



**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
COLLEGE OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES
TOURISM AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

**ASSESSEMENT OF PRACTICE AND CHALLENGES OF STAKEHOLDERS
INVOLVEMENT ON THE ON-GOING ECOTOURISM PROJECT: THE CASE OF
WENCHI CRATER LAKES, OROMIA NATIONAL REGIONAL STATE, ETHIOPIA**

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Partial Fulfilment of Master's Degree in Tourism Development and
Management**

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This is to certify that the thesis entitled "**Practice and Involvement of Stakeholders on the On-going Ecotourism Project: The Case of Wenchi Crater Lakes, Oromia National Regional State, Ethiopia**" was submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Master of Arts Degree in Tourism Development and Management Program and has been carried out by Ebisa Tilahun, ID No. GSR/9195/13, under our supervision. Therefore, we recommend that the student has fulfilled the requirements and, hence, can submit the thesis to the College of Development Studies and Tourism and Development Program.

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DECLARATION

I declare in the thesis that this is my own original work that has not been presented at this or any other university, and that all sources of materials used in this research have been fully acknowledged.

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

AAU:	Addis Ababa University
APA:	American Psychological Association
BSAP:	Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
CBD:	Convention on Biological Diversity
EDR:	Environmental Dispute Resolution
FGD:	Focus Group Discussion
GEF:	Global Environment Facility
IUCN:	International Union for Conservation of Nature
LCR:	Local Community Representative
NPA:	Network of Protected Areas
PMBOK:	Project Management Body of Knowledge
SCBD	Secretariat of Convention on Biological Diversity
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SDPASE:	Sustainable Development of Protected Areas System in Ethiopia
SMNP:	Semein Mountains National Park
UK:	United Kingdom
UN:	United Nation
UNDP:	United Nation Development Program
UNEP:	United Nation Environment Program
UNESCO:	United Nations Education Science and Culture Organization
WCMC:	World Conservation Management Council
WOTPA:	Wenchi Ongoing Tourism Project Administration
WWCTOHME:	Wenchi Woreda Culture, Tourism, Sport Office, Heritage Management Expert
WWCTOTIE:	Wenchi Woreda Culture, Tourism, Sport Office, Tourism Information Expert
WWCTOTPE:	Wenchi Woreda Culture, Tourism, Sport Office, Tourism promotion Expert
WWCTSOBH:	Wenchi Woreda Culture, Tourism, Sport Office, Bureau Head
WWCTSOTE:	Wenchi Woreda Culture, Tourism, Sport Office, Tourism Expert
WWF:	World Wildlife Fund

ABSTRACT

Stakeholder involvement can take place in different parts of a project cycle, at different levels of society, and can take many different forms. As a result, the purpose of this study was to investigate the practices and challenges of stakeholder involvement in the on-going ecotourism project at Wenchi Creator Lake. Both secondary and primary data were obtained through field observation, a semi-structured in-depth interview, focus group discussions, and document analysis. Key informants were purposively selected from government offices, the local community, and tourism service providers. Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted with thirteen key informants, as well as two focus groups with local residents and experts. The study uncovered that stakeholder involvement is practised informally and lacks accountability, transparency, principles, and common goals in Wenchi Creator Lake. Moreover, the study revealed that management inconsistency, conflict of interest among stakeholders, a lack of budget, a lack of government commitment, absence of evaluation and monitoring activities, and institutional ambiguity were factors that hinder stakeholder involvement in the study area. The stakeholder involvement in the on-going ecotourism projects are also revealed in this study. According to the study's findings, the level of stakeholder involvement in the on-going the ecotourism project is currently low. In order to manage the project sustainably, it is advised that the project administration strike a balance between the main management objectives and other stakeholders. This is because, as the study found, the site primarily focuses on biodiversity conservation and environmental protection, with a secondary focus on boosting the local community's economy via tourism, while the social aspect is largely ignored. Therefore, in order to pass the site on to the next generation, it is advised that the project administration balance all of the site's environmental, social, and economic aspects. Therefore, all stakeholders are suggested to work in collaboration to manage the on-going ecotourism projects.

Key words: Practice, Stakeholders, Involvement, Ecotourism project, and Wench Crater Lakes

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

One of the biggest and most significant worldwide sectors today is tourism. It is a significant factor in the economics of many nations since it boosts exports, creates employment, and produces money all across the world. Due to on-going mobility constraints, the travel and tourist sector's 10.3% share of global GDP declined to 5.3% in 2020 and then rebounded to 6.1% in 2021. Sixty two million jobs were lost in 2020, a decrease of 18.6%, leaving just 272 million people working globally in the industry, down from 333 million in 2019. In 2021, 18.2 million jobs were restored, an increase of 6.7% from the previous year (WTTC, 2021). The implementation of the tourist strategy at any destination will involve a range of institutions, including public sector organizations, NGOs, and private sector groupings or representative groups (UNWTO & SNV, 2010).

In any organization, stakeholder involvement is essential to the success of every project (Moodley 2012). According to Mitchell, Agle, and Wood (2007), in a project environment, stakeholders are frequently many and have a variety of influencing factors. Stakeholder involvement can take place at various points in a project's lifespan, at various social scales, and in a broad range of formats. These can include a variety of activities, such as giving feedback, developing projects, exchanging information, consulting, making choices, forming partnerships, and empowering people. Both a means and an end are served by participation. In order to create the project, it is a technique used by both people and communities (Andersen, 2009).

There has been evidence that there is more community support for the project when tourist stakeholders are included in the planning process from the start or, even better, are solely accountable for it (Hipwell, 2007). Despite these challenges, creating community-based tourism projects is not an impossibly distant goal; rather, it is a project that can be realized if the tourism stockholders are welcomed and supported by effective coordination and cooperation among the various stakeholders in order to raise the standard of living in rural areas.

Tourism is becoming more popular, which helps the economies of developing nations grow (Truong, 2014). In order to maximize the benefits from their domestic tourist sectors,

developing nations face enormous economic, social, and environmental problems, including the need to reinforce unstable inter-sectoral connections and decrease excessive income leakage from their domestic economies (UNCTAD, 2010).

A project's success depends on the viewpoints of the stakeholders. If unfavorable and consequently unsatisfactory, it may substantially impede its execution, resulting in cost overruns and schedule delays as a result of disagreements and conflicts (Olander, 2004). Stakeholders may contribute to a project's success by offering a diversity of talents, knowledge, and experiences if they are appropriately managed (Bourne, 2006). They might contribute to the project's increased success (TISA, 2010). Many traditional development projects and programs have been connected to the success or failure of stakeholders being included in or excluded from project cycle management (Baker & Sherrif, 2009).

Ethiopia offers much in terms of the environment, wildlife, culture, history, and archaeology. All around the country are several tourist attractions. Ethiopia's many national parks provide travellers unrivalled options for travel adventure, enabling them to take in the country's landscape and animals maintained in their natural habitats. The continents from which foreign travellers come include Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. Africa has significantly contributed since Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia, is home to the African Union Headquarters. In addition, Addis Ababa is the location of many international organizations (Mann, 2006).

Like other tourism hotspots in the country, the Wenchi Creator Lakes offer a lot of potential resources that might be used to entice both local and foreign tourists. The lake is blessed with its own natural shade, hot springs, waterfalls, and cool water, as well as with a beautiful and attractive setting, undeveloped woodlands, and a medieval church. The lake is flanked by high mountains and the so-called Kibate forest, a natural forest. Lake Wenchi has been ranked as the #1 tourist attraction in the world. During its 24th General Assembly, which took place in Madrid, Spain, the World Tourism Organization (WTO) named Lake Wenchi in Ethiopia as the Best Tourist Village of 2021 (Derera, 2015).

The potential of the resource led Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed to include Lake Wenchi as one of the initiatives in his "Dinner Table for the Country" agenda. The project, which should be completed in a year, might lead to an increase in ecotourism in the area.

The on-going ecotourism project at Wenchi Creator Lake contains a number of enabling and constraining variables, therefore the researcher was driven to look at these stakeholder participation strategies.

1.2. Statement of the problem

The corporate sector, the government, donor organisations, civil society organisations, and local communities are just a few of the players involved in the development and planning of tourist projects. The involvement of stakeholders in the planning of tourist projects and related activities not only supports the tourism sector but is also essential to attaining sustainable tourism development (Cole, 2006).

Tourism projects are endeavours taken by organisations, institutions, or businesses to solve a set of problems or grasp a business opportunity. They are multifaceted activities that require different expertise, inputs, and a collaborative effort before success can be attained and sustained (Knowles & Buhalis, 2001).

Most early research on project success seems to emphasise the three traditional dimensions of time, budget, and specification, also known as the "Iron Triangle," "despite the fact that this method is currently subject to widespread criticism."

Stakeholder involvement can increase project success because it is intimately related to sustainable development (Boon et al., 2013). This is in line with Reid's (2002) claim that active citizen participation is likely the most crucial empowerment concept, as well as Ngowi and Mselle's (1998) views on the functions of stakeholder involvement. According to Reid (2002), this results in the establishment of genuine democratic procedures as well as higher rates of resource acquisition and usage, better outcomes, higher levels of voluntarism, and a more positive sense of community spirit. According to Reid (2002), participation is the heart of a strong community.

The contribution of stakeholders to the growth of tourism in Ethiopia has not yet received the attention it merits. However, most of prior studies that have been done on this issue have not paid much attention to the governance structure in Ethiopia's tourist industry or to the involvement of stakeholders and their roles in the industry (Deresse, 2018).

Numerous studies on stakeholder involvement in tourism have emphasised how bad interactions and collaborations, as well as restrictions on commitment, resources, and human resources, among tourism and ecotourism stakeholders, speed up the degradation of natural resources while neglecting communities and enhancing the interests of other ecotourism

stakeholders (Yetnayet & Getaneh, 2018; Eteffa, 2018; Amare, Tolkach, & King, 2020). Furthermore, Sintayehu (2016) looked into how important parties might affect tourist development directly and indirectly. On pro-poor tourism, there hasn't been much research done. Derso (2021) addressed the social, economic, and environmental advantages of activities for the development of pro-poor tourism in Bahirdar city. Good intentions to work in small and microbusinesses related to tourism in the Awi zone are enhanced by the sustainability of pro-poor tourism development (Asmare, 2019).

Even though many attempts have been made by researchers in the field of stakeholders' collaboration, the majority of the research gap only looked at the intricate relationship between stakeholders and tourism for specific stakeholder groups, such as residents, visitors, business owners, or government officials, and their perceptions and attitudes (Kruja and Hasaj, 2010).

However, the involvement of stakeholders as a component of developing sustainable tourism remains untouched and has not been given much attention in the study area. Nothing has been done specifically on the aspect of stakeholder involvement with regard to benefiting the poor, specifically in the ongoing Wenchi ecotourism project. In an attempt to bridge these gaps the researcher address the lack of attention given to stakeholder involvement and collaboration in the development of sustainable tourism projects, particularly in the case of the ongoing Wenchi ecotourism project. Aside from these, the practical factors that influence (enabling and limiting factors) stakeholder involvement activity were investigated.

1.3. Research Questions

The study answered the following research questions:

- 1) Identify who the major stakeholder participate at the on-going ecotourism projects of wenchi Creator Lake are?
- 2) What is the status of stakeholder involvement for the on-going ecotourism projects at wenchi Creator Lake?
- 3) What are the fertile condition that enable successful stakeholder involvement in the on – going ecotourism project at wenchi Creator Lake?
- 4) What are the challenges that hinder meaningful stakeholder involvement in the on –going ecotourism project at wenchi Creator Lake?

1.4. Objectives of the Study

1.4.1. General Objective

The general objective of this study is to assess the practices and challenges of stakeholder's involvement in the on-going ecotourism project at Wenchi Creator Lake.

1.4.2. Specific Objectives

The study specifically aimed to accomplish the following objectives:

- 1) Identify the major stakeholder participate at the on-going ecotourism projects of wenchi Creator Lake
- 2) To assess the stakeholder involvement practice for the on-going ecotourism projects at wenchi Creator Lake.
- 3) To identify a fertile condition that enable successful stakeholder involvement in the on-going ecotourism project at wenchi Creator Lake.
- 4) To assess the challenges that hinder meaningful stakeholder involvement in the on –going ecotourism project at wenchi Creator Lake

1.5. Significance of the study

The findings of the study will have practical, managerial, and theoretical significance. Practically, the study will generate baseline data that strengthens research in the on-going ecotourism project in Ethiopia and other countries. Managerially, the study will be a source of information on stakeholder involvement and on-going ecotourism projects. Theoretically, the study will contribute to stakeholder involvement theory by identifying the practice, enabling, and hindering factors of stakeholder involvement in the on-going ecotourism project at the site level.

1.6. Scope of the Study

Three factors, including the geographical area, the theme, and the units of observation of the research, were used to limit the study's scope.

1.6.1. Delimitation by Spatial Scope

Geographically, the study's coverage is concentrated on Wenchi Creator Lake, which is located in south-western shoa, Oromia region, Ethiopia. Wenchi Creator Lake has very little industrial activity compared to other tourist areas in Ethiopia; hence, it is safe to say that the area does not now pose a substantial threat to the ecosystem. Wenchi woreda is the largest

topographical feature in the nation and is located 155 kilometres west of Addis Abeba and 32 kilometres west of Ambo. Wenchi Creator Lake is a naturally beautiful lake. The region is well known for its stunning mountainous landscape, which is partially used for farming and partially covered by natural forest, as well as for the freshness of the air and other attractions like the hot mineral springs. There are also many other natural and man-made attractions in the area that can draw both domestic and foreign tourists. As a result, the research was more narrowly focused on the chosen stakeholders, defined as everyone who takes part in the continuing ecotourism project of geographical territories.

1.6.2. Delimitation by Theme

The study's primary focus is on the procedures and stakeholder participation in on-going ecotourism projects at wenchi Creator Lake, and both the analysis and the findings place a strong emphasis on the participation of stakeholders in the study area. Investigated in the study were practical elements (enabling and restricting factors) that affect stakeholder involvement activities.

1.6.3. Delimitation by Unit of Observation

The third element of the study's delimitation is its observational unit of analysis. The study subjects who were used in this thesis as the source of pertinent data are referred to as units of observation. They provide the study with the majority of its data. The target group for this study includes the Wenchi Woreda Culture, Tourism, and Sport Office, the local community, and local tourism service providers, who are the primary stakeholders of the on-going project site at Wenchi Creator Lake.

1.6.4. Delimitation by methodological

Methodologically, this study employed an exploratory research design and qualitative research approach, and the data was obtained through a semi-structured in-depth interview, focus group discussion, field observation, and document analysis.

1.7. Limitation of the Study

Although the study has been carefully conducted, the researcher is still aware of its limitations and shortcomings. Thus, a literature review is an important part of any research because it helps to identify the scope of previous work in the research area. The study's

findings may not be applicable to all of Ethiopia's tourism projects because it was only conducted at the on-going Wenchi ecotourism project site with a small number of participants who represent a tiny percentage of the Ethiopian tourism industry. In addition, the data for the study was collected through a semi-structured interview, focus group discussion, field observation, and document analysis; there may be a lack of willingness to provide enough information, bias, and subjectivity. So getting full information on time was difficult. Political issues that were present in the region at the time of this study's conduct made it difficult to gather the data that was required.

1.8. Definition of Key Terms

- 1. Practice:** The activities and strategies implemented by stakeholders in the on-going ecotourism project to promote sustainable tourism development and improve local livelihoods (Smith, J., Johnson, A., & Brown, K., 2020).
- 2. Stakeholders:** individuals or groups who have a vested interest in the ongoing ecotourism project at Wench Crater Lakes, including local communities, government agencies, non-governmental organizations, tour operators, and other relevant parties.
- 3. Involvement:** The extent to which stakeholders are actively engaged in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the project, including their participation in decision-making processes and their contribution to the overall success of the endeavour.
- 4. Ecotourism project:** a sustainable tourism development initiative that aims to minimize its environmental impact while supporting local communities and preserving natural resources, including the Wench Crater Lakes ecotourism project in Oromia National Regional State, Ethiopia.

