

# **Participation in Sustainable Tourism Development: Stakeholders & Partnership Working**

This thesis is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

**James A. Maiden**

**School of City and Regional Planning  
Cardiff University**

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## Abstract

In order to achieve more sustainable development, many are advocating the crucial role of involving a comprehensive range of stakeholders in all stages of the development process, from policy making to project implementation. Following the sustainable development literature, it is believed that tourism will also achieve greater levels of sustainability if all stakeholders participate in its development. As the interest in stakeholders has grown, so too have partnerships become popular vehicles for the delivery of strategic goals, such that other more dynamic, less resource intensive forms of stakeholder participation may be overlooked.

Given the widespread interest in stakeholders, it might be anticipated that there would be a well-developed theory of stakeholding. While there is a stakeholder theory, which some tourism researchers have previously used, its current value is questioned here and a number of other organisational theories are therefore considered in an attempt to develop a more comprehensive framework for analysing stakeholding in practice. By also reflecting on collaboration, network and structuration theories, a fuller understanding of the complex range of issues is enabled.

Tourism in Wales is investigated here, which provides an interesting case study as it has recently undergone a restructuring process that attempted to increase coordination between and involvement of stakeholders. There is also a policy commitment, driven by the National Assembly for Wales, for increased partnership working between organisations. Policy and strategy documents from key organisations were analysed for their commitment to stakeholder involvement and a comprehensive range of stakeholder groups was interviewed. The study explores who the stakeholders are, the kind of mechanisms and processes employed to ensure that views are heard, and the effects of doing so in terms of benefits and problems. The network and coordination structures that underlie all communications are also key considerations. Analysis is undertaken at two different levels – a national and regional level of organisational coordination, as well as a local level case study of a scheme involving diverse stakeholder groups. How the different levels interact and the associated issues are also considered.

It is concluded that while there are some positive structural moves, there are also some embedded social constraints that mean more effective forms of stakeholder participation are not yet fully operationalised. The top-down focus on partnership working has meant that while some more well-resourced organisations and individuals have enjoyed more privileged access to decision-making processes, more 'grass-roots' stakeholders' opportunities to participate have not greatly increased. The evident enthusiasm for partnership working and stakeholder involvement must therefore be carefully nurtured to ensure success.

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## Chapter 1

### **Understanding the Role of Stakeholder Participation in the Sustainable Tourism Development Process**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

This study demonstrates the need for an enhanced understanding of the mechanisms involved in operationalising more effective forms of stakeholder participation in tourism planning processes. It is argued that greater recognition needs to be given to the wide range of ways that stakeholders engage in the development process. Evidence is provided that suggests a strong top-down commitment to partnership working, which, while having a range of benefits, overlooks the importance of other interorganisational dynamics and the potential for alternative forms of stakeholder participation to be effective. Stakeholders and partnerships have become contemporary buzzwords in modern organisational life across the public, private and voluntary sectors. This is primarily fuelled by the expectation that involving stakeholders in decision-making and establishing partnerships will yield extra benefits, and in the context of sustainable development, will lead to more sustainable outcomes. In the UK, New Labour has embraced the notion of partnership as a new vehicle for delivering public services (The Stationary Office 1998:97). As a result, public service delivery partnerships have received a growing amount of academic attention focussed both narrowly, such as on their internal processes, and more widely on the reflection of the new forms of governance that they embody (e.g. Atkinson 1999; Carley et al. 2000, Deakin 2002). Since devolution in Wales, the National Assembly has also been deeply committed to the promotion and facilitation of partnership working, such that it would be easy to consider that partnerships are 'the only game in town' when it comes to stakeholder participation, especially in attempts to deliver policy objectives.

Aligned with the sustainable development literature, some of those considering tourism planning processes have also recognised the importance of stakeholder participation in decision-making about development options, and they too have identified the need to develop effective collaboration between stakeholders. There is therefore also a growing body of work that investigates tourism partnerships. As will be discussed, partnerships are just one aspect of the stakeholder participation that is deemed so important for delivering more sustainable tourism development. Stakeholders actually participate in development processes in a range of different ways, including through network connections and by establishing a variety of coordination structures. It is therefore a priority to understand the different ways in which stakeholder participation is operationalised. As partnerships are given so much attention, it is appropriate to question whether they are actually an effective way of achieving

stakeholder participation, and so this question provides a further focus for this thesis. It is argued that the general focus on partnerships is too narrow and that a much broader framework is required in order to obtain a better understanding of the complex environment in which stakeholders interact. This research therefore addresses the need to investigate “the relationships between the participants in partnerships and the broader web of tourism policy networks and planning frameworks within which they operate” (Bramwell & Lane 2000:338).

A number of theoretical perspectives, which seek to explain different aspects of interorganisational working and the desire to incorporate stakeholder views in decision-making, are considered. Although stakeholder theory has already been applied in previous tourism research, its limitations have often not been recognised and there is a need to critically question its relevance and value. The thesis therefore addresses the application of stakeholder theory to tourism research, but also considers and applies related theories to develop a fuller analysis and reflect on the question about how organising methods can be improved by developing a more comprehensive framework for understanding the complex, multi-level stakeholder participation process in sustainable tourism development.

The investigation looks at the way in which the process of tourism planning is being operationalised through relationships from the national (strategic) to the local (implementation) levels. It considers the role of government and of coordinators at all levels and the effects of policy on the structures and mechanisms that aim to enable greater coordination of stakeholders. The study provides empirical evidence from tourism development processes in Wales where there is a constitutional commitment to sustainable development, active promotion of partnership working and high priority given to the development of tourism as an economic development tool. That tourism planning in Wales is very much a partnership between the public and private sectors and recently underwent a process of institutional restructuring (initiated by the Assembly) means that, though not the primary focus, the empirical material also provides a unique case study of governance in a devolved context.

## **1.2 Research Context**

Growing recognition of the detrimental impacts of an industrial development model that prioritises economic indicators and favours financial accumulation for a minority of the world’s population and environmental degradation has led some to consider more appropriate, more sustainable, development solutions (e.g. Milgrath 1989; Norgaard 1994; Fennell 1999). Further, realisation of environmental limits and associated studies of ecosystems, developing understanding of social organisation and interaction, and the

phenomenon of globalisation all highlight our interdependence and suggest the need to cooperate rather than compete or exploit. The interdependence recognised within ecological systems is also evident between the different sectors of society. Interdependence is particularly high around and between tourism issues and this means that tourism planning may be more effective if it involves a range of stakeholders that represent the different social, cultural, environmental and economic interests. In an industry frequently described as being fragmented, collaborative working can allow different groups to develop a more coordinated approach to tourism development. Yet, while some have a clear understanding of the problems and potential solutions, recent decades have seen the dominance of the 'business as usual' approach which has led to a worsening of the unsustainable situation.

In order to achieve more beneficial outcomes, many advocate a greater role for collaborative approaches to organisational management, planning and development (e.g. Healey 1998; Wahab & Pigram 1998; Bramwell & Sharman 1999). There appears to be a strong belief that working together can yield significant benefits and there also appears to be consensus amongst those working towards sustainable development that the involvement of different interest groups is crucial to help address the multi-dimensional concerns of a more holistic development approach. This view seems to have coalesced recently to mean that different groups, or stakeholders, should participate in decision-making about development options. In the UK, the planning system and public sector strategy development processes, for example, already acknowledge the need for stakeholder involvement. Simultaneously, those seeking to develop more ethical and beneficial business models also highlight the need to incorporate the views of stakeholders and recognise the potential benefits of collaborative arrangements.

It could be said that sustainability is essentially about taking difficult management decisions. Who makes those decisions, and how, will obviously have a significant influence on the path taken. This clearly places responsibility on those with the power to decide. As explored in subsequent chapters, the idea of sustainability brings with it a host of guidelines and principles that could offer assistance. Seeing all people as stakeholders in development begins to share the responsibility of making those decisions and offers the widest range of knowledge and experience relevant to problem solving. Yet modern society is only beginning to recognise this within its traditional hierarchical decision-making structures. Sustainability requires a different approach and how sustainable something may be will inevitably depend on the policies developed and how they are practically implemented.

It is evident that tourism academics and practitioners have given much consideration to sustainability and stakeholder participation, with an apparent consensus that the two are linked. Definitions of sustainable tourism characteristically include reference to "relationships"

(e.g. Lane 1994), “complex interactions” (e.g. Bramwell & Lane 1992), “communities” (e.g. Tourism Concern 1992), “economic benefits” (e.g. WTO 1995), “social needs” (e.g. Inskeep 1991), and “environment” (e.g. ETC 2002), which recognise the range of entities and the need to manage their interaction – something that inextricably links sustainable development to stakeholding and is embodied as a key theme in the range of sustainable tourism principles. In addition, that sustainable tourism is a widely recognised goal for the industry and that tourism organisations cluster together to form destination areas, also therefore makes the investigation of tourism and its attempts to involve stakeholders an interesting case study.

Although there may be some valid, fundamental reasons why tourism may never be sustainable (Sharpley 2000), which are dependent on its integration into a wider sustainable development model, it is evident that attempts can and are being made to make tourism operations *more* sustainable. Importantly, much of the sustainable tourism literature promotes the importance of focussing on the local level in order to achieve this (e.g. Hunter 1997). Consideration of localities incorporates the need to appreciate the diversity of situations and therefore a need to fully consider all aspects of the context. Understanding of the different aspects of development, it is acknowledged, necessitates the gathering of information from people who are affected by or can affect tourism development. Therefore, the role of stakeholders has become an essential element in the drive towards sustainable tourism. As the need to increase collaboration, and particularly local involvement, in the development process is seen as a fundamental principle of sustainable tourism, the extent to which this has been achieved will enable an understanding of how successful existing strategies are. Further, it is said that sustainable tourism should develop ‘holistic’ planning (Bramwell & Lane 1993), not just with other tourism-related organisations, but also with other sectors. The same also applies to the ‘parental concept’ of sustainable development; the literature of which has reinforced and developed the idea of stakeholder participation.

This investigation focuses on tourism in Wales for a number of reasons explained fully in Chapter 4. Wales provides a particularly interesting context for the research, as a complicated inter-relationship exists between the Assembly Government’s constitutional commitment to sustainable development and its priority of increasing Wales’s gross domestic product (GDP). Some have argued, for example, that the commitment to sustainable development is merely “spin” and that economic development considerations are taking priority over other aspects of sustainable development – particularly the environment (James 2004). Tourism’s place is particularly interesting as it is seen as a more sustainable form of development that can help to grow the GDP. The aim is to increase tourism expenditure in Wales by an average of at least 6% per year (WAG 2002). How much consideration is given to whether this makes for more sustainable tourism development is worth reflecting on.

### 1.3 Research Questions

If greater stakeholder participation is to be achieved and this is to lead to more sustainable development solutions, as the sustainable tourism literature suggests, then a greater level of understanding needs to be given not only to *what* these concepts mean, but importantly *how* they can be operationalised. In assessing attempts to operationalise more effective participation, it is also important to investigate the extent to which stakeholders are participating in tourism development, the levels of collaboration between groups and to assess the barriers and the opportunities for the future. Guiding the achievement of this objective will be the central research question: *How can stakeholder participation be operationalised?* Given a suspected overemphasis on partnership working, which perhaps overlooks the importance of more organic, less prescribed forms of stakeholder participation, it is important to ask the following subsidiary question: *Are partnerships a good way of ensuring effective stakeholder participation?* In order to address these questions and to ensure that sustainable tourism development is a concept that has a solid theoretical grounding, as well as gain insights into real attempts to implement it, this investigation explores relevant theoretical constructs to analyse practical attempts to operationalise stakeholder participation. This eventually leads towards the development of stakeholder-based theory.

### 1.4 Thesis Structure

Chapter 2 introduces the concept of sustainable development and explains how the idea of sustainable tourism development has emerged from it. In determining how more sustainable development solutions can be implemented, a preference for focussing on the process of garnering participation in decision-making is identified, along with the need to incorporate a multi-disciplinary range of interests in that process. The literature specifying the crucially important role of stakeholders and partnership formation is then outlined before introducing the specific focus given to 'inclusivity' by the Welsh context. At the end of the chapter, the issue of defining the key concepts – partnership, stakeholder, participation, and collaboration – is raised.

In order to develop a clearer understanding of the meanings of the key terms, Chapter 3 provides a critical examination of a number of organisational theories that have relevance for understanding stakeholders and the partnerships and networks they form. It focuses on the consideration of stakeholder theory, but also considers collaboration, network and structuration theories. Previous tourism research that has applied the various theoretical constructs is also critically considered.

In Chapter 4, the important features and principles of sustainable tourism development and stakeholder participation are brought together with the developed theoretical understanding. A conceptual framework is developed to guide the empirical research. Research questions are then developed and the methodology for collecting and analysing the data is explained, along with an introduction to the intensive and extensive level case studies. Then in Chapters 5, 6, and 7 the empirical material gathered through investigating the attempts made to operationalise greater stakeholder coordination in Welsh tourism is presented.

Based mainly on documentary analysis, Chapter 5 identifies key national and regional level stakeholders and explores the policy context. In so doing, it investigates the driving forces behind attempts made within Wales to improve stakeholder coordination. The chapter also investigates one form of stakeholder participation – engagement in policy development processes. In Chapter 6, an assessment is made of national and regional level stakeholder participation, focussing on the main stakeholder considerations – motivation, extent of participation, management, and benefits/problems. The local level case study is investigated in Chapter 7, which explores in detail a tourism partnership that includes national, regional and local level stakeholders. It considers how effective national policy objectives are being translated to the implementation level. Finally, in Chapter 8 the key findings from the empirical study are discussed with reference to the existing literature and knowledge base. The concluding chapter considers the practical and theoretical implications of the findings for future tourism research and development.

## 1.5 Key Definitions

The definitions of some key terms like stakeholder, collaboration, partnership, participation and sustainable tourism are given detailed consideration in chapters 2 and 3, but it is firstly worth outlining how a couple of other key terms are understood:

- **Tourism** is travel for predominantly recreational or leisure purposes or the provision of services to support this leisure travel. The World Tourism Organisation defines **tourists** as people who “travel to and stay in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited” (UNWTO 2007:8). Tourism is a somewhat peculiar industry to study as it is interwoven with the fabric of daily life. To a large extent tourism only exists in the ‘eye of the beholder’ and also many services used by tourists are not exclusively provided for them. These factors combine to complicate research and planning processes.

- The term '**tourism planner**' is used here in a broad sense to include any person involved in developing tourism strategy or policy. It is intended to be distinct from an individual business operative who plans the development of their business, except when that person becomes involved in, for example, a consultation exercise about the broader development of the industry.

## Chapter 2

### **Sustainable Tourism, Stakeholder Participation and Partnerships**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

Since the 1980s, the use of the term 'sustainable development' has become widespread within planning circles and the debates around this concept are now well established. It is out of this that the notion of 'sustainable tourism' has grown and it is widely acknowledged that during the 1990s, 'sustainable development' became a theme common to much tourism research (Pigram 1995). This is in contrast to the previous decade, when tourism's negative impacts, particularly on the environment, were much less widely recognised. In fact, tourism research is now one area that appears to have become particularly concerned with sustainability as modern society attempts to reconcile the detrimental effects of 'progress'. As one of the world's largest economic sectors, the efforts to make tourism more sustainable have significant implications for global sustainable development, and there are clear reasons why tourism should be focussing in this direction. Being natural resource dependent, especially in terms of the local environment, tourism has an inherent strong self-motivation for maintaining the quality of its surroundings, as well as the well-being of its participants (McKercher 1993). However, and as is mirrored in the wider development process, it is the people and the environment, as well as the relationships between them, that tourism has been accused of harming. The paradoxical nature of tourism – the desire for people to experience new places which alters the original nature of the place as it becomes more developed (Butler 1980) – has simultaneously provided beneficial opportunities for people to experience the varieties of life, while leading to dramatic and often detrimental effects on landscapes and cultures across the globe.

As this chapter will introduce, the notion of involving stakeholders who represent the different development impacts is seen as crucial to decision-making about more sustainable solutions. Much of the focus of previous research has been on the collaborative work of stakeholders and the partnerships that they form. This work is considered before introducing the Welsh context, which has a uniquely strong 'partnership agenda'. The aim of this chapter then, is to provide a critical review of the current understandings of these issues, which will identify any problems that this research can help address.

## **2.2 Sustainable Development**

It would not be appropriate to launch into a discussion about sustainable tourism without first introducing its 'parental' concept – 'sustainable development'. A brief introduction to some of the fundamental issues is therefore provided. Sustainable development is a phrase that has given rise to a virtual cottage industry for those interested in defining it and so this section can therefore only offer an introduction to the definition debate. This is achieved largely by charting the emergence of the phrase and by firstly exploring the meanings of 'development' and 'sustainability' in order to provide useful contextual information.

### **2.2.1 Development**

For many years development has been defined as a nation's stage of socio-economic advancement, measured by economic indicators such as: protein intake, access to potable water, air quality, fuel use, healthcare, education, and employment, with close attention paid to GDP and GNP (Fennell 1999). Simply, those with more have been perceived to be more highly developed. It is apparent that presently there is a particular emphasis on economic development and this has certainly not benefited most of the world's population or its environment. The increasing dissatisfaction of society with this situation, as demonstrated by the social and environmental movements, seems to be advocating change. It is clear that the over significance that is placed on economic wealth, raises serious questions about the way that development has been understood. This is emphasised by recognition that 20% of the World's population use 80% of its resources (Balin et al. 2002), exposing the reality that global 'development', in its traditional interpretation, is not achievable.

This has led to the suggestion that humanity needs to take a good long look at civilisation (Deming 1995), raising the question of what it means to be civilised in an age of poverty, climate change, diminishing habitat, and mass extinctions. Milgrath (1989) argues that we have put economic development first, above socially orientated values, resulting in a society that will not be able to sustain itself over the long term. These recognitions reflect the growing awareness of the unsustainability of the present worldview. Only now, out of need are we encouraged to adapt our ways from a predominantly economic focus to a more holistic view that appreciates the need for placing an increased value on people and the environment. The gauging of appropriate development by physical output or economic bottom lines is no longer appropriate and many advocate a consideration for social order and justice as well as ecological care (Hall 1992; Urry 1992). The concept of sustainable development is now widely

seen as the way forward in developmental thinking. It is intended that it will solve the problems of the past and ensure an amenable, lasting future.

### **2.2.2 A word about 'sustainability'**

Sustainability was originally an ecological or biophysical concept, reflecting prudent behaviour by a predator that avoids over exploiting its prey to ensure an optimum sustained yield (Odum 1971). Since then, the idea has been modified and applied in many different settings. Some have highlighted the problem with this (Dixon and Fallon 1989), observing that confusion was caused over what was to be sustained and for whom. It appears that the notion of 'sustainability' in a development context emerged in *The Ecologist's "A Blue Print for Survival"* (1972), writing as a response to the growing view that the industrial way of life, predisposed to continual expansion, was not sustainable. Notably, this is before the arrival of the phrase, 'sustainable development'. Sustainability's delineation from sustainable development is useful in that sustainability is a term which has been applied to separate and varied disciplines or ideas like sustainable housing, agriculture, or even economic growth. This is important because often the terms sustainability and sustainable development are used interchangeably, with the assumption that if something is sustainable, it naturally contributes to sustainable development. However, at its best the assessment of 'sustainability' now appears to have emerged as "a universal methodology for evaluating whether human options will yield social and environmental vitality" (Basiago 1995:109).

### **2.2.3 The birth of a concept**

Out of a perceived increase in ecological awareness since the 1960s, the concept of 'sustainable development' has grown as northern, developed countries have begun to recognise the detrimental effects that 'development' or 'progress' has had, and is having, on the global environment and society. At the heart of the concept is an almost utopian vision for humanity to live in harmony with nature and each other. After many years of attempting to define what sustainable development may mean, it is generally accepted that no absolutely true nature of sustainability can be found (Mowforth & Munt 1998) and that it is actually impossible to define it in an operational manner (Norgaard 1994). To some, this is a problem and there is evidence to suggest, for example, that this has left the concept open to, sometimes arguably deliberate, misinterpretation.

Seen as a watershed in the emergence of sustainable development, the Stockholm Conference (1972) appears to have captured for the first time the idea that it was possible to have development without adverse environmental side-effects. Another early-recognised use

of the term sustainable development was at the Cocoyoc (Mexico) Declaration in 1974, when it was used to catalyse debate over the relationship between economic change and the natural resource base.

*The combined destructive impacts of a poor majority struggling to stay alive and an affluent minority consuming most of the world's resources are undermining the very means by which all people can survive and flourish (UNEP/UNCTAD 1974).*

Other statements in the Cocoyoc Declaration (1974:893-901) illustrate awareness of the difficulty of meeting human needs sustainably, from an environment under pressure:

- “The problem today is not one primarily of absolute physical shortage but of economic and social maldistribution and usage.”
- “The task of statesmanship is to guide the nations towards a new system more capable of meeting the inner limits of basic human needs for all the world's people and of doing so without violating the outer limits of the planet's resources and environment.”
- “Human beings have basic needs: food, shelter, clothing, health, education. Any process of growth that does not lead to their fulfilment - or, even worse, disrupts them - is a travesty of the idea of development.”
- “We are all in need of a redefinition of our goals, or new development strategies, or new lifestyles, including more modest patterns of consumption among the rich.”

Early discussions about sustainable development took place at a range of international conferences, the titles and agendas of which provide a quick insight into the way the concept has been articulated and popularised (Fig 2.1). Of particular prominence was the “Our Common Future” report, which codified the term with the now popular if vague definition, quoted in just about every article on the subject:

*Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Brundtland 1987:8).*

Figure 2.1 The developing articulation and popularisation of sustainable development

- 1956 Marsh, G.P. Published "Man and Nature, or Physical Geography as Modified by Human Action" highlighting the upsetting balance within nature by unwise human action.
- 1963 Carson, R. Published "Silent Spring" introducing the notion of a world damaged by pesticide use.
- 1968 **UNESCO Biosphere Conference**
- 1968 **Ecological Aspects to International Development Conference**
- 1972 "A Blue Print for Survival" published in *The Ecologist* introduced the notion of sustainability.
- 1972 **UN Conference on the Human Environment**  
A major attempt to address environmental problems in relation to human development: "integrated development", "rational planning", reducing costs of environmental protection. Led to establishment of UNEP.
- 1980 **IUCN World Conservation Strategy: Living Resources Conservation for Sustainable Development** (report)  
Placed emphasis on the integration of development and conservation, sustainable use of the ecological system, preservation of biodiversity, and maintenance of biosphere for the benefits of current and future generations.
- 1986 **IUCN Ottawa Conference on Conservation and Development**  
Focussed on changes in development thinking and practices towards a sustainable mode of development, implying the satisfaction of basic needs, realisation of social justice, provision of self-determination, and maintenance of ecological integrity.
- 1987 **WCED Our Common Future** (report)  
Established operational objectives of sustainable development as to: revive and change the quality of growth; satisfy essential needs; ensure a sustainable level of population; conserve and enhance the resource base; reorient technology; merge environment with economics, restructure international economic relations; and make development more participatory.
- 1992 **UN Conference on Environment and Development (The Earth Summit)** Produced two significant conventions: Framework convention on Climate Change; and the Convention on Biological Diversity. Also, produced three non-binding agreements: the Rio Declaration (relates to sustainable Development; Agenda 21 (outlining financial, technological and institutional measures); and Principles of Forest Management (concerning deforestation).
- 1993 **UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD)** established to oversee and coordinate Agenda 21 implementation.
- 1994 **UN Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island States**
- 1995 **World Summit for Social Development**
- 1997 **APEC Forum Meeting of Environment Ministers on Sustainable Development**
- 1997 **WTO Symposium on Trade, Environment and Sustainable Development**
- 1997 **International Conference on Environment and Society: Education and Public Awareness for Sustainability**
- 1997 **Symposium on the United Nations and the Global Environment in the 21st Century**
- 1997 **International Conference on the Sustainable Development of Countries with Economies in Transition**
- 1997 **Kyoto Conference on Climate Change**
- 1998 **North/South Conference for Sustainable Development**
- 1998 **Conference on Ethics and the Culture of Development**
- 1998 **Building the Sustainable Economy**
- 1998 **Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development Conference on Protecting the Environment and Sustaining Development**
- 1998 **Meeting on the Global Issues of Sustainable Development**
- 1998 **International Conference on Ecology, Economy, and Development**

From the review provided, it is apparent that the root of sustainable development was the realisation of ecological limits and social inequalities. In the 1970s, there was a fear of “limits to growth” (Meadows, Randers and Behvene 1972). The 1990s brought fears of limits of sink capacities. Using ecological limits as a point of departure means reducing the negative environmental impacts of human activity, and enhancing the resilience of the environment (Redclift 1999). The way that the existing neo-classical economic system has evolved has led to the environment as being ‘external’ – essentially its ‘value’ has not been taken into account, which has propagated its exploitation, both in terms of extraction of resources and as a repository of waste/pollution. This has led to a questioning of the economic system and strands of economic theory, such as ‘ecological economics’, have developed with the aim of managing ‘externalities’. This is seen as a necessary response to the failure of the existing market-place system to deliver environmentally and socially sustainable economic activity (Ekins et al. 1992). In addition, others have considered the need for cultural re-evaluation and a new environmental ethic which needs to go beyond pragmatism, to give a new appreciation of the place of human beings in the world, through which it will be possible to achieve an ‘authentic’ model of sustainable development (Cooper 1992; Robinson & Garrat 1999).

Crucially then, at the heart of sustainable development is a recognition that there are some fundamental flaws in the global system and any definition of the term or attempts to implement policies to effect it should therefore be based on a comprehensive understanding of social, cultural, environmental and economic issues – the “four pillars of sustainability” (Di Castri 1995). This is why it is deemed essential to incorporate multi-disciplinary knowledge and experiences from each of these spheres. Yet, despite the increasing focus on the need to make development sustainable, a recent United Nations Environment Report (UNEP 2002) has revealed that there is actually a growing gap between the efforts of business and industry to reduce their impact on the environment and the worsening state of the planet. It is explained that in most industry sectors, only a small number of companies are actually striving for sustainability. Further, any improvements made are being superseded by economic growth and increasing demand for goods and services. Since the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Rio, 1992, global trends relating to environmental and social problems have in fact worsened.

#### 2.2.4 Current sustainable development thinking

Due largely because what is sustainable varies from one situation to another, it is generally accepted that no absolutely true nature of sustainability can be found (Mowforth & Munt 1998) and that it is impossible to define it in an operational manner (Norgaard 1994). What is perhaps more significant though, is that the goal of sustainable development may be providing an “impetus for structural change within society” (Fennell 1999:13). There is, at least amongst those that aspire to address sustainable development concerns, recognition that human behaviour must change significantly (Redclift 1999; Meadowcroft 1999). Fundamentally, it can be argued from both the ecological perspective that gave rise to those concerns (e.g. Redclift 1987), as well as from the social sciences (e.g. Lowndes & Skelcher 1998), that we must recognise our *interdependence*. Just as ecologists recognise the interdependence that exists in ecosystems and social scientists recognise interdependence between groups, a similar recognition is required to help understand problems and propose development solutions. The following extract begins to identify where much recent sustainable development understanding and effort currently lies – in the involvement of different interest groups, or stakeholders as they are contemporarily described:

*Sustainable development is a multi-faceted concept that encompasses environmental, economic and social issues. In taking forward policies that will implement the principles of sustainability, it is important to engage the opinions of stakeholders, and to represent a broad cross-section of society, that will include businesses, citizens, voluntary groups, academics and public sector organisations* (Sustainable Regions 2003).

Back in 1987, the Brundtland Report (WCED) actually identified the need for partnerships between stakeholders. It saw this as a key to implementing sustainable development, which suggests that the consideration of the multi-dimensional aspect of sustainable development can be seen to lead directly to consideration of groups representing those dimensions or interests. More recently, a strong argument is building for participation by all sectors of society in the decision-making about development options (e.g. LGMB 1993). It is now claimed that strengthening social networks and relationships, something that can be nourished through participation in decision-making, will help to maintain social and environmental capital (Hall 2000) and therefore lead to more sustainable forms of development. Indeed, it is often suggested that socially equitable development actually depends on participation by all sectors of society in the decision-making about development options (LGMB 1993). Evidently, the benefit of generating participation by multiple stakeholders with differing interests and perspectives is that it might encourage greater

consideration of the varied social, cultural, environmental, economic and political issues that affect sustainable development (Bramwell & Lane 1993; Medeiros de Araujo & Bramwell 2002). And as will be explored further, the idea of developing partnerships between stakeholders is also being adopted by those seeking to develop tourism:

*The way forward for travel and tourism is to create strong partnerships between the private and public sectors, non-governmental organisations, institutional bodies, and local communities, in order to ensure effective active participation by all stakeholders (UNEP 2002).*

Whether sustainable development can be accurately defined or not may not be as important as the inherent debates that cause the realisation of the detrimental impacts of traditional interpretations of development. Consideration of sustainable development raises awareness of a dominant global system that is creating socio-economic injustice, decreasing cultural diversity and is even threatening the very basis of life by its damaging effects on the biosphere. Although over simplistic, 'unsustainable development' is recognised to be a result of being too narrowly focussed, giving economic development undue priority above other interests. In order to address concerns, attention is increasingly focussed on interdisciplinary work and collaborative arrangements, recognising both the connections between problems and the potential solutions offered by the diverse range of expertise available in different spheres of interest. As will be explored subsequently, in relation to sustainable development as well as a more detailed focus on tourism, much consideration has been given to the participation of different stakeholders and the collaborations they form. Firstly it is important to introduce the concept of sustainable tourism development.

## 2.3 Sustainable Tourism

Early approaches to sustainable tourism thinking were quickly criticised for being too simple and too impractical as they overlooked tourism's complex and dynamic nature, as well as offered no practical solutions to the rapid growth of tourist numbers. It is also recognised that these views took what may be considered as being a 'tourism-centric' approach and may well have co-evolved with early definitions of sustainable tourism. Later definitions move away from the initial failure to recognise the importance of other industry sectors and the broader perspective of sustainable development (Hunter 1995), which resulted in the motivation to change mass tourism to more sustainable forms (Butler 1991). This led to a situation, which differed from previous views in three important ways Clarke (1997):

- The issue of tourism's scale became more objective and less emotive. Mass tourism became the subject for improvement, rather than the derided villain.
- Sustainable tourism became the goal for attainment, rather than the possession of an existing scale of tourism.
- Operationalising current knowledge to move towards the goal became the practical focus of effort.

In viewing tourism this way, the links to sustainable development were reinforced to some extent and this resulted in the demand to change mass tourism to more sustainable forms.

Most recent understandings of sustainable tourism then are as a goal that all tourism must aim for. In this view, the absence of "a precise definition of sustainable tourism is less important than the journey towards it" (Hardy & Beeton 2001:172). Within this approach, the wider role of sustainable development is most fully appreciated. The large-scale interpretation is now seen to have a dominant physical/ecological perspective expressed as a business orientation, and the small-scale version offers a social dimension from a local or destination platform. In the convergence of these two forms, both interpretations:

- Focus on the implementation of their current knowledge of sustainable tourism to move towards the ultimate goal of sustainability;
- Seek future progress towards the desired goal through the twin processes of further development of ideas inherent in their own interpretation and by adaptation of ideas found in the other.

Of course, there are contrasting views and even strong oppositions (Fig 2.2). Taking arguments to the extreme, some maintain that all tourism has negative impacts on the natural world and its populations, and therefore from this position it would be impossible to conceive of tourism as ever being sustainable (Sharpley 2000). At the other extreme, humans are viewed as living organisms whose behaviour is natural and who have no obligation or responsibilities

to consider other living things. Therefore people are unable to behave unnaturally and so all tourism is 'sustainable' in the sense of satisfying the desires of some people. In reality all of the proposed definitions can be considered as lying somewhere in between these positions.

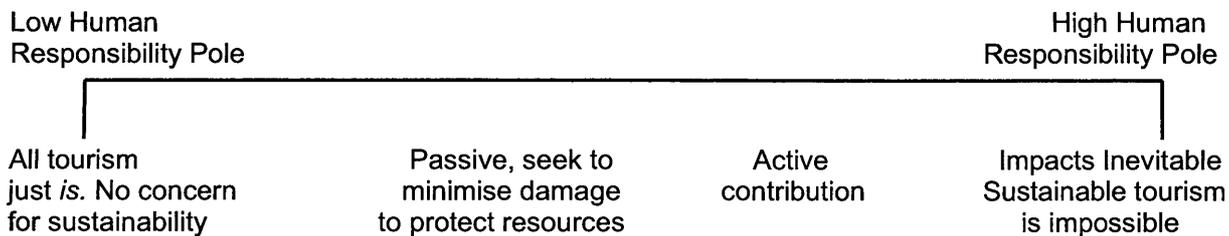


Figure 2.2 The continuum of sustainable tourism paradigms, adapted from Miller & Kaae (1993) and Orams (1995).

As with sustainable development, the meaning of sustainable tourism has caused a significant amount of discussion and a wide variety of definitions have been proposed. Some suggest that continuing the definition debate is of little use and that it is time to move on to thinking more about implementation (Garrod & Fyall 1998). On the other hand, it is argued that without wider consensus of its meaning, the term is still open to misinterpretation – something which has already been used to legitimise and justify existing inappropriate activities or policies (McKercher 1993). Furthermore, with the suggestion of sustainable tourism being an 'adaptive paradigm' (Hunter 1997) and therefore impossible to define in a fixed, concise way, a virtual stalemate can be envisioned. However, it is still valuable to recognise the current understanding of issues surrounding the concept and to this end, the following table represents a small selection of definitions that have been suggested (Fig 2.3).

From the definitions provided, it is possible to understand the essence of the intention for the concept of sustainable tourism and its links to the associated aims of sustainable development appear to come through some of these descriptions. However, although it is suggested that the sustainable tourism concept must be seen against the background of sustainable development (Bramwell & Lane 1993), much debate has revolved around the idea that in its application, sustainable tourism has often been developed in a limited, sectoral sense (Butler 1993; Wall 1997). What this has meant is that instead of contributing to sustainable development, operations may instead have planned for the perpetuation of tourism, perhaps at the cost of other more sustainable practices. In fact, this debate is reflective of the wider problems of defining sustainable development, whereby its meaning has been differently interpreted to support the prolongation of other potentially unsustainable activities.

Figure 2.3 Sample definitions of sustainable tourism

Sustainable tourism involves "seeking a more productive and harmonious relationship between the visitor, the host community and the place [thereby achieving] a situation which can be maintained without depleting the resource, cheating the visitor or exploiting the local population." (English Tourist Board 1991:15)

"Sustainable tourism development can be thought of as meeting the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunity for the future...leading to management of all resources in such a way that we can fulfil economic, social and aesthetic needs while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems." (Inskeep 1991:15)

"Sustainable tourism is a positive approach intended to reduce tensions and friction created by the complex interactions between the tourism industry, visitors, the environment and the communities which are host to holiday makers. It is an approach which involves working for the long-term viability and quality of both natural and human resources. It is not anti-growth, but it acknowledges that there are limits to growth." (Bramwell & Lane 1992:2)

"Tourism and associated infrastructures that, both now and in the future: operate within natural capacities for the regeneration and future productivity of natural resources; recognise the contribution that people and communities, customs and lifestyles, make to the tourism experience; accept that these people must have an equitable share in the economic benefits of tourism; are guided by the wishes of local people and communities in the host areas." (Tourism Concern 1992:3)

The WTO (1993) defined sustainable tourism development as meeting "the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunity for the future". In 1995, they defined it as a model form of economic development that is designed to: improve the quality of life for the host community; provide a high quality of experience for the visitors; and maintain the quality of the environment on which both the host community and the visitor depend.

"Sustainable tourism sees tourism within destination areas as a triangular relationship between host areas and their habitats and peoples, holidaymakers, and the tourism industry. Sustainable tourism aims to reconcile the tensions between the three partners in the triangle, and keep the equilibrium in the long term." (Lane 1994:102)

The WWF vision states that sustainable tourism and its associated infrastructure should:  
Be compatible with effective conservation and operate within the area's natural capacity, for the regeneration and future productivity of natural resources, minimise the ecological footprint, and  
Give proper consideration to local cultures and local people in host areas, and ensure that these people have an equitable share in the economic benefits of tourism. (WWF 2000:v)

"Sustainable tourism is about managing tourism's impacts on the environment, communities and the economy to make sure that the effects are positive rather than negative for the benefit of future generations. It is a management approach that is relevant to all types of tourism, regardless of whether it takes place in cities, towns, countryside or the coast." (ETC 2002)

Although most of the listed definitions and intentions of sustainable tourism appear to have some common ground with the concerns of sustainable development, it can be noticed that some of them could be interpreted in a way which puts more of a focus on sustaining tourism, rather than considering wider development goals. Further, it is believed that the lack of a solid definition has increased the risk of this occurring and this has meant that emphasis has sometimes been placed on growth for business viability to be maintained, above the principles of sustainable development. This is seen as an important first hurdle that must be crossed and it is believed that many advocates of sustainable tourism have stumbled here (Wall 1997). It is acknowledged that this 'tourism-centric' approach has become established as the dominant interpretation and given that tourism is in practical terms, an industry, this is

perhaps not surprising. In fact some express deep concern about this side of sustainable tourism, suggesting that as the concept developed in a more reactionary, rather than proactive way, it will inevitably encounter difficulties:

*The history of capitalism is full of examples of how reactionary tendencies are easily co-opted by capitalism to sustain its own existence, thus extending the status quo of exploitive relations rather than overthrowing them* (Macbeth 1994:44).

It was realised that a distinction needed to be made between a single-sector and multiple-sector approach to development and Butler's (1993:29) definitions of the two tourism paradigms help to clarify this issue. He defines sustainable tourism within the 'tourism-centric' view as:

*tourism which is in a form which can maintain its viability in an area for an indefinite period of time.*

This has been seen as the dominant paradigm and yet has been criticised for failing to provide adequate focus for policy formulation, which connects the concerns of tourism sustainability with those of sustainable development more generally (Wall 1993; Wheeler 1993). Lane (1994) explains one effect of this in the realisation that tourism development has been planned for with perhaps too much emphasis on the *destination area's* environmental resource base (including natural, built, and cultural features). This is illustrated by Gill & Williams (1994) in their appraisal of the situation in Aspen, Colorado, where strict controls in one location have led to a burgeoning of development nearby. They conclude therefore, that a commitment to growth management must extend beyond the confines of the resort community and be embedded in larger regional systems. Similarly, a commitment to sustainable tourism must extend beyond the confines of the destination area.

Reflecting on Butler's previous definition, it is felt that it may actually describe what others have called 'maintainable tourism' which, whilst not causing tourism's failure in the short term, has the potential to cause significant negative impacts over time (Hardy & Beeton 2001). It has been suggested that the dominant perception of sustainable tourism's meaning favours a growth-oriented (weaker) vision of sustainable development, even though growth may be managed to some extent through the use of tools such as environmental impact assessments. Some see this bias towards a weaker stance as not surprising, given that tourism has always involved the 'commodification' of nature and other aspects of a destination area's environment as a product that is sold to the tourist (Lafant & Graburn 1992). It is further

recognised that, as a result of the tourism-centric view, practical measures designed to operationalise sustainable tourism have failed to address many of the critical issues of sustainable development, and may even have worked against it (Hunter 1995).

This is to be contrasted with a definition of sustainable tourism in the context of sustainable development, which is said to be:

*tourism which is developed and maintained in an area (community, environment) in such a manner and at such a scale that it remains viable over an indefinite period and does not degrade the environment (human and physical) in which it exists to such a degree that it prohibits the successful development and well being of other activities and processes (Butler 1993:29).*

As this thesis is concerned with the broader context of sustainable development, it concurs with other like-minded authors that this is a more appropriate definition and direction for sustainable tourism (Bramwell & Lane 1993; Hunter 1995; Wall 1997). It more closely reflects Hunter's (1997) concerns that although sustainable tourism has its origins in the concept of sustainable development, the subsequent consideration of this tourism form has evolved in isolation from the continuing debate on the founding notion. If it is to be recognised then that the academic understanding of sustainable tourism is that it is intended to contribute towards sustainable development, there is a need to understand the key differences between the 'old' and 'new' views. This can be demonstrated by a comparison of the principles that would be relevant to each interpretation. Hunter (1995) explains that within the old, dominant tourism-centric paradigm, which balances the 'need' for continued growth and the 'need' for tourist satisfaction, the following would be appropriate guidelines:

- Meet the needs and wants of the local host community in terms of improved living standards and quality of life.
- Satisfy the demands of tourists and the tourism industry, and continue to attract them in order to meet the first aim.
- Safeguard the environmental resource base for tourism, encompassing natural, built and cultural components, in order to achieve both of the preceding aims.

Whereas, under the sustainable development based paradigm, there is only one principle required:

- Tourism development makes a positive contribution to all aspects of sustainable development, as far as possible in any given space and time.

For further illustration, Müller (1994:132) has outlined the following objectives of sustainable tourism from the previously dominant standpoint:

- Economic health;

- Subjective well-being of locals;
- Unspoilt nature, protection of resources;
- Healthy culture;
- Optimum satisfaction of guest requirements.

While these issues remain important in the newer view, within the previously dominant perception of sustainable tourism, it is understood that the ideal situation is to *balance* tourism development where none of these objectives predominates. However, Hunter (1997:859) has argued that this balancing of goals is unrealistic and that it likely reflects outmoded views of sustainable development. Instead, he suggests that sustainable tourism,

*need not (indeed should not) imply that these often competing aspects are somehow balanced. In reality, trade-off decisions taken on a day-to-day basis will almost certainly produce priorities which emerge to skew the destination area based tourism/environment system in favour of certain aspects.*

Healey and Shaw (1994:434) are also cautious of any approach that favours balance claiming that the,

*preference for the conception of balances and trade-offs not only sits more comfortably with economic priorities, it is also more easily subverted by imperatives of economic growth in that environmental limits to a trade-off are not set.*

In response to these concerns, Hunter believes that different interpretations of sustainable tourism are appropriate, and therefore a variety of development approaches should be used according to specific circumstances. This approach can be shown to more closely reflect contemporary views on sustainable development planning which disregards the use of a single approach in favour of tailored prescriptions to suit individual circumstances; the variety of environments and peoples alone should alert us to be wary of apparently simple solutions and of the general application of one prescription (Butler 1991; Wheeler 1992). Indeed, many researchers have recognised that the magnitude and type of tourism development should vary from location to location according to environmental characteristics (Wall 1993; Lane 1994). The adaptive approach seems to have the advantage of being able to account for local development needs and to some extent also bypasses the need for a neat, all encompassing definition. However, it also poses a challenge for those maintaining a strategic overview who must therefore face the prospect of having to deal with a multitude of situations.

The ability to look away from a fixed definition and the acknowledgement of a number of potential views may therefore help to avoid concerns that because everybody interprets the concept differently, sustainable tourism is in danger of becoming an empty cliché (Müller 1994). Furthermore, the conceptual reconnection with general sustainable development research is seen to offer a greater maturity for the formulation of policies of sustainable tourism, as the broader sustainable development literature frequently demonstrates greater flexibility in charting potential development pathways (Hunter 1997). Recognising then that sustainable tourism can be flexibly interpreted, a goal and on ongoing, evolving concept, the phrase 'sustainable tourism development' is favoured here because it importantly conveys more of a process-focussed understanding. The phrase also helps to link tourism with sustainable development, reflecting on the anticipation that developing understanding of stakeholder concepts in a tourism setting will also be relevant in wider sustainable development contexts.

### **2.3.1 Sustainable Tourism Principles and Guidelines**

Bramwell and Lane (1993:2) have identified four basic principles that are critical to the concept of sustainability: holistic planning and strategy formulation; preservation of essential ecological processes; protection of both human heritage and biodiversity; and development in which productivity can be sustained over the long term for future generations. These basic elements have been adapted to develop seven principles, or criteria, which have been used to assess sustainable development (Bali Sustainable Development Project, cited in Wall 1993). The principles developed are: ecological integrity, efficiency, equity, cultural integrity, community, integration-balance-harmony, and development as realisation of potential. It is recognised that at least three of these are particularly appropriate to a discussion about stakeholder participation (Timothy 1998). Efficiency is concerned with making the best use of resources (especially time, money and personnel). Equity refers to equality of opportunity and recognition of needs amongst various stakeholders. Integration-balance-harmony refers to the struggle between key factors, such as environment and economy, sectors such as agriculture and tourism, and in patterns of regional development (Wall 1993:55).

Over recent years academics and practitioners have developed a range of more specific principles and guidelines for sustainable tourism development. A review of these reveals that there appears to be a significant degree of consensus as to what they may be and also begins to explain more clearly what sustainable tourism development means in an applied sense. The following table represents a summary of a broad selection of such principles (Fig 2.4). It is believed that there can be little argument with the intentions of the principles outlined and the

widespread familiarity of them between the variety of people who have produced them offers some kind of endorsement of their worth.

Figure 2.4 Principles of Sustainable Tourism (collated from various sources)

<b>Principle</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Authors identifying importance</b>
Consulting stakeholders, participation and collaboration	Local involvement in decision-making; develop understanding and vision; involve local people in planning and management.	ETB (1991), Tourism Concern (1992), Owen et al (1993), Countryside Commission (1995), Robson & Robson (1996), Sautter & Leisen (1999), Bramwell & Lane (2000)
Development must respect location	Scale, pace and type of development should respect character of location.	ETB (1991), Owen et al (1993), Countryside Commission (1995), Hunter (1997)
Diversity	Maintaining and promoting natural, social and cultural diversity.	Tourism Concern (1992)
Equity	Fairly distributed benefits; equal opportunities; and recognition of stakeholder needs.	Tourism Concern (1992), Wall (1993), Timothy (1998)
Integrated planning	Development is integrated into national and local strategic planning framework.	Tourism Concern (1992)
Protection of the environment – local & global	Ecological integrity; environment has intrinsic value; sustain landscapes and habitats.	ETB (1991), Wall (1993), Lane (1994), Countryside Commission (1995)
Research & monitoring	Essential to help solve problems. Sustainability implies a greater commitment to monitoring the impacts of policies and adjusting them in the light of results.	Tourism Concern (1992), Countryside Commission (1995)
Resource distribution	Efficiency - making the best use of resources (especially time, money and personnel); sustain resource base on which development depends; conservation and sustainable use of natural, social and cultural resources; reduce over-consumption and waste.	Herity (1990), Tourism Concern (1992), Wall (1993), Countryside Commission (1995), Timothy (1998)
Responsible marketing	Full and responsible information increases respect and enhances customer satisfaction.	Tourism Concern (1992)
Sensitivity to local population	Sustain cultural activities and rights of residents to be involved.	ETB (1991), Tourism Concern (1992), Owen et al (1993), Lane (1994),
Support for local economies	Tourism must be part of a balanced, diversified economy; long-term benefits should be sought; employment of local people; avoid over reliance on tourism; take environmental costs into account; encourage visitors to help fund conservation efforts.	ETB (1991), Lane (1994), Tourism Concern (1992), Owen et al (1993), Countryside Commission (1995)
Training & education	Staff training improves quality of product; education of visitors recommended to increase awareness of issues and influence appropriate behaviour.	Tourism Concern (1992)
Visitor satisfaction	Value for money, high quality and meaningful experience required to increase appreciation and understanding.	ETB (1991), Owen et al (1993), Countryside Commission (1995)

## 2.4 Linking Stakeholder Participation and Sustainable Tourism Development

It has been demonstrated that the concept of sustainable development has grown out of a heightened environmental awareness. The environment is essential to all of us, and therefore a shared concern for everyone, which is why it can be argued that everyone must participate in its conservation. More recently, it is becoming widely recognised that bringing solutions to the vast range of development problems is immensely complex and that it will require a much broader-based approach if solutions are to be effective. One theme in particular that emerges from the review of sustainable development and tourism literature provided here is that in order to achieve increased sustainability, many advocate greater involvement of stakeholders in decision-making about development options and particularly through the formation of partnerships. Now, just as it is recognised that entities within an ecosystem are dependent on each other, society is acknowledging its own important interdependencies:

*What is needed is to put into place a collective learning mechanism for all the environment's different stakeholders, and to create the space necessary for fact-based structured dialogue on what our joint vision is of tomorrow's sustainable society. In that space, all stakeholders must recognise their own individual roles, their interdependency, and their need of partnership, or at least identify a platform for a common cause: putting sustainable development into practice (Presas 2001:204).*

It is argued that stakeholder management is a useful framework within which sustainable tourism can be delivered (McKercher 1993). Reflection on the range of proposed sustainable tourism principles outlined previously also reveals a strong emphasis on the need for stakeholder participation, particularly to focus awareness on the multi-disciplinary dimensions of their interactions, and also to help ensure coordination amongst the various interests. An increased focus on local situations is also an important part of this theme, which can be seen to partly emerge from an appreciation of the variety of different contexts that exist, as well as the wider necessity to incorporate knowledge from different disciplines or interests. While different groups have undeniably worked together throughout human history, recent years have seen an increased emphasis placed on collaborative working, and a plethora of interorganisational and cross-sectoral (public, private and voluntary) groupings are now being developed at and between national, regional and local levels. Some of the literature that considers these groupings is open for discussion here, but it is firstly worth reflecting briefly on *who* tourism's stakeholders are. In its "New Global Code of Ethics", the World Tourism Organisation (WTO 1999) identifies stakeholders as tourism professionals and public

authorities. It is clear, however, that many would suggest that this list omits many other interest groups and individuals. The English Tourism Council (ETC 2002) also recognise the importance of tourism stakeholders in its attempts to make English tourism more sustainable, which they believe will only be possible with the collaborative assistance of the following key tourism stakeholders: the tourism industry, Public Sector Support Bodies (such as the Wales Tourist Board, Government departments, National and Regional Agencies, local authorities and destination groups); visitors; and local communities.

Within tourism literature and practice, a wide range of terms are used to infer inclusivity or participation, including alliances, coalitions, forums, and task forces. Over recent years the notion of 'partnership' has become particularly prevalent. It is a term that is used particularly by the government and practitioners to describe regular, sometimes cross-sectoral, interactions between groups who aim to achieve a set goal or policy objective. Partnership is seen as a "long-term relationship based on a common cause and mutual respect for each stakeholder's mission and values" (Presas 2001:208). Partnerships are believed to have the potential to promote discussion, negotiation, and the building of mutually acceptable proposals about how tourism should be developed (Hall 2000; Healey 1997). Furthermore, partnerships can also reflect and help protect the interdependence between tourism and other activities and policy areas (Butler 1999). Partnership is desirable in order to secure what Huxham (1993) describes as "collaborative advantage" – the realisation of an objective that no single organisation could achieve on its own. There are three main reasons to consider partnership (Mackintosh 1992; Hastings 1996): to foster *inclusivity*, to achieve *integration* of 'cross-cutting' issues, to ensure more *efficiency* in service delivery. Highlighting the interest in partnership formation for example, the UK tourism policy explicitly intends to "encourage tourism management partnerships" (DCMS 1999:53). Similarly, as will be explored in following chapters, the national tourism strategy for Wales sees partnership as one of its essential elements (WTB 2001).

In its strictest sense partnership involves (Bristow et al. 2003):

- On-going collaboration between organisations or stakeholders that have their own independent identities.
- A real sense of shared purpose with clearly identified, agreed objectives.
- Genuinely shared decision-making (it does not exist where one organisation dominates the decision-making process and others are there merely to be consulted).
- A formalised structure (this may include, for example, an agreed statement of how the partnership operates, a protocol, an agreed programme of meetings, a separate legal entity).

Academic literature often refers to the related notion of collaboration between stakeholder groups, which is seen to have the potential to lead to mutually acceptable outcomes through a process of negotiation (Bramwell & Lane 2000). There is also a wider growing interest in 'interorganisational coordination' and this appears to be based on the belief that it may lead to pooling of knowledge, expertise, capital and other resources, greater coordination of relevant policies, increased acceptance of the resulting policies, and more effective implementation (Pretty 1995). It is now useful to consider some of the literature that provides an insight into the significance placed on stakeholders and the collaborations they form in the tourism development process.

#### **2.4.1 Stakeholder collaboration in tourism partnerships**

Recent tourism research has assessed the characteristics of successful and failed partnership efforts, identified barriers to partnership development, established motives for participation, and evaluated the accomplishments of partnerships (Bramwell & Lane 2000). In addition, some conceptual models have been developed to help describe tourism partnerships (Jamal & Getz 1995; Selin 1993; Selin & Chavez 1995), and a preliminary typology of sustainable tourism partnerships has been developed (Selin 1999). Member satisfaction and effectiveness attributes of regional tourism planning partnerships (Selin & Myers 1998) has also been assessed. The following section explores some of this literature in order to provide an introduction to the current understanding of tourism's stakeholder based collaborations, or partnerships as they are now widely known.

There are a number of reasons why collaborative approaches appear to sit well with the principles of sustainable development and therefore with attempts to make tourism sustainable (Bramwell & Lane 2000:4):

- Collaboration among a range of stakeholders including non-economic interests might promote more consideration of the varied natural, built and human resources that need to be sustained.
- By involving stakeholders from several fields and with diverse interests, there may be greater potential for integrative/holistic approaches to policy development, which may advance sustainability (Jamal & Getz 1995).
- If multiple stakeholders affected by tourism development were involved in the policy making process, then this might lead to a more equitable distribution of the resulting benefits and costs. The idea is that participation would raise awareness of tourism impacts on all stakeholders, and this heightened awareness should lead to fairer policies.

- Broad participation in policy-making could help democratise decision-making, empower participants and lead to capacity building and skill acquisition amongst participants.

As well as providing the widest possible safeguards for success, it is believed that broad-based ownership of tourism policies can bring democratic empowerment and equity, operational advantages and an enhanced tourism product (Jamal & Getz 1995; Joppe 1996). Indeed, it is argued that sustainable tourism development actually requires that “the planning, development and operation of tourism should be cross-sectional and integrated, involving various governmental departments, public and private sector companies, community groups and experts” (Wahab & Pigram 1998:283). Further, At the Millennium Conference of tourism leaders held in Osaka, Japan, in 2001, it was declared that sustainable tourism development could only succeed if support and participation at the ground level can be obtained, recognising that the understanding, support and participation of local communities has become a key development principle.

It is expected that working together towards a common objective can potentially benefit everyone, as each stakeholder is unlikely to possess all the different resources that are required to achieve their goal independently. When stakeholders in a destination collaborate together and attempt to build a consensus about tourism policies (Bramwell & Sharman 1999):

1. Collaboration potentially avoids the cost of resolving conflicts in the long term (Healey 1998).
2. Collaborative relationships may be more politically legitimate if they give stakeholders a greater influence in the decision-making that affects their lives (Benveniste 1989).
3. Collaboration improves the coordination of policies and related actions, and promotes consideration of the economic, environmental and social impacts of tourism, with potentially more sustainable outcomes (Lane 1994).
4. Collaboration adds value by building on the store of knowledge, insights and capabilities of stakeholders in the destination (Bramwell & Broom 1989).
5. Joint working may also promote a shared ownership of the resulting policies, and thereby channel energies into joint implementation or co-production (Susskind and Elliot 1983).
6. Participation in tourism planning by many stakeholders is also seen to help promote sustainable development by increasing efficiency, equity and harmony (Timothy 1998).

A further more comprehensive range of potential benefits of collaborative working has been identified (Fig 2.5), along with a consideration of the possible problems (Fig 2.6).

Figure 2.5 The Potential Benefits of Collaboration and Partnerships in Tourism Planning (Bramwell & Lane 2000:7)

- There may be involvement by a range of stakeholders, all of whom are affected by the multiple issues of tourism development and may be well placed to introduce change and improvement.
- Decision-making power and control may diffuse to the multiple stakeholders that are affected by the issues, which is favourable for democracy.
- The involvement of several stakeholders may increase the social acceptance of policies, so that implementation and enforcement may be easier to effect.
- More constructive and less adversarial attitudes might result in consequence of working together.
- The parties who are directly affected by the issues may bring their knowledge, aptitudes and other capacities to the policy-making process.
- A creative synergy may result from working together, perhaps leading to greater innovation and effectiveness.
- Partnerships can promote learning about the work, skills and potential of the other partners, and also develop the group interaction and negotiation skills that help to make partnerships successful.
- Parties involved in policy-making may have a greater commitment to putting the resulting policies into practice.
- There may be improved coordination of the policies and related actions of the multiple stakeholders.
- There may be greater consideration of the diverse economic, environmental and social issues that affect the sustainable development of resources.
- There may be greater recognition of the importance of non-economic issues and interests if they are included in the collaborative framework, and this may strengthen the range of tourism products available.
- There may be a pooling of the resources of stakeholders, which might lead to their more effective use.
- When multiple stakeholders are engaged in decision-making the resulting policies may be more flexible and also more sensitive to local circumstances and to changing conditions.
- Non-tourism activities may be encouraged, leading to a broadening of the economic, employment and societal base of a given community or region.

Figure 2.6 The Potential Problems of Collaboration and Partnerships in Tourism Planning (Bramwell & Lane 2000:9)

- In some places and for some issues there may be only a limited tradition of stakeholders participating in policy-making.
- A partnership may be set up simply as 'window dressing' to avoid tackling real problems head on with all interests.
- Healthy conflict may be stifled.
- Collaborative efforts may be under-resourced in relation to requirements for additional staff time, leadership and administrative resources.
- Actors may not be disposed to reduce their own power or to work together with unfamiliar partners or previous adversaries.
- Those stakeholders with less power may be excluded from the process of collaborative working or may have less influence on the process.
- Power within collaborative arrangements could pass to groups or individuals with more effective political skills.
- Some key parties may be uninterested or inactive in working with others, sometimes because they decide to rely on others to produce the benefits resulting from a partnership.
- Some partners might coerce others by threatening to leave the partnership in order to press their own case.
- The involvement of democratically elected government in collaborative working and consensus building may compromise its ability to protect the 'public interest'.
- Accountability to various constituencies may become blurred as the greater institutional complexity of collaboration can obscure who is accountable to whom and for what.
- Collaboration may increase uncertainty about the future, as the policies developed by multiple stakeholders are more difficult to predict than those developed by a central authority.
- The vested interests and established practices of the multiple stakeholders involved in collaborative working may block innovation.
- The need to develop consensus, and the need to disclose new ideas in advance of their introduction, might discourage entrepreneurial development.
- Involving a range of stakeholders in policy-making may be costly and time-consuming.
- The complexity of engaging diverse stakeholders in policy-making makes it difficult to involve them all equally.
- There may be fragmentation in decision-making and reduced control over implementation.
- The power of some partnerships may be too great, leading to the creation of cartels.
- Some collaborative arrangements may outlive their usefulness, with their bureaucracies seeking to extend their lives unreasonably.

How relevant stakeholders can have a voice in policymaking is explored in the literature on 'communicative' approaches to planning, summarised by Bramwell & Sharman (1999). Here it is suggested that planning should draw on the networks of relations found in local areas and build the capacities of the stakeholders so they can have more of a direct influence on their own lives (Healey 1997). It is argued that it is important to promote horizontal forms of collaboration, where stakeholders with legitimate and often conflicting interests in a local area engage in discourse and consensus building. As, for example, some legitimate stakeholders may lack technical knowledge or skills, or even confidence and an ability to express themselves, the challenge is seen as developing the capacity of the diverse stakeholders who potentially could assert concern about their locality (Carroll 1993; Innes 1995).

In order to address systemic constraints, such as power inequalities and institutional practices, attention is focussed on the processes within collaboration through which relations can be built up among relevant stakeholders, and to the communicative forms through which their, often conflicting, views and interests can be identified and consensus developed. Thus, there appears to be an awareness that local stakeholders are a key group to involve in planning processes although a range of issues exist that make this process a difficult task. This would suggest that attention should be given to existing social structures, from different attitudes and skill levels of individuals to national level leadership/policy setting, in order to achieve effective stakeholder involvement.

It has also been demonstrated that effective collaborative planning depends on a number of internal factors including adequate representation of interests, a shared vision, goal accomplishment, good working relationships, and open communication between members, and that this requires strong leaders and administrative support (Selin & Myers 1998). Elsewhere a typology of sustainable tourism partnerships has been developed Selin (1999), which shows that while tourism partnerships have developed a range of forms in response to a variety of societal forces, "Tourism partnerships are still underdeveloped due to many geographical, organisational and political constraints" (1999:271).

## 2.5 Partnerships and the National Assembly for Wales

It can be observed that the interest in a more collaborative approach has developed as alternative, more participative forms of governance have become increasingly popular (Bristow et al 2003). In Wales, the Government of Wales Act actually commits the National Assembly to a more inclusive style of politics, aimed in part at helping to deliver its constitutional objective to deliver sustainable development. Indeed, closely reflecting trends of concern for incorporating a wide variety of views in decision-making, the Assembly was originally envisioned as:

*a political system which leads to pluralism... you actually empower a whole range of 'other' people...[to] open-up access to power and influence to all these other people through pluralistic and open politics* (Davies, interview with Chaney and Fevre (1999) in Chaney and Fevre (2001)).

Through its policies, which include a range of very strong normative statements, the Assembly aims to spread the partnership approach:

*It is only through partnership and joint working with all agencies and spheres of government that Wales will gain the means to innovate and find responses to its distinctive national and local circumstances* (The National Assembly for Wales, 2000a: para. 1.3).

Partnership working in Wales has therefore become established as a significant vehicle for the implementation of a wide range of economic development, social inclusion and regeneration policies, as well as in the broader UK and EU context. The growth of both mandatory partnership working and a range of bottom-up initiatives has meant that there are now very few areas of broad sectoral and/or local community concern in Wales untouched by the development of partnerships.

So, in contrast to the previous Welsh Office, which had a strong hierarchical dimension (Pierre and Peters 2000, p17-8), the National Assembly has sought to develop an inclusive or partnership style of governance. In their review of the impact of devolution on the voluntary sector in Wales, Chaney and Fevre (2001) trace the centrality of inclusiveness to devolution debates in the mid 1990s. They argue that subsequently inclusiveness has come to dominate the discourse of devolution in Wales. This, combined with New Labour's promotion of partnerships, has blended with the process of devolution to form a unique situation such that, "So central was ... inclusiveness that it became prioritised and enshrined

in the Assembly's legal framework" (Cheney and Fevre 2001:152). Commentators have recognised that the Government of Wales Act placed a unique statutory obligation on the Assembly to consult with both business (section 115) and the voluntary sectors (section 114) (Kay 2003:234) when making policy. The voluntary and private sectors have been included in the policy process on the basis that they have previously been marginalised and offer distinctive capacities and expertise. The inclusion agenda is thus dominated by the perceived need to encourage broader engagement with the policy process and thus strengthen democracy.

It is also worth noting that the EU's requirement for partnership working in the delivery of Structural Fund programmes has provided a further powerful impetus for the proliferation and growth of partnership arrangements in Wales. In particular, it has been observed that a major impact of the EU's 'encouragement' in respect of the composition of EU Structural Fund partnerships has firmly embedded the 'thirds principle' – that there should be representation from the public, private and voluntary sectors (Bristow et al. 2003) – such that Wales is said to be uniquely strict in its approach to ensuring balance in the sectoral (and gender) composition of its Structural Fund partnerships (Welsh Affairs Committee, 2002: para. 26). Bristow et al. (2003) reveal that whilst some actors valued this as a means of ensuring equal access to the policy process, the strict application of the thirds principle may also hinder flexibility, and so at times is restrictive. More broadly, while the Welsh partnership agenda has produced a number of important benefits, the approach has been criticised for being the cause of: conflicting goals, contested roles, confused authority and constrained capacity (Bristow et al. 2003).

Another related feature of the new National Assembly is that it is lacking in policy capacity and this has partly driven its need to engage with external expertise (Flynn 2007). The Welsh Office civil servants were more used to holding organisations to account than to developing policy. A number of commentators including Deacon (2002) and Rawlings (2000), have all pointed out that devolution exposed the paucity of policy development capacity within Welsh government. The link between expertise and governance in Wales is most clearly expressed by Entwistle (2006:232) who argues that

*With limited policy capacity and a relatively underdeveloped pressure group and think tank community, Assembly officials are very dependent on public sector professionals. These patterns of dependence give rise to relatively tight policy communities, which in turn favour partnership solutions.*

Entwhistle (2006:229) sees partnership as a form of governance that emphasises the benefits of long-term relationships based on trust, common values, equality and reciprocity. Policy problems are to be solved through co-operation rather than coercion. Coordination of policy is increasingly through networks that exchange information rather than through central organisations that seek to impose solutions (see also Day 2006). The sense that patterns of governance in Wales remain in a state of flux are well summed up by Day (2006:650) who argues that,

*thus far devolution has consolidated existing networks of influence in Wales, bringing those involved closer to the seat of power and decision-making, without necessarily extending contacts beyond those limits. Whereas those who head key organisations enjoy frequent and high-level contacts with politicians and policy makers, active membership engagement has not greatly altered.*

## 2.6 Conclusions

This chapter has introduced the concept of sustainable development and reviewed the understanding of sustainable tourism and how it has evolved. Following sustainable development literature closely in this respect, sustainable tourism thinking is increasingly focused on the role of stakeholders in development processes. The equity and democracy principles embodied by sustainable development and the acceptance of the need to incorporate a wide range of knowledge begins to link stakeholder and sustainable development concepts. The review of the literature that explores tourism stakeholders and their collaborative work reveals that there are high expectations for the 'inclusive' approach. Stakeholders are seen as critical because it is necessary to include and consider the comprehensive range of interests and impacts to achieve more sustainable development outcomes. The attempts to achieve more sustainable forms of development are therefore inextricably linked to the concept of stakeholding. However, it appears essential not to under-emphasise the associated costs and potential problems. There are real challenges such as power imbalances, skill levels and resource issues that seriously threaten the effectiveness of partnerships.

One of the most conclusive points to emerge from the discussion about the definition of sustainable tourism is the need for some flexibility of interpretation to account for specific destination requirements and realities. Thus attention has become focused on the needs of local areas. This has at least partly contributed to the emergence of the phrase sustainable tourism *development*, which implies that definitions of sustainable tourism will vary at different

locations, as well as focusing attention on the development *process*. Destination areas are seen as the natural focus of effort, as these are the areas where the social, economic and environmental impacts are experienced, as well as being places where relevant knowledge is held. This is reinforced throughout the range of proposed sustainable tourism principles: development must respect location; protection of local environment; sensitivity to local population; and support for local economies. It is likely however, that the focus on local areas provides some interesting challenges for strategic level policy makers, particularly around the question of how vertical integration is achieved from the national to local levels. This is worthy of some analysis in order that future aims can be developed clearly and so that local needs can be addressed in the most appropriate way, whilst simultaneously meeting wider strategic objectives.

There appears to be considerable consensus amongst academics, NGOs and government agencies that in order to achieve more appropriate local development, the principle based on generating wider local involvement in planning, decision-making and management is key. As such, an increasing number of researchers are arguing the case for the participation of, and increased collaboration between, stakeholders *throughout* the tourism development process (e.g. Marsh & Henshall 1987; Keogh 1990; Jamal & Getz 1995; Sautter & Leisen 1999), and thus achieve greater vertical integration.

*Vertical integration ensures that bottom-up and top-down initiatives form a coherent whole, so that all are pulling in the same direction rather than at cross-purposes (Carley 2000:290).*

The high level of interdependence that exists in attempts to deliver more sustainable solutions seems to provide a perfect motivation for “those parties with a stake in the problem [to] actively seek a mutually determined solution” (Gray 1989:xviii). So while outcomes are obviously important, there appears to be an increased emphasis being placed on the *process* of identifying and implementing alternative development solutions. Understanding stakeholder participation in that process is therefore crucial to our understanding of the most appropriate mechanisms for achieving more sustainable forms of development. The empirical material provided in the following chapters therefore contributes to the development of that understanding.

With such a wide range of groups calling for and using the terms stakeholder, participation, collaboration and partnership, it is worth reflecting on how they may be interpreted by different groups and to consider whether there is any consensus around their meanings. Though the definition of a stakeholder is given further consideration in the following chapter, it is worth noting the importance of calling participants stakeholders. It

focuses attention on the need to incorporate representative views for each aspect or potential development impact. It also implies that participants have a right to be involved and that their participation should be supported.

Stakeholder participation can be understood in two related ways. In a broad sense, it can be understood as a whole gamut of techniques or practices whereby stakeholders engage in decision-making about development processes. Thus attending a meeting, involvement in a partnership or in a consultation exercise might be described as being forms of stakeholder participation. But stakeholder participation can have a deeper, more principled meaning, much like partnership and collaboration. Some see participation as requiring more of an *active* role for stakeholders in both decision-making and in the consequent activities that affect them (DFID 1995). Often the two meanings are used interchangeably and sometimes this can lead to the situation where consultation, for example, might be called stakeholder participation. While consultation may be a form of engagement, consultation is not really genuine participation in a deeper sense. Stakeholder participation might therefore be seen as a continuum, depending on the extent of stakeholder involvement, which links the two different interpretations. On the one hand of the continuum, stakeholders are essentially told or informed of a decision, whereas on the other hand stakeholders' views are clearly considered and may be supported. In the middle there is a two-way flow of information and opinions from all parties. In conducting research it is therefore always important to look for genuine forms of stakeholder participation. Thus, consideration must be given to assessing whether all stakeholders have the opportunity to develop the understanding, skills and capacity necessary to achieve equitable and effective participation, as well as how fully their views are considered.

The term partnership has various layers of meaning considered in a growing range of literature (e.g. Mackintosh 1992; McQuaid 2000; Osborne 2000). With the political level promotion of partnership working in public service delivery, a host of top-down partnerships exist, though not all partnerships are driven by the state. The term can also obviously apply to more spontaneous collaborative working, though the principles of partnership could be shared and an important characteristic is that it is a fairly formalised process. Definitions of partnership are very close to the academic understanding of collaboration (explored further in the following chapter) and it is observed that the term partnership appears to have become synonymous with stakeholder collaboration. It has been noted that the term partnership tends to be favoured more by government and practitioners for describing collaborations, but that as the term is used so widely in the field, it is acceptable to consider partnership akin to collaboration (Bramwell & Lane 2000).

Despite this, it is also acknowledged that the partnership label is now applied to so many different types of arrangement that there is a danger that the idea of partnership itself

will be devalued. And furthermore, it has also been suggested that partnership is a new form of governance that has actually reinforced existing networks of influence. In Wales, it appears that behind the rhetoric of inclusiveness and partnership, there is an underlying motive for adopting this approach based on a government need to involve others in policymaking due to its own lack of capacity. Furthermore, there is some concern that despite an apparent intention to ensure wider participation in policy processes, there is a question about how far reaching and therefore how comprehensive that participation actually is. Hence, it is therefore necessary to question whether partnerships represent genuine forms of collaboration, which really do seek to the active participation of relevant stakeholders, and that all appropriate stakeholders are actually engaged in the development process.

It is evident then that stakeholder participation is almost inextricably wound up with partnership working. The terms 'stakeholder', 'collaboration', and 'partnership' are all, at some level, value-laden concepts that embody certain principles. They are also enmeshed in the sustainable tourism development discourse, as in the discourse of governance. Emphasising this point in a health partnership context, Ling (2000) characterises the variety of academic and non-academic commentaries as amounting to "methodological anarchy and definitional chaos". There is no particular consistency between any particular terms and the range of activities that they encompass. Thus partnership, collaboration or stakeholder participation may all refer to a range of joint activities, from simply and passively exchanging information to the delegation or integration of functions that involve a high degree of trust on the part of the agencies involved. One of the effects of this is it devalues their meaning and it enables those inclined to do so to claim to be doing something more principled when they are not necessarily making the effort to ensure more active and genuine forms participation. All of these concepts occupy distinct territories within branches of interorganisational research. These are explored in the following chapter, which looks at a number of relevant theoretical perspectives that will be necessary for interpreting the empirical material provided by this investigation.

## Chapter 3

### **Organisational Theories for Understanding the Role of Stakeholder Participation**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

As Chapter 2 identified, there is a growing body of research into tourism stakeholders and the collaborations they form, now commonly called partnerships. Alongside this, there is also a significant amount of theoretical literature that attempts to understand interorganisational forms (e.g. Gray 1989), which is discussed in this chapter. Over the past two decades, as society has become more complex and economies more interdependent, organisations have acted on the need to work closer together to meet their objectives. As interorganisational collaborations have emerged, social scientists from a range of backgrounds have developed a number of theories that seek to better understand their internal dynamics, the external forces that affect their formation and growth, and the structures that develop in response. Relationships between private, public and voluntary organisations are now seen as an important component of “competitive advantage” (Huxham 1993).

*This ‘relational’ perspective is particularly relevant in the tourism industry as groupings of organisations cluster together to form a destination context (Pavlovich 2002:203).*

The previous chapter explored the concept of sustainable tourism development and identified that one of the main challenges is to encourage and develop stakeholder participation, through the introduced notions of collaboration, and the strengthening of social networks. At a practical level there is often limited attention paid to the exact meaning of these terms and the potential boundaries between the concepts. At an academic level, a review of literature reveals that there are several theories that may provide relevant lenses through which to view and interpret what is occurring ‘on the ground’. Theories have been developed to describe and explain issues of stakeholding, collaboration and the networks and structures within which they operate. Notably, stakeholder, collaboration, and network theories have been applied to tourism research, though so far Alexander’s (1995) structuration theory of interorganisational coordination has not been applied. These theories are introduced here, along with their application in previous tourism research. Similarly, the concepts of governance and multi-level governance are also explored, as they are also highly pertinent to the investigation and make valuable contributions to the analysis. As in the general sustainable tourism development literature, and as will be explored in this chapter, it is evident that there is a high degree of overlap in the language and ideas within these theories.

In particular, this chapter focuses on stakeholder theory and its previous application to sustainable tourism research because of its emerging but often loose application in tourism contexts. The array of other key terms, used and discussed interchangeably in tourism literature, also suggests that it is therefore necessary to explore their related theories. Given that “no single theoretical perspective will enable us to explain everything about organisational interaction” (Cook 1977:77), “future theoretical development relies on efforts to consider the contribution of each theory and to integrate these valuable perspectives into a more comprehensive framework” (Rowley 1997:908). Being interested in the wider stakeholder participation process, understanding how related theories help to explain the key issues will enable a fuller appreciation of possible avenues and linkages; the aim then being to provide a more comprehensive theoretical basis for effectively analysing the empirical material and to further contextualise the research. As will be demonstrated there is much useful overlap and complementarity between the theories.

### **3.2 The Emergence of Stakeholding**

Contemporary stakeholder concepts have been traced back to the aftermath of the Great Crash of 1929 in the United States, with the publication of Berle and Means’ (1932) *The Modern Corporation and Private Property* becoming the core book about stakeholding. Now, the existence of stakeholders is seen to be a consistent dimension in organisational life and many use stakeholder ideas to support their arguments. The term ‘stakeholder’ and the notion of identifying and managing stakeholders have become popular in contemporary business culture and have also widely permeated social and political thinking, although as illustrated here, this has led to the concepts being widely interpreted by practitioners, academics and politicians.

