# Sustainable Tourism Development Framework:

# A Guide for Regional Governments

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Sustainability within tourism is increasingly becoming a greater focus within the industry, however the role of various stakeholders can impede or support its success. For the private sector, the promotion of sustainable practices is an opportunity to differentiate themselves from their competitors or for the intrinsic good it provides to their community. For the public sector, government, it offers the same value of competition over other destinations and changes lives of its citizens, however, there is a unique set of challenges that comes with being the primary decision-maker in tourism development.

National governments can be plagued with bureaucracy with ministries and departments operating independently without internal coordination or oversight (Fredriksson, 2014).[i] City governments can often lack budget or capacity to address specific economic development needs (Sharp & Mullinix, 2012).[ii] However, regional or sub-national governments can be the catalyst in economic development, adhering to a fit-for-purpose strategy through devolution in which a federal government relinquishes control to a lower tier of government (Ribot, 2002).[iii] This process can allow for improved democratic representation, increased efficacy of public resources and better delivery of services (Iddawela et al., 2021).[iv]

Unfortunately a sub-national controlled model is not always extended in government settings, particularly in destinations that have varying political regimes such as in the case of South Africa, a democratic nation primarily led by one party, the African National Congress who's main opposition, the Democratic Alliance, leads the Western Cape province. With an "ear to the people" with a "voice to the decision-makers," provinces, states or sub-national governments can have enough resources and lobbying power to create change in a country where national law supersedes provincial law. Responsible for economic development including tourism, Wesgro, the organization for Western Cape has expressed interesting in forcing policy change, which could benefit the country's tourism landscape.

## Overview

In a governmental model where, national laws supersede provincial laws, a succinct development plan is essential in obtaining support should a sub-national entity wish to implement new policies. While various frameworks exist within sustainable tourism development, a revised model specifically designed for a province including updated stakeholder dynamics and indicators can offer fresh insight. This project[*] can act as a guide in the creation of a sustainable tourism policy through back casting focusing on the acquisition and role of stakeholders as well as indicators of success through the implementation of

* While this was developed during a global pandemic, these unique factors currently impacting the tourism industry were not taken into consideration, so that this framework can be used as a foundation in the post-pandemic world.

sustainable tourism development. Examples will be provided using the province of Western Cape, South Africa, and its tourism industry members.

Sustainable tourism is comprised of three unique pillars; environment, community, and economy; each of which impacts and is impacted by each other in nearly every aspect of development. Having a vision and understanding that model of systems dynamics is crucial, allowing for the preservation of intention. Newton, Fast & Henley (2002) provide a succinct overview of each:

> *"A sustainable environment is one that recognizes that growth occurs within limits and is restricted by the carrying capacity of the environment; minimizes harm to the natural environment; and uses materials in continuous cycles. A sustainable community values cultural diversity; makes decisions and plans in a balanced, open, and flexible manner that includes the perspectives of the community; and encourages fair distribution of benefits among members, including the disadvantaged. Finally, a sustainable economy involves a local economy that is stable diversified, relies on local strengths and resources, encourages local initiatives, and provides year-round employment for local residents."[v]*

In order to determine the ideal model of sustainable tourism, decision-makers must decide on the framework in which the model will be created; define roles including that of government, which is likely the initiator of development; determine how the stakeholders will be defined and acquired; focus on collaboration; decide what indicators will be used and what they will assess; potential challenges in the process; and the timeframe in which it will occur.

## Framework

A sustainable tourism model can be created in a variety of ways including forecasting and backcasting. Based on current trends, forecasting determines a path and is used to predict outcomes as well as solve challenges, however it can lead to dependance on objectives and has been suggested as not being a suitable strategy for long-term planning (Robert, 2000).[vi] Backcasting, however, begins with determining a vision and then deciding what steps must be taken in order to achieve that goal (Robinson, 1990).[vii] Backcasting allows for the determination of constraints within a system and allows for creative strategies and actions, all focused on the intended direction, rather than fixated on a pre-determined vision of the future (Holmberg & Robèrt, 2000).[viii] It is through backcasting that decision makers are looking for the most desirable rather than the most likely outcome (Robinson, 1988).[ix]

The Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development (FSSD) is an inclusive approach method and based on a backcasting model. "Structuring information in a systematic way [allows for] decision-making and designed for the incorporation of diverse tools and concepts that support the strategic goals" (Sarkis et al., 2010).[x] It is important to consider, however, that planning frameworks should focus on a process-oriented approach, versus an outcome-oriented approach to be as beneficial as possible, a challenge with politicians who need to show results (Wanner & Pobstl-Haider, 2019).[xi]

In order to best determine the goal, Newton, Fast & Henley (2002) offer a basic guideline:

1. Define and discuss the criteria for a future sustainable tourism community.
2. Distribute a survey to identify local information about sustainable development.
3. Compare the current state of the environment, community, and economy with the sustainable vision.

