



# Is Ecotourism a strategy for regional economic development in India?

## *The Case of Mussoorie and Asan Barrage*

**Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt**

Chair of Tourism (Prof. Dr. Pechlaner/Christopher Reuter)  
in cooperation with German Technical Cooperation (GTZ India)



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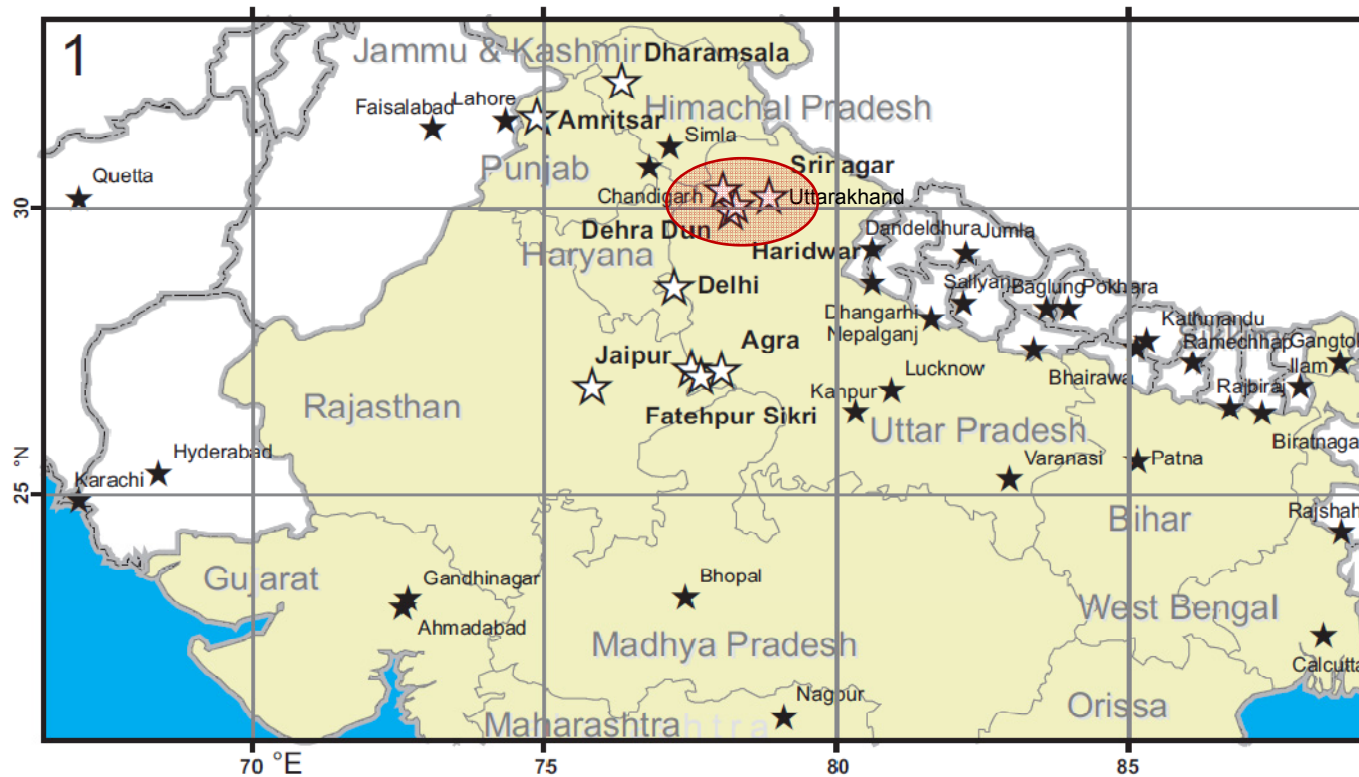
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# I. Introduction



# I. Introduction

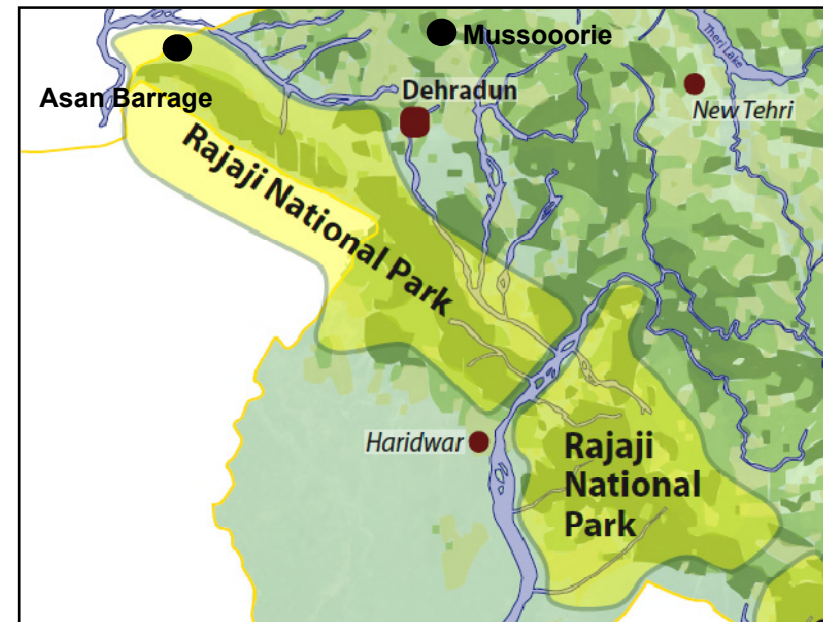


Excursion North India 2009 (Heckmann, 2009).



