



Report of the

# SWITCH Africa Green Regional sector meeting on SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

29 – 30 October 2019  
Kigali, Rwanda



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# INTRODUCTION

The SWITCH Africa Green regional meeting on sustainable tourism was held on 29 and 30 October 2019 in Kigali, Rwanda. The meeting was a platform for discussion on the economic viability of enterprises in the sustainable tourism sector that had improved livelihoods, generated income and created jobs while preserving the environment. The meeting facilitated dialogue among sustainable consumption and production (SCP) experts, policy- and decision-makers, financial institutions and owners of micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) on lessons learned and best practices in scaling up and replicating green business in the tourism sector. The participants were representatives from Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa and Uganda, regional economic communities, the European Union, financial institutions and United Nations agencies, as well as other experts and stakeholders in the sustainable tourism industry around Africa.

The meeting opened with statements by Mr. Frank Turyatunga, Deputy Director, Africa Office, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Mr. Faustin Munyazikwiye, Deputy Director General of the Rwanda Environment Management Authority, Mr. Nicola Bellomo, Head of the delegation of the European Union to Rwanda, and Ms. Belise Kariza, Chief Tourism Officer, Rwanda Development Board.

Mr. Turyatunga began by noting that tourism was a major foreign exchange earner in Africa. With the growth and expansion of the tourism industry, consumption of key resources such as energy, water, land and materials was growing commensurately with the generation of solid waste and sewage, loss of biodiversity and emission of greenhouse gases. It was therefore important to integrate sustainable consumption and production patterns into the tourism sector and ensure the development of national and regional policies and frameworks for sustainable tourism.



*Mr. Frank Turyatunga, Deputy Director, UNEP Africa Office, giving his opening remarks.*

*Photo | SWITCH Africa Green*

Mr. Munyazikwiye emphasized the promotion of community-based tourism as a key aspect of sustainability. He explained that through revenue sharing, 5 per cent of all tourism revenue in Rwanda was sent directly to communities.



*From left: Mr. Faustin Munyazikwiye, Rwanda Environment Management Authority, Ms. Belise Kariza, Rwanda Development Board, and Mr. Nicola Bellomo, Head of the delegation of the European Union to Rwanda.*

*Photo | SWITCH Africa Green*

Mr. Bellomo stated that sustainable tourism was a sector that resonated strongly with the European Union, which had supported the certification of African resorts and tour operators through the development of eco-tourism standards, notably in Virunga National Park. SWITCH Africa Green had had a great impact on the uptake of sustainable practices, the improvement in levels of investments by MSMEs, and the creation of green jobs.

Ms. Kariza noted that Rwanda's vision was "to be a leading sustainable, conservation-based tourism destination in the African continent", and that it was appropriate for the country to host the regional meeting in Kigali. The SWITCH Africa Green initiative provided an opportunity to advance sustainable tourism practices in Africa and transform them to achieve economic benefits and improved livelihoods for the African people.



*Mr. Nicola Bellomo, Head of the delegation of the European Union to Rwanda.*

*Photo | SWITCH Africa Green*

## SESSION 2: SETTING THE SCENE

### MODERATOR: MR. PATRICK MWESIGYE, REGIONAL COORDINATOR, RESOURCE EFFICIENCY, UNEP

Ms. Rhoda Wachira, Programme Management Officer, UNEP, presented the SWITCH Africa Green Regional Sector Report on Sustainable Tourism: Focus on Green Business Development. The SWITCH Africa Green programme specifically supported Sustainable Development Goals 8, 12 and 17 but in fact contributed to a wide range of Sustainable Development Goals. The programme focused on four sectors: integrated waste management, tourism, agriculture and manufacturing. In the tourism sector, grant projects had been implemented in three countries: Kenya, Mauritius and Uganda. The project in Kenya focused on promoting community-based tourism activities and sustainable markets, while in Uganda, the objective was to support sustainable tourism and eco-entrepreneurship in lodges, and the project in Mauritius was aimed at supporting small and medium-sized hotels in adopting sustainable consumption and production practices, in particular by improving understanding of environmental issues, developing skills and supporting value chain development.

