

**ASSESSING THE ROLE OF ECO-RATING CERTIFICATION SCHEME IN
PROMOTING RESPONSIBLE TOURISM**

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DECLARATION

I hereby, declare that this thesis is my original research work and has not been presented to any other university or institution for the award of degree.

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my parents, Judy Karuma and Kennedy Karuma, for their love, care and support towards my upbringing and education. May the Almighty Father bless them abundantly, Amen.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

It is not possible to prepare a thesis without the assistance and encouragement of other people. This one is certainly no exception. On the very outset of this thesis, I would like to acknowledge the Almighty and extend my sincere and heartfelt obligation towards all the personages who have helped me in this endeavour. Without their active guidance, help, cooperation and encouragement, I would not have made headway in the study. I am ineffably indebted to my research supervisors Dr. Peter Njuru and Dr. Irene Amoke, for their patient guidance, enthusiastic encouragement and useful critiques of this research work. I would like to express my very great appreciation to my colleague Ms. Joyce Kiruri for her valuable and constructive suggestions during the planning and development of this research work. Special thanks to Ms. Aclyne Njiraini for her advice, assistance in data collection and in keeping progress on my schedule. I wish also to extend my sincere gratitude to Ecotourism Kenya for giving a platform to conduct this research. I am also particularly grateful to the following organizations for enabling and facilitating my site visits to their facilities to collect study data: Kicheche Mara Camp, Basecamp Masai Mara and Tipilikwani Mara Camp. I wish to acknowledge with a deep sense of reverence, my gratitude towards my parents and members of my family, who have always supported me morally as well as financially. Last but not least my gratitude goes to all friends who directly or indirectly helped me to complete this thesis. Any omission in this brief acknowledgement does not mean lack of gratitude. May God, bless you abundantly.

ABSTRACT

Mass tourism as the dominant form of tourism practice has for decades caused environmental, socio-economic and cultural impacts to tourist destinations. Responsible tourism which is underpinned by sound environmental, social and economic principles, offers a way to mitigate the impacts of conventional tourism. Certification as a tool helps set standards, put benchmarks to be met by tourism actors and has been one of the strategies used to reduce these impacts. Certification is believed to have the potential to decrease adverse environmental and social impacts of tourism, by making the tourism industry assume its responsibilities. There has however, been scepticism concerning tangible benefits that certification provides in developing responsible tourism. This study aimed to assess the role of Ecotourism Kenya's Eco-rating Certification Scheme in promoting responsible tourism. The study assessed the growth of the Eco-rating Certification Scheme between 2003 and 2013 by analysing the number of certified facilities on the three levels of certification in order to understand the overall up take. It further investigated the environmental benefits of the Certification Scheme by comparing Kicheche Mara Camp (a Gold level certified facility) and Tipilikwani Mara Camp (a non-certified facility) based on similar environmental indicators and scoring criteria used in the Eco-rating certification. The challenges facing the Certification growth were investigated through primary data collection from interview with EK key informants and clients interested in the certification but yet to apply for assessment. Qualitative and quantitative data methods and statistical techniques such as T-test were utilized in the analysis and presentation of data. The growth trend of the Certification indicated a logarithmic type of progression that demonstrated an encouraging start which was later coupled by various development constraints. Growth is however, seen in the later years where the annual certified facilities increased to the highest number (102) in 2013. Respondents in the study identified lack of awareness on the EK Eco-rating Certification, cost of certification, long and tedious application process as the main challenges limiting its growth. Nonetheless, statistically the mean variances were similar which implied that the challenges exert the same pressure on Eco-rating Certification Scheme. Marketing and promotional strategies to create awareness, reviewing the certification costs, and revising the application procedure were identified as solutions to enhance the growth of Eco-rating certification. It is however, evident from the comparison between Kicheche Mara and Tipilikwani Mara Camps which scored 85.6% (173 points out of 202) and 38.6% (78 points out of 202) respectively on environmental indicators that the Eco-rating Certification can play a significant role in enhancing environmental management and promoting responsible tourism in the country. Certification should however, not be regarded as the ultimate goal as it rather constitutes a mechanism which can only work properly when combined with sound governmental policies in terms of planning and monitoring.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

EK	Ecotourism Kenya
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EMP	Environmental Management Plan
EMS	Environmental Management System
GSTC	Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria
KEBS	Kenya Bureau of Standards
KMC	Kicheche Mara Camp
KTF	Kenya Tourism Federation
KWT	Kenya Wildlife Trust
NEMA	National Environment Management Authority
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Act
SEKU	South Eastern Kenya University
TIES	The International Ecotourism Society
TMC	Tipilikwani Mara Camp
TRA	Tourism Regulatory Authority
WTO	World Trade Organization

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Accreditation: formal recognition given by an authoritative body that a certification body is competent to carry out tasks within its scope of work (e.g. an accredited trainer, an accredited label)(Janisch, 2007).

Black water: wastewater from the toilets containing faecal matter and urine (Ecotourism Kenya, 2008).

Certification: a voluntary procedure that evaluates, audits and gives written assurance that a facility, product, process or service meets specific standards. It awards a marketable logo to those that meet or exceed baseline standards(Ecotourism Kenya, 2013).

Criteria: individual factors that must be complied with to achieve certification(Bien, 2006).

Eco-rating: systematic approach to assessing a tourism accommodation facility on its environmental, economic and social-cultural performance, which is evaluated against set criteria(Ecotourism Kenya, 2013).

Eco-labelling: voluntary method of environmental performance certification and labelling that is practised around the world. An eco-label is a sticker which identifies overall, proven environmental preference of a product or service within a specific product or service category. (Global Eco-labeling Network, 2015).

Ecotourism: involvement of tourists in environmental conservation activities directly linked to addressing human development needs and equitable sharing of benefits accrued from tourism with local communities while supporting their nature conservation values(Ecotourism Kenya, 2014).

Environmental Management System (EMS): an overall management system that includes the organizational structure, responsibilities, practices, procedures, processes, action plans and resources for determining and implementing the environmental policy. It includes tools such as

environmental impact assessment, environmental auditing, and strategic environmental assessment (Synergy, 2000).

Grey water:wastewater generated from wash hand basins, showers and baths, which, can be recycled onsite for uses such as toilet flushing, and landscape(Ecotourism Kenya, 2008).

Mass tourism:refer to popular forms of tourism that involves the movement of a large number of people on nominally standardized packaged tour holidays (Synergy, 2000).

Responsible tourism: an approach to the management of tourism, aimed at maximising economic, social and environmental benefits and minimising costs to destinations (Responsible Tourism Partnership, 2002).

Standard: a document approved by a recognized body that prescribes a set of rules, definitions, conditions and/or requirements. Standards define what is expected and required by an endorsement scheme, and should be applied consistently to anyone and everyone who applies for endorsement (Janisch, 2007).

Verification:process that confirms, through the provision of evidence, that specified requirements have been fulfilled(Janisch, 2007).

Voluntary initiative:refers to certification, eco-labels and awards, that are not legally binding but usually focused on achieving environmental and social benefits beyond what the law requires (Synergy, 2000).

CHAPTER ONE

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 General background to the study

Over the past few decades, tourism has become one of the world's profitable industries yet considered one of the most harmful human activities in relation to environmental degradation (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2014). This industry depends largely on the existence of un-spoilt environment which stresses the need to find more sustainable paths of development in all aspects (environmental, economic and social). This has greater significance when it concerns ecologically and culturally sensitive areas where mass tourism has a heavy impact. Although the value of biodiversity is more widely appreciated worldwide, Bhandari (2014) notes that the tourism sector's growth has placed heavy burden on local economies, culture and environment, hence calling for responsible management. Pressure on wildlife and natural habitats is increasing due to intrusion of human activities and intensified resource extraction (United Nations Environmental Programme, 2001).

According to Lascuráin (1996), the impacts of tourism vary according to the number and nature of tourists and the characteristics of the site. The individual tourist normally has a relatively low impact; however, problems arise if the level of visitor use is greater than the environment's carrying capacity or the resource is overused. Although tourism can be a lucrative source of revenue and a catalyst for positive development bringing benefits to communities in its locale, it can also be an engine of destruction and degradation if not well managed (Ministry of East Africa, Commerce and Tourism, 2015). Bhandari (2014) explains that overcrowding, misuse of natural resources, the construction of buildings and infrastructure and other activities associated with tourism, produce negative impacts on the environment. These impacts are not only physical, but also cultural. These impacts however can be managed effectively if they have been identified, measured, evaluated and management responses created (Lascuráin, 1996).

Masstourism poses potential threats to many natural areas around the world. In Kenya, tourism has both direct and indirect impacts and has enormous pressure on protected and non-protected areas. Direct impacts are caused by the presence of tourists while indirect impacts are by the infrastructure created in connection with tourism activities (Lascuráin, 1996). The direct environmental and social impacts of tourism in Kenya include soil erosion, increased pollution (water, noise, aesthetics, soil, and light), discharges into the sea, natural habitat loss, increased pressure on endangered species, heightened vulnerability to forest fires and local people cultural erosion. Tourism also puts a strain on water resources, and forces local populations to compete for the use of critical resources.

Kenya has earmarked tourism as one of the six key growth sectors for the economic pillar of Vision 2030 and in making the country one of the top ten long-haul tourist destinations globally offering high-end, diverse, and distinctive visitor experience (Ministry of East Africa, Commerce and Tourism, 2015). Vision 2030 recognizes that attaining this will involve addressing constraints facing the sector and implementing strategic projects to improve the quality and breadth of Kenya's touristic offerings at the coast, in wildlife protected areas, and in niche products such as ecotourism and cultural tourism which spell for responsible tourism.

Responsible tourism which is underpinned by sound environmental, social and economic principles offers a way to minimize the adverse ecological impacts, benefit local communities and reduce poverty. Over the past few years, responsible tourism has been constantly gaining ground at a global scale. According to Responsible Tourism Partnership (2002), the fundamental principles of responsible tourism have the following characteristics: minimises negative economic, environmental, and social impacts; generates greater economic benefits for local people and enhances the well-being of host communities, improves working conditions and access to the industry; involves local people in decisions that affect their lives and life

chances; makes positive contributions to the conservation of natural and cultural heritage, to the maintenance of the world's diversity; provides more enjoyable experiences for tourists through more meaningful connections with local people, and a greater understanding of local cultural, social and environmental issues; provides access for physically challenged people; is culturally sensitive, engenders respect between tourists and hosts building local pride and confidence.

Certification within tourism whether conventional, sustainable or responsible tourism; is an issue that has attracted attention among tourism experts and the public in the last few years. There is however, scepticism concerning the tangible benefits that certification provides in the direction of sustainable and responsible tourism development (Font, 2003). Even though tourism development within destinations becomes sustainable, the challenge of unsustainable transport and travelling to and from these destinations remains unresolved. Although this is a very critical matter in itself, it is beyond the scope of this study. The main focus of this research is to assess the role of Ecotourism Kenya's Eco-rating Certification Scheme in promoting responsible tourism.

In the late 1990's, tourism practitioners in Kenya began discussing the idea of developing an eco-rating scheme to help the country's tourism industry define best practices and market it as a responsible tourism destination provider (Gona & Becha, 2000). According to Gona and Becha (2000), Ecotourism Society of Kenya (ESOK) currently Ecotourism Kenya (EK) organized workshops to provide the tourism industry with practical information on issues significant to the development of an eco-rating scheme. Gona and Becha (2000) explain that one of the major challenges the industry faced was to develop and implement a Kenyan scheme or adopt an already existing scheme. The industry unanimously endorsed the development of a Kenyan Scheme suited to the local context. The workshops emphasised a demand from tourism stakeholders for a tourism certification scheme that incorporated measurable minimum performance standards. In addition, the idea for varying levels of certification was supported in

order to attract different sized tourism enterprises. Others issues discussed included: industry sectors to be rated; criteria to be used for rating; approach to assessment; management of scheme; costs of certification, auditing and financing of the scheme. Gona and Becha(2000) further explain that a technical committee was formulated with EK as the chair to provide input and guidance to the Eco-rating initiative. Support was in addition provided for engaging a consultant to design the eco-rating scheme.

1.1.1 Ecotourism Kenya

Founded in 1996, Ecotourism Kenya (EK) is a membership civil society organization that brings together individuals, Community Based Organizations (CBO) and tourism businesses in a forum to discuss the concept of ecotourism and use the resultant knowledge to improve their operations towards best practices(Ecotourism Kenya, 2015). It has a vision to be a leader in the knowledge and practice of ecotourism and a mission to effectively link communities, tourism and conservation for sustainable tourism development in Kenya. The ultimate goal is to promote tourism practices that will conserve Kenya's natural environment and improve livelihoods of associated communities(Ecotourism Kenya, 2015).

Ecotourism Kenya promotes sustainable utilization of resources for sustained livelihoods. This is achieved through putting emphasis on respect for the environment, local people and their cultures and equitable sharing of responsibilities and benefits. Ecotourism Kenya (2015) states that the organization's policy is to ensure incorporation of sound environmental and social practices in new and existing tourism enterprises, and to increase recognition of environmental and social issues in the development of tourism in Kenya.

In all this,EK intends to remain at the forefront in the implementation of environmental best practices in tourism development and to promote social responsible practices applicable to tourism(Ecotourism Kenya, 2015). EK's mission is achieved through five (5) program areas as

follows; Standards and Best Practices; Community Enterprise; Public Information, Training and Education; Research and Consultancy; Leadership and Mentorship Program(Ecotourism Kenya, 2015).Through the standards and best practices program, Ecotourism Kenya runs the Eco-rating Certification Scheme. The Certification Scheme is a voluntary initiative by the tourism industry designed to further the goals of sustainable tourism in Kenya by recognizing efforts aimed at promoting environmental, economic and social/cultural values(Ecotourism Kenya, 2013).

1.1.2 The Eco-rating Certification Scheme

In October 2002, Ecotourism Kenya in cooperation with tourism stakeholders in Kenya launched the Eco-rating Certification Scheme (Ecotourism Kenya, 2013). The focus of the certification scheme is on tourism businesses interested in and committed to embracing ‘best practice’ in their operations. According to Ecotourism Kenya (2013), best practices (values) of Eco-rating Certification refer to excellent or superior practices in environmental, economic and socio-cultural aspects of a facility operation. The certification is designed for all tourism accommodation facilities that wish to implement best practices to enhance responsible or sustainable tourism practices in their business. The facilities include: hotels, lodges, camps, bush homes /homestays and *bandas*(Ecotourism Kenya, 2013).

The Eco-rating Certification criteria cover environmental and socio-economic issues. Emphasis has been placed on sustainable use of resources and protection of the environment, and support to local economies through linkages and building of capacity of local communities and employees. The Eco-rating Certification Scheme has three progressive levels (Table 1.1) namely: Bronze, Silver and Gold with each level having stated requirements for qualification based on the Eco-rating Certification criteria (Appendix E).

