AFRICAN JOURNAL OF HOSPITALITY, TOURISM AND LEISURE
2026, Vol. 15, No. 3, pp. 937-948
https://doi.org/10.46222/ajhtl.19770720.796

AJHTL
OPEN ACCESS

Research article

Destination management challenges in small town South Africa: Insights from Overstrand local municipality

Jayne M. Rogerson*[1]

[1] School of Tourism and Hospitality, College of Business and Economics, University of Johannesburg, Johannesburg, South Africa

ABSTRACT

Research issues concerning tourism and local economic development in small towns of South Africa have attracted much active concern. This research interest is boosted by South African policies for local government and tourism which allocate substantial responsibility to local government for tourism. Arguably, the practice of destination management is one of the most significant underpinnings for successful local tourism development albeit it is one of the least well-researched at the level of local governments in South Africa. The study is framed within an international literature and debates on destination development and represents a novel contribution to the limited body of African knowledge relating to the public sector and the challenges of local governments in destination management. The case study is of the Overstrand Local Municipality in Western Cape Province and based upon a quantitative profile of local tourism performance and the findings from 40 semi-structured interviews conducted in 2025 with tourism business stakeholders. The key findings reinforce the importance of the practice of destination management and in particular around both destination marketing and a cluster of issues surrounding an improved business environment.

KEYWORDS

Destination management; small town tourism; Overstrand local municipality; South Africa

Introduction

In South Africa local government is engaged in a range of activities that extend well beyond the traditional functions of the collection of rates, maintenance of roads, provision of water, and dealing with rubbish removal. As van der Watt (2022: 97) observes the Constitution and "post-1994 local government legislation devolved to municipalities various competencies and functions that extend beyond the services historically associated with municipalities". In addition to extended roles such as the protection of community well-being and environmental management, local governments assumed an increasingly developmental role with responsibilities towards driving the growth of local economies (C.M. Rogerson, 2014; van Niekerk, 2014; Nel & Rogerson, 2016; C.M. Rogerson, 2019). With a continued environment of high levels of unemployment and poverty in South Africa, tourism became viewed widely as a potentially critical foundation for stimulating local economic development futures and the implementation of 'developmental local government'. From international experience, local government involvement in tourism often is "justified on the basis that they are closest to several aspects of tourism development" (Nunkoo, 2015: 625). As shown in the Nel & Rogerson (2016) national survey, by the middle 2010s the majority of South Africa's local governments flagged the promotion of tourism as one basis for boosting local economic performance, job creation and small business development. Unquestionably, the 'turn to tourism' as a driver for local development was especially strong in small town environments with 'touristic capital'. Over recent years, therefore, research issues concerning tourism and local economic development in small towns of South Africa have attracted much active concern (Donaldson, 2018; Kontsiwe & Visser, 2019; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2019; Dlomo & Rogerson, 2021; Donaldson, 2021; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2021a; C.M. Rogerson, 2022; van der Watt, 2022; J.M. Rogerson, 2023; Mhlabane et al., 2023; Gotyi & Tsamse, 2026; Leonard, 2026). This research upturn has been stimulated, to a large extent, by the constitutional mandate

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR'S CONTACT: Jayne Rogerson jayner@uj.ac.za
HOW TO CITE: Rogerson, J.M. (2026). Destination management challenges in small town South Africa: Insights from Overstrand local municipality. African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure, 15(3), 937-948 https://doi.org/10.46222/ajhtl.19770720.796

ISSN: 2223-814X (Online) | © 2026 AJHTL

This work is published by African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure and is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License.

Open Rubric

that whilst national and provincial tourism organisations primarily are responsible for designing and implementation of tourism strategies as well as national and international marketing campaigns, it is the responsibility of local government authorities for supporting local tourism (J.M. Rogerson, 2026). Indeed, over a decade ago van der Watt (2013: 62) pointed out "South African policy for local government and tourism assigns substantial responsibility for tourism to municipalities (local government)". The recent 2024 White Paper on Tourism reiterates the responsibilities of local governments in South Africa towards the development of local tourism which, in turn, might assist improving the health of local economies (Republic of South Africa, 2024).

The multiple challenges for South African local governments surrounding the delivery of successful tourism-led local economic development are scrutinised by several authors (Dlomo & Rogerson, 2021; Donaldson, 2021; van der Watt, 2022). Arguably, the practice of destination management is one of the most significant underpinnings for successful local tourism development albeit it remains one of the least well-researched at the level of local governments in South Africa. The research reported by van Niekerk (2014) on Mbombela remains one of the few local studies which is centred squarely on the role of the local public sector within destination management. Against this backdrop the research here is framed as a contribution to this limited body of African knowledge relating to the public sector and the challenges of local governments in destination management. Specifically, the aim is to examine the issues of destination management for tourism in a small town local municipality in which the sector represents an essential driver for the local economy. The case study is the Overstrand Local Municipality which is in Western Cape Province and located 120 km south-east of Cape Town. The coastal settlement of Hermanus is the major town in the municipality. Other small towns which are part of the local municipality include Kleinmond, Betty's Bay, Stanford and Gansbaai. Three uneven sections of material are presented. The literature review situates the Overstrand research within broader debates around the definition and scope of destination management. Following a brief discussion of methodology, the results section analyses the contemporary challenges identified that confront the local municipality in destination management.

Destination management: The literature context

Pearce (2015a) points out that destination management is a relatively recent concept with the first significant studies, such as those by Laws (1995), only starting to appear in the 1990s. It was during the period of the 2000s and early 2010s "that a distinctive if still fragmented body of literature has emerged" (Pearce, 2015a: 4). Destination management became a centre of interest, "not only in academia but also in practice" (Laesser & Beritelli, 2013: 46). The extant literature on destination management is somewhat diverse with overlaps with destination marketing and debates occurring as to whether destination marketing be subsumed under destination management or is distinct from it (Reinhold et al., 2023a). In a seminal text on destination management Morrison (2024: 5) pinpoints that the concepts of 'destination management' and 'destination marketing' are interrelated albeit that often "destination marketing is one of the functions within the broader concept of destination management". The international literature on destination management is now substantial, continues to expand rapidly and especially since 2012 with the establishment of a dedicated journal, the *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management.* In addition, there is the regular reporting of 'state of the art' meetings which reflect on advances taking place in this evolving dynamic field (Laesser & Beritelli, 2013; Reinhold et al., 2015, 2018, 2023a, 2023b; Laesser et al., 2025). According to Morrison (2024: 8) destination management is demarcated as "a professional approach to guiding all of the efforts in a place that has decided to pursue tourism as an economic activity". The definition for Pearce (2015b: 2) is that "destination management is generally portrayed as an over-arching process or approach which addresses the need to manage the diverse facets of a destination". In scoping the purpose of destination management Pearce (2015a: 5) highlights that it embodies multiple goals namely "to serve visitors' needs, to ensure balanced and sustainable management and to ensure the long-term competitiveness of a destination". In addition, Buhalis (2000) adds the imperative of the goal of destination management also to maximise the profitability of local enterprises. Among others, Fyall and Garrod (2020: 165) highlight the diversity and depth of challenges relating to destination management. Overall, there is broad consensus that destination management involves diverse functions (Pearce 2015b, 2016; Reinhold et al., 2023a, 2023b; Albrecht & Haid, 2025; Parisi & Konidaris, 2026).

