THE PERCEPTIONS OF STAKEHOLDERS ON LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ROUTE TOURISM ON THE FOUR DESERTS TOURISM ROUTE IN SOUTHERN NAMIBIA

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i

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENT WORK

I, Juliet Lydia Olivier (nee Isaacs), passport number   and student number   , do hereby declare that this research project submitted to the Central University of Technology, Free State, for the degree of MASTER OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES IN TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT, is my own independent work and complies with the Code of Academic Integrity, as well as with other relevant policies, procedures, rules and regulations of the Central University of Technology, Free State; and has not been submitted before to any institution by myself or any other person in fulfilment (or partial fulfilment) of the requirements for the attainment of any qualification.

_____   **14 November 2017**

SIGNATURE OF STUDENT   **DATE**

ii

SUMMARY

The diverse landscapes, wildlife and different cultures of Namibia, provide the country with incredible opportunities for tourism. However, these assets must be developed to ensure the continued growth of tourism in the country. Tourism is Namibia's third largest foreign currency earner and, to ensure its sustainability, the Namibian government has gone to extensive lengths to promote conservation. To support the conservation of rural Namibia, the government has promoted the creation of conservancies which consist of rural conservancy members choosing to work together to protect the wildlife and environment. Conservancies and other protected areas currently constitute over 50% of Namibia's landmass.

The Namibia Tourism Board (NTB) was established in 2001 as a regulatory body for the tourism industry, in part to ensure the sustainability of the industry. Whilst most tourists visit the northern part of Namibia, southern Namibia, with its large open spaces and rural communities, lacks major development as a tourist destination. Route tourism is a viable option for lesser known areas, because it links smaller towns and attractions as part of a designated route. The Four Deserts Tourism Route spans the entire southern Namibia, but it is currently not managed and marketed as a tourism route.

The aim of this investigation was to determine the perceptions of stakeholders on the Four Deserts Tourism Route related to route tourism and Local Economic Development (LED). This served as basis for the recommendations to the NTB to manage and market the route as a fully-fledged tourism route. A quantitative research method was applied to obtain data, using a semi-structured questionnaire. A total of 177 questionnaires were collected for data analyses. The findings indicate that most of the participants along the Four Deserts Tourism Route are not aware of the route. Many feel that not enough is being done by the Ministry of Environment and Tourism and NTB to promote southern Namibia as a tourist destination.

There were also misgivings about the infrastructure (such as roads, signage, rest stops and information centres) along the route. Another concern raised was a lack of communication between private stakeholders and LED officers. The data analysis

enabled specific recommendations to be made on properly managing and marketing the Four Deserts Tourism Route. These recommendations will be presented to the NTB and MET.

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List of tables

List of graphs

List of pictures

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Despite unpredictable global events such as political revolutions, civil wars, riots, protests, global economic instability, large-scale natural disasters, tsunamis and severe weather conditions, travel and tourism remains a substantial driver of the global economy and continuously creates jobs and economic growth. For the year 2015 the global tourism figures have increased by 4.6% (to a total of US$ 52 million) compared with 2014, making it the sixth year of consecutive above-average growth internationally (United Nations World Tourism Organisation [UNWTO], 2016). In 2015 tourism to Asia, the Pacific and the Americas has increased from 4 to 5%, followed by Europe with 3% to 4%, the Middle East with 2% to 5%, and Africa with 3% to 5% (UNWTO, 2016:1).

In Africa the tourism industry plays a significant role in ensuring economic growth through foreign exchange earnings. Sub-Saharan destinations showed a 5% increase in tourist arrivals in 2012, and South Africa, being the largest destination in the sub-Saharan region, showed a growth of 10% in 2012, with over 9 million arrivals (UNWTO, 2013:3). With regard to Namibia, tourism contributes 7.2 million to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and is ranked the third largest sector after mining and agriculture, with a total of 1 519 618 foreign arrivals recorded for 2015 (Ministry of Environment and Tourism [MET], 2016:1).

Namibia was ranked among the most competitive tourist destinations in Africa in 2017, as measured by the World Economic Forum Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index. Tourism in this country has directly supported the creation of 24 000 jobs, which constitutes 4.5% of total employment. The Namibian government has, since 2008, positively impacted conservation and rural development by supporting 50 communal conservancies on 11.8 million hectares of land. This has enhanced land management and provided much needed income to rural Namibians, contributing significantly to the development of local areas (MET, 2011:2).

1

The tourism and hospitality industries are inextricably linked, and the hospitality industry constitutes the largest sector in the tourism industry, hence the term 'tourism and hospitality industry' applies widely. The development of small businesses that supply goods and services to the tourism and hospitality industry significantly enhances job creation opportunities. This applies to rural areas especially where the establishment of a tourism route can benefit local communities. Route tourism has gained significant progress in recent years, and the development of tourism routes is becoming more prolific, making it a significant factor in the promotion of tourism in small towns and rural areas (Rogerson, 2007:49).

A route, as defined by Briedenhann and Wickens (2004b:1), is a linkage between the tourism resources of a number of smaller centres by collectively marketing them as a single tourism destination. Meyer (2004) argues that tourism routes provide a particularly good opportunity for the development of less mature areas with high cultural resources that appeal to special-interest tourists. Special-interest tourists usually stay longer and spend more to pursue their particular interest. The rationale behind route tourism is to influence tourist travel patterns by offering an experience where tourism products are grouped together as part of a tourism route (Glasmeier, 2000; Donaldson, 2007:315).

International research on route tourism includes the work of Denstadli and Jacobsen (2011) on the perceived quality of scenic tourism routes and the importance of self-guided trails as a way to promote responsible tourism (MacLeod, 2013). Kunaeva (2012) focused on sustainable tourism management along the Camino de Santiago Pilgrimage Route. In Africa most studies on route tourism have been conducted within the South African context. These include the work of Lourens (2007) who focused on the successes of route development; Stoddart and Rogerson (2009) who focused on LED promotion and pro-poor tourism development; and Proos (2015) who assessed the marketing and management effectiveness of the Free State section of the Maloti Drakensberg Route. Although Namibia has tourism routes, little or no research has been done on route tourism in the Namibian context.

Namibia has a total land area of 825 615 square kilometres and a population of 2 113 077 million. It shares borders with South Africa in the south, Angola and

Zambia in the north, Botswana in the east, and the Atlantic Ocean in the west (MET, 2011). The southern part of Namibia is a semi-desert region with lower rainfall compared to the northern region. Unlike the north, where the summers are hot and humid and the winters have mild temperatures, the south have very hot summers and very cold winters. The north also attracts more visitors compared with the south and boasts a number of established tourism routes, such as the Arid Eden Route, the Omulunga Palm Route, the Four River Route, the Caprivi Wetland Paradise Route and the Kavango Open Africa Experience.

Although the south has a demarcated route, namely the Four Deserts Tourism Route, the route is not managed and marketed as such. The Four Deserts Tourism Route covers the entire southern section of Namibia, from the Orange River to the Tropic of Capricorn, linking a number of privately owned accommodation enterprises, information centres, activity, tour and safari operators (Open Africa, 2010). Because it is not properly managed and marketed, the route remains dormant and essentially non-existent (CEO Gondwana Group, personal communication).

Given that southern Namibia has large open spaces and many rural communities in need of Local Economic Development (LED), route tourism development can benefit the region. This study, thus, promotes the idea that the Four Deserts Tourism Route should be managed and marketed as a proper tourism route. The findings of this study will be presented to the tourism authorities of Namibia. The map in Figure 1 outlines the Four Deserts Tourism Route in southern Namibia.

3
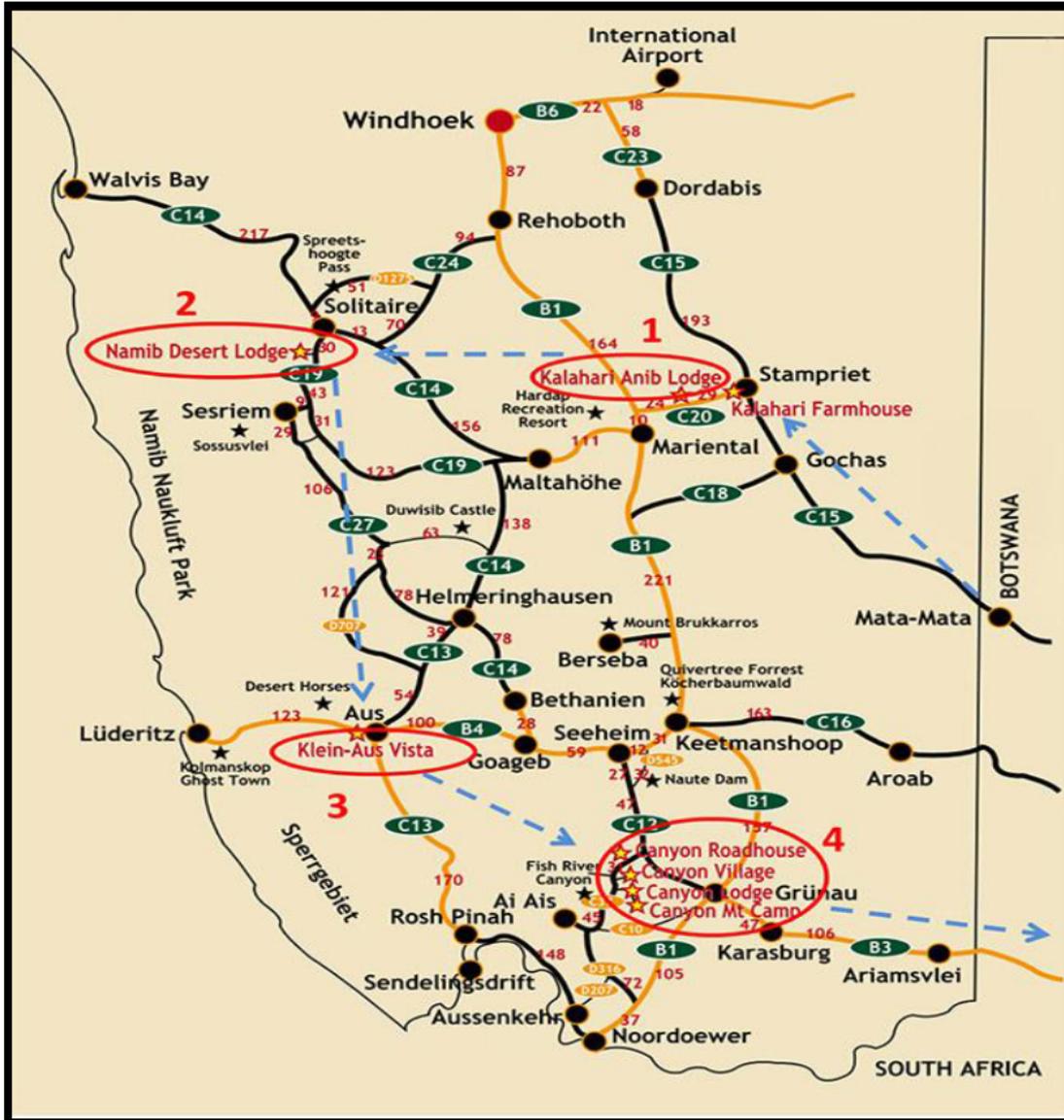
Figure 1: Map of southern Namibia
Source: Photographing Namibia

1.2 Research problem

Tourism is an important contributor to job creation and the economic sustainability of local areas, especially for a developing country like Namibia. According to Asheeke (2008) and Sherbourne (2009), Namibia's full tourism potential is underutilised. Southern Namibia, with its large open spaces and long distances between towns, draws fewer tourists than the northern part. Because the south has many rural communities, LED is important for uplifting these communities. In this regard route tourism is an excellent way of attracting tourists to local areas and tourism product

owners, and LED officers should assist one another in these endeavours. Although the Four Deserts Tourism Route was created by Open Africa, the route is currently not managed or marketed as a tourism route. This means that opportunities are unexploited for developing southern Namibia and for meaningful LED to take place.

With the above in mind, the main aim of the study was to make tangible suggestions to the Namibian Tourism Board (NTB) on managing and marketing the Four Deserts Tourism Route as a fully operational route. As the management and marketing of a tourism route need input from stakeholders (in this case tourism product owners and government officials), their perceptions were sourced. As the input from community members is part of the next step in advancing LED in the area, it fell outside the scope of this study.

1.3 Main objective / Co-objectives

The main objective of the study was to investigate the perceptions of product owners and government officials on LED and route tourism on the Four Deserts Tourism Route in southern Namibia.

Co-objectives

1. To determine the demographic composition of the product owners on the Four Deserts Tourism Route,
2. To identify the perceptions of product owners related to LED and route development on the Four Deserts Tourism Route,
3. To determine the status quo of current infrastructure and facilities – notably roads, signage, camping areas, rest areas, driver stops and scenic lookouts,
4. To determine challenges product owners are facing related to LED and route development on the Four Deserts Tourism Route,
5. To identify the opportunities for LED and route development on the Four Deserts Tourism Route,
6. To capture any recommendations product owners might have on LED and route development on the Four Deserts Tourism Route, and

7. To make recommendations to the NTB and MET on managing and marketing the Four Deserts Tourism Route as a fully operational tourism route.

1.4 Research questions

1. What is the demographic structure of the product owners along the Four Deserts Tourism Route?

2. What are the perceptions of the product owners along the Four Deserts Tourism Route on LED and route development?

3. What is the current status of the infrastructure of the Four Deserts Tourism Route with regard to the road, signage along the route, camping areas, rest areas, stops and scenic lookouts?

4. What are the challenges that product owners face along the Four Deserts Tourism Route on LED and route development?

5. What opportunities exist for LED and route development along the Four Deserts Tourism Route?

6. What recommendations do products owners along the Four Deserts Tourism Route have on LED and route development?

7. What recommendations can be made to the NTB and MET on managing and marketing the Four Deserts Tourism Route as a fully operational tourism route?

1.5 Research methodology

Research methodology is the method employed to conduct a scientific investigation of a particular phenomenon. It can be described as any organised and systematic process carried out to solve a particular problem (O'Leary, 2004:85). Research methodology is used in outlining the research approach and design, the population and sampling, measuring instrument, data collection and data analysis. Primary and secondary sources can be utilised to do research. Primary sources can be referred to as new data collected and used by the researcher for the first time. Secondary sources include existing information which the researcher can use; these include journals, books, internet sources, government statistics, etc. (Veal, 2006:39). To reach the objectives of this study both primary and secondary sources were used.

6

1.6 Research approach and design

This study consisted of a literature and an empirical section. The research approach was quantitative and the research design involved survey research because all the product owners and LED officers on the Four Deserts Tourism Route were included in the data-gathering process (Malhotra, 2010:171). Quantitative research usually relates to collecting large-scale numeric data. Results are then analysed and interpreted to explain a particular phenomenon. According to Kumar (2008:94), a research design is a detailed plan adopted by the researcher to obtain answers to research questions. The research methodology is fully explained in Chapter 5 of the dissertation.

1.7 Population of the study

A population is defined as a collection of elements that share a set of common characteristics (Malhotra, 2010:370). For purposes of this investigation the entire population of product owners (including owners of accommodation establishments, arts and craft shops, activity operators, etc.) and LED officers (government officials from the MET) within the different towns on the Four Deserts Tourism Route were included. A total of 250 product owners and government officials were targeted for data collection from which 177 respondents completed the questionnaire. This represents a response rate of 62%. No sampling thus applied to this study.

1.8 Ethical considerations

Research ethics is the domain of enquiry that identifies ethical challenges with a view to developing guidelines that safeguard against any harm and protect the rights of human subjects in research (Rogers, 2008:180). The researcher is aware of the key ethical principles such as respect, informed consent, beneficence, honesty and justice. Confidentiality of information, feedback responses, the identities of participants and the public domain are considered very important and were at all times be protected throughout the research process.

1.9 Limitations of the study

The focus of this investigation was on stakeholders' perceptions about LED and route tourism on the Four Deserts Tourism Route. The findings cannot be generalised to other settings. The degree of willingness of both product owners and LED officers to participate in the study was a limitation. Also, the study did not include the perspectives of the community members.

1.10 Layout of the study

Chapter 2: Route tourism development

Chapter 2 provides in-depth background on tourism development, and route tourism is discussed at international, regional and local level with examples of some successful routes. It also discusses the criteria for effective route development and its economic benefits.

Chapter 3: Local economic development, rural tourism and communities

Chapter 3 details how route tourism can affect LED and benefit poor communities through rural tourism and community-based tourism. It also gives a global and African perspective on LED.

Chapter 4: Namibia as a tourist destination

Chapter 4 provides background on tourism in Namibia and the importance thereof. It also provides the key attractions in the country and identifies the tourism routes in the country.

Chapter 5: Research methodology

Chapter 5 discusses the research approach and design, the research methods used to collect the data, the data collection process itself and the data analysis. In addition, it outlines the construction of the questionnaire, the pilot study and field work challenges.

Chapter 6: Analysis and findings

Chapter 6 presents the analysis of the research findings.

Chapter 7: Conclusions and recommendations

Chapter 7 provides the conclusions based on the findings of the investigation. Applicable recommendations are drafted based on the findings and will be presented to the NTB and MET.

CHAPTER 2: ROUTE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Introduction

Tourism is a key sector and economic driver and has the potential to positively impact the growth and development of local areas. As the tourism industry matures, there is an increasing demand for unique, authentic and meaningful tourist experiences (Frey & George, 2010:113). Tourists also tend to want to learn more about the destination they are visiting and to interact with locals as part of experiencing the local culture. Tourism planning is not only desirable, but vital if the gains from the tourism sector are to be sustained indefinitely. Tourism development in the form of route tourism has grown in significance in Africa. This has increased the viability of 'marginalized areas, stimulating social regeneration and improving the living conditions of rural communities' (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004:71).

The aim of this chapter is to inform the reader about route tourism and its importance by providing an overview of tourism development planning and sustainability. The chapter describes the terms 'tourism' and 'a tourist' and the importance of tourism development and planning. It also explains route tourism as a means of developing local areas and infrastructure. International, regional and local examples of tourism route development are presented. The chapter further outlines the criteria for successful route development and describes the economic importance of route tourism.

2.2 Explaining the terms 'tourism' and 'tourist'

Different definitions of tourism exist in the literature. Pearce (1989:11) defines tourism as the relationships and phenomena arising from the journeys and temporary stays of people travelling for leisure or recreational purposes. Inskeep (1991) views the term visitor' as signifying two types of travellers: 1) tourists, who are visitors staying at least 24 hours in the country; and 2) excursionists, who are temporary visitors staying less than 24 hours in a destination.

10

Leiper (2004:44) defines tourism as the theories and practices of being a tourist, which involves travelling and visiting places for leisure-related purposes. He states that tourism comprises people's ideas and opinions which shape their decisions about going on trips, about where to go and what to do, and how to relate to other tourists, locals and service personnel. UNWTO (1993) describes tourism as 'the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes'. Similarly, George (2011:3-5) view tourism as the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes whilst not earning any form of remuneration at these places.

The above definitions show that tourism involves temporary travelling to and from a destination, and utilising the activities and services at the destination. This study used the definition by UNWTO above. UNWTO (1993) drew a further distinction between tourism and travelling:

> In order for tourism to happen, there must be a displacement: an individual has to travel, using any type of means of transportation (he might even travel on foot: nowadays, it is often the case for poorer societies, and happens even in more developed ones, and concerns pilgrims, hikers). But all travel is not tourism.

The below three criteria are applied simultaneously to characterise a trip as complying with the definition of tourism. The displacement:

- Must be outside the usual environment. This criterion is of the utmost importance,
- Must be for a specific type of purpose, namely any purpose different from being remunerated within the place visited. The previous limits, where tourism was restricted to recreation and visiting family and friends, have now been expanded to include a vast array of purposes, and
- Can be with or without an overnight stay. Only a maximum duration is mentioned for tourism, not a minimal.

11

To summarise: Tourism can be defined as a set of socioeconomic activities carried out either by or for tourists. Those carried out *by* tourists correspond to what tourists do, whilst those carried out *for* tourists correspond to what other socioeconomic institutions do to support the needs of tourists. What is worth emphasising is that tourism so defined is neither a pure demand-side phenomenon nor a pure supply-side one (UNWTO, 1993).

In 1963 the United Nations Conference on Travel and Tourism defined 'a tourist' as any person visiting a country other than that in which he has his usual place of residence, for any reason other than following an occupation remunerated from within the country visited, a visitor being either a tourist, staying overnight, or an excursionist on a day visit. According to Cooper, Fletcher, Gilbert and Wanhill (2005), a tourist is defined as a person who travels to a country other than the one where she has her usual residence, but outside her usual environment for a period not exceeding 12 months and whose major purpose of visit is other than an activity remunerated from within the country visited. Another definition by Palatkova (2011) states that a tourist is a person who travels into another country other than his usual residence, for a period not longer than one year, but including at least one night, and the major purpose of travel is not the making of business.

