

## Strategies to Improve Coastal and Marine Tourism Sustainability in Gqeberha, South Africa

**Authors :** Mhlahli Mbangeni, Lynn C. Jonas, Rosemary Matikiti-Manyevere

**Abstract :** Coastal and marine tourism is considered among the most rapidly developing subsectors of tourism. That has enabled coastal and marine environments to gain popularity and economically contribute to coastal regions globally. However, in coastal regions of developing cities such as Gqeberha, South Africa, pollution, specifically plastics and waste from ships, are among the prominent challenges in these areas. Thus, there is a need for the management and planning of sustainability in coastal and marine tourism. As a result, the study evaluates the effectiveness of the current sustainability strategies and highlights the barriers and challenges faced by the coastal region. This study made use of the interpretivist paradigm following a qualitative research approach when collecting data. This was done by conducting semi-structured interviews with local government officials, coastal and marine tourism business top managers, as well as ocean economy-related non-profit organization operators through a purposive sampling method. The study employed content analysis to analyse the interview transcripts using a computer-aided qualitative data analysis software that is Atlas.ti. The research findings present current coastal and marine tourism strategies used, such as local government having quarterly meetings with the private sector promoting collaboration between the two entities. A further measure discovered was non-profit organisations conducting educational talks, workshops, and visiting schools to educate pupils within the coastal region about pollution and sustainability. Current challenges experienced in the implementation of sustainability practices include a lack of awareness, low visibility of the local government in promoting sustainability within the regions, and poor participation of the local community in activities such as beach clean-ups. Recommendations for strategies are to equip decision-makers with knowledge and skills to make informed decisions that are inclusive. Furthermore, local community participation should be encouraged through providing incentives. Local government may also be encouraged to allocate adequate resources to assist non-profit organisations' efforts towards sustainability. A further recommendation would be for coastal and marine tourism businesses to encourage them to create partnerships as well as collaborate with each other instead of competing in their sustainability efforts. The sharing of information about the sustainability of coastal and marine tourism between non-profit organisations, coastal and marine tourism businesses, local government as well as academia through research publications and ensured implementation, as well as evaluation, can contribute towards the sustainability of Gqeberha's coastal and marine tourism products.

**Keywords :** coastal and marine tourism threats, coastal and marine tourism trends, strategies for coastal and marine tourism sustainability, sustainability

**Conference Title :** ICHASS 2025 : International Conference on Humanities, Administrative and Social Sciences

**Conference Location :** Rome, Italy

**Conference Dates :** May 03-04, 2025