Sustainable Tourism Implementation for Small Accommodation Establishments in South Africa

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Abstract

While the tourism industry as an ideal industry to fast track poverty alleviation in South Africa, the uptake of sustainable tourism practices amongst many players, including small accommodation establishments (SAEs) remains a challenge. The lack of awareness of the benefits and value that sustainable tourism practices may bring, is amplified by the absence of appropriate policies, low collaboration levels, a shortage of capacity to implement sustainable tourism practices and a perceived weak business case for sustainable tourism implementation amongst SAE owners and managers. This paper presents a proposed framework that may be used to support the implementation of sustainable tourism practices amongst SAEs. The framework is a flexible, adaptable and scalable tool that assists in communicating a specific approach that could be utilised by role players including SAE owners, public sector entities, private sector business, industry professionals and community members. The essence of the framework is to support the implementation of sustainable tourism practises amongst SAEs, thus enhancing the overall sustainability of the tourism sector while simultaneously addressing the sustainability of the destination.

Keywords: Sustainable tourism implementation, SMMEs, tourism development

Introduction

Tourism has long been viewed as an excellent vehicle for poverty alleviation (UNEP & UNWTO, 2005). One of the main reasons for this sector to be of included in poverty reduction and job creation strategies is because of its overall economic contribution worldwide (Sharpley & Harrison, 2019). According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC, 2019), the sector has seen a growth of 3.5% globally in 2019, compared to the global economic growth of 2.5%. One out of each four new jobs created come from the tourism sector (WTTC, 2019). Looking at it from a different perspective, it is estimated that tourism creates 50 jobs for every 1 million US Dollars spent (WTTC, 2012). Tourism therefore clearly provides a large labour market and it is a labour intensive industry that contributes more to the number of jobs per unit of increase in GDP than, for example, agriculture and other non-agricultural industries

(Mitchell & Ashley, 2010). This means that if tourism GDP grows by 1%, it creates relatively more jobs than other industries would if they grew by the same percentage. Tourism is an important economic sector as it provides jobs and tax revenue and supports a wide range of other economic and industrial sectors (Dinica, 2006:246). Through tourism, the informal sector can contribute substantially to economic growth in underdeveloped countries because of job creation possibilities as well as relatively low barriers of entry into the sector (Kelliher, Foley & Frampton, 2009). Tourism, therefore, may be viewed as an excellent industry to help alleviate poverty worldwide.

However, tourism cannot fulfil this function if it is not sustainable. UNEP and UNWTO (2005:12) defined sustainable tourism as "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 promotes the conservation of environmental, ecological and natural heritage and respects "socio-cultural authenticity of host communities" (UNEP & UNWTO, 2005:5) while supporting long-term economic development. However, "sustainable tourism is part of the overall shift that recognises that orderly economic growth combined with concerns for the environment and quality-of-life social values, will be the driving force for long-term progress in tourism development and policies...If we do not define clear cut directions for sustainable tourism at this juncture in the growth of tourism, there may never be another chance" (Edgell, 2020:n.p.).

Research shows that little progress has been made in implementing sustainable tourism practices worldwide and in South Africa. Spenceley (2013) showed that inadequate motivation, awareness and capacity to implement meaningful sustainable tourism programmes persist throughout Southern Africa. In 2019, Spenceley asserted that "very little progress has been made over the past 30 years in mainstreaming sustainable tourism practices in Africa" (Spenceley, 2019:14). The creation of an enabling environment for sustainable tourism, improving the capacity of product owners/managers and increasing supply of – and demand for – sustainable tourism products and solutions remain key challenges to sustainable tourism implementation (Spenceley, 2013). This is amplified by the lack of suitable frameworks or approaches that support sustainable tourism implementation. Honing into the finding of a framework that specifically targets small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and smaller accommodation establishments (SAEs), that could provide a step-by-step guide to help them implement sustainable tourism practices does not exist within the South African context. This paper proposes such a framework, with a specific focus on SAEs and summarises the findings from research conducted by Glen (2018) on sustainable tourism practices in small accommodation establishments in South Africa.

South African context

Mass unemployment and persistent poverty have a long history in South Africa. Today large contingents of rural and urban communities continue to suffer from high levels of inequality, poor service delivery and ongoing structural challenges (Rogerson, 2015). With the country's Gini Coefficient at 60.8, South Africa is one of the most 'unequal' countries in the world (Schwab, 2018; World Bank, 2018). Looking therefore at the potential that the tourism industry presents for poverty alleviation and economic development, South Africa could focus efforts on driving sustainable change using tourism as the vehicle (Nkemngu, 2015). This viewpoint has been caught onto, as tourism is widely viewed in South Africa as an effective industry for job creation and poverty reduction. Through the involvement of the poor in its supply chains, tourism can be used as a vehicle to reduce poverty (Pillay & Rogerson, 2013). While South Africa possesses a plethora of tourism assets, many municipalities, however, remain distressed (Rogerson, 2015) and unable to deliver on basic needs such as water, sanitation, health and

education, let alone develop meaningful tourism strategies. Rogerson (2015) stated that many municipalities still experience economic development challenges, with tourism industries not having reached their full potential. The unequal benefits from tourism are still an ongoing theme in most of South Africa and unemployment rates are still increasing, with statistics showing an unemployment rate of 29 % (StatsSA, 2019).

