Tourism development in coastal areas in Africa: promoting sustainability through governance and management mechanisms

Marcel Leijzer and Richard Denman

Abstract

Coastal areas have a high potential for tourism development in large parts of Africa. Governments and tourism enterprises should pay due attention to sustainability principles for tourism to serve as a positive force on the coasts of Africa, helping to conserve coastal environments and biodiversity, minimising environmental impacts and contributing to the wellbeing of local communities. Research in nine African countries revealed mechanisms for improving sustainable tourism governance and management in coastal areas. It pointed to the need for strengthening policy frameworks and providing effective governance structures for sustainable coastal tourism. The sustainability of coastal tourism can further be enhanced by integrating planning for tourism in a wider coastal management context, strengthening the assessment of tourism development projects, improving monitoring and management of tourism enterprises, and pursuing greater benefits for conservation and local communities. Concerted efforts from the public and private sector, civil society, and international development agencies are required to support planning and management of sustainable forms of tourism on the African coasts.

Keywords: Africa; sustainable tourism; coastal zone management; policy research

Marcel Leijzer is at the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), Madrid, Spain. E-mail: mleijzer@unwto.org
Richard Denman is at the Tourism Company, Ledbury, United Kingdom. E-mail: rdenman@thetourismcompany.com

1. Introduction

Global tourism has witnessed massive growth in the past twenty years. In 2012, total international arrivals were 1.035 million, more than double the figure for 1990. Tourism has demonstrated a strong ability to recover from short term setbacks. While 2009 saw a decline in global arrivals as a result of the global economic recession, the years 2010 to 2012 recorded notably strong growth. Despite possible future fluctuations, the World Tourism Organisation UNWTO has maintained its forecast of overall growth in arrivals averaging 3.3% per annum to 2030, with an even higher average forecast for Africa (5%)(UNWTO, 2011).

Tourism is increasingly receiving the recognition it deserves as a driver for sustainability by those shaping the path to sustained and fair recovery. World leaders meeting at two major summits in 2012, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) and the G20, agreed that tourism can make an important contribution to many of the world’s most pressing challenges. The UNEP Green Economy report identified tourism as one of 10 sectors that are vital to greening the global economy.
In many countries, coastal areas provide the main tourism resource, with the greatest concentration of tourism investment and facilities. One of the main reasons why coasts are so important for tourism is that visitors are strongly attracted by coastal environments (beaches, fine landscapes, coral reefs, birds, fish, marine mammals and other wildlife) and by associated cultural interest (coastal towns, villages, historic sites, ports, fishing fleets and markets and other aspects of maritime life). At the same time, this special environment is sensitive and fragile. Many coasts contain important habitats and have a very rich biodiversity. Land, water and other natural resources are often scarce on the coast, partly as a result of the focus and pressure of development and activity in these areas.

Tourism literature has pointed out the possible benefits of coastal tourism for the economy, society and the environment and has highlighted issues and challenges related to coastal tourism development. The positive benefits often mentioned focus on revenue generation, local job creation and prosperity, infrastructure and community facilities, awareness of the need for conservation, investment in the environment and cultural heritage, and the contribution to sustainable community livelihoods. The challenges and issues described relate to physical destruction and loss of amenity, loss of habitat and biodiversity, pollution, resource consumption and competition, climate change, limited community engagement and benefit, property development patterns and motives, and seasonality and sensitivity of demand (e.g. Becken and Moreno, 2004; Jennings, 2004; Brunnschweiler, 2010). The possible benefits, issues and challenges underline the need for implementing policies and actions in coastal areas that deliver sustainable tourism. This means tourism that ‘takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities’ (UNWTO, 2005).

From 2011 to 2013, UNWTO undertook desk and field research into the mechanisms for sustainable tourism governance and management in coastal areas of Africa. The research was carried out as part of the GEF funded Collaborative Actions for Sustainable Tourism (COAST) project. The project, implemented in collaboration between UNEP, UNIDO and UNWTO, has the aim of supporting and enhancing 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 may be caused as a result of coastal tourism. There are nine countries involved in the project, being: Cameroon, Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal (in West Africa), and Kenya, Mozambique, Seychelles and Tanzania (in East Africa). Each country has one or more demonstration sites, where the context of sustainable tourism on the ground can be more clearly understood and the impact of various policies, structures and actions can be observed and tested.

The purpose of the research on sustainable tourism governance and management is:
- To determine whether the nine countries’ policies facilitate the long term sustainability of tourism and identify gaps, needs and options for sustainable tourism governance and management.
- To provide a vision and recommendations for the most appropriate type of mechanisms for sustainable tourism governance and management.

