

ABSTRACT

This study examined Tanzania's preparedness to host mega-events as a sustainable tourism product, using the Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) 2027 as a case study. Mega-events provide transformative opportunities to enhance global tourism appeal, stimulate economic growth, and promote sustainable development. Despite their potential, limited research exists on integrating sustainability into mega-event planning, particularly in developing contexts like Tanzania. This research evaluated the integration of sustainability practices, the adequacy of tourism infrastructure, and the strategic use of mega-events for long-term social, economic, and environmental benefits. Employing a qualitative case study approach and guided by an integrated framework derived from the Sustainability Aspects Framework (SAF) and the Green Economy Transition Framework (GETF), the study bridges immediate event-specific requirements with enduring sustainability goals. In the short term, SAF focuses on upgrading infrastructure, managing waste, and enhancing safety protocols to address immediate needs and benefit local communities. Over the long term, GETF drives strategies such as renewable energy adoption, eco-tourism expansion, and policy reforms to ensure a legacy of sustainable development. Bridging these phases, transitional efforts emphasize regional collaboration, renewable energy partnerships, and community-led initiatives, ensuring the event's benefits are equitably distributed and persist beyond its conclusion. Key challenges like infrastructure gaps and limited community engagement are addressed alongside opportunities like renewable energy adoption and local entrepreneurship promotion. This study explored these dimensions to provide actionable insights for policymakers and stakeholders. The study found that while Tanzania has taken important steps to upgrade infrastructure and promote regional partnerships in preparation for AFCON 2027, significant challenges remain, particularly in enforcing sustainability policies, engaging local communities, and ensuring post-event legacy planning. The integrated framework used in the study revealed that most initiatives are still focused on short-term execution, with limited emphasis on long-term sustainability or inclusive economic benefits. Nonetheless, the study identifies actionable opportunities, including support for eco-tourism, digital tourism strategies, and local entrepreneurship. These findings position Tanzania as a country with emerging potential to transform mega-events into platforms for sustainable tourism growth. The insights from this research offer a practical roadmap for policymakers, stakeholders, and other developing nations aiming to host mega-events with lasting economic, social, and environmental impact.

Key words: Mega events, Tanzania Tourism Sector, AFCON, Preparedness, Sustainable Tourism, Integrated framework, Green Economy.