

Saving Botswana's tourist industry from climate change

June 6 2012

Botswana's Okavango Delta is a sensitive ecosystem that could be affected detrimentally by climate change. Given the Delta's prominence in the country's tourist industry, such negative impacts could wreak havoc on its economy and affect the lives of its inhabitants.

Tourism in Botswana is the second largest economic sector, according to Wame Hambira of the University of Botswana in Gaborone. She has taken the Okavango [Delta](#) as a case study for investigating the vulnerabilities and problems faced by such an ecosystem and the side effects change might have on economic growth. She suggests that suitable adaptations and policy changes are needed in the face of climate change if Botswana is not to lose income from this sector.

The Okavango Delta is a richly diverse ecosystem, it is the world's largest inland delta and sits atop the [Kalahari Desert](#). More than 10 trillion litres of water irrigate the 15,000 square kilometres of the Delta. Given the beautiful landscapes, the scientific importance and the presence of large mammals including African bush elephant, buffalo, [hippopotamus](#), antelope, giraffe, leopard and lion as well as the endangered African Wild Dog, the Delta is an important [conservation area](#) and attracts an estimated 50,000 visitors annually. The actual figure may be more than double that.

"Currently, the prime sites for [tourism](#) in Botswana are geographically concentrated in the north-western part of the country along the Chobe River (Kasane/Chobe area) and the Okavango Delta, which are rich in

pristine wildlife and wetlands attractions," says Hambira. She adds that the Okavango Delta offers popular tourism activities such as hunting safaris, photographic safaris, bird and animal watching, fishing, canoeing and cultural and heritage activities.

Hambira calls for a full vulnerability assessment of Botswana's tourism industry as a whole, taking into consideration that the different ecosystems ranging from the dry lands to the wetlands and their associated leisure activities will be affected differently by climate change. Planned adaptation could then be achieved through financial, technical, legal and other assistance to facilitate the implementation of policies to help the tourism industry adapt to the effects of [climate change](#).

More information: "Screening for climate change vulnerability in Botswana's tourism sector in a bid to explore suitable adaptation measures and policy implications: a case study of the Okavango Delta" in *International Journal of Tourism Policy*, vol 4, 51-65

Provided by Inderscience Publishers

Citation: Saving Botswana's tourist industry from climate change (2012, June 6) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-06-botswana-tourist-industry-climate.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.