Tourists are the main reason for the existence of tourism, as Keyser (2011:164) argues, because tourists are the market and consumers of the destination offerings such as hotels, restaurants, entertainment, tourist guides, travel agents and other attractions. For the purpose of this study, a tourist is regarded as a person travelling away from home and who engages in a variety of activities during his period away.
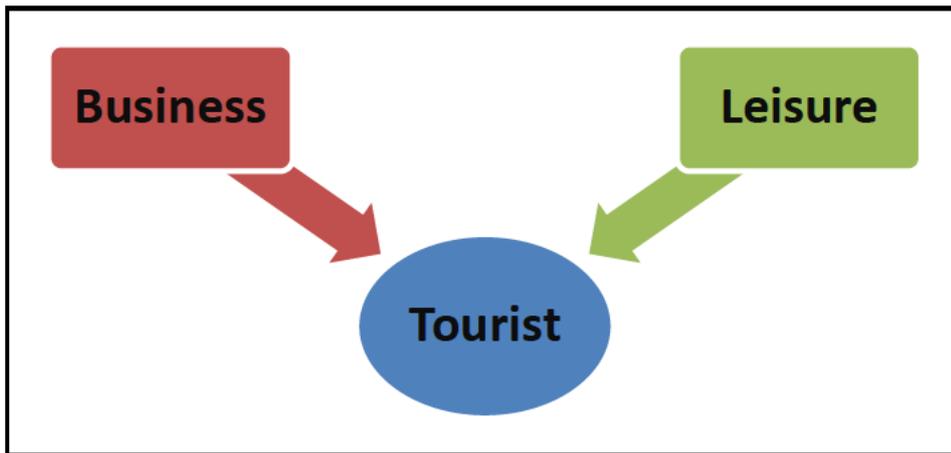
Figure 2: Types of tourists

A tourist can either be a business traveller or a leisure traveller, as illustrated in Figure 2. Business travelling is referred to by Swarbrooke and Horner (2001:110) as the practice of travelling for work-related purposes. Business tourists are usually motivated by the need to undertake business dealings efficiently and effectively within a given time frame.

A leisure tourist is generally more informed, interested and curious about potential holiday destinations, and would therefore opt for longer visits. These tourists have more disposable income and more time to travel. According to Beer (2009:145), leisure tourists are generally open minded and very selective with regard to media consumption, for example, internet, digital media, lifestyle channels and documentaries, choosing mostly what is personally relevant and motivating. Leisure tourists also like to challenge themselves physically and emotionally, and they are likely to visit untouched locations rather than stylised tourist destinations.

2.3 Tourism planning and development

Schubert (2011:377) contends that international tourism is recognised to have a positive effect on the increase of long-run economic growth through different channels, such as foreign exchange earnings. The most persuasive reason for pursuing tourism as a development strategy is its alleged positive contribution to the local or national economy. Tourism is considered to be an effective source of income and employment. It accounts for the single largest peaceful movement of people

across cultural boundaries (Lett, 1989:277) which, in 2012, has reached over 1 billion arrivals for the first time (UNWTO, 2012). Unsurprisingly, many governments are turning to tourism to revival their local economies (Lepp, 2007:876; Shrestha, Stein & Clark, 2007:978).

This makes the opportunity to participate in tourism increasingly widespread compared with the early 1900s when it was largely limited to the privileged minority. As stated by WTO (1980:1):

> World tourism can contribute to the establishment of a new international economic order that will help to eliminate the widening economic gap between developed and developing countries and ensure the steady acceleration of economic and social development and progress, in particular the developing countries.

Stokes (2008:253) states that tourism planning looks to provide a coordinated link between the present situation at a destination and an improved future for both residents and tourists.

Angeleska-Najdeska and Rakicevic (2012:211) argue that sustainable tourism development planning revolves around environmental preservation planning which should take place in order to determine the nature and direction of development. However, Spencer (2010:684) points out that failure to include the indigenous community in the planning process may have disastrous consequences. Therefore, Saayman (2013:318-319) stresses that tourism planning is important for the following reasons:

- To cope with uncertainty,
- To increase success,
- To reflect on different options, solutions or approaches,
- To prevent the necessity of crisis management,
- To increase stakeholders/staff participation,
- To control output,
- To develop a framework for decision making,
- To create an approach of action instead of reaction,

- To remain competitive,
- To ensure quality, and
- Facilitate growth and expansion.

Successful planning for tourism development requires the active support and involvement of the local community. It is important to recognise that host communities have a stake in ensuring that tourism does not compromise their quality of life. Tourism development and the growing demand for tourism globally over the past years have become highly beneficial, as direct and indirect income and employment are created in the host regions (Saarinen & Rogerson, 2014).

Tourism planning necessitates the development or upgrade of infrastructure, such as roads, water and electricity, which is shared by both tourists and local people. This will further motivate locals to plan and develop improvements to their property, of which the increased value will yield benefits for both tourists and locals (Frey & George, 2010:623). Brown and Hall (2008) also argue that tourism facilities and services can improve the general level of infrastructure of a region, and tourism businesses generate tax revenues, including revenues from employees, which directly benefit the local population, particularly in developing countries.

Honadle (1990) notes that tourism development can offer an opportunity for extension personnel to implement interdisciplinary programmes, including topics such as agricultural and natural resources, small-business and home-based business development skills, community resource development, or youth programming, depending on the given community's needs.

Uncontrolled and poorly planned tourism development can harm the resources on which tourism is dependent and destroy the special qualities that communities require to ensure their development (Dredge & Jenkins, 2007:5). For example, over-crowding at traditionally local venues and rapid changes in social value increase demand which, in turn, raises the price of consumer commodities and degradation of the natural environment occurs as a result. In addition, land tenure, indigenous people's rights, poverty, and a lack of access to basic services and core community

15

issues, which exist globally, might also have a significant impact on the viability of tourism development. Therefore, Inskeep (1991) sees sustainable development as a significant approach due to the increasing concern about environmental and cultural degradation.

2.3.1 Sustainable tourism development

Sustainable tourism provides many job opportunities for local people which can improve quality of life and reduce poverty in local economies. Sustainable development refers to sustaining the resources of development from depletion so that they are available for continuous and permanent use in the future. According to Bramwell and Lane (2000, cited in Liu, 2010, p.467), sustainable tourism development is a process of aligning the needs of tourists, the tourism' businesses, the host community and the environment. It calls for effective planning and implementation of collaboration and partnerships among various stakeholders in the process of tourism development (Bramwell & Lane, 2000).

Lozano-Oyola, Blancas, Gonzales and Caballero (2012:659) claim that sustainable tourism is not a specific form of tourism, but instead an approach that can be used to make all types of tourism more environmentally, socially and economically beneficial.

Sustainable tourism is a constant process and requires the informed participation of all relevant stakeholders and a strong political leadership to establish wide participation. Its impacts and the introduction of preventative and corrective measures must be continuously observed (UNWTO: 2005).

Sustainable tourism has to maintain a high level of tourist satisfaction and confirm a meaningful experience to tourists, raising their awareness about sustainability issues and supporting sustainable tourism practices amongst them. The most used and earliest known definition of sustainable development listed by the Brundtland Commission in 1987 states that 'sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'.

16

Sustainable tourism is defined as tourism which appreciates both the local people and the traveller, cultural heritage and the environment. It provides an exciting and educational holiday that is also of benefit to the people of the host country (UNESCO, 2010). Sustainable tourism is a high level of tourism activity which might be conserved over the long term, because it creates opportunities for the social, economic, natural and cultural environments of the area in which it occurs (ICOMOS, 2011).

By using the above definitions on sustainable tourism effectively explain the process of developing tourism in a sustainable manner. The ten steps below are used to finding answers to the questions and by answering the questions at each step, the process of developing tourism can be made more relevant and practical.
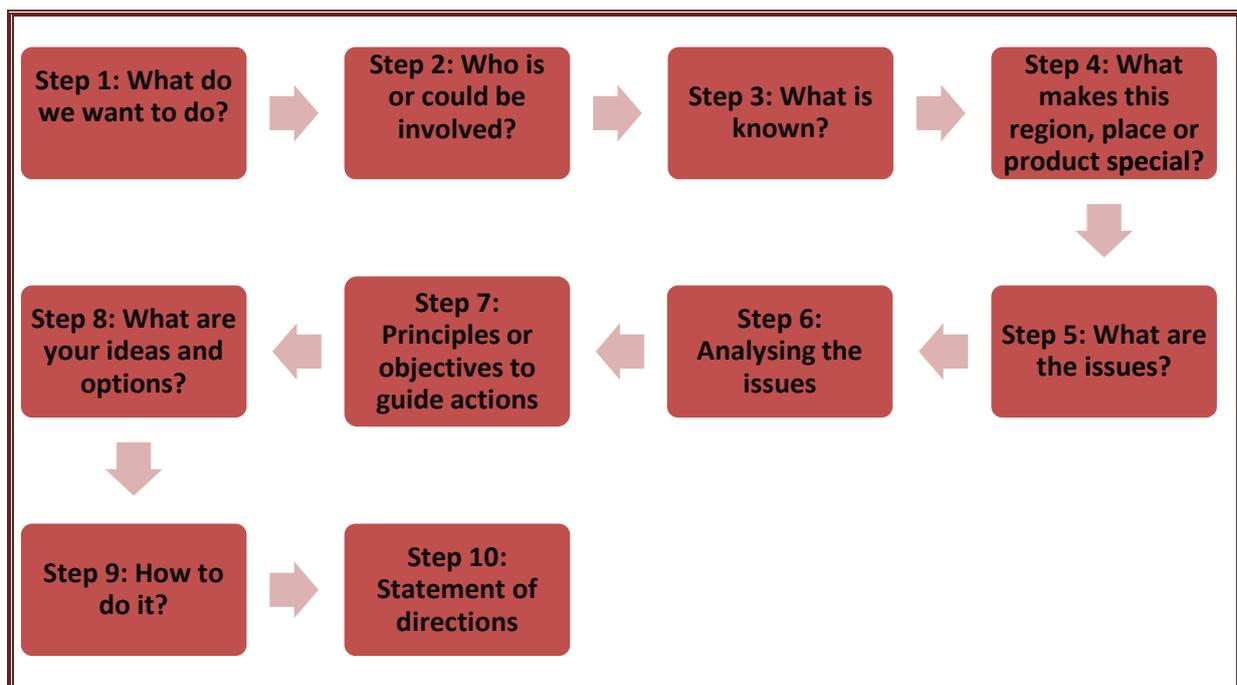
Figure 3: Ten steps to sustainable tourism planning
Source: Commonwealth of Australia (2004:7)

Figure 3 outlines ten steps to finding answers to the questions posed by the Australian government to explain the process of developing tourism in a sustainable manner. According to the figure, it is important to approach tourism development by providing answers to each question regarding the 'what, who and why' of tourism development.

According to Bonnedahl (2013), the increasing demand for more sustainable business practices has caused firms and organisations to start turning away from irresponsible practices towards newer, more socially and environmentally aware business ethics. Legal regulations are also increasing the pressure on corporations, which are finally adjusting their economic activities through stakeholder-oriented approaches such as corporate social responsibility and sustainable development programmes. In such programmes both public and private sectors can partner to resolve complex sustainability problems.

However, Keyser (2009:305) cautions that, for tourism destinations to remain competitive and successful over a long period, they should be able to balance industry demands against resource sustainability. The choice of tourism as a development option should be preceded by a comprehensive analysis of its impact on the sociocultural, environmental and economic resources from which it draws (Fletcher, 2013:126).

2.4 Overview of route tourism

Route tourism is defined by Rogerson (2007:50) as a marketing mechanism that combines a number of smaller tourist attractions and destinations into a single brand offering and collectively marketing them as a single unit under a unified theme. The idea behind route tourism is to bring together a collection of activities and attractions under a combined theme whilst, at the same time, stimulating entrepreneurial opportunities through the development of ancillary products and services.

In route tourism a number of smaller towns are linked together by a tourism route to encourage travellers to travel from one town to the next (Meyer, 2004:8); thus developing destination-level partnerships amongst the community to promote tourism in their area (Open Africa, 2009:Online). Meyer (2004:5) argues that tourism routes are a particularly good opportunity for the development of less mature areas with high cultural resources that appeal to special-interest tourists. For this reason, routes are developed in a way to attract tourists away from the major tourist nodes and off the main roads to the smaller towns that would not be visited by tourists normally (Donaldson, 2007:316). This gives the lesser known attractions and

18

destinations greater opportunity to attract visitors and achieve economies of scale by establishing networks with different service providers once they are included in the route (Meyer, 2004:3).

Tourism routes generate several positive advantages and foster cooperation rather than competition among small towns. In this way, they form development partnerships with local communities, especially the poor (Donaldson, 2007:315). Because of their essential structure and form, routes offer local communities the benefit of being linked to the experiences and knowledge gained from other participants.

A route with several attractions creates a synergy effect, and promotes wide benefits because of the greater number of possible linkages between small businesses and the dispersion of money over a wider area (Meyer, 2004). Therefore, a well-designed and imaginative tourism route can generate several positive advantages. These advantages include job creation and business opportunities as more travellers will now be passing through the area (Telfer, 2001; Meyer-Cech, 2003, 2005; Lourens, 2007).

Another critical advantage mentioned by (Goodwin, 2006) is that routes can act as a stimulus for small enterprise development within the local economy. Meyer (2004) further identifies three more important advantages of route development:

- Economic benefit accrues from spreading tourism more widely by developing tourist facilities, activities and services along the routes in a manner that might facilitate tourist spending at stopover points,
- Additional employment and income are provided, both directly and indirectly, through local facilities and services required to operate tour programmes, and
- Well-designed tourism routes can contribute to the expansion of the tourist markets and extend the average length of stay of tourists by offering a variety of attractions and activities.

In another sense, route-based tourism can be seen as a spatial development strategy concerned with distributing both the tourists and the money they spend

19

along the route itself and within its surrounding area. Various economic benefits can be spread throughout a region by means of tourist facilities, activities and services along the route that can be developed to facilitate tourist spending at stopover points (Meyer, 2004).

Additional jobs and income can result from tourist purchases and from providing services and supporting industries related to the main tourist product (Meyer, 2004; Rogerson, 2006; Lourens, 2007). The average length of stay can be increased by the variety of attractions, markets and activities and, thereby, the average spend is increased (Meyer, 2004; Rogerson, 2006).

2.4.1 Features of tourism routes

Tourism routes vary in length, size and theme with different terminologies used to describe them. The shorter routes that allow visitors to cover them by walking, cycling or on horseback, are referred to as 'trails' (Lourens, 2007:475). Trails would normally explore a local area such as a town, garden or shopping arcade in an organised way, as they present the attractions systematically. Longer distances that require driving along the route from one town to the next are referred to as 'routes' (Olsen, 2003:334).

According to Olsen (2003:334), Australia has three types of drive routes:
- Themed tourist ways of national, state or regional significance,
- Tourist drives of regional and local significance, and
- Short drives of local significance only.

In the United States, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA, 2002), an agency within the US Department of Transportation, supports states and local governments in the design, construction and maintenance of the nation's highway system and various federally and tribal-owned lands. The FHWA provides stewardship over the construction, maintenance and preservation of the nation's highways, bridges and tunnels, and distinguishes between National Scenic Byways and All-American Roads. A National Scenic Byway is a road recognised by the US Department of

20

Transportation for one or more of six 'intrinsic qualities', namely archaeological, cultural, historical, natural, recreational and scenic (National Scenic Byways Program, 2009b:Online). The most scenic byways are designated All-American Roads and must meet two out of the six intrinsic qualities. The designation means they have features that do not exist elsewhere in the US and are unique and important enough to be tourist destinations unto themselves (National Scenic Byways Program, 2009b:Online).

Routes can be corridor or linear style. Corridor-style routes are the most successful routes and best known, as they link key destinations with a clear beginning and an end and allow visitors to leave or enter a route at any point (ECI Africa, 2006c:18). Linear routes, such as the circular Cascades Loop in Washington State, can be experienced without ever arriving at the destination; in turn, the destination can be experienced without following the route (Murray & Graham, 1997:514; National Scenic Byways Program, 2009b:Online).

Tourism routes can also be either themed or product based, according to Rogerson (2004; 2007). The former implies that the route combines elements with a specific theme and the attractions along the route also comply with this theme (ECI Africa, 2006:18). The theme not only refers to the route itself, but to everything that is supplied as part of the route. Themed routes may offer special-interest experiences which appeal to special-interest markets (ECI Africa, 2006c:19) relating to culture, architecture, history, nature, activities, food and/or winery. World-known examples of themed routes include the Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail built around birding habitats (Hardy, 2003:321) and the Mozart Route in Austria (Meyer, 2004).

A product-based route holds a strong product focus and is usually developed to increase marketing and sales of the core product. Examples of product-based routes include the Niagara Wine Route (Telfer, 2001) and the Cheese Trail Bregenzerwald in Austria (Meyer-Cech, 2005).

2.4.2 Route infrastructure

The physical route mainly consists of culture sites, nature, built environments and road infrastructure that facilitate travelling along the route (Meyer, 2004:22). Routes can have detours and many hubs and byways for tourists to explore different places of interest along the way, which present ideal tourism information points (ECI Africa, 2006b:18). An efficient road network and the safety thereof are critical requirements for travellers (Olsen, 2003:337). Travellers must be provided with the comfort of refuelling, refreshments and toilet facilities combined with leisurely travel and opportunities for scenic detours and stops (Meyer, 2004:22).

Clear signage should guide travellers through the route (Hardy, 2003:326) and, for longer routes, accommodation facilities must be provided. Signage includes road markers, interpretation panels, brochures, maps and promotional items and should form part of the integrated visitor information system (Olsen, 2003:335). In this way, a visual sense of travelling along a themed route is created, which is important in reassuring travellers that it is safe to explore, stop and engage with locals. Without clear signage, travellers can get lost, which can jeopardise their safety, especially during night. Meyer (2004:23) and Olsen (2003:339) therefore argue that community participation is central to tourism route development and management.

While travelling on the route, visitors experience the host community when buying products and services. One is dependent on the other for the buying processes, and visitors sometimes bring problems of congestion, drugs and crime that could influence the local community. Therefore, mutual respect from both parties is essential (Aronssen, 2000:137). Although the tourism product owners are the core stakeholders on a tourism route, there are other enabling stakeholders that can affect, or be affected by, the achievement of the route objectives. Such stakeholders include the local, district, provincial and national public sector entities that influence tourism planning, development, funding, the physical infrastructure, marketing and distribution, all of which provide the enabling environment in which the route functions and the visitors experience the route (Buhalis, 2000:104).

2.4.3 The promotion and marketing of tourism routes

Tourism routes are aimed primarily at independent self-drive tourists who make their own arrangements regarding travel and how they wish to experience the route and its offerings. Therefore, promotional practices must give an accurate and real representation of the route and its products, with well-designed promotional media to assist potential visitors with the planning of their holiday (Olsen, 2003:337). Successful promotional practices are tools that effectively create a stable tourist demand by meeting, and not overusing, the current resource supply (Meyer, 2004:25). Regional identity can be expressed through branding via marketing or by creating new opportunities for craft and cultural producers along the route (Meyer, 2004; HSRC, 2006; Lourens, 2007). This can make the community internally more cohesive and cooperative.

Meyer-Cech (2003:154) states that tourism routes should position themselves appropriately to develop the tourist offering and build sales promotion. A lack of marketing skills, under-pricing of products and inaccurate representation of offerings are marketing problems that can result in visitor disappointment, inadequate promotion and ignorance of visitor needs (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004:199; Meyer, 2004:26). Olsen (2003:335) claims that a tourism route should be part of a tourist information network supported by maps, brochures, signage, interpretation and experience, instead of just being a road with signage. Integrated information networks comprise pre-trip information which is spread through the existing tourism-marketing infrastructure, as well as *en route*, and can promote successful marketing of the route (Olsen, 2003:336).

The marketing and promotion element of a route can either be private- or public-sector driven through local government tourism initiatives (ECI Africa, 2006b). Partnerships can provide mobilising action, such as resolving disputes over supply or sales, widening supply chains, dealing with infrastructural problems and planning, developing codes of conduct and mentoring small businesses. The private sector with the ready support of local, regional and state authorities and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) is the best for managing and marketing a route where necessary (Meyer, 2004; ECI Africa, 2006b; Rogerson, 2006; Lourens, 2007).

Governments play an important role in the development of meaningful partnerships (Ashley, 2006). This especially applies to the development of partnerships necessary for implementing pro-poor measures in route tourism (Meyer, 2004; Ashley, 2006). Pro-poor tourism, as defined by Ashley, Roe and Goodwin (2001:2), refers to the interventions aimed to increase the net benefits to the poor from tourism, and to ensure that tourism growth contributes to poverty reduction. It is not a specific product or sector of tourism, but an approach, and aims to unlock opportunities for the poor, whether for economic gain, other livelihoods benefits, or participation in decision making.

Governments can influence the private sector's behaviour by providing for pro-poor and pro-community actions as part of approving new plans, licenses or concessions (Ashley, 2006; Ashley & Hayson, 2008) through written agreements and monitoring thereof. Granting permission for development, ensuring the availability of financing for the local community, and facilitating negotiations between the private sector and the community, are all necessary for the beneficial operation of a tourism route (Ashley, 2006). It is, therefore, essential that the lessons regarding joint venture and partnerships between the government, private sector and the community are taken into account (Ashley, 2006).

2.5 International perspectives on route tourism

In 1964 a Council of Europe working group argued the idea of a series of European Cultural Routes. Their objective was to raise awareness of European cultures through travelling, setting up networks for cultural tourism and utilising European cultural heritage as a means of stimulating social, economic and cultural development. However, this idea only came into fruition in 1980 with the establishment of the Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Ways (Council of Europe, 2002). The above shows the long path to the realisation of the potential of tourism routes in the developed world.

A 'cultural route' is defined by the Council of Europe as a route crossing one or two more countries or regions, organised around themes of which the historical, artistic

24

or social interest is patently European. The route should be based on a number of highlights, with places particularly rich in historical associations (Council of Europe, 2002:2). After 20 years the programme has over 2 000 partners in multilateral cooperation with a chain of projects and information-sharing networks monitored and coordinated by the European Institute of Cultural Routes. The programme is described as an instrument for understanding the European values arising from the complex cultures and societies that have formed Europe (Council of Europe, 2002:3).

