

1. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, ECOTOURISM AND CONSERVATION PRINCIPLES

1.1. Definitions of Sustainable Development, Sustainable Tourism and Ecotourism

The Concept Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is a difficult concept to define; it is also continually evolving, which makes it doubly difficult to define. One of the original descriptions of sustainable development is credited to the Brundtland Commission: “Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987, p 43). Sustainable development is generally thought to have three components: environment, society, and economy. The well-being of these three areas is intertwined, not separate. For example, a healthy, prosperous society relies on a healthy environment to provide food and resources, safe drinking water, and clean air for its citizens. Thus, sustainability is about a future in which environmental, societal, and economic considerations are balanced in the pursuit of development and improved quality of life.

Principles of Sustainable Development

Many governments and individuals have pondered what sustainable development means beyond a simple one-sentence definition. The *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development* fleshes out the definition by listing 18 principles of sustainability.

- People are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature.
- Development today must not undermine the development and environment needs of present and future generations.
- Nations have the sovereign right to exploit their own resources, but without causing environmental damage beyond their borders.
- Nations shall develop international laws to provide compensation for damage that activities under their control cause to areas beyond their borders.
- Nations shall use the precautionary approach to protect the environment. Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, scientific uncertainty shall not be used to postpone cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation.
- In order to achieve sustainable development, environmental protection shall constitute an integral part of the development process, and cannot be considered in isolation from it. Eradicating poverty and reducing disparities in living standards in different parts of the world are essential to achieve sustainable development and meet the needs of the majority of people.
- Nations shall cooperate to conserve, protect and restore the health and integrity of the Earth’s ecosystem. The developed countries acknowledge the responsibility that they bear in the international pursuit of sustainable development in view of the pressures their societies place on the global environment and of the technologies and financial resources they command.

- Nations should reduce and eliminate unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, and promote appropriate demographic policies.
- Environmental issues are best handled with the participation of all concerned citizens. Nations shall facilitate and encourage public awareness and participation by making environmental information widely available.
- Nations shall enact effective environmental laws, and develop national law regarding liability for the victims of pollution and other environmental damage. Where they have authority, nations shall assess the environmental impact of proposed activities that are likely to have a significant adverse impact.
- Nations should cooperate to promote an open international economic system that will lead to economic growth and sustainable development in all countries. Environmental policies should not be used as an unjustifiable means of restricting international trade.
- The polluter should, in principle, bear the cost of pollution.
- Nations shall warn one another of natural disasters or activities that may have harmful trans-boundary impacts.
- Sustainable development requires better scientific understanding of the problems. Nations should share knowledge and innovative technologies to achieve the goal of sustainability.
- The full participation of women is essential to achieve sustainable development. The creativity, ideals and courage of youth and the knowledge of indigenous people are needed too. Nations should recognize and support the identity, culture and interests of indigenous people.
- Warfare is inherently destructive of sustainable development, and Nations shall respect international laws protecting the environment in times of armed conflict, and shall cooperate in their further establishment.
- Peace, development and environmental protection are interdependent and indivisible. The “Rio principles” give us parameters for envisioning locally relevant and culturally appropriate sustainable development for our own nations, regions, and communities. These principles help us to grasp the abstract concept of sustainable development and begin to implement it.

Guidelines for Sustainable Development

To identify a knowledge base that will support sustainability goals, citizens must first select goals. To help in this process, here is a list of statements, conditions, and guidelines for sustainability, which have been identified by prominent authors. Herman Daly, author of *For the Common Good: Redirecting the Economy toward Community, the Environment, and a Sustainable Future*, gives three conditions of a sustainable society:

- (1) Rates of use of renewable resources do not exceed their rates of regeneration.
- (2) Rates of use of nonrenewable resources do not exceed the rate at which sustainable renewable substitutes are developed.
- (3) Rates of pollution emission do not exceed the assimilative capacity of the environment.

Other authors consider peace, equity, and justice necessary for a sustainable society. Donella Meadows, author of *Limits to Growth*, outlined these general guidelines for restructuring world systems toward sustainability:

- (1) Minimize the use of nonrenewable resources.
- (2) Prevent erosion of renewable resources.

- (3) Use all resources with maximum efficiency.
- (4) Slow and eventually stop exponential growth of population and physical capital.
- (5) Monitor the condition of resources, the natural environment and the welfare of humans.
- (6) Improve response time for environmental stress.

SOME DEFINITIONS

Sustainable Development is to achieve a balance between physical development and the protection of the natural environment for use by future generations.

Sustainable Tourism is the type of tourism that meets the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. In other words, it promotes the conservation and more efficient use of natural and cultural resources.

Ecotourism is where *eco* stands for *ecological* rather than *economic*, although it can provide economic benefits, particularly to local communities. It is an alternative type of tourism which is concerned with maintaining the natural and cultural integrity of certain tourism areas within a natural environment. Although many tourism operators use the term ecotourism to describe and advertise their tourism products, it is actually a special interest market that should provide the following:

- Be a nature based experience
- Be low impact and relatively small scale
- Promote a conservation ethic
- Support local communities
- Provide a learning experience

Ecotourism has also been more loosely described as ‘green tourism’, ‘environmental tourism’ and ‘nature tourism’. It has obvious links with conservation, sustainable tourism development and local community participation in tourism businesses. Many would argue that it is the preferred type of tourism for most of the Pacific Island Countries (PIC’s).

Ecotourists come from a broad cross-section of market segments and should not be confused as just being backpackers or budget travelers. Nor, for that matter, as just ‘greenies’ or ‘environmentalists’. They participate in a wide range of activities and experiences that can be classified as either genuine or pseudo. Genuine ecotourists would be motivated by an intense, personal and prolonged encounter with nature and would usually involve initiating, promoting or assisting with an environmental conservation project or program. They are committed to the principles of conservation and sustainability. On the other hand, pseudo ecotourists enjoy the natural environment only as a convenient setting for some other motivation like thrill seeking in adventure type activities or the pleasures of scuba-diving and bushwalking. They have short term, brief encounters with nature and are less likely to involve themselves in a conservation project or learn much about the environment they are in through an interpretation program. They also tend to require a higher level of service and facility provision.

Community tourism and its commercial approach differ from the majority of mainstream commercial tourism developments and operators in the following ways:

- Indigenous landholders, traditional resource owners and local communities, as distinct from just foreign owned companies, are involved as majority shareholders and operating partners in the ecotourism businesses developed.
- Environmental management techniques and responsible tourism is encouraged, practiced and actually become part of the tourism products presented,
- Direct economic, cultural, social and environmental benefits flow into local communities providing them with a greater ability to earn income from these much needed community projects, thus creating sustainability for future generations, and
- Both domestic and international visitors and tourists are provided with the opportunity to participate in a more authentic and active life experience by integrating more with the local people and learning more about their cultures and natural environment.

1.2. Working with Local Communities

Communities often need help to plan for and build their future. In developing ecotourism activities, communities often need assistance to:

- Increase their understanding and awareness about ecotourism and their involvement in it;
- Facilitate the business planning processes;
- Develop a way for community stakeholders to participate in the planning, monitoring and decision-making for the business;
- Implement fair ways of sharing benefits gained from ecotourism amongst the community.

Guiding Principles for Local Village Projects

Basically, Village communities need to meet and talk about two main guiding principles, which can be expressed as questions.

1. What is the real commitment to ecotourism and environmental conservation?
2. What stage are you at in terms of starting a new business operation, already running a business operation or managing an operation for another tourism operator?

The first question can be answered through discussion, debate and recommendations from village community meetings. The second question may be answered by reviewing the Project Development Life Cycle, set out below.

The Project Development Life Cycle

The Project Development Life Cycle is a process that we can follow to plan the development of any project. Under this cycle, there are five (5) steps to developing a business/project:

- Needs Assessment and Aims – Community Consultations
- Project Planning – Business Planning and Product Development
- Implementation – Training, Marketing, Operations, Finances
- Monitoring – Community conflict, Tourist numbers, Tourist satisfaction
- Evaluation – Staffing, Infrastructure, Interpretation, Finances, Business Management

Developing a Community Awareness Program

It is vitally important that local village communities that are involved in ecotourism or wish to be involved, understand how the tourism industry works. This is particularly important in most PIC's where many of the tourism resources and attractions are community owned and the village community usually controls access to them.

An Ecotourism Awareness Program should ideally be commenced before communities get involved in an ecotourism business. But, such programs can also be run as part of the monitoring process, if a business has already commenced. What is important is that all members of the community have meaningful and informed participation in the ecotourism planning process.

How To work effectively with communities - A Step by Step checklist

- Find out about the community before you begin working with them. Identify the stakeholders within the community (e.g. different clans or church groups) as well as those who are external (e.g. other tour companies, government departments).
- Work with the community leaders and organizations that are already established to build strong community organizations. Work within established structures rather than create or duplicate existing ones.
- Establish a team (committee/working group) and work with this team. Bring other tourism workers and community members together at every step of project planning and implementation.
- Listen to ideas of all community members and respect everyone's ideas.
- Share your personal skills. Train community members to manage their own projects.
- People working with a community (or with any other group of people or team) will find that trust and honesty in the relationship they develop is one of their most valuable assets.

Some Handy Hints!

- Successful enterprise development in a community needs to be built on a strong foundation. One building block is a 'healthy community'. Some features of a 'healthy community' include:
 - a sense of shared identity;
 - the presence of established processes for resolving conflicts within the community;
 - a strong leadership and established institutions;
 - a willingness from community members to voluntarily contribute time for community projects.
- Are you building an enterprise on a healthy and strong foundation, or does some community development work need to be undertaken in conjunction with enterprise development?
- Any enterprise requires a strong leader (either a strong individual or team) to lead it. No enterprise succeeds without someone who is committed to the business, who will lead and manage the business, through good times and bad, and who will do so for reasons apart from their own personal financial benefit. Who will take the leadership role for your ecotourism project?
- Undertake a Needs Assessment within the community at the start of any ecotourism planning. It is vital that community stakeholder goals and objectives are identified at the outset, because these will shape the kind of ecotourism project to develop.
- Take your time and be patient. New things can take time to succeed. Work at the community's pace.

Some Definitions

Stakeholder. A stakeholder has some vested interest in the tourism project - whether active (e.g. employment) or inactive (e.g. the tour takes place on their land). Even within one village there are many different stakeholders, or groups, including different clans, church groups, youths, women, and elders. Each group will have their own interests.

Needs Assessment. A Needs Assessment is the first step in the project cycle and the first step in any project. It is a consultative exercise to determine what you want to do, why you want to do it and what you have to do, to achieve your goals.

Participatory Planning. Participatory planning means that all members of the community participate in the meetings, consultations and discussions about the ideas and recommendations on the planning for their future. They need to feel they have some ownership and control over this process.

Some Do's and Don'ts!

- DO** Help the community understand and gain awareness about the ecotourism project and how it works. Run a Tourism Awareness Programme if required. (see 1.4)
- DO** Promote participatory planning. Involve all stakeholders in planning and decision making for the ecotourism project (or at least offer opportunities for stakeholders to be involved).
- DO** Consider what, if any, community development work needs to be undertaken to strengthen the foundations for the community's enterprise plans.
- DO NOT** Let community expectations about the benefits they might receive from ecotourism get too high or unrealistic.
- DO NOT** Try to do everything yourself. Work with the community, at their pace and take time to develop their skills and experience. Let the community drive the project.

