Crossing Borders - Regional Tourism Cooperation

Experiences and Examples of regional tourism agendas, plans and strategies.
Contents

• Cross Border / Regional Tourism
• Examples of Regional Tourism Projects
• Opportunities and Challenges
• Regional Tourism in SADC
Regional Integration

• **Regionalism**: Top-down approach - institutional strategies, multilateral agreements, state-led projects

• **Regionalization**: Bottom-up approach - driven by private sector

Examples

• EU (open borders, transformation of border areas into tourist destinations, e.g. INTERREG-program)

• ASEAN (Asean Economic Community starts in 2015, joint tourism strategy)

• SADC, ECOWAS, EAC
Regional / Cross Border Tourism

- Regionalization and tourism enjoy a mutually reinforcing relationship
- Easier border crossing → more intra-regional travel → more tourists → stay longer and spend more money
- Borders/Border areas:
  - From barriers to increased contact and cooperation, fusion of cultures, attractions in itself
  - Cross Border areas tend to be remote and undeveloped
Germany, Switzerland, Austria
Sweden + Finland
Bioregion that defines the Pacific Northwest of the United States and Canada,
Intergovernmental cooperation among four countries: China, Mongolia, Republic of Korea and Russian Federation
South East Asia – Mekong Tourism
South East Asia – Mekong Tourism

Cross Border Tourism Implementation Structure

- National Governments
  - ASEAN
  - GMS
  - other
- Regional Organization - MTCO
- Donors and International Organizations
- Private Sector

Dialogue, Awareness
Knowledge exchange

Cross Border Tourism Projects
- Marketing
- Product Development
- Physical Market access
- Human Resources
- Sustainable Development
Opportunities from Regional / Cross Border Tourism Cooperation

1. Joint promotion and branding
2. Innovative products through exchange and knowledge transfer
3. Development of cross border attractions
4. Sustainable Tourism development - joint efforts lead to more sustainability

→ Increased arrivals and income from travel, more multi country tours, new experiences and offers in border destinations (tours, shopping, gambling)
Challenges for Regional / Cross Border Tourism Cooperation

- Imbalance / Uneven development / Sovereignty
- Lack of economic linkages, high leakage, dominance of foreign investors
- Formalities crossing borders
- Lack of resources and expertise, in particular governments and local actors in peripheral areas
- Insufficient involvement of the private sector
- CBT difficult to measure – people cross borders for different reasons: trading, shopping, migration, refugee
Recommendations for Regional / Cross Border Tourism Cooperation

- Bottom up / regionalization - focused projects in cross border areas
- Framework conditions
- Capacity Building
- Strengthen informal network building
- Jointly developing a destination image/brand
- Sustainability needs to be more integrated in all developments
Tourism in SADC

- The tourism and travel-related services sector is an important area of economic activity for the SADC region:
  - USD 19.2 billion (2.9 percent of GDP) in 2013
  - About 2 million jobs
  - 23.8 million arrivals 15.7 million from SADC countries
  - 1.3 other Africa
  - 6.8 international other
## Tourism in SADC

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<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
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<td>- Unique natural assets (Wildlife, Nature)</td>
<td>- Reputation of unsafe, underdeveloped destinations (war, diseases, insecurity)</td>
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<td>- High end, professional tourism offers</td>
<td>- Lack of professional services and products (only in the luxury segment)</td>
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<td>- Tourism is an important economic sector, labour intensive</td>
<td>- Accessibility, infrastructure, high prices</td>
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<td>- Visa restrictions</td>
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<td>- Limited regional cooperation</td>
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Tourism in SADC

Opportunities

- Large untapped potential
- Growing global demand; in particular from developing/middle income markets
- Changing requirements for travel (experimental traveling, sustainability, authenticity, etc.)

Threats

- Unsustainable development and loss of assets (nature, wildlife, culture)
- Exclusive development, difficulty for new entrants
- Inability of local suppliers to meet international hospitality standards.
Regional Integration and Tourism in SADC

• Foster regional integration agenda of SADC
  • SADC protocol of tourism states that tourism is a vehicle to achieve sustainable social and economic development
  • Protocols to ease market access (Protocol on Trade in Services) border crossings and movement of people (Protocol on the Facilitation of movement of persons)
  • Conservation of natural resources (Protocol on Wildlife Conservation Law Enforcement, Protocol on Forestry, Regional Biodiversity Strategy); support TFCA planning and development processes
  → Policy framework exist
Recommendations for more tourism cooperation in SADC

• Improve understanding and awareness of the tourism sector’s contribution to economic development → put tourism higher on the agenda

• Accelerate the implementation of regional policies

• Identify priority areas for cooperation

• Develop jointly cross border tourism areas and multi-country trips → show the benefits
Conclusion

Great opportunities for the economy and in particular the tourism sector to contribute to wealth, sustainability and better understanding and cooperation across borders.

But regional integration and cooperation amongst stakeholders and across borders is slow, long and complex.