



# Ecotourism certification in Kenya. A qualitative overview of the Eco-rating scheme by Ecotourism Kenya

Silvia DIAZZI



EIMAS  
EUROPEAN INTERDISCIPLINARY  
MASTER AFRICAN STUDIES  
Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree

## Context and Objectives

### Background

- **Kenya's** tourism heavily relies on **nature-based attractions**.
- **Ecotourism** tackles mass tourism & greenwashing.

### Focus

- The **Eco-rating Scheme** by **Ecotourism Kenya** certifies facilities based on sustainability standards.

### Research Question

**Does the Eco-rating scheme create business opportunities while promoting sustainable tourism in Kenya?**

### Objectives

- Identify attraction **factors**.
- Explore **benefits** & performance.
- Check the effect on **clients**.
- Examine **challenges**.
- Assess links with **tour operators**.
- Evaluate long-term **sustainability**.

## Methods and Data Collection

### Qualitative approach

#### Data Sources

- **11 interviews** → key tourism stakeholders (academia, private sector, public institutions, NGOs).
- **6 surveys** → Travelife-certified tour operators.

#### Analysis

- Inductive & deductive coding to identify themes.

#### Limitations

- Very low survey response from eco-rated facilities.
- Reliance on perceptions rather than numerical data.

## Results and Findings

### Attraction factors

- Reach eco-conscious tourists.
- Gain a competitive edge.

### Benefits

- Improve marketing visibility.
- Strengthen community ties.

### Challenges

- High initial costs.
- Low awareness of the scheme.

### Tour operators

- Mixed use of eco-rated facilities.
- Clients are willing to pay more.

## Conclusion

### For Businesses

- Builds stronger reputation
- Ensures long-term competitiveness

### For Communities

- Creates local jobs
- Supports conservation projects

### For Kenya

- Opportunity to position the country as a leading sustainable tourism destination with global recognition.



Meeting with Judy Kepher-Gona (Sustainable Travel Tourism Agenda).



Meeting with Dr. Florence Njau and Dr. Rachel Kirima (Kenya Utalii College)



Meeting with Kenya's Tourism Regulatory Authority team.



Meeting with Dr. Esther Munyiri (Kenyatta University), Edith Alusa-Bosire and Simeon Kisaka (Ecotourism Kenya).

### CONTACTS

[silvia.diazzi@icloud.com](mailto:silvia.diazzi@icloud.com)

