

NATIONAL AND REGIONAL PLANNING IMPACTS ON TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

This paper is an important addition to the understanding of the impact of national and regional planning on the development of tourism. The paper introduces national and regional planning by looking at how tourist areas can use them to develop a sustainable tourism industry (Iraqi, 2014). In the introduction, the paper explores the concepts of national and regional planning as well as sustainable tourism development. In the second section, the paper highlights the materials and methods used to conduct this research whereas the third section present the findings of different case studies on national and regional planning for tourism development. The paper demonstrates that national and regional planning establishes the foundation for the development of sustainable tourism industries (Lebel & Shamsub, 2012). To study the significance and impacts of national and regional planning on the development of tourism, this research used case studies, professional opinions and online questionnaires. The study highlighted that national and regional planning help create appropriate policies and infrastructure necessary for tourism development. Similarly, national and regional planning facilitated tourism through expansion of tourist sites and activities by considering the potentials of different regions in a country.

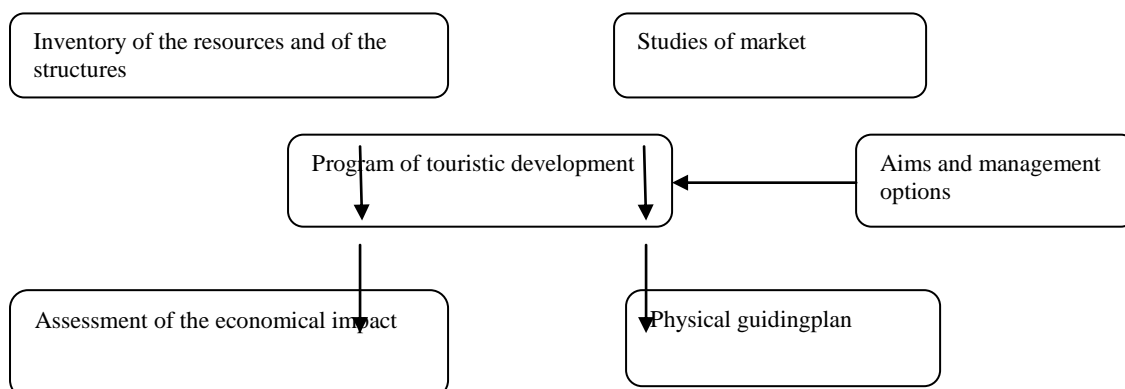
KEYWORDS: *national and regional planning, tourism development, sustainable tourism*

INTRODUCTION

Controlled, integrated, and sustainable development of tourism results in significant economic benefits to an area, without necessarily causing serious social or environmental challenges (Dede & Ayten, 2012). In the long-term, the area will manage to conserve tourism resources for continuous use. In the absence of proper planning, tourism can only bring short-term benefits (Lebel & Shamsub, 2012). However, the uncontrolled developments will result in serious social and environmental challenges as well as poor quality tourist destinations. Accordingly, local residents tend to suffer and the area loses tourists to destinations with better planning (Chadha & Onkar, 2014).

Tourism planning can take place at the national and regional levels of development. The national and regional planning establishes a strong foundation for the development of tourism industry in a country and its regions (Shani, Polak, & Shashar, 2012). National and regional planning creates policies, physical, and institutional infrastructure and standards that guide continuous and effective management of the tourism industry.

Traditional Scheme of Tourism Planning (Source: Baud-Bovy (1985, quoted by Moniz, 1996:37)



MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research stemmed from a desire to explain the importance and impact of national and regional planning on the development of tourism (Dede & Ayten, 2012). In the present study, the use of case studies has provided a means to identify the role and impact of planning in the tourism industry. The research considered the development of tourism in three different countries. These are appropriate sources to illustrate the impact of national and regional planning on tourism. In addition, the researcher identified professionals from the three countries and interviewed them on their views and opinions about national and regional planning of tourism in their countries. Finally, the research collected data and information through online questionnaires posted on the internet for members of public. The questionnaires asked people to list some of the impacts they believe originate from national and regional planning.

