

Managing Cruise Ship Impacts: Guidelines for Current and Potential Destination Communities

***A Backgrounder for Prospective Destination Communities
by Ted Manning, President Tourisk Inc. 2006***

The cruise ship industry is one of the largest components of tourism and is experiencing rapid growth. Cruise lines are seeking new routes and ports. Each year, the average size of ships is larger, with many carrying more than 2000 passengers and 1000 crew. At the same time, smaller ships (and some larger ones) are able to bring tourists to new ports which were previously inaccessible or off the beaten path. While there are clearly benefits to be gained from cruise ship visits, there are also issues which destinations must consider, to optimize benefits and reduce negative impacts of cruise ship visits.

Destinations are not equal. The unique situation of each destination dictates how attractive it is likely to be to a cruise line. This also relates directly to the leverage that a destination may have in dealings with potential and current cruise operators.



***Puerto Chacabuco Chile
Tiny port hosts more than
1000 visitors as Norwegian
Dream visits***

Key issues for destinations:

1. Deciding to Seek Cruise Tourism

Cruise visits seem to have considerable potential as a source of economic development for coastal communities. The initial reaction is therefore likely to be positive – as with other tourism proposals, when cruise visits are proposed. But, as

with all development initiatives, cruise tourism brings both potentially positive and negative impacts. Communities seeking new or enlarged cruise visits should carefully consider a number of factors. Because of the nature of the cruise sector, particularly for smaller communities arrival of cruise ships and their passengers may stimulate or require considerable change, and this change may involve the entire destination and its communities.

All stakeholders need to become involved early in the process, to ensure that all the values and concerns are addressed, and to delineate the negotiation position to be taken in dealing with cruise lines and other partners. While the decision to seek cruise ship visits will be led by community/political leaders, there are many potentially involved and affected. The question of whether to seek or permit cruise ships is therefore best phrased at the scale of the community or destination. *Recommendation: use a participatory process to consider cruise tourism development or expansion - involve all of the stakeholders.*



Zihuantanezo Mexico has a variety of accessible assets which attract cruises – beaches, traditional architecture, markets, safe harbour.

2. Assets Assessment

Potential cruise destinations need to be objective regarding the assets which they may have. Why would cruise lines and their visitors wish to visit: what is there which would keep them interested and cause return ship visits? When cruise ship firms choose destinations many factors come into play. These include:

- Key natural and cultural assets of the port and of sites which can be visited while the ship is in port. Because most port visits tend to permit from ten to twelve hours on land, sites may be considered as assets for the destination only if they are accessible on tours of eight hours or less. Variety of experiences is important – as tourists seek a range of different activities and tend to have different activity levels and capabilities. Note that in some destinations the location of port facilities is important, and may be an issue between destination values and those of the cruise line. The fact that it is possible to take small boats directly to an adjacent reef or beach may be seen as very positive by visitors and tour managers, but places fragile environments at risk (e.g. Cozumel where the new cruise port facility is adjacent to Paraiso reef). Docking in town may help town merchants but reduce the ability to sell tours – as visitors walk from the ship.
- Port facilities – accessibility and convenience for those embarking and disembarking. Because many cruise passengers may be older or disabled, ease of access is important. While ships may use tendering to ports where there are no or unsuitable shore facilities, this is not seen as a good or permanent solution; poor weather, particularly winds can prevent tendering – leaving disappointed tourists on board and shore tours having to refund payments. Many older tourists or those who are less mobile find tendering difficult, and may remain on the ship to avoid the trouble. Some ports have invested in fast comfortable tenders (Los Cabos, Belize City) to try to mitigate the problem. It should be noted that tendering time means that tourists have less time on shore – sometimes only a few hours before they need to line up to return to the ship (e.g. Falkland Islands – where a significant percentage of visiting cruises are unable to land passengers due to high winds/storms)
- Location relative to other destinations and departure ports. Most tours favour ports where the entire day and if possible evening can be spent in port – and passage to the next port occurs overnight. This means that ports which are less than twelve hours sailing (at about 20 Knots) from other ports or from home ports will be sought actively. (Many tourists do not find days at sea as interesting as port days)
- Security is an important consideration – particularly near the docking facility and in areas where tours or pedestrians may go. Cruise and tour operators may have their own requirements for safety, insurance, site certification, tour and guide certification etc. Cruise lines are asking for military escorts near port and at port facilities – and most ports have responded.
- Infrastructure – suitable numbers of buses, guides, police, toilets, parking to handle the tourist numbers (some Caribbean destinations like Cozumel and St. Thomas can have as many as a dozen ships in port at one time.

