

Towards a Framework for Food Tourism as an Element of Destination Marketing

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Local and regional food holds great potential to contribute to sustainable competitiveness in a destination. An analysis of the literature and promotional material of South African and key international destinations, however, indicate that the contribution of food to sustainable tourism and the marketing of destinations has received very little attention globally, as well as in South Africa. A framework and guidelines for developing and implementing food tourism could enable destination marketers and entrepreneurs to optimise the tourism potential of local and regional food. To this end a food tourism destination-marketing framework was conceptualised, which was based on the findings of a South African situation analysis and international trends and best practices. The South African situation analysis entailed an empirical investigation among regional and provincial destination marketing organisations to determine the current status and future potential and food tourism initiatives as a key component of destination marketing in South Africa. To support the food tourism destination-marketing framework, two key tools were developed, namely TOURPAT (a tourism and culinary atlas linked to a geospatial database) and PAT (a product potential and attractiveness tool). The framework and tools were tested in a South African destination and provided the stakeholders with mechanisms to develop and implement food tourism. This paper outlines the key components and an evaluation of the framework and tools that have been developed. Guidelines and recommendations for the development, packaging and marketing of local and regional foods are postulated. Proposals for future research are also outlined.

Keywords: food tourism, destination marketing

Background and Objectives

Governments, researchers and industry have only since the mid-1990s explicitly recognised the strong relationship between food, culture and tourism. In 1986, the 36th AIEST (Association Internationale d'Experts Scientifiques du Tourisme) congress addressed the topic of 'The Impact of Catering and Cuisine Upon Tourism' (Kaspar, 1986). At that time this relationship was problematic in tourist-gastronomic circles and in the tourism industry at large, therefore highlighting the connection between agricultural products, culinary heritage and tourism promotion. The minimal attention that food tourism initially received from governments and as a research area has grown steadily, as in 2003 four publications have focused on a variety of aspects regarding food tourism (Boniface, 2003; Hall *et al*, 2003b; Hjalager & Richards, 2002; Long, 2003). The development of food tourism strategies in certain regions and countries such

as Canada, Australia and the USA are presently receiving increased attention and are being implemented with positive results. South Africa, with its nine provinces and 55 tourism regions, although rich in culinary resources and opportunities, has yet to capitalise on its food tourism potential.

As reflected in the literature, the initiatives and discussion regarding the development of food tourism pertain mainly to the developed world and very little has been reported and published regarding the situation and potential in the developing world. This paper will contribute to the discussion of the situation regarding the development of food tourism in South Africa, which constitutes part of the developing world.

Food tourism can be regarded as a form of niche or alternative tourism and as a result of escalating competition and a change in traveller wants in terms of destination experience, is now more often being included as a new or additional sector in the travel and tourism business (Poon, 1993; Ritchie & Crouch, 2000). This situation affords food tourism the opportunity to be an important source of marketable images and experiences for the tourist, reinforcing the competitiveness and sustainability of the destination (Quan & Wang, 2003). The food and tourism industries benefit from this interaction, as local and regional food products become an important means of selling the identity and culture of a destination and enables food producers to add value to their products by creating a tourism experience around the raw materials (Quan & Wang, 2003).

This paper outlines the key components of a proposed framework and the supportive tools that have been developed and tested with regard to developing and implementing food tourism as an attraction in a destination. It furthermore postulates guidelines and recommendations for the development, packaging and marketing of local and regional foods. Proposals for future research are also outlined. This paper does not provide a detailed outline and discussion of the methodology and data analysis of this study which have already been reported in a previous paper regarding food tourism in South Africa (du Rand *et al.*, 2003).

Overview of Relevant Literature and Best Practices

A review of relevant literature, current trends and best practices was conducted to determine and compare the knowledge and perspectives of experts in the areas of food / culinary tourism, destination marketing and destination competitiveness and also to determine the position of food in the tourism field and how to market it as a form of niche tourism.

Food is considered as a reflection of the culture of a country and its people. It is therefore the ideal product to offer as an attraction in a destination and has many possibilities to be used as a marketing tool. Several authors have reflected on food and wine as an expression of place and how it is used to market a destination (Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Hall & Sharpies, 2003; Handszuh, 2000; Hjalager & Richards, 2002; Long, 2003; Richards, 2002; Wolf, 2002a).

There are many examples of how the interrelationship between food / food and wine and tourism and regional development has been put into practice around the world, by either the development and promotion of a specific product, course, event, service or any combination of products and services (Boniface, 2003; Boyne *et al.*, 2002; Corigliano, 2002; Hall *et al.*, 2003a; Macdonald, 2001; Richards, 2002; Scarpato, 2002;

Sharpies, 2003). Numerous publications illustrate this relationship in countries such as New Zealand, Australia and various countries in Europe (Boniface, 2003; Cambourne & Macionis, 2003; Hall *et al*, 2003a; Hassan & Hall, 2003; Murray & Haraldsdottir, 2004; Sharpies, 2003), in Canada (Selwood, 2003; Telfer & Hashimoto, 2003) and many other countries (Bernard & Zaragoza, 1999; Chang & Yeoh, 1999; Cusack, 2000; Demhardt, 2003; Haas, 2002; Handszuh, 2000; World Tourism Organisation, 2000).

Examples such as food and wine tourism networks exist in Australia and New Zealand, where in many cases it is the well-established wine industry that serves as a catalyst in the development of a lagging food tourism industry (Cambourne & Macionis, 2003; Hall *et al*, 2003a; Smith & Hall, 2003). Likewise the promotion of local foods and wine in restaurants help to build and strengthen such networks (Cambourne & Macionis, 2003; Hall *et al*, 2003a; Smith & Hall, 2003). Tourism New Zealand's web campaign focuses on food, wine and garden tourism and offers an integrated tourist experience with stronger and more established attractions supporting the lesser-developed attractions such as food tourism [<http://www.tourismnewzealand.com>]. The German Federal Government launched their 'Culinary Germany' campaign during the late 1990s and are benefiting from a well-established food tourism marketing initiative which has grown even stronger by also being web based [http://www.germany-tourism.de/culinary_germany.html].

A number of regions and locations in Europe, especially those in France and Italy, use their food and/or wine reputation for tourism promotion, e.g. Burgundy, Champaign, Bordeaux, Tuscany (Bessiere, 1998; Corigliano, 2002; Santich, 1999). Other countries that have developed food /food and wine tourism as an important component of their tourism strategy are Britain, Scotland, Canada, Singapore and most recently China (Boniface, 2003; Boyne *et al*, 2002; British Tourist Authority, 2003; Canadian Tourism Commission, 2002; Chang & Yeoh, 1999; Deneault, 2002; Economic Planning Group of Canada, 2002; Ooi, 2001; Quan & Wang, 2003; Stewart, 2000; Stewart, 2004; Telfer & Hashimoto, 2003).

The above are all examples of the different initiatives unfolding regarding food and food and wine tourism. South Africa with its multicultural society and representative of the developing world has the opportunity to be added to this list if the potential of food tourism is developed and marketed appropriately.

Food Tourism

Food tourism has ceased to be only concerned with the provision of food for tourists in restaurants, hotels and resorts. It has changed hands and it is the tourist that now travels in order to search for, and enjoy, prepared food and drink (Hall, 2003). Food is considered as 'an expression of a society and its way of life' (Kaspar, 1986:14), which is verified by Boniface (2003), who regards culture, both past and present, as an inevitable part of food tourism. Long (1998) accentuates the fact that food or culinary tourism is a sensory experience utilising all the senses therefore making it central to the tourism experience. Hall (2003b: xxiii) summarises it concisely and contends that food tourism is increasingly:

- recognised as part of the local culture, consumed by tourists;
- an element of regional tourism promotion;

- a component of local agricultural and economic development;
- a key element to competitive destination marketing;
- an indicator of globalisation and localisation; and
- a product and service consumed by tourists with definite preferences and consumption patterns.

Considering the various facets of food tourism, a focus on how food can contribute to tourism marketing strategies is becoming more urgent and apparent in present-day research.

The roots of food tourism lie in agriculture, culture and tourism (Bessiere 1998; Boniface, 2003; Cusack, 2000; Hjalager & Corigliano, 2000; Selwood 2003-Wagner, 2001; Wolf, 2002b). All three components offer opportunities and activities to market and position food tourism as an attraction and experience in a destination. Agriculture provides the product, namely, food; culture provides the history and authenticity; and tourism provides the infrastructure and services and combines the three components into the food tourism experience. These three components form the basis for the positioning of food tourism as one of the components in the tourism paradigm.