In the US, heritage trails have long shown to provide the drive for the development of a range of attractions and facilities along their routes (Hill & Gibbons, 1994:7). Western Heritage trails, in particular, have served as a catalyst for the stimulation of theatrical productions, wagon trains and horseback trails. Hill and Gibbons (1994:8) argue that, since tourists are dispersed along the length of the trail, carrying capacity management is facilitated, negative environmental impacts are reduced, and economic benefits more evenly distributed.

Another famous route in the USA is Route 66 which stretches over 3 200 kilometres between Chicago and Los Angeles. The main reason tourists follow Route 66 is to experience the road's ingrained time line of contemporary America. Before it was called Route 66, and long before it was even paved in 1926, this corridor was traversed by the National Old Trails Highway, one of the country's first transcontinental highways. For three decades before and after World War II, Route 66 earned the title 'Main Street of America' because it wounds through small towns across the Midwest and Southwest and is lined by hundreds of cafés, motels, gas stations and tourist attractions (Route 66 USA:Online).

In Australia, the Queensland Heritage Trails Network is a Cultural Tourism Incentive Programme in partnership with the local government. It was initiated in 2000-2002 with the objective to revitalise rural and regional Queensland economies by creating jobs and a sustainable tourism infrastructure (Queensland Heritage Trails Network, 2000:2). The aim was to develop a network of 32 major projects around themes for particular local areas or regions and promote linkages that stimulate and encourage tourists to travel through the state, venturing away from major attractions and

enjoying new experiences offered by lesser known surrounding areas (Queensland Heritage Trails Network, 2000:3). For them the term 'heritage' includes historical, environmental and traditional values, emphasising empathy with the land through a sense of community engagement.

Examples of successful international rural tourism routes are the wine and food circuits in Europe, North America and Australasia. In the Niagara region of southern Ontario, Canada, the wine routes are an integral part of a strategic alliance to promote agri-tourism among the region's food producers, processors, distributors, restaurants and wineries. In addition to routes based upon wine and food, there are major European examples of route-based cultural tourism of which the most notable is the Camino de Santiago in Spain and France, which is funded by the Council of Europe and estimated to generate about €4.7 billion yearly for the Galicia region in northern Spain (Turgalicia, 2005).

France is considered a pioneer of route development linked to heritage, with many examples of routes designed to channel visitors to churches or rural chapels representative of Baroque art. Other examples include the heritage trail or cultural route development in other parts of Europe, including Portugal, Slovenia, Bulgaria and the Baltic States.

2.6 Route tourism in the African context

Route tourism in Africa is not a new concept, and tourism route formation is encouraged as a development strategy for rural areas in southern Africa (Millennium Challenge Account Namibia [MCA-N], 2009) because it is closely related to promoting rural tourism. Routes can achieve a number of objectives as they link the preservation of cultural heritage with rural regeneration and tourism product development (Lourens, 2007). In Africa routes extend to the Indian Ocean island of Reunion, which offers a spice route 'linking attractions and producers and opportunities to buy around the spice theme', to the slave routes of West Africa, and to Uganda where heritage trails have been established.

Currently, South Africa has a number of established tourism routes named around different themes. The first tourism route established in South Africa was the Cape Wine Route which is world-renowned and an example of a successful route concept that attracts tourists to a specific region offering wine and culinary tasting experiences. Other examples of successful commercial routes are the Highlands Meander, the Midlands Meander and the Cape Garden Route (Viljoen, 2007:68).

Different tourism routes are being established and planned across South Africa and extending into neighbouring countries, including Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia and Swaziland. Examples include the Lubombo tourism route launched in 2006, traversing southern Mozambique, eastern Swaziland, as well as Mpumalanga and northern KwaZulu-Natal. The wine routes in the Western Cape are built around wineries and wine-producing areas, whereas Route 62, similar to the historic Route 66 in the USA, links 28 towns along the former highway between Cape Town and Oudtshoorn in the Western Cape (now overshadowed by the N2), with each town offering its unique attractions (Nowers, De Villiers & Myburgh, 2002:197).

The requirement of compliance with the route theme is not necessarily strictly adhered to, as route promotional material often communicates attractions along a route that do not tie in very closely with the route theme. An example of this is the Battlefields Route in KwaZulu-Natal that promotes not only the historical battle sites, but also natural attractions, annual events such as the Dundee Biltong Festival, and other attractions in the area unrelated to the military history that the name suggests (KwaZulu-Natal Battlefields Route, 1998:5). The Midlands Meander has 'a good place' as its theme, which encompasses just about everything that is offered in this rural area (Midlands Meander Association, 2006:2).

2.6.1 The Open Africa experience

The African Dream Project is an NGO, established by Open Africa in 1993. It is known as a high-profile ambitious route tourism initiative in Africa. The organisation is based in South Africa and brings together the tourism splendours of Africa into a continuous network of tourism routes extending from the Cape to Cairo (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004). The organisation follows a participatory approach to

27

develop tourism in predominantly rural areas in Africa through tourism, job creation and conservation in a mutually sustainable way.

The themes of the routes are varied and encompass arts and crafts, heritage, townships, fossils, shipwrecks and old mission stations (HSRC, 2006). Open Africa has three key objectives, which are to stimulate the development of Afrikatourism routes, to gather information on Afrikatourism resources, and to disseminate information on Afrikatourism to potential participants and consumers. They further work with six core activities which include:

- Responding to community requests regarding the formation of routes by facilitating the route development process,
- Assisting in raising the funds necessary to cover the costs of establishing routes,
- Developing and acting as custodian of the website onto which the routes are loaded,
- Marketing the Open Africa brand on behalf of the network,
- Facilitating the management and dissemination of the hands-on knowledge that builds up within the network, and
- Acting as a support base for the established routes and delivering proof to them of the value of being part of the network (Open Africa, 2009:1).

By 2007, Open Africa has developed over 40 community-driven routes, mainly in South Africa, with some extending into neighbouring countries (Viljoen, 2007:5). According to Briedenhann and Wickens (2004), the most important side of the project is that the marketing of the routes is electronically facilitated by the project coordinators. The Open Africa approach uses a system devised through interactively linking together geographical information systems technology with the internet. This has produced what is claimed to be a fully inclusive and community-participative workshop method for developing tourism routes (Viljoen, 2007:4).

Regardless of the above, Open Africa has been much criticised, because only a few of the routes are successful with regard to growing the number of tourism products and demand (HSRC, 2006). The HSRC (2006) is highly critical of the Open Africa

model for route development and argues that, while the organisation has established routes, its marketing is not functioning optimally. According to Lourens (2007:88), one of its errors has been developing too many routes over a short period of time. In a similar vein, Ndlovu and Rogerson (2003) contend that the Open Africa programme has led to an oversupply of tourism-themed routes with little demand, and has produced weak management and support structures. In many respects the failures of Open Africa are mirrored by the experience of parallel supply-led route initiatives in South Africa which have often been initiated by foreign donors. Overall, it is argued that Open Africa has in many cases caused distrust and substantial barriers to achieving meaningful participation in poor communities across Southern Africa (HSRC, 2006).

2.7 Criteria for successful development of tourism routes

As indicated before, tourism routes usually run through rural areas and are designed to attract tourists away from the major tourist nodes and off the main roads to small towns that would not be visited by tourists normally (Donaldson, 2007:316). This enables tourism businesses along the route to survive and prosper (Roberts & Hall, 2004:260). The development of a tourism route should take the needs of the tourists into consideration.

According to Meyer-Cech (2003:154), a successful route should be 'filled with life', accompanied by professional staging of a theme, hosting related themed events such as festivals or sport events (e.g., marathons). Tourists seek unique experiences, and the host culture brings the tourist closer by offering local meals and beverages to enhance the authenticity of the tourist experience (Plummer, Telfer, Hashimoto & Summers, 2004). This is imperative, as the product owners on a particular route is dependent on the patronage of the tourist. Even though there is some existing literature on route tourism development (see Rogerson, 2004 & 2007; Visser, 2004; Donaldson, 2007) there is no comprehensive 'how to' manual to be followed when developing a route.

Rogerson (2007:53) views a 'collective culture of co-operation to compete' as an essential ingredient for successful route development, although cooperation and

gaining the trust of local communities may be difficult, because many are seen as outsiders coming in and destroying opportunities for local participants (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004:198). The FHWA (2002) identified the following six dimensions as important to route tourism development; at least two must be met for a route to be designated as a National Scenic Byway, as mentioned earlier. These dimensions include the following qualities that are particularly applicable to this investigation:

- The scenic quality, which refers to the visual experience of the traveller and includes natural and manmade elements of the visual environment,

- The natural quality, namely those features in the visual environment that are in a relatively undisturbed state. These include fossils, geological formations, and vegetation, wildlife and water bodies,

- The historical quality, referring to the legacies of the past that are distinctly associated with physical elements of the landscape, either natural or manmade, and of such historical importance that they educate the viewer and stir appreciation for the past,

- The cultural quality, including the customs or traditions of a distinct group of people. These include crafts, music, dance, rituals, festivals, speech, food, special events, or vernacular architecture,

- The archaeological quality, referring to those characteristics that are physical evidence of historical or prehistorical human life or activity. These are identified as the ruins, artefacts, structural remains and other physical evidence that have scientific significance and educate the viewer and stir an appreciation for the past, and

- The recreational quality, which includes all outdoor recreational activities which are associated directly with and dependent upon the natural and cultural elements of the route. These refer to activities such as rafting,

boating, skiing, hiking, fishing, and so forth (National Scenic Byways Program, 2009a).

In Australia, Tourism Queensland (2004) and the Queensland Department of Main Roads (2004) have established similar guidelines:

- The tourism industry should be the driver, and incorporate the involvement of the public and private sector,
- A unique drive experience and attractions must be distinctive of the route,
- A mix of products should be presented which can include travelling to and visiting landscapes, heritage features and sea/mountain/outback vistas, amongst other things,
- A safe and efficient road network should exist,
- Clear signage should be provided along the route,
- Adequate service infrastructure including rest areas, driver stops, scenic lookouts and camping areas should be provided,
- Efficient user-friendly information networks underpinned by information centres should be present. This can include maps of the route indicating places of interest,
- The towns and visitor services must be linked and packaged for the convenience of the drive market,
- A well-managed and committed network with shareholder cooperation and consensus must be available, and
- An on-going plan for management for the route must be provided.

It is essential that tourism routes have a pro-poor focus with a commitment to the development and inclusion of local small businesses on the route (Rogerson, 2007:57). A pro-poor approach should take the concerns and needs of the poor into account by increasing the net benefits such as direct employment opportunities, small, medium and micro-enterprise (SMME) opportunities, communal income and livelihood benefits to poorer stakeholders (Meyer, 2004:26).

31

Two case studies conducted on the Camino de Santiago route in Spain and France and in the Midlands Meander in South Africa by Lourens (2007) identified the following advice on the key steps to take and pitfalls to avoid in route tourism development:

- The route must be conceptualised on the basis of solid market research that identifies key target markets and their requirements. Market research must be conducted on an on-going basis to ensure that the latest tourism trends are included in objectives and strategies for the area. Where budgets are tight, the destination can be aligned to a local regional or provincial tourism authority or linked to a local university to provide students who could help with the market research.

- An audit must be conducted of tourism products in the designated area. Existing products must be assessed to ensure that they are keeping up to date with the changing dynamics of the tourism industry. In addition, this audit must determine a clear minimum standard for members and a system for regular re-assessment.

- Tourism products need to be scrutinised and identified by the unique selling features of the area and its products. A macro-level strategic plan must be conducted to combine the market requirements and tourism assets of the region, providing a consolidated approach to the future development of the area. Consultation should take place between local, regional and provincial authorities regarding strategy and future plans for the area. This process should ensure that the envisaged route coincides with the macro planning for the region and potentially links up with broader planning or funding initiative.

- The size of the potential membership base should be determined. Tourism product suppliers, who have the ability to complement the unique features and main themes of the route, must be lobbied to join the organisation from the early stages. In addition, it is essential to develop portfolios for committee members according to the strategic objectives and ensure nominated

members are willing to perform within these portfolios and have the necessary experience. Equally critical is the incorporation of mentorship within the committee and sub-committee or task teams to ensure the sustainability of skills. Product diversification in the area should be encouraged by putting systems in place to incentivise the correct product mix for the area.

- A clear brand identity for the area must be determined. The importance of marketing the destination according to its identity as determined by its unique features must be re-emphasised. Marketing in the form of public relations is more affordable and sometimes more effective than hard-core marketing, especially for newly developing tourism destinations. It is important not to overstate the attractions of a destination and run the risk of under-delivery.

- A clear strategy should be determined to direct the work plan and day-to-day operation of the organisation. This requires an operations plan to ensure good communication between the association and its members and to assign the roles and responsibilities of committee members and staff.

- Planning the finances is crucial for the organisation's survival. It is important to allocate the resources according to their strategic significance. The association and its members must constantly remind themselves to think long term. Most routes projects start small and can take 20 to 30 years to mature and deliver substantial economic benefits.

Although the above guidelines are based on private-sector-driven development, they can also be used by public-sector planners. The private-sector-driven approach has proven to be practical and successful in the southern African environment. Ultimately, the institutional structure for a successful destination requires an effective partnership between the public- and private-sector organisations responsible for tourism within a particular destination.

Certain functions such as macro planning are better suited to being fulfilled by the public sector. The design and implementation are the responsibility of the public

sector as well and are vital to the success of destination development initiatives (Lourens, 2007:188).

2.8 Economic importance of route tourism

As indicated before, tourism has the potential to create sustainable jobs and economic growth. It accounts for US$ 6 trillion in GDP. According to UNWTO (2014:1), the sector supports 255 million direct and indirect jobs worldwide. Tourism is an emerging sector in most developing countries and has the ability to grow rapidly, which makes it an appealing strategy for economic growth. Developing countries usually have low incomes, high uneven distribution of income, high unemployment, and few industries. However, if tourism development is not done correctly, rapid increase in tourism can burden infrastructure and human resources, leading to a greater division between income levels (Audahaey, 2011). The economic impact of tourism routes has been significant in Europe, with the Camino de Santiago route generating an estimated €4.7 billion per annum for the Galicia region of northern Spain (Turgalicia, 2005) as mentioned before.

In Africa tourism plays a significant role in ensuring economic growth through foreign exchange earnings because of international travellers visiting the continent. Sub-Saharan destinations showed a 5% increase in revenue in 2015. South Africa, which is the largest destination in the sub-region, showed a growth rate of 10% in 2012 with over 9 million arrivals (UNWTO, 2013:3). UNWTO (2016) further forecasts a positive outlook for 2017, and experts from Africa are very positive as the growth in this region has picked up firmly in the second half of 2016 after some years of subdued growth.

Harrison (1994) mentions that the potential to utilise tourism as a tool for sustained socioeconomic development, as well as the redistribution of developed-country wealth, is obvious, yet somehow intangible. The distribution of tourists and its economic benefits to marginal areas, together with a more integrated product development and marketing approach, has been the underlying benefits of route development. The integration of activities and attractions into one unified route system can serve the stimulation of cooperation and partnership between

34

communities and act as a vehicle for economic development in marginal areas, in both the developed and developing world (Meyer, 2004:2).

Tourism in Eastern Europe has been identified as a catalyst to stimulate economic growth, increase the viability of underdeveloped regions and improve the standard of living of local communities over the last decade (Ratz & Puczko, 1998; Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004).

In sub-Saharan Africa not all tourism-related opportunities are being explored, although there has been an increase in tourism. This mainly applies to the rural areas where the establishment of tourism routes can benefit local communities and the poor. Therefore, the development of tourism routes as tourist attractions has gained prominence in recent years (Hashemi & Hosseiniyan, 2014:465). If routes are marketed successfully, they can contribute significantly to the local economy. An example is the Midlands Meander in South Africa. Since its development it is estimated to have generated an annual turnover of R359 million, and created about 2 100 jobs in all categories with a wage bill of R63 million (Coetzee, Oldham, Schroenn & Tang, 2009:15).

A new route can lead to the development of local enterprises, increasing the demand for goods and services, and contribute to much needed employment. Therefore, Meyer (2004:1) indicates that it is essential for new excursions and routes to link in with traditional tourism structures and extend them to incorporate new features, new products and new stakeholders in order to be commercially viable, which is essential if the poor is to benefit.

2.9 Summary

The chapter explained the terms 'tourism' and 'tourist', and analysed the literature on tourism planning and development. It provided an overview of route tourism, identifying the features of routes, and the importance of infrastructure, route promotion and management. The chapter also focused on national and international perspectives of tourism routes, with applicable examples of successful routes. It also

focused on the criteria for successful route development and the economic importance of tourism routes for rural area and poor communities.

CHAPTER 3: LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, RURAL TOURISM AND COMMUNITIES

3.1 Introduction

Tourism in rural areas can convert local resources, such as archaeological sites, forests and mountains, into economic value propositions that can create employment and development for the area (Gholami, Assayesh & Alipour-Nakhi, 2010:341). Spenceley and Meyer (2012:99) mention that, in some of the poorest regions in the world, rich cultural and natural assets exist that attract tourists. As tourists travel to impoverished regions of the world for a variety of reasons, they spend money on travel, accommodation, excursions, food, drinks and shopping. This creates opportunities for communities to generate income by offering goods and services.

LED is visible in a variety of forms in the international world, including aggressive place promotion, urban entrepreneurialism and community-based economic strategies. LED can manifest itself either in direct, community-based, pro-poor interventions and/or as pro-market endeavours (Hambleton, 2002). The purpose of LED is to promote local economic growth and create jobs which contribute to poverty reduction and community upliftment. According to Zaaijer and Sara (1993:129), LED is the process by which public, business and non-governmental sector partners work collectively to create better conditions for economic growth and employment generation, with the aim to improve quality of life for all.

In this regard, the World Bank (2002:1) asserts that LED is about local people working together to achieve sustainable economic growth that brings economic benefits and quality of life to all in the community. Therefore, the core focus of LED is partnerships, economic sustainability, job creation and the improvement of community well-being. This chapter provides a detailed background on LED with regard to rural tourism, local communities and tourism routes. LED relates to the increased level of control exercised over economic development by local urban agencies which include local business, local government, community organisations and NGOs.

3.2 Explaining local economic development

LED can be viewed as an attempt to address increasing socioeconomic problems, including low economic growth, high levels of unemployment and high levels of poverty. Local economic development offers the local government, private sector and local communities the opportunity to work together to grow the community in an area by looking to enhance competitiveness and sustainable inclusive growth (Nel & Rogerson, 2005).

The concept of LED has gained widespread acceptance internationally as being a locality-based response to the challenges posed by globalisation, devolution and local-level opportunities and crises (Rogerson, 2003; Nel & Rogerson, 2005). LED is now also included firmly on the agenda of many national governments and international agencies, such as the World Bank, acknowledging its prominent role in urban development and business promotion (Nel & Rogerson, 2005).

The World Bank defines LED as the process by which public, business and non-governmental sector partners work collectively to create better conditions for economic growth and employment generation. The purpose of LED is to build up the economic capacity of a local area to improve its economic future and the quality of life for all (World Bank, 2010:Online). Nel and Humphrys (1999:277) define LED as the process or strategy in which locally based individuals or organisations use resources to modify or expand local economic activity to the benefit of the majority in the local community. Another definition states that LED is essentially a process in which local government and/or community-based groups manage their existing resources and enter into partnership arrangements with the private sector, or with each other, to create new jobs and stimulate economic activity in an economic area (Zaaijer & Sara, 1993, in Nel & Rogerson, 2005:4).

Although these definitions emphasise different aspects, it is evident that the core focus of LED is on partnerships, economic sustainability, job creation and the improvement of quality of life and places within the context of communities or at local level (Nel & Rogerson, 2005:4).

A major international development organisation actively engaged in LED is the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ). The GTZ maintains that LED is an:

> ongoing process by which key stakeholders and institutions from all spheres of society, the public and private sector as well as civil society work together to create a unique advantage for the locality and its firms tackle market failures, remove bureaucratic obstacles for local businesses and strengthen the competitiveness of local firms (Ruecker & Trah, 2007:15).

Meyer-Stamer (2008:1) mentions that this particular definition is distinguished both by its focus on LED as an on-going process and, importantly, by its recognition that any effort to stimulate economic growth of a local economy is bound to involve large-scale systemic change. The focus of GTZ is on a market-driven approach and it considers LED activities as intrinsically opportunistic (Ruecker & Trah, 2007).

The overall purpose of LED is to create an economic structure that facilitates and enables an improved quality of life. Blakely and Leigh (2010) explain that to pursue pure growth is not enough; instead the focus needs to be on development and quality of life. Their recent definition states that LED is achieved when a community's standard of living can be preserved and increased through a process of human and physical development that is based on principles of equity and sustainability (Blakely & Leigh, 2010:75).

The concept of LED extends beyond focusing on economic growth; it is about creating development within the locality that improves the quality of life for the residents. It recognises that a necessary component of this development is the provision of employment and the generation of income so the area can afford desired, improved and necessary services, facilities and infrastructure. In the literature, the concept of 'community economic development' is closely related to LED. The purpose of community development is also to improve the quality of life of the members of the community. This is broader than specific community economic development (Blakely & Leigh, 2010).