- Provisioning - for some lines local provisioning of food, drink, clean water is done in tour ports, particularly for longer tours. A growing trend is to carry nearly all goods from the home port - due to the rapid growth of shorter tours, concerns regarding food safety, and economies of scale of provisioning at major ports like Miami or Tampa.
- Port costs – in a competitive environment, cruise lines have sometimes played ports against each other – if you have high dockage fees, they shift to another port or even another country. (Note: in the past this also was used to avoid environmental regulations, but most major firms are now party to international standards re vessel contamination. (see Conservation International, Lighthouse Foundation, and WTO Indicators – Cruise Destinations section)
- Marketing – note that most cruises are marketed as a package of several destinations and experiences. Specific cruises may alter the general formula to sell to a niche market (Latin music lovers, birdwatchers, scuba divers) and modify the itinerary accordingly. This is less true of large lines (e.g. Norwegian offers the same seven day tour every week out of Houston – to Cozumel, Roatan, Belize and Cancun- and draws on a large and varied market – from all of central and southern US. Many other lines offer similar year-round or half-year itineraries.) For those on a one week rotation, the day of arrival each week is not really negotiable.

Before seeking cruise visits (or responding to proposals) destinations will therefore need to examine how these factors relate to what they seek for their community or destination. Dealings with any cruise line will need to consider all of the above issues.

It should be noted that, similar to other tourism development, tourists will have many impacts on the milieu and services of visited communities and sites. This new activity may displace current activities by other tourists or by local residents – causing changes



in costs, access and variety. These changes can be positive or negative (overloading dock facilities or causing improved ones to be built; creating new services, or pricing the locals out of existing ones.) The same change may be viewed as positive by some (who may benefit) and negative by others (who may not benefit).

Male Maldives - a new cruise destination

Any asset assessment needs to consider both the current capacity and potential changes to it. For example, current availability of transportation (only 50 buses available on the island for tour groups) is a short term limiting factor. It could be changed, but only with some assurances that there will be a continuing need.

Recommendation: Do a thorough SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis to clearly identify the destination's assets, liabilities, opportunities and risks. Does the destination have a realistic chance at getting the tourism it wants, and the benefits from it? What are the conditions under which cruise ship visits are desired?

3. Key Success Factors for Cruise Destinations (from Cruise line perspective)

Cruise ship visitors tend to arrive in large numbers, all at once. In some ports, several ships may arrive almost simultaneously (e.g., up to a dozen at a time in Cozumel Mexico). Typically, cruise ships try to arrive early in the morning in a port, and leave between late afternoon and midnight. This is designed to give passengers time to undertake recreational activities, take shore tours, shop, and explore the port community and to maximize their daylight time for shore activities.

Variety is an important element for visitors. Where a ship ties up near the centre of town (e.g. St. Thomas Virgin Islands or Acapulco Mexico), many tourists will choose to walk around the town and market areas, and may make more than one tour to town (returning to the ship for lunch or to unload purchases). Those taking short tours (3-4 hours) may also have the opportunity to do more than one experience.

Where a ship has to use tenders to take passengers ashore, or docks some distance from a town or commercial centre, there may be little opportunity to shop or interact with locals, unless this is provided on a tour leaving from dockside. Often those taking tours or going diving, fishing, rafting, hiking, riding etc will have nearly no opportunity to spend money in the destination, rushing past the dockside vendors to board a bus and hurrying on return to make the ship's departure time.

