

The Green Place: An Ecolodge in Ikogosi-Ekiti, Nigeria

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My utmost thank is to God for letting me through all the difficulties. – Because of you Lord, I have completed this degree. I will keep trusting you in my future.

DEDICATION

To my mother – Erelu ‘Tunde ‘Funke Walsh, this project is a heartfelt dedication. Words fall short, but my gratitude knows no bounds. Thank you, Mom.

ABSTRACT

The Green Place is an ecolodge, established to provide tourists with great camping and campsites experiences while encouraging ecotourism and sustainable living. *The Green Place* will be in Ikogosi-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria and will be registered as a legal entity with the Nigerian Corporate Affairs Commission as required by law.

The Green Place seeks to provide friendly and environmentally sustainable lodging with 50 accommodation slots, which will be a campsite with 40 tents and 10 of conventional structure where individuals and families can have great tourist experiences.

This business plan is arranged into eight chapters and the conclusion, highlighting the concept of the business, an overview and description of the business with specific details of what the business will be offering the target market and the community where it will be located. This business plan also consists of the market analysis, competition analysis which have been used to develop a sales and marketing strategy.

This business plan highlights the operational plan for *The Green Place*, detailing Staffing and Training plan, Risk Assessment and Mitigation., Sustainability Plan and Costing and concludes with the Financial Forecasting.

Keywords: Ecolodge, sustainable living, Ikogosi – Ekiti.

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CHAPTER 1: *THE GREEN PLACE: AN ECOLODGE IN IKOGOSI EKITI, NIGERIA.*

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry is constantly growing and evolving and while during the COVID-19 era it was one industry that severely crashed, the post-COVID era despite scepticism has sprung back and interestingly with lots of more innovative ways to explore tourism. Several technologies have begun to introduce a seemingly substitute way to travel and explore the world, these technologies include virtual reality, augmented reality and what the IT world also refer to as mixed reality, this innovation is an intriguing new concept for the industry. Shamers, Thomas Paul (2021) in their article “Reviving tourism industry post-COVID-19: A resilience-based framework” review articles that evaluate how the tourism industry has fared in the aftermath of the COVID-19 outbreak. The article discusses the challenges posed by COVID-19 and how in the long run, it opens doors for local tourism, sustainable tourism, and ecotourism to be established and to take a definite stand in the tourism industry.

As tourism continues to grow around the world, Nigeria is not left behind. The country continues to develop its potential as a tourism destination. These potentials include cultural, natural, and manmade attractions, because Nigeria is richly endowed with natural, cultural, and geographical resources. Worthy of note is that Nigeria is relatively blessed with all year-round sun, allowing it to capture many tourist markets without season. These considerations are why in 1990, The National Tourism Policy was launched. The main thrust of Government policy on tourism was to generate foreign exchange earnings, create employment opportunities, promote rural enterprises and national integration, among other things (Ayeni & Ebohon, 2012).



Figure 1: Cultural tourism in Nigeria; the Argungu Fish Festival (Google Images, 2022)



Figure 2: Cultural tourism in Nigeria; the Argungu Fish Festival (Google Images, 2022)

Yet the crises in the country; industrial actions, Boko Haram insurgencies, the difficulty of obtaining a visa and the low state of technology and information dissemination has put Nigeria at a slow-paced growth in the tourism industry. According to the Nigeria Tourism Development Master Plan (2016), a poll of tour operators in the United Kingdom, Europe, and the United States of America found a lack of information or understanding of Nigeria

as a tourist destination. While over the years tourism in Nigeria might be growing, there is a gap of no minimal information in Nigeria's tourism industry and still so much the industry has not evolved into. This is why Nigeria is a place of choice to sustainably develop tourism, respecting both the environment and the local community. There are many unexplored territories that have remained isolated from the rest of the world.

The Green Place would be an ecolodge offering eco-friendly tourism and hospitality services to both domestic and international tourists. It aims to be deliberate about significantly reducing environmental impact through green practices and creating a hospitable and sustainable environment for visitors. *The Green Place* would be dedicated to creating a great motivation and possibility of interacting with nature, as well as environmental conservation and sustainability.

While hotels and lodges should provide tourists and visitors with not only accommodation but also access to food, refreshment and similar services, these facilities over the years have evolved. They have evolved beyond these, to taking on many other functions which include being a place of sociability, a place to publicly assemble and deliberate, for decorative showcasing, as political headquarters, vacation spots, and even permanent residences. Most of the services provided are integral to the tourism industry. Undoubtedly, the essence of this business is looking beyond the scope of the immediate gratification of the tourist or visitor but towards creating an eco-friendly environment where the natural environment is not destroyed but developed to further enhance comfort and healthy living. Understandably, the existence of lodges and hotels are not enough to help the development of tourism in certain destinations however the level of hospitality services should be in top gear to ensure that tourists become more satisfied with their visit which is what we seek to achieve.

The business concept is confident in its ability to develop loyal and excited clients through intelligent customer care. Our target market basically includes domestic and international tourists from the ages of 17 and above who are interested in ecotourism and visiting the south-western region of Nigeria. Lodgers can be accompanied by children and siblings, with no age restrictions applied. *The Green Place* will be situated at Ikogosi, Ekiti State. This is in Southwest Nigeria.

The business plan aims to address the necessity of a paradigm shift for the sustainable economic development of Nigeria, in which tourism plays a role of importance, especially

ecotourism. This means working towards economic diversification, away from a dependency that relies mostly on the agricultural sector, which Nigeria is mostly recognized for.

1.2 THE CONCEPT

Tourism is a large and rapidly increasing business that contributes significantly to global GDP. According to a 2020 World Travel and Tourism Council estimate, 10% of global GDP was influenced by the tourism industry. All these ranged from business tourism to cultural tourism. Other examples of these tourisms included ecotourism, culinary, medical, religious, sports and adventure tourism.

The International Ecotourism Society defines ecotourism as “responsible travel that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people”. The goal of ecotourism, sometimes known as "nature tourism," is to reduce the environmental impact of tourism. The concept is to use travel to connect conservation, communities, and sustainable development.

Another more concise and to-the-point definition is provided by Mary (2018), where they state that ecotourism is “responsible travel to natural areas that conserve the environment and improve the well-being of local people”. In practice, this indicates that the tourist is aware of the situation. Tourists should be conscious of their impact on both the local environment and the local people, and they should strive to decrease this damage within appropriate limitations. In addition, the tourist should aim to cause as little damage as possible while simultaneously supporting the local community wherever possible. Of course, this does not imply that the overall experience gets less enjoyable - just the contrary. This attitude of appreciation frequently leads to the tourists loving his trip much more.

It is also vital not to be tricked by nice words – a vacation is not "ecotourism" just because it is being advertised as such, a lot of companies will pitch holidays as eco-friendly without providing any evidence. Ecotourism has become one of the most rapidly growing segments of the tourism business, and tour operators will use eco-advertising to attract customers. Furthermore, when employed appropriately, ecotourism may make a significant impact and assist endangered species, hence the need to grow ecotourism the proper way and why the idea of *The Green Place* is developed.

The Green Place is a Nigerian-based firm that provides tourists with great experiences in the form of camps and campsites that encourages ecotourism and sustainable living. *The Green Place* would make every effort to be the most environmentally friendly lodging choice available in Ikogosi-Ekiti. It would be a place where individuals and families could feel at home while also gaining ideas about how to live more sustainably.

Key success factors include ensuring that guest services and interests are a priority and to specifically access, meet and exceed the expectations of guests.

The Green Place would also take economic and social sustainability into account by partnering with and encouraging local business owners to consider sustainable principles, as the concept is new in the state. The overview of Ekiti state is discussed in the next chapter while the final projection is discussed in the next chapter and would explain the profitability of the business. This would cover start-up costs, profit and loss statement, cash flow statement, and a five-year income projection.

CHAPTER 2: TOURISM SITE ASSESSMENT

The Green Place would be in Ikogosi town, Ekiti state, Nigeria with a coverage of about six acres of land, this ensures that it provides wholesome services to visitors. This space of land will include the campsite, parking lots, swimming area and gardens.

2.1 NIGERIA

Nigeria, also known as the Federal Republic of Nigeria, is a country that can be found in West Africa and has a total landmass of around 923,769 square kilometres. (356,669 sq mi). With a total population of 206.1 million people in the year 2020, it is the 32nd largest country in the world. (Data Catalog, 2022). The country of Nigeria is the most populated nation on the African continent and the seventh most populous country in the world. In the north, it is bounded by the Sahel, while in the south, it is surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean. Nigeria comprises 36 different states. The most populous city is Lagos, which also happens to be one of the most populous metropolitan areas in the entire globe and the second-most populous in Africa.

Over 250 different ethnic groups call Nigeria home, and the countries over 500 different languages reflect this diversity. In the Northern part are the Hausa people, in the Western part are the Yoruba people, and the Igbo people in the Eastern part, these make up the three major ethnic groupings. Because English is the official language, there is greater linguistic homogeneity across the nation because of this policy.

The economy of Nigeria is the largest in Africa, the 25th-largest in the world with a nominal GDP of 432.3 billion USD in 2020, and the 25th-largest economy in the world when measured by purchasing power parity. (Data Catalog, 2022). Because of its massive population and prosperous economy, Nigeria is frequently referred to as the giant of Africa. The World Bank classifies Nigeria as an emerging market, this is because it is believed that the nation has a very low score on the Human Development Index; this low ranking can be attributed to brain drain, an absence of incentives, and low incomes.

Nigeria is a member of various international organisations, including the United Nations, the Commonwealth of Nations, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the Economic Community of West African States, and the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries. Nigeria was also one of the founding members of the African Union.

The tourist industry in Nigeria has begun to experience a progressive expansion over the past several years, and this sector has been a substantial contribution to the country's overall economic growth. According to the country's National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), the tourism industry contributed 34% of Nigeria's gross domestic product (GDP) in 2017, while also being responsible for the creation of 20% of new jobs in the country.

The hospitality business in Nigeria is predominantly concentrated in the country's largest cities, such as Lagos, Port Harcourt, and Abuja. This business plan proposes to establish a model outside the major cities because the potential for both business and leisure travel across the nation can be significantly increased by expanding into smaller cities.

According to World Data Info, in 2016 there was a ratio of 0.025 tourists per inhabitant in Nigeria, which ranked the country 164th in the world and 8th in Western Africa for tourism. The tourist industry on its own contributed around 321.0 million US Dollars to the nation's economy. This amounts to 0.073 percent of the country's gross domestic product as well as nearly 34 percent of the revenues generated from international tourism in Western Africa. (*Tourism in Nigeria*).

2.2 EKITI STATE

The climate of the entire state of Ekiti is classified as tropical. It can be found at latitudes 70°151' and 80°51' north of the Equator and at longitudes ranging from 40°51' to 50°451' east of the Greenwich meridian. It is located to the south of the states of Kwara and Kogi, to the east of the state of Osun, and it is surrounded by the state of Ondo, with a total land area of 5887.890 square kilometres. There are 16 Local Government Councils in the state of Ekiti. The population of Ekiti State was expected to be 1,647,822 at the time of its inception on October 1st, 1996, and according to the results of a census carried out in 2006 by the National Population Commission, the total population of Ekiti State was determined to be 2,384,212. The capital of the state is in Ado-Ekiti.

The Ekiti are a subset of the Yoruba, and it is believed that their ancestors originated at Ile-Ife, which is the Yoruba people's spiritual home. Even if the native language is spoken with some slight modifications in each of the numerous communities, Ekiti natives are nevertheless able to understand one another. Multiple religions, including Christianity, Islam, and more traditional ones, are followed. The people that live in Ekiti are all of the same cultural background, and they speak a variant of the Yoruba language that is known as Ekiti. (Ekiti State, 2022)

2.3 IKOGOSI - EKITI

The town of Ikogosi-Ekiti can be found in the local government of Ekiti West. This is where the warm spring is situated. The warm spring originates from the hills that surround the valley, which is where the settlement is located. This resort centre is surrounded by extremely dense forest vegetation. This naturally abundant vegetation is meticulously cared for and kept safe from any arbitrary logging or cutting down of trees. This resort centre covers an area of about 31.38%, and it is exceptionally well-protected against erosion thanks to the presence of large evergreen trees. During the dry season and on days with a lot of sunshine, these trees not only provide shade but also act as a sort of canopy that people may rest under. The aesthetic splendour of this tourist area is enhanced further by the undulating terrain found throughout the entirety of the centre as well as the symmetrical arrangement of the hills that surround it. It is only a few kilometres to the Warm Spring, which is the tourist haven in Nigeria. There is a pass that goes through the tourist centre and leads to the similarly famed Erinta Waterfalls, which are located at Ipole Iloro. The state of Ekiti has a substantial amount of untapped potential for tourism. About 55 kilometres separate Ikogosi from Akure, the capital of Ondo State. Ikogosi can be found in the Ekiti West Local Government Area, which is around 40 kilometres away from Ado-Ekiti, the capital of the state of Ekiti.

