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**ASPECTS OF TOURISM 2**

Series Editors: **Chris Cooper**, *University of Queensland, Australia*  
and **Michael Hall**, *University of Otago, New Zealand*

**Tourism Collaboration  
and Partnerships**  
**Politics, Practice and Sustainability**

Edited by

**Bill Bramwell and Bernard Lane**

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# 11. Is There a Tourism Partnership Life Cycle?

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The paper examines how individual tourism partnerships change over time and whether there are commonalities in their dynamics and evolution. Literature on organisational evolution is reviewed and previous life cycle models are compared. A case study of the North Pennines Tourism Partnership is presented highlighting key phases in its development and partners' reflections on its nine year life. A brief comparative analysis of other tourism partnerships is presented to identify similarities and alternative life cycle trajectories. Particular attention is given to the final phases of partnerships, which by their nature are usually temporary organisations, and what happens to their role after they finish. A model tourism partnership life cycle is proposed and its implications for the planning and management of partnerships are considered. It is hoped the model will contribute to both theoretical and practical debates about partnership and collaboration.

## Introduction

This paper aims to examine how individual tourism partnerships change over time and whether there are commonalities in their dynamics and evolution. A life cycle model is presented based on a review of literature from a range of disciplines, an empirical study of one particular tourism partnership and evidence from a selection of others. The approach combines elements of Long's (1997) intensive and extensive strategies, identifying key developments in the evolution of an individual partnership over time, at a local level, followed by a comparative analysis with a selection of other partnerships to develop a model with more general potential applicability.

The paper first draws together literature on organisational evolution and life cycles, particularly focusing on those applied in the public policy arena. It compares 11 previous life cycle models to identify common characteristics, in order to provide a framework for the development of a specific model for tourism partnerships. The case study of the North Pennines Tourism Partnership is then presented. Key phases in its development are highlighted along with partners' reflections on the problems which were encountered particularly in its latter years. This detailed case is then contrasted with the evolution of the comparator partnerships in an attempt to identify similarities, differences and alternative trajectories for partnership life cycles and the factors determining these.

Particular attention is given to the final phases of partnerships, a topic ignored by many authors particularly in business management literature. Partnerships are usually, though not always, temporary organisations, although some last considerably longer than others. It is vital to consider why, when and how a partnership should finish and what happens to its role after it finishes. Brown (1996) draws attention to the need to develop better exit strategies which, she says, would help in sustaining ongoing support for partnerships and avoid building up unrealistic expectations. Finally a tentative tourism partnership life cycle

model is proposed and some of its implications for the planning and management of partnerships are discussed. It is hoped the model will contribute to both the theoretical and the practical debates about partnership operation and effectiveness.

The paper has a UK focus in terms of the examples of partnerships used and their external environment such as funding agencies or government policy. The theoretical sections, however, draw on literature from both the UK and North America. Whilst the model has been developed in relation to the UK context it should be possible to test its applicability in other countries to examine factors at play elsewhere.

## Partnerships

The process of partnership and collaboration are key elements of sustainable development and sustainable tourism, particularly when a wide and representative range of stakeholders from the local community are able to play an active role. There have been a number of studies of inter-organisational relations and research into partnerships in the tourism field recently (Selin & Beason, 1991; Jamal & Getz, 1995; Long, 1997). This paper uses Long's definition of tourism partnerships:

the collaborative efforts of autonomous stakeholders from organisations in two or more sectors with interests in tourism development who engage in an interactive process using shared rules, norms and structures at an agreed organisational level and over a defined geographical area to act or decide on issues related to tourism development. (Long, 1997: 239)

Tourism partnerships were first formally established in the UK in the mid 1980s. This was part of the more general trend in economic development towards collaboration between public-sector bodies. This trend was triggered by government cuts in public spending and a growing awareness of the benefits of partnership working. Whilst tourist boards, local authorities and other agencies had become accustomed to working in close collaboration, the main incentive to formalise and broaden tourism partnerships was the provision of funding from the English Tourist Board to establish Tourism Development Action Programmes (TDAPs) (Bramwell & Broom, 1989; Palmer, 1992). A range of TDAPs and other variants were set up around England in locations such as urban areas, depressed ex-industrial areas, rural areas and seaside resorts.

Initially most of these partnerships were between public-sector organisations, typically including the local authorities, the regional tourist board (membership organisations) and quangos such as the Countryside Commission (CoCo), Rural Development Commission (RDC) or the Training Agency. By the 1990s more private-sector representatives were wooed to participate in partnerships, particularly local tourism associations or chambers of commerce. This follows the trend recognised by Boyle (1993) in urban regeneration partnerships in which central government policy demanded more evenly balanced public-private involvement. In the mid 1990s there was a further shift in emphasis to widen participation to the voluntary sector and local communities to enable more multilateral partnerships to be established. Lowndes *et al.* (1997: 334) explain

how these 'have emerged from local imperatives and debates about building healthy and sustainable communities, but also have been stimulated by central government funding programmes'. These programmes include City Challenge and the Single Regeneration Budget which require voluntary sector and community participation.

### **The Collaboration Process**

Much has been written in the public policy and urban regeneration literature about collaborative approaches. Particularly useful is Wood and Gray's (1991) paper which ponders several definitions of collaboration and begins to develop a comprehensive theory of collaboration. More recently Huxham (1996) has developed the concept of collaborative advantage, i.e. those things that can be produced by partners in collaboration which would not otherwise have been achievable. She also considers the various dimensions of collaboration and hence how collaboration can be sustained over time. However little attention has been given to the dynamics of partnerships over time. Most authors focus on the processes involved in partnership and collaboration rather than how they may change as the partnership develops.

Huxham and Vangen (1994) give more emphasis to the difficulties of sustaining inter-organisational relationships long term. They present two possible routes for partnerships depending on the collaborative capability of partner organisations. Partnerships which have difficulties dealing with the process of collaboration can be overcome by inertia and frustration leading to 'collaborative fatigue' and probably the end of the partnership. Alternatively if the partners overcome most problems the partnership can develop into 'collaborative maturity' and be sustained for longer.

Several authors have addressed the processes at work within economic development partnerships. MacKintosh (1992) proposes a framework highlighting three key processes: synergy, transformation and budget enlargement. She also highlights the pressures and conflicts that can develop within partnerships. Hastings (1996) develops these ideas further, in the context of urban regeneration, and refines MacKintosh's framework to specify two different types of synergy – resource synergy and policy synergy – and two types of transformation – uni-directional, where one partner changes its ways of working under pressure from another; and mutual transformation, when all partners are changed by the process of collaboration. Both authors hint at the dynamics at play within partnerships over time, but do not consider explicitly how these factors may be more or less important at different stages of a partnership.

### **Life Cycle Models**

The concepts of organisational evolution and life cycles have been explored by authors in the business, management and organisational studies fields (Greiner, 1979; Kimberly & Miles, 1980; Quinn & Cameron, 1983). Waddock (1989) applies the concept to partnership organisations and develops an evolutionary model. This approach was transferred to the tourism literature by Selin and Chavez (1995) with their study of tourism-related partnerships in US forests. A number of these authors stress the need for more in-depth research into how individual

partnerships change over time. Long (1994) identifies the lack of discussion on how to sustain partnership programmes in the long term and Jamal and Getz (1995: 201) recommend research 'to trace the performance of collaborative planning processes and strategies over time'.

The use of a biological metaphor for studying organisations which are social constructs has been criticised. Kimberly (1980) points out that whilst biological organisms go through clear, predictable stages in their development this is not necessarily the case with organisations – there are no natural laws which govern their evolution. Similarly he points out that death is an inevitable feature of biological life, whereas there is no inevitable route towards death for organisations. This second criticism is perhaps less relevant when studying partnerships however, as whilst their lifespans vary, many do come to an end, even if they continue in another form. Thus it could be argued that the life cycle model is particularly appropriate for studying this form of organisation. Kimberly (1980: 9) concludes that:

biological metaphors, imperfect though they most certainly are, can serve a very useful purpose in the study of organisations. By forcing theorists to think through carefully where the metaphors are appropriate and inappropriate, their use can lead to the raising of important new questions.

This section aims to bring together and briefly review previous attempts to develop life cycle models in various fields. It summarises in table format those models which have been proposed most formally and which have greatest relevance for tourism partnerships, see Table 1.

The most familiar life cycle model in the tourism literature is Butler's tourist area life cycle model first outlined in 1980 which has since been discussed, tested and criticised by numerous authors. Butler's model (see Figure 1) applies not to organisations but to tourist destinations and thus might be thought irrelevant to this discussion. However, it is included at this stage not only because of its familiarity but because it is one of the few models to focus on the final stages and possible decline of the subject to which it is applied.

