

site decisions are price, size, and quality of facilities, and a wide variety of amenities or add-ons that will likely encourage prospective attendees to sign up for the convention or trade show. Convention centers need a staff of knowledgeable and efficient people to sell the center and ensure that conventioners/trade show participants are satisfied with their experience and will return in some future year.

Convention centers are funded and managed in a variety of ways. Some are funded and managed by local governments. Some are public/private **joint ventures**, whereas others are completely financed and managed as nonprofit private associations of tourism-related businesses. Often, the convention center facilities are built with public money, usually a combination of city and state funds. The annual marketing and operating costs are covered through tourism-related taxes, membership fees, and revenues generated directly from services provided at the center and sold to attendees. But most centers lose money.

## Tourism Planning

Another major function of government and **nonprofit tourism associations** is **tourism planning**. Planning involves predicting the future, setting **objectives** to attain future outcomes, and then outlining and implementing the actions needed to attain these objectives. You now realize that tourism is a conglomeration of many industries and needs the coordination of a wide variety of enterprises and agencies to thrive. However, because so many organizations are involved in the industry, planning is not easy.

Tourism planning is a continuous process and involves many steps to develop and sustain tourism revenues. A wide variety of decisions must be made, including the timing of development, size of the infrastructure and the superstructure, targeting of promotional campaigns, and efforts to enhance and preserve attraction resources. In addition, plans must include studies of the increased burdens on resources such as water, roads, and police and fire protection, and how the strains on these resources can be met or minimized. Table 11.5 provides a list of the steps that must be included in a comprehensive tourism plan.

Usually, tourism planning rests with a government agency, typically at the state/provincial and local levels, although many countries have strong national organizations as well. Government agencies are often charged with conducting research and making predictions concerning likely tourism industry trends. Based on research results, plans can be drawn up to achieve the desired level of tourism activity to maximize benefits and minimize the costs that can occur.

A tourism planning organization, whether at the national, state/provincial, or local level, needs to modify and refine its plan continually. First, research to learn the changing trends in market segments needs to be conducted regularly, along with studying emerging economic impacts of tourism (both positive and negative). Second, planners must constantly gain and enhance the cooperation of the industry sectors to ensure effective promotion and delivery of high-quality tourism services to visitors. Third, planners need to determine whether changes in priorities for tourism marketing are needed. For example, research may show that the area has successfully developed the domestic tourism market and now should start developing international promotion campaigns; or may be the idea of hosting a hallmark event, such as a World's Fair or Olympic Games, should be seriously considered. Last, but certainly not least, planners need to monitor and preserve the very resources that attracted visitors in the first place. Often, these resources are fragile natural or heritage sites, so plans must include ways to protect them from erosion and harm so that they are preserved for future enjoyment.