It was in 1963 that the Stanford Research Institute (SRI) evidently proposed the first definition of ‘stakeholders’ as being “those groups without whose support the organisation would cease to exist” (cited in Freeman 1984:31). Edward Freeman is seen to have pioneered ‘stakeholder theory’ and subsequently refined SRI’s definition in a management and organisational context as, “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organisation’s objectives” (1984:46). Stakeholder theory is now well established as a theory of organisational ethics and business management, made distinct by its explicit concern for morals and values as a central feature of managing organisations. In Europe, and particularly in the UK, the premises of stakeholding have also developed into a political theory, giving birth to the concepts of a ‘stakeholder society’, a ‘stakeholder economy’ and ‘stakeholder capitalism’. This has created an interesting and often confusing blend of ideas and arguments about what exactly stakeholder theory is. The following sections therefore

explore the different interpretations of stakeholding and consider their various contentious issues.

### 3.3 Stakeholder Theory: an organisational ethics perspective

It is worth noting that much of the discussion around stakeholder theory has taken place in private sector settings, so in reviewing the literature, this section follows that trend. From an organisational ethics perspective, stakeholder theory proposes that an organisation is characterised by its relationships with various groups and individuals, including employees, customers, suppliers, governments, and members of communities. Attention to the interests of these groups is the central concern of the theory. A group qualifies as a stakeholder if it has a legitimate interest in aspects of the organisation's activities (Donaldson & Preston 1995), although what constitutes a legitimate interest is a debatable aspect of the theory, as will soon be explored. The essential premises of the theory are:

- The organisation has relationships with many constituent groups (stakeholders) that affect and are affected by its decisions (Freeman 1984).
- The theory is concerned with the nature of these relationships in terms of both processes and outcomes of the organisation and its stakeholders.
- The theory focuses on managerial decision-making (Donaldson & Preston 1995).
- The interests of all stakeholders are of intrinsic value, and no set of interests is assumed to dominate the others (Donaldson & Preston 1995).

Each stakeholder group therefore has a right to be treated as an end in itself, and not simply as a means to an end. As a result, a group "must participate in determining the future direction of the firm in which [it has] a stake" (Evan & Freeman 1988:97). Further, management *must proactively seek out* inputs from all groups, and those who are more powerful should not be allowed to dominate (Sautter & Leisen 1999); although the theory does not necessarily imply that all stakeholders should be equally involved in all processes and decisions (Donaldson & Preston 1995).

In order for an organisation to effectively manage its stakeholders, it is recognised that the organisation/management function must understand three key concepts (Freeman 1984):

1. *Identification* of the stakeholders and their respective perceived stakes,
2. The *processes* necessary to manage the organisation's relationships with its stakeholders,
3. *Management* of a set of transactions or bargains among the organisation and its stakeholders.

Therefore, an organisation with "stakeholder management capabilities" has

*organisational processes to take these groups and their stakes into account routinely as part of the standard operating procedures of the organisation and which implements a set of transactions or bargains to balance the interests of these stakeholders to achieve the organisation's purpose (Freeman 1984:53).*

Stakeholder management requires simultaneous attention to the interests of all appropriate stakeholders in the establishment of organisational structures and general policies, and in case-by-case decision-making (Donaldson & Preston 1995).

Responsibility is placed on the management function to select activities that produce optimum benefits for all, regardless of the relative power of different groups. The consideration of intrinsic values gives the theory its fundamental normative core, which provides moral guidelines for the management of organisations and is seen as its most important role (Donaldson & Preston 1995). Some even see the stakeholder concept as “the beginning of a new ethical paradigm” (Robson & Robson 1996:540). And there appears to be a penalty for not taking this approach, for under the theory some caution that failure to retain participation of even a single stakeholder group will result in the eventual failure of the organisation (Clarkson 1995). To help ensure that this does not occur, stakeholder theory proposes that the various groups can and should have a direct influence on management decisions (Jones 1995).

Stakeholder theory is of course, like other theories, not without its issues and contested areas. In his book, Robert Phillips (2003) has identified and attempted to address many of the theory's criticisms. One of his main concerns is that broad interpretations of the theory have opened it up to additional distortion and misinterpretation and his treatment of these issues is useful for gaining a good understanding of the main debates (Fig 3.1). Many of the contested areas of the theory can be seen to fall within what he describes as the “broad vs. narrow” debate, which is partly a tension between comprehensiveness and usefulness.

*The wide-ranging intuitive appeal of stakeholder theory has led a number of scholars and commentators to stretch the theory beyond its proper scope, rendering it more susceptible to criticism and distortion (Phillips 2003:17).*

The major contested areas of the theory are: its incorporation of ethics and social science strands, and the related question of a normative justificatory framework; the question of stakeholder identification and legitimacy; and the theory's focus on two-way relationships.

Figure 3.1 What Stakeholder Theory Is Not (Phillips 2003:18)	
Critical Distortions	Friendly Misinterpretations
Stakeholder theory is an excuse for managerial opportunism (Jensen 2000; Marcoux 2000; Sternberg 2000)	Stakeholder theory requires changes to current law (Hendry 2001; Van Buren 2001)
Stakeholder theory cannot provide a sufficiently specific objective function for the corporation (Jensen 2000)	Stakeholder theory is socialism and refers to the entire economy (Barnett 1997; Hutton 1995; Rustin 1997)
Stakeholder theory is primarily concerned with distribution of financial outputs (Marcoux 2000)	Stakeholder theory is a comprehensive moral doctrine (Orts & Strudler 2002)
All stakeholders must be treated equally (Gioia 1999; Marcoux 2000; Sternberg 2000)	Stakeholder theory applies only to corporations (Donaldson & Preston 1995)

### 3.3.1 Distinctions

It is recognised that stakeholder theory “has been presented and used in a number of ways that are quite distinct and involve very different methodologies, types of evidence, and criteria of appraisal” (Donaldson & Preston 1995:70). This appears to have led to the suggestion that the theory can be made more useful by outlining three distinct strands – normative (ethics based), instrumental and descriptive (social science based) – and some have also questioned whether these elements can be usefully combined and used simultaneously (Donaldson 1999; Freeman 1999; Jones & Wicks 1999). A case has been made for a “conceptual glue” to hold the strands together (Donaldson 1999), while others prefer an approach that values the “different but useful ways to understand organisations” offered by the different theoretical strands (Freeman 1999).

Stakeholder theory can be used in a *descriptive* sense to describe and explain specific characteristics and behaviours of organisations, which is seen as desirable in the exploration of new areas. In essence, descriptive methodologies identify whether stakeholder interests are taken into account. In assessing the theory’s descriptive accuracy, it is important to consider whether both observers and participants see the organisation this way (Donaldson & Preston 1995). Both the descriptive and instrumental aspects of the theory lean heavily upon other theories such as agency theory, network theory, game theory, corporate social performance theory, transaction cost theory, company-as-contract theory, and private property theory (Scholl 2001).

*Instrumental* applications of stakeholder theory refer to “any theory asserting some sort of claim that, all other things being equal, if managers view the interests of stakeholders as having intrinsic worth and pursue the interests of multiple stakeholders, then the corporations they manage will achieve higher traditional performance measures, such as return on

investment, than had they denied such intrinsic worth and pursued the interests of a single group” (Donaldson 1999:238). Essentially, instrumental uses of the theory make a connection between stakeholder approaches and objectives in a hypothetical way, i.e. ‘if you do this then you could expect this’. It has proved difficult to measure the effects of employing stakeholder management practices in comparison with similar organisations that have not, although some do argue strongly that successful companies typically recognise themselves as social organisations based on trust, not just as vehicles for maximising profit (e.g. Kay 1993).

It is said that stakeholder theory is “explicitly and unabashedly moral” (Jones and Wicks 1999:206), which gives it its *normative* core. The normative aspect of the theory asserts “that managers ought to view the interests of stakeholders as having intrinsic worth and should pursue the interests of multiple stakeholders” because it is the ‘right thing to do’ (Donaldson 1999:238). A normative approach deals with the reasons why corporations ought to consider stakeholder interests, even in the absence of apparent benefit (Gibson 2000). From this application of the theory, it is not the observed facts of corporate life that are significant, nor is it necessarily the outcomes of applying stakeholder management. Crucially, the theory attempts to offer guidance on the basis of moral or ethical principles. That is to say, this approach makes categorical statements like, ‘Do this because it is the right thing to do’. Many tend to agree that the normative basis for stakeholder theory is a significant justification for its use (Donaldson & Preston 1995; Donaldson 1999; Jones & Wicks 1999).

Fig 3.2 Normative Justifications for Stakeholder Theory (Phillips 2003:17)

Author	Normative Core
Argandoña (1998)	Common Good
Burton & Dunn (1996) Wicks, Gilbert & Freeman (1994)	Feminist Ethics
Clarkson (1994)	Risk
Donaldson & Dunfee (1999)	Integrative Social Contracts Theory
Donaldson & Preston (1995)	Property Rights
Evan & Freeman (1995)	Kantianism
Freeman (1994)	Doctrine of Fair Contracts

Given that many see the normative aspect of stakeholder theory as being fundamental, several authors have considered a range of potential moral foundations for the theory from a variety of different perspectives (Fig 3.2). However, as Donaldson (1989) recognises, many proponents of the theory largely fail to make reference to a ‘normative, justificatory framework’, which he sees as one of the theory’s greatest problems. The absence of a rigorous normative underpinning leads to other theoretical ambiguities, such as the problem of stakeholder identification, because the basis for asserting the need for stakeholder

management will influence who can be seen as a stakeholder and how they may be managed, as well as ultimately the basis on which decisions are made. Freeman's (1984:46) seminal definition of a stakeholder quoted previously – "any group or individual who can affect or is affected by..." – potentially results in ascribing legitimacy to a very wide range of people. However, Phillips (1997, 2003) has attempted to refine and narrow the definition of a stakeholder with his call for the application of a 'principle of stakeholder fairness' to provide that contested normative basis for inclusion, which is based on Rawls' (1971) principle of fair play. He suggests the following:

*Whenever persons or groups of persons voluntarily accept the benefits of a mutually beneficial scheme of cooperation requiring sacrifice or contribution on the parts of the participants and there exists the possibility of free-riding, obligations of fairness are created among the participants in the cooperative scheme in proportion to the benefits accepted (Phillips 2003:116).*

Challenging the more traditional approach to understanding stakeholders, which identifies stakeholders as being those who have an 'interest' in the organisation, Argandoña (1998) has argued that the theory of the 'common good' can provide a more appropriate normative foundation, as it is argued that the concept of 'good' seems to be more appropriate for an ethical theory than the concept of 'interest'.

*The theory of the common good is based on the classic concept of 'good': the company does 'good' to many people, to some by obligation and to others more or less involuntarily. And 'it must do good' to certain groups by virtue of its obligation to contribute to the common good, which goes from the common good of the company itself to that of the local community, the country and all humankind, including future generations (Argandoña 1998:1099).*

In considering how persons and organisations share in the common good,

*We must apply the principles of efficiency or capacity and need: the duty to play an active role increases with the agent's capacity to act and the recipient's need (Argandoña 1998:1100).*

While adopting a 'common good approach' may broaden the scope of stakeholder theory, its effects do place more of an obligation on the company to 'do the right thing', not just for its own interest and the interests of its immediate stakeholders, but for the good of everyone. That Argandoña (1998:1099) has acknowledged the good of "all humankind, including future

generations” also intriguingly links the approach to familiar definitions of sustainable development.

Whether and how the descriptive, instrumental and normative elements of the theory can be combined and used has been the subject of much discussion. Concern seems to have been focussed on the distinctions between the two research streams – normative ethics and social science – that appear inherent in the theory, and the question of their compatibility has been raised. In response to this, Freeman actually casts doubt on the normative/instrumental/descriptive taxonomy, suggesting that it was always the intention to integrate different disciplines.

*By choosing to call groups “stakeholders”, rather than “interest groups”, “constituencies”, or “publics”, we have already mixed up “fact” and “value”... the very idea of a purely descriptive, value-free, or value-neutral stakeholder theory is a contradiction in terms (Freeman 1999:234).*

Phillips (2003) suggests that these debates have more to do with the wider issues about science’s atomistic tendencies, rather than with significant flaws in the theory, although he does recognise the importance of these discussions.

*Implicit in Jones and Wick’s convergent solution...is the idea that the two research streams – normative ethics and social science – were never as far apart as some scholars would have us believe... It is unfortunate that an article as “Convergent Stakeholder Theory” had to be written at all. Moral theory with no reference to our world is empty formalism; value-free science is impossible. These are not, however, universally held ideas; stakeholder theory has provided fodder and a battleground for those who believe in the strict partitioning of knowledge (Phillips 2003:68).*

Leading proponents of the theory then argue that although there has been some useful consideration of its different strands, these strands have always been integrated, but that their integration has required time to be appreciated. However, concerns about unifying the different normative and social science strands, as well as the range and lack of consensus about the normative basis for applying stakeholder theory, have led some to conclude that “a unified stakeholder theory does not exist” (Scholl 2001).

### 3.3.2 Stakeholder identity and legitimacy

In traditional models of the corporation, the firm only address the needs and wishes of four key parties: investors, employees, suppliers, and customers. Stakeholder theory however, recognises that there are other parties involved, including governmental bodies, political groups, trade associations, trade unions, communities, associated corporations, etc. Exactly who should be identified as stakeholders and questions about what constitutes a 'legitimate stake' have been contentious theoretical issues, influenced partly by the discrepancies imposed by those favouring either broad or narrow applications of the theory. Broad interpretations, adhering to early definitions of stakeholders, link the term to 'anything influencing or influenced by the firm', which could incorporate almost anyone and include groups such as activists, the media, the natural environment and competitors – groups that may not sit comfortably with traditional management perspectives. Narrow conceptions tend to omit these constituencies by considering stakeholders to be only those groups who have a direct relationship with the firm and to whom a 'moral obligation' is owed, despite their wider strategic importance. Clearly, as Phillips (2003) argues, if stakeholder theory is to be a theory of strategic management and ethics, then groups like competitors cannot lie completely outside the theory – the question then becomes how to account for a wider yet manageable array of stakeholders. Considering that under a broad interpretation of the theory, the list of potential stakeholders may be almost endless, it appears to be necessary to place a ceiling on the number of groups because it may become virtually impossible to see how objectives can be arrived at from an overwhelming input of voices. However stakeholders are identified, they can be represented on a 'stakeholder map' of those organisations a firm has connections with (Fig 3.3).

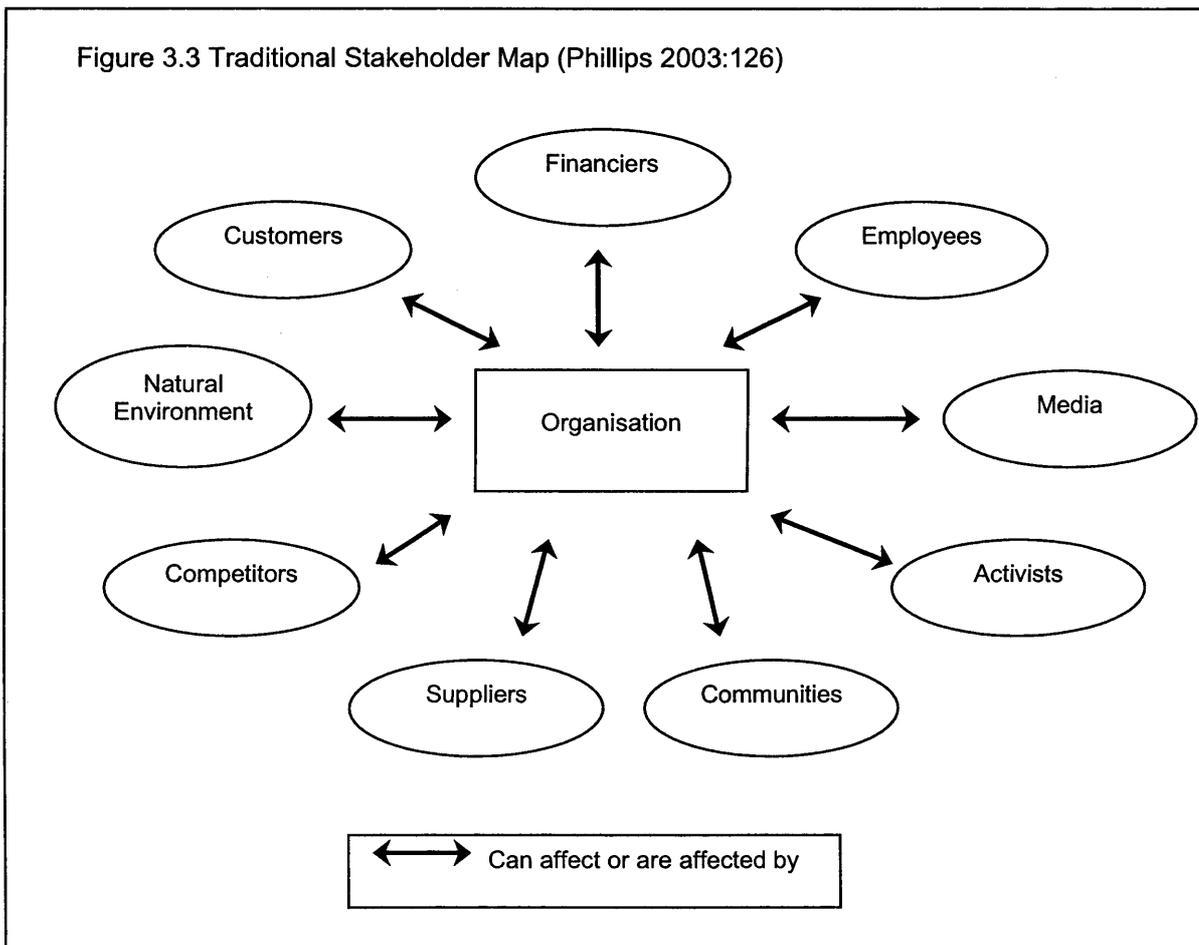
Some have made distinctions between 'primary' and 'secondary' stakeholders, where primary stakeholders are those who have a formal, official or contractual relationship. Other groups who have power (the ability to impact on the organisation) might be classed as secondary stakeholders (Carroll 1993). Environmental groups are often cited as good examples of secondary stakeholders as they are not employed by the firm nor are they part of the supply and demand network, yet can target and impact upon a corporation for practices that have detrimental environmental impacts. Donaldson and Preston (1995) have conceptualised a similar distinction between stakeholders and 'influencers', and Mitchell, Agle, and Wood (1997:854) propose a valuable theory of 'stakeholder salience', defined as "the degree to which priority is given to competing stakeholder claims", whereby stakeholders and their claims are classified based on the relative presence of three characteristics: *legitimacy*<sup>1</sup>,

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<sup>1</sup> Legitimacy: socially accepted and expected structures or behaviours.

*power*<sup>2</sup> and *urgency*<sup>3</sup>. It is also argued that other groups who have something to lose or gain (some form of human or financial capital) can qualify as stakeholders because they are “risk-bearers” (Clarkson 1995). What all these considerations have in common is that they recognise a need to account for a more complete range of stakeholders while being able to make distinctions in the levels of managerial decision-making given to each group. Yet ultimately, it remains for managers to make a subjective judgement about how much attention to pay to each stakeholder group.

Figure 3.3 Traditional Stakeholder Map (Phillips 2003:126)



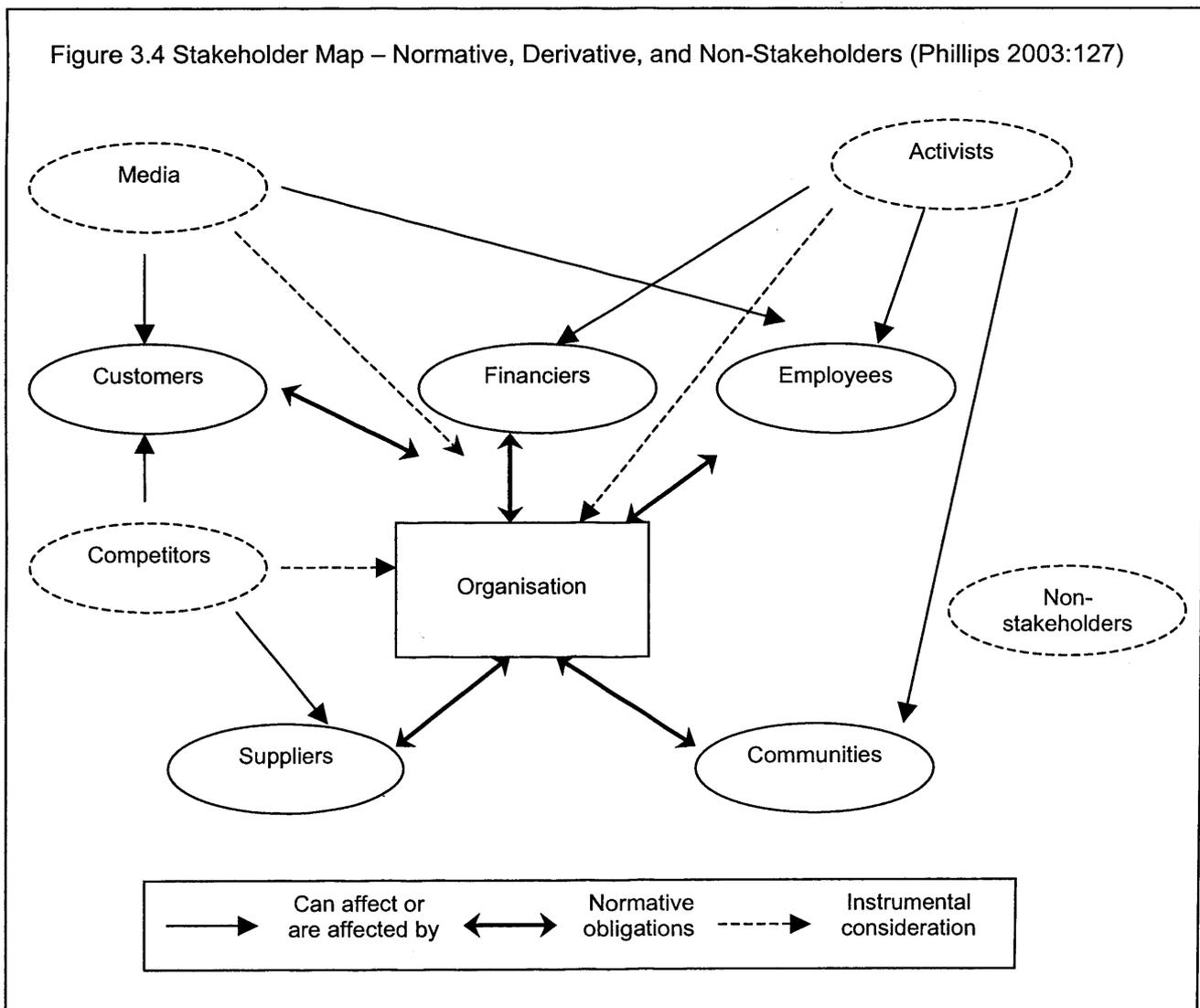
More recently, Phillips (2003) defends a distinction between normative and derivative stakeholder legitimacy that he argues makes stakeholder theory more precise and consistent.

*This distinction provides a middle ground in the broad versus narrow debate that recognises the moral obligations of the organisation to some (narrow) group of stakeholders while at the same time accounting for the pragmatic, power-based conception of legitimacy prominent in organisation theory and sociology as well as broader approaches to stakeholder theory (Phillips 2003:123).*

<sup>2</sup> Power: The extent a party has means to impose its will in a relationship.

<sup>3</sup> Urgency: Time sensitivity or criticality of the stakeholders' claims.

“Normative stakeholders...are those stakeholders to whom the organisation has a moral obligation...over and above that due other social actors simply by virtue of their being human” (Phillips 2003:124). These stakeholders are given higher levels of managerial consideration as a result of the development of obligations that arise in an organisational context. “Derivatively legitimate stakeholders are those groups whose actions and claims must be accounted for by managers due to their potential effects upon the normative stakeholders” (Phillips 2003:125). Derivative legitimacy is attained from groups’ abilities to affect the organisation and its normative stakeholders and so the legitimacy of derivative stakeholders is based on obligations to normative stakes, rather than on any obligation due to the derivative stakeholders themselves. Making this distinction, while perhaps narrowing the number of ‘core’ stakeholder groups, actually begins to cause recognition of the important impact of external relationships that exist between organisations and groups. It begins to make the stakeholder map look more like a diagram of network connections (Fig 3.4), although still in a more narrow fashion.



Not only is identification of the different stakeholders important, but also who selects them can influence outcomes. In the organisational context, the assumption is that the company identifies its stakeholders, as this is seen as a part of its managerial function. This assumption is largely unchallenged in the organisational literature although some do see it as a serious flaw within the concept because it places the firm at the head of the process and immediately opens it up to bias (Robson & Robson 1996). There is much discussion given to the legitimacy of stakeholders, yet some even argue that “an unchallenged ‘power to manage’, which modern corporate executives believe is theirs by right of necessity, is...quite contrary to the core [democratic] values of our society... it is illegitimate” (Hirst 1997:64), which may also call into question the theory’s ethical basis.

One problem of stakeholder identity, which has particular relevance in a sustainable tourism development context, is the status of the natural environment. Attempts have been made to ascribe stakeholder status to the natural environment (Starik 1995). Starik connects the natural environment with the business environment, and recognising that the natural environment clearly “affects” the organisation (as in the standard definition of stakeholder theory), thus suggests that it can be given stakeholder status. He then posits that the natural environment has a political “voice... for all humans to heed or appreciate” (1995:210). Following Carroll’s (1993) development of the moral legitimacy aspect of stakeholder management, Starik argues that “the development of environmental ethics implies that the natural environment also can be considered as one or more stakeholders of organisations” (1995:211). Starik discusses the role of proxy organisations that advocate for the environment and suggests that their existence is one reason why it had not previously been necessary to see ‘non-human nature’ as a stakeholder. Despite this, Starik continues to argue that human proxies for the non-human environment are necessary, and in particular that it is reasonable to have one stakeholder represented by a number of groups. However, Starik recognises that given the decline in quality of the environment, the current number of groups representing it is “apparently not sufficient to protect non-human nature’s stakes” and therefore there is a “call for organisations to consider as stakeholders as many natural environment entities as possible” (1995:212).

However, Phillips and Reichart (2000) argue that the environment should be denied stakeholder status for the reasons that Starik proposes, but that it is nevertheless accounted for by the fairness-based approach to stakeholder theory (Phillips 1997). Phillips and Reichart question the use of the “can affect criterion” (2000:189) for establishing stakeholder status, challenging that the term ‘stakeholder’ loses all significance if that criterion is to be applied because it makes it difficult to exclude anything. So while they argue that the natural

environment does not merit the status of an organisational stakeholder, they suggest that there are at least two ways in which the environment may merit attention:

- The environment may be important to other groups who themselves do qualify as legitimate stakeholders;
- The environment may merit moral consideration on its own apart from its stakeholder status.

Continuing the debate, Driscoll and Starik (2004) build on the Mitchell and et al. (1997) stakeholder salience framework (introduced above) to strengthen the basis for considering the environment as not only worthy of stakeholder status, but that it should be seen as the organisation's "primordial stakeholder". For Driscoll and Starik, stakeholder theory's normative core must acknowledge the priority of the natural environment among the firm's stakeholders. They argue that this is necessary to enhance the effectiveness of relationships between organisations and the natural environment. In doing so, they redefine power, legitimacy and urgency in an ecosystem-centred, network-based approach that also includes other stakeholder criteria such as proximity. There is therefore a strong case for seeing the environment as a stakeholder, given its fundamental importance. Careful consideration must also be given then to the agents that act on its behalf.

### **3.3.3 Moving beyond dyadic ties**

Stakeholder theory's focus on the two-way relationships between a focal organisation and its stakeholders could be seen as a significant limitation because it fails to acknowledge the wider network of stakeholder influences on decision-making (Rowley 1997). It is argued that in order to describe the response of organisations to stakeholders, consideration must be given to the "multiple and interdependent interactions that simultaneously exist in stakeholder environments" (Rowley 1997:887) – in other words, the broader network of stakeholder relationships. In reality, focal organisations do not simply respond to each stakeholder individually, as the significant body of stakeholder theory literature seems to assume. Stakeholder relationships do not occur in a "vacuum of dyadic ties" (Rowley 1997:890), but rather in a network of influences, and so a firm's stakeholders are likely to have direct relationships with each other. So, organisations respond to the interaction of multiple influences from the entire 'stakeholder set'. Further, the focal organisation is more than simply the central point of its own stakeholders. It may well be a stakeholder of many other focal points in a system and not even at the centre of this broader network. Thus, having identified stakeholder theory's concern for dyadic ties between a firm and its stakeholders as individual, unrelated groups as a limitation, it is argued that further application of the theory would

benefit from developing understanding of 'stakeholder environments' using concepts from social network analysis (Rowley 1997). To this end, Rowley has developed a 'theory of stakeholder influences' that incorporates aspects of social network analysis to help explain the impact of wider stakeholder relationships. This development of stakeholder theory importantly helps to link it to wider attempts to integrate different approaches to understanding organisational behaviour.

### 3.4 Stakeholding: a political economy perspective

As previously mentioned, early definitions of a stakeholder in organisational contexts emerged in the US during the early 1960s. As Bevir and O'Brien (2001) explain, centre-left economists used it as part of their attempt to rethink what makes for a successful company. They did so partly to develop their critique of free-market capitalism, which was seen as prone to narrow-focussed, short-term economic volatility and social divisiveness – what might now be seen as part of the discourse on unsustainable development. It was argued that the company is not simply a profit-creating organisation, embodying narrow shareholder interests, but rather a broad network of reciprocal interests, including employees, customers, and suppliers, as well as shareholders. Over the past twenty years, stakeholding has received a substantial amount of scholarly and popular attention as an approach to the examination of organisational management, while simultaneously Rawls's (1971), *A Theory of Justice*, appears to have had a significant influence on late twentieth-century moral and political theory (Phillips 2003), firmly embedding amongst some the concepts of cooperation, obligation and fairness.

While 'stakeholder theory' has largely developed as a theory of organisational ethics with a focus on business management, the developing discourse of stakeholding has also taken a different path, recently giving rise to the concept of a 'stakeholder society' or a 'stakeholder economy'.

*First we must make the distinction between the political concept of stakeholding and the conventional corporate sense of the term. Stakeholding is a general philosophy or concept... The corporate governance concept of stakeholding is very important, but it is a distinct part of what is an overall economic approach (Darling 1997:16).*

In a stakeholder society, "there is a mutuality of rights and obligations constructed around the notion of economic, social and political inclusion" (Hutton 1997:3). It is argued from this perspective that stakeholding is concerned with creating a change of culture (Darling 1997) in which recognition is given to "a diversity of legitimate entitlements to representation" (Rustin

1997:80). The stakeholder society view considers a different definition of stakeholders. Instead of seeing them as being those with an interest in a private sector firm, stakeholders can also have interests in public sector institutions:

*Parents are legitimate stakeholders in the management of schools, as are patients and their representatives in the management of hospitals and medical practices (Rustin 1997:80).*

In the UK, this concept appears to be closely related, although not entirely confined, to the emergence of New Labour, which has been influenced by the contemporary critique of the corporation from which stakeholder theory has itself developed. By the 1990s, the ideas of stakeholding had become popular with several British economists, some of whom were close to the labour leadership. Seeing the appeal of the term 'stakeholding' for its resonance with socialist theory, as well as its implicit critique of the New Right, New Labour appears to have eagerly adopted it.

*Terms such as 'stakeholding' and 'the Third Way' echo the socialist concept of moral personhood within community while extending the concept from the individual to the company, providing a critical perspective on the free-market capitalism of the New Right. New Labour applies the concept of stakeholding beyond the individual and the company to society and the state. Thus, stakeholding and the Third Way represent solutions to two fundamental issues facing contemporary Britain: social fragmentation and declining economic performance (Blair 1996: 290-321, cited in Bevir & O'Brien 2001:537).*

In recognising both the ethical values of the socialist tradition (such as equality, social justice, fellowship, and community) as well as developing a new understanding of stakeholding, New Labour seems to have identified that the proper goal for political action is a moral community in which all citizens attain freedom through cooperation and in which "individuals prosper best within a strong, active society, whose members acknowledge that they owe duties to each other as well as themselves" (Blair, 1994, cited in Bevir & O'Brien 2001: 536). And through implementing this vision, instrumental benefits are the expected outcome: "by working together with other services, each organisation can make more effective use of its resources" (UK Parliament 1999, 30). Thus, a new interpretation of the state and society appears to have been born in which stakeholders, who are linked by networks of partnership and trust, cooperate to deliver services (Fig 3.5). In the vision, although a partner itself in these networks, the state also acts as an enabler, creating and regulating the frameworks within which agencies and organisations collaborate.

*New Labour conceives of the state as an enabler, acting in partnership with citizens and other organisations, delivering services through networks characterised by relationships of trust... The Labour government uses such networks to institutionalise the idea of partnership (Bevir & O'Brien 2001: 536-543).*

Figure 3.5 New Labour and the Public Sector (Bevir & O'Brien, 2001)

		<b>New Labour</b>	<b>Old Labour</b>	<b>New Right</b>
Public Philosophy		Stakeholding	Fellowship	Individualism
Welfare State	Role of state	Enabler	Provider	Safety net
	State's relation to citizen	Partnership	Paternalism	Withdrawal
Service Delivery	Characteristic organisation	Network	Bureaucracy	Market
	Characteristic relationship	Trust	Command	Competition

And so, at least in Britain, by recognising a need for stakeholders to collaborate with each other, a close connection between the idea of stakeholding and partnership has been established. The parallel growth in partnership working and the development of stakeholding ideas further reinforces the connection of the two concepts, which both share embodied notions of increased cooperation, coordination and inclusiveness. Interestingly, as introduced in the previous chapter, these notions have been eagerly adopted in the recent government reform in Wales, with “inclusiveness” being the “essential foundation stone” of the National Assembly for Wales (Davies 1999:6), where a firm commitment to partnership working has also been established from the outset (Bristow et al. 2003). Therefore, the Assembly might be seen as a significant institution that actually attempts to operationalise concepts and principles that can be located in, or at least comparable to, developing interpretations of stakeholding.

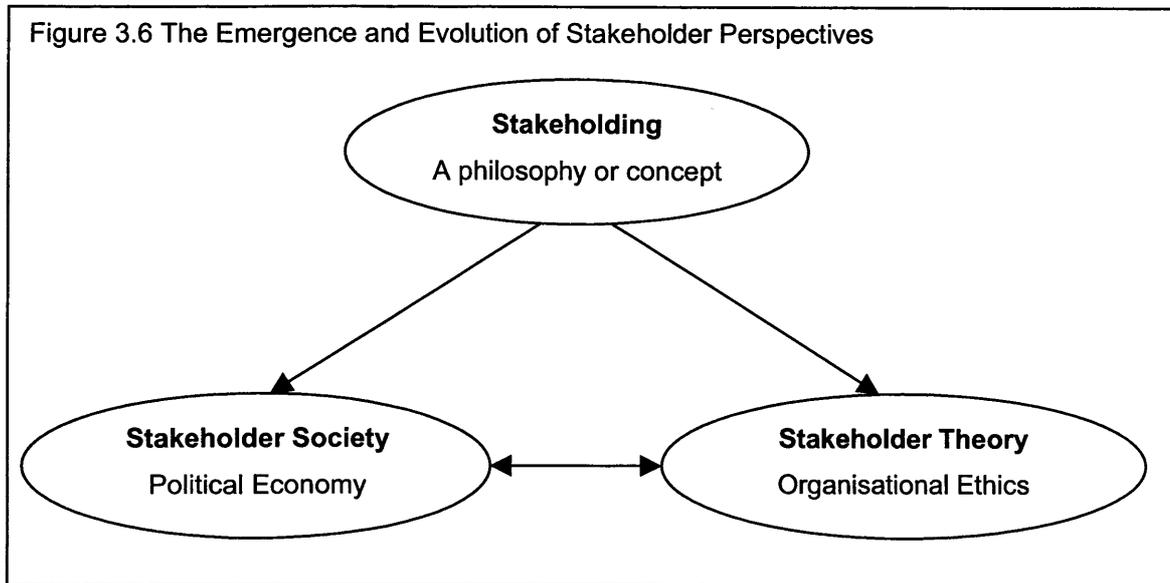
### 3.5 If Ever the Twain Shall Meet: management versus political perspectives

The existence of the two stakeholding perspectives appears to create tensions and misunderstandings and proponents of each seem to be, on occasion, hostile towards each other. For example, a supporter of the political economy application of stakeholder concepts directly challenges the assumption that managers of firms have a right to manage stakeholders (Hirst 1997) and some see stakeholder theory as an attempt to make businesses seem more ethical, while the focus remains on maximising benefits to the company (e.g. Marcoux 2000). Some even see the stakeholder model as being dead, as shareholder interests continue to dominate and are endorsed by the 'non-action' of the public (Beaver 1999). On the other hand, it has been suggested that the notion of stakeholder theory referring to the entire economy is an "unwarranted dilution" (Phillips 2003:33).

On one side, stakeholding has been described as "a straightforward political process" in which "[e]very individual ought to have a stake in their country" (Darling 1996:10). On the other, it is argued that stakeholder theory is not a theory of political economy and that 'stakeholder' is not synonymous with 'citizen' or 'moral agent' as those developing the political line of the theory might claim (Phillips 2003). One of the main concerns for the organisational ethics proponents is that in a stakeholder economy or society, everyone is a stakeholder. While there may be a valid argument in their consideration that "if everyone is a stakeholder, then the term is empty and adds no value" (Phillips 2003:9), others counter this charge, contending that "[s]takeholding extends the scope of democratic principles from the political sphere to the institutions of the wider society" (Hirst 1997:64) and that "[h]aving a stake implies that the holder is active rather than passive" (Kelly, Kelly and Gamble 1997:242).

As will subsequently be explored further in a tourism context, many applying stakeholding concepts fail to make the distinction between the two different perspectives clearly outlined here. As it is often useful and perhaps easier to defend a theory by narrowing its scope, it is probable that this lack of distinction has at least partially fuelled the evident hostility between perspectives, as each has fought to neatly define limits of the theory. Given the strong arguments on either side and the values of each perspective, as well as the continued and growing interest and discussion of stakeholding, it is therefore recommended that a suitable way forward might be to conceive of the stakeholder society interpretation and stakeholder theory as parallel branches of the stakeholding concept (Fig 3.6). Rather than severing the political economy branch completely, as staunch supporters of 'stakeholder theory' might demand, it might be valuable to explore the different perspectives' complementarity as there may be valuable lessons that can be reciprocated by maintaining a

broader view, especially as for a majority of those using the language of stakeholding, the interpretations may already be inextricably interwoven.



The issue of there being two perspectives comes together around the consideration of whether stakeholder theory can be applied to the public sector, or whether it is merely a private sector theory. As Scholl (2001) recognises, despite the opposition from prominent proponents, stakeholder theory has also found its way into the scholarly discussion of the public administration literature (Tennert & Schroeder 1999) and public sector practice. Donaldson & Preston (1995) completely doubt the value and appropriateness of such undertaking because they see the theory as merely one of the private sector firm, governed by fundamentally different principles and implications than any public sector organisation. However, it could be argued that it is just because public sector managers perform their tasks for different ends than their private sector counterparts (i.e. public interest or for the ‘common good’ (Argandoña 1998) as opposed to survival of the firm or profit) that the normative basis of stakeholder theory has even more relevance in the public rather than private sector. Further, the decisions of public sector managers have the same capacity for affecting individuals or groups when pursuing their organisation’s objectives. Just as in the private sector, public sector managers and their governmental organisations can be affected by others as a consequence of their own decision-making. Therefore, it can be argued that Freeman’s stakeholder definition might also be applied to managerial decision-making in a governmental context, and instrumental as well as normative considerations (which may even be more pertinent) might equally be applied to public sector stakeholder scenarios.

In addition, as Tennert & Schroeder (1999:5) find, public sector managers lack a proper toolkit for stakeholder identification and management. This can apparently lead to “difficult stakeholder situations” after public sector decisions have been made. Since the

public sector manager's self-understanding appears to be shifting from being a public administrator towards the one of a public facilitator (state as 'enabler'), Tennert & Schroeder see an even greater necessity for a solid grounding of stakeholder management in the public sector. In other words, the shift from more hierarchical to more network-type organisations further demands inclusion and management of different constituencies and suggests the need to consider stakeholder theory in other contexts as well as the private sector.

*Despite the fact that stakeholder theory primarily applies to the private-sector firm, the insights from this area can be applied in parts to public sector settings (Scholl 2001:18).*

In planning circles it is after all already accepted that some degree of public consultation should exist, which might be seen to represent an example of the normative incorporation of stakeholder views. Some have actually made the link between the development of participative approaches to planning, which identify a strong moral obligation to involve the range of affected parties in discussions and decisions, and the normative strand of stakeholder theory (Innes 1995).

### **3.6 The Application of Stakeholding Concepts in Tourism Research**

As we have seen from a review of sustainable development and tourism literature, the term 'stakeholder' is widely used and the normative view that stakeholders should be involved in decision-making about development options appears to be widely held. As will be demonstrated here, some have noted that the premises of stakeholder theory appear to be closely aligned with this literature and have adopted various concepts in their research. In tourism contexts, stakeholder theory can be seen as both an ethical business management tool – in the sense that stakeholders should be involved in decision-making processes (Robson & Robson 1996) – and as a more generally described, planning and management tool (Sautter & Leisen 1999). Given that many consider increased community participation as an important sustainable tourism principle (e.g. McKercher 1993; Yuskel et al. 1999), stakeholder identification and involvement is seen as an important way of developing collaboration within the sector (Medeiros de Araujo & Bramwell 1999).

There is perhaps a valid argument for linking stakeholder theory with sustainable tourism development based on ethics. Although there may be a relatively weak foundation of research into tourism ethic studies (Fennell 1999), some have considered the ethics involved in the new tourism forms, particularly ecotourism (Karwacki & Boyd 1995) and sustainable tourism (Hughes 1995). Holden (2003:106) has looked closely at the issue and concludes that

“there is a strong argument to suggest that a new ethic of conservation now governs many stakeholders’ interactions with the environment”. He recognises that this ethic is concerned with the economic and social well-being of communities. This may suggest that some tourism stakeholders may be inclined to view their actions more ethically than previously. It may therefore be speculated that, as an ethical approach to tourism has grown from an environmental perspective, then some stakeholders may therefore be prepared to take on board the ethical conjectures of stakeholder theory.

Robson & Robson (1996) investigate the potential for stakeholder management to be implemented by business organisations, drawing on evidence concerning tourism planning, which provides a perspective on the stakeholder approach to help “maintain the balance” between tourism activity and its social and environmental concerns. They argue that to tourism operators, stakeholder theory means stakeholders should be involved in decision-making processes. They also consider that “in terms of the perceived need to develop a more caring, sharing society, stakeholder theory must be taken seriously” (1996:534). However, the complexity of networking many thousands of small tourism businesses is recognised. The article gives much consideration to the identification of tourism stakeholders and also makes the link between the moral values of both stakeholder management and sustainable tourism development. Robson and Robson make no distinction between a stakeholder society and stakeholder theory, beginning with discussion of Tony Blair’s explanation of the stakeholder concept and then seamlessly moving on to explore Freeman’s definition of stakeholders.

Robson & Robson (1996) develop a stakeholder map from the tourism operator perspective (Fig 3.7). This is done, in part to identify tourism stakeholder groups, but also to demonstrate an important issue. Illustrating that the list of potential stakeholders may be almost endless, it is reflected upon that each potential stakeholder group (other than perhaps end users) will have its own range of stakeholders. Like Rowley (1997), they therefore identify that one of stakeholder theory’s problems is that it fails to recognise that each stakeholder has its own stakeholders and relationships with other groups. To demonstrate this, one stakeholder group from the tourism operator map is taken – the local government tourism marketer – and a range of its own potential stakeholders is identified (Fig 3.8). It is suggested that there has to be some ceiling placed on the number of groups incorporated because it becomes virtually impossible to see how objectives can be arrived at from an overwhelming input of voices. It is concluded that “the likely complexity of any given stakeholder system would seem to provide an insurmountable challenge to business” (1996:540). This serves to illustrate both the range of impacts that tourism has and the range of people that it affects, as well as some of the potential difficulties in managing an expansive list of stakeholders. It also

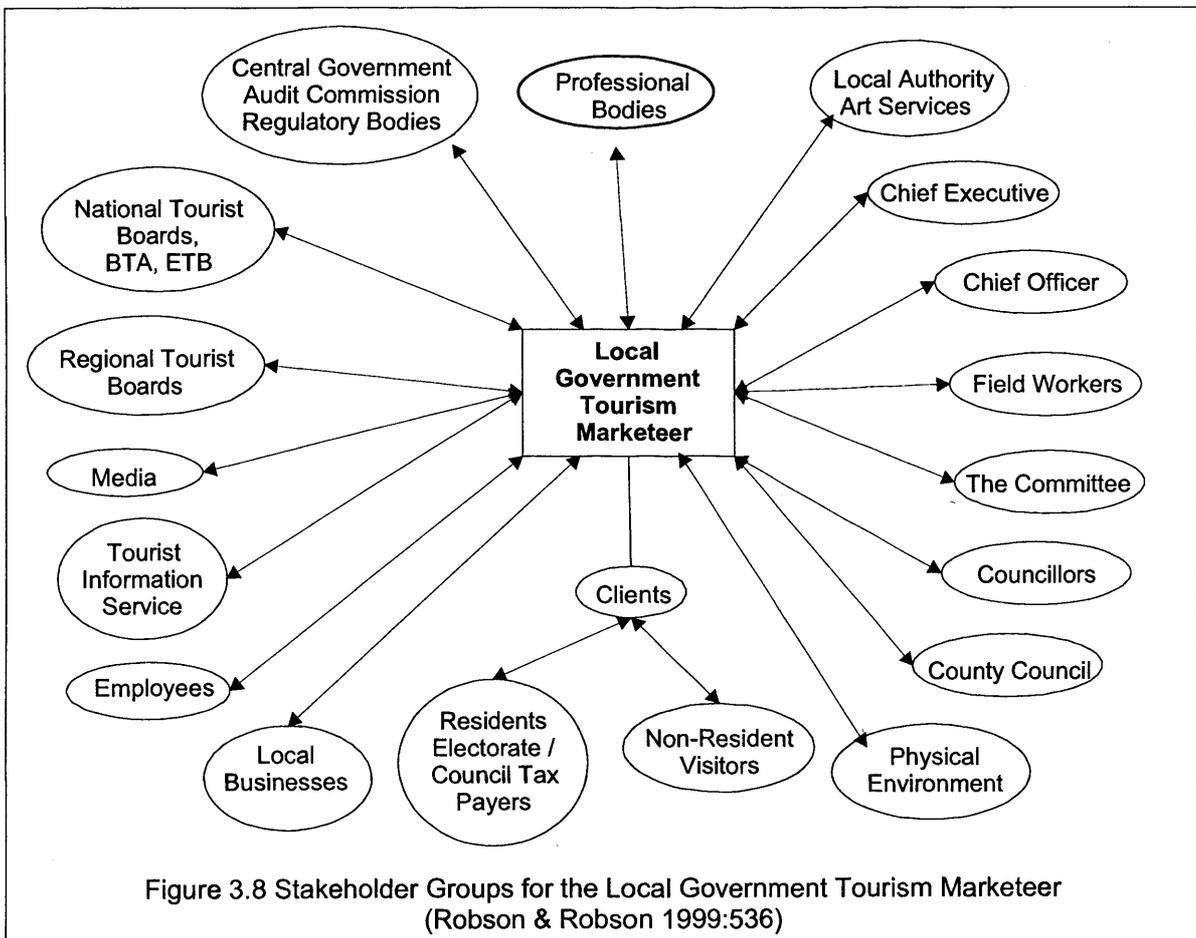
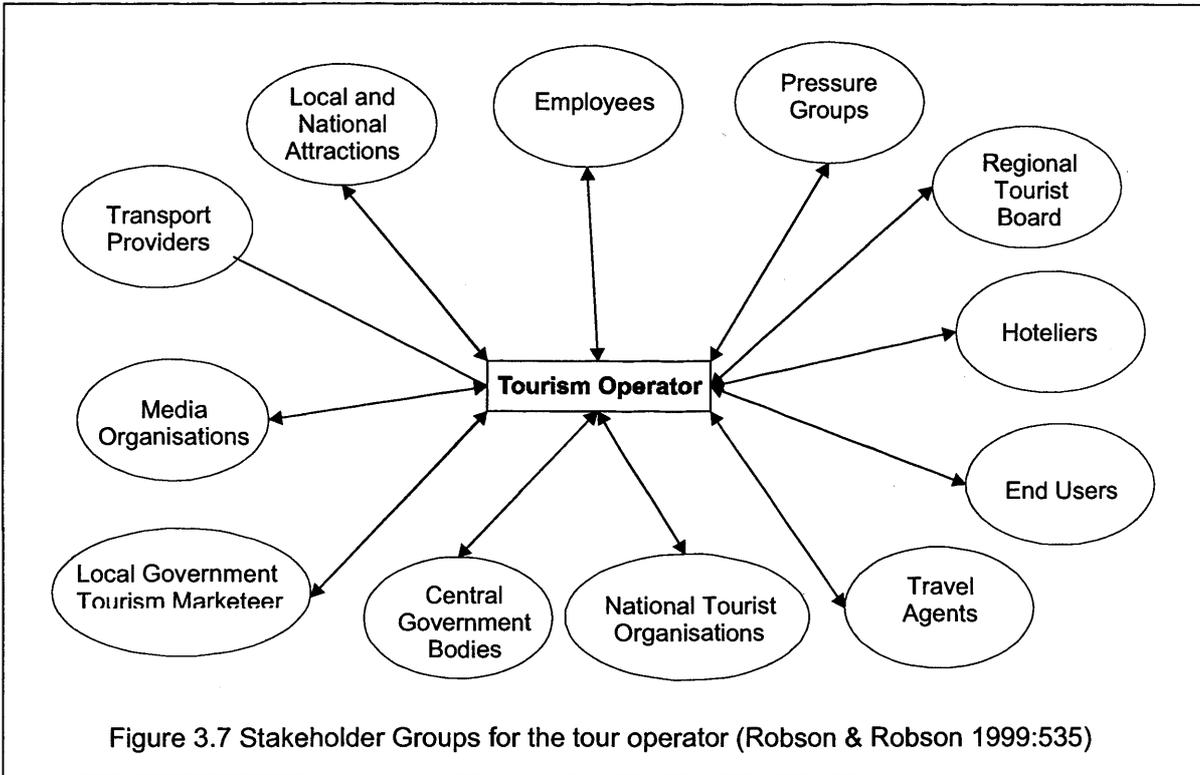
questions the narrow focus of stakeholder theory, which does not consider the wider networks of influence.

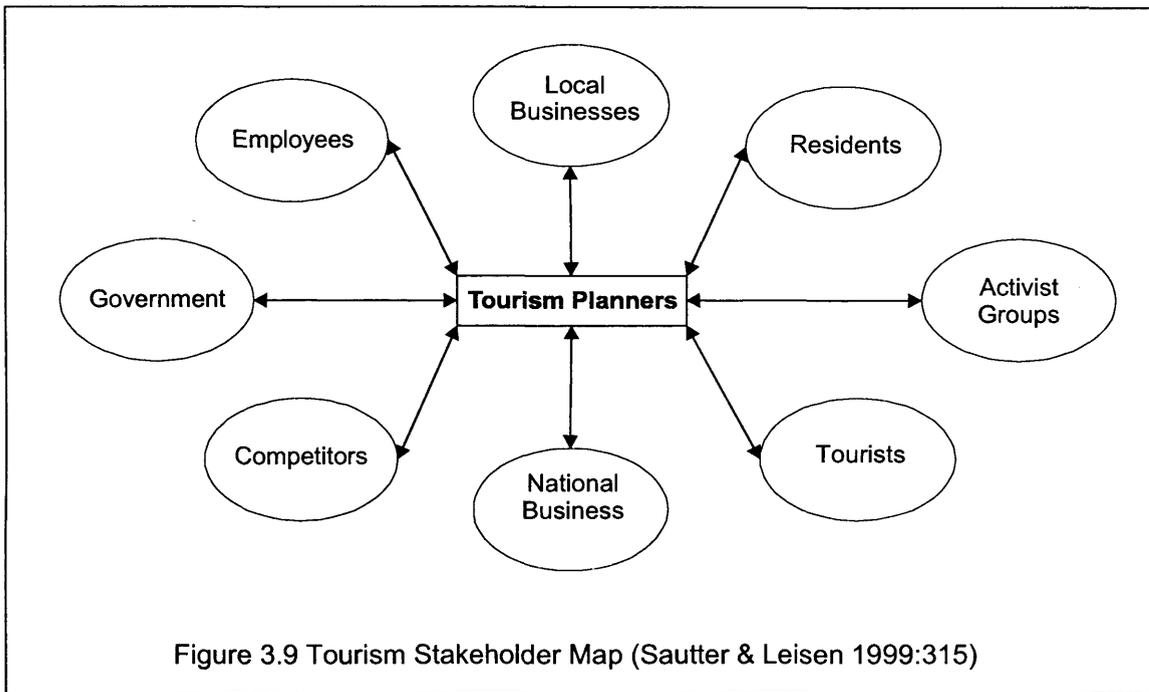
Sautter & Leisen (1999) consider that collaboration among key players is a fundamental ingredient in sustainable development. As such, they discuss stakeholder theory and its application as a normative tourism planning model. In consideration of a justificatory framework, they provide a foundation, based on 'relationship and transaction' efforts, for examining "how planners can more proactively seek out and manage stakeholder relationships to better promote sustainable tourism ventures" (1999:325). They provide a fairly detailed if uncritical explanation of stakeholder theory and clearly consider stakeholder theory from an organisational ethics perspective, although their concern is not so much for the benefits that may be due the managing organisation (tourism planners) as for the wider benefits for achieving sustainable tourism. It is concluded that stakeholder theory does provide tourism managers with a conceptual framework for managing the challenge of incorporating the needs and interests of all participants.

Adapted from Freeman (1984:55), Sautter & Leisen (1999:315) have produced a 'stakeholder map' from a tourism planning perspective (Fig 3.9). Here, 'tourism planners' are seen to be central to the process and therefore have a responsibility, under the premises of stakeholder theory, to ensure that all relevant stakeholders' views are incorporated. Tourism planners may then be able to implement their development with a more informed understanding of potential outcomes, therefore benefiting 'instrumentally'. It should be recognised however, that Sautter & Leisen's application of stakeholder theory represents a leap in the theory's use, away from the traditional perspective that views a business organisation as central to the stakeholder management process. While the authors do not address this shift, the intuitive feel to this transfer of application and its productive achievements are evident.

Hardy & Beeton (2001) used a 'stakeholder analysis' (outlined in the methodology chapter) to understand perceptions in order to determine whether tourism in the Daintree region of Far North Queensland was operating in a sustainable manner. They believe that sustainable tourism is "tourism in which stakeholders have a sense of ownership and a desire for it to be of high quality" (2001:168). Their article, like others, refers to Freeman's seminal definition of stakeholders and recognises that stakeholder theory has been broadened in its application to tourism contexts. Hardy & Beeton also firmly connect stakeholder involvement to the achievement of sustainable tourism. Continuing the development of stakeholder concepts as a methodology, stakeholders are identified by the research process (rather than by one particular organisation) and the study recognises that within the stakeholder system, different stakeholders do interact with each other, which would question the traditional two-

way relationships normally considered by the organisational ethics perspective of stakeholder theory.





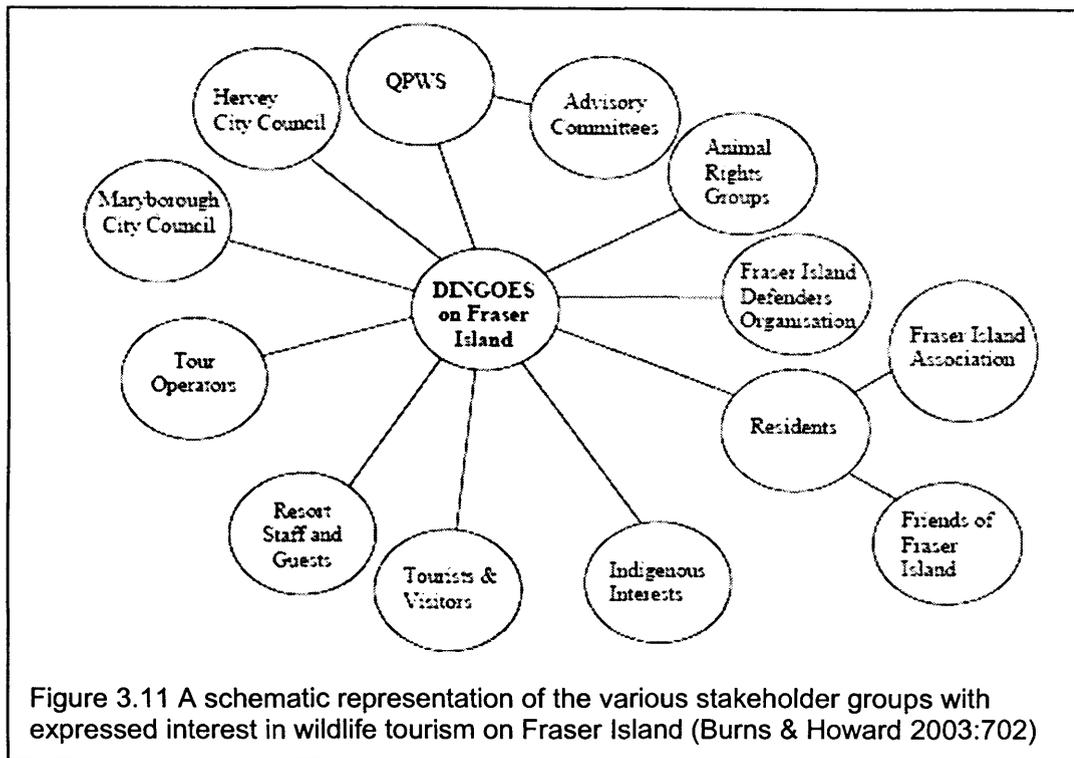
Other tourism researchers have used broader aspects of the stakeholding concept with scant or no actual reference to the theory and at times weaving different bits of the stakeholder language and concepts together. Developing stakeholder concepts into a methodology, Yuskel, Bramwell and Yuskel (1999) conducted interviews with stakeholders representing interests affected by the implementation of the “Preservation and Development Plan for Pamukkale, a World Heritage Site in Turkey. Consideration was given to the potential value of stakeholder interviews for a continuous planning process, including for monitoring views on tourism and conservation issues, plan proposals and on progress of plan implementation. It was concluded that “interviews can provide detailed information on the attitudes of stakeholders to tourism issues” (1999:358). Although the article makes reference to a stakeholder map and considers in passing the question of legitimate interest, there is no explicit reference to stakeholder theory. In the study, it is the research process that identifies stakeholders and it is stated that the “stakeholder map will reflect the values of the researcher” (1999:354). They also recognise the difficulties in identification of stakeholders and the need to adopt multiple stakeholder participation techniques to achieve differing objectives.

Recognising that participation by multiple stakeholders might encourage greater consideration of the varied issues affecting sustainable development, Medeiros de Araujo & Bramwell (2000) have taken on the question of stakeholder identification. They have reviewed approaches to identifying the stakeholders who are affected by a tourism project and who might participate in collaborative tourism planning (Fig 3.10). Like the other articles mentioned here, they also define stakeholders in the familiar broad sense – “any group affected by...”. Although no explicit reference to stakeholder theory is made, “a normative position that ‘stakeholder targeting’ is needed” and “legitimacy of the claims of different

stakeholders” are considered. The concept of stakeholder mapping is also discussed. However, expecting the map to illustrate a “complex array of multiple relationships”, the authors suggest that examination could be done using a social network analysis, rather than making reference to stakeholder theory. Thus, there is recognition of the narrow focus and analytical shortcomings of stakeholder theory and hence the need to consider a different theoretical model. Similarly, the research is framed in a collaborative planning context, again drawing on an alternative perspective for the consideration of stakeholders.

Figure 3.10 Five approaches to assessing the stakeholders who are affected by a tourism project (adapted from Medeiros de Araujo & Bramwell 2000)
Examine whether the stakeholders who become involved in collaborative planning arrangements for a project adequately represent the affected stakeholders (Boiko et al. 1996).
Pass information from assessments of relevant stakeholders to the stakeholders involved in collaborative planning arrangements in order to improve their understanding of the interests and viewpoints of other stakeholders (Finn 1996).
Identify stakeholders who are considered to have legitimate and important views but need to have their capacities raised to enable them to put these views forward and to negotiate in collaborative decision-making arrangements (Carroll 1993).
Ask stakeholders affected by the tourism issue to identify other stakeholders (Rowley 1997).
Place stakeholders on a diagram or map according to their key relationships to the issue (Harrison & St John 1994).

Burns & Howard (2003) used a study of different stakeholder perspectives to investigate alternative wildlife tourism management options. Stakeholders were again identified by the research process and defined broadly as “any individual or identifiable group who is affected by, or who can affect the achievement of corporate objectives”, though no actual reference to stakeholder theory is made. Interviews were conducted that revealed tensions between stakeholder groups and concluded that management of people is necessary for wildlife tourism to be sustainable. This investigation places a group at the centre of its stakeholder map of which it would be difficult to claim had stakeholder management capabilities. Here, it is “dingoes on Fraser Island” that are seen as central – as something in which a range of groups have a stake (Fig 3.11). Placing something like dingoes at the centre of a stakeholder map may aid in illustrating the groups who “affect or are affected by”, although it raises interesting questions from a theoretical perspective about who has responsibility for managing stakeholder views.



### 3.7 Collaboration Theory

Gray (1989:11) defines collaboration as “a process of joint decision-making among key stakeholders of a problem domain about the future of that domain”, observing that collaboration often occurs when the problem is complex and a single organisation cannot solve it on its own. Stakeholders are defined here as individuals, groups or organisations “directly influenced by the actions others take to solve a problem” (Gray 1989:5) and legitimacy is attained when a stakeholder possesses some degree of power over the domain (Gray and Hay 1986).

*Collaboration occurs when a group of autonomous stakeholders of a problem domain engage in an interactive process, using shared rules, norms and structures, to act or decide on issues related to that domain (Wood & Gray 1991:146).*

Something that distinguishes collaboration from other forms of participation is that it is considered a relatively formal process involving regular face-to-face meetings (Carr et al. 1998). Further, under Wood & Gray’s (1991) definition, collaboration should be focussed on a particular objective, so regular interactions that do not have a set goal are excluded. It has been observed that collaborations are normally temporary arrangements and as they vary in duration they may also vary in their structure. Selin & Chavez (1995:845), for example suggest that tourism collaborations

*may be highly structured, characterised by legally binding agreements, or may be quite unstructured verbal agreements between participating organisations.*

Five critical features of collaboration have been identified (Gray 1989):

- Stakeholders are autonomous but interdependent
- Solutions emerge by dealing constructively with differences
- Joint ownership of decisions is involved
- Groups assume collective responsibility for the future direction of the domain
- Collaboration is an emergent process

It is important to recognise that collaborative arrangements are dynamic phenomena, which evolve in response to a variety of internal and external forces (Selin 1999).

Collaboration theory posits that working together towards a common objective can potentially benefit everyone, as each stakeholder is unlikely to possess all the different resources that are required to achieve their goal independently, thus sharing a belief in the instrumental aspect of stakeholder theory. In tourism this has particular significance, due partly to its inherently fragmented nature and also because of the complexity of issues that it creates, as well as the range of stakeholders that it affects. So, knowledge, expertise and capital are distributed between the various stakeholders or *actors*. It is the actors' perceptions of their need for those resources and the goals that they pursue that cause their *interdependence* – something that stakeholder theory perhaps only narrowly and implicitly recognises. In coming together, actors can exchange information, goals and resources, but further, frequent interactions can also generate “processes of institutionalisation... [that is to say] shared perceptions, participation patterns and interaction rules develop and are formalised”, which may influence the future identities and behaviours of the stakeholders and therefore increase the lasting significance of interaction (Kickert et al. 1997:6 cited in Bramwell & Lane 2000).

Yet despite the principled intentions and anticipated advantages of initiating collaboration, there are a number of recognised potential problems that can arise – again something that stakeholder theory appears to be weak in identifying. Involving diverse groups in regular meetings and decision-making is usually complicated and time-consuming. Some groups may even refuse to work with others. Crucially there are also systemic constraints, such as power inequalities and institutional practices that need to be addressed. In particular, it is argued that there are issues regarding the differences in levels of power between the variety of groups and some may be concerned about losing power or influence (Hall & Jenkins 1995). While it is frequently assumed that collaboration can overcome power imbalances (Jamal &

Getz 1997), it is contended that such power differences are so embedded in society that they always affect the nature of collaboration (Reed 1997).

Attention therefore needs to be focussed on the processes within collaboration through which relations can be built up among relevant stakeholders, and to the communicative forms through which their, often conflicting, views and interests can be identified and consensus developed. Because some stakeholders may also lack resources or capacity to participate, caution and care is required to ensure a fair representation of views. Here, emphasis is placed on respectful “speaking and listening” among stakeholders (Forester 1989), which hints at the need for careful facilitation of meetings. In order to approach the potentially broad differences of opinion between groups, forms of dialogue, collective learning and consensus building are required which help to build trust, confidence and mutual understanding (Friedmann 1992). In practical terms, the less powerful may even benefit from having their voice heard in a separate arena, with information then being compiled by a neutral party.

### 3.7.1 Applications of collaboration theory in tourism research

Jamal & Getz (1995) apply and develop the theoretical constructs of collaboration to tourism destinations from a community involvement perspective. Their research draws primarily from the literature on interorganisational relations and finds that “collaboration may be suitable to manage turbulent planning domains at the local level... [and] might also be suitable for coordinating regional-level planning of tourism resources and destinations” (1995:200). A range of useful propositions are presented for guiding collaborative tourism initiatives and for investigating the application of collaboration theory to the planning and development of tourism destinations (Fig 3.12). Developing Gray’s (1985/1989) work on the necessary facilitating conditions and action/steps required for collaboration, Jamal & Getz identify three distinct phases in the collaboration development process for community-based tourism planning: *Problem-Setting*; *Direction-Setting*; and *Implementation* (Fig 3.13). These are useful for developing methodologies that seek to understand tourism collaborations, as is the case here.

For Bramwell & Sharman (1999), collaborative planning in tourist destinations involves direct dialogue among stakeholders that has the potential to lead to negotiation, shared decision-making and consensus-building about planning goals and actions. They develop an analytical framework intended to assist researchers and destination managers dealing with collaborative policy making. The framework encourages a wide-ranging analysis of collaboration, based on assessment of its *scope*, its *intensity*, and the *degree to which consensus*

*emerges* among participants (Fig 3.14). Using a case study, the investigation finds that: varied participation techniques are useful for providing information about the opinions of numerous groups; regular meetings promote open dialogue and help to overcome suspicions; and the process gives legitimacy and credibility to planning. It is noted that “the process had required a great deal of time, energy and organisational ability” (1999:412) and that greater inclusion could be achieved with additional resources. Bramwell and Sharman also suggest that “unequal power relations remained among the stakeholders” as a result of the convening organisation exerting its influence on the scope of the collaboration. This analytical framework is again useful for assessing the development and progress of tourism collaborations.

Figure 3.12 Propositions for guiding collaborative initiatives and for investigating the application of collaboration theory to the planning and development of tourism destinations (Adapted from Jamal & Getz 1995)

Proposition 1	Collaboration for community-based tourism planning will require recognition of a high degree of interdependence in planning and managing the domain. Perceptions of interdependence may be enhanced by emphasising the following aspects of interdependence in community tourism domains: sharing limited community amenities and resources (environmental, infra- and superstructure, recreational facilities, hospitality etc.), potential negative impacts of tourism development on the socio-cultural and natural environment which, in turn, could affect the economic viability of the tourism industry in the community; fragmentation of the tourism industry and inability of one sector to effectively operate alone since a critical mass of attractions, facilities, amenities is required.
Proposition 2	Collaboration will require recognition of individual and/or mutual benefits to be derived from the process. The mutual benefits include more effective and efficient tourism development (thereby improving the destination's competitive advantage), greater degree of environmental and socio-cultural sustainability, and avoidance of conflict. Individual benefits will be observed in: more effective representation for some groups, more resources for some groups to influence the planning domain; reduced uncertainty in a private firm's environment, thereby improving the firm's decision-making and potential for success, more effective public sector management of scarce resources, and greater individual resident satisfaction.
Proposition 3	Collaboration for community-based tourism planning will require a perception that decisions arrived at will be implemented (i.e., the process has legitimacy and power to either make or strongly influence the planning decisions). In the tourism planning domain, the collaboration's legitimacy and power will stem from: inclusion of key stakeholders; external mandate, or perception of a clear internal mandate (general objectives, purpose), and presence of adequate resources to carry out the process and implement outcomes.
Proposition 4	Collaboration for tourism destination planning will depend on encompassing the following key stakeholder groups: local government plus other public organizations having a direct bearing on resource allocation; tourism industry associations and sectors such as Chamber of Commerce, Convention and Visitor Bureau, and regional tourist authority, resident organisations community groups); social agencies (e.g. school boards, hospitals), and special interest groups.
Proposition 5	A convener is required to initiate and facilitate community based tourism collaboration. The convener should have the following characteristics: legitimacy, expertise, resources, plus authority, and may be derived from a government agency, an industry firm, or group such as the local Chamber of Commerce, or the local tourist organisation (e.g. convention and visitors bureau).
Proposition 6	An effective community collaboration process for strategic tourism planning for the destination requires: formulation of a vision statement on desired tourism development and growth; joint formulation of tourism goals and objectives; self-regulation of the planning and development domain through the establishment of a collaborative (referent) organisation to assist with ongoing adjustment of these strategies through monitoring and revisions.

Figure 3.13 A Collaboration Process for Community-Based Tourism Planning (Jamal & Getz 1995:190), based on Gray's (1985, 1989) Facilitating conditions and actions/steps

Stages and Propositions	Facilitating Conditions	Actions/Steps
<p>Stage 1</p> <p><b>Problem Setting</b></p> <p>Propositions applicable: P1, P2, P3, P4, P5</p>	<p>Recognition of interdependence</p> <p>Identification of a required number of stakeholders</p> <p>Perceptions of legitimacy among stakeholders</p> <p>Legitimate/skilled convener</p> <p>Positive beliefs about outcomes</p> <p>Shared access to power</p> <p>Mandate (external or internal)</p> <p>Adequate resources to convene and enable collaboration process.</p>	<p>Define purpose and domain</p> <p>Identify Convener</p> <p>Convene Stakeholders</p> <p>Define problems/issues to resolve</p> <p>Identify and legitimise stakeholders</p> <p>Build commitment to collaborate by raising awareness of interdependence</p> <p>Balancing power differences</p> <p>Addressing stakeholder concerns</p> <p>Ensuring adequate resources</p> <p>Available to allow collaboration to proceed with key stakeholders present.</p>
<p>Stage 2:</p> <p><b>Direction Setting</b></p> <p>Propositions applicable: P1, P2, P3, P6</p>	<p>Coincidence of values</p> <p>Dispersion of power among stakeholders.</p>	<p>Collect and share information</p> <p>Appreciate shared values, enhance perceived interdependence</p> <p>Ensure power distributed among several stakeholders</p> <p>Establish rules and agenda for direction setting</p> <p>Organise subgroups if required</p> <p>List alternatives</p> <p>Discuss various options</p> <p>Select appropriate solutions</p> <p>Arrive at shared vision or plan/strategy through consensus.</p>
<p>Stage 3:</p> <p><b>Implementation</b></p> <p>Propositions applicable: P1, P2, P6</p>	<p>High degree of ongoing interdependence</p> <p>External mandates</p> <p>Redistribution of power</p> <p>Influencing the contextual environment.</p>	<p>Discuss means of implementing and monitoring solutions, shared vision, Plan or strategy</p> <p>Select suitable structure for institutionalising process</p> <p>Assign goals and tasks</p> <p>Monitor ongoing progress and Ensure compliance to collaboration decisions.</p>

Figure 3.14 Assessment framework for local (tourism) collaborations (Bramwell and Sharman 1999)

#### **Scope of the Collaboration**

- The extent to which the range of participating stakeholders is representative of all relevant stakeholders.
- The extent to which relevant stakeholders see there are positive benefits to entice their participation.
- Whether the collaboration includes a facilitator and the stakeholders responsible for implementation.
- The extent to which individuals representing a stakeholder group are fully representative of that group.
- The number of stakeholders involved through the selected participation techniques.
- The extent to which there is initial agreement among participants about the intended general scope of the collaboration.

#### **Intensity of the Collaboration**

- The degree to which participants accept that collaboration is likely to produce qualitatively different outcomes and that they are likely to have to modify their own approach.
- When and how often the relevant stakeholders are involved.
- The extent to which stakeholder groups receive information and are consulted about the activities of the collaboration.
- Whether the use of participation techniques only disseminates information or also involves direct interaction among the stakeholders.
- The degree to which the dialogue among participants reflects openness, honesty, tolerant and respectful speaking and listening, confidence and trust.
- The extent to which the participants understand, respect, and learn from each others' different forms of argument.
- The extent to which the participants understand, respect, and learn from each others' different interest, forms of knowledge, systems of meaning, values and attitudes.
- The extent to which the facilitator of the collaborative arrangements exerts control over decision-making.

#### **Degree to which Consensus Emerges**

- Whether participants who are working to build a consensus also accept that some participants will not agree or embrace enthusiastically all the resulting policies.
- Extent to which there is consensus among the stakeholders about the issues, the policies, the purpose of the policies, and how the consequences of the policies are assessed and reviewed.
- Extent to which consensus and 'ownership' emerges across the inequalities between stakeholders or reflects these inequalities.
- Extent to which stakeholders accept that there are systemic constraints on what is feasible.
- Whether the stakeholders appear willing to implement the resulting policies.

### 3.8 Network Theory

Network theory is concerned with the collective nature of organisational action. Unlike some of the other theories considered here which analyse individuals, agencies or organisational behaviours, attitudes and/or beliefs, the theory focuses on how interactions between entities constitute a framework or structure that can be analysed in its own right (Galaskiewicz & Wasserman 1994). A range of different types of network exists and these may be classified in various ways. Classifications could include: network membership; nature of linkages between members; type of exchange or attraction; network function or role; and geographical distribution of the network. They may be described as informal, semi-formal or formal in nature. Halme (2001) adds that networks may vary according to organisational type configuration, as is supported by Smith-Ring (1999) who recognises that a key element is that of cooperation among business firms, governmental bodies or organisations, persons or other entities that are interconnected in various ways.

Granovetter (1973, 1985) identifies two groupings of network relations: 'strong ties' that an actor has with others within a linked group and; 'weak ties' that an actor has with others in external groups. Strong ties are formed by clusters of people in congruent relationships that act to encourage acceptable action and inclusion into the social set. This situation creates clusterings of people in strong relationships, with each person knowing what the other knows. While there are benefits to these cohesive relationships, clustering can lead to the same sources of information being recycled. Burt (1992) argues that this 'structural equivalence' makes strong ties redundant for information purposes. However, this argument overlooks the importance of cohesive ties for support, and their role for knowledge building in the network. 'Weak ties' are those that are disconnected with the stronger social group, either directly through having no contact with each other, or indirectly through contacts that exclude others. They are necessary to gain new ideas and opportunities that emerge from the external environment, and provide contact with people in more distant clusters. The linkages between unconnected groups occur through bridging mechanisms, which Burt (1992) calls 'structural holes'. He claims that these are critical for engendering entrepreneurial activity, as new information is brought into the network through the non-connected external source.

