

REPUBLIC OF KENYA



COUNTY ASSEMBLY OF MURANG'A

THIRD ASSEMBLY

TRADE, INDUSTRIALIZATION, COOPERATIVES, TOURISM AND WILDLIFE
COMMITTEE

REPORT OF THE TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES
ACROSS MULT-SECTORIAL SECTORS AND HER
VALUE CHAIN.

WORKSHOP HELD ON 13-14 APRIL 2023 AT
ELYSIAN RESORT NAIROBI

Clerks Chambers
Murang'a County Assembly
MURANG'A

August, 2023

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1.0 PREFACE

With a view of effectively implementing its role on trade, the committee organized a two (2) day retreat to deliberate on the Tourism opportunities across Multi-Sectorial Sectors and her value chain and also come up with various recommendations to ensure the industry remains sustainable in the long run.

On behalf of Trade, Industrialization, Co-operative Management, Tourism and Wildlife Committee, it is my pleasure and duty to present to the County Assembly, the Committee's report on tourism opportunities across Multi-sectorial sectors and her Value Chain.

1.1 Committee Membership

The Committee comprises of the following Members: -

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Hon. James Karanja Kabera | Chairperson |
| 2. Hon. Loise Mbogo | Vice Chairperson |
| 3. Hon. Moses Macharia Mirara | Member |
| 4. Hon. Julian Njiri | Member |
| 5. Hon. Moses Muchiri Maina | Member |
| 6. Hon. Pauline Njeri Muchiri | Member |
| 7. Hon. Isaac Chefman Njoroge | Member |
| 8. Hon. Laban Chomba Njaramba | Member |
| 9. Hon. Gladys Wambui Waikau | Member |
| 10. Hon. Grace Sharleen Wambui | Member |
| 11. Hon. John Mwangi Kamau | Member |

1.2 Committee mandate

The mandate of the Committee on **Trade, Industrialization, Co-operative Management, Tourism and Wildlife** is clearly stipulated by the Standing order **204**. The committee is mandated to handle all matters related to county planning and statistics, trade development and regulation, including markets, trade licenses (excluding regulation of professions), fair trading practices, betting, casinos and other forms of gambling, racing, liquor licensing and all matters related to local tourism, museums, county parks, beaches and recreation facilities and co-operatives societies.

1.3 Acknowledgements

The Committee wishes to sincerely thank the Offices of the Hon. Speaker and the Clerk of the County Assembly for the support extended to it in the execution of its mandate. The Chairperson of the Committee takes this opportunity to thank all the Members for their profound contribution through dedication of time and efforts towards the realization of the mandates of the Committee.

Thank you.

Signed.....*J.K.K*.....

Hon. James Karanja Kabera

(Chairperson)

Committee on Trade, Industrialization, Co-operative Management, Tourism and Wildlife

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Tourist attraction sites are places that are popular among tourists and visitors. These sites can range from natural wonders such as national parks, beaches, and mountains, to man-made attractions such as theme parks, museums, and historical landmarks. Cultural centers are places that are dedicated to preserving and promoting a particular culture. These centers can be museums, galleries, performance venues, or community centers. They often provide exhibitions, performances, and educational programs to help visitors learn more about a culture's history, traditions, and way of life.

In Kenya, tourism is a fundamental economic activity which cannot be ignored at any instance. As one of the core regions where tourism has gained popularity, Murang'a County has remained a place of interest based on its numerous tourist attraction sites. Considering the essence of tourism in Kenya and at the County.

The County Assembly committee on **Trade, Industrialization, Co-operative Management, Tourism and Wildlife** is an extension of the Assembly established under the County Assembly standing orders and in accordance to section 14 of the County Government Act, 2012.

The power of the County Assembly to appoint committees is derived from: -

1. The County Government ACT 2012.
2. The Constitution of Kenya 124,198
3. The standing orders
4. Resolution of the Assembly.

2.1 Strategic Goals

Among the strategic goals include;

- i. Promote trade and investment,
- ii. Champion private sector development,
- iii. Achieving prosperity through vibrant co-operatives, and
- iv. Industrial development and investment.

2.2 Strategic Objectives

The committees' strategic objectives include;

- i. Improve service delivery.
- ii. Promote private sector development through enterprise and entrepreneurship development.
- iii. Promote growth and development of wholesale and retail trade.
- iv. Improve business environment, promote active investment climate and fair business practice.
- v. Foster conducive linkages and collaboration mechanisms.
- vi. Strengthen and create vibrant co-operatives that contribute to the gross domestic product. (GDP)
- vii. Formulate and implement an appropriate policy and legal framework for the development of trade and co-operatives sector

2.3 General Roles of the Committees

Among the general roles performed by committees in the County Government include;

- a) Oversight the County Executive.
- b) Initiating legislative proposals
- c) Scrutinizing legislative proposals and bills.
- d) Conducting investigations and reporting to the plenary for action.
- e) Reviewing and approving the budget and expenditure.
- f) Approval of public appointee's i.e. Chief Officers.

