

Malawi 2020 Tourism Development Strategy

Written by:

ViaVia Tourism Academy & Solimar International



Government of Malawi



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Introduction

This Malawi Tourism 2020 Strategy could be used as a source of inspiration for a common vision or long term strategy for tourism development in Malawi through the year 2020.

The document is the result of the envisioning workshops in February 2015 and of a year's worth of consultation and engagement with the Government of Malawi and a variety of Malawian stakeholders.

Included are ambitious - yet actionable – goals that could be achieved through actions implemented with cooperation between the Government of Malawi, members of the tourism industry, non-profit organizations, donor agencies, and the people of Malawi. The Malawi Tourism Strategy 2020 recommends what could be done, how it could be completed, who is responsible, and how success could be measured.

The three main areas of focus include:

- **Improving the enabling environment** by reducing barriers for new and operating businesses, addressing infrastructure challenges, strengthening public-private sector dialogue, and incentivizing investment
- **Strengthening Malawi's tourism offer** by building a network of regional tourism committees to address gaps in tourism products and services.
- **Growing international tourism demand for Malawi** through the establishment of a public-private partnership destination marketing organization that engages in best practices to inspire visitation by high-value travelers.

Activities within each focal area could preferably be completed in parallel, with successes from one area reinforcing a positive outcome in another.

Background

Tourism in Malawi

In 2013, the Tourism & Travel (T&T) sector directly contributed US\$139.4 million (2.9%) to Malawi's GDP (WTTC 2014) and is forecast to rise by 3.3% in 2014, with an additional 4.4% per annum, from 2014-2024. However, this WTTC (World Travel and Tourism Council) measure excludes indirect effects generated throughout the supply chain and other tourism-related investment, collective public spending, and export-related tourism goods (WTTC, 2014).

WTTC uses a broader measure to account for the wider economic contribution of the T&T sector, incorporating the components above and thus describing how T&T feeds into other economic sectors. Under this metric, the T&T sector contributed US\$275.27 million or 8.9 percent of GDP in 2013. Looking to the future, real growth in Malawi's T&T sector is expected by WTTC to remain high, with 10-year annualized real growth of 8.7 percent for the wider economy GDP measure.

The Strategy Development Process

This document was developed from over two years of dedicated collaboration between the Government of Malawi, the Malawi tourism industry, ViaVia Tourism Academy, and through financial contributions of the Government of Flanders.

In 2014, three consultants of ViaVia Tourism Academy met with more than 55 stakeholders throughout Malawi to identify current challenges to tourism development, needs for further growth, examples of local successes, and identification of target markets.

A preliminary report entitled *"Putting Malawi on the Map as an attractive tourism destination: Public-private partnerships for effective destination management"* was delivered to the Ministry of Information, Tourism and Culture in July 2014 for internal review with other relevant Ministries and government departments. This report gives a view on the potential of tourism as instrument for development in Malawi.

In February 2015, the Malawi Department of Tourism hosted two envisioning workshops in Lilongwe and Blantyre facilitated by ViaVia Tourism Academy and Solimar International to review the findings of the report and build consensus on tourism development priorities. These multi-stakeholder workshops brought together over 91 tourism stakeholders, which

provided detailed feedback that was aggregated and shaped into this Malawi 2020 Tourism Development Strategy. Further in this report, the visions, destination goals and outcomes of these workshops will be described in detail. The sum of these could be used as a source of inspiration by the Malawi Ministry of Information, Tourism and Culture.

Partners

Close collaboration with local partners, strongly imbedded within the local community and committed to the local development policy was essential to the process of this project. All local partners involved are in condition to develop own dynamics and as such provide for a multiplication effect on the long term. ViaVia Tourism Academy is fortunate to cooperate with the Malawian Ministry of Information, Tourism and Culture and to work with external experts in order to provide the most adequate know-how and expertise.

The Malawi Ministry of Information, Tourism and Culture

The Malawi Ministry of Information, Tourism and Culture plays a vital role in the tourism development process. This strong progression could not be made possible without the commitment, highly valued advice and active partnership of the following people:

- **Ms. Elsie Tembo** - Principal Secretary for Tourism and Culture
- **Ms. Patricia M. Liabuba** – Director of Tourism
- **Mr. Charles Kachelenga** - Principal Tourism Officer (Planning and Development)
- **Mr. George C. Chirambo** - Tourism Officer (Planning and Development)

ViaVia Tourism Academy

ViaVia Tourism Academy is a non-profit organization in Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Sustainable Tourism & Intercultural Entrepreneurship. The Academy grew out of the expertise and social commitment of the Belgian Tour operator Joker and their connected worldwide network of ViaVia Traveler Cafés. Its aim is the deployment of Sustainable Tourism & Intercultural Entrepreneurship as leverage for economic, social and cultural empowerment, and as source for better understanding and inclusive societies.

