Nature based tourism
and a framework for
socio-economic research

Prof M Saayman
Nature based tourism and a framework for socio-economic research

Presented by
Prof M Saayman
TREES
North-West University (NWU)
3 August 2017
Introduction

• Nature based tourism is on the increase

• 80% of foreign tourists visit nature based areas in South Africa

• Competition nationally and internationally is on the increase
What is nature based tourism?

Nature-based tourism includes all forms of tourism where relatively undisturbed natural environments form the primary attraction or setting (Buckley 2009; Newsome et al. 2002).

Responsible travel to natural areas, which conserves the environment and improves the welfare of local people. It is tourism based on the natural attractions of an area (Texas Parks and Wildlife, 2017).
Challenges facing nature-based tourism

1. Tourists needs and behaviour are changing
2. Poverty
3. Poaching
4. Skills shortage
5. Community beneficiation
What is socio-economics?


The goal of a socioeconomic study is generally to assess socio-economic development, usually in terms of improvements in metrics such as gross domestic product (GDP), life expectancy, literacy and levels of employment, with the aim of enhancing the benefits received by communities (Saayman & Saayman, 2010).
Case of SANParks

- 20 National Parks / Transfrontier Parks
- Custodian of conservation in SA
- 80% of income derived from tourism activities
- How to achieve sustainability?
What is sustainability?

To meet the needs of the current generation without compromising the need of the future generation.
Economic

Sustainability

Community

Environment
Framework for socio-economic research

Figure 1. Conceptual framework for the interaction between communities, national parks, businesses and tourists.
Economic impact is influenced by:

- Number of visitors
- Length of stay
- Amount spent
- Size of the multiplier
Social impact focuses on:

- Negative social aspects
  - prostitution and drugs
- Property prices
- Employment opportunities
- Recreational benefits
- Image
- Infrastructure
- Participation in activities
- Quality of life
Lessons learned

• Multiplier – local is lekker
• Tourism and the economic sectors
• Level of development
• Affluent and poor communities views differ significantly
  – Affluent - higher social value than economic value
  – Poor – higher economic value than social value
  – Both value national parks
Conclusions

• Nature base tourism can contribute to poverty alleviation
• Can use our resource base more effectively
• Continuing research remains paramount
Thank You
Any Questions?