



## **SUSTAINABILITY IN TOURISM**

*Making tourism count to communities, ecosystems and businesses*

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### **Community based tourism initiatives and sustainable tourism development: a case of Mwaluganje Elephant sanctuary in Kwale County, Kenya.**

Sustainable tourism refers to tourism development that meets the needs of present visitors and hosts while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. It emphasizes the balance between environmental, social, and economic aspects of tourism. The development of Community Based Tourism Initiatives (CBTIs) in the 1990s was fundamentally based on their potential to enhance local community support for the conservation agenda. However, for the model to be sustainable, they must provide better returns environmentally, socially and economically to the community. The purpose of this conference paper is to illustrate whether Mwaluganje Elephant Sanctuary (MES) was sustainably developed, as a business entity and as a community initiative. The paper findings show that that the formation of MES led to a reduction in the quality and quantity of natural resource available to the landowners and that the current resources are unsustainable. Both plant and animal diversity/populations have been noted to have reduced in MES due to illegal logging, invasive species, poaching and browsing by elephants. Landowners are unsatisfied with the benefits derived from the MES, due to low income generation and economic linkages. The paper recommends that landowners be educated on alternative livelihoods, and tourism product improvement activities in MES be supported by the government and community be involved in their implementation.