

**Policy-Practice Mismatch?
Sustainable Nature-Based Tourism in Trinidad and Tobago.**

by

Leisel Kathleen Edwards

A thesis

Presented to the University of Waterloo

in fulfillment of the

thesis requirement for the degree of

Masters of Arts

in

Recreation and Leisure Studies

Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, 2016

© Leisel Kathleen Edwards 2016

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

ABSTRACT

Trinidad and Tobago, a twin island Caribbean nation has always been heavily dependent on the oil and gas industry for its economic survival. Due to the volatility of the energy sector, government's efforts are now geared toward economic diversification and the achievement of sustainable development, primarily through the advancement of emerging industries like tourism. The recent formation of the national tourism policy is therefore a strategic approach by government in the accomplishment of these stated national goals. Trinidad and Tobago is also the home of a rich and diverse biodiversity, boasting of natural resources that are inherently unique to the Caribbean region. If developed in a sustainable manner, the country's nature based profile has the potential of becoming a distinct tourism offering, with access to untapped and potentially lucrative niche markets. Taking all this into consideration, this research aims to analyse the development and implementation of Trinidad and Tobago's national tourism policy. This will be done by assessing the policy's adherence to principles of sustainable tourism development and evaluating its impact on the implementation of sustainable nature based tourism.

A qualitative case study approach was utilized consisting of different units of analysis. These included a thematic content analysis on the policy document where themes were generated to determine the policy's adherence to principles of sustainable tourism development. Additionally, a focus group and semi structured interviews were conducted, comprising a cross section of stakeholders who either assisted in the development of the tourism policy, are currently responsible for policy implementation initiatives, or are actively involved in environmentally based operations or sustainable nature based tourism activities. These primary

research methods were complemented by secondary data sources, providing a base to compare and justify primary analysis.

The inherent nature of this study provides insight into the motives, strategies and processes involved in the formulation of the tourism policy together with the sustainable nature of its content. In examining the policy's influence on the practice of sustainable nature based tourism, stakeholders' perceptions and feedback revealed disparities between policy and practice. From these findings, data was used to provide a host of action based recommendations aimed at bridging the gap between the tourism policy and the sustainable operation of nature based tourism in Trinidad and Tobago.

The evaluation of tourism policies within the Caribbean context, much less its link to nature based tourism is rare within the region. As such, this research offers a glimpse into the motives, undertakings, facilitators and challenges involved in the development of tourism policies as well as the disconnect that exist between sustainable tourism policies and practices.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A number of persons have contributed to the success of this thesis. First and foremost, I would like to thank God Almighty for giving me the strength and endurance for this rigorous academic journey that at times seemed never ending.

A special thank you is due to my supervisor Dr. Sanjay Nepal whose experience, patience, dedication and overall attention to detail have helped me through the structuring and writing processes involved in this thesis. I am also grateful to Professor Bryan Grimwood and Professor Luna Khirfan for their presence on my committee, I thank you for your comments and feedback.

To all those who without hesitation participated in this research, this thesis would not have been made possible without you. Thank you for your time and openness, you have contributed immensely to my practical education and future professional development.

Last, but certainly not least, I would not have survived these past few years without the support of my family and close friends. I am forever indebted to my parents, Prince and Gloria Edwards whose prayers, advice, and daily calls have supported me from afar; to my brother Greig whose words of encouragement always seemed to come in just the right time; to my darling Kirk who via skype, calls and messaging kept me company most days and nights while I toiled at this thesis. Finally, to Peter who made my transition into Canada and graduate school painless, dealt with my quirks and always made time to offer a helping hand, I am grateful. To all of you, from the depths of my heart, I shout “THANK YOU!”

TABLE OF CONTENTS

AUTHOR’S DECLARATION	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF FIGURES	ix
LIST OF TABLES	x
LIST OF BOXES	xi
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xii
CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 A QUICK GLANCE OF TOURISM AND TOURISM POLICY IN THE CARIBBEAN ...	3
1.2 TOURISM POLICY IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO	4
1.3 THE PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION	6
1.4 PURPOSE OF STUDY	9
1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIVES	9
1.6 STRUCTURE OF THESIS	11
CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW	13
2.1 TOURISM AS A MEANS OF DEVELOPMENT	13
2.1.1 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT	16
2.1.2 SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT	19
2.2 NATURE-BASED TOURISM	25
2.2.1 THE SUSTAINABLE NATURE OF NATURE-BASED TOURISM	29
2.3 PUBLIC POLICY: A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR TOURISM POLICY ANALYSIS	36
2.3.1 TOURISM POLICY- AN OVERVIEW	38
2.4 POLICY ANALYSIS	43
2.4.1 FRAMEWORKS, THEORIES AND MODELS	44
2.4.2 SYSTEMS MODEL	47
2.4.3 POLICY CYCLE MODEL	50
2.4.4 POLICY NETWORK APPROACH/ THEORY	55
2.5 DEVELOPING A TOURISM POLICY	59
2.5.1 SUSTAINABLE TOURISM POLICY: A FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS	65
2.6 FROM POLICY TO PRACTICE -THE GAP	74
2.6.1 POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES AND CHANGES IN GOVERNMENT	74
2.6.2 LACK OF COMMUNICATION, INTER-ORGANISATIONAL COORDINATION AND INTEGRATION	78

2.6.3	INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS	80
2.6.4	LACK OF STAKEHOLDERS PARTICIPATION AND SUPPORT	82
2.6.5	LACK OF TOURISM PLAN.....	85
2.7	CHAPTER SUMMARY	86
CHAPTER THREE-	RESEARCH METHODS	88
3.1	CASE STUDY RESEARCH APPROACH.....	88
3.2	BACKGROUND OF STUDY AREA	91
3.2.1	INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK AND TOURISM POLICY DEVELOPMENT	92
3.2.2	TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO’S TOURISM PRODUCT PORTFOLIO	94
3.2.3	NATURE-BASED TOURISM IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO	96
3.3	METHODS.....	99
3.3.1	THEMATIC CONTENT ANALYSIS.....	99
3.3.2	FOCUS GROUP.....	101
3.3.3	SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS.....	105
3.3.4	SECONDARY DATA SOURCES	109
3.4	ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	111
3.5	RESEARCH CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS.....	112
CHAPTER FOUR –	RESULTS AND ANALYSIS.....	113
4.1	SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND TOURISM POLICY FORMATION.....	113
4.1.1	THE GENESIS OF THE NATIONAL TOURISM POLICY.....	113
4.1.2	THE NATIONAL TOURISM POLICY FORMULATION PROCESS	115
4.1.3	THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE NATIONAL TOURISM POLICY.....	119
4.1.4	SUPPORTING/BASE DOCUMENTS	127
4.2	SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND SUSTAINABLE NATURE BASED TOURISM	131
4.2.1	PERSPECTIVES OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND ITS CORE PRINCIPLES..	132
4.2.2	SIGNIFICANCE OF SUSTAINABLE NATURE BASED TOURISM TO TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO	137
4.3	TOURISM POLICY AND SUSTAINABLE NATURE BASED TOURISM.....	144
4.3.1	POLICY-PRACTICE: THE CONNECTING FACTORS.....	144
4.3.2	POLICY-PRACTICE: THE DISCONNECTING FACTORS.....	156
4.4	CHAPTER SUMMARY	176
CHAPTER FIVE-	DISCUSSION.....	177
5.1	RESEARCH QUESTION #1	177
5.1.1	HOLISTIC AND CONSISTENT WITH NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS.....	177
5.1.2	STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT AND COLLABORATION.....	179
5.1.3	EDUCATION, TRAINING AND AWARENESS	180
5.1.4	ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	181

5.1.5	FUTURITY.....	182
5.2	RESEARCH QUESTION #2	183
5.3	RESEARCH QUESTION #3	187
5.3.1	ACCESS TO AND AUTONOMY OVER RESOURCES	187
5.3.2	INTER-ORGANISATIONAL CO-ORDINATION AND COLLABORATION	187
5.3.3	FUNDING	189
5.3.4	MARKET KNOWLEDGE.....	190
5.3.5	STAKEHOLDER COMMITMENT AND CONTRIBUTION.....	191
5.4	RESEARCH QUESTION #4	192
5.4.1	TOURISM EDUCATION AND AWARENESS	192
5.4.2	COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND PARTICIPATION.....	193
5.4.3	INTER-ORGANISATIONAL COLLABORATION, INTEGRATION AND COMMUNICATION.....	195
5.4.4	INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS.....	197
5.4.5	REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS	199
5.4.6	LACK OF DATA AND RESEARCH	201
5.5	CHAPTER SUMMARY.....	202
CHAPTER SIX- RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION.....		203
6.1	SUMMARY OF FINDINGS	203
6.2	POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS	204
6.3	POLICY-PRACTICE MISMATCH-BRIDGING THE GAP	206
6.4	RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH.....	212
6.5	RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS	213
6.6	CONCLUSION	215
REFERENCES.....		216
APPENDIX A: RESEARCH METHODS/UNITS OF ANALYSIS		233
APPENDIX B: FOCUS GROUP AND INTERVIEW GUIDE.....		234
APPENDIX C : INFORMATION LETTER TO MOT.....		236
APPENDIX D : FOCUS GROUP LETTER TO NATURE SEEKERS.....		240
APPENDIX E : VERBAL RECRUITMENT SCRIPT		243
APPENDIX F: INFORMED CONSENT FORM.....		246
APPENDIX G : RESEARCH ASSISTANT CONFIDENTIALITY		248
APPENDIX H : APPRECIATION LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS.....		249
APPENDIX I : FEEDBACK LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS		251
APPENDIX J: INTERCONNECTED PILLARS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT		253
APPENDIX K: NATIONAL TOURISM POLICY’S GUIDING PRINCIPLES.....		254

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1: Elements in the tourism policy making process	8
FIGURE 2: Simplified model of the political system	48
FIGURE 3: A conceptualised model of The Policy Cycle	51
FIGURE 4: The Ideal-typical policy cycle	53
FIGURE 5: Nature-based tourism along the North-Eastern Coast of Trinidad	98

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1: A model of sustainable development-principles and objectives	18
TABLE 2: Dimensions of nature based tourism	27
TABLE 3: Examples of typical tourism goals	42
TABLE 4: Case study research typologies: theory and practice	91
TABLE 5: Trinidad and Tobago's Tourism Products and Source Markets	95
TABLE 6: Focus Group Population	105
TABLE 7: Interview Population	106
TABLE 8: Phases of Thematic Analysis	109

LIST OF BOXES

BOX 1: General principles and requirements of sustainable tourism development	22
BOX 2: Risks associated with nature based tourism	35

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BSTAC1	Brasso Seco Tourism Action Committee Member 1
BSTAC2	Brasso Seco Tourism Action Committee Member 2
CARIRI	Caribbean Industrial Research Institute
CCA	Conservation Corporation Africa
CTDO	Chief Tourism Development Officer
CTO	Caribbean Tourism Organisation
EMA	Environmental Management Authority
EMO	Environmental Management Officer
FO1	Forestry Officer 1
FO2	Forestry Officer 2
MOT	Ministry of Tourism
NBTO1	Nature Based Tourism Operator 1
NBTO2	Nature Based Tourism Operator 2
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PSDC	Planning and Sustainable Development Coordinator
SNBT	Sustainable Nature Based Tourism
STC	Sea Turtle Conservationist
TDC	Tourism Development Company
TDP1	Tourism Development Personnel 1
TDP2	Tourism Development Personnel 2
TDP3	Tourism Development Personnel 3
THA	Tobago House of Assembly
TIDCO	Tourism and Industrial Development Company of Trinidad and Tobago
TPC	Tourism Policy Consultant
TPO	Tourism Policy Officer
WIDECAST	Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network

CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION

This research is concerned with analysing the development and implementation of Trinidad and Tobago's national tourism policy. This will be done by assessing its adherence to the principles of sustainable tourism development and evaluating its impact on the implementation of sustainable nature-based tourism. While this study is specifically geared towards uncovering factors that influence the execution of sustainable nature-based tourism, an analysis of the tourism policy is also expected to highlight any disconnect that may exist between sustainable tourism policies and their practices.

The formation of the national tourism policy is a recent effort by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to develop its tourism industry, based on national goals to diversify the country's economic base and achieve sustainable development. Evidence of this is found in the official tourism policy document, where it states:

The government has increased its thrust towards diversifying the economy in order to enhance revenue and job creation of several key industries, one of which is tourism and recognizes that the development of the sector requires a more strategic approach to long-term competitiveness (National Tourism Policy of Trinidad and Tobago, 2010, p.1).

Historically, government policies were established to limit and control tourism activity, especially with the oil boom of the 1970s which diverted attention away from the tourism industry as a main source of foreign exchange (Lewis & Jordan, 2008). As a result, Trinidad and Tobago has very limited experience in the operation and management of tourism activities, which has resulted in its industry being less developed in comparison to its Caribbean neighbours. In spite of this 'disadvantage', Trinidad and Tobago has at its disposal a unique opportunity to learn from both the accomplishments and failures of its Caribbean neighbours and other island destinations, in their attempts at cultivating sustainable tourism industries. Despite being a late starter in the tourism arena, Trinidad and Tobago's decision to formulate a national

tourism policy is a proactive approach by the government, as it sets its sights on becoming an established and world renowned tourism destination.

In light of this, I believe it is imperative to critically analyze the recently approved tourism policy to ensure that the principles of sustainable tourism were integrated into its development. Additionally, by examining the policy, findings will determine whether or not the processes and efforts made by involved institutions and stakeholders are able to effectively influence the achievement of sustainable tourism development, more so, sustainable nature-based initiatives. For these reasons, sustainable development, sustainable tourism, policy determination and implementation will be the overarching themes referred to throughout this research, while simultaneously exploring Trinidad and Tobago's nature-based tourism potential.

This chapter introduces research objectives that address corresponding research questions and reviews the main issues that form the basis of this thesis. A quick glimpse of tourism and tourism policy in the Caribbean are provided, creating a platform to briefly discuss the same as it relates to Trinidad and Tobago. The country's natural resource base, its potential contribution to tourism development and the role of policy formulation in the execution of related activities are also highlighted. These are then incorporated into the study's purpose and its prospective contribution to the field of tourism policy and sustainable nature based tourism (SNBT) are mentioned. It is the hope of the researcher that results obtained from this study can be generalized at a regional and an international scale, contributing to an increased understanding of how sustainable tourism policies are developed and their influence on varying tourism niches.

1.1 A QUICK GLANCE OF TOURISM AND TOURISM POLICY IN THE CARIBBEAN

Tourism is one of the few growth industries existing within the Caribbean to this day (Vaugeois (2000, p. 7) and is favoured by many governments because it is a significant source of foreign exchange; creates direct employment; stimulates indirect job creation; contributes to balance of payments; encourages entrepreneurial activities and has proven to be a lucrative replacement for declining traditional economic sectors like agriculture and manufacturing (Cameron & Gatewood, 2008; Clayton & Karagiannis, 2008). For these reasons, Caribbean countries have become heavily dependent on the tourism industry as a vehicle to propel economic growth and development. Mather and Todd (1993) reiterated this point, stating “there is probably no other region in the world in which tourism as a source of income, employment, hard currency earnings and economic growth has greater importance than in the Caribbean” (p. 11).

Tourism in the Caribbean is expected to continue on its growth path for years to come and as such will continue to be courted by countries reliant on its economic attributes and potential contribution to development. Researchers, decision makers and more recently national governments have been observing these upward growth patterns and expressing their concerns over the associated negative impacts of tourism within the region. These include but are not limited to pollution, resource scarcity, damaged or lost marine life, social tensions, crime, prostitution, high operating costs, low profit levels, lack of linkages and heavy leakages (Clayton & Karagiannis, 2008; Grandoit, 2005). As a result of these impacts, tourism policy is now, more than ever, perceived to be a crucial element in steering current and future tourism development toward sustainability.

Over three decades ago, Tinsley (1979) admitted that tourism growth within the Caribbean region was “the result of twenty-five years of non-planning” (cited in Wilkinson, 1997, p.4). Similarly, Jayawardena (2002) asserted that the sector’s success was in no way attributed to regional governments’ strategic decisions and/or planning initiatives. In light of this, it is safe to assume that within the Caribbean region, little regard has been given to tourism policy formation as an organised course of action or to provide structure in the development and implementation of tourism activities. Wilkinson (2009) pointed out that “tourism policy and planning in most Caribbean islands could be characterized by a lack of commitment to policy and planning, lack of integration with national development, weak institutional arrangements, preoccupation with gross tourist numbers rather than benefits, a lack of regional co-operation, and a lack of funds for local investment” (p. 382).

As a consequence of the above mentioned, concerns about the apparent negative impacts of tourism are becoming alarmingly more noticeable, with Caribbean countries beginning to strive towards developing sustainable tourism policies. This is evident in the preparation of a *Regional Policy Framework for Sustainable Tourism Development in the Caribbean* by the Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO). This framework provides a wide range of policies and strategies available to Caribbean governments, to assist them in avoiding and/or mitigating negative tourism impacts while at the same time promoting and maximizing the industry’s positive benefits (McHardy, 2005). This document was used as a guideline in the development of Trinidad and Tobago’s national tourism policy.

1.2 TOURISM POLICY IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Thus far, it has been highlighted that tourism in the Caribbean is encouraged as a means of economic development. Mc David and Ramajeessingh (2003) pointed out that “the size and

diversity of the industry's contribution to regional economies suggest that the industry has now assumed greater importance and could be regarded as a leading instrument of development in the region" (p.180). All things considered, this too emphasizes the need to analyse the tourism policy within the context of sustainable development and its corresponding concepts, namely sustainable tourism development. Additionally, any reference made to tourism policy should keep in mind the definition given by Acerenza (1985) that states, "[it involves] the complex of tourism related decisions which, integrated harmoniously with the national policy for development, determines the orientation of the sector and the action to be taken" (as cited in Wilkinson, 1997, p. 16). This definition is also supported by Edgell, Allen, Smith and Swanson (2008) who maintained that a "tourism policy should present a set of guidelines, which when combined with planning goals, charts a course of action for sound decision making" (p. 13). Drawing from these definitions, it can be assumed that the value of a tourism policy lies in it being future oriented and balanced, providing a framework within which decisions affecting tourism can be made. Additionally, it should possess the capacity to coordinate strategic efforts geared at developing a country's tourism potential in light of existing conditions within a destination.

Trinidad and Tobago has situated its' tourism policy against the backdrop of national development strategies in an attempt to diversify its economy and achieve sustainable development. This is highlighted in the tourism policy as:

This Policy is predicated upon the overarching national policy framework for sustainable development of Trinidad and Tobago and is aligned to the seven (7) Interconnected Pillars through which the government seeks to achieve its mission to promote a process of people-centered development (National Tourism Policy of Trinidad and Tobago, 2010, p.21).

The general intent of this action is to utilise the tourism policy in first setting the course for the industry's development and use of necessary resources. The national goals will then not only help determine how these resources are to be utilized for tourism purposes but also ensure they contribute to the accomplishment of established national goals. The end result should then be mutually beneficial, a cause and effect relationship between tourism development and national development. In this regard, Wilkinson (1997) noted that a "tourism policy provides the broad guidelines that shape the development of the sector, whereas the development strategy constitutes the means by which resources are used to meet the objectives defined" (p. 16).

1.3 THE PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

The formulation of the national tourism policy was a governmental effort aimed at developing Trinidad and Tobago's tourism industry. The content of this policy is said to be aligned to the principles of sustainable development, a national goal that the government is currently striving to achieve through its national development policy. In light of this, it is assumed that the underlying values of sustainable development and sustainable tourism development are embedded into the fabric of the tourism policy. However, based on government's overarching goal to diversify the country's economic base and push towards further economic growth through the development of emerging industries like tourism (National Tourism Policy of Trinidad and Tobago, 2010), there is some concern that the government is attempting to disguise its economically driven motives behind claims of wanting to achieve sustainable development. Therefore, by assessing the extent to which the underlying ethics of sustainable development and sustainable tourism are inculcated into the tourism policy, this research aims to determine the degree to which the principles of these concepts are adopted and

put into practice. Additionally, the effect this dilemma may have on sustainable nature based tourism will also be investigated.

The policy formulation process is also under scrutiny. The policy was in draft form for almost two decades, constantly being revised by changing governments that possessed varying goals and visions for the country's development. The framework, dynamics and environment in which it was finally developed and approved has to be examined to determine not only its contribution to sustainable tourism development but also the implementation of sustainable nature-based tourism. In light of this, the systems model as shown in Figure 1 will be the driving force of policy analysis in this thesis. The model's inner box represents the process of policy development and decision making while the outer box-the policy arena, comprises of elements that bear direct influence on the formulation and implementation of the said policy. The focus of this study however lies within the policy arena while the core of the research exists within the inner box. It should be noted that while the outer boxes namely institutional arrangements, values and power arrangements are not emphasized within this thesis, their contributions and fit within the policy environment are acknowledged and offers much needed contextual information. The systems model and other approaches to policy analysis will be discussed in further detail in Section 2.4.2

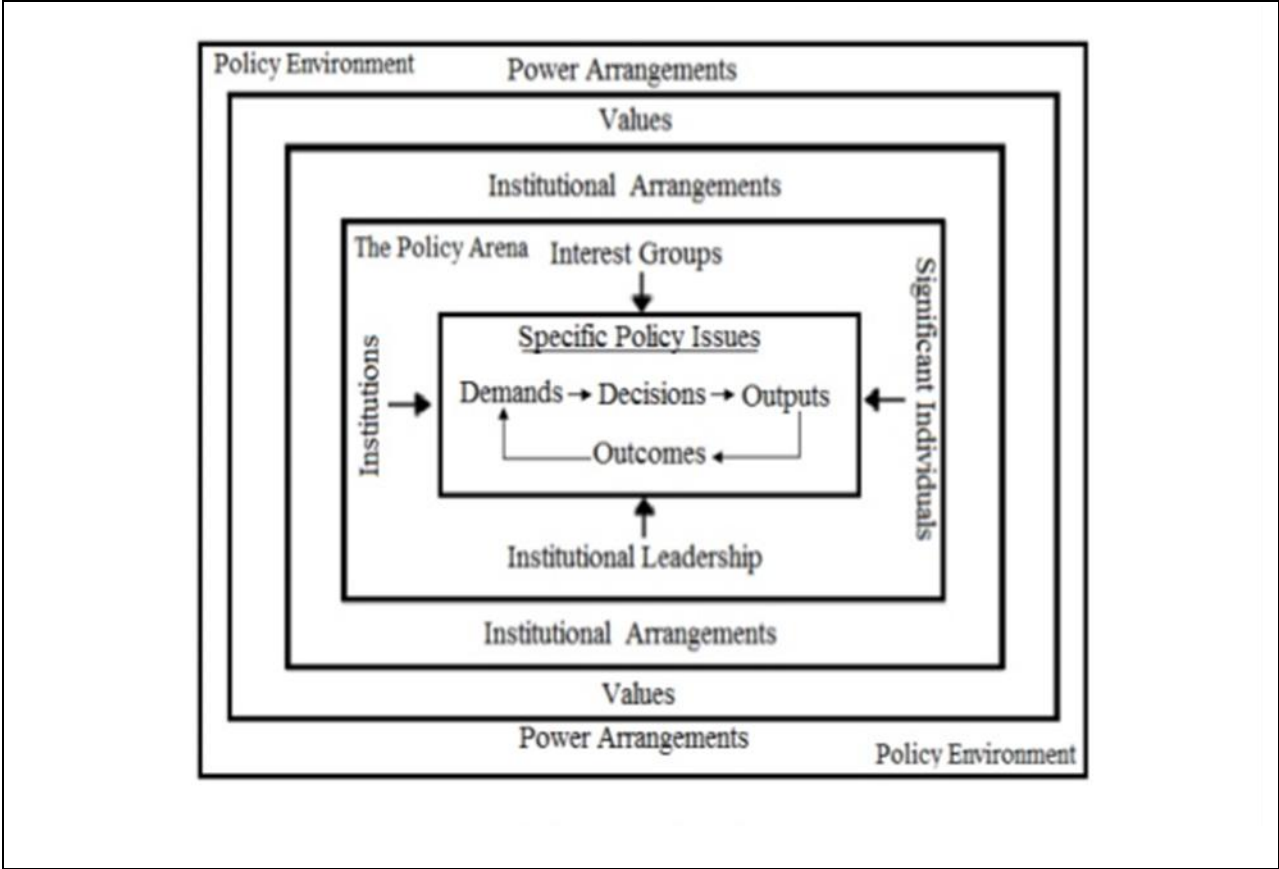


Figure 1. Elements in the tourism policy making process. Source: Hall, 1994, p. 50.

Within the Caribbean, relatively little research has been conducted on processes involved in the development of sustainable tourism policies, the challenges encountered in policy development processes and/ or its implications on the implementation of sustainable tourism endeavours, specifically, sustainable nature-based tourism. On the other hand, Trinidad and Tobago is endowed with an abundance of natural resources that are unique to the Caribbean, which is acknowledged within the tourism policy. This thesis can therefore act as a marriage between the study of tourism policy in the Caribbean and the practice of sustainable nature based tourism in Trinidad and Tobago. This will be done by drawing from global literature pertaining to policy formulation and implementation, sustainable tourism development and nature based tourism, ultimately geared towards determining the factors that influence the implementation of

sustainable nature based tourism as well as facilitating the proposal of mitigating solutions to impeding factors

1.4 PURPOSE OF STUDY

The government of Trinidad and Tobago, as highlighted in preceding sections, is currently utilizing the concepts of sustainability to frame its efforts at diversifying its economic base and achieving developed country status. It is under this premise that there has been increased focus and investment into the development of the tourism sector. Due to the plethora of natural resources that abound in Trinidad and Tobago, the potential for the successful implementation of sustainable nature-based tourism does exist. The country's natural resources can be utilized in a sustainable manner not only to expand the country's current tourism profile but also to contribute to the overall accomplishment of its national goals. I believe that this is heavily dependent on the content and activation of the national tourism policy as it has a direct impact on the proposed sustainable operation and management of the industry. It is against this backdrop that this research aims to analyze the development and implementation of Trinidad and Tobago's national tourism policy. This will be done by assessing its adherence to the principles of sustainable tourism development and evaluating its impact on the implementation of sustainable nature-based tourism. While this study is specifically geared towards uncovering the factors that influence the implementation of sustainable nature-based tourism, the analysis of the tourism policy is also expected to highlight the disconnect that exists between the sustainable tourism policy and sustainable tourism practices.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIVES

In light of the previous discussion, the key questions to be answered in this thesis are as follows:

1. How have the principles of sustainable tourism development informed the formulation of the national tourism policy?

This research is based on the premise that a sustainable tourism policy sets a precedent for the sustainable practice of tourism operations. It is against this premise that the lead question aims to understand the extent to which the principles of sustainability and sustainable tourism, according to the global discourse surrounding these concepts, have been applied in the development and implementation of the national tourism policy. This is expected to have a direct impact on the implementation of sustainable nature-based tourism.

2. Why was the tourism policy developed? And what strategies and processes were employed in its formulation?

This question refers to the motives behind policy development; approaches, procedures and/or activities involved in the formulation of the policy; the role and contribution of significant individuals and institutions who participated in the act of decision making and policy development as well as those responsible for policy implementation. Strategies and processes employed are considered important in this research as they too can determine the sustainability of the tourism policy and its influence on sustainable nature based tourism initiatives.

3. What are the factors that facilitate the translation of the national tourism policy into the practice of sustainable nature based tourism?

One of the main aims of this thesis is to unearth the factors that influence the implementation of sustainable nature-based tourism. These factors may include political ideologies and changes in government; communication, inter-organisational coordination and integration;

stakeholder collaboration, participation and support; commitment and accountability and capacity building.

4. What are the factors that hinder the translation of the national tourism policy into the practice of sustainable nature based tourism and how can these be addressed?

Hindrances may include oppositions, limitations and/or shortages that possess the potential to create a disconnect between the tourism policy and its effective implementation.

The research objectives include:

1. Examine the existing national tourism policy and its processes within a framework compromising of the interpretation, relevance, integration and practice of the core concepts of sustainable tourism development.
2. Investigate the potential gaps that may exist between the current national tourism policy and the practice of SNBT in Trinidad and Tobago.
3. Propose possible solutions and recommendations that can be used to ensure nature-based tourism is developed and conducted in a sustainable manner. Solutions and recommendations can later act as a point of reference for government, policy makers and other nature based tourism stakeholders to conduct future research and develop other sustainable niches of tourism.

1.6 STRUCTURE OF THESIS

This study will continue as follows: Chapter 2 will use existing literature pertaining to sustainable development; sustainable tourism development; policy formulation; sustainable nature-based tourism and factors that influence the policy-practice mismatch. These subject areas will be explored in an attempt to inform and direct the analysis of the national tourism policy and its effect on the practice of SNBT in Trinidad and Tobago.

Chapter 3 will outline the methodology and methods used to collect and interpret data as well as answer the stated research questions. Moreover, it will provide an overview of the study area and explore in detail the history of tourism development in Trinidad and Tobago, the tourism formulation process and the country's natural resources and tourism potential.

In Chapter 4, the results from the study will outline and analyse the varied perspectives provided related to the national tourism policy's influence on the implementation of SNBT initiatives. This will be followed by a discussion in Chapter 5 based on the key results and findings from Chapter 4. Chapter 6 will present a summary of all findings, with recommendations linked to policy, the practice of SNBT and implications for future research. As previously mentioned it is hoped that these can be applied to other Caribbean nations, developing countries and/or international island destinations.

CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW

This study examines Trinidad and Tobago's existing national tourism policy and evaluates the factors that have the potential to influence the implementation of SNBT. The content and framework of the policy will be analyzed in terms of its interpretation, relevance, integration and practice of the core concepts of sustainable tourism development. The literature in the subsequent sections of this chapter will be used to analyze how the development and content of the national tourism policy affect the implementation of sustainable nature-based tourism in Trinidad and Tobago.

In this chapter, attention is first drawn to the concepts of sustainable development and sustainable tourism development. Nature-based tourism, the backdrop of this research, is introduced in Section 2.2 as a form of sustainable tourism and the extent to which it is considered sustainable is debated within a framework of its associated benefits and risks.

Section 2.3 and 2.4 provide a detailed overview of the policy process together with theories and models that facilitate tourism policy analysis. The development and analysis of tourism policy is examined within the context of sustainability in Section 2.5, while Section 2.6 highlights the policy-practice mismatch, identifying factors within the gap that affects the implementation of SNBT.

2.1 TOURISM AS A MEANS OF DEVELOPMENT

For island destinations within the Caribbean, the decision to engage in tourism as a means of development is a result of numerous developmental limitations. These have obstructed their ability to earn much needed foreign exchange and maintain acceptable levels of employment. Connell (1988) identified a number of constraints that explain why some countries

are totally dependent on tourism, while for others, the sector plays a minor role in national development (as cited in Wilkinson, 1997, p.27-28). These limitations include:

- A narrowly specialized economy, based historically, primarily on agricultural commodities;
- A limited range of resources;
- A narrow range of local skills and problems of matching local skills and jobs (often exacerbated by a brain and skill drain)
- High transport, infrastructure and administration costs;
- Vulnerability to natural hazards (hurricanes);
- Vulnerability to externally influenced illegal activities.

In regards to developmental constraints, Trinidad and Tobago is in a contrastingly different position from other Caribbean islands. As a twin island nation, due to the existence of economic alternatives within the energy sector, it has never had to depend on the tourism industry to support its national development. However, in recognition of the enormous potential to contribute to the achievement of national goals, Trinidad and Tobago has recently increased its focus on developing its tourism sector.

Tourism is undoubtedly the preferred choice among Caribbean island destinations in their attempts at achieving developed status. Going beyond the common and already stated reasons such as a 'significant source of foreign exchange', an 'effective income and employment generator' or 'having no other alternative and lucrative option', Telfer and Sharpley (2008) explicitly outlined additional factors that shed further light into the reasoning behind tourism's popularity as a means of development within the Caribbean and more recently an ideal economic activity that is being actively explored by Trinidad and Tobago. These include:

1. *Tourism is a growth industry.* Tourism is an industry that is susceptible to external influences. Over the last fifty years, after it was initially introduced on the international scene, tourism is still experiencing consistent growth. Although the rate of its growth has

been impacted by global crises occurring in certain regions such as, natural disasters (hurricanes in the Caribbean and tsunamis in Sri Lanka or Maldives), threats of disease (SARS), political instability, terrorist attacks (9/11) and recession, global tourism arrival numbers have maintained a steady upward climb. The tenacity of the industry has rendered it essentially a safe development option.

2. *Tourism redistributes wealth.* Tourism is said to redistribute wealth direct tourist expenditure or investment on tourism infrastructure and facilities. This redistribution can occur both at an international level (from developed to developing countries) and national level where communities and their residents for instance, benefit from local tourism activities.
3. *Backward linkages.* Catering to the needs of tourists (accommodation, food and beverages, entertainment, local transportation, souvenirs etc.) involves the use of a variety of goods and services, provided by other industries within the destination. As such, tourism is said to provide more opportunities for backward linkages than any other industry.
4. *Tourism utilizes natural, 'free' infrastructure.* Tourism relies on natural (beaches, mountains, climate) or man-made (heritage sites) attractions. These resources are basic and free, with no costs attached to them. This quality allows the development of tourism activities to have relatively low start-up costs. The only existing costs are incurred in the protection, upkeep and management of these resources.
5. *No tourism trade barriers.* Many countries impose trade restrictions such as tariffs, quotas and even embargoes to protect their local markets from the effects of external competition. Tourism however, does not suffer this same fate. Apart from travel advisories and entry visas, tourist generating destinations, rarely impose limits on their

citizens from travelling to other countries. A recent exception has been countries restricting citizens from going to virus/disease stricken countries, in fear of them returning and potentially causing an outbreak. On the other hand, tourist receiving destinations have the freedom to attract tourists from wherever they desire. It should be noted that the lack of travel barriers and the existence of a free market does not remove international competition among destinations or limits that may restrict accessibility to certain markets (p. 17-20).

It is important however, not to be blindsided by the value of tourism's developmental attributes. For each one mentioned, there are aspects that should be taken into consideration that affects the degree to which tourism is successfully utilized as a development strategy. By critically analyzing tourism's contribution to development, Reid (2003) made the following concluding statement:

The introduction of tourism does not inevitably set a nation on the path to development. In other words, many developing countries are, at first sight benefitting from an increase in tourist arrivals and consequential foreign exchange earnings. However, the unique characteristics of tourism as a social and economic activity, and the complex relationships between the various elements of the international tourism system and transformations in the global political economy of which it is a part, all serve to reduce its potential developmental contribution. Not only is tourism susceptible to external forces and events such as political upheaval (e.g. Fiji, which has suffered a number of military coups), natural disasters (e.g. the Indian Ocean tsunami in December, 2006), terrorist attacks (e.g. Bali, Indonesia in 2002 and 2005, or the decline in travel following the September 2001 attacks in the USA) or health scares (e.g. SARS in 2003), but any countries have become increasingly dependent on tourism as an economic sector which remains dominated by wealthier, industrialized nations (as cited in Telfer & Sharpley, 2008, p. 3).

2.1.1 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Development as a theory, along with its processes and objectives, have evolved over time from the one dimensional perspective of economic growth to a complex, all-encompassing concept of sustainable development.

Reference to the concept of sustainable development was first made by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) when they produced a report entitled *World Conservation Strategy*. This report was the first of its kind to draw attention to the challenge of integrating developmental goals and environmental concerns (IUCN, 1980). The term ‘sustainable development’ was then introduced on a global scale, to a wider audience in 1987, by the World Commission on Environment and Development, who published *Our Common Future* also known as the Brundtland Report (WCED, 1987). This document was a global strategy aimed at combining development and environmental issues. In this report, the prevailing definition of sustainable development was stated as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED, 1987, p. 43). The United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) and The World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO, 2005) elaborated on this definition by stating:

Sustainable development is therefore about creating a better life for all people in ways that will be as viable in the future as they are at present. In other words, sustainable development is based on principles of sound husbandry of the world’s resources, and on equity in the way those resources are used and in the way in which the benefits obtained from them are distributed.

This was followed by the *Caring for the Earth* document (IUCN, 1991) which stressed the need for individuals to change their attitudes and consumption practices in an attempt to live sustainable lives. Telfer and Sharpley (2008) purported that these three reports provided a “framework for identifying the key principles and objectives of sustainable development and, indeed, the prerequisites for its achievement” (p. 35). Table 1 provides a summary of the principles and objectives of sustainable development. This summary takes the form of a conceptual model, outlining the manner in which the term embraces both development and sustainability objectives.

Table 1. A model of sustainable development: principles and objectives

<p>Fundamental principles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Holistic approach: development and environmental issues integrated within a global social - Futurity: focus on long-term capacity for continuance of the global ecosystem - Equity: development that is fair and equitable and which provides opportunities for access to and use of resources for all members of all societies, both in the present and future
<p>Development objectives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improvement of the quality of life for all people: education, life expectancy, opportunities to fulfil potential - Satisfaction of basic needs; concentration on the nature of what is provided rather than income - Self-reliance: political freedom and local decision making for local needs - Endogenous development
<p>Sustainability objectives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sustainable population levels - Minimal depletion of non-renewable natural resources - Sustainable use of renewable resources - Pollution emissions within the assimilative capacity of the environment
<p>Requirements for sustainable development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adoption of a new social paradigm relevant to sustainable living - International and national political and economic systems dedicated to equitable development and resource use - Technological systems that can search continuously for new solutions to environmental problems - Global alliance facilitating integrated development policies at local, national and international levels

Sources: Streeten (1977); Pearce et al. (1989); WCED (1987); IUCN (1991).

Telfer and Sharpley (2008) concluded from the conceptual model that the overall objectives of sustainable development can be seen as (p, 35):

- *Environmental sustainability*: The conservation and effective management of resources;
- *Economic sustainability*: Longer prosperity as a foundation for continuing development;
- *Social sustainability*: With a focus on alleviating poverty, promotion of human rights, equal opportunity, political freedom and self-determination.

Over the years, there has been much debate and controversy over sustainable development as a concept. The most common concern is the lack of consensus over the term's meaning. This has resulted in over 70 different definitions being put forward (Steer & Wade-Grey, 1993), with the term being used by those in diverse fields in different contexts with varying concepts and approaches (Heinen, 1994). More importantly, the ambiguity of the term has created a challenge in converting its principles and policies into operation or action (Pantin, 1999). This challenge is particularly prevalent within the Caribbean, where countries like Trinidad and Tobago have made the achievement of sustainable development a leading national objective. For instance, according to Pantin (1999), it may be difficult to ensure existing and new patterns of production and consumption are able to sufficiently satisfy the conditions of environmental, socio-cultural and economic sustainability, all of which are components of sustainable development. To address this, Pantin (1999) suggested applying the concept's principles to the region's current and specific environmental, socio-cultural and economic approaches and practices. If followed, Pantin's recommendation can potentially improve Trinidad and Tobago's chances of achieving sustainable development, where the concept is not only used in name but is translated into development initiatives specific to Trinidad and Tobago.

2.1.2 SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Sustainable tourism development is a paradigm offspring of sustainable development and is commonly defined as "tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities" (UNWTO, 2014). Definitions for sustainable tourism development abound and usually fall within two categories. Researchers like Garrod and Fyall (1998) and Hunter (1995) attempted to summarize these categories, with the first being those that are 'tourism

centric’ - focusing on sustaining tourism as an economic activity, while the other considers tourism as an element of wider sustainable development policies (as cited in Sharpley, 2000). The latter of the two categories is the chief reason for the government’s recent thrust towards developing its tourism industry. This approach is supported by Telfer and Sharpley (2008) who wrote “...sustainable tourism development should be seen as a means of achieving sustainable development through tourism. Thus, not only should tourism itself be environmentally sustainable, but it should also contribute indefinitely to broader sustainable development policies and objectives” (p. 42).

The origins of sustainable tourism development lie in the global attempt to formulate strategies to address the destructive environmental and socio-cultural consequences of the rapid and uncontrolled development of mass tourism that occurred during the 1950s and 1960s (Telfer & Sharpley, 2008). A cautionary approach to tourism development then ensued and understanding the impacts of tourism activity became the focal point of research and decision making in many tourism destinations. Efforts were therefore made to integrate sustainability into tourism activities, not only to address the negative impacts of tourism but also to maintain the long term viability of the industry (Liu, 2003). Following the principles of alternative development, the final step in the transition to sustainable tourism development included the emergence of alternative approaches and forms of tourism. Terms like ‘green’, ‘responsible’, ‘soft’ and ‘low- impact’ were attached to tourism as a substitute to mass tourism. Nature-based tourism was also included as an alternative and will be explored in this thesis.

Alternative forms of tourism were “designed to minimize tourism’s negative impact while optimizing benefits to the destination” (Telfer & Sharpley, 2008, p. 39). Researchers have however been critical of this aspect of alternative tourism that fall under the umbrella of

sustainable tourism development. Many researchers believe that the underlying principles of the concept should be extended to all types or forms of tourism, both conventional and alternative.

This point was echoed in the report *Making Tourism More Sustainable - A Guide for Policy Makers*, published by the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) and the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) that stated:

Sustainable tourism development guidelines and management practices are applicable to all forms of tourism in all types of destinations, including mass tourism and the various niche tourism segments. Sustainability principles refer to the environmental, economic, and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development, and a suitable balance must be established between these three dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability (UNEP & UNWTO, 2005, p.11).

These organisations have therefore acknowledged that the concepts, principles and practices of sustainable tourism are not limited to specific tourism niches, segments or destinations, but encompass all types (UNWTO, 2014). This means that even nature-based tourism can be sustainable once its approaches and practices are aligned to the principles of sustainable tourism. A brief summary of the general principles and policy development requirements for sustainable tourism development is given below in Box 1. The extent to which these principles have been integrated into Trinidad and Tobago's national tourism policy and its influence on the implementation of SNBT will be discussed and analysed throughout this thesis.

Box 1 General principles and requirements of sustainable tourism development

Sustainable tourism should:

- 1) Make optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural resources and biodiversity.
- 2) Respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance.
- 3) Ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contributing to poverty alleviation.

Sustainable tourism development requires the informed participation of all relevant stakeholders, as well as strong political leadership to ensure wide participation and consensus building. Achieving sustainable tourism is a continuous process and it requires constant monitoring of impacts, introducing the necessary preventive and/or corrective measures whenever necessary.

Sustainable tourism should also maintain a high level of tourist satisfaction and ensure a meaningful experience to the tourists, raising their awareness about sustainability issues and promoting sustainable tourism practices amongst them.

Source: *Making Tourism More Sustainable - A Guide for Policy Makers*, UNEP and UNWTO, 2005, p.11-12

Sustainable tourism development is now a widely held concept. It is also considered a critical element in tourism policy making, both in the public and private sector and at all levels of governance in tourism destinations, including Trinidad and Tobago. Sharpley (2000) shone some light on the increasing prevalence of this concept by stating:

Over the last decade the concept of sustainable tourism development has become the focus of increasing attention amongst tourism theorists and practitioners alike. It has now achieved widespread acceptance as a desirable objective of tourism development policy and practice and many organisations representing destinations or tourism industry have published sustainable tourism development plans and sets of principles (p. 1).

Although using the principles of sustainable tourism development in policy making is an ideal strategy to guide the sustainable implementation of tourism policies, the actual process of translating it into practice can be controversial and is a typical challenge faced by countries, especially developing countries like Trinidad and Tobago. As a result, disconnect between policy and practice is sometimes inevitable. Researchers like Hall (2009), Hjalager (1996) and Treuren and Lane (2003) have all noted that the difference between the goals of sustainable tourism and

the actualities of tourism's impacts at various scales have been referred to as an implementation gap or deficit (cited in Hall, 2011, p. 652). Several reasons are advanced for the divide between sustainable tourism policy and practice, most of which will be considered throughout this research. It is the hope of the researcher that the study's findings will unearth the factors that influence the effective implementation of sustainable nature-based tourism so that learning can occur and contribute to operational improvements.

In the first instance, sustainable tourism development is a sub-set of an already broad and complex concept of sustainability. Dealing with both concepts, simultaneously is unavoidable, a task that may go beyond the scope and expertise of many governments and policy makers. As a result, governmental organisations and decision makers may not be fully equipped to deal with the similarities and differences between the two concepts, their attributes, and requirements for successful outcomes, institutional arrangements and associated challenges. This incompetence can compound the capacity of policies to achieve effective sustainable tourism outcomes.

Acknowledged by Hall (2008), the researcher maintained that the various intricacies surrounding sustainability issues and sustainable tourism, requires the efforts of an entire government, an enormous task that lies outside of the usual jurisdiction of tourism-specific governance.

Disparities also exist between the idealism of sustainable tourism development as a concept set forth by researchers and academics in tourism studies and the reality of adopting it as a model of tourism development to be operationalized within the tourism industry (Sharpley, 2009). Ruhanen (2008) and Sharpley (2009) put forward that the 'theories' of sustainable tourism development are often disconnected from the real world of tourism governance and industry. Because of this divergence, Jenkins (1999) indicated that the concept and principles of sustainable tourism are rarely perceived as relevant to practitioners (as cited in Moyle,

McLennan, & Ruhanen, 2014, p. 1038). This is sure to have some form of influence in the actual implementation of sustainable forms of tourism, such as nature-based tourism, in the case of this research.

The nature of tourism and its operations is one that has been historically motivated by economic gains and benefits. Dodds (2007) in her case study analysis of sustainable tourism policy in Calvía and Maldives identified economic priority over social and environmental concerns as one of the main hindrances to achieving sustainability in tourism operations. Dodds (2007, p. 286) elaborated saying that:

This barrier is inextricably linked with political governance's short term focus and multiple other barriers arise out of this. A focus on short term objectives creates a negative feedback loop with economic priority- the shorter the political term, the more attention is focused on job creation and development for growth and other immediate results, which leads to economics being given priority over environmental and social concerns.

It is therefore a concern of the researcher in this thesis that recent efforts in the development of Trinidad and Tobago's tourism industry may be predominantly motivated by national goals of economic diversification and further economic growth. It is feared that even though sustained tourism development has been highlighted in the national tourism policy as an expected outcome of the industry's development, that these economic objectives may take precedence over environmental and social factors. The potential consequence of this sustainability imbalance is the ineffective implementation of nature based tourism initiatives. This issue will be analysed within this research as it should then inform current and future strategies and policy instruments that would lead to the achievement of SNBT.

2.2 NATURE-BASED TOURISM

There is a profusion of descriptions in the literature for nature-based tourism, many of which convey similar or overlapping meanings. In an international review of nature-based tourism definitions and statistics, Fredman, Reinus and Lunberg (2009) identified four recurring themes present in most nature-based tourism literature. These included: (i) visitors to a natural area, (ii) experiences of a natural environment, (iii) participation in an activity, and (iv) normative components related to sustainable development and local impacts (as cited in Fredman & Tyrväinen, 2010, p. 180). These themes are applicable to this thesis as they encapsulate the tourism activities and conservation efforts taking place in Trinidad and Tobago.

