and construction”. It is estimated that the tourism industry employs more than 130 million people worldwide and makes capital investments in excess of US\$400 billion annually.

The tourism industry worldwide has been monitored over the last 57 years using two primary indicators, namely tourist arrivals and tourist receipts. The tourist arrivals and the tourist receipts will both be discussed in the following sections.

### **2.4.2.1 Trends in international tourist arrivals**

According to the World Tourism Organization (WTO) the number of international tourist arrivals shows a substantial growth from a mere 25.3 million arrivals in 1950 to 846 million in 2006,

corresponding to an average annual growth rate of 6.5% (WTO, 2007b)<sup>1</sup>. It is important to note from Figure 2.3 below that the percentage share of international arrivals that Africa receives is minimal. It is however encouraging to notice that the international arrivals to Africa is increasing annually, growing from 5% per annum in 1990 to 7.6% per annum in 2004, and it has recently been reported by the WTO (2007b, 2009) that the growth rate for 2006 was 11.2% and for 2007 it was 8.4%. In 2008 there was a slight decline in the rate of increase to 3.7%. These growth rates are the fastest in the world and almost double the world annual growth in international arrivals for 2006 recorded at 6.1%. International rates of increase in tourism arrivals also showed a slowing of the growth rates to 6.0% in 2007 and 2.0% in 2008. As the major contributor to the African growth rate, sub-Saharan Africa showed an 8.3% growth in international tourist arrivals in 2007 (2.7% in 2008).



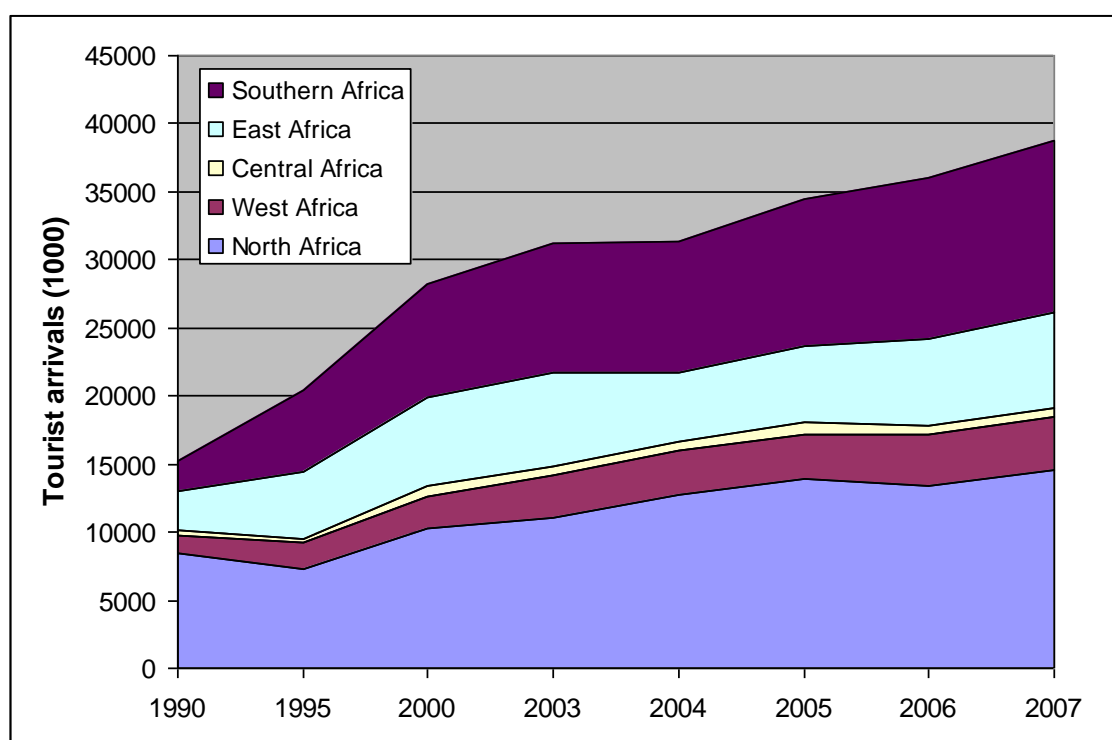
**Figure 2.3:** International tourist arrivals for the World and Africa between 1950 and 2008 (WTO data)

In an African context, international arrivals have increased from 15.2 million in 1990 to 37.3 million in 2005 (Figure 2.4). According to the WTO (2009) they increased again to 38.7 million in 2007. Important for the study at hand is the fact that the southern African<sup>2</sup> region's proportional

<sup>1</sup> All percentages have been rounded off to 1 decimal place.

<sup>2</sup> The World Tourism Organization has divided Africa into 5 tourism regions, namely North Africa (4 countries), West Africa (14 countries), Central Africa (8 countries), East Africa (17 countries) and Southern Africa (5 countries). According to the WTO classification the southern Africa region consists of Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland.

share of international arrivals in Africa increased from 14.9% in 1990 to 32.6% in 2007. The main reason for this may be the democratic reforms that South Africa has undergone since 1990, with its first truly democratic elections being held in 1994. These political reforms have led to the opening up of the southern African region to international tourism as well as the creation of worldwide curiosity leading to increased arrivals amongst tourists wanting to visit 'Nelson Mandela's rainbow nation'. West African arrivals also increased from 8.8% to 10.0%, while east Africa arrivals remained constant from 18.6% (in 1990) to 18.0% (in 2007), in north Africa arrivals also decreased from 55.1% of African international arrivals in 1990 to 37.7% in 2007. The increased arrivals for southern Africa bode well for the tourism industry in this region. However, with increased arrivals increased pressure on the tourism attractions and facilities will be experienced; therefore this increased tourism pressure needs to be managed carefully. As a result of the non availability of Africa's sub-region specific data for the 2008, this discussion only focused up to and including 2007.

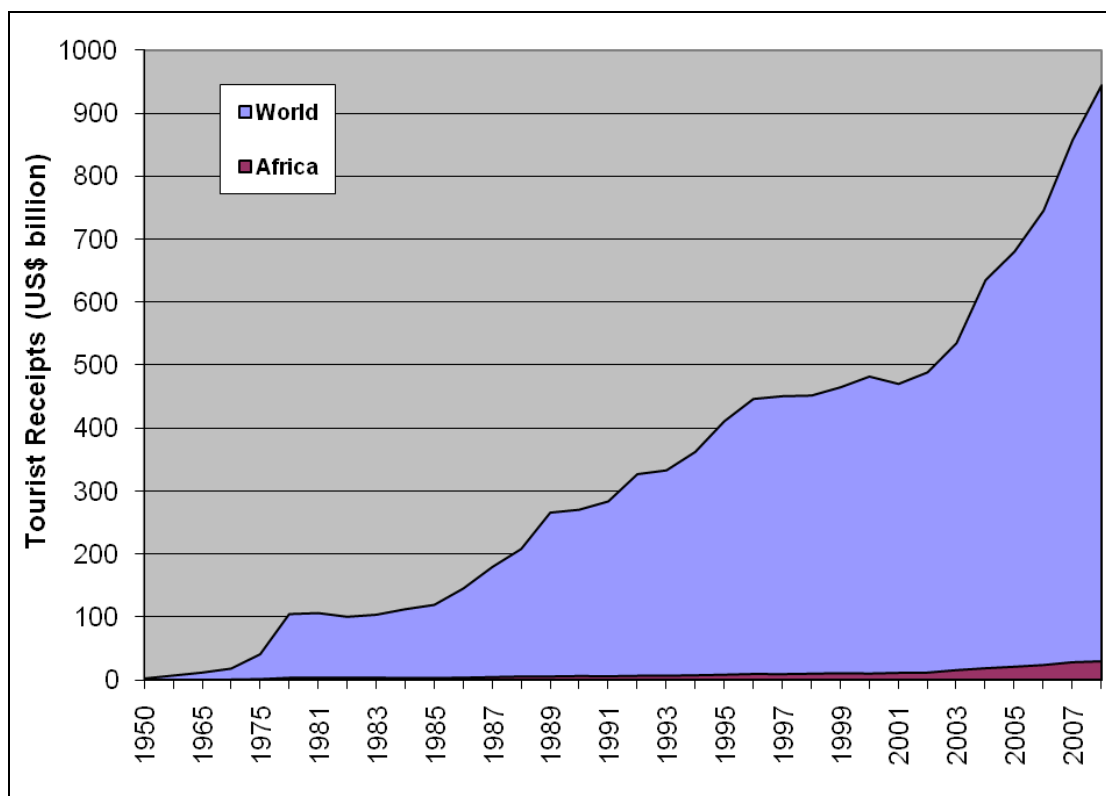


**Figure 2.4:** International tourist arrivals for Africa between 1990 and 2007(WTO data)

#### 2.4.2.2 Trends in international tourist receipts

International tourism expenditure on aspects such as accommodation, food and transport is an important pillar for the economies of many countries, creating much needed employment and economic opportunities. The WTO estimates that worldwide, international tourist receipts have grown from US\$2.1 billion in 1950 to US\$944 billion in 2008. According to the WTO (2009) this is an increase in absolute terms of US\$87 billion in 2008 (from US\$857 billion in 2007). This shows the incredible rate of tourism growth. The international receipts in Africa have also grown from US\$0.1 billion in 1950 to US\$30.6 billion in 2008. The total percentage of tourist receipts

that Africa receives is still dwarfed in comparison to other world regions, with Africa having received only 3.2% (Figure 2.5) of the total international tourist receipts in 2008. According to the WTO (2009) international receipts worldwide grew by 15.0% in 2007, followed by a 10.2% increase in 2008, while international arrivals for the same period increased by 6.0% (in 2007) and 2.0% (in 2008) respectively. As was the case with tourist arrivals, Africa had one of the strongest relative growth rates in receipts, namely 5.2% in 2008 (18.8% in 2007 – the strongest growth rate for 2007). More than US\$ 2.6 billion is earned every day through international tourism.

