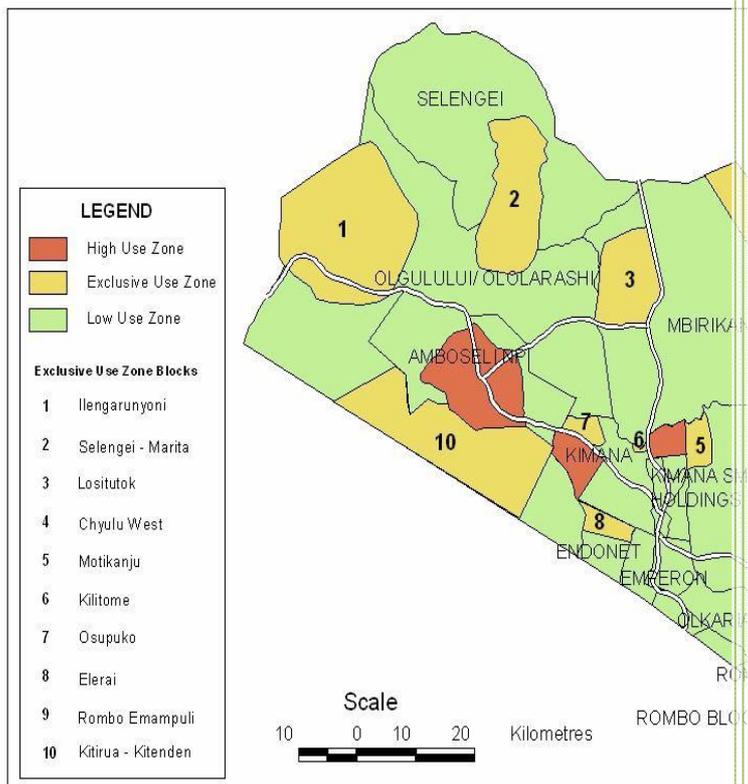


2014

Guidelines for Development of Tourism Area Plans



Tourism Regulatory Authority

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1.0 Introduction

Tourism remains the cornerstone of the economy, and a leading foreign exchange earner for the country. Moreover, the sector has high multiplier effects as its growth stimulates further socio-economic development in other sectors. Over the years, tourism has become an extremely competitive business. This necessitates a paradigm shift from the traditional products to sustainable tourism. In view of this, the goal of the National Tourism Policy is **“to achieve sustainable tourism that contributes to a better quality of life for all people.”**

The Tourism Policy and the corresponding Tourism Act 2011 envisage future development of tourism products and projects within designated tourism area plans in order to enhance and promote sustainable tourism development. In order to facilitate formulation of the Area Plans it is first of all necessary to develop guidelines and standards that will act as a framework to govern the activity.

The Tourism Act mandates the Tourism Regulatory Authority with the function of formulating guidelines and prescribing measures for sustainable tourism throughout the Country. Further, the Tourism Regulatory Authority Regulations 2014 stipulates that compliance with the relevant tourism or area development plan will be a consideration in issuance of tourism licenses for regulated tourism activities and services. It is in this context that these guidelines have been formulated to inform and guide development of tourism facilities in the different tourism regions in the country

2.0 Objectives of Guidelines for Formulation of Tourism Area Plans

The need for guidelines for formulation of Tourism Area Plans arises from the country's commitment to streamline and develop a sustainable tourism industry. In particular the need to:

1. Provide a conducive environment for tourism development in respective areas while at the same time taking into account the need to protect the natural resource base in addition to enhancing economic return to the investors, local communities and the nation at large.
2. Integrate tourism into the overall development policies and patterns of the country and regions, and establish close linkages between tourism and other economic sectors.
3. Provide a rational basis for decision making by both the public and the private sectors on tourism development.
4. Enhance and promote co-ordinated development of the many elements of the tourism sector. This includes inter-relating the tourist attractions, activities, facilities and services and the tourist markets.
5. Provide a co-ordinated and rational approach to tourism development to ensure that the limits of acceptable use and carrying capacity on the environment are not exceeded.

