To enhance her position as a leader in the knowledge and practice of sustainable tourism in Kenya and Eastern Africa, Ecotourism Kenya ensured that the event was carbon neutral, thus the first carbon zero tourism event in Eastern Africa. At this conference, the tourism industry was explicitly informed of the relationship between climate change and tourism. The message from Ecotourism Kenya was clear: the tourism industry is neither a victim nor victor of climate change; and if tourism was to flourish at projected rates, action must be taken to safeguard the environment and resources upon which tourism depends by embracing sustainable tourism.

The conference acknowledged that destinations in poor countries, especially those that depend on tourism as economic drivers and which have fewest resources to buy their way out of unhealthy environments might suffer the most from climate change. Concurring with the UNWTO Davos Declaration that the sector is highly sensitive to the impacts of climate change and global warming, the tourism sector was challenged to respond rapidly to climate change. On its part, government was urged to review weak environmental laws that had failed to safeguard key ecosystems from over-development and to provide incentives for individuals and communities to conserve areas outside protected areas and to embrace sustainable technologies.

There were yet threats to action, the conference noted. Lack of policies on sustainable tourism development, a fragmented tourism industry, lack of investment capital to drive change in technology and loss of species would threaten any action taken to address impacts of climate change. The conference recommended formation of private-public-civic sector partnership as a way to gain momentum in creating awareness and to push for practical actions by key organisations in the private and public sector. Such partnerships should ensure the attainment of the “quadruple bottom line” of environmental, social, economic and climate responsiveness in tourism development.

For an industry that depends on climate as a resource, the stakes are high and lip service is not an option. Impacts of climate change like melting snow on mountain, water scarcity, flooding, mudslides, rising sea levels, loss of species, coral bleaching, are being experienced in Kenya. A combination of regulatory and voluntary actions is required to address these impacts. Government must give high priority to environment in its development plans. It must develop policies to safeguard environment and support industry’s mitigation and adaptation strategies. The tourism industry must rethink the packages they offer and ensure they minimise overall carbon footprints of a holiday. This will require that they rethink activities, itineraries, destinations they promote and the product. The country and industry must think mitigation and adaptation. (see page 4 & 5 for summary of conference resolutions, statements and commitments)

This October, Ecotourism Kenya broke new ground by pioneering debate on climate change and tourism in Kenya at the 2007 National Ecotourism Conference. The conference acknowledged that destinations in poor countries, especially those that depend on tourism as economic drivers and which have fewest resources to buy their way out of unhealthy environments might suffer the most from climate change. Concurring with the UNWTO Davos Declaration that the sector is highly sensitive to the impacts of climate change and global warming, the tourism sector was challenged to respond rapidly to climate change.

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Part II

Tips for Responsible Investment on Community Land ©

In the March issue of our Newsletter (issue 15), we shared with you tips on how to ensure your investment is responsible at conceptualization/planning stages by making relevant consultations, choosing appropriate sites, selecting good designs, abiding with EMCA and Planning Act and where Management Plans exist, ensuring you abide by the investment guidelines.

In this issue, we share with you tips on what to do when considering an investment on community land. Such investments are commonly referred to as joint ventures or partnerships. The major social issues associated with developing tourism on community land include equity in benefit sharing, participation in decision-making, mentorship of community members, length of lease, access to land/pasture/water, social development programs and employment. Observe the following when contemplating developing tourism on community land:

• Sharing your tourism idea with as many community members as possible. Use local meeting/consultation forum like Chiefs Baraza’s. The area chief is a reliable entry point to the community. NGOs can also help. Beware of ‘gate keepers’.

• Consult widely to ensure the idea is acceptable to the community. This could take several meetings and months. Ensure there is consensus on the idea before you proceed with any agreements.

• Consult other organizations that are working in the area even if their work is not tourism related and learn from their successful mobilization strategies.

• Gather information on livelihoods and lifestyles of local people. This will ensure your intended investment complements local lifestyles and livelihoods.

• When selecting sites, be sensitive to social life and livelihoods. For example, avoid sites that are close to paths used to access market or water bodies, or sites of cultural significance. As much as possible do not displace people from current abode. Ensure there is consensus on site selected.

