

## Tourism Development Plan in Nigeria: Implementation, Management and Sustainability

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### **Abstract**

The Management of sustainable tourism is recognized as an important aspect of tourism planning, this process is now receiving even greater attention from relevant government agencies. Thus, in managing sustainable tourism development therefore, the adoption of planning and management techniques and process in developing sustainable goals and objectives is very paramount. In general, recent studies in the field of tourism have identified well planned and well managed tourism policy as the panacea to sustainable tourism development.

The paper focus on the process and the challenges involved in the implementation and management of the Nigeria tourism development plan vis-à-vis the effort of the Nigeria Tourism Development Corporation (NTDC) in the planning and management of tourism facilities and destinations in the country.

Findings revealed that though the final master plan has not been officially released since the draft was published in year 2006, implementation of the draft plan has suffered a lot of political and administrative bottlenecks which has utilizes the benefits of tourism to that community, government and private activities.

The paper therefore recommends the full implementation of the tourism master plan which will only be effective with the collaborative efforts of all stakeholders in the tourism industry in aspects of finding, planning and management of tourism development in Nigeria for effective sustainability.

**Key words:** Tourism, Master plan, Development, Management, Sustainability.

### **Introduction**

Tourism has been recognized and accepted as the fastest growing sector of the global economy (Esu, 2013). Also, UNWTO (2016) tourism highlight report has since upheld this position and emphasized the need for sustainable tourism development in our society. The need for sustainable tourism development through effective physical planning of tourism resources

and destinations cannot be over emphasized. Tourism planning therefore is a process aimed to optimize the benefits of tourism so that the result is a balance of the appropriate quality and quantity of supply with the proper level of demand without compromising neither the trade's socio economic and environmental development nor its sustainability (Geddner and Ritchie, 2006).

Planning is important in tourism for a wide range of reasons. First, through the capacity of physical planning process to control development, it provides a mechanism for a structured provision of tourist facilities and associated infrastructure. The geographic dimension has become a more significant aspect of tourism as most forms of tourism planning were realized and site specific. Edgell (2006) reflecting thereafter limited horizons that originally characterized most pattern of tourism (Hall, 2000), but as the spatial range of tourists has become more extensive, the mobility levels have increased, planning systems that are capable of coordinating development over regional, national and even international spaces have become more necessary.

Sequel to the above, Hall (2000) further reinstated that good tourism planning goes far beyond schemes to maximize profit. While profitable development brings positive economic and social benefits to the community, it also carries inevitable drawbacks. Therefore, developers must incorporate ways to enhance human welfare and happiness. These include insistence on quality architectural, landscape, and environmental design; planning for transportation; and energy conservation and education.

If such diverse goals are to be achieved, planners must implement a model that will guide their thinking by incorporating each aspect (including various political aspects) into a master plan. These include zoning, road maintenance, water and sewage treatment systems, and promotional expenses. An official body, financed through tourist earnings, is useful in keeping abreast of socioeconomic activities in the industry as well as dealing with other problems such as stabilizing prices, forecasting demand, keeping an inventory of potential national tourist resources, and arranging publicity campaigns (WTO, 2000)

Consequently, for the Tourism Master Plan to be sustained, vital issues, which should address strategic recommendations in the areas of tourism policy, governance, tourism product development, effective marketing approach, training and re-training of staff among others must be statutorily put in place and implemented to the letter.

### **Review of Literature**

Tourism has developed in sub-Saharan Africa without planning. Essentially, tourism has grown with government encouragement and private sector participation but without a blueprint on the type of tourism desire, growth rate control, and consent by local communities which are the arenas for guest-host interactions. Lack of planning soon leads to serious environmental and socio-cultural problems. Tourism becomes uncompetitive and it ultimately becomes unsustainable.