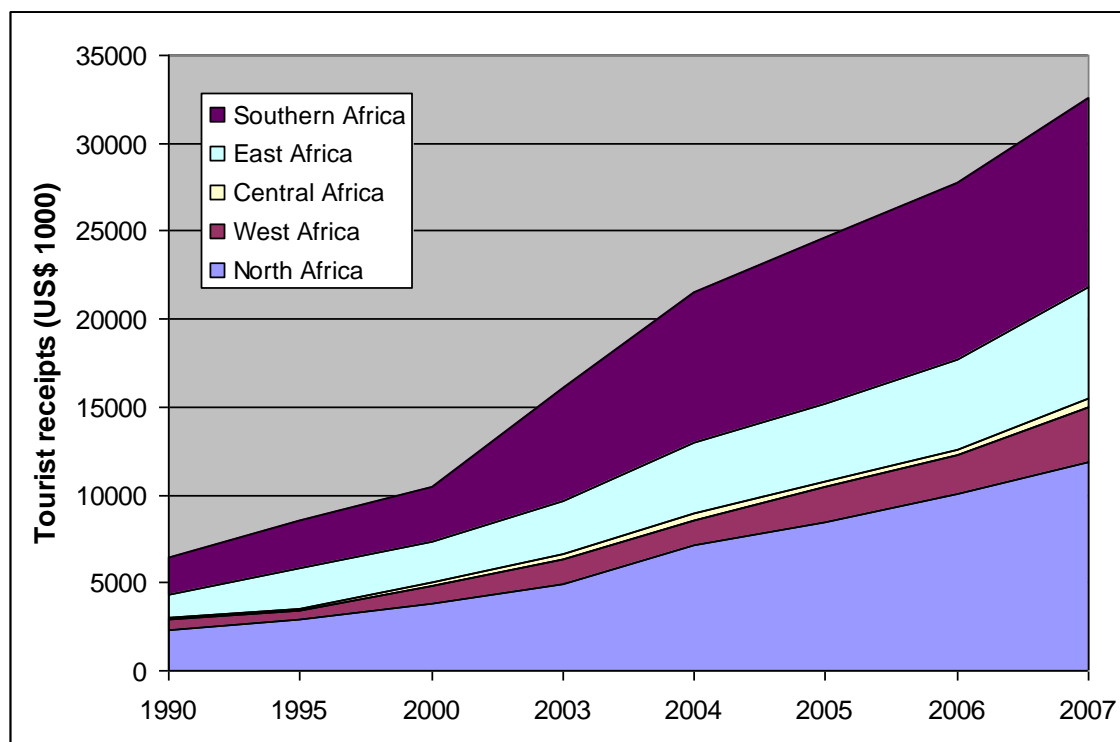


**Figure 2.5:** International tourist receipts for the World and Africa between 1950 and 2008 (WTO data)

The growth rate of international tourist receipts in Africa, increasing from US\$6.4 billion in 1990 to US\$21.5 billion in 2005, and US\$24.3 billion in 2006 (WTO, 2007b), is reason for optimism for the African tourism industry. All the WTO tourism regions of Africa are experiencing an absolute growth in terms of tourism receipts (Figure 2.6). Southern Africa has marginally increased its share from 32.5% in 1990 to 33.0% in 2007 (up from US\$2.1 billion in 1990 to US\$10.8 billion in 2007). The 2008 sub-region specific data was not available.

The southern African region, as classified by the WTO, therefore finds itself in a unique position in the world. Southern Africa has experienced exceptional growth in the number of arrivals from 2.3 million in 1990 to 12.6 million arrivals in 2007 (14.9% to 32.6% share of international arrivals to Africa). Although the international tourist receipts for southern Africa has increased from

US\$2 081 million in 1990 to US\$10 760 million in 2007. There has, however, not been a corresponding proportional increase in international receipts. This may indicate that a large portion of the arrivals to southern Africa have not been from overseas countries but from neighbouring African countries which may explain the negligible proportional increase in tourist receipts. The southern African region is as a result experiencing an increasingly large proportion of arrivals. Southern Africa may be classified as the region with one of the fastest growth rates in the world in terms of international arrivals for the 1990-2007 time period. The growth rate in arrivals creates both opportunities and problems that will have to be carefully managed in the future in order to ensure the sustainability of the tourism product.



**Figure 2.6:** International tourist receipts for Africa between 1990 and 2007 (WTO data)

Although Africa's share of the global tourism arrivals and receipts has increased annually they may still be described as a 'drop in the ocean'. However, it is important to note that "international tourism is already important for Africa and is likely to grow" in future (Mitchell & Ashley, 2006, p. 4). The World Bank (2006) has also indicated that there is a shift from pre-paid packages to independently organized travel, which increases the distribution options for African tourism products. This is a situation that bodes well for community-based ecotourism ventures in southern Africa. Another important aspect is that Africa itself is becoming an important source of domestic and regional tourism, as confirmed by Rogerson and Visser (2006), who found that in southern Africa regional tourism accounts for as much as 70% of all arrivals.

### **2.4.2.3 Future trends in world tourism**

Using 1995 as a base year, the WTO Tourism 2020 Vision (WTO, 1998) forecasts that international arrivals are expected to reach 1.6 billion by the year 2020. Of these, 1.2 billion will be interregional and 378 million will be long-haul travellers. It is predicted that tourist arrivals will grow by an average of 4.1% a year until 2020, while receipts from international tourism will increase by around 6-7% annually.

In its Tourism 2020 vision, the World Tourism Organization (WTO, 1998) has identified a number of trends that will influence global tourism patterns till 2020:

- There will be an increase in multiple, relatively shorter duration trips by travellers from industrialized countries.
- A strong uptake of foreign travel by the populations of developing countries will occur.
- There will be an increase in long-haul travel. Tourists will be travelling longer distances on their holidays, with the percentage of long-haul travel increasing from 18% in 1995 to 24% in 2020.
- There will be sustained strong growth rates of long-haul (5.4%) and intra-regional travel (3.8%).
- The fastest growth rates will be among residents of countries in East Asia Pacific, followed by those of the Middle East, South Asia and Africa.
- Tourists will be more discerning in their search for quality and value for money, which will influence their travel decisions and choice of destinations.
- Tourists will be increasingly environmentally conscious and will base their selection of destinations on their environmental quality.

Up to now, the WTO forecasts on future trends have not been far out as far as international tourist arrivals and international tourism receipts are concerned.

### **2.4.3 Tourism trends in southern Africa**

Siegfried (2002, p. 130) has pointed out that

[worldwide tourism] generates annually more than three trillion US dollars ... at any given moment, 300 million people are travellers, 60% of whom are leisure travellers. Of that 60%, 25% are nature-bound tourists. Tourism is one of the fastest-growing economic sectors in the world and in southern Africa. Tourists motivated by a desire to visit places of natural beauty is growing fastest of all. Of this only a small percentage comes to sub-Saharan Africa and most of what does ends up in South Africa. Millions of people of the developed world are in search of recreational experiences in 'natural' environments. Today, by good fortune, sub-Saharan Africa has an abundance of the product that these people are seeking, and are prepared to pay for.

'Nature-based tourism' (NBT) includes a wide variety of activities, ranging from hunting to soaking up the sun on the beach. NBT has a common factor: a dependence on ecosystem

services such as clean air and water, unspoiled scenery and attractive biodiversity. Scholes and Biggs (2004, p. 59) estimated the aggregate value of NBT in southern Africa in the year 2000 to have been US\$3.6 billion. This is based on direct tourism expenditures (i.e. what tourists spend in the country rather than what they are willing to pay for this experience) and represents approximately half the total tourism income in the region, the other half being contributed mostly by business travel and visits to family and friends. Tourism revenue is not evenly distributed around the region, nor is the proportion of nature-based tourism. The travel and tourism economy contributed 9% of the total Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the Southern African Development Community (SADC)<sup>3</sup> in the year 1999 (Krug, Suich & Haimbodi, 2002), varying from 5% in large, highly industrialized economies like South Africa, to 30% in Tanzania. In countries without large mineral resources, tourism is often the major source of foreign income (WTTC, 1999).

Scholes and Biggs (2004, p. 60) compare income from NBT to the income generated from other main sectors based on ecosystem services: agriculture, forestry and fisheries. Assuming that NBT is half of all tourism, and excluding the manufacturing sector knock-on effects of agriculture, forestry and fisheries, the contribution by NBT is almost equal to the other natural resource sectors combined. Importantly, those sectors are growing slowly (1-3% per annum) while tourism is growing rapidly (5-15% per annum). Inevitably, these factors will cause a policy shift in relation to natural resources, from being strongly influenced by the needs of agriculture, forestry and fishing, to being more influenced by considerations of conservation and aesthetics. The dominance of industries based on non-renewable resources such as mining and oil extraction will also decline in the long term (Scholes and Biggs, 2004).

A major fraction of the NBT in South Africa is based on the domestic market, whereas in other countries in the southern African region the foreign market (i.e. African and non-African) dominates. While a substantial and growing fraction of NBT, particularly in South Africa, is coupled to private conservation areas, there remains a crucial role for state-owned protected areas. National parks generally provide the nucleus around which private and community-based nature-tourism activities cluster (Scholes & Biggs, 2004). Communities living in close proximity to national parks or other areas of significant conservation value are therefore presented with unique opportunities to develop CBE in these areas. All the fundamentals for a long and sustained growth in the southern African tourism industry are in place. What now remains is the investigation into present CBE ventures to establish the best practices that can guide other communities wishing to develop successful and sustainable CBE ventures.

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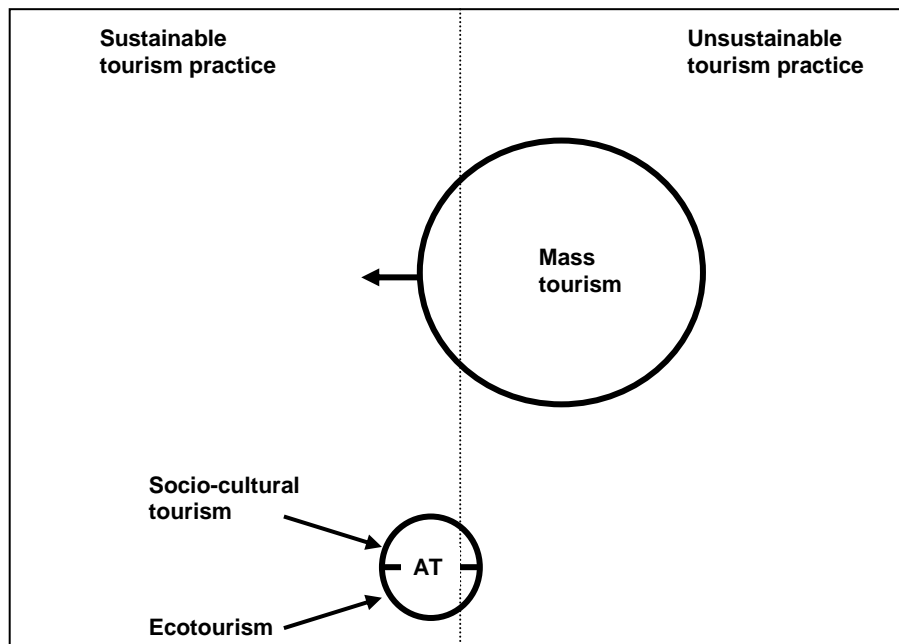
<sup>3</sup> The Southern African Development Community (SADC) is composed of the following countries: Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.



