

Capitalizing on Emerging Tourism Trends: An Exploratory Examination of Jamaica's Wellness Tourism Sector within an Innovation Systems Framework

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ABSTRACT

Jamaica is a Caribbean Island nation that relies heavily on tourism to generate a significant portion of its revenues. In the country's goal of achieving developed nation status, it is currently considering a number of ways to diversify its tourism product, increase employment and contribute to the success of its economy. To that end, Jamaica endeavors to grow its wellness tourism sector, which is currently in the emerging stage. This paper examines aspects of the Jamaican wellness tourism sector within an innovation systems framework as advanced by Mattsson, et al. (2005). The motivation for exploring this framework is that Jamaica's move from its traditional offering of "sun, sea, and sand" vacations to also include offerings that appeal to travelers seeking health and wellness experiences will require innovation in many areas including, but not limited to, planning, collaboration, implementation, and marketing. The framework explored in this study defines key components of innovation systems and key roles that can be played by various stakeholders. These include the attractor, the scene, the scene-maker, the scene-taker, and the collaborative network. This paper will explore each role with a particular emphasis on the key roles of environmental and social sustainability as well as the involvement of key stakeholders.

KEYWORDS: wellness tourism, innovation systems, Jamaica, sustainability

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is the world's largest industry and is experiencing a growth rate of 4-5 percent annually (Caribbean Export Development Agency [CEDA] 2008). However, the World Bank estimates that the global health and wellness tourism sector has seen annual growth rates of 30 percent, suggesting that the sector provides significant opportunities throughout the world (CEDA 2008). Unfortunately, the data related to health and wellness tourism throughout the Caribbean (including Jamaica) is sparse; nevertheless it is apparent that the development of the sector is a key focus of several Caribbean nations (CEDA 2008).

Wellness tourism is one of two distinct categories included in the health tourism sector (the other being medical tourism). Health tourism can be defined as “the attempt on the part of a tourist facility or destination to attract tourists by deliberately promoting its health-care services and facilities, in addition to its regular tourist amenities (Bennett, et al. 2004, p. 122). Hall (1992, p. 123) conceptualizes health tourism as comprising three elements: “staying away from home, health as the primary motive and occurring in a leisure setting”. The major distinction between wellness and medical tourism is that wellness tourists are typically in overall good health and seek services to maintain their well-being, while medical tourism involves curative therapy or treatment of some ailment or medical condition (Smith and Puczkó 2009). While both medical and wellness tourism has been identified as being vital to the growth of Jamaica’s tourism sector, for the sake of brevity; this paper will only examine the latter.

Growing the tourism sector in Jamaica is a high priority. This is evidenced by the focus placed upon it in the country’s National Growth Strategy which was developed by the Planning Institute of Jamaica and in Jamaica’s National Development Plan, Vision 2030. The latter advances a plan to help the nation achieve developed status by the year 2030 and the growth of additional forms of tourism, including health and wellness tourism are an integral part of this plan. According to Vision 2030 Jamaica, the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has observed that demand for wellness treatments and spa retreats has experienced substantial and steady growth over the past five years (Vision 2030 Jamaica 2010). Jamaica is clearly in a relatively early stage of advancing the health and wellness sector. This is evidenced in part by the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce’s observation that efforts are in place to develop strategies that will allow the country to “move from paper and policy to action” (Reynolds 2011).

PURPOSE

Given Jamaica's early stage in the process of developing and cultivating this promising sector as well as the lack of academic research associated with it, the purpose of this paper is to provide an analysis of aspects of Jamaica's wellness tourism sector within a relevant and comprehensive framework. This framework provides for the examination of the sector in terms innovation systems (Mattsson, et al. 2005). The innovation systems framework is relevant as Jamaica's increased emphasis on wellness tourism represents a departure from a long-standing strategy of targeting leisure travelers who simply seek the "sun, sea and sand" for which the nation is famous. Clearly, Jamaica's foray into the wellness tourism sector as an attempt to enhance its competitive position, it is a substantial undertaking, and stakeholders in this endeavor could benefit from varied analyses of this industry. The objective of this paper is to provide one such analysis.

LITERATURE OVERVIEW

Wellness Tourism

The broad category of wellness tourism dates back to the 18th century when it was not uncommon for the European elite to travel to distant locations in search of seaside treatments and spiritual enlightenment experiences to enhance their well-being (Smith and Kelly 2006). Modern day wellness tourism includes offerings such as yoga and meditation, holistic and spiritual experiences, massages, beauty treatments, and sports & fitness to name a few. The global pervasiveness of spas, retreats and holistic wellness centers is unprecedented (Smith and Kelly 2006), with the popularity of spa and wellness tourism in Jamaica coming into being in the 1990s (Positive Tourism 2010).