2.4 IKOGOSI WARM SPRING

The source of the spring may be found in Ikogosi - Ekiti. The water from the warm spring and the water from the cold spring flow together in the same spring. The Ikogosi region is home to both warm and cold springs, which both emerge from very close quarters, eventually converging at a common place, and then run downstream together while keeping their own thermal identities. It is the only instance of its kind ever recorded anywhere in the globe; therefore, it is truly one of a kind. The spot at which the warm springs and the cold springs come together is a singular destination for tourists. The springs emerge with a consistent temperature and volume of up to 150 litres/seconds from daylight till night, during all seasons, all year round. Additionally, the springs are always present. The natural state of the spring and its surrounding area has been preserved in its entirety for the purpose of promoting ecotourism, and a viewing platform has been erected near the warm spring's point of origin to make it simpler for visitors to observe the phenomenon.

The renowned healing properties of the Ikogosi Warm Spring are yet another one of its standout characteristics. It is widely thought that it possesses some form of medicinal action that can alleviate various disorders as well as aches and pains in the body. A great number of tourists who come to this location make use of the enormous swimming pool with warm water and the variety of other recreational opportunities that are available there. In addition to that, it is the birthplace of the 5-star Gossy Brand Spring Water that is bottled by UAC of Nigeria.

Ikogosi is a sleepy and unassuming village located in the southwestern part of Nigeria; yet this hamlet has been thrust into the national and worldwide spotlight due to the presence of a hot spring. (ekititourism.com, 2021)

The Ikogosi Warm Spring is unique in that it has a cold spring that flows concurrently with it. This is the Ikogosi Warm Spring's defining characteristic. According to Kukoyi (2014), this is a geographical wonder since out of the same rock formation pours both degrees of water. As a result, it has become a prominent tourist site in the state of Ekiti. Jimoh (2012) reported that the temperature of the water in the springs remains the same throughout the entire year, in each season, both morning and night.



Figure 3: Map of Nigeria, highlighting Ekiti state.



Figure 4: Map of Ekiti State

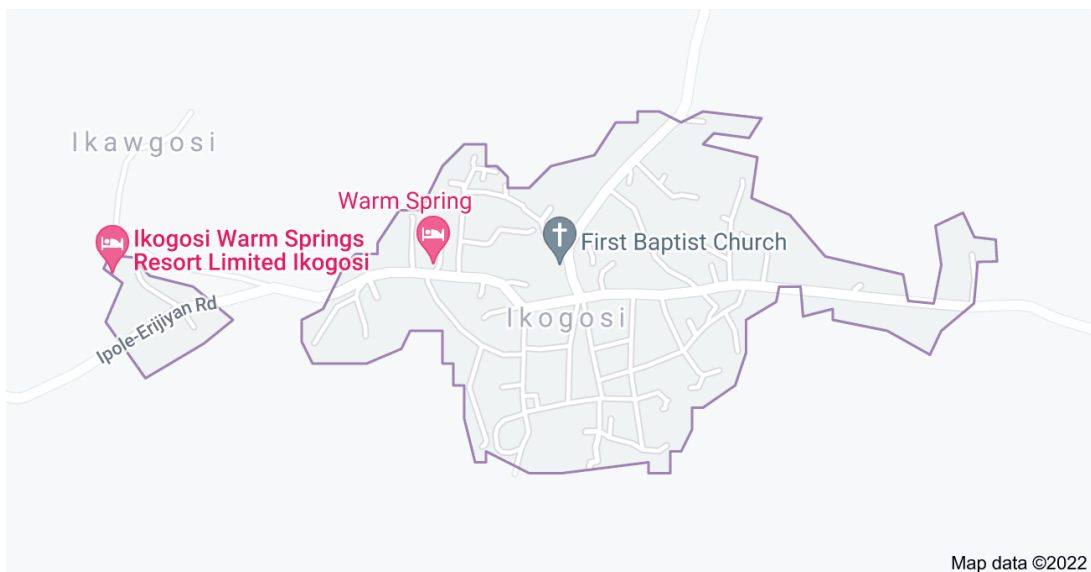


Figure 5: Map of Ikogosi - Ekiti (Google Maps)

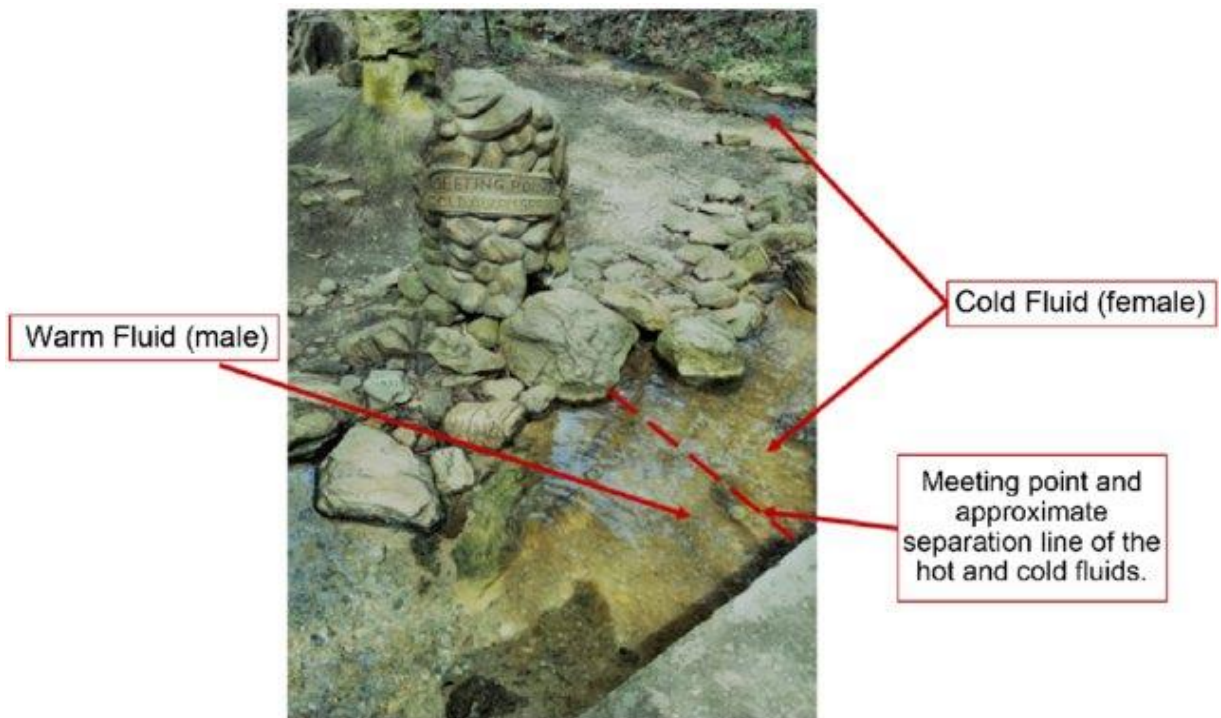


Figure 6: The Conflux of The Cold and Warm Water, (D. Chandrasekharam & Bundschuh, 2008)

2.5 IKOGOSI TOURISM INVENTORY SWOT ANALYSIS

This section focuses on the SWOT analysis for a comparison. The section has 4 tables that compare various aspects of what constitutes tourism services. The natural and cultural attractions, recreational activities and tourism infrastructures are highlighted.

Table 1: Natural Attractions of Ikogosi

Attraction	Description	Strength/ Opportunity	Weakness/ Threat
Warm springs	The existence of the spring brings a distinct lifestyle to the town, different from other surrounding towns in the state.	Excellent conditions for a variety of water sports in the area carved out as a pool.	Warm water temperatures all year round. 30 - 32°C.

		Direct accessibility and visibility.	Possible pollution from tourism.
Mild weather	Warm temperate, Mediterranean with an average of 30°C Sunlight and temperatures like Central California.	Summer season extends longer into fall with ample sunshine and least amounts of precipitation and wind.	Poor insulation of buildings leads to unpleasant interior temperatures and humidity.

Table 2: Cultural Attractions of Ikogosi

Attraction	Description	Strength/ Opportunity	Weakness/ Threat
Gastronomy	A few restaurants that sell a wide range of African delicacies with a wide range of price and quality.	Local cuisine is authentic with excellent quality to price ratio. A thriving palm wine culture. Locally grown vegetables and fruits.	There is room for more high-end restaurants. Vegetarian or vegan culture in restaurants is almost non-existent.

Table 3: Recreational Activities of Ikogosi

Attraction	Description	Strength/ Opportunity	Weakness/ Threat

Walks, hikes, bike rides	There are many flat surfaces both paved and dirt that allow simply trekking opportunities in varied locations throughout the county, many offering solitude in safe environments.	Each zone of the county offers distinct experience	There is room for improvement on adding bike lanes and connecting the neighbourhoods better. Lack of signage or centralised information on this topic.
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Table 4: Tourism Infrastructures

Attraction	Description	Strength/ Opportunity	Weakness/ Threat
Access	Ikogosi-Ekiti is about 35 minutes' drive from the state capital and about 5 hours' drive from the Lagos international airport.	High speed motorways with virtually no traffic outside major metropolitan areas. An easy one drive from the state capital.	Deserted roads in some states.

Accommodation	The one standard accommodation is the motel available at the warm springs run by the Ekiti state government.	Regular upgrades and proper renovations.	Lack of high enough accommodations facilities, which leave tourists having to go back to the state capital on the same day, most times. Non-substantial investment, except by the government.
Tourism office	A small tourism office in Ado - Ekiti; about 40 km from the town, offering basic touristic information.	Kind staff. Opportunity to create an online portal in conjunction with official tourism and government stakeholders.	Limited wealth of information to offer. Visual communication and narrative are almost non-existent. Lacking strength in supply chain.
Supermarkets	Non-existent supermarkets. Access to high quality product is mostly available in Ado - Ekiti; about 40 KM from the town,	Opportunity to provide access to quality products essential to tourists at <i>The Green Place</i> .	Lack of enough supermarkets.
Medical facilities	Clean and accessible health centre in Ikogosi.	Clean health centres. English is widely understood.	The health centre is less equipped than the state-owned hospital in Ado - Ekiti.

Parking	Ample parking with easy access.	Parking is free with very easy access and ample space. Relaxed laws for camper van parking and camping.	Lack of police presence in parking lots. Trash in parking lots from camper vans and tourists.
Roads	Most roads are well marked and are paved urban roads.	Flat topography. Well maintained. Many roundabouts with little traffic lights. Rarely traffic problems	Tailgating and overtaking is commonplace despite the narrow roads. Some drivers are unaware of driving etiquettes.

2.6 LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY BUSINESS IN EKITI STATE

Nigeria's tourism industry is regulated by the following set of laws governing business entry/establishment generally in Nigeria:

1. The Companies and Allied Matters Act Cap C20, LFN 2004; governs the formation and regulation business entities in Nigeria.
2. The Companies Income Tax Act Cap C21, LFN 2004; regulates income tax payable by companies.
3. The National Office for Technology Acquisition and Promotion Act Cap N62, LFN 2004; regulates the acquisition of foreign technology.
4. The Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission Act Cap N17, LFN 2004; regulates foreign investment in Nigeria.

The industry specific regulation for tourism at the Federal level is the Nigeria Tourism Development Corporation (NTDC) Act Cap N137, LFN 2004. The NTDC Act establishes

the NTDC as the apex regulatory governance body for the tourism industry in Nigeria. The NTDC Act also provides for the establishment of a State Tourism Board in each State which is expected to assist the NTDC in implementing the provisions of the NTDC Act. It is important to note that some States in the country have also enacted laws to regulate tourism within their region. For instance, the laws regulating tourism in Lagos State include the Hotel Licensing (Amendment) Law 2010 and the Lagos State Hotel Proprietors Law 1990. Historically, the Nigerian government's initial involvement in the tourism industry commenced post-independence with the formation of the Nigeria Tourist Association (NTA), which was registered in 1964 as a full member of the International Union of Official Travel Organization (IUOTO), the antecedent of the United Nations World Tourism Organization.

