A FRAMEWORK OF BEST PRACTICE FOR UK TOURISM MARKETING CONSORTIA

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Thesis submitted to the Welsh School of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure Management in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy.

May 2005

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DECLARATION

I declare that this work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted for any other degree. I further declare that this thesis is the result of my own independent work and investigation, except where otherwise stated (a bibliography is appended). Finally, I hereby give consent for my thesis, if accepted, to be available for photocopying and for inter-library loan, and for the title and abstract to be made available to outside organizations.

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Ella Hastings
ABSTRACT

A Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) program undertaken between the University of Wales, Institute Cardiff and Corris Caverns Ltd. identified an opportunity to carry out a study of tourism consortia. The KTP scheme was devised to develop and manage Dyfi Valley Attractions, a tourism marketing consortium in Mid Wales. This consortium provides the case study in which the action research methodology is applied. A review of the literature highlighted a number of current frameworks used to illustrate various elements of tourism consortia and also some clear motivations why UK tourism businesses make the effort to combine resources, including destination competition, cost effective use of resources and public sector incentives. Action research and case study methodology plot a model for best practice in tourism marketing consortia that is useable by practitioners and academics alike.

The thesis attempts to corroborate and build upon the findings in the literature by using action research techniques to examine the Dyfi Valley Attractions consortium. Action research was undertaken over a two-year period and incorporates first, second and third person narratives in the form of personal reflections and business reports. The methodology also incorporates a series of case studies that flow from a period of examination to one of explanation. The case studies were grouped into phases so that traditional methods of multiple case study comparison could be undertaken alongside development and refinement of the case study line of investigation.

The thesis produces a model for best practice which is developed through the case studies and is substantiated by evidence in the action research and the literature. The proposed model builds upon previous models to produce a flow of 'signposts' which will enable current and developing tourism consortia to evaluate and overcome current problems. The model also fits a lifecycle framework which has been adapted to show more clearly the phases of consortia success over time.
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Chapter 1
Overview

1. Overview

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1.1. The Problem

Throughout the period of study reported in this thesis, the researcher was working on a Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) project for the University of Wales Institute Cardiff and the Dyfi Valley Attractions consortium. The objective of the project was to establish and run a tourism marketing consortium for four tourism attractions in Mid-Wales. The KTP project aims were:

1. To identify product strengths from amongst the consortium partners and create a new combined product, or products and develop and introduce appropriate new marketing strategies. In so doing
   a. Refine and develop the web marketing strategy
   b. Develop the e-commerce opportunities
   c. Design an on going promotional campaign
   d. Introduce monitoring of any statistical records
2. Development of staff skills in accordance with market demand
3. Develop a system for customer feedback and review
4. Produce a marketing matrix which facilitates individual consortium partner product marketing to be supportive of the marketing strategy for the newly identified combined product or products

The research degree challenge was to identify a research question and approach derived from the KTP project and in the context of available time, budget and expectations from the industrial partners. The above aims show that the project placed an emphasis on developing and co-ordinating marketing initiatives for the long term success of the partnership.

At an early stage in the project it was decided that a study of other UK tourism consortia would be a useful market research exercise, to identify current trends and strategies. Consequently the case study review provided the researcher with a sound understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of tourism consortia. The case studies also provided a basis for analysing the Dyfi Valley Attractions consortium, at the centre of the KTP project. It was initially hoped that the Dyfi Valley Attractions would become a more central focus of this study, however as the research progressed it became apparent that
the research was a separate thread to the KTP project. This could have been due to demands from the KTP scheme or merely a difference in aims between the two projects. It was therefore proposed that the action research method would, by its nature, incorporate the Dyfi Valley Attractions consortium into the research degree and provide an additional grounding for findings derived from the case studies.

1.2. Research Agenda

Dyfi Valley Attractions is a marketing consortium based around Machynlleth in Mid Wales. The four attractions that make up the consortium are Celtica, The Centre for Alternative Technology, King Arthur’s Labyrinth, and the Talyllyn Railway.

Celtica is a unique attraction which tells the story of the Celts. This includes an audio-visual display and an educational interpretive centre. There are also play areas, a gift shop, and tea room. 2004 visitor figures: 31,949

Centre for Alternative Technology teaches visitors how to save energy and money in the home and garden, with environmentally friendly technology on display. There is also a shop and restaurant. 2004 visitor figures: 63,557

King Arthur’s Labyrinth is a 45 minute underground exhibition which incorporates a boat ride on a subterranean river, telling stories of King Arthur. There are a number of craft units, a restaurant and also a maze. 2004 visitor figures: 42,414

Talyllyn Railway is a narrow gauge steam railway running from the coast at Tywyn into the Hills of the Snowdonia National Park. There are places to stop and enjoy a forest walk, a museum dedicated to the steam engine and two cafés. 2004 visitor figures: 49,200

All four of the attractions are Small Medium sized Enterprises (SMEs), with varying management structures; council run (Celtica), voluntary organisation (Talyllyn...
Railway), privately owned (King Arthur's Labyrinth) and a cooperative (Centre for Alternative Technology). All four attractions undertake their own marketing activities as well as combining budgets for joint marketing under the Dyfi Valley Attractions banner. The cost effective nature of joint marketing and the ability to tap into funding streams makes the consortium an attractive option.

The consortium was formed in 2001, after the outbreak of foot and mouth disease, with the aim of promoting the message that "we are open for business, and that the area is a great place for day trips and short breaks." (Marketing promotion launched at the BTTF, April 2001). The consortium secured a three year grant from the WTB, however support for the project and time to manage the activities was not made available by the partners and it did not make much of an impact on the key markets. The KTP project was therefore designed to inject human and knowledge capital in order to get the consortium up and functioning effectively with the full support of the four attractions and other local organisations. This project had to consolidate and review previous marketing activity and produce an overall aim and direction, with the goal of formulating worthwhile marketing tools within the limited budgets available.
1.3. Research Aims and Objectives

Aim: To create a framework of best practice for tourism marketing consortia.

Objectives:
1. To review existing published research on tourism consortia.
2. To investigate 9 case studies of tourism marketing consortia, divided into 3 phases of research and review in order to determine their key characteristics.
3. To substantiate the findings from the case studies with results derived from the action research results using the Dyfi Valley Attractions consortium and the literature.
4. To evaluate the findings in the form of a framework for best practice.
1.4. Overview of the thesis

The aim of the study is to create a framework of best practice for tourism marketing consortia. As part of this aim, the first objective was to review existing research on tourism consortia. An argument was developed through the literature review in chapter 2, which seeks to identify why local competitors join together for consortia working. The literature on tourism consortia therefore reviews the motivations for tourism SMEs to join tourism consortia and provides an overview of the operating environment in the UK. The literature review analyses the current academic view on tourism consortia and includes a look at some of the most relevant consortia frameworks for the study. This creates a solid foundation from which to base and critically review the primary research outcomes. The literature review is illustrated by examples from the Dyfi Valley Attractions tourism marketing consortium. This aids the reader’s interpretation of the specific context in which the research was conducted and gives an insight to tourism marketing consortia in practice. This led to some clear findings which are tested in the primary case study research.

The methodology behind the second and third objectives is explained and justified in chapter 3. There were two types of research methodology used in this study; case study research and action research. It will be seen in chapter 3, that the nine case studies were split into three phases of work, which were individually written up and reported. Following the action research paradigm, at the end of each phase time was taken for a reflection of the outcomes. This showed a combining of case study and action research methods to create an evolving research framework.

The outcomes of the action research and the case study research were reported on and analysed in the results section (chapter 4). In light of objective 3 the analysis outlines
the results from the phases of research in the case studies, whilst also interjecting relevant sections of the literature and the action research results to substantiate the study's findings. The outcome of each phase of research is analysed, showing the development of a model for best practice in tourism marketing consortia, in line with objective 4.

At the end of phase three, the model developed into a coherent and practical tool, useable by practitioners and academics alike, grounded in current tourism consortia thinking and practice. The findings are then summarised in chapter 5, which outlines where the results have added to the academic, practical and methodological knowledge base. The chapter closes with a consideration of the limitations of this study that have been identified by the author and proposes questions for further research.
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2.1. Overview

The aim of the study is to create a framework of best practice for tourism marketing consortia. As part of this aim, the first objective was to review existing research on tourism consortia. The literature review has this therefore as its purpose.

In order to explore this fully, an argument is developed which seeks to identify motivations behind competitors joining together in consortia working. This discussion looks initially at marketing and the ‘four P’s’ in a broad sense. This is because the study is based upon tourism marketing consortia. This highlights some motivations for the development of consortia and therefore the next stage looks more closely at tourism marketing and the ‘extra 3 P’s’ to see if any of the motivations become increasingly apparent in a tourism context. This leads into a discussion on destination competitiveness and the role of the public sector within the tourism industry. The argument is to be narrowed down into the UK context and therefore the current situation of the UK tourism industry is explored. Having discovered many motivations for the formation of tourism marketing consortia within the UK, the study moves on to look more closely at consortia; in particular definitions, advantages and limitations, and frameworks as set out in current academic research. This identifies some areas of further research and investigation for this study.

The literature review is illustrated by examples from the Dyfi Valley Attractions tourism marketing consortium. This aids the reader’s interpretation of the specific context in which the research was conducted and an understanding of tourism marketing consortia in practice.
2.2. Marketing

This section will look at the definitions and techniques of marketing in a holistic sense, with the aim of focusing on tourism specific issues in order to highlight possible motivations behind the formation of tourism consortia in the UK.

Marketing has been defined as follows:

*Marketing is the management process which identifies, anticipates, and supplies customer requirements efficiently and profitably.* (CIM; [http://www.cim.co.uk](http://www.cim.co.uk): cited in Brassington and Pettitt, 2000: p5)

*Marketing is the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion and distribution of ideas, goods and services to create exchange and satisfy individual and organisational objectives.* (AMA, 1985; cited in Brassington and Pettitt, 2000: p5)

These two quotes imply that marketing is a management function that is focused on supplying the consumer with what they want. This can be confirmed by Morgan and Pritchard (2000: p6), who state that “good marketers see their business from the customer’s viewpoint and organise their entire enterprise to develop relationships with the customer based on trust”. With the consumer at the centre of marketing there are then tools, as shown in the second quote by AMA, 1985 which look into components behind marketing such as; pricing, promotion, distribution and product. These components have been adapted as principles around which to analyse marketing practice and are often referred to as the marketing mix. These four principles of the marketing mix will be looked at here in more depth, in order to explore the answer to the question ‘what is marketing?’ in the context of this study.

2.2.1. Product

The product is the central feature of a marketing campaign. For the example of Dyfi Valley Attractions the primary product on offer is the experience of visiting one or more
of the attractions. The product therefore has to deliver the benefits customers perceive and also live up to the expectation the consumers have of that product (Brassington and Pettitt, 2000). This requires the product to be developed with the target consumers needs and expectations at the core. Brassington and Pettitt (2000: p262) define the ‘product’ concept further by saying:

"A product is a physical good, service, idea, person or place that is capable of offering tangible and intangible attributes that individuals or organisations regard as so necessary, worthwhile or satisfying that they are prepared to exchange money, patronage or some other unit of value in order to acquire it."

The product in question must therefore offer some reason for the consumer to visit, either tangible or intangible. Once a product is in place that lives up to consumer needs the next question is about creating customer awareness and expectation of the product. With so few new product offerings succeeding (Doyle, 1995) it is an absolute necessity to inform your target consumers about the need that your product satisfies. In the example of the Dyfi Valley Attractions the four attractions continue to support their own, very individual product marketing, whilst at the same time investing in a marketing consortium. With an initial look at ‘product’, it is not absolutely clear why competing interests would combine resources to create one product offering. However by marketing all four products as one, the cost savings to each attraction could be a direct incentive and also the potential to collaborate research creates a more in-depth analysis. This theme will be discussed through the chapter.

2.2.2. Price

Price is a complex area, often overlooked in marketing, which at a basic level is behind the creation of income. At the same time it indirectly communicates, barters and fights competitors (Brassington and Pettitt, 2000). Indirect pricing strategies would include selling a product at a much higher price than its production cost to create a perception of
high quality. ‘Competitive’ marketing strategies could be put in place to under-cut competitors and therefore aim to capture a share of their market.

The four separate attractions that make up the ‘Dyfi Valley Attractions’ all have very similar pricing structures in that they pitch entry between £5 and £10. The level is set by a perception that this is what the market will tolerate. There is no apparent competition / or ‘price war’ between the four attractions as the pricing structure relates to the demand and perception of what the consumer will be willing to pay, rather than trying to undercut competitors.

Price is used as a tool for the Dyfi Valley Attractions consortium; a discount ticket and vouchers are available which give the consumer an incentive for visiting more than one of the four attractions. The marketing literature does not mention collaborative pricing structures as a tactic, as used by the Dyfi Valley Attractions. Therefore the literature does not initially point to a motivation for the individual competing attractions to combine products, and produce one price for all four.

2.2.3. Place
The place element of the marketing mix refers to the ‘distribution’ of the product and the ways in which the product is available to the consumer when their need is greatest. Marketing texts tend to focus on tangible distribution channels, such as distributors, intermediaries and agents. For many small tourism businesses the distribution of the product, merely means being open and available to the consumer. For the Dyfi Valley Attractions, in a seasonal and rural tourism destination, the place element is probably the least flexible element of the marketing matrix. For example the product cannot simply be moved to an area where there is particular demand at that time. Demand in
the Dyfi Valley tends to be seasonal and therefore King Arthur’s Labyrinth does not operate during the quiet winter periods, but is open for business as soon as the tourism season picks up in March. The Talyllyn Railway operates in winter, but at a reduction in its timetable compared to the summer and the other attractions. Celtica and CAT are open through the winter but with a lower staff contingent.

To overcome this problem of seasonality the attractions would have to create a consumer demand throughout the whole year to bring in enough revenue for them to be able to operate at the same capacity as in the summer. Laws (1995: p18) confirms the problems of seasonality by saying:

"Strong seasonality...causes difficulties for destination managers as sufficient facilities to meet peak demand have to be installed and staffed, but at other times of the year the reduced visitor activity cannot sustain the peak level of businesses."

This problem does have potential solutions, for example creating:

"destination marketing programmes designed to stimulate out of season visit, either through pricing tactics or by developing a range of additional activities at off-peak times of the year" (Laws 1995: p18)

An individual tourism operator in a rural setting could undertake such strategies; however in order to effectively ‘pull’ a sufficient number of tourists to the area with these initiatives their presence in the marketplace and their marketing budget would have to be considerable. Joint working could be a strategy employed in many instances to increase the power of off-season marketing strategies.

Distribution in leisure texts shows that it is not simply about the ‘place’ of the product. Morgan (1996: p188) states that there are three questions which a service industry manager must ask:

- "Where can potential customers get information?"
Where can they make booking and buy tickets?
How accessible is the location where the experience in enjoyed?”

Illustrating this through the Dyfi Valley Attractions, consumers can get information from leaflets which are distributed to tourist information centres, at the four attractions and distributed through an agency. The website is also a useful tool for providing a large amount of written information and pictures. These information sources also have contact details for finding out more information.

Consumers wanting to buy a Dyfi Valley Attractions joint ticket can purchase them online, pre or during visit. This is a service that is accessible globally. In contrast the individual attractions admission payment can only be taken on site, on the day of purchase. Group Travel Operators are also a point of sale for the attractions, where the operator deals with the interface and booking with the consumer. This is a recognised ‘chain’ where each organisation adds value to the consumer; for example the group operator includes transport and accommodation to the attractions product. “This is sometimes called the ‘value-added chain’” (Morgan 1996: p188)

These channels of distribution are costly, for example producing information in the form of leaflets and websites, and maintaining the distribution. Despite the cost it is seen that these channels are very important to attract business to the four attractions. The Dyfi Valley Attractions pool resources to produce one leaflet and website which markets all the attractions and the area. This is almost certainly because they are aware of the importance of these channels of distribution and also desire value for money.
2.2.4. Promotion

The promotional mix looks at the various types of communications that are used to inform a consumer about a product. There are five main elements, as suggested by Brassington and Pettitt (2000) these are; advertising, personal selling, public relations, direct marketing and sales promotion. The type of communication used would vary depending on factors such as cost effectiveness and the nature of the target market. For example the attractions in the Dyfi Valley Attractions do not utilise personal selling for the ‘consumer market’ because it takes considerable time and effort per customer, who is likely to visit just once, if at all. The consortium however uses direct marketing for the group organisers market, where they have a database of potential customers. As seen previously, through the distribution chain in section 2.2.3, direct marketing is justified for the group organisers market because there is a higher percentage return on each call/mail out; every group organiser that becomes a retailer, will bring a number of customers to one or more of the attractions. In the main, the Dyfi Valley Attractions would be best suited to use a combination of the five elements where possible.

This section has looked at marketing in a very broad sense. The definitions highlight the fact that marketing is concerned with getting a product to a consumer who wants it, at the right time and at the right place. This has focused on the four tools of the marketing mix; looking at the product itself, the price, the place and the promotion. This section also showed the marketing mix in a practical light with examples from the Dyfi Valley Attractions marketing consortium. It is hoped that this will produce a greater insight and understanding into why competing tourism operators form marketing consortia. The argument so far has revealed small insights into the motivation for this, for example; sharing the cost towards marketing a single combined product; jointly aiming to overcome some of the problems of seasonality; creating a combined pricing strategy and
overcoming some of the costs of distribution. The literature review will continue its focus on the marketing of tourism to see whether any clearer evidence can be drawn to identify the motivations behind the set up of tourism marketing consortia.
2.3. Tourism Marketing

The previous section outlined the marketing mix, used to describe the four marketing principles in relation to the Dyfi Valley Attractions. Some questions were raised and therefore this section will look at the specific tourism issues, focusing on the services marketing mix.

It is worthwhile to note that tourism can be defined as "the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes" (The World Tourism Organisation and Nations Statistical Commission, 1994, cited in Cooper et al. 1998: p8). The Dyfi Valley Attractions and other tourism consortia would therefore be focusing marketing efforts on encouraging people to travel to the destination for a transient period to participate in 'leisure' activities. For the attractions this period could be as little as a day; and up to a longer stay of seven to ten days. The Dyfi Valley Attractions do not include accommodation providers in their membership base at present, however they do include listings of local accommodation providers on their website to encourage short breaks and longer stay holidays. This is mainly because the Dyfi Valley Attractions are in a peripheral location, some distance from any major conurbation, and therefore day trip catchment area. The study will therefore take into account tourism as a 'stay outside the usual environment'.

This transient or time characteristic means that marketing must be tailored to a wide market which will occupy the business throughout the year or season. This is compared to other products where tailored direct marketing and customer loyalty can facilitate more than adequate repeat business from fewer people, for example a washing powder.
company, once loyalty has been created, can rely upon sales from that individual over a longer period of time, providing the customer remains satisfied with the product. This characteristic is an insight into collaborative marketing efforts. Tourism operators within a destination may wish to work together to bring new customers into the area, for the benefit of all. In the Dyfi Valley Attractions, the individual attractions share a common market which they can target as a united front.

2.3.1. Services’ Marketing Mix

It has been argued by authors, such as Booms and Bitner (cited in Cooper et al., 1998) that the four P’s (described in section 2.2) are highly representative of the manufacturing industry but less so of the tourism industry (Cooper et al., 1998). Therefore, they suggest three extra ‘service industry’ P’s to complement the original four of the marketing mix; People, process and physical evidence:

- **People;** refers to the interface between staff and customers, and customers with customers, which in a manufacturing environment would be low. However, within tourism businesses it is a general observation that the staff and other customers have a high degree of involvement in the tourists' experiences. This can be managed through training, appearance and incentives for staff, and consumer feedback for customers.

- **Process;** can refer to the procedures in place to manage the customers on site, for example flow of tourists through the activities, customer service and complaints mechanisms. For example, staff at the King Arthur’s Labyrinth, guide customers around the exhibitions to ensure the flow of tourists around the underground caverns.
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- **Physical Evidence**: relates to the surroundings, which make up the tourist experience, for example; lighting, noise and furnishings. Celtica have an audio visual exhibition which includes smell, sounds and lighting to complement the story that is being told.

These three factors can contribute to the overall tourist experience and are vital to have in line with the marketing strategy; for example Celtica is a Welsh tourist experience and therefore the staff are encouraged to speak to each other in Welsh in front of the consumers. Despite the importance of the extra three service industry P’s, they do not indicate any clear or specific motivations for tourism organisations to market collectively. The first four principles of the marketing mix, as mentioned in section 2.2, gave a clearer feel of the issues that may encourage co-operativity. It has however, been useful to note the issues raised in the services marketing mix to see whether they play a part in the functions of tourism consortia as the study develops. It is imperative to also review literature which could suggest other factors why tourism businesses market themselves collectively, in order to get a clearer picture for the research.

2.3.2. Tourism Characteristics

There are four recognised characteristics of the tourism product which are to be examined here as they may give strength to the argument for tourism businesses to form tourism consortia; intangibility, perishability, inseparability, and heterogeneity

- **Intangibility** means that we cannot fully examine a tourism product until after purchase. It is not feasible for the consumer to sample a product before purchase as it is with goods in the retail industry. This problem can be overcome by the production of "printed literature, videos or other means of providing clues as to the type of
product on offer in an attempt to increase tangibility" (Cooper et al. 1998: p355). Dyfi Valley Attractions, whilst having four separate organisations is able to create a unified tangible outcome in the form of leaflets and a website. The material shows the shared ‘experience’ i.e. the destination, and the separate ‘experiences’ i.e. the attractions.

- Perishability is not just a characteristic of the service industry; it is shared by food manufacturers. A perishable product has a life span, which once reached is not saleable, therefore a loss is incurred. For example the King Arthur’s Labyrinth has a product which involves a ride on an underground boat. 20 seats are available every quarter of an hour. If a seat is not sold on any of the tours then a loss has been occurred. They therefore factor in a percentage of 60% usage to calculate business decisions. Cooper et al. (1998) suggests that seasonality increases the problem of perishability in the tourism industry. This would be one of the factors why the Labyrinth does not operate during the winter.

- Inseparability is used to describe service products because “the product is often consumed and produced simultaneously” (Cooper et al. 1998: p355). This causes a problem regarding standards of service delivery. A manufacturer can have strict standards, which all products must adhere to in order for them to meet quality and safety standards, but a tourism producer cannot be aware every time a front of house staff member is having a ‘bad day’. “A wide range of product performance [can be] determined by employee’s attitudes and behaviour for which there can be none of the normal guarantees” (Middleton and Clarke, 2001: p43). This is a feature of the services marketing mix, where ‘people’ and ‘processes’ need to be managed in line with product and brand expectations.
• Heterogeneity "means that each service experience is likely to be different" (Brassington and Pettitt, 2000: p948). This takes into account the involvement of service staff and even external factors such as other customers and the weather. Dyfi Valley Attractions face such a problems, which make it difficult to analyse and control the whole experience of consumers compared with, for example, supermarkets where it is easier to standardise the experience customers receive.

These tourism marketing characteristics emphasise certain points already made in the literature; for example, the need for information to make the product more tangible is linked to the distribution channels, mentioned in section 2.2.3. It was assessed that the cost element involved effective distribution would be a motivation for working together. The perishability of the product, which has been shown to have a link with seasonality, means that each local 'competitor' i.e. the four attraction in the Dyfi Valley have a common goal of; bringing more people into the area who will consume an attraction product. This common goal is a strong motivation for pooling resources and seeing beyond a previously established competitive rivalry and working together to increase destination competitiveness.

2.3.3. Destination Competitiveness

Most consortia are destination specific and so this section looks at the characteristics of destination marketing, and in particular to focus on those elements which help look into competition versus co-operation within a destination.

Looking initially at the destination itself, it is made up of:

"Organizations, influences and forces that lie within the destination’s immediate arena of tourism activities and competition" (Ritchie and Crouch 2003 p66).
The organisations within a destination share a common drive to attract tourists to the area, but at this basic (macro) environment, they are separate organisations and competitors. Ritchie and Crouch (2003) also note that to be an efficient destination the very separate and individual parts that make it what it is, must operate as one. This shared destination entity can then exist competitively amongst other destinations. This can be reinforced by Jones and Haven-Tang (2005), who states that “a successful tourism destination must embrace an integrated approach towards the many components of the tourism system.” This destination must also “provide a distinctive brand” (Cooper et al., 1998), which will differentiate itself from the competitors.

So on the one hand a destination is made up of smaller, competing organisations which need to attract as many visitors as their capacity will allow, and on the other hand to be considered as a ‘competitive destination’ these small parts must be combined with a ‘distinctive brand’ to be most effective. Dyfi Valley Attractions is a useful example of this; at a basic level they are competitors who care about attracting business to their own organisations and at a wider level they are working together, and with other community organisations, with one brand and image to bring visitors to the destination. This study will look into some of the ways in which these competing tourism businesses are able to unite together under a shared brand and create goals for the benefit of all.

The increased competitiveness between destinations and reliance on the tourism industry has developed a “need for [an] integrated approach to tourism” Oliver and Jenkins (2002; cited in Jones E and Haven-Tang C, 2005). They go on to say that the concept of integrated tourism has so far been an area of little theoretical research. Branding of tourism destinations is also very important in order to overcome the
increased competition between destinations. There is a general feeling that places can be branded in many a similar way to products; Chernatony and McDonald (cited in Morgan and Pritchard 1998: p146) define a brand as:

"...an identifiable product, service, person or place, augmented in such a way that the buyer or user perceived relevant unique added values which match their needs most closely...its success results from being able to sustain these added values in the face of competition."

Morgan and Pritchard (1998) recognise the importance of branding as a method to develop a strong destination amongst competition however they also note that "it is more difficult to brand a destination as it is not a single product but a composite product consisting of a bundle of different components" Morgan and Pritchard (1998: p147). This demonstrates a lack of control over the individual products and therefore Morgan and Pritchard (1998) conclude that the promotional element of the marketing mix is the most well used in destination marketing strategies. Having looked at the marketing mix in section 2.2 it can be argued that the Dyfi Valley Attractions as a destination marketing tool, use many elements of the marketing mix to great effect, therefore it will be worthwhile to note any reliance on the promotional mix through the case studies in this research.

2.3.4. Public Sector Organisations in Destination Marketing

The increase in destination competitiveness has seen a strengthening in the role of the Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) (Ritchie and Crouch, 2003). There are many levels such as national and regional. In the context of the Dyfi Valley Attractions, the main regional organisation is the 'Tourism Partnership Mid Wales' (TPMW); the Wales wide DMO is the 'Wales Tourist Board' (WTB); and the UK DMO is currently 'Visit Britain'. Each of these organisations has a responsibility for overarching strategic direction. As stated by the WTB (http://www.wtbonline.gov.uk) the:
"Wales Tourist Board’s principal role is to provide leadership and strategic direction to the tourism industry in Wales. The Wales Tourist Board has led the preparation of a succession of medium-term national tourism strategies - key policy documents which identify effective responses to the main challengers which confront tourism in Wales. These strategies define a vision for tourism, establish priorities for partnership action and set targets for growth.”

This statement outlines the strategic nature of the organisation and that they have a remit to overcome the challenges that ‘confront tourism in Wales’. The statement above goes on to mention key points that the strategy aims to address which are:

- “Improve the competitiveness of Welsh tourism;
- Raise the profile and status of the industry generally and increase recognition of its economic performance;
- Adopt a customer-focused approach which understands and responds to market needs;
- Improve understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the different organisations involved in tourism and identify opportunities for effective partnership working;
- Promote growth in tourism through sustainable means.”

The interesting part of these key points is that they are working to “identify opportunities for effective partnership working”. This priority item has filtered down to the TPMWs strategy, which has a more direct impact on the Dyfi Valley Attractions. The TPMW have six priority items in their strategy, of which one of them is ‘partnerships’. In the strategy they mention:

“Capitalising on the potential of tourism in Mid Wales through partnerships between all tourism stakeholders” (TPMW; http://www.tpmw.co.uk)

The fact that these organisations recognise the importance of tourism partnerships could be a strong reason why organisations such as the Dyfi Valley Attractions have formed. In order to achieve these priority items and to encourage partnership growth in Wales and Mid-Wales both the WTB and TPMW have at some stage offered a scheme of match funding for partnerships within the regional or national boundaries. These schemes are funded directly from European Union (EU) Objective 1 funds, which is in place to:
“create a more prosperous environment, where all communities share an improving quality of life. The programme has set seven priorities and all projects must fit within detailed criteria of at least one priority. In general terms these are; Expanding and developing the SME base, Developing information and Knowledge based economy, Community Economic Regeneration, Developing People, Rural Development and the Sustainable use of natural resources, Strategic Infrastructure Development and Use of Technical Assistance” (http://www.wefo.wales.gov.uk/)

The tourism partnership fits into the aims of the EU objective 1 funding; it meets the priorities of expanding and developing the SME base because it provides the tourism SMEs with an opportunity for increased marketing activity. It can also be said that tourism partnerships provide and pool knowledge, therefore they contribute to developing information and knowledge.

