

# Destination Risk and Resilience Manual

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Erongo Region, Namibia



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# Preface

## by DKKV and Futouris

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating effect on economic and social systems globally and uncovered underlying vulnerabilities and inequalities. Besides COVID-19, a steady increase of climate-related disasters worldwide can be observed which are felt directly through loss of lives, livelihoods and assets, and indirectly through damage to economic production, welfare and society.

These issues are particularly demanding in a cross-cutting industry such as tourism, which is highly dependent on intact ecosystems, global business activity and socio-cultural experiences. While tourism is a particularly vulnerable industry influenced by many external factors, it is an indispensable source of income for numerous communities worldwide, particularly in regions with difficult accessibility, remoteness from economic markets and limited industry. Thus, addressing these complex and interconnected risks has become an urgent priority for tourism destinations.

In light of these developments, resilience has evolved as a key concept for dealing with risks. It emphasises anticipatory action and encompasses not only short-term coping measures, but also medium- and long-term aspects of learning, adaptation and transformation. Contrary to common belief, resilience does not conflict with sustainability but plays an important part to ensure continuous progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The integration of sustainable development into all phases of risk management can thus support future resilience building rather than limiting it. The rise in popularity associated with the concept of resilience has however led to the use of resilience as a buzzword in a variety of contexts, often lacking conceptual clarification.

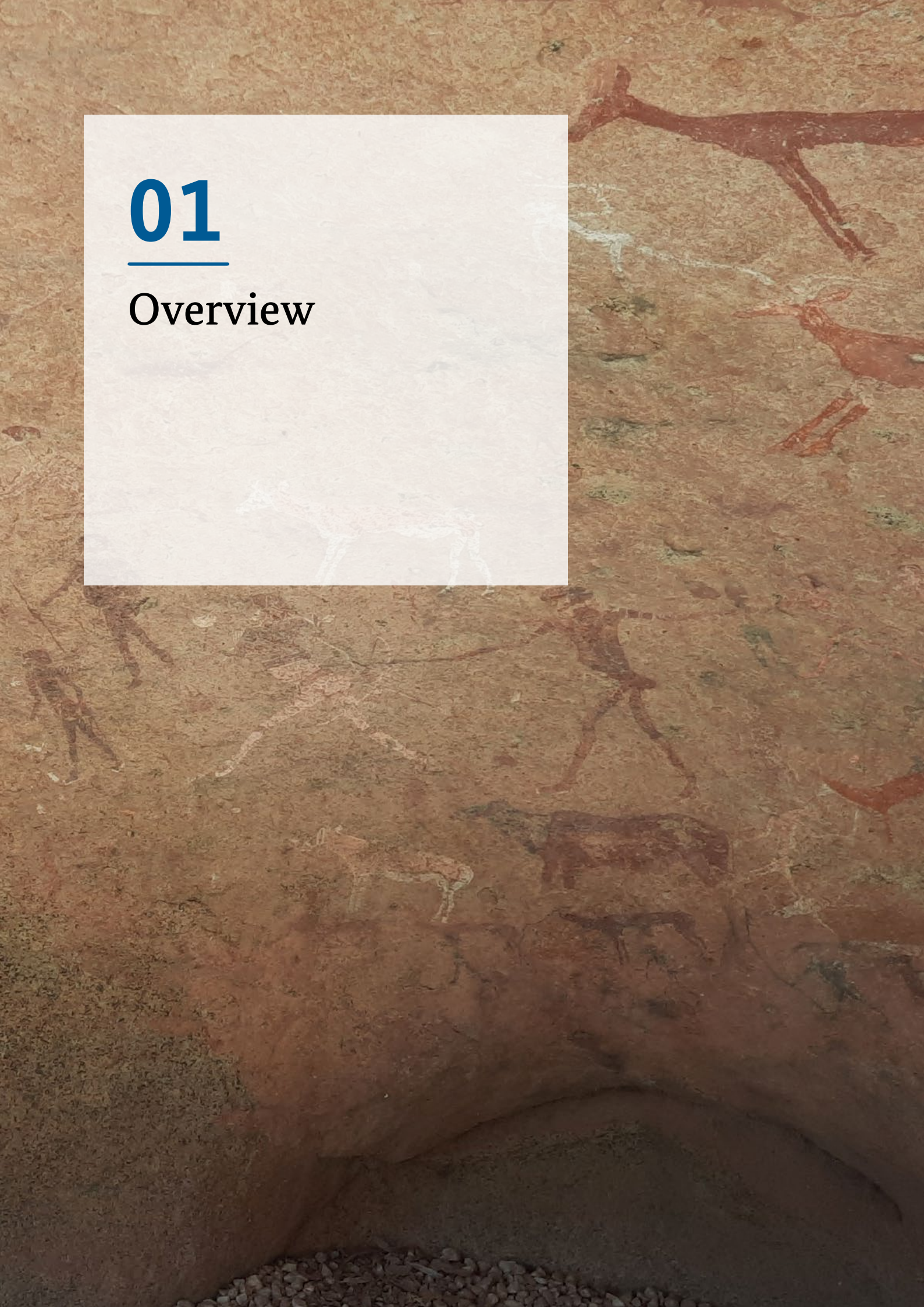
Turning into such a fashionable term has helped public perception but issues central to the discussion remains unanswered: What does resilience actually imply at destination level? How can resilience be analysed and subsequently be built? The project 'Destination Resilience' set out to increase the understanding of these issues and contribute to resilience building in tourism destinations. Implemented by the German Committee for Disaster Reduction and Futouris with support of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)<sup>1</sup> the project combines a wide-ranging expertise in the areas of disaster risk reduction and sustainable tourism.

Within the project, a holistic destination resilience analysis guideline was developed that provides a process-oriented and participatory methodology to assess and build resilience. The guideline is structured around 5 steps, which are the foundation for the development of destination resilience pathways towards risk-informed and sustainable tourism management that considers the local context. The 5-step approach has been successfully implemented in three tourism destinations in the Dominican Republic, Namibia and Sri Lanka. Please refer to the Destination Resilience Analysis Guideline to learn more about the conceptual ideas, key terms and underlying concepts about destination resilience.

This Risk and Resilience Manual presents outcomes and main conclusions of the destination analysis. It identifies valuable options for action to reduce risk and increase resilience in the Erongo Region, Namibia. Presenting a resilience analysis tailored to the local context of the Erongo Region, Namibia, it ensures the relevance of proposed options for action. The Manual is built on the principles of participation and co-creation of knowledge to increase ownership of proposed strategies. The future development is everyone's business so only by bringing together all relevant actors, destinations that are a resilient and sustainable place to live in and visit can be created.

# 01

## Overview



## 1.1 Background & Objectives

Tourism has the potential to boost the revenue of the economy, create employment in the tourism industry and in other different industries, develop the infrastructure of a country, and foster a sense of cultural exchange between tourists/visitors and the host country. As a consequence of being able to affect various sectors and industries of Namibia, tourism is said to be “everyone’s business”. Unfortunately, tourism destinations in every corner of the globe face the virtual certainty of experiencing a disaster of one form or another at some point in their history (Faulkner; 1945-2002). Hence, tourism resilience has emerged as a key concept that can foster a sustainable tourism destination. This manual has therefore been developed collaboratively, with the tourism public sector, private sector, academics and NGOs for use in addressing tourism destination resilience. The manual may also be of interest to any other entities, private or public, who would like to

better understand and implement tourism destination resilience within the Namibian context.

This manual aims to:

- ▶ Describe the Namibian tourism system, its governance, the key tourism industry stakeholders and the destination’s tourism inventory
- ▶ Raise awareness of the perceived risks, their impact on tourism, the risk drivers and the potential options for action to address these risks
- ▶ Establish the enablers and barriers to building destination resilience
- ▶ Identify viable and acknowledged pathways for destination resilience
- ▶ Recommend areas for specific training to enhance or build capacity

## 1.2 Conceptual understanding of resilience

Tourism in Namibia plays a significant role in the national economy and has been a major contributor to the sustainability of tourism employees and community livelihoods. In fact, in 2020, the tourism industry’s contribution to the total employment in Namibia was expected to reach 16.4% (the Republic of Namibia, 2017). However, the economic impact of COVID-19 and subsequent travel restrictions were catastrophic to Namibia. The tourism sector was the hardest hit by the pandemic. The tourism industry is known to be vulnerable to disaster and climate risks. Therefore, in order to recover quickly and enhance preparedness for future disasters, hazards and/or risks Namibia needs to build destination resilience.

What is destination resilience? Destination resilience is the overall ability of people in a tourism destination (e.g., service providers, institutions, organisations) to deal with different risks while maintaining an acceptable level of functioning of the tourism system without compromising long-term prospects for sustainable development. Dealing with existing and emerging risks involves the ability to assess, plan and act in order to prepare for, prevent, adapt and respond to different sources of risks (DKKV 2022, based on UN, 2020; UN-Habitat, 2018). Destination resilience has evolved

as a valuable concept to deal with risks and uncertainty and can help tourism stakeholders and tourism destinations to absorb disruptions, increase adaptability and transformation towards sustainable tourism development (see Figure 1).

Shocks and stressors include different hazards such as natural, human-made or hybrid in origin. Hazards are defined as sources that have the potential to cause harm, accidents, or adverse impacts (Muhammad and Hastuti, 2019). The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) (2016:18) sees a hazard as a ‘process, phenomenon or human activity that may cause loss of life, injury, or other health impacts, property damage, social and economic disruption or environmental degradation.’ Hazards are, therefore, by nature, very damaging to the tourism industry. As Aznar-Crespo et al., (2020) point out, the stakeholders that are most negatively impacted by hazards are the tourists, tourism businesses and the local population. Risk generally results from the interaction of vulnerability, exposure, and a hazard. In the context of tourism, a risk is the potential for adverse impacts and consequences for something of value in the tourism system, i.e., tourism actors, tourists and visitors, assets, properties, infrastructure, and natural or cultural attractions.

**Figure 1:** Destination Resilience Enables a tourism destination to Absorb Disruptions and then adapt and transform to Reach its Full Potential Sustainably



Whereas hazards deal with concrete possibilities, risk perception concerns itself with the extent of awareness of a specific issue and its consequences on one's close environment (Genc, 2018), especially an individual's interpretation of a potential risk and the probability of hazard occurrence, regardless of the quantum of the perceived threat. The selection of a destination is therefore based, not only on the price and image of the respective destination but also on personal safety which is largely perceived in relation to the respective destination (Weidemann, 2009). Risk perception, therefore, has an impact on the image of the destination. This is primarily because the success of a tourist des-

tinuation largely depends on the perceived image that tourists have of the present reality as well as the future.

Hence, hazards and any negative perceptions are likely to result in a reduction in tourists visiting the destination area. This, by implication, means that less income is likely to be generated along the tourism value chain, much to the detriment of tourism stakeholders and the development of the tourism destination. For a destination such as Namibia, it is therefore imperative to identify and profile the different hazards and challenges that are relevant to the country's tourism and to understand their impact on the sector.



## 1.3 Methods used

Destination resilience has evolved as a valuable concept to deal with risks and uncertainty. The project is guided by the Destination Resilience Analysis Guide-

line (DKKV & Futouris 2022), which involves the following five steps as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Risk and Resilience Assessment for Tourism Destinations



Note: Copyright by DKKV & Futouris 2022

The steps included different methods, which will be introduced in more detail in the next sections.

### 1.3.1 Workshops

Three workshops were conducted during the course of this project. The first was a half-day workshop, conducted in April 2022 at the University of Namibia in Windhoek. The workshop was attended by 51 people from various institutions all having a stake in the tourism industry in Namibia. This ranged from educational institutions, tourism associations, government, parastatals, non-governmental organisations, tourism businesses and the UNAM team. The aim of the workshop was to identify the tourism destination's risk priorities, risk drivers and the options for action to address the risks.

The second workshop was conducted in the Erongo region, Swakopmund on the 14th of June 2022. The purpose of this workshop was to identify and analyse enablers to building resilience in the tourism sector, to analyse barriers to building destination resilience and to identify training needs necessary to capacitate the sector in enhancing destination resilience. The workshop was attended by 25 participants (15 females and 10 males) all being stakeholders in the tourism industry. The workshop structure was a mixture of presentations, discussions and reflections regarding various issues critical to building destination resilience in Namibia generally, but in the Erongo Region specifically. Facilitators served to guide the discussions, letting the participants share their experiences and suggestions and letting the participants own the process. As a result, much valuable information was gathered.

The third workshop was a training workshop conducted in the Erongo region in the town of Swakopmund on the 26th and 27th of July 2022. The purpose of this workshop was to train participants from the tourism industry in the Erongo Region on various needs identified during the previous workshops and interviews. The workshop was conducted over a two-day period and was attended by 38 participants (26 females and 12 males) on the first day and 33 participants (23 females and 10 males) on the second day. The training was centred on three themes: tourism sustainability, destination brand management and community resilience.

### 1.3.2 Surveys

Two surveys were carried out in the project. The first survey was conducted in April/May 2022 with key stakeholders in the tourism industry at a national level to understand various issues impacting on the tourism industry in Namibia. A total of 20 participants took part in the survey that included different stakeholders in the tourism value chain. The second survey was carried out with tourism stakeholders in the Erongo Region. A minimum of 25 participants took part in the survey. The survey focussed on key issues impacting tourism in the Erongo Region.

### 1.3.3 Interviews

Additionally, face-to-face interviews were carried out using a structured guide and solicited information from 48 respondents, randomly drawn along the Walvis Bay Otjiwarongo corridor in the Erongo Region. Respondents were interviewed in the

following towns: Omaruru, Walvis Bay, Swakopmund, Karibib and Usakos. A stratified cluster random sampling approach was used with clusters being the towns, selected in the three tourism strata (Tourism accommodation, Tour operators, Tourism-related businesses/organisations). The aim was to identify enablers and barriers to inform tourism resilience and sustainability.

