

## Botswana Tourism policy Landscape – successes and challenges

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### ABSTRACT

The year 2016 marked Botswana's 50<sup>th</sup> Independence Day anniversary. In terms of tourism development, 2016 marked 36 years since the publication of the first policy document aimed at the formalisation and control of tourism activities in the country. Prior to that, tourism activities occurred in an almost haphazard fashion. In the 1990s, the contribution of the tourism sector to the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was insignificant. However, this sector has since experienced some rapid growth that saw it becoming the second biggest contributor to the GDP. Despite this development, very little has been done to profile the tourism policy context within which this has been taking place. This paper looks back and attempts to offer a retrospective analysis of Botswana's tourism industry from the policy perspective. The paper attempts to evaluate the tourism policy landscape of Botswana by looking at different policy documents and assessing their influence on the tourism industry. It identifies the ways in which formulation of such policies either promotes or cripples the development of tourism in the country. The paper notes that several achievements have been made on the policy front. However, the current policy and legislative framework does not position Botswana competitively in the global market. In conclusion, the paper recommends for the harmonization of the tourism policy landscape in order to make the industry more responsive to the needs and wants of the tourists.

**Key Words:** Tourism Policy, Policy Landscape, Tourism, Botswana

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### INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry continues to play a critical role in the development of national economies globally. It is one of the fastest growing industries in the world and future prospects of its growth remain positive (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2012). However, the level of

the impact of its contribution depends largely on the willingness of national governments to put in place policies that allow the tourism industry to flourish. According to Hall and Jenkins (1995), these policies are usually formulated by different stakeholders such as government, NGOs, private sector and interest groups. Although it is common practice for governments to formulate policies, such policies may be housed under different departments or ministries making it difficult for tourism to function smoothly.

Dye (1992, p. 2) defines public policy as “whatever governments choose to do or not to do.” They are policies developed by government bodies and officials highlighting how government relates to its environment (local, global; economic, social or political), and how it seeks to influence that environment to its advantage. This definition covers government action, inaction, decisions, and non-decisions, as it implies a deliberate choice between policy alternatives (Hall & Jenkins, 1995). According to Hall and Jenkins (1995, p. 8), “Tourism public policy is therefore whatever governments choose to do or not to do with respect to tourism” (see also Hall, 2003).

However, various groups perceive and influence public policies in significant and often markedly different ways. These include pressure groups (for example, tourism industry associations, conversation groups and community groups), community leaders and significant individuals (for example, local government councillors), members of the bureaucracy (for example, employees within tourism commissions, government departments or regional development agencies), academics and consultants (Hall, 2003).

Worth special note in the case of tourism is the critical role played by international agencies, such as the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and World Bank Global Environmental Facility (GEF), in the formulation and implementation of policy in specific destination areas (Braden and Prudnikova, 2008). According to Braden and Prudnikova, (2008), as a result of the presence and influence imposed by these agencies, there exists some uneven power relations in destination areas, often with a bearing on centre–periphery arrangements.

Therefore this review pays special attention to the wording and objectives of the documents and attempt to offer the implications of such to tourism development in the country. The premise for this orientation is that policies generally provide the developmental direction and, sometimes, even the means of attaining such development within a particular context. Therefore, government intentions and none thereof are carried in the policy documents. For this paper, a selection of policy documents and strategies was reviewed. These included; Tourism Policy (1990); Tourism Act (1992, as amended); Botswana Tourism Master Plan of 2000; Botswana Tourism Organisation Act (2009); Community Based Natural Resources Management Policy (2007); National Ecotourism Strategy (2002); and Tourism regulations (1996 & 2010). In terms of structure, this paper begins with a brief introduction to issues of public policy. The following sub-section deals with literature on the role of government in tourism development policy before focussing specifically on Botswana government’s role in tourism development. Next, the paper provides a review of selected policy documents, and ends with concluding remarks.

## THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND POLICY

According to Jefferies (2001, p. 102), “policy documents, high level reports and ministerial statements often refer to the economic development of tourism as ‘largely a matter for the private sector’. But the context will as often reveal that the involvement of state and government is indispensable”. Thus, government’s interest in tourism development including policy formulation and implementation is expected. As Jenkins (2000, p. 177) argues, “tourism promises much in the delivery of politically desirable outcomes like employment growth, income generation, multiplier effects and broader regional development.” In most countries, if not all, the development of tourism is a partnership between the private and public sectors (Jefferies, 2001; Wanhill, 1998).

Since governments have economic and social responsibilities over their citizens, they tend to take a direct interest in the development of tourism within their countries. Holloway (1995) argues that the greater the activities of tourism in a nation, whether incoming or outgoing, the greater the likelihood of government intervention in the industry. However, government’s involvement in the industry can also be due to the fact that government through its policies wants to promote and support the industry in order to make it more inclusive, participatory and developmental in orientation.

Hall (2009) laments that, historically, there exists a mix of ideologies and perspectives related to appropriate role of the state ‘with respect to ownership of productive assets as well as regulation of the private sector’ in southern Africa. According to Hall (2009), southern Africa has an interesting history of state ownership. This marks a clear point of departure from the liberal approaches obtaining in the Global North, where by contrast, the role of government has recently been undergoing a major transformation towards a dispensation of little or no state intervention as well as prominent private sector role in tourism planning and development (Hall, 2009; Hall and Jenkins, 1998).

In the end, many governments tend to confine their responsibilities to formulation and implementation of policy. In some instances, government’s role in tourism tends to transcend mere participation through public policy and legislation, to include its broader framework of bureaucracy. Governments make decisions on their own structure. They also determine the nature and modalities through which different governmental structures relate with each other, and with stakeholders. On account of the foregoing, therefore, government becomes central to the ideas of participation, understanding, agenda setting and relationships or associations building in tourism policy (Hall, 2009; Hall and Jenkins, 1995; Hall and Jenkins, 1998; Wray, 2009). Furthermore, some writers argued that government’s participation in tourism and tourism policy is both standard and inevitable. For example, Holloway (1995, p. 223) sees government’s role in tourism as manifesting itself in four distinct ways, namely; (a) planning and facilitating tourism, including the provision of financial or other aid, (b) supervision and control of component sectors of the industry, (c) direct ownership of components of the industry, as well as (d) promotion of the nations and its tourist products to home and overseas markets.

For his part, Wanhill (2000) argues that government’s role in influencing tourism and policy may be understood from two perspectives. The first perspective relates to demand and revenue management. This is aimed at guiding the tourist’s choice, controlling the costs of stay

or stimulating/regulating visitor numbers. Therefore, government's policies and programs are designed with the aim of marketing and promotion of the country; provision of information, pricing, and controlling access either to the country or popular cultural sites and natural resources. The second, perspective concerns designing supply and cost instruments aimed at influencing the providers of tourist facilities and services. These instruments include land ownership control; building regulations; research and planning; market regulation; taxation; ownership; finance and development; manpower planning; education and training, and investment incentives.

Subsequently, Hall (2009, p. 52) reminds us that, "...tourism is just one policy area that lies at the intersection of a number of policy areas that affect tourism, and which occur at various levels of governance. Any specific tourism policy arena, that is, the specific configuration of institutional and individual actors, their institutional arrangements, values and power relations that relate to specific policy issues therefore occurs over multiple scales and may involve actors over a number of policy areas". These agencies and actors, however, do not always possess the same sets of values, motivations and goals about what is best for tourism and its relationship with other industries in the destination area (Hall and Jenkins, 1995; Hall and Jenkins, 1998). As a result this has a potential to create a scenario where several interest groups and individuals compete for a say in the policy development process and direction of a destination area leading to what Hall (2009: 51) terms a "congested policy arena".

