



# Feedback Report: Ocean Sports & Tourism Workshop

28 July 2022

## Background

The Ocean Innovation Africa July Stakeholder workshop series was held in honour of African Day of Oceans and Seas. The intention of the workshops was to facilitate action on some of the challenges and solutions raised during discussions at the annual Ocean Innovation Africa summit.

The “Ocean Sports and Tourism” workshop looked at key challenges and opportunities for development of these industries in Africa.

This report is a summary of points raised during that discussion and as such statements do not necessarily reflect consensus from the workshop participants, nor the viewpoint of Ocean Innovation Africa.

## Participants

- Chair: **Rex Bowden** (Ocean Innovation Africa)
- Co-Chair: **Talent Moyo** (Cape Peninsula University of Technology)
- **Pauline Van Der Spuy** (City of Cape Town)
- **Bruce Tedder** (BlueCape, SABBEX)
- **Kate Rivett-Carnac** (Independent Researcher and Advisor)
- **Vincent Shacks** (Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa)
- **Alushca Ritchie**: (World Federation of Tourist Guide Associations, UN World Tourism Organisation, Cape Town Tourism)
- **Marghuerite Hofmeyer** (Sentinel Oceans Alliance)
- **Leonie Andereya** (Radisson Red Hotel)
- **Amanda Dixon** (Live Company Sports and Events, Strandloper Project)
- **Zandile Ndhlovu** (Freediving Instructor, Black Mermaid Foundation)
- **Lindani Mchunu** (V&A Waterfront)



## Community Engagement and Empowerment

Community stewardship of ocean resources is one of the most effective ways of ensuring sustainable use of coastal spaces. Communities need to find value in the ocean for this to take place, and to understand how conservation contributes to that value.

In Africa many communities do not benefit as operators or participants of ocean sports and tourism. This can be due to lack of knowledge of available options in the area or to lack of access – equipment, training, transport etc.

To ensure sustainable, inclusive development of these industries in Africa considerable outreach and investment is needed to enable participation of local communities. It is important to keep in mind that sustainability requires privilege in many respects. Messages to communities must be followed through by empowering them with knowledge and skills needed to take advantage of opportunities.

### Opportunity for action (South Africa)

- The V&A Waterfront has a lot of unused space in low season and is in a prime position to facilitate interaction between visitors, communities and the ocean. Potential for arrangement where V&A provides space and external group(s) organises outreach activities.

## Building awareness about sustainable ocean sports & tourism in Africa

Educational campaigns need to be geared towards their target audience (policy makers / tourism & sports operators / communities / tourists) to be effective: relevant to their activities and conveyed in a way they understand. Messaging should take into consideration the audience context and what they care about.

There are a number of educational campaigns aimed at key stakeholder groups, but it is important to make the average member of public aware of available opportunities as well. Sporting events are a great way of raising awareness through messaging and activities.

### Opportunity for action

- Highlight existing opportunities to public in more tangible and welcoming manner – open days, site tours etc. – encourage people to step outside their immediate environment. V&A would be ideal location for open day in Cape Town.

## Marketing sustainable ocean sports and tourism

Sustainability and inclusion need to be at the core of the product offer for ocean sports and tourism in Africa and branding of the offer.

Most people do not immediately think of coastal tourism in relation to “nature-based” tourism. Marketing initiatives should clearly articulate what is meant by the offer – what areas and activities it includes. Linking initiatives together from a brand point of view helps to solidify the image. For example, linking high-profile restaurants to sustainable suppliers and innovations.

Product offer should be diversified to allow fit-for-purpose branding: create an economy / product offer around what an area already has at its disposal (heritage / culture / community / environment / infrastructure) and bring people to that rather than trying to develop a new form of value. For example, it might be desirable for urban areas to develop beach infrastructure while a different approach would be needed in areas of pristine natural beauty. This would require collation of information on ecosystem health, available infrastructure, etc. along the coast to determine what kind of product offer would best suit which areas, and require strategic marketing at national level.

## Marketing sustainable ocean sports and tourism (cont.)

The same can be said of alternative product offers for areas with highly variable seasonal conditions. For example, in Cape Town the Kite Boarding industry thrives in the months when winds and temperatures are unsuitable for conventional beach tourism.

Support for seasonal beach developments could help to take full advantage of the high season. In areas of Europe where beach tourism is limited to a few months of the year the beach infrastructure, like bars, lifeguards, etc., is temporary. Where temporary bars pop up regulations state that lifeguards must be employed which further develops the product offer.

## Economic development of beaches

There is an opportunity to create jobs, better product offer, and community engagement in beach spaces through developments like the Hout Bay lifesaving club in Cape Town.

Various stakeholder groups collaborated with the local community to clean up and beautify Hout Bay beach, where they established a development lifesaving club. Sentinel Ocean Alliance runs their community outreach activities from the club, introducing the community to the ocean, equipping them with the skills to benefit from it, and educating them around ocean sustainability.

The small hub created around the club and the improved beach environment and facilities has begun to draw beachgoers who are attracted by the initiative itself as well as the offer. The community sees tangible benefits from the project which generates better engagement.

This model could be replicated elsewhere, particularly when authorities do not have the capacity to keep up maintenance of existing infrastructure. Lifesaving clubs would be good candidates to drive such initiatives as they are already set up at many beaches, have membership with diverse business expertise, and are often in need of additional funding.