'Density' explores the overall structure of the network and examines the number of ties that link network actors together. It is therefore a characteristic of the whole network. Meyer & Rowan (1977) argue that relational networks augment and transfer institutional myths between organisations. This suggests that relational ties are a fundamental element forcing organisations toward conformity, as institutional values are diffused within networks (Di Maggio & Powell 1983; Scott & Meyer 1983). Highly dense networks then, through tighter communication systems and stronger information exchanges, ensure the circulation of

institutional norms within the network, with actors forming patterns of exchange and producing shared behavioural expectations. Organisations are said to mimic each other's behaviour to become more legitimate, with subsequent conformity attesting to 'agreed-upon' behavioural constraints. These densely tied networks produce strong constraints on focal organisations, allowing stakeholders the capacity to monitor organisational actions more efficiently. Rowley (1997) contends that highly central firms in very dense networks will display 'compromising' actions because of their need to conform to stakeholder pressure. Conversely, less central firms in less dense networks will be 'subordinate' to these external pressures, as there is less 'noise' to resist stakeholder demands. In networks with less relational density, the focal organisation may have more discretion over its actions as it experiences less unified pressure from stakeholder influences. Thus, it assumes a 'commander' role. However, the fragmented nature of ties within the network results in less efficient information exchanges and limited access to resources, denying the population the legitimacy that the more prolific ties foster. These aspects provide further explanation of how organisations defend or create their positions within the external contexts.

Because networks are a collection of relationships they are fluid and change over time. There is a constant pattern of changing and modification of relationships as they adapt (Easton 1992). Easton argues that it is these continuous interactions and information flows between firms within the network that provide stability, a solid foundation for incremental change. Madhavan et al. (1998) confirm incremental change as a reinforcing process that enhances and strengthens the existing power structures within the network. They claim this can be a key dynamic accounted for in alliance partner selection. However, these authors also note the importance of external trajectories, in that it is macro-level influences that cause the most profound change. These 'structure-loosening' events result in the redistribution of power, creating a radical change in the overall structure of the network. New or previously peripheral players may be seen to have more desirable resource attributes, improving their centrality status within the network.

### **3.8.1 Applications of network theory in tourism research**

While there has been significant research examining and illustrating collaboration theory as a tool for managing and coordinating stakeholder planning activities, the role of the network structure as a mechanism for transferring information amongst stakeholders has not received quite as much attention in tourism research. Fundamental to the network perspective is a belief that actions occur within a broader web of social relationships that have built up over time (Granovetter, 1985). It is the reciprocity and frequency of interactions that

transform unilateral supply relationships into bilateral ones, which assists the development of tacit knowledge that underlies competitive advantage (Uzzi, 1997). It is therefore argued that the network approach offers an alternative perspective to understanding how tourism destination networks are coordinated and managed Pavlovich (2001).

Halme (2001) investigates sustainable development learning in multi-stakeholder public-private tourism networks. Here it is concluded that the *process* of collaboration appears more important than the *structure* of networks.

*The network approach to sustainability is necessary within an industry such as tourism, where a relatively large number of small actors with few resources cannot pursue sustainable development in isolation* (Halme 2001:101).

The point of departure for the study is that the imperative and multi-faceted nature of sustainable development actually requires various types of partnership, alliance or network between actors of society. It is argued that in order to operate through a network mode, participants that have traditionally acted in isolation from each other, simultaneously need to learn how to cooperate and to understand the concept of sustainable development and act upon it in practice. This process will determine the network's ability to become adept at explicating tacit knowledge among its actors, and to develop the network so it can facilitate the creation of sustainable outcomes. Halme concludes that a leading public actor may assume a 'teacher's' role in the network. In these instances, the network runs the risk of becoming merely an information dissemination tool. This involves a trap of one-way communication and under-used knowledge utilisation opportunities. Receptivity of the teacher-actor is low and the partners do not really collaborate. The teacher-actor should therefore make a special effort to create feedback loops leading to two-way communication, so that a learning strategy of collaboration can take place.

Morrison, Lynch, and Johns (2004) have researched international tourism networks and demonstrate a number of relatively successful examples. They consider the definition and description of networks, their benefits (Fig 3.15), and identifiable success factors. Discussion reflects on the main functions and benefits of tourism networks in relation to learning and exchange, business activity, and community. Through learning and exchange between network participants, benefits are leveraged that have the potential to be translated into positive business activity and community outcomes. In each of the categories it can be observed that there is a strong bias towards those benefits of a largely qualitative nature. This highlights a key issue in relation to the value of networks; there exists a lack of measured benefits from networks, and many associated are qualitative and not easily quantified. Morrison, Lynch, and Johns (2004:201) suggest that "a key management implication is that resources should be

targeted at the careful formulation of networks guided by the identified success factors, thereafter management focus should be primarily directed at learning and knowledge exchange function, alongside the ‘softer’ development of an appropriate organisational culture to support the underlying goals and purpose of the tourism network”. The paper concludes by identifying significant success factors and consequential management implications with specific references to tourism destinations as learning communities: structure and leadership; an established trust culture; resourcing; member engagement; inter-organisational learning; underlying objectives; and sustainable nature and lifecycle.

Figure 3.15 Benefits of networks to building profitable tourism destinations (Morrison, Lynch, & Johns 2004:198)	
Learning and exchange	Knowledge transfer Tourism education process Communication Development of new cultural values Accelerating speed of implementation of support agency initiatives Facilitation of development stage of small enterprises
Business activity	Co-operative activities, for example, marketing, purchasing, production Enhanced cross-referral Encouraging needs-based approaches, for example, staff development, policies Increased visitor numbers Best use of small enterprise and support agency resources Extension to visitor season Increased entrepreneurial activity Inter-trading within network Enhanced product quality and visitor experience Opportunities for business development interventions More repeat business
Community	Fostering common purpose and focus Community support for destination development Increases or reinvents a sense of community Engagement of small enterprises in destination development More income staying locally

Dredge (2004) has studied policy networks and the local organisation of tourism, considering the role of networks in fostering or inhibiting public-private sector partnership building. She recognises that networks form coalitions of collective action, which are preconditions for innovation and community capacity building (Rhodes 1997), but that coalitions may also impede collaboration from time to time. Dredge (2004:279) discusses the utility of network theory in understanding the capacity of local destinations to develop meaningful and productive partnerships and concludes that network theory recognises:

1. “the overlapping and simultaneous manner in which tourism issues are being dealt with by different policy communities at different scales over time.

2. the distinction between private and public action is blurred and that the network approach sits well with the realities of tourism as a multi-dimensional area of public-private sector policy interest.
3. that different levels of political support can exist for different tourism policy issues.
4. that stakeholders can have membership to more than one network and that stakeholder powers, roles, interactions and functions may vary accordingly.”

The research helps to move the use of network theory from just a consideration of structure and function, to providing an understanding of the dynamics of networks and to the development of strategies for their management.

In a different paper, Dredge (2006) argues that network theory provides a useful lens for understanding the structures and social interrelations between government, tourism producers and civil society. The work is of particular interest here as it too considers the connection between network and collaborative planning approaches. Dredge acknowledges that networks are not a panacea for explaining destination planning and policymaking (e.g. Marsh 1998), but aims to develop the knowledge about tourism policy networks that can be used as an organising framework for understanding public-private relationships and their influence on policymaking. In connecting the network and collaborative planning literatures, Dredge (2006:578) concludes that “networks interject a level of political reality into the collaborative planning process and framework that is more equitable and just”, which is important for sustainable development. This injection of reality is seen as important because collaboration theory is somewhat idealistic and naïve to the political context in which tourism planning and policymaking takes place (Healey 1997).

### 3.9 Structuration Theory of Interorganisational Coordination

While structuration theory (Giddens 1984) has been influential in sociology and human geography, it has had relatively little influence on tourism research (Dann 1999). As will be explained below, the theory focuses on people constructing their worlds while being surrounded by constraints of various kinds. This leads them to decide whether to live with or change the structural forces of the society in which they live. It has been suggested that it might be useful to consider the theory in order to help explore “the relationships between participants in partnerships and the broader web of tourism policy networks and planning frameworks within which they operate” (Bramwell & Lane 2000:338). A slight adaptation of structuration theory, which is concerned with how individuals and organisations construct interorganisational coordination structures, and is therefore easily linked to the discussion of collaborative arrangements and partnership formation, is considered here.

Stakeholder groups could be recognised as ‘organisations’ and indeed many are functioning organisations in their own right. The process of different organisations working together and the structures that exist and develop to enable this is known as ‘interorganisational coordination’. “Organisational arrangements... is what coordination boils down to” (Weiss 1981:43). For interorganisational coordination (IOC), the critical stimulus is organisations’ interdependence. The perception of their interdependence is what motivates people in organisations to interact and create linking structures that coordinate their respective organisations’ actions. Interdependence incorporates a range of motivators including policy, resources, objectives and, especially in tourism, (destination) product development. Interorganisational coordination, then, is a set of organisations’ recognition and management of their interdependence, by creating or using IOC structures to concert their respective actions (Alexander 1998). What mediates between structure and action is the actors’ knowledge of the structures forming the society where they live.

*IOC is the process of coordinating the decisions and actions of several organisations, for a purpose or undertaking that no one of them can accomplish alone (Alexander 1995).*

IOC is needed when organisations have to interact to accomplish their ‘mutual purpose’ (Alexander 1995):

- The existence of a common purpose: a task, goal or set of objectives which organisations agree on, or is mandated by an external authority.
- When participating organisations agree that each can achieve its particular goals more effectively by interacting in the relevant interorganisational system.

IOC and the emergence of coordination structures are explained by a range of theories including exchange theory (based on resource interdependence), and transaction cost theory (Alexander 1995:71-73). As IOC is a particular form of social structure, structuration theory has been developed in this context, which offers a conceptual framework for integrating those alternative explanations. Giddens' (1984) structuration theory accounts for social structures in general. A social structure is an organised set of rules and resources or transformation relations that is a property of the social system of which it is a part (Giddens 1984:25). The social structure is "recursively organised" – it has to be formed and continually reconstituted through the period of its existence. Social structures enable and/or constrain behaviour, action and interaction. Everyone knows they exist and can agree on what they are, though they are not material. "To understand how social structures (including coordination structures) come into existence and persist... we need to appreciate the relation between structure and action" (Alexander 1995:70). Action cannot be separated from the actor or agent. Acts take place in time and space, but action is a "continuous flow of conduct" which intervenes in "the ongoing process of events-in-the-world" and is the cause of intended and unintended consequences (Giddens 1979:55-6). Interdependence between organisations, perceived as part of the relevant actors' knowledge of their social settings – knowledge of environment and awareness of resource dependency – results in action. Knowledge is enacted in ways that reproduce existing structures of organisation and interorganisational systems, or that change and transform them to create new coordination structures (Alexander 1995:66-75).

Structuration theory suggests that actors' knowledge of their social context is the basis for the dual interaction between social structures and action – active agency interacts recursively with the containing structural forces in society (Giddens 1984). Under this interpretation, for example,

*public sector planners not only bring power relations into being, but they also exercise delicate day-to-day choices about whether to follow the rules or change them and thus change the structural forces (Bramwell & Lane 2000:338).*

The practical implication of this is that influencing actors' knowledge – their perceptions of their organisations in their interorganisational setting – is critical to affect IOC and to create or transform IOC structures. Enlightening the potential participants in an interorganisational system with an awareness of their interdependence, and revealing to them their potential mutual objectives and common goals, is therefore critical to stimulate effective IOC and its appropriate coordination structures.

*The critical role of agents' knowledge of their social settings makes it clear that institutional design of fitting coordination models is not enough to effect IOC. IOC has to be accomplished by transforming the relevant actors' perception of their setting, and mobilising them to design, install and implement the IOC structures they believe will suit their mutual purposes (Alexander 1995:75).*

Actors that are aware of their context seek to adapt themselves to changes in their environments. One of the most frequent adaptations is structural change. While coordination among organisations normally requires some kind of institutional design, deliberate structural change demands it (Alexander 1995:51). Institutional design when restructuring will often include the definition of roles and functions or the creation of new organisations. This can also apply when a new plan or policy to be carried out by an interorganisational system is launched. It is worth noting that externally mandated IOC efforts or coordination structures that are imposed commonly fail, as they may not be based on an adequate knowledge of the existing social structures or be too disruptive to the established system.

The structuration model of IOC then, accounts for IOC (interdependence) and describes how structures are created, reinforced or transformed (structure-action relationship). It also takes into consideration a variety of coordination structures (Fig 3.16). "A coordination structure ... is a structure where the decision centres are linked by one or several coordinating mechanisms" (Schleicher 1985:512). Coordination structures then are identified at several levels:

- 'Meta-structures' embrace the interorganisational field as a whole. They define the basic characteristics of interorganisational interaction.
- 'Meso-structures' cover a particular interorganisational system, 'action' or 'implementation' set<sup>4</sup> of organisations. Meso-structures are the various forms in which interorganisational systems are linked for IOC.
- 'Micro-structures' are devices for linking intra or interorganisational decision centres. These exist within and in conjunction with higher-level coordination structures.

At the different levels, a variety of forms defined by particular characteristics exist. As interorganisational work has tended to be concerned with hierarchy<sup>5</sup>, these are classified on a scale according to their 'degree of hierarchy' (Fig 3.17).

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<sup>4</sup> The 'action' set is any group of organisations which is interacting to accomplish some common purpose or to acquire some mutually beneficial rewards (Aldrich 1979, cited in Alexander 1995:61).

<sup>5</sup> Hierarchy is a major concern of transaction cost theory in particular which suggests that interorganisational systems structure themselves to minimise the participating organisations' transaction costs.

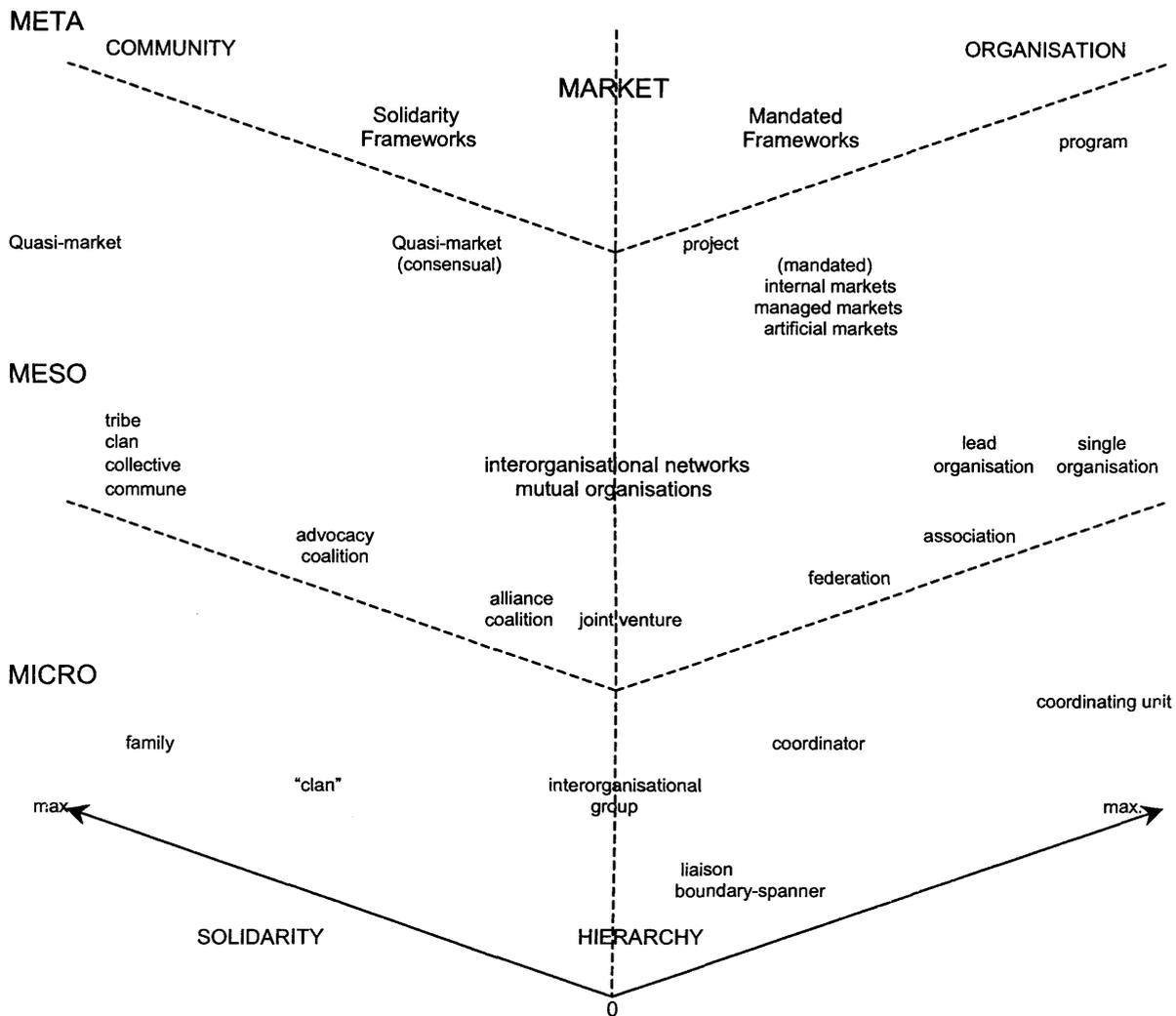


Figure 3.16 Interorganisational coordination structures (Alexander 1995:55)

Figure 3.17 Different Types of IOC Structure (Alexander 1995)

Level	Form of structure	Type of structure
<p><b>Meta:</b> highest level, embracing the interorganisational field as a whole. Meta-structures define the basic characteristics of interorganisational interaction.</p>	Solidarity  Hierarchy	<p><b>Quasi-market (consensus):</b> where coordination is the result of a sense of mutual obligation among its participating units. This may be the product of: shared beliefs or values, common affiliation, and/or long-term reciprocal interaction.</p> <p><b>Market-like frameworks:</b> can be created. A set of rules and norms of behaviour can be agreed upon or prescribed which will provide incentives or constraints that coordinate decisions and actions. One basis for market-like frameworks is a 'common resource pool': a group of organisations with a mutual interest in finding a rational way to allocate a common resource. Common resource pools are one basis for developing a consensual framework (decision and action rules).</p> <p><b>Quasi-market (mandated):</b> coordination on the basis of some externally imposed authority. May be the result of previous voluntary agreement or be created through some external process reflecting societal consensus or goal: legislation, regulation, or reorganisation.</p>
<p><b>Meso:</b> covers a particular interorganisational system, 'action' or 'implementation' set of organisations. Meso-structures are the various forms in which interorganisational systems are linked for IOC.</p>	Solidarity  Hierarchy	<p><b>Clan:</b> work group linked by common professional values. Suggested that clans are the most effective and perhaps the only way of coordinating highly complex technical undertakings.</p> <p><b>Advocacy coalition:</b> common ideology and shared values are the motivating forces</p> <p><b>Interorganisational networks:</b> "clusters of organisations that... are non-hierarchical collectives of legally separate units" (Alter &amp; Hage 1993:46). Networks range in the <i>extent of their cooperation</i> from <i>limited</i> (information and resource exchange, or interpersonal relations), through <i>moderate</i> (aimed at technical, economic, or political objectives) to <i>broad</i> (joint marketing cartels). Networks can also be classified as ones with <i>promotional linkages</i>, involving the pursuit of common interests or objectives, and those with <i>productional linkages</i>. Networks can be differentiated by their <i>extent</i>, between small ones linking two or at most three organisations, and larger multi-organisational networks.</p> <p><b>Mutual organisations:</b> joint ventures, cartels, associations</p> <p><b>Associations:</b> e.g. the trade association which is the result of pooled interdependence between competitors in a regulated industry. Described as "competitive cooperation" (Alter &amp; Hage 1993: 44-80).</p> <p><b>Lead organisation:</b> (Alexander 1991:218-9) refers to the one organisation charged with, or assuming responsibility of coordinating the other organisations in the network. The lead organisation's position may be as a result of the problem or issue being more in its domain than in the others', or of its superior power, or both. Besides its coordination tasks, the lead organisation has functional responsibilities as well, otherwise it would be a coordinating unit.</p>
<p><b>Micro:</b> micro-structures are devices for linking intra or interorganisational decision centres. These exist within and in conjunction with higher-level coordination structures.</p>	Solidarity  Hierarchy	<p><b>Informal links:</b> various kinds of interactions can sustain an informal network at this level, from interpersonal contacts through meetings, telephone calls, emails, information sharing, overlapping board members, to ad hoc issue related meetings. Such meetings may span the gap between this coordination structure and more formal ones.</p> <p><b>Interorganisational group:</b> may develop through routinisation of informal contacts or it may be as a result of institutional design responding to a common problem or interdependence. Such a group may be called a board, steering committee, etc. "Pure" interorganisational groups have low autonomy and persistence, nor identifiable place or budget. Few groups are this ideal type. Can be powerful or limited depending on their authority and resources.</p> <p><b>Coordinator:</b> an individual whose formal function is to coordinate the activities or organisational units with respect to a given task, objective, etc. "Integrating manager" (Mintzberg 1979: 165-8). Often used in conjunction with other structures. The unsupported, unattached, independent coordinator is rare.</p> <p><b>Coordinating unit:</b> when the individual role of coordinator is expanded into an organisational subunit or a whole organisation. Trist (1983) calls this a "referent organisation". It has greater autonomy than the interorganisational group, having its own budget and staff. It does not implement any of the tasks it is charged with coordinating, having no "line" functions. Unit varies on a continuum of autonomy. Evidence suggests that a balance of authority and resources are essential for a coordinating unit's success (Lehman 1975; Alexander 1992).</p>

### 3.10 Governance and Multi-level Governance

Given this investigation's interest in policy development and the involvement of a range of parties in it, as well as the impact of the devolved National Assembly for Wales, it is worthwhile considering some of the literature on 'governance' and 'multi-level governance', which offer alternative frameworks, rather than well-established theories. The governance literature is connected to that of policy networks as policy networks have more recently expanded to include more private and voluntary sector, not just state, actors (Rhodes 1997). The term 'governance' is used in a variety of ways and has a variety of meanings. Rhodes (1997), for example identifies six separate uses: as the minimal state; as corporate governance; as the new public management; as 'good governance'; as a socio-cybernetic system; and as self-organising networks. There is, however, a baseline agreement that governance refers to the development of governing styles in which boundaries between and within public and private sectors have become blurred (Stoker 1998). The essence of governance is its focus on governing mechanisms that do not rest on recourse to the authority and sanctions of government.

*The governance concept points to the creation of a structure or an order which cannot be externally imposed but is the result of the interaction of a multiplicity of governing and each other influencing actors (Kooiman & Van Vliet 1993:64).*

Stoker (1998) neatly encapsulates the various aspects of governance in his five propositions:

1. Governance refers to a complex set of institutions and actors that are drawn from but also beyond government
2. Governance recognizes the blurring of boundaries and responsibilities for tackling social and economic issues
3. Governance identifies the power dependence involved in the relationships between institutions involved in collective action
4. Governance is about autonomous self-governing networks of actors
5. Governance recognises the capacity to get things done which does not rest on the power of government to command or use its authority. It sees government as able to use new tools and techniques to steer and guide.

Picking up on Rhodes' (1997) 'governance as self-organising networks' definition, Rhodes (2003:65) describes governance as a process of "steering networks". Those policy networks are the sets of organisations clustered around a major government function or department. Networks are a distinctive coordinating mechanism and, therefore, separate from markets and hierarchies. Shared values and norms, which help to form trust within networks,

are the glue that holds the complex set of relationships together. Trust is essential for cooperative behaviour and ultimately the existence of the network. Governance leads to fragmentation of public activities through new networks, but it also increases the membership of existing networks by incorporating the private and voluntary sectors. Therefore, government swaps direct for indirect control, setting limits to network actions through, for example funding, legal and operational frameworks.

The literature on governance explores how the informal authority of networks supplements and supplants the formal authority of government. It explores the limits to the state and seeks to develop a more diverse view of state authority and its exercise. Governance through networks as self-organising sets of public and private sector actors is characterised by interdependence between organisations, a continuity of interactions caused by the need to exchange resources and to negotiate shared purposes, game-like interactions regulated by commonly accepted rules, and significant autonomy of networks from the state (Rhodes 1996:660).

The concept of 'multi-level governance' has been developed to understand different dimensions of governance at different spatial levels. As Stubbs (2005:67) summarises,

*The main value of the concept of multi-level governance is that it allows for an understanding of complexity at and between levels. In this sense, the vertical notion of multi-level governance, including but also seemingly "above" and "below" the nation state, goes alongside the horizontal notion of complex governance to address relationships between state and non-state actors, and new forms of public-private partnerships.*

Bache and Flinders (2004) have provided an overview of the concept's development and its main issues, which the following section leans heavily on. The phrase was first used by Marks (1992) to capture developments in EU structural policy following its major reform in 1988. Since then, the concept of multi-level governance has been developed to apply more broadly to EU decision-making. In an early paper, Marks (1993: 392-403) defined multi-level governance as:

*a system of continuous negotiation among nested governments at several territorial tiers" (Marks 1993, 392) [in which] "supranational, national, regional and local governments are enmeshed in territorially overarching policy networks.*

In developing this definition, it is evident that he drew on analysis of domestic politics, specifically the policy networks approach, outlined above. The multi-level governance concept thus contained both vertical and horizontal dimensions. 'Multi-level' referred to the increased

interdependence of governments operating at different territorial levels, while ‘governance’ signalled the growing interdependence between governments and non-governmental actors at various territorial levels. Marks added insights from the policy networks approach, which emphasised state fragmentation and the growing role of non-state actors in decision-making. So the simultaneous rise of the sub-national level and acknowledgement of the significance of policy networks combined to stimulate the initial conception of multi-level governance in EU studies. Similarly, the related concept of governance already had prominence in domestic and international studies, and the ‘multi-level’ aspect echoed the work of those studying intergovernmental relations within states.

Increasingly though, scholars found the need for analysis across increasingly contested jurisdictional and territorial boundaries both within and beyond states. For example, academics seeking to explain developments in British politics increasingly acknowledged the importance of a multi-level framework to recognise not only the formal institutional levels of locality, region, state, and Europe, but also the “steering role” of transnational organisations such as the World Trade Organization, International Monetary Fund and World Bank (Pierre and Stoker 2000:29). Bache and Flinders have explored the value of multi-level governance in relation to British politics. Here, the governance literature points to challenges to state power in the context of the upwards, downwards, and sideways flows of competences. They identify, however, that the related processes of devolution and decentralisation have arguably given added resonance to the ‘multi-level’ dimension of governance *within* the territorial boundaries of the British State.

Stubbs (2005:68-69) identifies four key dimensions:

- Increased participation of non-state actors;
- Need to move away from understanding decision-making in terms of “discrete territorial levels” and, instead, the need to conceptualise it in terms of “complex overlapping networks” (Bache and Flinders 2004:197);
- The multi-level governance concept allows for an understanding of the transformation in the role of the state towards new strategies of coordination, steering and networking;
- Forces an understanding of the ways in which traditional notions of democratic accountability are being undermined and challenged.

The broad appeal of the multi-level governance concept reflects a shared concern with understanding increased complexity, proliferating jurisdictions, the rise of non-state actors, and the related challenges to state power. Hooghe and Marks (2004:16) note:

*A common element across these literatures is that the dispersion of governance across multiple jurisdictions is both more efficient than and normatively superior to the central state monopoly.*

*Most important is the claim that governance must operate at multiple scales in order to capture variations in the territorial reach of policy externalities. Because externalities arising from the provision of public goods vary immensely – from planet-wide in the case of global warming to local in the case of most city services – so should the scale of governance.”*

Hooghe and Marks suggest it is necessary to consider how different jurisdictions interact with each other, which they argue, requires a focus on both formal and informal institutions to explain whether hierarchy, interdependence, or relative independence characterises relationships. Beyond this, it is necessary to consider whether jurisdictions are general-purpose or specialised, mutually exclusive or overlapping, stable or fluctuating.

Rosenau (2004) has considered the structures and processes of multi-level governance, and suggests that the notion of “framegration”<sup>6</sup> stimulates the need for new and relevant forms of governance. He identifies a system of rule, both formal and informal, and describes as these as ‘spheres of authority’ (SOAs) that “define the range of their capacity to generate compliance on the part of those persons towards whom their directives are issued” (2004:34). Rosenau prefers the SOA approach because:

*The notion of multi-levels suggests governmental hierarchies and explicitly posits the various levels as vertically structured in layers of authority, whereas the mushrooming demands for governance are also being met in a host of horizontal ways, through SOAs that may be widely dispersed and not necessarily linked to each other through layered hierarchies. Put differently, many of the demands for governance involve an insistence on autonomy that may or may not be operative within hierarchical structures (2004:39)*

Further:

*“Since governance involves the exercise of authority and the necessity of people looking ‘up’ to, and complying with, the authorities to which they are responsive, it is understandable that the multi-level governance concept connotes hierarchy. But once one broadens one’s analytic antennae to encompass networking processes and a variety of dissimilar SOAs, it becomes clear that authority relations have to be reconceived (2004:40).*

Jessop (2004) also provides a useful critique of governance approaches:

1. He suggests that “work on governance often tends to remain at the pre-theoretical stage of critique: it is much clearer what the notion of governance is against than what it is for” (2004:61).

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<sup>6</sup> “Framegration” is a contraction of fragmentation and integration, which is used to refer to the ‘diverse and contradictory forces that can be summarised in the clash between globalisation, centralisation, and integration on the one hand and localisation, decentralisation, and fragmentation on the other’ (Rosenau 2004:34).

2. "Governance theories tend to be closely connected to problem-solving and crisis-management in a wide range of fields... this can easily lead to a neglect of problems of governance failure' (2004).
3. "Because many studies of governance are concerned with specific problem fields or objects of governance, they tend to ignore questions of the relative compatibility or incompatibility of different governance regimes and their implications for the overall unity of the European project and European statehood. And... many empirical studies have overlooked (or, at least failed to theorise) the existence of meta-steering' (2004:62).

From this critique, Jessop (2004:63) suggests that what we are perhaps witnessing is the "re-scaling of the sovereign state or the emergence of just one more arena in which national states pursue national interests". In other words, the shift to governance is being countered by the increased role of governments in metagovernance: that is, in providing the 'ground rules' for governance. This emerging metagovernance role "means that the forms of networking, negotiation, noise reduction, and negative coordination characteristic of governance take place 'in the shadow of hierarchy'" (2004:65).

Peters and Pierre (2004:75) argue that "most of the analytical models and interpretations of multi-level governance that we have seen so far have fallen into the same trap as some analyses of governance, that is, a previously state-centric and constitutional perspective has been almost completely replaced by an image of governing in which institutions are largely irrelevant". They suggest that multi-level governance "lacks both a clear conceptual analysis as well as a critical discussion of multi-level governance as a democratic process" (2004:76). They identify a particular danger in relation to the development of multi-level governance in that "the absence of distinct legal frameworks and the reliance on sometimes quite informal negotiations between different institutional levels could well be a 'Faustian Bargain' where actors only see the attractions of the deal and choose to ignore the darker consequences of the arrangement" (2004:76). The danger of such a deal is that "core values of democratic government are traded for accommodation, consensus and the purported efficiency in governance" (2004:85), or put another way, where "informal patterns of political coordination could in fact be a strategy for political interests to escape or bypass regulations put in place explicitly to prevent that from happening" (2004:85).

### **3.10.1 The application of the governance framework in tourism research.**

There are very few incidences of the uses of the governance and multi-level governance frameworks in tourism research. The related uses of policy networks have been mentioned above and a useful application of governance in tourism research is detailed here. Yuskel, Bramwell and Yuskel (2005) have studied tourism governance in Turkey. Developing

a framework to evaluate the decentralisation of governance, they consider that “concentration of authority and decision making within the central state and its bureaucracies has been identified as a major obstacle to more effective governance” (859-860). Several authors have called for a transfer of responsibility from centre to lower government organisations to help deliver public services (e.g. Olivera 2002) and a growing decentralisation trend has been identified, particularly in developed countries (Lane 2003). Decentralisation has been described as involving “a transfer of authority to perform some service to the public from an individual or an agency in central government to some other individual or agency which is closer to the public to be served” (Turner & Hulme 1997:152). The decentralisation process tends to involve diverse public, private and voluntary sector organisations, which makes governance networks increasingly complex, often being organised informally and characterised by fluidity and hybridity (Healey 1997: Rhodes 1996). Thus the notion of decentralisation has been broadened (Oliveira 2002:1714) to include the transfer of authority to ‘quangos’, the private sector, and partnership arrangements (Rondinelli et al 1989). Yuskel, Bramwell and Yuskel (2005) conclude that while decentralisation can be difficult to achieve for reasons such as lack of resources and reluctance by central bureaucracies to cede power, it can also have very positive outcomes. It may establish more democratic procedures and create new sites for debate and consensus-building, and for dissent and conflict; these are close to the population and can encourage the reformation of dominant paradigms and lead to positive change (Wearing & Huyskens 2001).

### 3.11 Conclusions

The origins of the stakeholding concept have been introduced, tracing the use and development of the term from centre-left economists in the US, through its use in the private sector, and then to the public sector and the National Assembly for Wales. The evolution of the concept into two similar but distinct theoretical branches has been considered. Stakeholder theory has been discussed as a theory of organisational ethics and business management and consideration has been given to its main areas of theoretical contention. The theory has been most often applied in private sector contexts, though there are also credible arguments for the broadening of its use to include the public sector (Tennert & Schroeder 1999; Scholl 2001). Within the relevant literature, the main contested areas are associated with the incorporation of ethical and social science strands, the development of a normative justificatory framework and questions about how stakeholders are identified and who is seen to have a legitimate stake. The stakeholder approach to understanding the organisation believes that attempts should be made to instil some kind of moral ambition to operations and that this would be rewarded by greater beneficial outcomes. This normative position raises a general question about how appropriate it is for theories to make normative statements. Furthermore, in the private sector, the view that organisations do or indeed should act morally is perhaps challengeable and the profit motive certainly seems to still dominate. That the normative basis for stakeholder theory has not been definitively enunciated inevitably contributes to continuing questions and uncertainty around arguably its most important element. Nevertheless, the importance of establishing a normative basis for the inclusion of stakeholders remains important as it impacts on who is identified as a stakeholder and how their views are treated.

Unfortunately, the theory also appears to be weak in terms of identifying the kind of mechanisms required to ensure that the different stakeholder groups are heard fairly, although it does seek to recognise them. And as a theory it is also not well developed in terms of its provision of analytical tools. Where it is conceived of more narrowly, stakeholder theory's concern with the two-way relationships between a focal organisation with management capabilities and its various interest groups also appears too limiting to fully consider stakeholder interactions. There seems to be a lack of cognisance of the broader structure within which organisations are forced to operate – something that other theories are much better at explaining.

As has been demonstrated, the term 'stakeholder' is widely used in tourism contexts, but there is only a comparatively small amount of writing that accurately connects 'stakeholder theory' to tourism development. A review of current tourism literature that has examined

issues from a stakeholder perspective not only begins to identify a wide range of tourism stakeholder groups and make the connection with sustainability, but also helps to establish stakeholding as a pertinent concept for tourism to develop, and therefore an important area for research. However, given the complexities and uncertainties of stakeholder theory and its parallel political economy strand almost totally unconsidered by previous tourism research, those adopting stakeholder perspectives might be expected to consider more fully the implications of doing so. Just as the organisational ethics and political economy approaches to stakeholding are frequently, if controversially, interwoven, there is also a fairly strong tendency to interweave stakeholding, collaboration and network concepts.

From a handful of investigations that have used notions of stakeholding to explore aspects of tourism, several themes emerge. Stakeholder interviews are emerging as a popular methodology for gaining insights into the various perspectives that exist, and incorporation of stakeholders is seen to be a good framework for decision-making processes. However, the details and criticisms of stakeholder theory and therefore its relevance for application have received fairly limited attention at best and in some cases the term 'stakeholder' is used in complete isolation from its theoretical background. Often the only connection to stakeholder theory occurs when stakeholders are defined within articles, and although a variety of authors are often quoted, reference is usually made to a definition that is almost identical to Freeman's early definition of a stakeholder, which connects the use of the term to stakeholder theory, if only at a very basic level.

Most of the studies highlight problems of stakeholder identification and are carried out in situations where identification of stakeholders has formed part of the research process. This is different to the premises of stakeholder theory where a managing organisation would identify its own stakeholders. There also appears to be a desire to expand the application of stakeholding from consideration of two-way relationships between a focal organisation and its interest groups to applying it at the macro-level. This appears to be partly driven by an awareness that wider networks exist that impact on those relationships, although the theory's applicability at that level has not previously been fully considered.

Beginning to address that gap, the preceding discussion has considered the political economy perspective of stakeholding and has identified a range of distinctions and similarities between it and the organisational ethics perspective. As well as receiving widespread critical attention, both perspectives: expect instrumental benefits from participation; consider issues of duty and obligation; reflect on the question of legitimacy; and convey promises of inclusion, participation, reciprocity, accountability and justice. The key distinctions have been identified as being associated with the scale of application and the issue of stakeholder management. While the organisational perspective currently represents a micro-level theory that considers

the management of stakeholders by a focal organisation, the political economy view is more of a macro-level theory that emphasises individual autonomy and the importance of developing 'partnership based networks of delivery'. The main difference appears to be who is seen as the 'locus of control'. The organisational ethics perspective identifies a focal organisation as a manager of stakeholders and is more concerned with dyadic relationships between it and its interest groups, while the political economy perspective envisions society as something in which everyone has a stake and everyone is interdependent.

Through the lens of collaboration theory, stakeholders recognise their resource dependency and their interdependence. They recognise that there are potential benefits to be gained from seeking 'collaborative advantage' rather than 'competitive advantage' (Lowndes & Skelcher 1998). The relationships between stakeholders are seen to influence collaborations, which can be affected by control over resources and the varying degrees of power that might be exercised by particular parties. The types of collaboration vary in several aspects including, duration, type of objective and degree of structure. Often the ideas of collaboration between stakeholders are placed within a broader conceptual framework of the network of and relations between stakeholders relevant to a particular issue (Bramwell & Lane 2000), known within collaboration literature as the interorganisational domain. This broader consideration appears to sit well with the more recent consideration of stakeholding offered by those identifying the need for a social network based development of stakeholder theory (Rowley 1997).

While collaboration theory can be described as being a resource dependence theory that concentrates on relational *content*, social network analysis focuses more on relational *context*. It illustrates the patterns of relationships that exist and it describes network relations as 'ties', which can be 'strong' or 'weak'. It expresses the overall structure of the network in terms of 'density' and considers the 'centrality' – the nodal position – of individuals or groups. From a network perspective, the shape, form and characteristics of relationships influence the flow of information and power within the interorganisational domain. Network theory suggests that where there are closer relationships, there is the potential for certain groups of stakeholder to have greater levels of influence than others where relationships are weaker. Recent applications of network theory in tourism contexts demonstrate its value, particularly for studying policy networks and when combined with other theoretical frameworks.

It appears that the structuration theory of interorganisational coordination can also contribute towards a fuller understanding of stakeholding issues, though it has not previously been applied in tourism contexts. In particular, like collaboration theory, it offers an alternative view about the motivations for broad stakeholder involvement – interdependence, rather than the belief in intrinsic worth offered by stakeholder theory. It reflects on how

structures develop and considers institutional design as a kind of stakeholder coordinating mechanism; and it also helps to describe and classify a range of potential structures that are useful for analysing different stakeholder coordinating mechanisms. Interestingly, it identifies a range of other potential structures beyond simply the idea of partnerships, with the shape of these structures varying appropriately at different levels throughout the domain.

From the organisational theories considered in this chapter, it is evident that while there are obviously differences in approach, there are also significant similarities and areas of overlap. It is of interest to reflect on the variations and overlap in language that each perspective embodies. For example, it might be recognised that actors could be synonymous with stakeholders and collaboration may be considered to be the same as a partnership. As the stakeholding concept has evolved it has accumulated related terms and the notion that there is some close connection between stakeholding and partnership has been identified, whereby a partnership made up of relevant stakeholders or a “stakeholder partnership” (Ogu 2000) is a legitimate and meaningful phrase. It is therefore recognised that in practice it is now difficult to differentiate stakeholding from partnership working. Even at the academic level it is a challenge to distinguish the different variations or strands of the stakeholding concept. In the day-to-day practices of an industry like tourism, incorporating cross-sectoral influences and experiences, it might be all but impossible to fully appreciate, understand and reach a good level of perspicacity about the exact definition of key terms. Exploration of each theory’s application in tourism contexts has highlighted their respective values and limitations for future tourism research. The consideration of each theory’s contribution, and how they fit together is considered further in the following chapter, which develops a conceptual framework for approaching the empirical material.

## Chapter 4

### **Operationalising Stakeholder Participation: a conceptual and methodological approach**

*More research is needed which explores the relationships between the participants in partnerships and the broader web of tourism policy networks and planning frameworks within which they operate, and which does so using theoretically informed analyses (Bramwell & Lane 2000:338).*

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The main aim of this chapter is to bring together issues raised in the literature review and to develop specific ways of dealing with them. In effect, it draws conclusions from previous chapters then raises a more focussed set of questions that the investigation aims to assess. From this, a guiding conceptual framework for the thesis is produced. The chapter begins by identifying the key issues exposed by the literature review and the main questions that emerge as a result. It then goes on to justify the need for a conceptual framework that enables the recognition of the wide range of elements of and influences on stakeholder participation. By highlighting the key strengths and weaknesses of the theoretical concepts and linking the stakeholder participation principle of sustainable tourism development, the chapter reinforces the need to adopt a more pluralistic theoretical approach to the analysis. A diagram is then provided to represent the inter-relationship of concepts. This leads to the development of a methodology for gathering and analysing the necessary data.

#### **4.2 Identification of Issues and Questions Raised Through Literature Review**

Interestingly, there is an apparent link between the emergence of the terms ‘sustainable development’ and ‘stakeholding’, both temporally and in their critique of free-market capitalism. Both show a growing concern for ‘externalities’ and recognise the need to incorporate the views and knowledge of a wide range of interest groups, as well as incorporating notions of justice. Both are normative in nature, suggesting the requirement for ethical behaviour and fulfilment of obligations because ‘it is the right thing to do’. There are also similarities in the belief of instrumental benefits – management of stakeholders will lead to greater benefits/more sustainable forms of development. The notions of mutual respect and fairness also link stakeholding to the principled approach to partnership working.

It appears that many organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors are putting significant efforts into engaging stakeholders in decision-making processes.

Consideration of the global tourism system reveals an interconnected network of destinations and associated organisations that exist at local, regional, national and international levels. Such is the importance placed on tourism in economies that bodies exist at all these levels to aid in its development and many of these are promoting the 'improved coordination' agenda. The logical progression of stakeholder thinking has led to a belief in the need to incorporate the views of stakeholders at all these levels and that stakeholder participation will lead to more sustainable development solutions.

If the stakeholder approach really can lead to more sustainable solutions, then, given the apparent worsening state of the planet, it might be assumed that the extent to which it has been adopted and effectively implemented must be relatively low. Yet a presumption that working together can solve development problems, and particularly that partnerships between stakeholders will lead to more sustainable outcomes, persists. This presumption seems to be based on recognition of a range of potential benefits and the premise that, collectively, sufficient resources and knowledge exists. Conversely however, it is also acknowledged that working together, gaining the participation of the most appropriate people and ensuring that processes are fair and effective, pose serious challenges. The presumption therefore needs to be challenged.

As chapter 2 identified, there are calls for stakeholder participation throughout the tourism development process. The question that naturally follows this conclusion then, is **how can effective stakeholder participation be operationalised?** The priority is therefore to explore practical attempts to operationalise stakeholder participation, whilst drawing on a broad base of theoretical knowledge, with the aim of furthering understanding of key issues and improving knowledge about how stakeholder participation can be made more effective. This question is to be considered by bringing together the stakeholder participation principle of sustainable tourism development with a reworking of stakeholder theory.

Firstly, it is important to outline how stakeholder participation in the tourism development process is to be interpreted in this context. While considering that the nature of participation can be seen as being on a continuum from passive to active, at a practical level it also means involvement in various types of activity, including formal and informal processes such as in consultation exercises, partnerships and networks. The tourism development process, in this context, essentially means the process of developing and delivering policy. Drawing on both tourism and theoretical literature, this means that stakeholders should actively participate in each of the operationalisation stages: policymaking, strategy development and in implementation – identifying, developing and facilitating projects that will put those plans into practice. The investigation therefore considers participation in policy and

strategy formulation, as well as in implementation. It also considers how well these different stages are integrated.

Following the review of literature, listed below are the postulates that have been identified as central to this research:

- There is a need to involve stakeholders in order to achieve more sustainable development outcomes;
- There are multiple levels and facets of stakeholder participation;
- There are advantages of operationalising stakeholder participation, throughout the tourism development process, but especially at the local level;
- The principle of participation and, in particular, the use of partnerships are common mechanisms for facilitating stakeholder engagement.

Identification of these themes has however exposed a number of knowledge gaps. In order to develop a strategy for operationalising stakeholder participation, *a greater understanding is needed of the role played by and the relationships between the wide range of stakeholders, their organisations and their communication structures at all levels of the development process.* Within the tourism literature, there is little empirical evidence of how stakeholders have created structures to integrate their activity from the national to local levels and how different policy and planning systems have affected the creation of those coordination attempts. This investigation therefore attempts to plug that gap by providing evidence of efforts made to improve vertical and horizontal integration in the operationalisation of tourism development.

Both the tourism literature and the Welsh and wider political context, appear to favour a partnership based approach to stakeholder participation. However, while the literature suggests that there are some benefits of this approach, it also recognises that partnership working requires significant resources and skills, and is also a lengthy, formal process, which is often prescribed by government agencies or funding bodies. Yet despite recognising that there are real challenges, even for well-resourced organisations, there remains an assumption that partnerships are an appropriate vehicle for developing widespread stakeholder participation in development processes. Given the potential problems and particularly the fragmented nature of the tourism industry, where it is recognised that individual stakeholders can be geographically isolated and not well resourced, it seems necessary to challenge the presumption that partnerships are an effective vehicle for achieving effective stakeholder participation. A second important research question then is: **are partnerships a good way of ensuring effective stakeholder participation?**

### 4.3 Bringing a Stakeholder Based Theoretical Approach to Sustainable Tourism Development

As the literature review identified, the enthusiasm for more collaborative stakeholder based approaches has grown in sustainable tourism development literature, and some have already begun to take concepts from organisational management theories and to apply them in sustainable tourism development research. However, the relatively limited critical attention that has been applied to linking such theoretical constructs with the important question of operationalising multi-level stakeholder participation, particularly within the sustainable tourism field, suggests the need for more detailed investigation and analysis. This thesis also argues that there is only a limited amount of research that accurately and fully explores the appropriateness and value of stakeholder theory in sustainable tourism development contexts. While there is also recognition that the theory has been broadened in its application to tourism contexts (Hardy & Beeton 2001), this appears to have been done so without the necessary critical reflection.

Firstly, it is worth considering the distinctive and valuable features of the stakeholding concept and its theory. Stakeholders are seen as crucial for achieving sustainable development, as it depends on inclusion of pertinent interests and thinking in stakeholder terms focuses attention on issues of ownership, values, legitimacy and rights, which further connects stakeholding concepts to social aspects of sustainability. Holding a stake appears to convey the idea that there is a right to be involved and this is a message that empowers the less powerful and reminds the more powerful groups that they have obligations to facilitate wider engagement. The theory's consideration of stakeholder management capabilities is therefore important.

As has been demonstrated, there are three elements to stakeholder theory that require slightly different methodologies, types of evidence and criteria of appraisal. The descriptive element of stakeholder theory has been identified as one of its strengths – assessing to what extent stakeholders are involved has particular value in the exploration of new areas. In its *descriptive* form, stakeholder theory seeks to describe specific organisational characteristics and behaviours. In this context it poses the following question: **to what extent are diverse stakeholder interests represented?** The *normative* core of stakeholder theory is its most distinctive feature. It deals with reasons why an organisation should consider the interests of stakeholders. This can be argued on ethical grounds, particularly from various philosophical perspectives. While some have considered the normative basis of stakeholder theory in tourism research (Sautter & Leisen 1999), it is argued here that developing a basis, not just for stakeholder participation, but also for guiding decision-making, grounded in the principles of

sustainable tourism development would be a useful contribution to the theory's application in tourism settings. The normative aspect raises the question about **why stakeholder interests should be considered** and, as argued here, it can also be important for providing the basis on which decisions are made. The *instrumental* element of the theory can be used to develop a hypothesis for testing such that: **if tourism development effectively accounts for the interests of multiple stakeholders, then tourism will become more sustainable**. It poses the question, **what are the benefits and problems of stakeholder participation?** All three aspects of stakeholder theory therefore provide useful questions in this context. In going beyond a more traditional view of stakeholder theory, which sees a single organisation as having stakeholder management responsibilities, it is also necessary to ask further questions about **how and by whom are stakeholders managed**, and this will require additional analytical concepts.

As Chapter 3 demonstrated, those primarily concerned with developing stakeholder theory would argue that it predominantly considers two-way relationships between a focal private sector organisation and its various interest groups (e.g. Donaldson & Preston 1995; Phillips 2003). Likewise, for those largely concerned with developing theoretical understandings, the distinctions between stakeholder theory (from an organisational ethics perspective) and the theory of a stakeholder society (from a political economy perspective) may be clear. However, with the exception of Robson and Robson (1996) who recognised Tony Blair's influence on the stakeholding debate, though failed to make any distinction between the two theoretical strands, tourism researchers appear to have only recognised the existence of the organisational theory of stakeholding. They have therefore broadly applied the theory such that it may be seen as barely recognisable and some theorists might even reasonably argue that the theory is irrelevant in those tourism contexts. This is primarily because a variety of other entities have been placed in the focal position traditionally reserved for a firm with management capabilities. These include tourism planners (Sautter & Leisen 1999), tourism marketers (Robson & Robson 1996), dingoes (Burns & Howard 2003), and even 'tourism's sustainability' (Hardy & Beeton 2001).

Within tourism literature, there is also a tendency to expand application of the theory from its intended micro-level to the meta-level, such that much consideration has been given, for example, to the identification of 'tourism's stakeholders' instead of just the stakeholders of a focal organisation. As well as raising a question about stakeholder management responsibilities – a primary concern of stakeholder theory – the application of the theory in these settings also challenges the view that it only applies to the private sector. As has been demonstrated in Chapter 3, arguments have been made in support of use of the theory in the public sector (Tennert & Schroeder 1999; Scholl 2001). As the existence of stakeholders is

clearly a consistent dimension in all organisational life, it seems appropriate to question why a theory of stakeholding should only apply in private sector settings. However, even if those applying the theory in this way within the tourism field had explicitly considered this contested issue, the issues concerning the focal organisation as the locus of control, the scale of applicability (micro to meta), and the theory's consideration of only two-way relationships and lack of consideration of wider networks, which are believed to influence the dynamics of stakeholder relationships, are arguably fundamental to the consideration of organisational stakeholder theory's relevance in tourism settings.

The theory also has limited analytical value, particularly in comparison to other related theories that appear more valuable for understanding different aspects of the stakeholder participation process. Other tourism researchers have recognised the limitations of stakeholder theory and the need to draw on different theories to help explain the "complex array of multiple relationships" that develops through stakeholder participation (Medeiros de Araujo & Bramwell 2000; Bramwell & Lane 2000), and others have also applied related theories to analyse stakeholder relations (Jamal & Getz 1995; Bramwell & Sharman 1999). The theories of collaboration, and networks considered here have demonstrated their value for analysing key aspects of the tourism development process in areas where stakeholder theory's capacity for analysis is limited. Given its similarities and usefulness for analysing coordination structures, it is also suggested that the structuration theory of interorganisational coordination has useful tools for analysing stakeholder participation processes.

So, while some have noted a connection between stakeholding and sustainable tourism development (Sautter & Leisen 1999; Hardy & Beeton 2001), critical reflection of the relevance of stakeholder theory to sustainable tourism development is lacking and the broadening of the theory has not therefore been rigorously addressed. For stakeholder theory to be accurately applied to the concept of sustainable tourism development, the leap from the theory being one of management relationships between a focal organisation and its stakeholders to one of a whole industry or concept would need to be made. This might be achieved through consideration of the political economy perspective, which is actually a meta-level theory. There is, however, also value in considering both micro-level interaction and meta-level issues, so the integration of other theories is preferred.

It is argued here that the closely related and, to some extent, intertwined theory of collaboration has received slightly more rigorous attention by tourism academics and that this can be seen to be connected to the popularity of partnerships, particularly in sustainable tourism literature and practice. As elsewhere, this thesis considers that a partnership could be described as being a group of appropriate stakeholders collaborating to achieve a mutual goal. It seems that while stakeholder theory primarily attempts to provide an ethical argument for

the inclusion of stakeholders in decision-making, collaboration theory seems to offer more critical interpretation of what occurs when different stakeholders actually work together, and has therefore developed more useful suggestions for analysing the management process. The theory also provides more detailed frameworks that can be used for investigating the effectiveness of stakeholder involvement in collaborative activities, such as the series of propositions and development stages established by Jamal and Getz (1995) explored in Chapter 3, which this investigation makes use of for investigating the implementation level case study. Such frameworks can be used to test the scope and intensity of collaboration and its various development stages. They can also be useful for identifying the basis on which stakeholders collaborate, as well as the associated benefits and problems, while also considering aspects of legitimacy that have relevance for developing a more useful stakeholder based theory.

As has been demonstrated in the preceding chapter, network theory has relevance because it is virtually impossible to consider stakeholder interaction without recognising the wider influence of network relationships, particularly when investigating national to local policy development and implementation. The more thorough structural consideration of relationships is useful for assessing and predicting changes in a system of network relations. In addition, as is also explained in the previous chapter, a structuration theory of interorganisational coordination is particularly useful for providing analysis of coordination structures and for feeding into the consideration of why stakeholders work together. Similar to propositions made by collaboration theory, structuration theory would consider that the basis for coordination is interdependence – something that perhaps challenges stakeholder theory's ethics based reasoning for stakeholder involvement and therefore an important question considered by the research.

The governance and multi-level governance concepts, also introduced in Chapter 3, appear to provide additional valuable frameworks for considering stakeholder interaction. As network theory has informed the development of governance thinking, the recognition of overlap there, further emphasises the connection of the considered theoretical approaches. Having begun to see the broader web of stakeholder relations as important, the issue of how the different players form 'self-organising networks' as conceived within governance literature is particularly useful. The developed understanding of the way these networks are steered, issues of power dependence and the changing role of government in the process are all highly pertinent considerations for the development and delivery of tourism policy. Furthermore, these are even more significant in the context of the devolved National Assembly for Wales. It is also believed that a contribution can be made to the identified gap in research considering interaction at and between different spatial levels by reflecting on the multi-level governance

literature. Issues of decentralisation, participation of non-state actors, and state power in relation to new coordination strategies and network steering are all potentially very useful ways of analysing this investigation's findings.

#### 4.4 Research Questions

The central issue of this thesis is concerned with knowing:

*How can stakeholder participation be operationalised?*

Given a suspected overemphasis on partnership working, which perhaps overlooks the importance of more organic, less prescribed forms of stakeholder participation, it is important to ask the following subsidiary question:

*Are partnerships a good way of ensuring effective stakeholder participation?*

In order to address the main questions, it is necessary to:

- Explore existing attempts to operationalise stakeholder participation;
- Consider the range ways in which stakeholders participate.

And to achieve this, it is necessary to investigate the:

- Dynamics – structures and processes of stakeholder participation;
- Driving forces – the socio-economic and political context.

It is also necessary to develop a range of sub-questions to guide the research process:

##### **Why should stakeholder interests be considered?**

What is the basis for developing stakeholder participation?

- do stakeholders feel a moral imperative?
- do stakeholders recognise their interdependence?

##### **To what extent are diverse stakeholder interests represented?**

Who are the stakeholders?

To what extent is tourism development influenced by stakeholder opinions?

Is there adequate local level representation?



### **How and by whom are stakeholders managed?**

How are stakeholders identified?

Who possesses stakeholder management capabilities?

What are the structures and processes in operation to achieve stakeholder participation?

How can comprehensive stakeholder involvement be successfully achieved in sustainable tourism development?

### **What are the benefits and problems of stakeholder participation?**

Does the development process have greater legitimacy if stakeholders are involved?

Does stakeholder participation create a more sustainable tourism development process?

In reflecting on the utility of the broader theoretical framework developed here, a further question is therefore posed:

### **How useful is the framework developed here for understanding the complex multi-level stakeholder participation process?**

How does the framework developed here explore more effectively the structures, processes and basis of stakeholder participation?

How can stakeholder participation and decision-making processes be developed to lead to the implementation of more sustainable development solutions?

Before deciding upon an appropriate programme of empirical study to address these questions, it is important to develop a *framework for assessing the role of stakeholder participation in the sustainable tourism development process* that is capable of explaining a more comprehensive range of the factors that influence the operationalisation of stakeholder participation. This can be achieved by melding the organisational theories previously considered. From the review provided in Chapter 3, it is clear that these theories can provide the knowledge, tools and language to assist in assessing and understanding the key issues, and that integrating the different perspectives into a holistic framework is necessary in order to gain fuller understanding. It is therefore recognised that it is important to consider the **structures** that are developed, the **processes** applied and the **basis** on which stakeholders are involved and decisions are made. Given the recognised importance of generating stakeholder participation

throughout the tourism system, the framework should also be capable of considering interaction at and between different spatial levels.

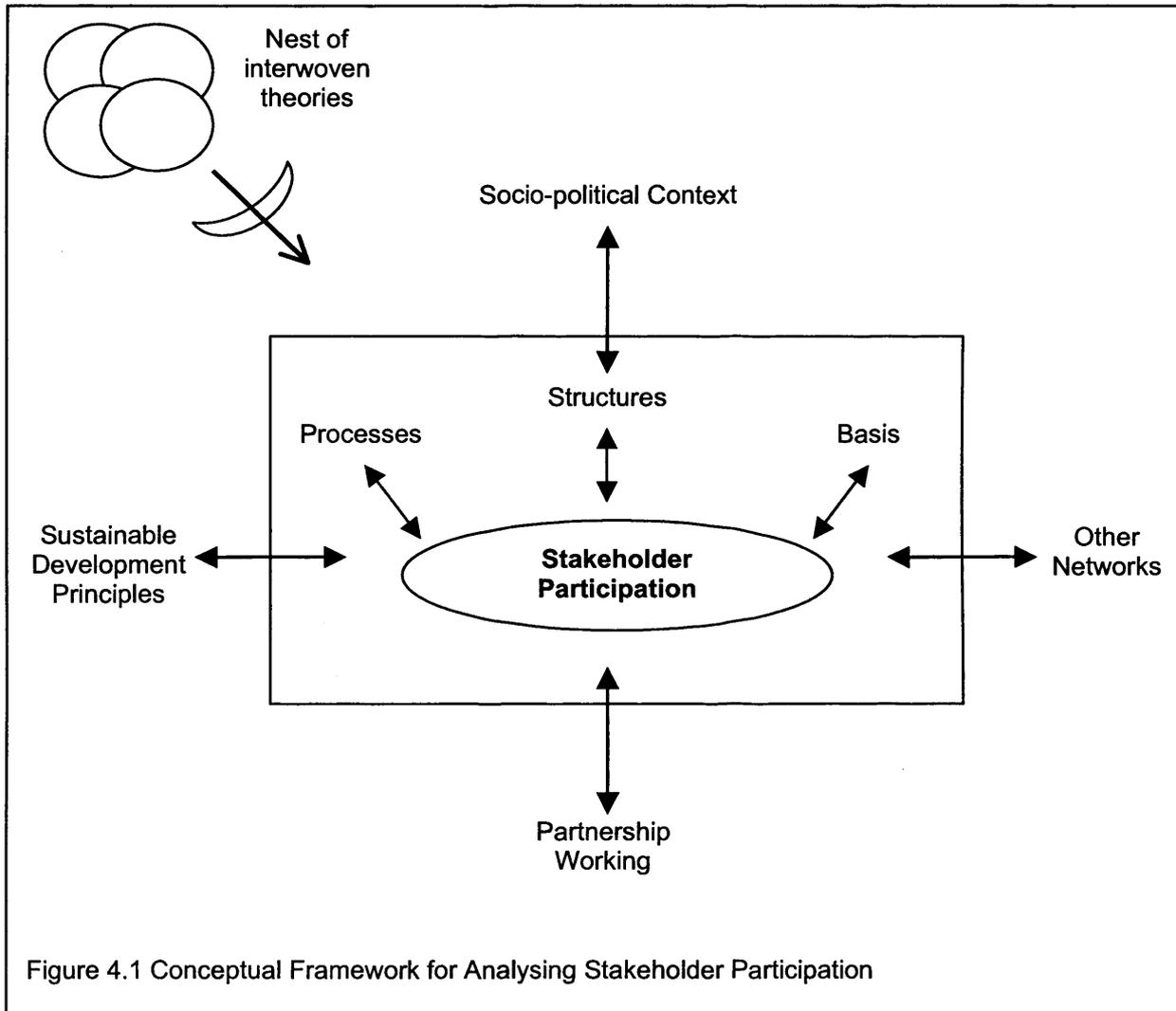
To do this, it is necessary to integrate aspects of the four theories discussed previously. The priority in this thesis is being given to development of stakeholder theory, for five important reasons:

1. The framework is importantly attempting to understand and develop the connection between stakeholder participation and sustainable tourism development, and particularly in exploring the development of a normative framework for decision-making;
2. Stakeholders are critical to developing more sustainable outcomes because of the need to include all pertinent interests;
3. The theory focuses on the need to manage stakeholders;
4. The use of stakeholding concepts is widespread in sustainable tourism development literature and practice and concepts from stakeholder theory have been applied in tourism research with limited critical reflection;
5. It poses research questions that are useful for gaining an overall picture of stakeholding, which are capable of being interpreted by a number of theoretical lenses.

In developing a broader approach to stakeholder theory and for comprehensive analysis of a national tourism system, the consideration of other theories is unavoidable because, as previously identified:

1. There are limitations in the analytical value of stakeholder theory, as well as questions relating to its applicability beyond the traditional private sector and the micro-level.
2. There is significant overlap between the different theories and their concepts.
3. Other theories have particular strengths that are valuable in the investigation's analysis.

The aim is to move stakeholder theory from being merely a descriptive, normative framework to being a theory with greater explanatory power by better integration with the processes by which stakeholders are engaged. So the investigation is contributing to the development of a stakeholder centred theory, which incorporates aspects of other established theories to aid in the overall analysis.



#### 4.5 Justification for Using Tourism in Wales as a Case Study

Tourism makes an appropriate case study because it is often described as a fragmented industry and therefore faces particular challenges in its attempts to improve coordination; is one of the world's largest industries and therefore has significant global development implications; has devoted significant attention to the consideration of its sustainability; and is widely adopting a partnership based approach. As many of the issues relating to sustainable tourism are concerned with collaboration and reconciliation with various interest groups, this investigation looks at the way in which progress towards tourism's sustainability is operationalised through relationships from the national (strategic) to the local (implementation) levels. Given the connection between sustainable tourism and sustainable development, and particularly their shared association with the need to involve stakeholders, lessons learned from investigation of tourism will also be relevant to those attempting to operationalise sustainable development.

Tourism in Wales provides a good context for the exploration of key issues. Wales is a convenient size for studying national to local level policy development, communication and strategy implementation (N.B. as widely recognised within the context of the UK, Wales is regarded as a nation throughout this study). Several important contextual factors also make Wales an interesting area for exploration of key issues:

- Devolution has provided Wales with the opportunity to develop its own pattern of national governance;
- There is a strategic level drive to encourage cross-sectoral partnership work;
- A recent review of tourism in Wales, initiated by the then national coordinating body (Wales Tourist Board), strongly emphasised the need to involve stakeholders and to develop new coordination structures;
- Recent establishment of four regional tourism partnerships indicate attempts to both improve coordination across different spatial levels and account for regional variations;
- Sustainability and partnership are two of the “four pillars” of the tourism strategy for Wales (WTB 2001);
- Tourism in Wales is regarded as a high priority for economic development, thus receiving increasing statutory attention (including funding);
- The National Assembly for Wales has, as a constitutional objective, a commitment to sustainable development – progress towards which is in need of some appraisal;
- Recovering from the outbreak of Foot & Mouth disease, which dealt a severe blow to tourism in Wales, attention is perhaps more than ever, focussed on sustainability in sensitive rural areas;
- Tourism in Wales is largely delivered by a large number of very small, often isolated businesses and is highly embedded in the environment.

Therefore the recognition at the highest level in Welsh tourism of the importance of, and its attempts to, improve coordination and encourage partnership working, clearly merit some investigation. An understanding of how effectively these mechanisms are being applied will provide insight into the strengths or weaknesses of the stakeholder approach in the tourism system, which would also serve as a basic guide as to the sustainability of the industry. Focussing on Wales as an area provides the opportunity to appreciate how policies are developed at the national level and interpreted and passed down to the regions through the development of strategies at various levels. At the local level, the impacts on and involvement of communities needs to be considered to discover what effect the policies are having and whether they are relevant and successful on the ground. As ‘tourism in Wales’ is attempting to

operationalise some of the key concepts of stakeholder participation and sustainability, investigating these attempts will be an extremely valuable contribution to tourism research, as well as the wider theoretical literature.

The recent restructuring and institutional design experienced in Wales, with its increased emphasis on stakeholder coordination and partnership working, mean that many participants will be developing awareness of the issues explored in this investigation. Restructuring processes can be turbulent, although they also bring opportunities to reflect on the benefits and problems of existing or new practices. It is expected that there will be a high level of awareness about the problems of previously uncoordinated activities and some optimism about the new approach. It was also likely however, that some would feel frustrated with management of the change process and that some may be uncertain of their place in the new structure and will be experiencing some difficulties adapting to the change. Wales is therefore a good laboratory for studying stakeholding and partnership models because:

1. The new policy framework and coordination structures provide an opportunity for appraisal;
2. There is a clear identification of a policy need for sustainable tourism development in Wales following devolution;
3. There is explicit embodiment of the partnership principle;
4. It is valuable to explore how the actual processes are developing, given their explicit policy focus.

Given the National Assembly's underwritten inclusiveness agenda and particularly its strong promotion of partnership working, studying stakeholder participation in Wales also means that the empirical evidence provided has the additional value of being relevant for considering new forms of governance.

#### **4.6 A Multi-level Methodology for Investigating the Complex Participation Process**

This section provides an outline of the factors that have been taken into account in the design of an effective methodology for empirical research. The guiding role of the conceptual framework is acknowledged, as well as the need for drawing on a number of techniques in order to cover all aspects of the 'complex multi-level stakeholder participation process'. The chapter therefore provides a detailed account of the four-part methodology (document analysis, interviews, observation, and a survey) that was applied. It also reviews the methods of data analysis. An explanatory note is also included on how the results have been organised in the following empirical chapters in line with the conceptual framework.

Reflecting on the conceptual framework, the aim of the empirical research was to develop a methodology for understanding the different aspects of a 'complex multi-level participation process'. This required a strategy that could explore the structures, processes and the driving forces of stakeholder involvement at the national/strategic/policy level, regional/coordinating level and the local/implementation level, whilst accounting for inherent experiential variations at the different levels. In order to achieve the objectives of the methodology, it was realised that an approach using a variety of techniques would be most appropriate. This ensured access to data from a range of sources and levels, enabling a greater understanding of macro to micro level issues.

The use of 'multi-nodal' techniques was combined with a case study approach, which is a preferred option when "the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on contemporary phenomenon within some real life context" (Yin 1994:1). The need to facilitate the analysis of the participation process across the different hierarchical levels suggested that it would be valuable to adopt the principles of 'extensive' and 'intensive' research as a way of conducting "theoretically informed concrete research" (Sayer 1984:156). In effect then, 'tourism in Wales' could be explained as the overarching, extensive case study, while the Dyfi Valley Tourism Growth Area scheme, introduced in section 4.6.2.1, was identified as an intensive 'sub-unit' for analysis. The 'extensive' element allows for the study of a larger number of individuals, but restricts the number of properties used to define them. It is valuable because it offers some representation of wider society, but it is also liable to exclude essential properties capable of influencing the behaviour of individual people. In contrast, 'intensive' research beneficially allows for the analysis of a larger number of properties of a smaller number of individuals, whilst adversely bringing with it the risk of ignoring significant parts of the system, as well as perhaps significant individuals. Therefore, by combining the two different approaches, a more effective methodology can be developed that has the ability to ask "different sorts of questions, use different techniques and methods and define objectives and boundaries differently" (Sayer 1984:221).

This investigation then, adopts both an extensive and an intensive case study approach by applying a number of different data collection methods at different spatial levels. The principal method used was semi-structured interviews. Documentary analysis was another important method that was used to support or challenge interview data, as well as provide contextual and other factual data. Selected survey work was also undertaken as part of the intensive process. The method of observation was also used. The fieldwork period commenced in September 2002 and finished in March 2004, with the document gathering and analysis extending beyond this, being an ongoing part of the research.

In addition to these successfully applied techniques, attempts were made to undertake a tailored network analysis to better quantify the network connections between the participants. Tables were prepared and posted to respondents at the end of the fieldwork process. They were designed to make it as simple as possible for respondents to complete, requiring largely the ticking of boxes (Appendix i). Despite the expectation that the relationships built with respondents might ensure an adequate response rate, only three out of twenty replies were eventually received. On reflection, it was recognised that the tables would have been time consuming to complete and the respondents had already given reasonable levels of commitment to the research. Interestingly, one respondent did write back saying that he “preferred to avoid the tick box approach” and provided documents that portrayed some of the information sought. Adequate data about network connections were therefore eventually drawn more qualitatively from the interviews and a more rigorous analysis of key documents.

#### **4.6.1 Extensive research – national and regional levels**

##### **4.6.1.1 Documentary analysis**

This stage began in September 2001 with a comprehensive review of existing documentation on tourism policy and strategic planning in Wales (Fig 4.2); it continued throughout the fieldwork stage and into the writing-up phase. The 1999 “Fit for the Millennium” review was used as an appropriate starting date for the analysis as it brings together consideration of the communication problems facing tourism in Wales and it effectively served as a catalyst for structural change, which helps to make tourism in Wales a valuable case study. The documentary analysis stage stimulated a considerable understanding of the context in which current policy was being developed.

The documentary analysis technique has the advantage that material can be reviewed as often as is necessary (Yin 1994), which was beneficial for preparing to gather primary data and to verify data already collected. In this investigation, the technique also had the advantage of providing crucial material from a time-period before the fieldwork actually started. However, as Yin (1994:82) cautions, “the documentary evidence reflects a communication among other parties attempting to achieve some other objectives”, and so it was important to approach the analysis with an awareness that a “critical analytical stance” (May 2001:195) should be adopted, being attentive for incidences of bias by the author. Therefore, those documents studied that do contain more critical reflection on ‘the state of things’ and the behaviour of organisations have been analysed on the basis of this consideration. For the most part however, the documents analysed were ‘aspirational’ – being strategic/business plans – or

factual, so the opportunity for bias in such documents is minimal. One of the greatest benefits in studying these plans though, was in being able to compare aspirations with actions.

<b>Figure 4.2 National and Regional Level Documents Analysed</b>	
<b>Date &amp; Publisher</b>	<b>Title</b>
1999, National Assembly for Wales Economic Development Committee	Fit for the Millennium. A review of roles and responsibilities in tourism in Wales
1999, Ceredigion County Council	South West Wales Tourism Strategy
WTB, 1999	Achieving Our Potential: A report of the consultation process
2000, Stevens & Associates	Review of Roles and Responsibilities
2000, WTB	Achieving Our Potential
2001, WTB	Corporate Plan 2002/2003 – 2004/2005
2001, WLGA	WLGA Coordinating Committee Secretary's Report
2001, WLGA	Memorandum of Understanding between the Wales Tourism Board and the Welsh Local Government Association
2001, WLGA & WDA	Memorandum of Understanding between the Welsh Development Agency and the Welsh Local Government Association
2001, Objective One West Wales and the Valleys	Regional Tourism Strategy
2001, Business On-line Wales	Assembly On-line for Business: Regional Tourism Partnerships
2001, TTFW	Tourism Training Forum for Wales Business Plan 2001-2006
2001, SNPA	Snowdonia Green Key Strategy Statement – Consultation Draft
2002, TPNW	Tourism Partnership North Wales Business Plan 2002/03
2002, WLGA	Quinquennial Review of the WTB 2001/2002
2002, BBNPA	Brecon Beacons National Park Authority Sustainable Tourism Strategy
2002, Wales Assembly Government	A Winning Wales – the National Economic Strategy of the Welsh Assembly Government
2002, WTB	Corporate Plan 2002/2003 – 2004/2005
2003, CRT	Capital Region Tourism Business Plan 2003 - 2006
2003, Locum Destination Consulting	Capital Region Tourism: A Revised Tourism Strategy for South East Wales
2003, TPNW	Tourism Strategy North Wales 2003-2008, Planning Tomorrow's Tourism Today
2003, TPMW	Business Plan for Tourism Partnership Mid Wales 2003/2004

#### 4.6.1.2 Semi-structured interviews

Following a preliminary appraisal of the relevant documents, the next step was to identify and interview the key actors who were fully immersed in the different elements of the tourism development process, especially in policy and strategy development. National and regional level actors were sought from the public, private and voluntary sectors. The investigation adopted a 'stakeholder analysis', which has been defined as,

*a holistic approach or procedure for gaining an understanding of a system, and assessing the impact of changes to that system, by means of identifying the main actors or stakeholders and assessing their respective interests in the system (Grimble & Wellard 1997:175).*

Grimble & Wellard (1997) argue that the advantage of stakeholder analysis is that it provides a methodology for gaining a better understanding of environmental and developmental problems and their interaction through comparative analysis of the different perspectives and stakeholder interests at different levels. The first step is to identify relevant stakeholder groups, but this is widely recognised as a difficult task. It can be achieved by developing a 'stakeholder map' of those with both spatial and functional reasons for inclusion. Caution is raised in developing the list of stakeholders as who forms the 'stakeholder community' tends to depend on how the issue is conceived, how its boundaries are drawn and who is perceived to have a legitimate interest. When the researcher is drawing up the list, there is an acknowledged need to make explicit the reasons for including (or excluding) certain groups because the choices made may be value laden.

In this study the documentary analysis effectively revealed the full range of national and regional level organisations and stakeholder groups that are involved in tourism in Wales, greatly simplifying the stakeholder identification process. Two documents were particularly valuable for developing the stakeholder community list: the "Fit for the Millennium" report (NAW 1999) and the "Review of Roles and Responsibilities" (Stevens & Associates 2000). Both documents clearly identified stakeholder groups and specific organisations representing those groups. Organisations, and subsequently individuals within those organisations, were therefore chosen in order to provide a cross-section of sectors, geographical area and spatial level (Fig 4.3). Respondents were chosen for being the most senior within their organisations and/or for having specific involvement in policy/strategy development. This method is defined as 'purposive sampling': "sampling in a deliberate way, with some purpose or focus in mind" (Punch 1998:193). After writing to all of the identified 'stakeholder community' with an outline summary of the focus and objectives of the research, meetings were successfully

scheduled with all but one of the potential respondents – an Assembly Member whose brief included tourism. In this case a relevant civil servant was put forward instead and an interview successfully arranged.