Hands-on Exercise: Drain or Sustain?

This hands-on exercise puts participants in the middle of an easy-to-understand sustainability dilemma. It originated from the Center for Geography and Environmental Education, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee, USA.

Purpose: To introduce participants to the concept of sustainable development.

Group size: 4 to 36 participants.

Time Needed: 30 minutes.

Materials:

- A large number of small pebbles.
- Paper and pencils for keeping score.
- Extension: A chalkboard and chalk.

Directions:

1. Divide the group into communities of four.
2. Place 16 pebbles in a communal pile for each community.
3. Explain the rules of the game:
 - The pebble pile represents a **valuable** renewable resource. The resource is replenished after each round of play.
 - Each community member may take freely from the resource pile each round.
 - Each community member must take at least one pebble in each round to survive.
4. One person in each community must record the number of pieces taken by each community member in each round.
5. After each round, count how many pebbles each community has remaining in the pile, and add an equivalent number of pebbles to the pile.

6. Play three or four rounds, pausing after each round to find out if any community members did not survive.

7. Play one final round, then have community members share what happened in their communities:

- In which communities did everyone survive?
- Which community had the most pebbles in the resource pile at the end of the game?
- Which communities are confident they will always have enough pebbles for everyone as long as the pile is renewed? How did these communities arrive at that point? What strategies were used?
- Was there a leader in these communities? If so, why did the community listen to that person?
- Could these communities have reached “pebble sustainability” without communication?

8. Compare per capita pebble ownership around the room.

- Out of the whole room, who had amassed the most pebbles? How did he or she accomplish this?
- Did this keep others from surviving?
- Where do we see this type of greed in the real world?

9. Start a discussion of the following:

- What information is necessary to know how to manage a resource sustainably (e.g., community size, resource renewal rate, environmental carrying capacity, etc.)?
- What is needed to actually put information into practice (e.g. leadership, communication, trust, legislation, understanding of consequences, examples of failure ?)

Extension:

10. Propose that all communities are taking pebbles from one communal pile. Some communities are at war with one another, and some are unaware of the others.

- Would the pebbles still need management? How would these factors affect the management of the pebbles?
- Would these situations change how community members felt about adhering to their sustainable usage?
- How might global pebble usage be managed? Write suggestions on the chalkboard.

11. Now explain that this scenario represents the current state of our common resource, the atmosphere. Automobile and factory carbon dioxide emissions are heating up the atmosphere, causing the “greenhouse effect” and changing the ecology of the planet. Each pebble taken represents one “share” of carbon dioxide emissions generated by that person.

- How do the communities that reached sustained usage feel about the “greedy” communities’ usage?
- How can the atmosphere be managed? Would the suggestions listed on the chalkboard be useful in this situation? What are other “real life” examples of shared resource issues?

Note: The pebbles represent a valuable renewable resource. In the United States, this game is often played with individually wrapped candies. The participants are told they can keep and eat the candies they have at the end of the game. Using candies or coins rather than pebbles helps participants understand the temptation and greed associated with this game and how it applies to the real world.

1.3. Using Ecotourism to Support Conservation

The following points summarise how ecotourism can support and achieve conservation.

- **ECOTOURISM CAN** provide jobs and an alternative income
 - Tourism can provide alternative income to environmentally damaging activities such as logging, over fishing, and coral collection.
 - Tourism can bring in money and provide jobs and opportunities (e.g. tour guiding)
 - Any community, or groups of people (e.g. fishermen) who are displaced from an area due to tourism and the resulting conservation efforts, need to be compensated through participation within the tourism project. (e.g. fishermen who are no longer permitted to fish a conservation area set aside for tourism could be given jobs as tour guides) once properly trained.

- **ECOTOURISM CAN** promote better management of resources, which can lead to better conservation of an area.
 - Ecotourism alone, does not always create conservation. Ecotourism projects need control through proper impact management.
 - Ecotourism can lead to the creation of either new conservation areas or expanding existing conservation areas.
 - Ecotourism management requires environmental monitoring, capacity building and networking.
 - A well-set-up ecotourism project has strict rules for how tourists behave within the environment (e.g. no littering, no fishing, no collecting). Communities can also be encouraged to follow these rules to set a good example for tourists.
 - Tourism can increase prices of some resources (e.g. lobsters, fish). Although this may reduce community access to these resources, it can also help communities value and manage the resources better (e.g. limits to numbers caught).
 - Since ecotourists demand areas with a healthy and diverse natural environment, resources must be well managed. This may include methods to stop over-utilizing and over-harvesting the limited resources (e.g. hunting birds, logging).
 - Ecotourism can promote scientific research in an area. Many ecotourists participate in monitoring and research in important sites.
 - Continued benefits from ecotourism depend on protecting the resources tourists have come to see.
 - All ecotourism plans should identify conservation issues and methods to minimize environmental damages (impacts).

- All ecotourism projects need to manage and control tourism through:
 - ❖ Strict rules – the do’s and don’ts
 - ❖ Setting a limit to the number of people that can be in one area at a time, or in a year (carrying capacity)
 - ❖ Environmental monitoring of impacts. This gives regular information on the health of the local environment.
 - ❖ Proper site hardening & site development to minimize impacts.
 - The promotion of conservation through tourism allows time for resources to replenish & recover from past degradation.
- **ECOTOURISM CAN** increase education and awareness of environmental issues, and develop community pride in the environment and conservation
- Ecotourism can increase environmental appreciation and awareness for not only the tourists, but also the local communities.
 - Ecotourism can be an example of sustainable development.
 - Ecotourism can be a learning ground for environmental awareness for local community members, especially children and youth, through their participation in tourism.
 - Tourism areas set aside for conservation can become education sites for communities, local schools and tourists alike.
 - Ecotourism helps communities value resources for their own intrinsic value, as assets not commodities.
 - Ecotourism helps communities get away from dependency on outside financial aid.
- **ECOTOURISM CAN** strengthen traditional knowledge, including environmental management techniques
- Since traditional practices can be a big part of an ecotourism project, ecotourism can promote culture and cultural revival by encouraging community members to learn traditional knowledge and skills to share with the tourists.
 - Ecotourism can promote and incorporate conservation knowledge from ancestors.
 - Ecotourism can increase pride in the community’s resources.
 - Tourism, however, can also degrade the local culture by ‘modernizing’ the culture and /or making traditional art for money not traditional reasons. A balance can be achieved through awareness.

➤ ECOTOURISM CAN provide income for conservation

- Tour operators bring income into an area, some of which can be used for conservation.
- An additional conservation fee can be paid by tourists into a fund to be used solely for conservation efforts.
- Ecotourism can provide sustainable income for conservation.

1.4. How to Plan an Ecotourism Awareness Program

It is important that communities who are involved in ecotourism understand ecotourism and how the tourism industry works. Assisting a community to develop greater awareness about ecotourism can be achieved using a range of methods, including:

- Meetings
- Role plays & dramas.
- Videos,
- Field Trips to other tourism ventures
- Active participation in the industry.

It is important that ecotourism awareness in communities is achieved before they get involved in an ecotourism business. It is important for communities to participate in the ecotourism planning process – **but meaningful participation requires informed participation.**

Guidelines For Running a Community Ecotourism Awareness Program. A step by step checklist

1. **Identify the existing level of knowledge of tourism in the community.**

This can be done through:

- Community meetings
- Social gatherings
- Questionnaires
- Person-to-person interviews

2. **Set a time and date for conducting Tourism Awareness.**

Be sure to work closely with the community leaders to do this. Make sure that you choose a time of day and day of week when there are no other special events or routine daily activities happening, so that everyone can attend.

3. **Plan the content of your tourism awareness program.**

What are the key messages that you want to get across to the community members? Use the 5 point checklist from the definition of ecotourism (on p.g)

4. **Plan how you will deliver, or present, the program.**

Carefully consider what materials and equipment you will need to get the message across. If you want to use a video, make sure that there is electricity available at the chosen location or a power point presentation.

5. **Make your presentation fun and enjoyable.**

Try to get the community involved in the program. Make it more of a 'social event'.

6. **Cater your presentation style for the specific community members that you expect will be attending.**

Remember that a tourism awareness program is for the whole community, including men, women and children. Different groups within the community might understand different presentations styles better (e.g. drama and storytelling works well for children). Different members will have different literacy levels. Schools are an excellent forum for developing awareness among younger community members.

7. **Present your program in a common language.**

If necessary, have someone from the community translate for you into the vernacular language.

Presentation methods could include:

- Drama and dance
- Large pictures, posters and simple charts (flipchart style).
- Case studies of other areas
- Videos and slideshows
- Written information (e.g. brochures, papers, books)

Some Handy Hints!

- Control community expectations about ecotourism from the start! Some communities have unrealistic expectations about the benefits they will receive from ecotourism, and no understanding of potential impacts.
- A community must gain an understanding of tourism before developing their own tourism project.
- Ecotourism is a business. Running a tourism business often requires a 24-hour a day, 365 days a year commitment. Even if there is a funeral, the tourism operation must still run if you have tourists booked for the tour/operation.
- Make your own decision about the best way to help a community develop ecotourism awareness. Be sure to take into account educational levels and literacy, as well as social and cultural factors.

- Simple techniques (e.g. slide shows, dramas, and storytelling) are often the most effective. High tech presentations are not always effective.
- The more the community can participate in the awareness programme, the better they will remember and understand.
- It is important to stress that ecotourism is an environmentally sustainable option to other businesses, like logging or fishing, that can deplete the natural resources and can irreversibly damage the environment.
- Monitor ongoing ecotourism awareness. Plan additional tourism awareness programmes as required!

Some Do's and Don'ts!

DO Involve the whole community

DO Make learning about ecotourism, fun and entertaining!

DO Remember that things change. Monitor changes in the tourism industry and market, and clear up all community misunderstandings about ecotourism as they arise.

DO Keep talking with the community as ecotourism in the area progresses.

DO Carry out follow-up tourism awareness programs – tourism awareness is an ongoing process.

DO NOT Raise community expectations too high!

DO NOT Let the community think that there will be large, immediate benefits from ecotourism. If communities expect too much from tourism (e.g. that they will all become wealthy) then if it does not happen, they may withdraw support for the project or start to make accusations of mismanagement.

DO NOT Forget to follow up on your Ecotourism Awareness programme by conducting new programs as needed.

DO NOT Assume community members understand ecotourism just because there is tourism activity already operating in your area.

2. MARKET RESEARCH AND PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

To provide the community with as much knowledge about the tourism industry and in order for ecotourism business managers to make informed and timely decisions, tourism market research is essential. It is vital that you do market research at the planning stage, before you start operating your business or developing your product.

There are many different kinds of tourists from many different countries and cultural backgrounds. Hence, it is vital to find out as much as you can, through market research, about the type of visitors who are coming to your village/region/destination country. You need to know three basic criteria:

- Visitor Characteristics – What sort of person comes to your area (by age, country of origin, marital status etc.)
- Visitor Behaviour – What do these people do when here? How long do they stay? How do they travel?
- Visitor Attitudes – What are their likes and dislikes?

