

ECOTOURISM ACTIVITIES AND CLUSTERS IN CHILE

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Ecotourism is expected to play a major role in Chile's national development. This survey gathers the first basic data on characteristics of 41 firms and related organizations in this industry, focusing on the range of their activities and the extent to which they work together as a cluster. Ecotourism activities in Chile relating to nature sport and experience are well developed, but it can be observed that culture and wellness are only beginning to emerge. There are limited, basic aspects of cluster behavior, but several key actors like university research, specialized equipment manufacturers and finance are only weakly involved. The geographic locations of clusters the tourism industry imagines are regional, but the industry is divided into head offices in Santiago, with field activities scattered about the country. Only the Lake District shows potential for true cluster development.

KEY WORDS: *Chile; ecotourism industry; nature, culture and wellness tourism; Latin America; clusters.*