

Cultural Heritage for Coastal Tourism and Climate Action in the Indian Ocean Region

A Project Summary submitted for IORA Financial Support by:
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Introduction

IORA promotes tourism and cultural exchanges by setting proposed policy directions for government cooperation and providing platforms for dialogue in promoting tourism amongst Member States, Dialogue Partners, and other international bodies. While IORA has focused on coastal (and cruise) tourism the nexus between this and culture and heritage has been less explored, although the current IORA Action Plan 2022-2027 calls to '(r)evuew the status of the Core Group for Culture and assess its revivability' under the priority area of Tourism and Cultural Exchanges. This project could be a catalyst in support of the development of the area of Cultural Exchanges as a regional engagement and economic development mechanism. The research aims and objectives (as set out in the accompanying proposal) support the overarching strategic goals under Tourism and Cultural Exchanges; Academic, Science and Technology Cooperation; Women's Economic Empowerment; and Trade and Investment. The project would also be in support of the 2016 Declaration on Gender Equality and Women's Economic Empowerment; the 2018 Balaclava Declaration on Women's Economic Empowerment and Gender Equality as a Pre-Requisite for Sustainable Development; and the objectives of the MoU between IORA Member States for the Promotion of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).

Geographic Focus of the Research:

South Africa, Kenya, Seychelles and Mauritius.

Problem Statement, Description of the Project and Originality

The Small Island Developing States (SIDS) of the southwest Indian Ocean Region (SWIOR) are vulnerable to the effects of climate change, in particular sea level rise and global warming. Studies by marine scientists such as Mike Roberts (SARCHI Food Security), Lisa Levin (Marine Biologist) and Martin Visbeck (GEOMAR), reveal that certain tropical parts of the globe (i.e., the southwest Indian Ocean region) are more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Existing and impending impacts on marine fauna and flora, as well as coastal livelihoods requires innovative, responsive measures and projects to address these vulnerabilities. Global responses to climate change however often emphasize high level intervention, such as global agreements on reducing carbon emissions, moratoriums on offshore mining and global bans on plastic and other climate aggravating pollutants. Little attention is given to small-scale, replicable, multi-purpose and implementable projects that can also respond to the negative impacts of climate change. The proposed project is therefore innovative and original, as well as needs focused. It investigates small-scale, local, gender affirming projects in coastal African contexts rather than focusing on macroenvironmental issues and their role in ocean sustainability; it identifies nascent coastal projects that have potential for commercialization for natural and heritage tourism, and other goals of human development and, it is needs focused because it specifically seeks to engage with gendered, women led/local projects that have the potential to develop IOR economies and advance

either the natural or cultural tourism endeavor of the selected countries. Finally, the project is multidisciplinary, engaging scholars in marine conservation, anthropology, art and cultural heritage fields.

Research Method and Methodology

The Principal Investigator (PI) of the project will enlist her research team to closely liaise with indigenous and autochthonous (earliest) peoples in the selected locales. The purpose of this is to ensure that the consultation and data collection process is inclusive and relevant to the project topic. A major feature of the project is the facilitation of contact between these indigenous/autochthonous groups and external investors for business and local capacity development. To this end, the project will use anthropological research methods (interviews, journals, participant-observation, focus group studies) to collect primary data on the projects. Approximately 50 people will be recruited for research in each site, leading to a total of 200 participants for the project. The sites are: South Africa, Seychelles, Mauritius and Lamu (Kenya). The Snowball sampling technique will be used in each instance and where necessary, the required documentation for research authorization will be obtained. As per the normal accepted research protocols at Nelson Mandela University, all ethical processes will be followed and ethical clearance will be obtained prior to fieldwork. The researchers on the project will be drawn from the four selected IORA member states. The remaining team members will be carefully selected in concert with colleagues and collaborators from the four countries.

The project team will also refer to secondary data to analyze the research findings. Since the project is mainly in the field of cultural heritage studies (and approaches the issue of heritage from a mostly anthropological perspective), the project will adopt Tim Winter's (2013) critical heritage studies approach. This is to understand how and why heritage conservation remains largely tangible and monumental, and how national governments can, via natural and cultural heritage tourism initiatives, leverage the richness of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) for sustainable development and ocean conservation.

Cooperation

There is one institutional partner from IORA states that has committed to the project for knowledge cooperation, exchange and research, this is Dr Penda Choppy from University of Seychelles. The PI also has an MOU with the University of Nairobi, Kenya, for research on coastal cultural heritages. In this regard, the PI can call on Prof Onyango Ouma at the University of Nairobi to participate as knowledge exchange partner in this project.

