



Formulation of an environmental policy

It is without a doubt that the tourism business is highly dependent on the environment. The natural environment acts both as a source of raw materials and resources and a sink for wastes generated from various human activities. Every year the tourism business consumes a large portion of resources such as water, building materials and benefits from aesthetic value of pristine environments. Consequently these businesses also release various categories of waste for instance emissions from motor vehicles, chemicals from cleaning, plastic, paper, glass, metals as well as organic waste. To preserve this delicate balance of taking from nature and churning wastes back to the environment necessitates the need for an environmental policy.

An environmental policy is a statement about an organisation's environmental position and values. This policy should aim at ensuring the sustainable management of the environment and natural resources, such as unique terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, for national economic growth and improved people's livelihood and well-being. As people in the world over are becoming increasingly aware of environmental issues, an environmental policy can also benefit a tourist facility by creating market friction in its favour. A publicly advertised policy shows stakeholders that a facility has considered its environmental performance and has adopted best practice or is working towards improving its environmental performance.

The Ecotourism Kenya Certification Scheme has a set standard on environmental policy that emphasizes on;

- Clear written sustainability/environmental policy
- Show responsive and conclusive address to responsible resource use, environmental conservation, cultural issues, socio-economic investment, health & safety and quality issues
- Evidence of proper communication, translation/implementation of policies into action
- Evidence of an Environmental Management System appropriate to nature, scale and scope of the business, and current Environmental Management Plan with clarity and specificity of plan (goals, targets, etc.) and execution (allocation of responsibility, clear timeframes etc.)

The guidelines in formulation of an environmental policy are borrowed from constitutional and legal requirements of rights and freedoms as well as environmental protection. They include;

- Every person in Kenya has a right to a clean and healthy environment and a duty to safeguard and enhance the environment.
- The right to development should be exercised taking into consideration the economic, social and environmental needs.



Illustration

NOTE:

- *The architectural design blend with the natural environment*
 - *The structure is lifted off the ground to prevent interference with natural vegetation*
 - *There is no hindrance of animal movement*
- An integrated ecosystem approach to conserving environmental resource should be adopted and enhanced to ensure that all ecosystems are managed in an integrated manner while also providing a range of benefits to people. This ideally means focusing all factors of the environment plants, animals, non-living components and human beings as a whole system and how they affect each other instead of focusing on only one area.

- Environmental resources should be utilized in a manner that does not compromise the quality and value of the resource, or decrease the carrying capacity of supporting ecosystems. In essence there should be no pollution of resources such as water, land or air.
- The facility should be based on long term views where present generations make choices that benefit them without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This involves wise use or careful consumption of resources especially those that are not easily renewable such as trees, fossil fuels.
- The facility should be through decentralization and devolution of responsibilities to the lowest level possible. Every employee should be included in implementing environmental targets.



SAMPLE ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

<Facility> aims at achieving continual environmental improvement through implementing a management system with objectives and targets

Under this policy environmental consideration will play a key role in support of our plan to promote protection and conservation of natural resources while providing our customers with the highest quality products and services.

<Facility>'s objectives under this policy are the following:

- Ensure there is environmental consideration in all business operations
- Demonstrate commitment to our, community and leadership in our industry in the protection of the natural environment

To achieve these objectives <Facility> has committed to:

- Compliance with all applicable environmental and health & safety laws, regulations and codes of conduct and apply responsible standards where regulations do not exist
- Manage business operations with the aim of preventing incidents and controlling emissions and waste with utmost consideration for the environment
- Improve employee and visitor awareness and concern of the environment through training and communication of this policy
- Respect the culture and customs of the local people and ensure that guests are briefed on socially acceptable and unacceptable behavior
- Promote social responsibility to the community through sustainable use of resources which directly benefits the local people
- Strive towards continuous improvement of operations by stimulating innovations and environmentally friendly alternatives and technologies

<Facility> will ensure compliance with this policy promoting utmost concern for the environment in all its operations.

This policy shall apply to all of <Facility>'s chains, business units, employees, and contractors in service to our business.

Signature

Name

Position

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