

Geotourism: a global phenomenon

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Geotourism is now an established global phenomenon. In both natural and built environments it provides a holistic approach to understanding an area by providing information about its Abiotic, Biotic and Cultural components. The advancement of geotourism completes our understanding of the environment arguing that to fully understand and appreciate the environment we must know about the Abiotic elements of climate and geology first, as these determine the Biotic elements of animals and plants which live there. By extension, the combination of the Abiotic and Biotic elements determine the Cultural Landscape of how people have lived in the area in the past, as well as how they live there today, in the present. Geotourism attractions are now being developed around the world primarily as a tool for the sustainable development of local and regional communities. A major vehicle for such development is through Geoparks. This presentation will define and characterise Geotourism then illustrate how it is contributing to regional development in a range of countries around the globe by adding economic value through specific attractions, activities, tours and amenities. It concludes by advocating the development of Geotourism in Geoparks needs to be based on best practices as geotourists are becoming more aware and discerning.