A number of factors have contributed to the growth of the wellness tourism sector – these include: aging of the large baby-boomer sector in the US, the increased desirability of alternative healing therapies, travelers’ desire to enhance their physical and mental well-being, people’s need to escape stressful lifestyles, and consumers’ increased willingness to spend money on their health and well-being (McNeil and Ragins 2005). Understanding these trends is important to nations, including Jamaica, which seek to benefit from the projected growth in the wellness tourism sector. Specifically, it will be important for Jamaica to utilize the implications of these trends in its shift from a tourism offering which has been primarily based upon “sun, sea and sand” vacations to add a quite different form of tourism.

Wellness Tourism on Jamaica

According to President of Jamaica Promotions Corporation (JAMPRO), Sancia Templer, Jamaica has the capabilities necessary to capitalize on the growing wellness tourism trend that is taking place worldwide (Reynolds 2011). Templer further noted that some of Jamaica’s strengths include excellent natural resources and qualified health and wellness professions and that the effective fusion of the two provides the foundation for success in this sector. Given the fact that research indicates that the sector generates over US\$40 billion, Templer asserted that Jamaica endeavors to capture at least a small portion of those revenues and was confident that this objective is realistic. It was further noted that success in the sector will require collaboration, strategic planning and investments on the part of local health/wellness professionals, governmental ministries, as well as the private sector (Reynolds 2011). Importantly, she also noted that there is potential that the growth of the wellness tourism sector will further impact additional industries and Jamaica’s economy in general (Reynolds 2011).

In addition to Jamaica's natural resources and qualified health and wellness professionals, additional factors contribute to Jamaica's potential success in capitalizing on the American wellness tourism market – these include proximity to the United States, the fact that the country is English-speaking, cultural affinity and the quality of existing infrastructure (Reynolds 2011). This is of particular importance because currently Americans constitute the greatest number of travelers visiting the Island (Forrester and Belnavis 2008).

Innovation Systems in Tourism

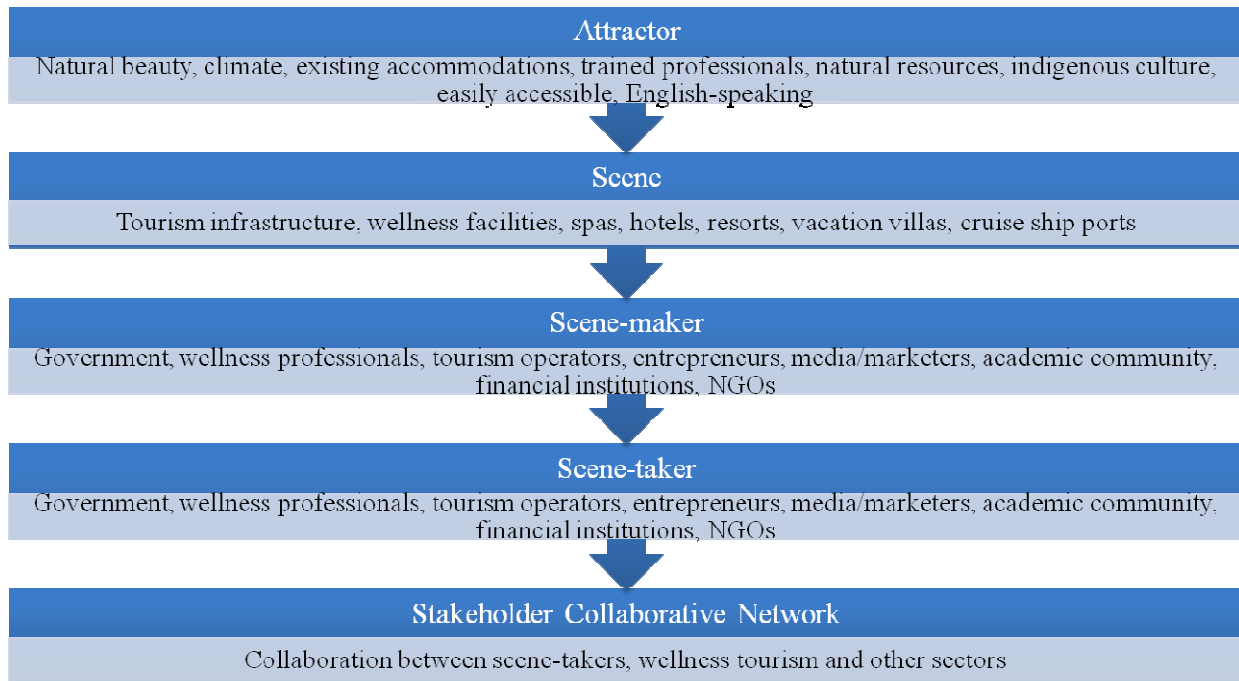
According to Mattsson, et al. (2005), tourism development requires innovations. The term innovation can be used in reference to the process of transformation or the outcome of the change process, such as a resulting new product or service (Mattsson, et al. 2005). Following the approach of Mattsson, et al. (2005), this paper will utilize the term “innovation” to describe the outcome of the process. The relevant innovation referred to in this paper is Jamaica's (expanded) wellness tourism sector. When referring to the process of innovation itself, this paper will use the term innovation activity. Mattsson, et al. (2005) note that the broad concept of innovation is composed of both technical and social innovations; however in the case of services, social or organizational innovation is more relevant than it is in manufacturing where emphasis is typically placed on technology (Gallouj 2002). According to Sundbo (1998), organization innovation entails change within the organization, change in offerings, customer behavioral changes, market behavior changes and changes in strategy. Clearly, this conceptualization applies to Jamaica's emerging wellness tourism sector.

