

Sustainable Tourism Development in Uganda



A case for Uganda
and best practices

Introduction

- Sustainable Tourism takes into account the needs of the environment, local residents, businesses and visitors. Greening tourism aims at ensuring sustainable tourism practices and development.
- The World Trade Organization (WTO) sees sustainable tourism 'as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity, and life support systems'.
- As tourism grows, the tourism and hospitality industry needs to recognize the importance of sustainable development, especially ecological dimension of the sustainability
- Tourist destinations are under increasing pressure to offer a green product as sustainable tourism remains a priority for most countries.
- Using Uganda as the case study, this presentation attempts to showcase the best practices for ensuring sustainable tourism through various regulatory and legislative policies and practices.



Key elements/Principles of Sustainable Tourism

- **Sustainable tourism** – sustainable refers to environmental protection, sustainable investments, sustainable funding for the sector, visitor satisfaction, community satisfaction, benefit to the government etc.
- **All inclusive tourism with fundamental participation of local communities** - Tourism should be initiated with the help of a broad based community inputs and the community should maintain control of tourism development.
- **Tourism should provide quality employment to its community** residents and a linkage between the local businesses and tourism should be established.
- **A code of practice** should be established for tourism at all levels i.e. national, regional and local, based on internationally accepted standards. Guidelines for tourism operations, impact assessment, monitoring of cumulative impacts, and limits to acceptable change should be established.
- **Education and training programs** to improve and manage heritage and natural resources should be established.
- Integrating the development of tourism and the policies of natural resources management on a local, regional and state level.
- **Value for money** – consumer and investor protection.
- **Monitoring and evaluation** – mechanisms of measuring performance, environmental impact assessments, trend analyses and future forecasts.



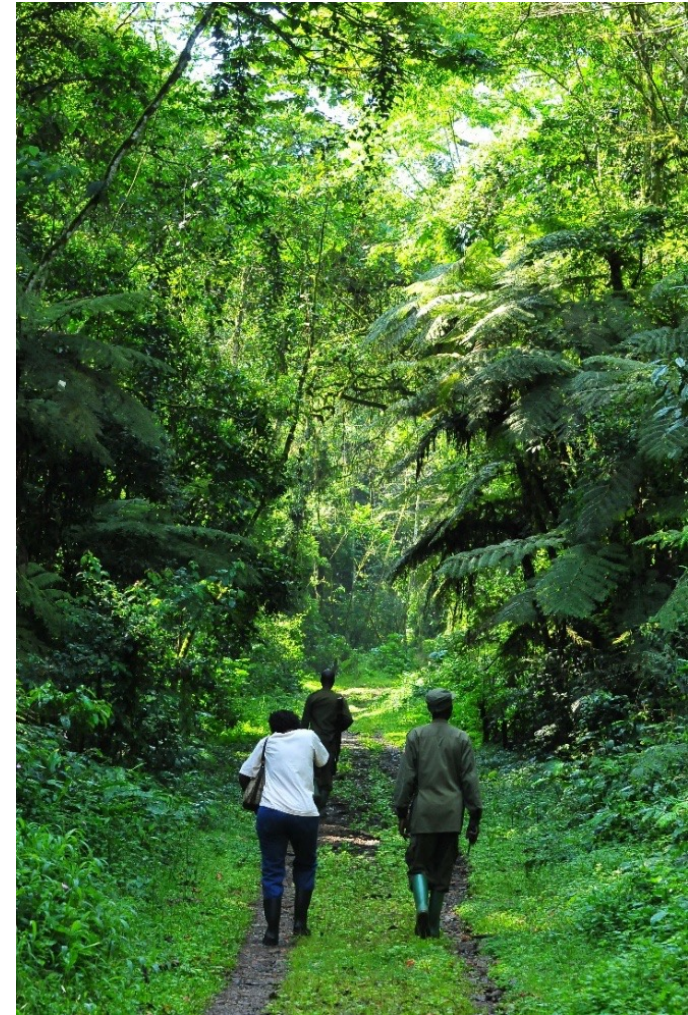
Tourism and Sustainability in Uganda

- Tourism is an important economic growth sector accounting for 10.4% of global GDP (WTTC, 2017) contributing US\$ 8.3Tn annually.
- In Uganda, tourism is the leading foreign exchange earner accounting for 8.1% of GDP and bringing in US\$1.4 Bn annually ,directly supporting 610,806 jobs in the sector
- The Government of Uganda has undertaken to grow the economy tenfold in a transformative, inclusive and sustainable manner over the next 15 years i.e FY 2025/26 – 2039/40.
- The Government of Uganda has identified four anchor areas that will deliver the 10-fold growth, and tourism development is one of them.
- Such an important sector needs to be made sustainable so that the immense benefits can continue to flow without negatively affecting the environment, culture and other sectors.



