

Policies and Strategies for Integrated Tourism Planning and Sustainable Development: The case of Iran

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The significance of tourism

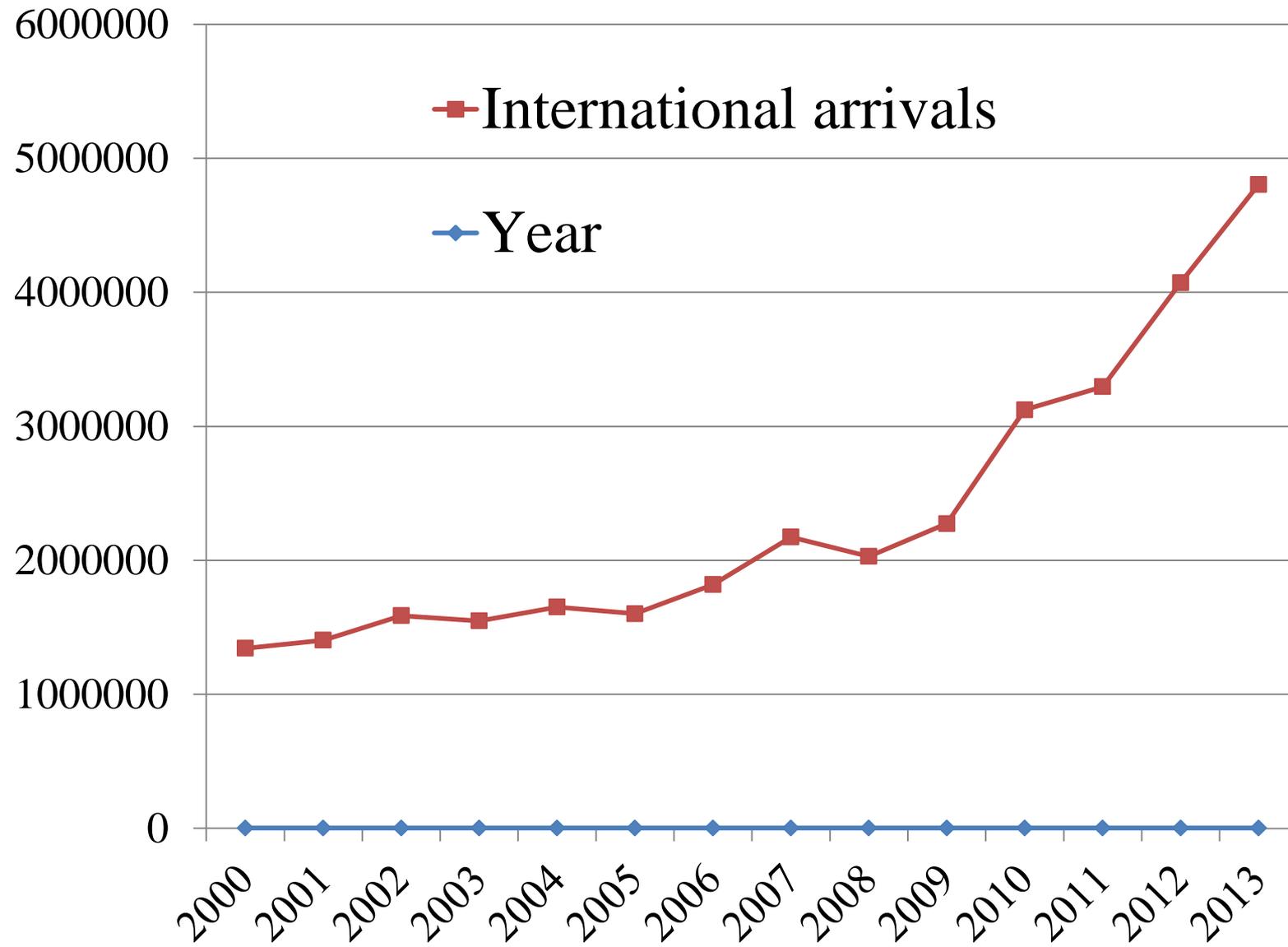
- *Tourism industry accounts for 9.3% of the world's GDP and has become one of the main generators of employment.*
- *The number of international arrivals exceeded 1.87 billion tourists in 2013.*
- *International tourism receipts reached US\$1159 billion worldwide in 2013.*