### **THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF BOTSWANA IN TOURISM**

In tune with the rest of the southern African region, the nature of Botswana government's participation in tourism has followed a state ownership orientation. The underlining principle is that government hold the country's resources (tourism resources inclusive) in trust for the society. By extension, access to, use, regulation and control of resources have always been state responsibility. Ideas and attendant exercises aimed at devolving management, access to and use of resources to local communities are a relatively recent development. The Government of Botswana's role in tourism development and administration is traceable to the enactment of its tourism policy in 1990 (Republic of Botswana, 1990, 2000). Ever since 1992, a number of legislations have been passed to regulate the tourism industry. These include but not limited to; Tourism Act (Republic of Botswana, 1992); Botswana Tourism Master Plan [BTMP] (Republic of Botswana, 2000); Botswana National ecotourism Strategy (Republic of Botswana, 2002); the Botswana Tourism Board (Republic of Botswana, 2004), and subsequently the Botswana Tourism Organisation (2009); Community Based Natural Resources Management Policy (2007); Tourism Regulations, 1996; Botswana Tourism Development Programme- Tourism Master Plan 28; Tourism (Licensing) Order, 1996; Finance (Tourism Industry Training Fund) Order, 1996; Financial Assistance Policy (FAP- Tourism), 1996; and Casino Act, 1971.

Tourism development in Botswana can be assessed at two different levels. The first level is the legal framework that has given rise to the public institutional frame responsible for administration and regulation of tourism. The second level is the role played by the private sector over the years in the development of tourism. This paper focuses on the first level of analysis. It sets off to assess Botswana's tourism policy landscape by identifying the ways in

which such policies either promote or cripple the development of tourism in the country. This is achieved by considering the successes and challenges brought about by such policies. The following sub section offers an overview of selected policy documents that characterise the tourism policy landscape in Botswana.

### **BRIEF OVERVIEW OF SELECTED POLICY DOCUMENTS**

The 1990 Tourism Policy constituted the first tourism policy in Botswana and attempts to come up with the second policy have so far failed. The policy was developed for three main reasons; that prior to 1990, tourism had not been given due prominence; the potential of the tourism industry was growing rapidly, and has now been recognised as the second engine of economic growth for Botswana (Republic of Botswana, 2003); and that Botswana were unlikely to benefit from its potential unless a deliberate policy framework was put in place (Republic of Botswana, 1990). The broad objective of this policy is “to obtain, on a sustainable basis and within the carrying capacity limits, the greatest possible net social and economic benefits for Botswana from their tourism resources, scenic beauty, wildlife and unique ecological, geological and cultural characteristics (Republic of Botswana, 2000, p. 26). Specifically, the objectives of the policy are to: increase foreign exchange earnings and government revenues; generate employment, mainly in rural areas; raise incomes in rural areas in order to reduce urban migration; promote rural development and stimulate the provision of other services in remote areas of the country; improve quality of national life by providing educational and recreational opportunities; and project a favourable national image to the outside world (Republic of Botswana, 1990). These policy objectives were to be achieved within the limitations of other government policies, specifically the Wildlife Conservation Policy and the National Policy on Economic Opportunities (Republic of Botswana, 1990). The former emphasised complete preservation in National Parks and Game Reserves while the latter emphasised the participation of locals in the ownership and management of tourism enterprises.

The Tourism Act [as amended in 2007] (Republic of Botswana, 1992) was promulgated by parliament in 1992 to provide for the regulation of the tourist industry with a view to promoting its development and well-being. The Act provides for (a) the appointment of officers (Director of Tourism and such other officers as shall be necessary for the proper administration of this Act) and stipulates his/her powers thereof; (b) the establishment and appointment the Tourist Industry Licensing Board and its powers thereof in relation to licensing and grading of tourist facilities; (c) outlines categories of tourist enterprises, makes provision for the licensing of these enterprises, and sets out the procedures in relating to applications for licences, power of inspection, appeals to the Minister; (d) Issue of licences to people wishing to carry on a tourist enterprise (e) grading of tourist enterprises (f) offences and penalties; (g) empowering the Minister to Make regulations for the better carrying out of the provisions and purposes of the Act, such as the imposition of a levy on all tourist enterprises to assist the training of staff for such enterprises, and the establishment of a national advisory council whose purpose shall be to advise the Minister on all matters relating to the formulation, planning, development and administration of a policy relating to tourism.