Figure 4.3 Key National and Regional Stakeholders Interviewed	
Organisation	Spatial Level
Wales Assembly Government, Economic Policy Division	National
Wales Tourism Board	National
Tourism Training Forum for Wales	National
Wales Tourism Alliance	National
Wales Association of Visitor Attractions	National
Wales Local Government Association	National
North Wales	Regional
Mid Wales	Regional
West Wales	Regional
South East Wales	Regional
Brecon Beacons National Park	Sub-Regional

Following, for example, Yuskel et al (1999:358) who state that “interviews can provide detailed information on the attitudes of stakeholders to tourism issues”, a semi-structured form of interviewing was deemed to be the most appropriate. Marshall & Rossman (1989) acknowledge that semi-structured interviews are used extensively by qualitative researchers. A summary of the strengths and weaknesses of this type of interviews is provided in Figure 4.4. It is said that semi-structured interviews are well suited to be applied to case studies, as the main questions can be adapted to suit different roles (i.e. policy makers and local business representatives) in order to explore their different perspectives (Drever 1995). This is of particular value for this research that investigates a range of actors at different spatial levels and from different sectors. The relatively informal style, occurring more like a normal conversation, but with a specific purpose (Kahn & Cannell 1957), importantly allows the interviewees’ perspective to unfold as he/she views it (Marshall & Rossman 1989).

This type of interview is very flexible and is suitable for gathering information and opinions, as well as for exploring peoples’ thinking and motivations, clearly of relevance to this study. Although the semi-structured nature of the interviews ensured some degree of ‘standardisation’, this was regularly complemented in practice by slight variations in both direction taken and the ‘depth’ achieved (Punch 1998). This allowed the main issues to be

addressed, whilst also allowing interviewees relative freedom to focus on what they perceived to be pertinent issues and events. In total, seven national and four regional level actors were interviewed.

Figure 4.4 Strengths and Weaknesses of Semi-Structured Interviews (Adapted from Marshall & Rossman 1989)	
Strengths	Weaknesses
Useful way to get large amounts of data quickly.	Relies on cooperation
Allows for a wide variety of information and a large number of topics to be covered.	Respondents may not be willing to share all the needed information.
Allows for immediate follow up questions for clarification of points.	Concerns about data quality due to personal biases of interviewer.
Combined with other techniques, allows researcher to check description against fact.	Large amounts of data may be difficult to process.

The data yielded by semi-structured interviews are said to be rich and they guarantee good coverage of discussion topics (Drever 1995). However, both the interview and analysis are time consuming and these require a good degree of skill. Here, the interviews lasted between one and two hours and their transcription took considerably longer. Another potential problem that needs to be considered when actually using this technique is the occurrence of bias, whereby an interviewee responds in accordance with what the interviewer “wants to hear” (Yin 1994:80). Using semi-structured interviews alongside other sources of information though, enables the researcher to corroborate data:

*no single source has a complete advantage over all the others. In fact, the various sources are highly complementary, and a good case study will therefore want to use as many sources as possible (Yin 1994:80).*

While the technique of recording and transcribing interviews is not without its critics (e.g. Stake 1995), the decision was made to tape and transcribe the interviews in full. It is acknowledged that there may be occasions where an interviewee’s anxiety over being taped may result in their stifling of responses, but this does not seem to have been a particular problem in this instance. Many of the respondents, particularly at the higher levels, stated that they had been taped in previous interviews, or had used the technique themselves, and so did not appear particularly intimidated. The interviewees seemed to speak quite freely, often appearing to welcome the opportunity to reflect on their experiences. That respondents were promised personal anonymity might have alleviated any potential anxiety over being taped.

The interviews with the carefully selected key policy community representatives at the national and regional levels produced a wealth of rich data. As these interviewees had all worked within tourism development for many years in a number of different roles, their views of the evolving situation enabled the development of a very detailed understanding of the issues under investigation. That there was a significant degree of consensus in responses indicated that these interviews provided an accurate portrayal of issues. The data provided by the interviews were “subjected to numerous readings until themes emerged” (Devine 1995:144). The interview transcriptions underwent two phases of analysis. Following an initial read through, key points raised in relation to individual questions and emerging themes were highlighted in each interview. These highlighted portions from all of the interview transcripts were then copied into a new document that was grouped by questions asked and themes. Handling the data in this way ensured a high level of familiarity with the subject matter. The analysis was therefore based on the practice of ‘coding’. By assigning labels of meaning to the data, the analyst begins by “summarizing the data by pulling different themes together” (Punch 1998:205). From here it is then possible to progress to the next stage of analysis, which involves a more inferential coding technique (Punch 1998). Here, the next stage was to compare and contrast the answers given within the themes and the questions asked. In the case of the themes, the analysis focussed on reviewing both the levels of consensus within each, as well as the most dominant themes. With regard to the questions asked, the focus was on determining the levels of consensus and discord in each case. Trends were sought in the answers given between the different sectors (public, private, voluntary), as well as the different levels (national, regional, local). The identification of themes and trends in the interview responses was informed by the broader perspective gained through the documentary analysis and the observation. Furthermore, combining the documentary evidence with the rich interview material enabled additional more intensive analysis, as it facilitated the development of two stakeholder participation case-studies – stakeholder participation in strategy development and regional level stakeholder coordination.

#### **4.6.2 Intensive research – local level**

As at the national and regional levels, semi-structured interviews and documentary analysis were important techniques applied at the local level and the same kind of questions and documents (Fig 4.5) were considered and analysed in the same way. However, as the research at the local level was to be more intensive and aimed to explore in more detail the stakeholder participation process at the implementation level, additional techniques were utilised: observation and a structured interview/survey. In total, eleven local level actors were

involved in the research between March and October 2003, including one actor who occupied multiple roles and was also interviewed as a national level representative.

**Figure 4.5 Local Level Documents Analysed**

<b>Date &amp; Publisher</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Description</b>
2001, Denbighshire County Council	The TGA Approach	Website detailing the TGA scheme
2002, Parkin et al.	Ecodyfi Development & Action Plan	The Dyfi Valley Partnership action plan
2002, Ecodyfi	Tourism News	Online Newsletter
2003, Ecodyfi	Dyfi Valley Tourism Growth Area Action Plan 2002-2004/8	
2003, Ecodyfi	Dyfi Valley Tourism Growth Area: launch and business support fair	Promotional Leaflet
2003, Ecodyfi	The Dyfi Biosphere Reserve/Area	Website pages
2003, MAB	UK Biospheres Review of Dyfi Valley	Website pages

#### 4.6.2.1 Selection of local case study

During the initial round of national and regional level interviews, one aim was to identify a potential local level case study by looking for respondents who might suggest relevant projects or who might subsequently act as key ‘gatekeepers’. It was suggested by several of the respondents that it would be valuable to study the Tourism Growth Area (TGA) scheme. Subsequent documentary analysis supported their suggestion. The scheme is a geographical development initiative designed by the WTB to stimulate tourism investment in various parts of Wales; it is explored in more detail in Chapters 5 and 7.

As there are fifteen designated TGAs, it was necessary to select one that could be investigated. The TGAs shared many characteristics, especially as they all had to satisfy criteria outlined by WTB. The challenge then, was to identify one that would be the most suitable for this research. As it was hoped that the results would be fairly representative of the experience in Wales, it was decided to study a rural TGA, as rural tourism makes up the largest part of the tourism product. It also better afforded the opportunity to consider more of the environmental aspects of sustainable tourism and also held the prospect of considering the impact of Foot and Mouth disease – something that emerged as an important contextual factor. Another key criterion for the selection of a TGA was its composition; it had to contain the right mix of participants. A further important part of the case study selection process was establishing access to a local group. It was therefore necessary to seek recommendations regarding a ‘gatekeeper’ from the initial round of national and regional level semi-structured

interviewees. Such a person was located who was in an important position and open to the idea of being involved in the research, as she had recently completed a Ph.D. herself.

After careful consideration, the Dyfi Valley Tourism Growth Area steering group was selected as a case study because it provided a good example of local level participation in the tourism development process. Interestingly, particularly in the context of this study, the Dyfi Valley TGA is located within a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve and has a specific theme of sustainability and so “the Dyfi Valley initiative is therefore a commitment to the development of tourism that is culturally, economically and environmentally sustainable” (Ecodyfi Website 2003). Further, recognising the importance of stakeholder involvement, one of its key objectives is:

*To develop systems for effective liaison and working partnerships with, and between, local businesses, organisations and individuals* (Parkin et al. 2002:5).

Of importance, the Dyfi Valley TGA involved a significant number of diverse stakeholders, many of whom were involved in its establishment. National and regional organisations such as the Wales Tourist Board and Wales Development Agency are involved, with the Regional Tourism Partnerships providing support. More locally focussed organisations are also involved, with the county councils having some input and community regeneration groups operating alongside other bodies, including local businesses. The group therefore represents a multi-level, multi-sector stakeholder collaboration (further details about this group are explored in Chapter 7). In addition to the ongoing documentary analysis, there were three phases of the local level research that involved spending a considerable amount of time in the field during 2003, spread over three separate visits to the study-area. As well as the observation that was undertaken, a total of 11 semi-structured and 10 structured interviews were completed with a representative mix of stakeholders across sectors.

#### **4.6.2.2 Observation**

Once the local case study had been identified and contact with the key gatekeeper established, attendance at a regular meeting of the stakeholder based group was established. As well as serving as an introduction to the group members, this meeting enabled the technique of observation to be employed. At this early stage in the local case study data gathering process, a ‘qualitative approach’ was adopted whereby ‘predetermined categories and classifications’ were not used (Punch 1998). The idea behind this approach is that,

*behaviour is observed as a stream of actions and events as they naturally unfold. The logic here is that categories and concepts for describing the observational data will emerge later in the research, during the analysis rather than be brought to the research, or imposed on the data from the start* (Punch 1998:185).

The main value of the observation was that it enabled an understanding of the inter-personal dynamics between group members. The experience was useful for preparing the researcher for the subsequent development of the interviews and the survey, and eventually for cross-referencing with interview and survey data. It also yielded important information about the local context and relevant documentary information, such as the list of proposed projects being considered by the group.

On subsequent visits to the study area, in what could be described as participant observation, the researcher was continually observing and recording contextual information that helped to build a picture of relevant tourism and community life. This included details such as tourist attractions, availability of tourism information, public transport, car parking facilities, provision for cyclists, dates of markets and types of produce, and number of tourism focussed shops. The researcher stayed in a campsite and a number of bed and breakfasts where informal conversations with owners also provided data that were useful for cross-referencing

#### **4.6.2.3 Interviews and survey**

As at the national and regional level, semi-structured interviews were an important part of the local level research process. Following the observed meeting, these interviews were arranged. They were conducted in the same manner as the previous interviews and similar question schedules were followed. This process developed a good relationship with participants and helped to develop a very good understanding of the local situation and how it linked to the larger spatial contexts. On returning from the field, the data were analysed as before and preparations were made for a return visit to get more specific information about the participation process.

In order to confidently assess the dynamics and success of the local process, a number of frameworks, identified in Chapter 3, were used as a basis for developing a more structured style of interview/survey: the 'propositions for guiding collaborative initiatives' (Jamal & Getz 1995); the 'collaboration process facilitating conditions' (Jamal & Getz 1995); and the 'assessment framework for local collaborations' (Bramwell & Sharman 1999). Key issues pertaining to the three different phases of partnership development – problem setting,

direction setting and implementation – as well as the scope and intensity of the collaboration were therefore considered. The survey used a five-point Likert scale, which tested levels of agreement (from strongly agree to strongly disagree) with the range of pre-determined statements (Appendix ii). The survey was delivered face-to-face in the style of a structured interview in most cases, though there were two incidences where the respondents were not able to meet a second time (due to their lack of availability during the specified period). One of these respondents completed the survey and returned it by post and the other was not subsequently returned. After the survey had been piloted with one respondent, eleven additional questions were added, which explains why in the results shown in Chapter 7, the percentages are occasionally calculated as being out of 9 instead of 10. Where the surveys were delivered with the interviewee present, the interviews were again tape-recorded and any comments made with regard to the questions were coded accordingly along with the rest of the interview data. These additional comments provided the additional benefit of adding some considerable depth to the survey. The surveys were further analysed by calculating what the majority view was in response to the statements as a percentage of respondents, whether it be either agree or strongly agree, disagree or strongly disagree, whether there was a balance between those agreeing and disagreeing, or whether the group was undecided.

Structured interviews by definition (see for example, Fontana & Frey 1994; Marshall & Rossman 1989) consist of a series of pre-established questions for which there is little, if any, room for variation in response. Open-ended questions are generally infrequent and answers are generally confined to fitting response categories that are usually pre-coded. All of the respondents receive the same questions in the same order. This limits flexibility, but neutralises the role of the interviewer, with the intention of minimising errors and increasing validity. Structured interviews are generally associated with survey work and are often used to sample a population to learn more about the distribution of characteristics or attitudes and beliefs, as was required here. It is assumed that the characteristic can be measured and they rely on the honesty and accuracy of the participants' responses.

There are limits to their usefulness for investigating tacit beliefs and deeply held values, though they can provide valuable quantitative data that describe the variability of certain features of a population (Fig 4.4). Some qualitative researchers have reacted against this type of interview, arguing that the lack of relationship and build up of trust inherent can lead to respondents saying something that is not true, as well as it being more likely that something of importance may be overlooked (Seale 1998). Conducting the structured part of the interview after the initial research gathering process mitigated this concern. By this time, familiarity and a degree of trust had been built up through prior contact with the respondent. As well as yielding valuable information in its own right, the combination of data from the

survey with other techniques, especially the semi-structured interviews, proved additionally beneficial.

Figure 4.6 Strengths and Weaknesses of Structured interviews (adapted from Marshall & Rossman 1989)	
Strengths	Weaknesses
Accuracy: enhanced by quantification, replicability, control over observer effects.	Of little value for examining complex relationships or intricate patterns of interaction.
Generalisability: known limits of error.	Cannot assure that the sample represents broader population.
Convenience: amenable to statistical analysis, comparatively easy to administer and manage.	Relatively expensive.
	May seem like an invasion of privacy or produce questionable effects in respondents.

#### 4.7 An Integrated Approach to Data Analysis

The multi-nodal methodology led to the generation of a substantial amount of data in a variety of forms. The material was analysed both collectively and independently, and was partly undertaken alongside the data collection. Beginning the review process from early on is a well-established technique in qualitative research, for “the advantages of flexibility emphasise the process of analysis as part of the fieldwork itself” (May 2001:163). In this case, preliminary analysis of the national and regional level interviews aided, for example, in the refinement of the techniques that were applied at the local level. All empirical data has been presented in a way that describes, as accurately as possible, the nature of the organisation and the respondents position without revealing their individual identity.

It is recognised that each research technique has its inherent strengths and weaknesses, and it is for this reason that most qualitative studies combine several data collection techniques (Marshall & Rossman 1989). In doing so, the weaknesses in one strategy may be compensated for by the strengths of a complimentary one (Denzin & Lincoln 1994). For example, as May (1993) identifies, a weakness with the interviewing approach is the fact that it relies on accounts of events that happened beyond the interview situation. When applied on its own therefore, acknowledgement has to be given to the danger that the data is inaccurate requiring contextualising in specific circumstances or events, or lacking clarity due to the need for the interviewer to witness the context of the event themselves. Thus, although the interview-generated results were the main source of data, had this been the only method applied, then provision would have to be made for a far greater degree of uncertainty regarding validation. The value of triangulating data has therefore been realised by this

investigation, especially at the local level, with the interviews, the survey and observation, all contributing to a very good appreciation of the issues under investigation, as well as enabling a high degree of validity to be attached to the conclusions reached. Satisfaction in the ability to make accurate statements about events and issues was gained by cross-referencing experiential evidence with recorded discussions, documentary analysis and survey responses. Further confidence in this multi-nodal approach is gained by familiarity of its use in similar studies. A topical example is found in the work of Selin & Myers (1998) who investigated tourism-marketing alliances by interviewing coalition members, conducting a mailed survey and systematically examining secondary sources to address their research questions. Yet despite this, it is worth noting a more specific problem for the use of interviews in this context. In drawing empirical evidence from the policy community and particularly from the participants in the local partnership, it should be acknowledged that their responses are based on their subjective criticisms of their collective performance. As Entwistle et al. (2007:77) recognise in their appraisal of the use of interviews in their assessment of partnership working, the respondents may simply “have got it wrong”. How aware the respondents are of their own and their organisations failings, and how well placed they are to assess the effectiveness of the collaboration is perhaps difficult to assess.

*There is, in short, a danger that, when asked about the problems of partnership working, partners will inevitably pin the blame on someone else. Without an analysis of the objective measures of the outcomes of collaboration or at least some alternative perspectives perhaps from external observers of the partnerships in question, we cannot know what weight should be attached to the partner's critique of their partnership (Entwistle et al. 2007:77).*

In writing up the themes and trends that have emerged from the empirical research, the proceeding analytical chapters will be guided by the conceptual framework. In clarifying the value of applying the conceptual framework, the approach adopted in each of the three empirical chapters can be summarised as follows. Chapter 5 explores the driving forces behind moves to develop stakeholder participation by identifying the stakeholders and the policy context. Chapter 6 explores the impacts of the policies on the national and regional level stakeholders and identifies the key coordinating structures and mechanisms. Chapter 7 then investigates what the real impacts are at the local implementation level and in considering the participation process, explores further the challenges and benefits of partnership working.

## Chapter 5

### **Tourism in Wales: Crisis, Institutional Design and Policy Making for a Diffuse and Complex, Multi-sectoral and Multi-level Industry**

*More research is needed on how different policy and planning systems have affected attempts at collaborative tourism planning (Bramwell & Lane 2000:339).*

#### **5.1 Introduction**

In order to identify the driving forces behind tourism in Wales, it is necessary to consider who the stakeholders are and how they are identified. It is also crucial to examine the policies in place and other contextual issues that impact on the tourism development process and stakeholder participation in it. Drawing largely on information from analysis of various policy and consultation documents, as well as on selected evidence from interviews conducted with key national and regional level tourism stakeholders, this chapter begins to address the main research questions of the thesis.

The chapter firstly introduces the range of key public, private and voluntary sector organisations (aspects, such as the formation and function, of these organisations are given fuller consideration in Chapter 6). It then importantly investigates the process developed to improve coordination from a Welsh Office review, initiated in December 1998, to the restructuring of communications within the Welsh tourism industry and establishment of key regional coordinating bodies, which became operational in April 2002. The chapter also analyses national and regional policy and strategy documents for their identification of coordination issues and their use of stakeholder and collaboration language, as well as looking at how those documents were developed. A local level strategic planning initiative is introduced to demonstrate how aspects of national strategy are transposed to the implementation level and then the use of funding to influence activities is considered. Finally, preliminary conclusions are drawn based on the main research questions, which are investigated further in the following chapters that continue to explore the effects of the policies on stakeholder participation.

## 5.2 Contextual Information

GDP	7.0%
Value	£2.6billion
Volume	10.9 million tourism trips
Jobs	100,000 direct jobs

The main defining feature in terms of tourist attraction is the natural environment, with Wales being the home to three of the UK's fourteen National Parks. Apart from tourism in the south-east, which includes Cardiff and its high percentage of event based tourism (as a result of the Millennium Stadium), much of the tourism in Wales is based on the environment and is therefore located in rural areas. As such a very high proportion of small businesses are involved in making up the tourism product, compounding the fragmented nature of the industry. While other significant contributors to GDP, like manufacturing are in decline, the expectation is that tourism's contribution will increase from 7% in 2001 to 8% in 2010, creating an additional 15,000 full-time equivalent jobs beyond the 100,000 already employed (WTB 2001). While changes in methods for calculating the number of trips and tourist expenditure in the UK make it difficult to accurately assess trends between 2002 and 2005, a marked increase in both trips and expenditure in Wales is apparent between 2004 and 2005 (Fig 5.2). It is also interesting to note that other regions in the UK seem to have experienced declines.

Figure 5.2 The UK Tourism Market (Visit Wales 2007)

**2005 DATA (UK and WALES)**

A change in methodology and contractor commissioned to undertake the survey took place in early 2005. Therefore year-on-year comparisons will not be fully valid. The full results for 2005 are still being calculated so the figures below are merely an early indication and should be treated as provisional. To calculate full year results for 2005, results from the two different surveys needed to be combined. Figures for the early part of the year were referenced back to 2002; this was agreed as a suitable base year by the four National Tourist Boards. The table below therefore supplies percentage changes between 2002 and 2005 for comparison purposes as well as 2004 to 2005 comparisons.

**WALES - UNITED KINGDOM TOURISM SURVEY RESULTS 2002 & 2005**

Based on data derived from the United Kingdom Tourism Survey. The data is derived from a sample survey, which is subject to normal errors.

**Jan-Dec 2005 vs Jan-Dec 2002 comparison**

Trips taken in:	Trips (millions)			Bednights (millions)			Expenditure (£ millions)		
	2002	2005	% change	2002	2005	% change	2002	2005	% change
Destination:									
England	134.90	111.19	-17.6	415.8	340.8	-18.0	22,659	17,832	-21.3
Scotland	18.54	14.87	-19.8	64.5	54.0	-16.2	4,014	3,063	-23.7
Wales	11.95	11.29	-5.5	39.8	39.5	-0.8	1,682	1,764	+4.9
Northern Ireland	2.80	2.56	-8.5	9.3	8.6	-8.3	572	441	-22.9

**Jan-Dec 2005 vs Jan-Dec 2004 comparison**

Trips taken in:	Trips (millions)			Bednights (millions)			Expenditure (£ millions)		
	2004	2005	% change	2004	2005	% change	2004	2005	% change
Destination:									
England	101.42	111.19	+9.6	314.0	340.8	+8.5	19,561	17,832	-8.8
Scotland	14.38	14.87	+3.4	52.4	54.0	+3.1	3,262	3,063	-6.1
Wales	8.89	11.29	+27.0	31.5	39.5	+25.4	1,539	1,764	+14.6
Northern Ireland	2.28	2.56	+12.3	8.5	8.6	+1.2	491	441	-10.2

### 5.2.1 Identifying the tourism community

In order to conduct research into tourism's stakeholders it is obviously necessary to identify who they may be. As part of this investigation is concerned with the stakeholder management capabilities that exist in Wales, one of the research questions is concerned with how groups are identified and by whom. Analysis of key documents (e.g. WTB 2001; Stevens & Associates 2000), the WTB web site ("Who's Who in Tourism"), and interviews with key organisations, has identified a list of key organisations and groups that have recognised roles within the tourism policy community. Tourism is a virtually inescapable phenomenon in modern life, although it is perhaps so embedded that many will not fully realise its impacts. This makes the list of potential stakeholders almost unending, while in reality only a relatively small number proclaim and contest their stake. It is evident that stakeholders are identified in two ways: by the operations of strategically focussed organisations; and by self-selection – stakeholders recognising their own stake and contesting it by participation in tourism development processes like public consultations, joining tourism associations or requesting admission to databases. While "there are many organisations whose remits influence the environment for tourism" (Policy Officer, WTB 2003), it is acknowledged by some that there are only two key stakeholder groups – the host community and the tourists in a "symbiotic relationship" (RTP representative 2003) – which probably includes most of the population at one time or another.

Communities are recognised as the "bedrock" and people like corner shop and petrol station owners are also recognised as "stakeholders in the local tourism economy" (Davies, SWWTP 2003). Local people who play host to tourism tend to be referred to as communities and partly as a result of the recent drive for Integrated Quality Management<sup>7</sup> (IQM) – a European tourism initiative – there are examples of where "people within hot spots have come together as communities to develop the tourism product" (RTP representative 2003). In rural areas, the farming community is also identified as an important stakeholder group, as some farms have diversified to incorporate tourism activities and/or have responsibilities for maintaining rights of way for walkers.

Another tourism stakeholder group identified by the processes of interviews is the customer or consumer – "they are the most important, they are what will make tourism sustainable" (RTP representative 2003). Customer power is apparently now very strong. In the past, the worst that they could do was not return to a destination. Now, with the use of the Internet, they can influence each other's decisions a great deal (RTP representative 2003).

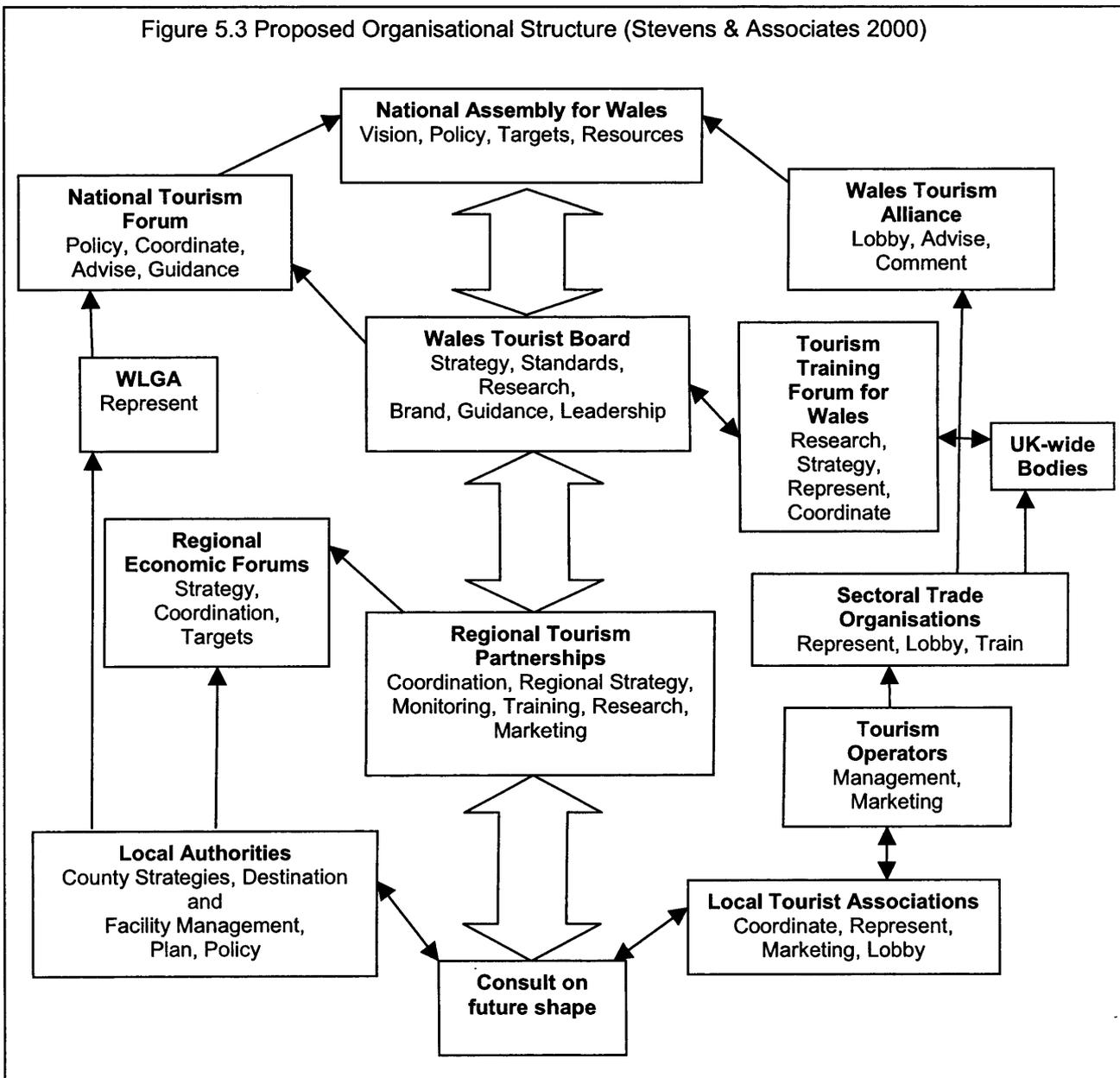
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<sup>7</sup> IQM is defined as a process of progressively improving the quality of the visitor experience while securing the economic, cultural and environmental benefits for the destination.

However, this group is largely, although not completely, missing from the documentary material produced by the tourism organisations involved in the study, and completely absent from any planning process encountered by the investigation. There are clearly understandable practical reasons for this as tourists are only such for the time that they are ‘on holiday’ and it is therefore difficult to involve them in ongoing processes. The only real way that tourists’ views are considered is through survey work. The customer and the host community then are frequently described as the two key stakeholder groups – “the twin anchors that pull us back down to everything” (RTP representative 2003).

The recent structural change that took place within Welsh tourism, subsequently explored in more detail, has heightened awareness of different stakeholder groups and the need to account for different views. During the debates that took place prior to the establishment of the restructuring and the creation of four Regional Tourism Partnerships (RTPs – explained in detail later), fundamental importance appears to have been placed on the need for greater coordination between all stakeholders, but particularly between the public and private sectors – the ‘agencies’ and the ‘trade’. The restructuring process was useful in terms of considering the range and types of organisations that are involved in tourism. It describes a range of key organisations and groups involved in tourism development and is a fairly accurate representation of the network connections identified during the study period (see Fig 5.3). The following sections introduce these ‘stakeholders’.

Figure 5.3 Proposed Organisational Structure (Stevens & Associates 2000)



## 5.2.2 Key public sector organisations

### *The National Assembly for Wales/Welsh Assembly Government*

*A lot of people have been critical of what the Assembly has achieved, but it has done a lot for tourism* (national level trade representative 2003).

Tourism in Wales is a devolved function, coming under the direct responsibility of the National Assembly for Wales. As a key economic driver in many parts of Wales, tourism is part of the Economic Development Minister's portfolio in the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG). The Minister – along with the twelve Economic Development Committee members – sets the budgets and targets and monitors progress made in achieving goals. It is the aim of the Welsh Assembly Government to:

*achieve a prosperous Welsh economy that is dynamic, inclusive and sustainable, based on successful, innovative business with highly skilled, well motivated people* (WAG 2002:2).

The Assembly foresees the “dynamic development of our country's green economy” (WAG 2002:1) and recognises that “Wales's environment is in every sense an asset” (2002:14). WAG appears to see a link between “Wales's superb natural environment” and tourism as part of its plan for Wales to “be a showcase of sustainable economic development” (2002:14). The intention to enhance tourism's contribution to the rural economy in particular is stated, with the Assembly wishing to “strengthen the contribution of tourism to the rural economy by stimulating investment, promoting partnership activity and encouraging integrated quality management initiatives” (2002:18). The stage is therefore set at the highest level for tourism development to be based on quality, partnership and sustainability. The level of funding given by the Assembly to the Wales Tourist Board (WTB) is investigated subsequently.

### *Wales Tourist Board*

From the establishment of the National Assembly for Wales until 2005, the WTB was an Assembly Sponsored Public Body (ASPB) or a ‘quango’ (quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisation), answerable to the Minister for Economic Development. In 2005, a ‘bonfire of the quangos’ (considered in more detail later in this chapter), saw WTB being fully absorbed into the Assembly. Since 2006 it has been a government department, called Visit Wales. Through an Annual Remit letter the Assembly issued WTB with detailed instructions and economic policy demands. Since devolution, the Assembly was insistent that

WTB worked closely with a number of other ASPBs as well as other organisations, with the aim of increasing the percentage of GDP contributed to the Welsh economy by 1%.

*Often we will say, as defined in this [Remit Letter] document, we want you to work with the WDA etcetera to identify strategically important tourism projects, big projects that will have a big impact and put Wales on the map. So, colleagues who give grants will work in partnership with the WTB, WDA etcetera (civil servant, WAG 2003).*

The WTB was set up under the Development of Tourism Act 1969 and its role was to “support the industry and to provide the appropriate strategic framework within which private enterprise can achieve sustainable growth and success, so improving the social and economic well-being of Wales” (WTB 2002). According to its mission statement, the WTB aimed to achieve this through the effective marketing and development of tourism. It saw the future of the tourism industry as being:

*A mature, confident and prosperous industry which is making a vital and increasing contribution to the economic, social, cultural and environmental well-being of Wales by achieving sustainable growth through effective coordination and collaboration at all levels in the industry (WTB 2002).*

The “four pillars” or “themes” that drive the national strategy, called “Achieving our Potential”, are quality, sustainability, competitiveness and partnership, which WTB believes are in line with tourism thinking across the UK.

*...one of the four major themes of the strategy is sustainability, the other three major themes being, Quality, Competitiveness and Partnership. I don't think there's anything hugely radical about those themes as far as tourism development and marketing is concerned. I think if you reach for any tourism strategy from any part of the UK, you'd probably come up with at least two or three of those themes (Policy Officer, WTB 2003).*

The WTB's four key policy objectives for the period 2002 to 2005 are:

1. To increase tourism expenditure all year round by marketing Wales effectively;
2. To improve visitor satisfaction by encouraging improved quality and standards in tour facilities;
3. To encourage higher levels of competitiveness, service delivery, innovation and profitability in the industry;
4. To encourage the sustainable growth of tourism through effective partnership working.

Specifically, the strategic vision for tourism is outlined as (WTB Corporate Plan 2002/2003 – 2004/2005):

- Creating a distinctive image/brand for Wales;
- Strategic approach to tourism investment;
- Extending the tourism season;
- Growing short holidays to Wales and maintaining long holidays;
- Increasing the value of overseas tourism to Wales;
- Clarifying roles and responsibilities;
- Maximising benefits from technological change;
- Improving training and competitiveness;
- Targeting high spend growth markets.

WTB likes to see itself as a stakeholder, rather than just as the leader of tourism in Wales:

*In any discussion with other stakeholder groups, we've learned from bitter experience that it doesn't really help tourism, help us, to try and position ourselves at the head of the pile. I think we have a role, a very important role within, at the strategic development and marketing of tourism, but from that point of view there are many others out there who have any equally important role as well, and I certainly wouldn't want to see us at the apex (Policy Officer, WTB 2003).*

### ***Regional Tourism Partnerships***



WTB 2002

Four Regional Tourism Partnerships (RTPs) were set up by in 2002 to manage a greater devolved budget from the WTB in order to direct the way tourism is developed within each area in Wales - north, mid, south-west and south-east. The RTPs are an important development in the coordination of tourism in Wales and as such are given detailed consideration in following sections. The RTP boundaries match the existing Regional Economic Forum areas. Although each partnership is an independent limited company, they are run by an elected board, with constitutionally written, equal representation from the public and private sectors – including Local Authorities, National Park Authorities and trade organisations. So they are not entirely public sector organisations, but they are included in this section as they are run on government funds, as well as being distinctly different from trading organisations. The RTPs are charged with developing regional

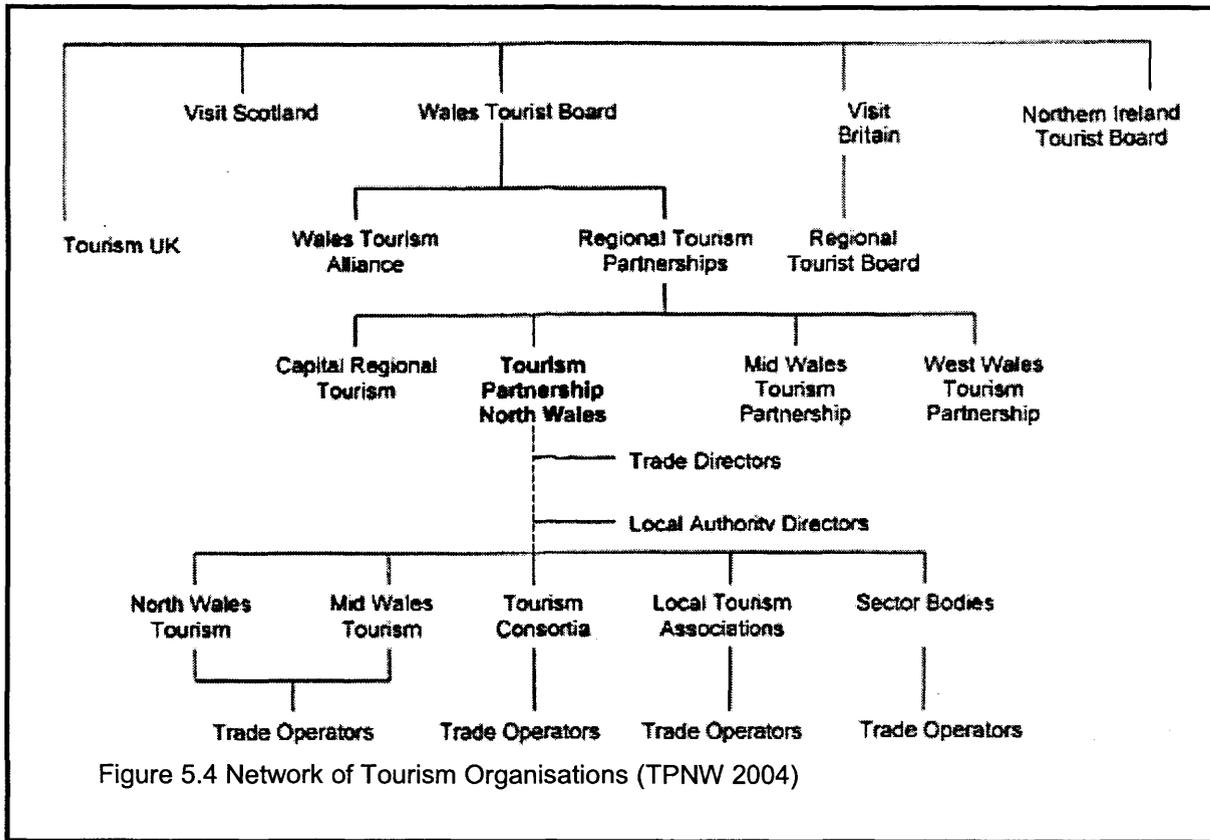
policy and implementing regionally prioritised projects, and as such begin to reflect appreciation for some of the issues identified in the tourism literature about the need for increased localisation of planning. Of the organisations investigated, the RTPs, with their strategic overviews and apparent participative cultures appear, from the interviews conducted and their published material (printed and web based), to have given particular thought to identification of tourism stakeholders, as well as partners. Their emerging role as regional coordinators charged with delivering strategic outcomes appears to necessitate this identification.

### ***Tourism Partnership North Wales (TPNW)***

The mission statement of Tourism Partnership North Wales is “Enhancing North Wales’ tourism economy through partnership, planning tomorrow’s tourism today”. From the title of its 1998 strategy document, “Cooperating to Compete”, it is possible to speculate that the idea of improving cooperation has been an issue for a number of years. A more recent Business Plan aims, amongst other things, to:

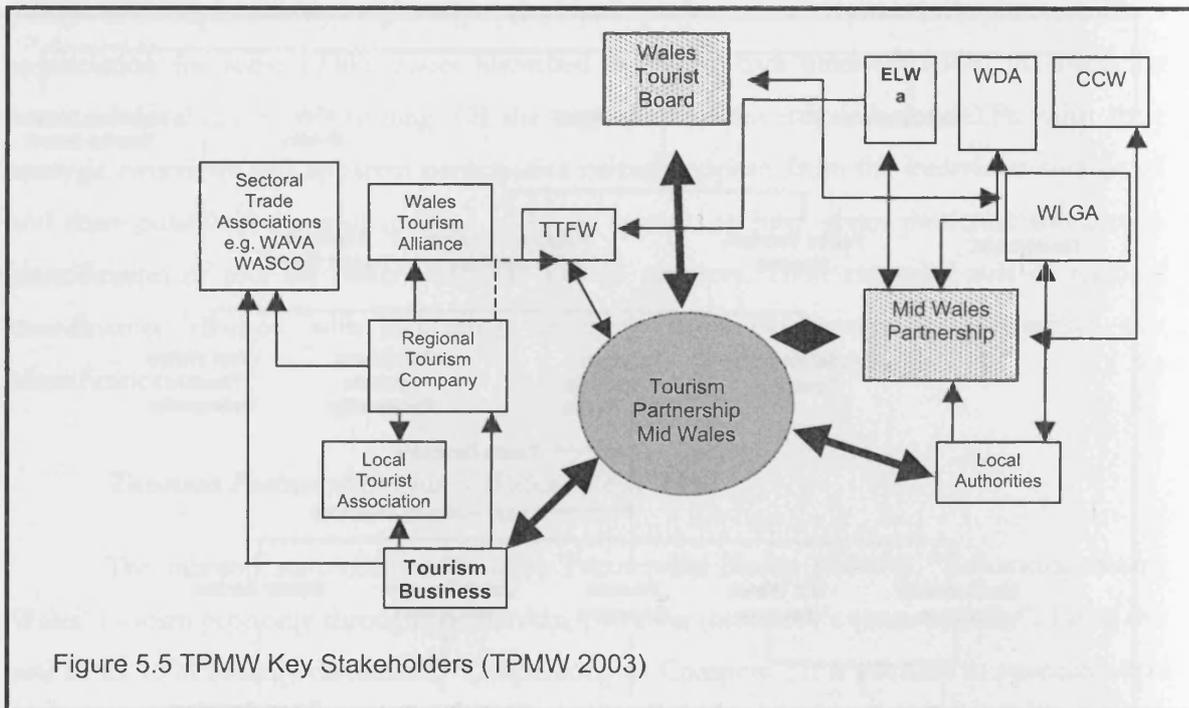
*embrace a sustainable approach to tourism development which benefits society, involves local communities and enhances Wales’ unique environmental and social assets (TPNW 2002:16).*

In north Wales, tourism brings in £595 million to the economy and the role of this partnership is to ensure that this figure continues to grow by capitalising on the area’s unique appeal and character. A critical success factor is stated in its business plan as being the formation of an effective partnership. The North Wales Tourism Partnership is directed by the previous Managing Director of North Wales Tourism – the Regional Tourism Company (RTC) that existed prior to restructuring. The following diagram (Fig 5.4), found on TPNW’s website and in its policy document, demonstrates that the organisation has given some thought to calls its “network of tourism organisations” .



### *Tourism Partnership Mid Wales (TPMW)*

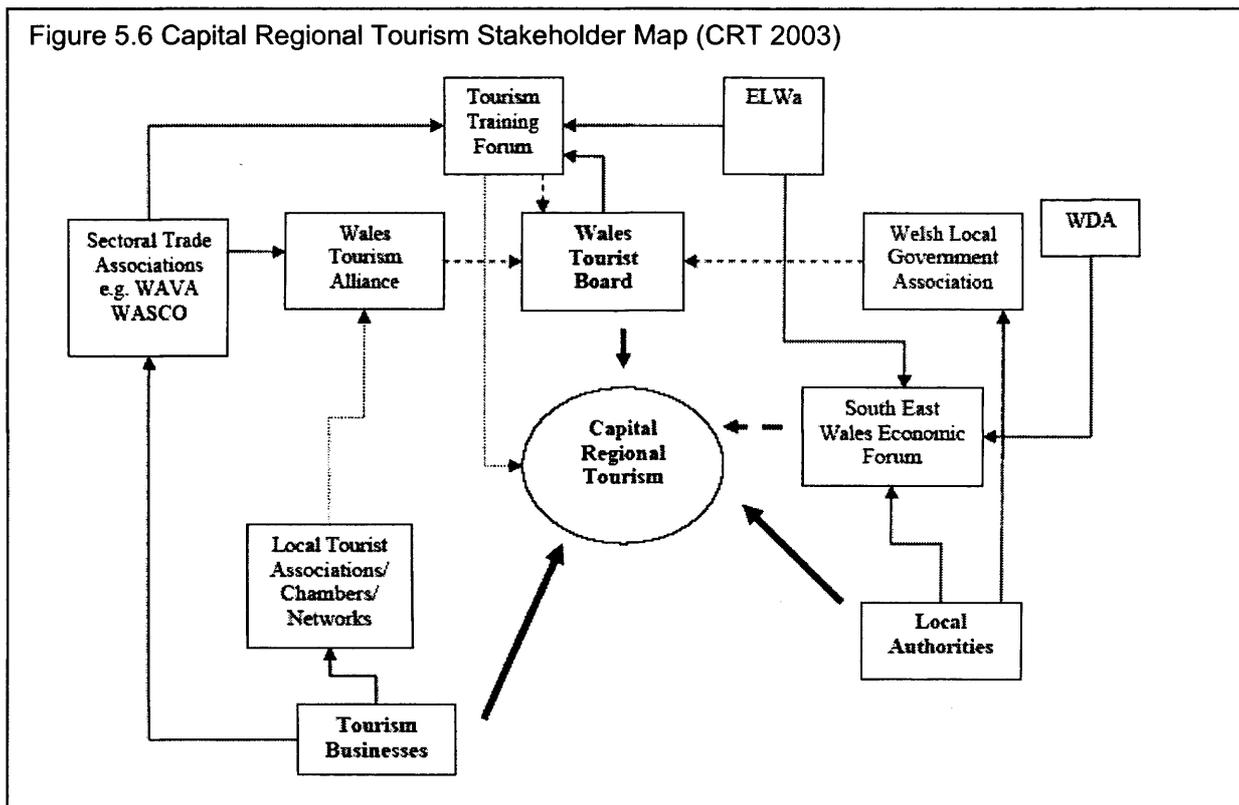
The current RTP business plan has developed from the priorities of “Naturally Different”, the previous strategy for the area. It is centred on the natural environment as the prime tourism asset and urges its careful management and protection as a priority. The immediate challenge for this partnership is to stimulate renewed business and prosperity following the devastating effects of the Foot and Mouth disease outbreak on what is a totally rural tourism product. Tourism currently contributes £298 million to the mid Wales economy and is a vital employer to the region. Although the Brecon Beacons National Park (BBNP) straddles three RTP boundaries, TPMW is actually taking the lead on the BBNP, while aiming to fully involve the others in policy development and discussion. Cross border issues are intended to be dealt with “flexibly” (Policy Officer, BBNP 2002). Director of the Mid Wales Tourism Partnership moved from being the Senior Tourism Officer with Anglesey County Council. TPMW has also given some thought to mapping its stakeholder connections (Fig 5.5).



### *Capital Region Tourism (CRT)*

This partnership's region is the most urban of the four and includes the capital city Cardiff. It is the smallest region geographically, which the CRT believes "means there is more imperative for cooperation amongst all of the tourism stakeholders" (CRT 2003b:10). Currently tourism brings in £436 million to the area. The challenge is to capitalise on Cardiff's current success in attracting big name events into the capital, and extend the benefits further afield, developing the region into a true gateway to the rest of Wales. The intended actions focus heavily on marketing/product packaging, with the industrial heritage of the region being emphasised. The partnership's director was previously Managing Director of Tourism South and West Wales – the former Regional Tourism Company. Again, this RTP has also mapped its organisational communications (Fig 5.6).

Figure 5.6 Capital Regional Tourism Stakeholder Map (CRT 2003)



### *South West Wales Tourism Partnership (SWWTP)*

The southwestern region of Wales consists of some of the best coastal scenery in the UK, as well as great swathes of inland green pastureland. Tourism currently contributes £477 million to the southwest Wales economy. Once established, SWWTP used the previous South West Wales Integrated Regional Tourism Strategy (1998) as the basis for tourism development and now recognises that the “four key themes of the national policy – sustainability, partnership, quality and competitiveness – are essential principles underlying the strategy” (SWWTP 2003:2). The region is said to have some “excellent strengths on which to build, including a solid structure for and clear commitment to public-private partnership (SWWTP:2003:1-2). The RTP’s director previously managed the National Botanic Garden’s marketing strategy and also worked for the National Trust in Wales. He welcomes tourism for the benefits it brings in terms of helping to support local services, heritage and the environment and calls for “all stakeholders in tourism in the region” to be “committed to its sustainable development (SWWTP 2003:2,6).

### ***Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) and Local Authorities***

The Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) was established on 1st April 1996, following the reorganisation of local government in Wales (WLGA 2004). The WLGA represents the interests of local authorities in Wales. The three Combined Fire Authorities and three National Park Authorities are associate members. The WLGA is a constituent part of the Local Government Association, but retains full autonomy in dealing with Welsh affairs. It exists to promote local democracy and represents the interests of local authorities in Wales. The Association's primary purposes are to promote better local government and to support member and associate member authorities in the development of policies and priorities that will improve public services and democracy. Unlike other economic sectors, the WLGA devotes particular attention to tourism because of the involvement of all local authorities in providing tourism infrastructure and regulation, as well as tourism's general importance to so many local economies (WLGA 2003).

The local authorities "are fairly big players" in Wales, with each local authority having a tourism officer and spending "tourism-related resources" (RTP representative 2003). On reflection, nearly everything the local authorities do – planning, education, leisure and environment protection for example – can have some kind of influence on tourism. The design of the RTP boards, explored subsequently, ensures that both the trade and the local authorities are integrated into the tourism development process. Each board therefore has between 4 and 10 local authority representatives (depending on the number of authorities in the region), National Park Authority representatives where relevant, and an equal number of business representatives.

#### **5.2.3 Key voluntary sector organisations**

##### ***Tourism Training Forum for Wales***

From February 1998, the Tourism Training Forum for Wales (TTFW) operated as a voluntary partnership and after a review in June 2000, was established as an independent limited company. Its mission is to:

*provide leadership, guidance and coordination for tourism training and education in Wales, for the benefit of all individuals, businesses, communities and education and training providers that have a stake in the tourism industry in Wales (TTFW 2001:2).*

It is comprised of representatives of the industry, WTB, TECs, WLGA, Further and Higher education, Trade Unions, CADw, Sports Council for Wales, Arts Council of Wales, Council of Welsh Museums, RTCs, National Training Organisations, and careers advisors. Its strategy has identified a range of priorities for action involving improved coordination between the education and business sectors in training, human resource development and enhancing the image of jobs in tourism and hospitality. The current Board is made up of representatives from (TTFW 2004): TTFW, Welsh Mountain Zoo, Associated Quality Services, Agri-Food Partnerships in Wales, Fourcroft Hotel (Tenby), WTB, Cambrian Training Company, and Springboard Wales.

TTFW's business plan 2001-2006 identifies its "stakeholders and customers" as:

- Tourism businesses, individually and collectively;
- People working in the industry and/or studying tourism;
- Communities in Wales where tourism is a significant economic activity;
- Politicians and funding bodies;
- Education and training agencies and providers – public and private sector;
- Economic development agencies – WTB, WDA;
- Sector Skills Councils with at tourism interest.

#### **5.2.4 Key private sector organisations**

##### ***'The Trade'***

Collectively known as 'the trade', the wide range of businesses that make up the tourism product are described as "a key part" in delivery, being at "the coal face" (RTP representative 2003). According to WTB there are between 5000 and 10000 tourism businesses in Wales. This admittedly vague assessment is attributed to "poor statistics" and "the problems we've got with defining a tourism business" – for example, a taxi driver may earn 50% of his income from tourists, but the way the national statistics are enumerated, the driver probably would not be counted as a tourism business (Policy Officer, WTB 2003). Increasing the potential number of tourism businesses further and demonstrating uncertainties within the sector, each of the RTP directors estimates that each region has around 5000-6000. Evidently knowing all of the tourism stakeholders in Wales with any accuracy is not currently possible. Particularly in the Capital Region, retailers are identified as "fundamentally important" stakeholders as more money is spent by tourists in shops there than on food and accommodation (RTP representative 2003). These retailers, although considered to be tourism stakeholders, do not

actually tend to participate in tourism development processes and may therefore be considered as part of the range of non-participating or inactive stakeholders.

### ***Tourism Associations***

In addition to the individual business stakeholders, there is a wide range of local level tourism associations (TAs) operating for the collective benefit of those businesses. There were tourism associations working in Wales 150 years ago (RTP representative 2003). Now, the size and efficacy of the TAs appears to differ across Wales. In mid Wales “there aren’t any strong tourism associations, although there’s quite a lot of small ones” (national level trade representative 2003). On its database, the MWTP records 81 tourism associations but it believes that of these, only 40 are actually active (RTP representative 2003). It seems to be that part of the problem with the TAs is that they are generally run on a voluntary basis “often reliant on one person driving them forward, and if that person disappears, so does the tourism association” (national level trade representative 2003). Newly forming tourism associations face a perennial problem of finding people to organise them (National Park representative 2003). In south west Wales the TAs are stronger and are now being supported by their RTP to become key organisations through which tourism can be coordinated. And in north Wales, very long standing TAs exist – “Llandudno tourism association has been going for over a hundred years and you could argue that they were good models of stakeholder collaboration before the tourist board and anything else” (RTP representative 2003).

### ***Wales Tourism Alliance***

In order to bring some coherence to the voice of the tourism industry, Wales Tourism Alliance (WTA) was formed in 2002 and has since then become recognised by decision-makers as the voice of the industry in Wales (WTA 2004). In effect it brings together a wide-ranging group of tourism industry associations and representative organisations to assist the development of the industry and ensure its concerns were represented in the post devolution climate.

*For too long Tourism has been depicted as a fragmented industry; the launch of WTA Ltd has ensured a coordinated, pan-Wales approach to all trade matters (national level trade representative 2004).*

The Alliance brings together a range of tourism associations with an interest in lobbying the Assembly on related matters and believes that “the tourism industry must be involved in the

decision-making process on matters that affect us all". Its aims are currently based on its three policies (WTA 2002):

1. Tourism must be included within the Economic Development subject area of the Assembly. It should have its own sub-committee.
2. The industry demands a dedicated and separate national organisation, provided with sufficient funds for development and promotion.
3. The Wales Tourism Alliance should have an advisory role to the Economic Development Tourism sub-committee and to the four Regional Fora.

The outgoing chairman of the Alliance believes that "tourism is the one industry which has the potential to bring sustainable economic growth to all corners of Wales", based on indigenous small and medium sized enterprises who are "committed to supporting local suppliers and jobs" (Baird-Murray 2002). The trade and industry organisations that make up the membership of the WTA are:

- Antur Cymru
- Association of Welsh Agents
- British Hospitality Association
- British Home & Holiday Park Association
- The Camping and Caravanning Club
- The Caravan Club
- Farm Stay UK
- Federation of Small Businesses
- Forum for Small Serviced Accommodation Operators in Wales
- Mid Wales Tourism
- National Caravan Council
- North Wales Tourism
- South West Wales Tourism Associations
- Tourism Training Forum for Wales
- Wales Association of Self-Catering Operators
- Wales Official Tourist Guides Association
- Welsh Association of Visitor Attractions
- Youth Hostels Association

#### ***Wales Association of Visitor Attractions (WAVA)***

The Welsh Association of Visitor Attractions was formed to support and represent visitor attraction operators. It provides networking opportunities for operators to discuss problems and share experience. It also ensures that information relevant to the industry is shared through its biannual conferences, through e-mail links with members and through newsletters. The Association also represents the interests of attractions to bodies such as the British Tourist Authority, the Wales Tourist Board and the Regional Tourism Partnerships, raising issues of concern and encouraging the widest possible support for attractions in

strategy development and implementation and the proper consideration of attractions in all marketing and development plans.

### ***Wales Association of Self-Catering Operators (WASCO)***

On the 19th May 1994 the Wales Tourist Board convened a Wales National Self-Catering Conference. The meeting voted overwhelmingly for the formation of a trade organisation to represent their interests. Following extensive consultation with the trade, The Wales Association of Self-Catering Operators or WASCO was launched in 1995 (WASCO 2004). Now, WASCO acts as a voice of self-catering in Wales and works through WTA as a focus/pressure group in advancing the needs of tourism and in making local authorities, National Assembly and Westminster aware of the needs and problems of tourism. WASCO's membership comprises of one-cottage operators to large agencies operating though out Wales. Members have previous diverse careers in other fields, resulting in a potential pool of talent that could be called upon by the tourism industry. Membership is open to any person or organisation who owns, manages or lets holiday accommodation (other than caravans or tents) in Wales. Members must have applied to participate in the Wales Tourist Boards Grading Scheme within one year of joining.

#### **5.2.5 Other organisations**

In addition to those organisations illustrated by the organisational structure provided near the beginning of this chapter (Fig 5.3), the WTB and other organisations also refer to a range of bodies that are frequently termed “partners” throughout their literature. National government agencies not mentioned on the above structure diagram who participate in tourism development, sometimes through regional branches are: Welsh Development Agency (WDA), Education and Learning Wales (ELWa), Arts Council of Wales, National Museum and Galleries of Wales, CADw, Welsh Sports Council, Countryside Council for Wales and the Forestry Commission. Of these, the WDA is one of the most significant in community/tourism development terms. It supports businesses and community development schemes and as such appears to be involved in several tourism development partnerships. Along with ELWa – another ASPB – and the WTB, it is also a “strategic member” of the RTPs, being encouraged during the establishment of the RTPs to appoint observers to Directors' Meetings (Cole 2003).

There are several other groups who also have roles to play: National Parks, Tourist Information Centres, and membership organisations (e.g. Mid Wales Tourism). There are also

organisations outside Wales that participate in some way. For example, WTA works with the English Tourism Alliance, and with Scotland and Northern Ireland as well as the British Hospitality Association.

### **5.3 Key Policy Factors that Frame Stakeholder Participation**

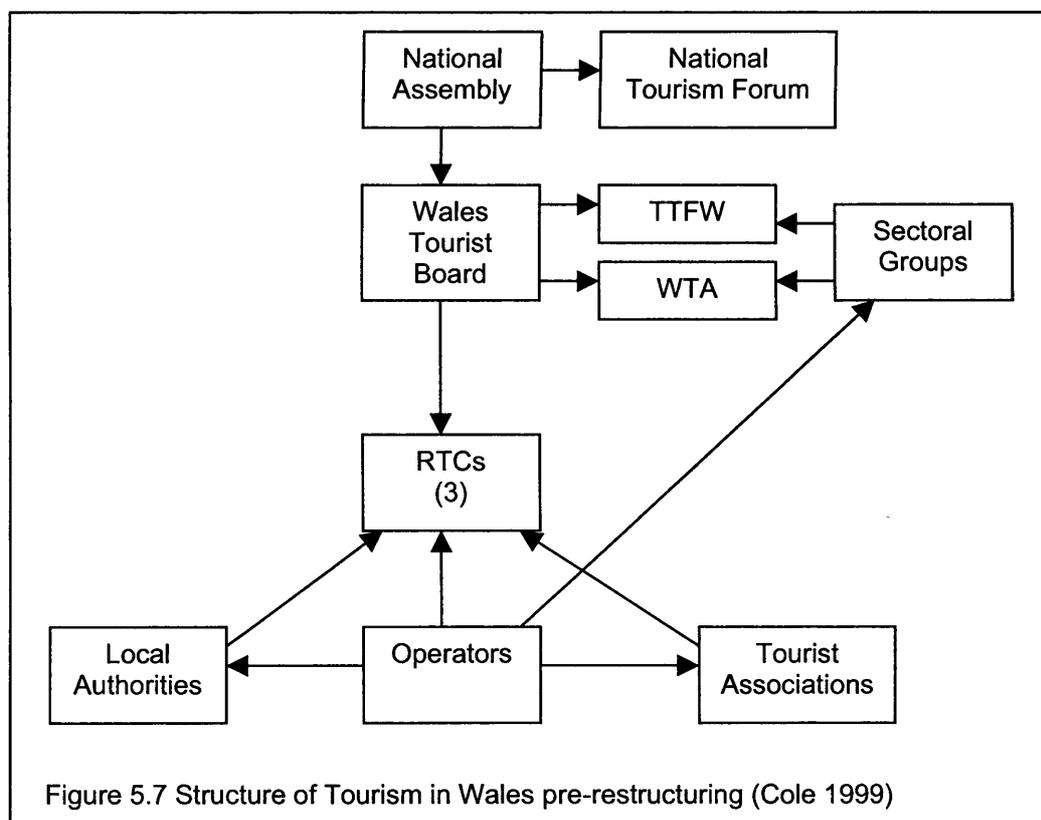
The wide variety and number of stakeholders, including those from the public, private and voluntary sectors, as well as ones that operate at the national, regional and local levels, occasionally with competing objectives, suggests that effective stakeholder participation would always be a challenge. This section therefore explores the impacts of a previously failing system and investigates attempts instigated to improve the network structure of tourism in Wales between 1999 and 2003. It might be that the growing academic and wider interest in stakeholder participation and sustainability is filtering through the tourism community, but there are other factors that are driving the enthusiasm, not just for participation but also for improved coordination stakeholders. It is identified that the following key contextual factors have provided the motivation to improve communication across the whole of the community: a restructuring process; Assembly partnership promotion; and the influence of policies, strategies and funding arrangements.

#### **5.3.1 Restructuring – the need for change: 1998-2001**

During the late 1990s, it was becoming increasingly clear that there were problems with both the existing structure of tourism in Wales and with the relationships between organisations involved. Essentially, there was a lack of adequate communication between the different groups involved in tourism development. In December 1998, the then Minister of State for the Welsh Office, Peter Hain, urgently requested that a working group, drawn from Local Authorities and tourism industry bodies, review the roles and responsibilities of the WTB, LAs and the then three Regional Tourism Companies (RTCs) – the key organisations involved in providing support to the tourism industry. The review document, completed in March 1999, recommended substantial changes to the organisational structure of tourism support and delivery. This was considered at the National Tourism Forum meeting in July 1999 and dispersed for wider consultation. However, no clear agreement on a preferred new structure emerged and the WTB therefore submitted its own views to the Assembly (Stevens & Associates 2000). The WTB analysis recognised the inadequacies of a structure in which roles and responsibilities of different organisations were unclear and that there was a lack of strategic focus at the regional level (Fig 5.7).

At the time, it was said that relationships between the three Regional Tourism Companies, the Local Authorities and the WTB were “reflective of a general lack of clarity and accountability across the entire industry. The lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities manifests itself as confusion, competition, and, to a lesser extent, conflict between stakeholders” (Stevens & Associates 2000:3). Further, others commented on the ongoing debate, stating that it had “been characterised by a somewhat emotional or self-interested response... by the various stakeholders” (Cole 1999:4). At a practical level the existing structure was causing the following criticisms, which prompted the original review (Cole 1999:5):

- Fragmentation of effort
- Poor communication and understanding
- Overlap and duplication of activity
- Parochialism
- Value for money
- Efficiency and effectiveness
- Lack of accountability
- Unnecessary competition for scarce resources



### 5.3.1.1 Identification and recognition of the problems: 1998-1999

In 1999, the National Assembly for Wales' Economic Development Committee published a consultation based report, "*Fit for the Millennium: A review of roles and responsibilities in tourism in Wales*" (EDC 1999), which this section leans heavily on. Out of consensus that emerged from the consultation process, it was decided that Welsh tourism should be re-structured in order to better organise and coordinate strategies at sub-national levels. A need was therefore generated to develop an organisational structure that established "clear, unambiguous roles and responsibilities with strong leadership at all levels" (Stevens & Associates 2000:2). It was recognised that the structure needed to be flexible enough to account for the many different types of stakeholder, yet robust enough to provide strategic leadership.

#### ***WTB issues***

Part of the frustration with the previous structure was fuelled by tourism trade organisations who were apparently dissatisfied with the actions of the WTB. However, this dissatisfaction was reportedly based on "a popular misconception by the trade" about what the WTB's role was (EDC 1999:16). Although the WTB's role was clearly defined, the trade believed that the WTB's purpose was to represent the industry. Evidently though, the WTB cannot act as a trade representative, as this could conflict with its strategic purpose – to optimise the economic and social contribution of tourism. Confusion about the roles apparently stemmed from a failure to communicate them effectively. It was therefore concluded that clearer explanation of the WTB's role would remove the "misconception" and help to improve relations between them and the trade. There was also an expectation that being clearer about its role, the WTB would be able to stay focussed as a strategic body providing direction and leadership, as well as advising government on industry needs – a role recognised as important by the newly formed Assembly. A need for a national body, which would represent the trade and lobby on its behalf, then became apparent. The Wales Tourism Alliance (WTA) established to address this need.

Reflecting further on its roles, it was recognised that the WTB undertook a number of non-core activities, including management of Quality Assurance Schemes and coordinating regional tourism strategies. While these roles may have contributed to some of the industry confusion, it was also felt that they should be reviewed for several reasons, such as establishing whether they could be undertaken more cost-effectively by another organisation or commercial company. Another issue that faced the WTB in 1999 was to do with the

emergence of the Assembly. WTB's policy role looked likely to grow due to an increasing demand to both respond to consultation papers and participate in various strategy/policy forums (such as the Regional Economic Forums). The WTB felt under-resourced to fulfil this demand.

### ***Regional Tourism Company issues***

It was reported that the Regional Tourism Companies (RTCs) had a number of conflicting roles, which were creating ongoing tensions. They were simultaneously acting as membership bodies, companies that have to trade solvently and as regional representatives of the WTB. In particular, this raised the following question: as the RTCs had a constitutional responsibility to their members, could they also act as WTB policy representatives? The dilemma that this posed, similar to that faced by WTB itself, was seen to be "at the heart of the confusion with the existing structures" (EDC 1999:17). Despite this, the role of representing their members' interests was seen as valuable, as was the opportunity for regional coordination. It was felt that these features should be maintained somehow and could be made more effective by changes in the existing structure.

Funding was another key issue for the RTCs. From their incorporation, the RTCs had received some funds from WTB and as a result of a "misguided belief by some" that after a 5 year period this would cease, concerns were raised that the RTCs could be seen as a "drain on resources", fuelling further discontent (EDC 1999:18). The RTCs had grown beyond their core funding allocation and needed a significant increase in working capital. They had had to form commercial subsidiaries. However, in order for them to take on the desirable regional strategy and marketing coordination role, they would need guaranteed levels of income. Reflecting on the experience of other membership organisations, it seemed that the idea of raising funds purely from members' subscriptions would seriously limit their activities. The regional tourist boards in England and Area Tourist Boards in Scotland, operating as companies limited by guarantee, were considered as possible models for new Welsh organisations.

### ***Local Authority issues***

Local authorities play a vital role in promoting the well being of their areas through a variety of services, including the support of tourism, although the degree to which local authorities become involved in tourism development obviously varies according to the amount of tourism in their area. The variation makes it difficult to develop a uniform

approach by local authorities and this contributed to the confusion about who does what in tourism. Considering further the operation of the local authorities, concern was expressed that they were prevented from taking a more integrated approach in respect of visitor management by departmental structure and the enforced contracting out of certain services. A new cabinet style of operation was initiated in order to achieve better integration, around the time that tourism was undergoing its structural review. From a tourism coordination perspective, one of the identified problems was the level of communication between the RTCs, WTB, the trade and local authorities. This was reportedly as a result of “the varying stances of officers and elected members and poor information flows between some of those representing local authorities at RTC meetings and the decision makers within the local authorities” (EDC 1999:19). Improved communications between the local authorities and the regional tourism bodies would therefore take an important place in the considerations of a restructuring process.

The growing interest in integrated quality management (IQM) would also be of significance to the future role of local authorities. This requires a high level of coordination and cooperation between the various local authority departments and the trade. It also requires effective liaison between them and others involved in the delivery of tourism support services. Another area of contention identified in the review of tourism, and again related to the need for improved coordination, was that of destination marketing. Many local authorities principal tourism focus was on marketing, but it was believed that an area marketing partnership level, possibly involving the RTCs (or their successors), would achieve a more efficient use of resources, including the freeing up of local authority officer time to focus on the delivery of IQM.

### ***Tourism Associations***

The lack of a standard constitution for tourism associations was of some concern to national bodies, as is the level of representativeness of some of them. There was also no national or regional structure to bring them together. Despite this, their potential to form a key link between grass roots operators and regional and national tourism bodies was identified as important. Further likely benefits included the ability to provide a forum for local authorities and locally based trade, which might develop greater coordination. The EDC therefore took the view that destination level TAs with a standard constitution should be encouraged and the idea that they may develop as branches of a regional tourism organisation was tabled.

### *Trade Bodies and the Wales Tourism Alliance*

Trade bodies based on sectoral groups were seen to have a clear remit and role to play, although it was recognised that improvement may be made by developing and formalising their links with the RTCs (or their successors) and the WTA. It was suggested that the trade bodies should also develop communication with WTB in an advisory capacity. The WTA's role of bringing the different sectors of industry together to speak in a united voice was seen as vital, but it was extremely under resourced. One option considered was for the three RTCs to merge into a national membership body with regional branches in order to speak effectively for the trade.

#### **5.3.1.2 A new approach: 2000-2001**

Reflecting on network theory, it could be interpreted that the previous structure represented a relatively less dense network and some of the main problems could be explained as a result. The fragmented nature of ties and the unidirectional flow of information between organisations clearly resulted in less efficient information exchanges, which led to confusion about roles, and it was also acknowledged that resources were used inefficiently. The low density of connections in the previous structure would also be a constraint on the system's ability to generate 'institutional norms', which would impact on the ability to deliver strategic objectives like sustainability. A further danger of a less dense network is that it would be harder for stakeholders to monitor each others actions, thus giving rise to questions of accountability, misconception of roles and distrust.

*Not working together didn't work, so let's try it the partnership way* (national level trade representative 2003).

Despite the confusion and other problems, effective collaborations were seen to be operating. Attention was drawn to the "Marketing Area Partnerships" between the WTB and the local authorities. This style of working was believed to have been well received and indicative of "the potential for strengthening a partnership approach to achieve the necessary [structural] change" (Stevens & Associates 2000:3). Further, the consultation process that eventually led to restructuring identified a number of commonly agreed principles. One of these expressed the view that "there must be a strong stakeholder culture across all partners" (Stevens & Associates 2000:4). Simultaneously the National Assembly for Wales was developing an agenda, which aimed to promote the widespread use of partnerships across and

between sectors, while placing “an increasing emphasis on the devolvement of activity to the regional level” (Policy Officer, WTB 2003). This agenda was being imposed on ASPBs through the Assembly’s Annual Remit Letters and associated funding mechanisms, as is explored later in this chapter.

The stage was therefore set for tourism in Wales to be conducted in a collaborative environment, based on an instrumental belief that better cooperation between groups and more decision-making power at the regional level would lead to a better tourism sector. Indeed, in developing its latest tourism strategy for Wales, the WTB published a series of topic papers, one of which being titled “The Benefits of Partnership” which outlined the growing view that,

*The basis for a successful tourism industry must be an effective partnership between the various organisations and individuals involved: central and local government; government agencies; voluntary organisations; private commercial sector; host community; visitors (WTB 2000:1).*

This had grown out of the previous system, in which different organisations were seen to be working less effectively as they might, due to a lack of effective coordination.

Out of consensus that emerged from the detailed “Fit for the Millennium” (EDC 1999) consultation process, it was evident that Welsh tourism would benefit from being restructured in order to better organise and coordinate strategies at sub-national levels. A need was therefore generated to develop an organisational structure, which established “clear, unambiguous roles and responsibilities with strong leadership at all levels” (Stevens & Associates 2000:2). It was recognised that the structure needed to be flexible enough to account for the many different types of stakeholder, yet robust enough to provide strategic leadership. The EDC’s report suggested a number of possible structures, although the one finally initiated is actually a variation of these.

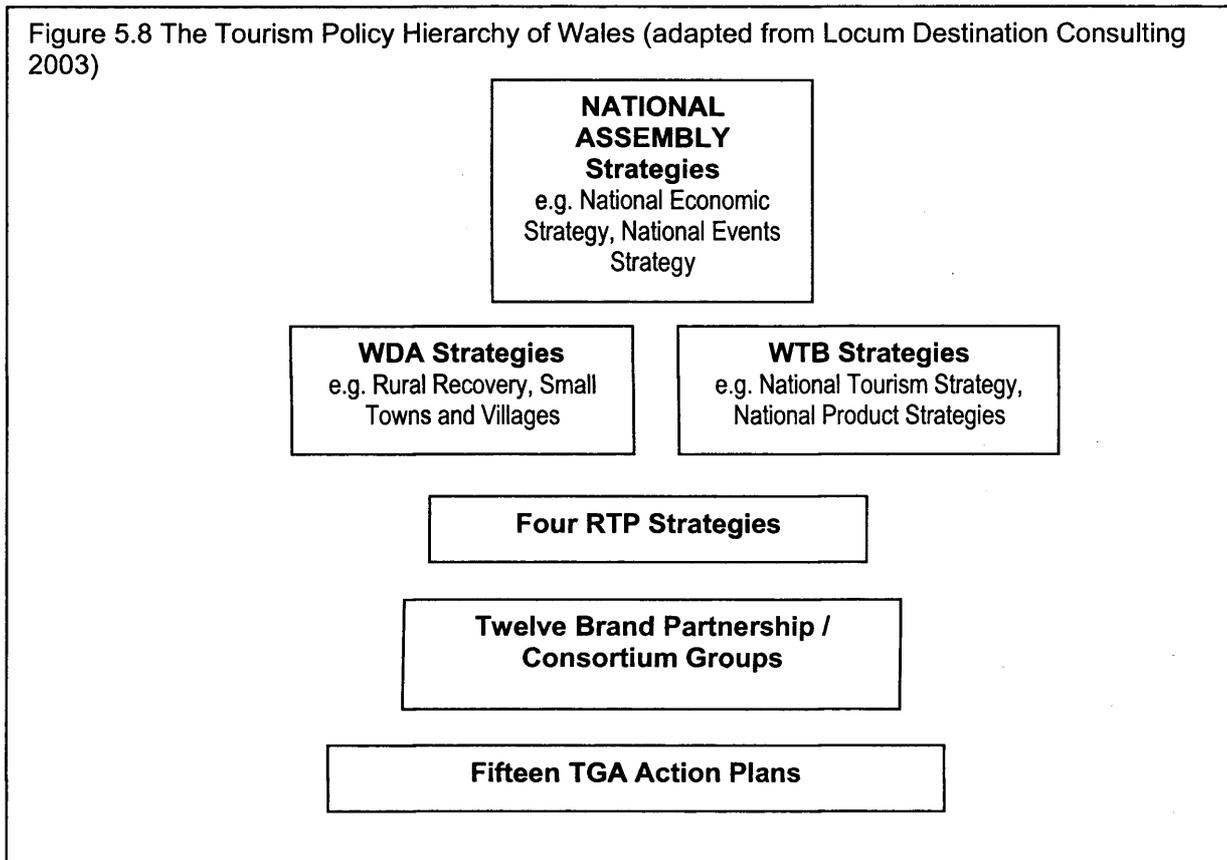
There are in fact mixed feelings about the way that the restructuring process occurred and not everybody concurred with the final structure. It has been said that the industry did not “own the process of change” (RTP representative 2003). The Wales Local Government Association, for example, was “deeply concerned” that “regional arrangements” were being made at a time when local authorities were “establishing local strategic partnerships for community planning” (WLGA 2002:5) and stated that “it is for individual authorities to consider whether they wish to participate in the new arrangements” (WLGA 2001:1). Although local authorities recognised the need to “work together in collaboration”, the WLGA maintained “some serious concerns about the way that this is being imposed [by WTB]” (WLGA 2002:5).