The activity of destination management involves multiple activities and functions with those most frequently highlighted being "destination marketing, positioning and branding; destination planning, monitoring and evaluation; product development; resource stewardship and environmental management" (Pearce, 2015a: 5). In another perspective based on extant international research, the so-termed 'core destination management functions' were identified as those of destination marketing, branding and positioning; destination planning, monitoring and evaluation, and product development (Pearce, 2015b).

Marketing, branding and communications are flagged as critical issues for destination positioning (Morrison, 2024). Fyall & Garrod (2020) make a call for progress to be made towards integrated and holistic forms of sustainable destination management with destinations considered as part of a wider system which includes urban planning, economic inequality, transport, land use planning and housing among others. In setting the framework for this study rather than attempt to be comprehensive the review concentrates on the role of the public sector and of local government in destination management. As articulated by Syssner and Hjerpe (2018: S24) the different role of governmental actors in destination management "has been the topic of many studies, accomplished on different continents, and in various political and societal contexts" (cf. Ruhanen, 2013; Nunkoo, 2015, Pearce, 2015a, 2015b, 2016). On several grounds, local governments are fundamental for destination management variously as they are understood to represent the public interest, are endowed with the legislative capacity to implement change, to regulate or minimize potential problems associated with tourism development (Dredge, 2013; Nunkoo, 2015). In New Zealand Pearce (2015b, 2016) points out that destination management functions are carried out by territorial local authorities rather than separate destination management organisations. Several authors attest that local governments assume a pivotal role in destination management not least as a result of a legislative mandate to pursue land use planning and regulate development applications (Bramwell, 2011; Ruhanen, 2013). Importantly, local governments potentially have the capacity to "look at the bigger picture" (Ruhanen, 2013: 88) and incorporate decision-making considerations for local residents and community interests (Nunkoo, 2015).

Table 1: Interlinkages of tourism with other sectoral policies

Policy sector	Influence on tourism	Influence of tourism on the sector
Transport	Policy shapes access to destination, travel patterns influencing visitor accessibility and destination satisfaction	Tourism policy can stimulate movement to and within a destination with seasonal peaks that push transport capacity limits and generate need for infrastructure upgrades
Infrastructure/services	Infrastructure policy for water and sanitation may constrain the capacity of a destination to absorb tourists including by limiting stock of accommodation	Tourism policies may generate visitor demand beyond local capacity of water/sewerage systems with resultant environmental and other crises
Land Use Planning	Strategic land use planning and zoning regulations may lock-in non-tourist related land uses at locations suitable for tourism development thus reducing capacity of a destination to maximise its tourism potential	Tourism policies can promote and concentrate visits in areas of high tourist value but where land use planning restricts the growth of accommodation and services
Environmental Management	Environmental policies may protect and preserve unique environmental features which contribute to destination sustainability. In addition, policies may constrain access to resources upon which local tourism is anchored	Tourism policies may over-promote fragile resources with consequences of increased visits and environmental degradation.
Protected Area Management	Policies can protect the character of the area and amenity of the destination contributing to place branding	Over-development may impact on protected areas leading to restricted access, user charges that negatively affect tourist satisfaction
Public Health and Safety	Policy protects and enhances visitor satisfaction and destination reputation	Tourism growth can result in visitors with infectious disease impacting local health. In addition, it can be a stimulus to crime.
Economic Development	Policies can encourage synergies with other sectors to add depth to a destination's offerings such as local food.	Policies can promote additional demand for services and products increasing their long-term viability
Education, training and employment	Policies can enhance awareness and recognition among local populations of the importance of tourism as well as enhancing quality of tourism services	Policy can create demand for provision of specialized tourism education and training facilities.
Heritage, arts and culture	Policies can foster a positive sense of community which can be a positive selling aspect of a destination.	Tourism policy can enhance linkages and add value to a locality's heritage assets and thereby contribute to their protection and enhancement.
Community development	Encourages community support for tourism activities and enterprises.	Tourism development policies can minimize local concerns and result in frictions between residents and tourists.
Emergency/disaster Management	Through education and planning policies can increase the preparedness of tourist facilities and services to address emergencies/disasters	Policies can include action plans to enhance readiness, response and recovery but presence of tourists in emergency/disaster spaces creates additional pressures on emergency response measures.

Source: Adapted after Dredge (2013: 8)

For local governments, successful destination management requires a recognition that tourism is but one economic activity occurring in an area. In terms of local governments and destination management several critical issues must be addressed. Dredge (2013) stresses that an appreciation must exist in destination management of the interlinkages between tourism and other sectoral policies operated by local government. Table 1 provides an overview of these linkages. Through the integration of policies it is important local government manage the competition that may occur between tourism and other economic activities for use of resources in particular spaces (Nunkoo, 2015). Indeed, it is common for resources which have tourism potential to be attractive to other kinds of enterprise. Accordingly, seeking complementarities or synergies between competing resource users and resolving conflicts are keys for successful destination management. Destination management must confront a variety of problems ranging from coping with decline to dealing with rapid growth, the introduction of new products, or the establishment of tourism as a significant part of the local economy. Overall, successful destination management often is linked to the preparation of local authority tourism strategies (Charlton & Essex, 1996). The British experience shows such strategies vary considerably in their scope, content and level of detail and that "a well-researched and realistic tourism strategy or policy can be a very effective tool in developing tourism at a particular destination, to the advantage of residents, the environment and the tourism industry itself" (Davidson & Maitland, 1997: 179). In other streams of literature around destination management much focus is accorded to the significance of specific issues around destination identity and place branding. Dredge and Jenkins (2003: 383) point out that

as a sector "tourism is essentially place-based and involves the production of destination identity at different scales", an activity that thus engages organizations at the local tier of government. Chan et al. (2021) aver that tourism branding becomes an identity for a locality and plays a vital role in creating an image for places. In recent years "place branding has gained in popularity among local officials, institutional stakeholders, academic authors, and researchers since it became a relevant topic at the heart of places' issues of development, promotion and attractiveness" (Mohamed, 2019: 23). For Guler (2017) in tourism development, local governments assume a critical role in participating and shaping the branding for localities. Indeed, place branding has been viewed as one of "the most important measures regarding territorial development that local public authorities should take" (Petrea et al., 2013: 137). Place branding has been viewed a foundation for rebuilding local tourism economies from crises such as that precipitated by COVID-19 (Skinner, 2021). It is argued many tourists perceive destinations as brands and that they ultimately determine their tourism destination by evaluating brand equity and the assets of the brand as such (Kim & Lee, 2022).

