Integrating Natural Capital into Sustainable Development Decision-Making in Uganda

A project funded by the UK Government

Biodiversity and Tourism Accounts

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Biodiversity and Tourism

• Tourism sector contributes 7.3% of GDP and employing 6% of labour force in Uganda (before Covid-19)

• Uganda Green Growth Development Strategy (UGGDS) targets the tourism and wildlife sector:
  • Increase the value of foreign tourism.
  • Create jobs and boost incomes
  • Protect natural capital

• Environmental-economic accounts are needed to provide key data and statistics for supporting green growth policy actions (UGGDS)

Lions in Kidepo Valley National Park
(Photo: Rod Waddington via Flickr, CC BY-SA 2.0)
Key policy questions for the accounts (from stakeholder engagement)

• What are the trends in biodiversity that support tourism activities?
• What is the value of tourism expenditure (tourism earnings)?
• How can we make better use of wildlife resources to increase international tourism and foreign exchange earnings?
• How can we better manage biodiversity to support job creation and poverty alleviation (revenue sharing with communities) via the tourism industry?
• Can we make the case for further investment to unlock more opportunities for sustainable wildlife-based tourism?
Key Protected Areas

- These are the key Protected Areas that were identified for wildlife watching Tourism.
- 12 Protected Areas are considered in the accounts.
- An integrated set of accounts on natural ecosystem extent, species and tourism activity have been compiled for each.
Trends in biodiversity that support tourism activities from the accounts

- Majority of the 12 key protected areas remain natural ecosystems (generally around 98%, although Mount Elgon is 92.5%).
- Loss of Tropical High Forest (Well-Stocked) is noted for Mount Elgon and the Rwenzori Mountains National Parks
- Bwindi Impenetrable and Mgahinga Gorilla National Parks maintain important populations of gorillas.
- Murchison Falls, Queen Elizabeth and Kidepo Valley National Parks maintain important populations of lions
- Murchison Falls, Queen Elizabeth, Kibale and Kidepo Valley National Parks maintain important populations of elephants and buffalo
- Lake Mburo National Parks maintain important populations of buffalo
Trends in wildlife watching tourism

Number of visitors to 12 Key Protected Areas

Increase of 54% between 2011 and 2019
Trend in Expenditure Associated with Protected Area Visits (2012 to 2019)

2012 (USD 24.8 Million)

2019 (USD 50.8 Million)

Driven by increases in Non Resident Foreign Visitors
Integrating Poverty Data

• Poverty maps can be broadly aligned to the information from the biodiversity and tourism accounts.
• Support an integrated analysis on where tourism development may deliver policy alleviation.
• Darker red districts indicate higher poverty rates
• Developing tourism in Kidepo Valley National Park could be a priority.
Policy Insights

• Investment in innovative tourism packages, access and tourist facilities should be promoted. Not only in the most popular parks but in less-visited destinations too (e.g., Kidepo National Park).

• Local communities must be involved in collaborations to start new businesses and create jobs in the tourism sector, to alleviate poverty.

• A strategy for the tourism sector to drive post COVID-19 economic recovery is urgently required. This should include investment in the wildlife watching tourism to drive growth in international tourism and associated export earning.

• Ecosystems and iconic species need to be protected and enhanced to ensure the wildlife watching tourism sub sector can support post COVID-19 economic recovery and UGGDS targets.
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Thank you for listening!