

# Libyan National Crisis Planning and Stakeholder Responses

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## ABSTRACT

**Aims and Place of Study:** A comprehensive framework is developed in conjunction with recommendations for resolving the crisis confronting national-level tourism plans, which is then applied to the Libyan case. Until now, overcoming a lack of tourism planning in unstable countries has been a lengthy, expensive process, with detailed solutions tailored to such an environment rarely being implemented systematically.

**Methodology:** It is argued that by systematically examining the people involved in the tourism planning as well as the tourism sector in general along with the tourism planning documents against a set of criteria, much can be learned about tourism planning. While plans vary according to context, all tourism plans should incorporate certain characteristics. This dissertation identified several characteristics that should be included in national-level tourism plans, including involved stakeholders and the inclusion of scenarios and a backup plan.

**Results:** This research determines the factors that constituted an obstacle to tourism development in Libya through the PESTEL model and then focused on a number of those factors. Based on the analysis of these factors, a model is developed that organises the practical elements that could enhance the tourism sector in developing countries. This is considered a pillar of national tourism planning, focusing on local and international stakeholders and their role in the success of the planning, as well as identifying other factors supporting the planning process and then dividing each component. It then points to crucial points drawn from the relevant literature indicating the characteristics of a good plan and, accordingly, the human and financial resources that must be reserved in the plan due to their importance to the success of planning. The framework is then used to guide the examination and evaluation of documents about the Libyan Tourism Plan.

**Conclusion:** The analysis concludes with recommendations for improving Libyan tourism planning and maximising the benefits of the current Libyan tourism plan (LNTP) 2009-2025. This research contributes to tourism planning by proposing a framework that can address tourism plans of the politically troubled nations at the national level, thereby facilitating the identification of problems and issues, allowing for the most efficient learning from mistakes, and providing a framework for conducting comparative studies

*Keywords: Libya, National Crisis, Planning, tourism planning,*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of Libya and the Libyan tourism industry

Libya is the fourth largest country in North Africa by area and has the Mediterranean Sea's longest coastline, measuring 1,770 kilometers, which equals 1,100 miles (Shanahan, 2012). Libya has five sites classified as unique world heritage sites by UNESCO (see Appendix

Error! Reference source not found. Additionally, the country also has a diversity of unique local products, traditions, and environments (also called desert tourism) as well as sea resorts which made it an attractive tourism destination (Grech & Bamber, 2013). Libya has experienced a flourishing period in its tourism sector (Hurd, 2005) in the post-sanctions period i.e. after 2003. The reasons are that the Libyan tourism ministry spent effort on planning and investing heavily in the tourism industry.

Furthermore, with an intent to decrease the reliance of the Libyan economy on the oil and gas sector as its primary cash cow, the Libyan state has developed a tourism plan in association with the UNWTO (Naama, Haven-Tang, & Jones, 2008). This plan covered the period from 2008 to 2012. In 2005, the international visitor numbers reached 170,000, and by the end of 2010 achieved more than doubled the number 2005 by 271,000 in 2010 (Lanquar, 2015). The arrival of international tourists to Libya from the year 2005 to 2013 is shown in Fig. 1. In 2011, the tourism sector was affected by political instability, and the number of international arrivals dropped by 90% reaching only 26,200. Accordingly, the new government in Libya has considered the development of the tourism sector a priority. Nevertheless, the number of international arrivals in 2013, which is considered the latest year according to literature, achieved just 50,000 (Lanquar, 2015).

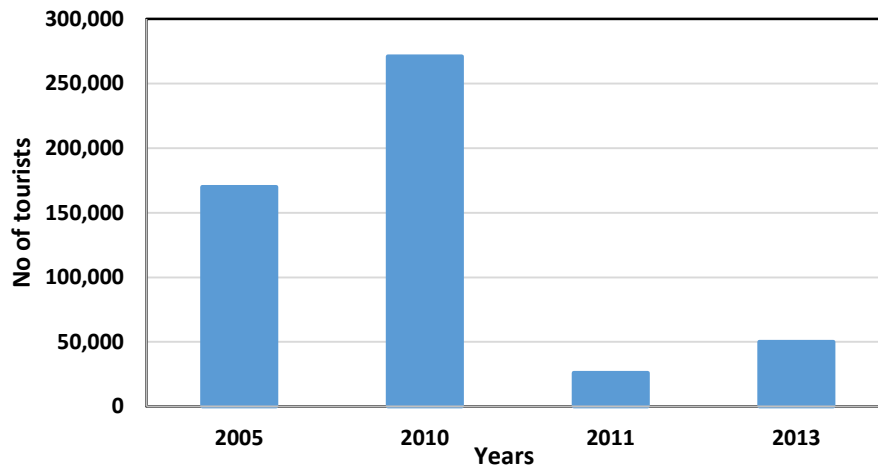


Fig.1. International tourists arriving in Libya (2005 to 2013)

## 1.2 Tourism Planning

Getz (1986) defines tourism planning as a method to streamline and optimise the process of using tourism as means to add value to the human and environmental ecosystems. This method is based on rigorous research and evaluation. In contrast to travel planning, which is static, systemized, and sequential, tourism planning is a continuous dynamic process that can help in finalising the pertinent objectives and means to achieve them (Almeyda-Ibáñez, George, & Marketing, 2017). It is then applicable for dealing with changes in the internal and external environments and contributing to a destination's success. Thus, tourism planning aims to create a seamless transition from the existing state to a better and improved future for the place or destination as well as its residents and visitors (Almeyda-Ibáñez & George, 2017; Bhatia, 2006; Chatzigeorgiou & Christou, 2016; Martins, 2018; Stokes, 2008). Tourism planning has historically involved extensive surveys and appraisals of a country's or region's physical resources, with little or no regard for the potential spillover effects of proposals and projects on adjacent areas or environments (Baud-Bovy, 1982; Ruhanen 2004).

With an increased scale and complexity in the tourism industry, tourism planning becomes of utmost importance to strike an optimal balance between the economic and industrial objectives to ensure sustainability and improvement of the destination (Martins, 2018). Between the 1970s and 1990s, tourism planning began to scale up its operations, marked by sparse interventions from public sector entities during the 1950s and 1960s (Costa, 2019). The evolution of tourism to the wider pockets of the world-spanning a range of countries with tourism in itself not limited to leisure resorts style was seen throughout the first quarter of the 20th century. This led to a very different set of challenges for the tourism planning methodology wherein tourism planners sought new paradigms to plan and promote tourism as a lifestyle offering of a specific city or national parks and other non-conventional (Costa, 2019; Dwyer & Edwards, 2010). Therefore, the evolution of tourism is hugely influenced by the policy initiatives pertinent to tourism planning. These policies can decide the winners and losers in terms of the revenue from the tourism sector as well as the impact of winnings and how these winnings and revenues are distributed (Dredge & Jamal, 2015; Dredge & Jenkins, 2011).

There are three approaches to tourism planning, namely: environmental-oriented, community, and sustainability approaches. The environmental approach is motivated by the impact of tourism on the natural environment (Krippendorf, 1982) which took its roots in the 1960s conservation movements. This led to the inclusion of the environmental concerns associated with tourism in the planning staging as opposed to only economic and physical planning objectives. The realization of the detrimental impact of tourism on the communities of destinations led to the second approach of community-based planning. To alleviate these irreversible effects, the community-based approach embraced the idea of developing socially acceptable and socially coherent means of managing tourism (Blank, 1989; P. Murphy, 1985). In essence, a 'bottom up' planning approach was sought which views the development of the destination's synonyms to the development of the local communities exposed to the tourism. For example, by investing in community members, over developing the community, for example, by investing in buildings (Hall, 1998). The third approach is motivated by concerns about the ecological impact of the tourism industry and is called the sustainable tourism planning approach. Sustainable practices as defined by United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) in 1987 (WCED, 1987) imply methodologies that can meet the current and short-term objectives without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to meet their goals. Sustainable development is widely seen as the solution to the negative environmental and social impacts of the tourism industry. Natural resources and endowments along with the social and cultural heritages are the primary resources for the tourism industry (Cooper, 1995; Peter E Murphy, 1995).