---

1 Further information on the COAST project can be found at: [http://coast.iwlearn.org/](http://coast.iwlearn.org/)
To provide guidance for key stakeholders in the nine countries on the reform of sustainable tourism governance and management as it relates to coastal tourism.

The research addresses mechanisms for sustainable tourism governance and management at both country level and local (demonstration site) level. It starts from the understanding that the fundamental requirement of governance for sustainable tourism is to have effective engagement of the key public and private stakeholder bodies whose policies and actions can affect the impact of tourism. The research also builds on the understanding that sustainable tourism governance requires engagement and coordination of tourism, environment, community and wider development interests at a local level. It is at this level that much of the necessary planning, networking, capacity building and information delivery occurs and where tourism needs to be effectively integrated into local sustainable development. A particular issue is how national policies and governance process are reflected and implemented at a local level, which may be influenced by decentralization and devolution policies and actions as well as local governance capacity and community engagement structures.

2. Methodology

Coastal tourism is a broad subject. The research concentrates on mechanisms of governance and management for sustainable tourism which is in turn a complex and multifaceted topic. The study has taken its approach and direction partly from the UNWTO and UNEP publication Making Tourism More Sustainable, a guide for policy makers, which contains guidelines on governance structures, sustainability aims and management instruments relevant to all types of destination (UNWTO and UNEP, 2005).

The field research was based on a series of missions to the nine COAST partner countries conducted between March 2011 and February 2013, lasting approximately seven days each and involving time in the capital city consulting with government and other national level bodies and in the demonstration sites consulting with local stakeholders and observing the situation on the ground. In all cases the views of both tourism and environment ministries and agencies were obtained, together with those of private sector representatives, relevant NGOs and community groups. Existing policy documents, legislative frameworks and other background material were also studied in each country. Field missions were undertaken to each of the nine COAST partner countries, with repeat visits made to Ghana, Kenya and Tanzania, in which specific attention was paid to the issue of economic incentives for sustainable tourism governance. A regional workshop was organized in Nairobi in May 2013 in which the research findings were presented and validated.

The field and desk research looked particularly at policy aims related to:

- Environmental impacts – Biological diversity, physical integrity and environmental purity. This reflects the GEF funding and ultimate project aim of conserving coastal and marine ecosystems and biodiversity. It relates to coastal landscapes, terrestrial and marine habitats, waste management, pollution control etc.

- Sustainable livelihoods – Local prosperity, social equity and community wellbeing. This recognises the positive and negative impact of tourism on coastal communities and the interrelationship between poverty alleviation and conservation.
The study investigated the extent to which policies and management in the nine countries are covering potential areas for intervention in order to achieve more sustainable tourism. Areas of particular relevance to coastal tourism, assessed during the research, include providing strategic direction for coastal destinations, and influencing tourism development, the operation or tourism enterprises and the behaviour of visitors. The research identified and assessed the current policy frameworks in the nine countries which do, or could, influence tourism sustainability. Particular attention was paid to:

- Tourism policies, which may be contained within national tourism strategies and may or may not embrace sustainability aims.
- Environmental policies, which may or may not have specific reference to tourism but should provide a basis for influencing tourism development and management.
- Sustainable development policies and/or more specific poverty reduction strategies, which may or may not have specific reference to tourism.
- Policies and programmes aimed specifically at coastal management, including integrated coastal zone management strategies and plans.

The extent to which the countries have local level policies and strategies that influence tourism was also investigated, including how these relate to national policy frameworks and regional development plans.

Further, the study investigated the presence and working of governance structures for the development and implementation of policy and for the management of sustainable tourism. Particular attention was paid to:

- Tourism governance structures including the degree of support and engagement by national government at a high level and the provision for private sector and civil society participation.
- Intra-governmental structures linking tourism, environmental management and sustainable development.
- Local area structures for tourism and coastal area management, including the role of local authorities and the engagement of tourism, conservation and community stakeholders.

The field research considered not only the presence of structures but also sought to assess their effectiveness and long term sustainability.

Prior to the field missions, in each of the nine countries national experts identified all relevant national and local policy documents, regulations and other relevant written material relating to the research, and identified relevant governance structures at national and local level, including multi-stakeholder bodies. During this initial step, the organisations and representatives to meet during the field missions to the nine countries became apparent, and a detailed programme for each of the field missions was prepared.