Nigeria is one of the African countries with tourism development, but without plan. Consequently, serious difficulties threaten further development of such tourism destination. However, tourism destination in Nigeria suffers from sustainable development difficulties which are attributed to the non-implementation of tourism master plan. Page *et al* (1999) posited The

first is tourism's image as a luxury export completely dependent over external demand on which local planners have relatively little control. Secondly international tourism revenues are not only always assured. Tourism is affected by political stability, perceptions of personal safety and security, and health. Any of these factors can influence tourism numbers and revenues and paralyze planning strategies. Also, Lea (1993) opined that tourism planning has suffered a severe setback as a result of lack of detailed data that can support tourism planning. Standardized data on length and location of visits and expenditure patterns are lacking

Without the benefits of sectoral planning, it is difficult to compare the cost and benefits of tourism investment with alternative projects (de Kadt, 1979). Neither is it possible to argue whether the considerable resources put into tourism infrastructure have been utilized in an optimal way. Inskeep (1994) categorized the rationale for tourism planning in threefold: developing and managing tourism in an integrated, controlled and sustainable way; generating optional benefits for the stakeholders; and minimizing environmental and socio-cultural problems. Although many countries prepared tourism plans in the 1960s and 1970s, it was not until the 1980s when international recognition was given to the role of tourism in development and the need to include tourism in national planning (Inskeep, 1991; de Kadt, 1979).

Planning provides the rationale for utilizing relatively large financial resources from a country's treasury. Such resources are required to develop infrastructure such as airports and hotels. As resources are frequently in short supply in Nigeria, there must be prior planning and policy justification for the development of tourism. Only planning can guide the type of tourism desired, the respective roles of the government, the private sector and local communities, and the source markets of the tourists (Olokesusi, 2007). This is the approach of integrated tourism planning which also recognizes local interests in tourism development (Murphy, 1985; Gunn, 1988; Inskeep 1991; 1994). Olokesusi (2007) opined that without local support and involvement in the planning development and implementation of tourism projects, medium-and long-term tourism activity would be impossible. True local participation as a partnership with the national and international interests can help sustainable tourism development. Many African countries seeking to increase foreign exchange earnings and employment opportunities from tourism bypass proper planning methods. They attempt to attract mass tourism regardless of its impact on society and the environment, which are contained and controlled in the provision of tourism master plan.

### **Sustainable Tourism Planning and Tourism Policy**

The role of the tourism policy in providing a set of guidelines for the development and promotion of a tourism destination cannot be over emphasized as it streamlines the structure and content of a formal tourism planning, as well as the process of policy formulation, to guide the effective implementation of the plan.

Because tourism policy formulation and tourism planning are very directly related to one another, it is important to distinguish between the two, or identify their similarities and their differences in a tourism context. Hall and Law (1998), highlighted the similarities between tourism policy and tourism planning as reported below:

- They both deal with future development of a tourism destination or region.
- They both emphasize the strategic dimensions of managerial action, although planning must also address a number of tactical concerns.

Their differences are listed below:

- Policy formulation is definitely a “big picture”, while much of planning is characterized by an attention to detail.
- Policy formulation is a creative, intellectual process, while planning is generally a more constrained exercise.
- Policy, particularly its visioning component, has a very long-term strategic emphasis, while planning tends to be more restrictive in its time horizon. A one-year planning cycle is not uncommon, although three to five-year plans are a possibility. In contrast, destination visions may have a five, ten, fifty or even a hundred-year time horizon.
- Policy formulation must allow for as-yet-unseen circumstances and technologies to be considered. In contrast, planning tends to assume current conditions and technologies, with some allowances for predictable (i.e., evolutionary) change.
- Policy formulation tends to emphasize a systematic determination of “what” should be done in long-term tourism development, while planning tends to emphasize the “how” for the achievement of specific destination goals (Hall and Law, 1998).

It should be noted that the definitions and distinctions related to policy strategy, goals, objectives, and planning are ongoing sources of debate in the management literature. Different scholars and managers frequently debate the exact meaning of these terminologies. While the debate is not inconsequential, it should not stand in the way of creative thinking or managerial action (Getz, 1986).

Although policy formulation and destination planning are different types of processes, they must nevertheless be seen as integrated components of an ongoing process of destination management. This need is reflected and adopted in “The Planning Process”, which is germane to any successful and sustainable tourism development activities and projects.

### **The Planning Process and Tourism Destination Planning**

Proper tourism planning involves the physical, legal, promotional, financial, economic, market, management, social and environmental aspects will help to deliver the benefits of tourism development.

Effective planning therefore, defines the desired result and activities in a systematic manner to achieve sustainable success (Getz, 1986); the following steps describe the logical sequence:

1. **Define the system:** What is the scale, size, market, character, and purpose? Formulate objectives. Without a set of objectives, the development concept has no direction. The objectives must be comprehensive and specific and should include a time-table for completion.