Fortunately, a lot of this information is readily available and generally accessible. But, it will require a community leader or a business manager to commit the time to collecting, processing and analyzing the data to ensure that it is relevant for your own use.

2.1. Sourcing the Relevant Information

Sourcing information is about knowing where to get the relevant information. Here are a few suggestions:

- Visiting the Ministry of Tourism office and/or the Visitors Bureau to collect the latest visitor statistics and research reports on industry trends and new products.
- Visiting and joining professional tourism industry associations to receive their industry newsletters and take advantage of networking opportunities
- Searching Internet sites for product information and research data
- Collecting and reading travel and tourism magazines
- Reading general media articles about tourism developments and issues
- Visiting other venues and facilities to conduct site inspections
- Ask for feedback from tourists, staff and other colleagues
- Personal observation and note taking

Market Segments – Different Types of Tourists

Free and Independent Travelers (FIT's) are tourists who arrive in a country without prior bookings. They decide what they will do, and usually make their bookings, after they have arrived in the country.

Package Tourists, in contrast to FITs, have paid and booked for most parts of their holiday (accommodation, transport, some tours) before they even leave their home country.

- *Visiting friends and relatives (VFR).* This segment's prime concern is the visiting of friends or relatives. For many, the purpose of the accommodation venue is a safe and comfortable place to sleep, alternatively they may actually stay with friends or relatives and be guided by friends and relatives on what to do and see.
- *Families.* What a family needs and expects will be influenced greatly by their budget (how much they can afford to spend), age and number of children, activities and services available at or near the destination and their mode of transport. For example, families may require interconnecting rooms, a cot, high chair, and information on local attractions, children's meals and a baby-sitting service.
- *Week-enders.* Many week-enders are couples taking a short break or may be a few friends sunning themselves at a beach resort. Weekenders generally want convenience because of the short stay and destinations to match their lifestyle.
- *The backpacker market* is usually looking for budget accommodation, cheap transport options and the opportunity to see and do as much as possible in the time available to them. They are not likely to want or need 'luxuries' and generally have more time to spend than other categories of travellers (however, they tend to spend less *per day* than other categories of travellers).
- *Business/corporate .*Corporate clients are usually company employees that need to travel as part of their work. People travelling for business like familiarity when away from home therefore they will often stay at the same venue, use the same transport company (airline), the same type of room and even the same room. Their stay is frequently short and usually only during the working week.
- *Government personnel.* Government employees often have only a limited travel allowance, set by the government, but represents one of the largest travelling markets.
- *Groups market.* Groups come in different sizes and may originate from overseas or locally. A group may be travelling for pleasure, be on an inclusive package, be on a special interest tour or attending a conference.
- **Group inclusive tours (GITs)** are groups of people travelling together on a package arrangement. This means their transport, accommodation, meals (some or all) and side trips are usually inclusive in the price paid. Everyone will arrive together, eat together and checkout together.
- **Special Interest Tours (SITs).** These tours comprise groups of people travelling because of a mutual special interest. For example, the tour may be specifically designed to visit art galleries, study the environment or be an indigenous tourism experience. It may be a school group or a sports club end of year holiday.

Exercise: How To Undertake Market Research to Develop a Tour ?

- Get copies of the most recent visitor statistics for your country/region. These are usually collected and held by the local government Tourism Office, or may be available via the South Pacific Tourism Organization. These reports normally tell you about visitor characteristics and behaviours.
- Talk to local tour operators and staff at the government Tourism Office. Ask them about their experience of visitor behaviour and attitudes. Ask them what sort of new tourism product they think there is demand for.
- Use the information you gather to analyse and segment your market – identify the different types of tourists who share common characteristics, behaviour and attitudes. Which groups, or segments, do you want to attract?
- Find out what other tourism products are already available to tourists in your area. Which ones are successful, and why? Can you offer a tour which is unique and different, or is it the same as what others are doing?
- Check the itinerary of your tour to see if it matches with the tourists that you think you will get. Make adjustments as needed.
- Do a formal survey of other tour companies to get feedback on your planned tour and its cost.

Some Handy Hints!

- Market research is critical to tourism planning. Don't forget to do it!!
- The results from your market research should be used to shape your marketing and promotion strategy.
- Some people conduct direct interviews with tourists to determine their likes and behaviour. Although this can be useful, remember that talking to only a small number of tourists cannot represent the characteristics of all visitors to your country. Don't rely on these interviews alone, make sure that you use it only as a useful addition to other market research methods.
- Keep up to date with changes in the type of visitors traveling to your country.
- Tourism, and the tourism market, are not static - it constantly changes as people and cultures change. For instance, the demand for ecotourism has increased rapidly in the last ten years as Westerners develop increased environmental awareness.

Some Do's and Don'ts

- DO** Market research!!
- DO** Keep up to date with the changes in your regional tourism market and the changes in what your tourists' like and dislike.
- DO** Know and understand your target market and design your products and your business to meet their needs.
- DO** Talk to your tourists when they are on tour, or staying with you. Ask them if you are meeting their needs and interests. (Refer 7.1 on p.g– Monitoring Visitor Satisfaction).
- DO NOT** Just rely on one source of information for your market research (e.g. talking to one tour operator). Get as many views and statistics as you can – this will give you a better overall picture.
- DO NOT** Assume that all tourists are the same! They are not!

Market Survey for Development of a New Ecotour

Case Study: Sa'anapu-Sataoa Conservation Area, Samoa

Source: *terra firma associates*

Below is an example of a real survey that was used to help develop new ecotours in the Sa'anapu-Sataoa Conservation Area in Upolu, Samoa. The survey was distributed to a number of already operating tour operators and tour sales agents.

You could use this example to design your own survey.

Industry Survey for Development of New Tours

Sa'anapu-Sataoa Conservation Area on Upolu, Samoa has set the objective of establishing some **new, high quality tours**, with the support of the South Pacific Regional Environment Program (SPREP), the Samoan Department of Environment and Conservation and *terra firma associates* (Australia).

Developing new, high quality tours is in the interest of the Samoa tourism industry! We value your support!

None of the tours are operating yet.

We will only develop the tours that this survey shows have the best potential.

Please assist our planning by indicating, on the following pages, which of the following six tours you think your business has the best chance of selling.

THE POTENTIAL TOURS ARE:

1. 1 1/2 hour Mangrove Canoe
2. Half day Coastal Rainforest Nature Trail
3. 1 1/2 hour Forest Walk
4. Half day Cultural Tour
5. Full day Nature and Cultural Tour
6. Cruise Ship Programme

GENERAL INFORMATION:

- Transport to and from the tour site is NOT included: operators need to arrange their own transport, at additional cost.
- All costs include 10% commission (*commission negotiable*).
- Guides will be fully trained. All safety issues will be addressed.
- Bookings will be able to be made direct with the Conservation Area.
- No tours will operate on Sunday.
- All tours support management of the Conservation Area.
- An Open Day will be held for tour operators and agents once the selected tours are developed.

We would like to set a time on Thursday 1 July to collect or discuss your survey. For further information, please ring Iteli Tiatia on 72060.

Fa'afetai tele!

TOUR #1: Mangrove Canoe Tour

Description

Experience the beauty and mystery of the Sa'anapu - Sataoa Conservation Area!

Travel by traditional outrigger canoe on the Sa'anapu lagoon or Sataoa river with an experienced guide, in comfort and safety.

Gliding through the mangrove forest, the Conservation Area may be the most peaceful and serene place you visit in all of Samoa!. Home to a large number of sea and forest birds, mudskippers, crabs and many fish, this is an experience you will not forget!

Details

Duration:	1 1/2 hours
Cost:	T32 per person (2-9 pax) <i>(includes guide, canoe, conservation management & village fee)</i>
Bookings:	preferred, not required
Departures:	anytime every day except Sunday
Group Size:	minimum 2 pax, maximum 10 pax

Please indicate your interest in this tour by circling a number and writing comments

A) Does the tour have: *(Please disregard cost when answering this question)*

<i>Little appeal</i>		<i>Average appeal</i>		<i>Strong Appeal</i>
1	2	3	4	5

B) What is your main market that may be interested in this tour
(eg: inbound groups, FITs, cruise ships)

C) Is the cost:

Good value Reasonable Too expensive

D) Any other comments:

TOUR #2: Coastal Rainforest Nature Trail

Description

Our specially designed nature trail is suitable for almost everyone! It weaves along golden beaches, follows boardwalks through mangrove forest and enters rich coastal forest. Grey ducks and reef heron feed on the lagoons, while forest pigeons, fantails and many other birds, enjoy one of the last refuges of coastal forest on Upolu. We even have a special viewing platform built over the lagoon for bird enthusiasts!.

We pass through traditional food gardens at the edge of the Conservation Area, and cross a lagoon by bamboo raft to arrive in Sa'anapu village, where we are welcomed into the carved *fales* of local chiefs, visit the historic church, and enjoy a light meal of traditional foods on the beach.

The trees overhead and the cool freshwater springs we pass will keep us cool, and our trained guide will explain the many uses of the plants we encounter along the trail.

The Sa'anapu- Sataoa Conservation Area is recognised as home to a unique range of plants and animals. It is the best remaining mangrove forest in all Samoa, and one of the last intact stands of our unique and ancient coastal rainforest. The trail is about four kilometres in length.

Details

Duration:	4 hours
Cost:	T56 per person (2-9 pax) T47 per person (10+ pax) <i>(includes guide, raft, light meal, conservation management & village fee)</i>
Bookings:	preferred, not required
Departures:	9 am & 1 pm every day except Sunday

Please indicate your interest in this tour by circling a number and writing comments

A) Does the tour have: *(Please disregard cost when answering this question)*

<i>Little appeal</i>		<i>Average appeal</i>		<i>Strong Appeal</i>
1	2	3	4	5

B) What is your main market that may be interested in this tour
(eg: inbound groups, FITs, cruise ships)

C) Is the cost:

Good value Reasonable Too expensive

D) Any other comments:

2.2. Choosing an Ecotourism Product

Choosing the right ecotourism products from the start can make the difference between success and failure of your ecotourism business. A **Tourism Product** is what you will actually sell to tourists. For example, a tour, accommodation, transport, handicrafts or meals. This decision requires careful research and consideration, and may need the support of an experienced tourism operator or a consultant. Before choosing the ecotour product you need to know:

1. What the community wants to offer; what are the ecotourism attractions in the community;
2. That tourists will be interested in these tourism attractions; that you have something different or interesting to offer; and
3. That the existing tourism industry in the region will support you.