In 2004, the Government of Botswana passed the Botswana Tourism Board Act which provided for the establishment of the Botswana Tourism Board, its powers, duties and functions, and matters connected or incidental thereto (Republic of Botswana, 2004). This act was replaced by the Botswana Tourism Organisation Act, 2009 (Republic of Botswana, 2009) which established the Botswana Tourism Organization (BTO) as a corporate body with a governing Board of Directors, reporting to the Minister of Wildlife, Environment and Tourism. Among the myriad of other objectives, the act empowers the Board to: (a) determine policies for giving effect to the objects and purposes of the Act (that established the BTO); (b) advise the Minister to change, review or formulate tourism related policies and strategies where necessary; (c) set performance targets and to design programmes aimed at facilitating the continued growth and development of tourism; and (d) investigate any matter that has a negative effect on the tourism industry, and to make recommendations thereon to the Minister (Republic of Botswana, 2009).

In 2000, the final report of the BTMP was released marking the culmination of an almost two and a half years long multi-stakeholder consultation process funded by the Government of Botswana (GoB) and the Commission of the European Union (CEU). The essence of the BTMP as captured in the executive summary section of the report is to provide a lens through which the country's policy framework should be read, understood and implemented. According to the report; "the Tourism Master Plan should serve as a basic guideline for development of tourism enabling the decision-makers to agree on the principles for the direction for the next decade. Its projection is based on a careful assessment of the possibilities within the country as well as the market trends abroad. The Plan forms the end of an opinion-building phase, but more essentially, it should be regarded as the starting point for an implementation process with the most important work still lying ahead (GoB and CEU, 2000, p. 2). To this end, the Master Plan centres on a number of key areas pertinent to the development of tourism in the country through, inter alia; analysing the status quo regarding tourism sector in Botswana, assessing the developmental potential of the sector, defining the policy framework for tourism development in the country, outlining the development strategy including the design of projections for the future, identifying the most optimum option among the many available for the country as well as laying out a framework for implementation.

Community-based natural resources management (CBNRM) is a natural resources co-management program involving primarily government and local communities. In some instances, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and private investors also take part in some capacity (Zuze, 2009). The rationale behind CBNRM is to decentralise power and decision-making relevant to the management of resources from the state to the communities (Agrawal and Ribot 1999). It begins with acknowledgement of the fact that local communities often disapprove of any arrangement whose end result is to exclude them from access to and utilisation of resources found within their immediate environs (Mbaiwa 2005). Therefore, it is believed that by extending some level of access to and utilisation of resources as well as decision-making power (however limited) to local communities, their appreciation of the need to conserve and sustainably manage such resources would be improved (Boggs 2000). This is rendered even more critical by the realisation that these communities bear the highest costs arising from the conservation of the resources in question.

Implementation of the CBNRM started in 1989 with the pilot project titled Natural Resources Management Program (NRMP) implemented among the Chobe Enclave communities in northern Botswana with a primary focus on wildlife resources conservation (Mulale 2005). According to Mulale (2005), the NRMP which was a joint funded project between the Government of Botswana and the United States Aid for International Development (USAID) ran and supported the CBNRM process in Botswana from 1989 to 1999. Since then the CBNRM has been extended to other parts of the country with an even wider resource focus. Various levels of success and failure have been reported (Balikie 2006). From its inception until recently implementation of the CBNRM was undertaken without a formal and specific guiding policy document (GoB 2007. Mbaiwa (200) notes that instead, implementation relied on the wildlife conservation policy of 1986 and the Tourism policy of 1990. Rihoy and Maguranyanga (2007) have, therefore, argued that this lack of a formal guiding policy is in part to blame for the challenges faced by community-based projects arising from intra-community power differentials and interests.

The National Ecotourism Strategy (NES) of 2002 is one of the significant policy documents that characterise the tourism policy landscape in Botswana. The policy was conceived in 2002 after the realisation that if managed sustainably, tourism could contribute significantly to the economy. The emphasis on sustainable management of the tourism industry stems from lessons learnt from other countries where the emphasis on mass tourism had led to the deterioration of the environment, something which did not augur well for the future of the tourism industry. Consequently the concern about the deterioration of the environment as a result of tourism led to a debate on alternative forms of tourism (Weaver, 1995). Among these alternative forms of tourism, ecotourism was heralded as the panacea for the attainment of the environmental sustainability (Burnie, 1995; Gurung & De Coursey, 1994). This is because ecotourism has been mooted as one of the alternative forms of tourism that have the potential to contribute to sustainable development (Scheyvens, 1999; Weaver, 1995).

