

Evaluation and Possibilities of Valorization of Ecotourism Potentials in the Mbam and Djerem National Park

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Abstract : Protected areas are the potential areas for the development of ecotourism because of their biodiversity, landscapes, waterfalls, lakes, caves, salt lick and cultural heritage of local or indigenous people. These potentials have not yet been valorized, so this study will enable to investigate the evaluation and possibilities of valorization of ecotourism potentials in the Mbam and Djerem National Park. Hence, this was done by employing a combination of field observations, examination, data collection and evaluation, using a SWOT analysis. The SWOT provides an analysis to determine the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, and strategic suggestions for ecological planning. The study helps to determine an ecotouristic inventory and mapping of ecotourism potentials of the park, evaluate the degree of valorization of these potentials and the possibilities of valorization. Finally, the study has proven that the park has much natural potentials such as rivers, salt licks, waterfall and rapids, lakes, caves and rocks, etc. Also, from the study, it was realized that as concerns the degree of valorization of these ecotourism potentials, 50% of the population visit the salt lick of Pkayere because it's a biodiversity hotspot and rich in mineral salt attracting a lot of animals and the least is the lake Miyere with 1% due to the fact that it is sacred. Moreover, from the results, there are possibilities that these potentials can be valorized and put into use because of their attractive nature such as creating good roads and bridges, good infrastructural facilities, good communication network etc. So, the study recommends that, in this process, MINTOUR, WCS, tour operators must interact sufficiently in order to develop the potential interest to ecotourism, ecocultural tourism and scientific tourism.

Keywords : ecotourism, national park Mbam and Djerem, valorization of biodiversity, protected areas of Cameroon

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