

Ecological Planning and Ecotourism Development in Kimbi Game Reserve, Cameroon

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ABSTRACT Game reserves and other protected areas are potential areas for the development of ecotourism because of their biodiversity, landscapes and cultural heritage of local or indigenous people. This study investigates the environmental sustainability of game reserves using a sample of the Kimbi Game Reserve. It assesses the potentials of the reserve for the development of ecotourism by employing a combination of field observation, examination, data collection and evaluation, using a SWOT analysis. The SWOT analysis determines opportunities and threats, and strategic suggestions for ecological planning. The study determines usage potential and the types of ecotourism feasible for development, and appraises the current management strategies. It concludes that ill-adapted strategies are bound to fail in promoting ecotourism, attaining sustainable landscapes and livelihoods. The Kimbi Game Reserve has economic potential for ecotourism which can be realized by integrating the cultural values, livelihoods and environmental awareness of local people in tourism development. Finally, the paper recommends that in this process, government organizations, universities and research institutions must interact sufficiently in order to develop the potential of interest to ecotourism, ecocultural tourism and scientific tourism. It suggests ways to ensure that tourism is ecologically and socially beneficial.