

Eco-tourism and nature activities in The Gambia

Project Profile

April 2013



Why The Gambia?

- Situated on the Atlantic coast and with a navigable river that flows more than 1,100km inland, The Gambia is the ideal, convenient landing spot in sub-Saharan Africa for eco-tourism activities and inland exploration

- This document outlines:
 1. **The market opportunity for investment in eco-tourism and nature activities**
 2. **The favourable conditions available to eco-tourism investors**
 3. **The support investors can expect to receive**

The most competitive destination in West Africa¹

The world's 2nd most price competitive destination for Travel & Tourism²

80km of pristine coastline and a navigable, unspoilt river

Winner of multiple eco-tourism awards



Source: British Foreign & Commonwealth Office website

1. World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness Report 2012-13

2. World Economic Forum Africa Competitiveness Report 2011

Economic indicators

- **GDP:** US\$752mn in 2011 – predicted rise to \$941mn by 2015 ¹
- **GDP growth:** 3.3% in 2011 – predicted annual growth average of 5.9% between 2012-2015 ¹
- **Country risk:** Lower risk level (yellow) than all neighbouring countries and in the same category as Sierra Leone, Ghana, Togo and Benin ²
- **CPI Inflation (2011):** 4.4% ³
- **Exports / Imports value (2011) :** - Exports: \$94.7mn ⁴
- Imports: \$343.69mn
- **Labour force (2008) :** 400,000 ³
- **FDI stock and inflows (2011):** \$703mn stock / \$36mn inflows ⁵
- **Currency exchange rates 2012 – highs (H) and lows (L):** ⁶
 - GMD/USD: 0.033 (H) / 0.029 (L) GMD/GBP: 0.021 (H) / 0.018 (L)
 - GMD/EUR: 0.028 (H) / 0.022 (L)



1. IMF World Economic Outlook. Real GDP (constant prices). Accessed: 8/2/13
 2. Maplecroft Political Risk 2012. Accessed: 8/2/13
 3. Access Gambia. Accessed: 8/2/13

4. UN Comtrade. Accessed: 11/2/13
 5. UNCTAD Stat. Accessed: 11/2/13
 6. Oanda.com. Accessed: 9/4/13

The Gambia's eco-tourism sector

- 5-7 hours from most of Europe by air, The Gambia is fortunate to have a rare combination of attributes that make the country a world-class eco-tourism destination
- The Gambia's navigable, unspoilt river, coupled with unique cultural and wildlife attractions, make it the ideal eco-tourism landing spot for Sub-Saharan Africa
- The country attracts thousands of ornithologists and anglers
- With a proud 30-year track record as a leading West African destination and a proven successful track record in eco-tourism, The Gambian Government is committed to cementing the country's position as a world-class destination for eco- and nature-based tourism

1. Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment: Programme for Accelerated Growth and Employment (PAGE) 2012-15, 2011

2. GiEPA Tourism Investment Brochure 2012

3. Gambia Tourism Board. Interviewed: 21/11/12

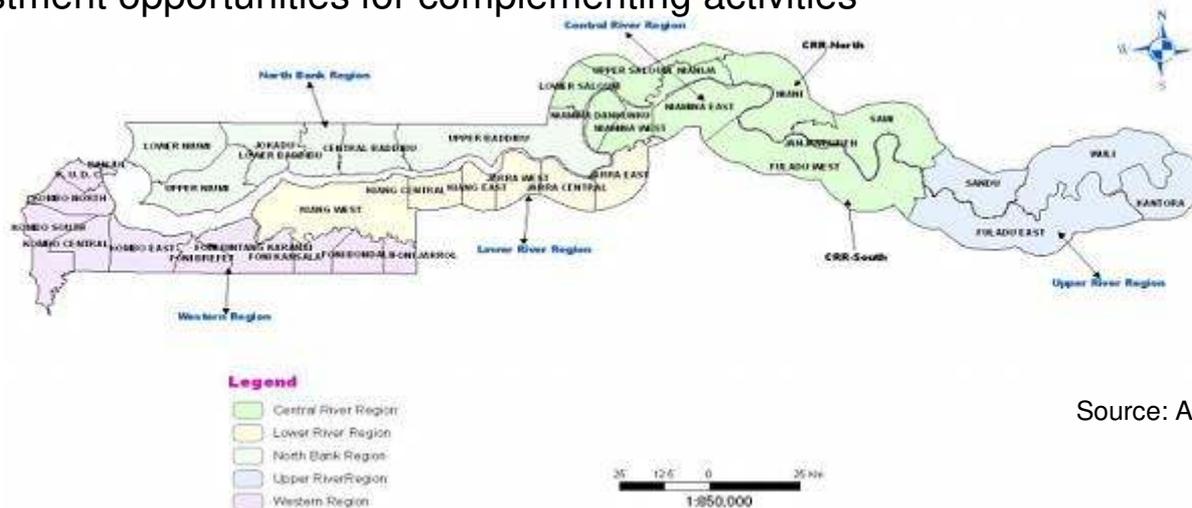
4. Access Gambia. Accessed: 14/3/13

KEY FACTS:

