



FINAL REPORT

Sustainability of Rural Tourism Products in South Africa: A Hypothetical Application

University of Venda
&
Council for Scientific and Industrial Research

March 2018



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This document has been prepared by Gift Dafuleya, Lorren Haywood, Tondani Nethengwe, Karen Nortje and Fhatuwani Sumbana within the framework of a Memorandum of Understanding between the National Department of Tourism (NDT) and the University of Venda, and in terms of a sub-service contract concluded between the University of Venda and the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research.

Research study guidance and a review has been provided by the Expert Forum members nominated, by the NDT, from various institutions in South Africa.

Valuable inputs were received from the NDT research team, the product owners, and anonymous key informants from various tourism-related institutions in South Africa.

Finally, special thanks go to the University of Venda Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management interns for their research assistance.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	II
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	III
FIGURES	IV
TABLES	V
LIST OF BOXES.....	VI
LIST OF ACRONYMS	VII
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	VIII
1. INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES.....	9
2. CONCEPTUAL OVERVIEW AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK	11
2.1. RURAL TOURISM: CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS	11
2.2. METHODOLOGY	14
3. REVIEW OF RTPS AND THEIR SUSTAINABILITY	20
3.1. RURAL TOURISM PRODUCTS AND THEIR CATEGORISATION	20
3.2. SUSTAINABILITY OF RURAL TOURISM PRODUCTS	23
3.3. EXAMPLES OF TOURISM SUSTAINABILITY FRAMEWORKS	28
4. OVERVIEW OF RTPS IN SOUTH AFRICA	35
4.1. GENERAL UNDERSTANDING OF RURAL TOURISM PRODUCTS BY THE RESPONDENTS	35
4.2. PROFILING OF THE RTPS CURRENTLY AVAILABLE IN SOUTH AFRICA	37
5. THE SUSTAINABILITY FRAMEWORK OF RTPS IN SOUTH AFRICA.....	40
5.1. PRINCIPLES, CRITERIA AND INDICATORS.....	40
5.2. THE RTP SUSTAINABILITY FRAMEWORK	41
6. APPLICATION OF THE RTP SUSTAINABILITY FRAMEWORK	57
6.1. A HYPOTHETICAL APPLICATION	57
6.2. SELECTION OF THE INDICATORS' DECISION TREE	62
7. CONCLUSIONS	65
8. REFERENCES	66
9. APPENDICES	69

FIGURES

Figure 1: Conceptualising the nature of Rural Tourism.....	13
Figure 2: Procedure used to conduct the literature review.....	15
Figure 3: Methodological framework for the development of sustainability principles, criteria and indicators.....	18
Figure 4: A flow chart of sustainable tourism.....	24
Figure 5: A sustainability framework of CBRT.....	33
Figure 6: The scoring and weighting system used to measure the performance of sustainability indicators.....	34
Figure 7: The Profile of RTPs in South Africa with an online presence.....	37
Figure 8: RTP distribution, by category.....	38
Figure 9: RTP distribution per province, by category.....	39
Figure 10: RTP Sustainability Principles, Criteria, Indicators.....	41
Figure 11: RTP sustainability at first year assessment: principles' level.....	58
Figure 12: RTP sustainability at second year assessment: principles' level.....	59
Figure 13: RTP sustainability at first year assessment: indicators' level.....	60
Figure 14: RTP sustainability at second year assessment: indicators level.....	61
Figure 15: Selection of indicators' decision tree.....	63

TABLES

Table 2.1: Number of participants in key informant interviews.....	17
Table 3.1: How to turn natural and cultural resources into RTPs.....	21
Table 3.2: The global sustainable tourism criteria for the tourism industry	30
Table 5.1: The RTP sustainability scale.....	42
Table 5.2: The sustainability framework	43
Table 6.1: A hypothetical RTP case.....	57



LIST OF BOXES

Box 1: Definitions of the term 'rural tourism'	12
Box 2: Examples of indicators of sustainable development for tourism destination, as guided by the UNWTO	29

LIST OF ACRONYMS

CBRT	community-based rural tourism
CRDP	Comprehensive Rural Development Programme
GSTC	Global Sustainable Tourism Council
NDT	National Department of Tourism
NTSS	National Tourism Sector Strategy
RTP	rural tourism product
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
StatsSA	Statistics South Africa
TIES	The International Ecotourism Society
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environmental Programme
UNWTO	United Nations World Trade Organization
WCSDF	World Cities Scientific Development Forum
WTTC	World Travel and Tourism Council

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report reviews the literature and other extant credible sources to identify, and to profile, rural tourism products (RTPs) in South Africa in the context of sustainability to support the National Department of Tourism's (NDT's) 2012 Strategy, outcome seven, in relation to sustainable rural communities, with a strong emphasis on supporting rural tourism. Building on the assumption that sustainable RTPs lead to sustainable rural communities, an RTP sustainability framework is, therefore, at the core of the report. The report is not prescriptive in terms of the sustainable indicators that should be adopted, but rather, given the complexity and diversity of the number of issues surrounding rural tourism, it provides a framework that acts as a base for RTPs to plan, implement and assess their sustainability.

The report first provides a conceptual overview of rural tourism and its products, activities and/or services, as well as the methodological framework used to arrive at the key findings made.

Key finding one: Rural tourism might not necessarily be confined within the ambit of a non-urban milieu. A 'country experience', encompassing a wide range of attractions and activities that take place in a cultural, agricultural, or natural resource setting, may occur in an urban area, or on its outskirts. This finding demonstrates the possibility of rural tourism transcending the rural–urban divide. However, for the purposes of this study, the rural–urban locational divide is important, because the NDT's Strategy specifically aims to develop rural communities – defined as non-urban, former homeland, and/or sparsely populated areas – via tourism.

Key finding two: Many categorisations of RTPs exist under which tourism activities and/or services profiling may be conducted. Using a literature review from, and about, South Africa, the following categorisations were deemed compatible with the South African context-specific RTPs: nature-based tourism; ecotourism; cultural tourism; agritourism; adventure tourism, and all other types of tourism. In each and every province of South Africa, RTPs are classified within the foregoing categories. While many RTPs have been profiled, it cannot be claimed that the list is exhaustive, because the approach was mostly limited to 'metascrawling' websites.

Key finding three: Prescriptiveness regarding the specific indicators that should be adopted was found to be inappropriate, because RTPs are highly heterogeneous, with the context within which they operate tending to differ. However, the report provides the key principles, the criteria, and the indicators for considering whether an RTP's sustainability is to be planned, implemented and assessed by the owners, to such an extent that it is institutionally feasible. In developing the framework, the principles, the criteria, and the indicators were aligned with South African policy documents to improve the relevance and the adequacy of the indicators involved.

A hypothetical case was applied to test the viability of the sustainability framework. Whereas the framework can typically be applied, the challenge underlying the development of a coherent, harmonised and comparable set of RTP indicators in terms of all categorisations is acknowledged.

1. Introduction and Objectives

In recent years, rural tourism has become an important development strategy for tackling poverty and unemployment among low- to middle-income countries. In South Africa, the significance of such a strategy is reflected in the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP) (2009), and in the National Tourism Sector Strategy (NTSS) (2012). Targeting development in the rural areas is extremely relevant, since 75 per cent of the world's poor are estimated to live in the rural areas in general, and a quarter of South Africans currently live in rural areas that are characterised by extreme poverty, and by underdevelopment, in particular.

Earmarking rural tourism as part of the instrumental tools for use in the fight against poverty requires that the rural tourism products (RTPs), services, and/or activities should not only be viable, but that they should also be sustainable. Yet, South Africa lacks a framework to guide and measure the different sustainable RTPs, services, and/or activities concerned. While the literature (see United Nations World Trade Organization [UNWTO], 2004; Glyptou, Paravantis, Papatheodorou and Spilanis, 2014; Zeppel, 2015) shows that RTP sustainability frameworks exist elsewhere, such frameworks do not necessarily apply in South Africa, due to the nature of rural South Africa, which has a unique social and cultural context.

The sustainability framework of RTPs is at the core of this report, which has three main objectives:

- to provide a critical review of the RTP-related literature, and how they may be assessed in terms of their sustainability;
- to identify and profile the RTPs present in South Africa; and
- to develop a framework that acts as a base for RTPs to plan, to implement, and to assess their sustainability, from both a demand and supply perspective.

Significantly, this report is not prescriptive in terms of the developed framework and indicators thereof that require adoption. Rather, given the complexity and diversity of the issues surrounding rural tourism in South Africa, the framework should be seen as a broad resource that acts as a base for the planning, the implementation, and the assessment of sustainability, without a requirement to fulfil all the indicators involved, as the RTPs might find that some of the indicators are not applicable in terms of their specific operational context.

This report stands, firstly, to facilitate the unlocking of rural tourism, in particular in South Africa; secondly, to assist tourism-related businesses and/or enterprises to develop plans that could make their RTPs more sustainable; thirdly, to benefit the rural local communities, where the rural products are found; and, lastly, to enhance the sustained product complementarity, given that, if one product is not sustainable, it could trigger problems relating to other related products, to the detriment of the tourism industry.

The research report is organised as follows. Section two provides a conceptual overview of the nature of rural tourism, discussing, in particular, the country and cultural experience that is embedded in RTPs,

services, and/or activities. It then presents a methodological framework that is used to arrive at key outcomes, especially in terms of the development of the framework. Section three presents a critical review of the literature on RTPs, focusing on how they may be categorised, and then on how they may be assessed in terms of their sustainability. Section four provides an overview of the RTPs identified in South Africa, whereas section five develops the sustainability RTP framework, which is then applied to a hypothetical case in section six.

2. Conceptual Overview and Methodological Framework

As part of the development agenda to reduce the prevailing levels of rural poverty and unemployment, the NDT has been driving a rural-tourism-led development process. The above requires a clear understanding of what is, and what is not, rural. In this section, we, firstly, discuss the concepts and definitions of 'rural', 'rural tourism' and 'rural tourism products', noting the variations in the understanding of the concepts, as they appear in the extant literature and across the different actors, as well as the recent move made towards showcasing RTPs within the urban milieu. Secondly, we present the methodology framework that was followed to profile the RTPs; to gather the views of the key informants; to develop the sustainability framework; and to conduct the consultation process and workshops held during the study.

2.1. Rural Tourism: Concepts and Definitions

Over the past five decades, tourism has been one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world, due to the improvements that have occurred in terms of transportation and the cost of travel (UNWTO, 2017). The tourism industry now supports one in every 10 jobs in the world, which translates into 10.2 per cent of the total employment (World Travel and Tourism Council [WTTC], 2017). Statistics South Africa (StatsSA) (2016) reports that, in 2014, tourism contributed 9.7 per cent to the GDP and 4.5 per cent to the total employment. Tourism has come to rival the country's mining industry, in terms of its overall contribution to the GDP. The gains made from tourism cut across both the rural and urban areas, with positive consequences for poverty alleviation (Rogerson, 2006). The concept of 'rural' is defined by the CRDP (2009) as pertaining to sparsely populated areas that people farm, or on which they depend for their accessing of natural resources. Such areas include villages, large settlements in the former homelands, and small towns that are widely dispersed throughout South Africa.

The NDT's rural tourism strategy is guided by the foregoing CRDP's definition of 'rural', which, arguably, presents the State's definition of the term. Noteworthy, the definition accommodates small towns as forming part of the rural sector. In contrast, the definitions of 'rural' by such non-State actors as Sharpley and Sharpley (1997) **exclude** small towns. The above-mentioned difference in definition has led Briedenhann and Wickens (2004) to conclude that the nature of what is 'rural' is difficult to define, in the South African context.

Given the complexity and heterogeneity of the term 'rural', defining the nature of 'rural tourism' is difficult. Chambers (2005) categorically states that the latter concept is subject to a number of interpretations, as its definition is, as yet, unclear. The above does not mean that the existing definitions employed by the different actors within the field of tourism cannot be used to define the term, 'rural tourism'. Instead, the above means that the aforementioned actors' definitions fail to converge with one another, with serious consequences for the clarification of the term 'rural tourism' (see Box 2.1). The prevailing confusion compelled Getz and Page (1997) to undertake a critical analysis of the various interpretations of, and academic positions on, the concept, it has been used since the 1960s. They concluded that the

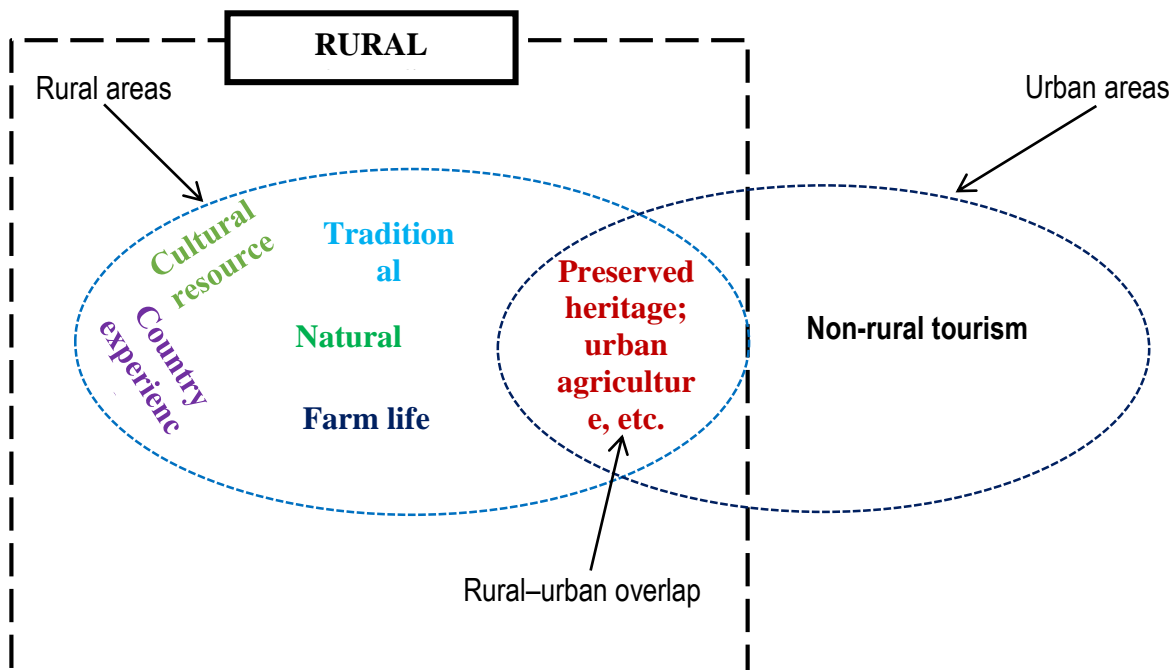
understandings of 'rural tourism' tend to differ internationally, largely because of the difficulties that are inherent in defining what is 'rural'.

Box 1: Definitions of the term 'rural tourism'

Pearce (1989)	The term is defined by the 'country experience' that encompasses a wide range of attractions and activities taking place in agricultural and/or natural environments.
Lane (1994)	The term indicates tourism that is located in rural and functionally rural areas, as based upon the rural world's special features of small-scale enterprise, open space, contact with nature and the natural world, and heritage (in terms of traditional societies and traditional practices).
Fleischer and Pizam (1997)	The term relates to tourism that is characterised by the taking of 'country vacations', during which the tourists concerned spend most of their vacation period engaging in recreational activities in a rural environment on a farm or ranch, in a country home, or in the surrounding areas.
Sharpley and Sharplet (1997)	The concept encompasses a wide range of activities, incorporating natural or man-made attractions, amenities and facilities, transportation, marketing, and information systems.
Prosser (2000)	The concept, in addition to alluding to farm-based holidays, also alludes to special-interest nature holidays and ecotourism; walking, climbing and riding holidays; adventure, sport and health tourism; hunting and angling expeditions; educational travel; arts and heritage tourism; and, in some areas, ethnic tourism.
MacDonald and Jolliffe (2003)	The concept concerns such aspects of culture and heritage as oral history, folklore, and local and family traditions.
Petric (2003)	The concept refers to enabling visitors to have personal contact with, or a taste of, the physical and human environment of the countryside, and, as far as possible, to allow them to participate in the activities, traditions and lifestyles of the local people situated there.
UNDP (2005)	Any form of tourism that showcases the rural life, art, culture and heritage in a rural location can be regarded as such a form of tourism. Rural tourism benefits the local community both economically and socially, as well as enabling interaction to occur between the tourists and the locals, for an enhanced educational tourism experience.
Fons, Fierro and y Patiño (2011)	The concept refers to tourism that occurs in the countryside, rather than in the town.
National Tourism Sector Strategy (2012)	The term relates to tourism that is not only located in sparsely populated areas where people farm, or where they depend on the local natural resources, with such areas including the former homelands, as well as small towns and villages, but which also involves the local poor.
De la Torre et al. (2014)	Such tourism can be seen as consisting of the revitalisation that is undertaken for the socio-economic benefit of the local communities.
Fatimah (2015)	The term refers to all cultural (including historic places and cultural/religious views) and natural resources (including agriculture and topography).
Todes and Turok (2017)	The term relates to tourism in areas that are characterised by poverty, unemployment, falling income levels, and reduced job opportunities.

Several catchwords emerge from the various definitions of rural tourism given in Box 2.1 above, including ‘country experience’, ‘cultural and/or natural resources’, ‘farm or agricultural facet’, ‘heritage’, and ‘traditional practices’. As such activities can be pursued in both rural and urban areas, some authors of definitions go to some length to emphasise that the former must be undertaken in rural (non-urban) places to qualify as forming part of ‘rural tourism’, per se. Indeed, a ‘country experience’ that encompasses a wide range of attractions and activities taking place in a cultural, agricultural or natural resource setting might be located in an urban area, or on its outskirts. The location of tourism is, therefore, important, with it helping to define the nature of the form of tourism involved (see Figure 1 below).

Figure 1: Conceptualising the nature of Rural Tourism



As urbanisation extends to areas that were once predominantly rural, the need for preserving some of the rural heritage sites involved has become of increasing importance. The above holds especially true for South Africa, where traditional culture, in spite of the influence of modernity, has tended to be highly respected. The manner of preservation of shrines is a typical example of the high esteem accorded to cultural heritage. With the spread of urbanisation, the overlap between rural and urban environments has resulted in an almost inevitable demand for cultural, traditional and/or country experiences to be preserved, even within the urban milieu.

Rapid urbanisation is also placing enormous demands on urban food supply systems. The World Cities Scientific Development Forum (WCSDF) (2012) posits that urban agriculture not only has the potential to reduce food insecurity and urban poverty, but it can also serve as a form of ecotourism that helps: (1) to improve the uniqueness of a city; (2) to preserve the natural heritage; and (3) to protect ecologically sensitive areas. The aforementioned WCSDF conference, which took place in China, saw the presentation of research papers showcasing urban greening and how agricultural development can lead

to tourism, primarily in the rural areas. Agrarian practice, which is used to define the nature of 'rural tourism', can now occur in urban areas, thereby contributing to the rural–urban overlap.

In the current report, we focus mainly on rural tourism that has no locational overlap with the urban milieu. We do, however, narrowly reflect on the issue of rural tourism as located in urban areas, in some sections of the report, in terms of profiling the RTPs in South Africa, as well as in relation to piloting of the developed sustainability framework. The key reason for focusing on the core rural-domiciled tourism is that the NDT's rural tourism strategy is targeted strictly towards the rural areas that are characterised by poverty, a reduced number of job opportunities, and vulnerable households. In the above context, rural tourism might be well positioned to bring about opportunities for local economic development and for poverty alleviation, especially by means of creating labour-intensive employment opportunities.