A number of life cycle models have been developed in the business management and commercial fields. An early example is Greiner (1972) who outlines five phases of gradual evolution interspersed with short periods of revolution as companies grow and face operational problems. Companies reaching a crisis point have to reorganise in order to progress and continue growing. As with many business models it does not look at the decline and failure of businesses although the implication is that if a company fails to respond to one of these crises then failure may follow. A particularly interesting feature of this model is the final phase of evolution which Greiner terms 'collaboration' as a mature company builds a more flexible and behavioural approach to management using team action to solve problems. He speculates that the final crisis following the collaborative period could centre around 'psychological saturation' of employees 'who grow emotionally and physically exhausted by the intensity of teamwork and the heavy pressure for innovative solutions' (Greiner, 1972: 44). These issues may apply to the collaborative nature of partnerships.

A particularly useful study was carried out by Quinn and Cameron (1983) who themselves reviewed nine models of organisational life cycles and then

Table 1 Comparison of life-cycle models

<b>Quinn and Cameron (1983) Summary model</b>			
<i>Entrepreneurial</i> Marshalling resources, lots of ideas, entrepreneurial activities, little planning, forming a niche	<i>Collectivity</i> Informal structure, sense of collectivity and mission, high innovation and commitment	<i>Formalisation and control</i> stable structure and rules, emphasis on efficiency and procedures, conservatism	<i>Elaboration of structure</i> Decentralisation, domain expansion, adaption and renewal
<b>Downs (1967) Motivation for growth</b>			
<i>Struggle for autonomy</i> Legitimacy and autonomy sought, stabilise resources, achieve survival threshold	<i>Rapid growth</i> Innovator control, emphasis on expansion		<i>Deceleration</i> Coordination problems, predictability emphasised, formal roles, reduced flexibility
<b>Lippitt and Schmidt (1967) Critical managerial concerns</b>			
<i>Birth</i> Short range perspective, survival, personal control	<i>Youth</i> Stability and service, efficiency planning and systematic control	<i>Maturity</i> Emphasis on adaptability, contribution to society, growth opportunities sought	
<b>Lyden (1975) Functional problems</b>			
<i>First</i> Adaption to external environment	<i>Second</i> Resources acquisition	<i>Third</i> Goal attainment	<i>Fourth</i> Pattern maintenance and institutionalisation
<b>Adizes (1979) Major organisational activities</b>			
<i>Courtship</i> Idea formation, entrepreneurial activities	<i>Infant organisation</i> Emphasis on production, time pressures, little planning, few meetings	<i>Go-go organisation</i> Rapid expansion, personalised leadership, fast decision making	<i>Adolescent</i> Coordination and admin dominate, stability, rules, conservatism
		<i>Prime</i> Loss of touch with environment, stable aspirations	<i>Maturity</i> Paternalistic, little motivation



**Table 1** (cont.)

<b>Kimberly (1979) Internal social control, structure of work and environmental relations</b>			
<i>First</i>	<i>Second</i>	<i>Third</i>	<i>Fourth</i>
Marshalling resources, creation of ideology	Obtaining support, choice of leader and staff, decisions	Identity, pursuit of mission, high collectivity and commitment	Formal structure and rules, internal competition, conservative trend, personal investment questioned
<b>Waddock (1989) Evolutionary model of social partnership development</b>			
<i>Context</i>	<i>Initiation</i>	<i>Establishment</i>	<i>(Death)</i>
Crisis, mandate, networks, vision, broker	Issue crystallisation, coalition building, forum established, trust building	Purpose formulation, work begins on agendas	<i>Maturity</i> Purpose re-formulation, broadening of focus
<b>Selin and Chavez (1995) Evolutionary tourism partnership model</b>			
<i>Antecedents</i>	<i>Problem setting</i>	<i>Direction setting</i>	<i>Outcomes</i>
Crisis, mandate, vision, networks, leadership, incentives	Interdependence, consensus on stakeholders and benefits, problem definition	Establish goals, set ground rules explore options, organise sub-groups	Programmes, impacts, benefits (feedback loop of cyclical re-evaluation)
<b>Wood (1992) The Heritage Regions Process</b>			
<i>Entry</i>	<i>Needs assessment</i>	<i>Planning</i>	<i>Doing</i>
Groundwork, commitment	Inventory, assessment, public acceptance	Viability of resources for development	Community action and implementation
<b>Lowndes and Skelcher (1998) Partnership life cycle</b>			
<i>Pre-partnership collaboration</i>	<i>Partnership creation and consolidation</i>	<i>Delivery</i>	<i>Termination and succession</i>
Network mode of governance, informality, trust, sense of common purpose	Hierarchy mode of governance, assertion of status and authority, formalisation of procedures	Market mechanisms, tendering and contracts, lower cooperation	Network mode of governance, uncertainty, new openness, community involvement
<b>Butler (1980) Tourism area cycle of evolution</b>			
<i>Exploration</i>	<i>Involvement</i>	<i>Development</i>	<i>Stagnation/ stabilisation</i>
			<i>Rejuvenation/ decline</i>

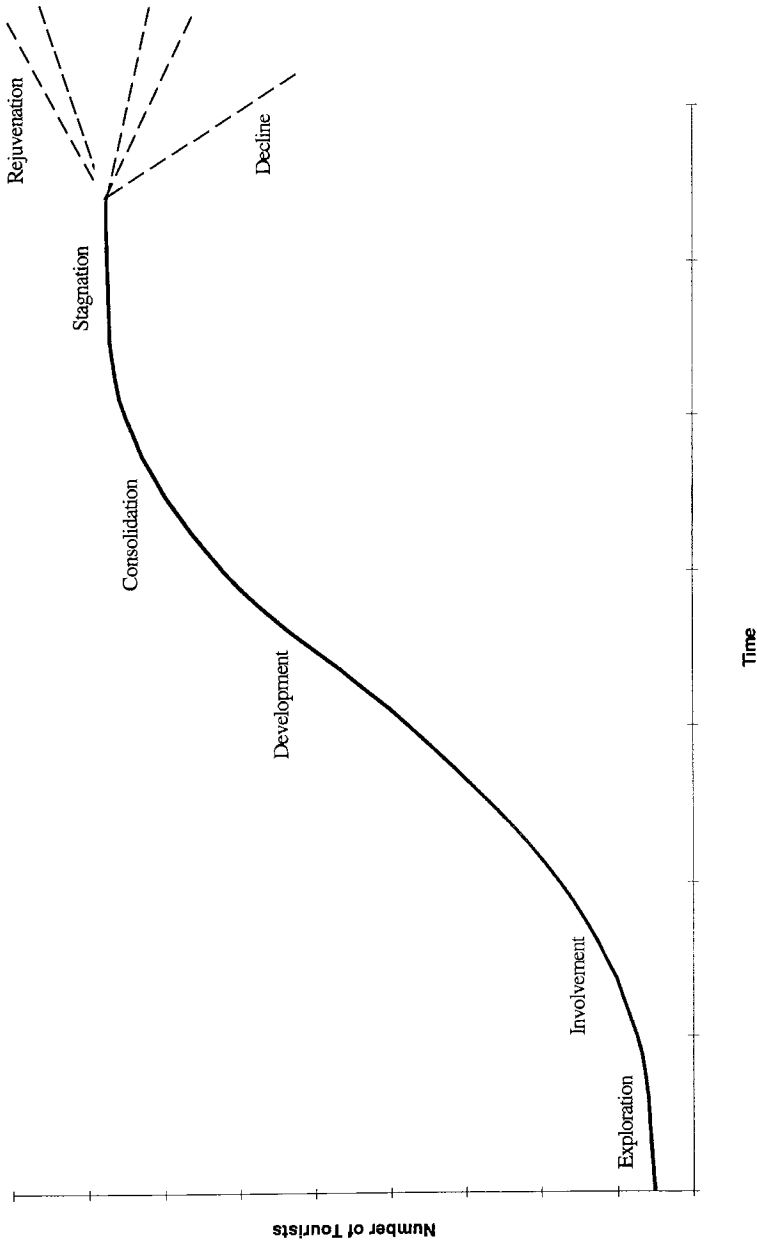


Figure 1 Butler's model of a tourist area cycle of evolution (1980)

produced their own summary model. They stress the importance of a longitudinal approach to studying organisations and criticise the tendency to focus on fairly static, mature organisations. They point out that the most interesting phases in organisational development are the early ones when change happens faster. The same could apply to the final stages of an organisation which is ending. Of the nine models they reviewed five have been chosen as most relevant to the current discussion, some are specifically based on public or government organisations rather than private companies. The five models and the summary model are included in Table 1, certain points are highlighted here as being of particular note in the context of the current study.

Downs' (1967) model focuses on government bureaux and stresses the need to acquire both legitimacy and resources in the early stages. Lippitt and Schmidt's model, also from 1967, stresses viability in the first stage, the importance of building a reputation in the developing stage and, in the mature stage, responding to societal needs, which in the context of tourism partnerships could be issues of sustainability and community development. Lyden's (1975) model, based on public organisations, includes issues such as generating a niche; resource acquisition; goal attainment and outputs; maintenance; and institutionalisation in successive phases of a life cycle.

