Measuring domestic tourism to drive recovery

UNWTO Virtual Workshop on Tourism Statistics
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Outline:
• The importance of domestic tourism
• Its measurement
• Its ability to compensate the losses from restrictions of COVID-19.
• Data that is needed to collect it
• Challenges
• Recommendations
Why is it important to measure domestic tourism in Lesotho?

• Domestic tourism can be used as a tool to eliminate poverty.
• Generates employment and economic growth.
• Addresses seasonality within the Lesotho’s regions and districts
• Provides a degree of insulation from international tourism fluctuations
• Helps in attaining sustainable tourism development

Current COVID-19 restrictions in Lesotho

• A negative COVID-19 test that has been taken within 72 hours is required for all international travellers.
• This COVID-19 test has to be a PCR test and not an antigen test.
• The validity of the certificate is strictly 14 days.
• Upon departure another COVID-19 test is required in order to enter our neighbouring country South Africa.
Lesotho's tourism products and services are affordable with different prices for both locals and international tourists.

Domestic markets have the ability to reduce seasonality of demand and improve the sustainability of tourism products and suppliers.

A domestic tourism survey that was carried out in 2014 indicates that:
- Basotho have a high level of awareness for tourism products which can potentially turn them into domestic tourists and in turn reduce poverty (decrease economic leakages and increase linkages).
- There is enormous potential to grow the domestic market which is not vulnerable to COVID-19 as it has the ability to sustain local businesses and thus contribute to local economic development.

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SURVEY RESULTS:
Tourist sites known and ever visited

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How people found out about tourism products and attractions in Lesotho: (Multiple responses)

- Friends and family: 7%
- Radio: 39.8%
- Previous visits: 32.9%
- Internet: 25.7%
- Newspaper: 12.1%
- Magazine/leaflet: 10.9%
- Work related/professional: 10.4%
- Travel guide: 8.9%
- Internet: 4.2%
- Social media platforms: 3.5%
- Newspaper: 1.5%
- None: 0.2%
- Other: 0.1%

How local residents can be aware of tourism products?

- Radio: 60%
- Community events: 55%
- TV: 45%
- Newspaper: 35%
- Other: 25%
- Magazine: 20%
- Travel guide: 15%
- Internet: 10%
- Social platform: 5%
Travel Patterns

- 66.4% travelled in the last 12 months while 33.6% did not
- Among those who travelled most travelled 1 to 3 times (45.1%)
- 53.3% were travelling in the groups of 1 to 4
- Composition of the groups
  - Family 29.4%
  - Individuals 23%
  - Business associates 4.7%
  - Church groups 4%
  - Friends 3.4%
  - Tour groups 1.3%
  - School groups 1%

Average Length of stay

- Average length of stay is 6.2 nights
Purpose of Visit

- Funerals 15.6%
- Business 7.4%
- Religion 6.1%
- Holiday 3.7%
- Medical & wellness center 3.2%

How residents can be aware of tourism products.
Main data that is needed to measure domestic tourism?

- Respondents’ profiles
- Tourism travel patterns in Lesotho
- Knowledge of tourism products in Lesotho
- Strengths of tourism products in Lesotho
- Barriers to travel
- Willingness to participate
- What the government can do to improve the tourism sector.

Challenges we have in collecting this type of data?

- Financial challenges
- Human resources
- Capacity training
Possible new measurement projects in this area

- To conduct a domestic tourism survey bi-annually
- Secure funding
- Hire and capacitate more human resource
- Install or provide software that ensures that a proper and in-depth analysis is done.
- Continue to provide market intelligence as well as relevant, accurate timely and reliable domestic tourism information.
- Monitor and evaluate progress of the development of the domestic tourism sector in Lesotho.