



The Role and Experience of the Sierra Leone National Tourist Board in Promoting Tourism in Sierra Leone - 25th September 2012.

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BACKGROUND ON SIERRA LEONE TOURIST BOARD DEVELOPMENT

- 1982: Sierra Leone developed a Tourism Master Plan - a study done by Parnel Kerr Forster and funded by the then European Community (EC), laid the foundation for the creation of the Tourist Board.
- 1988: Technical assistance from EC, led to the appointment of a Tourism Adviser with task of implementing the major recommendations contained in the Tourism Master Plan i.e., separate responsibilities between the Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Affairs as policy maker and the NTB as implementing body.
- 1990: The Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Affairs acting on the Tourism Adviser's Report enacted a new and more comprehensive legal instrument guiding the Tourism sector (Development of Tourism Act 1990.) This Act established a National Tourism Authority – the National Tourist Board of Sierra Leone, defined its roles, responsibilities and provided very attractive statutory development aids and incentives for investors in the Hotel and Tourism sector.
- 1997 – 2002: The difficult years due to political instability.
- 2002 – 2007: The Healing period.
- 2007 – Date: The Hopeful years.



1991 The National Tourist Board commenced operations having its first General Manager appointed by the Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Affairs from the Irish Tourist Board. 21 years later, the NTB has transformed amidst political, economic and socio-cultural challenges to a formidable institution geared towards achieving its mandates.

Responsibilities of NTB

- Implementation of Government tourism policies
- Developing and promoting sustainable and responsible tourism.
- Developing and executing appropriate marketing and promotion campaign and strategies.
- Facilitating private investment in the tourism industry
- Registration, licensing and classification all Tourist Establishments
- Product Development



Role of the Sierra Leone National Tourist Board in Tourism Development

- Monitoring the operations of all tourist establishments to ensure quality services in compliance with ECOWAS Standards of Classification of Tourist Establishments.
- Identification and development of the country's tourism products
- Market and Promote Sierra Leone as an attractive destination both locally and internationally.
- Promote positive image of the country internationally.
- Exploit the full potential of Sierra Leones' tourism
- Compile and produce statistical data on tourists/visitors arrival of the Country.
- Explore and develop new tourist destinations
- Organize and participate in capacity building programs for the Public and Private Sector in the Tourism Industry both locally and internationally.
- Serve as the liaison between the Private Sector and Government



The Journey So Far - Experiences

Over the past 21 years the NTB through numerous challenges has been able to accomplish positive strides in its drive to promote tourism in Sierra Leone

- Developed and Implemented projects to support tourism development and promotion in Sierra Leone : Integrated Framework Tourism Project (IFTP Tier 1)Tourism Project 2008-2010 successfully completed. Funding of US\$600K, Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF Tier 2) Tourism Project – ongoing. Funding of US \$3million
- Researched, identified, assessed and documented all tourism assets nationwide.
- Monitored and supervised the Beach Management Activities (Lumley Beach Development Project.)
- Organized regular Refresher Training Programmes, seminars and workshops on beach safety, security and other related activities.



•The journey so far – Experiences... Contd.

- Monitored, Assessed, Licensed, Classified and supervised the operations of Tourist Establishments countrywide as well as ensuring guest safety and promotion of good service delivery.
- Established Tourist Information Desk at Freetown International Airport and other outlets.
- Collects and disseminates visitors' statistics to government institutions, international institutions, private sector, investors etc.



The journey so far – Experiences - Contd.

- Organized Familiarization Tours for over 100 International Tour Operators/Travel Writers/Journalists from France, Belgium, U.K, Hungary, USA, etc.
- Regular Production and Printing of Promotional Materials such as: Visitors Guide to Sierra Leone, Handy Guide, Tourist Maps, Tourism Documentary Films and Marketing Tool-kit, Posters of different scenes, Banners, Brochures, Destination Brochures, Hotels/Guest Houses and Entertainment Directory and other marketing tool kits.



The journey so far - Experiences Contd...

- Regular participation at International Tourism fairs: the World Travel Market in the UK (WTM), the International Tourismus Bourse in Berlin (ITB), Top Resa in France, Fitur in Spain
- Attendance in regional tourism fairs: West African Travel (Mboka) and African Travel Association (ATA).
- Participated in investment and outreach missions locally and internationally.
- Organizing sensitization awareness campaigns and programmes on the significance and benefits of tourism towards the socio economic development of the country.
- Supported community based Tourism activities – Western Area Beach Festival (Welt Hunger and Hilfe –WHH), River No. 2. and Tribe Wanted.
- Participation in local Trade Fairs , Exhibitions and Festivals.



The journey so far – Experiences Contd...

- Designed New Tourism Website. www.welcometosierrealeone.sl
- Networking and liaison with relevant authorities/organizations/agencies to solicit small grants/assistance to support small tourism related projects activities nationwide.

Under the IFTP project, the following were achieved:

- Developed a seven year Tourism Strategic and Action Plan which identified a road map for tourism development and promotion in Sierra Leone 2009 – 2015.
- A two year below the line Marketing and Promotion program undertaken
- Capacity building programmes attained through the training of 64 tourist guides and 180 low cadre front office personnel of Hotels/ Guest Houses/Restaurants and other Tourist Establishments country wide.



