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CHALLENGES TO IMPLEMENT CARRYING CAPACITY FRAMEWORK: A CASE STUDY OF PULAU PERHENTIAN MARINE PARK INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

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Abstract

The environmental quality at Pulau Perhentian Marine Park is degrading day by day. Many studies have been done in order to support sustaining the tourist sites such as having limits in development and tourist arrival, or better known as carrying capacity. Despite the existence of many agencies whose job scope is related to Pulau Perhentian, poor implementation of the guideline is resulting in degrading environmental quality of the park. This paper looks at the roles and functions of each government agencies related to Pulau Perhentian. The outcome of this paper is the analysis of the current roles and responsibilities of the agencies and where are the gaps that can be filled in order to promote sustainable tourism in Pulau Perhentian.

Keyword: Institutional framework, government agencies, tourism key players, sustainable tourism

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INTRODUCTION

Pulau Perhentian is one of the coral reef islands on the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia. Statistics on tourist arrivals show an increasing arrival trend from 123,159 in 2005 to 244,762 in 2015 (Department of Marine Park, 2016). The increase in tourist arrivals has led to the various infrastructures been developed on the island. As suggested by Nurul (2013) and Rees (1992), development in areas like marine park should be controlled to avoid negative impacts on the environmental quality of the area. However, Pulau Perhentian is under overlapping administration of various agencies, which has created coordination issues.

This paper reviews the existing institutional framework related to the planning, management, implementation and operations of Pulau Perhentian. An examination of the roles and functions of each agency and association involved has been carried out to identify common ground, overlapping jurisdictions and potential conflicts. The federal, state and local agencies involved in the administration of Pulau Perhentian are as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1 List of Government Agencies Involved in Managing and Developing Pulau Perhentian.

| | |
|----------|--|
| Federal | Ministry of Tourism and Culture, Terengganu Office (MOTAC) Tourism Malaysia Terengganu Terengganu Marine Park Department Terengganu Marine Department |
| State | Terengganu State Economic Planning Unit (UPEN) Terengganu Town and Country Planning Department (JPBD) |
| District | Besut District Council Besut District and Land Office |

METHODOLOGY

This paper adopted a survey approach to obtain primary data from the stakeholders. In developing tourist sites, a formal institution will normally consist of internal and external parties (Singh, et. al., 2009). Internal parties are usually those who involve directly on-site, such as the local communities, resort and chalet owners, scuba diving operators, and boat service operators. Meanwhile, the external parties are the government agencies who are tasked with monitoring and regulating the sites.

The analysis undertaken in this study was for the external party audit, which sought the views of concerned parties on the island's current and potential tourism image and branding. The audit was done for both Perhentian Kecil and Perhentian Besar islands via interviews with various stakeholders, such as the

Ministry of Tourism and Culture Malaysia (MOTAC), Tourism Malaysia, and Department of Marine Park Malaysia (DMPM). It is also to study the structure and function of each government agencies and what are the contributions to the ecosystem of the island.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF EACH STAKEHOLDER

Ministry of Tourism and Culture, Terengganu Office (MOTAC)

This agency is set up by the Ministry of Tourism and Culture to act on its behalf at the state level and to provide the linkage between Federal & State Government on tourism-related matters. Basically, MOTAC gives advice on tourism policy and implementation. Besides that, it monitors the planning and development of tourism products and infrastructure, as well as tourism services and training.

MOTAC handles licensing applications for travel agents, homestays, tour guides, excursion buses, hire/drive cars, tourism training institutes and tourism accredited shops. They are to liaise with Tourism Malaysia in promoting tourism in Terengganu.

Tourism Malaysia Terengganu/ Terengganu State Economic Planning Unit (UPEN)

Tourism Malaysia Terengganu is responsible for the overall planning and development of tourism in Terengganu, in addition to acting as the link between the State & Federal Government. The agency is also responsible for assessing state resources, identifying development projects and their feasibility and/or implementation, and providing general advice on planning and economic matters, including advice on alternative proposals for consideration.

Terengganu Marine Park Department

Terengganu Marine Park Department have the authority on the protection of aquatic flora and fauna, and on the protection, preservation and management of the natural breeding grounds and habitat for aquatic life with particular regard to species that are rare or endangered.

The department is also in charge of promoting the natural regeneration of aquatic life whenever such life has been depleted. Therefore, one of their job scopes is to promote scientific study and research that will preserve and enhance the pristine state and productivity of such areas. Recreational and other activities are to be regulated too to avoid more damage to the environment of the area.