Table 1.1: Eco-rating Certification levels (Source: Ecotourism Kenya(2013))

 <p>Bronze Level</p>	<p>Demonstrates a facility’s awareness and commitment to environmental conservation, responsible resource use and socio-economic investment.</p>
 <p>Silver Level</p>	<p>Demonstrates a move towards excellence; it is awarded to facilities that have demonstrated progress towards achieving sustainability, through innovation in responsible resource use, environmental conservation, and socio-economic investment</p>
 <p>Gold Level</p>	<p>An indicator that a facility has achieved outstanding and replicable levels of excellence in responsible resource use, environmental conservation and socio-economic investment.</p>

1.1.3 Eco-rating certification process

1.1.3.1 Application

In applying for certification, an accommodation facility expresses its interest in eco-rating by writing to Ecotourism Kenya. The prospective applicant receives a self-evaluation application (questionnaire) which they are required to fill and return to the Eco-rating certification secretariat within two weeks.

1.1.3.2 Desk evaluation

The Eco-rating certification secretariat at Ecotourism Kenya scopes the application questionnaire within a week of receipt to confirm eligibility as stipulated. Any arising issues are communicated to the applicant accordingly. Once the Eco-rating certification application is approved, the applicant is required to pay a non-refundable application fee of USD 150 before a site audit is conducted.

1.1.3.3 Site audit

The Eco-rating certification secretariat later, plans a facility site audit at least within a month. A team of Eco-rating certification auditors conduct the site audit between one (1) to two (2) days, depending on the size of the facility. To facilitate the audit, the applicant may be required to provide accommodation to the auditors. The team of auditors then compiles an Eco-rating audit report of the facility from the information collated in the desk evaluation and site audits.

1.1.3.4 Eco-rating committee evaluation

The Eco-rating certification secretariat presents the report for evaluation to the Eco-rating committee, within a month of the audit. The committee evaluates the report in accordance to the Eco-rating certification criteria (Appendix E) and based on the scoring (Appendix F) an eco-rating certification is awarded with accompanying recommendations. Facilities with more than 40% of the total score but less than 59% are awarded Bronze Eco-rating, more than 60% but less than 79% are awarded Silver Eco-rating whereas those attaining than 80% are awarded Gold Eco-rating.

1.1.3.5 Outcome

The applying facility is notified of the outcome within two months of the facility site audit. The outcome can be a confirmation of the Eco-rating certification award, the deferment of the Eco-rating certification award pending the enactment of listed recommendations or a denial of the Eco-rating certification award. Successful applicants are required to pay the Eco-rating certification fee of their respective certification award within fourteen working days. Deferred applicants are expected to re-apply within six months to avoid nullification of their application. Upon payment of the full fees, all successful applicants receive the appropriate Eco-rating Certificate award, the respective Eco-rating certification emblem and the Eco-rating evaluation

report. They are required to display and use the appropriate Eco-rating Scheme emblems on their promotional material.

The delivery and development of the certification is a prerogative of the Eco-rating committee, which is a sub-committee of the Ecotourism Kenya board (Ecotourism Kenya, 2013). The Eco-rating committee draws expertise both from private and public sector professionals specialized in tourism, conservation and environmental management. According to Ecotourism Kenya (2013), Eco-rating Certification is made possible by a team of auditors who provide technical expertise in assessing facilities. This team comprises of environmental experts both from the private and public sector.

The Eco-rating Scheme follows a cycle (fig 1.1), certification is valid for two years after which a facility is required to re-apply and be re-evaluated to continue using the emblems. Credibility of the scheme is maintained through independent third party audit, random audits, mandatory re-assessment after two years of the first audit, signing a code of conduct and requirement that applicants must have two referees familiar with the applicants operations before submission. The referees can either be a major tour operator, an eco-rated accommodation facility, a representative of a private sector association, international organization or academic institution but preferably a member of Kenya Tourism Federation (KTF).

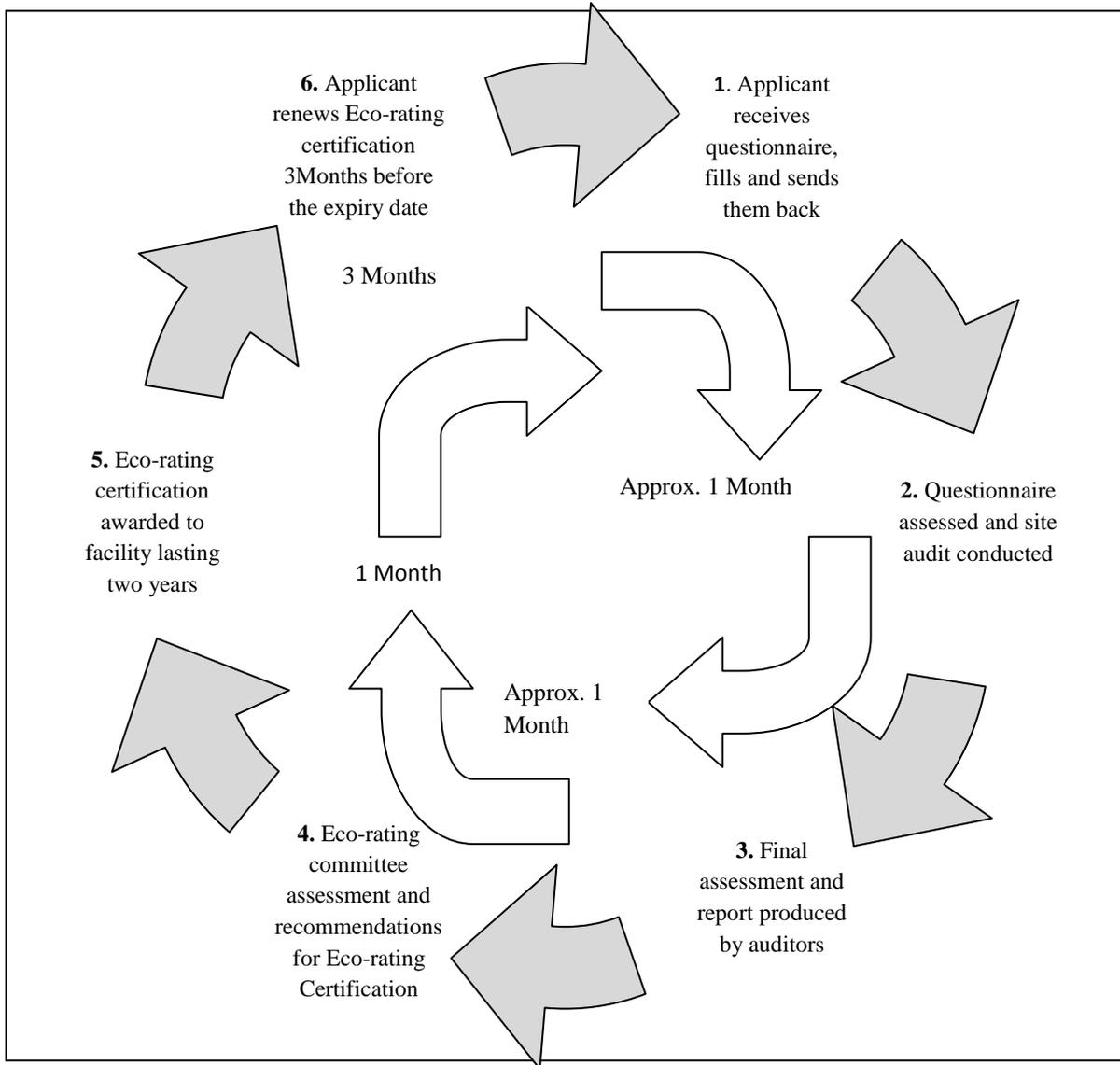


Figure 1.1 The Eco-rating Certification Cycle (Source: Ecotourism Kenya, (2013))

1.2 The Research Problem

Tourism is a major employer and the third largest source of foreign exchange earnings in Kenya after tea and horticulture (Ministry of East Africa, Commerce and Tourism, 2015). The country is however under a delicate balance between mass tourism benefits and destruction of the ecosystem. Mass tourism has led to increased tourist facilities resulting to environmental degradation and resource depletion (Bhandari, 2014). Noteworthy, Kenya's tourism greatly depends on its wilderness and wildlife which are all under threat from unsustainable tourism practices.

The Eco-rating Certification Scheme was established to specifically promote and increase awareness of environmentally and socially sound business practices. The certification is believed to enhance business sustainability by improving efficiency of resources used and reducing negative environmental impacts (Ecotourism Kenya, 2013). In addition, it provides a mechanism to support local environmental conservation values and offers a competitive advantage from using the Eco-rating label (Ecotourism Kenya, 2008). However, one of the most important limiting factors for the widespread success of certification programmes including in Kenya, is their relatively poor growth and uptake by the tourism industry worldwide (Synergy, 2000). Further, the success of tourism certification in many countries depends largely on government support in terms of funding, recognition and endorsement.

Whilst there is growing recognition that certification has the potential to decrease adverse environmental and social impacts of tourism, there is little empirical evidence on the subject in Kenya. This study therefore, assessed the effectiveness of Eco-rating Certification Scheme in promoting responsible tourism in Kenya. The study has further evaluated growth of the Eco-rating Certification from 2003 to 2013 in order to understand the overall uptake. It has also investigated environmental benefits of the Certification Scheme, the challenges facing its growth and recommended solutions to the challenges.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The main objective for this study was to assess the role of Ecotourism Kenya's, Eco-rating Certification Scheme in promoting responsible tourism.

The specific objectives of the study are:

- i. To assess the growth of Eco-rating Certification Scheme between 2003 and 2013.
- ii. To investigate the challenges facing growth of Eco-rating Certification Scheme.
- iii. To determine the environmental benefits of Eco-rating Certification Scheme.

1.4 Research questions to the Study

- i. How has the Eco-rating Certification Scheme grown between 2003 and 2013?
- ii. What are the challenges facing growth of Eco-rating Certification Scheme?
- iii. What are the environmental benefits of Eco-rating Certification Scheme?

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study was designed to assess the role of Eco-rating Certification Scheme in promoting responsible tourism. The research intended to gather information on the number of eco-rated facilities since inception of the Eco-rating Certification Scheme in 2003 up to 2013. In particular, it assessed growth in the number of Gold, Silver and Bronze Eco-rated facilities in order to understand the overall up take of the certification scheme. This research further investigated environmental benefits of the Certification Scheme. The assessment of environmental roles was meant to assist in understanding whether the Eco-rating Certification Scheme has any environmental values that enhance the promotion of responsible tourism. The research also investigated challenges facing the growth of Eco-rating Certification Scheme. This was designed to explain the outcome on the Eco-rating Certification growth.

The study restricted itself to actors relevant to the Eco-rating Certification Scheme including eco-rated and non-rated facilities, key informants from the tourism industry, Ecotourism Kenya members, partners and relevant government institutions such as National Environmental Management Authority (NEMA), Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS) and Tourism Regulatory Authority (TRA). For example, the research sampled and compared one Gold eco-rated facility - Kicheche Mara Camp - and a non-certified facility - Tipilikwani Mara Camp both located in Masai Mara ecosystem. The findings of the research were intended to be more or less indicative of the state of the rest of the country and therefore were generalized.

1.6 Rationale of the Study

There is little available information about Certification Schemes as a whole and in particular growth, justifiable environmental benefits and enhancement of responsible tourism in Kenya. Much of the existing literature and information on the above issues are unpublished and undocumented. Most of the available information is drawn from internet research, anecdotal information from environmental professionals in the tourism industry and borrowed evidence from other developed tourism certification schemes or labels. This may be partly due to lack of a government strategy and policy framework on ecotourism and specifically support to the existing Eco-rating Certification Scheme in Kenya. The lack of accumulated knowledge in the research area underlined the need for studies particularly on growth of the Eco-rating Certification Scheme in promotion of responsible tourism.

According to Golden et al. (2010), only 44% of single-standard labels in the Global market have conducted an impact study to assess the effect of their certification efforts on the environment. This is surprising given that one criterion for a successful label is the extent to which the organization can demonstrate positive on-the-ground impacts resulting from its labelling program (Golden et al, 2010).

It is therefore envisaged that this study will offer insight to Ecotourism Kenya particularly in assessing the growth of Eco-rating Certification Scheme, underlining the constraints and investigating its environmental benefits in promotion of responsible tourism. The study in particular will also provide baseline information that may guide the government, investors, future researchers, policy-makers, planners, and environmental consultants, in the development and management of tourism industry in Kenya and beyond.

CHAPTER TWO

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Over the last decade, various non-state certification schemes have emerged in response to perceived public policy failures and have become particularly vibrant sources of rulemaking. (Gulbrandsen, 2005). Often referred to as the privatization of governance, such schemes have been set up to certify companies engaged in and label products flowing from sustainable forestry, fisheries, agriculture, mining, and tourism, as well as various organic agriculture, food safety and fair-trade initiatives. These programs typically establish not only environmental performance standards but also standards for socially and economically responsible production.

In this chapter, existing information on the growth of various certification and eco-labelling programs at the national and international level will be reviewed. This will assist in understanding the underlying growth trends and investigate the environmental roles played by the Certification Scheme. In addition a review of existing literature will be done in order to illustrate the challenges facing the growth of other Certification Schemes and Eco-labels.

2.1 Types of Certification

Certification has been defined as the “process of providing documented assurance that a product, service, or an organisation complies with a given standard”(Font, 2003). Certification of tourism products, services, organisations or facilities in the sector is intended to influence tourism actors adopt practices that can help in the attainment of the environmental, social, economic and cultural objectives of tourism (Muriithi, 2013). The overall aim of certification is to raise the standards of how tourism in general is practiced (Font, 2003). According to Bien (2006), certification “sets standards and helps distinguish ecotourism and sustainable businesses from others that make empty claims” on how well they undertake responsible and sustainable practices.

According to Bien (2006), there are three main types of certification which include First, Second, or Third party certification. First-party certification is self-evaluation; this is whereby a company can declare that its product meets certain standards but no one from outside the company verifies the claims. Second-party certification is when a purchaser or industry body assures that the product meets the purchaser's standards. Lastly, Third-party certification is when a neutral, independent third party evaluates the compliance of the product with clearly defined standards.

Bien (2006), notes the terms 'environmental certification' and 'ecolabel' are often used interchangeably, although they signify different things. Environmental certification is awarded to those businesses or activities that comply absolutely with a set of baseline or minimum standards, which generally require more than what legal regulations do. Any number or all of the businesses in a sector can be certified, if they comply. In contrast, an ecolabel is an award that is given to a business or activity that has significant better performance compared to the other businesses in its sector. Only the best performers, who show exemplary performance, according to the established criteria, receive the ecolabel. Ecolabels are based on comparison with the best performance (benchmarking), rather than compliance with baseline standards. However, many certification systems in sustainable tourism incorporate aspects of both certification to minimum standards and the comparative requirements of an ecolabel.