The ViaVia Tourism Academy team includes:

- **Mrs. Greta Vandenboer** is chairwoman of ViaVia Tourism Academy and is professor in Strategic Marketing at the University College in Leuven (Belgium). Her main

subjects of teaching are the development of business plans and marketing plans. She has extensive international experience in business development and was leading projects in Europe, Asia, Latin-America and Africa. Mrs Vandenkoer was the main teacher and organizer of the Enterprise Development Workshops in Malawi (2011-2012) in collaboration with the ViaVia Tourist Academy and the Ministry of Information, Tourism and Culture & Wildlife and the Malawi Institute of Tourism. She has a degree of Master in Applied Economics University Leuven and a degree in Business Administration.

- Mr. **Lambert Teuwen** is a senior trainer for ViaVia Tourism Academy, a Senior Banker and Deputy Advisor at the European Investment Bank, responsible for lending for the Public Sector and Utilities in Western Europe. Mr. Teuwen has a degree in Civil Engineering and a Master in Computer Technology. He was co-teacher for two Enterprise Development Workshops in Malawi (2011 and 2012). In this mission he acts as external expert in Financing and Business development.
- Mr. **Sanne Cras** is active as Project Manager for ViaVia Tourism Academy non-profit association. He has international experience in tourism policies (for UNWTO) and has experience in education. He holds a degree in Languages, Tourism Management and a Master in History.
- Mr. **Manu Minne** is Project Manager for the ViaVia Tourism Academy non-profit association. He has managed tourism capacity-building projects in South Africa, Malawi, Mozambique, Indonesia, Vietnam, India, Peru and Europe. Areas of expertise include: tourist service design, tourism product development, tour leading and tourism destination management, as well as editing of training manuals and educational materials.

Additional Contributors

- Mr. **David C. Brown** is a tourism specialist with experience conceptualizing and implementing multi-stakeholder development and marketing programs focused on sustainable tourism, economic growth, biodiversity conservation, strategic planning, value chain creation, public private partnerships, destination management, and workforce development. He has extensive experience in the Americas, Europe, Africa, and Asia, leading and advising multifaceted tourism programs (i.e. for USAID,

MCC, UNWTO, IITS, and many more) and the Governments of the Republic of Georgia, Morocco, Namibia, Portugal, and Rwanda.

- Dr. **Jeroen Bryon** provides strategic support to Visit Flanders (Belgium) and to the European Travel Commission. His company ArrowMinded delivers consultant services on the development and execution of innovative tourism strategies. His expertise lies within innovation, tourism trends, service design and visitor (experience) management, tour guides, new media and mobile, spatial planning, destination marketing and destination development.

Tourism Development Strategy: Vision, Destination Goals and Outcomes

The following vision, destination goals and outcomes are based on the preliminary research report and on the two envisioning workshop. The results were aggregated and shaped into this Malawi 2020 Tourism Development Strategy, which could be used as an inspiration for a common vision for tourism development in Malawi through the year 2020.

Vision

The Destination Vision describes a shared view of Malawi's tourism vision in 2020 among tourism industry stakeholders, which are the direct result of the two envisioning workshops.

- Malawi will be a world-class sustainable tourism destination that professionally manages and actively conserves its natural and cultural heritage through vibrant collaboration with communities, business, and government. Malawi will showcase its leadership in African hospitality through high-quality services and facilities and will embrace tourism as one of the country's leading vehicles for economic growth through a highly competitive environment of exemplary education, entrepreneurship, infrastructure and investment

Destination Goals

Destination goals are tangible metrics that, when met, articulate success at achieving the Malawi's tourism vision

- Double total aggregate number of visitors coming from key markets in Europe, North America, South Africa and Asia (including China and India)
- Increase contribution of tourism to GDP by 15%
- Add 10,000 tourism-benefited jobs
- Increase average length of stay by 1 day
- Increase average annual occupancy rates of licensed accommodations by 10%
- Increase tourism traffic throughout the country, with 20% more visitation to national parks in the Northern and Southern Region.
- Attract \$100 million in new private tourism-related investment
- Improve Malawi's "ease of doing business" ranking by 20 points
- Open one new airline route to a major international hub
- 60% of licensed tourism business committing to sustainable tourism principles and best practices

Outcome 1. Enabling Environment

Building a solid foundation for smart tourism growth.