# I. Introduction

- Tourism is estimated to comprise 20% of the GDP of Uttarakhand; 5,9% for India (estimation by ITOPC)
- 16,7 million domestic visitors (8,5 million inhabitants)
- Himalaya region is expected to have one of the highest potentials among Asian regions (Shackley, 2006)
- Main products: Adventure Tourism, Spiritual Tourism (Char Dham, Yoga, etc.)
- Main problems (Singh, 2007):
  - no destination brand
  - low quality of infrastructure
  - high taxes.
- „Uttarakhand Tourism Development Master Plan“ (UNWTO, 2008b)

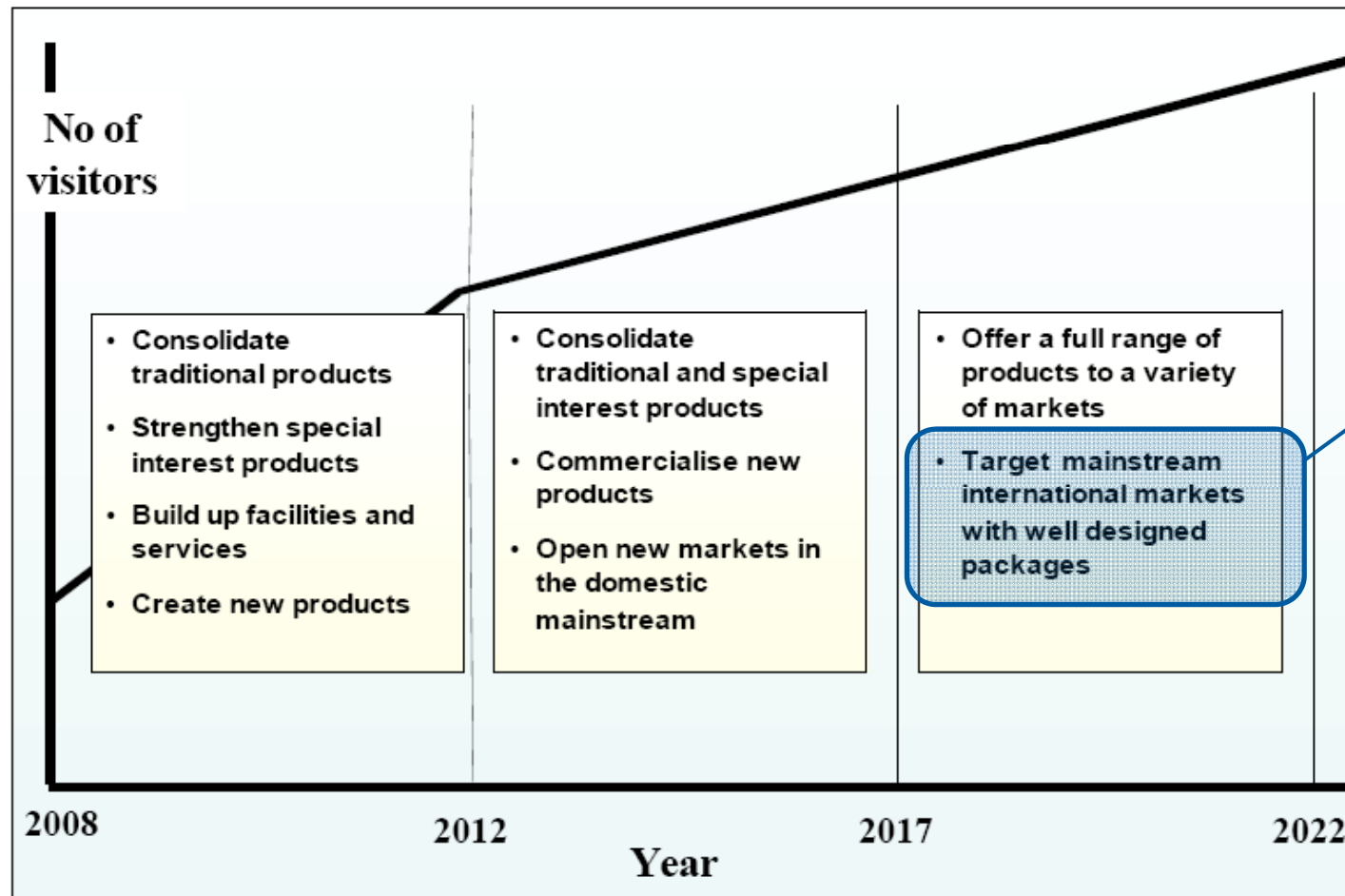


Rajaji National Park and the surroundings of Dehradun (UNWTO, 2008b).



# I. Introduction

## Strategy to grow Tourism Markets in Uttarakhand



„Golden Triangle“ today  
→ ambitious plan

Source: Based on UNWTO (2008b).



# I. Introduction

## GTZ (Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit)



- Founded in 1974
- Development from an agency to divert Official Direct Assistance (ODA) to a consulting company which helps countries and regions in conducting development programs → Capacity Building:
  - developing individual skills,
  - shaping effective organizations,
  - strengthening the networks created by those organisations,
  - creating an environment characterized by stakeholder involvement.
- Regional Economic Development (RED) project Uttarakhand:
  - developing value-chains,
  - promoting better regional framework conditions for pro-poor market development,
  - regional marketing and promoting Uttarakhand.

