

CASE STUDY 75

Analysis and Development of the Tourism Value Chain in Dogon Area - A decision-making tool for communities and local operators.

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Context

Composed of four Circles / local authorities (Bandiagara, Bankass, Koro and Douentza), The Dogon Area had in 2008 a relative poverty rate of 72.2% for the Mopti region compared to 60% for all of Mali. But besides that, the region possesses valuable tourist attractions. Its exceptional natural site (The Cliff of Bandiagara) and the population's millennium lifestyle are recognised as the largest tourist attraction in Mali and led to their registration as a World Heritage Site of UNESCO.

For several years, some organisations and development partners have been working to boost the development of tourism in these destinations. However, the challenge of producing a lasting and fair impact to all villages and municipalities of the territory remains unresolved.

Different issues arise (i) the collection of reliable and convincing arguments to facilitate the mobilisation of elected representatives of local authorities (districts and townships) and a critical mass of private and public investors for the development of the sector (ii) the lack of complementarities and cooperation between local and external actors working for tourism development, (iii) inadequate capacity of most players in offering quality goods and tourism services in order to attract and retain more visitors, (iv) creation and perpetuation of a communication system enabling the provision on the net and in travel agencies abroad to real time quality information towards potential markets to expand.

To cope with recurrent poverty in Dogon area and to support the various actors groups of the tourism value chain (guides, restaurants, hotels, craftsmen, local, decentralized services, travel agencies, etc...), the authorities in Mali suggested that SNV provides them with support.

Clients and partners

1 Client

The client of SNV in 2010 is the Malian Office of Tourism and Handicrafts (OMATHO) national and regional office of Mopti. OMATHO is responsible for the implementation of national tourism policy and was associated at all stages of the analysis phase. Moreover, OMATHO identified its capacity building needs for the coming year (marketing and promotion of tourism through Internet and mastery of new tourism concepts such as: ecotourism, responsible tourism, etc...) to better identify opportunities and constraints of these new segments. Besides OMATHO, actors which contributed to the analysis and perceived its added value can be considered as informal clients.

2. Partners

See 'Sustainability' below.

Intervention logic and methods

To identify capacity building needs of the actors group but especially to define the impact of tourism on poverty reduction, SNV used the tool consisting of the Development and Analysis of tourism Value Chain and leveraged funding from the European Union that will support building activities in 2011.

The analysis and development of the tourism value chain (VCA) in Dogon country involved five major steps that are and will be adjusted according to the local dynamics of each local authority.

The VCA began with 150 questionnaires administered to tourists, hotels, camp managers and their employees, travel agents and their drivers, restaurant owners, managers and canteen, their employees, artisans and shopkeepers, guides ... in each circle. It was conducted by five teams of investigators over a 10-day period. This survey provided economic and social diagnosis to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the sector and to prioritise areas of action conducive to economic development for low-income populations of the destination.

Following the data collected, a consultation and validation workshop of the survey results took place. This workshop was attended by representatives of different stakeholders from the 4 circles. It was a consultation of local stakeholders to enrich the results of the survey by defining prioritised areas of intervention and capacity building of stakeholders for boosting the sector.

The participatory planning process of the tourism sector has been underway since October 2010. It involves assessing the level of integration of the tourism sector by local authorities (circles) in the managing process of their local affairs (planning, budgeting and implementation of local development plan, participation and monitoring/evaluation by local population and their representatives). The analysis showed that the sector is rarely taken into account in the Circles and is on-going in the Municipalities and the most visited villages.

The on-going institutional assessment will be followed by technical support of SNV upon request from municipalities for a tourism strategy development in favour of local population over a period of 3 to 5 years. This step could be preceded by a workshop on developing a shared vision (10-15 years).

Finally, the tourism VCA in Dogon area will end with the implementation and monitoring/evaluation of a socio-economic development action plan (action plan PDSEC) including the tourism sector. A statutory committee of the municipality or a union of initiative could be empowered to assist the Municipality in managing and developing the destination. It is also conceivable that this responsibility can be entrusted to an umbrella organization of private sector operators.

The planning of the support period will vary for each municipality as it is related to their own dynamics. In the best cases, support could take a year.

Outcome

The DVCA provides an in-depth understanding of the interactions between the tourism sector and the local economy, but above all, the contribution of tourism expenditure to poverty alleviation.

The tourism value chain analysis helped identify capacity building needs of the various actors groups. Ideally the capacity reinforcement sought for tourism stakeholders of a destination could be driven by the industry leaders such as guide associations, hotel associations and local authorities involved, hence the importance attached to strengthening their management skills in local development as described in the preceding paragraph.

The need for capacity building of each type of actor is expressed by either the actors themselves or the tourists thus generally improving the quality of goods and tourism services. VCA can prioritise them in terms of their potential impact on poverty reduction. Therefore, in the Dogon area, the priority needs are as follows: capacity building of guides in mastering the local culture and heritage; strengthening of local producers (vegetables, juices, dairy products ...) to contract their supply in line with the demand of restaurants and hotels; strengthening the capacity of private travel agencies and the state to improve access to quality information through internet; capacity building of the local authorities to manage the destination and redistribute equitably the tourism benefits to all villages and municipalities in their territory.