Information on the environmental impact of producing or using specific products in the form of an eco-label was first encouraged by National Multi-issue Labeling Schemes in Germany. (Gulbrandsen, 2005). These programs were based on independent auditing, comparison of similar products within a category and authorized manufacturers to label the most environmentally preferable in terms of the product's whole life cycle.

According to World Trade Organization (2007), eco-labelling systems can be either mandatory or voluntary. Mandatory eco-labels are government-backed and could act as a trade restriction for

foreign producers (i.e., imports may be rejected if they do not comply)(World Trade Organization, 2007). In the case of voluntary labels, it is up to the manufacturer to decide whether or not to apply for certification of the product and the consumers choicewhether to buy an eco-labelled product. Voluntary eco-labelling such as EK's Eco-rating Certification Scheme may be funded and super-vised by the private sector whereas others such as the Botswana Ecotourism Certification Systemare government sponsored and funded.

2.2 Trends in certification

Growth of certification in tourism has been intended to ensure that sustainable and responsible tourism practicesrelating to destination environments and their people are observed and that tourism facilities seeking to becertified are evaluated on the basis of observing best practices(Muriithi, 2013).

According to Gallastegui(2002), some manufacturers argue that the green consumer does not really exist due to the high premium costs associated with certified products.Gallastegui(2002)further accounts for the gap between what consumers say they are willing to pay and what they really pay by acknowledging the skepticism that exists about misleading and unverified environmental claims. The implication is that accurate eco-labels can create trust in environmental claims, improve information symmetry between producer and consumer, and ultimately elevate actual payment levels to meet stated willingness-to-pay.

Ottoman (1992) notes that consumers purchase functional products for functional reasons. This means that a laundry detergent that is 100% biodegradable and manufactured with a miniscule carbon footprint will never outcompete any other product if it is not an effective detergent. A product that cannot deliver consumers needs will fail in the marketplace, no matter how eco-friendly it is. Hence, this affects the adoption trends and only high end tourism facilities with superior quality services are likely to enroll for certification.

Janisch(2007)further explains that eco-labelling has been unsuccessful in principle; firms seeking out environmentally preferable production processes should according to the Polluter Pays Principle be paying less and not more. This is best illustrated by the EK'sEco-rating Certification where the Certification Fee increases with progress to the Gold eco-rating certification which is the highest level of certification(Ecotourism Kenya, 2013). Therefore, Eco-labelling adds an extra cost to producers who incuradministrative costs, certification fees and undergo monitoring and audits.

According to Scott (2014)more than two-thirds of United States(US) and Australian travelers, and 90% of British tourists consider active protection of the environment and support of local communities to be part of a hotel's responsibility.This is further echoed by Karanja and Shabanji (2015) stating thatit is the responsibility of all tourism facilities to ensure that their social and environmental impacts are reduced to aminimum to promote responsible tourism.This has led to change in the standard way of conducting business. More facilities are now embracing Certification schemes and eco-labelsin a bid not to be left out in the growing market niche of environmental cautious tourists.Ecotourism Kenya (2007)underlines that facilities cannot ignore EK Eco-rating Certification due to the following: it embraces globalization and sustainable development; ensures environmental sustainability by enhancing environmental quality; invests in areas of operation including giving back to conservation of the existing biodiversity; cost effectiveness; self-regulation; market advantage; quality assurance; increases productivity and assists to improves relations with locals.

2.3 Environmental benefits of certification

In recent years, a new class of sector/issue-specific “green” certification programs has emerged and become a particularly vibrant source of Type I voluntary labeling. Perhaps best described as a hybrid between an environmental management system (EMS) standardand an eco-labeling

scheme, this type of labeling is based on third-party verification of compliance with sector/issue-specific performance criteria for environmental management practices (Gulbrandsen, 2005). Some of these schemes are policed by government-approved certifiers and/or administered by state agencies, such as the Costa Rican government's Certification for Sustainable Tourism (Honey, 2003). However, most of the sector/issue-specific programs have been set up by nongovernmental bodies and are inspected by certifiers accredited by those bodies. By studying the EK's Eco-rating Certification Scheme, it is possible to draw conclusions on other schemes as most labeling programs rely on similar certification and auditing procedures and the same performance enhancing mechanisms.

Gulbrandsen (2005) argues that Eco-labels offer information on the environmental impact of particular products or services and are increasingly used to help consumers make informed choices. Gulbrandsen (2005) further states that the idea is that the consumer will express a preference for environmentally friendly products, spurring producers to adhere to sustainable management practices. Eco-labels therefore ensure the moral persuasion of producers is geared towards promoting environmental responsibility in order to attract the strategic market moves by purchasers.

Experts have however indicated that certification opportunity sometimes leads to abuse of ecotourism where certification is only used to fulfil marketing interests without putting into practice environmental, social and economic principles (Muriithi, 2013). In addition, ecotourism certification is sometimes criticised for entertaining green-washing of the tourism industry instead of transforming the way tourism should be conducted (Honey, 2003). According to Bien (2006), green-washing refers to a business presenting itself as 'sustainable', 'ecological', 'green', 'responsible', 'Ecotourism', when it does not comply with generally accepted standards or is in contradiction with them". However, you know ecotourism by looking at what practices are put in

place by a tourism operator (Honey, 2003). Certification therefore can play a significant role in determining how businesses practice ecotourism or sustainable tourism principles according to set standards. It is also useful “in the supply chain assisting tour operators and others identify suppliers who meet minimum standards” (Goodwin, 2005). This is especially true for certification that is “performance-based” as opposed to “process based”. Performance based certification confirms that a business actually practices what it claims to do (Chester & Crabtree, 2002) as opposed to a mere demonstration of commitment to observing a standard as happens in the process-based certification.

Gulbrandsen (2005) explains the aptitude of labelling programs to improve environmental performance is dependent on two related factors: the stringency of environmental standards and industry compliance with the standards. Ecotourism certification is used to dissuade negative impacts by creating sustainability awareness in travellers and influencing their behaviour and selection of tourism products. Certification thus, becomes a market-driven mechanism designed to influence demand for sustainable travel by placing responsibility for improving environmental management in the hands of individual customers (Buckley, 2002).

Certification in particular is believed to have the potential to decrease the adverse environmental and social impacts of tourism, by making the tourism industry assume its responsibilities and by providing marketing benefits to companies that meet specific standards (Font, 2003). However, one of the most limiting factors for the widespread success of certification programmes is their relatively poor uptake by the tourism industry worldwide (Synergy, 2000).

The success of tourism certification in many countries including Kenya depends largely on governmental support in terms of funding, assessment and recognition. It has been estimated that without such support from the state, two-thirds of tourism certification schemes would not even manage to survive let alone be successful (Font, 2003). This is due to the relatively high costs which

make certification unequally accessible to different tourism companies. As a result, there are certain cases where the cost of certification might even become prohibitive particularly in countries that do not have a national certification program in place.

2.4 Challenges facing growth of certification

According to the Belgian Development Corporation (2013), major challenges for eco-labels are standardisation of methodologies and consumer communications. Further, Belgian Development Corporation states growing consumer awareness of production methods and sustainability issues has been responsible for the rise of eco-labels. On the other hand, Janisch (2007) states the main challenges of establishing an African Eco-label could include the cost of setting up and running a scheme which is credible and meets international requirements for standard setting entities. Depending on the sector for which the eco-label is established, it could add to the potential for consumer confusion if it is for a sector in which there are many established labels. In order to solve this, high level of awareness is required and credible and reliable auditing facilities need to be in place.

According to Spenceley (2005), a survey conducted among tourism certification scheme managers operating in Africa revealed a series of technical and financial challenges that faced them. These included: ensuring the quality and consistency of audits, while ensuring efficiency; simplifying schemes while maintaining their integrity; database management on certification criteria for enterprises; addressing different capacities of small, medium and large enterprises (e.g. skills, capacity, human resources); changes in best practice over time and knowledge management; the difficulty of raising awareness among consumers and the tourism sector of the net-benefits of certification (for example, to change the perceptions that certification is not a cost, but rather an investment); the lack of demand from tour operators for certified

products; training new assessors in new markets; and, obtaining long-term and sustainable funding.

In relation to certification standards and conformance, Janisch(2007) identifies four main processes and elements which include: setting the standard; certifying compliance with the standard; accrediting the standard and the certifiers; and label provision. The credibility of these processes greatly influences the effectiveness and integrity of eco-label and certification schemes. Janisch(2007) further asserts that it is global best practice for the governance of standards and conformance systems that the bodies which undertake these basic functions are independent of each other and embrace principles of best practice. If this is not the case, stakeholders will not have confidence that standards are neutral, objective and that the process of conformance is technically expert and impartial. Principles for best practice in standards and conformance systems are; participation, governance, transparency, flexibility, accordance and impartiality (Janisch, 2007).

Troth (2002) emphasises the latter by noting that elements of a credible certification system include: adequate, appropriate standards developed and/or accepted by all affected interests; trained, qualified assessors; professional/ethical operations at all levels with no biases or conflicts of interest; qualified, financially stable certifying body and/or accreditation mechanism; even-handed certification and accreditation; transparency; defined procedures; appeals mechanism; recognition by relevant agencies and/or customers; and acceptance in the marketplace or by regulators. Successful eco-labelling efforts face a variety of challenges,

Gallastegui(2002) notes the following will help an eco-label design team to avoid common pitfalls. First, the criteria or standards must be selected objectively. Ideally, performance measures selected determine true environmental outcomes rather than industry process outputs. Second, specific definitions should be

made throughout the process and product boundaries clearly delineated, as no two goods are perfect substitutes. Third, objective design of the certification process is necessary for the present and the future. The design team needs to define not only the certification process itself, but also the method and time frame by which standards can be updated. This is important so that the certification itself does not become arbitrary. Finally, a market analysis is necessary to gauge demand and market share for labelled goods. This should include a component for improvement across environmental metrics.

Teisl (2008) found that consumer's perception of the eco-friendliness of a durable good (such as a car) is primarily driven by comparisons between goods in the same category. The implication for non-durable goods is that ratings should at a minimum compare with products that are functionally equivalent. According to Hart (1997), firms must educate consumers through marketing efforts and labels should be informative, rather than simply exclamatory.

The need to show substantive benefits of certification underlines the importance of conducting research. According to Golden et al. (2010), only 44% of single-standard labels in the Global market have conducted an impact study to assess the effect of their certification efforts on the environment, which is shocking given that one criterion for a successful label is the extent to which the organization can demonstrate positive on-the-ground impacts resulting from its labelling program. One-third of the certification programs surveyed had made no attempt to monitor or evaluate the environmental and social benefits of their labels and have no intention of doing so. In their stages of impact assessment framework, Olsen and Galimidi (2008) also draw distinctions between implied impact ("we believe it works"), proven impact (i.e., "we can predict

our impact using proxies”), and optimized impact (i.e., “we assess our proven impact and its interrelationship with financial performance”).

The rapid increase in proliferation of certification in the market is accompanied by a high level of redundancy among eco-labels. According to Golden et al. (2010), 28% percent of responding eco-labels in the Global market recognized other labels as being equivalent while 33% of responding labels were recognized by other labels as equivalent.

Certification organizations draw their funding from a variety of sources. According to Golden et al. (2010) certification fees are the most common source of funding; however, when governments provide funding they play a significant role in the growth of the certifications. Janisch (2007) explaining on the Tunisian Eco-label experience indicates that it is very important for credibility and transparency, to create the appropriate legal framework. Obtaining commitment of government takes time. It took two and half years to develop the Tunisian Eco-label to the final stage of development.

2.5 Research gap

A combination of benefits of certification to tourism investors, tourists as well as local communities illustrates the growing importance of eco-labels across the world. Janisch (2007) states that eco-labels are considered one of the high-profile market-based tools for achieving environmental objectives; however, environmental benefits of eco-labels are not easy to measure but there are some indications of the environmental benefits. This study uses the globally accepted environmental criteria indicators to assess the benefits of EK Eco-rating Certification. These indicators include biodiversity conservation, resource use efficiency (water and energy), waste management (solid and waste water), chemical usage, and pollution control (Global Eco-labeling Network, 2015). The success of certification schemes as tools to encourage environment improvement is largely dependent on consumers’ understanding and ‘acceptance of certification’,

and in the general responsiveness of consumers to eco-labels (Deere, 1999). Therefore, the study also envisages understanding the EK Eco-rating Certification clients and stakeholders values and preferences on benefits. It aims at assessing whether indeed certification schemes are a useful tool for tourism and environmental planning and management.

CHAPTER THREE

3 STUDY AREA AND METHODOLOGY

In this chapter a description of the study area and the profiles for the two sample facilities is given. The study methodology including data sampling procedures, collection methods and instruments used as well as analysis and presentation is explained.

3.1 Study Area

3.1.1 Location

This study entailed different geographical areas for data collection. For instance; to study the growth of Ecotourism Kenya Eco-rating Certification Scheme, data was collected for all EK eco-rated facilities in Kenya. The study also targeted tourist facilities in Kenya interested in the certification but are yet to apply for assessment as respondents to understand the challenges facing the growth of the Eco-rating Certification. In order to determine the environmental benefits of Eco-rating Certification Scheme, the study compared two tourism accommodation facilities one certified, (Kicheche Mara Camp (KMC)) and a non-certified (Tipilikwani Mara Camp (TMC)) both located within the Maasai Mara ecosystem (Fig. 3.1). The background information for KMC and TMC is shown in Table 3.1.

3.1.2 Organization of the Masai Mara ecosystem

The Masai Mara ecosystem consists of the Maasai Mara National Reserve (MMNR), community owned group ranches and conservancies: Koiyaki, Lemek, Olchorro Oirowua, Olkinyei, Siana, Maji Moto, Naikara, Olderkesi, Kerinkani, Oloirien, and Kimintet. The Maasai Mara National Reserve (MMNR) covers approximately 1,510 km² under the management of Narok County and is part of the larger Mara Serengeti eco-system which covers 25,000 km² straddling Tanzania and Kenya (Dublin, 1991). The Masai Mara ecosystem has about 95 species of mammals and

570 species of birds recorded (Dublin, 1991). It is famous for hosting the wildebeest migration, which is referred to as the '8th Wonder of the World'.

Out of the 57 protected areas, which include inland and marine national parks and reserves in Kenya, Masai Marais amongst the leading in terms of annual visitor arrivals. Available reports show that the average annual tourist entry into the reserve is around 150,000 (KEBS, 2013). Development of tourist facilities within the ecosystem and specifically in the reserve has been rapid in response to the increasing number of visitors. The first lodge, Keekorok, was established in 1963. According to Kipchumba (2014), the Mara ecosystem has over 170 tourist lodges and camps. The increased tourist facilities have caused the loss of habitats and environmental challenges including sewage disposal problems, poor solid waste management and posed a threat to existing water bodies (Bhandari, 2014).