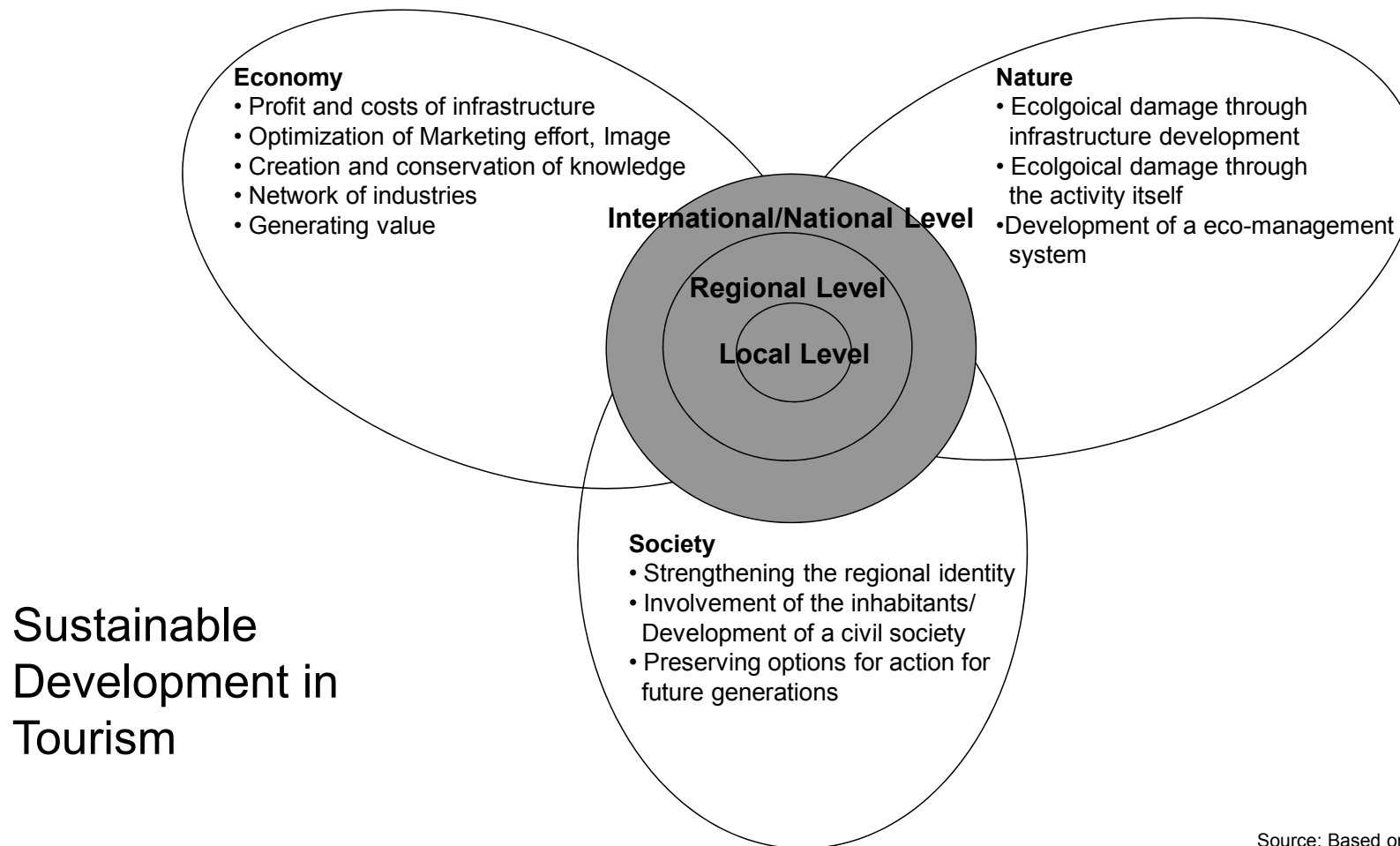
Source: Based on GTZ (2009).



## II. Ecotourism and Sustainable Development



## II. Ecotourism and Sustainable Development



Source: Based on Bieger et al. (2003).



## II. Ecotourism and Sustainable Development

### **Ecotourism:**

“Environmentally responsible travel and visitation to natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (and any accompanying cultural features, both past and present) that promote conservation, have a low visitor impact and provide for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local peoples.”

Source: IUCN (1996).



## II. Ecotourism and Sustainable Development

- “Plants and trees are the basis for a beautiful landscape”  
→ “landscape as a resource for tourism in a destination”
- Ecotourism as an alternative strategy to Resort Tourism in developing countries (community-based strategy)
- Main aims of ecotourism:
  - more stakeholder-based
  - more nature-based
  - more sustainable than other forms of tourism
  - product development based on nature

Source: Based on WII (2008).



## II. Ecotourism and Sustainable Development

### Attributes of ecotourism:

- No damage to the local residents and the environment of the destination
  - Promotion of regional small and medium sized enterprises for an independent touristic development
  - Relation between host and guest should generate benefits by emphasizing the regional identity
  - Creation of comprehension and knowledge about environment for local residents and tourists (education)
- Protection and preservation of the environment
- Use of existing nature resources

Source: Based on WII (2008).



### III. Case Study Design



### III. Case Study Design

#### **A Case study ...**

- investigates a real-life context,
- relies on multiple sources of evidence (e.g. statistical data, interviews etc.)
- and should be based on theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis.

Source: Based on Yin (2003)).



## III. Case Study Design

### Outline

- Excursion with 24 participants
  - Northern India, 1<sup>st</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> of September 2009 (four days of project work)
  - Cooperation with GTZ India (Project RED, Uttarakhand)
  - Two explorative studies on regional economic development in Asan Barrage and Mussoorie (Uttarakhand, close to Dehra Dun)
  - **Aims:**
    - (1) Evaluate the potential for Ecotourism
    - (2) Investigate the role of development consultants (GTZ)
- **Research Question:** Is Ecotourism a strategy for regional economic development in Mussoorie and Asan Barrage?
- **Limitations:** Research within the framework of the UNWTO-plan/ no far-reaching theory development



## III. Case Study Design

### Methodology

- Preparatory desk research
- **Nine structured interviews** (divided in three parts) with stakeholders from different backgrounds were conducted (two days)
- On-side participant observation (two days)
- Moderated discussions with the students about their experiences and insights
- Additional (statistical) data was provided by GTZ



## IV. Asan Barrage



## Asan Barrage: Facts & Figures II

- Asan Barrage was constructed in 1967 (**manmade**)
- **Unplanned** development of the bird sanctuary
- GMVN side established in 1994 (watersport facilities)
- 2004: Establishment of the Forest Conservation Training Centre
- 2005: Declaration as the first **Conservation Reserve** of India
- 251 bird species (80 water-birds), several of them are threatened
  - IBA side
- Area: 444.40 ha (wetland)
- AB is fed by Yamuna hydel canal and Aasan river
- AB is located on the national highway 72 (approx. 40 km from Dehradun railway station and 52 km from Jolly Grant airport)
- Accommodation facilities: 4 lodges, 2 suites (Forest Department)
  - + 2 cottages (GMVN), camping site
- 10 tour guides cater approx. 4000 visitors in groups (Hindi) of 15-20 per year
- Gastronomy: 2 canteens (FD and ID), kiosk (GMVN)



## Asan Barrage: Facts & Figures III

- Ownership: highly diverted (FD, ID, local communities, private)
- Governance: **Management Committee** was created in 2006:



- Entry fee: 2 Rs. for Conservation Campus
- Pricing: Dormitory 110 Rs., Cottage 440 Rs. (non A/C),  
Lodge 880 Rs., Suites 1200 Rs.
- Homepages: [www.asanwetland.com](http://www.asanwetland.com) (not available)  
[www.yamunabirdcount.com](http://www.yamunabirdcount.com) (not available)



## Asan Barrage: Tourism Development

The vision statement for Asan CR is as follows:

