policy brief

Sharing Benefits from the Coast:
tourism and links to small-scale fisheries in Mozambique
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Coastal resources in Mozambique are vital for local coastal communities, many of whom live in abject poverty. These resources also hold significant value for a number of different sectors, many of which supply expanding global consumer markets. Although these activities provide many opportunities for economic development and income generation, global patterns indicate growing levels of economic inequality between custodians of these resources and those exploiting them, as well as an increasing incidence of poverty. In the tourism sector, in particular, external investors have often initiated tourism ventures to the detriment of adjacent local communities.

Benefit sharing is a popular term to describe interventions to redistribute benefits and thus alleviate poverty. The expression was originally developed in the context of bioprospecting, but today it is used extensively in different sectors, is used by different sectors, and is used in contexts where the linkages between benefits distribution and poverty reduction have not been fully explored.

This three-year project was implemented by a team at the University of Cape Town to investigate:

1. the extent to which communities benefit from use of coastal resources;
2. the mechanisms used to distribute benefits; and
3. the governance arrangements that enable or constrain the more equitable sharing of benefits from coastal resources.

The research was conducted in both South Africa and Mozambique. In Mozambique, case studies included the communities of Conguiana (Barra) and Josina Machel (Tofo) in Inhambane Province and Gala in Maputo Province (Figure 1). These case studies represented marginalised or poor communities involved in coastal tourism. In Tofo cases there was a so-called benefit-sharing arrangement that aimed to redistribute benefits to the poor (e.g. a partnership arrangement with the tourism sector to establish development projects, tourism ventures, or joint-ownership of tourism ventures with the community). We explored a diversity of arrangements between the state, community, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and/or business and investigated a range of sectors. Because communities often pursue diverse livelihoods across sectors, we also explored interactions of benefits and losses between sectors, such as tourism and fisheries. Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were used and included 244 household surveys, 14 focus groups and 33 key informant interviews.

A range of sectors use coastal resources and have impacts on coastal communities. Interlinkages between these sectors must be taken into consideration in policy implementation and economic development planning to enable coherence and effectiveness. Benefits within and across sectors need to be understood in relation to the losses in order to minimise negative impacts on communities.

Key findings and policy recommendations

1. Ensure that decisions are informed by the interlinking benefits and losses between sectors

- A range of economic sectors use coastal resources along the Mozambican coast. For example, the fisheries sector includes a wide diversity of intertidal and inshore resource harvesting; the tourism sector utilises coastal land, beaches and reefs; and a range of crops and non-timber forest products are harvested in the agricultural and forestry sectors. These activities bring various ecological, economic, social and cultural benefits to local people. Moreover, most households are involved in two or more of these sectors, demonstrating the significant linkages between sectors and their impacts on livelihoods. However, many of the benefits that emerge from these sectors are often paralleled by equivalent or greater losses (see Figure 2).

- For example, tourism may lead to significant benefits for local communities through employment, training, capacity development and enhanced livelihood opportunities, through markets for marine resources. From the fishermen’s perspective, tourism can provide a much-needed source of income through increased demand for locally caught seafood. However, this may also lead to ecological losses which has been recognised by all stakeholder groups as a key concern. Regulatory measures need to be developed and agreed upon between the fisheries and tourism sectors to ensure fish are harvested sustainably whilst benefiting the local community and fishers.

“Tourism is a good thing for my fish stall because tourists buy bigger fish that earn me more money”

(tofo fish seller)
Conflicts result from uncertainties over access to the coast and ownership of coastal resources, often leading to losses for local communities. Although the state owns all natural resources and controls all rights of use, community access to these benefits is often hindered by more powerful foreign investors, in addition to a confusing set of administrative and political processes. This is especially the case for tourism and fisheries as they need access to similar resources. For example, artisanal fishing centres are natural harbours where boat access is easy, safe and sheltered. Tourism operators often use the same locations for lodge construction and boat access. Similarly, diving tourism, which is concentrated on the reefs, leads to conflicts with fishers over space. The need to identify common aims and objectives, and to clarify the land and resource rights of local communities, is critical for negotiating access to resources.

Various laws govern both land-based and marine resources and make provision for a local community to protect its rights to natural resources. The intent of these laws is to recognise traditional and customary rights and to promote partnerships. For example, the Land Law encourages agreements and negotiations between local communities and new investors in order for both to benefit. However, the law does not say how community consultations should be carried out. New investors often regard community consultations as ‘troublesome’ rather than a formal mechanism through which to build long-term relationships and agreements with local communities. Although consultation may occur, this does not guarantee good, sustainable relationships between investors and communities. Laws and policies need to include guidelines for implementing community benefit provisions, and ensuring that partnerships develop beyond just the ‘consultation’ phase.