2. **Gathering data:** Fact finding, or research, provides basic data that are essential to developing the plan. Examples of data gathering are preparing a fact book, making market surveys, undertaking site and infrastructure surveys, and analyzing existing facilities and competition.
3. **Analyze and interpret:** Once collected, the many fragments of information must be interpreted so that facts gathered will have meaning. This steps leads to a set of conclusions and recommendations that lead to making or conceptualizing a preliminary plan.
4. **Create the preliminary plan:** Based on the previous steps, alternatives are considered and alternative physical solutions are drawn up and tested. Frequently, scale models are developed to illustrate the land-use plans; sketches are prepared to show the image the development will project; financial plans are drafted from the market information, site surveys, and the layout plan to show the investment needed in each phase of the project and the cash flow expected; and legal requirements are met.
5. **Approve the plan:** The parties involved can now look at plans, drawings, scale models, estimates of costs, and estimates of profits and know what will be involved and what the chances for success or failure will be. While a great deal of money may have been spent up to this point, the sum is a relatively small amount compared to the expenditures that will be required once the plan is approved and master planning and implementation begin.
6. **Create the final plan:** This phase typically includes a definition of land use; plans for infrastructure facilities such as roads, airports, bike paths, horse trails, pedestrian walkways, sewage, water, and utilities; architectural standards; landscape plans; zoning and other land-use regulations; and economic analysis, market analysis, and financial programming.
7. **Implement the plan:** Implementation carries out the plan and creates an operational tourism development. It also follows up and evaluates. Good planning provides mechanisms that give continuing feedback on the tourism project and the levels of consumer satisfaction achieved (Getz, 1986).

Good tourism planning and its sustainable implementation should eliminate problems and provide user satisfaction. The final user is the judge in determining how successful the planning process has been. Again it serves as a guide to asking the right questions and making sure that the process is complete. It also illustrates that there are a number of approaches to tourism planning. There is no single magic approach (Wilkinson, 1997).

### **Salient Issues in the Nigeria Tourism Master Plan**

After decades of neglect, the tourism sector in Nigeria recently received a boost and acknowledged as one of the six priority areas of development by former president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, General Olusegun Obasanjo. A draft report of the Master Plan submitted

on December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2005 was purposed to develop tourism resources, alleviate poverty, generate employment, enhance the physical, social and cultural environment etc.

The master plan which is structured in 3 volumes focuses mainly on:

- Current Situation Analysis
- Strategic Recommendations and Complementation
- Technical Reports and Appendices (Bassey, 2016)

The development of tourism in Nigeria according to the master plan is expected to receive a boost through spending from international tourists appreciation contributions from the state government to the transport and hospitality sector, revenue from domestic leisure and travel activities, contributions to government revenue from VAT levies on the hospitality sector, company taxes also to be generated by the hospitality sector, stakeholders contributions, NGO etc.

On a general note, the draft master plan presented the tourism terrain in Nigeria as though virile and rich, but emphasis on major administrative and technical areas in need of urgent attention, these include the prime need of the general body coordinating tourism affairs in Nigeria. Federal Ministry of Culture and Tourism, to be further strengthened with qualified personnel with statistics and industrial experience.

- Also the Nigeria Tourism Development Corporation (NTDC) should be well equipped administratively and resources made to function more effectively.
- Available restrictions and bottle-necks on funding tourism project require attention in order to effectively foster investment in the sector.
- Effective collection and compilation of tourism statistics, static number of international visitors to Nigeria in the last 15 years should be done. International awareness to tourism resources in Nigeria, should be well organized and friendly in nature to attract visitors to tourism destinations. Training and general awareness about tourism, its products and benefits must be enhanced to adequately create investment opportunities in the sector as obtainable in countries making waves in tourism development. (Bassey, 2016)

The master plan thus recommended twenty eight (28) key tourism units for sustainable tourism development in Nigeria. Some of the key areas or major units which designated Nigeria tourism environment as cultural and regional conference destination in the tourism market place, include the clustering of tourism development into five sections- Tropical rainforest, Conference capital, Atlantic gateway, Scenic nature and Sahara gateway. Other units include, product development for international, regional and domestic tourists, flagging of tourism projects, investment in sites of regional significance, encourage the development of more standard accommodation, waste management, safety and security issues promotion of art and craft, festivals and events development of national parks, enhanced transportation facilities and marketing, encouraging partnership and stakeholders collaboration in tourism development, institutions of laws, legislations to identify the clear roles for the federal and state agencies in

tourism implementation of efficient tourism management information system.