1.9. Organization of the Thesis

The study was organized into five chapters. Chapter one consists of an introduction, the background of the study, a statement of the problem, research questions, the objective of the study (both general and specific), the significance of the study, the scope of the study, the limitations of the study, and the organization of the study. Whereas the second chapter focuses on literature, related concepts from the study are discussed in depth in chapter two. Chapter three of this study included the methods and techniques employed to gather, interpret, and analysed the data. The collected data was analysed and interpreted in Chapter four. Finally, in the final chapter, a conclusion, summary, possible recommendations, and future research directions were established.

CHAPTER TWO

2. REVIEW LITERATURE

2.1. Definitions and Concepts of Stakeholder

"Stakeholders" are entities or people who have the power to impact or could be impacted by the objectives of an organisation. (1984, Freeman). This tactic makes the assumption that those taking part may be people, groups, or both, internal or external, good or evil. It also presumes that stakeholders are linked to the organization's aims and that their "stake" or "vested interest" is "affected" by the accomplishment of those objectives, whether intentionally or unintentionally (Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland, 2017).

The term "stakeholder" is used to refer to "everyone who is influenced or impacted by the objectives you are attempting to accomplish." Customers, staff, colleagues, teammates, community members, financiers, investors, within company departments, lawmakers, media outlets, consumers, etc. might all be listed as players in the overall picture of a project. It is also possible to refer to stakeholders simply as "the individuals who contribute" (Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland, 2017). Stakeholders are people or organisations that may be passionate about a project and have the capacity to positively or adversely influence how it turns out. They may also be people or organisations that are directly or indirectly affected by the project.

Stakeholders include influenced local communities or people in general, as well as their both official and informal representatives, regional or local governments, leaders, religious leaders, members of organisations of civil society and categories with particular interests, members of educational institutions, and other enterprises (IFC, 2007).

2.2. Role and Responsibilities of Stakeholders for Tourism Development

Nazrin et al. (2012) claim that a variety of methods are used to distinguish between the unique identities and functions that stakeholders play in various forms of tourism. According to scholars like Pavlovich (2003), there are three different categories of stakeholders in the tourism sector: hosts (the community at large and ecosystem), industries, and tourists who act as consumers.

Three groups of parties are involved in the growth of sustainable tourism, according to the World Tourism Organization (WTO): the travel and tourism sector, environmentalists, and local governments or communities (Timur, 2012).

The WTO also describes how the tourist industry contributes to chances for commerce, employment, income, and foreign exchange through the provision of tourism services including travel, housing, food, and drinks (Nazrin et al. 2012). The environment's role is to urge tourists to participate in activities that showcase the community's way of life, the wonders of nature, and humankind's engineering prowess. In the end, choices are made by the local community or government, which is made up of residents as well as enterprises, organizations, and associations (Timur, 2012).

Raffay (2007) listed the following organizations as tourism stakeholders: municipal governments, significant politicians in the area, visitor information centres, heritage work groups, lodging providers, bars and restaurants, cultural program organizers, travel agents, attraction areas, regional tourism organizations, universities, hotel organizations, and media outlets.

2.2.1. Government/Public Authorities

According to Nazrin et al. (2012), the public sector is more active when it comes to planning, legislation, maintaining laws governing tourist destinations, supervising the construction of facilities, and marketing tourism. According to Inskip (1991), the government sector is also responsible for implementing laws, regulations, and policies; as a consequence, it is involved in a variety of tasks, including planning developments, implementing tourism laws and regulations, constructing critical facilities, boosting the appeal of public tourism, and conducting marketing to promote tourist destinations. The government sector is responsible for setting and enforcing standards for facilities, services, and other areas (Nazrin et al., 2012).

The provision of places (via infrastructure and superstructure elements, safety, preserved values and costs, accessibility), activities (via components related to culture and history, special events), and products (via physical characteristics, services, and freedom of choice) that are intended for public use is another responsibility of the public sector, according to Nazrin et al. (2016). The role of public agencies in the supply of assets managed by the public sector, such as national parks, state parks, zoos, recreation areas, monuments, and sports stadiums, was further covered by Gunn (1994).

2.2.2. Local Community

Dabphet (2014) claimed that the community at large is seen as a crucial stakeholder in achieving sustainable tourism growth since it is believed that tourism is held within the context of the community and has the potential to affect residents in both positive and negative ways. Since these activities take place inside their destinations, communities nearby are seen as one of the primary actors in the development of tourism and an important resource (Muganda, Sirima, and Marawa 2013).

Numerous academics have suggested that the local community contributes in various ways to the growth of tourism. These include the work of Muganda et al. (2013), who recognized that the role of communities as a whole includes participation in policy making, being a part of decision-making, utilizing the potential of resources, conservation, collaboration with government and the private sector, taking part in training and awareness programmes, and monitoring all tourism policies and plans. Additionally, Sintayehu (2016) discovered that local communities are significant players in the growth of the tourism sector because they contribute to conservation efforts, take part in decisions regarding policy, provide tourists with products and services that are produced locally promote their cultures, and foster a sense of ownership over the resources that support tourism.

2.2.3. Private Sectors

In a capitalist society, the private sector's primary roles revolve around providing lodging (hotels, apartments), food and drink (restaurants, cafés), shopping, and entertainment (theme parks, movie theatres, MICE, etc.). Despite being primarily focused on profit-oriented development, the private sector contributes significantly to the preparation of space, activities, and products (Nazrin et al. 2012).

The private sector largely engages in the provision of services in order to guarantee that the tourist plant and the associated services are of the highest quality and comply with industry-wide requirements (Barbados National tourist Policy, 2011). They are essential to the marketing and development of the tourist sector as well.

Together with the government, the tourist sector, both domestically and internationally, develops policies and plans that have an impact on the sector. The sector also keeps track of all such policies and plans to make sure the sector continues to be both competitive and lucrative. Because travellers undertake their travels for travel-related reasons and typically require some type of lodging facilities to rest and refuel, the lodging industry is one of the tourism industry's sub-sectors and a crucial player in its development (Vrana, V. B., & Zekić-Sušac, M. (2017).

2.2.4. Tourists

There are more and more visitors that desire to enhance the environment of the locations they visit. The visitor must be given the possibility to actively participate in the struggle against poverty and must be made aware of the opportunities to enhance the quality of life for locals. Visitors must be aware of the immediate consequences of their purchases, especially when considering the potential for charitable contributions (Jamieson, 2004).

2.2.5. Non-Government Organization

In order to encourage the underprivileged to participate, civil society is essential. This includes colleges and universities at all levels, professional associations, media outlets, community-based organizations, and NGOs. Donors can push other stakeholders to strengthen affirmative action, ensure that tourism is considered when development options are assessed, and provide efforts and experience in this emerging industry with technical assistance in addition to financial support (WTO, 2002). Donor-funded tourism master plans' primary goals are to enhance infrastructure, promote private investment, and draw international tourists.

Multinational firms and local elites who regularly shift their gains abroad or to big cities usually act as investors (Ashley, Boyd, and Goodwin, 2000). NGOs may be extremely helpful at all stages of boosting the advantages of tourism for the underprivileged, from creating the strategy to actively taking part in execution.

The main contributions that NGOs can make are their familiarity with poverty issues and priorities in the target area, their advocacy for the needs of specific groups and the poor, their capacity building efforts, which may include working on particular projects or with particular communities, and their ability to connect with funding sources (UNWTO & SNV, 2010).

2.3. Stakeholder's involvement in sustainable tourism development

Giving locals the chance to start their own tourist businesses is the major goal of sustainable, pro-poor tourism development. To increase the local community's understanding, skills, and trust with their ability to direct and manage the growth of their community, local capacity can be built through awareness-raising, the administration of tourist education and training programs, and the provision of business advisory support (Ashley C. G., 2001). As a result, in order for stakeholders to actively engage in the industry, they must be equipped with the knowledge and skills required to comprehend how tourism influences society. To reap the rewards of this enterprise, lessen poverty via the growth of sustainable tourism, and secure its long-term survival, all stakeholders must become involved.

When formulating government or non-government policy, for example, by planners, innovators, and advisors, pro-poor policies should be included at all levels. Those interested in poverty reduction planning or concerned about the development of rural areas should also look into and take use of the tourist industry's comparative potential (Ashley et al., 2001).

The private sector is made up of a complex web of intertwined connections between national businesses, global enterprises, and a wide range of local tourism-related sectors. The private sector's engagement is essential for attracting investment to the area and ensuring top-notch tourist management. It should go without saying that each tourism-related firm has its unique set of guiding principles and ways of operation. While some of these individuals could be strongly in favour of utilizing tourism to combat poverty, others might not consider it to be a top priority given their line of work (United Nations, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific). By hiring them as porters, cooks, tour guides, and other jobs, the private sector may encourage the poor to work in the tourist industry while also making the most use of regional suppliers and products (United Nations, 2008).

Since the bulk of workers in the tourist business are employed directly by the hotel industry, there is a significant opportunity to hire people from disadvantaged backgrounds. Although it

is conceivable to consider poverty to be a local and individual issue, it is clear that national government policies have a significant influence on lowering it—often by aiding in the implementation of national laws, regulations, and procedures. The role of the nation's governments is to focus on the following: establishing a strategy for the relationship between alleviating poverty and tourism; assisting the underprivileged in decision-making regarding tourism; using controls on planning and incentives for investment to entice the private sector to develop projects that benefit the underprivileged; and developing an appropriate legal framework that permits the employment of the underprivileged (Jamieson, 2004).

international organizations and agencies: It's crucial to remember that development aid should not only be directed at building hotels and airports, but also at supporting a nation's attempts to develop by supporting the expansion of its infrastructure, small and medium-sized tourist firms, and capacity building. The agenda for aid should also include tourism. giving technical help programs in a range of disciplines with a pro-poor tourism orientation, according to Jamieson (2004).

An increasing number of visitors are eager to improve the environment of the locations they visit. The visitor must be given the opportunity to directly fight poverty and make themselves aware of the opportunities to improve residents' standard of life. When thinking about the potential for contributions to charities, it is especially important for visitors to comprehend the direct impacts of their spending (Jamieson, 2004).

2.4. The Project Concept

2.4.1. Definition of Project

A project is a brief endeavour started with the intention of producing a special good, service, or outcome. They promote change and strive on generating corporate value (PMBOK, 2017). There is a potential that projects will bring unplanned results as a result of their involvement, which are referred to as side effects. The majority of projects are designed to provide a benefit in terms of profit through the project deliverables. These negative, good, or neutral side effects are all possible. The term "dis-benefits" can also be used to describe undesirable side effects. Project outcomes include the advantages and disadvantages a project experiences (Jepsen and Eskerod, 2016).

The interests of the important stakeholders, or perhaps all stakeholders, should be taken into consideration for a project to be successful, it is well-known in project management (Achterkamp and Vos, 2008; Huemann, Eskerod, and Ringhofer, 2016).

2.4.2. Project management

The Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK) (2000) states that "Project management is an application of knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to project activities to meet project requirements." There are five phases in project management: starting, planning, carrying out, controlling, and wrapping up. Project management is the set of abilities, resources, and procedures needed to carry out a project successfully (Jason Westland, 2006). Project management involves tools, people, and systems, according to James P. Lewis (2011), who supports this viewpoint. According to Chow, V.W., and Lei Ringer, R. (2017), stakeholder theory is the most frequent lens through which public engagement activities are seen in project management.

2.4.3. Project success

Due to the dynamic and distinctive nature of projects, success is one of the most difficult things to do. (Roine Leiringer and Vivian wy Chow, 2017) The iron triangle, which Martin Barnes first used in 1969, is the most well-known of them. The iron triangle's three points—cost, quality, and time—indicate that a project must be on schedule, under budget, and of high quality to be successful. The measuring criteria for project success can occasionally be expanded as needed, and various researchers may also employ measurement criteria other than the iron triangle.

Six factors are most typically used to gauge the performance of building projects, according to Anton de Wit (1998). Those being: adherence to the budget and time, customer satisfaction, usability, contractor satisfaction, and project manager and team satisfaction. Project success indicators and project success variables were utilized in a research by R.G. Koelmans (2004) to evaluate project success and performance. According to Shenhar et al. (2001), which was quoted by Amir Hossein Heravi, Vaughan Coffey, and Bambang Trigunaryah (2014), the study expanded the project success criteria to include additional elements such stakeholder engagement and satisfaction, consumer benefit, and an organization's future outlook.

Customer satisfaction now plays a significant role in determining project performance under the new project management model (J. Davidson Frame, 2002).

2.4.4. Project stakeholders

Stefan Taschner and Matthias Fiedler's 2009 report claims Actors having a particular interest are called stakeholders. As people come to share a vision of the problems and players that make up the domain, they become stakeholders (Cynthia Hardy and Nelson Phillips, 1998), and almost anybody connected to a project may be referred to as a stakeholder (Albert Lester, 2003). Project stakeholders, according to PMBOK (2000), are "individuals and organizations that are actively involved in the project or whose interests may be positively or negatively affected as a result of project execution or project completion. "Stakeholders are individuals or groups who expect certain things from the company and at the same time have a significant impact on its success," claims Robert M. Curtice (2006). Even when they are vehemently opposed to a process, stakeholders should always be encouraged to engage in it since they are important sources of information (Stefan Taschner and Matthias Fiedler, 2009).

2.4.5. Project stakeholder management

According to PMBOK5th edition (2013), stakeholder management is defined as

"Project Stakeholder Management includes the processes needed to identify the people, groups, or organizations that may have an impact on or be affected by the project, to analyze stakeholder expectations and their impact on the project, and to develop appropriate management strategies for effectively involving stakeholders in project decisions and execution."

As quoted in Eskerod, & Huemann (2013) by Steven B. Kramer and Randi L. Sims (2015) A project's demands and concerns must be addressed through effective stakeholder management. According to Charlotte (2017), one of the main aims of stakeholder management is to achieve effective engagement for all relevant stakeholders. To this end, a framework for stakeholder management was developed, consisting of four processes: Stakeholders Analysis & Mapping, Communication Strategy and Planning, Engagement Strategies & Techniques, and Continuous Assessment & Follow Through.

According to the PMBOK 5th edition (2013), there are four main steps for managing stakeholder engagement in a project: identifying stakeholders, planning stakeholder management, managing stakeholder engagement, and controlling stakeholder engagement. S.B. Ekung¹, E. Okonkwo, and I. Odesola (2014) quote Kivits (2013) who makes a distinction between stakeholder management and engagement. We can see from the example above that project stakeholder management includes stakeholder interaction. According to study findings (Mahmoud Rajablu, Govindan Marthandan, & Wan Fadzilah Wan Yusoff 2015), Manage-through-Stakeholder (MTS) has a positive impact on project success. More importantly, MTS plays a significant mediating role between stakeholder influential attributes of interest, legitimacy, proximity, and network (positive attributes) and project success.

2.5. Project Life Cycle Phases

A project's life cycle is the sequence of stages it goes through from the beginning to the end. The phases are often ordered in a sequential manner, and their names and numbers are chosen based on the project's nature, the management and control requirements of the organization or organizations participating, and the project's intended use. Functional or partial objectives, interim outcomes or deliverables, certain milestones within the overall scope of work, or financial feasibility can all be used to segment the stages. Phases often have a start and end point or control point and are time-bound. A technique can be used to record a life cycle. The distinct features of the company, industry, or technology used can influence or decide the project life cycle. Even while every project has a beginning and a conclusion, the precise deliverables and activities that happen in between will vary greatly depending on the project. Regardless of the specific activity performed, the life cycle offers the fundamental foundation for project management (PMI, 2017).