02

Tourism System



This section discusses the tourism system of the Erongo Region. A system is a set of interacting units with relationships among them (Sillitto et al., 2017). It is an entity capable of inter-relating and inter-connecting to the various components of its environment to form a whole and achieve an objective. For tourism specifically, this entails a complex network of spatial and functional connections involving key elements of tourists, transportation (transit routes), attractions (destination regions), and services-facilities (tourist

industries) operating within physical, cultural, social, economic, political and technological environments (Gunn, 1979; Leiper, 1979). Thus, the description of the tourism system of the Erongo Region will encompass key elements of the region's context, the tourism actors, markets and visitor profile as well as the destination inventory and governance structures that are relevant to the functioning of the system.

## 2.1 Context

The Erongo Region (Figure 3) is one of Namibia's key tourist destinations. The region is named after the famous Erongo mountain range which stretches out across the plains between the towns of Omaruru and Karibib (Namibia Statistics Agency, 2014), creating a beautiful landscape that is attractive to tourists. While there are numerous tourist destinations spread across Namibia's regions, there is no other region that dominates the tourist landscape in the country like the Erongo in terms of attractions, the number of tourists received and contribution to foreign currency generation, employment, infrastructural development and contribution to local residents' livelihoods.

The Erongo Region covers a total area of 63 586 km<sup>2</sup> which is approximately 7.7 percent of Namibia's total area. It is bordered by the Kunene Region to the North, Khomas to the South-East, Otjozondjupa to the North-East and the Hardap Region to the South. In terms of physical geography, the Erongo Region is one of the four regions of the country with a coastline, the others being Kunene, Karas and Hardap. Its entire western border is adjacent to the Atlantic Ocean coastline (IECN, 2011). Most of this coastline consists of rocky and sandy beaches punctuated by salt pans and gravel plains offshore (Robertson et al., 2012).

The climate of the Erongo Region is variable, including a cool, foggy coastal zone to a foggy interior zone as well as a middle and eastern desert zone. Though considered to be one of the coolest regions in the country, temperatures in the region are also variable and range from around 16-20 degrees Celsius and increasing inland to around 36 degrees Celsius.

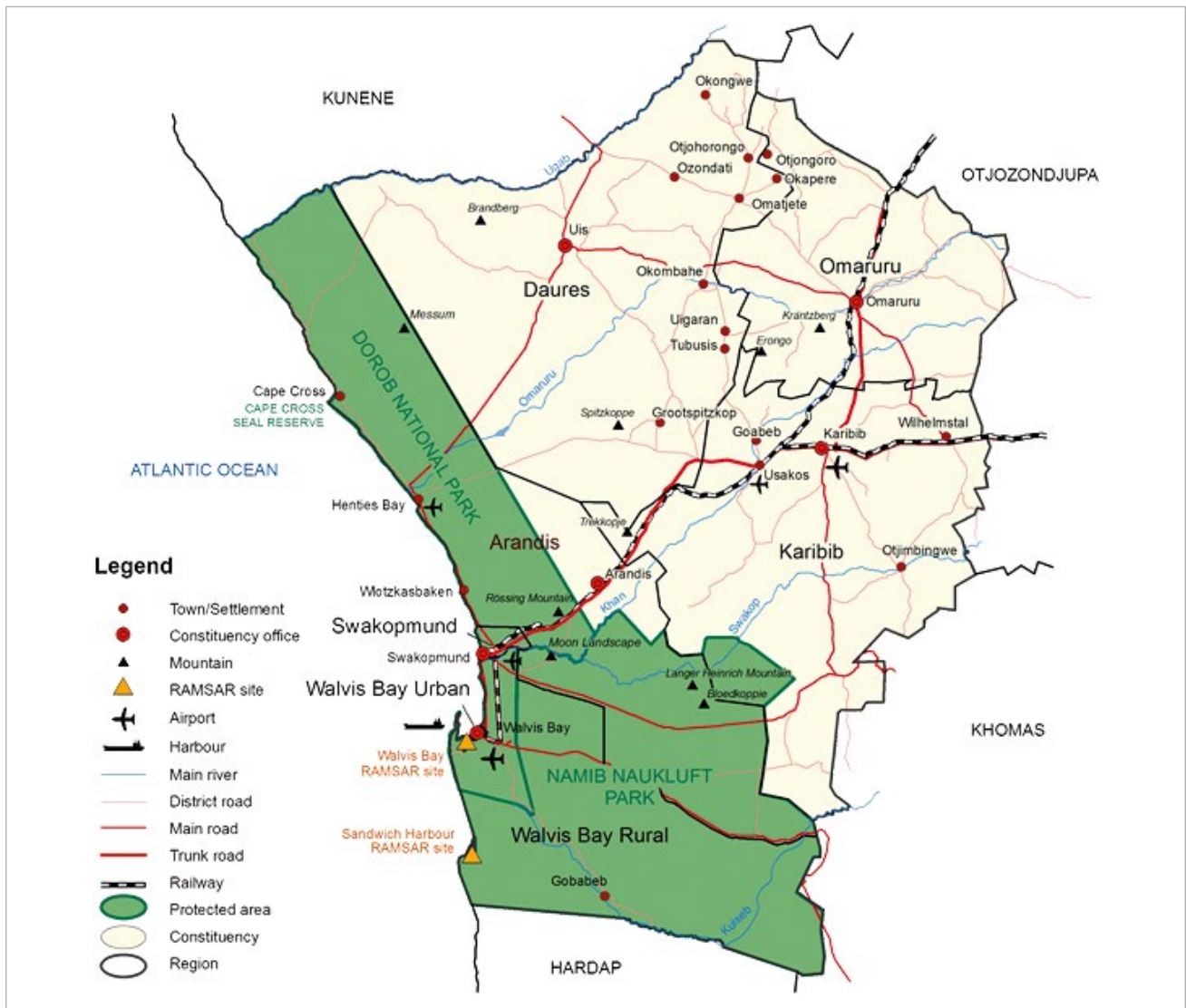
Temperatures can, however, sometimes soar above 40 degrees Celsius occasionally (IECN, 2011). Namibia is

generally one of the driest countries in sub-Saharan Africa. The Erongo thus mostly exhibits this dry climate as testified by the presence of the Namib Desert within the region. The mean annual rainfall in the Erongo ranges from almost no rainfall in the west to around 350mm further inland to the east. (Robertson et al., 2012) and this rainfall distribution also has an influence on the region's flora and fauna.

Topographically, the region is dominated by flat, undulating gravel plains interrupted by occasional ridges and isolated hills and mountains (MME, 2010). Among these mountains are the famous and beautiful Brandberg mountains which summit at 2579 metres above sea level as well as the Spitzkoppe- a granite rock formation that reaches a height of 1728 metres above sea level. The general terrain of the region lies at about 1000 metres above sea level. The region is also characterised mostly by ephemeral rivers which are generally dry for most parts of the year. Major rivers in the area include the Kuiseb, Swakop,

Omaruru and the Ugab rivers. The Swakop and the Omaruru rivers have an average mean run-off of approximately 40 million cubic metres per annum while the Kuiseb and the Ugab rivers have around half the former (Heyns and van Vuuren, 2009). These rivers have eroded deep valleys within the landscape, resulting in the presence of many canyons that are an attraction to many tourists visiting the country. Furthermore, the Omaruru and the Kuiseb rivers have developed alluvial fans which are important as tourist attractions but also as being home to aquifers that are important to the region's water needs.

Figure 3: The Erongo Region



Note. Copyright 2022 by Erongo Regional Council ([www.erc.com.na](http://www.erc.com.na))

The Erongo Region comprises seven constituencies, namely Arandis, Daures, Karibib, Omaruru, Swakopmund and Walvis Bay. In 2011, the population of the Erongo Region was 150 809 people, with only 12.6 percent of the inhabitants living in the rural areas and the majority in the urban areas (Namibia Statistics Agency, 2014). While no other census has been carried out since then, it is estimated that the population of the region had grown to 195 652 by 2018 (Namibia Statistics Agency, 2018). This low population means that much of the area of the region (with the exception of the urban areas) is sparsely populated.

Economically, the Erongo Region is critical to Namibia. This is because it contains the second largest economy

in the country, dominated by fishing, tourism, mining and transportation (MME, 2010). In 2012, for example, the region was identified as the fastest growing economy in the country (MET, 2012). The region is therefore one of the main economic drivers of the country’s economy with a capacity to generate more direct and indirect employment from hospitality and tourism-related jobs. The Namibia Labour

Force Survey 2018 report makes this importance apparent, indicating that the Erongo Region had the highest labour force participation rates (LFPR) at 80.9 percent and ahead of second-placed Khomas Region (76.8%) and Otjozondjupa (76.1%) (Namibia Statistics Agency, 2018).

While other economic activities such as mining and transportation are important in Erongo, there is no doubt regarding tourism as an anchor in the economy of the region. Thus, the Namibian National Sustainable Tourism Growth and Development Strategy (2016 – 2026), which aims at increasing tourist arrivals in the country so as to attain economic sustainability,

identifies the Erongo Region as one of the key tourism regions in the country. With direct international flights connecting the region to the rest of the world, the region is one of the top tourism destinations in the country.

## 2.2 Tourism Actors

Tourism is a broad field in which many players are involved, providing various goods and services as well as regulatory environments for the sector to thrive. In the Erongo Region, the tourism actors encompass a wide array of stakeholders, both formal and informal as well as the different tiers of government, all working together for the benefit of the tourism industry. Broadly categorised, the key tourism actors (with examples) in the Erongo Region are (*Please note that this list is not exhaustive*).

- ▶ **Government:** National Government of Namibia (e.g., the Ministry of Environment, Forestry & Tourism; the Namibia Tourism Board); the Erongo Regional Council.
- ▶ **Municipalities:** Walvis Bay, Henties Bay, Swakopmund, and Omaruru);
- ▶ **Towns:** Arandis, Karibib and Usakos;
- ▶ **Associations:** Hospitality Association of Namibia; Federation of Namibia Tourism Association; Walvis Bay Tourism Forum; Tour Guide Association of Namibia; Namibia Professional Hunting Association; Hospitality Association of Namibia; Association of Namibia Travel Agents; The Tour and Safari Association of Namibia; Emerging Tourism Enterprise Association
- ▶ **Museums:** Swakopmund Museum; Walvis Bay Museum; San Living Museum; Bakkrans historical sites;
- ▶ **Art Galleries:** e.g., Fine Art gallery, Ivanoff-Erb Art gallery; Tikoloshe Africa;
- ▶ **Informal curio sellers**
- ▶ **Transporters:** e.g., Mat-Travel Tours & Safaris; McClunes Shuttle Service; Africa Edge Safaris; Welwitschia Shuttles; Carlo's Shuttle & Tours; Seboa Tours & Car Hire;
- ▶ **Travel agents:** e.g., Tokkies travel, Rennies travel, Ultra travel
- ▶ **Tour guides:** e.g., Atlantic desert tours; MC Tours; West & Skeleton coast Angling Tours;
- ▶ **Security companies:** Private companies; Municipal Council Security.
- ▶ **Hunters:** e.g., African Hunters Safari, Immenhof Hunting, Omuwiwe Hunting Safaris.
- ▶ **Conservancies:** e.g., Tseiseb conservancy; Gaingu conservancy; Otjimboyo conservancy.
- ▶ **Accommodation:** (Hotels, Lodges, Guest farms, Backpackers, Camping sites; Self-catering homes): e.g., Swakopmund Plaza; Spitzkoppen Lodge.
- ▶ **Restaurants, Bars, Cafes, farmhouse delis, beer-gardens, traditional food eateries:** e.g., Spur steak ranch; Ocean basket; Bojos café; Village café.
- ▶ **Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs);** local, national & international.
- ▶ **Financial institutions:** Banks, Bureau de charge, informal money changers.

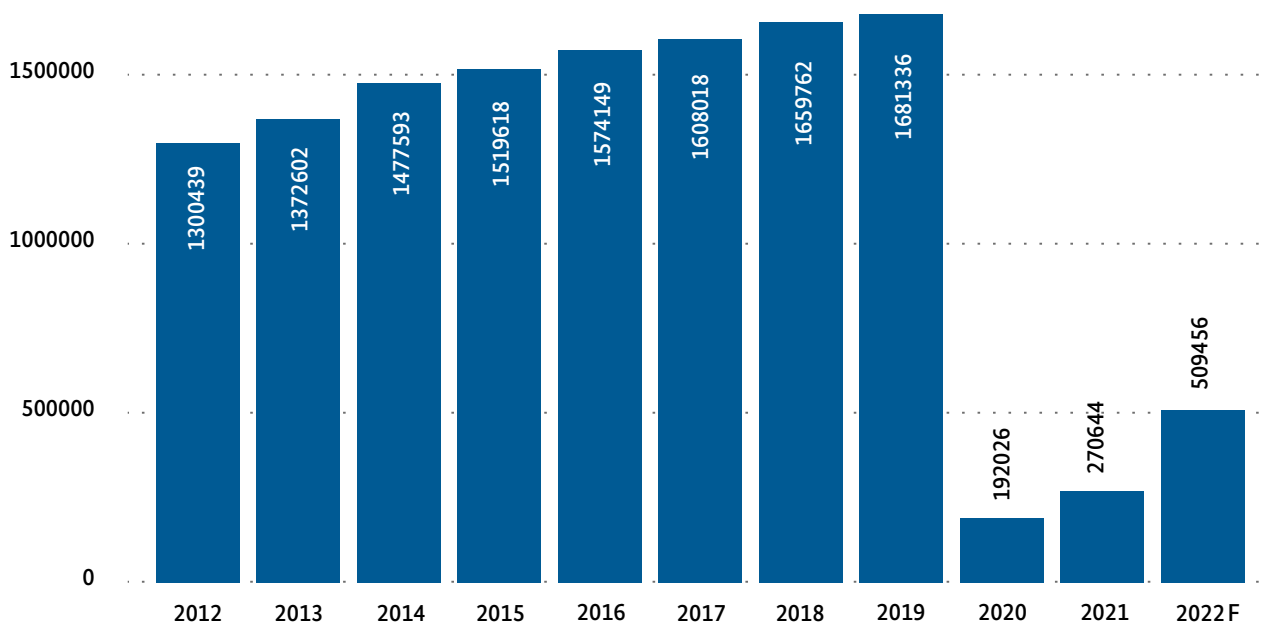
While there are many actors that participate in tourism through formal and registered businesses, there is also a significant proportion of stakeholders that participate in the tourism sector directly or indirectly through providing services informally to tourists. These actors, despite lacking official recognition, make a substantial contribution to the tourism industry. In some cases, the distinction between formal and informal actors is blurred, with actors operating on both sides of the 'divide'.