Importance of Tourism to Iran

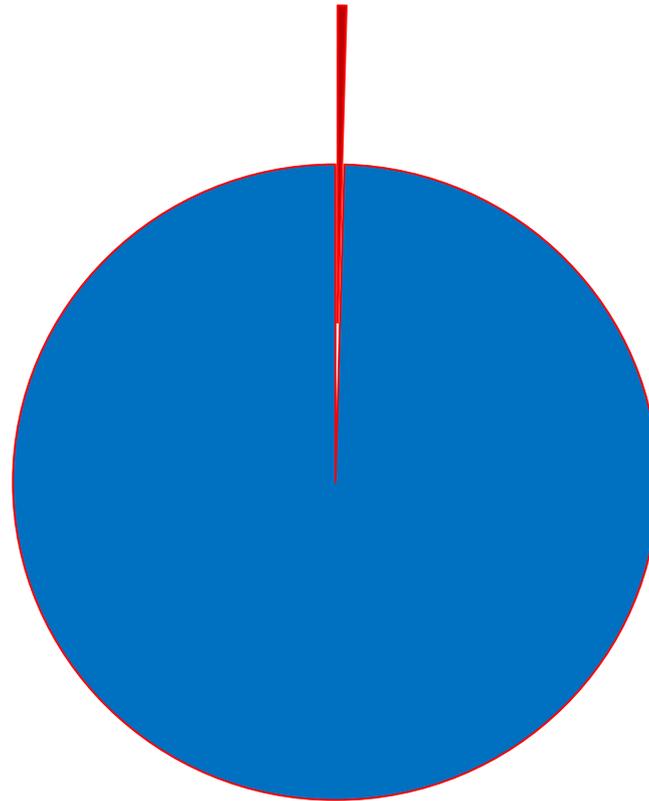
- *Iran's tourism has grown fast since the early 1990's.*
- *Tourism has been defined as one of the high priority for economic development in Iran.*
- *The total contribution of travel & tourism to the country's GDP was %6.1 in 2013.*

- *The total contribution of travel & tourism to employment, including jobs indirectly supported by the industry was 5.3% in 2013*
- *According to ICHTO, the number of international arrivals reached 4.8 million in 2013, up from 3.8 million in 2012.*
- *International tourist receipts increased up to \$US 2.4 billion in 2013.*