The magnitude and complexity of the projects vary. The PMI (2017) recognized the four generic project life cycle architectures shown below.

- a) Starting the project,
- b) Planning organizing and preparing,
- c) Carrying out the project work, and
- d) Closing the project.

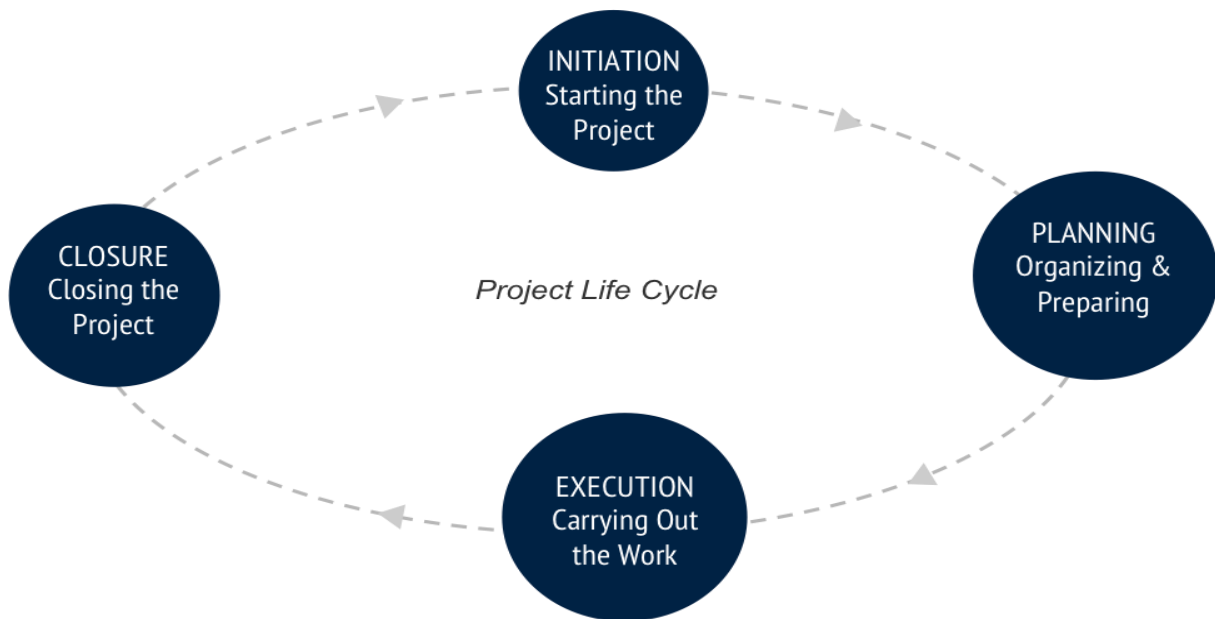


Figure 1 The four generic project life cycles

Source: Adopted from PMI (2017)

a) Initial Stage(Starting The Project)

The need, issue, or opportunity is identified at the project start phase, and then the team brainstorms solutions to meet the need, address the problem, or take advantage of the opportunity. The project's goal, project feasibility, and key deliverables are all determined at this stage.

The following steps might be taken during the project's beginning phase:

1. Identifying the primary problem of project
2. Identifying scope
3. Identifying deliverables - Defining the product or service to provide

b) Planning Organizing and preparing

The organization creates smaller goals within the larger project, making sure each is achievable within the time frame, and smaller goals should have a high potential for success. In this phase, you should break the larger project down into smaller tasks, assemble your team, and create a schedule for the completion of assignments.

1. Creating a project plan
2. Creating workflow documents or process maps
3. Estimating budget and creating a financial plan
4. Gathering resources
5. Anticipating risks and potential quality roadblocks

c) Execution (Carrying out the work)

The plan is put into effect during the execution phase. Keeping work on track, organizing the team, managing deadlines, and ensuring that the work is completed in accordance with the original plan are the responsibilities of the project manager throughout this stage of the project management life cycle.

1. Creating tasks and organizing workflows
2. Briefing team members on tasks
3. Communicating with team members, clients, and upper management
4. Monitoring quality of work
5. Managing budget

d) Closure (closing the project)

Provide final deliverables, release project resources, and assess project performance during the closing phase.

The project manager's job is not over just because the main project work is finished; there are still vital tasks to complete, such as determining what worked and what did not with the project.

1. Analyzing project performance
2. Analyzing team performance
3. Documenting project closure
4. conducting post-implementation reviews
5. Accounting for used and unused budget

2.6. Stakeholder Involvement in Project Identification and Project Performance

Project stakeholders are first and foremost any groups, people, or organizations that actively participate in a project or who have a stake in its execution, completion, or results. They may also have some influence on the project's goals and outcomes.

The project's outcome is important to the stakeholders. It could be an ownership, a right, or an interest. According to Carol, Cohen, and Palmer (2004), rights can be either legal or moral ownership depending on the context. On the one hand, stakeholders benefit from having their expectations acknowledged and managed through proper open communication, and on the other, stakeholders benefit from ensuring that the stakeholders understand and support the project.

Additionally, the project's scope and character are defined and determined by the beginning steps. If this phase is poorly carried out, the project's ability to satisfy community expectations would likely suffer (Nijkamp et al., 2002). Understanding the project environment and ensuring that the relevant needs and technical specifications are included into the project are the unique key project identifications required in this situation. Any deficiencies or problems should be noted, documented, and a solution should be suggested, according to Albert (2004). The initiation stage, which serves as the beginning of project implementation, should have a plan that includes the following tasks: choosing the project that best meets the needs of the community or organization, realizing the project's benefits, designating a project manager, translating needs and requirements into achievable goals, conducting a financial, social, and economic analysis of the costs and benefits, locating a funding source, and conducting a stakeholder analysis.

To cope with their possible impact on the project, legitimate and genuine stakeholders must be recognized, and their power, closeness, and influence must be understood (Curley, Steve, and Ricky, 2006). Stakeholder identification is a step in the project execution process that involves designating people and organizations that will be impacted by or utilize the project. Then, measures that are adequate and acceptable may be developed and put into practice to increase the impact of stakeholders. The inability to develop a thorough relationship between project risks and stakeholder participation would most likely result in project failure, which becomes a basic risk management concern for project managers (Malunga and Banda, 2004).

2.7. Stakeholder Involvement in Project Planning and Project Performance

The defining of the project's work requirements, quality, and aim, the specification of necessary resources and their allocation, the definition of the timetable, the appraisal of

various risks, and the decision of delivery methods are all aspects of stakeholder participation in project planning activities.

Project managers can boost a project's implementation process or its results by including stakeholders in the planning stage. Additionally, a research was conducted in Japan in 1995 by Nobeoka and Cusumano to ascertain the connection between stakeholder participation in project planning procedures and their influence on project performance. They discovered that the inclusion of stakeholders had an impact on project objectives during the planning stage, resource allocation, task specification, and ultimately project performance. Stakeholder involvement in planning, according to Harold (2003), helps with understanding the place and roles of stakeholders in deciding how to plan, developing the milestones, scope statement, assigning the planning team, identifying deliverables, creating the work breakdown structure (WBS), estimating the required resources for the activities, developing the schedule, estimating the time and cost necessary for activities, risk planning, and receiving formal approval to start working.

Additionally, crucial procedures like project planning, determining the obligations of each stakeholder, and preserving a cordial working relationship with them are all typically appropriate for project performance. The project plan and milestones reviews are the most often used methods or instruments for involving stakeholders in the planning stage. The approach entails the full participation of many stakeholders in the planning process. At this stage, the project managers define goals for each participant, create the project budget, and schedule tasks (Madeeha and Imran, 2014). The Administration and Control of Major Projects and Public Procurement in Guinea provide this function. They offer guidance and support to governments or organizations as they prepare and manage various project stakeholders. Other operational divisions approve the project budget, timetable, and work plan for each of their specialized projects. Last but not least, the rationale for including stakeholders in the planning stage is to produce effective and long-lasting projects by recognizing, assessing, planning, coordinating, and regulating every component that could have an impact on project performance.

2.8. Stakeholder Involvement in Project Implementation and Project Performance

One of the most crucial aspects of project management is involving stakeholders in the execution of the project. During the implementation stage, project managers support excellent resource management, coordination of personnel, and risk assessment to carry out the defined project plan. As an illustration, Duncan (1996) said that stakeholder participation in project implementation is essential to translating a project's planned plans and objectives into practical, well-structured tasks and activities that would help the project reach its objectives.

The complexity of stakeholder commitment in project execution is related to the project's features, such as its lengthy duration, significant financial investment, and several unanticipated and emerging aspects (Chang, 2013). The risks and problems connected to stakeholder participation in project execution and project performance can be categorized in a number of different ways. According to Florecel and Miller (2001), a few examples are project sponsorship growth, the business climate, governmental policies, political influence, financial viability, procurement, and social acceptability.

The effectiveness of development projects is highly dependent on the attitudes of various stakeholders, claim Low Sui et al. in 1996. As a result, the performance of the project as a whole will suffer if key stakeholders are not committed to carrying out their obligations to the best of their abilities during implementation. Deming (1986) and Joaquin et al. (2010) noted that stakeholder involvement is crucial to project success and that; as a result, it is crucial to take into account their claims and interests during the project implementation phases in order to successfully complete the project.

It should be emphasized that there is a reciprocal relationship between initiatives and stakeholders' engagement. In other words, while project performance can be somewhat influenced by stakeholders, stakeholders can also be somewhat impacted by development programs. For instance, implementing higher standard projects in the mining or construction sectors can change and improve people's living conditions, but environmental damage and pollution will reveal the project's negative effects on some stakeholders (Olander, 2002; Olander and Landin, 2005a). Additionally, using the right stakeholder participation strategy when implementing a project would make it simpler to manage their demands and foresee any hazards that might affect the project's success, according to Atkin and Skitmore (2008).

2.9. Stakeholder Involvement in Project Monitoring and Project Performance

Monitoring a project involves careful controlling and evaluation. To assess progress and performance, it contrasts the planned activities with the actual outcomes. (1999) Cleland. Project assessment is the procedure used to ascertain the actual state of a project. This evaluation is required to determine whether or not the project is being managed correctly. Coulter (2010) found that project monitoring had a significant influence on project quality. Therefore, it is essential to have a suitable control mechanism that offers organized and ongoing information on the project's performance. A project should be evaluated both before and after it is put into action. For instance, the goal of monitoring and control is to calculate each factor's impacts and then evaluate how well each component contributes to the project's success. (2014) Bhim Chimoriya. Control, according to Fayol (1949), "means making sure that everything happens in accordance with established rule and expressed command." Establishing a thorough methodology for planning, sustainability, and decision-making is the particular purpose in order to achieve project goals. The involvement of impacted stakeholders in the monitoring phase increases the likelihood of success, according to Flanagan and Norman (2003), who claim that stakeholder participation in monitoring influences development project performance. The importance of organizations in project monitoring and supervision was also mentioned by Coulter (2010). He discovered a strong and positive correlation between stakeholder involvement during the monitoring stage and the effects of those stakeholders, which are typically reflected in the performance of projects.

Stakeholder involvement in development projects through monitoring and reporting helps to uncover obstacles and issues around the initiatives. Stakeholder participation in project monitoring provides top management with a chance to influence and promote project performance (Katiku, 2011). In light of the fact that it would greatly enhance the project's performance, businesses may benefit from having constructive and knowledgeable stakeholders involved in project monitoring.

2.10. Practices of Stakeholder involvement for Tourism Development

Practices for involving stakeholders can be formal or informal; the most effective engagement initiatives are equitable and inclusive (Byrd, 2007; Sloan, 2009). According to Yetnayet and Getaneh (2018), these various industries can work together most successfully in the following areas: promotion and marketing, new product development, building infrastructure, preservation of heritage, improving profitability and service, visitor management, community development, and environmental protection. The number and diversity of those interested stakeholders can both restrict and impact the participation tools, according to Bramwel and Sharman (1999). According to Sloan (2009), the goal of engagement approaches should be to act as sensing mechanisms that gather data on stakeholder interests and expectations, which would subsequently influence those stakeholders' expectations and capacity for adaptation within the destinations.

It is understood that it is crucial to change the way decisions are made so that the needs of the poor are given top priority, as well as to increase the involvement of the poor by developing their capacities and sharing their expertise. These broad policies must be followed across sectors and levels and incorporate a range of different issues since it is recognized that altering decision-making procedures to guarantee that their needs are addressed is vital. These overarching strategies must be adhered to at all levels and throughout all industries, including a wide range of participants, from governments to foreign funders and investors, tour operators, tourists, and the impoverished (DFID, 1999).

There are currently pro-poor programs that support small- and medium-sized, such as tourism initiatives, the creation of alliances between regional governments and private companies, engagement in pro-poor planning, and a number of laws that directly benefit the poor, such as improving working conditions, spending on staff training and development, and managing protected areas (Ashley et al., 2001; Mowforth & Munt, 2003).

Stakeholders may need to take the initiative to encourage PPT by providing funding for technical assistance and training for the underprivileged, looking into and facilitating possibilities for businesses to connect private operators and underprivileged suppliers, and developing procedures that amplify the voice of the underprivileged at the policy level (Ashley, Goodwin, & Roe, 2001).

Public sector engagement is necessary for planning destinations and marketing, cross-sector integration, infrastructure development, norms and regulations, education and training, data gathering and monitoring on poverty and tourism performance, as well as other activities (UNWTO, 2010). The tourist business may benefit from enhanced planning, management, marketing, product development, training, and education through cooperation among many stakeholders. However, there hasn't been much in-depth study on what stakeholders can do to promote tourism that helps the underprivileged (Wen et al., 2021).

2.10.1. Accountability and Transparency

According to Eagles (2008), accountability relates to the need for formal responses from actors on the use of their authority and acceptance of responsibility for mistakes, ineptitude, or dishonesty. It is about the procedures for holding decision-makers responsible. The most obvious and contentious difference between the private and public sectors is that accountability may undermine the legitimacy of partnerships. For instance, during the campaign for the most recent municipal election at a particular ski resort, the mayor of the town was changed. According to Svensson et al. (2005), the municipal election's tight links to the region's top economic interests demonstrated that businesses rather than politicians were in charge.

In addition, there are a few difficulties and problems with tourist governance: First, it's possible that the network represents specialized economic interests rather than broad public ones. Second, the importance of commercial and political players in the tourist network is found, which may have an impact on decisions about the formulation of tourism policy (Scott et al., 2008). Third, private players are less conscious of their immediate responsibilities than public partners who cannot be disregarded.

In order to be transparent and operate in an open way, choices must adhere to set standards and regulations and information must be readily available (Scott et al., 2008). The major function of network governance transparency is to foster interaction, making it recognized and normal. This helps to not only uphold but also to increase participant confidence (Beaumont & Dredge, 2009).

In addition, there are a few difficulties and problems with tourist governance: First of all, it's possible that informal networks lack definite norms and requirements for participation, which might be an issue. Second, judgments could not reflect the network's participants.

Third, top tourist industry figures can have a significant impact on how government policy is ultimately implemented. Fourth, informal networks can have an impact on the governments outside of formally recognized, open policy-making processes (Scott et al., 2008). Lead organization controlled networks have a high level of local governance openness and accountability to significant network-level activities and important decisions. Based on what appears to be productive and efficient, the members themselves take over the function of the main organization.