Food tourism and destination marketing

Food is seldom the key reason for visiting a destination and most often is considered as part of the overall destination experience (Hjalager & Richards 2002; Long, 2003; Selwood, 2003). However, food is becoming one of the most important attractions as tourists seek new and authentic experiences and alternative forms of tourism (Boyne *et al*, 2003; Crouch & Ritchie, 1999; Hjalager & Richards, 2002; Selwood, 2003).

It is this very paradox that is creating the opportunity for food tourism to become an important and appealing attraction in a destination. The destination can enhance the appeal of its resources and attractions by marketing them correctly (Crouch & Ritchie, 1999). This would include product development, packaging, positioning and the promotion of the attraction.

Food tourism is regarded as one of the attractions offered in a destination and can therefore constitute part of the destination marketing strategy of a destination. From the preceding perspectives it is apparent that destination marketing and food tourism are linked. No destination can therefore afford to ignore the importance of food as either a key or more often a supportive attraction.

Destination marketing and destination competitiveness

The contribution of food tourism to the sustainable competitiveness of a destination entails the identification, development and implementation of food tourism enhancers to achieve destination competitiveness. The concept of sustainable competitiveness adopted in this study is that of Ritchie and Crouch (2003) which entails the ability to increase tourism expenditure by attracting a larger number of tourists, providing them with satisfying, memorable experiences, profitably, while enhancing the well-being of destination residents and preserving the natural capital of the destination for future generations. Sustainable competitiveness of the destination is therefore of prime concern.

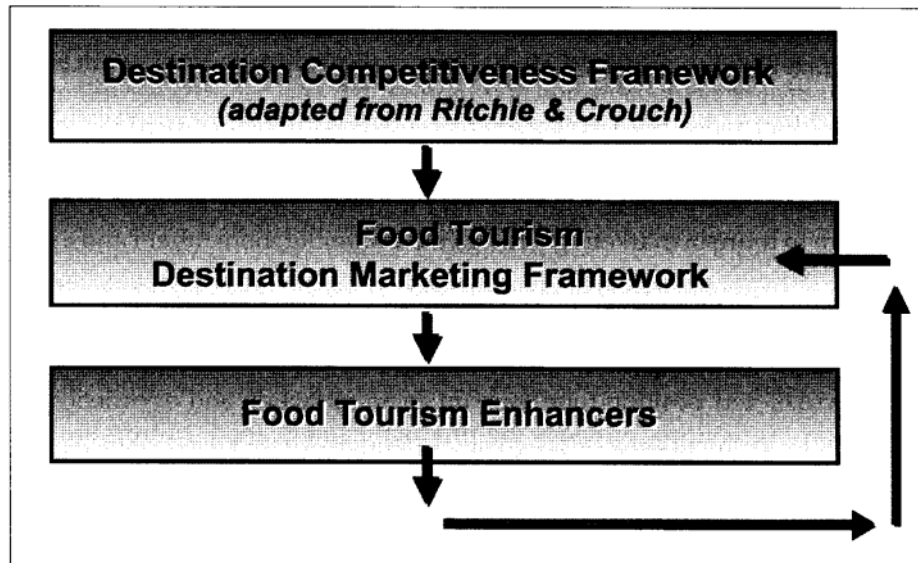


Figure 1 Procedure to develop the framework

Food tourism is one of the offerings of a destination that can enhance existing tourism products, as it fits the definition of being an amalgam of individual products, services and experience opportunities. As an offering food tourism is a compilation of products and services of most of the attractions and resources as portrayed in the literature. Food tourism is an amalgam of natural features, culture, services, infrastructure, access, attitudes toward tourists and uniqueness. It can enhance the total experience of the destination even further as it is the only product that can be experienced using all the human senses, therefore deepening the tourism experience even more. According to Quan and Wang (2003), food tourism holds several implications such as: adding value to agricultural products; providing a theme to build up attractions; utilising culture of foods as a food related event; incorporating food into mega events; and enhancing the local identity for destination marketing and development, therefore local and regional foods should not be regarded as trivial and ignored in tourism marketing. Food as a tourism product and experience can contribute to the competitiveness of the destination if appropriately developed and executed.

The destination competitiveness framework of Ritchie and Crouch (2003) was used as point of departure and frame of reference to contextualise the position, role, importance and contribution of food tourism regarding the enhancement of the competitiveness and sustainability in a destination, as is further articulated in this article.

Figure 1 provides a schematic outline of the procedure followed. The Ritchie and Crouch framework was adapted and rearranged to make it more focused on destination marketing management and to contextualise it with specific regard to food tourism. Food tourism was positioned within destination marketing and food tourism enhancers identified and defined as they feed back into sustainable destination competitiveness. This enables the destination to develop a profile regarding its position as far as food

tourism is concerned and will culminate in the Food Tourism Enhancers, which could contribute to increasing the competitiveness of a destination and enhance the sustainability of the destination by means of food tourism.

The destination is the central point around which all revolves in tourism. Therefore according to Ritchie and Crouch (2000) the most important product in tourism is the destination experience. Destination attractions and experiences they offer are increasingly regarded as the key elements of competitiveness and are therefore receiving more attention and promotional funding (Ritchie & Crouch, 2000).

Destination marketing, as one of the components of destination competitiveness and sustainability, provides opportunities to achieve and ensure destination competitiveness (Crouch & Ritchie, 1999). Changing consumer preferences, and the fact that South Africa is still relatively 'undiscovered' as the WTO regards Africa as an undeveloped market, provides sufficient reason to include food tourism as an attraction in destination marketing strategies. The development and enhancement of food tourism as a destination attraction by the various tourism stakeholders in South Africa could therefore help to improve sustainable destination competitiveness. This could result in tourism destination communities receiving social and economic benefits and tourists and visitors receiving more benefits from appropriately developed and marketed attractions (Yoon, 2002).

The benefits and impacts of local food

Local and regional food as one of the important components of food tourism holds great potential to contribute to sustainable competitiveness in a destination, both from a tourism development and a destination marketing perspective. The promotion of local and regional food is an effective way of supporting and strengthening the tourism and agricultural sectors of local economies by: preserving culinary heritage and adding value to the authenticity of the destination; broadening and enhancing the local and regional tourism resource base; and stimulating agricultural production. The development of a framework and guidelines for developing and implementing food tourism can enable destination marketers and current and prospective entrepreneurs to optimise the tourism potential of local and regional food. Boyne *et al.* (2003) reinforce the need for a framework to enable the stakeholders to cooperate and achieve the effective implementation of marketing strategies regarding food tourism. Figure 2 provides an outline of the process and interrelatedness between a sustainable and competitive destination, food tourism and destination marketing management.

An analysis of the relevant tourism literature and the promotional material of South African and key international destinations indicate that in spite of its potential, the role of food in the marketing of destinations has until recently received very little attention globally, as well as in South Africa. These observations are in contrast to a study undertaken during 2000 by the World Tourism Organisation, where food and drink products of a destination were considered as one of the most important cultural expressions of a destination (Bernard & Zaragoza, 1999; Handszuh, 2000; Hjalager & Corigliano, 2000).

