



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

PROMOTION OF COMMUNITY BASED TOURISM



POLICY DOCUMENT

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM
PRIVATE BAG 13306
WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA

JUNE 1995

**REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA****MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM**

Tel: 249 015

Fax: 240339

Private Bag 13306

Windhoek

Ref: N22/B

June 1, 1995

Enquiries: C Ashley

CIRCULAR NO. 20 OF 1995

To: All Heads of Directorates, Divisions, Sections and Outstations

POLICY DOCUMENT: COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

This document contains the approved Ministry policy for providing support to, and encouraging the development of, community-run tourism activities and enterprises on communal land.

A growing number of tourism activities and enterprises are being developed by local communities on communal land, in addition to existing and planned private sector developments.


This policy document provides a framework for ensuring that local communities have access to opportunities in tourism development and are able to share in the benefits of tourism activities that take place on their land.

Support for the involvement of rural communities in tourism enterprises is important:

- a) to implement the government policy of giving communities access to development opportunities and
- b) because where tourism is linked to wildlife and wild landscapes, the benefits to local communities can provide important incentives for conservation of these resources.

Approval of the policy was recommended by the Ministry Planning Committee and it was approved by the Permanent Secretary and by the Minister.

The previous circular dealt with the Policy Document: Namibia's Policy on Wildlife Management, Utilisation and Tourism in Communal Areas.



U HIVELUAH
PERMANENT SECRETARY



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM

POLICY ON COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

1. PREAMBLE

- 1.1. The Ministry recognises that tourism is one of Namibia's fastest growing industries, and therefore can be a key means to promote social and economic development in communal areas.
- 1.2. The Ministry recognises that due to historical inequities in the tourism industry, residents of communal areas have rarely been involved in the planning of tourism activities on communal land. They have also suffered the costs of wildlife and intrusion by tourists, but received little benefit.
- 1.3. The Ministry recognises that revenue from tourism which is related to wildlife and scenic landscapes can be an important conservation incentive to rural communities.
- 1.4. The Ministry notes that Article 23 of the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia commits the Government to addressing past inequalities.
- 1.5. The Ministry notes that Article 95 (l) commits the Government to sustainable utilisation of Namibia's natural resources for the benefit of all Namibians, and that tourism is one of the key forms of sustainable utilisation.
- 1.6. The Ministry notes that the principle of increased involvement of local individuals and communities in sustainable utilisation of natural resources is enshrined and supported in existing Ministry policies. In particular, it is noted that:
 - the Government White Paper on Tourism (1994) states that "*high priority [is] afforded to the involvement of local individuals and communities in the tourism process and in benefits-sharing*" and "*it is not only the generation of economic benefits which is important, but also the dispersion of those benefits to a wider group in society.*"
 - the MET policy on Wildlife Management, Utilisation, and Tourism in Communal Areas is designed to provide a legal basis for communities to participate in the management of, and benefits from, natural resources

through the establishment of "conservancies". One of the objectives of this is *"to allow rural communities on state land to undertake tourism ventures, and to enter into co-operative agreements with commercial tourism operations to develop tourism activities on state land."*

- Forestry policy embraces the principle of involvement of local people in sustainable utilisation of resources, and aims to "support and encourage participation of rural communities in all forestry conservation activities."

The Ministry notes that in order to achieve these policy objectives, complementary and more specific policy for the promotion of community based tourism is needed.

- 1.7. The Ministry recognises that in order to realise the high potential for tourism to bring social, economic and conservation benefits to communal areas, the constraints to community involvement need to be addressed, and new opportunities promoted.

2. POLICY

In view of the above, it is the policy of this Ministry to

- a) actively open up opportunities for rural communities, local people and the informal sector to increase their involvement in the tourism industry, particularly in tourism planning and the running of enterprises.
- b) ensure that rural communities, local people and the informal sector have greater access to the benefits from tourism on their land, by creating appropriate legal mechanisms and establishing appropriate incentives.
- c) ensure that development of tourism on communal land takes place in areas and in forms acceptable to local people.
- d) encourage the formal tourism sector to co-operate and work with the informal sector, and to recognise that as well as being in the long-term self interest of the tourism industry, this is a social responsibility and contribution to Namibia's national development objectives of improved equity, poverty alleviation, and sustainable growth.
- e) ensure that tourism development within Namibia is environmentally sustainable.

3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 3.1. The needs and aspirations of rural communities, local people and the informal sector, must be pro-actively incorporated into Tourism legislation and regulations.
- 3.2. Tourism regulations and legislation must avoid prescribing forms of involvement in tourism by rural communities, local people and the informal sector, and rather create a supportive and enabling legal framework.
- 3.3. The MET and tourism industry should work actively to increase the representation of the informal tourism sector and community interests in existing and future tourism fora.
- 3.4. Private sector tourism enterprises on communal land should involve and benefit local residents, and provide incentives for conservation to those that bear the costs of wildlife and tourism, to the maximum extent possible within financial and institutional constraints.

4. PROGRAMME TO PROMOTE COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

In order to implement the above policy, the Ministry will integrate these principles into its work in ways which include, but are not restricted to, the following:

4.1. *Increase representation in tourism fora*

The Ministry will ensure that rural communities, local people and the informal sector are represented on Government or para-statal organisations, committees and working groups which are involved in tourism development planning and drafting of regulations and legislation. (E.g. the Namibian Tourism Board, any permanent or ad hoc committees and workshops organised by MET to address tourism issues etc.) Statutory bodies (such as the NTB) must include representation from the informal sector in its membership. The Ministry will encourage all voluntary tourism associations to ensure a broad and representative membership.