Nevertheless, the debates and consultations about future roles and responsibilities had “already consumed much time and energy” (Stevens & Associates 2000) and in its annual remit for 2001/2002, the National Assembly directed WTB to establish four Regional Tourism Partnerships (TPNW 2002) – the final organisational details of which were still to be considered. The restructuring involved the creation of several new coordinating bodies – the Regional Tourism Partnerships (RTPs). It also called for a significant strengthening of the role and effectiveness of the trade coordinating body, the Wales Tourism Alliance. At the time, the maturation of a nationally recognised, 4 Region economic development map of Wales was being “expressed and reinforced in the coterminous geographical divisions of: the 4 Regional Economic Forums; the Welsh Development Agency; ELWa and the National Assembly for Wales” (Cole 2003:2). This led to the establishment of four regional tourism organisations, instead of modification of the previous three Regional Tourism Companies. The four RTPs then, were established “to receive devolved responsibilities and funding (increasing over time) and with the specific remit of implementing the regional tourism strategies” (Cole 2003:2-3). They were to be based on “the key principle that, as partnerships, the RTPs will strive to achieve joint goals of all partners, not the vested interests of any one partner” (Stevens & Associates 2000:10). The “empowerment” of regional bodies “to self-determine the allocation of priorities in tourism, with increased focus on ‘bottom-up’ against ‘top-down’ decision-making processes” was believed to assure “greater regional ownership and responsibility” (TPNW 2002). In setting up the RTP’s, WTB “sought to avoid duplication and instead strengthen ways of working at local, regional and national levels” (Locum Destination Consulting 2003:9). After running in “Shadow” form from October 2001, the RTPs became operational in April 2002.

### **5.3.2 Policy and strategic planning in the new post-devolution structure: 2002 and beyond**

The restructuring of tourism in Wales occurred almost simultaneously with the birth of the National Assembly. From the beginning, the Assembly has committed itself to working in partnership with the business, statutory and voluntary sectors (Bristow et al. 2003). This situation appears to have had a significant impact on tourism policy. As such its influence runs through the strategy documents of all of the major organisations involved in tourism development, where the words “partnership(s)”, “stakeholders” and/or “coordination” are commonplace. Thus, the Assembly’s partnership principles and terms are embedded into Welsh tourism’s documentation in order to encourage their practical implementation. So, in effect, tourism has become a test case of how effective the Assembly could be and how it

could make a difference in and for Wales. There are actually a fairly significant number of tourism strategies in existence which reflect the different practical levels of coordination and planning from the national to local levels (Fig 5.8). In order to highlight the policy context behind the participative style of tourism development growing in Wales, the following section analyses the national and regional strategies, and also introduces a nationally driven initiative to influence strategic planning at the local level – the Tourism Growth Area Scheme.



Before this analysis however, it is worth briefly considering the ‘bonfire of the quangos’ mentioned earlier in the chapter. As has been demonstrated, considerable effort was given to establishing the new coordination structures between 1998 and 2001. Yet despite this, in July 2005, barely three years into the implementation of those structures, the First Minister announced that the WTB was being brought ‘in house’ as part of a 1999 manifesto pledge to end the ‘quango state’ in Wales. The BBC described it as “arguably the most radical shake-up of Welsh governance since devolution” (BBC News 2005). In 1995, the then shadow Secretary of State for Wales and widely recognised key proponent of the ‘inclusiveness agenda’, Ron Davies, had originally called for the bonfire to deal with a “democratic deficit” (BBC News 2004). During the beginning of 2005, businesses, voluntary groups and trade unions had been consulted and ministers reported that the responses reinforced the need to increase both the speed of delivery and level of coordination of public sector support in Wales. However, others questioned whether an “already over-stretched” Welsh civil service

had the capacity to absorb the quangos and substantially improve upon their performance (Morgan & Upton 2005). Continuing, Morgan and Upton (2005) consider whether there might be “a creeping centralism at work in Wales which belies the notion that devolution creates a more robust and more accountable governance system”. As this ‘absorbing’ of WTB into the government took place after the fieldwork period had ended, these considerations are beyond the scope of this investigation. Nevertheless, it is believed that this additional re-organisation will be worth at least some reflection in drawing together some conclusions.

### **5.3.2.1 The new policy terrain: national strategies based on decentralisation and partnership**

*The whole idea of partnership working is impressed upon us by the Assembly for Wales... they are basically looking for joined up working and so we need to be seen to be working with other key stakeholder groups (Policy Officer, WTB 2003).*

As introduced in Chapter 2, the Assembly Government has demonstrated a firm commitment to partnership working and the tourism industry does not escape its enthusiasm for this approach. This fact may at first seem curious as tourism is not what one might instantly identify as being a public service. The importance of tourism to the economy though inevitably attracts the keen interest of government. As Bristow et al. (2003) had discovered, and Chapter 2 had identified, the practice of partnership in Wales was experiencing some difficulties. It is interesting to note that similar issues appear to be arising from the development of partnerships as existed in the pre-restructuring and uncoordinated tourism system (i.e. conflicting goals, contested roles, confused authority and constrained capacity) (Bristow et al. 2003), thus raising an important question about the actual benefits of partnership working. Nevertheless, the Assembly appears to be a key factor in driving the partnership consciousness within tourism as elsewhere in Wales, and it is being adopted and interpreted at all levels, with the Assembly’s Annual Remit Letters sent to ASPBs all requiring that organisations work together where appropriate.

*The way the Assembly links with ASPBs is through an Annual Remit Letter. This sets out where we see the priorities for WTB over the coming year, in general and specific terms. It sets out how much money they are going to have and a list of key areas where we think they should focus. So it’s not a partnership in that sense. It’s not a stakeholder relationship, but we give them the money, we have a government strategy, so we agree with them (because we don’t just issue this coldly, we talk about it), how we see them playing their part in it – the overall economic development objectives (civil servant 2003).*

*What it [the Remit Letter] would say for example is that, and it comes from the Minister of Economic Development, "I attach great importance to WTB's Operational Plans...WTB must consult with WDA, CCW and ELWa..." and it actually identifies within the letter other key areas where we should be working alongside the Assembly, WDA, ELWa, British Tourist Authority, etc. because it acknowledges, as we do that the whole process of moving forward can only be done through some sort of coordinated approach (Policy Officer, WTB 2003).*

The 'working together' approach is to a large extent fed into the tourism sector through the WTB and its strategy document, "Achieving Our Potential" (WTB 2000), which is prefaced by the First Minister encouraging "all involved in tourism to work in harmony" (Morgan in WTB 2000:preface). As previously mentioned, "partnership" is actually one of the "four pillars" or "themes" of the tourism strategy, which demonstrates explicit enthusiasm for the approach, stating that the recommended response to the major strategic challenges facing the tourism industry is "based on partnership action" (WTB 2000:43). Further, the importance of partnership working and is linked to sustainability in WTB's Corporate Plan, with Objective 4 being, "To encourage the sustainable growth of tourism through effective partnership working (WTB 2001:4). However, it is noted that the phrase "sustainable growth" might not necessarily imply sustainable tourism development.

Evidently though, reflecting on the pre-restructuring situation, the WTB recognised the need not just for partnership formation, but also for "improved" and more "effective" "coordination" and working "relationships" between all "participants". It sees the future of the tourism industry as being:

*a mature, confident and prosperous industry which is making a vital and increasing contribution to the economic, social, cultural and environmental well-being of Wales by achieving sustainable growth through **effective coordination and collaboration at all levels in the industry** (WTB 2000:6, emphasis added).*

The claim that partnership is a "pillar" of the national tourism strategy appears to be justified as reference to that style of working runs consistently throughout the document, which identifies a range of organisations and groups and suggests ways for them to be involved as well as reasons why a more coordinated approach is both necessary and valuable.

*the action plan suggests who is best placed to coordinate the implementation of each of these action points... The strategy provides a framework to guide coordinated action and **it seeks to inspire all those involved in tourism to collaborate effectively**" (WTB 2000:86, emphasis added).*

Yet WTB staff humbly recognise the nature of strategy documents and concedes that the real difficulties lie in converting good intentions into positive actions – something that they believe, relies on “partnership activity”.

*...any strategy is only words, and it's easy enough to write words, at least to put them down on paper, what's the difficult thing is turning those words into some sort of action that makes a difference. And, action that makes a difference really does depend on partnership activity (Policy Officer, WTB 2003).*

WTB (2000:14-86) sees tourism as a “fragmented industry” in which “effective coordination is difficult”, and recognises that while “willing partners”, “local communities”, and “a wide range of public and private sector parties... will have their own priorities and area of interest”, the strategy document calls on them to recognise their “shared objectives”, as they “all have a contribution to make in achieving sustainable growth in tourism”. It is a strategy that believes “coordination is crucial to success”.

*No single organisation has the skills, resources or ability to work in **isolation**. Tourism is a fragmented industry and it is **essential for people, organisations and businesses to work together in an effective way to get things done and make things happen**. The challenge is to establish **effective partnerships** between the National Assembly for Wales, the agencies with a responsibility for developing, marketing and managing tourism and those many individuals who work in the industry to raise standards and improve quality by **coordinating action at a local, regional and national level** (WTB 2000:14, emphasis added).*

WTB express the view that “securing future success and prosperity for the industry, therefore, depends upon effective working relationships being established between willing partners” (WTB 2000:14). Through “collaboration”, an opportunity to “gain strength” is proclaimed (WTB 2000:48) and it is also believed that adopting a partnership approach will also “ensure that scarce resources are used effectively by minimising duplication and unproductive competition” (WTB 2000:51). The WTB also mentions evidence that demonstrates this approach is the most effective way of working:

*WTB has demonstrated previously that an **integrated approach with other public sector partners and the private sector is the most effective way to stimulate***

*investment, generate added value and create new jobs in tourism* (WTB 2000:67, emphasis added).

The “Green Sea Partnership”<sup>8</sup> is seen as a successful approach that “could offer a useful model for the creation of similar partnerships to deal with other important issues which are of common concern to tourism, community and environmental interests” (WTB 2000:76).

*They managed with a large amount of effort and a small amount of resource to bring the local authorities and Welsh Water round to cleaning up the beaches, to a point where Wales now has more Blue Flag per mile of beach than any other part of Europe* (RTP representative 2003).

Areas where working in partnership and improving coordination would be beneficial are highlighted: “A Tourism and Transport Partnership, for example could examine opportunities to develop a sustainable, integrated transport system within sensitive environmental areas, and a National Parks Tourism Partnership could seek to extend sustainable tourism in the national parks through improved visitor management, promotion and facility provision” (WTB 2000:76). Several other areas are also mentioned (WTB 2000:50-82): marketing, information and communications technology development; investment strategy implementation; community development; training; procurement; and the preparation of a cultural strategy.

Yet, while being positive about the likely benefits of more effective coordination, the strategy recognises one of the key challenges of partnership work – ensuring “that the total contribution achieved through effective partnership working is greater than the sum of individual contributions undertaken independently” (WTB 2000:35). WTB shows further awareness of other partnership issues (2000:43-98), recognising for example that the “nature and composition of partnership structures will vary”. Concern is also expressed about accountability, suggesting that “responsibility for partnership coordination” should be assigned “to specific groups or organisations”. In addition, recognition is demonstrated that bodies will have “competing priorities” that may cause consideration of whether their participation in implementing parts of the action plan can be justified.

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<sup>8</sup> The Green Sea Partnership (GSP) was formed in 1996 to improve the quality of the coastal environment for the benefits of local communities and visitors. There are over 40 organisations in the partnership, including the WTB, Welsh Water, Environment Agency, CCW and maritime local authorities. “Tangible results include an increase in the number of Blue Flag beaches from 2 to 18” (WTB 2000:76, WTB 2001:7).

### 5.3.2.2 Participation in national tourism strategy development: the process of engagement

The consultation process for developing the WTB produced, national tourism strategy – “Achieving Our Potential” (2000) – ran from May 1998 to August 1999 (almost simultaneously with the “Fit for the Millennium” review) and gathered views from a range of tourism stakeholders. Appraisal of the strategy development process provides initial insights into levels of stakeholder participation in an important aspect of the tourism planning process.

*In preparing the strategy, WTB set out to ensure that consultation with the widest possible cross section of tourism interests was undertaken (WTB 1999:2).*

There were several phases to the consultation:

1. Preliminary phase – circulation of “intended approach to consultation”;
2. Topic papers and questionnaire response forms – part of the process of promoting understanding and ownership of the strategy;
3. Regional consultative workshops;
4. Final consultation phase – consideration of first draft at the National Tourism Forum and circulation for further comment.

Initially, approximately 5000 copies of a document explaining WTBs intended approach to consultation were sent out and responses to it invited.

*The preliminary phase was when we issued a summary document of what we wanted to do – the need for a tourism strategy, the purpose behind it – and to outline, at an early stage what we envisioned to be appropriate consultation arrangements, so that we were actually inviting very early on, feedback on the process that we intended to put in place. This was mailed out to all the businesses that we have on our database, all other government bodies, ASPBs, and in those days it was still the Welsh office so it went to them, and the local authorities. But basically we said this is why we think we need a new strategy, and these are going to be the processes we are putting in place to consult with you to ensure that it is a strategy that tries to embrace and take on board your views. And we obviously received responses to that which reshaped our consultation plans appropriately (Policy Officer, WTB 2003).*

Although “few [responses] were forthcoming”, it is said that there was general agreement on the need for a review of strategy and on the purpose of the strategy (WTB 1999):

1. To raise the level of competitiveness of Welsh tourism;

2. To increase the profile and status of the industry and increase the recognition of its economic importance;
3. To adopt a customer-focused approach which understands and responds to market needs;
4. To improve understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the different organisations involved in tourism and identify opportunities for effective partnership working;
5. To promote growth through sustainable means.

Following this consultation on the proposed consultation process, a summary consultation paper and questionnaire were sent to over 5000 private sector tourism operators and a set of topic papers and a summary questionnaire were sent to “over 525 organisations and individuals with an interest in tourism”, including:

- 22 unitary authorities,
- 50 tourism associations,
- 17 trade representative groups,
- 19 statutory organisations,
- 19 non-statutory organisations,
- TECs,
- Regional Economic Forums,
- and Welsh MPs/MEPs.

*The next stage was the drafting of a range of topic papers – there was a position paper which basically set out trends in tourism over the previous ten years or so, responding to customer needs, the benefits of partnership, extending the benefits of tourism and understanding the customer. These were topic areas that we in WTB thought were appropriate and we identified them at an early stage within this preliminary phase. These were the papers that we will provide, these are the subject issues that are included within those topic papers, are you happy with that? And again the response was fairly positive. This particular package of documentation was circulated to a small audience – it went to key stakeholder groups, but we sent out a summary of the issues raised in each of these topic papers, again to the wider audience of our businesses. As well as sending stuff out by post, and even though it was only four or five years ago, it’s difficult to believe now, web pages or email wasn’t really a process that was a part of the consultation package at that stage, as it would be now. So from that point of view we did a mail out (Policy Officer, WTB 2003).*

Of all the documents sent out, a total of 118 summary questionnaires were returned. In addition to the number of questionnaires returned, 50 detailed responses were submitted by “organisations with an interest in tourism” (WTB 1999:5) – WTB had stated that it organisations would not be confined to responding to the questionnaires and that other responses would be accepted. The Hotels and B&B/Guest House providers each generated around a quarter of questionnaire responses; 10% were from Caravan/Holiday Parks; and nearly 9% were from voluntary/charitable bodies. There was a fairly even split between the number of questionnaires returned by the public (53)% and private (47%) sectors. 48% of all the questionnaires returned were from North Wales.

In addition, a total of 298 participants (plus WTB and RTC staff) attended five regional consultative workshops, which:

*provided an opportunity for open discussion and debate on the strategic issues identified in the topic papers... Attendance varied at these workshops although generally there was a useful representative balance of delegates from a range of sectors including hoteliers and self-catering operators, educational institutions, unitary authorities, government departments, retailers and tourist attraction operators (WTB 1999b:5).*

*We also followed that up with regional half-day workshops, whereby we again invited the trade and organisations, whereby WTB would set out the issues that were being raised in the topic papers and seek to stimulate discussion around them. And again we were inviting comments, not only at the meetings, but beyond the meetings people were encouraged to respond to the issues that we had identified (Policy Officer, WTB 2003).*

It may be interesting to reflect on the fact that approximately twice the number of people attended the workshops compared to the number of postal responses received.

*When we received all the stuff back, and this [document] tries to identify the sort of response we had, we had this fairly basic ranking system to identify which of the issues we were raising were considered to be most important... It gave us an understanding of where people were seeing the importance of the future of tourism. And what we also did, within this document, was to summarise the comments we had in relation to each of the strategic questions, so that this enabled us to hopefully demonstrate to those that had been involved that we were taking their responses seriously. That whole process then culminated in a draft strategy, which again was circulated, was made available, and on which we received comments back. So again it was a fairly iterative process to actually pull the whole thing together (Policy Officer, WTB 2003).*

Many of the tourism representatives interviewed during this investigation believe that the WTB did all it reasonably could to encourage participation in the development of the national strategy. Lack of time and interest were recognised as the main barriers to participation (RTP representative 2003; national trade representative 2003).

*On the face of it, [the WTB consultation process was] extremely participative I suppose, to a level. Essentially, every tourism operator in Wales, every Local Authority, every organisation with some kind of interest in tourism was probably contacted by WTB when they were formulating their strategy (RTP representative 2003).*

*The consultation process was as inclusive as it possibly could be. Every effort was made to give people the opportunity to contribute. Whether you've ever done enough I don't know. But consultation involves two parties. It does involve people responding in a constructive way. I imagine WTB may have been disappointed with the level of response they got. There is a limit what you can do to encourage people to contribute. You do everything in your power, meetings, web, letters. ... Yet despite every best effort, there will always be people who say I wasn't asked, I wasn't involved. But it's not a once and forever thing. Channels are always open and people have to contribute. It'll be as good as the people who take an interest and if people don't take the opportunity, there's no point in taking a swipe from the sidelines later on (national level voluntary sector representative 2003).*

*I suppose 'involve' is the key word here. In order to involve all stakeholders, you have to make appropriate efforts to reach the different parties. We are the only ones with time to respond. A lot of it depends on capacity. If you are an organisation which has a policy officer then you can respond to policy consultations. Reaching individual business is a particular problem and then for that to be representative. You have to spark people's interest rather than just give them one opportunity to respond to a dull strategy consultation (local government officer 2003).*

So, out of over 5000 tourism participants that were sent questionnaires, only 168 (approximately 3%) responded. Including the 298 who attended the regional workshops as well, a total of 466 participants were involved in the development of the national strategy (plus the WTB staff involved). While as a percentage of total tourism stakeholders, this figure appears very low, it is important to consider that many of those participants were actually representing larger constituencies (Fig 5.9). Thus, as it is recognised that most potential stakeholders have limited capacities to respond to strategy consultations, the importance of having representative organisations to help mitigate this problem is highlighted.

Figure 5.9 Organisations who responded to WTB strategy consultation (adapted from WTB 1999) N.B. Industry comments are provided in the report, but are quoted anonymously

Arts Council Wales	National Trust
Bridgend County Borough Council	Newport County Borough Council
Caerphilly County Borough Council	North Wales RTC
Cardiff Chamber of Trade and Commerce	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park
Cardiff County Council	Pembrokeshire County Council
CCW	Powys County Council
City and County of Swansea	Snowdonia National Park
DSW Rail	TSWW – the old SW Wales RTC
Environment Agency Wales	UWIC
Flintshire County Council	Vale of Glamorgan Council
Flintshire Tourism Association	Wales TUC
Heart of Wales Line Travellers' Association	WASCO
Menter a Busnes	WDA
Menter Preseli	Welsh Office
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council	West Wales TEC
Mid Wales Partnership	WLGA
Monmouthshire County Council	Wrexham County Borough Council
National Museums and Galleries of Wales	

### 5.3.2.3 Regional Tourism Strategies

*The development of regional public and private sector partnerships has been identified as the key to overcoming the barriers to delivery and development of regional tourism strategies (TPMW 2003:13).*

Based on a recognition that came out of the consultation outlined above, which revealed that the problems and potentialities of tourism in Wales would need a more regional approach, the RTPs were established in 2001/2002 and given the “specific remit of implementing the regional tourism strategies” (CRT 2003b:3). As a result, they have committed a significant amount of effort during the early part of their existence to trying to encourage ownership of regional tourism strategies. At the time of conducting fieldwork, three of the RTPs were working from previously existing strategy documents, although they had all developed new business plans and were beginning to at least review the existing strategies. In north Wales, however (Fig 5.10), significant efforts were already being focussed on developing a new strategy, taking care to ensure that the strategy development process not only “included wide spread consultation with the tourism industry and the public and voluntary sector bodies

concerned with tourism”, but was actually also “guided by a Steering Group, which included representation from different sectors of the tourism industry and public sector as well as different locations across North Wales” (TPNW 2003a:1).

Throughout the draft strategy document and new business plans, the RTPs frequently refer to “stakeholders” and particularly “partners”, “who together, will deliver the agreed outputs” (CRT 2003a:12). Even before the formation of the RTPs, there is evidence from the South West Wales region that “there [was] already recognition in the region that the principle of sustainability is best implemented through partnerships across organisations and cross-sector initiatives (Ceredigion County Council 1999). And it is evident from the texts and the network diagrams produced (shown earlier in this chapter) that the RTPs have given some considerable consideration to the identification of the full range of organisations and groups involved in tourism. TPNW devotes a section to “Organisation structure and working alliances” and in it states a number of organisations it “will work in close liaison with” (TPNW 2003:40-41). TPMW and CRT both have a “Communication” section in their Business Plans in which “key stakeholders” are clearly identified (TPMW 2003:34; CRT 2003b:21).

#### Figure 5.10 Participation in Regional Strategy Development

*This pattern of bringing agencies and trade together is what we are doing. It's even more pronounced in the development of our tourism strategy. For the last one in 1998, a consultant came out with a report and said this is what we think is right for you, after consultation with specialists, and that was it, not a great degree of ownership. So this time the strategy has been developed on the premise of interviews with 100 good persons within the industry. We've then gone on a tour of each marketing area and had a full presentation of the issues and challenges (macro issues) – saying these are the things that are going to have to be addressed – with about 200 trade participants (across all), with a second wave of a further 350 later. Now we are on version 5 of strategy, having assimilated 4 routes of information from the trade, assimilated a hundred different contacts. Version 5 has gone out to 350 trade persons who have been to meetings and 100 other agencies are involved. So, I think we've gone along way down trying to get this comprehensive ownership of the document and in particular, rather than develop a document that just talks regionally – it addresses the overall economic analysis regionally – it then tries to put a visitors' eye view of where we could be 5 years hence. And then it goes by marketing area, so we've got a discussion [for example] on Isle of Anglesey about where its economy is different, where its uniqueness is differentiated from the other communities and then we have an action plan for Anglesey (RTP representative 2003).*

There are a number of reasons, expressed in the policy/strategy documents and interviews, as to why there is a keen desire to involve and link the different groups. Some appear to be based on an instrumental belief that “stakeholders will need to work together” (TPNW 2003:summary) because “their combined strength will be greater than if they work alone” (CRT 2003b:7).

*When aggregated and working as one unit [tourism networks] can punch above their individual weight in the market place (CRT 2003b:12).*

There are also more concrete recognitions of the positive outcomes of partnership working and examples provided of where the joint approach would be or has been particularly useful. As a partnership, CRT believes its partners may be able to help “lever” additional funding, as well as benefiting product development and marketing (CRT 2003b:10-12). TPMW recognises the financial benefits. It believes that “synchronised action” is the “most cost effective way of moving forward” (TPMW 2003:6). The North Wales strategy document draws attention to the successful partnership between LEADER projects and Offa’s Dyke, which it says have made “a real difference” (TPNW 2003a:2). It also recognises that events should be coordinated “to avoid duplication and competition” (TPNW 2003a:24).

#### **5.3.2.4 Local level strategic planning**

One of the principal ways in which the WTB tries to influence strategic planning at the local level is through its Tourism Growth Area (TGA) scheme (Fig 5.11). Initiated during 2001, there are fifteen TGAs across Wales (Fig 5.12) that are based on research into the specific characteristics and potential of each particular location. The initiative ensures that WTB capital funding, made available through Section 4 of the Development of Tourism Act for physical developments and improvements, is ‘ring-fenced’ for the TGAs. The amount of money available to each TGA differs on the basis of priorities and size of the area. One of the curiosities is that the grants do not necessarily represent increases in funding for particular areas and that applicants within the areas may independently apply to the WTB, and be successful even if the ring-fenced amount is all used. They do however provide a targeted focus.

So the TGA scheme is not an extra injection of funds to areas, rather it is a mechanism to help applicants obtain existing funds. But it also serves another more strategic purpose. The WTB devised scheme requires that different organisations and interest groups within the area form a steering group to locally manage the process. The process includes an initial bid to WTB, establishing some competition between areas. Selection is based on a

variety of criteria including the areas' potential to 'grow' tourism for local, regional and national benefit. Each TGA must develop an area action plan and all projects seeking WTB grant assistance should be in line with the TGA action plan and also meet the normal criteria operated by WTB for approval of Capital Grants:

- Demonstrate the need for financial assistance
- Demonstrate the viability if grant aided
- Project capital costs of a minimum of £10,000
- Job creation of 1 full time job per £12,500 grant aid

Figure 5.11 The TGA Approach (Denbighshire County Council 2001)

The TGA scheme is concerned with identifying and taking forward projects that will lay the foundations for sustainable growth in tourism. It will complement and run alongside existing tourism initiatives not replace them. It is not intended, for example, that the area should form a new focus for destination marketing. To achieve its aims the TGA programme has to:

- **Be founded on reality.** It is about generating ambitious but achievable projects, which play to the area's strengths, recognise its weaknesses and will create a more competitive product.
- **Be market focused.** It has to meet the needs of, and attract those market segments that have growth potential. Unless it can do this tourism will remain static or decline. Without a customer focus the industry will wither and die.
- **Be quality driven.** There has to be a significant effort to raise standards and deliver a total quality experience to the visitor and embrace the concept of Integrated Quality Management, which is a systematic approach to improving quality.
- **Add value and make a difference.** It needs to complement and strengthen existing activity undertaken by both public and private sectors not duplicate or cut across this.

The action programme sets out the priority areas for investment and development over the next six years to achieve the objectives of the TGA. Applicants will have to comply with the existing rules and procedures laid down for Section 4 funding by the WTB. Over and above this, priority will be given to those projects that attract a high score in terms of the following criteria.

- Does it fall into one of the above programme areas and sub headings?
- Does it meet the needs of one or more of the identified growth market segments?
- Is it of sufficient scale, quality and innovativeness to generate publicity and raise the awareness of the destination outside the area?
- Will it attract new and additional visitors to the area rather than simply displace business?
- Will it have a significant and lasting impact on improving the quality of the visitor experience?
- Will it bring forward or stimulate major private sector investment or help release large scale public sector funding?

The money can only be used for capital expenditure and has to be more than matched by funding from other sources. If there is a high take-up of funding in the early years of the TGA then WTB will review whether this allocation can be increased, subject to the resources being available. This figure should be seen as a minimum guaranteed level of funding from WTB rather than a maximum which couldn't be exceeded. Although the TGA is driven by WTB funding it will only realise its full potential if it is used in tandem with funding from other agencies and sources. It is vitally important that the work of the TGA is coordinated with and complements the activities of other agencies and programmes already in existence. Whilst the TGA funding is aimed at capital projects and product development there is a danger that this investment could be largely ineffective unless it is matched by adequate resources for marketing and operational support. The relevant agencies should review their marketing and revenue budgets to ensure that these complement and support the TGA programme.

Another condition of the funding arrangement is that it has to be matched by at least 50% of private funding/lending and/or other grants. Each TGA is also required to adopt the principles of Integrated Quality Management (19: WTB Corporate Plan 04-07). Initially it was also a requirement that they achieve Green Globe status, although shortly after having initiated the TGA scheme, WTB announced its decision to abandon plans to promote the global Green Globe environmental standards scheme and go for the Green Tourism Business Scheme (GTBS) instead (Ecodyfi 2002b). Using this process, WTB brings focus to local tourism development and its grants scheme, while encouraging different stakeholders to work in partnership at the local level. And by creating the process and establishing the criteria, it also exerts a level of control over the kind of development that can occur. As stated in the methodology, the TGA scheme therefore provides a useful case study for exploring deeper the issues of the thesis at a strategy implementation and spatial level. A specific TGA is explored in detail in Chapter 7.

Figure 5.12 Tourism Growth Areas by Region (WTB Online, 2005)

**North Wales**

Llandudno, Conwy & Deganwy will receive £2 million of WTB capital funds.

Caernarfon will receive £1 million of WTB capital funds.

Wrexham will receive £900K of WTB capital funds.

Llangollen & the Dee Valley will receive £600k of WTB capital funds.

**Mid Wales**

Cerdigion has been allocated £1 million of WTB capital funds.

Brecon Beacons have been allocated £0.5 million of WTB capital funds to develop quality rural holiday products.

Dyfi Valley has been allocated £0.5 million of WTB capital funds to develop quality rural holiday products.

Central Powys has been allocated £0.5 million of WTB capital funds.

Southern Gwynedd has been allocated £0.5 million of WTB capital funds.

**South east Wales**

Cardiff will receive £2 million of WTB capital funds.

The Wye Valley & the Vale of Usk will receive up to £0.5 million.

**South West Wales**

Swansea is recognised as an area of national strategic importance, a destination in its own right and will receive £2 million of WTB capital funds.

Tywi Valley will receive £1 million of WTB capital funds.

Tenby will receive £1 million of WTB capital funds.

Afan Forest has been allocated £0.5 million as a Special Interest Category.

**5.3.3 The changing nature of funding arrangements**

Underpinning the multi-level approach being adopted, the policy framework sets out detailed income and expenditure plans for the WTB and the RTPs. In 2001/02, for example, the Assembly provided £20,086,000 core funding to the WTB – known as ‘Grant in Aid’ (Fig 5.13). In breaking down the money into three categories – programme expenditure, capital

expenditure, and running costs – the Assembly has some control over how the money is used, with less than one quarter of it being designated for WTB’s running costs. The higher running costs allocation in 2002/03 is associated with the initiation of the RTPs.

Figure 5.13 WTB Funding Summary (WTB Corporate Plan 2002/03 – 2004/05)

Funding Summary	2001/02 (£000s)	2002/03 (£000s)	2003/04 (£000s)	2004/05 (£000s)
<b>1. Assembly Core Funding</b>				
Programme expenditure Capital	12,236	12,386	13,736	13,736
expenditure	3,150	3,150	3,150	3,150
Running costs	4,700	4,912	4,700	4,700
<b>Total Grant in Aid</b>	<b>20,086</b>	<b>22,648<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>21,586<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>21,586<sup>1</sup></b>
<b>2. EU Funding<sup>2</sup></b>	2,655	4,773	6,390	4,849
<b>3. Additional Match Funding<sup>3</sup></b>	2,234	6,934	4,392	1,200
<b>4. Rural Recovery Fund</b>	4,080	1,270	n/a	n/a
<b>5. Commercial Revenue</b>	1,281	1,413	1,289	1,289
<b>6. Total Funding</b>	<b>30,336</b>	<b>37,038</b>	<b>34,197</b>	<b>28,924</b>

<sup>1</sup> Indicative budget confirmed by NAW  
<sup>2</sup> EU Objective 1 funds have been approved for two projects:  
i. £6.3 million grant towards an Integrated Business Support scheme for tourism SMEs  
ii. £9 million grant towards Tourism Promotion and Marketing Programme  
<sup>3</sup> Assumes Pathway to Prosperity additional funding will match EU Objective 1 funds

The WTB’s Regional Development Fund (RDF) sets aside funding for the RTPs (Fig 5.14). This fund initially doubled from 2001 to 2002 to account for the inception of the RTPs and was set to grow for the first three years of the RTPs’ existence in real terms, and as both a percentage of Assembly Grant in Aid to WTB (6.1% – 16.2%) and as a percentage of WTB’s total annual budget (4.1% – 12.1%). The amount allocated to each RTP was different to reflect the different situations based on their size and contribution to tourism income generation. The RTPs express a need to “monitor the percentage of WTB’s annual budget set in the RDF, so as to sustain the commitments to devolve activity in the regions” (TPNW 2003:43), though the year on year increase does demonstrate that a greater portion of funds are being increasingly directed to the regional level.

This movement of money and inherent decision-making power away from the national level could be interpreted positively as it sits well with some of the theoretical aspirations of sustainable tourism. However, a somewhat controversial feature of WTB’s annual allocation to the RTPs is that after the first year the actual amount is based on performance measurement (Fig 5.15) and so has the potential to vary each year (Fig 5.16). This appears to be of concern to the RTPs who would have more confidence if they had certainty about their projected incomes. It also sets the RTPs in competition with each other.

*Variation in budgets erodes at the strategic nature of our activities and also reduces confidence in the expansion of resources e.g. additional staff to take on new roles (TPNW 2003:44).*

The placing of requirements on funding sources is an important way in which strategically placed national and regional organisations can influence the direction of others. The following chapter explores this mechanism in further detail.

Figure 5.15 RTP Performance Measures (TPNW 2003:44)

1. Compliance with Schedule 1 of Funding Agreement
2. Progress against outputs defined in RTP Business/ Action Plans
3. Measure Return On Investment for specific activities
4. Volume and Value targets for regional tourism growth
5. Leverage of public/private sector funding
6. Efficiency and Probity

**Figure 5.14 Confirmed and Indicative Regional Development Fund budget by RTP (Adapted from TPNW 2003)**

	2001/2002			2002/2003			2003/2004			2004/2005			2005/2006		
	£000s	% of WAG GIA	% of WTB total budget	£000s	% of WAG GIA	% of WTB total budget	£000s	% of WAG GIA	% of WTB total budget	£000s	% of WAG GIA	% of WTB total budget	£000s	% of WAG GIA	% of WTB total budget
	Actual			Actual			Indicative			Indicative			Indicative		
<b>RDF</b>	<b>1,229</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>2,500</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>6.7</b>	<b>3,000</b>	<b>13.8</b>	<b>8.8</b>	<b>3,500</b>	<b>16.2</b>	<b>12.1</b>	<b>3,500</b>	n/a	n/a
Regional Split															
North 35%	n/a	n/a	n/a	875	3.8	2.4	1,050	4.9	2.8	1,225	5.7	4.2	1,225	n/a	n/a
Mid 20%	n/a	n/a	n/a	500	2.2	1.3	600	2.8	1.8	700	3.2	2.4	700	n/a	n/a
South-West 25%	n/a	n/a	n/a	625	2.8	1.7	750	3.5	2.2	875	4.0	3.0	875	n/a	n/a
South-East 20%	n/a	n/a	n/a	500	2.2	1.3	600	2.8	1.8	700	3.2	2.4	700	n/a	n/a

**Figure 5.16 Assuming 25% of RDF is subject to performance measurement from 2004/2005 (TPNW 2003)**

	2002/2003 £000s	2003/2004 £000s	2004/2005 £000s		2005/2006 £000s	
RDF (Confirmed)	2,500	3,000	2,625		2,625	
RDF (Discretionary)	-	-	875		875	
Regional split	Confirmed	Confirmed	Confirmed	Discretionary/ At Risk	Confirmed	Discretionary/ At Risk
North	875	1,050	919	(306)	919	(306)
Mid	500	600	525	(175)	525	(175)
South-West	625	750	656	(219)	656	(219)
South-East	500	600	525	(175)	525	(175)

## 5.4 Conclusions

### 5.4.1 The representation of diverse stakeholder interests

Within the emerging Welsh tourism system, the recent restructuring and national policy and regional strategy development processes are important elements of the stakeholder identification process, and it is evident that the policy community has given much consideration to the identification of stakeholders. Each of these documents explicitly recognises the importance and views of different groups. Perhaps more than any other organisation, the RTPs appear to have given the fullest consideration to their stakeholders and three of them have actually developed diagrams that attempt to represent their connections with a range of what they call stakeholders or network connections. They appear to be similar to the stakeholder maps considered by stakeholder theory. However it is worth reflecting on how this mapping by the RTPs compares to the more detailed form of stakeholder analysis, outlined in the methodology chapter. Essentially, the development of a stakeholder map is only the first step, and here there is little evidence that in establishing their place relation to their stakeholders, that the RTPs have fully analysed the different perspectives and interests of their various stakeholders. Nevertheless, it is apparent that there is a high level of consensus about who the stakeholder groups are and also a wide recognition that the potential list of individual stakeholders would be almost endless. The following list of stakeholder groups have been identified: public, private and voluntary sector organisations; communities; and tourists, although to a much lesser degree and despite recognition by some of the importance of this group. The real question though is to what extent these groups are they actively involved, rather than just identified, as the answer will help determine the influence of the policies and the sustainability of the tourism development process in Wales.

Reflecting on the “Fit for the Millennium” review is valuable because the analysis of the process helps to assess the involvement of different groups. The consultation process clearly gathered the views of a relevant range of organisations. Despite this however, there were concerns about the way the final decision on the future structure of tourism was taken, which does raise questions about the actual level of genuine stakeholder participation in decision-making processes. There may have been a justifiable reason for WTB and the Assembly to take this decision – the time and energy taken to debate and consult – but some might argue that this kind of action is not exactly within the principles of partnership, so staunchly championed. This issue raises questions about stakeholder accountability and in this case it looks like a more traditional hierarchical process operated with the decision being taken by the top level, powerful organisations. That other organisations expressed some

dissatisfaction with the decision, yet went along with it anyway, suggests that either the level of dissatisfaction was small, or that they were unable to hold the more powerful organisations to account.

Involvement in the national and regional strategy development processes is one form of stakeholder participation that this chapter has considered. Though the statistics for response to the national strategy consultation exercise suggest a very low level of individual stakeholder involvement, there seems to be consensus from the interviewees that the level of involvement was acceptable because WTB made “every effort... to give people the opportunity to contribute” (James, TTFW 2003). Further, although the actual number of individual stakeholders may have been comparatively small (under 500 out of a potential 10,000+), the consultation did include the views from a comprehensive range of stakeholder groups consisting of organisations who represented a much larger number of individuals. The major barriers to participation seem to be associated with a lack of time and interest, though it is interesting to note that there was a greater level of participation in the consultation workshops than in the potentially less time consuming postal response process.

Although only one new regional strategy had been developed since the inception of the RTPs, there is evidence to suggest that there is much greater participation in regional level strategy development. Around the same number of participants were involved in the development of the new regional strategy as were involved in the production of the national strategy. At the regional level, where the emphasis has been on developing ownership and the process appears to have been genuinely more participative, rather than just having produced a strategy and invited comments, the exercise appears to have been more successful. That the regional strategy is also broken into more local components (5 sub-regions that reflect 5 of the 12 Welsh Marketing Area Partnerships), also appears to have helped bring in more local interest, perhaps as it is seen as more directly relevant. Apparent success in engaging tourism participants in this strategy development process does begin to indicate that benefits can be gained from operating at smaller geographical levels and also supports the increasing localisation focus of sustainable tourism development principles. It also highlights the importance of having regional level organisations that can coordinate activities.

Though the policy community seemed satisfied with the level of involvement in the consultation that contributed to the development of the national strategy, it is worth questioning what that says for the way stakeholder participation is understood. Clearly consultation is not a very active form of participation and often consultation processes do not generally allow much opportunity for stakeholders to make significant changes to what has been proposed. It is interesting to note that the workshops generated more interest from stakeholders, which indicates a more serious level of enthusiasm and commitment for more

active forms of participation than the postal response process offered. A similar conclusion may be drawn from the evidence at the regional level.

## **5.4.2 The consideration of stakeholder interests**

### **5.4.2.1 The impact of policy on stakeholder involvement**

Although further consideration of the influence of policies will be given in response to the question about how stakeholders are managed, it is impossible to ignore the influence of policy in response to the question about why stakeholder interests should be considered. In fact several of the respondents site 'direction from above' as one important reason why they work with stakeholders. As has been highlighted, tourism organisations from the global and European levels are recognising and promoting the importance of partnership working and stakeholder involvement (e.g. World Tourism Organisation and the EU Integrated Quality Management initiative). At the UK level, New Labour's elaboration of its stakeholder society approach may also be having some impact on the 'working together consciousness'.

Given the vigour with which partnership now appears to be promoted, it would be almost possible to believe that it was a new phenomenon. Clearly it is not an entirely new concept, despite partnership becoming the contemporary buzzword. Within the tourism sector, organisations have worked together to varying degrees for a very long time and there were tourist associations working in Wales 150 years ago. In Wales it has been observed that the partnership approach now appears to be inextricably linked to the devolved institutions of government and the National Assembly. Since devolution, the WTB has become an "Assembly Sponsored Public Body", and subsequently a government department, indicating the importance placed on tourism by the Assembly (primarily as an economic development tool), as well as perhaps a public sector desire for greater control over the tourism system. If anything, the role of WTB may have become more strategic since the restructuring process, although it does not appear to have changed significantly as a result of devolution – its purpose has largely been reiterated.

Through its Annual Remit Letters to its Sponsored Public Bodies and associated funding mechanisms, for instance, the Assembly is certainly a key factor in driving forward the partnership agenda, not just in tourism, but in other areas as well. Further, as part of the devolution process, the new delineation of Wales into four economic regions has had an additional direct impact on the structure of the tourism system. An effect of this has led to the associated development of four coterminous Regional Tourism Partnerships to replace the

previous three RTCs and their different boundaries, which could be seen to integrate tourism more closely with the Assembly's regional economic development priorities.

In what might be seen as a growing decentralisation process, this has also evidently impacted on the emerging policy framework, with the planned development of four new regional strategies that begin to take the coordination of policy implementation to a more manageable scale – a supposedly important factor for the delivery of more sustainable tourism. Much of the coordination and partnership language of the national policy can be found in the new regional business plans and in this way the top down aspects of the partnership drive are being normalised. It is the establishment of the four RTPs and their main role of leading on the implementation of regional strategies that is perhaps the most significant change to tourism in Wales. As such, the RTPs are given detailed consideration in the following chapter.

The partnership drive is not an entirely top down process. The rise of partnership working is also fuelled by the apparent failings of a previously uncoordinated system and evidently receives wide support amongst national and regional stakeholders. Swinging from one extreme to the other, there is evidence to suggest that the recent negative experiences within the tourism sector are significantly fuelling the desire for improved communication and coordination. However, given that some concerns have been expressed about the growing number of partnerships in other sectors in Wales (Bristow et al. 2003), it will be important to identify how the shift in practice is managed within the tourism system.

#### **5.4.2.2 Interdependence highlighted**

It is evident that the “Fit for the Millennium” review, which led to the restructuring of tourism in Wales, highlighted the need not just for partnership formation, but also for improved and more effective coordination and working relationships between all participants. This was especially apparent between the public and private sectors where poor communication, or ‘weak ties’, was leading to misconceptions about roles, which further fuelled dissatisfaction. Essentially, the lack of adequate communication led to a recognition that there was a need for change – that there was a need for greater coordination between stakeholders. Reflecting on Alexander (1995:75) the review process, along with the other identified factors, including Foot and Mouth disease, would have helped to transform “the relevant actor’s perception of their setting, [thus] mobilising them to design, install and implement the IOC structures they believe will suit their mutual purposes”.

Strengthened by a very real recognition of the negative impacts of a failing system, an ‘instrumental belief’ in the potential benefits of ‘collaborative advantage’ (Lowndes & Skelcher

1998) expressed by many of the study's participants was another important motivation for improving coordination. According to Bristow et al. (2003) most policy makers supported the partnership approach and anticipated that it would help to propel the transformation of governance and the design and delivery of public services. WTB enshrine this belief in its paper entitled "The Benefits of Partnership" (2001). Drawing on collaboration and structuration theories, it can also be identified that there was a wide recognition of stakeholder interdependence and of resource dependency. This recognition then informed subsequent policy documents and helped to transform the shape of tourism, essentially establishing a new coordination structure to improve the management of different the stakeholders or actors. The need is again enshrined in the national tourism policy document:

*No single organisation has the skills, resources or ability to work in isolation. Tourism is a fragmented industry and it is essential for people, organisations and businesses to work together in an effective way to get things done and make things happen (WTB 2000:14).*

It is perhaps also important, to satisfy the 'thirds principle' of partnership working, that each of the three sectors – private, public, and voluntary – all came to the same realisation about the need for greater coordination. The timing was therefore right for restructuring. The series of 'moons in alignment' might have helped to enable the process, perhaps minimising the disruption caused by restructuring. Reflecting further on structuration theory, it is important to ask the question as to what extent the process was externally mandated, as this would also have some bearing on its eventual success or failure. It actually seems like the process involved a significant number of appropriate stakeholders and their views seem to have been considered in a detailed way, as evidenced by the Economic Development Committee Report (1999). However, it should be recognised that no clear agreement on a preferred new structure emerged and WTB and the Assembly effectively took the final decision on the eventual structure. While it could be recognised that achieving consensus amongst a fragmented range of stakeholders might be impossible, the impact of WTB's clear enactment of its leadership role could have potentially negative ramifications for the implementation of the new structure, even including the non-participation of certain groups.

#### **5.4.2.3 Normative basis and ethical foundation**

Much of the evidence indicating consideration of a normative basis for stakeholder involvement is found in the policy documents. Statements such as "there *must* be a strong stakeholder culture across all partners" (Stevens & Associates 2000:4) and "The basis for a

successful tourism industry *must* be an effective partnership between the various organisations and individuals involved” (WTB 2000:1) clearly show a strong desire to make stakeholder participation the *modus operandi*. Although it is recognised as a gradual process, there is cross-sectoral acceptance by the policy community that stakeholder participation is becoming normal practice, if only as considered here, in terms of consultation, which is a relatively passive form of engagement. The policy community also recognise that the potential benefits of greater coordination are an important reason for stakeholder participation, as is previously explored.

However, the policy analysis found no real evidence of there having been any thorough consideration of what an ethical foundation for the inclusion of stakeholders might look like. It might be fair to acknowledge that the omission of such a consideration amongst the study respondents might legitimately be expected (as such consideration perhaps holds more interest for academics) and for some at least the ethical basis for including stakeholders seemed to have been implicit – one of those “recursively organised”, commonly agreed social structures that enable or constrain behaviour (Giddens 1984). If that was the case then it could be recognised that the foundation for continuing the development of stakeholder management techniques may be strong, as this approach could be becoming the only socially acceptable way of working.

Thinking more critically however, the issue of there being a strong ethical foundation is perhaps of greater importance than many practitioners may realise. Saying that stakeholders should or must be involved is clearly not sufficient and there is also a real danger that the inclusion of stakeholders can become merely a goal in itself. Indeed, there is little evidence here to suggest that the restructuring process had much to do with delivering more sustainable forms of tourism development. It is the quality of the interaction and the decisions that stakeholders make that are more important, as explored in the following chapters. As Chapter 3 demonstrated, stakeholder theorists have given the ethical foundation some consideration from a number of different perspectives. It is argued here that firmly establishing such a foundation is important in the decision-making process – an area that has perhaps received too little attention in practice. An adequate response to the question that arises about how to account for the different views of a variety of interest groups is essential to the effective management of stakeholders and in order to make good decisions. Whether there is sufficient understanding of a foundation for stakeholder inclusion is given further consideration in the following chapters, especially in the local, implementation level case study where the issues may be more clearly exposed. There appears then to be more evidence to support the more pragmatic dependency based structuration and collaboration motives for stakeholder

coordination, rather than there being an ethical basis for stakeholder participation – or at least there is no explicit recognition of an ethical basis in the policy documents.

#### **5.4.2.4 Stakeholder management**

It is evident then that the fragmented nature of the tourism industry and the growing quest for coherence is entwined with the industry's growing ideas about what the benefits of successful partnership would be. For the Welsh tourism community, partnership – “effective coordination and collaboration at all levels in the industry” (WTB 2000:6) – appears to be a panacea that will solve the problems of the past. A very clear identification of different stakeholders across sectors and spatial levels is portrayed in the policy documents. In addition, funding mechanisms are being developed to encourage a more strategic regional and local foci and also to encourage different organisations to work together at these levels. So, there are different dimensions to the understanding of partnership across tourism in Wales:

- National level partnerships, e.g. between government funding agencies and also sectoral trade associations;
- Regional level partnerships like the RTPs, which bring together the trade and the local authorities into public sector strategic planning;
- Local level partnerships, like the tourism associations, Marketing Area Partnerships and the TGAs.

It should be further recognised that some of these partnerships cross spatial boundaries, containing representatives from not just the three sectors, but also from different spatial levels. This is especially so at the local level where the Tourism Growth Area scheme encourages local practitioners to form steering groups with regional coordinators and national funding bodies. Thus, there is evidence of important vertical, as well as horizontal, integration, which helps to address the recognised sustainable tourism development principle of integration (e.g. Wall 1993). The establishment of structures and funding incentives are therefore emerging as key techniques by which different organisations and groups are encouraged to work together, though there is little to suggest from the policy documents that there has been much consideration about the actual mechanisms of partnerships – how different groups can work together to make collective decisions. The exploration of how stakeholders are managed is given further consideration in the following chapters.

## Chapter 6

### **Stakeholder Participation at the National and Regional Levels**

*People from all works of life, the butcher, the baker, the candlestick maker, everyone came into that discussion. I think we've lost that over the years (RTP representative 2003).*

#### **6.1 Introduction**

Having identified the policy context within which tourism in Wales operates – a context in which a new set of governance arrangements have been established for a diffuse and complex industry – this chapter explores the effects of the changing tourism policy and structures on the behaviour of participants. Drawing on consultation documents and, to a greater extent, interview data, the main bulk of empirical material is analysed under the main questions considered by the thesis. In effect, the chapter explores the impact of the policy context on tourism's national and regional stakeholders. Further analysis with regard to theory and sustainable tourism literature is undertaken in Chapter 8.

#### **6.2 The Consideration of Stakeholder Interests: basis, benefits and barriers**

As we have seen, stakeholder theory posits that there is some underlying normative or moral basis for involving stakeholders, as well as claiming that doing so will yield additional benefits. This section therefore goes beyond the policy and strategy documents and broader context to investigate whether there is a wider belief that stakeholder participation is the *right* thing to do and whether there is an instrumental recognition, and any evidence, of potential and actual benefits. The section then, combines two of the research questions, being concerned with the consideration of stakeholder interests and the benefits and problems, as it has emerged that there is a close connection between them. To some extent it is possible to gauge the effects of increased stakeholder participation in Welsh tourism by participants' reflections of the situation pre-restructuring, and their views on how the new system is working. Consideration of the problems is also of interest as it is useful in determining net benefits.

Amongst the national and regional level respondents, there was some recognition of the moral imperative to involve stakeholders.

*In a stakeholder society everybody has a right to a view (RTP representative 2003).*

However, most placed more emphasis on the importance of the potential benefits than on a deeper underlying motive, with one interviewee choosing to explicitly “skate away” from answering the question on morality and instead state that an underlying motivation was a directive from the Assembly.

*Firstly there is a requirement from the Assembly, they are basically looking for joined up working and so we need to be seen to be working with other key stakeholder groups. So there is the drive. Even if we didn't have that, we'd want to work in partnership because our funding is limited, our remit is limited and our ability to take things forward is limited. We have to work with others, not least the tourism industry to, and here's the cliché here, make sure we're all singing off the same hymn sheet to try and work to the same objectives and share the workload because unless you do that, there's a real danger of duplication of effort and in the public sector duplication of effort is a 'big no no'. So from that point of view we've got to focus on what we want to achieve, how we achieve it, who does what – this is the perfect theoretical approach – come together in appropriate mechanisms: work parties or task and finish groups, or whatever, to actually see a job through to its end (WTB policy officer, WTB 2003).*

Consideration of a basis for stakeholder involvement also caused reflection of the diametrically opposed alternative, ‘dictatorship’, to emphasise that non-involvement is virtually unthinkable in modern tourism culture (national level trade representative 2003; RTP representative 2003; local government representative 2003). However, this reflection was also qualified by a light-hearted recognition that “things go in circles and we may decide a ‘dictatorship’ is better at some point” (RTP representative 2003).

*Each community has a stake in its own future. Essentially that will continue until someone says, we've had ten years of Objective 1 money and nothing has happened and so what we need now is a bit of benign dictatorship (RTP representative 2003).*

So, as tourism in Wales has recently emerged from a time of poor communication and coordination, the value of “networking – getting people with common problems, enthusiasms and interests together, spreading news and encouraging good practice” (national level trade representative 2003) is widely appreciated and could be seen to be becoming normative. Yet, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, one of the strongest arguments for stakeholder involvement that has emerged is based on a wide understanding that, individually, organisations are small and narrowly focused, but that together they are stronger – that

resource dependency is a key motivator. This view is held even at the highest level in the biggest organisation in the tourism system:

*WTB isn't big enough to do everything by itself. Even if it was big enough, it wouldn't want to do it anyway because to actually move forward in tourism, you have to move forward across a range of organisations* (Policy officer, WTB 2003).

In isolation, organisations recognise that their remits, funding and other resources like time and skills are limited (Policy officer, WTB 2003). As a result, it is seen as a “necessity” for groups to work together (national level trade representative 2003).

*We've got to work in partnership because we are so small* (RTP representative 2003).

The public sector organisations also realise that working together avoids the danger of “duplication of effort” (Policy officer, WTB 2003; RTP representatives 2003), “improves quality” (RTP representative 2003) and that “collectively they are stronger” (local government representative 2003). There are examples of emerging tensions when groups do not collaborate and concern expressed about how duplication of effort can arise as a result – to the extent that it is worth offering financial incentives to promote cooperation:

*Take web development. We've been trying to influence the local authority to let go. And instead of an Isle of Anglesey County Council / Tourism page, we've got a Visit Anglesey Tourism page, developed in partnership between the local authority and industry. And we have the LEADER+ project saying we're going to do one independently. We've gone back two steps. We're trying to get out of this duplication scenario and get one quality operation, one quality campaign, and we'll put money on the table to try and influence that* (RTP representative 2003).

There also appears to be a growing realisation that “so much more can be achieved by working together” and not doing so can lead to “a splintered, fragmented approach” (RTP representative 2003). And on the importance of “grass roots” involvement in strategy development, it is understood that lack of participation “leads to a miss match” (national level voluntary sector representative 2003), so the importance of having a broad range of organisations involved is not lost on tourism participants:

*It's really important that you get a good cross-sectional representation (national level trade representative 2003).*

Some also hint at a simple logic underlying wide participation in decision-making:

*If you have a decision to make, you obviously want to make the right one. Life is a lot easier if you do, so why not talk to people before you make that decision rather than afterwards? It just seems an easier way round (national level trade representative 2003).*

It is also argued that “something founded on consensus” will have “greater acceptance” and as a result, be “easier to implement” (local government representative 2003). Further, developing communication with a broader audience is believed to have the potential to account for alternative or unexpected solutions:

*The obvious things don't always come to people in pin-stripe suits (RTP representative 2003).*

Interestingly there are contextual factors that appear to be affecting the environment for partnership working. The increasing education levels of organisation employees is one such factor. For example, all of the RTP directors have completed MBAs and have therefore picked up on the academic arguments for adopting a partnership approach.

*More of us have gone down the academic achievement route, MBAs etc., so that thrust has been coming through in the last 10 years and we see this as a way of doing business (RTP representative 2003).*

Another motivational factor that has clearly helped to embed the ‘improved coordination approach’ was the outbreak of Foot and Mouth disease in 2002, which highlighted interdependence, not just between different communities, but different economic sectors as well.

*Sometimes a major event is needed to bring people together. Foot and Mouth did that (national level trade representative 2003).*

Though it occurred after the establishment of the new coordination structure, it is evident that the outbreak of Foot and Mouth disease in the UK, and the government’s

response to it, made rural communities realise that their knowledge and opinions, and those of the tourism industry in particular, were not taken into consideration. Although the outbreak was a “hectic time” in which many “were engaged in a whirlpool of difficulty... it brought the business community together” (National Park representative 2003).

*In adversity there was a need for people to work together and it helped form strong bonds* (RTP representative 2003).

It brought people from different sectors together as there was a recognition that “if small hill farming disappears then tourism will suffer as it is one of the reasons tourists visit the area” (local trade representative 2003). “During Foot and Mouth, the tourism side and farming side weren’t talking. But quite a lot of farmers did tourism too so they merged the two” (national level trade representative 2003). It also highlighted that “the farming unions are far far better organised than the tourism side and if you come down to the local council level, the councillors are farmers not tourism operators” (national level trade representative 2003).

The Foot and Mouth outbreak also appears to have caused reflection of what sustainable tourism means in terms of raising awareness of cross-sectoral impacts – Foot and Mouth Disease “served to highlight the greater perceived dependency of the rural economy of Wales upon the tourism industry” (RTP representative 2002:8). So, “Foot and Mouth demonstrated that we are all interdependent. It clearly put into focus that the only way to protect is to think collectively” (national level voluntary sector representative 2003).

In the aftermath, the English Tourism Alliance (equivalent to the Wales Tourism Alliance) was effectively told by government, “if only we’d known what the trade wanted, we might have reacted differently” (national level trade representative 2003), demonstrating the previous lack of effective communication channels. As a result of the review process following the outbreak, it was decided that should Foot and Mouth occur again, “the new contingency would be to get all stakeholders together to decide what was the most appropriate action” (national level trade representative 2003), a recognition of the importance of wide consultation. Following this, it was recognised that some people were thinking, “why wait for another crisis? Why not all get together now and start working together?” (national level trade representative 2003). And so the crisis – a ‘structure loosening’ event – became a useful catalyst for bringing people together. It provided a key impetus for strengthening the Wales Tourism Alliance in particular.

There is then some evidence of a cultural shift beginning to occur as a result of the recent policy emphasis on partnership and the restructuring process. While the benefits of healthy competition are not completely dismissed, some are seeing that “collaboration is a lot

more fruitful” (local government representative 2003) and that “we are more likely to achieve more beneficial things by pooling strengths” (national level voluntary sector representative 2003).

*Often competition is wasteful. Identify our strengths, play to our strengths, see how we can complement other people. I'm not stupid enough to believe that that is going to be achieved overnight. There is an ideal and vision that we may not ever fully realise, human nature and organisation structures being what they are* (national level voluntary sector representative 2003).

Further, some who initially participate in the development process for self-interested reasons are beginning to realise their shared circumstances and the value of sharing resources:

*People go into it seeing that there's support there for their business and then in due course they realise that they're talking to people with whom they have a lot more in common than they thought, and that if they actually work together we can all do really well. If we pool our resources, our knowledge, we can do extremely well. Every time that happens it's a revelation for the people in the room. It's great when people come to that point of realisation* (RTP representative 2003).

So, at the higher levels investigated in this chapter, tourism participants across sectors are beginning to recognise the benefits of a system with greater coordination between stakeholders and, though frequently qualified – “It’s snowballing slowly” (RTP representative 2003) and “good things are happening, but it’s not quick or easy” (national level voluntary sector representative 2003) – there is unanimity in the view that improvements are being made.

*95 - 98% of people see the benefit of working together... It is working. There is clearly hard evidence now to suggest that. But it's still got a long way to go* (RTP representative 2003).

There is also recognition that “relationships are improving [and] there is definitely more integration between the public and private sectors” (RTP representative 2003). New communication channels have been opened and old ones strengthened: “The civil servants being involved is something new as well; we now have far better contact with Assembly Members; and we do meet [WTB] more regularly” (national level trade representative 2003). There is also some evidence of greater sub-regional coordination, for example “you’ve got

Cardiff working with the rest of the region on various campaigns, which never happened before” (RTP representative 2003). Some even believe that involving people more in the development process is helping to recover a lost sense of community:

*I think latterly we've started to redress the balance and we've started getting back to how it used to be, and that is about engaging local communities and asking them first of all, what kind of tourism do you want and what are the opportunities? In a way I think we're getting back to how it used to be a hundred years ago, when a community was actually engaged in tourism. People knew where their bread was buttered in those days (RTP representative 2003).*

There appears to be a general perception at the higher levels that most of the problems associated with stakeholder involvement appear to be related more to barriers to participation rather than on there being significant problems when stakeholders are actually brought together. However, some describe the lost sense of community and negative relationships that could be barriers to improving coordination. Though there is evidence of tourism associations still in operation today having been established over a century ago (RTP representative 2003), some tourism associations have disappeared. While there may be many reasons for this, a tourism association in mid-Wales has recently collapsed because of tensions between members and where this has occurred there appears to be “a history” between them that makes the likelihood of collaborative work in the near future very difficult (National Park representative 2003).

Some have reflected that, over the last century, the reality of what it means to be a community has changed, that there was previously a stronger sense of community than there is today and that this has implications for the re-establishment of relationships.

*That kind of tourism association at a traditional resort like Llandudno, would involve the railway company because that was the way that people got there, it would involve the town council because they would be responsible for services and amenities, hoteliers, retailers, people providing internal transport, tea shops, the pier operator, all of that. So there was a very holistic view from a community that saw tourism as important (RTP representative 2003).*

There is evidence that suggests that although it is still prevalent in certain places, like Abergavenny, the “holistic view” has been lost.

*Associations and their groupings tend to be far more narrow in the way they developed. They tend to be a hoteliers group or an attractions group or a self-catering operators group, often*

*geographically based or sometimes thematically based across the whole of Wales. People tend to have or have had more of a sectoral interest and as a consequence we have lost the idea of a host community, which is vital for tourism (RTP representative 2003).*

And the break down of community makes it easier for tensions to develop:

*Tourism is then seen as something outside the community and part of the problem. For some communities in the west of Wales, where tourism has a negative connotation, tourism operators are not seen as integral to the local economy, they're seen to be parasitic on it (RTP representative 2003).*

Some even seem to resist the idea of working together, worrying about “giving up power and influence” (national level voluntary sector representative 2003). Others also recognise that individualism is a problem, yet while they believe it has deep cultural roots, there seems to be persisting optimism about the benefits of collaboration.

*I've heard the Welsh being described as tribal; it doesn't come automatically for us to work together. There are individual egos, as well as organisational egos... However, there's a growing realisation that so much more can be achieved by working together (RTP representative 2003).*

A further concern about partnership working is that it can require a lot of energy and time and that with the current trend for this way of working, perhaps a more appropriate method might achieve the same results more efficiently.

*Sometimes the energy put into them [partnerships] is greater than the benefit they actually create. I think all of them create some kind of benefit, but sometimes the effort put in doesn't justify the benefit. It might have been achieved in other ways (national level trade representative 2003).*

Some have also expressed that there is now too much emphasis on having to involve everybody. There is unease that in some cases it may seem to be so important to be seen to have a representative cross section of participants, that it actually makes things more difficult to manage and may even mean that it is difficult to include the best people.

*You need people who are interested. We invite very broad participation and some people take us up on the offer, some don't. I would rather work with a small group of enthusiasts – at some level you have to anyway. At the core, you have to have a small group of knowledgeable, enthusiastic, involved individuals or organisations to take things forward. We suffer, at the moment we are almost tied down by representation being the key. I work with some European partnerships – you have to have a thirds principle: private, public and voluntary sector involvement. You've got to have a gender balance and a geographical balance and its an enormous headache. I'm not saying that one shouldn't seek to do it, but that [representation] seems to be more important than if they're there but not interested. That political correctness can sometimes be a barrier, rather than a stimulation to action. It's a difficult one, but if someone is just there because they're a woman, but they would really rather not be there because they're not interested, then there are issues around that. These are the observations of experience (national level voluntary sector representative 2003).*

Another problem or cost associated with getting involved with other different bodies appears to be one of pace. It is demonstrative of the arising issues occurring as a result of diverse organisations working together and may be a particular consideration on the reflection of cross-sectoral partnerships.

*The price of getting involved with the WTB or an organisation like this [RTP], is that you're probably going to move at the speed of the slowest or at the speed of consensus, rather than moving at the speed that's best for your particular business (RTP representative 2003).*

Several significant barriers emerged as being important in the consideration of participation in tourism development. Principally, stakeholder involvement is “very time-intensive” (RTP representative 2003), from planning for, travelling to and attending meetings through to participation in consultation exercises. It is understood that a lot of practitioners, particularly small businesses simply, “don't have time to participate” (RTP representative 2003).

*Some bodies are spread very thinly. You can be in too many meetings (national level voluntary sector representative 2003).*

It is perceived that the shortage of time leaves smaller organisations in a situation where they must prioritise, and it is the day-to-day tasks of running a business that seem to take

precedence. This issue is particularly pressing for the Welsh tourism industry, where most of the businesses are small and relatively isolated.

*Down at the individual business level, people haven't got the time. Many people are so focussed on their own business that they don't give a lot of thought to the big picture anyway, if it's a matter of making sure the bedrooms are clean or filling in a form then it'll be the bedrooms that are a priority (national level tourism representative 2003).*

*Small scale operators who find it very difficult to see beyond tomorrow and are very engaged in their business and find it difficult to find the time away to go and talk about things that they don't necessarily see the direct relevance of (RTP representative 2003).*

Some see non-participation as being a result of apathy and poor communications, which may be related to problems encountered by coordinating organisations in terms of conveying the relevance of doing so.

*The greatest barrier to participation and consultation is not, necessarily structures, but perhaps apathy. Apathy coupled with poor communications. Apathy and bad communication skills lead to under-representation (RTP representative 2003).*

There are examples of where coordination mechanisms and communication channels have broken down and would-be participants have not, for example, been given adequate notice of a meeting or been given enough time to respond to a consultation document. One particular incident highlighted a negative aspect of relying on other organisations and how ineffective exchanges can potentially have damaging long-term effects on relationships and future participation.

*We thought we'd use the WTB as a distributor and they said they could get material out by 6<sup>th</sup> May for a meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup>. The material didn't go out 'til the 20<sup>th</sup>! We say 10 days notice before any meeting and so that was bad. It drives us to say we should become another administrator, duplicating another database. We haven't gone that far because I can't afford to, therefore we will have to find better ways of circumventing the dependency on someone else's time. We wouldn't use that channel again unless we felt there was a month's spare time (RTP representative 2003).*

Another incident, when the WLGA had somehow been missed off the mailing list for a WTB consultation document, even drew into question the level of trust between two important national bodies.

*A couple of years ago, we only had a few hours to respond to a document. Is it conspiracy or is it a cock-up?* (local government representative 2003)

Yet, these problems serve to further highlight the importance of *effective* coordination, rather than hint towards a conclusion that stakeholders should not be brought together because doing so would not achieve more beneficial outcomes.

It is apparent then that there is a wide belief amongst the key national and regional level participants in the partnership and stakeholder coordination doctrine espoused in the policy documents, though this largely seems to be on the basis of there being anticipated and actual benefits, rather than on there being an underlying moral imperative. There also appears to be a satisfactory level of recognition regarding the perceived barriers to stakeholder participation. However, the high levels of time and energy (and other resources) that greater coordination requires are serious challenges. A high level of personal and organisational commitment will be required to ensure high levels of stakeholder involvement and this may also involve increased operating costs. The real danger is that the perceived requirement for additional resources might, and appears to be, excluding the smaller scale stakeholders – the ones mostly responsible for delivering the product – which potentially has huge implications for the delivery of strategic goals, especially in a sector predominantly comprised of this type of stakeholder.

### **6.3 Levels of Stakeholder Participation in the Tourism Development Process**

Considering that participation in tourism planning is seen as a key sustainable tourism principle, the extent to which stakeholders are involved in various aspects of the tourism development process is investigated. As mentioned previously, actually knowing all of tourism's stakeholders with any accuracy is currently beyond the realm of attainable information. So in judging "to what extent are stakeholders involved", it is not possible to give a wholly accurate percentage type answer. Therefore a more qualitative approach is adopted, as outlined in the methodology chapter. Thus, it is possible to account for the people who are actually involved, as well as make statements about the levels of involvement of various stakeholder groups.

As evidenced by the referral to different groups in strategy documents and interviews, there is good awareness of the range of stakeholder groups and the issues surrounding their involvement and coordination within the Welsh tourism sector. The new tourism structure, strategy documents and wider context appear to have embedded the view that stakeholders or partners should be engaged and so at least consideration of stakeholder groups appears to be foremost in procedural thinking. There is a widespread awareness that the number of stakeholders that are known about is only a fraction of the total number – “the tip of the iceberg” (RTP representative 2003). Yet despite the significant level of knowledge about who some of the stakeholder groups are, it is only recently that certain groups have begun to be recognised – particularly those groups that might be considered as being more ‘peripheral’.

*I think those who work in the public sector with a strategic element have had a blinkered view of tourism. There are a lot of stakeholders out there who just haven't been on the radar: entertainment, clubs, pubs, retail, and host communities. There's a load of people we haven't taken into account, probably because it's too difficult and there's no need to while we can deal with tourism in a box of its own. The other ones are the self-choosing stakeholders who don't want to be involved. They've had the opportunity but they've chosen not to exercise that right (RTP representative 2003).*

At the organisation level only “a very small percentage don't play the partnership game” (RTP representative 2003) and some non-participants do not want to participate, not because they find it too difficult, but because they believe in their own approach.

*95 - 98% of people see the benefit of working together, but you will always have the minority that do not want to work together. They think their way is the best way and you will not get them (RTP representative 2003).*

Some stakeholder groups either find it difficult to participate in development processes or simply choose not to and it appears to be “people at both ends of the scale” that are under-represented for a variety of reasons (RTP representative 2003). The most under-represented groups are the bigger tourism companies, like the international hotel chains, and the very small tourism businesses – the small accommodation providers. There are not actually very many big tourism companies in Wales, especially outside of Cardiff, Newport and Swansea, and they tend not to participate, apparently because they see no real need to; they “can probably do without the tourism infrastructure” because their “spending power, market presence, brand equity, far outweighs that of any government organisation” (RTP representative 2003).

In some ways tourism is a unique industry because the 'coal face' is at least partly made up of 'lifestyle operators' or businesses where tourism may not be their prime concern and only supplements their main income. For these types of operators, the business may not be run with the same kind of strategic concern as in other types of industry. So, despite the range of opportunities that exist for small businesses to get involved, many choose not to.

*You have got a lot of lifestyle operators, where it might not be their main occupation. They have other commitments; tourism isn't the most important one of them. There probably isn't another industry quite like that. And that creates problems because they're not prepared to come to meetings or do anything really (national level trade representative 2003).*

*There are plenty of opportunities, it's fair to say, for the local, small tourism operator to get engaged in tourism. There's a local tourism association wherever they are, there's probably one of those clusters working on training close to them, and they're getting communications from us, their local authority and the WTb. You could improve all those means of communication, it has to be two-way and there are ways of improving that, but essentially, they have the opportunity to get involved. There's nothing stopping them (RTP representative 2003).*

It appears then that for many owning a holiday cottage or running bed and breakfast accommodation is a way of supplementing income or is seen as an escape from the 'hectic pace of modern life'. As such many operators of these so-called "lifestyle businesses" do not always wish to participate in meetings and other planning bureaucracy. Their non-participation appears to be raising questions amongst coordinating organisations and because "they make up a big part of the product, there are issues" (RTP representative 2003). It even seems that there are questions being asked by the coordinating organisations about how much efforts should be made to engage with them:

*There are a very large number of small operators who don't feel particularly engaged and frankly don't want to be. There's a lot of talk of lifestyle businesses - there's a big debate going on now about how much one recognises those in terms of what we do (RTP representative 2003).*

There also appears to be a demographic to participation (at least within the rural tourism business community, which makes up most of the product in Wales), as "Younger people are devoting their time to getting their business going; older people are going off and becoming councillors" (national level trade representative 2003). So, simply because of the nature of tourism, getting *everybody* to participate, even if the opportunities are provided, seems highly unlikely.

*Some will never join anything. We're never going to get through to them* (national level trade representative 2003).

Concern is also expressed that the host communities (meaning local residents rather than local business who may be impacted on directly) are not getting engaged in tourism development (RTP representative 2003). While community groups are broadly well represented in Welsh Development Agency schemes, they do not appear to have such a presence in tourism meetings, particularly at the national and regional levels (RTP representative 2003). This may have implications for sustainability given the importance placed on these groups by both practitioners and academics. Apart from areas where residents groups emerge, usually in response to a proposed major development like the controversial "Bluestone Leisure Park" in Pembrokeshire (James, 2004) or acute problems caused by tourism, there is little in terms of organisational infrastructure to engage them in the tourism planning process and it is anticipated that residents not directly involved in tourism face similar problems to small businesses (e.g. lack of time), but with even less opportunities and incentive.

The existence of 'non-participants' raises the question, aside from the presumably difficult practical challenges that would arise if everybody did wish to participate, about what impact they have and whether it matters that not everyone is involved. Non-participating groups appear to cause several types of problem. Firstly, not being involved may cause problems for themselves because, by being 'outside' of the development process, they may not have access to as much information about things like funding and marketing opportunities. Secondly, some are concerned that the non-participants "are pulling us back" (RTP representative 2003), particularly when it comes to getting the message across about sustainability, improving quality and meeting changing market trends:

*My only concern is in terms of the wider host community who are going to meet the tourist on the street or in the sandwich bar or the taxi driver. I think that's where the real issues are* (RTP representative 2003).

*Surveys indicate that there is a growing demand for short breaks, rather than week long vacations. Getting this message across to holiday cottage owners is difficult* (RTP representative 2003).

And there is also some suggestion that non-participation makes it harder for others who are more actively involved.

*Some are active and others are not. The active ones tend to carry the ones that are not (national level voluntary sector representative 2003).*

Worse still is when non-participants in the 'normal' development processes intentionally set out to cause disruption. For example, there is evidence of aggrieved stakeholders "spreading misinformation" to try and influence wider perception (RTP representative 2003).

*By the nature of the minorities they can stir up a lot of dissatisfaction if one isn't careful (RTP representative 2003).*

It is accepted then that tourism in Wales is driven by a relatively small number of stakeholders. The previous chapter investigated participation in national strategy development and exposed a seemingly low participation rate (around 10% of those consulted) and it is widely acknowledged that there are around 400 active participants who could be described as being the core component of Welsh tourism planning (the figure quoted below compares closely with the number of national strategy consultation respondents: 466).

*You tend to see the same people at meetings, so probably out of about 10,000 stakeholders [in Wales], essentially the responses one gets to anything issued by WTB or any of us, is probably from the same 300-400 people who are interested, articulate and motivated – mainly local trade associations and groupings consortia, along with public sector interests. Some of those consortia and trade associations are very committed and interested, and those who are not are probably not passing information along to their groups. So, I'm conscious that there's a lot of people who are out of the loop (RTP representative 2003).*

While, as with the periphery group, there may be variation among the core, this group's views and actions have a stronger ability to make and influence development decisions. That these more active participants generally have organisational backing (i.e. are generally from associations or consortia, etc.) implies that they are representative of their groups' views – evidently an important way of handling communications with a massive number of individual stakeholders, which suggests that grouping and representation are important above a need to involve everyone directly. So, recognising that there is a practical limit to involvement, a developing formalised system then requires stakeholders within particular groups to ensure that their representatives are accountable and fairly represent their views.

*Any partnership has to have a certain degree of formality, and so the number of people you can get round a table are likely to be limited or limited in where they're drawn from or it's prescribed where they're drawn from (RTP representative 2003).*

Many of the core group know each other through regular contact in meetings or at least know of the others through organisational linkages and participation in consultation exercises:

*In a comparatively small country, most people do know each other. Wherever you go, it's the same people you meet (national level trade representative 2003).*

Within this core group of a few hundred, there also appears to be an inner core and there is a general feeling amongst respondents that strategic tourism development in Wales relies on “a few key people” (national level trade representative 2003). These people are affectionately referred to as the “usual suspects” and their numbers are recognised as “limited” (RTP representative 2003). It appears that one of the defining characteristics of the “usual suspects” is that they “wear many different hats” (national level trade representative 2003) – they simultaneously hold several different roles, which ensures that they are involved in many different ways, sometimes at different levels and across sectors. A review of the different roles held by one particular person demonstrates this characteristic and begins to identify him as one of the key players or “usual suspects” who is active in a wide variety of tourism development decision-making processes (Fig 6.1).

