

TOURISM NETWORKS POLICY AND STRATEGY

1. Introduction

1.1 The Houses of Parliament are being asked to consider the Tourism Networks Policy and Strategy which is attached as Appendix I of this Ministry Paper, and agree that it be tabled as a White Paper.

2. Background

2.1 The Tourism Networks Policy and Strategy was submitted to Cabinet in June 2019. Cabinet, by Decision No. 25/19 dated July 29, 2019, approved the Policy as a White Paper and directed that it be tabled in the Houses of Parliament.

Tourism Networks

2.2 The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) has within its Affiliate Members Programme the construct of networks which provide a forum of global partnership to address important tourism focal points. Knowledge, gastronomy and shopping are three of the primary networks being led by the UNWTO Affiliate Members. Jamaica has seen great merit in modeling elements of these networks given their currency and applicability to the Jamaican context.

2.3 The use of tourism networks complements the Ministry's Tourism Linkages Network Programme which was recently expanded. The Tourism Linkages Network promotes the buildout of five (5) networks that have been identified as key growth drivers in the Ministry's efforts to innovate and diversify the local tourism product. These networks are:

- Gastronomy
- Health & Wellness
- Entertainment and Sports
- Shopping
- Knowledge

2.4 Implementation of the programme provides a greater opportunity for local producers of goods and services to interact with the tourism sector, thereby increasing consumption of such goods and services and thus expanding the tourism value chain. A significant impact of this is increased foreign exchange generation and retention in the local economy.

2.5 In this regard the five networks will:

- ensure that Jamaica improves its global competitiveness;
- strategically target new tourism niches for which the country is naturally and culturally suited;
- respond to the new demographics, new spending patterns and the driving passion points of the traveller;
- combat seasonality by offering a diversity of events and activities throughout the year; and
- make the visitor's experience more experiential and fulfilling.

3. Tourism Networks Policy and Strategy and Vision 2030 Jamaica

3.1 Existing national policies which represent the basis for the development of the Tourism Networks Policy and Strategy provide a backdrop against which the Policy and Strategy will implement initiatives aimed at contributing to national economic growth. The Vision 2030 Jamaica National Development Plan of 2010 and The Master Plan for Sustainable Tourism Development (2002) are critical documents which provide a framework for the proposed activities.

4. The Tourism Networks Policy and Strategy

4.1 The Tourism Linkages Network emerged from the evolution of the Tourism Linkages Hub, which was established in 2013. The aim of this initiative was to strengthen Tourism's linkages with the productive sectors of agriculture and manufacturing by increasing the tourism sector's sustainable consumption of locally produced goods and services.

4.2 In order to strengthen the Ministry's efforts to build out the sector, the Policy was developed to outline the institutional framework required to support this work. The Policy identifies priority areas of coordinated focus through the Networks and will strengthen synergies between key stakeholders to develop and execute strategic activities by:

- Creating more economic opportunities along the tourism value chain
- Increasing retention of tourism spend
- Diversifying the tourism product
- Establishing standards to enhance service quality

4.3 Key Policy Outcomes:

- Increased opportunities for agriculture and manufacturing to supply goods and services to the tourism sector through targeted initiatives of the Tourism Linkages

Network that facilitate dialogue between the sectors and programmes with regard to demand and supply.

- An institutional framework that supports the work of the five Networks and Technical Working Groups. Under the guidance of Tourism Linkages Council, it is expected that the necessary systems will be implemented to enable each Network and the TWGs to carry out their functions efficiently.
- Increased collaboration among private and public sector partners to diversify Jamaica's tourism product. The Policy intends to facilitate the strengthening of partnerships between the public and private sector through ongoing communication and information sharing between the public and private sector stakeholders in the tourism sector and local suppliers.
- Reduction in seasonality through the diversification of product offerings that drives consistent visitor arrivals throughout the year. Through the creation and support for new and existing products and experiences, the visitor experience is heightened by the increased selection of opportunities to enhance their visit year-round, rather than at select times within the year.
- Enhancement of Jamaica's destination identity in the areas of gastronomy, shopping, sports & entertainment, health & wellness and knowledge. Through effective interventions that directly impact industry stakeholders, Brand Jamaica will be strategically enhanced through the promotion of Jamaican tourism in key niche areas.

