A comparison between the mangroves of Tanbi Wetland Complex (the Gambia) and projects in Oostende and Knokke-Heist (Belgium) with respect to the setup of a sustainable ecotouristic project: analysis of social, cultural and educational conditions

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We report about the on-going assessment of how to manage a newly to be established ecotouristic walkboard in the Tanbi Wetland Complex in The Gambia, and we compare this with the management structure of that of similar projects in natural areas of Oostende and Knokke-Heist (Belgium). This research, which is done within the framework of the Oostende-Banjul city link intends to study which stakeholders can play a part in the building and operation of such an activity, which role can they play, and how this project can be developed from a touristic, an educational and a management point of view? We use social constructivism as the conceptual framework, because it is considered essential to involve the beneficiaries to identify and develop solutions. We used ‘Participatory Rural Appraisal’ and ‘Rapid Rural Appraisal’, with secondary sources, direct observation and participation in activities, open interviews, participatory mapping, four R’s framework (Rights, Revenues, Responsibilities and Relationships of or between the stakeholders) and pebble scoring, visioning and pathways. These methods where applied in collaboration with governments and public organizations, local initiatives and individuals who could play an important part in the ecotouristic project.