The National Department of Tourism has recognised the need better tourism policy at a local level and had launched the National Tourism Sector Strategy (NTSS) in 2011. The aim is for the NTSS to be regionalised through the development of provincial tourism sectors strategies, and for these to then filter through to municipal level. The NTSS (NDT, 2011) has identified the lack of knowledge and understanding of tourism and its importance in local economic development as a critical stumbling block for sustainable growth in the tourism industry. It states that "fragmentation in planning, branding and marketing amongst government, local government, provinces and cities" are ongoing challenges for tourism and the sustainability thereof (NDT, 2011:15). Development of the NTSS followed the publication of the White Paper on The Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa (DEAT, 1996) and the Cape Town Declaration (ICRTD, 2002) a document widely referred to by responsible and sustainable tourism initiatives in South Africa. Other policies developed to respond to the need for sustainable tourism development include the National Minimum Standard for Responsible Tourism / SANS1162:2011 (SABS, 2011) and the National Tourism Act (NDT, 2014). The NTSS and the National Tourism Act of 2014 are currently under review as the NDT has recognised the need for stronger policies to support tourism growth and development. To support these two policies, the NDT is currently developing in the vicinity of 15 additional policies, focussing on, amongst others, tourism marketing and promotion, tourism integration in planning processes, community participation and tourism and niche tourism development (NDT, 2017). Many other efforts have been made to address the imbalances in beneficiation from tourism in South Africa and include for example the Operational Guidelines for Community-Based Tourism Initiatives (Edge Tourism Solutions, 2016), the Responsible Tourism Manual for South Africa (Spenceley, 2002), the South African Tourism Planning Toolkit (NDT, 2010) and the Rural Tourism Strategy of South Africa, published in 2012 (NDT, 2012). Between 2002 and 2009 various responsible and sustainable tourism certification providers emerged in South Africa, e.g. Fair Trade in Tourism (FTT), Heritage Environmental Management Company (Heritage) and the Green Leaf Environmental Standard (GLES). Each certification provider had developed its own set of standards that incorporate various sustainability standards and/or principles. In addition, the Tourism Grading Council of South Africa has started incorporating green criteria into its grading criteria and has introduced a programme named the Responsible Tourism Accolades (TGCSA, 2019).

Collectively the above policies, strategies, toolkits and guidelines promote the uptake of sustainable business practices so that local communities and natural heritage could be protected while creating economic and employment opportunities (van der Bank & van der Bank, 2016). However, it seems that the uptake of sustainable tourism implementation practices has not been as prolific as was anticipated by policymakers and the industry. An NDT (2015) study showed that there was still very little awareness of the existence of the National Minimum Standard for Responsible Tourism (NMSRT) as well as the principles it promotes amongst accommodation establishments and Spenceley (2019) showed that the adoption of the principles of responsible tourism was still vastly lacking. An analysis of the market showed that by mid-2009, 500 accommodation establishments in South Africa had been certified collectively by FTT, Heritage and GLES. Of these, more than 80% were relatively large hotels and most establishments were part of a large hotel group. By 2019, this number had declined to less than 200 certified establishments. A reduction in the number of certified establishments,

as well as a clear focus on larger establishments, cannot be contested in the South African context. In line with worldwide trends (Bastakis, Buhalis, & Butler, 2004; Montoro-Sancheza, Mas-Verdu, & Soriano, 2008; Wood, 2007), and considering the level of policy development by the South African government and other role players, it cannot be disputed that small businesses are seen as an important catalyst for sustainable growth, unemployment as well as poverty alleviation in South Africa.

In South Africa, it is estimated that there are between 30,000 and 60,000 smaller accommodation businesses, and they typically create one permanent job for every one-point-five rooms (Glen, 2018). Based on these numbers, between 130,588 and 296,000 direct jobs are created by smaller accommodation businesses and they potentially contribute 22% of total tourism jobs and 87% of the jobs estimated for the entire accommodation sector (Glen, 2018). From a national to a local municipal level, it is therefore essential that policies are created to support smaller accommodation businesses in their sustainable tourism journey and that policies developed fit the type and size of business that will need to implement these. In order to achieve this, policymakers should have an understanding of what sustainable tourism means and what the barriers are that prevent smaller accommodation businesses from implementing sustainable tourism practices. Looking at the definition provided by UNEP and UNWTO (2005), sustainable tourism takes into account the interests and needs of businesses, community, the industry (including market access) and the tourist (including safety, security, quality and service), and therefore highlights critical stakeholders in the journey to sustainable tourism implementation, i.e. businesses, community members, industry role players and the tourists themselves.

Taking the above into consideration, it is therefore imperative that programmes are set up to support the implementation of sustainable business practices amongst various stakeholder groups, including smaller accommodation businesses and their stakeholders. In order to achieve this, these groups need to be ringfenced and defined, and their unique needs assessed so that policies, strategies, guidelines and tools can address the unique needs of each group. Glen (2018) focused on smaller accommodation establishments (SAEs) and developed a framework for the implementation of sustainable tourism practices for SAEs. Barriers to the implementation of sustainable tourism practices amongst SAEs that were identified include, amongst others, a lack of appropriate policies to support sustainable tourism implementation from national through to local government; weak collaboration amongst tourism stakeholders (including public sector, private sector and community stakeholders); low levels of awareness of sustainable tourism amongst stakeholders and poor understanding of the business case; poor data and information available to support the measurement of sustainable tourism implementation and lack of capacity to implement sustainable tourism practices amongst tourism stakeholders.