### 2.3 Relevant source markets and visitor profile

Namibia is a key tourist destination, receiving visitors from the region and from other continents as well. Data for tourist arrivals, while available at the national scale, is very scarce at sub-national levels. Hence it is difficult to indicate how many tourists visit the Erongo Region. This section will therefore primarily focus on the tourist visitor data for the country. Prior to 2020, the country’s yearly visitors would exceed 1 million

people (Figure 4). The number of foreign tourist arrivals increased, for example, from 1.3 million visitors in 2012 to approximately 1.6 million visitors in 2017 – a sustained yearly increase of between 2.4-3.1 percent over the six-year period. In 2018, the tourist arrivals increased to 1.65 million and to 1.68 million by the end of 2019 (Ministry of Environment, Forestry & Tourism, 2019).

Figure 4: Number of Visitors to Namibia

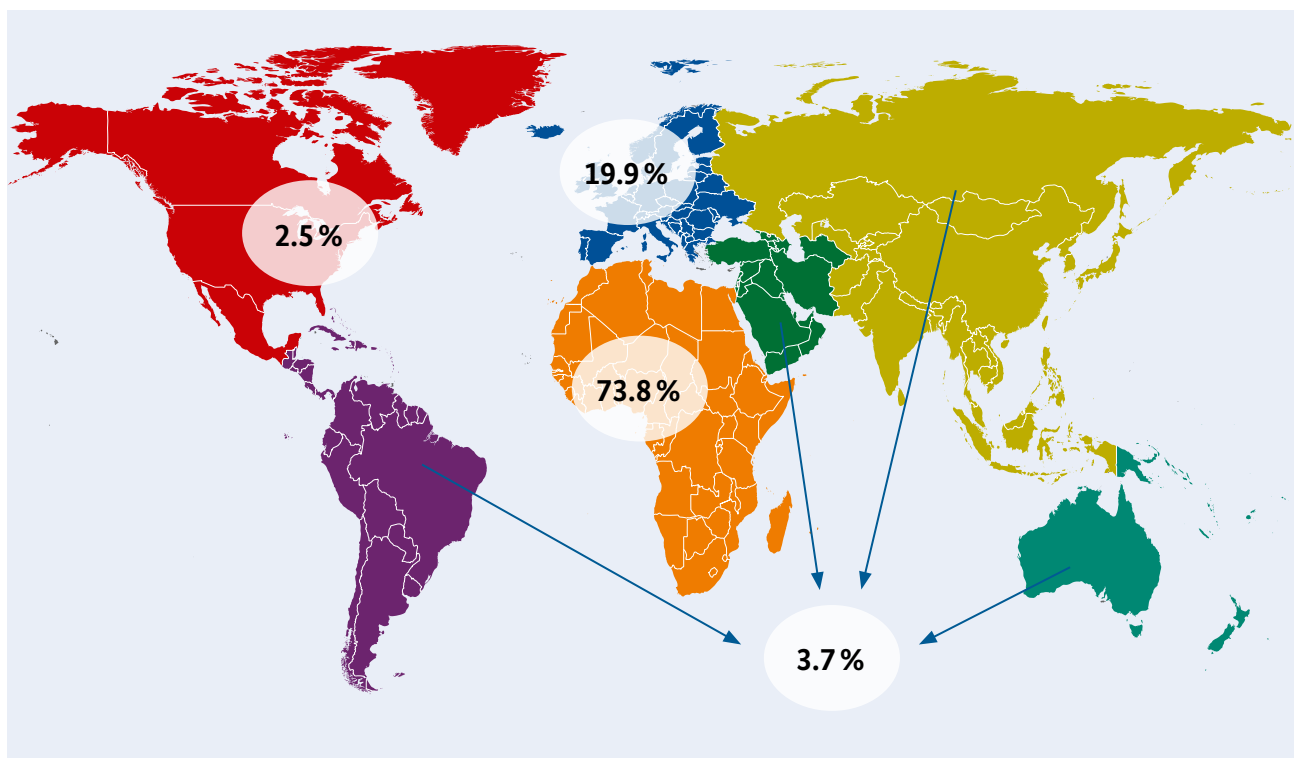


Note. Copyright by the Ministry of Environment & Tourism.

In 2017, the majority of the country’s visitors came from within the African continent (78.3%) while other important source markets included Europe (19.9%), North America (2.5%) and others -including Asia (3.7%) (Figure 5). By 2019, 79.1 percent were coming from

Africa, 15.5 percent from Europe, 2.1 percent from North America and 3.3 percent from others -including Asia, indicating the increasing importance of Africa as a tourist source market for the country.

Figure 5: Tourist Source Markets



Note. Copyright 2017 by the Ministry of Environment & Tourism.

The growth in the tourist visitor numbers was interrupted by the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, which prompted governments to lockdown their countries and thus restrict the movement of tourists, both locally and internationally. This resulted in tourist arrivals plummeting to 192 026 visitors in 2020. In 2021, however, the tourist arrivals started to increase and by the end of the year, the country had recorded 270 644 (Ministry of Environment, Forestry & Tourism,

2022). The falling COVID-19 infections, the consequent relaxation of travel restrictions as well as the wide use of vaccination around the globe are likely to see a further resurgence of the tourism sector in the near future. By mid-2022, the country had recorded a total of 509 456 visitors (Ministry of Environment, Forestry & Tourism, 2022), indicating that the sector may be on the rebound.

## 2.4 Destination inventory

The Erongo Region is one of the most endowed regions in the country in terms of tourism. This is because it contains some of the country’s key tourist attractions and hosts communal conservancies as well as areas in which community tourism is practised. These attractions pull in huge tourist numbers every year. This section focuses on an inventory of tourism assets and activities in this key destination area.

### 2.4.1 Dominant key tourist attractions

#### Parks

Overall, the region has two national parks, four conservancies and numerous private parks that make it an attractive destination. The two national parks are the Dorob National Park which stretches from the Kuiseb Delta in the south and extends northwards up to the Ugab River. Within the confines of the Dorob National Park are the Cape Cross Seal Reserve, the Messum Crater,



the Moon Landscape, and the desert dune belt between Swakopmund and Walvis Bay. The second park is a portion of the Namib-Naukluft Park which lies within the southern part of the Erongo Region and boasts several flora and fauna. While there are several private parks in the region, the largest of these parks is the Erindi Game Reserve, which is home to 20 000 animals (Erongo Regional Council, 2021). Some of the major tourist attractions in the Erongo Region include the desert dunes of Swakopmund and Walvis Bay, the two RAMSAR birds' sites of Walvis Bay and Sandwich harbour, the Skeleton coast and its shipwrecks, seal colonies and generally fascinating desert plants. The Spitzkoppe and Brandberg mountains are rock climbers' and hikers' havens. It is also enriched with fascinating rock paintings that add an aspect of heritage tourism to the region. The Brandberg mountain is a spiritual site of great significance to the San (Bushman) tribes. It is also home to a large diversity of wildlife and draws huge numbers of tourists yearly. Within the several parks and desert landscapes, several large animals are found and these include; elephants, lions, rhinos, hippos and leopards.

### Community tourism

The Erongo Region is a haven of community-based tourism which supports local communities such as the Topnaar community living along the banks of the Kuiseb River and whose survival is dependent on the natural environment, and to whom resilience and sustainability is key to future survival and sustenance of their livelihoods. The Topnaar community's traditional way of life and culture offers the tourist a unique tourism experience.

### Conservancies

There are numerous conservancies within the Erongo Region which spur community-based tourism and bring in a significant number of hunters, hence generating income for several communities. Some of the conservancies include the Otjimboyo and Ohungu of the Ugab River valley and the Tsiseb conservancy near the Brandberg mountain and its famous white lady rock painting.

## 2.4.2 Activities

Activities within a destination enhances tourism experiences. In Erongo, the desert dunes of Swakopmund and Walvis Bay provide activities such as quad biking over the dunes, dune climbing and sand boarding. The Swakopmund, Walvis Bay and Henties bay coastline

offers kayaking, angling, marine tours, bird watching etc. Within the conservancies, national and private game parks, game viewing safaris, rock climbing, hiking, and visits to heritage sites such as the Spitzkoppe bald granite peaks or inselbergs are on offer. (Erongo Regional council, 2021). Communities living within the conservancies provide tourists with cultural tourism, where the visitors can experience the traditional way of life of the community.

## 2.4.3 Accommodation

Within the coastal towns of Swakopmund, Walvis and Henties bay there are over 3,000 accommodation facilities ranging from four-star beach and city hotels, guest houses, Airbnbs, rest camps, private holiday homes, etc. Accommodation within the National and private Game Parks as well as within the conservancies ranges from 5-star lodges to rest camps. The region has accommodation facilities to cater for different types of tourists.

## 2.4.4 Accessibility

The ease with which tourists are able to reach a destination plays an important role in the success and growth of a destination. Walvis Bay has an international airport that allows direct international flights connection to the region. Other smaller airstrips accommodate small charter flights between the region to other attractions within the region and to other destinations within Namibia. The region has a good road network connecting it to all other parts of the region and the country as a whole. It is also accessible by sea with the harbour facilities at the port of Walvis Bay.

## 2.4.5 Amenities

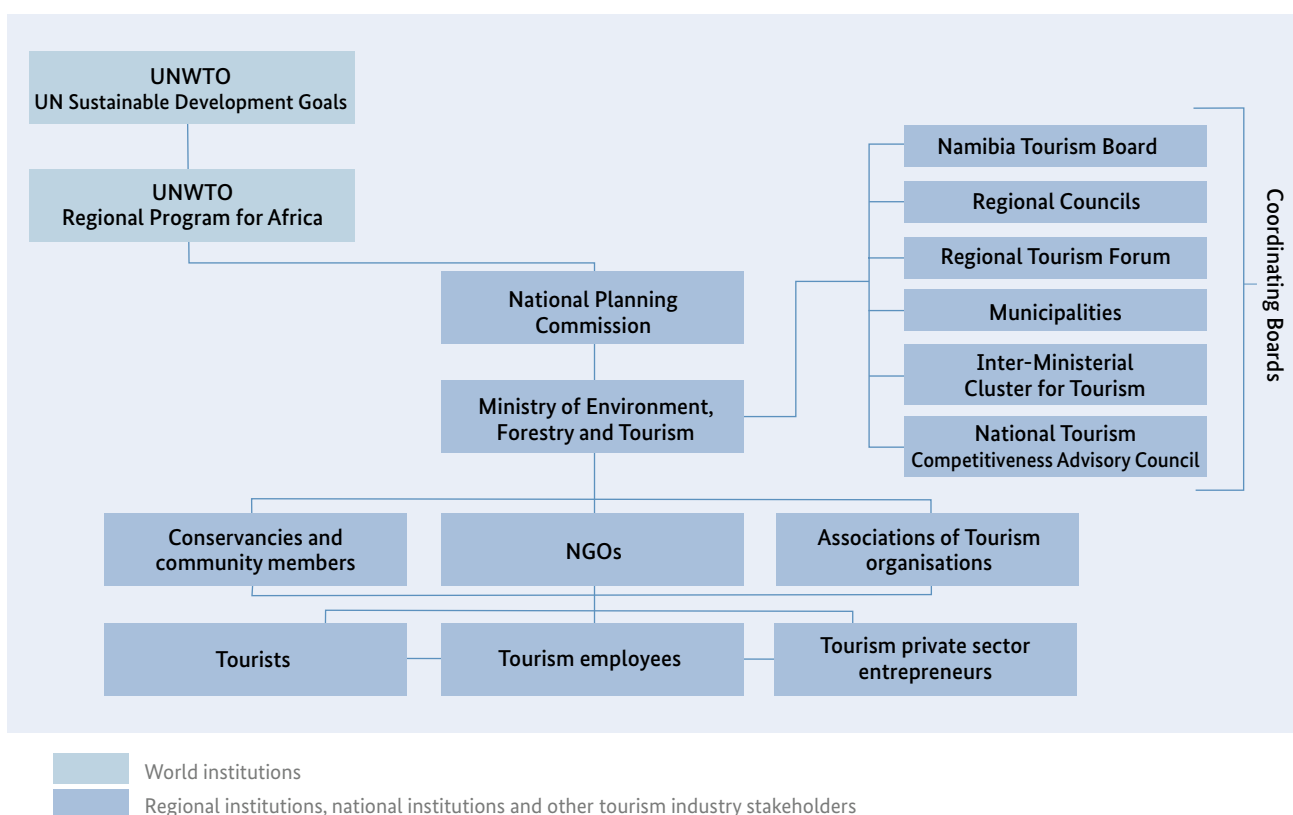
Broadly defined, amenities are those facilities that complement the attraction, make it easy for the tourists to visit and enhance their holiday experience. These include tour operators, car hire services, hotels, tourism information, etc. Other amenities at the destination that enhance the tourist experience include clean and sheltered beaches. Included also are public offices that directly or indirectly contribute to the smooth functioning of the destination. Among them are the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism, the Namibia Wildlife Resorts and the Erongo Regional Council.