#### **2.4.4 The changing face of tourism and new tourism**

Changes in the market forces, as well as the move towards more environmentally sensitive and sustainable forms of tourism, have led to significant changes in tourism. The emergence of sustainable development has been a major driving force in this change towards a new form of tourism. The negative economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts resulting from tourism's rapid and unplanned developments associated with mass tourism led to calls for a new or alternative form of tourism. The concern over the negative impacts was taken a step further to advocate a symbiotic relationship between tourism and the environment instead of a relationship of conflict or co-existence (Weaver, 1998, p. 11). Murphy (1985) in turn called for a community approach to tourism where communities would have greater involvement and participation in tourism. These factors, together with the rising concern for the sustainability of the tourism product, resulted in the development of Alternative Tourism (AT). AT sets out to be consistent with natural, social and community values, an approach which would allow both hosts and guests to enjoy positive and worthwhile interactions and experiences (Lubbe, 2003, p. 79). According to Krippendorf (1982), the philosophy behind AT was to ensure that tourism policies should no longer concentrate on economic and technical necessities alone, but rather emphasize the demand for an unspoiled environment and consideration of the needs of local people. AT, which places natural and cultural resources at the forefront of tourism planning and development, includes many new types of tourism, such as ecotourism, responsible tourism, appropriate tourism, green tourism, controlled tourism, environmentally sensitive tourism, Africa tourism, rural tourism, agri-tourism, health farms, guest houses, bed and breakfast establishments, township tourism, cultural tourism, community tourism, soft tourism and ethnic tourism (France, 1997; Weaver, 1998; Page & Dowling, 2002; Scheyvens, 2002; Fennell, 2003; Lubbe, 2003). AT is seen as being the opposite of mass tourism: where mass tourism is 'large-scale', AT is 'small-scale'; where mass tourism leads to homogenization of the tourism product, AT promotes 'desirable differences' between destinations; mass tourism is 'externally controlled', AT is 'locally controlled'; mass tourism is 'high impact' while AT is 'low impact' (Weaver, 1998).

Although mass tourism is said to be predominantly unsustainable, there has been a move amongst conventional mass tourism towards greater sustainability through controlled electricity use, disposal of waste and rotating laundry schedules (Fennel, 2003). This move towards sustainability is indicated in Figure 2.7 by the arrow indicating a move for mass tourism towards more sustainable tourism practice.



**Figure 2.7:** The relationship between mass tourism, alternative tourism and ecotourism (adapted from Butler, 1996 in Weaver, 1998)

Weaver (1998) distinguishes two primary forms of AT, namely socio-cultural and nature-based AT. In order to place this study in context the environmentally-based component is replaced with ecotourism in Figure 2.7. The size of the circle signifies the size of the different kinds of tourism development, mass tourism being large-scale while AT generally entails development on a smaller scale.

Ecotourism should therefore be seen as a sub-component of sustainable tourism. It is, however, important to note that while ecotourism has the potential to create positive environmental and social impacts, it can unfortunately be as damaging as mass tourism if not implemented and managed properly (Epler Wood, 2002).

#### **2.4.5 Trends and growth in African tourism research**

An analysis of the content of leading tourism journals reveals that the bulk of international tourism knowledge is about North America, Europe, Asia, Australia and New Zealand, with a low number of citations about Africa (Xiao & Smith, 2006, p. 497). Yet there is a growing body of research that is developing from Africa, especially on the nexus of tourism, development and poverty. This has been heavily influenced by changes in development approaches and development theory. One of the major areas of tourism scholarship that has emerged from predominantly Africa-based research is the large cluster of writings on pro-poor tourism. These works provide detailed analyses of tourism's potential for contributing to pro-poor tourism growth and poverty alleviation. Other important areas of African tourism scholarship identified by Rogerson (2007) in his review of African tourism research include policy development of tourism

and the contribution made by tourism to the national economic growth, the focus on small and medium-sized enterprises and their promotion, the different segments of tourism and the contribution of tourism to local economic development and urban regeneration.

According to Rogerson (2007) a new focus on tourism has been sparked by international development agencies as a result of the potential development role of tourism. It is widely acknowledged that given an appropriate policy environment, tourism can contribute effectively to economic and social development, including poverty alleviation (Rogerson 2006; World Bank 2006). The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) confirms this by stating that "tourism is recognized as one of the sectors with the most potential to contribute to the economic regeneration of the continent, particularly through the diversification of African economies and generation of foreign exchange earnings" (NEPAD, 2004, p. 3). This interest has sparked the emergence of another approach to tourism, namely pro-poor tourism.

## 2.5 Pro-poor tourism

Pro-poor tourism (PPT) may be defined as "tourism that generates net benefits for the poor" (Ashley & Roe, 2002, p. 62). The benefits may be economic, social or environmental and may affect livelihoods in a number of ways. As long as poor people reap net benefits, tourism can be classified as 'pro-poor'. The PPT approach focuses on strategies that enhance benefits to the poor, and aims to unlock opportunities for the poor (Ashley, Roe & Goodwin, 2001, Pro-poor Tourism website, 2010). Besides providing various advantages to people's lives, tourism may also bring certain disadvantages, such as displacement, inflation, inequality and social disruption. PPT seeks to harness the advantages of tourism while seeking to reduce the disadvantages associated with tourism.

PPT enhances the linkages between tourism businesses and poor people; so that tourism's contribution to poverty reduction is increased and poor people are able to participate more effectively in product development. Links with many different types of 'the poor' need to be considered: staff, neighbouring communities, land-holders, producers of food, fuel and other suppliers, operators of micro tourism businesses, craft-makers, other users of tourism infrastructure (roads) and resources (water) (Pro-poor tourism, 2010).

Tourism's potential for being pro-poor lies in four main areas:

- Tourism is a **diverse industry**, which increases the scope for wide participation, including the participation of the informal sector;
- The **customer comes to the product**, which provides considerable opportunities for linkages (e.g. souvenir selling);

- Tourism is **highly dependent upon natural capital** (e.g. wildlife, culture), which are assets to which the poor may have access, even in the absence of financial resources; and
- Tourism can be more **labour intensive** than such industries as manufacturing. In comparison to other modern sectors, a higher proportion of tourism benefits (e.g. jobs, informal trade opportunities) go to women (Ashley, Roe & Goodwin, 2001; Ashley & Mitchell, 2005).

Britain's Department for International Development (DFID) was the first agency to promote the concept of pro-poor tourism. Since then PPT has received much wider support from the WTO in a paper on poverty alleviation and tourism released at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in 2002. This report launched a new research programme called ST-EP: Sustainable Tourism - Eliminating Poverty. The programme aims to attract investment for focused research investigating causal relationships and tourism models that link tourism and poverty alleviation, while also promoting investment in sustainable operations (Spenceley & Seif, 2003; Rogerson, 2006).

Spenceley and Seif (2003) identify four factors upon which the success of PPT depends:

- **Success depends on where you are.** Tourism amenities and activities are not geographically evenly distributed, and the physical conditions of access constitute a barrier for many. Opportunities for the development and marketing of activities tend to be constrained where there is a significant distance between the clientele and the product.
- **Success depends on who you are.** Important decisions are usually not made by poor people or by those who seek to develop pro-poor policies and programmes. Most of the critical decisions that affect the sector tend to be made outside of the country, or by a few powerful local interests. Except on rare occasions, processes of public policy formulation are not adequately participatory.
- **Success depends on what you have.** The ability to enter the sector and to create employment and income-generating opportunities is based on the availability of financial or physical assets. Poor people are constrained by the absence of assets, and by the difficulties they face in accessing and using common property assets.
- **Success depends on what you know.** Efforts to participate in the industry are hampered by a lack of understanding of how the industry functions. In the absence of an adequate understanding of the manner in which this complex sector operates, the current status quo is unlikely to change.

PPT is an approach to tourism in which poverty alleviation and benefits to the poor should be firmly placed on the agenda for tourism development and management in future. It implies that tourism ventures have to do things differently through focusing attention of delivering benefits to

the poor. PPT is not only about community-based ventures or small and micro enterprises but applies to all forms and sizes of tourism ventures. According to Rogerson (2006), pro-poor tourism is still at the margin of mainstream international tourism thinking and needs to receive greater attention. The focus of this investigation relates to community-based ecotourism ventures which lend themselves to the implementation of PPT. Ashley and Roe (2002) confirm that many community-based, sustainable and ecotourism initiatives are good examples of PPT strategies without being named such. Ashley and Goodwin (2007) however state that the PPT approaches have to be applied not only to small community-based tourism ventures but throughout the mainstream tourism industry.

PPT is one core and often neglected element of sustainable tourism. Ashley and Haysom (2006) confirm this view by stating that one of the reasons for the PPT to be initiated was that social elements tended to be relegated to the periphery in sustainable tourism discussions, which that often emphasized environmental elements. It is therefore important when investigating the sustainability of community-based ecotourism that the social element should not be neglected. A detailed exploration of the meaning of ecotourism is necessary before discussing CBE. The next section will focus on the development of ecotourism and the concepts associated with ecotourism.

## **2.6 Ecotourism**

The global growth in tourism poses a significant threat to cultural and biological diversity (Epler Wood, 2002). Ecotourism, which is a growing sector within the larger tourism industry, is seen as a possible solution to the threat tourism poses to the natural and cultural environment. According to The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) ecotourism has been growing at between 20% and 34% per year since the beginning of the 1990s (TIES, 2007b). In 2004 ecotourism and nature-based tourism were growing globally three times faster than the tourism industry as a whole. TIES (2007b, p. 3) highlights the expected growth in this sector:

Sun-and-sand resort tourism has now 'matured as a market' and its growth is projected to remain flat. In contrast, 'experiential' tourism – which encompasses ecotourism, nature, heritage, culture and soft adventure tourism, as well as the sub-sectors such as rural and community tourism – is among the sectors expected to grow most quickly over the next two decades.

The importance of the ecotourism industry on a global scale was prominently brought to the foreground by the declaration of 2002 as the International Year of Ecotourism by the United Nations (Weaver & Lawton, 2007).

Ecotourism is also seen as a potential tool for sustainable development. Even though billions of US dollars flow through the ecotourism industry annually, ecotourism functions quite differently from other sectors of the tourism industry. Ecotourism has at its very basis the core concept of sustainable development, which is achieved through conserving natural areas, educating

visitors about sustainability and benefiting local communities. This section explores the concept of ecotourism further, to investigate the definition of the concept and establish the fundamental components and characteristics of ecotourism.

### 2.6.1 Origin of the term 'ecotourism'

Two primary factors have resulted in the origin of the term 'ecotourism'. First, there has been international growth in interest and concern for the natural environment through the 1980s and 1990s, and second, the idea of visiting and experiencing pristine natural environments and protecting them from harmful impacts has become more acceptable. These two factors initiated the search for a suitable term to indicate a positive relationship between the tourist and the natural environment. The introduction of the prefix 'eco-' to 'tourism' (as used in words like ecology, ecosystem, ecosphere and ecosensitive) led to the term 'eco-tourism' (alternatively 'ecotourism' – without the hyphen). Initially the term 'ecotourism' (now generally written without a hyphen) was used without a clear indication of the meaning, which often caused the term merely to be used as a marketing tactic to give businesses the apparent edge over their competition (Cater & Lowman, 1994; Orams, 1995; Ross & Wall, 1999).

Ever since the introduction of the term, much time and research effort has gone into the description, definition and delineation of the term 'ecotourism'. This discussion strives to clear up some of the confusion relating to the definition and fundamentals of ecotourism.

### 2.6.2 Definition of ecotourism

Ecotourism is an elusive concept that has many different definitions, some of which are listed in Table 2.1 below.