Innovations can be analyzed at the micro- or firm-level. Alternatively, the concept of macro innovation systems, which operate at the national-level, can be examined (Nelson 1993; Edquist and Mckelvey 2000). Importantly, Mattsson, et al. (2005) note that an innovation “system”

connotes enduring relationships characterized by fixed roles, with multiple entities – firms, government agencies and other stakeholders working in a collaborative effort to enhance the innovation activities (Maskell 2001). Vision 2030 Jamaica (2010) acknowledges the collaborative role of multiple governmental, educational, corporate and other entities as stakeholders in the strategic advancement of an expanded tourism sector (Vision 2030 Jamaica). In fact, the plan itself was developed with input from various stakeholders assuming vital and distinct roles in the plan/strategy.

Using case studies, Mattsson, et al. (2005) develop and test a model of tourism innovation systems that includes the attractor, the scene, the scene-maker and the scene-taker as fundamental elements (depicted in Figure 1 and described below). The framework identifies vital roles played by various stakeholders in order to ensure that innovation occurs, that the tourism destination fully exploits its positive features, and that tourism success is enhanced. Recognizing the importance of collaboration on a regional or local level, the model is based on an innovation system which is established within a network between various entities such as businesses, government agencies, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), each contributing various innovations, rather than a single innovation (Mattsson, et al. 2005).

Figure 1 – Conceptualization of the Jamaican Wellness Tourism Innovation System
(Based on the framework of Mattsson, et al. 2005)



Mattsson, et al. (2005) conceptualize an “attractor” as either a tangible activity, event, or entity created as part of a tourism offering (e.g., a theme park), which is intended to attract people to a particular destination or a naturally occurring phenomenon. Jamaica benefits from a number of attractors that have the potential to contribute to the growth and success of the wellness tourism sector - some are “created”, while others are naturally occurring.

Jamaica is well-positioned to take advantage of increasing numbers of consumers seeking the services of a destination spa (which includes an overnight stay), as excellent hotel and tourism-related services and established infrastructure already exist (The Jamaica Gleaner 2010). Further, the Island has seen a number of multi-million renovations take place in recent years specifically to add, expand, or improve existing hotel spas and wellness centers. This is an important early innovation activity in the pursuit of an expanded wellness tourism sector. This approach, which seeks to capitalize on, and improve what the Island currently offers its tourists

is also a practical one, as services innovations tend to be incremental, with the implementation of minor changes to existing service offerings (Sundbo and Gallouj, 1999).

An additional attractor in the wellness tourism sector is the existence of smaller tourism accommodations. Jamaica offers viable alternatives to the typical large-scale hotel or resort vacation, as it boasts well over 100 private villas in locations from the seaside to the mountainside. These villas can accommodate small groups of two persons to larger groups of 20 or so and vary from simple cottages to expansive private mansions. These are primarily located on the North coast. Smaller boutique operations and day spas round out Jamaica's offerings in this area and cater to customers seeking customized wellness experiences (JAMPRO 2010).

