THE IMPORTANCE OF STRATEGIC TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN A POST-CONFLICT CONTEXT

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Agenda

- About Kosovo
- Tourism in Kosovo
- Research Methodology
- Results
- Conclusion
Kosovo

Geographical position
• South-east Europe - landlocked
• Borders Albania, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro

Population
• App. 2m inhabitants
• Multi-ethnic community
• Youngest population in Europe
  - almost 50% are under 20 years old

Attributes
• Continental climate
• Cultural & natural attractions e.g. Sharr mountains
Kosovo is transitioning from previous politico-economic structures

**Historic development**
- After World War 2nd, Kosovo was part of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
- From 1990s Kosovo was a “no-go zone”
- From 1997-1999 ‘The Last Balkan War’ took place
- In 2008 Kosovo declared independence and the constitution defines the country as a secular state

**Post-conflict politico-economic development**
- Kosovo is recognised by more than 50% of UN countries
- Kosovo's economy is developing slowly, and depends on its Diaspora and international financial support
Tourism development in Kosovo is still at an early stage

International tourist arrivals
- app. 200,000

Types of tourists
- VFR-tourists, international diplomats
- Independent travellers (Asia & Europe)
The research was based on fieldwork and document analysis

- **Research Aim**
  - Evaluating whether and how the challenges of tourism development in a post-conflict context are reflected in the strategic policy plans.

- **Fieldwork research**
  - Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with relevant tourism stakeholders to collect profound and complex information on the challenges of tourism development.

- **Desk research > Document analysis**
  - Tourism Development Strategy of Kosovo (2006), developed by the Tourism Department from the Ministry of Trade and Industry of Kosovo (MTI) and German Agency of Technical Cooperation (GTZ) was examined to discover strategic consideration of the challenges.
What are the challenges of tourism development in Kosovo?
Economic

Image

Social

Political
Image

Economic

Social

Political
Kosovo’s image is equipped with negative perceptions

- Problems regarding identity of the state heightened by the fact that Kosovo’s independence is recognised by just over 50% of UN countries
- Negative perceptions of Kosovo’s image due to the war and its aftermath
- Anachronistic information of Kosovo that prevents potential travellers

Foreign tourists are “reluctant to travel here because they heard rumours and think that it is a complete chaos in Kosovo, they think there is no security and they cannot walk the streets but after experiencing reality they are surprised and value Kosovo much more highly than they did before their arrival”
International marketing campaign focusses on improving Kosovo‘s image

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dQRGHAdQjR0
Internal political problems are challenging tourism development

- Frequent government changes

“due to the mindset that no government follows the work of its predecessor to try and show people that the previous government was incapable and had the wrong working agenda”

- High level of irresponsibility

“due to the transition period of shifting governance from one system to another there is a very blurred line to who’s responsible for what. On top of it, the decentralisation of governance has created further dilemma of what is central governance and what is local governance”
Internal political problems are challenging tourism development

- Limited expertise & professionalism, particularly, due to political nepotism in staffing processes
- Lack of communication & collaboration
- Prioritisation of short-term objectives by the government
- Ineffective tourism regulations and policies

“currently tourism is being held captive by its own laws”
The strategy is ineffective

- Both institutions involved in developing the strategy claim that it was completed in cooperation; however, stakeholders argue that their suggestions were not taken into consideration and thus stopped participating

  => Stakeholders do not accept and follow the strategy

- Due to limited professionalism, responsibility and monitoring experience the DTO was not able to check the work done by the foreign consultant sufficiently

  => An ineffective strategy was developed that does not consider the circumstances of the destination

- The strategy was not approved due to failure in long-term planning, frequent government changes and low priority of tourism development
The strategy does not reflect challenges

- The strategy has not been compiled appropriately because up to date statistical analysis was not available and tourist attractions were identified partly inaccurately.

- It is not suitable to Kosovo’s conditions.

  “we need a strategy and policies that are applicable to Kosovo’s reality and generate economic prosperity from its original implementation”

- Kosovo’s negative image is acknowledged in the strategy; however, it is not explained how the problem will be lessened.

- No detailed definition of objectives
Conclusion

• Challenges for tourism development result from the country's image as well as internal political circumstances

• Challenges are considered insufficiently in the Tourism Development Strategy of Kosovo and within the process of formulation

• Thus, the strategy is not reflective with regard to the post-conflict circumstances of Kosovo and was perceived infeasible and ultimately not implemented
THANK YOU!

Any questions?
Back up
External politico-economic environment is challenging tourism development

- Low economic development and slow recovery

“Kosovo was in a frozen economic situation as for many years the economy of Kosovo went into a coma and it was the same condition for the tourism sector” (BS5)

⇒ No financial resources for investment in tourism

- Unsettled political affairs

“the EU and UN believe that in order to solve a problem they need to free the wolf and tie the sheep” (BS5)
“Interpreting heritage“ is a social challenge for tourism in Kosovo

- Multi-facet national culture
  - Various minorities live in Kosovo
  - Diversity is considered as a tourism asset
  - Integrating the largest minority is a challenge

- Heritage interpretation is challenging

“tour guides are not allowed inside certain heritage sites (…) tourists can go inside but the guides have to wait for them outside” (NGO1)

“all tour guide groups should be allowed in all open heritage sites and they need to find a mutual interpretation that legally binds them to follow” (NGO1)
Challenges relate to Kosovo's image and politico-economic and social conditions

- Challenges of tourism development in post-conflict Kosovo relate to:
  - the country's negative image
  - politico-economic and social conditions

- Challenges are highly interrelated

- Government support is essential (e.g. in terms of providing political and legal infrastructure) to overcome the challenges