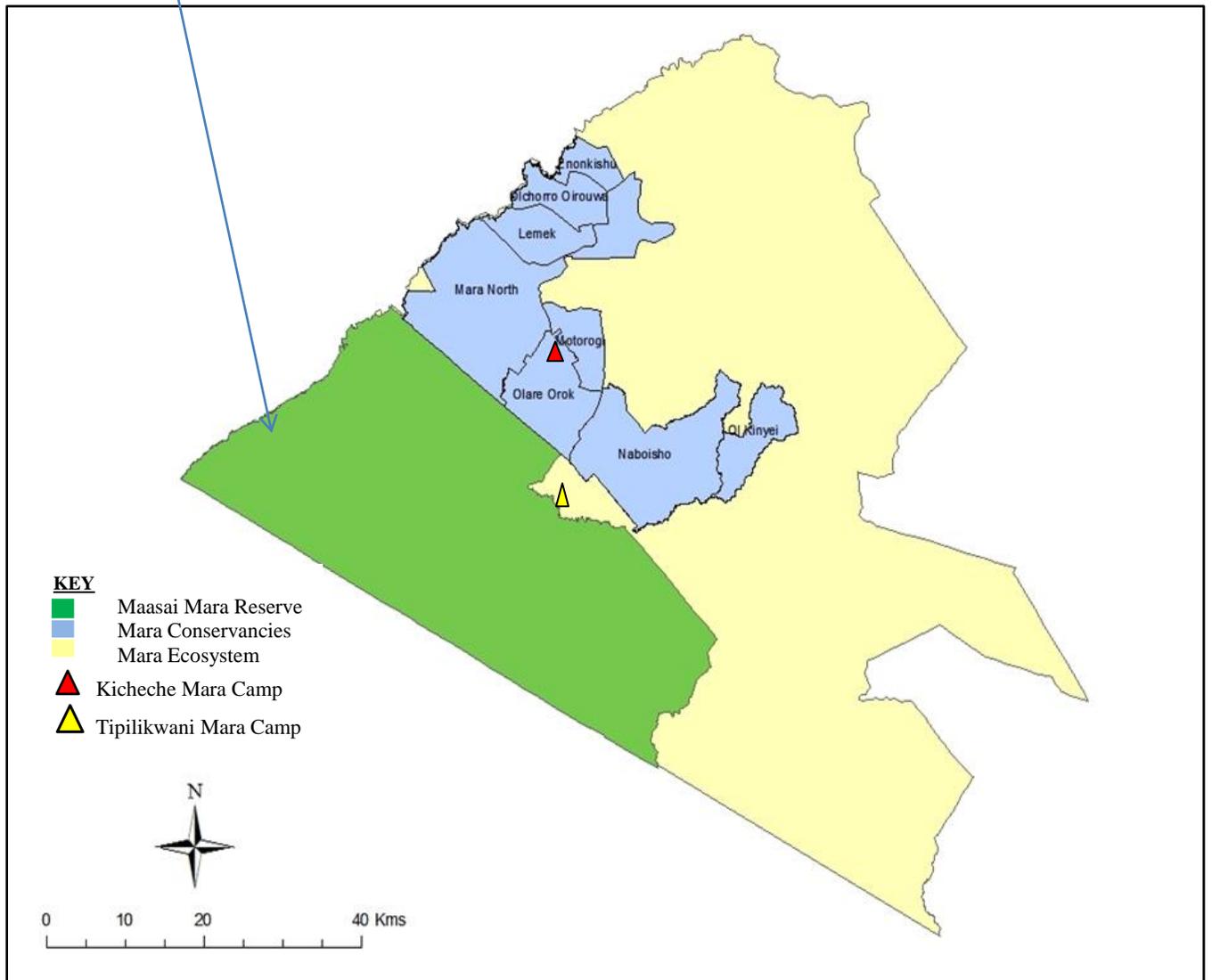
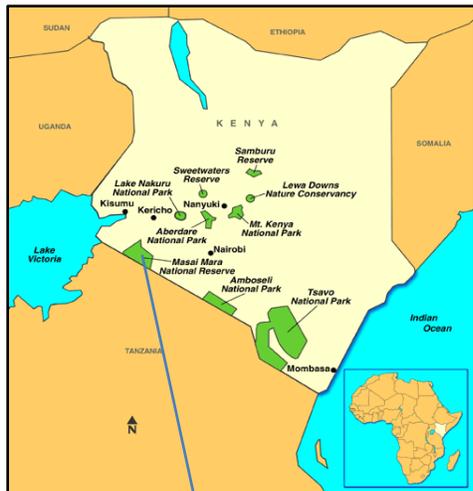


Figure 3.1 Map showing Masai Mara Ecosystem and the two study camps

Table 3.1: Background information for Kicheche Mara Camp and Tipilikwani Mara Camp

Name of the facility:	Kicheche Mara Camp (KMC)	Tipilikwani Mara Camp (TMC)
Type of facility:	Semi-permanent tented camp	Permanent tented camp
EK Certification achieved:	Gold	Not Certified
Year opened:	2005	2006
Location:	Mara North Conservancy situated approximately 15km southwest of Aitong town 1° 12' 55.80 S" /35° 9' 52.37 E"	On the banks of River Talek approximately 4 km off Talek Gate to Masai Mara National Reserve 1 27.713 S" /35° 14.651 E"
Number of Tents / rooms:	8	20
Bed Capacity	16	40
Number of months open in a year:	10 (Closed for 2 months during the rainy seasons)	12

3.2 Sampling procedures

In order to assess the growth of Eco-rating Certification Scheme, the annual number of eco-rated facilities between 2003 and 2013 was collected from Ecotourism Kenya (EK). Convenience sampling - a non-probability sampling technique where subjects are selected based on their convenient accessibility and proximity to the researcher - was used to identify key informants. EK secretariat, two previous EK Chief Executive Officers and a former Eco-rating Program Officer were interviewed as key informants based on their hands on experience in the Eco-rating Certification Program growth and its adoption.

For the purpose of investigating the challenges facing growth of Eco-rating Certification Scheme, the number of facilities that had shown interest in the certification but were yet to be eco-rated was collected from EK. Due to time constraints and nature of the study, the target population consisted of 20 facilities. According to Kothari (2007) selection of a representative sample using random population more than 10 but less than 1000 respondents' employ a sample size of 30% hence a sample size of six (6) facilities out of 20 was used.

Purposive sampling -a non-probability sampling technique where a more representative sample is selected based on the researcher's knowledge and judgment – was used to identify one certified facility (Kicheche Mara Camp (KMC)) and a non – certified (Tipilikwani Mara Camp (TMC)) as sample representatives to determine the environmental benefits of Eco-rating Certification Scheme. The reconnaissance study, time, geographical locations, financial implications, and manpower resources available were also considered in identifying the two facilities (KMC and TMC). Purposive sampling technique was in addition used to select relevant stakeholders – NEMA, TRA and KEBS – since they were known to have crucial information in the implementation of responsible tourism, rating of tourism facilities and standardization in Kenya.

3.3 Data Collection methods

In assessing the growth of EK certification between 2003 and 2013, the annual number of Eco-rating certified facilities for the three levels of certification (Bronze, Silver and Gold) was collected using a data schedule - a plan for carrying out a process, often in classified or tabular form - (Appendix A). Views from key informants (EK's secretariat, two previous Chief Executive Officers and a former Eco-rating Program Officer) and key stakeholders (National Environmental Management Authority, Tourism Regulatory Authority and Kenya Bureau of Standards) were obtained through guiding interview questions in Appendix B and D respectively. The interviews were used in reconstructing past information, understanding the schemes growth challenges, and collating knowledge on solutions to the challenges.

In order to assess the challenges facing the growth of EK Eco-rating Certification, seven variables (challenges) were selected based on Spenceley (2005) report on challenges facing certification schemes in Africa. The respondents (clients interested in certification but yet to apply for assessment) were asked through a questionnaire (Appendix C) to state to what extent they agreed with the statements (challenges affecting Eco-rating Certification) by putting a tick

either on: A – Agree, U – Undecided, or DA – Disagree. This ensured that responses gathered were standard and objective, more than would have been possible through interviews.

Field site audits were conducted at KMC and TMC to determine the environmental benefits of Eco-rating Certification. A standardised assessment checklist and score sheet (Appendix F), which is normally used by EK in the Eco-rating Certification was adopted to collate data at each of the facilities and the points/scores weighted appropriately. The checklist and score sheet ensured comprehensive data was obtained and the audits were conducted in a systematic and consistent manner. Further, observations were made to capture detailed and relevant discreet information on the ground that could not be explained using other forms of collecting data as it was either too sensitive or secretive. Photographs were also taken during the site visits for better understanding through visual terms and to represent salient features relevant to the study.

Secondary data was obtained to supplement the primary data sources. Sources for secondary data included South Eastern Kenya University (SEKU) library, Ecotourism Kenya (EK) resource centre, EK website and, Kicheche Mara Camp and Tipilikwani Mara Camp websites.

3.4 Data analysis, interpretation and presentation

Both quantitative and qualitative data methods were utilized in the processing, analysis and presentation of data. Data obtained from the schedule on number of certified facilities between 2003 and 2013 was analysed using Microsoft Excel. This was supplemented by qualitative data obtained from key informant and stakeholders' interviews. The qualitative data assisted in examining; explaining and interpreting the growth trends of Eco-rating certified facilities.

In order to understand the main challenges facing growth of EK Eco-rating certification, the scores obtained from identified variables were statistically analysed using MS Excel: T-test was performed on the data to test the most significant responses.

Descriptive techniques were employed to outline various intangible and non-quantifiable issues. Responses from the checklist on investigating environmental benefits of the certification were analysed qualitatively. Data obtained was used to supplement, explain and interpret scores attained by each facility. The scores were converted into percentage for easier data comparison and presentation.

The results obtained from the study were presented by use of text, tables, and graphs to show the interrelationships of various variables as warranted.

CHAPTER FOUR

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter is organized in three main sections (4.1, 4.2 and 4.3) which explain the results and discussion based on the study objectives. The first section deals with the annual growth of Eco-rating Certification Scheme between 2003 and 2013 with elaborated discussions on the three levels of certification. The second section explains challenges facing growth of the Eco-rating Certification Scheme whereas the third section discusses the environmental benefits of the Certification Scheme.

4.1 Growth of EK's Eco-rating Certification Scheme between 2003 and 2013

EK secretariat (personal interview) indicated that the EK certification Scheme has considerably grown based on the 2013 annual number of certified facilities but the growth is minimal compared to the possible facilities for eco-rating in the country. According to a Key EK informant (personal interview), there are more than 1,000 facilities in Kenya viable for Eco-rating Certification. Figure 4.1, indicates the total annual growth of certified facilities.

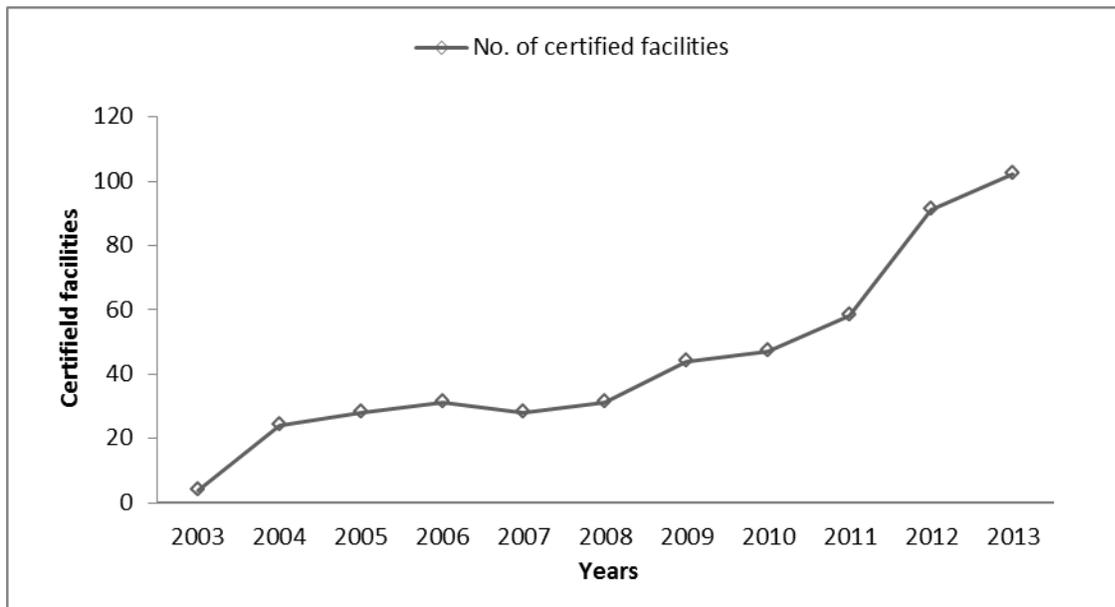


Figure 4.1: Annual growth of certified facilities between 2003 and 2013

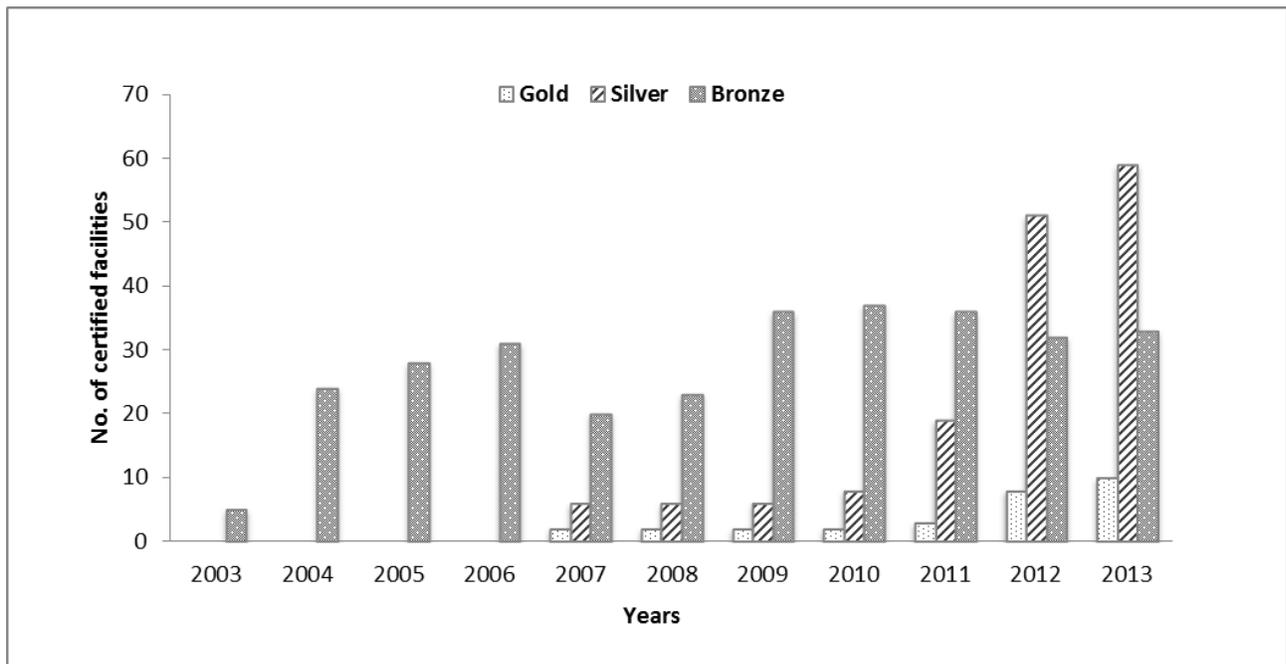


Figure 4.2: Certified facilities between 2003 and 2013 for the three levels of certification

A steady increase in the annual number of certified facilities by EK was experienced between 2003 and 2013 (Fig. 4.1). This affirms Gona and Gona (2014) report on Sustainable Tourism, indicating the tourism industry has lately experienced a paradigm shift in development from destructive processes to sustainable development. A rapid growth on the annual number of certified facilities between 2003 and 2006 is asserted by ESOK (2003), stating that out of the 896 enquiries received via website in 2003, 80% had a question about the Eco-rating Certification Scheme. ESOK (2003) further states that Ecotourism Kenya officials expected to audit six (6) to eight (8) properties a month in the future. However, between 2006 and 2007 there was a decrease in the number of new facilities seeking certification and a decline in certified facilities applying for re-assessment after expiry of their certificate.