It is important to maintain a set of principles while backcasting to achieve a systematic and cross-sectorial strategy (Broman & Robert, 2017)[xii]: Necessary, Sufficient, General, Concrete & Non-overlapping. This flexible approach of backcasting should include consistent re-evaluation throughout the process in order to achieve the goal. A variety of challenges can impact development including financial crises, introduction of new source markets, threats of terrorism and political conflicts, and climate change, however "creating tools to understand and prepare for the future becomes increasingly important" (Gossling & Scott, 2012).[xiii] While some challenges cannot be predicted, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, scenario planning can help, a tactic that has been used by destinations for nearly fifty years when "alternative" tourism arose in the late 19070's (DeKadt, 1979).[xiv] Some health experts have suggested that the Ebola crisis of 2014 may have helped Africa prepare for the COVID-19 pandemic in replicating techniques or strategies in a 'scenario' model fashion (Cable et al., 2021).[xv]

## Role of Government

Government, whether national, regional, or local is the ultimate decision-maker of development, particularly with policy, enforcement and financial support. Within tourism, most national governments have a dedicated department to oversee this sector, however, this can be inclusive of other industries such as Ministry of Tourism & Sports in Argentina, Ministry of Tourism & Aviation in Bahamas, Ministry of Trade, Tourism & Telecommunications in Serbia, or Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife & Antiquities. Because tourism encompasses nearly every aspect of society for local people, it is important to have synergy

between stakeholders, both internally within government and externally within the private sector. "As a sector, tourism is fragmented with diverse stakeholders and it is clear that leadership (usually from within a Destination Management Organization of some form) is an essential pre-requisite to deliver a common understanding of the value of sustainable tourism and its implementation" (Waligo et al., 2013).[xvi]

While many Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) require long-term integrated policy reform that spans across multiple electoral lifecycles, a joint advocacy approach can support these efforts which includes local stakeholders. There are three opportunities achieved in this approach: building better policy and political capital for change; shifting entrenched mindsets; and strengthening trust. However, there also remain three challenges within a joint advocacy approach including operational (businesses aligning their own practices), reputational (perceived legitimacy) and governance (policy bias). Gilbert & Nelson (2014) have identified six building blocks that can help increased perceived legitimacy:

1. Respecting the leadership role of government
2. Putting the interests of the people and the plant at the heart of advocacy
3. Investing sufficient resources to acquire accurate data and decide on priorities
4. Properly managing stakeholder dynamics and political implications of policy change
5. Ensuring consistency between internal and external practices
6. Conducting collaboration in good faith with accountability

"Governments must take the lead but face significant constraints and governance gaps" (Gilbert & Nelson, 2014).[xvii] By creating a framework that all stakeholders can support and are supported by, this will allow for responsible investment, collaboration and innovation. There are challenges within the role of government as fiscal limitations, short-termism, declining trust and governance weakness, but understanding these on the forefront allows for a quicker resolution.

Tourism governance plays a vital role in the success of development, particularly with a sustainable strategy and is defined as:

> "A practice of government that is measurable, that is aimed to effectively direct the tourism sectors at the different levels of government through forms of coordination, collaboration and/or cooperation that are efficient, transparent and subject to accountability, that help to achieve goals of collective interest shared by networks of players involved in the sector, with the aim of developing solutions and opportunities through agreements based on the recognition of interdependencies and shared responsibilities'' (Duran, 2013)[xviii]

Destinations reside in various stages of the tourism life cycle and have unique requirements that can impact how it is governed including its geography, community of stakeholders and its capability to move between stages (Butler, 1980).[xix] Each destination must establish its own set of values accordingly, as the dynamics as well as the priorities of the destination can be different (Pulido-Fernandez & Pulido-Fernandez, 2018).[xx] Principles of good governance have been established by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2011)[xxi] and include the following:

1. Participation & Inclusion – Everyone should have a voice in decision-making, either directly or through a representative
2. Accountability & Rule of Law – Legal framework shall be fair and enforced and government shall be held accountable to the public and stakeholders
3. Non-Discrimination & Equality – Development particularly for the most excluded groups and individuals

While good governance should be applied to all leaders in development roles, it is important to note that stakeholders "felt that heads of local government organizations were responsible for instigating change in tourism development, given they were directly involved in developing and managing tourism development within the destination" (Dabphet, Scott & Ruhanen, 2012).[xxii] However, the greatest factor in good governance is the amount of participation; as participation increases so does transparency, solutions and ultimately the probability of success (Pulido-Fernandez & Pulido-Fernandez, 2018).