How to Choose the best ecotourism product? - A Step by Step checklist

- Determine community needs and hopes for ecotourism through community consultation and tourism awareness. What does the community want to do?
- Identify potential tourism attractions in the area through site surveys. Attractions can include nature, wildlife, marine life, scenic views, shops, cultural dances, historic and cultural sites.
- Compare your ecotourism attractions with other tourism products and tourism areas. Identify the unique tourism values of your region. What is special or different about what you have to offer in your area?
- Assess the logistics of your attractions. Is there safe and reliable access all year round? Is access too expensive? Does it take too long to get to your sites?
- Assess the potential tourist market by using Market Research. What type of tourists might come? What do they want to do when they get there? Why would they buy your ecotour or stay in your guesthouse?
- Once the product is selected, start to develop the following plans:
 - Tours:** Develop tour plans, including tour itineraries, speaking (interpretation) plans, tour costings, safety plans, and environmental impact assessments, staffing plans and business plans, including a marketing plan.
 - Accommodation:** develop appropriate construction plans, maintenance plans, environmental impact assessments, staffing plans and business plans, including a marketing plan.
- Think about how to “add value” to your products. What additional things can you offer to get the tourist to spend more (sell handicrafts, food, hire gear)?
- Make sure all aspects of our tour products are conducted using minimal environmental impact practices.

Some Handy Hints

- Do not choose an ecotourism product (e.g. cave tour) just because the cave is there and you think it's a good idea. Do some research to find out what is going to work best, what are the safety requirements and other logistics and what potential tourists will want.
- Start small, with just one or two high quality ecotourism products. Once these are established and successful think about developing more.
- Get training and support to develop ecotourism products professionally. Ecotourism products must be high quality, reliable, safe and professionally operated to succeed.
- Work closely with the tourism industry. Ask tour operators to bring tourists to trial your product and suggest changes and improvements.

Some Do's and Don'ts

DO Choose an ecotourism product that is unique and builds on the strengths and attractions in your area.

DO Consider all aspects of location, access, market potential before deciding on the final ecotourism product.

DO Consult and involve other tourism industry operators and government tourism officials. It is important for them to support and market your ecotourism product.

DO Trial your new ecotour with local volunteers to identify any potential operational problems and/or weaknesses.

DO NOT Just copy other tourism products in your area. Try to differentiate (i.e. make it different) your product from others as this will tend to attract tourists.

DO NOT Choose a tourism product just because you like it. Make sure you do your research carefully, consult widely and choose a product that will work.

DO NOT Launch your product until it is fully ready.

Some Definitions

Site Survey: A way to assess the tourism attractions in your area to see if they are accessible, interesting to tourists and affordable.

Tourism Attractions: What tourists may be interested in seeing and doing in your area. Including cultural (dance, stories, music, food, ceremony), natural (birds, plants), historical (ruins, relics) and social (village life) features.

2.3. Ecotourism Best Practices

The Ecotourism Association of Fiji (ETAF) sets out the following guidelines for its members. This provides a good example for other PIC's.

We, the ecotourism stakeholders of Fiji, agree to jointly adopt the following Best Practices in order to:

PERSONAL

- + benefit local communities and fellow travellers
- + improve our respective lifestyles
- + provide genuine ecotourism holiday experiences
- + make tourism a mutually enjoyable holiday experience

GENERAL

- + conserve cultural and natural resources
- + minimize negative impacts of tourism
- + generate tangible accomplishments
- + offer comprehensive, exciting and safe itineraries

CULTURAL

- + address key social issues in rural villages
- + offer culturally-sensitive experiences
- + display the best of our respective cultures

ADVENTUROUS

- + provide exciting and adventurous personal challenges
- + develop adventure tourism products

NATURAL

- + employ a network of local nature guides
- + help protect wildlife conservation areas

EDUCATIONAL

- + educate each other of the benefits of ecotourism
- + raise environmental awareness

ECONOMIC

- + energize rural economies
- + offer an attainable sustainable economic option

DEVELOPMENTAL

- + assist with village development projects
- + develop local life-support skills

SCIENTIFIC

- + collaborate with tourism researchers
- + adopt the Tourism/Conservation/Research Economic-Development Model

2.4. Ecotour Product Planning

The following checklist can be used to assess a variety of ecotourism products under the same criteria.

Activity	Initial Investment	Ongoing Investment	Safety Risks	Training Requirements
Trekking	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/High	Moderate
Village Homestays	Moderate	Moderate	Low	Moderate
Guesthouse Accommodation	High	High	Low	Moderate
Cultural Performances	Low	Low	Low	Low
Café/Restaurant	High	High	Low	Moderate
Rafting	High	High	High	High
Food & Meal Preparation	Low	Low	Moderate – health & cleanliness is very important!	Moderate
Scuba Diving	High	High – equipment maintenance & turn-over.	Very High	High
Snorkeling	High	High – equipment maintenance & turn-over	Very High	Moderate
Sea Kayaking	High	Low	Moderate	Moderate
Walking Tour	Low	Low	Low/Moderate	Low – if use local guides
Cultural Tour – marine resources & traditional uses	Low	Low	Low	Low – if use local guides
Traditional Fishing	Moderate	Moderate	Low/Moderate	Low – if use local guides
Traditional Sailing	Moderate	Moderate	Low/Moderate	Low – if use local guides
Traditional Canoe Tour with Sightseeing	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Low – if use local guides
Mangrove Walk	Low	Low	Low/Moderate	Low – if use local guides
Surfing	High	Moderate	Low/Moderate	Moderate
Beach Resting	Low	Low	Low	Low

Case Study: Reef Management Tools

Source: adapted from Success and Failures of Global Reef Management by Robin Aiello

A variety of “management tools” have been developed to regulate marine park users around the world. This table provides some useful guidelines for ecotourism planners, managers and operators in PIC’s to adapt to their own situation.

Tools	What They Do	Are They Effective?
Zones	Allocate specific reef users to particular areas. Reduce conflicts of interest between user groups.	Yes – but, they must be clearly defined and enforced by both conservation area management and the community.
Permits	Limit the numbers of tourist operators, type of activities and numbers of tourists allowed in an area	Yes – but, they can be logistically problematic (e.g. processing delays, paperwork). They need to be well enforced.
Visitor Taxes (Reef Tax)	Make tourists pay to visit the area. Provide money that can be used to cover some management and conservation area costs.	Yes - but, the levied charge must match the tourists’ perceived value of the area. The fees must be channeled back into management of the area.
Moorings	Limit the number of boats, vehicles and/or visitors using an area. Reduce anchor and chain damage	Yes - but, the moorings need to get regular maintenance work to keep them in good order.
Seasonal Closures of Specific areas	Allow specific areas to recover from impact damage (natural and manmade).	Yes - closures must be well enforced, Local communities must be willing to adhere to the closures.
Breeding season Closure of Specific areas	This a fisheries management method to prevent stresses during breeding periods and ensure successful spawning. Numbers of fish and average size have been documented to increase in areas that have been closed	Yes – but, Closures must be well enforced, Local communities must be willing to adhere to the closures.
Community Consultation & Involvement	Promotes community commitment. Encourages self-management and regulation.	Yes – but, The local communities must be allowed to participate in the decision making process to assure that they will support and contribute to the process. All users must be consulted (e.g. elders, men, women, youth, and other operators).
Carrying Capacities	Assign a limit to visitor numbers allowed at a site. Are based on physical, ecological and social values	Yes – but, it is difficult to calculate a real number for a specific site.
Education Programs	Change perceptions & values to encourage voluntary compliance.	Yes - but, People need to understand the rationale behind rules and regulations before willingly complying.

3. ESTABLISHING AN ECOTOURISM BUSINESS

3.1. Choosing the Right Business Option

Local village communities have a range of ecotourism business options depending on how much they want to participate in directly operating and managing the ecotourism business. The following are business options for communities:

1. 100% community ownership, operation and management of the business
2. Employment of a contract manager and/or workers in their community business
3. Operation of a joint venture with another 'outside' tourism company
4. Allowing other companies (hotels or tour operators) to work on their community land in return for:
 - lease arrangements, concessions and payments
 - possible employment & training opportunities for the community
 - permits/licenses and permit fees/user pays fees/resource rental

In some places, outside companies are already operating on community land. In these cases, reaching a fair agreement is an important process for the community.

SOME DEFINITIONS

Joint venture Where two or more parties share ownership of and profits from a business.

Concession Making land and/or facilities available for another business to use in return for money or other benefits (like a lease)

Permit A written order giving permission to a tour operator or individual to use a place or facility for a fee. Permits contain specific conditions.

Getting Started

Operating a tourism business is a departure from normal village life as one has to get used to a more systematic, westernised style of administration with a fairly rigid routine of recording. Foremost is the need for a clear direction of destiny for the business that is about to be established which covers business planning especially going through the approval processes. These are central government controls and regulatory measures to maintain benchmarks of standards suitable for international approval and consumption. Basically, there are four types of regulatory approvals required for different areas of business operations. These are as follows:

Accommodation Establishments

To obtain a fully licensed accommodation establishment you are required to:

- Establish a majority consent for the de-reservation of native land for a commercial tourism lease - this is done through the NLTB to obtain a Land Title.
- Conduct a fully surveyed plan of the designated area followed by an Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) from the Department of Environment.
- Identify the requirements of needed infrastructure, water source, electricity, road, sewer connections, with their approvals depending on your location.
- Obtain approval of infrastructure and structural plans from the Rural Local Authority of your location and the Department of Town and Country Planning.
- Obtain a certificate of engineering from a recognized and reputable engineer for the structural scheme of works to be undertaken.
- Obtain approval from the Health Inspector for occupation of the premises.
- Obtain approval from the District Officer
- Obtain approval from the District Police Officer
- Obtain approval from the Hotel Licensing Board
- Obtain approval from the Central Liquor Licensing Board for the sale and/or service alcohol beverages.

Motor Vehicle for Tours and/or Transfers

Control and Regulatory conditions for road vehicles are strictly dealt with in laws administered by the Land Transport Authority (LTA) that requires things such as;

- Vehicle registration for the specified use
- Vehicle fitness inspection for the specified use
- Vehicle safety and security conditions for the specified use
- Third party insurance policy for cover of incidences
- Approved driver licenses for specified vehicle and use

Motor Vessel for Tours and/or Transfers

Control and regulatory conditions for sea vessels are strictly dealt with in laws enforced under the Marine Act that requires approvals such as;

- Vessel registration in Fiji
- Vessel registration for specified use
- Vessel registration for specified routing
- Vessel insurance reiteration for third party
- Vessel registration for specified personnel and levels of certification
- Vessel certification for carrying passengers

Potential Sources of Finance

Quite obvious is the need for a community to raise finance for their project. However, there are a number of funding initiatives undertaken by government, corporate business sponsors, commercial banks, Development Banks and NGO's, which village community businesses should be able to tap into. These include the following:

- Integrated Human Resource Employment Program – This is a program initiated by government and the UNDP/ ILO for employment promotion that is managed by the Ministry of National Planning and the Ministry of Tourism
Contact: Director of Tourism, Level 3, Civic Tower, Suva, 3312788
- Ministry of Tourism Eco Tourism Grant – this is a government initiative to boost local community involvement and investment in small tourism businesses
Contact: Director of Tourism, Level 3, Civic Tower, Suva ph 3312788
- Fiji Development Bank – Seed Capital Revolving Fund (SCARF), this is a soft loan scheme between Fiji Development Bank and the government with a low interest payback. Contact: CEO or Branch Managers Fiji wide
- Global Environmental Fund (GEF)– a global initiative funded through the World Bank and UNDP to protect local communities and their environment and at times support alternative livelihood income generating conservation projects, often where ecotourism is seen as a viable and sustainable option.
Contact : 5 Mitchell Street, behind NaHina Building, Suva
- Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) – a global initiative to protect communities and their environment through alternative livelihood projects such as ecotourism.
Contact : 5 Ma'afu Street, Suva
- Conservation International – similar to other Environmental NGO's, it supports communities and provides funding assistance for alternative livelihood and conservation projects. Contact : 3 Ma'afu St. Suva, Ph. 3314593
- Partners in Community Development Fiji – supports communities in making informed decisions about their own development. Contact: 8 Denison Road, Suva
- ATH/ Vodafone – Funding for Community support initiatives, Vodafone HQ, Suva

How to begin to organize the business - A Step by Step checklist

- Identify the level of direct involvement the community wishes to have in ecotourism as day-to-day workers. Does the community consider employment a key objective from the business?
- Assess the community's level of readiness/training needed to enter ecotourism as workers and managers conduct a (Training Needs Analysis). Are the potential workers trained well enough to offer safe and effective customer service?
- Consult with other tourism industry stakeholders in the region about their interest to work in the area.
- Consider the relative benefits and impacts to the community of the different business options available.
- Identify the following:
 - financial benefits. How will these benefits be distributed amongst stakeholders;
 - possible employment, training and management opportunities for the community;
 - environmental impacts and related management issues;
 - social/cultural impacts and related management issues.
- Make sure the 'right to renegotiate' the agreement after several years is clearly established and stated.
- Thoroughly research the background of potential business partners, and collect references from a range of sources.
- Prepare written agreements to cover all business options and activities including what will happen when the business ends.