She reported on a survey developed to capture the sustainable consumption and production interventions implemented through SWITCH Africa Green and measure their impact. The survey had targeted 30 per cent of the programme's 3,000 beneficiary MSMEs. Economically, the survey results revealed that 65 per cent of the beneficiary enterprises reported the emergence of new businesses, including community-based tours, curio shops, tour guiding, organic farming, increased local tourism, development of homestays for tourists, camping facilities and cultural tourism. Sixty-five per cent of MSMEs reported an increase in sales, potentially attributable to improved product quality and improved marketing strategies.

Socially, 76 per cent of surveyed beneficiaries reported that new jobs had been created during the implementation period. The sector was dominated by men, who represented approximately 77 per cent of employees. The proportion of young people employed ranged from 23 per cent in Kenya to 43 per cent in Mauritius and 45 per cent in Uganda.

Analysis of the environmental benefits of the programme, focusing on energy efficiency, water efficiency and waste reduction, also showed positive outcomes. For instance, 65 per cent of the enterprises had implemented energy efficiency interventions and 77 per cent had implemented water efficiency interventions. Overall, the survey results indicated strong uptake of sustainable consumption and production practices by the participating enterprise, with a notably positive economic, social and environmental impact.

During the session, the discussion focused mainly on the challenges, lessons learned and recommendations from the programme, which included the following:

- 1. Developing green financing mechanisms for sustainable tourism products and services:** At the government level, there is a need to finance the protection and management of natural and cultural resources and to invest in relevant infrastructure such as connectivity. There is a need to leverage and support private sector participation in financing and investment in sustainable tourism.
- 2. Capacity-building and knowledge-sharing:** MSMEs require partners on the ground to continuously work with them. Some of the relevant areas for capacity-building and knowledge-sharing include eco-innovations and solutions, standards and certification and community-based tourism.
- 3. Integrated policy approach:** Sustainable tourism is multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder and requires effective policy coordination across different levels of government to enhance national and local development and support community participation.



*Ms. Rhoda Wachira, Programme Management Officer, UNEP, presented the Regional Sector Report on Sustainable Tourism: Focus on Green Business Development.*

*Photo | SWITCH Africa Green*

## SESSION 3: PANEL DISCUSSION: GOOD PRACTICES FROM SWITCH AFRICA GREEN PROJECTS

The session highlighted examples of good practices in green business and sustainable consumption and production from selected enterprises in the region.

### 1. GREENING THE MAURITIAN TOURISM INDUSTRY

#### **Presenter: Mr. Noormamode Malick, Manisa Hotel, Mauritius**

The presentation highlighted interventions by the Manisa Hotel in Mauritius to adopt sustainable consumption and production practices in running the hotel. The interventions included reducing water consumption by installing faucet aerators, using low-electricity-consuming bulbs, reducing garden water consumption by using a rainwater harvesting system, reducing electricity consumption by replacing compact fluorescent light bulbs with light emitting diode (LED) bulbs and installing solar-powered lamps. Mr. Malick highlighted the impacts of the interventions and the opportunities to upscale.



*From left: Session 3 panellists Mr. Noormamode Malick, Ms. Angela Njehia, Ms. Youstra Mounir and Mr. Ali Abdool.*

*Photo | SWITCH Africa Green*

## 2. LET'S GO TRAVEL UNIGLOBE

**Presenter: Ms. Angela Njehia, Leisure Travel Manager, Uniglobe Kenya**

The presentation covered Uniglobe Kenya's efforts to engage in eco-tourism by having an eco-tourism strategy to meet its sustainability targets. One of its products was a tour free of single-use plastics. One hotel also had branded seed balls for specific tree species used during tours, and the itineraries mainly used eco-rated suppliers.