The Government of Malawi should create a political, social, economic and physical environment capable of hosting a thriving tourism economy. Enlightened destination management will utilize progressive policies and inclusive planning to generate more opportunities for growth while conserving valuable natural and cultural resources.

1.1 Strengthen public-private dialogue and address cross-sectorial challenges

Tourism is a cross-sectorial industry with the ability to generate significant economic impact when there is strong cooperation between transportation, education, foreign affairs, immigration, telecommunication and finance – among others. The Government of Malawi could strive to break down ministerial and departmental barriers and could take a more cooperative approach to managing Malawi’s tourism industry and reducing barriers to tourism growth, while building a strong partnership with the private sector to identify common-sense solutions.

1.1.1 Develop a Cabinet-Level Tourism Working Group

This requires setting up a high level working group from other relevant Ministries that meets semi-annually to discuss important issues in Malawi’s tourism industry and identify actionable policy to reduce barriers and drive growth. A focus could be placed on demonstrating the importance of tourism to the economy.

1.1.2 Develop a Public-Private Tourism Taskforce

To develop a Public-Private Taskforce, the Ministry of Information, Tourism and Culture could host a quarterly open dialogue amongst the tourism industry, community members, and the national government to drive cooperative solutions for system wide challenges.

1.2 Improve tourism operating infrastructure to enhance the visitor experience and maximize opportunities for business growth

Malawi's appeal as a destination is closely linked with its ability to provide a comfortable, functional, safe, welcoming and connected experience for its visitors. The infrastructure base of a country is a potential determinant of the attractiveness of a tourism destination. Infrastructure forms an integral part of the tourism package. In addition to improving the quality of life for residents, well-managed infrastructure ensures positive perceptions of the country while providing a platform for the tourism industry to deliver high quality services and goods. Malawi may perhaps seek diversified investment from the public and private sector to repair, maintain, and enhance the following important tourism infrastructure components:

1.2.1 Roads to Major Destinations

Ensure comfortable and safe access to Malawi's most recognizable attractions by upgrading and maintaining roads to Cape Maclear, Liwonde National Park, Nyika National Park, Lake Chilwa, Mulanje Mountain Forest Reserve

1.2.2 Internet and Telecommunications

Decrease cost and improve quality of high-speed Internet access in major tourism areas. Strengthen mobile telephone signals throughout the country.

1.2.3 Airport

For many tourists, the airport is the first meeting point with the country. Therefore it is recommended that a welcoming, efficient, and informative environment is created at Malawi's two main airports located in Blantyre and Lilongwe. Improve airport cleanliness, renovate for a more modern aesthetic, and utilize signage to clearly articulate regulations and procedures

1.2.4 Immigration

Guarantee a timely and smooth visa application process and ensure immigration officers perform their duties with superior customer service.

1.2.5 Health and Safety

Sensitize police to issues of visitor well being and increase patrols around highly urban trafficked tourism areas. Ensure there is well-trained and well-equipped rescue and emergency staff near major natural areas such as Lake Malawi and Mount Mulanje. Train hospital personnel on how to treat and manage international visitors.

1.2.6 Waste, Recycling and Cleanliness

Maximize Malawi's natural beauty by properly managing trash solid waste. Ensure major tourism areas are regularly monitored and cleared of roadside rubbish. Install waste bins in highly trafficked areas. Encourage Malawian businesses to minimize use of plastics while encouraging more recycling.

1.1.3. Visitor Services

A strong destination ensures the quality of the visitor's experience. This can be achieved by setting up a destination management system that retains important data about attractions, events, travel logistics and contact details for accommodations, tour operators and restaurants. Train staff at the Visitor Information Center in best practices in customer services and ensure that each center is stocked with useful information.

1.2. Build a skilled Malawian workforce that creates tourism leaders and meets industry needs.

Tourism is a people-driven industry that relies heavily on a large talent pool of managers, planners, guides, and hospitality staff. Therefore, the focus could be on increasing the number of individuals with world-class skillsets to meet the needs of the local tourism industry. This new workforce will create an attractive environment for investment in the tourism industry and ensure many years of strong, sustainable growth.