Tourism is critical for developed and developing countries alike, particularly those with tourism resources such as seas, beaches, rivers, mountains, deserts, leisure, and entertainment. In the Arab world and Africa, the importance of tourism can be seen in Egypt, Jordan, Tunisia, Lebanon, Morocco, and Syria. The national income of these states is heavily reliant on the revenue generated by tourism. Additionally, the tourism industry generates almost millions of jobs for citizens. Several of these countries (Egypt, Tunisia, and Syria) have been impacted by what has been dubbed the 'Arab Spring' revolutions (Forum, 2013; Sala-i-Martin et al., 2012). There are several impediments to implementing sustainable tourism planning. Four major barriers to realising the potential of tourism for sustainable development, especially in developing nations are identified by Jamieson and Nadkarni (2009). These four factors are listed as a lack of recognition of tourism's potential, the inability of nations to capitalise on the opportunities brought by tourism, indifference and lack of training among officials in using tourism as the means of job-creating and poverty reduction, and finally, limited or poor infrastructure that is required to support the tourism industry. These factors are coherent with the observations of Bushell and Eagles (2006).

pointing out the lack of formal education and organisational policies as factors hindering the growth of the tourism industry.

### **1.3. Levels of Tourism Planning**

There are four levels of tourism planning that include international and national planning, followed by regional and local scale planning. International tourism planning focuses on the means of international transportation followed by the movement of tourist countries and, finally, planning for the tour programs along with multi-country marketing strategies and promotion programs (Inskeep, 1988). National tourism planning includes a wide variety of factors such as tourism policy, physical infrastructure, and associated services. The logistical factors are also covered which include national and regional routes along with the organisational structures for tourism which frame specific legislation and investment policies. Effective marketing plans are also covered in national-level tourism plans encompassing promotional campaigns, and sociocultural, environmental, and economic impacts. The techniques used to implement these national-level plans work in incremental stages wherein the wider project is divided into smaller and short-term development projects (Inskeep, 1994).

### **1.4 National Tourism Planning**

The Libya National Tourism Plan (LNTP) 2009 -2025 can be summarised in 22 main points. (see Error! Reference source not found.) This plan, in general, seeks to lay scientific foundations to activate the role of the tourism sector and improve its performance to be one of the main tributaries of the national economy by significantly increasing its contribution to the national economic and social development processes. A target for this scheme has been set as follows:

- 1- Accommodate about 4.6 million tourists in 2025 with steady growth every year.
- 2- Providing about 100,000 beds by the year 2025.
- 3- Creating about 225,000 jobs by the year 2025.
- 4- An increase in the share of non-oil GDP of the country from 1.45% (year 2008) to over 6% by 2025.

Although the plan seems promising, it failed to navigate and minimise the adverse consequences of the crisis facing the tourism sector before, during, and after the Arab spring revolution. The current political and socio-economic situation in Libya, which began in 2011, is the primary evidence in this regard. Despite the participation of experts from developed countries, members from UNWTO, ten expert members representing the UK tourism sector from various disciplines (including, for example, some well-known tourism experts such as Peter Kendall, Peter M Burns, and Steve Crowhurst) were involved in preparing the Libyan tourism plan 1999-2018, the plan failed to cover all possible scenarios of crisis that may obstruct the tourism sector in particular and the most important of which was the political instability. Part of the reason for this failure lies in the fact that the then Libyan government engaged foreign experts, such as those mentioned above, and almost wholly ignored important local stakeholders (such as public and private hotel managers, academics, and government officials) in the planning process. Therefore, incorporating the experiences and practices of local stakeholders in the planning of tourism is highly recommended to create an efficient tourism plan. For example, S. Wilson, Fesenmaier, and Van Es (2001) and Kline and Milburn (2010) points out various factors contributing to the successful development of tourism including:

- Package for comprehensive tourism development

- Leadership in the community
- Local governmental support
- Ample financial support for developing tourism
- Strategic planning
- Cooperation between businesses and local government
- Cooperation between tourism entrepreneurs in rural areas
- Information technology support for the tourism industry
- Development of visitors bureaus infrastructure
- Support from the community to develop tourism

## **1.5 Factors Affecting Tourism Policy Implementations**

Numerous factors influence how tourism planning and policy are implemented in developing nations. According to Dredge and Jenkins (2007, p. 170), policy implementation is "the process through which policy ideas and plans are translated into practice." It is concerned with the development of a system of knowledge about "what emerges or is induced, as actors deal with a policy program" (O'Toole Jr, 2000). Policy implementation challenges have been examined from various perspectives that include both top-down and bottom-up methods and synthesis techniques. The top-down strategy is concerned with what and how to govern the environment in which the policy is implemented and how the policymaker implements the policy (Gunn, 1978; Hogwood, Gunn, & Archibald, 1984). To develop mutually agreed policies, the bottom-up method involves local communities or bureaucrats working with national, federal, or regional governments (Goggin, Bowman, & Lester, 1990; Lipsky, 1980). In practice, the accumulating evidence reveals that both approaches have significant limitations around understanding and dealing with the impact of multiple variables that are innate to the process of implementing a policy (Goggin et al., 1990). Considering the shortcomings mentioned above, several academics (Mazmanian & Sabatier, 1983; Ryan, 1996; Stoker, 1991) have explored and tried to establish a technique of synthesis that incorporates both top-down and bottom-up perspectives. Goggin et al. (1990) further suggested "The Inter-Governmental Policy Implementation Communications Model". Policy implementation outcomes, according to the synthesis approach, are influenced by national-level incentives and constraints such as policy messages and the communicator's reputation, local-level incentives and constraints such as local officials, local politics, and interest groups, and local decisional outcomes such as decision makers' interpretations of national decisions. In the context of tourism, Krutwayscho and Bramwell (2010) proposed a society-centered and relational approach to analysing policy implementation, emphasising the necessity of examining policies in connection to their interactions with the broader societal and environmental context (D. Wang & Ap, 2013).

### **1.5.1 Political Factor**

This component is determined by government engagement in the economy via fiscal and monetary policy, as well as conformity with international standards set by international organisations such as the United Nations, the World Tourism Organization, and the European Union. It analyses the following elements: governance functioning, anti-corruption policies, lobbying, military conflicts, political risk, ethnic tensions, and so on (Nicolae, 2018). Political stability is another critical factor to consider (Ivanov, Gavrulina, Webster, & Ralko, 2017b). The political component is founded on a cooperative relationship between the political world, as represented by political parties in government, and the corporate environment. The two components are interdependently related. Governors can either provide enormous possibilities for investors or create impediments in these cases.

Politics and tourism are inextricably linked through a single concept. It has been established that a democratic system is more conducive to tourism development than an authoritarian dictatorship. According to all available data, democratic states attract a more significant number of foreign tourists. As a result, these activities generate a bigger revenue stream. Political instability, on the other hand, is significantly more complex, with distinct levels (Andriole & Hopple, 1984; Gupta, 1990). Tourists make destination selections based on the degree of political instability and the likelihood of political turmoil and instability occurring (H. Seddighi, M. Nuttall, & A. Theocharous, 2001). Additionally, terrorism and political instability are inextricably intertwined, and political unrest can breed terrorism, as seen in Italy, Libya 2016, Lebanon, and former West Germany (Wieviorka, 1994). Political instability can occur as a result of terrorist activities in a country; thus, terrorism is viewed as a stage of political instability that can dissuade tourists from visiting countries that face terrorist threats (Sönmez, 1998). Political instability can hurt a country's individual businesses, including tourism, and the instability can expand to much larger proportions, resulting in social unrest, riots, and wars (Sönmez, 1998).

### **1.5.2 Economic Factor**

This element consists of indicators derived from a country's macroeconomic relationships, which deal with the following elements: macroeconomic indicator dynamics, the individual share of gross domestic product, level of inflation, exports, and imports made by a nation. Furthermore, institutional factors like infrastructure, investment and interest rates, utility costs, consumption, and competitiveness of the state also weigh in as critical economic factors (Nicolae, 2018). The given factors influence enterprises not only through the structure of economic connections but also through the overall state of the enterprise, which is reflected in a variety of status or process indicators at various points. The overall economic situation is critical in the case of tourism, as its indications are relatively synchronised. When a region or country enters a cycle of economic crises, it may result in a decline in tourism earnings. On the other hand, in countries with growing economies, the tourism industry presents investment prospects for many potential investors. When comparing the attractiveness of different countries, businesses considering international expansion must take the national currency's stability into account - foreign exchange risk (Nicolae, 2018), as it can impact the performance of the multinational sites as well as their investments. Apart from the events discussed above, there are additional economic variables whose dynamics vary by country but have a significant impact on tourism. These include factors that define and impact the disposable income of the individuals such as level of unemployment, travel or fuel and food prices, inflation and thereby, swaying the travel behavior of the nation. For two nations participating in major tourism exchanges, a significant shift in economic indicators could result in a corresponding change in currency exchange rates, so affecting tourism or people's capacity to travel. For example, devaluing the national currency boosts a country's competitiveness in the international tourism market and so contributes to the growth of tourism service exports, but the downside is that it reduces the local population's consumption options (Nicolae, 2018).