On a practical level, a nation's identity is reflected and strengthened by the food experiences that it offers. The way in which various ingredients are

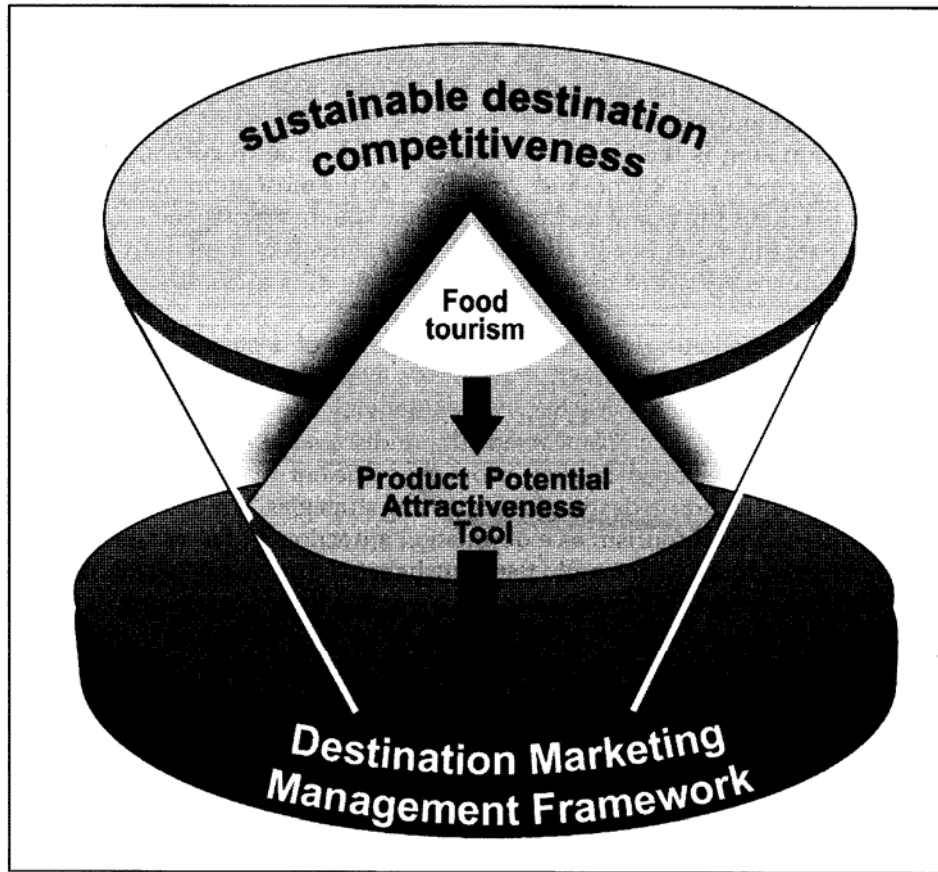


Figure 2 The interrelatedness between sustainable competitiveness, food tourism and destination marketing management

combined, cooked and eaten forms an important element of a national cultural identity and the destination's culinary heritage (Bessiere, 1998; Cusack, 2000). Many tourists are influenced by the quality and type of accommodation and food on offer (European Commission, 1999) and although food does not usually form an attraction in its own right, it is an essential part of almost every vacation and can add to the overall attractiveness of the destination.

Local food enhances the appeal of a destination, and eating is an important activity for tourists once at the destination (European Commission, 1999; Selwood, 2003). Tourists seeking nature and culture are particularly interested in sampling local food products and tasting authentic regional recipes. According to the Eurobarometer Survey (European Commission, 1999) more and more attention is being paid to the origin of the food, i.e. local and regional specialties and locally produced goods. Based on these perspectives it can be argued that local and regional food is a feature that can add value to a destination (Boyne *et al.*, 2003; Handszuh, 2000; Telfer & Wall, 1996) and contribute to the sustainable competitiveness of a destination (Crouch & Ritchie, 1999).

Knowledge regarding food tourism consumer behaviour will allow food tourism stakeholders to effectively target and develop markets, thereby intervening in the decision-making process and persuading the consumer to purchase local and regional food products and services (Mitchell & Hall, 2003). Research in this area is lacking and is reflected in the literature which has reported that tourists enjoy indigenous food, particularly items of local or ethnic nature (Wagner, 2001). Furthermore knowledge of the local, regional and national cuisine has become an interest for tourists (Chappel, 2001; Gallagher, 2001). Santich (1999), Macdonald (2001) and Bessiere (1998) also report that people interested in travelling for gastronomical motivations are on the increase. In spite of these trends, gastronomy has not been considered for its real potential (Bernard & Zaragoza, 1999; Selwood, 2003); nor exploited conveniently as a tourism resource and subsequently not portraying the behaviour of the food tourism consumer. Food tourism is not purely an income generating activity but also a cultural enhancement activity contributing to the tourism experience. It therefore needs to be considered as an essential component of the marketing strategy of a destination.

International trends and best practices

Food tourism globally remains a form of niche or alternative tourism, based on agriculture, culture and the tourism infrastructure. It is generally linked to cultural or heritage tourism and although it forms an important component of tourism, is still in many countries very much a less promoted attraction. However, as previously mentioned, the attention food tourism is receiving is growing for various reasons such as changing consumer needs (Poon, 1993), environmental awareness (Ritchie & Crouch, 2000), and destination competitiveness and sustainability (Ritchie & Crouch, 2003).

Initiatives regarding the development and implementation of food tourism range from food tourism strategies (Deneault, 2002); the establishment of food tourism networks and regional development (Haas, 2002; Hall *et al.*, 2003a; Murray & Haraldsdottir, 2004); food tourism marketing activities (Hall, 2003; Handszuh, 2000); the development of food events, food festivals, local product promotion (Boniface, 2003; Rusher, 2003); culinary heritage identification (Long, 2003; Ohlsson, 2000); and the development a variety of food related activities such as gourmet cooking holidays, food and wine tours and dedicated food routes (Hall *et al.*, 2003b; Meyer-Czech, 2003; Sharpies, 2003).

These global and local initiatives provide sufficient reason to encourage Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) to develop similar and competitive food tourism products and activities in their own destinations. The framework and tools developed and outlined in this paper can further help DMOs to develop and implement these initiatives.

The South Africa Situation

Considering the above, a situation analysis was undertaken among a representative sample of local and regional destination marketing organisations in South Africa to determine the following:

- the status of food as an attraction in destinations;

- the role of food in destination marketing strategies; and
- the constraints and gaps experienced in utilising local and regional food as attractions and as key elements of destination marketing strategies.

The outline of the methods and procedures of the study and reports of the situational analysis undertaken, including the analysis employed, were reported in a previous article (du Rand *et al*, 2003). For the purpose of clarity, a brief outline of the research procedure is provided. The empirical research phase of the study was preceded by an in-depth literature study regarding destination marketing, destination competitiveness and food tourism. Thereafter an analysis of international trends and best practices regarding the role of local and regional food in destination marketing was executed to gauge South Africa's position regarding the utilisation of local and regional food in destination marketing. The study is a quantitative study utilising a situational analysis approach and incorporating various data collection methods and techniques. The first phase of the study comprised a situational analysis that included a survey of DMOs representing all nine provinces and all 55 tourism regions in South Africa ($n = 112$). A compilation of expert opinions in the food tourism industry, both local and international, was furthermore executed which entailed an in-depth interview consisting of a number of open-ended questions which were transcribed and content analysis performed to identify core content and trends regarding food tourism planning, implementation and management.

As support to the situational analysis performed regarding food tourism and its position in South Africa, the second phase of the study comprised an analysis of all published promotional material including printed material, CDs and websites, which were scrutinised and analysed regarding the agricultural, cultural and food tourism information of South Africa. Based on the above-mentioned information a culinary database was compiled. Information from two additional databases, namely the Winelands tourism region regarding food tourism and the Eatout database reflecting a large number of rated restaurants in South Africa, was included in the culinary database. The database information was used to visually portray the food tourism potential and present status regarding food tourism using GIS techniques.

The data was analysed using descriptive statistics and integrated with the data from the culinary database and expert opinions. The integration of the data from the various sources was collected utilising a variety of methods which contributed to the validity and reliability of the data.

The final phase in the methodology of this study was the execution of the case study, which was undertaken to primarily test the framework for planning and implementing food tourism in a destination. The execution of the case study occurred after the integration of the data took place and the framework regarding the planning and implementation for food tourism had been developed. Utilising this information, a region, namely the Winelands region, was selected which reflected the possibilities and scope for planning and implementing food tourism in South Africa. The decision to select a region already implementing food tourism was taken as it afforded the researcher the opportunity to test the framework for planning and implementing food tourism, in a situation where the resources were present and the stakeholders were

interested and positive toward food tourism. This step was imperative considering the low level of interest and awareness food tourism has generated in large parts of South Africa.

The key findings of the South African situation analysis and the knowledge gauged from international trends and best practices regarding the role of local and regional food in destination marketing are central to the conceptualisation of a food tourism destination-marketing management framework. The results of the situational analysis are briefly summarised and more detail can be found in the initial article of du Rand *et al.* (2003). In the present article, the results refer to the total population ($n = 112$) and not only to the pilot study, as was the case in the previous article.

The status of food as an attraction in destinations

The focus of this study was to determine the position of food as an attraction in the tourism regions in South Africa and South Africa at large. Figure 3 portrays a picture that compares well with what is reported in the literature, namely that food is not primarily a key attraction (17.9%), but fares much better as a supportive attraction (36.6%). South Africa is best known for its nature-based attractions followed by cultural and outdoor and recreational activities. This provides sufficient proof that food tourism needs to be developed as a complementary or supportive attraction that can enhance visitor experiences and increase the competitiveness of the destination.