Botswana just like many other countries is not immune to this trend and has adopted ecotourism through the NES to help improve the tourism industry so that it could have a meaningful contribution to the country's economy. The overall goal of the strategy is to: create an environment in which all elements of tourism development planning and management facilitate, promote and reward adherence to the key principles of ecotourism (Government of Botswana, 2002). The strategy aims are to: Minimise negative social, cultural and environmental impacts; Maximise the involvement in, and economic benefits to, host Communities; Maximise revenues for re-investment in conservation; Educate both the visitor and the local people as to the importance of conserving natural and cultural resources; and Deliver a quality experience to tourists.

As a follow up to the establishment of the Tourism Act of 1992, the Tourism regulations were enacted in 1996 to help regulate the tourism industry (Republic of Botswana, 1996). Through these regulations, a National Advisory Council on Tourism and a training levy were established. The regulations were mainly concerned with regulating the hotel sector and this was achieved through setting up the minimum standards of operation for any hotel in the country in terms of lighting, ventilation, equipment in bathrooms and many others. In addition, the regulations also spell out the requirements for hotels graded from 1 to 5 stars and also define annual fees to be paid by tourism establishments (Republic of Botswana, 1996).

Owing to the inadequacies that were found in the tourism regulations of 1996, amendments were made to help improve the regulations. These amendments were made to exempt citizen wholly owned tourist enterprises with five bedrooms or less from the requirements of holding a licence, to suspend indefinitely the grading requirement of tourism enterprises, and to also set the training levy at BWP 1.00 per occupied bed per night. The 1996 regulations were revised and in 2010 a new set of regulations were published. These regulations cover quite a wide range of issues ranging from the issuance of the tourist enterprise licence to safety and sanitation (Republic of Botswana, 2010).

### **DISCUSSIONS: CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES**

Botswana's tourism policy landscape provides a platform with opportunities and challenges for the continued development of tourism in Botswana. Among the key opportunities provided for within this landscape is the idea of marketing and promotion of the country as a tourism destination. For instance, at the time of the release of the BTMP in 2000 it was admitted that there was no marketing strategy and no promotion plan in place for the country. As a result marketing activities were undertaken on a more ad hoc and piece meal basis. However, the BTMP made recommendations on a number of initiatives which have since been put in place. Among others, Botswana currently has representation located in countries that constitute major source market for the international tourist visitors to Botswana, namely the United States of America, the United Kingdom and Germany (BTO 2012).

The BTO has embarked on a number of initiatives aimed at promoting domestic tourism in the country including, promotion of sports events such as the Toyota Kalahari Botswana 1000 Desert Race and the Tour de Tuli Cycle Race; sponsoring major cultural events like Dithubaruba Cultural Festival and Domboshaba Festival of Culture and History (BTO 2013). The BTO has also been involved with sponsorship of such initiatives as Discover Botswana-Botswana Television (BTV) Morning Show as well as Botswana Television Weather. The recommendation about improvement on level and nature of education and training have also been taken up with the proliferation of a few vocational and tertiary education courses dealing with tourism and hospitality related subject matter in both private and public institutions.

Publication of the CBNRM policy has brought about a number of improvements to the understanding and implementation process of CBNRM in Botswana. One of those relates to role clarification for various stakeholders such as government, community and other external entities such as investment partners. The policy has also provided a clear institutional framework for the implementation of CBNRM activities in the country.

While publication of the policy brought about an improvement to the implementation of the CBNRM, some of the objectives have also introduced some challenges to the process. For instance, in an endeavour to address the apparent mismanagement of funds by certain community organisations, the policy has established the National Environmental Fund whose secretariat is housed under the Ministry of Environment Wildlife and Tourism (MEWT) (GoB 2007). The idea for the establishment of the fund is to ensure funds may be availed for other environmental activities around the country. The challenge with this arrangement is that while the CBNRM process is aimed at compensating local communities in areas where costs arising



from conservation are highest, the usurpation of about 65% of proceeds from activities CBTs and channelling it to the fund seems to defeat the intended purpose.