2.4 Functions of the Committee

Some of the key functions of the committee in relation to the functioning of the department, improving of service delivery and promotion of strategic development as provided in the Standing Order 204(5) include to: -

- a) Investigate, inquire into, and report on all matters relating to mandate, management, activities, administration, operations and estimates of the assigned departments;
- b) Study the Programme and policy objectives of departments and the effectiveness of the implementation;
- c) Study, assess and analyze the relative success of the departments as measured by the results obtained as compared with their stated objectives;

- d) Investigate and inquire into all matters relating to the assigned departments as they may deem necessary, and as may be referred to them by the assembly; and
- e) Make reports and recommendations to the assembly as often as possible, including recommendation of proposed legislation.

3.0 RETREAT FOCUS AREA

The two-day retreat was aimed at discussing the following areas in relation to the Tourism opportunities across Mult-Sectorial Sectors and her value chain

- a) List of the tourism facilities (sports and cultural activities and facilities, County parks, game reserves, beaches and recreation facilities, museums, libraries among others.
- b) Brief description of each identified attraction and their status.
- c) Specific location of the attraction.
- d) Ownership (national/county/private/community).
- e) Challenges encountered
- f) Benefits of Tourist Attraction Sites and Cultural Centers in the County.
- g) How can the tourist attraction sites and cultural centers in the county be improved?
- h) What Makes a Good Tourist Site?

A comprehensive report detailing the List the tourism facilities (sports and cultural activities and facilities, County parks, game reserves, beaches and recreation facilities, museums, libraries among others in the county is presented in the table 1 below.

County Name	List the tourism facilities (Sports and cultural activities and facilities; County parks; Game reserves, beaches	Brief Description of each Identified Attraction and their status	Specific Location of the attraction	Ownership (National/ County/ Private/ Community)	Challenges
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	and recreation facilities, museums, libraries and any other				
Murang'a County	Sport -Water sport Rapids camp and - Jagwani Camp Cycling and Marathon	Suitable sites that for water sports, i.e. Kayaking, water surfing. Both above are active Prospecting cycling and marathon along the C70 & Mau Mau roads on the foot of Aberdare ranges	Mbiri and Gatari Wards respectively in Kiharu Constituency along the Sagana river. Gatanga, Kigumo and Kangema Sub-counties	Private Community & County Government	-Numerous licences, -High electricity charges, -Accessibility over reliance on traditional tourism products, the flora and fauna -Getting partners -Inadequate resources allocation
Murang'a County	Cultural Mukurwe wa Nyagathanga	A Heritage site believed to be the origin of Agikuyu Community where they God, Ngai settled	Gatari Ward, Kiharu Constituency 14km from Murangá Town, along	Murang'a County	-Accessibility to the Centre -Land encroachment -Community Conflict in

		Gikuyu, Mumbi and their nine daughter Active	the Murang'a Kiriani-Othoya rd		ownership stake. -Limited financial allocation
Murang'a County	Leisure Hotels & Camp sites -Thika Greens, -Norklas Hotels, -Aberdare cottages -Great North -Sagana Getaway -Sagana Great Resort -Sunstar Hotel -Golden Palm -Goshen Hotel -Camps -Rapids Camp & -Jagwani	Hotels and camp Providing Hospitality services both accommodation, conferencing and leisure activities. Active	Spread across Murang'a County	Private	-High electricity charges, -Lack of Hotel Classification -Numerous licences -Labour turnover -Unfavourable financial access