Jamaica also possesses a number of naturally-occurring attractors. This includes temperate weather year-round, pleasant surroundings characterized by pristine waters and beaches, lush foliage and beautiful natural settings. In addition, Jamaica is known for its solid tradition of herbal-based healing and wellness maintenance. Many natural remedies have been passed down through several generations and are regularly employed by populations of Jamaicans who embrace "natural living" as an integral part of their lives. The Island also benefits from rich flora that is used by Shamans known as Obeah-men and various herbalists to address an array of health and wellness issues (Madrone 2010). Finally, the proximity and ease with which Jamaica can be accessed from the US and the fact that it is an English-speaking nation can be included as attractors for the American wellness tourist segment.

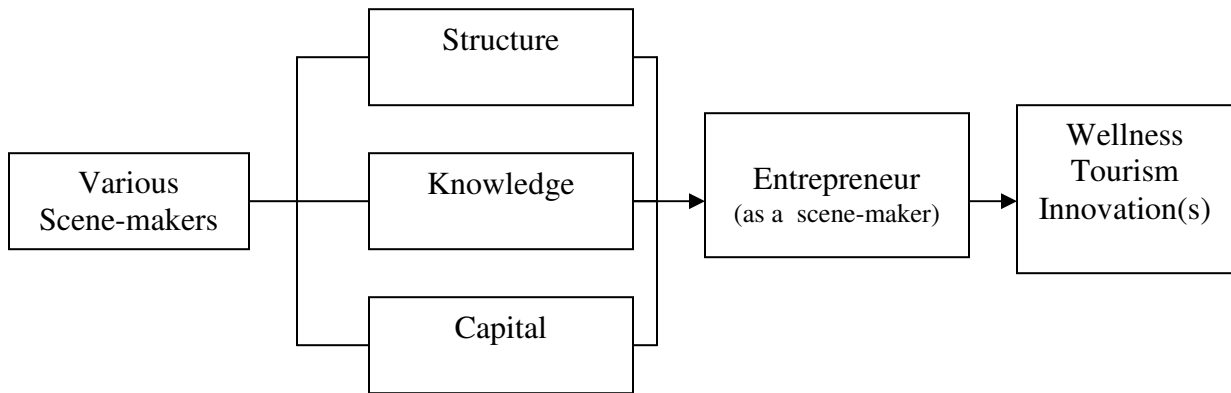
According to Mattsson (2005), developing the scene involves creating an obvious "identity" or building context around the attractor(s). In essence, it requires that the appropriate parties (organizations, businesses, individuals, etc.) devise ways to purposefully exploit the attractors to develop and/or increase tourism.

Creating the scene in Jamaica relies heavily upon using the current attractors to take advantage of (emerging) trends in the sector. For example, a 2007 Consumer Report published by Mintel anticipated that greater numbers of experienced tourists will choose smaller, more intimate accommodations offering “authentic experiences” and personalized wellness services going forward. Existing villa and small boutique hotel owners could develop the scene by offering an expanded selection of in-villa spa treatments, classes and experiences, which are unique to the Island. This might include treatments using local, natural ingredients and experiences. The fact that Jamaica already has a supply of skilled wellness practitioners (The Jamaica Gleaner 2010) contributes to the ease with which this aspect of the scene can be developed (The Jamaica Gleaner 2010). Further, research suggests that wellness seek facilities that are located in environmentally lush surroundings. Jamaica can create the appropriate scene by locating wellness tourism facilities in the most appealing natural surroundings (e.g., in close proximity to Jamaica’s mineral baths or atop the limestone cliffs of Negril overlooking the Caribbean Sea).

According to the Mattsson, et al. (2005) framework, the scene-maker conceives of the possibilities of tourism enhancement, which is created by the attractor, and develops the scene (Mattsson, et al. 2005). The scene-maker, which plays the role of an innovator, can be an entrepreneur, public entity, individual, or NGO and can also be involved in the maintenance of the scene and benefit from its existence; but it does not necessarily have to (Mattsson, et al. 2005). In developing the scene, Mattsson, et al. (2005) note, the ability of a destination to capitalize on a (tourism) opportunity may require both development of innovations and advancement of entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship be defined as “business creating behavior beyond individual attributes and abilities or as “... organizing of resources and collaborators in

new patterns according to perceived opportunities’’ (Landstrom and Johannisson 2001, p. 228). The result of some of these entrepreneurial activities is innovations created by the individual entrepreneur or in conjunction with other people, businesses, governments or public entities (Mattsson, et al. 2005). Importantly, these innovations are facilitated by the innovative character of the entrepreneur, the proper structures and knowledge required, and the necessary capital to fund them (Mattsson, et al. 2005). This means that relevant scene-makers include those who influence Jamaica’s strategy with respect to how, and what types of tourism enterprises emerge, those who provide access to the knowledge and skills required of entrepreneurs, and most importantly, the people ([potential] entrepreneurs) themselves. Figure 1 depicts these important relationships