## 2.5 Governance structures

Tourism is a sector with a complex web of interrelationships between actors and agents involved in the production of goods and services for tourists. There is therefore a critical need for these interrelationships to be managed properly, professionally and efficiently for the success of the sector. Such management generally focuses on providing direction and guidance in the destination areas. Governance, in the context of the tourist industry, entails a process of coordinating actions among the public, corporate, and social actors

in the “tourism system” in order to establish synergies. There are three main actors in the governance structures of tourism in Namibia namely: the public sector, the private sector, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). In addition to these, however, the complexity of the tourism systems is such that many other multiple players are also directly or indirectly involved to varying degrees in the governance of the tourism sector.

Figure 6: Tourism Governance Structures



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### 2.5.1 The public sector

The government is important in directing functions and providing legislative frameworks and guidance so that activities in the sector are coordinated. This is especially critical for growth and sustainability, economically, socially, and environmentally. Central to the governance of the tourism sector is thus the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (MEFT) whose role is to institute and promote policies that maintain ecological ecosystems and protect the biological diversity of Namibia as well as the sustainable

utilisation of the country's living natural resources for the benefit of all Namibians, both present and in the future. The ministry achieves its aims through multiple directorates such as the Directorate of Tourism and Gaming (DTG) whose mission is to develop a sustainable and responsible tourism industry that contributes significantly to the economic development of Namibia. There are several other tourism bodies in operation as recommended by the National Sustainable Tourism Growth and Development Strategy to aid in good governance of the tourism industry in the country (Table 1).

Table 1: National and Regional Government Tourism Bodies in Namibia

NO.	TOURISM BODY	OBJECTIVE
1.	Inter-Ministerial Clusters on Tourism Development	The overall objective of the Inter-Ministerial Clusters on Tourism Development is for the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism to meet with the identified clusters to deliberate on tourism-related matters. The clusters will aim to harmonise different Government policies in regard to tourism and eradicate the factors that hinder tourism growth and development.
2.	National Tourism Competitiveness Advisory Council	The overall objective of the NTCAC is to make the Namibia tourism industry competitive and effective through consultation with both governmental and non-governmental agencies. The council will aim to harmonise different Government policies in regard to tourism and eradicate the factors that are hindering tourism growth and development.
3.	Regional Tourism Forums	The main objective of the Regional Tourism Forums is to oversee tourism development and economic growth and to ensure the geographic spread of the benefits of tourism in the regions.

Other critical state-owned enterprises under the MEFT include the Namibian Tourism Board, the Namibian Wildlife Resorts, the Zambezi Water Front, and the Windhoek Country Club and Casino.

### 2.5.2 The private sector

While the national government provides the overall legal frameworks, direction and guidance to the governance of the tourism industry in the country, there are also many other structures that are critical to the smooth operation of a sector dominated by numerous small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) such as guest farms, game reserves, accommodation establishments, food and beverage establishments, small craft owners, shuttle services and tour guides. Generally,

all these stakeholders are governed through their membership to associations that guard their interests and sometimes even regulate their operations. These associations include the Federation of Namibian Tourism Associations (FENATA) a voluntary organisation for Namibian Tourism Associations that comprises all the different autonomous associations, organisations, non-profit making organisations, directly or indirectly involved in tourism. There is also the Hospitality Association of Namibia (HAN) which represents the full spectrum of the hospitality industry, and the Tour and Safari Association of Namibia (TASA) which is a voluntary private-sector body that acts on behalf of its members to encourage the development of responsible tourism in Namibia. This association also ensures that standards in the sector are adhered to and that there is reliability in the Namibian tourism industry.

Through joint ventures, the tourism private sector businesses collaborate with the public sector to provide most of the facilities for tourists in destinations. An example of this is the joint venture partnerships between the tourism private sector businesses and the conservancies in the country. While most of the associations are voluntary, they nevertheless provide critical oversight to the industry.

### **2.5.3 Non-Governmental Organisations**

In addition to the government and private sector associations, NGOs also play a key role in the tourism industry in Namibia. This is because some of them are involved in implementing several projects in the tourism sector as a way to promote sustainable development. Being regulated from the national level themselves, these NGOs are able to mobilise beneficiary organisations and communities to operate according to the demands of several regulatory frameworks and thus end up acting as unofficial monitors, especially in the projects they fund. Most of the NGOs work under

a board of trustees or directors, such as the Namibia Nature Foundation (NNF), Eco Awards Namibia, Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation (IRDNC), Namibia Development Trust (NDT), World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF), Desert Research Foundation of Namibia (DRFN), Namibia Community Based Support Organisations (NACSO), and Save the Rhino Trust (SRT), just to mention a few. Hence, they are held accountable for their initiatives and administration by their respective boards, which typically consist of prominent members of Namibian society who voluntarily avail their time and expertise to support environmental conservation.

**03**

**Risk registry**



Tourism is critical to the Namibian economy. It contributes substantially to job creation, foreign currency generation, infrastructure development, and the general preservation of the country's flora and fauna. Despite this importance, the sector remains extremely vulnerable to a wide range of hazards. As Yang et al., (2017) point out, tourism and risk are intrinsically connected, and their relationship is complex. This is because tourism involves people moving to unfamiliar territories, carrying out numerous transactions and

interacting widely and intimately with the environment in different and changing physical, socio-cultural, economic and political contexts. The numerous hazards that the tourism sector is exposed to have the potential to discourage visitors from travelling to affected destinations such as Namibia with negative consequences to the tourism industry in general. A general understanding of risks is essential in order to build and/or enhance destination resilience for long-term sustainable development.

### 3.1 Overview of different sources of risks

This section provides a systematic overview of the sources of risks for the Namibian tourism industry including rapid-onset shock events or slow-onset stressors, which may be natural, anthropogenic/human-made or hybrid in origin.

Natural hazards range from earthquakes, floods, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, mudslides, and many others. According to Baskara et al., (2021), the number of officially recorded disasters in the world is growing rapidly and poses a significant threat to the tourism industry as they disrupt tourism businesses, destroy infrastructure critical to tourism and disrupt tourism supply chains. In Namibia, the tourism sector is exposed to a number of different hazards including droughts, floods and climate change.

The tourism industry is also susceptible to human-made and hybrid hazards such as political, financial and social threats. As Muzindutsi, Dube and Manaliyo (2021) point out, the prevalence of any or all of these risks in a country makes the destination hostile and uncondusive for the tourism industry. Thus, a financial crisis or political instability is likely to reduce the number of inbound tourists, consequently decreasing the contribution of the tourism sector to the overall economy. A country that is stable financially, politically and socially is therefore likely to attract more tourists.

From the interviews with key informants, the following sources of risk were identified (Table 2), which will be discussed in detail in the ensuing sections.

Table 2: Risks identified by survey participants

	Identified risks	%
1	Health (COVID-19)	65
2	Environmental risk(Overdevelopment of beach/beach erosion)	30
3	Drought risk/heat waves	20
4	Extreme precipitation and floods	20
5	Physical risk (Bad road network)	15
6	Drought risk leading to water scarcity/Inadequate water supply	15
7	Crime (Theft/harassment of tourists/security for tourists)	15
8	Economic risk (Currency fluctuation)	10
9	Poaching/Human-wildlife conflict	10
10	Pollution (and destruction of habitats)	10
11	Environmental risk (Rising sea level)	5
12	Lack of international flights to the Erongo region	5
13	Physical risk (Infrastructure issues along the border)	5

### 3.1.1 Hydro-meteorological/climatological risks

Namibia is vulnerable to climate change. The IPCC Sixth Assessment Report (IPCC, 2022) predicts that the annual mean global near-surface temperatures will average from 1.1 degrees Celsius to 1.7 degrees Celsius higher than pre-industrial levels between 2022 and 2026. Namibia is also affected by these trends. Namibia's projected temperatures are expected to continue increasing by as much as 4 degrees Celsius over the next century – projections that are way above the global average (Thomson, 2021). An increase in temperature is likely to have a negative impact on liveability, as few tourists may tolerate such high temperatures, hence negatively impacting on the number of tourists visiting the country. Another risk driver is the existence of persistent east winds that affect areas such as Swakopmund and Walvis Bay and are disruptive to the tourism industry.

As indicated in Table 2 above, climate change-related risks were identified as a major challenge by 20% of the study participants. While some parts of the Erongo Region have moderate temperatures (e.g., Swakopmund, Walvis Bay, Henties Bay), some of the attractions (e.g. Gobabeb, Sossusvlei) are already hot and are likely to be less hospitable. In addition to less hospitable temperatures, increased temperatures are likely to result in the decrease in precipitation by as much as 14 percent in most of the country. As an already dry country, such a drastic reduction in precipitation will negatively impact the tourism industry as most places will find it difficult to have adequate water for basic use. Barnes, McGregor and Alberts (2012) postulated that the Karoo, Savanna and the north-eastern Woodland biomes which are home to most of the country's wildlife will likely become drier, hence negatively impacting on the tourism sector and possibly reducing the sector's income by a quarter in the next 70 years. Reduced inflows into the Etosha pans, for example, is likely to affect the natural springs around the area and consequently negatively impact the breeding of the flamingos.

Climate change is also envisaged to increase the frequency of droughts and floods in the country. At the turn of the century, Dilley (2003) reported that the frequency of floods and droughts in the country had dramatically increased. Hence 20% of the participants reported droughts as a major challenge in the Erongo Region (Table 2). Beyond this region, north-central Namibia frequently experiences seasonal floods because of the Cuvelai basin which accumulates water

from central Angola into the Namibian floodplains. In addition, north-eastern Namibia is also vulnerable to flooding due to the hydrological regime of the Okavango river system. These floods are associated with an increased risk of water-borne diseases such as cholera and malaria as well as the destruction of infrastructure that is critical to the tourism industry. The loss of infrastructure due to climate change has been pointed out by Wilhelm (2012) who estimated that annual losses due to climate change could be as high as 6% of the country's GDP. While the droughts and floods affect the generality of the economic sectors in the country, the tourism sector is likely to be hard hit because of the negative impact of climate change on flora and fauna – the bedrock of the industry- and on other natural attractions (Keja-Kaereho and Tjizu, 2019). Thus, climate change – through its influence on temperature, droughts and floods is a significant natural hazard to the tourism sector of the Erongo Region as well as Namibia in general.

While Namibia's relatively dry climate has largely preserved tourism attractions such as rock paintings (e.g., at Twyfelfontein, Brandberg, Spitzkoppe), researchers are apprehensive that some of the rock paintings and engravings are deteriorating due to weathering, biological agents, and animal action (Nankela, 2020). The degradation of such important and invaluable historic sites is likely to affect the tourism industry in future if necessary preservation steps are not taken.

### 3.1.2 Coastal risks

In general, coastal hazards are characterised by landforms and processes triggered by gravity, running water and by the action of the sea (Brandolini, Faccini and Piccazzo, 2006). This includes the erosion of beaches and dunes causing damage to property, humans and/or the environment. Though Namibia is blessed with beautiful coastal areas that are an attraction and contribute substantially towards tourism, climate change and its impact on sea level rise as well as increased coastal waves is a potential risk to the sector through increased coastal erosion and the higher costs of maintaining waterfronts (Crawford and Terton, 2016). About 30% of the interviewed experts in the tourism industry indicated that coral reef destruction was a major issue in Namibia, especially in the Erongo Region. In addition, climate change is likely to increase the incidence of coastal inundation, affecting marine species as well as destroying wetlands and seasonal oshanas that currently are home to a diversity of flora and fauna that are key to the tourism industry.

### 3.1.3 Biological risks

Biological hazards are organisms or organic matters that are harmful to human health. Examples include the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS – Cov), Ebola virus, Zika virus and Yellow fever. Perhaps nothing else illustrates the impact of biological hazards on tourism than the COVID-19 pandemic which has, to date, affected approximately 528 million and killed 6.2 million people globally (WHO Coronavirus Dashboard, 6 June 2022). Shaw, Chatterjee and Dabral (2022) argue that the COVID-19 pandemic is the worst biological hazard-induced disaster in recent memory. Namibia, like most countries, has not been spared, with 164 066 confirmed cases and 4 038 deaths.

In the case of Namibia, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic had detrimental effects on tourist numbers as tourists had little freedom to move due to travel restrictions and frequent lockdowns. The Erongo Region, as one of the tourism prime spots in the country, suffered terribly as tourist numbers declined. Hotels, Airbnb, transport companies and tour guide companies reported that they experienced significant losses due to the pandemic. From a peak of approximately 1.68 million visitors pre-COVID in 2019, the number of tourist visitors to the country plummeted to 187 100 people in 2020 and 354 508 in 2021 (Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism, 2022). It is estimated that COVID-19 cost the country approximately US\$3.2 billion in lost currency in 2020 alone (Xinhua, 2020). Hence COVID-19 is a hazard of considerable significance which continues to impact negatively on the tourism sector and the risk of resurgence is still lingering. About 65% of the study participants reported COVID-19 as a major risk in the Erongo Region. Most pointed out that there is no other hazard that has affected tourism in the region than COVID-19 in the recent past.

