

**“Water and Tourism -  
Challenges and Opportunities in the Implementation of Water and Waste Water Management &  
its Contribution to a Sustainable Coastal Tourism Industry in Kenya”**

Tourism is the second largest sector in the Kenyan economy after agriculture. The coastline of Kenya plays a major role as a tourism destination, because it contributes with more than 60% of the guests to the industry. Thus, tourism has important economic and social gains, but simultaneously it has ecological impacts, resulting in degradation of the environment. This is a cause for concern, because the environment is the basis for coastal tourism. A crucial environmental coastal resource is water. Equally, water is the main basis for tourism, especially at the coast. The attraction of coastal tourism is the ocean, and the attractiveness of the whole coastal area additionally depends on water, because water influences environments by determining whether it's a dry or green landscape. Besides that, water is also a crucial resource for daily hotel operations and for guests' consumption. However, Kenya is considered as being a water scarce country, because the water storage per capita in Kenya is way below the world average. Coastal tourism in Kenya exacerbates the problem of water shortage, because the per capita daily use of water by tourists can be as much as 10 to 50 greater than by local residents. In addition, high peak seasons at Kenya's coast coincide with dry seasons, because tourists prefer sun and dry weather. Beyond that, sewage disposal is another challenge. Up to 80% of the sewage is discharged untreated into the ocean or the environment, thus polluting and consequently limiting clean water sources. Tourism as a high water consumer contributes with high amounts of sewage to water pollution. Sewage discharge is considered as being one of the main sources of coastal water pollution in Kenya.

Managing water can determine the availability and the quality of water. The availability and quality of water is impacting on the tourism industry, and in reverse, the tourism industry is impacting on the availability and quality of water. Therefore, coastal tourism in Kenya has to develop in a sustainable manner – and an adequate water and waste water management can significantly contribute to a sustainable tourism industry in Kenya.

Laws are there, but there is a big gap between theory and praxis. The thesis analyses the various obstacles which prevent the implementation and the enforcement of an adequate water and waste water management in the Kenyan coastal tourism industry, such as a lack of adequate water and waste water infrastructure, a lack of financial means, a lack of research, a lack of business registration, a lack of awareness, impunity, non-compliance with laws, etc. Furthermore it seeks to find solutions for an improvement of the situation, such as sensitization, (technical) education, incentives, licensing, classifications, code of conducts, eco-labels, etc.

Tourists have an increased concern and demand for clean and healthy environments and for responsible tourism practices, which do not harm the host country. Furthermore, clean beaches and clean water are a pre-condition for successful coastal tourism. Kenya's destination image and the tourism's trust in Kenya as a safe tourism destination are depending on clean environments. Environmental quality is a competitive advantage in the tourism market and the water and waste water management is a crucial contributor to clean environments. Tourism is a major foreign exchange earner at the Kenyan Coast. Therefore, to provide long-term benefits and profit, an adequate water and waste water management in the tourism industry should be enhanced. However, tourism is not the only industry which impacts on water resources and on the environment, and water is not the only aspect in environmental quality. But there exists and will always exist a strong interdependency between water and tourism. The thesis shows how an adequate water and waste water management can contribute to a sustainable coastal tourism industry in Kenya.