It can be concluded from this that the tourism partnership is seen as a positive method for improving destination competitiveness, and improving the lives therefore of the local communities who rely on tourism in these areas. The DMOs, it would appear, therefore see that the advantages of tourism consortia outweigh the disadvantages, as illustrated in section 2.6.3 and 2.6.4. The monetary rewards associated with EU objective 1 grants, for setting up partnerships with local tourism providers could therefore be a strong incentive and motivation behind the trend towards tourism consortia in the UK.
2.4. **UK Tourism**

This study is based upon the issues and trends apparent in the UK market therefore this chapter will look at the current trends in UK tourism. It is hoped that the findings will further strengthen the argument for tourism consortia and offer some suggestions as to the future of the market and the potential problems for partnerships.

2.4.1. **Current Situation**

The England Marketing Advisory Board (EMAB, 2003) makes some relevant statements about the current tourism climate in the UK. They comment that domestic tourism expenditure is up between 1996 and 2002, mainly due to an increase in Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) and holiday-taking by the British market. This increase in domestic tourism is despite recent growth in low-cost airlines and reflects the trend towards the 1-3 night ‘leisure break’. The EMAB make observations on how the market is changing. There are an increasing number of active, middle aged and elderly with higher travel expectations and demands. There are also other key markets, benefiting from full time employment and more likely to take a higher number of short breaks. This supports that the current UK domestic market looks to be relatively buoyant; with a high level of available leisure spend and time.

This leisure break is however under much competition. With increasingly viable short breaks abroad facilitated by low-cost airlines, coupled with the level of competition in the UK market alone, tourism operators have to market very effectively to gain market share. This competition within the UK, and increasingly outside the UK, for the short or leisure break emphasises the previous findings in section 2.3.3 about the importance of creating a competitive destination, for attracting market share.
On the positive side, one of the main advantages in the trend towards leisure breaks is that consumers are becoming more inclined to take numerous short trips in one year. EMAB suggest that this market has seen the largest area of growth and there is “considerable opportunity to encourage people to take second holidays in the short leisure breaks... throughout the year.” (EMBA 2002: p12) The question for operators is ‘how to attract the attention of this huge potential market above other destinations?’ Mintel (2002) explains why there may have been an increase in leisure breaks. It is seen that there has been a significant increase in the proportion of ABC1s in the population, an increase of 8.4% from 1989 to 2001. This increase has been helped by the rise in working women which has raised the average household disposable income, allowing a higher percentage of households to take more than one holiday a year. The choice of destination for the main holiday is strongly influenced by a guarantee of warm weather, which the UK cannot supply. Coupled with the strength of the pound and the increase in low-cost flights the proposition of reasonably-priced overseas holidays for UK tourists provides strong competition. Domestic tourism is however protected from this by important life stage factors. Older consumers are likely to favour domestic tourism because of familiarity, nostalgia and ease of access. Affluent empty nesters have time, money and energy to indulge themselves in several holidays a year both abroad and in the UK. Young families are an important target market as travelling abroad with young children is not considered an easy option.

Mintel (2002) goes on to argue current factors against domestic tourism. It mentions that transport is a huge problem in the UK, with overcrowded roads, the high cost of petrol and the lack of other more suitable options, e.g. rail or bus. Another factor against the UK service industry in general, which Mintel (2002) states, is that:
“Britain has not yet managed to shake its reputation for poor service, which results from poor levels of pay, inadequate training and under-motivated staff.”

The UK tourism market therefore has to ‘compete’ with overseas destinations and overcome more localised problems of poor transport and the poor perception of the service industry in the UK. Section 2.3.3 tackled the notion of destination image and branding. These poor perceptions therefore need to be dealt with carefully on a destination level, and fed through into the brand and image.

These findings complement the theoretical discussions of a competitive destination and point to the fact that the increased UK and global competition has forced destinations to act together to drive destination appeal and ultimately, success. Hall et al. (2005) backs this up by mentioning that a constant emergence of competitors has reduced the competitive edge of some destinations within a rural context. With more leisure time and spend the UK market is a big resource for tourism destinations, and so competition between them is rife. The literature has so far made very little reference to the crucial tourism businesses that make up a destination.
2.5. UK Small Tourism Businesses

The UK tourism industry, and in particular Wales, is made up largely of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). This has been attributed by Quinn et al. (1992: cited in Ritchie and Crouch, 2003: p140) "to the relatively low entry barriers, the small number of restrictions that are imposed and the few skills required". Ritchie and Crouch (2003: p140) add another element which is "the desire by many to mix pleasure with business by turning a leisure hobby into a living". For this reason the literature will analyse the particular characteristics of SMEs. This may have a bearing on the reasons why tourism businesses seek to market co-operatively.

SMEs have many inherent characteristics. The first summarised by Carson et al. (1995) and Burns (2001) is their lack of financial resources. This has many implications; "firstly it constrains the strategies they can adopt ... and secondly it dictates that business decisions must have a quick pay-off" (Burns, 2001: p9). This has an impact on the marketing of the SME, for example strategies involving expensive advertising or TV promotions are not realistic. Marketing strategies have to be tailored to suit a small budget. The second problem is that marketing effort needs short term 'pay-offs' which has an impact on the ability to put the needs of the consumer first, as discussed in section 2.2. A long term marketing strategy which identifies the consumer and their needs, will look to address the requirements in terms of; product, price, place and promotion. A short term and 'quick fix' approach will take advantage of advertising opportunities and promotional offers which are not tied into any long term vision.

The second characteristic described by Burns (2001: p9), is that "small firms are likely to operate in a single market, or a limited range of markets, probably offering a limited
range of products or services”. This has big risk factors associated with it, for example, if the main and only source of revenue becomes out of date or not in line with consumer needs then the business needs to invest heavily on bringing the product back in line with consumer needs. Big businesses that have a range of products in a portfolio can bring money from the more successful areas to fund those that are performing less well. Another important characteristic of the SME is that because of the small size, it does not have “the benefit of a team of specialist experts in functional aspects of the business but instead must rely upon generalist Jack-of-all-trades individuals” (Carson et al., 1995: p81).

Jobber (cited in Morgan, 1996: p293) identifies five barriers to implementing the marketing concepts, as agreed in section 2.2, which add to the characteristics of the SME. These five barriers are:

1. High-cost solutions: giving greater satisfaction to the customers may cost more money.
2. Unquantifiable benefits: the exact return on this additional cost may be difficult to quantify, particularly in the short term.
3. Personal ambitions: individuals in the organisation may put their own priorities above that of satisfying the customer. These may be a narrow obsession with technical aspects of the work, preserving or expanding personal empires, or simply a desire for an easy life.
4. Reward systems discourage the marketing-orientated approach: these may encourage maximising sales or cutting costs without concern for quality offered.
5. Saying rather than doing: top managers may pay lip service to customer satisfaction and then cut back the funds needed to achieve it.”

To summarise, overall marketing characteristics of a SME, it has been seen that they are small, and therefore limited in the number of specialist employees. SMEs have limited financial resources which impact upon their marketing plans and steer them towards quick fix tactics. These tactics, particularly short term are difficult to quantify and therefore their benefits unknown. Also, they are dependant on a limited scope of
operations to make profit and the management are keen to achieve personal ambition, above the needs of the business.

These characteristics coupled with the characteristics of marketing, tourism, UK tourism environment and the tourism destination have started to unravel a picture as to why SMEs form partnerships, networks or consortia. In order to meet the needs and expectations of the consumer (the basic promise of marketing identified in 2.2), the businesses needs to firstly identify the consumer base; which can be costly and time consuming. At a destination level, the main market consumer may be shared amongst many operators therefore research can be undertaken jointly to benefit the organisations. A destination then has to make its brand and image noticed amongst all the other marketing messages from competing UK and overseas destinations. As the UK tourism industry is largely made up of SMEs the role of ‘destination marketing’ becomes a collective enterprise and is vital in order to retain a high market share. Tourism SMEs within the destination have limited marketing budgets and therefore an individual effort to raise the profile of an area is generally limited. Tourism SMEs are mostly reliant on one or two products to sustain an income and therefore methods must be sought that can bring customers into an area. Therefore Jones and Haven-Tang (2005: p365) state that “it is important for the different elements of the tourism product in the destination to work together to attract and meet the needs of ‘new’ tourist markets” and goes on to say that “European rural destinations ... illustrate that cooperation between stakeholders enables wider development goals to be achieved” (p371).

The literature has so far outlined clear motivations and benefits for UK SMEs to form tourism partnerships and has even suggested potential benefits to the organisations and the destination.
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2.6. Consortia

This section looks at ‘consortia’ and how they operate in light of the academic literature that has been developed to understand motivations and processes. This section also identifies some of the models that have been developed as a way of exploring areas for framework development in this study.

2.6.1. Definitions

This section aims to look at the different terms used to describe ‘tourism consortia’ within current research. There are several ways to name the joint working of separate businesses in tourism marketing currently which are; consortium, partnerships, collaborations or co-operations. These four are looked at below with regard to their definitions as given by the Oxford English Dictionary (2004: http://athens.oed.com):

- **Consortia**: “Partnership, association. Now more specifically, an association of business, banking, or manufacturing organizations” (http://athens.oed.com)
- **Partnership**: “The fact or condition of being a partner; association or participation. Now esp. of relationships in industry and politics” (http://athens.oed.com)
- **Collaboration**: “United labour, co-operation & Traitorous cooperation with the enemy” (http://athens.oed.com)
- **Co-operation**: “The action of co-operating, i.e. of working together towards the same end, purpose, or effect; joint operation” (http://athens.oed.com)

The term ‘consortia’ as referenced by the OED gives the feeling of a formal partnership or ‘association of businesses’. This term is more currently used in the tourism industry and the formality of the definition is important because it defines those organisations working together on a permanent and formal basis.

The term ‘partnership’ again brings a sense of formality to the joint working of organisations, and brings in ‘relationships in industry’. This is again a definition of a
formal and concrete working arrangement and also used by the tourism industry to
describe joint working of tourism operators.

‘Collaboration’ has a similar definition of having ‘co-operation’, however it does not
imply the formal bonds between the organisations. Its reference to working ‘with the
enemy’, in some situations may be considered apt.

The term ‘co-operation’ is again very appropriate to this study, with words such as
‘working together, same end, purpose, joint operation’. These are all key words
however the formal element is not suggested and therefore would be less desirable than
the other definitions.

For this study the term ‘consortia’ and ‘partnership’ will be largely used, however
references to ‘co-operation’ and ‘collaboration’ will be used in places, where
appropriate. It seems that all the definitions describe a working relationship between
businesses to achieve some predetermined benefit, with collaboration and co-operation
suggesting a shorter term arrangement; therefore they are all appropriate in this study.

2.6.2. Understanding Tourism Consortia

The next key question to discover is ‘what is a tourism consortium?’ This section will
therefore attempt to analyse a range of statements made in order to answer this key
question, and produce a workable definition for this study. There have been many
references in the literature made to ‘tourism consortia’ however to get a full picture,
definitions involving; collaboration, co-operation and partnerships, are included in the
research.
The first definition of ‘partnerships’ given here is by Selin and Chavez (1995; cited in Bramwell & Lane. 2000: pg 129), which states that:

"The emerging partnerships can be defined as situations where there is 'pooling or sharing of appreciations or resources (information, money, labour, etc.) among two or more tourism stakeholders to solve a problem or create an opportunity that neither can address individually"

One of the key points in this definition is that they see the partnerships as ‘emerging’ and therefore a relatively new phenomenon when this was written, 10 years ago, by Selin and Chavez (1995). The next key point is to bring together tourism stakeholders in a pooling or sharing of resources, which can be money, information, labour, etc. Finally this pooling or sharing of resources is conducted to solve a problem or to create an opportunity. This final point is important to view these partnerships as a business solution to problems or opportunities. This statement does not explore what problems and opportunities the industry is currently facing, to force these partnerships to emerge. However it links to findings in section 2.3.3, where there is a ‘pooling of resources’ to overcome problems such as distribution and increased competition from rival destinations.

This definition of tourism consortia is expanded by Gray (1989: p11, cited in Bramwell & Lane. 2000: p132) who defines collaboration “as a process of joint decision making among key stakeholders of a problem domain about the future of that domain”. This highlights the elements of joint working and of the problem domain as identified above. Gray (1989: cited in Bramwell & Lane. 2000: pg132) proceeds to identify five characteristics critical to the collaborative process:

"(1) stakeholders and interdependent;
(2) solutions emerge by dealing constructively with differences;
(3) joint ownership of decisions involved;"
(4) stakeholders assume collective responsibility for the future direction of the domain;
(5) collaboration is an emergent process.”

This is an interesting look at the process of tourism consortia and helps to see some of the critical factors that might influence observations made further in this study.

The previous findings about relationships between stakeholders working towards a problem domain are backed up further by Bramwell & Lane (2000: p4) who emphasises that:

“Collaboration involves relationships between stakeholders when those parties interact with each other in relation to a common issue or ‘problem domain’. Each stakeholder controls resources, such as knowledge, expertise, constituency and capital, but on their own they are unlikely to possess all the resources necessary to achieve their objectives and to plan effectively for their future in relation to a significant tourism development issue”

This definition proposes that each controlling stakeholder is unlikely, as an individual, to achieve objectives and plan for the future in an effective manner ‘in relation to a significant tourism development issue’. It is also argued that a tourism consortium is not just formed to solve problems but also seeks out opportunities in a proactive way. The definition also looks into the sharing of resources and it would be an interesting study to see if there is a dominant collaborated resource, or whether that depends on the nature and objectives of the consortium. Bramwell & Lane (2000: pg 4) addresses the issue of creating opportunities in a later statement which identifies that:

“Stakeholders may work together if they consider that their chances of realising their goals and creating new opportunities in a problem domain are greater by performing jointly rather than acting alone”

It will be interesting to note in the primary research whether consortia are formed in order to create an opportunity or to solve a problem, how this relates to their operating objectives and the problem domain.
For this study it will be important to pick out the key aspects of tourism consortia for a working definition. The key areas identified in the literature relate to stakeholders, pooling and sharing resources, the problem domain and joint working. Therefore the author proposes a working definition of tourism consortia as:

'A number of 'independent tourism operators' who work jointly to overcome a problem or create an opportunity; with a shared vision and resources for mutual benefit.'

2.6.3. Advantages of Consortia

There are many advantages of working collaboratively in the tourism industry, all of which vary in importance to each consortium. Gray and Huxham (1996, cited in Bramwell & Lane, 2000: Pg 7), identify a number of advantages to partnership working, which are summarised below:

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

When multiple stakeholders are engaged in decision making the resulting policies may be more flexible and also more sensitive to local circumstances and to changing conditions.

Non tourism activities may be encouraged, leading to broadening of the economic, employment and societal base of a given community or region."

In summary this highlights that the main advantages of collaborative working are that there is a range of knowledge, skills and personalities which can have a huge positive outcome for working practices, local acceptance and innovation. This sharing of skills and abilities coupled with transparent working practices can lead to a better understanding of the various tourism concerns and best practice schemes between similar businesses. These all appear to be indirect outcomes. The more direct advantages, and probable reason for collaboration, may derive from the pooling of resources, which was also mentioned above.

2.6.4. Limitations of Consortia

Having looked at the advantages, it is equally important to view the disadvantages of tourism consortia, to understand some of the difficulties that can be faced. Gray and Huxham (1996: cited in Bramwell & Lane, 2000: p9) identify a number of disadvantages of partnership as stated below:

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

There are a number of limitations that have been identified above. To summarise it seems that the persons involved have a large effect on the outcomes; for example a strong political figure may weald a greater power and authority over others in the group. This can have an adverse effect on innovation as the need to reach consensus in the time available is a priority. It may also be that there are limited traditions of collaboration or that the efforts are merely a front to 'paper over' other more important issues. The other limitation identified was the reduced effect consortia working could have on healthy competition; or it could go too far and create a cartel where the power is too great.
These advantages and disadvantages will become more apparent as the study unfolds and are a useful check list when undertaking the research.
2.6.5. Tourism Consortia Frameworks

The study of frameworks is vital to this study as one of the aims is to produce a framework of best practice in tourism consortia. A number of models and frameworks are considered here to establish the current thinking within academic literature.

The first to be explored is the three stage model as developed by Jamel & Getz (1995: cited in Bramwell and Lane, 2000: p10). This model outlines the flow of development and they explain that:

"The first stage consists of problem setting (identifying key stakeholders and issues), and is followed by the second stage of direction setting (identifying and sharing future collaborative interpretations; appreciating a sense of common purpose). The third stage is implementation (institutionalising the shared meaning that emerge as the domain develops), which may or may not be required, depending on the nature and objective of the collaboration (Jamel & Getz, 1995: p189)"

The flow of problem setting, direction setting and implementation can be obvious in many business environments however it highlights issues that occur in each of those sections. Problem setting involves identifying stakeholders and issues, for example potential partners. The second stage includes, "identifying and sharing future collaborative interpretations; appreciating a sense of common purpose" this would involve, bringing the shareholders together and working through the general direction and agreeing the desired outcomes and targets. The final stage implementation is about delivering the outcomes of stage two. This process does not include any systems for monitoring or evaluation and does not explore any of the motivations behind setting up.

Gray (1996 cited in Bramwell and Lane, 2000: p10) suggests that:

"not all collaborations proceed through three phases and that 'the phases are not necessarily separate and distinct in practice. Overlapping and recycling back to earlier issues that were not addressed may be necessary"
This shows the dynamic and changing nature of tourism consortia.

![Diagram of tourism consortium stages](image)

**Figure 2-1; Jamel and Getz, 1995: p189, with two added stages by Salin and Chavez (1995) (cited in Bramwell & Lane, 2000: p9)**

The model proposed by Jamel and Getz (1995) was recreated with two extra stages by Salin and Chavez (1995 cited in Bramwell and Lane, 2000: p11). This is shown in figure 2.1 with the extra stage -antecedents- added to the beginning and another -impact on the problem domain- at the end. The antecedents stage, reflects the planning, opportunities and decision making stages. The final stage ‘impact on the problem domain’ would be seen as a period of monitoring and evaluating the in line with the aims and objectives. Salin and Chavez (1995) also identifies that the final stage either formulates, and comes up with the final and future course for the partnership or the ending of the consortium. This model therefore explores the initial stages of partnership working and the stages of planning and formulating a workable structure. It seems that a linear framework would result in this finality, however as we have seen the consortia is a dynamic entity and therefore a more flexible framework would best cover the whole processes of a tourism consortia.

The whole diagram shown in figure 2.2 opens up the initial ‘antecedents’ stage of Figure 2.1 because it looks at the justification and decision making process. It then looks at the actual process of collaboration in the ‘Periphery Marketing Strategies’ stage
that could correspond with Jamel and Getz's (1995) stage of 'problem setting' and then the 'Periphery Positives' could be seen to relate to 'direction setting' in Figure 2.1.

**Peripheral Small Firm Weaknesses**
- Seasonality / Underutilisation of assets
- Scarce quality human resources
- Declining traditional markets
- Corporate group market dominance
- Variable management quality and capabilities
- Constrained financial resources
- Geographically remote
- Fragmented industry structure
- Public sector dependency culture

**Consortia Membership**
- Networking opportunities
- Economies of scale
- Marketing expertise
- Distribution Networks
- Education and training
- Financial resources

**Peripheral Positives**
- Distinctive climate
- Solitude
- Physical characteristics
- Authentic product
- Growth in 'green' markets
- Personalised management
- Public policy support

**Periphery Marketing Strategies**
- Product differentiation
- Product extension
- Market diversification
- Flexible specialisation

Figure 2-2; Morrison (1998). Justification for small firm consortia membership in peripheral tourism destination

This framework relates specifically to peripheral tourism, which is a characteristic of the Dyfi Valley. This framework can therefore be contextualised using the Dyfi Valley Attractions. Their inherent weaknesses due to being a peripheral rural tourism destination are that they suffer from; seasonality / under-utilisation of assets, constrained financial resources, geographic remoteness. These are all factors which would contribute to each attractions motivation for forming a tourism consortia.

The opportunities available for the individual attractions upon forming consortia as mentioned by Morrison (1998) are; networking opportunities, economies of scale, marketing expertise, distribution networks, education and training, and financial
resources. The Dyfi Valley Attractions have joint leaflets which are an example of the benefits of economies of scale and distribution networks. Many of these opportunities have also been touched upon in this study, for example, the economies of scale and distribution networks were looked at in section 2.6.3 and 2.2.3 respectively, and financial resources through DMOs incentive schemes were mentioned in section 2.3.4. This looks at other motivations however, such as networking opportunities, marketing expertise and education and training. This study explored the presence/absence of the factors (see chapter 4).

Periphery Marketing Strategies are put in place by the Dyfi Valley Attractions to overcome issues such as ‘destination competition’ by differentiating the product from others in order to create an added benefit for visiting the Dyfi Valley over other destinations. These strategies would focus on ‘Peripheral Positives’ such as solitude, and the growth in ‘green’ markets as is the case for the Dyfi Valley Attractions. These ‘peripheral positives’ are the makings of the weaknesses for peripheral small firms and therefore the cycle continues.

Morrison (1998) states that consortium type networks in periphery areas are vitally important for small firms due to the innate weaknesses and characteristics. The benefits of joining partnership led schemes have the potential to be quite significant. For example:

“It facilitates an enhanced profile of both the individual and the destination through branding, pooled marketing, managerial and financial resources and enables effective domestic and international marketing strategies, and collective entrepreneurship fuels the innovative capacity of the organisation.” Morrison (1998: p197)
This is however not without its pitfalls because the nature of partnership working is “extremely complex in nature and represents a formidable management challenge” Morrison (1998:197). Morrison (1998 p197) also goes on to say that the benefits are:

“Directly influenced by: member behaviour and characteristics; the achievements of a strategic fit between the small firm and the consortium and the practices and procedures implemented by management over time”

The diagram in figure 2.2 shows the potential factors behind the decision to create a partnership, including the weaknesses of peripheral small firms and the benefits and strategies that they will utilise in a partnership environment. This framework is a useful tool to determine the motivations behind joining a tourism consortium and the weaknesses inherent in SME marketing. This framework is a very useful insight in that it explores possible functions that the consortia may have over individual business practice and therefore provides an interesting starting point for further investigation into the practices of partnerships. This is however less of a framework for ‘best practice’ and more of an exploratory look at the motivations and justification for membership in tourism consortia.

After researching various business life cycle models Caffyn (2000: cited in Bramwell and Lane, 2000: p225) proposes a lifecycle framework of tourism consortia in figure 2.3. The lifecycle is a result of previous models, practical examples and case study research. Caffyn puts forward a lifecycle with six stages; pre-partnership, take off, growth, prime, deceleration, and ‘after-life’.

Pre-partnership in this framework is similar to ‘problem setting’ as defined by Jamel and Getz (figure 2.1) in that it is about “exploring ideas, formulating objectives, securing commitment and funding and developing a common purpose” Caffyn (2000:
Stage six can be one of two phases, either continuation or after-life. Continuation is where the partnership contains the loss of momentum and continues to be successful for a number of years and after-life is where it ceases to operate.

There are then eight possible outcomes for continuing with the partnership for the future which can apply after phase four or five. These are that; the community takes it on, it is absorbed into a bigger partnership, it is split between the partners, it is taken on by one organisation, it continues in a different form, it continues the same, it spawns other projects or it finishes completely. This is an interesting view of the outcomes of a partnership however this study will be focusing on the main elements of partnership working rather than the after-life stages of the consortia.

The main outcomes of the model, shown in figure 2-3, are that it provides a planning tool for management to assess the stage that they are currently in and strategise in order to transfer from one stage to the other without too much disruption. Although the ‘y’ axis in figure 2.3 is in terms of success the research does not demonstrate the question ‘what is success for a partnership?’ This question could therefore be an avenue for possible further research.
Figure 2-3; Caffyn (2000) (cited in Bramwell & Lane 2000)
The European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) model is a management framework model which is based on nine criteria. As shown in the figure 2.4, five of these criteria are ‘enablers’ and four of the criteria are ‘results’. This means that the enablers are the processes the organisation undertakes and the results are the outcomes of the processes (www.efqm.org). The model is dynamic in its nature and it also shows a cyclical process as innovation and learning feeds back to enhance enablers which in turn produces improved results. The nine criterion will be briefly outlined below.

Figure 2-4.; EFQM Excellence Model, www.efqm.org

Leadership is important to the future of an organisation; EFQM (www.efqm.org) state that “excellent leaders develop and facilitate the achievement of the mission and vision.” This is the starting point of the model which feeds into three more enablers which are;

Policy and strategy; the EFQM argue that in order to successfully implement the mission and vision, it has to be translated into clear policy and strategy.

People; an organisation benefits greatly from carefully managing and developing staff.

Partnerships and resources; internal and external resources and partnerships are at the core of “balancing the current and future needs of the organisation, the community and
the environment” (www.efqm.org). These three enablers then feed into the final enabler:

Processes, which should have the intention of “fully satisfying and generating increased value for customers and other stakeholders” (www.efqm.org). These processes produce three results which are; Customer results, people results and society results. This shows that an organisation’s responsibility is not just to its customers but to its staff and the society. These Key Performance results then need to be measured in “respect to the key element of their policy and strategy” (www.efqm.org).

The EFQM model is different from the other models considered in this literature review as it is not specific for tourism consortia. Its value is that it is intended to be a quality management model for any organisation. It is also dynamic, which it has been mentioned is a key factor of tourism consortia.

Most of these frameworks hold a very linear or cyclical view of process, development and lifecycle. It will be interesting to note whether consortia do in fact follow a very linear and uniform process, or whether each case study proves too unique. The lifecycle framework may be a useful tool for exploring with practitioners the stages that they are in and evaluating the process to get there and what they can expect for the future. Each framework discussed in this chapter seeks to identify different aspects of tourism consortia, from conception through to processes and lifecycle, except the EFQM Excellence Model which is a broad management model for any organisation. It may be an option to merge these factors or use particular elements for one framework; however the study may show that a particular method best represents the workings of a tourism consortium. This study looks to create a framework for best practice in tourism consortia, and it is hoped to build upon the previous findings.
2.7. Summary

The discussion for this literature review has been to establish clear motivation behind tourism businesses forming tourism marketing consortia. From the literature the author has put together a flow diagram outlining the Motivations of Tourism Marketing Consortia (MOTMAC; figure 2.5) which brings together some of the key elements.

![Flow diagram]

Figure 2-5; MOTOMAC (2005)

The increase in UK tourism competitors and the nature of the current market has dramatically increased competition between tourism destinations. This has given way to a shared problem between local tourism suppliers and prompted the public sector bodies to seek out ways to increase destination competitiveness. These two events have encouraged tourism competitors to join together to work towards solving this issue. In order to market the destination effectively money has to be spent on branding and marketing. To create a more tangible tourism product, this usually involves material such as leaflets and websites which need to be marketed and distributed. Individually, local tourism SMEs would not have had the capacity to achieve this in terms of money, expertise and time. However working jointly and with the support of public sector organisations this becomes a realistic proposition and a single, more powerful destination brand can be employed.
This study will look into some of the elements that make up the model in figure 2.5 with the aim of challenging its validity and creating a refined framework of best practice that can be applied to tourism marketing consortia within the UK using the current frameworks as a tool for analysis and comparison.
3. Research Methodology

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3.1. Overall approach

This chapter has the aim of explaining the research structure in this study. It will be seen in this chapter that two types of research methodology took place, action research and case study research, to reach the desired end result for this research question.

Crotty (1998) breaks research into its methodology and its methods. The method "describe[s] the concrete techniques and procedures we plan to use... [and the methodology] describe[s] our strategy or plan of action" (Crotty, 1998; p6-7). It is shown in this chapter that there are two clear research strategies; action research and case study research, each with their own very separate methods or techniques. For example, case study research uses interviews and observation and action research uses documentation and written reflections.

