

COAST – Collaborative Actions for Sustainable Tourism – Project

GEF/UNEP/UNIDO/UNWTO



“Supporting the conservation of globally significant coastal and marine ecosystems and associated biodiversity in sub-Saharan Africa, through the reduction of the negative environmental impacts which they receive as a result of coastal tourism”

COAST PROJECT

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH PROCESS ON ONGOING ECO-TOURISM INITIATIVES IN NORTH AND SOUTH KENYAN COAST

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INTRODUCTION

Biological and ecosystems degradation is continuing at an increasing rate around many countries whilst conservation efforts are not matching up, and if this continues in the next few years we might lose the fragile pristine environment that we have at the moment. The efforts we sow today will be the ones that will earn us a promising future and the generations to come will benefit. It is therefore becoming increasingly clear that more conservation efforts are needed.

My research entailed finding out as many as possible active eco-tourism businesses, projects, and organizations in North and South Kenyan Coast, documenting; their contact details, main objectives, length of time of operation, main sources of funding, number of visitors annually, and their future outlook/plans.

The North Coast is a 300km stretch between Mombasa Island and Lamu island. Here you will find some of the most luxurious world class hotels, offering the best in house entertainment e.g. traditional dances, board games, pool and beach volleyball, casinos and winding, sunny beaches. The north coast is a world of enthralling history and natural beauty. It is lined with pristine palm fringed beaches, and the calm inviting waters of the Indian Ocean. The beaches are broken by the wide mouth of Kilifi and Mida Creeks.

The south coast also stretches for some 200km and has a wide range of world class resorts, centered around Diani beach allowing visitors to relax and enjoy the natural paradise with the best standards of accommodation service and cuisine. The beaches are bordered by lush green coastal rainforests with a variety of birdlife and wildlife. There are quiet getaways such as Tiwi beach which is ideal for travelers looking for a low key break. Further south there are caves which were used as refuge by dhow sailors, Arab slavers and explorers. Shimonzi is also an excellent base for big game fishing around the waters of Pemba channel.

I began my internship at UNIDO in June this year and was privileged to be part of this project. The research took a period of two months but I believe it could take a shorter time if the contact persons cooperate well. The steps below show the whole research process.



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Summary of the Research Process

Background reading

I did a background reading of the project during the first week to familiarize myself with it and identify my area of interest which was eco-tourism. My research then started a week later on investigating the ecotourism initiatives in North and South coast.

Research Methods

I began my research, mainly using three methods since the research was to be conducted from a distance and therefore there was no possibility of meeting any of the contact people, apart from a few who are based in Nairobi and have projects at the coast e.g. Eco-tourism Society of Kenya.

The methods of research included- Internet searching

- Sending and responding to emails
- Making and responding to phone calls
- face to face meetings.

a) Internet search

This was my first step in the research and it involved finding out some of the major Eco-tourism Organizations in North and South Coast. This was important because through them it became easier to get to the small enterprises operating under them and to get to know the projects they had underway.

The major organizations I found included:

- ▶ Ecotourism Kenya
- ▶ International Union for Conservation of Nature
- ▶ Kenya Wildlife Service
- ▶ National Environment Management Authority
- ▶ Kenya Marine Fisheries and Research Institute
- ▶ Wildlife Clubs of Kenya
- ▶ Eco-Ethics International
- ▶ Save our Seas Foundation
- ▶ East Africa Marine Eco-region
- ▶ Nature Kenya
- ▶ PACT Kenya
- ▶ Watamu Marine Association
- ▶ Basiva foundation
- ▶ Malindi District Cultural Association
- ▶ Madina community Development group

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- ▶ Hemingways Resort
- ▶ Sun N sand beach Resort
- ▶ Turtle bay beach Club
- ▶ Camp Kenya Limited

The above organizations provide support to development of Eco-tourism initiatives and promote sustainable practices by funding other small enterprises. They come up with projects that benefit the communities (mostly economically), they also create awareness on the importance of conservation by educating them on alternative livelihoods. In turn the communities stop environmentally destructive activities thus promoting conservation of natural resources.