To facilitate the advancement of coastal projects identified, the PI will connect such projects with global venture capital initiatives such as Biofeyn and with Jeffrey Sachs, a global philanthropist-economist who is focused on world poverty alleviation. The PI engaged with the CEO of Biofeyn and Jeffrey Sachs in June 2022. These entities and associated personae seek to engage local communities to poverty alleviation. Furthermore and regarding natural and cultural tourism development, the PI and her team will seek to facilitate contact of the local groups with national tourism bodies, so that where desirable, the contribution of these communities can be mainstreamed into local tourism strategies and projects.¹

¹ For instance, in Lamu (Kenya), the team found that the coastal village of Matondoni, did not only have a rich coastal cultural heritage, the women and men of the village have nascent craft, music and food-making skills that do not feature in the mainstream tourism strategies of the country. Secondly and at another coastal Kenyan village, the PI and her team found women keen to advance their mangrove honey-making business but that these women had no support and insufficient training. The research alerted the PI to the possibility that similar entrepreneurial endeavors exist in coastal South Africa and the other selected sites but that as yet, such endeavors were not being maximized for sustainable development.

Specific Goal and Objectives of the Project

Goal:

Investigate, document, analyze and publish on selected environmental conservation projects in the IOR that have potential for the advancement of natural and cultural tourism.

Objectives:

1. Conduct anthropological research to document selected environmental conservation projects in the IOR that have potential for the advancement of natural and cultural tourism
2. Publicize the projects via presentations and video, so that the projects obtain global exposure and attract funding and capacity building support
3. Approach potential investors/philanthropists to support the cultural-ecological projects and thereby advance economic growth in the IORA region
4. Draw attention of IORA and other human development organizations to nascent socioeconomic projects in the IOR and galvanize support for the advancement of such poverty alleviation projects
5. Use the opportunity of transnational research in the IOR to build research capacity in the selected countries
6. Pursue socioeconomic cooperation and exchange regarding sustainable and environmentally friendly natural and cultural tourism endeavors in the region.

The aim and objectives of the project will benefit the region and IORA in:

1. Tourism and cultural exchanges (TCE) via cooperation and sharing of experiences for sustainable development of tourism and the encouragement of sustainable development of community-based and eco-tourism. In the medium-term the project will help to create IORA platforms for sharing data and best practices in tourism and long-term, to establish an IORA Tourism and Resource Centre and Website.
2. Trade and Investment Facilitation (TIF) via improving production capacity of products (i.e. mangrove honey) through inclusive public-private partnership that will enhance intra-IORA flow of goods and services to grow the region's economies sustainably. A major contribution of the project will be to facilitate business networking especially for rural, coastal women – thereby enhancing gender empowerment in IORA member states.
3. Academic, science and technology cooperation (ASTC) by increasing scientific knowledge, the developing of research capacity and the transfer of knowledge between the cooperating institutions. The project will facilitate medium and long-term goals, specifically the exchange of experiences and expertise among member states with the aim of promoting the creation of centres of excellence and (long-term) creation of centres of excellence and scientific networks.

Proposed Activities and Outputs

The project will first advance SDG 5, as well as SDG 9 and 14 to promote an inclusive, gender equitable blue economy and ocean governance, as well as cooperation and mutual advancement in the IOR. Continentally, it will advance the Africa Agenda 2063 goal of including and mainstreaming culture for sustainable development. Nationally (i.e. in South Africa), it will advance the human developmental goals of Operation Phakisa, by realizing the inclusion of coastal communities in ocean development, as set out in National Environment Management Act: Integrated Coastal Management Act 24 of 2008. The project will also achieve inclusion via aforementioned research with indigenous and autochthonous

communities, as well as through the documentation of local voices for inclusion and discussion in published outputs in the form of an edited book or a special edition journal on a case study on the four countries. Local voices, perspectives and coastal conservation initiatives will also be documented in the form of vlogs, podcasts, photographs and other visual outputs. Specified outputs include: Film documentary on the projects in the selected African countries, special edition journal/edited book, 3 vlogs and two podcasts, further training of nascent anthropologists in the field of ocean conservation in Africa, global and national collaboration with investors in natural and cultural heritage tourism.

Timeline: Project Commencement January 2023 with fieldwork data collection and data dissemination throughout the research period until completion of the project end July 2025.

Budget Required: USD300,000 (Mostly operational Costs: Travel, Subsistence, fieldwork fees, vaccines, research permits, project consumables costs; capital costs already covered by the PI's SARCHI Chair budget).

Support Requested: Financial support from MS and DPs is requested for 50% of the budget amount, i.e. USD150,000.

IORA Special Fund: An application will be made to the IORA SF for the remaining 50% of the required funding, i.e., USD150, 000, once the required funding commitment has been secured.

Proposed Budget Estimates/Cost Breakdown:

e.g. Budget Estimates/ Cost breakdown in USD

<u>Headings</u> <i>(All Figures in USD)</i>	# of Units	Unit Rate	IORA Funding	Self-Funding	Notes
Personnel Cost: 8 field researchers (2 for each country); PI (Prof Boswell, 1 administrator SA	10	n/a	120000		8 field researchers, the PI and one administrator for the 4 selected countries
Travel, accommodation Expenditure	10	n/a	150000		Field research expenses @ approx USD37500per country
Expenditure on Conference Services	n/a		25500		Film documentary, vlogs, website and marketing
Univ Admin fee		15%	4500		
Total			300000	n/a	