### **1.5.3 Social Factor**

This component encompasses all aspects of individual and group behaviour patterns that indicate attitudes, values, habits, and civility (Nicolae, 2018). It provides data on demographic variables such as age structure, natural growth, population mobility, workforce quality, unemployment rate, migration level, educational attainment, foreign language usage, society values, and religious tolerance. While the elements examined have a high degree of local individuality, there are also common trends seen in several nations that contribute significantly to tourism development. A significant category of factors is the demographic

character, with a cultural underpinning for its manifestation. For instance, deviations can be seen in the travel behaviour of the elderly population in developed and developing nations with the elderly segment in the former travelling far more than in the latter nations, as their life expectancy and longevity increase. We may draw from the analysed components that there is a significant degree of connection between people and state, which requires recognising social diversity and taking joint efforts to maintain the stability necessary for general development, including tourism development (Nicolae, 2018). Even the emphasis on the critical nature of environmental preservation can be seen as a social issue.

#### **1.5.4 Technological Factor**

This aspect covers contemporary changes in the means of communication, specifically information and cellular technology. The changes in hardware infrastructure such as frequency bandwidth and corresponding hardware place pressure to upgrade and introduction systems to maintain a connection with other systems. This impacts the ability of an organisation to assimilate new technologies and state-of-the-art of their field. The rate of technological innovation, government spending on innovation, the sector's technological attractiveness, the amount spent on technology implementation, the quality of technology and technical education, automating processes and working relationships, and the level of research and development (Nicolae, 2018) have to be examined. Financial strain is a result of the costs associated with keeping up with the upgrades related to IT as the industry rapidly evolves. These upgrades have become necessary as IT infrastructure has become crucial for the tourism industry's growth (Nicolae, 2018). Nowadays, the tourist business, like the rest of the economy, is undergoing upheaval as a result of the spread and adoption of new information technology.

#### **1.5.5 Legal Factor**

The legal framework encompasses various regulations along with the specific organisations charged with enacting and enforcing them. It analyses the elements such as adherence to the rule of law's principles and ideals and legislation that adheres to specific legal standards along with the functionality of these legal institutions. Further factors such as private and intellectual property rights as well as various other legal constraints (Nicolae, 2018). Legislation varies significantly between countries, particularly in terms of the ability to enforce contracts, intellectual property, and anti-corruption protection. Adjusting national legal frameworks to European equivalents directly impacts potential foreign investments (Nicolae, 2018) due to the legal protection of the investment.

#### **1.5.6 Ecologic Factor**

This factor is made up of all the aspects that determine the behaviour of organisations or individuals that are committed to preserving the natural environment and promoting sustainable development. It analyses the following factors: environmental quality, actions to protect and conserve biodiversity, availability of natural resources (Nicolae, 2018), development of renewable energies, product recycling, ecological education of the populace, and the presence of protected areas and zones (Krippendorf, 1982, 1987). The examination of the factors that comprise this component demonstrates the state's emphasis on or disregard for the environment. It is especially pertinent in tourism, as preserving the natural environment is a critical component of maintaining the tourism industry's growth. This component manifests at the level of each of the other factors through a rethinking of aspects from a sustainable development perspective. Ecological considerations are critical for tourism, as tourists are constantly in contact with nature. The PESTEL model will be utilised

to assist in identifying the factors that influence tourist planning in Libya from a stockholder's perspective.

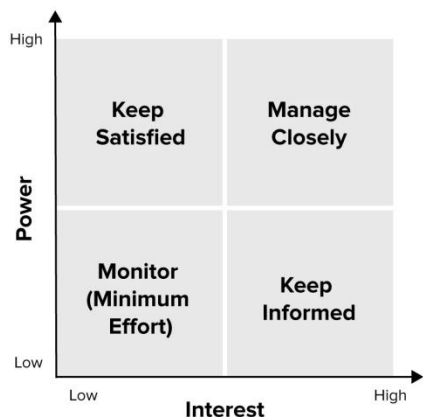
## **1.6. Crisis and Disaster in Tourism**

The recent outbreak of COVID 19 has prompted further studies in crisis and disaster management in tourism (Mostafa nezhad, 2020). However, despite the multiplicity of these studies on crisis management and its relationship to tourism, some of these studies are related to education and training and the impact of crises on them, e.g. (Goh & King, 2020). Others are characterized as research that will study the reality and effects of those crises on the environment of their occurrence (Bhaskara & Filimonau, 2021). As Ivanov et al. (2017b) note, the difference and diversity of cultures from one country to another call for more studies to cope with those crises that sometimes hinder the implementation and continuation of tourism plans in developing countries. This indicates the lack of research on crisis and disaster in the tourism sector of countries based on their peculiarities, as well as the responses of the tourism industry to such events. This lack of research is rather surprising as both the public and private sectors require knowledge of crisis management, disaster recovery, and organisational continuity. More recently, there have been several attempts to further understand the impacts of the recent crisis, for example, political instability and terrorist attacks on tourism in the Middle East countries, including Jordan, Turkey, Egypt, and other developing countries (Afonso-Rodríguez, 2017; Basnyat et al., 2017; Elshaer & Saad, 2017; Farajat, Liu, & Pennington-Gray, 2017; Ivanov et al., 2017b). For example, in Egypt, the prolonged period of political instability has financially compelled hotels and travel agents to implement downsizing strategies that include employee reductions. This has resulted in a sense of job insecurity, which has become a significant risk for Egypt's tourism industry (Elshaer & Saad, 2017). In Ukraine, the long political instability has caused negative influences on the tourism industry; it has been revealed that the political instability has resulted in decreasing revenues and dropping numbers of international tourist arrivals (Ivanov et al., 2017b).

## **1.7 Stakeholders Involved in Tourism Planning.**

Edward Freeman (2010), in his exhaustive work, coined and defined the stakeholder as “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization’s objectives” as mentioned in R Edward Freeman (2010, p. 46). In addition, there are other definitions of the stakeholder, which are “those groups without whose support the organization will cease to exist” as defined since 1963 in the internal memos of Stanford research institute (R. Edward Freeman & Reed, 1983). Additionally, (Friedman & Miles, 2006, p. 5) defined stakeholders as “have a stake or claim in the firm benefit from or are harmed by, and whose rights are violated or respected by corporate actions” along with a list of 75 definitions for stakeholder. However, for most academics, Freeman’s definition is still of great value because it is a broad definition and could encompass most if not all stakeholders of any operation. There are different models of stakeholders, but they usually comprise both internal and external entities and individuals and group entities (Friedman & Miles, 2006). Furthermore, one must notice that government and or governmental organisations can represent both external and internal entities in some organisations. For example, in some cases, the government owns a hotel, but the hotel is taxed by the government, and this case shows clearly that the government was represented as two stakeholder entities. Stakeholders can be shareholders, customers, suppliers, distributors, employees, and local communities. In the destination management of a hotel or a tourist attraction, the stakeholders are government, hotel managers, employees of the hotel, guests, and visitors but also taxi drivers, local shop owners, and the local community that benefit from the whole operation.

Fig. 2 illustrates the importance of stakeholders as well as the strength of each participant. Involving stakeholders in tourism planning and management is becoming increasingly popular and critical, as they can contribute to the development and improvement of the tourism industry (T. B. Jamal & Getz, 1995). Stakeholders can contribute diverse perspectives, knowledge, and experience, which can help to enrich tourism planning strategies, thereby increasing competitive advantage. Additionally, when it comes to decision-making, countries should involve as many stakeholders with affected interests as possible to obtain diverse perspectives and experiences. Gray (1985) advocated for the inclusion of all stakeholders who are affected by the actions of other stakeholders in the process of developing the tourism plan. The current study included government officials, hotel managers, academics, and experts.



**Fig. 2 Power of Stakeholder participation**

### **1.7.1 Government Officials**

By many, government officials are core stakeholders in all the stages of the planning process and its implementation. They are important mainly due to their economic and political (de Araujo & Bramwell, 1999) influences. Governments introduce regulations of commerce, taxation policies, and estate development initiatives. Furthermore, government officials also decide how public funds are going to be used in terms of tourism planning and promotion. They also consider how historical and cultural sites are preserved (Review, 2012). As government officials make decisions at a state level, and their decisions influence very crucial and essential factors important for the smooth and efficient running of the state. Additionally, their decisions also affect economic, ecological, and social spheres, and therefore, there is a great need for the government officials to have a full understanding and relationships in the tourism management and planning and what consequences of their decisions there could be (Zulkefli, Jaafar, & Marzuki).

