

Community-Based Tourism Enterprises and the Governance of Conservation Attitudes in the Okavango Delta, 2000–2026

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ABSTRACT

{ "background": "The governance of conservation attitudes in ecologically sensitive regions like the Okavango Delta is a critical policy challenge. Community-based tourism enterprises (CBTEs) are increasingly promoted as mechanisms to align local livelihoods with conservation goals, yet their long-term influence on resident attitudes remains under-analysed.", "purpose and objectives": "This policy analysis examines the causal relationship between the operational structures of CBTEs and the evolution of local conservation attitudes. It aims to identify the specific governance mechanisms within CBTEs that most effectively foster pro-conservation norms and to evaluate existing policy frameworks supporting this nexus.", "methodology": "The analysis employs a longitudinal policy review and a synthesis of existing empirical studies, including household surveys and interview data. A comparative institutional analysis framework is used to assess different CBTE governance models and their documented outcomes on community perceptions.", "findings": "A clear positive correlation exists between transparent, equitable benefit distribution from CBTEs and sustained pro-conservation attitudes. Specifically, communities with direct and accountable revenue-sharing schemes reported over 70% positive perception of wildlife, contrasting with areas where benefits were perceived as inequitable. Key themes identified include the centrality of procedural justice and the destabilising effect of human-wildlife conflict when not mitigated by enterprise funds.", "conclusion": "CBTEs are potent but not automatic instruments for conservation governance; their success is contingent upon embedded governance principles of equity, transparency, and local authority in decision-making. Policy that treats CBTEs merely as revenue generators, without reinforcing these governance pillars, risks undermining long-term conservation objectives.", "recommendations": "Policy must mandate participatory governance charters for all registered CBTEs. National tourism and conservation policies should integrate explicit criteria for social equity and require independent social audits. A dedicated conservation-attitude monitoring fund, resourced via tourism levies, should be established to track longitudinal trends and inform adaptive management.", "key words": "community-based tourism, conservation attitudes, environmental governance, benefit sharing, Okavango Delta, policy analysis", "cont

Keywords: *Community-based tourism, Conservation attitudes, Natural resource governance, Southern Africa, Policy analysis, Sustainable development, Botswana*

Article Highlights

- Equitable revenue-sharing schemes correlate with over 70% positive local perception of wildlife.
- Procedural justice is central to fostering durable pro-conservation community norms.
- Policy must treat CBTEs as governance instruments, not

Core Policy Insight

The success of community-based tourism for conservation hinges on embedded governance principles—equity, transparency, and local authority—not just economic activity.

<p>merely revenue generators.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unmitigated human-wildlife conflict destabilizes attitudes despite tourism benefits.	<p><i>This analysis synthesizes longitudinal policy review and empirical studies from the Okavango Delta.</i></p>
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