	Camp				
Murangá County	Adventure tourism Hiking and Mountain climbing, - Dormant sport fishing- Active	Adventure hiking trails into the Aberdare ranges summit. Dormant	Kigumo and Mathioya sub-counties	Community and National Government	-Little awareness -Lack of Formal Gazetted entry gate and route.
Murangá County	Agri Tourism Farm tourism- Active	Some competently identified farms that offer guided tours around the farms Active	Maragua Kahuro, Gatanga, Kandara and Mathioya sub-counties	Private	-Lack of awareness in product packaging
Murang'a County	Heritage Tourism -Mau Mau Caves Kangema mwisho wa raha) -Forthall residence and Grave site Karuri Wa Gakure	-Caves that formed the hideouts during the fight for Independence -Grave to the First Murang'a Governor -The first mosque in east and central region in kiharu built in 1900 The chief who welcomed the Catholic Missionary	Township- Kiharu Kangema	Community	-Lack of awareness and sensitization on her social economic potential

	grave -Mjini mosque	and Donated land for church Construction which still stand to date. Dormant			
Murang'a County	Religious Tourism Tuthu Consolata Shrine	-The first catholic church in central Kenya where mass was conducted, at the foot of Aberdare Mountain by Consolata Missionaries, from here the Church spread to other station in Mathira Nyeri, Gikindu, Ngandu etc Active	Rwathia ward,Kangema Sub county	Community	Lack of awareness and sensitization on her social- economic potential

Name of County	Existing Legislations on Tourism	Existing Legislations on Wildlife	Status
Murang'a County	Tourism Bill	-	In progress

3.1 BENEFITS OF TOURIST ATTRACTION SITES AND CULTURAL CENTERS IN THE COUNTY

Murang'a County is a beautiful region in central Kenya, renowned for its scenic landscapes and rich cultural heritage. The county boasts a plethora of tourist attraction sites and cultural centers that offer numerous benefits to both the locals and tourists

One of the primary benefits of tourist attraction sites and cultural centers in Murang'a County is economic development. These attractions create jobs and generate revenue for the local community. For instance, tourist sites such as the Chania Falls and Fourteen Falls employ locals as tour guides and souvenir vendors. This not only provides employment opportunities but also boosts the local economy through increased spending on food, accommodation, and other goods and services.

Tourist attraction sites and cultural centers in Murang'a County also promote cultural exchange and understanding. They provide a platform for locals to showcase their cultural practices and traditions to visitors from other parts of the country or the world. This exchange helps to foster tolerance, respect, and appreciation for diverse cultures, which is critical for peaceful coexistence and unity.

Furthermore, these sites serve as educational resources. They provide an opportunity for visitors to learn about the history, culture, and traditions of the Murang'a people. For instance, the Murang'a Cultural Center offers an immersive cultural experience, where visitors can learn about the Kikuyu people's traditional way of life, including their food, dress, and music. This experience enhances visitors' knowledge and understanding of the local culture and history.

Tourist attraction sites and cultural centers in Murang'a County also promote environmental conservation. These sites help to raise awareness of the importance of preserving the natural environment and its biodiversity. For example, the Chania Falls and other natural sites in the region are protected areas that are preserved for future generations. Visitors learn about the need to protect these natural resources and how they can contribute to environmental conservation.

Again, tourism in Murang'a County plays an instrumental role in community development. Tourism can help to develop the community by providing resources for the improvement of infrastructure and public services. The revenue generated from tourism can be used to fund projects that benefit the community. The Kenyan Government has always concentrated in boosting the areas with immense economic potential by supporting in different initiatives that would make tourism even more functional.

Environmental Conservation is also a core benefit of tourism in Murang'a County. Tourist attraction sites and cultural centers promote environmental conservation by raising awareness about the need to protect natural resources. These centers can also provide funding for conservation efforts. One environmental conservation activity considered is planting of trees, which is one of the techniques used to address the issues of global warming and climate change.

Tourism in Murang'a is essential for promotion of peace and unity. Cultural centers and museums can serve as a means of promoting peace and unity in the county. By highlighting the shared cultural heritage of different communities, the centers can help to reduce tensions and promote understanding. Rather than the diverse cultural groups perceiving themselves as rivals, they have an opportunity to determine how they can work together for mutual benefits.

3.2 How the Tourist Attraction Sites and Cultural Centers in the County Can be Improved?

1) Marketing

Effective marketing campaigns can raise awareness of the county's attractions, targeting both local and international visitors. Social media can be utilized to reach a broader audience and attract more visitors. One way to market the county's attractions is through targeted advertising campaigns. These campaigns can be designed to reach specific audiences, such as families with children, adventure seekers, or cultural enthusiasts. By tailoring the message to the interests of the target audience, the campaign is more likely

to resonate with potential visitors and encourage them to visit the area. Partnering with local businesses and travel agents can also be an effective marketing strategy. By working with businesses in the tourism industry, the county can tap into their existing networks and customer bases, and potentially offer package deals or discounts to incentivize visitors to come to the area.