2.11. Level of Stakeholder Involvement in Tourism Projects

Numerous multidisciplinary studies have been conducted on tourism as a complex phenomenon and significant economic force. Since it addresses social, economic, and psychological concerns, the stakeholder theory also has a multidisciplinary nature. From a managerial standpoint, effective stakeholder management must address both groups that the project may influence as well as groups that the project may affect (Freeman, 1984). In the context of tourism, relatively general stakeholder categories that are crucial for project design and execution include locals, visitors, employees, the government, nearby businesses, rivals, activist organizations, and educational institutions.

The functional approach, which sees tourism as a proactive force that, if developed properly, seeks to maximize positive returns to a community's overall growth while minimizing the costs to the environment and culture, is a crucial point of view on tourism from the perspective of stakeholder theory. A functional approach also recommends that the tourism system be managed jointly by all parties or stakeholders involved in or impacted by this sector within a certain market or community. Three possible benefits of consensus-based cooperation among stakeholders in tourist policy planning were outlined by Bramwell and Sharman (Bramwell B., Sharman A., 1999).

- It may avoid the costs of solving conflicts among stakeholders
- it may legitimate collective actions if stakeholders are involved in the decision-making processes which affect their activities
- The willingness to collaborate may enhance the coordination of policies and related activities.

Research on the use of stakeholder theory in the tourist industry conducted in the 1990s addressed the effects of tourism on community development and established the value of include stakeholders in the planning process for tourism development. While significantly contributing to the body of knowledge by looking into collaborative efforts in the community tourism domain as a possible solution in resolving tourism planning and management problems (Jamal and Getz, 1995), Keogh stressed that instead of cooperative approach, tourism industry often imposes planning decisions on the local population (Keogh, B., 1990). In 1999, Sautter and Birgit expanded their study on how to manage the interests of many stakeholders in the growth of the tourist industry and proposed measures to strengthen stakeholder alignment.

Stakeholder management in the tourist industry has established itself as a necessary tactic for effective tourism planning and development up until the turn of the twenty-first century. A significant contribution has been made in the management sector, particularly via the works of (Baggio R., 2006; Presenza and Cipollina, 2010), which focused on clusters and networks as a source of competitive advantage for players in the tourist industry.

Depending on the approach employed and the stakeholders involved, effective stakeholder participation in tourist development can have a variety of consequences. As systematized by (Byrd, E.T., 2011), these outcomes can include:

- Stakeholders who are informed and educated about the topics and issues
- Public values and opinions are incorporated in the decision-making process
- Improved quality and legitimacy of the decisions
- Generation of new ideas
- Trust increases between all stakeholder groups
- Conflict and lawsuits are reduced
- More cost-effective process
- The promotion of shared resources and responsibility

2.12. Community-Based Tourism (CBT) and Community Participation Ladder

Participation of the local community in development projects has been popular for many years. Despite typically being seen as the sole province of the government, successful tourist

development has required stakeholder involvement. In Bjork's (2000) framework for key actors, which defines tourism development as an activity needing a multi-stakeholder approach, stakeholder engagement is highlighted. Authorities, tourism enterprises, visitors, and local communities are only a few of the stakeholders in the tourism industry that are listed in Figure 2.2. In order to guarantee the growth of a sustainable tourist industry, each stakeholder must engage. Similar to what Okazaki (2008) stated, community involvement is crucial for promoting sustainable tourism.

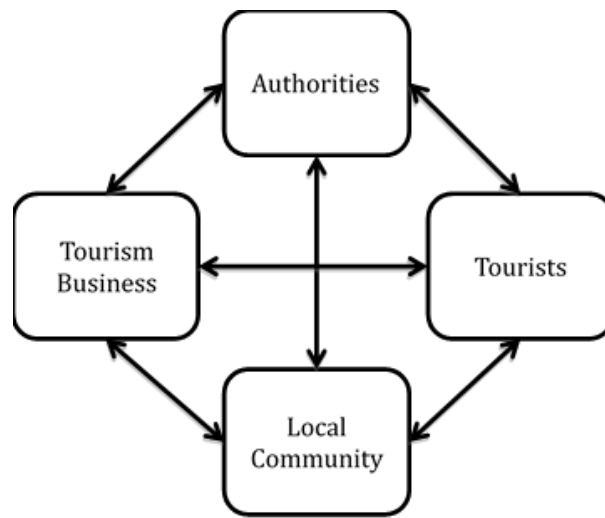


Figure 2 Key Players in Tourism

Source: Adopted from Bjork (2000)

According to Haywood (1988), community involvement is the process of distributing decision-making among all interested parties. Its fundamental goal is to assure power redistribution and to make it easier to distribute the expenses and rewards of tourist operations fairly and equally (Arnstein, 1969). Communities must be empowered to achieve these goals through awareness-raising efforts and transformational learning processes that help people comprehend the circumstances they are dealing with (Reid, 2003). While CBT continues to be the best setup for pursuing tourist development, numerous researchers have discovered issues with its use. According to Addison (1996), a participative approach to tourist development is sometimes time-consuming and underfunded.

In addition to the substantial transaction costs associated with its deployment, maintenance expenses are also prohibitive (Getz & Jamal, 1994). Dealing with the community also entails dealing with divergent demands, values, and sets of entrenched interests and power relations

(Cornwall & Jewkes, 1995). Even when given the opportunity to participate in the development process, local community members' capacities are frequently insufficient (Gray, 1985).

Despite these obstacles, CBT is still the most effective strategy for promoting involvement in tourist development, according to Okazaki (2008). First, local behaviour has a direct impact on the experience of tourists. To minimize antagonism and a sense of competitiveness with visitors, local community members must gain from tourism-related activities. Second, the town's natural resources, such as its surroundings, amenities, and the host community, serve as the foundation for the tourist industry's image. The local community's treatment of natural resources has a significant impact on their conservation, preservation, and upkeep. Third, tourism-related community engagement enables the preservation of the environment and culture. Finally, if the socioeconomic development of the community is given priority, sustainable tourist development is made feasible. In light of this, it is important to provide job possibilities that contribute to improving people's institutions, institutions' institutions, and income (Jamal & Getz, 2000).

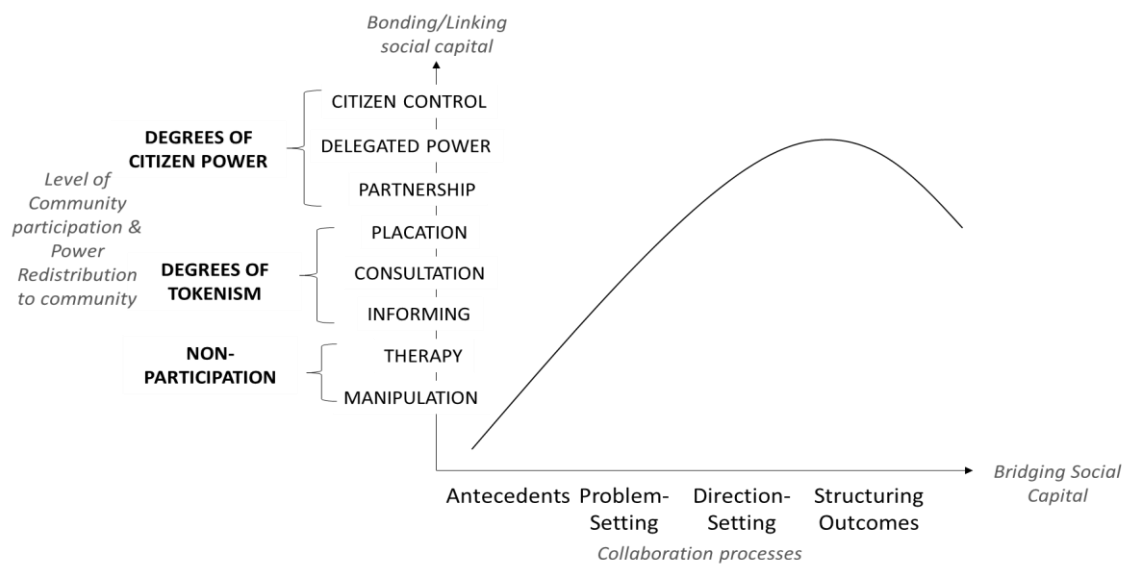


Figure 3 . Ladder of Citizen Participation

Source: Adopted from Arnstein (1969)

In the framework of Arnstein's (1969) ladder of citizen involvement, which details the stages and classifications of the development of community engagement? In Figure 2.3, this is displayed. The ladder has three levels of slow progression and eight rungs. The levels of community involvement and power redistribution to the communities are explained by the eight rungs. Participation is only employed for public relations objectives at the first level

(manipulation). It is seen as a skewed representation of involvement. The stage when local community members' beliefs and attitudes are modified to align with the viewpoints of those in authority is known as the second rung (therapy). Community members are educated about their options, obligations, and rights during the third rung (informing), which is seen as the first step toward legitimate and genuine engagement. In order to allow complete involvement in the initiatives, the members are urged to share their ideas and opinions at the fourth rung (consultation). Community involvement is increasing on the fifth rung (placement), albeit it is still viewed as tokenistic. In the sixth rung, partnership, community members actively bargain with those in positions of authority to facilitate the transfer of authority and responsibility in planning and decision-making. The community members attain dominant control over planning and decision-making at the seventh level (delegated power). The local community is given complete power and responsibility for the administration and development of tourist places in the eighth level (citizen control).

2.13. Factors that Influence Stakeholders Involvement

2.13.1. Awareness

The private sector is likewise largely uneducated about the expansion of tourism. In the nearby villages, there is also a lack of public awareness of tourism (Etefa, 2018). In Ethiopia, the idea of PPP is still not fully grasped in all areas of the economy, and there is a lack of understanding of the current regulatory frameworks. The application of PPP in the tourist industry is challenging due to these two issues. These include, among other things, underutilizing PPP, prioritizing other industries, and financial agreements (Getachew, 2015).

2.13.2. Trust

Building trust among stakeholders and identifying common challenges is the most challenging aspect in the collaborative process (Tazim Jamal & Getz, 2000). Building trust in partnerships begins with methodical and respectfully utilizing community knowledge to achieve trust among stakeholders. As previously said, it is crucial to regularly assess the nature of the collaborative process because it is an ongoing process (Reed, 2000). Collaboration and involvement in tourism are restricted by a lack of trust and legitimacy among stakeholders. As a result, they hinder efficient implementation. The funding of projects and the creation of tourism infrastructure are two issues that stakeholders need to solve. Remedial action is necessary in the case of autocratic governance structures or

processes that undermine confidence. For tourism to succeed, stakeholders must address issues of classism, gender inequality, and the cultural practices that have led to these issues (Eyisi, Lee, & Trees, 2020).

The reciprocal connection between the multiple parties engaged in perfect tourist management becomes incredibly hard since each participant has a distinct interest. In a partnership, there are a certain number of stakeholders whose combination of power, interest, and influence results in an unequal outcome (Bambang et al., 2019). The political actions taken by government actors address a variety of issues, including the level of public official corruption, fair treatment of people and the preservation of their rights in development, and a democratic form of government (Wong et al., 2011). These aspects of development are crucial for sustainable tourism and ethical leadership. Although the political economy suggests that the federal government gets involved in the tourism industry to protect community interests, the government frequently faces criticism for being politically unjust to communities as a result of its undue influence on the formulation of tourism policy (Bramwell, 2011; Ruhanen, 2013).

2.13.3. Governance and Bureaucracy

According to Ashley, Boyd, and Goodwin (2000), rules governing tourist activities, labor credentials, and service standards are usually targeted at more formal sector businesses and may disproportionately harm those with little contacts and financial resources. According to Yetnayet and Getaneh (2018), poor leadership and governance in the tourist industry have a detrimental effect on how well the public and private sectors collaborate. The term "governance" is now widely acknowledged as a useful conceptual phrase to describe modern patterns of group decision-making, especially in the local public sphere. These networks, which exhibit stakeholder diversification, incorporate both governmental and non-governmental players in group deliberation (Panyik, 2015).

The stages of beginning tourism, increasing tourism, and responding to emerging difficulties have frequently been followed by phases of destination governance (Gill & Williams, 2011). Tourism laws that address tourist activities, labor credentials, or service standards are frequently targeted at more formal sector businesses and may have the most negative effects on those with little contacts and financial resources (Ashley, Boyd, and Goodwin, 2000). All stakeholder organizations need a clear set of rules outlining how to cooperate with one

another. In government organizations, certain policies are drawn from the corresponding regional agencies. The fact that so many employees in the organizations are unaware of the policy, however, is a major issue (Etefa, 2018).

2.13.4. Power Imbalance

Concerning stakeholder salience, or the extent to which managers give precedence to conflicting stakeholder claims to successfully build strategies to accomplish shared goals, is key to addressing the power connections that support and impact collaborative processes (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood, 1997). Some stakeholders control the management process, whilst others can just act as supporters or may even be inactive. When stakeholders collaborate, this situation prevents communication and coordination between them. Conceptually speaking, collaborative governance is desirable, but this theory has to be further developed in relation to various levels of cross-sectorial stakeholders (Bambang et al., 2019). Collaborations among tourist destination management stakeholders at the organizational level have been shown to involve several kinds of power. Powers that may be used included those that were coercive, legal, induced, and competent. Government and organizations from the public sector were found to have coercive power, which they used to impose rules or put policies into effect on other parties.

An industry extreme body for tourism, DMOs, airline companies, airport companies, media, and publishers, as well as a significant number of private organizations, might be found to have legitimate power. In this case study, those stakeholders used their official positions to steer numerous industry seminars, marketing initiatives, and events in the location in order to exercise legitimate authority.

All three tiers of government—federal, state, and local—as well as other stakeholders with significant financial resources available can exhibit induced power (Saito & Ruhanen, 2017). Collaboration amongst stakeholders has been recognized as being crucial to the administration and development of tourism destinations. Some organizations are able to exert greater influence over the procedure than others; therefore not all destination stakeholders have the same amount of power and influence in working together or decision-making (Ibid.).

2.13.5. Political Issues

Given that such occurrences put a carefree and comfortable holiday in jeopardy, tourists are by nature sensitive to political violence in the destination country. The concerns of policymakers regarding stability and safety in tourism areas are valid. According to Neumayer (2004), significant rises in political unrest have a long-term reduction in tourist arrivals of roughly 25%. By its very nature, tourism is politically charged. When there is stability and security, tourist numbers rise, and the opposite is true. There is no political context that is conducive to cooperation, yet collaboration necessitates such an environment as many parties join together to cooperate (Etefa, 2018).

2.14. Theories of Stakeholder Collaboration

In this part, the stakeholder collaboration theory and the social exchange theory are introduced. This thesis uses these theories to describe the steps in the cooperation process before examining stakeholder interactions.

2.14.1. Social Exchange Theory

According to the social exchange theory, agents participate in exchange processes either cooperatively or not. The process of social contact is reciprocal and interdependent. The definition of exchange given by Emerson in 1976 is "a process involving transactions that are mutually beneficial." In a transaction when they reciprocate, it necessitates a two-sided, reinforcing connection or the mutual reliance of participants.

Researchers have emphasized the need of reciprocity in defining a "exchange" (Emerson 1976; Cropanzano and Mitchell 2005; Presenza and Cipollina 2009). In a transaction where both sides profit through reciprocity, actors may become mutually reliant. The kind of compensation that should be offered in return, including whether it should take the shape of physical (material) or immaterial resources, is a matter of debate.

According to Emerson (1976), the flow of just material products is not always the result of the exchange process among a network of agents; rather, he claims that the exchange process may be boosted by a variety of non-material incentives. In addition to its theoretical foundations and the conceptualization of the categories connected to the exchange process, social exchange theory has been criticized on a number of other fronts.

