




POLICY NOTE

Strategy for Sustainable Coastal and Marine Tourism Activities to Conserve Aquatic Biodiversity and Ecosystems in Africa





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Summary

Coastal and Marine Tourism (CMT) includes a range of tourism, leisure, and recreationally oriented activities that occur in the coastal zone and immediate offshore coastal waters. These include tourism-related development infrastructure (accommodation, restaurants and food services, attractions, and second homes), and the infrastructure supporting CMT development (e.g., retail businesses, transport hubs, marinas, and activity suppliers) (Belhabib et al., 2016). Also included are tourism activities such as recreational boating, coast and marine-based ecotourism, cruises, swimming, recreational fishing, snorkelling, and diving among other water sports. In the context of Blue Economy (BE), the concept is central to sustainable development that incorporates socioeconomic benefits and ecological conservation and essentially seeks to promote economic growth, social inclusion and the preservation or improvement of livelihoods while at the same time ensuring the environmental sustainability of the Lakes, Rivers, Oceans and coastal areas (Tarlac, 2018; UNECA, 2016; UN, 2014).

This Policy Brief is based on a study commissioned by A-IBAR, with funding from Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) on identification of priority issues and actions for sustainable coastal, marine tourism and mining activities in Africa. The Policy Brief summarizes the key findings on strategies and Protocols that would support toward sustainable development of coastal and marine development that would minimize impact of aquatic biodiversity and environment.

Rationale for Coastal and Marine Tourism in Africa

Tourism in Africa holds great promise, but it is often underappreciated. In terms of numbers, Africa receives more tourists than the Caribbean, Central America and South America combined. This development makes a strong case for increased investment in tourism. Tourism creates jobs and opportunities for entrepreneurship, reduces poverty, promotes stability, preserves heritage and culture and builds Global connections. The sector has potential for expansion and growth as most



areas are yet to be exploited. In 2018, the sector contributed 24 million jobs across Africa at an annual growth rate of 5.6% compared to a Global average of 3.9%. This provides a potential opportunity for economic development. It is projected that in 2030 the value generated by coastal tourism would exceed 100 billion USD with 28 million people employed while in 2063, it would generate 138 billion USD in value, with an employment figure of 35 million. The rapid development of Continental tourism will boost the demand for tourism services and infrastructures. It is also noteworthy that 80 per cent of tourism occurs along coastal towns and areas. Beaches, coral reefs and an array of aquatic activities attract millions each year. Thus, the bottom line is that coastal tourism plays a significant role in the future of the Africa Blue Economy. However, as tourism advances, the risks that coastal tourism imposes are sizable. With these concerns increasing, many are strongly advocating for more sustainable tourism development.

The imperative need to keep watch on climate, the environment and marine life are however important to mitigate against depletion of


blue resources. If not, this will place many developing Countries in economic distress as coastal tourism quality fades. In addition, pollution and other impacts from coastal tourism activities stem primarily from point sources rather than non-point sources.

The effort to minimize the impact of coastal and marine tourism should be made from an integrated and prospective approach that respects the marine and freshwater ecosystems; a key strategic approach for AU Member States is the development of National Master plans for sustainable coastal, and marine tourism. Focus should be geared towards the Africa Blue Economy Strategy (ABES) interventions in the thematic areas touching on the following strategic outcomes: Enhanced health and livelihood of people; Adoption and utilisation of skills and technologies; Improved conservation of ecosystems, and Adaptation of fair and equitable system for sharing the benefits and costs among those who contribute to the realisation of environmental and ecosystem services and those who benefit; as well as Policy and Regulatory mechanisms requiring baseline surveys; e.g. EMP; EIA and SEA.