**Table 2.1:** Definitions of ecotourism

<p>"The ecotourist practises a non-consumptive use of wildlife and natural resources and contributes to the visited area through labour or financial means aimed at directly benefiting the conservation of the site ..." (Ziffer, 1989).</p> <p>"Visits to national parks and other natural areas with the aim of viewing and enjoying the plants and animals as well as any indigenous culture" (Boo, 1990).</p> <p>"Purposeful travel to natural areas to understand the culture and natural history of the environment; taking care not to alter the integrity of the ecosystem; producing economic opportunities that make the conservation of natural resources beneficial to local people" (The Ecotourism Society, 1991).</p> <p>"Tourism that is environmentally sensitive" (Muloin, 1991).</p> <p>"Purposeful travel that creates an understanding of cultural and natural history, while safeguarding the integrity of the ecosystem and producing economic benefits that encourage conservation" (Ryel &amp; Grasse, 1991).</p> <p>"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 cultural aspects (both past and present) found in these areas" (Ceballos-Lascurain, 1993).</p> <p>"Responsible travel to natural areas which conserves the environment and improves the welfare of local people" (Lindberg &amp; Hawkins, 1993).</p>
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"Tourism which is based upon relatively undisturbed natural environments, is non-degrading, is subject to an adequate management regime and is a direct contributor to the continued protection and management of the protected area used" (Valentine, 1993).

"An enlightening nature travel experience that contributes to the conservation of the ecosystem while respecting the integrity of the host communities" (Cater & Lowman, 1994).

"Low impact nature tourism which contributes to the maintenance of species and habitats either directly through a contribution to conservation and/or indirectly by providing revenue to the local community sufficient for people to value, and therefore protect, their wildlife heritage area as a source of income" (Goodwin, 1996).

"Environmentally responsible travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (and any accompanying cultural features – both past and present) that promotes conservation, has low negative visitor impact, and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local populations" (Ceballos-Lascurain, 1996).

"Ecotourism is a sustainable form of natural resource-based tourism that focuses primarily on experiencing and learning about nature, and which is ethically managed to be low-impact, non-consumptive, and locally oriented (control, benefits, and scale). It typically occurs in natural areas, and should contribute to the conservation or preservation of such areas" (Fennell, 1999).

"Ecotourism is constructed around the natural environment and contributes to sustainable development through active involvement of local communities and their culture" (Kapere, 2001).

"Ecotourism is tourism practised in relatively undisturbed natural areas, for the main purposes of admiring and learning more about them" (Yunis, 2001).

"Ecotourism is about nature and outdoor tourism. It involves travelling to destinations with the main purpose of experiencing firsthand the scenic, attractive and well-managed natural environment and cultural heritage of areas, without having a negative impact on them. It is an enlightening experience about local people and ecosystems in which the ecotourist, the product/service supplier as well as the local community participate and have an interest. It brings both economic and social benefits to local communities and ensures the conservation of cultural and natural resources" (Matlou, 2001).

"Ecotourism is ecologically sustainable tourism with a primary focus on experiencing natural areas that fosters environmental and cultural understanding, appreciation and conservation" (Ecotourism Association of Australia, 2002).

Some central over-arching themes and factors flow from these definitions. As already indicated, the short list above reflects only some of the many existing definitions for ecotourism. All the definitions of ecotourism emphasize that it must take place in natural areas. These natural areas include national parks, nature reserves and other state-managed areas as well as private land and land owned by communities. Besides the fact that ecotourism has to take place in natural areas it is important to note that ecotourism is environmentally and culturally sensitive and must directly benefit both the conservation areas and the local communities. The benefits that are derived for the conservation areas and the benefit derived for the local communities all create incentives to ensure the continued conservation and protection of the natural environment. The last important core element of ecotourism is that local communities also need to receive significant benefits from ecotourism.

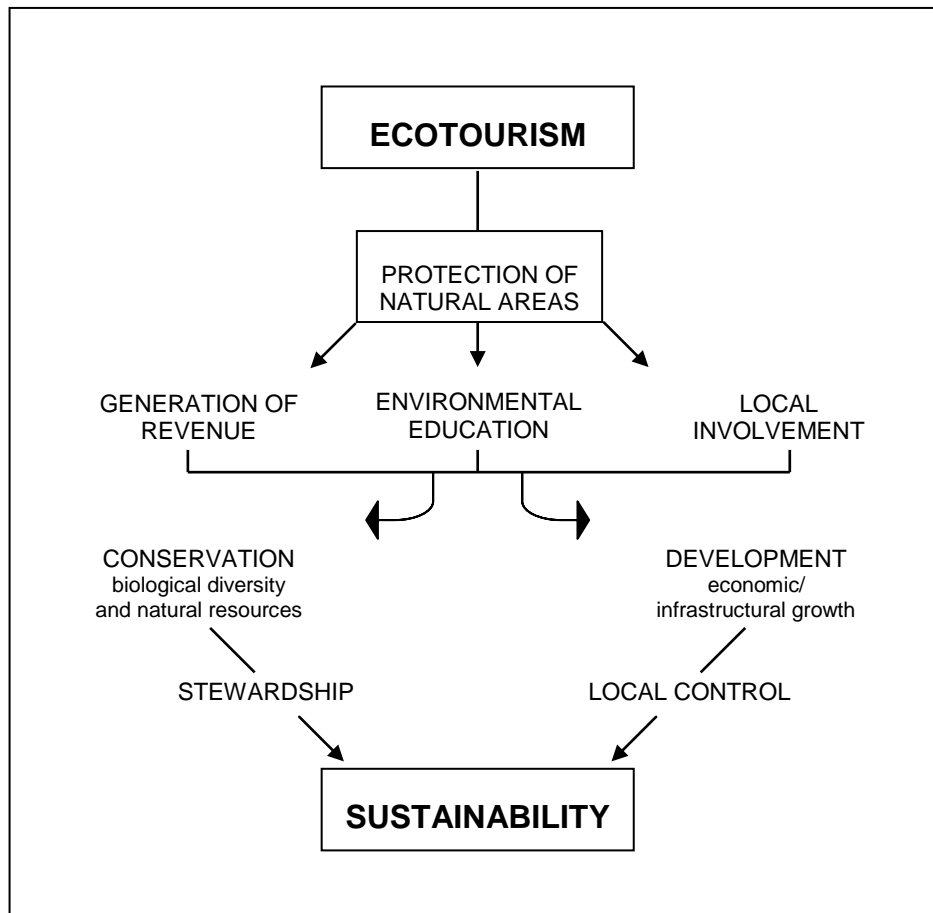
In order to facilitate further discussion and to arrive at a working definition, a number of elements derived from a few definitions have been combined in the author's new definition below:

**Ecotourism is responsible travel to natural areas in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (and local culture). It promotes conservation of the environment and provides significant socio-economic benefits for local communities.**

Ecotourism is therefore about connecting tourism, conservation and communities.

### 2.6.3 Conceptual ecotourism framework

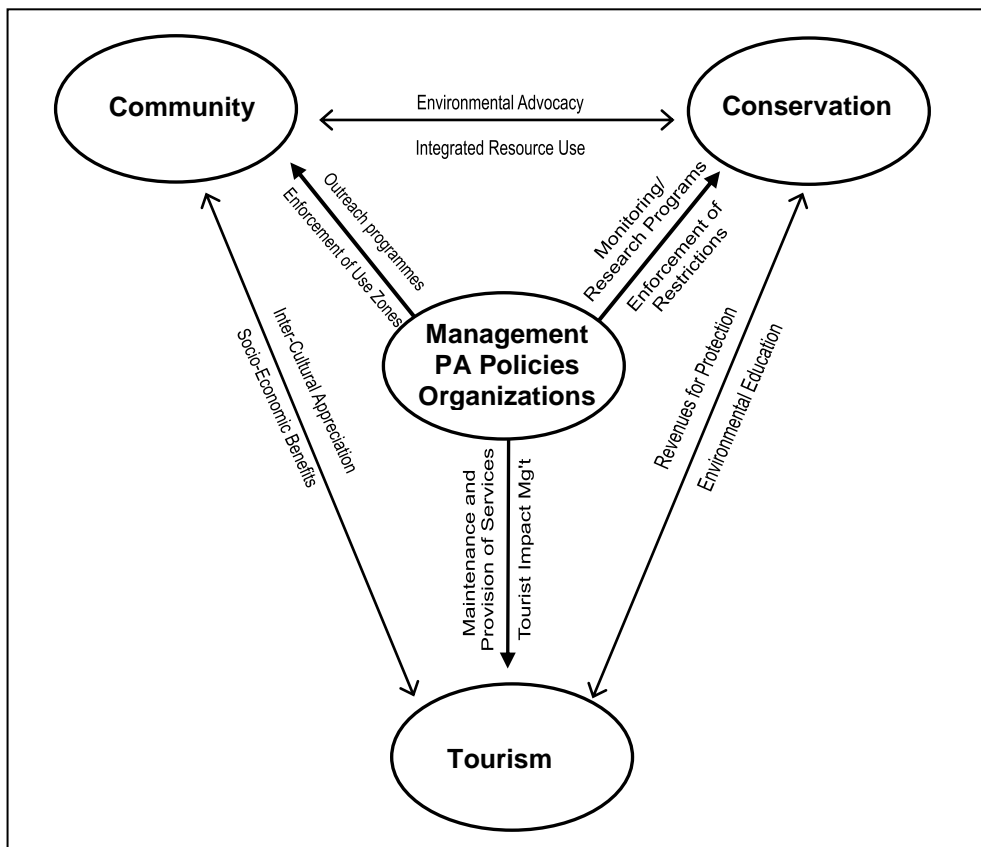
According to Ross and Wall (1999) ecotourism is often seen to be a potential strategy to support conservation of natural ecosystems while at the same time promoting sustainable local development. It is evident from the definitions above that, through the introduction of ecotourism, natural areas and local populations are united in a symbiotic relationship. Ecotourism can thus be viewed as a means of protecting natural areas through generating revenue, and through environmental education and the involvement of local communities in both decision making and benefit sharing. Therefore ecotourism is an important means by which conservation and development can be promoted in a sustainable way (see Figure 2.8).



**Figure 2.8:** Linking ecotourism to sustainability (Ross & Wall, 1999)



Three important aspects of ecotourism exist: tourism, community and conservation. These three aspects have to be taken into consideration with every decision that is made so as not to affect any one of these three aspects negatively while benefiting the others. The ideal situation would be one in which all three aspects benefit while none is disadvantaged in any way. Boo (1993) argues that ecotourism will not be successful without effective management. In an attempt to address Boo's concern, Ross and Wall (1999) add a fourth aspect to this relationship, involving management, protected area policies and the involvement of a wide range of organizations, such as non-government organizations (NGOs), conservation organizations and development aid agencies. This fourth aspect merely plays a catalytic role between the three core aspects. Management practices therefore act as a catalyst between the three core aspects thereby maintaining a symbiotic relationship to ensure sustainability.



**Figure 2.9:** Conceptual framework for ecotourism (adapted from Ross & Wall, 1999)

The three core components of ecotourism are illustrated in Figure 2.9. In the centre are the catalysts, namely management, protected area policies and organizations, such as NGOs, that assist in making ecotourism a success. The success of ecotourism depends on how these three components interact with one another. In an ideal ecotourism situation, local communities, conservation and tourism are linked through a symbiotic relationship.