## Stakeholders

The designation of stakeholder within tourism development can and should consist of anyone who is or can be affected by tourism, which in some destinations such as the Maldives, may include every person indirectly, if not directly. The significance of stakeholders was identified by Freeman (1984) in Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach[xxiii], however also argued as an essential support element for an organization's survival (Sheehan, Ritchie & Hudson, 2007).[xxiv] Gossling, Hall & Weaver (2009) noted that the "implementation of sustainable tourism is driven by stakeholder partnerships, which implies that sustainable tourism implementation is largely dependent upon effective stakeholder strategy."[xxv]

Unfortunately, in previous development, the perspective of all stakeholders has not been taking into consideration (Byrd, Bosley, Dronberger, 2009)."[xxvi] However, when tourism stakeholders were empowered in the process, their perceived attitude and recognition in the value of tourism become increasingly positive, further influencing sustainable tourism development (Hamilton & Matthew, 2013).[xxvii]

To obtain success in sustainable tourism development, it is imperative that the stakeholders have a clear understanding of the concept (Choi & Sirakaya, 2006).[xxviii] Additionally, it is necessary to have effective communication through the entire process particularly within and amongst stakeholders (Berry & Ladkin, 1997).[xxix] Meyers & Goes (1988) suggest that tourism development is "more likely to be communicated when the stakeholders understand the technicalities of the concept" indicating the need to have these two issues as the primary focus.[xxx]

One way to determine stakeholder groups, particularly at a community level is through an SPSS decision tree in which stakeholders are determined based on their awareness and support for sustainable tourism (Byrd & Gustke, 2004).[xxxi] As a statistical application using algorithms, supported by the Chi-square Automatic Interaction Detection (CHAID) method, a survey can be conducted to establish attitudes and produce a diverse and representative segment of stakeholders.

Within a specific industry such as tourism, the process of determining applicable stakeholders has been studied in depth with a core set of attributes determined by Waligo et al. (2013) that include: leadership qualities, information quality and accessibility, stakeholder mindsets, stakeholder involvement capacity, stakeholder relationships, contextual circumstances and sustainable tourism implementation policies. [xxxii] Guided by these attributes, a sub-national tourism organization could use the following list of stakeholders created by Bakker & Twinning-Ward, 2005 (Figure 1), however may choose to elaborate or modify as necessary, such as in the case of a destination with strong in religious beliefs or legal system guided by Sharia law like Saudi Arabia.

| Figure 1.  Stakeholder Categories | |
|---|---|
| **Stakeholder Group**[xxxiii] | ***Western Cape Examples*** |
| **Public Sector** | |
| Municipal authorities | *Cape Town Tourism, Hermanus Tourism, Stellenbosch 360* |
| Regional authorities | *Wesgro (Western Cape Tourism)* |
| Various levels of government responsible for tourism and its key assets | *South African Tourism, Ministry of Tourism, Brand South Africa* |
| Other ministries in areas affecting tourism | *Home Affairs; Environment, Forestry & Fishers; Public Works and Infrastructure; Sport, Arts & Culture* |
| Departments within government | *South African Heritage Resources Agency, South African National Parks, Tourism Grading Council of South Africa* |

| Private Sector | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Tour Operators & Travel Agents | ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ *(Local),* ▮▮▮▮▮▮ *(National)* | |
| Accommodations | *Local (Cape Milner), Cresta Hotels (Regional), Radisson Blu (Global)* | |
| Attractions | *Private (Cape Town Para-gliding) & Public (Table Mountain National Park)* | |
| Transportation | *Private (Avis - Car Rental, Uber - Rideshare, Rovos Rail - Train, SA Express - Airline, Marine Dynamics - Cruise); Public (MyCiti)* | |
| Guides | ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ | |
| Suppliers to the industry | *Eskom (energy), General Motors (transportation), AfricOil (fuel), Masstores (food)* | |
| Tourism & trade organizations | *African Travel & Tourism Association, Association for the Promotion of Tourism to Africa, Southern African Tourism Services Association* | |
| Business Development organizations | *United States Tour Operators Association, Meetings Africa* | |
| NGO's | | |
| Environmental groups | *Friends of the Earth International, Wildlife & Environment Society of South Africa* | |
| Conservation groups | *World Animal Protection, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals* | |
| Other interest groups | *Professional Hunter's Association of South Africa; African World Heritage Fund; Restaurant Association of South Africa* | |
| Communities | | |
| Local community groups | *Khayelitsha Development Forum; Hermanus History Society* | |
| Native and cultural groups | *Western Cape Cultural Villages; Thswane Cultural Group* | |
| Traditional leaders | *National House of Traditional leaders (includes 23 representatives)* | |
| Tourists | | |
| Organizations representing tourists | *American Society of Travel Advisors* | |
| International tourism organizations | *United Nationals Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organization, United National World Tourism Organization* | |

Pulido-Fernandez & Pulido-Fernandez (2018) state, "Identifying stakeholders and establishing the relationships that exist between them is fundamental to tourism management in a territory." The inclusion of various stakeholders having individual needs and their relationships is further explain in the multi-stakeholder involvement management (MSIM) framework (Waligo et al., 2013).