In the following years, other developments made within the industry were:

1. The military administration in 1976, promulgated Decree 81 which established the Nigeria Tourism Board (NTB).
2. In 1982, the development of a master plan on tourism in Nigeria started, leading to the 1990 National Trade and Tourism Policy (NTTP).
3. In 1992, the Nigeria Tourism Development Corporation (NTDC) Act was enacted under which the NTB transformed into the NTDC. The NTDC Act mandated the NTDC to promote, develop and regulate tourism in Nigeria.
4. In 2006, the NTTP was replaced by the Nigerian Tourism Development Master Plan (NTDMP). This 2006 master plan addresses the scope of foreign ownership and foreign direct investment (FDI), how tourism investment rights are protected, and the time and cost required for setting up a tourism business in Nigeria.

There has been no recent policy in respect of legal and regulatory development beyond what has been highlighted above. There has been no amendment made to the 1992 NTDC Act to adequately reflect the current global trends and development in the tourism industry. Although regulatory movement has happened more in a few states of the Federation such as Lagos and Ekiti State which have enacted laws regulating hotels, food, gaming and liquor business, there are still aspects of tourism which are not specifically addressed by either federal or state laws.

Ekiti State has an established State Bureau of Tourism saddled with the following responsibilities.

- Tourist Attraction Development.
- Regulate local & international tourism investors.
- Interstate Government, partnership, affiliation & Collaboration with tourism bodies worldwide.
- Training/HR Capacity Building.
- Viable partnerships with the Private sector (PPP's & Concessions).
- Commercialization.

CHAPTER 3: BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

This section delves into the physical space of the business site and investigates the structure and setup of *The Green Place*. The business' focus is to use the physical space proficiently, such that the natural state of Ikogosi is maintained, and the land does not undergo damaging changes.

3.1 BUSINESS OVERVIEW

The Green Place offers an unusual kind of accommodation in Ekiti state. Located in the quiet town of Ikogosi - Ekiti, a few towns away from the state capital. The business site is a safe and calm retreat away from the state capital, it is less than one hour's drive from the Ado - Ekiti, the state capital. *The Green Place* offers around 50 accommodation slots, which will be campsites with tents 40 and 10 of conventional structure. The amenities provided by each campsite are showers, toilets, and kitchenette facilities where tourists can cater to personal needs. These amenities will be provided to all accommodation slots and also distributed in common areas for easy and quick access to tourists if the need arises. The general kitchen facility will be available from 07 hours to 22 hours, while the general toilet and showers will be available round the clock. The reception area will also be available for 24 hours, this is for check-ins and check-outs and general inquiries and complaints for both residents and visitors. These are conventional structures.

Beside the reception area is an area dedicated for guests to enjoy the outdoors and interact with other guests if they desire. This area will have plants, trees and vegetation providing both shelter and privacy. This area will create an ecologically conducive environment. All of the connecting pathways to site amenities and lodges will have various sustainability snippets and colourful information on plant life and eco-friendly lifestyles such as can be found in zoos.

These structures can be subject to replacements and redesigns as the need arises and in more expansion for the business. *The Green Place* is committed to having as little impact as possible on the environment, hence reducing the need for resources without impacting the comforts of the locals. The core of this business is sustainability, and as such the idea is to show that even without building high-end infrastructures, tourists both local and international can be accommodated in comfort.

The Green Place is committed to encourage eco-friendly awareness without compromising the tourist's experience. The guests enjoy their stay with us and are yet inspired to a better awareness of the surrounding and to promoting sustainability in all possible spheres.

3.2 NEEDS STATEMENT

Developed countries have technologies and such efficiencies that life in Nigeria does provide. This obstacle has affected social and infrastructural development. There is also the situation of lack of a budget allocation for civil construction. Developments like energy efficiency is simply a growing term and things like thermal insulation, even in the core Northern part of the country that is prone to the cold weather is alien. Innovation and sustainability should be a high priority for the nation, as cities such as Abuja, Lagos, Port Harcourt continue to attract a large market of tourists, both local and international. *The Green Place* through proper research can address the economic and environmental issues by staying ahead of this curve and developing dynamic features, products, and ideals.

3.2.1 ECONOMIC NEEDS

In 2021 the minimum wage in Nigeria reached NGN30'000 per month which as of 23, April 2023 on oanda.com is \$65.07 per month. A Nigerian newspaper, The Premium Times on 21 January 2023 has described this as “grossly inadequate and not able to meet basic nutritional needs”. Coupled with this, is that “in 2022 the employment rate in Nigeria is now only estimated to reach 33%. This figure was projected at 32.5% in the preceding year” (*Nigeria: Forecast Unemployment Rate 2021-2022, 2022*)

More businesses established through investments will not only mean more taxable revenues but certainly employment creation. A micro-SME can give the employee a stronger sense of purpose and accountability within the organisation which helps build an emotional attachment and dedication to the job”. The salaries for these micro-SMEs can be motivating. They should be recorded and taxed, while the focus remains providing employment to the national youth demographic, who have either remained unemployed or are being forced to migrate.

More local SMEs can have an economic sustainability goal and start and or continue to adapt jobs that are available in all seasons of the year with decent wages and a prospect of career advancement.

3.2.2 SOCIAL NEEDS

The Green Place creates an environment for socialising between tourists, employees of the lodge and the host community. An environment that is devoted to the mutual interest of the town's image and ethics. When innovative businesses are established with focus on development of social competencies, the residents are encouraged to be a part of a better future for their town.

3.2.3 ENVIRONMENTAL NEEDS

In their 2013 paper titled "Environmental Impact of Tourism: Implications for Nigeria's Tourism Development," Ngoka, Ochor, and Dike discuss the environmental impact of tourism in Nigeria. They assert that unchecked tourism can kill or stunt vegetation when throngs of visitors tramp through conservation areas, which is something that can be observed when visiting tourist destinations that receive many visitors annually. The pressure exerted by foot traffic and automobiles can deteriorate tourist destinations. Also, waste disposal can influence the soil. In India, for example, the Taj Mahal is deteriorating because of visitor traffic, and in Egypt, the monuments face the same problem.

Additionally, souvenir hunting can impact a region's ecological equilibrium. Hunting for trophies, collecting species such as corals, and stealing wildlife resources from protected areas can result in the extinction of species. Some of these actions may be carried out by locals to sell to both domestic and international tourists. The capture and harvesting of wildlife for tourist souvenirs can have a direct impact on wildlife. Sometimes, live creatures are also sold as pets.

The Green Places' promotion of ecotourism means that activities like local souvenir hunting will not be encouraged, and the goal of the site will be preserved as best as possible, with options such as solar lights.

Some of the negative fallout of unsustainable tourism that *The Green Place* mitigates against include loss of natural habitat, theft of resources from natural resorts, species extinction, zero environmental education. However, if eco-friendly tourism is promoted there will be an avoidance of pollution, involvement of indigenous people in natural protected areas on site, optimum use of site for tourism, that is, avoiding an overuse of the site and environmental education.

While mass tourism is not currently a problem in Nigeria, it is essential that environmental concerns be incorporated into the country's tourism practices. Nigeria still has the time to

avoid the occurrence of other regions that have not integrated sustainability in their tourism development and management.

3.3 MISSION STATEMENT

The Green Place is an eco-friendly facility located approximately 40 kilometres and about an hour's journey from Ekiti state's capital. The facility offers visitors a stimulating form of eco-friendly lodging. Combined with exceptional service, the business mission is to enhance visitors' beautiful experience. *The Green Place* is passionate about the region and the tourists who visit, both domestic and international, and are confident that it can accelerate the necessary change for a sustainable form of lodging and destination tourism.

The Green Place promotes eco-friendly tourism in the tourism industry, where negative impacts to the host state and local community is reduced, yet still providing a unique experience to lodgers and visitors alike.

3.4 VISION STATEMENT

In five years, *The Green Place* will become a recognized destination for sustainable accommodation in Southwestern Nigeria. Marketing efforts combined with a sustainable operation will aid in achieving a consistent stream of bookings.

Essentially, what *The Green Place* aims to realise during year 1 to year 5 are;

- Make the sites available for rent by brands that promote sustainability, during off-peak periods.
- From the very first year, work with destination management organisations that promote sustainability and ecotourism.
- In its second year, be a recognized host for an artist exhibition, team building/ company retreats.

3.5 PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

This section highlights the services and products for *The Green Place*. We will also look at how to mitigate against possible problems that might materialise.

3.5.1 THE GREEN PLACE TENTS AND ENVIRONS

The Green Place will offer a fully equipped facility while the business will stay true to its original idea. It will provide basic luxurious comforts. There will be two choices to pick from for the tent sizes. A standard sized tent of 12 x 12 feet - which can comfortably

accommodate three people and a larger sized tent of 15 x 24 feet - which will be available for large families or groups.

Solar lights, simple furniture and mattresses and dressings will be available in all tents. The tents will be lightweight, spacious, and created with recycled fabric that are free of PFCs, PFASs, and fire-retardant chemicals. The tent will be constructed from 100% Global Recycled Standard (GRS)–certified yarns. These materials are environmentally friendly.

Recycling will make up most *The Green Place's* waste management practises once it opens. Plastic, paper, glass, and metal will be among the goods that can be recycled, in addition to compost, technological waste, batteries, and light bulbs. Appropriate containers for each kind of waste will be provided around the lodge. Also, understanding that some guests might not be aware of which types of materials can be recycled, information about which items can be recycled will also be offered in various locations throughout the property.

Other waste disposal methods will include composting, here food waste will be used for fuel for the plants and gardens, this will help limit carbon footprint when the food waste comes in excess they will be donated to a public garden or farms in the town of Ikogosi-Ekiti. Wastes that cannot be composite or recycled will be limited to about 25% of the total waste.

3.5.2 ADDITIONAL SERVICES

The reception area asides being used for check-ins and check-outs will sell basic supplies like toiletries, cold drinks, fruits, and snacks. This is especially necessary as the closest supermarket might not be a walking distance.

Other services will include but will not be limited to handicap facilities, bicycle rentals, parking lot, safe deposit boxes, a quiet area for yoga and a recycling station. The lodge will also provide residents with resources on events, culture and history of the town and the region, look to enhance an interest in eco-tourism and active adventures like hiking and swimming. All services' key focus will be on giving the residents and visitors a natural, clean land comfortable space.

3.6 BUSINESS STRUCTURE

The Green Place business will be registered as a private liability company with the Corporate Affairs Commission of Nigeria (CAC). Businesses in Nigeria must be incorporated with the CAC in accordance with the Companies and Allied Matters Act LFN 2004. The private liability company is different from a public limited company (PLC) in that it will not be listed on stock exchange and its shares will not be publicly traded. The

business will remain limited by shares and will be a legally separate business entity. (*Advantages Of Company Limited by Shares Over Business Name in Nigeria*, 2020).

Some of the legal benefits of this structure are;

- The business is a separate legal entity, which means that any misconduct is held against the corporation separately. Any legal action is brought against the company rather than its directors.
- There are checks and balances in private firms limited by shares. As a result, a company's control is in the hands of its board of directors or shareholders in their shareholding capacity.
- Another significant advantage is that when the lone proprietor or proprietors die, the business dies and ceases to exist. A private business limited by shares, on the other hand, enjoys eternity and can survive the directors after their death.

CHAPTER 4: MARKET ANALYSIS

Over the course of the past several years, Nigeria's travel and tourism sector has experienced substantial expansion. As a result of the rise in the number of tourists, both domestic and foreign, sustainable tourism practices are required to lessen the detrimental effects that tourism has on the natural environment. In recent years, ecotourism as a concept has seen a rise in popularity, and there has been an increase in the number of hotels that have earned the ecolabel certification. Even though the foregoing is accurate, it is interesting to note that Ikogosi-Ekiti, which is well-known for its famed Ikogosi Warm Spring, and which is a prominent tourist destination, does not currently provide eco-labelled hotels that are satisfactory for tourists. Ikogosi Ekiti has the potential to become a major tourist attraction due to the distinctive combination of its rich cultural heritage, fascinating history, and breathtaking natural scenery. In recent years, there has been a growing demand for hotels that are ecologically friendly and that respond to the requirements of tourists who are environmentally concerned.