### 3. Contextual background

Individual countries and destinations in Africa are at different stages in the development of coastal tourism, but many of the challenges they face are similar. There are significant differences between the nine countries in the scale of tourism and its relative contribution to the national economy (Table 1).
Table 3.1 Tourism – Relative Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Tourism % GDP Direct</th>
<th>Tourism % Export of services 2011</th>
<th>International Tourist Arrivals 2011 (in thousands)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seychelles</td>
<td>44.3 (2009)</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Gambia</td>
<td>7.8 (2008)</td>
<td>66.8</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>3.6 (2010)</td>
<td>44.3 (2010)</td>
<td>1,001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>6.6 (2005)</td>
<td>62.9</td>
<td>795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>0.4 (2010)</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>715</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UNWTO

Tourism is very important to the economy of all the countries. Even in Nigeria, a 0.4% contribution to total GDP is significant for an individual sector and, in this case, amounts to a large total value, given the size of the country and the number of international arrivals. There is a lack of correlation between total arrivals and contribution to GDP, mainly due to the considerable difference in size between the countries. The volume of tourism in Mozambique reflects the land border with neighbouring South Africa. Seychelles stands out as a small country with a very significant dependency on tourism.

The relative importance of coastal tourism to the total tourism performance in the countries cannot be quantified. However, in Seychelles and The Gambia the tourism sector is almost entirely made up of leisure-based coastal tourism. Coastal tourism also dominates in Senegal and Mozambique and accounts to a significant proportion of tourism in Cameroon. In Ghana and Nigeria, the proportion of tourism that occurs on the coast will be high, partly owing to the coastal location of Accra and Lagos, even though coastal tourism as a product is not highly developed in these countries. Kenya and Tanzania are rather different, owing to a long established tradition of safari tourism. In both countries, however, there is a significant and developed coastal tourism product.

Taking the group of countries as a whole, some common issues are apparent in the relationship between tourism, the environment and communities on the coast. All countries are seeing a degree of new development for tourism on the coast. The pressure is particularly strong in Seychelles. Tourism projects may involve a mix of hotels, resorts, apartments and activities. In many countries, there is a general spread and pressure of urbanisation of the coast which can be a threat to the environment and to the amenity of the coastline for tourism.

Tourism operations can be a source of marine and terrestrial pollution on the coast in all the countries. The extent of this varies considerably from one enterprise to another. In general, there appears to be very little data on the actual levels of coastal pollution attributable to the tourism sector in the nine countries. Hotels and resorts are often quite heavy users of water and energy, but the extent will depend on their size, nature and management. The seriousness of the impact of this depends on the circumstances of the
location but, generally, there is a need to improve efficiency of resource use in the interests of local communities, the environment and operational cost saving. Poverty is widespread on the African coast, notably in fishing communities. The tourism sector does already contribute significantly to income flowing into the coastal areas, but more could be done to strengthen the linkages to the local community.

Coastal erosion is a threat to coastal integrity, livelihoods and tourism, notably in West Africa, but also to some coastal environments in the East. Damage to ecosystems and habitats, such as through the cutting of mangroves, is occurring quite extensively. Some of the coasts are suffering from poor solid waste management and are dirty and insanitary. Tourism appears in the main not to be a major direct cause of these problems, which mainly result from the activities of local communities over time. However, there are situations where tourism is harmful to biodiversity, such as through disturbance of turtle nesting sites on beaches. In all countries, the presence of protected areas under different forms of designation is important for both conservation and tourism, with tourism being seen as an increasingly important source of income for these areas which are largely under-funded.

4. Results and discussion

Government and management requirements for achieving sustainable tourism development in coastal areas in Africa, identified during the study, include having in place:
- Policies that are relevant and coherent across government, in the overall areas of sustainable development, tourism and the environment.
- Clear and supportive governance structures at all levels that involve and benefit from engagement of the private sector and other stakeholders.
- Sound planning and integrated management of coasts, including coastal tourism.
- Effective processes to assess and influence new tourism development.
- Tourism operations that pursue sound environmental management practices and seek to benefit local communities.
- Tourism related actions to improve the attractiveness and conservation of coastal environments.
- Actions to deliver more benefit to local communities from tourism.

Each of these requirements were assessed in detail during the desk and field research.

4.1 Policies for sustainable tourism

In most developing countries, government policies in different sectors are strongly influenced by top level policies on development and poverty reduction. All the nine countries set out their development aspirations and policies in a Vision framework or a Poverty Reduction Strategy and frequently both, with the latter providing a roadmap for achieving the vision. In a few countries, separate sustainable development policies exist or are being prepared, highlighting environmental and societal priorities and challenges. A common emphasis in the development policies is placed on good governance. One purpose of good governance is seen as providing an enabling environment for businesses. A positive relationship between the public and private sectors is universally underlined. In many of the countries, there is an emphasis on community engagement in governance and for business expansion to bring opportunities for local people. More formally, the
policies are often providing a basis for decentralisation programmes, placing more power and responsibility in the hands of local government, with recognition of a parallel need for institutional strengthening and capacity building.