2.2. Methodology

Three distinguishing activities were undertaken, in terms of the adoption of a cascading approach, to facilitate the finalisation of the current report. Firstly, the RTP-related literature was reviewed in relation to the issue of sustainability. Secondly, as guided by the categorisation of the RTPs and the sustainability frameworks found in the literature, the present researchers identified and profiled the currently existing RTPs in South Africa, so as to be able to develop a sustainability framework applicable to the South African context. Thirdly, by means of the identified RTPs enumerated, three RTPs were selected and empirically applied to test the developed sustainability framework.

2.2.1. Literature review procedure

A review of the RTP-related literature, and of how the existing RTPs address the issue of sustainability, contributed to the formulation of the objectives of the present report. Figure 2 below indicates the procedure that was followed to conduct the literature review concerned.

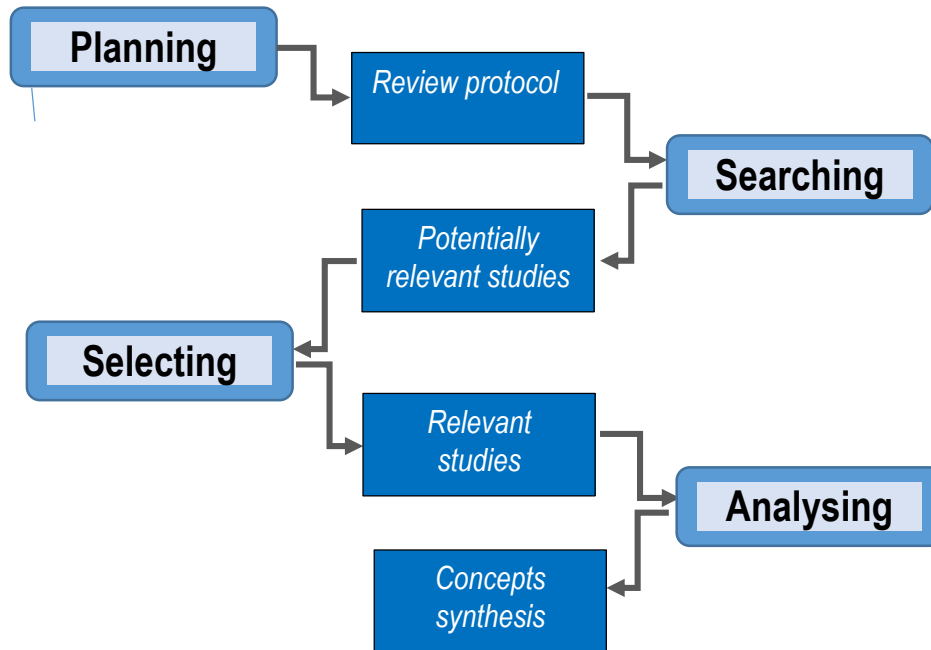
Procedure 1 (Planning): The first step taken prior to the literature search involved the compilation of a work plan, and the development of a research protocol, after which a day of training was presented to the tourism interns who held a BCom Honours in Tourism Management and to some who held a BCom Honours in Business Management. The training included reviewing the objectives of the study, searching the University of Venda's library database, providing guidelines on construct search strings and iterations, and undertaking a mock and practice search.

Procedure 2 (Searching): The searching for potentially relevant studies was undertaken by the research assistants during the third quarter of 2017. The first search interface involved such online academic databases as Elsevier, Science Direct, Springer, and Wiley, which were all subscribed to by the University of Venda. The second interface consisted of the Google search, consisting of scouting for relevant South African government and multilateral organisation reports.

The construct search strings included, but were not limited to, such words and/or terms as 'rural tourism', 'rural tourism products', 'cultural tourism', and 'agricultural tourism'. The iteration involved adding and/or

leaving out such concepts as ‘development’ to refine the nature of the hits concerned. Furthermore, backward and forward snowballing¹ was used to broaden the scope of the harvest of relevant literature.

Figure 2: Procedure used to conduct the literature review



Procedure 3 (Selecting articles): The selection of relevant literature, referenced in the current report, was done by two of the research team members. Explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria derived from the research objectives were used. A cascading approach of exclusion was used, during which, firstly, a potentially relevant study was excluded, based on the title, then on the abstract, and, finally, on the full paper content. Articles and/or reports were included if they addressed the issues of rural tourism, RTPs, and the sustainability of tourism.

Procedure 4 (Analysis): Equipped with the relevant literature, marking of all the passages of text that were related to the study concepts became the main analysis activity, followed by the formulation of a concept matrix to synthesise and summarise the primary studies into usable, concise information. Basically, the analysis made the relevant primary studies equivalent to data, which were then coded, so as to produce part of the information presented in the current report. Suffice it to indicate that the literature review provided more than just a summary of the literature concerned, with the focus being directed towards accessing concepts and definitions, and not, necessarily, the full articles themselves.

¹ ‘Backward snowballing’ takes place when the literature search retrieves the studies that the relevant study cites, while ‘forward snowballing’ takes place when the literature search retrieves studies citing the relevant study.

2.2.2. Procedure followed when identifying and searching information sources for the profiling of RTPs

To identify and profile the RTPs, we needed first to identify credible sources of information by means of which to access the relevant RTPs. The six secondary source types identified by the research team included: websites; tourism magazines; academic journals; bulletins; periodicals; and policy documents. Each of the source types is evaluated below.

Websites: The meta search engine that was used to identify the websites from which to retrieve information regarding the RTPs was the Metascrawler. The search engine blended the results obtained from such leading authority sites and search engines as Google, Yahoo!, Bing, MIVA, Ask.com, and About.com, as well as from other popular search engines. The main advantage offered by the Metascrawler was that it saved the research assistants both time and effort. The websites, which became the dominant source of information, were so numerous that they are not listed here. However, the list of those websites where details regarding RTPs were found is provided in the Excel sheet accompanying the current report, in which all the identified RTPs are profiled.

Tourism magazines: Three popular magazines were studied in close detail to assess whether it would be worthwhile to acquire all relevant South African magazines, and to use them as a source whereby to identify the RTPs. However, the research team agreed that magazines might not provide much information on RTPs, because the three that were scrutinised focused on anecdotal issues relating to only a few RTPs in each issue, causing it to be unlikely for them to achieve broad coverage of all the relevant RTPs in South Africa within the space of a year or less. For instance, one magazine covered, in a single issue, the latest gadgets, gear and garb to ensure a stress-free and comfortable autumn escapade, as well as why game rangers are the last defence against poaching and animal extinction. Tourism magazines were, accordingly, dropped from the list of potential sources of information.

Academic journals: Google Scholar was the search engine used to identify journal articles of relevance to the search for information on RTPs. The search yielded no journal article that could be a good source of details on RTPs in South Africa. Instead, the journal articles perused were found to contain information on the theoretical categories of RTPs, rather than on the RTPs themselves. Where the RTPs were discussed, such discussion mainly took the form of case studies, in terms of which deep scientific analysis was done, and, consequently, in relation to which depth was preferred to breadth. Accordingly, such journals also ceased to be considered a viable source of information.

Bulletins, periodicals and policy documents: The tourism policy bulletin issued by the NDT was considered to be of too high a level (with it covering policy- and strategy-related information) to be a source for identifying RTPs. The state of tourism report also gives broad categories of tourism products, services, or activities, without specific details regarding the actual names of the tourism products concerned. As a result, they were also excluded as a viable source of information.

The foregoing evaluation of information sources clearly showed that the websites considered should form the dominant source for identifying RTPs. Therefore, in the case of each profiled RTP, the team provided

its universal resource locator, or web address. A telephone call was made to verify whether the RTP concerned was still in place. The above-mentioned situation was challenging, because, in some cases, the phone numbers provided on the websites had either changed, or no longer existed. The researchers, therefore, found it difficult to confirm the existence of especially the relatively small RTPs.

To triangulate the effort exerted of using secondary sources to identify the relevant RTPs, key informants from academia, research and policy institutions, government tourism officers, and tourism association and agents were interviewed to solicit their views on where, and how, RTPs could be identified (see the next section).

2.2.3. Key informant interviews

The interviews of key informants², whose responses form the qualitative part of this study, had three main objectives:

- to confirm whether the researchers had good sources available for identifying the RTPs in South Africa;
- to gain an understanding of how RTPs could be categorised in South Africa; and
- to elicit perceptions on the sustainability of RTPs in South Africa.

Due to the qualitative nature of the study, the purposive non-probability selection of key interviews, which did not aim to draw statistical inferences, was used as the *modus operandi*. The above meant that the key informants were chosen because they most likely knew of specific RTPs, with the choice being made in such a way that it reflected the heterogeneity of the tourism players involved. Given the aforementioned context, the number of informants interviewed was less important than were the criteria used to select them.

Table 2.1: Number of participants in key informant interviews

Target institution	Abbreviation	Reason for inclusion	Number of participants
Academia	UR	Universities undertake the teaching about, and research into, the field of tourism.	8
Municipalities	MR	MR have tourism departments in place that are responsible for tourism management within their jurisdictions.	7
Tourism authorities	TAR	TAR are responsible for tourism activities in their jurisdictions.	2
Tourism associations and agents	TAAR	TAAR maintain a database of members, who could be the suppliers of RTPs.	4
Total number of interviews undertaken			21

² The study deliberately avoided the use of focus group discussions, because identifying RTPs did not require stimulating debate to be entered into to perceive the differences in perceptions and attitudes among the various group members. In each instance, a key informant was asked to provide a list of RTPs and their sources that might be verified by the team, and which might be triangulated with the responses of other key informants, who were likely to provide similar answers.

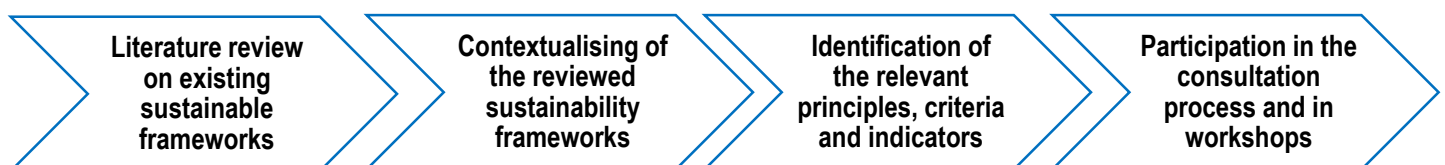
The conducting of the relevant interviews³ presented a challenge, in that some of the respondents concerned were unable to participate in face-to-face, or telephonic, interviews. However, some of the respondents asked whether they could provide a written response at a time convenient for themselves. Consequently, two out of the eight tourism lecturers/professors gave a written response, while the rest participated in face-to-face, or telephonic, interviews. No interviewee referred to colleagues who could provide more information than they did themselves, except for in the case of one interview with a municipality, during which reference was made to a Tourism and Parks Agency. While saturation point was not reached in respect of qualitative sample sizes, the interviews ceased when it was realised that expecting them to provide an exhaustive list and categorisation of RTPs was impracticable.

2.2.4. Methodological framework for developing the principles, the criteria and the indicators to assess the sustainability of RTPs in South Africa

The research team undertook the four key stages presented in the framework below (Figure 3) to develop the principles, the criteria and the indicators to address the issue of the sustainability of RTPs.

The development of the aforementioned principles, criteria and indicators started with a review of the existing sustainability frameworks found in the literature. Thereafter, the identified sustainability frameworks were consolidated and contextualised within the ambit of tourism practice in South Africa. The above involved taking into account South Africa's development plan, tourism strategies, policies, and legal documents, such as the Equity Act No. 55 of 1998 and the health and safety standards.

Figure 3: Methodological framework for the development of sustainability principles, criteria and indicators



The identification and selection of the relevant principles, criteria, and indicators whereby to address the sustainability of RTPs was grounded on the existing tourism sustainability frameworks, and on the South African development plans, tourism strategies, and legal and/or policy documents. The sustainability framework, which is discussed and presented in detail later on in this report, was then produced, prior to its subjection to a series of consultation processes and workshops. A consultation workshop, titled the 'Sustainability Framework for RTPs in South Africa Dialogue Meeting', was held in Pretoria on 25 January 2018.

³ The interview guide is provided in Appendix 1.

Key officials from the research directorate of the NDT were invited to participate in the workshop. In fact, the consultation process with the NDT's research directorate was ongoing, even before the start of the project, with the directorate being kept fully informed at all stages, in order to secure its guidance. Since the study was undertaken on behalf of the product owners concerned, their views were solicited at regular intervals, with them, effectively, becoming part of the workshop. The sustainability framework was also shared with the expert forum formed by the NDT to subject it to further scrutiny.

Upon completion of the first draft of the framework, the respondents in charge of a few of the RTPs were selected to review the practicability of the framework, which process was used for the conceptual testing of the sustainability framework for RTPs. The questionnaire (see Appendix 2) distributed received only one report back from an RTP, with the views obtained then being used to finalise the framework.

2.2.5 The piloting and case selection of RTPs for the empirical testing of the sustainability framework

To apply the framework empirically, a pilot RTP was selected to first check whether the identified principles, criteria and indications applied to their operations. The selected pilot, which was an RTP located in urban space, was selected for piloting so that they could become accustomed to the issues covered. Moreover, it was convenient to do so, for logistical reasons. Unfortunately, the delay in receiving the feedback from the RTP resulted in the framework having to be sent to two other RTPs located in the rural areas, prior to the receipt of the feedback. Also, no response was received prior to the writing of the current report. The only response that was received was in relation to the questionnaire on the appropriateness of the sustainability involved (see Appendix 2).

The training of RTPs on how to use the sustainability framework was clearly required, for their own benefit. The lack of response was not taken to mean that the RTPs involved were unwilling to provide feedback, in the light of their prior agreement to do so. Consequently, as part of the report, the sustainability framework is applied hypothetically. The same hypothetical scenario that is presented in the current report is, therefore, to be used in the training of the RTPs that are interested in assessing their own sustainability.

3. Review of RTPs and Their Sustainability

The current section discusses the categorisation of RTPs, and how they relate to sustainability issues, as observed in the existing literature. Section 1, which conceptualised and defined the nature of rural tourism, highlighted how such rural tourism could find its positioning within the urban areas. The section also emphasised how the rural development agenda of the government could be distorted if rural tourism was not strictly limited to the rural milieu. The present chapter follows such reasoning, with it focusing more on the tourism products, services and/or activities located in the rural areas, and less on those that are located in the urban areas, while acknowledging that the nature of the divide poses an inherent challenge. The chapter also reviews the existing sustainability frameworks of the RTPs concerned.

3.1. Rural Tourism Products and their Categorisation

According to Kotler (1997), the perception of a product is related to its ability to satisfy one's needs and wants. Contextualising this assertion within the field of tourism, tourism products can be seen as tourism experiences that should satisfy the needs and wants of those involved. Indeed, many authors (see, for example, Jefferson and Lickorish, 1988; Middleton, 1989; Johnson and Thomas, 1998; Prentice, 2001; Shaw and Ivens, 2002) define rural tourism similarly. As early as the 1970s, Medlik and Middleton (1973) described tourism products as consisting of a bundle of activities, services and benefits constituting the entire tourism experience leading to tourist satisfaction. According to the two authors, the aforementioned bundle consists of five components: destination attractions; destination facilities; accessibility; images; and price.

Sharma (2007), rather than considering the satisfaction of wants and needs in terms of defining a tourism product, instead defines a tourism product as whatever is promoted and marketed within the ambit of tourism. From a marketing perspective, the above makes sense, in that a seller could create a tourism product that, in turn, creates a want, or need, among the potential users of the product. Consequently, the satisfaction of wants and needs is, therefore, less important within the given context than is what is marketed.

Based on the foregoing perspectives, and on the need to restrict the consideration of rural tourism strictly to that tourism that occurs in rural places, as was discussed in section 1, a rural tourism product could be defined as a non-urban tangible, or intangible, service and/or activity that is marketed to both present and potential tourists so as to satisfy their needs and/or wants, in exchange for financial remuneration. It is, therefore, intriguing to know what the services and/or activities concerned are, and what examples were found in the literature. Prior to reviewing such literature, it is expedient to discuss the caveats pertaining to the definition of an RTP.

Xu (2009), in providing a caveat to the RTP definition used in the current report, stresses the need to take a holistic view of tourism products, claiming that tourism products include both core and support, as

well as complementary, elements in terms of the contemporary synchronised modern economies. The above means that a tourism product cannot be complete in isolation, because it constitutes the entire tourism experience, from when the tourist leaves home to the time of return. Middleton (1989) presents the entire product experience by referring to two different levels, namely the specific and the total. On the specific level, Middleton treats the product as a discrete service and/or activity that is offered by a single business, such as sightseeing. On the total level, Middleton treats the product as the complete experience of the tourist, as in from when they first set out to a destination for the purpose of sightseeing, the legal requirements of access thereto, and the hospitality that they encounter at each and every point along the way.

In terms of the non-urban services and/or activities constituting the RTPs, Du Cros (2001) discusses how a cultural asset can be transformed into an RTP. The author posits that a culture that is never marketed, and that is never made to appeal, to tourists has little chance of becoming, of itself, a tourism product. As already stated in the definition of RTP used in the current report, marketing is an embedded part of a tourism product, without which none of the rural activities and/or services can be seen as attractive. Basically, whatever is located in the rural areas, and whatever is marketable enough to attract tourists, can constitute an RTP. Fatimah (2015) presents how natural and cultural resources might be made attractive to tourists and transformed into RTPs, as is shown in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1: How to turn natural and cultural resources into RTPs

Types	Activities transformed into RTP	
Natural resources	Village's natural view	} Sightseeing
	Village's traditional atmosphere	
	Cultural/religious view	
	Agriculture	→ Farming lesson
	Topography	→ Trekking; hiking
Cultural resources	Traditional foods and fruits	→ Culinary experience; cooking lessons
	Historic places	→ Ritual/pilgrim tour
	Traditional music and art	→ Performance; event
	Traditional houses	→ Home stay; sightseeing
	Local craft making	→ Culinary

Source: Adapted from Fatimah (2015).

Whereas Fatimah (2015) uses two types of classification (shown in Table 3.1 above) embracing activities that, in turn, can be transformed into RTPs, other categorisations also exist in the literature. Each of the categories concerned is discussed separately below.

Agritourism: Such tourism can be defined as the act of visiting a working farm, or an agribusiness enterprise, for the purpose of enjoyment, education or active involvement in the activities of the farm, or operation (Che, Veeck and Veeck, 2005:227). The introduction of agritourism in relation to traditional farming practices is a relatively new concept in South Africa, which is based on the premise of attracting visitors to farms. The NDT (2012:37) also describes agritourism as a component of rural tourism that serves to attract visitors to farms or agricultural operations, with it being comprised of agricultural and other business enterprises that offer something for tourists to see, to do, and to buy.

A special subcategory of agritourism is that of wine tourism, in terms of which vineyard walks, the harvesting of grapes, and the purchasing and tasting of wine attract the attention of the tourists concerned (Wax, 2016). Wine tourism, also called enotourism or vinitourism, is a relatively new form of tourism, which has grown significantly throughout the first decade of the 21st century (Wax, 2016). As noted by Wax, in the United States, 27 million travellers, or 17 per cent of American leisure travellers, engaged in wine-related activities in 2015. In Italy, the figure stands at approximately five million travellers, generating 2.5 billion Euros in revenue in 2014. Most visits to the wineries take place at, or near, the wine production site. Visitors typically learn the history of the winery, see how the wine is made, and then taste it. At some wineries, the opportunity to stay at a small guest house at the winery is also offered. Many visitors buy the wines made by the winery at the premises, accounting for up to 33% of their annual sales. Most tourism agencies see the above as a segment of the industry, with tremendous growth potential, stating that, in some regions, it only functions at 20 per cent of its full potential. As enotourism grows, regions like the Napa Valley have to deal with the effects of continued success, such as crowding and increased tasting- room fees. Kirkman's (2010) study reveals that, in South Africa, many wineries do not comprehend the positive influence that wine tourism can have, with them viewing it as only a secondary marketing activity. Nevertheless, Luhambo Tours (2017) cover a range of wine farms that form the jewel of the wine tourism route in the Western Cape province.