Capacity building activities will be tailored to each need: action support, training workshops, exchange visits, coaching, public-private partnership facilitation, multi-actor trade, etc.

Several findings gathered during the analysis phase should be taken into account in tourism action development and capacity building of operators such as: the phenomenon of begging and schooling, water shortages and lack of seeds, state of transport means and roads, the issue of photography, behaviour change (acculturation, alcoholism), degradation and preservation of sites, environmental protection, the need for hygiene and management of waste.

The second part of this case study will be conducted by end 2011. It should clarify the outcomes and impacts achieved and those to be completed.

Impact

At this stage, the impact is more of a socio-psychological document than materialised on the ground.

First of all, the analysis highlighted the composition of the sector actors (segments and sub segments), their activities and their interrelationships at local and national levels. In short, the institutional environment of the destination is known or observable by all private and public operators of the destination thereby facilitating interconnections such as: cooperation, complementarities, coordination and synergy of activities which are practices for speeding the local industry development.

On the other hand, the analysis provided details of the flow and volume of local expenditure by tourists in all segments and sub segments of the chain (catering, handicrafts, transport, etc...) enabling to prioritise efforts on the segments with strong economic impact and poverty reduction. Tourists expenditure which do not benefit the local economy were also identified allowing local operators to develop where possible, local alternatives.

Finally, the local operators and authorities were able to gather relevant assessments from tourists to improve management of the destination.

All these data are very useful for stakeholders and local government bodies to control the economy sector and especially to integrate it into the public management of local affairs. These data therefore contribute to the decision making of all stakeholders to improve the sector.

Lessons learnt

The value chain analysis aims at collecting and analysing reliable data hence the importance of first hand data and qualified investigators. These precautions are strategic to meet the various challenges in this area: control questionnaires, reluctance to disclose the amount of income and wages to the family and the

revenue authorities, weaknesses of official statistics, lack of accounting in business, culture more oral than written, etc.

VCA takes time and must be planned according to the tourist season to avoid a lack of key stakeholders (tourists, seasonal workers, etc).

Disseminating the VCA results at local level and at the International Tourism Fair in Bamako allowed SNV significantly increase its visibility and credibility in the sector and enforced its position among the authorities and potential partners sector and donors.

Finally, it appears that the consideration and analysis of external factors that affect tourist arrivals must be integrated into the VCA and activities must be planned in partnership with the tourism authorities at the national level.

Sustainability

Capacity building of local stakeholders will take place from 2011, so we can not mention sustainability yet.

The case is useful to tour operators and tourism consultants to manage the implementation of the approach «value chain analysis and development». Sharing the case with them could be valuable.

This is a mid-term achievement case. Following the diagnostic phase "value chain analysis", initiatives are currently focused on implementing the second phase "value chain development". Scaling up this support to other tourist destinations would only be possible after a year or two and would be conditioned upon the results of the current route.

A critical mass of technical and financial partners for the implementation of the Development phase activities and improving the communication of the Malian state with regards to the detrimental publicity are necessary conditions for the success of this intervention.

The tourism value chain is transversal in the sense that it involves several other value chains (agriculture, livestock, crop, forestry, etc.) which multiplies the opportunities for partnership. Current partners are: (USAID) through the project GSTA / PD (Alliance for Sustainability in Dogon Area), the German cooperation through the DED (architectural and cultural tourism). Contacts are underway with the Italian cooperation through NGOs CIVS (gardening), French cooperation across AFDI (gardening, breeding). Many other partners remain to be explored.

Quotes:

"As my retirement was getting closer from my teaching career, I started gradually in 1995 investing in tourism with the help of my children and nephews on a land donated by the chief of village. Revenues obtained quickly exceeded my salary as a teacher and I could pay their studies in tourism. Today, they are 7 graduates to work in our hotel. What SNV does in terms of awareness of pro-poor tourism development, incitement for collaboration between different actors and strengthening the capacity of providers of goods and services in tourism is important because we need to be oriented and strengthened."

From Mr Paul TOGO, the owner of Togona hotel in Bandiagara.



Location of the Dogon area in Mali

Standard data:

Start/end date of the contract: January 2010 to end 2012

Composition of the team: 1 tourism advisor and 1 intern in 2010.

2011-2012, we shall have 2 advisors (1 expatriate and 1 local) and 2 interns (1 local and 1 expatriate). Two LCB consultants will also be involved.

PP-days already invested. 216 PPD (123 on implementation; 8 on evaluation; 51 on strategic planning and 34 PPD for contract with international consultant)

The financial resources invested:

- Euros 6,100 for activities with clients and internal needs
- Euros 10,215 for international consultant, paid half by Mali and half by regional network

Not included salaries and travel expenditures for advisor and driver.

Client satisfaction and enhanced capacity scores (scores on outcome and impact).
Level 3