![Figure 3-1. Pictorial representation of the combination of action research and case studies to progress from exploration to explanation of the research question.](image)

Figure 3.1 shows that by combining these two types of research in this study, it enabled progression from a period of exploration to explanation. The whole research question is set within a backdrop of action research, where the researcher is working for the Dyfi Valley Attractions tourism consortium. This backdrop along with the literature review
put together a picture for initiating the case study research. The outcomes of the first and second phase of the case study research (see chapter 4) were subject to reflection and review before the next phase of the research took place. This reflection and review is typical of an action research cycle and is critical in order to develop a path from exploration to explanation; clarifying and substantiating key points which fed into the final model. Each phase was therefore built upon using the experience of the previous case studies and the ‘action research’ gained during the work for the Dyfi Valley Attractions consortium. Classic multiple-case study methodology was also rigidly adhered to within each case study phase. The line of questioning and investigation for the three case studies in each phase remained consistent so that appropriate comparisons or differences could be reported upon.

It was initially hoped that the Dyfi Valley Attractions consortium would become a central part of the research methodology. As the research developed, it became clear that the consortium provided the inspiration to initiate the programme of research and then merely an additional tool, through action research, with which to examine the findings from the case studies. This may well have been because the case studies evolved rapidly into an informative picture of the nature of tourism consortia, whilst the KTP project was being held back by the differing opinions of the four partners and the limited financial resources.

This methodology chapter expands further on this overview and looks at the rationale behind the choices of research methodology within this study and the choices of method assigned to each.
3.2. Action Research

Although there is no recognised and formal definition of action research there are however many agreed characteristics. Lashley (2000: p315) comments that “action research involves inquiry with the object of acting on the social situations”. This begins to highlight the theme that action research involves looking into social situations, outside the research institution. Zuber-Skerritt (1991: cited in Lashley, 2000: p315) continues this theme by stating that “action research is a process by which groups of people work on real issues and problems, carrying real responsibility in real conditions”. This quote refers to work issues in ‘real conditions’ and is backed up by Eden and Huxham (1996: p75) who say that “the common theme ... is that the research output results from an involvement with members of an organisation over a matter which is of genuine concern to them”. This is a situation similar to the one faced here between the researcher and the Dyfi Valley Attractions consortium and so action research was highlighted as a key research technique. Eden and Huxham (1996: p77), reflect upon a two way process between the researcher and the practitioner, where the researcher “contributes to the practitioners world and the practitioner becomes involved in and contributed directly to the study” The researcher in this study was employed by a university on a two year contract to undertake strategic management tasks for the Dyfi Valley Attractions consortium and was therefore contributing to the practitioners world, in turn the practitioners were directly involved with contributing to the study.

One of the key arguments for action research is that much research has minimal effect on the working practices of practitioners even through the “indirect effect on management and organisational practice through graduates trained by the academics who do research” (Zuber-Skerrit and Perry, 2002: p176). Action research aims to
readdress this balance by being conducted within a real life situation, with practical outcomes. This is separate from learning though practice in that it is concerned with theory generation (Lashley, 2000). This study was set within an organisation where there was concern for the generation of best practice consistent with valid concepts or models that were, in turn built from the multiple case study research.

3.2.1. Approach to Action Research

The use of action research for this study was important to provide research that was relevant to the organisation and to legitimate the approach in academic terms. The researcher was working with the Dyfi Valley Attractions tourism consortium on a two-year contract with the university. This contact with the organisation was a corner stone of action research and was vital to obtain the kind of interaction and exchange that facilitates richness of data and knowledge. This is different to traditional research as a “hard boundary separates the researcher from the systems that s/he is researching” (Zuber-Skerritt and Perry, 2002: p174). These authors suggest that where research has the aim of looking into the softer systems of management and organisational learning, action research is a more appropriate method.

It has to be remembered however, that this study is a mixture of the two; traditional case study research and action research. The one part looked closely at the workings of a consortium through action research methods. For this part the researcher was working for the Dyfi Valley Attractions. The other part investigated the research question through case study methodology with the researcher in an external position to the organisations studied. However as will be seen in the case study section (3.3) that the case studies evolved through phases using methods similar to those in an action research setting and therefore action research is relevant to both research ‘methodologies’.
3.2.2. The three reflection approach

In order to carry out the action research, three distinctive channels of action research practice were identified (Reason and Torbert, 2001: cited in Reason and Bradbury 2001: chapter 23). These are shown in Table 3.1.

| First Person Action Research | Practice skills and methods addresses the ability of the researcher to foster an inquiring approach to his or her own life, to act with awareness and to choose carefully and to assess effects in the outside world. First Person practice brings inquiry into more and more of our moments of action – not as outside researchers but in the whole range of everyday activities. |
| Second Person Action Research | Practice addresses our ability to inquire face-to-face with others into issues of mutual concern, for example in the service of improving our personal and professional practice both individually and separately. Second Person inquiry starts with interpersonal dialogue and includes the development of communities of inquiry and learning organisations. |
| Third Person Action Research | Practice aims to extend these relatively small-scale projects so that 'rather than being defined exclusively as “scientific happenings” they (are) also defined as “political events” (Toulmin and Gustavsen, 1996). Third person strategies aim to create a wider community of inquiry involving persons who, because they cannot be known to each other face-to-face (say, in a large, geographically dispersed corporation), have an impersonal quality. Writing and other reporting of the process and outcomes of inquiries can also be an important for a third person inquiry. |

Table 3-1 Reason and Torbert (2001 cited by Reason and Bradbury, 2001: chapter 23)

Reason and Torbert (2001) divide the method of action research into three clearly distinguishable and separate entities. This is a useful tool in order to choose and analyse suitable data from the wealth available and it provided a structure for the action research process.

First person action research for this study was about “bringing enquiry into more and more of our moments of action” Reason (2001: p4). It therefore included personal reflections at 12 and 18 month intervals, to record moments of action for later enquiry (see page 7-74). The personal reflections are an analysis of the day to day running of the tourism consortia and are documented in narrative form in the appendix, which includes problems that have been experienced and how things have moved forward. This also demonstrates the 'effects on the outside world whilst acting'. The personal reflections
were circulated no wider than the research team, to allow for frank and honest opinions to be recorded.

Second person action research includes more formal documents such as the end of year one report, minutes from the project review meetings and a written recommendation of the researcher from within the community of enquiry (page 7-81). These are part of the formal business documents that were produced on a regular basis and were circulated within the community of enquiry. These documents show a wider understanding of the workings of tourism consortia from within the community of inquiry and show problems, successes and areas to be improved. These documents show differing knowledge and perspectives to the researcher (first person analysis), and therefore develop upon the initial first person enquiries.

Third person action research includes documents such as reports of surveys on the consumers to the four attractions of the consortium (see page 7-102). They were produced approximately three times per year, and were circulated within the community of enquiry to provide a basis for the Dyfi Valley Attractions annual review. These documents created another angle on the investigation, and completed the three phases of action research. However the third person research was the most difficult to source for this study and it is limited in its offerings to the line of enquiry.

3.2.3. Action Cycles

The comparisons drawn up between action research and Kolb’s Learning Styles (cited in Lashley, 1995) as stated in Lashley (2000), are very interesting and pose another useful way of using and evaluating the action research process. It is noted by Lashley (2000) that action research is cyclical in nature and therefore goes on to draw parallels
with Kolb’s Learning Styles, which goes through a process of research, reflection, theorising and acting (as shown in figure 3.2).

![Kolb's Learning Styles Diagram](image)

**Figure 3-2; Kolb’s Learning Styles (source Lashley, 1995)**

Using Kolb’s Learning Styles model (figure 3.2) in the context of action research, it is almost possible to trace the steps undertaken in an action research project. Action research literature refers to this basic cycle of action and critical reflection (see Figure 3.3). Dick (2002) proposes such a cycle where “*during reflection people first examine what happened previously – they review, they then decide what to do next – they plan*”. This period of planning is then developed in his paper to include a second stage in the cycle. This cycle, based on an action research perspective is starting to look similar to the Kolb’s Learning Styles (Figure 3.2), with the exception of ‘experience’.

Kolb’s Cycle fits with this action research project in that it involves ‘active experimentation’ or ‘doing’, which results in the experience; this is important because without the experience there is no record with which to learn from. Reflection is the stage that follows the experience and then the conceptualisation or thinking/planning resulting from the period of reflection, is fed into another phase of experimentation or
doing. Using the three reflection approach it is possible to capture the two phases of ‘doing’ and ‘reflecting’ as they were taking place within the Dyfi Valley Attractions marketing consortium, for which this study is based.

![Action Research Spiral]

**Figure 3-3 Dick (2002) A simple Action Research Spiral**

For this study the Action Research cycle can also be seen clearly in the case study phase of the research. The planning was undertaken and then the first phase; the first three case studies were undertaken. The results of these case studies were recorded (see page 7-11), and a period of reflection involved a written report of the phase which was able to identify an initial framework of tourism consortia, and feed in to the next stage of the research (see section 4.2). The planning for the second phase of the case studies; the fourth to the sixth, was informed by the learned experience and action research reflection of phase one. The outcome of this phase of the study (see section 4.3) helped to reinforce and strengthen the model first conceptualised in phase one and to feed into the planning stages of phase three. Phase three; the final three case studies, was a much more simple exploration, desiring only the facts to confirm the main findings in phases one and two, and therefore an informed and learned investigation. This would suggest that whilst the case study research was based upon traditional research, it also closely fits into an action cycle when it is grouped into the three phases. Had this period of reflection and review not been taken between each phase in the case study research the results may not have been as informed and developed. The time for reflection between
each phase helped to refocus the aim, address any new issues and strengthen the investigation.

3.2.4. Analysis of Action Research findings

As we have seen, the phases of the case study research and the research/experiences with the Dyfi Valley Attractions consortium can both be labelled as ‘action research’.

The initial research area for this study was to evaluate the findings from action in the Dyfi Valley Attractions consortium to inform, and substantiate the model for best practice. Action research evidence was gained which fitted into the three reflection approach as mentioned in Table 3.1 and section 3.2.2. This evidence was obtained from work with the Dyfi Valley Attractions consortium and was analysed through the model for best practice that was developed during the case studies. It sought to establish whether the Dyfi Valley Attractions fits into the profile of the model, where it differs from the model or where it can strengthen or develop any key areas. Having evidence from each of the three reflection areas; 1st, 2nd and 3rd person reflections, was important to improve the validity of the findings and therefore was seen as crucial by the researcher. The action research results are recorded in the appendix, 5, 6 and 7, in order to facilitate a clearer flow through the thesis for the reader.

The development of the case study phases was a classic cycle of ‘doing’ and ‘reflecting’. After each phase the results were written up into one report under the headings of the interview guide, where similarities and differences between the case studies were noted, as with traditional multiple case study research. These end of phase reports were recorded in the Chapter 4, Results (see page 4-1). The reports from the individual case studies were included in the appendix 2 to 4, again, to provide a clearer
flow through the thesis for the reader. The writing up also allowed time for reflection of
the outcomes in relation to the literature and fed the priority findings into the second
phase. After the first phase a simple model was developed which best explores any
similarities or findings.

The second phase therefore aimed to explore this model further in questioning. The
second phase was also written into one report which explored the key areas under each
of the interview headings. This process, coupled with time for reflection allowed the
researcher to expand and develop the model in light of further findings. The final phase
was important to strengthen and justify the model during the ‘doing’ phase, the
‘reflection’ phase then allowed time to input any further developments into the model
which were as a result of the final three case studies.
3.3. Case Studies

As seen previously in this chapter, the nature of the research question made it essential to be able to analyse multiple organisations and to be able to compare and contrast the overall data collected. Many methods of data collection became available and so it was vital to select the most appropriate strategy. This section looks at the most appropriate methods and discusses why case studies were selected to operate alongside action research for this study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Form of Research Question</th>
<th>Requires Control of Behavioural Events?</th>
<th>Focuses on Contemporary Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experiment</td>
<td>How, why?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Who, what, where, how many, how much?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archival analysis</td>
<td>Who, what, where, how many, how much?</td>
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<td>Yes/No</td>
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<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>How, why?</td>
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<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study</td>
<td>How, why?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.2 Relevant Situations for Different Research Strategies Cosmos Corporation (cited in Yin 2003)

Table 3.2 shows the relevant situations for different research strategies. Experiments can be ruled out of the discussion because they require behavioural control over the events and as organisations are at the heart of the study, this is not an achievable
strategy. Surveys are a useful form of data collection and fulfil the correct criteria. However on their own they will not produce the kind of in depth analysis required to make any critical judgements on the outcome of the research. Archival analysis again covers the main criteria, however it means that all of the organisations studied require archival records and that they are all up to date and correct. Historical evidence determines the past workings of the organisation which made it incompatible with this study, which is aiming to take a snap shot of the current situation in the organisation.

From analysing the various methods it was clear that the case study was best suited to this study. Firstly it seeks to answer the questions in a how or why format, for example how the consortium operates and why. Secondly it does not require control of events which would be an unlikely and false situation in a dynamic organisation and finally it focuses on contemporary events and so allows for a snap shot to be taken of the organisation at the moment of research. The case study as an incorporation of many of the methods, described in Table 3.2, enables the research to be completed in a thorough fashion and minimises the disadvantages of each individual research methods.

Case studies were finally selected because in themselves they are essentially numerous data collection methods that are used in order to fully investigate the questions posed, as Finn, et al. (2000) notes, the combination of research methods in the case study allows for a depth of information to be recorded. Data collection methods will be discussed later in this chapter.

Yin (2003: p13) defines the case study;
"as an empirical inquiry that i) investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, especially when ii) the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident”.

This is separate from a survey where variables are limited and so it is difficult to gain a feel for the context in which the survey is taking place. Finn, et al. (2000), reinforces the above statement from Yin (2003) by stating that the case study research can take into account the context of the individual situation. Yin (2003: p13-14) goes on to say that;

"the case study enquiry i) copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result ii) relies upon multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulation fashion, and as another result iii) benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis”

This final part of the definition shows the case study to be an all encompassing research strategy where the data collection methods are multiple; to inform as best as possible on the context of the situation researched. Point iii) is important because unique to this case, theoretical propositions were established through knowledge of a real life situation, gathered using action research techniques, as well as current literature as discussed in the previous section.

For this particular study multiple case studies were used. In order to fully investigate the research proposition it was thought that a range of case studies need to be undertaken to create a body of knowledge that is a fair representation of the workings of a tourism consortium. Herriott and Firestone (1983 cited in Yin, 2003: p46) confirms this by stating that “the evidence from multiple cases is often considered more compelling, and the overall study is therefore regarded as being more robust.”
3.3.1. Selection and Sample

The sample was decided upon, based on the project plan, the time available and the research outcomes. It was decided that a total of nine case studies were feasible. These were split into three phases, each phase representing a period of analysis and review of the case studies in that phase. The experience gained was analysed in the context of the real life example; Dyfi Valley Attractions, to inform a model and also feed into the preparation for the next phase, so the experience was about incremental knowledge of consortia, thus mapping well onto the action research paradigm (refer to figure 3-1).

The use of nine case studies was therefore deemed as appropriate for this situation, and reinforced because the use of multiple studies increases the credibility of results to academics and practitioners, to quote Yin (2003: p78) "if multiple candidates are qualified to serve as cases, the larger the number you can study the better".

In terms of selecting the case studies a period of screening did not really come into the field because after rating a prospective case against a list of inclusion criteria (see Table 3.3), only about 12 were identified as potential, and after initial approaches only nine remained. The population was identified through many channels. Firstly internet searches were conducted, then contacts in UWIC and the WTB were asked for information then exhibitions were attended. Once the potentials had been ticked off against the list of criteria and asked to take part in the study the desired nine were left without having to be selective.
Chapter 3
Methodology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>‘Shopping List’ for Case Study Selection</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Must be a partnership of more than two external members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The members must predominately exist to support tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be based in the UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing to be one of the core functions of the partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can include accommodation, attractions or a mixture of the two</td>
</tr>
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Table 3-3. Case study selection, inclusion criteria

The ‘shopping list’ of criteria was developed in order to create some purposeful selection of cases, all with a similar nature to the case study that was worked with, and for ease of analysis and comparison. The first criterion was used to establish whether it was actually a functioning partnership in the context of the wider world, and not just a mutual agreement between two operators. The second criterion was developed as it is imperative to this study that the focus is on the tourism industry and not confused with or diluted into any other industry. The criterion about being based in the UK is mainly to limit the number of possibilities and to enable direct comparisons. It also ensures that all the cases share similar external forces, such as government funding opportunities and tourist board support which keeps the focus on pertinent issues. Partnerships can be set up with many goals and objectives however it was seen as important to limit the scope of those that were studied. It was therefore crucial to keep the study to tourism partnerships which have a strong emphasis on undertaking marketing for the members or the area. The scope of the study in terms of membership base was not limiting as long as the members were tourism operators. This is because similarities are still shared in terms of opportunities/constraints posed by the very nature of tourism.
The organisations that were finally identified for the study are as follows;

**Phase 1;** Highlands Loch Ness (Scotland), Golf Highland (Scotland) and The Gems of Midlothian (Scotland).

**Phase 2;** Sperrins Tourism (Northern Ireland), Causeway Coast and Glens (Northern Ireland) and Attractions of Snowdonia (Wales).

**Phase 3;** Windermere Attractions Group (England), Sussex Top Attractions (England) and Yorkshires Magnificent Attractions (England).

The choice of partnerships gave a wide spread in distribution throughout the UK and showed a good selection of attractions and accommodation and a mixture of both. The only criticism is that there was no prior reference made by the author to whether the partnership was public or private sector, and the study went on to find that they had some differences in terms of scale and scope of operation. For future studies it is recommended that a choice is made to follow just one, either public or private, however this may in turn greatly restrict the number of organisations available to study and therefore limit the outcome.

### 3.3.2. Sources of Evidence

Having selected case studies as the most appropriate research strategy, the next stage was to determine the most appropriate methods of data collection, to inform as best as possible the research aim which is; ‘to create a framework of best practice for tourism consortia’.

Yin (2003: p85) discusses the six sources of evidence for case study data collection, which are, documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant observation and physical artefacts. He continues by saying that:
"no single source has a complete advantage over all the others. In fact, the various sources are highly complementary, and a good case study will therefore want to use as many sources as possible" (Yin, 2003: p85)

Having determined that using multiple methods is an advantage, it was important to view the six sources and rank them in terms of usability and outcomes available, in order to select the most appropriate method/s for this study.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Evidence</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
<th>Phase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Documentation      | • Stable – can be reviewed repeatedly  
|                    | • Unobtrusive – not created as a result of the case Study  
|                    | • Exact – contains exact names, references and details of an event  
|                    | • Broad coverage – long span of time, many events and many settings  | • Retrievability – can be low  
|                    |                                           | • Biased selectivity, if collection is incomplete  
|                    |                                           | • Reporting bias - reflects (unknown) bias of author  
|                    |                                           | • Access – may be deliberately blocked  | X | X | X |
| Archival Records   | • Same as above for documentation  
|                    | • Precise and quantitative  | • Same as above for documentation  
|                    |                                           | • Accessibility due to privacy reasons  | X |
| Interviews         | • Targeted – focuses directly on case study topic  
|                    | • Insightful – provides perceived casual inferences  | • Bias due to poorly constructed questions  
|                    |                                           | • Response bias  
|                    |                                           | • Inaccuracies due to poor recall  
|                    |                                           | • Reflexivity – interviewee gives what interviewer wants to hear  | X | X | X |
| Direct Observations| • Reality – covers events in real time  
|                    | • Contextual – covers context of event  | • Time consuming  
|                    |                                           | • Selectivity – unless broad coverage  
|                    |                                           | • Reflexivity – event may proceed differently because it is being observed  
|                    |                                           | • Cost – hours needed by human observers  | |
| Participant Observations | • Same as above for direct observations  
|                    | • Insightful into interpersonal behaviour and motives  | • Same as above for direct observations  
|                    |                                           | • Bias due to investigator’s manipulation of events  | X |
| Physical Artefacts  | • Insightful into cultural features  
|                    | • Insightful into technical operations  | • Selectivity  
|                    |                                           | • Availability  | |

Table 3-4  Yin (2003), Six Sources of evidence: Strengths and Weaknesses, including their use in the case study phases.
Documentation can include the following; letters, memoranda and other communiqués, agenda, announcements and minutes of meetings and other written reports of events, administrative documents, formal studies or evaluations and newspaper clippings and other articles appearing in the mass media or in community newsletters. In this case documents could be used to great effect to corroborate findings and to add more details to events and backgrounds. The amount of documentation available in each case study will vary in its coverage of events and breadth of information, for example more casual partnerships may have little record of the processes undertaken, whereas the more formal partnership may have an excess of paperwork.

Archival Records include the following; Service records, organisational records, maps and charts, lists, survey data and personal records. For this study archival records would be useful to produce precise and accurate evidence of organisational records such as budgets, membership and directorship over the last year/few years. As again for documentation there may be little recorded evidence of worth and as Table 3.4 states, access to these records may be restricted.

Interviews have been described by Yin (2003: p89) as "one of the most important sources of case study information". The interviews regarded as case study collection methods are described again by Yin (2003: p89) as being "guided conversations rather than structured queries" in comparison to the survey method. The key difference between the case study interview and the questionnaire or survey is that the questions are open ended however they can still be structured in a way that remains directed on the case study protocol "focused interview" (Yin, 2003: p 90). In this scenario it was vital to select the most appropriate respondent or respondents from each consortia, in order to gain the best evidence and to be wary of potential pitfalls, as described in Table 3-20.
3.4 such as response bias or poor recall. To overcome these problems corroborating evidence with other sources where possible was vital.

Direct Observations can be taking place when visiting the site in a formal or informal basis, representing an important part of the research question or just interesting tit bits picked up by the researcher. In this case tangible evidence at the sites was of little benefit to the research outcome, because this study is not looking at the quality of the premises or attractions.

Participant observation was potentially useful in this case as interactions between subjects could have given rise to feedback for the study, however the researcher did not have the time or resources to spend significant amounts of time with each consortium and so findings from a limited period may not best reflect the organisation at all. Also interactions may have been influenced by the presence of the researcher.

Physical Artefacts did not feature in this study because it was looking at the intangible and dynamic nature of tourism consortia and so physical evidence was not available to corroborate the case study findings.

Looking at the sources of evidence available for a case study provided useful information about the best types to use and also the weaknesses to be aware of whilst in the field. The most consistent theme to arise out of this investigation was the need to collect, where possible, more than one source of evidence to ensure that the results are an accurate and a true record of the facts. The most relevant form of data collection for this study was clearly the interview. It involved a reasonably short amount of time and created a wealth of information that was not available in the written records. As the
tourism consortia varied widely in their structures and processes, the interview was the one form of data collection that could be applied across the board. The other main forms of data collection were documentation and archival records; however for this study the emphasis was placed on the interview.

To see the forms of data collection used, the research has been broken down into its phases which are groups of case studies, and the methods used in each phase have been discussed and explained (see also Table 3-4 for the full range of evidence used).

Phase 1: Used primarily the interview, with an open ended set of questions that matched the desired outcome of the study (see appendix 1 for interview structure). The interview was useful as an investigative tool to find areas of consortia working that were going to be relevant to the overall study, and to find initial similarities between the Dyfi Valley Attractions consortium and the case study. Documentation in the form of minutes from meetings, agendas and administrative report and archival evidence in the form of budgets and membership records were gathered alongside the interview but within the remit of the research.

Phase 2: Similar to phase 1, however the interview schedule was altered in light of the outcomes of the first phase but still with an open ended feel. Documentation and archival records were again gathered where possible to support the findings of the interview.

Phase 3: This had a different approach because budget restrictions were starting to become apparent. The interview was conducted over the telephone so the interview schedule was again amended in light of the previous research, and to be aware of the
restrictions of the telephone. This format in fact suited this final phase because it was a phase of confirming the previous research and feeding it into the model. The interview was easily shortened to focus on the key issues which were to impact upon the outcomes of the research. Documentation and archival records were not given in phase 3 due to the nature of the interview and also because two of the cases actually did not have records in a written format as they functioned in a very casual and mutual style.

The research methods chosen suited the research and the individual cases well. They were sufficient to produce findings that backed each other up and fulfilled the criteria of the research. The interviews face-to-face were all successfully recorded on a Dictaphone, which gave the researcher time to make the most of the open ended style of research. The only criticism for the style of data collection unique to case studies is that the archival and documentation records were collected on a case by case basis and so cannot be used as a comparative or contrasting tool. To overcome this, documentation collected must be the same for each study and contain the same level of information, therefore it was seen only as an instrument for informing and corroborating the interviews.

3.3.3. Interview Structure

The aim of the interview schedule was to guide the questioner, using a series of headings with certain key points. The aim was not to have a uniform script but to use the prompts to initiate conversation and understanding of the consortium. The interview guide was adapted after each phase, in line with the action research cycle, to eliminate areas of investigation that had not created a worthwhile discovery and to focus in on relevant areas as they were unfolding (see appendix 1 for the three interview guides).
The first section of the interview guide related to mission. A question raised by the literature was ‘whether consortia are formed in order to create an opportunity or to solve a problem and how this relates to their operating objectives and the problem domain.’ The first two questions addressed this by asking about the problem domain and then finding out if the remit of the consortium was to ‘solve a problem or create an opportunity’. The final three questions in the mission section were added in mainly through experience. Experience of tourism consortia has shown that they form for many different reasons. The core function, desirable by this study is marketing; however it is useful to discover any other functions which may lead to best practice. This then feeds the question which asked whether the purpose of the consortia has changed or diversified since set up. This question had the aim of exploring some of the background to ascertain why they are functioning as they were at the time of the interview. The final question in the mission section asked about pitfalls and how they were overcome. This also initiated conversation about some of the things that have happened, how they were dealt with and gave a picture of what had gone into making them the way they were at the time of the study.

The section on structure began by viewing the tourism consortia lifecycle. The interviewee was asked to plot their lifecycle against time and success to date and then predict where it may be heading. This was then compared to the lifecycle proposed by Caffyn (see page 2-40) and was used to initiate discussion between the proposed lifecycle of the consortium and Caffyn’s academic view. From experience it was interesting to look then at the roles that have been created and discover whether they had been successful. For competitors to work together is it best to create roles for each party or is another less formal approach preferred? This then links to the point of
structure and the interview guidelines tried to discover how formal the consortium was in terms of meetings structure, membership fees and number of members.

Communication was a section that the researcher thought was useful to include. Are there any differences in the methods consortia use to communicate, and does this have an impact on overall performance? Therefore this section asked whether there is face-to-face interaction, what the main methods of communication are and whether conflict is a problem.

Resources have been discussed at length through the literature, and therefore this question sought to establish which are in fact the most essential resources collaborated, for example money, expertise, knowledge or are there some other resources that have been overlooked by the current literature.

Marketing and outputs relate to the results achieved through combining resources to target the core functions. As seen in the literature, marketing is about supplying the consumer with what they want, therefore in terms of marketing questions the interview guide included; what is the core product, what are the benefits gained by the consumer and is the consumer gaining a benefit from the consortium? The final point in this section of the interview was about brand values. This was to discover whether the consortium see themselves as a collection of suppliers, as a single product brand or as a destination brand, and was useful in order to evaluate whether the partnership was formed in order to compete as a destination or to overcome some other problems.

The section in the interview guide on evaluation tried to pin-point the value put on evaluating the success of the consortium. It also tried to discover how they measure
success and what they saw as success. Caffyn (2000) does not indicate what success is in her framework (page 2-40) and it was therefore useful to analyse in this study. This section also looked at whether evaluation of the product is a priority and whether evaluation initiates a period of review and or change. This factor was a useful comparison to see whether the consortia which evaluate are more successful than those which do not.

Questions relating to the future of the partnership are guided by Caffyn’s framework. Did the partnership expect to fall into particular defined categories as outlined in the framework? It also looked at the longevity of the strategies; do they see it as a strong, long term initiative or could is easily collapse due to external factors? These points helped to explain certain functions of the partnership and were used as a comparison to see whether those looking long term are more successful.

The final point about threats highlighted the importance of finding out any external reasons why a consortium may fail or collapse as it was seen as important to eliminate or try to minimise such factors in best practice.