Objective analysis was done on all the key points explained in the different cases studies about tourism development in the three nations. Thereafter, the research examined the responses from the eight professionals to examine the similarities to the findings contained in the case study. The comparison aimed to measure the level of correlation or similarity between research findings and thoughts by professionals in the tourism sector (Iraqi, 2014). The analysis on questionnaire responses examined the number of people who stated that national and regional planning is important for tourism development. In addition, it identified the most important impact stated by the participants.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The online questionnaires attracted 765 respondents who shared their views on different aspects of the topic. Out of the 765 responses received, 619 (81%) people agreed that national and regional planning is important for the development of tourism in different countries across the world. In addition, 412 (54%) people argued that an independent body or institution should have the responsibility of organizing national and regional planning of tourism development (Shani & Pizam, 2012). On the contrary, 340 (44%) people argued that the government has sufficient resources and influence to handle issues of national and regional planning involving tourism. According to 725 (95%) respondents, the most important impact of national and regional planning on tourism development involves protection of natural resources and environment. On the question of involving local populations in the process of national and regional planning, 681 (89%) respondents faulted tourism authorities for ignoring the significance of local people. Finally, 313 (41%) people had opinions that national and regional planning only focuses on areas with traditional resources for tourism rather than seeking into new and potential resources that can attract tourists to former non-tourist destinations. With respect to the professionals, all of them agreed that national and regional planning are important processes in the development of a long-term tourist industry (Shani, Polak, & Shashar, 2012). The thoughts shared by the professionals echoed the findings contained in the cases studies of tourism in the three different countries.

	Base Year	Forecasts		Market share (%)		Average annual growth rate (%)
	1995	2010	2020	1995	2020	1995-2020
	(Million)					
World	565	1006	1561	100	100	4.1
Africa	20	47	77	3.6	5.0	5.5
Americas	110	190	282	19.3	18.1	3.8
East Asia and the Pacific	81	195	397	14.4	25.4	6.5
Europe	336	527	717	59.8	45.9	3.1
Middle East	14	36	69	2.2	4.4	6.7
South Asia	4	11	19	0.7	1.2	6.2

Tourism across the world’s continent will continue growing steadily in the next six years. However, nations and regions can only benefit or surpass these forecasts if there is proper planning in place.

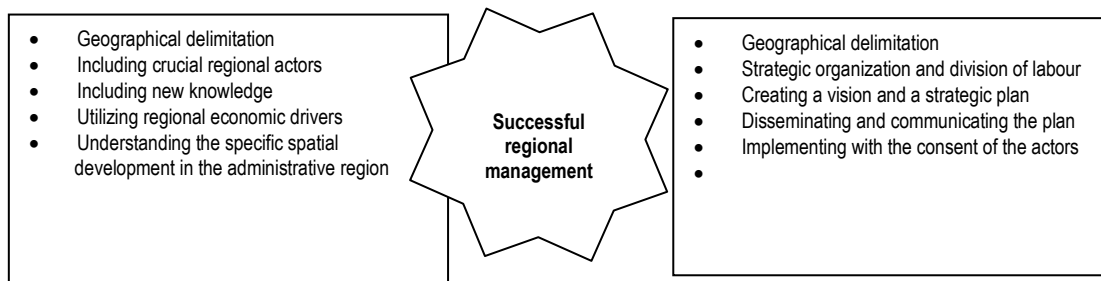
Fig: <http://www.unwto.org/facts/eng/vision.htm>

From the study conducted, the following are some of the major significance and impacts of national and regional planning on the development of tourism industry (Iraqi, 2014). First, national and regional planning creates policies, physical and institutional infrastructure and standards that facilitate the development of tourism in a logical manner. Policies and institutional infrastructure are critical components of the tourism industry (Mekawy, 2012). Clear guidelines and policies on tourism as well as the existence of proper institutional and physical infrastructure create an enabling atmosphere that allows players to make investments that enhance the development of tourism industry (Lebel and Shamsub, 2012; Shani and Pizam, 2012).