## 3. A SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS MODEL IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

**Presenter: Mr. Ali Abdool, Sustainability Specialist, Sun Resorts, Mauritius**

Mr. Abdool explained that Sun Resorts in Mauritius owned and managed eight resorts on the Indian Ocean, with 3,700 employees and a 1,050-room capacity. The resorts had incorporated sustainable consumption and production patterns into the management of the hotels, which had resulted in improved energy efficiency, with a decrease in energy consumption of 3.34 kW/GN (kilowatt hours per guest night), and improved water efficiency through the use of recycled water. Forty-nine per cent of the waste generated was recycled through an industrial symbiosis venture that had provided substantial savings for the hotel chain. In addition, every supplier conducting business with Sun Resorts had to fill in a supplier assessment questionnaire and sign a supplier code of conduct reflecting the enterprise's quality management system and environmental management system.

## 4. SWITCHMED PROGRAMME

**Presenter: Ms. Yousra Mounir, Amaken Trips, Egypt**

Ms. Mounir presented an example of sustainable tourism from the SwitchMed programme. The initiative was based on a concept of tourist activities with local community involvement. The local community provided homestays and sold their local crafts, among other activities. During travel within local communities, the initiative focused on environmental sustainability interventions such as recycling, upcycling and beach clean-up. Amaken Trips had been able to grow considerably by marketing its eco-tourism products through social media.

# SESSION 4: SUSTAINABLE TOURISM INTERVENTIONS

**MODERATOR: MR. THIBAUT PORTEVIN, POLICY OFFICER, GREEN ECONOMY, EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

The session provided a platform for dialogue on interventions being carried out to support sustainable tourism, including in fragile ecosystems.

## 1. POLICY INTERVENTIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN UGANDA

**Presenter: Ms. Vivian Liyazi, Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities, Uganda**

The presentation demonstrated the policy interventions undertaken by the Government of Uganda with support from SWITCH Africa Green. The policy interventions included reviewing the Tourism Act of 2008 to incorporate sustainability and looking into using hotel and grading classification regulations as a sustainability tool. The purpose and objective of the policy interventions was to encourage and promote sustainable tourism practices that take into account the needs of the environment, local residents, businesses and visitors.

Uganda had made efforts in conservation by protecting the integrity of its parks through increased security using the Uganda Tourism Police Force, strengthening the Uganda Wildlife Authority, enacting stricter laws and regulations to curb trafficking and poaching, engaging in international collaboration, including on the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, and awareness-raising in communities bordering on protected areas. An example of a protected wetland in Uganda was Bigodi Swamp, an eco-tourism base that supported the livelihoods of hundreds of people living in the communities around it. Through eco-tourism, the swamp has engendered job creation, enterprise development and community projects such as water facilities, a health centre and schools.





*Mr. Thibaut Portevin, Policy Officer, Green Economy, European Commission.*

*Photo | SWITCH Africa Green*

## 2. A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM MODEL IN SOUTH AFRICA

### **Presenter: Ms. Wilna Botha, WOWZULU Initiative, , South Africa**

Ms. Botha spoke about applied sustainable tourism measures in marketplaces and advocacy on such measures for improved sustainable consumption and production as a good business practice in tourist destinations. She also highlighted efforts to build capacity in community-based tourism by addressing gaps in sustainability. The WOWZULU initiative, a One Planet network project, had started with rural children and women. WOWZULU was a sustainable community-based tourism model implemented by Africa Ignite across six rural and peri-urban areas of KwaZulu-Natal, mostly in or near the province’s scenically beautiful wilderness areas. The WOWZULU model was designed to create inclusive destinations that link emerging community-owned tourism experiences to established commercial tourism products in existing tourism destinations. The initiative is premised on local partnerships, where tourists visit the communities using locally sourced tour guides and purchase local products through a “fair trade” approach.

Lessons learned from the initiative included the following:

- ▶ Global/Europe-centred sustainable tourism concepts and language need to be aligned with African realities.
- ▶ Aspects of rural culture are constraining successful enterprise development.
- ▶ Continued marketing and sales are crucial.
- ▶ It takes time to make community tourism projects successful and extensive; sustained support is needed.
- ▶ Rural communities need strategies to cope with the impact of climate change.
- ▶ A development approach can create dependency that thwarts entrepreneurship.