6. Identify ways and means of developing new tourism products and destinations (attraction areas) to depict the unique and rare attractions of any given area. This will uplift the country's competitiveness and position particular areas or regions within Kenya as contributors to the national tourism earnings. This will also impact positively on our mission of wealth creation that is also in tandem with the Vision 2030.
7. Optimize economic, environmental and social benefits of tourism. Benefits of tourism will be more equitably distributed whereas the possible negative impacts of tourism will be minimized.
8. Curb the phenomenon of unplanned and unregulated development of tourism facilities which has resulted in declining standards of the tourism product as a result of congestion and poor quality visitor facilities as well as environmental degradation from tourism overuse.
9. Identify investments (infrastructure, financial and human) needed in each area to stimulate tourism development.
10. Assure long term sustainability of Kenya's tourism product.

3.0 Guiding Principles for Tourism Development in Kenya

The Guiding Principles for tourism development in the country are provided for in the Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2010 on Enhancing Sustainable Tourism in Kenya of November 2010 which is the Policy that guides Kenya's tourism development. They are as follows:-

- (a) **Community Values:** Tourism should represent the past, present and future aspirations of Kenyans while respecting positive natural and cultural values.
- (b) **Code of Practice:** A code of practice should be established for tourism at all levels benchmarked on internationally accepted standards.
- (c) **Environmental Assessment:** Guidelines for tourism operations, impact assessment, monitoring of cumulative impacts and limits to acceptable change should be established.
- (d) **Equitable Benefits:** Tourism is an economic and social development tool and must take into account equitable benefits to the host communities, visitors and investors.
- (e) **Value for Visitors:** Tourism will be undertaken in a manner that it provides value for money, excellence, convenience and quality service to the visitors.
- (f) **Sustainable Use:** Tourism will be undertaken in a manner that does not compromise the quality and value of the resource, or degrade the carrying capacity of supporting ecosystems.
- (g) **Inter- and Intra-generational Equity:** Tourism management will be based on long term objectives where present generations make choices that will benefit future generations.

- (h) **Conservation:** A mutually beneficial alliance between tourism and conservation should be developed.
- (i) **Public Participation:** A coordinated and participatory approach to tourism should be enhanced to ensure that the relevant government agencies, county governments, local authorities, private sector, civil society and communities are involved in planning, decision making and implementation processes.
- (j) **The Principle of Subsidiarity:** Tourism management will be undertaken through decentralization and devolution of authority and responsibilities at the county level. .
- (k) **The Precautionary Principle:** Where there are credible threats of serious or irreversible damage by tourism, lack of full scientific certainty will not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent such damage.
- (l) **The Polluter and User Pays Principle:** The polluter and users of natural heritage should bear the full environmental and social costs of their activities.
- (m) **Capacity Building:** Community involvement, participation and collaboration with stakeholders should be continually encouraged to enhance local capacity.
- (n) **International Cooperation:** Bilateral agreements as well as regional and multilateral instruments should be domesticated and implemented.

4.0 Benefits of National and Regional Planning for Tourism

Integrated National and Regional planning for tourism offers an array of benefits which include:

1. Provide for overall tourism development objectives and policies
2. Protects natural resources and attractions
3. Provides for participation of public and private sector investment in tourism
4. Regulates and enforces planning requirements
5. Establishes guidelines and standards for preparing detailed plans of specific tourism development areas.

5.0 Guidelines for Tourism Area Planning

Tourism in a destination like Kenya is integrated as a system in itself. It involves varied attraction features each of which provide a different experience and have varying degrees of sensitivity to tourists use. There is also varied needs for services to tourists in different parts of a tourism region and the kind of facilities and amenities required also vary from region to region. The tourism sector also needs to be integrated into the overall development policies and plans of any given area and if well planned tourism always adds value to most other economic activities in a region. Regional tourism area plans will in addition be integrated into the national tourism policies and plans.

To ensure that all the components of the tourism product are incorporated and harmonized as desired and to ensure that tourism is in harmony with other development sectors, integrated tourism area planning will be based on some key guidelines.