4.1 GEOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS

4.1.1 GLOBAL TOURISM

In 2019, the Global Sustainable Tourism Council in their article “Criteria for hotels and tour operators” discussed that in recent years, the global tourism industry has seen substantial expansion, culminating in a record-breaking number of international tourist arrivals in 2018. In 2018, there were 1.4 billion international tourists. This illustrates the continuing popularity of travel as a leisure activity and marks a 6% increase over the previous year's numbers. This expansion can be linked to several different factors, including the decrease in the cost of air travel, the expansion of the middle class in developing economies, and the advent of social media as a platform for finding travel inspiration and making reservations. UNWTO (2019), states that destinations in the Asia-Pacific area, such as Thailand, Japan, and China, are seeing an increase in the number of tourists visiting their countries in recent years, making this region the leader in global tourism expansion. Over 343 million tourists from other countries arrived in the region last year, which represents a 7% rise compared to the year before. Europe and the Americas both saw considerable growth in visitor numbers, with Europe seeing a 6% increase and the Americas seeing a 3% increase.

The COVID-19 pandemic, however, has had a substantial influence on the tourism industry, resulting in a steep fall in the number of international visitors as a result of travel restrictions

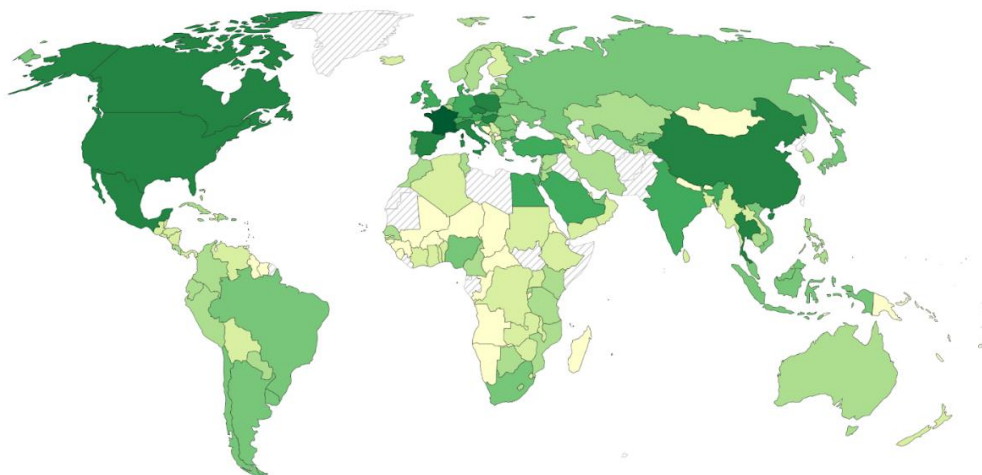
and lockdowns caused by the epidemic. When compared to the previous year, international visitor arrivals dropped by 74% in the year 2020, which resulted in a loss of over 1 trillion dollars in revenue generated by tourism. As a result of rising vaccination rates and loosening regulations, the tourism industry is gradually making a comeback, with some nations, like the United States and Spain, reporting an increase in domestic tourism.

Long-term projections for the tourism industry continue to point towards growth and prosperity, despite the obstacles presented by the pandemic. The World Tourism Organization forecasts that the number of international tourists will reach 1.8 billion by the year 2030. This increase will be driven by several causes, including an increase in the amount of disposable income people have, the rise in popularity of experiencing travel, and the development of sustainable tourism (Smith, 2022).

However, to remain competitive, the sector will need to adjust to the shifting interests of its customers and handle problems such as excessive tourism and the negative impact that travel has on the environment. Tourism must be conducted in a way that is both responsible and sustainable if it is to be of benefit to local communities and to facilitate cultural exchange. This requires collaboration between local governments and private firms.

International tourist arrivals, 2020

International tourists are those who stay overnight and whose main purpose for visiting is not commercial.



Source: World Tourism Organization (via World Bank)

OurWorldInData.org/tourism • CC BY

Figure 7: International Tourist Arrivals for 2020

4.1.2 NATIONAL TOURISM

The tourism business in Nigeria is one of the most important contributors to the country's GDP, and in recent years, Nigeria has seen significant expansion in this area. The Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (NBS) reports that the country's tourism industry was responsible for 4.8% of the country's gross domestic product in 2019. In addition, the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) found that the industry was responsible for the creation of 1.8 million jobs in Nigeria, which represented 2.2% of the country's entire workforce. This demonstrates that the tourist industry is a substantial contributor to the economy of Nigeria. The cultural heritage of the country is one of the things that is contributing to the expansion of the tourism industry in Nigeria. The nation of Nigeria is home to many distinct ethnic groups, each of which maintains its own distinct history, customs, and practises. Visitors come to Nigeria to immerse themselves in the country's various cultures and gain a deeper understanding of its past. The National Museum in Lagos, the Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove, and the Ogbunike Caves are three of the most well-known cultural attractions in all of Nigeria.

Natural attractions in Nigeria are another factor that is contributing to the country's growing tourism industry. The African nation of Nigeria is home to several beautiful natural sights, such as waterfalls, beaches, and wildlife reserves. These natural treasures are a lure for tourists since they offer opportunities for activities such as hiking, swimming, and seeing wildlife. The Yankari National Park, Olumo Rock, and the Erin-Ijesha Waterfalls are among the most well-known of Nigeria's many breathtaking natural landmarks.

Furthermore, the government of Nigeria has been making attempts to grow the tourism industry by investing in infrastructure and advertising the country's potential as a tourist destination. In 2018, the government of Nigeria unveiled a national tourism development master plan to serve as a roadmap for the country's continued growth in the tourist industry. Included in the strategy are attempts to enhance infrastructure, increase tourism within the country, and attract investment from elsewhere.

However, the Nigerian tourism industry is still confronted with obstacles, including insecurity, limited infrastructure, and visa limitations. It is necessary for the government of Nigeria to find solutions to these problems to fully realise the potential of the tourism industry and to entice a greater number of tourists to visit the country.

The tourist industry in Nigeria has been witnessing growth over the past few years, which can be attributed to the country's cultural and natural attractions as well as the efforts of the

government to support the development of the tourism industry. Nevertheless, for the industry to realise its full potential, there are still several obstacles that need to be overcome.

4.1.3 EKITI STATE TOURISM

The state of Ekiti, which can be found in the southwestern part of Nigeria, is a region that has been richly endowed with natural wonders, cultural heritage, and historical significance. The state's tourism industry has seen tremendous growth in recent years, with an increase in the number of visitors coming from both inside the country and outside the country to enjoy the state's rich cultural history and breathtaking natural landscapes. The rise in tourism has resulted in an increase in the amount of money that is brought into the state government, as well as the formation of new job possibilities and the expansion of the tourism industry overall.

According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) report in 2019, the tourism industry contributed 34.2% to Nigeria's GDP, with the Ekiti state government playing a critical role in enhancing the growth of the sector. The government has invested in the development of tourist attractions and infrastructure to create a conducive environment for tourism growth in the state. One of the major tourist attractions in Ekiti state is the Ikogosi Warm Spring, a natural wonder that attracts many tourists from around the world.

The state government has also taken steps to promote the cultural heritage of Ekiti state by organising various cultural festivals and events throughout the year. For example, the Ekiti Parapo Festival celebrates the unity and cultural diversity of the state, attracting visitors from all over Nigeria and beyond. The government has also provided support to local artisans and craftsmen, encouraging the development of the state's handicraft industry.

The tourism industry in Ekiti state is expected to experience further growth in the coming years, as the state government continues to invest in the development of tourist attractions and infrastructure. However, challenges such as inadequate funding, poor road networks, and security concerns need to be addressed to ensure sustained growth of the tourism industry in Ekiti state. The government can seek partnerships with private investors to secure funding for tourism development projects. Additionally, improving the road networks to tourist destinations and ensuring adequate security measures are in place will enhance the safety and convenience of tourists. Addressing these challenges will not only attract more tourists to the state but also create job opportunities and stimulate economic growth in the tourism sector.

4.2 MARKET SIZE AND GROWTH POTENTIAL

The market size for ecolodges in Ikogosi Ekiti is relatively small but growing. According to a report by the World Tourism Organization, sustainable tourism is one of the fastest-growing segments in the tourism industry. The report states that sustainable tourism has grown by 65% over the past decade, and it is expected to continue to grow at a rate of 4-5% per year.

With the Nigerian hospitality industry there has also been significant growth in recent years, with the hotel industry expected to reach a market size of \$3.3 billion by 2023 (Market Research Future, 2018). With a population of about 3.5 million people, Ekiti state, where Ikogosi Ekiti is located, is one of Nigeria's fastest-growing states. (World Population Review, 2021). Ekiti state's tourist economy is currently underdeveloped, with a limited number of hotels and attractions. (Travel Start, 2021).

4.2.1 DEMAND

There is a growing demand for sustainable tourism practices in Nigeria, with more tourists seeking eco-friendly accommodations (Travel Start, 2021). According to a report by Jumia Travel, the leading online travel agency in Africa, 71% of Nigerian tourists prefer to book eco-friendly accommodations (Jumia Travel, 2019). Furthermore, a survey by Booking.com found that 87% of global tourists want to travel sustainably (Booking.com, 2020). This is a big opportunity for an ecolodge in Ikogosi, Ekiti, to capitalise on Nigeria's increasing market for sustainable tourism. The hotel can demonstrate its dedication to sustainable measures, such as energy and water saving, waste reduction, and the use of ecologically friendly items, by getting an ecolabel certification. This would not only attract eco-conscious tourists but will also help to preserve the local ecosystem and community. The hotel can also provide activities and experiences that promote sustainable tourism, such as nature walks, organic farming excursions, and cultural immersion programmes. By integrating sustainable tourism techniques, the hotel in Ikogosi-Ekiti may separate itself from competitors and create a unique and memorable experience for customers that respect sustainability.

4.3 MARKET SEGMENTATION

The market for ecolodges in Ikogosi Ekiti can be segmented into two main categories: leisure tourists and business tourists. Leisure tourists are individuals who travel for pleasure and relaxation, while business tourists are individuals who travel for work-related purposes. Both segments are important for the success of an ecolodge in Ikogosi Ekiti.

4.4 TARGET MARKET

The target market for an ecolodge in Ikogosi Ekiti is environmentally conscious tourists who are looking for sustainable accommodation options. This includes tourists who are interested in reducing their carbon footprint and supporting eco-friendly initiatives. The hotel can also target tourists who are interested in experiencing the natural beauty and cultural heritage of Ikogosi Ekiti.

4.5 COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS

There are currently no ecolodges in Ikogosi Ekiti. However, there are several eco-friendly hotels in the neighbouring towns and cities. These hotels include the Federal Palace Hotel in Lagos, the Eko Hotels and Suites in Lagos, and the Le Meridien Ogeyi Place in Port Harcourt. These hotels have a strong presence in the market and offer a range of amenities and services to their guests. The closest of these hotels is the Eko Hotels and Suites in Lagos, which is approximately a six-hour drive from Ekiti state. They are located outside of Ikogosi Ekiti and do not offer the same natural and cultural experiences as an ecolodge in Ikogosi Ekiti.

4.5.1 BUILDING A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

Despite the lack of competition currently, it is important to note that models can spring up soon, hence *The Green Place* will maintain a competitive advantage that is thoroughly crafted and will continue to improve on it. These include the marketing and sustainability plan of tourist development.

To be competitive, the value to the customer and the value chain of the company must be distinctive from what the competitors “might be able to” offer (*Magretta, 2011*). Also important is the safety standards on site, hence the requirements for quality and sustainability programmes are expressed in *The Green Place’s* communication. These communications will detail certifications and safety programmes that the hotel adheres to. The labels and the partnership certificate communicate to the customer about a third-party involvement in the implementation of sustainability and quality policies in the hence making the business more trustworthy.

4.5.2 PORTER'S FIVE FORCES ANALYSIS

Porter's (1979) five forces analysis framework was not originally aimed at a small activity operator in the tourism industry. It however helps to provide a useful checklist for *The Green Place* to understand the industry better and how best to position itself in it.

The threat of new entrants is low: While there are no legal barriers or government policies preventing the entrance to the market, ecotourism and sustainability is still a novel theme in many parts of Nigeria, especially outside of cities like Lagos, Abuja, and Port Harcourt.

If there are new entrants after *The Green Place* has entered the market, they are more likely to positively draw more attention and tourist interests to Ikogosi - Ekiti. *The Green Place* will continue to create its brand equity, customer base, networks, and other advantages to reach the competitiveness required for profitability. However, it will not engage in price competition, as it would eventually be done at the cost of quality and sustainability.

The threat of substitutes is low as the more established businesses who offer similar tourism services are miles away from the site. The closest one being 192 miles away with approximately a seven-hour drive. While there are other lodges around the state, tourists that are eco-tourism conscious will prefer to stay at *The Green Place*, especially our prices are derived from cost of quality and sustainability alone.