2.14.2. Stakeholder Collaboration Theory

According to Savage et al. (2010), the corporation theory has been supplanted by the stakeholder theory, which emphasizes how a business interacts with the market to establish market pricing. It is now feasible to take into account the interests of people who might influence or be impacted by an organization's decision thanks to the development of stakeholder theory. The firm's theory places a lot of emphasis on a firm's interests (Savage et al. 2010). The notion of the stakeholder claims that decisions are made with the organization in mind.

2.15. Stakeholder Analysis Tool

Stakeholder analysis was first used as a method in organizational management to examine stakeholder interactions. It identifies significant stakeholder groups that have the potential to affect or be influenced by the organization and its operations. Customers, shareholders, decision-makers in politics, workers, suppliers, and the communities in which the firm works can all be stakeholders (Freeman, 1984). The stakeholder analysis will aid the business in comprehending the needs of its stakeholders and in creating effective strategies for interacting with them (Marr and Walker, 2001; Svendsen, 1998).

Although numerous approaches are used, stakeholder analysis often includes stakeholder mapping (Johnson and Scholes, 1993; Freeman and Reed, 1998). It involves choosing between two options. Initially, think about how willing each stakeholder (group) is to voice its opinions for the selection of particular growth plans. Second, whether they have the means to achieve it, or more precisely, the extent of each stakeholder group's power. A power-interest matrix may be made by combining these two issues.

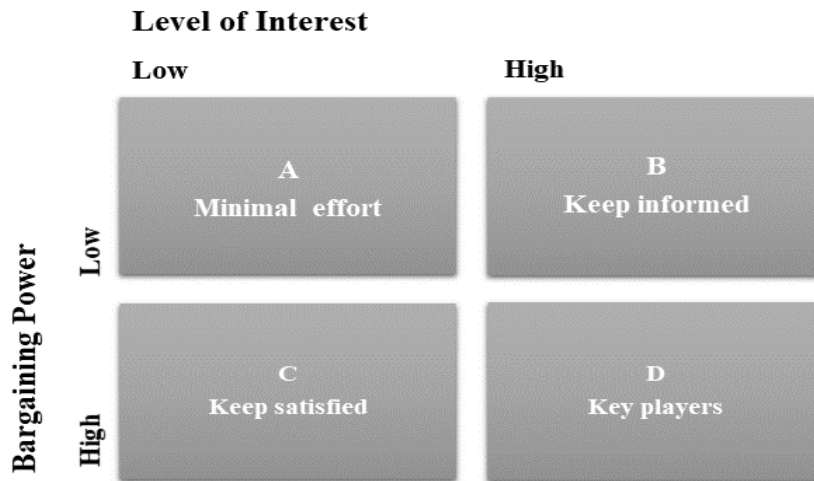


Figure 4 Stakeholder Mapping: The Power-Interest Matrix

Source: Adopted from (Mendelow, 1991)

As shown in Figure 2.4, the stakeholder power interest matrix divides stakeholders into groups based on their level of influence and their level of interest in the project. Clearly, when policies and plans are being developed, the essential factor to be taken into account is whether a certain proposal will be accepted by the important stakeholders (segment D). Planning relationships with sector C stakeholders, who are mostly institutional stakeholders like religion, is frequently the most challenging task. Despite the fact that these stakeholders may, on the whole, be somewhat passive, a challenging scenario may occur if their degree of interest is underestimated and they abruptly relocate to segment D and thwart specific development ideas. Stakeholder management may be seen as having a part in increasing or satiating various stakeholders' levels of interest. Similar to segment A, sector B's stakeholder needs—those of NGOs and other groups with high levels of interest but low levels of influence—must be adequately met, mostly through the dissemination of information. These sector B stakeholders may play a critical role as adversaries or allies in swaying the opinions of other stakeholders, for instance by lobbying and public protest (Johnson and Scholes, 1993; Eden, 1996). Managers or planners must thus carry out this information-gathering procedure with, for example, representatives of the interests of the larger community.

Particular emphasis is placed on the significance of power in stakeholder analysis by Mitchell et al. (1997). They contend that each stakeholder will exert his or her own authority in an effort to realize and uphold objectives and interests. However, the degree to which stakeholders influence decisions that have an impact on the development process varies greatly, and the level of power is largely determined by the types of power bases that each stakeholder has. According to power bases, Mitchell, Agle, and Wood divide power into three categories: coercive power based on physical force, utilitarian power based on resources like products and services, and normative (symbolic) power based on respect and status.

Power is a critical trait to take into account in stakeholder theory and organizational management, according to Friedmann (1987). He contends that the traditional organization development approach's primary flaw is its emphasis on intergroup dynamics and individual personality. Because it doesn't include a power analysis, the technique is unable to properly comprehend how stakeholders or organizations interact with one another and other players.

2.16. Adapting Stakeholder Analysis Tool for Collaborative Tourism Development

Stakeholder analysis may be a useful tool to advance collaborations, but it should be appropriately adapted to be used in tourism development and planning settings. Therefore, this section discusses the rationale and application of stakeholder analysis and suggests the adaptive framework for collaborative tourism development. Stakeholder analysis may be a useful tool to advance collaborations, but it should be appropriately adapted to be used in these settings.

According to Hall (2000a), the fragmented character of the current tourist sector generates an atmosphere that necessitates cooperation amongst the different entities. Because tourist growth has increasingly been accompanied by complex and diverse difficulties, policy-making and planning, in particular, have adopted the stakeholder idea. It has been proposed that all parties involved in or impacted by tourist activities within a specific market or community should cooperatively manage the tourism system as a new strategy to address these issues (Inskeep, 1991).

Similar to this, Sautter and Leisen (1999) contend that tourist planners should fully understand all the stakeholders that have an interest in the design, process, delivery, and results of tourism services. According to their viewpoint, it is crucial to identify stakeholders and their individual interests when managing the tourist industry, which is comparable to the importance of the stakeholder power-interest matrix in organizational management that has already been discussed. What sort of indicators should be evaluated in stakeholder analysis, however, is not made apparent in the research on stakeholder analysis in tourist development. First, traditional analytical indicators need to be improved. For instance, as the literature study earlier demonstrated, power is recognized as an important quality in stakeholder analysis, yet it is challenging to evaluate power in stakeholder analysis. The goal of analysis should be to determine what sort of power resources each stakeholder has as power in stakeholder analysis has a social connotation that relates to the social interactions between stakeholders rather than a physical one. The idea of power resources is equivalent to the three power bases (coercive, utilitarian, and normative) described in Mitchell et al. (1997)'s previous arguments. Therefore, using each stakeholder's power as his power base may be more effective in real analysis.

Second, 'perspective' as a fresh analytical metric has to be added to stakeholder analysis for tourist growth. As Getz (1991) notes, a stakeholder's viewpoint on tourist development is crucial in determining his attitude toward the development. Because various stakeholders have different values on the issues they are interested in, these viewpoints of stakeholders differ. Values are defined as "ends, goals, interests, and beliefs that change with human perception and with time and that have a significant influence on power conflicts relating to policy" (Henning, 1974, 15). Additionally, Appadurai (1986) asserts that values are learned, mutable, and subjective judgments within a social context rather than inherent, fixed, and objective attributes. As a result, various stakeholders frequently hold disparate values, which affect how they see development-related challenges.

Thirdly, it is important to assess the different "involvement" levels and "influence" kinds. With power base, these two analysis indicators are connected. In other words, these are variables that the power base indication depends on. In particular, a base of influential stakeholders may choose the specifics of their engagement and the scope of their influence over tourist development.

As a stakeholder in the development of tourism, the government, for instance, may utilize his legal standing as a foundation of power. In this manner, the government controls the development process and has a substantial amount of power.

Finally, after performing a stakeholder analysis, consideration should be given to the question of "legitimacy" for the development of collaborative tourism. In this context, legitimacy goes beyond simply being proper or legal, as defined by the dictionary. The notion that shareholder interests or claims are socially acceptable or desirable, on the other hand, is related to the opposite and is founded on fabricated societal values and beliefs (Hall, 2000b). According to Suchman (1995, 574) "legitimacy is the generalized perception or assumption that an entity's actions are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions."

Legitimacy does not correspond with stakeholder power because it is founded on societal values and beliefs. A high legitimate stakeholder, like a group of local residents, may not really have much authority to affect how decisions about tourist development are made. Regarding community involvement in tourist development, which develops empowerment of community people to decide their own development goals, the legitimacy of stakeholders is of special relevance (Timothy, 1999). Because the power-interest matrix of stakeholder analysis does not sufficiently investigate who counts in terms of social value, it is believed that taking into account the legitimacy of stakeholder in tourist development helps.

Based on the discussion, a stakeholder analysis framework for tourist development may now be created. The following explanation can be used as an overview of the framework development process.

First, there are three elements that may be included in the stakeholder analysis process: (1) identifying the stakeholder (groups), (2) evaluating the perspective, interest, power base, engagement, impact, and legitimacy of each stakeholder, and (3) developing strategies for stakeholder collaboration.

2.17. Empirical Review of the Activities of Tourism Stakeholders

MoCT has undertaken several efforts at the federal level with the goal of becoming one of the top five tourism destinations in Africa. At the federal and local levels, this effort entails the creation of various groups and organizations. The Ethiopian Tourism Transformational Council (ETTC), The Ethiopian Tourism Transformational Board (ETTB), and The Ethiopian

Tourism Transformational Agency (ETTA), which is now called ETO (MoCT, 2015) have all been established to address the issue of lack of collaboration among stakeholders. Each of these organizations has a specific role to play.

In addition to this admirable effort, Temesgen (2016) asserted that numerous stakeholder responsibilities in the execution of the Ethiopian tourism strategy remain unfulfilled. He said that the development of infrastructure facilities is little supported by the federal and provincial governments. They have not adequately coordinated and managed marketing and promotion efforts, nor have they taken responsibility for the tourists' mental and physical health.

In his writings, he also made the case that the private sector hasn't done its fair share in protecting attractions, expanding local infrastructure, providing quality tourism services in the ways and to the extents that are necessary, and participating in associations for mutual support.

The Oromia Culture and Tourism Bureau (2012) also made an effort to define some of the functions that the public, private, and local communities play. It outlines how the government can help the tourist industry grow by fostering a welcoming climate and making land available to investors. It asserts that the private sector is the only agent authorized to manage any profitable commercial operations. It also states that local communities must take various steps to engage in ecotourism activities as well as protect tourist sites and ensure their safety and security.

However, other studies, like those by Sintayehu (2016), Gebrekiros (2016), Tefaye and Taye (2017), and others, have shown that there is an issue with stakeholder collaboration, which is preventing the growth of tourism at the local, regional, and national levels.

Sintayehu (2016) thoroughly identified key stakeholders for tourism development and their respective roles. He classified the stakeholders as public authorities, associations, NGOs, training institutions, private organizations like hotels, lodges, tourism service providers and SMMEs, as well as host communities. The author explained that while bringing a strategy, plan, policy, and legislation pertaining to tourism development as well as creating and improving tourism infrastructures are all roles of public authorities, the private sector, NGO's, and other educational institutions have the responsibilities of getting involved in tourism development by investing, creating tourism products, supporting the creation of tourism infrastructures, engaging in conservation efforts, and offering training, financial support,

among other things. Local communities also play a part in resource development for tourism and conservation.

Ethiopia's Tourism Development Policy (2009) makes a powerful statement about the issue of lack of stakeholder collaboration, which is prevalent due to the lack of a clear policy that would lay the foundation for the cooperation and coordination that should exist among the government, the private sector, the community at tourist attraction sites, the general public, and other stakeholders. As a result, the country has not been able to fully profit from the industry, and unsustainable and poorly planned development has continued. In this context, Robinson and Jonker (2016) asserted that Ethiopian stakeholders do not actively participate in the creation and execution of policy.

The Ministry of Culture and tourist (MoCT) has recognized a lack of coordination and mutual assistance among tourist stakeholders as a barrier to the growth of the industry in the nation, according to Yimer (2016). Another topic covered by Selamawit (2013) was the function of the government and other participants in destination branding. The benefits of cooperation between various government agencies, destination marketing organizations, and stakeholders in building a nation's reputation have been noted by the author, who also asserted that the creation of a successful destination brand necessitates stakeholder cooperation.

2.18. Conceptual framework of the Study

The conceptual framework, which acts as an anchor, demonstrates the connections between the important elements under consideration. The idea that the level of stakeholder engagement may influence how stakeholders see ongoing ecotourism initiatives links the main components of the current study, which are stakeholder participation activity and practical concerns (enabling and constraining restrictions). The relationship between these ideas is depicted in Figure 2.1.

A conceptual framework for this study was developed by the researcher based on the literature review. The concepts from the study's title included "practice and stakeholder involvement on the ongoing ecotourism project: the case of Wenchi crater lakes, Oromia national regional state, Ethiopia. Government, industry, NGOs, local communities, and tourists all fall under the category of stakeholders. Although those parties are a part of the initiatives, many elements work to obstruct them. The contributing elements are political problems, power imbalances, trust, governance, and administration. Training and

development, community empowerment, productivity improvement, infrastructure development, resource preservation, marketing and promotion were all activities that were put into effect as part of the continuing ecotourism initiative. The continuous ecotourism of the Wenchi Creator Lakes Project may operate well in terms of inclusivity, as the conceptual framework arrows show, provided stakeholders control all variables and are active in the activities jointly.

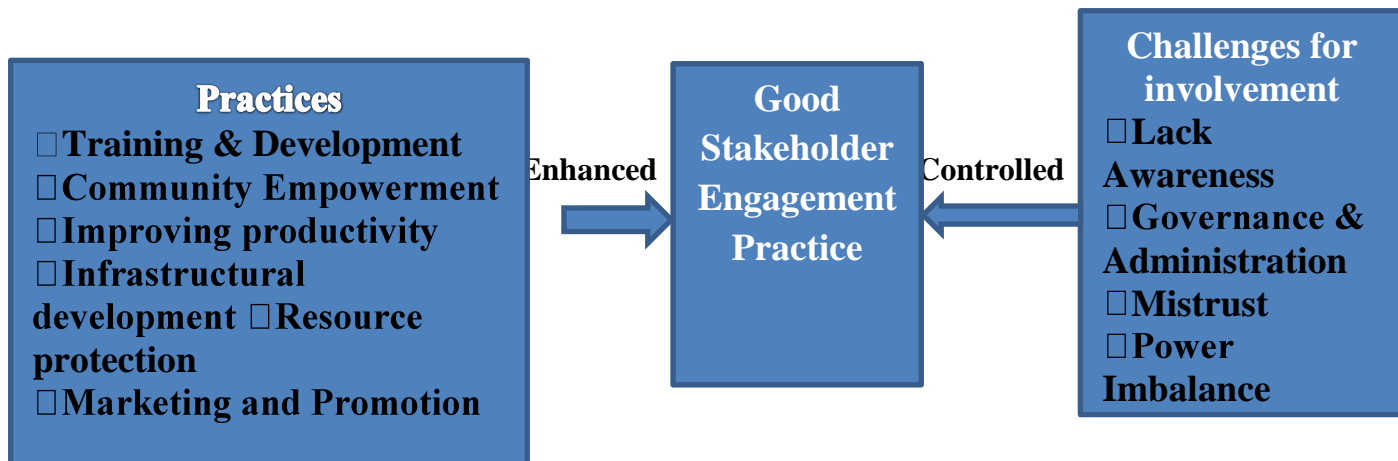


Figure 5 Conceptual framework of the study

Source: Own Construction, 2023

CHAPTER THREE

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Description of Study Area

3.1.1. Location

Ethiopia's Wenchi Crater Lake is a popular tourist destination and an enticing ecotourism destination. The lake is located in Western Shoa region, which extends between latitude 15° N - 3° S and longitudes 48° E - 33° W. It is surrounded by Kelela region in the north, Dera region in the east, Goro Wenchi region in the south and Haro Gebeya region in the west.

