

The Apitourism Regions for boosting the Tourism Heritage of the Republic of Benin (49th APIMONDIA Congress, APIMONDIA 2025, Copenhagen, Denmark 23-27 September 2025. www.apimondia2025.com)

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Unlike classic tourism, Apitourism is the sharing of goods and services of the bees in a given society. It integrates apitherapy and the promotion of beehive products for strengthening the interrelationships between human beings, the bees, and floral resources. It helps achieve socio-economic, cultural, environmental, and spiritual needs without compromising the ecological functions for living in harmony with nature.



Traditional hives in northern Benin

Apitourism regions in Benin

North Beninese Apitourism region

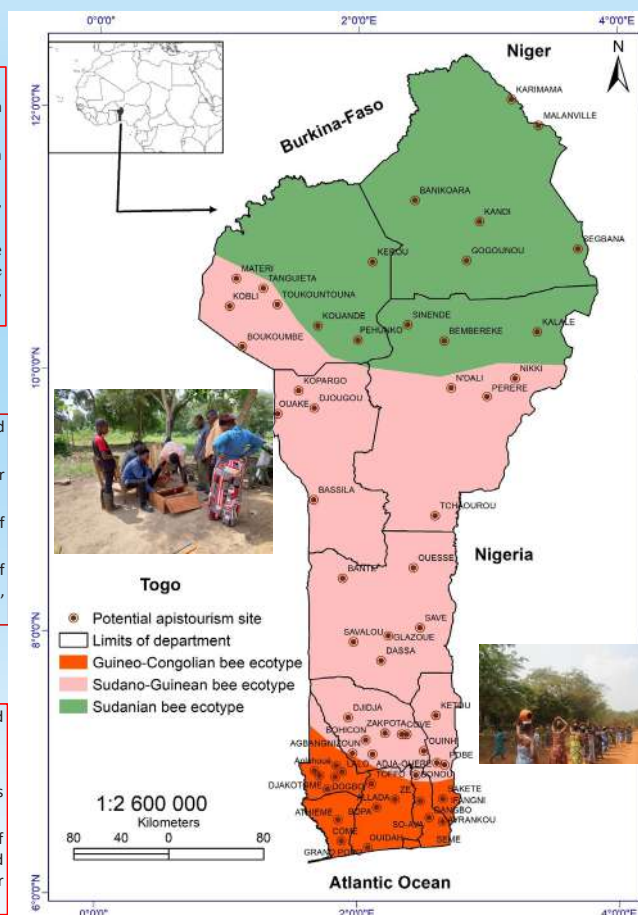
- Giant honeybee of the *adansonii* genotype;
- The oldest beekeeping practices with traditional hives;
- 8% of the country's tourism reception capacity;
- Areas of National Parks with big games, hunting trails, geological landscapes;
- Apitourism sites to be integrated into the functional classic tourism itineraries in the cities of Kandi, Bankoara, Malanville, Natitingou, Tangueta, and Porga.

Central Beninese Apitourism region

- Medium sized honeybees of *scutellata* and *adansonii* genotypes;
- Best honey potential and highest beekeeper population in Benin;
- 18% of national tourism reception capacities of Benin;
- Suitable Apitourism sites in the cities of Abomey, Bohicon, Djidja, Dassa, Savalou, Parakou, Djougou, Bassila, and Nikki.

South Beninese Apitourism region

- Small-sized honeybees of *iberiensis* and *scutellata* genotypes;
- Few beekeepers and low honey potential;
- 75% of national tourism reception capacities of Benin;
- Suitable Apitourism sites in the cities of Ouidah, Abomey-Calavi, Porto-Novo around Museums, sacred groves, Research centres or dedicated apiaries, Industrial quarries,



The integration of bees into existing tourism heritage of Benin will help strengthen the existing tourism site management sustainability, environmental sustainability, cultural, and socio-economic sustainability, the four key principles of the worldwide tourism development. This allows an optimal exploitation of tourism potentials while preserving their authenticity and long term ecological and social values. It requires a strong public-private partnership and actors capacity strengthening,

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Tourism is the third most crucial socio-economic sector that generates incomes and employment in Benin. As such, it occupies a prominent place in the country's development policies with great investments from the central government. In response to the sustainable development goals requirements, tourists are worldwide increasingly demanding on the quality and diversity of the services they receive. Strengthening the tourism sector requires then environmentally and socio-economically sustainable innovations beyond the classic visit of places, natural wonders and human past and present glories. Bees, with their great ecological and socio-economic functions, offer many facets which may be valued to support the well-diversified tourism heritage of the Republic of Benin. The honeybee diversity analysis indicated that the country bears three honeybee races (*adansonii*, *iberiensis* and *scutellata*) and many solitary bee species with their specific habitats, challenges and services for satisfying tourist curiosities. The geographic distribution of the native bees and apicultural management systems revealed three main apitouristic regions that are well integrated in the classic tourism heritage of the country. The southern apitourism regions, which extend from the coast to the latitude of Abomey, benefit from the strong and rich socio cultural and environmental tourist heritage of the south Benin with the highest tourism reception capacities. The central Apitourism regions from the district of Djidja and the Plateau department to the latitude of Bembereke benefits from the best apicultural potential with well diversified beekeeping systems and bee populations. Serving as the departure areas for ecotourism and hunting trips to the north, it is the second tourism region with 18% of the country's tourism reception capacity available for the apivisitors. The northern apitourism regions including the department of Atacora and Alibori are areas of specific old traditional honeybee management systems around the W and Penjari national parcs with their water fall and wildlife safaris. The involved actors, their roles, and responsibilities, as well as the challenges that may emerge from integrating the bee sector into the tourism heritage of the country, are also analysed with the required adaptation strategies.