The bargaining power of suppliers is moderate: The suppliers for the business will range from furniture and fixture suppliers to consumables suppliers, understandably the hotel will have fewer suppliers from across these to choose from especially because consideration will be given to suppliers who provide eco-friendly products and services. However, *The Green Place* has more bargaining power with suppliers whose expertise are solely on sustainable, eco- friendly services and products, because of first, the ecolabel status and secondly there is a gradual introduction of more companies who are environmentally conscious. Both hotel and suppliers have a level of bargaining power here which balances moderately. *The Green Place* will continue to balance sustainable practices with costs and availability of eco-services and products.

The customer's bargaining power is low as tourists will act independently of each other. And the last of the five forces, *the industry rivalry* influences how much *The Green Place* must invest in marketing to be successful. There is no rivalry yet however the lodge will remain innovative in terms of service development, with an overall competitive strategy.

Note that in tourism, gaining competitive advantage requires networking, cooperation, and collaboration. The business and institute partnerships must be strong and sustainable.

Even with the companies in direct competition there are benefits from collaboration. The natural environment must be preserved for mutual good. *The Green Place* will look to form a collaboration with the Ekiti State Bureau of Tourism Development whose vision is “Making Ekiti State a most attractive destination for relaxation and holidays by building a heliport, world-class hotel and accommodation facilities, developing Efon, Okemesi, Ikogosi, Ipole-Iloro tourism corridor” (Bureau of Tourism Development – Ekiti State Website, n.d.). The vision of Ekiti state via the Bureau of Tourism aligns with collaborative efforts, initiatives between the business and the government. *The Green Place* will also collaborate with Triple G Eco Revival Solutions Ltd, an environment conscious organisation in Ekiti in hosting their retreats, programmes and initiatives while continuing to create an awareness for the company.

In summary of the analysis, *The Green Place* does not face significant threats from any of the five forces. The growth rates in tourism may change the business environment in Ikogosi -Ekiti in coming years. in the following years. For example, the competition may increase, and the sustainability of the industry may be at stake. There are no grounds for complacency for *The Green Place* despite the current positive outlook.

4.6 MARKET ANALYSIS SUMMARY

In conclusion, the market analysis for ecolodge in Ikogosi Ekiti has shown that there is a growing demand for sustainable tourism practices and eco-friendly hotels. The global tourism industry has been experiencing significant growth in recent years, although the COVID-19 outbreak has posed a challenge to the industry. Nigeria's tourism sector has been growing steadily, with the country's cultural heritage and natural attractions being major drivers. Ekiti State has seen significant growth in tourism, with its unique blend of culture, history, and natural beauty. The development of ecolodges in Ikogosi-Ekiti can tap into this growing demand for sustainable tourism practices while catering to the needs of environmentally conscious tourists. Overall, sustainable tourism practices and responsible tourism development can benefit both the environment and the local communities while promoting cultural exchange and economic growth.

CHAPTER 5: SALES AND MARKETING STRATEGY

This chapter examines the steps involved in creating a sales and marketing strategy for *The Green Place*. It explores the importance of eco-certification, the target market, the marketing mix, and the use of social media to promote the hotel.

The target market plan for *The Green Place* is built on being a destination of choice for a variety of people, including summer visitors, independent tourists, and group tourists.

5.1 ECO-CERTIFICATION

Eco-certification is a process that verifies that a hotel meets specific environmental standards. Eco-certification provides assurance to customers that the hotel is committed to reducing its environmental impact.

Eco-certification is essential for ecolabel certified hotels as it provides a competitive advantage in the market. Customers are increasingly aware of the environmental impact of their travel, and they are looking for hotels that are committed to sustainability. Eco-certification provides customers with the assurance that the hotel is committed to reducing its environmental impact.

5.2 TARGET MARKET

Eco-conscious tourists are the target market for an ecolodge in Ikogosi, Ekiti. Eco-conscious tourists are people who care about the environment and are willing to spend a higher price for ecologically friendly items and services. They are more likely to be educated, ecologically conscious, and to have a greater income.

The marketing plan will entail identifying a set of customers who are naturally drawn to ecologically friendly experiences. The strategy will be the outcome of carefully listening to and understanding consumer needs, representing those needs to people in charge of product manufacturing and service delivery, and providing them with what they anticipate.

The company will employ research surveys and observation to discover this wealth of information to bring product specifications and brand name in front of clients when they are most receptive. A camping guest profile will be compiled using information received from guest research questionnaires. Our main target clients for *The Green Place* are free independent tourists and visitors who are looking for a unique experience rather than a room in a hotel or hostel.

The usual length of stay in a campground is one to three nights. These guests are constantly looking for new and distinctive experiences that are different from regular hotels and hostels. *The Green Place* transforms the facility into a destination and a vital component of the client experience.

The target audiences are those who are looking for eco-friendly accommodations with a low environmental effect. *The Green Place* is a natural destination choice for people due to its surroundings and facilities.

The company's market analysis is to determine the viability of the endeavours put in and to identify critical aspects that will contribute to the company's success. The market research will be carried out using the following methods and sources:

- Tourism and hospitality research.
- Interviews with proprietors of similar businesses in other areas
- Interviews with potential guests
- Suggestions from industry professionals

5.3 MARKETING MIX

A hotels or lodges marketing mix is a collection of methods that it can employ to advertise its products and services. The marketing mix is made up of four components: product, price, promotion, and location.

5.3.1 PRODUCT

The product for the ecolodge is the accommodation and the sustainability initiatives. The company will ensure that its accommodation meets the environmental standards set by the eco-certification body.

The Green Place camping area will have a total of 40 tents available, 25 of which will be the standard sized tents referred to earlier and 15 of the larger sized tents. All tents have the capability of being furnished with beds, bedding, bedside tables, and other essentials at the guests' request. In addition, guests are entitled to a fully stocked kitchen, restrooms, a shared shower area, a public space for shared use, and a convenience store stocked with supplies necessary for day-to-day living. In addition to that, a fast Wi-Fi internet connection will be provided in the camping area.

In addition to the tents will also be 10 lodges that are conventional rooms, this will be the standard 12 x 12 feet, and completely ensuite.

5.3.1.1 *TOURISM SUPPLY CHAIN*

The tourism supply chain for the ecolodge in Ikogosi-Ekiti involves various processes that ensure sustainable and responsible practices in the hotel's operations. The lodge getting an eco-label certification means that it has met specific environmental standards set by the certification body, and as such, it must maintain these standards throughout its operations.

The tourism supply chain for the ecolodge in Ikogosi Ekiti begins with the procurement of goods and services. The company sources its supplies from local suppliers and producers to promote local economic development and reduce the carbon footprint associated with transportation. The company also ensures that the suppliers it uses follow sustainable practices, such as using eco-friendly packaging, reducing waste, and using renewable energy sources.

The Green Places' supply chain also involves waste management and recycling processes. The lodge will segregate its waste and ensure that recyclable materials are properly disposed of through its waste management system. The hotel also implements a composting system for organic waste, which is used for gardening and landscaping purposes.

The energy usage of the entire lodge area is also an important part of its tourism supply chain. To lower its carbon footprint, the business employs sources of clean energy such as rooftop solar panels and wind turbines. And to reduce energy usage, the lodge also employs energy-efficient practices such as LED bulbs and energy-efficient equipment.

In terms of water consumption, the lodge implements water conservation practices such as rainwater harvesting and water-efficient fixtures to reduce its water usage. *The Green Place* also ensures that wastewater is properly treated before being discharged into the environment.

The business's tourism supply chain also involves its interactions with the local community, employing locals and supporting local businesses through its procurement practices, which helps to promote local economic development. It will also engage in community outreach programs such as environmental education and awareness programs to promote sustainable practices in the community.

The tourism supply chain for the ecolodge in Ikogosi-Ekiti involves various processes that promote sustainable and responsible practices. From procurement to waste management, energy consumption, water conservation, and community engagement, the hotel ensures that it maintains its eco-label certification by following specific environmental standards. By doing so, the hotel not only promotes sustainability but also contributes to local economic development and the well-being of the community.

5.3.2 PRICE

The pricing at the lodge will reflect the sustainability initiatives. The hotel will charge a premium for its eco-friendly accommodation. The price approach is based on the type of accommodation and the utilisation of optional services. The pricing structure is divided into three major categories:

- Standard sized tent (12 by 12 feet)
- Large sized tent (15 x 24 feet)
- Conventional rooms (12 x 12 feet)

Additional services, such as bringing along a pet or a place to park a vehicle, will be paid separately. There is also a distinction from peak and off-season. Prices will be reduced during the low season, which is the rainy season in Nigeria; March to July to accommodate the predicted decrease in demand.

See the table below for the proposed price list.

Table 5: Price Structure

ITEMS	DESCRIPTION	PRICE
Standard sized tent	12 x 12 feet suitable for up to 3 people	25,000 NGN
Large sized tent	15 x 24 feet, suitable for up to 7 people	35,000 NGN
Conventional lodge	12 x 12 feet, ensuite	40,000 NGN
Domestic animals	Cats, dogs excluding guide dogs	15,000 NGN
Birds	Birds of any kind	Free
Swimming pool	-	1,000 NGN
Gym centre	-	1,000 NGN
Bicycle rentals	-	1,500 NGN.

Table 5: (Price structure, own illustration)

5.3.3 PROMOTION

Promotion is essential for the lodge. Management can use a variety of channels to promote its sustainability initiatives, such as social media, email marketing, and advertising.

While the overnight accommodation services in Ikogosi are not particularly competitive, a target group-specific communication of available services and goods is critical, as sustainable tourism is still a relatively new phenomenon in the state.

A variety of promotional initiatives are possible. However, to save money in the beginning, the emphasis is on low-cost alternatives. Earned, owned, and paid media will be the three categories for promotional operations.

5.3.3.1 OWNED MEDIA

Owned media refers to any online asset or platform that a company or individual has full control over and does not rely on a third-party service to manage or distribute content.

Owned media available to *The Green Place* are own website, social media channel profiles that is, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram company profiles. These profiles will give *The Green Place* the ability to engage with customers, post updates, and build a following.

Email marketing will also be used, *The Green Place* will build an email list of subscribers who have opted in to receive newsletters, promotions, and other updates.

5.3.3.2 EARNED MEDIA

Earned media refers to any exposure and visibility that a company or individual receives through word-of-mouth recommendations, viral marketing, or other forms of organic publicity that are not paid for or owned by the company. Earned media that we will strive for at *The Green Place* include press coverage, this can be facilitated through press releases, interviews, or other means of communication with journalists.

Others include social media mentions as visitors can include likes, shares, retweets, and comments. Reviews and ratings on websites like Google and Yelp, this will help increase visibility and reputation among potential customers. Influencer endorsements and User-generated content, this can result in increased brand recognition and credibility.

5.3.3.3 PAID MEDIA

Paid media refers to any type of advertising or marketing that a company or individual pays for to promote their brand or product. Earned media for *The Green Place* includes Display ads: These are banner or sidebar ads that appear on websites, blogs, or other online platforms. Companies can purchase ad space on these platforms and display ads to reach their target audience.

1. Paid search advertising includes search engine advertising such as Google Ads, in which businesses can pay to have their website appear at the top of search engine results pages when visitors enter specified keywords.
2. Sponsored posts and adverts on social media sites, as they allow businesses to target specific audiences. Sites like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn.
3. Influencer marketing: This is a type of paid media where companies pay social media influencers to promote their brand or product to their followers.

5.3.4 PLACE

Place refers to the distribution channels that the hotel will use to reach its target market. An ecolodge can use online travel agencies and its website to reach its target market.

Direct Sales: The website will be the primary sales channel. Guests can reserve their accommodations directly on the internet thanks to the incorporation of a digital booking system. Bookings will also be taken over the phone.

Indirect Sales: Because over 30% of overnight bookings are now done through so-called OTAs (Online Travel Agencies), this sales channel is important. Lodgings will be listed on germane OTAs, such as booking.com. These bookings will be logged in real time on the company's booking system.

CHAPTER 6: OPERATIONS PLANNING

The Green Place campground business is addressed in its entirety within the operations plan that has been developed. This includes adhering to company administration and fiscal agreement, creating an appropriate legal business entity, developing working procedures and guidelines, acquiring equipment, identifying the key suppliers, hiring or contracting staff, professionals, and advisors, and establishing bank accounts in the name of the new legal entity.