Figure 1 – A simple model of Scene Makers’ Roles in Tourism Innovation
(Based on the concepts of Mattsson, et al. 2005)



Considering the scene-maker, clearly the entrepreneur can play a key role in developing innovations within the Jamaican wellness tourism sector. The development of wellness tourism entrepreneurship innovations in Jamaica can take many forms. One logical approach entails existing tourism enterprises’ expansion of their current offerings to include greater focus on wellness services and experiences. An additional approach is the creation of new wellness tourism entrepreneurs. In fact, Jamaican society could benefit from the growth and development

of micro- and smaller-sized wellness tourism entrepreneurship, given the fact that travel and tourism jobs in Jamaica are expected to grow to approximately 38.1% of total employment by 2014 (Clayton 2009); yet as with most Caribbean nations, the majority of jobs in this sector tend to be lower paying. Therefore, wellness tourism entrepreneurship has the potential to not only contribute to the economic viability of Jamaica, but also to provide benefits to society at large and help promote social equity (see Jamrozny 2007).

The provision of wellness services and experiences via smaller-scale wellness tourism enterprises owned by indigenous Jamaicans is an option that can be expanded. This model is in sharp contrast to the large resort and all-inclusive tourism model, which has prevailed in Jamaica for many years. The viability of this concept is supported in a number of ways. First, Agenda 21 for Travel and Tourism alludes to the necessity of developing and promoting smaller-scale, local tourism enterprises as countries seek to enhance both environmental and economic sustainability (United Nations World Tourism Organization [UNWTO] 2011). In addition, travelers' desire to spend time at smaller-scale, more intimate, wellness-centered accommodations has been noted as a growing trend (Intel Consumer Research Report 2007). Finally, some identify the opportunity for tourists to interact/socialize with others and experience the local culture as an important aspect of wellness tourism (e.g., Smith & Puczko 2009). These experiences are often not promoted, or are even subtly discouraged by some large hotels and all-inclusive resorts.

Development and advancement of smaller-scale wellness tourism entrepreneurship in Jamaica might include delivery of services and experiences such as: meditation, yoga, occupational wellness workshops, culinary/nutrition education, massage therapy, physical fitness and treatments rendered by herbalists and traditional healers in privately-owned cottages, villas, and boutique hotels catering to smaller groups. Another area that provides entrepreneurial promise is

broader-scale marketing of wellness products made from ingredients, which are indigenous to Jamaica that are intended for use in the course of wellness treatments. A major foray into this wellness tourism-related segment would require support on the part of the Jamaican government in the areas of marketing, training, funding, and regulation.

Increasing the number of (smaller-scale) wellness tourism entrepreneurs will undoubtedly require increased government support and funding; thus, making governmental entities additional scene-makers. Jamaica’s Private Sector Development Programme (PSDP), which is a joint initiative between the governments of the European Union and Jamaica seeks to enable the entrepreneurial environment has provided technical services and support to over 500 micro-, small-, and medium-sized enterprise Island-wide (McIntosh 2009). One of the service units of PSDP is the Cluster Sector Initiative, which has the ultimate goal of “establishing Jamaica as the premier source of natural, herbal, organic, health and wellness products and services in the Caribbean” (McIntosh 2009). While the entrepreneur and government agencies as a scene-makers have the potential to play important roles in the Jamaican wellness tourism sector, success will also rely heavily upon additional scene-makers (Table 1 below).