• Estimate the market value of land (community contribution) and use this as basis for calculating community investment. Consider opportunity costs of setting aside land for conservation/tourism investment. Refer to studies that may have been done or consult local Development Office for evaluation of community contribution.

• Discuss benefit sharing in details. This is the core of the engagement for both investor and community. After making your proposal for benefit sharing, allow community to consult and propose their own benefit-sharing model. Negotiate based on the two offers.

• Sometimes community may need external support in arriving at a decision. This support could be a friendly NGO, government department, civil society organizations or individuals. This should be allowed.

• Discuss with community the proposed design and activities in detail. Allow for their input and where practical incorporate their ideas.

• Discuss potential business linkages between investment and local businesses e.g. supply of vegetables or dairy products. Make clear requirements for such linkages and obligations and responsibilities of contracting parties.

• Discuss and agree on employment, wages and increments. Do not pay less than union rates. Make clear any exceptions that are going to be made in terms of employment e.g. overlooking qualifications and paying higher wages.

• Discuss training program for local staff to bring them at par with industry standards. State whether this will be a benefit or the cost will be deducted from net pay to community.

• Discuss modalities for payments to community. Give advice on effective/equitable ways for distribution of benefits among community members, but let community decide how best to share.

• In the lease agreement, ensure that all terminology are properly defined. For example, define bed night, entry fee, community, management, profit, losses, management fee, visitor, payment/due date, distributable income, the lodge, budget, partners, partners meeting, resolution, obligations, right, tax, turnover etc.

• Keep record of all meetings, any payments, and agreements. Ensure community has similar records as you have.

• Finalize on each item before proceeding to invest. Invite relevant organizations to witness the signing of the agreement.

For tips on responsible practices during implementation phase, look out for next issue of this Newsletter. To receive a copy of this newsletter on a regular basis, join Ecotourism Kenya as corporate, CBO or individual member. See details on page 7.

Note: these tips are part of research being conducted by Ecotourism Kenya and should not be reproduced without reference to Ecotourism Kenya.
CLIMATE CHANGE
Why tour operators should budge

Tour operators have played and continue to play a critical role in the growth of international tourism by linking suppliers to consumers (travellers). As intermediaries, tour operators serve to improve the flow of information between principles and consumers. They provide expert product knowledge and advice to consumers, they offer customers greater choice through aggregation of products and services, they attract consumer confidence by acting as guarantee for service hence seen as reducing consumer risk. Ideally tour operators assemble the main elements of a holiday and sell it to a consumer. This function in its traditional form tends to alienate tour operators from the ‘goods’ they sell.

Indeed it is believed that this traditional role coupled with the perception that tour operations did not impact on the environment, led to poor participation of tour operators in sustainable tourism. They did not budge to the pressure of sustainable tourism from professionals. While they would have used their strategic role to influence government policy on sustainable tourism and to impress upon destinations and travellers to embrace sustainable tourism practices, many of them were involved in ‘green washing’. They use terminologies like ecotourism in their brochures but only to attract clients. Despite their inertia in as far as sustainable tourism was concerned, tour operators continued to do business and their bottom line (profits), enlarged as the sector grew.

Things are different with climate change. Unlike sustainable tourism, which was seen as a ‘market driven paradigm’ and could be ignored, climate change is science. Climate change debates have therefore exposed impacts of tour operations that were hitherto invisible like transport and energy and which have direct implication on global warming. Energy use contributes more than 40% of green house gases, while air transport contributes 5% of green house gases. As tourism grows, the contribution of air transport to green house gases will increase significantly since moving people is a key role of tour operators. Tour operators move people on-site, to site/destination and between sites. This movement requires some form of motorized equipment/vessel, which depend on energy. This makes tour operations a high-energy business.

The knowledge that tour operations contribute to green house gases is in the public (travellers) domain. This means that decisions on whether to mitigate and adapt is no longer in the hands of the tour operator. Tour operators are now directly answerable to their informed travellers who may soon make ethical considerations about travel, choosing not to travel or to travel short distances, in view of growing concerns over global warming. This may affect long-haul destinations. Alternatively, travellers will be seeking to minimise the carbon footprint of their holidays and will add carbon minimisation to their check-off list when buying a holiday. Travellers have always had choices and they continue to have choices even in the wake of climate change. What choices do operators have?