Data collected on sustainability aspects of accommodation businesses can only be meaningfully interpreted and benchmarked if a simple definition of SAEs exists. In order, therefore, to assess small accommodation businesses' performance on key indicators such as GDP and job creation, a definition that distinguishes them from larger accommodation businesses is required. Policies that help address the unique challenges of SAEs in their efforts to become more sustainable would then become relevant. Glen (2018) defined SAEs as all types of establishments offering overnight accommodation to tourists, with 20 rooms or less and include all accommodation types that fit into primary and secondary descriptors. Primary categories describe the main types of services provided and are mostly drawn from the Tourism Grading Council of South Africa's accommodation categories, with minor adjustments having been made. The categories identified include backpacker (provides budget overnight accommodation and flexibility); bed and breakfast (provides overnight accommodation and

breakfast); guest house (provides overnight accommodation with limited service and has); lodge (is located in natural surroundings and provides formal overnight accommodation with full or limited service); self-catering (no catering provided) and small hotel (full or limited service provided with formal accommodation). Secondary categories provide an additional descriptor of the experience and/or the setting and could include lesser-used descriptions which are found in a variety of literature. These descriptors would be useful to help distinguish different contexts for SAEs which would otherwise be deemed essentially the same for example a lodge in an urban setting would have significantly different challenges to a country lodge which is situated in a rural area. It was proposed that "self-catering" can be either a primary or a secondary category.

Much research had been conducted on various aspects related to the implementation of sustainable tourism, e.g. SMMEs in general (Rogerson, 2004), the impact of tourism establishments on poverty alleviation (Spenceley & Goodwin, 2008), sustainable tourism certification (Spenceley & Bien, 2013; Strambach & Surmeier, 2013), mechanisms to measure performance amongst community-based ecotourism ventures (Mearns, 2010; Snyman, 2013). In addition, other sustainable tourism implementation frameworks, toolkits and approaches that have been developed have very specific focus areas, for example, UNESCO World Heritage Sustainable Tourism Toolkit framework focusses on world heritage sites and surrounding communities (UNESCO, n.d.); sustainable tourism certification (or eco-labelling) focuses on sustainable operations of a variety of tourism businesses (Spenceley & Bien, 2013); the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Sustainable, Competitive and Responsible Enterprises (SCORE) programme focusses on SMEs with 50 or more employees (Nyangintsimbi, 2015); and inclusive business in tourism (or inclusive tourism) focusses on the communities impacted by a variety of tourism stakeholders (ITC, n.d.).

The process of developing the framework

The main attributes of the proposed framework which guides the implementation of sustainable tourism practices amongst SAEs and the application of the framework to support the implementation of sustainable business practices amongst SAEs in South Africa are the focus of this paper. It is argued that a framework provides a "holistic, practical, scalable and adaptable tool to be utilised by individual businesses, communities, the tourism industry and other industries to work collectively towards sustainable tourism management and development" (Glen 2018:209). The framework was developed as an empirical study, drawing on literature and primary data collected through multiple-method surveys including both qualitative and quantitative data. The research specifically targeted Smaller Accommodation Establishments (SAEs) as a subsector of the tourism industry in South Africa and therefore specific groups of participants were selected to gather data from, including industry experts and establishment owners/managers.

The research utilised three main instruments. 1). A survey amongst key nine tourism experts identified using a snowball approach which acquired references from each expert identified and consulted. Industry experts are professionals representing certification companies, consulting companies, academia, government agencies, non-government organisations and small accommodation establishment (SAE) owners who are involved in responsible tourism and sustainable tourism activities such as policy formulation, research, consultation or implementation. Consensus was achieved amongst the nine experts through a Delphi method that included two rounds – the first round gathered responses and the second round mediated responses until consensus was achieved. 2). An online survey amongst a broad base of small accommodation owners and managers (167 responses received), and 3). Face-to-

face interviews and focus groups with small numbers of accommodation owners/managers (48 participants).

Responses from participant groups 2 and 3 above were acquired through distributing questionnaires via industry associations and through the engagement of participants through industry events. Having illustrated in the above introduction the importance of SAEs, their contribution to the economy and job creation and their potential to help reduce poverty in South Africa, the framework described in this paper, therefore, makes a meaningful contribution to the existing body of knowledge that deals with sustainable tourism implementation.

The actual framework
Attributes of the framework
The framework is required to help SAEs overcome barriers so that they can implement sustainable tourism practices. In other words, each barrier identified must have an appropriate mechanism within the framework to help SAEs overcome it. Current models were deemed to lack scalability and replicability, are not well articulated and often lack clear implementation guidelines. The research, therefore, developed a set of attributes for an appropriate framework, including that the framework should guide the development of policies to support sustainable tourism implementation from national, provincial and local government and it should help promote collaboration amongst tourism stakeholders to reduce the number of uncoordinated efforts and fragmentation within the sector. The framework should be flexible, adaptable and accessible to multiple key role players (stakeholders) in the smaller accommodation sector so that they can support the adoption of sustainable practices through various mechanisms. The framework must help redirect the focus of investment to triple bottom line impacts, illustrate a clear business case for change and include supporting indicators for tourism stakeholders. It also needs to help create capacity amongst stakeholders and provide tools for recording and sharing of data that supports the measurement of sustainable tourism implementation at an industry level as well as at a business level. The framework developed was broadly based on the key steps of the UNESCO online toolkit (UNESCO, n.d.), with additional inputs having been gained from various other frameworks found in the literature. These were assessed for their ability to help SAEs overcome the barriers to sustainable tourism implementation. From this, a single, holistic and comprehensive framework was developed. The framework addresses a wide spectrum of issues and promotes rigid planning tools to execute sustainable tourism implementation in a structured approach.