Adizes' (1979) model uses life cycle analogies of courtship, infancy, adolescence and maturity. It is one of the few models to consider the decline and death of organisations, which are attributed to an over-emphasis on stability, administration, rules and procedures. Finally, Kimberly's (1979) model stresses the early stages of development particularly the need to first marshal resources and develop an ideology; a second stage involving the selection of people and establishing support and a third stage of creating an identity. These are all things which a partnership must do in its formative stages. He emphasises that most organisations become more conservative and predictable in their later stages.

Having reviewed these models, Quinn and Cameron develop their own summary model because, whilst the models vary significantly, all suggested progression through similar life cycle stages. Their four summary stages are:

an *entrepreneurial stage* (early innovation, niche formation, creativity), a *collectivity stage* (high cohesion, commitment), a *formalization and control stage* (stability and institutionalization), and a *structure elaboration and adaptation stage* (domain expansion and decentralization). (Quinn & Cameron, 1983: 40)

Waddock (1989) specifically applies previous theory to partnership organisations. She develops an evolutionary model outlining four stages: first, the context from which a partnership grows; second, the initiation phase; third, establishment; and fourth, maturity. She emphasises the importance of three processes within the sequence: issue crystallisation – around which the partnership will focus; coalition building – the process of assembling the appropriate partners and balancing power between them; and thirdly purpose formulation, determining the scope, direction and goals of a partnership. Her model has a feedback loop of 'purpose reformulation' by which a partnership in maturity can cyclically re-evaluate its purpose in the context of a changing environment. Waddock suggests that this re-evaluation process will lead to a broadening of focus and

that if partnerships fail to reformulate and broaden their purpose they may die. Death may of course be appropriate if the partnership's purposes have been achieved.

In the tourism literature both Jamal and Getz (1995) and Selin and Chavez (1995) have used Waddock's ideas in relation to tourism planning and partnership. Jamal and Getz (1995) suggest three broad stages in a collaboration process for community-based tourism planning. The stages include problem-setting, direction-setting and implementation. Selin and Chavez (1995) produced a more specific evolutionary model of tourism partnerships with five stages and a feedback loop: antecedents; problem-setting; direction-setting; structuring; and outcomes. They particularly stress the dynamic but fragile nature of this type of collective effort.

Wood (1992), cited in Brown (1996), gives an overview of the phases involved in the process of initiating and developing Heritage Regions in Canada (a specific government-sponsored heritage tourism programme). Wood identifies five phases: entry, needs assessment, planning, doing and renewal, plus the tasks to be undertaken at each stage.

In the urban regeneration literature Boyle (1993) outlines a series of stages through which many regeneration partnerships progress: first, a launch and need for credibility; second, the implementation of early action programmes; third, hitting a plateau of reality and deeper questioning; and fourth, longer term ambitious programmes of structural change. This emphasises evolution in terms of a work programme and differentiates between early action – often vital in developing credibility and a profile – and longer term outputs – which may have much longer lead-in times.

Finally two more recent pieces of work from the public policy field shed light on the process from a further perspective. Lowndes and Skelcher (1998) studying changing modes of governance, focus on networks and more formal partnerships and propose a four-stage life cycle: pre-partnership collaboration; partnership creation and consolidation; programme delivery; and termination and succession. They link these stages to three modes of governance which play a greater or lesser role in each stage; these are market relationships; hierarchical arrangements; and more informal and fluid networking. Networking plays an important role at the beginning and end of partnerships, but hierarchies develop in the consolidation phase and market mechanisms of tendering and contracts may play the major role in the programme delivery phase.

Deakin and Gaster's current research (1998) approaches the subject by examining the collaboration process. They propose a ladder of partnership (somewhat similar to Arnstein's (1971) ladder of participation). Partnerships, it is suggested, can move up (or down) the ladder towards greater levels of collaboration and full partnership during their lifetime.

The 11 models vary significantly as they have all been developed at different times, in different contexts and focused on different types of organisation. The number of phases also varies. However there are numerous similarities between the characteristics of various phases. A series of five summary phases has been developed containing characteristics from the models which would appear to have the most relevance to organisations such as tourism partnerships. These are presented in Table 2. Phase 5 contains the most variation in characteristics as the

models identify different scenarios for organisations, some more positive than others. This forms a framework within which to assess the case study and comparative analysis, to examine which phases are apparent in reality, how the collaboration process and achievements change over time and in particular what happens in the latter stages of a partnership. The embryonic phases in Table 2 will be reassessed in the final section of the paper, in the development of a life cycle model of partnerships.

**Table 2** Summary life cycle phases and characteristics

<i>Phase 1</i>	<i>Phase 2</i>	<i>Phase 3</i>	<i>Phase 4</i>	<i>Phase 5</i>
Responding to external environment	Problem definition	Development of identity	Full implementation	Stagnation
Exploration of ideas	Coalition building	Formulation of procedures	Stability	Commitment questioned
Vision formulation	Development of trust	Pursuit of mission	Monitoring	Uncertainty
Networking	Inventory	Explore options	Consolidation	Fewer options for innovation
Marshalling commitment	Assessment of needs	Form sub-groups	Coordination and administration	Loss of relevance
Creating a mandate	Choice of leader and staff	Personalised leadership	Decentralisation	Re-evaluation
Marshalling resources	Innovation	Build momentum	Tendering out and contracts	Purpose reformulation
Developing a common purpose	Sense of mission	Expansion of activities		Adaption and renewal
	Seeking legitimacy	High commitment		Domain expansion

## The Case Study

### Methodology

The case study, the North Pennines Tourism Partnership (NPTP), was chosen as a longstanding, broad partnership with an emphasis on the development and management of sustainable tourism. The partnership was in its final year and thus provided an ideal opportunity to study the latter stages of a partnership and the proposals for the continuation of its work by other means. The field research, conducted in July 1998, involved a series of semi-structured interviews with key informants. These included three past project managers, who could provide in-depth information for particular periods in the partnership's lifetime. In addition six representatives of a sample of partners were interviewed. The sample was chosen both to gather views from each type of organisation or sector involved and to give a geographical spread across the area.

Interviewees were asked about the partnership operation and outputs over time, focusing on the identification of key phases and turning points. Notes were transcribed using tapes of the interviews and the transcriptions were sent to interviewees for amendments or additional comments. The results were analysed and coded to identify common themes, opinions and attitudes about the partnership as it was established, throughout its nine year life and into the future. The first draft of the paper was widely circulated within the partnership and a number of positive and confirmatory comments were received. Members of the partnership appeared to have found the process of reflecting on the lifetime of the partnership interesting and helpful, particularly as plans were being developed concurrently for a new partnership for the area. It is acknowledged that the analysis is based on a limited sample of participants in the partnership. Whilst a larger sample may have gathered additional detail the respondents were confident that the trends and phases were accurately identified.

### **Background**

The partnership was established in 1990 as 'a Partnership to help strengthen the Rural Economy and care for the countryside in the North Pennines' (NPTP 1994: 2). The North Pennines (see Figure 2) is a bleak but beautiful upland area which has been designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), one of the largest in the UK. Its unique and wild landscape and sparse population have led to it being dubbed 'England's Last Wilderness'. It consists of large moorland plateaux which harbour the sources of the rivers Tyne, Wear, Tees and Eden. It is a watershed area in administrative terms as well, being split between the counties of Cumbria, Northumberland and Durham and six district councils. The area has a unique industrial heritage having once been the most important lead mining area in the world. Thus it has a range of historic remains and unusual geological features in addition to being a highly valued natural environment, providing habitats for rare bird species such as merlin and black grouse and wildlife including red squirrels and otters.

The area had been the focus for tourism development previously. It was designated as a Tourism Growth Point in the mid 1970s by the English Tourist Board but resources were limited and there was no project officer to implement proposals. In the 1980s the initiative was continued by the North Pennines Tourism Consultative Group involving local authorities and government agencies, but again progress was slow. The group commissioned a report on tourism in the area (Tym, 1988) which proposed a more coordinated and targeted approach implemented by a project officer. This period would relate to Phase 1 in Table 2. The same year the AONB designation of the area was confirmed. These two events triggered much discussion and following a public workshop to debate the best way forward, the North Pennines Tourism Partnership was launched (Phase 2).