Tour operators need to influence the destinations/products they sell to adapt cleaner and greener technologies, to save energy and water, to embrace energy efficient travel, to design more energy efficient activities and to conserve the areas in which they operate. They need to encourage low-energy tourist activities, design long-stay tours to reduce between site travels, diversify activities/destinations to spread impacts, support creation of new conservation areas, provide carbon-offset opportunities for travellers and influence policy. They can do this by consciously selecting to promote destinations that are managed and developed in sustainable way, by educating travellers to make informed choices on destinations, by presenting accurate information on destinations and by promoting properties that show commitment to environmental conservation and social responsibility.

Industry associations too have a role. In Kenya, there are more than 2000 registered tour operators. Of these about 250 are members of the Kenya Association of Tour Operators (KATO). Other associations representing tour operators interest include Mombasa and Coast Tourism Association (MCTA), and the newly registered Kenya Association of Local Tour Operators (KALTO). Ecotourism Kenya accepts membership from tour operators who commit to sustainable tourism. Traditionally, associations are service organisations with codes of conduct to guide member activities. The secondary role of associations is to lobby government for favourable policies that recognise the significance of tourism as an economic activity and support the growth of the sector.

Yet, climate change will require associations to move beyond their traditional roles and support members to mitigate and adapt to climate change. The first step is to create awareness and conduct studies to determine the carbon footprint of the sector. The second step is to come up with strategies for mitigation and adaptation to climate change. Third is to lobby government to commit to sustainable development and allow industry to self-police development and activities of tour operators through the associations. Last but not least, the associations need to enter into partnerships on behalf of their members, with credible organisations for management of carbon-offset programmes. In brief, the associations and tour operators cannot ignore climate change, as was the case with sustainable tourism.
Theme: Climate Change and Tourism

Statement
Coordination is crucial to gaining momentum in the climate change campaign. It is therefore important to form private-public-civic sector partnerships as a way to gain momentum and to push for practical actions by organizations such as Kenya Tourism Federation (KTF), Ecotourism Kenya (EK), National Environment Management Authority (NEMA), Tourism Trust Fund (TTF), Kenya Association of Air Operators and related NGO’s.

Commitment by Tourism Sector
• The tourism sector in Kenya is committed to realize a common vision on climate change by 2009

Actions
• Each player in the tourism industry to take immediate action to define it carbon footprint.
• Government and funding institutions to support the development of an industry-wide carbon baseline.
• Capacity institutions, NGO’s and the private sector organizations to raise awareness to promote a civic movement for mitigation of global warming

Theme: Communities and Ecotourism

Statements
• Accessing funds for Community Based Tourism (CBT) development remains a challenge to communities.
• There is gender parity in CBTs, especially in communities where traditions dictate relationships and property ownership. Women should be empowered to play a significant role in CBTs.
• Planning of and for CBTs is being undertaken with limited economic data and research on the segment.
• Marketing and creating market access is an area requiring professional business support at sectoral level

Commitment by CBTs
• CBT’s commit to be viable businesses making profit and offering products that meet consumer’s expectations at the same time addressing socio-economic needs and environmental concerns.

Action
• Private sector to provide professional business support to CBT’s

to create improved market access.
• Donors and NGO’s to encourage and support gender sensitivity in the development and management of future CBT’s
• Donors and NGO’s to empower CBT’s to access available funding
• Professionals, consultants and capacity building institutions to provide and encourage the use of economic data and research in the development and implementation of CBT’s
• Communities to take a realistic, transparent and accountable approach in planning, development, management and revenue utilization

Theme: Ecotourism Best Practices

Statements
• There is a gap between industry needs and tourism training curriculum (educational sector), hence a need for a regulatory framework.
• EIA and EA tools are most critical in effective environmental management and have quantitative and qualitative benefits to businesses. Other important tools include the SEA.
• Conservation organizations and the tourism sector have mutual benefits in investing in mitigation and adaptation to climate change.
• Communities and conservation stakeholders recognizes the value of holistic approaches to Corporate Social and Environmental Responsibility (CSER), practiced by the responsible tourism sector, as a real development tool.