### **1.7.2. Hotel Managers**

Hotel managers are perceived as the main source of information and experience for the tourism industry and tourism planning. Thanks to their experience and knowledge, they provide valuable information and suggestions as they understand how the tourism industry works (Dragouni et al., 2018). They possess practical experience, and therefore their contribution and insights are irreplaceable. Furthermore, their experience ranges from and covers those areas that are important for hotel management and how it is run. This is a very complex category as hotel manager deals with operations management, human resource

management, events management, and customer relationship management. Hotel managers are affected by other stakeholders' decisions, and they must follow the guidelines introduced by government officials, but their contribution is important, especially as they see how the policies implemented by the government officials work in practice and how they affect everyday processes in hotel management. Because most hotels in Libya are state-owned and operated by private entities, the private sector is involved in tourism and crisis planning and plays a critical role in developing the plans. The current study included six hotel managers, three of whom were business owners, and the remaining three were executive managers responsible for running and managing the hotels.

### **1.7.3. Academics**

Due to the gap in the literature dedicated to the tourism sector and crisis planning, the present study has selected to gain understanding and opinions from academics focusing on tourism planning to support the multi-stakeholder involvement and also to represent smaller groups of stakeholders who can contribute to the research by providing their viewpoints (Choy, 1991). Tourism has become one of the academic fields, and more research is actively going on in this sector. Researchers have started to conduct studies that examine developments in the tourism sector and its evolution. Tourism relates to various disciplines such as sociology, marketing, and politics (Kirilenko & Stepchenkova, 2018). Through data analysis, academics can bring a new approach to the tourism sector, and they can bring more accurate data when they are observing the relationships of individual stakeholders and their contributions to the sectors. Furthermore, the data can also help to measure the dynamics of the industry and track the gaps in the research and what needs more attention and further elaboration. Park, Phillips, Canter, and Abbott (2011) pointed out that there are over 20 subject areas in tourism research, and each of them requires a different approach. Moreover, academic stages provide access to secondary data, which can help assess the development of the industry and the changes and trends. This can prove to be useful for further research and making predictions and suggestions about the future of the industry.

### **1.7.4. Experts in tourism planning**

Tourism planning experts have useful and important information that can contribute to and aid in the development of tourism and crisis planning strategies. As a result, their perspectives were incorporated into the current study. Experts have the ability to influence the attitudes of other stakeholders participating in tourist planning, so they are important to the process and have the right to participate (Brohman, 1996) (Daafous, 2019). Moreover, tourism experts cover many areas that are included in and related to the tourism industry. They use different perspectives to investigate the tourism sector, and they try to explain certain aspects and impacts that affect the industry. Their contribution is more practical than one of the academics, and they nicely complement one another.

## **2. Research Methodology**

Different methodological approaches are related to various types of research. The most frequently used methodologies are quantitative, qualitative, and mixed, and this section is going to discuss each one of them individually. For the present study, a qualitative approach has been chosen, as it facilitates the purposes of the research and enables the author to collect more detailed and valuable data through the experience of professionals and experts in the tourism industry and other stakeholders in the Libyan tourism industry.

### **2.1 Research strategy**

Research can be structured in various ways, and the researchers need to make sure that their research strategy is chosen appropriately and helps meet the research objective. The research strategy is chosen based on the research philosophy and approach and what exactly we are trying to observe and find out in the research. Denscombe (2014b) listed several examples of research strategies: survey research, case study, ethnography, action research, experimental research, and grounded theory. Schutt and Check (2012) defined survey research as gathering information from a sample of individuals through their answers to questions. Survey research can be both qualitative (open-ended questions) and quantitative (questionnaires with numerical scales and closed-ended questions). This study used interview research to gather the data required to answer the research questions: the qualitative data and interviews with the target population conducted to collect the data. Data collection methods and population selection will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

## **2.2 Data Collection Stage and The Analysis**

Various methods used to collect and analyse data for the empirical part of this research project are outlined in this section. A semi-structured interview without limiting the participant to a scripted questionnaire was used as a primary means of data collection in this study. A total of 20 participants associated with key stakeholder groups in the tourism sector of Libya were interviewed in an open-ended style conversation for this work. The various steps of the data collection and analysis step include collection via interviews, interview guide development, selecting participants, and conducting the interview.

### **2.2.1 Data Collection by semi-structured interviews**

For qualitative approaches, interviewing is a great data gathering tool, a direct and effective means to obtain insight into real-world phenomena (John W. Creswell, 2009; Shepherd, 2016). According to the study's objectives, the researcher creates the structure and purpose of the research interview, providing the researcher with complete control over the interview's direction. It enables follow-up questions that enable the interviewer to elicit additional information or clarification. Semi-structured interviews can be extremely beneficial for determining what is occurring and comprehending the context. They can also be used in exploratory studies to provide critical background or contextual information (Saunders M., et al., 2015). The author collected data through face-to-face, semi-structured interviews, guiding the conversation topic while allowing interviewees to elaborate on their responses. This aided in the identification of multiple themes. Semi-structured interviews were selected because the research was a) exploratory, b) specific and narrow questions, c) focusing at a particular time on a particular phenomenon, d) the researcher had access to the key stakeholders in the tourism field, and e) cultural background of the country the research was conducted. These semi-structured interviews allowed for greater flexibility in terms of question wording and order of answers. This helped the interviewer take different backgrounds, social positions, and educational levels into account to best gain significant insight into the stakeholders' perceptions of success within tourism and crisis planning.

### **2.2.2 Interview Theme**

In semi-structured interviews, an interview theme or guide is a critical tool that allows the researcher to focus on the interview while also providing structure and control over the direction of information flow (Bernard, 2017). It assures that the researcher appears knowledgeable and well-prepared by establishing credible and comparable data (Bernard, 2017). The interview themes originated from the study's fundamental research question and were derived from the researcher's literature review (Mazzei & Jackson, 2012). As

demonstrated in Appendix E: Interview Questions, the interview guide was prepared to match the study objectives. Interview questions were divided into three distinct themes:

- The first theme explores the participant's views on the tourism sector, experiences in the tourism industry, and their opinions on the significance of the tourism industry in Libya.
- The second theme explores the views of participants on the various aspects of LNTP 2009-2025
- The final theme covers the current political environment in Libya.

The line of questioning used in the interview was flexible in terms of wording and order, allowing participants to express The majority of the interviews were conducted in Arabic and then translated into English before being coded. In total, three interviews were conducted in English. The majority of these interviews were with key stakeholders in Libya's tourism industry. One of the most important variables in the effectiveness of the data-gathering tool was the selection of acceptable applicants for interviews.

### **2.2.3 Participant selection: snowball sampling**

The selection of the participants done at random may not be optimal (Shepherd, 2016) as random selection does not warrant appropriate experience, knowledge, and skills expected from the participants if the study should yield credible insights and relevant information. A sampling of data is critical for both quantitative and qualitative research as this allows investigators to collect less data by focusing on a minority rather than all possible situations (M. N. K. Saunders, Thornhill, & Lewis, 2016). A hybrid of purposive and snowball sampling is employed in the selection of interview participants. At the start of the empirical study, the researcher employed purposive sampling by contacting and arranging an appointment with one of the experts in the tourism sector in Libya to identify potential respondents to have information regarding the success of the tourism sector in Libya and those who were involved in the LNTP (2009-2025). The research focuses on the assessment of the Libyan national tourism plan and crisis planning; hence the key stakeholders who were targeted are (1) experts involved in creating the LNTP (2009-2025), (2) government or public sector officials, (3) hotel managers in the private and public sector, (4) academics, and (5) managers in high-level positions in the Libyan Ministry of Tourism.

Representatives from key stakeholders' groups were chosen based on their experience, skills, and knowledge of working in the tourism industry. This was to ensure different perceptions could be obtained. A wide variety of organisations were considered while sampling the participants for this study. These organisations included the Libyan House of Representatives, the Libyan Ministry of Tourism, experts in the Libyan tourism sector, hotel investment and operating companies, hotel managers in the public and private sectors, and academics and lectures in the Faculty of Tourism at the University of Tripoli. The first draft of the invited participants specifically considered the bureaucrats and policymakers who have directly impacted the policies of the tourism sector and were also involved in the creation of the LNTP (2009-2025) from UNWTO. The researcher was able to meet with the Executive Director of the Libyan Ministry of Tourism, and also the Head of the Human Resources Team, and the Head of the Tourism Development Team of the LNTP (2009-2025). In addition to these, the researcher also interviewed the head of the Documentation and Information Centre at the Libyan Ministry of Tourism. This added particular insight to the study due to an astute take on the policies directly impacting tourism.