The South Africa Department of Tourism had launched WOWZULU as a replicable model and had done feasibility studies on replicating it in more South African provinces.



*From left: Mr. Vivian Liyazi, Ms. Wilna Botha, Mr. Naut Kusters and Mr. Daren Moodely.*

*Photo | SWITCH Africa Green*

### 3. CERTIFICATION FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN KENYA

#### **Presenter: Mr. Naut Kusters, European Centre for Ecological and Agricultural Tourism**

The presentation covered the interventions of phase II of SWITCH Africa Green, showcasing the sustainability programme for tour operators in Kenya and how it had assisted in upscaling tour operator standards. It also covered the approaches to building tour operator capacity in sustainable consumption and production and eco-tourism. Under the SWITCH Africa Green phase II project, 120 tour operators have been trained in sustainability and 75 have been audited and certified as complying with the Travelife Certified standard. The project included a five-day hotel auditor training course to which tourism vocational schools were invited, and aimed to train suppliers to the tour operators. The project beneficiaries would have common sustainability standards for suppliers and a common supplier database linked to the tour operators. Furthermore, the project had created linkages with European markets through integration, which had resulted in partnerships with more than 30 European outbound tour operators. The project was using a “sustainable” destination branding and marketing strategy to enhance the Kenyan tourist market. A social media campaign targeted at consumers had also been identified as an effective marketing strategy.

### 4. GREENING THE VALUE CHAIN OF TOUR OPERATORS IN MAURITIUS

#### **Presenter: Mr. Daren Moodely, Tourism Authority, Mauritius**

The aim of the project, known as SUS-ISLAND, was to make Mauritius and Rodrigues Island a green destination to visit and a sustainable island to live on, where tour operators, suppliers and stakeholders are mobilized and empowered to develop, promote and deliver sustainable tourism products for the mainstream market. Sustainability became the innovation ingredient for tourism products. The project proponents realized that mainstream tourists were attracted by and enjoyed tourism products that had a positive economic, social, environmental and cultural impact on Mauritius. The project aimed to demonstrate and scale up a self-sustaining mechanism for improving sustainability impacts along the tourism value chain and improving awareness and marketing of sustainable tourism products.

SUS-ISLAND promotes sustainable tourism innovation along the value chain of tour operators, with the target groups being inbound tour operators and their current and potential suppliers, particularly hotels, pleasure craft operators, tour guides, taxi drivers and local handicraft makers. Other target groups include tourists and enablers (Government, financial institutions, industry associations and the Mauritian population). The SUS-ISLAND vision is to bring sustainable tourism

to the mass market, creating value for the company and customers by integrating sustainability as an innovation ingredient. That will be achieved by applying the Mauritius Pro-Handprint Innovation (MauPHI) Framework, a tool to guide businesses in targeting, managing, measuring and communicating the positive effects of tourism along the value chain. A thousand operators in Rodrigues have been trained in the basics of tourism, including sustainable tourism, under the project. The participants have conducted site visits to small and medium-sized hotels on Rodrigues Island to gain insight into handprint innovations.

#### Main recommendations from the session

- ▶ Provide enabling policies and legislation for sustainable tourism.
- ▶ Improve access to finance, which is a challenge for sustainable tourism investment projects.
- ▶ Incentivize the transition to low-carbon, climate-resilient investments and encourage more responsible business practices in tourism.
- ▶ Promote partnerships and networking, which are needed for sustainable tourism projects to be successful and extensive.
- ▶ Provide for certification of tour operators and hotels through their supply chain as a channel for sustainability in the tourism sector.
- ▶ Provide capacity-building, such as training and site visits, to support enterprises in integrating sustainability and to support implementation.
- ▶ Enhance access to markets through innovative marketing strategies that attract tourists.
- ▶ Use community-based tourism in Africa as an avenue to ensure revenue-sharing with local communities through development projects such as the WOWZULU initiative, which focus on rural women and young people, using their traditional skills to create art and crafts for tourism and provide a source of revenue.
- ▶ Develop indicators for sustainable tourism and conduct a survey to document the impact of enterprises that have incorporated sustainable tourism.
- ▶ Adhere to gender equality in eco-tourism initiatives.