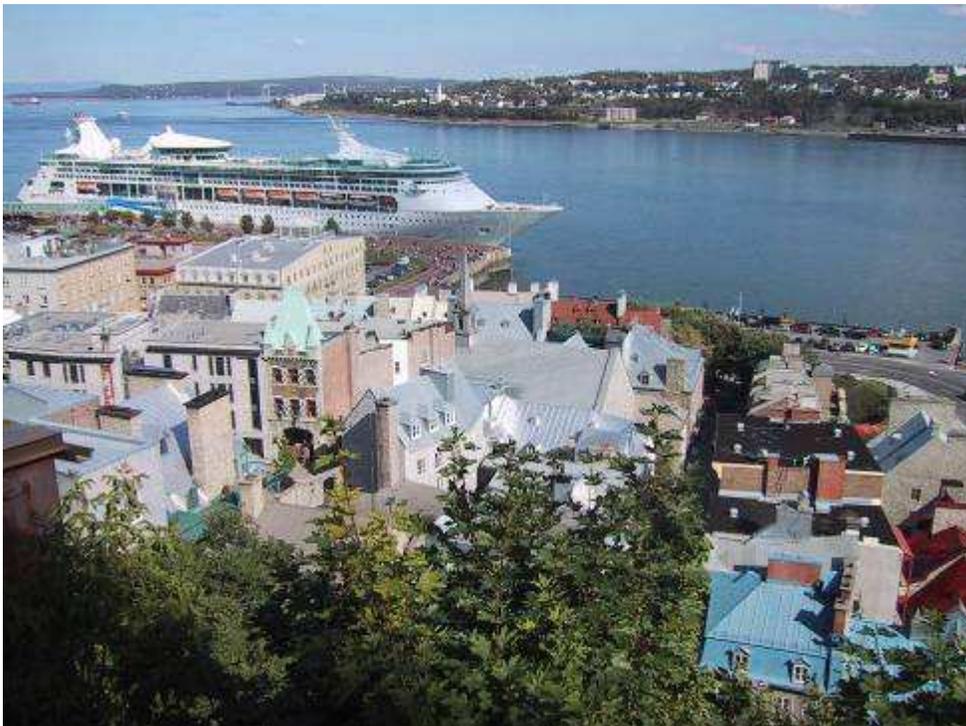
*St George's Grenada
where visitors walk
off the ship into the
town centre*



Port and tour managers need to consider these factors – and design the offer to try to optimize destination benefits as well as visitor satisfaction. It should be noted that the UNEP estimates that 44.5% of all cruise ship passengers were in the Caribbean, and that the nationality of cruise ship passengers worldwide is approximately 50% American. (see UNEP website <http://www.uneptie.org/pc/tourism/sust-tourism/economic.htm#negative-econ>)

Tourist management is a key factor in the reputation of a port. Where it is done well, passengers are provided with hassle free experiences, a variety of opportunities, and this enhances the reputation of a destination. The cruise lines monitor passenger reactions carefully and are very sensitive to the complaints they receive. Note that some destinations (e.g., la Guaira, [Caracas] Venezuela, or north and West African ports) have been dropped from the schedules of most lines in recent years due to visitor problems (mainly perceived security issues) and dissatisfaction with the experiences. (Note: One line, Princess still has one ship visiting la Guaira every two weeks) Alternate stops were added to replace those abandoned (e.g. Aruba, Canaries, and Spanish ports)

Recommendation: Do a reality check regarding what visitors are likely to do, how many, where? Is your community cruise ready? What would you have to do to be prepared? Which tours can be offered? Who will guide them? Is there sufficient infrastructure? Communities and destination authorities need to be aware of what the cruise lines seek, and which factors are critical for the cruise lines.



*Quebec City
Canada – a
seasonal
cruise
destination*

4. Destination Leverage

Many destinations have very little ability to choose whether, when and how cruise ships visit. In areas like the Caribbean, destination communities are in de facto competition for cruise ship visits. While some destinations have attained “must see” status, many compete head to head for visitors who wish to see beaches, reefs, jungle, or colonial capitals. If a cruise ship substitutes one island for another in an itinerary, much of the market will not care. This can constrain any leverage a port has in trying to get any specific conditions.

