ECOTOURISM KENYA
ARUSHA ROUND TABLE PRESENTATION 2010

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www.ecotourismkenya.org

WHAT ARE THE PRINCIPLES OF ECOTOURISM?

1. Conscientious, *low-impact* visitor behavior
2. Sensitivity towards, and appreciation of, local cultures and biodiversity
3. Support for local conservation efforts
4. Sustainable benefits to local communities
5. Local participation in decision-making
6. Educational components for both the traveler and local communities

WHAT WE ARE ABOUT: Ecotourism Kenya in a nutshell

EK Vision: To be a leader in the knowledge and practice of ecotourism

Mission: To effectively link communities, tourism and conservation for sustainable tourism development in Kenya

Goal: To promote tourism practices that will conserve Kenya's natural environment and improve livelihoods of associated communities.

Registered under the Societies Act as a Civil Society, EK is a **membership** organization that promotes sustainable tourism

OUR PROGRAMMES: 4 focal areas

- Community Outreach
- Standards and Best Practice
- Awareness Creation and Information Sharing
- Research and Consultancy

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ECOTOURISM KENYA …….SINCE 1996

WHAT DRIVES US?.....PASSION WITH PURPOSE

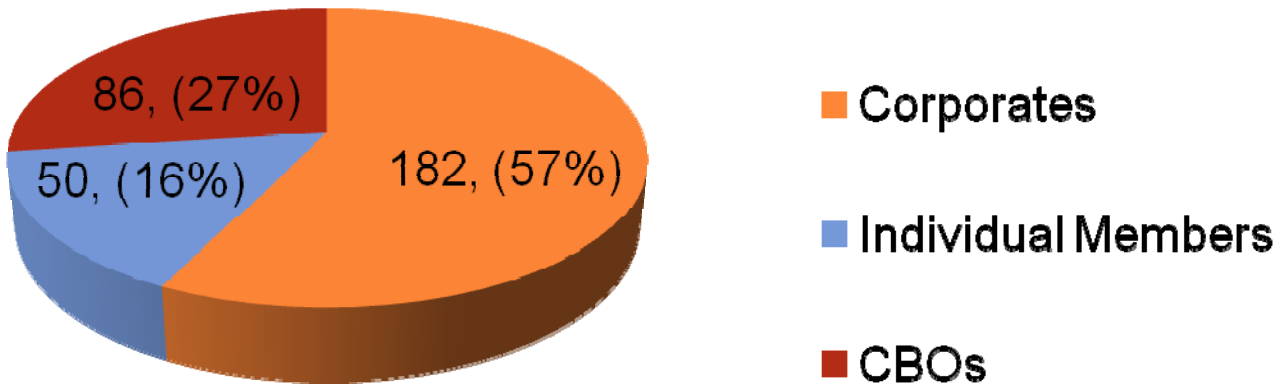
All our programmes at EK are motivated by principles that drive us. We promote sustainable utilisation of resources by tourism practitioners and place emphasis on:

Respect for the environment

- Respect for local people and cultures
- Equitable sharing of responsibilities and benefits
- Sustainable tourism development

CURRENT MEMBERSHIP

Category of member	Total Number
Corporate	182
Individuals	50
CBOs	86
Total Members	318



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CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP DISTRIBUTION

Type of Group	Number of members in group
Airlines	2
Camps/Lodges	58
Conservation Organizations	9
Government Agencies	2
Hotels/Hotel Groups	23
Sustainable Tech. Companies	6
Tour Operators	73
Training Institutions	5
Others	4
Total	182

VOLUNTARY CERTIFICATION - raising standards

Linking communities, tourism and conservation

- Bronze: Entry level
- Silver: Demonstrate innovation
- Gold: Best Practice – commitment over time

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ECO-RATING SCHEME

ECORATING SCHEME

ABOUT EK'S ECORATING SCHEME

DRIVERS

•Increased awareness among tourists….demand growing. Travellers want to feel good about the money they are spending travelling / on holiday
•Responsible travellers demanding responsible destinations

1997 Ecotourism at a Crossroads
1998 National Tourism Conference
Oct 1999 KTF Ecorating Workshop

DEVELOPING THE SCHEME

•Ecotourism Kenya given the responsibility of managing the scheme at KTF workshop Oct '99
•Extensive Stakeholder Consultations held

•Technical committee comprising representatives from large hotels to small tented camps, the scientific/conservation/NGO community, landowners, community tourism initiatives, training institutions, tour operators
• Scheme Launched in 2002

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ECORATING INFO.....

•Ecorated facilities currently44

•How many ecorated in 2009 – 14 properties of which 8 were new applicants

• A major challenge is getting renewals

•Certification provides a mechanism through which enterprises can achieve **voluntary standards** of performance that meet or exceeds baseline standards or legislation. Some certification systems are applicable to a number of different industries (e.g. ISO14001) while others are sector specific (e.g. the Forestry Stewardship Council).

•A number of certification systems have been developed specifically for the tourism industry since the early 1990s.

REGIONAL COLLABORATION

- Discussions mainly demand driven by TZ, Uganda and Rwanda facilities interested in being Ecorated.
- Ecotourism Societies being set up / strengthened in the EA region
- EAC creating opportunities for cross border collaboration and inroads into positioning the region as a single tourism destination
- Absence of a similar 'home grown' scheme in the region
- Perceived benefits of the scheme's attractiveness to clients
- Increased interest and queries on 'Green Credentials' from source markets.
- Accessibility of the scheme (achievable)
- Potential for geographic expansion of the Scheme

POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF REGIONAL COLLABORATION

- Shared resources can be managed more effectively
- Potential to open new tourism circuits
- Addresses cross border tourism issues and allows for joint advocacy (avoiding exploitation)
- Opportunity to learn from existing scheme / organization and build on it without losing autonomy
- Benefits to the improvement of in-country tourism standards
- Development of a strong regional destination marketing tool

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