## SESSION 5: REVIEW OF THE REGIONAL SECTOR REPORT ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM: FOCUS ON GREEN BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

**MODERATOR: MR. PATRICK MWESIGYE, REGIONAL COORDINATOR, RESOURCE EFFICIENCY, UNEP**

A closed-door session was held for the peer review of the SWITCH Africa Green Regional Sector Report on Sustainable Tourism: Focus on Green Business Development. The session panellists were:

- ▶ Reviewer 1: **Mr. Jaime Mayaki**, Deputy Director, Regional Department for Africa, World Tourism Organization
- ▶ Reviewer 2: **Ms. Lilly Ajarova**, Chief Executive Officer, Uganda Tourism Board
- ▶ Reviewer 3: **Mr. Steven Niyonzima**, Coordinator, Resource Efficient and Cleaner Production Centre Rwanda

The session was also attended by the representative of the European Union and the SWITCH Africa Green national focal points.

It was noted that the report documented very good results for the programme; such significant results were surprising, and more details could have been provided in the case studies in the report. Comments included suggestions to restructure the report to reduce its length, include the steps taken to achieve the results, and provide more details in the methodology section. After a discussion with the participants, including the national focal points and representatives of tourism institutions in the participating countries, the European Union and the SWITCH Africa Green secretariat, it was agreed that the report would be amended to reflect the comments made.

# DAY 2

## SESSION 6: PARALLEL WORKING GROUPS AND OUTCOME RECOMMENDATIONS: CREATING AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN AFRICA

On the second day of the meeting, the participants were divided into four parallel working groups to discuss the creation of an enabling environment for sustainable tourism in Africa. The groups discussed policies to promote sustainable tourism; financing for enterprises in the tourism sector; sustainable tourism markets; and technical assistance models for enterprises in sustainable tourism.

### GROUP 1: POLICIES TO PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

#### Key recommendations

- ▶ Create a networking facility or mechanism for the replication of best practices in participating countries and other countries in Africa.
- ▶ Foster networking to promote development and eco-tourism.
- ▶ Include the International Chamber of Commerce in networking.
- ▶ Replicate various methods of policy intervention, as has been done in Mauritius and South Africa. A strong regulatory framework is key.

#### For the African Union:

- ▶ Set up a dialogue platform for tourism matters, bringing in all actors along the value chain, including the Government and researchers. Eco-tourism diplomacy should also be given consideration.
- ▶ Develop an eco-tourism policy and its operationalization mechanism.

#### Policy harmonization and institutional structure:

- ▶ Bring in sectors with different competencies along the value chain to do their part in complementing and supporting the tourism sector, as tourism was not a stand-alone sector.
- ▶ Create an institutional structure to ensure well-defined roles and responsibilities for the various sectors involved in the tourism sector.
- ▶ Foster a thriving private sector environment; explore how the informal sector can be formalized to help them thrive and self-regulate.
- ▶ Adopt greening certification and grading criteria standards for tourism entities. As an example, the grading criteria for the East African Community need to be revised with respect to greenness, sustainability and inclusivity aspects.

#### Continental strategy

- ▶ Harmonize national and continent-level strategies that can also feed into the regulatory framework.
- ▶ Develop an African Union tourism strategy with short-, medium- and long-term plans.
- ▶ Develop conflict resolution strategies, as impact is strong in the tourism sector.
- ▶ Develop and support the implementation of an ecosystem payment service strategy.
- ▶ Develop and implement a communications strategy.
- ▶ Initiate strategies to mitigate negative travel advisories at the country and continental levels.
- ▶ Ensure compliance with the World Trade Organization global code of conduct for tourism.

**Eco-tourism in education:**

- ▶ Entrench eco-tourism and the green concept from an early stage by mainstreaming it into the education system.