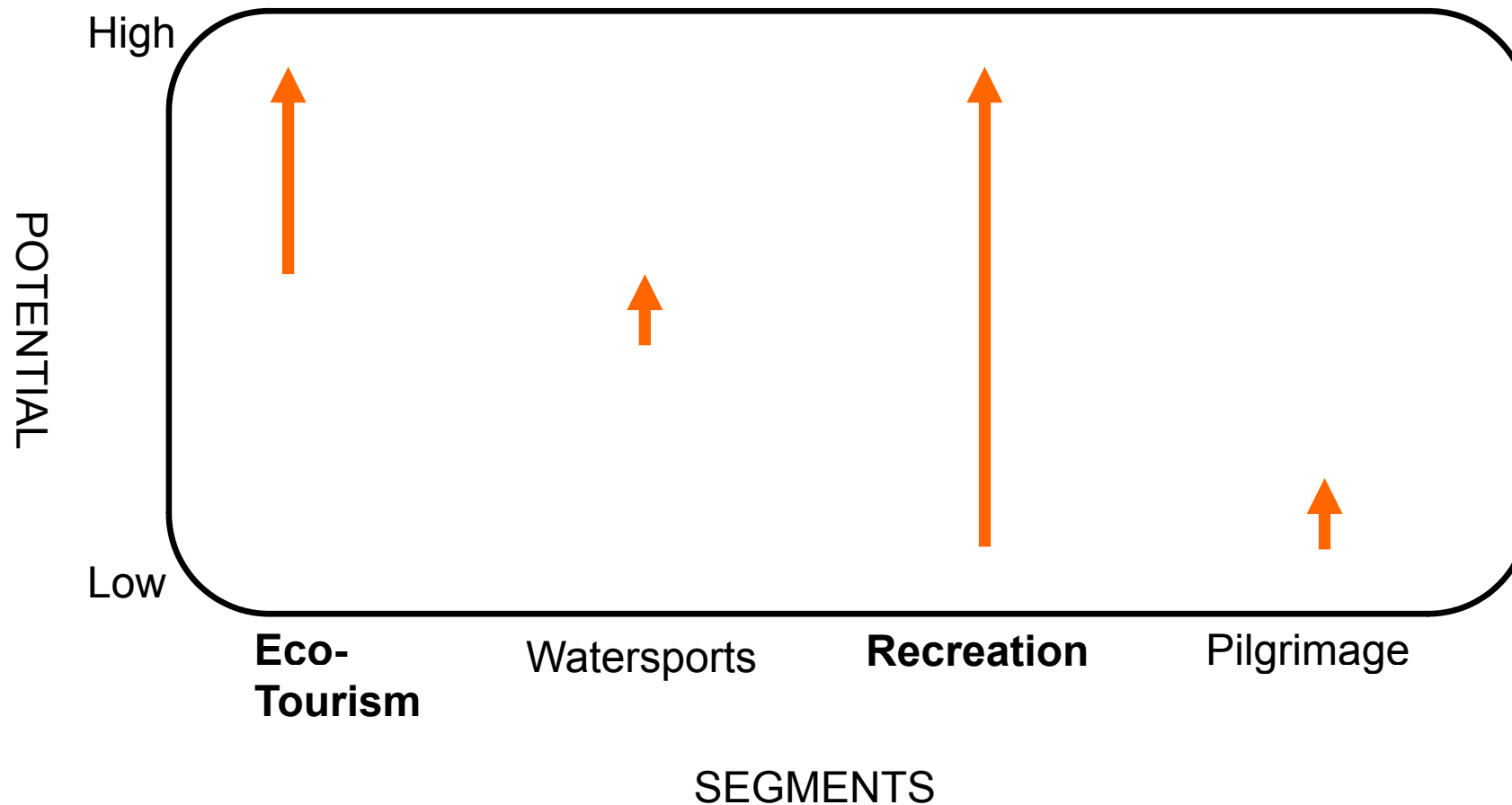
*To develop as a well protected wetland Conservation Reserve in the Himalayan foothills, rich in biodiversity and emerge as a centre for recreation and conservation education with significant local participation.*

Source: WII (2009).

- Conservation vs. tourism development (potential conflict)
- Small scale ecotourism development in place (focus on birdwatching)
- Restricted use of the reservoir for water activities
- Infrastructure: Bypass of National Highway 72 completed (improvement!)
- **Large-scale boulder mining across the Yamuna river**
- Finance: Great dependency on public funds



## Asan Barrage: Tourism today and potential target groups





## Asan Barrage: Eco-tourism and Innovation

- **Beach and recreation area (restricted and monitored)**
  - **(Paddle/Electro-) Boatingtours including bird watching**
  - Multiple language guidance
  - **Solar powered hotel and/ or boats**
  - Park, bike and boat (centrally organized, one-for-all tickets)
  - Souvenir shop and/ or book shop
  - Adventurepath
  - **Free on-site training for school teachers (promoters)**
  - Special events (family day, yoga courses, etc.)
  - Canoeing (Yamuna, dry-season)
- „I'd be bored in 2 hours!“



## Asan Barrage: Eco-tourism and quality

- **Education and vocational training (language skills, hospitality, specific topic-related knowledge)**
- **Enforcing quality standards (classification/ certification)**
- Waste management
- **Attractiveness and ecological design of the facilities**
- Regular maintenance of the facilities
- Monitoring and quality control
- Up-to-date homepage
- Quality of food (above average restaurant needed)

**„Good food always attracts people.“**



## Asan Barrage: Eco-tourism and Integration/Cooperation

- Enhanced packaging (hotel)
- Integration of tour operators
- **Cooperation between public and private sector (e.g. PPP)**
- Cooperation with schools and colleges (free training for teachers)
- **Improving the effectiveness of the management committee of Asan Barrage/ Networking between Stakeholders**

**„There are so many good schools. It's a huge potential.“**

- IBA bird watching circuits
- **Cooperations for product development within the Dehradun region (e.g. Timli Forest Trail)**