Place branding "refers to the development of brands for geographic locations with the aim of triggering positive associations about the area and distinguishing a place from other places" (Stevens et al. 2020: 752). For Ginesta and San Eugenio (2021: 632) place branding "is a relatively new transdisciplinary academic discipline" which has evolved from what earlier research described as place marketing or place promotion activities. However, place branding goes beyond place marketing and place promotion as places "have followed the example of organizations by importing various concepts and techniques of product branding and especially corporate branding in their own operational area in order to improve their position in a globalized and competitive environment" (Mohamed, 2019: 25). Stevens et al. (2020) maintain that public branding is a new governance strategy in the public sector and seen as significant most especially for local governments. Central attention is focused on how territories position themselves in competitive global markets and in this regard public administrations, including local governments are "key actors in the development of place branding" (Ginesta & San Eugenio, 2021: 632). Arguably, place branding is the translation of product branding into the domain of public administration (Petrea et al., 2013). Brand management becomes another strand of research concerning destination management (Datzira-Masip & Poluzzi, 2014). According to Manoharan et al. (2025) branding is a valued governance strategy used by municipal governments to boost the general perception of their resources and opportunities. Arguably, place branding can be viewed as an exercise of places to seek definition of their 'competitive identity' (Ginesta & San Eugenio, 2021: 642). Enhancing destination image and tourism outcomes are core goals of place branding agendas which involve positioning the place in the minds of multiple audiences by nurturing and maintaining a distinctive place identity (Bisani et al., 2024). A strategy of place branding seeks to "influence people's ideas by forging emotional and psychological associations with a place" (Stevens et al. 2020: 753). Moreover, when done properly "these emotional and psychological associations can stimulate tourists to visit the area" (Stevens et al., 2020: 753). One of the most critical impediments consistently identified upon local governments' role in tourism planning and destination management is, however, the lack of research and available information (Dredge, 2000; van Niekerk, 2014; Nunkoo, 2015; Rozïte & van der Steina, 2019: J.M.Rogerson, 2026). As observed by Garcia et al. (2025: 147) the imperative is for "trustworthy-information" in order to inform decision-making. Among key findings of a recent bibliometric survey of international research conducted on local governments and tourism was the need identified for evidence-based planning (Uy & Sarsale, 2026). From the example of Irish local government McLoughlin and Hanrahan (2023) stress the significance of evidence-based planning to support local governments in destination management and tourism planning. As McLoughlin et al. (2023: 1) aver "local authorities have significant planning responsibilities and can benefit from evidence-based approaches". Likewise, Pham et al. (2025: 673) record "the usefulness, position and dynamics of evidence in destination management". In terms of roles of the local public sector in the South African context, marketing and promotion, creating and maintaining a suitable environment for development within the destination, leading and coordination were isolated amongst the most significant roles for local governments in destination management (van Niekerk, 2014).

Methodology

The study was pursued through the application of different research methods. At the outset, a baseline literature search was undertaken of existing works that interrogated destination management and especially of those with a specific local government focus. As was demonstrated in the above discussion the current 'state of the art' of international literature concentrates upon debating the contemporary challenges of destination management for tourism in countries of the Global North with only limited research engagements concerning Africa (van Niekerk, 2014; Uy & Sarsale, 2026). In addressing the knowledge gap, scoping and

analysis of the destination management challenges facing local government was undertaken through a mixed methods approach. A baseline of quantitative data on the performance of Overstrand tourism was captured from the private sector S & P Global data base as official data for tourism is not available at the scale of local municipalities. The data calculation method is through the S & P Global ReX Tourism model which allows triangulation of multiple data sources (including official data) relating to tourism flows in South Africa. For probing the destination management challenges at the local level a qualitative approach was adopted and the research involved face-to-face semi-structured interviews. The Overstrand interview research was undertaken to capture stakeholder perspectives on business challenges surrounding destination management in a small town environment. Using a purposive sampling approach, 40 in-depth interviews with tourism business stakeholders were done between September-November 2025. The interviewees were contacted telephonically to establish a convenient time and venue. Themes for discussion and letter of support from the Overstrand Municipal Manager were forwarded to respondents via email prior to the interview meeting. The cohort of interviewees included accommodation providers, event organizers, tourism marketers, wineries, restaurants, property agents and the local tourism business association. Interviews were conducted mainly on an individual basis; occasionally the interviews were with small groups of two or three businesses. Each interview took on average between one to two hours and all interviews were recorded and transcribed. In terms of geography, two-thirds of the interviews were undertaken in Hermanus, the major tourism hub of the municipality; others were captured in the smaller centres of Kleinmond, Stanford and Gansbaai. Overall, the small town interviews provide rich insights into the lived daily experience of operators who depend on the local environment, the municipal system, and the destination's reputation for their commercial survival. In a parallel with international studies that were targeted to produce an evidence-base for destination management, thematic content analysis was deployed to explore the detail in the transcribed interviews.

Results

The results and discussion are organized in terms of two sub-sections of material. The first presents a profile of the case study region and an analysis of the performance of the tourism economy using the available statistical source material. The second section shifts to the qualitative material and provides the results of the interviews concerning destination management and its local challenges.

The case study municipality: The statistical portrait

The Overstrand is a destination with rich and diverse tourism assets. It is a municipality of exceptional natural beauty, cultural endowment and opportunities for enjoyment of marine tourism. Arguably, however, another critical asset for the Overstrand is its reputation as one of the best-run local authorities in South Africa with high quality of basic service delivery, infrastructure maintenance, street cleanliness and visible security. The municipality is the locus of a dramatic coastal geography which stretches from Kleinmond to Gansbaai with competitive strengths for tourism unmatched by few other small towns in the country **(**Rogerson & Rogerson, 2019). Whale watching in Hermanus is the flagship experience and the primary driver of international awareness of the destination (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2020; J.M. Rogerson, 2023). Shark-related marine tourism in Gansbaai provides a second, world-class adventure-oriented marine tourism offering (McKay, 2020; van der Watt, 2022). Beaches, shorelines, biodiversity (fynbos) and nature photography are further assets for local tourism. Natural protected areas offer multiple opportunities for hiking, camping and caravanning. Adventure activities encompass canopy tours, ziplining, parasailing, sand boarding, tubing and quad biking. Second homes tourism and long-stays by wealthy European 'swallows' are added boosts to the municipal tourism economy. Another group of tourism assets surround wine, food, and gastronomy which are strategically significant components of the Overstrand's tourism identity. Wine farms in the Hemel-en-Aarde Valley and the Walker Bay region (including Stanford) are the anchor. Culinary tourism is accelerating in importance as a result of the opening of a number of fine dining establishments associated with the wine estates. In November 2019 the significance of culinary tourism was reinforced by the announcement that Overstrand had been recognised by UNESCO as Africa's first Creative City of Gastronomy (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2021b; J.M. Rogerson, 2023).