"As stakeholders are instrumental to achieving sustainability objectives, stakeholder views are pivotal for the development of effective stakeholder involvement strategies" (Waligo et al., 2013). This concept provides a holistic guideline for stakeholder involvement in the development of sustainable tourism. Three strategic levels have been identified to help guide Destination Management Organization (DMOs) in the organization of this framework:

1. Attraction – Cultivating interest in the concept of sustainable tourism
2. Integration – Addressing stakeholder concerns and looking for solutions
3. Management – Monitoring, motivating, and addressing issues

Within each level, two stages exist to address a specific purpose:

a. Scene-setting (Attraction) – Focusing on awareness and the concept through tailored communication strategies for each stakeholder group understanding that interest increases when familiarity is obtained.
b. Recognition of Stakeholder Involvement (Attraction) – Assess stakeholders' unique situations and design activities specific to their needs.
c. Stakeholder Relationship Management (Integration) – Promote collaboration amongst stakeholders through networking, by addressing varied perceptions and encouraging stakeholders to think beyond their original social, environment and economic goals.
d. Achievable Objectives (Integration) – Recognizing the need for various challenge such as finances, the sharing of best practices and "opportunity optimization."
e. Influencing Implementation Capacity (Management) – Manage expectations when success is obtained to influence, even increase stakeholder involvement.
f. Monitoring Stakeholder Involvement (Management) – Consistent review through reward of effort and achievement, particularly to establish an inviting environment for new stakeholders. Stakeholder issues tend to be specific, so once addressed, they may feel less inclined to cooperate or continuing participating (Friedman & Miles, 2006).[xxxiv]

Elkington (2004) indicates that the implementation of sustainable tourism with a multi-stakeholder model requires leadership, incentive structures, priority setting, long-term vision, resilience, and financial resources.[xxxv] Even when these requirements are met, there can still be potential challenges with stakeholders. As previously mentioned in destinations with strong religious integration, Ghatak (2006) elaborates that "religion is often used as a justification for maintaining, rather than questioning established norms."[xxxvi] There are also issues of mistrust with government policy, lack of communication,

failure to involve the "right" leaders and poor administration (Berry & Ladkin, 1997).[xxxvii] Tosun (2000) provides a categorical breakdown of the barriers (Figure 2), which should be reviewed prior to process of acquiring stakeholders so as to mitigate these challenges.[xxxviii]

| Figure 2. Barriers to Stakeholder Involvement | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Operational Barriers** | **Structural Barriers** | **Cultural & Personal Barriers** |
| Lack of information on planning and legalities | Poor legal framework & regulatory constraints | Low capacity of poor |
| Weak administration | Lack of access to resources | Apathy |
| Poor coordination | Lack of expertise | Low awareness |
| Poor execution | Lack of training | Mistrust |
| Failure to Influence process | High costs | Domination by elite |
| | | "Not in my backyard" (NIMBY) |

For the government as a stakeholder itself, there can also be issues in lack of support overall or in certain departments in which collaboration is necessary, lack of leadership or lack of access to make informed decisions (Dodds, 2007).[xxxix] Within stakeholder relationships, outside of a lack of involvement, there can be low levels of awareness, coordination issues, feeling of disempowerment, difficulty in finding common interests, and unwillingness to make changes to current behavior; all of which can lead to constraints in the process (Cooper et al., 2009).[xl]

*A potential new stakeholder group - The Rights of Nature (RoN) has been explored in other destinations, particularly Ecuador, which has established Nature as a stakeholder in its constitution. "Chapter 7 grants Nature the rights to exist, to maintain its integrity as an ecosystem, and to regenerate 'its lifecycles, structure functions and evolutionary processes.' Nature also has the right to be restored if injured, independent of human claims for compensation. Moreover, the constitution empowers any person to enforce these rights in court on behalf of Nature" (Kauffman & Martin, 2017).[xli] With verdicts at the national Supreme Court level supporting Nature as a plaintiff, there is now precedent elsewhere in the world to pursue litigation on behalf of the environment, which may help any level of government create stricter environmental policies.*

## Collaboration

Stakeholders have the right to maintain their views on sustainable tourism development and diversity leads to better results, however, the "variety of personality and people which is clearly the most important strength of participatory modelling, is also its largest weakness" (Prell et al., 2007).[xlii]   By

collaborating during the process, decision-makers will have an easier attempt of implementation in the long term (Healey, 1998).[xliii]

Bramwell & Sharman (1999) composed theoretical framework on the key issues to consider when evaluating the efficacy of collaborative tourism policy development, which has been identified as an ideal model.[xliv] These issues are listed and further discussed in three sets:

Scope of Collaboration:

- *The extent to which the range of participating stakeholders is representative of all relevant stakeholders.* The effectiveness of the group is contingent up the diversity of its members (Selin & Myers, 1988).[xlv]
- *The extent to which relevant stakeholders see there are positive benefits to entice their participation.* Some collaborators only seek collaboration with others who share similar goals (Stoker, 1995).[xlvi]
- *Whether the collaboration includes a facilitator and the stakeholders responsible for implementation.* Ideally a facilitator is someone who would have little vested interest in the outcome (Friedmann, 1992).[xlvii]
- *The extent to which individuals representing a stakeholder group are fully representative of that group*. With various models of ownership/management, it is important to have all represented (ie. For accommodations, this would include B&B, Boutique, Hostels, Stand-alone Hotels, Regional brands, Global brands, etc.). Similarly with government, the experts may not be in the decision-making roles and their advice may be looked over. (Gray, 1989).[xlviii]
- *The number of stakeholders involved through the selected participation techniques*. While questionnaires can reach a wider number, a focus group can provide more insight into viable options (Ritchie, 1985).[xlix]
- *The extent to which there is initial agreement among participants about the intended general scope of collaboration*. If proper expectations about roles and deliverables are not agreed upon and early in the process, there is potential for this to be an issue later. (Johnson, 1984).[l]