It is very valuable for the different stakeholder groups to come together to identify where there are issues and how to address them. For example, NGOs do a lot of work on education and upliftment but there are specific issues that need government support to address, particularly in relation to infrastructure. Government needs feedback from communities and NGOs to know what interventions are needed. Collaboration from the various sectors can help to mobilise additional support and funding from external investors.

### Opportunities for action

- Could design a blueprint for beach development with which to approach clubs/authorities running the beach to implement.
- Could build a framework to communicate issues between beach managers, communities, authorities, NGOs, etc. with connections to broader stakeholder groups. Communicate common issues and have key contacts for specific types of issue.

## Industry Sustainability

Consumer mindset changes operator practices. Guests are becoming more aware and expectant in regard to sustainability of tourism offers (For example, disposable shampoo bottles in hotels, work conditions for boat builders, etc.). Africa needs to keep abreast of these trends and appeal to this type of tourist to encourage a sustainable industry.

Education of guests is at the discretion of the tourism operators. Without someone providing them with information on alternative local and sustainable offers and why sustainability is better, the consumer shift will be slower. Tourism can be directed towards the desired product offers.

## Industry Sustainability (cont.)

Sustainability needs to be consciously incorporated in goals from the outset, in messaging, analytics, and throughout the supply chain, to maximise impact. Operating sustainably costs more, so voluntary uptake from industry is slow. Stricter governance of those with vested interests like mass tourism/hospitality operators could help to speed uptake. If there is genuine investment in transforming the tourism industry it should be a prerequisite for operating in the space.

Financial incentives alone are rarely enough to bring about behavioural shift. Rather the reason for regulations needs to be conveyed and a manageable way forward provided. Guidelines appeal to the safety concerns of the public. Explaining what regulations exist and why helps to make users more mindful and appreciative. Destinations that do have guidelines in place can work with legislation as an advantage over unregulated destinations.

## Building an economic case for sustainable ocean sports and tourism

Making a clear case for the link between ocean tourism and economic development, in manufacturing for example, supports the economic business case providing a more powerful argument for industry development. Foremost to this is defining the ocean sports and tourism economy: what it includes and what the roles of the different stakeholders are.

### Opportunity for action

- Opportunity to work on press releases with economic stats (for more formal publications for decision makers) using published research on topologies.

Offshore, Inshore, beach, coastal etc. areas often fall under the responsibility of different authorities, with different regulations applying to how they can be used. It is important as well to think about what activities are encompassed within a sustainable industry and how to manage integration of those that do not meet sustainability targets. While industry development cannot come at the expense of the environment and communities, the product offer must still be attractive to be able to compete in the market.

Limits for what constitutes good and bad growth need to be defined from the outset. Examples of what has worked and what has damaged the industry elsewhere in the world can be used to help define limits.

## Cruise Industry

The cruise industry is one of the most important components of the ocean tourism economy and also has one of the least sustainable footprints. The industry has come under considerable criticism for negative environmental and social impacts, which are often highly localised to already vulnerable areas where the ships moor.

The industry has huge potential for revenue but is very difficult to work into sustainable development. Although there is a lot of work going into mitigating the environmental impacts of the ships themselves, further action is needed to address the social impacts of mass tourism.

Getting small local operators included in cruise itineraries is difficult because they are planned years in advance but more and more passengers are opting to explore the stopover cities of their own accord. This presents an opportunity for guides to direct them to independent operators.

### Opportunity for action

- A follow-up discussion with Cape Town cruise industry stakeholders would be of great interest – what the industry obligations in terms of sustainability and equity are, how the process of signing on suppliers and operators works, what the expected numbers and revenue are, how sustainability and equity are incorporated in the planning, best practice around the world, etc.

## Water Quality

The impact of freshwater systems on coastal waters is a critical and growing threat to coastal tourism and ocean sports across South Africa. From plastic pollution to sewage, industrial, and agricultural runoff, poor water quality has detrimental effects on ecosystem and bather health.

Even with attractive infrastructure and product offer in place, tourists will avoid beaches if water quality is poor. Ocean sports and tourism industries cannot be developed without first addressing this issue. Although there is plenty of anecdotal evidence that poor water quality causes outbreaks of disease, there is no coordinate reporting or statistics gathered and so it is not possible to certify it as a health crisis.

Inland waste management has the strongest impact on water quality of coastal discharge. Addressing such issues requires very localised interventions and communication between coastal and inland authorities. The situation is complicated by the number of municipal departments under which the issue falls.

Rectifying the situation while require complex investment in technology and infrastructure, as well as data to be able to define how different areas are to be used and how water quality affects that usage. Extensive monitoring is needed to be able to provide data for evidence-based decision making and fund raising.

### Opportunity for action

- The Green Drop report produced by the South African government is an excellent repository of data with which to start but needs to be taken up by private forums to ensure that it is followed up with action

## Pan-African Perspective

Cape Town has a very privileged perspective on ocean tourism. There is a large interest in the industry throughout Africa at the moment and it is important to make sure that African initiatives are given exposure across the continent.

### Opportunity for action

- A conversation between the V&A and similar developments from other port cities around Africa might be an interesting start.
- Linking tourism to protection of heritage – climate change poses a threat to over 100 world heritage sites along the African coast in the next 20 years. Have potential as iconic tourism destinations but would need protecting against damage from climate change. Could link development of tourism industry around heritage sites to protection, local development

Thank you to our fantastic workshop participants for getting this discussion going!