1.2.1 Establish a National Primary and Secondary School Tourism Curriculum

Create an early appreciation for the tourism industry, an interest in tourism careers, and an awareness of the value of visitors by delivering tourism education modules each year to Malawian students.

1.2.2. Improve Tourism Expertise at Learning Institutions

Improve skill of Malawian tourism educators at Malawi Institute of Tourism, Mzuzu University, and Blantyre International University through certification courses and continuing education requirements. Attract international expertise in tourism education.

1.2.3 Apprenticeships and Applied Learning

Create pathways for individuals interested in tourism careers by incentivizing the private sector to create hands-on learning opportunities and establishing internship programs within the tourism and hospitality industry.

1.2.4 Public Sector Education and Skills

Ensure all government officials meet a baseline competency on basic tourism management concepts and skills. Establish a mandatory onboarding program that includes training and testing for new government tourism staff. Initialize a continuing education program for government tourism professionals around best practices in destination management, marketing, and tourism planning.

1.3. Liberalize the business climate and fast track tourism business growth by reducing economic and legislative barriers

A successful tourism destination is based on a highly competitive tourism economy by aligning its policies with global economic best practice. Particular focus will be paid to improving the ease with which businesses operate, entrepreneurship can flourish, and creating an environment that is attractive to investment.

1.3.1 Tax Reform

Analyze and streamline current national tax policies on tourism businesses to remove undue burden, free capital, and encourage reinvestment.

1.3.2 Financial Services

Enabling access to international electronic commercial and banking networks to boost global consumer confidence and ensure that foreign currency can be retained within Malawian banks.

1.3.3 Investment

Developing globally competitive investment incentives and aggressively promote investment opportunities in Malawi's tourism sector, with special attention to public-private partnerships that benefit local communities, natural conservation, and infrastructure development.

1.4 Construct a culture of transparency with accessible information and data

Current and detailed data is the cornerstone of important political and business decision-making. Malawi could drive public and private sector cooperation and strengthen the industry capacity for fact-based analysis by regularly presenting important statistical and financial data.

1.4.1 Enact a Tourism Satellite Account

Initialize data collection and analysis procedures in line with United Nations World Tourism Organization best practice for tourism industry accounting, resulting in the ability to better monitor Malawi's tourism economy.

1.4.2 Issue Semi-Annual Budgets and Progress Reports

The Malawi Department of Tourism in collaboration with the private sector could publish a report featuring important tourism industry milestones, visitor arrival information, visitor spending data, tax revenue receipts, and tourism-based government expenditures.

Outcome 2. Enhancing Tourism Supply

Harnessing Malawi's rich natural and cultural resources to build an attractive, world-class destination.

Malawi promotes itself as the warm heart of Africa, with both natural and cultural attractions. Malawi sits amid a vibrant travel and tourism region that is growing rapidly and increasing its world market share. To strengthen its destination position and tourism offer, Malawi should build a network of regional tourism committees to address gaps in tourism products and services.

2.1. Regional Tourism Committees will identify local solutions for local challenges

A network of Regional Tourism Committees could take the lead in managing the regional tourism development process and seeking initiatives for development. A tourism committee could decide on the regional tourism priorities, identify funding opportunities and provide the region with expertise and education. They will work together with donors as a unified voice. They collaborate with the national government, the destination management organization and share knowledge between the regions. All of these elements contribute and enhance the national level destination marketing.

2.1.2. Creating of Public-Private Sector Tourism Committees

Ideally a tourism Committees consist of members from the public and private sector. Bringing these parties together could create more political and institutional stability on the tourism level.

2.2. Strengthen the management of protected areas to ensure sustainable use of Malawi's natural assets

Malawi's natural assets attract the majority of its leisure visitors and are indispensably linked to the success of the country's tourism industry. Many areas are critically threatened by unsustainable agricultural, logging, and wildlife management practices. To ensure the survival of Malawi's magnificent natural assets it is recommended to the prioritize conservation of its natural resources in an inclusive manner that ensures benefit to local communities and the industry as a whole. The Regional Tourism Taskforces could take the lead in addressing following topics:

2.2.1. Zoning

The process of zoning in urban and lakeshore areas is important to attract investment and make progress with the sector's ability to have greater sustainable impact. Hence, a comprehensive analysis of current land use practices could be undertaken, especially in and around sensitive natural areas. Create agreements with local communities on sanctioned or common areas for sustainable agriculture, aquaculture, and forestry activities; for special tourism economic zones; and for conservation management. The use of common lands by local communities should be respected and sustainably managed by the Regional Tourism Taskforce, which by working together can regulate agricultural, cultural or other activities.