The Lake is 29 Kms, 38Kms, and 155Kms away from the town of the district (Chitu), and the town of the zone (Woliso) and from the capital, Addis Ababa respectively. In addition to being a well-liked tourist site, this lake, which has a total surface of 1,600 square meters, is vital for ecology, enjoyment, and aesthetics. The magnificent Crater Lake and 15th-century monastery in the area are well recognized (Malairajan Singanan, Lakew Wondimu, and Mitiku Tesso, 2008).

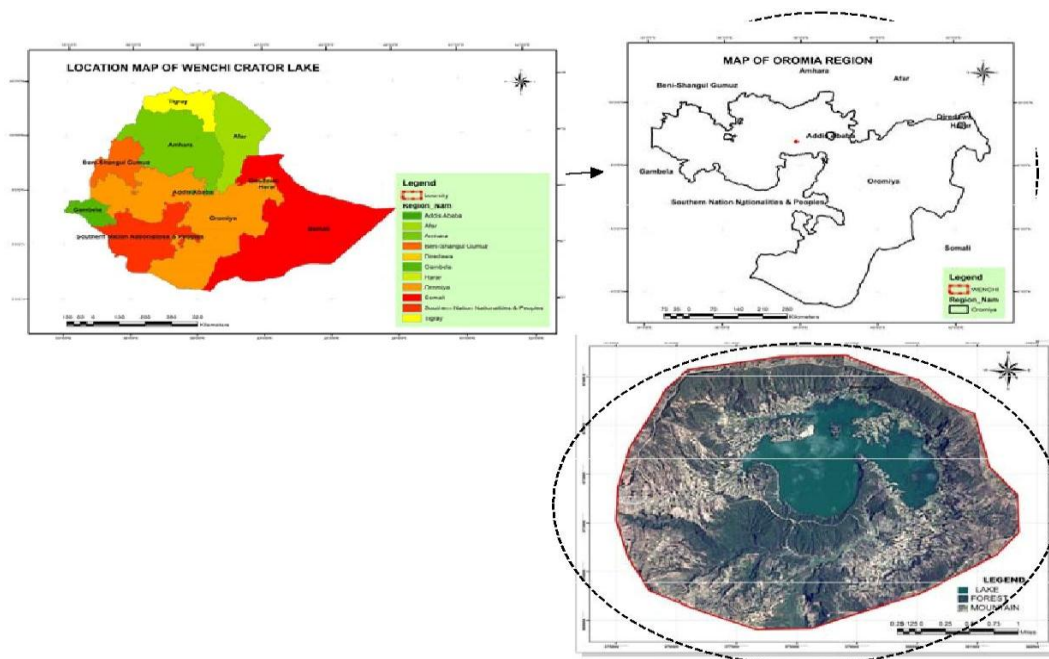


Figure 6 Geographical Map of Wenchi Crater Lake

Source : (Wenchi Woreda Culture, Tourism, Sport Office, 2008)

3.1.2. Climate

The elevation ranges from 2800 meters (near the lake) to 3300 meters (above sea level) at the top of the ridge that encircles the lake. It has a dega climate (temperate) throughout. The rainy season's height occurs in July and August, and the months of November through January have the least amount of precipitation. Rainfall can increase significantly each year, reaching up to 1200 mm. In October, November, and December, crops are commonly impacted by frost. The maximum temperatures are reported between April and May, which is the conclusion of the dry season.

3.1.3. Demography

Different data sets present the local population in different ways. According to information obtained from the kebele's health extension office, which asserts to have carried out a house-to-house census, there are 5661 people living there with an average family size of 6.5. People under the age of 15 make up 53.7% of the overall population, making up the bulk of the population. This age group, which comprises 36.2% of the total, is followed by this age group. 981 households are present, according to the agency. There are female heads of home in 172 of them.

3.1.4. Tourism

The abundance of historical, cultural, and natural tourist attractions in Ethiopia is widely recognized. However, due to economic constraints and a shortage of knowledgeable and competent workers in the industry, many of these abundant resources are not being exploited effectively to boost the tourist industry. Oromia is one of the richest areas in the country in terms of tourism attractions, both natural and man-made (cultural and historical). Numerous attractions are available in the region that may be used and exploited to boost the tourist sector and the socioeconomic development of the locals. Due to the existence of a Churkos Orthodox Church monastery in the center of the Crater Lake, surrounded by water, Wenchi Creator Lake is one of the most well-known. The local society benefited from both the foreign tourists and the locals by selling boats, horses, and other commodities for cash.

3.2. Research Design and Approach

The goal of this study is to examine the practices, enabling factors, and limiting aspects of stakeholder engagement in ongoing initiatives in the case of wenchi Creator Lake. Given the nature and goals of the current study, an exploratory research design was chosen to address the aforementioned questions because there were few previous studies on the subject (Zegeye, Worku, Tefera, Getu, & Sileshi, 2009).

Qualitative research methods were also used to address the other research questions. An interactive process that enables us to understand the interpretations that individuals in their social environment ascribe to a particular event (actions, decisions, attitudes, values, etc.) is provided by a qualitative research technique (Snape and Spencer, 2003). In this study, a qualitative approach was chosen to directly engage with individuals and groups of ecotourism project stakeholders to explore and understand how they collaborate, the factors that influence their collaboration, how these factors influence the nature of collaboration, and how the stakeholders view ecotourism projects. The idea of stakeholder engagement, which is a complicated social phenomenon since different stakeholders' perspectives on ecotourism initiatives are dynamic, seemed to best be addressed using a qualitative study technique. Furthermore, qualitative research enables the researcher to go beyond only looking for numerical data to seek comprehensive knowledge of complex realities and processes (in this example, stakeholder collaboration) (Mayoux, 2006).

3.3. Target Population

Before examining stakeholder involvement, it is crucial to understand the stakeholders in the studied area. As a result, the researcher visited the study area during the proposal process in order to identify the key stakeholders, following the advice from McCabe (2016). This method of discovering stakeholders is known as the "reputational approach," in which stakeholders in a particular field are found by consulting experts (McCabe, 216). Due to this, the Wenchi Woreda Culture, Tourism, and Sport Office, the Local Community, local tourism service providers, Ecotourism Association, religious leader, local tour guide and project administrative project make up the majority of the project's stakeholders at Wenchi Creator Lake. To address the research issues, these analytical units were employed in the study.

3.4. Sample Size

The study's sample consists of 13 key informants composed of members of the local community, Project administrative, Ecotourism association and the government officers. FGDs were also used in conjunction with local officials and members of the community. 10 people in total—5 community members and 5 woreda experts—participated in the discussion from the research area. The community participants in the FGDs were specifically chosen based on their involvement experiences since it was thought that stakeholders with involvement experience would be more equipped than other members of the community to understand and respond to the study questions.

3.5. Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling was used in this investigation because it fit the nature, design, and methodology of the study. Because stakeholders are thought to be those who have a comprehensive understanding of their engagement, purposeful sampling was used. They are also the ones participating in many strategic decisions and decision-making processes for managing this ongoing project. They also have a better understanding of the Wenchi Creator Lake project's management and project-related concerns. As a result, it is anticipated that they will comprehend the research challenge more effectively than others. Therefore, using the purposive sample technique, respondents from the relevant group of stakeholders was chosen based on pre-established criteria to have the pertinent information for this study.

3.6. Data Collection Instruments

3.6.1. Semi-structured in-depth interview

Among the most typical interview approach employed in qualitative social research is the semi-structured interview, where the researcher seeks out specific data that may be contrasted and compared with data obtained from other sources (Dawson, 2002). To accomplish the stated goals, the study used a semi-structured, in-depth interview. In order to accomplish this, the researcher used a set of semi-structured, in-depth interview questions that were developed based on the literature and verified by advisers and specialists. In the middle of the interview, suitable probing questions were also asked. 13 in-depth interviews with participants from the Woreda Culture, Tourism, and Sport office, the local population, and the project administrator were as a consequence. For a smooth and thorough conversation about the topics under consideration, interviews were held in Afaan Oromo and Amharic with qualified

and experienced workers from each stakeholder office. The interviews were afterwards translated into English.

3.6.2. Focus Group Discussion

Focus groups are a technique for obtaining data that involves speaking with a large number of individuals at once and allowing them the freedom to discuss the topics that interest them (Wong 2008). In contrast to the individual interview approach, in which respondents individually present their own perspective, FGDs give researchers the option to bring together a range of individuals, particularly the community at the destination, to debate themes. Focus group talks were held to help the researcher understand the topics under discussion from the perspectives of various people during a certain time period in order to get comprehensive and adequate information to address the research questions.

As a result, the kebeles' representatives were chosen based on their background and involvement in the partnership process (Tefera & Beyene, 2014). In a FGD, four to ten participants often discuss their thoughts on pertinent subjects in less than two hours (Stewart and Shamdasani 2014). Researchers have observed that a FGD may be impacted by the subjectivity of the investigator or moderator, who may persuade participants to behave in the investigator's interests (Morgan and Spanish 1984).

The FGDs were conducted primarily to accomplish two of the particular goals, which were to look at stakeholder involvement techniques and the variables that affect stakeholder involvement in the ongoing ecotourism project in Wenchi. The researcher considered that participants in focus groups had in-depth knowledge and expertise relating these particular goals.

As a consequence, two focus group discussions (FGD) involving five members of the local community and five tourist specialists were held. The focus group discussion was conducted in Afaan Oromo in July and August of 2022. Based on the precise goals that would be covered in the FGD, the researcher created a checklist. Considering the consent of the informants, audio recording was employed to capture the whole conversation after obtaining the interviewees' permission and making the study's purpose clear.

3.6.3. Field Observation

Additionally, the researcher made frequent field visits in the study region to check on the progress of the ongoing ecotourism project in order to anchor the data gathered by the methods mentioned above. Images were collected to complement the data acquired and

analyzed by other data collection tools as well as to make the report more real. A checklist was utilized to direct the field observation procedure. On the checklist, there were inquiries on the ongoing project's status and its stakeholder involvement initiatives.

3.6.4. Document Analysis

This study analyzed research reports on the ongoing project and stakeholder minutes to cross-check and triangulate the data collected from interviews, observations, and FGD. As a result, the researcher was able to gather in-depth data from several secondary sources to effectively corroborate the primary data.

3.7. Methods of Data Analysis

Field observation, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions were used to gather the data needed for this study, and the researcher then structured and formatted this data in a way that made it simple to analyze and understand.

The current study employed thematic analysis to examine the data that had been gathered. Data themes are found, examined, and reported upon through the process of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It is utilized in this investigation because of its adaptability and accessibility (Braun & Clarke, 2012). The detailed procedure was taken from Braun & Clarke (2006). First, transcripts of the data from the interviews and focus groups were created. In order to become familiar with the data corpus, the researcher also read the transcription of the document. Third, after becoming familiar with the data corpus, pay close attention to the initial codes produced from the data set.

In order to find homogeneity and heterogeneity in the data set, relevant topics were then looked for, and the initial codes connected to the themes that emerged from the data set were found. The prospective themes were then examined to clarify any confusing themes that are actually not themes but are being falsely identified as such. Finally, the themes that arose inductively from the data were polished, identified, and the reports were created based on those topics.

3.8. Validity and Reliability of the Study

In every investigation, the problem of reliability and validity is crucial. As a result, before gathering the data, advisors and other academicians with expertise in the field sampled the interview questions and FGD checklists. Later, the questions were revised depending on the

feedback from the experts. Additionally, the triangulation technique was applied for analyzing the data. As an illustration, data triangulation (the cross-checking of information gathered from one group with that of another group) assisted in examining the various stakeholder interests. (Tefera & Beyene, 2014). Additionally, all data collection and analysis were done by the researcher to ensure consistency throughout.

3.9. Ethical Considerations

Research ethics are crucial since they influence the study's credibility and dependability. The researcher should have written authorization from the institutions or organizations for which they perform the research, as well as a clear statement of their goals for the study area. In the instance of the current study, the researcher got a letter from Addis Abeba University authorizing her to contact the selected businesses in order to gather data. As a result, the researcher gave the organizations under investigation the letter before the collection of data, explained the study's goals to the respondents, and took their agreement into account when conducting the current study.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

To address the research questions posed in Chapter 1's introduction, this chapter primarily focuses on presenting the findings of the data and conversations that have been gathered. The Wenchi Creator Lakes project served as the case study for this study, which aimed to investigate the behaviours and involvement of stakeholder groups in on-going ecotourism projects. As a result, main stakeholder groups in and around Wenchi Creator Lake were subjected to a series of semi-structured, in-depth interview questions and focus group discussions. Data were also gathered through keeping track of the project's progress and doing document analyses on the strategic management plan, rules, and regulations of the project. These responds from semi-structured, in-depth interviews, observations, focus groups, and document reviews served as the foundation for the study's conclusions. These are offered based on particular objectives together with claims from various parts that relate to the study topics. For the on-going ecotourism project at Wenchi Creator Lake, this chapter discusses the key study findings and relates them to the body of knowledge and theory on stakeholder engagement.

4.1. Demographic Characteristics Interview Informants

This section discusses the demographic characteristics (age, experience, position, and location) of the respondents in the current study. The respondents to this study were recruited from the Culture, Tourism, and Sport office, the local community, and the project administrator.

Considering the point at which the respondents will not generate new information to answer the research questions, which is usually called the "data saturation point" in qualitative inquiries, 10 semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with the selected respondents. Respondents who have experience working with stakeholder involvement from the woreda culture, tourism, and sports office and project administration were contacted. The following table summarizes the interview respondents as follows:

Table 1 Demographic Characteristics Interview Informant

Interview code	Age	Position	Frequency	Gender	Organizations	Location
WWCTSOTE	45	Tourism Expert	1	M	Wenchi Woreda Culture, Tourism, Sport Office	Wenchi, Ethiopia
WWCTOTIE	33	Tourist Information Expert	1	M	Wenchi Woreda Culture, Tourism, Sport Office	Wenchi, Ethiopia
WWCTOHEME	35	Heritage Management Expert	1	M	Wenchi Woreda Culture, Tourism, Sport Office	Wenchi, Ethiopia
WWCTOTPE	49	Tourism Promotion Expert	1	F	Wenchi Woreda Culture, Tourism, Sport Office	Wenchi, Ethiopia
WWCTSOBH	51	Bureau Head	1	M	Wenchi Woreda Culture, Tourism, Sport Office	Wenchi, Ethiopia
LCR1	42	Local Community Representative	1	M	-	Wenchi, Ethiopia
LCR2	47	Local Community Representative	1	M	-	Wenchi, Ethiopia
LCR3	38	Local Community Representative	1	M	-	Wenchi, Ethiopia
LCR4	52	Local Community Representative	1	M	-	Wenchi, Ethiopia
WOTPA	44	Local Project Administrator	1	M	Wenchi On-Going Ecotourism Project Administration Office	Wenchi, Ethiopia
ETAW	39	Ecotourism Association of Wenchi Creator Lake	1	M	<i>Ecotourism Association of Wenchi Creator Lake</i>	Wenchi, Ethiopia
RL	46	Religious leader of monasteries	1	M	Wenchi Cherkos monastery	Wenchi, Ethiopia
LTG	32	<i>Local Tour guide of wenchi</i>	1	M	-	Wenchi, Ethiopia

Source (Compiled by the researcher, 2022)

The table above (Table 4.1) reveals the key informants and their respective characteristics. Accordingly, the majority of the informants were male, except for one informant from the Wenchi Woreda Culture, Tourism, and Sport Office Tourism Promotion Expert. All the respondents have two years and above work experience as pre-specified by this study.