5.1 Planning Guidelines

1. Plans for tourism development within a region should be done within the context of existing and proposed complementary and competing attractions at the national level, and in relation to opportunities that may promote regional tourism circuits.
2. Integrate regional tourism plans with broader national planning processes, including the National Tourism Policy.
3. When planning, all interested and affected parties should be involved and encouraged to participate. Stakeholders should include the National and County Governments public sector, the private sector, NGOs, CBOs, service providers, traditional institutions like clans and elders councils, and representatives of marginalised groups.

4. Plans should be holistic and address economic, environmental, social and institutional factors that promote sustainable development.
5. The planning team should ensure accountability and transparency throughout the planning process.
6. The planning process should consider issues of land ownership and equitable access to natural resources so that the plans provide access to opportunities for all.
7. The plans should include development of new infrastructure so that it not only promotes tourism, but also uplifts the standards of living for the residents These include roads, security, recreational facilities and information centres.
8. The plans should promote a phased approach to the introduction and development of new tourism infrastructure, facilities and services. In the short-term, prioritise initiatives that have a high probability of commercial success, community benefits and low environmental impact, but which require little financial or capacity support.
9. Tourism area plans should promote opportunities for community based tourism enterprises and joint ventures between the private sector and community organizations. Community members should negotiate contracts that include provisions for equitable rights, responsibilities, risks and opportunities.

5.2 Economic Guidelines

1. Tourism area plans should give preference to projects where community members are involved in the decision-making and identification of resources. Where returns from user fees are attractive, encourage support for the private sector investment.
2. Ensure that the plans are realistic and implementable. The plans should empower stakeholders with information regarding potential or available resources for tourism development, to ensure that expectations are realistic.
3. The plans should encourage improvements in the quality of all tourism attractions and services particularly between SMEs to enhance their revenue generating potential.
4. The plans should promote and encourage linkages between existing and emerging tourism enterprises and supporting producers and suppliers to enhance cooperation, communication and local networks and local business. They could therefore also support the development of local tourism associations or tourism information bureaux.

5. The plans should foster an ethic of Corporate Social Responsibility and fair trade within the tourism industry, and consider asking proposed enterprises to quantify their support for initiatives that uplift the community.
6. The plans should have provision for assisting new and emerging businesses in addressing gaps in the market to promote commercially viable development across the planning region. They should not over-capitalise on existing strengths.
7. Tourism area plans could also outline how advances in information technology can be harnessed to market tourist attractions. A website could be set up describing tourism routes, products and activities.
8. Consider the opportunity costs of tourism in people's livelihoods. Tourism is an unpredictable business that can be easily affected by insecurity, disease outbreaks and currency fluctuations. It should not replace existing livelihoods, but be promoted as a complementary revenue-generating venture that adds value to existing socio-economic, activities.

5.3 Social Guidelines

1. The tourism area plans should provide ways to build local capacity for tourism development. This could be by way of training and exposure visits and it will enhance community acceptance and ownership tourism planning and development process. It also ensures that once external experts withdraw, local expertise remains within the region. Training needs may include project planning and management; leadership skills; gender and empowerment; business, tourism and crafts skills; community and resource mobilisation; financial management, procurement and accountability; documentation and communication; and lobbying, networking and advocacy.
2. Plans should also consider establishing local institutions such as community forums. These should be accessible to all interested members of the community, especially those who are marginalised. The forum should be used to disseminate information on tourism for review and address local concerns such as quality, access, marketing and social impact.

3. Co-operation between different institutions to promote responsible tourism and conservation, including local government, NGOs, CBOs, private sector tourism businesses, and other interested parties should be encouraged.
4. Mutually respectful, friendly and beneficial relationships between residents, tourists and visitors; especially with regard to the rights of privacy should be encouraged.
5. The plans should identify areas where tourists should visit and provide information on areas that are suitable for residents only.
6. Products that provide opportunities for interactions between visitors and hosts for cultural exchange and learning should be designed. This can be by way of home stays, story-telling, and inclusion in local festivals, local guides and agro-tourism.
7. Planning should address ways in which tourism can be developed so that it does not negatively affect the way of life of the local people and their livelihoods. For instance, avoid conflict over resources and do not interfere with children's schooling. It should not compromise respect for social, cultural and religious rights, or the essential human rights of people to food, a safe and clean environment, work, health, and education.
8. Plans should also stimulate opportunities for marginalised members of society such as women, orphans, youth, people with disabilities and the landless to actively participate in the tourism industry.
9. The planning process should sensitise residents regarding the potential needs and expectations of different types of tourists through its consultative process and other media and fora.
10. The plans should include appropriate indicators that can be used to monitor and report on both positive and negative social impacts of tourism.