Who should use the framework
The research identified policymakers, regulators, tourism businesses, marketing organisations, quality assurance organisations, value chain participants, associations, staff members, suppliers and providers of finance as some of the key stakeholders in creating a sustainable tourism industry. It was proposed that while SAEs are the target group that needs to implement sustainable tourism practices, they cannot do this on their own and they are critically dependent on other stakeholders to successfully implement sustainable tourism practices. However, SAEs need to take ownership of the requirement to implement sustainable tourism practices, while other stakeholders could refer to the framework to understand their role in creating a more sustainable tourism industry, with the framework being used as a road map.

Framework overview and discussion
Figure 1 illustrates the proposed high-level process to be followed to facilitate the implementation of sustainable tourism amongst SAEs. The process will be the same for all role players, and the starting point will be to identify role players and their roles. This is followed

by an agreement on guiding principles for sustainable tourism implementation, creation of local context, the development of competitive strategies and the development of internal and external indicators, which will provide the measurement of success and impacts.

Figure 1: High-level process of the framework (authors based on fieldwork)

The next section discusses the various elements of the framework, which is an expansion of the overall process flow, as shown in Figure 2.
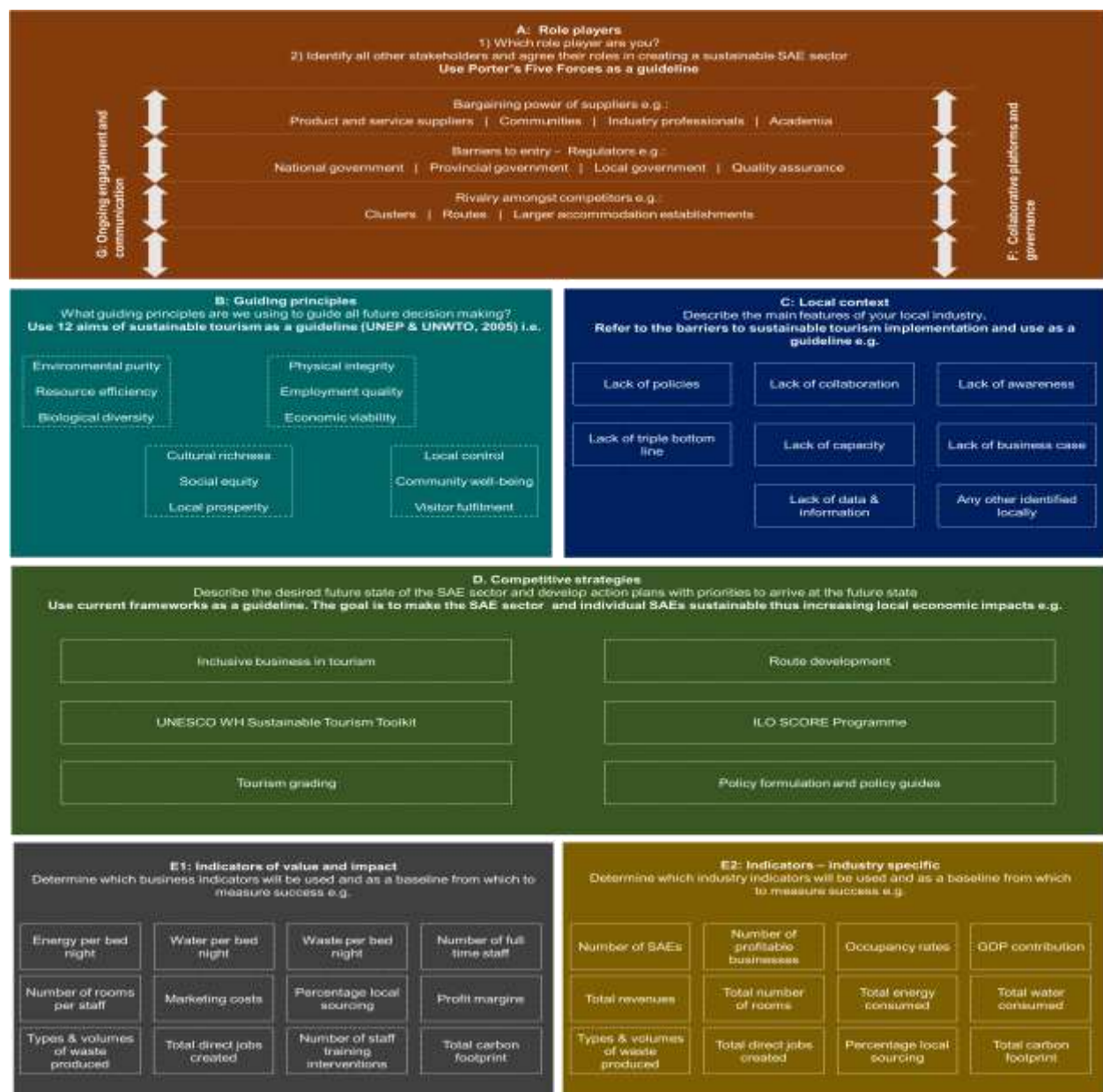

Figure 2: Framework for the implementation of sustainable tourism practices in SAEs (Authors based on fieldwork)

Role players

As shown in A (Figure 2), it was illustrated throughout the research that the sustainability of the industry and adoption of sustainable tourism practices are dependent on collaboration

amongst all role players. The various role-players included in the adopted definition of sustainable tourism (UNEP & UNWTO, 2005) have been considered in the framework, including visitors (or tourists), industry, the environment and community members. Once the key role players have adopted a single simplified definition and categorisation of SAEs they will be able to better support SAEs in their sustainability journey. The role players' contribution in assisting SAEs to overcome the barriers to sustainable tourism implementation is set out below.