- Tourism a key priority sector:
 - Accounts for 16,000 jobs (formal and informal)¹
 - Contributes about 12% of GDP¹
- 100,000 tourists per year²
- Repeat tourists: 40%³
- Predicted tourism growth rate: 3.7% until 2018²
- 400 tourism students graduate each year¹
- Home to over 560 species of birds⁴
- Home to over 100 species of fish (more than 70 in the reefs alone⁴)

Locations

- The Western Region is home to various existing eco-tourism centres and attractions, all easily reachable from Banjul's Airport and the existing coastal tourism cluster. Attractions include the award-winning Makasutu Culture Forest, Abuko Nature Reserve, Oyster Creek and the villages of Tanji and Kartong
- Despite these successes, much of The Gambia's natural potential remains untapped and offers a wealth of opportunities for eco-tourism activities
- Baobolong Wetland Reserve in the North Bank Region, the River Gambia National Park and the town of Janjanbureh in the Central River Region, and Basse Santa Su in the Upper River Region offer investment opportunities for complementing activities



Source: Access Gambia. Accessed: 11/3/13

Infrastructure

- Banjul Airport has undergone a US\$21 million modernisation¹ and the Government is continuing to upgrade the infrastructure. Passenger traffic at the airport reached 318, 240 in 2011 – a 5% increase on 2010's figures³
- Banjul port has 4 berths, 400m of pier and operates 24 hours per day, 361 days a year. The port also handles 9 river ferry crossings per day⁴
- The north- and south-bank roads along the navigable river ensure easy access from the rest of the country
- Other new relevant infrastructure / upgrades in development:
 - The Trans-Gambia bridge (completion due 2017)
 - Improved cross-border trunk roads with Senegal



1. GIEPA Investment Guide 2011

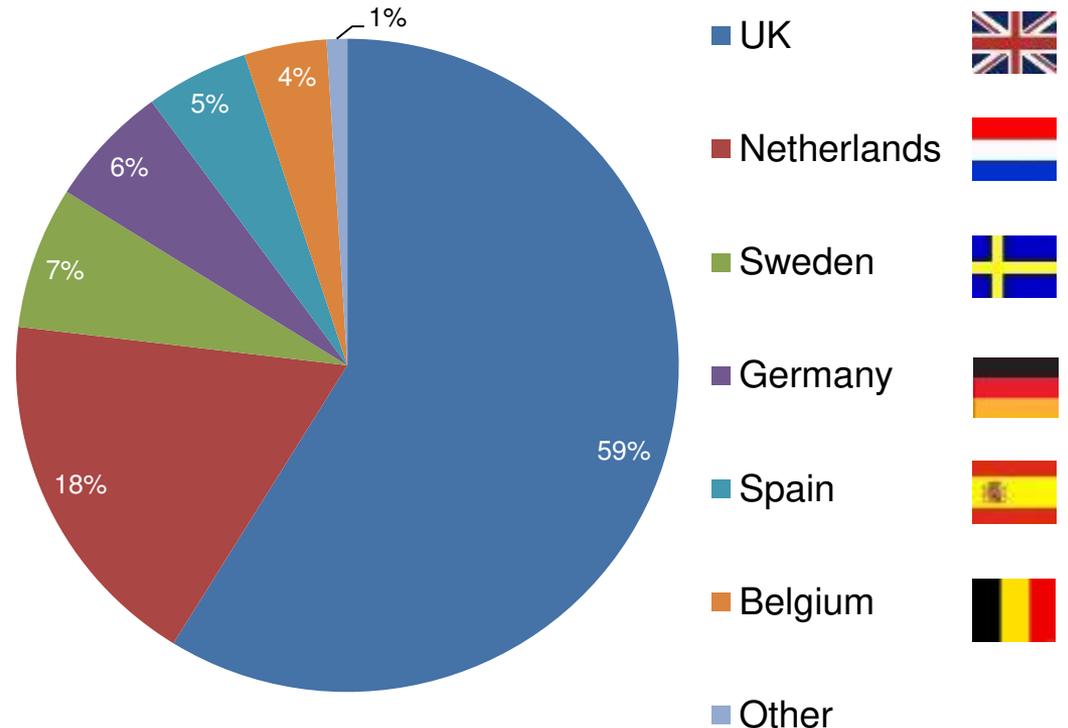
2. The Gambia Trade Policy 2011

3. The Gambia Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA). As reported in The Daily Observer, 1/11/12

4. Gambia Ports Authority. Interviewed: 20/11/12

Tourists in The Gambia

- The vast majority of tourists in the Gambia tend to come from Northern Europe
- The UK is typically the largest source market by far. The chart to the right shows the principal source markets between January and October 2012.¹ The Netherlands and to a lesser extent Sweden, Germany, Spain and Belgium are also important markets
- Many of these core markets have a strong affinity with eco-tourism and environmentally-friendly, sustainable lifestyles.² This reinforces The Gambia's potential as a centre for eco-tourism in West Africa