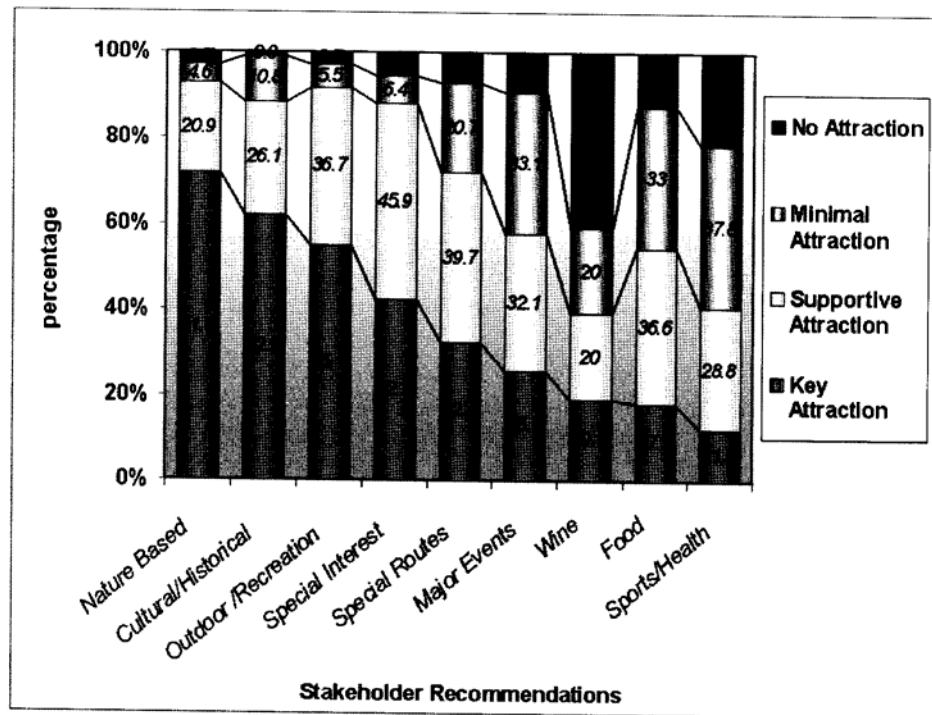


Figure 3 Relative position of food as an attraction in South Africa

The availability of agricultural resources and infrastructure provide further reason for the development for food tourism.

The key components of food tourism lie strongly in the presence of local and / or regionally produced food products and speciality restaurants of the area. This is in accordance with expectations as this is the traditional way of showcasing the food of a region and offering the tourist a cultural experience. Of particular significance is the finding that routes, festivals and events are also receiving considerable attention.

The main reasons for food not being regarded as an attraction in a destination are that the region stakeholders were unaware of the tourism potential or had insufficient knowledge regarding the promotion of food. This once again supports the need for a food tourism marketing strategy to be developed as has happened in countries such as Canada, Australia and the USA.

Wine and food tourism are intertwined and in South Africa, with its well-established wine routes, it is imperative that cognisance is taken of the importance and presence of wine tourism (Bruwer, 2003; Demhardt, 2003; Tassiopoulos *et al*, 2004). Figure 3 indicates that wine tourism (19.1%) is stronger than food tourism (17.9%) as a key attraction in South Africa but does not fare that well as a supportive attraction (20%) versus (36.6%). The reason for this is that wine tourism is still very much localised in South Africa and is only in very recent times becoming more of a destination experience in areas where wine is not produced.

The current role of food in destination marketing strategies

Regional tourism stakeholders are to a certain extent aware of the importance of food, as 56% of the respondents in the study reported that food is used as a marketing activity or tool in promoting a destination.

The traditional methods of marketing are utilised to a limited extent regarding food tourism, but the number of respondents utilising these methods represent only 35.7% and lower as outlined in Figure 4. Together with limited use of these traditional methods of marketing, the content quality of the information regarding food is often scant and uninformative. An analysis of promotional literature indicated that very little food tourism information was included in the material. The focus was more on advertisements of restaurants, which supports the lack of informative food tourism information (du Rand *et al*, 2003). Very few tour operators (13.4%) promote food tourism, which verifies the fact that food tourism is not a priority and lacks a focused marketing strategy. Therefore a framework and procedure to assist DMOs in marketing and implementing food tourism in a region would be beneficial.

The perceived constraints and gaps regarding food tourism

The perceived constraints and gaps regarding the marketing of food tourism are portrayed in Figure 5.

Nearly 60% of the respondents regarded the general lack of food promotion as the key constraint or gap. The fact that there are no special food events organised in a region (56.3%) and that funds are a constricting factor (54.5%), exacerbates the situation of food not being promoted as a special or niche tourism attraction. Of particular significance are that the constraints regarding marketing (special

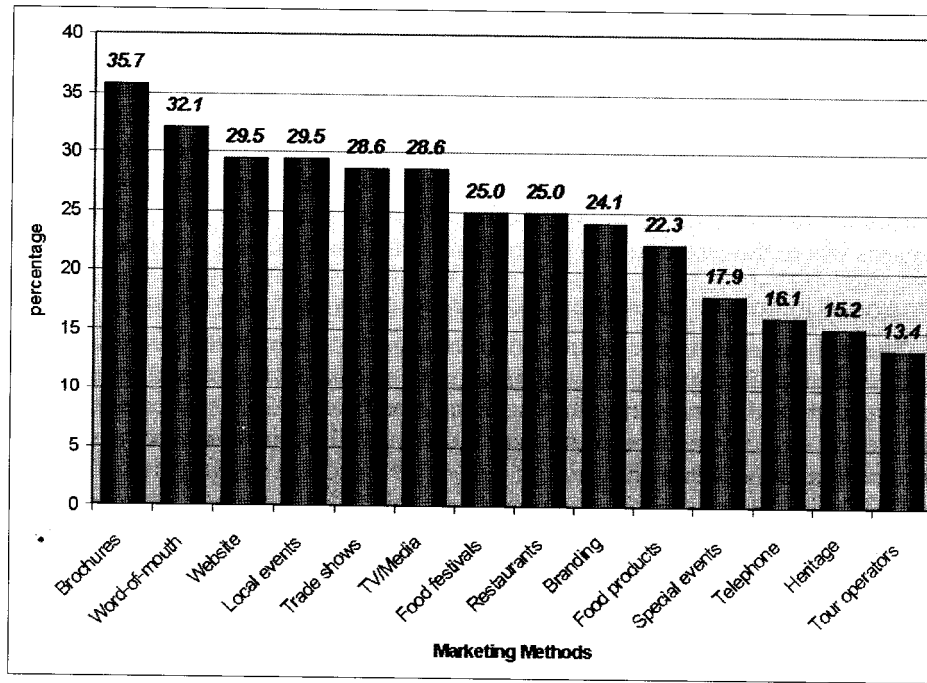


Figure 4 The use of marketing methods regarding food tourism

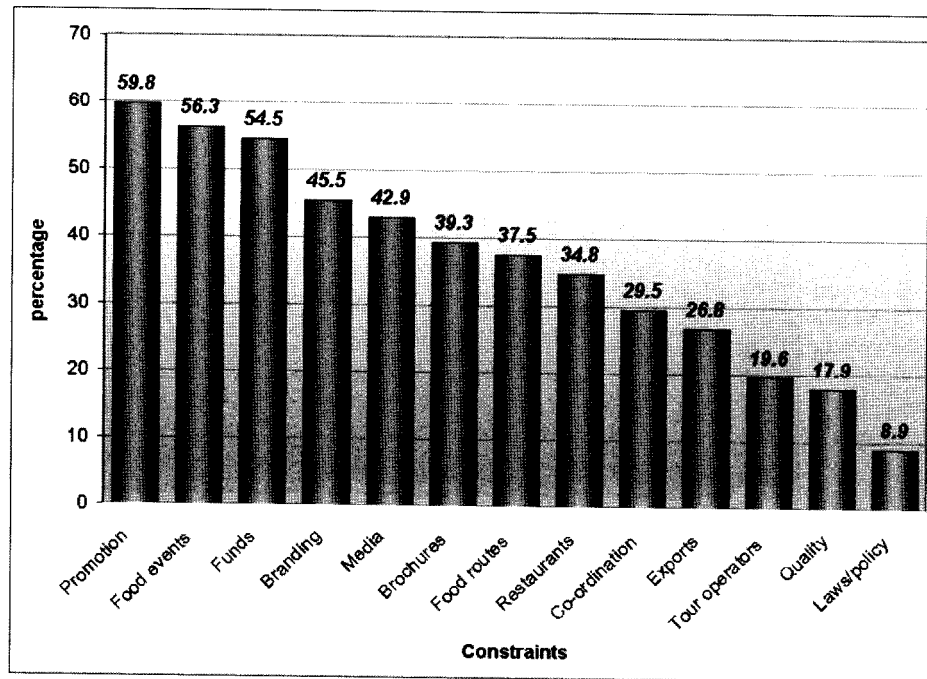


Figure 5 The perceived constraints and gaps regarding food tourism

food events; branding; media coverage; brochures) are perceived to be more important than the constraints regarding the product (routes; speciality restaurants; quality of food service and products). The lack of funds (54.5%), and the fact that tourists, regardless of the marketing initiatives undertaken, will consume food may be the underlying reason for this situation. For DMOs to become more competitive and contribute to sustainable tourism the development and marketing of attractions such as food should be approached with more urgency, especially in the regions where the resources are plentiful and the infrastructure is in place.