Adventure tourism: Such tourism is the voyage type of tourism that takes many forms, like wildlife- and butterfly-watching (Burns, 2011). Wildlife tourism can be broadly defined as trips to destinations with the main purpose of visiting them being to observe the local fauna (Uganda Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities, 2016). According to Şengün (2011), wildlife tourism includes other niche markets, including the exploration of marine life (like whale watching). As birdwatching has grown to be a significant niche market in its own right, the definition of wildlife tourism has been restricted to trips to destinations, with the main purpose of the visit being to observe the local fauna, excluding the birdlife.

The global market size of wildlife tourism is estimated as amounting to 12 million trips each year (Lovelock, 2008). Lovelock (2008) reports that Africa accounts for around one half of all such trips, with South Africa, Kenya, Tanzania, and Botswana being the top destinations involved. Some destinations currently rely heavily on wildlife tourism, but could survive without it. Yet, wildlife tourists, according to Burns (2011), are some of the most diverse of any niche market. They range from the experienced

specialists, who like to seek out unspoiled places that remain relatively undiscovered, to the relatively inexperienced tourist travelling on a package to one of Africa's well-known game reserves. Across the spectrum, consumers vary considerably in terms of age, gender, and socio-economic grouping.

Ecotourism: Such tourism is defined as responsible travel (to natural areas) that: (1) conserves the environment; (2) sustains the well-being of the local people; and (3) involves interpretation and education (The International Ecotourism Society [TIES], 2015). TIES stresses that ecotourism-related education should include both staff and guests, and that it should emphasise the uniting of communities, conservation, and the sustainability of travel. TIES lists the following as being the principles of ecotourism: (1) the minimising of physical, social, behavioural, and psychological impacts; (2) the building of environmental and cultural awareness, and of respect; (3) the providing of positive experiences for both visitors and hosts; (4) the producing of direct financial benefits for purposes of conservation; (5) the generating of financial benefits for both the local people and private industry; (6) the delivering of memorable interpretative experiences to visitors that help raise their levels of awareness to the host countries' political, environmental, and social climates; and the designing, constructing and operating of low-impact facilities.

Other tourism: This category of tourism represents all other types of tourism that cannot be classified into the foregoing categories, like slow and soft tourism. Such tourism occurs when people travel to a place that is not as fast-paced as are the cities from which they come, and where there is low risk of fast life (Burns, 2011).

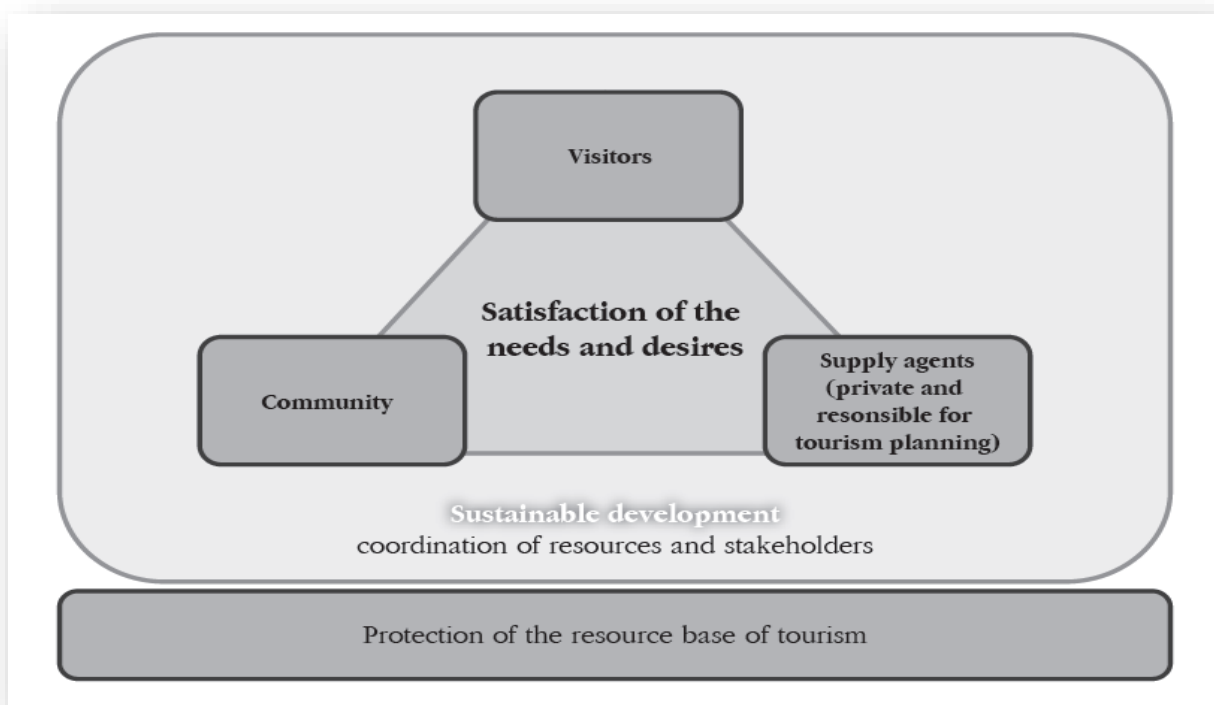
3.2. Sustainability of Rural Tourism Products

The UNWTO defines 'sustainable tourism' as consisting of the kind of tourism that "makes optimal use of environmental resources; respects the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities; ensures viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders; requires the informed participation of all relevant stakeholders, as well as strong political leadership; and also maintains a high level of tourist satisfaction" (UNEP and UNWTO, 2005). Cernat and Gourdon (2007) posit that the aforementioned definition is quite flexible, in that it allows for the drawing of a variety of interpretations of the meaning of the concepts concerned, thereby making researchers and practitioners question its utility. As a result, there are a variety of definitions of the term 'sustainable tourism' to be found in the literature, which tends to be context-specific to the destination or product under discussion (Angelkova, Koteski, Jakovley and Mitrevska, 2012).

Torres-Delgado and Saarinen (2014) define sustainability in tourism as that which is concerned with the guidance and control of the broader impacts and processes of tourism development than those simply affecting the physical environment. While it is agreed that the different forms of sustainable tourism should not solely focus on the environment, the implementation of the principle of sustainability should seek to: (1) improve the residents' quality of life; (2) provide job opportunities for the locals, as opposed to the non-locals, in terms of engagement in tourism-related activities; (3) optimise the local economic benefits to be gained therefrom; (4) provide long-term economic linkages between the destination's communities and industries; (5) protect the natural and built heritage for present and future generations; (6) minimise

the negative impacts of tourism; and (7) provide a high-quality experience for visitors and sociocultural well-being for destination communities, respecting the promotion of social identity and capital, as well as the local culture, and thereby fostering a sense of social cohesion and pride (Eusébio, Kastenholz and Breda, 2014). Similarly, Eusébio et al. (2014) argue that sustainable tourism development strives to satisfy the needs and desires of all the stakeholders concerned (including the visitors, the private and public industry operators, and the host communities), as much as it does to protect the resource base (both natural and cultural) of tourism. Figure 4 below illustrates the above-mentioned definition of sustainable tourism.

Figure 4: A flow chart of sustainable tourism



Source: Adapted from Eusébio et al. (2014).

Another definition that diverges slightly from the one given by UNEP and UNWTO (2005) is that which is offered by Butnaru and Haller (2017). They define sustainable tourism as a form of tourism characterised by: (1) low negative impact on the environment and the local culture; (2) the generation of income, and an increased number of workplaces; (3) the preservation of the fauna, flora and ecosystem of the area; and (4) the responsible correcting of economic activity. According to the two aforesaid researchers, the role of sustainable tourism is to reduce the negative externalities usually associated with tourist activity. As such, they suggest the reasons for supporting sustainable tourist activity to be: (1) the acceptance of responsibility for the maintenance of environmental well-being (ecological sustainability); (2) the desire to sustain the vitality of the local economy vitality (economic sustainability); (3) the intention to respect cultural diversity (sociocultural sustainability); and (4) the wish to accumulate worthwhile experiences.

An important aspect of sustainability is the measurement thereof. The most common and effective means of measuring sustainability is by means of indicators. Indicators need to be identified, as they are not only able to measure a specific parameter, but also to help manage the development of a particular activity, thereby guiding the tourism operation concerned towards sustainability (Torres-Delgado and Saarinen, 2014). Ultimately, the indicators, and the manner in which they are used in an assessment, must be able to identify the key factors of change, and their evolution, as well as any potential threats (James, 2004). Measurement is key to both management and improvement. So, to make a case as to whether or not tourism products are sustainable, it is crucial to be able to use the associated principles, criteria and indicators as the appropriate tools of measurement.

In terms of their review of tourism sustainability methodology, Glyptou et al. (2014) divide their analysis into four categories, according to four different principles. The principles include the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of tourism, as well as the integrative approaches to sustainable tourism. According to the above-mentioned researchers, the economic dimension of tourism has received much attention, due to the fact that, for many, tourism is a production centre, and, thus its contribution lies in its ability to supply demand, with resultant profits. They continue to argue that to adhere to the economic dimension of tourism alone, in terms of ascertaining sustainability, is not prudent, as there are shortcomings involved. Such limitations are due to the fact that it is difficult to identify the many multilevel interconnections of tourism with the other production sectors, and, even more significantly, it is very difficult to pinpoint the end user involved (in other words, who the tourist concerned is). As such, Glyptou et al. (2014) suggest that economy-oriented approaches are deficient, because of the inconsistencies that exist in terms of the sector's contribution and production line.

The second dimension identified by Glyptou et al. (2014) is social, in terms of which employment is identified as being the major issue under the social thinking umbrella, as it allows for comparability according to the numbers involved. However, the above-mentioned authors dismiss the approach concerned as being insufficient to capture the complexities and the qualitative characteristics of tourism employment.

The third dimension identified by Glyptou et al. (2014) is environmental, with the researchers in question noting that there has been increasing international pressure to ascertain the different impacts that such sectors as tourism have on the environment. The above-mentioned authors are sceptical of the approaches used up to now that have focused solely on the environmental dimensions involved, with them having focused mainly on the 'environmental cost' of tourism production, instead of on the inherent dependence of tourism supply and environmental resources. As such, assessment occurs either in terms of physical indicators that are non-monetary, such as ecological footprint, or eco-efficiency, analyses and environmental Impact assessments, or in terms of environmental impacts that take the form of such monetary units as simulated markets and contingent valuation, market price, and the hedonic property values typology (Glyptou et al., 2014).

Due to the shortcomings of the three above-mentioned dimensions, Glyptou et al. (2014) suggest that integrative approaches have emerged specifically in relation to how one can measure a visitor's impact, as well as the quality of the natural resources of the hosting destination. In terms of such an approach, the above-mentioned authors also see progression, with the first integrative assessment tools used seeking to assess the signs of environmental degradation, in comparison to maximising the tourist experience. However, application of the above methodology tends to culminate in what Glyptou et al. (2014) call "process management and policy guidance", instead of in the assessment of sustainability. The next generation of integrative assessment tools, according to Glyptou et al. (2014), is built upon a foundation of indicators. However, the above-mentioned authors suggest that a great variety of indicators have been developed, which suggests that no consensus has yet been reached with regards to the process, or in terms of the universality of the indicators concerned. In most cases, integration occurs by bringing the social, environmental and economic indicators together under generalised frameworks, with the researcher being relied upon to synthesise the information involved according to the characteristics of the analysis and the place in question. Glyptou et al. (2014), in criticising such approaches, argue that the above has resulted in many case-specific and dimension-oriented frameworks that are not truly integrative, and which are adequately generalised for purposes of sustainability.

Eusébio et al. (2014), similarly to Glyptou et al. (2014), suggest that sustainable tourism is a complex issue and that the efforts to deal with it mostly focus on four dimensions: economic; cultural; social; and environmental. While the researchers' findings are similar to those of the latter authors, they do not include integrative approaches, but instead add two more dimensions, namely technological and political, to the mix.

Numerous methodologies are used to identify the indicators concerned, with all of the former generally following the concept of defining principles and the associated criteria that embrace the key sustainability challenges relating to sustainable tourism. The sustainability principles that are mostly relevant to the tourism context are the environmental, the economic and the social aspects of the tourism destination or product concerned. Associated with each principle would be a standard/management objective, which serves to operationalise the principle. The criteria are also the aspects upon which the principle can be judged, or assessed. Each criterion is accompanied by means of a set of related indicators, consisting of quantitative or qualitative measures that highlight the direction of change involved. The greatest challenge lies in having to establish a consistent and, most notably, significant, reliable and practicable set of indicators that demand as little data research to be done, and as little expense to be incurred, as is possible. As such the indicators concerned need to be observable, measurable, responsive to changing conditions, and able to cover the appropriate scale (temporal and spatial). Some of the key issues for consideration when defining indicators include their relevance, feasibility, credibility, clarity, and comparability (UNWTO, 2004).

In their review of the sustainability of tourism indicators, Torres-Delgado and Saarinen (2014) suggest that, while indicators are useful for enabling the detection of specific impacts, the sets of indicators often become barely manageable lists of statistics, because a minimum number of indicators are required for the quantification of sustainability. In addition, the above-mentioned authors suggest that a major

challenge to the use of indicators is the lack of data, their availability, and the subjectivity that arises in building and interpreting lists. The above, in conjunction with the fact of there being little consensus on the meaning of sustainability, suggests that indicators might only be useful when they are treated in a contextually specific manner, comparing the performance of a destination against its own behaviour over time, rather than in attempting to compare the performance of different destinations with that of another (Torres-Delgado and Saaninen, 2014).

Lozano-Oyola, Blancas, Gonzalez and Caballero (2012) propose that the three basic functions for sustainable tourism indicators are: 1) the formulation of general action plans at the regional level; 2) the definition of short-term strategies for destinations; and 3) the establishment of destination benchmarking practices. Petrinic (2013) also notes that, because sustainability indicators are difficult to develop, it is necessary to reflect on, and to incorporate, stakeholder priorities. To the above end, the author concerned identifies four different categories of stakeholders within tourism that require accessing to develop sustainability indicators for tourism. The categories, according to Petrinic (2013), are:

Public sector: municipal authorities, regional authorities, various levels of government responsible for tourism and its key assets, other ministries and agencies in areas affecting tourism; Private sector: tour operators and travel agents, accommodation, restaurants and attractions and their associations, transportation and other service providers, guides, interpreters and outfitters, suppliers to the industry tourism and trade organizations, business development organizations; NGOs: environmental groups, conservation groups, other interest groups (hunters, fishers and sports/adventure associations), communities, local community groups, native and cultural groups, traditional leaders, and Tourists: organizations representing tourists in the region and point(s) of origin international.

Petrinic (2013), thus, suggests that all of the different groups of stakeholders require to be a part of the process followed to identify and develop the sustainability indicators for their particular setting.

The foregoing literature deals with the sustainability of tourism in general, which, undoubtedly, has application in the assessment of RTPs, in particular. The issue becomes that of context. Nonetheless, few studies address the sustainability of RTPs, specifically. For instance, Viljoen and Tlabela (2007) indicate that, for RTPs to be sustainable, community involvement has to be prioritised; increments in the investing of foreign capital into the local economy should be pursued; biodiversity conservation should be promoted; and the practice of ecotourism needs to become instilled. Angelkova et al. (2012) suggest that rural tourism is tourism that specifically supports the integrity of a place in a way that the traveller is able to understand and experience its local character, such as the architecture, the traditional cuisine, the heritage, the aesthetic values, and the ecology of the destination. In exchange, the earnings gained from tourism tend to enhance the local experience, and they can be of great benefit to the local people. For example, tourist establishments (hotels, motels, restaurants, travel agencies, etc.) seek to hire and train more local people than before, to buy the local products, and to use the local services. Lane (1994) suggests that the sustainability of rural areas speaks to a multipurpose phenomenon. Thus, an RTP should aim to sustain the culture and the character of the host communities, the landscape and its habitats; the rural economy; and a tourism industry that will prove to be viable in the long term. The above, in turn, will mean the promotion of successful and satisfying holiday experiences. In essence, the conception of sustainable tourism should be a basic indicator, or should show the achievement, of economic, social and aesthetic goals, while protecting the cultural values, the social integrity, the key ecological processes, and the biological diversity of an area (Angelkova et al., 2012).

3.3. Examples of Tourism Sustainability Frameworks

As early as the 1990s, the UN World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) developed sustainability criteria and associated indicators around the pillars of sustainable development. A guidebook on sustainable development indicators for tourism destinations outlined the Organisation's baseline criteria for sustainability (UNWTO, 2004). The guidebook was designed for use by the tourism and destination managers, in practically assisting them through their use of indicators as building blocks for the implementation of sustainable tourism practices at their different destinations. Box 2.2 below presents the baseline criteria and associated indicators indicated in the guide.

In addition, the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) has defined global sustainable tourism standards, mainly consisting of guiding principles and minimum requirements that any tourism business, or destination, should aspire to reach so as to help protect and sustain the world's natural and cultural resources, while ensuring that the form of tourism engaged in meets its potential as a tool for conservation and poverty alleviation. The criteria, which were developed over a three-year period, incorporated input from over 30 different tourism organisations, businesses and tourism experts (Zeppel, 2015). The standards were the GSTC response to the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals for environmental sustainability and poverty alleviation (Zeppel, 2015). The GSTC framework, which includes 37 criteria, is based on four pillars, relating not only to impacts on our physical environment, but also to those on the social and cultural environments, and the management thereof, namely:

- effective sustainable management;
- the social and economic benefits for the host community that can be gained from the minimisation of negative impacts;
- the benefits to communities, visitors and cultural heritage gained from the minimisation of impacts; and
- the benefits for the environment of minimised negative impacts.

Associated with each of the four pillars are definite indicators. Currently, the GSTC has developed four different sets of indicators based on the above sustainability pillars. They include:

- the criteria and indicators for the tourism and hospitality industry (also known as the GSTC industry criteria);
- the criteria and indicators for tourism destinations;
- the criteria and indicators for hotels; and
- the criteria and indicators for tour operators.

Box 2: Examples of indicators of sustainable development for tourism destination, as guided by the UNWTO

The UNWTO provides guidance to indicators that respond to the issues that have shown themselves to be common to many destinations since the early 1990s. It is a menu, allowing planners and managers to select the issues of importance to their destinations, and to gain ideas for application from the suggested indicators within the ambit of 13 different themes.