These factors form some of the fundamentals of ecotourism. In this study, CBE was investigated in the context of these core components. A number of important characteristics of ecotourism have to be noted as these are important in differentiating CBE from community-based tourism, as indicated at a later stage.

#### **2.6.4 Characteristics of ecotourism**

The simplest way to evaluate whether a specific tourism venture is indeed ecotourism is to evaluate it against a set of characteristics such as those in the list below compiled by the author. This list of characteristics was compiled using the works of Buchanan (1996), The International Ecotourism Society (TIES, 2001), the Ecotourism Association of Australia (EA) and the Sustainable Tourism Co-operative Research Centre (STCRC) (2002), Motavalli (2002), Patterson (2007) and TIES (2007a).

Ecotourism should include the following characteristics:

- **It should be nature-based.** Ecotourism is fundamentally a nature-based travel experience. The main motivation should be experiencing, observing and appreciating nature as well as the traditional cultures prevailing in natural areas.
- **It should have a minimal impact on the environment.** Ecotourism strives to take place in such a way so as to minimize the negative impacts on the natural and socio-cultural environment of the destination area. In an attempt to limit the negative impacts ecotourism developments usually accommodate small groups and are often managed by small locally owned businesses.
- **It should be an educational travel experience.** It includes an education and interpretation component, where ecotourists are given the opportunity to experience nature and culture first-hand in ways that lead to a greater understanding, respect and appreciation.
- **It stresses the importance of responsible business.** Ecotourism strives to work co-operatively with local communities so that their needs may be met while nature conservation also receives benefits and due consideration.
- **It supports conservation.** Ecotourism should support conservation through generating direct benefits towards the conservation and management of protected and natural areas.
- **It should aim to maximize economic benefits for local communities and business.** Ecotourism strives to maximize the economic benefits of local people, particularly those living in and adjacent to natural and protected areas. Where possible, ecotourism empowers local communities through the hiring and training of local people and through buying products locally, thereby providing alternative employment and income opportunities. It also supports local ownership or joint ventures with outside business or NGO partners of tourist facilities and concessions.

- **It should include monitoring programmes.** Ecotourism should include long-term monitoring programmes as well as environmental and social base-line studies that assess and monitor impacts in order to minimize them. Part of the social monitoring should include monitoring customer satisfaction so as to ensure that customers' expectations are met.
- **It should be managed within limits.** Ecotourism should ensure that tourism developments do not exceed the social and environmental limits of acceptable change as determined by researchers and local people.
- **It should focus on zoning and management.** Ecotourism should emphasize the need for regional tourism zoning and visitor management in areas that become ecotourism destinations.
- **It should have an appropriate infrastructure.** Ecotourism should rely on infrastructure that has been developed in harmony with the environment. It should strive towards minimizing the use of fossil fuels and other associated impacts while conserving nature. The infrastructure should also blend in with the local natural and cultural environment.

### 2.6.5 Responsible travel

Responsible, ethical and sustainable tourism is the tourism industry's reply to growing international and consumer pressure to include and address economic, social and environmental issues. The concept of sustainability has had a profound influence on the world and the way in which the tourism industry, and in fact all business, conducts itself. Business now has to concern itself not only with economics but also with social and environmental issues, referred to as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Careful consideration must be given to the minimization of negative environmental impacts while enhancing the positive impacts. Besides the environment, business now has to take all stakeholders into account: employees, state and local communities as well as shareholders, investors and consumers. Companies are also adopting the 'triple bottom line' approach to reporting, where social, environmental and economic aspects have to be considered and accounted for. The Institute of Directors of Southern Africa (2002) acknowledges that there is a move away from the single bottom line (profit for shareholders) to a triple bottom line, which embraces the economic, environmental and social aspects of a company's activities. The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) has endorsed CSR (WTTC, 2002). CSR involves more than merely donating a portion of profits to worthy causes; it has become a core philosophy of business. The WTTC (2002, p. 2) explains CSR as

adopting open and transparent business practices that are based on ethical values. It means responsibly managing all aspects of operations for their impact not just on shareholders, but also on employees, communities and the environment. Ultimately CSR is about delivering sustainable value to society at large, as well as to shareholders, for the long term benefit of both.

In 1999, the World Tourism Organization (WTO) committed itself to a Global Code of Ethics for Tourism. Tourism 'ethics' is concerned with the way in which the tourism industry conducts itself

and refers to the codes by which human conduct is guided, the way in which business is done, the way in which we treat each other and the way in which we travel (Goodwin & Pender, 2005). The Global Code of Ethics was designed to “promote responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism” (WTO, 1999, pp. 2-3). This code aims to create a new world order in the tourism industry that is equitable, responsible and sustainable. This aim can only be achieved if all the stakeholders in the tourism industry work together.

One approach to achieving equity in the tourism industry is the concept of ‘fair trade’. According to Mann and Ibrahim (2002), as with fairly-traded coffee and tea, tourism wants to encourage more equitable business partnerships that benefit tourists, tour operators and hosts. An excellent example of this is South Africa’s Fair Trade in Tourism, which promotes six principles: fair share; democracy; respect for human rights, culture and environment; reliability; transparency; sustainability (Goodwin & Pender, 2005).

‘Responsible tourism’ is another approach being advocated by the tourism industry to achieve equity, responsibility and sustainability. The Cape Town Declaration on Responsible Tourism (2002) was the result of the Cape Town Conference on Responsible Tourism in Destinations organized by the Responsible Tourism Partnership as a side event preceding the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002. The conference addressed ways in which stakeholders can work together to take responsibility for achieving the aspirations of the WTO Global Code of Ethics and the principles of sustainable tourism. According to the Cape Town Declaration (2002) responsible tourism has the following characteristics:

- It minimizes negative economic, environmental and social impacts.
- It generates greater economic benefits for local people and enhances the well-being of host communities, and improves working conditions and access to the industry.
- It involves local people in decisions that affect their lives and life chances.
- It makes positive contributions to the conservation of natural and cultural heritage, as well as to the maintenance of the world's diversity.
- It provides more enjoyable experiences for tourists through more meaningful connections with local people, and a greater understanding of local cultural, social and environmental issues.
- It provides access for physically challenged people.
- It is culturally sensitive, engenders respect between tourists and hosts, and builds local pride and confidence.

South Africa committed itself to the principle of responsible tourism in its 1996 White Paper on the Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa. The principles of responsible tourism were, however, later elaborated on (DEAT, 2002, p. 2):

Responsible tourism is about enabling communities to enjoy a better quality of life through increased socio-economic benefits and an improved environment. It is also about providing better holiday experiences for guests and good business opportunities for tourism enterprises.

In answer to international calls for responsible and sustainable tourism, the WTO launched an initiative to develop sustainable tourism as a force for poverty alleviation at the World Summit for Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002. This initiative, which was named ST-EP (Sustainable Tourism-Eliminating Poverty), focuses on encouraging sustainable tourism that alleviates poverty, bringing development and jobs to people living on less than a dollar a day. As Kofi Annan, the 7<sup>th</sup> Secretary-General of the United Nations, has indicated, "ST-EP will promote socially, economically and ecologically sustainable tourism, aimed at alleviating poverty and bringing jobs to people in developing countries" (WTO, 2007a, p.1). Tourism's global geographical coverage and expansion as well as its labour-intensive nature support a spread of employment and can be particularly relevant in remote and rural areas where many of the world's poor live. According to the WTO (2007a), statistics show the growing strength of the tourism industry for developing countries. The WTO (2007a) also stated that in 2005 international tourism receipts for developing countries amounted to US\$203 billion. Tourism can be seen as one of the most important export products of developing countries and it is the major foreign exchange earner for 46 of the 49 Least Developed Countries in the world (WTO, 2007a).

### **2.6.6 Evolution of ecotourism research towards community involvement**

In a review of ecotourism research over the last 20 years, Weaver and Lawton (2007) identify three main themes in ecotourism research, namely the definition of ecotourism, the impacts of ecotourism and the 'North-South' divide. These themes are discussed below.

**Definition of ecotourism:** Twenty years of research have led to many different definitions of ecotourism. Finally, comparative agreement has been reached that it is nature-based, has an educational component and should be sustainable in terms of economics and environmental and social dimensions. There is now growing pressure to add consumptive forms of tourism to this, namely hunting and fishing, to expand the cultural component of ecotourism and even to include certain forms of mass tourism. Whether this will be accepted by the ecotourism fraternity remains to be seen.

**Impacts of ecotourism:** There are persistent efforts to understand the impacts of ecotourism, from four main points of view: (1) 'hard scientific', concentrating on the effects of viewing wildlife; (2) community-based models to optimize socio-cultural impacts; (3) econometrical, on the various aspects of incentive effect; and (4) ethical issues of ecotourism's impact.

**'North-South' divide:** The main focus of ecotourism research in the 'North' in more developed countries (MDC) is on markets, the industry and institutions. In the 'South' in less developed countries (LDC), research on venues and community-based models predominates.

This particular study falls under the research theme of i) the global 'South', by investigating specific CBE sites in LDC in southern Africa. And ii) impacts, focusing specifically on the sustainability of the community-based model of ecotourism in order to improve the socio-cultural, economic and environmental performance of CBE.

The study also strives to fill two important gaps identified by Weaver and Lawton (2007): (1) the surprising lack of a significant amount of research having been done on the sustainability of ecotourism ventures; and (2) the lack of studies attempting to identify and quantify the indicators that form the basis for sustainable management. However, the contribution to these two aspects was assessed not on the broad area of ecotourism but more specifically on a subtype of ecotourism, namely community-based ecotourism (CBE).

## **2.7 Community-based ecotourism**

Although it has already been briefly alluded to in Chapter 1 (see Figure 1.1), CBE is both a specific type of ecotourism in which the community approach to tourism is followed, and a specific sub-type of community-based tourism (CBT) which is related to the ecotourism industry. A working definition for CBE was necessary for this study.

Sproule (1996, p. 233) defines CBE ventures as "enterprises that are owned and managed by the community". This is, however, a very restrictive definition, as many CBE ventures are not totally owned or managed by communities. An example of this would be a joint venture that is co-owned and co-managed. This definition is expanded on by Lui (1994) and Cater (1993), both cited in Scheyvens (2002, p. 71), indicating that CBE "ensures that members of a local community have a high degree of control over the activities taking place, and a significant proportion of the economic benefits accrue to them". Kiss (2004, p. 232) emphasizes that CBE has to go beyond merely providing benefits to communities through either providing employment opportunities or contributing to community projects, to involving communities actively in tourism. Kiss (2004) explains that this involvement "has been interpreted as anything from regular consultations, to ensuring that at least some community members participate in tourism-related economic activities, to partial or full community ownership of whole ecotourism enterprises". Denman (2001, p. 2) adds the aspect of involvement as well as of development and management in his definition which states that CBE is ecotourism "where the local community has substantial control over, and involvement in, its development and management, and a major proportion of the benefits remain within the community". Epler Wood (2002, p. 41) aligns herself with this by saying that CBE "implies that the community has substantial control

and involvement in the ecotourism project and that the majority of the benefits remain in the community". For this study, community-based ecotourism is

**responsible travel to natural areas in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (and local culture) that promotes conservation of the environment, where the local community has substantial control over and involvement in development and management, while the majority of the socio-economic benefits accrue to the community.**

### 2.7.1 Types of community-based ecotourism

The first attempts to classify CBE in southern Africa were all done using Namibian community-based tourism ventures as examples (Ashley & Garland, 1994; Ashley, 1995; Palm & Pye, 2001). These studies all classified CBT ventures into four classes or types. However, during an assessment of the status of natural resource-based community tourism in the SADC region, Johnson (2001) describes six types of CBE in southern Africa (Table 2.2).