Key recommendations for sustainable tourism regulation

- Decentralization and mainstreaming of tourism regulation and management in Local Governments.
- Set standards in line with international standards to ensure quality, safety and confidence of the consumers.
- Strengthen Sector Supervision, monitoring and coordination.
- Harmonize the tourism law with other laws and policies that promote sustainable tourism such as the Green growth strategy for Uganda, Vision 2040, Tourism Master Plan, Uganda Wildlife Act, National Environment Act ,Tourism Policy,among others .
- Sustainable Tourism Legislation and regulation along the entire tourism value Chain i.e.;
- ✓ Sustainable hotel operations by issuing standards and regulations
- ✓ Green Tourism Associations by regulating their operations through a code of ethics.
- ✓ Green the sector of tourist guides and tour operators by providing minimum standards.
- ✓ Green destinations – Regulate activities in destinations i.e. carrying capacity, community participation, environment conservation, waste management etc.



A photograph of a gorilla resting in a dense, lush green forest. The gorilla is positioned in the center, surrounded by thick foliage and tree branches. The text "Best practices for Greening Tourism legislation and regulation" is overlaid in white, bold font across the middle of the image.

Best practices for Greening Tourism legislation and regulation



Tourism legislation and regulation should ensure;

1. Activities and programs which promote tourism awareness, preserve the country's diverse cultures and heritage, and instill a sense of history and a culture of tourism among the youth and the populace;
2. Enhance the employment of nationals in tourism-related enterprises;
3. Ensure that tourism development protects and promotes the general well-being of the local people, particularly in the area of investment, as well as the exploitation of women and children in tourism;
4. Enhance the collection, analysis and dissemination of data which accurately measure the economic and social impact of tourism in the country to facilitate planning in the public and private sectors;
5. Ensure the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology through the promotion of activities geared towards environmental protection, conservation and restoration;



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6. Development of responsible tourism through environmentally sound and community participatory tourism programs in conservation.
7. Balanced tourism development (urban and rural) so as to spread the benefits of tourism and contribute to poverty alleviation, better access to infrastructure.
8. Capability-building of local government units (LGUs), in partnership with the private sector, in the management of local tourism projects and initiatives.
9. Maintaining international standards of excellence in all tourism facilities and Services.
10. Establishment of tourism zones/Tourism development Areas, which will provide the necessary vehicle to coordinate actions of the public and private sector; and
11. Ensure a sustainable funding mechanism for the implementation of tourism Policies, plans, programs, projects and activities.



EAC CRITERIA FOR GRADING AND CLASIFICTION OF ACCOMMODATION FACILITIES (Sustainability Aspects considered under the EAC)

- Environmental Architectural Features
- Environmental Policy, Plans and Programs
- Landscaping
- Acoustics/ Noise Management
- Solid Waste Management
- Effluent discharge / Waste Water Management
- Water conservation & Management
- Energy Conservation
- Supplies Policy
- Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Sustainable Hotels

a) Lighting

- **LED lighting.** These reduce energy consumption by up to 30%.
- Sensor lights staircases, corridors and public washrooms.
- Solar lighting in public areas (car park, landscaped areas)
- Timers and photo sensors to control.

b) Air Conditioning:

- Key Card connected to a window contactor to switch off air conditioning when the window is open.
- Integration of key card with air conditioning and lighting to switch off when there is no occupancy.

c) Timers and Photo Sensors

- Timers and photo sensors ensure automated lighting



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e) Recirculation Pumps.

- Hot water recirculation pumps to ensure immediate hot water from the tap which reduces time and loss of cold water in the shower.

f) Pressure Reducing Valves

- Pressure reducing valves control pressure and manage loss of water at outlets.

g) Floating Macrophyte Systems

- This is an eco-friendly water purification system using floating plants to purify and recycle waste water that can be then used for landscape irrigation.

h) Rain Water Harvesting

- Harvesting and use of rain water reduces reliance on municipality water, and associated costs and inconveniences.