Table 2: Profile of Overstrand tourism economy, 2024

Indicator	Details and Comment
Total Trips	224 407 trips of which 64.3% leisure trips, 26.0% VFR trips, 8.4% Business; 1.3% Other.
Origin of Trips	73.4 % Domestic, 26.6 % International
Total Bednights	1 416 306
Origin of Bednights	63.1 % International, 36.9 Domestic
Total Tourism Spend (R'000s)	2 853 070 which contributes estimated 20.8 % Local Gross Domestic Product

Source: Author compilation based on S & P Global Data base

Using the data compiled by S & P. Global Table 2 provides an essential profile of the tourism economy of the Overstrand in 2024. It reveals a leisure-focused destination which is dominated numerically by domestic trips but with major commercial revenues critically reliant upon international visitors as indicated by the structure of bed nights. In comparative perspective Overstrand is ranked (2024) on the basis of total spend contribution to local GDP the eighth most tourism-dependent of South Africa's 213 local (including metropolitan) authorities.

Table 3. Proportional Contribution of Tourism to GDP: South Africa and Selected LMs 2019-2024

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
SOUTH AFRICA	7.3	4.3	4.7	6.8	6.8	6.9
Overstrand	22.3	14.8	17.3	22.2	21.3	20.8
Swellendam	16.4	10.1	11.2	14.7	11.4	9.6
Cape Agulhas	39.8	27.4	31.2	36.0	34.5	32.6
Theewaterskloof	7.8	4.4	4.7	7.0	6.8	6.7
Cape Town	7.7	4.4	4.6	6.8	6.9	6.9
Stellenbosch	16.2	9.8	6.6	9.5	9.2	9.1
Bitou	30.3	20.8	24.2	29.7	28.4	28.0

Source: Author compilation based on S & P Global Data base

Table 4: Total Tourism Spend (R'000 Current Prices), South Africa and Selected LMs 2019-2024

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
SOUTH AFRICA	411,345,361	241,187,177	290,658,665	455,968,011	480,968,011	504, 126, 193
Overstrand	2,304,446	1,514,508	1,944,018	2,719,592	2,788,494	2,853,070
Swellendam	637,759	392,681	482,287	693,426	574,378	507,703
Cape Agulhas	1,575,879	1,082,272	1,367,390	1,761,726	1,783,539	1,785,665
Theewaterskloof	980,381	566,486	686,391	1,133,605	1,197,457	1,262,831
Cape Town	42,609,706	24,151,661	27,809,581	44,480,159	48,221,099	50,561,687
Stellenbosch	3,359,492	2,018,794	1,505,344	2,340,957	2,435,188	2,533,532
Bitou	1,767,844	1,179,769	1,506,039	1,999,348	2,038,333	2,088,710

Source: Author compilation based on S & P Global Data base

The impacts of COVID and post-COVID-19 performance of the Overstrand municipality demand brief attention. Tables 3 and 4 demonstrate the diminished contribution of tourism for South Africa as well as to selected municipal economies in the Western Cape showing the onset of an uneven recovery that commences in 2022. In a national benchmarking of comparative tourism spend for 2018 and 2024, the position of Overstrand is unchanged at rank 25 in terms of most important South African local municipalities for tourism spend. Overall, the period 2018-2024 reveals different phases in the performance of tourism in the local municipality with plummeting COVID-induced tourist trips and spend followed by a post-2022 rebound primarily the result of the return of leisure visitors – both domestic and international – and with a minor upturn in business tourism. By 2024 the state of tourism in absolute terms – numbers of visitors, tourism spend is nearly back to 2018/2019 levels. In relative terms, however, as compared with other coastal municipalities there are signals that the Overstrand tourism economy has not been performing as well as certain other destinations, including Saldanha Bay, Mossel Bay and Kouga which appear to have bounced back faster from COVID.

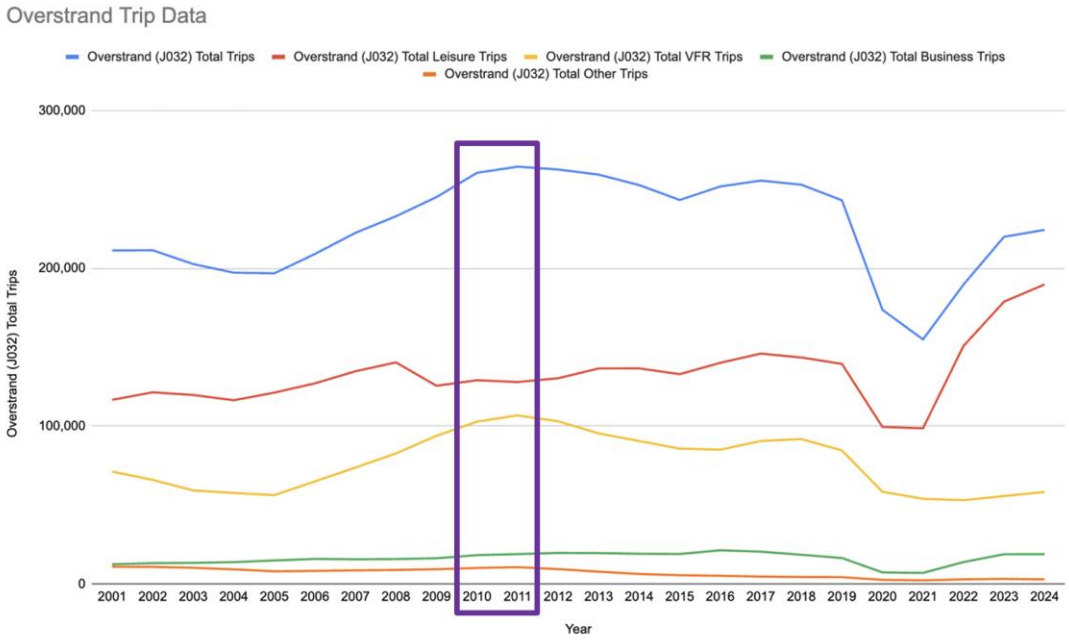

Figure 1. The trajectory and structure of The Overstrand tourism economy 2001-2024
Source: Author compilation based on S & P. data

