

# The public sector and tourism



But are governments important to tourism, and how do they become involved with tourism management? What are the effects on tourism-has it led to success or failure?

Governments and tourism-Tourism needs favourable conditions to thrive-these are stability and security, a sound legal structure with provision of vital services and necessary infrastructure(the roads, water supplies, a favourable environment.)All these the State is able to provide. It is the government who has the influence and political clout for decisions and course direction. The degree of involvement and commitment are most important here. These two factors exist with varying degrees of effect within each country on the globe. PSM or public sector management involves action implementation and policy direction through the government. The principles of accountability on behalf of the public having the necessary support of the legal framework and political system prevailing.

Why governments intervene in the tourism sector-First and foremost if there is no monitoring of tourism activity there could occur sudden deterioration of the environment with consequences to the local population. Both facilities and infrastructure as supplied by government contribute as enabling factors with positive benefits of the populations well-being and provision of increased tax revenue. Jobs, also a very important issue are thereby able to be created. See *Guide for Local Authorities on Developing Sustainable Tourism* WTO(1998: 29). Much of the developing world has embraced the immediate benefits to its economy by the pursuit of such investment. Critics would point out the potential for damage by alteration of the locality's social and cultural fabric. There are also leakages whereby the revenue generated

is not experienced by the locality it gets diverted elsewhere to overseas investors with a stream of cheap labour coming in to fill potential seasonal employment occupancies for the locals.

Politics tend to deal in wider frameworks and this is not always in the best interests of the people. The Franco regime of the 60s utilised tourism for political acceptability. France has always sought to the position of the welfare state on behalf of the poorer members of its society. It is similar to recreational tourism most evident in the Soviet era where cultivation of a workers climate is applicable to the spas, resorts and holiday camps. The government of the UK expounded the potential of the tourism industry for being able to accommodate to large numbers of unemployed during the 1980s when unemployment was at a high level. A transnational body such as the EU has consistently supported financial aid for the creation of infrastructure in the outlying regions of the world. Aid is rendered by the more wealthy nations to those who are impoverished to generate immediate recovery and wealth the Pacific Islands being a case in point.

Government intervention and tourism performance-The tourism industry is a very complex category and requires proper coordination encouraged to achieve positive results. It is pointed out that with extensive government involvement there is inevitable bureaucratic regulation and stiflement this deterring would-be investment from the private sector. Government intervention *is* necessary where there is present seasonal dependency and the local economy cannot be kept running all year round.

The political complexion of local councils is very variable interest in tourism is likely to wax and wane. Government is concerned with obtaining as much quality statistical data as it is able so as to understand how these local economies function and so be able to assist more effectively but still is a very fragmented process. Resolve of conflict directly concerns government intervention; and similar to politics is concerns a balancing strategy between the tourism industry and disenchanted opposition more often than not the local residents themselves.

Strategic objectives are more likely to be pursued by government Jeffries(2001) has pinpointed two viewpoints. Firstly redeployment of tourist visitors taking into account the seasonal variation patterns and secondly geographical redeployment in steering tourism flows elsewhere. It is argued for the first strategem that extension of the tourist season with an improved range of visitor and domestic attractions offered during the low season there will automatically occur increased business interest and therefore activity. Employment growth might well occur rather than sustaining a low seasonal level. The second strategem concerns direct intervention and an example of this would be the Languedoc-Rousillon coastal region to the south of Montpellier. A certain number of bespices were guaranteed for the resort area and improved throughout the 70s and 80s. In this case regional development has occurred to assist an undeveloped region.

Locally in the UK the saturation effects experienced from an influx of tourism has prompted definitive measures to contain it; examples of this would be Stratford-upon-Avon, Cambridge with York and Canterbury