5. Institutional Arrangements

5.1 The Policy identifies priority areas of coordinated focus through the Networks and will strengthen synergies between key stakeholders to develop and execute strategic activities. It is under this guiding framework that the Policy and Strategy has been developed to create an operational framework for the Networks and the Technical Working Groups (TWG), to encourage the innovation and diversification of the tourism sector, creating new and appealing experiences that visitors are now demanding.

5.2 The existing Tourism Linkages Network will be formally integrated into an expanded institutional structure of the Tourism Enhancement Fund and will be comprised of two Tourism Working Groups with a focus in manufacturing and agriculture as well as five networks: Gastronomy; Sports & Entertainment, Knowledge; Health & Wellness and Shopping. Each Network will be comprised of a team of public and private sector stakeholders, who are key decision-makers operating within each area and share common interests and commitment to the development of their respective network areas. The main functions of the Tourism Linkages Network are to:

- Provide administrative support to the Networks

- Participate in the Implementation of initiatives
- Support, facilitate and monitor the development of efficient marketing and distribution systems for local products and services required by hotels and other tourism entities.
- Increase market awareness and intelligence of the main sectors targeted, through research and analysis
- Ongoing communication and information sharing between tourism and local suppliers
- Facilitate and monitor the development of more effective and efficient information and communication systems to support relationship building and trade between local suppliers of goods and services and tourism entities
- Create opportunities for deeper facilitation of linkages between the entertainment and tourism sectors
- Facilitate opportunities for better networking, information sharing and communication across sectors.

5.3 Each network will be led by a Chair, who reports directly to the Tourism Linkages Council. The Main functions of the Tourism Linkages Council are to:

- i. Provide general oversight and guidance on the implementation of strategies
- ii. Support and facilitate collaboration among relevant entities
- iii. Monitor and evaluate progress of the implementation of Network activities
- iv. Provide problem-solving support where necessary

6. Financing

6.1 The Tourism Enhancement Fund will request annual subvention from the Government to fund the implementation of the Policy and Strategy. It is also anticipated that the private sector will seize the opportunities presented and invest in the business opportunities identified in all Networks.

7. Implementation

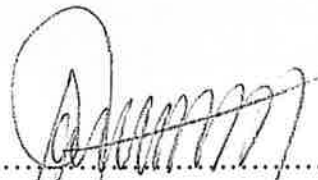
7.1 The Policy Implementation Plan outlines the various activities to be undertaken through each Network, anchored by the Tourism Linkages Council, with partnership efforts undertaken through each individual Network and the Tourism Working Groups. In order to operate efficiently, the Tourism Linkages Council is comprised of key public and private sector partners and acts in an advisory capacity to oversee the coordination and implementation of the various projects and programmes. Technical support is provided by the Networks, whose membership include area-specific professionals and practitioners with the relevant expertise to develop and plan sustainable initiatives.

7.2 A monitoring and evaluation framework has been developed to ensure proper reporting and implementation of the Policy and Strategy by key stakeholders. Information sources include reports from partners, research and stakeholder meetings. Priority indicators have also been developed to measure the desired outcome of each activity pursued.

8. Consultations

8.1 By way of Cabinet Decision No. 36/26 dated October 26, 2016 approval was granted for the Development of the Tourism Networks Policy and Strategy. Upon the development of the Green Paper, the consultation process undertaken by the Ministry involved internal review of the Policy and Strategy by the Ministry and its agencies before public consultations were held. Four consultation sessions were held with key public and private sector stakeholders representing each of the five Network areas, hoteliers, tour operators, villa owners and restaurateurs, members of the Agriculture and Manufacturing Technical Working Groups and stakeholders with a cross-cutting impact on the Tourism Networks.

8.2 Following this series of consultations, revisions were made to the Policy and further consultation sessions conducted, where critical input was garnered from relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies. Based on feedback obtained adjustments were made and a final version of the Policy submitted for approval as a White Paper.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Edmund Bartlett', is written over a horizontal dotted line.

Edmund Bartlett, CD, MP

Minister of Tourism

January 14, 2020