Intensity of Collaboration:

- *The degree to which participants accept that collaboration is likely to produce qualitatively different outcomes and that they are likely to have to modify their own approach.* This is particularly true with the community's role as a stakeholder in which their participation may be a façade. (Hall, 1994).[li]
- *When and how often the relevant stakeholders are involved*. If stakeholders are included from the beginning of the process, their acceptance of policy may be higher than if they were to only be recognized at the end when they will likely have greater concerns (Haywood, 1988).[lii]

- *The extent to which stakeholder groups receive information and are consulted about the activities of the collaboration*. While the distribution of information will increase accountability, the representatives may not consult with their respective teams. Coincidentally, it has been questioned that the reduction of accountability may occur if decision-making is removed from the role of elected officials (Hastings, 1996).[liii]

- *Whether the use of participation techniques only disseminates information or also involves direct interaction among stakeholders.* A variety of techniques should be used such as information-giving, opinion-collecting, but also consensus-building between stakeholders (Marien & Pizam, 1997).[liv]

- *The degree to which the dialogue among participants reflects openness, honesty, tolerant and respectful speaking and listening, confidence and trust.* The tone and attributes of how conversations occur, greatly influences understanding and cohesion within the stakeholder group (Innes, 1995).[lv]

- *The extent to which the participants understand, respect and learn from each others' different forms of argument.* Various forms will help "remove the hegemonic communicative distortions through which powerful groups have maintained their position in the past" (Healey, 1997).[lvi]

- *The extent to which the facilitator of the collaborative arrangements exerts control over decision-making*. By allowing stakeholders to collectively make decisions and build consensus, participation will be greater (Robinson, 1997).[lvii]

Degree to Which Consensus Emerges:

- *Whether participants who are working to build a consensus also accept that some participants will not agree or embrace enthusiastically all the resulting policies.* Recognizing that complete agreement is unlikely with all decisions, but supporting the process and decisions will yield a better outcome (Bryson and Crosby, 1992).[lviii]

- *Extent to which there is consensus among the stakeholders about the issues, the policies, the purpose of the policies, and how the consequences of the policies are assessed and reviewed*. By focusing on the common ground, versus divisive issues, consensus can be formed about the overall concept and goals (Smith & Blanc, 1997).[lix]

- *Extent to which consensus and "ownership" emerges across the inequalities between stakeholders or reflects these inequalities*. There is a likelihood that a difference of options will always result between those who benefit and those who do not (Prentice, 1993).[lx]

- *Extent to which stakeholders accept that there are systemic constraints on what is feasible*. Various factors determine success, including money and time. Some may feel policies do not change enough, while others may feel it is too drastic, so the need to understand balance is important.

- *Whether the stakeholders appear willing to implement the resulting policies*. If there is a basic level of commitment for implementation, then there will likely be increased desired to reach a consensus (Benveniste, 1989).[lxi]

Collaboration provides an opportunity to mitigate any challenges when sustainable tourism policy is implemented and is an important aspect to a successful model. By focusing on this as a key factor in the process, governments, particularly sub-national ones can be more efficient in the already bureaucratic process.

## Indicators

Indicators are useful tools in the planning of sustainable particularly when it comes to policy development and can be either qualitative or quantitative in nature, allowing decision-makers to understand where there is success or failure (Holden, 2006).[lxii] The selection of indicators, or measurement tools, is extremely important as some have "significant limitations when it comes to practical application, allowing for only partial comparisons, while others are scientifically relevant but too complex to be operational, or the result of political consensus and therefore liable to generate conflicts of interest" (Torres-Delgado & Palomeque, 2014).[lxiii]

The World Tourism Organization created an Indicator Development Process in 2004 which provides destinations an overview in the creation of indicators:[lxiv]

Phase One: Research and Organization

1. Definition/delineation of the destination
2. Use of participatory process
3. Identification of tourism assets and risks
4. Long-term vision

Phase Two: Indicator Development

1. Selection of priority issues and policy questions
2. Identification of desired indicators
3. Inventory of data sources
4. Selection procedures

Phase Three: Implementation

1. Evaluation of feasibility
2. Data collection and analysis
3. Accountability and communication
4. Monitoring and evaluation of results