1. Gambia Tourism Board. Visitor statistics from January - October 2012

2. The UK, Sweden, Germany and the Netherlands all featured among the top 20 markets globally in Yale University's 2012 Environmental Performance Index. Accessed: 14/3/13

Direct flights to The Gambia

- Direct flights currently link The Gambia to numerous countries in West Africa, North Africa and Western and Northern Europe
- Sixteen commercial airlines currently fly to Banjul International Airport – the most recent addition (Spain's Vueling) commenced operations in spring 2013¹
- Key major European cities such as London, Madrid, Barcelona, Amsterdam, Brussels, Milan, Frankfurt, Stockholm, Oslo, Copenhagen, Manchester and Birmingham all have direct flights to Banjul



1. Corporate announcement on Vueling's website from 17/10/12. Accessed: 14/3/13.

Nature Reserves and Parks

- The Gambia is home to rich and diverse wildlife that attract eco-tourists year after year. Principal nature reserves include the following¹:

Bijilo Forest Park

Covers 51 hectares and is easily accessible with its location in Kololi along the coast and the Senegambia tourist area. Popular for its birds and monkeys

Abuko Nature Reserve

Covers 105 hectares in Western Gambia. The reserve protects a large tract of gallery forest, and it is particularly noted for its bird and monkey populations

Baobolong Wetland Reserve

Located on the northern bank of the Gambia River in central Gambia, opposite Kiang West. This wetland covers 22,000 hectares

Kiang West National Park

Located on the southern bank of the river in central Gambia. Its 11,000 hectares are dominated by dry woodland vegetation, with mangroves and mud flats

River Gambia National Park

It is a 580 hectare park covering five mid-river islands near Georgetown in eastern Gambia. It was established mainly as a rehabilitation sanctuary for chimpanzees

Tanji River Bird Reserve

Located on the coast. Its 612 hectares include dunes, lagoons, mangroves, dry woodland and is popular for the variety of birds which can be seen in the reserve

1. Information from the Gambia Tourism Board, via visitthegambia.gm site. Accessed: 12/3/13.

The Gambia's eco- and nature tourism community

- The Gambia is already home to a developed community of stakeholders in the eco- and nature tourism sector (including businesses, industry associations and representative groups). A few examples of these organisations are displayed below
- The presence of these businesses and supportive organisations demonstrates The Gambia's attractiveness and potential as a prime location in West Africa for eco-tourism development

EXAMPLES OF ORGANISATIONS:

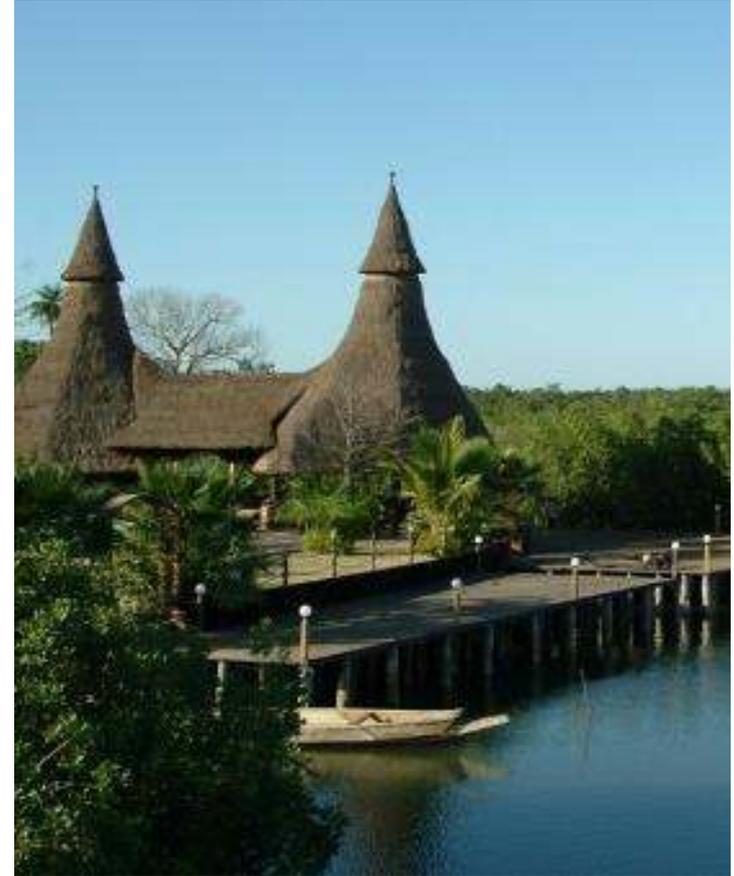
Gambia Tourism Board	Sandele Eco Retreat	Makasutu Cultural Forest	Gambia Tourism and Hospitality Institute
Ndemban Community Project	Tumani Tenda Eco-Tourism Camp	African Safari Company Ltd.	Association of Small Scale Enterprises in Tourism (ASSET)

“It’s nothing but a pleasure to work with people here - people love doing their jobs.”