All the nine countries have specific tourism policies that focus on achieving significant growth in tourism volumes, and in which sustainable development principles are reflected. In some, the pillars of sustainability – economic, social and environmental – provide a framework for the policies. An interesting approach adopted in The Gambia and in Senegal was to set out and then formally adopt principles of responsible or sustainable tourism as a separate commitment upon which subsequent tourism policies are then based.

Five of the nine countries have Tourism Master Plans or equivalent sector development plans or structure plans. These are detailed documents based on analysis of resources, markets, opportunities and the various challenges facing the delivery of tourism policy. The Tourism Master Plans all recognise the need to embrace social and environmental sustainability. However, sometimes this may not be fully integrated in the proposals put forward. When referring to opportunities in the different zones, environmental circumstances are considered in general, and in some cases this influences proposals for the scale and nature of possible development in coastal areas. Most of the master plans point to considerable weaknesses in capacity to plan and deliver. They underline the need for effective regulations, professionalism and transparency, calling for measures such as objective Environmental Impact Assessment for tourism development and better land use planning. They also emphasise the need for good governance and engagement of the private sector, with reform of agencies such as tourism authorities, where necessary.

An important observation from most of the countries is the relative lack of tourism policies, strategies, master plans or action plans at a sub-national level. The increasing emphasis globally as well as in some African countries on destinations, and on development and management programmes for them, based on multi-stakeholder engagement, suggests that this is a significant weakness.

### 4.2 Governance structures and relationships

All the nine countries have Ministries of Tourism, which are often combined with other responsibilities, such as culture or natural resources. All the tourism ministries have responsibility for formulating and overseeing tourism policy and, in all cases, there is a separate tourism agency, usually called a Tourism Board or Authority which has responsibility for marketing. Patterns are changing in the national level tourism structures. A number of countries have undertaken reviews of tourism delivery which have pointed to institutional weaknesses, including duplication, inefficiency and insufficient stakeholder engagement. In general, there has been a move towards further devolution of functions towards separate agencies and away from ministries, and also to splitting marketing from product control and development. A strong feature of tourism in all the countries is the presence of active private sector membership bodies which help to coordinate individual tourism enterprises, communicate with them and represent their views. These bodies provide a good vehicle for discussing and taking up issues and have shown an interest in taking up sustainability concerns. In most countries, there are various structures and processes that provide for joint governance and initiatives between the public and private
sector. Most of the tourism boards have Boards of Directors that have representation from the private sector alongside the Ministry of Tourism.

The establishment of effective structures for delivering and managing sustainable tourism at a local level is very important for the sustainability of the sector and for tackling issues of planning, development, control, enterprise engagement and community benefit. In several countries, there have been strong recent or on-going moves to increase decentralisation of governance to local authorities operating at county or district level. The level and nature of decentralisation and the degree of local democracy and self-governance does vary between the different countries. While decentralization processes have tended to lead to a specific identification of responsibilities at different levels in the fields of planning and environment, the situation with respect to tourism is often less clear. In some countries various functions relating to tourism, including licensing of enterprises, is likely to be undertaken at a regional or provincial level. In Mozambique, for example, provincial directorates of tourism have this responsibility, but have limited capacity to deliver the service over large and highly dispersed areas. Multi-stakeholder structures for tourism management at a destination level that bring together local government, private sector, NGOs, community bodies may exist at different levels for different purposes. Local destinations can be quite small areas with a clear identity and tourism potential and where it is practicable for local stakeholders to work together on management issues. They may fit within larger destinations, which may be a better level to undertake certain functions, for example with respect to delivery of expertise and marketing.

4.3 Planning the Coastal Zone for Sustainable Tourism

Coastal zone planning requires a coordinated approach, taking account of current resources, future change and the needs of different sectors and communities in order to achieve economic, social and environmental sustainability. The need for an integrated coastal zone management (ICZM) process and plan is recognised in all the nine countries. The different players should work together to agree and implement a ICZM plan, which considers the various pressures and opportunities for development on the coast from a range of sectors that may be competing for land and resources and whose impacts can affect other sectors as well as the integrity of the coastal environment. In some respects, tourism may be regarded as more environmentally benign than many other sectors. However, it is also recognised that tourism developments bring their own impacts, and part of the requirement of coastal planning is to ensure that tourism developments on the coast are located and designed to be appropriate to local environmental conditions.