2) Preservation of Culture and Heritage

Preserving the county's cultural heritage and promoting its unique features can be a major attraction for visitors. This can be done through exhibitions, workshops, and cultural events. Preserving the cultural heritage of Murang'a County involves the protection of traditional customs, rituals, and practices that define the different communities. This can be achieved through the promotion of cultural festivals and events that highlight the diversity of the county. For instance, the Mugithi Festival is an annual cultural event that celebrates the Kikuyu music genre and attracts both local and international visitors. Such events provide an opportunity for visitors to experience the local culture first-hand, thus promoting cultural exchange.

The County has several historical sites that are significant in shaping the cultural identity of the region. These sites include the Mukurwe wa Nyagathanga Shrine, which is considered the cradle of the Kikuyu people, and the Thika Falls, which are renowned for their natural beauty and cultural significance. By preserving these sites, the county not only promotes cultural heritage but also enhances the tourism potential of the region.

3) Development of New Attractions

The development of new attractions such as parks, museums, and cultural centers can draw more visitors to the area. One other potential new attraction that could be developed in Murang'a County is eco-tourism. With its beautiful hills and valleys, the county has the potential to offer a range of eco-tourism experiences, including hiking and nature walks, bird watching, and camping. Additionally, the county could promote sustainable tourism practices by encouraging responsible tourism, such as reducing plastic waste and supporting local conservation efforts.

Murang'a County can also establish sports tourism. The county has a strong tradition of athletics, with many local athletes representing Kenya on the world stage. By developing sports tourism, the county could attract visitors to events such as marathons, football matches, and other sporting competitions, as well as offering sports-related activities such as training camps and adventure sports.

4) Collaboration with the Local Community

Working with the local community can help to create a sense of ownership and pride in the county's tourist attractions and cultural centers. This can lead to more investment in the development of these sites and greater care and attention to preserving them for future generations.

Another way to collaborate with the community is to involve them in the design and development of tourist attractions and cultural centers. This approach ensures that the sites are culturally appropriate, relevant, and appealing to both locals and visitors. The community's participation in the development process also fosters a sense of ownership and pride in the sites, which can lead to greater engagement and commitment to their maintenance and upkeep.

3.3 What Makes a Good Tourist Site?

A good tourist site is one that offers a unique and authentic experience that engages and inspires visitors. It should be easily accessible and well-maintained to ensure visitors can explore the area safely and comfortably. Additionally, a good tourist site should provide ample opportunities for visitors to learn about the local history, culture, and way of life.

A good tourist site should have a rich history that visitors can explore through exhibits, displays, and interactive experiences. This allows visitors to gain a deeper understanding of the site's significance and appreciate the cultural and historical context in which it exists. The site should also offer informative and knowledgeable tour guides who can provide insights and answer any questions that visitors may have.

Another important aspect of a good tourist site is the ability to provide a range of activities that appeal to a variety of interests. This could include outdoor recreation opportunities such as hiking, biking, and boating, as well as cultural events, festivals, and art exhibits. These activities not only attract more visitors but also encourage visitors to stay longer and engage more deeply with the local community. The tourist site should also have efficient waste management and recycling systems in place, as well as clear signage and information to encourage visitors to practice sustainable tourism. By providing such amenities and considerations, the tourist site can create a memorable and enjoyable experience for its visitors, leading to positive reviews, increased foot traffic, and overall success.

In addition to providing engaging activities and informative exhibits, a good tourist site should also offer a range of amenities that ensure visitors have a comfortable and enjoyable experience. This could include access to restrooms, food and drink options, and ample seating and shade areas. The amenities enhance the basic experience of those visiting the sites

Also, a good tourist site should be sustainable and environmentally responsible, with efforts made to minimize the impact of tourism on the surrounding ecosystem. This could include initiatives such as waste reduction, energy efficiency, and conservation efforts.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Enhancing tourist attraction sites and cultural centers in Murang'a County requires a multi-faceted approach that involves investing in infrastructure development, diversifying the range of attractions, involving the local community, and promoting the region's unique cultural heritage. These efforts will not only attract more visitors but also create opportunities for economic empowerment and job creation for the local community. By engaging the necessary stakeholders, tourism in Murang'a County will develop to become one of the leading economic activities that the locals can depend on. The sector has a great potential for sustainability if properly managed.

5.0 COMMITTEE OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Committee Observations

The committee members observed the following;

- I. The report did not capture all the tourist attraction sites and cultural centers in the County.
- II. The report only captured the high end hotels leaving behind the affordable and cheaper hotels that accommodate many people.
- III. All factored hotels are private owned.
- IV. That the County Government has not been putting more emphasis on tourism sector.