6.1 STAFFING AND TRAINING PLAN

The operational responsibilities of *The Green Place* campground are business management, administration, operations management, and property upkeep. All services are obtained directly from the business. Due to the proximity of the campground, *The Green Place* will occasionally require assistance and student positions will be available. During the initial year of operation, no additional personnel will be hired. The company will seek students who are pursuing related courses and are interested in learning how to operate a sustainable tourism business.

As an alternative, *The Green Place* will contemplate offering feasible job opportunities on our campground, where internationals can stay for two to four weeks and receive hands-on experience operating an urban campground. Candidates for employment with *The Green Place* should possess the following abilities:

- An outgoing, affable personality
- Good decorum and interpersonal skills
- An enthusiastic attitude
- A strong work ethic
- A dedication to providing excellent customer service.

Additionally, *The Green Place* is committed to offering as much training as is needed. There are two aspects to service in any guest-focused operation: the procedural, which requires technical skills, and the personal, which requires interpersonal skills. Tourism industry research indicates that hotel management as well as employees place a premium on training in interpersonal skills, customer service, and communication. It is essential to recognise the positive effects of training so that staff can meet the right service standards.

The specific benefits of staff training for *The Green Place* are as follows:

- Increased skills and knowledge.
- Increased success in conducting job functions.
- Improved attitude, self-esteem, and morale.
- Improved service, greater efficiency, and lower turnover.
- Increased guest satisfaction.

Staff training may consist of hands-on instruction or formal, on-site, or off-site training. Typically, seasonal operations training incorporates the two. Temporary and potentially long-term employees are going to benefit from the springtime training, where a strong orientation programme is a priority for all employees at the start of the season. This assures the development of a skilled workforce to communicate our principles regarding the ecologically sound operation of our campground to guests and beyond.

6.2 ADMINISTRATION

A solitary on-site manager will oversee the operation of *The Green Place* campground. During the first year of operation, this manager will perform most administrative tasks, which in this instance will be performed by the proprietor. During the upcoming years and anticipated expansions, a portion of the administrative duties will be outsourced. *The Green Place* outsourcing its accounting, bookkeeping, and information technology needs to boost efficiency and assure the site's smooth operation. The manager is also responsible for maintaining the facility throughout the entire year.

In the off-peak seasons, the manager is responsible for the upcoming year's programme, as well as any potential rentals of the campground as a storage facility. During this period, additional advertising strategies for the coming year will be developed. It is of utmost importance to *The Green Place* that daily operations operate as efficiently as possible, and that all instances of mismanagement are quickly identified and corrected. The administration and employees of *The Green Place* must carry out the following duties, which are essential to the operation and administration of *The Green Place* campground:

- Upkeep of buildings
- Financial management, such as budgeting, pay checks, accounts payable and receivable, sales tax refunds, etc.
- Administrative Activities - reservations, arrivals and departures of guests, payment processing, etc.

6.3 OPERATIONS & COMMUNICATIONS

The operations and communications essential for *The Green Place* are discussed here as the need for effective process and a clear line of communication cannot be overemphasised.

Sustainable modes of production: The use of energy saving appliances, the use of renewable energy, waste reduction, employee training on these sustainable modes of production.

Experience of the guests: *The Green Place* will provide amazing activities like cultural tours and nature hikes. The lodges will also be comfortable while remaining eco-friendly with offers like organically grown food.

Training and retraining of employees: These will be regularly held and will range from guest services to emergency response methods, to history about the region and the culture of its locals.

Communications: Marketing materials, signage, and online platforms are some of the ways *The Green Place* will let lodgers know about its commitment to environmental stewardship.

Effective operations and communication are important for success in any business, this is why the company prioritises environmentally sustainable operations while still providing a high-quality guest experience, organising staff training, and retraining and engaging with the local community. *The Green Place* will promote its commitment to environmental sustainability and contribute to the long-term sustainability of the region.

6.4 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

The management of financial resources is one of the most important factors in business as it determines the success and longevity of any business. Aspects that *The Green Place* will focus on are:

Budgeting: The company's budget will consider salaries and wages, utility bills, marketing, and maintenance. The budget will also make provision for anticipated investments for instance a new facility that further helps to promote sustainability. Efficient management of financial resources is an important first step.

Cost control: As an ecolodge, there is a likely hood that the cost of keeping business afloat might be higher than an average resort. Keeping a tight rein on expenses is therefore one

major difficulty to be encountered. *The Green Place's* management will seek to discover areas that can save expenses while not compromising the commitment to protect the environment. An instance will be to look to install solar panels such that it lowers monthly energy bills.

Management of Revenue: Most of the income for the business will be from room and tent rentals, and a few other services the business will provide. (See table 5). It's important that *The Green Place* makes the very most of its revenue potential, management will be keeping track of occupancy rates and adjusting as and when it deems fit. Management will also look to give deals and appealing packages during off-peak seasons.

Reporting on finances: An accounting system will be set up and all accounts will be reconciled regularly. This helps to keep track of the financial health of the business. Trends can be recognized, revenues estimated that help to make informed judgements about investments and ways to reduce costs.

Reporting on sustainability: The management of waste, energy, and water consumptions as well as other sustainability initiatives that are geared at protecting the environment will be reported and monitored. These records can serve as information to promote *The Green Place* to potential investors and lodgers.

In summary, the management of financial resources is crucial *The Green Place*. It will give assurance to the long-term sustainability and profitability of the business while simultaneously achieving environmental responsibilities, when strong emphasis is put on budgeting, cost control, revenue management, financial reporting, and sustainability reporting.

6.5 RISK ASSESSMENT AND RISK MITIGATION PLANS

It is important to evaluate potential dangers and then develop strategies that eliminate or reduce the danger and impact of it. This applies to any business and *The Green Place* is not an exception. These are some of the actions to help assess and mitigate risks.

Table 6: Risk Identification and Mitigation Measures

Potential Risks	Risk Mitigation Measures
Power Outages	<p>Power supply in Nigeria has been a major challenge for businesses. The lodge will make use of the following strategies to reduce its carbon-footprint.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make use of clean energy solutions using solar energy - Invest in energy-saving appliances. - Ensuring that appliances that are not in use are turned off and unplugged.
Employee Turnover	<p><i>The Green Place</i> will adopt an effective hiring process to ensure that employees are a good fit for the establishment. The lodge will mitigate employee turn-over through the following measures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continuous trainings and retraining - Routine employee appraisal and performance reviews - Gather employee inputs and feedbacks through the review. - Scheduled evaluation and review of employee compensation packages
Physical Damages to property	<p>Following an occurrence resulting in physical property damage, a proper and thorough site/damage assessment will be performed. This assessment will determine the extent of the damage, potential recovery time frames and costs, and will also ensure the safety of personnel that may access the site.</p> <p>If a thorough site or damage assessment is not possible immediately the incident, access to, and assessment of the facility and its contents may</p>

	<p>be delayed for a minimum of 24 to 72 hours. The delays may be due to possible loss of structural integrity and necessary forensic investigation.</p> <p>To mitigate the risk of damage to physical property, <i>The Green Place</i> will ensure that the company’s insurance policy and premium is constantly up to date.</p> <p>The company will also establish an emergency response protocol and ensure that all staff are trained routinely to adequately respond.</p> <p><i>The Green Place</i> will also carry out routine structural checks and maintenance to mitigate hazards.</p>
<p>Waste Management</p>	<p>Efficient management of garbage is essential to the preservation of the environment and can also lessen the likelihood of causing harm to the environment or endangering human health. The lodge will implement an eco-friendly waste management strategy, using the 3 R method; reduce, reuse, and recycle. Composting is another effective waste management method that will be adopted by the lodge. The lodge will also collaborate with the authorities in charge of waste management in the area to ensure the correct disposal of hazardous material. This will help to decrease the risk.</p>
<p>Wildlife Preservation</p>	<p>As a lodge that has earned the ecolabel, <i>The Green Place</i> is in a rustic vegetation and hilly terrain. It is imperative for the lodge to take measures to reduce the amount of damage that its operations can cause to wildlife and the environments in which they live. The lodge will implement measures to lessen the likelihood of this danger occurring by;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Restricting the use of artificial lights to reduce the amount of disturbance caused to nocturnal animals, - Educating visitors on ethical wildlife viewing practices

	- And supporting local conservation efforts.
Water Scarcity	The lodge will implement water conservation measures to reduce the likelihood of this risk occurring by installing low-flow showerheads and toilets, rainwater harvesting systems, and greywater reuse systems. The lodge will also collaborate with the local community to encourage water conservation and provide support for the development of water infrastructure.

(Source: Own Illustration)

To summarise, a risk assessment and risk mitigation strategy are indispensable components of an ecolodge. These components are necessary for ensuring the long-term viability of the company and dedication to the preservation of the natural environment. By adhering to these measures and putting particular risk mitigation techniques into action, *The Green Place* will be able to lessen the impact of potential hazards, ensure the safety and comfort of visitors, and keep environmental commitments while still ensuring the protection of the environment.

6.6 LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

When running an ecolodge, there are several different legal issues that need to be considered to guarantee compliance with the applicable laws and regulations. The following is a list of important legal factors that *The Green Place* will consider:

Environmental regulations: Regulations pertaining to the environment are an essential component in the process of running an ecolodge. *The Green Place* will be responsible for adhering to all environmental standards, including those pertaining to the purity of the water and air, the management of trash, and the preservation of wildlife, which can be found at the local, state, and federal levels. *The Green Place* will take advantage of the opportunity to collaborate with environmental agencies to ensure compliance and reduce any potential threats to the environment.

Land use restrictions: Land use regulations define how land can be used and developed, and the lodge will comply with applicable land use regulations in the area where it is to operate legally. This may include the acquisition of the requisite permissions and approvals for land use and development operations, such as the building of a structure or the clearing of land.

Health and safety regulations: The presence of health and safety standards in the workplace helps to ensure that both employees and guests do not experience any injuries. *The Green Place* will comply with all applicable health and safety laws, such as those pertaining to the safety and sanitation of food, the safety of fires, and the protocols for responding to emergencies.

Employment restrictions: The lodge's interaction with its employees is governed by the employment regulations that are in place. *The Green Place* will be responsible for adhering to any employment standards that are currently in effect, including those pertaining to minimum wage, overtime pay, workplace safety, and discrimination.

The distinctive qualities of *The Green Place*, as well as its name and logo, can be safeguarded due to the ownership of intellectual property rights. The lodge will be responsible for ensuring that it does not violate the intellectual property rights of any other parties, and it may also be required to register its own intellectual property, such as its logo or trademarks.

Contractual obligations: There are many other contracts that *The Green Place* will get into, such as agreements with different suppliers or service providers. The management of *The Green Place* will ensure that these contracts are legally binding, and that the lodge's obligations and rights are articulated in a way that is easy to understand.

Fiscal responsibilities: *The Green Place* will be responsible for ensuring that it follows all applicable tax rules and regulations, including those pertaining to income tax, sales tax, and payroll tax.

In summary, running an ecolodge in Ikogosi, Ekiti requires several different legal concerns that need to be considered to guarantee compliance with applicable laws and regulations. By addressing these legal concerns, *The Green Place* will be able to minimise legal risks

and demonstrate its commitment to environmental sustainability. This will also show that *The Green Place* has a good awareness of these legal standards and complies with them.

6.7 KEY MILESTONES

For the initial year of operation, *The Green Place* will establish Milestones for what it wishes to accomplish. It is essential to acquire as much experience as possible in the first year. To accomplish this, *The Green Place* focuses on the four areas with the greatest potential.

6.7.1 OPERATIONAL

- Establish a low-impact alternative form of housing with the biodegradable tents.
- Raise awareness through an effective marketing mix.
- Excellent customers support.
- Construct the camping sites with an emphasis on the design schematics.
- The greening of the campground with native vegetation.
- Ensure that all common areas are always spotless and accessible.

6.7.2 MARKETING

- Launch the website www.thegreenplace.com which as of 23 April 2023 is still an available domain, or otherwise an available similar domain name, to help achieve a monthly average of at least 150 unique new visitors in its initial year of operation.
- Develop a social media marketing approach that includes *The Green Place* Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and Instagram pages.
- Obtain visibility in Travel-Blogs and Camping Magazines.
- Generate positive Tripadvisor reviews.
- Word-of-mouth has demonstrated to be the most efficient method of advertising.

6.7.3 FINANCIAL

- Recruit local partners with identical values to *The Green Place* and establish a partnership-network (discounts).
- Establish giftable holiday vouchers.