Nature-based tourism is defined as “any type of tourism that relies on attractions directly related to the natural environment” (Weaver, 2008, p. 8). Similarly, Eagles (1997) stated “nature-based tourism is based upon the desire of people to experience nature in their leisure time” (p. 3). Lucas (1984) went further to describe this niche as “tourism which is based on the enjoyment of natural areas and the observation of nature...has a low impact environmentally, is labour intensive and contributes socially and economically to the nation” (as cited in Valentine, 1992, p. 108). For the purpose of this research, nature-based tourism will be incorporated as part of an entire subsector of the tourism industry that includes submarkets, namely nature, eco- and adventure tourism (NEAT), differentiated according to the travel motives of tourists. As such nature-based tourism will be characterized as:

Tourism in natural settings (e.g. adventure tourism), tourism that focuses on specific elements of the natural environment (e.g. safari and wildlife tourism, nature tourism, marine tourism), and tourism that is developed in order to conserve or protect natural areas (e.g. ecotourism, national parks) (Hall & Boyd, 2005, p. 3).

Clearly highlighted in Table 2, nature-based tourism is understood to be multi-dimensional and varied, with classifications, roles and experiences being dependent on experience, style and location (Valentine, 1992). According to Kuenzi and McNeely (2008) the opportunities to engage in nature-based tourism activities are limitless, “from snow-covered mountains to earth-coloured savannas teeming with exotic wildlife, lush rain forests, vast desert landscapes and pristine coastal strips offering spectacular bird and marine life, the opportunities for immersing oneself in nature seem countless” (p. 155). Other categories of nature-based tourism include 3S tourism (i.e. sun, sea and sand), captive tourism (i.e. zoological parks, botanical gardens, aquariums and aviaries), extractive tourism (e.g. hunting and fishing) and some types of health tourism (mud-bathing, nature retreats and spas) (Weaver, 2008). It is therefore safe to assume that nature-based tourism “presents a vexing situation as the environment becomes the main attraction upon which many individuals and organisations stake their claim” (Plummer, Kulczycki & Stacey, 2006, p. 500).

According to Cloesen (2003), increased environmental consciousness is the principal cause for the emergence and growing popularity of nature-based tourism. Sindiga (1999) noted that “an increasing number of tourists is becoming aware of the ecological harm that mass tourism causes, the value of pristine natural areas, and the concerns of local people” (p. 110). An increase in environmental awareness is also complemented by issues pertaining to public land scarcity, increased focus on economic development, improved outdoor recreation equipment and an abundance of information pertaining to natural environments (Shafer & Choi, 2006).

Table 2. Dimensions of nature-based tourism

Dimension and variation of nature-based tourism	
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Nature-dependency (activities/experiences are dependent, e.g. safari; enhanced by nature, e.g. camping or nature has a subordinate role, e.g. swimming pool)- Intensity of interaction (dedicated, casual)- Social sensitivity (intra-group dynamics)- Duration
Style	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Level of infrastructure support (field, base)- Group size and type- Cultural interaction factor- Willingness to pay- Length of visit
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Accessibility (remoteness)- Development contribution (city, village)- Ownership (private or government)- Fragility (sustainable, capacity)

Source: Nature-based tourism, Valentine, 1992, p.109

Improved standards of living and health care has led to more active populations, who now have a greater interest in exercise, nutrition, holistic wellness and stress management than their previous generations (Frost, Laing, & Beeton, 2014). As a result, Collier (1999) observed that “there has been a shift in tourism demand, away from passive, consumptive forms of tourism, towards more active, participatory and sustainable tourism (as cited in Cloesen, 2003, p. 73). In light of these trends, observations made by other researchers have indicated that nature-based tourism is becoming progressively more “specialized, diversified, motorized, sportified, indoorized and adventurized” (Fredman & Tyrväinen, 2010, p. 182).

The recent acknowledgement of the economic significance of nature-based tourism to the tourism industry and national economies is another contributing factor to the sector’s mounting attractiveness. In the first instance, societies across the globe have been experiencing an increase in urbanisation. This occurrence has been accompanied by a growing middle class that are economically stable and possess a higher level of disposable income that they spend engaging in

leisure and recreation ventures. Additionally, despite being characterized as having very little free time and minimal contact with nature, this growing middle class is becoming more curious and appreciative of the environment, a phenomenon that has been stimulated by the media (Buckley, 2000). As a result, there is a greater desire to escape heavily populated and crowded urban areas, in the pursuit of peace and tranquillity, with an urge ‘to get back in touch with nature’(Buckley, 2000; Kuenzi & McNeely, 2008; Frost, Laing, & Beeton, 2014). This has led to increased visits to national parks, or a heavy reliance on commercial guides and outfitters to provide packaged nature tours and excursions. Secondly, increased commercialization of outdoor recreation has led to a growth in the retail sector for recreational equipment (Buckley, 2000). While outdoor recreation always existed, personal vehicles and equipment were frequently used instead of the services of commercial operators and agents. Outdoor recreation was therefore considered to be a form of personal recreation, and its activities and expenditure were labelled domestic or household rather than part of the tourism industry. Now due to its commercialization, together with the effects of urbanization, there has been a heightened recognition by the tourism industry of the economic potential of nature-based tourism.

The development of nature-based tourism is also seen as a valuable option for communities who possess the resources and inclination (Valentine, 1992, p. 108) to support the activities of this sub-sector. In these communities, the same natural resources that local residents rely on to maintain their livelihoods, also act as attractions that draw local, regional and international visitors to the area. Goods and services formed from the area’s natural resource base, help generate economic value that contribute to an improved quality of life for residents and enhanced experiences for visitors. Such activities are usually encouraged and facilitated by the management and involvement of organisations like Nature Seekers.

Non-economic benefits of nature-based tourism also include ecosystem preservation, conservation of biodiversity, watershed protection, consumptive benefits (e.g. timber, wildlife products, herbs and medicine) and non- consumptive benefits (e.g. aesthetic, spiritual and cultural/historic) (Sherman & Dixon, 1991). The advantage of nature-based tourism's environmental orientation has been acknowledged by researchers such as Rugendyke and Thi Son (2005) who maintained that sub-sector is "believed to be more environmentally friendly than traditional agricultural system [and] has been encouraged by governments in the hope of providing alternative livelihoods to local people" (p. 185). Stanbrook (2010), although making a general reference to tourism, his observation that tourism has been widely used as a component in conservation efforts and delivered benefits to local people, thus contributing to development, is also applicable to nature-based tourism. These benefits are the main reason why sustainable nature-based tourism is being considered in this research along with the analysis of the national tourism policy to determine the factors that influence its successful execution.

2.2.1 THE SUSTAINABLE NATURE OF NATURE-BASED TOURISM

Trinidad and Tobago has a rich natural resource base that has the potential to underpin the sustainable development of the country's tourism sector. Hall and Boyd (2005) impressed the need to view nature-based tourism within the broader realm of sustainability, incorporating the natural, socio-cultural, political and economic systems in which it is entrenched, that also play an influential role in its' development. Pickering and Weaver (2001) noted that just like other forms of tourism, "the planning and management of nature-based tourism is increasingly mediated by the paradigm of sustainability" (p. 7). According to Wall (1997) nature-based tourism has the potential to be a sustainable form of tourism once it aligns itself with the fundamental principles of sustainability, promotes a long-term view and is able to adapt to or accommodate changing

needs and conditions of the host destination. Based on their research in Malaysia, Marzuki, Rofe and Hashim (2014) claimed “nature-based tourism is purported to promote environmental sustainability and community development while achieving economic agendas” (p. 529).

The sustainability of nature based tourism is although a popular notion can also be double-sided. It is susceptible to the negative impacts nature based tourism and its services impose on the environment such as the depletion of freshwater supplies, soil regeneration and pollination and is vulnerable to the socio-economic systems within which tourism operates (Kuenzi & McNeely, 2008). These and other risks associated with nature based tourism relevant to Trinidad and Tobago are summarized in Box 2 while the juxtaposition of SNBT is explored in further detail in upcoming paragraphs.

In the first instance, it is believed that nature-based tourists spend more money than traditional mass tourists at destinations (Sindiga, 1999). These tourists tend to prefer peak nature experiences, integrated into specialized tours that are generally extremely valuable. The exceptional values of these excursions add an alluring element, which fosters a high willingness to pay (Valentine, 1992). These experiences usually include but are not limited to “trekking/hiking, bird watching, nature photography, wild safaris, camping, mountain climbing, fishing, river rafting/canoeing and botanical study” (Whelan, 1991, p. 6) and is often referred to as examples of ‘low volume high value’ tourism (Valentine, 1992). Oftentimes, the income received from these nature-based activities, visitor user fees and activity permits are ploughed back into conservation efforts, aimed at ensuring the sustainable maintenance of the environment while simultaneously contributing to local development initiatives (Sindiga, 1999; Chen & Liaw, 2012). Carlisle (2001) made reference to the Conservation Corporation Africa (CCA) model, which was developed based on the observed interdependence between the maintenance of

biodiversity and the development of local economies. The CCA model employed nature-based tourism to protect the indigenous wildlife population (e.g. animal, bird and plant life; forests, savannahs and woodlands) while simultaneously providing economic and socio-cultural aid (e.g. direct employment and training, provision of entrepreneurial opportunities and established community facilities such as schools and clinics) to local communities. Engaging in nature-based tourism activities (e.g. encounters and information on wildlife, local culture and ecosystems), in this case, significantly reduced the likelihood of continued environmental degradation previously brought about by financial constraints. These inhibited the proper management and maintenance of protected areas and wildlife, population growth and encroachment issues as well as improper subsistence farming practices (Carlisle, 2001).

On the flip side, the sustainability of nature-based tourism, as previously highlighted, is said to be susceptible to the socio-economic systems within which it operates. For instance, tourism is known to contribute significantly to the economic development of host countries, but heavy dependence on the sector makes host destinations and its local communities more vulnerable to any form of disruption, such as weather conditions, disease, war, political unrest or economic downturn. Examples of such include the 2002 hotel bombings in Bali, the SARS outbreak in 2002, civil unrest (Maoist insurgency) in Nepal and the 2004 tsunami in southern Thailand. All these events disrupted the local and international tourism industry, resulting in significantly adverse effects on the livelihoods of local communities and their residents, who were dependent on tourism for their survival.

Nature based tourism is no exception and its operations are subject to similar disruptions. The potential therefore exists for host destinations, which in most cases are local or rural

communities, to suffer the same fate. Kuenzi and McNeely (2008) noted “it is often the local communities who are most vulnerable to the ‘boom or bust’ nature of the industry” (p. 164).

The sustainable development of nature-based tourism is also constrained by financial limitations, impeding its ability to achieve long term sustainability (Pickering and Weaver, 2001; Marzuki, et al. 2014). This is due to the high costs associated with maintaining natural areas and wild life, ongoing costs of environmental monitoring programmes, accreditation certificates, training courses, development and issuance of manuals and permits, and liability insurance and compensation schemes (Buckley, 2000; Mc Donald, 2001; Shafer & Choi, 2006). To cover these costs, many cash-strapped protected-area management agencies increase visitation numbers to generate additional funds- a seemingly counterproductive undertaking that can threaten the environmental integrity of these same areas (Pickering and Weaver, 2001). This in turn can create a conundrum that results in an increase in costs associated with management and maintenance strategies geared towards minimizing negative environmental impacts of nature-based tourism, promoting conservation, ensuring high quality visitor experiences and operating in a sustainable manner.

SNBT is realized through the support and involvement of local communities and its residents. This is built on the premise that sustainable tourism insists on the fair distribution of socio-economic benefits to host communities in order to alleviate poverty and facilitate development, and in encouraging informed stakeholder participation (UNEP & UNWTO, 2005). Murphy (1985) pointed out that “more than any other industry, tourism development depends on the goodwill and cooperation of the local populations” (as cited in Sindiga, 1999, p. 113). As such, active involvement by local residents is thought to be imperative in achieving SNBT endeavours, be it conservation initiatives or general tourism activities. This is due to the fact that

“local people have the greatest repertoire of knowledge of their ecology to be able to manage the resource system in a sustainable manner” (Sindiga, 1999, p. 113). The spin-off effect ensures that local people directly benefit (income earning opportunities, stable employment, social services) from their participation as well as foster continued support for nature-based tourism operations.

Nature-based tourism however, is not always welcomed by residents of local communities. In some instances, especially in developing countries where visitors tend to be affluent, it is resented by the local people because it magnifies their inferior social conditions (Valentine, 1992). On the other hand, residents may be eager to participate in nature-based tourism initiatives but may lack the capacity (adequate skills and training; knowledge about the environment and area history) to effectively do so. The absence of these resources, can lead to a leakage of benefits and a reduction in the scope of local control and participation, due to the recruitment of external nature-based tourism operators and personnel (Valentine, 1992). This hinders the achievement of sustainability in nature based tourism, since local participation is a core sustainability component. It includes the ownership and control of tourism enterprises and is a measure of enhancing local retention of foreign exchange earnings and the expansion of employment thus eliminating the occurrence of leakages (Sindiga, 1999). Even if there is a high willingness to pay by nature-based tourists, only a small fraction is redistributed to host communities.

While nature-based tourism may appear to be the ideal form of tourism, it has also been criticized for being just as, or in some cases, even more unsustainable than conventional mass tourism. This is attributed to the fact that operations related to nature-based tourism depend heavily on the natural environment and is more likely to exert pressure on the very resources it relies on (Kuenzi & McNeely, 2008). In support of this perspective, Marzuki et al. (2014)

claimed that nature-based tourism possesses the potential to “threaten the natural resource upon which such tourism is based, undermining longer term viability” (p. 526). The heroic assumption that nature-based tourism is inevitably environmentally friendly is considered a general fallacy by some, with evidence to support its contribution to environmental degradation. These include erosion from poorly built and maintained walking trails, pollution from inappropriate trash disposal, and uncontrolled deforestation to accommodate tourism infrastructure (Valentine, 1992; Fredman & Tyrväinen, 2010; Marzuki et al., 2014).

The sustainability of other resource stakeholders has the potential to directly or indirectly influence the sustainability of nature-based tourism (Pickering & Weaver, 2001). In practice, nature-based tourism relies on the same resources that other industries such as forestry, agriculture, housing and business development utilize (Fredman & Tyrväinen, 2010). Multiple stakeholder interest in land and natural resources can result in conflict between the different potential uses. To combat this problem, as will be discussed in upcoming sections, effective coordination of policies governing the functions and responsibilities of each stakeholder group or sector is required. Additionally, in order to facilitate the achievement of sustainable nature-based tourism, the activities of the various sectors need to adhere to sustainability requirements.

Box 2. Risks associated with nature based tourism

Ecosystem- comprising the living organisms in a defined area and the environment in which they are placed.

- Unplanned development of tourism infrastructure and facilities in an area – that is, development without management standards and guidelines ensuring participation of local communities in both conservation and the revenue from tourism – often results in significant alteration of ecosystems. The changes can include deforestation, drainage of wetlands, soil erosion or compaction, desiccation through excessive groundwater extraction, fragmentation and disruption of habitat, potential encroachment on protected areas, littering, air and water pollution, eutrophication (i.e. a process in which water bodies receive excess nutrients, leading to excessive vegetation growth and ultimately to a reduced concentration of oxygen), increased risk from fires, and, ultimately, loss of biodiversity.

– Wildlife observation often happens at critical stages in an animal’s life history: e.g. for marine wildlife, during ‘migration, breeding, feeding, resting and socialising’ (Valentine and Birtles 2004: 28). Humans compound the problem by desiring to get too close. The tourism industry’s need for predictability of viewing wildlife creates strong incentives to manipulate habitat, or, in particular, to provide wildlife with food. These actions can create a range of negative impacts (wild animals no longer behaving naturally, death/disease from inadequate diet, over-population, introduction of alien species, change in an ecosystem’s natural ‘balance of species’) which need to be compared to perceived benefits (conservation of threatened populations, creation of positive attitudes towards wildlife).

– Hunting and fishing can affect the ‘genetic fitness’ of a species by changing the sex ratio and/or age distribution or through secondary effects such as poisoning following the ingestion of lead shot. They can also impact ‘non-target species’ via ‘by-catch’. However, overexploitation and overharvesting of wildlife, leading to the local extinction of wildlife, has most often been associated with illegal hunting (poaching), subsistence hunting, and wildlife.

Socio-economic- systems within which tourism takes place

- Due to all kinds of tourism activities, local communities may find that access to or use of important resources may become more difficult or altogether restricted. For instance, in protected areas, traditional wood gathering or spiritual practices may no longer be permitted (Eagles et al. 2002: 32). Tourists’ consumption of fresh water supplies, food, electricity, etc. in areas where such resources are scarce further competes with the needs of local population. For example, use of water for showers, swimming pools, and golf courses can conflict with local domestic and agricultural water uses.

- A further concern is the potential disruption of indigenous culture and ways of life. Such disruption can be caused by an influx or the immigration of new residents in search of jobs and business opportunities. Increasing inequalities in local communities as tourism generates winners and losers can also strain the social fabric.

- Dependence on tourism presents a risk to the economy both on a local and national level; for tourism has proven to be a volatile industry in specific countries, regions and destinations (e.g. in the Caribbean, the Maldives). Extreme fluctuations in tourist volumes are often dependent on ‘external factors’ such as terrorism, civil unrest, natural disasters, outbreaks of infectious diseases, the price of petroleum, exchange rate fluctuations and changing tourist preferences, all of which are hard to foresee and/or control. Thus, it is often the local communities who are most vulnerable to of the ‘boom or bust’ nature of the industry.

Tourists health and safety

- Accidental injuries or deaths are also not uncommon among hikers, skiers, and other mountain sports, or among enthusiasts of kayaking, rafting, scuba diving and other water-related sports.

Source: Nature-based tourism, Kuenzi and McNeely, 2008, p.163-167

In conclusion, Marzuki et al. (2014) pointed out that sustainable nature-based tourism revolves around the promotion of environmental sustainability and community development, while simultaneously attempting to achieve economic agendas. Although nature based tourism may not always be sustainable, there should be continuous efforts in both theory and practice to achieve this goal. According to Kuenzi and McNeely (2008) “the on-going protection of many of the world’s protected areas and their natural resources depend on the well-being of the very tourism industry that also threatens them (p. 155). With this in mind, the goal of nature-based tourism initiatives should be to mitigate or avoid negative impacts while ensuring its benefits are maximized. For nature-based tourism destinations, this is usually made possible through directives outlined in tourism policies. The analysis of a country’s tourism policy, that is, its content and approaches, therefore has the potential of determining the extent to which sustainable nature-based tourism can be achieved. These will explored in subsequent sections and discussed throughout the thesis.

2.3 PUBLIC POLICY: A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR TOURISM POLICY ANALYSIS

Public policy varies across sectors (education, transport, agriculture, health, tourism, etc.) and usually possesses inherent differences among countries and regions. Despite these variations, a commonality exists as it relates to the constitution of a public policy. Hogwood and Gunn (1984) asserted that for a policy to be regarded as a public policy “it must to some degree have been generated or at least processed within the framework of governmental procedures, influences and organisations (as cited in Hall & Jenkins, 1995, p. 7). In essence, any undertaking, at any stage of the policy determination process, even a simple act of granting approval for a

project, once executed by or within the context of a public authority or institution, is all that is required for a policy to be deemed a public policy.

Public policy- making is primarily political in nature and is influenced by the economic, social, and cultural characteristics of society together with the formal structures of government and other features of the political system (Hall & Jenkins, 1995, p. 5). From their studies of tourism, public policy and policy processes, Hall and Jenkins (1995) have noted that a public policy “is a process as policies are formulated and implemented in dynamic environments where there is a complex pattern of decisions, actions, interaction, reaction and feedback” (p. 10). Edgell et al. (2008) described public policy as “both a process and a product- the decision making process and the product of that process...there is recognition that policy should serve not only the government, but also the public’s interest” (p. 13). The views of the above researchers are also supported by Stevenson, Airey and Miller (2008) who wrote that “policy making is a societal process involving communication between many people in a variety of different organisations. These interactions are negotiated and constrained by other decision makers, reflecting wider societal features that shape the environment” (p. 732)

Jenkins (1978) proposed that public policy is “a set of interrelated decisions taken by a political actor or group of actors concerning the selection of goals and the means of achieving them within a specified situation where these decisions should, in principle, be within the power of these actors to achieve” (as cited in Whitford and Ruhanen, 2010, p. 476). Dye (1978) on the other hand, viewed public policy as choices that are left up to government or governmental authorities. He defined public policy as whatever governments choose to do or not to do (as cited in Hall & Jenkins, 1995, p. 5). This definition covers government action, inaction, decisions and non-decisions as it implies deliberate choice between alternatives. Wilkinson (1997) added to

this perspective by pointing out that “policy is a course of action adopted and pursued by government” (p. 15).

After careful review, it can easily be concluded, that the common thread among all these definitions is that public policy is both a process and as previously highlighted, a predominantly political activity.

2.3.1 TOURISM POLICY- AN OVERVIEW

Tourism, regardless of its’ type, magnitude or activity is fragmented and multifaceted in nature. It plays an integrative role in and across multiple sectors and industries at international, national, regional, local and community levels. As highlighted in previous sections, it also affects and is affected by the economic, socio-cultural, political and environmental aspects of destinations’ development. It is these characteristics that pose paradoxes and potential challenges for tourism policy makers and planners, but also places greater emphasis on the need for sound tourism policy and strategic planning. Jenkins and Hall (1997) reiterated this by saying “tourism policy making and planning are ‘wicked tasks’ where numerous values and interests compete for scarce resources” (as cited in Dodds, 2007, p. 73).

Goeldner, Ritchie and McIntosh (2000) defined tourism policy as “a set of regulations, rules, guidelines, directives and development/promotion objectives and strategies that provide a framework within which the collective and individual decisions directly affecting long term tourism development and the daily activities within a destination are taken” (p. 1). In the same vein, Jenkins (2006), defined a tourism policy as “a reference point against which planning considerations should be related. It provides parameters and guidelines to facilitate future development in the tourism sector; in essence a policy sets out the objectives that it seeks to achieve” (as cited in Cukier, 2006, p. 23). The importance of a tourism policy is emphasized by

Edgell et al. (2008) who noted that “it provides a common agreed upon purpose for tourism and establishes the broad parameters for planning and coordinating the efforts of all tourism stakeholders” (p. 260). In the case of Trinidad and Tobago, tourism is now being considered a critical element in the achievement of economic growth and regarded as a catalyst for socio-economic benefits, the preservation of the country’s natural and cultural assets as well as the general advancement of the nation (The National Tourism Policy of Trinidad and Tobago, 2010). Hence, in order to attain these goals, a strategic approach through the development of a tourism policy was deemed necessary. Wahab (1997) noted that tourism policies “serve as a framework specifying the national tourism goals, objectives, priorities and actions that will provide the basis for future development of tourism in destination areas” (p. 133).

Tourism is often adopted by policy makers as a development strategy. Wilkinson (1997) recommended that countries attempting to develop and promote their tourism industry should situate their tourism policies within the context of national development strategies. He reiterated this point with the following statement:

The pattern of tourism development in a particular country cannot be understood without an examination of that country’s policies towards resources and the environment, in general, and tourism in particular. There are both cause and effect relationships here. Similarly, a country’s development policies in general affect the nature of tourism development (p. 14).

Acerenza (1985) best captured the essence of this statement with his interpretation of what constitutes a tourism policy, when he defined tourism policy as “the complex of tourism related decisions which, integrated harmoniously with the national policy for development, determines the orientation of the sector and the action to be taken” (as cited in Wilkinson, 1997, p. 16). This notion that tourism policies should not be examined in a vacuum, but must be considered within the broader context of national development is deemed appropriate for this research. This is due

to the fact that the national tourism policy was formulated as an extension of Trinidad and Tobago's national development goals which include diversification of the country's economic base and the achievement of overall sustainable development. During the course of this thesis, evaluations will be made to determine the influence the tourism policy has on the implementation of sustainable nature-based tourism in Trinidad and Tobago.

Tourism policy determination is said to reflect the diversity in national priorities, goals and objectives, some of which are highlighted in Table 3. Hartley and Hooper (1990) elaborated on this point by saying:

Public sector policy objectives which may be sought from tourism include the creation of income and wealth; job creation; maintaining and improving the image of an area, its environment and the quality of life; maintaining and improving links both within and between nations; and contributing to the nation's balance of payments position (as cited in Baum, 1994, p. 185).

In most cases however, priorities and objectives are often economic in nature, especially for developing countries where resources (including investment capital) and expertise are in limited supply. It is the same in destinations where there are arguments for the careful use of available resources as well as economic and political judgements related to alternative uses of resources (Jenkins, 2006). This was illustrated in a study conducted by Baum (1994) where the issues influencing the development and implementation of national tourism policies were highlighted. The study revealed economic and employment related factors were the chief reasons given for the development of national tourism policies. In his review, he highlighted that the "generation of foreign exchange, provision of employment and regional economic development were consistently the top three" of all groups of factors considered (p. 186). He also observed that these economic factors were more prominent in developing countries than in developed countries where non-economic factors consisted of creating national awareness; environmental; and the

development of international goodwill. His research depicted tourism's significance in developing countries, where issues like sustainability and its corresponding concepts and principles were not the main focus when developing tourism and formulating tourism policies. In light of this, this research aims to understand the extent to which the principles of sustainability and sustainable tourism were integrated into the development of Trinidad and Tobago's tourism policy and not just used to mask economically driven motives. This assessment will also determine its impact on the execution of sustainable nature based tourism.

Due to tourism's diverse, fragmented and integrative nature, its' effects are far reaching, stretching across a spectrum of sectors and industries, having both positive and negative consequences at all levels of society. It is because of these characteristics that both advocates and opponents of the tourism industry consider the development of tourism policies a mandatory act. It is believed that comprehensive tourism policies will encompass all aspects of and concerns relating to tourism, in order to mitigate its negatives impacts and promote positive effects. Edgell et al. (2008) summed this up by saying:

Opponents of tourism often cite the negative impacts an influx of visitors might have on the destination, and there is a need to have a policy that recognises these concerns, but, of course, the positive impacts should be equally important to policy makers and practitioners. Understanding both positive and negative impacts will lead to practical sustainable tourism development (p. 14)

Table 3. Examples of typical tourism goals

Tourism Goals	Description
Economic	Meaning optimization of the contribution of tourism to economic prosperity: full employment, regional economic development and improved balance of payments.
Sociocultural	Personal growth of the population and the boosting of their appreciation of the history, geography and ethnic diversity of the country; avoidance of any activity that may undermine or denigrate the social and cultural values and resources in the country or area as well as negatively affecting its traditions and/or lifestyles; maximising the chances for a more beneficial enjoyment of travel and recreation for foreign visitors and residents.
Environmental	Judicious use of natural resources; avoidance of all possible causes of pollution; utilization of new and renewable sources of energy; safeguarding the physical environment through strict adherence to carrying capacities and clearance of solid waste; and preservation of national heritage resources and urban revitalization.
Market Development	Frontier facilitation procedures; increasing the chances of a better tourist image of the destination in generating markets; and enhancing the opportunities for a broader market for the national tourist products.
Government Operations	Maximum harmonization of all government activities supporting or relating to tourism and recreation; supporting the need to educate all policy makers on tourism; legislation for necessary tourism activities; regulation of the various facets of tourism action at the national, regional and local levels; the raising of tourism consciousness amongst the general public; encouraging the private sector to increase its activities in tourism development through various incentives; ascertaining the limits of tourism growth and; safeguarding internal and external security in tourism operations.

Source: Wahab (1997, p.133)

The formation of tourism policies is not only influenced by the significant contribution tourism plays in the achievement of national priorities and objectives, but is also based on the stage of tourism development and the balance between government and private sector interests

(Jenkins, 2006). In his findings, Baum (1994) observed that in some countries (both developed and developing) where there was dominant government involvement, especially in the absence of a private sector, there were no published, official tourism policy documents. From these findings he noted that countries where tourism has a long standing history, with active governmental or political support, the industry evolved over time, with little or no guidance from a formal tourism policy. However, where tourism has a much shorter history, as is the case in Trinidad and Tobago, “the guiding role of a formally articulated statement of policy and the existence of a specialist ministry are likely to be deemed of greater importance” (p. 187).

In summary, based on literature, it is safe to conclude that sustainable tourism policies should facilitate the future development of the industry; focus on issues like sustainability and its corresponding concepts and principles; account for a country’s national development goals and be wide-ranging enough to mitigate tourism’s negative impacts and promote its positive effects.

2.4 POLICY ANALYSIS

Due to the practical implications of this study, both a descriptive and prescriptive approach to policy analysis will be undertaken. In the first instance, Mitchell (1989) noted that descriptive models of policy analysis document the manner in which the policy process actually occurs (as cited in Hall & Jenkins, 1995, p. 10). Critical questions like- what happened, why it happened, and who is responsible will be asked, in an attempt to gain deeper insights into the policy process and the content of the policy. As mentioned by Airey and Chong (2010) “public policy making is a key area of policy research, focusing on the factors that affect policy formulation and implementation, as well as the subsequent effects of policy” (p. 296). It is hoped that this approach will yield deeper insights into the policy’s implications on the implementation

of SNBT in Trinidad and Tobago as well as provide an information base for future research and policy development.

Prescriptive policy analysis on the other hand according to Mitchell, 1989 attempts “to demonstrate how policy-making should occur relative to pre-established standards” (as cited in Hall & Jenkins, 1995, p. 9). Prescriptive policy analysis examines policies and makes recommendations as to what governments should do rather than investigating policies to determine what happened and why during policy formulation processes, which would usually have implications on policy implementation. This approach is also applicable to this study as it does seek to propose policy and practical recommendations to ensure nature based tourism in Trinidad and Tobago is conducted in a sustainable manner.

Although both processes seek different outcomes, for the purposes of this research, they complement each other. Edgell (1991) held the view that prescriptive studies conduct analyses for policy, while descriptive studies carry out analyses of policies (as cited in Dodds & Butler, 2009). “Prescriptive models serve as a guide to an ideal situation”, while descriptive models “help analysts to understand the effects that choice, power, perception, values and process have on policy making” (Hall & Jenkins, 1995, p. 10).

2.4.1 FRAMEWORKS, THEORIES AND MODELS

One aspect of this research is the analysis of Trinidad and Tobago’s national tourism policy in terms of its policy content and the policy making process. Barrett and Fudge (1991) indicated that policy analysis is “concerned with understanding and explaining the substance of policy content and policy decisions and the way in which policy decisions are made” (as cited in Hall, 2000, p. 8). The study also aims to investigate the factors that affect policy formulation and implementation, as well as the subsequent effects of the said policy (Airey & Chong, 2010).

These elements of policy analysis will be examined within the context of the policy process. According to Schlager (1999), the term process “connotes temporality, an unfolding of actions, events, and decisions that may culminate in an authoritative decision, which, at least temporarily, binds all within the jurisdiction of the governing body” (p. 293). In the acknowledgement of a number of factors, Sabatier (2007) noted that “the policy process involves an extremely complex set of elements that interact over time” (p. 3). Some of the factors highlighted by the researcher include:

1. There are normally hundreds of actors from interest groups, governmental agencies, legislatures at different levels of government, researchers, journalists, and judges involved in one or more aspects of the process. Each of these actors (either individual or corporate) has potentially different values/interests, perceptions of the situation, and policy preferences).
2. The process usually involves time spans of a decade or more, as this is the minimum duration of most policy cycles.
3. Policy debates among actors in the course of legislative hearings, litigation and proposed administrative regulations typically involve very technical disputes over the severity of a problem, its causes and the probable impacts of alternative policy solutions.
Understanding the policy process requires attention to the role that such debates play in the overall process.
4. And finally, most disputes in the policy process involve deeply held views/interests, large amounts of money, and, at some point, authoritative coercion. Given these stakes, policy disputes seldom resemble polite academic debates. Instead, most actors face enormous temptations to present evidence selectively, to misrepresent the position of their

opponents, to coerce and discredit opponents and generally to distort the situation to their advantage.

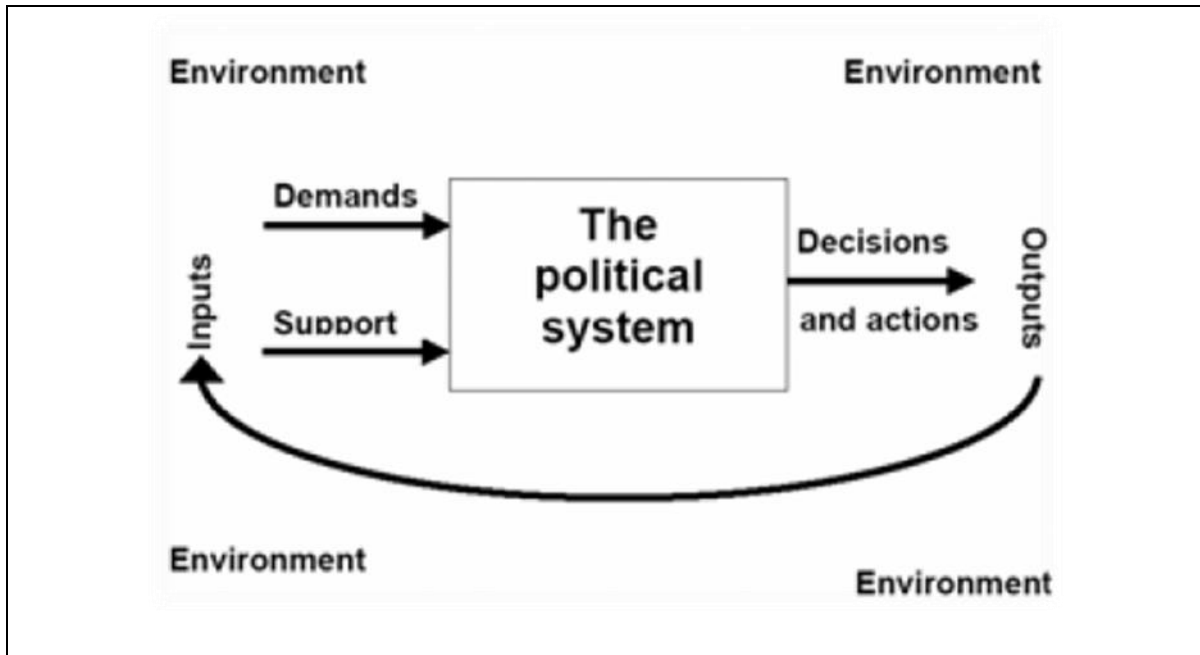
Attention therefore, should be devoted to the structure, context, constraints, relationships and dynamics of the process, as well as to the actual decisions and events that occur. All of which will have an impact on the implementation of SNBT. In short, given the intense complexity of the policy process and the variety of contributing factors, it is almost imperative that policy analysts and researchers find ways of simplifying the situation to facilitate better understanding. With this in mind, it is believed that strategies for simplification and greater insight into the policy making process are obtained through conceptual frameworks, theories and models. This need to structure the tourism policy process through appropriate theoretical and analytical frameworks was expressed by Brooks (1993) in his view that “a conceptual understanding of the policy making process is fundamental to the analysis of public policy in any policy arena, including tourism, because policies imply theories” (as cited in Hall and Jenkins, 1995, p. 8).

Frameworks provide a foundation for inquiry by specifying classes of variables and general relationships among them (Schlager, 1999, p. 296). They attempt to identify the universal elements that any theory relevant to the same kind of phenomena would need to include, thus facilitating diagnostic and prescriptive inquiry - the basis of analysis (Ostrom, 1999). Theories then select elements from frameworks that are most relevant to the research questions and use these as the foundation to make specific assumptions, provide explanations for, or predictions of, behaviour, relationships and outcomes (Ostrom, 1999). Models are representations of a specific situation. Normally narrower in scope and precise in assumptions, they are used to test, revise and/ or further develop theories, in order to advance, improve and

enhance current knowledge and understanding of a phenomenon. The phenomena in this case are the process of formulating the national tourism policy and its influence on SNBT. This section will provide conceptual frameworks, theories and models that will prove useful in this research, providing additional knowledge to support and direct its purpose and objectives.

2.4.2 SYSTEMS MODEL

Policy as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter is a political activity, influenced by the interplay of various economic, socio-cultural, political and physical factors (Pforr, 2005). Jenkins (1978) maintained that “public policy is best understood by considering the operation of a political system and its environment and by examining how such a system maintains itself and changes overtime” (as cited in Hall & Jenkins, 1995, p. 10). It is therefore imperative, according to Pforr (2005), to discuss the policy process with reference to this environment because it “determines the approach to political problems and shapes policy responses by governments” (p. 327). To this end, Eaton’s (1965) systems model of the political system provides a basic conceptual approach to policy analysis, giving a brief overview of policy processes and their interplay in the political system and their environment (See Figure 2).



**Figure 2. Simplified model of the political system (Systems Model of the Policy Process).
Source: Pforr, 2005, p. 328.**

The systems model, also known as the input-output model of the political system is based on three fundamental processes: inputs, conversion and outputs. These are contained within a dynamic environment comprising of influential social, cultural and economic factors. Inputs take the form of demands and support for action that originate both from outside and inside the political system. These inputs are then converted into decisions and actions made by political authorities that are authoritative in nature rather than routine. These then lead to outputs, basically the final action that the system has decided on. In the amended version of the systems model, the output process is followed by policy outcomes. Here the intended or unintended impacts of policy action or inaction on the wider environment are taken into account.

Hall (1994) incorporated the systems model into the analysis of tourism policy in a conceptual model, highlighting the relationship between the tourism policy environment, the political system and political features (See Figure 1). This model according to Hall and Jenkins (1995) clearly illustrates that tourism policy is a “consequence of the political environment,

values and ideologies, the distribution of power, institutional frameworks and of decision making processes” (p. 5). Pforr (2005) reiterated when he argued that:

To understand the tourism system...and in particular its political dimensions, it is fundamental to develop an understanding of the policy environment. The complex interplay of the features of the political system, historical and constitutional developments, the economic structure, demographic and socio-cultural factors as well as the geographical settings are all seen as important determinants of the tourism policy process (p. 329).

While other models and approaches mentioned in succeeding sections also provide context and guidance in the analysis of the national tourism policy, the systems model is the proposed model of choice for this research, as its focus lies within the policy arena highlighted in Figure 1. The outer box of the policy arena comprises of elements that directly influence the development and execution of the tourism policy in question while the inner box represents the core of this study, which is the process of policy formation and decision making.

There is acknowledgement that the systems model is overly simplistic. Its main criticism is centred on its inability to provide “information about the structures and processes, which take place in the conversion process of the political system” (Pforr, 2005, p. 329). This is where policy decisions that bear influence on policy formulation and implementation take place. In recognition of this, Jenkins (1978) pointed out that the simplicity of the systems model is only “a guide to thought” (as cited in Hall and Jenkins, 1995, p. 10) and as such, should not be perceived as a limiting attribute. Due to the fact that the policy process is so multifaceted and complex, it is undoubtedly difficult for some and even pointless to others to place emphasis on specific elements or to make distinctions among the various stages of the policy process. According to Spann and Curnow (1975) “the reality of public policy making in one systematic interactive and operational whole is probably beyond the wit of man” (as cited in Hall and Jenkins, 1995, p. 11). In light of this, Hill (1997) argues that “the main merit of the systems theory is that it provides a

way of conceptualising what are often complex political phenomena” (as cited in Pforr, 2005, p. 328). It is therefore suggested that this basic model be complemented by other theories and models, so that more thorough and in-depth analysis can occur.

2.4.3 POLICY CYCLE MODEL

The policy cycle model, sometimes referred to as the ‘stages model’ is another analytical perspective or framework that can be adopted when trying to better understand the policy process. It simplifies the process of policy making by segregating it into different formal stages (Pforr, 1999) and reducing its complexity since it “breaks down the policy process into functionally and temporally distinct sub- processes” (Jenkins-Smith & Sabatier, 1994, p. 176). Initially divided into seven phases (Jann & Wegrich, 2007, p. 43), the model has developed into a prominent paradigm now comprising of only five stages, which describes the chronological order of the policy process. Offering a synopsis of this policy sequence, Jann and Wegrich (2007) explained that at first problems are identified and put on an agenda (agenda setting). A comprehensive analysis of problems and goals then takes place, followed by an inclusive collection and analysis of information and a search for the best alternative to achieve stated goals (decision making). The final selection of the course of action occurs and policies are developed and adopted (policy formulation). Measures are then carried out (policy implementation) and finally policies are assessed against their effectiveness and efficiency and then either terminated or restarted (See Figure 3).

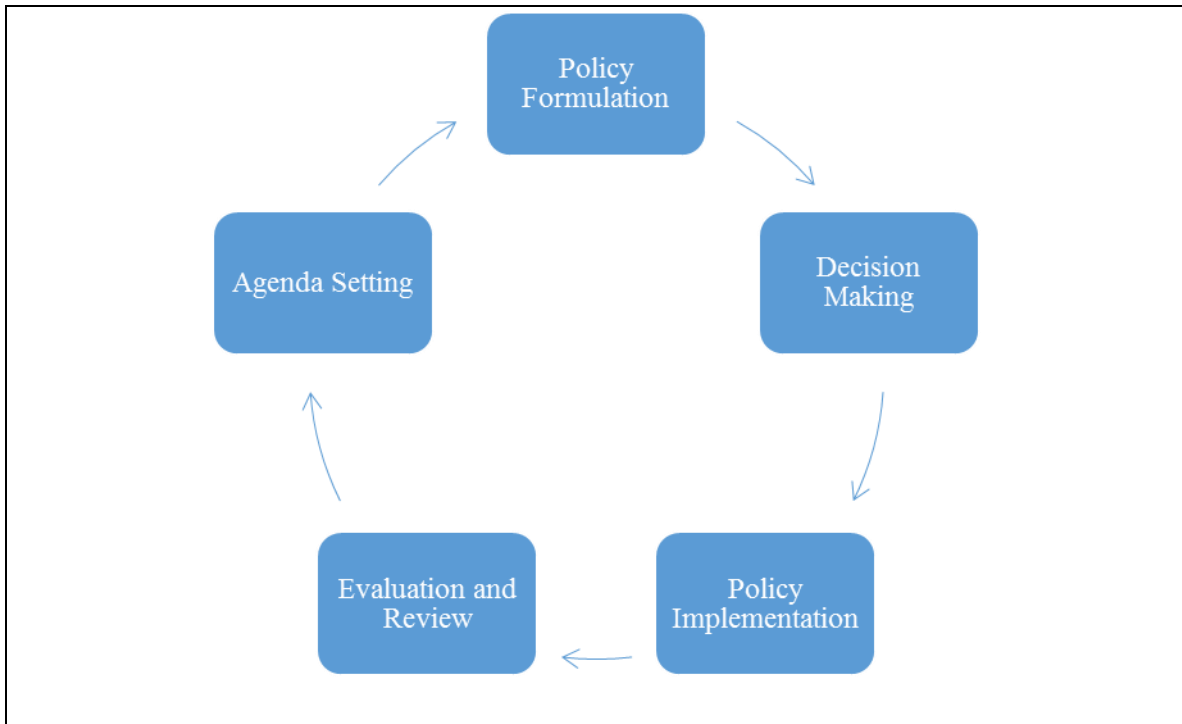


Figure 3. A conceptualised model of The Policy Cycle. Synthesized from the literature review by author.

First introduced by Lasswell in 1956, the policy cycle model was an attempt to establish a multidisciplinary and prescriptive policy science that considered the policy process through a sequence of discrete stages or phases (Jann & Wegrich, 2007). Highly critical of the political/administrative dichotomy, Lasswell's stages perspective focused more on the contributions, roles and level of interaction of different actors and institutions involved in the policy process (Pforr, 2005). The policy cycle has been very instrumental in identifying and examining the roles that elected officials and appointed bureaucrats; interest groups and corporations; and scientists and experts all play in defining, applying and enforcing policy. This is crucial because the various actors involved all have different responsibilities that are linked to the different stages of the policy process.

As an extension of Eaton's (1965) input- output systems model, the policy cycle model highlights the feedback loop that exists between output and input. Jann and Wegrich (2007) pointed out that "instead of ending with the decision to adopt a particular course of action, the focus was extended to cover the implementation of policies, and in particular the reaction of the affected target group (impact) and the wider effects of the policy within the respective social sector (outcome)" (p. 44). This is illustrated in Figure 4. The policy cycle framework attempts to answer questions "concerning the actual impacts of particular interventions (evaluation) or is concerned with the consequences following from the results of evaluations (termination, new problem perception and recognition" (Jann & Wegrich, 2007, p. 58). According to Jann and Wegrich (2007) "framing the political process as a continuous process of policy making allowed to assess the cumulative effects of the various actors, forces and institutions that interact in the policy process and therefore shape its outcome (s)" (p.44). In light of this, the policy cycle is therefore "seen as a useful tool for a descriptive analysis as it highlights the process character and explains the dynamics of the complex policy and decision making" (Pforr, 2001, p. 279).

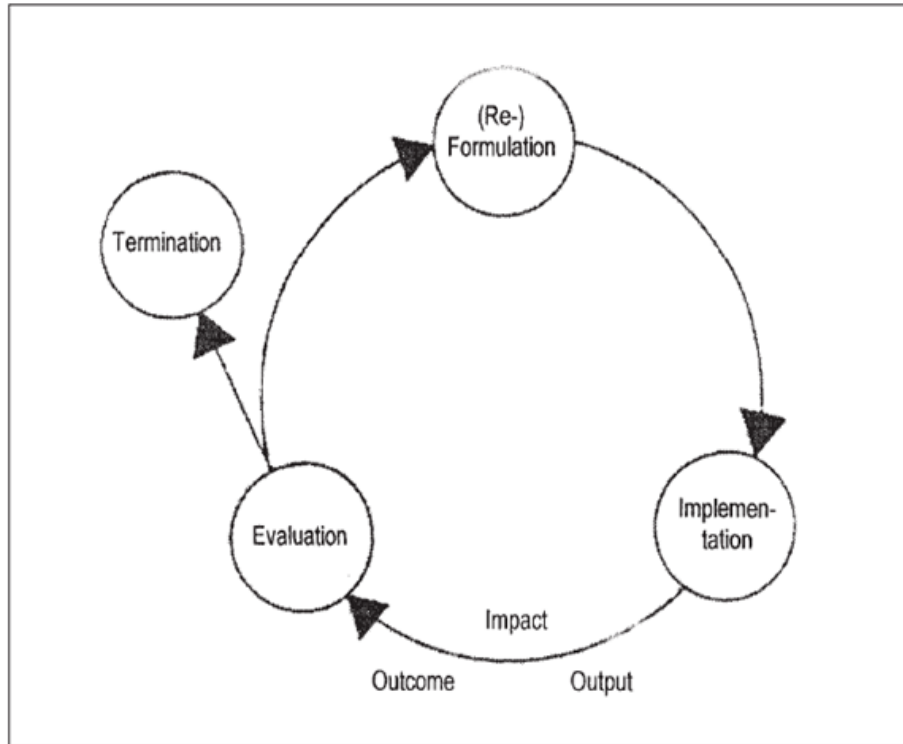


Figure 4. The ideal-typical policy cycle (after Schubert, 1991). Source: Pforr, 2005, p. 331.

It is worthwhile to note that the policy cycle model serves as a starting point to other typologies of the policy process. It also serves as a basic template, providing researchers an opportunity to systematize and compare the diverse debates, approaches and models in the field and to assess the individual contribution of the respective approaches to the discipline (Jann & Wegrich, 2007). It is a standard model for ideal-type, rational evidence-based policy making, “focusing on the generic features of the policy process rather than on specific actors or institutions, or particular substantial problems and respective programs” (Jann & Wegrich, 2007, p. 45). The policy cycle perspective has also provided greater insight into the complex conditions, central influencing factors and the diverse outcomes of the policy process. As a result, the policy cycle model has become a conceptual framework in policy studies, contributing to the development of diverse concepts that has provided useful tools to analyse the various

elements of the policy process. “It has developed into the most widely applied framework to organise and systemize the research on public policy” (Jann & Wegrich, 2007, p. 45). The main emphasis of this model, according to Dye (1987), is not the content of the public policy that is to be studied, but rather the process by which public policy is developed, implemented and changed” (as cited in Pforr, 2001, p. 280).