**Table 2.2:** Types of community-based ecotourism (Johnson, 2001)

<b>1. Operations owned and managed by entrepreneurs from communities</b>
A local entrepreneur from the community has taken an opportunity that has presented itself. Such an opportunity may have arisen as a spin-off from a nearby conventional tourism attraction or operation such as a national park or game reserve or an existing tourism establishment.
<b>2. Operations wholly owned and managed by communities</b>
The community owns and manages the operation entirely, without significant outside assistance. The operation may be run by an informal grouping of community members or it may be a formally elected or appointed committee, trust, association or even a formally registered company.
<b>3. Operations run through informal agreements between private sector operators and communities</b>
This type of CBE venture involves some form of agreement or arrangement between a private sector operator and a community that has some form of tourism product, service or resource to offer tourists.
<b>4. Operations run through formal agreements between private sector operators and communities</b>
This form of CBE is similar to the previous type but in this case it involves a partnership that has been formalized through the signing of formal business agreements and contracts between the two parties.
<b>5. Operational partnerships between state, private sector operators and communities</b>
A three-way partnership exists between the state, the private sector and the community. This type of CBE will also be referred to as a triple joint venture.
<b>6. Operations run by organizations such as national trusts or societies</b>
This form of operation is run by an existing national trust or society. These organizations are usually closely allied with conservation interests or wildlife protection. In this case, however, the 'community' may be defined as the members of the trust or the society. Sometimes the community may also include all the citizens of a particular country.

Although these six categories may be used as a means for classifying all the CBE ventures in this study, it is important to note that these six types are generalizations and that combinations of the types may also exist. Adams and Hulme (2001, p. 22) contend that "the question is not whether state action or community action is better: both are essential, along with private sector support – the challenge is how to develop effective mixes of state, community and private action in specific contexts". These six types of CBE were used to classify the resultant CBE ventures into types, as indicated later.

The success of CBE is reflected in the extent to which it is able to protect natural resources and biodiversity, generate money to finance conservation and contribute to the local economy, educate visitors and members of local communities and thereby encourage environmental advocacy, and involve local people in conservation and development issues (Wall, 1997; Ross & Wall, 1999; Avila Foucat, 2002; Epler Wood, 2002; Kiss, 2004; Mader, 2007). The sustainability of ecotourism is therefore equated to its success. In this study an evaluation framework for monitoring the sustainability of CBE in southern Africa was developed.

### **2.7.2 Sustainability of community-based ecotourism**

Ecotourism is becoming increasingly important in economic terms due to the size and the nature of the tourism market. Besides becoming more and more important in terms of economics, it also leads to both positive and negative economic implications. Positive economic implications relate to increased income and foreign exchange earnings while the negative economic impacts relate to the costs associated with tourism development and the problems associated with seasonality.

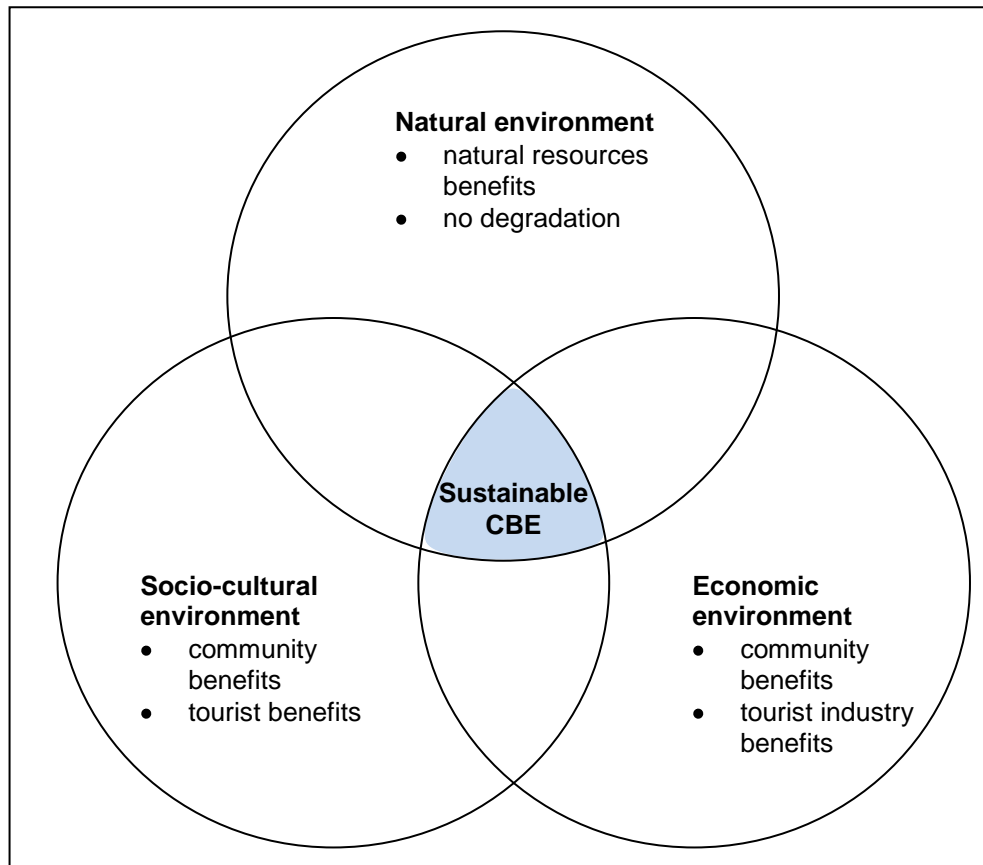
Ecotourism also leads to positive and negative environmental impacts. Positive impacts include generating the stimulus for the conservation of natural and cultural resources as well as providing the financial means for the conservation. The negative impacts result from the encroachment and degradation of these very same natural and cultural environments. Further potential positive social and cultural consequences of ecotourism are the improvement of economic conditions of communities, the provision of better social services and the preservation of cultural values, while negative consequences might include conflict over allocation of resources, social problems and the commercialization of local culture, causing its original value to be degraded (Aronsson, 2000, p. 14-15). In recent years, more attention has been given to the negative impacts of ecotourism and this has resulted in increasing pressure to improve the sustainability of ecotourism. This study attempts to address this matter.

Choi and Sirakaya (2006, p. 1274) argue that “although tourism has brought economic benefits, it has significantly contributed to environmental degradation and negative social and cultural impacts”. If it is not managed carefully and sustainably, CBE is in danger of becoming a self-destructive process destroying the very resources on which it is based. The sustainability of CBE can be determined by measuring the three core areas namely socio-cultural, natural environment and economic sustainability. Sustainable CBE is found where these three areas overlap (Figure 2.10).

There can be no doubt that for CBE to be sustainable it must be economically feasible, because tourism is an economic activity. Economic sustainability implies optimizing the development growth rate at a manageable level with full consideration of the limits of the destination environment. Economic benefits should be fairly distributed throughout the community.



Environmental sustainability recognizes that the natural environment of a community or a destination is not in perpetual supply and may be degraded and depleted. The natural environment must be protected for its own intrinsic value and as a resource for present as well as future generations. Socio-cultural sustainability in turn implies respect for social identity and social capital, for community culture and its assets, and for the social cohesiveness and pride that allows community residents to control their own lives (Choi & Sirakaya, 2006).



**Figure 2.10:** A model of sustainable community-based ecotourism (adapted from Wight, 1995)

The sustainability of the CBE sites was consequently determined using an evaluation framework making use of sustainable tourism indicators: “Indicators have been identified as desirable instruments and/or measuring rods to assess and monitor the progress towards sustainable development” (Selman, 1999 cited in Tsaur, Lin & Lin, 2006, p. 641). The use of sustainable tourism indicators has been advocated by many, including the WTO; this has led a proliferation of programmes implementing sustainable tourism indicators worldwide. There has however been a lack of application of sustainable tourism indicators to community-based ecotourism. This study hopes to address this lack through the development of an evaluation framework for monitoring the sustainability in CBE case studies in southern Africa.

## 2.8 Indicators for sustainable development of tourism

Indicators are defined by Hart (2010, p.1) as “something that helps you understand where you are, which way you are going and how far you are from where you want to be”. An indicator also has the ability to reduce a large quantity of information to its simplest form, without losing the essential information in order to answer questions being asked. Indicators are therefore variables that summarize relevant information to make visible phenomena of interest. Whereas statistics provide raw data with no meaning attached, indicators of sustainable development provide meaning that extends beyond the attributes directly associated with the data.

The use of sustainable tourism indicators has been developed to help tourism managers obtain and use information in support of better decision making regarding sustainable development for tourism. Indicators are proposed to be the building blocks for sustainable tourism and they are intended to be used as tools that respond to issues most important to managers of tourism destinations. The World Tourism Organization (WTO, 2004, p. 8) explains that indicators are

measures of the existence or severity of current issues, signals of upcoming situations or problems, measures of risk and potential need for action, and means to identify and measure the results of our actions. Indicators are information sets which are formally selected to be used on a regular basis to measure changes that are of importance for tourism development and management. They can measure: a) changes in tourism’s own structures and internal factors, b) changes in external factors which affect tourism and c) the impacts caused by tourism. Both qualitative and quantitative information can be used for sustainability indicators.

“Used properly, indicators can become key management tools – performance measures which supply essential information both to managers and all stakeholders in tourism. Good indicators can provide in-time information to deal with pressing issues and help guide the sustainable development of a destination” (WTO, 2007c, p. 4).

According to the World Tourism Organization (WTO, 2004, p. 9) some of the benefits of good indicators are the following:

- better decision making – lower risks and costs
- identification of emerging issues – allowing prevention
- identification of impacts – allowing corrective action when needed
- performance management of the implementation of plans and management activities – evaluating progress in the sustainable development of tourism
- reduced risk of planning mistakes – identifying limits and opportunities
- greater accountability – credible information for the public and other stakeholders of tourism fostering accountability for its wise use in decision making
- constant monitoring that can lead to continuous improvement – building solutions into management

### **2.8.1 History of indicator development and application to tourism**

Indicators were originally developed to assess and monitor changes in national economies. More recently indicators have been used to monitor progress towards sustainable development. Since the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, many organizations associated with the UN have also begun to develop indicators as tools for monitoring progress towards sustainable development (UNCSD, 2001). Bell and Morse (1999, p. 23) point out that “indicators have been seen by many as the core element in operationalising sustainability”. Agenda 21 strongly emphasizes the need to monitor sustainable development using indicators. The Earth Summit+5 reaffirmed that indicators are important tools to reduce the complexity of information on sustainable development and to support national decision making.