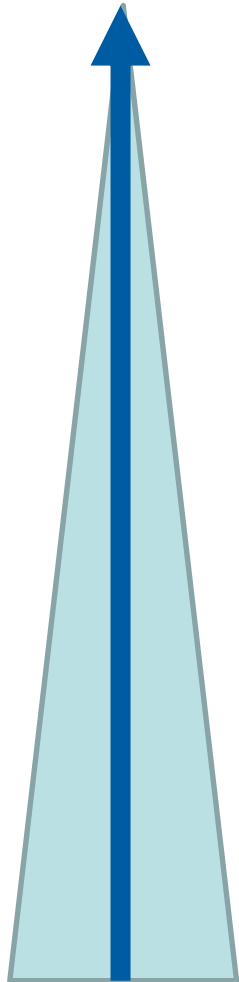
# Synthesis Asan Barrage

## Conclusion

- **Asan Barrage needs to improve its facilities and the quality of the surroundings and the offered services**
- Innovative ways to allow tourism infrastructure development (e.g. eco-hotel) should be implemented
- **Local recreation demand → attractive market**
- Innovative products (e.g. local cuisine and craftsmanship, adventure trails) have to be developed
- Intra- and Inter-Network cooperation must be institutionalized (bird watching circuits, destination management)
- **Private actors must be involved into the development process and local entrepreneurship strengthened**
- Marketing and promotion need to be professionalized and adapted to future customers (e.g. web 2.0, attract school children)
- Attractive Branding (e.g. Yamuna River Eco-Resort)



# Synthesis Asan Barrage



## OFFERS

- Customized local packages
- Integration into destination packages
- High value service-provision
- Tourist/ Nature Information Centre
- Local (food) products

## PRODUCTS

- Diversified water activities (product and spatial diversification)
- Sophisticated forms of guiding (hospitality/ customer satisfaction)
- Upscale accommodation in vicinities close to AB
- Trekking/ walking trails

## THEMES

- Ecotourism
- Recreation (local/regional)

## VALUES

- Quiet
- Green (Highly bio-diversified) and blue (water: river confluence and artificial lake)
- Accessible

## Outlook



## V. Mussoorie



## History of Mussoorie





## History of Mussoorie

(Received its name from an abundantly growing plant called *Mansoor*)

1803: Erstwhile Garhwal and Gorkha envision

1815: Becomes part of the British Empire

1826: First Building “Mullingar” erected by Captain young

1827: Convalescent depot for Europeans was built - Indians and dogs not allowed

1832: The first Surveyor General of India “George Everest” establishes Everest Lodge

1842: Mussoorie given the status of city

1861: First hotel „Charles Ville“ opened

1901: Population (~ 6500) rises to 15.000 in summer

1920: Mussoorie gets electricity

1959: First Exile station of Tibetan Government



## History of Mussoorie

- 1959: Establishment of training institute for Indian Administrative services (Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration)
- 1980: Supreme Court of India puts a ban on construction of new buildings at Mussoorie

## Important political movements & protests

2-Oct-1994: The police firing incident during the Uttarakhand movement

## Political Changes

Year 2000 formation of the state of Uttarakhand carved out from the erstwhile Uttarpradesh



## Visitors Information: Mussoorie

Visitors Reference Period: April 2005 – March 2006 Source ACNielsen ORG-MARG Pvt. Ltd													
Domestic Overnight													
Location	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
Mussoorie	170312	236159	52195	46482	49535	52154	71514	78765	112356	13203	15135	16224	914034
Foreign Overnight Visitors													
Mussoorie	140	848	73	44	95	0	1496	1324	212	232	0	68	4532
Day Tourists													
Mussoorie	5645	6574	7021	3541	2814	2657	3536	10418	8975	5624	2800	2750	62355

Source: ITOPC (2008).



## Classification of Accommodation Units in Uttarakhand

Location	Starred	Unstarred	Others	Total
Dehradun	6	94	31	131
Haridwar	0	37	791	828
Rishikesh	0	30	34	64
<b>Mussoorie</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>204</b>
Badrinath	0	4	27	31
Gangotri	0	9	52	61
Yamunotri	0	7	70	77
Nainital	1	110	24	135
Joshimath	0	30	17	47
Kothdwar	0	7	6	13
Corbett N.Park	5	0	0	5
Pithoragarh	0	7	5	12
Almora	0	3	34	37
Ranikhet	2	1	11	14
Pauri	0	15	3	18
Bageshwar	1	2	1	4
Kausani	1	12	0	13
Uttarkashi	0	18	56	74
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>548</b>	<b>1195</b>	<b>1768</b>

Source: ITOPC (2008).



# Mussoorie: Tourism Development

## Quality based policy

Issues related to quality of offerings

1. **Ban on construction and renovation of existing accommodation units**
2. Demand is higher than supply and continuously growing -  
Discourages the qualitative improvement of offerings
3. Destination has reached its **maturity** in terms of volumes -  
diversion to satellite destinations is more of a necessity than a  
conscious diversification strategy



## Mussoorie: Ecotourism and Innovation

Connection of themes and services:

(e.g. in Dhanolti, George Everest Estate, Kempty Falls)

- Health: yoga, nutrition, ayurveda, walking
- Sports: mountain biking, horse riding, hiking, paragliding
- Spirituality: meditation
- Culture: religion, Tibetan/ British history, traditional handicraft

Eco Parks as a starting point for Eco Trails



## Mussoorie: Ecotourism and Quality

- Research on scientific basis and corresponding teaching offers (seriousness as part of the image)
- Consideration of customer needs (multilingual information and guiding as basic quality)
- The research on scientific basis is expensive and justifies in medium term a high prize strategy
- Step-by-step equalisation of prize levels for residents and guests



## Mussoorie: Ecotourism and Cooperation (inter-organisational perspective)

- Integration of Ecotourism elements in the education at schools in Mussoorie (projects and workshops)
- Close cooperation with scientific and research institutions for product development
- Close cooperation between Forest Department, Hotel Association and City Council
- Marketing cooperation between Ecotourism offers in the Mussoorie Region (special interest groups)