1. The well-being of the host communities
 - the number of complaints made by the local residents
 - the percentage of locals participating in community events.
2. Sustainable cultural assets
 - the number and type of new legislation or amendments introduced to preserve the structures at local, provincial/state, or national levels.
3. Community participation in tourism
 - the number (%) of tour companies at a destination offering tours/guides provided with trained knowledge regarding sustainable tourism practice/information in terms of the local management plan.
4. Tourism satisfaction levels
 - the visitors' level of satisfaction, and the percentage of return visitors.
5. Health and safety
 - the number of visits made by the tourists to the local doctors.
6. The capturing of economic benefits from tourism
 - the number (%) of employees qualified/certified
 - the amount of annual total income generated by the community.
7. The protection of valuable natural resources
 - the existence of protected area(s) at the destination.
8. The managing of scarce natural resources
 - the percentage of businesses participating in energy conservation programmes, or in applying energy-saving policy.
9. The limiting of the environmental impact of tourism activity
 - the total tourism numbers categorised by their type of activity
 - the percentage of tourists who believe that the destination is too crowded, and the percentage of local residents who believe that it is too crowded.
10. The controlling of tourism activities and levels
 - the existence of a spectators management plan
 - the level of facilitation of the information related to safety issues (e.g. the clarity of information that is available on event scheduling, place, access, the safety issues of building and spaces, the availability of services, etc.).
11. Destination planning and control
 - leakages from the economy
 - the degree of local and tourist satisfaction
 - the degree of stakeholder participation in the planning process (e.g. the number of meetings, dissemination channels and other consultation mechanisms used, the level of participation)
12. The designing of products and services
 - the percentage of clients who are satisfied with their experience (exit questionnaire: ask specifically about green products)
 - the percentage of tourists with a positive image of the destination (exit survey)

Source: UNWTO (2004).

In terms of the GSTC framework, all the indicators are given equal weighting. Zeppel (2015) notes that the GSTC does not prescribe how to implement/measure sustainability, or when a goal has been met. The framework only specifies the minimum requirements for a tourism business, such that it is capable of protecting the associated resources, and of promoting responsible travel practices.

Schianetz (2005) suggests that an assessment tool has a number of requirements, including that the assessment tool is able to deal with: site-specific and cumulative impacts; interconnections; cause-and-effect relationships; feedback loops; and time management. Using the above-mentioned requirements, the aforementioned author looks at a number of current assessment tools that are currently available, such as: sustainability indicators; life cycles assessments; environmental auditing; ecological footprinting; multi-criteria analysis; environmental impact assessments; and systems dynamics modelling. The researcher's assessment is that systems dynamic modelling performs better in all her requirement categories, as it is a continuous learning process that acknowledges the uncertainties, and that embraces the messiness of the issue, as well as making sufficient room available for the qualitative variables (Schianetz, 2005).

Table 3.2: The global sustainable tourism criteria for the tourism industry

Criteria/Pillar	Indicators
Effective sustainable management	Have a sustainable management plan
	Legal compliance
	Reporting and communication
	Staff engagement (training on sustainable tourism)
	Customer experience
	Accurate promotion
	Building and infrastructure compliance with zoning requirements
	Building and infrastructure impact and integrity
	Buildings' use of locally acceptable materials
	Buildings and infrastructures allowance of accessibility to all
	Land and water property rights
	Information and interpretation (culture and heritage)
	Destination engagement (active participation in sustainable destination planning)
Social and economic benefits for the local community	Community support (pro-poor activities)
	Local employment
	Local purchasing
	Local entrepreneurial support
	Exploitation and harassment (policies supportive of youths and women)
	Equal opportunity
	Decent work (a safe and secure work environment)

	Community service (maintaining community's access to basic services)
	Local livelihoods (land, rights of way)
Benefits to the cultural heritage	Cultural interaction (tourism guidelines agreed on with the locals)
	Protection of the cultural heritage
	Prevention of the destruction of culture and heritage
	Preservation of artefacts
Benefits to the environment	Conservation of the environment
	Environmentally preferable purchasing
	Efficient purchasing
	Energy conservation
	Water conservation
	Reduction of pollution
	Greenhouse gas emissions
	Transport
	Waste water
	Solid waste
	Harmful substances
	Minimisation of pollution
	Conservation of biodiversity, ecosystems and landscape
	Benefits to the environment (cont.)
Invasive species	
Visits to natural sites	
Wildlife interactions	
Animal welfare	
Wildlife harvesting and trade	

Source: Mutana and Mukwada (2017).

In contrast, Cernat and Gourdon (2007) identify seven key dimensions around which to build an assessment tool, or, as they have classified it, a benchmarking tool. The seven key dimensions are: tourism assets; tourism activity; tourism-related linkages; tourism-related leakages; environmental and social sustainability; overall infrastructure; and attractiveness.

Weber and Taufer (2016) have developed a sustainability assessment tool for analysing the sustainability of rural tourism products. The goal of the tool is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the product portfolio at the destination with regard to the sustainability aspects of the products. The tool consists of 12 different criteria that represent the management of sustainability, as well as the three sustainability dimensions (i.e. the economy, the ecology and the society) that are suitable for the specific case of tourism products. The criteria were determined based on a literature review of the existing sustainability assessments, including the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria and the Global Reporting Initiative (Weber and Taufer, 2016). The criteria serve as the basis for the development of a tool that should enable

destination managers to assess the sustainability of their tourism products without them having to implement extensive monitoring. The criteria include:

1) Management:

- Sustainability management: Sustainability aspects are considered systematically. The product is regularly evaluated; the effects are measured; and the measures of improvement are derived.
- Stakeholder participation: Active exchange occurs with all the stakeholders that are either directly (product partners, guests) or indirectly (community, farmers, owners of secondary homes, etc.) involved. The different expectations and needs are considered when developing the product.
- Informing the guests about sustainability: The guests are informed about the sustainability aspects of tourism, and they are encouraged to contribute to it. All the employees are trained, so that they can inform the guests competently.

2) Economy:

- Strengthening of the regional economy: Wherever possible, the product includes the local and regional products, and it supports the local service providers. Regional resources and attractions are promoted.
- Special customer benefits: The product provides attractive customer experiences. Due to the high quality, the uniqueness, the innovative content and/or the explicit reference to the region, the product generates high customer benefits, thereby increasing the spirit of competitiveness.
- Economic efficiency: The cost of developing and maintaining the product is in a positive relationship with the intended economic effects. The product generates added value (either directly or indirectly) and/or increases its attractiveness for the guests.

3) Society:

- The consideration of specific guest needs: The product considers guests with specific needs (e.g. accessibility, family friendliness, senior friendliness, food intolerances, etc.). Appropriate information is transparently available.
- Working conditions for employees: The working conditions for employees are fair and attractive (e.g. equal pay, safety, health, education and training, work–life balance, the promotion of diversity in terms of culture, age, gender, etc.).
- Promotion of the local culture: The local culture is cultivated and promoted (e.g. customs, regional materials/architecture). The product contributes to the preservation and the enhancement of the culture of the region. It is authentic, and in line with the local culture. The exchange between visitors and locals is encouraged.

4) Environment:

- The conscious use of energy: Energy is consciously used (in terms of energy consumption, efficiency, green power, etc.), with measures being taken to save energy and to avoid CO₂ emissions.
- Environmental-friendly mobility aids: Offers of environmental-friendly mobility aids are communicated actively (e.g. guest information, pickup service). Related incentives are made

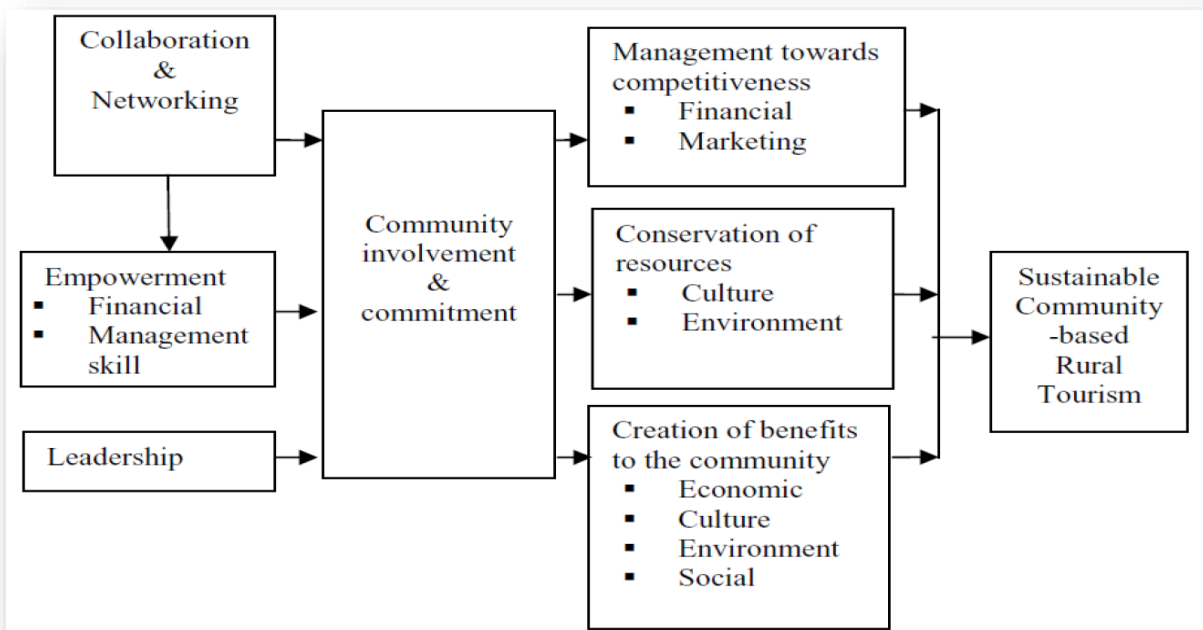
available to the guests. In the best case, the product includes only environmental-friendly means of transport.

- Protection of nature, landscape and environmental resources: The nature, landscape and other environmental resources (e.g. low level of land consumption, biodiversity) are used responsibly. The conservation, restoration and enhancement of the natural and cultural landscape are supported either directly or indirectly. The construction of facilities (signalling, panels, infrastructure, etc.) takes into account the natural, scenic and architectural environment. Measures are adopted for the reduction of noise pollution, for water protection and conservation, and for the prevention, reduction, separation, recycling, and disposal of waste.

The above-mentioned criteria are listed on a table, with the assessor ranking the tourism product based on the criteria ranging from 1 to 7, with the allocation of 1 indicating 'not at all' and 7 indicating 'very much'.

Kayat (2014) undertook research to define a sustainability framework for community-based rural tourism products (CBRTs). The research has relevance to South African RTPs, in that one of the key objectives of RTPs is the socio-economic upliftment of the communities concerned. The intention of the framework that the aforementioned author designed is to enable planners and managers to understand criteria ensuring that CBRTs fulfil certain sustainability criteria. The criteria, according to Kayat (2014), can be clustered into five dimensions, namely: community involvement; empowerment and leadership; benefit of the community; collaboration and networking; marketing and promotion; and conservation, as can be seen in Figure 5 below.

Figure 5: A sustainability framework of CBRT



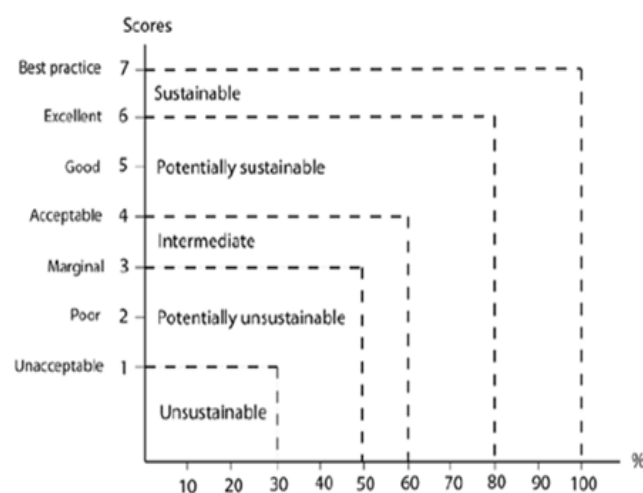
Source: Kayat (2014).

Some form of performance evaluation requires association with an indicator. Although an indicator provides a measurement of sorts, the measurement should be contextualised. Numerous ways exist of doing this, including the defining of performance targets that require achieving, through the implementation of a scoring and weighting system, as is shown on Figure 6 below, which provides an example of how a scoring system works.

The sustainability frameworks discussed above provide excellent examples of the diversity of sustainability assessments in terms of the manner in which the criteria are defined, and the indicators assigned. However, they all, ultimately, measure the same things. As such, defining a sustainability assessment framework for RTPs in South Africa should share many similarities with those discussed above. What would make it slightly different would be to include the sustainable development objectives of the National Development Plans and their contextualisation, based on legal and/or policy documents.

Figure 6: The scoring and weighting system used to measure the performance of sustainability indicators

Percentage	Rating scores	Level of performances	Interpretation of sustainability values
80-100	7	Best Practice	Sustainable
70-79	6	Excellent	Potentially sustainable
60-69	5	Good	Intermediate
50-59	4	Acceptable	Potentially unsustainable
40-49	3	Marginal	Unacceptable
30-39	2	Poor	Unacceptable
0-29	1	Unacceptable	Unacceptable



Source: Prescott-Allen (1997).

4. Overview of RTPs in South Africa

The qualitative research focused on three aspects of the RTPs in South Africa: (1) confirming whether the researchers had access to good sources for identifying the RTPs; (2) understanding how RTPs could be categorised; and (3) eliciting perceptions of the sustainability of RTPs. The present section reports on the results from the qualitative work, with the presentation intermingle such with the results obtained from the profiling exercise.

4.1. General Understanding of Rural Tourism Products by the Respondents

The key informants from the universities, the municipalities, the tourism authorities, and the tourism associations and agents, were asked whether they were familiar with the term 'rural tourism products'. A range of responses, stretching from *I don't know what RTP is* to *I know ...*, was received:

I know that rural tourism is when tourists visit rural or remote areas, so maybe 'rural tourism products' refers to tourism products located in the rural areas [TAR].

Mmmhh, I am not familiar with this term, perhaps you may explain it for me ... (interviewer explains) ... oohh, so it refers to hotels [that are situated] out of town [MU].

It relates to tourist attraction activities that are only found in rural areas [TAAR].

Ja, of course I am familiar, I do teach tourism, right I would say these are tourist activities, services or attraction[s] located in non-urban areas, of course defining what is non-urban could be something else [UR].

Some respondents in the municipalities expressed a lack of understanding of the term 'rural tourism product'. Rather than taking such incomprehension as betokening that tourism officers do not know of RTPs, it is thought that it could mean that they are involved in RTPs, without necessarily knowing the nomenclature involved. The above-mentioned reason is suggested, because each time the interviewer prompted the interviewee, or explained the meaning of an RTP, the latter would state that they knew what it was, illustrating their knowledge by means of giving an example that suggested that they were aware of its true nature.

The general understanding of the nature of an RTP is that it must occur beyond the urban environment. One academic's response was interesting, in that it indicated how attempting to delineate urban from non-urban could be problematic (see the UR's response). However, in spite of the above, none of the key respondents mentioned the possibility of an RTP being located in a city. However, when it came to responding to the question regarding examples of products that they thought could be RTPs, some of the respondents mentioned products that were found in Johannesburg and the city's surroundings.

I think culture in Soweto, and some museum in Johannesburg, could be possible examples; ja they are, hey, because they showcase rural life [UR].

The Cradle of Humankind would fit in. It is historic, perhaps demonstrating where we come from as a people. It has preserved this for us, it's sort of a heritage. But ja, I must admit it is confusing, yet I would say it's a [form of] rural tourism [UR].

Despite the places mentioned by the academic respondents being in the urban areas, the products are typified as examples of rural tourism. Referring to how the current researchers conceptualise RTPs, the foregoing respondents showed the empirical possibility of locating an RTP in an urban milieu, although the same respondents would have defined an RTP as a rural activity, service or attraction present in a non-urban space.

The respondents mainly identified tourism information centres as being a good source for profiling RTPs and/or searching the Internet. One respondent actually indicated that:

Using the Internet could be the best, because most ... tourism products seek to attract tourism via the Internet, otherwise your coverage would be low. But again, you will not find all these products in [i.e. on] the Internet. Some of them may have owners with a small clientele base [so] that they do not see the reason for [having an] Internet presence [TAR].

The idea regarding the categorising of RTPs from the point of view of the respondents yielded no results, with one academic even indicating [this is] *not my field of expertise*, and with another saying *Surely you can't expect me to give you the categories off-head [i.e. off the top of my head]? This is not a test where I'd have to read first.*

Generally, the key respondents surveyed thought that the RTPs in South Africa were sustainable, with a few others thinking otherwise, or being unwilling to say anything on the matter:

Yes, they are. I think it's because they don't harm the environment, and they work with [the] local communities [MR].

I do not have a good reason for my answer, but I think they are sustainable. More and more people in the world are now seeking to know the culture of other people – how they live, and so forth – so this proves potential for demand of [i.e. for] RTPs into the future [TAAR].

I am afraid their market is small. They are exciting products, environmentally friendly and all, but, if they don't innovate, I am afraid [that] they may die out. In fact, I know of one product, could it have been envisaged to be a cultural centre or something, I don't know, but the point is, it is now a white elephant [UR].

I am not sure about their sustainability [TAR].

Unsurprisingly, a few of the respondents were unsure about the sustainability of RTPs. Perhaps this was so because they lacked a yardstick for measuring the performance of the RTPs, and they were not in the position to judge their level of sustainability. At the same time, those respondents who were able to pass judgement on whether or not the RTPs were sustainable selected some indicators that were also found

in the literature on the sustainability of RTPs. For instance, in the foregoing responses, UR pointed at two indicators: marketability, which speaks to the dual issues of demand and usage, and their environmental aspects. MR also pointed to the environmental indicator, as well as introducing the aspect of local community involvement.

4.2. Profiling of the RTPs Currently Available in South Africa

To profile the existing RTPs in South Africa, the Metascrawler search engine was used, in line with the feedback received from the key informants. The other possible source of information regarding the profiling of RTPs was the tourism information centres, which most of the respondents had indicated as a possible source of such information. However, searching for RTPs using the Internet became the most viable source of information for the team. Consequently, not all the RTPs present in South Africa are likely to have been profiled, although the details pertaining to a representative number of RTPs in South Africa were found on the Internet. The above is clearly a limitation of the study in general, and an injustice to the RTPs who value means of visibility other than the Internet.