The journey so far – Experiences Contd...

- Building on the gains of the IFTP and in accordance with the recommendations of the Strategic Action Plan on Tourism in Sierra Leone, a three year project proposal was developed and approved under the Enhanced Integrated Framework Tourism Project (EIF-Tier 2) – “The Sustainable Tourism Development and Promotion Project” to address the following:
 - Sector Governance: this will address regulatory problems facing the industry
 - i. Review of the Tourism Development Act of 1990
 - ii Formulation of an Ecotourism Policy and Action Plan.



The journey so far – Experiences Contd...

Product Development: Enhance and add value to 5 targeted Ecotourism sites i.e., the Tiwai Island in the Southeast, Wara Wara Mountain in the North, Banana Island, Tacugama Chimp Sanctuary and River No.2 in the Western Area Peninsular through provision of small grants.

- Promotion of marketing initiatives to support targeted ecotourism products i.e., mountaineering, sport fishing, fauna and flora, bird watching, culture/heritage tourism, nature base tourism, adventure, sight seeing
- Institutional and Human Resource capacity Building of the public and private sectors. Support to Hotel and Tourism Training Center and advisory services to NACTOG, NCTVA and other professional associations.



Views on Sierra Leone Tourism – Evidence of Change

“Sierra Leone has **everything** a traveler **could desire.**”

The Observer

“It **won't be long** before Sierra Leone **takes its place** in Europe's **packaged beach-holiday scene.**”

Lonely

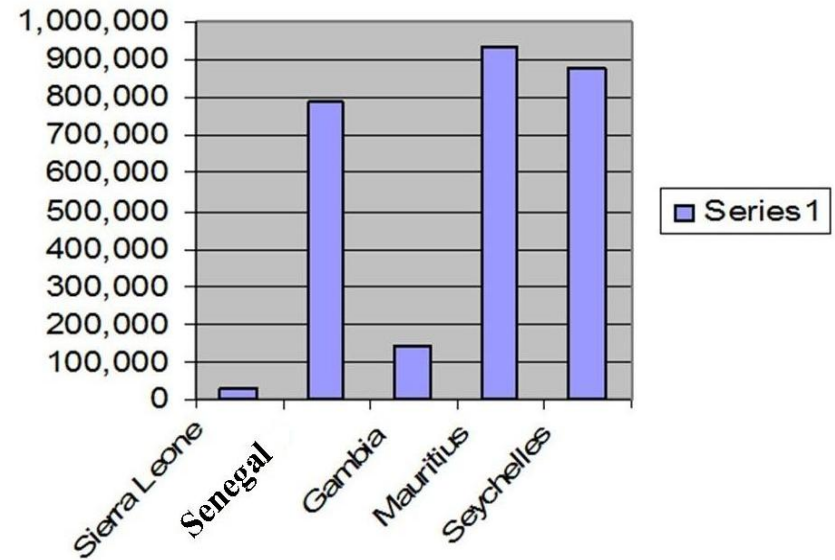
“Africa's **sunshine secret... peace** now **reigns** and the **beaches** are **beckoning.** ...In fact, it's been a while since I last got so **attached** to a **place** so **quickly.**”

The Times

“There is **nowhere quite like Freetown** anywhere else **in the world**This is **real Africa**, not comparatively clinical South African, or package-holiday north Africa – this is **where** the **sights**, the **sounds** and **smells** of the continent **come alive.**”

The Observer

Annual Tourist Arrivals -2007
(UNWTO Compendium 2009)



The **growth potential** of the sector is **striking** - especially given the **rave reviews** of the critics and the **size of comparable tourist markets**

Views on Sierra Leone Tourism - Evidence of Change

*“River No 2, with its **mountainous backdrop** and **glittering oceanic horizon**, rivals **anywhere on earth** for **brehtaking** coastal **grandeur...**” – The Observer*

There are many miles of unexploited white and golden sand beaches throughout the coastline but in particular down the Western Peninsula. A Land of Fragile Beauty Emerges After Years of War, by Marc Santora

Critically acclaimed and still underinvested, the **beaches** of Sierra Leone remain almost entirely untouched. Coastline presents **significant opportunities** for **high-end** tourism **lodges**, similar to those in other parts of Africa. Government is **building** the required **infrastructure** to improve **access** to key beach locations



CURRENT STATUS/IMPACT OF PROMOTING TOURISM IN SIERRA LEONE –STATISTICAL DATA

PURPOSE OF VISIT BY AIR FROM 2007 TO JAN – JUN 2012

YEAR	HOLIDAY	V.F.R	BUSINESS	CONFERENCE	OTHERS	TOTAL
2007	3,842	4,154	9,571	1,812	12,844	32,223
2008	4,292	5,068	10,455	2,343	13,512	35,670
2009	8,627	4,635	11,414	4,577	7,522	36,775
2010	7,728	5,156	12,803	4,208	8,720	38,615
2011	11,146	9,483	18,480	5,337	7,996	52,442
JAN- JUN 2012	5,328	7,274	11,614	4,828	3,553	32,597



