Sustainability of Rural Tourism Products in South Africa

Univen & CSIR

National Department of Tourism Research Seminar, Johannesburg, South Africa
23 March 2018
• South Africa does not have a framework for sustainable rural tourism products.

• Frameworks existing elsewhere may not just be borrowed in their current state and format for use in South Africa.
Objectives

To:

• to provide a critical review of literature on the RTPs and how they may be assessed in terms of their sustainability,

• to identify and profile RTPs in South Africa, and

• to develop a framework that acts as a base for RTPs to assess their sustainability, from both a demand and supply perspective.
Conceptualising Rural Tourism

RURAL TOURISM

- Rural Areas
  - Cultural resources
  - Traditional practices
  - Natural resources
  - Country experience
  - Farm life

- Urban Areas
  - Preserved heritage; urban agriculture etc.

Rural-Urban Overlap

Source: Authors
Methodology: Literature Review

Planning
- Review protocol
  - Potentially relevant studies
  - Relevant studies
    - Concepts synthesis

Selecting
- Searching

Source: Authors
Methodology: Identifying information sources, searching for RTPs
## Methodology: Key Informant Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target institution</th>
<th>Reason for inclusion</th>
<th>Number of participants</th>
<th>Abbreviated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academia</td>
<td>Universities teach and research on tourism.</td>
<td>Eight</td>
<td>UR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipalities</td>
<td>Have tourism departments responsible for tourism in their jurisdictions.</td>
<td>Seven</td>
<td>MR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism authorities</td>
<td>Responsible over tourism activities in their jurisdiction</td>
<td>Two</td>
<td>TAR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism associations and agents</td>
<td>Association have database of members, who could be the suppliers of RTPs</td>
<td>Four</td>
<td>TAAR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total interviews</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Authors
Methodology: Developing principles, criteria and indicators to assess sustainability of RTPs in South Africa

- Literature review on extant sustainable frameworks
- Contextualizing reviewed sustainability frameworks
- Identification of relevant principles, criteria and indicators
- Consultation process and workshops

Source: Authors
Methodology: Piloting and Case Selection to Empirically Test the RTP Sustainability Framework

• One RTP identified for piloting

• Three RTPs, identified as cases

• One positive response with no response on applying the framework

• Three delayed responses
## Results: From Reviewed Literature - RTP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types</th>
<th>Activities transformed into RTP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Natural resources</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village natural view</td>
<td>Sightseeing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village traditional atmosphere</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural/religious view</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>Farming lesson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topography</td>
<td>Trekking; hiking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional foods and fruits</td>
<td>Culinary; cooking lessons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cultural resources</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic places</td>
<td>Ritual, pilgrim tour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional music and art</td>
<td>Performances; Events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional houses</td>
<td>Home stay; sightseeing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local craft making</td>
<td>Culinary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Fatimah (2015) with variations made by the authors.
Results: From Reviewed Literature - Sustainability

- Satisfaction of the needs and desires
  - Visitors
  - Community
  - Supply agents (private and responsible for tourism planning)

- Sustainable development
  - Coordination of resources and stakeholders

- Protection of the resource base of tourism
Results: From Key Informants

I know that rural tourism is when tourists visit rural or remote areas, so maybe rural tourism products refers to tourism products located in the rural areas [TAR].

Using the internet could be the best

I think culture in Soweto,

(this is) not my field of expertise,

what is non-urban

I am afraid their market is small

now a white elephant [URG]

this is not a test where I’d have to read first.
Results: From Internet Search of RTPs - Profiling
Results: From Internet Search of RTPs - Profiling

Source: Authors
Results: Sustainability framework

- 6 Principles
  - Broad and provide fundamental objectives
- 22 Criteria
  - Operationalises the principles
- 28 Indicators
  - Specific and provide a measure of criteria

Source: Authors
## Results: Sustainability framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Level of performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Fails to demonstrate an ability to meet the requirement.</td>
<td>Very Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The response addresses some elements of the requirement but contains insufficient/limited detail or explanation to demonstrate how the requirement will be fulfilled.</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The response addresses a broad understanding of the requirement but may lack details on how the requirement will be fulfilled in certain areas.</td>
<td>Acceptable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The response is sufficiently detailed to demonstrate a good understanding and provides details on how the requirements will be fulfilled.</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The response is comprehensive, unambiguous and demonstrates a thorough understanding of the requirement and provides details of how the requirement will be met in full.</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sustainability Framework

PRINCIPLES

Sustainability management

- Reasonable tourism strategy/plan
- Health and safety
- Education/training
- Regulatory compliance
- Employment equity

Socio-cultural authenticity

- Cultural richness
- Cultural awareness and authenticity
- Controlling tourism capacity of RTP
- Ecosystem and biodiversity protection
- Energy conservation

Optimal use of resources

- Water management
- Solid waste management

Tracking satisfaction

- Local employment
- Community satisfaction
- RTP satisfaction
- Local ownership

RTP satisfaction

- Corporate social responsibility
- Community well-being
- Level of satisfaction
- Bookings and use of the RTP

Financial viability of the RTP

- Economic viability of the RTP
- Checks and balances
- Risk management
RTP Sustainability hypothetical application

2017 Assessment of RTP Sustainability

- Sustainable management
- Resource use
- Economic viability
- Community beneficiation
- RTP satisfaction
- Socio-cultural authenticity

2017, 2018 Assessment of RTP Sustainability

- Sustainable management
- Resource use
- Economic viability
- Community beneficiation
- RTP satisfaction
- Socio-cultural authenticity

Source: Authors
RTP Sustainability hypothetical application

Source: Authors
Selection of Indicators

1. Select one of the six principles to consider

2. Select one of its criteria as identified in the framework

3. Determine your context especially noting the product cycle of the RTP and the sustainable principle under consideration:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sustainability management</th>
<th>Economic viability</th>
<th>RTP satisfaction</th>
<th>Socio-cultural authenticity</th>
<th>Community beneficiation</th>
<th>Optimal use of resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standard – principle typically applies across all RTPs</td>
<td>Does RTP pursue market share vs Market growth?</td>
<td>Standard – principle typically applies across all RTPs</td>
<td>The context is determined by the culture surrounding the product</td>
<td>The context is determined by type of product and backward and forward linkages</td>
<td>The context is determined by the resources used.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Select indicator(s) for each criteria considering the RTP life cycle and its context

   Is the indicator already measured in existing frameworks, or elsewhere?

   **YES** - Is it consistent with the criteria under consideration?

   Yes: Move to step 5
   No: develop an indicator consistent with criteria and government practice. Develop complementary indicators. Select alternative indicator.

   **NO** - Is there an established method, or example of the indicator?

   Yes: Select method in common usage. Are data available?
   Yes: Move to step 5
   No: Create data for in line with government and strategic interest OR select alternative indicator

   No: Develop consistent method or example. Are data available?
   Yes: Move to step 5
   No: Create data for in line with government and strategic interest OR select alternative indicator

5. Is indicator optimal? (Adheres and conforms to national and international standards)

   **YES**
   Adopt indicator/ retain and use indicator

   **NO**
   Select alternative indicator
Thank you