2.2.2. Deforestation Program

Working together with international experts to develop a program that proactively manages sensitive forest areas to prevent illegal logging and land erosion. Support the protection and conservation of the natural and cultural resources (Department of National Parks and Wildlife, Department of Culture, Ministry of Environmental Affairs...), by stressing the value of them towards local residents.

2.2.3. Anti-poaching programming

Malawi's parks and reserves have been undergoing considerable change over the past 10 to 15 years. The success story of Majete Wildlife Reserve is achieved by an effective public-private partnership. The network of Regional Tourism Taskforces could develop a nationwide comprehensive "zero-tolerance" program that includes law enforcement,

community communication, and national policy to eradicate incentives and a market for illegal poaching activities.

2.3 Conserve and promote Malawi's cultural heritage

Malawi offers diverse cultural attractions, including ethnic and cultural festivals, cultural villages, a range of museums, colonial era buildings, independence struggle monuments, and religious buildings and monuments. Malawi possesses an immense cultural heritage, which requires improved recording and preservation of cultural sites, improved presentation of cultural events, and increased attention in marketing of the cultural asset base.

2.3.1 Museums

Revitalize Malawi's dated museums through smart business planning, sponsorship promotion, and volunteer programming to ensure they become beneficial centers for discovery and research about Malawi's rich culture for visitors and locals alike.

2.3.2 Cultural Villages

Improve management, operations, and marketing of Malawi's cultural village programs to drive traffic to important centers of cultural learning.

2.4. Supporting and promoting internationally-recognized festivals and events to amplify Malawi's brand

Improve the operations and promotion of Malawian festival, sports, cultural events that will raise the country's international profile and generate considerable economic impact for small and medium tourism enterprises.

Priority festivals and events include:

- The Lake of Stars music festival that is now a recognized part of the international music festival circuit.
- The SkyDive Malawi Festival was created to promote and celebrate the skydiving sport in Malawi.
- The Yachting Marathon covers over 500 kilometers and is the longest freshwater race in the world.
- Outdoor events such as Mulanje Porters Race, Luwawa-Lake trail bike race, and the Mangochi Bicycle race.
- New cultural events initiated in recent years attract domestic and international attention to different degrees.
- Ethnic-based cultural events being actively promoted for various groups (Chewa, Lomwe, Ngoni)

2.5 Grow tourism's economic benefits by strengthening the supply chain

To maximize the economic value of the Tourism sector to Malawi's economy, there is a possibility to increase the multiplier effects through improved supply chain linkages. This could be addressed by stimulating a stronger supply chain response to opportunities generated by existing tourism providers, notably by developing and utilizing more domestically produced goods and service supplies through supplier initiatives.

Outcome 3. Enhancing Tourism Demand

Striving to be a leader in African tourism by attracting high-value visitors through innovative marketing that is at the same time cost-efficient and highly inspiring.

Understanding that Malawi is still relatively unknown globally, it is recommended that during the next five years the focus is directed on creating and enacting an evocative tourism brand that fully illustrates for consumers what to expect from the “Warm of Heart of Africa” and positions the country as a premier travel destination.

3.1. Establish a destination marketing organizations co-managed by the public and the private sectors

Several organizations currently have mandates for marketing Malawi – the Ministry of Information, Tourism and Culture, the Malawi Tourism Marketing Consortium and the Malawi Tourism Association - the later managed largely by the private sector. While all have managed exceptional promotional activities, the coordination among the public and private sector could be improved, especially on establishing tourism marketing goals and working collaboratively to achieve them.

The establishment of a new destination marketing organization with the sole responsibility of generating demand for the country’s tourism industry. Ideally the institution is a partnership between the Government of Malawi, the tourism industry, and the Malawian people.

3.1.1. Management

Establishing a governing structure that balances the interests of the public sector and the private sector while ensuring proper oversight and transparency.