Timing of arrivals is more likely to depend on sailing time from the home port or last port than on the wishes of the destination. Thus some small ports may have three ships in port on Tuesdays, and none on other days of the week. Cozumel, for example, is typically the first port from the US or the last port before return to the US for all lines providing tours of the Western Caribbean. Up to a dozen ships have simultaneously visited the small island on a Tuesday or Thursday in season, with few visits on other days. Ships must leave at a specific hour to reach home port in the morning on Saturday or Sunday – and the departure time is often early in the afternoon, meaning that tourists do not eat on shore. (Note that the Hard Rock Café and Planet Hollywood, among other restaurants, have closed shop in Cozumel)

Key concerns:

- Day in port – is there any means to spread visits across the week or season? This has been successfully done by regions (Alaska is a model) where several tourism destinations work together to try to negotiate routing, scheduling, environmental regulation etc. to some effect. The Association of Caribbean States has discussed this approach but it is not yet in place. Even so, cruising is very seasonal – with Dec-Mar the prime time in tropical destinations like the Caribbean and very little cruise traffic in the summer or hurricane seasons.
- Can we influence arrival or departure times and/or length of time spent in port? There are few examples of success in this area (although a significant event – such as the night-time cliff diving in Acapulco can cause the overall tour designers to stage the ports so that the ship is in port later – due to demand from passengers – this may have been a factor in the substitution of Zihuantanejo for Manzanillo by some lines as the first port after Acapulco – allowing a later departure.)
- Can we influence which tours are provided? Can we get any assistance from the cruise line in establishing the infrastructure to manage the tours (transport, guiding, tour development, awareness?)
- Provisioning: can we obtain any provisioning from our port (e.g., fruit, beverages, local food products)? Many of the lines provision only at home port – hence the serving of only California wines on cruises from Chile to Argentina, or the serving of only imported Puerto Rican rum on trips which dock at Jamaica or Barbados.

Most destinations have little leverage. In places where ships land at several destinations (Alaska, Hawaii, Mexico’s west coast, Chile, Turkey) there may be

greater national capacity to set standards. For example, while Belize has a “Belize Cruise Tourism Policy (1999), apart from adherence to international waste management protocols, it is unclear whether it has been able to significantly influence the landings or on-shore offer for the increasing number of visiting ships. Work is ongoing by Conservation International and several cruise lines to develop codes of practice relative to management of onshore impacts but these are not yet in place.

Recommendation: Like Belize or Alaska, a host country should have a clear policy framework. Ideally, destinations should collaborate with the region in which they are located (and the cruise lines) to develop a comprehensive policy and means of ensuring compliance. Destinations will ideally have defined goals and clear lines of authority for negotiation with potential cruise line visitors. Where several desirable destinations are within the control of one nation, leverage may be enhanced.

Potential models for such policies are those now in place in:

- *Alaska, where several initiatives are being discussed and emissions regulations are now in place (a good review of more general initiatives related to Alaska and done by Hawaii to learn from its experiences is http://www.hawaii.gov/tourism/files/2004_conference_mcconkie.pdf*
- *Belize http://www.destinationsbelize.com/cruise_s.htm,*
- *specific reef systems Australia’s Great Barrier Reef- http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au/corp_site/key_issues/tourism/cs_policy.html*
- *an emerging initiative for Mesoamerican reefs www.mbrs.org.bz/TORs/cruise.pdf*

Note that there is also work by Conservation International on shore impacts with publication expected in 2006



Roatan Honduras – when two or three ships visit at once there is a problem with congestion in port and shortage of taxis and buses

5. Integrating Cruise Tourism into Broader National/Regional Goals

Tourism cannot be planned effectively apart from broader destination or regional planning. Many of the key assets from the point of view of cruise visitors and indeed all tourists are managed by other industries. These include the small boats which make the port attractive, the main street facades where historic architecture is the valued feature, the protected wetland habitats, reefs, and dunes etc which are the *raison d'être* for tours.