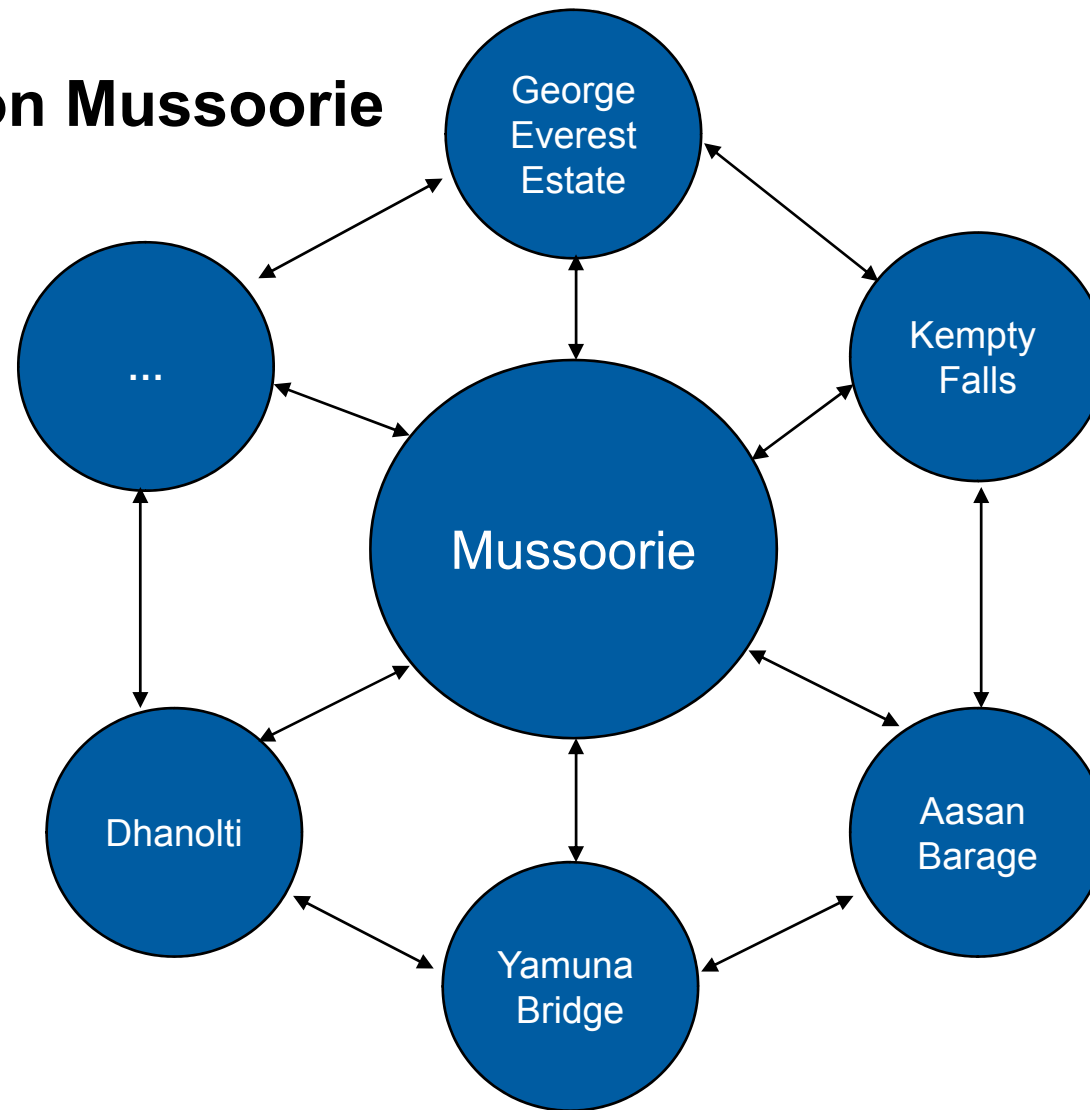


## Mussoorie: Ecotourism and Integration (service perspective)

- Integration of touristic players (e.g. Hotel Association) into development projects of the Forest Division
- Integration of Eco Development Committees (e.g. Dhanolti) into the cooperation of Hotel Association and Forest Department
- Integration of responsible persons in the tourism of Mussoorie into the marketing and promotion activities of Uttarakhand
- Combination of the attractions of Mussoorie Region in packages and day visit offers



## Destination Mussoorie





## Potential Products and attraction points

- Architectonic arrangement of view points (e.g. sky walk)
- Eco Parks as attraction points of the Greater Mussoorie Area
- Sustainability of infrastructural projects (e.g. cable car project from Dehradun to Mussoorie → „car free“ destination)



## VI. Conclusions



## Conclusions

- There is no chance of establishing ecotourism without clear cooperations between Forest Department and private actors
- There is no possibility to introduce tourism and destination development without investments in training (language, content and hospitality)
- Due to globalization and internationalisation (and the UNWTO goals for Uttarakhand) it is necessary to adapt the **western quality standards** and prices step by step
- **Two possible strategies: Ecotourism as a premium product for foreigners and underlying strategy for general recreation (local/regional demand)**
- Marketing and promotion are necessary partial strategies in order to fully develop the destinations