International Tourist Arrivals To Iran

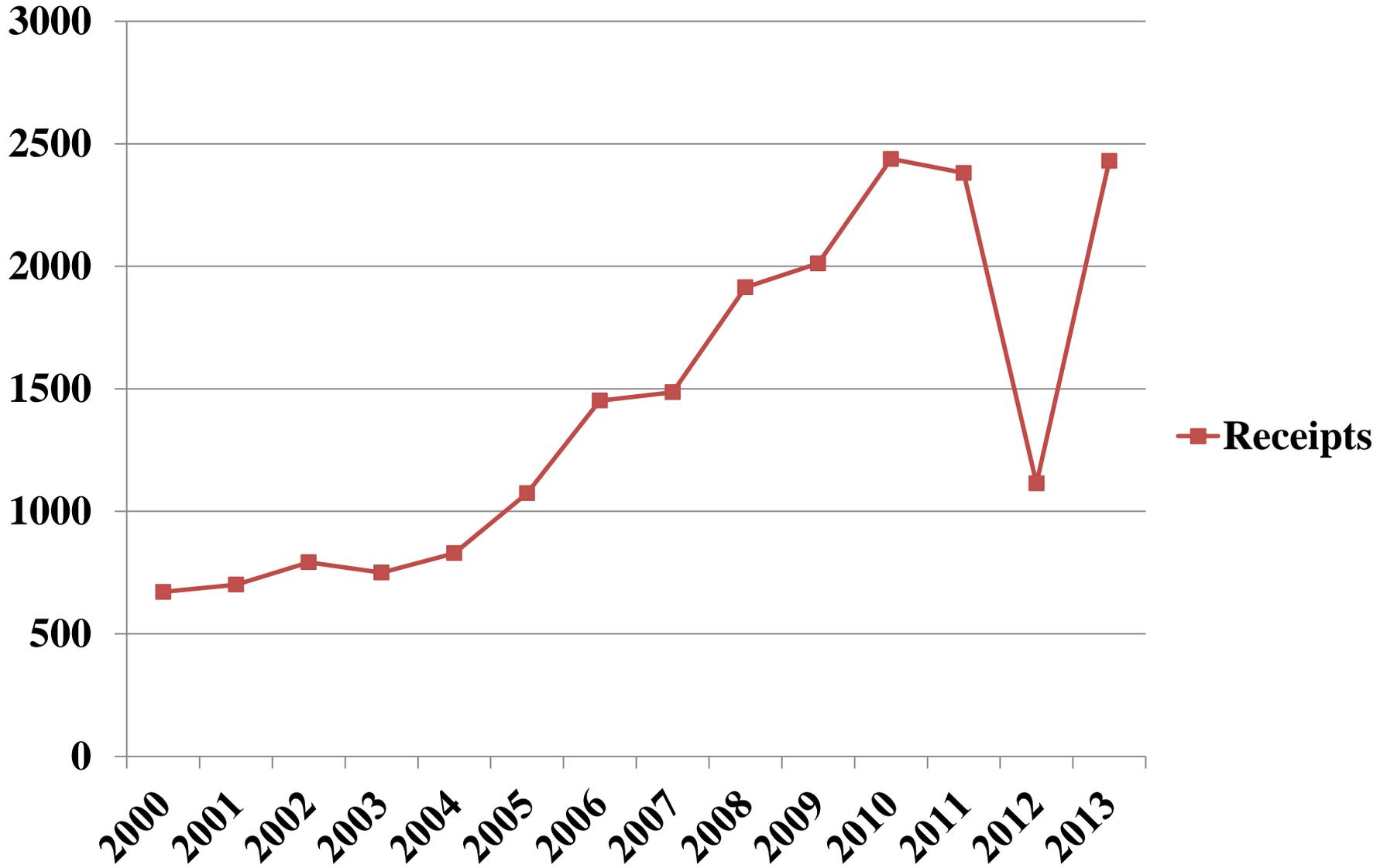


Iran's share from worldwide arrivals



■ Iran ■ world

International Tourism Receipts



What are policies and strategies?

- *Policies are the plan of action adopted or pursued by governments or businesses whereas strategies represent the steps to achieve them.*
- *Policy is determined based on several considerations, of which the most important is achieving the objectives of developing tourism.*
- *More generally, tourism policy should reflect the overall development policy of the country so that tourism is well integrated.*
- *Policies and strategies should be flexible to the new changes.*

Tourism policy-making in Iran

- *Tourism in Iran is government-led, under the control of public sector.*
- *Responsibility for the development & management of tourism falls more & more to national government.*
- *Policies are made based on the Islamic laws & values.*
- *The planning policies covering tourism development in relation to the other economic sectors are contained in the country's five year economic plans.*

Tourism policies (Iran's Tourism Management Master Plan)

- *Introduce, develop, and maintain Islamic culture to the world, especially to countries that have the most relationships with Iran;*
- *Recognize and cooperate with these countries in order to develop stronger international relationships including developing a dialogue to develop Islamic culture;*

- *Contribute to the promotion of national unity on a continuing basis by emphasizing a respect for cultural diversity;*
- *Continually seek to use Iran's strategic geopolitical position as a basis for developing it as a regional center for the transmission of goods, tourists, and investment;*

20-Year National Vision Policies

- *Sustain, develop & introduce Iran's cultural & natural heritages to the world;*
- *Enhance the continuous value of Iran's cultural heritage at the local, national & international levels;*
- *Enhance the public culture in the area of cultural heritage & tourism through capacity building;*