Commitment by ecotourism practitioners
• To always maintain approaches to best practices that moves ecotourism away from disjointed activities towards becoming a holistic practice.
**Theme: Sustainable Destination Management**

**Statements**
- What we call wildlife dispersal areas are in essence Land for Wildlife
- Tourism is an incentive for conservation
- Incentives and benefits are essential factors for successful conservation
- Planning for protected areas should incorporate land for wildlife and local livelihoods.
- Conservation planning and investment is costly but many alternatives exist for financing, including investment by tourism operators.
- Planning models for destinations should cater for varying capabilities of user groups.

**Commitment to destination management**
- To employ holistic conservation approaches in destination management.

**Action**
- Tour operators to promote certified products and those that have made effort to promote the ecotourism brand
- Capacity organizations and learning institutions to take part in definition, development and review of criteria to ensure they address areas of impact.
- Private sector to support efforts to harmonize existing schemes and move towards regional integration of certification schemes.

**Theme: Critical Issues in Ecotourism**

**Statements**
- “Green” is not universal. It is defined by knowledge and understanding of the context in which a particular object, practice, service, product exists.
- Certification is a useful tool, that can promote best practices and help “green” products to access markets.
- Successful branding of ecotourism is dependant on focused leadership, collective action, partnerships and shared/unified brand values.
- Ecotourism ventures must be sensitive to indigenous people livelihoods and rights.
- Indigenous people have a responsibility to embrace technology in order to remain competitive in the tourism market place.

**Commitment**
- The tourism industry should commit to promoting and securing the ecotourism brand through increased participation in voluntary certification programs.

**Action**
- Learning institutions to seek and disseminate best practices in sustainable tourism as made available by the private sector.
- Destinations and tour operators to always meet and comply with legal standards, but strive to move beyond compliance to achieve sustainability.
- Government to provide incentives rather than “punishments” in order to move tourism beyond compliance towards sustainability.
- The ecotourism sector to engage in long term Corporate Stakeholder Responsibility (CSR), in order to contribute to tangible development and conservation.

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< Pictures showing some of the participants who attended the different sessions during the 3 day conference.
Flaunting the rules to make a buck

Coastal Tourism has become a thriving activity enjoyed by both national and international tourists alike. Whether one is a resident of Kenya, or a tourist from abroad, people are flocking to the coast to enjoy the pristine beauty of Kenya's marine environment.

The marine environment is a very delicate ecosystem supporting a multitude of plant and animal communities that each have their niche, ecological role and placement within the environment, set forth for them. The delicate balance of survival that the marine environment maintains is threatened by numerous activities imposed upon it by man, and two such activities have the greatest impact: glass bottom boat excursions and SCUBA diving excursions. This is not to say that the above automatically are categorized as threat to the marine environment, yet they do have the potential to easily become one. However, there does exist a glimmer of hope as marine awareness continues to grow and individuals, companies and organizations, are sourcing ways of contributing to the protection of this fragile ecosystem.

Guided excursions into the marine environment usually takes two forms: glass bottom boat trips, or SCUBA diving activities. These activities are the most popular form of intrusion into the watery world, and unfortunately have the greatest negative direct effect on the marine environment. Too often, the monetary rewards of these activities cause the operators and/or guides to flaunt environmental guidelines and literally allow their passengers to get away with ‘murder’ so as to keep a smile on the paying guests face. One sure way of keeping the guests happy is to ensure that they see an abundance of fish, and one way to ensure this spectacle is to offer food to the fish as an attracting device. This will result in the fish approaching within touching distance. This brings with it several problems. The first is that the food offered is usually bread which the fish will readily eat yet is not part of their regular diet, thus creating the potential of future complications within the fish’s digestive tract. But what happens when the guide has forgotten to pack the bread?-no worries because he will just get his knife out and kill some of the other marine organisms (seas urchins are often used for this) to feed to the fish, after all, one must keep the paying customers smiling! The second problem with feeding fish is that these guides will feed the fish in the same area day in day out and this changes the natural behavior of the fish. Eventually the fish will lose the need to hunt for themselves as food is continually provided.