Additionally, participants were asked to suggest possible stakeholder groups that might be relevant to the research topic. Again, proposed candidates were evaluated for suitability in advance. In some cases, participants who had suggested the potential participant organised the interview directly themselves. In other cases, the suitability of the recommended participant was ascertained by the author and then the interview was arranged. Table 1 shows the list of participants selected and the methodology of sampling used - purposive and snowball sampling.

**Table 1: Summary of List of Interviewees**

Code	Category of Stakeholders	City	Years of experience	Sampling
EP1(1)	Tourism Experts	Tripoli	28	Purposive
EP2(11)		Tripoli	27	Purposive
EP3(10)		AL- Zintan	26	Purposive
EP4(14)		Cardiff-UK	23	Snowball
AP1(5)	Academic	Tripoli	22	Purposive
AP2(6)		Maserata	27	Purposive
AP3(18)		Al-Khums	13	Snowball
AP4(16)		Gharian	13	Snowball
PP1(7)	Government officials	Tripoli	0	Snowball
PP2(12)		Ben- Gaze	3	Purposive
HP1(13)	Hotel managers	State-owned	31	Snowball
HP2(19)			35	Purposive
HP3(20)			29	Purposive
HMP1(2)		Privately owned	18	Snowball
HMP2(8)			33	Purposive
HMP3(9)			24	Snowball
MP1(4)	Ministry of Tourism	Tripoli and Ben-Gaze	23	Purposive
MP2(17)			17	Snowball
MP3(3)			24	Purposive
MP4(15)			13	Snowball

#### **2.2.4 Data Analysis**

When analysing data qualitatively, most tourism planning research has been positivistic (Veal, 2017). The research focused on tourism and crisis planning pre-, during, and post-crisis, and challenges that the LNTP (2009-2025) did not include, to the researcher's knowledge, and qualitative research involving codes that could, potentially, be repurposed for the research. Due to the exploratory nature of the research and the scarcity of relevant literature, categories and codes were centered on participant interviews. In the first cycle of coding, open coding was used to separate data into concepts using a combination of 'NVivo' and concept coding. Concept coding is based on the concept under inquiry, therefore presenting the 'bigger picture' (Saldaña, 2021). NVivo coding is where interaction is started on the participant's terms. An overview of various objectives and commensurate coding

comparisons are shown in Figure 3. The author chose codes that matched the research objective, prioritising the participant's own words to incorporate a concept pertinent to the topic under investigation. From the first cycle (Saldaña, 2021) of the study, second cycle coding was used to generate categories and themes, resulting in the establishment of a theoretical basis. This was accomplished by using focused and axial coding approaches to reorganise data coded during the first cycle. Focused coding selects the most common or significant codes from the initial cycle coding to generate categories (Charmaz, 2014). On the other hand, axial coding organises categories according to their connections with each other (Charmaz, 2014; Saldaña, 2021). The second cycle of coding can be repeated numerous times to ensure that all themes and links are recorded. The practice of presenting data in the form of diagrams, charts, matrices, or networks to aid in the interpretation and development of the data collected is known as a data display. Within developing topics, data conclusion, and verification look for patterns and causal linkages. The data is used in conjunction with the identified themes to build arguments in support of the conclusions reached (Bazeley, 2009).

UNDER PEER REVIEW

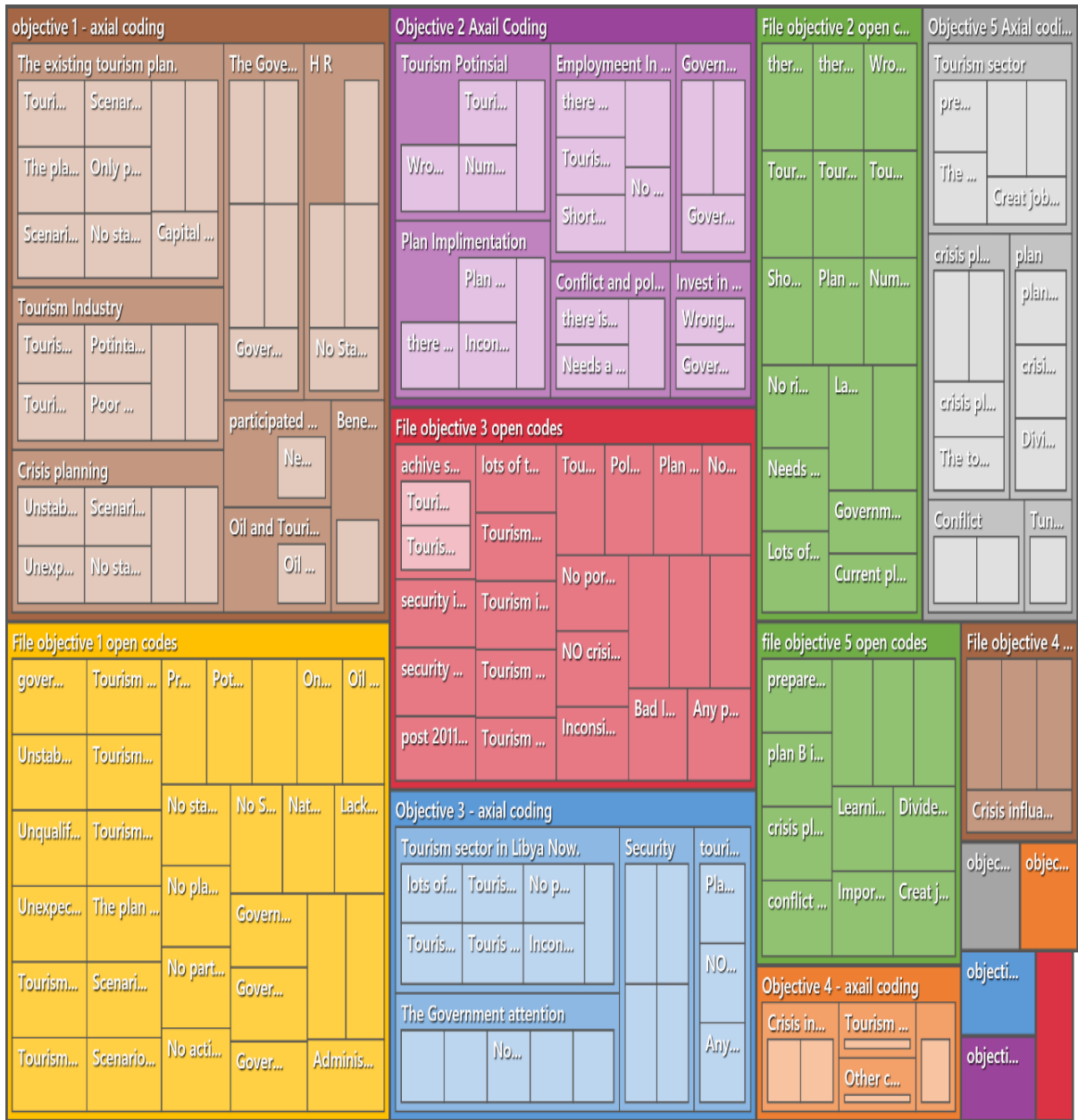


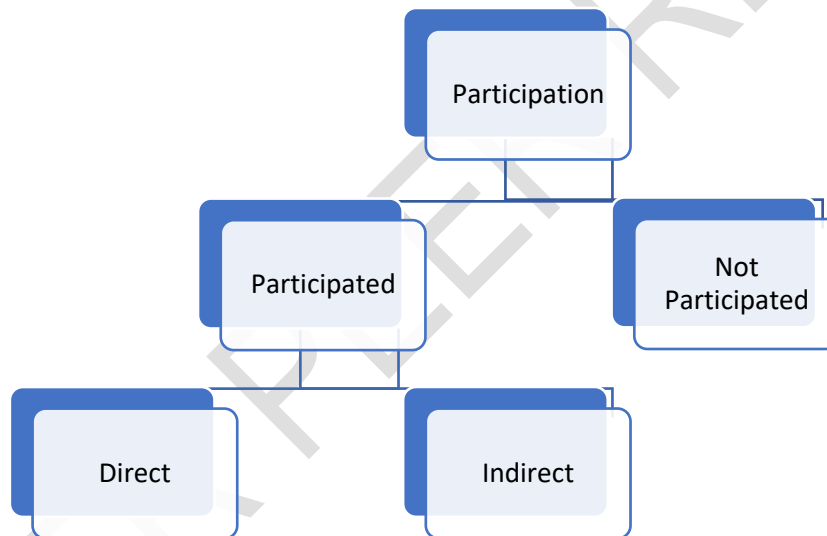
Fig. 3. Overview of the comparison of various items coded in NVivo for this study

