SUSTAINABLE COASTAL TOURISM IN AFRICA

DEMONSTRATING AND CAPTURING BEST PRACTICES AND TECHNOLOGIES FOR THE REDUCTION OF LAND-SOURCED IMPACTS RESULTING FROM COASTAL TOURISM

BACKGROUND

The natural beauty of the African coastal landscapes, and the rich flora and fauna they support, in combination with the favourable climate conditions, has increased the prominence of coastal tourism in the region.

Coastal tourism is often considered an 'environmentally friendly' alternative to more exploitative and diverse livelihood options, with the added potential to benefit environmental protection (by increasing the appreciation of the value of natural resources). In sub-Saharan African countries, coastal tourism has developed at different rates; moreover development has typically progressed in an ad hoc, un-planned and uncontrolled manner.

In the absence of proper controls and legally enforceable environmental standards and planning, tourism operators have tended to focus on short term profits. This situation is resulting in environmental and socio-cultural impacts that are posing a serious threat to the coastal and marine ecosystems of transboundary significance, as well as the long term sustainability of the tourism sector which depends on a clean and attractive environment.

The project 'Sustainable Coastal Tourism in Africa' focus on developing strategies for a sustainable coastal tourism by engaging the private sector and enhancing public-private partnerships. This action will enable the formulation and implementation of appropriate national and regional policies and strategies for sustainable tourism development in coastal and marine areas, including a political and strategical framework to guide and promote ecotourism development.

OBJECTIVES

The key objective of the project is to mitigate the negative impacts of tourism on the coastal and marine environment in Sub-Saharan Africa. It also aims to support nature conservation, as identified by the African Process, through promoting the development of sustainable tourism policies and strategies and the implementation of pilot demonstration projects in a number of countries that participated in the African Process.

The project is designed to:

- Provide appropriate policy and strategy frameworks for sustainable tourism development in coastal areas
- Build and enhance national capacities in sustainable tourism development
- Implement pilot demonstration projects

Well managed, coastal tourism may generate economic, social and environmental benefits

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Sustainalbe tourism expands livelihood options and promotes local economic development

Coastal areas are especially vulnerable to the negative impacts of unplanned and uncontrolled tourism development

ACTIVITIES

- Identification of the best available practices and technologies

- Development and implementation of mechanisms for sustainable tourism governance and management

- Assessment & delivery of training & capacity requirements emphasizing an integrated approach to sustainable tourism

- Dissemination of knowledge accumulated in the framework of the project, including the Regional Information Coordination House (RICH) and a regional GIS-based coastal Environmental Information Management and Advisory System (EIMAS).

PARTNERS

- Global Environmental Facility

- United Nations Environment Programme

- United Nations Industrial Development Organization

- This project involves the following countries, and it is coordinated through the Ministries of Environment and Tourism: Kenya, Mozambique, Seychelles, Tanzania, Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal and Cameroon

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

- UNWTO – Department of Sustainable Development of Tourism: **http://www.unwto.org/sdt**

- UNWTO – Regional Representation of Africa: **http://www.unwto.org/regional/africa/menu.htm**

- GEF-Project website: **http://gefonline.org/projectDetailsSQL.cfm?projID=2129**

Sustainable tourism strategies and policies are needed to ensure long-term protection of the natural resources on which tourism destinations depends

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