Figure 7: The Profile of RTPs in South Africa with an online presence

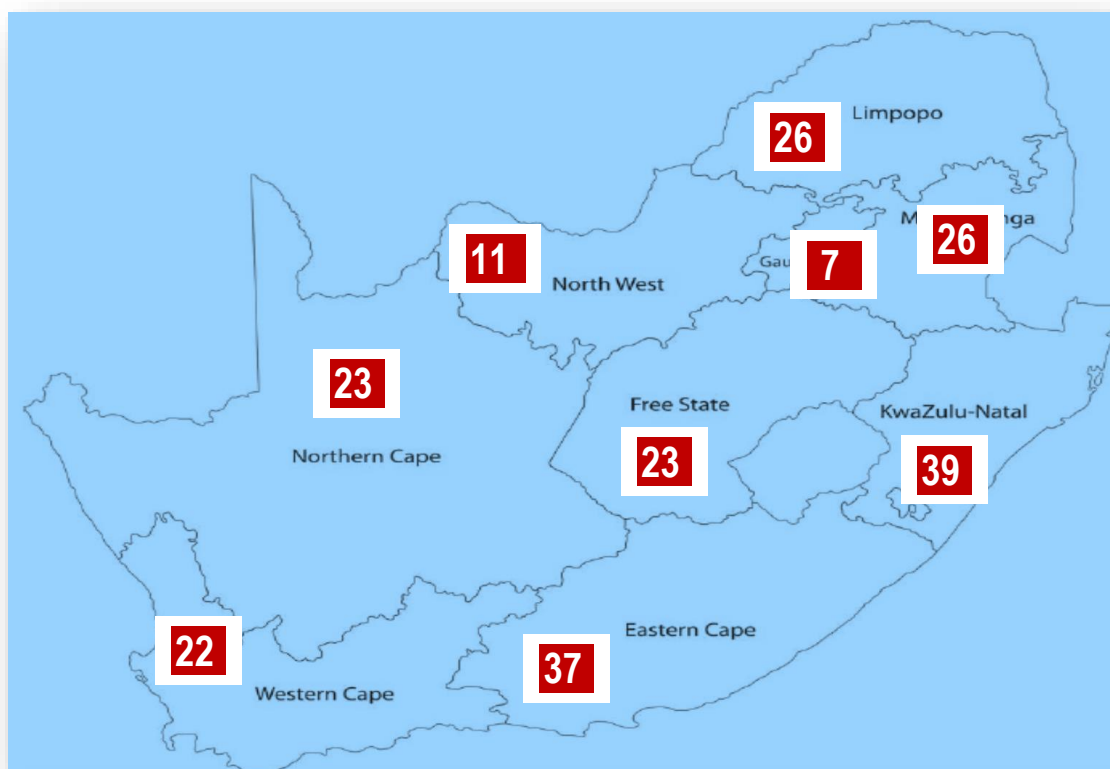
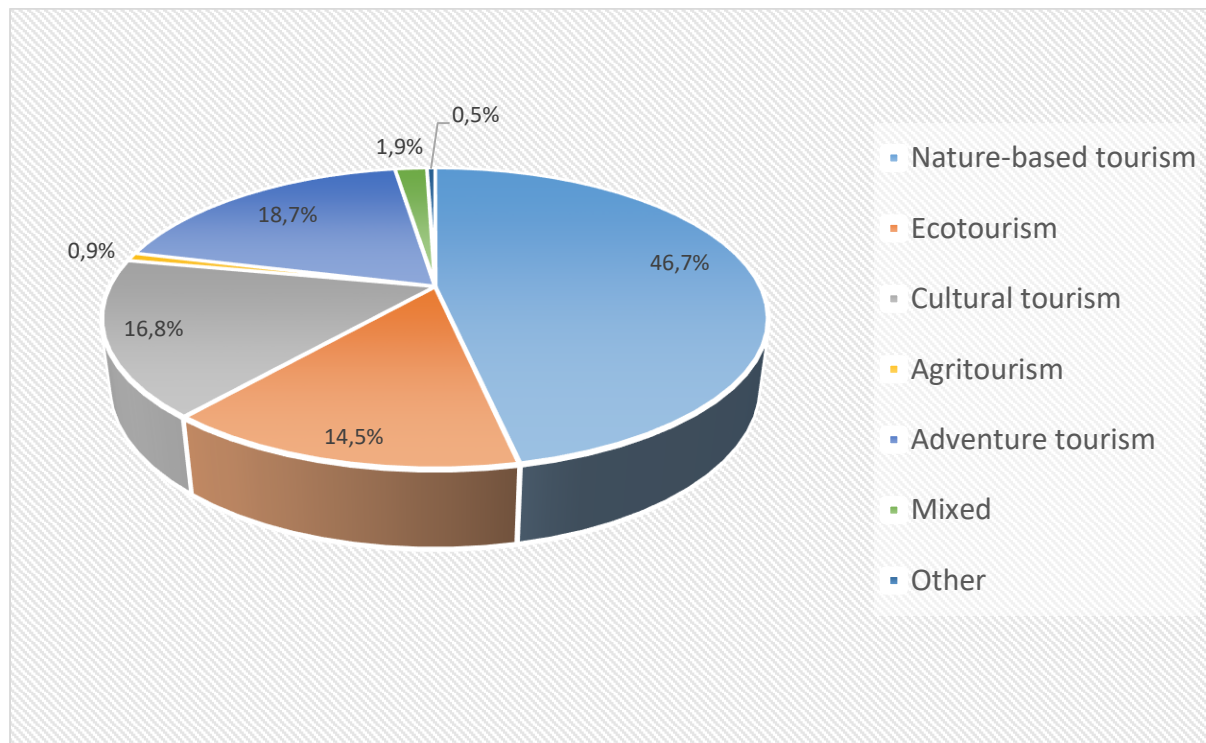


Figure 7 provides the numbers of RTPs that have been profiled by province in South Africa. The highest number of visible RTPs online were found to be present in KwaZulu-Natal, followed closely by those that were present in the Eastern Cape. The Gauteng province had the lowest number, which was to have been expected, given that the province is geographically small and predominantly urban. The North West

province also had a low presence of RTPs online, with the remainder of the provinces having a similar showing.

Figure 8 below shows how the profiled RTPs were dispersed by category: nature-based; ecotourism; cultural tourism; adventure tourism; and others. The nature-based tourism products were by far the highest number available, with almost half of all the profiled RTPs falling within this category. The spheres of ecotourism, cultural tourism and adventure tourism had almost an equal representation of the RTPs in terms of the categorisation. Agritourism was found to be represented by the lowest number of RTPs, which raises interest in association with the reason for such a low level of representation. However, the current researchers did not consider attempting to answer the question empirically. Speculatively, however, it could be argued that the field of agritourism is still in its infancy in South Africa. Much marketing is still perhaps required to attract tourists to this category of RTPs.

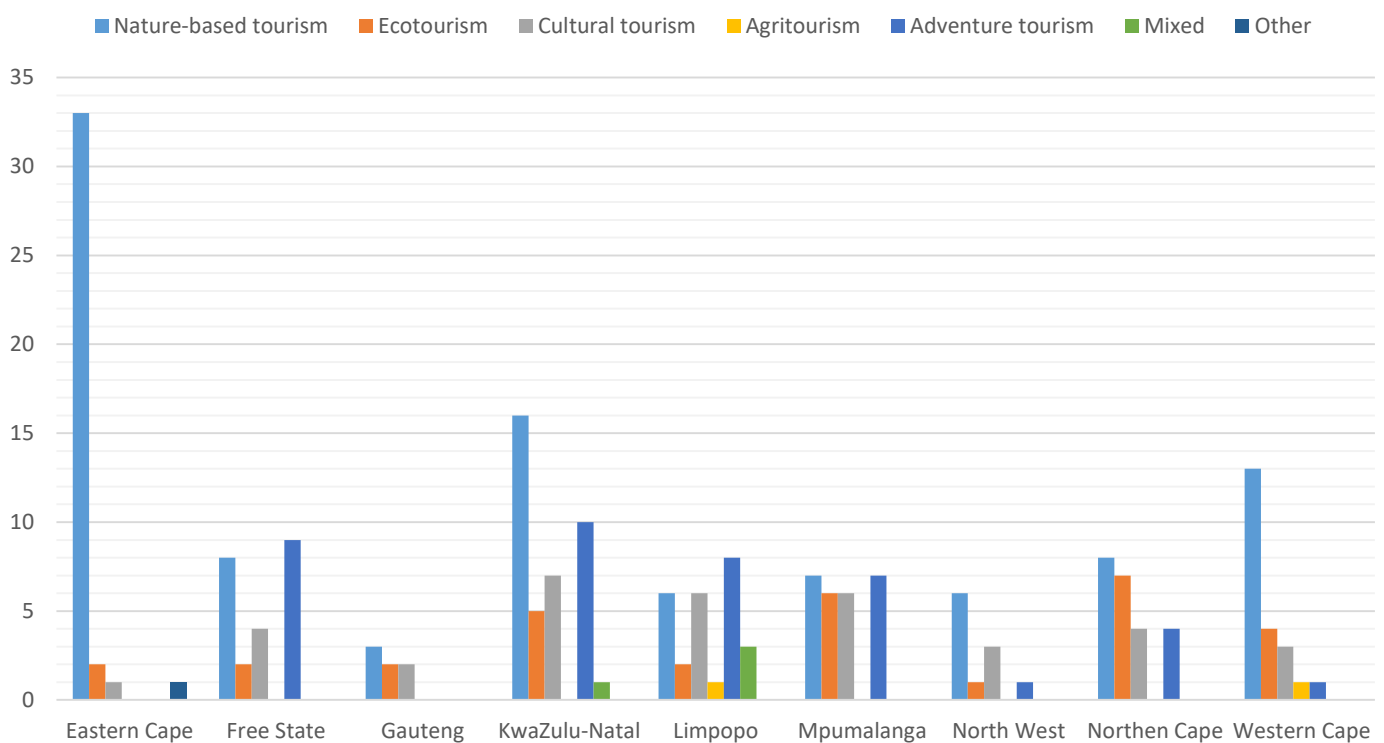
Figure 8: RTP distribution, by category



The distribution of RTPs within their category, per province, is shown in Figure 9 below. The Limpopo Province, which was found to have the most diversified categories of RTPs in South Africa, was one of the two provinces (with the other being the Western Cape) with an online RTP presence in the field of agritourism. The presence of nature-based tourism products was balanced with those of cultural and adventure tourism. The above was unlike the case with the Eastern Cape province, where the dominance of nature-based tourism was found to be unparalleled. Surprisingly, adventure tourism products were found to lack visibility online in the above-mentioned province. To the extent that the online research could have failed to capture all the RTPs available, and to which the classification might have been done

incorrectly, the conclusion can be drawn that, compared to the amount of nature-based tourism present within the province, and to the number of RTP products that were found to be present in the other provinces, either the online adventure tourism marketability of RTPs in the Eastern Cape was deficient at the time of the report, or there were simply only a few RTPs present in the province.

Figure 9: RTP distribution per province, by category



KwaZulu-Natal province was found to have the highest number of profiled RTPs, but its product range was not as diversified as was that of the Limpopo Province. However, the former province had a fairly balanced spread of categories, with nature-based and adventure tourism dominating the other categories. Mpumalanga Province was found to have a more balanced spread in its product offering, in spite of lacking RTPs in the agricultural category. The Western Cape and Free State provinces followed in terms of providing a balanced product offering.

Despite Gauteng Province being predominantly non-rural, it hosted the suppliers of nature-based and cultural tourism products, a selection of which were traced on the outskirts of the province, on par with the tourism products located in the rural areas. However, the above clearly shows that some RTPs can be located in a non-rural milieu.

5. The Sustainability Framework of RTPs in South Africa

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, encompassing 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and 169 targets, was adopted at the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015, set to govern the development priorities for the coming 15 years. Goal 8, which calls for the promotion of sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all, specifically targets the devising and implementing of policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs, and that promotes local culture and products. In the present instance, tourism is seen as one of the driving forces of global economic growth, which, indeed, is so, given that tourism currently accounts for 1 in 11 jobs worldwide. Goal 12, which calls for ensuring the maintenance of sustainable consumption and production patterns, has a target of developing and implementing tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for sustainable tourism that creates jobs and that promotes local culture and products.

Noteworthy, in terms of the foregoing targets of the development goals is the promotion of local culture and products, with its major bearing on RTPs. The emphasis is also on the sustainability of tourism products. A framework to be used to assess the sustainability of tourism products in general, and RTPs in particular, is, therefore, timely in South Africa. Section 3 reviewed the tourism frameworks available elsewhere, including that provided by the UNWTO, which is posed to assist countries to reach the SDGs by 2030. The framework is used, together with the other framework discussed in section 3, to arrive at the framework that should prove to be most suitable for South Africa and its unique context.

5.1. Principles, Criteria and Indicators

The framework consists of six key principles that embrace the key elements of sustainability that all RTPs should probably address. The principles are as follows:

Sustainability Management: The principle relates to the planning, organising, leading, and controlling of the tourism services and/or activities, while simultaneously sustaining the social, economic and natural environment upon which the economy and society depend.

Economic Viability: Tourism products should be financially profitable for the owners concerned to continue providing them as a going concern, while having a positive impact on the society and the environment.

RTP Satisfaction: The principle measures how tourism activities and/services supplied by an RTP meet, or surpass, tourists' expectations. It provides RTP owners with a metric that they can use for managing and improving their RTP(s).

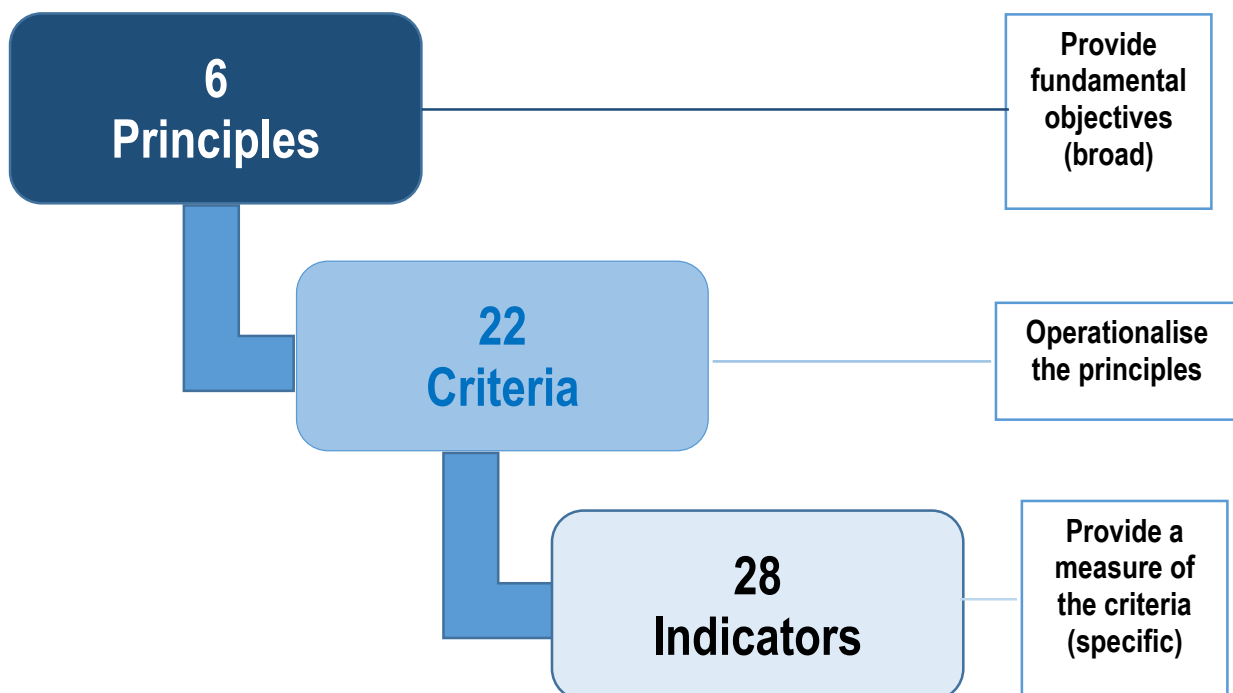
Sociocultural Authenticity: The principle relates to the extent to which a tourism product reflects the associated beliefs, values, culture, and heritage, and depicts the accurate detail of the everyday life and experience of the specific community within which the RTP is supplied.

Community Beneficiation and Sense of Well-being: The tourism product should give access to decent ownership and work opportunities for the locals, particularly the youth, women and people with disabilities, as well as serving as a tool for the empowerment of such vulnerable groups, thus helping to ensure that their participation in all aspects of society is full.

Optimal Use of Resources: Tourism products have the moral and commercial imperative to use resources efficiently, and to conserve and preserve fragile ecosystems.

Associated with each of the principles are criteria and indicators, which are reflected upon in the next section. The criteria concerned are, in essence, management objectives for each principle covered. The above means that they are the objectives that the RTP should address to be sustainable for each principle. For each criteria, there are indicators that should enable the RTP supplier to measure their performance in terms of the set criteria. The principles are very broad, with the criteria narrowing down to afford the creation of indicators that are very specific, as is shown in Figure 10 below.

Figure 10: RTP Sustainability Principles, Criteria, Indicators



5.2. The RTP Sustainability Framework

The framework has three core functions. Firstly, it provides the RTP suppliers with an understanding of the aspects of sustainability for which they need to be responsible. For example, the principles and criteria concerned provide the RTP supplier with the sustainability conditions that they need to address and measure in their operations. Secondly, the framework provides indicators that enable the RTP supplier to measure their sustainable performance. Thirdly, associated with each indicator is a sustainability scale

to enable the RTP supplier to measure their performance against each criterion residing under the banner of each principle. The scale (see table 5.1 below) can serve as a sustainability roadmap, in that it provides the RTP supplier with the relevant information that should enable them to improve on their sustainable performance of the preceding years. Each weighting represents a measure relating to the level of performance of the RTP concerned.

Table 5.1: The RTP sustainability scale

Weighting	Measure	Level of performance
1	Fails to demonstrate the ability to meet the requirement	Very Poor
2	The response addresses some elements of the requirement, but it contains too insufficient/limited detail or explanation to demonstrate how the requirement will be fulfilled.	Poor
3	The response addresses a broad understanding of the requirement, but it might lack details on how the requirement will be fulfilled in certain areas.	Acceptable
4	The response is sufficiently detailed to demonstrate a good understanding of, and to provide details on, how the requirements will be fulfilled.	Good
5	The response is comprehensive and unambiguous, demonstrating a thorough understanding of the requirement, and providing details of how the requirement will be met in full.	Excellent

The sustainability framework is provided in Table 5.2 below.

Table 5.2: The sustainability framework

PRINCIPLE ONE: SUSTAINABILITY MANAGEMENT

CRITERIA	INDICATOR	SUSTAINABILITY SCALE	REASON FOR INDICATOR	SOURCE OF INDICATOR	FURTHER INFORMATION/ QUESTIONS/EXAMPLES TO GUIDE THE RTP
Responsible Tourism Strategy/Plan	A responsible tourism plan (i.e. a plan that documents the environmental and socio-economic plan of the RTP)	1: no strategy or plan 2: draft strategy or plan exist but not being implemented 3: strategy or plan exists and is implemented but only addresses one pillar of sustainability 4: strategy or plan exist and is implemented with at most two pillars of sustainability being addressed 5: a comprehensive strategy or plan, fully implementing all pillars if sustainability and details environmental commitments community engagement, employment equity, education etc.	An organisation that provides a service needs to have a strategy in place that details how they manage their impacts on the environment stakeholders (e.g. the tourists) and on the indirect stakeholders (e.g. the community members).	RTP's responsible tourism strategy/plan / related document	Have you consulted the National Responsible Tourism Development Guidelines for South Africa (March 2002)? This document outlines what tourism products need to consider to be both responsible and sustainable. The document should help the RTP to set up a sustainability plan. In addition, have you consulted the South African National Standards on Responsible Tourism? Section 5.1.2. states that organisations shall establish a responsible tourism policy.
Education/Training	Number of employees trained on reducing negative environmental, social, and economic impacts	1: 0–24% employees 2: 25–49% employees 3: 50–74% employees 4: 75–99% employees 5: 100% employees	Staff trained in the management of environmental, sociocultural, and health and safety practices are being sensitised to issues that potentially might lead to diminished demands for the RTP.	Employee training records	Have you consulted the South African National Standards on Responsible Tourism? Section 5.1.5. states that organisations shall facilitate staff awareness and training in its responsible tourism policy.