Further evidence of an ‘unfinished recovery’ can be found by extending the analysis of the Overstrand tourism economy over a period of two decades. Using S & P. Global data Figure 1 widens the analytical lens beyond the 2018-2024 window of the preceding data by a plot of total trip volumes to the Overstrand on an annual basis from 2001 to 2024 across all visitor categories. The picture it reveals is instructive (Fig. 1). Several points are of note. First, total trips to the Overstrand reached their highest recorded level in 2010 and 2011 when aggregate visitor volumes approached 280 000 trips per year. This peak was driven primarily by leisure tourism the dominant category throughout the entire period which reached approximately 130 000 trips in those years. The subsequent decade brought a gradual but steady decline in overall volumes, well before COVID-19 arrived to accelerate the contraction sharply in 2020 and 2021. Second, the post-COVID recovery is genuine and encouraging. Total trips have climbed back towards 190 000 by 2024, and leisure trip volumes have similarly recovered to levels broadly consistent with the mid-2010s. Figure 1 makes clear what the more recent data tables alone do not, namely that the Overstrand's tourism economy has not yet returned to its own historical high-water mark. Current visitor volumes remain approximately 30% below the 2010/2011 peak, and the trajectory of recovery, while positive, has not been steep enough to close that gap within the period covered by this study. This long-term perspective therefore adds an important perspective to the earlier analysis. The Overstrand tourism economy is not merely recovering from COVID-19; it is recovering from a decade-long softening in visitor volumes that pre-dated the pandemic and that the pandemic then deepened considerably. The long-term view therefore reinforces an argument for examining issues around the state of tourism destination management.

Destination management challenges

Thematic analyses of the collected interview data from the 40 semi-structured interviews disclosed several salient issues around local destination management. Two strands of issues can be identified, namely (1) destination marketing and branding, and (2) creation of an improved enabling business environment. Notably, both these sets of issues were identified in the earlier South African research on destination management as conducted by van Niekerk (2014).

Destination marketing and branding

The greatest dissatisfaction expressed by local businesses relates to inadequacies of tourism marketing and with associated concerns about branding. The ‘under-selling’ of the tourism potential of the Overstrand was widely recorded and viewed as the most significant issue for enhanced destination management. Typically, for one Hermanus-based business owner: *"The municipality does really well with services but destination marketing would be highest on my list and support locals to see what challenges we can overcome together"*. The interview respondents highlighted the low profile or, in many instances, the absence of a professional destination marketing presence for Overstrand at leading national and international tourism trade shows as their most concerning matter. One Hermanus respondent expressed the common view: *"We need to market the uniqueness of the various aspects of the area. It is not just about the whales. We should also be marketed internationally through partnerships with South African Tourism at events abroad and leverage Overstrand to get a bigger audience"*. Unquestionably, tour operators and travel agents remain important for the international group market, particularly visitors from the United States, United Kingdom, and Asia travelling on pre-arranged itineraries. This channel is strategically significant beyond its current volume because it is where multi-night itineraries are designed, often 12-18 months in advance. Accordingly, Overstrand's absence from the major international tourism trade events is a critical marketing gap from planning conversations in which future itineraries are built and future visitor numbers determined. The marketing vacuum means tour operators designing itineraries for 2027 and 2028 are not being courted.

Further, the limited visibility of the Overstrand at leading international trade markets is compounded by an over-reliance on a single seasonal attraction, namely whale watching in the destination's public narrative. From the perspective of one Hermanus accommodation provider “*"The municipality could assist by marketing better and not just focusing on whales. It might have been that years ago but now there is a lot more to do like the cliff path, wines, art galleries and surrounding towns like Stanford"*. Indeed, it is argued that the marketing over-reliance on whales is a prime cause of the persistent ‘one-night’ stopover by large numbers of international travellers as whale-viewing is seen as a single morning activity justifying only a one-night stay in the Overstrand. Arguably, the strategic reorientation for destination management is not a rejection of whale watching as it remains the most powerful hook the Overstrand has for initial international awareness. Rather, it is the imperative for a deliberate broadening in destination marketing to highlight other product offerings, such as the area’s natural beauty, biodiversity, food, wine, heritage and events. The Hemel-en-Aarde Valley produces wine of international standard. Indeed, of all unrealised strategic assets, the UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy accreditation stands out as the most immediately actionable for destination management and the most disproportionately neglected. This is a globally credible designation

that places the Overstrand within a network of recognised international culinary destinations including Parma, San Sebastián, Chengdu, and Ensenada (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2021b; J.M. Rogerson, 2023). It speaks directly to the fastest-growing and highest-spending segment of international experiential travel, namely culinary tourism and yet is almost entirely unknown for local marketing: *"The culinary experience plays a big part in the Hermanus economy. We need to look at the UNESCO accreditation"* (Hermanus Restaurant Owner).

For destination marketing therefore the priority is to reposition the Overstrand as a year-round attraction destination such that visitors who come for the whales, stay for the wine, return for the gastronomy, bring their families for the beaches and the fynbos, and recommend the Overstrand to friends looking for an adventure or a festival or a slow-travel escape. The assets to build this narrative exist. Importantly, they are often situated beyond the central Hermanus tourism node and thus can contribute to a more inclusive and even geographical spread of tourism within the municipality. The Stanford heritage and food scene is distinctive and genuinely special. The Overstrand coastline from Pringle Bay to Pearly Beach is among the most spectacular in South Africa. The local Kogelberg Biosphere is a biodiversity asset of global significance. The UNESCO gastronomy credential connects the destination to a global community of culinary tourism. For destination management underpinning all this is a natural narrative that the Overstrand has not yet fully claimed, namely the convergence of the ocean 'big five' and the fynbos floral kingdom in a single, compact, accessible destination. No competitor destination in South Africa (and few in the world) can offer visitors the experience of watching whales from a cliff path that runs adjacent to a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, followed by a meal at a restaurant in a Creative City of Gastronomy, followed by a wine tasting in a valley that produces bottles served at restaurants in Paris or New York. The interviews disclosed that disquiet about destination marketing was associated also with considerations relating to the branding of the local municipality. Indeed, the brand identity problem makes effective marketing for the Overstrand more challenging even when it does occur. The name 'Overstrand' is consistently described as an administrative label with no emotional resonance for visitors referring to a municipal boundary, not a destination. The following statements exemplify these issues: *"Overstrand is fine for a municipality but as a name it doesn't land anywhere"* (Hermanus Business Owner) and *"Overstrand means nothing to tourists. But Hermanus is the hook as it probably conjures up the wine valley, mountains, swimming, restaurants and marine life"*. (Hermanus Tourism Business Owner). The branding confusion is further that whilst 'Hermanus' has established brand equity, the name 'Whale Coast' over-emphasizes the single-attraction problem. From the perspective of a Hermanus wine estate operator: "*"In terms of attracting tourists, Hermanus is the attraction not Overstrand or the Whale Coast".* Another tourism operator based in Hermanus opined as follows: *"Sustainable tourism should be our hook to get people here. How do we explore what we have and make it available to people so they have an authentic experience"*. The suggestion to position around 'sustainable tourism' and 'authentic experiences' would align with UNESCO gastronomy credentials and contemporary travel trends in experiential travel, food tourism as well as eco-tourism.

