

Problem 1 Tourist attractions capping visitor numbers: Case study of Manyeleti Nature Reserve, Mariepskop Nature Reserve, Bushbuckridge Nature Reserve and Injaka Dam

Industry: Tourism Sector

SUPPORTING DOCUMENT

As part of revitalisation of tourist attractions, determining the number of visitors that should be welcomed per day (capping visitor numbers) is one of the key mergers to put in place. The assumption is that once the attraction revitalisation process is complete, through marketing the attraction could attract more tourist due to its unique offerings. This success will be financially improved when the site manager/s are able to directly charge visitors. Public-owned attractions such as Bushbuckridge Nature Reserve will be expected to implement user-pay strategies which will require appropriate regulatory framework and the ability to physically restrict access only to those willing to pay for the experience such as barriers to entry (Morgan & Lok, 1999:1-2).

Possible benefits of capping visitor numbers for an attraction:

- Ensure nature conservation and preservation
- Manage overcrowding
- Increase visitor experience
- Assist with visitor data collection (statistics)
- Projection of revenue per day
- Staffing per activity (justify for increase is required)
- Present an informed justification to increase the entry fee and determine the entry fee for different categories (International, National & local)
- To support an argument to acquire/procure certain infrastructure /facilities of certain standards (meeting the standards as stipulated by the South African Institution of Civil Engineers (SAICE) and the South African Grading Council and other concerned bodies.
- Influence decision on the type of system / technology to be adopted for the site.
- Provide a perspective on the attraction marketing strategy, new product/service development and existing product/service enhancement including community involvement.

Drawing from prior presented literature, there are a number of tourist attractions in the country (in my province, Mpumalanga Province) that are deserted in a way. These tourist attractions have the potential to realise their sustainable development while practicing responsible tourism in their daily operation activities and generate a healthy revenue. Tourism development in South Africa is guided by the key principles of Responsible Tourism stipulated in the 1996 White Paper.

- South Africa was the first country to include Responsible Tourism in its national tourism policy as outlined in the 1996 White Paper on the Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa.

- Goodwin (2007) noted that Responsible Tourism is about “making better places for people to live in and better places for people to visit.” Responsible Tourism requires that operators, hoteliers, governments, local people and tourists take responsibility and action to make tourism more sustainable.

A study by Spalding and Parrett (2019) through Figure 1 illustrate the use of mangrove tourist attractions that have not received much attention although they provide a high-value, low impact use of these important ecosystems. It is noted that the location of mangroves has placed this tourist attraction in the way of development. Some areas of mangroves have been lost in recent decades due to aquaculture, agriculture and urban expansion. It is likely that mangrove tourism attracts tens to hundreds of millions of visitors annually and is a multi-billion dollar industry (Spalding *et al.*, 2019).

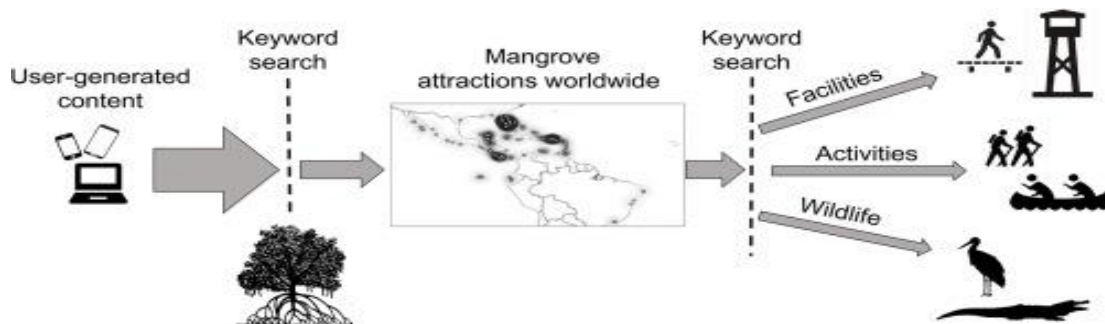


Figure 1: Mangrove recreation activities
Source: Spalding *et al.*, 2019

Drawing from prior presented literature, there is a number of tourist attractions in the country (in my province, Mpumalanga Province) that are deserted in a way. Those tourist attractions have the potential to regain their strength, realise sustainable development while practicing responsible tourism in their daily operation activities and generate a healthy revenue. Tourism development in South Africa is guided by the key principles of Responsible Tourism stipulated in the 1996 White Paper.