3.1.2. Business and Strategic Planning

Together with all stakeholders, setting up a detailed business plan that identifies clear activities and measures of success for the organization as well as diversified, sustainable revenue streams to implement the activities.

3.1.3. Draft and Sign Legislation

A first possible start to develop the tourism marketing engine could be to draft a new “Tourism Promotion Act” within the Ministry of Information, Tourism and Culture that establishes a new parastatal organization with a clearly defined mandate and public funding a tax revenue collected by the Malawi Revenue Authority.

3.2 Establish and implement a detailed annual destination marketing strategy with clear actions and measures of success

The destination management organization will be responsible for implementing a Malawi destination marketing strategy, which is a detailed roadmap of how to raise the country’s global profile and drive more tourism arrivals while being efficient and effective with the resources available. The strategy is a collaborative effort undertaken by the public and the private sectors, and it holds institutions and individuals responsible for securing positive outcomes.

The strategy should be refined and updated every year to maximize successes and re-evaluate underperforming programs.

Main components of Malawi’s tourism destination marketing strategy should include:

3.2.1. Market Research

Clearly illustrate current visitor numbers and describe their behaviors - such as how they discovered Malawi as a destination, what motivates their travel, how do they travel while they’re in the country. Forecast future travel figures from key markets and understand areas for growth. Special attention will be paid to trends and influences that are impacting the tourism marketing from a global, regional and local level.

3.2.2. Target Markets

Based on market research, identify the geographic area and interests of the travelers with the most potential for Malawi.

3.2.3. Marketing Goals

Set realistic and achievable metrics for measuring success, including tangible results like visitation and intangible results like increased brand equity.

3.2.4. Brand Management & Messaging

Describe how the Malawi tourism brand will be maintained and broadcast throughout the year, including specific campaigns that focus on brand pillars and specific brand promises.

3.2.5. Content Strategy

Highlight the photos, videos, and stories that will be used throughout the year to achieve the marketing goals. Explain how they will be captured and disseminated.

3.2.6. Online & Digital Marketing

Develop and maintain a world-class tourism website. Leverage social media to breathe life into the brand and create conversation around Malawi. Use targeted online advertising to extend the brand and generate awareness on sites frequented by the target markets.

3.2.7. Travel Trade Marketing

Inspire and educate international tour operators and travel agents to be advocates for Malawi tourism and sell more Malawi itineraries. Utilize trade shows as an opportunity for effective and efficient B2B marketing in target markets.

3.2.8. Media and Public Relations

Build relationships with online and traditional media outlets and engage them through information dissemination, events and specialized trips.

3.2.9. Traditional Advertising

Sparingly deploy billboards, television, and published advertisements to drive specific audiences to learn more about Malawi.

3.2.10. Events

Utilize international embassies and distributors of Malawian products, among others, to host specialized events to showcase the country's tourism assets and connect interested travelers with tour operators.

3.2.11. International Representation

Build a team of international travel specialists that are most familiar with the target market to sell Malawi

3.3. Build and manage a highly-recognizable and inspiring destination brand

Malawi's tourism brand is more than a logo and tagline – it is the composite sentiment felt about the destination. While it is impossible to completely control the brand, it can be influenced through consistent usage of evocative messaging and imagery.

Savvy marketing builds Malawi's brand promise – “the warm heart of Africa” – that is then fulfilled by the Malawian tourism industry when visitors arrive.

The branding process should be built on vibrant dialogue with tourism industry stakeholders – including the local community – and yield a detailed brand strategy that includes:

- Visual identity
- Main destination message
- Brand pillars and sub-brands
- Usage guidelines
- Press and local engagement plan

3.4. Leverage inspiring consumer marketing

Malawi speaks directly to potential visitors through a rich combination of online and offline channels.

3.4.1. Website

Create and maintain a vibrant website that inspires and informs potential visitors, the travel trade and the media. Blend vivid imagery and dynamic content to keep the site fresh and valuable. Integrate e-commerce components to provide a sales platform for tourism businesses. Equip the new Malawi tourism website with the best back-end technology that can track and measure users and deliver automated, custom content.

3.4.2. Social Media

Malawi tourism's social media presence will present a unique voice that inspires visitors with bold stories and timely, honest engagement. Through the use of Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram – brand advocates will be identified and nurtured with great content and frequent conversations.