Securing use and access to coastal resources is critically important to both the tourism and fisheries sectors in Mozambique. The Tourism Ministry has identified the prime motivation for visiting Mozambique as its beach and island resorts, diving and snorkelling, nature reserves as well as sport and recreational fishing. However, the lack of integration of policies and laws between land-based and sea-based resources leads to inconsistencies in the way in which traditional use and ownership of resources are recognised. Efforts are needed to improve inter-sectoral coordination, communication and linkages, in order to identify a joint vision for tourism and fishery development that enhances benefits to local communities.
3. Support partnerships to share benefits

A range of partnerships have been initiated in the tourism sector as a means to enhance benefits of coastal resources for local communities. Different actors, such as private businesses and NGOs, as well as the state have played a critical role in initiating and implementing such partnerships. Ongoing support and promotion of these interventions is vitally important to unlock livelihood opportunities and promote more equitable sharing of long-term benefits. It is equally important for the state to continue providing basic services to affected communities.

- Partnerships are a type of benefit-sharing mechanism. Benefit-sharing mechanisms – which we understand to mean the institutions through which people gain access to and control over resources and through which benefits are distributed – are typically linked to a decision-making process which will use certain instruments or tools (e.g. community levies, development projects) to distribute benefits (see Figure 3).

- The outcome of these arrangements is largely determined by the objectives of different actors. For example, the goals of NGOs, private investors and the state will differ, depending on whether their aim is development or profit, for example, and will also be influenced by applicable policies and laws.

- An example of a state-driven initiative is the community levy. In Mozambique, through the Forestry and Wildlife Law, 20% of revenues from protected areas is granted to local communities, generated from the lease of land, gate fees or from tourism profits from adjacent protected areas. In Gala, the community levy from the Maputo Elephant Reserve has led to enhanced food security and monetary benefits to the local community. A local committee, through engagement with the state, has equally distributed benefits to local households.

- NGOs such as Lupa, which is involved in tourism in the Gala community, play an important role in facilitating benefits to the local community. Benefit-sharing mechanisms initiated by NGOs have created locally supported institutional structures, have promoted dialogue about community participation, and have involved local communities in decision-making related to tourism planning and development. Benefits to local communities have been improved through these interventions.

- Partnerships between the private sector and local communities are rare in Mozambique, and where they do exist are often driven by the ethical principles of the company. Although private investors are legally required to benefit local communities through concession agreements, this is not adequately monitored or enforced. Most tourism operators have little regard for the needs and rights of local communities. However, some businesses are actively initiating benefit-sharing arrangements, and these have had positive impacts. For example, a private sector initiative in Bazaruto has led to informal agreements with local communities that support livelihood projects, and lead to infrastructure development and the provision of basic services to local households. Attention needs to be given to the establishment of a training levy that could be used to set up funds in local communities for meeting specific capacity needs.

- Although external interventions make positive contributions to the livelihoods of local communities, it is important that government takes responsibility for its core functions. Some of the key benefits emerging from non-state initiatives include health care, education, roads and drinking water, which reflect the failure of the state to deliver these basic services. State prioritisation of basic services would free up resources for external investment in other non-essential benefits. Ongoing support to various actors and their implementation of benefit-sharing interventions is key to enhancing local livelihoods and promoting equity.

This study highlights that while coastal tourism may be seen as a poverty reduction strategy, such interventions may in fact exacerbate the fragile livelihoods of marginalised communities. Attempts to enhance benefits through partnerships with local communities have the potential to not only bring economic benefits to such communities, but also social, cultural and environmental benefits.
Institutions identified to share benefits are often selected expeditiously, without giving proper attention to their appropriateness and legitimacy. It is important that sufficient time, resources and commitment are dedicated to ensure that benefit-sharing institutions are robust. Existing language barriers between external investors, governments and communities need to be recognised and steps taken to facilitate communication and genuine engagement. This research has highlighted the fundamental importance of ensuring that institutions match local realities and that they are representative and accountable. Achieving fairness and equity requires participatory processes that adequately engage with local communities to ensure that their needs, values and aspirations are effectively incorporated into decision-making.