The wide range of partners is listed in Table 3. The partnership set clear objectives, incorporating the principles of sustainable development, one of the first UK partnerships to do so (Table 4). The work of the partnership was carried out initially by two working groups on marketing and development, guided and coordinated by the project manager. The partnership's initial budget was about

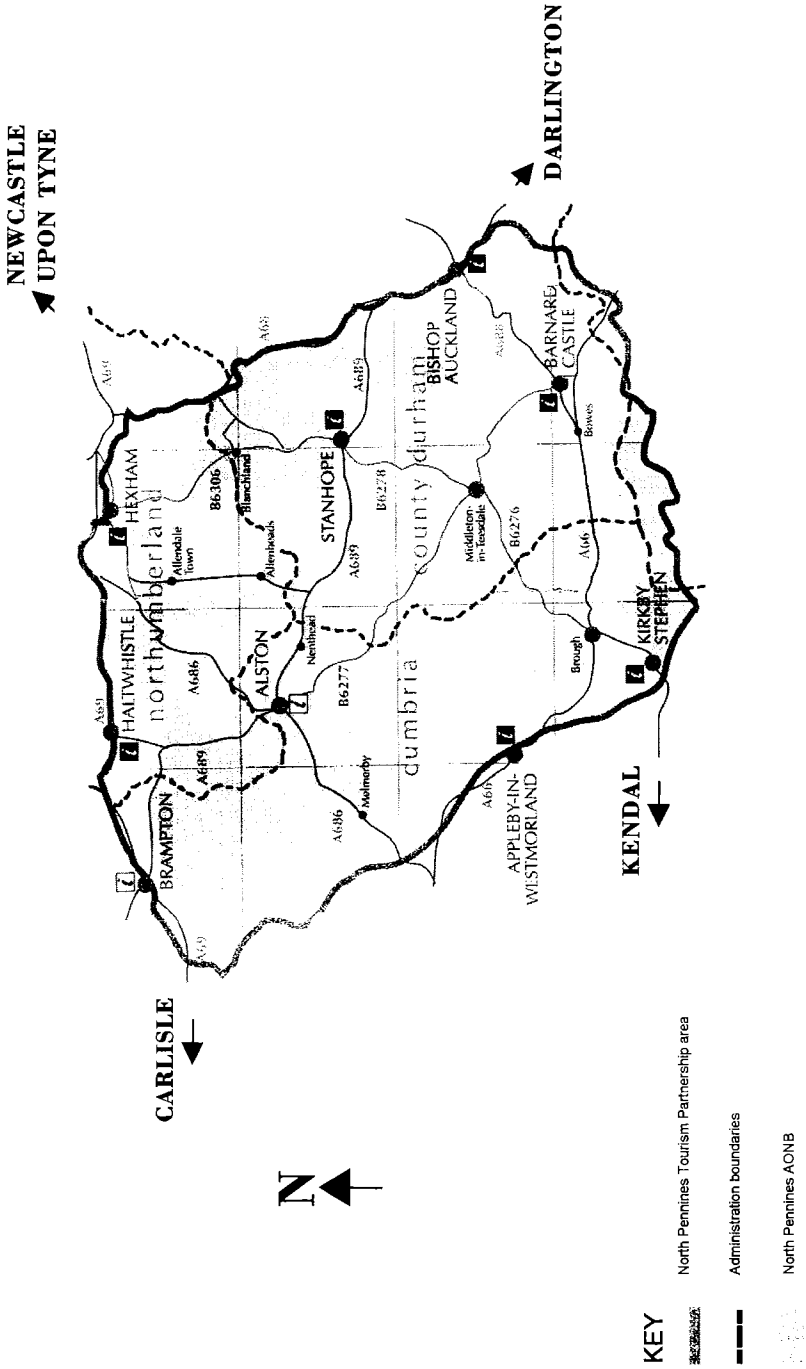


Figure 2 The North Pennines

**Table 3** North Pennines Tourism Partnership Partners (as listed in the NPTP review, 1994)

<p><b>Government Agencies*</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English Tourist Board (represented through the Cumbria and Northumbria Tourist Boards)</li> <li>• Countryside Commission</li> <li>• Rural Development Commission</li> </ul> <p><b>Local Authorities*</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cumbria County Council</li> <li>• Durham County Council</li> <li>• Northumberland County Council</li> <li>• Eden District Council</li> <li>• Tynedale District Council</li> <li>• Wear Valley District Council</li> <li>• Teeside District Council</li> </ul> <p><b>Private Sector</b> (including farming representative)</p> <p><b>Voluntary Sector</b> (the North Pennines Heritage Trust)</p>
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*Note:* Those marked \* provide the core funding. The others give their time, energy, enthusiasm and funding, as appropriate, to individual projects.

£50,000 per year in core funding provided by the partners. The partnership generated much larger amounts for specific projects from a variety of sources.

Previous accounts give more detail of the partnership's organisation and activities (Countryside Commission, 1995; Davidson & Maitland, 1997). Two more critical accounts have also been published tackling the extent to which local communities have been involved in or benefit from tourism development in the area (Prentice, 1993; Phillips, 1991).

## Results

The interviews revealed much consensus among the partners and project managers about how the NPTP developed over time. The main factors influencing its direction and success were identified as the funding available and the project managers leading the partnership. The funding arrangements for the partnership changed significantly after five years and this had a major impact on its later phases. The partnership had four project managers, and interviewees tended to link phases in the partnership's development to the managers in place at the time. The third significant internal change involved the transfer of management from Cumbria Tourist Board to Durham County Council after six years. The sequence of these changes is illustrated in Figure 3. They form the organisational context against which the other changes in the partnership must be viewed.



**Table 4** North Pennines Tourism Partnership – aims and objectives (NPTP, 1994)**Overall aim:**

To help strengthen the rural economy and care for the countryside in the North Pennines.

**Objectives:**

1. Increase awareness of the North Pennines as an area and a visitor destination by coordinating appropriate marketing opportunities.
2. Increase the range of active and informal countryside activities and promote these activities.
3. Improve existing attractions and provide quality, small to medium scale attractions based on the area's heritage and attributes.
4. Improve the quality and standards of existing accommodation and encourage modest expansions in key market sectors.
5. Promote the development of rural arts and crafts.
6. Help conserve the character of the landscape and heritage and enhance the appearance of the area's towns and villages.
7. Develop community and private sector support for tourism.
8. Improve business advice and training for the local tourism industry.

In its early stages the main challenges the partnership faced were trying to work collaboratively across a large and fragmented geographical area with a large number of partners with diverse interests. One interviewee expressed a mental image of the North Pennines being in the 'back yard' of all the partners who faced away from it towards their main areas of interest elsewhere. The partnership was making them all turn round to face the area and confront its problems together. Collaborative working was also relatively new to most partners. Another main challenge was to create and project an identity for the North Pennines externally and to build up credibility and a profile locally. The most commonly mentioned outputs from the early stages were the logo, which was rapidly taken up and used by both public and private sectors, and the newsletter which kept both partners and local communities informed of progress.

Some interviewees mentioned the early challenge of trying to win more support from the private sector. This remained problematic throughout the partnership's life. The businesses in the area are small, marginal and fragile. Only a committed few became heavily involved in the NPTP. However, after the first few years there was enough enthusiasm and momentum to establish a North Pennines Tourism Association which flourished for a few years and which in its turn developed the successful North Pennines Festival. However, interest has waned during the latter phases of the NPTP and the association is currently suspended.

The first project manager was seen as successfully setting up an operational structure, raising the profile locally, generating enthusiasm and developing momentum. Work was started on creating an identity and also monitoring and research procedures were initiated. This period would relate to Phase 3 in Table 2.

The second project manager arrived during year two and remained in post for four years. This period was seen by most as the 'golden era' of the partnership –