3.4.3. Email Marketing

Keep Malawi top-of-mind with proactive email outreach to potential travelers, trade contacts, and the media. Customize e-mail newsletters with relevant content based on market segments. Integrate multimedia to keep Malawi's story alive.

3.4.4. Printed Material and Collateral

Brochures, maps, calendars and other branded materials such as t-shirts, USB keys, and key chains will be developed only when there is a clear distribution plan in place. Priority will be given for materials that can be produced or replicated digitally for wider distribution, lower cost, and better tracking.

3.4.5. Advertising

Launch targeted advertising campaigns in select markets to drive discovery of the destination. Visually stunning ads with clear calls to action will be placed strategically in print publications and on digital platforms. Opportunities will exist for cooperative advertising between destination marketing organizations and the private sector.

3.4.6. Establish and nurture relationships with the international travel trade to expand Malawi's sales force

Outbound tour operators and travel agents are an important component of effective destination marketing because they are responsible for driving the majority of visitors to any particular destination. A strong relationship built on cooperation and education will ensure that tour operators and travel agents will drive traffic to Malawi.

3.4.6. Customer Relationship Management System

A database will be developed to track all trade-related communication, build a profile of all international tour operators, and measure the success of outreach efforts.

3.4.7. Destination Specialist Program

An online education tool will be developed to help the travel trade better understand Malawi attractions, activities and travel logistics. Tour operators and travel agents that have completed the program will receive benefits such as FAM trip invitations and listings in marketing materials.

3.4.8. Sales Tools

Copyright-free photos, videos, maps, social media content and planning guides will be provided to the travel trade free of charge to enhance their ability to sell Malawi to their clients.

3.4.9. Trade Shows

Attending select travel trade shows that are focused on priority target markets. Plan in advance for one-on-one meetings with tour operators.

3.4.10. Familiarization Trips

Inviting vetted tour operators to experience Malawi first hand so that they are more aware of the destination's offer and can meet with inbound operators, accommodation providers, and community organizations.

3.5 Leverage media opportunities to raise awareness of the destination in target markets

Tapping into the established audience of well-known traditional and online media outlets by building and strengthening relationships with editors, journalists and bloggers that can help tell the country's story.

3.5.1. Media Outreach and Management

Building a comprehensive list of media contacts with detailed information about their audience and area of interest. Deliver regular "pitches" of story ideas perfectly tailored to their needs. Track outreach activities and resulting publications.

3.5.2. Press Trips

Providing high-value media outlets the best opportunity to write thoughtful, effective pieces about Malawi by providing a guided tour throughout the country – showcasing destinations and attractions in line with that year's theme.

Executive Summary

This document is the result of an effective cooperation between the Government of Malawi, members of Malawi's tourism industry, the people of Malawi and ViaVia Tourism Academy, supported by the Government of Flanders. The proposed Tourism Development Strategy could be used as a source of inspiration for a common vision for tourism development in Malawi through the year 2020.

The Malawi Tourism Strategy 2020 proposes a pathway to develop the tourism sector, however this is not definitive and open for adaptation.

Based on consultation and engagement with a variety of Malawian stakeholders we would like to propose, for the consideration of the Ministry, the following possible areas of focus.

The creation of an enabling environment for tourism development in Malawi is an advisable step to a further growth in tourism. Which entails reducing entry barriers for new businesses, improving public-private dialogue as well as incentivize investment within the tourism sector. A positive and enabling environment could allow the creation of a new "Tourism Promotion Act" within the Ministry of Information, Tourism and Culture that establishes a new parastatal Destination Organization to kick-start the tourism development. This independent Destination Marketing Organization could generate market awareness for Malawi as a tourism destination, inspire travelers to choose Malawi over other options, drive sales, linking consumer to supplier and educate tourists on the diversity of Malawi's tourism products.

Furthermore, the emphasis could be placed on strengthening Malawi's tourism supply-side through the development of Regional Tourism Committees, in order to link and support priority areas for tourism development. A regional committee could provide the basis and structure of the tourism supply-side of a specific region, but at the same time integrate the national level tourism strategy. The education of these tourism officials play a key part in the success of the Committees. In collaboration with Tourism Institutes (MIT, Mzuzu University, Blantyre International University) it is advisable to provide these committees with tailor-made training programs, to strengthen their capacity to develop the tourism sector.

Ideally these areas of focus could go hand-in-hand and could be implemented parallel to each other as a premise for success as well as to benefit from their mutually reinforcing potential.