The experience in selected countries in Africa has illustrated that ICZM should be seen as much as a process of maintaining facilitated engagement of stakeholders as the production of a plan. Bringing stakeholders together has often proved quite possible, but maintaining commitment over time has been more of a challenge. ICZM processes and plans tend to be quite broad in their treatment of different coastal activities and the balance between them, indicating how their competing use for resources will be addressed. They may contain a spatial element involving zoning of the coast for preferred types of use. However, in order to provide detail and also a legal basis for the spatial differentiation of land for different types of development and activity, a land use plan is needed, which has been developed in some of the nine countries for parts of their coast, although their availability appears to be patchy and quite limited.
ICZM plans and land use plans are both important in shaping development on the coast and identifying where it should occur. However, the delivery of successful sustainable tourism also requires a dimension of tourism destination management planning. This should focus specifically on tourism and provide a direction for its development based on careful assessment. Such a plan is well suited to a local destination level, but should reflect any national tourism policies and master plans. The key inputs to a destination management plan are:

- Resource assessment, including physical and cultural attributes as well as the nature, quality and performance of tourism facilities.
- Market assessment, considering current markets coming to the area, ongoing trends and future opportunities, and proposing marketing activities.
- Environment, social and other constraints which may determine capacity.
- Structures for effective planning and coordination of tourism in the destination.

Destination management plans should be informed by, and inform, wider ICZM plans and land use plans, ensuring that both reflect tourism needs and realities. In the nine countries, so far relatively few destination management plans in coastal areas have been forthcoming. Challenges for the drawing up of such plans relate in particular to human resource and financial constraints within the destinations and to a lack of data and evidence for planning.

4.4 Influencing Coastal Tourism Development

The extent, size, nature and location of new tourism development on the coast has a fundamental effect on the impact of the sector on coastal environments and communities. Selecting and using management tools effectively to influence development is of utmost importance to the sustainability of coastal tourism. All the nine countries have a requirement that any development which is likely to have a significant environmental impact should be the subject of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), leading to a report or statement that is taken into account in the determination of approval of the project. It is therefore a potentially powerful instrument in ensuring tourism development that is sustainable. Although they are called Environmental Impact Assessments, it is common for EIAs to cover a range of potential socio-economic and cultural impacts as well. EIAs make an objective assessment of impacts and identify mitigation actions to be taken by the project. There is a considerable variation between the nine countries in the likelihood that an EIA will be required for tourism investments. For example, in some countries all hotel development projects over 10 bedrooms appear to require a full EIA, while in others the threshold is 100 bedrooms. Especially for small scale tourism enterprise development the EIA requirements are often unclear. It would be helpful to clearly set out a minimum level of EIA procedure that is appropriate to the size of project and also practical to deliver.

An important issue in the EIA process is the extent of consultation with the local community. Generally, it is a requirement for communities to be consulted and for the EIA report to be made available for reading. While this requirement may be met, there is a feeling in certain countries and destinations that the effort made to consult and engage with the community is insufficient. Further, although systems for conducting EIAs are in place in the nine countries, in many countries stakeholders feel that the application of EIAs has not been fully effective and too many tourism projects may have been developed and are operational that should have been prevented or modified by the EIA. Possible reasons
for this are that EIAs may take place too late in the cycle and the results emerge after projects have already received a degree of approval. Government agencies and local authorities tend to have limited capacity to monitor the performance of development projects and the resulting operations to ensure that they are complying with the approach and mitigation measures that were proposed and approved through the EIA.

The EIA is one element of the procedures leading to the approval of tourism development proposals on the coast, which can also include other management aspects as licensing and planning approval, and specific site requirements for coastal development. Some countries are clearer than others about where and how to start to obtain a license. For example, in Tanzania approaches are all channelled to the Tanzania Investment Centre, which is a one-stop-shop for investors. This centre then brings together government ministries and agencies and facilitates contacts between them and the developer. In general, where the procedures are clear and there is good coordination, there appear to be fewer problems with developments being given approval without complying with correct procedures and scrutiny. All of the countries have an Investment Promotion Agency that generally have the responsibility to promote the country to investors and guide and help them in the various processes involved. This can be seen as a form of economic instrument for development, taking into account that a reduction in time delay in achieving investment approval can have a significant economic value for investors. The length of time that procedures may take can also have a bearing on the chances of securing good, sustainable development. Awareness of likely delays and hold ups can be a cause for developers to circumvent the procedures.

A specific site requirement for coastal developments concerns setback of buildings from the high water mark. In most countries, a minimum setback has been identified but this may not be enshrined in regulations, can often be surprisingly vague, and is not always necessarily being met. There is considerable variation between the countries on the extent of setback expected, ranging from 150 meter in The Gambia and Nigeria to 60 meter in Tanzania and 25 meter in The Seychelles. The need for a larger setback on the Atlantic coast compared to the Indian Ocean is understandable owing to the sea conditions and extent of erosion in West Africa. However, this is an area that could benefit from greater clarity, backed up by firm evidence and taking account of climate change predictions.