**GROUP 2: FINANCING FOR ENTERPRISES IN THE TOURISM SECTOR****Key recommendations**

1. Address challenges and opportunities in access to finance for MSMEs in the tourism sector, including:
  - ▶ Lack of awareness of funding opportunities;
  - ▶ Lack of financial literacy (both MSMEs and banks);
  - ▶ The “paper tiger” (excessive administration and paperwork);
  - ▶ High interest rates;
  - ▶ Lack of available local experts and consultants;
  - ▶ Lack of (easy) access to funding options and models;
  - ▶ Lack of collateral/assets to guarantee loans;
  - ▶ Lack of understanding of the cost of switching to green technology;
  - ▶ Lack of intermediary/aggregator organizations to address the “missing middle”;
  - ▶ Lack of accurate data.



*Group 2 participants discussing financing for enterprises in the tourism sector.*

2. The following financial tools and services should be adopted in the region to promote the use of sustainable tourism practices by MSMEs:
  - ▶ Support for energy (water) service companies in implementing sustainable consumption and production practices;
  - ▶ Tourism banks (with better literacy of the tourism sector);
  - ▶ Clustered funding models or joint ventures (collective collateral);
  - ▶ Tourism development fund (customer surcharge);
  - ▶ Earmarked government subsidy schemes;
  - ▶ Flexible matchmaking grants;

- ▶ Climate finance (green energy funds);
- ▶ Tax incentives for innovative inventions in the sector;
- ▶ Direct government funding/pilot programmes;
- ▶ Public-private partnerships;
- ▶ Insurance/guarantees against emergent threats;
- ▶ Revenue-sharing mechanisms at the community level.

## GROUP 3: SUSTAINABLE TOURISM MARKETS

### Key recommendations

#### 1. To create value and markets for communities:

- ▶ Co-create markets with communities and stakeholders to ensure community ownership.
- ▶ Provide business potential assessments: feasibility studies, skills assessments (community side).
- ▶ Assess existing and potential business opportunities (market side).
- ▶ Promote storytelling to create value for the products.
- ▶ Create partnerships and networking platforms for strong branding and sustainable development.
- ▶ Undertake capacity-building to enable communities to improve product quality.
- ▶ Build on indigenous or traditional knowledge to create tourism products.
- ▶ Support the development of marketplaces, for example by creating open spaces for market day and leveraging the skill sets of stakeholders who have the capacity to sell.



*Members of group 3, on sustainable tourism markets, listening to a presentation.*

*Photo | SWITCH Africa Green*

#### 2. To develop and implement sustainable marketing strategies:

- ▶ Build enterprise capacity to define the unique selling point and sustainability aspects of their products.

- ▶ Various stakeholders should help enterprises to understand the main sustainable markets and submarkets; identify potential diversification of markets.
  - ▶ Strategies should reflect domestic and regional market opportunities and monitoring of sustainable/green market trends, with prices adapted for the local population.
  - ▶ Entrepreneurs should develop strategies with tourism seasonality in mind and identify partners aligned with their core business.
  - ▶ MSMEs should prepare joint marketing strategies with other MSMEs to develop successful marketing strategies.
  - ▶ Proposed strategies should mainstream gender and age into business commitments.
  - ▶ Enterprises should monitor product impact on sustainability and disseminate the data generated, which could then be analysed to align with sustainability goals.
  - ▶ Digital marketing and social media are essential marketing tools for MSMEs, and partnerships should be developed to exploit them.
3. To understand and engage their respective consumers, tourism businesses should:
- ▶ Focus on experiential travel, creating authentic mementos and souvenirs linking to the social and environmental impacts.
  - ▶ Associate travellers with e-marketing using hashtags and other content-generation techniques.
  - ▶ Use behavioural and cultural approaches to understand consumers.
  - ▶ Develop educational programmes for children and university students on sustainable tourism.
  - ▶ Encourage feedback from consumers.
4. For certification and branding, countries should:
- ▶ Identify relevant, suitable certification schemes, recognizing the need for and importance of certification in the sector.
  - ▶ Build the capacity of MSMEs to understand and comply with certification schemes.
  - ▶ Look into community-based certification opportunities, which are less expensive.
  - ▶ Mainstream sustainability into the main destination or regional branding and connect MSMEs to national/regional branding.