The simplicity of this model, the separation of the different stages of the policy process, its consideration of the roles and responsibilities of policy actors at different stages of the process and the focus placed on effective policy implementation and evaluation as a continuous flow, makes the policy cycle applicable to this study and provides some instruction in the analysis of Trinidad and Tobago’s tourism policy that complements the systems model.

In critically assessing the merits of this approach, it is difficult to ignore the fact that the model is subjected to a brunt of criticism, specifically in regards to its empirical validity.

According to Pforr (2001), “one of its frequently raised limitations is its ideal-typical division in phases, which rarely occurs in political reality, where overlaps and parallelism are evident” (p.

279). Elaborating on this critique Jann and Wegrich (2007) argued that:

Under real-world conditions, policies are, e.g., more frequently not the subject of comprehensive evaluations that lead to either termination or reformulation of a policy. Policy processes rarely feature clear cut beginnings and endings... processes do not evolve in a pattern of clear-cut sequences; instead, the stages are constantly meshed and entangled in an ongoing process...new policies (only) modify, change or supplement older policies, or- more likely-compete with them or contradict each other” (p. 44).

In support of this argument, Sabatier (2007), Jenkins-Smith and Sabatier (1994) gave the following examples:

Implementation, for example, affects agenda setting; or a policy will be reformulated while some field agencies try to enforce ambiguous programs; or policy termination has to be implemented. In a number of cases it is more or less impossible, or at least not useful, to differentiate between stages. In other cases the sequence is reversed; some stages miss completely or fall together.

The model is said to suffer from its inability to explain the factors that drive the policy process from one stage to the next. It is therefore not a causal model. Jenkins-Smith and Sabatier (1994) noted:

It lacks an identifiable force or forces that can drive the policy process from one stage to another and generate activity within specific stages. The literatures on each stage shows very little integration with each other in terms of the major actors involved or the causal factors which drive the process along. And because it fails to specify the linkages, and influences that form the essential core of theoretical models, the approach also does not provide a clear basis for empirical hypothesis-testing across stages or within multiple stages. The means for confirmation, alteration or elaboration of the model are lacking, except within a specific stage (p. 177).

Finally the policy cycle framework is condemned for perpetuating the separation between the state and society as it is congruent with a top-down perspective of the political process, where policy decisions are made by elected politicians, which are then passed on to the public service for implementation. Jenkins-Smith and Sabatier (1994) argued that:

It draws attention to a specific cycle of problem identification, policy decision, and implementation that focuses on the intentions of legislators and the fate of a particular policy initiative. Such a top-down view results in a tendency to neglect other important players (e.g., street-level bureaucrats), restricts the view of 'policy' to a specific piece of legislation, and may be entirely inapplicable when 'policy' stems from a multitude of overlapping directives and actors, none dominant (p 177).

These limitations have led to the development of other conceptualizations and theoretical frameworks of the policy process, such as the policy network analysis.

2.4.4 POLICY NETWORK APPROACH/ THEORY

In recent years, policy network analysis has emerged as “an important conceptual innovation” in the examination of the policy process, expanding the existing body of knowledge in the study of public policy (Pforr, 2005, p. 334). This approach was in response to the criticisms made against policy science in the 1980s, where the discipline was accused of being

overly schematic and rational in its analysis of the policy process. Government and higher civil servants, traditionally removed and separated from the wider society, were described as the chief participants involved in policy formulation and implementation. Policy objectives and decisions were made by central government, with limited coordination among departments or cooperation with other interest groups.

The conflict between this theoretical perspective and ‘real life’ policy making, complemented by structural changes in the global socio-political system, resulted in current policy studies being “more concerned with the complex, diffuse and non-rational nature of the policy process” (Pforr, 2005, p. 334). This slant on policy analysis according to Pforr (2006) “reacts to an increasing breakdown of the traditional boundaries between the state and society and policies are now more regarded as a result of interaction between societal and government participants” (p. 88). Added to this, Knoepfel and Kissling-Näf (1993) stated that since the 1980s governance has been “increasingly characterized by a trend towards a non-hierarchical relationship between society and state and by the formulation and negotiation of policies in pluralist and corporatist networks or network-like structures” (as cited in Pforr, 2006, p. 88). Policy network analysis in essence, is an explanatory approach that examines the relationships of all those involved in policy making processes. It stresses on “the configuration and interaction of actors within a particular policy network or policy subsystem, with much less attention devoted to policy adoptions” (Schlager, 1999, p. 298).

Interestingly enough, even within the study of policy networks there is a broad spectrum of methods and approaches. Applicable to this research, some attention will be placed on the ‘structural approach’ which examines relations between actors rather than their individual attributes to explain public policy processes (Pforr, 2005, p. 336). Brandes, Kenis, Raab,

Schneider and Wagner (1999), distinguishes between the two principal veins of analysis found within this approach. They claim:

On the one hand, there are structural methods aiming at a detailed description of whether and how the different actors in the network are connected to each other via direct and/or indirect links of communication, support, or other flows of policy resources... The other type of structural analysis is less interested in whether actors are directly or indirectly connected, but more in the similarity or dissimilarity of the profiles of the relations in which an actor is involved (p. 92).

Concentrating on the former approach to structural analysis, which was also used in Pforr's (2005) study of Australia's Northern Territory tourism policy, it is hoped that the same outcomes are achieved. According to the researcher:

It allowed for the structural description of actors and their relational constellation, an investigation of sub-networks, the identification of so-called blocks of actors (characterised by a higher degree of cohesiveness) as well as an analysis of the overall network structure, its density and level of centrality... in essence the main focus was directed to the questions 'who are the core actors in the tourism policy process?' and 'what is the nature of their interaction?'

With respect to tourism, a policy arena with a vast variety of actors and a complex web of interactions (central and local government; public and private sector; decision makers and implementers; tourism departments and other state institutions), policy network analysis "focuses on the participants in the tourism policy making process, their relationships as well as the structural context in which these take place" (Pforr, 2005, p. 336). Here, emphasis is placed on cooperation and communication networks that underlie the policy process. Pforr (2005) went further to note that policy network analysis within this policy regime not only identifies the key policy actors, but also establishes their level of influence and decision making relevance as well as maps out "the intensity and density of their relational constellations" (Pforr, 2005, p. 338).

Policy network analysis has been instrumental in highlighting the significance of relationships that exist among policy actors and their influence on the policy making process.

And while it has also promoted the movement towards non-hierarchical relationships between the state and society, it is worthwhile to note that governments still play a very crucial and dominant role in policy making. There is now however greater efforts made to collaborate with relevant departments and interest groups. Jann and Wegrich (2007) noted:

Whereas the final decision on a specific policy remains in the realm of the responsible institutions (mainly cabinet, ministers, Parliament), this decision is preceded by a more or less informal process of negotiated policy formation, with ministerial departments (and the units within the departments), organised interest groups and, depending on the political system, elected members of parliaments and their associates as major players (p. 49).

The state also has persuasive measures to manipulate the arrangement and configuration of policy actors within networks. Again, Jann and Wegrich (2007) observed that “despite the considerable level of self-governance within policy networks, governments still play a crucial role in influencing the actor constellation within in these networks, for example by altering the portfolio of ministries, creating new ones, or establishing/abolishing agencies” (p. 49).

Policy network analysis has been criticised as being descriptive rather than explanatory; providing insufficient explanation as to “what political factors or players determine the implementation of policy” (O’Brien, 2010, p. 566); or failing “to shed light on exactly how the political system transfers inputs into outputs” (Pforr, 2005, p. 338). In other words, although it has been helpful in addressing the complexity of the policy making process, it does not fully explore how politics and policy networks influence policy implementation (O’Brien, 2010). Despite these criticisms, this approach still acts as a foundation for further interrogation and examination of Trinidad and Tobago’s national tourism policy. According to Pforr (2006), “it explores in more detail the structural and relational constellation of actors shaping tourism policy making” (p. 88); and it describes, analyses and explains a particular issue by asking how networks among public, private and non-profit actors shape the process (p. 92). It is a novel

analytical perspective that can be employed to unearth the issues or elements that has an impact on the effective implementation of SNBT that goes beyond political-bureaucratic relationships.

To conclude, the breakdown of these different approaches to policy analysis allows for a detailed and comprehensive evaluation of the tourism policy process. Jenkins (1978) claimed that “any analysis of policy and the policy process can only be achieved through the linking of a number of perspectives” (as cited in Airey & Ruhanen, 2014, p. 151). As a result, although the systems model is the main form of policy analysis that will be operationalised in this research, the interplay of these complementary analytical methods has provided a structure to better understand the complex and dynamic tourism policy process in Trinidad and Tobago, thus creating an information base to facilitate future research in tourism or any other policy arena.

2.5 DEVELOPING A TOURISM POLICY

Thus far, focus has been placed on the main approaches to policy analysis. In this section the general steps involved in the development of tourism policies as highlighted in the literature will be outlined (e.g. Pforr, 2001; Pforr, 2005; Jann & Wegrich, 2007; Inskeep, 2007; Edgell et. al, 2008; Wang & Ap, 2013). Added to this, the concept of policy design will be introduced followed by a brief explanation of some of the challenges encountered in the process of policy formulation.

Policy formulation is said to involve “identifying and/ or crafting a set of policy alternatives to address a problem and narrowing that set of solutions in preparation for the final policy decision” (Sidney, 2007, p. 79). According to Cochran and Malone (1999) it assumes the ‘what’ questions: “What is the plan for dealing with the problem? What are the goals and priorities? What options are available to achieve those goals? What are the costs and benefits of each of the options? What externalities, positive or negative are associated with each

alternative?” (p. 46). Following the rational/stages model of policy analysis, the typical approach to tourism policy formation starts right after problems, issues and/or demands have been identified and put onto the political agenda to be addressed by government. Due to the multidimensional nature of tourism and the involvement of a variety of stakeholders in various sectors, non- tourism related issues are also factored in, as these too possess the potential to affect the outcome of tourism policies. Detailed research and debates ensue, surrounding the economic, socio-cultural and environmental effects of the defined problems, issues and/or demands. Edgell et al (2008) stressed on the importance of this stage noting “only reliable and comprehensive research on tourism’s impacts will lead to good decision-making and policy development” (p. 13). Additionally, the concerns and interests of all relevant stakeholders – the public sector (government, ministerial departments and tourism offices), private sector (nature based tourism operators, hotels and resorts, transportation, businesses) and non-profit organisations (NGOs, tourism professionals, community organisations and citizens) have to be accounted for.

At this stage, specific policy objectives and priorities are established, with the culminating result being a set policy framework, accompanied by a regime of guidelines that act as a parameter for government officials to identify policy options and specific proposals for action. Identifying policy options involves pinpointing a broad range of approaches to a problem and then isolating and designing specific tools (sanctions, grants, prohibitions, rights) that constitute each approach (Sidney, 2007). This is the decision making phase of the policy formation process, where the costs and benefits of policy options and proposals are evaluated and analysed, taking into consideration factors such as the destination’s current tourism standing, the basis for developing and maintaining tourism, the extent and type of tourism to be developed,

availability of resources to facilitate tourism activities political acceptability, feasibility, and national development objectives and policies (Inskeep, 2007)

Policy options are not always formalised into programs or documented to instruct action. In some instances, they are drafted in order to undergo further revisions, to be tested for their suitability and implementation feasibility, to acquire adequate resources (e.g. economic resources, human resources or political support) or to seek external, expert advice, before a final decision is made. The closure of the policy making process is marked at the juncture of a concluding choice after deliberation over various policy options has occurred. According to Howlett and Ramesh (1995), the policy making process ends with the final decision where “government adopt a particular course of action or non-action” (p. 11). In addition to the official tourism policy document, its content, ideas, goals and objectives can be translated into other forms such as “government reports, conference proceedings, discussion documents, legislation, tourism development plans, marketing plans, strategies, studies, surveys, fiscal reports, promotional literature and strategic planning reports” (Edwards, McLaughlin & Ham, 2003).

Policy development is a critical stage of the policy process. This is because the deliberation over policy options together with the determination of the final policy decision determines the course of action and sets the tone for the implementation of tourism initiatives. It also highlights the power and control among social, political and economic interests. Schattschneider (1960) indicated “...the definition of alternatives is the choice of conflicts, and the choice of conflicts allocates power” (as cited in Sidney, 2007, p. 79).

In preceding sections, earlier studies of policy analysis portrayed government and top level civil servants as being the dominant policy actors and decision makers in the formulation of policy. They were seen as being far removed from the wider society, only relating to local level

policy stakeholders when delegating implementation initiatives. In regards to developing countries however, especially in the Caribbean, governments in most cases have the mandate to formulate and enforce tourism policy, due to the small size and limited investment from the private sector. While the private sector is usually motivated by the prospects of profitability gained from tourism operations, George and Clark (1998) argued that the state “must take into account non-economic ramifications...without government involvement, short term developments can foster long term problems” (p. 207). Similarly, in the context of tourism, Inskeep (2007) maintained that “the government should assume the lead role in determining tourism policy because policy affects the entire country and its communities and must balance economic, environmental and social concerns” (p. 170).

While current studies still recognise governments’ crucial role in the final decision of a specific policy, recent approaches to policy making now acknowledge the involvement and influence of policy networks (government departments and agencies, private sector, interest groups, communities) in all stages (problem identification to policy implementation; implementation to evaluation) and negotiating processes. Policy development now involves “bargaining between diverse actors within a policy subsystem- the result being determined by the constellation and power resources of substantial and institutional interest of the involved actors and processes of partisan mutual adjustment” (Jann & Wegrich, 2007, p.49). In other words, tourism policy making is perceived as an outcome of negotiation and coordination among various interest groups rather than just the decisions of government officials.

Policy design is a recent concept in the examination and description of policy formation. It is based on the premise of trying to understand why policies fail or succeed in relation to policy development processes. It is assumed that both (i.e., design and process) contribute

significantly to implementation outcomes. Sidney (2007) highlighted that “scholars who approach policy design from an academic perspective typically seek to develop a framework that can improve our understanding, analysis and evaluation of policy processes and their consequences” (p. 81). The idea of policy design is centred on the search for and generation of policy alternatives that will eventually lead to effective and successful policies.

It is acknowledged that policy design entails some level of creativity and rational processes. There is however more recognition that policy designs can be fortified by a deliberate and conscious search for policy alternatives in order to improve decisions and outcomes (Alexander, 1982). Researchers Linder and Peters (1985) suggested developing a framework that can be used to generate and compare policy alternatives and solutions based on matching the characteristics of problems, goals and instruments. The intended outcome of this approach is to create a comprehensive set of policy options that can facilitate effective policy design and ultimately result in successful policy decisions and outcomes.

Policy design is also influenced by the level of public interests on an issue. For example, interests groups are sometimes actively involved in defining problems and offering solutions related to an issue. The mandate of policy designers in these instances will be to create policies that achieve a balance between the acceptance of interest groups and the achievement of desired outcomes. On the other hand, there may be instances when an issue does not capture the attention of interest groups. When this occurs, solutions and alternatives may not be forthcoming, posing a challenge in the development of policy. In cases like these, policy makers would have to make an extra effort to gain the interest and support of decision makers and mobilise public interest thereby creating some level of assurance that stakeholders would comply with policies that are eventually created.

Admittedly, the described pattern of policy development, although typical and widespread, is liable for criticism. For one, it can be faulted for not highlighting the challenges involved in the process of tourism policy determination. In the first instance, the tourism industry is diverse and fragmented attributes which pose challenges for governments in their efforts to develop policies and design institutions intended to support tourism operations. Hall and Jenkins (1995) noted that “tourism policies are enmeshed in a dynamic, ongoing process, and it has become increasingly evident that governments struggle to comprehend the tourism industry, its impacts and how they should intervene” (p. 4). Understanding the industry or considering its impacts sometimes fall outside the mandate of mainstream politics. For example, governments’ traditional responsibilities extend to defence, economic development, education, health, law and order. In instances like these tourism holds a low status and is given marginal political commitment. As a result tourism policy formulation suffers from an element of inexperience, minimal research and financing, lack of strategic awareness, disconnection from other sectoral policies and limited involvement from key policy actors or stakeholders (Hall & Jenkins, 1995; Stevenson, Airey & Miller, 2008). Bearing this in mind, Hall and Jenkins (1995) noted that “tourism public policies are likely to be adhoc and incremental” (p. 4).

The nature of tourism is also complex. Tourism’s tentacles extend to different economic sectors with varying and at times conflicting goals, objectives, initiatives and policies, accompanied by a plethora of stakeholders with diverse values and interests, all of which have an impact on tourism and policy development. According to Stevenson et al. (2008) “it operates across a wide range of traditional service areas... and it has fuzzy boundaries, spanning diverse areas and requiring multiple connections to be made across organisations and plans” (p. 743). Hall (2000), in a review of the role of government in New Zealand’s tourism industry,

highlighted a small core group of primary agencies directly responsible for tourism and a much larger number of secondary agencies having partial involvement in tourism. Added to this was the existence of other ministries, departments and agencies whose operations either had an indirect effect on or were affected by the outcome of tourism policy. From this example, it is safe to assume that tourism's disposition does not allow its effective policies to be formulated in a vacuum or without adopting a somewhat integrated approach. Hall (2003) noted that this conundrum often results in policy coordination being inherently difficult thus making tourism policy formation a complicated and extremely problematic task. These and other challenges involved in the formation of Trinidad and Tobago's tourism policy will be further discussed in later sections, as they will then be used to explain factors that influence the implementation SNBT.

2.5.1 SUSTAINABLE TOURISM POLICY: A FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

Earlier in this chapter, the theoretical constructs and debates surrounding the concepts of sustainable development, sustainable tourism and their parental paradigm – sustainability, were explored and discussed. In this section, these will inform the development of a basic sustainability framework that will be utilised as an analytical tool in the evaluation of Trinidad and Tobago's tourism policy. Based on the premise that tourism is expected to play an instrumental role in the overall achievement of sustainable development in Trinidad and Tobago, the proposed framework is considered critical in the assessment of the policy's adherence to the principles of sustainability and in extension its sub-concepts, sustainable development and sustainable tourism. It is hoped that the observance of these principles will contribute to the policy's capacity to support and facilitate the effective implementation of SNBT in Trinidad and Tobago.

The structure and model of tourism has undergone changes over the years, in varying economic and political situations. According to Torres-Delgado and Palomeque (2012), this has resulted in an emergence of concepts and paradigms that have transformed “the basis of the models, objectives and means for realizing tourism policy” (p. 3). With sustainability being one of these emerging concepts, its’ significance is reflected in the forefront position it holds in policy statements, discussion papers, legislation, tourism initiatives and strategies. This concept is progressively being adopted by both the private and public sector at all levels of governance, by national, regional and international organisations, tourism organisations, businesses and local communities (Moyle, McLennan, Ruhanen & Weiler, 2014). Among these institutions, there is a clear consensus that tourism’s increasing influence on destinations’ economic, socio-cultural and environmental fabric demand sound management and amplified regulation through sustainable tourism policies. This is exemplified by Hall (2011) who noted “the growing contribution of tourism to environmental change while it is simultaneously being promoted as a means of economic growth suggests that sustainable tourism development is a significant policy problem and that policy making is a significant part of the governance process” (p. 652). Moyle et al (2014) went even further to argue that:

The tourism industry must be prepared to address the current and forthcoming challenges to maintain the viability of the sector and the resources upon which it depends; thus there is a need for proactive decision-making and strategic planning by governments, businesses and other stakeholders in order to maximize opportunities, minimize adverse impacts, and maintain competitive advantages (p. 1037).

It is against reflections like these that there have been progressive efforts made to incorporate sustainability into tourism operations by translating it into a policy issue, to be addressed by governments through policy making. Mowforth and Munt (1998) cautioned that “if sustainable tourism policies and measures are not established early on to manage the possible negative

effects of tourism, initial tourism development can become a political and marketing gimmick that opens the door to unwelcome mass tourism” (p. 1277).

Integrating the values of sustainability and sustainable tourism into the development of tourism policy is not an instantaneous occurrence but rather involves a process and a balanced approach. Ivars Baidal (2001) maintained that it is a “process of qualitative change driven by political decision...to adapt the constitutional and legal framework, and the planning and policy instruments, to the development of tourism based on a balance between the conservation of natural and cultural resources, financial viability and social justice (as cited in Torres-Delgado & Palomeque, 2012, p. 3). This idea of balance or a ‘balanced approach’ has become the cornerstone of the sustainable tourism paradigm. It is founded on the notion of the triple bottom line, where the impartial and simultaneous focus on all aspects of tourism development - the environmental, socio-cultural and economic is encouraged. According to Dodson and Smith (2003), “... policies should facilitate the integration of economic activity with social concerns, cultural priorities, legal rights and effective governance systems” (p. 6). The accomplishment of this is no easy task, and therefore increases the imperative for a comprehensive process involved in formulating tourism policies. Agreeing with this sentiment, Moyle et al (2014) maintained that “it is difficult to balance economic returns with preservation of the environment and society; sustainable tourism requires holistic, integrative and long-range planning” (p. 1039). Similarly, Edgell (2006) stated that, “for sustainable tourism to be successful, long term policies that balance environmental, social and economic must be fashioned” (p. 24).

Strategic policy documents give a clear insight into the extent to which the concept of sustainability is entrenched in tourism development and tourism policy formation. The analysis of such documents have been used by researchers to better understand how the notion of

sustainability in tourism has been used in different contexts (Ruhanen, 2008; Briassoulis, 2000; Whitford & Ruhanen, 2010; Torres-Delgado & Palomeque, 2012; Moyle, McLennan, Ruhanen & Weiler, 2014). Drawing on Inskeep's (1991) *Action Strategy for Sustainable Tourism Development*, a model used to evaluate the sustainability level of national tourism policies and the work of Briassoulis (2000) in his examination of sustainable tourism policies, an attempt will be made to outline the characteristics that a sustainable tourism policy should possess. Against these and other criteria will Trinidad and Tobago's tourism policy be assessed for the extent to which it adheres to the principles of sustainability or sustainable tourism.

Firstly, tourism policies should be holistic and broad, consistent with the overall developmental goals and objectives specific to the given destination. There should also be a clear insight into the nature of the particular destination's environmental, social and economic systems when policies are developed. While other countries' good practices and successful experiences serve as guidelines for the future development of a country's national tourism strategy, the ideal and ultimate determining factors ought to be the country's unique characteristics and national goals. Augustyn (1998) examined the process of sustainable rural tourism development in Poland and recognized the absence of this as a major drawback. In their study it was observed that the Polish government based the development of their tourism strategy solely on the advice and expertise of foreign consultants, with little to no regard of the nature and characteristics of the Polish macro and micro-environments. This resulted in the formulation of inappropriate implementation strategies that were difficult to apply to Polish circumstances and the eventual failure of achieving truly sustainable rural tourism development. Based on this research, Augustyn (1998) suggested that in order for tourism policies to be sustainable, policy makers should acquire "a clear understanding of the concept of sustainability and an ability to learn from

the experiences of others, rather than copying examples of their good practice” because “what works well in one country, does not necessarily translate into another” (p. 206). This perspective was endorsed by Inskeep (1999), who maintained “sustainable tourism development must be given policy definition and direction for each country, region or locality where it is to occur. This must be done in light of environmental, social and economic conditions and requirements that exist here” (p. 462). This first point is extremely relevant to Trinidad and Tobago as the policy under research is the first official and documented tourism policy in the country’s history and the development of SNBT is still in its infancy stage in comparison to other destinations within the Caribbean region.

Tourism policies are said to comply with the principles of sustainability when there is involvement of, and collaboration with, national institutions, tourism organisations and businesses, local communities and other relevant interest groups. These parties are usually actively engaged in tourism research, the provision of tourism services, environmental protection and community empowerment programmes. As such, they tend to have first-hand knowledge and experience of industry needs, issues and problems. Utilizing consultation techniques for instance, in the process of formulating policy, will enable these various stakeholders to be involved in developing strategies and making decisions related to their respective tourism sectors. The intentional outcome should benefit the entire industry, its stakeholders and the destination as a whole, leading to the achievement of sustainable tourism development. This thesis will examine the extent to which nature based tourism organisations, NGOs, community groups and similar stakeholders were involved in policy formation and decisions as this will influence their nature based tourism operations.

When policies are underpinned by the principles of sustainability education, training and capacity building together with tourism awareness are regarded as important policy strategies. These are employed to educate and sensitize individuals, communities and the general public on issues pertaining to sustainability and sustainable tourism. It also creates a cadre of highly qualified and experienced personnel at strategic levels of tourism organisations, which improves professionalism and boosts the level and quality of tourism goods and services offered by the industry. According to Inskeep (1991) “sustainable tourism development involves the establishment of education and training programs to improve public understanding and enhance business and professional skills” (p.463). This is especially relevant to Trinidad and Tobago in particular as it heavily dependent on its human resource capital to propel and sustain tourism development. In their study of tourism educational and training policies in Cayman Islands George and Clarke (1998) suggested including in tourism policies, mandates for the introduction of tourism education at all levels of the school system- from primary to tertiary level; training and recruiting appropriate teachers to facilitate tourism education; setting up scholarship programmes to encourage regional and international tourism study; intensify professional, vocational and entrepreneurship training with the private sector that is consistent with government policies and supports sustainability; organizing public awareness campaigns and activities and developing capacity building workshops for local communities. Once operationalized, these proposals should reflect and meet the needs and diversity of the region’s tourism industry. Applied to Trinidad and Tobago, it can provide the necessary knowledge and skills set to promote local empowerment and community development as well as increase environmental awareness and improve approaches to natural resource protection and conservation. This will undoubtedly influence initiatives geared towards the effective

implementation of SNBT and in extension facilitate the overall achievement of sustainable tourism development.

Tourism policies tend to follow sustainability practices when objectives are set to prevent the loss or irreversible damage of natural or cultural resources. While some natural and cultural resources can be replaced, it still depletes the resource base that future generations and tourists will one day experience or depend on to survive. In cases where old-growth forests, wildlife species, ancient monuments and distinct landmarks are lost, they can never again be enjoyed by future generations (Inskeep, 1999). It is therefore crucial for policy makers to make provision to avoid the possibility of this occurrence and its impacts and set guidelines to protect and preserve the natural and cultural capital of destinations, in order to ensure intergenerational equity occurs.

Finally, sustainability in tourism as previously mentioned is a long term objective. Policies should therefore be long ranging and large scale, acting as a guideline for local policy initiatives. Other studies have indicated that in order for sustainable tourism policies to be effective and for results to show, a time span of ten to twenty years is needed (Dodds, 2007a; Dodds & Butler, 2010). Dodds (2007b) highlighted that “the focus on short term objectives creates a negative feedback loop with economic priority- the shorter the political term, the more attention is focused on job creation and development for growth and other immediate results, which leads to economic priority over environmental and social concerns” (p. 293). This time frame is more than most political terms and the continuation and actualization of sustainable tourism policy initiatives are therefore at the mercy of the incumbent government and related policy actors. George and Clarke (1998) making reference to Caribbean countries (which is also relevant to Trinidad and Tobago) insisted that tourism policies should be apolitical. They argued that:

Too often Caribbean countries have viewed development (tourism) plans as belonging to a particular party, frequently to the socio-economic and environmental detriment of the country and its tourist industry. When opposition parties come to power they often try to remove all traces of the previous party's work by abrogating policies and initiatives, and starting their own, often hastily constructed" (George and Clarke, 1998, p. 213).

It is therefore safe to assume that the sustainable nature of tourism policies is not only determined by their content, but also by longevity, the successful operationalization of their proposals and the ability to achieve initial sustainability goals and objectives.

Despite the outlined measures and strategies that help determine whether tourism policies comply with the principles of sustainability, there is evidence to suggest that developing and executing sustainable tourism policies can be challenging, if not somewhat impossible. For one, there is the perspective that most tourism policies are still predominantly focused on economic development, sometimes at the expense of social and environmental values. Moyle et al (2014) examined the evolution of the concept of sustainability in government policy and planning documents at strategic levels through the use of content analysis (elaboration of this research method can be found in Chapter 3). In these documents sustainability appeared as an individual concept on its own (that is, using the term "sustainability" or "sustainable tourism") and as an overarching theme composed of various elements such as the economy, society and the environment. In terms of policy content, their study revealed that there was a switch in discourse from concepts that were traditionally associated with sustainable tourism such as impact, social, conservation, triple bottom line and change, toward a focus on climate, nature, responsible, adaption and transformation. In addition to this, over time there was an evident imbalance in the triple bottom line concepts, with most of the spotlight on the economic aspects of development and dwindling attention on environmental and social aspects. This imbalance was perpetuated even more at the strategic levels. Policies at the local level concentrated equally on all elements-

society, community and the economy, while “policies at the national level made the least use of sustainability concepts” with an overwhelming emphasis on the economy (Moyle et al, 2014, p. 1048).

As previously indicated, the concept of sustainability is a global phenomenon that has gained momentum as an international issue and is advocated at all levels of governance. It therefore holds a critical position in the social and political agendas in countries worldwide. Its widespread popularity has led to the debate over its legitimate use by governments who have been criticized of using it to validate their political motives (Bramwell, 2004; Stabler, 1997). Its use as a sustainability cliché has been illustrated by Whitford and Ruhanen (2010). In reviewing the development of Australia’s policies for indigenous tourism and analyzing their sustainable tourism content, Whitford and Ruhanen (2010) discovered that policies appeared to adopt a sustainable approach on the surface. It was a topical issue and seemed to “espouse the virtues of sustainability”, especially in their mission statements, rationale and objectives (p. 487). But after careful scrutiny, it was evident that a great proportion of the policies focused almost exclusively on economic aspects of tourism, namely increasing visitor numbers, enhancing product development or improving marketing, with very little attention paid to socio-cultural and environmental concerns. From this study Whitford and Ruhanen (2010) concluded that “the policies only paid lip service to the purported triple bottom line approach, as they only appeared to appreciate the diversity and complexities of indigenous peoples’ cultures but also displayed a propensity for a top-down, narrow approach to indigenous development” (p. 491). In instances like these where motives for tourism development are driven by economic factors, it compromises the ability of strategies and policies to achieve sustainable tourism development.

These two studies are among many that provide substantial grounds for questioning the competence of tourism policies to be sustainable and is one of the key motives behind this research. This inability to balance economic, social and environmental values would undoubtedly have an impact on the sustainable development of practical approaches or implementation strategies. This and other factors will be explored in the next section as it relates to the implementation of SNBT in Trinidad and Tobago.

2.6 FROM POLICY TO PRACTICE -THE GAP

In order to better understand the factors that influence the practice of SNBT in Trinidad and Tobago, elements within the policy-practice gap must first be identified. This section will address the elements that can hinder the conversion of the tourism policy into effective practice and ultimately affect the implementation of SNBT.

Despite the support and promotion of sustainable tourism development by international organisations and governments there is still a prevailing disparity between sustainable tourism policies and the reality of their implementation (Dodds, 2007a; Dodds, 2007b; Doods & Butler, 2010; Moyle, McLennan, Ruhanen & Weiler, 2014). With much enthusiasm, many governments have adopted the principles of sustainable tourism development yet; there is still little evidence to prove that this enthusiasm has been translated into practice (Sharpley, 2009). As a result, many researchers have conducted studies highlighting a number of factors that contribute to the disconnect between sustainable tourism policies and its execution. Some relevant to Trinidad and Tobago are highlighted below.

2.6.1 POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES AND CHANGES IN GOVERNMENT

The implementation of tourism policies is influenced by the political philosophies and ideological preferences of an incumbent government, its ministers and other relevant

organisations (Yüksel, Yüksel & Culha, 2012). These ideologies and philosophies determine the level of commitment and the extent to which ministries and their relevant officials are involved in sustainable policy implementation. A government that is committed to making sustainable tourism a national priority, will attempt to integrate the economic, social and environmental aspects of tourism to the benefit of the destination and its visitors. These values will then permeate throughout the political system and receive support from ministries and government departments, irrespective of their industrial or sectorial orientation, thus facilitating the implementation of sustainable tourism policy. Portney (2003) argued that “the lack of political will to pursue sustainability prevents all those professionals and technical experts from doing their part” (p. 128). Conversely, the possibility exists that those who influence policy may have a limited understanding of the meaning of sustainability, why it is needed in tourism or its prerequisites. This is then transferred to the general public who may already regard tourism as a minor element in societal functions, leading to minimal participation in sustainable tourism policy implementation initiatives. Butler (1999) claimed that the difficulties and conflict involved in adequately defining the concept of sustainability has resulted in a lack of overall awareness and understanding of sustainable tourism and therefore an obstacle in the operationalization of sustainable tourism policies. Muangasame and McKercher (2014) observed that in Thailand, local respondents had no idea what the term ‘sustainability’ meant or how to measure it until it was rephrased within the context of “protecting the environment and developing green tourism” (p. 13).

Governments’ ability to bridge the gap between sustainable tourism policies and their implementation may be obstructed by their limited focus on one aspect or benefit of tourism. For example, in countries where the industry contributes significantly to foreign exchange earnings,

employment and economic diversification, tourism may hold a dominant position in public agenda. Ministers in these countries play an active role in the various stages of the policy process and their tourism endeavours are supported by government and other ministries. However, their commitment to tourism development may be economically oriented and not influenced by the other dimensions of tourism or the principles of sustainable tourism, thus making it difficult to carry out sustainable tourism policies. This was illustrated in Calvia and Malta, where the primary focus was the promotion and marketing of the destinations with efforts aimed at increasing tourist numbers and gross expenditure (Dodds, 2007a; Dodds, 2007b). Additionally, countries like Trinidad and Tobago, where tourism is not a leading industry or an economic priority, the industry lacks significant recognition on the political agenda and minimal attention is given to tourism programs. This erroneous perception of tourism's irrelevance impedes the ability of tourism organisations and departments to garner the assistance and support from the public and private sector to develop and operate tourism in a sustainable manner.

Changes in government or ministerial posts, a prevalent occurrence in Trinidad and Tobago, is another element in the policy-practice gap, in that, it can affect continuity of tourism policies and their adherence to the principles of sustainable tourism. Examples of these include changes in political ideologies or circumstances; high turnover of tourism directors with the new executives not agreeing with the policy priorities of their predecessor; revised job descriptions of tourism officials or departmental tasks; frequent modifications to implementation programs; and a general replacement by a succeeding government (Dodds, 2007a; Yüksel et al, 2012).

As discussed in previous sections, the objectives of sustainable tourism take 10-15 years (more than one political term) to be realised. If they are not achieved during a government's current term, rarely will a new government keep the same objectives for the intended results to

come into fruition. This phenomenon was highlighted by Dodds (2007a) in her study of sustainable tourism and policy implementation in Calvia, Spain. Based on the feedback received from her respondents Dodds (2007a) noted that due to the change in government “the vision of the plan was fading (or no longer being implemented at all) and this had become a barrier to the implementation process (p. 315). This essentially affected the continuity of efforts geared towards the achievement of sustainable tourism development. Similarly, in Thailand Muangasame and McKercher (2014) found that successful policy implementation was hindered by a high turnover rate among cabinet ministers that often led to changes in policy as the new leaders come with new ideas trying to make an authoritative impression. “One minister may identify sustainability as a core priority, whereas his or her replacement may not see it as being as important” (Muangasame & McKercher, 2014, p. 15).

In the case of Trinidad and Tobago, the country has already undergone four ministerial changes in the Ministry of Tourism (MOT), under the current government. These changes have also been complemented by simultaneous replacements of the permanent secretary position, a post that is supposed to remain constant, regardless of changes at the ministerial level. As public sector leaders, permanent secretaries spearhead the implementation of government’s agenda and manage their departments. In this capacity, they are sometimes more knowledgeable than the ministers they represent and are responsible for the continuity of ministerial and departmental goals and objectives. Because the effectiveness of sustainable tourism policies depend on longevity and consistency, these changes can adversely affect the implementation of SNBT. On the other hand, Yüksel et al (2012) highlighted that even if the same government remains in power, the level of commitment and the communication by the succeeding government officials may not be different and can influence the fate of sustainable tourism policy implementation.

2.6.2 LACK OF COMMUNICATION, INTER-ORGANISATIONAL COORDINATION AND INTEGRATION

The tourism industry affects and is affected by a wide range of organisations and stakeholders, at varying levels of the public and private sector. This interdependence fosters inter-organisational relationships comprising of resource trading (e.g. technical, financial or human resources), coordination and interaction between and among sectors (Hall and Jenkins, 1995). These relationships are imperative to the success of tourism operations and play a significant role in sustainable tourism policy implementation (Hall & Jenkins, 1995; Dodds, 2007a; Dodds, 2007b; Dodds, 2007c; Wang & Ap, 2013). In light of this, tourism stakeholders should be mindful of factors such as a lack of communication, coordination and limited integration between sectors and organisations that can sabotage the contribution inter-organisational relationships make to the execution of sustainable tourism goals and objectives, thus amplifying the gap between policy and practice.

Due to the multisectoral nature of tourism, it also requires a continuous and steady flow of information between the various sectors (e.g. transportation, housing, forestry, environmental and natural resource management, finance). In the event of changes in tourism policy objectives or directives for example, these sectors need to be aware of each other's roles and responsibilities as well as given the opportunity to communicate their needs and concerns, so that their actions and policies do not conflict with tourism implementation initiatives (Dodds & Butler, 2006). According to Barrett and Fudge (1982) implementation is "an interactive and negotiating process between those seeking to put policy into effect and those upon whom action depends" (as cited in Krutwayshe & Bramwell, 2010, p. 671). A lack of information sharing and ineffective

communication among sectors can therefore exacerbate the tourism policy-practice disconnect and in the case of Trinidad and Tobago, adversely affect the carrying out of SNBT.

In some countries, Trinidad and Tobago being one such country, tourism is perceived by other sectors and government departments as an insignificant industry (Hall, 1994; Dodds, 2007a; Dodds, 2007b). Tourism departments and ministries in these countries often possess limited political influence over other government agencies (Muangasame and McKercher, 2014), many of which operate independently of each other, performing non-tourism related departmental tasks. For these reasons there is little motivation or willingness to integrate policy initiatives of the different organisations and departments to assist in the implementation of tourism policy. This is especially so if there is no perceived benefit to the organisations and their stakeholders. Muangasame and McKercher (2014) contended that “effecting tourism policy across different government departments, involves convincing those departments and their respective stakeholder groups of the merits of them supporting the idea...if they see no benefits, then they have no incentive to participate” (p. 3). Shafer and Choi (2006) in their investigation of nature-based tourism policy issues in Pennsylvania suggested that managers of governmental agencies whose operations directly or even remotely influence nature-based tourism activities be encouraged to rank these activities on the same level as their own programs. These efforts, through appraisal systems should then be rewarded as they would have facilitated interagency cooperation and SNBT.

Academic literature suggests translating sustainable policy into practice is dependent on local level involvement, as stakeholders at this level have more control over issues that affect sustainability. On the other hand however, evidence also proves that without support and acknowledgement from higher levels (e.g. central government) in the form of resources,

expertise and approval, policy implementation can be equally ineffective (Wang & Ap, 2013). Dodds (2007a) found that in Calvia for example, many local government respondents and policy implementers noted that “without national and regional support, policy plans could not be effective because sustainability is wider spread than the local level” (p. 314). In Matura, Trinidad for instance, the Forestry Division is responsible for the maintenance and use of the areas, including the beach, where the leatherback turtles lay their eggs, tourists visit, residents sell their crafts and operators conduct tours. If permission for land use was not granted by the Forestry Division, it would have been difficult to carry out conservation initiatives geared towards protecting the leather back turtles, an activity that is connected to objectives outlined in the current tourism policy.

In conclusion, drawing from the above scenarios, poor communication, a lack of coordination and limited integration can weaken inter-organisational relationships and hinder the establishment of policy strategies required to solve policy problems and achieve sustainable tourism policy objectives. It is therefore recommended by Wang and Ap (2013), that organisations adopt procedures or structures that link organisations’ decision centers in order to achieve consensus and improve communication, coordination and integration.

2.6.3 INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

An institution is “an entity devised to order inter-relationships between individuals or groups of individuals by influencing their behaviour” (Hall & Jenkins, 1995, p. 21). Institutional arrangements promote certain ideologies that define and even constrain the choices of individuals. They differ between organisations and consist of rules or norms, including legislation, organisational directives and culture. Additionally, they set boundaries or standards of acceptable behaviour that individuals internalise and in some cases are compelled to follow or

adhere to (Pal, 1992). Institutional arrangements can either widen or bridge the gap between sustainable tourism policy and the execution of SNBT in Trinidad and Tobago.

Tourism organisations operate within the public administrative system, across different policy domains, where the industry's issues are governed by the rules and norms of public administrative arrangements together with the values of tourism and its administration (Wang & Ap, 2013). In Trinidad and Tobago for example, the Monitoring and Evaluation unit at the MOT reports directly to the Ministry of Planning and Sustainable Development whose main responsibility is to expedite and strengthen the national framework for the achievement of overall sustainable development. While the Monitoring and Evaluation unit in theory should concentrate its efforts on individual tourism initiatives and projects, in practice it is expected to contribute instead to the achievement of the overall goals and objectives of the superior ministry. This therefore reduces the unit's capacity of ensuring tourism programmes are implemented in sustainable manner or adhere to the guidelines of the tourism policy. In instances like these where institutional arrangements do not fully facilitate tourism specific agendas, the disparity between policy and practice widens.

Having to operate across different policy and administrative domains can give rise to conflict due to the diversity of values and interests. This in turn can create confusion among organisations who may lack a clear interpretation of their specific roles and responsibilities in carrying out tourism policy objectives. Wilkinson (1997) noted that this is a common weakness of institutional arrangements and is prevalent in the Caribbean. It is oftentimes manifested in the lack of guidelines for sustainable tourism development, non-existent environmental legislation and ineffective enforcement of standards. Wilkinson (1997) went further to add that it also leads to poorly developed coordinating mechanisms, weak commitment to integration, insufficient

resources and limited institutional capabilities, all of which hinder the execution of sustainable tourism policies.

2.6.4 LACK OF STAKEHOLDERS PARTICIPATION AND SUPPORT

The term ‘stakeholders’ is defined by Waligo, Clarke and Hawkins (2013) as “those groups or individuals who are associated with tourism development initiatives and therefore can affect or are affected by the decisions and activities concerning those initiatives” (p.343). Stakeholders in the study of tourism policy therefore refer to any entity involved in its decision making processes and/or promotional and operational activities and include tourists, the local community, the private sector, NGOs, special interest groups, educational institutions and different levels of government (Shafer & Choi, 2006; Dodds & Butler, 2009). Fredman and Tyrväinen (2010) highlighted that nature-based tourism is characterised as having multiple stakeholders, “not just those involved in tourism, but also those associated with the protection, management and utilization of natural resources” (p. 179). Although the involvement of multiple stakeholder groups can result in conflicting interests, the successful implementation of SNBT is still largely dependent on active stakeholder partnerships and engagement. This is because, policy outcomes for the most part, have a direct impact on the quality of lives and the activities that stakeholder groups pursue (Hall, 1994; Bramwell & Sharman, 1999). As such, it is advisable for stakeholders not only to be consulted in the development of sustainable tourism policies but also encouraged to be active participants in their implementation (Wahab & Pigram, 1998; Priskin, 2003; Dodds, 2007a; Telfer & Sharpley, 2008). A lack of stakeholder participation can hamper the realisation of SNBT.

Stakeholder participation at times occurs through collaborative measures mostly when problems are complex and cannot be effectively dealt with by just one organisation. Gray (1989)

contended that collaboration “is a process in which those parties with a stake in the problem actively seek a mutually determined solution” (as cited in Bramwell and Sharman, 1999, p. 393). The collaborative approach “improves the coordination of policies and related actions, and promotes consideration of the economic, environmental, and social impacts of tourism” (Bramwell & Sharman, 1999, p. 392). Despite this advantage, establishing collaboration is a complicated task due to the diversity of stakeholders that may be involved, possessing contrasting viewpoints and power imbalances. From their experience the authors Muangasame and McKercher (2014) maintained that “the more diverse the stakeholder groups that are involved in policy implementation, the more compromised the policy must become to satisfy divergent needs...the end result is often something that is unworkable” (p. 16). They therefore suggest involving only the core stakeholders who are directly affected by policy decisions in implementation efforts. In the case of this research, Kuenzi and McNeely (2008) noted that those most vulnerable to nature-based tourism initiatives (local and indigenous communities) should be included to bridge the gap between the tourism policy and the practice of SNBT in Trinidad and Tobago. If they are not included, they may feel disenfranchised or even driven to deplete the very resources that are to be protected or that support their livelihoods. This however, raises the issue of excluding some stakeholders from the process.

In reference to power inequality among stakeholders, Hall (1994) pointed out that “power governs the interaction of individuals, organisations and agencies influencing or trying to influence, the formulation of tourism policy and the manner in which it is implemented (p. 52). In this regard, imbalances in power can obstruct collaborative approaches and prevent stakeholders from fully participating in sustainable tourism implementation efforts. Dodds (2007c) argued that “bureaucracy and the dynamics of public sector organisations give rise to

situations where decisions are not always taken in the best interest of sustainability...people's egos, specific corporate agendas and power struggles are factors which have to be reckoned with" (p. 60). Oftentimes during local forums, focus groups and/or consultancy sessions stakeholders who possess power and influence, in most cases members of the private sector (tour operators, hoteliers, restaurant owners) are the most vocal and persuasive when highlighting issues, giving recommendations or making decisions. Those with less influence (community members and NGOs) sometimes do not get the same opportunity to express their views and if advice is given, there is no guarantee that it will be carried out. This frustration is constantly experienced by local NGOs and community members in Trinidad and Tobago, causing them to be hesitant when their involvement or contribution is requested in subsequent sessions.

Although the implementation of sustainable nature based tourism requires full community support, in reality, not all parties will be interested in taking part in such initiatives. A respondent from the research conducted by Muangasame and McKercher (2014) pointed out that there is "a general misconception that the whole community is ready to welcome so-called 'agreed' upon plans and each member would react to its objectives in the same way" (p, 4). Sindiga (1999) claimed that the assumption that local communities are homogenous groups is far from the truth and diversity can lead to conflict rather than participation. He noted that "every community is made up of diverse elements on the basis of defined criteria such as income, education, religious affiliation, gender, resource ownership and so on" (p. 114). It is therefore necessary that policy makers and administrators are aware of the varying segments existing in communities in order to advance policy goals and objectives that can be common to and benefit all groups.

Stakeholders are more willing and able to engage in sustainable tourism policy programs when they have a complete awareness and thorough understanding of what these programs entail. After careful investigation Muangasame and McKercher (2014) reported that low awareness was identified as one of the main issues in the implementation of the '7 Greens' sustainable tourism policy in Thailand. This stemmed from a lack of direct involvement in the formation of sustainable tourism policies (Waligo et al, 2013), which was then translated into a perceived lack of relevance by stakeholders and reduced their willingness to partake in the implementation of the policy. In Trinidad and Tobago, this is particularly true of non-tourism organisations who may not have participated in the tourism policy development process, but already have their own in-house sustainability programs and are not aware of how their operations influence or are influenced by sustainable tourism policy initiatives, especially as it relates to nature based tourism. They are therefore less likely to adopt programs pertaining to the tourism policy unless it can in some way be integrated into their own programs and yield some benefit.