The feeding of fish should be outright banned within the marine parks of Kenya. The organisms one goes out to see are all there, one just needs to look for them and surely that is part of the fun and challenge when entering a natural environment. When was the last time you went to the Maasai Mara and had your guide deposit a mountain of freshly killed carriion so as to attract the lions?

The most adverse effect that the boating activities have upon the marine environment is the trampling of coral. Coral is a living organism just like any other. Fair enough, it seems to resemble an inanimate rock, doesn’t swim around like a fish does, nor appear as cuddle-able as a dolphin, nonetheless it is still alive and has a very important role in the ecosystem. Each time a foot or hand is placed on any area of the coral it causes damage to that coral colony, in some instances killing off that particular area, no questions asked. The glass bottom boats frequent shallow areas and as such make it easy for their guests to clamber onto the coral blocks. The SCUBA diving boats frequent deeper areas so standing on the corals is not necessarily a problem, however lack of buoyancy control is. To enable a SCUBA diver to transverse through the 3-dimensional world of water, he or she has been taught the principal of buoyancy control. Often times this principle has not been taught properly (time and monetary constraints) and the result is that the diver races to the surface (a dangerous situation for the diver), or crashes uncontrollably towards the bottom (a dangerous situation for the coral reef). Imagine being a coral community of 45 cm diameter comprised of a delicate lattice network of thin coral branches and having a person four times as long and 20 times as heavy come crashing on you!)

A friendly briefing outlining the environmental issues prior to the excursion into the aquatic realm would prevent a lot of this accidental unknowing damage caused as a result of the above. Often times the fault is not with the guides or guests as they are simply unaware of what damage they are causing. In order to combat this problem information and training should be provided for the guides so that they in turn can pass it on to the visiting guests. Most visiting guests will appreciate the information and do their best to minimize their impact on the aquatic realm.

Apart from an increased awareness concerning the fragile marine environment, a set of guidelines that boat operators should adhere to would make a tremendous difference. The former is growing, and already practiced by some with the increase in ecotourism, but the latter requires development and more importantly, enforcement. The national parks (terrestrial) of Kenya all
Are your ‘green’ programmes holistic or fragmented?

There is a tendency in the tourism industry to progressively breakdown holistic approaches to sustainable business development into self-defined disjointed ‘green’ activities, observes Lars Lindkvist of Basecamp Explorer. In fact a perceived lack of international standards for ecotourism and a rapidly growing global interest in going “green” is creating opportunities for opportunistic businesses to ‘green wash’. The ‘green’ activities that evolve from opportunities are not necessarily all bad but without coordination and holistic approaches, they tend to be inefficient and sometimes even harmful: harmful in the sense that they are not sustainable and responsible.

One way to guarantee travelers that your ‘green’ activities are holistic and sustainable is to participate in a certification scheme. Ecotourism Kenya provides hotel, lodges and camp owners in Kenya with opportunity to verify their ‘green’ practices by applying to be eco-rated. More than 35 properties have applied and qualified for various levels of certification. Getting eco-rated takes ten easy steps:

10 STEPS IN APPLYING FOR ECO-RATING

Step 1 Visit www.ecotourismkenya.org and look up the eco-rating pages for information on the scheme and decide the level of eco-rating you wish to apply for. Send e-mail to info@ecotourismkenya.org to request for the assessment tool also known as eco-rating questionnaire.

Step 2 Management identifies a team leader for the process. This should be a person who has access to information and who can request department/section heads for data where necessary.

Step 3 Team leader briefs all department/section heads on decision to apply for eco-rating and what it means for the organisation.

Step 4 The team leader, in consultation with management and employees, completes the assessment tool by answering all the questions in details.

Step 5 Different person from the one who completed the questionnaire reviews the answers. This ensures that any omissions in answers are noted and amendments made accordingly.

Step 6 Team leader shares completed assessment tool with management and all departments highlighting areas that the property is weak and needs review and good areas that need further strengthening.

Step 7 Make photocopy of the completed assessment tool to keep as part of organisation records and for assistance/use in developing environmental management plan.