*Lawrence Williams,
Makasutu Culture Forest*

Availability of incentives

- A host of incentives are available to investors eco-tourism accommodation, provided certain criteria relating to investment value and job creation are met.¹ These incentives include:
 - **Tax holiday:** tax breaks on corporate and turnover tax, withholding tax on dividends and depreciation allowance for period of 5-8 years, depending on the project's location
 - **Import Sales Tax Incentives:** Exemption from payment of import sales tax on direct inputs for the project



1. To access incentives, a new investment must be worth at least US\$250,000 and lead to the creation of at least three jobs in the tourism sector. Source: GIEPA Regulations 2012. More information on criteria available from GIEPA.

Operating costs

- The Gambia has by far the most efficient labour market in West Africa¹ and offers competitive costs in the tourism sector
- Annual licence fees for a variety of tourism-related activities are also competitive

INDICATIVE KEY COSTS:

- Average daily wages for unskilled labour hover between US\$2-4 a day²
- Energy: 9.70 GMD / kWh (commercial tariff)³
- Water: 22.48 GMD / cubic metre (commercial tariff)³
- Telecoms: From 0.73 GMD / min³
- Key taxes³:
 - Corporate: 32% (exemption possible)
 - Income: up to 35%
 - VAT: 15%
- Annual licence fees³:
 - Tourist Guide: 1,150 GMD
 - Gift Shop: 10,000 GMD
 - Pirogue⁴: 2,000-4,000 GMD (depending on size)

1. World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness Report 2012-2013

2. Program for Accelerated Growth and Employment 2012-15

3. GIEPA Investment Guide 2012

4. A pirogue is a dugout canoe

Government policy position

- The Gambian Government recognizes the importance of private sector participation in the economy, both as an engine of growth and as a source of knowledge transfer
- The Government's tourism policy is guided by the Tourism Development Master Plan (TDMP), which emphasises growth, development and marketing of The Gambia as an interesting, attractive and exciting tourism destination
- Within the TDMP, the Tourism Development Framework attaches importance to developing the nature, heritage and community based tourism product along the River Gambia in a more intensive and commercial manner
- Consistent with its tourism policy and the promotion of private sector development, the Government has established:
 - Gambia Tourism Board (GTB)
 - Gambia Hospitality and Tourism Institute (GHTI)
 - 10 specific Tourism Development Areas (TDAs)



A helping hand – every step of the way

- The Gambia Investment and Export Promotion Agency (GIEPA) is the Government Agency mandated to support companies with their investment, business and export development as well as support to MSMEs
- From the initial provision of information right through to supporting the establishment, growth and development of an investment project, GIEPA is your supporting partner for doing business in The Gambia – every step of the way
- Here are just a few of the ways in which GIEPA can support your business:

Provide all business-related information to current and potential investors

Serve as the link between investors and authorities

Help to identify joint venture partners

Help to obtain licences, land, clearances etc.

Provide advisory services and training to exporters

Support companies planning to expand / diversify

Provide ongoing assistance to companies once they've started operations

Administer and advise on incentives



Four Good Reasons to Choose The Gambia

1

COMPETITIVE TOURISM HOT-SPOT:

- World's 2nd most price-competitive market for Tourism (WEF)
- The most competitive country in West Africa (WEF)
- Predicted tourism growth rate of 3.7% until 2018
- Winner of multiple eco-tourism awards

2

EXCELLENT ECO-TOURISM OFFER AND KNOW-HOW:

- 80km of pristine coastline and a navigable, unspoilt river
- Diverse wildlife species and unique natural attractions
- Around 400 tourism graduates each year
- Most efficient labour market in West Africa (WEF)

3

STRONG AND IMPROVING INFRASTRUCTURE:

- Banjul International Airport recently upgraded with US\$21 million investment, with 318,240 passengers in 2011
- North- and south-bank roads along the navigable river ensure easy access throughout the country

4

ATTRACTIVE INCENTIVES, COMPETITIVE COSTS:

- Competitive labour costs and licence fees
- Strong political support for eco-tourism development
- Comprehensive guidance and support from GIEPA



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