5.4 Environmental Guidelines

1. Tourism area plans should include provisions for Environmental Impact Assessments. This applies for tourism infrastructure, tourism attractions and tourism facilities.
2. New developments should be designed in locations and with operational requirements that will not adversely affect local people or the environment especially in ecologically sensitive areas.

3. Use of national and international best practices in the design of infrastructure and location of facilities should be employed but adopted to the local conditions.
4. The plans should propose developments that promote conservation and education among the local people and staff and enhance the local environment.
5. Use renewable, non-polluting sources of energy whenever possible: solar, wind, and hydro-electric power needs to be highlighted in planning. Realistic targets on reduction energy consumption by the tourism industry within the area could also be included.
6. Recommendations on best waste disposal systems could also be included as well as ways of promote the ethic of reduce, re-use and recycle among developments and enterprises in the region.
7. Waste disposal and public health systems both to the benefit of the tourism industry and the community within the planning region should also be addressed with recommendations on their safety, efficiency and aesthetic value.
8. Provision should be given to improvement of local awareness on tourism and environmental management that protects the ecosystem.

6.0 The Planning Process

Tourism area planning must be carried out according to a systematic process in order to be effective. This Section describes the process to be followed based on the guiding principles outlined above. The process may vary depending on the local conditions and resources and the desired type of tourism in the given region, but it should generally follow the steps outlined in this section.

6.1 Prefeasibility Study

Before embarking on tourism area planning, the tourism areas/ regions for Kenya need to be identified and mapped out. This framework therefore recommends a countrywide prefeasibility study that will enable the zoning. It will start with a situational analysis to give the status of the tourism industry in the country. This will be followed by a demarcation of the country into tourism regions depending on the resources and unique features within the different areas and how they are linked with each other.

The identified tourism regions will then need to be prioritized for planning based on the extent of existing tourism activity. The ones that are most developed will need to be planned first since it may not be possible to undertake planning in all regions all at once.

6.2 Steps in Tourism Area Planning

1. Study Preparation
2. Determination of Development Objectives
3. Surveys and Evaluations
4. Analysis and Synthesis

5. Policy and Plan Formulation
6. Recommendations
7. Implementation and Management

6.2.1. Study Preparation

This will start with preparing the Terms of Reference for the planning study project. These will not be uniform to all regions since the planning requirements will be unique to each region as will have been brought out during the mapping of regions. The TORs must be carefully written so that the planning project is properly carried out and achieves the desired results.

The core planning team will then be selected. For a comprehensive study, a multi-disciplinary team is required that includes specialists on tourism, physical planning, marketing, economic and financial analysis, wildlife conservation, environmental issues, socio-cultural and community issues, infrastructure planning. It should also include some community opinion leaders and a representation of local leadership from the counties covered in the given region. Depending on the type of tourism area, other specialists may be needed in areas such as mountain trekking, marine activities, sports and agro tourism among others. Apart from the core team, other stakeholders will need to be identified and ways of consulting them along the planning process identified.

6.2.2. Determination of Tourism Development Objectives

The objectives state what is expected to be achieved through tourism development in that region. Objectives typically combine and balance economic, environmental and socio cultural factors and should always include the concept of sustainability. These will be determined in a preliminary manner at the start of the project and later refined based on feedback during the planning process.

The objectives will be determined in close coordination with community residents and their leaders, as well as the relevant National and County Governments Authorities. This also offers an opportunity to sensitise the local people and other stakeholders on the need for the

area plan and build consensus on the approach. This will ensure they co-own the process and later support the implementation of the plan and also identify the opportunities it presents for them.