By making the MEWT the secretariat and overseer of CBNRM process in the country, the policy somewhat shifts the power relations more in favour of government, a situation which the co-management approach is meant to address in the first place. In addition, the district Technical Advisory Committees (TACs) are identified as the final arbiters in all matters related to the business of CBNRM at district level (GoB 2007). This centralisation of power in matters related to CBNRM is underlined by, among others, such statements as contained in article 5.4 of the policy which reads “government as custodian of land and its resources, shall retain the ultimate authority to protect natural resources, species and habitats and will continue to monitor and regulate their use to ensure their survival and proper management, above all rights notwithstanding” (GoB. 2007, 9).

The National Ecotourism Strategy marks one of the significant turning points in the tourism landscape of the country. The strategy has helped point tourism development in the right direction by providing guidelines through which the ideals of the tourism policy could be achieved (Government of Botswana, 2002). Firstly the guidelines are anchored around the concept of sustainability where all tourism related activities in the country should conform to sustainable development. Secondly, it advocates for the facilitation of the development of economically viable and effectively managed ecotourism enterprises. Thirdly, the strategy acknowledges the critical role played by locals (Batswana) in the development of the tourism industry and as such encourages them not only to participate meaningfully but to also derive benefits from it. Lastly, the strategy promotes adherence to high quality ecotourism standards throughout the tourism industry in line with international target market expectations. Furthermore the strategy goes on to outline what ought to be done to realise all the initiatives stipulated in the strategy. This can be viewed as a positive development as it allows the strategy to be specific to the tourism issues in the country.

Although the NES has brought about positive developments in the Botswana tourism landscape, there are teething problems associated with its implementation. For example, Mbaiwa (2005) argues that enclave tourism works against the ideals of ecotourism which are enshrined in the NES. He contends that foreign owned ecotourism enterprises because of their strong financial muscle out-compete local ecotourism enterprises and render them profitless. This makes it very difficult for communities to realise benefits from ecotourism projects. Furthermore there are challenges associated with the management of natural resources and these include poaching, lack of education on the importance of the management of natural resources and shortage of funds to support natural resources management initiatives.

In a nutshell, the discussion on the tourism regulations has demonstrated that Botswana has done very well in the regulation of the tourism industry. When compared with other developing countries, Botswana’s tourism industry is still at its infancy stage since it was only formalised around the 1990’s. Within a period spanning less than two decades, the country was able to set-up the tourism regulations and revised them after the realisation that they did not capture certain pertinent issues. This shows that over the years the regulation of the tourism industry in Botswana has been responsive to the needs and challenges of the industry, something which the country should be proud of in its commemoration of the 50th anniversary of independence.

## CONCLUSIONS AND WAY FORWARD

This paper reviews selected tourism policies and programmes in Botswana, namely, the Tourism Policy (1990); Tourism Act (1992, as amended); Botswana Tourism Master Plan of 2000; Botswana Tourism Organisation Act (2009); The Community Based Natural Resources Management Policy (2007); National Ecotourism Strategy (2002); and Tourism regulations (1996 & 2010). These policies should be seen against the backdrop of economic diversification. In the attempt to diversify the economy, tourism has been identified as an engine of economic growth with the potential to contribute significantly to Botswana's economic diversification (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2005; Lejarraja & Walkenhorst, 2007), employment creation, and eradication of poverty (Botswana Government, 2011). However, the current policy and legislative framework does not position Botswana competitively in the global market. The Tourism Policy (Republic of Botswana, 1990) and the Botswana Tourism Act (Republic of Botswana, 1992) have been in operation since the early 1990s. They offer a regulatory and institutional framework that does not necessarily position Botswana's tourism in the global market.