Table 1 – Examples of Scene-makers and Roles in the Wellness Tourism Innovation System

STRUCTURE	
Entity	Role
Jamaican Government <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet office • Various governmental ministries • Tourism Product Development Corp. • Parish councils (local government) • Registration, regulation & licensing agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish policy and oversee development, implementation & control of programs to promote wellness tourism entrepreneurship • Enhance the wellness tourism brand on a national level • Establish standards, regulations, and licensing

KNOWLEDGE	
Entity	Role
Educational Institutions, Academics and Professionals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of the West Indies • University of Technology • HEART Institute • Team Jamaica • Community Colleges • Researchers, scientists & consultants • Existing entrepreneurs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research on all facets of the wellness tourism sector as well as entrepreneurship • Business counseling • Educate and train (future) wellness tourism entrepreneurs • Provide mentoring opportunities for emerging entrepreneurs
CAPITAL	
Entity	Role
Providers of Financial Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Development Bank of Jamaica • International Development Bank • Private Sector Development Program • Caribbean Association of Investment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance wellness tourism projects & related support services • Provide grants to promote Jamaican tourism sector • Attract foreign direct investment • Facilitate regional collaboration

According to Mattsson, et al. (2005), the scene-taker is the most critical function in the tourism innovation system, has entrepreneurial characteristics, and can be an individual, business enterprise, public entity, or NGO. The scene-taker recognizes that creating a lasting positive effect on the tourism sector requires work beyond simple transformation of the attractor(s) into a scene; it involves diligent effort to maintain the scene, and the scene-taker engages in activities directed toward that end (Mattsson, et al. 2005). Subsequent to the creation of the scene, the tourist destination will likely require periodic incremental innovations, and if the scene is not maintained, the local tourism sector will not experience positive effects; thus, the importance of the scene-taker (Mattsson, et al. 2005).

A vital aspect of the Jamaican wellness tourism scene is the natural environment itself, and maintaining its beauty and viability is of paramount importance. Several studies have focused on the (potential) negative environmental impacts to tourism destinations caused by increased

numbers of visitors (e.g., Wang and Miko 1997, La Pierre 1994) and not unlike other tourist destinations, Jamaica must balance tourism success with environmental issues. Natural resources such as mineral springs, fresh and pollution-free air, expansive areas of dense foliage and trees, clean waters, and pristine beaches are not only critical to the wellness tourism sector, their preservation for mankind's enjoyment, health and well-being, now into the future is a absolutely vital. Voigt, et al. (2001) assert that a genuine provider of health and wellness experiences bears particular responsibility in maintaining the natural environment and they assert that the desire of these enterprises to contribute to the well-being of individual consumers must also extend to the state of the planet. Therefore, wellness tourism enterprises serve an important role as scene-takers.

The Jamaican government is also a key scene-taker and has recognized that tourism can contribute to an array of environmental problems leading to the decline of the scene. These threats including degradation of air, water, and soil quality, damage to beaches and coral reefs, and loss of natural habitats and (coastal) ecosystems, to name a few Vision 2030 Jamaica (2010). In the attempt to negate these potential impacts, the Jamaican government has sought to promote sustainable tourism, with an emphasis on preserving and enhancing the natural environment and ensuring that business practices today do not take place to the detriment of future generations (Vision 2030 Jamaica, 2010). Jamaica's strategy of developing and growing sustainable tourism has the potential to result in win-win outcomes. Not only are precious resources preserved, Jamaica can capitalize on the segment of travelers that is looking for spa or wellness experiences that are relaxing and rejuvenating, are also in harmony with nature, and make use of natural products (Organic Nature News 2010). In fact, according to a Mintel Consumer Report (2007),

the wellness tourist tends to be more conscious of the environment and their impact on it than other travelers.

Additional scene-takers might include various NGOs and trade organizations such as US-based Green Spa Network, which has as its goal “to promote the natural connections between personal wellbeing, economic sustainability, and the health of the planet” (Green Spa Network 2011) and supports its world-wide member enterprises with the tools to engage in environmentally-friendly practices. In addition, certifying bodies such as Green Globe, which is based on Agenda 21 principles for sustainable development, might also be an important element of Jamaica’s wellness tourism innovation system. Green Globe certification requires external, independent auditing and annual recertification and its certification standards include: efficiency and conservation in energy, water, and ecosystems, reduction of hazardous substance use, waste-reduction/recycling, sharing environmental concerns with employees and guests and responsibility to the community/society (Green Globe 2010). In this case, providers of the certification also act as scene-takers, helping wellness tourism enterprises by providing criteria to guide environmentally sustainable operations and certifying them, thus contributing to the maintenance of a fundamental element of the scene (Jamaica’s natural environment). Figure 2 and table 2 illustrate the key roles of the scene-taker.