39

3.2.1 Global perspectives on local economic development

The origins of LED practices can be traced back to the late 1960s and early 1970s during the time of global economic restructuring and advancing decentralisation in the cities of the global North (Blakely, 1989; Valler & Wood, 2010). Rodriguez-Pose (2010:1) claims that Europe is generally 'regarded as the cradle of LED approaches'. During that time many former industries were in decline and in Europe the textile industries, shipbuilding, steel-making and other heavy industries on which the economies of the cities were built moved to other overseas locations. Similar trends occurred in the US where American multinationals, which initially benefitted the US economy, ended up hurting local economies when factories closed, leaving a trail of unemployment and depressed regions (Blakely, 2010).

This global restructuring created a need to develop and adopt new technologies and putting in place strategies to attract new investments. New policies on promoting LED then focused on retaining and attracting new investments through place marketing and investment attraction, and putting in place incentive systems such as grants, tax breaks or loans and significant provision of hard and soft infrastructure. The areas in decline were identified and rezoned for new development through special legislation to attract new public- and private-sector investments (Nel & Rogerson, 2005).

A mix of LED strategies was highlighted, which included encouraging inward investment, fostering new innovation, nurturing creative environments, promoting start-ups, coordinating infrastructure investments and assisting small businesses to grow (Beer, 2009). Meyer-Stamer (2008) emphasises systemic competitiveness by providing a competitive local business environment, encouraging and supporting networking and collaboration between businesses, including through public and private partnerships, supporting cluster growth and quality-of-life improvements among local communities. This competitiveness in regional, national and global markets is the current frame of reference for the LED practice globally.

Pressure to stimulate LED has come from at least two main directions: 'On the one hand they are expressions of uneven and inequitable outcomes in the economic

40

landscape and on the other hand they reflect variability in the aspirations and concerns of actors about the pace and extent of local investment' (Le Heron, 2009:93). Although interest in LED approaches to development was first apparent in both Western Europe and North America (Blakely, 1989), notions of and approaches to LED subsequently spread to other parts of the world. With the advance of globalisation and growing decentralisation, the 1990s saw a diffusion of LED ideas and practices from the global North to the South (Rodriguez-Pose, 2001; Helmsing, 2003; Nel & Rogerson, 2005). Haughton and Naylor (2008:170) draw our attention to LED as exemplifying international policy transfer, 'one of the emblematic tendencies within the current phase of capitalist development'.

3.2.2 Local economic development in southern Africa

Over the past two decades sub-Saharan Africa has been greatly affected by decentralisation and reduced central state control in an era of accelerating globalisation (Nel, 2007). One such important area has been the spread and growth of LED as an aspect of development planning (Rodriguez-Pose & Tijmstra, 2007). According to Swinburn and Yatta (2006), the importance of LED across sub-Saharan Africa is signalled by the activities of the United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLG-A). The UCLG-A is an association of local governments, individuals and entities and is a united voice and representative of local government. As part of its mission of building African unity within and driving development through the grass roots, it identifies LED as one of six priority areas for action for the period 2006 to 2015 (Swinburn, Yatta, Kreutz & Beez, 2007).

LED research is much smaller in African countries outside South Africa, but efforts are starting to accelerate. Rodriguez-Pose and Tijmstra (2007:532) mention that the importance of localities and city regions as actors in economic development is increasing. Helmsing (2003) states the reason why LED has emerged as an alternative development approach across Africa in the 1990s, namely drawing attention to issues of globalisation, structural adjustment and liberalisation policies and decentralisation.

41

Rodriguez-Pose and Tijmstra (2007:533) pose the questions as to whether the 'enabling environment' for the design and implementation of LED strategies exists outside South Africa. They identify the main constraints as a lack of government capacity in many countries, poor governance and data shortcomings which often exclude the correct identification of a locality's strengths and weaknesses and, consequently, the making of 'well-informed policy choices' (Rodriguez-Pose & Tijmstra, 2007:528).

Local and regional governments generally face constraints such as a lack of funding and government capacity with regard to skills and infrastructure which hamper the development and implementation of successful strategies (Rodriguez-Pose & Tijmstra, 2007:532-533). Most research on African LED activities centres on South Africa because LED is legislated as a reform mandate for local governments (Nel & Rogerson, 2005). LED practice and research in the South African context have become a laboratory, and many aspects have been exported to other African countries (Rogerson, 2006).

Rogerson and Visser (2004) argue that the most important policy documents are the White Paper on Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa (South African Government, 1996) and the Tourism in Growth, Employment and Redistribution strategy document of 1998 (DEAT, 1998). The vision set out in the White Paper is 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. The 1996 Tourism White Paper identifies the need to promote community participation in tourism, whilst many local authorities have embarked upon what often amounts to pro-poor tourism development strategies, such as the promotion of crafts, township visits and cultural tourism (townships refer to the poor, black residential areas created under apartheid) (South African Government, 1996).

The White Paper on the Local Government Republic of South Africa (1998) advocates that 'Local Government should be committed to working with citizens and groups within the community to find sustainable ways to meet their social, economic and material needs and improve the quality of their lives'. The White Paper directly

states that LED should be a developmental outcome of municipalities, as they can play an essential role in advancing the creation of jobs and boosting the local economy. Therefore, municipalities must first invest in the basics, such as providing good-quality, cost-effective services and by making the local area a pleasant place to live and work. In terms of the White Paper, municipalities are given the responsibility towards the people within their area of jurisdiction and are, therefore, accountable for all actions. It also highlights the following challenges facing the South African municipalities (South African Government, 1998):

- Addressing skewed settlement patterns, which can be considered functionally inefficient and costly,
- Addressing redistribution between and within local areas, as there is an extreme concentration of taxable economic resources in formerly white areas,
- Concentrating on creating viable municipal institutions for dense rural settlements close to the borders of the former homelands with minimal access to services and little or no economic base,
- Addressing the spatial separations and disparities between towns and townships and urban sprawl, and
- Creating municipal institutions which recognise the linkages and dependencies between urban and rural settlements.

This White Paper also puts forward tools, techniques and approaches to create a framework in which municipalities can develop their own strategies for meeting local needs and promoting the social and economic development of communities (South African Government, 1998).

In Namibia, LED is still in its infancy; however, the country adopted the White Paper on LED in 2009, supported by the GTZ (German Technical Cooperation). GTZ is also behind the Local Economic Development Agency (LEDA) being set up within the Ministry to support municipalities in developing LED strategies and processes going forward. The vision in the White Paper on LED in Namibia acknowledges that national efforts are geared to enhance the conditions for greater global competitiveness in the country.

43

The White Paper further asserts that it is at the local and regional level that opportunities are identified through the active involvement of local people and the responsiveness of public and private actors. It does not prescribe any specific action to local players, but aims to create a common understanding of regional and local economic development as a concept, and provide practical examples of initiatives which are drawn from local and international LED practices. The White Paper then provides a framework for local and regional development, and adds value to national development initiatives without being prescriptive (GTZ & IDC 2008:Online).

3.3 Local economic development through rural tourism

'Rural' is defined by Briedenhann and Wickens (2004:194) as areas of either low population density or poor level of economic development are situated in non-first world urban areas. The concept of rural tourism is defined by Gopal, Varma and Gopinathan (2008:512) as visiting an area dominated by natural and farming environments where specific natural, economic and sociocultural features are harmoniously integrated so as to create unique tourist products. According to Sarkar (2009:8), rural tourism is an activity that takes place in a rural village, and must conform to the needs of the tourist who wants to experience a rural lifestyle and farming with regard to both buildings and settlements. This experience includes arts and crafts, culture, adventure and heritage.

Rural tourism is dependent on infrastructure, connectivity and sanitation because it is a business that relies heavily on the movement of the tourist to the destination (Sakar, 2009:8). Parhad, De-gang and Xiao-lel (2007:1) regard rural tourism as a means to foster long-term economic and social development. This has become a development tool for many rural areas.

After World War II there was a dramatic growth of rural tourism (Cole, 2009:336), especially due to the advancement in transportation reducing travelling time and cost which were barriers to rural tourism. During the first half of the 20th century rural tourism played a major role in nation building and an integral part of the diverse rural economies, with the countryside and its natural capital constituting a significant

44

economic resource (Cole, 2009:337). Nature then became a tourist product, and rural tourism began to dominate the land uses and the appearance of many rural settings (Horakova, 2010:66).

Cole (2009:335) further links factors such as higher income, smaller family size, changing demographics, lower transportation costs, improved living standards, peace and tranquillity of rural areas, interest in healthy lifestyles, growing interests in heritage, development of infrastructure, more hospitable environments for tourists and an increase in leisure time to rural tourism development. Rural tourism was further aided by raised living standards and the increase of ownership of motor vehicles during the 1960s and 1970s, which improved accessibility to tourism service by the demand of middle and higher classes (Eruera, 2008:42).

According to Eruera (2008:43), any form of tourism that displays rural life, art, culture and heritage at rural locations that both benefit the local community economically and socially and enable interaction between the tourists and the community can be termed 'rural tourism'. A strong tourism destination could provide multiple points of interaction, combining sites of agri-tourism (e.g., wineries, orchards), ecotourism, cultural tourism, and outdoor sports and recreation opportunities (Burrows, Fennell, Redlin & Verschoor, 2007; Smith, Davis & Pike, 2010). Therefore, Rajeev Kumar (2008) argues that rural tourism is a subset of tourism that consists of ranging aspects such as farm/agri-tourism, cultural tourism, nature tourism, adventure tourism and ecotourism.

Holland, Burian and Dixey (2003:8) state that rural tourism has come to mean agri-tourism or farm tourism. They define farm tourism as when accommodation for rural tourists is provided on farms and the core activity takes place in the wider rural area. In this regard, they define agri-tourism as when the purpose of the visit has a specific agricultural focus such as being with animals. They finally define rural tourism as an activity that includes not only farm tourism and agri-tourism, but also campsites, lodges, safari drives, craft markets, cultural displays, adventure sports, walking trails, heritage sites, musical events and any other tourist activity taking place in a rural area.

45

Rural tourism in the South African context showcases rural life, arts, culture and heritage that benefit local communities and enable interaction between the tourists and community members for a more enriching experience. It is multifaceted and entails agri-tourism, cultural tourism, nature tourism, adventure and ecotourism (Department of South African Tourism, 2012). Viljoen and Tlabela (2006:3) have identified five features of rural areas:

- Rural areas are spaces where there are human settlements which occupy only small patches of landscape. Most of these patches of landscape are dominated by fields and pastures, woods and forest, water, mountain and desert,
- Rural areas are places where most of the people spend most of their time working on farms,
- Rural areas are characterised by an abundance of relatively cheap lands,
- Rural areas have high transaction costs, associated with long distances and poor infrastructure, and
- Rural areas have geographical destinations which increase the costs of political transactions and magnify the possibility of elite capture of urban bias.

In Figure 4 below, Sarkar (2009:8) illustrates the components of rural tourism. The dependence of rural tourism on infrastructure, connectivity and sanitation is emphasised in this tourist-centred approach, because infrastructure makes it possible for tourists to reach their destinations. The provision of basic infrastructure is also critical for poverty alleviation, and a lack of infrastructure may frustrate development programmes and contribute to the persistence of poverty.

46
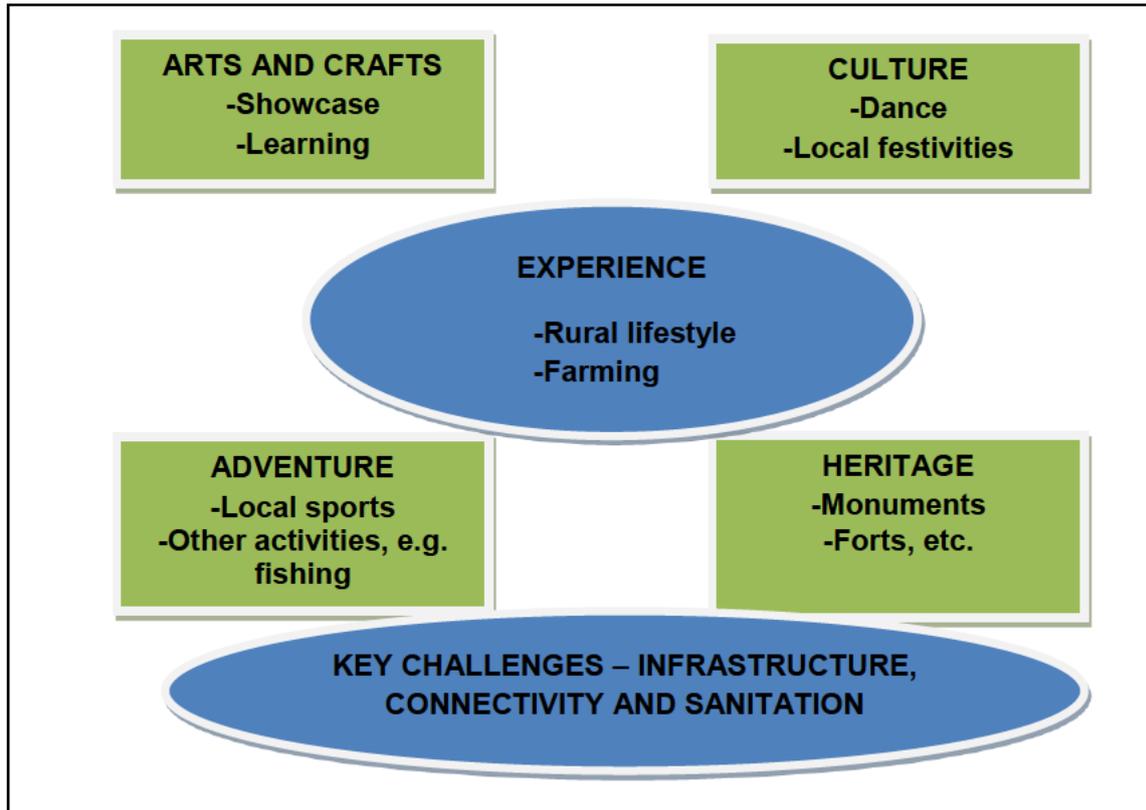
Figure 4: Typical components of rural tourism
Source: Sarkar (2009:8)

Rural tourism focuses on the use of natural resources in an untouched state, including flora and fauna, water features and general scenery. Rural tourism, thus, involves travelling to the country side or other isolated areas where one can connect with natural beauty (Tane & Theirheimer, 2009:904). Rural tourism not only includes leisure activities which are carried out in rural areas, but also various forms of tourism such as community-based tourism, ecotourism, cultural tourism, adventure tourism, guest farms, backpacking, riding and agri-tourism (Viljoen & Tlabela, 2006:1).

3.3.1 Types of rural tourism

There are two types of rural tourism:

- The first type is 'pure' rural tourism that conjures up images of the unspoilt, idyllic countryside with activities related to enjoying the setting (Roberts & Hall, 2004:280). They argue that this type of rural tourism typically targets a number of niche markets offering a range of the traditional, peaceful rural

experiences such as hiking, fishing, picnicking, observing wildlife and enjoying the countryside and its people.

- The second type of rural tourism is a large-scale, high-impact phenomenon in which the rural location is less important (Roberts & Hall, 2004:280). This type of tourism imposes urban values on the rural space and attracts large numbers of people. These people collectively participate in activities such as leisure shopping, competitive events such as cycle races, marathon races, and 4x4 rallies, and cultural events such as the Ficksburg Cherry Festival, Oppikoppi music festival, and those that have mass-market appeal.

Consumers today look for memorable experiences more than just service delivery. Experiences form an integral part of tourism, and visitors travel away from their usual places of residence to seek new and different experiences elsewhere (Hayes & MacLeod, 2007:45). Rural tourism lends itself to poverty alleviation in poor rural areas where few other possibilities for economic development exist, since it can be 'labour intensive, inclusive of women and the informal sector' and based on the natural and cultural assets owned by the poor community (Ashley & Roe, 2002:61). Thus, small local tourism providers may be in a better position than larger ones to provide visitors with authentic rural experiences (Open Africa, 2009).

3.3.2 The impact of rural tourism

Because local communities are not always proactive recipients of the benefits of tourism, they can struggle, negotiate and modify their environment to create opportunities in order to recover from key obstacles to their development. Their struggle is a means to poverty alleviation and sustainable livelihoods (Verbole, 2009:49). There are consequences for using the rural resources for tourism development in the countryside. The quality of available resources might diminish and limit further developments of the tourism industry. Also, the deterioration of the quality of resources can have a negative impact on the tourist product and reduce the profitability of a destination, which can lead to less tourism (Giaoutzi & Nijkamp, 2006:2).

48

Unfortunately, rural tourism has the potential to bring negative effects such as an 'aggression against an environment and the way of life with no real compensation' (Greffe, 1994:25). Local communities are exposed to people from different cultures and values through rural tourism, which can influence their economic situation, areas of morality, social structures, politics and local identity (Macleod, 1999:453-454).

Greffe (1994:25) contends that rural tourism might not generate sufficient income to recover considerable development costs. Although tourism could facilitate an inflow of income into a rural area, much of the economic gain could leak out of the area if local residents do not get their fair share of the profits. As Carbone (2005:565) states that only when there is proper respect between tourists and hosts, full participation of local communities, a fair distribution of economic gains, and an effective protection of the environment, will rural areas and communities benefit from the development of tourism.

Among the economic objectives set out in the Tourism White Paper it is stated that tourism should be used to aid the development of rural communities, and that balanced tourism development should be facilitated. Government further made a pledge to support investors in rural communities, and that balanced tourism development in South Africa should be facilitated in less-developed geographic areas (South African Government, 1996).

3.4 Community-based tourism as a form of rural tourism

Community-based tourism (CBT) as a form of rural tourism is based on the active participation of the local community in that area, as explained by Murphy (1985). The definition of CBT centres on ownership, management and control of tourism projects by the local community (Simpson, 2008). Active community participation in the development of their tourism industry is central to CBT and it is also seen as a development strategy based on community resources, needs and decisions (Tosun, 2000).

According to Zahra and McGehee (2013:25), tourism literature has advocated the inclusion of local communities in tourism since the 1980s. Developing tourism from

the local community level is considered crucial to the success of tourism at the national level. This is because communities play a key role in the sustainability of the tourism product, and their positive interaction with tourists helps to build a good image for the destination.

Similarly, South African Tourism (2012:1) points out that the goal of CBT is the beneficiation of indigenous people and villagers through tourism ventures. It aims to ensure that the members of the local communities have a high degree of control or ownership in tourism activities, their limits and resources used (Scheyvens, 2002).

In the 1980s the World Conservation Strategy emphasised linking protected area management with activities which are of economic importance to local communities (Mearns, 2003:29). The UNWTO (2008) has guided many local communities to develop tourism under the principle of sustainability through the development of CBT projects. Choi and Sirikaya (2005) argue that once tourism is developed, the community will then actively control and manage their tourism industry, allowing for greater benefits to be retained within the community. Local people should receive a significant share of the economic benefits of tourism in the form of direct revenues and employment, upgraded infrastructures, environment and housing standards.

Telfer and Sharpley (2008) stress two major goals in CBT. The first is social sustainability, which refers to the roles of local control and participation in tourism operation and shared socioeconomic benefits. The second is respect for local cultures, identities, traditions and heritage; hence, communities and the people involved should be depicted in ways that are ethically sustainable and acceptable. CBT must, therefore, emphasise community empowerment and ownership as a means to sustain community growth.

Community participation, involvement and a sense of ownership are essential elements to the sustainability, viability and success of CBT (Tosun, 2000; Mitchell & Reid, 2001; Choi & Sirakaya, 2006; Simpson, 2008). This focus on the community can be seen as a bottom-up approach to development, where the local people on the bottom line of the development ladder can now take control of their own future and tailor tourism development around their own needs (Hamzah & Hampton, 2012).

50

However, not all communities will be suitable for CBT and, to ensure each community's suitability, an assessment of community tourism potential should occur. In assessing the potential for CBT development, the initial planning stage should begin with an inventory of potential tourism products within a community. Potential tourism products are known as 'CBT assets' (Mountain Institute, 2000) and can range from nature-based activities, to local handicrafts, to cultural events (Cooper et al., 2005).

Tourists are initially lured to an area because of its unique features; therefore, the assessment process should begin with an evaluation of the characteristics that make the community unique. Cultural assets, a destination's traditions and way of life are ideally suited to become tourism products because they encompass the features that make a community unique (McKercher & Ho, 2006). For this reason, it is important to involve the communities in tourism development and, by empowering these communities, reduce the negative impact of mass tourism.

According to Leballo (2000:4), CBT empowers local communities, improves local skills, brings about a sense of ownership by local community members and can lead to development in a locality. In addition, CBT ensures local control of activities and increased benefits to make a real difference to the lives of locals (Mearns, 2003). Mbaiwa (2003) notes that, if local communities are not involved in tourism, they tend to resent tourism, to which the remedy is the introduction of community-based initiatives. The table below outlines the different types of community empowerment.

51

Table 1: Types of community empowerment in tourism development

TYPE	SIGNS OF EMPOWERMENT
Economic	Tourism brings long-term financial benefits to a destination community. Money is spread throughout the community. There are notable improvements in local services and infrastructure.
Psychological	Self-esteem is enhanced because of outside recognition of the uniqueness and value of the local culture, natural resources and traditional knowledge. Increasing confidence in the community leads members to seek out further education and training opportunities. Access to jobs and cash leads to an increase in status for usually low-status residents, such as women and youth.
Social	Tourism maintains or enhances the local community's equilibrium. Community cohesion is improved as individuals and families cooperate to build a successful industry. Some funds are used for community development initiatives such as education and roads.
Political	The community's political structure provides a representational forum through which people can raise questions and concerns pertaining to tourism initiatives. Agencies initiating or implementing the tourism venture seek out the opinions of community groups and individual community members, and provide chances for them to be represented on decision-making bodies.