In contrast, from 2008 to 2011 (Fig. 4.1) there was a noticeable increase in the number of certified facilities (from 31 to 58) which according to an EK key informant may be attributed to increased marketing and follow up of renewals. In 2008, there was demand for certification from tourism accommodation facilities outside Kenya resulting in expansion of EK's Eco-rating

Certification to cover the East African region (Ecotourism Kenya, 2008). This accounted for an increase of approximately 13% of newly certified facilities (Fig. 4.1). Between 2012 and 2013, the Eco-rating Certification marked the highest number evaluated and certified facilities (102 facilities) since inception of the program which according to the EK secretariat (Personal Interview) can be attributed to increased marketing, outreach initiatives and improved human capacity.

The number of certified facilities per year based on the three levels of certification -Gold, Silver and Bronze - is presented in Figure 4.2. EK Certification Scheme experienced a gradual growth in the number of Bronze certified facilities between 2003 and 2006 (from <10 to 31 certified facilities). According to EK secretariat (personal interview) the period was characterized by high number of companies wanting to improve their environmental performance and at the same time enhance their marketing. Saini (2000) acknowledges this by noting that a major fundamental concept in marketing is the desire for continual improvement to ensure a product competes well in the market place. After a decrease in 2007 (from 31 to 20 Bronze certified facilities) there was a gradual increase in number of certified facilities to a highest number of 37 certified facilities in 2010, which is in agreement with the general increase in certified facilities during this period (Fig. 4.1) However, after this period, there was a levelling-off/slight decrease in Bronze certification.

The first Silver and Gold certification were done in 2007 (6 silver and 2 Gold). Between 2007 and 2010, there was minimal change in the number of Silver certified facilities, but after that there was drastic increase from 19 Silver certified facilities in 2011 to 59 certified facilities in 2013. In contrast, the number of Gold Certified facilities remained low between 2007 and 2011 (<5 certified facilities), showing only a slight increase between 2012 and 2013, from 8 to 10 facilities. According to Ecotourism Kenya (2013), Gold certification demonstrates superior and

replicable levels of excellence and hence the growth (2012 to 2013) demonstrated success in abiding by the national policies and environmental management and conservation.

4.2 Challenges facing growth of EK’s Eco-rating Certification Scheme

The actual scores on three series (Agree, Undecided and Disagree) from the six (6) sampled facilities is showcased in Table 4.1. The percentage of the three series (Agree, Undecided and Disagree) on challenges facing growth of Eco-rating Certification Scheme is presented in Figure 4.3.

Table 4.1: Actual scores on three series (Agree, Undecided and Disagree) from the six (6) sampled facilities

SUGGESTED CHALLENGES	AGREE	UNDECIDED	DISAGREE
Lack of adequate information on the EK Eco-rating Certification	4	1	1
Lack of credibility in the Certification	0	3	3
Challenges in filling the self-assessment application tool	2	3	1
The EK Eco-rating Certification is expensive therefore unaffordable	4	2	0
The EK Eco-rating lacks endorsement from government and relevant agencies	3	1	2
Not sure of the Certification benefits	3	0	3
The procedure to attain certification is long and tedious.	3	3	0

In reference to the statement that lack of adequate information on the EK Eco-rating Certification is a major reason why respondents had not applied to be certified, four (4) respondents agreed, one (1) disagreed whereas one(1) was undecided (Table 4.1) representing 66.6%, 16.6% and 16.6% respectively (Fig. 4.3). Interviews with industry stakeholders revealed low awareness about the scheme (Personal observation). This in return leads to low number of applicants seeking certification which results to slow growth.

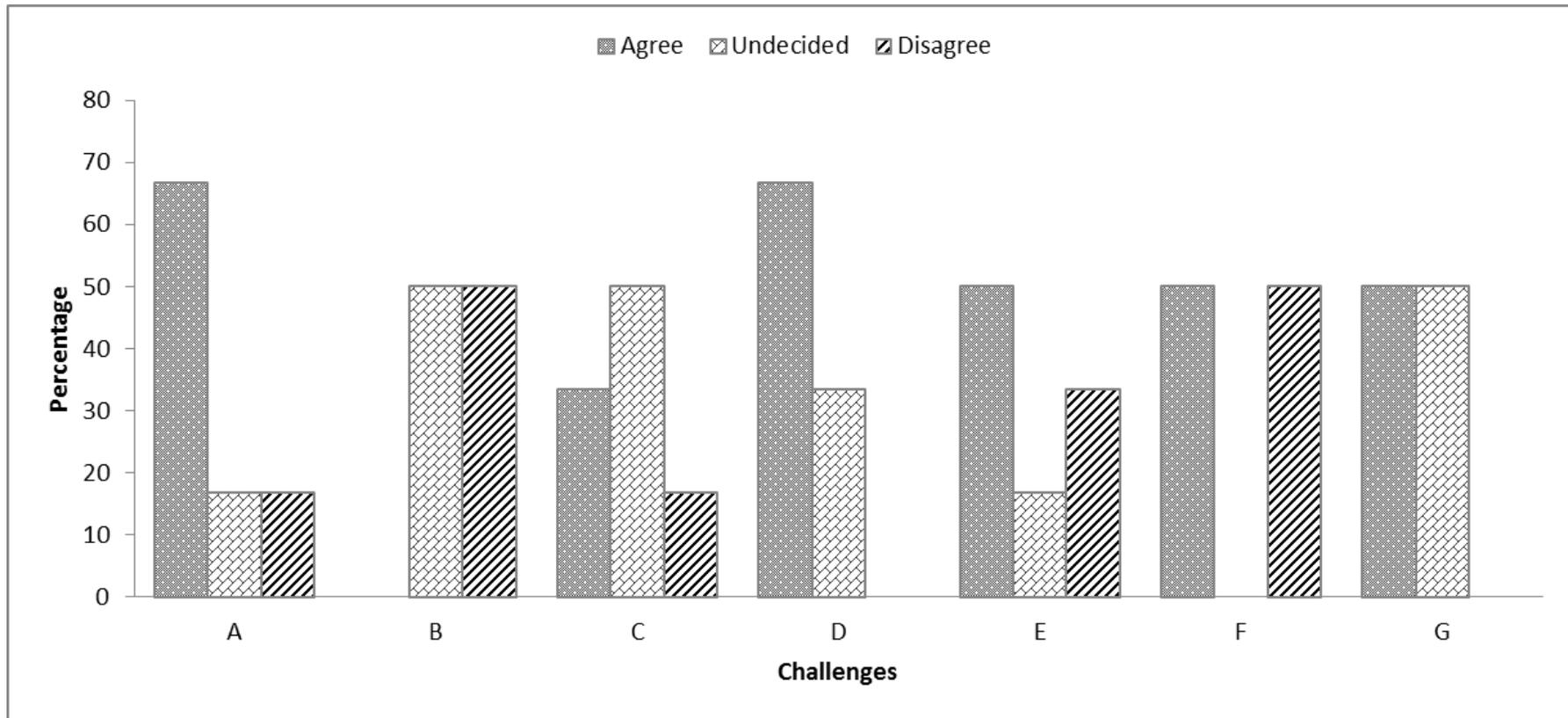


Figure 4.3 Percentage score of the three series (Agreed, Undecided and Disagreed) on the level of challenges facing EK Eco-rating Certification: A- Lack of adequate information on the EK Eco-rating Certification; B - Lack of credibility in the Certification; C - Challenges in filling the self-assessment application tool; D - The EK Eco-rating Certification is expensive therefore unaffordable; E - The EK Eco-rating lacks endorsement from government and relevant agencies; F-Not sure of the Certification benefits; and G -The procedure to attain certification is long and tedious.

In relation to the statement that lack of credibility is a cause for failing to apply for EK Eco-rating Certification, 50% of the respondents (Fig. 4.3) disagreed whereas 50% (2 respondents) were undecided. This could explain that the certification is credible. However, according to EK (personal interview) lack of an international recognition and endorsement by other major certification bodies places the Eco-rating Certification Scheme at a disadvantage. Buckley (2002) explains certification systems credibility is vital in making tangible impact on the sustainability of business practices and to be regarded as reliable, valid award to the market.

On whether the respondents experienced challenges in filling the self-assessment tool, 33.3% (Fig.4.3) agreed (2 respondents) whereas 50% were undecided (3 respondents) and 16.6% disagreed (1 respondent) with the statement. This indicates the self-assessment tool is not easy to fill. However a significant number were undecided which could be attributed to the fact that they had not attempted to fill in the Eco-rating Certification self-assessment tool.

On the statement that EK Eco-rating Certification is expensive therefore unaffordable, four (4) respondents agreed (66.6%) whereas two (2) respondents (33.3%) were undecided (Table 4.1). These shows the certification costs could be a major inhibitor for potential facilities to apply for assessment. The results are in line with the view of EK (personal interview) that a significant number of clients find the EK Eco-rating Certification expensive therefore unaffordable for their business operations. This in turn limits medium size tourism businesses from applying for certification as the clients are expected to support the entire process. Ecotourism Kenya (2013) confirms that interested applicants are required to pay a standard application fee (150 USD) and pay subsequent certification fees (500 USD, 1000 USD and 1500 USD based on the level of rating attained – Bronze, Silver and Gold respectively). They are in addition required to offer, one to two night accommodation for the auditors depending on the size of the facility to facilitate the site audit process.

In relation to the statement that EK Eco-rating lacks endorsement from government and relevant agencies, 50% of respondents (Fig. 4.3) agreed. This was confirmed by EK Secretariat (personal interview) who noted that substantial number of potential clients felt that lack of endorsement from government and relevant agencies such as Kenya Tourism Board does not spell the need for engaging or attaining the certification. According to EK Secretariat (personal interview) the Eco-rating Certification also does not receive funding from the government or donations but fully depends on the application and certification fees. WTO(2007) explains that the funding mechanism for application, verification and certification processes is a crucial and critical element for the success of any certification system. EK Secretariat further explained (personal interview) that inadequate infrastructure such as office equipment including computers, printers, cameras are a challenge in effectively running the organization's program. In addition a Key EK informant (personal interview) noted that the Eco-rating Certification relies on one vehicle to facilitate site verification audits which is old, prone to mechanical problems and serves the other core organization's programs.

On whether the respondents were not sure of certification benefits, three (3) disagreed (Table 4.1) indicating they were aware of the benefits; however three (3) indicated they are still unaware of the benefits. According to EK (2013) one of the major benefits of Eco-rating Certification is publicity for certified facilities. This is however, hampered by insufficient funds (EK Secretariat, Personal interview). 50% of the respondents agreed that the procedure to attain EK Eco-rating certification is long and tedious whereas 50% were undecided which is an indication that the certification procedure is cumbersome.

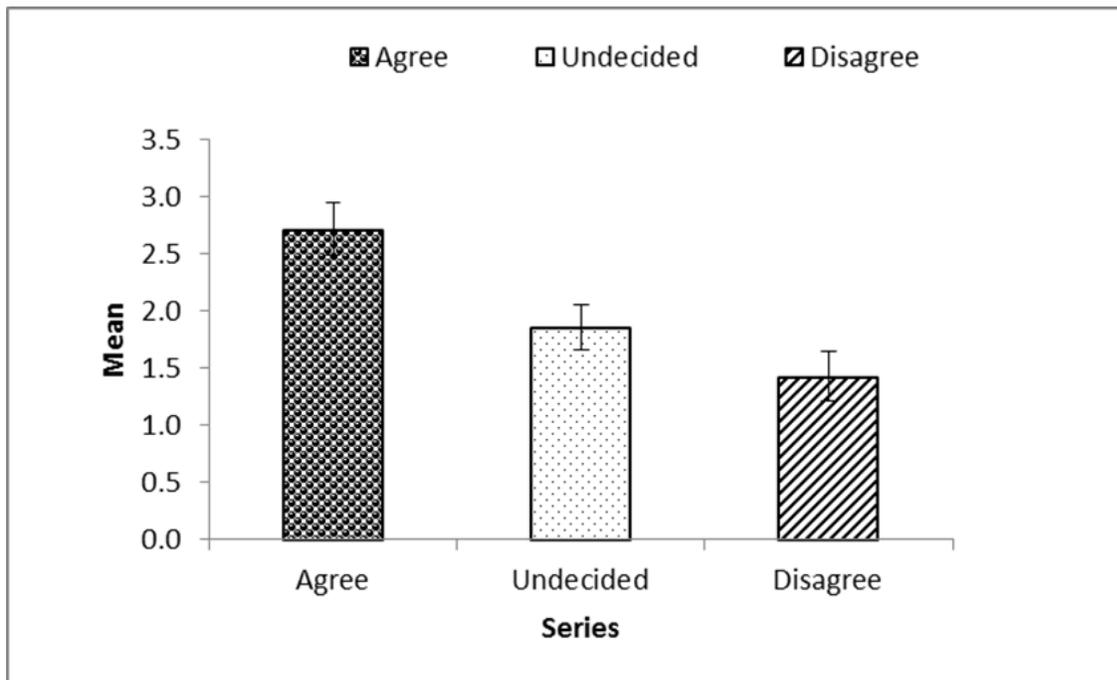


Figure 4.4 Mean score for each of the three series (Agree, Undecided, and Disagree) on challenges facing the growth of EK according to the institutions interviewed

Figure 4.4 shows the mean score of each of the three series (Agree, Undecided, and Disagree) on challenges facing the growth of EK, according to the facilities interviewed. The mean of agreement with challenges was 2.7, which was 45% whereas the mean of disagreement was 1.4 (23.8%). Statistical comparison between responses for agreeing and disagreeing with the suggested challenges showed that there was significant agreement with the suggested challenges ($P < 0.05$; t -statistic = 0.095, $n=7$) as hindrances to certification. Similarly, the mean of Agreed series was also significantly higher than that of the Undecided series (t -statistic = 2.41, $n=7$). This showed that there was a general agreement with the suggested challenges which implies that the challenges are of equal concern in the Eco-rating Certification Scheme.