MET will actively support those regions that have not so far established Regional Tourism Associations to do so, and will encourage broad representation of the community on such bodies. MET will assist them with tourism planning, and provide information, advice, contacts etc needed for implementation. MET will promote the greatest possible participation by local communities in the planning and establishment of the tourism control and development zones provided for by the Tourism White paper.

4.2. Prioritise community interests in planning

The views of local residents must be reflected in the planning process. Mechanisms for achieving this should be explored and established as the planning process develops.

Special attention and priority should be given to developments that are initiated by local residents or which maximise their participation and the spread of benefits.

Approval of PTO and concession applications is part of the planning process. All PTO/concession applications for a tourism enterprise must include details of an agreement between the applicant and local community, before it can be approved by MET. The local community is to be defined according to specific circumstances, but in each case is primarily the residents in, or closest to, the tourism development/area, who utilise land and other resources in the area, and wherever possible will be represented through an existing institution such as Development Committee(s), Farmers Association(s), Council, or, once established, a wildlife Conservancy. In assessing applications for tourism enterprises, MET will judge them against a range of criteria, to include:

- degree of local participation and benefit in the enterprise. Whether it enhances or suffocates other locally-initiated tourism enterprises
- degree to which it complements the regional tourism plan and objectives of the national tourism strategy
- environmental impact, use of water and other local resources, conformity with Namibia's Environmental Impact Assessment procedure.

4.3. Support tourism enterprises run by communities/local residents

The MET encourage the development of tourism enterprises run by communities and local residents and will:

- ensure that such enterprises are accommodated in regulations on grading, registration, marketing etc. (e.g. that accommodation categories include community campsites; guide categories include village guides)
- promote the proactive marketing and promotion of enterprises run by communities or local individuals (e.g. in material for those seeking socially and environmentally responsible tourism) as a lack of marketing skills is one of their major constraints.
- ensure that training courses are included and/or recognised within the Namibian Tourism Board's training programme that are explicitly designed to meet the

needs and enhance the skills of rural people and communities involved in tourism.

- ensure that the qualifications gained as part of this programme are included in the tourism industry's schedule of recognised qualifications so they can be legally recognised, contracted, and marketed.
- facilitate contacts between the informal sector, formal sector, banking sector, government, and voluntary and donor organisations, to ensure the provision of investment incentives, soft loans, and technical advice to informal sector tourism. Specifically: in designing investment incentives and in facilitating soft loans for tourism development (e.g. from banks or donors), MET will ensure the specific needs of small-scale, community, and informal sector enterprises are taken into account. A long-term goal will be to enable rural residents to move from the informal to the formal sector and gain access to, for example, loans from the formal banking sector.
- support and coordinate with activities of others, such as NGOs and donors, who are promoting community enterprises.

4.4. *Promote maximum benefit to communities from private sector tourism enterprises on communal land*

MET will not specify how a specific venture should increase local benefits and participation, but will give incentives for and preference to partnership and/or revenue-sharing ventures.

e.g.

- use criteria for judging PTO allocations and tourism concessions, as outlined above:
- tax laws and financial regulations should be designed so that, at least, they do not discourage revenue-sharing, and wherever possible provide an incentive for it.
- the MET Community-based Tourism Officer will act as a facilitator of partnerships wherever possible.
- specifically promote such ventures in marketing for ethical tourists.

4.5. *Enhance rights over tourism resources*

In order to redress past inequalities, the MET needs to enhance the rights enjoyed by communities over tourism resources. At present they have little control over what happens to or on their land.

- **Conservancies:** MET sees conservancies as a key tool by which communal residents gain rights over environmental resources, particularly wildlife, and hence over tourism assets. Once the conservancy legislation is passed, MET will support communities to establish wildlife conservancies and to establish tourism ventures as appropriate. MET will give recognised conservancies (with a legal Trust fund or other mechanism for administering and sharing revenues) the concessionary rights for lodge development (which they can utilise themselves or lease to others) within the conservancy boundaries, according to the same principles by which all tourism applications will be considered, as listed above: i.e. local involvement, environmental impact, conformity with regional and national strategy etc.

4.6. *Invest in communal areas*

Tourism in communal areas needs to be carefully promoted and planned. However, there is less (public and private) money in communal areas for investing in the natural resource base, tourism infrastructure and planning, marketing and promotion, training etc.

Therefore it is important that a substantial share of funds for investment in Namibian tourism are spent in communal areas, particularly any levies or fees raised nationally for tourism-related activities, such as resource conservation, training, or marketing, i.e. that, at a minimum, income raised in these less developed areas is ploughed back. Where appropriate, this should be done by channelling payments directly to a local fund.

4.7. *Ongoing promotion of community-based tourism development*

The MET will:

- employ a Community Tourism Officer to help facilitate the above, to facilitate communication within the informal sector, and among the informal sector, government, investors, tourism companies etc., and ensure that community-based tourism is given appropriate recognition in further national tourism policy development.
- continue liaising with the informal sector and their representatives, and ensure their views are taken into account as policy and legislation further evolves.

Approved by



Ulita Haveluah
Permanent Secretary

8/05/95 Date

A large, stylized signature in black ink.

Gert Hanekom
Minister

Date 6-05-95