### 3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1 Participation of Stakeholders in Preparing the LNTP 2009-2025

To clarify the vision to the reader, the researcher divided the participants in this study according to their participation in preparing the LNTP 2009-2025. Fig.4 classifies participants based on the means of their participation in LNTP as some of the participants were involved in devising the plan while others were not involved in that process. In terms of interviewees who participated in the plan, they were divided into two categories: one group participated

and contributed to the plan's preparation clearly and directly. Others contributed indirectly by submitting some reports and statistics that were relied upon in the planning process. The participants that the researcher met were the key stakeholders that included experts in the tourism sector, hotel managers in the public and private sectors, academics, and representatives of the Libyan Parliament. Except for the four experts EP1, EP2, EP3, and EP4, other participants were not involved in the creation of LNTP. It is worth stating that the participants acknowledged the deficiency in the current tourism plan, and they agreed that "Ignoring the key stakeholder may lead the plan to fail". National and international experts and professionals who have long experience in this field (such as EP1, EP2, and EP4) have participated in the LNTP. Although these participants are key stakeholders in the Libyan tourism sector, other key stakeholders (refer to Fig. 4) have not been involved in the existing plan. EP1, EP2, and EP4 agreed that "The main issue in the current Libyan national tourism plan is the lack of qualified participants". It can be noticed that even though the key stakeholders in the tourism industry have longstanding experience in the Libyan tourism sector, and they are well qualified, they argued that they had not been involved in creating this plan. Other participants assumed that they were involved in this plan indirectly by providing important statistical information, which the planer relies on for future planning, such as the occupancy rate for hotels, number of visitors, number of hotel rooms, and the number of beds. For instance, HP1 stated.



**Fig. 4. Division of the participants in this study based on their role in LNTP 2009-2025**

"We as hotel managers may have been involved in the plan, and indirectly, how? We may have participated through the provision of statistics, and without a direct meeting because the Ministry of Tourism from time to time asks hotels to provide statistics on the proportions of occupancy and the number of rooms occupied, and the number of visitors of different nationalities, we meet with the Ministry and the officials there. I expect that the Ministry will have based on these statistics and reports in the development of the plan referred to".

Ignoring involving key stakeholders during the creation of NLTP is one of the main reasons that can cause the failure of the plan as they better understand the needs of the tourism sector along with the challenges faced by visitors. Furthermore, they appreciate the limitations of the sector as well as know their customers and understand how to deal with them. For instance, participant HP1 mentioned, "I know that effective tourism planning requires the involvement of all stakeholders to benefit from their practical and scientific

expertise to develop a successful tourism plan". Furthermore, HP1 also stated, "Here it is clear that the lack of direct participation of stakeholders has caused a deficit in the plan, and evidence that with the presence of the first crisis". Disregarding the involvement of stakeholders and limiting their role in providing some information and data that the planners use may have significant consequences that affect the success of the plan, for example, one benefit of providing data that helps one part of the plan such as the number of visitors, hotels, available rooms, etc., enables that the planners use the existing data to determine the tourism target market. However, the lack of accurate information on the number of workers in the sector (qualified and unqualified) may result in poor planning. Not to mention the views that may be presented by stakeholders in this regard and their contribution to the success of the plan.

On the other hand, some key stakeholders in the tourism sector who participated in the current work have blamed the government and the Ministry of tourism for not participating in the NLTP. Regarding the participants from the Ministry of Tourism, two of the participants claimed that they were familiar with the plan, as the nature of their work made them within committees that supervise those in charge of drawing up the plan, providing them with some information and data they need in addition to some other facilities required by the nature of the work of the planning team. Regarding hotel managers in the two sectors participating in this study, their responses differed on this point, as some of them claimed that they participated indirectly by providing them with some data and information that planners need through the Ministry of Tourism. Others stated that they did not participate in this plan, and several of them stated that they were not aware of this plan at all.

A response from private hotel managers was they were not aware of the plan; to be more accurate, they had not heard about this plan and had not seen it yet, according to their response to this question. This response also came from some academics and one of the state-owned hotel managers interviewed during this study. The researcher, through their response to this question, hypothesised the possibility that those who participated in preparing this plan were selected based on the nature of their work and their job status. Except for EP1, EP2, EP3, and EP4, those who were interviewed and did not participate in the preparation of the LNTP, the number of years of experience in the tourism industry for each of them is up till 35 years. In other words, they are considered to be experienced and competent according to what was reported by their colleagues participating in this study but were not consulted in drafting LNTP. HP3 mentioned, "I have never participated in tourism planning in Libya because this is limited to employees of the General Tourism Authority previously". Also, AP4 stated, "I did my doctoral thesis on training in the tourism sector in Libya. However, I did not play any role in tourism planning directly and officially".

Although this category of participants did not participate in the development of the national plan, in their answers to the interview questions about crisis planning, they highlighted through their responses and documents that they put in place immediate plans to enable them to overcome the obstacles that occurred during the Libyan crisis. Some of them submitted proposals to their direct manager, and others formed committees that would draw up a crisis plan that would enable them to reduce the effects of instability on the tourism sector, according to their responsibility and the location of the work. One of the interviewees was the manager of the Libyan state-owned hotel, stated that during the beginning of the crisis, there was a five-star hotel suffering from misuse on some floors, and as a result, it was decided to close the hotel for maintenance, the manager reported that he had made a proposal that the floors below them be closed to maintenance and that underneath them, and then work to maintain them and keep the other part of the hotel to work normally. A manager of the hotel formed technical committees to assess the damages and the possibility of remedying them, as he stated that it was easy to carry out the necessary maintenance

that needs a short time. However, this proposal was rejected according to his response. This reaction provided a clear image of their ability to overcome such obstacles. HP1 said: "What happened in 2012 when we felt that the crisis is continuing, we made suggestions on the operation of some hotels, but unfortunately and then rejected because there is another view of the company's managers is that this crisis is simple and will soon be resolved". Despite there being no crisis planning in the national tourism plan, the managers of organisations such as state-owned hotels have their crisis planning in hotels, and they developed some strategies that would reduce the effects of the crisis; the same has been done by managers of private hotels in Libya.

HMP3 said: "As private hotels, we have made several attempts to stimulate tourism through the development of short-term plans" and the reaction that they have taken, also explains. "About crisis planning related to the hotel, the hotel has undergone some operational changes to coexist in the ecosystem since 2011, and during the past period, we have developed solutions to get out of these crises optimally". Based on the above data, it is clear that the importance of all critical stakeholders, including the players from the private and public sectors, is necessary to manage the crisis seen by the tourism industry and should be well accounted for in the LNTP.

### **3.2 Libyan National Tourism Plan**

In the purview of the Tourism Secretariat and under its supervision, the General Plan for Tourism Development in Libya 1999-2018 was prepared by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), UNWTO, and the National Consultative Office (NCO) in 1999. However, only a few of the recommendations of this plan were implemented as required, and the failure to implement other recommendations was attributed to the fact that the previous policies focused on the public sector taking over the comprehensive planning and financing of all development activities and focusing on the implementation of public infrastructure projects. This led to tourism being considered an activity of secondary importance. The blockade that Libya witnessed for a long period contributed to the suspension of the sector completely. Nevertheless, the previous tourism plan (1999-2018), as the Libyan Ministry of Tourism calls it, was an important document. It reflects great efforts to summarize the situation and challenges at the time and to lay down a scientific and practical framework for tourism development on the prevailing data, determinants, and expectations of its development.

However, several global and local changes since the preparation of that scheme affected, directly and indirectly, its implementation and thereby needed updating. The updating included the effects of removal of the blockade from the Libyan state, changing oil prices, developing the relationship of countries marketing tourism with Libya, moving towards supporting the contribution of the private sector in economic development, reducing the role of the public sector in some activities, improving economic competitiveness, economic openness, rehabilitating the technical infrastructure, issuing a set of economic and investment laws and taking executive measures including facilitating procedures for granting visas to tourists. The Ministry of Tourism and Handicrafts at that time framed its work according to a development plan. The Tripoli University Office for Engineering Consulting was tasked with preparing the general plan for tourism development in Libya from 2009-2025 based on local and international developments.