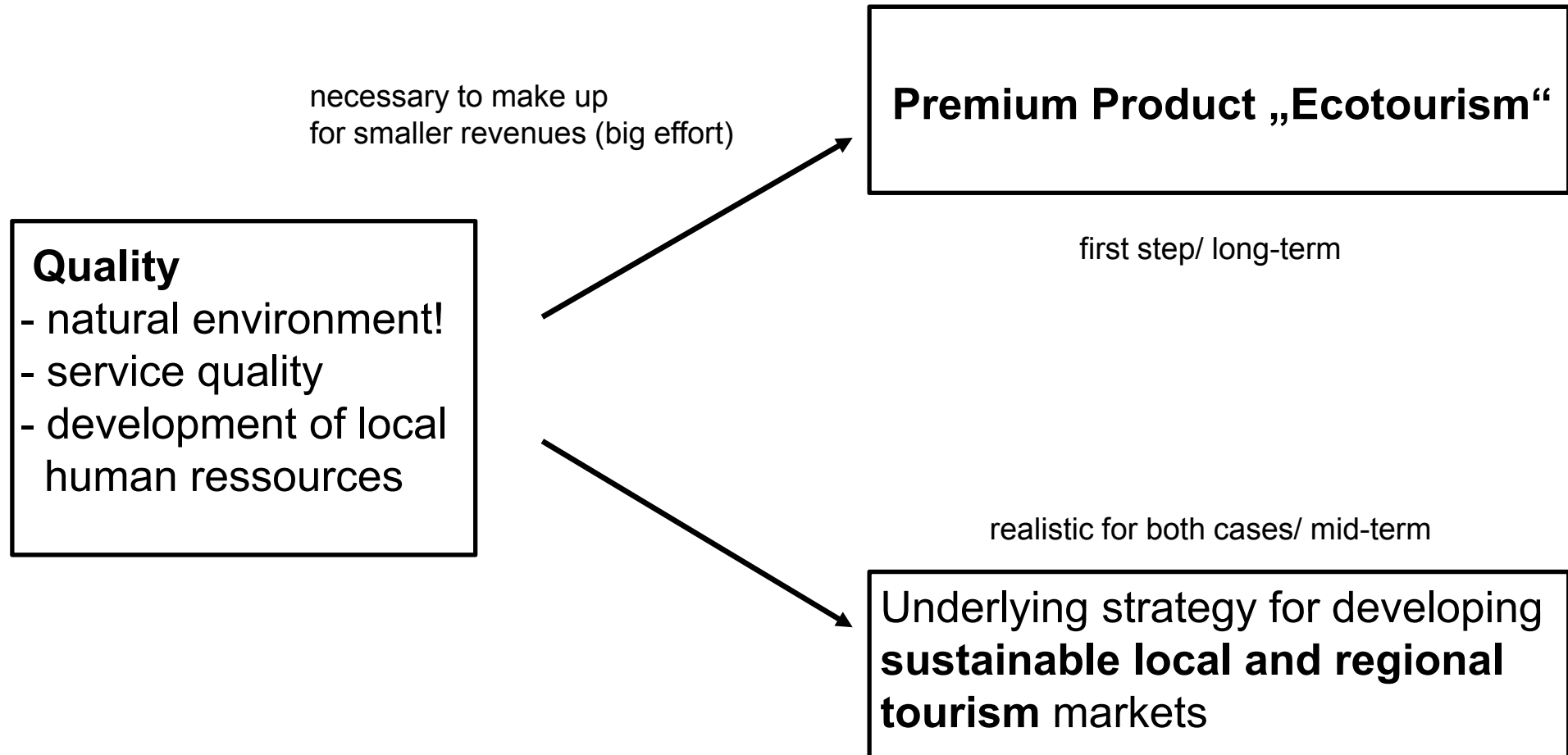


## Conclusions

- Extraordinary destinations and attraction points need a marketing implementation according to the product development. Especially important is the coordination between state institutions and private investors
- Ecotourism is an interesting product for the purpose of strengthening the awareness and for the development of the competitiveness
- **Ecotourism has to be understood as an underlying (sustainable) strategy and an additional offer for a broader destination management**
- The effect of restrictions have to be evaluated (construction ban vs. Car free destination Mussoorie)

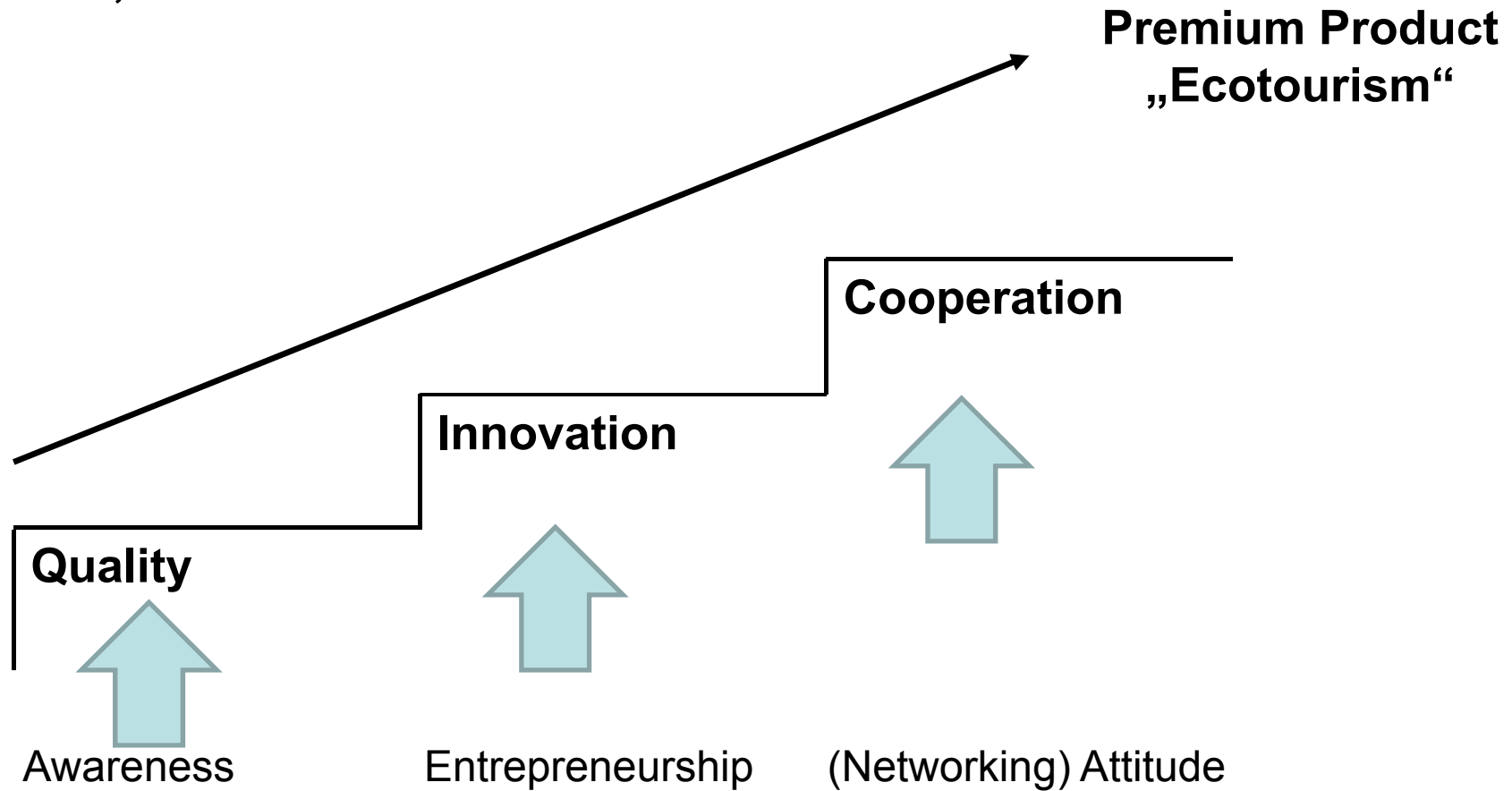


## Chances and Challenges for Ecotourism





Yes, but ...





## VII. Literature

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# Thank you very much for your attention!