Benefits of Coastal and Marine Tourism for The Economy, Society and the Environment in Africa

CMT is a cardinal Blue Economy Sector which yields significant benefits with enormous potential to drive sustainable livelihoods, yield extensive economic gains and promote cultural and environmental preservation. Some benefits of CMT include:

1. Revenue generation and International receipts: Fundamentally, coastal tourism can provide a major source of revenue for the Countries and local areas in which it occurs. In developing Countries, it can be a primary source of hard currency earnings;
2. Local jobs and prosperity: Many coastal areas have fragile economies, sometimes due to their peripheral location. Tourism enterprises can provide an important direct source of both skilled and unskilled jobs. Spending by tourists on miscellaneous purchases and the development of local supply chains can generate further employment and income in the area and support other economic sectors;
3. Infrastructure and community facilities: Tourism investment can support the provision of infrastructures, such as transport, telecommunications, energy and water supply, that may otherwise not be available in some coastal areas and communities. Leisure facilities and amenities provided for tourists may also be available to local people;
4. Increasing awareness of the need for conservation: The dependency of tourism on attractive coastal environments and culture can lead to a greater awareness of their value amongst local communities, Government and other stakeholders, leading to more commitment and support for their conservation. More generally, it can provide a motivation for keeping areas clean and well maintained;
5. Investment in the environment and cultural heritage: Some forms of tourism investment can directly benefit the natural and cultural heritage. Sensitive developments have included restoration of coastal habitats and historic sites and support for cultural traditions. Tourism businesses and visitors may provide financial and practical support for conservation, and;
6. Sustainable community livelihoods: Tourism can provide an alternative source of




livelihood for local communities, which may be more sustainable than their previous activities.

Challenges of Coastal and Marine Tourism:

As an anthropocentric sector, CMT thrives alongside a plethora of challenges which when duly identified and assessed, will enhance inclusive and integrated management for sustainable development. Some key challenges of CMT include:

- 1. Physical destruction and loss of amenities:** Poorly sited new development and sprawling urbanisation can destroy natural beauty and amenities. The construction process of coastal hotels and resorts can be very destructive if not well managed, causing erosion, silting of coastal water and other damage;
- 2. Loss of habitat and biodiversity:** Tourism development can lead to the removal and fragmentation of important habitats, including dunes, coral reefs, wetlands and mangroves. Tourism activities, such as diving, boat anchoring and some beach activities, can cause damage to marine and terrestrial habitats and disturbance to wildlife;
- 3. Pollution:** Pollution can arise from sewage discharge, gaseous emissions, noise, light, solid waste, marine litter, plastic waste and other sources generated by the operation of tourism businesses and the activities of tourists. This can have social and environmental consequences, both terrestrial and marine;
- 4. Resource consumption and competition:** Coastal tourism can be a major user of local natural and non-renewable resources, including water, land, minerals and living species, including fish and crustaceans. Some developments are major energy users, causing a general depletion of resources and competition for what is available – all of which can affect local community livelihoods and well-being. Tourism use can prevent access to the coast by local people. Tourism can also negatively impact cultural resources;
- 5. Climate change:** Coastal areas are very susceptible to the impacts of climate change, including Sea level rise, unpredictable climate, storm surges, changing temperatures and flooding. This can affect the physical integrity of coasts



and hasten erosion as well as damage property and influence demand patterns. It has particular implications for the location and design of future developments;

6. Limited community engagement and benefit: In some coastal areas there has been little involvement of local communities in the planning of tourism development and insufficient consideration of the impact on their livelihoods. While economic advantages may be gained by some people, opportunities to maximise and spread local benefits may not be pursued;

7. Property development patterns and motives: In many areas, the nature of the tourism-related investment has been changing. There is an increasing trend towards projects which involve an element of residential property development, in the form of second homes and condominiums. This may affect land prices and availability, and the level of tourism benefits left in the local area. Some developments may be driven in part by property speculation. Some developers may have little long-term commitment to the area, and;

8. Seasonality and sensitivity of demand:

Coastal tourism can sometimes last for a very short season, often owing to climate conditions. This can limit the profitability of enterprises, the quality of jobs available and the benefit to local communities. Coasts can also be quite vulnerable to certain factors that cause market fluctuations, such as natural disasters, security issues, etc.

