



**SUSTAINABILITY IN TOURISM**  
*Making tourism count to communities, ecosystems and businesses*

**James Mutimu Ndung'u**  
University of Nairobi, Kenya

**Community and Ecotourism Entrepreneurship in Kenya: Sustaining Tourism through Valuation of Ecosystem Services**

Tourism is a major driver for economic growth for developing countries. In Kenya Tourism contributes for about 12 per cent to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The main tourist attractions in Kenya are nature based ranging from the unique biodiversity and wildlife coupled with local traditional cultures. Some of the lands where these occur are owned by local communities whose livelihoods also depend. There have been conflicts over management of nature based Ecotourism products and proceeds between communities and other stakeholders in the past. This has resulted into loss of biodiversity and other tourist attractions. This may be addressed by determination of tourism values through valuation of ecosystem services to inform tourism pricing and negotiations for Ecotourism concession agreements. At the ecosystem level, other communities may benefit from concession fees even though not be directly involved in hosting the tourism attraction but who indirectly may devalue the attractions. This is achieved through Payment of Ecosystem Services (PES) and Corporate Social Responsibility programs. Valuation and Payment of Ecosystem services not only brings equity amongst the actors in the tourism value chain but also maximises the output from the land potential and reduces the social and visitor footprints. They form a basis for differential Ecotourism pricing resulting to product segmentation in the tourism market. This will result into a triple bottom line where the cumulative social, ecological and economic costs of tourism are paid for in a given unit visit thus sustaining tourism nature based tourist destinations.