Employment equity	Employment equity plan	<p>1: No employment equity plan</p> <p>2: The RTP has an employment equity plan, but it has not been submitted to the DG of the Department of Labour</p> <p>3: The RTP has an employment equity plan that has been submitted to the DG of the Department of Labour</p> <p>4: The RTP has an employment equity plan that has been submitted to the DG of the Department of Labour, and has undergone an audit</p> <p>5: The RTP has a comprehensive Employment Equity Act, and has been audited (clean audit)</p>	<p>The RTPs need to ensure that they employ as many local people as possible from the surrounding communities.</p> <p>The company is equitable in terms of hiring women and local minorities.</p> <p>South Africa has BEE regulations in place that also require adherence.</p>	Equity plan, report and audit findings	Have you consulted the Equity Act No. 55 of 1998?
Regulatory compliance	Licences and registration in terms of appropriate regulations	<p>1: The RTP has not undertaken to acquire the necessary licences and does not adhere to regulations</p> <p>2: The RTP is in violation of licences and regulations</p> <p>3: All licences and registrations are up-to- date</p> <p>4: The RTP has received certificates of compliance to licences and regulations</p> <p>5: The RTP has received a certificate of excellence for</p>	This criteria is important to ensure that the product is operating legally, and within legal regulation.	Risk register Compliance audit reports and certificates	Have you consulted the South African National Standards on Responsible Tourism? Section 5.1.1. states that organisations shall comply with all relevant national, provincial and local legislation, licences and permits, as may be required.

		compliance to licences and regulations			
Health and safety	Health and safety policy	<p>1: The RTP lacks a health and safety policy</p> <p>2: The RTP has a health and safety policy, but it is still recording instances of non-compliance (i.e. work-related accidents, not communicated to staff and guests, etc.)</p> <p>3: The RTP complies with health and safety policy</p> <p>4: The RTP complies with the health and safety policy and is reducing work-related accidents</p> <p>5: The RTP has gone above and beyond the set standards</p>	<p>Non-compliance with health and safety standards can have devastating consequences in respect of the form of accidents, the loss of life, and injuries.</p> <p>All the RTPs need to have measures in place that ensure the health and safety of their employees and tourists, as well as the possession of such safety equipment as fire extinguishers.</p>	<p>Health and safety procedure manual/guidelines</p> <p>Observing such equipment as fire extinguishers</p>	<p>Have you consulted the Occupational Health and Safety Act No. 85 of 1993?</p> <p>For example, a score of 5 is given when the RTP complies with all health and safety requirement and then innovates in its own ways to have either extra requirements or activities, such as providing a gym at the work place, that assist employees to be health and safe.</p>

PRINCIPLE TWO: ECONOMIC VIABILITY

CRITERIA	INDICATOR	SUSTAINABILITY SCALE	REASON FOR INDICATOR	SOURCE OF INDICATOR	FURTHER INFORMATION/QUESTIONS/EXAMPLES TO GUIDE THE RTP
Financial performance/profit ability	Profit margin	<p>1: Making a loss, with no improvements over time</p> <p>2: Making a loss, with improvements over time</p> <p>3: Breaking even</p> <p>4: Profit margin is between 1 and 14%</p>	The RTP needs to show that it is economically sustainable, using standard financial performance indicators.	RTP's financial statement	For example, suppose RTP X's revenue for one year to be R100 000.00, and its total expenditure to be R75 000.00. The above would yield a profit margin of 25% [(R100 000–R75 000/R100 000)]

		5: Profit margins above 14%			
Checks and balances	Budgets and projections	1: None 2: Compiling RTP draft budget and projections 3: Working within budget and projections 4: Medium-term planning 5: Long-term planning and projections; growth of investments	Financial planning for the RTP needs to be in place to monitor its economic viability on a regular basis.	Financial budgeting, monitoring and evaluation, and/or any related reporting documents	How to do a simple financial budget and/or projection: 1. Start with a sales forecast. 2. Set up a spreadsheet projecting sales over the course of three years. 3. Create an expenses budget. 4. Develop a cash-flow statement. 5. Do income projections. 6. Deal with assets and liabilities.
Risk management	Risk register	1: None 2: None, but considers risks, although such consideration not recorded 3: Risk register, with the risks being recorded in some way/form 4: Recorded, including mitigations to the risks 5: Probabilities and uncertainties included	The RTP needs to identify risks to the business, and to have measures in place to address the risks, should they materialise.	Risk register	Be aware of the five steps in risk management: Step 1: Identify the risk. Step 2: Analyse the risk. Step 3: Evaluate/rank the risk. Step 4: Treat the risk. Step 5: Monitor and review the risk.
Usage demand for the RTP	Ratio between the actual use of the RTP vs the maximum capacity use of the RTP	1. None 2. 1–49% 3. 50% 4. 51–70% 5. 71–100%	An indication is given of the progress of the RTP in terms of growth, and of hesitance if potential customers renege on their bookings.	Reservation records	For example, if 100 potential users book a room, but only 40 actually use one, the booking usage rate is 40%.

PRINCIPLE THREE: LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH THE RTP

CRITERIA	INDICATOR	SUSTAINABILITY SCALE	REASON FOR INDICATOR	SOURCE OF INDICATOR	FURTHER INFORMATION/ QUESTIONS/EXAMPLES TO GUIDE THE RTP
Tracking satisfaction	Tracking systems of visitors, and their satisfaction levels	1: No tracking system, satisfaction levels not recorded 2: Comments captured in visitors' book, or comments made directly by visitors 3: Conduct a formal visitors' feedback survey either on site or via email 4: Have a formal visitors' survey and record satisfaction levels from social media applications 5: Have comprehensive tracking systems in place, including all of the above, and associated with the systems the RTP has as an analytical tool for measuring and monitoring satisfaction levels over time	Visitor satisfaction is an important way of measuring whether or not the RTP is providing a relevant and quality service at a competitive price, and is able to secure return customers.	Market data on sales, prices, costs, and spending Visitor survey Social media (e.g. TripAdvisor)	How do you communicate with past customers?
Level of satisfaction	Customer loyalty Percentage of visitors satisfied with the RTP	1: No return visitors 2: 1–24% return visitors 3: 25% return visitors 4: 26–49% return visitors 5: 50% and above return visitors 1: No record 2: Less than 50% 3: 50–59% 4: 60–69% 5: 70% and above	The rate of return visitors (RVR) assesses if customers do come back for the RTP, and this may indicate loyalty towards the RTP. The managers should continually provide and improve customised services to meet customer requirements, and to	Booking records Visitor survey records	What is a good rate of return for the visitors – return and referral. To calculate the RVR, divide the number of return visitors by the number of total unique visitors for a given period of time. Overall experience based on the number of comments tracked within the financial year that are being measured/reported. Do you ever ask your customers about the prevailing level of product satisfaction?

			achieve competitive advantage.		
--	--	--	--------------------------------	--	--

PRINCIPLE FOUR: SOCIOCULTURAL AUTHENTICITY

CRITERIA	INDICATOR	SUSTAINABILITY SCALE	REASON FOR INDICATOR	SOURCE OF INDICATOR	FURTHER INFORMATION/ QUESTIONS/EXAMPLES TO GUIDE THE RTP
Cultural richness	Local cultural values, diversity, history, testimonials, and heritage anchored in the RTP vision/ mission/ product offerings	1: None – no recognition of local culture 2: Some reference made, but little integration into RTP offering/vision/ mission 3: Local culture embedded in product offering, but does not feature in the vision/mission of the RTP 4: Local culture embedded in product offering, and features prominently in the vision and mission of the RTP 5: Local culture embedded in product offering, and features prominently in the vision and mission of the RTP (additionally, clear evidence of innovation in terms of integrating the local culture in all aspects of the RTP)	Supporting the continuation of cultural richness and awareness in the local area will ensure local support, but, more importantly, it will engender the longevity of the cultural space within which the RTP operates. This includes the local cultural traditions, the cultural mores (values, beliefs, behaviours, etc.), and local and indigenous knowledge.	Mission and vision statement	Does your RTP make an effort to include elements from the local culture in its offering? Does your vision and mission seek actively to support the local culture in the area? How innovative are you in the way in which you seek to embed the local culture into your RTP offering and vision and mission? The above could include such aspects as the incorporation of local customs into operations, or making use of such living heritage options as: cultural tradition; oral history; performance; ritual; popular memory; skills and techniques; indigenous knowledge systems; or traditional craftsmanship.
				Product pamphlets	
Cultural awareness and authenticity	Availability of cultural heritage promotion materials, advertisements, programmes or plans.	1: None available 2: Available –information is provided verbally and on request 3: Promotional material readily available via multiple platforms and reflects current/up-to-date options 4: In addition to (3), promotional material with clear forward and backwards linkages		Outreach plans and programmes Product promotion/ advertising materials	Do you make sure that you are aware of local cultural events or programmes happening in your area? Do you make an effort to promote local cultural events or products? Do you actively seek to create RTP offerings that promote other cultural offerings in the area?

		5: In addition to (3 & 4) the RTP actively promotes and seeks to create opportunities for cultural awareness above and beyond its own operations		Business innovation and development plan Communication strategy	
--	--	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--	--------------------------------------------------------------------	--

PRINCIPLE FIVE: COMMUNITY BENEFICIATION AND SENSE OF WELL-BEING

CRITERIA	INDICATOR	SUSTAINABILITY SCALE	REASON FOR INDICATOR	SOURCE OF INDICATOR	FURTHER INFORMATION/ QUESTIONS/EXAMPLES TO GUIDE THE RTP
Local employment	Percentage of local residents employed per total staff complement	1: Less or equal to 20% 2: 20% < percentage of local residents employed per total staff compliment < 40% 3: Percentage of local residents employed per total staff compliment = 40% 4: 40% < percentage of local residents employed per total staff compliment < 60% 5: Percentage of local residents employed per total staff compliment > 60%	Local prosperity has huge potential to guarantee the local support and sustenance of the RTP.	Market data employment (full-time, part-time, contract, demographics) Business records Visitor spending surveys	‘Local’, in the current study, refers to the community/communities within which the RTP is situated. ‘Community’, in the above sense, is defined as a group of people who share social ties/perspectives, and who engage in joint action in specific geographical locations/settings. In South Africa, particular emphasis should be given to communities with strong cultural connections, or who are indigenous to a particular place. Note: A person can only be considered part of the local community if they are identified as such by others of the same community AND they live in the geographical proximity of said local community.
	Percentage of local employees’ employment at management level per total number of staff at management (supervisory,	1: Less than or equal to 5% 2: 5% < Percentage of local employees employed at management level per			

	<p>management and executive) level</p> <p>Percentage of procurement (including services – total business value chain) from the local community suppliers</p>	<p>total staff at management < 15%</p> <p>3: Percentage of local employees employed at management level per total staff at management = 15%</p> <p>4: 15% < Percentage of local employees employed at management level per total staff at management < 25%</p> <p>5: 25% and above</p> <p>1: Less than or equal to 20%</p> <p>2: 20% < Percentage of procurement from the local community suppliers < 40%</p> <p>3: Percentage of procurement from the local community suppliers = 40%</p> <p>4: 40% < Percentage of procurement from the local community suppliers < 60%</p> <p>5: 60% and above</p>			
Local partnership/ ownership	Percentage of local partnership/ownership	<p>1: Less than 5%</p> <p>2: Between 5% and 25%</p> <p>3: Between 26% and 30%</p>	Local partnership/ownerships an ideal way to ensure	Business partnership/ ownership records	

		4: Between 31% and 40% 5: More than 40%	local community beneficiation.		
Capacity-building	Skills development expenditure as a percentage of the total payroll Skills development opportunities provided to the local community	1: 0% 2: At 2% or less 3: Between 3% and 4% 4: Between 5% and 7% 5: At 8% and more. 1: None provided 2: Awareness of skills development opportunities raised but not provided by RTP. 3: In addition to (2), skills development opportunities provided internally (in-house) to the RTP staff only from local community 4: In addition to (3) skills development opportunities provided externally (out-sourced) to the RTP staff only from local community 5: 4: In addition to (4), skills development opportunities are provided to unemployed members of local community.	The indicators can provide evidence of the socio-economic impacts of the RTP on the well-being of the community. Some of the indicators have a negative effect. Assessing the net well-being could, therefore, be crucial.	Interviews with key informants Focus groups with community members and business owners Community questionnaire	Note: Skills development expenditure should be on par with the relevant BEE standards. Skills development includes training, learnerships, apprenticeships, and internships

Corporate social responsibility	Corporate social responsibility (CSR) plan	<p>1: No CSR plan in place</p> <p>2: CSR plan exist but is not being implemented</p> <p>3: CSR plan exists but its implementation does not address local beneficiation and does not have a monitoring and evaluation component</p> <p>4: CSR plan exist and its implementation addresses local beneficiation but does not have a monitoring and evaluation component.</p> <p>5: A CSR plan exists and its implementation addresses local beneficiation and has a monitoring and evaluation component.</p>	Local beneficiation through knowledge-sharing and capacity-building potentially strengthens the sustainability of the RTP.	Knowledge and skill transfer plan and support programmes in the RTP's business (tourism firm) documents	A systems approach in relation to a CSR plan means that it is reflected in the plan, to the extent that the organisation recognises that it is embedded within a larger social ecological system, and that other shared users are dependent on it for their resources.
----------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

PRINCIPLE SIX: OPTIMAL USE OF RESOURCES

CRITERIA	INDICATOR	SUSTAINABILITY SCALE	REASON FOR INDICATOR	SOURCE OF INDICATOR	FURTHER INFORMATION/QUESTIONS/EXAMPLES TO GUIDE THE RTP
Water management	Water consumption on a yearly basis	1: Water consumption increased over the year, and the RTP has no water efficiency measures in place	Water consumption is measured, and reduction/efficiency measures are in place to reduce water use, where possible.	Utility records, environmental monitoring records	Water efficiency, in terms of this indicator, includes the reuse of water. The RTP can highlight a reduction in water consumption, due to the reuse of water for other purposes.

		<p>2: Water consumption stayed the same as in the previous year, with no water efficiency measures in place</p> <p>3: Water consumption stayed the same as in the previous year, even with water efficiency measures in place</p> <p>4: Water consumption decreased 5–25%, with water efficiency measures in place, including the reuse of waste water</p> <p>5: Water consumption decreased 26–50%, with water efficiency measures in place, including the reuse of water</p>			<p>Have you consulted the South African National Standards on Responsible Tourism? Section 5.4.3. states that the tourism product needs to decrease the overall consumption of water, and to improve the extent of reuse of waste water.</p>
Solid waste management	Solid waste management plan	<p>1: Lacks a waste management plan</p> <p>2: Waste management plan in draft</p> <p>3: Waste management plan being implemented</p> <p>4: Waste management plan in place, including the recycling of waste</p> <p>5: Waste management plan in place, including the recycling and reuse of waste</p>	<p>The RTP needs to implement measures to reduce the amount of solid and liquid waste. A recycling programme requires introduction and measurement.</p>	<p>Utility records, environmental monitoring records</p>	<p>The waste management plan should address the issue of solid and liquid waste management, as well as waste production, storage, collection, recycling, and reuse.</p> <p>Have you consulted the South African National Standards on Responsible Tourism? Section 5.4.5. states that an organisation needs to implement a waste management plan that seeks to minimise the waste production of both solid and liquid waste.</p>
	Waste production and reduction	<p>1: Waste production and reduction not being measured</p> <p>2: Waste produced by the RTP not reduced over the past year</p> <p>3: Waste production reduced over the past year</p>			

		<p>source of renewable energy sources such as solar or biofuel</p> <p>4: The RTP is not dependent on national grid using other fuel sources and /or renewable energy</p> <p>5: The RTP operates completely on renewable energy (solar, wind, biofuels)</p>			
Ecosystem and biodiversity protection	<p>Identification and management plan for sensitive ecosystems</p>	<p>1: The RTP is not aware of sensitive ecosystems for which their RTP is a part of.</p> <p>2: RTP is aware of sensitive ecosystems but have not identified measures to protect them.</p> <p>3: all sensitive ecosystems have been identified and management plan exists</p> <p>4: RTP actively monitors and manages sensitive ecosystems on site</p> <p>5: Sensitive ecosystems are identified and exist within the operation of the RTP but the RTP does not have any impact on such ecosystems.</p>		<p>Environmental management plan</p>	<p>Have you consulted the South African National Standards on Responsible Tourism? Section 5.4.12. states that an organisation shall contribute to local biodiversity conservation, including the supporting of natural protected areas and areas of high biodiversity value. In addition, section 5.4.13. states that an organisation shall avoid inflicting adverse effects on ecosystems, and that it shall rectify any negative environmental impact resulting from its activities.</p>
Controlling the tourist-carrying capacity of the RTP	<p>Intensity of visitors to the RTP</p>	<p>1: Carrying capacity of visitors unknown, so no evaluation of overuse possible</p> <p>2: Density counts of visitors exceeding carrying capacity (i.e. overcrowding)</p>	<p>Too many visitors can place stress on the RTP, and on the ecosystem in which it operates. To avoid the above, the RTP must restrict the number of visitors within its carrying capacity.</p>	<p>Records of number of RTP users</p>	<p>Have you consulted the South African National Standards on Responsible Tourism? Section 5.4.13. states that an organisation must avoid inflicting adverse effects on ecosystems, and that it shall rectify any negative environmental impact resulting from its activities.</p>



		3: Density counts matched with carrying capacity 4: Programme in place for optimal use actively ensures that carrying capacity is not exceeded 5: Optimal carrying capacity linked to health and safety and sensitive ecosystems			
--	--	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--	--	--

6. Application of the RTP Sustainability Framework

Having provided the sustainable framework for RTPs in South Africa, the present section gives guidance on the application of the framework. The above is important, because the selected RTPs that were earmarked for the empirical application of the framework could not respond in time for the production of the present report. Such delay is believed not to have been due to unwillingness on their part, but due to the framework not being easy to apply, and hence requiring the guidance and/or training of those involved in its implementation. Also, it may take time to apply, especially when the RTP-related information is not readily available.

6.1. A Hypothetical Application

Given that difficulties were experienced in empirically testing the framework, an RTP case had to be created, in terms of which used hypothesised figures were used to demonstrate how the framework might work in practice (see Table 6.1 below).