National, provincial and local government
The role of government at all levels should formulate specific cross-sectorial policies that support the specific needs of SAEs. The government should enforce current policies and establish effective incentive programmes to promote the mass uptake of sustainability principles and stimulate large-scale collaboration. In this way, those businesses that adopt practices could get preferential business from government. Further, it is the role of government departments to facilitate the inclusion of tourism plans and strategies in other development plans and strategies, for example, integrated development plans. For this purpose, better data should be collected from the industry. Policy implementation guides should be updated and simplified to assist with these processes.

Small accommodation establishment (SAE) owners and manager
SAEs should work more closely with local tourism stakeholders to ensure their specific needs are understood. They should take greater ownership and action towards understanding sustainable tourism practices, prioritising implementation thereof and support other SAEs in their efforts. Through participating in local associations, SAEs can help create greater awareness of the benefits of sustainable tourism.

Associations
Associations are important role players in promoting destinations. The accommodation market is critically dependent on the specific offerings of destinations, and associations should ensure that this is spelt out and promoted to target markets. Associations should also collaborate with other tourism and business associations to promote greater cohesion amongst role players and possibly reduce costs e.g. through collective bargaining opportunities and collaborative marketing. Associations are the voice of SAEs in the context of a sustainable industry and they should liaise with public and private sector and local community stakeholders for the benefit of SAEs.

Market access organisations
These organisations can support greater cohesion and collaboration amongst industry associations and individual businesses to reduce marketing costs. Market access organisations should promote routes and destinations to enhance the marketing of individual businesses and recognise that sustainable tourism as a real economic enabler and should therefore also help create awareness of sustainable tourism amongst tourists.

Quality assurance organisations
These organisations are ideally placed to contribute to data collection efforts in the industry and make data available in a standardised and comparable format. Grading standards that are affordable to SAEs, incorporate sustainability criteria and are applicable to the specific needs of SAEs should be developed. It is critical that quality assurance standards are refined in consultation with SAEs.

Communities

Community members in tourist areas could proactively participate in tourism-related initiatives to bring about greater cohesion and collaboration amongst tourism stakeholders. They could provide information to SMME about products and services in the local supply chain that would support sustainable tourism uptake and the could participate in marketing initiatives to help make travellers aware of the impact of their choices.

Value chain participants/suppliers

These include suppliers that provide products and services to SAEs annually, monthly, weekly or daily. These organisations could re-evaluate actual SAE market share and the types of product and service SAEs buy. They could look at tailoring products and services that support SAE needs and create opportunities for savings (for example via associations) and could include, for example, financial services, licence providers, quality assurance companies, amenities providers, utility providers.

Tourists and tourism buyers

These organisations are ideally placed to promote SAEs that adopted sustainable business practices. They could also contribute to supporting a sustainable tourism industry through awareness of the specific behavioural changes required from tourists, for example supporting SAEs, smaller tourism businesses within a destination, awareness of energy and water consumption.

Industry professionals and service providers

Professionals can promote the role of SAEs in the achievement of sustainable tourism industry, contribute to research and data collection that support SAE sustainable tourism implementation programmes and provide input into policies and strategies that address the SAEs and the communities they operate in. They could work more closely with local tourism stakeholders to ensure that SAE and community-specific needs are understood and can be collectively addressed. Industry professionals are facilitators of sustainable tourism implementation amongst SAEs and providers of a holistic framework that will help support the mass scale adoption of sustainable tourism practices. They can support SAEs through business development and incubation, capacity building, skills development and training in the context of the framework provided.

Academia

Academic institutions can create awareness of opportunities that tourism presents, especially amongst youth, in sustainable development. They can contribute to research and data collection that will support SAE sustainable tourism implementation programmes and incorporate sustainable tourism implementation content in their curricula. They can further partner with SAEs via associations for student internships and ensure that training criteria are set in accordance with 12 guiding questions.

Investors

Investors need to understand and acknowledge the importance of SAEs as an economic contributor. This will help them find new ways mitigating business risks and developing investment approaches that would support SAEs in their sustainable tourism journey, as outlined in the framework. Investors should set reasonable and measurable targets, simplify application processes and criteria and contribute to research and data collection that will

support SAE sustainable tourism implementation programmes, thus working in partnership with SAEs to promote sustainable tourism implementation. The above list of role players may not be an exhaustive list. Each group of tourism businesses will have their own local context and their own collection of role players and stakeholders. The list can, therefore, be utilised as a starting point to map role players for each initiative undertaken in the cluster.

Guiding principles

As seen in B (Figure 2), SAEs have different interpretations of sustainable tourism while there is a need for greater awareness to be created amongst SAEs of sustainable tourism practices. In the development of strategies towards sustainable tourism implementation amongst SAEs, it is critical that all role players buy into a set of guiding principles that will help them shape their thinking and guide decision-making. The UNEP and UWTO guide incorporates 12 aims of sustainable tourism (UNEP & UNWTO, 2005). For the proposed framework, the principles were turned into questions, as shown in Table 1. Working with these questions, each stakeholder takes greater ownership in accordance with the fundamental principle of responsible tourism, which requires all stakeholders to take responsibility for their actions (Langalibalele, 2012).

