

Abstract

Over the past decade the Government of Zimbabwe (GOZ) initiated ease of doing business reforms aimed at repositioning the country's tourism industry. This study reviews tourism operators' re-tooling challenges in Zimbabwe's current economic landscape. A questionnaire survey was administered on sixty tourism sub-sector's representatives. Findings highlight that local tourism operators are experiencing sub-optimal capacity utilisation, and a dire liquidity crunch. Results further showed that local operators' re-tooling efforts have been hampered by policy inconsistency, antique production equipment, debt legacy issues, devastating effects of sanctions or restrictive measures, lack of skilled personnel and brain drain, and a very high cost of doing business. The study conceived that Zimbabwe currently does not tick all the boxes of being a first choice tourist destination given the international tourism market's low opinion on its very expensive destination tag, and its intoxicated political and economic environment. However, there was general consensus among stakeholders that the gamut of challenges was not insurmountable with the necessary political will. Recommendations were the need for the speedy rehabilitation of destination Zimbabwe's relations with international financial institutions and de-construction of the high risk country profile index in order to firmly put the tourism sector on a solid path again.