The tourism industry has monitored destination performance for many years by using conventional tourism indicators such as arrival numbers and tourist expenditure (Ceron & Dubois, 2003). In the same way as GDP has been found to be an inadequate measure of human welfare, conventional indicators can be seen as inadequate measures of tourism’s true performance. An increasing number of tourism researchers are stressing the need for the development of sustainable indicators that make the important connection between tourism and wider social, economic and environmental processes within a destination (Mowforth & Munt, 1998; Manning, 1999; Miller, 2001; Sirakaya *et al.*, 2001).

In 1993 an initiative began to develop indicators that would aid managers, regulators and communities to better understand future risks associated with tourism. The WTO commissioned a task team to develop indicators which could assist in identifying emerging problems and could act as early warning systems for the tourism industry. This team was immediately faced with conflicting views on what good indicators for tourism actually were, and scientists suggested hundreds of indicators while potential users wanted a simple and timely set of indicators. The task force quickly realized that no perfect set of indicators existed and that each user would have different needs that would have to be fulfilled in terms of number, accuracy, frequency and timeliness of indicators (Manning, 1999).

Roberts and Tribe (2008), who concur with this view, state that the selection of indicators is very subjective and that each user will have their own set of ideal indicators which is dependent on their intended uses of the information. Mac Gillivray and Zadek (1995) and Miller (2001) contend that the process of indicator selection may be strengthened through open transparent negotiation of the final selection of indicators.

The WTO undertook five pilot projects (one each in the USA, Canada and Mexico, and two in Argentina) to investigate the development of indicators for sustainability of tourism ventures. These five sites confirmed both the commonalities and diversity in the contexts of each destination. Central to the development of the indicators in each site was a participatory scanning process which identified key assets and the risks associated with each destination. It

has become clear that the management of tourism in any destination cannot be done in isolation but has to be planned and managed in such a way that the interests of all stakeholders are taken into consideration. Indicators can be an important tool, leading to a more holistic approach to tourism planning and management and creating better understanding between tourism managers, communities and other resource users. Through more effective monitoring of environmental, social and economic factors, indicators provide strategic information that helps prevent unacceptable outcomes, and generally supports decision making (Manning, 1999).

Indicators are those sets of information chosen because they are meaningful to our decisions and can be supported in a way that provides us with the information when needed. The WTO process was designed to assist tourism managers in identifying which information was key to their decisions. This would help them reduce the risks to their enterprise, the community and the environment. Consequently, the WTO identified a core set of indicators which is likely to be useful in almost any situation which needs additional indicators critical for management in a particular ecosystem or type of destination (WTO, 2004).

Roberts and Tribe (2008, p. 576) indicate that there is a general tendency by researchers to equate environmental sustainability to sustainable tourism development, ignoring socio-cultural and (to a lesser extent) economic dimensions of sustainability. Although some research has been done on economic sustainability, little attention has been given to the social sustainability aspects of tourism.

### **2.8.2 Types of indicators**

Indicators may be categorized as either objective or subjective. Tsaur *et al.* (2006) state that objective indicators generally refer to quantitative data and the majority of them could be described through various equations. Subjective indicators, on the other hand, are based on personal feelings and attitudes and are usually qualitative in nature. Objective indicators have been widely used because they are seen to be more rigorous. However, the WTO (1995, p. 7) states that “indicators of sustainability are not always quantifiable and may necessarily be somewhat subjective. This limitation does not in any way detract from their utility as management information in promoting sustainable tourism.” This study utilized both objective and subjective indicators to develop an evaluation framework for determining the sustainability of CBE enterprises in southern Africa.

Indicators are employed for site-specific measurement of impacts and the measurement of change. Indicators are an effective means for site-specific evaluations provided they are practical, facilitate prediction, are sensitive to spatial and temporal variation, and are relevant to a valid conceptual framework (Kreutzwiser, 1993 cited in Ross & Wall, 1999). Indicators were investigated using the conceptual framework of ecotourism as discussed in section 2.7.3 above.

Choi and Sirakaya (2006, p. 1286) have the following to say with regard to sustainable community tourism (SCT):

The review of the literature shows that only a few sustainable indicators for SCT were tested in a destination setting. In order to build the efficiency and effectiveness of indicators that monitor the impact of tourism on natural and cultural resources and host communities, these indicators should be tested in a real rural community setting.

This study attempts to address this deficiency and will develop an evaluation framework to measure the sustainability of CBE sites in a southern African context. It was therefore necessary for the case studies that would test the evaluation framework to be situated in rural community settings

This study made use of indicators to determine the sustainability of CBE ventures in southern Africa at a particular moment in time. It therefore also provided benchmarks against which other CBE ventures can compare their performance. This study did not investigate the sustainability over time of the CBE ventures. It is suggested that future research could monitor and re-measure the sustainability of the selected CBE ventures to establish changes in sustainability over time, using the same indicators.

### **2.8.3 Indicator applications**

The WTO (2004, p. 303) states that “indicators are not an end in themselves. They become relevant only if used in tourism planning and management processes, and ideally they become effective in creating better and more sustainable decisions.”

The WTO (2004) indicates a series of applications in which indicators support tourism planning and management:

**Indicators and policy:** Indicators are helpful in identifying the key policy issues that need to be addressed during the development process to achieve effective and responsible management.

**Using indicators to strategically plan for tourism:** Planning is about knowing what you want, how you will get there and how you will know if you have achieved it. Indicators are useful in all three of these phases of planning for continual improvement, as they provide the means to measure how close the tourism venture is to the desired state or outcome.

**Indicators and regulation:** Most regulations are based on the achievement of a specific standard. Indicators assist in measuring adherence to these desired standards.

**Carrying capacity and limits to tourism:** Indicators can be very useful in monitoring whether specific limits or carrying capacities which may affect the sustainability of tourism are being reached.

**Public reporting and accountability:** The information collected through indicators needs to be shared with the public in order to ensure transparency and accountability.

**Indicators and certification programmes:** Indicators are used to monitor and measure the adherence to a series of criteria as prescribed by the certification authority or programme.

**Performance measurement and benchmarking:** Tourism ventures are increasingly being called upon to measure their performance in relation to other tourism ventures and benchmarks. Indicators play a critical role in determining both benchmarks and baselines for comparison as well as the performance of tourism venture in relation to one another and the predetermined benchmarks.

#### **2.8.4 Growing indicator initiatives worldwide**

Indicators are now increasingly playing a role in the planning, development and management of tourism destinations as well as in certification.

Agenda 21, resulting from the 1992 Earth Summit, indicated in Chapter 40 the need for appropriate information to support decision making and suggested the establishment of indicators for sustainable development. In 1994 the World Travel and Tourism Council responded to Agenda 21 by launching Green Globe a global environmental certification programme. Green Globe is a worldwide environmental management and awareness programme for the travel and tourism industry and it is open to companies of any size, type and location that commit to improvements in environmental practice. The aim of Green Globe was to turn the principles of Agenda 21 into practice. In 1999 Green Globe became an independent company (Font & Buckley, 2001). Environmental certification programmes have provided a significant interest in measuring indicators for certification purposes. The tourism industry further responded to Agenda 21 through the development of Agenda 21 for the travel and tourism industry (WTO, WTTC & Earth Council, 1996). It presents indicators as a key priority action area. As part of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) which sets standards for sustainability reporting, the Tour Operators Initiative has provided draft guidelines for sustainability reporting through the use of performance indicators. Global sustainable tourism criteria were developed as part of a broad initiative to arrive at a common understanding of sustainable tourism. A set of baseline criteria launched at the World Conservation Congress in October 2008 indicated the minimum that any tourism business should aspire to reach (Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria, 2010). At the time of selecting the baseline indicators for this study these criteria had not yet become public.

Since the early 1990s the WTO has been promoting the use of sustainable tourism indicators as essential tools for policy making, planning and management of destinations. The WTO has organized a series of regional and national workshops to train tourism officials and professionals on the application of sustainable tourism indicators at pilot destinations (WTO, 2010). These workshops were held in several countries and with the aims as indicated in some cases (Table 2.3):

**Table 2.3:** Indicator workshops organized by the WTO between 1999 and 2008 (WTO, 2010)

- Hungary (1999) for Central and Eastern European countries
- Mexico (1999) for Central American nations and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean
- Sri Lanka (2000)
- Argentina (2000) for South American countries
- Croatia (2001) for the Mediterranean islands
- Cyprus (2003) to assist the Cyprus Tourism Organization in developing a national system of sustainability indicators for tourism
- Trinidad and Tobago (2004) jointly with the Association of Caribbean States
- Thailand (2005), regional workshop with a special focus on Sustainable Redevelopment of Tourism Destinations for Tsunami Recovery.
- Bolivia (2005) for countries in the Andean Community
- China (2005)
- Saudi Arabia (2006) for countries of the Middle East and North African Region
- Kazakhstan (2006)
- Indonesia (2007)
- Montenegro (2007)
- Philippines (2008)

These workshops have stimulated worldwide growth in the application of the sustainable tourism indicators – from the Caribbean, Mexico, the United Kingdom, India, Australia and New Zealand to many European countries. This list of WTO workshops shows that none have been organized in southern African and this could be a reason for the apparent lack of research relating to the application of sustainable tourism indicators in a southern African context. There are three notable exceptions: Spenceley (2003; 2005) discusses the implementation of a new Sustainable Nature-based Tourism Assessment Toolkit (SUNTAT) which was used to evaluate the environmental sustainability performance of privately and publicly owned nature-based tourism enterprises located inside protected areas. This Toolkit provides a complex and exhaustive list of criteria for the investigation of nature-based tourism ventures. Many of these criteria are complex in their collection and analysis and are not considered to be relevant for the investigation of CBE ventures. An example of this includes the complex economic data which CBE ventures are not yet collecting. The second initiative aiming at encouraging equitable and sustainable tourism is Fair Trade in Tourism in South Africa (FTTSA). FTTSA promotes the concept of Fair Trade in Tourism and markets fair and responsible tourism using the 'Fair Trade in Tourism' Trademark (Spenceley, 2004). The third southern African initiative is the Heritage Environmental rating programme that offers certification throughout the tourism industry in South Africa (Heritage, 2010). According to Koch *et al.* (2002) all enterprises enrolled with the Heritage programme automatically receive Green Globe affiliate status. Although both FTTSA and the Heritage scheme provide excellent motivation to move towards greater environmental and to a lesser extent social sustainability, they fail to incorporate a broad range of social, economic and environmental sustainability issues.