Table 1: The 12 questions about sustainable tourism (adapted from UNEP and UNWTO, 2005: 5)

1.	Economic viability: What actions have we taken to ensure that the enterprises in our destination and our destination are viable and competitive so that we can continue to prosper and deliver benefits in the long term? (for example: Have we created good policies? Have we provided incentives or discounts to reduce business costs)?
2.	Local prosperity: How are we maximising the contribution of tourists to ensure the prosperity of our destination, including the proportion of visitor spending that is retained locally? (for example: Have we ensured that local businesses are fully integrated into the tourism value chain? Are we channelling the income from tourism to the right initiatives such as community-based projects or conservation?)
3.	Employment quality: How are we increasing the number and quality of local jobs created and supported in our destination, in line with industry standards, including the level of pay, conditions of service and availability to all without discrimination by gender, race, disability or in other ways?
4.	Social equity: What have we done to ensure widespread distribution of economic and social benefits from our businesses and from tourism throughout our local communities, including improving opportunities, income and services available to the poor? (for example: Have we proposed to tourists that they partake in other local cultural activities, visit our natural areas or purchase from local artists?)
5.	Visitor fulfilment: What actions have we taken to provide a safe, high quality, satisfying and fulfilling experience for all our visitors, regardless of gender, race, disability or other characteristics? (for example: Have we implemented universal accessibility (UA) principles adequately? Have we engaged local policing and security stakeholders to illustrate the value that tourism brings to the area?)
6.	Local control: How are we working with and empowering local communities in planning and decision-making about the management and future development of tourism in our area, in consultation with all other stakeholders?
7.	Community well-being: How are we maintaining and strengthening the quality of life in local communities, including social structures and access to resources, amenities and life support systems, avoiding any form of social degradation or exploitation? (for example: Do we know all the tourism products in our area and are we aware of the types of business practices that they promote?)
8.	Cultural richness: What have we done to show respect for and enhance the historic heritage, authentic culture, traditions and distinctiveness of our communities? (for example: Have we provided consistent and adequate information to visitors on our local heritage? Have we provided information to tourists of important local customs and cultural practices?)
9.	Physical integrity: What actions are we taking towards maintaining and enhancing the quality of our natural and man-made landscapes, both urban and rural, and avoiding the physical and visual degradation of the environment?
10.	Biological diversity: How are we supporting the conservation of natural areas, habitats and wildlife, and what are we doing to minimise damage to them?
11.	Resource efficiency: How are we reducing and minimising the use of scarce and non-renewable resources in our businesses and within our communities? (for example: What have we implemented to reduce energy consumption and water consumption?)
12.	Environmental purity: How are we reducing and minimising our contribution to the pollution of air, water and land and the generation of waste by our businesses, tourists and communities?

Local context

C in Figure 2 posits that an understanding of local context will be achieved through the engagement of other SAEs, public and private sector stakeholders and local. Each SAE faces different sustainability challenges depending on its location and an assessment of local context will highlight unique internal and external factors to be considered in planning sustainable tourism interventions. Factors affecting local context could include types destination

attractions (beaches, nature reserves or businesses), local support for tourism development, the state of tourism infrastructure, levels of collaboration amongst local stakeholders, capacity to implement sustainable tourism practices and data available on the performance of the tourism industry. The framework suggests some tools that can be used to determine the barriers that need to be overcome by SAEs in the local context, for example, Porter's Five Forces Model (Porter, 2008) can be used to identify specific issues related to profitability and long-term sustainability, for example, high costs of certain suppliers, weak policies that impact businesses, inadequate marketing strategies, low occupancy rates, quality and standards, and others. Besides, the UNEP and UNWTO (2005) *Making tourism more sustainable – A guide to policymakers* can be used to highlight the types of policies that need to be implemented to support SAEs. The local context will provide an outline of what currently exists, what is superfluous or what is lacking. Furthermore, The SANS 1162:2011 (SABS, 2011) could be used as a guide to understanding the triple bottom line impacts that need to be achieved by SAEs, for example, environmental best practice, cultural and social best practice, economic best practice and operational best practice. Also, The UNESCO online toolkit (UNESCO, n.d.) describes methods and types of questions asked for obtaining local context and involves data collection, analysis of data and determining data gaps. As shown in the broad industry survey and the focus groups/individual interviews, data collection remains a challenge for SAEs.

Once the local context and local issues have been determined, role players and methods to overcome these issues need to be identified. Understanding the environmental, social, cultural and economic needs within a destination and relating this to the needs of local SAEs will, therefore, allow for the formulation of plans to implement sustainable tourism practices. Two examples are provided below: Example 1: If low levels of employment persist in an area, how could SAEs help alleviate this through their operations? They could achieve improvement by creating greater operational efficiencies, resulting in reduced costs, opening up more opportunity to employ additional staff, which will likely result in better service levels. This process can be supported by the collection of baseline data, for example, current energy consumption per bed night as well as energy cost, investment to reduce consumption, consumption per bed night after implementation and payback period of investment through savings. Example 2: Water restrictions imposed due to drought in the area could motivate SAEs to implement more efficient taps and greywater recycling systems so that tourists effectively place less stress on local resources. This, in return, will also help resource-constrained community members to secure future water resources. This process can be supported by the collection of baseline data, for example, current water consumption, current volumes of greywater, investment to recycle greywater, water consumption after implementation and payback period of investment through savings. Concerning the examples above, it must be noted, that if one ten-bedroom accommodation establishment implemented the measures proposed, the impacts on local communities would be minimal. However, if 20 establishments collectively and collaboratively implemented these measures, they would be more likely to have a measurable and definite impact.

Development of strategies
According to D in Figure 2, once the local context has been created and gaps and barriers have been identified, role players need to develop strategies to best address sustainable tourism implementation in SAEs. More concise and simple strategies will be easier for all relevant stakeholders to buy into and to understand (UNESCO, n.d.). The aim is to develop a vision for the future (Lourens, 2007) as well as a plan that will enable the SAE owners and managers to commence the journey to sustainable tourism implementation. The 12 aims of sustainable

tourism (UNEP & UNWTO, 2005) can be utilised for guidelines to establish the desired future state and accompanying prioritised actions required to achieve this desired state.

There are certain actions that SAE owners and managers can do on their own, but other actions require collaboration amongst various role players. For example; SAE owners/managers can reduce energy and water consumption within their establishments. In addition, such SAE owners/managers with local government and communities can also separate waste in establishments, create policies and provide licenses for waste collection and disposal or recycling (local government), develop small businesses that collect and dispose of waste (community organisations and members as well as business incubators). In associations with suppliers, they can also identify key cost drivers and determinants of profitability within SAEs (SAE owners and managers), prioritise these (SAE owners and managers with associations) and negotiate collective price reductions (associations and suppliers).

Indicators of value and impacts

In Figure E1 and E2, the performance of SAEs, their role in the tourism industry, their contribution to job creation and their potential contribution to the economy have been highlighted as important indicators to convince role players to support the SAE sustainability journey. The indicators will also help to develop a clear business case for change, with a focus on the triple bottom line impacts of sustainable tourism businesses. It is proposed by the research that internal indicators are used to measure the performance of the SAEs themselves and external indicators are used to measure the performance of the industry within the local context. Some suggestions highlighted by research is provided in Table 2.

Table 2: Internal and external indicators for SAEs

INTERNAL INDICATORS	EXTERNAL INDICATORS

1) Resource efficiency improvements within establishments measured against the bed nights, for example:
    a) Water consumption;
    b) Energy consumption;
    c) Food consumption;
    d) Amenities consumption;
    e) Waste created – wet and dry waste;
    f) Carbon footprint;
    g) Green/local products purchased.
 	
 2) Progress made on sustainable tourism implementation – number of measures implemented (also refer to Eco-Atlas symbols), for example:
    a) Energy-saving;
    b) Water-saving;
    c) Green sourcing;
    d) Local sourcing;
    e) Waste recycling;
    f) Carbon offset;
    g) Other, as per the criteria of SANS 1162:2011 (SABS, 2011);
    h) Decrease in alien invasive plants/increase in indigenous plants.
 	
 3) Establishments grading or quality assurance, for example:
    a) Current grading/quality assurance level;
    b) Number of years grading/quality assurance has been maintained.
 	
 4) Implications of Porter's Five Forces model, for example:
    a) Operational cost reductions over time;
    b) Increase in occupancy rates over time;
    c) Collective bargaining power (number of establishments belonging to single association);
    d) Improvement in overall quality standards and/or customer satisfaction levels;
    e) Change in overall profitability.
	1) Measurement of change at local community level:
	    a) Total resource consumption improvement;
	    b) Total GDP contribution of SAEs to local economy;
	    c) Number of direct jobs created by this sector;
	    d) Corporate Social Investment (CSI) spend of this sector in communities;
	    e) Value of conservation levies raised;
	    f) Level of leakage;
	    g) Multiplier effect improvements;
	    h) Number of policy changes;
	    i) Impacts of policy changes.
	
	 2) Resource efficiency improvements within establishments measured against bed nights, for example:
	    a) Per establishment;
	    b) Per sub-sector;
	    c) Per sector;
	    d) Per town;
	    e) Per region.
	
	 3) Tourist communication/feedback, for example:
	    a) Total value of marketing vs total spend (value needs to increase, spend needs to reduce);
	    b) Number of participants in the sustainable tourism implementation programme and contribution;
	    c) What do the tourists say?
	    d) What do the establishments communicate to tourists (marketing)?

Collaborative platforms and governance

F in figure 2 suggests that implementation of strategies need to be agreed, roles and responsibilities assigned, and progress monitored. Through this process, barriers such as the lack of appropriate policies, the lack of collaboration and lack of data and information can be identified and managed as project risks or issues. Specific capacity gaps need to be identified

and measures added to the overall implementation plan to help overcome the capacity issues. As an example, should there be inadequate knowledge to implement resource efficiency amongst SAEs, a recognised programme that has access (or could obtain access) to funding should be approached to support the implementation. This should be added to the implementation strategies and plans. Each role player's mandates and priorities need to be understood and agreed, for example, if a local government department has the mandate to ensure that roads are maintained, then the maintenance of roads need to be linked to the benefits that tourism will bring. Appropriate governance needs to be put in place to ensure that current priorities in a destination support the priorities of a sustainable tourism implementation programme for SAEs. It is critical that where role players represent different organisations, for example, tourism associations, local government or local SMMEs, all relationships are governed by formal memoranda of understanding and/or agreement, to ensure commitment and agreed delivery. Whether new platforms are created, or existing ones utilised, it is critical that the collaborative platforms include the right role players.