2.6.5 LACK OF TOURISM PLAN

The conversion of sustainable tourism policies into practice is also reliant on strategic tourism plans (Inskeep, 1991; Goeldner & Ritchie, 2000). Currently, there is no active tourism plan in Trinidad and Tobago to complement the recently developed sustainable tourism policy in the execution of its goals and objectives. A strategic plan entails detailed analysis and the use of surveys to determine the applicability of measures recommended for implementation as well as the probable constraints and barriers involved in realizing policy intentions (Lai, Li & Feng, 2006). As a result, tourism plans are able to detect the likely future performance of implementation activities, that is, the likelihood of success or failure. Tourism plans also assist

implementers in the allocation and management of resources required for policy implementation. The absence of a tourism plan therefore constitutes a major element in the policy-practice mismatch and will be acknowledged in this research. According to Ramsaran (1989), a plan is more a process than a document, with the former involving the “pursuit of policies through the implementation of projects in a framework consistent with stated goals” (as cited in Wilkinson, 1997, p. 38). Along the same lines Edgell et al. (2008) defined strategic planning as:

A process aimed to optimize the benefits of tourism so that the result is a balance of appropriate quality and quantity of supply with the proper level of demand, without compromising the local’s socio-economic and environmental developments or its sustainability (p.297).

2.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The tourism industry contributes significantly to the economic growth and development of most Caribbean islands. As such, tourism is considered an integral component in national goals which is translated through policies. The literature in this study revealed that the concept of development has evolved and has affected the manner in which tourism activity is perceived and conducted. There is now a greater and more holistic emphasis on the political, socio-cultural, economic and environmental aspects of tourism activity. As such, sustainable development and sustainable tourism were highlighted and the need for their effective operationalization was deemed necessary for the survival of the tourism industry and to provide host destinations with long term, sustained benefits.

Much of the literature focused on the policy process which was examined within theoretical frameworks. Within these frameworks the varying approaches to policy development and analysis were discussed. While research on policy analysis aims to examine policies in order to make recommendations, the literature in this case was reviewed to help determine what

happened in the course of developing Trinidad and Tobago's tourism policy and the resulting implications on the execution of SNBT.

Factors contributing to the disparities between tourism policies and practices were also identified and these will be addressed to determine their influence on the implementation of SNBT in the next chapters.

Despite the industry's importance to the region, there is limited research on sustainable tourism policies, its development and more so, its' link to the practice of SNBT in the Caribbean. This research therefore adds to the body of knowledge and attempts to fill this research gap. The following chapter discusses the methods employed in this thesis research.

CHAPTER THREE- RESEARCH METHODS

In this chapter, the philosophy behind the choice and use of particular research methods were explored together with the different techniques and procedures used to gather and analyse data. The primary goal of this thesis was to conduct an in-depth investigation of Trinidad and Tobago's national tourism policy. This involved a critical examination of its formulation processes, the extent to which its content adhered to the principles of sustainable tourism development and its influence on the execution of SNBT.

Due to the intricacies of this research, a case study of Trinidad and Tobago was undertaken focusing on different units of analysis. These units consisted of thematic content analysis, field research methods (focus group and semi-structured interviews) and a review of secondary sources of data. These methods facilitated the emergence of new data as the research proceeded, making it possible to garner more information thus gaining a comprehensive understanding of the research topic. The outcome of this acquired knowledge included a host of action-based recommendations relative to Trinidad and Tobago at a national level. Additionally, I am now afforded the opportunity to add to the existing body of literature in topics pertaining to tourism policy processes, sustainable tourism development and nature-based tourism specific to the Caribbean or island destinations.

3.1 CASE STUDY RESEARCH APPROACH

Researchers who aspire to comprehend complex social phenomena, retain holistic, real-world experiences and/or acquire a detailed understanding of organizational processes usually focus on a 'case' by conducting a case study research (Hartley, 2004; Yin, 2014). As such, a case study approach was thought to be the best fit as a methodological choice, in the critical analysis of Trinidad and Tobago's policy's content and processes, while simultaneously putting the

theoretical issues that were explored in the literature into perspective (Hartley, 2004). According to Cotty (2003), methodology governs the choice and use of methods that researchers utilize. It is “the strategy, plan of action, process or design lying behind the choice and use of particular methods and linking the choice and use of methods to desired outcomes” (Cotty, 2003, p. 3).

Due to the comprehensive nature of its research issues, case studies are best approached through a combination of methods, be it qualitative, quantitative or both. Prompted by this observation, Hartley (2004) made the distinction that a case study is more of a research strategy than a research method. While, Stake (2000) contended that:

A case study is not a methodological choice but a choice of what is to be studied. By whatever methods, we choose to study the case. We could study it analytically or holistically, entirely by repeated measures or hermeneutically, organically or culturally, and by mixed methods- but we concentrate, at least for the time being, on the case (p. 435).

This research adopted an instrumental case study to gain a deeper insight into issues and not particularly the case itself. According to Stake (2000) the case only plays a secondary or supporting role, enabling the researcher to better understand something else. In the case of Trinidad and Tobago for instance, although the nature-based tourism activities and operations of the highlighted stakeholders were of significant interest to be explored in detail, they were chosen solely as appropriate avenues to further analyze the national tourism policy and investigate the factors that influence the implementation of SNBT. However, because the current research topic revolved around a number of simultaneous interests, confining it to just one category was difficult. With this being said, aspects of this study also fell under the classification of an intrinsic case study.

Stake (2000) noted that an intrinsic case study is carried out because the researcher desires a better understanding of a particular case. He went further to add “it is not undertaken

primarily because the case represents other cases or because it illustrates a particular trait or problem, but because in all its particularity and ordinariness, this case itself is of interest” (Stake, 2000, p. 437). The purpose of this thesis was not to build theory, but was instead based on my personal, deep-seated interest in tourism policy and nature-based tourism, specifically in Trinidad and Tobago. Taking into account my country’s unique characteristics, that is, its historical background, physical setting, political climate and natural resources, provided ample justification for this research to be considered partially an intrinsic case study.

Varying typologies of case study research were also considered in the preparation of this thesis, but only a combination of two- explanatory and evaluative (Veal 2011) were incorporated. These are briefly outlined in Table 4. In the first instance, my research was explanatory as it described the extent to which the concept of sustainable tourism development was integrated into the national tourism policy and its’ translation into the practice of SNBT. Based on the outcome of this case study I was also able to gauge or confirm whether or not the concept of sustainable tourism development was applied and its effect on SNBT operations in Trinidad and Tobago. Additionally, research findings highlighted concerns which warranted recommendations for modifications to be made or alternatives to be sought.

On the other hand, this thesis was also considered a form of evaluative research as it assessed the effectiveness of the policy by focusing on the operations of a few nature based tourism stakeholders together with the challenges and shortcomings raised in relation to the disparities that exist between the tourism policy and the practice of SNBT.

Table 4. Case study research typologies: theory and policy

TYPE OF RESEARCH	RESEARCH PURPOSE	CASE STUDY OUTCOMES
Explanatory research	Testing a single existing theory (concept in this case)	Case study confirms applicability of theory in at least one setting or, alternatively, raises doubts as to applicability of theory and suggests modification or alternatives
Evaluative research	Testing effectiveness of a single policy	Case study confirms effectiveness of the policy in at least one setting or, alternatively, raises doubts as to effectiveness of the policy and possibly suggests modification or alternatives
	Establishing need for policy measures	The case study outlines the current problems and their likely causes and suggests the need for policy action

Source: Veal (2011, p.345)

As previously highlighted, due to the contextual and analytic nature of this research topic, the case study approach integrated a range of research methods starting first with thematic content analysis or document analysis, followed by semi- structured interviews, focus groups and secondary data analysis. Some context of Trinidad and Tobago was provided to better establish the social relevance of the study, while other sections explored the techniques used to collect data in order to analyse the national tourism policy in terms of how its processes and framework influences the implementation of sustainable nature based tourism.

3.2 BACKGROUND OF STUDY AREA

Unlike its Caribbean counterparts, Trinidad and Tobago's economic focus, since the time of its independence from Britain in 1962, has always been on the energy sector. This sector is the country's chief economic driver and accounts for almost 45% of its' GDP (Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs, 2014). According to the *Gross Domestic Product Data (2009-2013)* produced by the Central Statistical Office in 2013, the energy sector alone reportedly contributed

\$TT64, 887.50 million (at current prices) to Trinidad and Tobago's GDP (Ministry of Planning and Sustainable Development, 2014). As a result, Trinidad and Tobago's tourism industry is less developed in comparison to its Caribbean neighbours, which is clearly illustrated by the statistical reports generated by the World Travel and Tourism Council (2014). Using Trinidad and Tobago and Bahamas as examples, the report indicated that the sector's (i.e. travel and tourism) total contribution to Trinidad and Tobago's GDP in 2013 was 8.2% of total GDP and was forecasted to rise by 2.9 % in 2014, while for the Bahamas, the sector accounted for just about 46.0 % of total GDP in 2013, which was expected to rise by 7.0 % in 2014. In terms of employment (both direct and indirect) in Trinidad and Tobago, the industry generated less than 5% of jobs in 2013, with rates expected to decline by 1.2% in the following year. For the Bahamas, in 2013 direct and indirect jobs supported by the industry accounted for 54.5% of total employment (102,500 jobs), with an anticipated increase to just about 60% in 2014 (WTTC, 2013).

Despite these glaring contrasts, Trinidad and Tobago is in a considerably unique position where it can safely observe the operations of its regional neighbours and learn from their successes and failures, as it embarks on its own journey of tourism development. The first officially documented step of this journey is discussed in the following section.

3.2.1 INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK AND TOURISM POLICY DEVELOPMENT

The policy and institutional framework for tourism in Trinidad and Tobago is characterised by a decentralised form of governance. The sector is governed and controlled by the MOT that bears the responsibility of tourism policy development, monitoring and evaluation together with facilitating and managing tourism development functions. The TDC acts as the implementation arm of the MOT, charged also with the task of promoting and supporting

Trinidad and Tobago's tourism product through product development, marketing and promotion as well as destination management. Specific to the sister isle of Tobago, the Tobago House of Assembly (THA) a local government authority that looks after the overall 'on the ground' management of the island of Tobago, while the Division of Tourism and Transportation is the main implementing agent for the THA with respect to tourism development. There is a national Standing Committee on Tourism, which is a formalised mechanism of consultation and collaboration among stakeholders (representatives from key governmental and tourism related organisations both in the public and private sector) focusing on important issues pertaining to tourism (Trinidad and Tobago Tourism Master Plan, 1995; National Tourism Policy of Trinidad and Tobago, 2010).

In recent years, the government of Trinidad and Tobago has made attempts to diversify the economy that has historically relied on the production and exportation of oil and natural gas for its wealth (Vision 2020 Draft National Strategic Plan, 2005). These efforts however, have primarily been geared towards job creation and increasing foreign exchange earnings, spanning over a twenty year period. Beginning in 1994, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago commissioned a National Tourism Plan, which was completed in 1995 and at that time provided a road map to guide the development of tourism (Vision 2020 Strategic Tourism Development Plan, 2004). This plan highlighted key issues and constraints that were thought to hinder the proper development of the tourism industry. These issues included: the absence of a common vision; the tourism product's inability to match international standards; the lack of proper environmental management and environmental protection strategies; little to no research, promotion and infrastructural development (Vision 2020 Strategic Tourism Development Plan, 2004, p. 8). The plan's guidelines were then used by the Tourism and Industrial Development

Company of Trinidad and Tobago (TIDCO) now TDC to formulate a marketing strategy to position Trinidad and Tobago's tourism products separately. Trinidad was promoted as a hub for culture, events, meetings and conventions as well as cruise and eco/soft adventure pursuits. Tobago on the other hand, was advertised as offering mostly 3S tourism, together with dive, weddings and honeymoons, game fishing and golf tourism (Vision 2020 Strategic Tourism Development Plan, 2004).

The national tourism policy was first drafted by the MOT in 1999 but failed to receive government's approval, even after its revision in 2001. A new draft was then prepared in 2003, but had yet to go through the customary consultative and approval processes. Using a collaborative approach to policy making, the MOT then coordinated the efforts of a Policy Working Committee comprising of the MOT, the TDC, policy advisors and other technical staff to properly develop this draft between the years 2006 to 2007. Further revisions were made in 2008 and in 2010 the policy was reviewed and again revised to ensure alignment with the national policy agenda, that is, the achievement of sustainable development.

The approved national tourism policy was deemed proof of the country's changing ideological perspectives, where economic concepts were once the main indicators of its development status. Now, a greater emphasis is on the social and environmental aspects of development. To date, the initial Tourism Master Plan developed in 1995 is inactive and is yet to be revised or a new one developed.

3.2.2 TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO'S TOURISM PRODUCT PORTFOLIO

Although Trinidad and Tobago is a twin island nation, each island boasting its own tourism product. Trinidad offers both cultural and business tourism, attracting for the most part business travellers and returning nationals visiting friends and relatives (VFRs) from North

America and the Caribbean region. Tobago on the other hand, is known for its rustic, idyllic environment, suitable for leisure tourism, with its main source markets being UK, Europe and Trinidad (National Tourism Policy, 2010). Both islands draw to its shores eco and adventure tourists, but these tourist numbers are significantly lower than the dominant tourism niches previously highlighted. These disparities in numbers highlight an opportunity for both islands to develop its eco and adventure tourism product offerings all of which fall under nature based tourism (Section 2.2), implement SNBT and expand the industry’s current tourism portfolio. Table 5 gives a summary of Trinidad and Tobago’s tourism products and source markets.

Table 5. Trinidad and Tobago’s Tourism Products and Source Markets

	TRINIDAD	TOBAGO
Unique Selling Proposition (USP)	Cultural diversity and state of the art meeting and conventions infrastructure	Infrastructurally developed, yet semi-rustic, idyllic island-environment Close proximity to the island of Trinidad
Main Types of Visitors	Business travelers Returning residents Independent travelers (not on pre-paid packaged holidays)	European leisure travelers on pre-paid packaged holidays Trinidadians on short trips and week-end visits, long summer holidays
Main Source Markets	USA Caribbean Region	UK & Europe Domestic market (Trinidad)
Main Markets	Business Tourism	Beaches, leisure, sun, sand & sea tourism
Current Targeted Market Niches	Business Ecotourism, Events and cultural attractions Shopping Nightlife Historical sites Health Sports	Diving & Water Sports Ecotourism Events and cultural attractions Diving Weddings & honeymoons Yachting Historical sites Health

Source: National Tourism Policy of Trinidad and Tobago, 2010, p. 13

3.2.3 NATURE-BASED TOURISM IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

While Trinidad and Tobago is famously known as the birthplace of steelpan and calypso and boasts of hosting 'The Greatest Show on Earth' - Carnival, unknowing to many, it is also the home of a rich and diverse biodiversity that can facilitate a wide range of sustainable tourism activities and initiatives that depend on natural settings. As such, this research will focus on nature based tourism as a whole that incorporates an entire subsector of the tourism industry that includes submarkets, namely nature, eco- and adventure tourism (NEAT), differentiated according to the travel motives of tourists.

Geographically connected to the South American mainland, the twin island state has an inherent and unique selling position being the only Caribbean island destination possessing the characteristics of a South American continent. Trinidad offers a spectrum of soft adventure activities from hiking through rainforests and exploring caves to turtle watching and kayaking. With more than 450 bird species and popular types of game fish, it has proven to be a bird watchers paradise and destination where anglers can enjoy game fishing all year round. Tobago on its own has the oldest protected rainforest in the Western Hemisphere. Protected since 1776, Tobago's Main Ridge Forest Reserve hosts a diverse selection of flora and fauna. With over 300 species of South Atlantic corals and 600 species of fish, diving is a very popular past time in Tobago. The island is distinctly known for its unspoilt and secluded beaches that can be found in the most unlikely pockets throughout the island. They offer a serene and laid back getaway from the hustle and bustle of daily life. Sherman and Dixon (1991) noted that "as economic growth and development proceed, the number of 'wild places' will increase" (p. 123). With this in mind, it is imperative for Trinidad and Tobago to utilize its abundance of natural resources and

attractions in an effort to differentiate its tourism product not only within the regional market but also on an international, global scale.

Throughout this research, references made to SNBT are related mostly to organisations and communities (e.g. Grand Riviere, Brasso Seco and Matura) along the north-eastern coast of Trinidad, also known as the country's 'Green Belt' (See Figure 5). Organisations like Nature Seekers, Turtle Village Trust and Brasso Seco Tourism Action Committee are well known for their contributions to environmental protection and conservation, efforts geared towards sustained livelihoods and involvement in SNBT activities. For instance, Nature Seekers' core activities revolve around conservation efforts aimed at protecting and preserving the leatherback turtle population. The NGO has also become increasingly more involved in other nature-based initiatives, all of which utilize the community's nature resources, namely tour operating, reforestation projects, natural craft and recyclable programmes and annual beach clean ups. Turtle Village Trust works towards the sustainable development of communities along the north-eastern coast of Trinidad, capacity building, and sea turtle conservation, while Brasso Seco Tourism Action Committee's efforts are specifically geared towards sustainable community development based on their surrounding environmental resources. These organisations and the communities in which they oversee and operate in are considered operational models/benchmarks within the nature based tourism fraternity.



Figure 5. Nature based tourism along the North-Eastern coast of Trinidad. Source: Turtle Village Trust website (www.turtlevillagetrust.org)

3.3 METHODS

Data for this research was collected from primary and secondary sources. These included thematic content analysis, a focus group session, semi- structured interviews and secondary sources of data. These methods were conducted in stages, where each one informed the other that followed suit. An overview of these can be found in Appendix A.

The research population consisted of a cross section of stakeholders who assisted in the development of the tourism policy, are currently responsible for policy implementation initiatives or are actively involved in environmentally based operations or SNBT activities. These stakeholders either participated in the focus group session or were among a list of key informants interviewed.

3.3.1 THEMATIC CONTENT ANALYSIS

Critically analyzing the content of the national tourism policy with respect to sustainability and its influence on the implementation of SNBT was one of the main motives for conducting this research. Taking this into consideration, thematic content analysis was thought to be the most suitable research method to facilitate this purpose. With this method, the policy's textual content was the main focus of study and its data observed and interpreted (Veal, 2011; Timothy, 2012). According to Veal (2011) "content analysis... [involves] detailed analysis of the contents of a certain body of literature or other documentary source as texts" (p. 164).

Thematic analysis, the most common approach in this form of content analysis was conducted as a means of dissecting the national tourism policy's content and involved a process of identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Becoming familiar with the data was the first step in this approach and was done by reading through an extensive list of journal articles, books and other studies. This allowed me to

accumulate prior knowledge of the research topic, and identify relevant themes I deemed interesting enough to examine in further detail. This was complemented by a detailed review of Trinidad and Tobago's tourism policy, where the document itself was read over twice. Notes were taken, briefly outlining what was in the policy and specific points of interest. These were later used in the development of a coding scheme. According to Lewis-Beck, Bryman and Liao (2004), in thematic content analysis "the coding scheme is based on categories designed to capture dominant themes in a text" (p. 185).

Due to the fact that there is no universal coding scheme (Lewis-Beck et al., 2004), I used my notes to organize the policy's data into sets of 'coding categories' following the sustainable tourism policy framework outlined in Section 2.5.1. Coding categories possessed characteristics of interests based on the themes highlighted in the framework and included data excerpts relevant to the policy being holistic and consistent with national goals; facilitating stakeholder involvement and collaboration; addressing tourism education, training and awareness in addition to focusing on environmental considerations. Each section of the national tourism policy was read and excerpts containing information related to the varying coding categories were grouped accordingly. Based on the frequency of particular groups of data found under each coding category, patterns in the data were revealed and themes generated. Generated themes were then refined at an explicit level, that is, specific and straight to the point, without going beyond what was initially written in the document. Part of the refining process involved writing a detailed analysis of each theme, to describe the 'story' each theme was attempting to tell as well as how each one related to the overarching research topic and questions.

3.3.2 FOCUS GROUP

The second research method involved a focus group. This was conducted to discuss the tourism policy's sustainable content, the processes involved in its' development as well as the factors influencing the practice of SNBT. According to Lewis-Beck et al. (2004) a focus group is "a research interviewing process specifically designed to uncover insights from a small group of subjects" (p.391). It utilizes pre-determined questions, deliberately sequenced in order to guide debates toward concepts of interest (Lewis-Becket al., 2004). The initial aim at the beginning of this study was to conduct two focus group sessions, however due to scheduling constraints several respondents opted to have individual and separate interviews. In the end six (6) out of the seven (7) individuals who agreed to participate attended the focus group session. These included three (3) representatives from the Tourism Development Company; one (1) from the Environmental Management Authority, one (1) from Turtle Village Trust and one (1) from the MOT (See Table 6). While there is no set number for a focus group, to establish a balance literature usually suggests having six to twelve participants (Lewis-Beck et al., 2004; Veal, 2011; Coles, Duval & Shaw, 2013). A balance was indeed established and the group comprised of representatives from a community group whose main focus is geared towards conservation and SNBT efforts; local and central government agencies; the MOT and its implementation arm-TDC. The ideal size of the group according to Carter & Low (2012), ensured that there was enough people to generate discussion but not too many that it became difficult to effectively facilitate a debate or give each participant the opportunity to make a contribution or express their views.

Conducting a focus group was no easy task and its success was contingent on prior preparation and planning. As previously highlighted, I was able to informally meet some of these

individuals in June 2014 on a preliminary research trip to Trinidad. At first, through purposive sampling, I went through a list of official websites linked to government departments, tourism boards and organisations, tour operators and non-governmental organisations that were known to be actively involved in sustainable tourism efforts or nature based tourism programs. After reviewing these websites to determine the organisations' contribution to sustainability, tourism policy development, tourism policy implementation, the environment and nature-based tourism, contact was made via telephone requesting an opportunity to speak to anyone who was capable of providing assistance with my research. In most instances I was given the email address of individuals involved in the above listed categories and told to provide an overview of my research and a list of key questions. After sending out several emails, meetings were arranged with those who responded. Phone calls were made prior to each scheduled meeting as a reminder and added confirmation. A snowball sampling method, where participants are used as a source of suggestions for additional contacts (Veal, 2011) was employed at each meeting and further informal interviews were set up based on these referrals. Meetings took the form of casual conversations, using an initial list of questions to guide discussions. Different questions were asked to different individuals based on their occupation or the organisation they belonged to. Correspondence with these contacts was maintained and in August 2015, some of these same individuals formed part of the study's focus group. Additionally, the information obtained from these discussions not only helped clarify my research topic but played an instrumental role in developing the questions and themes used in the focus group session and subsequent semi-structured interviews.

In organizing the focus group, personal contact was first made with all participants via email, telephone or personal visits giving a brief introduction to the research and an outline of its

purpose. Keeping in mind the schedules and professional portfolios of all participants I was able to set a date, time and location that was mutually convenient. Reminders were sent two days prior to the focus group's scheduled date highlighting these details. Approximately one dozen open-ended questions were developed beforehand (See Appendix B), designed to provoke conversation. Questions were asked in a particular order, from general to specific ones pertaining to the most important topics or issues. Each participant at the close of the focus group session was asked the same ending question as well as summary comments and opportunity to summarise their comments.

I, the researcher operated in the capacity of the facilitator and was responsible for moderating the session, making sure discussions remained engaging and on target, covering all aspects of the research topic. The focus group session commenced with introductions and ice breakers where each participant was given the opportunity to familiarize themselves with representatives from other organisations and express their interests and contributions to nature-based tourism activities, tourism policy formulation, or implementation processes. Ground rules were established and participants informed that the session would be recorded with a digital recorder. Group members were assured of confidentiality and that their identities would remain anonymous, even after the research was complete. Care was taken to ensure all participants were given a fair chance to share their comments and perspectives, within the allotted time, in a respectful and efficient manner without being prompted for answers. All participants were respectful of each other and eager to share their views, so there was no need to implement control mechanisms to address overly vocal or enthusiastic respondents that possessed the ability to dominate discussions or encourage hesitant ones (Lewis-Beck et al., 2004). Refreshments were provided as an incentive, and informants were free to serve themselves during the session.

The discussion period then ensued by asking the pre-designed questions and lasted no more than two hours.

In addition to being recorded, my mother and friend assisted by being the second and third researchers, acting as observers and making notes on the discussion. Their notes and the items noted on a flip chart were used to produce a written summary of the recordings (Veal, 2011). This flip chart was especially useful when connecting perspectives or reminding participants of their previous comments. It should be noted that prior to the focus group session, all researchers including myself met to briefly discuss issues related to confidentiality, the research, the question guide and note taking processes.

The recorded focus group session was listened to on two different occasions and compared to written notes and discussed observations. These were transcribed within a week and analysed using the same coding process as with the semi-structured interviews. These will be discussed in the subsequent section.

Focus groups are particularly beneficial at the early stages of research and when combined with other research strategies (triangulation) (Carter & Low, 2012). The interactive nature of focus groups where participants are free to respectfully express themselves, challenge, verify and learn from what others are saying and assist in collaborative and generative enquiry (Carter & Low, 2012), allows the researcher to collect a wide range of opinions and information from participants belonging to major subgroups and organisations all at the same time. This information provided an in-depth overview of the research topic which was then utilized throughout the research process.

Table 6. Focus Group Population

	ORGANISATION	DESIGNATED TITLE	ABBRIVIATED TITLE	TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
FOCUS GROUP	Ministry of Tourism	Tourism Policy Officer	TPO	1
	Tourism Development Company	Tourism Development Personnel	TDP1 TDP2 TDP3	3
	Environmental Management Authority	Environmental Management Officer	EMO	1
	Turtle Village Trust-NGO	Sea Turtle Conservationist	STC	1
TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS				6

3.3.3 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

A semi-structured interview is a conversation between a researcher and a participant, where partially structured and open ended questions are used to illicit views and opinions from participants (Creswell, 2014). Oftentimes, rather than a formal questionnaire, semi-structured interviews sometimes use an interview guide or a check list of topics to be raised, together with a few key pre-determined, prescribed questions. This particular interview format is “adaptable to a wide range of themes and topics” (McGhee, 2012, p. 370) and creates opportunities to expand on themes and concepts that may unexpectedly arise since it gives the researcher enough scope to ask additional questions based on respondents’ previous responses. McGhee (2012) noted that this method of research is “well suited for issue-oriented research and questions or problems [and] is valuable when the researcher wants to capture an informant’s ideas, thoughts and experiences in their own words” (p. 370).

I was able to carry out semi-structured interviews which complemented information received from the focus group session. Interviewees consisted of individuals from different stakeholder groups and sectors including SNBT operators, community tourism action groups,

members of Nature Seekers, a tourism policy consultant and representatives from varying but relevant arms of local and central government, namely the Forestry Division, EMA, TDC and the MOT (See Table 7).

Table 7. Interview Population

	ORGANISATION	DESIGNATED TITLE	ABBRIVIATED TITLE	TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
INTERVIEWS	Tourism Intelligence International	Tourism Policy Consultant	TPC	1
	Ministry of Planning and Sustainable Development	Planning and Sustainable Development Coordinator	PSDC	1
	Forestry Division	Forestry Officer	FO1 FO2	2
	Tourism Development Company	Chief Tourism Development Officer	CTDO	1
	Brasso Seco Tourism Action Committee-CBO	Brasso Seco Tourism Action Committee Member	BSTAC 1 BSTAC 2	2
	Nature Seekers-NGO	Managing Director of Nature Seekers	MDNS	1
	Asa Wright Nature Centre	Sustainable Nature Based Tourism Operator	NBTO1	1
	Nature Trekking in Trinidad and Tobago	Sustainable Nature Based Tourism Operator	NBTO2	1
	Matura community member	Matura Community member	CM	1
TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS				11

The main aim of conducting the semi- structured interviews was to gain a deeper understanding of the national tourism policy in terms of the processes involved in its formulation; assessing the degree to which the policy’s content is aligned to the principles of sustainable tourism development as well as to determine how the policy’s framework affects the implementation of SNBT. The findings in turn highlighted the potential gaps that exist between

the tourism policy and the sustainable execution of nature-based tourism initiatives. According to Ryan (1995) questions were open ended (without fixed categories for responses) in order to gain more spontaneous opinions and to avoid the potential bias from restricting responses to the researcher's own fixed categories (as cited in Yuksel, Bramwell & Yuksel, 1999, p. 355).

Participants were contacted in advance either in person, over the phone or via email, to set up interview dates and times that were most convenient to them. A few days before the scheduled interview dates, participants received reminder phone calls or emails. Interviews generally took no more than forty five minutes to one hour and with participants' permission, sessions were audio recorded and supplemented with detailed notes during and after interviews. To help elicit information and ensure all relevant topics were covered, a list of pertinent themes and questions were prepared in advance and outlined in an interview guide (See Appendix B). Veal (2011) pointed out that in practice, as a qualitative research method, semi-structured interviews "allows the range of topics- and hence the content of the checklist- to evolve during the research process...new topics may emerge from interviewees themselves" (p. 241).

The questions and issues outlined in the interview guide flowed in a sequential order. Some questions were specific and consistent which facilitated comparative analysis of responses that were already given, while others were broad and gave respondents freedom to express themselves and discuss issues that they perceived to be important. Sensitive issues were avoided in questioning, but when they arose, participants were given the freedom to discuss them as confidentiality was assured at the beginning of each interview session. It is important to note that even though issues covered were standard throughout all interviews, questions and emphasis sometimes varied depending on informants' positions or status. At the end of each interview, a snowballing method was employed and participants were asked to suggest other individuals who

they believed would provide in-depth and pertinent information related to the research topic. Following each interview session, an appreciation email was sent thanking individuals for their cooperation and contribution to my research. I also attempted to transcribe them as soon as possible.

The data was analyzed using six phases of thematic analysis developed by Braun and Clark (2006). These steps are outlined in Table 8. Having familiarized myself with the transcripts, reading each one over twice, the next step involved generating initial codes which were later used to identify themes. With the use of a table, the codes for each interview and their corresponding data extracts were listed. Each code and data extract was numbered for easier reference to transcripts. These were then printed and different coloured pens were used to make connections and highlight themes. Under the different themes, the numbered codes and assembled extracts were collated. Generated themes were then evaluated for their validity and relevance to the entire data set. The final stages consisted of defining and naming each theme in order to capture their essence and produce a final report. This is where salient extracts were used to provide supporting evidence of each theme presented.

It should be noted that the utilization of a coding process was sourced from the principles of grounded theory which involves the generation of new theories from data (Levy, 2015). However the use of the coding process in this research was simply to facilitate a thematic approach to policy analysis and not the construction of new theories.

Table 8. Phases of thematic analysis

Phase	Stages	Description of process
1	Familiarising yourself with your data	- 'Repeated reading' of the data and making notes of initial ideas. - Transcription of data.
2	Generating initial codes	- Production of initial codes - Systematic coding throughout the entire data set. - Matching and collating data extracts to codes.
3	Searching for and identifying themes	- Sorting different codes into potential themes. - Collating all relevant coded extracts into identified themes.
4	Reviewing themes	- Evaluating the relevance of collated extracts to themes - Evaluating the validity of individual themes to entire data set.
5	Defining and naming themes	- Define and refine themes, i.e. identify the essence of each theme. - Conduct and write a detailed analysis for each theme Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme and overall story of the analysis. - Consider whether or not themes contain sub-themes. - Give final themes working titles.
6	Producing the report	- Final analysis and write up of report. - Provide sufficient evidence of the themes, i.e. extracts that capture the essence of the demonstrated point.

Source: Braun and Clark (2006)

3.3.4 SECONDARY DATA SOURCES

While thematic content analysis, focus groups and semi-structured interviews were the principal sources of qualitative data used in this thesis, I was also able to utilize secondary sources of data. These were sourced from the libraries and data bases of the MOT, TDC, CTO and Nature Seekers. Information took the form of published and unpublished government documents, government statistics, past tourism plans, regional tourism frameworks, findings from Nature Seekers and academic articles. Notable documents included the *Tourism Master Plan 1995*, the *Caribbean Tourism Organisation's (CTO) Regional Sustainable Tourism Development Policy Framework* (2008), the *Vision 2020 Draft Final Tourism Sub-Committee Report* and the *Vision 2020 Draft National Strategic Plan of Trinidad and Tobago*.

Information retrieved from these sources was used to justify and supplement the data collected from the focus group and semi-structured interviews as a means of ensuring reliability of data. Data was matched against academic literature to make comparisons, contrasts or to support findings. There are several advantages of using secondary sources of data. In the first instance, they supplement and validate primary data and compare and contrast findings to relevant academic literature, which may not have arisen with primary, purpose-designed data collection (Veal, 2011). Secondary sources may prove effective at identifying policy issues which can then facilitate problem solving, policy reform and modification of implementation strategies. Finally, secondary sources of data have the potential to reveal gaps in past and existing studies, leading to new research and advancement in tourism literature. It is my hope that this thesis stimulates future research in the area of tourism policy specifically in the Caribbean region and sheds some light into the practice of sustainable tourism and the promotion of SNBT.

Despite these advantages, secondary sources of data are often criticized for having embedded biases from the initial researcher and being unreliable and difficult to verify. This is due to the fact that the data may have been originally designed for other purposes and as such information may be varied or diverse and not necessarily ideal for current research. These shortcomings were mitigated by collaborating findings with informants, even after the focus groups session or scheduled interviews.

3.4 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This research was reviewed by the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Waterloo and received full ethical clearance. Participation in this study was voluntary and all respondents were recruited via email, telephone or a personal visit. Those contacted via email were sent two letters (See Appendix C and D) giving a brief summary of the research and its purpose as well as requesting assistance in the form attending an interview and/or focus group session. A verbal recruitment script (See Appendix E) was utilized when communicating with informants over the phone and arrangements were then made to email the information and focus group letters. Those individuals who were met in person, a hard copy of these letters were also provided.

Focus group and interview sessions commenced first with seeking participants' permission to audio record their responses as well as take notes. Furthermore, informants were provided with a consent form (See Appendix F) where they indicated their willingness to participate in the study, were informed of having the freedom to ask questions and withdraw consent or assistance at any time of the research and that their departments' or organisations' names will only be used once permission was granted. My mother and friend who both assisted me at the focus group were given confidentiality statements (See Appendix G) to sign, instructing them to keep all data collected during the study confidential.

Completion of the focus group session and interviews were marked by an appreciation letter (See Appendix H) thanking all respondents for their contributions in the study. Those who requested feedback on the study were emailed a copy of Chapter 4 (Results and Analysis) and Chapter 5 (Discussion) of the thesis, along with a feedback letter (See Appendix I).

3.5 RESEARCH CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

The main drawback experienced in conducting this study was time. Due to respondents' tight schedules, it was sometimes difficult to find an appropriate interview time. Frequent cancellations and rescheduling took place and one interview in particular was conducted in fifteen minutes as opposed to the average time frame of forty-five minutes to an hour. This was exacerbated by upcoming elections, resulting in many individuals being occupied with closing reports and impromptu meetings. While my initial timeline for field research was two months, in actuality, it took three months to accumulate research data. This however did not affect the affect my findings.

This chapter has provided an outline of the methodology and research methods that was used to collect and analyse data. The findings and results from this stage of research are presented and in Chapter 5

CHAPTER FOUR – RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

A descriptive approach is used in this chapter to present the findings acquired from the data collection process. This process involved the application of thematic content analysis, a focus group session, semi-structured interviews and secondary sources of analysis. Field research participants included individuals involved in the development of the tourism policy, policy implementation personnel, SNBT operators, leaders of community groups, environmental and forestry officials and conservationists. Four overarching themes emerged from the questions posed from the interview guide. These broad themes were then deconstructed into sub themes utilizing a coding process outlined in Table 8 to facilitate further analysis.

4.1 SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND TOURISM POLICY FORMATION

This section's findings relate to research questions one and two (See Section 1.5) and examines the extent to which the principles of sustainable tourism development framed the development of the tourism policy. This aspect forms the core of this research, and as indicated in Chapter 1, is expected to have a direct impact on the execution of SNBT. Additionally, findings will focus on the motives, strategies and processes involved in the development of the national tourism policy.

4.1.1 THE GENESIS OF THE NATIONAL TOURISM POLICY

For almost two decades tourism has been identified as an area of national priority and a means of diversifying Trinidad and Tobago's economic base. According to one of the respondents who played a key role in the development of the national tourism policy and is now a Tourism Policy Officer (TPO), "during the 1990's, the government recognized the need for economic diversification and thus intensified its efforts by targeting several sectors including the tourism sector".

Diversification efforts in the context of Trinidad and Tobago's economy, translated into exploring other sources, apart from the oil and gas industry, for foreign exchange earnings and employment creation. Taking this into account, the tourism industry was perceived by government to be a viable economic alternative. This was highlighted in the *Medium Term Policy Framework 1993-1995* (1992) where it states "Of all the sectors, tourism has the potential to generate employment opportunities within a short period of time" (Medium Term Policy Framework 1993-1995, 1992, p. 38).

In a nutshell, the formulation of the national tourism policy was the end result of government's recognition that a strategic approach was imperative to successfully develop its tourism industry and diversify its economy. This tactical decision is noted in the National Tourism Policy document, as:

The Government has increased its thrust towards diversifying the economy in order to enhance the revenue and job creation potential of several key industries, one of which is tourism, and recognises that the development of the sector requires a more strategic approach to long term competitiveness (National Tourism Policy of Trinidad and Tobago, 2010, p. 1).

Tourism was also considered a means of achieving national socio-economic objectives. The TPO noted, "The tourism sector was seen as key in the provision of socio-economic opportunities for wide cross sections of local communities, including rural communities in Trinidad and Tobago". Further substantiation for this motive is found in the tourism policy itself where it states "Tourism development shall be undertaken in a sustainable and responsible manner so that the sector realizes its full potential to engage local communities, create economic opportunities and alleviate poverty" (National Tourism Policy of Trinidad and Tobago, 2010, p. 1).

As previously mentioned, the government considered the formulation of the tourism policy a strategic approach to tourism development. However, there were other policy issues on a national scale that threatened to hinder the potential development and success of Trinidad and Tobago's tourism industry. These further solidified the need for the tourism policy. The TPO offered an extensive list which included:

- The need for a sturdy institutional framework for tourism development
- Health, safety and security
- Product development and marketing –the tourism product is not up to international standards and a distinct destination image
- Lack of sound information management, continuous research and analysis
- Environmental conservation- the environment and natural resource base are not sufficiently protected.
- The need to engage local communities to encourage involvement or participation.
- Overall communication channels lack effectiveness and efficiency
- Tourism investment climate is not competitive and needs to be enhanced
- The need for efficient and cost effective transportation options to facilitate accessibility
- Information Communication Technology

4.1.2 THE NATIONAL TOURISM POLICY FORMULATION PROCESS

With the identification of policy issues put onto the national agenda, the next step involved the formulation of the national tourism policy, which involved the establishment of a Policy Working Committee. When asked to identify the key institutions, agencies or individuals

that constituted the Policy Working Committee along with their main roles and responsibilities in policy's development, the TPO stated:

The key members of the Policy Working Committee consisted of representatives from MOT, TDC and THA. Apart from the Working Committee, other significant tourism stakeholders were also invited to actively partake at different stages of the tourism policy process. These stakeholders included tourism and hospitality facility owners, operators, tour guides, tour operators, taxi operators, NGOs, CBOs and the general public. These relevant groups were selected from MOT's contact list of key tourism stakeholders as well as on the basis of the policy's overall aims and objectives and those who were expected to be the primary actors or contributors when looking at the policy's end result. The Working Committee was charged with the responsibility of identifying critical issues and developing the first draft of the tourism policy based on the existing documentation at that time.

According to the TPO, the task of identifying critical issues based on the concerns and interests of relevant stakeholders, establishing a consensus in the identification of these issues and then incorporating stakeholder input was tedious and posed several challenges to the policy development process. He highlighted:

It was indeed a task, not only in the identification of policy issues that could have been incorporated into making the policy but also trying to ensure that all highlighted issues, challenges and views mentioned were included. You see, not all issues were relevant to the policy or feasible, but we had to arrive at a consensus and this was difficult. The entire process of having to decide on a common tourism vision, objectives and policy options that reflected stakeholders' views and addresses key issues and trends was gruelling.

The ensuing stage involved a series of meetings and deliberations by the Policy Working Committee, resulting in the completion of the policy's first draft, which was then submitted to Cabinet in 2007. This, however, according to the TPO was rejected.

The revision of the first draft was done by enlisting the services of a consultant (Tourism Policy Consultant- TPC). When asked his and his organisation's specific role at this stage of policy development, the TPC responded: "we simply facilitated the stakeholder involvement

process as well as the actual drafting and development of the final revision of the tourism policy that received Cabinet's approval in 2010". He further stated:

We developed a draft document, based on directives from the Ministry of Tourism. This document was actually the revised draft policy after the initial draft failed to receive government's approval. We then took that document to all the stakeholders and added their input. So the document was sort of a discussion point or starting point. So I think we had nine national consultations, two in Tobago and seven in Trinidad.

The TPO further explained this juncture of the policy process where the revised policy was presented to stakeholders and consultation sessions were conducted. He revealed:

A series of pre-consultation meetings with select groups were held and here we would have looked at the tour guides, tour operators, the hotel association, the small accommodation and tourism operators association, the taxi drivers association, NGOs and CBOs. We had these meetings and presented the policy. We would have gotten feedback which we took into account and incorporated when revising the content of the policy. We did a similar exercise in Tobago where we had pre-consultation meetings with key stakeholder groups there including the hotel association of Tobago, tour guide association and other stakeholders, like the Chamber of Commerce. We also met with the THA to present the policy, they put forward their views and concerns and then when we revised the policy based on those pre-consultation meetings we had the public consultation.

When asked to describe the relationships among those, who at this stage were actively involved in forming the policy (the Working Committee and members of the select group who attended the pre-consultation meetings), the TPO simply stated, "There was a definite need for better collaboration in terms of multi-sectoral and inter-ministerial/agency linkages. At times the private sector priorities seemed to overshadow community issues and needs".

Subsequent to the pre-consultation meetings, public consultations were held on both islands. These meetings were advertised through local media and the policy was made available on the MOT's website. The feedback received from the select groups and the general public were then integrated into the third revision of the tourism policy. The TPO stated:

We had one public consultation in Trinidad and one in Tobago. At these consultation sessions, presentations were made and we had a session that allowed for feedback from the participants which was then incorporated to revise the tourism policy. These sessions

were advertised in the newspapers and open to the general public. Following these we revised the policy based on feedback received.

When asked if individual sessions were held with key constituents who may not have been able to attend these sessions or based on the nature of information shared opted to be interviewed alone, both the TPO and the TPC confirmed that one on one meetings were in fact conducted. “We had one on one individual meetings with key stakeholders, whether it was the Minister, the Secretary of Tourism, the head of different associations and so on, we met with them one on one and had their input” (Tourism Policy Consultant). The TPO added: “we had a small presentation with select stakeholders to get some final input from them that we then used to revise the policy once more. This revised version was submitted to Cabinet in 2009 and it was approved.”

In 2010 there was a change in government and this brought about even more changes to the already approved tourism policy. The policy now had to be aligned to new national objectives, reflecting proposals geared towards the achievement of sustainable development. This will be discussed in the following chapter. The TPO reflected: “When we had the change in government the following year we had to make some revisions to the policy to ensure alignment with the 7 Pillars. Then the policy was approved, well re-approved by the Cabinet in 2010”. These pillars (See Appendix J) outlined the sustainable framework developed by the then government and consisted of initiatives “designed to engineer a significant policy shift with positive consequences for the sustainable development of the country” (National Development Agenda for Trinidad and Tobago, 2011, p.6).

When asked to summarize the policy development process, both the TPO and TPC agreed that the initial process and policy document were quite different from the revision processes and the approved version of the national tourism policy. The TPC stated, “...so the

final product was completely different from the beginning product”, while the TPO went a little further, alluding to the fact that it employed a more integrated approach:

So it (the initial policy document) went through a process, but the initial process, coming up with the initial document in 2007 was different to the process that was followed in 2008. We had a Working Committee comprising members of the Ministry of Tourism, TDC and the THA, but when the policy was revised in 2008, the Permanent Secretary at the time solicited the services of the consultant who then made revisions to the policy based on that base document from 2007. But then we went out to stakeholders and we got feedback which would have been incorporated and so on. And of course we got feedback internally from the relevant divisions in the ministry.

Although some challenges were already highlighted, the TPO was again asked if he was able to think of any other obstacles that he may have encountered during the policy development process. To this he added:

As previously stated, the national tourism policy has been in the pipelines since 1995, but with changes in governments, being rejected by parliament, having to make changes and refinements, having to consult other ministries, ministry policies and agencies, obtaining widespread buy-in without evoking consultation burnout and then adjusting it to reflect government policies and objectives e.g. Vision 2020- Seven Pillars of Development, it took some time to come into fruition. In addition to this, there were a few human resource constraints such as the attrition of staff which resulted in the subsequent loss of institutional knowledge for the execution of projects.

4.1.3 THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE NATIONAL TOURISM POLICY

The main aim of this research is to examine the national tourism policy and its processes within a sustainability framework, to determine whether or not sustainable tourism and its principles were indeed the basis of the policy. Taking this into account, the research question “How have the principles of sustainable tourism development informed the formulation of the national tourism policy?” was kept in mind while analysing the tourism policy and its supporting documents. Added to this, respondents who were involved in the policy’s development process were asked, “How were the principles of sustainability and/ or sustainable tourism development applied or integrated in the development of the policy?” Furthermore, the brief summary of

principles and requirements for sustainable tourism development and the criteria for evaluating tourism policies' adherence to the concept's principles, both highlighted in Section 2.5, will be used as an assessment framework to present this section's findings.

4.1.3.1 HOLISTIC AND CONSISTENT WITH NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Sustainable tourism policies are assumed to provide guidelines that direct the complete management of a destination's environmental, social and economic resources. In this regard, holistic connotations were found in the tourism policy where government's aim to meet the nation's economic, social and environmental needs through tourism development is expressed. From the onset, the policy mentions that:

The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago is fully committed to building a nation in which every citizen benefits from its rich natural and cultural resources and in so doing will transform the society into economic prosperity, social stability and environmental sustainability... The tourism sector is therefore regarded as critical to the achievement of economic growth through balanced and sustainable development and can be a catalyst for socio-economic benefits for local communities, the preservation of our natural and cultural assets and the advancement of our nation (National Tourism Policy of Trinidad and Tobago, 2010, p.1).

This all-encompassing element is again conveyed in the policy's tourism statement- "To use sustainable tourism as a tool for the economic, socio-cultural and environmental development of Trinidad and Tobago for the benefit of all citizens" (National Tourism Policy of Trinidad and Tobago, 2010, p. 21) and is also implied in its guiding principles (See Appendix K).

In developing a sound framework for a sustainable tourism policy, the policy should be consistent with a destination's overall development goals and efforts (Inskeep, 1999). The TPO explained:

... The policy should be based on guiding principles, which should be linked to the overall focus of the government in terms of development for the country. And as we

indicated earlier in the discussion, the tourism policy's guiding principles and areas of focus are aligned to the 7 pillars of national development. These speak of approaches to the achievement of nation-wide sustainable development. On this basis, sustainability and sustainable development forms the foundation of the tourism policy that guides the development of tourism. So I think that should be one of the fundamental building blocks for the structure of the policy, terms of its content.