### **2.8.5 Development and implementation of sustainable tourism indicators**

In tourism literature there has been a keen interest in the issue of monitoring sustainable tourism, but there are very few accounts of the methodological aspects of indicator

development. Most existing tourism monitoring literature focuses either on the need for indicators, critiques of existing indicators, the selection of the correct indicators or the results of monitoring activities (Miller, 2001; Roberts & Tribe, 2008). The process of indicator development is generally left to the technical skill of the researcher involved and is seldom critically examined. Miller and Twining-Ward (2005) state that this is not just as a result of a reluctance to engage in technological and methodological discussions, but that it reflects the early stage of development of indicators of sustainable tourism, the complexity of the process, the small number and reflective immaturity of most of the sustainable tourism monitoring programmes currently in existence.

Indicators need to be carefully designed and selected to suit specific local circumstances. They should be designed as part of an integrated development system to ensure that the results feed naturally into decision-making structures and that a difference is subsequently made in the way tourism is managed. One of the few existing accounts of the phases of the development of an indicator programme is the WTO's 'Indicators of Sustainable Development for Tourism Destinations: A Guidebook' (WTO, 2004). This document identifies 12 steps to indicator development and use. These steps are listed below:

**Initial phase: Research and organization**

Step 1: Definition/delineation of the destination

Step 2: Use of participatory processes

Step 3: Identification of tourism assets and risks

Step 4: Long-term vision for a destination

**Indicator development phase**

Step 5: Selection of priority issues

Step 6: Identification of desired indicators

Step 7: Inventory of data sources

Step 8: Selection procedures

**Implementation phase**

Step 9: Evaluation of feasibility

Step 10: Data collection and analysis

Step 11: Accountability, communications and reporting

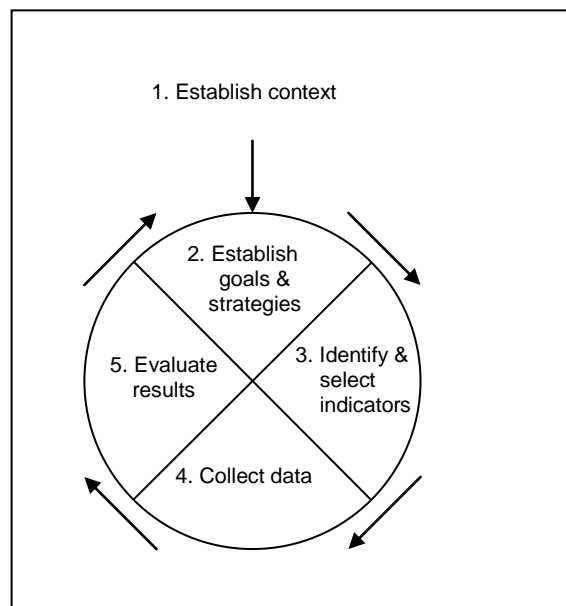
Step 12: Monitoring and evaluation of application of indicators

Another useful source for planning an indicator programme is the Bellagio Principles which were developed in 1996 as part of the IISD's Measurement and Indicators Programme for sustainable development. Ten principles were developed by practitioners and researchers from around the world to guide the indicator development process, from the design of indicators to the communication of results. Principle 1 deals with the starting point of any assessment through the establishment of a clear vision and goals. Principles 2-5 focus on the content of the monitoring, stressing the need to merge a sense of whole system with an understanding of the priority issues. Principles 6-8 look at the process of monitoring and principles 9-10 address the ongoing challenge with the implementation of monitoring (Hardi & Zdan, 1997). The inclusion of the building of institutional capacity is a particularly important, element especially in the case of developing countries.



A very comprehensive discussion on the implementation of sustainable development indicators and their development is provided by Meadows (1998) who reports on a five-day workshop on indicators held by an international network of sustainable development experts (The Balaton Group). This report identifies 10 steps to indicator development. The first step involves the following: the selection of a small group of stakeholders to facilitate the indicator development process (1), clarity on the purpose of the indicator set (2), identifying the communities' shared values and vision (3), reviewing existing models of indicators and data (4), drafting a set of proposed indicators (5), convening a participatory selection process (6), performing a technical overview (7), researching the data (8), publishing and promoting the findings (9) and regularly updating the work (10). These steps are valuable references for the development of indicator programmes. But as with the WTO (2004), the Bellagio Principles and the indicator work of the Balaton Group all fail to convert the indicator results into actions. They also fail to review and evaluate the indicators used.

Miller and Twining-Ward (2005), Fraser *et al.* (2006) and Reed *et al.* (2006) propose that a more adaptive management process to indicator development be applied. Fraser *et al.* (2006) and Reed *et al.* (2006) designed a five-step cycle that starts with establishing the context and assessing the problems through a series of stakeholder workshops. The second step involves establishing the goals and strategies for indicators. The third step involves identifying, selecting and designing the indicators, while the fourth step involves the actual collection of the indicator data. The last step involves evaluating the results and adjusting the indicators and the actions based on the lessons learned before the next round of monitoring begins.



**Figure 2.11:** Illustration of the adaptive learning process of developing and implementing sustainability indicators (adapted from Miller & Twining-Ward (2005), Fraser *et al.* (2006) and Reed *et al.* (2006))

According to Miller and Twining-Ward (2005) there are several advantages to the adaptive management approach to indicator development, especially in the context of a developing country. First, it is a flexible learning cycle. Second, it stresses the organizational learning aspects of monitoring, building capacity and human resources. Third, it shows clearly and visually that developing, designing and implementing indicators form only part of the process. The real challenge lies in the implementation, monitoring and actions that take place once the results of the indicator evaluation process have been obtained. The adaptive management approach to indicator development and use provides a unique cyclic methodology to cope with the continuous changes which often occur in the tourism industry.

Reed *et al.* (2006) state that a careful balance has to be maintained between the different approaches to indicator development. On the one side lies the expert-led or top-down approaches and on the other side lies the community-based or bottom-up approaches. Indicators that emerge from a top-down approach are generally collected rigorously, scrutinized by experts and assessed for relevance using statistical tools. This approach often fails to engage local stakeholders. Indicators from bottom-up methods tend to be rooted in an understanding of the local context and are derived through understanding local perceptions of the environment and society. Given that sustainable development is an all-embracing paradigm, applying to all scales and to all countries, there has also been a deep and prevalent ethos towards participatory selection of indicators. While there are many top-down indicators for sustainable development, there are also many efforts to create community indicators for sustainable development to encourage their use at a local level. Local Agenda 21, resulting from the Earth Summit, requires the establishment of local programmes and recommends the use of indicators to help facilitate change (Morse, 2004).

Denman (2001, p. 24) emphasizes that “[p]rojects will be considerably strengthened by regular monitoring and feedback to assess success and identify weaknesses that may need to be adjusted. Simple indicators should cover economic performance, local community reaction and well-being, visitor satisfaction, and environmental changes. Monitoring should be kept simple and feedback should be obtained from visitors, tour operators and local people.” Simpson (2008b, p.263) supports this need for ongoing monitoring by stating that “[t]he importance of ongoing monitoring cannot be understated in order to refine strategies, mitigate costs, maximize benefits to communities and ensure long-term sustainability of individual tourism initiatives”.

The results of indicator monitoring are not always self-evident and will be of little value if they cannot be accurately interpreted and understood. Baselines, thresholds, targets and benchmarks provide valuable tools to assist in the interpretation of the results obtained from indicator measurement. Baselines normally represent the agreed starting point of the monitoring process, often being the first year for which data has been collected. The indicator results are

then interpreted based on the degree of variance from the baseline. This tool works well as long as it is clear that the baseline may not necessarily represent a desired state, as a critical limit may already have been exceeded. A baseline, as the first tool used in the interpretation of results, does not always indicate what action is necessary and it will only indicate if a previous level has been exceeded. Additional tools for the interpretation need to be used in conjunction with the baseline data. These tools are thresholds, targets and benchmarks. Thresholds indicate a critical point or threshold that should not be passed. Thresholds often act as an early warning system which if reached should trigger some form of management action to ensure that the issue is resolved or remediated. Targets and benchmarks provide a focus or an aim of a desired subjective state that would like to be achieved. These targets and benchmarks continuously drive management actions towards the attainment of the target. Baseline data therefore forms a critical component in the interpretation of indicator results.

The process of consultation and stakeholder engagement is often a very time- and resource-intensive process (Fraser *et al.*, 2006; Reed *et al.*, 2006; Reddy, 2008). An alternative evaluation framework for monitoring the sustainability of tourism ventures that is time-efficient and cost-efficient is necessary. This study aimed to develop a time- and cost-efficient evaluation framework that can be used to determine the sustainability of community-based ecotourism ventures across southern Africa and to test its applicability in a field setting.

## **2.9 Summary**

The review of the literature has highlighted the major influence that the emergence of sustainable development has had on travel and tourism market trends. As tourists become more aware of their impacts on the environment, they are demanding more sustainable tourism experiences. These changing market trends, together with the devolution of natural resource management rights and responsibilities from the state to communities, has placed communities in a very favourable position to harness their natural and cultural assets to capitalize on the growing visitor arrivals and receipts in order to alleviate poverty within rural communities. These CBE ventures can only be successful and sustainable if the three primary elements, community, conservation and tourism, are managed effectively in an interdependent way. Sustainability investigations often neglect social and economic issues and focus primarily on environmental issues. This study focused on all three core elements of sustainability: social, economic and environmental, in order to improve the performance of CBE ventures in southern Africa.

A number of research gaps that were identified as a result of the review of the literature were addressed by this study. These gaps include a lack of research on the sustainability of ecotourism ventures and a lack of studies attempting to quantify indicators for sustainability. A need has also been expressed to test sustainability indicators in real rural community settings. This study addressed these gaps through developing an evaluation framework for determining

the sustainability of CBE ventures in southern Africa. It is also foreseeable that the study will apply sustainability indicators at rural CBE settings.

Increased attention on the negative impacts of ecotourism has brought about a corresponding increase in pressure to improve the sustainability of ecotourism. However, before the sustainability performance can be improved, it first has to be measured. Sustainable tourism indicators have been identified as valuable tools for determining and monitoring sustainability. Indicators have also been said to operationalise sustainability by providing social, economic and environmental information that supports more effective and holistic tourism planning, management and decision making. This study made use of both objective and subjective indicators to develop a time and cost-effective framework for monitoring the sustainability of CBE ventures in southern Africa. The results of testing the applicability of the framework provide baseline data that may be used for benchmarking future CBE sustainability investigations in southern Africa.

This resultant evaluation framework should be seen as a first step in a cyclic adaptive learning approach to the development and implementation of sustainable tourism indicators in CBE ventures. This approach identifies, selects and measures sustainability in order to provide feedback to the management of CBE ventures so that they may take the required actions to improve their sustainability. The process is then repeated periodically to review and monitor the changes that have occurred.

Developing successful CBE ventures based on the three cornerstones of environmental protection and conservation, providing benefits to communities, and sustainable, responsible tourism through effective management and facilitation can go a long way in responding to the trends emerging in the literature. Ongoing benefits have to be provided for communities (social sustainability), while environmental conservation is not compromised (environmental sustainability) and an economically viable tourism product is maintained (economic sustainability).

The chapter that follows addresses the research design and methodology of the study as well as the selection of case studies for further investigation.