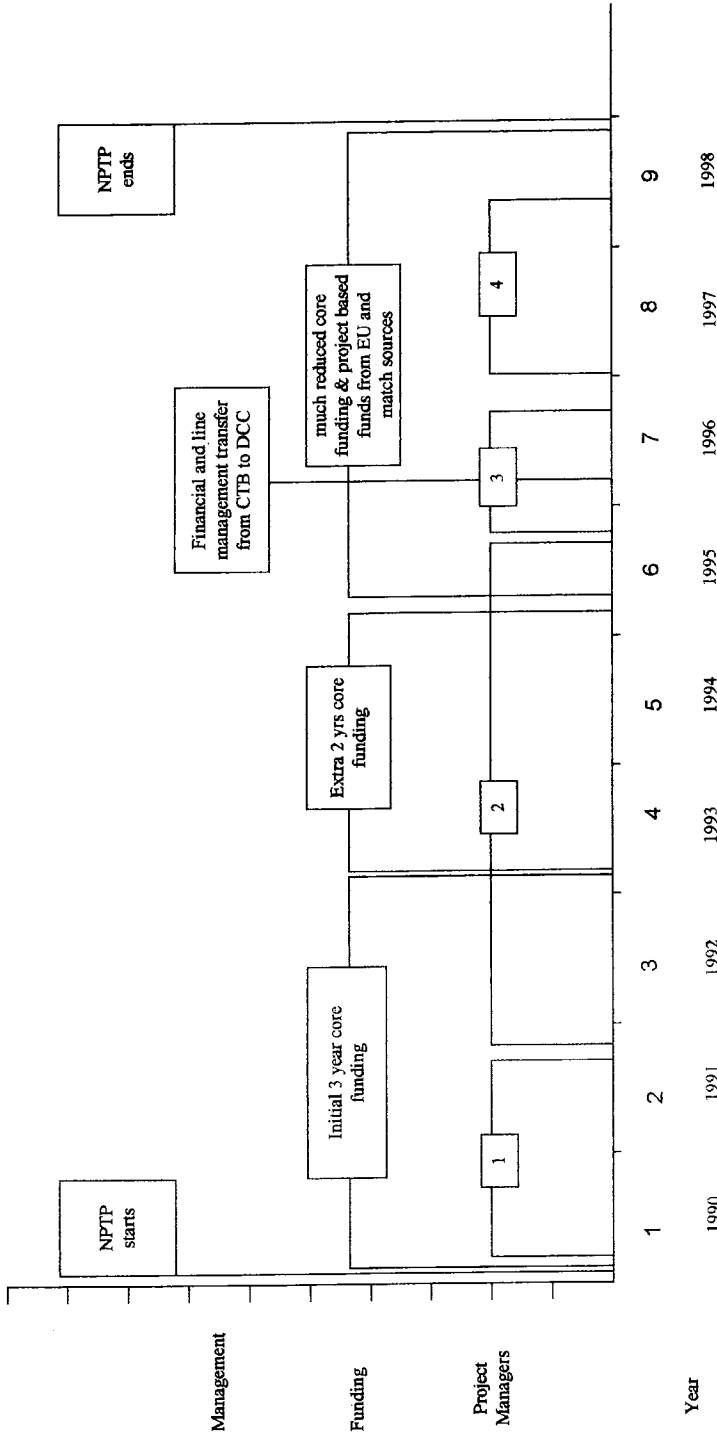


Figure 3 North Pennines Tourism Partnership – management and funding phases

the initial work had been done and the partnership concentrated on implementing the marketing and development work programmes (NPTP, 1994). The early emphasis was on marketing activity, producing basic literature for the whole area. Development projects and improvements on the ground tended to take longer to implement and came on stream later. Funding was secured for a three year Business and Training Initiative to run in parallel with the NPTP developing business advice and training opportunities for the private sector (NPTP, 1995). Most interviewees mentioned the publicity created by the PR campaign promoting 'blustery breaks'. The success of these projects and the high profile the partnership achieved enabled the partnership to secure an additional two years core funding. Thus this 'golden era' was extended into the fifth year of the partnership. It was presented nationally as good practice (English Tourist Board, 1991; Countryside Commission, 1995) and won awards. Key achievements of the partnership are summarised in Table 5. This period would relate to Phase 4 of the embryonic model in Table 2.

The main turning point came with the change in funding arrangements as the public-sector agencies withdrew from core funding leaving only the relatively small core contributions from local authorities. This coincided with the area's designation as Objective 5b status by the European Union (EU). Partners agreed that this new source of funding was the factor which enabled the partnership to continue beyond year five. However EU funding is project based and thus the partnership had to apply for funding and match funding for each of its activities individually. To complicate matters not all the area was Objective 5b; it came under two Government Office areas, under three Rural Development Commission areas and two Tourist Board areas. Thus the prospect of new funding came tied to the threat of mountains of paperwork in applications, conflicting timescales of funding sources and delays in waiting for decisions.

At the same time a new project manager took over, initially on a temporary contract. The financial situation and the time it consumed caused great frustration and a loss of morale and momentum. New staff were taken on when funds were secured for particular projects, partly because the project manager did not have capacity to do actual implementation work. The work programme was cut and consolidated to those projects that could be funded and achieved. Characteristics of Phase 4 – increasing administration and tendering out of implementation can be identified here. Whilst significant projects were completed such as the creation of a network of local information points, the partnership had fewer successful outputs and the interest of local people, businesses, the tourism association and partners themselves dropped off. A downward spiral had been triggered by the change in funding.

During this period the management of the partnership was transferred from Cumbria Tourist Board to Durham County Council. This was a point at which the partnership could have folded but Durham made a conscious decision to keep it going and a 'rescue package' of additional core funding was assembled. Partners generally still felt committed, due to the good work achieved in the past, the continuing needs of the area and their political commitment to the local population. A fourth project manager took over but again most of their energy was taken up with resolving funding crises and securing project funds.

**Table 5** Key achievements of the North Pennines Tourism Partnership**Marketing activities:**

- Created new North Pennines logo and corporate identity
- Print including visitor map, accommodation guide and leaflet
- Joint UK and overseas marketing campaigns and PR activities
- Published an outdoor activities directory and regular events listing
- Produced an annual guide to public transport services 'Across the roof of England'
- Short breaks campaigns

**Development of the product:**

- The Business and Training Initiative (3 year parallel project)
- Improvements to existing and development of new attractions
- Arts and crafts initiatives
- Walks development and promotion
- Assisted with development of C2C (coast to coast) cycle route and a network of camping barns
- Interpretation strategy, new interpretive information boards and local interpretive plans for individual communities
- Local information points in village shops and post offices
- Boundary signs for North Pennines AONB
- Helped set up North Pennines Farm Holiday Group
- Conducted survey of infrastructure provision
- Established cross-region working between authorities on arts, transport and the countryside
- Regular visitor surveys
- Research into tourism employment

**Liaison with businesses and the community:**

- Established North Pennines Tourism Association (NPTA)
- Assisted NPTA set up North Pennines Festival
- Regular newsletter and local exhibitions
- Green tourism business awards and advice

The changes in project managers would in themselves have affected momentum and implementation. Each project manager brought different expertise to the partnership and shifts in emphasis can be identified. The last two project managers were unsure of their security as long-term core funding had gone. One local authority withdrew its support when it cut its tourism budget and the future appeared ever more uncertain. The project managers' energies were concentrated on 'fire-fighting' rather than implementation and long-term planning. It was obvious to everyone that the partnership's future was in question. Elements of Phase 5 – uncertainty creeping in and partners questioning their commitment – can be identified here.

## Assessment

There was considerable agreement amongst interviewees about the high and low points of the partnership and the way momentum had been lost. All identified funding as the critical factor and main turning point, which then had negative knock-on effects.

As far as the partnership process was concerned there was considerable commitment and enthusiasm from all partners to working together, tackling the problems of the area as a whole and for developing sustainable tourism. The large number of partners meant that each achieved high levels of gearing for their own relatively small financial contributions. Some interviewees thought there was a core and periphery of partners with some much more active than others. Some partners were particularly involved in certain 'pet' projects. In others the level of commitment changed as officers changed, with new personnel likely to feel less enthusiasm and ownership of the partnership. There was a sense that the partners who were least interested to start with were the first to withdraw when momentum was lost.

The private-sector involvement has been mentioned earlier. Whilst some agencies bemoaned the lack of financial input from local businesses others greatly appreciated the contributions made in time and energy, often to the detriment of their own fragile businesses, that key individuals made throughout the partnership. Both sectors faced practical problems, for example the sheer scale of the area meant that attending meetings could take the best part of a day and in winter roads could be blocked by snow. Political issues may have been important for some authorities, keen to show a presence in one of their peripheral areas. However, there were few political or power conflicts probably due to the wide spread of power amongst a large number of partners. Partners had developed significant levels of mutual trust.

Representation from the local community was never particularly strong. Local people were involved in key workshops and kept informed through newsletters, the local press and talks, but only a few parish councillors actively took part in meetings on a regular basis. Added to this was voluntary sector representation through the local heritage trust and the South Tynedale Railway, a local tourist attraction. Arguably this represents a reasonably good involvement in such a sparsely populated area. Certainly the central location of the partnership office in Alston made the project manager accessible and presented a friendly local profile.

Most of the interviewees were disappointed about the way the partnership had declined in the last few years. A formal exit strategy was never drawn up although the issues were discussed at meetings. There appears to have been a general assumption amongst most partners that the partnership would continue and that it was just going through a rough patch. One called it 'blind optimism'. No one wanted to walk away from the achievements and from the area itself which still needed considerable support. All partners felt the area needed continued input. The other key issue was that as EU funding became available until 1999, partners felt an obligation to make use of the opportunities this offered, even when the problems of administration were realised.

Interviewees felt that if partners had grasped the nettle earlier and wound the partnership up with an exit strategy earlier, then it could have finished as a success. Better communication about the ending of the partnership was needed as the private sector, locals and some partners were reportedly unclear about exactly what was happening in the last few months.

### **The future**

Finally, pressured by the Countryside Commission's desire to tackle wider management issues in the AONB, a transition from the Tourism Partnership to a North Pennines Partnership was agreed, to start in January 1999. A new project manager will be responsible for coordinating the implementation of the AONB Management Plan (North Pennines AONB Steering Group, 1995) which focuses on environmental conservation, protection of historic remains and sustaining the economy and tourism. There appears to be a certain logic to the new arrangements, a wider, more integrated partnership, overseen by the Countryside Commission, the one agency which covers the entire area. In fact the creation of the Countryside Agency in spring 1999 (from CoCo and part of the RDC) is likely to strengthen the emphasis given to economic and social issues within a new partnership. However interviewees were still uncertain how the new partnership would work, what its priorities would be and dubious about whether one project manager could successfully coordinate such a wide range of work. It was foreseen that issues such as the production of area-wide tourism literature could fall back into the hands of individual districts and that collaboration and joint projects could begin to break up. It was not clear what private-sector representation there would be.