Source: Scheyvens (2002:60)

In Table 1 it is clear that tourism provides positive economic, psychological, social and political benefits with regard to improvements in local services and infrastructure. Community self-esteem is enhanced because of outside recognition of the uniqueness and value of their culture, natural resources and traditional knowledge. In turn, community members want to increase their level of knowledge and skills, as access to jobs and cash leads to increase in status. Socially, community development initiatives such as education and roads are maintained as a result.

However, the revenues gained from CBT are relatively small and sometimes do not outweigh the costs. Therefore, CBT projects could fail because of poor governance and a lack of access to markets. Other researchers (Kock, 1997; Tosun, 2000; Scheyvens, 2002) found limitations to the participation of the local community, namely a lack of knowledge and resources and the fact that the local community does not always operate as one group.

3.4.1 Community-based tourism in Namibia

Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) was first applied in Namibia in the 1980s with the Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation (IRDND) with the aim to combat poaching and increase the benefits of wildlife tourism to local communities (Gujadhur, 2000:37). The Ministry of Wildlife, Conservation and Tourism was formed after the country's independence in 1990 with the aim to include locals in sustainable resource management. Since then community involvement in tourism has been promoted by both government and NGOs in the country (Ashley, 2006). In 1994 government legislation passed, with the White Paper on Tourism stating that 'tourism must provide direct benefits to local people and aid conservation' (MET, 1994:5).

A movement based on CBNRM was initiated in 1994 involving the designing of community-managed plots of land across Namibia as conservancies. A conservancy is defined as a territorial unit where resource management and utilisation activities are undertaken by an organised group of people. The following criteria must be in place to register as a conservancy: a defined membership, elected committee members, agreed boundaries, a constitution including a resource management strategy and a plan for equitable distribution of benefits (NACSO, 2010). Conservancies operate with the specific purpose to conserve Namibia's natural resources and wildlife and, since their inception, Namibia has experienced unparalleled growth in wildlife populations as a result of conservation.

In 1995, a policy on CBT development was initiated by the MET; however, government had little operational support to implement the policy at that time. Namibia's conservancy programme is regarded as one of the most innovative and

effective community conservation and development initiatives in the world (Lapeyre, 2010). Therefore, in 1996 when Namibia's communal area conservancy legislation was passed, new opportunities for rural Namibians were created with a new vision of linking sustainable use of natural resources to social and economic benefits.

This Nature Conservation Amendment Act of 1996 states that residents of communal areas have rights and duties regarding the consumptive and non-consumptive use and sustainable management of game in those areas, enabling residents to derive benefits from such use (MET, 1996). The CBNRM programme in Namibia provides both a conceptual and legislative framework for the initiation of CBT (Roe, Grieg-Gran & Schalken, 2001). The CBNRM philosophy holds that communities receive direct benefits through the protection and sustainable use of natural resources, which links closely with the ecotourism and CBT concepts outlining the importance of environmental, social and economic issues. CBNRM programmes, thus, work to promote the idea that local management of natural resources can enhance the efficiency and sustainability of rural development through a means of incentivised conservation (NACSO, 2010).

As mentioned above, self-defined communities choosing to work together to protect the wildlife and their natural habitats through CBNRM programmes are referred to as conservancies (NACSO, 2010). Once registered as a conservancy, communities involved can experience profound development because registration provides them with both consumptive and non-consumptive rights over the land. Consumptive rights provide communities the opportunity to hunt additional game, improving food availability, whereas non-consumptive rights over the land create opportunities for communities to establish their own CBT enterprises. CBT enterprises allow communities to become involved in joint venture tourism projects, providing potential for economic growth. For example, if a tour operator constructs a lodge on a conservancy land, employment opportunities become available for previously unemployed conservancy members. Promoting and increasing tourism through the use of conservancies and CBNRM can, therefore, boost the influx of money and economic benefits derived from tourism in the development of rural communities (NACSO, 2010).

54

According to Ashley and Garland (1994:3), tourism in communal areas 'builds local support for conservation and sustainable natural resource use (and a sustainable tourism product)'. Furthermore, they state that CBT is promoted in Namibia for three main reasons, namely:

- To benefit the community by boosting welfare, economic growth and empowering locals,

- To benefit conservation by encouraging community commitment to wildlife conservation and sustainable management of the natural resource base, and

- To benefit Namibian tourism by diversifying Namibia's tourism product, especially through ecotourism and ensuring long-term sustainability in the country's resource base.

Namibia's national CBNRM programme involves the promotion of wildlife conservancies and, since 1997, 29 conservancies have been registered and a further 30 are in the process of being developed. Wildlife, however, remains the property of the state and communities receive only conditional rights over it (Ashley, 2006). The country has allocated 74 000 square kilometres of land as conservancy areas with 38 000 people being registered as members (usually adults over 18) and an estimated 150 000 benefiting from the conservancy programme (Arntzen, Molokomme; Terry; Moleele; Tshosa; Mazambani: 2003).

3.4.2 Challenges of community-based tourism

Communities are often split into various groups based on the relationship of class, gender and ethnic factors, and certain families are likely to lay claims on privileges based on their status in the community. The circumstances are unlikely that community members will have equitable access to involvement in tourism development and the benefits it may bring. Another challenge mentioned by Scheyvens (2002) is that communities often lack information, resources and power in relation to other stakeholders in the tourism process, which makes them

vulnerable to exploitation. Timothy (2002) explains that the barriers to the implementation of CBT can relate to sociopolitical traditions, gender, ethnicity, accessibility of information, a lack of awareness, economic issues and a lack of cooperation, etc.

The South African Tourism White Paper of 1996 identified a number of key factors hindering the tourism industry's potential to achieve meaningful growth and community beneficiation, which can also apply to tourism in Namibia. These factors include:

- Limited integration of communities and previously neglected groups,
- A lack of market access and market knowledge,
- A lack of interest on the part of existing operators to build partnerships with communities and non-traditional suppliers, and
- A lack of appropriate institutional structures (South African Government, 1996).

The international donor and research community have raised concerns about the viability of CBT enterprises, asking whether the significant amount of grant money provided by donors and NGOs to CBT enterprises is justifiable based on CBT true benefits to the community and the environment (Goodwin, 2006:330). Communities, particularly rural ones, are often on the front line in service provisions but last to receive benefits from their efforts. In Namibia, out of eight community–private sector joint ventures initiated during 1996 and 1998, only two reached operational stage, while the remaining six did not realise its potential (Ashley & Jones, 2001).

CBT has demonstrated the potential to generate significant returns on its conservation, socioeconomic and business objectives as ventures have spread and evolved. However, evidence indicates that most CBT projects have not contributed to local poverty reduction or delivered sufficient incentives for conservation (Goodwin, 2006:324). Although some CBT tourism schemes have been widely adopted, many under the guise of ecotourism, their success is something which has not been researched sufficiently (Goodwin, 2006:305).

3.5 Route tourism, local economic development and rural communities

Route tourism can increase economic benefits through the development of small businesses supplying goods and services, which significantly enhances job creation opportunities. This especially applies to rural areas where the establishment of a tourism route can benefit local communities. In this regard, CBT can be used as a vehicle for providing economic benefits to the poor in the surrounding community. It is argued that CBT is a form of sustainable tourism with the specific aim of alleviating poverty in a community setting.

Meyer (2004) argues that tourism routes and networks have been identified as a possible means to encourage community development. The heightened interest in community and pro-poor activities in rural LED strategies has meant that route tourism as a form of LED has become increasingly important. This is due to the potential of rapidly optimising the synergies between job creation, tourism and conservation (Open Africa, 2002:4).

In some parts of the world, the concept of rural trails, heritage routes or scenic roads is used, particularly in the context of promoting rural tourism (Olsen, 2003; Denstadli & Jacobsen, 2011). One example of a heritage route under the sponsorship of UNESCO is the Jesus Christ Route, a flagship project in Palestine which aims to mobilise a selection of cultural, religious and natural heritage resources (tangible and intangible) in the area to create internationally marketed and high-quality tourism products.

Cultural routes can be used as a development tool for marginal or rural areas, because they have the potential to stimulate economic activity and bring tourists into these areas. Therefore, it is important to include local communities in the decision-making process, considering the type and scale of development, if the economic benefits of tourism are to be spread more widely (Rogerson, 2007).

The Liberation Heritage Route has a participatory management approach. A high amount of effort was made to include local communities by identifying and prioritising

57

heritage sites to allow them more ownership (Hampton, 2005). The commitment to local small business development should be central to any tourism route planning that is linked to LED objectives.

3.6 Summary

The chapter provided an overview of LED in the global and southern Africa context, it further elaborated on rural tourism, the types of rural tourism and the impact of rural tourism on economic development. CBT was explained and discussed in general as a method for realising LED. There was also a focus on the challenges of community-based tourism, and the chapter concluded with a discussion of LED and rural communities.

CHAPTER 4: NAMIBIA AS A TOURIST DESTINATION

4.1 Introduction

As an economic field, tourism is growing faster than the rest of the world's economy with regard to visitor expenditures, export output, capital investment, income and employment. This has resulted in many southern African countries (such as Namibia, Botswana and South Africa) becoming dependent on tourism as a means of economic growth (Binns & Nel, 2002a; Rogerson & Visser, 2004). Although Namibia has gone through a long process of reconciliation, and nation-building became a preponderant project designed to incorporate the previously disadvantaged people into the dominant political and economic structures of the society, however none of these processes or projects was anchored on justice and has transformed society in ways that would benefit the public as a whole (Du Pisani, 2004). Therefore, Jauch, Edwards and Cupido (2009:35) argue that 27 years after independence Namibia is still characterised by inequalities in race, gender, class, ethnicity and education.

This chapter outlines Namibia as a tourist destination. It focuses on the history of the country, the tourism profile, regions and key attraction, and the existing tourism routes. It also presents an overview of the NTB.

4.2 Overview of Namibia as a tourist destination

In Namibia tourism has grown rapidly since the country gained independence from South Africa in 1990. It is a major industry, directly contributing to the country's GDP and employment creation (Saarinen & Niskala, 2009:61). The foreign tourist arrivals for Namibia in 2015 have increased by 3% from 2014. Nearly one million travellers visit Namibia annually, with about one in three coming from South Africa, followed by Germany, the UK, Italy and France.

Namibia is among the prime destinations in Africa and is known for ecotourism which features Namibia's extensive wildlife heritage. Overall, about 27% of all employment in the country is generated through travel and tourism (MET Annual Statistics, 2016). In December 2010, Lonely Planet ranked Namibia as the 5th best tourist destination

59

in the world in terms of value. Namibia features famous national parks, which includes the Etosha National Park, the Namib Naukluft Park featuring the Namib Desert and the Sossusvlei Sand Dunes, the southern Fish River Canyon Park and the Namib Skeleton Coast. Along the coast, excluding the coastal towns, is the Dorob National Park covering the West Coast Recreational Area and consisting of 10.7 million hectares (!hoaes, 2011b; New Era, 2011). The Namib-Skeleton Coast National Park is one of Namibia's oldest treasures and estimated to be the eight largest of all protected areas in the world. The Caprivi region also hosts several national parks and game reserves.

Tourism in Namibia, similarly to other southern African countries, has common challenges that affect the development of tourism in the region. These include a lack of adequate infrastructure, energy and water supply. Compared with the international world, Namibia has only a few national airlines which are compatible with international airlines on intercontinental routes.

Due to inadequate training facilities, shortage of skilled and experience personnel can result in a lack of quality services (Cleverdon, 2002). To address these challenges the 14 member countries of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) have adopted a regional approach to tourism development by forming the Regional Tourism Organisation of Southern Africa (RETOSA) in 1995 to promote and market the region and assist tourism development in member countries.

The following section presents an overview of Namibia as a tourist destination. It provides the history of the country, the tourism profile, main regions, key tourist attractions and the main tourism routes the country offers.

4.2.1 History of Namibia

Namibia, known as the Republic of Namibia, is situated in the south-western corner of Africa and borders to the west on the Atlantic Ocean. It shares borders with Angola and Zambia in the north, Botswana in the east and South Africa in the south and east. Namibia is a semi-arid country with very hot summers and cold winters,

and is influenced by the Subtropical High Pressure Zone. This causes air to become hotter and drier as it reaches lower levels, leading to a lack of water in the atmosphere. The country's climatic conditions differ in the north with warm humid conditions and high rainfall figures to cold winter months and hot summers, whilst dry conditions and lower rainfall figures are prevalent in the south. Namibia has four perennial rivers located along its international borders, and all other rivers within the country are ephemeral. This makes the areas close to these rivers favourable for crop production, whereas the rest of the country mainly depends on livestock and cattle farming.

The first and oldest inhabitants of the area were the San, believed to have lived here for more than 30 000 years (Orjala, 2004:63). Other groups include the Khoikhoi, Damara and Namaqua. Since about the 14th century AD, the Bantu moved into the area. Most of the territory became a German imperial protectorate in 1884 and remained a German colony until the end of World War I. Around 1905 racial segregation was officially established, which laid the foundation for colonialist class divisions, where black Namibians were used as labour force on farms, mines and in other sectors (Melber, 2000a:37). During this time Africans were dispossessed of 75% of the land, which was sold to Europeans. This led to anti-colonial resistance, which was brutally crushed and resulted in the deaths of thousands of Hereros and Namas at the hands of the German colonists (Jauch et al., 2009:4).

In 1920, after the Treaty of Versailles ending World War I, the League of Nations mandated the country to South Africa, which imposed its laws and, from 1948, its apartheid policy (Frayne, 2000:54; Jauch et al., 2009:6). Andreasson (2010:22) maintains that apartheid constituted the codification, expansion and intensification of existing racially discriminatory legislation in southern Africa. On 21 March 1990 the country gained its independence from South Africa and inherited a racially unequal and distorted economy together with a population suffering from a critical shortage of skills and severe unemployment (Jauch et al., 2009).

Namibia derives its name from the Namib Desert, named after the Nama word 'Namib', meaning open space. The country is thus known as the 'land of open spaces'. Namibia has one of the lowest populations in the world with less than two

people per square kilometre. Namibia is a member state of the UN, the SADC, the African Union (AU), and the Commonwealth of Nations. In the years leading to Namibia's independence, its people suffered oppression, whilst wildlife populations underwent marked depletion as a result of illegal poaching and unmonitored hunting. Since then, Namibians have gone to extensive lengths to revitalise their diverse cultures and environment (Jauch et al., 2009).

About 44% of the land is commercial, surveyed and fenced freehold land, which is predominantly owned by white farmers who produce beef (Melber, 2005a:136; Jauch et al., 2009:23). Mining, fishing and small-scale manufacturing is some of the other sectors of the economy. Namibia has since its independence managed to differentiate itself as a country with an enabling environment for development, with a specific focus on CBT. Such an environment includes peaceful and political stability, good governance, fine transport, developed information and communication technology, infrastructure, sound economic policies and CBNRM (Janis, 2009:2). Despite the good growth prospects and enabling environment, the country is still faced with challenges. These include high unemployment amongst unskilled people, income inequalities which are amongst the highest in the world and poverty endemic close to 35% (Novelli & Gebhardt, 2007:2).

One of the most outstanding legacies of the colonial and apartheid era was that, with regard to its ownership structure, at independence the Namibian tourism industry was totally white dominated. The need for transformation, a change in the structure of the tourism industry and a sharing of the benefits of tourism was urgent in Namibia. Structurally, the country's tourism industry is highly concentrated and dominated by a small elite group of large, mostly foreign controlled (mainly South African) tourism organisations. The large inbound tour operators (both Namibian and international) which control most of the tourist flow into Namibia and comprise the major market share are Sense of Africa (which controls 50% of the tour operators market), SWA Safaris, Springbok Atlas, Abenteuer Africa Safaris, and Namib Wilderness Safaris (Nyakunu & Rogerson, 2014).

Other operators specialise in niche markets such as 4x4 trips, independent and young travellers, backpackers and overland campers. Several of these tour

operators are part of larger international groups or networks. For instance, Sense of Africa is a subsidiary of Tourism Investment Holdings Limited (Tourvest), a large tourism company listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange, while Springbok Atlas is a subsidiary of Imperial Holdings, and Abenteuer part of the World of Destination Management Companies. In addition, there is a burgeoning small and medium enterprise sector (SME). The exact data on the number of SMEs in the Namibian tourism economy are unavailable, particularly in respect of the emerging black-owned tourism enterprises (Nyakunu & Rogerson: 2014).

In response to the above challenges, the Namibian government aims to reform the national development strategy by creating a long-term plan known as Vision 2030, as a way to creating jobs, developing the nation and transforming the country into a high-income and more equitable knowledge economy (Scholz, 2009). In line with this vision, the Namibian government hopes to reduce the nation's unemployment rate of 38%. The National Planning Commission (NPC) of Namibia believes that the tourism industry can make a vital contribution to job creation, stating that 'no other sector of the economy has as much potential to create jobs and generate income for Namibia's rural communities' (Lapeyre, 2010).

Currently, tourism constitutes over 15% of Namibia's GDP and is growing at a rate over twice the worldwide average (Travel and Tourism Economic Impact: Namibia, 2013). Namibia has incorporated an environmental protection programme into its constitution and became the first country in Africa to protect its wildlife and natural landscapes. Over 50% of Namibia's land is involved in some degree of environmental protection (NACSO, 2012).

4.2.2 Namibia's tourism profile

Namibia's natural and cultural assets provide a substantially good base for tourist attractions which are scattered across the country and, therefore, could spread the impact of development to different areas. Internationally, the tourism market in Namibia is perceived as a new and unexplored destination. Therefore, new tourism ventures and foreign investments in tourism started to flourish (Roe et al., 2001).

Tourists are attracted to Namibia because of its landscapes and scenery, wildlife and cultural diversity.

In addition, Namibia offers diverse historical attractions through its heritage tourism, which is, however, considered to be underdeveloped. The heritage and cultural assets include ancient rock art and the pastoralist cultures of the Himba and San people of the Kunene region and the Kalahari Desert respectively and which are promoted as tourist attractions. Other historical and cultural attractions are linked to the country's German colonial legacy and are found mostly in Windhoek and coastal towns of Lüderitz, Walvis Bay and Swakopmund (Turpie, Lange, Martin, Davies & Barnes, 2004:3; Scholz, 2009:156).

The mainstay of tourism is about 70% nature-based tourism, and 40% of Namibia is some form of natural protected area, such as communal conservancies (16%), freehold conservancies and private reserves (6%), and community forests (0.8%). Work by Novelli and Gebhardt (2007) and, more recently, Lapeyre (2010) and Janis (2009) confirms that nature-based tourism is the essential anchor of Namibia's tourism industry. Overall, the tourism sector is considered to be one of the nation's largest job providers (MET annual statistics, 2014). The below graph illustrates the different reasons why tourists travel to Namibia, showing the majority being for wildlife purposes.
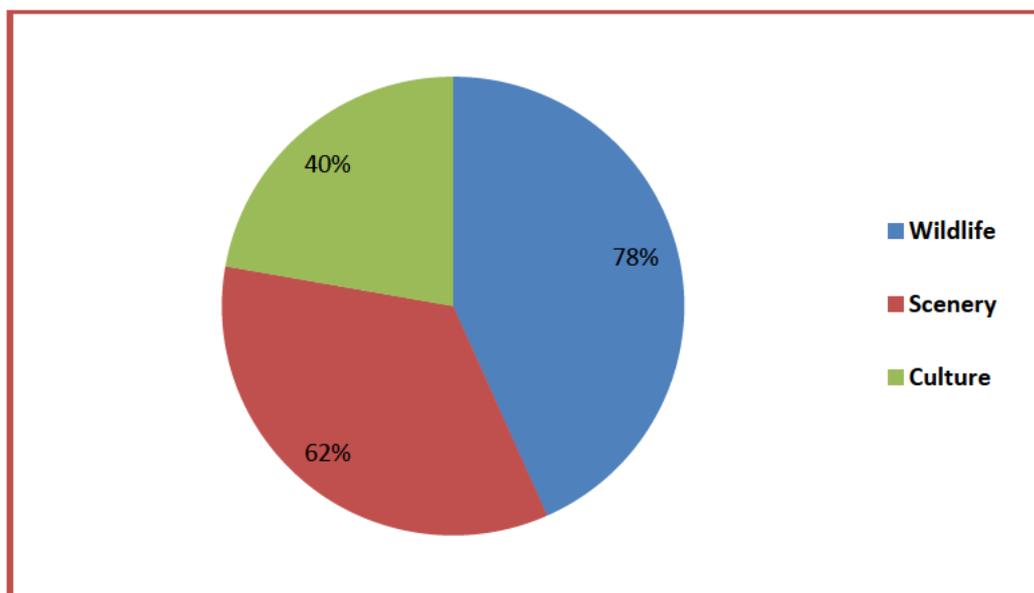
Figure 5: Reasons for travelling to Namibia
Source: Report on the Namibia Tourism Exit Survey 2012-2013 (2013)

64

Figure 5 illustrates the percentages of tourists visiting Namibia. From this information one can see that the majority of tourists (78%) visit Namibia for its wildlife, followed by scenery (62%) and the least (40%) for cultural visits.