#### **3.2.1. Objectives of the LNTP 2009-2025**

The general plan for tourism development 2009-2025 seeks to lay scientific foundations to activate the role of the tourism sector and improve its performance to be one of the main

tributaries of the national economy by greatly increasing its contribution to the national economy and social development processes. A target for this scheme has been set as follows (see Error! Reference source not found., Error! Reference source not found. and Error! Reference source not found.):

- 1- Accommodate about 4.6 million tourists in 2025 with regular growth every year.
- 2- Providing about 100,000 beds by the year 2025.
- 3- Creating about 225,000 jobs by the year 2025.
- 4- Increase the contribution of the tourism sector to the non-oil GDP from about 1.45 % in the year 2008 to about 6% by 2025.

### **3.2.2. Comprehensive plan**

LNTP was characterised by comprehensiveness; as EP1 stated, "all ministry of tourism needs is to implement the plan because everything is there; all it needs is implantation". Additionally, when looking at the responses of the interviews and their opinions about the benefits of the existing Libyan tourism plan in general, were that this plan covered all parts of the country, including the types of facilities that the sector needed. It has been highlighted by one of the key stakeholders (HP2), that the plan comprehensively covers three main points:

- "Develop the infrastructure, attractions, rehabilitation and training, and the development of various tourism resources.
- Increasing the employment rate of direct and indirect labor in the tourism sector and establishing a partnership between the local and foreign sectors.
- In the field of marketing and promotion, it aims to create a favorable climate for investment and exploitation of all tourism ingredients".

From the above, it is clear that this plan is concerned with all sectors, not only the tourism sector, which is responsible for its implementation, including the transportation sector, roads, communications, and infrastructure, as it needs all sectors to join together to implement it. Also, this plan, according to the responses of the participants in the study, will contribute to a qualitative leap for the tourism sector in Libya, as it is through this that Libya could be a modern tourist country. However, some of the participants focused on the implementation process and determining who will implement this plan, which contributed to the failure of its implementation, in addition to the fact that this plan is comprehensive for all Libyan soil, and it is almost difficult to implement unless there are concerted efforts between the parties concerned with the development and under the direct supervision of the Libyan Ministry of Tourism. Moreover, EP3 went into more detail, and he explained more about the different perspectives that the plan covered: "We anticipated even the cost of hotels, how much hotels are going to cost, the government of the country? How many hotels do we need inside Tripoli? How many hotels did we need in a different place?". So, for this plan, the ministry of tourism all needs is to implement the plan because everything is there. All it needs is implantation". While EP4 has mentioned that "This plan has covered all the areas that are related to the tourism sector, for education, training, development, and everything related to this sector".

The current Libyan tourism plan is characterised as a comprehensive plan that covered all of the Libyan soil, which only included, according to the responses of the participants, all regions of Libya, east, west, and south, and was developed to cover all the needs of the Libyan tourism sector, including the preparation of hotels and tourist resorts in all tourist areas in Libya. EP2 stated, "You cannot have the tourism sector or tourism industry without

suitable accommodation, without suitable transportation, within the country and abroad. Libya is a huge country, to travel from Tripoli to Ben-Gazi, you need ten hours by road (travel by car), and a one-hour flight. And to the south of the country as well, it's a long distance. For traveling, one needs associated infrastructure such as petrol stations, restaurants, and accommodations, all of which have been covered in this plan but were never executed on the ground. Also, MP2 supports that same statement: "These plans covered all needs of the Ministry of Tourism including training and the maintenance of ancient cities and support for traditional industries and the processing of seasonal beaches." According to the responses of the participants, this plan dealt with more than that in laying out the details, including the number of sites to be built tourist facilities on, and then determining the number of foreign investors who will be contracted to implement these projects according to specialisation and interests. "This plan targeted 17 locations were identified to support the local investment in the preparation of beaches in addition to the sites that were contracted to be invested by the foreign investor."

### **3.2.3 Ambitious: A plan too big**

The comprehensive nature of this plan caused failure in implementation because Libya is a vast and sprawling country, and for this plan to be properly implemented, it needs infrastructure and superstructure that meets the desires of tourists. This will take more effort as well as will cost the country a huge number. Consequently, some of the participants argued that this plan had been divided into four parts to implement.

EP1 emphasised that "We cannot implement the entire master plan. So, the master plan should be broken or divided into small plans, and then we must divide it by the bodies, the different government bodies in Libya, and it will be easy to implement". From this standpoint, the participants discussed that the implementation process must be attended by the interest and participation of all other relevant sectors, because the tourism sector is interdependent, and therefore the plan can only succeed with the cooperation and collaboration of all parties such as the telecommunications sector and others. Moreover, this plan requires a component in a fundamental which is the security of the state as the PE4 said,

"To implement this plan, we need the security component fundamentally. Time and financial support are also key factors. The plan already consists of ideas and is very comprehensive, consisting of all the archaeological sites".

Speaking about the implementation of the plan at a time when Libya was enjoying safety and security, and the income of Libya at that time was sufficient from oil to cover all the expenses that this plan needed, the responses indicated that the Libyan state, due to the absence of institutions and was under the rule of the individual, which made such plans linked to the vision of who leads the country during that period and according to his personal view according to the responses of some of the participants.

HP2 said. "There was no opportunity to implement the plan, because of the intervention of the political decision in the development plans, and on top of that, these projects are cessation after 2011 due of the ongoing conflict". Consequently: the responses of some of the participants in the study were identical to the fact that this plan could be exhausted in its implementation if it was revised, modified, and divided into short-term plans in line with the current state of affairs, where it was emphasised by MP1: "I believe that this scheme should be dusted off, adapted and exploited in line with the current situation of the country. The implementation plan for 2019 is inspired by the original tourism plan 2009-2025."

MP1 emphasised this statement and added: "Of course, this plan cannot be implemented until after its adjustment, because the plan was not settled solutions that may not be sufficient in facing the state of war or political instability". In addition to the fact that this plan needs to be modified to be implemented in a manner suitable for the tourism sector in Libya, there is another flaw in the process of preparing the plan, which is its inability to cope with disasters and crises that may occur during the implementation period. This aspect is discussed extensively in the upcoming sections, which focus on the effects of 'not including an alternative plan and lack of scenarios to be relied upon if the plan fails.

No plans B (alternative plan): Various participants have remarked on the lack of alternative plans. For instance, AP1 stated: "There are some shortcomings in the scheme with no doubt that it does not include an alternative plan or a scenario that ensures continuity of the plan in the event of a crisis." The tourism sector in Libya suffers from a lack of data; even though the plan has cost the Libyan government millions of dollars, the plan stopped when the country faced a crisis and political instability. The reason for that, as the EP1 remarked that there is a lack of scenarios related to crisis and unforeseen concomitances, "I do not think so as long as I know Libya has not been through the natural crisis like tsunami or floods or earthquakes, No No ". One of the participants attributed the reason for not developing an alternative plan, or what is known as (Plan B), that the Libyan state has not witnessed any kind of disasters and natural crises, as well as any other type of crisis, due to the internal security stability the country has been going through for decades.

EP1 stated: "When we started the plan111, we did not expect that is going to be a revolution. To be honest with you, nobody was expecting this" "Libya was safe, very safe." Also, the responses of some participants as to the reason for not including an alternative plan, were due to purely political reasons as the Libyan state and the nature of its strong security system do not allow such topics to be raised even if they were for a scientific and research purpose, as some participants reported. Even though the LNTP has been created by the Studies and Research Centre at the University of Tripoli and the participants of this plan were the chief executive officer, high-level managers from the Ministry of tourism in Libya, international experts, including the ones from UNWTO as EP1 said: "This plan, we were a big team of not less 12 or 15 experts from Libya and abroad". Additionally, EP1 added, "The plan has been based on scientific studies and was contributed by specialised experts from inside and outside Libya, experts from the UNWTO, Britain, and other countries with a long tradition in the tourism sector have also participated in it.". Furthermore, other participants argued that there is a shortage of plan B; in such a strategical plan, they should be provided with alternative ways to achieve the target for which the plan is created. As EP4 said: "It is necessary to develop a plan (B) so that we can remedy the current crisis by adding to the development of a strategic plan that includes alternatives or scenarios to be applied and continued in the future". The development of an alternative plan or plan B should have been an integral part of the original plan, as it guarantees its continuity, and success and contributes fundamentally to achieving the primary goal of that plan, even if the alternate plan is not used. Also, having an alternative plan gives the plan flexibility during crises. In addition, it maintains the original plan and increases its strength.

