

Abstract

This study examines the critical success factors of route tourism development. The aim is to provide a set to practical planning guidelines to assist the successful implementation of routes on a local level. Lessons are drawn from case studies of the Camino de Santiago in Spain, the heritage trails in Queensland, Australia, Hadrian's Wall in the United Kingdom and of the Midlands Meander in South Africa. Routes are considered important because it demonstrated to be an effective vehicle for local economic development. The evidence of their positive impact on rural economies is confirmed throughout the case studies. It is argued that the successful development of tourism routes is not an exact science and emerging destinations often have many hurdles to overcome. Through an analysis of these four case studies, the study explores the elements of themed routes that constitute successful destinations and highlights the importance of planning, promotion and institutional development.