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i) Natural Ventilation

- Natural ventilation to reduce dependency on air conditioning through designs that provide for greater natural ventilation and lower expenditure on air conditioning.

j) Sanitary Ware

- The design and installation of sanitary ware to make the building greener:
 - ☐ Low fill volume bath tubs
 - ☐ Dual flush system toilets
 - ☐ Dry urinals (they use purely plant-based sealant. This biodegradable sealing liquid effectively prevents unpleasant odours)
 - ☐ Sensor urinals
 - ☐ Sensor taps



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k) Paints

- Use of paints that are free of Volatile Organic Compounds (**VOCs**) for improved health.

l) Furniture, Fittings & Equipment.

- Use of furnishing and finishes that use materials from sustainable forests, have low toxic material levels, are locally manufactured and are durable enough to last-Ease of repair, disassembly, and recycling.

m) Green Equipment

- Prioritise purchase of equipment designed to efficiently conserve energy and other natural resources such as water.



Best practices for Greening tourism destinations

Conservation of energy, cultural heritage, natural resources and job equality

- Support the conservation of environment and avoid the physical and visual degradation of the environment.
- Support the conservation of natural areas, habitats and wildlife, and minimize damage to them.
- Train people at tourism destination to be environment friendly
- Create awareness among visitors to respect environment and community.
- Minimize the use of scarce and nonrenewable resources in the operation of tourism facilities and services.
- Income generated by tourism (e.g., entry fees to monuments, museums, etc.) should be used for conservation and development of the destination.
- Destination should be culturally rich and should have historic heritage, authentic culture, traditions and distinctiveness of host communities.



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Management of resources

- Destination should be rich in natural resources, landscapes, etc. to provide a unique experience to tourists.
- Destination should provide visibility for its natural resources.
- Train people at tourism destination for optimum use of natural resources (water).
- Train people to use technology to save electricity (like solar heaters, energy saving light bulb, etc.)
- Encourage business with environmentally friendly service providers.
- Train people for reuse, recycling products to reduce waste..
- Service providers should be encouraged to purchase local products (consumables like amenities, food items, etc.)



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Empowering Local community

- Engage and empower local communities in planning and decision making about the management and future development of tourism in their area.
- Destination should provide informative material about sustainable practices.
- Provide jobs to people of the local community.
- Train people at tourism destination to be environment friendly.

Developing support systems

- Income should be used for developing;
 - amenities like hospitals, hotels, etc., of the place
 - support systems like schools, etc.



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Using environmentally friendly products

- Train people to use organic products/environmentally friendly products.

Training for service providers

- Train people to use technology to save electricity (like solar heaters, energy saving light bulb, etc.)
- Encourage business with environmentally friendly service providers.
- Tourism destination service providers (airlines, hotels, taxi drivers, tour guides, etc.) should encourage visitors to adopt sustainable methods.
- Sensitize visitors to respect environment and community.

Social equality

- Ensure the level of pay, conditions of service and availability of job equally to all without discrimination by gender, race, disability, etc.



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Integrate Technology for Sustainable Tourism Solutions (Technology-Driven Solutions)

- **Hosted Buyers Matchmaking Platform:**
 - Facilitate connections between exhibitors and buyers focused on sustainable travel.
- **Real-Time Event Monitoring:**
 - Use an app for tracking attendee feedback, sessions attended, and carbon footprint data.
- **Virtual Participation Options:**
 - Include live streams and virtual booths for global participants.

Green Transportation

- **Eco-Friendly Shuttle Services:**
 - Provide electric or hybrid buses for transporting delegates to and from venues.
- **Promote Cycling and Walking:**
 - Offer bike rentals and walking tours as part of the Expo experience.
- **Carpooling:**
 - Develop a carpooling system for delegates traveling within Uganda.

Showcase Uganda's Sustainability Efforts

- **Conservation Success Stories:**

Highlight the impact of tourism on Uganda's national parks and wildlife sanctuaries.

- **Cultural Heritage Preservation:**

Emphasize Uganda's efforts to protect and promote traditional crafts, music, and dance through tourism.

- **Sustainable Lodges and Tours:**

Feature eco-lodges and tour operators who adhere to green practices.

Partner with Sustainable Organizations

- **Collaborations:**

Work with international sustainability organizations, conservation bodies, and local NGOs to showcase Uganda's green tourism initiatives.

- **Certification Programs:**

Promote certification schemes for hotels, tour operators, and destinations adhering to sustainability standards.