Discussants of Focus Group Discussion

Table 2. Discussants of FGDs

No	Woreda	Discussants	Total number of discussants
1.	Wenchi woreda	Local community representative(5)	10
2.	Wenchi woreda	Experts (5)	

Source (Compiled by the researcher, 2022)

4.2. Stakeholder involvement on the on-going project of Wenchi Creator Lake

The success of a project depends on the engagement of the stakeholders. For the project to succeed in a sustainable manner, according to every participant in the focus group discussion and interview, it is critical to include many stakeholders. In this regard accountability, transparency, common objectives and values are important for success of stakeholder involvement.

4.2.1. Accountability and Transparency

Accountability and transparency are essential for a certain level of engagement. This is because if collaborative partners aren't transparent, the stakeholders will harbour mistrust of one another, which prevents them from attaining their shared objectives. Additionally, a distinct organization to which all stakeholders report and are accountable should be formed for efficient review and monitoring.

Although it may be recognized that they are accountable to several bodies, every respondent and participant in the focus group who participated in the discussion reiterated that they are answerable to someone. According to the information from the in-depth interview and focus group discussion, the body they report to varies depending on the office. This claims that their engagement is dispersed and that no responsible entity has called them together to discuss and assess their performance. Although all of the respondents from the government

offices acknowledged that there is trust among the stakeholders, one of them emphasized that genuine trust depends on implementation. Here is how it is put:

‘‘Yes, there is trust among the local community, administrators, and other stakeholders in this on-going ecotourism project. However, we believe that trust is only valid when it is put into action (Participant WWCTSOTPE, August 22, 2022)’’

The paragraph above suggested that there is trust between the parties involved, but this is not actual trust because trust can only be called to be true when it is put into practice. Due to a lack of defined accountability, transparency, and reporting structures, stakeholder participation was practiced on the ongoing ecotourism project in an informal manner. When both parties have faith in the other stakeholders' competence, professionalism, capabilities, and capacities, the parties are more inclined to cooperate and assist one another (Reina, Reina, and Rushton 2007). The FGDs make it very clear that the public mistrusts government officials who fail to appropriately engage the public and instead adopt a top-down strategy for managing and planning the tourist industry. As a result, the community has stopped collaborating with the government.

Trust is a prerequisite for effective stakeholder participation, according to the current study (Savage et al. 2010; Young-Ybarra and Wiersema 1999). The stakeholder participation in the research area is developed at the direction of the authorities rather than by participants who trust one another, according to the interviews. However, it is difficult for the government to force participation from the top down since there is a lack of basic confidence.

4.2.2. Agreements, Common goals and Principles

Involvement cannot flourish without common objectives, agreements, and values (Kayser, 2011). An established partnership is led by agreements, shared objectives, and ideals. The collaboration between the stakeholders lacks direction and a clear direction if there are no agreements and no shared objectives. All participants in the focus group and interview agreed that there were no formal agreements or shared objectives amongst them. The project's stakeholders establish individual plans at their offices and share some of them with other stakeholders to make them common, but there is no set rule or understanding among them on how to work toward a shared objective. This fact is revealed in the following interview with travel industry specialist Wenchi Woreda:

In their office structure, the issue of the on-going ecotourism project is their main work process, but they are weak in their involvement and follow what is here. The major stakeholder working with us is the local community (Participant WWCTSOHME, interview July 2022).

Based on the aforementioned, it can be concluded that the stakeholder offices at the woreda level of the ongoing Wenchi Creator ecotourism project are insufficiently involved with both the project management and the local community. The local community and the project management are the only parties that are functionally involved. In addition to project administration, the respondent mentioned above also offered the following about the local community's participation in project management:

In this regard, the government's engagement in the ongoing Wenchi Creator Lake project is not governed by a single philosophy, and there is no overarching objective that directs their activity. However, when centered on topics that are of shared interest or importance to stakeholders, engagement is most successful (WWF, 2000). An extract from a conversation with the Peace and Security Office of Wenchi Woreda is provided below:

There is no distinct, planned, typical, official, or guiding principle. The project problem was treated seriously in every meeting since it was seen as a major direction and was politically assessed. Due to this task, direction was given to the peace and security sector from the federal level to the woreda level to manage the project based on a plan with other stakeholders, but there was no guiding principle. However, those found guilty as a result of unlawful behaviour on a current ecotourism project are charged and punished. Apart from this, there was no formal guiding principle or memorandum of understanding given to the local communities or the governing bodies (Participant WWCTSOTIE, interview, July 2022).

4.3. Factors that enable stakeholder participation in the ongoing ecotourism project in Wenchi

Stakeholders made a variety of recommendations for ways to encourage stakeholder participation. The enabling factors suggested by the stakeholders are clearly organized around certain topics, which are subdivided into the following categories.

4.3.1. Create Awareness and Provide Opportunities for Interaction

The first stage in promoting stakeholder participation is raising awareness of its importance and advantages. Lack of knowledge of the larger advantages that may be obtained from

collaboration is one of the key causes of resistance to it. Due to this ignorance, many make incorrect assumptions and have anxieties that cooperating will encourage others to steal or mimic their ideas and methods. In the words of a public agency consultant, "Getting people together, getting people to understand the bigger picture to make them want to collaborate, and making them see the benefits of what they are doing is always a challenge." According to one interviewee,

The local community's level of awareness about the importance of stakeholder involvement and ecotourism project is critical in determining the level of participation on on-going ecotourism project activities (Interviewee, WWCTSOHME, 2022).

To change such perceptions, stakeholders must be informed about the risks and advantages of cooperating. Building mutual trust is essential to reducing resentments and unhealthy competitive attitudes between regions as well as to making individuals aware of the reciprocal advantages of collaboration. This will prevent people from feeling scared about working together. "The things that we need to change about collaborative practices are, first and foremost, building awareness that everyone is linked to tourism in some way, building mutual trust so that people will not feel threatened about engaging in collaboration, and diminishing the resentments and unhealthy competitive attitudes between areas," said the head of ecotourism association. "The things that we need to change about collaborative practices are, first and foremost, building awareness that everyone is linked to tourism in some way, and it's also about building clear channels of communication," said the local project administrator .



Source (Field observation, August 2022)

4.3.2. Proactive Approach, Willingness, and Commitment

An essential requirement for creating long-lasting connections that result in beneficial consequences is a sincere commitment to engagement as opposed to a simple exchange of ideas (Waligo et al., 2013). A top official from a major industry association said that

dedication and willingness are crucial ingredients that are required to start participating. According to the WWCTSOBH,

To encourage more participation from existing employees, we need more commitment from other businesses and regions to achieve the common goal. It's the willingness to collaborate; I mean, it's the willingness to put in the hard work.



Source (Field observation, August 2022)

4.3.3. Inspirational Leadership

Stakeholder involvement is primarily driven by inspirational leadership, according to Heath (2003, p. 134). The WCTSOBH of a significant tourism industry sector noted that having strong leadership in the sector is an essential prerequisite for having an all-inclusive outlook toward cooperating. According to the interviewee, competency and expertise are additional crucial qualities for effective leadership to successfully promote and implement collaborative practices.

A senior official from a policy-making organization suggested that a key quality of an inspirational leader is the capacity to "not control but empower, not want to get credit and recognition but be able to give it."

According to the interviewee, it's crucial for a leader to be able to "leave your egos at the door" and understand that "one-upmanship does not get anybody anywhere" in order to encourage collaboration. It is crucial to acknowledge these traits in others in order to encourage them in others. At the same time, it is crucial to realize that "one-upmanship does not get anybody anywhere" and to leave one's egos at the door. Recognizing these abilities in others is crucial for encouraging these traits in others, but the interviewee also issued the warning that "upmanship does not get anybody anywhere" in this regard. The interviewee noted that while it is critical to acknowledge these traits in others in order to encourage them

in others, the methods for rewarding achievement also need to help changing people's perspectives on collaboration.

4.3.4. Consistency

The phrase "success breeds success" appears frequently in stakeholders' remarks on encouraging collaboration. People are compelled to join a team when they see the key players are a part of it, especially when they witness success and have the chance to contribute. An LCR1 interviewee with experience in tourism has suggested:

What we need to do is demonstrate that we can be successful. That which we set out to do, we achieved. And then we will get people to agree that we have done a good job, so they will come along. At the moment, we have to do the hard work to establish ourselves...

4.3.5. Open, Clear and Tailored Communication

Fostering any kind of relationship in an atmosphere where mistrust and friction exist is not possible (Choi & Turk, 2011). An LCR3 was proposed. When there is a lack of clarity about what is happening in the industry, the measures taken by industry leaders, and the intentions behind those steps, it is believed to lead to confusion and controversy.

If we want more involvement, we must not only listen to business groups but also to all of our key stakeholders, the big boys and girls in town. We also need to listen to local people and actually engage with them.

4.3.6. Facilitating Conditions for Stakeholder Engagement

I suppose 'involve' is the key word here. In order to involve all stakeholders on the ongoing project, we have to make appropriate efforts to reach the different stakeholders. We are the only ones who encouraged the stakeholders for the discussion. A lot of stakeholder selected depends on capacity. Reaching individual business and some stakeholder like stakeholder from federal level is a particular problem (Ecotourism Association of Wenchi Creator Lake, 2023)

Not working together didn't work, so let's try it the partnership way if they call us (Religious leader of monasteries, 2013).

The above interviewer suggested that despite the confusion and other problems, effective collaborations were seen to be operating. Attention was drawn to the Government and the local authorities. The basis for a successful ecotourism project must be an effective partnership between the various organizations and individuals involved: federal and local government; non-government agencies; voluntary organizations; private commercial sector; host community; visitors and Religious leader

A mature, confident and successful stakeholder involvement which is making a vital and increasing contribution to the economic, social, cultural and environmental well-being of the community by achieving sustainable growth through effective coordination and collaboration at all levels in the industry (local Tour guide of wenchi , 2023).

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

4.3.7. Monitor and Assess Collaborative Practices

An essential component of project success is examining and monitoring the competitive environment for policy and strategy formulation and, at the same time, systematically evaluating the effectiveness of the key policies and strategies that have previously been implemented, a finding highlighted by Dwyer and Kim (2003). As an approach to establishing the practise of engaging in collaboration, an interviewee from a WWCTSOBH suggested the practise of identifying key performance indicators of major tourism bodies by assessing how each individual agency is performing in its collaborative efforts.

4.3.8. Vision and Clear Goals

Well-defined values and principles with respective roles defined for each stakeholder and opportunities outlined for them to participate and contribute under a unified vision are essential to STC (Heath, 2002, p. 135). Tourism industry stakeholders believe that robust involvement is the foundation for developing a strong national tourism plan with a resilient commitment to execution. A vision and a set of clear goals and expected outcomes for

collaboration are pointed out as necessary elements to achieving success and ensuring commitment to collaboration from everyone, as mentioned by a senior official from a private tourism organization. The level of willingness of stakeholders to collaborate with others will reveal whether the activities or strategies for collaborative engagements are appropriate, and adjustments can be made accordingly. Similarly, an interview participant from WWCTSO said that

When the community is not empowered to participate in ecotourism project, it results in self-reliance, an improved living standard, a sense of ownership and dependency, unfair competition, and conflict. As a result, one of the tools of sustainable tourism development that seeks to encourage sustainable business practices is community empowerment (WWCTSOBH).

4.4. Factors that hinder Stakeholder involvement in the on-going ecotourism project of Wenchi on-going ecotourism project

4.4.1. Management Inconsistency

Management inconsistency has been identified as a challenge for stakeholder involvement in 30% of the 10 semi-structured in-depth interviews with the key informants from the stakeholder offices and in all FGDs with the local community representatives and tourism experts. Participant WWCTSOBH stressed the following issues:

The first problem is the problem of implementation. To solve this problem, we don't identify our problems through evaluation; there is no evaluation. This is because there is management inconsistency; as new heads join the stakeholder offices, everything becomes new for the new head, and this hinders the evaluation process. This is a problem when assessing our performance. When there is a meeting, at any time the participants are new because there is management inconsistency, which challenges implementation. Over all, there is a management problem; still, there was no initiative to solve these problems from the management side. The management is busy with other issues.

The preceding text emphasised that inconsistency in management hampered the evaluation of stakeholders involved in on-going ecotourism projects in Wenchi. The project agenda changes as the office heads who participate in meetings differ from time to time. And also, there is a management problem from the side of government

stakeholders because the management bodies are busy with other issues than project issues. Wenchi Woreda, a tourism expert, stated the same thing as follows:

There is no such thing as a challenge that prevents us from working in involvement. Nevertheless, there is a change of office heads at the woreda level. The new heads may be from other disciplines; hence, to work with them, you need to socialise with them and also inform them of the objectives of the project and other things. This is a great problem because they are unfamiliar with the area, and the issue of the project becomes new to them (Participant WWCTSOTPE, August, 2022).

In addition, all the FGDs stressed that the management's inconsistency challenged stakeholder involvement in Wenchi's on-going tourism projects. The following subtopic from FGD explains this issue as follows:

4.4.2. Lack of Budget

Budgeting is important to manage the on-going ecotourism project sustainably. Without a budget, it is impossible to achieve the objectives of the project. In the current study, 90% of the interviewees stressed that working within budget is a great challenge with the involvement of stakeholders in the study area. And also, all the FGD discussants from local communities and tourism experts agreed that a budget constraint has hindered stakeholder involvement in the study area to manage the on-going ecotourism project.

As one participant from WWCTSOHME pointed out, a lack of budget hampered training and awareness-creation campaigns, which are the backbones of stakeholder involvement in building knowledge and skills gaps among the stakeholders of the on-going ecotourism project at Wenchi Creator Lake. The following text from the said participant is explained as follows:

... Due to a shortage of budget, trainings are not given and awareness-creation campaigns are not created, which is a big challenge for us to work in collaboration (Participant WWCTSOHME, interview, 2022).

The budget has not only hampered training and awareness campaigns, but it has also hampered efforts to collaborate with stakeholders on the on-going ecotourism project due to accessibility issues. Bekele et al. (2017) discovered that the community's ability to supply appropriately skilled labour is low and that in order to develop tourism business and management skills, training opportunities must be prepared in wenchi ecotourism project

areas. They further added that local communities near the project have great potential for young labour that can be skilled through formal education and short-term training. However, as indicated in the interview text above, training and awareness-creation campaigns are hardly hit by budget problems in project areas and thereby hinder stakeholder involvement for sustainable management. The major issues stressed in interviews and FGDs as consequences of the budget were the lack of vehicles to move from place to place to collaborate with the stakeholders.

Furthermore, speakers at the FGDs emphasized this issue by pointing out that the project administration is experiencing a vehicle shortage, which is a budget issue. The following text is explained as follows:

The project staff are ashamed to arrange stakeholder meetings due to budget problems because they cannot even settle lunch and coffee bills for the attendees of the meeting (FGD, July, 2022).



Source (Field observation, August 2022)

4.4.3. Conflict of interest between Stakeholders

Conflict is inevitable when there are various interests among the stakeholders in project management. When the coordination among the stakeholders is strong, the magnitude of the conflicts will be reduced. To boost coordination, there should be good conflict resolution and problem-solving methods among the stakeholders.

4.4.4. Lack of Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation are important to achieving the objectives of an organization. The way an organization monitors and evaluates its progress determines the outcome or implementation of its objectives. Tourism areas are no different in this case. The stakeholders in project area management should monitor and evaluate their progress to achieve their common goals. As they have planned, there should be a clear monitoring and evaluation process to know whether things are going as planned or not. However, in Wenchi project

areas, stakeholder involvement lacked monitoring and evaluation, and this hindered the implementation process. The following text, given by participant LCR3 from Wenchi Woreda, stressed this issue.

The first problem is the problem of implementation: to improve our performance, we don't identify our problems through evaluation; there is no evaluation (Interview, August, 2022).