After finding out the major organizations, what they do and who they work with, I did a general research on other small organizations and CBO's that operate independently. This I did this through internet searches and analyzing the results and taking the necessary details from their websites (as per my research questions indicted above). This was the most convenient method since I was operating from a distance.

b) Sending mails

After doing a) and finding their contacts, I sent each one of them an email which contained my identity, purpose for the research, why it was necessary that they give me the information, and a brief explanation about the COAST project. Attached to it was a recommendation letter from the project technical coordinator.

c) Making phone calls

This was also used frequently after sending the emails to make sure they had got them and to find out when I would expect their responses. The method was also useful when conducting a follow up as some delayed their response. Furthermore, for smaller organizations -especially the CBO'S - who didn't have email addresses, and for the ones who preferred to give the information over the phone, this method proved useful.

d) Meetings

In my opinion, I think this is the best way to collect information when given such an assignment. One can easily access information on the area of study because it is easier and more convenient to interact with people on a one to one basis. In my case I only got to meet some of the major organizations based in Nairobi, for the other organizations communication was either through phone calls or emails.



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Challenges

Throughout the research there were a few challenges, some of which I managed to find solutions for. These are shared below:

- While doing the general internet searching there were some organizations that didn't even show their contacts details, and so I only managed to get their physical addresses.
- After getting their contacts, some of them turned out to be no longer in service and they were removed from the database.
- Delayed or no responses. This was one of the biggest problems throughout the research. Some people took too long to respond while others cooperated very quickly. To solve problem I conducted follow up phone calls and then most people responded.
- Another issue was that some respondents preferred meetings which was not possible because this was a desk study. I tried to make them understand but some remained silent even after persuading them on the need to respond.
- Finally, in some cases where I couldn't find enough information and it took me a long time trying, eventually I deleted these from the research database.

Conclusion

Throughout the research process, I realized that there is not so much going on in south coast in terms of eco-tourism and conservation when compared with the north coast. I think more initiatives should be created to encourage conservation and improve the livelihoods of the people.

Recommendations

I would like to recommend if a similar research is to be conducted then funds should be made available for the researcher to go to the area of study to create a strong linkage between the research and the respondents in the study area.

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Example of datasheet for Eco-tourism operations:

ORGANISATIONS IN NORTH COAST	CONTACTS OF ENTERPRISE/PROJECT TIME OF OPERATION	OBJECTIVES	MAIN SOURCES OF FUNDING	VISITOR ATTRACTIONS/SERVICES PROVIDED	VISITORS ANNUALLY
A-ROCHA KENYA •A christian conservation organisation that demonstrates God's love for His enviroment by facilitating a deeper understanding of creation an practical care of it through education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •A ROCHA KENYA Established in1999 an opened a bird observatory and field study centre in watamu in 2002 Which has accomodation for 17 people and additional space for campers. •CONTACTS (0)42 233 2023, 020 233 5865 kenya@arocha.org 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Educate the community on enviromental conservation. ► To conserve the community and the enviroment throug promotion of eco tuurism. ► To research on birdlife and biodiversity in order to protect threatened habitats and species. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Funds are raised from a small fee they charge guests at Mwamba an other generous donations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Main visitor attractions at mwamba is bird watching. 	
HEMINGWAYS RESORT •Luxury tropical treat hotel on one of Kenya's finest beach, 74 room resort hotel overlooking the stunning beach of watamu marine park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has been operating for 22yrs. Located 20 miles north of mombasa •CONTACTS; (0) 42 2332624, reservations@hemingways.co.ke 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► To provide a 5 star level of haspitality to their local and intarnational clients at their hotel.Exellent accomodation, fine dinning and multitude of services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Clients payments for accomodation and meals/drinks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Watamu marine national park,beautiful white sandy beach,sunbathing,deep sea fishing,snorkeling, diving and relaxing. •Facilities including 5 star standard accomodation, air conditioning, telephone, mini bars,fans, hair driers and en suite bathrooms in all bedrooms,fully equiped gym, tennis court and day spa treatment facility. 	Average of 8000 to14,000 bednights