Transforming Ethiopia’s Tourism Sector

Overview

Ethiopia is home to numerous historic, cultural and natural attractions including eight UNESCO heritage sites. However, weakness in destination development, services and products as well as infrastructure remain key challenges facing the sector.

The tourism sector has created over 700,000 jobs in 2014. In 2016, over 800,000 thousand tourists have visited the country with an average number of 6.5 days of stay. The same year tourism generated income of US$ 3.5 billion to the national economy. This accounts for 4.8% of GDP and is expected to rise in the coming years. Ethiopia aspires to become the fifth tourism destination in Africa by 2020.

Our Approach

UNDP is supporting Ethiopia to transform its tourism sector in order to deliver on the industry’s huge socio-economic benefit, including the creation of local employment and diversification of local economies, enhancing the conservation and protection of natural resources, as well as generating wealth particularly through increased foreign exchange earnings.

Through our multi-year tourism development programme we focus on helping Ethiopia to introduce catalytic interventions that will help the country improve the scale, quality, diversity and socio-economic benefit of the nation’s tourism sector.

UNDP’s intervention focuses on helping to transform the tourism sector through:

- Regularly review, update and roll out relevant policies, strategies and regulations driving the sector.
- Strengthen partnerships and stakeholder engagement including public-private partnerships and local communities engagement.
- Facilitate the creation, acquisition and use of good practices in tourism development.
- Enhance destination and product development and branding.
- Strengthen partnerships with training institutions, particularly TVETs.
- Develop destination branding and marketing strategies.

Highlights

UNDP has supported the Ministry of Tourism and Culture to set up the Ethiopian Tourism Organisation (ETO) in 2014 to identify and address bottlenecks in the way of transforming the tourism sector.

Over the last four years UNDP has provided almost half a million USD to support ETO in implementing catalytic interventions in an effort to build a sustainable and economically viable tourism sector.

UNDP has also helped to produce a Tourism Destination Development and Management Strategy which is expected to help the country expand the variety and diversity of experiences of tourists.