Table 6.1: A hypothetical RTP case

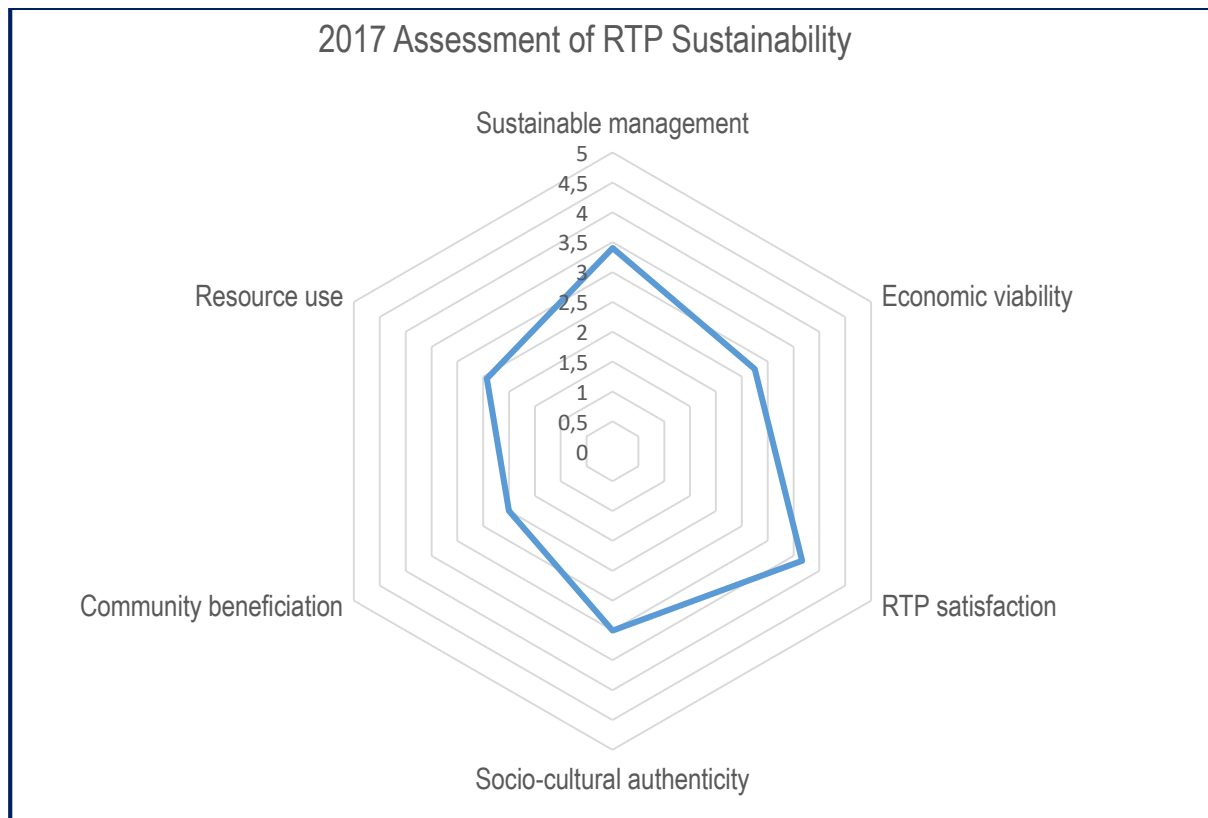
Principle	Indicator	2017	Transformed to Principle Level	2018	Transformed to Principle Level
Sustainability management	Responsible tourism plan	4	3.4	5	4
	Employs trained personnel	3		4	
	Employment equity plan	2		4	
	Licence and registration	5		5	
	Health and safety policy	3		2	
Economic viability	Profit margin	3	2.8	4	3.5
	Budgeting	2		3	
	Usage demand	4		4	
	Risk register	2		3	
Satisfaction with the RTP	Tracking system	4	3.7	3	3.7
	Customer loyalty	3		4	
	Satisfaction	4		4	
Sociocultural authenticity	Culture in vision	2	3	3	3.5
	Culture promoted	4		4	
Community beneficitation and sense of well-being	Local employment	4	2	3	2.7
	Local management	2		3	
	Local suppliers	1		2	
	Local ownership	1		2	
	Skills development	3		4	
	Skills to locals	2		3	
	Social responsibility	1		2	
	Water consumption	3		3	

Optimal use of resources	Waste management	3	2.4	3	3
	Waste reduction	2		4	
	Energy saving	4		3	
	Energy mix	1		2	
	Sensitive ecosystems	1		2	
	Visitor intensity	3		4	

For each indicator, a score, using the sustainability scale in Table 5.1 and/or Table 5.2, is included for the sustainability year leading to 2017 and 2018, respectively. To transform the indicator scores into figures at the principles level, the average of the indicators relating to the principle in question is found. For instance, to determine the economic viability concerned, the four indicator scores – profit margin, budgeting, usage demand, and risk register – are averaged to give 3.4 and 4 for 2017 and 2018, respectively.

Two reasons exist for scores requiring to be translated to the principles level. Firstly, indicators are detailed such that to scan through them from one year to the other to assess whether positive progress has been made towards sustainability is difficult. Secondly, management and other stakeholders tend to be interested in obtaining a quick visual impression of the framework to save time.

Figure 11: RTP sustainability at first year assessment: principles' level

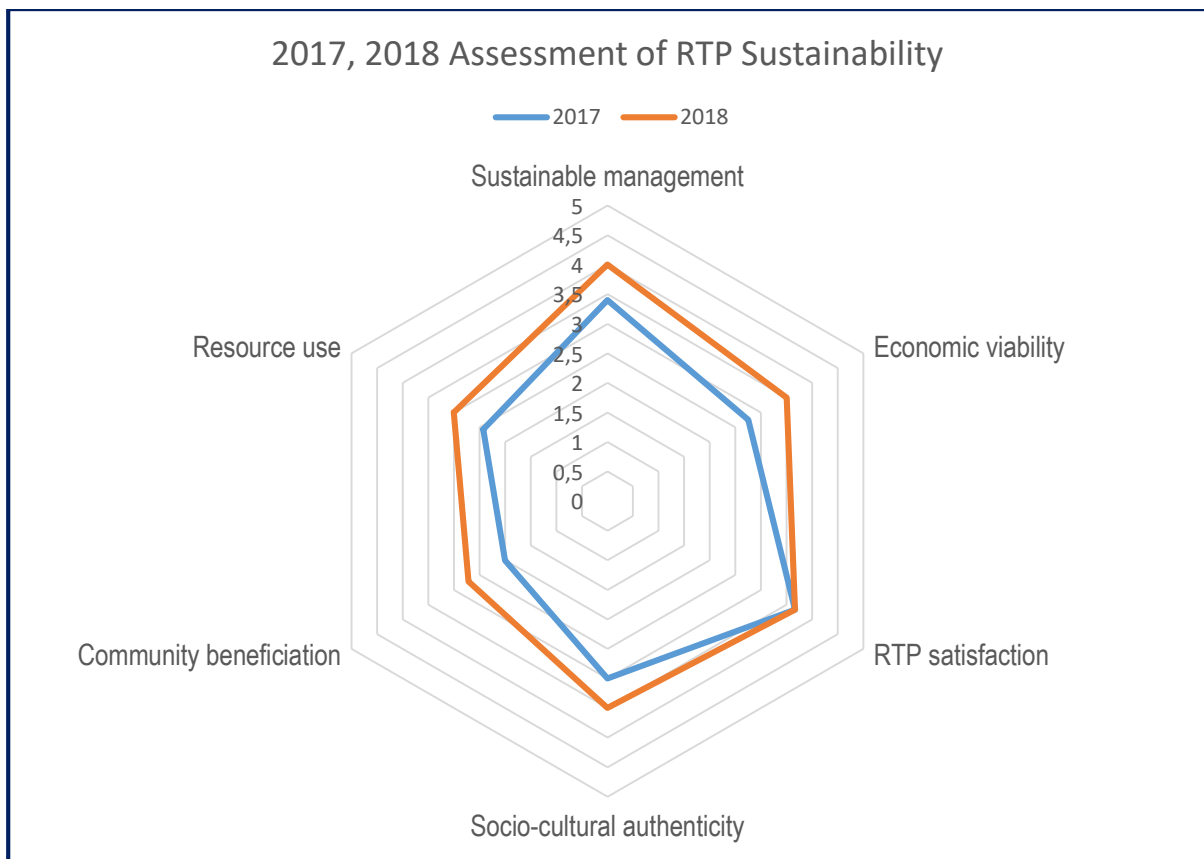


The hypothetical case of the RTP developed in Table 6 can be presented to effect on spider diagrams that give a pictorial glance of the RTP's performance, in terms of sustainability over time. The first

diagram, which is shown in Figure 11, presents the sustainability framework at principles level in 2017, and then in 2018, illustrating the evolution of the RTP.

The hypothetical case in Figure 11 demonstrates that the RTP is not doing well in terms of the principles of community beneficiation and resource use. However, it shows good performance in relation to the level of satisfaction experienced with the RTP. Such information could already provide strategic managers of the RTP enough detail to work on to improve the weak areas. In the event that they do so, and can measure the RTP's performance a year later, the spider image should come to balloon outwards, as is shown in Figure 12 below.

Figure 12: RTP sustainability at second year assessment: principles' level



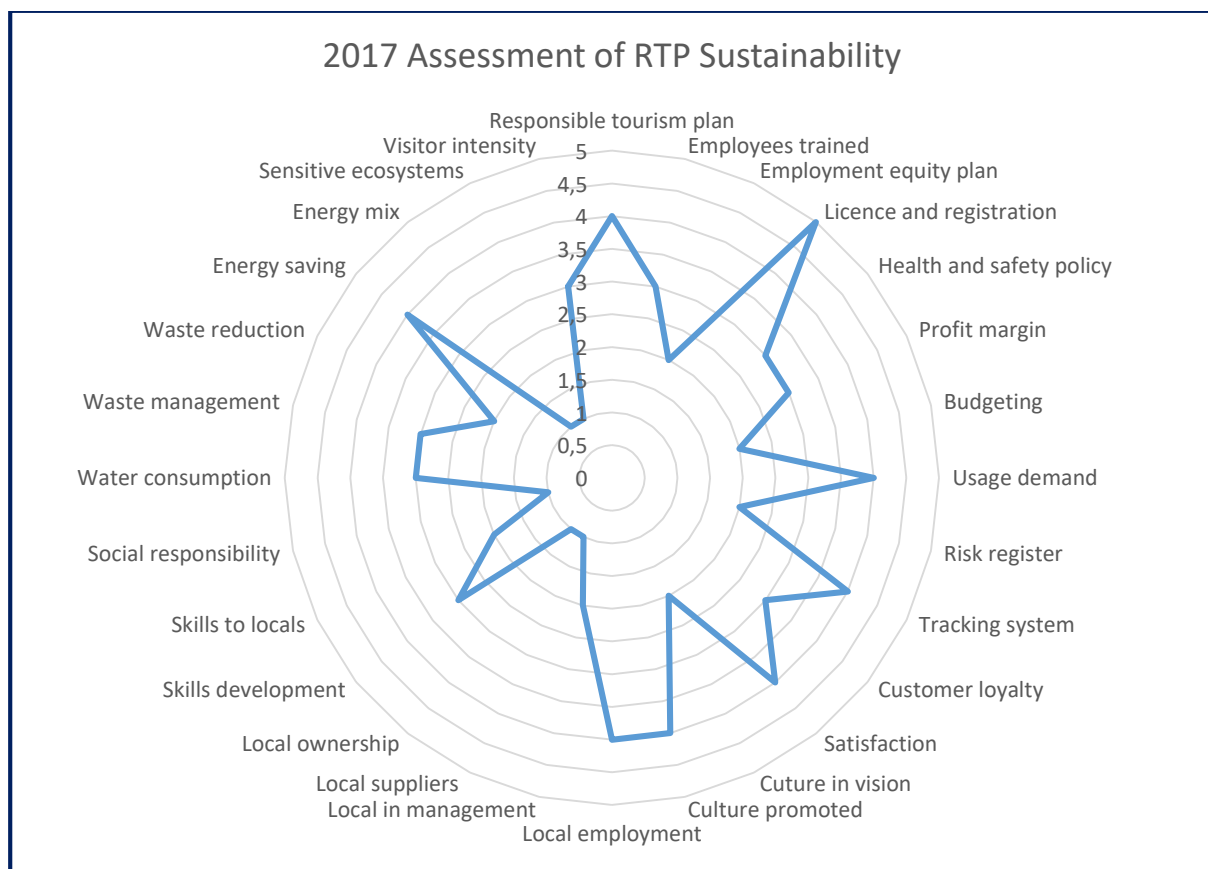
The spider graphs of the sustainability of RTPs at the principles level are mainly appropriate for use by such strategic managers and stakeholders as the government (i.e. the NDT). Operational managers would have to know of the factors driving the community beneficiation to perform badly. The above would mean that they would have to assess the sustainability of the RTPs at a more detailed level, that is, at an indicator level, as is shown in Figure 13 below.

As can be seen in Figure 13, a nuanced view is provided to enable the assessment of the non-performing areas of the community beneficiation and sense of well-being principle, being social responsibility and community ownership. The operations manager might then realise that, to improve sustainability, the

community might be pleased, in terms of the social responsibility activities and the selling of shares to the locals engaged in by the RTP.

On the principle of the level of satisfaction attained with RTP, it can be seen that the customers are tracked well, with the tracking system of the RTP showing that the customers are satisfied with the product offering made. However, customer loyalty is lacking, which could be a potential source of weakness for the product. The above-mentioned information does not show at the principles level of sustainability, because at such a level, all that can be seen is that the level of satisfaction with RTP is good.

Figure 13: RTP sustainability at first year assessment: indicators' level



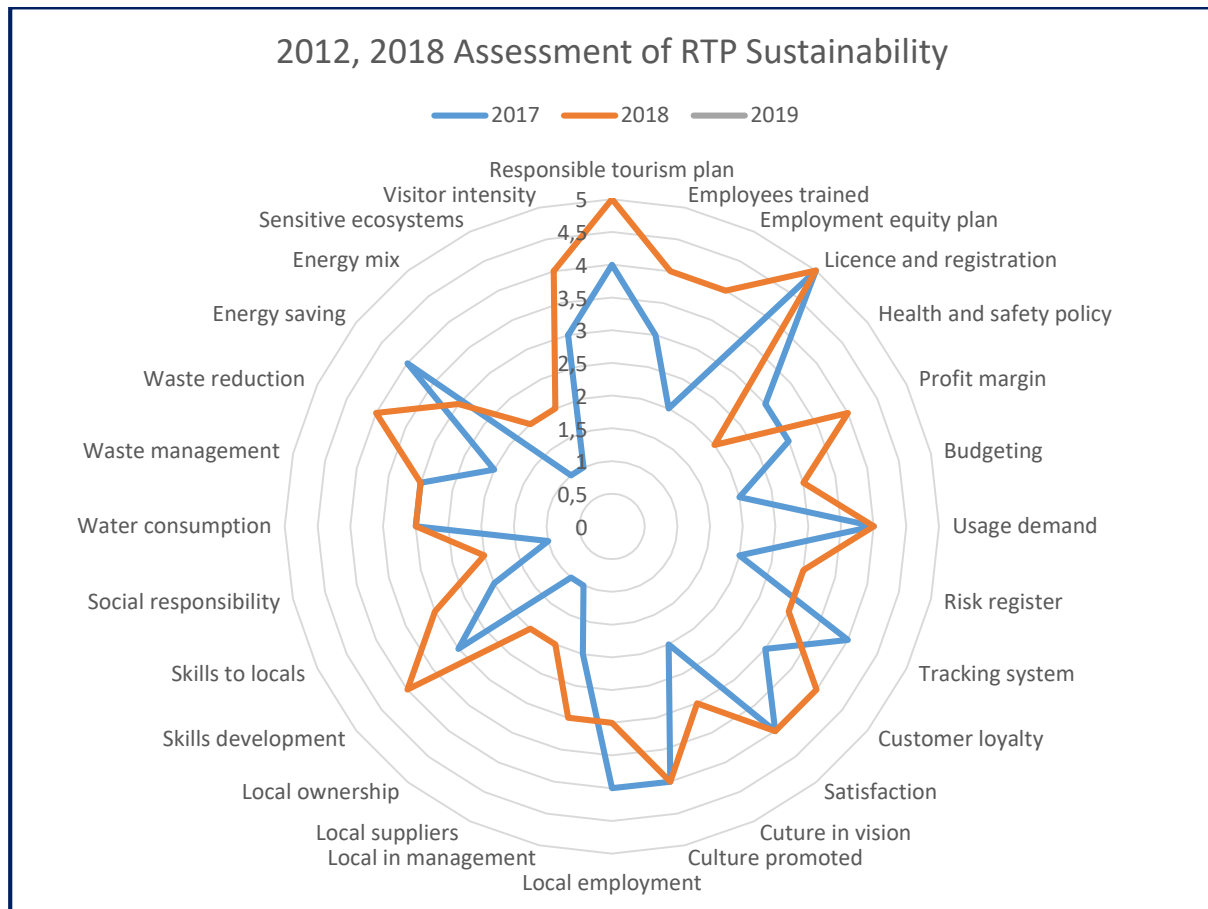
Having tracked, and tried to improve on, the indicators that are lagging behind, and by maintaining those that are doing well, the sustainability image of the RTP should show improvement, as is shown in Figure 14 below. The indicators that have shown improvement, especially in terms of community beneficiation, are local ownership and social responsibility. With increased improvement, the product will move towards sustainability as a going concern. The assessment of the RTP might continue into 2019, and still further into the future, with, for each period of time concerned, the spider diagram showing whether progress has been made towards, or away from, sustainability.

A potential trade-off might occur in the short run, between community beneficiation and economic viability. The above mainly emanates from the fact that, as the amount of local ownership increases, the extent of

foreign ownership, and, consequently, of dividends might decrease in respect of foreign owners, while it might increase to the local owners, in the short run. However, if the product is sustainable, the benefits in future, in terms of profits, as well as dividends, will be expected to outweigh the costs. A situation in which the above does not occur could potentially lead to protests being raised by the locals against foreign ownership of the RTP, which might, eventually, lead to the complete closing down of the RTP activities and/or products, which will render its future income null and void (i.e. it will go bankrupt).

The application of the RTP sustainability framework to RTPs in the real world, and not in a hypothetical instance, such as we have used in the current report, has one major challenge, being that of the generalisability of indicators to all the RTPs involved. Whereas the principles are, in effect, at a broader level, and whereas they can definitely cut across all categories of RTPs, doing so is impossible with the indicators. For instance, a nature-based RTP might not have the same indicators as does a cultural RTP. The above begs the question as to how the relevant indicators should be selected by the RTPs concerned. The following section discusses how the selection should take place.

Figure 14: RTP sustainability at second year assessment: indicators level



6.2. Selection of the Indicators' Decision Tree

The current subsection provides recommendations on how to select the sustainability indicators that are contextual to the RTP and its category. The guidance can assist the owners of RTPs to assess themselves genuinely, as being sustainable is in their own benefit. A challenge might arise if, for instance, the NDT wants to fund an RTP based on its sustainability. In such an instance, the RTP concerned might have no choice but to assess their sustainability using the indicators prescribed by the funder.