**Prof. Dr. Harald Pechlaner**

Professor of Tourism  
Director of the Center for Entrepreneursh!p  
Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt  
[harald.pechlaner@ku-eichstaett.de](mailto:harald.pechlaner@ku-eichstaett.de)

**Christopher Reuter, M.A.**

Research Associate  
Chair of Tourism/Center for Entrepreneursh!p  
Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt  
[christopher.reuter@ku-eichstaett.de](mailto:christopher.reuter@ku-eichstaett.de)



## VIII. Appendix



## **Members of Group A**

Christopher Reuter, M.A.  
Ravinder Kumar (GTZ)

Natallia Brahinets  
Claudia Gunkel  
Natalia Gritsenko  
Eva Hauke  
Kilian Kärgel  
Sandra Karlsen  
Albert Kräh  
Lena – Maria Pfaff  
Kerstin Riedl  
Anne Soffner  
Daniel Sukowski  
Julian Sukowski

## **Members of Group B**

Prof. Dr. Harald Pechlaner  
Sanjay Bahti (GTZ)

Nina Buchelska  
Alexandra Danz  
Sebastian Ferschl  
Daniela Gehring  
Björn Huntemann  
Markus Kapfer  
Janina Mülheims  
Lukas Petersik  
Katharina Pointvogl  
Zornitsa Slavkova  
Ludwig Thieme



## Interviews Asan Barrage

- 10/09/2009:
- 1) Dr. Dhananjay Mohan, WII;  
Dr. Gautam, WII;
  - 2) Mr. Rajeev Bhartari, Addl. Secretary Tourism,  
Deputy CEO UTDB
- 11/09/2009:
- 3) Mr. Ram Lal Arya, Forest Department;
  - 4) Mr. Yasir Arafat, Sales and Marketing Manager  
Competent Palace Hotel



## Interviews Mussoorie

10/09/2009:      1) Secretary of Eco Development Committee, Dhanolti;  
Range Officer, Dhanolti Forest Department;  
Deputy Range Officer, Dhanolti  
2) Range Officer, Mussoorie Forest Department

11/09/2009:      3) Mr. Manoj Garg, Resident of Mussoorie  
4) Mr. O.P. Uniyal, Chairman City Board Mussoorie  
5) Mr. R.N. Mathur, President of Mussoorie Hotel  
Association  
Mr. B.N. Mathur, Owner of Prince Hotel

→ 13 interview partners in two days at two locations



## SWOT Analysis: Asan Barrage (Summary)

<p><b>Strengths:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Accessibility: above average</li> <li>- Attractive landscape</li> <li>- Closeness to Dehradun</li> <li>- First stop of Siberian migratory birds</li> <li>- Closeness to Yamuna river</li> <li>- High biodiversity</li> <li>- Involvement of locals (tour guides, management committee)</li> <li>- Many schools and colleges in the region</li> <li>- Closeness to WII and FRI (spatial and institutional)</li> <li>- Potential for HWCs very low</li> <li>- Sport activities have been used for several years (e.g. boating)</li> <li>- GMVN site</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cement factories directly across Yamuna river</li> <li>- Highway still runs through the park (but bypass is also in place)</li> <li>- Fragile ecosystem</li> <li>- Parking space is missing</li> <li>- Tours only available in Hindi</li> <li>- Booking system not institutionalized</li> <li>- No private actors on spot</li> <li>- Facilities are mostly of low quality</li> <li>- Service quality is well below western standards</li> <li>- No price enforcement possible (no fences)</li> <li>- AB is still not well known in the region</li> <li>- Public transport: No direct connection to Dehradun</li> <li>- Governance structures are inefficient (e.g. low influence of tourism experts)</li> <li>- Marketing and promotion are almost non-existing</li> <li>- Target groups are not clearly defined (conflicting views among stakeholders)</li> <li>- Low awareness among locals concerning eco-tourism</li> <li>- No tourist information centres</li> <li>- Inadequate distribution of signs and information boards</li> <li>- Low degree of cooperation among stakeholders (network quality)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Highway improvement → accessibility</li> <li>- Increased advertising and promotion activities</li> <li>- High potential of eco-tourism (financing conservation through tourism)</li> <li>- Rising income of the growing Indian middle class → Growing demand</li> <li>- Attractiveness of the landscape for Indian city dwellers</li> <li>- High potential among school children and college kids</li> <li>- Positive economic effects (e.g. employment and incomes)</li> <li>- Branding opportunities</li> <li>- Proximity to industrial areas (along highway 72) → Business clients</li> <li>- Year-round bird watching possibilities (migratory + breeding birds)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Disturbance of birds by tourists</li> <li>- Issues related to the closeness to the border</li> <li>- Proximity to industrial areas (cement factories in Himachal Pradesh)</li> <li>- Possible conflict between conservation and tourism development</li> <li>- Possible conflict between private interest and government</li> <li>- Eco-tourism might only ensure subsistence-level incomes (e.g. tour guides are not fully employed right now) → needed investments (in the future) might not be possible</li> </ul>



## SWOT Analysis: Mussoorie (Summary)

<p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Location and landscape</li> <li>Climate situation</li> <li>(British) History</li> <li>Schools and educational institutions</li> <li>Awareness of unique nature</li> <li>Well known/ established destination</li> <li>Tourism as an important economic pillar</li> <li>Safety for tourists and residents</li> </ul>	<p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Infrastructure: public transport, accessibility and road maintenance to satellite locations, parking spaces</li> <li>No (international) service standard</li> <li>Accommodation: basic infrastructure and facilities</li> <li>Missing networks between Mussoorie and satellites</li> <li>Unclear guest segmentation and no consequent product development (climate as motive is not enough!)</li> <li>Limited hotel capacities reduce innovation power</li> <li>No internationalisation</li> <li>Missing Marketing Management of Mussoorie Region</li> <li>No common internal and external strategies for traditional and modern accommodation</li> <li>Missing know-how and education in the field of tourism</li> </ul>
<p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As India is becoming a global player Mussoorie has the opportunity to become a global brand</li> <li>Within the Indian domestic market the middle class gets more and more the chance to consume global destination brands</li> <li>From Hill Station Mussoorie to Greater Mussoorie Area</li> <li>Diversification of tourism products and offers</li> <li>Cable car project from Dehradun to Mussoorie</li> </ul>	<p>Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hotel construction ban</li> <li>Tradition as a barrier for innovation</li> <li>Strong Mussoorie community prevents cooperation tendencies with Mussoorie greater area</li> <li>Strong dependence on Uttarakhand Tourism Policy</li> <li>High number of cold beds doesn't create sustainable value</li> </ul>