Some Handy Hints

- Clearly define community goals and objectives for ecotourism, and exactly how it wishes to be involved in ecotourism.
- Find out if community leaders and workers are prepared for the intensive work and commitment needed to develop their own ecotourism business. If not, consider a joint venture or other arrangement that allows other companies to operate the day to day on behalf of your business.
- Get legal advice when drawing up agreements/contracts and include opportunities to regularly review agreements and contracts.

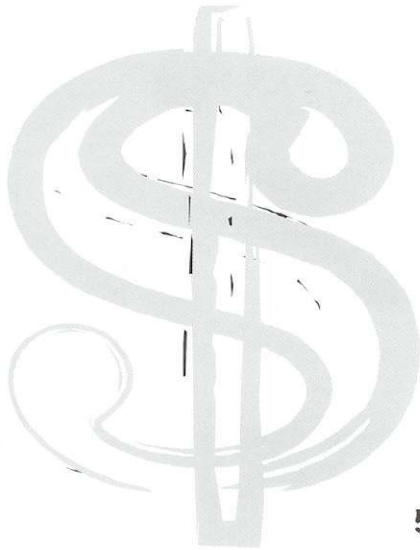
Some Do's and Don'ts

- DO** Make sure the communities consider all the potential benefits and impacts for their business choices, and have selected the ecotourism business option that best suits their goals.
- DO** Carefully check the credentials of potential business partners.
- DO** Make sure the community understands all legal agreements and have protected themselves adequately.

- DO NOT** Just think about money. Do not forget to consider all potential benefits and impacts (including environmental, social, financial) from an ecotourism business/joint venture/lease, and make sure the agreement covers these issues.
- DO NOT** Enter a legal agreement unless you have legal advice and thoroughly understand the agreement.

10 Important Messages for Small Businesses

Source: Queensland Small Business Corporation, Queensland, Australia



1. **Believe in your product and service** and in your ability to provide and promote it.
2. **Develop an aptitude for your business** and get the basic skills to operate it.
3. **Be responsible to your customers** - only make commitments that you can keep.
4. **Ensure that your product is of the highest quality** - it's your best advertisement.
5. **Be cost conscious** - the price of your product must cover your expenses *and* your profits.
6. **Start with enough cash** to cover setting up and expenses.
7. **Start small and keep overheads down** until confident of success.
8. **Start well organised** and develop a system to keep track of expenditure and earnings.
9. **Remain aware of all the laws and regulations** affecting your business (including taxation, customs, health and so on).
10. **Develop a comprehensive Business Plan.**

11 Commandments of Small Businesses

Source: Queensland Small Business Corporation, Queensland, Australia

1. Don't take too much cash out of the business.
2. Don't be lazy - get accounting, legal and business advice.
3. Don't go into business without money.
4. Don't open your doors (start your business) without a Business Plan.
5. Don't open your doors (start your business) without a Marketing Plan.
6. Don't choose partners or staff for emotional reasons. Find people who are qualified.
7. Don't do it on your own - build up a support team.
8. Don't get too confident - keep yourself open for new ideas.
9. Don't neglect your bookkeeping.
10. Don't neglect your health - you **ARE** the business.
11. Don't get caught ignoring these commandments.

Example: An Overview of Ecotourism Business Options

Ecotourism Business Option	Level of Community Involvement	Financial Distributions	Benefits	Possible Impacts
Community Owned and Operated	Community has 100% ownership & operational control	Good profits are possible if tours, tourist numbers & management is good. Opportunity to widely involve community. All profit remains within the community.	Direct community control. Wide community involvement. No sharing of profits outside community.	Requires consistent, full-time & long-term community commitment
Joint Venture	Community Shares ownership with another business	Profits are shared with other business	Could lead to training & skill development for community. Shared control and management. A good business partner could give better profits than the community doing it themselves.	Partners need to consider and understand community needs or else conflicts can arise.
Permit / Permit Fees	Community collects fees; checks permits & sets regulations	Permit/entry fees are gathered from all visitors. Fees may produce only limited income to the community	Community can set rules. Suitable for large visitor numbers when tours are not feasible.	Can lead to environmental and cultural impacts if clear tourist rules & impact management strategies are not carefully established. All impacts must be monitored. All rules must be enforced
Lease for Hotel/ Tourism Business	Community involvement needs to be negotiated as part of the lease.	Can vary greatly depending on the terms of the lease agreement. If negotiated properly, good financial returns are possible	Money & possible employment and training, but this depends on agreement	Low community control unless agreement is clear. Socio-cultural & environmental impacts must be carefully monitored and managed.

3.2. Writing up the Business Plan

Statistics for small businesses in Australia show that:

32% of businesses stop after 1 year
61% of businesses stop after 3 years
75% of businesses stop after 5 years.

Most businesses that fail do not have a Business Plan.

The Business Plan describes every aspect of an ecotourism business. It is the essential final step in planning before a community starts developing the ecotourism business.

The Business Plan will help you and the community:

- Identify common goals for the ecotourism business
- Make plans for everything that can affect the Ecotourism business including managing risks
- Organize and prioritize resources (time, money, workers, infrastructure) required for the ecotourism business to succeed
- Decide if the ecotourism business can succeed.

Most banks and funding agencies require a Business Plan before approving loans or funding submissions.

Some Definitions

Business Plan Describes all aspects of your business: goals & objectives, marketing, management & staffing, operations, financial planning & includes environmental and community management issues.

S.W.O.T. analysis A tool to help identify and manage the strengths (S), weaknesses (W), Opportunities (O) and threats (T) to your business.

How to prepare a Business Plan

A Step by Step checklist

- Organize a Business Planning Team that represents all relevant stakeholders.
- Involve someone who has previous business planning experience.
- Generate ideas as a group. Have someone record and write up the ideas and decisions for future discussion and reference.
- The Business Plan should include topics such as:
 - Summary – Describes the highlights of the Business Plan;
 - Business Description – outlines the ecotourism products, and states the goals & objectives for the business;
 - Market Research – identifies current tourism trends, potential target markets, and present competitors;
 - Marketing Plan – outlines your plans for promoting your product;
 - Management and Staffing Plans – shows the management structure, including jobs, responsibilities (duties) and training needs of management and workers;
 - Operational Plan – describes how to run the tourism business, including booking procedures, communications, transport, equipment needs and permits;
 - Financial Plan – lists costs and prices, commission rates, accounting procedures, budgets and funding sources;
 - SWOT and Risk Analysis – analyses the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the ecotourism business. It states ways to manage all the identified risks;
 - Action Plan – lists what needs to be done, by whom, when, and at what cost.

Some Handy Hints

- The most important part of business planning is the process of involving all stakeholder groups. This is best done by sitting down together, sharing your ideas, and considering all options before deciding on what you want.
- Make sure to take the Business Plan to the community and tourism industry for their feedback and ideas.
- Don't underestimate the importance of setting goals and objectives for your business. This will help everyone to have a 'shared vision' for the business, and to measure progress in achieving the goals.
- The Business Plan does not need to be long or detailed, as long as you have considered and planned for all aspects of the business.

Some Do's and Don'ts

DO Use the business planning process as a tool to assess if your business will succeed.

DO Involve all stakeholders in the business planning process.

DO Be realistic, especially with financial projections, community needs and their willingness to participate in the business.

DO Include community and environmental management issues.

DO Review the Business Plan regularly, and update it as needed.

DO NOT Rely just on guess work when doing your financial projections. Make valid and conservative assumptions.

DO NOT Forget to assess all possible risks and include plans to deal with risks.

DO NOT Start operating unless you have prepared a business plan

Example: Business Plan Outline

When writing a Business Plan, use the following suggested outline. Make sure that you think through all sections and discuss it with your community.

1. Summary - Highlights the main points of your plan and describes why the business will succeed.
2. Business Description
 - Goal - States the goal and vision of your project.
 - Objectives - Lists the main objectives – including community / Owner’s aims.

3. Market Research & Marketing Strategy

THE MARKET

- Current tourism - Looks at visitor statistics and trends.
- Market segments - Identifies the different visitor groups and their interests.
- Target market - Identifies what type of tourist will buy your product.
- Demand - Is there demand for your product?
- Competition - List all other competitors and what they do

Does any other business offer similar products, or is your product different and complementary?

SALES AND MARKETING

- Sales - Who will sell your tour?
- Product - Is your product based on the unique strengths & resources of the area?
- Price - Is your tour price competitively priced?
- Promotion - Identify methods of selling your tour.

What marketing tools will you use (e.g. brochure, TV, internet)?

What is the best way to reach your target market

- Brochure Write a simple brochure make sure it has all necessary information.

4. Management & Staffing Plan

- Management Identify the chain-of-command, and clearly state how decisions will be made.

What are the roles of the community, tourism committee, manager, etc.

- Staff & Jobs Identify all jobs & responsibilities.

Have workers been selected? Are they enthusiastic and committed?

- Training What training is required?

Where can you get trainers to train your staff?

5. Operational Plan

- Logistics/operations Outline all the necessary logistical and operational aspects of your business.

Write down your tour itinerary (including arrival/departure times) and details of how you will run the tour.

Be sure to cover all aspects, including safety, ongoing training, gear maintenance, interpretation, emergency, comfort, impacts, transport, and booking procedures.

- Safety & emergency Procedures Are there operational difficulties?

Will your guests be safe at all times?

6. Financial Plan

- Money Management - Identify savings & withdrawal procedures.

Set up a 'transparent' accounting practice.

- Benefits Are benefits fairly distributed?

How are needs of business, family, church, community balanced?
- Tour Costs: Make sure to calculate an accurate tour costing.
- Budget Calculate a Tour Payments & Profit for 1-9 passengers.