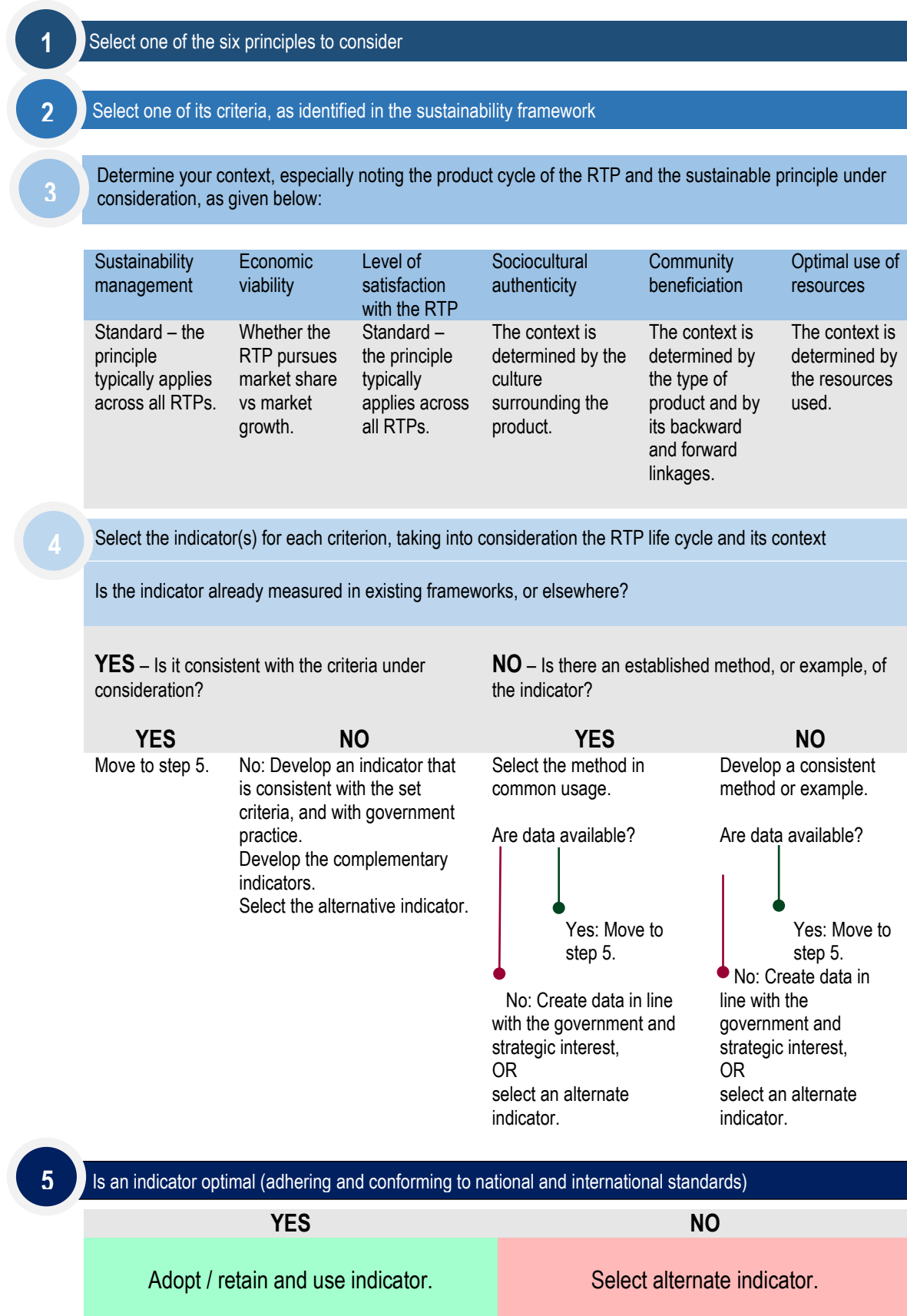
Figure 6.5 below sets out a decision tree guiding the RTP-related thought process through the main steps and decisions that require to be taken when selecting sustainability indicators, in line with the context of the RTP, and with the general direction that the owners might want to take. Before discussing the key steps in the decision tree, it is shown why the context might differ between the RTPs both internally, and in terms of the different categories.

An example of the above will illustrate how the context could lead to the adoption of a different indicator, which, nonetheless, addresses the same criteria and principle of sustainability given in section 5. Assume that we have two nature-based RTPs, with one having just entered the tourism market, and with the other having been in existence for over a decade. The two RTPs concerned are competitors, as they offer the same activities, services, and/or attractions. The new RTP might not be expected to make a profit in its first year, as it starts up operation. While it is possible to measure the performance of the RTP based on its profit margins, doing so might, arguably, not be the best choice of an indicator, given that it might make it appear as though the RTP is not sustainable, when, in fact, it is because it is still in its infancy. The use of a related financial performance indicator, such as the payback period, might, then, be appropriate, instead. However, for its counterpart – being the rival RTP that has existed for more than 10 years – the use of profit margins makes sense, as the RTP is established and should be making a profit. The foregoing example is one of many other indicators that might not be fairly harmonised across all RTPs, due to their different contexts. For the above reason, it would be inappropriate to be prescriptive regarding the specific indicators that should be adopted, which must, necessarily, be context-specific and informed by an RTP's monitoring activities, and by pre-existing data. Nonetheless, it is appropriate to indicate that the minimum number of indicators selected should not be fewer than the number of criteria provided in the present report, given that the principles concerned, and their related criteria, are key elements, and that they present the minimum requirement for the assessment of sustainability. The decision tree, which is set out in Figure 6.5 below, guides the way through the process of sustainability indicator selection. For each step, guidance is provided below:

Steps 1–2: The steps are taken directly from the framework. What is important is to make sure that the criteria are aligned with the appropriate principle.

Step 3: Determining the context of the RTP is necessary, as, in some cases, the indicators are identified and employed in terms of the framework presented in the current report might not be applicable. The above cannot be decided a priori, outside the sustainability principles and the product cycle of the RTP concerned. Where a principle is indicated as being standard, it means that most of the indicators can apply across most of the RTPs.

Figure 15: Selection of indicators' decision tree



Step 4: The choice of type of indicator is salient, and it is necessary to consider which types to choose for the RTP, because only a limited number may be selected for cost and pragmatic reasons. The following checklist might be considered in making the decision:

- How many indicators are desirable for the RTP, taking into consideration its size?
- What type of indicators are already used, or omitted, and are necessary for assessing sustainability?
- Do the indicators relate appropriately to all the principles of sustainability, without bias?
- What type of benchmarks already exist in relation to the RTP?

Step 5: The indicators should be considered in relation to both national and international standards. The need to consider international standards might seem to be somewhat far-fetched, but national standards are a requirement that, in most cases, have to be fulfilled.

7. Conclusions

The current report has reviewed the literature on RTPs in the context of sustainability to support the NDT's 2012 strategy, outcome seven, on sustainable rural communities, with a strong emphasis on supporting rural tourism. A sustainability framework for RTPs in South Africa was developed. The challenge in using the framework relates to the indicators, whose relevance varies widely from one to another RTP. Thus, the lack of homogeneity of context means that the report is not prescriptive in terms of the sustainable indicators that should be adopted.

Given the diversity of RTPs, the sustainability framework developed in the present report only acts as a base from which RTPs can plan, implement and assess their own sustainability. Where a decision as to which indicators are to be used is to be made, the report provides a guide to the selection of indicators, without losing the basis of the sustainability framework.

There is legitimacy in arguing for different indicators that relate to the same criteria, given the context and the stage of tourism product development. This is illustrated, for example, by the fact that the marketing and management approach for the tourism product cannot be the same at different stages of its life cycle; and, consequently, it might have differing objectives and drivers. The outstanding challenge is, therefore, the extent to which the selected indicators 'speak' to the criteria concerned in a convincing way.

The implication of the above is the need for the continuous training of RTP suppliers who need to plan, implement and assess their sustainability, representing a burden on the national government in this regard. By combining the insights from researchers, practitioners and policymakers, the continuous improvements of indicators can lead to the realisation of sustainable rural tourism in South Africa, in line with SDGs 8 and 12.

8. References

- Angelkova, T.; Koteski, C.; Jakovlev, Z. and Mitrevska, E. 2012. Sustainability and competitiveness of tourism. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Science* 44: 221-227
- Briedenhann, J. and Wickens, E. (2004). Rural tourism - meeting the challenges of the new South Africa. *The International Journal of Tourism Research*, 6(3):189-203.
- Butnaru, G.I. and Haller, A.P. 2017. Perspective of Sustainable Rural Tourism in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK): Comparative Study of b and s Convergence in the Economic Development Regions. *Sustainability*, 9(252).
- Burns, P.M., 2011. *Controversies in Tourism*, CABI
- Chambers, E., 2005. Can the Anthropology of Tourism make us better Travelers?. *Annals of Anthropological Practice*, 23(1), pp.27-44.
- Che, D., Veeck, A. & Veeck, G. (2005). Sustaining production and strengthening the agritourism product: linkages among Michigan agritourism destinations. *Agricultural and Human Values*, 22:225-234.
- Cernat, L. and Gourdon, J., 2007. Is the concept of sustainable tourism sustainable. *Developing the Sustainable Tourism Benchmarking Tool* < http://www.unctad.org/en/docs/ditctncd20065_en.pdf.
- Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (2009) accessed from <http://www.ruraldevelopment.gov.za/about-us/office-of-the-director-general/8-about-us/3-crdp> on the 15th October 2017.
- De la Torre, G.M.V., Hidalgo, L. A. and Fuentes, J.M.A. 2014. Rural tourism in the south of Spain: An opportunity for rural development/ *Modern Economy* 2014(5): 152-160.
- Department of Rural Development and Land Reform. 2009. The comprehensive rural development framework. http://www.ruraldevelopment.gov.za/phocadownload/Documents/crdp_version1-28july09.pdf
- Du Cros, H., 2001. A new model to assist in planning for sustainable cultural heritage tourism. *International journal of tourism research*, 3(2), pp.165-170.
- Eusébio, C. Kastenholz, E. and Breda, Z. 2014. Tourism and sustainable development of rural Destinations: a stakeholders' view. *Revista Portuguesa de Estudos Regionais*, 36(2).
- Fatimah, T. (2015). The impacts of rural tourism initiatives on cultural landscape sustainability in Borobudur area. *Procedia Environmental Sciences* 28 (2015) 567 – 577
- Fleischer, A. and Pizam, A., 1997. Rural tourism in Israel. *Tourism management*, 18(6), pp.367-372.
- Fons, M.V.S., Fierro, J.A.M. and y Patiño, M.G., 2011. Rural tourism: A sustainable alternative. *Applied Energy*, 88(2), pp.551-557.
- Getz, D. and Page, S. eds., 1997. *The business of rural tourism: International perspectives*. Cengage Learning EMEA.
- Glyptou, K. Paravantis, J.A. Papatheodorou, A. and Spilanis, I. 2014. "Tourism sustainability methodologies: A critical assessment", IISA 2014, The 5th International Conference on Information, Intelligence, Systems and Applications, Chania, Crete, Greece.
- James, D. 2004. Local sustainable tourism indicator. *Estudios Turísticos* 161–162: 219–232.
- Jefferson, A. and Lickorish, L.J., 1988. *Marketing tourism. A practical guide*. Longman Group UK Ltd..
- Johnson, P. and Thomas, B., 1998. The economics of museums: a research perspective. *Journal of cultural economics*, 22(2-3), pp.75-85.
- Kayat K., 2014. Community-Based Rural Tourism: A Proposed Sustainability Framework. *SHS Web of Conferences* 12, 01010.

- Kirkman, A. (2010). The Role of Wine Tourism in the Marketing of Wineries in the Stellenbosch Wine Route of South Africa. Unpublished Dissertation. University of South Africa: Department of Business Management.
- Kotler, P., 1997. Marketing management, 7th.
- Lane, B. (1994). What is Rural Tourism. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 2(1 & 2): 7-21.
- Lovelock, BA., 2008. Tourism and the Consumption of Wildlife: Hunting, Shooting and Sportfishing, London: Routledge.
- Lozano-Oyola, M., Blancas, F.J., Gonzalez, M., and Caballero, R. 2012: Sustainable tourism indicators as planning tools in cultural destinations, *Ecological Indicators* 18: 659-675.
- Luhambo Tour. (2017). Cape wine and day tours. [Online]. Available from: <http://www.luhambotours.com/cape-winelands/wine-routes-of-the-cape> Accessed: 14 June 2017.
- MacDonald, R. and Jolliffe, L., 2003. Cultural rural tourism: Evidence from Canada. *Annals of tourism research*, 30(2), pp.307-322.
- Medlik, S. and Middleton, V.T., 1973. The tourist product and its marketing implications. *International Tourism Quarterly*, 3(1), pp.28-35.
- Middleton, V.T., 1989. Marketing implications for attractions. *Tourism Management*, 10(3), pp.229-232.
- Mutana S and Mukwada G., 2017. An Exploratory Assessment of Significant Tourism Sustainability Indicators for a Montane-Based Route in Drakensberg Mountains. *Sustainability* 9(7) 1072.
- National Department of Tourism Strategy., 2012. National Tourism Sector Strategy [NDT] <https://www.tourism.gov.za/AboutNDT/Branches/1/Knowledge/Documents/National%20Tourism%20Sector%20Strategy.pdf>
- Pearce, D.G., 1989. Social impacts of tourism. *Social Cultural and Environmental Impacts of Tourism*, pp.1-39.
- Petric, L. 2003. Constraints and possibilities of the rural tourism development with special stress on the case of Croatia. Finland: University of Jyväskylä
- Petric, I. 2013. The role of the ITs in the development of tourism sustainability: a smart tourism platform. In: *Sustainable Tourism: An interdisciplinary approach*, Juraj Dobrila University of Pula, Faculty of Economics and Tourism, pp 147–164
- Prentice, R., 2001. Experiential cultural tourism: Museums & the marketing of the new romanticism of evoked authenticity. *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 19(1), pp.5-26.
- Prescott-Allen, R. 1997. Barometer of sustainability: Measuring and communicating wellbeing and sustainable development. Paper presented at the IUCN, An approach to assessing progress toward sustainability: Tools and training series for institutions, field teams and collaborating agencies, Gland.
- Rogerson, C.M. 2006. Pro-Poor local economic development in South Africa: The role of pro-poor tourism, *Local Environment* 11(1): 37-60
- Schianetz, K. 2005. Challenges of Sustainability Assessment for Tourism Destinations. 4th National Conference on Tourism Futures, 2-5 October, 2005, University of Queensland.
- Sharma, A., 2007. The shift in sales organizations in business-to-business services markets. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 21(5), pp.326-333.
- Sharpley, R. and Sharpley, J. (1997): *Rural Tourism: An Introduction*. London: International Thomson Business Press.
- Shaw, C. and Ivens, J., 2002. *Building great customer experiences* (Vol. 241). London: Palgrave.
- Statistics South Africa, 2016. National Accounts. Tourism Satellite Account for South Africa, final 2012 and provisional 2013 and 2014. <http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/Report-04-05-07/Report-04-05-072014.pdf>
- The International Ecotourism Society, TIES, 2015. Uniting conservation, communities and sustainable travel. <http://www.ecotourism.org/news/2015>

- Todes, A. & Turok, I. (2017). Spatial inequalities and policies in South Africa: Place-based or people-centred? School of Architecture and Planning, University of the Witwatersrand.
- Torres-Delgado, A. and Saarinen, J. 2014 Using indicators to assess sustainable tourism development: a review, *Tourism Geographies* 16(1): 31-47
- Uganda Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities. 2016. Annual tourism sector performance report. https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/2fa323_1404f3cfd40b43f281d63f893cc6ce1e.pdf
- UNDP (2005). UNDP annual report 2005: A time for bold ambition. http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/corporate/undp_in_action_2005.html
- UNEP and UNWTO. 2005. Making Tourism more Sustainable. A Guide for Policy Makers. United Nations Environment Programme and World Tourism Organization. <http://www.unep.fr/shared/publications/pdf/DTIx0592xPA-TourismPolicyEN.pdf> Accessed 4 September 2017
- United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). 2004. *Indicators of sustainable development for tourism destinations: A guide book*. Madrid: World Tourism Organization. <http://www.e-unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284407262>
- United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR). 2011. World Cities Scientific Development Forum (WCSDF). <https://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/events/20173>
- United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). 2017. Measuring Sustainable Tourism: A call for Action – Report of the 6th International Conference on Tourism Statistics, Manila, Philippines, 21 – 23 June 2017, UNWTO, Madrid.
- Viljoen, J. Tlabela.K. 2007. Rural Tourism Development in South Africa: Trends and Challenges: Human Sciences Research Council of South Africa: Cape Town.
- Wax, B. (2016). Enotourism: Changing the Way We Travel with and for Wine. [Wine Travel Guides](#)
- Weber, F. and Taufer, B. 2016. Assessing the sustainability of tourism products – as simple as it gets. *International Journal of Sustainable Development Planning* 11(3): 325-333.
- World Travel and Tourism Council., 2017. Accessed from <https://www.wttc.org/-/media/files/reports/economic-impact-research/regions-2017/world2017.pdf> on the 16th January 2018.
- World Cities Scientific Development Forum., 2012 accessed from <https://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/events/20173> on 4th January 2013.
- Zeppel, H. 2015. Environmental indicators and benchmarking for sustainable tourism development. In Hall, M.C.; Gosling, S.; Scott, D. (Eds.) *A Routledge Handbook of Tourism and Sustainability*; Routledge: New York, NY, USA, 2016.

9. Appendices

Appendix 1

Research question	Interview questions asked to answer the set research questions
What rural tourism products are available in South Africa, and how sustainable are they in terms of both demand and supply?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Please tell us the categories of RTPs of which you know. 2. In each category, please tell us the names of the RTPs involved, and where they are supplied in South Africa. 3. <i>If the respondent did not exhaust the categories identified in this study: are you aware of these other categories (list read respecting the category not provided by the respondent).</i> 4. <i>If yes: can you give us the names of the RTPs that are currently available in each of the categories, and where they are supplied in South Africa?</i> 5. What do you think is a good source for identifying RTPs in South Africa? 6. What else can you tell us about RTPs in South Africa?
What are the indicators of the sustainability framework for rural tourism products in South Africa?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do you think that the RTPs that are currently available in South Africa are sustainable? Justify your answer. 2. In your view, what could make the RTPs available in South Africa sustainable? 3. Do you think that there are RTPs that can be sustainable in the context of South Africa, but which are currently not supplied by the business sector? 4. Which of the RTPs that are currently available do you think are performing well/badly/moderately? 5. What else can you tell us about the sustainability of RTPs in general, and in South Africa in particular?

Appendix 2

SUSTAINABILITY FRAMEWORK FOR RURAL TOURISM PRODUCTS

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the conceptualisation testing of the sustainability framework for rural tourism products (RTPs) in South Africa. The research has been undertaken by the University of Venda and the CSIR, for the South African National Department of Tourism.

Please be advised that your product name will remain anonymous, with the only information that we will report being the type of rural product and the general, rather than the specific, location of your product. Before completing this questionnaire, please ensure that you have read through the framework. Please provide as much detail as possible in your answers, so that we can ensure that we are able to make the framework increasingly user-friendly.

Thank you in advance for your participation in the study.

1) How would you define your rural tourism product? Tick where appropriate.

	RTP category	Place tick, where appropriate, in this column
1	Nature-based tourism	
2	Ecotourism	
3	Cultural tourism	
4	Agritourism	
5	Adventure tourism	
6	Other	

2) Do you understand the relevance of the following principles in terms of their relevance to the sustainability of RTPs?

Principle	Tick where appropriate		Please provide a reason for your answer if you can.
	Yes (I understand.)	No (I don't understand.)	
Sustainability management			
Economic viability			
Level of satisfaction with the RTP			
Sociocultural authenticity			
Community beneficiation and sense of well-being			
Optimal use of resources			

3) In your opinion, do the principles encapsulate your understanding of the sustainability of rural tourism products?

Indicate the appropriate response below, and provide a reason for your choice.	
Yes []	
No []	

4) Do you feel that there are any principles missing?

Indicate the appropriate response below, and identify the missing principle.	
Yes []	
No []	

- 5) Associated with each principle are a number of criteria that form the objectives of the principle. Do you think that the criteria chosen for each principle are appropriate?

Principle	Tick where appropriate		Please provide a reason if you do not think that the given criteria are appropriate, and state what you think their replacements should be.
	Yes (I understand.)	No (I don't understand.)	
Sustainability management			
Economic viability			
Level of satisfaction with RTP			
Sociocultural authenticity			
Community beneficiation and sense of well-being			
Optimal use of resources			

- 6) Are there any criteria that you feel have been left out and that should be included, or even criteria that should be removed?

Name of the criterion	Inclusion/removal recommended

- 7) (a) Are the indicators used for each criterion realistic? Yes [] / No []

If no, state which ones are not realistic.

Unrealistic criterion	Reason for the criterion not being realistic

- (b) Do you think that you would be able to collect sufficient data to measure your RTP's performance against the indicators? Yes [] / No []

If no, on which indicators do you think it would not be possible to collect data?

Criterion on which it is not possible to collect data	Reason for it not being possible to collect data

8) Do you feel that the sustainability scale provided for each indicator is useful as a measurement tool for sustainability? **Yes** [] / **No** []

9) Is the framework user-friendly? **Yes** [] / **No** []

10) Please provide any additional comments below:

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THE STUDY.



End of Document