Continental Strategy for Promoting Sustainable Coastal and Marine Tourism in Africa

The development of a Continental Strategy to guide the sustainable development of CMT in Africa Union Member States will facilitate the alignment of CMT to the ABES strategic intervention areas, to promote economic growth while improving human well-being and social equity and preserving the environment. The Strategy will enhance mitigation of the challenges associated with CMT and strengthen pathways for achieving sustainable CMT. Through a participatory stakeholder engagement process, the following priority constraints and key issues related to the expansion of CMT in Africa, Policy intervention

areas, objectives and priority actions are outlined for such a Strategy.

Priority Constraints And Key Issues Related To The Expansion Of Coastal And Marine Tourism In Africa

i. Poor Policy coherence and stakeholder collaboration issues

- Most Policy documents on tourism are outdated and do not sufficiently capture and align with all indices of sustainable CMT as encapsulated in the Agenda 2030- SDG 12 (Sustainable Consumption and Production), 13 (Climate Change) and 14 (Oceans' Conservation); Paris Agreement or CBD,
- Lack of robust stakeholders platform, and engagement to identify and address major environmental and social challenges faced by the maritime and coastal tourism sector, in particular, related to climate change, biodiversity protection and natural resources conservation,

- Inadequate Regional Policy platform for the sharing of knowledge, expertise and resources from different marine Regions, in particular those with similar challenges and issues, as well as transnational and inter-regional partnerships, networks and Strategies.
- ii. Lack of coordinated/harmonised Regional template for integrated coastal and marine planning through an ecosystem approach*
 - Lack of Regionally coordinated actions for implementation of key coastal and marine planning tools such as Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and Marine Spatial Planning (MSP), Inadequate support for transboundary planning and Regional cooperation among AU Member Countries, especially for National and local institutions and stakeholders, by sharing information and a common Vision, planning and actions to facilitate sustainable tourism.
- iii. Poor regionally coordinated monitoring, evaluation and statistics schemes*
 - Poor quantitative instruments and assessment tools (e.g. EIA, Blue Accounting) to evaluate the carrying

- capacity of destinations or territories and lack of harmonised indicators for socio-economic and environmental statistics at National and Regional level,
- Lack of Regional template to evaluate and monitor the impacts of maritime and coastal tourism on natural ecosystems.
- iv. *An ineffective platform for identification, supporting and disseminating sustainable practices, responsible businesses and green skills among AU Member States (AU MS).*
- Lack of Regional support mechanism to promote sustainable business practices by private and public actors within AU MS,
 - Poor incentives to strengthen the integration of local private actors from different economic sectors along the sustainable tourism value chain,
 - Poor capacity in encouraging high-quality education and vocational training integrating the principles of sustainability.
- v. *Inadequate Regional sectoral Strategies and action plans to green and decarbonize the whole tourism industry*
- Poor sectoral action plans to decarbonize the whole CMT industry,
- No template for the use of eco-labels and environmental certifications in the whole tourism value chain.
- vi. *Lack of robust financing platform for sustainable blue tourism activities, Strategies and actors*
- Uncoordinated alignment of development aid and cooperation schemes,
 - Poor environmental incentives and Policies aiming at influencing the behaviour of blue tourism enterprises, travellers and investors,
 - Gaps in the creation of sustainable and efficient PPPs in the development of critical tourism facilities and services.
- vii. *Poor knowledge base of Regional institutions to involve, prepare and empower travellers, the industry and key stakeholders*
- Poor capacity development of the private sector on benefits of resource-efficient allocation, branding and reputation improvement and the long-term security of green investment,
 - Lack of Regionally coordinated good practices of information sharing, capacity-building and awareness actions.

Policy Intervention Areas, Objectives and Priority Actions

To achieve the objectives of the Strategy, several areas of intervention and priority actions are proposed to achieve the expected outcomes. The bottom-line is to overcome the challenges faced by the CMT activities on the conservation of aquatic biodiversity.

Area of intervention #1. Strengthening the local capacity for environmentally sustainable and climate resilient economies and empowered communities.