Proposed initiatives to address perceived gaps and constraints

The respondents' views on initiatives required to address the perceived gaps and constraints in Figure 6 once again accentuate the fact that marketing (59.8%) requires attention. Promoting the use of local products (52.7%) and developing a marketing strategy incorporating food tourism (49.1%) furthermore support the proposed actions required.

DMOs wanting to incorporate food tourism as one of their attractions will have to pay more attention to the marketing activities which all were rated as important actions to focus on. The establishment of partnerships between stakeholders (48.2%) could strengthen the impact of an appropriate marketing strategy which incorporates food tourism.

Stakeholder recommendations for future strategy development

The possible strategies and recommendations made to optimise a destination's potential and the use of food to enhance a destination are outlined in

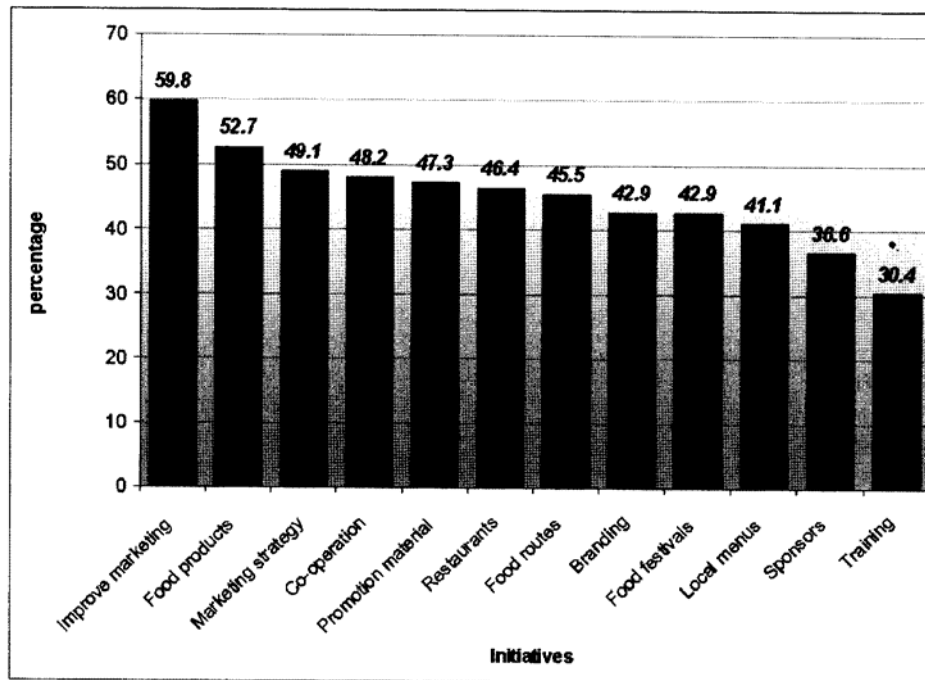


Figure 6 Initiatives required to address perceived gaps and constraints

Figure 7. Aside from funding (76.5%) that is required for all types of promotional initiatives in a destination and is also considered to be the most crucial, the strategies that can contribute the most to optimising a destination's potential with regard to food tourism are all promotion and marketing orientated (media coverage; brochures; branding; restaurant promotion; shows; food events). Once again the strategies related to the product (local / regional food; food routes; food festivals) are rated less important than the recommendations related to marketing strategies.

Tourism spending on food and dining out in South Africa by international tourists (8%) and domestic tourists (24%), is substantial enough to warrant more aggressive marketing of food tourism as a form of niche tourism (Rule *et al.*, 2001). It could contribute to the promotion of food tourism in destinations that have the resources (local food products/suitable providers), but that are not exploiting their potential related to food tourism.

When analysing the reasons why food is not promoted as a key or supportive attraction, it can be concluded that there is a lack of awareness of the tourism potential of food; the marketing constraints; and a lack of knowledge regarding the potential of local and regional food.

To enable the DMOs to assess and optimise the food tourism potential of their destinations, tools such as TOURPAT were developed, which were derived from an Environmental Potential Atlas (ENPAT) developed by the South African Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism. ENPAT is a collection of environmental, social and economic georeferenced features, which are linked to an attribute database on national, provincial and regional levels. TOURPAT (Tourism Potential Atlas), is a more

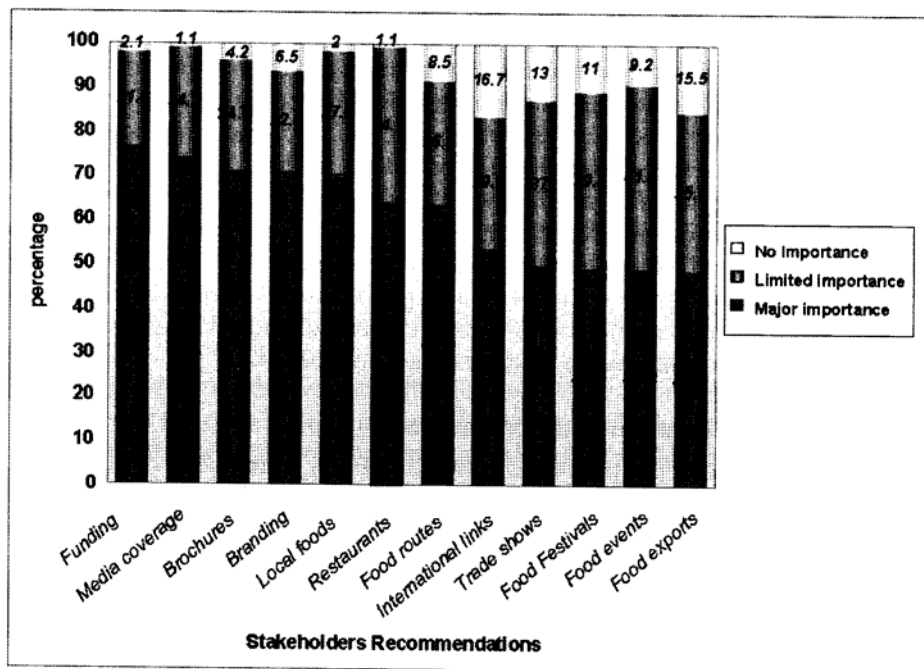


Figure 7 Stakeholder recommendations for future strategy development

focused database which includes cultural data and data on tourist attractions. The culinary database, as previously described, culminates in a culinary atlas for the tourism regions of South Africa. These are additional features and components that can function as a decision support tool for environmental and strategic management.

A complementary tool, PAT (a product potential and attractiveness tool), was developed to be used in conjunction with TOURPAT to assist DMOs in the strategic evaluation of the food tourism potential of their destination. It can also contribute to a destination marketing management framework for optimal and responsible development and marketing of food tourism.

The Need for and Development of the Framework

Although various gaps as portrayed in Figure 8 were identified related to marketing and food related issues, specific actions and strategies were recommended. Of particular significance are the consistent higher ratings that the marketing and promotion-related aspects, namely media coverage, food promotion and branding, of food tourism received above that of the food product itself. The strategies and actions accentuate the importance of developing a focused marketing strategy and framework, which includes food tourism and which addresses the above-mentioned areas. Such a framework can also facilitate the development of food tourism as an attraction in a destination. Destination competitiveness and sustainability can also be enhanced by such actions and result in the responsible utilisation of available resources and existing infrastructure.