3.3.4. Analysis

The data collected in this case study research was almost entirely qualitative, which means that simple displays of graphs and cross tabulations would not effectively interpret the research outcomes. Looking at the texts, two methods of analysing qualitative information in the tourism industry came to light, which were; content analysis and semiological analysis. Content analysis involves quantifying the
information by counting frequencies of information which can be used as a comparison, where as semiological analysis is a way of:

"Getting below the surface of the communication [for example] ... at the denotative level ... a picture of a red rose represents a prickly, sweet scented flower. The connotative level is the second level of deeper meaning i.e. the English Rugby Union Team (who have a red rose on their shirts)” (Finn, 2000: p149).

Yin (2003) looks more specifically at the analytical techniques appropriate to case studies and analyses 5 such methods that are discussed in detail below:

**Pattern Matching** “compares an empirically based pattern with a predicted one. If the patterns coincide, the results can help a case study to strengthen its internal validity” (Trochim, 1989: cited in Yin 2003 p116). Yin goes on to explain that for descriptive case studies a predicted pattern of variables needs to be identified prior to research in order to analyse the findings. In this study a predicted pattern could be that the consortia with the most members is the most successful in terms of its marketing outcomes.

**Explanation building** has a goal to “analyse the case study data by building an explanation about the case”. Yin (2003: p120) goes on to comment that most explanatory building is done in a narrative format and so the strongest examples show links with theoretical prepositions and often as an iterative framework of examination and revision of these prepositions.

**Time series Analysis** is able to trace and analyse changes over a period of time. It is essential when linking the time series analysis to a case study that the critical factors to be observed are identified and the timing of such events is recorded.
Logic Models "match empirically observed events to theoretically predicted events" (Yin, 2003: p127) He goes on to say that this differs from pattern matching as it is recorded in a logical sequence of events.

The final technique identified by Yin is the Cross-Case Synthesis. This method is specific for the multiple cases, where each case is treated as an individual study. Analysis is conducted between the cases to identify differences and similarities to each other or to an initial case or preposition.

From the techniques identified above, the 5 options suggested by Yin (2003) were the most appropriate. Content analysis was felt to be too structured and not suitable to the dynamic nature of this research and the differences between the cases observed. Semiological analysis was also not a fitting option because of the type of data collected. Of the five suggestions from Yin (2003) several seemed plausible, however the ones adopted were cross-case and explanatory building. Cross-case is used because it involves collecting data from multiple cases and comparing and contrasting the similarities and differences found in each, and relating these findings to an initial case or proposition. Explanatory building technique is used, as this research builds from initial findings in an iterative nature, or action research cycle.

The findings for the individual cases were therefore written up in a report format that sought to show the results of the interviews, archival analysis and documents against the predetermined questions. The phases were useful as the 3 case studies in each phase were compared, and an overall report for the phase produced (see methodology for phase reports). The report for each phase was complied by analysing on a cross case basis using mind maps to extract the vital information from each. Explanatory building
techniques were then used as each report was modelled against the 'live case' of the Dyfi Valley Attractions consortium and a framework/model devised and tested in an iterative fashion, as discussed in the previous, action research section.

3.4. Summary
As it has been shown in this chapter, the methodology used in this research question combined two research 'strategies' to reach a shared outcome. Looking again at figure 3.1, it has been explained why the two research strategies were chosen and how their inherent strengths have been combined to create a unique but credible research strategy. This strategy of using traditional multiple case studies within an action research setting enabled clear development and understanding of the research question and enabled the evolution of a framework for best practice. This, it could be argued however, weakens the outcome of the multiple case studies because an overall critique of the nine case studies would not be possible. There are however, themes and similarities that run through the nine case studies, which inform and justify the development of a model, backed up by the action research within the Dyfi Valley Attractions. This development, justification and substantiation to create a workable outcome proves the worth of combining research methodologies.
4. Results

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4.1. Overview

This section outlines the phases of research in the case studies and interjects relevant sections of the literature and the action research results to substantiate the study's findings. The results from the individual case studies and the action research narratives (first, second and third person) can be found in the appendix sections 2 to 7. This is to allow a clear and flowing analysis of the entire outcome of the study, uninterrupted by first order data.

The outcomes of each phase of research are analysed, showing the development of a model for best practice in tourism marketing consortia. This model is substantiated using the literature and the action research results and further tested in the following phase of case study research. The final model presented (see figure 4.3) is a culmination of the research and the literature and is therefore argued to be a sound representation of the best methods of working for a tourism consortia.
4.2. **Report on Phase One**

Phase one involved the study of three separate case studies;

1. Highlands Loch Ness (HLN) in Scotland
2. Golf Highland in Scotland
3. The Gems of Midlothian (Gems) in Scotland

The report outlined here is the analysis of the results from the first three case studies with references from the literature review. It also attempts to shows the researcher’s reflections of the results which provided areas of study to feed into the second phase. For written reports of the three separate case studies please see appendix 2.

The conclusion of this phase was to reflect upon the results of the three case studies, comparing the results as in traditional multiple case studies, and the production of an initial framework for best practice. The results are displayed in their interview headings for ease of referral. As mentioned previously, this framework is further analysed using action research results from the Dyfi Valley Attractions and forms the basis for questioning in the second phase.

**Background**

The consortia studied in phase one varied widely in their membership base; from 3 similar B&Bs in one study, to more than eighty operators, comprised of accommodation attractions, airlines, and tour operators in another. All of the marketing consortia have been set up in Scotland since 2000, which may show correlation between public sector interventions from that time or just that consortia have a short lifecycle. Public sector funding has played an important role in the set up and development costs of all of the case studies, without it they may not have got off the ground. This highlights the
importance that has been placed on the development of destination marketing partnerships by the public sector tourism bodies.

Two of the case studies were very formal in their set up, being limited companies and having to comply with certain procedures. The smaller one (Gem’s) on the other hand, was very informal in all of its activities and procedures. Neither of these structure sizes had any apparent strengths over the other, so the decision would be down to members’ choice. Smaller and well bonded members may benefit from a more informal set up as long as each member was equally committed to the cause. The literature does not discuss whether a formal structure is more beneficial than an informal structure, therefore it can be viewed at this stage that the structure should be tailored to suit the needs of the stakeholders. It will be interesting to note whether a formal or informal structure is preferred out of the nine case studies.

**Structure**

The consortia have a varying degree of formal aims and objectives. HLN has a very clear set of aims and objectives, which gives focus and direction to the consortium. Golf Highland has a clear aim but the strategies seemed to be confusing and the direction not clear, this could be why the members seemed unsure of what the consortium was doing, and that no clear roles were in evidence. Gem’s showed that formal aims and objectives were not necessary, as they functioned well on an informal basis working from one project to another. Again it will be interesting to see from the other case studies whether formal aims and objectives are preferred or whether this type of organisation is less flexible to take advantage of opportunities as they arise.
A membership type of structure is used by all the consortia in phase one, and works well, with fees paid on an annual or project basis. Clear leaders/visionaries are seen to be crucial to all of the consortia in maintaining the direction and focus of the members, without whom success could be questioned. It is interesting to note the importance of leaders and visionaries. The literature review states that ‘persons involved have a large effect on the outcomes’. This effect can be both positive and negative. However the case studies in phase one show that it is ‘crucial’ to have a clear leader to maintain direction and focus. This point will be analysed further through the following phases of research.

The consortia studied seemed to be working within geographical boundaries, whether it be as wide as the ‘Highlands’ or as concentrated as ‘Midlothian’ which was never said to be the written rule but was an informal barrier to entry. This could be because geographic areas are easier to define in marketing activity. HLN went on further to split the geographic region into 5 separate clusters within the Highlands area, this is proving to be a very successful strategy. This finding from the case studies backs up the use of partnerships to create a competitive destination. The consortia seem to have an invisible barrier to entry, which is location based. Ritchie and Crouch (2003) made a point of noting that to be an efficient destination the very separate and individual parts that make it what it is, must operate as one. It can be seen that the case studies in phase one are combining separate and individual parts to operate as one. HLN are making the most of this type of ‘clustering’ and overcoming the immediate locational barriers by creating a number of different destinations or clusters within a wider defined geographical boundary but under one single heading. From this is can be concluded that the consortia are operating within a defined destination to compete on a wider level.
DATE: 02/05/06
NAME: A. Naama
COURSE: Ph.D.

DISSERTATION REQUEST
24 HOURS NOTICE IS REQUIRED DURING BUSY PERIODS

AUTHOR: Hastings, E. L.
DISSERTATION TITLE: A Framework of Best Practice for UK Tourism Marketing Consortium

CLASS NO: 790.1 HAS
Communication

Communication is an important issue in all of the case studies. On the one hand face to face communication is seen to be the best and only method for communicating and on the other hand the membership base is too large to contemplate face to face interaction regularly and so e-mail is the dominant form of communication. HLN sees the importance of quality communication so they trained their members to use e-mail properly and effectively. The type of communication used seems to depend on the size of the organisation and suits each consortium appropriately, with not one form standing out as working better than another. The event of e-mail has made mass communication much easier, and could be a contributing factor in the participation of partnerships.

Conflict is not seen to be a huge problem amongst the working partnerships interviewed so far. The lowest level of conflict arose in the consortium with the most structure and focus towards its aims and objectives. Golf Highland and the Gem's, who had less formal communicated aims and objectives, stated that they have problems with disagreement amongst members and themselves. This shows an initial finding that clear aims and objectives can lead to a more productive working relationship with less conflict. It will be interesting to keep note of this relationship through the other case studies in order to establish whether a set of formal aims and objectives decreases conflict.

Resources

The most obvious resource and input into all of the consortia is finance, especially the larger and more formal of them. The money is collected from various sources including members, grants, other one off partners and income from schemes such as the preferred suppliers, with HLN. Without this resource few of the outputs could have taken place.
In kind support is apparent also in the consortia, Golf Highland in particular owes its offices and equipment to in kind support. It has also been noted that the consortia studied in phase one contained entirely, members from SMEs. The notes refer to the limited financial resources of SMEs, which has been a significant motivating factor in these three instances for collaborating with a number of other local SME operators.

Knowledge and expertise is a resource that is used for the benefit of the members and of the consortia. Members are able to utilise this source for the better of their organisations and the consortia can be run more effectively. Golf Highland has not yet fully exploited this resource to its advantage as it is very much led and run by one or two individuals.

Labour is an area not mentioned by the consortia in the interview but very much apparent, with the regular commitment for meetings and the amount of work that has been put in voluntarily by its members. Without the ability of the members to give up their time to the consortium it would certainly cost more to run it terms of staffing cost and would not make the most of resources such as knowledge and industry expertise.

This pooling and sharing of resources is a clear characteristic of tourism consortia from the literature review. It is seen as a method of overcoming problems such as distribution and increased competition from rival destinations. The main three resources pooled in phase one of the case studies are; money, knowledge and labour, although the apparent time and commitment made by all the members of the consortia was not picked up on by the interviewees. These will be examined further in the following phases of research.
Outputs

Marketing is the main output for the consortia in this study. All of the consortia have formed for the purpose of marketing and so is a key function. Various levels of marketing activity take place and different target markets are focused upon. The larger consortia have a key focus on the group markets; HLN in particular was formed to realise the potential of the group market which could not have been tapped into as an individual operator. This shows the importance of combined resources where targeted marketing activity is being carried out which could not have been realised by individual operators.

The type of marketing activity conducted includes; Websites, attendance at exhibitions, brochures, leaflets, newsletters, internal and external familiarisation trips, adverts in trade press and newspapers, CDs to be distributed to operators and consumers and marketing to staff.

The other main output is training and is often a spin off from other activities, for example, to get the most out of a particular marketing technique. Highland Golf has a training programme which, unlike the others is available to non members and so is a tool for generating extra income.

This research question specified that the consortia had to have the function on marketing as a priority item. The cases in this phase therefore were accurate, in that they all had marketing as their main function. It is interesting to see that training is a well used spin off for the marketing consortium and a useful income generation. It will be useful to see if this is a consistent theme in the other phases of just a one off.
Evaluation

Evaluation in tourism marketing consortium was a widely debated issue. All of the consortia have a method of evaluation; however they all recognise flaws in the design. HLN consortia have the best system as it actually looks at enquiries generated which are a direct result of their marketing activity. Golf Highland can disclose that some of its members have seen an increase in the golf business and the Gem’s can show an increase in business since the formation of the consortium. Neither of these however can show a direct link between the increased figures and the consortium marketing activity.

The systems in place must depend upon the aims and objectives of the consortium. The following examples have been found in this study; measuring enquiries generated, return of member’s year on year and increase in business year on year. The results of training outputs are not measured and the informal benefits to members are not measured.

All the measures mentioned can only be used as a guide as they are by no means accurate. The members must all be fully committed to the measurements in place and have adequate systems in place to deal with them. It was noticed that where adequate measures are not in place members were uneasy with the situation and did not seem fully committed to the aims and objectives of the consortia.

The current literature and frameworks on tourism marketing consortia do not seem to show evaluation as a critical factor. It can be seen from phase one, however that the two less well structured consortia, Golf Highland and Gems of Midlothian which suffer more from conflict, do not have a strict and formal approach to evaluation. This is
another relationship which will be useful to analyse in the following phases of research. Is it due to the lack of formal evaluation that conflict occurs?

Future

The main outlook for all of the consortia is to increase success for the immediate future (See lifecycles for phase 1; appendix 2). This shows a positive feeling for the years to come. None of the interviewees amended their lifecycles after seeing Caffyn’s (2000) Lifecycle diagram, as they all showed a second period of growth and success for the coming years, after plotting a clear growth phase for the present. According to Caffyn (2000) the consortia should be reaching a phase of prime and then possible deceleration. The Gem’s, however do see the consortia as a temporary and they predict to have a maximum of five years left to function. Future success of the consortium is definitely dictated by the funding available either through grants or input from members. This was a clear conversation when plotting the lifecycles.

One of the main factors that they all share is having a key leader or visionary, who is inspiring to the members and commits a lot of time and effort to the mission. It is debatable whether if this person left, or became less committed, the consortium would continue to function as well. This was mentioned as a concern in two of the three case studies. Another threat to the success of the schemes was the possible takeover by another consortium who worked within the area. This was not likely to happen in the near future for any of the case studies but it was still expressed by the majority.

All of the case studies would like to see growth in the membership, which is seen as a way to protect the future, with potential new leaders and a larger income to help with the continuation of the cause.
4.2.1. Phase One Model Development

From the results obtained in phase one of the case study research there were some areas which clearly stood out as being important to the functions of the consortia. Figure 4.1 shows these results in a linear format.

![Figure 4-1: Hastings End of phase one model development](image)

Firstly it shows the importance of the visionary / leader. All of the case studies in phase one made it clear that a leader was essential to a maintain direction and focus of the consortia. This was also backed up by the literature review which stated that the persons involved could greatly affect the outcomes. This argument can be further backed up in the second person action research (minutes from meeting; see appendix 6) where one of the stakeholders in the partnership stated that “it was seen that without an employee in place it is likely that the partners will not have the time to pick it up.” This one employee or focus was therefore important as a leader and also to provide the support and back up which was essential for survival. Whilst the employee can be seen as a ‘resource’ in the model, the first person research in appendix 5, clearly makes reference to the fact that once I had taken up leadership of the project, it was able to gain pace and momentum. This shows that the visionary and leader can be interlinked with the ‘labour resource’, however they are two distinct functions and therefore need to remain separate for analysis.

Comments in the second person action research (meeting notes; see appendix 6) also showed that the University involvement in the consortia and employment of a co-
ordinator in the project “has lifted the scale and profile of Dyfi Valley Attractions”. This is a clear sign that having a drive and focus, the consortium working has become more effective in terms of scale and profile, which is what they are aiming for.

The current literature on tourism consortia clearly shows that the main functions are the pooling and sharing of resources. This is clearly evident in all three of the case studies in phase one; where finance, labour and knowledge are regularly shared or exchanged to meet the consortia aims. The second person action research (meeting notes; see appendix 6) produces the statement that:

“Budget allocation and identification of a person to take on the project are decisions that will inform the work of the project for the final months and therefore need to be made by the partners”.

This reinforces the importance of labour and finance, as the outcome of both will ‘inform the work of the project’. The first person 12 month reflections (see appendix 5) also made reference to the fact that a delay in the grant funding was holding the whole project back which was leading to frustration from all the parties involved. This evidence clearly shows that resources are a crucial addition to the framework as without these frustrations become apparent. It is also important because the resources are a means to an end, i.e. provide the ability to carryout the aims of the consortia.

The next phase in the model (figure 4.1) shows that structure is important to tourism consortia. The structural element of the model highlights the importance of having clear aims, roles and decision making procedures. In the literature, Jamel and Getz (1995) propose a framework, which has been outlined in figure 2-1 of this study. The framework shows the consortia to progress through three stages initially. This includes a stage known as direction setting where the stakeholders work through the general direction and the aims and targets for progression. This stage is closely linked to the
'structure' stage in this model (figure 4.1). The research in phase one has shown that the HLN, with very clear aims and objectives are providing a productive working environment; the Golf Highland on the other hand did not appear to possess such clear aims and objectives and it was also noted that there was a lot of negativity and confusion between the stakeholders. The Gem’s were a very different prospect in that it was a very informal set up, however it is concluded from this that the structure can be informal or formal to suit the needs of the partners; the key issue is to have clearly communicated aims, structures and personal roles. Having structure in place will create a mutual sense of ownership over the project by the stakeholders and the clear direction will create mutual understanding of the tactics used to reach the targets. The second person action research gathered in this study comments that:

"Ella’s first and perhaps most difficult challenge was to understand the common business drivers, to consolidate objectives, and then to present these back to the consortium members such that common purpose and action could be agreed. This required a change in culture and a move away from the more self-centred competitive attitudes that typify small tourist attractions as they struggle to survive." (Lord, 2004; second person research, appendix 6)

This shows that once the leader was put into place, the structure was the next key area to address. This involved ‘consolidating objectives to reach a common purpose and action’. This statement also shows the difficulty involved in creating the mutual and agreed objectives in competing tourism SMEs. It is therefore suggested that this area of structure should be under critical and constant review in tourism consortia in order to maintain a productive working environment.

The functions identified in the case studies of phase one are; marketing, training, knowledge and referral. These functions are the methods by which the problems or opportunities are realised and overcome. The main method was marketing; where a number of smaller operators pooled resources to overcome their individual financial
limitations. This can be shown clearly in HLN because by acting as a consortium the operators were able to reach the group organisers market, which due to the financial costs was unrealistic as an individual. Referral is also a very effective function which is used to great effect by the Gem’s who will recommend one of the other B&Bs if they are full. This has generated a significant income to the partners which could have been previously lost to other suppliers. Dyfi Valley Attractions confirm the importance of referral; the third person action research (see appendix 7) confirms that referral is an important tool for increased awareness of the brand and the four products in Dyfi Valley Attractions. These functions are the main visible components of tourism consortia and are therefore often seen as the most important or only processes for a consortia. This is mirrored in Jamel and Getz (1995) framework under the heading of implementation. From the 1st person action research (see appendix 5) it was highlighted that; ‘One of the main topics of conversation is that they all need to see outcomes’. The ‘functions’ element is where the tangible outcomes are materialised. It is seen here that this is an important and valuable aspect of the tourism consortia for the stakeholders, which should not be underestimated. It is therefore included in the framework and will be monitored in the following two phases.

It was noted in the report from phase one that evaluation could be linked to conflict and dissatisfaction: ‘Golf Highland and Gems of Midlothian which suffer more from conflict, do not have a strict and formal approach to evaluation’. It is also apparent in the Dyfi Valley Attractions case that evaluation is a vital component of the partnership; “My main findings have been that they are desperate for quantifiable records about the success of the project and tangible outputs that they can view as success factors” (1st person action research; appendix 5). Evaluating and producing quantifiable records to show the success of the partnership is important for two reasons:
1: To show that the aims and objectives are being adhered to and targets are being met, or to show areas for improvement and or rethinking for the consortium.

2: To provide the individual SME with results to show that their input of scarce resources, into an external organisation, has produced tangible benefits for themselves. This will determine their future involvement in the partnership.

Evaluation can be a time to confirm that the consortia are working in the right direction or can be a corrective measure for future improvement. As the stakeholders are SMEs, this period of review and evaluation is critical in order to maintain their full support and commitment for the future, because other short term tactics may crop up that have faster or more visible returns on investment.

The framework that has been proposed and justified using phase one of the case study research, the current literature and the action research methodology is further tested in the second phase of the case studies. The interviews were adapted to allow for a review of the framework and in light of the results obtained in phase one.
4.3. Report of Phase Two

Phase two involved the study of three separate cases;

4. Sperrins Tourism Ltd (STL) in Northern Ireland
5. Cause Way Coast and Glens (CCG) in Northern Ireland
6. Attractions of Snowdonia (AoS) in Wales

The report outlined in this section is the analysis of the results from these three case studies which includes references from the literature review. For written reports of the separate case studies please see appendix 3. The aim of this phase is to consolidate findings from phase one and to reflect upon and provide a critique of the framework devised in phase one. The framework will then show this development with further analysis gained from the action research in the Dyfi Valley Attractions.

Background

STL and CCAG are both based in Northern Ireland and have very large membership base 145 and 409 respectively. They are both concerned with marketing the members and the area, and include the public and private sector. AoS on the other hand has a much smaller membership base of 16 which are all private attractions operators; the marketing however is still focused on the destination ‘Attractions of Snowdonia’. This reinforces the thinking that consortia are strategies to increase destination competitiveness. In fact, all of the cases so far have included a destination area in their title; ‘Sperrins’, ‘Causeway Coast and Glens’ and ‘Snowdonia’. The interesting element that phase two has brought to light is that the CCG consortia is run by the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) and is not a private concern of individual SMEs. This is a direct acknowledgement from the NITB that consortia are an important strategy for increasing destination competitiveness and awareness.
All of the cases have been functioning for sometime, in one case (AoS) for 17 years. This was on a more informal basis to start with until they secured funding four years ago. Presently all the consortia are formal in their set up, with two of them having a board of directors and one having subcommittees for the various functions of the consortia. The only problem associated with this is that the public sector board members, in the case of the STL, tend to overpower and intimidate the private sector members despite the fact that they have equal voting rights.

There is a suggested link here that funding creates formality. The AoS were functioning on an informal basis until funding became available. This finding strengthens the argument for ‘resources’ particularly financial, in consortia, to become formal entities. It also proves that informal partnerships are also a successful and long term option; the AoS functioned informally for 13 years prior to external funding.

**Mission**

The core function of each of these consortia is to market the destination and the members. The two partnerships in Northern Ireland have or will be expanding into new areas such as product development and the allocation of funding. This role works well in this situation as they are responsible for a large number of members who make up a destination, with a rather underdeveloped product.

The AoS partnership is made up of attractions that are all sure of their own directions and development and would not benefit in having this as a more central role. Instead they pool money for more efficient marketing and schemes such as the ‘learning journeys’ to allow for individual reflection and critique of their own product.
The most common problem shown in phase two was the bringing together of tourism organisations, who are often in competition and have different needs and wants. A key area of tourism partnership success must be the ability to manage these needs and wants in a constructive way for all.

This ‘mission section’ has given a clear picture that each consortia has very individual needs depending on the type of membership base. In Ireland there seems a clear need for development and leadership of the tourism businesses that make up the consortia whereas in AoS the stakeholders have clear individual directions and would not require the same level of intervention. This poses a question when trying to formulate one framework for best practice in consortia, any framework therefore needs to be a flexible and dynamic guide, covering a number of key options.

Structure
The two consortia with the more formal set ups (CCAG and STL) have far more members than the AoS. This could show a correlation between the number of members and the need for formality. It could also be a reflection on the type of members; the two with the formal set up both contain public sector members.

The membership structure is similar in all cases, where an annual fee is paid and this subscribes the member to the various marketing activities. There are certain instances where a member can opt into other schemes such as AoSs winter discount schemes or STLs exhibition attendance. The annual fee is on a sliding scale for those with members from various scales and sectors of operation but tends to be set where the members are all from one sector i.e. AoS is a consortium of attraction SMEs which has a set annual membership fee.
In all cases it is felt that the roles within the groups are clearly defined, and do not cause any problems. Where the set up is more informal it is felt from these case studies that this has a lot to do with the personalities involved and the length of time it has been in operation.

The type and number of members is again an area of consideration, which did not show itself as an issue in phase one. It dictates structure and mission of the partnership, and is therefore a key factor. The framework proposed in phase one does not limit the partnership to either direction and could be used as a tool for an informal or formal partnership to ensure that key factors are in place for success.

**Communication**

E-mail is by far the main method of communication as it facilitates dynamic and efficient operations with all members updated quickly and easily. It has also allowed for decisions to be made faster and therefore taken advantage of special offers etc.

Conflict only seems to be a problem for STL, the other consortia mention that they have clearly defined roles, which enables them to be free from conflict, this may however be due also to leadership and experience. CCAG is led by the NITB which could be seen as a strong leadership and the AoS have been functioning for many years. The main issue here has shown the complex nature of bringing together people with different agendas and being able to manage them effectively. Clearly defined roles and a well formed leadership structure have enabled the consortia to avoid any messy disagreements. These are elements that are reflected in the consortia framework after phase one. Phase
two has so far provided more evidence to support the inclusion of leadership and structure into a future model.

**Resources**

The main resource collaborated is finance in the form of fees from the members and all of the consortia receive some form of external grant aid. Time given up by the board members is also an important resource for STL and to that effect their fees are waived. Again this is another strengthening factor for the inclusion of resources, in particular financial in the framework. STL are the first to recognise the importance of time as a resource and have allowances to that effect.

**Marketing**

Marketing is the key function of all the consortia in phase two. The main markets are the short break market and groups with only one consortium focusing largely on the international market. This is the CCG, their NITB backing is probably the reason why they can afford to target the international market.

The types of media used are; Familiarisation visits for press, PR, brochure production, posters, exhibitions, Direct mail, editorials, website and advertising.

The brand messages used in this marketing activity reflects the location and the things to do for the two larger consortia and is about a quality product for the attractions consortia. This, and the fact that they all use the destination in their organisational name, reflects the use of the destination as the unique selling point for tourism consortia and the focus for marketing activities. This is reflected strongly in the literature review which mentions that destination competition is on the increase and that the public sector
organisations seek to use partnerships as a strategy for overcoming some of this competition.

Evaluation

The main feeling between the case studies is that more needs to be done in terms of evaluation. The level undertaken at present varies from a very formal assessed evaluation process in the CCAG to nothing for STL.

The main problem seems to be how to evaluate the consortia’s actions and how to create targets that are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely). The methods shown in phase two are; gaining feedback from the members, recording the responses from various campaigns, assessing the reputation of the consortia, the level of funding allocated, and the return of members year on year. These evaluation methods are time consuming and do not produce a definite picture of success or failure. The intangible nature of the tourism industry and in particular tourism consortia allows for mainly qualitative and subjective analysis to be undertaken. This being said however, by combining a number of evaluation methods like the CCG, a fairly rounded picture can be produced. The link can again be made, that STL find conflict a problem and they also do not undertake any evaluation. It is believed that evaluation is therefore so critical that to not evaluate would inevitably create a climate of dissatisfaction.

Future

The consortia do not all think that they will continue functioning at the same level for the foreseeable future. Two of them see themselves expanding into other areas as well as marketing (CCG and STL) and one expects that the funding will drop off (AoS).
The two larger consortia do not see that they could continue without external funding (CCG and STL) where as the smaller attractions consortia can see it continuing as long as the members view a perceived benefit. This seems almost contradictory; where there is a large paying membership base the future without external funding does not seem possible, where as the consortia with much lower prospects of annual subscription could continue.

In terms of the membership CCAG and STL who already have a large membership are quite keen to see the numbers growing even further where as the much smaller AoS are keen to stay at the present figure give or take one or two, in fear of diluting the product.

The processes and structure of the three consortia are quite different, which is why they differ in their view of the future. The three started off as similar marketing consortia and are developing very different side lines for example, training, funding allocation and learning journeys. The scale of operations is also apparently very different, where AoS feel that they could scale down in operation and survive (as before) without external funding the other two cases are very reliant on external funding and could not continue without it.