Step 8 Return completed assessment tool to Ecotourism Kenya with all requested attachments to facilitate speedy review. EK will acknowledge receipt of the tool.

Step 9 Receive your desk assessment report at least 14 days from date of receipt by Ecotourism Kenya. This could be a confirmation of award or deferment based on scores.

Step 10 If label is awarded;

• For Bronze, applicants will be requested to make payments of US$ 150, for accreditation. In case of deferment, the applicant will receive guidance on what to do about areas of weakness. Deferred applicants are encouraged to re-apply after six months and go through step 1 – 10.

• For Silver and Gold, applicants will be requested to prepare for a field assessment within one month of the desk evaluation.

Are your ‘green’ programmes holistic or fragmented?

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See page 8 for a list of Eco-rated facilities.
For assistance with eco-rating e-mail info@ecotourismkenya.org

Join Ecotourism Kenya now...

There are three categories of Membership as follows:
1 Corporate - 10,000
2 CBO - 1,000
3 Individuals - 2,500

To join send your cheque or Money Order to:
Ecotourism Kenya, P. O. Box 10146 00100 – GPO, Nairobi.

Include the following details:
Name, Name of Organisation (Corporate & CBOs), P. O. Box, Postal Code, Town/City, Telephone, Fax and Email address.

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Sander works with Coastscape, a consortium of environmental consultants, and specialises in marine conservation, underwater photography and marine EIAs. He can be reached at info@green-water.org

Ecotourism Kenya Newsletter – Issue No.18
The Kenya Tourism Initiative (KTI) is a joint initiative between the tourism industry, led by KTF, and the media aimed at removing tourism from the leisure pages/sections of media into news making items. Started mid this year, the initiative has successfully organised two media/industry workshops and one breakfast meeting for senior editors of leading media houses.

In addition through the initiative, a media award has been launched to recognise and reward excellence in tourism reporting. Key objectives of KTI are:

- Improve relationship between the media and tourism industry.
- Raise awareness on need for skilled and professional communication in tourism industry
- Help manage crisis communication
- Introduce industry to opportunities in news media

It is envisaged that this newfound relationship between media and the tourism industry will improve tourism communication and help pave way for a brighter future for the industry. However, the success of this partnership will depend on a steady supply of accurate, reliable and newsworthy information by the industry and industry’s ability to adapt to new media and expand the opportunities of coverage.  

JK-G

List of Ecorated Facilities

as at November 2007

Gold Eco-rated facilities

Basecamp Masai Mara www.basecampexplorer.com
Campi ya Kanzi www.maasai.com

Silver Eco-rated facilities

Amboseli Porini Camp www.porini.com
Mara Porini Camp www.porini.com
Ol Seki Mara Camp www.olekiki.com
Olonana Camp www.sanctuarylodges.com
Porini Lion Camp www.porini.com
Turtle Bay Beach Club www.turtlebay.co.ke

Bronze Eco-rated facilities

Bateleur Camp www.ccafrica.com
Borana Lodge www.borana.co.ke
Elephant Pepper Camp www.chelipeacock.com
Elsa’s Kopje www.chelipeacock.com
Il Ngwesi Lodge www.ilenwesi.com
JMAR Safaris Duma Camp www.jmarsafaris.com
Kicheche Mara Camp www.kicheche.com
Kichwa Tembo Tented Safari Camp www.ccafrica.com
Kizingo Lodge www.kizingo.com
Koija Starbeds www.loisaba.com
Lewa Safari Camp www.lewa.org
Loisaba Kiboko Starbeds www.loisaba.com
Loisaba Lodge www.loisaba.com
Ooi Donyo Wuas Lodge www.richardbonhamsafaris.com
Oltukai Lodge www.oltukialodge.com
Rekero Tented Camp www.rekero.com
Saruni Safari Camp www.sarunicamp.com
Shompole Lodge www.shompole.com
Tassia Lodge www.tassiasafaris.com
Tortilis Camp www.chelipeacock.com

Kenya Tourism Initiative

First Kenya Tourism Initiative (KTI) workshop in Nairobi. Participants from left to right: Duncan Muriuki of KATO, Wangui Maina of Business Daily and Jake Gieves-Cook of KTB.