*Personalities are important. It can come down to one or two key players – how good they are (national level trade representative 2003).*

These key players clearly have significant experience and are of particular value to their networks. The growing number of partnerships therefore appears to aid in the development of closer social networks as the same people get to know each other better through regular contact, though some concern is expressed that the number of different meetings is an inefficient use of time.

*Many members wear many different hats. There are useful crossovers in meetings. I get the feeling that it's the same group of people meeting under different headings in different places, I guess to discuss different issues, but whether it's the most efficient way of doing things, I'm not entirely convinced (national level trade representative 2003).*

Figure 6.1 Evidence of Multiple Roles of a “Usual Suspect”		
Spatial level	Organisation and role	Sector
National	Welsh Association of Visitor Attractions – Chair	Private
	Wales Tourism Alliance - Director	Private
	WTB Countryside Tourism Advisory Group – member	Public
	Pendragon Consultants Ltd – Director	Private
Regional	Mid Wales Tourism Partnership - Director	Public
	Mid Wales Tourism - Director	Private
	Mid Wales Partnership - tourism sub committee member	Private and public
	Attractions of Snowdonia Consortium – member	Private
	North Wales Tourism – member	Private
Local	Corris Caverns (visitor attraction) – Director	Private
	Dyfi Valley Attractions Consortium – member	Private
	Dyfi Valley TGA – steering group member	Public, private and voluntary sector

In addition, that a few people hold multiple roles has the potential to give rise to a conflict of interests. There is also some wider concern that even when involved in partnership work, opportunism exists and it is still possible for some to further their own aims.

*Conflict of interest is something that's quite interesting because it is a small community and people are involved in many partnerships (RTP representative 2003).*

*If you don't have clear objectives, a proper understanding of goals, the people in the partnership might have different objectives and might try to further their own aims. Politics comes into that an awful lot (civil servant 2003).*

The issue of contesting vested interests is considered further in the following chapter where a potential negative impact – the hindrance of new development solutions – is considered.

## 6.4 Stakeholder Management

Management of groups and their interests occurs at national, regional and local levels and is orchestrated by a range of different organisations. The sheer number and inaccessibility of many stakeholders in the tourism system creates practical communication problems and appears to be a significant factor behind the development of coordination structures. As explored in the following section, newly created coordination structures and mechanisms employed in Wales evidently serve to facilitate the management of stakeholder views and are used by the higher level organisations to promote the delivery of their strategic goals.

### 6.4.1 National level coordinators

As a result of the restructuring process, all of the organisations seem to be making attempts to be more involving, although there is little evidence at the national level of organisations having conducted comprehensive stakeholder mapping, perhaps at least partly due the number of stakeholders and the range of issues open for consideration.

*I'm not sure whether we have any stakeholder organisational chart which clearly shows all of the people that WTB works with because I think that the chart would vary, depending on the function or area that we are involved in (Policy officer, WTB 2003).*

### ***National Assembly***

As has been outlined in the previous chapter, the Welsh Assembly Government is at the tip of public sector involvement in Welsh tourism, instructing its Sponsored Bodies through its Remit Letters and influencing structures and practice through various funding mechanisms. Prior to the establishment of the Assembly, the UK government's Welsh Office influenced tourism in Wales, most notably in recent history with its initiation of the "Fit for the Millennium" review process, which eventually led to the restructuring of the sector; thus demonstrating the significant role of national bodies. Now, with the 'bringing in house' of WTB, participants are especially clear where the "stakeholder working" drive is coming from:

*I think stakeholder working is here to stay. For one reason we're told it has to be by the Assembly whether we like it or not. It's part of their aspiration to see people working in this kind of way (RTP representative 2003).*

With regard to tourism, the Assembly generally only communicates directly with a small number of national organisations. While it does on occasion also meet with other interested bodies, due to the difficulties associated with meeting all stakeholders, the Assembly largely relies on other organisations to gather views and disseminate information.

*Obviously we don't just take WTB's word for it. We recognise that there are a number of other stakeholders and we have regular meetings with the WTA and from time to time the BHA and any other stakeholder who wants to come and see us. The minister Andrew Davies has all sorts of requests to perform visits, talk to conferences, so we would give him speaking notes. So it's not all down to the WTB. We are in touch directly with stakeholders. We don't have direct contact with the RTPs, not yet anyway. It tends to be all Wales organisations, or if it's an individual event, then the individual organisation. It's difficult to meet all stakeholder bodies and interests so the WTA has recently been revamped to be the all Wales level representative of businesses, so our initial point of contact is with them. We're more than happy to meet others if they want to. We never refuse meetings but strategically we tend to talk to the all Wales level and leave it to them to disseminate to all their members (civil servant 2003).*

In formally gathering views, the Assembly has a 'consultation database', which organisations can sign up to if they want to be alerted of a relevant consultation process. In recent years, the website has become an important tool for interested parties and the Assembly believes that developing policies is now a more participative process.

*When we are developing policies, either tourism or more general economic policies, we tend to have a consultation database, so the WTA can put their name on the database, so whenever we propose a policy that might impact on tourism (can be wide ranging, energy, wind farms, Foot and Mouth footpath closures) they get consulted. But nowadays it's all on the website, so anybody with an interest (i.e. a stakeholder) can access and contribute to our policy. We do involve/consult individual organisations through websites and people with an interest, a lot more than we used to (civil servant 2003).*

## **WTB**

As with the Assembly, the WTB maintains various databases for tracking communication with organisations. As well as through the use of electronic communication, the WTB also hold 'open board meetings' and 'open forums' in attempts to improve their external relationships and make the running of their organisations more transparent.

*Just to give you an example of what WTB has been doing to try and open up its way of working: we now have four open Board meetings a year, they're done on a quarterly basis... What would happen as part of that process is that we would meet with the RTP in that region and we would talk with them about the issues that are bothering them or about whether our working relationship needs to be improved, so it's an active way of taking things forward, but we also have an open forum where we invite, advertise in the local papers, saying that "WTB are meeting, why don't you come along and meet with us?" We say, "if you've got any issues, you've got an opportunity to raise those and we'll take them on board". That's an easy way that we can make ourselves more accessible. When there is a need to get a job done, there will be more formalised structures in terms of meeting arrangements (Policy Officer, WTB 2003).*

However, despite the new opportunities that are welcomed by some, it appears that few people are enthusiastically making the most of them.

*The WTB now has open Board meetings, but they are lucky to get attendance into double figures! I don't believe everyone's that happy that they don't want to turn up. The Chairman, Chief Executive, Strategy Director, Marketing Director – they are all there; all the Board Members. What an opportunity to ask them questions (national level trade representative 2003).*

Yet the former WTB was of course a major player at the national policy and strategic level and as mentioned, it was its influence that led to the creation the four RTPs as they are, in so doing demonstrating its power to coordinate other organisations. Its strategy and its distribution of Capital Grants, including the initiation of the Tourism Growth Area scheme (mentioned previously and explored in more detail in the following chapter), also influence the behaviour of tourism participants. WTB also maintained a level of overview of the RTP's activities through a process of annually endorsing their action plans.

*[The RTPs] are all required to put in their plan for the year ahead to WTB around this time of year and we have to endorse that (Policy Officer , WTB 2003).*

Further, as identified in Chapter 5, the WTB decided on the allocation of funds to each RTP – the amount of funding each region receives varies, which to some extent puts the RTPs in competition with each other – and also stipulates how that money can be spent, i.e. percentages on running costs and for project expenditure.

## **TTFW**

Figure 6.2 Formation of TTFW (national voluntary sector representative 2003)

*In 1998, a voluntary partnership of interested parties came together try and develop a strategic approach to tourism training. ...What we recognised was there was a lot going on in pockets and no mechanism to bring them together – lots of project based work going on, funded from different sources. Somebody would have a good idea – lets do a training needs analysis – without knowing that 5 miles down the road, somebody could be doing something similar. So it was a bringing together of coordination. It was also looking at bringing supply and demand together because funding providers had pushed tourism trainers in a particular direction. You do what you're paid to do. Government policy was all top down: we want NVQs, we want this, and this is what we're funding you to do. But there was a mismatch, at least partial, quite big I think, between government policy and what was being provided and what businesses actually wanted and would engage in. So we had a lot of supply and relatively little take up, for a number of reasons: sometimes it wasn't what they wanted; sometimes they didn't know what was available. Also there is an issue of small businesses which are very busy and actually stimulating, getting their interest in skills development, is quite a challenge.*

*So a number of interested parties got together on a voluntary basis to try and coordinate things, to sharpen up what we were trying to do collectively (I was working at WTb at the time). We agreed we would do it for three years and then evaluate, see if we were having any impact, and if it was useful we would see how we could develop it. And that's exactly what happened. We had 4 working parties and we tried to include every stakeholder we could possibly think of: anybody who had any interest. If they were a provider, a business, a trade associations, public agencies, whatever. If they had an interest we were very happy for them to be there. And it worked well in part, but the secretariat was being provided by WTb – by me and my department – but it was only part of what we did and we felt we couldn't do enough. So, following an evaluation in 2000, we decided to seek funding and set up TTFW, which happened finally in November 2001. We are funded by WTb and ELW and we look to Europe and other funding partners who are asking us to do specific pieces of work on a contract basis.*

The Tourism Training Forum for Wales (TTFW) is a national body whose main purpose is to improve coordination of training. It was born out of the uncoordinated situation at the end of the 1990s with the intention of being a mechanism by which the supply of and demand for tourism training could be brought together. In outlining the history of the

organisation's formation (Fig 6.2), the Director describes a lack of communication that was leading to inefficiencies, a misunderstanding of needs and inappropriate service provision. It is noteworthy that the TTFW was formed by the voluntary coming together of interested parties and it is possible to speculate that the broad range of input helped to recognise the range of problems and possible solutions that led to successful funding applications to set up a new body. The TTFW now works operationally with "partners of all sorts" at the national and regional levels while maintaining a strategic overview. Working at the regional level has become very important to TTFW and in attempting to ensure cohesion between national strategies and programs with local level needs, the TTFW, in partnership with the RTPs, is creating and developing regional networks to work with tourist associations. Much of their work therefore seems to be about identification and connection of different interest groups (Fig 6.3).

Figure 6.3 TTFW: Function (national voluntary sector representative 2003)

*We are working with businesses to encourage them to invest time and effort in relevant training; working with training providers to ensure they are providing the sort of training businesses want; working with partners of all sorts, both at a national and regional level. The regional level is very important. And in addition to our national strategic work we are working with the RTPs and other regional partners to create Tourism HRD Networks to work with the local tourist associations. What's important is that what we do nationally and strategically feeds into our more operational work at a regional level, but equally of course, the grass roots operational work feeds into strategy, otherwise you have a mismatch. We are here to make things better, to make things work. We don't deliver training. We want to work with those that do deliver and those that could benefit from it. And other agencies who have an interest.*

Working with a diverse range of organisations, TTFW has encountered a number of challenges. Although it is a national body, TTFW only has four staff. Recognising the crucial need to gather information and build relationships, a lot of time was consumed during the early stages travelling around, getting to know people.

*Initially, we are a very small team. There's only four of us for Wales: the secretary, the director, a coordinator for tourism businesses, and a coordinator for training and education providers. They spent a lot of time during the first year going out and meeting people and talking to them, finding out what their concerns and interests were. Talking and developing relationships is the best way to work, but relationships are complex and take time to build. But we are very much, get out*

*there and talk to people. Our coordinators are frequently out on the road, meeting with people, trying to get a very much better understanding of who's doing what, and then of course you develop external relationships with people; then you get the information (national level voluntary sector representative 2003).*

As with other organisations, part of the problem for TTFW has been knowing everybody involved in tourism, but even when there is knowledge about organisations, internal structures or sheer numbers can still make communication difficult.

*With the training providers it is a more concrete audience. You know who the colleges are. We know who the training providers are, by and large. Relating to them isn't as easy as you might think. You think, I'll go to college x and talk to their tourism person, but in fact structures aren't like that. There may be five or six individuals within a particular college whose work impacts on tourism, but they don't necessarily work together because the work is split up departmentally: in some colleges, hospitality might be separate from tourism for example, and the mechanisms and work patterns don't actually bring them together. However, it's our job to talk to them and build up their contact database so that they do know who they need to be talking to about what. ...On the businesses side, that is an enormous task. WTB estimate they know of 5-6000 tourism businesses and if it's not the tip of the iceberg, it's perhaps half the picture. So as well as all the ones we know about, well we know they're there, but we don't know anything about them because they don't talk to us, they don't talk to WTB, ELWa. They don't engage at all. And that is an enormous challenge. However, we have made quite a start in talking to the tourist associations, the trade bodies, and we are well aware that one person, even if they spent every day of the week going to speak to a tourist association, we wouldn't cover them all (national level voluntary sector representative 2003).*

In an attempt to handle the task of coordination, TTFW therefore relies to a great extent on the structures of regional and locally based organisations, like the RTPs and tourist associations, as channels of communication. It is importantly working with other organisations at different levels to help bring together different stakeholders for the purpose of planning tourism for specific areas.

*The plans are, in each of the regions we have been supporting the RTPs bringing together stakeholders – anybody really who feels they have an interest: providers, the business side and other agencies – to develop first of all an action plan and identify what the priorities are for that region (national level voluntary sector representative 2003).*

But as well as working with other coordinating organisations at the sub-national levels, due to the size of the task, TTFW recognises the need to have its own employees at the regional level and had applied for funding to create posts that would help to improve national to local coordination.

*Part of that [European Social Fund] funding will be used to fund a post – an HRD coordinator for each region. They would have dual role. They will be located with the RTP, so they will be the HRD specialists at a regional level, but they will also be the eyes and ears of the TTFW in the region and because they've got a region to look after, rather than the whole of Wales, they will make direct contact with the TAs and the training providers in their region. So it is a mirror image of the relationships we are trying to develop on a national basis and it will integrate very much into the work we are doing (national level voluntary sector representative 2003).*

TTFW highlights several related factors that influence its role as coordinators and that constrain the realisation of a fully coordinated, collaborative tourism system. It recognises that “everybody has a vested interest” and that occasionally existing organisational structures can be problematic. In reflecting on the over supply of tourism training, it is suggested that the previous system was suited to certain bodies. These groups in particular appear to be concerned that they would lose out if things changed. TTFW attempts to manage this kind of situation, trying to “engage”, by being “open and transparent”. It believes that it has a neutral position that benefits the way it operates, acting largely as a facilitator and in some senses as a mediator. In addressing concerns, TTFW believes that demonstrating the mutual benefits of working more strategically is an important negotiating tool.

*There are good things happening, and we are encouraged that they can be replicated, but it is not quick or easy. What we are about is effecting cultural change. Everybody has a vested interest, but we are trying to break down barriers. One of the advantages of TTFW is we don't have an axe to grind. We are incredibly neutral. We are not in competition with anybody. What we are trying to do is facilitate better working relationships. Politics exist. You would be naïve to imagine that they don't and of course in any sort of network you are going to have vested interests that maybe conflict with each other. What we try to do is to move it away from the organisation and focus on the need. What action needs to be done to move things forward, but undoubtedly where you are trying to change the way things are done, there are very often people with perceptions who were very happy with the way things were done in the past because it benefited their particular organisation who are going to take some convincing to do things differently in the future. But we have to be open and transparent with people and to try and engage everybody. You*

*have to demonstrate that there is something in it for them and sometimes they take more convincing and there is a worry of giving up power and influence – “if I share maybe I lose”. But something has to be done. In some cases there is too much provision. You’ve either got to grow your market or refine your provision, or perhaps a bit of both (national level voluntary sector representative 2003).*

TTFW recognises that “at some level you have to” work with a “small group of enthusiasts” and believes that getting “good people” involved is more important than worrying about whether there are representatives from each group. Experience has demonstrated that it is not just what a person represents that is important, it is attitude and ability to ‘think outside the box’. Though, it is the structures that are more heavily criticised for ‘forcing’ uninterested people to be involved. The imposition of structures is also seen to cause problems for representative bodies because participation can cause significant demands on their time.

*We have to be careful. Good people wherever they come from do think outside their boxes, they look at the bigger picture. Not, I come from town x and I only care about anything that benefits town x. some people come in and say I’m from town x and I’m not interested in anything that doesn’t benefit town x. That’s the kind of issue you come up against when you set up these structures. I’m not complaining about the people, I’m complaining about the structures that force people into those situations. It’s something we are grappling with. In an ideal world you’d have people that were representative and good people. It’s much to do with attitudes, caring and wanting to get involved. Sometimes there are some representative bodies that are spread so thinly. It can happen when you MUST be involved in everything (national level voluntary sector representative 2003).*

## **WTA**

One of those representative bodies that appears to be “spread so thinly” is the Wales Tourism Alliance (WTA). The WTA does not have a single full-time employee, with the Chair providing his time on a voluntary basis. The restructuring of tourism that took place actually had the effect of taking resources away from WTA, despite the review process calling for a strengthened trade representative body.

*Prior to the formation of the RTPs, the Directors of the RTCs were a very important part of the WTA as they provided much of the human resources and funding. The removal of both people and funding actually led to a restructuring of the WTA, also in 2002 (national level trade representative 2003).*

In 2002, WTA “constructed a pan-Wales Board framework that led to the election of a group of well-respected and experienced industry leaders”. Nevertheless, it is recognised that “having a fulltime employee would enable WTA to get more of the trade involved and it could achieve a lot more” (national level trade representative 2003). The WTA would prefer not to receive public funding for a post, as the Chair is keen for the trade to have ownership, but it is recognised that where the money might come from remains a “big question mark”, implying difficulties associated with getting the trade to pay for a coordinating role. It is also anticipated that “it is possible to have funding from public sources and be independent – as long as you have the right kind of relationship” (national level trade representative 2003).

The Board of 7 now meets monthly and the broader membership “made up of national and regional tourism-related organisations from the length and breadth of Wales”, making a total of 18, meets quarterly to discuss industry interests, “identifying and championing strategic issues” on behalf of the 7000 tourism businesses the WTA claims to represent (WTA 2002-2003). The WTA then ensures regular communication with the Assembly and WTB, by which it is endorsed, and that all trade sectors therefore have an input into the policy making process.

*This last year in particular has seen an enormous improvement in communications and interaction with both WAG and WTB and I have little doubt that this trend will continue. ...the RTPs are not that relevant as they deal with regional issues and the WTA are far more involved in national matters* (national level trade representative 2003).

So the WTA speaks as the voice of the tourism trade, participating in a wide range of meetings and consultations. It is empowered to do so from above (by WAG and WTB) and from below, with its membership organisations acting as another layer of coordination to the groups that they each represent – every member of WTA is itself a membership organisation/association, representing, in some cases, thousands of members. The WTA is now also reaching out to less well-connected groups by, for example, helping to set up a forum for small service sector operators with assistance from WTB (therefore also demonstrating WTB’s role in developing coordination).

The membership of the WTA is worthy of further consideration, as each member organisation has its own coordinating functions at national, regional and sometimes local levels (Fig 6.4). A review of their names and functions reveals a plethora of phrases that in some way indicates that they are a collection of shared interest groupings: associations, consortia, forums and federations that serve to facilitate, represent, support and participate. The existence of these organisations demonstrates the predisposition of similar interest groups to form coordinating bodies to act on their behalf. This appears to help address the resource

problems that many have in terms of being able to participate in development processes and also seems to give those coordinating organisations the power of the collective voice.

Figure 6.4 Membership of WTA – a plethora of coordinating organisations (adapted from WTA 2005)

Name of Organisation	Function	Represents	Other information
Antur Cymru	Umbrella organisation	Outdoor education, recreation, and tourism in Wales	Active observer status membership for other key bodies in Wales, which include the Countryside Council for Wales, Sports Council for Wales and Wales Tourist Board
Association of Welsh Agents	Facilitates communication between the self-catering agents themselves, the WTB and the WTA.	Virtually all the Wales-based Agencies (plus one just over the border!) and collectively its members market in the region of 2,500 self-catering units.	
British Hospitality Association	National association	Hotel, restaurant and catering industry	
British Holiday & Home Parks Association (BH&HPA)	Representative trade body for the parks industry in the United Kingdom.	303 members in Wales who own or manage 365 caravan holiday home, chalet and touring parks, providing some 200,000 tourist beds.	
Camping and Caravanning Club		400,000 members	Oldest such Club in the world with a history going back to 1901
Farm Stay UK	Farmer owned consortium aiming to promote the concept of farm tourism in the UK		
National Federation of Self Employed and Small Businesses (FSB)	Lobbying and campaigning		Regularly consulted by the Government and National Assembly.
Forum for Small Serviced Accommodation Operators in Wales	Represent the collective opinion of bed and breakfast and small guesthouse operators in Wales with 10 letting bedrooms or less. It operates to debate all issues of interest to this sector of the industry and to exchange views from both within the industry and with organisations such as WTB.	Membership of the forum consists of two representatives each from North Wales Tourism, Mid Wales Tourism, FarmStay Wales, SW Wales Tourism Associations and the trade in SE Wales.	The secretariat for the forum is provided by Mid Wales Tourism
Mid Wales Tourism	Regional membership organisation for tourism businesses. Principal deliverer of support for the Tourism Economy of Mid Wales	Serves the tourism industry throughout Powys, Ceredigion and the Meirionnydd area of Gwynedd, representing tourism interests at all levels. The company has circa 700 members, ranging across the whole spectrum of the tourism industry.	Membership benefits include free listing on the regional website, preferential banking facilities and rates on credit card processing, discounts on specialist insurance packages, leaflet distribution and provision of discount vouchers towards training courses.

The National Caravan Council	Trade association	Membership in excess of 500, the NCC represents the manufacturers, dealers, park operators and supplies and services providers throughout Great Britain and Northern Ireland.	Originally formed in 1939 as the for the UK Caravan Industry
North Wales Tourism	It is the principal deliverer of support for the tourism industry on a partnership basis.	Represents over 1300 private sector public organisations within the North Wales tourism/hospitality industry. Wales.	
South West Wales Tourism Associations	Participate in the partnership delivery of local, regional and national strategies for tourism	The four local tourism associations of South West Wales	Evolved from local tourism groups and now work with the South West Wales Tourism Partnership, the WDA, the county councils of the region and regional facilitators. Local associations target as many trade representatives as possible to ensure a united front through which the other agencies can operate.
Tourism Training Forum for Wales (TTFW)	Provides support and leadership to tourism businesses in Wales. Working closely with education and training providers it aims to develop the industry's skills and knowledge base so that quality and training are at the heart of the Wales tourism industry.		The Forum is involved in a number of innovative projects which bring the areas of education & training and business together. Working in partnership it is also leading the development of regional teams who will be committed to working closely with businesses and education providers in across Wales.
Wales Association of Self-Catering Organisations (WASCO)	Acts as a voice of self catering in Wales and works through WTA as a focus- pressure- group in advancing the needs of tourism and in making local authorities, National Assembly and Westminster aware of the needs and problems of tourism.	One-cottage operators, to large agencies operating though out Wales.	Members have previous diverse careers in other fields, resulting in a potential pool of talent that could be called upon by the tourism industry.
Wales Official Tourist Guides Association	Promote and represent the interests of qualified self-employed professional tour guides in Wales.	Over fifty members	Strong links to the Institute of Tourist Guides we operate throughout Wales with the active approval of the Wales Tourist Board.
Welsh Association of Visitor Attractions (WAVA)	Support and represent visitor attraction operators. It provides networking opportunities for operators to discuss problems and share experience. It also ensures that information relevant to the industry is shared through its biannual conferences, through e-mail links with members and through newsletters.	About 70 members	Also represents the interests of attractions to bodies such as the British Tourist Authority, the Wales Tourist Board and the Regional Tourism Partnerships, raising issues of concern and encouraging the widest possible support for attractions in strategy development and implementation and the proper consideration of attractions in all marketing and development plans.
YHA	Affordable accommodation	36 youth hostels across Wales	

## **WLGA**

The Wales Local Government Association (WLGA) encouraged partnership working with the WTB through development of a Memorandum of Understanding and through attendance at WTB meetings. The same is true of its partnership with the Wales Development Agency (WDA).

*The Memorandum describes the working relationships agreed between the WTB and WLGA. It builds on and enhances the established structures and relationships for consultation and cooperation between the WTB, WLGA and local authorities (WLGA 2002).*

The Memorandum outlines a range of commitments between the two organisations with regard to: working together; development programmes; marketing; research and monitoring; publicity; quality assurance; customer care and visitor services; and implementation and review. Although, the detailed document now “tends to stay on the shelf” (local government representative 2003), it provides reassurance that if there was a break down in communication, then grounds for taking appropriate action would be clear. That the document is largely unused, therefore suggests the existence of adequate communication channels.

*We were involved in developing the Memorandum of Understanding, which actually tends to stay on the shelf. There has never been any situation where we need to invoke this, where we have had a disagreement and needed to resort to it, but I suppose if we weren't consulted on a particular proposal, for example, there are some specific commitments in here which we can refer to (local government representative 2003).*

The WLGA was represented on a number of WTB working groups on tourism matters such as culture, sustainable tourism and destination management systems (WLGA 2003). In so doing, it acts as a national voice for the collective interests of local authorities in Wales, keeping “abreast of tourism policies coming from the Assembly and WTB and alerting local authorities when there's a national local government issues to be resolved” (local government representative 2003). It argues that as the local authorities are the “democratically elected representatives of their communities”, it “is important that these views are adequately considered by all organisations” (WLGA 2002). The WLGA does not always act as a voice for the local authorities – direct local authority links with WTB were encouraged and the WLGA would only normally step in if there was a nationally important issue or something was

happening that was affecting a number of localities, when the benefits of a stronger collective voice would be realised.

*Where there are issues that affect a number of local authorities we step in. Local authorities are stronger collectively than they are individually. Although of course individual relationships between local authorities and WTB are important, and if local authorities have a problem they will take it direct to WTB. The key for us as an association is to keep abreast of what is going on and intervene when there is an issue of national importance (local government representative 2003).*

The Regeneration Policy Officer, whose brief includes economic regeneration and tourism, works at two different levels, using a representative spokesperson to communicate upwards with government ministers, and a network of officers to gather local views.

*As a policy officer, I work at a political level with elected members and at officer level, with tourism officers within local authorities. At member level there is a tourism spokesperson, who at the moment is leader of Carmarthenshire council. Whenever we need to raise a tourism issue with a minister, she will present that, and she will deal with the media etc. At officer level, we have a tourism officer network through which we canvas views etcetera (local government representative 2003).*

Demonstrating how sometimes internal organisational structures can make interorganisational communication difficult, until recently WLGA “didn’t have a tourism policy officer and so it was difficult for WTB because they didn’t have a contact point” and it took the persistence of a WLGA staff member to ensure that WTB regularly contacted them and the local authorities in particular (local government representative 2003). Although the importance of tourism to local authorities is recognised and there is good communication between them, the WLGA as an organisation itself is “not that active in the tourism area” (local government representative 2003), which explains why it is not directly in contact with more tourism related organisations. The focus tended to be on direct relationships with WTB although it is said that WLGA found it difficult to influence and hold them to account. The way WTB evolved means that it can only be held to account by the Assembly, which appears to make it a powerful organisation.

*Whenever you look at ASPBs, it’s interesting to think of the way that the Assembly influences these pre-devolution organisations. Because you have this indirect accountability – the only way WTB is held to account is through the Assembly. So accountability is a problem. When we want*

*WTB to head in a particular direction, its very hard for us to do that. We can hammer away at them, writing letters, but the real clout comes from the Assembly (local Government representative 2003).*

This means that for WLGA, it is important to have good relations with the Assembly, but it appears that the Assembly finds it more convenient to deal with public bodies like WTB, rather than with the twenty-two voices of the local authorities.

*And of course, if policies are delivered through ASPBs, it's much easier for the Assembly to do that because they don't have 22 local authorities sticking their oar in. Its much easier for a civil servant in Cathays Park to deal with a single official in an agency like WDA and WTB than it is to deal with 'bolsby' people like us (local Government representative 2003).*

Despite these views, the WLGA, among other organisations, does participate in the Quinquennial Review of the WTB that is submitted to the Assembly, demonstrating that there is some opportunity to speak critically.

It is evident that the WLGA and the local authorities expressed more concern over the creation of the four RTPs than any other group and it is clear that they felt all of their views were not taken on board. As mentioned, there was concern about the regional, rather than local focus, being established, but there was also unease that structures were being created that would force local authorities to work together, despite the general view (also held by WLGA) that greater coordination was desirable.

*Local authorities are not always the best at working together, but that should be discretionary rather than structures being created and imposed upon them nationally by WTB. It might be easier for the Assembly, but it might not be best for public policy (local Government representative 2003).*

In consideration of this issue, it is recognised that the precise decision-making process is often never specified. A point arises where views may be irreconcilable and a decision has to be made. In this case, it was the WTB that exercised its power, which was supported by its close relationship with the Assembly. So despite open consultation processes, at some point somebody has to decide which view takes precedence. This is apparently something that is never written down.

*The difficulty is how to reconcile the views: which takes precedence? Power and resources are the biggest determinants, and lobbying tactics are quite a good way. Its important to be clear at the outset how much weight should be given to each of the stakeholder views. It can't be equal because*

*of the different size stakes people have. You never see set out on paper, public views 20% against WTB 80% weighting (local Government representative 2003).*

#### **6.4.2 Regional Tourism Partnerships: a case study of stakeholder coordination**

After the reflective period of 1999-2000, four Regional Tourism Partnerships (RTPs) emerged with the intention of improving coordination within Welsh tourism. The RTPs are an interesting model, being established and designed with the intention of addressing the previous problem of separation between the public and private sectors. They have been described as a “valiant attempt to make sure that local authority and trade interests are aligned”. Consequently, at the Board level, they are made up of a local authority representative from each of the constituencies in the region and an equal number of private company directors. While, particularly in the Capital Region Tourism partnership (CRT) with its large number of constituencies, a large number of directors “brings its own concerns in terms of servicing”, one of the principal advantages is that “it does mean you have a way in to a good number of organisations”. And as local council and trade directors are there because people have voted for them”, they are respected and usually well connected amongst their communities – “it’s a useful way of getting together the first tier of stakeholder interests through our door” (RTP representative 2003). Because there are local authority representatives there, the RTPs have an ‘in-route’ into local communities as the local authorities have their own “community networks” (RTP representative 2003) – community councils and groups. Furthermore, as many of the Board members are also members of tourism associations or other sectoral groupings, the potential number of informal organisational connections established by the make up of the RTPs is significant, therefore significantly aiding network development.

*Politically the RTP is a masterstroke because it does bring those local authorities round the table and it brings the trade in alongside them, and through that representation/ election process, there’s a high degree of accountability (RTP representative 2003).*

Financially supported by money from the Welsh Assembly through the Wales Tourist Board, they are “lean staffed” (RTP representative 2003), being “quite rightly” (RTP representative 2003) restricted to what portion of their funding can be spent on running costs. Having between three and five employees, all RTP directors recognise the effect that this has on their functionality. By being lean the RTPs have to work with other people and this has

become established as their “raison d’être” (RTP representative 2003). Indeed, the RTPs do not just work with other people. They actually encourage others to work together to try and get them to realise the benefits of pooling resources and knowledge.

*One of our key roles is to bring people together to make them see the bigger picture. We very much are coordinators/facilitators/enablers. A lot of our work gets contracted out. We make people see how their activities affect the wider picture (RTP representative 2003).*

Being charged with delivering regional strategic outcomes, it is acknowledged that the RTPs could “easily become a body of 15-20 people” (RTP representative 2003). However, it is realised that one of the effects of managing “everything on everybody’s behalf would disengage” other stakeholders – “there’s a delicate balance between over-managing, over-coordinating” (RTP representative 2003). The RTPs also appreciate that the funding they have is a very small amount proportionally to what is spent in the regions on tourism. They therefore “devolve work out to other people”, “influencing others to do things” (RTP representative 2003) and as such can clearly be seen as stakeholder coordinators. Because they intentionally do not have the manpower or finances to do everything themselves, they work through third parties, through contracts and service agreements, and also by giving grants.

*We create a series of ripples then. We have an action plan, try and keep a focussed mind, try and avoid duplication, try and get the best networks of delivery (RTP representative 2003).*

In attempting to successfully implement the regional strategies, the RTPs employ a number of tactics that seem to focus on getting everyone “gelled” (RTP representative 2003). For Capital Region Tourism (CRT), Strategic Objective 1 is:

*To oversee the development, implementation and monitoring of the Regional Tourism Strategy through coordinating the activities of individual partners and other key stakeholders (CRT 2003:9).*

Primarily a “pot of money” (RTP representative 2003) is used to get people to work together. So not only, do the RTPs aim to influence the actions of stakeholders individually, but they try and encourage stakeholders to work together to meet objectives by distributing funding on that condition. 80 to 90% of their budget goes out to other stakeholders and in this way the RTPs can exert some control over them by placing conditions on what the money can be used for. In some cases, where it is identified what organisations can do well independently, the

money can be given to individual organisations. However, the RTPs appear to be particularly interested in supporting collaborative work. Indeed, funding is explicitly used as a tool for ensuring that people work together – “Funding greases the wheels. Funding can be the carrot that can put people into bed with each other” (RTP representative 2003). There are numerous examples of where the RTPs are putting “peoples’ heads together to try and get a cohesive approach together” (RTP representative 2003). It is a stated objective of their strategies. The RTPs can thus be seen not only to influence stakeholders individually, but they also actively encourage different stakeholder groups to work together.

*We will never stop trying to get people to work together if we identify that there is a need for them to do so. If there's not, then we'll support what they're doing and individuality is the key to it* (RTP representative 2003).

Activities of the South West Wales Tourism Partnership (SWWTP) represent a good example of how stakeholders can be coordinated by organisations. In the Swansea City and County area there were four tourism associations. Each had twenty to thirty members, but none of them had sufficient resources to be effective, at least in terms of being able to communicate beyond their local areas (i.e. to participate in more strategic level planning). When established, the SWWTP suggested that, while stressing the importance of not losing “individuality”, they were instructed to “put your heads together... elect an officer that we can communicate with; meet between yourselves; identify what you want to do; come to us with a collective view” (RTP representative 2003). The RTP recognised that it could not talk to individual tourism association members on a regular basis, and even talking to a representative from every tourism association in its region would be difficult. It appeared to recognise that the quality of communication could be improved if it established a system whereby there was a “cascading of information” (RTP representative 2003). This approach was believed to be a good way of ensuring that bodies were working together to “get the best advice and information to be able to make well-informed decisions” (RTP representative 2003). TPNW also considered offering support to tourism associations, thus: improving interlinkage between associations; improving viability; share knowledge and experiences; and up-skill the capacity of the associations (TPNW 2003b:37).

SWWTP is therefore financially investing in the private sector on a project-by-project basis in order to actually influence the sector’s organisational structure. It aims to “support the establishment of core private sector membership tourism associations” (RTP representative 2003) that will be able to entice people to join. By doing this, the RTP is not only attempting to bring in more stakeholders, but it is actively creating structures by which communications

can occur. It recognises that it does not have the capacity to communicate with the thousands of trade stakeholders in the region and so it is engineering a sub-level by strengthening the tourism associations. The tourism associations then have some responsibility for gathering stakeholder views. One of the effects of this is that the associations then act as a kind of filter for those views. While this places the responsibility of ensuring that any message coming from the tourism associations is representative of the majority of stakeholders on those bodies, it makes the job of the 'regional level coordinator' easier in that it can more effectively deal with a handful of associations than thousands of individual voices.

In supporting these groups, SWWTP anticipates that "they will become a body of like-minded people who we can communicate with" (RTP representative 2003). It would appear that the RTP recognises one of the main challenges of its coordinator role – with a potentially huge number of stakeholders, diversity of views and a motivation to be inclusive, how is effective stakeholder coordination possible? While the RTP claims that in an ideal world they would like to communicate with everyone, it is recognised that it would "need an army of people" working for it (RTP representative 2003). CRT describes a similar situation in discussion of its strategy development consultation process. Because time is limited "you just need to engage enough people for it to be viable... [Because] you can't knock on every door, we try to arrange consultation through organisations" (RTP representative 2003). In north Wales, the difficulties of communicating with a large number of people are also recognised. The structure of TPNW, with some of its Board members representing sub-regional marketing areas, begins to address the issues by creating sub-levels through which information may be channelled. Interestingly then, the imposed financial restrictions, while limiting communication opportunities, also create an additional incentive for the establishment of sub-regional structures.

*The [Regional] Tourism Company still remains here; the WTB has an office in Colwyn Bay; there are local authority offices everywhere. Amid that, from the industry side, you have your component businesses, tourism associations with the best part of 30 associations across the area, consortia, local authorities leading mainly on marketing area print. Add to that a few national sector bodies (one for visitor attractions). There is a multitude of self interested bodies and as a guidance we are steered not to have a higher than 20% spend on admin. I felt that the only way we could communicate was occasionally through newsletters, but that we would communicate through a marketing area cell. Therefore the Board has marketing area directors who have a lead role in the marketing area partnerships (RTP representative 2003).*

*In each case, the RTPs would have found a way of operating by sub-groups or whatever, to ensure that there are manageable units to work within (Policy officer, WTB, 2003).*

So the RTPs accept that they cannot communicate with every stakeholder individually and while they do operate an open-door policy, for the most part they need to communicate with a representative body. It is evident that in a context where many would be stakeholders are apathetic or lacking capacity to participate, the most vocal people tend to have particularly strong grievances, claims, or opinions. What the coordinator needs to know is how representative those views are. If the view comes from a tourism association it will understandably have greater legitimacy than an individual contacting the RTP directly. The coordinator therefore looks to other organisations do a certain level of coordination themselves and in this case, by strengthening the tourism associations, it feels it can rely on the processes taking place at that level in order for it to feel it has a majority view that it can justifiably act on.

In terms of legitimacy, what adopting this approach implies is that for a stakeholder view to be valid it is helpful if it has some kind of group or organisational backing. There is an implied reliance on the democratic process operating within the group and while it is acceptable to act in the interests of the majority, there is the potential to hide behind that process in instances where the 'opposing' stakeholders might be small in number, no matter how relevant their claim. The best that the coordinator can hope for is to get a "collective view", acknowledging that "sometimes you have to accept that you never get unanimous decisions" (RTP representative 2003).

A coordinator can also justify not having to deal with a particularly obstreperous character or rogue view in this way and also by making explicit the appropriate communication channels, which may actually filter out that view. It may be inferred that this may pressurise those in the minority towards conformity of views – to become a "body of like minded people" – although the concern for "individuality" (RTP representative 2003) expressed in this case might suggest that conformity is not seen as an expected or desirable outcome. While it is apparent that the RTPs welcome communication from individuals, having established for example a "community liaison group" that met individuals with no organisational representation on a monthly basis (RTP representative 2003), it is possible to speculate about situations where seeking common views may give rise to potential problems.

Conversely, contrary to concerns expressed about having to deal with a large number of voices, there are times when stakeholders do not participate as much as organisations would like. It is important to recognise that at times, stakeholder coordinators sometimes have to make an effort to ensure that stakeholders do actively participate: "Casting your float in the

water does not always provide good feedback” (RTP representative 2003). The RTPs recognise that it is therefore necessary to “get out there and talk to them in surroundings that are familiar to them so they can feel confident” (RTP representative 2003), thus demonstrating that a range of coordination techniques is required and utilised.

The provision of funding by SWWTP for the tourism associations, based on the recognition that many are run on a voluntary basis, is also intended to improve coordination by giving them the resources they need to communicate more effectively. One of the challenges that faces many potential stakeholders is the lack of time that many have for actually participating in tourism development processes. The extra money enables the appointment of a staff member who can work to engage and develop the views of their respective stakeholders and also attend meetings on the group’s behalf. The RTPs also fund open days and other meetings such as discussion and focus groups as a way of ensuring that there are a number of opportunities to participate and a broad range of views is gathered.

In addition, the RTPs use databases to build lists of tourism stakeholders, although SWWTP and TPNW do not maintain their own due to high costs and the availability of existing information from the previous Regional Tourism Companies and their evolution into membership organisations. CRT has taken the approach of offering inclusion to its database to anyone who wishes. In this sense, the stakeholders are “self-selecting” (RTP representative 2003). There is no cost for inclusion and there were around 1400 on the database at the time of interviewing. CRT communicates formally with people on their database twice per year, meeting to nominate and vote for Board Members. All RTPs distribute regular newsletters and are also using websites as communication tools.

Demonstrating a deeper appreciation of what more effective stakeholder participation entails, the RTP directors are aware of the variety of skills required for fulfilling their role as facilitators – “we are a facilitator: it’s a big measure of our performance” (RTP representative 2003). In bringing people together for the first time in a perceived context of hostility in extreme cases, a certain amount of “hand-holding” is required (RTP representative 2003). Simple, clear and appropriately timed communication is recognised as vital. And in demonstrating the influence that stakeholders can have over the agendas of meeting, themes for discussion have to be relevant to their needs in order to engage attention. Recognising the difficulty in getting stakeholders to attend meetings, a method successfully employed is to “get people to pay up front for a meal” (RTP representative 2003). The use of email is particularly important for communicating, but it is also seen as important offer to different methods to suit individual requirements. Good communication is recognised as part of building “good relations” and in the initial stages of development, maintaining the quality of communications – getting peoples’ names right and providing timely information – also helps (RTP

representative 2003). Illustrating a level of understanding about what promotes the development of good relations, the following comment was made:

*It's about explaining where you're coming from and being consistent, as well as employing the right kind of people – people who are able to listen is very important (RTP representative 2003).*

Emerging in a context where there were contemptuous feelings from the private sector towards the WTB and, to some extent, the previous somewhat isolationist environment, part of the task is about “breaking down the suspicion of people” (RTP representative 2003) and making them see the shared benefits. One RTP director compared being a stakeholder coordinator to being a parent, requiring “patience”, having to “support, persuade, cajole” and at times be “strong-minded” (RTP representative 2003). Persistence and “good public relations skills” (RTP representative 2003) are also recognised as being important. Further, having “respect” for and “liking people” emerged as important ‘person specifications’ for the coordinator role (described as “more of a vocation than a job”), demonstrating a more human understanding of what stakeholder participation is all about.

*There's a time to be nice and a time to be not so nice, a time to be hard and not so hard. The common thread is you've got to work people, be persistent and have a certain amount of belief in it (RTP representative 2003).*

Even in the early stages of the ‘improved coordination environment’, there are examples of success. Joint marketing is one such example (Fig 6.5). A nationally driven initiative to see Wales from a ‘tourist perspective’ brought groups together as destination areas and appears to offer a more effective approach with tangible benefits. Taking the idea further at the regional level, once the marketing group was formed and aware of the benefits or working together, financial incentives were offered to align the group’s goals with the regional strategic priorities. Thus a significant “carrot” is provided that has the real potential to help implement the strategy.

Figure 6.5 An example of stakeholder coordination: marketing

*On the marketing side, WTB works very closely with local authorities and rather than having 22 local authorities (there are 22 in Wales) all writing tourism brochures, probably 10 years ago, we actually worked with local authorities to see Wales from a consumer point of view. What are the favoured areas in terms of where people want to go, what are the major destination areas from a tourism perspective? So, instead of having 22 brochures, we got it down to 12 marketing areas: Snowdonia, Pembrokeshire, Mid Wales, South Wales, etc., more specific or generic destination areas. Local authorities now print for those areas, which support the main piece of print produced by WTB, which is a whole Wales guide. And we work very closely with the local authorities who have responsibility for developing the brochures for those areas. There is a very integrated approach to the way we market tourism in Wales. And we would meet on a regular basis to ensure that the processes we put in place are working. (Policy Officer, WTB 2003)*

*WTB defined Wales as having 12/13 marketing areas. 4/5 of those are in North Wales. They are, the island of Anglesey, Snowdonia (Gwynedd), Coastal Resorts (our dichotomy) are large with two products - Llandudno traditional and then Real/Prestatyn with its more modern tourism with caravans on mass, Borderlands on the east... So we have 4 or 5 marketing area guides and I'm trying to evolve those into marketing area partnerships. The Anglesey one is easier because it is co-terminus with a land boundary, but it does bring in the key players to a meeting. It has to bring on-board any tourism association to that partnership, any business or enterprise group that has a focus on tourism - Holyhead Chamber of Commerce and Tourism, Chemys Bay TA, Isle of Anglesey tourism officer team, LEADER+ agency for Anglesey. We had a meeting yesterday and there's a dozen round the table. We're trying to get those partnerships gelled. We've constituted a way in which we can communicate and a way in which we can get industry and local authorities and other agencies together. One aspect that we have developed here - there is a "pot of money". So we're dangling £50,000-100,000 in front of these groups, so say, "can you please confirm what are your current marketing activities?" If it's consistent with our strategy or action plan, you can have the £50,000. Therefore, we are trying to ensure that everything that takes place is impact orientated, evaluated and monitored to that effect. And move away from a scenario where we have a party who doesn't play the partnership game... We are replicating that across 5 cells in north Wales. So, we've got something in Colwyn Bay that brings in 2 TAs, the Chamber of Trade and the local authority. In the Borderlands, we have 3 counties that form part of that, complimented by about 4 or 5 TAs. This pattern of bringing agencies and trade together is what we are doing. (RTP representative 2003)*

## 6.5 Conclusions

### 6.5.1 Basis, benefits and barriers

It is evident that in order to generate greater stakeholder participation, a significant amount of effort is going into the development of interorganisational coordination structures. Also, the belief in improving coordination of partners and stakeholders enshrined in the policy documents appears to be widely shared amongst the core policy community who are beginning to see the benefits of the new structures. Again, the main motivations for greater coordination are expressed as being interdependence and instrumental belief in the benefits of a more collaborative approach, rather than an explicit ethical consideration, although there is some recognition that “everybody has a right to a view” (RTP representative 2003), as well as acceptance that stakeholder involvement is becoming the norm. The analysis of key national and regional stakeholder views demonstrates how the process of stakeholder participation has been unfolding and what some of the benefits and problems are. It also provides reinforcing evidence about why stakeholders should be involved, while beginning to expose the complexities and the slight differences between sectors.

‘The trade’ have previously been isolated from strategic tourism planning and are keen to be more involved out of “necessity” (national level trade representative 2003). The public sector appear to have a strong motivation to avoid duplication of effort and become more efficient and they also seem to see themselves as being responsible for facilitation and coordination. The voluntary sector, represented in the national and regional level part of this investigation by only one organisation – TTFW – is also taking on aspects of this coordination role, where it formed to address an identified gap in service provision. The strongest sense of conflict and mistrust appears to be between the WLGA and the WTB and Assembly, especially over the establishment of the RTPs, and it is likely that this conflict is embedded in tensions over the exercise of power, perhaps with the Assembly and WTB being seen to encroach on the territory of local government. Yet despite this, there is very little evidence elsewhere of tension regarding the new structure.

So, a belief in the potential benefits of greater coordination and collaboration runs through the participants and there is emerging evidence of some benefits being attained: improved sharing of information and other resources; avoiding duplication of effort; growing sense of strength through collective action; more integration between sectors and across levels; as well as the perceived rebuilding of a sense of community. However, the key national and regional stakeholders show more of an appreciation of the problems of and barriers to increased stakeholder participation and coordination than is recognised in the policy

documents. High transaction costs associated with greater involvement are expected and it is anticipated by those at this level that groups with fewer resources will find it difficult to participate. As these less well-resourced stakeholders make up the bulk of the tourism product delivery, it will be important to get these groups involved for the delivery of strategic objectives of improving quality and achieving greater sustainability. How well the new structures enable this will be a key test for consideration in the following chapter. Concern is also expressed by some of the respondents that there might be too much emphasis on participation and representation, when arguably a limited number of informed people 'thinking outside their boxes' can be just as, if not more, effective. In a situation where resources are scarce, achieving this balance and selection of key stakeholders will be an important aspect of success. It might be expected then that the tendency being expressed towards a more pragmatic model of stakeholder participation, based largely on interdependence rather than a strong ethical imperative, would constrain the outreach efforts of coordinating organisations, though the mechanisms being developed at the regional level do actually suggest that significant efforts are being made to account for as wide a range of views as possible.

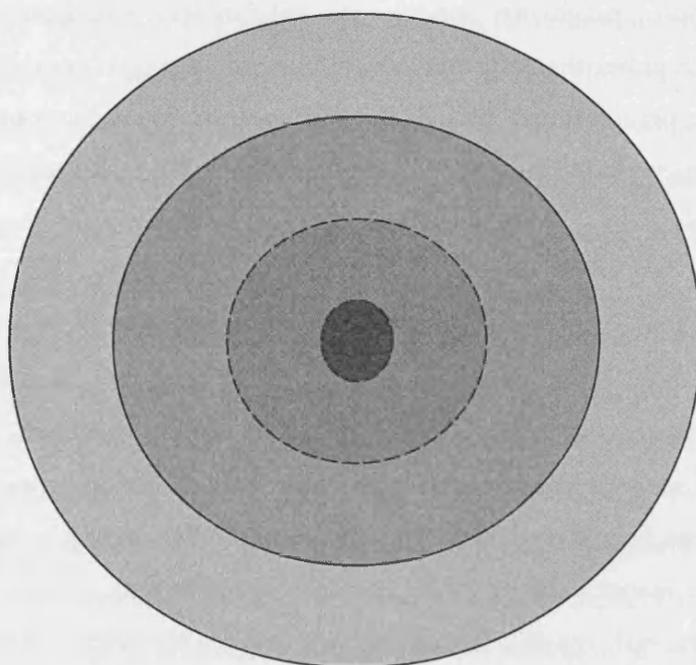
### **6.5.2 The representation of diverse stakeholder interests**

This chapter has explored the extent to which previously identified groups are involved in the strategic planning and operation of tourism. Some awareness of other 'off the radar' groups has been demonstrated by the respondents, as well as an understanding of the issues faced by many 'hard to reach' groups. Within Welsh tourism then, it is possible to categorise several 'spheres of stakeholding' that influence strategic tourism planning to varying degrees: '*Inner Core*', '*Core*', '*Periphery*' and '*Excluded*' (Fig 6.6). The existence of these categories and the inherently varying levels of influence that they have, especially the 'usual suspects', perhaps raises questions about whether the interests of all stakeholder groups are seen to have intrinsic value, where no set of interests is assumed to dominate – an essential premise of stakeholder theory (Donaldson & Peterson 1995). It is clear then that the trend towards partnership working does aid in the development of denser networks and closer interorganisational relationships, though particularly for the already more well-resourced organisations.

From a social network perspective then, it could be interpreted that there is a very high degree of 'centrality' within the Inner Core and also a relatively dense network within the Core group (comprising around 4% of the total estimated number of tourism stakeholders) where regular communication allows for circulation of information and institutional norms

(Meyer & Rowan 1977). Thus the prominence given to the consideration of partnership working and stakeholder coordination within the most active tourism development participants and the high density of network connections here, would theoretically help to produce 'shared behavioural expectations', and there is evidence to suggest that this is actually happening with regard to the acceptance of partnership practices. Therefore the 'relational ties' within this set of actors may be driving organisations towards conformity of views about improving coordination. This group may also serve to constrain government power as there is evidence elsewhere that the state's capacity to impose its will on society has become challenged by such cohesive 'policy communities' (Marsh & Rhodes 1992).

Figure 6.6 Different Spheres of Stakeholding in Tourism Development



**Key**

- Inner Core** – 'usual suspects'  
 Around a dozen individuals linked to key agencies, having worked in the tourism industry for a number of years with multiple roles, developing relationships and potentially operating at different levels and across sectors
  
- Core**  
 300-400 organisational representatives active in strategic planning and communicating information to their constituencies.
  
- Periphery** – 'hard to reach'  
 Around 10,000 diverse tourism organisations of varying size (most of them SMEs), some linked to tourism associations, consortia, etc, but many having very little two-way communication with core groups.
  
- Excluded** – 'off the radar'  
 Other diverse individuals, organisations and groups who choose not to be or are unable to be involved, or have not adequately been identified and who are not connected to tourism communications.

What has been described here as the Inner Core can also be analysed by considering some of the literature on policy networks (e.g. Rhodes 1997; Marsh 1998; Dredge 2006). Rhodes (1997:38) has developed a typology of networks ranging on a continuum from tightly integrated policy communities to loosely integrated issue networks. These networks are also distinguished by their membership and the distribution of resources between members. Under this classification, though not a perfect comparison, the inner core group could be considered to be a “policy community”, which is characterised by “stability of relationships; continuity of restrictive membership; vertical interdependence...; and insulation from other networks... and the public.” These policy communities also possess the following characteristics: frequent, high quality interaction, sharing of basic values, access to and control of resources, and a fairly equal balance of power.

Within the Periphery and Excluded groups, a more fragmented network evidently exists, which, in line with theoretical expectations, results in much less efficient information exchanges and limited access to resources. However, the contextual ‘structure-loosening’ events identified – the Fit for the Millennium Review, Foot & Mouth, and even academic understanding – have demonstrated that the more peripheral group has more desirable attributes, such that it is worth making significant efforts to improve their centrality status within the network (Madhavan et al. 1998). The existence of coordinating organisations and their ‘bridging mechanisms’ is evidently an important aspect of strengthening network connections. Again reflecting on the policy network literature, these groups could be seen to represent the “issue network” end of the networks continuum. These issues networks are characterised as having: many participants; fluctuating interaction and access for the various members; limited consensus and ever present conflict; interaction based more on consultation rather than negotiation; and unequal power relationships, with limited access to resources (Rhodes 1997).

### **6.5.3 Stakeholder management**

Within Welsh tourism, stakeholder management has largely been defined by the creation of what can be understood as new ‘interorganisational coordination’ structures, which, as has been demonstrated, have largely emerged through widespread recognition of different groups’ interdependence. The Fit for the Millennium Review then serves as the key process that, through the lens of structuration theory, influenced actors’ knowledge of their setting and of their mutual purposes and then mobilised them to “design, install and implement” the new structures (Alexander 1995:75). The ‘institutional design’ process

characteristically included the (re-)definition of roles and functions, as well as the creation of new organisations.

Although not easily in some cases, all organisations appear to be adapting their working practices to improve coordination with each other, with some being specifically set up to do so. In effect, all of the organisations considered at the national and regional levels manage or coordinate their stakeholders (often called members) to varying degrees and a variety of tactics are employed. At the higher level, national policy documents and funding mechanisms operate, which instruct and encourage organisations to form partnerships and improve communications. Here relationships are formalised through Remit Letters and Memoranda of Association. New working practices, such as having open meetings and running regular focus groups, provide opportunities for interested groups to get closer to bodies like the WTB. Information Technology has also broadened the potential for wider communication, from providing the ability to send regular emails to a large database of contacts, through providing online information resources on websites, to enabling wider involvement in consultation exercises.

It is apparent though that direct communication between national and local level groups is not always that effective, especially for dealing with a broad range of topics, with few local stakeholders actively participating in the WTB's open meetings and the national strategy development process. Given the large number of stakeholders involved, this is perhaps understandable as developing relationships with such a large number – something that is emerging as a key factor in developing good stakeholder participation – must be seen as almost impossible. It is also worthy of note that higher level organisations can only do so much to develop that broad participation and that some responsibility lies with stakeholders to get involved where there are opportunities to do so.

Reflecting on the types of interorganisational coordination structure outlined in Chapter 3, the overall or 'meta-structure' might be described as being a blend of a consensus and mandated quasi-market based structure, with coordination being to some extent the result of mutual obligation among participants and to some extent based on the imposition of an external authority. At the 'meso-structure' level, various structures exist that link the interorganisational system together. The WTB represents a hierarchical "lead organisation" (Alexander 1995:218-9) that, as well as having functional responsibilities, also assumes responsibility for coordinating other organisations.

It is also evident that a number of 'interorganisational networks' exist. The WTA and WAVA are clearly examples of "clusters of organisations that are non-hierarchical collectives of legally separate units" (Alter & Hage 1993:46). These large national level 'solidarity' based networks typify limited to moderate levels of cooperation, sharing information and resources

and also having other (e.g. policy influence) shared objectives. The specifically focussed national groupings like WAVA and TTFW seem to handle their communications with more success than WTB, though their remits are narrower and their stakeholders are much more limited in number and by their nature have more shared interests. Other examples of solidarity based network structures exist, such as the joint marketing initiatives, which represent what can be described as fairly 'broad' levels of cooperation. Further meso-structures also include "associations" like the tourism associations, though these tend to operate at the local or destination level. These types of entity are described as "competitive cooperation" structures (Alter & Hage 1993:44-80).

Existing within and in conjunction with higher-level coordination structures, a number of micro-structures have been found to operate. The high number of "informal links" developed through interpersonal contacts and overlapping board members, exemplified by the existence of the 'usual-suspects', but that also operate throughout the system, represent the least hierarchical form of a micro-structure that evidently links intra and interorganisational decision centres. The RTPs would be accurately described as "coordinating units" or "referent organisations" (Trist 1983), having their own budget and staff with the specific function of coordinating. Lehman (1975) and Alexander (1995) suggest that such an organisation's success is based on a balance of authority and resources. The design of the RTPs, with their public and private sector elements does seem to ensure fair representation and provides the opportunity to develop collective ownership that might give them legitimacy and therefore sufficient authority to act. They may also gain 'authority' through provision of financial incentives. Thus, it appears that the RTPs coordinate through a 'carrot and stick approach', gently steering others in a specific direction, i.e. towards strategy implementation. Having limited operating budgets – generally accepted as a positive feature by RTP directors – but also having larger grant giving funds, further suggests that the RTP design was well considered and possibly therefore capable of successfully achieving their objectives.

Of great importance in the consideration of stakeholder participation then, is the development of coordination structures that help to gather and disseminate views and facilitate higher quality communications and develop relationships between the different spatial levels. Thus, the tourism system is populated with a plethora of shared interest groupings that help to address some of the issues of constrained resources and gives the coordinating organisations legitimacy by being representative of their groups' views. These coordinating groups help to channel the views of their constituents and can speak with the power of a collective voice. Acting as 'information funnels' or bridging mechanisms makes the number of groups that organisations at the higher level have to deal with more manageable, though there may be a risk that minority views and/or the views of those with no

organisational representation might get filtered out. It is increasingly clear that the regional level is growing in importance for the coordination of organisations. Crossing and uniting the different sectors, both formally and informally, and spatially occupying the middle ground, the key functions of the RTPs, with their provision of financial incentives and their apparent ability to build relationships and develop network connections, seem to have the potential to achieve what they were designed for – the implementation of strategic goals.

## Chapter 7

### **Stakeholding in Practice: The Dyfi Valley Tourism Growth Area**

#### **7.1 Introduction**

This chapter develops a stakeholding and partnership analysis using a local case study. The chapter follows the establishment and development of a local stakeholder-based partnership (between 2001 and 2003), and in so doing introduces the geographical context and the different stakeholders and their interests. It investigates the following:

- The Dyfi Valley Tourism Growth Area: briefly describes the Tourism Growth Area (TGA) scheme and the project;
- The range of interest groups that participate in the steering group;
- Stakeholder participation and partnership working at local level;
- The real effects on tourism.

The TGA scheme is used to analyse key issues associated with national to local level stakeholder coordination and partnership working, as well as reveal information about what happens when different interest groups collaborate. As explained in the methodology chapter (Chapter 4), the TGA was selected as a case study because it is a good example of local level participation in the tourism development process. The study is interested in local level participation because of its importance as a sustainable tourism principle and assessment of local level participation will contribute to an understanding of how more sustainable tourism development can be achieved. Evidence is taken from a series of interviews and a 'partnership development' survey that helps to reveal details about the following parameters of stakeholding: network connection; group cohesiveness; power; resources; and local participation.

## 7.2 The Dyfi Valley Tourism Growth

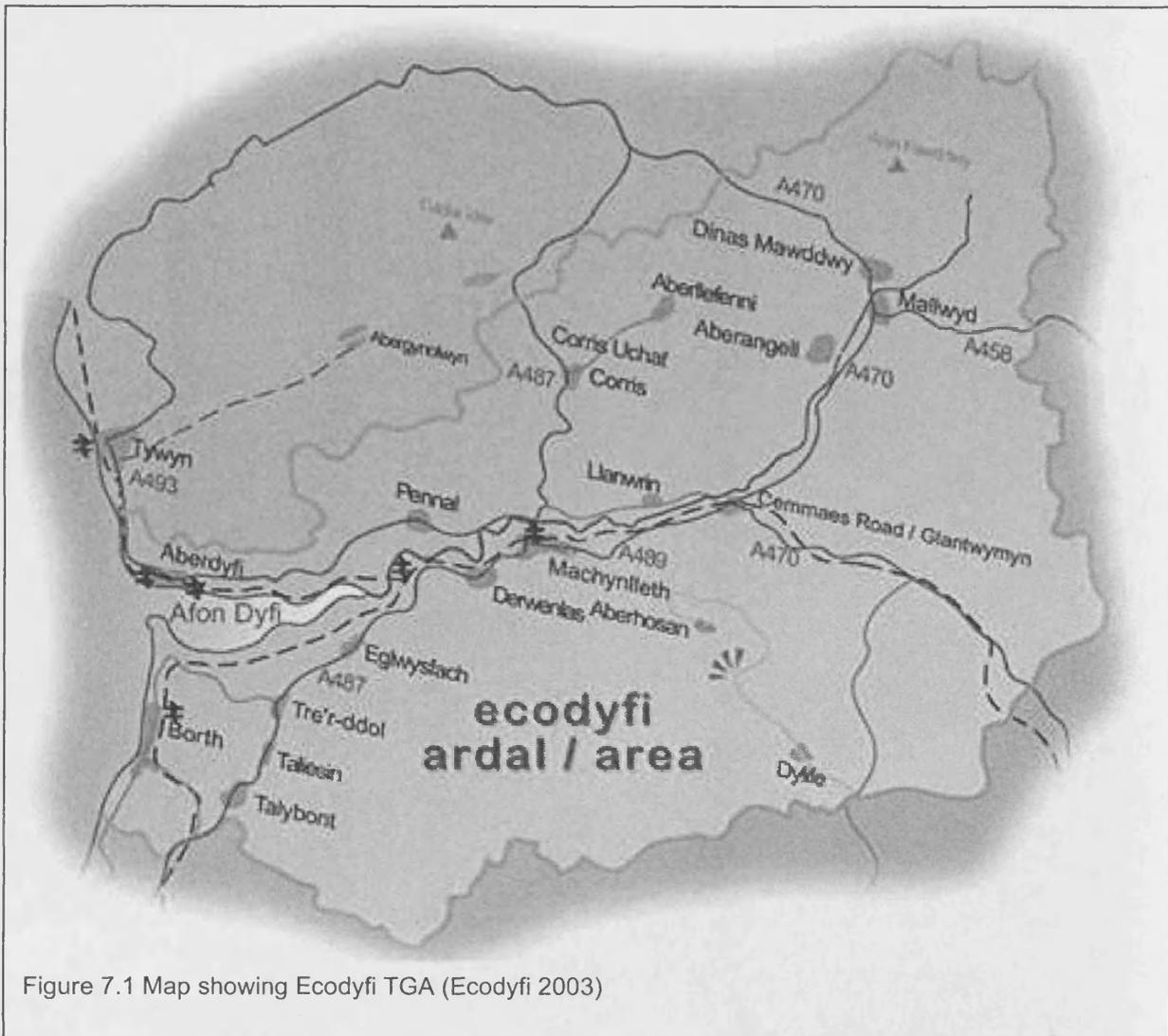


Figure 7.1 Map showing Ecodyfi TGA (Ecodyfi 2003)

### 7.2.1 The local context

Prior to an investigation of the TGA and its participants, it is worthwhile to consider the geography of the Dyfi valley area in order to provide useful contextual information. The valley itself is one of the main natural features and its estuary and immediate surroundings make up the only site in Wales to have UNESCO Biosphere status (Fig 7.2). There is also a mixture of wooded and meadow hills, providing a very scenic landscape. A small seaside resort, attractive small towns and villages and some important historical features, combined with three significant visitor attractions (Centre for Alternative Technology, Celtica, and Corris Caverns) and road and rail links to the Midlands, make the area a relatively popular tourist destination with the potential to grow its market. However, much of the area is suffering from rural deprivation, and with a collapsed slate industry and farming in decline,

more people are seeking employment in service sector jobs and many young people are leaving the area. While out-migration is occurring, inward-migration exceeds it, with more affluent members of the wider community buying up old farms and other properties (Fig 7.3).

Figure 7.2 The Dyfi Biosphere Area (Ecodyfi 2003; MAB 2003)

The Dyfi Biosphere Area is currently the only biosphere in Wales. It requires re-designation on the basis of new criteria drawn up by UNESCO in 1995.

The current biosphere area includes most of Dyfi SSSI, including Dyfi/Cors Fochno NNR and Ynys-hir RSPB reserve.

In practice, the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) informally defines the biosphere area by the five metre contour around the estuarine system.

Within this area, appropriate zoning has not been formally revised from the original site map, but for practical purposes Cors Fochno is viewed as the core area, with the rest of the NNR, the RSPB and Wildlife Trust reserves being managed largely in line with buffer zone requirements.

Following a review carried out by Oxford University in 2000, it is proposed that the Dyfi biosphere designation be extended to include the wider Dyfi catchment.

The catchment forms a natural, distinct ecological unit. It would also encompass a population within which there is considerable support for a broader biosphere area.

Zoning of the restructured biosphere area would have to be agreed on, and a management plan prepared and implemented with full involvement of stakeholders such as farmers, wildfowling, local interest groups, educational establishments, and recreational groups.

The estuarine area, consisting of the current biosphere reserve and adjacent low-lying land (up to 5 m contour), is the subject of the Dyfi Strategy Group. This partnership, including Countryside Council for Wales, the Environment Agency, Montgomery Wildlife Trust, and the RSPB, is developing a framework for wetland rehabilitation, and is awaiting the outcome of a lottery fund bid which will support work including land purchase and restoration around Dyfi/Cors Fochno.

There is considerable interest amongst the local community in natural history and environmentally related issues – although the interest is, perhaps, strongest within elements of the ‘incoming’ population, who have moved to the area for its natural attributes. There is, apparently, well-established membership of organisations such as the RSPB, and local bat, raptor, barn owl and dormouse groups. Volunteer wardens deal with a variety of issues: e.g., four summer wardens assist with CCW schools liaison, and around 14 volunteers warden the wildfowling scheme. Consultation bodies include the Wildfowling Panel, and, in the wider area, the Forest Enterprise Environment Panel. The Cardigan Bay Forum and ‘Friends of Cardigan Bay’ interest groups are concerned with environmental issues in the area. Specific projects carried out by interested individuals also exist, for example private purchase of land for reforestation, and small-scale willow coppicing.

Tir Cymen support has been taken up by a number of farms on the north side of the estuary, for example to improve habitat on farmland for lapwing breeding. There has also been some local involvement in the Habitat, Hedgerow and Woodland Grant schemes. It is hoped that if the ‘whole farm’ approach of the proposed Tir Gofal agri-environment scheme comes into existence, this will enable farmers throughout the area to contribute more effectively to objectives in line with those of the biosphere reserve.

Figure 7.3 General description of the Dyfi valley (Ecodyfi 2002:5)

The 12 Town and Community Council areas in the new project area encompass the extreme west of Powys, the southernmost part of Gwynedd and the northern tip of Ceredigion. The area (of some 600 km<sup>2</sup>) has 4,600 households, containing 11,350 residents (1991 census data). Machynlleth, with a population of just over 2,000, is the main town and service centre. Residents of the Mawddwy area, round the headwaters of the Dyfi in the north-east of the valley, tend to use Dolgellau as well. Borth, Llandre and Talybont are influenced by the university town of Aberystwyth to the south. This is reflected in higher property prices here than in the rest of the valley.

Several inter-linked factors have created a sense of optimism, vitality and innovation envied by the rest of mid Wales. Laura Ashley started a trend for unusual and attractive shops and the Centre for Alternative Technology has resulted in many spin-off benefits, including the Welsh Development Agency's investment in the Dyfi Eco Park. Most of the community recognises the value of the valley's excellent environmental and cultural assets.

However, the upper Dyfi valley has not benefited from this trend as much as the Machynlleth area and many needs remain unmet throughout the valley. Recently, the National Assembly recognised the problems by designating the Powys part of the Dyfi valley as a "Communities First" action area. The community has all the symptoms of rural deprivation, with a sparse and ageing population suffering from poor housing, poor access and economic decline. Agricultural decline in this area of small upland farms on severely disadvantaged land is a major challenge.

Corris is still suffering from the decline of the slate industry that created it, but does at least have a good bus service (by rural standards) to partially compensate for its lack of job opportunities and services. Its need was recognised by its inclusion in Gwynedd Council's Slate Valleys Initiative. Above all the Dyfi Valley demonstrates the need to develop a more robust and less vulnerable community. The relatively high numbers of persons employed in agriculture and dependence on tourism means that the local economy is susceptible to adverse events beyond local control - as was demonstrated in the 2001 outbreak of Foot & Mouth Disease.

The low pay economy is based on agriculture, tourism (small retail businesses and catering) and health and social care, with an increasing number of jobs being part-time. The top three employing categories are "other services" (29.7% of the workforce), agriculture and forestry (20.6%) and distribution and catering (17.4%). There are few jobs to attract young people to stay or move into the area.

The number of farms, area farmed and number of farm workers have gradually declined in recent years. It is estimated that average net incomes for upland sheep and beef farms in Wales have fallen for the last five years and by 1999/2000 had reached a quarter of the 1991/1992 levels. This is a long-term trend: at the end of the 1950s 157 lambs "bought" a tractor. In 1998 the same model (with the addition only of a safety cab) required the sale of 1166 lambs. The tendency for farms to be amalgamated leads to farmhouses being sold separately, often to older people from outside the area. The resulting social and linguistic change is a stress to a community rooted in its relationship with the land.

Overall, inward migration outweighs out-migration, but like is not being replaced with like. In one year alone (from summer 1999 to summer 2000) about 18.5% of 16 to 25-year-olds in Ceredigion left the area (National Assembly digest of local area statistics). One indicator of sustainability of a community is its ability to provide job and housing opportunities for those who want to return – and for its quality of life to be high enough for its young people to want to return (or stay). The paradox of community regeneration programmes is that the improvements in quality of life will tend to attract other, more affluent, sectors of the wider community, who will win the competition for housing.

An analysis of the areas strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (Fig 7.4) provided by Ecodyfi – a local regeneration organisation – identifies the natural environment, high levels of environmental awareness amongst some sections of the local community and a “reputation for sustainable development” as key positive attributes that could be built upon for developing high quality tourism green tourism products. The main problems for the area appear to be familiar issues for those who recognise the decline in prosperity of rural areas: an over-dependence on agriculture and forestry; high transport costs due in part to low population density and limited public transport; low pay economy; migration trends; loss of rural services; and poor access to training. Some of these problems are recognised and acted upon by regeneration schemes operating in the area, like Communities First and the Slate Valleys Initiative, but all seem to be given at least some consideration by the TGA Action Plan and it is estimated that through successful implementation of the action plan, between 25 and 50 full-time equivalent jobs could be created (Parkin et al. 2002:7). A review of the “Vision for tourism in the Dyfi Valley” demonstrates a belief that future tourism development is not just development for the sake of ‘growing’ tourism, but that tourism can be developed for the benefit of communities and their environment:

*To develop a dynamic and competitive tourism industry in the Dyfi Valley in a sustainable manner which builds on its strengths and fulfils its potential for the mutual benefit of local people, the economy, the environment and the area’s cultural heritage, and enables it to become the premier UK ‘green tourism destination’ (Parkin et al. 2002:4).*

Further consideration of the action plan’s objectives (Fig 7.5) reveals a broader concern for changing attitudes about tourism from the negative perceptions of low pay, low skill and high nuisance factor, which are at least partly responsible for the identified low quality tourism product, including poorly maintained rights of way and some local under appreciation of the area’s natural assets. Tourism appears to be seen very much as a solution to many of the ills of rural deprivation and as *the* way forward from declining agriculture, forestry and slate industries. With the match funding element invoked by the TGA scheme, other bodies are not simply encouraged to invest, but are absolutely essential.

Thus, involvement by agencies such as the Wales Development Agency, Forestry Commission, Countryside Council for Wales, as well as private sector interests, is crucial. And further, any money invested by other organisations must be seen as an endorsement of the role tourism can play in developing localities and clearly reflects the national impetus for partnership working. In a review of the type of projects that are open for consideration by the Dyfi Valley TGA (considered in more detail later in the chapter), in nearly all cases, the total

required for implementation far exceeds even the minimum 50% match funding required, indicating that a significant contribution from other bodies will be needed. This really is WTB stimulating investment in communities (rather than funding investment itself) and if other funding is to be found, it may be possible to speculate that other bodies must also see the value in investing in tourism as a way of meeting their own remits, thus indicating in this case an overlap between tourism, community regeneration, countryside management, farming and forestry.

The achievement of Tourism Growth Area status for the Dyfi Valley is the result of meetings and changing circumstances in the area that go back several years (Fig 7.6). Once it was established, the Assembly explored areas where it could act and one of the things it did was attempt to establish what local tourism needs were. Meetings were held across Wales, attended by WTB and Council representatives, as well as interested local groups and businesses. The evidence from Dyfi Valley TGA indicates that the meeting held nearby in Newtown raised awareness of local level problems and in particular that there appeared to be a lot of initiatives “coming from above” and not much “communication between people at the grass roots level”. It also became apparent that people involved in tourism were “not very impressed by what the national bodies were doing” (Fig 7.7). Following the Assembly initiated meeting, Ecodyfi called a meeting to explore the possibility of establishing a local tourism association, which was eventually achieved after many more discussions. Several of the attendees of those early meetings appear to have been influential in shaping the tourism association as well as the bid for TGA status that occurred simultaneously. Some now also sit on the TGA steering group, which oversees the local delivery of the scheme.