Trinidad and Tobago's national development goals comprises of the achievement of sustainable development and economic diversification. Mention of the former is made in the policy, where it states,

This policy is predicated upon the overarching national policy framework for sustainable development of Trinidad and Tobago and is aligned to the seven (7) Interconnected Pillars through which Government seeks to achieve its mission to promote a process of people-centered development. The Government recognises that building a viable tourism sector requires strong public/private sector partnerships, inclusion and support of the national community, emphasis on our rich plurality and cultural diversity and strategic application of modern information communication technology platforms to ensure efficiency and cost-effectiveness" (National Tourism Policy of Trinidad and Tobago, 2010, p. 21).

While economic diversification through tourism development is mentioned in the policy as,

The Government has increased its thrust towards diversifying the economy in order to enhance the revenue and job creation potential of several key industries, one of which is tourism, and recognises that the development of the sector requires a more strategic approach to long term competitiveness (National Tourism Policy of Trinidad and Tobago, 2010, p. 1)

4.1.3.2 STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT AND COLLABORATION

A key component of sustainable tourism is stakeholder involvement and collaboration. At every stage of the policy's development, based on policy analysis and the responses of those involved in the formulation process, a collaborative approach was adopted. This involved consulting both major and relevant tourism stakeholders as well as the general public and their contribution incorporated into the policy content. According to the policy:

The Ministry of Tourism co-ordinated the efforts of a Policy Working Committee comprising the Ministry of Tourism, the Tourism Development Company Limited

(TDC), policy advisers and other technical staff to develop the initial Draft National Tourism Policy document between 2006 and 2007. The Division of Tourism and Transportation of the Tobago House of Assembly (THA) also participated in the process. Subsequently, a Tourism Policy Steering Committee comprising representatives of the above-mentioned agencies guided the revision of the draft document providing more detailed inputs regarding tourism product development, investment and marketing. In order to complete the drafting of the National Tourism Policy, comments from a wide cross-section of key stakeholders and partners were considered (National Tourism Policy of Trinidad and Tobago, 2010, p. 2).

The draft policy was further revised in 2008 and 2009 and major stakeholders from the tourism industry were consulted to make inputs to the revised draft. These stakeholders included public and private sector agencies, community groups and NGOs, all of whom attended two public consultations that were held, one in Trinidad and one in Tobago. Stakeholder involvement and collaboration as a sustainable aspect of policy formation were validated by the TPO, when asked “How were the principles of sustainability and/ or sustainable tourism applied or integrated in the development of the policy?” To this, he responded:

All relevant stakeholders were given the opportunity to highlight their concerns and interests. These issues were assessed based on their relevance, impact and contribution to Trinidad and Tobago’s overall national agenda which focused on economic diversification and later the achievement of sustainable development. After extensive research and debate, most of the highlighted issues were incorporated in the development of the tourism policy. Additionally, because the national policy issues identified in the Tourism Master Plan (1995) were still deemed relevant, they were also used to propel the development of the national tourism policy

In addition to the policy development process, the tourism policy document itself makes reference to collaboration by all stakeholders as one of its eleven (11) principles aimed at facilitating the sustainable development and management of the tourism industry. It states:

A participatory integrative approach shall be adopted where local communities, the private sector, NGOs, the general public and other interest groups and stakeholders are given opportunities to take part in the planning and decision making process, and ownership of the tourism industry.

Stakeholder involvement and collaboration through community participation is also mentioned in the policy as a means of “Encouraging participation of local communities in the travel and tourism industry” (National Tourism Policy of Trinidad and Tobago, 2010, p. 22). Under its socio-cultural goals, the policy outlines government’s intention “To encourage the active participation of local communities at all levels of the tourism sector and in the development, management and implementation of tourism projects, and (National Tourism Policy of Trinidad and Tobago, 2010, p. 23). In a similar manner, the policy states that, “It is the objective of Government to appropriately engage and empower local communities in the planning and decision making process for the development, management and ownership of tourism products and services” (National Tourism Policy of Trinidad and Tobago, 2010, p. 28). The resulting outcomes of local communities becoming more involved in the planning and development of tourism activities is “access to enhanced infrastructure and enjoyment of quality tourism and services...increased opportunities for entrepreneurship, employment and income generation” (National Tourism Policy, 2010, p. 26).

The policy also speaks of establishing an institutional framework that would facilitate further collaboration and coordination among stakeholders. Listed as success factors for the sustainable growth of the tourism industry, the policy states:

Government is committed to creating an institutional framework that supports and co-ordinates the development of the tourism sector in an effective and efficient manner. This framework shall comprise of: The public sector agencies of the Ministry of Tourism, the Tourism Development Company Limited (TDC) and the Division of Tourism and Transportation of the Tobago House of Assembly (THA), with adequate resources to meet their respective mandates; Standing Committees for the sustainable development of tourism in both Trinidad and Tobago, comprising stakeholders and relevant public sector agencies to facilitate and co-ordinate tourism development; and an appropriate legal and regulatory framework for the tourism sector (National Tourism Policy of Trinidad and Tobago, 2010, p. 38-39).

Finally, stakeholder collaboration was not limited to entities within Trinidad and Tobago but also considers regional and international cooperation. Explicitly highlighted in the policy document, it declares, “This Policy recognizes that collaboration between the THA and Central Government as well as between Trinidad and Tobago and regional and international organisations would facilitate the achievement of strategic industry objectives through the sharing of research, experience and best practice” (National Tourism Policy of Trinidad and Tobago, 2010, p. 37).

4.1.3.3 EDUCATION, TRAINING AND AWARENESS

Sustainable tourism development involves tourism education, training and awareness (Inskeep, 1991) and are showcased in the policy as national tourism goals under the distinct section “Employment, Training and Tourism”

In the first instance, an efficient work force is listed as a key factor expected to drive the success of the tourism industry, with training being a chief facilitator in the development of such a work force. In light of this, the policy states, “Employees in the tourism sector will have increased access to training and development on a continuous basis with the potential for increased income earning and enhanced standard of living through career development” (The National Tourism Policy of Trinidad and Tobago, 2010, p.26). Similarly, as it relates to human resource development in the form of manpower planning, the government aims to:

Measure and monitor the quality and quantity of the manpower currently functioning in the tourism sector and conduct a needs assessment for the sector at all levels; Promote employment opportunities linked to the tourism industry and: Facilitate training of front-line and support personnel within the industry in partnership with the private sector; (National Tourism Policy of Trinidad and Tobago, 2010, p. 35)

The integration of tourism education into the national school curriculum and the improvement of tourism and hospitality institutions are also mentioned in the policy as part of

government's overall plans to address tourism education, training and awareness. According to the policy, the government shall:

Encourage the integration of appropriate material into primary and secondary schools' curricula and encourage more field visits and excursions; Implement a continuous program of tourism education and awareness; Encourage the upgrade and expansion of tourism and hospitality institutions and certifications at the tertiary level by offering tertiary level scholarships in tourism related fields; continuing to develop language and technology-oriented training modules; expanding opportunities for tourism internship; supporting and encouraging the introduction of postgraduate level leisure, tourism and hospitality management programs; encouraging tertiary level institutions to keep up with the evolving needs of the tourism industry in accordance with international standards; and encouraging international collaboration and branding

Tourism awareness on its' own is mentioned sporadically throughout the policy or grouped with education and training. Despite this, it was highlighted as a major tourism issue facing the Caribbean, possessing the potential to affect tourism's meaningful contribution to Trinidad and Tobago's economy. As such, the promotion of tourism awareness is highlighted in the policy as one of government's strategies to invest in human resource development which includes the implementation of "a continuous program of tourism education and awareness" (National Tourism Policy of Trinidad and Tobago, 2010, p. 36).

Tourism awareness also falls under the mandate of the MOT, NGOs and the media. In the first instance, the policy discloses that it is the responsibility of the MOT to build "public awareness on activities in the Ministry and tourism industry through various media" (National Tourism Policy, 2010, p. 39), while it is the role of the media to "create awareness of the importance of tourism to all citizens of the country" (National Tourism Policy, 2010, p. 44). For NGOs according to the policy, they are expected to exploit opportunities for tourism training and awareness geared towards tourism development and generate awareness of the potential of tourism to stimulate community growth and development (ibid, 2010, p. 43).

4.1.3.4 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

Due to the adverse effects on the tourism industry, environmental degradation is mentioned in almost every section of the tourism policy and is regarded as a major national and regional issue that needs to be addressed. Taking this into consideration, sustainable tourism development is seen as a primary means of ensuring the sustainable usage of environmental resources while at the same time preserving them for future generations through conservation efforts (The National Tourism Policy of Trinidad and Tobago, 2010). In his explanation of how environmental considerations were incorporated into the national tourism policy, the TPO noted:

There is a section in the policy that deals with the environment and policy measures. Although those policy measures are general, they speak towards the conservation and preservation of the environment and adhering to the international rules and guidelines as it relates to the environment.

'Environmental Goals' (The National Tourism Policy of Trinidad and Tobago, 2010, p. 24-25) is the sub-section that the TPO made reference to. Here the significance of environmental protection and preservation are explicitly acknowledged and ways in which they can be achieved are outlined. Similarly, using the principles of sustainable development to inform strategies geared towards managing the country's natural resource base as well as the effective allocation and use of land, the policy states:

Government recognizes that the environment is an important resource base for tourism. Accordingly, tourism shall be developed responsibly and with due care and regard for the natural and cultural treasures of the country. Government shall ensure that development of the tourism sector is in accordance with the physical environmental policies of the country and evolving international environmental standards. The principles of sustainable development shall inform all areas of tourism planning and management (National Tourism Policy of Trinidad and Tobago, 2010, 27).

Other areas in which environmental considerations were highlighted in the policy include for one information management and research. In this regard the policy talks about conducting

capacity studies for sites and attractions, while ongoing research and monitoring of environmental impacts and climate change will be carried out to assess their effects on the industry. Environmental consciousness within the accommodation sector is also manifested by government's promises to "attract internationally branded hotels that have a proven track record of social and environmental responsibility"; "encourage partnerships within the accommodation sector for...environmental sustainability" and "provide services to small, independent and locally owned properties to enable them to become more environmentally and economically sustainable" (National Tourism Policy, 2010, p.33)

4.1.4 SUPPORTING/BASE DOCUMENTS

In the formulation of Trinidad and Tobago's national tourism policy, national plans, policy frameworks and other relevant documents were utilized as an informative and instructive base. In the analysis of these documents, there were commonalities that made it safe to assume that the use of these documents indicated the policy's adherence to the principles of sustainability and its intent to achieve sustainable tourism development. These similarities included the consideration of national goals and objectives in development strategies (including tourism), the need for a strategic approach to tourism development and the significance of sustainable tourism development.

4.1.4.1 The TOURISM MASTER PLAN (1995)

The Tourism Master Plan (1995), the first national document of its kind, was intentionally developed as a blue print for tourism sector development. It was also conceived in the discernment of several factors. Firstly, there was the perception that the tourism sector was suitable for attaining national goals and objectives, most of which were economically oriented and also mentioned in the tourism policy. The Tourism Master Plan (1995) stated:

Trinidad and Tobago faces an outstanding opportunity to develop a tourism sector that supports national objectives for economic diversification and job creation, improves the quality of life of the country's citizens, and has a discernible and positive influence on economic sectors in the country" (Trinidad and Tobago Tourism Master Plan, 1995, p. 1-9).

Secondly, there was the notion that Trinidad and Tobago possessed the potential to readily develop a tourism sector that would respond to market needs and interests while simultaneously contributing to Trinidad and Tobago's economic and social welfare. In this regard the Tourism Master Plan (1995 highlighted:

Trinidad and Tobago has an opportunity to offer a distinct and exciting destination product in a world of products. The country's cultural diversity, entertainment, natural features and friendly people provide all the ingredients of an exciting and memorable destination. Responding to today's tourism markets is like no time before in history. To match market interests one needs a sustainable environment, protection of resources, pride and enthusiasm by communities to share the destination-all factors that make the country a place to live, work and enjoy. Tourism today can make a profound contribution to the economic and social well-being of Trinidad and Tobago" (Ibid, p. 1-9).

A strategic plan for the sector was also deemed necessary to manage in a sustainable manner, the very environment the sector depended on, as a means of ensuring its long term success and improving the overall quality of life enjoyed by all citizens. Concern for the environment was expressed in the Tourism Master Plan as:

Trinidad and Tobago's natural and heritage resources are the legacy of previous generation entrusted to this and future generations. While motivation for resource protection should always be their value to a country's quality of life, these resources are also a critical base for building a successful tourism industry because of increasing interest in ecotourism, heritage and cultural experiences...The long term viability of such an industry, however is dependent on ensuring sustainable use of these resources. An ancillary and exciting benefit from tourism, is its ability to generate revenues for long term management and enrichment of the resource base. The flip side to this is that tourism markets are exhibiting general concerns about environment that can place a destination at risk if it does not demonstrate environmental responsibility. Thus a destination's behavior and policies are a fundamental concern in building a strong and sustainable tourism sector (Ibid, p.V-37).

Furthermore, tourism's contribution and the need for a tactical approach to its development was emphasized by the Tourism Master Plan (1995) as:

The first step to committing to tourism industry development is the adoption of a vision and policy framework which ensures that tourism meets the needs of citizens from all walks of life both economic and social development. There are many examples where tourism development has attracted investment, but at considerable cost in terms of social disruption and alienation. Therefore preparations for tourism must include mechanisms to ensure sustainable benefits which enhance the quality of life of the country's citizens" (Ibid, p. 1-9)

4.1.4.2 TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO MEDIUM TERM POLICY FRAMEWORK (2002-2004)

The Trinidad and Tobago Medium Term Policy Framework (2002-2004) initiated processes that articulated government's policies, programs and projects that were to be implemented over the stated time period in order to achieve national development goals and objectives. These objectives generally focused on economic diversification, increasing employment opportunities, and developing a knowledge based society where citizens were safe and possessed equal opportunities. In this regard, tourism development was given serious consideration and as a result this framework also became a forerunner to the national tourism policy. An overview of the framework revealed however, that there was no direct mention of sustainability or sustainable development as a national goal or objective and even if there was a sustainable intent embedded in the consolidation of all these objectives, the concepts still were not clearly conveyed.

4.1.4.3 WORKING FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO (2005)

This document was yet another influential piece that preceded the national tourism policy. Basically "an overarching national policy framework for sustainable development"

(Working for Sustainable Development in Trinidad and Tobago, 2005, p. 21), this document took into account the finite nature of the oil and gas industry and sought to outline strategies and highlight priority areas. These areas, commonly referred to as the *7 Development Pillars* were regarded as critical in government's aggressive pursuit of alternative drivers to economic growth, all of which engendered long term sustainability. According to this framework, sustainable development was to be achieved:

Through the leveraging of resources and application of efforts in such a way that the country produces more than it consumes, that the fundamental principles of environmental sustainability are integrated into its development strategy, and that the well-being of the present generation is improved without severely undermining that of future generations" (Working for Sustainable Development in Trinidad and Tobago, 2005, p. 1).

The development of a sustainable tourism industry was therefore considered a viable option not only for economic diversification but also for its potentially significant contribution to the achievement of overall sustainable development. In this regard the document states:

The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago continues to recognise the sustainable development of the tourism sector as a key driver for socio-economic transformation, boosting economic diversification and competitiveness, while simultaneously balancing the need for environmental, social and human development, enhancing local communities, preserving natural and cultural assets, and consequently securing the advancement of the entire nation (Working for Sustainable Development in Trinidad and Tobago, 2005, p. 23).

4.1.4.4 CARIBBEAN TOURISM ORGANISATION (CTO) CARIBBEAN SUSTAINABLE TOURISM POLICY FRAMEWORK (2008)

Sustainable tourism is explicitly defined in the national tourism policy as:

The optimal use of social, natural, cultural and economic resources for tourism development on an equitable and self-sustaining basis in order to provide a unique visitor experience and an improved quality of life for all through partnerships among government, private sector and local communities" (National Tourism Policy, 2010, p. IV).

This definition mirrors that found in CTO's Caribbean Sustainable Tourism Policy Framework. This too served as a base document used in the development of Trinidad and Tobago's national tourism policy. It was developed by CTO and is an amalgamation of policy guidelines geared towards addressing a host of thematic areas deemed critical to the sustainable development of the tourism sector. It is applicable across the board, irrespective of the type of tourism practiced or its host destination (Caribbean countries). Essentially, it "provides its members, primarily the National Tourism Organisations (NTOs) in its 32 member states, with a Policy Framework to guide the sustainable development of tourism" (Caribbean Sustainable Tourism Policy Framework, 2008, Application section, para 2).

In conclusion the manifestation of the policy's adherence to principles of sustainable tourism development was generally consistent throughout the policy. There is an acknowledgement of the tourism industry's contribution to the country's economic, socio-cultural and environmental base. There is also recognition that once the tourism sector is developed in a sustainable and responsible manner, the achievement of sustainable development is almost assured and economic diversification will occur.

4.2 SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND SUSTAINABLE NATURE BASED TOURISM

The findings in this section provide an insight into stakeholders' understanding of sustainable tourism development and its principles. This allows the researcher to ascertain whether they are similar to that found in the national tourism policy and/or in international discourses on sustainable tourism development. These perceptions are in turn expected to influence the conversion of the tourism policy and its objectives into the practice of SNBT in Trinidad and Tobago. The importance of SNBT to Trinidad and Tobago is also highlighted as it

speaks to the significance of the tourism type to a range of stakeholders and the economy, therefore justifying why it should be developed, managed and executed in a sustainable manner.

4.2.1 PERSPECTIVES OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND ITS CORE PRINCIPLES

The question “What is your understanding of sustainable tourism development and what are the core principles associated with this concept?” was intentionally asked to all respondents to determine whether they were knowledgeable about the universal concept and if their explanations would be similar to that found in the national tourism policy. Respondents’ understanding of sustainability and/ or sustainable tourism development, especially those who are actively involved in nature based initiatives, is critical to the sustainable management and operation of SNBT. The following themes emerged as the most frequent when the aforementioned questions were asked.

4.2.1.1 HOLISTIC AND LONG TERM

Almost all of the interview participants understood sustainable tourism and its core principles to be all-encompassing with considerations being made for tourism’s impact on future generations as well as its renewed and continuous existence. Some respondents’ merged the principles of sustainable development and tourism in their responses. For example the Planning and Sustainable Development Coordinator (PSDC) said:

When I think about the sustainable development report, I think about development in such a way that what you do, does not adversely affect the inhabitancy of the earth in the future. Which I think is the international understanding of sustainable development. So if you combine tourism development, which of course is creating experiences and products from those experiences, then I will say that sustainable tourism development will have to be facilitating and creating a platform for the tourism industry or tourism to develop in such a way, that it does not adversely affect future generations.

He went further to highlight the core principles of sustainable tourism development as:

When developing tourism products, knowing the impact on the environment and whether or not that will affect future generations. Also knowing the impact on our treasury that will affect future generations as this is not just an environmental issue. Added to this, is knowing the impact tourism development will have on our people. If we develop tourism products that are socially exclusive, that too will have an impact on future generations. So it's actually taking those things into consideration, not just the environmental impact but the economic impact and the social impact as well.

Other respondents believed that sustainable tourism development and its principles involved utilising and managing resources in such a manner that it improves or retains its original value or condition. Respondents noted that this facilitates long term existence, allowing future generations to partake or benefit from its corresponding tourism product or service. This was emphasized by Forestry Officer 1 (FO1), when he highlighted:

Sustainable tourism implies being able to offer your tourism product constantly. Being able to maintain a certain standard of service as regards to what you are able to offer, in a manner that will not destroy it. Being able to offer something indefinitely and at the same time being able to preserve and maintain it at a certain standard. Just as in the case of the turtle protection efforts at Matura and even Grand Riviere, they are able to protect the turtles from being slaughtered and from being disturbed, because when the turtles are disturbed they won't come back to these beaches. Communities are therefore able to offer turtle tourism activities continually, without having any adverse effects on the natural resource itself.

A few of the respondents understood sustainable tourism to be the promotion of positive impacts as well as the prevention and/or mitigation of negative impacts on 'the triple bottom line'-environment, economy and society. In her reply, Tourism Development Personnel 1 (TDP1) stated, "For tourism development to be sustainable, I think it has to have a positive impact on the environment, on the economy and even the society that's involved...and by extension, mitigating the negative impacts of the tourism activity". While in the same vein the TPC noted, "Sustainable tourism is a tourism that develops without destroying or damaging the environment and the people that are supposed to benefit from tourism. So for me sustainable tourism in essence revolves around the two p's: people and planet".

Some interview participants responded based on the emphasis of their nature based activities. For instance the operations of Nature Seekers are deeply rooted in the community and the environment, for them sustainable tourism development involves being community oriented while simultaneously considering the impacts on both environmental and human resources in the generation of long term economic benefits. In this regard the Marketing Director of Nature Seekers (MDNS) commented:

...for us, because we are embedded in the community we understand sustainability to be both positively affecting human resources and the environment. And of course, those together lead to some sort of economic benefit for the long term. So that to me, those three components, the environment, your human resources and the economics working together for the benefit of, in our case its strongly embedded on community and environment.

4.2.1.2 COMMUNITY ORIENTED

The community focused trend seemed to be a stand-alone for some respondents. When asked their understanding of sustainable tourism development and its' associated principles, these respondents believed that it involved communities benefiting from or being active participants in tourism activities. For instance, from the onset the TPC noted:

A key principle will be the people aspect, which will involve taking tourism to the communities, involving the communities and making sure they participate and become part of the tourism development process. And then of course intermittently linked to communities is the whole aspect of culture. So you cannot have sustainable tourism without using culture as part of tourism or preserving the culture of the country in tourism development.

Again, establishing a link between respondents' operations and their understanding of sustainable tourism development and its principles, the MDNS supplemented her previous response by emphasizing that community integration and involvement were also integral components. She noted:

...the genesis of our operations really was the community coming together. It is always a core value moving forward, that whilst, yes the environment is important, the human resource aspect is equally important. Because for us, you can't save the environment without the human resource. The human resource aspect, community integration and involvement is a key prerequisite in the achievement of sustainable tourism development.

4.2.1.3 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS AND EFFICIENT USE OF RESOURCES

“I know often times in Trinidad and Tobago a lot of people when they think sustainability, they think environment alone” was the remark made by the MDNS when discussing the environmental aspect of sustainable tourism development. This seemed true, especially for those who worked closely within communities and with natural resources. As one informant put it:

I understand sustainability from an environmental perspective. For me it means being conscious of the environment, ensuring that it is protected and conserved in a manner in which it can be enjoyed by and useful to current and future generations. It is all about adding to the environment instead of contributing to its detriment (Nature Based Tourism Operator 1- NBT01).

The TPC also highlighted the environment as a key component of sustainable tourism but further added:

One of the key aspects of sustainable tourism is the environment in terms of developing the environment, preserving the environment, using the environment as a tourism product. So benefiting but not destroying from the environment. From my understanding, the environment is partly the essence of sustainable tourism development.

According to Brasso Seco Tourism Action Committee Member 1 (BSTAC1), sustainable tourism to her meant using the natural resources within the community for tourism purposes to create livelihoods. She stated:

...creating and utilizing the available resources that we have around us. So we have a lot of nature. We have a lot of agriculture. We have a lot of cocoa, coffee...so it's really about utilizing the resources that are around you and creating sustained livelihoods.

In conversations about their understanding of sustainable tourism development and its environmental component, a few participants brought up mitigation strategies, where limitations are set. For instance, the Tourism Development Personnel 3 (TDP3) noted:

Limitations in sustainable tourism development involves setting a framework in terms of how far tourism is going, so that you don't damage your environment or you try to mitigate the negativity associated with tourism activity. Limitations facilitate conservation, because when you talk about sustainable tourism, you will be putting things in place, such as carrying capacities for particular ecosystems, so that you establish a limit, conserving your natural resources, the basis of your tourism product to be used by future generations.

4.2.1.4 TOURISM EDUCATION, AWARENESS AND TRAINING

In the literature tourism education, awareness and training was highlighted as a significant component of sustainable tourism development. However, only a few respondents included this in their responses. According Brasso Seco Tourism Action Committee Member 2 (BSTAC2) responded saying:

Sustainable tourism involves training community members to engage in sustainable activities as a way of sustaining their communities, creating livelihoods and contributing to overall community development. So this may mean training to be tour guides, or accommodation owners, host homes, caterers, agro-processors, so that you are sustaining your community as well as utilizing what you have around you, to create sustained livelihoods, to bring about development.

Forestry Officer 2 (FO2) commented on awareness of a tourism product or service as an integral component of sustainable tourism development. He noted:

You have to consider things like advertising or promoting the product, because it does not make sense having a tourism product that no one is aware of. Tourism consumers will not appreciate a product they are not aware of. Awareness not only of its existence but also its importance and this could lead to unsustainable practices when dealing with the product. So I will also list that as a principle of sustainable tourism.

4.2.1.5 SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IS A RHETORIC

One informant in particular blatantly did not believe in sustainable tourism, despite making personal efforts to operate a SNBT company. Due to personal experiences within the tourism industry where sustainability seems to be an empty concept, void of action, he had become very despondent. He shared:

The term sustainability is loosely used, sustainable tourism is loosely used. I will believe it when I see changes in administration and tourism practices. Sustainability or sustainable tourism for me will only exist with action. Let me see action, that something is actually being done. Currently there is a lot of lip service, talk about sustainable implementation and change but nothing is being done (Nature Based Tourism Operator 2-NBTO2).

Based on the responses of the research participants, their understanding of sustainable tourism development and its principles are generally similar to that found in international discourses as well as the national tourism policy and as such should influence the translation of the tourism policy into the practice of SNBT.

4.2.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF SUSTAINABLE NATURE BASED TOURISM TO TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

The question “How important is sustainable nature based tourism to Trinidad and Tobago?” was asked to all research participants. While all agreed that SNBT was significant, responses typically varied. Almost all mentioned, the unique characteristics of Trinidad and Tobago’s nature based offerings. Among these respondents, the consensus was that its’ one of a kind tourism profile should be developed not only to distinguish the country as a tourism destination in a class of its own, but also to access channels where untapped and potentially lucrative tourism niches and markets could be explored. Furthermore, SNBT was repeatedly linked to community empowerment and development and was thought to be a sound approach to environmental protection.

4.2.2.1 TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO'S NATURE BASED TOURISM PROFILE- UNIQUE AND DISTINCTIVE

There was no hesitation by Sea Turtle Conservationist (STC) when asked to discuss the importance of SNBT to Trinidad and Tobago. She noted, "I think our (Trinidad and Tobago's) main type of tourism or tourism product is nature based tourism. I mean when compared to other tourism types, I would think that nature based tourism is our main attraction".

The unique characteristics of Trinidad and Tobago's natural resources seemed to be a recurring theme in discussions with greater emphasis placed on Trinidad rather than Tobago.

Trinidad is connected to South America geographically. So we possess the same natural elements as they do. This is unique because as an island we possess the characteristics of a continent. Tobago, in terms of natural assets has the world's oldest forest reserve (Tobago Main Ridge Forest Reserve. With all this in mind, Trinidad and Tobago, as a unitary nation or state has more than enough nature potential, product and service offerings than other Caribbean nations, who may be ahead of us, only in terms of the marketing and packaging of their nature based tourism products and services (Chief Tourism Development Officer- CTDO).

Going into more detail, to explain the distinctiveness of Trinidad and Tobago's natural resource portfolio, the FO1 stated:

In terms of biodiversity, Trinidad especially, has a greater variety of different types of plants and animals than all the islands (Caribbean) put together. And that's the biodiversity. Our biota that is our total collection of plants and animals, our fauna and flora is basically not Antillean, its Neo-Tropical. It is from South America. Because between 10-15000 years ago we were connected to Venezuela. After the last ice age there was an upheaval I'm told and we were separated. We are not Antillean in our biota, we are South American. And I think this is one of the facts that have caused the variety of plants and animals to be so great.

Trinidad is a stepping stone to South America and its natural features are key attractions to many international researchers. The FO1 elaborated on this point, saying:

Researchers see Trinidad as a stepping stone to South America, because they have access to the same biodiversity in Trinidad that they can't in South America, without having to travel hundreds of miles. So what you will see happening, unbeknown to the general

public, many researchers usually come down here and conduct a lot of studies. Right here in Trinidad. And this dates back to even colonial days. If you go now to the British Museum of Natural History, quite a lot of their insect collection is from Trinidad. Even in regards to plants, you can go to the Kew Gardens in England, many of their plants...many of their South American specimen are from Trinidad, because they are so easily accessible (Forestry Officer # 1, 2015).

The ease of access to the habitats of diverse animal and plant species, sensitive ecosystems, endangered and endemic species in a relatively small geographic area is also a strong pull factor for nature enthusiasts. By visiting Trinidad, tourists avoid having to deal with lengthy travel times, poor infrastructure and dangerous conditions often caused by flooding for instance. These are all characteristic of neighbouring South American countries like Guyana and Venezuela. The FO1 highlight:

The value of Trinidad over the other islands is that within 100 square miles, a person can see a lowland rainforest, a cloud forest,, a mangrove swamp, tropical savannah, mud volcano, coral reefs...so many different types of habitats a person can visit, just within a 100 square miles. You have Caroni Swamp right there and close by is the Nariva Swamp. Then over in Tobago you have the coral reefs and then in El Tucuche you have cloud forests. In South Trinidad you have mud volcanoes. So it's not hard to get to, everything is 100 square miles. So the advantage of Trinidad as an eco-destination is that within 100 square miles, you have such a wide variety of habitats. That's Trinidad's advantage.

4.2.2.2 SUSTAINABLE NATURE BASED TOURISM NICHES

SNBT is significant because it creates an avenue for Trinidad and Tobago to capitalize on meeting the needs of the 'new tourist'. According to the CTDO:

This form of tourism (nature based tourism) is evolutionary due to the increasing awareness to nature and sustainability and the manner in which it can be used to accomplish the goals of both. There has been a rise of new tourists who are looking for an authentic experience and wanting to get involved and participate. Sustainable nature based tourism matches their preferences of offering experiential product and service offerings.

In addition to meeting the needs of the 'new tourist' the significance of SNBT to Trinidad and Tobago is its link to untapped and potentially lucrative niches and markets. One such market

is the domestic tourism market. FO 2 indicated that local interest and participation in nature based activities seemed to be increasing along with the development of more eco-oriented businesses and sites. He commented:

... from what I have observed, the interest in and demand for nature based tourism is gradually increasing, because there is a lot of potential. Even when you look at local domestic tourists, you have a lot more people going out to recreate themselves at rivers, beaches and a lot of people now into cycling and mountain biking. The main stream nature based activities like bird-watching in the Caroni Swamp or turtle watching, seems to attract more foreigners, based on my personal observations. However, it seems that locals are visiting non-traditional nature based tourism sites or being engaged in non-traditional nature based tourism activities. Although there is still a large number of local people still going turtle viewing, because that is a spectacle by itself, but when you look, there are quite a lot of eco-sites have developed over the last number of years that are normally booked on weekends for other recreations such as La Vega for instance. So this in a way supports my argument.

Expanding on this, BSTAC1 revealed that pursuing the local market can also potentially benefit communities. She stated:

...even Trinidadians are enjoying coming up into these areas and then definitely foreign visitors and it is a way of creating employment in rural areas. So it's not everybody that is looking to get out of the bush and go into the city. Because the reality is that those who are in the city are looking to get out and come here, not necessarily to live but to spend the weekend, spend a holiday. Therefore making provisions to cater for this market creates potential prospects that communities can capitalize on, which can contribute to community sustenance and independence.

Another potential niche market highlighted among the respondents is educational tourism that focuses on Trinidad and Tobago's natural resources with the help of SNBT practitioners and operators. Exploring this niche was especially emphasized by FO1, who believed that this was a way of encouraging collaboration between local and international educational institutions, sharing and exchanging information and showcasing local natural resources. He noted:

We do have a small niche market at this time, but definitely something worth exploring. Every year small groups of researchers from North American and British universities come down to Trinidad and do research in Trinidad. Particularly so, with the turtles in Matura and Grand Riviere as well. Other groups come in and do work on insects, bats,

birds and things like that. Small trips of students come from Glasgow University in Scotland as well as Trinity College in the States and they work with local tour operators. So expanding on this, government and the local universities can invite others to come to Trinidad as an introduction to the tropics. Students can do nature related courses here and we can establish exchange programs where our students visit their universities to do the same. I believe this is one way we can market ourselves, using sustainable nature based tourism as the foundation.

The FO1 also highlighted that this niche market had the potential to foster community involvement and even create employment opportunities.

The community can also be involved in this collaboration. Community members can be used as guides and security. Because many of people in these communities, they may not have much formal education but they have a lot of practical knowledge of their surroundings and the plants and animals. And the advantage of using community based tourism is that guests tend to feel more secure, because they are with people in the community who know the area.

Another positive spin off of SNBT discussed amongst the respondents was the revitalization of the cocoa and coffee industry and developing an agro-tourism product PSDC explained:

So we just finished doing work on a tourism circuit for central Trinidad. We ran three pilots, one with our own board, one for domestic tourists and one for international tourists to receive feedback. We also took a tour of a cocoa plantation. That's nature based. It's actually one of the coolest things I have ever seen in my life. Because what we got to see was the farmers coming in with the beans, how they weighed it and how much they got paid. And our beans are the trinitaria of the beans, one of them. So there are different types of cocoa beans on the international market and ours are the more expensive kind. We also bought some chocolate from the plantation, which was amazing! So this tour actually got us thinking of ways in which we can internationalize this experience so that locals and foreigners alike can partake in this aspect of nature based tourism/agro-tourism. That is what we are currently working on right now. Additionally, we have an investor, and what we are looking to do is make coffee liqueur. And also, a new board was established, because we had a very old cocoa board, cocoa and coffee board, so institutionally the arrangement will change and it will be a little more modern, a little more efficient to assist the farmers, in terms of exporting their product. So what we are looking to do is to develop Trinidad and Tobago's cocoa and coffee into a geographic indicator. A geographic indicator it is a form of a trademark, so it's like champagne. You can call anything champagne but actual champagne is from Champagne. It's like Blue Mountain coffee, or Ethiopian coffee, so people know or expect a certain caliber of coffee, from that area and its sends the price up. So that's the idea for Trinidadian cocoa and coffee.

To other interviewees, SNBT was considered valuable because it possesses the potential to create opportunities to form partnerships or collaborate with different tourism efforts. The PSDC highlighted that from a structural perspective, nature based tourism resources can be utilized and adjusted to boost Trinidad and Tobago's accommodation sector, while simultaneously benefitting nature based tourism operators. He noted:

Accommodation is a huge issue, we do not have enough rooms on the island. But that ties in quite nicely to this. Some of the accommodation options that we are looking into do involve nature based tourism, involve bringing people closer to the environment. Because we market Trinidad and Tobago as a business tourism destination when people visit, they mostly see just bricks and mortar, the hardscapes. They don't actually see any waterfalls, they don't even see the lush mountains, mountain reserves, precious wildlife. So we are trying to bring accommodation closer to some sensitive habitats. This is expected to boost the accommodation sector, educate people about the environment, and boost their awareness about nature. And this in turn will benefit nature based tourism operators, entrepreneurs, even accommodation owners, who will now have the opportunity to market their products and services and contribute to the experience.

A common view amongst key informants was that Trinidad and Tobago will risk forfeiting its chances of diversifying the economy if its nature based tourism product (the environment and its natural resources) is not properly managed. Highlighted consequences included the loss of significant and unique selling factors, tourism product, employment opportunities, safe habitats and a damaged destination image. The TDP 1 explained:

Taking the operations of Nature Seekers for instance, what would happen if the beaches, turtles and every natural resource they depended on was not maintained or taken care of? We would lose that product and of course it will have negative impacts on the community of Matura in the long run. Because no longer will there be activities that provide employment or even a safe place for the turtles to hash. And obviously it will have very negative impacts ultimately in terms of ultimately putting Trinidad and Tobago in a bad light if we don't put something in place ensure that this is a sustainable type product and protect the natural resources. In essence we will be losing a significant selling factor, that competitive advantage we have over that we have over the others (Caribbean destinations). Because we do have a little bit of everything, yes we have great beaches too... but it's not white sands. So considering all these scenarios, it is important that sustainable practices be encouraged in nature based tourism operations, to ensure that the longevity and survival of the resource base and a continuous competitive advantage.

A few respondents did point out that despite the obvious significance of SNBT to Trinidad and Tobago, it is still very much underdeveloped, is not considered a national priority and in some instances, even locals are ignorant of its potential. The FO1 for instance stated, “Nature based tourism in Trinidad, despite having a lot of potential is not very well developed or supported by government. There is just a lot of lip service in this regard”. Giving a specific example, the EMO noted, “We have a lot of things, I mean, look at the Main Ridge in Tobago, one of the oldest protected areas in the world, yet many sites of its kind are either undeveloped or underdeveloped”.

According to Tourism Development Personnel #2 “I think we all know it (SNBT) is important, even those in charge know it, but it’s just a matter of what becomes a priority. And it’s just not a priority right now”. Respondents believed this low priority placed on SNBT initiatives that translates into limited support is due to greater focus being placed on other supposedly more lucrative forms of tourism like Carnival,

When you think tourism in Trinidad the first thing that comes to anybody's mind will be Carnival. That is where the money is. But to say that they (government) will come in a community or develop the natural resources and say well they will venture into something like that. No! They do not see a lot of money making in that. Because nature based programs and projects, especially those within rural communities are kind of slow. They don’t really get off the ground quickly... and although that is a main component of sustainability, that it takes time, government seems to prefer fast development and that cannot happen in this case (BSTAC2)

Added to this, the emphasis is still on the oil and gas industry, “Trinidad and Tobago still puts a lot of emphasis on oil and gas. The petroleum sector is the basis of our economy. But in regards to the nature based tourism development, I think the government is very negligible” (FO1

Trinidad and Tobago’s sustainable nature based product is known and appreciated it seems more by foreigners than locals. While this is a good indication that it has the potential to

be a successful tourism niche, it also speaks of the need for greater local awareness, appreciation and pride. Sharing her experience, BSTAC2 explained:

Well the locals in a sense, they are not really knowledgeable about the resources around them. They are accustomed because they have been living in the area for almost all their lives. So it's like, "I know what a blue jay look like, I seeing it every day", but an outsider will still find "Oh ho that's a bird pretty!" "Is it blue, is it grey, what colour it is?" But they are seeing it every day and they may not have noticed or cared if it was blue or grey, all they know is that it's called a blue jay! (Brasso Seco Tourism Action Committee Member #2)

Because community members have grown so accustomed to the natural resources that surround them, they have become unaware of its value, more so, of its tourism value. This lack of awareness results in a lack of willingness and interest for SNBT tourism and development. This is then a challenge when attempting to encourage community involvement to facilitate SNBT activities and cater to outsiders who are very much interested and appreciative of the same natural resources.

4.3 TOURISM POLICY AND SUSTAINABLE NATURE BASED TOURISM

This section strives to establish a link between the tourism policy and the actual practice of SNBT. Responses from key informants and focus group participants who are actively involved or affected by SNBT will be used to determine whether there is a disconnect between the national tourism policy and the execution of SNBT initiatives. The upcoming sections explore factors that either facilitate or obstruct the connection between the national tourism policy and SNBT activities.

4.3.1 POLICY-PRACTICE: THE CONNECTING FACTORS

During the interview process, respondents identified several critical factors that influence the execution of SNBT in Trinidad and Tobago. For the most part these included stakeholders'

commitment and contributions, access to resources, market knowledge, inter-organisational cooperation and funding.

4.3.1.1 STAKEHOLDER COMMITMENT AND CONTRIBUTIONS

In the first instance, the commitment and contributions of stakeholders, namely NGOs, local government organisations, TDC and the MOT, seem to facilitate the connection between the tourism policy and the execution of SNBT.

NGOs

According to the National Tourism Policy of Trinidad and Tobago (2010), NGOs and CBOs, especially those with an environmental focus play a vital role in the development and spread of responsible tourism practices, while providing valuable insights at the grassroots level. In this regard, the operations of organisations like Nature Seekers and Turtle Village Trust in particular will be highlighted as examples of factors that bridge the gap between the tourism policy and SNBT practices.

In the first instance, Nature Seekers is involved in the conservation and monitoring of the endangered leatherback sea turtle, both locally and internationally. According to the MDNS:

Our core role in carrying out sustainable nature based tourism initiatives I would say is sea turtle conservation. We were one of the critical groups that assisted in developing what they call a Sea Turtle Monitoring Programme. Under this programme we track the amount of turtles that visit our shores, how many eggs they lay and that information is used not just on a national scale but we work with the Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network (WIDECASST) which is an international sea turtle organisation, for them to track data in terms of the population numbers, where the rise and fall are taking place etc. So that is one of our main contributions to sea turtle conservation.

Through education, public awareness and volunteering programs, Nature Seekers is also able to spread their commitment to the sustainable management of the leatherback sea turtle population and other related tourism activities. Educational programs are conducted on a small

scale, targeting schools within the area, with the aim of fostering a culture of environmental consciousness among the younger generation. The MDNS stated:

We have a project that started in the north east coast, where our education unit consisting of a few volunteers from the community would go into schools and engage in educational activities. So we have a spin the wheel and play jeopardy. It's more games oriented but it gives students general information about sea turtles and how we should protect, not just them but our natural resources on a whole. It's still on a small scale because our immediate focus is the communities within our area, but the intent is to hopefully, over the years, develop a national project. When children learn new things they tend to go home and tell their parents, so that's where we are hoping to get that double up on education.

Participation in national environmental ventures affords Nature Seekers the opportunity to promote SNBT to a wider and more extensive audience. They are also able to bring environmental issues to the forefront and impart the organisation's knowledge on conservation and sustainable practices. The MDNS mentioned:

Last year, EMA had a Sea Turtle Symposium, and our chairperson would have presented at that Symposium. From a national perspective, we try to participate wherever possible, even if its exhibitions that are pro-environment and nature oriented. Often times we are invited by organisations like the Caribbean Industrial Research Institute (CARIRI) to share our information or conservation/sustainable nature based tourism model and we are more than happy to participate in such activities.

Additionally, the organisation assists national committees with data collection and policy directives that have nationwide impact on SNBT.

Nature Seekers' contribution to SNBT also extends to reforestation initiatives, under the National Reforestation Programme. "We are contracted under the National Reforestation Programme to re-plant or monitor 300-400 acres of land on this end. So that's also a Monday to Friday daily activity, creating employment" (MDNS). The National Reforestation Program does parallel work to the Forestry Division and has created jobs for community members while simultaneously managing the natural resources that facilitate SNBT activities in Matura and similar communities. The FO1 explained:

The National Reforestation Programme is an organisation that has been established to take unemployed people in these villages and use them to clear trails and to plant trees. And they do vital work in promoting sustainable nature based tourism, mainly through clearing trails, particularly old cocoa trails that would have been used long ago to take cocoa out of the forests that are now being used as nature trails. Throughout the country, the organisation has created new trails to nature sites such as the Avocat Waterfall, Madamas, the El Tucuche Mountain.

Furthermore, Nature Seekers is in collaboration with the Forestry Division in the conceptualizing of the Matura National Park and involves the restoration and development of trails. This park is a protected tropical forest that extends from Matura to Matelot (See Figure 5) and is the home of the country's most diverse, yet sensitive and threatened biodiversity. Collaboration efforts also include partnering and supporting other NGOs which enables other likeminded community/sustainable organisations to participate in SNBT and conservation pursuits.

Where possible, we try our best to collaborate with other organisations, whether it's to provide guidance, because we have been around for 25 years, so for the newer organisations, or where we have the facilities and the finances to, at least invite them to any training sessions we have, so that they can help themselves, in terms of the training capacities and so forth (MDNS).

Similarly, the Turtle Village Trust (TVT), is an organisation birthed out of five community groups, that span from Matura to Matelot (See Figure 5), coming together based on the common challenges experienced in the conservation of sea turtles. The focus of TVT's operations is natural resource management, specifically sea turtles, while simultaneously increasing the capacity of its community members in the generation of sustained livelihoods. Taking this into consideration, TVT contributes to SNBT through research, conservation, capacity building and education and awareness.

In the first instance, they oversee data collection and turtle conservation in the M2M area. According to the STC, "Apart from the data collection on the beach, we also do research on the

turtles themselves, collecting data about the population in order to measure the increase or decline of the population and develop strategies to act accordingly”.

The increasing presence of the leatherback turtle has escalated the popularity of this natural phenomenon resulting in a growth in visitor numbers to Matura and surrounding communities. This has triggered the need for enhanced conservation efforts as well as the continuity and diversification of SNBT initiatives. This is made possible through training and capacity building. TVT offers community members training to sustain their livelihoods and the opportunity to expand their skill set. The STC mentioned:

For those groups that work on the beach we afford them training so if there wasn't any turtles, they will still be able sustain themselves. A lot of the communities that are on the coast, are more impoverished communities. So what we try to do is ensure that they can sustain themselves as a community group so any sort of training that they need, like tour guiding training etc. For instance at some locations like Las Cuevas and Blanchisseuse where there are a lot of turtles but not much people visiting, villagers who are only involved in the monitoring of turtles, they may be interested in conducting tours to increase visitor numbers. On the other hand, more popular turtle watching beaches like Grand Riviere or Matura, some villagers may want to be involved in tour guiding to capitalize on the high level of visitation. So any initiative they identify interest in, we try to facilitate it.

Local Government Agencies

The Forestry Division plays an instrumental part in supporting the objectives of the tourism policy which makes the execution of sustainable tourism programs possible. For example, the Wildlife Section of the Division is the main government agency, responsible for the management and protection of the sea turtles. Responsibilities include legislation, employment, funding, advocacy and the creation of linkages. According to FO1:

The Wildlife Section is responsible as the lead government agency for the management of the marine turtles in Trinidad. We did our part with respect to legislation, funding, advocacy, creating linkages between the communities and other external stakeholders as well as other government stakeholders in the effort for them to derive benefits (tourism benefits).

Legislation endeavours are linked to employment and funding, enabling communities engaged in SNBT to realise benefits derived from the sustainable execution of nature based tourism activities. In Matura for instance, the Forestry Division grants villagers employment contracts to patrol and protect the beaches while simultaneously collecting data for research and monitoring purposes. The latter is one way Forestry is able to consistently monitor and evaluate turtle projects in respect to visitor numbers and turtle population. Additionally, they are given the exclusive rights to conduct tours. These rights and contracts are managed solely by the Division.

The FO1 in giving a detailed explanation of this link stated:

Every year these turtle groups in the villages sign a month to month contract with Forestry whereby we pay them a stipend to patrol the beach, protect the turtles from slaughtering and also to collect data. The collection of data helps in the monitoring and evaluation of sea turtle projects with respect to visitor numbers and turtle populations. This information is then used by organisations such as Nature Seekers and Turtle Village Trust in their own operations. In the case of Matura, we also have an arrangement whereby the villagers are given exclusive rights to conduct tours. They therefore have a monopoly in conducting these tours. When people visit, they have to pay a permit fee to the Forestry Division as well a tour guiding fee to the tour guides. Forestry Division is responsible for managing these contracts which gives villagers the exclusive rights to take groups of people on the beach to watch turtles. Villagers make quite a lot of money from that. The Forestry Division is the one who manages and controls that co-management arrangement between the community and Forestry.

These rights, contracts and financial support given to villagers also assist in the preservation and protection of natural resources and sea turtles.

That co-management is very important, because it acts as an incentive to villagers to protect the turtles rather than what they would have done in former years which was to slaughter them for their meats and eggs. Now every year, a couple turtles are still killed, particularly the smaller species, not so much the leatherback, the Hawks-bill turtle, because they are the tastier meats, in terms of palatability they are highly sought by people. Although illegal it still happens but at a much lesser extent than in previous years (FO2).