The physical manifestation of this identity confusion and fragmentation is evidenced in the signage landscape. Visitors travelling through the Overstrand encounter a confusing array of names, *viz*. Overstrand, Overberg (name of the district municipality within which Overstrand falls), Whale Coast, and Hermanus. These are rendered in inconsistent formats, faded colours, and varying sizes of signage. The absence of the UNESCO Kogelberg Biosphere and Creative City of Gastronomy designations from both promotional material and signage represents a failure to leverage internationally credible credentials that competing destinations would use prominently and consistently. A related question of destination identity is the naming and branding of the local tourism route. The Overstrand's four main settlements - Kleinmond, Hermanus, Stanford, and Gansbaai - are strung along the coast in a natural sequence that constitutes in practical terms an existing tourism route. Nevertheless, the route is currently unnamed, unmarked as a coherent itinerary, and marketed piecemeal rather than as a unified tourism product.

An improved business environment

A cluster of issues were disclosed for destination management around the making of an improved business environment for tourism businesses. These structural challenges were revealed consistently across business type, geographic location, and scale of tourism enterprise. The most frequently raised and urgent operational challenge in the interview sample concerned staffing and skills. Businesses across every category; accommodation, restaurants, wine farms, attractions and adventure operators report difficulty finding locally-based candidates with the training and experience required for management, front-of-house, and specialised hospitality roles. The consequence is that management-level positions are routinely filled by people recruited from Cape Town, at higher cost and with no employment benefit flowing to local communities. The manager of a large hotel with conference centre in Kleinmond stated as follows: *"Our biggest challenge is staffing and the skill base. You will find that a lot of businesses here bring in from Cape*

Town. We have local communities that don't get the benefit. We need more local tourism and hospitality training and development. It should not be up to private businesses to do this". This underscores that the absence of a local training pipeline is experienced as a policy failure as much as a market failure. The manager of one of largest hotels in Hermanus observed: *"To assist the tourism economy the municipality should focus on training and development and empowering the local community to have that labour source. We need the workforce and the municipality could start the programme with the support of private entities to help fund it and get it to fruition".* In a municipality with high unemployment, the gap between available labour and employable candidates for tourism roles represents a lost development opportunity as much as a business constraint: *"If there was a local registered database of skilled labour where candidates can load their CV and they are screened, we would go there when looking for seasonal or permanent candidates. This is not just our issue - it is a general issue in the area"* (Kleinmond Hotel Manager).

Transport and accessibility create another set of structural difficulties with consequences that cascade across the visitor experience, the staffing challenge, and the night-time economy. The Overstrand has no Uber service and limited public transport options of any kind. This requires visitors to use either rental cars or local taxis to move independently around the destination. Evening restaurant services are effectively inaccessible for businesses and guests outside the Hermanus CBD, and staff at outlying establishments face significant logistical obstacles in reaching their workplace after hours: *"Our major challenge is the sporadic nature of tourism. Seasonality is an issue but as we are out of town and there are no Ubers or public transport. We struggle to provide a dinner service. Staff transport after evening functions is a major issue"* (Restaurant and Venue Owner, Hermanus Outskirts). Infrastructure gaps occurring in specific areas remain a source of operational frustration despite the broader service delivery excellence of the municipality. For example, sewage pump capacity near the seafront was flagged as an issue that directly affects the visitor experience in the restaurant precinct. The requirement for environmental improvements was also identified, particularly in Gansbaai and surrounds. Tour bus parking in the Hermanus CBD is one of the most long-standing and explicitly unresolved infrastructure deficiencies across the entire interview sample. Typical are the following statements. From a Hermanus Hotel Owner: *"The municipality could assist more with parking for the tourist buses. On one day we can have as many as 12 tour buses coming through here. The roads in town are tiny and the municipality can look to create an area dedicated to buses that is safe and fenced in".* The viewpoint of an operator of one of the major tourist attractions was similar: *"We also get a lot of tour buses in winter due to the Saudi Arabian and Indian tourists who travel then. These buses come from afar and sometimes luggage is left inside so safety is paramount".*

Further, in terms of an improved business environment, destination management needs to address several other points of concern. The interviews disclosed a consistent and increasingly urgent frustration, namely that a destination with exceptional assets and a well-run civic platform was held back not only by the absence of marketing but also by regulatory friction, institutional drift, and poor communication. Indeed, communication gaps between the municipality and businesses around events and visitor flows represent a dimension of relationship failure, and one with commercial consequences. Businesses repeatedly described missed revenue opportunities because they were not informed about upcoming visitor flows in time to prepare. Signage represented a specific and acute version of the regulatory frustration. Businesses across the Overstrand describe a process for obtaining tourism signage that is bureaucratically opaque, slow, and discouraging. In the words of one guesthouse owner: *"There is supposed to be municipal regulations around signage literally to the centimetre. But I see everybody just puts up any darn signage they want and there's no follow up and no consequences".* The frustrations around inadequate signage were strongly articulated in interviews with operators of wine farms. Typically, one wine farm owner in the Hemel-en-Aarde Valley observed: *"Signage is something the municipality could improve especially for the wine areas – a sign to Hemel-en-Aarde and Stanford wine routes. Wine is not alcohol it is culture. Hemel-en-Aarde is almost a gastronomy route but there is no map at the turning. Nothing to invite people in.".* Another respondent reflected as follows: *"The barrier to business we have at the moment is signage and we are told that it will take 6 months to get a brown sign. They don't assist us and there is a lot of red tape. Also for the valley as a whole a wine route sign is at the top of our list" (*Wine Farm Owner, Hemel-en-Aarde Valley).

Above all, for creating an improved business environment, widely identified across the interviews was the absence in the Overstrand municipality of a dedicated, accessible point of contact to interface between municipal processes and the needs of the private sector. As captured by one Hermanus tourism business operator: *"Infrastructure is their main objective but the municipality is there to provide the foundation for the private sector to do what they need to do. But with tourism we do need a bridge".* The request is for a personnel appointment of what interviewees described variously as a ‘bridge person’, ‘liaison’ or ‘champion’ to function in a relationship role. The appointee would address the communication shortfalls and assist navigating the bureaucracy on behalf of tourism operators as well as pinpoint emerging issues for the attention of municipal management. In a follow-up interview conducted with the Municipal

Manager this gap in local destination management was acknowledged: "*They (tourism businesses) want a 'go-to' and that gap is felt*".