Make up Accounts Sheet for an estimated year.

7. SWOT and Risk Analysis

(Strengths/Weaknesses/ Use a SWOT table and include: Opportunities/Threats)
Environmental risks and management strategies;

Community management issues: community support, levels of involvement, tourism impacts, sharing the benefits;

Business and operational risks.

8. Action Plan:

Activities to start: List all Actions needed to begin operations.

List details of who, when, where & how much.

3.3. Financing Conservation through Ecotourism

Tourism is the world's largest industry. There are many kinds of tourism, ranging from large businesses such as hotels, beach resorts and cruise ships, to small community-based ecotourism projects.

So, what makes ecotourism different from other forms of tourism? Ecotourism is an environmentally and culturally friendly version of standard 'fun-in-the-sun' tourism.

By definition, ecotourism is based in and around nature and cultural environments. In order to make sure that these environments are kept pristine, Ecotourism activities should minimize their impacts on the environment.

So, what is the relationship between ecotourism and conservation?

Ecotourism should support conservation of the environment.

Conservation can be achieved in several ways.

1. ecotourism activities can raise environmental awareness in both communities and tourists;
2. ecotourism can increase a community's pride in their environment;
3. ecotourism brings in income. Unlike other extractive industries (e.g. logging, fishing) which take resources out of the environment and community, ecotourism is a non-extractive income generator.
4. ecotourism can provide income that can be put back into local conservation efforts.

Community-based Conservation Areas are often good locations for ecotourism activities, since they are ecologically healthy and valuable and will attract the interest of ecotourists.

How to Choose a Conservation Financing option

The following list includes some options for financing conservation through ecotourism activities. Decide on a way to set aside money to be put back into conservation. How you do this will depend on the type of ecotourism business that you are running.

1. If the community operates their own ecotourism business (e.g. an ecotour or accommodation), the best options are:
 - Set aside a percentage of the gross profit from the ecotourism business to go directly to conservation purposes (Example 1A)

EXAMPLE 1A - % of profit

Tour Costing	
Guide	\$10
Canoe	\$20
Food	\$5
Tour Cost	\$35
Profit Margin (60%)	\$21
Retail Tour Price	\$56

Conservation Fund contribution will be 5% of profits (if there are any)

- Include a set Conservation fee in the costing for the ecotourism product (Example 1B). Although this option raises product cost, it is more reliable, especially in years where there might not be any profit.
2. If the community does not operate their own ecotourism business, but has ecotourism operating on their land, there are still ways to raise revenue for conservation. If the community opts for using permits / licenses (allowing a tour operator to use your area for a set fee) or concessions (leasing part of your area to a tourism operator), then the best option is to:
 - set aside a percentage of the gross profit to go directly to conservation purposes.

EXAMPLE 1B – Set conservation fee

Tour Costing	
Guide	\$10
Canoe	\$20
Food	\$5
Conservation Fee	\$2
Tour Cost	\$37
Profit Margin (60%)	\$22
Retail Tour Price	\$59

Consider setting up a Voluntary Conservation Fund, which anyone can contribute towards. Ecotourists (especially satisfied ones) are often willing to give extra donations to ongoing conservation efforts. Similarly, tour operators using the area may want to make other contributions to the conservation effort.

Some Handy Hints

- It makes strong business sense to protect and enhance the key tourism resource (the natural & cultural environment) by reinvesting a share of the ecotourism profits into conservation. This is why some ecotour operators using a Conservation Area may also want to voluntarily contribute to conservation – it is good for their business in the long run.
- A community's natural environment is often owned by a whole community or shared among different clans or families. Often everyone helps keep the environment in a healthy condition, particularly if there is a formal conservation mandate on the natural environment. Thus, revenues from tourism operations based in that area should recognize that the community stakeholders have contributed to the ongoing conservation and health of the natural environment, which, in turn, allows it to be used as a key tourism resource.
- In some Conservation Area cases, instead of putting a percentage of the revenue/ profit into a specific conservation fund, the community has chosen to put it all into a 'multi purpose' Community Fund. This Community Fund is used for broader community purposes, which may include conservation projects if community leaders so wish.
- Collecting additional conservation fees from visitors onsite, is difficult to collect and administer. Generally tourists expect these charges to be included in the tour price that they have already paid. They do not like having to pay additional charges once they have arrived on site. Therefore, it is usually easier to integrate the conservation fee into the product price.
- You should also investigate whether a share of tourism revenues collected by the government can be redirected to conservation. For example the Cook Islands, there is an Airport Departure Tax collected by the government that includes a Conservation Levy. The Takitumu Conservation Area has applied for a share of revenue collected through this Levy to help fund their conservation projects.

Some Do's and Don'ts

- DO** Use the conservation status of your area as a positive marketing tool. An ecotourist, who is interested in the quality of the natural environment, will prefer a tour in a Conservation Area over one that is in a non-protected, heavily used area.
- DO** Promote the fact that your tour supports conservation and that the tour price includes a conservation fee. Ecotourists do not mind paying a bit extra if they know they are supporting conservation. Often this 'justifies' the price to the tourist.

- DO** Give opportunities to visitors and tour operators to voluntarily support your conservation efforts by making donations.
- DO** Make sure that you take care of the natural environment, and prevent impacts. In the same way that you reinvest tourism revenue into maintaining your infrastructure (e.g. guesthouse or walking tracks), so you should reinvest some tourism revenue into looking after your natural environment.
- DO NOT** Overprice your tour or your product with conservation fees – be conscious how your product price compares to others.
- DO NOT** Let your tourism resources get degraded, or else tourists will go somewhere else!

3.4. Marketing and Promotion

Marketing and Promotion is how you let tourists know about your ecotours and ecotourism products and convince them to buy them. Effective marketing is vital for a successful ecotourism business. The Marketing Plan must consider:

The interests of the target market;

- What is unique and appealing about your Ecotourism products:
- What prices for your ecotours and tour products will be competitive with other products;
- The best methods, people and organizations to work with to promote and sell your ecotours and Ecotourism products.

How to market your ecotourism products

A Step by Step checklist

Consider the 3 P's – product, price, promotion

- Develop your PRODUCT: Before you market your Ecotourism Product, you need to make sure that it:
 - Appeals to the interests of your target market.
 - Is unique or significantly better than competing products in your area;
 - Is of the highest possible quality;
 - Is designed to be continuously improved in response to visitor interests

- Has an appealing and ‘catchy’ name that will be remembered.
- Calculate a PRICE: Figuring out the right price for your ecotourism product can be difficult. You need to make sure that it matches the prices of other similar tourism products in the area (work this out jointly with the tourism office & travel agents). Also, you need to make sure that the price covers your business operating costs plus commission (for Travel Agents).
- Promote your product: Once your ecotourism product is developed, the next step is promoting it. There are many ways to promote your products. You can:
 - Produce a brochure or a website
 - Work within the tourism industry:
 - use Travel Agents (they require commission)
 - develop a tour package with a Tour Wholesaler
 - through your National Tourism Office
 - run educational tours for industry representatives
 - use direct marketing (e.g. guide books, travel articles in magazines, TV features, WebPages on the internet, contact with local clubs and educational groups, travel markets).

Some Handy Hints!

- Remember “Word of Mouth” is the best advertising. It is twice as effective as radio advertising and it is seven times more effective than newspaper or magazine advertising. A survey in Vanuatu shows most tourists chose Vanuatu because of good news they had heard from friends and relatives
- The best business is repeat business.
- Make sure your tourists are happy! They will tell many other people about their experiences if they are happy.
- Tourism is the world’s largest industry with many agencies and organizations. Try and work in partnership with these groups.
- Offer commission on tours for travel agents/Wholesalers and work closely with your local tourism organizations.
- Review your marketing plan regularly and focus your marketing efforts on the tourist organizations and methods that work best for your tourism product. Be sure to focus on your target market.

Some Do's and Don'ts

- DO** Respond immediately to all tourist inquiries, otherwise you will lose business and your reputation.
- DO** Make sure you have the communications you need to contact tourists (phone, fax, email, radio) or work with an agency who has.
- DO** Make sure your prices and tour products are clearly stated.
- DO** Work closely with others in the tourism industry (travel agents, government visitors bureau, other operators). They are potentially your best source of customers.
- DO** Record where tourists heard about your tourism products, analyze results and focus your marketing dollars where they are most effective.
- DO** Offer “Open Days” and educational tours for staff from the general tourism industry.
- DO** Offer free tours (or “cost price” if there are airfares, hotel costs etc) for travel writers and photographers in return for travel articles and photos. These can be powerful promotional tools.

- DO NOT** Spend a lot of money on full colour brochures unless you are certain it is worth it. A well produced one or two-colour brochure is effective, cheaper and easier to photocopy.

- DO NOT** Spend a lot of money on expensive radio, TV or magazine advertising unless you are certain it will bring results.

Example of Marketing Guidelines for an Ecotour

Source: terra firma associates & Komarindi Ecotours

The Komarindi Conservation Area, Solomon Islands, has put the following marketing guidelines together. They are used to help direct the direction for promoting the Komarindi CA ecotours.

You should develop a similar set of guidelines, but be sure to make them unique to your area - highlighting the special features that your area has to offer.

GUIDELINES FOR MARKETING OF THE KOMARINDI CONSERVATION AREA ECOTOURS

The Komarindi Conservation Area offers unique ecotours. The following are some of the special features of these Komarindi Ecotours.

✪ **The tours help conserve the Komarindi environment**

Komarindi landowners wanted to conserve their lands and resources, and not to see them logged or otherwise damaged. So, as an alternative way to make some income, the community has set up an ecotourism business, and a Conservation Area

✪ **Komarindi Conservation Area has got international recognition**

It has many special and unique species, some found nowhere else in the world. The South Pacific Biodiversity Conservation Programme and the Solomon Islands Government support the Conservation Area. It is recognised by the World Conservation Union as a Category 6 conservation area

✪ **Komarindi Ecotours is a professional business**

The ecotourism business has been professionally planned, with outside help. The guides and managers have done up to five training courses each. The guides are very good at looking after tourists comfort and safety, and are experienced

✪ **Komarindi Ecotours is 100% owned by the local communities**

The ecotourism business has received some financial assistance to get started, but all the benefits goes back to the community, and income is shared through a Common Fund

✪ **The Komarindi area has real and authentic attractions**

Komarindi offers real villages, vast areas of primary rainforest, and a community which know about tourism and want tourists to visit. The community has made some rules about tourist behavior to protect their cultural values and their environment, which they ask all visitors to observe. The numbers on tour groups are often limited so there is no crowding

✪ **The tours are unique and special**

There are not many tours anywhere in the world that are like Komarindi Ecotours- community owned and operated, and supporting conservation. And, the Poha Cave is the oldest rock art in all of Melanesia!

✪ **There is a low malarial risk for overnight tours**

Away from villages, and in the cooler air of the mountains and valleys, there is a low malarial risk

✪ **Komarindi Ecotours offers genuine ecotourism**

Komarindi Ecotours:

- are owned and controlled by the community
- benefit the community
- provide a lot of information for tourists, especially about people and the environment
- support conservation
- give the tourist a unique and exciting experience

Writing a Brochure

Source: terra firma associates, Community Ecotourism Development Manual

A brochure does not necessarily need to be expensive or have full colour photos.