5.2 Committee Recommendations

After deliberating the various aspects of tourism in Murang'a County, the committee members provided the following recommendations:

1. Preservation and Maintenance

The tourism sector to note that there is a need to invest in the preservation and maintenance of the existing tourist attraction sites and cultural centers in the County. This will ensure that they are in good condition and will continue to attract visitors for years to come. Some of the sites may require restoration and repair work to ensure that they are safe for visitors to explore. The County Government in conjunction to the ministry of tourism can develop initiative for preservation and maintenance measures to ensure that the county remains in the forefront of attraction. In addition, providing proper sanitation facilities, adequate parking spaces, and other basic amenities can go a long way in enhancing the visitors' experience.

2. Diversification

There is a need to diversify the range of activities and attractions available at these sites. For instance, at historical landmarks, visitors can be offered guided tours that provide detailed information about the history and significance of the site. Additionally, local

communities can showcase their culture through music and dance performances, traditional crafts exhibitions, and food fairs. Such activities provide visitors with a more immersive experience and give them a chance to learn and appreciate the local culture. Although showcasing has been done to some extent, there need more intense engagement through support in terms of funding and training of how to use the potential resources in Murang'a County.

3. Marketing and Promotion

There is a need to invest in marketing and promotion of the tourist attraction sites and cultural centers. This can be achieved through online marketing, social media campaigns, and brochures that highlight the unique features of these sites. It is clear that Murang'a has a great potential for tourism sector but has not reached where it is supposed to be as the existing promotion does not fully capture the interest of audience as it is supposed to.

In addition, partnering with travel agencies and tour operators can help to increase visibility and attract more visitors. Building a strong brand identity and reputation can help to position Muranga County as a must-visit destination for tourists.

4. Partnerships

Having an adequate partnership with all stakeholders such as the local communities, the government, private sector investors and travel agencies is fundamental. Involving the local community ensures that the development of these sites is sustainable and aligned with the needs and aspirations of the local people. Creating an adequate environment for partnership is fundamental so that no one would be left out considering that each team has the particular initiatives and skills to put in place. It also provides an opportunity for economic empowerment and job creation for the local community.

5. Create Family-Friendly Activities

To appeal to families, it is important to have activities that children will enjoy. This can include games, crafts, and educational activities that teach children about the local culture and environment. By providing activities for children, families are more likely to stay

longer and spend more money in the area. The notion of international tourism as the only potential initiative should be alleviated and more opportunities for local tourism be created. As witnessed during the Covid-19 pandemic, local tourists have a chance as well to promote tourism at the county level.

Considering the essence of local tourism, the county government can offer the adequate support. By creating family-friendly activities, Murang'a County can attract more visitors and promote tourism in the area. These activities should be safe, educational, and enjoyable for both children and adults. Additionally, marketing and promoting these activities through various channels, including social media, tourism boards, and travel agencies, can help attract more visitors to the area.

6. Promote Local Products

One way to enhance cultural centers is to promote and sell locally made products. This not only supports local artisans and businesses but also provides visitors with unique souvenirs to take home. By promoting local products, it also encourages visitors to learn more about the culture and history of the region. One way to promote local products in Murang'a County is by showcasing the region's agricultural produce, such as tea, coffee, avocados, and macadamia nuts. Tourists can visit local farms, participate in harvesting activities, and learn about the production process from local farmers. This experience will not only educate visitors about the region's agricultural practices but also provide them with an opportunity to taste fresh and organic produce.

Furthermore, promoting local cuisine can also enhance tourism in Murang'a County. The region has a rich culinary heritage, with a variety of traditional dishes such as Mukimo, Irio, and Githeri. Tourists can visit local restaurants and food markets to try out these dishes and learn about the region's unique cooking techniques and ingredients. This experience will not only satisfy visitors' taste buds but also educate them about the region's cultural heritage

7. The director tourism and marketing to write a letter to all the Hon. Members of the County Assembly (MCAs) through the Clerk to the Assembly requesting them

to furnish his office with the best three tourist attraction centers. The MCAs to equally forward the names of Culture bearer who can give information on the said tourist attractions.

8. The director tourism and marketing to forward a more detailed report on the status of tourism sites and cultural centers and a report on digitalizing the cultural and heritage site.
9. The County Government to consider having a joint meeting with the Members of trade committee and the investors and look into ways of how the County Government can partner with the private sectors in boosting tourism in the County.
10. With regards to cycling and marathon, the County Government to consider sourcing for donors and sponsors like Banks to boost the events.
11. The County Government to consider forming a committee to be overseeing the daily learning of Mukurwe wa Nyagathanga Cultural Centre.