### 3.1.4 Environmental risks

The relationship between environmental hazards and tourism is complex. This is because while the industry relies on a clean environment for continuance and survival, tourist activities may themselves become detrimental to the environment. Such hazards may include pollution, natural habitat loss, forest fires, deforestation and discharge of waste into the sea. Deforestation and land degradation have been classified as a major problem in Namibia. Significant uncontrolled and unmonitored and unregulated timber extraction occurs in the north-eastern regions of Namibia. With 22% of the land classified as desert and 70% as arid to semi-arid and 8%

as dry sub-humid, any reduction in land cover has a significant negative environmental impact (Gbagir et al., 2021). The Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report of 2017 published by the World Economic Forum, for example, downgraded the country's competitiveness tourism placing because of high levels of deforestation. While the introduction of Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) has helped in conserving forests and wildlife (Meyer et al., 2021), more still needs to be done in order to protect the environment and to increase tourism potential.

In Namibia, tourism is an activity that largely thrives on natural resources. Such resources must therefore be used efficiently and sustainably. The major risk to the sustainability of natural resources in the country is the mismanagement of resources either due to corruption and greediness or due to the inability of the government to adequately fund the preservation and maintenance of natural resources. Until the resources are managed and preserved, the Namibian economy will continue to lose thousands of dollars every month due to inefficiencies in managing the country's resources. Poaching is also negatively impacting on the sector as wildlife that is critical to the survival of the sector is hunted and decimated. In some cases, poaching is triggered by conflicts between wildlife and humans. A proper management and awareness system is therefore needed to reduce the risk.

### 3.1.5 Political risks

Political instability denotes a situation of poor governance where there is generally no trust between the governing and the governed and where control is generally lacking. On its own, political instability negatively impacts the supply side and ultimately leads service providers and operators to suspend services as well. Political threats in tourism are also linked to many factors such as political unrest, terrorism, crime and corruption. Namibia is one of the most stable democracies in Southern Africa. It has, over the years, experienced smooth changes in leadership. However, this does not mean the absence of political threats which are linked to social unrest, being triggered by economic challenges. The constant increase in fuel prices and other basic commodities in the country and the failure of the government to adjust wages to above inflation levels is pushing people further into poverty. The poor and unemployed, especially the youth, have begun to get into the streets to picket and this may affect the tourism sector as tourists may perceive this negatively. Added to this is the rise in anti-Chinese sentiments



and rhetoric which may be construed negatively by the international community if not well-managed and hence impact negatively on the destination image. This has the potential to reduce the number of tourists visiting the country.

### 3.1.6 Economic risks

Economic threats revolve around issues of exchange rates against major currencies, foreign investment risk as determined by international rating agencies (e.g. Fitch, Standard and Poor Global, Moodys), and refinancing risk. Because the Namibia dollar is tied to the South African rand, some of the economic risks that the country faces are imported risks. In March 2020, for example, Moodys downgraded South Africa's sovereign credit rating to junk status, citing a deterioration in the country's fiscal strength and weak economic growth. The intricate link of the Namibian to the South African economy is thus bound to make it susceptible. On its own, the ratings have not been consistent. In July 2021, for example, Fitch's ratings affirmed Namibia's long-term foreign currency default rating at BB with a negative outlook, arguing that the rating was a result of the country's declining credit-worthiness due to a rise in government debt and low economic growth (The Economist, July 2021). Uncertainties regarding the pace of economic growth, rising unemployment and the lack of agreement regarding a social contract between the government and labour in the country also poses a risk to the tourism industry. The continued economic challenges in the country thus pose a grave risk to the tourism industry.

### 3.1.7 Societal risks

Tourists are extremely sensitive to perceptions. As a result, some of their decisions are based on issue-related perceptions of crime and safety. Namibia is relatively a safe country in terms of tourism and incidences of robberies or muggings of tourists are few. Approximately 15% of the study participants identified theft from tourists as a major challenge to tourism, especially in the Erongo Region (Table 2). However, there is a need to deal with issues of perceived corruption especially when government departments deal with tourists as well as increasing the visibility of the police in areas visited by tourists. In addition, the level of customer care ought to be dealt with, improving in order to satisfy the tourist expectations of what excellent service entails. While the challenges have not been well-documented, anecdotal information points to the

emergence of the sex trade in the tourism industry. This poses a safety risk to both the tourists and the locals and ought to be interrogated and stemmed.

### 3.1.8 Technical risks

Infrastructure is critical to the success of the tourism industry. This infrastructure is inclusive of airports, roads and rail, accommodation, car rentals and internet infrastructure. It is such infrastructure that determines the competitiveness of the tourism destination. Namibia has a relatively well-developed tourism infrastructure system (Asa et al., 2022) consisting of good roads, airports, and accommodation facilities in or nearer to most of its tourist attraction areas. Despite this good infrastructure, there are still areas that need improvement in terms of accessibility and upgrading the standard of the infrastructure. Kalvelage, Diez and Bollig (2021) point out that some of the country's roads, especially in the Zambezi Region are less accessible and need upgrading or improvement, especially given that the region forms a core element of the Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (KAZA).

Study participants (20%) also pointed out that bad road networks were a challenge to the tourism industry in the Erongo Region (Table 2). Inadequate transport infrastructure, therefore, reduces the attractiveness of the tourist destination. In addition to challenges related to transport infrastructure, some of the facilities in the tourism destinations in the country need to be upgraded and continuously maintained especially in large attractions such as Etosha. A further 10% of the study participants indicated infrastructural deficiencies as a major hazard, especially in relation to the processing of tourists at the country's entry points – be it the land borders of the airports where significant delays are experienced. Such delays are likely to create a negative perception of the ease of travel and thus negatively influence the destination image and a decline in the number of tourists visiting the country.

Study participants also raised the issue of cell phone network coverage, alluding to the fact that there is no widespread coverage in some of the tourist destinations, especially in the Erongo Region. This, they argued, is likely to discourage tourists from visiting the area. In cases where one encounters a challenge, for example, a tire burst or a mechanical challenge with their vehicle, the absence of cell phone coverage can place one in a position of helplessness or danger. Inadequate cell phone network coverage is hence a risk to the industry.

## 3.2 Risk drivers

Underlying risk drivers influence the sources of risks, existing vulnerabilities, and the different elements exposed to them (UNDRR & United Nations General Assembly, 2016). While the previous section has dealt with the various risks and hazards for the Erongo Region, this section focuses on the factors underlying these risks and hazards as they play a critical role in determining the resilience of the destination.

### 3.2.1 Climate change

A number of the various hazards that the Erongo Region faces are a result of changes in weather patterns at various geographic scales with negative impacts on the region. It is a common cause that climate change is occurring, being driven by increased emissions of greenhouse gases mainly in the industrialised world, but its impacts are being felt even in less industrialised countries like Namibia (IPCC, 2022). Extreme weather events include high rainfall amounts leading to flooding and damage to infrastructure that is necessary for tourism to thrive. On the other hand, infrequent rains in other areas cause frequent droughts, ultimately resulting in water scarcity and loss of biodiversity which is key to a thriving tourism industry.

### 3.2.2 Unemployment

While crime and robberies have been pointed out as major risks to the tourism industry in the Erongo Region, the underlying risk driver of these risks is unemployment. Like many other countries in the region, Namibia is facing challenges in terms of economic growth. These challenges are linked to challenges in the global financial markets as well as the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The prolonged closure of industries in the country due to the pandemic resulted in many workers being laid off as a number of companies either reduced their operations or closed shop. This has seen a significant number of people joining those seeking employment in an environment where economic recovery has been slow. The government's efforts to borrow money from international financiers (e.g., World Bank, IMF) have been equally slow and tedious, leaving the industrial recovery plans inadequately financed. The increase in crime in the country (and the Erongo Region) has negatively affected the tourism industry as visitor numbers have decreased, reducing income from the industry and

creating negative perceptions on the tourism destination with negative consequences for future tourism. Exacerbating this issue is the fact that adequate police visibility has been lacking in Erongo and crime levels remain high.

### 3.2.3 Poverty

One of the highlighted key risks for tourism in the Erongo Region is the existence of the sex tourism and the illegal photographing of the Himba people. But, what is driving these risks? Feedback from workshops and interviews in the study indicated that the underlying driver was the existence of extreme poverty levels, especially among the Himba people. While the way the Himba people dress is part of their culture, some tourists take advantage of the high poverty levels among this group of people and photograph them without their consent, with little or no reward accruing. This is despite the fact that some of the photographs are sold for huge sums of money overseas. The sex trade is also argued to be driven by acute poverty levels and tourists take advantage of the Himba people, exploiting them. If unchecked, this sex trade is likely to pose a danger to the sustenance of the tourism industry, given the degrading nature of the sex trade to the Himba and the trauma that they may be continually subjected to. Diseases are also likely to spread within the community and pose a danger to health.

### 3.2.4 Insufficient information and enforcement of laws on pollution

Pollution was pointed out as a key risk to the tourism industry in the Erongo Region. This involves huge waste materials being improperly disposed of, causing a risk to wildlife and aquatic life. Information from interviews and workshops pointed to the fact that there is inadequate information in the tourism industry regarding the disposal, use and re-use of waste material such as plastics. This results in improper disposal and this is exacerbated by the fact that there is no enforcement of the rules and regulations governing the disposal of waste in the country in general and in the Erongo Region in particular. Ultimately, the environment is harmed, the beauty of the tourist attractions may be compromised leading to fewer tourists visiting in future.

### **3.2.5 Expansion of human settlement and existence of illegal market for wildlife products**

While poaching is a very serious problem that requires urgent attention, much of the measures advocated for do not address the root causes of this challenge, presumably because the underlying drivers are scarcely understood. Information gathered in this study showed that poaching is generally a result of the continued existence of the illegal markets for wildlife products and the high value that is placed on these products. As long as the illegal market continues to exist, poaching is likely to endure. To tackle poaching successfully, there is therefore a need to address the root cause and fight to stamp out the illegal markets that exist in the various parts of the world. In addition to the existence of the illegal market, some of the poaching is influenced by the encroachment of human settlements into areas previously reserved exclusively for wildlife. Given that some of the inhabitants are poor, poaching wildlife is also an attempt to supplement their livelihoods. The solution, therefore, lies in not only educating the communities on the value of wildlife, but also making sure that the communities also benefit from the wildlife. This will engender a sense of ownership in the community and thus protection for the animals.

### **3.2.6 Lack of employee engagement**

A key issue raised during the interviews and workshops was the issue of poor customer service. Such poor service resulted in a poor service experience for the tourists and a poor image for the destination. Ultimately this would lead to a decline in visitors to the Erongo Region. But, what are the issues underlying this risk? The reasons are numerous: lack of skills to engage visitors; lack of guidelines on how to engage visitors; insufficient understanding of the importance of tourism to the country, poor remuneration and lack of engagement between employers and employees. There is therefore a need to empower employees with the proper skills of etiquette and to remunerate them adequately.

### **3.2.7 Understaffing of the National Tourism Board**

Namibia in general and the Erongo Region in particular, is an attractive destination with beautiful scenery and a variety of wildlife. However, this destination is inadequately marketed. This is because there is insufficient manpower and understaffing within the National Tourism Board to focus on destination branding, to deal with grading and quality issues in the industry, and to creatively use the media to market the destination to reach its full potential.

### **3.2.8 Lack of certification and registration in the industry**

Certification goes a long way in enhancing a destination. One of the key challenges raised in the study was the non-recognition of qualified tour guides. This affects the payments due to these guides as they are generally paid less, even though they offer adequate services to the visitors. The absence of certification of these tour guides by the industry is a risk to the image of the destination. There is therefore a need to have these guides officially certified to control the proliferation of unqualified and incompetent guides who may offer poor services resulting in visitor dissatisfaction and a poor destination image. In extreme cases, uncertified tour guides may also endanger the life of visitors.

### **3.2.9 Greed and huge inequalities in the industry**

It is indisputable that tourism is important in the country and is also a major employer. The low pay in the industry, however, makes it difficult to attract educated and young people to the sector. The driver of this risk is greed by some of the industry players who do not want to pay their workers fair wages. It is likely that this trend will lead to an ageing workforce in the industry and those that are capable of revolutionising the sector technologically will also be kept away by the low remuneration.

### 3.3 Key risks and potential options for action for the Erongo Region

While Namibia faces numerous risks in terms of the tourism industry, there are other risks that are particular to the Erongo region. These range from droughts, and flooding, to east winds, poaching and pollution. From the workshops held in both Windhoek and Swakopmund as well as the various surveys and interviews carried out in the study, a number of these risks were pointed out and potential options for action were suggested (see Table 3).

One of the major risks that were identified included damaged tourism infrastructure due to flooding which occurs in some of the areas within the Erongo Region especially during the rainy season. In a climate environment where extreme weather patterns have become more frequent, flooding and the subsequent damage to infrastructure that is key to tourism has also become common. To enhance the resilience of the destination regarding this challenge, there is a need for the government and local authorities to identify, beforehand, the flood-prone areas and then design and develop climate-proof infrastructure so that disruption to the tourism industry will be minimised.

The other identified major risks include loss of biodiversity/wildlife in the destination due to extreme weather events such as droughts, which is also a result of an increase in extreme weather events. In general, Namibia is a dry country. However, the increased frequency of dry spells in the country results in water scarcity and the loss of biodiversity. Consequently, this is likely to reduce the number of visitors to the country. One way of dealing with this risk is for the government to inaugurate a clear policy on rural and urban water harvesting. This will potentially result in the destination harvesting adequate water to meet its requirements, guaranteeing visitors access to water for the duration of their stay.