Additionally, boatmen training courses for island villagers are also held by the department in order to train them in handling tourists. The department also organises awareness programmes relating to marine parks for the island local community and tourists such as beach/coral clean up and 'coral camp'. It is also

in charge of collecting conservation charges which are imposed on all tourists visiting the marine parks.

Terengganu Marine Department

This agency is responsible for ensuring the safety of users navigating in the waters of Terengganu. Unlike the Marine Park Department, it specializes in the registration of ships and licensing of boats, enforcing and regulating shipping laws, and conducting ship inspections and surveys.

The Marine Department is also in charge of Kuala Besut jetty in terms of providing the facilities, managing passengers and controlling ferries/boats coming in and going out at the jetty. However, the officers interviewed mentioned that currently, the department is facing shortage of workforce to carry out monitoring and enforcement programmes, therefore leading to lack of monitoring of tourist behaviour and activities on site.

Terengganu Town and Country Planning Department (JPBD)

JPBD is responsible as an advisor to the State Government on matters relating to land use and development and maintenance in Pulau Perhentian. The department is also accountable for the planning of projects and development of land, besides providing planning advice to the public. The department also oversees the preparation and implementation of statutory development plans for the area such as Special Area Plan, District Local Plan and State Structure Plan.

Besut District Council

Besut District Council is responsible to plan and control development in the Besut District. Among its other roles are to provide environmental cleanliness services, plan, implement, maintain and encourage landscape beautification and social facilities structure programme in Besut District. It also responsible in the preparation, implementation and monitoring of the Special Area Plan and District Local Plan of the area.

Besut District and Land Office

This agency is responsible to plan, coordinate and implement physical development projects and community development in the Besut District. It also processes land subdivision applications, change of land category and other land matters in Besut District. Nevertheless, the capacity and budget allocation is the main problem here because more manpower is needed in managing Pulau Perhentian.

FINDINGS

This study has found that there are some overlapping jurisdictions between the agencies. If the agencies can clarify further their job scopes and make effective

collaboration and coordination model among themselves, this could help to alleviate problems associated with insufficient workforce to monitor and administer Pulau Perhentian. Coccossis and Mexa (2004) suggest that with effective coordination, they can also improve the existing management plans, master plan and also the policy implementation.

Table 2 Classification of Roles and Responsibilities of Perhentian Island External Stakeholder

| No | Agencies | Roles and functions | | | | | | | | | Current issues |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|----------|------------|------------------------------|------------|-----------------------|----------|----------|------------------------|---|
| | | Policy maker | Planning | Management | Implementation & enforcement | Monitoring | Marketing & promotion | Training | Advisory | Research & development | |
| Federal Level | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | MOTAC | / | | | / | | / | | / | | |
| 2 | Tourism Malaysia Terengganu | | | | / | | / | | | | Insufficient manpower. At tourism information centre Kuala Besut only 1 employee on duty. |
| 3 | Terengganu Marine Park Department | / | | / | / | / | | / | | / | Insufficient manpower and onsite enforcement in regulating tourist and community activities in marine park areas. |
| 4 | Terengganu Marine Department | / | | / | / | / | | | | / | Insufficient manpower to carry out monitoring and enforcement. |
| State Level | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 | Terengganu State UPEN | / | / | / | / | / | / | | / | | |
| 6 | Terengganu JPBD | / | / | | | / | | | / | | |
| District Level | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7 | Besut District Council | / | / | | / | / | | | / | | Insufficient manpower in terms of management (planning, implementing, maintaining, and controlling development) in Pulau Perhentian. Insufficient budget allocation for additional staff. |
| 8 | Besut District and Land Office | | | / | / | / | | | | | Insufficient manpower. |

CONCLUSIONS

This study is significantly valuable for the tourism key players to identify and recognize their main roles, and then improve their service delivery, for instance, to include the local participation in the management of coastal marine resources. Studies by Cinner (2005), Kaza (1988), Kenchington (1988) and White (1986) support the findings that both state and federal agencies should be more effective in delivering their roles, aside from giving priority to the community involvement, as it is the main factor in the success of marine protection area.

This study is done due to the concern of the environmental issues that are occurring nowadays at Pulau Perhentian Marine Park. Even though many studies have provided solutions such as low impact visitation and eco-friendly tourism activities, but without effective implementation and management, the environmental degradation of the park will continue.

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