The following information and figures were obtained from the yearly statistics at the MET office (MET Annual Statistical Report, 2016). The tourist arrivals to Namibia for the period of 2010-2015 show a slight growth of 5.1% as compared with 2014. Compared with a 12.2% increase in arrivals in 2014 from 2013, growth was minimal in 2015. Tourist arrivals by purpose of visit revealed that tourists visiting friends/relatives are 53%, whereas those visiting Namibia for holiday purposes were 47% respectively. The South African tourist market are the highest to Namibia in the top ten holiday list with 29.7%, followed by the Angolan tourists with 28.7%, Germany ranked third with 16.1%, and the Netherlands the least with 2.5%. International tourists use air travelling, while many tourists from Africa tend to travel by roads when visiting Namibia.

The above figures suggest that, in future, tourism could play an even larger role in Namibia, mainly in rural areas. For the last five years the Namibian government has identified tourism as one of the target sectors in which public investments are to be made to combat poverty and unemployment. With the current results there are clear observations of growth in this sector (MET: 2016).

4.2.3 Regions and key tourist attractions

Namibia is a small country with diverse cultures, unique landscapes and open spaces, and its wildlife has made it a choice destination to many international tourists. Namibia is divided into different regions: Khomas in the centre of the country, Omaheke in the east, Erongo in the west, Otjizondjupa, Omusati, Ohangwena, Oshono, Oshikoto, Kunene, Kavango and Caprivi regions in the north, and Hardap and //Karas in the south.

The capital city, Windhoek, is located in the Khomas region, and the rural surroundings consist of mainly privately owned cattle, game and guest farms which mostly are involved in tourism. The region hosts two conservancies, namely the

Daan Viljoen Game Park and Von Bach Game Reserve, and boasts a high level of infrastructure and human development. The Khomas region has the highest per capita income level in Namibia, although within the region, specifically Windhoek, large disparities exist between different income groups (Mendelsohn et al., 2002:188).

The Erongo region has several tourist attractions such as national parks, sand dunes, the Cape Cross seal colony and the coastal towns of Swakopmund, Henties Bay and Walvis Bay. The towns are important destinations not only for international tourists, but also for domestic and regional tourists during the major holiday seasons. In addition, the coast is particularly suitable for bird watching, although the potential of this sector is underutilised (Hottola, 2009). As in the Khomas region, the income and human development levels are higher than in the rest of Namibia and the coastal infrastructure is well developed (Larsen, 2003:10). The region also has a high number of tourism establishments.

The Kunene region stretches upwards along the north-western side of the country, and features the home of the Himba ethnic group. This region gets its name from the Kunene River on the northern border, and has Opuwo as its capital town. Although under-developed, the region features dramatic scenery, for instance the Ruacana Falls, as a major attraction, as well as a number of conservancies and lodges, guest houses, and cultural tourist sites.

The Omusati region borders with the Oshana region and has Outapi as its capital town. The Ohangwena region has Eenhana as its capital town. The Oshana region has Oshakati as its capital town. The Oshikoto region named after Lake Otjikoto has the capital town of Omuthiya. The above four regions are predominantly known for agricultural activities where Mahangu (a traditional rain-fed cereal crop) is cultivated successfully, and the Mopani tree is the dominant species in this area. These regions are also known as the Four O-regions and lies towards the northern central part of the country bordering on Angola.

The Otjizondjupa region lies in the central east of the country, south of the Kavango region, and features the Waterberg Plateau Park. The capital town is Otjiwarongo,

also the largest town in northern Namibia. The Omaheke region lies south of the Otjozondjupa region and east of the Khomas region, bordering with Botswana in the east. It also forms part of the western part of the Kalahari Desert. The capital town is Gobabis, and the region is mainly known for livestock cattle farming, although the majority of these farms have now diverted into game farms, featuring a number of privately owned conservancies, now offering hunting and tourism facilities.

The Kavango and Zambezi region stretches to the north-eastern part of the country. These regions have a tropical climate with high temperatures and rainfall figures, making it the wettest region in the country. The Zambezi region features the Zambezi, Caundo and Kwando Rivers, with the capital town Katima Mulilo. The Kavango region has the capital town of Rundu, and features the Okavango River and part of the Okavango Delta. The different regions are reflected in Figure 6 below.
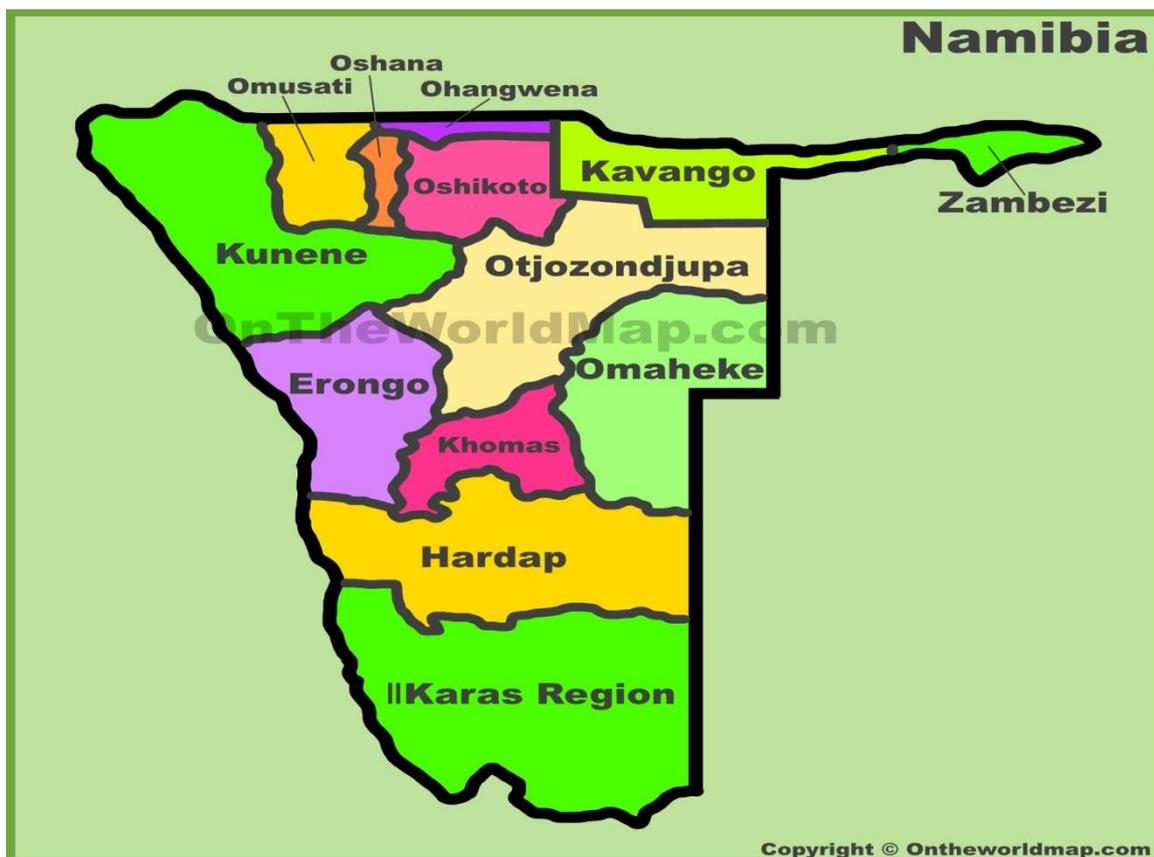
Figure 6: Regions in Namibia
Source: Google Maps

To the south of the Khomas region are the Hardap and //Karas regions. These areas are also indicating the main study area for this research study. The Hardap region stretches south, followed by the //Karas region further south bordering South Africa. It borders to the Atlantic Ocean to the west and the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park between Botswana and South Africa to the east. The capital town is Mariental, and the region is also home to the Hardap Dam and recreational park.

The //Karas region further south has its name from the Karas mountain range in its southern part, with the capital town of Keetmanshoop. It features the Fish River Canyon, Ai-Ais Hot Water Springs in Warmbad, and the coastal town of Lüderitz in the far south bordering the Atlantic Ocean. This region is also the least densely populated area from the 13 regions. Because of low rainfall figures in these regions, both regions are predominantly small stock farming areas, mainly with sheep and goat.

Game farming and irrigation along the Naute Dam and Orange River have gained importance. The area is known as home to three main attractions, the Fish River Canyon – also the second largest canyon in the world – the Ai-Ais Hot Springs, and the Sossusvlei area where the world's highest sand dunes and unexplained fairy circles are found. The arid and semi-arid landscapes of the southern part form a desert system which allows travellers to explore Namibia's deserts, the Kalahari Desert on the eastern side, a section of the Nama Karoo on the southern central side, and the Namib Desert towards the western side along the Atlantic Ocean. These two regions also host sections of the Four Desert Route System, which are described below:

The Kalahari Desert comprises a total area of 1.6 square kilometres, making it the largest desert in southern Africa, stretching into Botswana and parts of Namibia. The dunes were formed about 20 000 years ago and are partly covered by grasses, punctuated by camel thorn trees and shepherds bush. The Kalahari is home to the San people who live from the natural resources, perfecting the art of sustainable living (Open Africa, 2015:Online).

The Nama Karoo covers most of the southern central part of Namibia and 135 600 square kilometres in South Africa. The Nama Karoo is a vast, open, arid region dominated by low-shrub vegetation and punctuated by rugged relief (Dean & Milton, 1999a). Although not remarkably rich in species or endemism, the flora and fauna of the region are impressively adapted to its climatic extremes. The geological formations consist of the Fish River Canyon and the Brukkaros Mountains. Other attractions in the area are the Duwiseb Castle and wildlife such as springbok, oryx, kudu, mountain zebra and ostrich (Open Africa, 2010: Online).

The Succulent Karoo covers an area of 39 700 square kilometres and extends down the western coast of Namibia from Lüderitz into South Africa, and then penetrating further inland. It comprises two major biogeographically domains, the Namaqualand–Namib Domain and the Southern Karoo Domain (Jürgens, 1991). The Namaqualand–Namib Domain encompasses the fog-affected coastal plain and adjacent escarpment in the west. It consists of several sub-regions: The Sperrgebiet of southern Namibia; the Richtersveld, which is a desert–mountain region adjacent to the Orange River; the Sandveld, or sandy coastal plain, south of the Orange River; the Hardveld, or granitic uplands, of the Great Escarpment; the Kamiesberg, a granite massif of 1 800 m along the escarpment; and the quartz-strewn plains of the Knersvlakte in the extreme south. This domain receives most of its rain in winter (Open Africa, 2010:Online).

The Namib Desert lies between a high inland plateau and extends along the coast of Namibia, merging with the Kaokoveld Desert into Angola in the north and south with the Karoo Desert in South Africa. The Namib Desert is commonly referred to as the world's oldest desert, being 43 million years old, featuring some of the highest dunes in the world. The entire western part of Namibia comprises the desert which flows beyond the borders of Namibia into southern Angola and to the Northern Cape Province of South Africa. The scenery ranges from shifting glowing red dunes in the south to gravel plains with inselbergs in the central parts, and blue mountains in the north east, with deep valleys cut by ephemeral rivers (Open Africa, 2010:Online).

69

The following section briefly presents Namibia's main tourist attractions. They include the Etosha National Park, Skeleton Coast, Namib Desert, Fish River Canyon, Swakopmund, Brandberg, Kaokoland, the Caprivi Strip and the Waterberg Plateau.

The Etosha National Park is Namibia's top wildlife destination and is home to Africa's tallest elephants, the endangered black rhino, and 91 other species of mammals. The park is very popular with photographers, whilst visitors can see plenty of giraffe, elephant, lion, rhino, cheetah and leopard, mammals and a huge variety of birdlife (Travel News Namibia, 2017).

The Skeleton Coast gets its name from beached ships and skeletons of whale and seal bones that litter the desert along this coastline. It forms the northern half of Namibia's coastline in the Kunene region stretching along the coastline towards the Erongo region. The Skeleton Coast is a sanctuary for Cape Fur seals which also attract various predators like hyena and jackal. With the establishment of the new Dorob National Park covering the West Coast Recreational Area, excluding its towns, all coastal parks have been merged into one large national park consisting of 10.7 million hectares and is called the Namib-Skeleton Coast National Park (!hoaes, 2011; New Era, 19.1.2011).

Picture 1: Skeleton Coast
Source: NTB 2012

The Namib Desert is the oldest desert in the world, situated in the Hardap region stretching to the Erongo region. The central section of the desert is known as the Namib Naukluft Park. The highest dunes are found in Sossusvlei, and with good

70

rains the salt pan (Deadvlei) fills up with water that attracts birdlife. The ancient Welwitschia plant (*Welwitschia Mirabilis*) is also an attraction, some of which are 1 500 years old. Activities include hot-air ballooning, safari drives and bird watching. The area is also surrounded by lovely lodges and campsites (Travel news Namibia: 2017).

The Fish River Canyon is Africa's largest canyon, formed 500 million years ago and located in the //Karas region. The Ai-Ais Hot Springs, with the Fish River Canyon, were incorporated into a single conservation area in 1989. The springs originate deep underground and are rich in minerals, with water temperatures of around 60 degrees Celsius. Activities include hiking during cooler months (May to September), which take 5 days (85 km).

Picture 2: Fish River Canyon
Source: NTB 2012

Swakopmund is Namibia's most important seaside town, with old German-style colonial buildings, found in the Erongo region. It is a popular spot for local tourists, who visit to escape the heat during the hot summer months. Swakopmund has a variety of hotels, restaurants and cafés to enjoy.

The Brandberg Mountain lies in the north-western Namib Desert area, in the Erongo region, and at 2 606 metres it is the highest mountain in Namibia. 'Brandberg' means 'fire mountain', a testament to the fiery red colour of the mountain at sunset. Here, stone-age rock art in the caves on the mountain are the main reason for tourists to visit.

71

Kaokoland is where the Himba live in the Kunene region, one of Namibia's loyal traditional tribes, a people featured in the film *Babies*. Kaokoland is very remote and sparsely populated due to its arid and rocky landscape.

Picture 3: Himba women in Kaokoland
Source: NTB 2012

The Caprivi Strip is exclusively shaped like a narrow finger of land in north-eastern Namibia. The Caprivi region borders on Angola, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Botswana. This area is filled with wildlife and is ideal for a water-based safari, as several major rivers (Zambezi, Okavango, Chobe and Linyanti) flow in this region.

The Waterberg Plateau in the Otjizondjupa region has a rather violent history and was the scene of an awful massacre of the Herero people by German colonists at the turn of the century. It was declared a nature reserve in 1972. The remote location has made this an ideal spot for conservancies to set up protected areas for rare species of wildlife like rhino, sable, cheetah and buffalo. The area has excellent bird life, surrounded by plenty of safari camps and lodges. Hiking and game drives are excellent activities to do here.

The Kalahari Desert lies in the eastern part of Namibia, in the Omaheke region stretching into the Hardap region, and crosses the border into Botswana. These red undulating dunes with golden grasses waving in the wind are home to the San and

lend new definition to wide open spaces. The sprawling landscape is home to uniquely adapted species of wildlife and flora

4.2.4 Namibia's tourism routes

As indicated earlier in the study, although tourism routes exist in the southern part of Namibia, they are not marketed as such or in a way that attracts tourists to the routes themselves. Apart from the Four Deserts Tourism Route that covers the entire southern part, the Nama Padloper Route also exists in the far south of the //Karas region. This route starts at the Vioolsdrift/Noordoewer Border Post between South Africa and Namibia and runs for about 160 km along the Orange River to the town of Rosh Pinah before heading north to the quaint village of Aus on the edge of the Namib Desert. The route passes through the town of Aussenkehr, which is famous for its grape cultivation and export and the Aussenkehr Nature Park, which offers a unique travelling experience towards Norotshama River Resort (Open Africa, 2010:Online).

The below-listed routes are smaller sub-routes, also developed by Open Africa, in and around different towns in the south:

- the Nama Padloper Route,
- the Canyon Diamond Route,
- the Kalahari Route, and
- the LudBay 4x4 Guided Self-drive Route.

On 3 June 2014, three newly self-drive routes, the Omulunga Palm Route, Arid Eden Route and Four Rivers Route, were launched in the northern region of Namibia by the Deputy Minister of Environment and Tourism, funded by the MCA-N and developed by Open Africa and the NTB. The objective was to diversify tourism products, create sustainability and direct tourists to communal areas in the country. Another aim was to unlock tourism opportunities, strengthen the linkages with communal conservancies, enhance the benefits of tourism to rural communities, add value to the brand, and provide a competitive advantage for Namibia as a tourism destination.

73

The Omulunga Palm Route covers mostly the northern part of Namibia, and travellers are able to see traditional and modern open markets and local crafters, and discover the Ruacana Falls. The Arid Eden Route stretches from Swakopmund to the Angolan border in the north and includes the previously restricted western area of the Etosha National Park. The Four Rivers Route covers the four perennial rivers of the northern region which are the Zambezi, Okavango, Kwando and Chobe rivers (MCA-N, 2009).

4.3 The Namibia Tourism Board

The Namibian government identified the tourism sector in Namibia as one of the target sectors for public investments to combat poverty and unemployment by (Smit, 2011). To ensure the sustainability of Namibia's tourism industry, the NTB was created in 2001 as a subsidiary governing body under the MET. The NTB has four key mandates:

1. Marketing Namibia as a tourist destination,
2. Regulating the tourism industry,
3. Grading or doing quality assessment of accommodation establishments, and
4. Facilitating training to persons entering the tourism industry.

The NTB further promotes the development of environmentally sustainable tourism by actively supporting the long-term conservation, maintenance and development of the natural resource base of Namibia (NTB Act: 2010). To more effectively track and monitor organisations, all tourism-related businesses must be registered with the NTB, either as an accommodation establishment or a regulated business. To register with the NTB, businesses must undergo an application process during which they are evaluated based on compliance with the requirements of the relevant category. Businesses found to be operating without registration could face a fine and/or imprisonment.

The MET focuses on promoting environmental sustainability and ensuring biological diversity for years to come (MET: 2013). The MET delegates tourism-related responsibilities to the NTB who oversees all activity within the tourism industry and

provides both certification for tour operators and regulations to promote the financial and environmental sustainability of tourism.

Namibia's tourism industry has attracted substantial amounts of donor funding. The European Union's Rural Poverty Reduction Programme has invested N$2 million in community-based tourism since 2005 (Lapeyre, 2010:192). The US-based Millennium Challenge Corporation donated US$304.5 million in 2008 for poverty reduction. Also, N$66.69 million was used by the Namibian government for the tourism sector (Millennium Challenge Corporation & Government of Namibia, 2009; Van Den Bosch, 2009). The funds were divided between the Etosha National Park, conservancy support activity and marketing, of which N$62million was allocated for communal conservancies to improve their marketing services and tourism development. In addition, the Spanish government contributed US$6 million to fostering community-based initiatives that promote cultural tourism, specifically cultural villages, cultural trails and centres, and geo-parks (Petronella, 2008).

4.6 Summary

This chapter profiled Namibia as a tourist destination. It presented a brief history of the country and detailed the country's tourism profile, regions, key attractions and tourism routes. The chapter also alluded to the functions of the NTB.

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1 Introduction

Research is an intensive activity that aims to find solutions to societal problems. Research is usually based on the work of a variety of scholars with the aim of generating new ideas and/or searching for solutions to new and/or existing problems (Salkind, 2006:2). Therefore, every research study needs to be well planned to avoid wasted effort and to ensure the achievement of valid solutions (Parikh, 2006:480). The difference between research and information gathering is that the former requires the application of a relevant methodology (Bhattacharya, 2003:17). This chapter discusses the research approach and design, the population, the design of the questionnaire, data collection procedures and data analysis applicable to this study.

5.2 Research approach and design

Research methodology refers to scientific endeavours that consist of a set of specific procedures, tools and techniques to gather and analyse data (David & Sutton, 2011). There are two main research approaches: quantitative and qualitative research. Quantitative research can be described as research that seeks to quantify data through statistical analysis (Malhorta, 2010:137). Quantitative research produces data that utilise numbers and statistics (O'Leary, 2004:99). Quantitative research, underpinned by a distinctive theory as to what should pass as warrantable knowledge, requires methods such as experiments and surveys to describe and explain phenomena (Anderson, 2004:204-207; Kumar, 2005:12).

Qualitative research, on the other hand, seeks to elucidate an in-depth understanding of the research problem. This is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning that individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem (Creswell, 2014:4). It involves gathering a great deal of information from a small number of people rather than a limited amount of information from a large number of people (Veal, 2006:40). Sometimes qualitative research does not involve

76

numbers or statistics at all, but full descriptions of the phenomenon under study, including real experiences. In addition, qualitative research emphasises the human element, uses close first-hand knowledge of the research setting and avoids distancing the researcher from the people or event/situation being studied (Neuman, 2003).

Quantitative data collection methods often employ measuring instruments such as structured observation schedules, structured interviewing schedules, questionnaires, checklists, indexes and scales (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delport, 2011:171). Leedy and Ormrod (2010:135) state that, with quantitative data, the researcher collects and examines data from various angles to construct a rich, meaningful picture of a complex, multifaceted situation. These numerous data can then be statistically analysed and percentages can be derived and displayed in tables and graphs (Kumar, 2008:5). Owing to the nature of the study and the relatively large population, the study employed a quantitative research approach to collect data from all the product owners and LED officers on the Four Deserts Tourism Route.

The research design of a study provides the 'nuts and bolts' of how the research will be undertaken (Coughian, Cronin & Ryan, 2007:661) and connects the research methodology with the research methods (tools and techniques) that will be used to answer the research questions. It describes the processes through which the data are collected, measured, analysed and reported in an accurate and objective way (David & Sutton, 2011). The research design for this study was survey research, and a semi-structured questionnaire was administered to all participants. Survey research is a method used for collecting information by asking questions. Participants' responses are summarised through percentages and frequency counts, and inferences are drawn (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:183-184).