### **Implementation of Nigeria Tourism Master Plan**

It is disheartening to note that since the release of the draft master plan (published as executive summary report) in January, 2006; it is disheartening to note that the final Tourism Master Plan is yet to be published officially.

Consequently, as laudable as the provisions of the Draft plan is; as touching as the major aspects of tourism development units and infrastructures in Nigeria, are the mechanism for full implementation of its programmes is yet to be achieved. Though, these have been put in place at the federal and in many states of the Federation, their impact in the comprehensive development of tourism in the country according to the draft plan has not been felt significantly as expected.

Nigeria is richly endowed with cultural, historic, natural and even man-made tourism resources, that if fully tapped and effectively managed will not only sustain the economy of Nigeria as a whole, but enhances the development of rural places and towns in the country, as there is no village in the country without a peculiar feature, culture or resource, that can be developed as tourism sites. The delay or neglect of the full implementation of Nigeria tourism Master Plan from the various studies on the subject matter (Hall, 2000, Wilkinson, 1997) hinges of political influences, lack of funding, lack of experienced man power and mis-conception of the viability and future of sustainable tourism planning and development for the country.

The implication of the delay in the implementation of Nigeria Tourism Master Plan has resulted into various forms of haphazard tourism destination development in the country. The mis-management of tourism facilities and resources are also part of the short falls of the implementation process. Standard and quality are neither maintained nor enforced in majority of our tourism sites and in the provision of tourism facilities and related infrastructure.

The forgoing are associated with the bottleneck in tourism development in Nigeria and have consequently constituted a clog in the wheel of sustainable tourism development in the country, the full and effective implementation of the Tourism Master Plan in the country will cub these problems through the provision contained in the Master Plan and also enhance sustainable tourism development.

### **Conclusion**

The quality of tourism planning and development will determine the ultimate success and longevity of any destination area. Thus, time, effort, and resources devoted to planning are essential investments (Fagence, 1996).

Thoughtful planners have formulated the goals for tourism development through tourism master plan, and these should be guiding principle for any tourism destination. Obstacles to sustainable tourism development can also be overcome by sound planning augmented by political means, if growth is desired. This is often accomplished by the involvement of the official tourism bodies and stakeholders. Tourism development therefore, should be a part of the overall regional or urban land-use development plan to enhance coordination and effective management.

To achieve sustainable tourism development in Nigeria, government can also help

considerably in making financing available, while in the private sector and host communities, active participation should be encouraged and possibly enforced through tourism policy for general and prompt tourism project acceptance and effective management.

Sequel to the above, it is worthy to note that, the lack of tourism planning leads to serious environmental and socio-cultural problems and a deterioration of the tourism product. Soon, tourists stop coming and this may seriously affect a country's hard currency reserves. However, planning is not a panacea for all the problems associated with tourism. By providing goals and objectives of tourism planning, and comparing these with national development goals and objectives, it may become possible to work out whether the expectations of tourism as a tool for development are being met.

### **Recommendation**

Aside the need for the call for the release and implementation of the tourism development master plan, the following recommendation are also suggested for adoption by the various arms of government involved in the planning and management of tourism resources and destination development.

- Providing a framework for raising the living standard of the people through the economic benefit of tourism. Awareness of the benefits of tourism, both short and long term should be done regularly through the print and social media outfits. This will further promote tourism development.
- Developing an infrastructure and providing recreational facilities for visitors and residents alike. This extends to good road network, availability and affordable transport facilities, health and other facilities.
- Ensuring types of development within visitors centres and resorts that are appropriate to the purposes of those areas. This will attract patronage and full acceptance of such project by the would-be-users.
- Establishing a development programme consistent with the cultural, social and economic philosophy of the government and the people of the host community or area. This will facilitate rapid and sustainable cultural resource development, and subsequently revenue generation.
- Optimizing visitor satisfaction, through the provision of visitors' relaxation needs.
- Standard catering services and accommodation facilities of various standards.

Sequel to the above goals of sustainable tourism planning, the following mechanisms should be effectively considered, modalities for its management clearly spelt out and backed-up with legal institutional framework.



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