The proposed framework and procedure for developing and implementing food tourism is the outcome of the integration of data collected by means of the situational analysis, the evaluation of best practices, the collation of expert opinions and the information regarding food tourism acquired from the culinary database. The above-mentioned information provided the structure and components of the framework and procedure for developing and implementing food tourism. The case study was selected once all the information had been analysed and a clear indication could be made regarding the most suitable region to use for the case study. The framework and procedure for developing and implementing food tourism was assessed for implementability in the execution of the case study.

The development of the framework and procedure to optimise the tourism potential of local and regional foods so as to ensure sustainable competitiveness is outlined and discussed in the next section of this paper.

Synthesis and verification of the framework

The destination competitiveness and sustainability framework of Ritchie and Crouch (2003) together with other competitiveness models (Dwyer, 2001; Heath, 2003; Kim, 2001) were used as point of departure to contextualise the contribution of food tourism to the competitiveness and sustainability of a destination. Various methodologies were applied and tools were developed, namely TOURPAT and PAT to clarify and confirm the contribution of food tourism to destination marketing, as previously referred to.

The above-mentioned methodologies and tools culminated in the framework and procedure for developing and implementing food tourism in a destination.

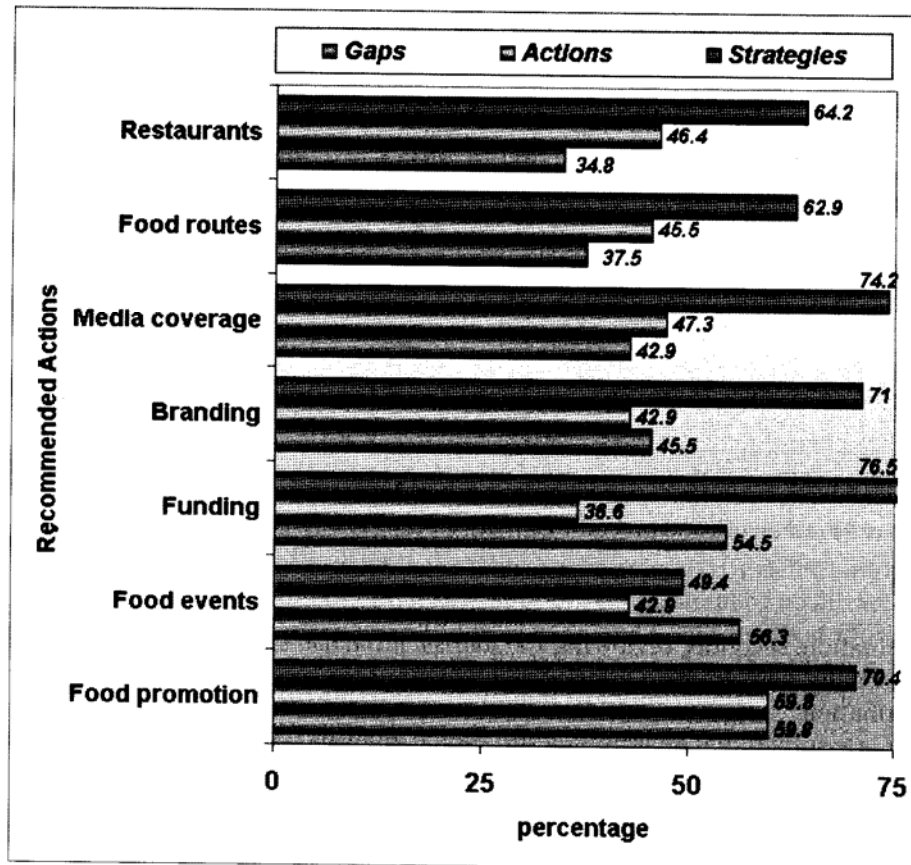


Figure 8 The relationship between identified gaps and recommended actions

This framework can be utilised to identify food tourism enhancers that can contribute to the optimal and responsible development and marketing of food tourism in a destination.

The framework and procedure for developing and implementing food tourism in a destination

Figure 9 presents the framework and procedure for developing and implementing food tourism in a destination. The framework and procedure consists of three main steps with various actions that take place within the three main steps. The procedure and each step will be discussed and the application of the framework will be illustrated in the case study.

The key components and how they interrelate with the other components within the framework are outlined and discussed below.

Situational analysis

To implement *the food tourism framework* the first step is to perform a *situational analysis* entailing three components: firstly performing an evaluation of the *environment*, the current and potential *markets* and the *resources* and *attractions* in the

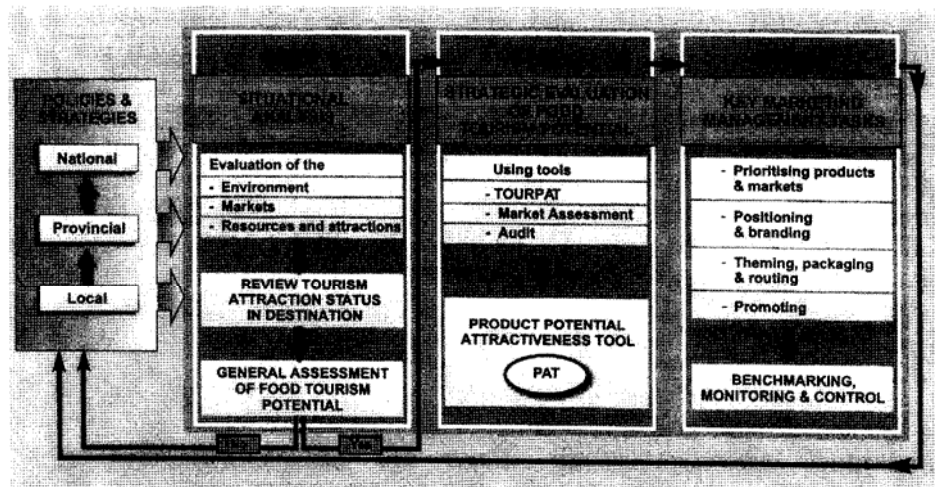


Figure 9 Framework and procedure for developing and implementing food tourism

destination; secondly reviewing the *tourism attraction status* in the destination; and finally performing a general assessment of the *food tourism potential* in the destination.

It is assumed that an umbrella situational analysis will have been performed for the destination at large as part of the total strategic planning process, which constitutes a component of the tourism policies and strategies on a national, provincial and local level. Information regarding the environment, the market and the resources and attractions in the destination should be extracted from the situational analysis and the food tourism focus should be addressed as a specific focus area (food tourism can also be combined with wine tourism in the regions where wine tourism is already established).

- **The environment**

Information regarding the environment entails an identification of the stakeholders (local authorities/community interest groups/businesses) and the identification of possible leaders regarding food tourism. An evaluation of macro trends and developments in the environment will assist in determining possible threats and or opportunities.

- **Markets**

Information regarding the market comprises the identification of the suppliers of food tourism offerings and target market identification (DMOs; Tourism Business Units (TBUs) particularly linked to restaurants / food service institutions etc.). An identification of the current and potential market environment (regional / provincial / national / international) for DMOs and TBUs linked to the destination with a specific interest in promoting food tourism will be beneficial regarding the positioning of the food tourism product and identifying possible target markets.

- **Resources and attractions**

An identification of the resource components of the destination (attrac-

tions, infrastructure, facilities and services) is essential to determine strengths and or weaknesses specifically related to food tourism.

Once the situational analysis has been undertaken the nature and extent of a food tourism focus must be outlined and put into context, so that it can be incorporated in future tourism policies and strategies, if it is not already a component of the policy at this stage.

Reviewing the tourism attraction status

Once the evaluation of the environment, markets, resources and attractions has been completed, it is necessary to *review the tourism attraction status* in a destination.

General assessment of food tourism

Finally, a general assessment of the food tourism potential is necessary so as to determine whether it is feasible to proceed with the development of food tourism as an attraction in a destination. This can be determined by assessing the food tourism market share and position in the destination.

- **Food tourism market share and position**

The *food tourism market share and position* can be assessed by determining if food tourism is credited with a key/supportive/minimal or no attraction status. This is only a general and initial assessment and the food tourism market share and position will be verified and substantiated with the execution of the audit and the information from the culinary database.