Securing sustainable forms of tourism development should not only require planning and control, but can also be approached through development promotion, assistance and economic incentives to encourage the right kind of projects. In selected countries, relevant ministries and NGOs provide verbal and/or written advice to developers. A good example are the guidelines for coastal tourism development in Tanzania, endorsed by the Ministry of Tourism, that provide guidance on site selection, design of facilities, landscape management, resource management, community relations, and carrying capacity. The provision of financial incentives, for example tax relief and reduction in import duties, can also be used to encourage investments that meet sustainability criteria. A good illustration of this is the tax relief offered in Senegal if local employment is created outside the capital.

4.5 Influencing the Operation of Coastal Tourism Enterprises

All the nine countries have some form of regulatory framework concerning the performance of tourism enterprises in managing impacts on the local environment and on
the welfare of visitors, staff and local communities, using a pattern of auditing, reporting and inspection. Environmental monitoring includes inspection of hotels and other premises, and/or self-auditing of environmental management with a report submitted to the environment agency, which is then the subject of a verification visit. In addition external monitoring of water and air quality may take place, which appeared to vary quite widely between the different countries and locations, partly based on expected or reported incidents. In Nigeria, for example, water quality monitoring was stepped up owing to concerns about sewerage discharge into the lagoons, including from restaurants, and has been combined with increased inspection of premises.

Despite the existing monitoring procedures, in some countries there are still many concerns about awareness, enforcement and on-going impacts, which are addressed in the COAST project. A number of common areas of weakness in the regulatory and inspection process have emerged, including: requirements may not be well known; criteria and procedures used in inspections may be too insubstantial; social aspects are missing; monitoring may be too infrequent; the process is fragmented; and some enterprises and activities are not inspected. In general, both environmental and tourism bodies point to a problem with a lack of financial and human resources to fulfil the inspection requirements and to ensure effective enforcement of the regulations, which could be addressed by strengthening collaboration between agencies and inspectors. In most countries, inspection by the tourism authorities related to the granting of an annual licence to operate is the most frequent inspection, occurring more often than inspection by environment agencies. A particular opportunity may rest with extending the scope and coverage of the tourism inspection to make sure that it is better placed to pick up any major violations or weaknesses concerning environmental management or staff and community relations. Another opportunity may arise from holding more joint inspections, with inspectors from the different disciplines working together, which is happening in Seychelles and Mozambique.

Mandatory government inspection tends to cover a relatively small number of key impacts that are reflected in regulations, such as waste management and pollution control. Wider sustainable tourism issues are not covered by the government inspection, but are addressed by voluntary certification schemes offered by bodies operating globally or at a national level. Voluntary certification has advantages in addressing a full range of sustainability issues. However, many enterprises, who take it up, are likely to be well motivated towards the environment and local communities already. It has been shown to be a good tool in encouraging them to be more comprehensive in their approach and to go further. The weakness lies in the inability to reach the majority of businesses, including those less predisposed towards sustainability.

Increasingly, many hotels and resorts also have their own quite strict sustainability policies and targets which may exceed those stipulated in regulations. These are found in individual companies as well as in international chains. Some relate directly to company Corporate Social Responsibility policies. In addition to their own policies, providers of accommodation, catering and recreational activities are heavily influenced by the standards set down by the international tour operators who are contracting with them. These may relate especially to customer safety, but international operators are increasingly taking note of environmental and community impact and building this into their own CSR policies and into their brand positioning and communication. International tour operators are themselves influenced by certification, such as the Travel Life scheme supported by the Association of British Travel Agents and other European operator
associations. The influence of tour operators is particularly strong in The Gambia, Senegal and Kenya, where the travel trade accounts for much of the market. Giving greater exposure in marketing campaigns to enterprises meeting sustainability criteria, e.g. those holding a sustainable tourism label, can also be considered as a valuable economic incentive.

4.6 Managing Coastal Environments Linked to Tourism

The impacts of tourism on the environment, but also of the latter on tourism, are often interrelated. Some direct measures taken to maintain the quality of the coastal environment in its own right, but also as an essential resource for tourism, include solid waste management, fighting coastal erosion, and conserving ecosystems and biodiversity.