6.7.4 ENVIRONMENT

- Establish a carbon-offset programme through which customers can make additional contributions to conservation and social initiatives.
- Develop an offset calculator to demonstrate the number of emissions saved by lodging at *The Green Place*

- Provide details on sustainability-based activities that share the same values as *The Green Place*.
- Create a sustainable tourism policy that reduces the negative environmental effects of daily operations.
- Promote biodiversity through ongoing cultivation - Participate in community clean-ups in Ikogosi town.
- Provide rental bicycles so that visitors can explore the region with zero emissions.

CHAPTER 7: SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

The Green Place aspires to be a green and ethical business in which its values related to sustainability are pervasive and visible in every aspect of both its internal and external operations. Sustainability begins at the foundation of an organisation. This indicates that the entire crew shares the same mindset so that it can be communicated to the guests. To ensure equitable distribution of long-term socioeconomic benefits, including stable employment and opportunities to earn money, social services, and poverty reduction, to all community stakeholders. (UNWTO, 2008)

To bring sustainable knowledge to the external environment, *The Green Place* must initiate this process internally. This implies that the fundamentals, and consequently the management of *The Green Place*, must have a clear understanding of their internal function and objectives before communicating ideas and values to the outside, in this instance the end user.

7.1 TOURISM CONSERVATION MODEL

The table below illustrates the six Tourism Conservation Models designed by Brandon and Margaluis. (1996). For each model, the table describes in detail what *The Green Place* may accomplish as an organisation to meet these goals. The models are presented in ascending order of increasing resource commitment, collaboration among stakeholders, and overall collaboration and implementation.

Table 7: Tourism Conservation Model

S/N	Tourism Conservation Model	<i>The Green Places' Action</i>
1.	Increase Income Diversification	Reducing financial risks and securing future investments through the modular nature of the Campsite set up.

		<p>Diversity in tent equipment to target different clients, which opens income opportunities even during off-season months.</p> <p>During off-season months, when rent costs are still running, the campground can be rented out to people who need a place for their campers.</p> <p>Additional educational programmes can be booked through external teachers to make <i>The Green Place</i> more appealing.</p>
2.	<p>Increase Conservation Awareness and Constituencies</p>	<p>Raising awareness about the whole footprint of tourists from start to finish and researching options where choices can lower their environmental footprint.</p> <p>Displays towards the initiatives that are taking place by <i>The Green Place</i> that are also rooted within the goal statements of the firm.</p> <p>Displays towards the efforts that are taking place by <i>The Green Place</i> that are also rooted within the vision statement of the company.</p> <p>An example of the philosophy of reducing, reusing, and recycling.</p> <p>Cultivating one's own seedlings in transportable containers made of materials such as milk cartons, for example.</p>

		Encouraging individuals to consume less white and red meat as well as dairy products, reducing the amount of packaging and plastics used, shopping at local markets and focusing on seasonal and regional fare.
3.	Improve Tourism Operations and Guidelines	<p>Temporary use has the potential to reduce infrastructure implementation while having a lower environmental impact.</p> <p>The campground includes signage along the walkways with information about the plant and animal life on the grounds.</p> <p>The welcoming kiosk will provide information about environmental projects in and around the site.</p> <p>The primary goal is to inspire people rather than educate them about human impact on nature. It is crucial to emphasise that our clients are on vacation and are paying for a service; they did not book an educational programme.</p> <p><i>The Green Place'</i> major goal is to raise as much awareness as possible about our impacts and to present solutions for how we can act to improve these.</p>
4.	Increase Monitoring and Research	Completing species counts on a purely voluntary basis to contribute to the collection of data for the regional authorities.

		<p>Conduct a plant inventory once a year at the campsite so that we can measure our effects.</p> <p>Encourage the research efforts of municipal governments.</p>
5.	Increase Conservation Partnerships	<p>In addition to the goal of reaching CO2 neutrality, further consideration will be given to the implementation of a carbon offset programme.</p> <p>The promotion of ecotourism and the sale of associated tours and products</p>
6.	Increase Tourism Generated Conservation Financing	<p>Establish channels for monetary contributions to be made to regional preservation efforts.</p> <p>Organise an annual fundraising event, open to both visitors and residents of the area, to generate money for a particular conservation cause.</p> <p>Apply for funding to produce material that educates people about conservation challenges, with the goal of increasing funding streams for appropriate solutions.</p>

(Source: own illustration)

7.2 SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

The purpose of this sustainability plan is to outline the steps that an ecolodge in Ikogosi can take to ensure its operations are sustainable and contribute to the preservation of the environment. The plan covers three main areas of sustainability: environmental, social, and economic. It is based on research and best practices in sustainable tourism and eco-lodges.

Table 8: Sustainability Plan

S/N	Sustainability	Description
1	Environmental Sustainability	<p>Energy Efficiency: The lodge will use energy-efficient equipment and appliances, such as LED lights, Energy Star-rated appliances, and solar water heaters to reduce energy consumption.</p> <p>Water Conservation: The lodge will install low-flow toilets and showerheads and encourage guests to reuse towels and linens to conserve water. It will also collect rainwater and treat wastewater for irrigation and non-potable uses.</p> <p>Waste Management: The lodge will implement a waste management system that includes recycling, composting, and proper disposal of hazardous materials. It will also educate guests on waste reduction and disposal practices.</p> <p>Land Use and Conservation: The lodge will protect and preserve the natural environment by using eco-friendly landscaping practices, such as planting native plants, avoiding the use of pesticides, and supporting reforestation efforts.</p>
2.	Social Sustainability	<p>Community Involvement: The lodge will support local communities by purchasing locally produced goods and services, hiring local staff, and supporting community development initiatives. It will also provide opportunities for guests to engage with local communities through cultural tours and activities.</p> <p>Guest Education: The lodge will educate guests on sustainable practices and the local environment through signage, brochures, and guided tours. It will also encourage guests to engage in responsible tourism practices, such as minimising waste and respecting local customs and cultures.</p> <p>Employee Empowerment: The lodge will invest in the training and development of its employees to ensure they have the</p>

		necessary skills and knowledge to provide high-quality service and contribute to the sustainability goals of the lodge.
3.	Economic Sustainability	<p>Economic Viability: The lodge will operate in a financially sustainable manner by balancing its revenue and expenses, minimising waste, and investing in energy-efficient and cost-effective technologies.</p> <p>Local Economic Impact: The lodge will support the local economy by hiring local staff, purchasing locally produced goods and services, and contributing to community development initiatives.</p> <p>Sustainable Tourism: The lodge will attract environmentally conscious guests who are willing to pay a premium for sustainable accommodations and experiences. It will also collaborate with other eco-lodges and sustainable tourism organisations to promote sustainable tourism practices and initiatives.</p>

(Source: own illustration)

By implementing this sustainability plan, *The Green Place* can contribute to the preservation of the environment, support local communities, and operate in a financially sustainable manner. This plan is based on research and best practices in sustainable tourism and eco-lodges and can serve as a blueprint for other lodges seeking to adopt sustainable practices.

7.3 SUSTAINABILITY COSTS - PLANNING AHEAD

While the benefits of implementing sustainable practices are numerous, it is also important to consider the costs associated with these practices. The following is an estimate of the costs associated with implementing the sustainability plan outlined below:

Table 9: Sustainability Plan Cost

S/N	Activity	Description	Amount Range
1.	Energy Efficiency	Solar water heater LED lights Batteries, Solar panels, inverters. Maintenance of solar panels and water heaters Continuous training of staff to ensure optimal performance of energy saving appliances	₦10,000,000 ₦350,000 This is discussed under employee empowerment no. 7
2.	Water conservation	Low flow toilets and showerheads Collecting rainwater and treating wastewater for irrigation. Regular maintenance, staff training and guest education materials	₦500,000
3.	Waste management	A waste management system for recycling and composting Proper disposal of hazardous materials	₦480,000
4.	Land Use and Conservation	Eco-friendly landscaping, which includes avoiding the use of pesticide, plant local plants	₦200,000
5.	Community Involvement	Supporting community development initiatives.	₦200,000
6.	Guest Education	Creating flyers and brochures to educate guests on sustainable practices inclusive of ongoing cost of hiring and	₦1,000,000

		training staff to deliver guest education programs.	
7.	Employee Empowerment	Training and development programs, hiring external trainers.	₦500,000
8.	Sustainable Tourism	Attending conferences, networking events, or marketing campaigns that promote sustainable tourism practices and initiatives.	₦1,000,000

(Source: own illustration)

Overall, the estimated cost of implementing the sustainability plan outlined above is ₦14,230,000 which is a range for the first year. However, it is important to note that many of these costs are one-time costs, such as installing energy-efficient equipment, and will result in long-term savings for the lodge. Additionally, the lodge can attract environmentally conscious guests who are willing to pay a premium for sustainable accommodations and experiences, which can contribute to the economic sustainability of the lodge.

While implementing sustainable practices may require an initial investment, these practices can contribute to the long-term financial, environmental, and social sustainability of the lodge. By adopting sustainable practices and promoting responsible tourism, lodge can reduce its operating costs through energy and water savings, minimise waste, and avoid fines or penalties for non-compliance with environmental regulations. Moreover, by attracting eco-conscious lodgers who are willing to pay a premium for sustainable accommodations and experiences, the lodge can generate revenue and contribute to the local economy. Additionally, the adoption of sustainable practices can improve the reputation of the lodge and increase customer loyalty, leading to repeat business and positive word-of-mouth marketing. Therefore, while implementing sustainable practices may require an initial investment, the long-term benefits can far outweigh the cost.

CHAPTER 8: FINANCIAL PROJECTION AND FORECASTING

9.1 START UP COST

The estimated initial investment needed to make *The Green Place* fully functional is NGN517,520,000 as explained in detail in Table 10 below.

Table 10: Start Up Costs

Category	Items	Quantity	Unit Cost (₦)	Total Cost (₦)
PRE-OPENING COSTS				
Market Research and Feasibility Study	Research expenses	1	₦250,000	₦250,000
Legal and Regulatory Fees	Permits, licenses	1	₦200,000	₦200,000
Architectural and Design Services	Architect fees	1	₦500,000	₦500,000
Land Acquisition/Lease	18,500 square feet	18,500fs	₦4400.00	₦81,400,000
Construction and Renovation	Building materials, labour	1	₦290,590,000	₦290,590,000
Marketing and Branding	Website development, marketing materials	1	₦1,100,000	₦1,100,000
OPERATIONAL COSTS				
Staff Salaries and Benefits	Front desk, housekeeping, kitchen staff	102 Staffs	-	₦70,680,000
Utilities	Electricity, water, heating, cooling	1	₦500,000	₦500,000
Marketing and Advertising	Online ads, social media promotions	12 Monthly	₦140,000	₦1,680,000
Property Maintenance	Repairs, upkeep	12 Monthly	₦140,000	₦1,680,000
Cleaning and Housekeeping	Cleaning supplies, laundry	Monthly	₦40,000	₦480,000
Food and Beverage	Ingredients, supplies	Monthly	₦116,000	₦1,392,000
Waste Management	Disposal services <i>See also Table 9: Sustainability Plan Cost</i>	Monthly	₦40,000	₦480,000
Water conservation	Low flow toilets and showerheads. Collecting rainwater and treating wastewater for irrigation. <i>See also Table 9: Sustainability Plan Cost</i>	Annually	₦500,000	₦500,000
Guest Amenities	Toiletries, supplies	Monthly	₦40,000	₦480,000
Insurance	Property, liability	Annual	₦1,000,000	₦1,000,000
Property Taxes	Local property taxes	Annual	₦1,000,000	₦1,000,000