Objective:

Development of a template for Regional biodiversity protection, nature-based solutions to climate adaptation, blue investments, and more sustainable (coastal and marine) tourism practices as means for building more resilient ecosystems

Priority actions:

- i. Develop integrated strategies for sustainable environmental management;

- ii. Develop and implement harmonized Regional Regulatory Framework towards providing support for a protected area network of marine and coastal parks and reserves, including beach parks and Regulations;
- iii. Develop capacity for climate-resilient economies and communities;
- iv. Capacity building of National officials and operators in the collection of relevant data to make decisions that take a long-term perspective on the changes in climate and disaster risks
- v. Develop a risk management framework;
- vi. Establish an information database and dissemination mechanism for CMT issues, and;
- vii. Strengthen Policy and Regulatory frameworks for pollution management and good governance of coastal and marine resources.

Area of intervention #2. Support towards the development of Resilient Infrastructure, Blue Carbon & other Ecosystem Services.

Objective:

Ensuring that infrastructure needs are in sufficient capacity whilst reflecting climate mitigating measures through the application of nature-based solutions.

Priority actions:

- i. Establish a Regional regulatory framework for the development of resilient infrastructure;
- ii. Provide support for the operation of the Regional infrastructure framework for the protection of coastal structures from floods and standardization of building codes for the industry toward climate resilience;
- iii. Establish strategic linkages with other sectors including on infrastructure development, synergizing sectoral regulatory frameworks,
- iv. Improve sustainability in port and coastal infrastructure development.

Area of intervention #3. Promoting Public-Private Sector Partnerships in CMT planning and management.

Objective:

To accelerate investment in CMT initiatives that will improve Ocean health and stimulate the BE.

Area of intervention #4. Strengthening local capacity for the development of Integrated and Sustainable Coastal & Marine Tourism.

Objective :

Ensuring Regional and National capacity development for sustainable Integrated and Sustainable Coastal & Marine Tourism.

Priority actions:

- i. Introduction of a Regional action plan to encourage opportunities, through the creation of a template for Integrated and Sustainable Coastal & Marine Tourism;
- ii. Encourage research action and development of capacity for Integrated and Sustainable Coastal & Marine Tourism;
- iii. Improve capacity for strengthening the Regional institution on CMT;
- iv. Enhance inter and intra coordination mechanism among...

- v. Support integrated planning mechanism, and;
- vi. Strengthen the Legal and Policy environment for harmonization of collaboration on transboundary matter.

Area of intervention #5: Mechanisms for coastal and marine tourism sustainable development operationalised

Objective:

Development of a roadmap for a sustainable ocean economy through sustainable management of Coastal and Marine Tourism towards addressing: climate change effects, pollution reduction, ecosystem regeneration and biodiversity conservation, and gender inclusiveness by investing in local jobs and communities.

Priority actions:

- i. Develop Regional coordinated strategies for increasing sustainable and resilient financing for conservation and restoration activities, including MPA management and enforcement;

- ii. Harmonize National based tourism policies and plans, including product development and marketing, for attracting visitors, both domestic and International,
- iii. Develop a mechanism for engagement with tourism-based communities for the management of tourism infrastructure and regeneration of the local environment, economy and community;
- iv. Create a regionally harmonised structure for collecting, integrating and maintaining data on sustainability indicators, including through National Ocean and tourism accounts, and target appropriate investment for sustainability requirements;
- v. Utilise collaborative management arrangements and cooperative vpartnerships to promote the engagement of all stakeholders in decision-making and share expertise and resources for sustainability;
- vi. Undertake value chain analysis to align strategies and interventions to eliminate leakage and boost local economic prosperity, and;

- vii. Leverage on user fees and environmental taxes and also build long-term solvency through the establishment and endowment of conservation trust funds to ensure conservation funding is resilient to downturns in visitation.

Conclusion

Despite the extensive gains associated with the expansion of CMT in the purview of Blue Economy promotion in Africa, the impact of the sector on biodiversity and the aquatic environment cannot be overemphasized. This Policy note highlights the benefits of CMT for Africa's transformative development as well the challenges associated with its development. Tenants for the development of a Continental Strategy for the sustainable development of CMT in AU Member States have also been expressed in this document.

Link to the main report: www.

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