

A Proposal for the Development of Balnear Tourism in Nigeria

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Background

- Nigeria is endowed with **natural land and marine resources** including hot springs
- Geological research shows that there are **at least ten unutilized hot springs** in Nigeria
- The economic importance of hot springs is shown in Italy, France, Germany, Poland, Japan, China and several other Countries whose well-developed system of hot springs contributes more than 10% of aggregate government revenue
- Nigeria can tap into this huge global market by establishing balnear/health tourism centers at its nine hot springs to attract balnear-tourists from within Africa, Europe and other continents, all year round made possible by our good climate, weather and rich culture
- Nigerian hot springs, characterized with identical properties like their long-established European counterparts, are among the top ranked in West Africa that can be developed for medical treatment and tourism

Hot springs in Nigeria yet to be harnessed



Distribution and Characteristics of hot springs in the West African Sub-region: Nigeria in focus

SPRING NAME	COUNTRY	COORDINATES						SOME PHYSICAL PARAMETERS			
		LATITUDE (N)			LONGITUDE (E)			pH	Eh(Ms)	TDS(g/l)	Temp
		Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degree	Minutes	Seconds				
Tafadek	Niger	17	23	19.2	7	57	27.5	7.74	1.09	0.62	46
Possotome	Benin	6	31	21.7	1	58	12.6	7.74	0.82	0.52	43
Zagnanado	Benin	7	13	10.3	2	23	55.2	6.08	0.02	0.01	29.6
Atchabita	Benin	6	53	39.3	2	27	14.6	7.23	0.56	0.33	40.2
Hetim-Sota	Benin	6	35	15	2	30	17	7.23	1.07	0.6	47
RuwanZafi (Adm)	Nigeria	9	28	46	11	30	6.9	7.23	0.51	0.31	44.2
Ikogosi	Nigeria	7	35	40.8	4	58	50.3	7.23	0.08	0.04	35.6
Wikki	Nigeria	9	45	11.1	10	30	40.3	7.24	0.01	0.01	32.9
RuwanZafi (Kd)	Nigeria	10	25	35.9	8	30	49.8				
Akiri	Nigeria	8	22	51.3	9	20	10	7.22	10.89	6.27	46.5
RuwanGishiri	Nigeria	8	26	55.5	9	4	29.6	7.23	11.9	6.77	35.8
RuwanZafi, Awe	Nigeria	8	6	1.06	9	8	2.35	7.23	16.02	9.11	39.5
Tangarahu	Nigeria	8	7	44.4	9	29	58.6	7.23	14.16	8.06	34
Bitrus	Nigeria	8	11	25.3	9	44.9	44.9	7.23	16.24	9.23	42.7

Objective

This paper proposes the introduction of hot spring tourism (Balnear-tourism) to Nigeria to support the diversification of the healthcare delivery system and promote a culture of inbound medical tourism

Balnear-tourism and economic benefits of hot springs



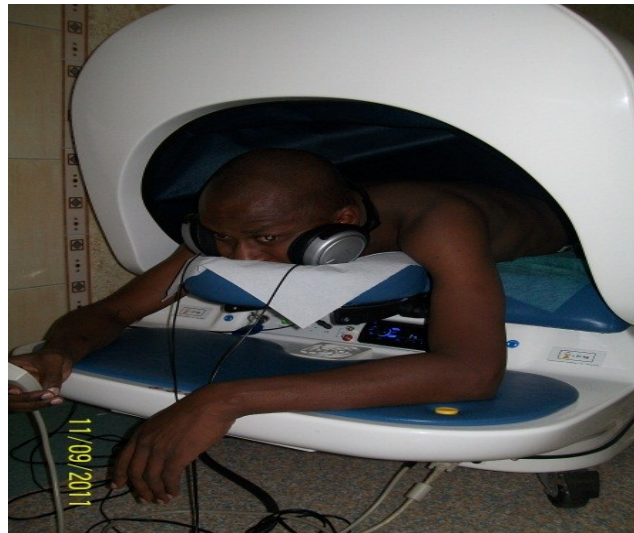
Bathing therapy from collected hot spring



Bathing therapy



Inhalation therapy



Hydro-massage



Bathing therapy from collected hot spring

Revenue generating potential of hot springs in Nigeria

- The revenue generating potentials and benefits of hot springs for balnear-tourism takes four dimensions;
 1. Through the value chains of demand created across many industries such as hospitality industries, hotels, spas, wellness centers, and hot springs resorts as well as retail trading around the health resorts there is capacity to generate employment and revenue to individuals, community and government.
 2. Medical tourism by foreigners have potential to generate multi-billion foreign exchange as a source of economic diversification to support crude oil and other natural resources. Foreign nationals from Europe can visit Nigeria year round made possible with the good climate, sunlight and weather.
 3. Balnear-tourism has potential to reduce the outbound medical tourism that is taking place presently in the country. Every month, almost 5,000 people leave the country for various forms of treatment abroad. About 1.2 billion dollars is lost to medical tourism yearly in Nigeria. The potential to improve health and wellbeing of Nigerians through the wellness and preventive role of balneotherapy can reduce the outbound medical tourism.
 4. Revenue generated through balnear-tourism can scale up funding for health care if the proceeds generated can be used to fund health care especially for the vulnerable people. This can enhance the achievement of Universal Health Care Coverage.

Practical steps to establishing Balnear-tourism Center in Nigeria

1. Creation of **conducive environment** for attracting domestic and foreign balnear-tourism investors to Nigeria. **Private sector participation is key** to the building of hotels, spas and hot springs resorts. **Security** of lives and properties is also key.
2. **Linkages** with health resorts and Professional Societies such as **FEMTEC, ISMH** should be established to create balnear-health centers.
3. The relevant States and subject matter experts from Nigeria, should be consulted for ideas on the best possible ways to develop the hot springs as commercially viable and sustainable balnear—tourism business enterprises – *Medical Geologists, Balneologists, Health Economists, Tourism Experts*
4. Establishment of environmentally **friendly sources of energy** to power the balnear-tourism centers: solar energy and geothermal energy.

Conclusion

Nigeria stands a good chance of establishing the first balnear - tourist Center in West Africa given its comparative advantage in the industry within the context of the relevant resource endowment for the industry



APPRECIATION/ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