#### **3.2.4 No Scenarios in the plan**

Lack of scenarios related to the crisis. The (LNTP 2009-2025) does not include scenarios related to the crisis, their impacts, and the means to manage them. This was acknowledged in the interviews, as mentioned below. PP2 stated that: "Unfortunately, I do not expect this plan to contain predictions or scenarios to go through what happened in 2011, and this reflects the fact that Libya's tourism development plan was not well thought out. Otherwise, it would have dealt with the crises and the obstacles".

Some of the participants said that during the Ghaddafi era, "nobody can talk about a change of regime or revolution". However, PE1, PP1, and AP1 stated that there is no plan B or any other crisis planning given that Libya has not experienced any natural disaster since 1942. In addition to that, no one from the team expected that the regime of this country would be changed or there will be a revolution against the regime due to iron fist policies used by the regime to clinch power, as resonated by EP1 and EP4 in their interviews.

"We did not foresee or even expect any revolution. To be honest with you, nobody was expecting this. Therefore, we did not think about conflict or war and the explosions; this is new to us, and a phenomenon to us is new. We do not know, Libya was safe, very safe, even I conducted studies when I did my Ph.D., one of my studies was directed to the international tourists, and one of the questions was about the level of safety and security, and I remember that this scored a very high mark, very high grade compared to other questions".

Even though the plan contained three scenarios related to the ways that could help to increase and ease the number of tourists entering the country, crisis scenarios were not considered in the planning. To summarise, this plan lacked consideration of the front of impacts any political or natural crisis can have on the tourism sector, as well as miserably failing to provide any means to manage such scenarios. The possible causes for ignoring these crisis scenarios stem from the lack of any historical precedence of natural calamities in recent history as well as the strong man political rule that negated any possibility of significant change in the political environment of the country.

### **3.3 Implementation Challenges**

The responses of the participants in this study and by their job position indicated that Libya was one of the first countries to have paid attention to tourism since the 1950s. An official government ministry was established to take care of tourism affairs because of the state's archaeological and tourist sites along with the appropriate climate for creating a thriving tourism ecosystem. MP2 stated "Libya was one of the first countries in the development of tourism plans. Additionally, Libya was one of the first countries that joined the UNWTO." Furthermore, EP2 stated, "It has not been deployed, apart from the initiatives that had happened with some private sector and some public companies in establishing hotels. Rather than that, I did not hear any progress". There was a problem in the implementation of the plans prepared for the tourism affairs. Some participants attributed this shortcoming because of the instability that the Ministry of Tourism has been suffering from over the decades, and this matter will then be discussed in Section Error! Reference source not found. context with more details. In addition to the lack of the state's seriousness in relying on the tourism sector and investing in it because it relies on the oil industry as the source of its income. In addition to the state's policy and its objection to establishing partnerships in the field of tourism development caused further hindrances for tourists to visit the state and learn about its offerings. The participants reinforced the state's negative stance on caring for the tourism sector and incompetent pertinent administrators, which in turn led to the failure of the scheme.

### **3.4 Non-qualified People for Implementation**

Several reasons led to the failure of the LNTP 2009-2025. Participants voiced their opinions with regards to before and after 2011. For pre-2011, they indicated the lack of seriousness of the state and its policies towards tourism, and for the post-2011, the political instability and insecurity of the country as the primary obstacle to the implementation of tourism plans. Furthermore, the tourism industry was not seen among the priorities of successive

governments. HMP3 stated: "The reasons for its lack of success is that it was not implemented from the ground and did not empower experts and other serious stakeholders to implement the plan".

Delegating matters to incompetent people was also among the major reasons for the unsuccessful implementation of the 2009-2025 tourism plan. One participant stated that the Libyan tourism plan directed the establishment of several hotels and tourist resorts along the Libyan coast and tourist attractions that included desert and archaeological areas. A local apparatus was assigned to implement these state plans to construct the facilities as directed in the NLTP. Participants attributed the delay in implementing the plan to the behemoth of other tasks assigned to this agency which included building hospitals and administrative centers, and which subsequently led to the infrastructure activities of the tourism sector being put down at the end of the list. In addition, the regime change that Libya witnessed after 2011, followed by the subsequent collapse of all sectors in the Libyan state, and the accompanying security chaos and the succession of governments during very short periods was an obvious reason for not turning to the tourism sector and paying attention to it. Nearly six governments have succeeded in ten years, and all these governments were focused on providing the necessary needs for the people and providing security and safety for their citizens. The tourism sector was of no significant interest, and the state only provided the salaries of workers in this sector.

MP2 said "The impact of the multiplicity of governments and the political division in not enabling the right person to be in the right place". The abovementioned factors of the tourism sector being not among the state's priorities along with the political instability, which did not leave a lot of room for people to either work on their competencies and/or competently do their job, has done significant damage to the campaign of implementing LNTTP 2009-2025. To summarise, LNTTP 2009-2025 was a significant step in making the Libyan tourism sector competitive and decreased the reliance of the Libyan economy on oil; its execution presented major challenges. Among the flaws of this plan, is the inconsideration of the impact of natural and political crises along with the means to alleviate them. The execution of the plan was riddled due to the sheer size of this plan, along with the lack of political will and hostile environment in the post-2011 era.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

*To characterise the strengths and limitations of Libyan tourism development plans and whether they would be compatible with the current situation in Libya.*

The strengths and limitations of the Libyan tourism development plans, along with their compatibility with the contemporary circumstances of the State, are analysed and the significant findings on this objective are:

- The tourism plan reflected efforts to summarise the challenges of the time along with laying a methodical framework for tourism development.
- The plan was comprehensive and covered multiple sectors realising the necessity of multi-ministry collaboration to offer a competitive solution for the development of tourism.
- The comprehensive nature of this plan can also be seen as a limitation the plan due to a lack of consideration of possible changes in the political and economic circumstances of the state.
- The plan also lacked mitigation directives and thereby, giving rise to the inability to cope with disasters and crises that may occur during the implementation period.

- The lack of diverse stakeholder participation and considering a holistic approach to the tourism sector is a primary limitation of this plan.
- The existing plan can be made compatible with the contemporary situation by revising and modifying the plan into pertinent modular short-term plans in line with the current state of affairs.

*To explore how the Libyan ministry of tourism responded to political crisis and instability.*

The response of the ministry of tourism, as well as the successive governments in Libya, to the political instability, is examined. The analysis of the direct interview data along with the indirect data (official reports and denouements) informed the understanding of these responses. The critical findings of these examinations are:

- Ministry of tourism attempted to revitalise the tourism sector by initiating domestic festivals and supporting domestic tourism.
- Ministry of tourism further fostered international relations via seminars and conferences.
- The efforts of the ministry of tourism did not yield any significant impact owing to the limited capacity of the ministry and the lack of support from the wider government.
- An obvious lack of interest and gross neglect was observed in the responses of the Libyan state towards the tourism sector.
- The lack of interest of the Libyan state before 2011 stems from the lack of belief in tourism as a productive and revenue-generating activity.
- An alternative explanation for the pre-2011 attitude of the state towards tourism is an intentional choice owing to the special political dimension of the state's policies towards its neighboring states.
- For the post-2011 period, the government's interest in tourism was unlikely due to the political and security situation in the country.
- The short serving duration of successive governments has also exacerbated their ability to formulate and implement meaningful policies for the development of tourism.

*To understand how the political instability has affected the development of tourism in Libya based on various stakeholders' viewpoints.*

The impacts of political instability and security crisis on the development and implementation of policies to forward the tourism industry in Libya are thoroughly analysed and discussed. While the latter provides an in-depth commentary on the impacts of the political and security environment on tourism in Libya. The significant finding on this objective are:

- A steep reduction in the number of international tourists and, thereby, revenue reduction was observed at the onset of the political crisis.
- A complete stagnation in tourist activity is observed since 2012 leading to the closure of tourism companies, travel agencies, and various other businesses.
- Expatriate workers have left the country due to a turbulent and unsafe environment leading to the further inertia in restarting the sector due to the heavy dependence of the tourism industry on foreign labor.
- Parasitic loss incurred by the government in the form of the salaries of people employed publicly in the tourism sector owing to the employment policies.
- The implementation of the plans prepared for the tourism affairs has been halted.
- The uncertainty and chaos of this political crisis have weakened the Ministry of Tourism as multiplicity, and successive short-term governments do not provide an environment conducive to institutional stability and strength.
- The political crisis has also tarnished the image of the nation, and this impacts the potential of the region to draw tourists. This situation is worsened by the proliferation of weapons in the hands of the militias.

- The political instability and lack of security have failed to protect the archaeological sites from violation, leading to the loss of culture and heritage.
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