The presence of strewn waste on and behind beaches and in other locations on the coast is a major problem in most of the countries and seriously degrades their appeal for tourism as well as being generally unsanitary and polluting the environment. The waste is usually locally generated, accumulating over time. Some may come from tourism activity or be washed up from the sea. A number of initiatives to address the problem have been pursued in different countries, often government backed and with active involvement of local NGOs and communities.

Erosion of beaches is a major issue, especially in West Africa, which is threatening both the short and long term appeal of the coast for tourism. Hotels and resorts should be seen as key stakeholders in any actions taken to combat erosion and sometimes they are the initiators of action. Any intervention, however, needs very careful consideration and planning along whole lengths of coastline as action taken in one place can have serious consequences elsewhere and over time. There is, therefore, a strong need for collaboration between the stakeholders and especially between the hotels and the responsible public authorities.

Coastal ecosystems, including habitats, landscapes and a rich marine and terrestrial biodiversity are very important to tourism, which itself can provide a motivation and source of revenue to support their conservation. A number of examples of situations where ecosystems are threatened, requiring management solutions, and of direct action to support conservation related to tourism can be found in the nine countries. The cutting of mangroves and other trees on the coastal belt is a serious problem in most of the countries. The presence of designated protected areas on the coast, in the form of national or marine parks and reserves or other designations, is very important both for conservation and for tourism. Yet, the role of such areas is undermined in many cases by lack of resources for conservation, management and enforcement of their protection. Tourism can play a part as a source of support for protected areas. Admission fees and charges may be used directly as a source of revenue for conservation and management, especially if the budget is retained locally. Income from tourism can also support communities within and around the areas, encouraging and enabling them to support conservation.

4.7 Supporting community livelihoods
A key requirement for sustainable coastal tourism is for the local communities along the coast to gain benefit from the industry, thereby helping to alleviate poverty, improving livelihoods and encouraging better management and conservation practices by the communities.

It is recognised that employment in the tourism enterprises, especially hotels and resorts, is one of the main ways in which local people living on the coast can gain benefit from tourism. It is through direct employment that the largest volume of local people will be reached. However, the conditions need to be right for this to happen, which in many coastal areas is a question of both demand and supply. In some countries, there is a government policy orientation to strengthen the level of engagement of local people in tourism enterprises. In Seychelles, for example, a high priority is being given to encouraging Seychellois to work in the sector at all levels, including in management. Consultation with the private sector suggests that there is generally a willingness to employ local people, partly as it makes sense in terms of cost and housing. Most coastal areas have a reasonable population level and hence a potential pool of labour. In some areas, however, problems exist with a low level of awareness and interest in such employment within the community, and with skill gaps, sometimes caused by a lack of provision of skills training in the hospitality sector provided within coastal destinations.

In most of the coastal areas, only limited attention is paid to the opportunity to channel more economic benefit to local communities by strengthening the local supply chains to the hotels and resorts, even though the opportunity to do so does exist in many places. Some of the coastal areas are low lying and relatively fertile, with an established local agriculture. A successful initiative to address the supply chain opportunity is the ‘Gambia is Good’ project that has linked coastal hotels with small local farmers, by giving the hotels confidence that the produce supplied is of a good quality and reliably available. The experience in The Gambia underlines the importance of delivering the right quality, quantity and continuity when trying to strengthen local supply chains. Hotels often prefer buying agricultural products from one supplier, and it can be useful if local farmers can establish linkages with these suppliers or establish their own association or enterprise to supply the hotels. A particular opportunity relating to the supply chain in coastal locations is the supply of fish and seafood to local hotels and restaurants. This is already happening to a certain level, but generally little priority has been given to understanding the relationship between fishing and tourism, and further research would be required to study opportunities and constraints.

Informal trading on the Africa’s beaches has provided a source of income for local people. Many people attracted to beach selling come from the poorer communities. The situation creates a considerable management challenge as informal trading practices are sometimes considered as harassment and have resulted in some visitors not returning. Harassment from beach trading is primarily a problem in The Gambia and Kenya, but also occurs elsewhere. There has been some progress towards addressing the problem in both countries, through a combination of dialogue, zoning, licensing, infrastructure provision and capacity building. Useful tools have been the preparation of agreed codes of conduct for visitors, for hotels and for beach operators, so that they are much clearer about how to treat each other and have a basis for identifying and rectifying bad practice, and the introduction of specific management measures to help local traders, including the opportunity to sell products within certain hotels.
In all the countries, there are examples of coastal communities who are providing a community-based tourism experience, which involves a visitor experience supplied by members of a local community, acting cooperatively, including elements of interpretation of local biodiversity, culture or village life, with personal guiding, provision of simple catering and occasionally accommodation. Ensuring effective market access can be critical for success. A location accessible from a main population or tourist centre can make a major difference. In some areas, building a relationship with one or more tour operators or hotels can be important and could be achieved by developing products and services that complement the offer of existing tour operators and hotels. By formulating and executing eco-tourism projects at the demonstration sites, the COAST project aims to enhance benefits for local people and conservation through the mechanisms described above.