However, it must contain certain specific information, so that travel agents can sell your product and tourists will know what you have to offer.

The following items should be included in your brochure.

Important Things to Include in your brochure....

Description

- ❖ Describe the area where your tours operate.
- ❖ Describe (briefly) your ecotour product (e.g. ecotour or guesthouse). Include basic information, such as:
 - available facilities,
 - level of exercise/comfort,
 - duration of tour.

Access

- ❖ Describe how they are supposed to get to your area. Include a simple map of the location.
- ❖ If needed, you may want to include airline, bus or boat information.
- ❖ If access to your area is seasonal, you must say which months you are open and operate tours.

Bookings

- ❖ Give contact information and how they should make bookings.
- ❖ Include information on where they can get more information about your guesthouse and tours (e.g. website).

Tour Price Or Retail Rate

- ❖ List the costs of everything, including accommodation, transfers, tours and meals.
- ❖ Be sure to include the following:
 - cost inclusions (what is, or is not, included in the cost)
 - time period for which the costs are valid.

Terms And Conditions

- ❖ This is a very important part of the brochure, since it outlines your legal liabilities.
- ❖ The main information you need to provide is:
 - how people will pay you
 - when they should pay
 - what refund policy there is for cancellations, etc.
 - a statement of limited liability with regards to weather, cancellations, injury, tour adjustments, etc.

Example

Terms and Condition Wording

"Although we will try to operate tours as specified, the operator reserves the right to adjust the tour program if necessary due to reasons of bad weather, community requests etc. The tour operator will not be liable for any injury or damage to person or property."

4. DEVELOPING AND OPERATING AN ECO-RESORT

4.1. Managing an Ecotourism Business

Tourism is a business! Some people think that all they need to start a tourism project is a beach, a guesthouse and some brochures. After that, the tourists will follow and everyone will make money and be happy!

This is not usually true. The high number of tourism projects that fail or barely get enough tourists to pay their expenses, show that tourism is not an easy industry to succeed in.

Run your tourism project as a business and you have a better chance of success.

How To Manage a Business - A Step by Step checklist

Develop an awareness and understanding of how the tourism industry works, and how you can develop good business management practices. Running a business requires special skills!

Do a Business Plan before you start operating! A Business Plan does not have to be too detailed, but it is an important exercise in planning. Most businesses that fail do not have a Business Plan. (Refer to section 3.2 – Business Planning)

Carefully monitor how your tourism business is performing once it starts operating. Be sure to look at:

- Your finances; report back to the community at least every 3 months;
- Environmental impacts: make sure that you are keeping impacts to a minimum, and that the environment stays pristine.

Have a mechanism that allows a representative group of community stakeholders to be involved in decision making and monitoring. Sometimes a Tourism Committee is established, or an existing community organization takes on the role of overseeing the business;

A formal evaluation of how the business is going should be done after every 2 or 3 years, or when a big problem arises. Are the goals and objectives being met? Have the community's goals and objectives changed over time?

Some Handy Hints!

- Don't hesitate to get professional advice when needed. Many Pacific governments have agencies to assist small businesses.
- Try to keep initial investments low. The more money you put into a business, the more money you need to earn to pay your costs, and the more pressure your business is under to make money.
- Make sure you have excellent financial management practices. Keep your books up to date. Report to the community on finances on a regular basis, and keep 'open' books.
- Provide high levels of customer service. Be professional.
- Regularly check government laws and regulations – make sure that you are following them.

Some Do's and Don'ts

- DO** Ensure managers understand about business and the tourism industry. Managing a business is different from managing a community! Try not to confuse these leadership roles.
- DO** Find good staff and be sure to look after them! Good staff are extremely valuable assets to any business.
- DO** Conduct realistic tourism market research.
- DO** Keep your financial records up-to-date and accurate.
- DO** Work with other local tourism businesses. They are your 'business partners', and you are all working in one industry. Look for opportunities to cooperate, not compete. Are there associations you can join?
- DO** Monitor your business. Things change! You need to stay on top of these changes, and adapt your business as needed.
- DO NOT** Rush into operating your business. Take your time and do a Business Plan first.
- DO NOT** Market the product without doing Market Research.
- DO NOT** Be scared to change or adapt your ecotourism product and business over time.

4.2. Infrastructure Development

Ecotourism projects often require infrastructure to either meet the needs of the tourists and /or to limit environmental impacts from tourism activities.

Building infrastructure is sometimes referred to as site hardening. Common examples of ecotourism infrastructures include:

- Accommodation (e.g. guest houses & Eco-Lodges);
- Boardwalks, walking or bike trails;

Benches, BBQ, rest shelters;

- Bird hides;
- Toilets, field showers;
- Docks, wharves.

DEFINITIONS

EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment)

An assessment of the environmental impacts of a proposed tourism activity before that activity starts

Depreciation

The allowance made in financial calculations for wear and tear (e.g. a computer loses (depreciates) Value over time, as it gets old and well-used). impacts on the environment (such

Site Hardening

Putting specific infrastructure/ Facilities at a tourism site to limit as rubbish bins, or a boardwalk)

How to plan the development of tourism infrastructure

A Step by Step checklist

- Find out as much as you can about the needs and likes of your target tourist market. What is the target tourist market for your ecotourism product? Are they Ecotourists, cruise ship visitors, Japanese tourists? Remember that different groups of tourists have different needs and likes. For example, ecotourists may prefer traditional style accommodation rather than western style accommodation. Cruiseship visitors (often older people) may require a well-developed walking trail, not a muddy bush track.
- Design your infrastructure to meet the needs of your target market. You may need expert help with design and plans.

- Undertake an Environmental Impact Assessment to assess the potential impacts that construction and use of the infrastructure may have on the environment. You may need to amend your design for environmental reasons.
- Choose your building materials carefully. What material would be best for your climate, your environment, your budget and your market? Can you use recycled or environmentally sustainable materials?
- Use traditional materials wherever you can! Ecotourists want to experience local culture, expressed through architecture and dividing design.
- Build your infrastructure using minimal impact practices. Keep disturbance to the environment (e.g.: tree cutting, digging) at a minimum. Develop environmental guidelines for construction.
- Carefully plan who will own and be responsible for maintenance. Infrastructure is often expensive and requires regular maintenance.
- Plan your budget to include depreciation costs of your infrastructure. Each year you should set aside some of your profit so that you have money available when the time comes to replace the infrastructure (e.g. new boards in your boardwalk).

Some Handy Hints

- Remember that the more money you need to establish a business, the more money you need to earn. Is your project going to earn enough money to eventually be able to maintain and replace your infrastructure?
- Communities are often better suited to low investment businesses, rather than business with lots of infrastructure and high investment requirements.
- Make sure you include depreciation costs in your product cost and project budget.

Some Do's and Don'ts

- DO** Assess the environmental social and cultural impacts that may result from the construction and ongoing use of the infrastructure.
- DO** Set aside enough money from the profits to do regular maintenance on infrastructure to keep it safe and looking good.
- DO** Be sensitive to the visual impact of infrastructure development. How would an ecotourist react to seeing a tin roof in the middle of a natural environment?

DO NOT Forget to assess the financial viability of the infrastructure. Will your project earn enough money to replace and maintain the infrastructure?

DO NOT Forget or underestimate depreciation costs.

DO NOT Expect your donor or government department (if they have helped fund your project) to help you maintain or replace the infrastructure. As a business, you are expected to earn and set aside money to maintain and replace the infrastructure yourself!

4.3. Operating the Facilities and Services

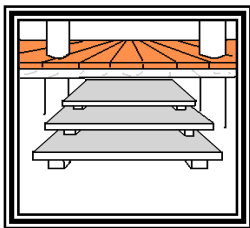
The following guidelines on service standards are for the smaller scale, family or village community owned and operated accommodation found throughout many Pacific Island Countries (PIC).

Guest Rooms/Beach Bures/Fales

Location

- Size and shape of your land can determine how many bures/fales are to be built, as well as how they are to be spaced out.
- Note that the bures/fales should not be too close to each other, at least 10metres apart from each other for the best privacy, and note you would not want to have them too far apart.
- Try to ensure that all your bures/fales face the best views (both interesting and natural features) within the area.
- Plant trees between your bures/fales & around the area: not only will this make your area look more beautiful, it can provide more privacy for guests as well as strengthen your resort in case of storms.
- The height of the tide on the beach should also determine how far up the beach bures/fales need to be (i.e. follow your building and environmental regulations).

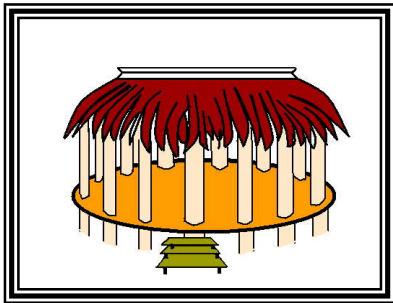
Design



- Try to keep the bures/ fales as traditional as possible; dont use modern materials such as tarpaulins, plastics, etc.
- Make the floor comfortable and it is better if it is raised off the ground. Better if wood or ceramic tiles are used.
- Wide wooden steps are to be built on one side of the bures/fale, most preferably the side of the bures/fale facing the sea.
- Wooden shelf could be built for the guests to put their belongings on.

- A doormat should be placed on the front steps in order for the guests to wipe the sand from their feet.
- Bowls of water on the front steps would also be appropriate for guests to wash the sand of their feet before they enter the bures/fales.
- A traditional coconut broom can be provided for the guests to sweep sand from their bures/fales.
- Wooden pegs to be fixed on the supporting posts of the bures/fales for guests to hang towels, clothes, etc.
- The light should be positioned at one end of the bure/fale, most preferably at the head of the mosquito net - some guests like to read while they are in bed and the light needs to be positioned so that the top material of the net does not block the light.
- Traditional blinds are best to cover the bures/fale when it rains.

Maintenance and Housekeeping



- You will need to check your bures/fales regularly (i.e. see that the roof is still water-proof, check that the floor is still strong.)
- Ask guests for feedback regarding the bures/fales (i.e. were they comfortable, etc.)
- Conduct a thorough check of the bures/fales when guests depart.
- Clean sheets should always be provided for all new guests.
- Make sure the sheets have no holes, have no stains, etc.
- Sheets to be changed every day and cleaned.
- Pillows, as well as pillowcases, to follow the same procedure as the sheets.
- A guest's bure/fale should be thoroughly cleaned out every three days. Politely ask guests to move their belongings in order for the bure/fale to be cleaned.
- Mats, mattresses, pillows, everything to be placed out in the sun after guests depart.
- Mats to be shaken and swept thoroughly.
- Make sure the mosquito nets are cleaned and have no holes.
- During the day, mosquito coils would be useful for the guest's sake, however, make sure it is all right with them as some may not be comfortable with the smoke.
- Eliminate all animal life within the bure/fale (i.e. cockroaches, ants, termites, rats, birds, dogs, cats, lizards, borers, etc.).

Toilets and Showers

Location

- Avoid building your restrooms on the beach, you may need to move them more inland and on firmer ground.
- To be allocated for easy access to the guests.



