


Strategic Framework for Innovative Tourism and Sustainable Development in Namibia

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ABSTRACT

Globally, the importance of the tourism sector for economic and sustainable development has already been acknowledged. Namibia is no exception. Endowed with natural beauty wildlife, deserts, and beautiful beaches, the tourism sector is clearly acknowledged in the development policies and plans. Despite this, there are few comprehensive studies that deal with strategic aspects of neither the tourism sector nor frameworks to enhance innovative tourism for sustainable development. Due to such precincts and lack of comprehensive research, strategic management of tourism and its development to the fullest potential is difficult. Tourism is a powerful vehicle for economic growth, and job creation is a reckoned global phenomenon. International tourist arrivals to SSA have been on the increase making it one of the fastest-growing regions in the world. Hence, adopting an exploratory approach with a systematic literature review with contextual analysis, this study aims to fill this gap and deliberates on the requisite strategic framework for innovative tourism and sustainable development in Namibia.

KEYWORDS

Approach, Culture, Development, Economic, Industry, Strategy, Tourism

INTRODUCTION

Tourism activity has a very positive impact on the development - in social and economic terms – of communities. Tourism helps the communities from all over the world to progress and it is currently one of the most important industries worldwide. Today, the business volume of tourism equals or even surpasses that of oil exports, food products or automobiles. Tourism has become one of the major players in international commerce, and represents at the same time one of the main income sources for many developing countries. This global spread of tourism in industrialised and developed states has produced economic and employment benefits in many related sectors - from construction to agriculture or telecommunications. Furthermore in the developed countries tourism plays a significant role in the economy as provider of jobs and as contributor to the GDP as well as an important agent for improving the standard of living. Thus, tourism is a powerful vehicle for economic growth and job creation all over the world. The tourism sector is directly and indirectly responsible for 8.8 percent of the world's jobs (258 million); 9.1 percent of the world's GDP (US\$6 trillion); 5.8 percent of the world's exports (US\$1.1 trillion); and 4.5 percent of the world's investment (US\$652 billion) (WTTC, 2011). The World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) estimates that 3.8 million jobs (including 2.4 million indirect jobs) could be created by the tourism industry in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) over the

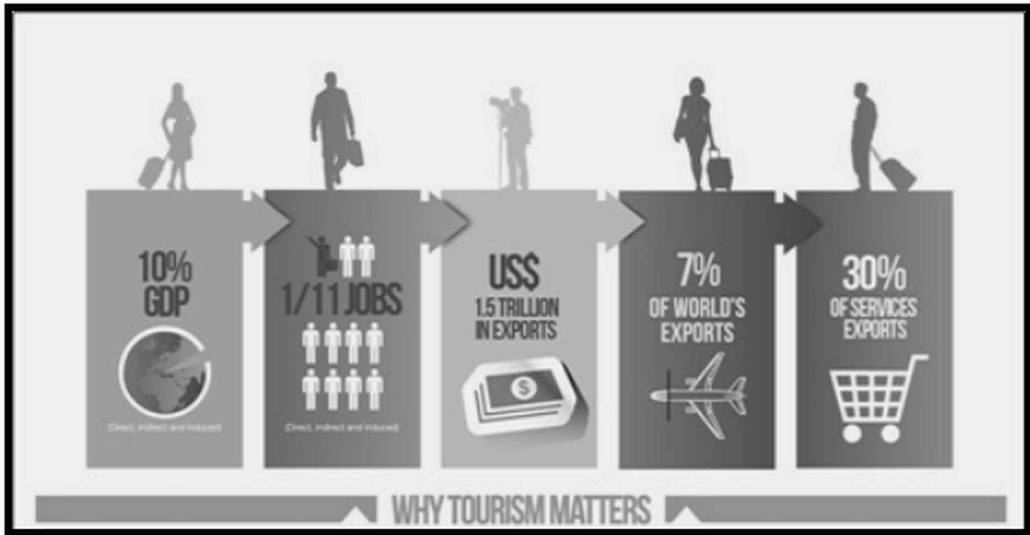
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next 10 years. The potential for growth in tourism in the region is significant and compelling. Figure 1 reflects why tourism matters for any country and economy.

Figure 1. Reflects why tourism matters



Source: UNWTO, 2016

According to Rogerson (2011), Cape Verde saw a boom in its tourism sector as a result of market-oriented policies, political and banking reforms, and investment incentives. Receipts from tourism in Cape Verde were US\$432 million in 2008, comprising 72 percent of all service exports, 15 percent of GDP, and employing directly and indirectly an estimated 21 percent of the workforce (27,800 people). Many other countries in SSA are on the verge of tourism success. In 2011, tourism directly generated 2.7 percent of the GDP of countries in SSA and directly and indirectly accounted for more than 1 in 20 of the region's jobs (12.8 million) (WTTC, 2012). Global hotel chains are poised to spend hundreds of millions of dollars in Africa over the next few years to meet increased demand from both international tourists and the continent's own fast-growing middle class. Global international tourist arrivals have been growing steadily at 4-5 percent per year since the 1950s. Between 2009 and 2010, despite the global financial crisis, international tourist arrivals to SSA increased by 8 percent, making SSA the second fastest growing region in the world after the Asia Pacific (UNWTO, 2010). The dramatic growth has been attributed to legislative reform, the development of a tourism strategic plan, and the elimination of visas for Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries. Already more than 10 million people are travelling across international borders every year within Africa for shopping, medical needs, sports, religious gatherings, business meetings and conferences, and visiting friends and relatives. For example, 58 percent of all arrivals to Namibia in 2010 were from South Africa and Angola. Regional arrivals to South Africa increased by 12.8 percent between 2009 and 2010 (South African Tourism, 2010).

Yet it is by no means easy to develop and sustain a successful tourism destination. African destinations compete for tourists against venues in Asia and South America. It is not enough to have interesting natural and cultural attractions and "friendly people." In many African countries a deep-rooted skepticism about the economic and social benefits of tourism prevails, due to a lack of accurate

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