



THE WORLD BANK'S ROLE IN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract: Over the last four decades, commitment to tourism as a development strategy for developing economies has fluctuated within the World Bank. This article reviews the bank's experience from 1966 to the present as it has evolved through various phases of its own institutional role towards development. Today, driven by strong country demand, there is renewed interest within the bank in the role of tourism in the fulfillment of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. The paper analyzes the role and approach of the World Bank toward this development aim. **Keywords:** World Bank, growth strategy, value chain, poverty reduction, economic impact, sustainable development. © 2007 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Résumé: Rôle de la Banque mondiale dans le développement du tourisme. Dans les quarante dernières années, l'engagement au tourisme comme stratégie pour les économies en voie de développement a varié à l'intérieur de la Banque mondiale. Cet article passe en revue l'expérience de la Banque de 1966 au présent telle qu'elle a évolué à travers les différentes étapes de son rôle institutionnel vis-à-vis le développement. Actuellement, poussé par une forte demande des pays, il y a un intérêt renouvelé à l'intérieur de la Banque quant au rôle du tourisme dans la réalisation des objectifs du Millénaire pour le développement des Nations Unies. L'article analyse le rôle et l'approche de la Banque mondiale envers cet objectif de développement. **Mots-clés:** Banque mondiale, stratégie de croissance, chaîne de valeurs, réduction de la pauvreté, impact économique, développement durable. © 2007 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

INTRODUCTION

This paper synthesizes internal World Bank commissioned research (Mann 2005) using evidence from over 300 reviewed projects and project-related documents in 86 countries to chart the role the bank has played since the mid-60s in using tourism as a development tool. The study shows that differing development themes (such as structural adjustment and sustainable development) have influenced the way tourism's role in development is perceived within the agency and

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how this in turn has shaped a country-level dialogue with governments, the private sector, and other development partners. It documents the ebb and flow of tourism-related lending from the bank over the past 40 years—showing some correlation between the categories of projects it has financed (for example, economic growth or cultural and environmental preservation) and the prevailing development theme of the time. The discussion focuses on current practices in order to benchmark these in the literature and analyze their merit with respect to the growing demand from developing countries for lending and advice (Mann 2005:1–3).

Beyond the institution, the growing demand to develop tourism is also reflected in the wide range of development institutions (George Washington University 2004) supporting projects and programs in this field, and providing technical advice in developing countries. Multilateral institutions, including the African, Asian, and Inter-American Development Banks, the Inter American Development Bank, the European Union and United Nations agencies such as the United Nations World Tourism Organization, the United Nations Development Program, United Nations Education Program, United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the United Nations Conference of Trade and Development, are all involved in related development activities from a range of perspectives driven by their individual institutional development objectives.

A range of bilateral institutions including Australia's Agency for Internal Development, Austria's Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Canada's International Development Agency, Denmark's International Development Agency, France's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Germany's Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit and Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau, Ireland's Irish Aid, Japan's International Cooperation Agency and Bank for International Cooperation, the Netherlands' Development Organization, Norway's Agency for Development Cooperation, Switzerland's Agency for Development Cooperation, the United Kingdoms' Department for International Development, and the United States' Agency for International Development, also have targeted development programs, and a range of nongovernmental organizations too many to mention here, have specific tourism development objectives. However, despite this broad support to this industry there is little research on the role of external (non-national) institutions in the process of developing tourism; this is one gap this paper addresses by examining the role of the World Bank historically and currently.

The premise for the paper is that the bank plays an influential role in the way governments perceive the role of tourism in their economies. Reflecting on the long list of development partners that support the industry, it is posited that the bank is better placed than other development agencies to play the role of "honest broker" in galvanizing governments and development partners toward a more systematic and inclusive approach in the design, implementation, and evaluation of the economic, social, and environmental impacts of tourism development interventions geared toward sustainable development. The discussion highlights that opportunities are being missed within the

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