5. Conclusions

The research has demonstrated that effective governance of sustainable coastal tourism requires a coherent policy framework to guide and drive action and appropriate bodies to see that the policies are implemented. To strengthen policy frameworks for sustainable coastal tourism, it should be ensured that development policies accurately identify the role of sustainable tourism and that sustainability aims are mainstreamed in updated tourism policies. Similarly, coastal tourism opportunities and challenges should be clarified in national tourism policies and strategies. Specific emphasis needs to be placed on destination-level sustainable tourism planning and action, and wider policies and legislation needs to be pursued to support transparent land use planning and tourism development processes.

A primary requirement for governance structures for sustainable coastal tourism is the effective engagement of different stakeholder interests at all levels, while clarifying roles and responsibilities and ensuring sufficient capacity to deliver. Strong liaison and coordination should be maintained between government ministries, departments and agencies on tourism and environment issues, and the private sector should be encouraged to engage with sustainability, for example through public-private coordination bodies. The development and operation of multi-stakeholder destination management bodies can be seen as a key to effective sustainable tourism governance and management at destination level.

All countries have procedures in place for the assessment and control of development on the coast, but this could be significantly strengthened to make the process more effective, while also encouraging positive sustainable tourism development outcomes. Effective application of EIAs for coastal tourism developments can be strengthened by clarifying and being consistent about EIA requirements and procedures for tourism projects while also strengthening community consultation and engagement in EIAs. Practical guidelines should be drawn up by tourism ministries on the kinds of development considered most suitable to particular types of location, including guidance on design, impact on biodiversity, energy, water and waste management. Developers should be provided with a single point of contact that can help guide the procedure and provide advice on requirements. In some countries development promotion agencies can fulfil this function. There is potential to use financial incentives, such as conditional tax relief, to influence both the development and operation of tourism businesses. To improve the monitoring of the operation of tourism enterprises, the reach and potency of inspection processes should
be strengthened and enterprises should be stimulated and assisted to improve their environmental and sustainability management.

Several coastal management issues, including waste management, coastal erosion and biodiversity conservation, may have a strong bearing on the future of coastal tourism in destinations. These issues can be addressed by generating resources from tourism to support conservation and management and by raising awareness and facilitating community engagement in conservation and management. The delivery of benefits to local communities from tourism should be seen as an important sustainability goal in its own right. This can be encouraged through strengthening supply and demand conditions for growing local employment, building and maintaining local supply chains, managing informal local trading and fostering community-based initiatives that meet conditions for sustainability and success.

The overall responsibility for the proposed actions to improve governance and management for sustainable coastal tourism in Africa should rest with government, who should provide the policy and legislative framework for protection and sustainable development, and ensure that effective management processes are in place. Of course, tourism enterprises and their associations should also commit to acting responsibly towards the environment and communities, backing this up with appropriate action. In addition, NGOs and civil society bodies have potentially a very important role to play in the area of facilitation and capacity building. A key opportunity is the involvement of local NGOs in destinations to bring together the different interests and provide assistance and expertise. Academic and research bodies, training institutions and local consultants can also provide highly valuable knowledge and services. Last but not least, international agencies should continue to help African nations in the planning and management of tourism on their coasts. They should recognise tourism as a key issue linking the economy and the environment, relevant to international programmes in both these fields. International assistance can help both through providing financial and technical support, and through enabling the sharing of experience and knowledge between countries.

Acknowledgements

This study has been carried out within the framework of the COAST (Collaborative Actions for Sustainable Tourism) project in Africa. The COAST project wishes to explicitly acknowledge the importance of funding provided by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and other donors and partners including UNEP, UNIDO and UNWTO, as well as all other in-country project partners. The authors would like to thank Lionel Bécherel, who undertook the studies in Cameroon and Senegal and Jeremy Gotwalls, who undertook the study in Mozambique. The valuable input of the COAST project focal points and demonstration site coordinators in Cameroon, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Seychelles and Tanzania as well as national experts appointed to assist with the study is also gratefully acknowledged.

References


CBD (2007), *Managing Tourism and Biodiversity*, Convention on Biological Diversity and UNEP, Montreal


Eagles, P. *et al.* (2002), *Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas: Guidelines for Planning and Management*, IUCN, Gland


UNEP (2005), *Forging Links Between Protected Areas and the Tourism Sector*, United Nations Environment Programme, Paris


