Characterisation of trips and related statistics- Experience of Lesotho

INBOUND TOURISM

Sources: Entry/exit cards collected in collaboration with Immigration and Lesotho Revenue Authority (where there are no immigration officers) and the visitors surveys

Entry/Exit cards

Collection

- Focus is on entry points only due to shortage of staff
- The cards are completed by every arriving visitor
- Administered by Immigration officers and temporary staff recruited by the Corporation and in other cases by other agencies where Immigration is not represented
- Areas currently covered: Six out of 11 ports due to both human and financial resource constraints
- The cards are collected at the end of every month
- Variables captured include the following: Port of entry, mode of travel, sex, age, country of residence, purpose of visit and intended length of stay

Processing

- Was done by NSO but currently by Lesotho Tourism Development Corporation (LTDC) since June 2005 as an effort to improve both the collection and timely processing
- Data capturers recruited to capture the information
- Data is captured using the form designed by the IT Administrator
- Statistical Tables produced on monthly basis but full reports done on quarterly basis
- Tables produced using crystal reports

Challenges:

- Some of the variables need to be revised. E.g. under Purpose of visit, no allowance has been made on the current form for those visiting friends or relatives, therefore either tick holiday or other
- The form is currently being revised in collaboration with agencies represented at ports of entry, Central Bank of Lesotho and NSO and taking into consideration categories recommended by UNWTO. This has taken longer than anticipated due to non-participation of key agencies like Immigration in meetings to review the form.
- The revised form combines both the entry/exit cards and the Lesotho Revenue Authority (LRA) declaration form. The biggest challenge is that LRA is working towards computerizing their systems meaning with time, the form will have to be revised again to exclude the LRA component.
- There are plans to cost-share printing of the cards amongst agencies that have a stake. The challenge is whether each agency will fully commit its resources including human resource, time and finances. Currently, Immigration is responsible for printing the form, as mandated by the Act of Parliament but they are not doing it. LTDC had to do it since we desperately needed that information
- If we are successful in implementing the form

Visitors Survey

Introduction:

Reference Period: Dec 2004 –Jan 2005

Purpose: To collect information on visitors to Lesotho that informs product development and marketing strategies. Such information was collected to complement the one collected using entry/exit cards.

Variables Captured: Characteristics of visitors and trip (Origin of visitors, age and gender, No. of people in a group, source of information, transport means, purpose, length of stay, accommodation used, attractions visited, evaluation of facilities/services, problems encountered, expenditure, future plans to visit Lesotho

Coverage: Six out of 12 Border posts with high tourist traffic

Target population: International departures

Sample selection: use of non-probability method to select ports of entry with high tourist traffic and probability method (systematic) to select actual respondents (every fifth person)

Data collection instrument: Questionnaires designed to be completed by visitors

Data collection method:

- Use of questionnaires administered by temporary staff and staff of the Lesotho Revenue Authority – handing over questionnaires to visitors to fill there and then and collecting them before they leave
- Interviews were spread throughout the week from 8:00 hours to 17:00 hours
- Every fifth person arriving at the border was requested to complete the questionnaire where possible
- Questionnaires collected every week and once a month in Border posts that are far
- A pilot was undertaken to pretest the questionnaire before the actual survey, results analysed, the revisions/improvements made to some of the questions
- Cooperation was solicited from all agencies represented at border posts to ensure smooth conduct of the survey

To enhance the response rate:

- Small tokens (small Basotho Hats) were given to those who agreed to complete the questionnaires.
- Also, temporary staff were placed at each of the selected border posts to request respondents to complete the questionnaires, explain the importance of filling that questionnaire, provide clarification where necessary as well as check for consistency of the answers given. The temporary staff assisted with ensuring that questionnaires were fully completed

Data Processing

- As soon as the survey was completed, questionnaires were edited e.g checking that dates are correct, make corrections where possible. Eg. Under purpose of visit, instead of ticking VFR, some have a tendency of writing wedding or funeral under "other" where one has to specify
- Questionnaires were then Coded
- Data was captured using a form designed by our IT Administrator based on the questionnaire and submitted into Access database.
- Cross Tables and charts were produced from the database using Crystal reports
- Only a few questionnaires were excluded which were completed by locals at the airport and those whose length of stay exceeded 365 days