Visitors generally shy away from places that are prone to crimes or have a reputation for high crime rates. For tourism, a perception of high crime rates creates a negative image of the destination. For the Erongo Region specifically, a perception of high crime means that visitors will avoid the region for other places perceived to be less affected, hence decreasing visitor numbers and the potential to generate income. To attend to this risk and reduce the negative impact on tourist numbers (and income), the national government, in collaboration with the municipalities in the Erongo Region (e.g., Swakopmund Municipality, Walvis Bay

Municipality) must collaborate to increase the visibility of both national and local police so that visitors are assured of their security. In addition, the existing tourism protection unit must be beefed up in terms of manpower, vehicles and equipment so that they are able to effectively carry out their mandate.

In the modern age, tourists generally require and expect to visit destinations with clean environments and where the hosts show consciousness in protecting the environment. Where such consciousness is not apparent or shown, and environmental rules and regulations are weak or not implemented, the condition of the environment may be negatively affected by littering, hence causing harm to the environment. A degraded environment will, in turn, result in the decrease in visitor numbers and this will also have a negative impact on revenue generation and the general attractiveness of the destination. For the Erongo Region, dealing with this risk entails increasing the awareness of the existing laws so that both the local population and the visitors are aware of what is expected of them in safeguarding the environment. In addition, the relevant authorities must strictly enforce the applicable laws. Further, the significance of Eco-Awards must be increased, rewarding those businesses that operate in a manner that preserves the environment. A combination of these actions may keep the destination more environmentally-friendly and in turn increase visitor numbers to the region.

While visitors are attracted to the Erongo Region by the existence of beautiful scenery and diverse wildlife, such an attraction is endangered through poaching activities which have the potential to deplete wildlife. To deal with this challenge, the Erongo Region, in collaboration with the national government, must capacitate the existing anti-poaching units to effectively carry out their jobs. This entails training them (including refresher courses), giving them vehicles to increase their reach, improving their technological capacity (e.g., using drones for monitoring/tracking), and giving them the right weapons to combat poaching given that some of the poachers will be armed. Preserving the very wildlife that attracts visitors will go a long way in increasing the resilience of the destination.

Table 3: Key risks and potential options for action

Source of risk	Risk for tourism (what negative impact for tourism)	Underlying risk drivers (if identifiable)	Potential options for actions
Flooding	Damaged tourism infrastructure	Increase of extreme weather patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify flood prone infrastructure and develop climate proof infrastructure</li> </ul>
Drought	Loss of biodiversity/wildlife Water scarcity	Increase of extreme weather patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy on rural and urban water harvesting</li> <li>Create awareness on water recycling at tourism business level</li> </ul>
Crime	Negative impact on destination image Decrease in tourist numbers	Unemployment, poverty, lack of visible policing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance tourism protection unit</li> <li>Enhance local patrols &amp; increase interface between police &amp; local patrols</li> </ul>
Pollution	Littering, causing harm to environment & scenery	Limited information & inadequate enforcement of environmental laws	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase significance of eco-awards</li> <li>Enforce existing environmental laws</li> </ul>
Poaching	Endangered species risk extinction, ecosystem imbalance	Existence of illegal wildlife market, human settlement encroachment to wildlife areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase capacity of anti-poaching units, strengthen ability to prosecute poachers</li> </ul>
Poor customer service	Poor visitor experience, denting of destination image	Poor personnel management, lack of skills, poor remuneration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create customer service charter,</li> <li>Remunerate employees well</li> <li>Create awareness of tourism importance</li> </ul>
Poor destination marketing	Relatively unknown destination – fewer visitors, unclear destination identity	Understaffing at National Tourism Board (NTB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create central hub for tourism information</li> <li>Review and improve destination marketing internationally</li> </ul>
Prolonged east winds	Disruption of tourism activities	Increase in extreme weather patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop early warning systems &amp; protection measures</li> </ul>

For a destination to be truly resilient, visitors need to keep coming back. This is generally possible when visitor experiences are good. Such experiences are determined by the level of customer service. The tourism establishments in the Erongo Region therefore ought to prioritise training related to customer care, underlying the importance of visitor experiences to the success of the industry. Hence there is a need to establish a customer service charter, outlining standards in dealing with customers. In addition, businesses must create awareness amongst their employees about the importance of visitors in sustaining the tourism industry. Without these visitors, the industry will be moribund. Further to this, businesses must ensure that they remunerate their employees well. It is difficult to motivate employees to provide good customer care in an environment where they are not recognised and remunerated well.

Finally, the Erongo Region as a destination is not well marketed. This leads to the destination not being well-known and therefore loses on potential visitors that could help grow up both the regional and the national economy. The Erongo Regional Council, in collaboration with businesses within the region and the National Tourism Board (NTB) must therefore create a central hub for information about the potential of the region, its attractiveness and other relevant information to entice visitors. In addition, links must be established with other international bodies to increase the reach of information regarding the destination. This has the potential to increase the number of visitors to the area.

# 04

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## Enablers and barriers for building destination resilience



Peoples’ ability to act in the context of risk strongly depends on their access to assets or capitals (human capital, social capital, natural capital, physical capital, and financial capital), while the willingness to take ac-

tions is shaped by individual values, norms, and beliefs. These factors serve both as enablers and barriers. Both enablers and barriers to pursuing resilient action will be discussed in the following sections.

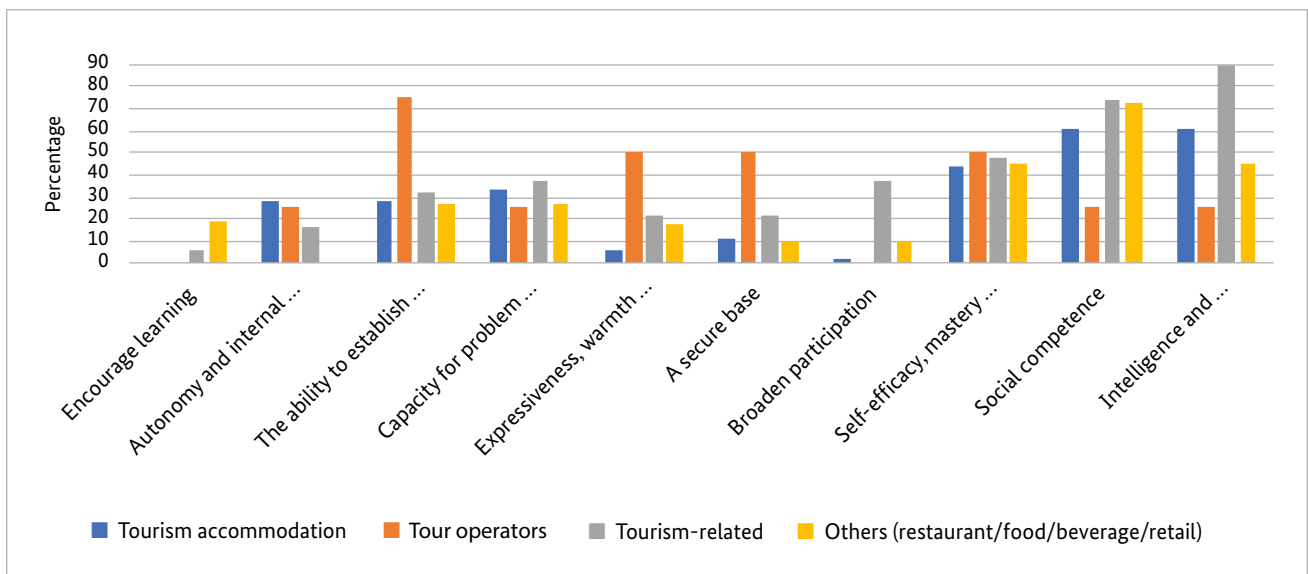
### 4.1 Enablers to destination resilience

Enablers allow the tourism sector to recover quickly from difficulties to spring back or recover from misfortune or disaster. Critical in this case are the capabilities that provide a mechanism that enables tourism organizations to respond to disruptive environmental changes. Enablers also include efforts to enhance the long-term growth of the tourism sector in a sustainable and resilient manner, thus effectively rebuilding the tourism sector. Some of the ingredients in a resilient destination include: diversity, connectivity, shared responsibility, environmental sensitivity, learning & reflexivity, and thinking adaptively (Cheer and Lew, 2017).

This section presents findings on enablers to tourism resilience. The indicators are derived from the workshop participants and literature. Three types of enablers were identified: those that apply at individual, enterprise and community levels. Respondents were asked to select all that apply within each category. Figure 7 displays percentage responses for individual enablers by type of service provider. For those in tourism accommodation and tourism-related services, intelli-

gence and academic ability (61.1% for both groups of providers), and social competence (89.5% for tourism accommodation, 73.7% for tourism-related services) are important enablers to building resilience. The majority of touroperators rated the ability to establish and access a network of support as very important (75%), whereas there was equal split on the following individual enablers within this group of service providers: Expressiveness, warmth and affection (50%), A secure base (50%) and Self-efficacy, mastery and high self-esteem (50%). On the other hand, those offering services in restraint, food, beverage and retail considered capacity for social competency (72.7%), as well as self-efficacy, mastery and high self-esteem (45.5%) and intelligence and academic ability (45.5%) as important individual enablers. Overall, the following individual enablers - Intelligence and academic ability, Social competence, Self-efficacy, mastery and high self-esteem were deemed the most important among service providers in tourism accommodation, tourism-related (sale of merchandise/ events/ visitor attractions) and those offering food and retailing services.

Figure 7: Individual Enablers by Type of Service Provider

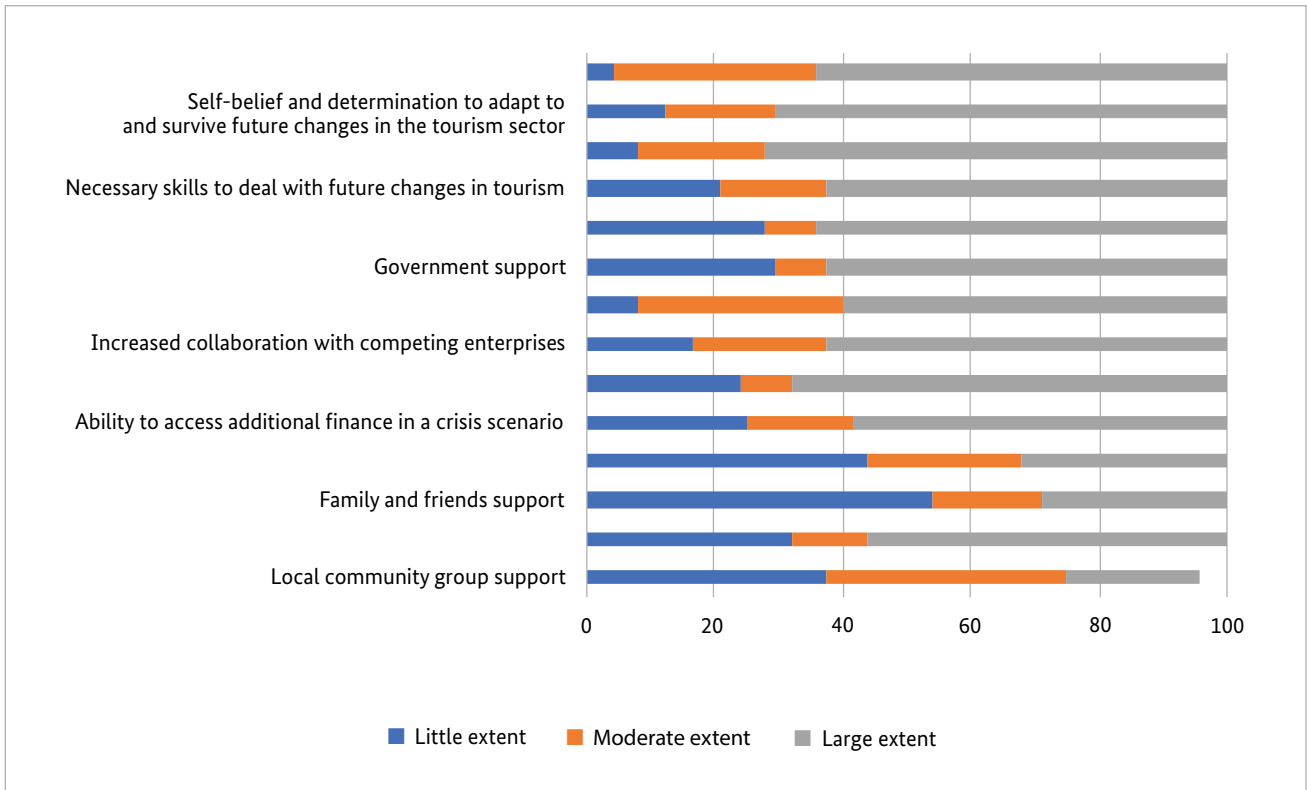


**Enablers for enterprise resilience**

In addition to individual enablers, enterprise resilience has long been known to continue to reshape the tourism sector’s resilience. Seven components were examined, ranging from government support, family and friends’ support to management and staff skills, as well as self-belief and determination to adapt by management and staff. Figure 8 presents the findings. Both

females and males identified that to a large extent having management and staff with self-determination to adapt, and skills to deal with future changes are important. Similarly, government support and increased collaboration within a network were deemed to establish enterprise resilience.