There remain hundreds of potential indicators that can be utilized to measure success of a sustainable tourism policy including over 700 indicators listed in *Indicators of Sustainable Development for Tourism Destinations: A Guidebook* (WTO, 2004). With many choices, it is important to identify themes,

which can be further extracted and applied toward a particular destination. In a meta-analysis of 27 studies identifying core indicators of sustainable tourism, Agyeiwaah, McKercher & Suntikul (2017) determine key themes (Figure 3) based on the frequency of items within the collection of studies to compose a more concise guideline.[lxv] *(In this analysis, social and culture themes were presented separately, and potentially new dimensions were identified including political, management/institutional and technology, which can further be expanded if applicable.)*

| Figure 3. Indicator Themes | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Economic** | Revenues and profitability | **Social** |
| | Employment | Residents' involvement, participation & awareness |
| | Visitor satisfaction | Congestion and overcrowding |
| | Tourist arrivals, volume & numbers | Community satisfaction |
| | Regional dispersal of visitation^ | Safety and security |
| | Seasonality | Access |
| | Accommodation quality, capacity & occupancy | Community health |
| | Local ownership in business | Wellbeing and quality of life |
| | Repeat visit | Residents' attitude and complaints |
| | Expenditure | Education |
| | Unemployment rate | Crime rate and harassment |
| | Leakage | Gender equality |
| | Length of stay | Racial equality^ |
| **Environmental** | Water quality and management | Sex tourism and child sex abuse |
| | Land rights management^ | Tourists visits to local doctors |
| | Solid waste discharge and management | **Cultural** Retention of local customs and language |
| | Recycling rate | Maintenance of cultural sites |
| | Air/atmospheric quality | Community relationships^ |
| | Energy consumption | Actions and events taken to promote indigenous culture |
| | Environmental awareness | |
| | Air pollution | Satisfaction with local integrity |
| | Noise pollution | Loss of authenticity |
| | Number of endangered species | ^ based on professional insight into South Africa's tourism landscape, the following have been added as suggestive indicator themes |
| | Others | |

After themes have been established, the creation of indictors is necessary, and a frequently used technique is the Delphi or Fuzzy Delphi method. The Delphi method was developed by the Rand Corporation in the 1950s and is based on tiered surveys to capitalize on the intuition of expert participants (Pill, 1971).[lxvi] The goal of this technique is to obtain a consensus on a specific issue that provides a systematic level of evaluation, while allowing individual expertise to remain.

In a series of four or five rounds of surveys and researcher analysis, a succinct list of indicators can be obtained.

1. An open-ended questionnaire which allows for the acquisition of specific information about a topic (Custer et al., 1999).[lxvii]
2. The results are then used to create a more structured second questionnaire, which is distributed to the same experts in which they are asked to review the summarized results. It is here where disagreement can occur (Ludwig, 1994).[lxviii]
3. In the third questionnaire, ratings are applied to each item that has been summarized and the experts are asked to clarify their view or revise their judgement (Pfeiffer, 1968).[lxix]
4. In the last round, the final list of items is presented along with their ratings, possible opinions of the minority and those which have achieved a consensus; of which a final revision can be applied.

Some researchers suggest the use of equal ratings (Singh e al., 2009)[lxx], however an alternative method that can yield more accurate results is to utilize a 5-point Likert scale in which a list of potential indicators are weighted based on their importance to the theme (Choi & Sirakaya, 2006).[lxxi]

## Timeline & Challenges

Based on various studies that focus on the development of a sustainable tourism policy, an estimated timeframe of completion is around four months. However, this is contingent upon the acquisition of data, access to resources, financial support, or other extenuating circumstances. As this model is presented as a backcasting framework, consistent re-evaluation of targets is necessary.

Various challenges can impact the timeline as well as success of the development. Frequent references to election cycles impacting progress within development are mentioned throughout studies. Specifically, within tourism, the implementation of new policies can prove difficult in times of crisis, which given the current pandemic situation, will likely have an impact for two or three years. To understand challenges locally, an interview was conducted with ███████████████████████████████ a local tour operator in Cape Town.[lxxii] ████████ frequently referenced the greatest challenge being financial support from the government, associating the two as interchangeable forms of support. However, after further discussions, the segmentation of market became relevant with the greatest need for businesses who are fiscally stable being education, not additional financial support. Conversely, those in "lower communities" would benefit through a subsidization or incentivized program, allowing for the prolonged understanding of economic viability of sustainable efforts. ████████ further shared that government

process prevents sustainability, particularly in working with government who conduct a bidding process for tenders. While applications can be weighted based on black empowerment (percentage of black employees or ownership), no weight is provided for sustainable initiatives. When conducting a government project, three quotes are required with lowest cost winning, so including a hybrid vehicle will exclude that company from winning due to cost. Another challenge identified by ▆▆▆▆ is the consistency of programs as he used to work with GreenPop, a local environmentally focused company whereby he would provide the amount of mileage his business incurred over that month and then donate funds to become carbon neutral. Unfortunately, ▆▆▆▆ shared the company just stopped calling. While other challenges were identified such as the turnover of staff who may need to be trained on sustainable initiatives, the greatest opportunity that was identified was the support of government through education.