Second, national and regional planning provides a foundation for the continuous, organized and effective management of the tourism industry. This is essential for the long-term development and success of tourism (Chadha & Onkar, 2014). For instance, continuous management allows the tourism board to look regularly into ways through which they can improve the state of tourism in the country. Accordingly, challenges such as insecurity, poor marketing, and slow development will not affect the tourism industry in this country (Zainub & Wall, 2013).

Global vision and including

Ability to anchor the



The figure shows the elements that might be required to create successful regional management. One source of these experiences is the dialogue projects initiated after the 2003 national planning report was published.

Third, national and regional planning fosters a culture of conservation and protection of tourism resources for sustainable use. Tourism resources such as wild life, forests, historical sites, architectural designs, and cultural events among others can deteriorate in quality or get destructed if there is no proper planning to protect and conserve these resources (Shani, Polak, & Shashar, 2012). Through national and regional planning, these resources can receive proper attention that ensures authorities allocate sufficient resources for management, restoration, and replacement of resources so that the tourism industry can continue being successful for many decades (Zainub & Wall, 2013). Most significantly, conservation and protection ensures that there is no or minimal impact that tourism activities cause on the local populations (Zaman, Vasile, Goschin & Rosca, 2013).

Finally, national and regional planning promotes tourism development by laying foundations for the creation of tourism activities in different parts of the country (Ndivo, Waudo & Waswa, 2013). For example, planning ensures that tourist destinations are diverse and evenly spread across the country not just to attract tourists interested in different things but also to promote national and regional development (Mekawy, 2012). For example, national and regional planning facilitates the identification of potential tourists' activities and destinations that can attract visitors in different areas (Shani, Polak, & Shashar, 2012).

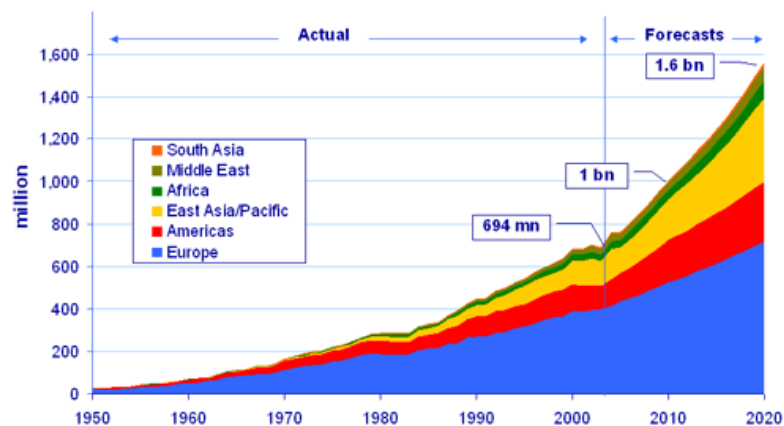


Fig: as the forecasts for tourism across the world continue to rise to greater levels, there is need for proper national and regional planning to ensure that the sector remains robust and profitable.

Source of image: <http://www.unwto.org/facts/eng/vision.htm>

CONCLUSION

National and regional planning is a critical activity in tourism development. The planning process facilitates the development of tourism industry by ensuring that tourist destinations and activities are diverse and appealing to visitors. Most significantly, planning is essential for the continuous effective management of tourism so that authorities address potential challenges that can affect the industry. Another critical contribution of planning involves protection and conservation of tourism resources for sustainable use. This ensures that the tourism industry remains active, successful, and beneficial in the long-term. Countries that take national and regional planning have well established and developed tourism industry that allow them to enjoy great economic, social and environmental benefits than countries with uncontrolled development of tourism industry. Therefore, it is highly recommendable that countries develop national and regional planning strategies to boost their tourism industry and prevent any possible destruction of natural resources such as the environment and wild life among others.

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