Figure 2 – Maintaining the Wellness Tourism Scene



Table 2 - Some Examples of Scene-Takers and their roles in Maintaining the Scene

MARKETING	
Entities and Roles	
International Development Community	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • United Nations World Tourism Organization - provide Services to improve competitiveness of member states • United States Agency for International Development (USAID) – promote sustainable tourism tied to development through various projects 	
Jamaican/Caribbean Marketing Entities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JAMPRO – promote Jamaican trade & investment • Jamaica’s Private Sector Program’s Cluster Sector initiative – promote Jamaican health & wellness products and services • Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association – promote development of Jamaica’s tourism industry • Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association - provide resources to assist member in gaining competitive advantage 	
INFRASTRUCTURE	
Entities and Roles	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism entrepreneurs – development, maintenance & improvement of facilities and attractions consistent with the needs and demands of wellness tourists • Jamaican Ministry of Transport and Works – Development and management of air, land, and marine transport systems 	

INFRASTRUCTURE – Continued
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Tourism – facilitate expansion of hotel stock and upgrade various elements of infrastructure impacting tourism areas • Various local and global financial institutions – finance infrastructure development, expansion and maintenance projects
PEOPLE
<p>Entities and Roles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional wellness tourism personnel and entrepreneurs – contribute to incremental innovations in wellness tourism offerings • Marketing researchers and the academic community – conduct research on wellness tourism trends for the purpose of contributing to ongoing innovation activities in the sector • Indigenous Jamaican community – provide input on cultural elements as well as social and wellness experiences to enhance the offering, engage in training and educational activities to prepare for/enhance entrepreneurial abilities
NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND PRESERVATION
<p>Entities and Roles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green Jamaica – engage in advocacy & environmental education • Environmental Foundation of Jamaica – provide funding to NGOs & partner with various stakeholders • Jamaica Business Development Corp. – promote sustainable business • Sustainable Communities Foundation – promote environmental sustainability • Environmental Certification Agencies (e.g., Green Globe, Environmental Audits for Sustainable Tourism [EAST project] – certify accommodations, facilities and attractions
WELLNESS TOURISM OFFERINGS
<p>Entities and Roles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrepreneurs – ensure offerings are consistent with (changing) demands of consumers • Jamaican Government (various ministries) – facilitate wellness tourism enterprise development and expansion • Caribbean Resort and Spa Association – establish industry standards • Day Spa Association – provide guidance on the availability of offerings

Stakeholder Collaborative Network

According to Mattsson, et al. (2005), the activities of the scene-takers can help to create a collaborative network, which can provide benefits to all individual tourism enterprises. Within the realm of collaborative networks, Brown (1991, p. 136) describes social networks as “inter-organizational forms that can link many individuals and organizations, are autonomous from any common hierarchy and can enable exchange of resources and information without compromising the independence of its members”.

When one considers the advancement of Jamaica's wellness tourism sector, it becomes apparent that many stakeholders exist. A stakeholder is an individual or group that has an interest in a decision or proposed action (Donaldson and Preston 1995). In this case, Jamaica's stakeholders are many and diverse and include:

- (wellness) tourism entrepreneurs
- health and wellness professionals
- governmental ministries
- local councils
- financial institutions
- marketing entities
- the international development community
- NGOs
- educational institutions
- trade organizations
- various sectors outside of tourism (e.g., construction, agriculture)

Some key questions when considering stakeholder collaborative networks include: what are the objectives of the collaborative network, who are the relevant stakeholders, and how will stakeholder collaboration take place? The Jamaican government has made it clear through its development plan that the country endeavors to achieve developed nation status, in part by growing emerging forms of tourism (including health and wellness), while also focusing on the effective intersection of environmental, social, and economic sustainability as a top priority. That is to say that Jamaica has established the need to focus on sustainable tourism.

According to the UNWTO (2011), sustainable tourism development initiatives "should meet the needs and interests of current tourists flowing within country while at the same time ensuring the protection of the environment and enhancement of tourism opportunities for the future generations". The UNWTO (2011) notes that in the case of developing nations, tourism often results in a number of less-than-optimal outcomes including:

- loss of control of resources and failure to retain tourism earnings due to over-reliance on foreign investments and interests

- little positive impact on the local economy due to the “disconnect” between tourist enclaves and the local economic sectors
- far-reaching environmental degradation
- an increase in alienation among indigenous communities attributed to inequities in the distribution of the costs and benefits of tourism as well as the (perceived) loss of control and cultural identity to outsiders