- *Sustainable development of tourism for the benefit of the nation & with regards to the country's cultural value;*
- *Increase & develop domestic tourism & acquire an appropriate portion of international market via utilization of the country's capabilities,*
- *Priority should be given to the tourist exchange with Islamic countries & those that have common cultural background with Iran.*
- *Increase & ensure tourist justice & their safety & security.*

Policies addressing the sustainable development of tourism in Iran

Item	The Economic Development Plans					Other Documents	
	1 1993-1997	2 1999-2003	3 2004-2008	4 2005-2009	5 2010- 2014	Tourism Master Plan (2000/2001)	20-Year National Vision (2005-2025)
Infrastructure	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Tourist facilities & services	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Environmental conservation	×	×	*	*	*	*	*
Cultural heritage conservation	×	×	*	*	*	*	*
Local community participation & capacity building	×	×	*	*	*	*	*
Marketing & promotional activities	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Visitor satisfaction	×	×	×	×	*	*	*
Human resource development	*	*	×	*	*	*	*
Tourism attractions and activities	×	×	×	*	*	*	*
Private sector supports	*	*	×	*	*	*	*

What are tourism strategies?

- *Supporting foreign and domestic investments and providing the basis for obtaining these resources;*
- *Reducing the government intervention, bureaucratic process, and paying more attention to the role of private sector in tourism development;*
- *Implementing the global tourism code of ethics throughout the country;*
- *Facilitating the movement of international tourists and eliminating the negative views towards them;*

- *Developing different types of tourism (e.g. ecotourism, health tourism, religious tourism, cultural and events tourism) and providing related facilities and services;*
- *Changing the tarnished image of the country in international tourism markets by implementing appropriate marketing and promotion programs;*
- *Increasing the country's share of international tourist arrivals and the revenue generated;*

- *Establishing infrastructure and tourist facilities and services in places with high priority in national and local plans;*
- *Increasing the local community participation in tourism planning and management and empowering them.*
- *Reducing the negative impacts of tourism on sensitive destinations, local communities and natural and cultural heritages.*

- *Promote economic development, especially employment for youth and the unemployed, promoting greater income equity between city and rural areas, and increasing net foreign exchange earnings;*
- *Contribute to the sustainable development of the natural and socio-cultural environment by promoting the importance of these values to the population and adopting sustainable development practices.*

Challenges & Obstacles

- *As a main pillar of sustainable development, limited attention has been paid to the local participation & empowerment of local communities in policies.*
- *In practice, policies haven't been able to combine simultaneously, economic growth with welfare, empowerment, cultural reinforcing manner, social transformation & sustainability.*

- *The investigation on tourism policies & practices reveals a gap between sustainable tourism as a theoretical ideal (what has been planned) & what has been actually achieved.*
- *Little has been done to develop effective mechanisms to monitor & control developments aimed at curbing environmental degradation, social & cultural erosion & economic marginalization of the poor.*
- *The social injustice & economic unviability of tourism projects, especially at the local level, is a grave concern of both local communities & critics.*

- *The safety of tourists was seen to be an important issue given the political problems in some of the countries surrounding Iran.*
- *Iran's tourist facilities and services are limited in scope, quantity, & quality, but limited attention is being paid to in the current policies & strategies.*
- *The private sector is limited in scope with much of the tourist plan in the hands of public sector; therefore, much emphasis should be given to the private sector's role in the country's future tourism.*

- *Poor profitability & high risk is a big challenge of investment in the sector & need to be considered in the future strategies.*
- *Misinformation has led to an incorrect international image of the country in the community of nations. Hence, the current policies & strategies should offer possible solutions to correct this negative image.*
- *The institutional organizations, tourism management capabilities, & especially human resources at the national & provincial levels are not appropriate & need to be considered in the development plans.*

Conclusion

- *However, a hard look at the overall situation leads us to conclude that the policies & strategies pursued by the industry stakeholders have been those most suitable for promoting mass tourism rather than sustainable tourism.*
- *Grim realities such as unsustainable development of some tourism activities leave serious doubts as to whether tourism development can be propelled towards more sustainability in the long term.*
- *We should measure policy performance by developing appropriate mechanisms.*

Thank You