The above text explains that the stakeholders (government side) of the Wenchi ecotourism project failed to sit down to evaluate the performance and identify the problems that hinder implementation, except to meet to talk about the project's performance (Interview, August, 2022).

4.4.5. Lack of Coordination and Institutional Ambiguity

When we talk about collaboration, we are indirectly talking about coordination. Where there is involvement, there is coordination (Keyser, 2011). Among the project management stakeholders, coordination is important to pull resources together and take risks together. However, coordination among the stakeholders working in collaboration to achieve a common goal would be ensured when there were responsible institutions committed to bringing them together.

In wenchi ecotourism project areas, the involvement lacked coordination, and there is no clear institution that facilitates and coordinates the stakeholders. The project administration calls the stakeholders when there are meetings. The stakeholders are not working in coordination by setting clear objectives. Though they plan to work on ecotourism project issues separately in their respective offices, there is also no clear structure in place that oversees their performance. Their relationship is fragmented. This is demonstrated in the following text:

The ecotourism project will benefit the communities and be sustainable if the owner works on clear principles by clarifying the political, economic, and social benefits and if it is supported by a budget. If there is no owner to bring the stakeholders together, it is impossible to manage an ecotourism project in a sustainable way. If a single stakeholder leads the issue, there will be no coordination; therefore, there should be an institution that works on coordinating other stakeholders (Participant LCR2, August 22, 2022).

The above text clarifies that the collaboration in the project is challenged by a lack of owners who work to coordinate the stakeholders and by institutional ambiguity. The participant suggested that if there was an institution that worked by coordinating the stakeholders, the project would be sustained. The coordination issue was also the collaboration in the project, which is challenged by a lack of owners who work to coordinate the stakeholders and by institutional ambiguity. The participant suggested that if there was an institution that worked by coordinating the stakeholders, the project would be sustained. The coordination issue was also pointed out by FGD; the project is challenged by a lack of owners who work to coordinate the stakeholders and by institutional ambiguity. The participant suggested that if there was an institution that worked by coordinating the stakeholders, the project would be sustained. The coordination issue was also pointed out by FGD discussants as challenging the collaborative efforts in Wenchi ecotourism projects.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1. Summary

Stakeholder involvement is a process that brings together various stakeholders with diverse interests to work on common goals. However, this issue has been overlooked in the case of an on-going ecotourism project in Ethiopia, though it has received attention at the principle level. The role of government, the local community, project administration, the private sector, and research agencies' involvement is crucial for the success of the ecotourism project. The involvement of these stakeholders in on-going ecotourism projects at Wenchi Creator Lake is limited. The summary of the findings of this study will be given based on the research questions as follows:

The study found that stakeholder involvement was practiced in the on-going ecotourism project in an informal, fragmented way and changed with the changing office heads of the woreda - level stakeholders. In addition, there is no clear accountability, transparency, or reporting structure. The stakeholders of an on-going ecotourism project meet when called by the project administration, and they have no clear guiding principles, common goals, formal agreements, or communication. Further, there is no responsible body that works with a sense of ownership by monitoring and evaluating the progress of the stakeholders.

The areas they work on in collaboration are merely related to creating awareness for local communities, and the community's benefit and socio-economic development issues fail to get much attention.

Stakeholders suggested several methods for facilitating stakeholder involvement, including raising awareness and providing opportunities for interaction, taking a proactive approach, demonstrating willingness and commitment, inspiring leadership, maintaining consistency, using open, clear, and tailored communication, monitoring and assessing collaborative practices, and having a clear vision and setting clear goals.

The most significant barrier to stakeholder involvement while working in a multi-stakeholder environment is communication gaps caused by language differences and the use of communication tools; the second factor accounts for incompatible interests of partners, cultural differences, late identification of stakeholder interests, and failure to identify all relevant stakeholders and provide them with the level of attention they require. The finding indicated that low stakeholder commitment, failure to fully participate throughout the project life, shifting of authorities, and an endless turnover of staff from partner organisations were challenges caused by gaps in understanding of local rules. Regulations and procedures adopted by international stakeholders were noted. The finding also directed that the level of willingness of stakeholders to collaborate with others will reveal whether the activities or strategies for collaborative engagements are appropriate, and adjustments can be made accordingly.

5.2. Conclusion

With reference to the results obtained from the analysis of the study, the following conclusions were forwarded: The study results revealed that the level of stakeholder involvement in the study area was very low, so it needs the improvement of their consent, especially in benefit sharing, decision-making, tourism planning, conservation, and management of tourism resources on the on-going ecotourism project. From the above information, it is reasonable to conclude that the level of stakeholder involvement in the study area was very low.

The study outcomes revealed that stakeholder involvement in the on-going ecotourism project had economic, socio-cultural, and environmental contributions. The economic contribution of stakeholder involvement in the on-going ecotourism project is that it helps to create employment opportunities, improve living standards, reduce poverty, and increase household income. Whereas, the socio-cultural contribution of stakeholder involvement in the on-going ecotourism project helps to promote conservation of cultural values, promote mutual understanding, encourage respect for different cultures, and foster positive cultural exchange. The environmental contribution of stakeholder involvement in the on-going ecotourism project also helps to promote positive environmental ethics, proper utilisation of resources, conservation of the environment, and environmental awareness. From the above information, it is reasonable to conclude that stakeholder involvement had an economic, socio-cultural, and environmental contribution.

The study also found that stakeholder involvement in the on-going project of Wenchi creator lacked clear principles, common goals, and structure and was practised informally without any responsible body that works by a sense of ownership. The management approach applied by the project is neither top-down nor community-based but somehow participatory in this ongoing project and has room for stakeholder collaboration at the principle level but is weak in practise. The study identified management inconsistency, lack of budget, conflict of interest, lack of government commitment, negative perception, lack of monitoring and evaluation, lack of coordination, and institutional ambiguity as major challenges to stakeholder collaboration on the on-going Wenchi ecotourism project.

5.3. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are suggested to various stakeholders for achieving the ecotourism project in the study area:

- **Effective Community Participation:** Results in this study showed that a lack of effective community participation is a cause for the low level of ongoing ecotourism projects. Major achievements in ecotourism projects can be achieved with the help of local communities. Local communities can play their role by protecting security, providing hospitality, running their own small businesses, conserving and preserving tourism resources, and guiding tourists. Therefore, special attention should be paid to participating communities in tourism projects. If the local community better participates and benefits from the tourism industry project, a sense of belongingness and ownership will be established.
- **Designing a Development Programme:** In order to increase the contribution of this ecotourism project as a means of employment creation and income generation, there is a need to establish and design community empowerment programmes at the community level that will create opportunities for the local people to take part in the project and be employed in various tourism businesses. Moreover, the development of community empowerment programmes in the communities in areas of ongoing ecotourism projects should be based on people-centred participatory approaches like participating in ecotourism project planning, decision-making, implementation, and management, as well as monitoring and evaluating the project.
- **Awareness Creation, Training, and Capacity Building:** Awareness creation, training, and capacity building are important for a successful ecotourism project.

The role of training institutions in the tourism industry is needed since it produces skilled manpower for the industry. So the local authorities, local universities, industry partners, private sector education institutes, and potential training providers cooperation is important to meet the project objective in the study area.

- **Empowering Local Communities in Tourism Investment:** Empowering local communities in tourism and related businesses is important for tourism development in the project area. An investment must be promoted in different businesses such as restaurants, hotels, lodges, tour operators, car rental, souvenirs, cultural cloth, and others. The government must make tireless efforts to encourage local investors by improving and expanding loans and credit facilities.
- **Infrastructural Development:** Infrastructural development plays a vital role in the ongoing ecotourism project. A tourist attraction by itself is not sufficient to satisfy the tourist since it must be complemented by other tourist facilities and supporting infrastructure. Tourist infrastructure and other amenities should meet at least certain minimum acceptable standards. The government and private sectors, as well as NGOs, should therefore increase their role in the area by providing infrastructure and facilities to tourists.
- **Establishing Benefit Sharing Mechanisms:** There should also be benefit sharing mechanisms for tourism stakeholders. Tourism stakeholders, including members of the communities, should come to a consensus as to what percentage of benefits should accrue to all parties. This will be a good way to increase the effectiveness of community empowerment in the study area.
- **Marketing and Promotion:** The other key solution for tourism development around the ongoing project is executing a comprehensive campaign on broadcast, printed, electronic, and social media designed by local, regional, and national tourism bureaus, tour operators, and other private sectors, detailing what is special about tourism resources and providing information to any tourist for the purpose of image building.
- **Conflict Management Practice:** For a construction project to be successful, stakeholders must be aware of conflict management strategies. In order to improve their managerial performance in conflict situations and to provide a better grasp of various ways for managing disputes in the implementation of ecotourism projects. All parties involved in the project must be aware of the causes and effects,

negotiate, take action to address the reasons, set mutually beneficial goals, and resolve issues related to project performance.

5.4. Future Research Directions

The current study is not exempt from limitations. The first limitation emanates from its approach, because qualitative approaches approach is often accused of generalizability. As the current study investigated and assessed the practises and stakeholder involvement in the on-going ecotourism project in Wenchi Creator Lake employing a qualitative research approach, the findings of this study may not be generalised to other tourism projects. However, the aim of qualitative research is not to generalise findings to other areas but rather to explore the phenomena under inquiry in detail in a given context.

But it does not mean the results are not generalised to areas of similar or approximately similar nature. Future research is suggested to further dig into the same phenomena using other quantitative approach to explore the phenomena under inquiry in detail in a given context. But it does not mean the results are not generalised to areas of similar or approximately similar nature. Future research is suggested to further dig into the same phenomena using other quantitative approaches to make them more generalizable to other tourism projects. Next, this study approached only the government, experts, local communities, and project administration at a lower level. Future research can expand this and include stakeholders from all groups, including tourists.

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INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
COLLEGE OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES
TOURISM AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Appendix
Interview Questions

Appendix I: Interview Questions for Government sector Representatives

Dear Informant,

My name is Ebisa Tilahun. I am postgraduate student of Tourism Development and Management at Addis Ababa University, School of Graduate Studies. Now I am conducting research on ‘*practice and involvement of stakeholders on the on-going project: the case of wenchi crater lakes, Oromia National Regional State, Ethiopia*’ for partial fulfilment of the requirements for Master of Arts Degree in Tourism Development and Management. Hence, I approach different organizations like yours for data collection. The information I gather from you is used only for academic purpose and the results will be discussed confidentially without disclosing your privacy. I appreciate you for your time, patience and the information you provide me in advance.

Participant Information

Interviewee name _____

Sex _____

Age _____

Marital status _____

Stakeholder office _____

Educational background _____

Position _____

Collaboration related experience _____

Place of interview _____

Date of interview _____

Duration of interview _____

Section one: To investigate how stakeholder involvement is practiced on the on-going projects of Wenchi Creator Lake.

1. How long have you been in this office?
2. Have you ever worked in involvement with Wenchi ongoing tourism project?

3. What are your stakeholders?
4. How do you understand stakeholder involvement?
5. How do you involve with your partners, how often?
6. What are your areas of involvement with your partners?
7. How do you communicate with your partners?
8. What particular strategy does your organization have to engage with stakeholders?
9. Do you think involvement is important for the on-going project? Please explain.
10. Do you have common goals that you promote with your partners? (What are that common goals?)
11. Do you have any set of guiding principles, rules, norms, or memorandum of understanding which guides your interactions with your partners (Why/why not?)
12. How do you describe the role of local community? In what ways do they provide you with support?
 - a) How often do you work with the local communities?
 - b) Have you ever benefited the local community?
 - c) What do you think is to be in place to benefit the local community?
13. Are there any reporting or supporting structures in your network?
 - a) If yes, how do they work?
 - b) Are there formal agreements between you and your partners?
 - c) Is there anyone you are accountable for in your collaboration?

Section two: To identify factors that enable successful stakeholder involvement on the on –going project?

1. Do you think that there are factors that enable the involvement efforts and supports? Yes or No, if your response is yes, what are those factors?
2. What strategy exists to increase the involvement of stakeholder involvement on the on –going project?
3. How do you deal with the enabling factor you face while working with your partners?
4. What should be done to better enhance the performance of ongoing tourism project?
5. Do you believe that Wenchi has potential for tourism investment? If yes, what are those potential investment areas? If no, why?
6. Is there anything you want to add concerning on the factors that enable successful stakeholder involvement on the on –going project?

Section three: To identify factors that hinder successful stakeholder involvement on the on –going project?

1. Do you think that there are factors that limit the involvement efforts and supports? Yes or No, if your response is yes, what are those factors?
2. How do you deal with the problems you face while working with your partners? Do you solve problems together?
3. Do you collaborate with NGOs, Universities and private sector? If no why?
4. What do you recommend NGOs, Universities and private sector?
5. How do you evaluate the role of your involvement for the project finishing?
6. How the project contributes for the socio-economic development of the local community (in terms of, job creation, income generation and promoting local culture)?
7. Overall, if you have anything you want to add concerning the factors that limit stakeholder involvement on the on-going project?

FGD questions for local community representatives and experts

Dear discussants,

My name is Ebisa Tilahun. I am postgraduate student of Tourism Development and Management at Addis Ababa University, School of Graduate Studies. Now I am conducting research on ‘ ‘ *practice and involvement of stakeholders on the on-going project: the case of Wenchi crater lakes, Oromia national regional state, Ethiopia* ‘ ‘ for partial fulfilment of the requirements for Master of Arts Degree in Tourism Development and Management. Hence, I approach different organizations like you for data collection. The information I gather from you is used only for academic purpose and the results will be discussed confidentially without disclosing your privacy. I appreciate you for your time, patience and the information you provide me in advance.

1. How long have you been in this community?
2. How do you understand stakeholder involvement?
3. How do you collaborate with on-going project? On what issues? When?
4. Do you have common goals that you work with this project? (What are those common goals?)
5. How do you communicate with your partners?
6. Does the current approach support stakeholder involvement?
7. Who makes most decisions in the current involvement? Why?
8. Are you satisfied with your position in decision making concerning on the on-going project?

9. Do the project administration participate you in decision making?
10. Does the project support your socio-economy (in terms of job creation, income generation and promoting the local culture?)

Probing questions

- a. If no, what problems do you face?
 - b. Do you think stakeholder involvement can solve these problems? Explain.
11. What do you think should be done in relation to the current management approach being applied in the project?
 12. What are factors that enable successful stakeholder involvement on the on –going project?

Section two: To identify the limiting factor of stakeholder involvement on the on-going project

1. What do you face while working with your partners?

Probing questions

- a. Are you working in coordination with your partners?
 - b. Who do you know most among your partners?
 - c. Do you trust your partners?
2. How do you deal with the opportunities you face in working with others?
 3. What efforts are needed from other partners, in order to deal with the opportunities of the current involvement?
 4. Is there anything you want to add concerning opportunities of stakeholder involvement?

Section three: To identify the limiting factor of stakeholder involvement on the on-going project

5. What do you face while working with your partners?

Probing questions

- d. Are you working in coordination with your partners?
 - e. Do you trust your partners?
6. How do you deal with the challenges you face in working with others?
 7. What efforts are needed from other partners, in order to deal with the challenges and problems of the current involvement?
 8. Is there anything you want to add concerning challenges of stakeholder involvement?

Thank you for your cooperation!

Appendix II: Observation Checklist

1. The overall status of the on-going ecotourism project
2. The major challenges of the on-going ecotourism project
3. Sustainable management activities in and around the on-going ecotourism project
4. Any involvement initiatives among the near communities
5. Any meetings, workshops or discussions with the stakeholders
6. The infrastructural developments of the area and its surroundings

Photo Gallery of Wenchi Lake Eco-Tourism Project during Construction Period



Source (Field observation, August 2022)