According to Camarinha-Matos (2010), these problems require approaches to sustainable tourism which rely on the involvement of a diverse set of stakeholders through collaborative networks. In pursuing a sustainable wellness tourism sector in Jamaica, all stakeholders must remain cognizant that addressing sustainability issues and problems requires effective collaboration because necessary changes exceed the capacity and capabilities of individual entities (Camarinha-Matos 2010). In other words, no one individual, group, enterprise or governmental ministry can successfully tackle the challenges of creating and maintaining a sustainable wellness tourism sector. The findings of Mattsson, et al. (2005) support this notion and they conclude that “conservatism of tourism firms in relating to local firms in other sectors impede attractor utilization” (p. 377). Further, if even one of the aforementioned potential problems is realized (e.g., environmental degradation), the negative impact on wellness tourism could be quite significant.

As previously noted, relevant stakeholders must establish how the collaboration within the network will take place. Over the years, various models, methods and tools have been developed in the realm of collaborative networks that can facilitate the involvement and interchange of ideas and input between diverse stakeholders (Camarinha-Matos, et al. 2010). Some examples include basic infrastructures and collaboration tools which facilitate interaction, dissemination of information required in decision-making, and coordination of potentially heterogeneous, fragmented, individual entities by way of information and communication technologies (Camarinha-Matos, et al. 2010). An example of the latter is connection through virtual

organizations. According Brown (1991), four types of organizations exist, which can enable coordinated action by spanning organizational boundaries, they are: “an inter-organizational network, an association of organizations and networks, an inter-sectoral partnership, and a social movement and related coalition” (p. 3).

Implications for Practice

Mattsson, et al. (2005) found support for the premise that all components of their model must exist if a tourism sector is to be successful. Further, their research indicates that the scene-taker is the most critical function. This suggests that Jamaica should ensure that its attractors, natural and otherwise are adequately developed into a scene that provides value for its intended wellness tourism target market and that the scene is adequately maintained. Jamaica enjoys a “head start” on many other locations attempting to make a foray into the wellness tourism sector. One of the keys to success will be identifying existing sources of competitive advantage and further enhancing and maintaining them, while understanding which types of attractors should be developed as brand new innovations in the sector. Mattsson, et al. (2005) note that innovations do not necessarily have to be radical; they can also develop in an incremental manner. Jamaica could start small, with existing enterprises and cultivate a world-class wellness tourism enclave in one particular area of the island, which already benefits from adequate infrastructure, natural resources, and visionary entrepreneurs interested in collaborating in wellness tourism efforts. Later, Jamaica could focus its efforts helping to creating, support, and market smaller-sized, locally-owned wellness tourism enterprises.

Given the importance of the participation of many stakeholders and collaborative efforts on the part of those involved directly and indirectly in the (wellness) tourism sector, policy-makers can play a key role in facilitating such a significant task. For example, the Jamaican government

could require public participation on proposed wellness tourism projects that might impact local communities. This could result in valuable input as well as endorsement on the part of the local community. This is particularly important given that increased tourism has the potential to spawn a sense of loss of cultural identity on the part of indigenous communities. In the pursuit of sustainable tourism growth, policy-makers could take steps to implement requirements for local entrepreneurial involvement in wellness tourism innovation activities/innovations and adherence to stringent environmental standards on the part of wellness tourism enterprises. In this coordinating, collaboration-facilitating, and regulatory role, the Jamaican government can work toward achieving more wellness tourism innovation than would be possible on the part of individual firms alone (see Mattsson, et al. 2005). This is of paramount importance because “many tourism firms are not innovative, not involved in an innovation system and not network-oriented” (Matteson, et al. 2005, p. 379).

While the involvement of public institutions for the purpose of policy-planning and implementation is vital, research on collaborative networks in tourism initiatives also finds that “self-regulating action networks” play a key role in sustainable tourism success (Mattsson, et al. 2005). These networks are composed of individual organizations collaborating toward mutual goals and they assume an action-oriented approach to environmental and social sustainability. They recognize that success will require the management of all resources in a way that balances economic, social and cultural needs and that dealing with the complex interplay of these needs requires broad understanding and support on the part of various stakeholders. These networks benefit from the involvement of private businesses as well as NGOs and they strive to create a “business ecosystem” of sorts (Mattsson, et al. 2005). Jamaica could benefit from further implementing this type of model and embracing the fact that a viable wellness tourism

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collaborative network is rooted in collaboration not just between tourism and other sectors, but connectedness with the environment and society.

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