Considerations:

- Port location – a nation with several potential port sites can consider which ports are most likely to help achieve broader goals – for example to spread tourism to new areas, help strengthen infrastructure, create tourism routes, provide investment for key facilities etc. , (note the factors which may influence cruise line decisions on which ports they wish to use – above.)
- Design of shore facilities – at the port and for tours
- Human resource considerations (language, training etc for guides, coordinators, civil authorities etc)
- Investment – can the cruise lines and/or visitors help in funding the infrastructure they need – are the vehicles in place to, for example allow contributions, partnerships in protection etc. for the sites to be visited. Are there assurances for the medium term (will the line continue to visit for a known period, justifying the investment in new infrastructure, training, etc.?)

Recommendation: Cruise ship tourism should be part of a broader development plan or at least a national/regional tourism plan. Plans for other sector development and for other forms of tourism create cumulative effects – both benefits and impacts and need to be considered together for sustainable destinations. Planning should have a long to medium term dimension.

6. Considerations re Tourism Impacts on the Destination

When tourists arrive in large numbers they inevitably place stresses on the destination. They can overwhelm infrastructure if there has been insufficient planning (2000 impatient tourists lined up to go through one security checkpoint), as well as cause impacts (both positive and negative) on the society, economy and environment of a destination. The average cruise ship now exceeds 2000 passengers and 1000 crew. Plans must address the maximum numbers possible - preparations to accommodate one ship are likely to be insufficient on a day that three arrive at once (berths, taxis, buses, seats in restaurants, toilet facilities, trained guides, parking places etc)

The following factors are important to consider:

- **Infrastructure:** Infrastructural considerations are usually the simplest to address
 - direct capacity - number of berths, water and sewage facilities, customs agents, pilots, port police, loading and offloading equipment
 - related capacity - number of buses, taxis, drivers, guides, translators, organizers, tourist police

Note that infrastructural limits can be changed – by investment. Destinations need to consider whether they have sufficient assurance that the port or attraction will continue to attract visitors over a period long enough to justify the investment. (Cruise lines often change ports – for security, economic or visitor satisfaction reasons, and major facilities or services may be left unused)

- **Social:** Is the host community prepared to accommodate the tourists? Social impacts include increased contact with foreigners who may have different customs, behaviours than local residents. Noise, occupation of spaces (churches, restaurants, parks, beaches etc.) which were previously the exclusive use of the local community will occur. New facilities may be built enhancing job opportunities while in other cases local shops may be replaced by new ones. Some community members may receive benefits – while others may not. Who wins, who loses? In some cases the tourist impact will be concentrated (e.g. tours to a small village site). (See social indicators section of *WTO Indicators of Sustainable Development for Tourism Destinations: A Guidebook* for greater detail)
- **Environmental:** Cruise ship environmental impacts are of two types – those associated with ship operations and those associated with tourist activities. Conservation International (and many jurisdictions) have created guidelines for ship operations which are a key point of reference for control of damage from e.g. emissions, anchors, waste disposal, oil spills etc. Most major cruise lines subscribe to these guidelines, and in some jurisdictions there is strict enforcement. (see - Conservation International: *A Shifting Tide* 2003)



Istanbul Turkey – provides variety in tours and shore excursions

On-shore effects and actions by cruise ship visitors have received less attention. There are a number of specific areas of concern:

- a. Impacts of shore tours on ecological resources. (specific guidelines for tours such as Green Globe 21 are a good point of reference – for management of visitor impacts) Specifically control of numbers, timing and behaviour are of concern.
 - b. Impacts of sea tours on fragile ecology (notably reefs) The WWF Mesoamerican Caribbean Reef Ecoregion initiative has identified some substantive steps – notably inventory of sensitive areas, awareness, and negotiation of conditions of access for tours etc. Specific capacity and behavioural guidelines (again see Green Globe 21 as an example) would be very useful. There is a capability to negotiate where ships can anchor, which ecosystems are to be accessible to them, and the conditions of access.
 - c. Impacts of levels of use on natural systems. Tourism planning requires understanding of the sensitivity of each element of the ecosystem to different use levels. Indicators can be established to monitor key elements of sustainability – and should feature large in any tour planning, (including group numbers, timing, staging, behaviour management etc).
 - d. On shore tourist waste management. Tourists will create waste –solid and liquid. Sound waste management needs to be a central element in any tour management. Specific management guidelines and indicators can be found in the waste management section of WTO 2004.
 - e. Resource consumption (water, energy). Like any tours, those associated with cruise ships need sound resource management. (WTO 2004 water and energy sections provide key indicators as does the section on Cruise ship destinations). Note that managed tours can avoid water consumption in water short areas (bring it with you, schedule stops where water or energy are more readily available).
- **Economic:** Arrival of cruise ships and their passengers is normally expected to stimulate economic activity. Some may be direct – purchase of fuel, water, payment for berthing, port fees etc. Most of the economic impact will however be traced to the tourists and their activities. The industries which are most likely to benefit from the visitor activities are:
 - transportation (taxis, buses, automobile, boat rentals)
 - tour operators (including organizers, guides)
 - selected attractions (mainly those marketed as part of tours or shore activities by the tour staff on the ship)
 - shops (mainly those located close to the dock, or marketed directly by the ship activities staff [paid advertisements through shopping arrangements] Main beneficiaries are jewellery shops, craft merchants, local specialties [e.g. spices, art, clothing]
- While there may be some benefits to other sectors, in most locations other types of shops may not see significant gains.

