

Analysis of UK Government's 2011 Tourism Policy

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+ Political context

- UK coalition government formed in May 2010
- Tourism was one of the first main policy statements
- UK government viewed tourism as a potential growth sector



+ Economic context

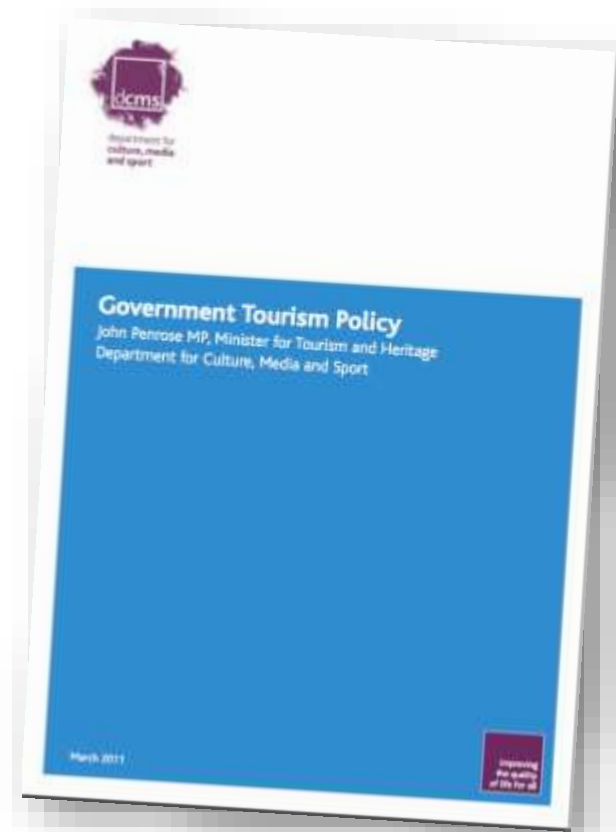
- Coalition government elected in the wake of economic crisis
- Structural reforms and austerity programme
- Tourism viewed as one of the 'winners' in the UK economy
 - Ability to capitalise on weak national currency
 - Provide domestic tourism opportunities
- *Aim of reducing public spending by approx. 13% on 2010 levels (Taylor-Gooby, 2012)*
- *By the end of 2011, international arrivals to the UK had risen by 3.3% and spending by these tourists had risen by 6.5% (ONS, 2012) Domestic tourist trips in the UK also rose by approx. 9.3% (Tourism Alliance, 2012)*



+ Key aims of UK Tourism Policy

1. Develop an innovative new partnership marketing campaign
2. Increase the proportion of UK residents who holiday in the UK to match those who holiday abroad each year
3. Improve the sector's productivity to become one of the top 5 most efficient and competitive visitor economies in the world

(DCMS, 2011)

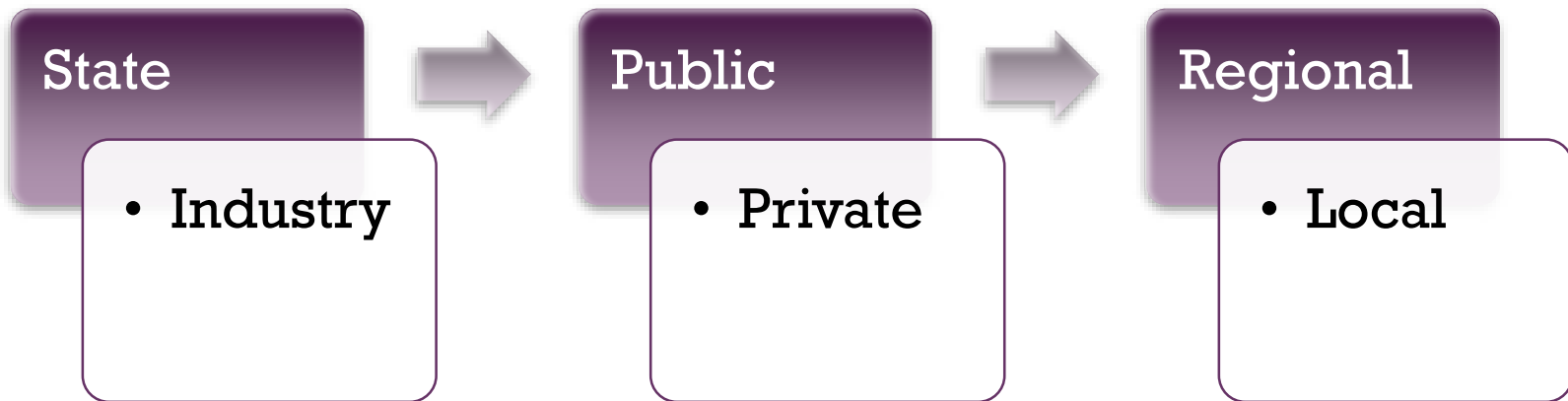


+ UK Tourism Policy Approach

- Reflects the Government's neoliberal policy agenda
- Focus is no longer on London 2012, but identifies many similar areas for growth and barriers to growth
 - e.g. regulation, balance of trade, need for skills development, poor industry coordination, inadequate signage
- Often prescriptive



+ Changing governance structures for UK tourism industry





Relationship between the state and industry

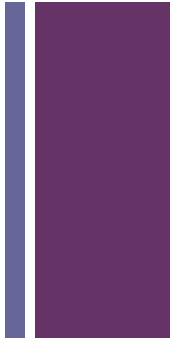


- Continued government intervention justified through problems of market failure and free-riding
- Reduced government intervention
 - private sector now taking the lead with public sector funding for tourism development and marketing suffering large cuts.

Contradiction?



Relationship between the public and private sectors



- Visit Britain's new role is to be 50% co-funder of a partnership marketing campaign with a value of £100 million
- To attract 4 million additional overseas visitors in four years after London 2012
- To gain £2 billion in extra visitor spend
- To create 50,000 new jobs



- Issue: After 12 months, £10 million has been raised by private sector (some in-kind) and £25 million by public sector



Relationship between regional and local levels



- DMOs are restructured to fit '*natural geography of a tourist area*' (DCMS, 2011:forward), similar to new LEPs '*natural economic geographies*' (BIS, 2010)
- In line with new localism agenda



- Issue: No definition of tourism geographies
- Issue: Problems of private sector buy-in for DMOs (Cole et al 2012)

+ Conclusions



- Swings from highly ambitious to very mundane
 - Radical proposals on governance
 - Micro-management of signage and hotel rating schemes
- No indications of development process or mechanisms for measuring success and evaluation
- New institutional arrangements lack clarity and stakeholders appear disengaged
- Tourism *can* provide growth, but is unclear wit this policy will help or hinder it