While the creation of the Botswana Tourism Board (Republic of Botswana, 2004) and its predecessor, the Botswana Tourism Organisation (Republic of Botswana, 2009), were a step in the right direction to “plan, develop and implement tourism marketing and promotion strategies aimed at creating and sustaining a positive image of Botswana as a tourist and investor destination” (Republic of Botswana, 2004, Sec 5 [2] [a]), Botswana still lacks a clearly articulated tourism marketing strategy. Efforts being made by both the Botswana Department of Tourism and the Botswana Tourism Organisation to market Botswana as a global destination of choice are limited by resource constraints. Therefore, not only is there “a need for a well-researched, clear marketing strategy that will direct the future marketing focus of the [Botswana Tourism Organisation] and inform Botswana's overall tourism policy and development thrust” (Leechor & Fabricius, 2007, p. 81) but also significant resources are needed to implement such a strategy. It has also become clear that a robust tourism policy is needed to consolidate the many tourism ideas that have been developed since the 1990s.

The Botswana Tourism Organisation Act, 2009 centralised “all such things as are necessary to market and promote Botswana's tourist attractions, and to encourage and facilitate travel, by local and foreign tourists, to the said attractions” (Republic of Botswana, 2009, Sec 4, [1]) on the Botswana Tourism Organisation. This is too centralised on one authority. There is need to decentralise tourism management to other structures of governance. Decentralisation has been found to lead to efficient provision of local public services and stimulates economic development (Iimi, 2005) due to its ability to reduce the decision load by sharing it with more people and allowing more organisational flexibility which enables quicker responses (Peckham, Exworthy, Powell, & Greener, 2005). While experiences with decentralised in Africa are varied, Conyers (2007, p. 28) argues that the history of decentralisation has not been static, with a number of positive changes over the years, “including the move to more democratic forms of local governance, recognition of the need for fiscal decentralisation, and the many recent attempts to increase citizen participation and downward accountability. This is not a new phenomenon in Botswana whose decentralised efforts dates back to 1964

(Tshukudu, 2014). Many governments have also decentralised their tourism authorities. For instance, while Tourism Australia was established by the federal government (see, Parliament of Australia, 2004), each state and territory in Australia has its own government tourism agency (i.e. the establishment of the Victorian Tourism Commission through the Tourism Victoria Act by the Legislative Assembly of Victoria, 1992). State and territory tourism authorities in Australia work to promote Australia as a tourism destination internationally from within their jurisdictions. In addition, “in each state and territory there are a number of other organisations - the Regional Tourism Organisations and Visitor Centres, that work with the local tourism industry, local government and state organisations to develop and market tourism in their local area” (Small Business Development Corporation, NK). Therefore Botswana should find ways to decentralise the Botswana Tourism Organisation function to local authorities who can market and develop their tourism products better than under a centralised system. This paper has also evaluated the Botswana Tourism Master Plan of 2000 and found that it had a number of challenges and milestones. One of its key milestones was to identify and select the best possible option for future tourism development in Botswana. Of the four identified options, namely; option (a) low volume/ high price; option (b) medium volume/high price; option (c) high volume/mixed price and option (d) modified high volume/mixed price, the BTMP had recommended option d as the most appropriate for Botswana. However, this option has not yet been explored, to date. Obviously this would entail a review of the current tourism policy document. Going forward this is an inevitable exercise.

The evaluation of the CBNRM Policy also suggests a need for a policy review. This is apparent given important given the apparent power shift (re-centralisation) that has come with the policy stipulations. Dressler et al. (2010) make a call to the planners and practitioners of CBNRM to ensure that access, use, and control of locally available resources should be ensured for local communities especially marginalised sections of such communities. They argue that this is one of the smartest ways to ensure that these communities experience the entitlement and empowerment that would ultimately encourage their participation in conservation. Dressler et al. (2010) further tie their argument to the IUCN vision which marries the value of justice to conservation of nature. If the current power imbalance is left unchecked, the intended objectives of the CBNRM process would be missed. The same applies to the National Ecotourism Strategy of 2002 which should be reviewed with a view to make it responsive to the needs and challenges of the ecotourism landscape in the Botswana. Issues of leakages in tourism revenue, community participation, human/wildlife conflict and many others need to be given serious attention so that the ideals of ecotourism are realised.

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