PLACE OF RESIDENCE BY AIR FROM 2007 TO JAN – JUN 2012

	AFRICA	ASIA	AMERICA	MIDDLE EAST	EUROPE	OTHERS	TOTAL
2007	10,846	2,579	6,169	965	11,327	337	32,223
2008	11,915	3,142	6,684	888	12,713	328	35,670
2009	11,637	3,515	7,348	948	12,815	512	36,775
2010	10,806	3,516	7,406	2,667	10,295	3,925	38,615
2011	15,652	5,360	10,474	2,485	13,807	3,664	52,442
JAN-JUN 2012	9,467	3,484	6,220	2,103	9,000	2,040	32,597

NUMBER OF BEADS AND ROOMS AVAILABLE 2007 -2011

NO.		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	TOTAL
1	Hotels Rooms Available	888	1,290	1,197	1,419	1,730	6,524
2	Hotels Beds Availble	1,396	1,626	2,305	1,769	1,832	8,928
3	Guest Houses Rooms Avai.	1,294	1,317	1,456	1,461	1,578	7,106
4	Guest Houses Beds Avail.	1,348	1,324	1,567	1,486	1,868	7,593
TOTAL		4,926	5,557	6,525	6,135	7,008	30,151

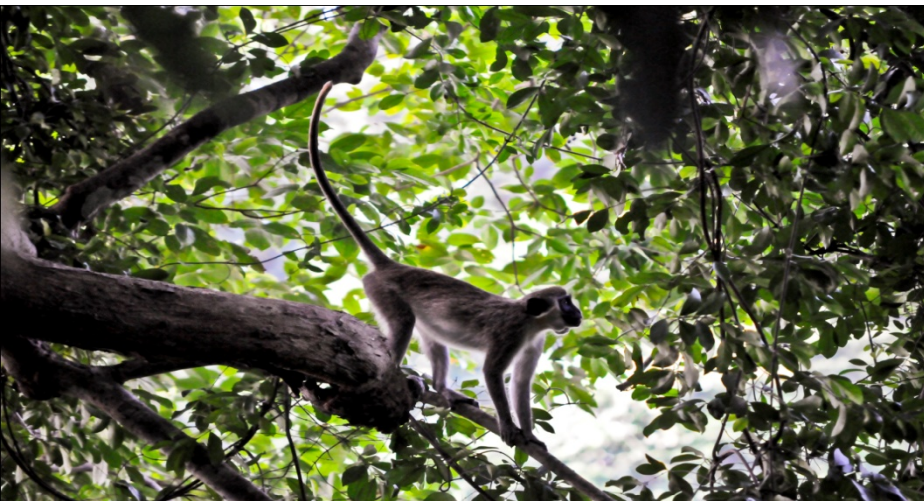
REVENUE GENERATED

YEAR	AMOUNT IN US \$
2005	21.5M
2006	18.4M
2007	24.6M
2008	27.1M
2009	26.1M
2010	27.1M
2011	36.9M



Constraints

- a. Lack of coordination between the Board/Ministries/Departments and Agencies.
- b. Lack of enthusiasm and support from the Private Sector to support marketing activities.
- c. Low marketing budget.
- d. Lack of capacity both in terms of human and capital capacity.(service Delivery poor and access to finance limited and expensive
- e. Limited Government support.
- f. 80% of the Tourism products are underdeveloped.
- g. Currently the regulatory framework of the tourism industry is obsolete , weak and does not reflect modern trend.
- i. Poor infrastructural facilities hindering tourism growth.





IS THERE A POTENTIAL FOR A NEW APPROACH AND IMPROVEMENT? Yes

SUPPORTING FACTORS

- a. Need for Government support towards tourism development and promotion (Tourism now part of the Government's Agenda for Prosperity programme)
- b. More funding (Support from the EIF- Tier 2, under the Sustainable Development and Promotion Project a three year funding totaling 2.9millions dollars to support tourism development and promotion in Sierra Leone)
- c. Re-positioning and branding using the data driven approach
- d. Human resource (More training opportunities being developed)
- e. Redefining of the sector with the review of the Development of Tourism Act 1990 and
· the formulation of an Eco-tourism policy and Action Plan

HURDLES TO ACHIEVING THIS GOAL

- a. **Political** (the fight to convince government, visa issue, having other line ministries or sectors to work together with i.e, Ministries of Lands, Energy and Power, Transport and Aviation Foreign Affairs, Roads Authority, Immigration etc)
- b. **Social (Poverty, Diseases, etc)**
- c. **Cultural (cultural intolerances)**



NEW STRATEGIC PLAN

- a. Develop linkage with the Private Sector and other relevant MDAs. Ensure the Private Sector is key in expanding the Industry
- b. Source alternative funding to strengthen product development, marketing/promotion and capacity building not addressed under the EIF Tier 2.**



Experience and get the feel of a paradise unspoilt

Sierra Leone....

The freedom to explore

THANK YOU!