Conclusion

This paper makes a novel contribution to the limited existing literature that examines destination management at the level of local governments in South Africa. Arguably, the successful progress of tourism-led local economic development demands undertaking the practice of destination management. In small towns that imperative is particularly urgent. The Overstrand case study provides insight into the range of issues that must be addressed in destination management. Destination marketing, branding and the creation of an improved business environment surface as leading concerns. Overall, in terms of the challenges for 'developmental local government' the Overstrand represents an example of a South African local municipality that has not yet made the transition from capable service provider to active economic facilitator. The picture that emerges from the interview data is, however, that the municipality should sustain and deepen what already works in its record of service delivery and insert a new layer of economic facilitation that currently does not exist, namely for destination management. For Overstrand the agenda of destination management demands that the municipality should evolve from its current posture of responsive, reliable, and inward-facing to one that is pro-actively oriented towards the commercial community, the tourism economy it supports, and thereby potentially catalyse broad ramifications for local economic growth, job creation and community development. The agenda for destination management is headed by the importance attached for an enhanced destination marketing function to represent the Overstrand at the national and international trade platforms where the destination's future itinerary share is determined. Business stakeholders identify other 'action points' for destination management wherein municipal roles should expand. These relate to improving the local business environment. Key issues are: (1) to lead or facilitate skills training with greater benefits to accrue to the local hospitality workforce, (2) improve destination marketing coordination for routes, (3) address tourism-specific infrastructure issues (parking, traffic, environmental assets), (4) streamline and accelerate signage processes, and, (5) establish structured business communication channels, including through the appointment of a dedicated tourism 'bridge' person.

Acknowledgements

For important inputs to this paper thanks are extended to Robbie Norfolk, Betty White and L. Gladys Champagne. Jonathan Rogerson is credited for preparation of Figure 1

References

Albrecht, J., & Haid, M. (2025). Leadership and stewardship in destination management. In R. Hallack, M. Mustafa, & C. Lee (Eds.), *Leadership in tourism and hospitality* (pp. 15–25). Edward Elgar Publishing.

Bisani, S., Daye, M., & Mortimer, K. (2024). Legitimacy and inclusivity in place branding. *Annals of Tourism Research, 109*, Article 103840. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2024.103840

Bramwell, B. (2011). Governance, the state and sustainable tourism: A political economy approach. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 19*(4–5), 459–477. https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2011.576765

Buhalis, D. (2000). Marketing the competitive destination of the future. *Tourism Management, 21*(1), 97–116. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177(99)00095-3

Chan, A., Suryadipura, D., & Kostini, N. (2021). City image: City branding and city identity strategies. *Review of Integrative Business and Economics Research, 10*(Suppl. 1), 330–341.

Charlton, C., & Essex, S. (1996). The involvement of district councils in tourism in England and Wales. *Geoforum, 27*(2), 175–192. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/0016718596000115

Datzira-Masip, J., & Poluzzi, A. (2014). Brand architecture management: The case of four tourist destinations in Catalonia. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management, 3*(1), 48–58. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2013.12.006

Davidson, R., & Maitland, R. (1997). *Tourism destinations*. Hodder & Stoughton.

Dlomo, T., & Rogerson, C. M. (2021). Tourism and local economic development in King Sabata Dalindyebo Municipality. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure, 10*(1), 145–164. https://hdl.handle.net/10210/482408

Donaldson, R. (2018). *Small town tourism in South Africa*. Springer.

Donaldson, R. (2021). Small town tourism in South Africa revisited. In C. M. Rogerson & J. M. Rogerson (Eds.), *Urban tourism in the Global South: South African perspectives* (pp. 193–211). Springer.

Dredge, D. (2001). Local government tourism planning and policy making in New South Wales: Institutional development and historical legacies. *Current Issues in Tourism, 4*(2–4), 355–380. https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500108667893

Dredge, D. (2013). *Short-term versus long-term approaches to the development of tourism-related policies*. OECD Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1787/5js4vmp5n5r8-en

Dredge, D., & Jenkins, J. (2013). Destination place identity and regional tourism policy. *Tourism Geographies, 5*(4), 383–407. https://doi.org/10.1080/1461668032000129137

Fyall, A., & Garrod, B. (2020). Destination management: A perspective article. *Tourism Review, 75*(1), 165–169. https://doi.org/10.1108/TR-07-2019-0311

Garcia, C. I., Pforr, C., & Volgger, M. (2025). A research roadmap for evidence-informed planning in tourism. *Tourism Geographies, 27*(2), 145–167. https://doi.org/10.1080/14616688.2025.2493336

Ginesta, X., & San Eugenio, J. (2021). Rethinking place branding from a political perspective: Urban governance, public diplomacy and sustainable policy making. *American Behavioral Scientist, 65*(4), 632–649. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764220975066

Gotyi, Z. G., & Tsamse, A. (2026). Heritage tourism as a catalyst for local economic development: Challenges and opportunities in Raymond Mhlaba Local Municipality, South Africa. *African Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 2*(1), Article a16. https://doi.org/10.4102/ajst.v2i1.16

Guler, E. G. (2017). The role of local governments in city branding. In Information Resources Management Association (Ed.), *Advertising and branding: Concepts, methodologies, tools and applications* (pp. 784–803). IGI Global.

Kim, J.-J., & Lee, C.-J. (2022). A tourists' gaze on local tourism governance: The relationship among local tourism governance, brand equity, and tourism attachment for sustainable tourism. *Sustainability, 14*(24), Article 16477. https://doi.org/10.3390/su142416477

Kontsiwe, N., & Visser, G. (2019). Tourism as a vehicle for local economic development in small towns? When things go wrong: The case of Aliwal North, South Africa. *GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites, 27*(4), 1334–1346. https://gtg.webhost.uoradea.ro/PDF/GTG-4-2019/gtg.27418-437.pdf

Laesser, C., & Beritelli, P. (2013). St. Gallen consensus on destination management. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management, 2*(1), 46–49. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2012.11.003

Laesser, C., Reinhold, S., & Beritelli, P. (2025). The 2024 consensus on advances in destination marketing. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management, 38*, Article 101038. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2025.101038

Laws, E. (1995). *Tourism destination management: Issues, analysis and policies*. Routledge.

Leonard, L. (2026). From mining consideration to mindful tourism in Melmoth, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa: Reimagining sustainable futures. *Local Environment, 31*(8), 1276–1295. https://doi.org/10.1080/13549839.2025.2560358

Manoharan, A. P., Hohensinn, L., & Wu, H.-C. (2025). Public branding in the digital age: An empirical investigation of U.S. cities. *International Journal of Public Administration, 48*(1), 43–54. https://doi.org/10.1080/01900692.2024.2311385

McKay, T. (2020). Locating great white shark tourism in Gansbaai, South Africa within the global shark tourism economy. In J. M. Rogerson & G. Visser (Eds.), *New directions in South African tourism geographies* (pp. 283–297). Springer.