The NPTP was seen by some as having played a key role in influencing the proposals for the new partnership. It initiated partnership working in the North Pennines and proved it could work. It also lobbied hard for a significant focus on tourism in the new management plan. A diagrammatic representation of partnership working in the North Pennines is suggested in Figure 4. Showing the first early efforts through the Tourism Growth Point and Tourism Consultative Group resulting in the more formalised NPTP and now the broader partnership. Tourism has been used as the vehicle to mobilise the public and private sectors in the past and now a more integrated programme of environmental management and social and economic regeneration is planned.

### **Success**

Interviewees found it difficult to pinpoint the overall impact of the NPTP. They felt the product in the area was generally stronger now and businesses were run more professionally. The creation of a new identity for the North Pennines was held up as the biggest achievement along with establishing the joint working across the area. New improvements on the ground, marketing and information literature, more events, walking and cycle trails, better networking between businesses and coordination in related areas such as arts, countryside and transport were seen as important outputs. It was also felt that the people involved had acquired a much greater understanding of the issues and problems of the area and of developing sustainable tourism. Partners' outlooks had changed through working on such an initiative.

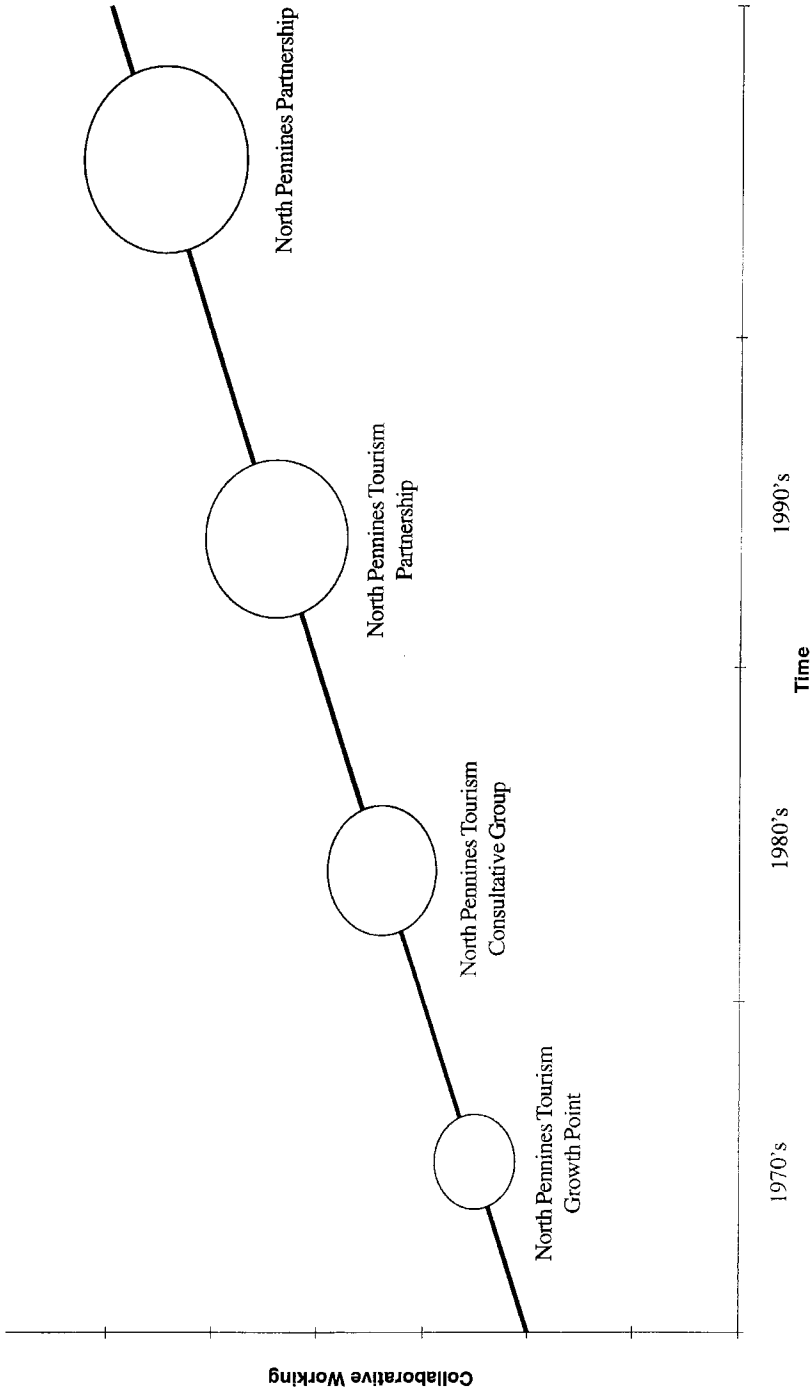
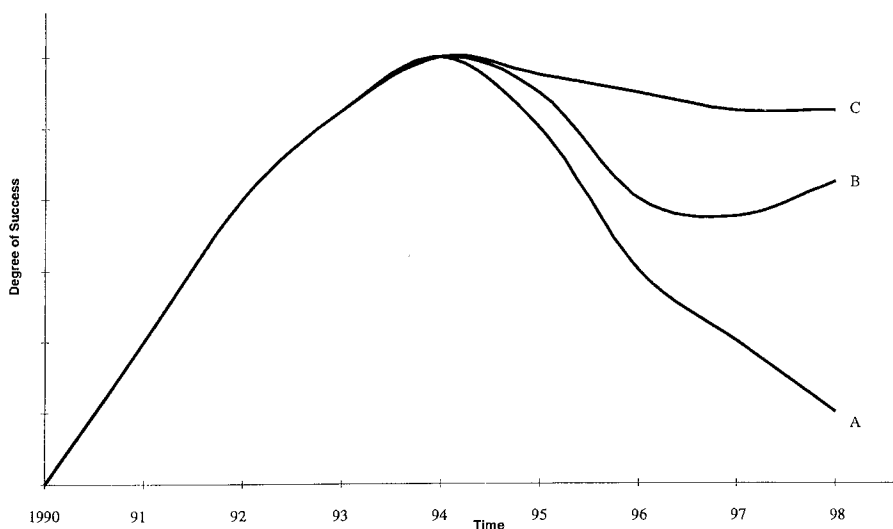


Figure 4 Representation of the development of partnership working in the North Pennines

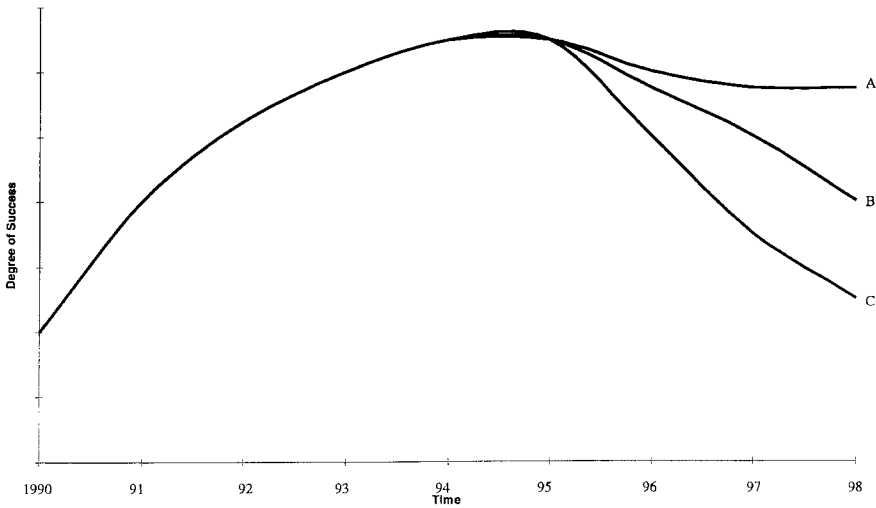
In order to assess each interviewee's view of the partnership over its whole lifetime they were asked to chart the partnership's success on a graph. Specific indicators of success are difficult to identify for partnerships, particularly when they have not been agreed at the start. In this case a simple distinction was made between success in terms of the outputs and achievements of the partnership at different points in its lifetime, and success in terms of process and the degree of collaborative working within the partnership. The results are summarised in Figures 5 and 6. There is no specific scale on the vertical axis and thus the heights of the curves drawn by individuals have been averaged to allow the shape of the curves to be compared.