**Key Factor**

This area of questioning was added for this phase to find out what the consortia valued as key factors for survival. The two main key factors that came out of phase two are money and time given by the members, either the committed directorship or the contribution of the members for feedback and development. This links strongly with ‘resources’ in the framework and highlights how crucial they are to the future.
4.3.1. Phase two Model Development

![Diagram of Phase two Model Development](image)

Figure 4-2; E Hastings End of phase two Model Development

Phase two clearly backs up the findings in phase one to confirm the presence of the various framework sections in tourism consortia. The addition that has been made for this phase is a clear link between no evaluation and dissatisfaction/conflict (see figure 4.2). This has been mirrored in that evaluation has been found to create satisfaction and conditions for positive change. STL in this phase reinforced the presence of dissatisfaction or conflict where no evaluation occurs. Conversely, in AoS and CCG, evaluation was undertaken and they both reported very little conflict. The first person action research undertaken in the Dyfi Valley Attractions also confirms that the consortia members crave quantifiable records on the success of the marketing activities that were carried out in 2004. Again, this links into the fact that the consortia members are SMEs and so budget restrictions lead to a heightened desire for results linked to their investment.

It has been reported that the ‘functions’ of the individual consortia grow and develop over time. Marketing is the most common first step for the consortia, which is due to
pressure such as destination competitiveness and public sector incentives. Following on from that, the consortia are developing into their own individual processes which reflect the make up of the partnerships. For example, AoS have a strong base of individually minded attractions and therefore certain activities such as product development or training have not been at the forefront of development. They have however initiated a ‘learning journeys’ scheme so that the attractions can spend time analysing successful large and small attractions for their individual benefit. The Dyfi Valley Attractions on the other hand are in their early stages of development compared to the other consortia in this phase and therefore they are concentrating primarily on their first aim of marketing activities. The second person action research in appendix 6 shows that they had an aim of staff training however this has been currently overlooked due to budget and time restrictions.

This section has shown clear links between the cases and the framework developed in phase one. It has also identified the fact that the consortia, although similar in their processes and structure, are all very different in their ambitions, outlook, membership base and formality. This needs to be taken into careful consideration when proposing the final framework.

Phase three attempts to confirm and further analyse the working framework, post phase two. The interview structure is streamlined and developed to cover some key areas of questioning that has arisen from the first two phases.
4.4. **Report on Phase Three**

Phase three involved the study of three separate case studies;

7. Windermere’s Attractions Group (WAG), in England
8. Sussex Top Attractions (STA) in England
9. Yorkshires Magnificent Attractions (YMA), in England

The final report for phase three includes the analysis of information gathered from these three case studies. This phase had the aim of consolidating information as opposed to investigating, and to report on the findings in relation to the framework devised and developed in the previous phases. For written reports of the three separate case studies please see appendix 4.

**Background**

The case studies in phase two are; Windermere’s Attractions Group (WAG), Sussex Top Attractions (STA) and Yorkshires Magnificent Attractions (YMA). All the attractions consortia in this phase are based in England. WAG and STA have been functioning for over a decade where the YMA has been running for just under 5 years. YMA and STA have a large membership base whereas the WAG has just four members. Two of the consortia share a vision that they should be non-competitive and therefore strict enforcements are made as to who can join. For example, the membership criterion states that new members cannot be those who are in competition with existing members. Therefore location and business activity are crucial membership considerations.

The cases in phase three all showed strong desires to be independent, sourcing all of their funding through the members. The overarching feeling is that to be self sustaining it is necessary to be self funding. Economies of scale and pursuing opportunities are
what hold the groups together in an environment of budget cuts. YMA has an
interesting element in that three of the members are from National Museums and
therefore have a free entry policy. This has had an effect on the ticketing schemes that
were in place.

This section has brought about some interesting findings; it has been argued in the
literature and in the previous cases that the public sector bodies have played an
important role in the destination consortia. These three cases clearly state that they are
independent from ‘funding bodies’ which, they agree upon, has given them
independence and freedom. The three consortia in phase three are in England, whereas
the previous cases have been located in Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland. It would
pose an interesting study to evaluate the influence and importance of the public sector
tourism organisations, in the UK, in order to establish why the consortia in England
have a pattern of not taking up possible funding sources.

Mission
The core function of each of these consortia is to market the destination and the
members and to continually help each other out. With the majority having unwritten
aims and objectives the main driving force is of a stronger package at reduced operating
costs.

WAG are facing a problem because one of the members is having a budget restructured
and will no longer be able to continue to contribute financially to the consortium. The
rest of the members are keen however to keep the partnership as it is, which means the
other attractions raising extra capital to cover the costs. The STA have undertaken a
benchmarking study with the University of Brighton however apart from that all of the consortia are marketing led.

Two out of the three consortia function in a very informal manner, with a primary aim of reducing marketing costs. This could show a link between informality and the absence of a funding body. This point can be stressed because the Dyfi Valley Attractions had to undergo some formalisation in order to qualify for any public sector funding. The absence of external funding could also be significant reason why there is little in the way of additional activity, such as training. These findings contribute to and strengthen the need to understand the effectiveness and influence of public sector organisations in the UK on tourism consortia.

In terms of the framework, this phase confirms that a resource; money, has been collaborated within a structure, which although informal, has clear aims and objectives to develop the functions of marketing.

**Structure**

The structures of the three consortia are very different. One has a part time secretary to undertake the consortium activities and 55 members (STA). YAG, has nine members and employs an outside agency to tackle the administration and running and the WAG group has four members and is run by representatives from the four attractions.

Two of the consortia run by collecting an annual membership fee and the WAG collects money to undertake each project. It is interesting to note that the larger set ups collect finance on a more formal basis and have a formal administration in place.
It can be concluded that all of the case studies in this phase rely upon visionaries and leaders. In the larger partnerships this is a formal appointment of a person or persons to be responsible for the administration and management. In the less formal group the four attractions representatives are each taking responsibility for the direction and management of the partnership. This shows that the leader/visionary outlined in the framework can take a number of forms; an elected secretary, an employed administrator or a joint ‘board’ of management elected from the members. The style of leadership reflects the nature of the consortium and is effective in many forms. The key point to be picked up by the framework is that leadership needs to be in place, in an agreed form.

Communication

Communication is not seen as an issue for the three consortia in phase three. The two that have administrators conduct their communication through them whereas the smaller group tends to meet on a regular but informal basis to conduct conversations and discuss the activities.

Resources

Four resources were mentioned as important by the three consortia. They are; Human Resources, Expertise, Time and Money. Human resources and time may however be interlinked but were strongly put forward by the groups. This closely mirrors the resources outlined in the framework and the literature.

Marketing

Marketing is the key function of all the consortia in phase three. The main markets are the group and tour operators and the day trip market. It was seen by one of the attractions consortia that the short break market was not their key target because they
did not involve local accommodation providers in their marketing activities. The STA who have 55 members do not specify a particular target because the diversity of attractions attracts a diverse market.

The type of media used are; Familiarisation visits for press, PR, brochure production, posters, exhibitions, direct mail, editorials, website, advertising and fictional characters. The WAG use a character called Tizzy Wizzy to promote the group on the website; this has created a good level of press coverage. The brand messages used in this activity reflect; fun for all ages, family fun and an outdoor, quality experience.

These findings back up the findings of the previous six case studies. The marketing activity is strongly focused on the group market. This could be because this market requires a higher degree of skill and resources to successfully attract, therefore with combined funding and expertise the marketing consortia are best placed to make an impact.

**Evaluation**

WAG and STA do not evaluate their activity, although they state that this is something that they need to do. This has been put down to time pressures and that they leave it up to the members to decide how successful any particular campaign has or has not been. YAG do evaluate monthly, by submitting visitor figures they can produce a picture of the current environment and use the figures as a benchmark for their own performance.

It was not as clear in this phase whether the lack of evaluation caused any disagreement or conflict, because it was conducted over the phone and therefore limited the scope of investigation. The clear acknowledgement by the two consortia that they should be
undertaking evaluation shows that it is seen as an important element that they are missing. The YAG also have a benchmarking scheme, where monthly visitor figures are submitted by each attraction to create a long term picture of tourist activity. This has many advantages from giving the individual attractions greater material to evaluate their own activities and to see if the consortium marketing activities are creating an increase in visitor numbers.

Future

All of the consortia are looking to continue in a similar fashion as they are. The WAG are however looking for some funding to fund some bigger initiatives and to move forward with the current marketing activity.

All of the cases in phase three believe that they can be self sustaining entities because they are self funded. The only time this may change is if the commitment of those currently involved changes or the current attractions representatives leave. The self funding element is therefore very reliant on the commitment of all of the partners which puts the future in an uncertain light. It can also be shown that to undertake activities on a larger scale, funding is often a key factor used by the partnerships.

Key Factor

The three key factors that arise from phase three are; a sense of co-operation and shared vision, the secretary and the time put in by the attractions. This emphasises the fact that the labour of visionaries/leaders is very important to the outcomes of the consortia. The comment about shared vision arose from the WAG, where responsibility is shared amongst the attractions.
4.4.1. Phase Three Model Development

This final phase of the case study allowed for further reflection of the model proposed. This final model has drawn in sources from the Dyfi Valley Attractions, through action research and also from the investigations of the case study research.

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 4-3: E Hastings End of Phase Three Model Development**

The new addition to the model, labelled ‘need’ represents findings from the literature and the action research in conjunction with the case studies. The literature shows that the tourism industry in particular share certain characteristics which are intangibility, perishability and heterogeneity which increase the need for pooling resources, as shown in section 2.3.3. Section 2.3.3 expands this further by stating that the increasing competition from other destinations has created a ‘need’ for SMEs to combine resources for a common goal. This affects SMEs in particular because they have a limited financial resources, time and expertise and therefore there is a ‘need’ for them to buy into organisation such as tourism consortia in order to make the most effective use of their scarce resources. A question was raised in the literature; are consortia formed in order to create an opportunity or to solve a problem? This is interesting to look at here because it seems like this question is actually a lot less important than first presumed. It is now seen through this study, that it is more important that there is a problem or opportunity creating a ‘need’ for the consortium. This need will drive the leadership to
find the resources, organise the structure and action the functions. The ‘need’ shown in the cases has been, amongst other things; sourcing external funding, capturing markets which were difficult as an individual, overcoming competition from other destinations and taking advantage of economies of scale. In the Dyfi Valley Attractions, the first and second person action research (see appendix 5 and 6), shows that funding was secured from the WTB. This shows that they found funding opportunities in order to undertake the marketing activities. They also took advantage of funding from the Welsh Assembly to sponsor a KTP associate employed by the University of Wales Institute, Cardiff. This shows that the four SMEs in the Dyfi Valley Attractions consortium had a ‘need’ for finances and leadership in order to effectively undertake marketing to the short break and group markets. By working as a partnership they were able to tap into essential financial resources.

The final addition to the model shows the importance of gathering quantifiable information on the success of the functions. This is derived from the Dyfi Valley Attractions action research and the literature. It became clear on many occasions and is documented in appendix 5 and 6 (1st person and second person action research), that the outcomes need to be quantifiable to provide a strong evidence of success. These outcomes can then be the focus of evaluation and feed back into the leadership to drive the way forward.

The EFQM model as described in the literature review (section 2.6.5) shows a similar pattern of requirements to follow in order to create a successful or excellent business. The similarity between the EFQM model and the model developed in this study, acts to reinforce the strengths of both models. The model for tourism consortia best practice is however tailored to tourism partnerships and has some key differences. Firstly, need is a
primary difference between the frameworks because UK small businesses face considerable pressure, competition and opportunities which encourage them to form consortia. When the need stops the consortia will terminate, regardless of the outputs. Whereas individual businesses, as seen through the EFQM model for excellence will continue and develop as long as the outputs are in line with targets.

In terms of results, the EFQM model for excellence shows three types of results for; people, society and customer. The results gained as a result of tourism consortia effect society and the individual businesses in the consortia, in that it has the aim of increasing tourism to the area. However it is the job of the consortia partner businesses to produce the results for the people, through delivering the product and not the consortia.

The two models share the similarity of the importance placed on evaluation. The EFQM model shows that this leads to innovation and learning and the model for consortia best practice shows this leads to satisfaction and change. The need for satisfaction on tourism consortia is a key point for maintaining harmonious relationships between partners. The model for best practice makes a point of including ‘not evaluating’ as a process in the model. This is because it was seen as such a significant factor to avoid, that its presence was deemed important in order to show the possible outcomes for practitioners.

This cyclical process of need, leadership, resources, structure, functions, outputs and evaluation, will be undertaken many times by a successful consortium. The cyclical process will come to an end with the end of the consortium, which could be due to a removal of any of the individual factors in the framework. This loop will be looked at in
conjunction with the lifecycle framework by Caffyn and the lifecycles plotted by the cases’ in phase one and two.

4.5. Lifecycles
Having looked at the lifecycles of tourism consortia with the first six case studies, it seems that the tourism consortia undertake some clear patterns. This reflects the lifecycle proposed by Caffyn (2000) but suggests that there are a number of ‘steps’ apparent, due to the nature of the work (see figure 4.4). Each step represents a period of growth and prime, before another period of growth. The period recognised by Caffyn (2000) as prime, could be seen as consolidation in this model. Where the consortia takes account factors such as evaluation, funding, and partners support, before undertaking another phase of activity and growth. Each step can represent a cycle of the model proposed in figure 4.3.

![Figure 4-4 Tourism consortia lifecycle adapted from Caffyn (2000)](image-url)
Initially the consortium takes its first cycle through the model and ends up at stage ‘1’. Through careful evaluation, continuation of ‘need’ and implementation of ‘leadership’, ‘resources’ and ‘structure’ the ‘functions’ of the partnership can proceed to stage ‘2’ (as outlined in figure 4.4). Where there is not consideration of evaluation or the acknowledgement of the factors of need, leadership, resources and structure. The consortium is in danger of reaching point 3 in figure 4.4 and therefore declining in success.

It is worth noting that there is not a defined number of steps that a consortium goes through, as that would depend on factors such as lifespan, partnership commitment, funding opportunities. The model outlines clear decelerations of consortia at specified junctions of the model. However, it is thought that because of the dynamic nature of the consortia, and the reliance totally on external factors for survival, the termination or decline can come into force at any period of the lifecycle.

This adaptation of Caffyns (2000) tourism consortia lifecycle fits with the findings of the case studies and the action research to portray the procession through the cyclical model for best practice as shown in figure 4.4. These two diagrams together will enable tourism practitioners to evaluate their progress in the lifecycle and to recognise important signposts that they must ensure are in place in order to achieve best practice. For example the partnership may be continuing functioning where the need for operation has been removed and therefore the support of the partners and the success of the outcomes will be limited.

This chapter has shown the progression through the three case studies, the interpretation of inter-phase results in a traditional case study compare and contrast, and the
development of the research techniques to move from a stage of exploratory to a stage of explanatory using action research methods. Coupled with the results gained through the analysis of the literature on tourism consortia in the UK, the results can show a clear model for best practice which has been examined and interpreted through the Dyfi Valley Attractions as set out to achieve in the aims and objectives.
5. Conclusion

5. Conclusion .................................................................................................................. 5-1

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5.2. Reflection on Aims and Objectives ......................................................................... 5-2

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5.8. Personal Reflections .................................................................................................. 5-9
5.1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to summarise and reflect upon the research study. It takes, as a starting point, the aims and objectives and reviews how effectively they were accomplished. The chapter then outlines where the results have added to the academic, practical and methodology knowledge base. The chapter continues to look at the limitations that have been identified by the author and proposes some questions for further research.

5.2. Reflection on Aims and Objectives

This section endeavours to recap and reflect upon the aims and objectives of this research study (See section 1-3 for the aim and set of objectives).

The literature produced an informative and academic view on the workings, processes, strengths and weaknesses of tourism consortia. The amount of available literature on tourism consortia was limited, and therefore the search was widened to include important aspects surrounding a typical UK tourism consortia, for example; marketing, SMEs, the UK tourism environment. The literature formed an essential backbone to the whole study. It generated an insight into some of the issues of tourism consortia that could be further examined in the case study environment and then developed using the action research methodology. The literature was then used to feed into and substantiate the results from the case studies, alongside the action research results from the Dyfi Valley Attractions. This was useful in that it provided a third critical view point to enhance or challenge any findings. The consortia frameworks highlighted by the literature review were an important aspect to the research because it provided a body of
knowledge from which the framework for this study could be built upon. Finally, the literature review had a positive indirect effect. There was an improved awareness of the situation and background of UK tourism marketing consortia, increasing the potential for the work carried out with the Dyfi Valley Attractions, separate to the research.

The literature on tourism consortia was, as mentioned, limited and therefore the type of research methodology chosen – action research combined with case studies, allowed the research to develop and grow as a result of findings. This type of research methodology, it is felt, helped to overcome some of the limitations of the available literature.

The case study research, as has been mentioned, was made up of nine case studies divided into three phases to allow for reflection and development, in line with action research principles. The first phase of research therefore was an exploration of the findings in the literature, and served as a foundation for the following phases of research. It was therefore an in-depth look at the three tourism consortia. The interview guide was kept the same for the three cases and therefore multiple case study methods of comparison could be used to highlight key areas of interest or controversy. The research was carried out on-site for the first three case studies, which gave a good overview of the dynamics of the consortia. It also presented the ability to ensure that the person interviewed was in the best position to answer the interview questions. The results from phase one were written into separate reports (see appendix 2; p7-11) and then combined alongside key findings from the literature and the action research to provide an initial framework for best practice and direction for analysis in the second phase of research (see results; p4-3).
The second phase of research was also carried out on-site, at the offices of each consortium. The findings from phase one produced key areas of exploration and testing, although the focus was not so narrow that it restricted exploring other areas of importance. The Causeway Coast and Glens turned out to be a public sector organisation with a very different remit to some of the private sector led consortium, which could have given a different angle to the outcomes of this phase. CCAG, did however share many of the characteristics and problems identified in the literature and phase one, therefore it was deemed not to be a problem. This phase was able to build upon the framework devised in phase one, which in turn could be substantiated by the literature and the Dyfi Valley Attractions action research results (see results: p4-16). This then provided the focus for the final phase.

The final phase differed from the first two phases, as it involved conducting the interviews via the telephone, rather than face to face. This was due to time and budget restrictions, however because this phase had the emphasis on strengthening findings, rather than exploring new elements, it turned out to be a suitable option. The results show that the framework for best practice, as developed in phases one and two, could be backed up and further added to, to best describe the most influential and positive workings of tourism consortia, as shown through this study.

The separation of the individual case study reports to the appendix (sections; 2, 3, and 4), for this study, was a decision that was taken in order to improve continuity for the reader. They are therefore available for reference, but do not dilute the key findings.

As the literature on tourism consortia was limited, it proved an important element of the study to review findings through the Dyfi Valley Attractions consortium. The action
research methods used suited the environment of working within a tourism consortium, as access to the required documents was possible. The style of collecting action research enabled a broad spectrum of documents to be collated which removed the likelihood of the results showing bias and disrupting the outcome of the study. The results from the action research were very useful in providing a foundation, alongside the literature, from which to review and substantiate the case study results. This combination increases the confidence and reliability of the results which are translated in the framework (see section 4.4.1).

It can be seen therefore that the aims and objectives for the study were carried out to the letter and provided a useful framework within which to work.

5.3. Contribution to Theory
The generation of the final model for best practice, as illustrated in figure 4.3, develops the current models for tourism consortia. It built upon a series of 'sign posts' that a tourism consortium needs to progress through, or have an understanding of, in order to reach an outcome of best practice. Furthermore the proposed model for tourism consortia, builds upon work by Jamel and Getz 1995 and Salin and Chavez 1995 (figure 2.1 in the literature), to create a 'cycle' of operation that the consortia would proceed through rather than the linear approach adopted by Jamel and Getz (1995). This develops further from the framework and incorporates an action orientation that explains why some consortia are successful. The framework outcome for this study also brings in some of the elements that have been described in the framework by Morrison, 1998 (Figure 2.2) as it shows a consideration for 'need', which takes into account problems and opportunities i.e. justification.
The framework devised to represent best practice in tourism marketing consortia, also mirrors elements in the EFQM Excellence model (Figure 2.4). The element of need, as driven though the desire to overcome problems and opportunities, inherent in tourism SMEs, and the fact that there is a clear sequential process through the cycle, separates the models. Also the clear inclusion of non-evaluation as a stage was deemed as so important, as to be included to highlight the effects of a consortium not evaluating its processes.

It can be concluded that the model proposed in this thesis, although informed by the model of Jamel and Getz, Caffyn and Morrison, differs from previous accounts in its ‘action’ orientation, the possibilities it offers for intervention, and its potential for explaining consortia success and failure. It is a strength of the model that it was developed ‘in practice’ through a series of action research cycles designed to provide a workable and practical framework for best practice.

5.4. Contribution to Practice

The framework for best practice is a tool which can be used by tourism consortia in the UK as part of a regular review, or as a start up and planning tool. Its application for practitioners is to provide the guidelines to steer their consortium into a productive and successful organisation, which is backed by the stakeholders. The case study research did not uncover any current tools or frameworks by which the consortia can be assessed, apart from the simple measures of productivity and return on investment.
It is hoped that this model can be produced into a format which is straightforward and appeals to the 'leaders' of tourism consortia or public sector organisations promoting consortia as a tool for review and evaluation and a process for achieving best practice.

5.5. Contribution to Methodology
This research has made a significant contribution to methodology. As has been noted in the methodology chapter, two types of research methodology have been combined; case studies and action research. This collaboration has allowed for the development of a research technique which evolves with the research. It has also considered the strengths of having a multiple approach to case studies and by grouping them into phases of three it has allowed for traditional multiple case study techniques of comparing and contrasting to take place. The action research has made an impact in that it has given a chance for reflection after each phase; the reflection involving results from the case studies, literature and the Dyfi Valley Attractions case. This reflection has produced valid reasoning for tailoring and evolving the research questioning and agenda, in order to investigate more pertinent issues. This type of methodological evolution has been a benefit in a situation where there was minimal academic literature to draw upon.

5.6. Limitations of Research
The first phase of the case study research was an initial 'exploration' of the issues surrounding tourism consortia, which meant that it took a broad view of the case studies. If the research had had a narrower focus from the start, it may have produced a different and a more focused outcome. This research however will be a useful tool for future studies to develop a narrower critique of tourism consortia.
Working within the Dyfi Valley Attractions had a positive effect on the research as it gave a deep insight into the workings of a consortium and also provided a background for some of the research. This involvement could have given the researcher a framed perspective of the workings of a tourism consortia, and could have had an effect on the results obtained through the case studies. On the other hand this insight could have enabled the researcher to be a more effective interviewer and researcher. To eliminate this, a second researcher without any involvement in tourism consortia would have to have been present at the interviews.

5.7. Opportunities for Further Research

It has been identified that there is scope for narrowing the research agenda to focus more specifically on issues highlighted to be important in the tourism consortia framework for best practice. For example; to what extent does the leader influence the workings and lifespan of tourism consortia? What are the most common drivers or need factors behind the set up of tourism consortia? What are the most efficient evaluation tools used by tourism consortia to determine success?

The question also arose during the study and that was; to what extent do UK public sector organisations influence the set up of tourism consortia, and does this change from region to region? This was highlighted as the consortia in England did not appear to have such close relations with their DMOs, particularly in relation to funding.

It is hoped that these questions offer a framework for future research on tourism marketing consortia.
5.8. Personal Reflections

This study has undertaken many twists and turns in its development and progression, notably, the involvement from the Dyfi Valley Attractions as a central focus of the research. The research began as a spin off to the KTP project, which had the aim of bringing together four disparate organisations for joint marketing purposes. It was intended that the Dyfi Valley Attractions consortium would be the main feature of the study through action research analysis. The Mphil, through the case study research, however progressed rapidly in comparison to the KTP project with the Dyfi Valley Attractions because of difficulties inherent in consortia, e.g. reaching a shared view and limited financial resources. The momentum of the project was therefore carried through the case studies and the Dyfi Valley Attractions action research took more of a supporting role. The KTP project however proved instrumental in the outcomes of the Mphil. The level of seasonality inherent in UK tourism businesses allowed time to carryout the objectives of the KTP and also time freed up time for research during the quieter months. Also the integration with the university allowed access to knowledge and support, crucial to the outcomes of this thesis.

I feel that it has been a complex project, managing the two separate pieces of work, which has demanded a high level of time management, negotiation and communication skills to complete. It has also highlighted to me the importance of wider business and community networks in achieving projects of this scale.
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Appendix 1

Interview Guide for Case Study Research

Interview Guide – Phase 1.................................................................7-2
Interview Guide – Phase 2.................................................................7-5
Interview Guide – Phase 3.................................................................7-8
Interview Guide – Phase 1

Mission

- What is the problem domain? – what goals and opportunities are you realising by working as a partnership
- Is the remit of the consortium to solve a problem or create an opportunity?
- Core functions? Any spin offs
- How has the purpose changed/diversified since set up?
- What are the biggest pitfalls you have encountered?
  - How did you overcome them?

Structure

- How would you plot your lifecycle?
  - Note key points factors that have influenced this on the graph
  - Where do you see it going? (dotted line)
  - How are you going to ensure that?
  - Which stage do you think you are in?
- How has the structure of the consortium changed over time?
  - (power/members/financial)
- Are roles clearly defined? Does this cause problems/work well?
- Do you have a structure to your meetings timetable to ensure consistency?
  - What is the general turn out like?
  - Does this have an effect on the direction of the consortia?
- Membership structure e.g. fees, quality, buy in to schemes, opt out of certain schemes?
- How many in group/membership?
Appendix 1
Interview Guide

Communication
- Are you looking to change this?

Communication
- Is there face to face interaction?
  - When, how often, why, who.
  - How highly do you rate face to face interaction
- What are the main methods of communication between the group?
  - How do you find this works out?
  - Have you got any systems to ensure the quality of the communication?
- Do you find conflict a problem? - How do you deal with it?

Resources
- What are the resources collaborated? e.g. Money, expertise, knowledge
- How are the resources collaborated?

Marketing/outputs
- What are your main outputs e.g. training/skills/marketing/
  - Explain
- In terms of marketing, what is it you are selling to the consumer? (core product)
  - What are the key benefits the consumer gets from this partnership?

Evaluation
- How do you measure/quantify the success of the partnership?
Appendix 1
Interview Guide

- aim/opportunity which could not have been exploited on own.hit certain goals
- after evaluation do you have a period of review and change?
- Against what factors do you measure success (performance indicators)
  - How do you think you could/should improve this?
  - Are there any other measures you could use?

Future
- What is the future direction for the consortia? Where do you hope to see it and why?
- Do you believe it is a self sustaining entity or could it collapse easily due to environmental/internal factors?
- Do you see the partnership as being a short term or long term strategy?

Threats
- What do you see are the biggest threats to the survival of the consortia?
Interview Guide – Phase 2

Background

• When was the consortium set up and by whom?
• Is the remit of the consortium to solve a problem or create an opportunity?
• Was there any funding available to help with the set up and running costs?

Mission

• What is the problem domain? – what goals and opportunities are you realising by working as a partnership
• Core functions? Any spin offs
• How has the purpose changed/diversified since set up?
• What are the biggest pitfalls you have encountered?
  • How did you overcome them?

Structure

• How would you plot your lifecycle?
  • Note key points factors that have influenced this on the graph
  • Where do you see it going? (dotted line)
  • How are you going to ensure that?
  • Which stage do you think you are in?
• How has the structure of the consortium changed over time?
  • (power/members/financial)
• Are roles clearly defined? Does this cause problems/work well?
• Membership structure e.g. fees, quality, buy in to schemes, opt out of certain schemes?
• How many in group/membership?
Appendix I
Interview Guide

- Are you looking to change this?

Communication
- What are the main methods of communication between the group?
  - How do you find this works out?
  - Have you got any systems to ensure the quality of the communication?
- Do you find conflict a problem? - How do you deal with it?

Resources
- What are the resources collaborated? e.g. Money, expertise, knowledge
- How are the resources collaborated?

Marketing/outputs
- What are your main outputs e.g. training/skills/marketing/
  - Explain
- In terms of marketing, what is it you are selling to the consumer? (core product)
  - What are the key benefits the consumer gets from this partnership?
- What media/tools do you use to sell the product?
  - Reasons behind the choice
- What do your brand and values say about you?
  - Why/what purpose

Evaluation
- How crucial is it to evaluate the success of the consortium?
  - What would happen if you didn’t?
- Against what factors do you measure success (performance indicators)
- How do you think you could/should improve this?
- Are there any other measures you could use?
- After evaluation do you have a period of review and change?

Future
- What is the future direction for the consortia? Where do you hope to see it and why?
- Do you believe it is a self sustaining entity or could it collapse easily due to environmental/internal factors? Short or Long Term?

Key factor
- Is there one key factor without which the consortia would not function?