4.3 Environmental benefits of the EK's Eco-rating Certification Scheme

This section compares a certified facility - Kicheche Mara Camp (KMC) and a non-certified – Tipilikwani Mara Camp (TMC) to determine the environmental benefits of EK's Eco-rating Certification. Out of a total 202 points (Table 4.2), KMC attained a score of 173 points whereas

TMC scored 78 points which accounts for 85.64% and 38.61% respectively. Figure 4.5 illustrates the comparative analysis for KMC and TMC based on the percentage scores obtained from the environmental components studied.

Table 4.2: Scores on various environmental components between KMC and TMC

Environmental Components	KMC SCORES	TMC SCORES	ATTAINABLE SCORE
Environmental Policies	14	3	14
Environmental Conservation	17	7	17
Wastewater Management	22	13	28
Solid Waste Management	30.5	8	32
Pollution	18.5	12	22
Water	20	7	26
Energy	25	15	30
Purchasing & Supplies	9	4	13
Chemical Use	17	9	20
TOTAL	173	78	202

4.3.1 Environmental policies

Compliance of 100% (14 out of 14 points) was recorded by KMC whereas TMC attained 21.4% (3 out of 14 points) on environmental policies (Fig 4.5). High score at KMC was attributed to the existence and execution of an environmental management system (EMS) for its operations. According to Ecotourism Kenya (2013), a Gold rated facility should have a clear EMS detailing plan of action, responsible persons, timelines available and verifiable progress in its operations. This was evident at KMC with high levels of environmental performance, including presence of well communicated environmental policies. Interviews with the camp management indicated that, since their rating KMC has attained increased operational efficiency and achieved cost savings from their business. In comparison, TMC did not have an EMS or an environmental policy. Interviews with TMC management indicated that the operations were implemented through departmental heads. However, observations showed negligence in execution of allocated responsibilities and lack of monitoring by the management.

4.3.2 Environmental Conservation

A comparison for Environmental Conservation between KMC and TMC indicated 100% (17 out of 17 points) and 41.1% (7 out of 17 points) scores respectively (Fig 4.5). Observations showed the two facilities are built with consideration for low environmental impact (natural vegetation is relatively undisturbed), and little visual impact (blends with the natural surroundings) (Fig. 4.6)

KMC guest tents were equipped with a folder that contained elaborate information about the surrounding ecosystem. The Camp also had an information resource area equipped with publications on birdlife and wildlife to sensitize the guests. The facility in addition, had strategically fixed notice boards meant for staff communication. Interviews with the management indicated that arrival briefings were conducted for all visitors whereas frequent meetings were held to sensitize the staff. In contrast, TMC did not have any information to guest or staff on the surrounding ecosystem. Although visitor arrival briefings were conducted, observations showed the facility lacked proper communication channels for both staff and guests. Interviews with the management indicated KMC pays a prescribed fee specifically set for biodiversity and wildlife conservation activities whereas TMC did not have set fees but supported conservation issues on a needs basis.

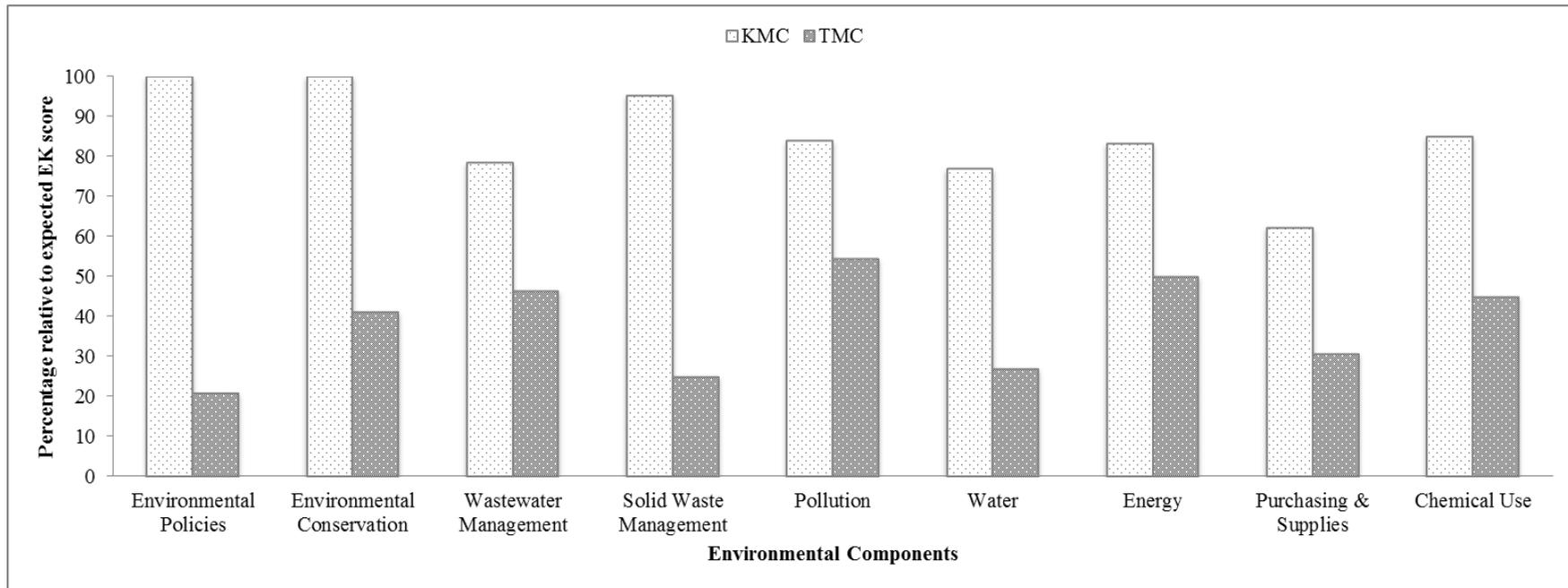


Figure 4.5 Comparison of relative score on various environmental components between KMC and TMC

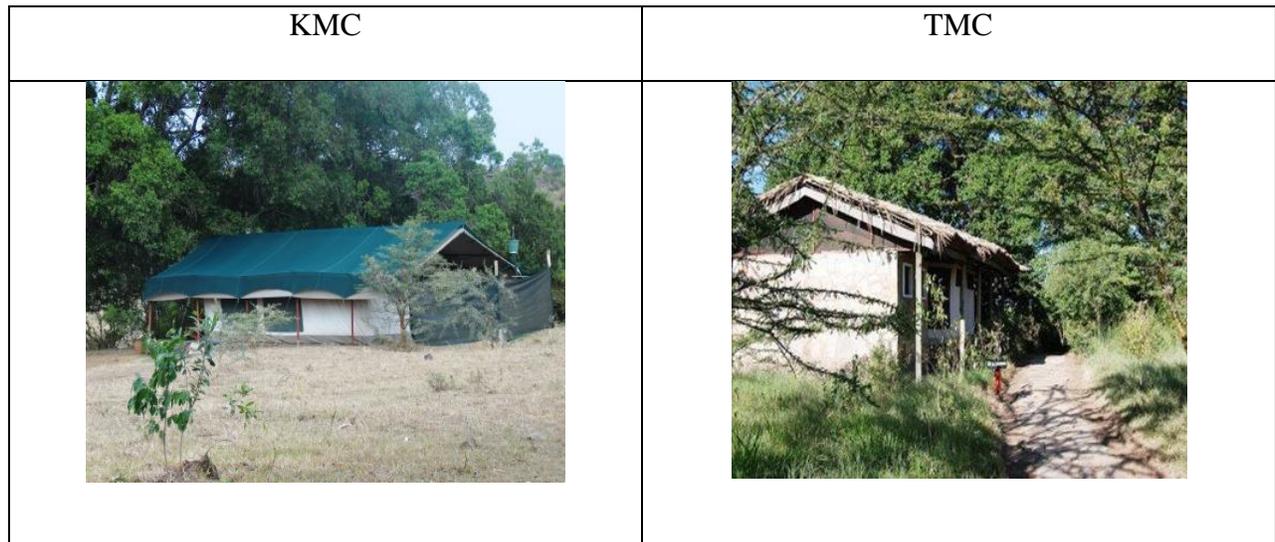


Figure 4.6: Comparison of the architectural designs at KMC and TMC

4.3.3 Wastewater and solid waste management

KMC scored 22 points whereas TMC attained 13 points out of a possible 28 points (Table 4.2) on the wastewater management which accounts for 78.5% and 46.4% respectively. Both facilities use soak pits to manage grey water from the guest tents, staff quarters and public areas. TMC lacked a site drainage plan whereas KMC had a clear site drainage plan illustrating the waste water treatment system. Although according to the management both camps monitor their waste water system, there were no supporting documents at TMC contrary to KMC which had supporting documents. At Kicheche camp, the facility has a written action plan to monitor its waste water system and has also conducted its effluent tests in compliance with relevant legal requirement. In KMC, grey water from the guest kitchen is managed through a grease trap – to filter out fats and oils - compartment before draining into a soak pit. However, TMC did not have a grease trap which resulted to an inefficient system with observations showing signs of a blockage. Black water effluent from the guest tents, staff quarters and public areas is managed through septic tanks, at the two facilities. At KMC, biological enzymes are added to facilitate sludge digestion hence no sludge emptying is needed; however the facility lacks adequate

innovation to recycle and re-use its waste water. On the contrary, TMC relies on the County government sludge exhaust system to dispose its waste.

KMC attained 95.3% (30.5 out of 32 points) compared to TMC (8 out of 32 points) 25% (Fig 4.5) on solid waste management. The varying percentages can be explained from the status of solid waste – plastics, glass, metallic tins, organic, electronic and construction debris – management at the two facilities. The high score at KMC can be attributed to the presence of an effective waste management system that involves segregation, communication and sensitization of both staff and guests and waste monitoring. KMC has adopted the waste management hierarchy, 3Rs - Reduce, Reuse and Recycle policy which has significantly assisted to minimise the waste generated by the facility. This is underlined by World Tourism Organization (2015), in a case study of waste management at Kicheche Laikipia that notes through the 3Rs initiative: reduce, reuse, and recycle; the hotel (Kicheche Laikipia) has made significant reduction on organic, plastic, glass and metallic waste. In contrast, TMC lacks a clear waste management plan resulting in ineffectiveness on its solid waste management. Lack of staff awareness on need for proper waste management was also evident at the Camp. For example waste littering (Fig. 4.7b) below, was observed at the TMC staff quarters section. Waste mixing – metallic tins, plastic, organic, polythene bags, and glass – was also noted at the facility compost pit which should ideally be designated for organic waste only.

Figure 4.7d shows an incineration chamber at TMC with mixed waste evidence that the facility does not practice waste separation; rather, waste is either incinerated or dumped in a nearby pit. In comparison KMC solid waste is efficiently managed. The waste is separated at source, with well labelled waste bins in place (Fig. 4.7a). Further sorting is done at a designated waste holding area. Organic waste (Fig. 4.7c) is composted and later used as manure at the kitchen garden.

In order to reduce on waste, KMC has implemented innovation measures such as monitoring its waste generation and composition and hence putting measures in place. This underlines Karanja and Shabanji(2015),stating that sound waste management require concerted effort from the management and reliable data on waste generation and composition. Kicheche Camp for instance minimises on waste packaging. Observations showed that vegetables and fruits are packed in reusable crates while meat and dairy products are stored in cool boxes. Waste glasses (wine bottles) are re-used. They are decorated with beads and used to serve water at the guest tents. Waste tetra-packs from milk packaging, are re-used for rearing indigenous tree seedlings within the camp whereas waste vehicle tyres (used tyres) are filled with soil and used for growing herbs within the premises.

Unlike TMC that uses cell battery torches (Fig. 4.7f) which leads to waste from cell batteries, KMC has adopted solar rechargeable torches (Fig. 4.7e). Drinking water (Fig. 4.7g) is served in 10 litre dispensers in the guest tents to reduce on waste whereas at TMC water is served in plastic bottles. The use of 10 litre dispensers as a waste reduction initiative is also echoed byKaranja and Shabanji(2015) stating that Kicheche Laikipia purchases water in 18 litre dispensers and serves in 10 litre vessels at the guest tents which reduce on the need to use bottled water.

Excess plastic, metallic and glass waste at KMC is collected on regular basis, monitored by weighing and transported for disposal to recycling companies unlike in TMC where it is incinerated. The efficiency in waste management at KMC can be attributed to Eco-rating Certification as noted by United Nations Environmental Programme(2001) stating thatthe improvement of waste management practices for a hospitality facility is a pivotal part of its overall green strategy.

KMC	TMC
 <p>a) Waste separation –labelled bins</p>	 <p>b) Waste burning and dumping</p>
 <p>c) Organic waste composting</p>	 <p>d) Incineration Chamber</p>
 <p>e) rechargeable torches</p>	 <p>f) Cell battery torch</p>
 <p>g) Drinking water in 10 litre dispenser</p>	 <p>h) Drinking water in plastic bottles</p>

Figure4.7: Waste management comparison at KMC and TMC

4.3.4 Pollution

Pollution refers to introduction of contaminants into the environment, mainly in the form of chemical substances, gases, noise, heat and light. Figure 4.5 shows the overall percentage score for KMC (84%) and TMC (54.5%) on pollution management. High score at KMC (18.5 out of 22 points) compared to TMC (12 out of 22 points) was attributed to presence of an effective management system for the camp. For example, KMC generator is fitted with muffler system to reduce on noise pollution. The camp pathways are fixed with low wattage bulbs to minimize on light pollution at night. In innovation, the camp has re-used obsolete fridges as storage cabins for clothes. However, lack of proper fuel storage at the facility which increased risk of pollution contributed to slightly low scores. In comparison TMC did not have a pollution management system. For instance, normal light bulbs were observed fixed on pathway lights, and the generator section is not sound proofed.

4.3.5 Water use management

In water usage, KMC attained 20 points whereas TMC scored 7 out of a total 26 points (Table 4.2) which accounts for 76.9% and 26.9% respectively (Fig 4.5). The high water conservation scores for KMC can be linked to the presence of a comprehensive water management plan, which has a clear monitoring action plan and specified conservation measures. A water meter is fixed at source to monitor consumption on a daily basis. Water baseline records are kept and analysed on a monthly basis. This assists the facility to set conservation targets and detect any anomalies on its water use. Various water conservation measures are in place which include guests' arrival briefing and sensitization through folders placed at the guest tents; staff sensitization during departmental meetings; the use of towel-talks (cards with information to encourage guests on the need to re-use towels). Interview with the management indicated the camp has a routine inspection schedule to monitor possible water leaks therefore reducing on any loss of water. The

guest tents are also fitted with safari showers - 20 litre bucket shower system (Fig. 4.8a) to reduce on water use.