Figure 8: Enablers of Enterprise Resilience by Sex



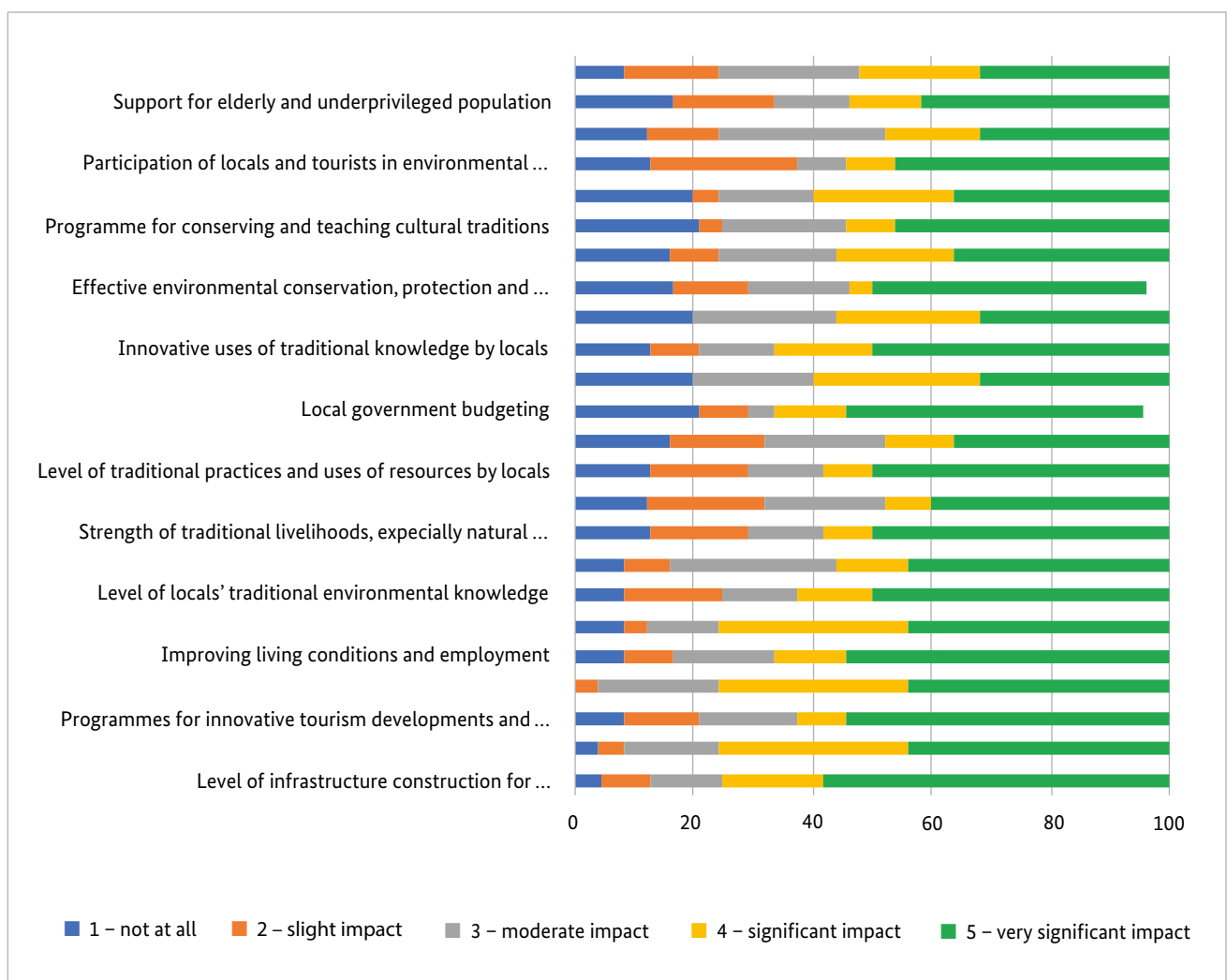


## 4.2 Enablers for Community sustainability and resilience

Resilience in the tourism sector also depends, at the same time, on community sustainability. Some of the enablers of community sustainability and resilience are displayed in Figure 9. A total of 12 indicators were explored and are disaggregated by sex here. For both females and males, the following are the top five indicators that significantly would enable community sustainability and resilience: Level of infrastructure

construction for education/interpretation and resource access; programmes for innovative tourism developments and marketing; Improving living conditions and employment; Level of locals' traditional environmental knowledge; and Strength of traditional livelihoods, especially natural resource-based. Nevertheless, females were more likely to indicate a very significant impact compared to males.

Figure 9: Enablers of Community Sustainability and Resilience

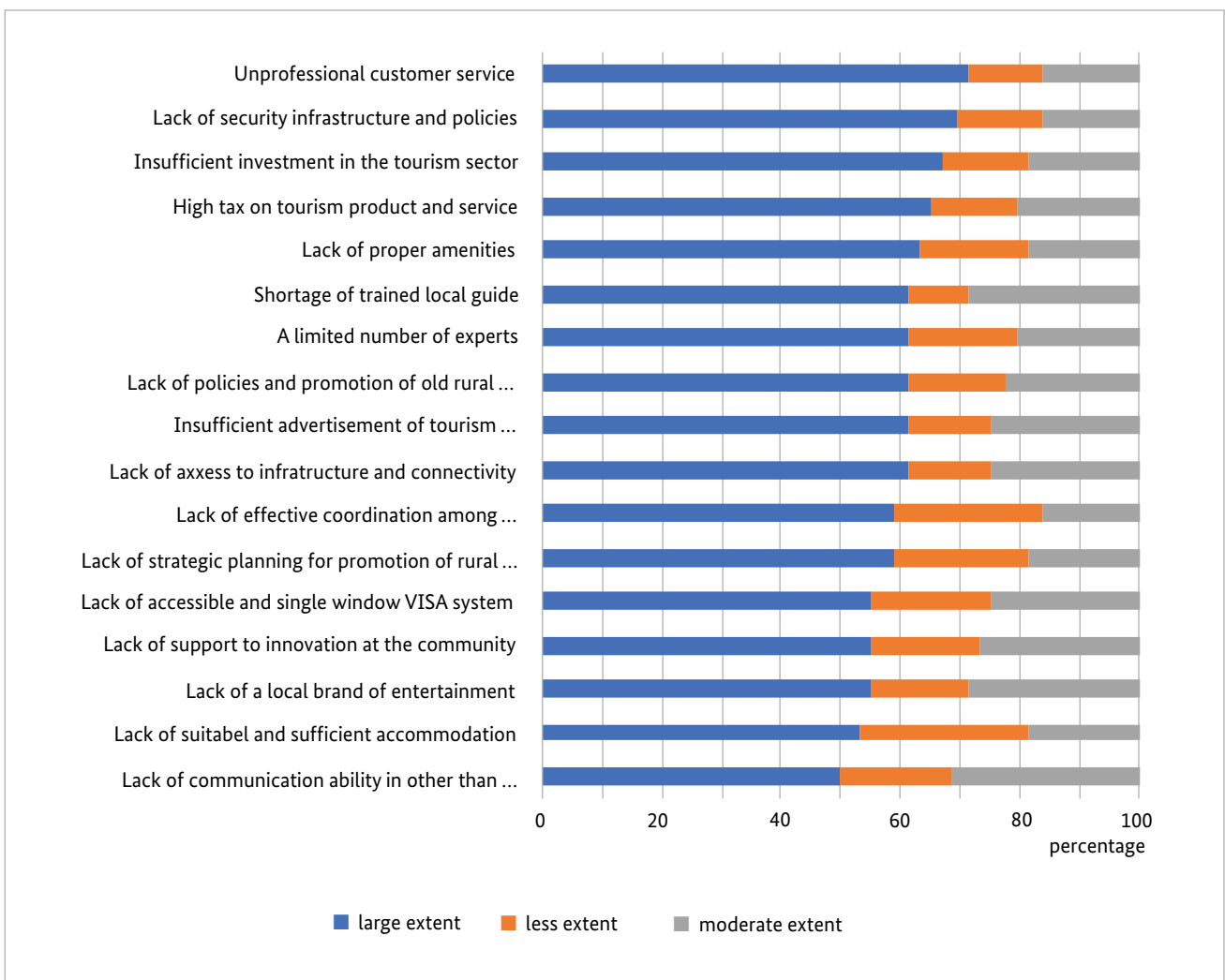


### 4.3 Barriers to destination resilience

Alongside enablers, policymakers responsible for developing and growing successful tourism destinations face a large variety of change drivers in key tourism source markets. Identifying barriers is vital if the tourism sector is to become more resilient against disruptive events and prepare for long-term stability. In this study, we explored 17 indicators that were presented to respondents to indicate to what extent they are barriers to tourism. Figure 10 shows the results. The fol-

lowing were considered, to a large extent, the top five barriers to resilience: unprofessional customer service (71.4%); lack of security infrastructure and policies (69.4%); insufficient investment in the tourism sector (67.3%); high tax on tourism products and services (65.3%), and lack of proper amenities (63.3%).

Figure 10: Barriers to tourism resilience

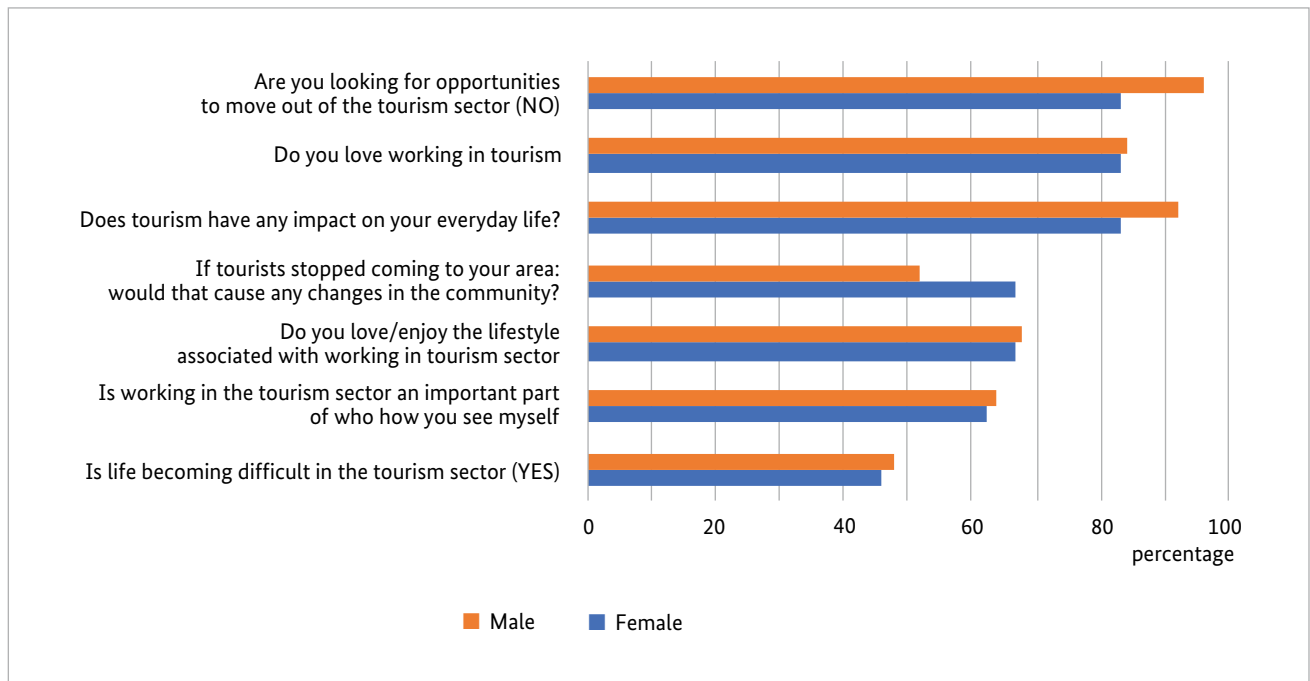


## 4.4 Overall motivation towards working in the tourism sector

One of the building blocks towards a resilient tourism sector is the individual motivation of continuing working in the sector. Respondents were asked the question of how motivated they are and impactful is working in the tourism sector. A summary of findings is provided in Figure 11. The majority indicated that they love working in tourism (84% male, 83.3% female), that tourism has an impact on their everyday life (92% male, 83.3% female), and they are not planning to move out of the tourism sector (96% male,

83.3% female). Similarly, over 60% of the respondents suggested that stopping tourism in their community will cause changes to their community, while others reported they love/enjoy the lifestyle associated with working in the tourism sector, whereas others feel that working in the tourism sector is part of whom they see themselves. Others stated that life is becoming difficult in the tourism sector (48% male, 45.8% female).