## Tourism in Western Cape & Cape Town

Since 2002, Cape Town has established guidelines on Responsible Tourism, specifically choosing this term rather than Sustainable Tourism. The reason provided is that "in responsible tourism, individuals, organizations and businesses are asked to take responsibility for their actions and the impacts of their actions. This shift in emphasis has taken place because not much progress has been made on realizing sustainable tourism in the 15 years since the 'Earth Summit' in Rio. This is partly because everyone has been expecting others to be sustainable." In 2015, Cape Town launched an 89-page 'How-to-Guide' for implementing responsible practices in the tourism industry that includes seven priority areas: buying responsibly (economic), supporting enterprise development (economic), developing skills (social), building communities (social), conserving water (environmental), using energy efficiently (environmental) and reducing & managing waste (environmental).[lxxiii]

Tourism is a large economic impact for Western Cape and accounted for 42-56% of international visitation in 2018 with a total foreign direct spend of R16.3 billion (~$1.1B USD) and 175,000 jobs (Wesgro, 2018).[lxxiv] In an interview with ▆▆▆▆▆▆▆▆ for Wesgro, she shared the focus and challenges the province faces. As a progressive region, more so than any other in South Africa, a focus on energy conservation has been imminent, but has challenges. Wesgro's Energy Executive Director Kadri Nassiep said, "Cape Town has abundant wind and solar photovoltaic resources, but we need to overcome regulatory and political barriers to raise our numbers significantly."[lxxv]

▆▆ shared that electric cars have been on the forefront of conversations, but without any manufacturers in the country, it is cost-prohibitive, however with an upcoming sponsorship and hosting

of a Formula-E race, this may change. With the 2018 water crisis, the region has established a new foundation of best practices that have remained in both the private and public sector.  With sanitizing stations prevalent from closure of sinks in many places, this continued and has been suggested as a possible reason for low rates of transmission of COVID-19.

One of the biggest points of contention surround government designations of animals, which are controlled by two different departments within the national government: Ministry of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development & Ministry of Environment, Forestry & Fisheries. There is a confusing designation between livestock (managed by the former) and game (managed by the latter) and is determined not necessarily by the species, but by where the animal originates.  While 'canned' hunting in South Africa is no longer legal (the process in which an animal is restricted to a small area for hunters to obtain a 'trophy kill'), the current laws do not address the reality.  There are lion breeding facilities throughout the country and during infancy and adolescents, human interaction is prevalent with holding babies and feeding the cubs; creating a calmness, enjoyment and need within the lions.  However, once they are too old to have controlled human interaction, they are taken to hunting reserves and as they do not fear humans, approach vehicles to get food, subsequently being killed by the hunters.  Currently this is legal and an aspect of the law that Wesgro wants to change, but is prevented from doing so because of national policies, ███ shared.[lxxvi]

However, Wesgro has been able to implement programs to help with "creating a more connected economy."  As a part of Great Wine Capitals of the World, there are awards given to local wineries who provide for the community in a variety of ways.  In recent years, a new condition has been added to the winner:  Should that winery win, they are required to mentor a smaller developing winery.  This is supplemented with the creation of best practices and online training modules to help businesses succeed.

█████████ a Khayelitsha township community leader, has been operating tours in the largest township in South Africa, just 40 minutes from Cape Town.  While it began with the ████████ ██, he quickly grew a business that empowered the local community through township tours, art tours and food tours.  In an interview, ██████ shared that in doing so, the community has responded with such appreciation and a greater sense of purpose.[lxxvii]  Walking through the township, the positive reactions are unlike many places in the world and provides an opportunity for shared experiences amongst multiple stakeholders.  Unfortunately, because of the growth of the township, business development is happening quickly from within the corporate sector and while the Khayelitsha Development Forum (KDF) dictates growth, ██████ shared it is negatively impacting the community, particularly around the train station

where a new plaza is being constructed and pushing the local kiosk owners out. ██████ is unsure of how or why this can be approved, but assuming it is a result of corporate bias controlled the KDF. Another local businessman in the township referenced the local mafia of businessmen who will harm locals if there is pushback.  Unfortunately, without government intervention, little can be done.  Segments of a video interview can be ██████████.

Along the coast in Gansbaai, South Africa, known for shark cage diving, some companies have created a multi-level approach in closing the loop between two dimensions of sustainability.  White Shark Projects, an outfitter that offers shark cage trips and whale watching, along with supporting marine conservation efforts started a Recycle Swap Shop which won an award in 2017.  Lindsey Gibaud, with White Shark Projects explained the premise: Here, the kids in the community collect recycling in their neighborhood and turn it in to us to receive tokens.  These tokens are then used to "buy" school suppliers and other necessities like soap.  This type of incentivization has proven successful and impacts two key elements of sustainable development. [lxxviii] (Their video can be viewed here.)

## Solutions for Wesgro

While Wesgro has attempted to create policies specific to the region, the greatest challenge is the inability to properly manage its tourism resources and policies. While innovative in theory, the constraints limit success and should be presented to the South African government to justify a change of policy allowance.