## GROUP 4: TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE MODELS FOR ENTERPRISES IN SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

1. Technical assistance approaches
- ▶ Capacity development to empower communities to take advantage of their environment to produce eco-tourism products that can be marketed to attract visitors and customers;
  - ▶ Technical assistance using multi-level skills empowerment;
  - ▶ Increased training for MSMEs on the use of local resources such as community tour operators and graduates for mentorship;
  - ▶ Enhanced development of toolkits and workbooks, which are essential for knowledge management, including empowering trainers to train other trainers;
  - ▶ Targeting existing MSMEs, a hallmark of successful project, which makes it easier for them to carry out their work;
  - ▶ Use of customer-focused innovations and packaging in projects on the ground.
2. Lessons learned
- ▶ Innovative products need to be properly registered to avoid duplication of intellectual property.

- ▶ Sustainability is a journey, it is not instantaneous. Emphasis should be placed on the need for products that are fit for market first before pursuing sustainability to ensure longevity.
- ▶ Communities should define the level of their sustainability indicators themselves, not just have them imposed.
- ▶ Uptake by local and county governments is key, as government have a major role to play.
- ▶ Showcasing success stories and best practices among peers offers an opportunity for replication and increased revenues.
- ▶ There is a need to integrate new projects and initiatives into existing systems.
- ▶ Enterprises should ensure that they have mature products before partnering with tour operators; it helps to work with more mature, community-based organizations.



*Group 4 members discussing technical assistance models for enterprises in sustainable tourism.*

*Photo | SWITCH Africa Green*

### 3. Enablers for community-based tourism

- ▶ Provide tax incentives for community-based tourism enterprises and their products and eliminate double taxation by regulatory bodies.
- ▶ Remove institutional incoherence and lack of coordination to enable proper licensing and registration.
- ▶ Pursue a community-based tourism policy integrated into the national tourism development policy and national blueprint.
- ▶ Protect intellectual property for the products, trademarks and patents of local communities.
- ▶ Provide tax exemptions for entities registered as a society, association or welfare organization.
- ▶ Diversify products and capacity-building to avoid duplication of intellectual property within a given country.
- ▶ Form cooperatives and create a central marketplace for community-based tourism products.
- ▶ Create enabling financing and infrastructure systems for community-based tourism enterprises.



## SESSION 7: POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM WITH AN EMPHASIS ON THE SUBREGIONS

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**MODERATOR: MR. ROBERT WABUNOHA, REGIONAL COORDINATOR, ENVIRONMENT GOVERNANCE, UNEP**

The last session of the meeting was a panel discussion on the role of regional economic communities and partners in implementing the recommendations to strengthen regional and national mechanisms for the uptake of sustainable consumption and production practices in the tourism sector.

In summarizing the recommendations, it was noted that there were many good existing models that should be scaled up and replicated. The main areas of focus included capacity-building for MSMEs in the sector to promote the uptake of sustainable consumption and production practices and patterns. There were many good practices that could be replicated regionally, but that would require support in the form of government policies, including tax incentives; awareness-raising, both nationally and regionally; and development of certification and standards for sustainable tourism in the region.

The sector is vulnerable to natural disasters and social and political challenges, and consequently insurance schemes and favourable funding opportunities that took into account the challenges in the sector would be beneficial, such as seasonal funding tools and guarantee funds. Government support in terms of providing the relevant infrastructure (water, energy, waste disposal facilities, roads, etc.) was also key for the sector.

Certification mechanisms and standards to promote sustainability in the sector were a challenge, and brainstorming on how to establish them regionally and subregionally would be an important area for follow-up.

The region would benefit from a network of like-minded organizations and individuals who could regularly share knowledge on best practices. It was recommended that a regional networking forum on sustainable tourism be established.

Mr. Mustapha Ouabbas, African Union Commission, commended the inputs and information provided during the meeting. It was good to see that so much has been done in the field already, and the lessons learned would significantly inform the strategy. He recommended that members provide their inputs to the Africa Union's sustainable tourism strategy to ensure that the issues were captured at the regional level.



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