5.3 Population

A population in research is defined 'as the whole group of people (organisations and objects) that have the characteristic that you want to study; the group of people is a well-defined group of individuals which can be considered as a population' (Robson, 2002:3260). As indicated before, the population for this research consisted of all the

77

product owners and LED officers along the Four Deserts Tourism Route. A total of 177 questionnaires were received back from the product owners and LED officers on the Four Deserts Tourism Route. Sampling did not apply to this study.

5.4 Data collection

Data collection refers to the period in the research project that involves engaging with the target sample or population from whom data are collected (David & Sutton, 2011:613). In the current study, the researcher personally gathered the data from respondents and travelled the entire Four Deserts Tourism Route, starting from Rehoboth via the C14 road to Aus, Noordoewer, Keetmanshoop and back to Rehoboth via Koes and Gochas, to administer the questionnaire to product owners and LED officers. Consent was obtained from the product owners before the journey commenced. The researcher also assured participants that their responses would be treated with utmost confidentiality. Respondents who could not immediately complete the questionnaire were requested to mail it to the researcher.

5.4.1   Construction of the questionnaire

A semi-structured questionnaire was used to collect data from the participants, with a combination of closed- and open-ended questions. Bryman and Bell (2007:475) described a semi-structured questionnaire as involving a degree of structure. Semi-structured questionnaires have an overall topic, general themes, targeted issues and specific questions; they are more flexible than structured interviews.

The questionnaire for this study was constructed in the following way: A cover letter introduced the researcher to the respondents, stating the reason for the study and the ethical aspects regarding the feedback received (refer to Annexure A). The questionnaire consisted of four sections:

- Section A focused on the demographic information of respondents (specifically age, gender, race, language, years of experience, position at establishment and facilities offered),

78

- Section B ascertained the perceptions of respondents pertaining to LED and route tourism,

- Section C required a rating of the facilities and services offered along the Four Deserts Tourism Route, and

- Section D asked more probing questions to respondents, specifically related to the challenges and opportunities of LED and route tourism and the recommendations to improve the Four Deserts Tourism Route (refer to Annexure B).

5.4.2 Pilot study

Pilot studies are important to quantitative research studies, as it is crucial that the questions are clear and concise and respondents understand them correctly (Veal, 2006:33). For the purpose of this investigation, the questionnaire was piloted on five product owners in Windhoek. The outcome confirmed that the questions were clear and concise, and no adaptations were made to the questionnaire.

5.5 Data analysis

Data analysis involves making sense and drawing conclusions from raw data. Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005:211) point out that data analysis by means of statistical techniques assists researchers in investigating variables, as well as their effect, relationship and patterns. The raw data in this study were captured in Excel and both descriptive and inferential statistics were extrapolated. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2010:253) and Welman et al. (2005:231), descriptive statistics describes a body of data and summarises the observations, whereas inferential statistics has two main functions, namely to estimate a population parameter from a random sample and to test statistically based hypotheses. Descriptive and inferential statistics were performed on the data.

Section D on the questionnaire consisted of open-ended questions. Open-ended questions can elicit a greater diversity of responses, and tend to be more objective and less leading than closed-ended questions. Most respondents gave similar

responses; some did not fill out this section, while others opted to answer only what they thought was relevant. The researcher grouped the feedback according to the similarity of the answers.

5.6 Field work challenges

The researcher experienced the following challenges during data gathering:

- The time frame for returning the questionnaires to the researcher took longer than estimated initially. It was only until follow-up telephone calls had been made that attempts were made to return the questionnaires,
- The researcher travelled distances that were very long and tedious, yet some respondents were not available to fill out the questionnaire, and
- Some of the respondents were rude and unwilling to take part.

5.7 Summary

This chapter outlined the research methodology applicable to this study – this included the research approach and design, population, data collection, the design of the data-gathering instrument, the pilot study, data analysis and fieldwork challenges.

CHAPTER 6: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

6.1 Introduction

This chapter provides feedback on the findings of the empirical section of this study. The empirical section is based on the semi-structured questionnaire (see Annexure B). The chapter systematically analyses the responses to the questionnaire. As indicated before, 177 questionnaires were used for data analysis and both descriptive and inferential statistics were applied to interpret the data.

6.2 Descriptive statistics

Section A describes the demographic profile of the respondents, Section B ascertain the perceptions of the respondents toward LED and route tourism, Section C rates the facilities and services offered on the route, and Section D poses open-ended questions based on the challenges and opportunities of LED and route tourism.

6.2.1 Section A: Demographic profile of respondents

This section describes the demographic profile of the respondents, including age, gender, racial background, language, experience, position and facilities and/or services offered.

Age composition

Question 1 indicates the age composition of the respondents. Refer to table 2.

Table 2: Age composition of respondents

Variable	Valid N	Mean	Median	Mode	Frequency of mode	Minimum	Maximum
AGE	177	44.7	44	Multiple	10	19	84

According to Table 2, the minimum age recorded was 19, and the maximum age recorded was 84 years, with a median of 44.

Question 2 required the respondents to indicate their gender. Refer to Graph 1.
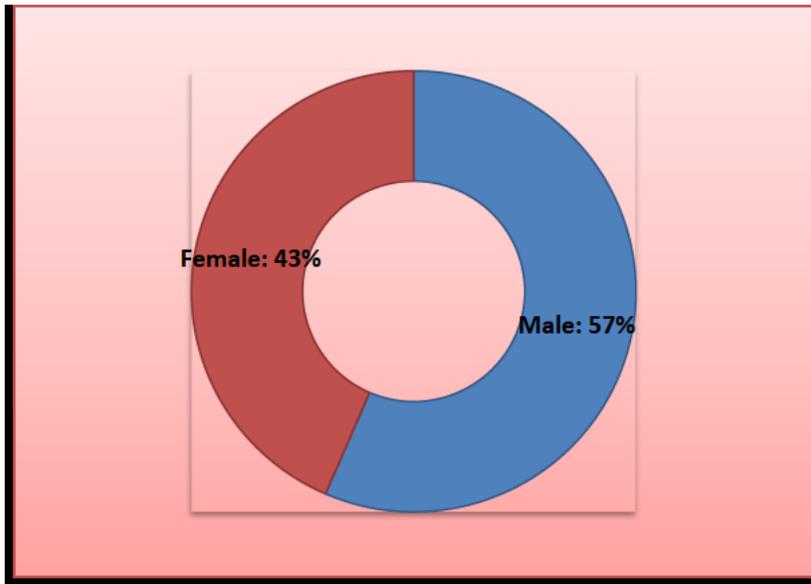
Graph 1: Gender composition of respondents

Graph 1 show that 57% of the respondents were male and 43% were female.

Question 3 indicates the respondents' racial composition. Refer to Graph 2.
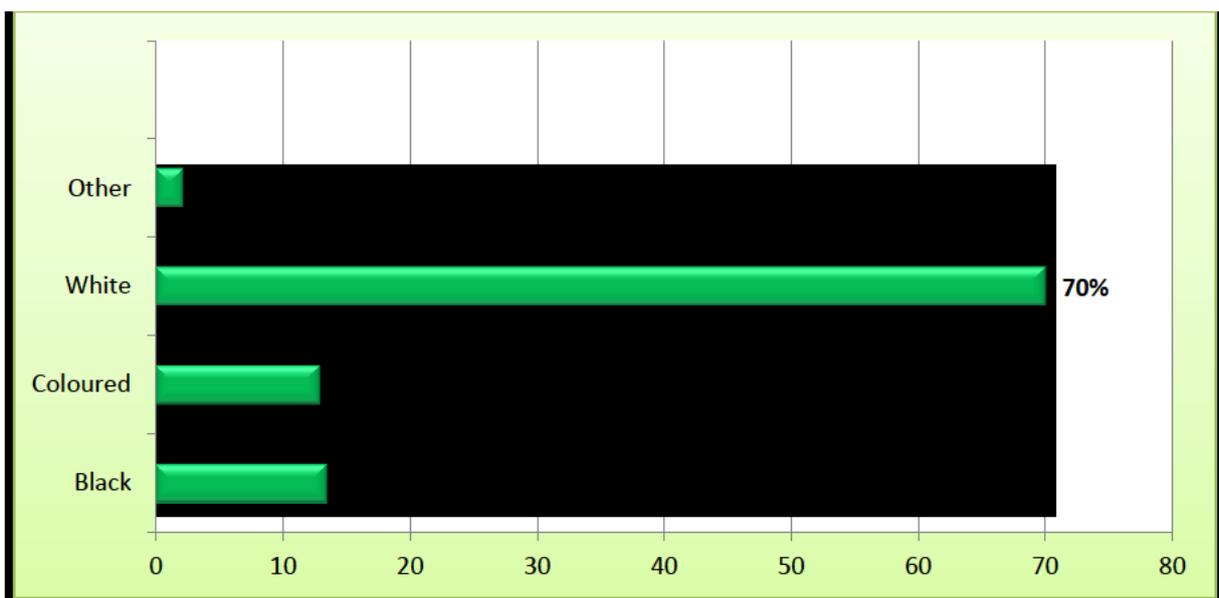
Graph 2: Racial composition of respondents

Graph 2 shows that the majority of respondents, namely 70%, were white, 13% were coloured and 14% were Black. Three per cent (3%) had another racial background.

Question 4 requested the respondents to provide their preferred language. Refer to Graph 3.
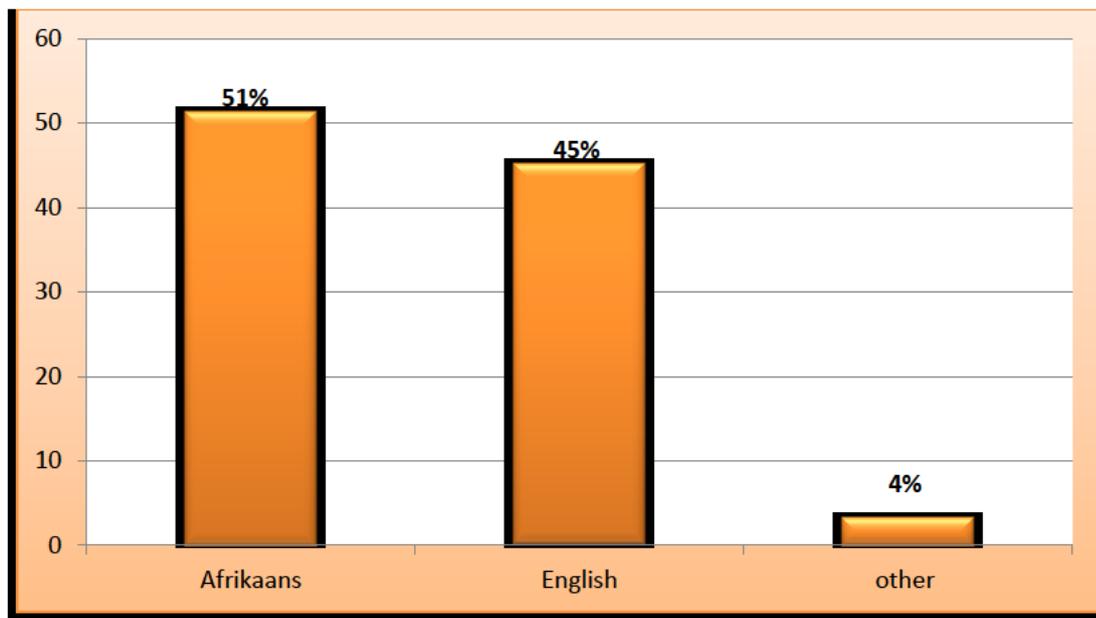
Graph 3: Language composition of respondents

Graph 3 indicates that 51% of the respondents preferred Afrikaans, above 45% who preferred English and 4% who preferred other languages.

In Question 5 the respondents were asked as to their number of years of experience in the tourism industry. From the feedback received, an average of 8% had between 8 to 20 years of experience in the tourism industry.

Question 6 requested the respondents to indicate their position at the establishment, which is illustrated in Graph 4.

83
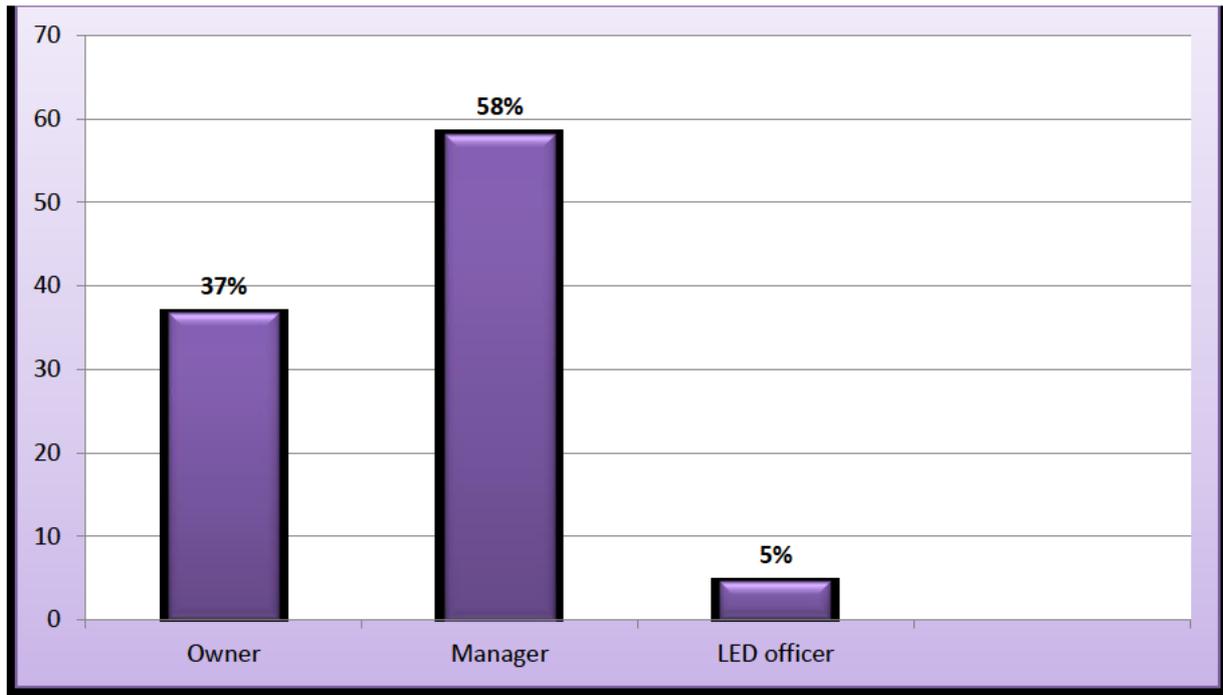
Graph 4: Position *of respondents* at establishment

Graph 4 shows 58% were managers at the establishment, 37% were owners and 5% were LED officers.

6.2.2 Section B: Tourism routes

Question 8 required the respondents to indicate their level of agreement by selecting the best suitable answer to the questions/statements provided.

Table 3: Responses to LED and route tourism

Question/statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
8.1 Are you familiar with the Four Deserts Tourism Route?	40.7%	27.3%	19.2%	12.8%	100
8.2 Are you a member of the Four Deserts Tourism Route?	62.1%	30.5%	6.9%	0.5%	100
8.3 Should LED be an integral part of tourism routes?	1.1%	1.7%	52.0%	45.0%	100
8.4 Tourism routes have the potential to aid LED.	0	0	46.0%	54.0%	100
8.5 The Namibian government is sponsoring tourism projects	24.0%	54.4%	21.0%	0.6%	100

84

in the south.					
8.6 Community members are involved in LED programmes.	13.2%	53.4%	32.8%	0.6%	100
8.7 The arts, culture and heritage of local communities are promoted.	30.0%	38.3%	31.0%	1.0%	100
8.8 Community members are employed by tourism businesses.	6.8%	16.9%	67.8%	8.5%	100
8.9 Local tourist guides are employed in tourism businesses.	10.9%	33.9%	48.3%	6.9%	100
8.10 Tourism routes have the potential to increase tourist numbers.	0.6%	4.0%	34.9%	61.6%	100
8.11 Community tours are offered by local communities.	32.6%	53.1%	12.6%	1.7%	100
8.12 There are community rest camps in the southern region.	20.1%	52.9%	25.9%	1.1%	100
8.13 There is sufficient communication amongst product owners.	10.7%	46.9%	39.5%	2.8%	100
8.14 The communication networks between product owners and LED officers are good.	17.4%	54.1%	26.7%	1.7%	100
8.15 There are sufficient visitor information centres.	23.3%	60.2%	14.8%	1.7%	100

The results from Table 3 show that 40.7% of the respondents did not know about the Four Deserts Tourism Route and that 62% were not members of the FDR. A total of 52% agreed that LED should be an integral part of route development, 54% strongly agreed that tourism routes have the potential to aid LED, while 54.4% disagreed that the Namibian government was sponsoring tourism projects in the south of Namibia.

Another 53.4% of respondents indicated that the local community members were not involved in LED programmes, whereas 38.4% maintained that arts, culture and heritage in the area were not promoted. However, 67.8% agreed that community members were employed and 48.3% agreed that local tourist guides were employed in the area.

85

A total of 61.36% of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement that tourism routes have the potential to increase tourist numbers. On the other hand, 53% disagreed that community tours were offered by local community members in the area, whereas 52.9% said that there was no community rest camps in the area. A total of 46.9% indicated that there was no sufficient communication amongst product owners, and only 1.7% said there were communication networks between product owners and LED officers in the area. Another 60.2% of the respondents claimed there were insufficient visitor information centres in the south of Namibia.

6.2.3 Section C: Facilities and Services.

Question 8 required respondents to rate the facilities and services along the main tourism routes. Results are given in Table 4.

Table 4: Facilities and services on the Four Deserts Tourism Route

Questions	Poor	Satisfactory	Excellent	Total
8.1 The condition of the roads	33.5%	56.8%	9.7%	100
8.2 The signage on the roads	46.6%	45.5%	8.0%	100
8.3 The safety on the route	40.0%	57.1%	2.9%	100
8.4 Tourism facilities along the route	71.4%	24.0%	4.6%	100

According to Table 4, 56.8% of the respondents indicated that the roads were in a satisfactory condition, and 46.6% agreed that the signage on the roads was in a poor condition. A total of 57.1% indicated that road safety was satisfactory, and 71.4% rated the facilities on the road as poor.

6.2.3 Section D: Responses to the open-ended questions

In questions 9 to 11 the respondents were asked to fill out the open-ended questions as listed below:

9. Please list/describe the challenges associated with the implementation of local economic development projects on the Four Deserts Tourism Route.

Respondents listed the following challenges in answer to the above question:

1. The road conditions and access to facilities are poor,
2. Hospitals and shops offering medical facilities are far away,
3. Marketing efforts are more individually based and uncoordinated,
4. The history of the area is not sustained,
5. Locals have poor skills and a very low quality of living,
6. Locals are not educated on the importance of tourism in the area,
7. The services and facilities in the national park areas are poor,
8. There is a lack of support and interest from the private sector in the form of employment creation,
9. There is a lack of training facilities and financial aid to young locals in the area, and
10. Local community members are lacking vision, money, knowledge and the ability to work together to develop themselves.

Some respondents felt that the government must become more involved in promotion and development of the area, and offer more assistance financially and in the form of training. Respondents also indicated that government should provide more information material of the area and existing tourism routes, and communicate clearly to the public.

10. Describe opportunities for tourism development on the Four Deserts Tourism Route.

The following opportunities were indicated by the respondents:

1. The promotion of arts, culture and heritage in the area,
2. The provision of larger conservation areas and the relocation of game to these areas,
3. The improvement of toilets and eating facilities in the Sossusvlei area,

87

4. Better development of activities around towns such as restaurants, cycling routes, shops and information centres,

5. Better maintenance of the existing infrastructure, by tarring some of the most travelled gravel roads,

6. The promotion of the Kgalagadi National Park and opening up of the Sperrgebiet area for protective tourism,

7. The improvement of the road signs, advertising signage and emergency numbers along the main roads,

8. The promotion of the southern culture by providing cultural villages and offering more BEE opportunities, and

9. Better maintenance of the national park areas of Namibia Wildlife Resorts (NWR).

11. Please list any recommendations to improve the Four Deserts Tourism Route.

The respondents indicated the following recommendations:

1. Improve the communication network between the LED officers and private owners in the region,

2. Improve the roads, with better signage and rest stops, more travel information, and more safety and security measures,

3. Provide information on route tourism on the internet,

4. Clearly label the tourism routes in the area,

5. Market tourist routes among locals,

6. Promote cultural villages and cultural tourism in the area,

7. Improve tourism facilities along the roads, including shops and rest stops, and

8. The Namibian government and NTB should become actively involved in tourism business development, marketing and training in the southern region of Namibia.

6.3 Inferential statistics

Inferential statistics is used to examine data for differences, associations and relationships with the aim to draw conclusions beyond the data observed (Bryman & Bell, 2007). The types of inferential statistics that should be applied depend on the nature of the variables to be used in the analysis. The most basic inferential statistics tests include chi-square tests and one- and two-sample t-tests.

Pearson's chi-squared test was applied in this study, using a significance level of 0.05. The next section presents the correlations between Question 5 (position in the organisation) and Questions 7.1 to 7.15 (perceptions of respondents related to LED and route tourism). For the sake of the analysis disagree and agree responses were combined.