SWOT
- What do you see are the biggest Strengths and weaknesses of the consortia
- What do you view as being the biggest opportunities and threats to the consortia?
Interview Guide – Phase 3

Background

- When was the consortium set up and by whom?
- Is the remit of the consortium to solve a problem or create an opportunity?
- Was there any funding available to help with the set up and running costs?

Mission

- What is the problem domain? – what goals and opportunities are you realising by working as a partnership
- Core functions? Any spin offs
- What are the biggest pitfalls you have encountered?
  - How did you overcome them?

Structure

- Membership structure e.g. fees, quality, buy in to schemes, opt out of certain schemes?
- How many in group/membership?
  - Are you looking to change this?

Communication

- Do you find conflict a problem? - How do you deal with it?

Resources

- What are the resources collaborated? e.g. Money, expertise, knowledge
- How are the resources collaborated?
Appendix I
Interview Guide

Marketing

- What are you target market(s)
  - Why did you choose these market(s)
- What media/tools do you use to sell the product?
  - Reasons behind the choice
- In terms of marketing, what is it you are selling to the consumer? (core product)
  - What are the key benefits the consumer gets from this partnership?
- What do your brand and values say about you?
  - Why/what purpose

Evaluation

- How crucial is it to evaluate the success of the consortium?
  - How often do you evaluate?
- Against what factors do you measure success (performance indicators)
  - How do you think you could/should improve this?
- After evaluation do you have a period of review and change?
  - Does this generate full commitment from the members?

Future

- What is the future direction of the consortia?
  - Where do you hope to see it and why?
- Do you believe it is a self sustaining entity or could it collapse easily due to environmental/internal factors? Short or Long Term?

Key factor

- Is there one key factor without which the consortia would not function?
SWOT

- What do you see are the biggest Strengths and weaknesses of the consortia
- What do you view as being the biggest opportunities and threats to the consortia?
Case study Number 1 - Highland Loch Ness Consortium

Case study Number 2 - Golf Highland Consortium

Case study Number 3 - Gems of Midlothian Consortium
Case study Number 1 - Highland Loch Ness Consortium

4th January 2004

Background

The “Highlands Loch Ness – More than a Monster” tourism marketing consortium (HLN Ltd) currently comprises 37 leading tourism operators and preferred suppliers in the Inverness, Loch Ness, Nairn, Cairngorm and East Sutherland/Easter Ross areas. Members include accommodation providers, visitor attractions, special interest tour operators, transport and cruise operators, retailers and entertainers, as well as partners such as Highlands and Islands Airports Limited, Historic Scotland and Golf Highland.

The company was established in Autumn 2000, primarily as a cost-effective way for its members to target travel trade buyers, although some consumer promotion activity has also been undertaken. The company’s core activity to date has been attendance at around 12-14 overseas and UK travel trade exhibitions. Leads gathered at these shows are compiled onto a database and E-mailed to all members to allow them to follow up relevant enquiries direct.

In addition to attendance at travel trade exhibitions over the past three years, HLN has also undertaken a range of other activities, including:

- development of travel trade factsheets and CD-ROMs, for distribution at exhibitions
- development of a website, www.highlandslochness.com
- production of a consumer leaflet, for use at consumer shows
- various consumer promotions/special offers, in conjunction with various newspapers and publications
- familiarisation visits for travel trade buyers and the press
- networking and training events for members

Structure
The structure of HLN has not really changed since it was set up as a limited company in 2000. It consists of a board of nine directors who meet on a regular basis to work towards the aims of the company. There is one employee who works one and a half days a week to bring these aims and objectives together. It is a very effective trade led organisation, with all board members roles clearly defined and understood.

The geographic regions were developed after feedback from the trade shows into 5 area clusters, of which one area was sought out and developed. These geographic clusters contain attractions and accommodation providers who have to be selected by the board as suitable candidates to complement the existing profile of members.

Membership fees are taken on an annual basis and are a large contribution towards the income of the organisation. Members are charged on a basis that reflects their size and turnover. Hotels are charged a flat rate of £500 and then £20 per letting bedroom on top of that. Attractions are charged on three different levels of £550, £1100 and £1650 depending on their size and profitability. Other organisations such as special interest tour operators negotiate their membership fee. Joining fees are being introduced for all new members in 2004.

Communication

The board meets on a regular 6-8 week basis which facilitates a high level of face to face interaction and established trust between members. The HLN group also run a series of familiarization visits for its members at the member organisations which are often followed by evening activities. This is highly rated by all members of the organisation as a method for exchanging industry news and best practice and has been key in developing trust and referral between businesses.
E-mail is the most frequent form of communication and is very useful for enabling the members to be kept up to date with all the relevant information. HLN realised the importance of this method of communication and therefore ran a training course for all of its members to become confident in the use of the internet and e-mail.

Conflict between the board or other members has not been a problem for HLN.

**Resources**

The most obvious collaboration of resources is the financial aspect. Money is collected from the members in the form of annual fees and from the income gained through the preferred suppliers’ initiative. This is collaborated to facilitate the desired outputs in terms of marketing activity for HLN.

A very important and informal collaboration takes place as the members exchange industry knowledge and intelligence at the meetings and social events. This is seen as vital to the members however cannot be quantified into direct outputs for HLN.

**Outputs**

The company’s main aim is to promote the members and the area to the trade market. Their main outputs are therefore marketing activities and include attendance at trade shows and exhibitions to gather useful contacts for its members. Training is also an output, where they enhance their members skills for the better of the group.

The marketing activity sets out to achieve a number of business contacts for a wide range of business in a geographic area. Little focus is given to the consumer market as it
is seen as providing little return for their investment, however the website it is hoped will address the consumer market cost effectively.

The Highlands Loch Ness – More than a monster has certain inherent brand values related to a ‘soft’ range of products such as personal touch, consistent quality, integrity and delivery against a proposition.

**Evaluation**

Evaluating the success of tourism consortia is a difficult factor. HLN gather data on the number of enquiries made by the travel trade to its members. This has to be used as a guide rather than a measure because of the problems of collecting this kind of information. Problems can include; chasing members for accurate and up to date figures, knowing which enquiries came directly as a result of the marketing, repeat business from enquiries is not measured and the lag time from exhibition to enquiry can understate figures in the short term.

Evaluation of other outputs such as the exchange of knowledge and industry developments is qualified by the comments made by members at the review days. The measure is informal and not used as a guide to the success of the consortium, however is has helped in the growth of social events and fam visits amongst the members.

**Future**

HLN is viewed by its members as being a long term marketing strategy to increase the business for its members. As they are not reliant on external funding and have low overheads and staff costs its is feasible that they can continue as a long term operation.
Its strategic priorities are seen as retaining its focus on the travel trade, reducing its consumer marketing, encouraging cross referral of business between members, push members to promote a consistently high product/service and to tailor activities to meet the needs of the consumer.

Future activities will include targeting new geographical markets such as Russia and France, developing and promoting their new website, developing existing members' meetings and networking opportunities, developing a staff passport scheme, developing a programme of familiarisation visits for the travel trade and product development. These activities are subject to funding availability over the next three years.

**SWOT Analysis**

**Strengths of HLN**

- There is an atmosphere of enthusiasm, trust, confidence, networking, energy, referral business activity and net additional business
- Diversity of businesses within the group
- Focus of its members on the main aim
- A high exposure to the travel trade for little input from each member
- High level of communication and networking amongst members
- Small overheads and staff costs
- Complements the marketing activity of other organisations such as HOST
- Growing recognition of HLN as a brand

**Weaknesses of HLN**

- Limited capacity of the organisation reliant on goodwill and volunteer effort
- Need for more rounded membership
- Present website
- Need to push the ethos of HLN within the employees of HLN members
- Lack of clear criteria to assess new members
• Ambiguity in the measures of success

Opportunities

• Has a strong trade voice which will make the most of future opportunities
• Potential for growth of the brand and the membership
• Growth of air traffic into Inverness airport
• Continued cost effective targeting of the travel trade
• Growth of the cluster groups to six or more

Threats

• Growth of other similar public funded consortium
• Future disasters such as September 11th and foot and mouth
• Continued financial support from members
• Loosing the chairman who is a driving force behind the consortium
• They only have the one main product to fall back one
Case study Number 2 - Golf Highland Consortium

4th January 2004

Background

The Highland Golf consortium is made up of approximately 80 members of which there are 47 golf clubs and 30-40 accommodation providers spread across the Highlands of Scotland. Close contact is also made between Highlands of Scotland Tourism (HOST) Highlands Loch Ness consortia, Highlands and Islands Airport Limited, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Highland council.

The consortium was set up in 2001 with the remit of ‘getting tourism and golf clubs to work together for the better of tourism in Scotland’ (F. Cromerty 2004, Transcript from interview with Highland Golf)

It was seen to be creating an opportunity that was not fully exploited, especially in teaming up golf clubs and accommodation providers for a seamless tourism experience.

Initially Golf Highland was focusing its marketing activity on the travel trade, for example attending exhibitions such as the International Golf Travel Market. This has developed to include; consumer marketing, website development, fam visits to the accommodation and golf clubs and more recently targeted marketing on key markets in Russia and Stockholm.

Structure

The structure of Golf Highland has not really changed since it was set up as a limited company in 2001. It consists of a board of nine directors who meet on a regular basis to work towards the aims of the company. There is one employee who works full time and
one employee who works part time to bring the aims and objectives together. It appears that there are no clear aims and objectives as there is discontentment between members about its direction and as a result of this no clear roles are defined for the board or members. The day to management roles are however clearly defined.

There are no clear geographic regions however it was mentioned at the AGM that a system of splitting into several geographic clusters such as HLN would be advantageous and help with the organisation, administration and marketing activities. There has been a huge increase in the number of accommodation providers since the beginning but all in all there is a good mix between public and private sector golf clubs. They are looking to continue this growth.

Membership fees are taken on an annual basis dependant on the size of the organisation and are a reasonable contribution towards the income of the organisation. Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Highland Council are the major contributor towards the financial income of the organisation and therefore have a large bearing on the aims and objectives of the consortium.

**Communication**

The board members meet on a regular basis to discuss the direction of Golf Highland. It is thought that there is enough face to face contact between the board members however members do not get enough of this contact. The manager tries to visit as many of the members on an annual basis but with time constraints this has proven difficult. Member contact can be improved in the future by developing a series of internal fam visits for the members to socialise and share expertise and industry knowledge.
The most common form of contact between the members is by e-mail and telephone which suits the nature of the organisation and the dispersed nature of the members.

Conflict has not been a problem of Golf Highland, more a difference of opinion between the members or the board and the politics that go on behind the scenes.

**Resources**

The most obvious collaboration of resources is the financial aspect. Money is collected from the members in the form of annual fees and from the Highlands and Islands Initiative and the Highlands Council. A scheme of preferred suppliers is being developed which it is hoped will increase the level of income for the consortium. The finance is collaborated to facilitate the desired outputs in terms of marketing activity for Golf Highland.

In kind support is also an important resource in the form of offices and equipment from the local college. A minimal and informal exchange of knowledge and expertise takes place at the members meetings and through the manager.

**Outputs**

The core marketing outputs are the website, golf brochure, quarterly newsletter, attendance at exhibitions, operating of fam trips for press, and adverts in magazines. Golf Highland have a good relationship with many magazines which means at short notice they are asked to input information for an editorial.

Golf Highland also have a training course for its members and anyone who wanted to participate which brings in minimal income at present. The main market for the
consortium is group and trade organisations because they bring in more income for the effort and expenditure.

The core brand values are about a strong golfing and high quality product.

**Evaluation**

Measuring the success of Golf Highland was a much debated issue in the AGM. As few of the operators are measuring benefits individually and the consortium has no formal structure in place to measure success little idea of the achievements is made public to all the members. The unquantifiable success has produced an environment where members are questioning the benefits of the scheme. Some of the larger hotels can show that Golf Highland has increased visitor figures however the general feeling is towards the need for measurement across the board.

Golf Highland does however measure success in terms of hits on the website, demand for the brochure and attendance at golfing events. The future will see the use of a golfing pass which can be used to measure the take up of Golf Highland across the board.

Measuring success is not so straightforward because many of the smaller golf clubs and hotels do not have the systems in place, such as monitoring green fees or occupancy rates. This is a major consideration for the future of Golf Highland which is to be discussed at their review day.

**Future**

The future aims of the management of Golf Highland are to work with more people, more members and understand more about what Golf Highland is, and taking a more
active role. The success of the website is also vitally important, especially the recruitment of more golf clubs to the site.\(^1\)

Future activities depend on the input of grants from Highland Council and Highland and Islands Enterprise, which is by no means certain over the next three years. To become self sustaining Golf Highland needs to be aware of its successes and inform its members of the benefits they are receiving. Once the benefits become apparent the members are more likely to see the merit in higher fees and more members will want to become involved.

**SWOT Analysis**

**Strengths of Golf Highland**

- Growing recognition of Golf Highland as a brand
- Large and diverse number of members
- Support from Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Highlands Council
- Dedicated management and board to lead and inspire the members

**Weaknesses of Golf Highland**

- Working with public sector politics
- Internal politics associated with working with a large number of people
- Need a clear and separate identity away from Highlands Loch Ness
- Dependence on external funding
- Just another golf tourism consortia in Scotland
- No obviously clear aims and objectives

**Opportunities for Golf Highland**

- Make the most of increasing air links into Inverness airport
- Remaining a competitive golf product compared to other areas of Scotland and Ireland who are pricing themselves out of the market
- Growth in the preferred supplier scheme will increase future income

\(^1\) F. Cromerty 2004, Notes from interview with Golf Highland
Appendix 2  
Case Study Phase 1

• Growth of the training scheme would provide an increase in recognition and income
• A programme of internal fam visits will help with building relationships and trust between members

Threats for Golf Highland

• External funding may not continue
• Internal politics in the golf clubs may make systems difficult to implement
• Other golfing consortia taking over Golf Highland
• Major unforeseen disasters such as foot and mouth and September 11th
• Loss of members because membership fee outweighs the perceived success
Golf Highland Consortium
Tourism Partnership life cycle model, and predicted future

Appendix 2
Case Study Phase 1

Success

Life cycle to date

Expected future

Present time

Time
Case study Number 3 - Gems of Midlothian Consortium

5th January 2004

Background

The Gems of Midlothian is a tourism marketing consortium of three Bed and Breakfasts located in the Geographic region of Midlothian. The B&Bs are all four star establishments and pride themselves on quality of service and pro-activity in ensuring all visitors have a welcoming and comfortable stay. By working as a group the members are seeing an increased number of guests, gaining a lot of satisfaction from working with other people and being recognised by the industry, which has seen a number of opportunities open up to them.

The consortium was established in 2002, following the foot and mouth outbreak. Visit Scotland supported the tourism operators by offering grants to those who entered into joint marketing activity. The Gems had no formal aims and objectives so it was decided to use the grant to increase the profile of the B&Bs and the area by using leaflets, discount vouchers and fam visits to feature writers. The initial remit of the consortium was to solve a problem and by doing this they have realised an opportunity that has grown out of all proportion.

The initial marketing activity proved to have limited response, and so an increased level of marketing activity, including area marketing followed. The Gems developed and launched a website featuring the three B&Bs and the area of Midlothian, produced DVDs for the individual B&Bs to increase the number of bookings from enquiries and are currently in the finishing stages of an area DVD which has brought together a
number of operators and suppliers. The DVD is to be available through the TICs and via the internet.

Structure
The structure of the Gems has been very informal which has suited its members and has proved to have successful results. There is no regular meeting structure or appointed roles the group just take up the roles and responsibilities as and when appropriate. It seems that there is one clear visionary and face of the Gems, who takes the lead and focuses the group on the next initiative. It appears to be a very effective trade led organisation, as there is a high level of trust and companionship amongst the members.

The Gems have no clear membership structure which is one of their problems as there is never a regular income for the Gems. All members pay into the schemes as and when they are proposed and approved. It is though that a joining fee should be put in place to ensure the commitment of any new members.

The small geographical area which the Gems of Midlothian covers is a limiting factor in increasing membership numbers. One other B&B has been identified in the area which fits the criteria of being four star approved and as having a pro-active mentality towards the satisfaction of its guests.

Communication
The members meet on a regular but ad hoc basis, which facilitates a high level of face to face interaction between the members. It is seen very much as an informal set up and so the meetings tend to have a strong social basis.
Face to face is the most common form of communication between the members as it is seen that e-mail and even the telephone are less personal and that it is better to 'sit around the table and thrash things out' (Quin Dunlop 2003; transcript from interview with Gems of Midlothian)

Conflict is not so much of a problem for the Gems group but rather a difference of opinion. It was mentioned that three members to the group was the worst possible number as there is always two people versus one person in disagreements. It is not a limiting factor of the group but seems to cause some underlying difficulties.

**Resources**

There does not seem to be a clear collaboration of resources. Money is the most obvious one, however it is not formalised or regulated. Input of knowledge, expertise and time seems to be a more appropriate function of the Gems which comes through in the more informal nature of the business

A vital and very important collaboration takes place as the members exchange labour and time. A clear example of this is when one member goes on holiday; the telephone is diverted to one of the other members who take their calls and book customers on their behalf. This has resulted in £2,000 of business being booked in while the member was on holiday.
Outputs

The group has been quoted to have an aim to ‘create a quality brand for three B&Bs and connect the brand to the quality component of the Midlothian Tourist Product’ (www.scotexchange.net; 2003). Their main outputs have therefore been concerned with marketing of the product to the consumer market through the production of a leaflet, website and discount voucher in year 1. This activity earned them a Thistle Award for small businesses.

Other key outputs are the referral business that has been developed through developing trust and confidence in working together. In one year period it was estimated that £970 had been made by just referring business to the other B&Bs when they were full or closed. The other benefit as mentioned before was the chance to continue taking bookings through the other members during a period of absence.

The Gems of Midlothian consortium have certain brand values such as quality, top end of the market, pro-activity and quality of service. They have been recommended as being the benchmark and market leader for the future of tourism.

Evaluation

Evaluation is done on an annual basis, where the B&Bs compare year on year turnover and occupancy. This has shown an increase in business since and during the Gems of Midlothian group which is a clear indication to the members that the consortium has resulted in success. This could however be unclear as a natural increase in tourists to Scotland who demand B&B accommodation is not considered. This measure is not 100% however it fulfils the requirements of the members and so it is a suitable and easy measure for the group to use.
Evaluating other outputs such as exchange of knowledge and expertise is very difficult to measure and is not considered in the annual review of the Gems. Time and labour inputs are be measured individually through the bookings made directly through referral of business and the individual views of the members.

Future
The future aim of the Gems of Midlothian is to increase occupancy of the members’ establishments by marketing Midlothian as a tourist destination predominately using the internet as a marketing tool. Income for marketing activities will come through a preferred supplier deal with private hire cars.

The lifespan of the Gems is seen as being short as it will be unable to sustain itself into the future unless more people get involved who are keen to take the ideals forward.

SWOT Analysis
Strengths of The Gems of Midlothian

- Close and bonded members
- High quality of the B&Bs and their commitment to a high quality product
- Increased marketing activity through combining resources
- Proximity to Edinburgh and the airport
- The area of Midlothian is ideal for markets such as weddings and conferences

Weaknesses of The Gems of Midlothian

- Short term nature of the group
- Small numbers of the group can cause disagreements and make the future uncertain
- Strong branding of Edinburgh could overshadow Midlothian
- Small capacity of bed spaces between the members
- Reliant on one key figure to lead the group
- All members commit time and labour on a voluntary basis
Opportunities for The Gems of Midlothian

- New low cost flights from Germany and the Czech Republic to Edinburgh.
- Future discount vouchers working with other operators
- Increase in the profile of the Gems via the marketing video
- Creation of clusters similar to Gems throughout the whole of Scotland
- Increased use of the internet as a marketing tool

Threats for The Gems of Midlothian

- Illness of Gems members
- Another disaster such as September 11th or foot and mouth
- Possibility of breakdown in current unanimity of purpose or mutual trust
- New target markets such as groups or overseas
Gems of Midlothian Consortium
Tourism Partnership life cycle model, and predicted future

Success

Life cycle to date

Expected future

Present time

Time

Appendix 2
Case Study Phase 1

7-32
Appendix 3

Case Studies Results Phase 2

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Case study Number 5 - Causeway Coast and Glens........................7-42
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Case study Number 4 - Sperrins Tourism Limited

9th February 2004

Background

Sperrins Tourism Limited exists to lead and co-ordinate the local public, private and community tourism interests in the sustainable and innovative development, promotion and training of tourism in the Sperrins. We are committed to developing a competitive industry through maximising the natural resources of the unspoilt environment and peoples of the Sperrins. Sperrins Tourism Limited (2004i)

The company was established in September 1999 and is responsible for implementing a regional tourism strategy; accessing and distributing funding for tourism development; marketing and promoting the Sperrins to potential local, national and international visitors; and providing relevant specialised training and support for the tourism industry.

Originally it was set up by the four council areas of Strebane, Magherafelt, Cookstone, and Omagh, but has since widened and strengthened to seven to include the City of Derry, Limavady and Coleraine. “Sperrins Tourism has 145 associate members who contribute to the company on an annual basis. The members reflect and make-up of the local tourism industry and include accommodation, activity and attraction providers. A key role of Sperrins Tourism Limited is to reflect the needs of the members, and develop initiatives, which can benefit the members” Sperrins Tourism Limited (2004 ii)
It has been seen to be set up to create an opportunity in pooling resources for example in exhibitions and other marketing costs to gain recognition for the whole area. These activities are part funded by the members and part funded by the Tourist board.

Mission

The partnership is bringing money and innovation to an area with a reasonably underdeveloped tourism product.

The core functions are marketing, where they use brochures and exhibit at various exhibitions. They gain some income from including Sustrans and the Railnetwork in their brochures, however they are a not for profit organisation and so cannot exploit this any further.

The purpose hasn’t really changed over time in that they still do the marketing however their role has changed because they now offer training and are seen as a lobbying voice in the Tourist Board. hey have also taken on the European funding which has dramatically increased their staffing levels as they are involved in sorting out applications and allocating funds. This has widened their catchments because it has increased their profile and strengthened their base. European funding covers product development and domestic marketing, upgrading accommodation providers.

Trying to work throughout the seven district council areas is their biggest pitfall. There is a common need for marketing and product development however can be difficult to retain the bigger picture especially as everyone is coming from their own little area. This can be overcome by reminding them all of the bigger picture and having a very strong chairperson.
Structure

The structure has widened and broadened since set up and the directors have increased by 25%. The company structure in terms of staff has exploded because of the allocation of European funding applications this gives them a bigger presence in the area.

Annual fees are paid by the members (see membership prices) which includes entry onto the website, a newsletter and brochure and they get good feedback from the WTB and get into other promotions such as supermarket promotions, and referral work through Sperrins. The general feeling about members is that more members equals more money, and they are not afraid that this would dilute their product at all, rather they will strengthen the product in terms of resources.

The role of chair person rotates through sectors and council wards so everyone has representation in the long run. Also have a number of subcommittees under the main board: marketing committee, Nertti committee (funding allocation) and a product development committee and they all rotate on a regular basis.

The councillors are definitely the driving force behind the project because they are the ones seen to have the clout because they pay huge sums of money to keep the partnership running. The partnership would like to see the private sector contribute more in the AGMs and on the board. This may be because the councillors are intimidating and are used to the formal meetings unlike some of the other members.

It is felt that roles are clearly defined amongst board members, everyone listens to the chair and in turn the chair listens to the members of the sub committees, which are clear
in their roles as they each have a specific remit e.g. the marketing sub committee looks at marketing and brochures etc.

Communication
E-mail is used as much as possible and is seen as the main method of communication between the partnership and the members. Some of the members, however, do not use e-mail especially the councillors who like to have their papers in front of them. The membership base gets contacted by post regularly through their regular newsletters. They would like to see a cut in mailing however the vast majority of people want the papers sent by post.

Conflict is a problem in all sorts of forms and at all levels. For example, between councils who are only interested in their areas; also between sectors who want to be seen to have their equally rights.

Resources
The main resource collaborated is financial, in the form of membership fees. Premises are also seen as a resource and have been used to same time and money for meetings.

The time the board members gives up is a valuable and recognised resource, however board members have their fees waived costing the partnership £1,300 per annum and their travelling expenses paid. Other members do not really give up their time to do anything.

Marketing
The main output in terms of marketing is the production of the brochures. It is hard to calculate and define how many visitors this has brought in however they look at figures from the northern Ireland Tourist Board which can to give a general figure for the area.

There are four brochures and a website which has just had an upgrade. Events listings and special offers are on the website. Direct marketing is conducted where brochures are sent directly to officers in GB and go to exhibitions like Go Fishing in Birmingham. Returns for this are so hard to define, however any enquiries can and are recorded. Familiarisation trips are undertaken throughout the whole year, close links with the NITB get them business sent through. Lots of editorials for hill walking and cycling have been produced which are on going and fairly similar each year.

The target market has changed, it used to be the high fliers getting them to stay for a week, now the short break market has become the main target. Packages have been produced to complement this for example a guide to do hill walking as part of the stay. Hotels run promotional weekends or latch onto the walking weekends and some offer bikes for guests to use. The market for family days out tends to target the mid to high end of the market because it is a requirement to have a car in order to get to the area. The retirement market are also key because the area offers suitable activities such as walking and golfing. Golfing and angling bring in a lot of men so they are trying to offer a product for the wives e.g. pampering or shopping.

Brand slogan used is “First to catch the dawn” This is a bit dated now however it will cost to much to change and is not the right time at present. Need something that will represent the variety of activities to do in the area e.g. more than just mountains. The logo is ill defined, loch, mountains etc. can see a revamp coming on.
Evaluation

Evaluation at present is ad hoc. They rely on feedback from various sectors and the members. They look annually at what worked and what didn’t, but it is not a formal assessment. Tend not to rely on questionnaires in general, just use them at exhibitions to see how good the stand and handouts were etc. Members do not require seeing the performance figures to be satisfied with the outputs at present. They do however agree that for the future and long term a formal evaluation process does need to be put into place and administered.

No formal reflection and analysis of the scheme is undertaken as time is just too short. It would however be a worthwhile exercise.

On the European funding evaluation side to the company, rigid evaluation has to be done on an annual basis which is tick box. This does not feed onto the marketing side of the company.

Future

They see themselves consolidating and renegotiating the financial commitment of the members. They are also looking to see the NITB commit as they are not a Regional Tourism Organisation (RTO) so have no official funding from TB.

They are keen to bid for more European funding, to cover the areas that are not presently under the European funding region of the Sperrins tourism area. This will permit applications for the other members
If funding is secured then they see themselves as a self sustaining entity otherwise they cannot generate revenue and make profits.

**Key factors**

A Committed directorship who are very committed to marketing the Sperrins

**SWOT**

**Strengths of STL**

- Representation of the three sectors public, private and community has lead to a destination partnership with all round representation.
- They have a committed staff team, who handle all aspects of the operation.

**Weaknesses of STL**

- They have a big geographical area. This is hard to cover in terms of resources and members travelling to meetings

**Opportunities for STL**

- Managing European funding is a massive opportunity for the area and the partnership. The success of this area could lead to more funding for the future.

**Threats to STL**

- Not being acknowledged by the tourist board.
- The future restructuring of the TB in Northern Ireland, without consultation by themselves, to form a number of signature projects in NI. Having not been given the opportunity to contribute to the signature projects, which are located in areas that don’t need the extra visitors in peak times, feel that they may get swept under the TB carpet.
- They try to link to TB strategies but they are not always given the opportunity.
Sperrins Tourism Limited
Tourism Partnership life cycle model, and predicted future

Appendix 3
Case Studies Phase 2

Life cycle to date

Present time

Expected future

Time

Success
Case study Number 5 - Causeway Coast and Glens
10th February 2004

Background
After a review by the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) in 1997 5 regional tourism organisations were set up to replace and existing 11 tourism marketing consortium. CCAG is responsible for out of state marketing for the area covered by Newtownabbey, Larne, Carrickfergus, Ballymena, Moyle, Coleraine, Ballymoney and Liavady Local Authorities.

Presently 409 businesses are members of Causeway Coast and Glens Ltd (CCAG). This membership currently has a focus on accommodation (335) with the remaining 74 members covering an extremely diverse range of providers including Blue Badge Guides, Visitor Attractions, Retailers, Community Groups, Golf Clubs, Tour Operators, Ground Handlers, Transportation, Special Interest Providers etc.

The remit of the CCAG was to solve a problem because the existing system was in such a mess. It is believed that the creation of the RTO has in fact created an opportunity for CCAG.