6.2.3. Surveys and Evaluations

Surveys are conducted and evaluations made of the many elements related to tourism in the area. These elements include:

- Characteristics of the area's environmental, economic, socio cultural, land use and land tenure patterns. Special considerations such as land tenure which affects the availability of land for development should be highlighted in this background analysis.
- Existing and potential tourist attractions and activities. Tourist attractions are specifically inventoried, categorised and evaluated. They are categorised into types of attractions related to the natural, historic and cultural heritages of the area and any specialised features like resources for sports tourism or potential for agro tourism. Evaluation of tourism resources must include accessibility to attraction sites. The overall environmental quality of the area should also be evaluated.
- Existing tourism development including accommodation and other tourist facilities and services. The type and quality of existing tourist facilities and services should be included here.
- Existing and potential tourist markets and travel patterns. If there is some existing tourism, a special survey should be conducted of tourist arrivals to determine their characteristics and attitudes towards existing tourist attractions, activities, facilities and services and their expenditure patterns in the area.

- Existing and already planned transportation access to and within the area including air, road and rail and water transportation. Both transportation facilities and services should be surveyed including frequencies and capacities of transportation carriers.
- Other types of existing and already planned infrastructure including water supply, electric power, waste management and telecommunications.
- Present development policies and plans of the area, region or of the counties involved and even national ones that affect the given region. This should include both overall development policies and plans and those adopted for tourism.
- Institutional elements of tourism including availability of a qualified labour force to work in tourism and any existing tourism education and training programmes, public and private organisational structures for tourism, tourism-related laws and regulations including local by laws including tourist facility standards, land use controls and environmental protection. It should also include financial capital available for investment in tourism and any financial mechanisms adopted to attract investment either applicable nationally or specific to that region.
- Other influencing factors on tourism such as political stability, public health and safety and effect of competing destinations must also be evaluated as described.

6.2.4. Analysis and Synthesis

All the elements surveyed should be analyzed in an integrated and comprehensive manner (planning synthesis) to understand their inter-relationships. It is important to carefully analyse tourist markets in relation to the types of attractions and activities that can be available for tourists and other components of the tourism product. Instead of projecting tourist arrivals, which is difficult if there is little or no existing tourism in the area, the approach is used of establishing market targets. These targets indicate the number and types of tourists that can be attracted to the area if the recommendations of the tourism area plan, such as improvements to

attractions, facilities, services, transportation and other infrastructure and promotional programmes, are implemented. The market targets provide the basis for calculating the tourist facilities needed as well as needs for other types of tourist facilities and services and tourism infrastructure. The targets are also used for projecting the economic impact of tourism in the future, based on the projected expenditure patterns of tourists.

Analysis of environmental impacts is also included at this stage. A basic environmental planning technique is carrying capacity analysis. This is not a precise tool but provides a very useful guideline to determine the optimum level of development and use of attraction features, facilities and services. Establishing carrying capacities is based on the concept of maintaining a level of tourism development or visitor use of a site that will not result in serious environmental deterioration or socio cultural or economic problems in the tourism area or be perceived by tourists as depreciating their enjoyment of the area.

It must be noted that the carrying capacity concept is a relative and not an absolute indicator. Thus, for example, two beaches of similar physical characteristics may have a different carrying capacity depending on the markets they are aimed for and on the level and type of tourist facilities and infrastructure already existing in each of them. All development results in some changes to the environment but a reasonable and realistic approach is based on not exceeding the levels of acceptable change so that tourism resources are conserved and successful tourism development is sustained. Seasonality is a major consideration with saturation, of course, more likely to be reached or exceeded during the peak season. Carrying capacity analysis involves consideration of physical, economic, socio cultural and infrastructure factors as related to impact on the community and impact on the tourists.

At this stage in the planning process, it is useful to summarise the major opportunities and constraints for developing tourism. This provides the basis for focusing recommendations on taking advantage of development opportunities and resolving or mitigating the development constraints. SWOT analysis is sometimes an effective technique to summarise major opportunities and constraints, especially in strategic planning.

The factors identified in SWOT analysis should be expressed in a series of short statements which can then be easily compared to make a summary analysis of the area's potential for developing tourism. They also provide the basis for formulating the priority recommendations for development.