In comparison, TMC does not have a water usage management plan. Unlike Kicheche, Tipilikwani does not monitor water usage neither can it promptly detect water loss through leaks, or account for its water consumption. The facility also uses high pressure shower heads (Fig. 4.8b) which are not fitted with flow reducers. Nonetheless inadequacies were also observed at KMC which had not made significant efforts to harvest rain water from its iron roofed staff restaurant.

KMC	TMC
 <p data-bbox="363 1163 602 1192">a)20 litre safari showers.</p>	 <p data-bbox="954 1163 1239 1192">b)high pressure shower heads</p>

Figure4.8: Shower system comparison at KMC and TMC

4.3.6 Energy use Management

In energy use management KMC attained 83.3% while TMC scored 50% (Fig 4.5). The high score (25 out of 30 points) in energy usage at KMC can be linked to the presence of a comprehensive energy usage plan which has clear targets with monitoring and conservation measures. In contrast, TMC does not have an energy conservation plan, set targets or adequate monitoring parameters. Figure4.5 shows both facilities have significantly invested in solar energy as the alternative source of power. Solar power in the two camps is used for lighting and pumping water from the boreholes.

In particular, KMC is entirely powered by solar energy (Fig. 4.9a) fixed with an inverter battery system and a backup generator with power output of 16.5 KVA. Solar power is used for lighting, water heating and running refrigerants. In water heating, the KMC has four (4) 300 litres solar water heating boilers. Liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) is used for cooking throughout whereas charcoal briquettes (Fig.4.9a) are used for baking in a fuel efficient oven. Remains from the charcoal dust are used to manually produce more briquettes. Energy production for KMC is metered and recorded at regular intervals to monitor consumption. Baseline records obtained from energy recording are kept and analysed on a monthly basis. This assists the facility to detect any anomalies in its power consumption and reduce on fuel usage from running its backup generator. Energy conservation is promoted through the use of energy saving bulbs, easily accessible main switches, guests' briefings upon arrival, and employees' sensitization during departmental meetings. Circuit breaks are installed to control consumption.

In contrast, TMC's main source of power is a diesel powered generator with an output of 100 KVA. As earlier noted, the facility has invested in solar power (Fig. 4.9b) inverter battery systems which run when the generators are off. Unlike KMC, water heating is done through the generators at TMC. On energy monitoring, TMC has not metered its power consumption making it difficult to account for power consumed. Nonetheless, the facility has invested in various measures to reduce its energy usage. The camp has for instance, installed approximately 75% of energy saving bulbs within the premises. In regard to cooking, the camp uses liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) for its guest and charcoal for staff quarters. Unlike Kicheche, Tipilikwani uses charcoal bought from the neighbouring towns which sustainability source could not be ascertained. Figure 4.9d illustrates bags of charcoal observed at the facility.

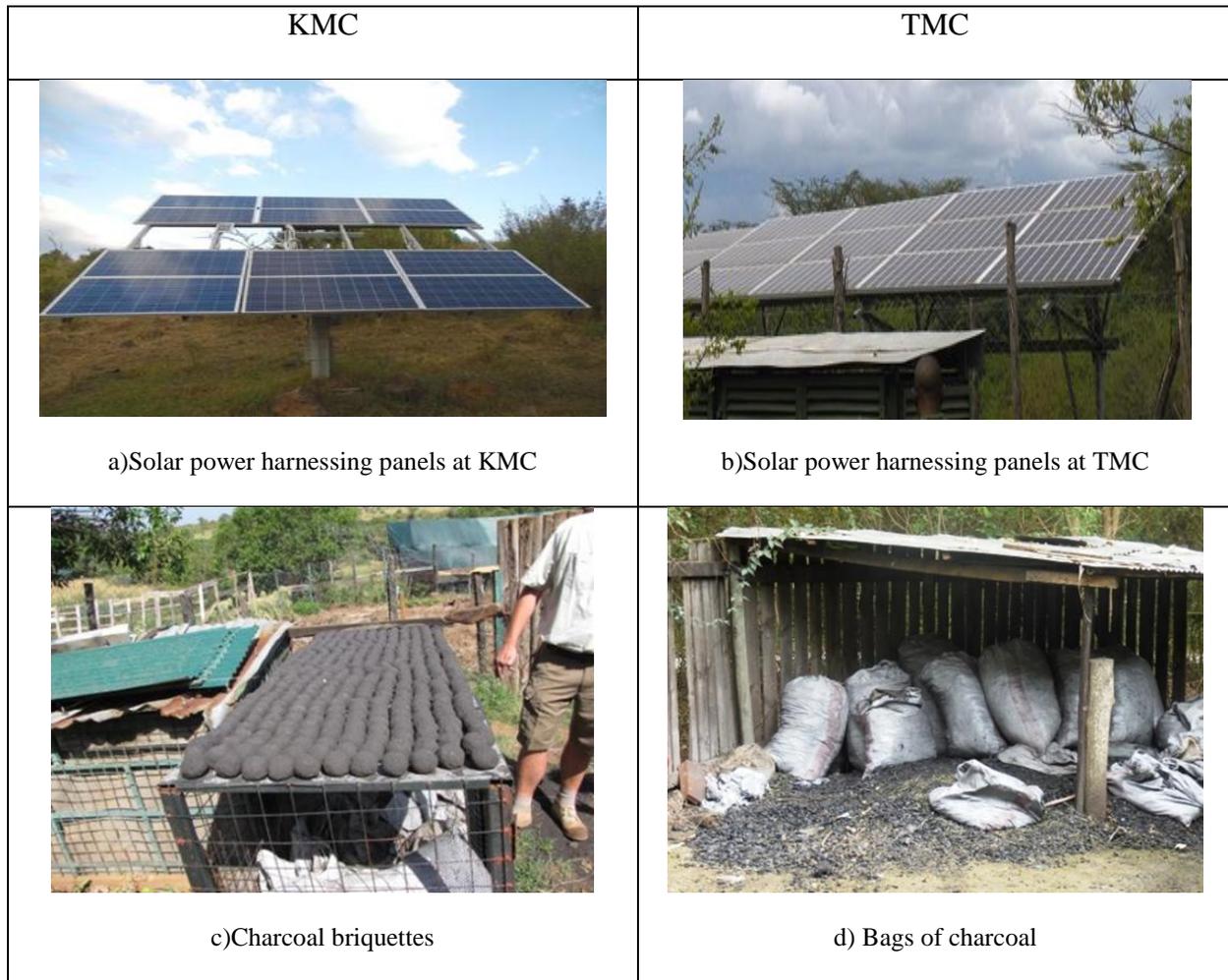


Figure4.9: Comparison on energy usage at KMC and TMC

4.3.7 Purchasing and supplies

In purchasing and supplies, KMC scored 9 out of 13 points(69.2%)whereas Tipilikwani scored 4 out of 13 points (30.7%)(Table4.2). The analysis indicates KMC is keen on ensuring sustainable purchasing of its products – buying in bulk to reduce wastage - as opposed to TMC. This was evident for observations made in the two facilities food’s store and interviews with the management. However both facilities also indicated inadequate policies to guide on purchasing and supplies. For instance, Kicheche Camp only purchases sustainably where possible and does not have guiding policies to its suppliers

4.3.8 Chemical use

On chemical use, KMC attained 85% (17 out of 20 points) whereas Tipilikwani scored 45% (9 out of 20 points) (Fig 4.5). KMC uses biodegradable chemicals as was noted in the laundry and bathroom facilities. Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) records for usage of the chemicals are also available. In comparison, Tipilikwani uses contemporary soaps (non-biodegradable). Interviews with the management also revealed there were no MSDS at TMC for the available chemicals. However, KMC also showed inadequacy in chemical monitoring and usage. For instance, biodegradable soaps are only issued to guests whereas staff use non-biodegradable soaps.

According to Bien (2006), certification will not fill your business with new clients but it does have perceived benefits. Based on this study, it is evident from a certified and a non-certified facility under similar scoring criteria that EK Eco-rating Certification plays a significant role in enhancing environmental conservation and management of accommodation facilities. These results highlighted a vast gap on the environmental conservation and management at the two facilities which can be attributed to the fact that KMC is a certified facility that has implemented the EK Eco-rating Certification Criteria unlike TMC.

CHAPTER FIVE

5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The overriding purpose of this study was to assess the role of Ecotourism Kenya's, Eco-rating Certification Scheme in promoting responsible tourism. This chapter therefore, provides conclusions and recommendations based on the specific research questions identified in the study.

5.1 Conclusion

In relation to the first research question, it was evident that the Eco-rating Certification Scheme has impressively grown since inception despite the existing challenges. The growth trends indicate a logarithmic type of growth that shows a promising start which was later slowed down by various constraints making it harder to achieve Ecotourism Kenya(EK) goal of promoting responsible and sustainable tourism through certification. Progress is however seen in the later years where the annual number of certified facilities increased to a high record of 102 certified facilities seen in period 2012 – 2013. In general inference, this can be concluded to be slow growth and low impact as it accounts for 10.2% of the more than 1,000 viable facilities for Eco-rating Certification (Key informant interview).

Based on the second research question, the study identified lack of awareness on the Certification, cost of certification, long and tedious application process as the main challenges limiting its growth. However, statistical analysis of the challenges showed that they were of equal concern in the Eco-rating Certification Scheme. In reference to the third research question, it is evident from the comparison of a certified and a non-certified facility put under similar scoring criteria that EK's Eco-rating Certification plays a significant role in enhancing environmental conservation and management of an accommodation facility.

5.2 Recommendations

- i. EK should ensure an annual growth assessment study or research on the Eco-rating Certification. This should identify challenges, timely seek solutions, and ensure replicable measures are highlighted in subsequent years. In addition, EK should establish a customer complaints register to ensure raised issues are corrected and to capitalise on the strong areas.
- ii. EK should explore the possibility of engaging relevant institutions such as NEMA, TRA, and KEBS to enhance visibility and endorsement as an entity that has government support. A comprehensive marketing/promotional strategy targeting potential and certified facilities, and consumers should be developed to enhance awareness of the eco-rating certification scheme.
- iii. The scheme should explore the possibility of reviewing the certification fee to be based on the size of businesses such as bed capacity, visitors or turnover which would ensure enterprises otherwise left out, afford the certification. In addition, a review of the self-evaluation tool (questionnaire) and application procedure should be done to reduce its bulkiness which deters interested clients.
- iv. It would also be of great interest for future researches to conduct a cost-benefit analysis, where full costs and benefits (both tangible and perceived) to certified facilities participating in the certification are assessed. This should help to justify certification to non-members, demonstrate the distinction on environmental performance between certified and non-certified facilities, and also provide motivation for re-assessments.
- v. Having existed for more than ten years, the Eco-rating Certification should be a hub for certification, innovation and environmental best practices. Research should be conducted and success stories or case studies published to enhance responsible tourism and promote the certification.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Data collection schedule

My name is Andrew Karanja currently undertaking a research in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a Master's of Science in Environmental Management at South Eastern Kenya University. My study is on assessing the role of Ecotourism Kenya's Eco-rating Certification Scheme in promoting responsible tourism. I am also assessing the growth of Eco-rating Certification Scheme between 2003 and 2013.

In this regard, I wish to request for the certification data as noted below. The information obtained from this research is purely for academic purposes. The input will remain confidential.

Year	Certification levels and number awarded per year		
	Gold	Silver	Bronze
2003			
2004			
2005			
2006			
2007			
2008			
2009			
2010			
2011			
2012			
2013			

Appendix B: Interview Questions for Key Informants

I wish to carry out an exercise on assessing the growth of Ecotourism Kenya's Eco-rating Certification Scheme in promoting responsible tourism. As an interested/affected party, I kindly request for your comments and information on the below questions. Your input will be highly appreciated.

1. How can you describe the growth trends of the EK certification since inception?
2. In your view, has the Certification achieved its goal of promoting responsible tourism?
3. In your opinion, has the certification had any environmental benefits? Yes NO
 - a) If yes, which benefits?
 - b) If no, what could be the attribution?
4. Do you feel the certification could be undergoing any growth challenges? Yes NO
If yes, what are some of the challenges?
5. Please share any other relevant information that could assist in the study?

Appendix C: Questionnaire for EK Eco-rating Certification interested clients

My name is Andrew Karanja currently undertaking a research in fulfilment of the requirements for a Master's of Science in Environmental Management at South Eastern Kenya University. My study is on assessing the role of Ecotourism Kenya's Eco-rating Certification Scheme in promoting responsible tourism. Am also assessing the challenges the certification scheme is experiencing in its growth.

As an interested client in Eco-rating Certification, I kindly request for your comments and information as detailed below. The information obtained from this research is purely for academic purposes. Your identity and input will remain confidential.

Listed are some of the challenges, to what extent do you agree with the statements? Please tick where appropriate: Agree, Undecided, Disagree Agree

Tick ✓ where applicable

Variable	Agree	Undecided	Disagree Agree
Lack of adequate information on the EK Eco-rating Certification			
Lack of credibility in the Certification			
Challenges in filling the self-assessment application tool			
The EK Eco-rating Certification is expensive therefore unaffordable			
The EK Eco-rating lacks endorsement from government and relevant agencies			
Not sure of the Certification benefits			
The procedure to attain certification is long and tedious.			

a) If any other, please specify

- i.
- ii.
- iii.
- iv.
- v.

b) What are some of the solutions would you propose to the identified challenges?

- i.
- ii.
- iii.
- iv.
- v

Thank you!

Appendix D: Interview Questions for Key Stakeholders

I wish to carry out an exercise on assessing the growth of Ecotourism Kenya's Eco-rating Certification Scheme in promoting responsible tourism. As an interested/affected party, I kindly request for your comments and information on the below questions. Your input will be highly appreciated.

1. In your view, has the Certification achieved its goal of promoting responsible tourism?

2. In your opinion, has the certification had any environmental benefits to the industry?
 - a) If yes, which benefits?

 - a) If no, what could be the attribution?