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Responsible tourism implies:

- ✓ *“Tourism industry responsibility to the environment, through the promotion of balanced and sustainable tourism, and a focus on environmentally based tourism activities;*

- ✓ *Responsibility of government and business to involve the local communities that are in close proximity to tourism infrastructure and attractions, through the development of meaningful economic linkages;*
- ✓ *Responsibility of tourists, business and government to respect, invest and develop local cultures, and protect them from over-commercialization and over-exploitation;*
- ✓ *The responsibility of local communities to become actively involved in the tourism industry, to practice sustainable development, and to ensure the safety and security of visitors;*
- ✓ *The responsibility of both employers and employees in the tourism industry, both to each other and the customer (responsible trade union and employment practices); and*
- ✓ *Responsible government as well as responsibility on the part of tourists to observe the norms and practices of South Africa”.*

The United Nation World Tourism Organisation define Sustainable Development as the type of "Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities".

Sustainable tourism development guidelines and management practices are applicable to all forms of tourism in all types of destinations, including mass tourism and the various niche tourism segments. Sustainability principles refer to the environmental, economic, and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development, and a suitable balance must be established between these three dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability.

Sustainable tourism should:

- *“Make optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity.*
- *Respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance.*
- *Ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contributing to poverty alleviation”.*

TOURIST ATTRACTIONS OVERVIEW: CASES FOR THIS MISG2023 PROBLEM

Manyeleti Nature Reserve

Manyeleti – meaning ‘place of stars’ in the local language, Shangaan

- It is sharing fenceless borders with the Kruger National Park, Sabi Sands and the Timbavati Game Reserve.

- It is +-23 750 hectares.
- Co-managed by Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA) and Manyeleti CPA (Integrated Management Plan).
- This site 100% land claimed by CPA.
- The attraction (protected site) has family-friendly accommodation facilities and activities:
 - ✓ 34 self-catering, on-suite bungalows of which 19 are newly renovated
 - ✓ 20 caravan camping areas with communal ablution facilities
 - ✓ Two large sparkling pools and a small tuck-shop
 - ✓ The 60-bed dormitory with cooking facilities. (Mainly caters for guests who are attending the Environmental Education Programme offered by Manyeleti Nature Reserve).
 - ✓ Renowned for Big 5 sightings
 - ✓ Park road network is suitable for all vehicles
 - ✓ Guided open vehicle game drives and guided bush walks available
 - ✓ Picnic area
 - ✓ Braai facilities, etc.

Mariepskop Nature Reserve

- It is located along Blyde River Canyon Nature Reserve, Acornhoek West.
- It is +- 13000 hectares.
- It is managed by the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE).
- Co-management Agreement between MTPA and Blyde-04 CPA (Integrated Management Plan).
- It is 100% land claimed by Blyde -04 CPA.
- Facilities in the attraction:
 - ✓ 7 waterfalls
 - ✓ Viewpoints
 - ✓ Picnic spots
 - ✓ Hiking trails
 - ✓ 2000 plant species
 - ✓ 2 self-catering chalets
 - ✓ Braai facilities

Bushbuckridge Nature Reserve

- It is located in Bushbuckridge opposite Injaka Dam.
- It is +- 7000 hectares.
- It is co- managed by MTPA and CPA (Integrated Management Plan).
- It is 100% land claimed by Sisonke CPA.
- Facilities and activities:

- ✓ Main office
- ✓ Staff accommodation
- ✓ Bush walks
- ✓ Birding
- ✓ Ridges
- ✓ Indigenous plants, and many more

Injaka Dam

- It is located in Bushbuckridge opposite Bushbuckridge Nature Reserve.
- Hectares (to be confirmed)
- It is managed by the Department of Water Affairs and Sanitation.
- It is not under land claim.
- It is regarded as a national key point. The buffer zone surrounding the dam is 100% claimed by Injaka Watervaal CPA.
- Memorandum of Agreement in place between DWS and BLM for the dam management. Resource Management Plan is in place.
- Facilities and activities:
 - ✓ DWS offices
 - ✓ Fishing
 - ✓ Boating and many more

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