

# 1

# Introduction

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## ■ Background

*International Cases in Sustainable Travel & Tourism* is a joint initiative of the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) and the Building Excellence in Sustainable Tourism Education Network (BEST Education Network). The WTTC is an international forum for business leaders which works to raise awareness of travel and tourism as one of the world's largest industries. The BEST Education Network is an international consortium of tourism educators and researchers committed to furthering the creation and dissemination of knowledge within the field of sustainable tourism.

The notion of sustainable tourism development has become a core principle in many tourism programs and degrees. The 1972 Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment and the 1980 World Conservation Strategy of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) created the momentum for the Brundtland Commission and the subsequent release of *Our Common Future* (or *The Brundtland Report*). *Our Common Future* defined the concept of sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". This definition has been enthusiastically embraced by educators and some parts of the tourism industry who recognise that the survival of tourism relies on the quality of cultural and natural resources on which the industry depends. Despite this, sustainable development has been criticised as a vague concept. Brundtland's definition of sustainable development represents a threshold learning concept for learners but it remains a complex concept to grasp without clear examples in a range of different contexts.

This book includes a collection of contemporary international best practice cases, representing award winners and finalists from the WTTC Tourism for Tomorrow Awards. Since 2003, the WTTC Tourism for Tomorrow Awards have recognised best practice in sustainable tourism in four different categories: