

Rural tourism development in South Africa

Trends and challenges

Johan Viljoen and Kholadi Tlabela



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Preface

The Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) has established an occasional paper series. The occasional papers are designed to be quick, convenient vehicles for making timely contributions to debates or for disseminating interim research findings, or they may be finished, publication-ready works. Authors invite comments and suggestions from readers.

About the authors

Johan Viljoen is a senior researcher in the Urban, Rural and Economic Development Research Programme of the HSRC. He holds a masters degree in Geography from the University of South Africa.

Johan has more than ten years' experience in both qualitative and quantitative research and has been involved in several research projects and large-scale surveys. His research outputs mainly pertain to tourism, population studies and the environment. He has been the author and co-author of a number of peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters and client reports.

Kholadi Tlabela was a researcher in the Urban, Rural and Economic Development Research Programme during the time of the study. She holds a masters degree in International Communications from the University of South Africa.

Kholadi has more than 15 years' experience in both qualitative and quantitative research, and has been involved in several research projects. Her research outputs relate mainly to population and communication studies. Her publication record spans the authoring and co-authoring of a number of research reports, peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters.

Comments and suggestions on this paper can be emailed to jhviljoen@hsrc.ac.za.

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Introduction

During the past decades, tourism has begun to find much wider recognition as an economic sector with the potential to make a contribution towards development in destination areas (Rogerson & Visser 2004). As one of the most intriguing sustainable development themes, rural tourism has lately become very popular in both developed and developing countries (Rattanasuwongchai 1998).

Rural tourism consists of leisure activities carried out in rural areas, and includes different types of tourism activities such as community-based tourism, ecotourism, cultural tourism, adventure tourism, guest farms, backpacking, riding and agritourism. Holland, Burian and Dixey (2003) argue that it is important to develop tourism in rural areas in order to increase participation of the poor in the development of tourism, and bring wider benefits to rural areas. Seen from this perspective, one advantage of rural tourism is that the nature of the product often involves ventures that feature local ownership and management.

However, developing rural tourism has its challenges. Holland, Burian and Dixey (2003) argue that, since the success of tourism development – whether pro-poor or not – depends on commercial, economic and logistical issues (such as the quality of the product, accessibility and infrastructure of the destination, availability of skills

and interest of investors, rural areas may well be at a disadvantage compared to urbanised and more developed areas in most of these aspects. In developing countries many of these challenges may be complicated by political and institutional obstacles, such as the administrative complexity of dealing with less densely populated areas, the lack of policy co-ordination between rural development and tourism development, and the low priority provided to rural areas by central governments. Thus ways to deal with these challenges are needed (Holland, Burian & Dixey 2003).

As an integral part of economic development policies, the tourism sector is viewed as one of the key drivers of economic expansion and employment creation in South Africa and southern Africa over the next decade (The Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism [DEAT] 1996). However, the expansion of the tourism system as a national priority was neglected until recently. According to Rogerson and Visser (2004), the isolation of the old apartheid system delayed South Africa's entry onto the global stage of tourism, an entry that has seen a spectacular expansion of international tourism arrivals since 1993.

The economic potential of tourism, as a key driver of growth and development in South Africa, is based on the competitive advantages that the country has in its natural and cultural resources. South Africa's fast-growing tourism industry also complements a worldwide trend towards alternative tourism. This type of tourism signalled a breakaway from the perception of sun, sea and sand representing the ideal holiday. Popular new tourism types include, among others, eco-, cultural and adventure tourism. Many of these tourism types are indeed ideally suited for developing tourism in rural localities, with the necessary environmental qualities. *The White Paper on the Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa* (DEAT 1996) also contends that the prime tourism attractions are not located in the city centres but in the rural areas. The rural location of many of these attractions provides rural inhabitants with the opportunity to participate and share in the benefits of tourism development.

Defining rural tourism

The definition of rural tourism has been the subject of many debates in the literature, without arriving at any consensus. One major challenge surrounding this lack of consensus is that rural areas are heterogeneous. To emphasise this dilemma, Holland,

Burian and Dixey (2003) indicate that most people know a rural area when they see one, but few agree on its definition. However, Ashley and Maxwell (2001) identify common features of rural areas as follows:

- Spaces where human settlement and infrastructure occupy only small patches of the landscape, most of which is dominated by fields and pastures, woods and forest, water, mountain and desert;
- Places where most people spend most of their working time on farms;
- Abundance and relative cheapness of land;
- High transaction costs, associated with long distance and poor infrastructure; and
- Geographical conditions that increase political transaction costs and magnify the possibility of elite capture or urban bias.

Petric (2003) argues that the heterogeneity of rural areas makes it difficult to reach consensus regarding the definition of rural tourism, mainly for the following reasons:

- Rural areas where rural tourism occurs are difficult to define since criteria used by different nations vary enormously;
- Not all tourism which takes place in rural areas is strictly rural – it can be urban in form, and merely be located in a rural area;
- Different forms of rural tourism have developed in different regions, and hence, it is hard to find characteristics that are common to all of the countries; and
- Rural areas are in a complex process of change due to the impact of global markets, communications and telecommunications, which have changed market conditions and orientations for traditional products.

Besides the term rural tourism, other terms such as ecotourism, cultural tourism, etc., covering a range of contexts, are also in use and give rise to different concepts, whose meaning is also a source of discord between authors. Furthermore, tourism activities revolving around large holiday home developments, big hotels, golf courses or ski pistes are difficult to integrate into the concept of rural tourism (Petric 2003).

While there is lack of consensus on the definition of rural tourism, Petric (2003) argues that the distinguishing feature of rural tourism should be the wish to give visitors personal contact with, or a taste of, the physical and human environment of the countryside and, as far as possible, allow them to participate in the activities, traditions and lifestyles of the local people.

International rural tourism development trends

Rural tourism varies from country to country and is organised and pursued for different reasons. There are developmental reasons to promote tourism as a growth activity, such as for regeneration following agri-industrial collapse, or diversification of a remote marginal agricultural area into adventure tourism or cultural tourism. Other reasons relate more to development of the tourism product, such as diversifying a country's image or alleviating blockages in popular sites (Holland, Burian & Dixey 2003).

In Indonesia, rural tourism has been developed mainly in the plantation areas of Sumatra and Java. Visitors stay in hotels, but visit farms to see activities such as rice planting or rubber tapping. Rural tourism projects have been developed predominantly by state enterprises (Iwantoro 1998). In Japan, the most common type of rural tourism is the farm inn which is a private farmhouse or an inn built on a farm, providing visitors with accommodation and usually meals, and gives them an opportunity to participate in the day-to-day activities involved in running a farm, such as planting, harvesting and fishing (Arahi 1998). Korea offers tourism farms and home-stay villages near tourist resort areas. Rural tourism in Korea combines benefits for rural people – such as the growth of farm incomes conserving the rural environment and making more intensive use of rural resources – with those for urban people such as providing leisure resorts and opportunities for study and enjoyment (Choi 1998). In Malaysia, the government-initiated agritourism centres are intended for education and recreation, while in certain instances rare plants, animal species, traditional foods, handicrafts or historic buildings are the main attraction (World Travel and Tourism Council 2002).

An overview of rural tourism in Europe can be given both in terms of a legal perspective and also from different experiences within some of the European Union countries, including France, Great Britain and Italy. In recent decades, Europe has experienced a growing interest in rural tourism that has led progressively to the increase in demand and supply of infrastructure and services. Nowadays, this phenomenon is characterised by a segment of tourism demand and supply having a great economic and financial impact within rural areas (Dettori, Paba & Pulina 2004).

A European example of a well-developed rural tourism is France, where rural tourism dates back to 1951. In 1969, the French government defined a new type of tourist accommodation, 'Chambres d'Hote', that were characterised by a diversified supply of services and leisure activities. From a French legal perspective, rural tourism is not classified as an agricultural activity because an activity can only be defined as agricultural if there is long-term production from the land (Dettori 2004). Camping

and caravans are the most popular forms of accommodation in rural areas, many of them on farms. While many farmers have developed camping sites on their farms, others prefer to invest in various kinds of short-term rental houses, known as 'gîtes' (Food and Fertilizer Technology Centre 2005).

In Great Britain, rural tourism has been developing since the 1970s and was seen as a response by citizens from polluted and industrialised urban areas, who went in search of uncontaminated and unspoiled environments. Rural tourism is regarded as an instrument to protect the rural environment. A supply of accommodation and infrastructure facilities was planned and delivered, by both the public and private sectors, to fulfil the needs of these tourists. The demand for 'green tourism' is the basis on which the economy of British rural areas will be sustained. Integrating and differentiating the traditional agriculture activity and a sustainable use of the existing natural resources will help Great Britain reach this objective (Dettori, Paba & Pulina 2004).

Within the European legal framework, the rural tourism of Italy represents a unique example. Unlike other European countries, rural tourism and agritourism in Italy are two distinct concepts. Rural tourism and agritourism are defined by two separate legislative acts and are characterised by distinct administration, commercial and fiscal disciplines. Rural tourism, in Italy, is defined as a tourism activity aimed to protect rural areas and all the cultural, historical, craft and gastronomical resources that these areas are based upon. Rural tourism dealers might not be agriculture operators, since the law does not require a connection between tourism and agricultural activities, whereas the latter connection is the foundation for running an agritourism firm. Agritourism is defined as accommodation and restoration services that are provided by agricultural operators, and the tourist activity can be regarded as connected and complementary to the agricultural activity (Dettori, Paba & Pulina 2004).

With regard to policy motives, strategies to use tourism as a motor of growth in rural areas have emerged in different contexts. These strategies are about enabling rural producers to reduce reliance on agriculture and engage in new economic opportunities that are competitive in more globalised markets. In Eastern Europe, the emphasis has been on tourism as a tool for rural regeneration, while in developing countries the emphasis is more on diversification of underdeveloped areas. In the latter, the problem is not so much the collapse of agriculture but the insufficiency of agricultural livelihoods and the search for new sources of income and economic opportunity (Holland, Burian & Dixey 2003).

Within Africa, many countries are positioning themselves to take advantage of newer trends and alternative forms of tourism that can protect natural resources and stimulate cultural diversity while generating economic growth. In Uganda, the tourism policy emphasises large-scale participation of communities in cultural

tourism – including handicraft development – which is seen as a rural income-generating activity. It also emphasises a bottom-up approach to supporting developments at district level, with a focus on community-based tourism development (Holland, Burian & Dixey 2003). Cultural and village-based tourism are the prevailing types in southern Morocco and focus on preserving and revitalising the local culture, while village tourism emphasises experiencing the daily life of a community (Nusser 2005). In South Africa, rural tourism is viewed as a means to eliminate poverty and create employment opportunities in rural areas.

Post-1994 tourism policy development in South Africa

One of the immediate priorities of the new South African Government when it came to power was to redress the imbalances of the past and, in particular, to improve the quality of life of the poor. The government aimed to achieve this goal by developing policies that impact positively on the poor, by reducing inequality and creating opportunities for economic growth. This goal is reflected in a number of government policy documents, including the integrated *Rural Development Strategy* (South Africa 1995) that aims to eliminate poverty and create full employment by the year 2020. Rural people are said to be at the heart of this strategy, and are thus expected to take charge of the development process in their own areas and participate actively in matters that affect their future (Kepe 1998).

According to Rogerson and Visser (2004), various new tourism policy frameworks have been developed since 1994 to support the development and changed role of tourism. Certainly, the most important policy documents were the *White Paper on the Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa* (DEAT 1996) and the *Tourism in GEAR* (Growth, Employment and Redistribution) strategy document of 1998 (DEAT 1998). The vision set out in the white paper was to develop the tourism sector as a national priority in a sustainable and acceptable manner, so that it would contribute significantly to the improvement of the quality of life of every South African. Among the economic objectives it sets out was one that states that tourism should be used to aid the development of rural communities, and that balanced tourism development in South Africa should be facilitated. Government in particular also made a pledge to support investors in rural communities and in less developed geographic areas. It was also considered of central importance that the tourism

potential of rural areas should be unleashed, by improving infrastructure that enhances accessibility to remote areas.

The white paper also claims that many communities and previously neglected groups, particularly those in rural areas that have not actively participated in the tourism industry, possess significant tourism resources. It was foreseen that these communities would play a pivotal role in developing rural tourism. Women, in particular, were mentioned as having an important role to play in the development of responsible tourism in rural areas.

The *Tourism in GEAR* (DEAT 1998) document builds on the white paper by seeking to forge a framework for implementing policies in the context of macro-economic strategy. According to Rogerson and Visser (2004), the white paper on tourism and the *Tourism in GEAR* document signalled the need for a collaborative approach within which tourism should be led by government and driven by the private sector, and in which it could also be community based and labour conscious. This approach is also emphasised in tourism policy and other documents published by DEAT. One of these documents, *The Responsible Tourism Handbook: A Guide to Good Practice for Tourism Operators* (DEAT 2002), prioritises opportunities for local communities. Guidelines contained in this document detail 'responsible tourism' in the context of developing partnerships and joint ventures, in which communities have obtained a significant stake supported by capacity building and management roles.

Rural tourism diversification in South Africa

The South African tourism landscape of 2006 has developed over a period of 40 years (Rogerson & Visser 2004). Tourism development started off being mostly domestic, although, by 1961, 31 000 foreign visitors came to South Africa each year. By the mid 1980s, South Africa received approximately 50 000 international tourists per annum. The global isolation of South Africa before 1992 contributed to tourism being mostly domestic driven, but this situation changed after the country's entry onto the global tourism stage with the democratic reform of 1994. Growth in international tourism to South Africa grew in bounds and leaps since the early 1990s. By 2004, South Africa had received up to 5.9 million international tourists. The massive increase in international tourism demand has, to a great extent, shaped the development of niche tourism types, and these have positive spin-offs for rural destinations.

Community-based tourism

A number of studies on nature-based tourism show that considerable positive local outcomes and benefits may flow from community involvement in, and ownership of, such projects (See Ashley 1998, Viljoen & Naicker 2000 and Ndlovu & Rogerson 2004). While the concept of community-based tourism overlaps with pro-poor tourism, its main aim is to involve local people in the tourism initiative (Denman 2001).

Supporters of pro-poor tourism argue that some of the most successful examples of tourism being pursued by governments in the developing world, with the aim of maximising local benefits, occur in those countries that actively support community involvement in tourism (Ndlovu & Rogerson 2004). South Africa presents an interesting case in this regard.

In South Africa, the impact of community-based tourism is of special relevance in the wake of government commitments. Following the elections of 1994, the South African government endorsed community-based initiatives as part of post-apartheid tourism planning. As a result, national, provincial and local government across South Africa has supported a number of tourism development initiatives that focus on community-based tourism in rural areas (Ndlovu & Rogerson 2004). Through its Poverty Alleviation Fund, the National Department of Environmental Affairs has, for instance, provided support to the Khoi-San Village tourism project in the Eastern Cape, the Lilani Hotsprings project (KwaZulu-Natal), Isithumba Adventure Tourism project (KwaZulu-Natal) and the Siyabonga Craft Centre, among others. These projects were mainly infrastructure related and aimed at creating jobs. Provincial tourism authorities, such as Tourism KwaZulu-Natal, have also been very active in their support of community-based tourism projects (see Table 1).

Although the term community-based tourism is commonly used in South Africa, the definition is contested and means different things to different people. The lack of consensus seems to stem from whether the community actually owns and/or manages the tourism venture or facilities, whether the focus is upon the provision of jobs for local people, or on issues of community involvement in decision making (Ndlovu & Rogerson 2004). Despite the lack of consensus, Ndlovu and Rogerson (2004) argue that a number of authors accept a broad definition of community-based tourism, as that 'in which a significant number of local people are involved in providing services to tourists and the tourism industry, and in which local people have meaningful ownership, power and participation in the various tourism and related enterprises' (Leballo in Ndlovu & Rogerson 2004).

Table 1: KwaZulu-Natal community-based tourism support, 2003 to 2004

Project name	Project detail
Lilani Hot Springs Phase I and II	To ensure sustainability on this project, Tourism KwaZulu-Natal (TKZN) made available a budget of R300 000 to cater for initial operations on Phase I. A management company was appointed to work with the community structure in running the facility as a business. Phase II is almost complete and will be operational soon. About R6 million has been invested from the Poverty Relief Fund, contributing to the creation of temporary employment.
Muden Craft and Cultural Centre	This project is located within the Umvoti Local Municipality area, in the AmaChunu community. It aims to construct a craft market, a cultural centre demonstrating AmaChunu customs and a museum. The planning process has been completed and all documents approved. The process of appointing the construction team to start on Phase I of the project has begun. The project was approved by the municipality as one of the Intern Development Programme (IDP) tourism projects. An amount of R650 000 was allocated by TKZN for Phase I of this project, and the municipality contributed an additional amount of R50 000.
Ethunzi Nature Reserve and Lodge	The project is located at KwaMkhwanazi Tribal Authority area, on the coastal strip near Mtunzini and within the Uthungulu District Municipality area. It aims to package potential tourism sites for investment by the private sector and to develop a community conservation area. Community facilitation on this project has been through the Mkhwanazi Tribal Authority. An amount of R270 000 was made available by TKZN to undertake a Social/ Environmental Impact Assessment (SEIA) and to package the project for investment.

<p>Isandlwana Lodge</p>	<p>This project aims to facilitate the involvement of the Manqwe Buthanani community under Inkosi Mazibuko, at the Isandlwana Lodge. The lodge is located within the community, near Nqutu, in the Umzinyathi District Municipality area. The community was assisted in establishing a joint venture with the owners of the lodge, by buying an equity share in the business. TKZN facilitated the signing of the agreement between the lodge owners and the community trust, and an amount of R350 000 was allocated to the trust from the DEAT, through TKZN, to assist the community in buying their equity share.</p>
<p>Isithumba Adventure Tourism Phase II</p>	<p>This project continues from Phase I to include more accommodation facilities, as well as activities. A business plan has been completed and submitted to the DEAT for funding.</p>
<p>Bhambatha Heritage Centre</p>	<p>The project is located within the Umvoti Local Municipality area, at Ngome near Greytown. It features the historic battle of Bhambatha KaMancinza Zondi, who led his warriors in resisting payment of poll tax in 1906. This resulted in the Bhambatha Rebellion. The museum, Umuzi Wesintu homestead and a craft market will all form part of the Bhambatha Heritage Centre. The concept and design have been developed, and the application for funding submitted to the DEAT. The Umvoti Municipality supports the project and has allocated a budget to it.</p>
<p>Mkhambathini Tourism Initiative</p>	<p>Two projects have been identified, and business plans prepared and submitted to the DEAT for funding. This initiative is part of development in the Valley of a Thousand Hills, which involves three municipality areas: Ethekwini Municipality, Ilembe District Municipality and Umgungundlovu District Municipality.</p>

Emasothsheni Tourism Trading Area	A feasibility study was conducted for this project and the process of applying for funds to implement the study's recommendations has begun. The project is located at Nqutu, in the Umzinyathi District Municipality area. Albert Luthuli Legacy Project renovations to the Luthuli House were accelerated, in order to complete them within the 2003/2004 financial year. Renovations to the church were completed, as was the bust of Chief Albert Luthuli, by December 2003. An amount of R200 000 was allocated by TKZN to this project, and KwaDukuza Municipality was an implementing agent. The project forms part of the Zulu Heritage Route, which links up King Shaka, Chief Albert Luthuli and the Kingdom Projects. The National Department of Arts and Culture provided most of the funding for this project.
Township Tourism Route	This project identifies tourism potential in black townships around Durban, and aims to develop tourist routes that create small, medium and micro enterprise (SMME) opportunities for the benefit of the inhabitants. The townships involved include KwaMashu, Ntuzuma, Inanda, Phoenix, Cator Manor, Chesterville, Claremont, Lamontville, Umlazi, Chatsworth and KwaMakhutha.
EmaKhosini Lodge	This project is located in Ulundi in the Zululand District, and has as its goal a lodge development inside the Ophathe Game Reserve. The beneficiaries of this venture will be the Nobamba and Mpungose communities. The implementation of the project is currently on hold, pending the resolution of a land-use dispute.

Source: Adapted from *Tourism KwaZulu-Natal (2004)*

The HSRC has recently conducted research to establish what constitutes an enabling environment for community-based development, and to what extent community participation adds to the sustainability of tourism initiatives. This research revealed that the participation of local communities in community-based tourism initiatives is a precondition for sustaining such initiatives (Viljoen, Ringdahl, Adams & Tlabela 2004).

However, the research also found a number of other issues that are central to the success or failure of community-based tourism development initiatives:

- Involving communities in tourism initiatives is a long, time-consuming and in many instances difficult process, with many pitfalls. One of the most basic stumbling blocks is how to define the community or communities that need to be involved in such a process. Communities are heterogeneous entities with many vested interests and affiliations. This might complicate matters during negotiations between communities and other stakeholders. Involving more than one community can also complicate negotiations, when rivalry and competition for benefits occur.
- Legal issues such as establishing legal entities to represent communities, as well as issues with regard to land ownership, can also be problematic. Possible tourism investors place a high premium on secure tenure arrangements. Land tenure insecurity may therefore be one of the main deterrents to tourism investment in communal areas. Land ownership disputes can also be a major deterrent.
- Management processes are also full of potential pitfalls. Miscommunication and misinterpretation of information has the potential to sour relations between stakeholders, which may lead to irreparable damage and the failure of initiatives.
- A word that perhaps best describes the rewards of successful community participation in tourism initiatives is empowerment. Various degrees of social and economic empowerment have been achieved in tourism initiatives that embraced the participation of communities.
- Joint venture models of co-operation between investors, communities and other stakeholders have also proven to be important tools in either the success or failure of initiatives. It would appear that different models might be applicable to different situations in ensuring the sustainability of initiatives.

Ecotourism

Ecotourism became prominent in the 1990s and has received much attention since then. The term ecotourism is also frequently debated and defined in various ways, but is increasingly used by the tourism industry and by academics to describe tourism that focuses on natural areas and undeveloped parts of the globe (Hughes 2005). It is generally used to describe tourism activities that are conducted in harmony with nature, as opposed to more traditional 'mass tourism activities' (Visser & Kotze 2004).

A more comprehensive definition by Fennell describes ecotourism as 'a sustainable form of natural resource-based tourism, which focuses primarily on experiencing and learning about nature, and which is ethically managed (in terms of control, benefits and scale) to be low-impact non-consumptive and locally oriented' (Fennell in Visser & Kotze 2004: 312).

The international definition of the word ecotourism implies far more than merely a nature experience. Ecotourism implies tourism practices that would benefit all concerned parties rather than benefit some concerns and neglect others. Consequently, ecotourism has therefore come to include such concepts as planning before development, sustainability of resources, economic viability of a tourism product, no negative impact on either the environment or local communities, environmentally friendly practices by all parties concerned, and economic benefits flowing to local communities (Cybertourism Travel Services 2003).

As an eco-destination, South Africa is exceptionally rich in scenic beauty and wildlife. These facets remain the strongest motivations for tourism in this country. As a result, there is growing awareness of environmental responsibility among members of the South African tourism industry. Parties that are directly involved in a nature-based tourism experience, such as the national and provincial parks, as well as private game reserves, are now including the concept of involving and benefiting local communities in their mission statements. Similarly, the need for thorough planning is being emphasised through the publicity given to mining projects in ecologically sensitive areas. Conservation and careful management of scarce resources is increasingly becoming a priority (Cybertourism Travel Services 2003).

The term ecotourism is defined in the government's *White Paper on the Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa* as 'environmentally and socially responsible travel to natural or near natural areas that promote conservation, have low visitor impact and provide for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local people' (DEAT 1996: 3).

Hughes (2005) highlights the essence of what responsible ecotourism has been trying to achieve as follows:

- Increases foreign tourism and thus increases the inflow of foreign capital;
- Brings benefits to rural communities;
- Promotes understanding of biodiversity conservation;
- Changes justifiably negative attitudes to conservation;
- Protects biodiversity; and
- Makes ecotourism sustainable and permanent.

Cultural tourism

Cultural tourism is perceived as a new branch of tourism, aimed at investigating ways in which culture can be used to create value in this sector. It is also seen as a way in which marginalised communities and individuals can benefit from tourism on the basis of their cultural resources. In South Africa, cultural tourism is fairly new to the field of tourism and as such is undergoing considerable growth (Jansen van Veuren 2004).

Cultural tourism is defined in the government's *White Paper on the Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa* as 'cultural aspects which are of interest to the visitor and can be marketed as such, including the customs and traditions of people, their heritage, history and way of life'. An important aspect of cultural tourism is visiting cultural villages (DEAT 1996: 3).

Cultural villages are purpose-built structures intended for visiting by tourists or, in some cases, as museums (Jansen van Veuren 2004). The majority of cultural villages in South Africa were initiated during the 1990s, with most cultural villages found in KwaZulu-Natal, the Lowveld, and the areas in and around Gauteng. Employment levels vary from two to 130 employees. Other than township tours, cultural villages are the main form of cultural tourism in South Africa (Jansen van Veuren 2004).

In general, a cultural village is situated on or near an established tourist route in a rural area. It usually consists of a homestead to show living arrangements, an arena for dance, music and other live cultural displays, a restaurant and a craft/souvenir outlet. Additional features of a cultural village include a game enclosure, museum display, historical video or visit to a real homestead located nearby (Hughes 2005).

According to Jansen van Veuren (2004), visitors to the cultural village are taken on a guided tour through one or more reconstructed traditional homesteads. The guide generally explains a number of traditional customs, which are then demonstrated by the cultural workers. The tour is often followed by the performance of a traditional dance.

Various cultural villages offer different types of cultural experience. In most cases, indigenous cultures are depicted as they existed in the 19th or early 20th centuries. Some villages display a depiction of early building styles or present-day cultures. Several villages offer a traditional meal or overnight accommodation, and some have a craft or curio shop. Variations occur in the detail and quality of these elements, in the cultures that are depicted and in the scale of the cultural villages.

Jansen van Veuren (2004) distinguishes between three main ownership types:

White private sector owners: The main aim of white private sector owners is to make a profit, either directly or by using the cultural village as a drawcard for other businesses, such as hotels or curio shops. Private cultural villages often take the form of small businesses held by individuals or families, but a minority belong to larger corporations. While local communities benefit mainly from low-level employment and handicraft production, there is often an absence of empowerment through ownership, community involvement or local participation in senior management. Other problems include inadequate skills development and certification, and the scarcity of local people in skilled and middle-management positions (Jansen van Veuren 2004).

Indigenous entrepreneurs: Indigenous entrepreneurs establish cultural villages based on their own cultures. Profit is the main aim of establishing the cultural village, but many entrepreneurs emphasise a strong commitment to cultural conservation and education, or to job creation in their communities. Although these villages employ by far the fewest cultural workers and pay their employees substantially less than other types of village, they are committed to bringing benefits to local communities and also show awareness of local needs (Jansen van Veuren 2004).

State ownership: Government-established cultural villages intend primarily to preserve various aspects of indigenous cultures. Some cultural villages are intended to have both a cultural and a development function. Since the new government came to power in 1994, cultural villages constructed under homeland governments are now owned by town councils, provincial governments and parastatal development agencies. Within state-owned cultural villages, those that are operational pay substantially more in wages than commercial cultural villages, albeit with the aid of subsidies (Jansen van Veuren 2004).

Agritourism

In an increasingly competitive and hostile agricultural economic environment, the trend of embracing tourism as an additional income generator has taken off among agricultural enterprises. This has also acted to boost tourism growth in rural localities. One of the drives among agricultural sectors to diversify sources of income is the inception of agritourism. Agritourism is based on the premise of attracting visitors to farms. It often comprises tourist activities linked to game, crop and cattle farming, wineries and aquaculture. Agritourism is a relatively new concept in South Africa. It started off at ostrich farms near Oudtshoorn in the southern Cape, and with

the establishment of the Western Cape wine route in 1971 (initially limited to the Stellenbosch area, where there were just three well-known wine farms). This wine route has developed into one of the biggest Western Cape attractions and proves to be popular among both domestic and international tourists. Today, the Cape wine route has grown from the initial three farms, with a small number of visitors, to more than 300 farms with up to 500 000 annual visitors. Wine tour activities and facilities on offer include restaurants, wine tasting, picnicking and tours of wine cellars and production facilities. An increasing number of farm establishments have opted to specialise in accommodation, suitable for those visitors interested in experiencing the peace and tranquility of rural areas. In a survey among farmers of the southern Cape Garden Route, it was found that 52.5 per cent of respondents perceived agritourism as a full branch of the agricultural industry (*Die Burger*, 4 Sept 2003). The study showed that guesthouses, self-catering accommodation and horseriding proved to be the most popular tourist activities at farms. It was also recorded that 60 per cent of farming enterprises generated up to 30 per cent of their total income from tourism activities.

Adventure tourism

Adventure tourism, another relatively new branch of the sector, has been identified as one of the fastest-growing tourism segments, particularly popular with foreigners (*The Natal Witness*, 3 April 2003). Areas such as the KwaZulu-Natal midlands, particularly around Pietermaritzburg, have been capitalising on this fast-growing segment with activities as diverse as abseiling, rock climbing, mountaineering, horseriding, white-water rafting, skydiving, parachuting, paragliding, microlighting, off-road motorcycling, mountain biking and off-road driving being offered. The Eastern Cape, in particular, has been identified as an area with a large potential to offer adventure tourism activities.

With the ban on off-road vehicles on beaches in 2002, off-road adventure routes have become a lucrative source of income for farmers (*The Argus* 23 Feb 2002). A report in the Western Cape of the establishment of trails for four-wheel-drive vehicles on over 80 farms, in a relatively short period, testifies to this fast-growing activity. Farmers who embark on offering this type of trail find that risks associated with farming are lowered by the generation of income all year round. Poor communities, such as the residents of the centuries-old Wupperthal mission in the Cedarberg, have also shown interest in establishing a local trail with the support of the Western Cape Tourism Board (*The Argus*, 23 Feb 2002).

Budget tourism

Budget tourism is a term often used to describe predominately young, budget tourists who carry all their belongings on their backs and who survive on under US\$15 a day, use local transport and bargain for goods and services while guarding against being overcharged (Hampton 1998). These backpackers are also known for seeking out new tourist destinations and avoiding crowds. Due to its 'budget' image, this type of tourism has not received much promotional attention from government and agencies, such as South Africa Tourism (SAT), in the past. Despite being the stepchild of tourism product development in South Africa, backpacking facilities have been spreading across the country at a slow but steady pace. The geographical distribution of backpacker hostels is not only limited to premier international destination sites in South Africa but is also noticeable in rural areas that are often too remote to form part of international tourist routes. These areas include Hogsback, Coffee Bay, Kokstad, Ficksburg and Clarens (Visser & Barker 2004). The established perception that backpackers and budget tourism bring in little revenue to the destination regions has nevertheless been challenged. It is argued that backpackers' longer duration of stay causes them to spend more money than the average international tourist (Scheyvens 2002). Scheyvens (2002) also reported that the spending patterns of backpackers and budget tourists bring benefits to remote and otherwise marginalised regions that international mass tourists seldom visit. Marginalised regions in South Africa have nevertheless not benefited as much from backpacking activities as has been the case in other parts of the world, due to South Africa's limited public transport facilities. Many backpackers of today, however, are likely to be some of the more knowledgeable international tourists of tomorrow.

Game ranching

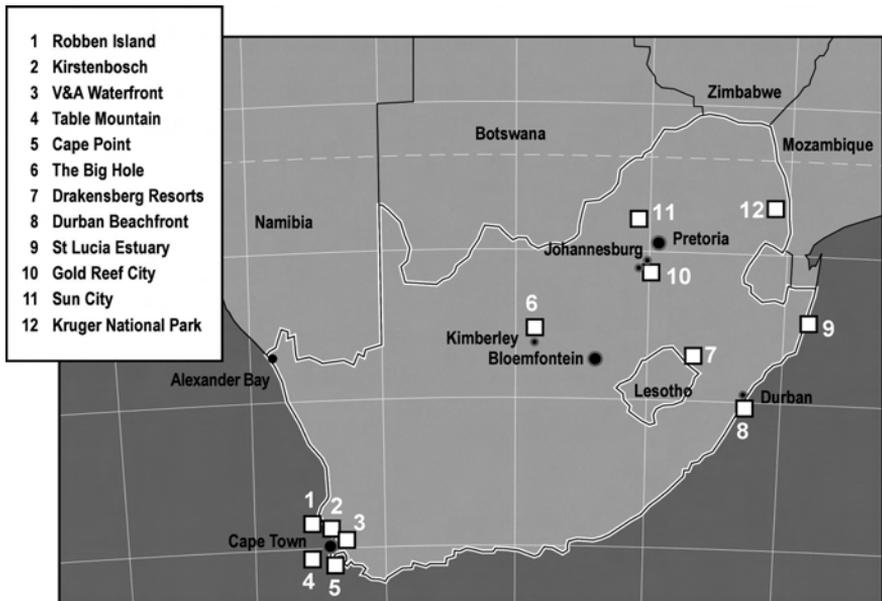
The game ranching and ecotourism industries in South Africa have been expanding rapidly since the early 1990s, and are predicted to continue growing even faster in the immediate future (Radder 2000). Over the past decade, the number of game ranches in South Africa has increased from 4 000 to about 6 000, extending over 10.4 million hectares in contrast to the 3.3 million hectare total of South Africa's national parks (National Research Foundation 2002). Growth in the number of game farms has been accompanied by an increase in ecotourism activities, such as game drives, hiking and birdwatching. However, hunting is reportedly still the mainstay of most game farms and ranches (SA Game & Hunt 2001). Many landowners and operators view ecotourism as another opportunity for diversification. Viewed in combination

with amenities and comforts that attract people, ecotourism does offer prospects as an income stream, although markets for ecotourism are not well defined.

Spatial patterns of tourism development in South Africa

Visser (2004) highlights the need to distribute the potential benefits of tourism expansion more evenly across the country and the whole southern African region, as one of the key tourism policy development challenges. An investigation by Rogerson (2002) shows that both the supply and demand for accommodation, comprising a proxy variable for more general tourism activity, are highly concentrated in the three metropolitan areas of Cape Town, Durban and Gauteng. Reportedly, business tourism dominates the Gauteng tourism node, with domestic leisure tourism being predominant in Durban and Cape Town. Other relatively significant tourism nodes comprise the Garden Route and eastern Mpumalanga. International leisure tourism is of particular importance to Cape Town and the surrounding areas, receiving 60 per cent of all international visitors to South Africa (Cornelissen, 2005).

Figure 1. Major international tourist attractions in South Africa



Source: Adapted from Visser (2004)

The prevailing pattern of tourism development reveals that the benefits of tourism are distributed in a spatially uneven manner, with few benefits and opportunities flowing outside major tourism nodes (Visser 2004) (see Figure 1). The reason given for this uneven distribution is a lack of tourism-supporting infrastructure. Recognising these inequalities, a number of development initiatives have been introduced in the form of Spatial Development Initiatives (SDIs), including the Wild Coast, Maputo and Lubombo development corridors, where tourism is identified as a key driver of local economic development.

Visser and Rogerson (2004) report that changing economic circumstances as a result of de-industrialisation and global economic restructuring have negatively impacted upon many South African localities, with the consequence of job losses through closures of mines and factories. This has led to a variety of local-level responses, with tourism growing in significance as a lead sector for local economic development (LED). Stillbaai and Clarens are examples of particularly successful small-town LEDs, where tourism represents the main sector of development. Route tourism is another example of emerging LED strategies, where the collective marketing and promotion of a grouping of adjacent tourism facilities takes place in order to compete more effectively with established tourism destinations. The Midlands and Highveld Meanders are cited by Visser and Rogerson (2004) as successful examples of route tourism initiatives, in terms of enterprise development and employment creation.

A study commissioned by the DEAT in 1999 documented the distribution of tourism infrastructure in South Africa (DEAT 2005). Using this information, 19 areas were selected as tourism nodes. These nodes were referred to as Priority Areas for Tourism Infrastructure Investment or PATIIs, and were selected on the basis of available infrastructure that would act as catalysts to unlock the inherent tourism development potential of these areas. The development of these 19 nodes was intended to partly address the distorted tourism patterns that prevail.

Visser (2004) also points to a glaring contradiction between the tourism development objectives of the government and SAT in terms of the marketing of tourism products in different portfolio countries. By virtue of the tourism white paper, SAT is tasked with improving the regional distribution of tourists through the country and throughout the year. Current tourism marketing by SAT nevertheless reinforces contemporary tourism patterns, which continue to benefit top tourism destinations with few benefits flowing to other regions. Placing emphasis on major tourism drawcards in international marketing campaigns makes sense in order to grow international tourism arrivals *per se*, but it contributes little to developing the lesser known tourism regions.

Concluding remarks

- South African tourism policy provides a solid base for tourism development and has been particularly successful in growing international tourism arrivals. However, rural areas do not benefit as much from this growth as well-established tourist destinations. Prevailing patterns of tourism development show that few benefits and opportunities currently flow outside the major tourism nodes.
- In all its different shapes, the development of rural tourism in South Africa is of growing importance in the changing rural tourism landscape of post-apartheid South Africa. What is notable is that, although many rural tourism initiatives are still in their infancy, there is growing recognition in both the private and public sector that the benefits of tourism should be distributed in a spatially even manner. This policy will work towards improve the quality of life of all South Africans.
- The increasingly competitive and hostile agricultural economic environment has provided incentives for agricultural enterprises in rural areas to embrace tourism. The trend among agricultural enterprises to adopt tourism has gained significant impetus in rural areas, due to the additional source of income it provides.
- Tourism growth in rural areas over the past 10 years has lead to a diversified tourism product that increasingly attracts both domestic and international tourists. International tourists primarily visit the better known and most marketed rural areas, such as the Western Cape wine and garden routes, and the Kruger National Park.
- Certain types of tourism, such as budget tourism, could be beneficial to rural areas. However, budget tourism has not received much support by government because of a perception of limited economic spin-offs when compared to other tourism types. Then again, some tourism experts do not support this perception and argue, for example, that the longer duration of stay of backpackers causes them to spend more money than the average international tourist. Also, the spending patterns of backpackers and budget tourists bring benefits to remote and otherwise marginalised regions that international mass tourists seldom visit.
- The current emphasis on tourism drawcards in marketing campaigns, by official tourism role-players such as SAT, calls for a change in approach. Their aim should be to introduce and grow lesser known tourism regions without compromising established and well-known drawcard destinations, such as Cape Town, the Garden Route and the Kruger National Park.

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