Figure 7.4 SWOT Analysis of the Dyfi Valley (Ecodyfi 2002:6)

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perceived high quality natural environment; variety of landscapes and ecosystems; uncrowded</li> <li>• Strong clean, green image</li> <li>• Reputation for sustainable development</li> <li>• Low crime rate</li> <li>• Substantial timber resources</li> <li>• Railway connections</li> <li>• Strong sense of social cohesion and mutual support</li> <li>• Vitality and innovators</li> <li>• 'Incubator' effect of Centre for Alternative Technology</li> <li>• Variety of interesting shops in Machynlleth</li> <li>• Welsh culture and language</li> <li>• Associations with Owain Glyndŵr</li> <li>• Strong cluster of visitor attractions and festivals</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low population density/small labour pools causing high cost of service &amp; training</li> <li>• Migration trends leading to ageing population</li> <li>• Over-dependence on agricultural and forestry sectors in transition, which currently are not adding much value to local resources</li> <li>• Economic leakage through bulk exports of primary material (livestock and timber) out of the area</li> <li>• Limited alternative employment opportunities</li> <li>• Transport costs high, limited public transport</li> <li>• Low Gross Domestic Product per head</li> <li>• High share of self-employment and small businesses; low value-adding and offer little opportunity for growth or employment</li> <li>• Poor access to training provision including Further and Higher Education</li> <li>• Limited telecommunications infrastructure</li> <li>• Many rights of way poorly maintained</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop the high quality environment in sustainable ways through green tourism and environmental management and services sectors</li> <li>• Develop niche markets for high quality/natural/organic foods</li> <li>• Add value locally to primary products from agriculture &amp; timber</li> <li>• Exploit growing tourism markets such as activity holidays, cycling, green tourism, culture, heritage &amp; arts</li> <li>• Development of appropriate local renewable energy projects and cluster of related businesses</li> <li>• Use Information &amp; Communication Technology to reduce isolation and promote learning and skills</li> <li>• Further develop retail in Machynlleth etc</li> <li>• Expand small businesses</li> <li>• Start new business, taking advantage of culture of self-employment</li> <li>• Attract consultants and other small business to relocate here</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued decline of agriculture and forestry undermines rural economy</li> <li>• Series of short-run agricultural crises threatening financial stability of rural businesses and their ability to restructure</li> <li>• Loss of rural services exacerbating isolation</li> <li>• Continued shift in rural demography leading to over-representation of retirees and lack of young people.</li> <li>• Continued acidification damaging terrestrial habitats and freshwaters.</li> </ul>

Figure 7.5 Dyfi Valley TGA Action Plan and its relationship with local context and broader tourism objectives

Key tourism objectives (Parkin et al. 2002)	Local SWOT Targeted	National and Regional Tourism Objectives Targeted
Improve the quality of the visitor experience and enhance visitor's appreciation of local culture and the environment	✓	✓
To encourage all tourism businesses to invest in the quality of their tourism product adapting best environmental practice in design and operational management, consistent with the 'Green Guide', in order to raise standards to those comparable with the best in Wales	✓	✓
To encourage greater professionalism in the management of all tourism businesses including the skills and personal development of all staff involved in the industry	✓	✓
Extend visitor season, length of stay and visitor spend		✓
Strengthen the identity and raise the image and profile of the Dyfi Valley as an exemplar destination for sustainable tourism	✓	
To develop systems for effective liaison and working partnerships with, and between, local businesses, organisations and individuals.		✓
To ensure local communities are much more aware of the benefits associated with tourism and its contribution to their prosperity	✓	
Develop and expand the range of local services (including transport), recreational opportunities and activities for local people and visitors	✓	
Ensure that adequate resources are available to implement the strategy		
To introduce the principle of IQM to all tourism businesses in the area, linked to accreditation and provide a forum for effective partnerships and to monitor and evaluate performance		✓
To ensure all tourism businesses in the area have internet facilities linked to the WTB Destination Management System and regional marketing initiatives by 2004	✓	✓
To develop the quality and reliability of market intelligence to better inform the industry and future investment decisions		
To develop an integrated public transport system and actively market it to reduce reliance on the private car	✓	
To manage the Dyfi Valley in a sustainable way which ensures all aspects of the environment are maintained and enhanced for the enjoyment of future generations.	✓	✓
Improve the quality of the visitor experience and enhance visitor's appreciation of local culture and the environment		✓

Figure 7.6 Timeline of relevant activities

<b>Date</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Lead organisations</b>
2001	Assembly organised tourism meeting in Newtown	Assembly, WTB, PCC,
2002	Formation of Dyfi Valley Tourism Association	Ecodyfi
	Bid for TGA status completed	Ecodyfi and Aberdyfi Partnerships
	TGA action plan completed	Funded by WTB, TPMW, PCC, Gwynedd Council, WDA, Cymad LEADER <sup>9</sup> Conducted by Parkin, Broom, and Parr (consultants)
	TGA steering group formed	Funded by PCC, Gwynedd Council, WTB
2003	TGA Launch	Funded by TPMW, WTB, PCC Organised by TGA officer and other steering group members
2007/8	TGA funding ends	

<sup>9</sup> Cymad is a company that encourages the strengthening of communities. Its main focus is the administration of the LEADER programme, a European initiative to promote rural areas.

Figure 7.7 The Establishment of a Local Tourism Group (local trade representative 2003)

*There was a tourism meeting held at Gregynog Hall just after the Assembly had been set up. The Assembly tried to establish what local tourism needs were. They were feeling their way. It was attended by Jonathan Jones from the WTB, the Chairman of Powys County Council, and some others I forget – it was about four years ago. That meeting made me think that there was so much direction coming from above and what seemed to be absolutely essential was more communication between people at the grassroots level because there were people doing the same thing in the same area and not even knowing. All the directives were coming from above and they weren't necessarily related to what people locally wanted at all. People you spoke to involved in tourism didn't seem very impressed by what the national bodies were doing at all.*

*Having been at that and feeling quite strongly that something needed to be done, the next thing was a meeting being called locally by Andy Rowland [from Ecodyfi] and Dulais Engineering. They had been a little bit organised on the tourism side in that they did a "Green Guide" to the Dovey Valley each year, which was basically an illustrated map of the area with advertising on the back. The whole aim of it was to promote the area as a green destination, there was a prize given to the greenest business each year given by David Bellamy. This meeting that was called was to form a local tourism association. It was about four years ago now. Quite a lot of people actually went to that meeting – local people and businesses. We discussed what we had to offer, what the problems were, we got into little groups, that sort of thing. It seemed like it was a good idea, but it was very hard to decide how we would get a tourism group together. But the thing was, "who was going to do it?" We were already running the Chamber of Trade and that takes up a lot of our own time. Nobody was really prepared to organise it when it came down to it. As time went on there seemed to be fewer and fewer people coming. It then ended up with it being decided by the people that stayed with the process, and I felt very strongly that, it should come under the umbrella of Ecodyfi, who were already established, already had a paid officer, Andy, who was extremely proficient at what he was doing, able to write the right sort of language.*

## 7.2.2 Applying for TGA status

The local regeneration Ecodyfi and Aberdyfi Partnerships finally coordinated and oversaw the successful combined bid for TGA status in 2002. In order to put forward an application, a number of public meetings were held that canvassed local views on how they would like to develop tourism. These were attended by a number of interests including cycling and other outdoor pursuits businesses, visitor attractions, and the local Chamber of Trade, although at that stage there was little participation from potential investors.

*There was not an enormous interest shown initially by anybody who wanted to actually make an investment in tourism, but there were quite a number of interested parties – people interested in the cycling business, Ecodyfi Partnership, obviously, hiking interests and people with interests in things like transport and there was a discussion session when people said what they wanted to see in and around Machynlleth. Things from improved signage, making the place look nicer buses etcetera – and some of that has been done. We did a lot of flipcharts and that kind of thing (local business representative 2003).*

Early on in the process, it emerged that there was a good number of people interested in being involved in and bidding for TGA status, but it seemed like there were very few who could take time away from their business to complete the application. Initially, this was a frustration to some in the voluntary sector, who eventually coordinated the bid on behalf of the whole community.

*We had a meeting at Corris Youth Hostel and a lot of people were saying, “We want to do it, but we haven’t got time.” I was arguing, “Well if you haven’t got time to do it, why are you involving people like us, because you’re the beneficiaries, you have a pecuniary interest in getting more visitors in, you should be prepared to invest in that.” So that was the hard truth at the time (local voluntary sector representative 2003).*

As a requirement of being granted TGA status and “in order to provide strategic context for subsequent tourism development, the WTB, Mid Wales Partnership, Powys County Council, Cyngor Gwynedd, WDA and Cymad LEADER commissioned [a team of consultants] to prepare a detailed Action Plan” (Parkin, Broom and Parr 2002:1). It is evident that some members of the business community viewed the appointment of the consultants negatively because they felt that they had already outlined their objectives in a number of meetings and they knew that there were already a substantial number of unfulfilled

consultancy reports in existence. It also meant delaying the process by almost a year and the additional input of public money before any funds made it to the tourism businesses. The use of consultants is also highlighted as one of the possible reasons why there was not more local interest – people had been asked what they want before and then had been disappointed by a lack of delivery, and so were believed to be sceptical of getting involved again.

*Considering the size of the area and the tourism impact, there wasn't as much interest as one would have liked to have seen, and this petered out pretty quickly. I think the reason for that was people thought, "Oh, it's going to be more of the same". And the "more of the same" started as soon as you said the word consultants. Everybody felt we've been here before. The first £13,000 of the £0.5 million that is earmarked goes to consultants and we know what this means. It means that it all gets frittered away in consultants fees, feasibility studies etc and it doesn't ever get to the people who count (local business representative 2003).*

The frustration demonstrated by the small business representative at the employment of consultants perhaps indicates that there was some sense of a loss of local control of the project. Although the loss of control may have only been temporary and the action plan still based on meetings attended by local stakeholders, the additional delay and cost seems to have suggested to an already 'bruised' community that, despite the appearance of a 'new partnership approach', little had actually changed at the level of implementation. In evaluating these sentiments though, it is worth reflecting on the actual bidding process, which eventually had to be coordinated by the two regeneration partnerships because the local business stakeholders could not commit the time to compile the application form. This raises the question about whether there really was an alternative to using public funds to develop the action plan for the area.

WTB had ring-fenced £500,000 over 5 years (2003 – 2007) for the Dyfi Valley Tourism Growth Area. Up to £100,000 was to be made available annually, but while project funds could have rolled over into the next financial year provided that the money was already committed, any uncommitted money would be withheld. Like other TGAs, the Dyfi Valley TGA is overseen by a steering group (Fig 7.8) and a paid officer. The part-time officer post is jointly funded by WTB (£10,000), Powys County Council (£2,500) and Gwynedd Council (£2,500).

Figure 7.8 Dyfi Valley Tourism Growth Area Steering Group (Adapted from Ecodyfi 2003b)

Steering Group Member	Interest
Aberdyfi Partnership	Local community regeneration group run by volunteers
Celtica	Major local visitor attraction. One of Wales' leading visitor attractions. Celtica offers a unique, informative and stimulating experience of Celtic heritage and culture. Receives approximately 40,000 visitors per year.
Corris Caverns Ltd.	Major local visitor attraction, comprising 'King Arthur's Labyrinth', 'Bard's Quest' and Corris Craft Centre. Receives approximately 40,000 visitors per year.
Countrywise	The leading organisation promoting the development of sustainable tourism in Wales.
Ecodyfi Partnership	Local community regeneration organisation. Provides office space and management time for TGA Officer.
Machinations	Local, family owned and run visitor attraction.
Machynlleth and District Chamber of Trade	Represents the mutual business interests of members. Encourages communication between businesses and promotes the town, as well as undertaking improvements.
Mid Wales Tourism Partnership	Guides and develops the tourism industry on a regional basis. Informs and encourages tourism businesses to take advantage of programmes and projects in order to develop the regional tourism product. Provided support for the TGA Launch.
Powys County Council	One of the two local authorities, which the Dyfi Valley TGA touches. Offers support and advice to tourism businesses and community groups. Provides one third of the funding for the TGA Officer post.
TGA Project Officer	The first line of contact for potential applicants; organises and provides administration for steering group meetings and provides other support as needed to help deliver the TGA objectives.
Wales Development Agency	Helps community groups develop tourism related projects leading to economic and community development, as well as providing support to businesses

The Dyfi Valley TGA scheme was officially launched on April 10<sup>th</sup> 2003 and was introduced by the Chairman of the steering group, Peter Jones (a local visitor attraction Director), evidently revealing some truths about the TGA.

*The Dyfi Valley has worked hard to achieve this status, learning from past experience. I now appeal to the business community of Bro Ddyfi to be innovative, creative and positive. We have five years in which we can achieve our goals but without the ideas and commitment from the business community, the money will not be spent and our achievements will be limited (Ecodyfi 2003).*

The area won its status through the hard work of a small number of committed individuals and organisations, who, it appears, are appealing to local businesses and the wider representative community to capitalise on the opportunities it presents, while seemingly expressing some concern about the actual commitment that may be forthcoming for some of the reasons previously outlined. The launch was described as a ‘business support fair’, giving local businesses an opportunity to meet the TGA steering group and ‘other partners’ (Fig 7.9), who are intended to fulfil supporting roles and/or provide additional resources (that all important match funding) rather than take part in leading the scheme.

**Figure 7.9 Dyfi Valley Tourism Growth Area: Other Partners (Adapted from Ecodyfi 2003b)**

<b>Other Partners</b>	<b>Interest</b>
Arena Network / Green Dragon	Manage the Green Dragon environmental award scheme.
Communities First	A major Welsh Assembly Government programme aimed at cutting poverty and helping to improve the lives of people in the poorest areas.
Cymad	Economic regeneration company.
Forestry Commission	Through the Woodlands for Wales strategy, Forest Enterprise is committed to promoting the use of woodlands to develop a high-quality visitor experience, including specialist recreation such as wildlife observation and artistic pursuits, as well as more noisy and physical sports in appropriately zoned areas.
Gwynedd Council	One of the two local authorities, which the Dyfi Valley TGA touches. Provides one third of the funding for the TGA Officer post.
Menter Maldwyn	A community company that promotes the use of the Welsh language in an economic sustainable cultural way in Montgomeryshire working with sustainable tourism.
Mid Wales Tourism	The regional membership body with over 750 members from all sectors of the area’s tourism industry. Provides a strong voice for industry, a network of industry contacts and a source of general help.
Wales Development Agency	Helps community groups develop tourism related projects leading to economic and community development, as well as providing support to businesses.
WTB	Provides £500,000 worth of Capital Grants for Dyfi Valley TGA, as well as one third of the funding for the TGA Officer Post and support for the TGA Launch

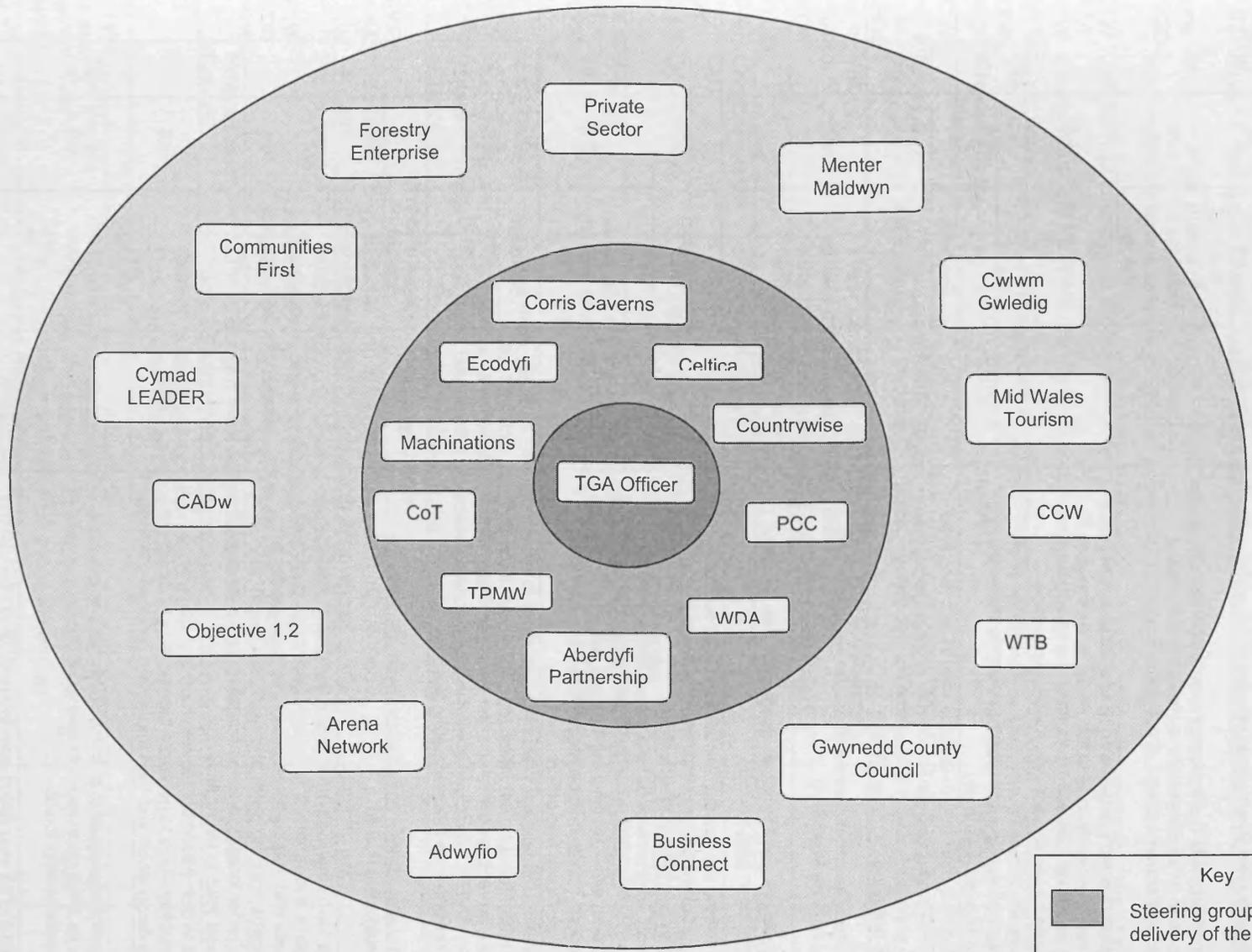
### 7.2.3 Delivery of the scheme

A year into delivery of the TGA scheme, with a range of applications for funding emerging, a host of other potential match funders (partners) had been identified. These included specific interest organisations like the British Horse Society, community regeneration organisations, a county council, the Heritage Lottery Fund, ASPBs, and European funding

streams. It is therefore apparent that a wide range of organisations is needed to implement a local action plan, from the 'leader' (in this case the TGA officer who is responsible for identifying and coordinating these bodies), who in turn is assisted by the local steering group, to the diverse and generally 'non-local' fund providing organisations. Again, it is possible to categorise different levels of involvement, with the steering group representing the core and then a wider variety of organisations being drawn in to provide relevant resources. A review of the levels of funding required also indicates the comparatively small amount of money that is being invested by WTB, demonstrating, if the initiative succeeds, a broader willingness to invest in, and therefore a belief in, tourism focussed schemes as a way of developing localities. Perhaps this indicates that a large number of remits overlap the tourism agenda, which would be expected if tourism really can contribute to sustainable development objectives. The amount made available by WTB further diminishes in proportion when other 'non-capital' projects that have emerged through the Dyfi Valley TGA process are considered (Fig 7.10). The range of revenue generating based projects seeking funding more than equalled the number of capital projects, which suggests that the contribution of these revenue projects were crucial to the meeting objectives of the action plan, which would only have provided funds for capital investment projects.

Figure 7.10 Potential capital development projects, leaders and possible funding sources (Adapted from Ecodyfi 2003c)

Initiative seeking funding through TGA scheme	Lead Partners	Budget Estimate	TGA Funding	Potential Funding Source
Support additional limited lodge, bunkhouse, caravan, tent or group accommodation linked to activity provision. Important not to significantly increase accommodation stock causing displacement: rather, to fill 'market gaps'	Private Sector	£100k	£30k	Private Sector PCC/GCC Business Connect
Support initiatives to upgrade the quality of the accommodation stock with an emphasis on environmentally friendly practices and meeting the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act	Private Sector	£300k	£100k	Private Sector PCC/GCC Business Connect
Build on existing programmes to proactively encourage local communities to draw out their special local heritage including interpretive panels, heritage trails, opening up churches and chapels, establish web page, marketing local events and activities and opening up activities to visitors	Ecodyfi Individual Communities	Up to £25k per initiative Total £100k	£25k	WTB RTGA CCW, WDA Obj 1,2 CADw HLF Adfywio
Funding to support the diversification of local boat trips (including wildlife, dolphin-watching, sea fishing etc)	Aberdyfi Partnership	Capital budget £100k	£30k	WTB RTP
Support the enhancement or development of new specific visitor attractions where there is clear evidence of demand, economic benefit and financial viability	Ecodyfi Attractions Operators	£300k	£100k	Obj 1,2 HLF
To implement Cycling Tourism action plan including following projects	PCC/GCC Cycle Officers Ecodyfi Forest Enterprise	£1.6m	£100k	PCC/GCC Obj 1,2
Upgrade and extend Forest Trails	Forest Enterprise	£50k	£20k	FE Obj 2
Encourage secure cycle parking at attractions and stations	PCC GCC Attractions Ecodyfi	£10k implementation	£3k	WTB RTGA Obj 1,2 Private Sector
Develop horse riding network (and potential pony trekking centres)	Ecodyfi, PCC British Horse Society	£50k	£15k	Obj 1,2 PCC/GCC BHS Adwyfio
Relocate and upgrade Machynlleth TIC and create town museum in Royal House.	PCC WTB RTP	£10k feasibility study £60k implementation	£20k	PCC HLF Cwlwm Gwledig
Provide comprehensive white on brown tourism signage including entry signage/symbols, visitor orientation and interpretive provision	Private Sector	£5k audit £30k implementation	£10k implementation	PCC GCC (for audit only) RTP
Support expansion and enhancement of Activity Centres and other activities including angling subject to evidence of demand and financial viability	Ecodyfi Activity Centres	2 Studies £10k Implementation 2 Projects 0.5m	£100k implementation	Private Sector
Review existing public toilet provision and upgrade where necessary	PCC GCC	£100k implementation	£12.5k	PCC GCC
Implement recommendations of TACP Environmental Strategy for Machynlleth to enhance entry and first impressions of the town, the streetscape, car parks etc	PCC	£100k implementation	£30k	PCC HLF
Encourage nature/farm trails and guided farm walks e.g. add on to Tir Gofal with grants for trails, hides and interpretation	Ecodyfi Farming Connect	Establish funding package up to £30k pa with individual project grants of up to £3k	£30k	WTB Adfywio Tir Gofal
Establish scenic drive network in and around Dyfi Valley linking to communities. This could provide opportunities for guided minibus tours.	Individual enterprise/ Ecodyfi	£10k	£2.5k	GCC Business Connect



Key

- Steering group overseeing delivery of the initiative
- Other partners expected to provide additional resources

Figure 7.11 Illustration of the range of organisations expected to be involved in the delivery of the TGA vision

Figure 7.12 Potential revenue development projects, leaders and possible funding sources (Adapted from Ecodyfi 2003c)

Initiative	Lead Partners	Budget Estimate	TGA Funding	Potential Funding Source
Support applications for 'seed corn' funding for essential feasibility work related to projects which are consistent with regeneration strategies e.g. Aberdyfi Haven and waterfront development including Eco Visitor Centre	Aberdyfi Partnership	Up to £10k per project Assume 2 projects	N/A	WTB Objective 1,2 Lottery, SNP
Review Cycling Tourism Product and prepare action plan	Ecodyfi	6k	N/A	WTB and FE
Publicise more effectively the myriad of events and festivals in the area to make them more accessible to visitors and increase patronage by local communities	Ecodyfi	Assist existing initiatives to maximum of £5k pa	N/A	RTP GCC/PCC
Establish market research project throughout 2002 and annually thereafter to really understand who the visitor is, their needs and requirements so future planning for tourism and investment decisions can be based on fact rather than supposition	Ecodyfi	£6k accessed yr 1 only	N/A	WTB RTP WDA PCC/GCC
Financially support post of Tourism Action Plan Officer with appropriate marketing budget to promote the Dyfi Valley and its constituent parts more effectively	Ecodyfi	£15k - £20k pa	N/A	WTB PCC/GCC
To support Celtica initiative to develop annual Welsh language and cultural programme with music, dance, poetry reading and storytelling in pubs and villages throughout the Dyfi Valley: Celtica to extend and enhance Cambrian Minstrels	Celtica Ecodyfi	Establish events budget £10k pa	N/A	WTB Arts Lottery HLF PCC/GCC
To devise strategy to target green and activity sector markets within context of Area Marketing.	Ecodyfi	£15k	N/A	RTP, WDA GCC/PCC/ Adfywio
Market Dyfi Valley as pre-Christmas destination with excellent speciality shopping in Machynlleth	Ecodyfi Chamber of Trade	£2.5k pa	N/A	GCC/PCC/ CCC
Develop and extend the existing Twristiaeth Dyfi Tourism Association to achieve better coordination between accommodation providers and attractions	Ecodyfi WDA ELWa	£5k pa	N/A	RTP Private Sector
Develop support programmes to help communities "help themselves" including developing Dyfi Valley web sites with links to community web site. Establishing Tourism Association to effectively market. This to include Machynlleth, Llanbrynmair, Aberdyfi, Pennal, Corris and others.	Ecodyfi	£2.5k per community	N/A	PCC/GCC WTB WDA
Develop links with University of Wales (Aberystwyth) to extend the Integrated Quality Management initiative to the whole of the Dyfi Valley and take advantage of their on-line Business Support Programme for SME's. To include identifying specific businesses, developing exemplars and disseminating best practice	Ecodyfi University of Wales Business Connect	Establish annual budget of £15k pa	N/A	WTB Obj 1,2
Consider Dyfi Valley Guides Association to provide focus for training and marketing	Ecodyfi, private sector	Use training budget identified for host training	N/A	ELWa PCC/GCC
Develop 'local food chain' initiative for the Dyfi Valley linking produce to hotels and restaurants including introducing regular farmers markets and making more of local distinctiveness by developing menus, training chefs and marketing Welsh food. Extend to pre-order local food for self-catering and provision of hampers of local food to take home	Ecodyfi	Project fund of up to £10k pa	N/A	WDA CCW RTP
To encourage Welsh Assembly Government and CCW to undertake feasibility study to generate Master Plan to maximise the Biosphere designation and then implement recommendations	CCW		N/A	
Develop educational programmes linked to life long and leisure learning such as short courses – fun as well as academic – on cultural and sustainability topics	Ecodyfi CAT	Establish 'seed corn' support budget of £10k pa	N/A	WTB Private Sector Adfywio ELWa,
Establish culture of all year round opening (including abandoning half day closing) with hotels working closely with shops developing collaborative marketing	Chamber of Trade Ecodyfi		N/A	Nil
Further develop scope for increasing short adult activity courses such as Royal Yachting Association training, wildlife, arts and crafts etc using existing resources and accommodation	Aberdyfi Partnership Ecodyfi	Seed corn support budget of £10k pa	N/A	Private Sector Sports Council ACW

### 7.3 Dyfi Valley TGA Steering Group

The Dyfi TGA steering group has already been introduced and information about how the area came to be designated a TGA has been provided. Now it is worth considering the interests of the different stakeholders in more detail (Table 7.9). In order to make some assessment of how and why stakeholders commit resources to a partnership like the TGA, it is worthwhile to consider their individual roles and remits. Issues such as the different resources that are made available through broader participation, such as knowledge and other network connections, are key considerations, as are views about involvement in the initiative.

**Figure 7.13 Dyfi Valley Tourism Growth Area Steering Group**

<b>Steering Group Member</b>	<b>Interest</b>	<b>Sector</b>	<b>Level</b>
Aberdyfi Partnership	Local community regeneration group run by volunteers	Voluntary	Local
Celtica	Major local visitor attraction. One of Wales' leading visitor attractions. Celtica offers a unique, informative and stimulating experience of Celtic heritage and culture.	Private	Local
Corris Caverns Ltd.	Major local visitor attraction.	Private	Local
Countrywise	The leading organisation promoting the development of sustainable tourism in Wales.	Voluntary	National
Ecodyfi Partnership	Local community regeneration organisation. Provides office space and management time for TGA Officer.	Voluntary	Local
Machinations	Local visitor attraction.	Private	Local
Machynlleth and District Chamber of Trade	Represents the mutual business interests of members. Encourages communication between businesses and promotes the town, as well as undertaking improvements.	Private	Local
Mid Wales Tourism Partnership	Guides and develops the tourism industry on a regional basis. Informs and encourages tourism businesses to take advantage of programmes and projects in order to develop the regional tourism product. Provided support for the TGA Launch.	Mix of public and private	Regional
Powys County Council	One of the two local authorities, which the Dyfi Valley TGA touches. Offers support and advice to tourism businesses and community groups. Provides one third of the funding for the TGA Officer post.	Public	County
TGA Project Officer	The first line of contact for potential applicants, organises and provides administration for steering group meetings and provides other support as needed to help deliver the TGA objectives.	Partnership coordinator	Local
Wales Development Agency	Helps community groups develop tourism related projects leading to economic and community development, as well as providing support to businesses	Public	National

## *Aberdyfi Partnership*

Since its foundation in 1998, the Aberdyfi Partnership has pursued a strategy for the regeneration of Aberdyfi, a coastal village, sometimes described as “the jewel of Cardigan Bay” (Fig 7.14). Although not specifically a tourism-focussed organisation, the voluntarily run group has been working to develop Aberdyfi’s tourism potential and recently was largely responsible for the development of a car park that has improved access to the beach and taken parked cars off the roads in the village, as well as increased the number of customers in the village shops. The group is also playing a lead role in the ambitious development of an ‘ecocentre’, which will provide interpretation of the ecological value of the estuary to visitors.

Fig 7.14 Aims of the Aberdyfi Regeneration Strategy (DTZ Piedad Consulting, 2000)

- To demonstrate a realistic and sustainable approach to the sustainable regeneration and growth of Aberdyfi
- To improve the economy, the fabric of the village, its amenities and the facilities for residents and visitors, without disguising its intrinsic character and particular identity.
- To use Aberdyfi’s assets especially its situation in an area of outstanding natural beauty (AONB) and ecological interest and its attractiveness for golfing, water sports and other outdoor pursuits, to promote tourism both domestic and international and to highlight Aberdyfi as an important visitor destination.
- To attract EU Objective 1 and other public sector funds for specific projects, to attract private investment into the village with its large potential assets and to act as a catalyst for regeneration in the wider area.
- To harness the support of all sectors of the local community and existing and potential stakeholders to ensure local ownership and that the Partnership’s activities are socially inclusive.

In the course of developing the projects for the village, the Partnership has importantly been inclusive in terms of keeping local people involved and informed. With few exceptions, the strategy and projects that have been evolved have support from local people across all sections of the community (local voluntary sector representative 2003). Inclusion in its widest sense remains a key priority of the Partnership, reflected in the mix of projects which will provide benefits for local people and visitors alike and particularly the infirm, mobility impaired and other disadvantaged members of the community. To this end, the Partnership’s office bearers and members are drawn from across the community (Fig 7.15). Importantly, membership of the Partnership is not finite – it is open to members of the community and all public, private and voluntary sector organisations who have a role to play in achieving the objectives of the Partnership. Its membership currently consists of: two hoteliers, a butcher, an architect, a barrister; and representatives from: Principal Outward Bound Wales, Gwynedd Council (Chief Officer Coastal Protection, Maritime Officer, Harbour Master), Aberdyfi Community Council, Mid Wales Tourism, and the local Chamber of Trade.

The Chairman on the Aberdyfi Partnership also sits on the local County Council and is retired from a career in agriculture and agricultural training. He recognises that the people who make up the Partnership are mainly retired 'incomers', which reflects the demographic of the village. While he is open to criticism about the incomer issue, the Chairman believes that there are some associated benefits, particularly the wide range of skills, experiences and ideas that the range of participants bring. Evidently, one of the main challenges to the group is the resistance of some sectors of the community to change. However, it is believed that those opposed to new developments are often in the minority and so projects can usually be implemented as there is generally more in favour than not.

*The main idea of the Partnership was regeneration. It is a very picturesque village and on the one hand you have to try and keep the character, but people have still got to make a living. Most of the people here are older and they want the place to stay the same. Because of the high level of second homes, they're not here for 52 weeks a year and they don't necessarily have to work here either. You've got to be realistic. In any partnership you'll never please 100% of the people. We do exhibitions and if more than 50% back you, you do it (local voluntary sector representative 2003).*

Figure 7.15 Composition of the Aberdyfi Partnership (local voluntary sector representative 2003)

*The composition of the Partnership is mainly 'incomer'. 60% of the houses in Aberdyfi are second homes. More people are retiring early and moving here. I was involved in agriculture and then agricultural education. I took early retirement and then came down here. By then I knew the place quite well; I'd been on holiday here and I'd worked in the area. I was only 59 and I didn't want to fossilise, so you tend to get involved. This has happened to quite a few people down here. Consequently, you tend to get a lot of people with background information in various subjects. This has had some effect on the Partnership. The local people round here haven't been around a bit like us. They've seen things done differently and it can be difficult when you try and bring new things to a community that's always been close knit. So you get people that come in and see things that want doing. You've got to be careful. So we've got an architect, engineer, ex director of meteorological office in London (Sir John Houghton), there's businessmen – a lot of them not local. We're desperate to get a welsh speaker on. We got one, but he didn't stay very long. So out of 10-12 people, we only have 2 or 3 people who you might call 'real locals'. You could criticise us for that, but my answer is, "We've tried". We have tried to pull people in from different organisations. It's working quite well because I think it's good to bring in new ideas from outside sometimes.*

The Aberdyfi Partnership originally wanted to run its own TGA, but the parameters of the scheme ensured that it joined with other groups to focus on a wider destination area, rather than on just the Aberdyfi community:

*I think we're big enough to run our own TGA, with Teresa two days a week. But no, the powers that be said we have to link in with the Dyfi Valley down the road (local voluntary sector representative 2003).*

### ***Celtica***

Celtica is one of Wales' leading visitor attractions. Located in Y Plas, Machynlleth (former home of the Marquess of Londonderry), the award winning attraction is family orientated and opens year round, receiving around 40,000 visitors per annum. Celtica offers an informative experience of Celtic heritage and culture. Celtica has a reputation for delivering an exciting and stimulating package designed to meet the requirements of education throughout a selection of study levels. All work is developed to complement the classroom and where possible, Celtica seeks to provide broad, cross-curricular programmes that enable schools and colleges to maximise the potential value from their visit. The visitor attraction also offers facilities for businesses and claims to be an ideal setting to host the following: conferences, meetings, press receptions, product launches, seminars and training.

The Director of Celtica is the elected Chair of the Dyfi Valley TGA steering group and is one of the three visitor attraction representatives in the group. He is particularly keen to ensure that the cultural element of sustainable tourism is given its due recognition in the process and that the "green issue" is not overplayed (local business representative 2003). As Chair, he committed some time in the early stages to "seeking clarity" about the scheme and in particular about the role of the TGA Officer.

*At the start there was a lot of confusion about the role of the Officer post and I spent a lot of time with WTB and TPMW seeking clarity. Things weren't all that well defined when the idea of the TGA scheme emerged (local business representative 2003).*

## Corris Carverns Ltd.

Figure 7.16 Corris Caverns: from slate quarry to visitor attraction (Corris Caverns 2004)

In 1878 Braichgoch quarry employed 250 men and produced 7,000 tons of slab and roofing slate, but rising costs and falling demand saw the company collapse in 1906. Another five companies worked the mine intermittently until 1962 when it was bought by brothers Dewi and Gwilym Lloyd of Aberllefenni. For eight years high-quality slab was extracted for use as panels for electrical fittings, before a new road scheme brought the levelling of the slate tips, the closure of the slate mill and the building of the Corris Craft Centre on the reclaimed land in 1983.

At Corris Caverns, visitors can learn about the original legends of King Arthur, the wizard Merlin, Avalon and much more. An underground boat will take you magically through a waterfall and deep into the spectacular caverns under the Braichgoch Mountain. As visitors walk through the caverns, Welsh tales of King Arthur are told with tableaux and stunning sound and light effects. King Arthur's Labyrinth, The Bard's Quest and Y Crochan Restaurant can all be found at Corris Craft Centre. Corris Craft Centre is home to independent crafts people who produce and sell their own work. There are candles, toys, leather craft, pottery, jewellery and turned wood.

Corris Caverns is a major visitor attraction within the TGA, consisting of King Arthur's Labyrinth, The Bard's Quest, Corris Craft Centre and Y Crochan Restaurant (Fig 7.16). Like Celtica, it receives around 40,000 visitors per year and the King Arthur's Labyrinth part of the attraction is a partner in the Dyfi Valley Attractions marketing initiative. The Director of Corris Caverns, Ian Rutherford, sits on the steering group as a visitor attractions representative and is clearly an influential figure in tourism, nationally as well as locally. He was at one time a board member of WTB and is now, amongst other roles, the Chairman of the Welsh Association of Visitor Attractions (WAVA), mentioned in previous chapters, and a Director of the Mid Wales Tourism Partnership (TPMW). As has been explored, a review of the other current tourism related positions that he holds clearly establishes him as one of the key players or 'usual suspects' who attends many meetings and is active in tourism development decision-making processes (Fig 7.17).

Figure 7.17 Director of Corris Caverns – multiple roles

Welsh Association of Visitor Attractions - Chair  
Mid Wales Tourism - Director  
Mid Wales Tourism Partnership - Director  
Wales Tourism Alliance – Director  
Pendragon Consultants Ltd – Director  
Mid Wales Partnership - tourism sub committee member  
Dyfi Valley TGA – steering group member  
Attractions of Snowdonia Consortium – member  
Dyfi Valley Attractions Consortium – member  
Corris Development Workgroup – member  
WTB Countryside Tourism Advisory Group – member

## *Countrywise*

Launched in 1985 as Festival of the Countryside (FOC), Countrywise (as it is now known) is recognised as the leading organisation promoting the development of sustainable tourism in Wales. It holds the largest database of visitor attractions in Wales. Countrywise is a ‘not-for-profit’ company, employing a small professional team of four staff and is seeking charitable status. Working in partnerships with major national organisations as well as small local community groups and individual businesses, Countrywise seeks to enable and empower groups and businesses to achieve their objectives (Fig 7.18). Countrywise’s work has a sustainable tourism focus that considers the “promotion of the Welshness of Wales” alongside the usual environmental, social and economic issues (local voluntary sector representative 2003). The organisation is based in Newtown, which is actually outside of the Dyfi Valley area. However, its interest in sustainable tourism and its links with the Dyfi Valley Partnership – Countrywise has been involved in the production of the Dyfi Valley Guide since 1999 – begin to explain its involvement in the TGA process. When the TGA process was beginning to emerge, Countrywise had hoped that there may have been some money available for it to test some ideas about the assessment of tourism’s sustainability.

*With our interest at Countrywise in sustainable tourism it seemed like a good opportunity for us. It was very much a vested interest and I declared that quite openly... In the early stages, I wanted to use Dyfi Valley as a testing ground for one or two ideas, of how you actually assess sustainability, how do you measure it in some form or another. And also measure in some simple way, the impact of tourism on a community, whether it's wearing out footpaths or locals not being able to park, or tourists getting in the way, or does it have real positive benefits. So I was hoping to get a bit of money out of it as well as to test some ideas out. And also to generate and share our expertise and experience (local voluntary sector representative 2003).*

Although the eventual parameters of the scheme excluded the possibility of funds being available for Countrywise, the organisation was happy to be involved in its delivery at the local level and it was influential in helping to maintain local control of it – something that required considerable negotiation with the WTB.

*I was one of the people battling long and hard to keep the ownership of the TGA and the day to day running of it in the community, not with a WTB project officer parachuted in. I wanted to keep it local and I think we've achieved that, but that's been a struggle (local voluntary sector representative 2003).*

Figure 7.18 Countrywise Activities and Partners (adapted from Countrywise website 2004)

Activities

- Economic Development
- Community regeneration, empowerment and capacity building
- Recreation and leisure, access and enjoyment
- Education
- Health
- Rural services including public transport
- Publications: research, design and publication of books and booklets.
- Video production: production and sale of videos on sustainable tourism subjects.
- Marketing: a complete service of design, publication, printing, distribution and evaluation of marketing material.
- Project management: development and management of both small and large projects.
- Community tourism: support for community-driven events, activities and sustainable tourism initiatives; a comprehensive pack of support for event organisers is currently under development.
- Sustainable Tourism Business Programme: encouraging tourism businesses to adopt sound environmental practices through programmes of action and assessment, making real cost savings and other substantial benefits – pilot phase under development.
- Quality assurance and management: a developing portfolio of services to enhance the quality of visitor and customer experiences; establishing operating and customer care standards; assessing the quality of service at sites and centres.
- Niche marketing: developing and promoting niche marketing opportunities, for example farm tourism, wildlife tourism, promoting local foods and crafts, 'premium' short breaks.
- Networking and best practice: operating throughout Wales, Countrywise is in a unique position to promote and share Best Practice in sustainable tourism and development. Countrywise therefore has an extensive network of contacts, partners and businesses including LA21 projects.
- Media contacts: regular contacts with an extensive network of media contacts.
- Schools and environmental education: an increasing portfolio of work with schools including the development of educational material and videos.
- Consultancy: Countrywise is developing a range of consultancy services.

The range of current partners:

- Wales Tourist Board
- Countryside Council for Wales
- The National Park Authorities of Snowdonia, Brecon Beacons and the Pembrokeshire Coast
- Kite Country
- Severn Trent Water and Dwr Cymru Welsh Water
- Many LEADER projects
- Forest Enterprise Wales
- Sustrans
- Community organisations including Curiad Caron in Tregaron
- Conservation and environmental organisations including the RSPB, the Welsh Wildlife Trusts, the Welsh Kite Trust, etc.
- Many other local authorities and community groups

The director of Countrywise describes a contextual environment in which mistakes made in the past by WTB appear to be making it extremely difficult to get people to take part in new initiatives.

*I think that there is a substantial rift between the WTB and what I call the 'tourism coal face'. There is a massive gap between the two...I think a lot of communities are fed up with having initiatives dumped on them or they are selected without any consultation at all...One or two units within the business support team at WTB are struggling to bridge that gap, but there's so*

*much cynicism out there that it's almost unbridgeable... There's still a substantial situation of us and them* (local voluntary sector representative 2003).

The eventual success of the TGA scheme then will be an important measure of how well new attempts to improve coordination and participation have been implemented.

### ***Ecodyfi Partnership***

Figure 7.19 Ecodyfi Partnership: formation and function (MAB 2004)

The most significant example of local involvement in sustainable development in the area was the establishment in January 1997 of the Dyfi Valley Eco-Partnership (Ecodyfi), covering the Dyfi catchment area, with objectives that stress the sustainable use of natural resources and community-based economies. Ecodyfi brings together over 20 representatives from business and the public sector, including local county councils, Snowdonia National Park Authority, farmers' unions, CPRW, and the Development Board for Wales. Ecodyfi builds on the history of ecological initiatives in the Dyfi Valley, such as the Centre for Alternative Technology at Machynlleth, Parc Eco Dyfi, windfarm development, and organic farming projects aims to provide advice and grant aid to encourage and support sustainable initiatives. A current example of Ecodyfi's work is a three-year community renewable energy project, including the development of small-scale hydro, solar power, and biofuel initiatives.

Established in 1997 and described by UNESCO as “the most significant example of local involvement in sustainable development in the area” (Fig 7.19) the Dyfi Valley Eco-Partnership, or Ecodyfi as it is known, is a voluntary sector, community regeneration organisation (Fig 7.20) that brings together public, private and voluntary sector organisations through quarterly board meetings to “influence policy and make things happen” (Ecodyfi 2002). Its Development and Action Plan identifies a range of stakeholders (Fig 7.21). Ecodyfi, is “taking the lead role in delivering the [TGA] programme locally... and developing the networks that will translate the TGA's vision into a future reality” (Ecodyfi 2003).

As mentioned previously, Ecodyfi (through the work of its Director) was heavily involved in the establishment of a local Sustainable Tourism Project to develop sustainable community tourism in the Dyfi valley in June 2001. Through this Project, Ecodyfi established the first tourism association in the area, which has been identified as “a crucial network for developing the local tourism product and... through collaborative work, collective marketing and group lobbying” (Ecodyfi 2003). Adding to the significance that is placed by this organisation on networking and collaborative action, the trade association also recognises the value of “a collective voice in lobbying strategic development planning and grant applications”. The Director of Ecodyfi sits on the steering group and Ecodyfi also ‘houses’ the TGA Officer, who works part time for the Partnership, as well as the TGA.

Fig 7.20 Ecodyfi: mission and vision (Ecodyfi website)

Ecodyfi's mission is to foster sustainable community regeneration in the Dyfi valley. Local needs must be met within a long-term vision. This implies attention to global as well as local environmental sustainability, to the robustness of the local economy and to the capacity of local people to take responsibility. Our vision is for the Dyfi valley to be a thriving bilingual community with a reputation for sustainability. It is based on the following ideas:

- Strengthening the local economy is the key to meeting social needs
- Tourism and farming are the most important local industries.
- The only kind of tourism that will succeed here is sustainable tourism. Short-term fixes will not do. Equally, the only kind of farming that will succeed here is sustainable farming.
- Local distinctiveness is the key to success in many markets nowadays, particularly in tourism and increasingly in local produce (including foodstuffs).
- Food, holiday and other products will all benefit from being associated with a clean, green image of the valley - where the Dyfi valley is a leader in sustainable community regeneration.
- Globalisation of production and distribution systems leads to unsustainable levels of resource use and waste creation and makes local economies more vulnerable to external factors. Reversing this trend is sometimes called "relocalisation".

Figure 7.21 Ecodyfi: partners and development (adapted from Ecodyfi 2002)

Partners include local individuals, private companies, voluntary bodies, local authorities, the Snowdonia National Park Authority and the Welsh Development Agency (WDA). They can all influence policy and make things happen through quarterly Board meetings, through membership of the Management Committee and by joining Working Groups on specific topics. Ecodyfi opened a formal membership scheme in September 2001. Over 50 individuals and 14 organisations have paid to join so far, including 7 Town and Community Councils. The Partnership has concluded that it should be the umbrella body for a variety of collective actions aimed at community regeneration. The alternative under consideration was to focus more narrowly on specific subjects like energy and the environment. This view crystallised during a consultation process. The main stakeholders in this were as follows:

- Town & Community Councils
- Local voluntary organisations
- Tourism businesses
- Farmers
- Other local businesses
- Local members and Board members of Ecodyfi
- Other residents
- Regional partners
- Staff

We talked to as many people as we could about the future of the valley and the future of the Partnership. The main elements were as follows:

- Requests to speak to all the local groups. Presentations included: Borth, Glantwymyn, Llanbrynmair and Machynlleth Town and Community Councils, Gweithgor Corris, Aberdyfi Partnership, Gwerin y Coed, Eglwysfach WI, Canolfan Aberhosan Committee, Machynlleth Forum and a staff meeting at CAT.
- An MSc student, Llion Pugh, worked with us on work placement for two months, engaging the farming community. He used individual interviews and a large public meeting, which targeted Young Farmers Club members in particular.
- Machynlleth Chamber of Trade distributed our consultation documents to members.
- 850 copies of a (printed) summary consultation document (attached as Appendix 3) were distributed to members and more widely, e.g. at the library, post offices, door-to-door and via group networks.
- A fuller (photocopied) consultation document (attached as Appendix 4) was also used in smaller numbers.
- A preliminary questionnaire (attached as Appendix 5) was inserted in copies of the Blewyn Glas.
- Discussions with key people in other organisations, including CAMAD and Cymad.
- Press releases to all the local media.
- Over 200 people responded, including contributions at meetings.
- In mid-May, a 9-page "Response to consultations" document was sent to those who had participated in the review (and to some who hadn't). This has been further developed into the present document.

The main questions we asked were as follows:

- Are you happy for Ecodyfi to coordinate community regeneration in Bro Ddyfi?
- How would you change Ecodyfi to make sure it is the voice of the community as a whole? For example, should some positions on the Board be reserved for representatives of bodies like local councils and businesses? Or should they be involved in other ways (perhaps through a "forum")?
- Do you agree with the kind of vision set out in the consultation documents?
- Would you like your area to be included?
- Can you suggest any project ideas?

Responses were overwhelmingly positive and the suggestions have been incorporated into this Development Plan.

## ***Machinations***

Established in 2000, “Machinations” is a relatively new family owned and managed visitor attraction in Llanbrynmair. Having over 30 years experience of running tourism businesses, its owner is candid about the business prospects in his area, as well as being particularly concerned about the levels of bureaucracy that seem to accompany nationally driven initiatives (Fig 7.22). Believing that there is little opportunity in the area for economic development in other sectors apart from tourism and interested in the possibility of obtaining funds for local businesses, including his own, the visitor attractions manager decided to become involved in the TGA process. He also wanted to ensure that his village was not neglected, being concerned that there may be too much focus on Machynlleth and Aberdovey.

Figure 7.22 Machinations: formation and TGA involvement (local level business representative 2003)

*My wife and I have been running tourism businesses for over 30 years. Now we make Timberkits and they sell in Hamleys and in lots of tourism places. They need to be sold in the giftware market because the toy market is dominated by big big companies and relies very heavily on marketing. They don't sell very well in big cities and towns. Nearly 3 years ago, because we are on the main roads through Wales running east-west and north-south, we set up our own tourist attraction and shop. We wanted to diversify and expand, so we bought this place, a free hold property. At the same time we got hold of some automata – a collection, and there aren't many about. Many of the museums in the UK failed, so you might ask what I'm doing opening one!*

*So we have a collection of automata, we sell our own Timberkits, and we have a shop where we sell anything that moves, we have a little gallery area and a café. So we are in the business of tourism and we have a self-catering house that we rent out. Apart from which, the situation in the locality with regard to farming and the like, it seemed to us that the only way forward was in tourism. We opened where we are about a year ago. We rebuilt the old village hall in Llanbrynmair and spent about £180,000. I've been interested in the TGA well before that. One reason was because I had a general interest in tourism as the only thing the area could look at. What else could it do? The other thing was we wanted to set up a tourism venture of our own so I wanted to suss out everything to do with the granting apparatus – what money was going to be available from where. ...people were asked if they wanted to serve on a steering committee and I said I wanted to do that. I wanted to have some idea how the process worked and I wanted to have some influence on it. And that was that really. ...Bear in mind we had a project that we were trying to get money for and we had a vested interest in the success of it [the TGA].*

The small business representative's previous negative experience of grants processes, which in part provided some motivation for his involvement in the TGA steering group, provides evidence of some of the past frustration that appears to be an embedded feature of local people's experience of dealing with national bodies.

*We ultimately had a grant from the WDA and the WTB, and it made up £62,000 of the £180,000. We had to fight tooth and nail to get that and the principal problem that we encountered was the slowness of the process. We knew what we wanted to do, when we wanted to open up, what size building and all the rest of it. And it was incredibly slow work getting the Development Agency and the Tourist Board working with us, especially the Tourist Board. The Tourist Board seemed to spend most of the time incommunicado. You can't get at them and even if you do, the one in Caernarfon is away on secondment or is doing this or that, so they refer you to Carmarthen, and "Sorry, the chap in Carmarthen is out today" and they refer you to Cardiff, and it goes on endlessly. They seem very reluctant to actually go and see the tourist attractions proposed. Well you wouldn't expect them to actually see a tourist attraction would you, or the proposals for it?*

Machinations' manager has also been involved in other initiatives like Communities First and having been frustrated by them, was keen to try and have some positive influence on the new tourism scheme.

*I was also a member of, until I resigned recently, another Assembly motivated exercise – Communities First. Again a lot of money earmarked for an area that desperately needed it and I have seldom experienced so much frustration in all my life. I doubt whether I'm likely to die of a heart attack, but if I go back to serving on Communities First, I will! It's endless bureaucracy, endless discussion, endless paper pushing. We had, from Llanbrynmair, 13 proposals of things that might be done, all waiting for money. Now I'm all for consulting the grassroots, but the Communities First scheme spent £7,000 in the first year finding out what 40 people were concerned with. They came up with the usual things: health, education, transport, housing, security. And still no money has ever gone to anybody to do anything. We were a year finding this out, and it was a year when people were desperate for money. It doesn't get anywhere because you have facilitators facilitating facilitators (local business representative 2003).*

It is evident that Eric Williamson is a believer in 'entrepreneurial spirit', and feels somewhat bruised by the current political climate in which business is a dirty word, particularly when it comes to involvement in community regeneration:

*As a business, we almost always seem to slip through the net because every application has to have the buzzwords – social deprivation, etc. That’s absolutely rubbish for the most part because if you get money moving about the community, you don’t have social deprivation. There seems to be a nasty smell attached to businesses (local business representative 2003).*

### ***Machynlleth and District Chamber of Trade***

Representing the interests of the local small business community, the Secretary of the local Chamber of Trade sits on the TGA steering group. She was instrumental in re-establishing the Chamber and is one of the people who has participated in the tourism meetings taking place since the 1999 Assembly meeting in Gregynog. As such, she has played an important role in shaping the local tourism association and the TGA bid. The Secretary was inspired to re-establish the Chamber after feeling that nobody in her community was taking action to address a particular problem that it faced (Fig 7.23). Her involvement in a number of community initiatives demonstrates the important impact that a concerned, motivated individual can have, particularly with some ‘organisational backing’ to give them increased credibility.

**Figure 7.23 Re-establishment of the Machynlleth and District Chamber of Trade (local business representative 2003)**

*The Chamber of Trade folded a number of years ago. It was very formal – not the kind of meetings you would want to go to. It organised dinner dances and that kind of thing – all very boring. Anyway, that all folded. So a few years ago; I think it was that awful summer we had when there was a lot of vandalism on the main street. We have this problem like a lot of rural areas in terms of lack of police presence, so I said, “well, somebody’s got to do something about it” and I went round with various people who had shops on the main street and there happened to be a meeting being called by Powys County Council and it seemed to be a good platform to voice our concerns, so went to that and got a few more people interested. And it seemed like a good idea to re-start the Chamber of Trade, so that we would have more power. Obviously you do have more power as an organisation. I was elected as secretary, there was another chair at the time, but when he left, my husband was elected.*

Like the other small business representative in the steering group, the Chamber of Trade Secretary has negative experiences of previous public sector initiatives that suggest a lack of understanding between sectors and highlight the difficulty of cross-sectoral working, in terms of managing expectations and meeting requirements.

*The processes are all very very slow, all the processes are slow, and they don't necessarily get you anywhere. There was the Town Heritage scheme. We used to go to the meetings representing the CoT. That was a scheme administered by both the WTB and Powys County Council, where they would match fund improvements to properties in the town. Match funding is only 50% and at the time there was Foot & Mouth. People didn't have the money. We actually applied for money. They told us it was going to be fast-track, really simple, fast-track. And then when you applied they told you in needed to be in triplicate, quadruplicate, centuplicate. And we just thought forget it. Everybody said, "forget it". And then they say, "people in Mach are apathetic, you can't get them to take anything up" (local business representative 2003).*

Further, the Chamber of Trade Secretary describes a fairly negative context in which local level communication channels have broken down and of a community that has been the victim of a number of unpopular nationally driven initiatives:

*There was a lot coming from above and what seemed to be absolutely essential was more communication between people at the grassroots level because there were people doing the same thing in the same area and not even knowing. All the directives were coming from above and they weren't necessarily related to what people locally wanted at all. People you spoke to involved in tourism didn't seem very impressed by what the national bodies were doing at all (local business representative 2003).*

A sense of lost community is also outlined which is partially explained in some rural areas as being the result of changing demographics – people moving to and from urban areas.

*It's a community of individuals here and it is quite hard to get people together. To a certain extent this is why people are living here. They have their own individual ideas about how things should be (local business representative 2003).*

### ***Tourism Partnership Mid Wales***

The Tourism Partnership Mid Wales (TPMW) has been previously described in previous chapters as a key regional tourism organisation. It does not operate solely at the regional level and it is involved in all of the TGAs in its area. Two TPMW staff sit on the Dyfi Valley TGA steering group and the organisation provides a venue for the steering group meetings. Although not the only channel of communication between the TGA and the WTB, TPMW's relationship with WTB does appear to place it in the position of an information relay. Being charged with responsibility for delivering the regional tourism strategy, TPMW is closely involved in all of the TGAs in its area, attempting to ensure that priority is given to ensure developments meet the broader strategic tourism aims. To this end it has provided funding on a number of occasions, like in the launch and development of the Dyfi Valley TGA action plan. Echoing other comments, TPMW accepts that, when it emerged, the TGA process was not very well defined. Significantly, it is recognised that WTB have tried to give more control to the local level, but that they have still produced a scheme without wider consultation and still retained the decision-making power.

*WTB has attempted to be more empowering at the local level but hasn't got it quite right. It came up with the TGA concept and handed over the process, but the guidelines it provided about how it should be run were not good enough. It suggested that it should be run by steering groups, but gave no indication of who should be on it, how many, and how often they should meet. It has also retained the decision-making power (RTP representative 2003).*

### ***Powys County Council***

Powys County Council (PCC) is the sole local authority interest on the steering group and being based in Brecon is about as far away from the Dyfi Valley TGA as it is possible to be while remaining within county – the biggest in Wales, covering much of what is known as 'mid Wales'. However, alongside Gwynedd County Council and the WTB, PCC provides one third of the funding for the TGA Officer post. It has also provided portions of funding for the initial consultant compiled action plan and the local launch event of the initiative. PCC is involved in other TGAs within its area and is also a member of the Brecon Beacons Strategic Tourism Partnership. PCC provides an online source of information for tourism interests in the county, as well as producing a monthly tourism focussed newsletter as a way of keeping in touch with what it sees as "a host of isolated communities" (local government representative 2003). It recently produced a tourism strategy for the Brecon Beacons area, although was somewhat disappointed with the response to its consultation process.

### ***Wales Development Agency***

*Our main objective is to sustain one of the best business climates in Europe by aiding the growth of quality jobs and competitive industry for the benefit of people throughout Wales (WDA 2004).*

The Welsh Development Agency (WDA) was established in 1976 by the UK government and subsequently became a sponsored body of, and accountable to, the Welsh Assembly Government. Like WTB, it was taken ‘in house’ by the Assembly Government in 2006. Having an economic development focus, it aims to create “prosperous communities by helping businesses to start, develop and grow”. The WDA has offices around Wales, as well as in several countries around the world where it tries to sell the countries investment opportunities. The office located in Aberystwyth, which is actually outside the TGA, provides a steering group member. As part of the national organisation, the WDA can provide grants to businesses that can help make up the match-funding element of a WTB Capital Grant. At the time of investigation, the WDA ran a number of initiatives, such as the Community Regeneration Toolkit, that were said to focus on the creation of sustainable communities through, in part, the development of local partnerships and strategies (Fig 7.24).

Figure 7.24 Community Regeneration Toolkit (WDA website 2004)

Through its prime objective of promoting economic vitality and employment, the WDA has a major influence on shaping the surroundings of communities in Wales. We have been engaged in the physical and, in certain defined areas, social regeneration of Wales for many years, culminating in the launch of the Community Regeneration Policy.

This policy focuses on the optimal location and design of new developments, alongside their accessibility, particularly by public transport, as key factors in aiding the development of communities in a sustainable way.

Central to the creation of sustainable communities is the way in which new development is designed. The policy will ensure that new development design works with existing topography, landscapes, ecology and heritage buildings to reduce environmental impacts and enhance a sense of place. It will encourage a mix of uses and facilities that will create and reinforce communities. Well-designed buildings, streets and spaces will provide environments that will attract business and residents and enhance existing communities. Buildings themselves should adopt high environmental standards in terms of materials used, energy efficiency and be considered in terms of life-cycle costing.

We promote and encourage the reuse of land and buildings wherever possible, where restoration for amenity and recreational use is frequently of more benefit to the local community than redevelopment.

Our CADEG scheme aims to bring back into economic use redundant buildings in rural areas, contributing to the local economy and preserving valuable landscape features.

The Community Regeneration Policy has shown us that we have an important role, when working closely with unitary authorities and other partners, in adding value to local well-being and empowering communities.

The Agency's involvement in community regeneration will necessarily be delivered at the local level to meet the needs and aspirations presented by a particular community. The aim is to ensure an integrated approach to economic, social, cultural and environmental issues, recognizing the importance of community involvement and action in economic initiatives.

The WDA's Community Regeneration Programme provides support for community groups to develop local partnerships and implement strategies and action plans that promote the economic development of their community. Specific assistance is available for capacity building within the community; training and support for developing community partnerships; funding of community group revenue costs; and the employment of a development officer where appropriate.

The key to successful regeneration is partnership working on all levels and the Agency is keen to ensure that the partnership principle is followed in all regeneration projects. A kit bag of agency tools enables a flexible approach to work with and through integrated partnerships at a regional and local level, so that priorities are agreed and all possible resources are mobilised.

As part of the Community Regeneration Programme the Agency can provide:

- Aid for communities in the development of the local partnership and to develop a strategy for the future
- Support for the development of partnership groups
- Basic organisational development training and support for community groups
- Direct revenue funding for various costs and studies
- To communities that can show a clear need for funding to employ a Development Officer
- Appropriate consultancy / professional support
- Sector based intervention to build actions centred around specific sectors
- Agreed structural intervention to provide communities with strategic capital focussed expenditure.

## 7.4 Analysis of Stakeholder Participation at the Local Level

Analysis of the steering group members and their diverse roles has revealed a number of important observations. The following section draws on further local level evidence from the partnership development survey and stakeholder interviews conducted. As previously identified, in order to assess the functioning and development of the local partnership, it is important to consider the problem-setting, direction-setting, and implementation stages. The six propositions for assessing collaborations (Jamal & Getz, 1995) also provide a valuable framework: recognition of interdependence; recognition of benefits; legitimacy; involvement of key stakeholder groups; identification of convener/facilitator; and identification of shared goals. The assessment also includes reflection on participants' motivational factors, their awareness of constraints and opportunities associated with being involved in partnership work, and network related issues. This section contributes greatly to the investigation's understanding of the real effects of attempting to improve coordination of stakeholders. N.B. the following section contains bracketed figures, e.g. (1:89%). These refer to the partnership development survey question numbers and the percentage of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with its statements.

### 7.4.1 Local stakeholder involvement

Virtually all respondents believe that there is a moral basis for involving all stakeholders (1:89%), but this is seen as an "ideal" or "principle" and, understanding that it is not always practical to bring everybody on board, there is also recognition by some that it is not worth "trying too hard to engage people because it is futile". In line with the 'thirds principle' of partnership thinking, there are representatives from the three sectors in the steering group – public, private and voluntary – and in this case, there are a reasonably equal number of representatives from each. There is also an even split between the number of big and small business members. However, as almost half of the steering group is made up of participants who work for national and regional organisations, and although for the specific project they are thinking locally, it may be fair to question to what extent they are seen as 'local stakeholders'. The involvement of employees from the bigger organisations is evidently seen as an issue and their real commitment is actually questioned.

*The trouble with people from different organisations, like PCC, the WTB is that they're actually employed. They change every now and then, they get moved sideways, they're sacked or whatever; so you end up with somebody different. It's a job for them. Not an all-consuming passion like it*

*is for locals. To be quite honest, there should be a lot more local involvement (local business representative 2003).*

*When you think of the steering committee, five of whom are paid by public bodies; if you put it in their hands, they have every interest in protracting it forever. It's a job for them and the longer the job goes on, the better they like it and the more careful they are to make sure they've never committed themselves to anything, just in case they get it wrong. And my own feeling is, this is a misuse of public money and it's also fiddling while Rome burns because the communities are struggling (local business representative 2003).*

Yet despite concerns about the public employment of some group members, and as the steering group is made up of people who do live and/or work within the TGA, all of the steering group members agree that it is sensitive to local circumstances (4:100%). The locally developed strategy, which clearly considers what it feels is the most appropriate kind of development for the area, further indicates both an understanding of local needs and opportunities. There is recognition that the group formed with a clear definition of a common problem (2:80%) and most believe it will be solved by collaboration (3:70%), as it is believed that “the more people you engage, the more knowledge and experience you bring” (local voluntary sector representative 2003).

The TGA is recognised as an inclusive process that includes multiple stakeholders (7:90%), although the comment is made that the number of participants in the steering group is less than the number initially involved in setting it up. Most steering group members also believe that the TGA incorporates a sufficient range of stakeholders with the expertise to adequately understand problems (8: 70%), but interestingly the two small business representatives do not agree, echoing their desire to see more involvement from similar interest groups. In particular, with the exception of one steering group member who owns a rental holiday cottage as well as a visitor attraction, there is notably no representation from accommodation providers. Although this group makes up the larger number of small tourism businesses, their under-representation in the TGA raises questions and perhaps provides further evidence that this group is unable to easily participate in tourism development processes. It is also recognised that the constitution of the group is more a reflection of those willing to join, rather than meticulous design:

*There are few people who actually put their hand up to join, so you don't turn anyone away (local authority representative 2003).*

Again, those representing small businesses identify frustration with WTB that has become so embedded in the community after a series of failed initiatives that people are extremely cautious about getting involved with anything new. The “very very slow” pace of funding schemes, despite being told by WTB that they would be “fast-track”, combined with persistent “moving the goalposts”, (local business representative 2003) are particular concerns. Thus indicating that future tourism partnerships may need to pay attention to not only identification of stakeholders, but also to consideration of how previous tensions may be resolved so that they may be successfully incorporated.

Although, deep concern is expressed by the small business representatives that there are not enough “real local people” involved – the small businesses and the residents – there is general agreement that the TGA is helping to increase local participation in tourism planning (36:70%) and the very existence of the steering group and the history of the bidding process provides some justification for that view. There is significant recognition that there are limitations to community participation in tourism planning (37:80%), although some claim that there are plenty of opportunities and are somewhat frustrated that more of the community does not get involved. Some believe, however, that local people will be more eager to join in when there is more evidence of positive results, as they are believed to be wary of new initiatives having been disappointed in the past. It also seems that unless well connected within the tourism community, it would be possible to not even be aware of the TGA scheme, or to dismiss it as yet another potentially flawed initiative.

*Not many people know the TGA exists, to be honest. You see an article in the local paper about it. People scan over it and think, “Oh, it’s another of these schemes” (local business representative 2003).*

#### **7.4.2 Barriers and benefits**

Principally, a lack of time is identified as the major barrier to participation and this is related to a perceived lack of organisation between certain groups. It is recognised that if individuals from particular interest groups had better communication with each other, then they could identify “leaders” or representatives to attend meetings and participate as collectives. It was also suggested that the number willing to participate might not have reached a “critical mass” yet and the individuals are too spread out to make improved coordination easy. That the local community is made up of many different communities, which have conflicting interests, also appears to make it more difficult to coordinate a collective

community voice: retired versus seeking employment; incomers seeking silence and solitude versus local looking for industrial work; business community versus residential community.

*It is a bit hard to organise people here. It's a community of individuals here and it is quite hard to get people together. To a certain extent this is why people are living here. They have their own individual ideas about how things should be. To actually get people together is incredibly hard. Although there is a bit of a community here. I always say groups rub along with each other* (local business representative).

However, further demonstrating the benefits of stakeholder collaboration, steering group members believe that the outcomes of the scheme will be more socially acceptable/legitimate coming from a diverse range of stakeholders (33:89%), with one group member expressing hope that it may importantly help to “counter the, ‘Oh, not another scheme from WTB’ attitude” (local voluntary sector representative 2003). In addition, there is a unanimous recognition that collaborating aids in the development knowledge and skills (15:100%) and that the existence of the steering group helps to improve coordination between organisations (16:100%), who, without the focus of the project, may not necessarily even have a reason to meet.

*The TGA is the glue that brings communities together at a strategic level. It has helped to understand peoples' aspirations; they are talking to each other, which is vital. The process allows the discussion to take place* (local voluntary sector representative 2003).

With most steering group members believing that working with other stakeholders increases innovation and effectiveness (13:78%), it seems that the potential for positive outcomes is quite high, reinforcing the argument that stakeholder collaboration has instrumental benefits. However, a cautionary view is expressed by the group, with just over half recognising that vested interests and established practices can block innovation (14:56%). The issue of vested interests is well demonstrated by the consideration of a proposed major visitor attraction. The proposed development, falling in line with the sustainable/green tourism interests of the TGA vision, appears to be a potential threat to the larger visitor attraction representatives. Recognising and openly declaring their vested interests, some of the visitor attraction representatives argued that they best knew the visitor market and that they believed the area could not sustain an increased number of visitors as the proposed development speculated.

*The most recent thing to happen with the Tourism Growth Area, note **Growth Area**, is that two interested parties in the visitor attraction business have said – you’ve certainly heard about the proposed agricultural tourism centre (a very adventurous scheme that could be the Eden of Wales: Terra Nova), which I think is a superb idea; they were taking about £11 million investment, not quite the £86 million of Eden. They’ve got an offer of a 100-acre site near Llanbryn-mair – but two of the attractions here have said, “We don’t think the tourism money should be spent on this because that’s going to spread it all too thinly”. This is the Tourism **Growth Area** we’re talking about. So then you get interested parties perverting the scheme – vested interests which are against the purpose of it (local business representative 2003).*

The attractions managers’ concerns about authorising a project, which could compete with their own businesses, therefore illustrate one of the problems of involving interest groups in decision-making. The issue was something of a sticking point for the group and was resolved in a non-direct way. The amount of money involved in this particular proposal was well beyond the scope of the TGA scheme and it appears that rather than go down a route that could potentially split the group by forcing a vote, it was easier for the group to emphasise its boundaries, avoid making a decision and pass the responsibility to the national level.

Most of the group believe that resources are clearly identified (17:70%). This is evidently the case for the funding provided by WTB, but uncertainty is expressed with regard to group members’ own resources, in terms of what funding and, in particular, other resources like time and skills that each may be able to offer, or may be required to commit. There is more uncertainty about whether the group is actually under-resourced. The small majority suggests that the group is under-resourced (18:44%), stating that the “funding to deliver is too low” (local business representative) and that there are “too few business people” (local business representative). Further, lack of resources is seen to be a wider issue and most respondents feel that this excludes less well-off organisations from participating in the steering group (19:60%), recognising that “small businesses find it difficult to attend meetings” (local voluntary sector representative).

### 7.4.3 Network Connections

Although the effects are not explored in comprehensive detail, most steering group members have connections to each other outside of the TGA scheme, often through being involved in other partnerships with them (Fig 7.25). Occasionally, as has been demonstrated, organisations are connected by an overlap of their individuals’ multiple roles, which suggests

that most decisions are being made by familiar and relatively small groups of people. It perhaps also reinforces the argument that there are a limited number of people actually willing or able to participate. Comments of a small business representative illustrate a belief in the importance of having the right individuals in the right place and concern about lack of willing people:

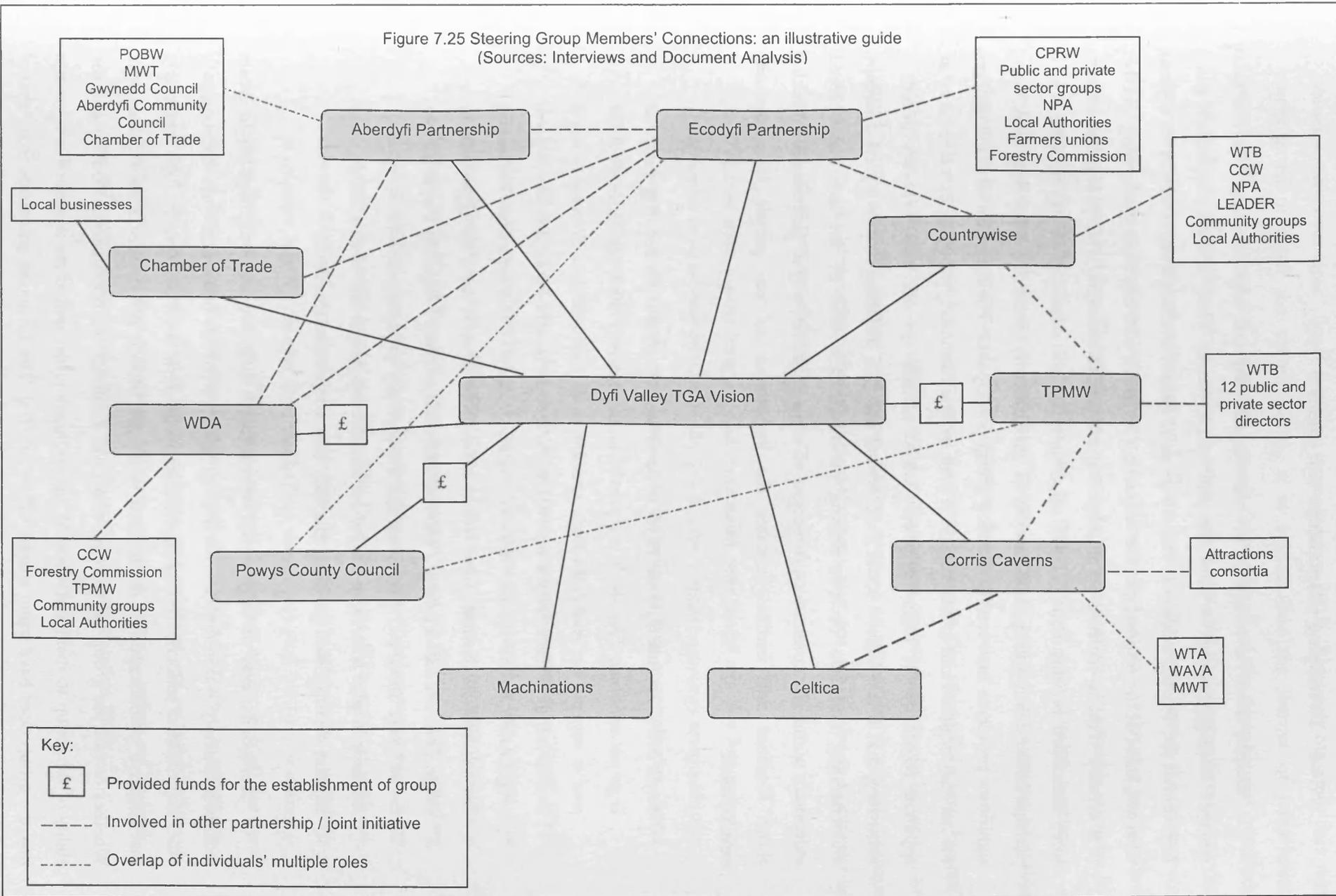
*Yes [individuals are the key]. I'd be very loath to leave if we close the shop. If we left the Chamber of Trade, it might cease to exist (local business representative 2003).*

The number of network connections that members have within their interest groups may indicate how representative they are and will certainly influence how adequately they can represent their interests and convey information about trade-offs and agreements to the people they represent. Most of the steering group members feel that they can adequately relay information, indicating perhaps that they have both sufficient authority and communication channels (29:70%). However, this is not the case for one small business representative, who feels that the level of communication within his interest group is inadequate. In addition, the number of connections with other bodies beyond their immediate interest group will be indicative of whether they can easily build external support with implementing organisations. On the whole, members feel that they are able to build external support (30:60%), although again the small business representatives are more unsure of being able to do so. Given the match-funding requirement, this will be essential for the successful delivery of the initiative.

The number of network connections is inevitably increased in the Dyfi Valley TGA as a result of its composition. Within the TGA partnership, there are three other cross-sectoral partnerships: the local Aberdyfi and Ecodyfi regeneration partnerships, and the Regional Tourism Partnership – TPMW. While also indicating a wider interest in the partnership approach, this ‘nesting’ of partnerships, suggests the existence of an overlap in remits and possibly a belief that common aims can be met. It is also valuable because it actually expands the range of organisations involved, opening up greater access to potential resources. The involvement of the RTP, with its responsibility for delivery of the regional tourism strategy and relationship with WTB, can be seen as very important, both in terms of guiding the strategic impact of the initiative and as a communications ‘bridge’ between the local and national levels. The participation of two national organisations – WDA and Countrywise – also opens up new opportunities for sourcing of funds, developing network connections, and further indicates and reinforces the national significance of the local project. More generally, the involvement of a diverse range of organisations appears to increase the likelihood of securing resources to meet the scheme’s objectives.