The Forestry Division creates other opportunities for employment and sustained livelihoods that contribute to the furtherance of SNBT. Illustrating this point FO1 stated:

In the Nariva Swamp for example, villagers are employed to clear trails and plant trees. Some villagers also do some tour guiding work with private operators. They offer authentic, local experiences and information as tour guides even to the extent of cooking meals. Visitors therefore get the chance to experience eating local food within the community. In instances like these, the Forestry Division will not train villagers specifically to be tour guides, but through the provision of jobs such as woodsmen to clear the trails, villagers would have acquired knowledge of forested areas, trails and different species of plants and animals. This is what they then apply to tour guiding.

The EMA's on the other hand, ensures that all projects and programs comply with environmental standards and policies. According to the EMO:

When other stakeholders are developing their products or engaging in different projects, some of which will be nature based related, its EMA's responsibility to ensure they possess certain pieces of legislation to make certain products and projects are in compliance with them. Additionally we make sure that proper environmental management practices are conducted for different projects. For example if someone is developing a project, the Certificate of Environmental Clearance (CEC) process may be applicable to their designated activities, for other projects water pollution rules may be relevant. Designated activities may include the construction of hotels, nature trails and parks or general clearing of land. So this is one way we help facilitate the execution of sustainable nature based tourism. If the proper legislation is not in place or environmental practices conducted, nature based tourism projects and activities would not be able to carry on or be completed.

The Tourism Development Company (TDC)

Apart from being the first point of contact in the active execution of tourism projects, TDC is also charged with the mandate to provide support systems to stakeholders before any implementation initiative takes place. The MDNS indicated that TDC's support is offered mostly on a project to project basis or when the need arises. Assistance usually takes the form of training in areas such as tour guiding or customer service. Additionally, the TDC offers support in the form of financial incentives and technical advice.

... we also offer support in terms of funding. There are times stakeholders will come with a proposal and after review depending on the type of tourism program or project, we would offer financial incentives or technical advice for development to ensure that there is a sustainable outcome (TDP2).

Finally, the TDC has a multidisciplinary team that is responsible for scouting different areas within Trinidad and Tobago, assessing their nature based tourism potential. Once deemed feasible, alliances are made with relevant stakeholders to ensure the proper execution of initiatives. TDP explained:

We more or less are involved in exploring new or potential nature based tourism initiatives. For example, we recently sent a multidisciplinary team down to Mayaro/Nariva to view the different areas where the manatees would come up. We did a tour of these areas and we were able to get a better understanding of the communities that surround these areas in terms of their levels of education, occupation as well as their knowledge and awareness of the potential nature based tourism product that existed in their area.

The Ministry of Tourism (MOT)

The MOT is indirectly involved in SNBT projects and programs through collaborative efforts with NGOs in the maintenance of infrastructure that exists in areas that provide nature based tourism services. For example, the MOT has partnered with Nature Seekers, granting them permission to manage the Salybia Recreation and Water Sport Centre while overseeing the upkeep of the facility. This Centre hosts kayaking tours, boat rides and fishing trips along the Salybia River, all of which are operated by Nature Seekers as one of their many community building projects (MDNS).

4.3.1.2 ACCESS TO AND AUTONOMY OVER RESOURCES

Some respondents noted that even with the tourism policy containing sustainable tourism goals and objectives, engaging in SNBT activities were impossible without the availability of and access to resources. Although this seemed somewhat obvious, respondents thought it was worthy of mention. Nature Seekers in particular is a prime example. Due to granted access and authority over the natural resources (beaches and forested areas) within the community, the organisation has the liberty to structure their activities, conservation and community

development programs in the best interest of the environment and their community. This freedom has also afforded them the opportunity to create jobs and sustained sources of income for community members. Sharing in detail, the MDNS stated:

For us in particular our sea turtle conservation project has really grown because Forestry Division has given us the sole rights to do tour guiding on the beach during the nesting season, March to August. So persons coming to view have to get an official permit from them and then in turn use our services. So that I think is a great enabling factor, because if it was open game we would not have had that advantage or ‘monopoly’ so to speak. So that is something that I think other communities like Brasso Seco for instance need, to be given some level of authority from a national body to manage their respective areas.

The provision of physical resources (infrastructure) was also identified as an enabling factor. In some communities, government and community groups have provided amenities and services with the goal of encouraging visitation to these areas and participation in SNBT activities. For instance, according to FO1:

The community of Grand Riviere is similar to Matura in that people visit to watch the leatherback turtles. The drive to Grand Riviere is long, regardless of which part of Trinidad you are coming from. Taking this into consideration, the community group allows visitors to use the car park to camp and stay overnight and has also provided a communal bathroom. Also, during the Easter vacation the TDC sets up a section on Maracas Bay at the Stan River. Visitors can use the area for camping. It’s regulated, so you pay a fee for usage. In Toco, the regional corporation has set up communal toilets and some showers and arrangements are currently being made to construct a camping ground. So efforts at these nature sites are being made, but there is always room for expedient improvements.

4.3.1.3 MARKET KNOWLEDGE

Trinidad and Tobago being relatively new to the tourism arena has an opportunity to learn from the negative experiences of other more established Caribbean tourism destinations, brought about by unsustainable practices. In this regard, the TPC stated:

I think one of the key facilitators of sustainable tourism in Trinidad and Tobago is having seen what others have done and how they did it incorrectly. So if you look at tourism in other islands, like the Dominican Republic for example and how they developed tourism or even the Bahamas and Barbados to some extent, it us discouraged us (Trinidad and Tobago) from wanting the high rise hotels that would crowd our beaches or limit local

access for instance. So, we have seen the adverse effects of this type of tourism and because Trinidad and Tobago jumped on the tourism bandwagon a little bit late, we now have the advantage of trying to do it right.

In addition to learning from the negative experiences of other destinations, Trinidad and Tobago has been afforded the time to acknowledge changes in consumer demand and characteristics, and therefore tailor their nature based products to meet these needs. In this way, tourism policy objectives can be met and SNBT carried out. In his response the TPC noted:

I suppose one of the other influencers is the fact that Trinidad and Tobago has realized that this is what the customers want. There is a growing niche of nature lovers, of people who want to preserve and protect the environment, people who are caring and concerned about the impact of their travel on local communities, there is a growing number of people who want to experience what the locals are experiencing, so they will want to go to the beaches and to the river limes that the local people enjoy. So I think Trinidad and Tobago realized that that is what the customers want. So from a supply side it makes sense to do it right and from a demand side, it is what the customers want.

4.3.1.4 INTER-ORGANISATIONAL CO-ORDINATION AND COLLABORATION

Inter-organisational coordination and collaboration is another facilitating element in the implementation of SNBT in Trinidad and Tobago. By establishing partnerships with local, regional and international organisations, practitioners are able to access technical advice and assistance when dealing with operational challenges. These challenges, according to key informants include, a lack of information and research, difficulties accessing financial support, limited knowledge in natural resource management techniques, the need for training in customer service, safety and security. Practitioners mentioned that these factors hindered the activation of the tourism policy as it relates to the execution of SNBT activities and projects.

For example, Nature Seekers recently worked with the Caribbean Industrial Research Institute (CARIRI), a government owned organisation that specializes in innovation, research and development, technical and financial advice and training. They were able to assist the NGO in the development of a strategic plan to address shortcomings in the monitoring and evaluation

of critical areas such as safety and security, customer service and meeting financial and environmental objectives. Explaining in detail the MDNS stated:

An area that we are trying to work on and where there is not much support is the monitoring and evaluation of our nature-based activities. For one, the issue of safety and security is very important. We have gotten general guidance from external parties, but it really is one of the core areas that we need to monitor closely. Added to this is evaluating customer service and if we are meeting certain objectives, both from a financial and environmental point of view. So in this regard, we recently liaised with CARIRI. They came and they did a diagnostic of our system, from a technological stand point and they are now willing to work with us to do a customer relations management program software. So that will be one of our first point of contact that we could utilize that to get feedback from our customers in terms of our level of service and safety.

Respondents indicated that through collaboration and coordination, SNBT organisations with similar agendas are also able to efficiently achieve common objectives due to the old adage of 'strength in numbers'. By working together, organisations develop a common front in the pursuit of mutual or collective goals. The MDNS again highlighted:

This year in particular, we have really been trying to liaise and collaborate more closely with the other communities and NGOs in the area. We make sure we support each other's projects. For instance, when we have training programs we try to invite persons from the different communities so that we're at least together or on the same page when it comes to certain projects. This allows us, in the event that we are approached by Ministry of Tourism or by TDC, as a unit we can jointly say yes we have the capacity to do x, y, z or these are our shared concerns and challenges. Added to this, the existence of Turtle Village Trust has really created a platform where at least you can identify persons from the different organisations and you have access to their contact information.

Inter-organisational collaboration was also said to happen through informal networks (FO1). According to the FO1, due to the various stakeholders involved in SNBT with inter-related functions and responsibilities, the development of informal networks is almost inevitable. This component allows for the expedition of decision making and application processes of SNBT initiatives. The FO1 explained:

We will normally have our unofficial contacts. So for instance if I wanted to find out something from EMA I will speak to my contact in EMA who works with us and then they will guide us as to what to do, how to get results from the official route. So basically

you use the unofficial route to access the official route, which makes things easier. Sometimes if you want to get some information quickly and avoid the red tape that will help you make a decision that is normally the faster way to get it done.

4.3.1.5 FUNDING

Financial assistance was identified by respondents as one of the main enablers of SNBT. Without funding, critical functions and activities carried out by all stakeholders mentioned in Section 4.3.1.1 would be impossible. According to STC when asked “What are the factors that facilitate or influence the implementation of sustainable nature based tourism?” her response was “I will have to say financial input to be honest. Because a lot of what we do would not have happened if we didn’t have financial input.” On a similar note, the MDNS noted:

Our last project was funded by Green Fund (a national environmental fund that provides financial assistance to community groups for activities related to environmental restoration projects, reforestation, environmental education and public awareness of environmental issues and conservation). This has really boosted and developed our capacities to now carry out our operations in a more efficient manner. We now have competent manpower and a new way of thinking that has equipped us with the ability to conceptualize new and self-sustaining projects....so as I said before even the strategic plan that we have developed this year was under funding provided by Green Fund. And this has really been helping our operations thus far, because there are certain things that we couldn’t have thought of or done until getting the input from an external party and that was only made possible through funding.

Financial assistance also encourages and creates sustained livelihoods. This is because the income generating potential of SNBT acts as an incentive to individuals, increasing persons’ willingness to become involved in initiatives. In her responses STC highlighted:

Once there is funding to facilitate projects and programs, people see this as an opportunity to earn an income. From what I've seen a lot of these groups get involved because they looking for an avenue to make money, because they see it as a livelihood. A prime example is the National Monitoring Program (a program geared towards the proactive management of sea-turtles in Trinidad and Tobago to prevent extinction). There were a lot of groups that only came on board because they knew they would get a stipend. So a lot of people get involved in nature based tourism, they get involved because they know that it’s going to help them in the long run.

4.3.2 POLICY-PRACTICE: THE DISCONNECTING FACTORS

In this section, attention is drawn to the factors that can obstruct the conversion of the tourism policy into the implementation of SNBT, therefore widening the divide between policy and practice. These factors were derived from a range of responses related to the questions, “How does the current tourism policy enable or facilitate sustainable nature based tourism operations in Trinidad and Tobago?”, “What are the challenges encountered in the practice or implementation of sustainable nature based tourism in Trinidad and Tobago?” together with “How can these challenges cause a gap or disconnect between the national tourism policy and its overall execution?”.

4.3.2.1 KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS OF THE TOURISM POLICY

In the first instance, respondents were asked “How does the current tourism policy enable or facilitate SNBT operations in Trinidad and Tobago?” The basis of this question is to highlight practitioners’ awareness of the national tourism policy in terms of its existence, sustainability content as well as its expectations which should then direct their operations and/or facilitate the execution of SNBT initiatives.

In response to the aforementioned research question, almost all SNBT practitioners involved in this study stated that their operations were not specifically guided by the tourism policy, while other respondents were not even aware of the policy’s existence. BSTAC1 explained:

I do not know what the national tourism policy is about. I didn’t even know there was one. But it’s not really something that guides our operations anyway. We receive more financial assistance from government than policy oriented support or direction.

In terms of Nature Seekers, their operations are usually aligned to the policies of other environmental stakeholders. MDNS stated:

Nature Seekers for the most part, aligns its' operations with the Forestry Division and the Environmental Management Authority because of the conservatory nature of our operations. We do not specifically follow the national tourism policy, simply because for us, conservation comes first then tourism. Sustainability has always been incorporated into our operations.

Recently however, Nature Seekers did make it a point of duty to utilize the national tourism policy as a guideline in the development of their organisational strategic plan.

This past year, we have been successful at creating a five year strategy for the organisation. It's still very fresh. Our final draft just came out, so we still have some tweaks to go through. But the national tourism policy was one of the documents which we looked towards in terms of guidelines to align our operational activities. So just in terms of strategic planning, we would have looked at the tourism policy to align some of our operational activities moving forward for the next five years. So we did site that and tried to make reference to it (Sutherland, Marketing Director of Nature Seekers, 2015).

Apart from this, their regular operations are still predominantly directed and influenced by the policies of other environmental ministries and organisations.

In some cases SNBT activities are carried out following guidelines and frameworks set by the operators themselves. According to CTDO "Even though tourism policies are set by the Ministry of Tourism and policies are implemented by TDC, tourism initiatives and projects still have their own frameworks that guide and influence them". This was illustrated by NBTO2 who preferred to follow the policies and guidelines of other Caribbean destinations, because of their proven track record, performance and priority they give to sustainable tourism initiatives. He stressed:

Because Trinidad and Tobago is not serious about sustainable tourism, I prefer to operate my company following the principles of Jamaica and Bahamas' policies, not Trinidad's. I run my company according to the policies and guidelines of these islands combined, because they are all about tourism. They walk their talk. So I am a member of their tourism boards, I get their magazines and bulletins and I structure my company's operations accordingly. So don't get me wrong, I have made sure to do everything within the sphere of the laws of the land. But combining the use of those countries' tourism policies and my knowledge of the natural resources found throughout Trinidad and

Tobago, this blend allows me to run a sustainable nature based tourism company that continues to be good to me.

Even in instances where the tourism policy's guidelines are unknown or not followed, the sustainable operation of nature based tourism initiatives should not be compromised. According to the TPO:

Business can go on as usual for communities, NGOs and operators who are involved in sustainable nature based tourism as there are policies from other ministries that do relate to their operations that they can adhere to and still be effective and successful at what they do. These policies would assist in helping communities and stakeholder groups engage in and continue their current (SNBT) activities. There are also guidelines outlined by the Ministry of Planning that every operation would have to adhere to, that is still directly related to the tourism policy. So that in some way or the other, once its tourism related, regardless of the channel, there is still a link to the tourism policy.

While the principles of sustainability and sustainable tourism development seem to be ingrained in the programs and projects of the highlighted respondents, it is evident that for some, their ignorance of the tourism policy, its existence and content can restrict them from effectively aligning their operations in accordance to the policy's set goals and objectives. This in itself can potentially exacerbate the disconnect between policy and practice of SNBT.

4.3.2.2 TOURISM EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

During the interview process when asked "What are the challenges encountered in the practice or implementation of sustainable nature based tourism in Trinidad and Tobago?" and "How can these challenges cause a gap or disconnect between the national tourism policy and its overall execution?" some salient themes were identified in the responses. These included a lack of education and societal awareness of environmental issues, sustainable practices and the significance of SNBT. The TPC believed that these shortcomings were the "root cause" of all the other factors contributing to the divide between the tourism policy and the implementation of SNBT. He noted:

If you are not fully knowledgeable, aware of, or understand the importance and impacts of this type of tourism, then of course there will be a lack of commitment and support, limited planning or inadequate infrastructure and funding...it's connected to everything and affects everything.

On a general scale, responses revealed that Trinidad and Tobago is not an environmentally conscious nation. "I think one of the key challenges that we have realized in Trinidad and Tobago is that our people, our population, they are not fully aware, fully knowledgeable, fully educated on the importance of preserving the environment" (TPC). According to the key informants, this lack of environmental consciousness transcends into the attention placed on sustainable tourism development and by extension SNBT and may be due to the country's emphasis on the oil and gas industry. According to CTDO, "Much of government's focus is on the energy sector, so there is limited attention paid to tourism. From governmental and ministerial levels right down to the culture and awareness of nationals and the general masses, it is oil and gas oriented".

The PSDC went a bit further in this matter, noting:

The challenges specifically in terms of sustainable tourism development I think revolves around the fact that we don't have an environmental ethos in Trinidad. We have an energy ethos but the amount of awareness for the environment, sustainability or tourism is lacking. If you ask an average person on the street, what they think about energy, oil and gas, they will talk about its importance, they know why it's important, because they live in it every single day...every time they go into the gas station, they live in it. But if you ask someone about the environment, the response most likely will be at two extremes, something random or hardcore. The good thing about it is that can be overcome by education. So that's not even just a tourism thing, that's a sustainable development thing.

A lack of education was said to bring about a change in people's attitudes and behavior toward the environment and sustainable tourism. Respondents believed there was a sense of indiscipline, scant courtesy and a short term mindset displayed by nationals in relation to the country's natural resources brought about by limited knowledge on the subject matter. These

traits at times, result in a lack of stakeholder interest, buy-in and involvement in SNBT initiatives. The TPC gave an example stating:

...stakeholders, because they are either totally unaware or not properly educated makes it difficult for them to buy in into the whole idea of sustainable tourism. And I have had that experience dealing with some stakeholders who say very frankly that it is a waste of time. They are looking more at the sun, sand and sea aspect without realizing that sun, sand and sea are also part of nature.

Establishing buy-in can sometimes be a challenging process as it involves educating people on how their actions are detrimental, in the hope of convincing them to alter their behaviour and stop unsustainable practices. The EMO explained:

Part of the buy-in has to be from the groups whose activities have a negative impact on natural resources. So for example fishing can potentially be one of our types of tourism-sport fishing. But part of it is, we are actually fishing out our resources. We are capturing young fish, immature fish, so we're fishing out our resources for one thing. So it is to get buy-in from those people, getting them to realise that their activities have a detrimental effect on the same resources that they may rely on or would like to capitalize on.

The MDNS stated that in some cases the lack of education causes a sense of intimidation and during meetings community members fail to express critical concerns to decision makers whose mandate is to ensure the tourism policy's goals and objectives are met. This in itself is a hindrance to the execution of SNBT because if those who possess the power to effect change are not knowledgeable about what needs to be done then the necessary changes would not occur. She explained:

When given the opportunity to speak out, what is observed is that the private sector and the hoteliers are usually the ones to speak out more. This happens because community members lack training and education and not wanting to look bad they remain silent at these forums and focus groups. Additionally, the absence of information and knowledge about the potential of the natural resources that surround them have made some community members uncertain about what they want or need. As a result a cyclical gap is created. Those who have the power and influence to make changes are unaware of the resources required by groups that need them and those who are in need are ignorant of the fact or are unable to express it.

Decision makers and government officials are also unaware of SNBT's significance. This affects their resolve in the provision of resources needed to execute SNBT. In this regard, the TPC explained:

The powers that may be, the people that are in position, they themselves are also not fully aware of how important the environment or in this case sustainable nature based tourism is. So while the MOT may say, well this is something good to do, the customers want it, we find that the Ministry also depends on other ministries, be it Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Works and Infrastructure, whoever the case may be. And if they are the ones who have to actually implementing strategies and initiatives are not fully buying into the whole eco, environmental, green, sustainable tourism philosophy, then it will be difficult convincing them to invest time, money and resources.

In essence, while the tourism policy may promise “to promote public awareness” (p. 22); “to provide appropriate education, training and awareness programs for tourism” (p. 23); “facilitate the expansion of the range and scope of education and training opportunities and provide career guidance in the tourism sector” (p. 29); “implement a continuous program of tourism education and awareness (p. 36); and “exploit opportunities for tourism training and awareness” (p. 43), the foregoing responses however highlight the current state of affairs as it relates to a lack of tourism education, limited awareness of the country's natural resources and the absence of a general environmental ethos. This is an indication that a lot of work still needs to be done to bridge the gap when the tourism policy and its influence on the practice of SNBT.

4.3.2.3 HUMAN RESOURCE CONSTRAINTS

The need for human resource development is mentioned throughout the tourism policy as: “Government is committed to building and strengthening human resource capacity” (p.22). Despite this, respondents were still able to identify human resource constraints as an impediment in the practice of SNBT activities. Key informants from the MOT and TDC for instance, admitted that high staff turnover rates inhibited the successful execution of nature based projects. TDP1 pointed out, “One of our challenges here at one point was that we didn't have a full staff

component. So our resources were limited or restrained, so some projects were at a stand-still”.

As a follow up to this statement, the TPO outlined the consequences of high staff turnover as:

...if you have persons leaving an organisation with a certain amount of institutional knowledge that can facilitate the implementation of specific projects, that can be considered as lost knowledge and expertise that is not easily replaceable and should definitely be factored in as a barrier to implementation.

The human resource predicament also extended to acquiring proper and adequate personnel for specific positions. According to the BSTAC2, “it’s a difficult task getting the proper human resources in place, especially when trying to source it from within the community”. This challenge was attributed to the “low levels of educational attainment in rural communities” (CTDO) which further perpetuates the issue of human resource constraints. Respondents highlighted that in instances like these, specialised services from external sources have to be requested. For example, for smaller SNBT operators like the Brasso Seco Tourism Action Committee, the processes involved in applying for grants and other forms of financial assistance can be complicated. Without the help of an in-house professional, the only other option is to hire an external party which is an added expense that most operators cannot afford. The lack of persons qualified in grant writing is a common obstacle in accessing funds experienced by small scale nature based practitioners. NBTO1 stated:

One the main sources of funding is the Green Fund, however it can be difficult to access due to the complicated application process and the amount of information that is needed. It helps if you have an experienced consultant, but this too is an additional cost that some nature based tourism operators or NGOs may not be able to cover.

4.3.2.4 INFRASTRUCTURE AND AMENITIES

Known for hosting the abundance of the country’s natural resources, the northeastern coast of Trinidad is also characterized by its poor road conditions and infrastructure. These according to those interviewed hinder accessibility and discourage visitation to nature based

tourism sites. BSTAC2 simply stated, "...things like roads prevent people from even wanting to come to places like these. There are people who will say 'I really want to go up there you know, but the roads are terrible!'" Expressing a similar sentiment, FO1 gave an example. He stated:

In regards to Grand Riviere, accessibility is becoming increasingly difficult. In some areas the roads are very bad and what makes it worse is that the drive itself is very long. Then at certain parts of the road there is no signage or very poor signage. All these drawbacks are really working against the people of Grand Riviere and similar areas. Their potential development and success as nature based destinations are being compromised.

It is interesting to note that in areas like Brasso Seco, the lack of proper infrastructure in terms of road access not only discourages people from visiting the rural community but it also affects the livelihoods of farmers who are unable to go out and sell their produce. This too indirectly affects the nature based tourism in these areas, because agricultural activities and income work in tangent and help support nature based tourism projects. There is a clear disconnect between policy and practice, as it is clearly stated in the policy that "Government shall improve accessibility and infrastructure of rural areas to facilitate the pursuit of their full potential" (National Tourism Policy, 2010, p. 33).

Associated with infrastructure is the availability of supporting amenities. These include signage, bathrooms, tourism information centers, and camping grounds. FO1 noted:

Based on text book knowledge tourism development requires infrastructure, amenities, must be accessible and have some degree of attraction. In Trinidad for the most part, we lack the infrastructural element to really develop a tourism industry at this time. As a tour guide, if you're you taking people let's say from Port of Spain to Matura and they are travelling in a maxi taxi (bus), if someone wants to use the bathroom, you have to go into a rum shop (bar). There just isn't any place at the side of the road or a tourism office that you can pull into. The infrastructure is just poor. Trinidad has a tremendous potential to promote nature based tourism to an increasing domestic market, but this is only possible if the government invests in proper infrastructure and amenities. People come and camp at certain beaches and when they want to use toilets and can't, they have to be creative. These are definite drawbacks when wanting to partake in NBT activities.

The overall responses of those interviewed indicate that in the absence of proper infrastructure and amenities physically accessing nature based tourism sites or partaking in SNBT activities can be difficult and discouraging. This issue shines light on the gap that exists between the policy's intent and the practice of SNBT.

4.3.2.5 CONFLICTING LAND USES

In terms of land use, the tourism policy outlines government's intent to "cooperate with all stakeholders and other land interests leading to optimal land allocation and usage for the tourism sector" in addition to promising the "effective protection and sustainable utilization of natural and cultural resources in land use planning and development projects for tourism (The National Tourism Policy of Trinidad and Tobago, 2010, p. 28). Judging by stakeholders' responses, this intent is far from a reality, as there were many complaints of conflicting land use and its' adverse effects on natural resources.

Quarrying for instance has always been prevalent along the northern coast of Trinidad according to informants and was identified as the most controversial land use activity and industry. A recent boom in construction throughout the country has increased the demand in quarrying for aggregate. The FO1 attributed the destruction of forests mainly to quarrying.

Explaining in detail he stated:

In my opinion as a forest officer and as a tour guide, we are losing out forests very rapidly. To me, the most destructive thing to the environment at this time is quarrying. Nothing could destroy an environment like quarrying. It's even worse than fires. If you fly over Trinidad on your way to Tobago and you look out to the Valencia area, you will see vast tracks of what were once pristine forests. It's no longer a forest, it's a moonscape. When you wound the environment like that by removing the top soil, it is very difficult for the forest to come back. It won't happen in our life time and even years afterwards.

A loss of forests translates into a loss of species and habitat; the very resources SNBT depend on. Alluding to the fact that Trinidad and Tobago's land space and natural resources are too small and sensitive to handle this type of stress, FO1 highlighted:

Experts are known for saying that habitat destruction is the single greatest cause of species lost in the world. So if this applies to the world, can you imagine the magnitude and impact on small Trinidad that is only 60 miles long by 40 miles wide? Our environment in my opinion is under a lot of stress.

Hunting was another conflicting land use activities mentioned by respondents. Although regulated to some extent by seasons and licenses, it has been criticized for its contribution in the loss and abuse of habitat and forested areas. Referring to this issue, FO1 claimed, "There is no consideration given to carrying capacities during the hunting season. Licensed hunters flood these areas. If you were to ever go Edward Trace in the South when the hunting season is open, it's like a traffic jam inside there!"

4.3.2.6 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND PARTICIPATION

"It is the objective of Government to appropriately engage and empower local communities in planning and decision making processes for the development, management and ownership of tourism products and services" (The National Tourism Policy, 2010, p. 28).

Although mentioned in the policy, there seem to be a disparity between this objective and the statements provided by several key informants. Failure to incorporate stakeholders' contributions or feedback made during consultation sessions for upcoming projects, seemed to be a frequent occurrence. The subsequent effect is community members no longer wanting to participate in future consultative efforts. The MDNS shared:

Stakeholders are often asked to voice their opinions, observations or give their input at forums, focus groups and consultations and then what they say is ignored or not incorporated. This causes frustrations among stakeholders and reduces their willingness to be forthcoming with information that may help both government and themselves and stakeholders.

Additionally, community members seemed to be reluctant to participate in tourism development projects, which include nature based initiatives due to a lack of remuneration. FO2 believed that community members should be compensated for their knowledge, advice and input.

Elaborating on this point he said:

I know for a fact, based on actual information I have gotten from community members that they feel as though “these people (project developers, planners, ministry officials) are paid to develop plans for my area, yet they are coming to ask me for help and I am not getting paid. My payment is the possible benefits I will get from the plan further down the line, if I have a committee or organisation, we can do the tours etc.” Personally I think this is unacceptable and unfair. The idea should be that community members and their knowledge are highly valuable, their knowledge has a cost attached to it, and just like the consultant’s knowledge has a cost attached to it they should be compensated accordingly. No financial value is attached to the firsthand knowledge that they get from communities to help in the development of plans.

Along similar lines, it was also pointed out that because natural resources within communities are freely accessible to anyone at any time, communities do not benefit from its use or their services. This too acts as a deterrent to community members who no longer want to be involved in nature based activities. According to the BSTAC2:

If you are coming into our community, even if you have your own guides, I think it is only fair that you contribute something to the community. At the end of the day it is the community who is maintaining the trails, picking up the garbage, cleaning the landslides that allows you to partake in nature based activities. There must be a way that the communities can continue developing no matter who is coming in, whether you are utilizing our services specifically or you’re just utilizing the area.

This final point is connected to a lack of ownership as it relates to resources and infrastructure.

The BSTAC1 substantiated this by stating:

This is a challenge and I think is very important to nature-based tourism especially. As a community we can develop what we have, for instance, the hiking trails to the beautiful waterfalls, but when it comes down to it, we don’t own the roads, we don’t own the trails, we don’t own the waterfalls, so we can’t really stop anybody from going there without us or making it mandatory for them to contribute to community efforts that makes it possible for them to go to these places. So it would be great, if we were in a position as Nature

Seekers, who I think is in collaboration with Forestry. To access the natural attractions in the Matura area, you have to have permits and you have to hire their guides. That in itself is a fabulous model.

4.3.2.7 INTER-ORGANISATIONAL CO-ORDINATION, COLLABORATION AND COMMUNICATION

Several stakeholders insisted that the mismatch between the tourism policy and the success of SNBT projects was attributed in part to a lack of inter-organisational co-ordination, collaboration and communication. Overlapping zones and jurisdictions were among the first issues highlighted. According to the EMO, “In any particular area, you will sometimes find multiple ministries or organisations charged with similar duties and responsibilities”, which often leads to confusion and a neglect of responsibilities. The TPC noted:

A lack of collaboration and communication occurs among ministries, especially when responsibilities are not well defined. For instance there are ministries that are in charge of the same area, functions or services. At times there are conflicts that arise among these ministries in terms of the prioritization of these issues that ends up causing delays and hindering implementation.

The STC added that at times, organisations are unaware of their responsibilities or those of others in related fields, all because there is little to no collaboration among them. In some cases, both the overlapping of responsibilities and being oblivious to the roles adopted by organisations resulted in an abandonment of said responsibilities. Giving an example, the MDNS stated:

...it often affects the maintenance of areas and resources especially the beaches where turtles come up to lay their eggs and people engage in turtle watching activities. Nature Seekers have been fortunate in some instances to get the permission of the Forestry Division that gives us access and authorization to use land, which has enabled many projects. But other than that, this problem definitely causes an implementation gap.

The existence of numerous authorities in charge of the same resources and physical spaces has also resulted in conflict and power struggles. According to the MDNS:

There have been times where clashes occur between Town and Country Planning and Forestry Division. This is because of former archaic policies and zoning management. Some areas may be under the control of or have the vested interests of TDC, MOT and the Regional Corporation at the same time. Because of this conflicts arise as to who exactly is responsible for the physical space. There is sometimes a power struggle among organisations for use of these areas or responsibilities are ignored because there is no clear cut rule as to who should step up.

Conflict and challenges also arise when trying to acquire permission for various aspects of nature based tourism projects. Having several authorities involved impedes operations and sometimes causes projects to be at a standstill. Making reference to the previous example given, the MDNS stated:

With the sea turtle by-catch project I think we would have passed it through Ministry of Environment, but EMA still had to grant a level of approval. There was some back and forth and now the project is shelved. So I think having the national authorities collaborating with each other, coming to a consensus on projects that they want to support or don't want to support will make it so much easier for us (practitioners)...because you think you get through on one level and then it's shelved because concepts change or the persons in charge change.

The lack of coordination and integration among stakeholders is more evident between tourism and non-tourism organisations. Using road maintenance as an example, the CTDO highlighted, that there is sometimes no urgency by non-tourism organisations. This is because tourism is not considered a priority so their operations take precedence over those connected to tourism. For instance:

The road to Orasco Bay is messed up due to quarrying and mining, and the road to Maracas often experiences landslides. These areas are entry ways to nature based tourism sites. What will happen is that the Ministry of Works will have their own priorities that is separate from tourism and as such they will sometimes address these issues only when they see fit, which isn't always conducive to tourism operations. It acts as a deterrent to those wishing to visit these places. The impact this may have on tourism is not taken into consideration by these agencies when deciding when and how to fix these roads

Ineffective communication among stakeholders was also mentioned. The TPC stated, "you also have the issue of the right hand is doing something but the left hand does not know".

This is an indication that sometimes within the same field of work, even in the same area, due to a lack of communication, relevant stakeholders can be ignorant of tourism development initiatives. The MDNS highlighted that in the past there have been projects that occur in close proximity to the community of Matura that Nature Seekers is unaware of. One in particular is a recent nature trail development project where government plans to develop old trails that were once used to transport cocoa between villages on the northeastern coast of Trinidad to encourage hiking and biking. She noted:

The trail development project for instance, when they came up to San Souci we didn't even know! And apparently that was the official launch of that particular trail. We did not know that it was even being developed and San Souci is just up the road! So I mean greater communication is needed, even if it's to be there just to support or to be in attendance. Because sometimes we get calls from customers asking about activities up the coast, so it would be good to at least be in the know, so that we could share that information. They only contact us when they need something or they send invitations to events, that's it.

The FO2 added that authorities usually fail to communicate or follow up with communities about intended projects. The frustrations that ensue often affect future buy in and involvement in upcoming developments. This too was considered to influence the practice of SNB, an evident variance between the tourism policy and practice. According to FO2:

There are cases where communities and their organisations are aware of plans being developed or were already developed for the area. They are given a long list of things that can take place in that area, based on the area's potential and a year passes and nobody ever comes to start anything and the community is left with their hopes up, clueless as to what might happen. It is no wonder that when authorities return to these same communities with confirmed plans to implement nature based projects they are met with disinterest and in some cases resistance.

4.3.2.8 INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS

One of the most contentious issues among stakeholders was the questionable stability of the current institutional framework and its impact on SNBT operations. Due to frequent changes in administration, there have been constant shifts in the political directorate causing instability in

corresponding actions towards tourism development. The TPO reported, “Challenges encountered thus far include changes within the ministry at administrative levels. With each change in administration there are different interests or shifts in priority that need to be focused on”. The MDNS highlighted irritations experienced due to these frequent administrative changes by saying:

Stakeholders’ (at the ground level) frustrations are attributed to constant changes in the MOT and TDC. There are inconsistencies at the ministerial level whereby ministers and officials are constantly changing or being replaced. The new ones come with new ideas and philosophies, wanting to change current programs and projects that took time to be developed or implemented, they revise or introduce new policies and plans or simply ignore stakeholders’ voices. There is no consistency or stability and this hinders the ability to move forward, to progress and to accomplish objectives.

The recurring replacement of tourism ministers undermines tourism policy objectives and has an impact on the nature and direction of SNBT projects. In this regard the TDP2 explained:

Shifting political motives is definitely a challenge. I have personally seen it in the last five to six years about five or six different Ministers of Tourism and each come with their own personality, their own ideology, and their own political ideas of how things should be done. These traits obviously have a major influence on the development of nature based tourism. If they choose to endorse it, if they have it as a priority, whatever initiative they choose to support will have an impact on how development takes place.

The duplication of efforts and resources, suspended projects and the failure to transfer information and responsibilities are all by-products of recurring ministerial changes. According to the TPO:

We (MOT) had some changes within recent times at the permanent secretary level. Each time there is a change we had to go back to the drawing board in terms of explaining or putting forward the work that had been done previously. Sometimes, you really don’t know if the permanent secretary who is there at present will stay for very long. I mean just to give an example, within probably the few last years we had 4-5 different permanent secretaries. So it’s always a challenge in terms of time and effort invested to accommodate these changes.

The Brasso Seco Tourism Action Committee is another prime example. During the initial stages of the Committee’s formation, TIDCO was restructured and TDC was instated as the new agency

in charge of the implementation of tourism initiatives. Having worked thus far with TIDCO, the expectation was that the project's information would be conveyed to the new agency. This was not the case and the project was shelved for some time, taking much longer than expected to become a reality. Providing details, the BSTAC1 stated:

When TIDCO went under and TDC came in, they didn't share any information, so everything that was in TIDCO's office, stayed there and TDC had none of the information pertaining to our project. When this happened, we decided not to go back to TDC and we just continued doing what we were doing. In reality, it could have been that if the information has changed hands...because TIDCO were really partners with us and really had helped in the early stages with the training and getting this building, the core of this building constructed, really doing a lot of good mobilization work to get things going. So imagine if that had continued, we would have been in a different place, a more advanced stage.

There seemed however to be some consensus among a few stakeholders interviewed, claiming not to be affected by the instability and inconsistencies caused by frequent changes in government administration. This was attributed to the fact that they operated independently and did not rely heavily on government assistance. According to BSTAC2, "I don't think changes in government will have so much of an impact on us, because we are not that dependent on them. So if they cease to exist, we will still go ahead with what we were doing". Respondents from Nature Seekers also shared similar sentiments in saying that changes in government and shifting political ideologies do not affect their operations. This is because they operate primarily under the laws and policies of environmental agencies and not directly under government or the MOT.

The MDNS stated:

For the most part we are not affected by changes in government. I don't think we really encountered any government structure that was anti-environment, but there definitely wasn't sufficient movement that was pro-environment as we would have wished. But as I said, for the most part, the over-arching laws etc. are there, like from EMA, Forestry Division, Fisheries etc., within which we base our operation by and supports the kind of work that we do.

4.3.2.9 REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS

Responses from stakeholders interviewed revealed that regulatory measures such as licenses, permits or certifications are instrumental in prohibiting particular tourism activities from sensitive and endangered areas. These are said to be government's way of outlining the acceptable conditions under which tourism should take place, making sure environmental and safety standards are adhered to. According to the national tourism policy, one of the many responsibilities of government is to "facilitate the sustainable and responsible development of the tourism industry by formulating appropriate development guidelines and regulatory measures" (The National Tourism Policy of Trinidad and Tobago, 2010, p. 38). Contrastingly, stakeholders directly involved in nature based operations did not believe this was being done in an effective manner.

In the first instance, attention was drawn to current certification requirements that have created loopholes in the sustainable practice of nature based tourism. Trinidad and Tobago Tourism Industry Certification (TTTIC) is an example of a national certification programme "designed to ensure tourism operators and service providers in Trinidad and Tobago's tourism sector conform to prescribed standards and quality in their operations" (Trinidad and Tobago Tourism Development Company Limited, 2015). This certification however is not mandatory and as such operators are free to conduct nature based tourism practices at their own free will, which at times are not in accordance with the principles of sustainable tourism development or the standards and objectives found in the national tourism policy. According to NBTO1, in order to become a licensed nature based tour operator, one must attain this certification which involves a six month intensive course period. However, when asked if regular checks were made to ensure

operations were aligned with standards set by the certification after successfully receiving one, he adamantly replied:

No! In theory tour operators are supposed to be monitored by the Bureau of Standards, but in reality this does not happen, which has created a porthole for every and anybody to become a tour operator and claim to conduct sustainable nature based tourism operations, with no form of check and balances in place.

Secondly, key informants expressed their frustrations in the frequent occurrence of other operators, tour guides in particular, conducting nature based activities without permits. The resulting outcome of not having permits is unnecessary stress put on the environment and natural resources brought about by an influx of visitors at unregulated numbers to natural attractions. Failure to possess a permit also poses serious safety and security risks to visitors. Providing more detail, BSTAC1 asserted:

...the thing about getting permits is that you are forced to abide by a set carrying capacity. You are only allowed to take this amount of people, at this amount of time. But when you don't have that, you can have five groups come up here, literally with 100 people each and they're all going to the same place. And what is that going to do to your trails, to your destination? And we have no control over that.

There was also a consensus among respondents about the lack of law enforcement. The MDNS commented saying, "I think for us, the challenge exists in the actual execution of the laws or the legislations attached to the policies that the government has made". This is especially so when it comes to the protection of natural resources, another inconsistency that existed between the tourism policy and actual nature based tourism operations. The TPC highlighted a specific case in Tobago where he questioned the effectiveness of authorities in curbing unlawful and environmentally damaging activities. He noted:

I know of a particular case in Castara, Tobago that is the home of beautiful coral reefs. We all know the sensitivity of coral reefs, the residents are aware of this, yet at the same time you see people, local Tobagonians themselves, going to that said reef and spear fishing! And of course that destroys the reef, it destroys the coral. And they

(environmental organisations) are having a challenge of how do we get these people to stop? Who is in charge? Who is policing? And yes there is a unit responsible, but they are not really effective enough.

The PSDC believed that law enforcement was a two-fold process, involving the ability to do so and the method/s involved, “It’s not just the ability to enforce, the question is also one of the actual model of enforcement. How do you go about it?” When asked the question “Who should be held responsible for the enforcement and execution of regulatory measures indicated in the tourism policy?” he responded:

The de jure answer is either you are going to have to ask the community to be responsible for it or you going to have to assume responsibility at TDC which is an ongoing cost. The crux of the matter actually comes down to how do you action an enforcement model? Who is going to do it? Who is going to accept responsibility and who is going to benefit from it? Who are the beneficiaries?

The members of the Brasso Seco Tourism Action Committee seemed to think that because nature based tourism in Trinidad and Tobago occurs mostly in rural communities, community members should be the ones empowered to enforce the law.

You all will create all of these policies but if you don’t mobilize the communities that surround those forests and empower them to be able to say "No you cannot go inside there with that amount of people or with that chemical that you want to spray", then you will be sitting in your office with a lovely policy on your desk with all these objectives and clueless to the fact that nothing is being accomplished. It is imperative that you empower these communities to know that they can take care of their own, make them take care of the resources that surround them, empower them to have control over these activities.

The lack of strategic action plans was also emphasized by stakeholders as a major divide between the tourism policy and the practice of SNBT. As TPO put it, “Right now because there is no tourism implementation plan, there is no concrete way of ensuring the policies are carried out according to set objectives or guidelines. Whereas the tourism policy is general, the plan would be more specific”. This point was especially emphasized by the MDNS who, speaking from experience, pointed out that in the absence of a national tourism plan there is no strategy in

place to regulate operations or offer distinct directions to guide practitioners. This often results in independent operations as opposed to collaborative efforts, where nature based practitioners are forced to conduct activities on their own, in the hope that they are aligned with the national objectives outlined in the tourism policy. The monopoly effect of not having a strategic plan and having to work on your own is an inevitable waste of resources and efforts. The MDNS explained:

...not having that broad, overarching guiding document, that we could refer to and again share with the community prevents us from collaborating and working together towards a common goal. That is exactly what is happening right now. As much as we try to liaise with each other, everybody is still doing their own projects more or less, which is in some ways wasting resources, because we could have been collaborating more closely and working on maybe two or three core projects as opposed to ten or fifteen different projects along the coast.

4.3.2.10 LACK OF DATA AND RESEARCH

The lack of data and research is another challenge that was identified. The national tourism policy speaks of information management and research in the context of “strengthening the in-house capacities of the major tourism ministries and organisations in order to generate and publicize appropriate tourism statistics and market information intelligence; ensure that consumer and industry trends are continuously monitored and shared with stakeholders and to encourage as well as facilitate ongoing research and monitoring of key factors affecting the tourism industry” (National Tourism Policy of Trinidad and Tobago, 2010, p. 30). The MDNS however highlighted an inconsistency as it relates to this matter between the tourism policy and the practice of SNBT when she shared, “What is currently lacking is data and research to benchmark from a quantitative perspective, progress made and future development initiatives or just to be aware of internal trends that are taking place in similar organisations or related

government institutions”. She went on to emphasize the importance of national statistics by saying:

...it’s especially needed to justify decisions to donors as to why organisations have decided to go into a certain direction. Data also is important to track for example the source of visitor arrivals, so you know what markets to target or niches to develop. People attend conferences but statistics are not locally generated to evaluate the outcome of these conferences or trade shows. Attendance is therefore almost a waste of time and counterproductive if you have no evaluative system in place to measure the success or failures, increases or declines etc.

4.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In summary, this chapter outlined the themes that emerged from thematic content analysis as well as responses obtained from focus group and semi structured interview sessions. Examining the policy’s development processes and its content revealed the integration of sustainable tourism development principles.

Stakeholders possessed a general understanding of sustainable tourism development and its practical translation was evident in their operations. The significance of SNBT to Trinidad and Tobago was highlighted and it was revealed that the country hosted a unique and distinctive nature based portfolio that if properly developed can be a prominent nature based tourism destination within the region, having access to untapped and potentially lucrative tourism niches and markets

Taken together, the results also suggest a disconnect between the tourism policy and the practice of SNBT. While there were factors highlighted that promoted a convergence between the policy and SNBT, there seemed to be more that caused a divide and influenced the effective implementation of SNBT.

Chapter 6 will provide a discussion on the findings presented in relation to the research questions and the academic literature outlined in Chapter 2.

CHAPTER FIVE-DISCUSSION

This chapter offers a discussion on the results and findings of the study, by focusing on the research questions found in Section 1.5 and relating them to the relevant academic data outlined in earlier chapters. Reference will also be made to the first two out of the three research objectives. The results from the field research have been analysed to determine the degree to which the sustainable tourism mantra resonates in the content of the national tourism policy and is manifested in the practice of SNBT in Trinidad and Tobago.

5.1 RESEARCH QUESTION #1

How have the principles of sustainable tourism development informed the formulation of the national tourism policy?

After careful analysis, the findings of this study show that the National Tourism Policy of Trinidad and Tobago does in fact incorporate the principles of sustainable development and sustainable tourism development. The extent to which these principles informed the formulation of the national tourism policy extends not only to the processes involved in its development, but also to the actual content found in the policy document itself. A link is made to the four (4) assessment criteria found in Section 2.5.1 which form the headings of the upcoming sections and help frame the discussions that ensue.

5.1.1 HOLISTIC AND CONSISTENT WITH NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The tourism policy did appear to be holistic and comprehensive, consistent with the overall development goals and objectives specific to Trinidad and Tobago. Throughout the policy, reference was made to the destination's contextual characteristics which included for example its institutional and regulatory framework, cultural diversity and abundance of unique natural resources. Making reference to the significance of these elements and why they should be

incorporated into the development of the tourism policy, Pforr (2001) stated, “a complex interplay of the features of the political system, historical and socio-cultural factors, as well as the geographical setting, all shape tourism politicsand must therefore be regarded as important determinants of the tourism policy process” (p. 277). Moreover, while some respondents did mention that the successes and failures of other more established Caribbean destinations were taken into account when developing Trinidad and Tobago’s tourism policy, the final policy outcome was ultimately influenced by the country’s unique circumstances and requirements. This approach is supported by Inskeep (1999) who noted that “sustainable tourism development must be given policy definition and direction for each country, region or locality where it is to occur...this must be done in light of environmental, social and economic conditions and requirements that exist here” (p. 462).

The tourism policy was also aligned to the country’s national goals of diversifying the economy that was previously dependent on the energy sector and achieving sustainable development. Taking this into account, the underlying aim of the policy’s development was to establish an initial course of action for the development of Trinidad and Tobago’s tourism industry, with the national goals then being used to determine how the country’s resources would be utilized to simultaneously meet tourism purposes. The intended final outcome of this strategy would then be the accomplishment of economic diversification and the attainment of sustainable development. Wilkinson (1997) supported this approach and recommended that countries attempting to develop and promote their tourism industry should situate their tourism policies within the context of national development strategies. He reiterated this point by stating:

The pattern of tourism development in a particular country cannot be understood without an examination of that country’s policies towards resources and the environment, in general, and tourism in particular. There are both cause and effect relationships here.