Mission
The company's mission statement has been defined as; to effectively and efficiently market the region outside Northern Ireland in order to attract out-of-state visitors to the region. The company will provide the focus, co-ordination and overall management of the tourism marketing in the region.
The marketing objectives for CCAG are; to increase the number of out of state visitors to the region by focused marketing; to encourage continuation of private/public sector partnerships; to maximise media coverage of the region; to maximise e-commerce opportunities; to increase the baseline brand awareness of the region in appropriate markets; to develop a range of key tourism products; and to monitor and evaluate all marketing activity as effectively as possible.

Marketing is the core function of CCAG, it is seen as not being an effective function on its own, because they cannot separate tourism development and marketing. The product still needs development in the area and so straightforward marketing is just not enough. The NITB is currently in the process of changing and restructuring the system which could bring the 5 RTO into 4 and include tourism development in their remit.

The spin offs produced by CCAG are internal familiarisation visits for the local Tourist Information Centres (TICs), staff training, and partnership work with the private sector for promotions.

The product has not really changed since set up however it is currently changing, in terms of delivery mechanisms to achieve the strategy. They are trying to get more into product development, visitor servicing and marketing closer to home.

There are several pitfalls that the CCAG comes across; raising funding in the private sector is very difficult, seasonality and peripherality effect the area that they work in. They don’t have the business tourism market that Belfast has so they struggle in the winter period as legislation states that they have to stay open in the winter. This and other factors have resulted in 6 hotels closing in the last 6 years, which becomes a
problem when trying to host events. Also, suppliers often do not understand how the business works, for example, they would not open for £15 were the fixed cost are just £9.

Structure

CCAG has 24 members on the board that meets every two months, and a management committee of 12 that meets every month. This board comprises the public and private sector split 50/50. It is difficult to find a structure that suits all of the councils. For example the council area that has the largest number of attractions is least able to pay into the partnership and the area with the least number of attractions is most able to pay. There is a need to find a balance.

The public sector puts in over 50% of the funding for CCAG however it only has 50% of the decision making power, shared with private sector. This principal has removed local authority dominance and has significantly increased private sector participation in marketing activities.

Overall the membership structure of CCAG has shown a decline of 5.3% on 2002/2003. The reduction in membership for 2003/2004 has been mainly attributed to businesses closing down and retirements of existing operators. Although recruitment for 2003/4 is ongoing, it is unlikely that there will be a significant increase in membership.

Current membership stands at 1,704 businesses who pay annual fees to be members of the partnership. There is also a joining fee for new members which ranges from £15 to £75 depending on the scale and size of the operation. Annual fees also take into account
the scale of the operation and starts from £65 for a Retailer/Travel agent who has under 5,000 sq ft.

It is seen that roles or clearly defined and works well for the CCAG

**Communication**

Minutes of the meetings between the board members are circulated to all of the members. A hoc mail outs to members three/five times a year and a members newsletter about 3 time a year help to keep members up to date with the partnership. Members will communicate with the partnership if they need to.

Post is main method of communication, although increasingly there is a need to e-mail. This has problems in that some of the smaller members don’t have e-mail so it would get confusing to split the membership between those who receive post and those who do not.

Conflict is not really seen as a problem because they don’t have any contentious issues. Their main area of debate amongst the members is that one of the hotels gets more business than all of the others.

**Resources**

The main resource collaborated is financial, collected annually from its members, TB and local authorities. They don’t see themselves as being able to raise a high level of funding, so they cannot make the most of advertising and other marketing opportunities.
Funding is a constant struggle for CCAG, however they have also been supported by European funding. The biggest problem with this is finding funding to match it. They have a lot of smaller accommodation providers, if asked to match fund for example £100 the accommodation provider expects a return of that £100 in business straight away.

Marketing

The CCAG partnership tends to conduct all sorts of marketing although television tends to be linked to national campaigns because of funding. Examples are attendance at trade shows and exhibitions, promotions, advertising, familiarisation trips, PR, Literature production, website and direct mail.

Target markets, for the CCAG are staggered into a 3 tier approach.

| Tier one: | domestic and closer to home markets, specific overseas segments already delivering results (including VFR), as well as those with direct access. Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland, Great Britain, USA, Canada, Australia/New Zealand, The Netherlands. |
| Tier two: | segments that match with our internationally competitive products, for example the current focus includes Sweden and Golf, Germany and cruising, France and angling, Italy as a foreign language. |
| Tier three: | Maximising the potential of key emerging segments in international markets (future tier one and tier two markets). Work will be done with Tourism Ireland to select two or three best long term prospects. |

The brand values for CCAG are ‘inspiring, mythical, dramatic, invigorating’ in other words ‘outstanding natural beauty supported by Myths and Legends’. The name of Causeway Coast and Glens was carefully chosen because the Giant’s Causeway is a well know icon which creates interest; a geographical location helps to identify the location; and the glens are less well-known and so add mystery.
Evaluation

Evaluation for the CCAG is crucial to the success of the consortium. All objectives set are measured in terms of their outcome, from number of trade partners recruited to the number of requests for brochures on the back of advertising campaigns. After each campaign they have evaluation forms sent out to the public and private sector members to help with the process of evaluation, and other external influences also play a part on the overall evaluation process.

Some of the objectives that are set cannot be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic or Timely), this is a problem because they are assessed externally by people outside the tourism industry who expect to see exact and quantifiable figures.

Every three months there is a review of the marketing strategy by the CCAG and it is reviewed annually by the NITB.

Future

The future for the CCAG is in the hands of the NITB, the current plan for restructuring will see them getting into areas other than marketing such as product development and visitor servicing, widening their load enormously. Product development is certainly an area of interest to the CCAG. CCAG would like to see themselves getting the domestic market as it would strengthen their portfolio.

CCAG could never be a self sustaining entity, it is impossible to think of any destination or tourism company that could claim to be. However as long as they are getting support from the members and the NITB there is no reason to think that it could
not carry on for the medium to long term. The CCAG could not function independently of the TB.

Key factors

Money is the key factor for the CCAG, with out which they could not function.

SWOT

Strengths of Causeway Coast and Glens

- Greatly increased public and private sector co-operation on tourism marketing
- The region is a well-established tourist destination with a wide range of attractions and activities on offer for visitors
- Giant’s Causeway is a World Heritage Site and is the strongest iconic image that N Ireland can use in out of state marketing
- The Causeway Coast and Glens is the best known of the regions in Northern Ireland
- Excellent support from tourism providers for the work of the RTO
- In depth tourism knowledge of the existing Board members, which contributes significantly to the development of the region’s marketing objectives
- Areas of outstanding natural beauty with a wide variety of scenery
- Three blue flag beaches
- Thirty one golf courses, including the world renowned Royal Portrush
- The region features prominently in current Tourism Ireland collateral
- Geographical positioning to ports of entry
- Established international events
- CCAG Visitor Survey continues to provide detailed information on visitor profiling
- Good Road infrastructure
- Increase in private and public sector investment in tourism marketing and product development
- Close working relationship with NITB and Tourism Ireland staff in headquarters and overseas offices
- Cultural Heritage

Weaknesses of Causeway Coast and Glens

- Lack of political stability
- Lack of effective performance measurements to access all marketing activities
- Lack of packaged product in the region
- Shortage of hotels with 60+ rooms to accommodate coach tours
• Deterioration of the long stay market
• Seasonality of visitors coupled with the off-season closure of major visitor attractions
• Low level of product awareness leading to short stays
• Current strength of Sterling in the world currency markets
• The RTO and NITB have limited resources
• Dominance of Causeway Coast area as main tourist destination within the region
• Approximately 45% of current CCAG accommodation members are small operators with four bedrooms or less or one unit of self catering accommodation. This results in an absence of marketing orientation among providers
• Lack of product knowledge by tourism providers continues to restrict the potential of cross selling between providers
• Lack of direct air access to N Ireland
• Road signposting throughout the region, especially from major access points
• Poor presentation of culture of the area
• Poor public transport
• Lack of clarification of delivery mechanisms/roles of tourism bodies including the RTO

Opportunities for Causeway Coast and Glens

• The designation of the Giant's Causeway/Antrim and Causeway Coast area as a signature project in the current NITB Strategic Framework will provide the opportunity to develop a master plan for the whole of the region
• Potential new direct air access routes to N Ireland
• Formulation of Regional Partnerships (NITB Strategic Framework) and clarification of roles
• Potential growth offered by political stability and the continuing development of Tourism Ireland, which will create a significantly greater number of opportunities for N Ireland to be exposed to potential new markets and customers
• A co-ordinated approach to the development of sustainable tourism through the current close links with the Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust, particularly the opportunities presented by the NRRTI initiative which has allocated £3 million to the region
• Potential for incentive travel, using a small number of key suppliers
• The introduction of route 93 in the region and continuing development of the Sustrans National Cycle Network
• Potential to attract more international events to the area
• The ongoing research programme will provide information on visitor profile, which will enable development of a very focused, segmented, marketing strategy
• Development of an Internet Marketing Strategy
• Increasing competition on air/sea routes resulting in lower fares and increased accessibility particularly from GB
• Improvement of road and rail links from the Republic of Ireland
• Global increase in activity holidays and cultural experience
• Increased emphasis on fam trips for press and trade representatives
• The development of packaged holidays using the services of members such as Leisure Breaks, Travel solutions, Travelbreaks, North and West Coast links, Airporter Travel and tours.

Threats to Causeway Coast and Glens

• continuing internal political instability and uncertainty
• The continuing threat from world wide terrorist activity
• Increasing competition from other regions of GB from the republic of Ireland or from new destinations such as Eastern Europe
• Incoming operators lack of confidence
• Lack of support from product providers
• Continuation of Sterling to perform well in the world currency markets
• Competition for limited government resources from other sectors of the economy
• Lack of long term funding for the RTO
Causeway Coast and Glens

Success

Time

Life cycle to date

Present time

Expected future
Case study Number 6 - Attractions of Snowdonia
25th February 2004

Background
Attractions of Snowdonia was formed on the 31st March 1987 with the aim to; attract visitors to those attractions which for the time being are members of the group; co-operate with the Wales Tourist Board, British Tourist Authority and similar organisations in publicity, exhibitions, meetings and similar promotional operations with the aim of attracting visitors to Wales in particular and the United Kingdom in general; co-operate with all sections of the tourist industry in providing means for attracting visitors.

To begin with the consortium was very low key and run on the money that was put in from the attractions and the time and resources that were given up by the members. Since the joint marketing funding was secured they employ a full time secretariat which has commanded more in subscriptions from the members due to the increased activity and match funding. Since then the project has really taken off.

The group evolved through a desire to solve a problem in regional marketing, it was perceived that Snowdonia area was weak in marketing the destination. Out of this has evolved the opportunity of advanced marketing, opportunities to network, best practice schemes and greater lobbying politically.

Mission
The core functions of Snowdonia Attractions are in terms of marketing. This includes brochure production, attendance at exhibitions, poster productions, PR, direct mail and
advertising. Other activities that have spun off from the original activity are training and networking, shared learning and lobbying.\(^2\)

This mission has changed a lot since set up, they started off small, but success has lead to them expanding in members, finance and activity which has been good for the consortium. Originally marketing was just a brochure which has developed into wider marketing and spin offs.

Bureaucracy is very high up on the list of pit falls for the Attractions of Snowdonia, the level of administration required from the funding bodies takes a lot of time away from activities such as marketing. As an organisation working on behalf of the attractions it can be difficult to manage the needs of the group members as many have individual needs and demands from the organisation. In terms of planning, the future is never certain and so it can be difficult to plan for the medium to long term; can have a strategy in place but will you have the funding to make it work?

**Structure**

Finance available has increased year on year but the actual management structure has not changed since the funding became available. The take up of new members has been steady and is now, give or take one or two, at its perceived maximum capacity. The limit is in place because they feel that it can become a difficult message to sell once the membership reached a certain point. On the other hand this is accepting that the budget is limited to income from the members.

\(^2\) This has helped in terms of drawing money down to facilitate individual members funding.
Fees are on an annual basis which is currently £2000 per site which is then match funded by the WTB. They do have additional buy in/opt out schemes, for example, the winter discount schemes which was pointless for the attractions that are closed in the winter.

It is seen that the roles are clearly defined in the group which is partly explained by the personalities involved, it could also be because the group has been functioning for many years and so all disputed have been resolved.

**Communication**

E-mail is used as much as possible and is seen as the main method of communication between the partnership and the members. E-mail has allowed them to do things more dynamically because decisions can be made faster, and they can do far more than posting enabled.

Predominately conflict is not a problem for the Attractions of Snowdonia, but again that is down to the personalities involved. Occasional conflict occurs where individual members have own aims and objectives. The main argument is on discounts, some members are pro discount and other members are very against it and see it as a devaluation of product.

**Resources**

The main resource collaborated is financial, in the form of membership fees collected on an annual basis. This income has been subject to match funding from the Welsh Tourist Board in recent years and has been a huge support. The secretariat is also a
valuable grant funded resource which benefits the organisation and gives a sense of responsibility.

Marketing
As mentioned above the main marketing outputs are brochure production, attendance at exhibitions, poster productions, PR, direct mail and advertising. They do a lot of PR locally which helps to increase the profile and good for the members to see

The main markets are the resident day market, in region and out of region in terms of short breaks, and also media, groups. The consumer gets sold a destination but with more localised product selling within that destination.

The brand tried to tap into the ABCI upmarket high spend profile, so they have tried to create a brand that reflects the quality of the product.

Evaluation
Success is measured internally through feedback from the members and externally through bringing in funding and creating a reputation in public and private sector industries.

Last year they researched into how it was seen form a consumer point of view, and it was found that most people picked up the consortia brochure in Wales.

Areas for improvement are that more research could be undertaken; future planning given more emphasis; databases collated; having a way to monitor the full extent of PR activity. To monitor success Attractions of Snowdonia need to get in touch with the
members and collate visitor figures, tokens from advertising/press releases etc. This means that they are very heavily reliant on other people imputing.

Future
There are signs that future funding may level out and even drop off. Contingencies need to be put into place so that they can get other funding sources for example, get joint project with Irish partnerships to tap into Interreg European funding stream

Is partly self sustainable at a limited level as long as the members can see a perceived benefit in continuing to pay into the scheme. Although without match funding they would not be able to pay for a secretariat and they would have a limited budget so may not be able to get the members to pay so much into the scheme.

Key factor
Key factors are funding and the time given to it by its members.

SWOT

Strengths of Attractions of Snowdonia

• Strong collective-commitment to collaborative working within Snowdonia
• Confident but realistic in terms of aims and objectives for the consortia’s work
• Members clearly understand role and benefits of consortia
• Incorporates major in-bound transport provider (Stena Lines)
• Common geographic base that conforms to one of the 12 marketing areas
• Reflects a strong, coherent range of opportunities for key markets within a well-defined destination
• Effective clusters of attractions exist that add power to the product’s market appeal

3 INTERREG III is a European Commission Community Initiative to encourage transnational cooperation on spatial planning
4 Taken from Attractions of Snowdonia, SWOT analysis 2004
Membership includes key national organisations: Cadw, NMGW and National Trust

Interesting but complementary by range of attractions spread throughout area ranging by type and scale

Incorporates some of Wales’ icon or flagship attractions

Represents an appropriate critical mass of attractions and activity providers to give credibility to the marketing offer

Commitment to developing visitor access by sustainable transport

Have achieved real benefits already. These extend beyond marketing into business development, market research, and securing external grant aid.

Economies of scale and cost effective marketing have been welcomed by members

Desire to grow tourism in Snowdonia as well as for members’ individual businesses

Realisation that combined resources have strong purchasing powers

Weaknesses of Attractions of Snowdonia

Reliant upon the voluntary effort of the membership

Group needs to undertake more research to demonstrate the value of consortia’s work

Temptation to provide a destination marketing material in absence of this being done by others

Potential gaps in membership (location, type) still to be assessed

Membership criteria (baseline entry) to be agreed

Benefits have not been formally measured

The potential for cross-referral marketing between members has not been fully exploited to date

Limited resources for collective effort with members still assessing impact

Opportunities for Attractions of Snowdonia

Creation of a strong approach to marketing to allow overall business growth as well as collective business development

Achieve greater effectiveness and efficiency in the marketing effort with particular realisation of economies of scale

Ability to respond to strategic and tactical needs of the market place

Establishing credibility as an organisation with influence with in the attractions sector and Wales

Working closely with regional tourism partnerships for mid Wales and North Wales and with WAVA

Threats to STL

Development and strengthening of other consortia in the region

Weakening of the overall destination sell reducing the impact of this complementary activity

Erosion of market share in region
• Inability to effectively compete with other forums of leisure activity.
Appendix 4

Case Studies Results Phase 3

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Case study Number 7 - Windermere's Attractions Group

4th May 2004

Background
The Consortium has been running informally for 15 years since the World of Beatrix Potter opened. The Windermere Lake Cruises were keen to augment their product and offer more to the consumers and particularly to groups. The Windermere Lake Cruises started attended exhibitions and decided to offer space to the other attractions at Windermere to help with costs. This initiated the group working. It has now become much more formal and created a formal joint marketing presence in the market, with formal displays and folders at exhibitions amongst other.

There has been no funding to help with the set up and running costs of the consortium but they did not look for funding for it. The attractions so far have all had reasonable marketing budgets and each put in enough to produce some useful marketing.

They were the first partnership like this in the area and they feel that they have initiated the start of some others that cover different markets and product offerings

Mission
The main feeling is that they are offering a stronger package as a group at reduced costs. It is purely a marketing concern and there are currently no plans to spin off into other activities.
Currently one of the members is having their budget restructured which has presented a problem because they cannot contribute financially, however the group feel that they are a worthwhile member to keep on board.

**Structure**

There are currently four members in the group and they would like to maintain it as it is. The four marketing officers from the attractions have informal meetings and very rarely take minutes but discuss future marketing initiatives and fund them all on an ad hoc basis.

The projects works out at approx £2000-£3000 per year for each of the four attractions which is paid on a project basis, plus the time give up by the marketing officers.

There are no paid administrators so relies upon the work of the partners and so they only go into schemes that all of the attractions are willing to do.

**Communication**

Communication is not a problem, the attractions are all of a similar scale and so the partners can all relate from equal backgrounds. This reduces the occurrence of conflict, which in this case is not apparent.

**Resources**

Money expertise and time are the main resources collaborated

Time is the most essential resource as without each of the partners being able to give up valuable time none of the projects would be achievable.
Marketing

The main target markets for the consortium are groups/tour operators and the travel trade. This market helped with the evolution of the group as they got together to make the most of economies of scale at the trade fairs. The domestic market that they are aiming for is the 1 ½ hours drive time, day trip market, these are markets that are not really being targeted by any other organisation in the area and so feel that it is a worthwhile catchment areas

Using the destination as a pull they employ various promotions to the hour and a half’s drive time market, for example literature with the usual discounts and offers but more recently they have revived a character called Tizzie Wizzie. This a fictional character linked to the area similar to Nessy which has generated a huge press coverage national and international, they are currently discussing its next use in their marketing effort.

The main methods of marketing communication are; website, group literature, joint advertising press and PR and individual advertising. In the past they have done joint leaflets but they have not found them cost effective

The consortium offers the consumers the combined experience of the attractions and the fact that they can all be reached by boat as part of a combined trip. This is more crucial now since the 10 mph speed limit has been imposed on the area, so it is a good incentive for drivers.

The brand values are about an outdoor experience, quality experience and traditional experience.
Evaluation

The consortium does not evaluate any of the projects as they tend to be onto the next project straight away and leave no time for evaluation; probably one of their weaknesses.

Future

They are planning to look for some match funding for the next three years up to about £17,000 per year from the North West development agency. This will help to fund some bigger initiatives that are planned and to move forward with the current marketing activity.

The future of the consortium depends on those involved, if the priority in the attractions marketing departments changed or the personnel involved then it may fold.

Key factors

The main key factor that the Windermere’s attractions group relies upon is the time put in by the marketing officers.
Case study Number 8 - Sussex Top Attractions

10th May 2004

Background

STA LTD has been a limited company for 10 years now. Initially it was created by east sussex county council in 1983 to produce a brochure for the marketing of the local tourism attractions. Originally this was just made up of 18 attractions. Two years after its set up the county council decided that its budgets could not be used for this type of initiative and so it was handed to the private sector to take over.

The remit of the consortium was to create an opportunity which was the all round marketing of the attractions. This is entirely funded by its members and it is intended to remain so.

The Company's principle business remains the production and distribution of the Sussex Top Attractions brochure, together with a general marketing of this private consortium of Sussex tourist attractions.

Mission

The aims and objectives are unwritten and unspoken however they are to promote the members attractions through marketing activity.

Marketing is the main function of the initiative. This work includes brochure production and distribution, website and attending exhibitions. They are also involved in a benchmarking study run by the University of Brighton however they are not themselves planning on undertaking any other functions.
Any pitfalls they have encountered are external to the partnership for example communications and the weather.

Structure
There are currently 55 entries in the Sussex Top attractions colour brochure from East and West Sussex. They are not looking to change this at the moment because anymore would not be suitable to the brochure type marketing.

Money is collaborated on an annual basis in the form of subscription fees that are fixed and equal to all members as their overriding aim is that everyone is treated equally.

There is a formal board of 10 directors who are elected by the membership from the members. Robin is the paid company secretary and works about 2 days per week.

Communication
Communication is mostly conducted via e-mail and is a very good system for dynamic communication and decision making. The consortium does nto find that conflict is a problem.

Resources
Money is the main resources collaborated

Marketing
The 55 members attract a wide variety of markets and so the partnership does not really have a specific target market. They tend to steer away from the short break market because they feel that it should be left to the accommodation sector to get people to stay.

The brochure is the main method of marketing which is produced annually in a quantity of 1 million. This is distributed to the members and to the wider region through commercial distributors.

The website is a useful portal, similar to the brochure to inform the consumer in one piece of material. This continues to experience increase used. The website features a page for every member, whose brochure entry appears there in English, French, Dutch and German.

They also circulate offers for advertising and because of the large number in the group can sometimes attract discounts and preferential rates.

Exhibitions are attended on a fairly regular basis. In 2003 they attended SEETB Days Out fair, Great Days Outs Fair and a one day event in Paris for coach operators.

The main selling point to the consumer is that there are 55 member attractions in a one stop shop, all detailed in a brochure with a map for convenience.

Evaluation
The consortium leaves it up to the members to evaluate their perceived added value of being a part of the scheme. The solid membership base shows that they are all satisfied with the current level of return for their investment.

Future

They are planning to continue in a similar fashion, perhaps with the website being used in preference to reduce the print run.

They believe that it is a self-sustaining entity because they are self-funding and therefore not answerable to anyone but themselves.

Key factors

It is seen that without the secretary the partnership would probably not be able to continue functioning as effectively as it has been. Although he works just two days per week, this is from home and so he is on hand effectively 24/7.

In short, having someone to run and co-ordinate the partnership is their key factor.
Case study Number 9 - Yorkshires Magnificent Attractions
29th June 2004

Background
The consortium was formed four and a half years ago by the attractions. The main aim was to make Yorkshires Attractions more visible outside of Yorkshire. The Attractions in the group are currently; The National Railway Museum, Harewood, Magna Science Adventure Centre, National Coal Mining Museum of England, Thackray Museum, The Deep, Royal Armouries Museum, National Museum of Photography, Film & television, and Eureka! The Museum for Children. Of this group of nine attractions, three are part of the National Museums.

A crucial factor in the idea behind the group was that smaller attractions could take advantage of the economies of scale. It also created a chance to attend more exhibitions; being staffed from a larger pool of resources.

The aims are literally to both solve a problem and to create an opportunity. And laterally it is a voice that more people listen to with three national museums.

No funding was or has been obtained for the set up and running of the consortium. It has been considered in the past but believed to be too much of a tie.

Mission
The core functions of the consortium are to boost tourism to members through marketing. They have also been approached by other organisations who would like to join them or to supply or distribute to the members. They are members of Audiences
Yorkshire who distribute their literature and because of the scale of the operation they are able to negotiate significant discounts.

They continually try to help each other out. There aren’t any members that are in direct competition so it all runs smoothly and there have not been any pitfalls yet.

**Structure**

Each member pays an annual fee which covers the administration and most of the marketing. Occasionally they have to contribute more to some of the bigger projects or for extra marketing.

There were seven members to start with, now there are 9. They are not looking to increase it by much because it then becomes difficult to administer and at present none of the attractions are in direct competition.

They meet once a month, where the administration puts forward ideas. These are mostly taken up by the members.

**Communication**

Communication between the group works well, with the external administrator. Conflict is not really a problem because they are all very co-operative and none of them are really in direct competition.

**Resources**
Generally man power and money is collaborated. For example advertising and exhibitions at reduced costs to the individual attractions.

**Marketing**

The main target markets for the consortium are those people looking for a day out and groups. They do not cater for the short break market because that would involve accommodation providers and they are only an attractions group. Each attraction then had their own individual markets which they concentrate on separately to the group.

The main tools used are; the Website, Leaflets (for groups and day trip market), Adverts, Exhibitions, Contacts in the group market from the administrator, and Familiarisation trips.

The inclusion of four national museums and galleries means that they cannot always offer reduced admission incentives. They continually need to find ways to create added value.

The main selling point to the consumer is that there are an option of itineraries to guide their days out. They sometimes have discount vouchers, depending on the promotion. This is sometimes a problem because three of their members are national museums and offer free entry.

The logo of four stick figures represents fun for all ages, highlighting that they are family attractions.

**Evaluation**
They evaluate monthly. Each attraction puts in monthly figures which are returned as a comparison against everyone else’s and the Yorkshire Tourist board. This is useful to see the general trends and compared with Yorkshires Tourist Board.

Also after a show or promotion, evaluation and feedback is obtained to understand the success or failure of the activity. This is important for future work.

The meetings have a female majority which in the opinion of the interviewee, helps to increase the amount of discussion about particular issues and therefore gain critical feedback and review.

**Future**

YMA would like to see themselves expanding their audience and visitor base with their new brand. They would like to find new organisation who could offer new ways of working.

It is a sustainable entity due to the fact that each attractions had an ever decreasing budget and an increasing pressure to see more results. So the more cost effective solutions can be found, the better.

**Key factors**

The sense of co-operation between the members and shared vision is the key factor in the success of the operation.
Appendix 5

Action Research Results; First Person

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Appendix 5
Action Research Results; First Person

Action Research Results

First Person Results – 12 month Personal Report
July 2003 to July 2004

The last 12 months have been a time of considerable change and of learning, both professionally and personally. The initial period was the start of a new job at Dyfi Valley Attractions which was a real change of environment and expectation, from the university setting. The job had not been occupied beforehand and so it involved finding my feet in this new environment and creating a job for myself. The partners were very busy with the summer season and so I was left to get on with achieving the objectives of the scheme. The project plan had not been successfully agreed upon and so there was little guidance formally laid out. I spent some time familiarising myself with the attractions and the area and analysing previous figures about tourism to this particular area before getting into some research of my own. This was deemed as important because it gave me an understanding of many aspects of the businesses and its stakeholders.

During this time I was living away from my home in Cardiff and staying with relatives some distance away from my work. This meant a long commute morning and evening and more often then not a weekend in Cardiff to pack up the house and get ready to move. House hunting was also a priority and took up the rest of my free time, leaving little space for reflection and analysis on the progress I was making.

The work sent me onto a steep learning curve where everyday I was learning more about the tourism business and about myself. The scheme provided two residential modules with other TCS associates that gave time to review, discuss and share experiences which in fact, although the disciplines were different, the problems to
overcome were very similar. The modules provided a good foundation stone for confidence by reinforcing the actions that had been taken and by guiding on issues inherent to the TSC schemes. The systems and procedures and the different meetings all became much clearer and easier to understand and therefore implement.

The joint marketing scheme was then the next big challenge to my ability and my confidence as it was a scheme which would support much of the work that I was to carry out if we completed it successfully. The previous research and investigations proved very useful as is reinforced the information that was being fed into the application for the scheme.

Alongside this I was still commuting on a daily and weekly basis and the event of my wedding was getting closer. The work provided as a good distraction and the wedding as a good deadline for many jobs to be completed at work. I owe a lot to family and friends who put in a lot of hard work while I was away, which also tested my trust, patience and delegation skills so dutifully learned at the modules!