Position (Question 5) and whether respondents were familiar with the Four Deserts Tourism Route (FDTR) (Question 7.1)

Position	Familiar with FDTR **Disagree**	Familiar with FDTR **Agree**	**Row Totals**
Owner	42	21	**63**
Manager	70	32	**102**
LED officer	5	2	**7**
Totals	**117**	**55**	**172**

	Chi-square	df	p
Pearson chi-square	.1077389	df=2	p=.948

There is no correlation between position and whether respondents were familiar with the Four Deserts Tourism Route.

Position (Question 5) and whether respondents were members of the Four Deserts Tourism Route (Question 7.2)

Position	A member of FDTR **Disagree**	A member of FDTR **Agree**	**Row Totals**
Owner	55	8	**63**
Manager	97	5	**102**
LED officer	8	0	**8**
Totals	**160**	**13**	**173**

	Chi-square	df	p
Pearson chi-square	4.087790	df=2	p=.130

89

The findings indicate no correlation between the position of respondents and whether they were members of the Four Deserts Tourism Route.

Position (Question 5) and whether respondents felt LED should be an integral part of tourism routes (Question 7.3)

Position	LED to be an integral part of tourism routes **Disagree**	LED to be an integral part of tourism routes **Agree**	**Row Totals**
Owner	3	62	**65**
Manager	2	101	**103**
LED officer	0	8	**8**
Totals	**5**	**171**	**176**

	Chi-square	df	p
Pearson chi-square	1.277118	df=2	p=.528

There is no correlation between position and the respondents' view that LED should be part of tourism routes.

Position (Question 5) and whether the Four Deserts Tourism Route can aid LED (Question 7.4)

Position	FDTR has the potential to aid LED **Agree**	**Row Totals**
Owner	65	**65**
Manager	103	**103**
LED officer	7	**7**
Totals	**175**	**175**

	Chi-square	df	p
Pearson chi-square	0.000000	df=0	p=1.000

The findings show no correlation between the position of respondents and whether the Four Deserts Tourism Route can aid with LED.

Position (Question 5) and whether the Namibian government was sponsoring tourism projects (Question 7.5)

Position	Namib Government sponsoring tourism projects **Disagree**	Namib Government sponsoring tourism projects **Agree**	**Row Totals**
Owner	48	14	**62**
Manager	82	21	**103**
LED officer	5	3	**8**
Totals	**135**	**38**	**173**

90

	Chi-square	df	p
Pearson chi-square	1.289473	df=2	p=.525

The findings indicate no correlation between the position of respondents and whether the Namibian government was sponsoring tourism projects.

Position (Question 5) and whether community members were involved in LED programmes (Question 7.6)

Position	Community members involved in LED programmes **Disagree**	Community members involved in LED programmes **Agree**	**Row Totals**
Owner	38	25	**63**
Manager	71	31	**102**
LED officer	7	1	**8**
Totals	**116**	**57**	**173**

	Chi-square	df	p
Pearson chi-square	3.109034	df=2	p=.211

There is no correlation between the position of respondents and whether community members were involved in LED programmes of the Four Deserts Tourism Route.

Position (Question 5) and whether the arts, culture and heritage of local communities were being promoted (Question 7.6)

Position	Arts, culture and heritage are promoted **Disagree**	Arts, culture and heritage are promoted **Agree**	**Row Totals**
Owner	40	21	**61**
Manager	71	31	**102**
LED officer	6	2	**8**
Totals	**117**	**54**	**171**

	Chi-square	df	p
Pearson chi-square	.4556248	df=2	p=.797

The findings indicate no correlation between the position of respondents and whether arts, culture and heritage of local communities were being promoted, at a significance level of 0.05.

91

Position (Question 5) and whether community members were employed by tourism businesses (Question 7.8)

Position	Community members employed by tourism businesses **Disagree**	Community members employed by tourism businesses **Agree**	**Row Totals**
Owner	18	47	**65**
Manager	22	81	**103**
LED officer	2	6	**8**
Totals	**42**	**134**	**176**

	Chi-square	df	p
Pearson chi-square	.8856738	df=2	p=.642

There is no correlation between the position of respondents in the organisation and their view that community members were employed by tourism businesses.

Position (Question 5) and whether local tourist guides were employed on the Four Deserts Tourism Route (Question 7.9)

Position	Local tourist guides are employed on the FDTR **Disagree**	Local tourist guides are employed on the FDTR **Agree**	**Row Totals**
Owner	27	36	**63**
Manager	45	57	**102**
LED officer	5	3	**8**
Totals	**77**	**96**	**173**

	Chi-square	df	p
Pearson chi-square	1.124335	df=2	p=.570

There is no correlation between the position of respondents and whether local tourist guides were employed on the Four Deserts Tourism Route.

Position (Question 5) and whether the Four Deserts Tourism Route has the potential to increase tourism to southern Namibia (Question 7.10)

Position	FDTR has potential to increase tourist numbers **Disagree**	FDTR has potential to increase tourist numbers **Agree**	**Row Totals**
Owner	1	64	**65**
Manager	7	95	**102**
LED officer	0	8	**8**
Totals	**8**	**167**	**175**

	Chi-square	df	p
Pearson chi-square	2.981410	df=2	p=.225

The findings indicate no correlation between the position of respondents and whether the Four Deserts Tourism Route has the potential to increase tourism to southern Namibia.

Position (Question 5) and whether community tours were offered by the local community (Question 7.11)

Position	Community tours are offered by local community **Disagree**	Community tours are offered by local community **Agree**	**Row Totals**
Owner	49	14	**63**
Manager	92	11	**103**
LED officer	8	0	**8**
Totals	**149**	**25**	**174**

	Chi-square	df	p
Pearson chi-square	5.639987	df=2	p=.060

There is no correlation between the position of respondents and whether community tours were offered by the local community, at a significance level of 0.05.

Position (Question 5) and whether there were community rest camps on the Four Deserts Tourism Route (Question 7.12)

Position	Community rest camps **Disagree**	Community rest camps **Agree**	**Row Totals**
Owner	40	23	**63**
Manager	79	23	**102**
LED officer	7	1	**8**
Totals	**126**	**47**	**173**

	Chi-square	df	p
Pearson chi-square	4.747167	df=2	p=.093

The findings indicate no correlation between the position of respondents and whether there were rest stops on the Four Deserts Tourism Route.

Position (Question 5) and whether there was sufficient communication amongst product owners (Question 7.13)

Position	Sufficient communication amongst product owners **Disagree**	Sufficient communication amongst product owners **Agree**	**Row Totals**
Owner	40	25	**65**
Manager	55	48	**103**
LED officer	7	1	**8**
Totals	**102**	**74**	**176**

93

	Chi-square	df	p
Pearson chi-square	4.086141	df=2	p=.130

There is no correlation between position and sufficient communication between product owners, at a significance level of 0.05.

Position (Question 5) and whether there was sufficient communication between product owners and LED officers on the Four Deserts Tourism Route (Question 7.14)

Position	Sufficient communication between product owners and LED officers is good **Disagree**	Sufficient communication between product owners and LED officers is good **Agree**	**Row Totals**
Owner	49	15	**64**
Manager	66	33	**99**
LED officer	8	0	**8**
Totals	**123**	**48**	**171**

	Chi-square	df	p
Pearson chi-square	5.160466	df=2	p=.076

The findings show no correlation between the position of respondents and sufficient communication between product owners and LED officers on the Four Deserts Tourism Route.

Position (Question 5) and whether there were sufficient visitor's information centres along the route (Question 7.15)

Position	Sufficient visitor's information centres **Disagree**	Sufficient visitor's information centres **Agree**	**Row Totals**
Owner	50	15	**65**
Manager	89	13	**102**
LED officer	8	0	**8**
Totals	**147**	**28**	**175**

	Chi-square	df	p
Pearson chi-square	4.750009	df=2	p=.093

There is no relationship between the position of respondents and whether they felt there were sufficient visitor's information centres on the Four Deserts Tourism Route.

94

The next section presents the correlations between Question 5 (position in the organisation) and Questions 8.1 to 8.4 (rating facilities and services amongst the Four Deserts Tourism Route).

Position (Question 5) and condition of roads (Question 8.1)

Position	Condition of roads **Poor**	Condition of roads **Satisfactory**	Condition of roads **Excellent**	**Row Totals**
Owner	19	40	5	**64**
Manager	37	55	11	**103**
LED officer	3	4	1	**8**
Totals	**59**	**99**	**17**	**175**

	Chi-square	df	p
Pearson chi-square	1.533813	df=4	p=.821

Pearson chi-square indicates no significant correlation between position and condition of the roads, at a significance level of 0.05.

Position (Question 5) and signage on the road (Question 8.2)

Position	Signage on the roads **Poor**	Signage on the roads **Satisfactory**	Signage on the roads **Excellent**	**Row Totals**
Owner	27	31	6	**64**
Manager	51	46	6	**103**
LED officer	4	3	1	**8**
Totals	**82**	**80**	**13**	**175**

	Chi-square	df	p
Pearson chi-square	1.676677	df=4	p=.795

There is no significant correlation between position and respondents' view of signage on the road.

Position (Question 5) and safety on the road (Question 8.3)

Position	Safety on the roads **Poor**	Safety on the roads **Satisfactory**	Safety on the roads **Excellent**	**Row Totals**
Owner	24	38	2	**64**
Manager	43	56	3	**102**
LED officer	3	5	0	**8**
Totals	**70**	**99**	**5**	**174**

95

	Chi-square	df	p
Pearson chi-square	.6576755	df=4	p=.956

The findings show no relationship between position of respondents and safety on the roads.

Position (Question 5) and rating of tourism facilities (Question 8.4)

Position	Tourism facilities **Poor**	Tourism facilities **Satisfactory**	Tourism facilities **Excellent**	**Row Totals**
Owner	49	15	0	**64**
Manager	70	25	7	**102**
LED officer	6	2	0	**8**
Totals	**125**	**42**	**7**	**174**

	Chi-square	df	p
Pearson chi-square	5.318830	df=4	p=.256

The findings show no correlation between the position of respondents and their view of the tourism facilities on the Four Deserts Tourism Route.

6.4 Summary

In this chapter the analysis of the findings was presented based on the feedback received from the questionnaires. Descriptive and inferential statistics were applied to analyse the data. The next chapter outlines the conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

In Chapter 6 the data were analysed and discussed. Chapter 7 presents the conclusions and recommendations of this study.

7.2 Conclusions

The main objective of this study was to ascertain the perceptions of product owners and LED officers regarding LED and route tourism. The main aim of the study is to make a case for managing and marketing the Four Deserts Tourism Route as a proper tourism route. The subsequent recommendations will be presented to the NTB and MET for consideration.

The demographic background of the respondents in the study shows that respondents were between 19 and 84 years of age. The majority of the respondents were white males (57%) preferring Afrikaans (51%) as language. Eight per cent (8%) of respondents had between 8 and 20 years' experience in the industry. Fifty-eight per cent (58%) of respondents were managers compared with 37% who were owners. Four per cent (4%) of respondents were LED officers. The majority of the respondents were not aware of the existence of the Four Deserts Tourism Route and were therefore not official members of this route.

The findings confirm no significant correlation between position and whether the respondents were familiar with the Four Deserts Tourism Route, as well as no correlation between position (question 5) in the organisation and whether the respondents were members of the Four Deserts Tourism Route (question 7.2). This confirms that, although the name exists, respondents were not aware of the route.

As the route seems essentially non-existing, it means that there cannot be any coordinated effort to advance LED in southern Namibia. Route development is dependent on the participation of stakeholders (in this case, product owners and LED officers) (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004:70). If these parties fail to find a

97

common working relationship, it is not possible for communities to benefit. The complexity of this relationship is confirmed by Briedenhann and Wickens (2004:75) who stated that members and stakeholders of routes have a difficult task in aligning products and ensuring the success of a route.

It is insightful that all respondents (100%) agreed route tourism has the potential to aid LED. However, the respondents' feedback indicates that signage and road conditions are poor and maintenance is problematic. Most of the roads on the Four Deserts Tourism Route are gravel roads, which are frequently used by travellers, making the maintenance process very complicated to the authorities. There have been suggestions for tarring these roads, but the costs involved are high. The pictures below show the current state of roads and signage.

Picture 4: Signage along the Four Deserts Tourism Route

Picture 5: Condition of the road and signage along the Four Deserts Tourism Route

Picture 6: Condition of gravel road and signage along the Four Deserts Tourism Route

More than half of the respondents (57%) indicated that the safety on the roads was satisfactory, whilst 71% rated the facilities along the route as poor (refer to Table 4).

Facilities typically include rest areas, scenic lookouts and rest stops. The researcher also noticed that there were no signs on the route indicating the name 'Four Deserts Tourism Route' as advertised on the web page of Open Africa (http://www.openafrica.org). The statistical analysis in Chapter 6 indicates similar results, namely the majority of respondents rating the facilities as poor.

In this regard, Meyer (2004:22) and Olsen (2003:337-338) highlighted the importance of an efficient road network and road safety to travellers using a route. The following emanated from a survey conducted among drive tourists in the USA (Eby & Molnar, 2002:99) that 'the first consideration is with aspects associated with physically driving along the route, such as directness, travel time, road conditions, safety, congestion and distance'. Signage is a particularly important element of physical element of the road that not only enables tourists to find and follow the route, but also direct them to activities and different kinds of sight-seeing which provide a unique route experience (Hardy, 2003:326; Meyer, 2004:22; Roberts & Hall, 2004:260).

The route should be presented in a consistent way, which applies to the use of logos, signage, *en route* information and promotional material (Hardy, 2003:327). A clearly identified route with good road conditions and signage enables travellers to find their way easily (Hardy, 2003:326; Olsen, 2003:339). This also applies to rest stops and other facilities along the route. The picture (Picture 7) below was taken by the researcher whilst travelling along the Four Deserts Tourism Route and illustrates the current condition of the rest stops.

Picture 7: Rest stop along the Four Deserts Route

The majority of respondents (60%) indicated that there were insufficient visitor information centres in the area (see Table 3). Although many accommodation establishments have their own information centres on the premises, they do not always have the latest information at hand. At present the region has five stand-alone information centres, and the information provided is not up to date.

The majority of the feedback also shows that the communication network between product owners and the LED offices in the areas is very poor. Communication between public and private sector is an important aspect in route tourism, because the public sector needs to be informed about new products and developments in their area of operation. On the other hand, the private sector needs to know what the public sector is doing regarding relevant marketing and tourism development. Meyer (2004:21) reiterates that, if communication and cooperation between the public and private sector is sufficient in order to grow the route, travelling along a route should be a pleasurable experience. The scenic detours, stops *en route* and basic infrastructure should provide travellers comfort with regard to refuelling, refreshments and toilet facilities (Meyer, 2004:22).

101

7.3 Recommendations to the Ministry of Environment and Tourism and Namibia Tourism Board

Cultural tourism is a rapidly growing sector globally as there is increased interest in diverse cultures in rural areas (Richards, 2005:10). This shift in focus provides an opportunity for rural communities to use their local assets to be involved in the industry. Community involvement would mean that the local people become, first, a part of the planning processes and, secondly, beneficiaries when it comes to profits, as stated in the literature section of the study.

Attractions also need to consistently provide high-quality service to ensure visitor satisfaction and brand integrity (Hardy, 2003:326). The components of a tourism route share the route's brand identity, and they also share in the brand reputation, as visitors expect consistency throughout their journey along the route (Hardy, 2003:326; Olsen, 2003:338). Quality assurance, therefore, becomes important to ensure that at least minimum standards are upheld along the entire route (Hardy, 2003:326).

In order for the Four Deserts Tourism Route to operate as a fully functional route, the following recommendations are presented:

1. A management team must be appointed to manage and market the Four Deserts Tourism Route,
2. Shorter sub-routes can also be better developed and promoted as attractions to that town or area,
3. Route development can be expanded to offer a route that links with South Africa – such as the Cape to Namibia route,
4. Clear and proper signage and rest stops and look-out points must be provided along the Four Deserts Tourism Route,
5. The safety of tourists travelling the Four Deserts Tourism Route must be secured by regular road maintenance and patrolling of remote areas,
6. LED needs to be promoted by involving the local community in business opportunities and promoting their culture,

7. Local tourist guides should be better trained and their knowledge should be continuously updated,

8. Areas such as national parks, public toilets and rest areas should be better maintained and kept clean,

9. Networks with public and private businesses in the area must be created to establish better and continued cooperation between stakeholders,

10. Government buy-in and support for the route needs to be obtained,

11. Because the Four Deserts Tourism Route can aid LED in the area, local communities must be assisted by government in the form of self-sustaining projects that will develop their local cultures and traditions, and

12. Creating a data base of tourism product owners will assist both the public and private sectors with tourism development and marketing.

Route planning requires a good understanding of local tourism assets, area carrying capacity and infrastructure requirements, physical planning, market analysis, the creation of local institutions and tourism quality standards, as stipulated by Rogerson (2007:56). Stakeholders should work together and compete with other areas, and not with one another. This will enable product owners to collectively target accessible markets. It is also important that the managers and developers of the Four Deserts Tourism Route think long-term and bigger than just the route itself, because the route must link with the macro-level strategic plan for the area on a local, regional and provincial level, and take into consideration broader funding initiatives for route financial planning (Lourens, 2007:486-487).

7.4 Summary

This chapter summarised the conclusions and recommendations based on the findings of the study. The chapter highlighted the necessary recommendations, to be submitted to the NTB and MET, for the improvement and further development of the Four Deserts Tourism Route. If these recommendations can be implemented, the Four Deserts Tourism Route can become a major role-player in the Namibian tourism landscape.

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114

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SURVEY on the impact of route tourism on local economic development on the Four Deserts Tourism Route

Dear Participant

Thank you in anticipation for your time and willingness to contribute to my master's study on the impact of route tourism on local economic development: the case of the Four Deserts Tourism Route.

The completion of this questionnaire is anonymous and the information will be handled confidentially. Your inputs are of extreme value and importance to the researcher and management of Namibia Tourism Board. The responses will be analysed for research purposes.

The information will be used for research purposes only and the findings based on this survey will be available at a later stage, on request.

Please answer this questionnaire as honestly and fully as possible. Once completed, please return by email: jisaacs@namibiatourism.com.na by 30 August 2016.

Yours truly

Ms JL Isaacs
Study leader: Prof D Kokt at the Central University of Technology, Free State
Phone: 051 507 3114
E-mail: koktd@cut.ac.za

ANNEXURE B: QUESTIONNAIRE

Please complete the questionnaire by making an **X** in the applicable box. Please **print** answers to open questions.

Section A: Biographic Information

1. Please indicate your age in years.

Age in years	

2. Please indicate your gender.

1	Male	
2	Female	

3. Please specify your racial group.

1	Asian	
2	Black	
3	Coloured	
4	White	
5	Other (specify)	

4. Please specify your preferred language.

1	Afrikaans	
2	English	
3	Other (specify)	

5. How many years' experience do you have in the tourism industry?

No. of years	

129

5. Please indicate your position with regard to the organisation for which you are completing the survey.

1	Owner of establishment	
2	Manager of establishment	
3	Local economic development officer	

6. Indicate which facilities and/or services you offer at your organisation.

1	Accommodation	
2	Cultural village	
3	Food and beverage (restaurant/bar)	
4	Souvenir/craft shop	
5	Visits to monument(s), heritage site(s), natural wonder(s), museums	
6	Trophy hunting	
7	Tour service operator	
8	4 x 4 Route	
9	Wildlife	
10	Hiking	
11	Any other, specify	

Section B: LED and the Four Deserts Tourism Route

7. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
7.1	I am familiar with the Four Deserts Tourism Route.	1	2	3	4
7.2	I am a member of the Four Deserts Tourism Route.	1	2	3	4
7.3	Local economic development should be an integral part of tourism routes.	1	2	3	4
7.4	The Four Deserts Tourism Route has the potential to aid local economic development in southern Namibia.	1	2	3	4
7.5	The Namibian government is sponsoring community projects on the Four Deserts Tourism Route.	1	2	3	4

130

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
7.6	Community members are involved in local community development programmes on the Four Deserts Tourism Route.	1	2	3	4
7.7	The arts, culture and heritage of local communities are promoted on the Four Deserts Tourism Route.	1	2	3	4
7.8	Community members are employed by the product owners on the Four Deserts Tourism Route.	1	2	3	4
7.9	Local tourist guides are employed on the Four Deserts Tourism Route. Or 'mostly local…'	1	2	3	4
7.10	The Four Deserts Tourism Route has the potential to increase tourism to southern Namibia.	1	2	3	4
7.11	Community tours are offered by the local community.	1	2	3	4
7.12	There are community rest camps on the Four Deserts Tourism Route.	1	2	3	4
7.13	There is sufficient communication between product owners on the Four Deserts Tourism Route.	1	2	3	4
7.14	There is sufficient communication between product owners and local economic development officers on the Four Deserts Tourism Route.	1	2	3	4
7.15	There are sufficient visitor information centres on the Four Deserts Tourism Route.	1	2	3	4

Section C: The facilities and services along the Four Deserts Tourism Route

8. Rate the facilities and services along the Four Deserts Tourism Route.

	Poor	Satisfactory	Excellent
8.1 The condition and quality of the roads.	1	2	3
8.2 The signage on the route.	1	2	3
8.3 The safety on the route.	1	2	3
8.4 Tourism facilities (like rest stops, rest rooms, look-out points, etc.) along the route.	1	2	3

Section D: Open-ended questions

9. Please list/describe the challenges associated with the implementation of local economic development projects on the Four Deserts Tourism Route.

10. Describe further opportunities for tourism development on the Four Deserts Tourism Route.

11. Please list any recommendations to improve the Four Deserts Tourism Route.

Thank you for your time and participation.