

# Resilient and sustainable tourism development in the Erongo Region, Namibia



## Building resilience in tourism destinations

Tourism is a major source of income for numerous communities worldwide, particularly in regions with difficult accessibility, remoteness from economic markets, and limited industry. However, many tourism destinations face complex and interconnected risks such as climate change, pandemics, ecosystem degradation, loss of nature and biodiversity (UNDRR, 2022). 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. In the face of growing uncertainty and occurrence of disasters in tourism destinations, resilience

has evolved as a key concept for dealing with these challenges.

However, approaches for putting it to practice in a destination are still scarce. The Erongo region in Namibia set out to change this by pioneering an innovative methodology to analyse and build destination resilience. This brochure outlines the Erongo region as a tourism destination, identifies hazards and risk for tourism activity in the region and compiles options for action to build resilience including implications for their implementation.

## How to build destination resilience?



## Involving tourism stakeholders

Tourism is a people's business. It involves a variety of stakeholders from different backgrounds and centres around creating exchange between tourists and the host country. This includes institutional actors (government, ministries), destination management organisations, tourism businesses (e.g., accommodation providers, tour operators, transport services), local

communities and visitors. Naturally, all these actors have a stake in resilience building, which is why they need to form part of a destination resilience analysis. Therefore, the project employed a variety of participatory formats, among them interviews, focus group discussions, surveys and workshops with the stakeholders from national, regional and local level.



### ERONGO REGION, NAMIBIA

The Erongo Region in the western part of Namibia is one of the country's key tourism destinations and contributes significantly to foreign currency generation, employment, infrastructural development and to local residents' livelihoods. Named after the famous Erongo mountain range, the area is known for its beautiful landscape and historical architecture including natural characteristics such as mountains, dunes and beaches on the Atlantic Ocean coastline.

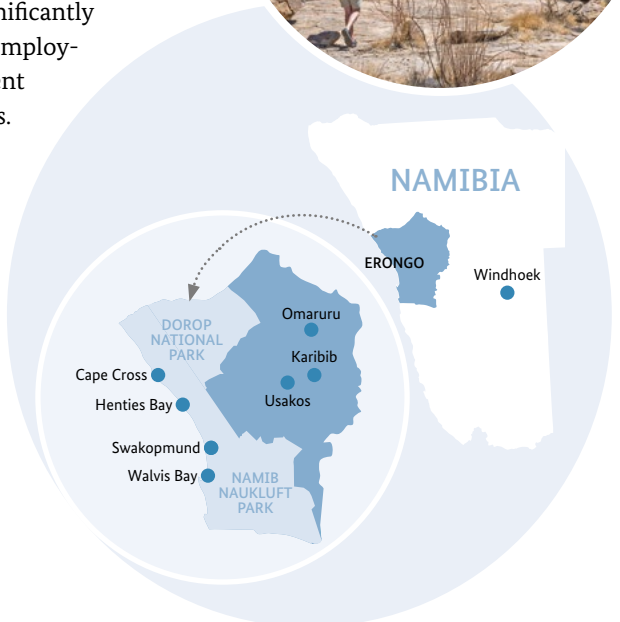


Figure 1: Map of Erongo Region

## STEP 2



## KEY RISKS FOR TOURISM IN THE ERONGO REGION

During the project implementation, key risks for tourism in the Erongo Region were identified. These include sudden shock events and slow-onset stressors. The potential negative impacts of these risks include adverse consequences for human lives, the

economy, the environment, destination image, or community well-being. Below, the key risks in the Erongo region as well as underlying risk drivers which were identified during the participatory workshops, interviews and surveys are summarized. .

TYPE OF RISK	IDENTIFIED RISKS / KEY RISKS
Hydro-meteorological/ climatological risks	Drought/heat waves
	Extreme precipitation and floods
	Sea level rise
Coastal risk	Overdevelopment of beach/beach erosion
Biological risk	COVID-19
Environmental risk	Human-wildlife conflict
	Pollution and destruction of habitats
Economic risk	Currency fluctuation
Societal risk	Theft/harassment of tourists/security for tourists
Technical risk	Bad road network
	Inadequate water supply

## STEP 3



## OPTIONS FOR ACTION TO ADDRESS RISKS

There is no solely valid pathway to reach destination resilience. Each key risk can be addressed with a number of different actions which must be carefully evaluated to check if their implementation is feasible, realistic and in line with other goals of sustainable development. During the project,

different options for action to tackle key risks for tourism in the Erongo region were identified.



## STEP 4



# GENERAL PRINCIPLES THAT ENABLE RESILIENCE

There are common aspects that encourage the development of resilience pathways in tourism. We call them **Resilience Principles for Tourism**. These principles are applicable in most destinations and guide the development of concrete action for strengthening resilience and promoting sustainability. Examples include:

- ▶ **Diversity and Redundancy:** e.g., diversification of tourism products and activities to avoid overdependency
- ▶ **Social Networks:** e.g., build and strengthen cooperation among all stakeholders in the destination
- ▶ **Reflexivity and Awareness:** e.g., workshops and trainings to raise awareness on different risks in the destination; reflect contributions of tourism to economic growth and improving tourism satellite accounting
- ▶ **Flexibility, Adaptability and Learning:** e.g., create knowledge on how to manage risks; address skills gap in tourism industry
- ▶ **Participation and Collective Action:** e.g., establishment of easily accessible tourism funds and stimulus packages; define responsibilities and coordinate action across at all levels and in partnership with communities.

## STEP 5



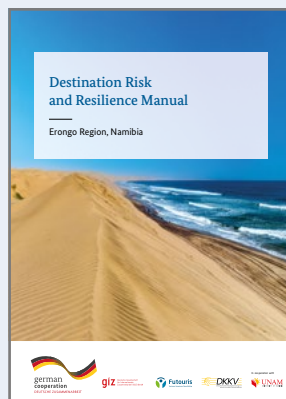
# CREATING OWNERSHIP THROUGH TRAININGS

In order to increase long term resilience of tourism destinations in Namibia, there is a need to raise awareness for risks through training and capacity enhancement of local tourism stakeholders on sustainability and resilience. Following the identification of training needs in the workshops, the local project team designed a two-day training program. Among others, a session on climate change awareness was held in which participants discussed sustainable water consumption, recycling and water harvesting for tourism stakeholders.





For further insights on the successful implementation of this project in the Erongo Region (incl. key risks for tourism, methods and options for action to build resilience) please find more information in the *Destination Risk and Resilience Manual for the Erongo Region, Namibia*



## ABOUT THE PROJECT

The University of Namibia (UNAM) has partnered with the German Committee for Disaster Reduction and Futouris as part of an international project on promoting resilience in tourism destination in Namibia, the Dominican Republic, and Sri Lanka. The project aims to assess destination resilience and provides support to tourism actors to build resilience and strengthen sustainable tourism development.

The project is supported by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

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