INVENTORY COSTS				
Furniture and Furnishings	Beds, chairs, tables	50 each	₦200,000	₦10,000,000
Kitchen Equipment	Appliances, utensils	Varies	₦5,000,000	₦5,000,000
Linens and Bedding	Bedding sets, towels	Varies	₦5,000,000	₦5,000,000
Uniforms	Staff uniforms	102	₦10,000	₦1,020,000
Energy Efficiency	Solar water heater	2 set	₦5,000,000	₦10,000,000
	LED lights Batteries, Solar panels, inverters.	Annually	₦350,000	₦350,000
	Maintenance of solar panels and water heaters <i>See also Table 9: Sustainability Plan Cost</i>			
MISCELLANEOUS COSTS				
Guest Education	Creating flyers and brochures to educate guests on sustainable practices inclusive of ongoing cost of hiring and training staff to deliver guest education programs. <i>See also Table 9: Sustainability Plan Cost</i>		₦1,000,000.00	₦1,000,000.00
Guest Activities and Entertainment	Activity expenses, entertainment costs	Varies	₦200,000	₦200,000
Transportation Services	Shuttle services, transportation costs	Varies	₦200,000	₦200,000
MARKETING AND PROMOTION				
Website Maintenance	Hosting fees	Yearly	₦1,000,000	₦1,000,000
Photography and Videography	Professional media production	Varies	₦1,000,000	₦1,000,000
Digital Marketing	Online ad campaigns	Yearly	₦2,000,000	₦2,000,000
Print Materials	Brochures, pamphlets	Varies	₦1,000,000	₦1,000,000
Sustainable Tourism	Attending conferences, networking events, or marketing campaigns that promote sustainable tourism practices and initiatives. <i>See also Table 9: Sustainability Plan Cost</i>	Annually	₦1,000,000	₦1,000,000
STAFFING / HUMAN RESOURCES				
Employee Empowerment	Training and development programs, hiring external trainers. <i>See also Table 9: Sustainability Plan Cost</i>	Annually	₦500,000	₦500,000
Uniform maintenance	Cleaning and upkeep of staff uniforms	Varies	₦200,000	₦200,000

Employee Perks	Benefits, meals, discounts	Varies	₱200,000	₱200,000
TECHNOLOGY AND SYSTEMS				
Property Management System (PMS)	Software subscription	Monthly	₱16,000	₱192,000
Point-of-Sale (POS) System	Software subscription	Monthly	₱8,000	₱96,000
Guest Wi-Fi	Equipment, setup, maintenance	Varies	₱200,000	₱200,000
ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES				
Community Involvement	Purchase locally produced goods and services. Supporting community development initiatives. <i>See also Table 9: Sustainability Plan Cost</i>	Varies	₱200,000	₱200,000
Land Use and Conservation	Eco-friendly landscaping, which includes avoiding the use of pesticide, plant local plants. <i>See also Table 9: Sustainability Plan Cost</i>	Varies	₱200,000	₱200,000
Certification Costs	Ecolabel certification fees	Biennial	₱200,000	₱400,000
LEGAL AND REGULATORY				
Health and Safety Compliance	Compliance costs	Varies	₱200,000	₱200,000
Licensing and permits	Fees for permits, licenses	Varies	₱200,000	₱200,000
Intellectual Property	Trademarking, copyrights	Varies	₱250,000	₱250,000
GUEST AMENITIES				
Outdoor Facilities	Landscaping, outdoor amenities, Bicycles	Varies	₱2,000,000	₱5,000,000
Recreation Activities	Activity materials, equipment	Varies	₱2,000,000	₱6,000,000
Spa and Wellness	Equipment, products	Varies	₱5,000,000	₱5,000,000
RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT				
Sustainability Research	Research expenses	Continuous	₱2,00,000	₱2,00,000
Innovation	Testing new technologies	Continuous	₱2,00,000	₱2,00,000
CONTINGENCY				
Emergency Fund	Reserve for unexpected events		₱2,000,000	₱2,000,000
TOTAL				₱517,520,000

9.2 CASHFLOW STATEMENTS

9.2.1 CASHFLOW STATEMENT FOR YEAR 1

Table 11: Cashflow Statement for Year 1

	JAN	FEB	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
Cash Inflows from Operating Activities													
Room Rentals	₦19.5M	₦20M	₦19.5M	₦19.5M	₦19.5M	₦19.5M	₦19.5M	₦32.9M	₦19.5M	₦19.5M	₦27.35M	₦32.9M	₦269.15M
Swimming Pool Usage	₦0.4M	₦0.4M	₦0.4M	₦0.4M	₦0.4M	₦0.4M	₦0.4M	₦1M	₦0.4M	₦0.4M	₦1M	₦1M	₦6.6M
Gym Centre Usage	₦0.3M	₦0.3M	₦0.3M	₦0.3M	₦0.3M	₦0.3M	₦0.3M	₦0.9M	₦0.3M	₦0.3M	₦0.9M	₦0.9M	₦5.4M
Bicycle Ride Usage	₦0.3M	₦0.3M	₦0.3M	₦0.3M	₦0.3M	₦0.3M	₦0.3M	₦0.95M	₦0.3M	₦0.3M	₦0.95M	₦0.95M	₦5.55M
Stationeries, Laundry & Restaurants	₦10M	₦10M	₦7M	₦6	₦6M	₦6M	₦6M	₦6M	₦6M	₦7M	₦10M	₦1M	₦90M
Total Cash Receipts	₦30.5M	₦31M	₦27.5M	₦26.5M	₦26.5M	₦26.5M	₦26.5M	₦41.75M	₦26.5M	₦27.5M	₦40.2M	₦45.75M	₦376.7M
Cash Outflows from Operating Activities													
Cost of Goods Sold	₦2.18M	₦2.18M	₦2.18M	₦2.18M	₦2.18M	₦2.18M	₦2.18	₦2.18M	₦2.18M	₦2.18M	₦2.18M	₦2.18M	₦26.16M
Operating Expenses	₦6.63M	₦6.63M	₦6.63M	₦6.63M	₦6.63M	₦6.63M	₦6.63	₦6.63M	₦6.63M	₦6.63M	₦6.63M	₦6.63M	₦79.56M
Income Tax Expense	₦2.17M	₦2.17M	₦2.17M	₦2.17M	₦2.17M	₦2.17M	₦2.17	₦2.17M	₦2.17M	₦2.17M	₦2.17M	₦2.17M	₦26.04M
Other Operating Payments	₦8.33M	₦8.33M	₦8.33M	₦8.33M	₦8.33M	₦8.33M	₦8.33	₦8.33M	₦8.33M	₦8.33M	₦8.33M	₦8.3M	₦99.96M
Total Cash Payments	₦19.31M	₦19.31M	₦19.31M	₦19.31M	₦19.31M	₦19.31M	₦19.31M	₦19.31M	₦19.31M	₦19.31M	₦19.31M	₦19.31M	₦231.72M
Net Cash Flows from Operating Activities	₦11.19M	₦11.69M	₦8.19M	₦7.19M	₦7.19M	₦7.19M	₦7.19M	₦22.44M	₦7.19M	₦8.19M	₦20.89M	₦26.44M	₦144.98M

9.3 FIVE YEAR PROJECTION

Table 12 shows the ecolodge's long-term potential based on a revenue estimate of 20% sales growth each year on average. Annual indirect expenses and other costs (e.g., from the Sustainability Plan) will also rise to account for inflation. This is Nigeria's expected average inflation rate up on till 2028.

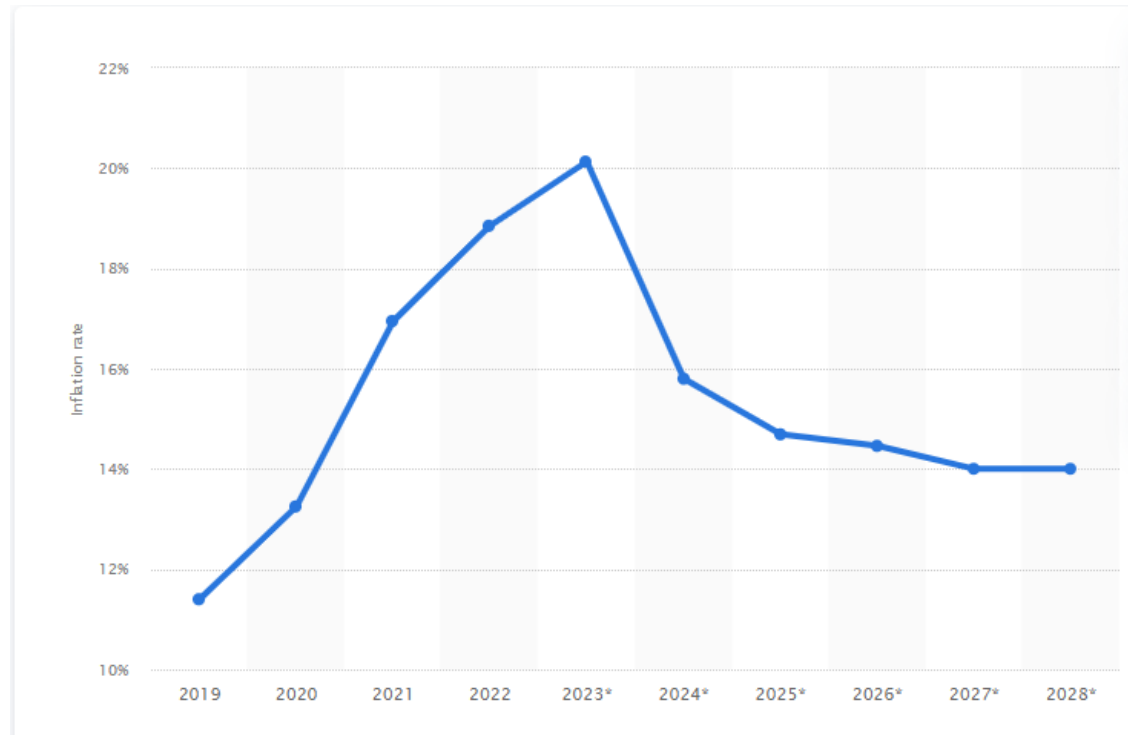


Figure 8: Inflation rate forecast in Nigeria from 2019 to 2028 (Nigeria: Forecasted Inflation Rate 2025, Retrieved August 26, 2023)

Table 12: The Green Place Five Year Projection

	YEAR 1 (2024)	YEAR 2 (2025)	YEAR 3 (2026)	YEAR 4 (2027)	YEAR 5 (2028)
Cash Inflows from Operating Activities					
Room Rentals	₦269.15M	₦322.98M	₦387.58M	₦465.09M	₦558.11M
Swimming Pool Usage	₦6.60M	₦7.92M	₦9.50M	₦11.4M	₦13.69M
Gym Centre Usage	₦5.40M	₦6.48M	₦7.78M	₦9.33M	₦11.2M
Bicycle Ride Usage	₦5.55M	₦6.66M	₦7.99M	₦9.59M	₦11.51M
Stationeries, Laundry & Restaurants	₦9M	₦108M	₦129.6M	₦155.52M	₦186.62M
Total Cash Receipts	₦376.7M	₦452.04M	₦542.45M	₦650.94M	₦781.13M
Cash Outflows from Operating Activities		With inflation @14.69%	With inflation @14.46%	With inflation @14%	With inflation at 14%
Cost of Goods Sold	₦26.16M	₦30M	₦34.27M	₦38.76M	₦44.18M
Operating Expenses	₦79.56M	₦91.25M	₦104.23M	₦117.87M	₦134.37M
Income Tax Expense	₦26.04M	₦29.87M	₦34.12M	₦38.58M	₦43.98M
Other Operating Payments	₦99.96M	₦114.64M	₦130.96M	₦148.1M	₦168.83M
Total Cash Payments	₦231.72M	₦265.76M	₦303.58M	₦343.3M	₦391.37M
Net Cash Flows from Operating Activities	₦144.98M	₦186.28M	₦238.87M	₦307.63M	₦389.76M

CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSION

It is important for developing countries like Nigeria to understand the necessity of sustainability in the tourism industry. This means essential that the triple bottom line theory is understood and that businesses within the tourism industry focus as much on social and environmental issues as they do on profits.

This work focuses on developing skilled labour in form of training and re-trainings to members of staff and forming reinforcing relationships with the local community by conserving the environment and socio-economic development.

For years the economy has had a dependency on agricultural and oil produce, a more diverse economy can however be achieved through tourism if attention is giving to sustainability.

The Green Place's proposal is both environment and community focused. The location Ikogosi-Ekiti allows for a community-based ecotourism seeing as how the Ikogosi Warm Spring Resort has existed since it was first brought into public focus in 1952 by a Southern Baptist Missionary, Reverend John S. McGee. The resort has continued to thrive over the years. The Warm Spring has provided jobs for locals and people from neighbouring towns. Considering this in addition to the financial, technical, and economic backdrop makes this a feasible project.

Projects like these are successful if local communities participate actively and are of course beneficiaries – this includes financially e.g., wages, through capacity building and skills empowerment.

The ecolodge focus on the communities – allowing them an additional income source with activities which they understand is not at the detriment of their community and the environment.

In conclusion, investing in Nigeria, especially a location that is still largely referred to as rural might present several hurdles – *The Green Place* forecast certainly is positive when it is viewed through the triple bottom line method. Profit is made, the people benefit from the set-up and the planet does not suffer.

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