This stage should involve consultation with all the relevant stakeholders identified along the process within their relevant groupings. It gives an opportunity to share with them the information that Stage 3 i.e. surveys and evaluations, brought out and their reactions. Their input greatly aids and ensures that they will support the next stage of plan formulation. Consultation could also include use of public media like local radio, television, newspapers and magazines and some stakeholders will give their input through memoranda and internet communication.

6.2.5. Plan formulation

Based on the objectives, surveys, analysis and synthesis, a draft tourism area plan is prepared. This will be an area-wide structure plan that identifies the main access points to the area, the tourist attractions, the tourism development sites and the transportation network that connects the access to the attraction features and development sites. It will also be a land use plan for tourist facilities even prescribing the capacities for accommodation and other facilities in the region.

The resulting draft plan will include an implementation and management plan. Plans have little value unless they are capable of being implemented, and are actually implemented. Techniques of implementation should be considered throughout the planning process and specific implementation techniques identified in the planning process. These techniques include development programming, applying tourist facility standards, zoning regulations, financial mechanisms and other means. Recommendations are made on improvements needed to existing tourist attractions, existing tourist facilities and services, institutional and other elements of the plan. Development and design standards for tourist facilities are also recommended. Environmental and socio cultural impacts are analysed and protection measures recommended. In addition, the economic impact of tourism should be analyzed and

ways for enhancing economic benefits be recommended. An implementation matrix will also be included highlighting major milestones and specific important activities whose implementation needs to be monitored.

A crisis management plan should also be included to guide on how to deal with possible natural calamities in the given region that could affect tourism development as outlined in the plan.

6.2.6. Validating the Plan

The draft plan should be validated in a forum that involves all stakeholders. Initially, stakeholders will have been consulted within various groupings depending on their interest. In the validation hearing, they are all invited into one workshop to confirm that it takes care of their concerns as they had expressed them earlier. It also helps them own it and understand how it affects all the other interested parties.

6.2.7. Operationalising the Plan

This involves giving the plan a legal status so that all those involved are compelled to follow its provisions. This could be by way of a legal notice anchored on existing legislation and this gives the effective date for the implementation the plan.

7.0 Expected Provisions of the Tourism Area Plans

Tourism area plans are policy and structure plans. The policy states the type and extent of tourism development that is appropriate for the area and special considerations such as environmental protection and community involvement. The structure plan shows the access to the area, primary and secondary tourist attractions, places or sites where tourist facilities will be located and the connecting transportation network. The type and approximate amount of accommodation to be developed in each facility development area can be indicated. Tour circuits and tourist stopovers may be delineated.

Important provisions for area-wide planning are:

- Establishment of a good access point or gateway for tourists visiting the area. There may be more than one primary means of access.
- Establishment of an area or areas where there will be concentration of tourist facilities and services and often some tourist attractions. This place may serve as a base for touring the area.
- Clustering of tourist attractions, often with secondary attractions combined with one or more primary attractions. Clustering of attractions will induce more tourists to visit the area and encourage them to stay longer, and provides the opportunity for more efficient provision of access and other infrastructure.
- Designation of tourism development zones such as resorts where there is a concentration of tourist facilities and services. Designation of tourism zones allows for efficient provision of infrastructure, offers a variety of easily accessible facilities and activities for tourists, encourages integrated planning and application of development controls, and limits any negative impacts in certain areas. Tourism development zones

should not pre-empt areas that are more important for other uses such as agriculture, seaports, industrial development and conservation of fragile ecosystems.

- Designation of an efficient and interesting transportation network linking the tourist attractions and development area. The transportation network should allow, if possible, for organizing tour circuits that form loops and minimize backtracking on the same roads.
- Development of tourist stopovers on the tour circuits where there are points of tourist interest, that offer minor tourist facilities such as restaurants, snack bars, shops and toilets. Some isolated stopovers may include small-scale accommodation.
- Provision of multipurpose infrastructure that serves general community needs as well as tourism development. The plan will include market analysis and establishing market targets, establishing carrying capacities, recommendations on institutional elements and environmental protection measures and approaches to conserving local cultural identities and bringing benefits to local communities.

9.0 References

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