Similarly, a country's development policies in general affect the nature of tourism development (p. 14).

5.1.2 STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT AND COLLABORATION

An analysis of the tourism policy together with findings from informants involved in its development revealed that a collaborative approach was adopted. All major and relevant stakeholders from the tourism industry, public and private agencies, community groups and non-governmental organisations (NGO) as well as the general public were said to be consulted and given ample opportunity to participate and make contributions at every stage of policy making. The media in the form of MOT's website and local newspapers were utilized to publish the policy and receive feedback. In contrast to these findings, there were a handful of respondents who reported being unaware of the policy's existence or content, let alone involved in its development. A reason for this discrepancy is not clear, but it may be that these informants were not considered major tourism stakeholders and were therefore not contacted by MOT or informed of the policy's development. Additionally, because they align their operations with other ministries and/ or organisations, they were not privy to or mindful of publications displayed in the media or invitations related to public consultations.

Despite these somewhat contradictory results, on a general scale, an inclusive approach to policy development was adopted, making it safe to assume decision makers acknowledged that the effectiveness of Trinidad and Tobago's tourism policy depended on active partnerships and stakeholder engagement. According to Bramwell and Sharman (1999), a collaborative approach "improves the coordination of policies and related actions, and promotes consideration of the economic, environmental, and social impacts of tourism" (p. 392).

In analyzing the policy or reviewing participants' responses, no mention was made of the involvement of non-tourism sectors and/or government bodies. Establishing inter-sectoral

coordination mechanisms with other governmental bodies whose decision making processes may have an impact on tourism operations is critical as it establishes a common and shared vision for tourism development (Caribbean Sustainable Tourism Policy Framework, 2005). This in turn ensures tourism develops in harmony with Trinidad and Tobago's overall economic, social and environmental goals

5.1.3 EDUCATION, TRAINING AND AWARENESS

The tourism policy outlines government's intent to integrate tourism education into the national school curriculum from nursery to tertiary levels of education. Additionally, plans to upgrade tourism and hospitality institutions, certifications and provide more opportunities for training and field experience relevant to the needs of the industry are also included. According to George and Clark (1998) and Maxim (2014) these strategies will ensure individuals are properly equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to appropriately deal with issues pertaining to sustainable tourism development, thus contributing to an improvement in sustainable tourism practices and the possibility of implementing tourism policies in a sustainable manner. Although no specific reference was made to the terms 'sustainable tourism development' or 'sustainability', the inclusion of tourism education and training as important policy strategies is indicative of the policy's adherence to the concepts' principles.

Limited public awareness and understanding of tourism were highlighted in the policy as national concerns. In an attempt to address these while simultaneously sensitizing individuals and communities on tourism issues, together with improving the public's perception of tourism development, the policy assigned these responsibilities to various stakeholders namely the MOT, TDC, NGOs, CBOs, women and the media. From this, it can be deduced that policy makers took into consideration the perspective of Muangasame and McKercher (2014) who

believed that sustainable tourism activities touches all aspects of a destination and its society. Therefore, by making stakeholders who belong to varying sects of society responsible for tourism awareness the probability exists that more citizens would be convinced of tourism's significance and the need to engage in sustainable tourism practices. This increases the likelihood of tourism, more so sustainable tourism becoming more relevant on national scale

Ultimately, once these stakeholders uphold their mandate to create tourism awareness and improve the public's perception of tourism, "policy makers can attempt to change people's behaviour by influencing their knowledge and attitudes" (Woerkum, Arts & Leeuwis, 2000, p. 241). Furthermore, being made aware of sustainable tourism and its issues through constant forms of communication makes stakeholders more liable for the contribution and roles they play in tourism policy implementation and in this case SNBT. According to Dodds (2007a) "it is imperative to engage the wider population on an ongoing basis and to make stakeholders more accountable for the implementation and not just the formulation of sustainable tourism measures" (p. 316).

5.1.4 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

The government has realised that the environment is an important resource base, one that the tourism industry is heavily dependent on. This is reflected in the tourism policy where the government has promised to utilize, develop and preserve the environment in a sustainable manner for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations (The National Tourism Policy Trinidad and Tobago, 2010, p. 24-25). In this regard, the policy is said to observe the general principles and policy requirements for sustainable tourism development, outlined in the literature where it states "sustainable tourism should make optimal use of the environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological

processes and helping to conserve natural resources and biodiversity” (Making Tourism More Sustainable - A Guide for Policy Makers, UNEP and UNWTO, 2005, p.11-12).

Furthermore, according to the policy, special attention is to be paid to the country’s natural and cultural assets, while adhering to national and international environmental policies and standards. Additionally, environmental sustainability is expected to be achieved through proposed strategies such as the implementation of environmental certifications, effective allocation and use of land resources, enforcement of environmental laws and regulations, sustainable technologies, education and community based tourism (The National Tourism Policy, 2010).

5.1.5 FUTURITY

The national tourism policy has been in the development pipeline for over two decades, starting with the establishment of the Tourism Master Plan in 1995. After several revisions and aligning itself to the guidelines outlined in the national policy framework for the achievement of sustainable development- *Working for Sustainable Development in Trinidad and Tobago (2005)*, the policy received Cabinet’s full approval in 2010. Since 1995, despite changes in political administrations and governmental approaches, all possessing different aspirations for national development, the consistency in the underlying motives for tourism development in Trinidad and Tobago has remained constant. This is reflected in the policy’s supporting or base documents highlighted in Section 4.1.4. These documents all focus on similar long term tourism goals and objectives, namely economic diversification, job creation, improvement in the quality of life experienced by all citizens and most recently sustainable development. According to Dodds (2007a) and Dodds and Butler (2010), a policy is informed by the principles of sustainable tourism development when it has a long term vision for tourism development, there is

consistency of long ranging tourism goals and objectives and it aligns itself with guidelines for sustainable development.

Findings also confirmed that government's recent pursuit of sustainable tourism development was primarily motivated by the need to expand the country's economic base, due to the fluctuating performance of the oil and gas prices on the international market. Dodds (2007a) pointed out, that at times, attention to sustainability issues are only addressed when the economic situation of a destination is compromised, thus leading to increased focus on environmental and social considerations. To validate the authenticity of sustainable tourism policy efforts Dodds (2007a) suggested that "tourism should be recognized as a core sector contributor to economic, social and environmental successes or failures and must be integrated into all policy frameworks..." (p. 317). Similarly, Butler (1999) and Dodds (2007c) thought tourism development should be balanced with other societal and economic activities. Respondents however painted another picture, believing that the tourism sector was still placed on the 'back burner' of governmental priorities, while oil and gas was still considered to be the country's leading industry, receiving the majority of their focus and investment.

5.2 RESEARCH QUESTION #2

Why was the tourism policy developed? And what strategies and processes were employed in its formulation?

An analysis of the national tourism policy, together with responses from key informants involved in its development, revealed that the chief motives behind its formation was the need for economic diversification, the promise of economic growth and foreign exchange earnings not to mention job creation. Moreover, the purposeful development of the tourism policy was a strategic approach to tourism development, making sure the tourism industry was effectively

contributing to national goals and objectives. The crux of this intent is embodied in Jenkins's (2006) definition of a tourism policy where he describes it as "a reference point against which planning considerations should be related. It provides parameters and guidelines to facilitate future development in the tourism sector; in essence a policy sets out the objectives that it seeks to achieve" (as cited in Cukier, 2006, p. 23).

Upon further investigation the researcher also realised that the formation of the tourism policy was not only influenced by tourism's potential contribution to national goals and objectives but also the stage at which Trinidad and Tobago was at in its tourism development. In comparison to the other Caribbean destinations, Trinidad and Tobago has a shorter tourism history and as such developing a tourism policy was simply a proactive approach when deciding to successfully engage in tourism activities. According to Baum (1999) and relating it to Trinidad and Tobago's case, "the guiding role of a formally articulated statement of policy and the existence of a specialist ministry are likely to be deemed of greater importance" (p. 187) than other more established destinations as there is now a greater desire for extensive tourism development in the country.

Although economic factors seemed to be the major driving force behind the development of the national tourism policy, results from field research and policy analysis uncovered the consideration of a multitude of other national concerns and policy issues that further solidified the need for the tourism policy. These issues were linked to collaboration and communication among major stakeholders; environmental degradation; tourism education, training and awareness; local community involvement; infrastructure; marketing and promotion; adherence to international standards and socio-cultural impacts. In light of this, Edgell et al. (2008) believed that a comprehensive tourism policy should encompass all aspects of and concerns related to

tourism in order to mitigate the negative effects it can have on a destination while promoting the positive impacts. He noted,

Opponents of tourism often cite the negative impacts an influx of visitors might have on the destination, and there is a need to have a policy that recognises these concerns, but, of course, the positive impacts should be equally important to policy makers and practitioners. Understanding both positive and negative impacts will lead to practical sustainable tourism development (p. 14)

Similarly, Hall (2011) upheld the view that sustainable tourism policies were regulatory and proactive mechanisms to address current and imminent challenges facing the tourism industry. He stated “the growing contribution of tourism to environmental change while it is simultaneously being promoted as a means of economic growth suggests that sustainable tourism development is a significant policy problem and that policy making is a significant part of the governance process” (p. 652). Arguably, because Trinidad and Tobago is now fully immersing itself into tourism initiatives, the preparation of a tourism policy developed within a sustainable tourism framework has given the country an opportunity to counteract and effectively address tourism’s impacts as well as emerging problems and challenges that the industry might face.

Along a similar vein and giving more detail, Moyle et al (2014) added,

The tourism industry must be prepared to address the current and forthcoming challenges to maintain the viability of the resources and the resources upon which it depends; thus there is a need for proactive decision-making and strategic planning by governments, businesses and other stakeholders in order to maximise opportunities, minimize adverse impacts and maintain competitive advantages (p. 1037).

In terms of the strategies and processes involved in the formulation of Trinidad and Tobago’s tourism policy, results indicate the adoption of a collaborative approach. This was made possible by the participative efforts of the Policy Working Committee that comprised of significant tourism stakeholders, interest groups (NGOs and CBOs), ministries, tourism organisations and institutions, in addition to select consultation groups. Following the systems

model (See Figure 1), incorporated by Hall (1994) in his analysis of tourism policy, the Working Committee and select groups represented the policy arena (the outer box) and had direct influence on the policy's formulation processes. They were also charged with the responsibility of identifying critical issues and developing the first draft of the tourism policy.

The identification of issues, weighing in on varying stakeholder concerns and interests and establishing a consensus occurred within the inner box of the systems model. It was noted that at times the dynamics between stakeholders were a bit unsettling as the priorities of some, particularly those in the private sector, seemed to overshadow the needs of others. This process according to informants consisted of further collaborative efforts, consultations, public meetings and frequent policy revisions which facilitated the decision making process related to the policy's vision, structure and content. The final stage involved situating the policy against national objectives, that is, the achievement of sustainable development, which led to the policy's approval, granted by Cabinet (the government).

The policy process involved in the development of Trinidad and Tobago's tourism policy, mirrored the systems model which illustrated that a tourism policy is a "consequence of the political environment, values and ideologies, the distribution of power, institutional frameworks and of decision making processes" (Hall and Jenkins, 1995, p. 5). Additionally, the involvement of varying stakeholders at different stages of the policy's formation are incorporating their concerns and interests provide some proof that the principles of sustainable tourism development was considered and put into practice.

5.3 RESEARCH QUESTION #3

What are the factors that facilitate the translation of the national tourism policy into the practice of sustainable nature based tourism?

5.3.1 ACCESS TO AND AUTONOMY OVER RESOURCES

Access to and control over natural resources was highlighted by respondents as influential in the practice of SNBT. According to Valentine (1992), nature based tourism is a valuable option for communities like Matura and Brasso Seco that possess the resources and inclination to support the sector's activities. This is because, the same natural resources residents have grown accustomed to and depend on for their livelihoods can also be transformed into attractions that will generate income and contribute to improvements in the quality of life for residents. Although the policy speaks of effective allocation and use of land resources, the immediate 'right to use' made possible by the Forestry Division in addition to operating in areas that are naturally endowed have afforded organisations like Nature Seekers for example, the freedom to customize their nature based activities to best benefit their communities and its environs.

5.3.2 INTER-ORGANISATIONAL CO-ORDINATION AND COLLABORATION

Respondents indicated that inter-organisational coordination and collaboration were factors that were capable of promoting the conversion of the national tourism policy into SNBT initiatives in Trinidad and Tobago. Maxim (2014) claimed that "developing partnerships with other organisations, both from the public and the private sector, could overcome possible conflicts and bring in more resources and expertise to help with the implementation of sustainable tourism policies" (p. 44). Respondents, particularly nature based practitioners, highlighted instances where partnerships with local, regional and international organisations

yielded assistance in overcoming operational challenges. Nature Seekers for instance, in partnership with CARIRI was able to develop a strategic plan to deal with critical areas like customer service, safety and security in addition to receiving technical advice, funding and training. This collaborative effort has improved their operational capacity and they are now able to make the necessary steps to advance their sustainable nature based initiatives.

Shafer and Choi (2006) suggested that the occurrence of inter-agency collaboration will allow regional directors or comparable executives of state agencies to have regular and systematic exchanges of information about nature-based tourism priorities, agendas and activities. The MDNS held fast to this notion, pointing out that collaboration amongst other SNBT organisations with similar agendas resulted in the efficient accomplishment of common goals and objectives. Within the Matura to Matelot area for example, expertise and resources are now frequently shared among practitioners and communities, creating a common front in addressing similar concerns and challenges as well as providing support and advancement in cooperate initiatives.

Informal networking was also highlighted by informants as a component of inter-organisational coordination and collaboration. This is quite prevalent in Trinidad and Tobago and has always been part of the country's culture. These networks are based on close ties between friends, relatives or acquaintances and involve the return of favours. Respondents reported that informal networking occurs frequently among local level stakeholders who are closer to nature based tourism operations, issues and problems than central decision makers. According to Pülzl and Treib (2007) negotiation processes occur more frequently within networks of implementers and in the case of Trinidad and Tobago, based on the feedback

received from those interviewed, have proven to be extremely helpful in the accomplishment of SNBT activities through the expedition of decision making and application processes.

5.3.3 FUNDING

Funding was another key facilitating factor highlighted by respondents. Apart from funding commonly received from government organisations or international institutions, money earned from nature based tourists themselves proved to be a chief source of financial assistance. It is believed that nature-based tourists spend more money than traditional mass tourists at destinations (Sindiga, 1999). These tourists tend to prefer premium nature experiences, integrated into specialized tours that are generally extremely valuable. The exceptional values of these excursions add an alluring element, which fosters a high willingness to pay (Valentine, 1992).

The income received from these nature-based activities, visitor user fees and activity permits are then reinvested into conservation efforts, aimed at ensuring the sustainable maintenance of the environment while simultaneously contributing to local development initiatives (Sindiga, 1999; Chen & Liaw, 2012). Practitioners proved this to be true as they listed instances where financial assistance not only facilitated critical functions and activities (e.g. Green Fund and Nature Seekers) but also acted as an incentive, encouraging local involvement and creating sustained livelihoods (e.g. the National Monitoring Programme). Carlisle (2001) made reference to the Conservation Corporation Africa (CCA) model. This model employed nature-based tourism to protect the indigenous wildlife population (e.g. animal, bird and plant life; forests, savannahs and woodlands) while simultaneously providing economic and socio-cultural aid (e.g. direct employment and training, provision of entrepreneurial opportunities and established community facilities such as schools and clinics) to local communities. The model

proved that there was a clear interdependence and mutually beneficial relationship between nature based tourism and the development of local communities.

5.3.4 MARKET KNOWLEDGE

According to stakeholders interviewed, Trinidad and Tobago's recent plunge into tourism development has afforded the country time to observe and cater to changing market trends, tourist behaviour and preferences. Sindiga (1999) noted that "an increasing number of tourists are becoming aware of the ecological harm that mass tourism causes, the value of pristine natural areas, and the concerns of local people" (p. 110). Additionally, improved standards of living and health care has led to more active populations, who have a greater interest in exercise, nutrition, holistic wellness and stress management than their previous generations (Frost, Laing, & Beeton, 2014). Acknowledging these traits through the development of nature based products and services that best meet consumer needs was a suggestion made by respondents to help bridge the gap between tourism policy objectives and the execution of SNBT.

Despite being a late comer to the tourism arena with the aforementioned advantages, respondents revealed that Trinidad and Tobago is still yet to fully recognize and put into practice the economic significance of nature based tourism and its potential impact to the national economy. In the literature, Buckley (2000) highlighted a growing middle class that was economically stable, residing in urban areas that were becoming more curious and appreciative of the environment. As a result, there has been a greater desire to escape heavily populated and crowded urban areas, in the pursuit of peace and tranquillity, with an urge 'to get back in touch with nature'(Buckley, 2000; Kuenzi & McNeely, 2008; Frost, Laing, & Beeton, 2014). This phenomenon according to key informants applies to both international tourists and local residents. Stakeholders also believed that these growing aspirations to take part in nature based

initiatives together with Trinidad and Tobago's abundant nature potential was not being matched by adequate government investment in SNBT initiatives.

5.3.5 STAKEHOLDER COMMITMENT AND CONTRIBUTION

The contributions and sustainable practices of nature based operators and NGOs namely Nature Seekers, TVT, Brasso Seco Tourism Action Committee as well as ministries and local government agencies like the MOT, TDC, Forestry Division and EMA were listed among respondents who were either actively involved in the development of the tourism policy or aware of its content, as facilitating factors in the execution of sustainable nature based activities. These organisations engage in for instance, leatherback turtle conservation and monitoring; promote education and public awareness programs; support reforestation initiatives; develop cottage industries, assist in the maintenance of infrastructure; provide support systems such as training, financial assistance and technical advice; explore new and potential nature based tourism initiatives; establish environmental compliance; create employment and sustained livelihoods; and conduct research and develop environmental protection strategies. In light of the inherent characteristic of these activities, Stanbrook (2010) noted that tourism is widely used as a component in conservation efforts and to deliver benefits to local people, thus contributing to overall development on all levels of society. Therefore it is safe to assume that in the absence of stakeholders' contributions, efforts and commitment, it would be difficult to realise tourism policy's goals and objectives, especially those that bear influence on SNBT in Trinidad and Tobago. In other words, the gap between the tourism policy and the execution of SNBT programs and projects can potentially be greater.

5.4 RESEARCH QUESTION #4

What are the factors that hinder the translation of the national tourism policy into the practice of sustainable nature based tourism and how can these be addressed?

Hindering factors were said to include challenges, limitations and/or shortages that can affect the successful execution of the tourism policy and thus influence the practice of sustainable nature-based tourism initiatives. In this section the most salient factors highlighted in Chapter 4 will be discussed.

5.4.1 TOURISM EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

The lack of tourism education and awareness were among the most prominent challenges mentioned by those interviewed. One respondent even went as far as to suggest that this shortfall was the fundamental reason for the occurrence of other translation issues. Informants also pointed out that a lack of tourism education and awareness contributed to minimal buy-in, limited stakeholder participation and commitment and inadequate support by decision makers who were responsible for providing infrastructure, funding and other resources that were required for the sustainable practice of nature based tourism. Butler (1999) implied that a lack of overall awareness and understanding of sustainable tourism fosters perceived irrelevance and a lack of stakeholder support, all of which are hindrances when attempting to execute sustainable tourism initiatives. George and Clark (1998) in full agreement, also pointed out that “policy and education are inextricably linked and essential for maintaining the tourism sector” (p. 206) and as is therefore applicable to both the formulation and enactment of a sustainable tourism policy.

Feedback from interviews revealed that on a general scale Trinidad and Tobago lacked an environmental ethos. This lack of environmental consciousness transcends into the scant attention paid by the country’s citizens, organisations, institutions and even government

ministries to sustainable tourism activities and in extension SNBT. Stakeholders believe that this lack of environmental cognizance and ignorance to matters related to sustainable tourism is perpetuated by the absence of environmental education, awareness programs aimed at fostering a culture of environmental consciousness together with an appreciation of the country's natural resources. Kuenzi and McNeely (2008) stated,

Awareness about the impacts of tourism, the importance of biodiversity, and the need for conservation efforts needs to be raised within the tourism industry. It should be integrated all along the tourism supply chain, from tour developers to the indigenous communities (p. 168)

Dodds (2007c) claimed that “education about sustainability is imperative as awareness campaigns would help change short term societal beliefs and the ‘live for now’ mentality, as was witnessed in Calvia and Malta. This is especially applicable to Trinidad and Tobago as respondents alluded to the notion that citizens may not be fully knowledgeable about sustainable tourism issues because national focus is still primarily on the energy industry. However, now that the performance of oil and gas in international markets are declining, talks of diversification that have been occurring for almost two decades are now being activated, resulting in changing behaviours and attitudes as well as increased national awareness of sustainable tourism development, environmental issues and Trinidad and Tobago's nature based potential.

5.4.2 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND PARTICIPATION

Active and consistent community involvement and participation was noted by the stakeholders as a necessity in the realisation of SNBT. Murphy (1985) pointed out that “more than any other industry, tourism development depends on the goodwill and cooperation of the local populations” (as cited in Sindiga, 1999, p. 113). Encouraging community involvement and participation in sustainable tourism development is built on the premise that engagement generates socio-economic benefits to host communities which alleviates poverty, facilitates

community development and encourages future stakeholder participation (UNEP & UNWTO, 2005). In talking about community involvement and participation, the BSTAC1 posed a question which seemed to highlight the concerns of other stakeholders. The question asked was, “how were residents expected to participate if the existing natural resources present in their communities were on one hand, freely accessible to everyone and then on the other hand, their (community members’) services or assistance were not requested?” Sindiga (1999) emphasized that it is the local communities who primarily assist in the achievement of nature based tourism endeavours since they possess “the greatest repertoire of knowledge of their ecology to be able to manage the resource system in a sustainable manner” (p. 113). With reference to the literature and in response to the first question, if stakeholders are not given the opportunity to be involved in nature based activities, the likelihood exists that resources and their dependent operations will not be used or conducted in a sustainable manner. This matter has the potential to produce adverse environmental and socio-economic effects to the said communities. In light of this therefore, limited community involvement and participation can be considered noteworthy issues that decision makers should be cautious of, especially when addressing factors that contribute to an implementation gap between the national tourism policy and the practice of SNBT.

Added to this, stakeholders expressed frustrations when feedback and contributions were offered but failed to be incorporated into programs developed by decision makers or the lack of compensation given for community members’ knowledge, advice and input. The frequency of these occurrences according to key informants contribute significantly to a general lack of willingness by communities to participate in subsequent projects initiated by government.

In other instances, respondents highlighted that some community members are just not interested to participate, even if their involvement was emphasized as a requirement in the

successful execution of sustainable nature based initiatives. Muangasame and McKercher (2014) pointed out that there is “a general misconception that the whole community is ready to welcome so-called ‘agreed’ upon plans and each member would react to its objectives in the same way” (p, 4). In these cases, respondents disclosed that community members who have grown accustomed to the natural resources in their areas are usually unappreciative or are unaware of the tourism value of the natural resources that surround them. Therefore when called upon to participate in ventures, they perceive it to be useless and a waste of time. Informants noted that it is then the responsibility of officials to develop strategies to create awareness within communities about the nature based potential of resources in their area, which would hopefully foster participation and engagement in the advancement of nature based tourism goals and objectives.

5.4.3 INTER-ORGANISATIONAL COLLABORATION, INTEGRATION AND COMMUNICATION

Respondents stressed that inter-organisational collaboration, integration and communication were complicated tasks due to the diversity of stakeholders involved in SNBT activities. The complications brought to the forefront included overlapping jurisdictions, ignorance of roles and abandonment of responsibilities as well as conflict and power struggles. Muangasame and McKercher (2014) made reference to this predicament based off of their research experience, acknowledging that “the more diverse the stakeholder groups that are involved in policy implementation, the more compromised the policy must become to satisfy divergent needs. The end result is often something that is unworkable” (p. 16).

In the first instance, multiple agencies charged with similar responsibilities within the same district or area have resulted in confusion over and even neglect of responsibilities due to

unclear interpretations of specific roles and functions. Wilkinson (1997) noted that this leads to poorly developed coordinating mechanisms, weak commitment to integration, insufficient resources and limited institutional capabilities, all of which have been illustrated in Chapter 4 as elements that are currently causing a divergence between the tourism policy and the implementation of SNBT in Trinidad and Tobago.

Conflict and power struggles also ensue due to the existence of multiple entities all possessing some degree of control over natural resources. Dodds (2007c) argued that “bureaucracy and the dynamics of public sector organisations give rise to situations where decisions are not always taken in the best interest of sustainability...people’s egos, specific corporate agendas and power struggles are factors which have to be reckoned with” (p. 60). This quandary according to informants is said to occur predominantly between tourism and non-tourism organisation. This usually impedes SNBT projects due to a lack of urgency by non-tourism agencies, a complete neglect of responsibilities by both sets of organisations or enforced restrictions where permission for various aspects of projects are required from varying organisations, which can be time consuming, contributing to delays in critical projects.

Authorities’ failure to communicate with each other and communities about upcoming or planned projects was another issue that respondents pointed out during the field research. Nature Seekers for example were oblivious to other nature based developments occurring in a nearby community, which prevented them from offering support and even promoting affiliated activities. Improved channels of communication in this instance would have fostered collaboration and given the opportunity to be involved would have advanced the common goals and objectives of Matura and surrounding communities as it relates to nature based activities. In instances like these when developers fail to communicate with community members,

stakeholders interviewed reported a general sense of resistance and disinterest by residents. In this regard, Gelders and Brans (2007) argued that “communication about policy intentions reduces or avoids unintended consequences later on, such as surprises, misunderstandings, resistance, frustrations and speculation among citizens and organisations” (p. 159). In essence a lack of inter-organisational collaboration, integration and communication causes a divide between the tourism policy and affects the effective implementation of SNBT.

5.4.4 INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS

Institutional frameworks according to Pal (1992) consist of rules or norms that are linked to legislation, organisational directives and culture. Additionally, boundaries or standards of acceptable behaviour, internalized by individuals are set within these frameworks while ideologies that define and control the choices and actions of individuals and organisations are promoted. These elements therefore determine the level of commitment and extent to which ministries and their relevant officials are involved in the activation of tourism policies. In light of this, when institutional frameworks are unstable and/or constantly shifting, changes in organisational directives, political philosophies and ideological preferences are imminent, resulting in inconsistencies and unstable environments which adversely impact tourism development. As such, the instability of Trinidad and Tobago’s current institutional framework that governs its tourism sector was a heated topic of debate during interview sessions, with respondents highlighting its impact on SNBT operations.

Frequent changes in government or ministerial posts are prevalent occurrences in Trinidad and Tobago. One respondent even indicated that within the last governmental term, a period that lasts up to five years, there were close to six different Ministers of Tourism, all of which possessed their own and often varying political perspectives, ideologies and goals for

tourism development. Drawing from the literature, Muangasame and McKercher (2014) in their research of Thailand found that successful policy implementation was hindered by a high turnover rate among cabinet ministers that often led to changes in the tourism policy as the current leaders would come with new ideas trying to make an authoritative impression. “One minister may identify sustainability as a core priority, whereas his or her replacement may not see it as being as important” (Muangasame & McKercher, 2014, p. 15). Consistent with examples given by Dodds (2007a) and Yüksel et al, (2012), informants highlighted that these frequent changes have resulted in high turnover rates of tourism directors with the new executives not agreeing with the policy priorities of their predecessors; revised job descriptions of tourism officials or departmental tasks which have caused confusion in responsibilities and sometimes a neglect of some critical functions; and repeated modifications to implementation programs.

In addition to inconsistencies and unstable environments, SNBT practitioners highlighted a host of other implications that have made it difficult to carry out their operations. For instance frequent administrative changes within the MOT and TDC at administrative levels have resulted in shifts in development priorities which SNBT practitioners highlighted made it difficult for them to carry out their operations. These have caused fractions in sustainable tourism initiatives, with respondents giving examples of discontinued projects; critical operations being shelved or halted; tasks and program efforts being duplicated; and failure to transfer information, resources and responsibilities pertaining to projects that have already started. As mentioned in the academic literature, because the effective execution of sustainable tourism policies depends not only on its content but also on longevity and consistency, it is evident from the results that these fluctuating circumstances do have adverse impacts on the implementation of SNBT. Maxim

(2014) suggested having sustainability occupy a high and permanent position in local and central government's agendas, as a way of resolving the occurrence of unstable institutional frameworks. He strongly believed, "political will (regardless of the political party in power) and making sustainability a priority for the development of tourism would help local authorities to allocate the necessary resources and to adopt the long term measures needed to progress towards sustainable tourism" (p. 45).

These inconsistencies have forced some stakeholders to either align their operations with the laws and regulations of other organisations or establish their own based on the goals and objectives they wish to personally achieve. In the case of Nature Seekers, due to the conservation and environmental aspect of their activities, they for the most part, operate under the laws and policies of environmental agencies namely the Forestry Division and EMA. Similar to the premise held by Hall and Jenkins (1995), practitioners have realised that institutional frameworks regulate how demands on policy and operations are made, determines who has the authority to make certain decisions and actions that will influence their undertakings. Not wanting to be subject to a seemingly rigid and unstable institutional system, research participants have opted to operate independently in the best interest of their projects, communities and organisations.

5.4.5 REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS

Regulatory frameworks include prohibition/preclusion of tourism for particularly sensitive and endangered areas in combination with permits/licenses for operators, allowing governments to define conditions under which tourism is acceptable or tolerable (Kuenzi & McNeely, 2008, p. 168). Although the establishment and activation of regulatory frameworks are mentioned in Trinidad and Tobago's tourism policy to encourage and enforce international

standards or “the sustainable and responsible development of the tourism industry” (The National Tourism Policy of Trinidad and Tobago, 2010, p. 38) research findings indicate that in reality the opposite occurs. In the first instance, there is a prevalence of operators conducting nature based activities without permits. In cases like these, there is no way of gauging operators’ adherence to environmental standards and safety procedures. The result is usually a breach of carrying capacities, causing damage to sensitive and endangered areas and species and consequently posing safety risks to operators and visitors alike.

Surprisingly, it was also brought to the forefront that industry certification is not mandatory and compliance to industry standards is left up to practitioners’ moral persuasion. Added to this, there is no active system in place to monitor on a consistent basis adherence to certification standards, even for those operators who have obtained certification. As mentioned in the literature review, monitoring and evaluation programs are justified by their ability to assess the progress and operations of tourism initiatives and intervene or make improvements when necessary. The absence of these can result in destinations running the risk of encountering difficulties or failures when attempting to carry out sustainable tourism (Muangasame & McKercher, 2014).

According to respondents, these issues to be exacerbated by a lack of law enforcement. It was highlighted that laws and legislations have been established and are in place for the protection of natural resources, but due to inefficiencies in enforcement authorities or the nonchalant culture of the people, unlawful activities continue to occur without penalties, causing SNBT operators to encounter obstacles when trying to meet their goals and objectives.

Many stakeholders believed that a lack of strategic plans may be the root cause of regulatory challenges encountered. In the absence of a national tourism plan, there is no

operational benchmark to base nature based initiatives, the roles and responsibilities of organisations and agencies are not clearly defined or documented and challenges occur when attempting to hold individuals, communities and organisations accountable for unsustainable actions. Respondents highlighted this as a clear cut recipe for unregulated activities. Edgell et al. (2008) claimed that strategic planning is a process aimed at optimizing “the benefits of tourism so that the result is a balance of appropriate quality and quantity of supply with the proper level of demand, without compromising neither the locale’s socio-economic and environmental developments nor its sustainability (p.297). The Caribbean Sustainable Tourism Policy Framework (2008) has provided support in highlighting the need for a strategic tourism plan and its significance in the realisation of tourism policies by stating:

A national tourism master plan should be developed in accordance with the principles of good governance setting forth concrete targets, specific activities and timelines for these to be conducted for the sustainable development of the national tourism sector, within the ambit of the stated policy. Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should be an integral part of the tourism master plan, and are essential for tracking progress made in the realisation of the enunciated targets. Responsibility for monitoring progress according to the specified indicators needs to be stipulated in the tourism master plan (p.7).

5.4.6 LACK OF DATA AND RESEARCH

One interesting finding was the lack of data and research, as this too was linked to challenges associated with monitoring and evaluation. Those interviewed insisted that tourism research, data and statistics were of utmost importance to keep abreast of industry trends, best practices and developments, track markets and niches, facilitate the transfer of knowledge and skills between similar organisations and institutions and measure progress and effectiveness of sustainable tourism efforts. In a nutshell, to improve tourism offerings, data collection is considered critical.

5.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has provided a discussion on a full range of issues that affect the practice of SNBT in Trinidad and Tobago. In the first instance, the policy's development and content being informed by principles of sustainable tourism development can be influential in the sustainable management and operation of the entire tourism industry, particularly SNBT. Although findings indicate the primary motive behind the formulation of the tourism policy was economic diversification, the policy is still a strategic approach geared towards tourism development and can make certain the industry contributes to the achievement of national goals and objectives. Factors that influence the policy practice mismatch and therefore affect the translation of the national tourism policy into the execution of SNBT were also highlighted.

The final chapter of this thesis will summarize the study's findings and present policy and practical recommendations aimed at bridging the gap between the tourism policy and the implementation of SNBT. The chapter ends with suggestions for future research as well as a brief outline of the implications surrounding this current research

CHAPTER SIX- RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

This final chapter is a summary of the entire thesis research as it relates to the study's objectives outlined in Section 1.5. A case study approach was utilized allowing for the views of a cross section of stakeholders to be captured and gaps between the tourism policy and practice of SNBT in Trinidad and Tobago to be identified. Recommendations are outlined based on findings acquired from thematic content analysis and field research methods. These are linked to proposed changes which include the best courses of action to address the challenges experienced in the implementation of SNBT. Finally, for researchers planning to undertake similar studies, suggestions on alternative research methods to best understand the policy-practice dynamic are provided to assist in future research endeavours.

6.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this research was to analyse the development and implementation of the national tourism policy by assessing its adherence to the principles of sustainable tourism development. In turn, an evaluation of its impact on the practice of SNBT was conducted.

The first objective aimed at examining the policy and its processes within a framework comprising of the interpretation, relevance, integration and practice of the core concepts of sustainable tourism development. An investigation into the policy's genesis and the processes involved in its formation was carried out. This was complemented by a thematic analysis of its content and that of its base/supporting documents. Both exercises revealed a general acknowledgement to the principles related to sustainable tourism development. Despite this, there was still evidence to suggest that the underlying motive for the policy's development was the tourism sector's potential contribution to Trinidad and Tobago's economy, namely the diversification of the country's economic base, foreign exchange generation and job creation.

This focus at times seemed to dictate the level of focus and importance placed on SNBT initiatives as respondents believed that decision makers did not perceive it to be as lucrative as other forms of tourism or economic activities.

The second objective involved investigating the potential gaps that may exist between the current national policy and the practice of SNBT. Field research methods, consisting of a focus group and semi structured interviews, uncovered factors that both enabled and hindered the translation of the tourism policy into the execution of SNBT. The disparities identified by key informants that existed between the policy and SNBT were mostly attributed to a lack of tourism education and awareness influenced by mostly by cultural perceptions of the environment, sustainable tourism development and Trinidad and Tobago's nature based potential. Limited community involvement, institutional and regulatory shortcomings together with inter-organisational challenges also contributed to the disconnect.

The final objective was to propose possible recommendations to address the identified challenges and to ensure nature based tourism in Trinidad and Tobago is developed and conducted in a sustainable manner. These proposed recommendations were partly sourced from content analysis and field research methods and are geared towards policy amendment and the alleviation of issues linked to the policy-practice mismatch which influences the implementation and practice of SNBT in Trinidad and Tobago.

6.2 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

For SNBT to have a greater and more positive impact on Trinidad and Tobago's economy, a stable and enabling environment is required. According to CTO's Caribbean Sustainable Tourism Policy Framework (2008), such an environment relies on sound education, infrastructure and institutional capacity. During the initial stages of analysis, the policy did

address these areas. However upon closer evaluation of base/supporting documents and field interviews, it was apparent that the policy needed greater emphasis, clarity and articulation. In light of this, suggested policy actions and proposed additions to current policy guidelines will be outlined in subsequent sections. In some instances specific reference to SNBT will be made, while in other cases, it is understood to be equally applicable to the tourism niche under study. Proposed policy amendments and/ or actions in these areas include:

- **Tourism Education, Training and Awareness**

A lack of tourism education, training and awareness was a fundamental concern among all stakeholders involved in the study. It would therefore be highly desirable for government to amend the policy, placing greater emphasis on tourism education, training and awareness. This would involve integrating tourism into the national educational framework; developing the human resource capital to best meet the needs of the tourism industry and raising public awareness of the significance of tourism along with fostering feelings of pride, appreciation and respect for natural resources.

- **Infrastructure**

Poor road conditions, lack of amenities such as road signage, tourism information centres and bathrooms along with inconvenient and unsafe access points were all listed as challenges by practitioners when attempting to conduct SNBT operations. Comprehensive measures must be incorporated into the national tourism policy to address these areas. These can include collaborative efforts between TDC, the private sector and community members. Moreover, the initiation and in some cases the continuation of road enhancement projects should be considered to alleviate travel constraints and improve access to tourist attractions.

- **Institutional Capacity**

Weak and unstable institutional structures, complemented by the lack of inter-organisational collaboration, integration and communication have for a long time hampered SNBT initiatives. The policy should encourage linkages between tourism and other policy areas by outlining mechanisms aimed at promoting, establishing and maintaining sound inter-sectoral relationships and improving coordination between tourism and non-tourism organisations. Moreover, policy directives should facilitate a coherent approach to sustainable tourism development as a means of eliminating the occurrence of inconsistencies and unstable environments. This in effect may reduce the likelihood of conflict and power struggles, the suspension of critical projects, the duplication of resources and efforts and neglected responsibilities.

6.3 POLICY-PRACTICE MISMATCH-BRIDGING THE GAP

Practical recommendations aimed at narrowing the gap between the tourism policy and the implementation of SNBT were generated primarily from a cross section of stakeholders who either assisted in the development of the tourism policy, are currently responsible for policy implementation initiatives or are actively involved in SNBT activities. These include:

- **Developing and implementing educational and awareness programs**

A lack of tourism education and awareness was deemed the root cause of many other issues and challenges highlighted throughout the course of this study. One practical suggestion to address this issue is the creation and implementation of nationwide educational and awareness campaigns that go on for extended periods of time. The logic behind this initiative is to create a significant shift in the culture and attitude of citizens, organisations, ministries and government towards the value of developing the tourism industry in a sustainable manner. This is a feat that

cannot be accomplished in a matter of months but requires at least a year to be effective. Hence, this strategy will be geared towards showcasing Trinidad and Tobago's nature based potential and offerings as well as sensitizing the public about environmental issues. This is done with aspirations of inculcating an environmental ethos and a sense of moral responsibility to be possessed by the general populace as it relates to the country's natural resources.

Public engagement is another suggested method of raising awareness. This involves informing or educating the public about the ramifications and implications of proposed and current sustainable tourism development projects and programs. It is advised that developers be honest in highlighting the corresponding impacts of initiatives. Public engagement can also take the form of periodic information workshops and seminars as well as incorporating the advice and feedback of stakeholders who are active in the field.

- **Community involvement and participation**

Communities should be given a level of autonomy from a national authority to manage their areas. This form of empowerment to maintain their surrounding natural resources should also be extended to them possessing the powers to enforce laws to protect these said resources. Having a sustainable tourism policy will be ineffective if communities are not empowered to enforce the law and ensure policy objectives that influence nature based tourism are adhered to.

Community involvement and participation is essential in SNBT operations. Continued efforts are therefore needed to strengthen stakeholder involvement capacity, that is, the extent to which stakeholders can participate in the execution of SNBT initiatives. This can be done through consultations, focus groups, workshops, information sharing, keeping them abreast of development plans and decisions. Informants indicated that they wanted to be in positions where they had some level of leverage and input in decision making and assist in the direction of

projects occurring in their area or influencing nature based practices. This would ensure a higher level of community buy in, support and assistance for future initiatives.

While stakeholder consultations are vital in the development of SNBT, greater recognition should be given to contributing stakeholders who in most cases are community members. This aspect can take the form of financial compensation as it acknowledges that there is a value attached to stakeholders' contribution. It can also act as an incentive for others to participate in future development endeavours. Careful consideration should be taken when adopting this measure as it can be costly and counterproductive if participation is only pegged to potential remuneration.

- **Encouraging inter-organisational collaboration, coordination and communication**

One means of promoting inter-organisational collaboration and coordination at the ministerial and departmental levels is to establish a multi-sectoral work group comprised of representatives from relevant public and private sector organisations. Some respondents suggested an inter-ministerial team with special focus on sustainable tourism initiatives. This co-management mechanism would consist of a team of key stakeholders, meeting on a regular basis to discuss particular aspects of sustainable tourism initiatives, including nature based tourism. This will create an avenue for the systematic exchange of information related to plans or strategies aimed at developing nature based tourism, or to discuss priority areas, upcoming agendas and activities so that everyone is made aware and are in one accord.

Another recommendation put forward was the formation of a tourism task force. Utilising the idea of a 'one-stop shop', the main focus will be on sustainable tourism, where representatives from various agencies, ministries and organisations responsible for implementing and monitoring sustainable tourism initiatives will all be under the same umbrella. For instance if

a stakeholder had an inquiry, they are able to consult the tourism task force and be directed to all the relevant organisations and agencies involved as opposed to having to go to different ones, which can be time consuming and costly. This would therefore facilitate a direct flow between groups and organisation.

- **Fostering stable institutional frameworks**

Frequent changes in political and administrative offices have had adverse impacts on the consistency and continuity of SNBT. These have been brought about by fluctuations in interests, ideologies and priority areas; fragmentation in the execution of nature based tourism initiatives; duplication and wastage of resources; and the halting critical projects. A reasonable approach thought to help tackle this issue involves instating a constant champion or ambassador for sustainable tourism development. While to some extent this role should be adopted by the Permanent Secretary in the MOT, results have shown that these positions are also reshuffled on a regular basis. Therefore a devoted political figure head should be charged with the responsibility of overlooking matters pertaining to sustainable tourism development. Accompanying this position would be a constant policy with a set of procedures based on a common vision. It is expected that personal agendas and political affiliations not take precedence over this vision or outlined responsibilities. These efforts should guarantee continuity of programs and projects, consistency in interests, focus areas and political directives and the sustainable management of resources.

- **Developing and implementing strategic plans**

As highlighted in the previous chapters, Trinidad and Tobago lacks a strategic tourism/ implementation plan, devised to prioritise actions, identify and define roles and responsibilities and to determine and address the effectiveness of implementation measures. Intentions to

develop a tourism action plan were indicated during interviews, but this was contingent on the national tourism policy receiving approval. I am in full support of respondents who expressed that now more than ever, even after five years of the policy receiving Cabinet's approval it is necessary to develop and activate a tourism plan for Trinidad and Tobago. This would significantly help in bridging the gap between the tourism policy and the practice of SNBT.

- **Improving access to financial assistance and technical expertise**

Funding or financial assistance is a core component in SNBT. It allows practitioners to engage in environmental conservation and protection initiatives. Stakeholders interviewed complained that the processes involved in accessing funds are difficult and time consuming, while in most instances financial assistance received from government was insufficient. Stakeholders also believed that this was indicative of the value placed on SNBT. To address these issues, it is recommended that government increase funding for projects as well as develop revenue generation streams enabling projects or programs to fund themselves, thus decreasing organisations' heavy reliance on government or other financial donors. Moreover, consultants should be provided to NGOs, to assist in funding application processes. Services rendered by consultants can be subsidized by the MOT or TDC. This initiative can be supplemented by programs and workshops developed to train community leaders, NGOs and nature based employees in skills and information required when applying for financial assistance. These may include eligibility criteria, grant writing requirements, financial management, conducting environmental assessments and monitoring techniques.

- **Provision of infrastructure and services**

There is a need for improvements in the accessibility of nature based tourism sites and locations as current road conditions not only discourage visitation to remote communities but

also affects the livelihood of residents. It is imperative that the Ministry of Works and Transport, Local Government and other relevant ministries and organisations work together to construct and maintain proper road networks in these rural areas to facilitate community development and the promotion of SNBT.

The provision of appropriate infrastructure and amenities to cater to the needs of nature based tourism enthusiasts and practitioners should be a priority for MOT in collaboration with the Ministry of Works and Transport, Town and Country Planning and other relevant ministries and agencies. Examples of needed infrastructure and corresponding amenities include but are not limited to secure and easily accessible camping grounds, communal toilets, cafeterias, car parks, rangers to monitor sites and enforce rules, information centres etc.

- **Engaging in research and the utilization of tourism data**

Increased research and the utilization of national statistics are also necessary. Tourism research and data are required to evaluate tourism management approaches, identify and analyse current and future tourism trends and markets, examine visitor information and activities, stay abreast of international tourism standards, policies and emerging challenges, measure and compare industry performances as well as develop products and make required product improvement or adjustments. The proposed course of action is the utilization of a central information system created specifically for the collection and management of tourism data. Efforts of this nature are currently lacking in Trinidad and Tobago, but are highly recommended for efficient tourism planning and decision making, facilitating sustainable development and by extension sustainable tourism development.

A recent initiative, introduced after the completion of field research under the present government is the Tourism Baseline Survey. This is a scientific approach at determining the

existing contribution of the tourism sector to the national economy. At the end of this survey, it is proposed that the MOT will have relevant data to develop key tourism indicators track the industry's contribution to Trinidad and Tobago's economy. According to the MOT,

It creates a platform for visitors to be heard and assessed in an objective and focused manner... It involves the establishment of data for visitor spend, employment in primary tourism businesses, income earned and level of skills and training received, allowing the Ministry of Tourism to better craft tourism data driven policy and set targets which will result in the tourism sector contributing meaningfully to the economy (Ministry of Tourism Trinidad and Tobago, 2016).

6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The purpose of this study was to analyse the development of the national tourism policy by assessing its adherence to the principles of sustainable tourism development and evaluating its impact on the implementation of SNBT. By conducting an instrumental case study that integrated a range of research methods, namely thematic content analysis, semi structured interviews, a focus group and secondary data analysis; I was able to gauge the extent to which the concept of sustainable tourism development was incorporated into the formation of tourism policy. Additionally, a detailed insight into the factors that influenced the implementation of SNBT was acquired. The achieved outcome was a better understanding into the sustainable policy-practice dynamic, with recommendations given to address highlighted issues. However, there still remains room for further research in this field of study.

An alternative approach to understanding possible disconnects between sustainable tourism policies and practice is to conduct a longitudinal study. This would entail first examining the national tourism policy and its impact on SNBT before the application of this study's recommendations. A similar analysis will then follow, maybe a year or so later, which is the usual time frame required in implementing recommendations and evaluating their effectiveness.

Based on the outcome of this subsequent study, the researcher can then decide the course of action he/she should take.

There are several examples of countries within the Caribbean region that have successfully ventured into sustainable tourism development as a means of economic diversification. By conducting an in-depth comparative study that analyses the tourism policies of Trinidad and Tobago and another Caribbean destination, in addition to their SNBT initiatives, it is believed that valuable lessons could be taken away. These may include strategies to address current challenges or programs and projects geared towards the sustainable operation of nature based tourism.