**Figure 5** North Pennines Tourism Partnership – profile of success over time – outputs and achievements

The profiles drawn by interviewees were relatively consistent over the first four to five years of the partnership. In Figure 5, the pattern of achievements over time is seen to rise rapidly to a peak in 1993/4. After this most respondents drew a steep decline (A), whilst one saw a later rise in 1997/8 (B). However two respondents felt achievement levels had been maintained relatively high (C). Figure 6 reveals a flatter profile for partnership working with a start point above the bottom line indicating the collaborative efforts before the partnership was actually launched. The flatter curve represents the fact that partner relations have remained strong and joint working was maintained even through the difficult times. Profiles all showed a gradual rise to 1993–5, two respondents felt efforts had increased since then while the partnership went through difficulties (A), other felt efforts had tailed away either gradually (B), or more dramatically (C).





**Figure 6** North Pennines Tourism Partnership – profile of success over time – partnership working

This process highlights how different individuals and organisations have differing perceptions of levels of success according to their own nature and priorities. It points to the need for a common set of evaluative criteria. Despite this there was considerable agreement over the partnership's phases and the factors affecting them. Interpretations varied, for example all agreed about the problems in the later phases, but some interpreted this as representing less collaboration and others identified higher levels of collaboration in order to try to tackle the problems.

Considerable emphasis has been given to the influence of funding over the partnership's life cycle as all interviewees stressed this factor. This is largely due to the high level of involvement of public sector organisations and lower levels of community involvement. In another partnership with a high proportion of business or community involvement the reduction in external funding might not have such a major impact. The existence of higher levels of social capital might sustain a partnership longer. In the North Pennines, however, the sheer size of the area and the dispersed nature of business and communities would make this more difficult.

### Comparative Analysis

A simple comparative analysis of the lifespans of ten other partnerships was carried out in order to assess whether the results in the North Pennines were typical, whether the other partnerships followed different paths and what factors were most important in determining trajectories. The partnerships chosen were an opportunity sample utilising the knowledge of the interviewees

and author of other partnerships in Cumbria and Northumbria (Eden; Carlisle; Kielder; Hadrian's Wall; Till Valley; West Cumbria) and other areas (the Peak District; 'Kite Country' in Wales; plus Stirling and the Trossachs in Scotland; Caffyn, 1998 and forthcoming). These are summarised in Table 6. Further research using a more comprehensive sample would be helpful in testing the tentative conclusions more rigorously.

**Table 6** Comparator partnerships

<i>Partnership</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Started</i>	<i>Lifespan (years)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
Carlisle Tourism Development Action Programme	Cumbria	1988	4	Incorporated in strengthened district council remit
Eden Tourism Action Programme	Cumbria	1989	4	Incorporated in strengthened district council remit
Hadrian's Wall Tourism Partnership	Newcastle-Northumberland-Cumbria	1995	6	Ongoing – review scheduled for 2001
Kielder Partnership	Northumberland	1986	14	Ongoing
Kite Country Partnership	Mid Wales	1994	7	Ongoing after new funding agreed until 2001
Peak Tourism Partnership	Peak District National Park	1992	3	Split into three key initiatives each now led by a partner or as new independent sub-initiative
Stirling Initiative	Central Scotland	1993	10	Ongoing – established as 10 year initiative
Till Valley Partnership	Northumberland	1994	3	Incorporated in strengthened district council remit
Trossachs Trail Tourism Management Programme	Central Scotland	1993	5	Ongoing – possibly to be incorporated in new National Park
West Cumbria Tourism Initiative	Cumbria	1989	10	Ongoing – funding agreed until 2000

In all the cases funding sources and cycles appear to be key factors in the life-span of the partnerships. The Till Valley and the Peak Tourism Partnerships lasted only three years, i.e. one funding cycle, and were not renewed after the initial period of pledged funding support. Both the Eden Tourism Action Programme and Carlisle TDAP continued beyond three years (due partly to changes in project manager) but were absorbed into their respective district councils not long after. The other partnerships survived into a second three year funding phase. Another significant factor may be simple geography. Each of these four partnerships falls into a specific administrative boundary and could be continued by a single authority relatively easily – either the district council or national park.

Some partnerships such as the West Cumbria Tourism Initiative and the Kielder Partnership are still going after more than ten years, with funding commitments renewed periodically. The Stirling Initiative demonstrates a

different model whereby the involvement of central government, through the Scottish Office, and national agencies enabled a more ambitious tourism-led economic development initiative with an initial lifespan of ten years. While it may face some of the same problems as other partnerships it does not have to bid periodically for renewed support in the same way.

The Stirling example also demonstrates the role of political factors – as national government promoted it as a high profile initiative. In other areas partnerships demonstrate important alliances between two local authorities to tackle an issue – such as in West Cumbria. Equally if major private-sector partners see partnerships as valuable politically they are likely to continue to support them – possible factors in both West Cumbria and Kielder. Another factor may be the scope of the partnership. Those with more specific agendas such as environmental sustainability (e.g. the Trossachs and Kite Country) or heritage conservation (e.g. Hadrian's Wall) may have additional rationales for continuing. However funding is still fundamental to a decision to extend the life of a partnership.

There appears to be a range of possible options for tourism partnerships to take when they reach a certain point; either to continue, possibly in a revised format, or to bring the partnership to a close and continue its work via a different mechanism. The Scottish Tourism and the Environment Task Force Guidelines for Tourism Management Programmes identifies some strategy options and emphasises the importance of considering the long-term future of partnerships at a relatively early stage (Scotland's Tourism and Environmental Task Force, 1997).

Although examples of all were not identified in the study, there are eight possible options which suggest themselves from the earlier analysis:

- (1) A partnership may finish completely with no organisation picking up its role. No examples of this have been found, but it is obviously a possibility.
- (2) The work of the partnership may be taken up and continued by one partner. Eden, Till Valley and Carlisle are examples of this. It should be borne in mind that the commitment given by the local authority may diminish at a later stage, such as Carlisle's recent drastic cuts to its tourism budget.
- (3) A range of partners may take up the different strands of work the partnership was involved in. These could include local authorities, tourism associations, specific agencies, voluntary groups etc.
- (4) The partnership could spawn a series of independent more focused projects which continue. This is what happened in the Peak District where the initial partnership focused heavily on visitor management, interpretation and setting up an environment fund. These three main areas of work are now continuing; the visitor/traffic management led by the National Park and local authorities and the interpretation and environment fund as two independent projects. The partnership successfully developed mechanisms to continue its work after it finished.
- (5) The partnership could, of course, survive in more or less its original form as West Cumbria and Kielder have to date. This may not continue indefinitely and they may still be vulnerable to local authority spending cuts or the loss of European funding. These two cases have major private-sector partners

(British Nuclear Fuels and Northumbrian Water/Forest Enterprise respectively) and this may be a factor in their longevity.

- (6) The partnership could continue but in a more permanent form such as by becoming a limited company or trust.
- (7) The partnership may be absorbed into broader management or partnership arrangements as with the North Pennines. This route is also an option for the Trossachs as a National Park is being established in the wider area. Similarly Hadrian's Wall Tourism Partnership which currently works alongside the English Heritage led Hadrian's Wall management programme could potentially be absorbed into a broadened format
- (8) It would be feasible for the local community, businesses and/or voluntary organisations to continue a partnership independently, or with only minimal support from, the public sector. This would need considerable local commitment and organisational skills.

Various factors will determine how many of these options are available or suitable for particular partnerships. Waddock (1989) suggested that a partnership which survives must broaden its agenda periodically. This could be a crucial factor in continuing partnerships and also in those where the agenda is broadened to such an extent that it merges with a broader management framework – as with the North Pennines. If the partnership's objectives and areas of work have been very focused it may be possible to spawn new independent projects as happened in the Peak District, which can attract funding support themselves. The existence of powerful private sector partners may be crucial to continuing a partnership after early funding rounds.

Waddock (1989) describes the need to keep 're-hooking' partners with a broadening agenda – keeping them interested and committed to the work being done. This ties in with Miles (1980) description of the dangers of 'organisational drift'. He suggests that organisations need to transform themselves periodically in order to survive. Greiner (1972) and Huxham and Vangen (1994) warn of collaborative fatigue which may set in due to the pressures of ongoing partnership working. This could incorporate an element of boredom as partners' interest is taken by new, more exciting initiatives.

The most vital factor is resources – if funding sources begin to dry up and are not replaced by new sources the future for many partnerships will become less viable. For example the Kite Country Partnership has recently secured just 18 months EU funding to extend its life a little longer. In the UK, as European funding is reviewed and government funding through projects such as the Single Regeneration Budget become ever tighter, the question may become: how will it be possible to sustain any form of collaborative working of this kind? An alternative would be some form of largely voluntary and community programme. At an appropriate scale, with sustained local commitment and skills, much could be achieved.

Partnerships are by nature temporary. An ending is therefore a likely outcome whether it is sooner or later. This need not normally be termed a failure as many objectives may have been achieved but it would be much more beneficial to plan a positive end to a partnership and end on a high note, rather than drifting to an uncertain conclusion, as in the North Pennines.