McLoughlin, E., & Hanrahan, J. (2019). Local authority sustainable planning for tourism: Lessons from Ireland. *Tourism Review, 74*(3), 327–348. https://doi.org/10.1108/TR-12-2017-0198

McLoughlin, E., & Hanrahan, J. (2023). Evidence-informed planning for tourism. *Journal of Policy Research in Tourism, Leisure and Events, 15*(1), 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1080/19407963.2021.1931257

Mhlabane, B., Nyikana, S., & Rogerson, C. M. (2023). Route tourism planning, local impacts and challenges: Stakeholder perspectives from the Panorama Route, South Africa. *Studia Periegetica, 43*(3), 129–148. https://doi.org/10.58683/sp.567

Mohamed, B. (2019). Exploring place branding: State of the art and future research directions. *China-USA Business Review, 18*(2), 25–33.

Morrison, A. (2024). *Marketing and managing tourism destinations* (3rd ed.). Routledge.

Nel, E., & Rogerson, C. M. (2016). The contested trajectory of applied local economic development in South Africa. *Local Economy, 31*(1–2), 109–123. https://doi.org/10.1177/0269094215623729

Nunkoo, R. (2015). Tourism development and trust in local government. *Tourism Management, 46*, 623–634. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2014.08.016

Parisi, E., & Konidaris, A. (2026). Tourism destination management: Comparative case study of two tourist destinations: The island of Kefalonia in Greece and the city of Bolu in Turkey. In V. Katsoni (Ed.), *Synergizing management, culture and arts for tourist development* (Vol. 2, pp. 639–652). Springer.

Pearce, D. G. (2015a). Urban management, destination management and urban destination management: A comparative review with issues and examples from New Zealand. *International Journal of Tourism Cities, 1*(1), 1–17.

Pearce, D. G. (2015b). Destination management in New Zealand: Structures and functions. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management, 4*, 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2014.12.001

Pearce, D. G. (2016). Destination management: Plans and practitioners' perspectives from New Zealand. *Tourism Planning & Development, 13*(1), 52–71. https://doi.org/10.1080/21568316.2015.1076511

Petrea, R., Petrea, D., Olău, P. E., & Filimon, L. (2013). Place branding as efficient management tool for local government. *Transylvanian Review of Administrative Sciences, 9*(Special Issue), 124–140.

Pham, K., Andereck, K. L., & Vogt, C. A. (2025). Stakeholders' involvement in an evidence-based sustainable development plan. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 33*(4), 673–696. https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2023.2259117

Reinhold, S., Laesser, C., & Beritelli, P. (2015). 2014 St. Gallen consensus on destination management. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management, 4*(2), 137–172. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2012.11.003

Reinhold, S., Laesser, C., & Beritelli, P. (2018). The 2016 St. Gallen consensus on destination management. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management, 8*, 426–431. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2012.11.003

Reinhold, S., Beritelli, P., & Laesser, C. (2023a). The 2022 consensus on advances in destination management. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management, 29*, Article 100797. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2023.100797

Reinhold, S., Beritelli, P., Fyall, A., Choi, H.-S. C., Laesser, C., & Joppe, M. (2023b). State-of-the-art review on destination marketing and management. *Tourism and Hospitality, 4*(4), 584–603. https://doi.org/10.3390/tourhosp4040036

Republic of South Africa. (2024). *White paper on the development and promotion of tourism in South Africa 2024*. Government Gazette, 4 October 2024, No. 51354.

Rogerson, C. M. (2014). Reframing place-based economic development in South Africa: The example of local economic development. *Bulletin of Geography. Socio-Economic Series, 24*, 203–218.

Rogerson, C. M. (2019). Revamping local economic development policy in South Africa. In J. Knight & C. M. Rogerson (Eds.), *Geography of South Africa: Contemporary changes and new directions* (pp. 253–259). Springer International.

Rogerson, C. M. (2020). Using municipal assets for leveraging local economic development in South Africa. *Bulletin of Geography. Socio-Economic Series, 48*, 47–63. https://doi.org/10.2478/bog-2020-0013

Rogerson, C. M., & Rogerson, J. M. (2019). Tourism, local economic development and inclusion: Evidence from Overstrand Local Municipality, South Africa. *GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites, 25*(2), 293–308.

Rogerson, C. M., & Rogerson, J. M. (2020). Inclusive tourism and municipal assets: Evidence from the Overstrand Local Municipality, South Africa. *Development Southern Africa, 37*(5), 840–854. https://doi.org/10.1080/0376835X.2020.1796597

Rogerson, C. M., & Rogerson, J. M. (2021a). Municipal assets for tourism and small-town local economic development: Caravan parks in South Africa. In J. Saarinen & J. M. Rogerson (Eds.), *Tourism, change and the global South* (pp. 205–221). Routledge.

Rogerson, C. M., & Rogerson, J. M. (2021b). Creative networks and the making of Africa's first UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy. In C. M. Rogerson & J. M. Rogerson (Eds.), *Urban tourism in the Global South: South African perspectives* (pp. 239–266). Springer.

Rogerson, J. M. (2023). The evolution and pandemic recovery of Africa's first Creative City of Gastronomy. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure, 12*(5), 1646–1655.

Rogerson, J. M. (2026). Local government roles in tourism development: Perspectives from South Africa. *Revistă Română de Geografie Politică, 28*(1), 39–55. https://doi.org/10.30892/rrgp.281104-401

Rozīte, M., & Van der Steina, A. (2019). Tourism planning and strategy implementation: Practice in municipalities in Latvia. *Research for Rural Development, 2*, 161–168. https://doi.org/10.22616/rrd.25.2019.064

Ruhanen, L. (2013). Local government: Facilitator or inhibitor of sustainable tourism development? *Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 21*(1), 80–98. https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2012.680463

Skinner, H. (2021). Branding—The challenges of getting it right: Coping with success and rebuilding from crises. *Tourism and Hospitality, 2*, 173–189.

Stevens, V., Klijn, E.-H., & Warsen, R. (2020). Branding as a public governance strategy: A Q methodological analysis of how companies react to place branding strategies. *Public Administration Review, 81*(4), 752–762. https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.13263

Syssner, J., & Hjerpe, M. (2018). Swedish destination management professionals' expectations of local governments. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism, 18*(Suppl. 1), S24–S41. https://doi.org/10.1080/15022250.2017.1374880

Uy, I., & Sarsale, M. (2026). Tourism planning and local government units: A bibliometric analysis. *Hotel and Tourism Management, 14*(2). https://doi.org/10.5937/menhottur2600006U

van der Watt, H. (2013). Responsible tourism and local government in South Africa. *Progress in Responsible Tourism, 2*(2), 62–68.

van der Watt, H.-M. (2022). *Better lives for all? Prospects for empowerment through marine wildlife tourism in Gansbaai, South Africa* [Doctoral dissertation, Massey University].

van Niekerk, M. (2014). The role of the public sector in tourism destination management from a network relationship approach. *Tourism Analysis, 19*, 701–718. https://doi.org/10.3727/108354214X14146846679402

Volgger, M., Cheer, J., & Pforr, C. (2025). Evidence-informed decision-making in sustainable tourism: From research to action. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 33*(4), 613–627. https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2025.2461560