3. What are the existing opportunities in your organization that EK Eco-rating Certification Scheme could optimize on?

4. Please share any other relevant information that could assist in the study?

Appendix E: Eco-rating Certification Criteria

	Parameters	Bronze	Silver	Gold
1	Environmental Policies	<p>Demonstrate awareness of environmental issues within their setting</p> <p>Show demonstrable evidence of addressing these issues; water and energy</p> <p>Have a vision of conserving the environment within the organization</p>	<p>Show a clear progress in responding to environmental issues by improved management of energy water</p> <p>Evidence of drafted EMS and EMP including the intention</p>	<p>Responsively and conclusively addressing water, energy and waste management within the setting</p> <p>EMS and current EMP detailing plan of action, responsible persons and timeline available and progress is verifiable and positive</p> <p>Evidence of proper translation of policies into action</p>
2	Environmental Conservation	<p>Demonstrate effort in mitigating negative effects and protecting natural environment</p> <p>Demonstrate positive partnership (s) past or present concern with protecting the natural environment</p> <p>Environmental consideration in building renovation processes (materials used)</p> <p>The business should have EMS</p>	<p>There should be evidence of direct involvement to reduce negative impacts and protection of natural environment</p> <p>The business should demonstrate involvement with relevant conservation organization in protection of natural environment</p> <p>The business design should demonstrate satisfactory consideration in the design and subsequent renovation</p> <p>EMS and EMP should adequately address conservation concerns surrounding the business</p>	<p>Effective action in mitigating negative effects and protecting natural the environment</p> <p>Verifiable relevant and positive partnership(s) with environmental conservation orgs. To protect natural environ.</p> <p>Environmental consideration in facility design (including use of materials) Effort in maintaining pristine environment</p> <p>EMS and EMP incorporating components of environmental conservation</p>
3	Wastewater Management	<p>The business should demonstrate proper wastewater management</p> <p>Evidence of regular testing of samples in compliance to legislation</p> <p>Disposal of waste water should not compromise the environment or the health of living things</p>	<p>The business should show that wastewater has been adequately managed</p> <p>The business must in addition demonstrate evidence of compliance with minimum regulatory requirements</p> <p>The EMS and EMP should demonstrate adequately how wastewater will be managed</p>	<p>Evidence of regular testing with parameters and compliance with minimum regulatory requirements</p> <p>Conclusive plan integrated in EMS and EMP.</p>
4	Solid Waste Management	<p>Should demonstrate effort in waste management</p> <p>Waste should be separated at the source</p> <p>Waste disposal should be in line with legislation and law</p>	<p>Waste management techniques should be evidently functional</p> <p>Evidence should show that solid waste management at source is efficient and effective</p> <p>EMS and EMP should</p>	<p>Outstanding effort in reducing solid waste production</p> <p>Evidence of precise procedures for solid waste management</p> <p>Showcase innovative methods of waste reduction</p>

			conclusively cover solid waste management	strategies Conclusive plan of waste management integrated in EMS and EMP
5	Pollution	Demonstrate clear understanding of potential pollutants within their operation and how to handle them	There should be evidence within the EMP to show that the business is working to reduce pollutants where applicable	outstanding evidence of abating environmental pollutants (emissions, effluent)
6	Water Policy and Usage	The business must be in compliance with laws regarding water extraction and use Water extraction should be ethical and not in contradiction to community usage There should be demonstrable evidence of involvement in protection of water catchments or prospective plan Evidence of policies addressing water use should be in place	The business must show evidence of addressing water consumption through the EMP Water abstraction and consumption must be in tandem with corresponding legislation The organization must show evidence of participation of protection of watershed and water catchment areas	Techniques of wastewater management (application of Innovation; Flow reducers etc.) Have a conclusive water policy addressing usage and includes benchmarking and elaborated plans to reduce consumption The policies should show responsiveness to local, national and international consumption regulations and strategies Policy should also reflect on protection of source and watershed
7	Energy Policy and Usage	The business must demonstrate effort in reduction of energy consumption	The business must show clearly documentation of energy consumption The EMP must address the issue of energy consumption reduction adequately	Remarkable reduction of energy consumption comparable to the facility Careful consideration in choice of energy source (the source cannot be orthogonal to sustainability efforts) Clear benchmarking with pragmatic approaches to consumption reduction
8	Socio-cultural and Socio-economic considerations	The business must demonstrate sensitivity to the community through evidence of contribution and participation in their well-being	The business must demonstrate reasonable support of the local community through CSR Partnership with the community should be objective and targeted Staff and employment should be considerate of socio-economic state Reduction of negative impacts to the community	Competent and sustainable approach of channelling help to the local community (job offers, CSR, etc.) Evidence of partnership agreements where they exist Sensible and considerable remuneration of staff Evidence of improved community well-being (economic and cultural sustainability)
9	Health & Safety	The business must be in compliance with health and safety regulations concerning the hotel and workers	Absolute compliance with health and safety regulations concerning the hotel and hotel workers evidenced by	Absolute compliance with health and safety regulations concerning the hotel and hotel workers evidenced by

			documentation	documentation
10	Documentation and records	The business must provide minimum documentation namely EMS, mission statement and vision	There should be verifiable evidence that documentation is in place or is actually on-going	Clear documentation EMS, EMP, monitoring docs (water, electricity, gas, waste, effluent) Use of collected data in managing environmental performance of the facility
11	Visitor education	The organization should be able to demonstrate that they educate visitors on environmental issues	The business should show evidence of implementation of effective communication about their environment	Effective communication and perceived understanding of the organization's ethos by visitors
12	Staff Education and awareness	There should be evidence that the staff are adequately educated concerning environmental conservation	The hotel should show a developing schedule on staff training both internal and external regarding environmental conservation Staff should demonstrate awareness of environmental issues	Regular staff training programmes Verifiable competence of staff of knowledge and support of organization's ethos (contractual commitment, etc.)
13	Programme sustainability	There should be adequate evidence of clear leadership of environmental issues	The business organization should demonstrate functional inclusion of departments in environmental management There should be evidence of formation of spearheading team	There should be an effective team of multidisciplinary staff spearheading environmental and socio-economic issues within the hotel There should be a clear organizational structure and evidence of how decision processes are made and reached

Appendix F: Checklist and Score Sheet for EK Eco-rating Certification (Source Ecotourism Kenya, (2009))

		Yes	No	N/A	Comments	Marks
1.1	Environmental Policies (14pts)					
	Does the operator have an environmental policy?					
a)	'Yes' with evidence(2 pts) 'Yes' with explanation but no evidence/clear policy (1pt); 'No' (0pt)					
b)	How is the policy communicated to:					
	(i) Employees? (5 pts)					
	Visuals e.g. posters, notices, brochures (1pt for each up to 2)					
	Verbally e.g. briefings, meetings, etc. (1pt for each up to 2)					
	Other (1pt)					
	(ii) Guests? (5pts)					
	Visuals e.g. posters, notices, brochures (1pt for each up to 2)					
	Verbally e.g. briefings, meetings, etc. (1pt for each up to 2)					
	Other (1pt)					
c)	(i) Does the operator have effective EMS (2pts)					
	'Yes' with evidence (2pts); 'No' or unclear system (0pt)					
2	Environmental Conservation (17pts)					
a)	How many measures are in place to retain the natural character of the environment? E.g. planting indigenous flora, waste management, staff & guest communication on environmental performance, visitor impact management strategies (up to 7measures)					
b)	Is there clear demonstration and practice concerning the environment, sustainable resources and respect with regards to:-					
	(i) Facility design Clear demonstration of concern for the environment, sustainable resource use (up to 2 pts)					
	(ii) Renovation of structures: Clear demonstration of concern for the environment, sustainable resource use and/or local culture (up to 2 pts)					
	(iii) Plants on the property: No new vegetation introduced, not even gardens (2 pts); only indigenous plants introduced (1 pt) Other measures like reducing exotics (1 pt) Unclear or no measures (0 pts)					
	(iv) Does the hotel have regular campfires? None at all (2pts); done but concern for environment demonstrated (1pt); done with no concern for environment demonstrated (0pts)					
	(v) Are floodlights used within the property? None used at all (2pts); used but concern for environment demonstrated (1pt); used with no concern for environment demonstrated (0pts)					
1.3	Waste water Management (28pts)					
a)	Is there a site drainage plan? Yes with evidence (2pts); explained but no evidence (1pt); none (0pts)					
b)	Is there evidence of an effective management system for; -					
	Storm water: Presence of an effective management system (2 pts) Absence of an effective management system (0 pts)					
	Waste water from kitchen: Presence of an effective management system (2 pts) Absence of an effective management system (0 pts)					
	grey water from guest rooms: Presence of an effective management system (2 pts) Absence of an effective management system (0 pts)					
	grey water from staff rooms: Presence of an effective management system (2 pts) Absence of an effective management system (0 pts)					
	waste water from laundry: Presence of an effective management system (2 pts) Absence of an effective management system (0 pts)					
	sewage from guest rooms: Presence of an effective management system (2 pts) Absence of an effective management system (0 pts)					
	sewage from staff rooms: Presence of an effective management system (2 pts) Absence of an effective management system (0 pts)					
	sewage from public areas: Presence of an effective management system (2 pts) Absence of an effective management system (0 pts)					
	sewage from staff quarters; Presence of an effective management system (2 pts) Absence of an effective management system (0 pts)					
	Overall evaluation of the facility's waste water management status Demonstrated awareness of and concern for responsible waste water management (1pt)					

	Presence of measures to avoid, minimize and/or recycle (3pts) Significance innovation, research and/or investment in waste water management (2pts) Effectiveness and/or suitability of the chosen systems (2pts)					
1.4	Solid Waste Management (32)					
a)	Is there evidence of an effective management system for					
	Food waste; Presence of an effective management system (2 pts) Absence of an effective management system (0 pts)					
	Used cooking oil; Presence of an effective management system (2 pts) Absence of an effective management system (0 pts)					
	Waste fuel oil; Presence of an effective management system (2 pts) Absence of an effective management system (0 pts)					
	Plastic; Presence of an effective management system (2 pts) Absence of an effective management system (0 pts)					
	Discarded tyres; Presence of an effective management system (2 pts) Absence of an effective management system (0 pts)					
	Metal scrap; Presence of an effective management system (2 pts) Absence of an effective management system (0 pts)					
	Construction debris; Presence of an effective management system (2 pts) Absence of an effective management system (0 pts)					
	Glass, light bulbs, etc. Presence of an effective management system (2 pts) Absence of an effective management system (0 pts)					
	Electronic waste; Presence of an effective management system (2 pts) Absence of an effective management system (0 pts)					
	Batteries; Presence of an effective management system (2 pts) Absence of an effective management system (0 pts)					
	Biomedical waste; Presence of an effective management system (2 pts) Absence of an effective management system (0 pts)					
	Overall evaluation of the facility's solid waste management status Demonstrated awareness of and concern for responsible solid waste management (1pt) Presence of measures to avoid, minimize and/or recycle solids wastes (3 pts) Significant innovation, research and/or investment in waste management (3pts) Effectiveness and/or suitability of the chosen system (3pts)					
1.5	Pollution (22pts)					
	Is there evidence of an effective management system for					
	Chemical substances; Presence of an effective management system (2 pts) Absence of an effective management system (0 pts)					
	Gases; Presence of an effective management system (2 pts) Absence of an effective management system (0 pts)					
	Noise; Presence of an effective management system (2 pts) Absence of an effective management system (0 pts)					
	Light; Presence of an effective management system (2 pts) Absence of an effective management system (0 pts)					
	Air; Presence of an effective management system (2 pts) Absence of an effective management system (0 pts)					
	Heat; Presence of an effective management system (2 pts) Absence of an effective management system (0 pts)					
	Overall evaluation of the facility's pollution mitigation measures Demonstrated awareness of and concern for responsible pollution mitigation (1pt) Presence of measures to avoid, minimize and/or minimize pollution (3 pts) Significant innovation, research and/or investment (3pts) Effectiveness and/or suitability of the chosen systems (3pts)					
1.6	Resource Use					
1.6.1	Water (26pts)					
	Overall evaluation of the facility's water usage and management status Demonstrated awareness of and concern for sustainability (1pt) Presence of measures to avoid, minimize and/or recycle (up to 3 pts) Significant innovation, research and/or investment (up to 3pts)					
a)						
b)	(i) Is there a water management plan (1pt)					
	(ii) If yes, how it is executed					
	Clarity and specificity of plan (goals, targets, etc.) (up to 2pts) Clarity of execution (allocation of responsibility, clear timeframes etc.) (up to 2pts) Present measures to save water (up to 4pts)					
c)	How do you promote water conservation among your employees and guests? Visuals e.g. posters, notices, brochures (up to 4pts) Oral/audio e.g. briefings, meetings, etc. (up to 4pts)					

	Other (2 pts)						
1.6.2	Energy (30pts)						
a)	What is the contribution of alternative energy sources to the total energy requirement in the facility?						
	70% and above (5pts)						
	30 - 69% (3pts)						
	1 - 30% (2pts); Non-use of alternative energy (0 pts)						
	Overall evaluation of the facility's energy use and management status Demonstrated awareness of and concern for sustainability(1pt) Presence of measures to avoid, minimize and/or recycle (up to 3 pts) Significant innovation, research and/or investment (up to 3pts)						
b)	(i) Is there an energy management plan? (1 pt)						
	(ii) If yes how it is executed (attachments where possible) Clarity and specificity of plan (goals, targets, etc.) (up to 2pts) Clarity of execution (allocation of responsibility, clear timeframes etc.) up to 2pts) Present measures to save energy (up to 4pts)						
c)	How do you promote energy conservation among your employees and guests? + Visuals e.g. posters, notices, brochures (up to 4pts) Oral/audio e.g. briefings, meetings, etc. (up to 4pts) Other (2 pts)						
1.7	Chemical use (20pts)						
a)	Is there evidence of concern for the environment/sustainable resource and concern for safety and hygiene demonstrated with regards to chemical use in:-						
	Washing utensils; Presence of an effective management system and environmental concern (2 pts) Absence of an effective management system and environmental concern (0 pts)						
	Washing clothes and linen; ; Presence of an effective management system and environmental concern (2 pts) Absence of an effective management system and environmental concern (0 pts)						
	Cleaning floors;; Presence of an effective management system and environmental concern (2 pts) Absence of an effective management system and environmental concern (0 pts)						
	Gardening; Presence of an effective management system and environmental concern (2 pts) Absence of an effective management system and environmental concern (0 pts)						
	Fuel handling and storage; Presence of an effective management system and environmental concern (2 pts) Absence of an effective management system and environmental concern (0 pts)						
	LPG handling and storage; Presence of an effective management system and environmental concern (2 pts) Absence of an effective management system and environmental concern (0 pts)						
b)	Overall evaluation of the facility's chemical use and management status Demonstrated awareness of and concern for sustainability(2pt) Presence of measures to avoid, minimize and/or recycle (up to 3 pts) Significant innovation, research and/or investment (up to 3pts)						
1.8	Purchasing and supplies (13pts)						
a)	(i) Is there evidence of a clear purchase plan/policy/strategy? (1 pt)						
	(ii) Are there environmental considerations when procuring or purchasing goods? (1 pt)						
b)	Is there evidence of concern for the environment/sustainable resource considerations demonstrated with regards to the facility's overall purchasing and supplies practices in:						
	Foodstuff (up to 2 pts)						
	Curios (up to 2 pts)						
	Others (up to 2 pts)						
c)	Overall evaluation of the facility's purchasing and supplies practices Presence of measures to avoid, minimize and/or recycle (up to 3 pts) Significant innovation, research and/or investment (up to 2pts)						

Name of facility