Should the evaluation of the environment, markets, resources and attractions and the tourism attraction status review indicate a meaningful potential, according to core indicators of food and tourism and the specified criteria as presented in Figure 9, the next step will be to perform a more *in depth and comprehensive information analysis* to quantify and qualify the potential for food tourism in a destination. If no meaningful potential is identified, it is recommended that food tourism as an attraction and priority in destination marketing be revisited.

All three components of the situational analysis need to be performed before proceeding with step number 2, which entails a strategic evaluation of the food tourism potential of a particular destination.

Strategic evaluation of the food tourism potential

The second step in developing the food tourism framework is to execute a *strategic evaluation of the food tourism potential* in the destination using TOURPAT, performing a market assessment and executing an attractiveness audit, which will culminate in applying PAT, a *product potential and attractiveness tool*, and assist the destination in determining the food tourism potential of the area. This step entails information management and marketing research, once again assuming that much of this information will be available in the overall strategic planning process as a component of the national, regional and local tourism policies and strategies. This information needs to be extracted from these policies and strategies and applied in the food tourism framework.

- **TOURPAT (a tourism and culinary atlas linked to a geospatial database)**

The strategic evaluation of food tourism potential can be facilitated by using a key knowledge tool, TOURPAT, that was constructed to facilitate

the development and promotion of food tourism as an important element of destination marketing. TOURPAT is a database comprising information reflecting the various tourism resources and more specifically focusing on food tourism data (agriculture; culture; infrastructure; tourism infrastructure and attractions; tourism routes; food and wine attractions, events and facilities) indicating what is available in a destination.

The main objective is to provide a decision-making support tool that can assist with the identification and mapping of the spatial distribution of food tourism in the destination-marketing context. This information is portrayed visually utilising GIS (geographic information systems) techniques and is displayed in the form of 'thematic maps' providing visual information of a destination regarding one or more of the resources. Overlays can be compiled visually portraying the different categories of products available in an area (food/wine/agricultural/culture/food tourism opportunities and attractions/routes, etc.). • **Market assessment and food attractiveness audit**

The determination of the market positioning on a regional, provincial, national and international level is combined with the food tourism resource and opportunity matrix in the food attractiveness audit.

Market research is required to identify the current and potential target markets of the region. This information is usually available from reports regarding the specific region or destination and needs to be accessed to determine the market position and identify the target markets of the region.,

Product-market matching needs to be performed, with specific reference to food tourism. This can be achieved by completing the attractiveness audit, which is an integrated product and marketing assessment. This information will provide an indication of the food tourism potential and the food tourism enhancers.

A *competitive analysis* needs to be undertaken to identify the strengths, weaknesses, strategies and gaps of key competitors thereby determining possible branding and competitive strategies with a specific focus on food tourism.

The execution of the *resource/opportunity audit* needs to take place to determine the availability of resources specifically for food tourism and to substantiate the food tourism market share and position.

Performing the *food tourism attractiveness audit* will enable the destination to pursue its goals, opportunities and strategies utilising its strengths and avoiding its weaknesses specifically with regard to food tourism. The audit will therefore strategically evaluate the resources and capabilities of the destination and indicate the current functioning of its tourism operations with specific reference to food tourism.

The execution of a *strategic evaluation of the food tourism potential* in the destination by means of using TOURPAT, performing a market assessment and executing an attractiveness audit, will culminate in PAT a product potential and attractiveness tool that assists in determining the potential of food tourism in a destination.

- **PAT (product potential and attractiveness tool)**

The *product potential and attractiveness tool (PAT)* is a combination of a checklist and evaluation of the perception of stakeholders regarding specified components namely key attractors; non-negotiables; enablers; value adders, facilitators and enhancers, of food tourism (Heath, 2003). The components are identified in terms of tourism and food and wine present in the destination. The components in each of the tourism and food areas are identified by means of an analysis of the culinary database, the questionnaire and the destination marketing management framework. Each component is evaluated in terms of the status of the component in both the areas of tourism and food where four equates a high status and one a low status. The total score calculated can provide the destination with an indication of the product potential and attractiveness of the destination in terms of food tourism. PAT functions as a decision-making support tool and provides information regarding the resource analysis that can assist destination marketers and current and prospective entrepreneurs, to optimise the tourism potential of local and regional foods in future destination marketing. PAT can be the indicator that provides DMOs and TBUs with a profile and information regarding the potential and capability to develop and implement food tourism in the destination.

The development of such an instrument was one of the key goals of the longer-term research project concerning food tourism in South Africa. This instrument was tested in a selected case study, which together with the data from TOURPAT, provides DMOs with a tool for strategy formulation and implementation and subsequently competitive and sustainable tourism in a destination.

Key marketing management tasks

The third step in the framework comprises the execution of a *series of key management and marketing tasks* and constitutes the part where food tourism will be developed and implemented in the destination marketing and management strategy of a specific destination. Four key marketing management tasks were identified from the destination marketing management framework with a food tourism focus.

Task 1: Prioritising products and markets

Information from the situational analysis and strategic evaluation is used to apply criteria for identifying, developing and implementing food tourism in a destination in terms of the key food tourism attractions to be focused on. The market readiness and market-matching of the attractions will also be assessed.

Task 2: Positioning and branding

This task entails the identification and implementation of the steps to take regarding the positioning and branding of food tourism in the destination.

Task 3: Theming packaging and routing

The options regarding theming, packaging and routing for a destination are identified with the aim of enhancing the attractiveness and contributing to the

competitiveness and sustainability of the destination

Task 4: Promotion

This task entails establishing the key possibilities regarding promotion of food tourism in a destination in terms of tools and techniques used, and determining the constraints and gaps regarding marketing and promotion of food in a destination.

Completing the four tasks as outlined above will enable a destination marketer to address the issues regarding the marketing and management of food tourism in a destination.

Benchmarking, monitoring and control

The final task that DMOs will need to execute will be the activities of benchmarking, monitoring and controlling. This task is necessary to determine the success of implementing food tourism in a destination and to identify where marketing and management tasks need to be revised, adapted or replaced.

To determine the 'implementability' of the framework it was necessary to apply the framework in a selected *case study*.

Applying the Framework: A South African Case Study

The framework and its components were tested to determine its perceived relevance and viability and to verify the practical applicability of the framework in a case study situation. The assessment procedure of the framework was necessary prior to the actual implementation of such a framework, which will require a longer period of time to establish.

The framework and tools were tested with key stakeholders in a leading South African regional destination, where food and wine is a key element of the overall destination experience. The case study was executed in the form of a workshop in the Winelands area, one of the tourism regions in the Western Cape province.

The aim of the workshop was to assist destination marketers and current and prospective entrepreneurs to optimise the tourism potential of local and regional food and drink products so as to ensure sustainable competitiveness, both*from a tourism development and destination marketing perspective.

The 'Winelands' region was selected because it has the ability to be presented as a 'Premier-ranked Food and Wine Tourist Destination' in South Africa, i.e. 'a place offering the best regarding food and wine tourism and a place the potential tourist visitor should consider first when making travel plans'.

The outcomes of the case study will be used to assess the implementability of the framework, which will allow for the development and implementation of food tourism in the next phase of this research when the food tourism framework will be implemented and assessed over a period of time.

The Winelands case study procedure

Key stakeholders in the Winelands region were invited to participate in the workshop, of which 18 were representatives of various sectors of the tourism industry, namely restaurateurs, hotels, guesthouses, wineries, farms, cheese factories, regional wine tourism representatives, and tour operators participated.

Each stakeholder received a workbook consisting of five worksheets that needed to be completed as part of the participative strategic planning process.

The workshop entailed a PowerPoint presentation regarding food tourism, the aim of the workshop, and the advantages of implementing food tourism in the Winelands area that already has a well-established wine industry and supporting tourism activities.

Thereafter each group participated in the execution of a *situational analysis* (step 1) specifically focused on food/food and wine tourism, which entailed: stakeholder identification and the role they perform in food and wine tourism; a compilation of resource component mix in terms of attractions; infrastructure; facilities; services in the destination; the establishment of current challenges, 'opportunities and constraints of destination; and finally the determination of *tourism attraction status*.

The second step was then executed, which entailed a strategic evaluation of the food tourism potential of the region. Information regarding the area was available as stakeholders brought the basic information required with them and therefore they proceeded with the execution of the food *attractiveness audit*. Thereafter they completed PAT, which assisted with determining the food tourism potential of the region.