- Restaurants (unless part of tours) may get little custom as tourists return to the ship to eat food they have already paid for.
- Liquor stores may sell little, as most ships do not permit purchases for consumption on board (bottles are taken from the passengers and stored until they disembark at their home port).
- General merchandise: While some purchase of general items may occur (snacks, toiletries, hats, film, items forgotten) this is unlikely to be significant.
- Casinos – while some passengers may visit an onshore casino in ports where these exist, most ships have their own casinos, and this will greatly reduce attendance.

There will be some spin-off effects from tourist spending. For some destinations, the investment stimulated by cruise and other visitors can help to create critical mass for some services – those with a tourist focus, enhancing such elements as public safety, range of shops, and availability of health services. At the same time, cruise tourism can be very seasonal (up to 80% of the Caribbean cruise ships re-deploy to Alaska, northern Europe and the Mediterranean from April to October) exacerbating the seasonality of other Caribbean tourism. Many service shops will close in the off season – depriving locals of both access to services and of employment in the off season.

Recommendation: An objective impact analysis be done for any significant new cruise tourism or major changes in it. (Ideally this should take the form of a Strategic Environmental Assessment – covering the above factors important to destination sustainability (instead of a more limited site specific EIA))



Suva Fiji – long time round the world tour port

7. Managing cruise visitors.

Tourist behaviour is a concern for all destinations. To some extent cruise tourism distils and can reinforce some of the behavioural issues. Because cruise tourism is in many ways day tourism, the impacts of large numbers of tourists can be concentrated in a few places in a short time period. A study of tourist behaviour in Dominica (Christian 2001) concluded that “cruise ship excursionists are less likely than stay over ecotourists to be sensitive to the environmental consequences of their actions.” David Weaver, also referring to Dominica experience (D. Weaver in Diamantis 2004, *Ecotourism pp. 155-156*) noted several factors associated with cruise ship excursionists – including their focus on a few sensitive sites, clustering and crowding, litter, and loss of ground vegetation, soil erosion and damage to trees in sites targeted by tours. At the same time, he noted that the cruise tours had provided the impetus and wherewithal to begin to harden and manage impacted sites like the Emerald Pool. He also noted that high visitor numbers disguise lower numbers of visitor days (due to the concentration of visits on a few days).

One Black Sea cruise sent twelve busloads of tourists simultaneously to an historic church. At the time the church was holding an investiture of a new prelate – a significant ceremony involving the Metropolitan and key personages. When four hundred chattering tourists, armed with flash cameras disgorged into the church, the ceremony was interrupted and disharmony was clear (the author was there at the time, on a study of visitor management in Ukraine). Both better planning and crowd control could have avoided this problem, at least sequencing visits, and ideally rescheduling the tour so that the buses arrived after the ceremony was completed.

