



Ministry of Environment & Tourism

GREEN ECONOMY

Stakeholder Dialogues

Namibia 2011

BACKGROUND PAPER 4: Tourism, landscapes and biodiversity July 2011

From 11 to 13 July 2011, the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET) hosts a first 'Green Economy stakeholder dialogue' with representatives from various key economic sectors in Namibia. The workshop aims to discuss what a national Green Economy definition would be and what opportunities and challenges would exist in a transition to a green development pathway in these sectors. This is one of five background papers providing initial information on a specific sector group.

'Our unique biodiversity, landscapes, wilderness areas and other natural resources unlock major economic potential - not only, but to a large extent through tourism, which today is invaluable to social and economic development in Namibia!'

Sem Shikongo, Director of Tourism, Ministry of Environment and Tourism

Key questions and discussion points

- What are the major landscape and biodiversity assets contributing to our growing tourism sector?
- How to ensure sustainable growth of the tourism sector?
- What are our options of linking social upliftment to the tourism sector?

'A mature, sustainable and responsible tourism industry contributing significantly to the economic development of Namibia and the quality of life of all her people, primarily through job creation and economic growth' (Vision of tourism in Namibia). This policy promotes both domestic as well as international tourism. Increased local participation and equity are essential to spread the benefits of tourism. Tourism development must be economically, socially and environmentally sustainable. Namibia neither wants, nor can afford to permit, tourism that yields only short-term benefits and leaves behind a wake of destruction, de-motivation or disruption to the fabric of local life. Sustainability is inextricably linked to the protection of the natural resource base, namely environment, aesthetic value, wildlife and culture. Government recognizes the need to be involved in managing, promoting and financing aspects of these.

- How can we further unlock the potential of innovative natural resources products (e.g. biodiversity, non-timber forestry etc.) to contribute to poverty alleviation?
- How can the opportunities of using natural capital in a conscious way best be connected to decision making?
- What is needed to adequately value and valorise landscapes, biodiversity and ecosystems?
- What are the necessary processes for valuing and promoting landscapes, biodiversity and ecosystems to make them more important on our road to economic growth?



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Value of tourism, landscapes and biodiversity in Namibia

Biodiversity in Namibia – well managed by all?

Namibia's remarkable diversity of species, ecosystems and landscapes is one of the country's greatest assets. Overall Namibia already understands the value of these natural resources for its economy and sustainable development, and many progressive conservation and management approaches are in place. However, true valuation of such resources is still largely absent and limited returns and investments from the national budget find their way into the protection of the resources. When short-term industrial and mining business tempts, the long-term benefits from biodiversity-related tourism returns are often ignored. Is this a very smart decision?

Tourism-biodiversity linkages – pros and cons

Fact 1: In 2006 the broader travel and tourism economy contributed approximately 16% of Namibia's GDP, and provided up to 72,000 jobs (17.9% of total employment).

Fact 2: Namibia's protected areas are without a doubt the country's most important tourism attractions.

Fact 3: Tourism revenue contributes to conservation.

Fact 4: If not well directed, tourism can have negative impacts on the environment and undermine the long-term benefits associated with conservation-tourism linkages.

BioTrade – a real opportunity

Fact 1: BioTrade currently represents a 4.5% contribution to GDP. This comprises income from indigenous natural products (0.15%); wildlife (1.08%); agriculture: indigenous crops and vegetables (0.97%) and livestock breeds (1.62%); indigenous fisheries and marine resources (0.21%); timber, non-timber forest products and others (0.49%).

Fact 2: At least US\$151 million is being invested (mainly from the public sector) in these nascent industries.

Fact 3: Although estimates for growth vary strongly on a product-by-product, and sector-by-sector basis, it is asserted that the contribution of BioTrade to Namibia's economy could increase by 50% over a period of 10 years (2010-2020) to 7% of GDP.

Some 'greening' options

- Resource conservation (water consumption, pollution)
- Green procurement policies for tourism sector
- Develop Namibia as a carbon neutral destination
- CBT & CBNRM – poverty reduction linkages; pro-poor growth
- Development of biodiversity products
- Market development and trade support for biodiversity products
- Eco-labelling
- Green sector strategy ('white paper')
- Fiscal reforms which ensure returns from biodiversity income to conservation
- Access & benefit sharing options
- Continue natural resources accounting
- Eco-innovation; eco-awards.

Useful references and websites

- **UNEP Green Economy Reports:** www.unep.org/greeneconomy/GreenEconomyReport/tabid/29846/Default.aspx
- **The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity:** www.teebweb.org
- **The Bank of Natural Capital:** <http://bankofnaturalcapital.com/>
- **MET DEA RDP series:** www.met.gov.na
- **Central Bureau of Statistics, National Planning Commission Namibia:** www.cbs.gov.na
- **Jessica Jones, Juliane Zeidler, Henock Ramakhutla, Pierre du Plessis, Sheila Kiratu, Laudika Kandjinga, 2009. Rapid Trade and Environment Assessment – National Report for Namibia.** www.iisd.org/tkn/research/pub.aspx?id=1167
- **Kudakwashe Ndhulukula, Pierre du Plessis, 2009. RTEA Namibia Sector Paper – Green Labelling, Eco-certification and Fair Trade: Threats and Opportunities for Namibia:** www.iisd.org/tkn/research/pub.aspx?id=1195
- **Andee Davidson, 2009. RTEA Namibia Sectoral Paper – Ecotourism and the Informal Carbon Market: Is the Climate Right for Change?** www.iisd.org/tkn/research/pub.aspx?id=1193
- **Jessica Jones, 2009. RTEA Namibia Summary Paper – Emerging Dynamics for Namibia's Sustainable Development: A Summary Policy Brief.** www.iisd.org/tkn/research/pub.aspx?id=1191
- **NACSO: State of the Conservancies reports. Namibia's communal conservancies: a review of progress in 2009** www.nacso.org.na/SOC_2009/index.php
- UNEP: Namibia BioTrade study (forthcoming)