Figure 7.25 Steering Group Members' Connections: an illustrative guide  
 (Sources: Interviews and Document Analysis)



#### 7.4.4 Developing relationships and values

Despite some involvement by regional and national organisations, it is not clear whether existing tensions between the different levels are being resolved. Although more believe that the TGA is helping to resolve tensions between national, regional and local views than not, most of the respondents are uncertain (35: 50%), with one even questioning whether it is actually creating tensions by highlighting existing frustrations. That many respondents were undecided on this issue reflects uncertainty on the outcomes of the scheme and is perhaps embedded in the apparent history of unsatisfactory initiatives, rather than there being significant problems between the steering group participants. The historical tensions between the national, regional and local levels do appear to be a continuing problem, exacerbated by an apparent failure of the bigger organisations to actually get out and meet key people – something that locals believe could have several benefits, including improving relationships, understanding and also decision-making processes. The idea of meeting ‘hand-picked’ individuals within the community, is recognised as an important way of gathering information about localities and further indicates the importance of key people in community development.

*People like WTB have to get out. People in Cardiff are the outsiders. The best thing you can do is get out and about. They should meet people and not necessarily in meetings. Even the RTPs need to come out and meet people more, especially at the grass roots level. It would be nice if someone met us. We've never seen anyone. I do think people should come out and meet people at the grass roots level more. I don't think you can beat it, can you? They say we have this meeting here and there, but sometimes maybe they could come and meet one or two of the big people in the village. Come and have a coffee and hear their individual problems. I know they'll argue it's time not well spent. But if they hand picked they would get very quickly a good consensus of what's happening or what is the main problem and that will help them in their decision-making when they have their staff meetings (local voluntary sector representative 2003)*

It might be easy to believe that working with different interest groups could create tension and rivalry, but in this case the steering group members believe that collaborating with other stakeholders reduces adversarial attitudes at the local level (6:89%), perhaps suggesting that negative preconceptions about each other are broken down during their interaction. Whether or not the group has shared values will influence the potential for conflict and the ability of the group to make decisions. While some are undecided, there is general recognition that the group does have some shared values (5:70%). The comment was made that “shared

values evolve over time” (local business representative 2003). Although the study has not investigated in detail the shared values, it is evident that the themes of community regeneration and sustainability running through the remits all of the organisations involved, apart from the visitor attractions (although not to say they would not support them), gives the group some considerable common ground. There is evidence to suggest that the debates are not so much about the themes or values, but in different approaches to achieving regeneration and defining sustainability. The topic of sustainability has been given considerable attention by steering group members, which is reflected in their “vision” – to develop tourism in a sustainable manner for the mutual benefit of people, economy and the environment, to enable the area to become the premier UK green tourism destination.

It is evident that the degree group members believe in that vision does vary. Ecodyfi and its keen interest in an ecologically strong interpretation of sustainability can be seen to be largely responsible for shaping that vision. Others seem to go along with it without perhaps endorsing it wholeheartedly, although their differences may not actually be as significant as they themselves perceive them to be.

*The green aspect is fairly strong and that comes mainly from Ecodyfi who have been extremely influential in establishing the Dyfi Valley TGA. There's nothing necessarily wrong with that, but I want to make sure the other aspects of sustainability are given enough attention (local business representative 2003)*

*Our response though, was “Where do we fit into sustainable tourism down here?” We're complementary to what they're doing. I don't feel that we can offer as much to them perhaps. Our philosophy might be slightly different to theirs. Here, we were set up to regenerate. Our brief is different to Andy's [at Ecodyfi]. We can work together because it's the Dyfi Valley and getting people in, but that doesn't mean to say that everything we do should be how to save water, energy (I'm being a bit cynical here but you know what I'm trying to say). We've got to get people here otherwise things will close down; that's our priority. Sometimes we've got to ignore sustainability to get people here. We feel what they [Ecodyfi] are doing is very good, but I find it difficult to marry the two together at times. We are complementary. We're about balance, trade offs, but over there... they've got to do more than get people to cycle (in a sustainability sense) to get people to come to the Dyfi Valley. You're just not going to get people to go and see sustainability in Machynlleth. At the same time you can still come and see the dolphins, sailing, and the beach, and still be part of sustainability (local voluntary sector representative 2003).*

*And sustainable just sort of... well it does make sense, even purely in pragmatic terms, but it was also a way of giving the valley – tourism is very competitive these days, it's up against foreign destinations to start with. Every area is saying, "Come to us, we're the best." It seemed to make sense to capitalise on what we've got here, having had CAT [Centre for Alternative Technology] here for over 25 years now, we have got this image of greenness. And there is a down side to it. It's a bit exclusive, it's a bit elitist, it's a bit hippyish – that's how certain people might see it, and people did. There were some objections to it in the first place. We could be promoting an image that didn't appeal to people – of hippies and drugs, etc. But there's another side to it. CAT are a great deal more sophisticated than they used to be and are bringing in a very middle class clientele and educated clientele. And ideally, they're the sort of visitor we want really (local business representative 2003)*

#### **7.4.5 Management of the partnership**

Half of the group believe that ground rules were clearly established (20:50%), with the others being undecided or disagreeing. As mentioned, it took considerable time to establish the procedures and this is seen to be as a result of the TGA process being at best "a flexible system, open to interpretation by each TGA" and at worst a "very vague" system in which participants "seem to make up the rules as [they] go along" (local business representative 2003). But despite shortcomings in the establishment of ground rules, most of the group feels that they have a sense of fair process (21:70%). However, with the exception of one respondent who is undecided, all group members feel that monitoring will be important to ensure compliance of agreements and effective implementation (32:90%).

Just over half agree that the group has effective leadership (11:60%), with the others remaining undecided. In this case, there seems to be some confusion as to who the leader actually is. Although most see the paid Officer as the leader, there is some consideration about whether the Chair also provides a leadership role. Either way, several see the group as being "cooperatively run" (local voluntary sector representative 2003) and as having "supported leadership" (local business representative 2003), indicating perhaps that the group has an inclination towards operating a relatively flat leadership structure. While slightly more respondents believe that the leader is unbiased (12:50%), those claiming that the leader is biased recognise that bias is an inevitable part of being a stakeholder and that there is no evidence of the leader (whether perceived to be the Chair or the Officer) taking advantage of their position.

Figure 7.26 Reflections on the TGA Officer Post

*One of the major things the steering committee was concerned with was, not only seeing the consultancy went to its full term and did what it was required to do, but also with the aim that somebody should be put in post to act as a coordinator for the TGA fund, which was going to be another expenditure of money. How much would be spent per year on this person and who would that person be and what role would it be? Again, more money was going to be spent on administration. So we've got consultants and a post swallowing up money, for what purpose? Is there not a fund and is it not being administered by somebody? It's being administered by WTB, is it not? Or could it not be administered by the County? Do we really need another person acting as a bureaucrat? What it came down to in the end and what began to turn me off the whole affair, was that endless discussions went on about the role of the consultant, endless discussions went on about who was going to be the officer and how was it going to work, and a large number of people were in the meantime saying, "We've got ideas, we need the money" (local business representative 2003).*

*Yes, it does [cost money] but it's not a lot really (local voluntary sector representative 2003).*

*To actually get any support, help, or whatever is very hard. Really what we needed was an employed person. Someone with some enthusiasm. We've been so lucky with Teresa [the TGA Officer]. I put myself forward as an interviewer and we had some extremely good applicants for the job, even though it was only part time. I've got great faith in Teresa, she's got her head screwed on the right way. I'm sure she'll get out of it what she can for the local area (local business representative 2003)*

It is evident that there are mixed feelings about the TGA officer post, with some being concerned that public money was being used to benefit more administrators ahead of the businesses who needed it. Others believed that the relatively small amount of money required for the post was well worth it (Fig 7.26). Consideration of the amount of work involved in the officer post – organising and administration of the group meetings, communicating with applicants and identifying potential funding partners – and the acknowledged limited resources within the local community, as well as a desire to maintain local ownership, suggests that the post is worthwhile. This is further reinforced by a reflection on the experience of the Aberdyfi Partnership:

*We're doing all kinds of development plans, organising surveys for harbour development etc. Well, we're all part time we don't get paid for it... This [lack of a paid coordinator] is a problem and it's vital with partnerships. Everybody says, "Partnerships, great, get groups of people*

*working together". I'm chairman, unpaid, the vice-chairman, unpaid, development officer unpaid, secretary unpaid. There should be a fund whereby partnerships can come and ask for funding to cover – we all pay our own telephone calls, stamps, mileage. There's nothing for partnerships. It's all right saying, "Great, partnerships". You can get the feedback, but someone's got to coordinate it, make it look professional. They'll never get partnerships being effective – you'll have them run off the back of a cigarette packet. That's the last thing you want (local voluntary sector representative 2003)*

A majority of the group believe that the structure may need to change in order to ensure effective long-term collaboration (31:70%). Some consider that other groups with different knowledge or skills may be invited to join to deal with specific issues that emerge as the process continues. There is a general view that it is necessary to organise smaller working groups (24:80%) and this has already happened. A sub-group has formed to have a preliminary look at individual projects that approach the TGA for information about the application process. With a majority of the group undecided, it does not appear that it is clear who is accountable for outcomes (34:56%). It is argued that as the TGA has no money, then it cannot be accountable (local business representative 2003), but that people will see the TGA steering group as being so (local business representative 2003). The delay in establishing firm guidelines for operation of the group has evidently attributed to this uncertainty (local voluntary sector representative).

Most of the group recognise that participants had different motivations for joining (22:80%) and this appears to be accepted as something to be expected. What seems to be important is that "people have been balanced and focussed" (local business representative 2003) and all do seem to be concerned about the wider interests of the area. It appears that establishing a common agenda was difficult, with half the group claiming so (23:50%) and with some uncertainty remaining about whether a common agenda has actually been established. This seems to be largely as a result of initial uncertainty from WTB about the scheme's delivery mechanisms, some disappointment over lack of revenue-grants, and to a lesser extent, the debates about defining sustainable tourism. Nevertheless, there is agreement that due to the multiple interests of the group, multiple options are considered (25:70%), and further, all agree that hearing different sides of the negotiation helps to find a common basis for agreement (26:100%). Thus beliefs in the benefits of the stakeholder inclusion approach are demonstrated that could lead to the possibility of achieving more appropriate development solutions. There is also evidence to suggest that in this case the group is able to reach agreement and proceed with a cause of action (27:90%), indicating that the group members believe that they are operating fairly successfully in terms of discussing issues and making

decisions. In demonstrating an ability to make decisions, their concerns that they do not have enough decision-making power may carry extra significance.

#### **7.4.6 Power imbalances: decision-making, bureaucracy and access to resources**

Although close, the evidence suggests that in this situation, the TGA process does not give enough decision-making power to the local level (28:55.6%). This is significant as it appears to lead to frustration and may not be judged sustainable according to sustainable tourism principles. Concern is focussed mainly on the retention of decision-making power at the national level, with WTB creating the scheme and its parameters initially and holding the final decision about grants. There is concern expressed within the TGA steering group that the grants for capital development may not suit most tourism businesses, who are more interested in revenue generating projects (local voluntary sector representative 2003). Interestingly, having responsibility for the allocation of public funds is received slightly differently. While all welcome the opportunity to have some influence over how the money should be spent, there are differences in the desired level of involvement they wish to have. Some recognise the important position of national and regional bodies, which may have a better overview of wider needs, and would be cautious of having the final decision-making power.

*There's a limit to what you can do at a local level when you're dealing with money. I've got sympathy there. You're dealing with a lot of money, public money. I think what should be given to us – people at the local level should be able to say we really do support that, and then I accept that's got to go back to Cardiff or somewhere. But the timing should not be so long. We should be able to endorse what we feel is right for this area and have a say on it, but then we don't dole the money out. I'd be against that. If we at the local level prioritise for our area, we could know quickly. We haven't got the knowledge for all Wales so I accept that they (WTB etc) should have some input into it because for all we know they could be doing something similar down the road. But we should be able to prioritise (local voluntary sector representative 2003).*

So, while recognising the benefits of a national overview, the value of local knowledge is still seen as crucial to the development process. However, there are still perceived problems with nationally made decisions. In particular, there is extreme frustration at the levels of bureaucracy and the financial and time costs that distribution normally entails. This leads some to question the behaviour of those responsible for making decisions, raising concerns about

the fear some individuals have over being held accountable, despite working for seemingly powerful organisations.

*Bureaucracy at all levels is hindering development at the moment. They've really got to sort themselves out here. There's too many hoops. There's this fisherman here and they've really messed him about. The money's available and he's missed another season now. I don't think these people realise that decision-making is real life. Every month that went by they wanted budgets and cash flows and it went on and on and on. Don't they realise these people are working? Consultant after consultant was coming. The only people that seem to be making money these days are consultants (local voluntary sector representative 2003).*

*I think when it comes to it, the whole thing has to move a lot quicker. The whole cooperative element needs to be much more adventurous and the whole thing is held back by endless ticking of boxes by officials trying to make sure that nothing ever comes back to them. The last thing they want to be is accountable. And there was a delay in paying out, as far as we were concerned. Initially it was going to be staged payments as the development went on, then they said we've changed the rules on that and we're going to pay you on completion. So on completion we said right where's the money. Then they said it's going to take longer than that. In fact it was some 5 months afterwards. They would come back to you and so, "oh we want this, and then there's that". We'd say, "is that everything now?" "Yes, yes that's everything" and then "oh, there's another thing". It went on endlessly because they were so anxious that something was going to come back to them (local business representative 2003).*

WTB's actions in this matter may have been better received if they had made explicit the grant giving decision-making process because the local steering group remains uncertain how much emphasis will be placed on their considerations. It appears that the lack of clarity over devolvement of decision-making power causes further frustration, and is an aspect of the 'history of unsatisfactory initiatives' evidently being repeated in the TGA scheme:

*I'm never quite sure how much power it does have to be quite honest. It's all very vague. We seem to make up the rules as we go along and never know if we should be doing so. The Town Heritage scheme was the same. WTB and PCC could never agree on what area the scheme was supposed to cover and they just made up the rules as it went along (local business representative 2003).*

And further, as the WTB money is only up to half what will be required, the steering group is ultimately made weaker by a reliance on other sources of funding, whose application procedures may well not be able to incorporate their views anyway.

*Funders hold the whip hand* (local voluntary sector representative 2003).

Within the group, it is also recognised that issues arise as a result of imbalances of power. All steering group members acknowledge that there are more powerful stakeholders in the group (9:100%), and that this power has different sources and is expressed in different ways. Power is seen to come “down to individuals’ skills” in terms of expertise (local business representative 2003) and an ability to argue your point of view, with some being “more vocally powerful” (RTP representative 2003). With the exception of two who are undecided, half of the respondents think that there are dominant group members (10:40%) and the other half do not think that any member dominates. It may not be surprising to discover that it is the small business representatives and the voluntary Aberdyfi Partnership representative, who could accurately be described as ‘weaker’ (resource-poor) members, who believe that there are dominant groups.

## 7.5 Conclusions

This chapter has examined practical attempts to operationalise the principles (and policies) of partnership working and stakeholder participation at the implementation level. This has been achieved by studying a goal focussed, cross-sectoral, multi-level project. In order to learn more about the actual effects of developing improved stakeholder coordination structures, the chapter has drawn on evidence gathered from interviews and a questionnaire designed to help assess the key issues associated with and the effectiveness of the collaboration process. By analysing findings against the suggested development stages and propositions for investigating the application of collaboration theory outlined in Chapter 3 (Jamal & Getz 1995), it is possible to assess the functioning of the stakeholder-based collaboration. Therefore it can be demonstrated that, though there are aspects that can be improved, the Dyfi Valley TGA steering group generally scores highly against the propositions (recognition of interdependence, recognition of benefits, legitimacy, involvement of key groups, facilitation, and shared vision), suggesting that it is a fairly effective collaboration.

The TGA scheme then is about targeting investment in specific areas where potential for tourism growth has been demonstrated. In establishing a bidding process for TGA status, competition is created which encourages people within localities to work together to develop

applications. The process requires that applicants must have a good level of understanding of the local situation, which in conveyance to the national level, helps the national body to develop a good strategic overview of Welsh tourism issues. The steering group members' participation in the TGA scheme, as well as the subsequent involvement of a host of applicants, represents an increased level of local participation in the tourism planning process as a result of the TGA scheme. However, as almost half of the steering group is made up of participants who work for national and regional organisations, and although for the specific project they are thinking and acting locally, it may be right to question to what extent they are seen as 'real' local people, i.e. the local residents and small businesses that find it the hardest to participate in, and are often excluded from, development processes. This may have to be taken into consideration when determining the actual level of 'local participation in the planning process', demanded by sustainable tourism development literature.

Nevertheless, as specific ideas do come from the local level and are considered by what is effectively a panel of local 'experts', it means that development solutions are tailored to specific circumstances, apparently sitting well with the sustainable tourism principle supporting destination specific tourism development. However, it is important to note that the nationally driven TGA scheme has received some criticism because the money that it makes available can only be used for *capital investment* projects. There is some evidence to suggest that there is a desire at the local level for *revenue generating investment* and so the WTB's grants scheme cannot be seen to be wholly in line with the needs of local tourism practitioners, demonstrating perhaps a need for further communication between the national, more powerful, fund holding organisation and the more locally knowledgeable, yet resource constrained stakeholders.

In requiring that TGA designated areas produce a development strategy, the scheme promotes the importance of strategic planning to people at the local level. Apart from the concerns expressed about the number of unimplemented strategy documents existing for the study area, the idea of producing a new strategy has not been challenged by the respondents and so may be considered a valuable exercise by all stakeholders. Compiling a strategy may have a number of benefits. As well as encouraging a more considered approach to tourism destination development, the idea of thinking beyond individual enterprises and locations – placing them in a wider geographical context – is promoted. And perhaps there is a possibility that encouraging strategic planning at the local level will also increase interest in national strategy development.

With its desire to encourage partnership working, the WTB stipulates that the TGA scheme should be delivered by local level steering groups that are made up of a range of different stakeholders. Yet, the initial failure of WTB to provide any firm guidelines for the

establishment and role of the steering groups has been identified as a concern, and while this has meant that the local participants have had to develop a way of working that suits their circumstances in terms of organisation of meetings, it also seems to have cost the group some considerable time and effort to determine how they would operate and exactly what their role in the process would be. And even a year into the scheme, uncertainty still remained about how their views were going to be handled by WTB. For example, the question remained that if the group endorsed a proposed development, could WTB still refuse to fund it? Thus poor communication from the national to local level is exposed that also raises questions about the retention of decision-making power, with WTB presiding over all funding decisions, at least for its 50% share.

In establishing a requirement for WTB grants to be match-funded, the national tourism body is encouraging wider involvement of 'other partners'. Many of these organisations are in command of public money in some form or another and, as shown by the network analysis, evidently have sufficient overlap of development interests to enable them to consider investing in local tourism projects. Although the investigation has not canvassed their views on being 'expected' to contribute, broader understanding of the context for partnership working recognises that many of these publicly funded bodies are being encouraged to work in partnership, being driven in Wales by the Welsh Assembly. The other agencies then, by offering match funding, are evidently able to report partnership practice, although to what extent this is 'genuine' or based solely on the distribution of funds is questionable. Either way, the match-funding element can be seen to weaken the decision-making power of the local steering group, as they cannot directly influence the funding processes of the other partners.

Within the steering group, members generally share many views about its make up, functioning and its impacts. However, it is interesting to note that much of the non-conformity of opinion is expressed by the small business representatives, who generally seem to find it hardest to participate and may have fewer network connections and less influential roles within the tourism planning context. As anticipated, particularly by the regional level stakeholders, the lack of resources, particularly time and money, as well as their presence in less dense networks, do make smaller tourism businesses less powerful and it also makes it difficult for them to organise effective communication structures to enable their wider views to be included. There is a concern that some of the local community is apathetic, but it is difficult to ascertain to what extent this is true above the constraints they face, as well as their mistrust of initiatives as a result of previous negative experiences. It is therefore possible to suggest that 'stakeholder apathy' or non-participation may be at least partly determined by resource availability and past experience. On reflection of stakeholder theory, which seems to assume that stakeholders are queuing up to be involved, it has been revealed that the opposite

can also occur – that due to resource constraints and mistrust, stakeholders cannot or even do not really want to engage in the participation process. Future ambitions to truly develop a stakeholder-based system must therefore concentrate on more ‘actively pursuing’ stakeholder interests if fuller and more genuine participation is to be achieved.

There does however appear to be a belief in partnership working and a strong belief that all stakeholders should be included where possible, despite the difficulties of working in this way. The investigation has revealed the following main challenges of stakeholder participation:

- Establishing a common agenda;
- Managing vested interests;
- Identifying leaders, both within the partnership and in the wider community;
- Overcoming resource constraints.

However, it is because of the ‘stakeholder conviction’ and recognition of the benefits that stakeholders from different interest groups seem willing to collaborate. It has emerged in this investigation that the main benefits of stakeholder collaboration are:

- Reduction of adversarial attitudes;
- Broader consideration of options leading to increased innovation;
- Outcomes that may be more acceptable to the wider community.

However, there currently appears to be a limit to the level of commitment of some groups and a host of restrictions that currently make full, active and fair collaboration a serious challenge.

With the constraints faced by local people on participation in the development process, any investment they make must be seen as a significant commitment and therefore they presumably must have high expectations of reward. The disappointment experienced by many during previous initiatives seems to increase the uncertainty and therefore aversion to becoming involved, especially without immediate evidence of benefits, again demonstrating a more utilitarian (rather than moral) basis of stakeholding. Yet, the belief in involvement of different stakeholder groups and acknowledgement of the actual benefits do make the participation of local people extremely valuable. Indeed, as has been revealed, the enabled consideration of alternative options, which could lead to more appropriate development solutions, makes the involvement of this group essential to the tourism planning process.

Although tensions do clearly exist, the assessment of the Dyfi Valley TGA has revealed that it is a moderately successful partnership. Representing a range of interests, including public, private and voluntary sectors, the steering group generally believe that they have the collective expertise to be able to understand and deal with problems. It is however interesting to note that the only people who think that the group lacks expertise represent

small businesses, with both representatives stating that there is not an adequate “cross section of the community”. Experience of the group and its members reinforces their belief in themselves and it is clear that the group have a very good level of collective knowledge and enthusiasm and is able to generally place the wider interests of tourism and the community at the forefront of discussions. However, the group has encountered ‘vested interests’ difficulties precisely because the group is made of different stakeholder interest groups – another real challenge to the management of views and expectations.

Thus management or coordination of stakeholders to ensure effective collaborations evidently has two key aspects – group leadership and ensuring inclusivity. In this case, the employment of an officer was contentious, although it is widely recognised that partnerships do generate additional tasks that necessitate some administration and coordination and require additional time above each stakeholder’s other daily responsibilities. The TGA steering group seem to have found it difficult to establish a clear leader, which appears to be as a result of each individual’s sensitivities and perhaps desires not to be seen to dominate. Whether or not a leader is necessary will be open to debate, but the case for a facilitator role, along with some mechanisms to incorporate the views of those unable to attend meetings and even promotion of the importance of participating, is more immediately apparent.

The question of whether the involvement of a stakeholder-based steering group is actually helping to deliver more sustainable tourism is a difficult one, though there is some evidence to suggest that there is movement in the right direction. The local focus of the action plan and the suggestion that outcomes will be more socially acceptable as a result are positive indications. That some local stakeholders are getting involved and that a range of organisations is sharing its experiences and resources are also providing benefits that bring ownership and innovation. Yet wider issues about funding decision-making power, apparent lack of local people willing or able to participate, and even unresolved debates within the group about defining and understanding sustainability are all considerations that potentially limit the positive impacts on sustainable tourism development. Interestingly in this study, perhaps a key consideration is the issue of capital versus revenue grants – something that the local steering group had no control over. An assessment of the proposed projects that have been highlighted by the TGA steering group reveals that those seeking revenue grants, rather than capital investment, may lead to more sustainable tourism. The potential revenue based projects that could lead to more sustainable tourism development include: conducting feasibility studies into regeneration; developing cultural and green tourism programmes; improving the local tourism association’s coordinating role; establishing a local food chain initiative; and management of the Biosphere. In considering these proposed projects and identifying potential lead partners and funding sources, the steering group is actually going

beyond its WTB given remit, which was limited to helping raise awareness of the Capital Grants Scheme. It is the type of funding available then that appears to be at least partially inappropriate for delivering increased sustainability. If WTB had developed the TGA scheme in a more consultative fashion, it might have been made more aware of local needs, and therefore the outcomes might have led to a greater level of sustainable tourism development.

## **Chapter 8**

### **Conclusions: Understanding the Role of Stakeholder Participation in Sustainable Tourism Development**

#### **8.1 Introduction**

As has been demonstrated from the review of literature provided in Chapters 2 and 3, and again in the empirical material, there is broad enthusiasm for the adoption of stakeholder participation based practices from the individual organisation level to the whole society level. The terms stakeholder and stakeholding are now in widespread use in the broader organisational management and socio-political literature and practice, as well as more specifically within the tourism field. Given also the apparent link between stakeholding and its anticipated ability to deliver more sustainable forms of development, research into surrounding issues is both timely and important. This thesis has therefore considered existing tourism research that has applied various stakeholder concepts and has studied a number of theories that help to understand their associated issues.

Investigating tourism in Wales between 1999 and 2003, during its period of self-reflection, restructuring and establishment of new policy frameworks and coordination structures, has provided valuable empirical material for considering how the policy and planning system has affected stakeholder participation in tourism development. The study of structures and coordination mechanisms created provides useful insights that contribute to the existing knowledge base about how stakeholders participate throughout the development process. Previous chapters have drawn together conclusions about why and how stakeholder interests should be considered and the benefits and constraints of doing so, as well as progress made in attempts to operationalise greater stakeholder participation in the tourism development process from the national to the local level. As well as contributing to existing knowledge about stakeholding and sustainable tourism development, the other important contributions that this thesis makes are concerned with the development of a stakeholder-focussed theory. In order to determine the effectiveness of these attempts, key findings from the empirical research will be related to the existing literature base.

As a result of the arguably questionable application of stakeholder theory to tourism research thus far and the interesting similarity between the premises of the theory and key principles of sustainable tourism development, the priority has been given to the consideration of this theory's value and limitations. By considering other related organisational theories, the scope for developing a more comprehensive theoretical framework has also been tested through empirical work that has investigated attempts to operationalise improved and more

strategically focussed stakeholder coordination from the national to the local level. This chapter is therefore divided into two main sections. The first section discusses the main empirical findings of the investigation using a theoretically informed analysis. The empirical contribution is threefold:

1. It considers the impact of policy and planning systems on collaborative tourism planning;
2. It explores the relationships between participants in partnerships and the broader web of networks;
3. It touches on governance in a devolved context.

The second section draws together the findings and contributes to the development of theoretical understanding around stakeholder concepts. The theoretical contribution is twofold:

1. It considers the application of stakeholder theory in tourism contexts;
2. It proposes a broader theoretical stakeholder centred framework for assessing the role of stakeholder participation in sustainable tourism development.

## **8.2 The Operationalisation of Stakeholder Participation**

Having investigated how the policy and planning system has affected stakeholder participation in the strategic development of tourism in Wales, this section identifies key factors in the stakeholder participation process as being: recognition of interdependence; resource distribution; and crucially, the development of appropriate coordination structures. It also considers the role of partnerships throughout the process. Prior to this, it is worth reflecting briefly on how the changes made to the policy and planning system in Wales may or may not be intended to contribute towards achieving more sustainable forms of tourism development.

One of the departure points for this thesis was that much of the literature on sustainable tourism development was calling for greater participation of stakeholders. In studying participation in Welsh tourism development, it has been demonstrated that significant efforts are going into the coordination of different stakeholder groups. However, although the aim of making tourism more sustainable is stated in the policy documents, throughout the important institutional design process, there is actually very little reference to the notion of sustainable tourism and how it might be developed. So, it is worth asking how much the restructuring was actually related to the development of sustainable tourism. It could even be surmised that the process was only marginally or even accidentally had anything to do with the development of a more sustainable tourism industry. Analysis reveals that a

major priority for the Assembly is to grow tourism's contribution to GDP. This is at times explicit and at times disguised in phrases that seem to suggest sustainable development, like *sustainable growth*, which is based on a challengeable assumption that economic growth is important for sustainable development. The desire for growth is channelled through the RTPs as it is one of their performance measures and it is writ large at the local level in the *Tourism Growth Areas*.

It is also apparent that the desire for increased stakeholder participation is very much linked to the Assembly's need to develop and deliver policy. While it has been recognised that the Assembly has sought to develop a more inclusive style of decision-making, it is also observed that it is lacking in policy capacity. A number of commentators have pointed out that devolution exposed the paucity of policy development capacity within Welsh government (Deacon 2002; Webb 1999). This shortcoming has partly driven its need to engage with external expertise and so it appears that the restructuring of tourism Wales – the creation and strengthening of communication channels – may have at least as much to do with addressing these factors than an overt concern for making tourism more sustainable. Thus, in studying stakeholder participation in tourism development, it has been impossible not to consider wider issues of democracy and therefore governance. As Warren (1992) has observed, in what he terms 'expansive democracy', increased participation, either by means of small-scale direct democracy or through strong linkages between citizens and broad-scale institutions, has pushed democracy beyond its traditional political spheres by relating decision-making to the persons who are affected. The investigation therefore provides a fairly unique case study of governance in a devolved context, particularly because of the make-up of the tourism industry. Tourism is not what one would necessarily identify as a public service – the focus of much governance focussed work – and being made up as it is in Wales, predominantly of small isolated private sector organisations, analysis of government led attempts to coordinate and influence the direction of them is particularly interesting. Overall, the restructuring process and the subsequent 'bonfire of the quangos', paint a picture of a governing body which is continually attempting to shape its environment. This creates an unsettled context to which stakeholders have to adapt and to gives the impression that it is overly concerned with defining its own role, to the frustration of many.

### **8.2.1 Recognition of interdependence**

In answering the question about how stakeholder participation may be operationalised, the evidence provided here suggests that raising awareness of each stakeholder's recognition of their interdependence is a key requisite. Though few would evidently argue against there

being an ethical basis for improving stakeholder participation, there is stronger evidence to support a more pragmatic dependency-based motivation, as would be suggested by collaboration and interorganisational coordination theories. Increased awareness of interdependence is also seen as key feature of policymaking and politics in what Castells (1996) calls the 'network society'. Importantly, raising awareness of interdependence motivates organisations by encouraging recognition of each other's strengths and limitations. In Wales, the widespread recognition of interdependence was primarily achieved through a 'crisis of uncoordination' and the process that eventually led to restructuring. Faced with a faltering system and further influenced by experiences of the Foot and Mouth disease outbreak, key participants across sectors and spatial levels clearly recognised their interdependence and resource dependency, and therefore a need to improve coordination between different parties. In getting across the message about recognising interdependence, key factors identified in the literature are concerned with raising awareness of the importance of the different social, cultural, environmental and economic dimensions of sustainable development, as well as reflection on the arguably detrimental cultures of competition and individualism, though there is little evidence of that having taken place in Wales. The evident lost sense of community and 'tribal nature' of some groups, exposed by the empirical material, however, reflect some of the negative aspects of recent progress that are beginning to be addressed as part the enthusiasm for more connected working is growing.

As identified, the recognition of stakeholder interdependence is enshrined in the variety of policy and strategy documents that exists. Therefore the policy context, including the provision of funds to encourage partnership working, is also an important motivating factor for different groups to work together. These documents frequently describe the benefits of working in partnership, often highlighting successful examples and therefore propagating the importance of recognising interdependence and helping to generate a culture of partnership to replace the lost sense of community. However, as has been demonstrated, these documents tend not to reflect on the ethical basis for stakeholder participation, though they are at least normative in the sense of stating that this approach *must* be adopted in order to achieve more successful tourism development. A question therefore rises about whether the pragmatic basis for stakeholder participation evidenced here is strong enough for ensuring that the necessary steps are taken to fully engage with an appropriate range of stakeholders. Given that more could be done, particularly at the local level, to facilitate greater participation, and that it might be possible to argue, on pragmatic grounds, that it is too difficult to take those necessary steps, a clearly stated normative argument for stakeholder participation would be stronger.

### 8.2.2 Resources

One of the causes of interdependence within Welsh tourism is the availability (or scarcity) of resources and this research has revealed a very strong pragmatic motivation for stakeholder participation based on awareness of resource dependency, which reinforces the widely held belief that improving stakeholder coordination will yield additional benefits. The issue of resource distribution has several features and exposes certain tensions. At one level the sustainable tourism development process can be seen to be concerned with the efficient use of resources (Timothy 1998). In a 'national to local tourism system' the distribution of resources can be outlined as follows. There are a relatively small number of national level and to some extent also regional organisations that have public funds to invest in strategic development and dedicated staff resources to distribute them. At the local level there are thousands of organisations with few financial resources and limited capacity (lack of time, skills, and/or interest) to get involved in strategic development, but who are seen to have valuable knowledge about the local context and who are actually at the "coal face" delivering the product. From a sustainable tourism development perspective, there is a strong argument that says the local people have the best knowledge about the needs of their communities and therefore how the money might best be spent. However, the fund distributing organisations obviously need to be accountable for the expenditure of public funds and so systems for accountability must be a natural part of the process. Part of the accountability process, as demonstrated by the TGA scheme is concerned with the delivery of strategic goals: local areas can obtain funding if their plans help to meet the broader strategic needs of tourism development. But there is something of a paradox here. If local people do not get involved in the broader level strategy development process and their views are not therefore considered in drawing up that strategy, it is conceivable that the strategy will not accurately identify their development needs. How then could they genuinely apply for funding when the criteria may be based only on the views of those better-resourced groups that participated in the process?

Therefore, a central concern for operationalising stakeholder participation is how to maximise the effectiveness of redistributing these resources. As will be considered further, the establishment of improved coordination structures is an important part of addressing this concern. However, tensions arise at the local level when they see public money trickling down to them and they perceive that much of it gets absorbed in layers of bureaucracy before it reaches the communities that need it. Frustrations have also developed because local communities have witnessed a series of failed nationally driven initiatives, which they believe to be as a result of inadequate consultation. Of course, the fund distributing organisations are bound to being accountable for allocation of resources, which causes some of the perceived

'inefficiency'. It is unlikely that anyone would dispute the need for accountability, but careful consideration of processes in order to make them as streamlined as possible will doubtlessly be important. The development of new initiatives like the TGA scheme, though not perfect and may be even arguably less temporally efficient, does give some important, if limited, local ownership over the decision-making process connected with the distribution of public funds. Financial incentives are therefore an important way in which organisations attempt to guide others towards the achievement of strategic goals, as well as also encouraging different organisations to work together – the 'carrot approach'.

Tourism research has thus far indicated that raising the capacities of local stakeholders is necessary to ensure effective participation (Healey 1997). Lack of technical knowledge or skills, or even confidence and an ability to express themselves have previously been recognised as important areas where capacity building is required (Carroll 1993; Innes 1995). In Wales, much the same is evident and at the local level, for example, it was revealed that there was a shortage of people who could actually write the necessary language to complete the application form for TGA status. Here, other key capacity related factors have been identified, with the lack of time being a major barrier to participation in local development processes. It is recognised by representatives at all levels that people running small businesses are often too busy to get involved, even in less participative parts of the development process. Therefore a key conclusion is that stakeholder participation in sustainable tourism development processes is linked to what might be termed 'stakeholder capacity'. Intriguingly, much stakeholder literature seems to assume that one of the challenges of stakeholder management is dealing with a potentially overwhelming number of voices. However, it has been identified here that though this can pose challenges, it is also as likely that in some situations 'stakeholder silence' – a lack of sufficient participation from key groups – could be a similar problem. Given that the lack of time to participate in even the most basic aspects of the development process is such a barrier, it is hard to imagine how certain stakeholders might be able to engage in, by definition, time consuming, partnership processes.

Evidently the national organisations like the WTB are making efforts to be more accessible by, for example, holding open Board meetings at the regional levels. These however are not well attended and go nowhere near addressing local capacity building needs. The TGA scheme provides more of a focus for local stakeholders to participate, though there is still concern that important stakeholders are not getting involved. This appears to be largely linked to lack of time, but another part of the capacity shortfall could be explained as being created by a lack of interest in more strategic planning or, less benignly, the presence of mistrust in and distaste for "oh no, not another initiative" (local business representative 2003), fuelled significantly by historic relationships turned sour. Stakeholder silence then, may not just be as

a result of a lack of capacity to participate, but could also be as a result of negative past experiences of participation or disapproval with or even misunderstanding about a particular scheme. Stakeholders participate if they can see some benefit to themselves and they *need* to see good things happening before getting involved. This is understandable given their resource constraints, yet creates a 'Catch 22' situation for tourism developers. Those organisations responsible for coordination must therefore make efforts to be aware of why particular groups are not engaging and attempt to address those concerns. Until these complex contextual issues are resolved, there is a possibility that local stakeholder participation in nationally driven schemes will remain low. Locally developed, 'bottom-up' partnerships like the Aberdyfi Partnership however, demonstrate that the initiative of a small but influential group of community members can affect positive change in their location. Such local initiatives though, are also limited in their capacity as they may be run entirely by volunteers and find it difficult to access funds to cover even basic administrative costs and member expenses.

It is difficult to ascertain exactly whether or how these capacity constraints can be overcome, but an ability to identify and support successful, locally driven partnerships or less formal arrangements like communication networks, which appear to be under-developed locally, would be a valuable asset to the tourism development process. It is anticipated that, particularly with a greater regional focus and the increasing network density of the new structures, greater national level awareness of popular local initiatives might be facilitated. The research has also indicated that the funding of local stakeholder coordinators and provision of funds to cover core costs would be very positive steps. The coordinators would have to be very pro-active in gathering stakeholder views and in encouraging and supporting participation. There would be strong arguments for these coordinators to come from the local community, though there may also be arguments in support of having a neutral party and they would certainly have to be skilled facilitators. It would clearly be crucial for these coordinators to link in with existing communication networks. There is evidence to suggest that there would also be some opposition to public funds being allocated in this way as it might be seen as yet another layer before money reaches the community, though this appears to be a minority view. To some extent, the role of 'local stakeholder coordinator' is already being operationalised through the existence of the local tourism associations and other voluntary sector organisations like Ecodyfi, so the creation of new positions is not necessarily essential. As has been demonstrated, the RTPs have recognised the importance of this role and are providing additional resources to the tourism associations in order to strengthen their capacities to participate in the planning system and gather the views of their stakeholders. Similarly new tourism associations are forming, like the one in the Dyfi Valley, although here as elsewhere, limited resources are a real challenge, strengthening the case for these

organisations to be adequately funded. Though stakeholder participation at the local level appears to require additional funding to make it more effective, this can be seen as an investment in an important aspect of sustainable development, as it has been argued that social capital can be built through participation in decision-making (Murphy 2002).

### **8.2.3 Development of coordination structures**

The challenges of networking many thousands of small tourism businesses in a complex “stakeholder system” has been recognised as “an insurmountable challenge to business” (Robson & Robson 1996:540), though until now there has been little investigation of how this can be done within a national to local tourism system. Robson and Robson’s important consideration of the challenge perhaps overlooks the role of non-business organisations in the networking or coordination process, which have been identified here as fundamental elements. With such an overwhelming number of potential stakeholders and the transfer of information and other resources between the national and local levels a key issue, the existence of coordinating organisations at all levels, which act as representative bodies, appears to be crucial in order to make the handling of communications manageable. This effectively means that in most situations, for stakeholders to have a voice and to be connected into the network, they must have some kind of organisational representation. While this brings with it the benefit of increasing the legitimacy of the those views and improves the efficiency of communication, the need for organisational representation may in some cases be seen as a barrier to participation, especially where no organisation exists that represents a particular stakeholder’s views and resources to form such an organisation may be limited.

Thus, a major finding of this investigation is that stakeholder participation is highly related to the effective development of coordination structures and the wider networks in which they are located. Who controls the development of the structures and how effective they are will therefore be important factors in overall levels of stakeholder participation. A wide variety of structures have been identified at all levels and these are created by a diverse range of groups. The structures are weaker at the local level, where capacities for coordination are more limited and the benefits of scale economies cannot be gained. There are a number of strong national coordinating bodies like the Wales Association of Visitor Attractions, but the structures in Wales are growing in strength at the regional level, which is becoming an important focus for strategic development and the coordination of stakeholders. Greater cross-sectoral (public, private, and voluntary), as well as vertical and horizontal integration has therefore been achieved by developing coordination structures like the RTPs and the TGA steering groups, which bring together the different sectors at different spatial levels. This helps

to address the recognised sustainable tourism development principle of integration (e.g. Wall 1993). In fact, the TGA scheme importantly helps to locate bottom-up development and partnership based procedures within “strategic policy frameworks” (Marsden 1998:169). However, despite the creation of better coordination structures, the issue exposed about a local need for revenue generating (rather than capital development) funding sources, amongst other, suggests that some questions still remain about the effectiveness of the bottom-up element for conveying its issues and requirements.

Nevertheless, the evidence provided here therefore builds confidence on Jamal & Getz’s (1995:200) tentative suggestion that “collaboration... might also be suitable for coordinating regional-level planning of tourism resources and destinations”. Both the regional and sub-regional levels appear to be growing in importance for coordination and as strategic focal points, and coordinating organisations operating at these levels appear to be more able to draw involvement of participants, particularly as they appear to have more relevance to their needs. The design of the RTPs appears to be fit for purpose and bringing the local authorities and the private sector representatives together in this way seems to be a good way of encouraging cross-sectoral communications and linking the national, regional and sub-regional levels. However, there still remains a question mark over security and uncertainty over levels of funding for the RTPs and given their key role this ought to be addressed. Also, their formation was to some extent externally mandated, which caused some initial discomfort for the participants as there was a feeling of having been forced together. The RTPs could be seen to represent a new form of governance involving “the devolution of authority to subordinate levels of territorial organisation and the development of transnational but inter-local policy making” (Jessop 1997:301).

Interestingly, the issue of how the meta-structure was created raises considerations about the role of leaders in a stakeholder based system and connected to it the question of accountability. While it is widely recognised that stakeholders have a right to a view, there appears to be little understanding about how that view should be treated. In a business management setting the focal organisation rightly or wrongly maintains its management authority, but in the wider implementation of stakeholder concepts like in tourism development, where the broadly interpreted objective is to work for the ‘greater good’ of the participants, the issue about what gives particular organisations authority over others is more complicated. Though processes are consultative, the government and its sponsored agency clearly exercise ultimate power over the strategic development of tourism in Wales through the formulation of policies, creation of coordination structures and distribution of grants, which help to communicate its policy intentions down to the local level, as well as begin to improve upward communication from local stakeholders. The question of accountability can

be considered from a social network perspective, which would suggest that actors in densely packed clusters are held accountable by their participants. If this were so, it would indicate that the majority of participants were adequately satisfied with the direction taken (assuming the policy community could be described as a relatively dense cluster), or alternatively that the cluster was not dense enough to hold the decision makers to account. Either way, ongoing efforts to improve coordination and develop partnerships will have the effect of creating more connected, denser networks, which may help to improve accountability across the tourism system.

The institutional design process, led by the Assembly Government, could be interpreted as being a form of metagovernance. As Murdoch and Ward (1997) have noted, metagovernance is controlled by the institutions that set the parameters for participation and is therefore hierarchical (top-down, or *vertical*, rather than *horizontal*, or spatially decentred). Others have also observed that, "The new vocabulary of governance rides the back of new political strategies of cooperation" (Hajer & Wagenaar 2003:4). Thus, the question arises as to whether the coordination attempts are a result of a genuine concern for increased stakeholder participation. Whereas bottom-up strategies that seek to involve local actors and their knowledges have been seen as a potential area for individual empowerment from state structures (e.g. Herbert-Cheshire 2000), others have observed, as is the case here, that community action and local involvement is often mediated and implemented by local and regional agencies (MacKinnon 2002:5) and so there is a tension between 'empowerment' and 'managerial technologies' or controls. The lack of certainty, for instance, about what the actual level of decision-making power the local level partnership had, and the limited and restricted resources that were passed down to it, indicates that this more critical interpretation about the development of the TGA scheme might be relevant. Failure to consider a normative framework for involvement may lead to a greater risk that the latter is more likely to be a reality.

The governance framework appears to offer a valuable lens with which to look at this investigation's findings, where recognition of "interdependence between organisations, [and] a continuity of interactions caused by the need to exchange resources and to negotiate shared purposes" (Rhodes 1996:660) exists. It has already been stated that the RTPs represent a case study of interorganisational coordination. The same could be said about them from a governance perspective. Their make up is certainly a blurring of boundaries (Stoker 1998) between the public and private sectors. Further, they are clear examples of how organisations attempt to steer others with a variety of incentives, particularly the use of funding, to influence behaviour. Just as Rhodes (2003) has suggested, in the Welsh context the government has a limited direct controlling role, having instead helped to establish the framework for actor

engagement in the restructuring process. Consequently, the non-government actors have an increased role in decision-making. Looking further at the findings with a governance gaze, it can be suggested that the tight network of the Inner Core group (or policy community) could, to a significant degree supplant the authority of government, particularly in terms of its greater capacity to develop and help deliver policy.

Whereas much of the multi-level governance literature is set in EU contexts across relatively larger spatial levels, in applying the concepts to the devolved Welsh context and at national, regional and local levels, many of the ideas still seem relevant. This reinforces some of Bache and Flinders' (2004) research in relation to British politics, particularly their argument that the processes of devolution and decentralisation have strengthened the significance of the multi-level aspect of governance within the British state. The behaviour of the Assembly Government is characteristic of the new role of the state as considered by the multi-level governance concept, i.e. new coordination strategies, steering and promotion of networking, or in this case partnership working, which has the effect of increasing networking. In Wales, the attempts to decentralise (Oliveira 2002) decision-making has had some benefits with the growth in importance of the regional level in particular helping to improve coordination. Though there are a number of concerns about the local level initiative, at least a space has been created for debate (Wearing & Huyskens 2001). Nevertheless, the evidence here suggests that there are still some clinging to power and though it is improved, there remains an insufficient flow of resources to the local level.

At all levels, the existing coordination structures link the networks in which they are located, both formally and informally. Though the new structures are strengthening the number of formal connections, some of the densest network clusters appear to be based on informal connections, typified by the 'usual suspects'. From a network perspective, this group could therefore be seen as the most powerful. Often the knowledge and skills of this 'central' group are important assets of the overall system, and as Roberts & Simpson (2000) recognise, partnerships depend on motivations and personalities of key peoples as much as they do on formal structures. However, the ability of these people to influence policy and affect implementation requires careful monitoring to ensure that its influence remains positive. The dense part of the overall network in which they are located and the strong ties within that part would serve to some extent to ensure that acceptable action was maintained. However, it remains important for other groups just outside, but still connected to, this central social set to ensure their accountability. Similarly, the national and regional organisations could be seen as being more powerful from a resource dependency based perspective, as they have more resources. However, there is recognition by some within those organisations that unless they can actually contact and influence practitioners they could also be seen as virtually powerless.

And further, as Cloke et al. (2000) note, the key role of government has been reduced to one of seeking to coordinate or manage policy networks through facilitation and negotiation (Cloke et al. 2000). This problematises the privileging of actors within a network, and questions what the agency of actors should be if they do actually hold a privileged position (Rhodes 1997). A range of factors influences the participants in partnerships; close network ties and close relationships between certain participants may mean that they can be steered to suit their objectives or vested interests.

The social network perspective also suggests that denser, more connected networks ensure the circulation of institutional norms. This can be important for generating shared behavioural expectations and affecting cultural change. In Wales, the evidence suggests that the cultures of stakeholding and partnership are becoming increasingly established at all levels, indicating both the existence of relatively strong network connections and that the development of the structures is having some success, at least as far as communicating and institutionalising this 'behavioural constraint'. Thus, the development of strong network connections might also be valuable for institutionalising more sustainable forms of development. This would assume that the core groups had developed a suitable understanding of what more sustainable tourism development would mean. Alternatively this understanding could come from previously unconnected groups (Burt 1992), now being brought more into the system through investment in coordination structures.

As demonstrated by the range of coordination structures identified, stakeholders do participate in many other types of collective organisation and the over-emphasis on partnership working means that importance and value of these other ways may be overlooked. It also appears that there is little networking going on between local stakeholders, even within their own interest group, which essentially means that there are fewer opportunities for exchanging information and learning from each other, as well as for sharing resources. It has been identified that in order to lend legitimacy to a stakeholder's views, it is necessary for there to be some kind of representative organisation. In an environment where partnerships are the favoured structure, given the challenges of developing partnerships, is the bar too high for local stakeholders to even begin to participate in the development process? The TGA studied here had already been successful in that it had won TGA status. Doing this required extra resources provided by a voluntary community development organisation, without which the group would probably not have even been able to apply. This raises a question about all those groups that failed to win TGA status and it might be considered that these groups, who may have been less able to coordinate their actions, may be even more in need of the increased focus on development that the scheme brought.

As stakeholder participation has become connected with stakeholder coordination, it also appears to have become closely linked with partnership working, at least within the policy community.

*What you call stakeholder participation, we call partnership. They're the same thing really*  
(Policy Officer, WTB 2003).

There is certainly much enthusiasm for the approach and some evidence of benefits. Partnership seems to, or at least has more potential to, work better at the national and regional levels, where resources for this way of working are more plentiful. Nevertheless, it is recognised as a lengthy, expensive, formal process, which may be over concerned with representation. It is particularly difficult for stakeholders to work in partnership at the local level, where resources are fewer, especially in terms of time and perhaps also skills. The limited resources of some stakeholders means that even when they do participate in partnerships, they do not do so on an equal basis and there is a risk that particular groups will dominate. Partnerships can highlight or entrench inequalities, which may even mean that they represent a more passive form of participation for some than they ought to, as the less influential may be forced to 'take the back seat'. It is therefore worth asking whether the partnership agenda really does meet the participation principles of sustainable tourism development or even the inclusivity ambitions of the Assembly. Some have critically suggested that the top-down creation of partnerships may be intended to "pacify, more than deliver" (Kelsey 2002:84). Others have suggested that "local partnerships are [not] a return to social democracy... Instead they can be usefully understood as an integral part of a new form of social governance that attempts to send globally legitimate signals about social stability and inclusivity, while urging active orientation to and participation to these fields and local subjects" (Larner & Craig 2002:2). Certainly the top-driven partnerships may be too prescriptive and have the potential to limit creativity.

So, it is evident that much effort has been given to the development of coordination structures and that these structures are created from a pragmatic rather than ethical basis, which may impact on their reach. There still remains too little support and guidance for partnerships at the implementation level, which might raise a question about whether stakeholder participation is seen as an end in itself (i.e. as a strategy goal or funding requirement) or whether there is actually genuine concern for stakeholders and a commitment to raising their capacities to participate. There remains a need for people to learn to work together effectively and they must overcome past tensions and power inequalities in order to turn the ideals of policy into a positive culture of collaborative working.

### **8.3 Theoretical Implications for future Sustainable Tourism Development Research**

The literature review provided in this thesis identified that there is some similarity between sustainable tourism development principles and the two different interpretations of stakeholder theory, from the strong normative statements about why stakeholders should be involved in decision-making to the instrumental belief that greater benefits will be accrued from doing so. While the normative aspect of the theory makes it distinct, its analytical tools are not strong meaning that it needed some development for it to be of greater value. The multiple facets and levels of stakeholding have required a broader theoretical framework to aid in the analysis of the empirical material. This section reviews the framework developed here.

#### **8.3.1 The locus of control: micro-level stakeholder management *vis a vis* meta-level stakeholder coordination**

As organisational stakeholder theory is mainly concerned with the management of stakeholders, for it to be accurately applied in sustainable tourism development contexts, one of the main considerations to address is the question of who manages the stakeholders in a broader interpretation of the theory? From an organisational ethics perspective of stakeholding, the firm is seen as the locus of control (Fig 8.1). This focal organisation could therefore be described as a micro-level coordination structure in which various groups have a stake. The firm is seen as the manager of its stakeholders, so any processes considered by the theory lie within the boundaries of the firm's management capabilities. Stakeholder theory has been transposed into sustainable tourism development contexts as if sustainable tourism development was something that participants could have a stake in, perhaps representing (if crudely for the sake of illustration) the different aspects of sustainable development – an arguably justifiable supposition (Fig 8.2). Yet, those preferring a narrower interpretation of the theory would probably argue that it is not relevant beyond the scope of micro-level relationships (Donaldson & Preston 1995; Phillips 2003). However, that a significant number of authors see the appeal of favouring a broader interpretation perhaps lends some legitimacy to at least exploring the possibilities. The empirical evidence provided here, which suggests a clear need for the coordination of stakeholders at all levels, further justifies the importance of exploring this aspect.

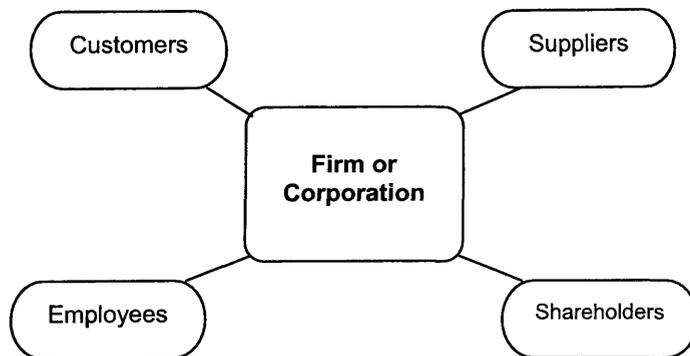


Figure 8.1 Freeman's Stakeholder theory of the firm

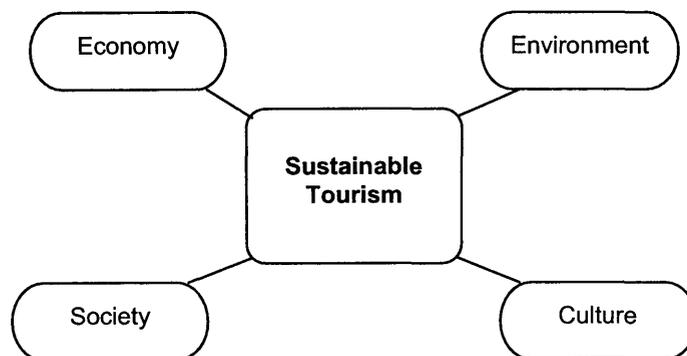


Figure 8.2 Stakeholder Map for Sustainable Tourism

While it may be conceptually easier to identify a firm with its inherent management functions as central and as the manager of its stakeholders, it is perhaps more difficult to identify any one tourism organisation as being the 'locus of control' in a system in which everyone has a stake in sustainable tourism development. As has been considered, tourism is frequently described as fragmented industry where many small operators act independently and often have little direct communication with each other. At the meta-level, it is questionable then as to whether there is a rigorous overall management function that could ensure the incorporation of stakeholder views, at least as far as could explained by a narrow interpretation of stakeholder theory. Even at the individual business or micro-level, while conceptually comparable with the theory's original interpretation, the question still remains as to whether the premises of the theory would apply to the many small tourism businesses that have limited capacities. An interesting peculiarity in considering stakeholder theory in relation to tourism in Wales is the level of power exercised by private sector organisations. Stakeholder theory assumes that the firm is a powerful organisation with management capabilities. Conversely however, in Welsh tourism most of the tourism businesses are small. Here these businesses find it difficult to represent their own interests, let alone act as managers of their stakeholders.

However, to say that there is no meta-level management is not entirely accurate. As the empirical material has demonstrated, all tourism operations are to some extent guided by the meta-level policy frameworks and network structures within which they exist. Within these frameworks, and arguably better described by a structuration theory of interorganisational coordination (introduced in Chapter 3 and applied in Chapter 7), a host of meso- and micro-level structures operate that all serve to coordinate stakeholders in a variety of ways. At the national and regional levels, the WTB, the National Assembly and the RTPs, for example, all attempt to 'manage' other organisations towards the achievement of strategic objectives. Here a question might be asked about the distinction between 'management' and 'coordination'. It might be considered that stakeholder theory is concerned with the management of stakeholders in the same way that a firm manages its employees. On the other hand, the partnership approach evident in Welsh tourism could be seen to reflect what could perhaps be more accurately described as 'stakeholder coordination' – encouraging and facilitating stakeholder participation and interaction. Organisations like the RTPs certainly see themselves as having this function and in fact they are given legitimacy to act in this way by both the policy framework and the integral participation of the public and private sectors. In effect then, there are multiple loci of control within the national tourism system. For sustainable tourism development then, stakeholder management goes beyond the micro-level, which is arguably too narrow on its own for the consideration of more sustainable development solutions anyway, and is therefore more about the development of coordination structures, which, as has been demonstrated, importantly help to integrate organisations both vertically and horizontally.

Unlike in the narrower interpretation of stakeholder theory, where questions of legitimacy are generally concerned with what constitutes a legitimate stake in the interests of a focal organisation, in this context the question of legitimacy is turned around such that the ability of coordinating entities to influence or represent other stakeholders depends on a range of factors that give them legitimacy to do so (e.g. access to resources and network centrality/density). And unlike stakeholder theory, those focal organisations are not coordinating stakeholders for their own benefit, but for the wider interests of those stakeholders and the whole system. Similarly, questions of stakeholder identification contested by stakeholder theorists are also inverted in the tourism system. Whereas under stakeholder theory identification is seen as a function of the stakeholder management process, while this remains the same to some extent, as the policy community have made significant efforts to consider the variety of stakeholder groups, to a large extent stakeholders are self-selecting, choosing whether or not to participate in development processes or join their representative bodies. In practice, this effectively overcomes concerns held about the bias of a single focal

organisation selecting its own stakeholders. That stakeholders are identified at all levels and by a wide range of organisations, not just by one focal organisation, also mitigates any questions of bias in the selection of stakeholders.

### **8.3.2 Dyadic relationships *vis a vis* spheres of influence/networks of delivery**

It could be recognised that the intended micro-level focus of stakeholder theory leads it to focus narrowly on the two-way relationships between a focal organisation and its stakeholders. This has been recognised as a significant limitation by some tourism researchers (e.g. Hardy & Beeton 2001), as well as by certain organisational theorists who have recognised the theory's failure to acknowledge the wider network of stakeholder influences (Rowley 1997). The focus on two-way relationships considered by stakeholder theory is further called into question by the empirical evidence of this investigation, which highlights the importance and influence of networks on stakeholder relations, especially when considering a national tourism system.

As Rowley (1997) has considered, social network constructs of density and centrality appear to more accurately consider the structural influences on stakeholder relationships and their abilities. Despite stakeholder theory's premise that no set of views is assumed to dominate, the theory's failure to account for the existence of networks overlooks the impact of structures on levels of decision-making power and access to information and other resources. Stakeholder theory appears to assume some kind of equality, but in reality differences in access to resources and strength of network connections mean that equality remains an ideal, which seems to be better understood from the other organisational theories considered here. Having categorised several spheres of influence, it is evident that more central parts of the network with stronger ties (clusters) have more influence on decision-making. However, it is anticipated that the new coordination structures will increase the density of the overall network, which will enable stakeholders to 'constrain' the behaviour of more powerful organisations. In this study, there actually appears to be less concern about the actions of the more central organisations and individuals than might be anticipated. While the existence of those recognised as being the 'usual suspects' might be considered bad in participative terms (in the sense that they have significant levels of influence at the strategic level), their experience can also be seen as an asset to the overall system. Other central organisations include the range of representative (usually membership) bodies that exist to represent the views of their members and are given the mandate to do so by their members.

### **8.3.3 A sense of perspective: influence of the political economy interpretation**

There are two ways stakeholder theory might be used and adapted to work in the wider meta-level setting of sustainable tourism development. It could be recognised that throughout the meta-level system, micro-level interactions are occurring and organisational stakeholder theory could be applied with no modification in those multiple situations. Alternatively some broadening would have to be accepted in order to enable its use at the meta-level. Interestingly, consideration of the alternative stakeholder perspective provided by the political economy interpretation might help to develop this broadening. Given particularly its meta-level consideration of the importance of networks of delivery, it might be recognised that the theory of a stakeholder society more accurately reflects the needs of sustainable tourism development research than organisational stakeholder theory, though no previous tourism research has clearly acknowledged this alternative theoretical branch.

The empirical evidence provided by this study identifies involvement of the public sector, a process of decentralisation (regionalisation and localisation) and the development of networks. Given that the partnership agenda in Wales is so closely linked to the National Assembly, which has clearly influenced the structure of tourism communications and is attempting to institutionalise the idea of partnerships of stakeholders, it could be recognised that sustainable tourism development, at least in Wales, is more closely aligned with the political economy perspective of stakeholding, as it too recognises the need for less centralised management structures. From the alternative stakeholder perspective, individual autonomy is emphasised, along with the importance of the need for developing networks of delivery, and the state is seen as an 'enabler'. In Wales, as in the New Labour vision outlined in Chapter 3, it is evident that the 'state' does see itself in this role, creating and regulating the frameworks within which agencies and organisations collaborate. However, it appears that expecting individual autonomy to deliver is insufficient for motivating and engaging stakeholders and that a clear need and desire to coordinate stakeholders has been demonstrated by the empirical material. As the focus on management capabilities is an important aspect of organisational stakeholder theory, then the recognition of the need to coordinate stakeholders should also be an important part of a broadened theory. Another area of similarity between the political economy perspective of stakeholding and the evidence here is the question of what interest groups have a stake in: having a stake in sustainable tourism development is more comparable to having a stake in society than in an individual focal organisation.

### 8.3.4 Normative justificatory framework: developing a normative basis of decision-making for achieving more sustainable development outcomes

Chapter 3 introduced the notion of a satisfactory normative justificatory framework for involving stakeholders in decision-making from stakeholder theory's organisational ethics perspective. It was recognised that although a normative framework could be considered to be the most important aspect of the theory, the exact nature of that framework is still a contested issue. As the empirical material here has revealed, there appears to have been little reflection amongst tourism development participants about exactly what the basis is on which stakeholders are involved. While this does not seem to have an immediate negative impact, as the problem of bias in the stakeholder selection process existing when there is a single locus of control is not such a significant issue in the sustainable tourism development context (as previously discussed), it is apparent that more importantly it would be beneficial if some consideration was given to the *basis on which decisions were actually made*. Though this issue is relevant throughout the whole system, it was highlighted particularly at the implementation level where the participation process was explored in more detail. This issue raises the question about whether it might be possible to develop such a decision-making basis through a theoretical normative framework in order to make more sustainable decisions.

In its organisational management form, stakeholder theory claims that the organisation will benefit from involving its stakeholders and that stakeholders have a stake in the organisation's success. Previously it appears to have been considered that stakeholders participate on the basis that they have a particular interest and knowledge about a relevant aspect of the issue in question. Traditionally then, it could be interpreted that stakeholders would endeavour to achieve the best possible outcome for their interest. This could understandably lead to conflict and perhaps even irreconcilable differences between stakeholders, especially if stakeholders believe that they only have a stake in their individual benefits. Therefore the negotiation and decision-making process is fundamental to the delivery of outcomes. A key question to consider to aid in the decision-making process that may be all too easily overlooked, or even interpreted differently by the participants, is just what is it that stakeholders have a stake in?

Given the importance of recognising interdependence, stakeholders should be seen as not just representatives of a particular view, but as part of a more complex system in which their immediate or prime concerns may become subsidiary to the system's ongoing success and in which they must potentially yield some (perhaps short term) benefit to themselves for the 'greater good'. Here it might be worth recalling Argandoña's development of the theory of the common good in relation to stakeholder theory, discussed in Chapter 3. As the theory of

the common good has been discussed as a potential justificatory framework for stakeholder theory, its contribution to the consideration of a normative framework for decision-making is valuable as it develops the argument for the need for stakeholders to act in the wider interests of the 'society' in which they are located.

*The theory of the common good offers a sufficiently solid basis for the theory of stakeholders, and also the means for determining, in each specific case, the rights and duties of the participants, in accordance with the common good of the company, of the particular 'society' it has with its stakeholders, and of society as a whole (Argandoña 1998:1100).*

As well as creating the necessary communication structures to develop network connections, by establishing a framework in which stakeholders recognise that they have a stake in sustainable tourism development (Fig 8.2), rather than in furthering their own interests or in the success of a focal organisation, the possibility of making more sustainable decisions may be realised. Developing explicit consideration of each stakeholder's interdependence, which is already beginning to occur, will strengthen this framework. The normative framework for achieving this would be improved by considering and adopting the range of sustainable tourism development principles explored in Chapter 2 and these would form the basis by which competing interests are dealt with and decisions made. However, as the local level case study has demonstrated, even in what was a relatively successful local partnership, the risks of facing vested interests and difficulties in even agreeing what constitutes more sustainable forms of development are serious challenges.

Ultimately, more sustainable decision-making requires individuals to be highly reflexive about representing their stake and for them to recognise that what is best for themselves is what is best for everyone. It requires the broadening of experiences and knowledge of all stakeholders as well as raising capacities to participate equitably in complex decision-making processes. Only by understanding the 'bigger picture' or reflecting on the 'common good' and by making stakeholders aware of the wider organisational interests can decision-making really be successful. Perhaps this is something that will develop over time as the coordination structures implemented continue to bring the different groups together, collective knowledge develops and consensus can be built.

#### **8.4 A More Comprehensive Theoretical Framework for Understanding the Complex Stakeholder Participation Process**

It is clear that, as it is, stakeholder theory is too limited for sustainable tourism development research and even its relevance in this context is challengeable. While some have expressed concern about broadening stakeholder theory, it is evident here that unless some broadening is accepted then its usefulness will remain limited. Limiting a theory though, is not necessarily a bad thing. And given that stakeholder theory has already received its share of criticism and that, thanks to authors such as Phillips (2003), it has more recently started to look more mature as an ethical business management tool, it might be a shame to broaden it too far. It might after all be more valuable to keep stakeholder theory as a private sector management theory, especially given the widely recognised importance of developing a more ethical approach to business. Nevertheless, the exploration of the theory in relation to sustainable tourism development research has revealed pressing issues to consider for the future development of a stakeholder based theory, particularly concerning questions of legitimacy and identification, as well as contributions to discussions around the normative justificatory framework and the basis on which decisions may be made.

There is clearly also a need to develop a stakeholder perspective to research in the sustainable tourism development field, as stakeholder based partnerships are now firmly at the core of its strategic thinking. Adopting a stakeholder perspective is particularly useful in sustainable development contexts because it brings with it a need to reflect on the range of various interests and impacts. The focus on management, or on coordination as described here, that consideration of stakeholder theory encourages is arguably a crucial aspect of stakeholder participation. It therefore follows that there must be groups or organisations who can effectively fulfil this coordination function. When considering the development and implementation of strategies, it is demonstrably important to account for macro, as well as micro, level influences and outcomes. The broad framework applied here has usefully achieved this and the insights provided into the variety of network influences and coordination structures are valuable additions to the more narrow, though still important, dyadic consideration of stakeholder management. Linking the framework with a strong normative element and sustainable tourism development principles in order to guide decision-making processes is a further valuable contribution.

So, recalling the previously quoted words of Cook (1977:77), “no single theoretical perspective will enable us to explain everything about organisational interaction”, and Rowley (1997:908), “future theoretical development relies on efforts to consider the contribution of each theory and to integrate these valuable perspectives into a more comprehensive

framework”, a sustainable decision-making theory of stakeholder relations might be developed. This builds upon Rowley’s (1997) “network theory of stakeholder influences”, which neatly blends stakeholder and network theories. By adopting a wider pluralist approach, it is possible to explain more comprehensively the complex participation process throughout the different levels of the sustainable tourism development process and gain a better appreciation of the benefits and challenges of organising stakeholder participation. A theory of stakeholder relations would therefore incorporate aspects of the four theories considered here in order to importantly account for the processes of collaboration as well as the coordination structures (Halme 2001). Stakeholder theory has valuable contributions (e.g. need for management and normative basis) and where its analysis is limited, other connected theories can provide additional insights. Collaboration theory is of benefit because it better recognises the challenges of the participation process and provides valuable tools for analysing the dynamics and outcomes of stakeholder based collaborations. The influence of network relationships is clearly strong and network theory partly explains why getting different groups together is advantageous (e.g. bringing new knowledge into the set and developing culture). A need to focus on network building is demonstrated in order to transfer shared values and norms and make the connections between different spheres of influence and knowledge. Coordination structures have been demonstrated to be extremely important for stakeholder participation, so primacy must therefore be given to the reflection and funding of appropriate coordinating organisations. The structuration theory of interorganisational coordination provides a useful framework for understanding a range of coordinating organisations and as a result is beneficial for considering the development of existing or new structures. The governance concepts considered here also provide very pertinent ways of interpreting the findings, and particularly as they are only beginning to be applied in tourism contexts more research that adopts a governance perspective is needed. They too consider the issues of interdependence, networks and accountability and therefore have an obvious overlap with the theories considered here.

There are of course other areas where additional research could build on this investigation. As for a majority of the stakeholders, their sum participation in policy development is in consultation exercises. Detailed critiques of the consultation process and questioning of its efficacy and even relevance in an apparently more participative style of development are necessary. Given the encountered problems of partnership working, particularly at the local level, there needs to be an appraisal of a range of other collaboration and consultation techniques that can run alongside partnerships (Bramwell 2004). A key consideration must also be how individual and institutional capacities can be built, especially of those with responsibilities for leading the development of policy – the tourism planners –

who do need a range of sophisticated social skills. Further, and associated with that, is the question of how resources might be better distributed. And finally, as tourists have been identified as a key stakeholder by practitioners and yet are uninvolved in any of the development process, it would be valuable to explore ways in which they might be engaged with.

### **8.5 Essential Policy Considerations in Operationalising Stakeholder Participation for Sustainable Tourism Development**

As well as being aware of organisational theory, the essential considerations that should be taken into account when operationalising stakeholder participation policies can be summarised as follows:

- A framework based on sustainable development principles needs to be put in place in order to guide decision-making processes. Just bringing together different stakeholders is not necessarily a pre-requisite to ensuring more sustainable outcomes.
- Awareness of context: One surprising conclusion is the important role that context plays on influencing levels and quality of participation. In developing partnerships, the historical context will play an important part in the ease of their formation, as bad previous experience and mistrust are real barriers to bringing different interests together.
- Awareness of multiple levels of stakeholder participation and integration of these levels, vertically and horizontally.
- Commitment to developing processes of participation as well as coordination structures.
- More decision-making power at the regional and local levels is necessary, especially at the beginning of new initiatives.
- Positive steps to engage less well resourced stakeholders are essential. This includes outreach and a commitment to ongoing capacity building.
- Skilled stakeholder coordinators are important to facilitate proper, more equitable participation.
- Alternatives to partnership need to be considered for ensuring wider and more effective participation of stakeholders.
- Take more risks: Spontaneous local groupings can achieve good results, but are hindered by lack of resources. Mechanisms for more speedily distributing relatively small amounts of funding to pump-prime initiatives would be useful.

To conclude, coordinating effective multi-level participation requires extremely sensitive and skilled management of a wide and complex range of factors. Often certain considerations seem even to be contradictory to each other. For example, the strong desire for local level decision-making over funding has to be tempered with the national need for accountability. And local participation is valuable, though there is still a need to maintain a strategic overview. Establishing this delicate balance is a particular challenge. Yet there is a belief in the stakeholding approach that should be capitalised on and though the relationship building required is difficult, it can be seen as an investment in the development of social capital, which in itself is a contribution to sustainable development. At a fundamental level, just as stakeholder participation is tied up with political processes, it is impossible to ignore the importance of individuals in the process. If the individuals involved were all able to operate in a highly reflective way, fully conscious of their own actions and of the wider needs, then participation would be more effective. So it is somewhat ironic that an approach so focussed on collective action, also relies heavily on the behaviour and actions of individuals.

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## Appendix ii – Partnership Development Survey

The following questions aim to provide an understanding of how the TGA Steering Group has developed. Please tick a box in relation to each question. It would be greatly appreciated if you could write any thoughts that you have with regard to the questions. Instances that illustrate the issue, as well as reasons why, are good examples of what to write. These comments will enhance the research.

How did the steering group form? Had the members worked together previously?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

### 1. There is a moral basis for involving all stakeholders

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>				

.....

### 2. The Steering Group formed with a clear definition of a common problem

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>				

.....

### 3. Steering Group members believe that collaborating will solve the problem(s)

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>				

.....

### 4. The steering group is sensitive to local circumstances

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>				

.....

**5. Steering group members have shared values**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>				

.....

**6. Collaborating with other stakeholders reduces adversarial attitudes**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>				

.....

**7. The TGA is an inclusive process that includes multiple stakeholders**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>				

.....

**8. The TGA incorporates a sufficient range of stakeholders with the expertise to be able to adequately understand problems**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>				

.....

**9. There are more powerful stakeholders in the Steering Group**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>				

.....

**10. One or several of the stakeholders tend to dominate**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>				

.....

**11. The Steering Group has effective leadership**

Strongly Agree      Agree      Undecided      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

.....

**12. The leader is unbiased**

Strongly Agree      Agree      Undecided      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

.....

**13. Working with other stakeholders increases innovation and effectiveness**

Strongly Agree      Agree      Undecided      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

.....

**14. Vested interests and established practices block innovation**

Strongly Agree      Agree      Undecided      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

.....

**15. Collaborating helps to develop knowledge and skills**

Strongly Agree      Agree      Undecided      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

.....

**16. The steering group helps to improve co-ordination between organisations**

Strongly Agree      Agree      Undecided      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

.....

**17. Resources are clearly identified**

Strongly Agree      Agree      Undecided      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

.....

**18. The Steering Group is under-resourced**

Strongly Agree      Agree      Undecided      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

.....

**19. Less well-off organisations are excluded due to resource constraints**

Strongly Agree      Agree      Undecided      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

.....

**20. Ground rules were clearly established**

Strongly Agree      Agree      Undecided      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

.....

**21. Stakeholders have a sense of fair process and equity of power**

Strongly Agree      Agree      Undecided      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

.....

**22. Stakeholders motivations for joining were different**

Strongly Agree      Agree      Undecided      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

.....

**23. Establishing a common agenda was difficult**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>				

.....

**24. It is likely to be necessary to organise smaller working groups**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>				

.....

**25. Due to multiple interests, multiple options are considered**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>				

.....

**26. Hearing different sides of the negotiation helps to find a common basis for agreement**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>				

.....

**27. The Steering Group is able to reach agreement and proceed with a course of action**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>				

.....

**28. The steering group has adequate decision-making power**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>				

.....

**29. Group members are able to ensure that the bodies they represent understand any trade-offs and support any agreements made**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>				

.....

**30. Members are able to build external support with implementing organisations**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>				

.....

**31. The structure of the Steering Group may need to change to ensure effective long-term collaboration**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>				

.....

**32. Monitoring will be important to ensure compliance of agreements and effective implementation**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>				

.....

**33. Outcomes will be more socially acceptable coming from a diverse range of stakeholders**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>				

.....

**34. It is clear who is accountable for outcomes**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>				

.....

35. The presence of the TGA scheme is helping to resolve tensions between national, regional and local views

Strongly Agree      Agree      Undecided      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

.....

36. The presence of the TGA scheme is helping to generate local participation in tourism planning

Strongly Agree      Agree      Undecided      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

.....

37. There are limitations to local communities participating in tourism planning

Strongly Agree      Agree      Undecided      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

.....