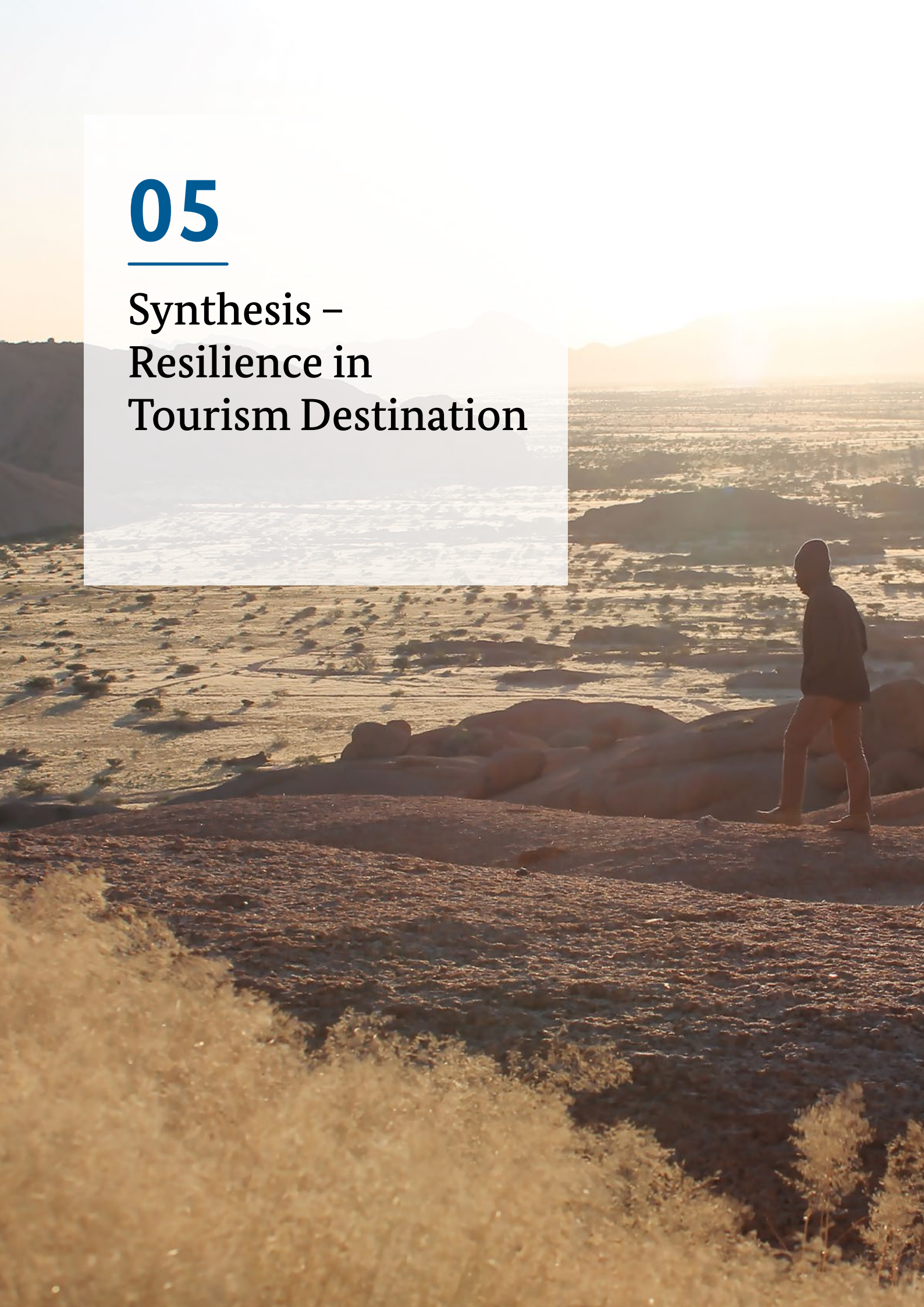
Figure 11: Motivation Towards Working in Tourism Sector



# 05

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## Synthesis – Resilience in Tourism Destination



Informed by the conceptual and methodological framework that we developed to assess resilience and to identify pathways for increasing long-term resilience of tourism destinations in Namibia and through the stakeholder's workshops we were able to establish consensus on the risk registry for Namibia and Erongo Region in particular.

The major risks factors affecting destination resilience in Namibia included COVID-19, overdevelopment of beach/beach erosion, drought/heat waves, climate change, bad road network, inadequate water supply, theft/harassment of tourists/security for tourists, currency fluctuation, human-wildlife conflict, pollution and destruction of habitats, rising sea level, lack

of international flights to Erongo Region, border infrastructure issues, unprofessional customer service, insufficient investment in the tourism sector, high tax on tourism products and services and lack of proper amenities.

In order to address these issues, there is a need to implement workshops and training for local tourism stakeholders to raise awareness of risks, sustainability and resilience, and increase stakeholder collaboration to support resilience-building activities and initiatives. Capacity building and training are therefore recommended as a strategy to revive and rebuild a resilient tourism sector in Namibia.

## 5.1 Focal points to tackle barriers

### 5.1.1 Stakeholders training

In order to increase long-term resilience of tourism destinations in Namibia, there is a need to raise awareness of risks through training and capacity enhancement of local tourism stakeholders on sustainability and resilience. The training should cover cross-cutting areas of risk-informed management for tourism development within the boundaries of sustainability. For the Erongo Region in particular, whose tourism is largely nature based, there is a need for specific tourism industry stakeholder awareness and training on climate change impacts, climate prediction, climate change adaptation and climate change mitigation. The targeted key stakeholders include the tourism business community, the local people, the town councils, key government ministries (of tourism, finance, home affairs and security and local government, Namibia Tourism Board (NTB), Hospitality Association of Namibia (HAN) and Parks and Wildlife Department, Emerging Tourism Entreprises Association (ETEA). All these stakeholders have influence in tourism planning, development, and custodianship of tourism resources in Namibia.

### 5.1.2 Establishment of a tourism revolving fund/stimulus package which is easily accessible to all key stakeholders

The fund will guarantee adequate resources for reinvestment in the various tourist products and can be geared towards financing tourism related projects and tourist sites and attractions in the country with high touristic potential. In addition, the fund can also be accessed to diversify the tourism product portfolio in Namibia. Most businesses have struggled with operations and business viability since the COVID-19 pandemic and there is a need for easy stimulus packages to save the industry from total collapse.

### 5.1.3 Rehabilitation of ports of entry

The entry border infrastructure needs rehabilitation. While the HKIA has been face-lifted the inland borders posts have remained with old infrastructure, and there is a need to modernise operations at the borders. This will go a long way in improving tourist experiences.

#### **5.1.4 Domestic tourism enhancement mechanisms/to address shocks of regional/international tourism fluctuations**

One of the major risks affecting tourism in the Erongo Region is the overdependence on international tourist arrivals. It is critical to build a culture of holiday taking by the locals and for the tourism enterprises to rethink the pricing modes with a view to encouraging domestic tourists to access holiday products. However, the pricing models should be sustainable enough to cover operational costs and steer the businesses to profitability.

#### **5.1.5 Address skills gap in customer service**

Across the spectrum of Namibia tourism and validated through stakeholders' workshops we held there was concern about unprofessional customer service leading to largely dissatisfied tourists. There is also concern

that highly experienced staff were retrenched during the peak of COVID, leaving enterprises manned by inexperienced staff. It is therefore imperative that a robust staff training programme be put in place, encouraging and facilitating staff exchange programmes in order to improve the skills base in the entire tourism sector in Namibia.

#### **5.1.6 Tourism satellite account**

There is a need for an effective tracking and efficient accounting of the contribution of tourism to economic growth in Namibia. This will allow the capturing of tourism inflows into the economy, thereby curbing leakages and ensuring that the local communities benefit from the Namibia tourism value chain. Local communities have often raised concerns about the opaqueness of the national tourism accounting system. There is a need to train all stakeholders on the Tourism Satellite Accounting (TSA)

## **5.2 Responsibilities and ownership**

Building destination resilience requires actors to take responsibility and work towards making a difference in their specific fields. Having identified key interventions that are necessary going forward, the study went

on to indicate the different sources of possible funding and who is responsible for the interventions. These are summarised in the following table:

Table 4: Key interventions and ownership

Key intervention	Source of Funding	Responsible institution
Establishment of tourism revolving fund/stimulus package	Government of Namibia Banks Environmental sustainability levy (to be established) Non-governmental organisations • Environmental Development Fund • Namibia Nature Conservation • World Wildlife Fund • UNDP • German International Corporation (GIZ)	• MEFT • Development Bank of Namibia • Bank of Namibia
Stakeholders training	Futouris Donor funding The Namibian Tourism Board(NTB) Namibia Training Authority(NTA)	• The Futouris Project • (Team (Namibia) • UNAM/NUST
Rehabilitation of ports of entry	Government of Namibia	• Ministry of Home Affairs, Immigration, Safety and Security
Domestic tourism enhancement mechanisms	Government of Namibia	• MEFT • Namibia Tourism Board
Address skills gap in customer service	NTB Namibia Training Authority (tourism and hospitality training levy)	• NTB • NTA • NUST/UNAM
Tourism Satellite Accounting	MEFT UNWTO Technical Cooperation UNECA	• MET • NTB • NSA • BoN • Home Affairs

### 5.3 Building strategies for resilience

The entire tourism value chain in the Erongo Region is prone to unprecedented risks, shocks and stressors and there is a need to raise awareness and anticipate these challenges for the Erongo tourism destination to remain competitive and sustainable. A review of the Covid19 pandemic reveals that tourism in the Erongo Region was the most affected resulting in socio-economic consequences for the host communities in Erongo. The livelihoods of communities in Erongo are highly dependent on the tourism value chain. All tourism sub-sectors in the Erongo Region which include lodging, tourist transport, tour operators, travel agents, Food and Beverage and tour guiding have not been spared the devastating effects of shocks and stressors of the past years.

In order to build destination resilience the following strategies are proposed:

- ▶ Building /strengthening cooperation among stakeholders in Erongo
- ▶ Coordinated action across government bodies at all levels and in partnership with communities
- ▶ Strategic planning for development and marketing
- ▶ Diversification of tourism products and activities to avoid over dependency
- ▶ Having an inclusive policy framework for tourism development in the Erongo Region

# 06

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## Conclusion and outlook





Tourism as a major economic sector in Namibia, offers visitors a chance to experience something of what makes this country, its people and its places special. While in the country, the visitors spend their money on a range of services related to the tourism industry, which boosts the national revenue as they inject money into the economy. Tourism also offers Namibians a chance to work in the industry, to interact with people from around the world (and local visitors from around the country), and share in the benefits accruing from tourism. Unfortunately, like any other tourism destination in the world, Namibia faces the virtual certainty of being affected by a variety of shocks and stressors that pose a risk to tourism. To ensure that the tourism sector continues to play its role in the country's economy, stakeholders must institute programmes and strategies that build resilience of this key tourism destination. A destination can build and achieve resilience, which is necessary to increase inbound tourism, ensure flexibility, transition, innovation, and build a new trajectory for renewed attractiveness or destination image.

As demonstrated above, enhancing destination resilience in any country, planning and decision-making is critical and integral to ensuring the sustainability of the tourist destination in particular and the entire tourism industry value chain. The exercise has also demonstrated that for the tourism industry to remain competitive, stakeholders must cooperate to anticipate and prepare for worst-case scenarios. Throughout the various engagement sessions, stakeholders demonstrated a strong desire to mainstream resilience. The growing desire of stakeholders to achieve a more integral resilience is a critical driver. This manual, therefore, aims to support this desire. By using this manual, we hope that domestic tourist destinations will be able to mainstream resilience into their tourism planning and risk management process and will be ready to better respond to natural disasters, thus creating sustainable tourism destinations for all.

This exercise has revealed a number of important points, one of which is that resilience takes a sector-wide approach and requires that the boundaries of the tourism sector be broadened to include critical areas of disaster management and climate change. As alluded to earlier, the manual has mapped critical stakeholders that will champion this course. This exercise has also identified several shocks and stressors that should be addressed that comprise different hazards such as natural, human-made or hybrid in origin. In Namibia, the tourism sector is exposed to a number of different hazards including droughts, floods and

climate change. Furthermore, these are compounded by human-made and hybrid hazards such as political, financial and social threats. These hazards are detrimental to the industry as their presence makes the destination hostile and uncondusive. Table 2 above provides a more detailed analysis of the extent of the challenges associated with these hazards as provided by participants at various engagement sessions.

Through various engagements with stakeholders, the following key pathways (or enablers) for stakeholders to advance resilient tourism agendas were identified. These enablers consist of pathways applicable at the individual, enterprise and community levels. There were several barriers to destination resilience that were outlined by stakeholders at the various sessions which this manual has taken into consideration. To address these barriers, the manual proposes capacity development initiatives such as workshops and training for local tourism stakeholders to raise awareness of risks, sustainability and resilience, and increase stakeholder collaboration to support resilience-building activities and initiatives. Capacity building and training are therefore recommended as a strategy to revive and rebuild a resilient tourism sector in Namibia.

## Outlook

Going forward in exploring the growing field of tourism resilience, this manual flags a number of strategic areas to be further addressed. These include the following:

- ▶ Building /strengthening cooperation among stakeholders in Erongo
- ▶ Coordinated action across government bodies at all levels and in partnership with communities
- ▶ Strategic planning for development and marketing
- ▶ Diversification of tourism products and activities to avoid over-dependence on nature-based tourism and international tourist arrivals

Finally, mainstreaming disaster risk reduction at tourism destinations will mean creating a robust culture of disaster preparedness. The exercise has revealed that stakeholders are willing to embrace tourist destination resilience practices in their respective areas of business. The future of the industry pre-supposes an alignment of political will and leadership with disaster management goals and objectives, and the actions

and resources to strengthen the disaster management infrastructure and operation – all for the purpose of achieving destination resilience.

The ultimate measure of this must not only be an articulated plan of action but also the achievement of desired outcomes in the face of disaster events. The manual outlines a range of options that tourism destinations should consider for mainstreaming risk reduction in post-disaster recovery including the use of hazard scenarios to anticipate long-term recovery issues, establishing a standing recovery task force to oversee reconstruction or providing incentives or disincentives to either encourage or discourage behaviours.

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Deutsches Komitee Katastrophenvorsorge e.V.,  
Kaiser-Friedrich-Str. 13, 53113 Bonn  
T +49 (0)228 26 199 570  
E [info@dkkv.org](mailto:info@dkkv.org)  
I2 [www.dkkv.org](http://www.dkkv.org)

Futouris e.V., c/ o Regus  
Heidenkampsweg 58, 20097 Hamburg  
T +49 40 809034 4055  
E [info@futouris.org](mailto:info@futouris.org)  
I2 [www.futouris.org](http://www.futouris.org)

## Authors

Dr. Selma Lendelvo, Prof. Godfrey Tawodzera,  
Ms. Mary-Ellen Kimaro, Dr. Simon Chiutsi,  
Prof. Lawrence Kazembe, Dr. Wanjiru Muhoho,  
Mr Mally Likukela, Mr Jona Heita,  
Mr Lawrence Mutjavikua, Ms Catherine Malulu,  
Ms Martha Mosha

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