Ongoing engagement and communication
At this point, the work that has been done to date will likely have only included a small number of local role players (see G in Figure 2). In line with models of change (Hayes, 2014), the recommendations of the UNESCO online toolkit (UNESCO, n.d.) and the recommendations of the IT Guide (Tewes-Gradl, van Gaalen & Pirzer, 2014), engagement of broader stakeholder groups now becomes increasingly important. SAEs are at the heart of change (STPP, 2014), and therefore SAEs will need to buy into the change first. However, the correct forums for engagement of each of the role players and the correct methods of communication with each role player need to be established. "Inclusive business ecosystems are defined as communities or networks of interconnected, interdependent players whose actions determine whether or not a company's inclusive business model will succeed" (Tewes-Gradl, van Gaalen & Pirzer, 2014: 31). Each town and area will have its own unique channels and networks (for example existing associations or route forums), but tourism offices, local media, online media, local community forums, existing chambers and associations, local conservation organisations, schools and local suppliers of products and services will be good places to start (UNESCO, n.d.). It is critical that formal engagements and communication initiatives are scheduled and communicated to relevant role players, to ensure maximum participation. Each engagement and communication must have set objectives aimed at aligning all role players to the various phases of change to be effective, as suggested by Dinica (2006), i.e. 1) providing information, 2) creating motivation, and 3) set in motion change in the behaviour of people and application of resources. Each form of communication must also ensure that role players take strides forward in collaboration towards a more sustainable SAE sector.

Investment and funding
A key barrier that was identified in the implementation of sustainable tourism implementation amongst SAEs is the lack of capacity (including funding) to do so. In order to attract further investment, therefore, greater stakeholder collaboration and collection of good data are essential. Once implementation strategies and plans have been created, overall funding needs and benefits must be illustrated. This will provide a basic business case with which to approach investors or make financial commitments. Capturing the elements within the framework on paper will be the basis for the business case for investment and will explain to investors. Some key questions to consider in this regard are what the SAE sector wants to achieve within the local context; who the role players are; what each role player's role is; what the guiding questions are that govern decisions and actions; what the vision of the future is and the

strategies and plans to implement this; how and by whom initiatives will be governed; what indicators will be used for success and how data will be collected; who the beneficiaries are and how engagement and communication with role players will happen.

According to the UNESCO online toolkit (UNESCO, n.d.), there are four potential sources of funding - levies and taxes, which suggest there are a number of governmental institutions, such as the Department of Trade and Industry, the Department of Environmental Affairs, the Department of Energy, the Department of Tourism and others that provide funds from time to time to development initiatives at a national, provincial, and local level. It is critical that the role players in the SAE sustainable tourism implementation programme include public sector role players who can assist projects to navigate through institutional frameworks and public sourcing rules and processes. Local revenue sources imply that in the context of the SAE sector, there are various ways in which this could be achieved. As an example, local associations could fulfil a funding role, provided they receive an adequate income from memberships and other fundraising activities. In many instances, municipalities financially support tourism associations. As such, it is critical for the local SAE sector to build into their plans a strategy for defragmentation and strong collaboration. External revenue sources entail that in the case of World Heritage Sites, it is possible to generate revenue through selling "products, services, experiences, or intellectual property beyond the destination" (UNESCO, n.d:4). This may not necessarily be the case for smaller clusters or destinations. However, innovative new ways of doing things and creating opportunities to work with other industries, such as agriculture, could potentially generate local income. Professional funding organisations/donor funding infer that there are many different donor and investment funds available for tourism development, provided that a strong business case exists. The more clearly and simply benefits for beneficiaries and achievement against the goals of the relevant institutions can be illustrated, the more likely a specific programme will attract funding.

Conclusion

This paper concluded that a specific, single framework is required to support SAEs with the implementation of sustainable tourism practices. The framework guides the formulation of appropriate policies, demonstrates the need for collaboration amongst tourism stakeholders, emphasises the triple bottom line impacts of sustainable tourism practices, illustrates a clear business case for change and enhances the overall awareness and understanding of sustainable tourism. Key role players that will benefit from using the framework include policymakers, regulators, tourism businesses, marketing organisations, quality assurance organisations, value chain participants, associations, staff members, suppliers and providers of finance as some of the key stakeholders in creating a sustainable tourism industry. The UNEP and UWTO guide provides 12 aims of sustainable tourism (UNEP & UNWTO, 2005), which have been adapted to become 12 key questions that are utilised by tourism stakeholders in planning tourism interventions, thus ensuring the incorporation of sustainability principles.

The framework further emphasizes the need to analyse and understand the local context where sustainable tourism practices are implemented and suggests tools that can be used to determine the barriers to sustainable tourism implementation, e.g. Porter's Five Forces Model (Porter, 2008), UNEP and UNWTO (2005) *Making tourism more sustainable – A guide to policymakers*, SANS 1162:2011 (SABS, 2011) and the UNESCO online toolkit (UNESCO, n.d.). Once local context has been mapped out, concise and simple strategies need to be developed, including a vision for the future (Lourens, 2007) state of a sustainable tourism industry. Finally, the framework recommends clear indicators that will support the development of a business case for change, with a focus on the triple bottom line impacts of sustainable tourism businesses.

Finally, the framework proposes the establishment of forums for engagement of each of the role players and the need for the correct methods of communication with each role player to be established, as tourism communities are interconnected and interdependent, and each role players' actions will determine whether or an inclusive business model will succeed. While the framework was developed with SAEs in mind, it can be concluded that all tourism role players may use it as a guide to support their actions towards a sustainable tourism industry. Whether role players' mandates are focused at industry, community or individual business level, the principles and attributes encapsulated in the framework are universally applicable. Further research should test and adapt the framework for other role players, e.g. medium and large accommodation businesses, tour operators, municipalities and regulators. The research proposes several avenues that could be useful to broaden and test the framework. Such studies could find ways in which different industry participants could share data to establish a better baseline for sustainable tourism practices; mainstream the framework by converting it into a user-friendly format, provides step-by-step actions (both visually and descriptively) and is accessible for use by any tourism industry role player; or Convert the framework into a step-by-step implementation guide that is accessible to all industry players.

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