Fame, Decline & Revival

Bagamoyo was formerly famous as an entrée port to the hinterland of what is today Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi and Rwanda and as the first headquarters of the colony of German East Africa. For several decades however, Bagamoyo slowly declined, becoming a desolate and decaying small town.

Now, Bagamoyo’s lost glory is glowing again mainly as a result of the growing tourism in the area and becoming a new conference destination rivalling Arusha.

In addition, Bagamoyo’s fame as the first education centre in what is today Mainland Tanzania—the town hosted a number of Catholic schools and the first multi-racial school during the German colonial period—is returning. The establishment of one of the best girl schools in Tanzania—the Marian Girls’ High School—run by the Roman Catholic Church in a predominantly Muslim area testifies the religious tolerance and national unity that exists in Tanzania. The fact that the current President has had a residence in Bagamoyo for many years adds political prestige to Bagamoyo.

All these developments have led to the rapid growth of population of Bagamoyo. In-migrants drawn from different parts of Tanzania and some from Kenya who have come to work in tourist hotel and tourism related activities. The construction of tourist hotels and population growth has not been accompanied by orderly land use planning and surveying of new plots. As a result Bagamoyo is now expanding haphazardly, with unplanned settlements sprouting daily.

The Government has initiated the process of nominating Bagamoyo and the old slave route to Ujiji on the shores of Lake Tanganyika for UNESCO World Heritage Site status.

Despite all the new developments the long neglect of Bagamoyo is seen in the abandoned old buildings built before or during the German colonial period. Many of these buildings—some of which are listed as national heritage under the antiquities law—are crumbling. They are not only eyesores, but many pose safety hazards.

Environmental Policy

The *Environmental Management Act, Cap. 191* (EMA) enacted in October 2004 provides for the legal and institutional framework for dealing with environmental issues. It also provides for environmental management instruments including Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

To elaborate the EIA requirements and process—which includes monitoring and Environmental Audits—the Minister has also promulgated the *Environmental Impact Assessment and Audit Regulations, 2005*.

The EMA has provisions on enforcement outlining responsibilities of different institutions from the lowest level in the government structure of governance and to the national level. The Act combines both “Command and Control” and “Incentive and Disincentives” approaches in inducing compliance.

The EMA expressly states that its provisions (including EIA requirements) are binding on the government and government-funded projects.

Environmental Challenges

However, despite very substantial progress in development of Tanzania’s environmental management framework, a number of critical environmental issues in the Bagamoyo area affect ecosystem and public health:

**Beach erosion.** The construction of hotels close to the beach and the cutting down of mangrove trees in their vicinity has exacerbated the problem of beach erosion in Bagamoyo.
Some hotels have been built in contravention of the legal requirement stipulated in EMA. The law prohibits any human activity of a permanent nature or an activity which by its nature would likely compromise or adversely affect conservation and protection of ocean within sixty metres from the shoreline.

**Unplanned settlement.** The growth of unplanned settlement is discernible in Bagamoyo. Driven largely by the development of tourist hotels, this has not gone in tandem with the construction of infrastructure.

The situation creates squatter areas that are squalid due to lack of necessary facilities and services in a peri-urban or urban area.

Environmental, land use planning and urban planning legislation require the planned settlements that are built in conformity with physical planning regulations.

**Deforestation.** Deforestation—particularly of Mangrove forests—is rapid, driven by charcoal-making, shore development, and to some degree by salt-making and prawn-farming activities. This reduces shore protection (see beach erosion, above), and also eliminates critical fisheries breeding habitat.

Deforestation is proceeding despite the fact that mangrove forests are protected under the Environment and Forest legislation in Tanzania.

Charcoal is a major source of household energy in Bagamoyo. In additional, some local charcoal is sent to Zanzibar and there are rumours that it is then exported to Gulf states.

**Wastewater and Solid Waste Management.** The construction of tourist hotels, schools and other facilities, and residences has significantly increased the volume of wastewater and solid waste generated in Bagamoyo.

The EMA places the mandate for management of solid waste and sewerage on Local Government Authorities. However, solid waste collection services in Bagamoyo have not kept pace with the increased waste volume.

And although sewerage treatment is required by Tanzania’s Environmental and Public Health and Sanitation legislation, most sewerage (both “brown” and “gray” water) is discharged without treatment to the Indian Ocean.

**Quality of Water for Domestic Use.** The main source of water for most households is wells. Ground water in Bagamoyo is often saline. Wells are highly susceptible to contamination, e.g. from latrines.

Many households thus rely on water that does not meet the water quality standards that have been gazetted by the Minister for Environment as well as those in the water legislation.

**Decaying and Derelict Buildings.** Some old buildings that are protected under the Antiquities Act such as the Old Boma have been neglected and are crumbling.

This situation poses a public safety hazard from collapses. In addition, Bagamoyo is losing its invaluable cultural heritage. Yet, preserving this cultural heritage and its beaches and natural environment (also at risk) are required to sustain and grow tourism in Bagamoyo—the engine of the town’s revival—over the medium & long term.

The EMA and Antiquities Act require the preparation of General Management Plan for such heritage.

**Compliance and Enforcement.**

On paper, Tanzania possesses the environmental policy tools necessary to address these issues.

However, there is lack of voluntary compliance culture in Tanzania. Many would wait for sanctions before they comply or implement the law.

There is thus a need for both public awareness and capacity building programmes, and for effective and efficacious enforcement of EMA and other relevant sector legislation.