The above outlined procedure enabled the groups to discuss the key marketing management tasks and propose the necessary strategic guidelines regarding: optimising primary markets regarding the development of food / food and wine tourism; positioning food tourism /food and wine tourism within the tourism strategy of the destination; branding food tourism/food and wine tourism within the tourism strategy of the destination; theming, packaging and routing food tourism/ food and wine tourism within the tourism strategy of the destination; and promoting food tourism/food and wine tourism within the tourism strategy of the destination.

The procedure furthermore also enabled the groups to identify the critical success factors for developing and implementing food and wine tourism in the Winelands region. Fundamental and essential requirements for future success were also established.

The outcome of the case study

This workshop assisted entrepreneurs and marketers in performing an appraisal to determine their current competitive position in the tourism market place by:

- Identifying / evaluating the attributes of their destination which contribute to making it a 'Premier-ranked Food and Wine Tourist Destination'.
- Assessing destination strengths and weaknesses to enable comparison to other destinations and determine positioning and promoting strategies.
- Planning and preparing a food and wine tourism strategy to enable prioritising products and markets.
- Identifying gaps and opportunities in the product mix and apply theming and packaging to market and promote food and wine tourism in the region.
- Measure destination performance and potential regarding food and wine tourism presently and over time (PAT).

The workbook and the framework and procedures applied during the appraisal exercise provided a tool for developing and implementing food/food and wine tourism as a key focus in destination marketing. The workshop assisted the participants to develop a better understanding of the food tourism industry in the region and its markets. The participants identified available food tourism products in the region to enable the region to become a 'Premier-ranked Food and Wine Tourist Destination'. This step also helped the participants to determine which food tourism products needed to be developed to strengthen the destination. Marketing and promotional strategies were identified to allow the products of the region to be showcased to visitors and residents. The need to improve communication and integration by linking and developing the food tourism industry in the region / area / province / country was identified as an area of great concern.

The key outcomes of this exercise indicated that the framework and tools provided the stakeholders with very useful mechanisms to strategically and practically develop and implement food tourism as a key and/or supportive element in the positioning and marketing of regional tourism destinations.

The general assessment of stakeholders was positive regarding the use of the framework and procedure for developing and implementing food tourism at regional level. Participants were also of the view that facilitation of the procedure and implementation of the framework could result in a higher level of success and could be applied in other destinations as well.

Conclusions and Recommendations for Strategy and Research

Based on the preceding situational analysis findings, the survey results and the execution of the case study, the following can be conclusions, recommendations and suggestions regarding the development and implementation of food tourism that can be considered by DMOs are also presented.

Guidelines and recommendations for future strategy development

The underutilisation of food as an attraction and marketing tool in destination marketing, both locally and globally, indicated the need for a framework to develop and implement food tourism in a destination. Mechanisms to develop and implement food tourism were required, which led to the development of TOURPAT and PAT. The framework, tools and procedure were assessed for implementability in the case study with a group of stakeholders. The following guidelines and recommendations can be proposed, based on the information regarding the South African situation and information gained from global best practices.

Utilisation of food as a tourism attraction

The literature review, evaluation of best practices and the situational analysis provided sufficient evidence of the position of food in destination marketing. Although food tourism was being developed and included as an attraction in various destinations, it still receives minimal attention in destination marketing. Focused strategies therefore need to be developed and implemented to address the underutilisation of food as a marketing tool in destination marketing. Based on the preceding perspectives the following initiatives can be considered to elevate the role of food in destination

marketing and to position food as a competitive and sustainable tourism attraction:

- Appropriate marketing initiatives, partnerships and networking, supporting local products of high quality.
- Utilise cross-marketing to enhance food and wine as a significant attraction in a destination.
- Optimise current and potential markets by ensuring that standards are in place and that quality is consistently provided.
- Follow 'lifestyle' positioning of food and wine tourism within the tourism strategy and support the quality of life, nature and leisure components of tourism marketing.
- Where relevant food tourism should adopt a 'niche' type of approach and be aimed at both local and international guests.
- Food tourism should be considered as a tool to extend the current tourism seasons.
- Destinations with an attractive/unusual/unknown cuisine should consider using it as a branding tool.
- Branding of food tourism can be enhanced by innovative signage and development of logos that identify attractions in specific regions.
- Theming, packaging and routing of food tourism can be improved by forming links with other tourism attractions and activities such as nature, sport, history and culture.
- On-theming, e.g. wine and food, food and history, food and health, can create new experiences and provide greater impact for a destination where appropriate.
- Food routes can be linked to existing historical tourism routes.
- Specialty restaurants can be developed to assist with the promotion of the special cuisine of an area.

The need for a framework to develop and implement food tourism in a destination

Besides the actions that can be taken to enhance food tourism in a destination, the study furthermore indicated the need for a framework to develop and implement food tourism in a destination. Such a framework can streamline the efforts and identify the correct procedures regarding the development of food tourism as an attraction in a destination. The framework that was developed and assessed for implementability indicated that the stakeholders would benefit from applying the procedures as outlined in the framework. It is therefore imperative that for the various tourism regions to develop and implement food tourism in a destination, the DMOs and other stakeholders follow a procedure that will assist the stakeholders in evaluating the environment, assessing the resources and attractions of the destination and determining the markets. The establishment of the food tourism potential of a destination is crucial for further development and success regarding tourism in the destination. An assessment of the feasibility of food tourism, that is performed in the first step of the framework, provides a destination with an indication whether to pursue the development of food tourism

or rather to focus on other attractions.

Mechanisms to develop and implement food tourism

The participant stakeholders in the case study indicated the need for facilitation with regards to the procedure of developing and implementing food tourism in a destination. A considerable amount of important information is required and data management is crucial in determining the strategy regarding food tourism in a destination. Tools and procedures facilitate the process and assist the stakeholders in the strategic evaluation of the food tourism potential of a destination. TOURPAT, the market assessment, the audit and finally the application of PAT can be implemented by DMOs to assist them with the process of planning and implementing food tourism. Furthermore it could also evaluate the application of the framework over a longer period of time, which will provide more in-depth information and provide the opportunity to make further improvements and adjustments to the framework. There is a need for these tools to be implemented by the DMOs and other stakeholders in the tourism industry, as not only will these tools facilitate the development and implementation of food tourism but they can also be used for other areas in the tourism industry, e.g. sport and adventure tourism which could enhance the sustainable competitiveness of the destination.

Stakeholder involvement

The lack of stakeholder involvement and networking is indicated in the study and was identified as one of the major shortcomings by the participant stakeholders in the case study. A higher level of stakeholder involvement will assist in:

- The establishment of local and regional partnerships that will contribute to the enhancement of food tourism in the region and within South Africa.
- Proper product development supported by both the public and private sector, by means of mentoring and proper guidance can lead to improved promotion of food and wine tourism in a destination.
- Improved communication and interaction amongst stakeholders and the media which will enhance the promotion of food and wine tourism.
- Establishing a more focused approach regarding the execution of the key marketing management tasks.

It is crucial that the stakeholders establish co-optition amongst themselves and promote local and regional food as an attraction in the various regions of the country. There is a need for stakeholder involvement with a specific focus on an untapped potential of food tourism. Stakeholders and DMOs need to be encouraged to participate in promoting food tourism and to on-sell food with wine which is a better-established tourism product and attraction in many regions in South Africa.

Possibly the key challenge regarding the development of food tourism in South Africa is the utilisation of local food as a catalyst for local pride. South Africans need to cultivate a pride in that which is their own and realise the advantages of promoting their local and regional cuisine and culinary heritage.

Proposals for future research

This study recommends that the framework for developing and implementing food tourism be implemented. Data gathered as an integral component of the strategic marketing process at the local and regional level should, where appropriate or possible, have a focus on food tourism. It is furthermore recommended that the tools TOURPAT and PAT be used and refined and that the culinary database be continuously updated so as to be beneficial in data management for the specific regions regarding achieving and maintaining sustainable competitiveness.

This study has indicated that food tourism in South Africa has not capitalised on the opportunity to promote each local tourism region for what it excels in as far as food is concerned. Future research is required to determine the culinary heritage of each tourism area in terms of local and regional cuisine. It is also imperative to identify the local food produced in each area, region and province, thereby incorporating it into the local cuisine and promoting the products according to region and locality, which can contribute to sustainability and competitiveness in such an area.

In conclusion, this study was executed in various stages of which two have now been completed, namely the execution of the South African situational analysis and the development and application of the framework (case study). Future work would include the refinement and further testing of the framework and the supportive tools (TOURPAT and PAT) and the utilisation of these supportive tools by DMOs and other key stakeholders.

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