Incentives for Sustainability

- **Awards for Green Tourism:**

Introduce a "Green Tourism Award" to recognize exhibitors and stakeholders who demonstrate outstanding commitment to sustainability.

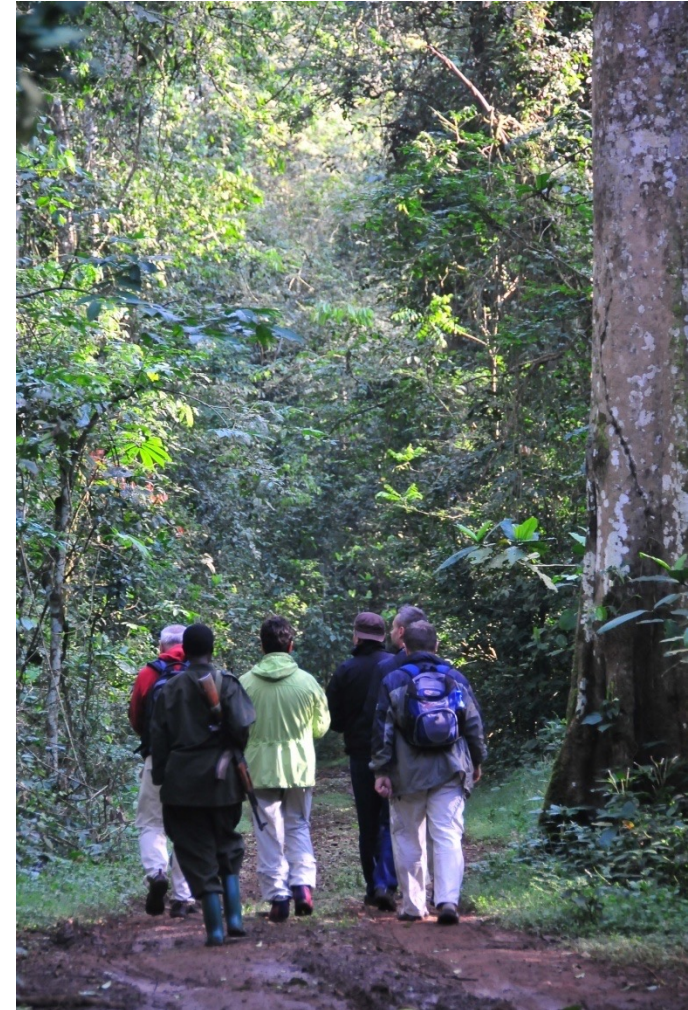
- **Discounts for Eco-Friendly Practices:**

Offer discounts or incentives for exhibitors and delegates using sustainable methods, such as virtual booths or eco-friendly accommodations.

Sustainable Tour Operators/Travel agents/Tour Guides

Choosing Destinations

- Responsible travel agent/Tour operator/ Guide must consider the environmental and tourism impacts on local communities, as well as the activities of the clients at the destination.
- Offer destinations that support local communities by providing jobs to residents and developing projects that improve the quality of life for locals.
- Encourage customers to choose community-oriented destinations and familiarize them with tourism-sponsored projects in the host community.
- Ensuring producers receive a fair share of revenue. Local communities should benefit from tourism activities with fair wages and other long-term benefits.
- If a popular destination is struggling with a sensitive or damaged environment, try to find an alternative to offer clients.



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Habitat Conservation

- Support conservation groups
- Support and share scientific research related to habitat protection and conservation.
- Always use existing roads or trails.

Client Education

- Ensure that guides are well informed about endangered or threatened wildlife or plants.
- Showcase specific conservation programs for species or habitats in your area e.g. partnerships with local parks, conservation zones and wildlife reserves.
- Take time to learn about diseases that may affect the animals your clients are visiting.



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Keeping It Local

- Maintain open lines of communication with local officials in small, remote communities . Community support can raise the company's profile, which in turn brings more people to the community and helps to sustain the local economy.
- Look to the local community for employees. Locals typically have the best knowledge of the area.
- Consider instituting an apprenticeship program to encourage local youth to become guides.

Respect the Regulations

- Be familiar with all applicable laws and guidelines in the region and destination. Inform clients/customers about all applicable laws before the tour.



Conclusion

- Uganda's tourism is largely nature based hence risk extinction if not sustainably managed.
- Tourism resources are dependent on climate Change and this calls for collective actions by all stakeholders in order to promote sustainability along the entire tourism value chain.

Thank you