While there are many knowledgeable and “civilized” tourists, significant numbers can be insensitive to the host community and its ecosystems. This is amplified by the following factors associated with cruise ship tourism:

- Ships may visit many countries on a trip – few tourists have the interest or incentive to learn much about a destination culture or ecosystem they will only visit for a day or a few hours..
- Tourists in large groups do not behave like they do at home – instead a group or even mob mentality can occur – hence excessive drinking, loud behaviour, showing off – behaviours which may be completely out of character with their normal behaviour at home where there is community peer pressure and the norms are known. This can result in offence to local communities, destruction of ecosystems unless controlled and managed by guides and coordinators.
- All cruise lines are not the same. Some target knowledgeable niche markets; Seabourn or Lindblad focus on sensitive sustainable tourism, educational experiences and market to those interested in ecology, history etc. Other lines target different segments - stressing partying (Carnival), or family experiences (Disney), shore experiences (Lindblad) or elegance (Celebrity, Holland America) – each of which will bring a different type of tourist to the destination. A destination known as a fun place (e.g. Cancun) is likely to be featured in cruises

aimed at young partying visitors and will target action trips, motorized jungle tours, jet skis etc. A destination stressing ecotourism, sports or adventure (Dominica, Costa Rica) is more likely to be featured in the cruise itinerary of a ship stressing eco-adventure or exploration, and is likely to bring older travellers seeking educational tours. Large ships may have a mix of all these.

Recommendation: Destinations consider carefully the type of visitor they wish to attract, the suitability of their attractions for that niche, and the means of visitor control in their development of port tours, marketing, and positioning with the cruise lines.

*Stanley Falkland Islands
–tourists line up for
tender to ship*



8. Governance and Control

Provision of governance and control for the visitors needs to be considered. This can tax the capacity of existing human resources – particularly those associated with traffic control, policing, provision of advice and guidance and simple crowd control at dockside and elsewhere. Visitors may be unaware of the laws and regulations of a country and of specific sites. This can relate to matters as simple as suitable dress, attention to personal belongings, or which way to look when crossing the streets. It also involves provision of information, awareness for guides and tourists, and control of behaviours which may damage sustainability of sites and of tourism. Destinations seldom have good access to visitors before they leave the ship. More so than with air arrivals, however, cruise ships have access to visitors and time to provide them with briefings, materials, and information which will help them in the destination. Cruise ships commonly provide destination lectures and port information before the ship arrives

(although these are not compulsory and many will not attend). Nevertheless, there are many opportunities to help destinations provide messages to visitors (no fruit allowed ashore, wear long trousers and head cover in religious sites, no bikinis in the town, no nude bathing on the island, do not go alone into the market area, be sure to take mosquito repellent if you visit the wetland etc).

A destination needs to consider which messages are important, and how to work with the cruise industry to get the information to the tourists. Most cruise companies will try to comply with these, particularly as they relate well to the overall experience of the visitors, and can reduce the potential of problems to resolve.



Cozumel Mexico can have up to 12 ships in port simultaneously

Governance and control can also be very site specific, and relate to special assets and places. Destinations will have specific attractions which will draw heavy traffic. (see the Dominica reference above) and which will need specific actions in advance of arrival of numbers. There are many tools which can be used to address tourism numbers (see for example Manning and Prieur 1998, *Governance for Tourism : Coping with Tourism in Impacted Destinations*) - which reviews a range of tools from zoning, hardening, behavioural controls, etc which can be used for impacted sites. Pam Wight in *Ecotourism*, Diamantis 2004 also reviews a range of planning instruments and control strategies which have been successful in visitor management.

Recommendation: Based on an inventory of the key assets and locations where tourists are expected to visit, a capacity assessment needs to be done, and a management plan (for the port/destination, and for specific sites to be targeted for tours). Managers should consider a range of tools to manage the visitors within the carrying capacity/sensitivity of the key assets.

9. Assessing the Costs and Benefits

As noted in section 5, cruise tourism needs to be planned within the wider framework of sustainable development planning for the destination. Similarly, the costs and potential benefits need to be objectively assessed within the economic development planning context of the destination as a whole. Proponents of cruise tourism, as with any other form of development, often have very optimistic views of what will occur, and may not always consider the true social costs and benefits; from the point of view of sustainability of the destination these are very important.