## Tourism Partnership Life Cycle Model

This research aimed to develop a model of a typical life cycle trajectory. The model builds on the phases identified in Table 2, from the analysis of other life cycle models, but has been reformulated to incorporate the findings from the case study and the comparative analysis of other partnerships. It aims to merge the most appropriate elements of both theory and practice. The phases are now given titles and the model is expressed visually to better communicate changes in levels of success over a timescale.

The model (Figure 7) shows six phases through which a partnership may develop and the key characteristics of each phase. Firstly a *pre-partnership* phase in which the potential partners identify issues, explore ideas, formulate objectives, secure commitment and funding and develop a common purpose. The second is a relatively short *take-off* phase in which the partnership is launched formally, wider support for the partnership is sought, a project manager may be appointed, an inventory of resources and assessment of needs is carried out, there is a more precise definition of objectives, the work programme is finalised and there is a sense of mission and trust between partners. Third is a *growth* phase in which momentum builds, early projects are implemented and the partnership strives to establish its identity, both in the tourism market place and locally amongst the population and tourism businesses. The partnership explores options and expands activities and may begin to organise itself better, forming subgroups etc. At this stage there are likely to be characteristics of high partner commitment, high levels of innovation and personalised leadership.

The fourth phase is when the partnership is in its *prime* and has reached maturity and a certain stability. It has made significant achievements, achieved credibility and is held up as an example of good practice. It has often secured additional funding on the strength of this. A partnership may consolidate its activities and monitor achievements as implementation reaches its peak. Coordination and administration roles grow and activities may be decentralised or put out to tender. It would theoretically be possible to end a partnership at the end of this phase, but should the partnership continue there is likely to be a period of *deceleration* (Phase 5) and a gradual or perhaps more sudden decline, in which the partnership has stagnated or some uncertainty has entered. Partners begin to lose interest and question their commitment, project managers may have been replaced and there is a general loss of momentum and thus outputs. Partnerships would re-evaluate their objectives, and may reformulate and renew their commitment. At this point the partnership could stabilise and continue successfully for some years, perhaps at a different scale. Alternatively the decline may be terminal and a decision may be taken to formally end the partnership. The final phase proposed is a *continuation* period if the partnership survives, or the *'after-life'*, if it is formally brought to an close.

At this point a series of eight possible options (as previously listed) is suggested as to how the work of the partnership is continued by other mechanisms. The final phase can be 'bolted' on to the life-cycle curve after Phase 4 or 5.

The model suggests that a typical partnership may reach maturity after three years and begin to decline after six. Death or a need for some form of transformation might normally come after nine years if not before. The precise number of

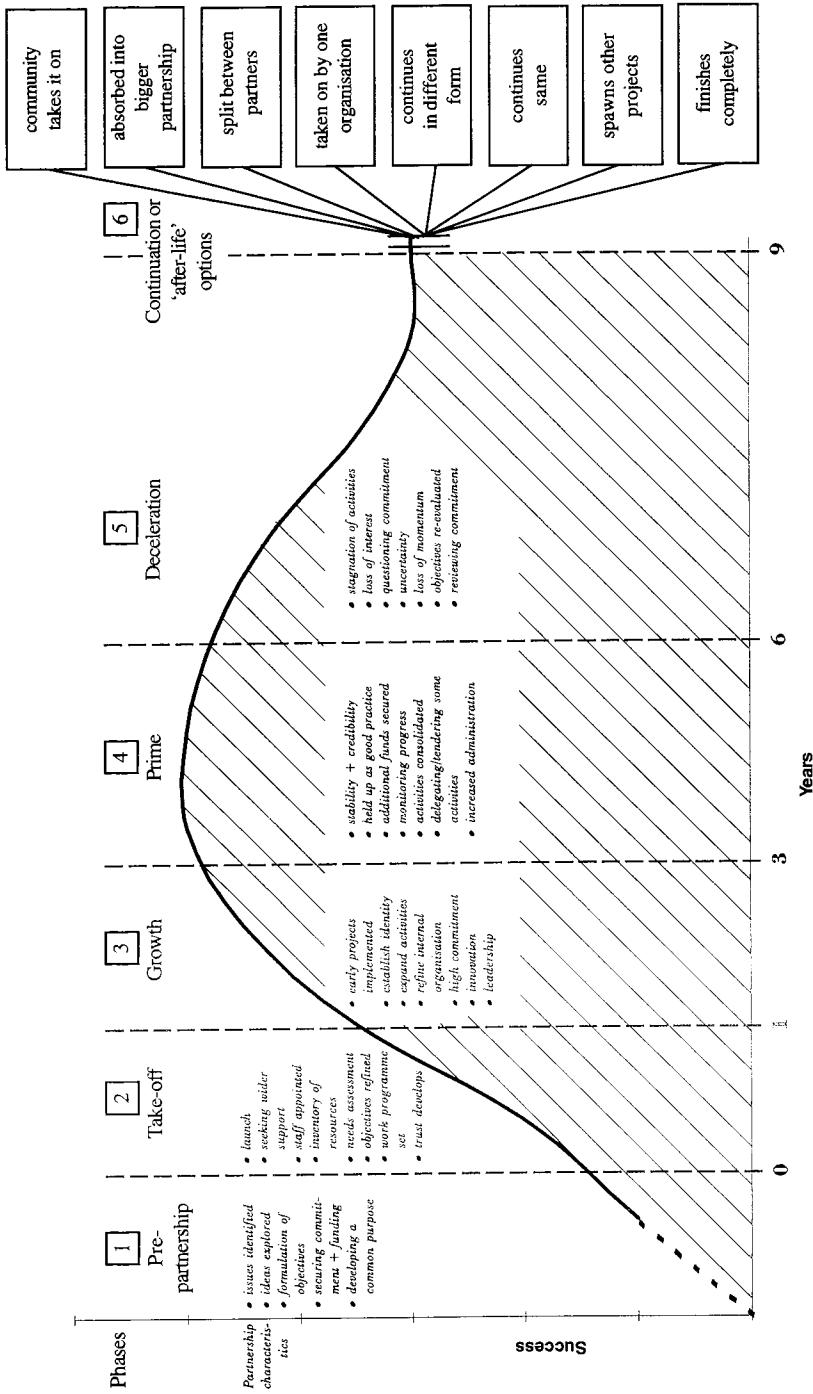


Figure 7 Tourism partnership life cycle model

years is not relevant but three year periods are suggested as these are often the cycles for agencies making funding commitments. Phase 5, the deceleration and decline, could be omitted in practice and an option from Phase 6 implemented before the partnership begins to decline. The scale on the vertical axis is left open. It is suggested that success may mean different things for different partnerships and that each should have its own measures of success. Further research is needed into indicators of success for partnerships which could be set out at the beginning of a collaboration and monitored regularly.

The North Pennines Tourism Partnership survived for nine years and broadly followed the model trajectory proposed. As in many cases there had been a longer period of pre-partnership collaboration and there were varying interpretations of how steep the decline in the last years was. The 'after-life' option in this case was being absorbed into a broader management structure.

The critical factors in determining both the trajectory and characteristics of the life cycle are the funding arrangements and also how successfully partners work collaboratively. Power struggles can influence the trajectory of a partnership enormously as they absorb energy and affect outputs. Similarly personalities in the form of project managers can be crucial. The speed at which a partnership can reach its peak of success, how high the peak is and how long it goes on for will be partly dependent on the ability of the project manager's co-ordinating role. Similarly the range of choices at the end of the partnership may be constrained by how the partnership operates during its lifetime.

The implications of the model are that decisions should be taken about the future of a partnership before decisions are forced upon it by circumstances. Partnerships need to debate pro-actively their continuation or after-life and when these should come into effect, rather than simply react to circumstances. If decisions are made in good time the transition can be planned and communicated to partners and local populations so that there is none of the uncertainty that surrounded the North Pennines for so long.

The model should also assist partnerships in visualising and managing their own development through different stages in the life cycle. It should enable a partnership to respond to change more effectively and understand the processes which influence its development. Quinn and Cameron (1983) point out how the criteria used to measure the effectiveness of an organisation should be different depending on where it is in the life cycle, as it will be trying to achieve different things in its early stages than in the mature or declining stages. This re-emphasises the importance of indicators of success. Decisions about whether and how to prolong partnerships would be made easier if clear evaluation criteria are applied regularly.

Any model will inevitably not fit all cases and it may be that just as Butler's Life Cycle Model is generally destination specific this model may be best viewed as partnership specific. While the biological metaphor of a life cycle is open to criticism the model will be useful in examining the factors which affect the development of successful partnerships. It may help partnerships plan for and manage both internal tensions and changes, and also minimise the impact of forces and changes in the external environment. It highlights the importance of evaluating progress and achievements at regular stages. Partnerships involve trying to maximise collaborative synergy between numerous partners in a

dynamic environment. The life cycle model may assist a partnership to steer a course for its future and make appropriate decisions to ensure the collaborative working continues regardless of whether the partnership does itself.

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