Reiterating the point made in Chapter 1, relatively little research has been conducted on the processes involved in the development of sustainable tourism policies or its implications on sustainable tourism initiatives, more so, SNBT. This study therefore contributes to the body of knowledge related to sustainable tourism policy and nature based tourism that currently exists within the Caribbean. Furthermore, it is the intent of the researcher that the results of this study and its recommendations, both of which reflect stakeholders' concerns and proposals are taken into consideration by practitioners, policy makers, industry officials and government as Trinidad and Tobago forges to make its mark in the sustainable tourism arena.

6.5 RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

This research revealed a definite disconnect between Trinidad and Tobago's tourism policy and the implementation of SNBT. It was interesting to note that a few practitioners were unaware of the existence much less the content of the tourism policy. Despite this ignorance, all possessed a sound comprehension of sustainable tourism, its requirements and were able to efficiently translate the concept's principles into their nature based activities, most of which

without government's assistance. Ultimately, it illustrates that closer partnerships between government and operators are needed; creating opportunities for both groups to develop a mutually beneficial relationship for the advancement of nature based tourism as well as other forms of sustainable tourism endeavours.

The significance of nature based tourism to Trinidad and Tobago was also highlighted in this research, with specific emphasis on the abundance of natural resources and unique characteristics possessed by the island destination. The common thread however seemed to be the underdevelopment of the sector and its potential being unknown by the country's citizens. In this regard, investment in the sustainable development and promotion of the country's natural resources to both local and international markets as a means of capitalizing on the sector's potential and ensuring that its resources are protected and conserved should be a key policy area to consider.

In some instances the tourism policy was identified as an enabling factor in nature based tourism activities. However, in other cases practitioners and communities operated independently, guided by their own rules and regulations, goals and objectives. This implies that the tourism policy is ineffective at directing SNBT initiatives and therefore needs to place greater emphasis on this niche of tourism, in an attempt to bridge the gap between policy and practice.

Several factors that facilitated the implementation of SNBT were explored while the challenges encountered in executing its practice were also highlighted. Both sets of factors had elements of education and training, community involvement and autonomy, infrastructure and amenities, funding, inter-organisational collaboration and communication, institutional frameworks, regulatory mechanisms, access to and or control over resources together with

conducting research and utilizing tourism data. Recognition of these factors have a number of implications for future practice and should be explored in future research.

6.6 CONCLUSION

Trinidad and Tobago has an opportunity to offer a distinct SNBT product to match the needs of local, regional and even international markets. Responding to these markets however requires a sustainable approach ensuring its resources are protected, communities are involved, citizens are fully educated, trained and aware of the sector's significant contribution to the nation's overall development, institutional structures are stable, regulatory mechanisms are in place and research and data are conducted and utilized on a consistent basis. This may seem like a daunting task, with clear challenges that require targeted actions to address them. However, this study has shown that the knowledge, will power and contributions of key stakeholders are creating a momentum, and therefore it is possible for sustainable tourism development to become a reality.

The analysis of the tourism policy did reveal that it was developed in a sustainable manner. Despite there being evidence to suggest economic priorities and gains were the chief motivations underlying its' development, for the most part, the policy's formulation processes and content did ascribe to the principles of sustainable tourism development. However there is an obvious disparity between the policy's intent and what is actually being practiced which in turn has created challenges in the practice of SNBT. This research has provided a list of appropriate recommendations that can be implemented to efficiently address these issues and set Trinidad and Tobago on a path of achieving a truly sustainable tourism industry.

REFERENCES

- Augustyn, M. (1998). National Strategies for Rural Tourism Development and Sustainability: The Polish Experience. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 6, (2), 191-209.
- Airey, D., & Chong, K. (2010). National Policy-Makers for Tourism in China. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 37 (2), 295-314.
- Alexander, E. R. (1982). Design in the Decision-Making Process. *Policy Sciences*, 14, 279-292
- Bramwell, B., & Sharman, A. (1999). Collaboration in local tourism policymaking. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 26(2), 392-415
- Bramwell, B. (2004). Mass tourism, diversification and sustainability in Southern Europe's coastal regions. In B. Bramwell (Ed.), *Coastal mass tourism: Diversification and sustainable development in Southern Europe* (pp. 1-31). Clevedon, UK: Channel View Publications.
- Brandes, U., Kenis, P., Raab, J., Schneider, V. and Wagner, D. (1999). Explorations into the visualization of policy networks. *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, 11 (1), 75-106.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- Briassoulis, H. (2000). Sustainable Tourism Policy Implementation: An Ex Ante Critical Examination. In H. Briassoulis & J.V.D. Straaten (Eds.), *Tourism and the Environment: Regional, economic, cultural and policy issues*, (pp. 255-282). London: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

- Baum, T. (1994). The development and implementation of national tourism policies. *Tourism Management, 15* (3), 185-192
- Buckley, R. (2000). Neat trends: Current Issues in nature, eco- and adventure tourism. *International Journal of Tourism Research, 2*, 437-444.
- Butler, R.W. (1999). Sustainable Tourism: a state-of-the-art review. *Tourism Geographies, 1* (1), 7-25.
- Cameron, C., & Gatewood, J.B. (2008). Beyond Sun, Sand and Sea: The Emergent Tourism Programme in the Turk and Caicos Islands. *Journal of Heritage Tourism, 3* (1), 55-73
- Caribbean Tourism Organisation. (2014). *Caribbean Tourism Review*. Retrieved September, 27 from <http://www.onecaribbean.org/statistics/annual-reviews-prospects/>
- Carlisle, L. (2001). Private Reserves: the Conservation Corporation Africa Model. In R. Buckley., C. Pickering & D.B. Weaver (Eds.), *Nature-based tourism, Environment and Land Management* (pp. 17-23). Oxon, UK, CABI Publishing.
- Carter, C., & Low, T. (2012). Focus Groups. In L. Dwyer, A. Gill and N. Seeteram (Eds.), *Handbook of Research Methods in Tourism- Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches* (pp. 352-364). Glos, UK: Edwards Elgar Publishing.
- Chen, W. J., & Liaw, S. C. (2012). What is the value of ecotourism? An evaluation of forested trails for community residents and visitors. *Tourism Economics, 18*(4), 871-885.
- Clayton, A. (2005). A Policy Framework for the Sustainable Development of the Tourism Industry. In C. Jayawardena (Ed.), *Caribbean Tourism: Visions, Missions and Challenges* (pp. 20-30). Kingston, JA: Ian Randle Publishers.
- Clayton, A., & Karagiannis, N. (2008). Sustainable Tourism in the Caribbean: Alternative Policy Considerations. *Tourism and Hospitality Planning and Development, 5* (3), 185-201.

- Cloesen, U. (2003). Approaches towards Nature Based Tourism policies in Australia and New Zealand. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 8 (1), 72-77.
- Cochran, C. L., & Malone, E. F. (1999). *Public Policy: Perspectives and Choices*. Boston: McGraw-Hill.
- Creswell, John W. (2014). *Research Design: qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches*. London, UK: Sage Publications.
- Dodds, R. (2007 a). Sustainable Tourism and Policy Implementation: Lessons from the Case of Calvia, Spain. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 10 (4), 296-322.
- Dodds, R. (2007b). Sustainable Tourism Policy- Rejuvenation or a Critical Strategic Initiative. *Anatolia: An International Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 18(2), 277-298.
- Dodds, R. (2007c). Malta's Tourism Policy: Standing Still or Advancing towards Sustainability?
- Dodds, R., & Butler, R. (2010). Barriers to implementing Sustainable Tourism Policy in Mass Tourism Destinations. *Tourismos: An International Multidisciplinary Journal of Tourism*. 5(1), 35-53.
- Dodson, M., & Smith, D. E. (2003). *Governance for sustainable development: Strategic issues and principles for indigenous Australian communities*. Canberra, Australia: CAEPR.
- Economist Intelligence Unit. (2010). *Enabling efficient policy implementation: A report from the economist intelligence unit sponsored by Oracle*. New York: Economist Intelligence Unit, *The Economist*. 29 pp. Retrieved February, 22 from <http://www.oracle.com/us/industries/public-sector/economist-report-193495.pdf>
- Edgell, D., Allen, M., Smith, G., & Swanson, J. (2008). *Tourism Policy and Planning: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*. Oxford, UK: Elsevier Inc.

- Edwards, S.N., McLaughlin, W.J., & Ham, S. H. (2003). A Regional Look at Ecotourism Policy in the Americas. In D. A. Fennell and R. K. Dowling (Eds.), *Ecotourism Policy and Planning* (pp. 21-38). Cambridge, MA: CABI Publishing.
- Fredman, P., & Tyrväinen, L. (2010). Frontiers in Nature-based tourism. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism, 10*(3), 177-189.
- Frost, W., Laing, J., & Beeton, S. (2014). The Future of Nature-based Tourism in Asia-Pacific Region. *Journal of Travel Research, 53*(6), 721-732.
- Gelders, D., & Brans, M. (2007). Arguments for and against communication of policy intentions. *International Public Management Review, 8*(1), 154-167.
- George, S., & Clark, A. F. (1998). Tourism educational and training policies in developing countries: a case study of the Cayman Islands (Caribbean). *Journal of Third World Studies, 15*(1), 205-220
- Goeldner, R.C., Ritchie, J.R.B., & McIntosh, R.W. (2000). *Tourism, Principles and Practices*. New York, John Wiley & Sons.
- Grandoit, J. (2005). Tourism as a development tool in the Caribbean and the environmental by-products: the stresses on small island resources and viable Remedies. *Journal of Development and Social Transformation, 2*, 89-97.
- Gunn, C. A., & War, T. (2002). *Tourism Planning. Basics, Concept, Cases* (4th ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Hall, C. M. (1994). *Tourism and Politics: Policy, Power and Place*. Chichester, NY: John Wiley & Sons.
- Hall, C. M. (2000). *Tourism Planning: Policies, Processes and Relationships*. Essex, UK: Pearson Education Limited.

- Hall, C. M. (2003). Institutional Arrangements for Ecotourism Policy. In D. A. Fennell and R. K. Dowling (Eds.), *Ecotourism Policy and Planning* (pp. 21-38). Cambridge, MA: CABI Publishing.
- Hall, C. M. (2008). *Tourism Planning*. (2nd Ed.). London: Prentice Hall.
- Hall, C. M., & Boyd, S. (2005). Nature-based Tourism in Peripheral Areas: Introduction. In C. Michael Hall & S. Boyd (Eds.), *Nature-based Tourism in Peripheral Areas: Development or Disasters* (pp. 3-17). North York, ON: Channel View Publications.
- Hall, C. M. (2011). Policy learning and policy failure in sustainable tourism governance: From first and second- order to third-order change? *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 19(4-5), 649-671.
- Hall, C. M., & Jenkins, J. M. (1995). *Tourism and Public Policy*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Hall, C. M., & Boyd, S. (2005). Nature-based Tourism in Peripheral Areas: Introduction. In C. M. Hall and S. Boyd (Eds.), *Nature-based Tourism in Peripheral Areas: Development or Disaster* (pp. 3-17). Ontario, CA: Channel View Publications.
- Hartley, J. (2004). Case Study Research. In C. Cassell & G. Symon (Eds.), *Essential Guide to Qualitative Methods in Organizational Research* (pp. 323-333). London: Sage Publications Inc.
- Heinen, J. (1994) Emerging, diverging and converging paradigms on sustainable development. *International Journal of Sustainable Development and World Ecology*. 1, 22-33.
- Hogwood, B., & Gunn, L. (1997). Why “perfect implementation” is unattainable? In M. Hill (Ed.). *Policy Process: A Reader*, 2 (pp. 217-225). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Howlett, M. and Ramesh, M. (1995). *Studying Public Policy. Policy Cycles and Policy Subsystems*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.

- Inskeep, E. (1991). *Tourism Planning. An Integrated and Sustainable Approach*. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold.
- International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). (1980). *World Conservation Strategy: Living Resources Conservation for Sustainable Development*. Gland, Switzerland: World Conservation Union.
- International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). (1991). *Caring for the Earth: A Strategy for Sustainable Living*. Gland, Switzerland: World Conservation Union.
- International Union of Travel Organisations (IUOTO). (1974). The role of the state in tourism. *Annals for Tourism Research*, 1, (3), 66-72.
- Jann, W., & Wegrich, K. (2007). Theories of the Policy Cycle. In F. Fischer., G.J. Miller & M. S. Sidney (Eds.), *Handbook of Public Policy Analysis. Theory, Politics and Methods* (pp. 43-62). Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press.
- Jayawardena, C. (2002). *Cuba: Crown princess of Caribbean tourism?* Paper, presented at the 27th Caribbean Studies Association Conference, Nassau, Bahamas.
- Jenkins, C. (2006). Tourism Development: Policy, Planning and Implementation Issues in Developing Countries. In Cukier, J. Editor (Ed.), *Tourism Research: Policy, Planning and Prospects* (21-30). University of Waterloo: Department of Geography.
- Jenkins-Smith, H.C. and Sabatier, P.A. (1994). Evaluating the advocacy coalition framework. *Journal of Public Policy*, 14 (2), 175-203.
- Kuenzi, C., & McNeely, J. (2008). Nature-based tourism. In O. Renn and K. Walker (Eds.), *Global Risk Governance* (pp. 155-178). The Netherlands: Springer.

- Krutwaysho, O., & Bramwell, B. (2010). Tourism policy implementation and society. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 37 (3), 670-691.
- Lai, K., Li, Y., & Feng, X. (2006). Gap between tourism planning and implementation: A case of China. *Tourism Management*, 27, 1171-1180.
- Lewis, A., & Jordan, L. (2008). Tourism in Trinidad and Tobago: Carving a Niche in a Petroleum-based Economy. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 10, 247-257.
- Lewis-Beck, M. S., Bryman, A., & Liao, T. F. (Eds.). (2004). *The Sage Encyclopedia of Social Science Research Methods* (Vols. 1-4). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Inc.
- Linder, S.H., & Peters, B. G. (1985). From Social Theory to Policy Design. *Journal of Public Policy*, 4, 237-259.
- Liu, Z. (2003). Sustainable tourism development: A critique. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 11 (6), 459-475.
- Mather, S., & Todd, G. (1993). *Tourism in the Caribbean*. Special Report No. 455). Economist Intelligence Unit: London.
- Marzuki, A., Rofe, M., & Hashim, N.A.M. (2014). Disputes on nature based tourism development in Northern Peninsula Malaysia. *Tourism Analysis*, 19, 525-530.
- Maxim, C. (2014). Drivers of success in implementing sustainable tourism policies in urban areas. *Tourism Planning and Development*. 12(1), 37-47.
- McDavid, H., & Ramajeessingh, D. (2003). The state and tourism: a Caribbean perspective. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 15 (3), 180-183.

- McGhee, N.G. (2012). Interview Techniques. In L. Dwyer, A. Gill & N. Seetaram (Eds.), *Handbook of Research Methods in Tourism- Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches* (365-376). Glos, UK: Edwards Elgar Publishing Limited
- McHardy, P. (2005). Planning for Sustainable Tourism Development in the Caribbean. In C. Jayawardena (Ed.), *Caribbean Tourism: Visions, Missions and Challenges* (31-57). Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers.
- Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs, Trinidad and Tobago (2014). *Oil and Gas Industry Overview*. Retrieved October, 17 from <http://www.energy.gov.tt/our-business/oil-and-gas-industry/>
- Ministry of Land, Housing and Marine Affairs, Trinidad and Tobago (2015). *About the Green Fund*. Retrieved June, 5 from <http://www.mphe.gov.tt/agenciesdivisions/gf.html>
- Ministry of Planning. (1992). *Medium Term Policy Framework: From Stabilization to Growth 1993-1995*. Port of Spain: TT. Government Printing Office.
- Ministry of Planning and Sustainable Development, Trinidad and Tobago (2014). *Gross Domestic Product Data 2009-2013*. Retrieved October, 17 from <http://cso.planning.gov.tt/category/statistics-category/national-income>
- Ministry of Planning and the Economy. (2011). *National Development Agenda for Trinidad and Tobago*. Port of Spain, TT: Government Printing Office.
- Ministry of Planning and the Economy. (2012). *Working for Sustainable Development in Trinidad and Tobago*. Port of Spain, TT: Government Printing Office.

- Ministry of Tourism. (1995). *Trinidad and Tobago and Tobago Tourism Master Plan*. Port of Spain: TT. Government Printing Office.
- Ministry of Tourism. (2004). *Vision 2020 Strategic Tourism Development Plan*. Port of Spain. TT: Government Printing Office.
- Ministry of Tourism. (2010). *National Tourism Policy of Trinidad and Tobago*. Port of Spain: TT. Government Printing Office.
- Ministry of Tourism. (2016, January 21). *Tourism Baseline Survey* [Video file]. Retrieved from: <https://www.facebook.com/TrinidadandTobago50th/?fref=ts>
- Mowforth, M., & Munt, I. (1998). *Tourism and sustainability: New tourism in the third world*. London: Routledge.
- Moyle, B. D., McLennan, C. J., Ruhanen, L., & Weiler, B. (2014). Tracking the concept of sustainability in Australia tourism policy and planning documents. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 22 (7), 1037-1051.
- Muangasame, K., & McKercher, B. (2014). The challenge of implementing sustainable tourism policy: a 360-degree assessment of Thailand's "7 Greens sustainable tourism policy". *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*. 1-20. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2014.978789>
- O'Brien, A. (2010). Beyond policy-making: Institutional regimes, the state and policy implementation in the Irish case. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 13 (6), 563-577.

- Ostrom, E. (1999). Institutional rational choice. An assessment of the institutional analysis and development framework. In P. A. Sabatier (Ed.), *Theories of the Policy Process* (pp. 21-64). Boulder: Westview Press.
- Pal, L. A. (1992). *Public Policy Analysis: An Introduction*. Scarborough: Nelson Canada
- Pantin, A. P. (1999). The challenge of sustainable development in small island developing states: case study on the Caribbean. *National Resources Forum*, 23, 221-233
- Pfarr, C. (1999). A methodological approach to the study of tourism public policy. In R. Mitchell and M. Hall (Eds.), *Tourism Policy and Planning*. Proceedings of the IGU Sustainable Tourism Study Group and International Students Conference (pp. 134-45). Dunedin: University of Otago, Centre for Tourism.
- Pfarr, C. (2001). Tourism Policy in Australia's Northern Territory: A Policy Process Analysis of its Tourism Development Masterplan. *Current Issues in Tourism* 4 (2-4), 275-307.
- Pfarr, C. (2005). Three Lenses of Analysis for the Study of Tourism Public Policy: A Case from Northern Australia. *Current Issues in Tourism* 8 (4), 323-343.
- Pfarr, C. (2006). Tourism Policy in the Making. An Australian Network Study. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 33(1), 87-108.
- Pickering, C., & Weaver, D.B. (2001). Nature-based Tourism and Sustainability: Issues and Approaches. In R. Buckley., C. Pickering & D.B. Weaver (Eds.), *Nature-based tourism, Environment and Land Management* (pp. 7-10). Oxon, UK, CABI Publishing.

- Plummer, R., Kulczycki, C., & Stacey, C. (2006). How are we working together? A framework to assess collaborative arrangements in nature-based tourism. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 9(6), 499-515.
- Portney, K. E. (2003). *Taking Sustainable Cities Seriously: Economic Development, the Environment, and Quality of Life in American Cities*. Boston, MIT Press.
- Priskin, J. (2003). Issues and Opportunities in Planning and Managing Nature-based Tourism in the Central Coast Region of Western Australia. *Australian Geographical Studies*, 41(1), 270-286.
- Pülzl, H., & Treib, O. (2007). Implementing Public Policy. In F. Fischer., G.J. Miller & M. S. Sidney (Eds.), *Handbook of Public Policy Analysis. Theory, Politics and Methods* (pp. 89-107). Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press.
- Rugendyke, B., & Thi Son, N. (2005). Conservation costs: Nature based tourism as development at Cuc Phuong National Park, Vietnam. *Asia South Pacific Viewpoint*, 46(2), 185-200
- Sabatier, P.A. (2007). The Need for Better Theories. In P. A. Sabatier (Ed.), *Theories of the Policy Process* (3-17).Boulder: West View Press
- Sage Research Methods. (2014). *Intrinsic Case Study*. Retrieved April, 21 from <http://srmo.sagepub.com/view/encyc-of-case-study-research/n183.xml>
- Schlager, E. (2007). A Comparison of Frameworks, Theories and Models of Policy Processes. In P. A. Sabatier (Ed.), *Theories of the Policy Process* (pp. 293-319). Boulder: Westview Press.

- Shafer, E., & Choi, Y. (2006). Forged nature-based tourism policy issues: A case study of Pennsylvania. *Tourism Management*, 27, 615-628.
- Sharpley, R. (2000). Tourism and Sustainable Development: Exploring the Theoretical Divide. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 8(1), 1-19.
- Sharpley, R. (2009). *Tourism and the Environment: Beyond sustainability?* London: Earthscan
- Sherman, P. B., & Dixon, J. A. (1991). The Economics of Nature Tourism: Determining If It Pays. In T. Whelan (Ed.), *Nature tourism: managing for the environment* (pp. 89-131). Washington, D.C., Island Press.
- Sidney, M. S. (2007). Policy Formulation: Design and Tools. . In F. Fischer., G.J. Miller & M. S. Sidney (Eds.), *Handbook of Public Policy Analysis. Theory, Politics and Methods* (pp. 79-87). Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press.
- Sindiga, I. (1999). Alternative tourism and sustainable development in Kenya. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*. 7(2), 108-127.
- Stabler, M.J. (1997). *Tourism and sustainability: Principles and practice*. Wallingford, UK: CAB International.
- Stake, R. E. (2000). Case Studies. In N.K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 435-454). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Inc.
- Stanbrook, C. (2010). Local economic impact of different forms of nature based tourism. *Conservation Letters*, 3(1), 21-28

- Steer, A., & Wade-Grey, W. (1993). Sustainable development: Theory and practice for a sustainable future. *Sustainable Development, 1* (3), 23-35.
- Stevenson, N., Airey, D., & Miller, G. (2008). Tourism Policy Making: The Policymakers' Perspectives. *Annals of Tourism Research, 35*(3), 732-750.
- Sustainable Tourism Online. (2014). *Caribbean Economic Impact Report*. Retrieved April, 5 from <http://www.sustainabletourisonline.com/parks-and-culture/nature-based-tourism/forms-of-nature-based-tourism/nature-based-tourism>
- Telfer, D. J., & Sharpley, R. (2008). *Tourism and Development in the Developing World*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Telfer, D. J. (2002). The evolution of tourism and development theory. In R. Sharpley & D. J. Telfer (Eds.), *Tourism and Development: Concepts and Issues* (35-78). Clevedon: Channel View Publications.
- The People's Partnership. (2010). *Prosperity for All- The Manifesto of the People's Partnership for a United People to achieve sustainable development for Trinidad and Tobago*. Port of Spain, TT: Government Printing Office.
- Torres-Delgado, A., & Palomeque, F.L. (2012). The growth and spread of the concept of sustainable tourism: The contribution of institutional initiatives to tourism policy. *Tourism Management Perspectives, 4*, 1-10.
- Trinidad and Tobago Tourism Development Company Limited (2015). *Trinidad and Tobago Tourism Industry Certification*. January, 10 from, http://www.tdc.co.tt/p_ttlic.htm

- United Nations Environmental Programme and The World Tourism Organisation. (2005). *Making Tourism More Sustainable- A Guide for Policy Makers*. Retrieved from <http://www.unep.fr/shared/publications/pdf/DTIx0592xPA-TourismPolicyEN.pdf>
- United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO). (2014). *Sustainable Development of Tourism*. Retrieved April, 5 from <http://sdt.unwto.org/content/about-us-5>
- United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO). (2014). *International tourism exceeds expectations with arrivals up by 52 million in 2013*. Retrieved September, 29 from <http://media.unwto.org/press-release/2014-01-20/international-tourism-exceeds-expectations-arrivals-52-million-2013>
- United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO). (2014). *International tourism generates US \$1.4 trillion in export earnings*. Retrieved September, 29 from <http://media.unwto.org/press-release/2014-01-15/international-tourism-generates-us-14-trillion-export-earnings>
- United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO). (2014). *Sustainable Development of Tourism*. Retrieved November, 19 from <http://sdt.unwto.org/content/about-us-5>
- Valentine, P.S. (1992). Review: Nature-based Tourism. In B. Weiler & C.M. Hall (Eds.), *Special Interest Tourism* (105-127). London, UK: Belhaven Press.
- Vaugeois, N. (2000). *Tourism in developing countries: refining a useful tool for economic development*. Bilbao, Spain: 6th World Leisure Congress Proceedings.
- Veal, A. (2006). *Leisure and tourism policy and planning*. Oxon: CABI Publishing.

- Veal, A. J. (2011). *Research Methods for Leisure and Tourism- A Practical Guide*. (4th ed.). Essex, UK: Pearson Education Limited.
- Wahab, S. (1997). Sustainable Tourism in the Developing World. In S. Wahab & J. J. Pigram (Eds.), *Tourism, Development and Growth: The Challenge of Sustainability* (129-146). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Waligo, M.V., Clarke, J., & Hawkins, R. (2013). Implementing sustainable tourism: A multi-stakeholder involvement management framework. *Tourism Management*, 36, 342-353.
- Wall, G. (1997). Sustainable Tourism-Unsustainable Development. In S. Wahab, & J. Pigram (Eds.), *Tourism, Development and Growth: The Challenge of Sustainability* (pp. 33-49). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Wang, D., & Ap, J. (2013). Factors affecting tourism policy implementation: A conceptual framework and a case study in China. *Tourism Management*, 36, 221-233.
- Weaver, D. (2008). *Ecotourism* (2nd ed.). Milton, Qld: John Wiley & Sons Australia, Ltd.
- Weaver, D. (2009). Reflections on sustainable tourism and paradigm change. In S. Gossling, M. Hall, & D. Weaver (Eds.), *Sustainable tourism futures: Perspectives on systems, restructuring and innovations* (pp. 33-40). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Whitford, M.M.; & Ruhanen, L.M. (2010). Australian indigenous tourism policy: practical and sustainable policies? *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 18 (4), 475-496.
- Wilkinson, P.W. (1997). *Tourism Policy and Planning: Case Studies from the Commonwealth Caribbean*. Elmsford, NY: Cognizant Communications Corporation.

Wilkinson, P.W. (2009). Predictions, past and present: World and Caribbean tourism. *Futures*, 41, 377-386.

Woerkum, C.V., Arts, N., & Leeuwis, C. (2000) Communication Strategies, Tourism and the Natural Environment. In H. Briassoulis & J.v.d Straaten (Eds.), *Tourism and the environment: Regional, economic, cultural and policy issues*, (239-254). London: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED). (1987). *Our Common Future*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC). (2014). *Caribbean Economic Impact Report*. Retrieved April, 5 from http://www.wttc.org/site_media/uploads/downloads/caribbean2014.pdf

World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC). (2014). *Caribbean Economic Impact Report- Bahamas*. Retrieved September, 29 from <http://www.wttc.org/focus/research-for-action/economic-impact-analysis/country-reports/>

World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC). (2014). *Caribbean Economic Impact Report- Trinidad and Tobago*. Retrieved September, 29 from <http://www.wttc.org/focus/research-for-action/economic-impact-analysis/country-reports/>

Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case study research: Design and methods* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Ltd.

Yüksel, F., & Yüksel, A. (unknown). *Tourism Plan Formulation and Implementation: The Role of Inter-organisational Relations* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Sheffield Hallam University, Sheffield, UK.

Yüksel, F., Bramwell, B., & Yüksel, A. (1999). Stakeholder interviews and tourism planning at Pamukkale, Turkey. *Tourism Management*, 20, 351-360.

Yüksel, A., Yüksel, F., & Culha, O. (2012). Ministers' statements: a policy implementation instrument for sustainable tourism? *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 20(4), 513-532.

APPENDIX A: RESEARCH METHODS/UNITS OF ANALYSIS

THEMATIC CONTENT ANALYSIS		
POLICY DOCUMENT		DESCRIPTION
National Tourism Policy		A strategic approach to sustainable tourism development
FIELD RESEARCH METHODS		
	ORGANISATION	CROSS SECTION OF TOURISM INDUSTRY
FOCUS GROUP	Ministry of Tourism	Government Ministry (Policy Development)
	Tourism Development Company	Government Agency (Policy Implementation)
	Environmental Management Authority	Government Agency (Environment)
	Turtle Village Trust	NGO (Environmental Conservation)
INTERVIEWS	Tourism Intelligence International	Travel and Tourism Consultancy Group
	Ministry of Planning and Sustainable Development	Government Ministry (Sustainable Development)
	Tourism Development Company	Government Agency (Policy Implementation)
	Forestry Division	Local Government Agency (Wildlife)
	Brasso Seco Tourism Action Committee	CBO
	Nature Seekers	NGO (Environmental Education and Turtle Conservation)
	Asa Wright Nature Centre	Nature Based Tourism Operator (Conservation and Accommodation)
	Nature Trekking in Trinidad and Tobago	Tour Operator
SECONDARY SOURCES OF ANALYSIS		
BASE/SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS		DESCRIPTION
The Tourism Master Plan (1995)		A blueprint document for the development of Trinidad and Tobago's tourism sector
Trinidad and Tobago Medium Term Policy Framework (2002-2004)		An outline of government's agenda in the achievement of national goals and objectives
Working for Sustainable Development in Trinidad and Tobago (2005)		A strategy geared towards economic diversification and the achievement of sustainable development
CTO's Caribbean Sustainable Tourism Policy Framework (2008)		An amalgamation of policy guidelines designed to address issues deemed critical to the sustainable development of the region's tourism sector

APPENDIX B: FOCUS GROUP AND INTERVIEW GUIDE

A. SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND TOURISM POLICY FORMATION

- What was the motivation behind developing the national tourism policy? OR What factors contributed to the genesis of the tourism policy (e.g. economic motivation, political move, government initiative, private sector interests', stakeholder pressure,)?
- What were the processes involved in the development of the tourism policy?
- Who were the key persons or agencies involved in policy formation? (What were their specific roles and how were they selected?)
- How were the principles of sustainable tourism development applied or integrated in the development of the policy?

B. SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND SUSTAINABLE NATURE BASED TOURISM

- What is your understanding of sustainable tourism development and what are the core principles associated with this concept?
- The national tourism policy is founded on the principles of sustainable development, the parental paradigm to sustainable tourism development. From your experience how is this concept (sustainable tourism development and the core principles you have just highlighted translated into nature-based tourism or your nature-based activities?
- How important is sustainable nature-based tourism to Trinidad and Tobago?
- What is your organisation's contribution to sustainable nature based tourism initiatives?

C. TOURISM POLICY AND SUSTAINABLE NATURE BASED TOURISM

- What was your departments'/organisation's contribution to the development of the national tourism policy?
- In what way does your department or organisation contribute to the execution of the national tourism policy?
- How does the current tourism policy enable/facilitate sustainable nature based tourism operations in Trinidad and Tobago?

D. THE DISCONNECT BETWEEN THE TOURISM POLICY AND SUSTAINABLE NATURE BASED TOURISM IMPLEMENTATION

- In your opinion what are the factors that influence the implementation of sustainable nature based tourism in Trinidad and Tobago?
- What are the challenges encountered (purely from your line of work) in the practice or implementation of sustainable nature based tourism in Trinidad and Tobago?
- How can these challenges cause of a gap or disconnect between the national tourism policy and its overall execution? Can you think of other causes (e.g. political ideologies and changing in government; lack of communication, inter-organisational coordination and integration; institutional arrangements, stakeholder participation and support; lack of commitment and accountability; lack of a tourism plan, monitoring and evaluation).
- How can these challenges in your opinion be dealt with?

APPENDIX C : INFORMATION LETTER TO MOT

Leisel Edwards
62 Palms Drive,
Fairview Park
Freeport. Trinidad
Tel# 1-868-687-3096
1-868-673-7262
Email: leisel_edwards@yahoo.com

Ministry of Tourism
(Ag) Permanent Secretary
Levels 8 & 9, Tower C, International Waterfront Complex
1A Wrightson Road,
Port-of-Spain,
Trinidad and Tobago

Dear Ms. Donna Ferraz (Ag),

I am a current student at the University of Waterloo, Canada, pursuing my Masters in Tourism Policy and Planning. I am kindly requesting the assistance of Nature Seekers with my thesis research entitled “*An analysis of the national tourism policy: Factors that influence the implementation of sustainable nature-based tourism in Trinidad and Tobago. The case of Matura*”. This thesis is grounded on the assumption that the country’s national tourism policy has a direct impact on the sustainable operation of the industry- specifically nature-based

tourism. By investigating the policy's processes, frameworks and its sustainability content, I will attempt to test this hypothesis as it relates to the implementation of sustainable nature-based tourism in Trinidad and Tobago. Special focus will be on the operations of Nature Seekers and in extension the community of Matura.

One of my ultimate goals for this research is to propose possible solutions and recommendations that can be used to ensure nature-based tourism is developed and conducted in a sustainable manner. Solutions and recommendations can later act as a point of reference for government, policy makers and other nature-based tourism stakeholders to conduct future research and develop other sustainable niches of tourism.

I will be in Trinidad from mid-June till the end of July, 2015 to conduct my official field research. I have attached a summary of my proposal for your perusal and hope you are able to assist me in any way possible. This may be by way of setting up an interview date and time most convenient to you or other capable individuals and/or attending and participating in a focus group session I wish to hold with tourism personnel, ministry officials, Nature Seekers and active members of the Matura community. It is my desire to learn from tourism officials and policy actors who occupy different positions within the industry, about their varying perspectives, experiences and expectations as to how the current tourism policy and its sustainability content is actually translated into practice. Special focus is on sustainable-nature based tourism and it is my hope to gain a deeper insight into the research topic that can undoubtedly contribute to making recommendations.

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to take part in a face-to-face interview that will last between 45 minutes to an hour and/or focus sessions that may go up to 2 hours. If you decide to attend one or both, they will take place in a

mutually agreed upon location and time. You may decline to answer any of the interview questions if you wish. You may withdraw from the study at any time by notifying myself, or my advisor, and there will be no negative consequences if you decide to do so. With your permission, the interview will be audio recorded to facilitate collection of information.

All participants will be informed and reminded of their rights to participate or withdraw before any interview, focus group session or at any time in the study. To support the findings of this study, quotations and excerpts from the interviews and focus group sessions will be labelled using pseudonyms to protect the identity of the participants. Participants will not be identifiable as their names and positions will not appear in the thesis or findings resulting from this study.

If the Ministry of Tourism wishes to have the identity of the organisation remain confidential, a pseudonym will also be given to the organisation. All paper field notes collected will be retained locked in a secure cabinet in the Recreation and Leisure Department at the University of Waterloo. All paper notes will be confidentially destroyed after five years. In addition to this, all electronic copies of personal and organisational information or identifiable data will be kept in password protected files, accessible only to myself the researcher and supervisor and erased after a five year period. There are no known or anticipated risks to participants in this study.

I would like to assure you that this study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee. However, the final decision about participation belongs to the Ministry of Tourism and its involved employees. If you have any comments or concerns with the ethical content of this study, please feel free to contact Dr. Maureen Nummelin, the Director, Office of Research Ethics, at 1-519-888-4567, Ext. 36005 or maureen.nummelin@uwaterloo.ca.

If you have any questions regarding this study or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact me at 673-7262 or by leisel_edwards@yahoo.com . You may also contact my supervisor, Dr. Sanjay Nepal at 1-519-888-4567, Ext. 31239 or by email snepal@uwaterloo.ca.

I hope that the results of my study will be beneficial to Trinidad and Tobago, Nature Seekers, its employees the community of Matura, as well as the broader research community. I very much look forward to speaking with you and thank you in advance for your assistance with this project. Thank you in advance for consideration and assistance in this matter and I do look forward to your timely response.

Respectfully,

Leisel Edwards

M.A. Candidate in Tourism Policy and Planning

Recreation and Leisure Studies

University of Waterloo

ledwards@uwaterloo.ca

Dr. Sanjay Nepal

Professor

Geography & Environmental Management

University of Waterloo

1-519-888-4567 ext. 31239

snepal@uwaterloo.ca

APPENDIX D : FOCUS GROUP LETTER TO NATURE

SEEKERS

Nature Seekers

Marketing Manager

P.O Box 4535, Sangre Grande PO

Toco Main Road, Matura

Trinidad. WI.

Title of Project: An analysis of the national tourism policy: Factors that influence the implementation of sustainable nature-based tourism in Trinidad and Tobago. The case of Matura.

Organizer: Leisel Edwards

University of Waterloo,

Faculty of Applied Health Sciences

Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies

(519) 888-4567 Ext.36344

Details: (Location), (Date), (Time)

The main aim of the focus group sessions is to critically discuss the sustainability content and processes involved in the national tourism policy and how have do these and other related factors influence the implementation of sustainable nature-based tourism. Special focus will be

on its influence on the community of Matura and the operations of Nature Seekers. These sessions will be facilitated by Leisel Edwards who is affiliated with the University of Waterloo.

Participation in this session is voluntary and involves a two hour input to and discussion of the issues associated with the national tourism policy, sustainability and nature-based tourism initiatives. There are no known or anticipated risks to your participation in these sessions. You may decline answering any questions you feel you do not wish to answer and may decline contributing to the session in other ways if you so wish. All information you provide will be considered confidential and grouped with responses from other participants. No faculty members will be present during the session and your name will not be identified with the input you give to this session or in the report that the facilitator produces for this session.

The information collected from this session will be kept for a period of five years in the office of the Faculty Supervisor.

Given the group format of this session we will ask you to keep in confidence information that identifies or could potentially identify a participant and/or his/her comments. If you have any questions about participation in this session, please feel free to discuss these with the facilitator, or later, by contacting Dr. Sanjay Nepal at 519-888-4567, Ext.31239. If you are interested in receiving a copy of the executive summary of the session outcomes, please contact me at ledwards@uwaterloo.ca.

I would like to assure you that this study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee. However, the final decision about participation is yours. Should you have comments or concerns resulting from your participation

in this study, please contact Dr. Maureen Nummelin in the Office of Research Ethics at 1-519-888-4567, Ext. 36005 or maureen.nummelin@uwaterloo.ca.

Thank you for your assistance with this project. In appreciation of your time given refreshments and Waterloo memorabilia will be provided at these sessions.

Respectfully,

Leisel Edwards

M.A. Candidate in Tourism Policy and Planning

Recreation and Leisure Studies

University of Waterloo

ledwards@uwaterloo.ca

Dr. Sanjay Nepal

Professor

Geography & Environmental Management

University of Waterloo

1-519-888-4567 ext. 31239

snepal@uwaterloo.ca

APPENDIX E : VERBAL RECRUITMENT SCRIPT

P = Potential Participant; I = Interviewer

I - May I please speak to Ms Shaniel Sutherland?

P - Hello, Ms Shaniel Sutherland speaking. How may I help you?

I - My name is Leisel Edwards and I am a Masters student in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo. I am currently conducting research under the supervision of Dr. Sanjay Nepal on *“Policy-practice mismatch? Sustainable nature-based tourism in Trinidad and Tobago. The case of Matura”*

As part of my thesis research, I am conducting interviews with active residents from the community of Matura, members of Nature Seekers, tourism academics (tourism professors from the University of the West Indies) and officials from varying but relevant arms of local and central government including the Forestry Division, Environmental Management Authority, Tourism Development Company and the Ministry of Tourism to discover their perspectives on this study which is specifically geared towards uncovering the factors that influence the implementation of sustainable nature-based tourism, the analysis of the tourism policy is also expected to highlight the disconnect that exists between the sustainable tourism policy and sustainable tourism practices.

As you are key player in sustainable nature-based tourism operations in the community of Matura, I would like to speak with you about your perspectives on factors that influence the implementation of sustainable nature-based tourism and the analysis of the tourism policy. Is this a convenient time to give you further information about the interviews?

P - No, could you call back later (agree on a more convenient time to call person back).

OR

P - Yes, could you provide me with some more information regarding the interviews you will be conducting?

I - Background Information:

- I will be undertaking interviews starting in [June 2015].
- The interview would last about one hour, and would be arranged for a time convenient to your schedule.
- Involvement in this interview is entirely voluntary and there are no known or anticipated risks to participation in this study.
- The questions are quite general for example, ‘What are the factors that can obstruct/hinder the implementation of sustainable nature-based tourism?’
- You may decline to answer any of the interview questions you do not wish to answer and may terminate the interview at any time. With your permission, the interview will be tape-recorded to facilitate collection of information, and later transcribed for analysis.
- All information you provide will be considered confidential.
- The data collected will be kept in a secure location and disposed of in 5 years’ time.
- If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please feel free to contact Dr. Sanjay Nepal at 519-888-4567, Ext. 31239.

- I would like to assure you that this study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee. However, the final decision about participation is yours.
- After all of the data have been analyzed, you will receive an executive summary of the research results.

With your permission, I would like to email/mail/fax you an information letter which has all of these details along with contact names and numbers on it to help assist you in making a decision about your participation in this study.

P - No thank you.

OR

P - Sure (get contact information from potential participant i.e., mailing address/fax number).

I - Thank you very much for your time. May I call you in 2 or 3 days to see if you are interested in being interviewed? Once again, if you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact me at my research office number 519-888-4567 ext. 36005

P - Good-bye.

I - Good-bye.

APPENDIX F: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

- I have read the information letter about the study “*An analysis of the national tourism policy: Factors that influence the implementation of sustainable nature-based tourism in Trinidad and Tobago. The case of Matura*” being conducted by Leisel Edwards (Department of Recreation & Leisure Studies, University of Waterloo) under the supervision of Dr. Sanjay Nepal.
- I am aware I have the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, and to receive answers to satisfy these questions.
- I was informed that I can withdraw my consent and assistance from the project at any time.
- I was informed that study participants can withdraw from participation at any time by advising the researcher.
- I am aware that the name of my department or organisation will only be used in the thesis or any publications that come from the research with our permission.
- I am aware the study has been reviewed by and has received ethics clearance from the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Waterloo.
- I am aware that if I have questions or concerns resulting from participating in this study, I may contact the following people:

Leisel Edwards

(Researcher)

1-868-673-7262

ledwards@uwaterloo.ca

Dr. Sanjay Nepal

Supervisor

1-519-888-4567 ext. 31239

snepal@uwaterloo.ca

1. I agree to participate and/or allow the researcher to recruit participants for this study from this department or organisation (write name of department or organisation below)

Yes

No

2. We agree to the use of the name of (write name of department or organisation below) in this thesis or any other publication that comes from this research.

Yes

No

(If No, a pseudonym will be used to protect the identity of the department/ organisation.)

Manager/Director Name (Print): _____

Manager/Director Name (Signature): _____

Date:

APPENDIX G : RESEARCH ASSISTANT CONFIDENTIALITY

CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

I understand that as a research assistant for a study being conducted by Leisel Edwards in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies, University of Waterloo, Canada under the supervision of Professor Sanjay Nepal, I am privy to confidential information. I agree to keep all data collected during the study confidential. I will not reveal the data to anyone outside the research team.

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Witness Signature:

APPENDIX H : APPRECIATION LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

Leisel Edwards

62 Palms Drive,

Fairview Park

Freeport. Trinidad

Tel# 1-868-687-3096

1-868-673-7262

Email: leisel_edwards@yahoo.com

Nature Seekers

Marketing Manager

P.O Box 4535, Sangre Grande PO

Toco Main Road, Matura

Trinidad. WI.

Dear Ms. Shaneil Sutherland,

Thank you for participating in the study “*An analysis of the national tourism policy: Factors that influence the implementation of sustainable nature-based tourism in Trinidad and Tobago. The case of Matura*”! I really appreciate you taking the time to share your understanding, experiences and expectations of sustainability, tourism policy and its link to the execution of sustainable nature-based tourism, especially relating it to your operations.

I hope you will get in touch with me if further thoughts occur to you about the subject of our discussion. Should you have any comments or concerns you could also contact Dr. Maureen Nummelin, the Director, Office of Research Ethics, at 1-519-888-4567, Ext. 36005 or

maureen.nummelin@uwaterloo.ca. This project was reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Waterloo.

If you have any questions regarding the study, or would like additional information, feel free to contact me by phone at 1-868-673-7262 or by email at ledwards@uwaterloo.ca.

You may also contact my supervisor, Dr. Sanjay Nepal, at 1-519-888-4567 ext. 31239 or by email at snepal@uwaterloo.ca.

I hope you enjoy these small tokens of appreciation for your time. Thanks again!

Leisel Edwards

M.A. Candidate in Tourism Policy and Planning

Recreation and Leisure Studies

University of Waterloo

ledwards@uwaterloo.ca

Dr. Sanjay Nepal

Professor

Geography & Environmental Management

University of Waterloo

1-519-888-4567 ext. 31239

snepal@uwaterloo.ca

APPENDIX I : FEEDBACK LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

Leisel Edwards

62 Palms Drive,

Fairview Park

Freeport. Trinidad

Tel# 1-868-687-3096

1-868-673-7262

Email: leisel_edwards@yahoo.com

(Name of Organisation)

(Position)

(Address 1)

(Address 2)

Trinidad. WI.

Dear (Name),

Enclosed is a draft copy of Chapter 5 ‘**Results and Analysis**’ and Chapter 6 ‘**Discussion**’ that will form part of my thesis which has the full title “*An analysis of the national tourism policy: Factors influencing the implementation of sustainable nature-based tourism. A case of Matura*”.

I hope you like these chapters, and in particular I hope you will find that I have been faithful to the information you gave me and to the general circumstances of the national tourism’s impact on sustainable nature-based tourism, specifically the operations of Nature

Seekers as you described them. You will note that some other sources had views similar as well as somewhat different from your own. If you feel that I have misrepresented you in any way, or if my presentation of events with which you were connected is not as you remember them, I invite you to send me your comments and I shall take them into consideration as I revise this draft. And of course, you may, as always, contact Dr. Maureen Nummelin, the Director, Office of Research Ethics, at 1-519-888-4567, Ext. 36005 or maureen.nummelin@uwaterloo.ca if my draft chapters raises any concerns. This project was reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee.

I look forward to receiving your critique within the next two weeks. You can contact me via email at ledwards@uwaterloo.ca.

Sincerely,

Leisel Edwards

M.A. Candidate in Tourism Policy and Planning

Recreation and Leisure Studies

University of Waterloo

ledwards@uwaterloo.ca

Dr. Sanjay Nepal

Professor

Geography & Environmental Management

University of Waterloo

1-519-888-4567 ext. 31239

snepal@uwaterloo.ca

**APPENDIX J: INTERCONNECTED PILLARS OF
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**



APPENDIX K: NATIONAL TOURISM POLICY'S GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Tourism development shall benefit all of the people of Trinidad and Tobago both as visitors (customers) as well as participants (suppliers) of the industry;
2. Effective local community involvement shall form the basis of tourism growth;
3. A participatory integrative approach shall be adopted where local communities, the private sector, NGOs, the general public and other interest groups and stakeholders are given opportunities to take part in the planning and decision making process, and ownership of the tourism industry;
4. Tourism shall be used as a tool for the social development and transformation of the country;
5. Central Government shall work collaboratively with the Tobago House of Assembly and the tourism sector in Tobago to ensure that tourism is sustainably developed in Tobago;
6. Tourism development shall be people-centred and innovation and investment-driven;
7. Government shall provide the enabling framework and impetus for development;
8. Sustainable usage of the environment shall be practised;
9. Cultural authenticity shall be maintained and the culture further supported and promoted;
10. The talent of the people of Trinidad and Tobago shall be developed and nurtured to provide the innovation and creativity that will fuel the competitiveness of the sector; and
11. Tourism development shall take place in the context of strong cooperation with other States within the Caribbean.