After the wedding the next four months at work were to be the most frustrating as the joint marketing application kept being returned for amendments and we were getting further away from achieving any support for the scheme. All parties linked to the scheme felt the pressure and wanted to start seeing some results from the scheme. The planned outcomes all evolved from the grant scheme and so other plans had not been implemented in its absence. Progress was however being made slowly on the new name of the consortium and the image that it was to portray. This took much more time than previously thought because all four of the attractions and myself held very different
views about this and so a lot of time and compromising took place before the final decision was reached.

On the personal side, the first five months after the wedding were less stressful in that I was living closer to work and with my husband, so trips to Cardiff at the weekend ended. The free time I gained was mostly spent on finding a house and getting all the necessary paper work finished. The completion on the house took much longer than expected and it wasn’t until March 2004 that the house was ready to move into. The rental agreement had expired and so for a couple of weeks we were very anxious about living arrangements and it tested to the limit the new bonds of marriage and our organisational skills. Again family and friends were a key part to successfully making it through this stage, by helping with moving or just providing reassurance and support.

During the period of moving my professional side to life was also getting very demanding. The scheme looked like it was not going to receive any funding, which meant that my role was going to change very rapidly from strategic and implementation role to one of cold calling and a higher emphasis on operational duties, which was an area of great disagreement between the supervisors, and uncertainty for myself. The combined pressure was a real test of my strength, which at times was none existent. I spent at least two weeks very close to tears and a nasty car crash was really breaking point for me, however it made me realise the most important things in life; a smashed bumper and crumpled door were not it. I found the support of one of the partners invaluable at this time and much time was spent chatting through the various issues in work and home, which helped to let out feelings that were previously bottled up. This support helped to raise my confidence and give me a greater feeling of ownership over the scheme, which lead to more control and a better working environment.

Things started to even out almost simultaneously; the move finally happened, just before we became homeless and the joint marketing project was accepted just as
tensions were reaching their highest in the scheme. The three months that followed this were very busy, but satisfying; achieving goals set by the scheme, e.g. designing new print materials and website, and unpacking boxes and making a home.

For the final month or so of the first year in the project, life has settled down into a really good routine; at work the outcomes have been achieved and a pattern of work has settled in around working towards the aims of the joint marketing scheme and the project. The partners are all very busy with their own businesses so it allows me to get on with achieving the targets. Personal life is relaxed and settled in the new area and routine well.

Looking back, the achievements that I have made in the last 12 months and the amount that I have learnt is probably going to go down as the greatest year of my life, although at the time the awareness of this was quite low. I learnt to delegate and trust other people and take tasks one at a time, splitting bigger ones into smaller chunks. Time management also came quite naturally and I found an enormous level of support from family, friends and colleagues, without which the year may not have been as smooth as it was.
First Person Results – 18 month Personal Report

July 2003 to January 2005

Reflecting on the work over the last six months, I feel that the project has really taken shape and begun to show the promise that was expected of it. Having re-read the reflection of the first 12 months I feel that the underlying aims of the project are now beginning to stabilise and cement. On a personal level life in the new house in Machynlleth is settled and has provided me with a good base for putting positive energies into the job.

The productivity shown on the latter part of the 12 month plan has continued with an emphasis on reinforcing the efforts put into place. For example, more mail outs of the leaflets, improving and adding to the website, planning for local community events, familiarisation visits organised and held for the group organisers and continued consumer research which has informed discussions into new ticketing schemes. 2004 was not a great year for the joint ticket that was already in existence. Even though all parties involved were pushing the scheme the numbers just did not materialise. It was now seen that there may be place for a new initiative as the University had been trying to tell them from the start. A ‘one plus one’ referral scheme was therefore proposed and accepted and work has begun to ensure that this is ready to launch in March for the Easter Holidays. Alongside this new scheme I was a little concerned that the WTB and regional partnerships were focusing marketing efforts towards the activity market so heavily that they have no place for attractions. This led me to devise a leaflet that incorporates the attractions into a cyclical route for walking and cycling around the four attractions. This is gathering funding and will hopefully be launched in early 2005.
The Mphil and personal development have also progressed well these last six months, with two more modules being attended and two Chartered Institute of Management courses being taken. These courses have increased my ability in strategic marketing and copywriting and I even feel that they have slightly increased my authority over the partners in some areas. I also feel a lot more confident about writing copy for the website and leaflets having now the methods in place to write successful copy.

The future of the project has been a top concern of the partners with the Joint Marketing Funding finishing in March 05 and the UWIC project coming to an end in July 05. I spent much of the end of 2004 researching the various grants that would be available and filling in an application for the most suitable. This has really helped to focus the attention on the future and what the expectations and needs of the four partners are.

Funding is nearly in place, plans are being adhered to, aims are reached and results are being achieved, although for some reason the stability of the partnership as a whole has not really figured in the project. To quote from a September entry in my diary:

“It has been a tough month, with renewed scepticism of the scheme. It often feels like I am making them participate in the scheme rather than running one that they put together!!”

This has been a general feeling about the scheme for 2004, I think that it would have been easier to extract all of their teeth than getting them to commit fully to the needs of the project. One of the main topics of conversation is that they all need to see outcomes, and therefore the panic has lead them to focus on the short term which is not what the project was aiming to achieve. Most of the outcomes are recorded individually at each of the attractions, however chasing them has been very hard and they have been very
Appendix 5
Action Research Results; First Person

un-cooperative, then on the other hand, they demand for these results to be collaborated. A review meeting was arranged to discuss all the work that had been achieved and to plot the best course of action for the future. This received a lot of support to start with however once the meeting started short term projects were raised and agreed and I was told to get on with it and to put the rest in place myself. I did get an apology from one partner about their lack of input at this meeting, but that they really are too busy to get a handle on the project themselves.

My main findings have been that they are desperate for quantifiable records about the success of the project and tangible outputs that they can view as success factors. Little personal commitment has been given however expectations and demands have been at an all time high. I doubt that, without the support of the KTP project, this partnership has a long term future unless the partners view the success worth the effort that they have to put in. Without joint and unflinching support from the partners projects such as this are difficult to fulfil in the eyes of everyone.
Appendix 6

Action Research Results; Second Person

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Second Person Results - Year one Review; July 2003 to July 2004

Written Account

The project started on the 7th July 2004. The first two months were spent settling in, developing an understanding of the tourism industry in this area, and meeting with the various organisations and individuals that would be in the future of assistance to the Attractions Consortium.

One of the main problems to begin with was “getting into” the project since partnership working was new ground both for myself and for the university; so getting to know the organisations and formulating the scheme was one of the first key areas. The idea of TCS was also new ground to myself and the partners so it took a while to get used to all the various types of meetings, modules and other associated procedures. The modules on the TCS scheme and the support from the partners made this initial learning curve easier to manage.

After this initial induction period was over, and whilst everyone was keen to get stuck into the scheme, final agreement had still not been reached over the project plan and so this became the next priority. The Joint Marketing Application for funding support took a long time to develop, progress seemed slow and confidence in the scheme appeared to be drifting. The turning point I feel was at the end of 2003 when the project plan was agreed as it allowed various plans and pieces of work to be put into place, so that when and if the funding was secured, work could be carried out quickly and efficiently.

At the start of 2004 it did not appear that the scheme was going to receive any funding from the WTB and the project felt like it was losing its appeal. It was difficult to get motivated because of the feeling that time had been wasted waiting for funding.
However in March 2004 funding came through for the year and then followed a busy couple of months catching up and preparing for the coming season. This involved creating the new literature and the new website and also preparing press releases and working with the group travel market through the exhibitions and the E-Newsletters.

The job overall has been interesting and varied and very rewarding, especially seeing the consortium starting to function in the role that it was intended to fulfil and all the partners working well together for the benefit of all. Tangible outputs have now been coming out of the scheme which is another big factor which generates support.

Alongside the day to day running of the project, year 2 will be spent looking at the schemes in place, formulating a strategic marketing plan and later on handing over, so that the consortium can continue to be successful after the project has finished. I feel that this is an important area if the consortium wants to get the most out of the scheme for the future.
Progress to date

This section will outline the main tasks completed with a short explanation of the method and outcomes.

Induction

Visiting sites and reading around subject material and reports. Found relevant Mintel reports and summarised main findings which produced a good foundation for own consumer research. Spent time reading the various publications and texts, including Trade Talk (a WTB) publication and various marketing media.

Joint Marketing Scheme

The consortium were in a position to qualify for joint marketing funding from the WTB, which involved a two stage application process that was completed in March 04. The process was useful in itself to underpin the formal aims and objectives of the consortium. More recently time has been spent putting together a review for the first quarter of the scheme.

SWOT Analysis

The SWOT analysis was a useful tool to analyse the four attractions and the consortium, and to provide a starting point for the business plan.

Business strategy
A short business strategy was formulated to lay down agreed aims and objectives and to bring a sense of one goal for the four attractions. This will be a vital start to the strategic marketing plan.

Hosted Visit for UWIC

Five members of staff from UWIC spend a day looking at three of the attractions and reviewing the product. This produced a report for the consortium members and gave additional UWIC staff an insight into the project so that they can be used as a further resource for information and advice.

Analysis of Ticket Distribution

Analysis of ticket distributors was useful to gain an understanding of the working of the joint ticket and to provide information on how it is viewed by other organisations. As a result of this analysis the new ticket is initially being distributed solely by the four attractions.

Consumer Surveys/Interviews

Initial research was conducted in September 03, to gain the opinions of the consumers who visit the attractions. This involved an in-depth survey of 10 people at three of the attractions.

The second consumer research was undertaken in June 04 and involved a less in depth approach with a sample of 25 at each of the four attractions. This survey will be undertaken twice more in 2004 across the season and will provide useful information on awareness of the joint ticket and provide an indication of the effectiveness of the joint marketing scheme.
Coleg Powys Work Experience

Arranged a work experience group from Coleg Powys to visit the attractions and formulate some design ideas for our logos and design. The images were used to guide the designer into areas that the attractions were happy with for the look of the new literature. The consortium also has free use of a CD of photos from the School.

New name and logo

The process of deciding upon a new name and logo for the attractions consortia took up a lot of time both in and out of meetings, to read around various literature that could assist the decision, and then to reach the final decision with the agreement of all the partners. This decision was reached in January 2004.

Print and Design

The process of leaflet/ticket/insert and poster production took three months during the first part of 2004. Collecting and writing information, sourcing pictures and gaining agreement from all the parties as well as liaising with printers and designers was very time consuming. The final products are now in place and have received good reviews.

Joint Ticket

Analysis of the joint ticket sales alongside the aims of the scheme helped to formulate a new pricing structure. This was agreed upon by the attractions, and so a spreadsheet was devised to allow fast and easy calculation of any changes in price and commission to the division of money on the sale of a joint ticket. This is a useful tool for the joint ticket which can be used after the project.

Website
A website needs review was undertaken, a website skeleton devised, and copy written to assist the designer and to provide a foundation for the finished product. Key sites were identified that could be used to link to the new site.

**Accommodation Providers**

Working with accommodation providers is an on going aim of the project. At present 21 accommodation providers have joined the website and one local accommodation provider has supported the project by sponsoring the new material. There is also a provider who is using 10,000 of the DVA brochures in its next mail out.

**Sponsors**

Gaining sponsors for the scheme involved writing a sponsorship proposal and sending it out to any parties that may be interested. This generated two responses from Arriva Bus and Trefeddian Hotel which was a positive sign for the Consortium.

**Press Releases**

A number of press releases have been issued during 2004 which have resulted in features in the local press, including one lengthy article in the “Shropshire Star”.

**Editorial**

Dyfi Valley Attractions has had editorial in Coachtours UK, the Good Holiday Guide, and Four Nations Travel Magazine so far this year.

**Dyfi News Network**
The WTB tourism road show sparked off interest with other local tourism concerns regarding a local press release scheme. The Dyfi News Network is produced monthly and contains information on the area in a colourful and informative manner, generating interest from both the national press and tourism professionals.

Other Ticketing Schemes

Other ticketing schemes have been reviewed by UWIC in conjunction with information provided. This has resulted in the contingency development for summer 2004 and other schemes that may be of interest during 2005 after development.

Contingencies

Time has been spent looking at various possibilities for the consortium to come up with a contingency for the summer of 2004. The leaflet needs to be designed so that it is ready if needed.

Monthly Work Objectives

After much time spent trying to agree upon methods of control and project ownership for the partners, it has been agreed upon to produce monthly Work Objectives agreed by all at the technical meetings and reviewed at the team meetings.

Budget
A budget has been formulated for the scheme that takes into account the joint marketing funding and the spending to date. This has become a useful tool for the control of expenditure.

**Exhibitions**

**Showcase Wales (26th November 2003)**

This was the first exhibition for the attractions consortium since the start of the project and so a lot of time was spend writing information packs and preparing for the event. Three of the attractions also attended and so it was a busy and productive time resulting in a database of 120 contacts of which 50+ had been spoken to by one of the partners.

**BTTF (3rd March 2004)**

Dyfi Valley Attractions leaflets and packs were held by the Mid Wales Tourism Stand so it was a good opportunity to see what other attractions were doing and to make contacts for the MPhil research.

**Llandudno Spring Familiarisation Visit (19th March 2004)**

Another exhibition for tour operators on a familiarisation visit. This was useful in providing a few more contacts for the Group Organisers E-newsletter and meeting other local attractions and tourism professionals.

**Invasion Wales (28th March 2004)**

Invasion Wales was a one day exhibition to Belgium operators who were on a familiarisation trip round north Wales. The exhibition produced a number of contacts for the consortium which were followed up with the first Group Organisers E-newsletter.
CAT accommodation providers lunch (17\textsuperscript{th} MAY 2004)

CAT held an event for accommodation providers which allowed DVA to attend and to show its connection with CAT. This was also useful in recruiting other accommodation providers on to the website and to gain feedback from those already confirmed.

Training and courses

Modules PDP and Mini Project (August 2003)

Two, week long modules in leadership, team working, meetings, managing time and other useful topics to provide a good foundation for the TCS/KTP scheme. It also gave an opportunity to meet other associates. The mini project focused attention on report writing and presentations.

Art of Leadership course 15-17\textsuperscript{th} September

This was a course run by the TTI for associates. It built on work undertaken in module two and was very useful and interesting in terms of leadership styles and management.

WAVA educational Conference (17\textsuperscript{th} November 2003)

This was a good starting point for thinking about working with schools on the Dyfi Valley attractions project and to gain an understanding of the WAVA roles.

Action Research seminar (27\textsuperscript{th} November 2003)
Professor Conrad Lashley, attended a seminar at UWIC in which action research was explored in the context of the KTP scheme with other associates. This was a useful introduction into the area that is to form a key part of the MPhil.

**CRM course (4th – 6th February 2004)**

This was a course designed for the research degree and obligatory for all those wishing to do an MPhil. The course was successfully completed after passing the presentation at the end.

**Learning Journey (February 2004)**

Snowdonia attractions undertook a learning journey to several major attractions over a couple of days. The visit was also beneficial to meet other attractions representatives and to gather behind the scenes information from the attractions which were Chatsworth House, Eureka and Jorvic Centre.

**WTB Road show (2nd March 2004)**

At the Tourism Road show, 3 seminars were attended; press releases, creative marketing and website optimisation. These were all very useful and also provided an opportunity to network and meet other tourism professionals in Wales. The Dyfi News Network was founded.

**Conference in Naples (4th -7th April)**

A four day conference on tourism partnerships was an ideal chance for both the MPhil and the daily operations of Dyfi Valley Attractions. The conference generated lots of further thinking and a good chance to network amongst academics in the tourism field.
WTB PR workshop (21st April 2004)
Another useful workshop by the WTB for exploring the possibilities, as an operator in the industry and meeting contacts from the travel trade and other local providers.

Making Strategy Happen - CIM Course (11th June 2004)
The aim of this course was to turn strategy into action. This was a day of learning backed up with group activities. It was useful to discuss the various scenarios and it will help in all aspects of implementation.

Copywriting course (2nd August 2004)
This one day course was extremely useful as it highlighted some key areas underpinning successful copywriting for print and website. This has already had useful applications in the work place.

Qualifications

MPHIL
The application for undertaking the research degree has been accepted and work on the data collection is nearing completion. 8 of the 9 case studies proposed have been completed and work had begun on writing up the research methodology. Professor David Botterill has visited Machynlleth to see the project in situation and to discuss how to relate the research to outcomes for the consortium.

NVQ Level 4 in Management
The first section of the NVQ has been completed successfully and the second stage is underway.
Second Person Results - Technical Meeting – 12.00 3rd December 2004
(WTB Pavilion, Builth Wells Showground)

Circulation: John Lord, Mike Snelgrove, Ian Rutherford, Peter Jones, Una Carney

Minutes from 3rd December 2004

Website

EH to look into the current web marketing. Has Martin registered on any of the search engines?

Chase IR about updating his web link

Get hold of web visits from other sites such as AoS, to compare with the results for Dyfi Valley Attractions in 2004

Input the local YHA’s onto the school pages of the website.

Familiarisation Visit

The familiarisation visit was a success and was followed up by press releases, E-newsletter (with early booking discount), phone and e-mail.

Samhain

Between 2500 and 3000 people were in attendance which was up from last year.

Elemental Earth, the community group that run the event, is currently discussing whether they will take part in the organisation of the 2005 event.

The attractions are keen to know the future of the event so that they can decide how to get involved for the future. Dyfi Valley Attractions would not be suitable to take on the running of the lantern procession but can take part in satellite events run during the weeks build up. It is crucial to finalise the roles and responsibilities for 2005 planning, Peter Jones to lead the attractions.
Appendix 6
Action Research Results; Second Person

The event needs about £10,000, of which £5,000 was obtained by grant funding.
The remainder was in-kind support.

Project Review, Completion and Legacy

The project review has come about because it is an appropriate time to review what has been undertaken so far and to focus on the desired outcomes. This will provide a steer to the final 6/7 months.

Ian Rutherford commented that the project has lifted the scale and profile of Dyfi Valley Attractions. It has provided an impetus which Dyfi Valley Attractions looses at its peril. It is therefore important to maintain the support from the attractions.

The project aims are as follows:

1. To identify product strengths from amongst the consortium partners and create a new combined product or products and develop and introduce appropriate new marketing strategies. In so doing
   a. Refine and develop the web marketing strategy
   b. Develop the e-commerce opportunities
   c. Design an on going promotional campaign
   d. Introduce monitoring of any statistical records
2. Development of staff skills in accordance with market demand
3. Develop a system for customer feedback and review
4. Produce a marketing matrix which facilitates individual consortium partner product marketing to be supportive of the marketing strategy for the newly identified combined product or products
Most of the aims were being achieved however point 3 is not currently being undertaken and should be looked at. The main focus in line with these aims is to produce a marketing strategy for the future of the consortium.

John Lord made the point that budget allocation and identification of a person to take on the project are decisions that will inform the work of the project for the final months and therefore need to be made by the partners.

IR; the partners are at a time where they should be producing a statement of aspirations. Funding can then be allocated to try to match these aspirations and they would be keen to employ someone on a part time basis to continue the day to day running of the consortium.

It was seen that without an employee in place it is likely that the partners will not have the time to pick it up.

The project can come up with two marketing strategies one of which is for a budget of £10,000 and the other is for a budget of £2,000.

Need to have in place

1. A list of aspirations for Dyfi Valley Attractions, formulated by and agreed by all the partners
2. A document of what has been achieved to include figures from the attractions and details of who I have been in touch with.
These documents can then inform a presentation to be undertaken by EH to gain the commitment from the partners for the future.

Peter Jones expressed a wish for more detailed information on who has attended, including the names and frequencies of the group visits in 2004 which can be cross referenced against the Dyfi Valley Attractions contacts lists. He also noted that a booking can take several marketing triggers so it is difficult to assess which trigger finally made them action a booking.

EH expressed the need to use the schools literature as support and referral material to work already being undertaken by the attractions. This will then free up some budget in the JM scheme to continue with the work already undertaken to short break market and groups.

EH expressed the need to work alongside the activity market where possible because there is a big drive in Welsh tourism marketing to this area. The idea of producing a leaflet which showed the attractions being linked by cycle paths and walking routes could be a useful tool in encouraging activity holidays to include the attractions. It was seen by everyone as a worthwhile project and EH was advised to look into this further.

For the future of the Dyfi Valley Attractions budget EH was asked to talk to Dee Reynolds at TPMW because they are often keen to support marketing groups. IR has background papers.

It would also be worth getting in touch with the WDA through the economic development channels rather than tourism.
Ticket Schemes

The current joint ticket scheme has been under review and it has been decided to change the format of the scheme. The referral voucher for 2005 will therefore be a business card sized ticket which is given out at the attractions. It will entitle the bearer to a 20% reduction in the cost of entry at the other three attractions. It will be valid for seven days and is designed to encourage more movement around the attractions.

Next Meeting

EH to arrange the next meeting.
Second Person Results - KTP Awards Nomination– 2004

Associate: Mrs Ella Hastings  Age: 23 years

Partnership between the University of Wales Institute Cardiff (UWIC) and Corris Caverns Limited

KTP scheme no. 4259  Commenced: 7 July 2003

Scheme overview

Dyfi (pronounced Dovey) Valley Attractions (DVA) is a newly formed consortium comprising four diverse visitor attractions in mid-Wales who have come together to achieve the benefits of a joint marketing strategy.

The Tourist Industry in Wales, which is central to the Welsh economy, is fragmented, based around SME’s (particularly small) which are weather-dependent, still overcoming the effects of Foot and Mouth disease in 2001, cash-strapped, and which rely totally upon visitor numbers and the marketing activities that underpin those tourist visits.

The four visitor attractions are diverse in both their product offering and, most relevantly, in their management and ownership:

The Centre for Alternative Technology – Plc supporting a registered charity
The Talyllyn Railway – Volunteer Preservation Society, private: statutory railway company
Celtica – Local Authority owned and managed
King Arthur’s Labyrinth and Craft Centre – privately owned and managed

Each attraction is therefore managed with varying degrees of overt commerciality.

More detail can be found on the new website www.dyfivalley.org.uk
Ella Hastings

Ella’s first and perhaps most difficult challenge was to understand the common business drivers, to consolidate objectives, and then to present these back to the consortium members such that common purpose and action could be agreed. This required a change in culture and a move away from the more self-centred competitive attitudes that typify small tourist attractions as they struggle to survive. Ella continues to tactfully address this issue.

Ella’s second and equally difficult challenge was to establish working practices, meetings schedules, reporting lines and authority levels in an organisation that existed in name only, and in which her points of contact were the four senior managers at the attractions all under heavy time pressures. This has required and continues to require clarity of purpose, self initiative, and diplomacy in order to create a business environment and work ethic that allows the overriding objectives of the consortium to be achieved notwithstanding the sometimes conflicting objectives of the consortium members. In achieving this Ella has demonstrated organisational skills of the highest order and a persuasive tongue that is impressive in one so young.

Ella was instrumental in securing a marketing grant of £10,000 from the Regional Tourism Partnership to support the activities of the Consortium.

In the process of re-designing the discounted joint entry ticket for the attractions, Ella identified a sponsorship opportunity and raised a further £1000 (p.a.) for the Consortium.
Whilst developing the website from scratch Ella identified the opportunity for hosting links for local service and accommodation providers which has generated another £1000 (and rising) for Consortium marketing activity.

Ella is currently investigating and evaluating means of extending the tourism season by developing an events strategy encompassing the four attractions which will generate further income whilst meeting the prime objective of increasing visitor numbers. In addition, Ella has established links with other tourism partners and is developing support-marketing strategies to most cost-effectively deploy the limited financial resources of the Consortium.

Whilst these sums might be considered small, they are not so in the context of small mid-Wales attractions and Ella has shown herself to be commercially aware as well as creating a wider and more effective marketing grouping.

Within the first twelve months of this unique and intriguing project Ella has delivered a range of marketing tools including, inter alia, a new name for the Consortium, new promotional leaflets, an attractive and informative destination web site, site posters, educational packages and leaflets for schools groups, group travel leaflets, a new pricing structure, new tickets and has become a focus for local destination marketing activity. This has demonstrated good judgement, drive and ambition to succeed.

Ella has taken a lead in re-branding the product, initiating new marketing activity, establishing benchmark data, monitoring awareness and evaluating results. In all this Ella has carried with her the support of the management and staff of the four attractions.
Appendix 6
Action Research Results; Second Person

She has demonstrated sound judgement, integrity, an ability to lead as well as work as a member of a team, commercial acumen, drive, and the ability to motivate and persuade. This augurs well for a successful future in senior management.

In addition to all of the above, Ella found the time to get married and set up home in a new area, whilst making good progress with her NVQ and MPhil studies. She has had a busy and successful twelve months, and is an excellent ambassador, for the KTP concept.

We would recommend Ella for a KTP award without reservation.

John Lord, Senior Lecturer – UWIC, Academic Supervisor.

Ian Rutherford, Managing Director – Corris Caverns Limited, Industry Supervisor on behalf of all Consortium partners.

24 August 2004
Appendix 7

Action Research Results; Third Person

Dyfi Valley Attractions, Consumer Analysis 2004; Third Person Research.........7-103
Dyfi Valley Attractions, Consumer Analysis 2004; Third Person Research

**REPORT**

**AIMS:**
1. Compare three sets of results taken across 2004
2. To measure the awareness of Dyfi Valley Attractions
3. To analyse the success of the joint ticket
4. Find out where people are travelling from
5. To discover the potential of other referral schemes

**SUMMARY**

- There is increased awareness of the Dyfi Valley Attractions brand
- There is a link between; visitor awareness of Dyfi Valley Attractions and staff referral.
- There is a higher tendency to participate in a referral scheme in August.
- Consistent comparisons strengthen accuracy of results.
- 39% of those using the internet as a planning tool visited the Dyfi Valley Attractions website in October.
- The postcodes show a fairly central distribution of the population sampled.
- The perception is that they are not in the area long enough to take advantage of the offer
RESULTS

1. Have you heard of Dyfi Valley Attractions?

The current awareness of the Dyfi Valley Attractions had increased to an annual high. This could be because of the cumulative effect of the marketing effort in 2004. This graph also interestingly shows the link between the sale of the joint ticket and awareness of Dyfi Valley Attractions, when they are not being sold in August awareness drops significantly.
2. Would you consider buying a joint ticket?

The popularity of the joint ticket has increased through 2004 from 41% to 61%. It is felt that this, inline with the increased awareness, is a positive sign that the marketing activity is having an effect on the target market. This is a useful consideration when deciding on the future of the joint ticket.
3. Do incentive schemes influence your visit?

The tendency to be influenced by incentive schemes has rose from 51% in June to 64% in August and then went back to 53% in October. The fact that many families are looking for things to do in the summer could be a factor, and shows the need to be able to offer such schemes during August.

4. Are you on holiday in the Dyfi Valley?
A large and consistent proportion of the sample was on holiday during the 2004 research. The narrow percentage difference shows a consistent theme and strengthens the previous findings.

a. How did you plan your visit to the Dyfi Valley?

This is another consistent finding which strengthens the previous research. Previous experience and other – mainly friends and family – were the two biggest factors when planning a visit to the area. The October results show an increased reliance on previous experience and the internet, which would be in line with the repeat visit, short break market.
b. Where are you staying?
The distances were calculated with Machynlleth as the centre. The average miles per person were also calculated; 28 miles per person in August compared with 23 miles per person in October. Even though it is a similar average, it is worth noting that this could be due to the fact that a shorter holiday in October would restrict the time available. The results also show the main points where consumers to the Dyfi Valley Attractions are likely to be staying. This is useful information for each attractions individual local marketing effort.

5. Have you been to the Dyfi Valley Attractions website?

A small increase in usage of the Dyfi Valley Attractions website before visiting is a positive sign. To put it into context; the percentage of the sample who used the website as a planning tool that visited the Dyfi Valley Attractions website was 39% in October; 35% in August and 15% in June.
6. How many people are in your group (including yourself)?

![Bar chart showing group size distribution for June, August, and October.]

The main group size in October has increased to four. However, the mean group size in June is 3.6, which rises to 4.1 for August and then reduces again to 3.9 for October. This could show that the groups are generally larger in the summer, perhaps because of family holidays. The differences are minimal and could be due to natural fluctuations.
7. What is your postcode? 2004 Results

The popular; B, SY, and LL all figure in the top few. Where the frequency is 2% or above the labels have been added to show the top postcodes.
DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE, OCTOBER 2004 (RESULTS FROM OCTOBER SURVEY)

One dot represents one response. This shows a fairly central spread from all the surveys in 2004 and is a good indication of the main markets to the Dyfi Valley Attractions. It is a good source of information when planning marketing activity.