One example that can be presented to the South African government by Wesgro is a strategy that was implemented in New Zealand in the early 2000s, with a shift from national tourism development to regional tourism development.  This new Regionalism policy framework can foster "longer-term strategic and collaborative planning of the sector in order to enhance the contribution of tourism to sustainable community wellbeing" (Shone & Memon, 2008).[lxxix] This is particularly true in partnerships between government and the private sector. The change supported a more favorable bottom-up approach in sustainable community development.  The national government assumes the role of supporting regional strategies, building capability, infrastructure, and national coordination. With a specific policy in New Zealand, the "Local Government Act," rules were set forth to require local policymakers to work closer with the communities. As local destinations develop, there is potential for the formation of new regional organizations to focus on their particular needs and be guided through a hierarchy approach that will allow regional governments to "assist individuals, businesses and communities within regions to identify

local opportunities, develop the capability to respond to opportunities and exploit those opportunities (Schollmann & Dalziel, 2002).[lxxx]

Rogerson (2020) sets out to explore the key challenges of tourism development and management at a regional level.[lxxxi] As this study was conducted in South Africa, it is extremely applicable and highlights issues that impact the Western Cape.  In some instances, assets of key importance are owned and run federally, mostly managed under Sanparks (South African National Parks), such as Table Mountain, Cape Point Peninsula and Boulder's Beach.  This re-direction of funds impacts the ability to properly manage the lesser-known assets, even though local governments are best suited to coordinate such tourism development. A qualitative study was conducted in two regional areas in South Africa to identify key challenges: budget and access to knowledge. With regional governments being more susceptible to budget variance, tourism assets can be neglected further reducing potential revenue from such assets, creating a cyclical pattern of destruction of their tourism product offering and assets.

Destinations can only maintain their competitive advantage by consistently adapting to visitors needs and in turn, innovation must occur (Booyens, 2012).[lxxxii] Innovation can be segmented into product (new themes such as slow tourism), process (new systems such as technology platforms), organizational or management (operational strategies such as training), marketing (such as cooperative agreements or campaigns) or institutional (new rules, certifications or even policies). However, policy development is the issue in South Africa and preventing innovation of a progressive regional government.  On March 4, 2021, Wesgro launched a campaign in conjunction with Airbnb targeting the "digital nomad" (Wesgro, 2021).[lxxxiii] While originally intended to be geared toward the international market, the South African government has not yet approved a visa for longer than 90 days, unlike other destinations like Dubai and Barbados who have adjusted their policies to appeal to a new audience who have chosen to relocate during a pandemic. While lobbyists have been applying pressure for months, efforts have gone nowhere.

There are various positive principles with which South Africa has focused on including authenticity of tourism products, development of community assets and incorporation of sustainable practices. However, with tourism having such a large economic impact in the country, innovation and research has been minimal in comparison to other industries.  It is also important to note that "it cannot be assumed that the benefits of tourism will reach poor communities or that tourism will necessarily promote wealth distribution, equality and community upliftment without appropriate policy intervention" (Booyens, 2012). While tourism tends to be private sector driven, the government must provide a suitable environment for it to exist.

# Summary

The development of a sustainable tourism policy for a regional government can provide great opportunity within the entire hierarchy by setting an example for a national government and providing support to the local governments.  However, due to bureaucracy, political structure, and policies, this can be limiting in the effort to achieve sustainability within tourism. Openness throughout the process is critical, from the model framework, to identifying the stakeholders and determining the indicators of success.  "The development process can become sustainable only when it has an intrinsic source of revitalization, self-renewal and self-criticism" (Gupta et al, 2003).[lxxxiv] While a government can provide vague policies on the international stage, it is the feedback and opinions of the stakeholders within the community that showcase the relevancy of policies and their potential impact in communities. By revising a sustainable tourism policy framework and presenting concrete evidence of the benefit in regional policy creation, Wesgro and many others across the globe, can design a future that allows the children of today to experience the positive impact of tourism and create global connections.

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**Challenges with this Project:** Conducting research during a global pandemic proved challenging, compounded by human capital issues in the tourism industry. Companies have been forced to close and staff have been dramatically reduced, resulting in the elimination of roles whose work has been absorbed by the few who remain.  Specifically, within Wesgro, the new Chief Marketing Officer did not assume the position until mid-March 2021, the Trade Relations Manager departed during March 2021, and the CEO announced his resignation. With private sector contacts, many emails went unanswered. Unfortunately, with minimal resources, staff were forced to focus on current initiatives leaving little time to assist in academically focused conversations.

**About the Author:** Joshua Smith began his tourism career in 2007 with Virtuoso, where he managed integrated marketing strategies with over 40 governments.  In 2010, Joshua launched a representation company, increasing brand awareness of various international companies within the US market.  Then, in 2012, he joined Travcoa, a World Leader in Luxury Travel, increasing the success of the Private Journeys portfolio developing over 140 programs in 70 countries. In 2013, Joshua co-founded Millennials in Travel, a career development and networking organization for young professionals in the travel industry. Joshua was named on the hot list of "Rising Stars" by *travAlliancemedia* in August 2013 and featured on the cover of *Travel Agent Magazine's* 2014 December Issue titled 'Millennials Rising'. In 2016, Joshua launched his travel agency, Global Citizen Journeys, developing experiential trips for millennials.  With a desire to change the world, he began working for South African Tourism in 2018 while simultaneously starting a Master of Sustainable Tourism degree with Arizona State University.  Joshua currently resides in Cape Town working on projects under Joshua Smith Consulting, leading Millennials in Travel and operating his travel agency.

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