New cruise tourism will bring a range of benefits (many of those to be expected are noted above) but also will require investment and may involve other costs – both direct and indirect. There may also be options. While cruise lines definitely will favour new port facilities, tailored specifically for cruise ships, destinations can also become involved in tourism through adaptation of existing facilities. Least cost solutions may involve tendering to existing municipal docks (Belize City, Cabo San Lucas), use or minor adaptation of existing cargo docks (e.g. Puerto Limon Costa Rica, Port of Spain Trinidad, Puerto Madryn Argentina). These may permit entry into the cruise ship market with reduced initial outlays (although pressure to renovate or create new cruise docks is likely to continue, particularly if initial visits are considered a success). It is, however, possible to begin to experience some visits without the major outlays for new facilities; this more gradual approach can permit destinations to test the waters without full commitment, particularly if they have new and interesting experiences/assets to showcase. One strategy can be to use any profits from visits to help pay for the improved facilities wanted. (See the Bermuda cruise website for a specific example of this strategy to develop new port facilities and to directly involve the cruise lines).

Part of any benefit cost assessment should be a welfare element – that is an assessment of who pays and who gains. While it may be prohibitive to do a full blown social benefit cost analysis, elements of this should be covered in any assessment. At the very least, an approach which obtains the input of all stakeholders regarding their perceptions of benefits and costs should be undertaken, and these carefully considered in the planning process.



*Cartagena
Columbia – has
reduced visits in
recent years*

10. Partnering

To optimize benefits and have the capacity to influence cruise lines, it will be important for destinations to have links to each other and to collaborate in the management of cruise tourism. The Alaska initiative shows how several destinations within one desirable cruise region were able to establish strong regulations for emissions – currently the strongest in force. Through such initiatives as CELB/ICCL/CI work with the cruise lines, international standards for cruise ships (covering mainly waste management and emissions) have been established and most major cruise ship lines have adopted the., (although enforcement capacity has been an issue) . The same NGO/Industry partners have announced a new initiative designed to “protect biodiversity in top cruise destinations and promote industry practices that minimize the cruise industry’s environmental impact. The initiative’s first step will be to establish a science panel of experts in conservation, environmental technologies, and cruise industry environmental practices. The science panel will independently review core environmental issues facing the cruise industry and provide advice as to the best course of action to deal with those critical challenges.” Work by other NGOs such as WWF can also provide links to international initiatives to develop criteria and standards, and obtain expertise which will help new destinations to both understand emerging standards and to meet them. This will be important for long term sustainability of the destinations as certification and standards become important factors in tourist choice of destinations.

Recommendation: Destinations be encouraged to work together and with suitable partners in the industry and NGOs to be able together to achieve sustainable development goals/standards for the destination.



*Vancouver
Canada – port
for Alaska
cruises*

Sources and Resources:

The following are key sources for information on cruise ship impacts and the actions which some jurisdictions are taking to deal with them:

CELB Marine sector guidelines (mainly for application to small craft, boat tours, and tour activities which may be associated with cruise ships).

http://www.celb.org/ImageCache/CELB/content/travel_2dleisure/marine_5fguide_2epdf/v1/marine_5fguide.pdf

Diamantis D. 2004, *Ecotourism* (see in particular the article on Dominica by David B. Weaver (pp151-164)

ICCL Cruise ship environmental standards: (waste management focus)

<http://www.iccl.org/policies/environmentalstandards.pdf>

http://www.iccl.org/policies/envstd_summary.pdf

Lighthouse Foundation forum on cruise ship impacts <http://www.lighthouse-foundation.org/lighthouse-foundation.org/eng/forum/artikel00304eng.html> (Graeme Robertson)

Oceans Conservancy:

http://www.oceanconservancy.org/site/PageServer?pagename=issues_ships

UNEP – re economic and environmental impacts of tourism (some reference to cruise ships) <http://www.uneptie.org/pc/tourism/sust-tourism/economic.htm#negative-econ>

USEPA Cruise Ship discharge standards:

http://www.oceanconservancy.org/site/PageServer?pagename=issues_ships

World Tourism Organization 2004, *Indicators of Sustainable Development for Tourism Destinations*, Madrid 2004. (section 4.18 Cruise Ships and their Destinations)