The extent to which the benefit-sharing arrangement is locally developed, or externally imposed plays a major role in determining whether intended benefits match the realities, needs and aspirations on the ground. Thus, where there has been a significant level of devolution and representative decision-making power in the mechanisms and institutional arrangements for access and benefit distribution, communities have perceived a greater level of tangible and intangible benefits. However, where there is little decentralisation of decision-making power, benefits have been largely outweighed by losses. The more people participate in decisions that affect them, the greater the possibility of equitable benefits.

Even progressive policies that promote benefit sharing in tourism do not necessarily translate to equitable benefits on the ground. Power dynamics between the private sector, different government departments, traditional authorities and communities, fundamentally influence benefit distribution, as do internal power dynamics within communities. An uneven balance of power can lead to inequity, which is the case for example between local communities and powerful foreign investors. These dynamics are in turn influenced by the value of the resource, with higher-value resources such as prime coastal land, attracting more political competition, and in some cases corruption.

Although efforts have been made to set up institutional arrangements to enhance benefits to local communities, a number of blockages have been identified that prevent equitable benefit sharing. Political interference and patronage remain central obstacles. Institutions set up to share benefits must be accountable, transparent and properly representative of the communities they intend to benefit.

Benefit-sharing arrangements in the tourism sector vary at the local level, from formal institutions to informal partnerships. Substantial consideration must be given to the types of institutions used to establish partnerships, in order to ensure that they reflect local realities and are accountable and participatory.

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Factors that enable benefit sharing for coastal resources
- Robust, representative and accountable institutions
- Decentralised decision-making that matches local realities
- Transparency
- Strong local participation
- Capacitated state
- Partnerships
- Trust between stakeholders
- Capacitated external actors
- Redistributed policies and laws (and coordination between sectors)
- Access to the coast and its resources
- Secure land and resource tenure

Factors that hinder benefit sharing for coastal resources
- Weak institutions
- Poor alignment between institution and benefit-sharing objectives
- Lack of accountability
- Centralised decision-making
- Autocratic decision-making
- Limited capacity within communities
- Incapacitated state
- Elite capture of benefits
- Political interference
- Political patronage
- Absence of clear policy and legal framework for benefit sharing
- Lack of access to the coast and its resources
- Insecure land and resource tenure

"Fishing or selling fish is not very good or profitable anymore. There was a lot of fish before and we used to earn a lot of money. If we don’t have dried fish to eat, we get products from the fields we cultivate, just enough food to make curry (caril) for the family.”
(tofe fish seller)
5. Recognise the value of both monetary and non-monetary benefits

A wide range of economic, social, cultural and ecological benefits accrue to local communities from coastal resource use. Although monetary benefits are of paramount importance to local livelihoods, non-monetary benefits are also highly valued. The multi-faceted nature of benefits needs to be taken into account when decisions are made about tourism, conservation and development interventions.

- Benefits from coastal resources are not only realised as economic opportunities, but also encapsulate broader non-monetary benefits such as the recognition of rights, the sharing of power, greater dignity, capacity development and empowerment, knowledge generation, decreased conflict, increased food security and enhanced social cohesion (see Figure 4 for example of benefits from tourism). Often, these equate to, or in some cases even exceed, the importance of monetary benefits. A key conclusion to emerge from this research points to the variable nature of coastal resource benefits and the different values placed on these benefits.

- Decision-making about development has typically relied largely on the economic benefits of various interventions without adequately considering the non-monetary benefits that may be sacrificed by the intervention. Recognition needs to be given to the ‘hidden’ values of social, cultural and ecological benefits in decision-making.

These findings affirm the growing number of studies that challenge conventional frameworks for understanding human well-being, focused on money, commodities and economic growth and point towards the need for a more nuanced and complex approach to development in general, and benefit sharing in particular.

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**Figure 4** The range of benefits identified in this research from coastal resource use

- **Economic**
  - Jobs
  - Shareholding
  - Infrastructure
  - Markets
  - Levies
  - Economic security & resilience
  - Livelihood diversity
  - Foreign exchange

- **Social/Cultural**
  - Food
  - Empowerment
  - Recognised rights (access & use of resources)
  - Decreased conflict
  - Social cohesion
  - Greater dignity/cultural identity
  - Knowledge/skills
  - Enhanced access to basic services

- **Ecological**
  - Enhanced environmental awareness

The multi-faceted nature of benefits, the reliance of communities on a diverse range of sectors for their livelihoods, and the inter-connectedness of benefits and losses between these sectors, underpins the importance of viewing coastal livelihoods in an integrated and holistic manner.
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