- Public Works Department can assist you with positioning of the restroom as there are considerations when applying for a permit.
- Prepare drawings of the restroom with the assistance of the Department.
- The Department will ensure that the positioning is in a safe place in relation to the environment (e.g. so that it does not affect any nearby rivers, or neighbors, or swimmers).
- The Department should then check and detect if there are any risks to your proposed position/location.
- Finally, your permit will then be issued from the Department.
- Ratio = at least 1 Toilet and Shower: 3 bures/fales.
- Ensuite toilets are preferred by some elderly guests
- Off-suite private toilets are also cost-effective to build

Design



- A flushing toilet with a septic tank (or even compost toilets) are most preferred.
- Each toilet should have (a) toilet paper with holder, (b) a small bin to be placed in the corner behind the toilet, (c) a wooden peg behind the door for clothes, towels, (d) toilet brush, etc.
- Both the toilet and shower should have lockable doors.
- Neatly made signs should be on the doors.
- Showers should have 2 areas, (1) wet area, (2) dry area.
- The wet area should have a soap holder, if made of wood, a few small holes to be drilled at the bottom will be essential for the water to be drained out.
- The top of the shower should raise at least 1.90mtrs to account for tall guests.
- The key for the tap should be at waist level of an adult.
- The dry areas will require a dry mat outside the wet area.
- A curtain or a door must separate the 2 areas.
- Ceramic tiles will be most preferred if possible, neat and easily cleaned.
- Necessary is a separate room where guests can wash, with a sink and soap holders, towel holders, a mirror above the sink.
- Should you have many daily visitors, it could be better to have an open shower for the people to wash off the sand. Thus, you can still reserve your best showers for your overnight guests.
- Hot-water is an excellent option that many visitors may request.

Maintenance and Housekeeping

- Cleanliness is absolutely vital when it comes to toilet/shower facilities.
- Toilet buildings need to be scrubbed thoroughly at least once per week (e.g. the walls, floor, etc.).

- The supplies should be stocked every morning and to be checked in the afternoon. The supplies should never run out (e.g. toilet paper, hand soap, etc.).
- Toilets to be cleaned daily use cleaning detergents, air fresheners, emptying the rubbish bins, sweeping out the sand.
- If you have many guests, you may have to sweep out the rest room a few times during the day.
- Check in the evening that the lights are working properly
- Always have a spare water-tank nearby in case of water shortages.

Dining Area & Facilities



Location

- Most guests would prefer to dine with a nice view of the ocean, and preferably out over the beach.
- Lift the platform of the dining area up a bit to offer a better view for guests.
- Should be close to the kitchen

Design



- A traditional open bure/fale would be appropriate, partially enclosed, normally the front area facing the sea to be opened for the sea breezes to enter.
- Tables should be between 70 – 80cm from the floor, chairs should be 45 – 55cm from the floor.
- Set tables with chairs scattered in the bures/fale.
- Have a fresh bouquet of flowers on each table.
- Cater for all table needs (e.g. salt, sauce, pepper, tooth picks, sugar, milk).
- Tables to be covered with clean table cloths
- Knives, forks and spoons to be wrapped up neatly in serviettes and placed on tables (to the right hand side of the guest's plate).
- Have a sign outside "Dining Area".
- In cases of wooden chairs, covering with matting or cushions for comfortable seating is appropriate.
- If you have many guests, a buffet would most probably be suitable, otherwise menus should do.
- Traditional displays adds atmosphere to the restaurant.
- Have pictures of fish so that you can show guests the fish they are eating.
- You could have a BBQ area, offering a BBQ night for your guests to enjoy on the beach.

Maintenance and housekeeping

- The dinning area must be cleaned after every meal to ensure that the are is free from insect.
- Try to keep cats and dogs away from the area at all times.
- After every meal, check to see that all the table facilities are to be refilled.
- Try to have mosquito coils under the table during meal times.
- Fresh flowers for every meal would be very nice.
- When you ever get the chance (e.g. no guest for a day it would be a good idea to thoroughly clean the area, clear the dust, scrub and mop the floors, etc.
- Check regularly that all facilities (chairs and tables) are fit for using (i.e. no broken chairs, etc.)

Booking Facilities



- A telephone and fax machine are very important as some guests would prefer to book in advance, it would also make it easier for you to plan the operation of your bures/fales, (e.g. orders, etc.)
- Answering the phone is very important as this can always give first impressions. It will be better if someone who is fluent in English always answers the calls. This is a standard example of answering the phone:



- Bula/Talofa Lava (Hello)
- This is the Beach Resort.
- This is Sereima speaking.
- How may I help you?

Name	No. of Guests	Date of Arrival	Date of Depart.	No. of Fales & position

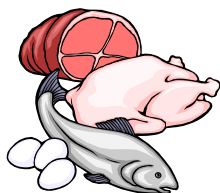
- A booking diary should be kept at all times near the phone for quick reference to availability, the diary should be formatted in columns with the (1) guest's name, (2) number of guests, (3) Date/time of arrival, (4) Date/time of departure, (5) Number of bures/fales and position, (6) Particulars (this section would contain any useful information regarding guests to assist you further with accommodating their needs (e.g. vegetarian, weaknesses, sicknesses, etc.) (7) Bures/fale Number(s) – this is where you can allocate the bures/fales to various guests, to ensure you do not book the same bures/fale twice on the same day, etc. This would be a standard diary but you can add more columns and information that you may find useful.
- After receiving all of this information, just quickly check that the bures/fales are available.
- Ask the guests what time they plan to arrive.

- Thank the guests for their booking and repeat their booking to them for double-check.
- “Farewell”, and tell them that you look forward to seeing them.
- You must be sure that you completely understand what the guests have asked/wanted/needed. (It is better to get them to repeat their booking again until you understand –don’t make a mistake: you would not want to ruin their holiday).

Food Preparation

This is another important section that can affect your guest’s stay at your beach bures/fales. Not only will the quality of food matter, but also the pricing.

Menu Planning



Fruits



- It is important to try and adopt a menu that suits the type of guests you have as each guest will have his own taste.
- It is important that you understand your guest’s needs so that you can cater accordingly (e.g. vegetarian, diabetic, etc).
- Be aware that children are not like adults who are adventurous and brave to try most dishes, so it will be better for you to consult with parents as to what the children would prefer, otherwise, you can prepare meals common to children (e.g. fish & chips, burgers, rice, etc.), always keep some tin foods in case the children find it difficult to eat from your menu (e.g. spaghetti, baked beans, sweet corn, baby foods, etc).
- Try to ensure that you serve fresh foods (e.g. taro taken straight from the plantation, fish, etc).
- Try to vary your menu so that you have something special everyday of the week.
- You can either hand the guests a menu to choose from, otherwise, you can prepare buffets so that the guests can help themselves, that way they take only what they need and save wasting food.
- Be sure to have a well-stocked kitchen to save you the embarrassment of having to ask guest to change a meal due to unavailability.
- Important to always have tropical fruits available for guests: papaya, bananas, guava, golden apples, mangoes, pineapples, etc.
- You could even have a ripe bunch of bananas hanging at one end of the dining area for guests to help themselves.

Drinks and Snacks

Should always have a standard menu to notify guests what is available at all times for them. You can either offer the service to their bures/fales – or – have these available in the restaurant area where the guests can buy item.



- Coconut drinks
- Boiled Water (water should be boiled for at least 10minutes to remove bacteria)
- Soft drinks
- Beverages
- Peanuts
- Potato Chips

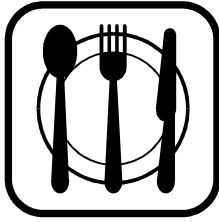
Hygeine

Foods need to be tasty and attractive, most importantly to be prepared safely so that the guests do not get sick.



- Make sure utensils are cleaned before you start cooking.
- Make sure that your hands are cleaned before you touch any food - use soap.
- Make sure cutting boards and knives are clean, and it would be better if there were separate boards for meat and vegetables. If not, thoroughly scrub after using for meat before using for vegetables.
- Always wash your hands after handling raw meat.
- Keep kitchen nice and tidy at all times and keep children, dogs and cats out.
- Make sure all cupboards are free of insects and dust.
- Keep meat separate from fish and vegetables.
- Better if the kitchen area is enclosed with screens on windows and doors to keep the flies out.
- Make sure that the chicken is cooked to the bone.
- Do not re-freeze foods that have already been defrosted.
- Use only boiled water for ice.
- Be very cautious with stoves, be alert and always be safe to avoid fires.
- Clean all utensils straight after use
- Better to let the dishes dry out on a rack instead of drying with towels.
- Always keep clean towels on hand.
- Always re-check the frozen goods if power has been off for some time.
- Try to set up your kitchen in a way so that there is enough space for at least 5 to 6 people to maneuver easily

Food Serving

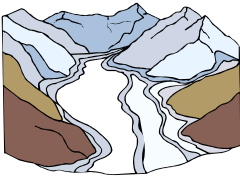


- Make sure that your guests are aware of the meal times (e.g. breakfast: 7-10am, lunch: 12-2pm and dinner: 6-8pm).
- If you only have a few guests, you may be able to consult with them as to the time they prefer to eat.
- You can even offer the Special of the day.
- Some guests prefer to serve themselves and it would probably be easier for you to place dishes on tables and guests can help themselves.
- Food is an integral part of the culture and you can explain to the guests what the local foods are, as well as inviting them to witness how such foods are prepared, especially in an umu or lovo.
- Some guests would prefer self-catering and, thus, there must be a common fridge for such guests to store their food - must not be mixed with your foods.
- Be creative and try to serve food in an attractive manner.

Attractions and Activities

Nearby attractions will also be of assistance to your beach, not only do they draw guests to your area but to your bures/fales. Activities will also earn a little extra money for you.

Attractions



- Make a list of possible tours you can provide within your area.
- Offer to prepare a tour lunch for them at a reasonable cost.
- Always be sure that there is good communication between you and guests when giving directions.
- Maps would be helpful to guests who prefer to explore on their own.
- Draw maps to be sure they are clear.
- Attractions include;
 - Mangroves
 - Rainforest Preserves
 - Marine Protected Areas
 - Caves & Waterfalls
 - Freshwater pools
 - Blowholes & Beaches
 - Archeological sites
 - Traditional architecture



Activities

Be sure to advise guests at check-in time of all activities available to them so that they can plan their day's activities during their stay. Be sure to have an activities book available at the guest area, make sure the guests are aware of the costs of various activities as some guests are uncomfortable when wondering whether to pay or not. Another option is to display activities on a blackboard.

- Fishing trips
- Snorkeling
- Surfing
- Walking tours
- Plantation tours
- Craft instruction
- Fiafia/Meke Night (traditional dancing and feasts)
- Sunday Activities (church ceremonies, advise them to join in the preparation of the Sunday cooking)

Cleaning the beach

- Clear and rake the beach every morning.
- Remove all litter, glass, seaweed, etc.
- Check regularly during the day for any litter or rubbish that currents or visitors may have left behind.
- Also remove rubbish washed up by the sea.
- It would be better to have rubbish bins along the beach for visitors to lighten the cleaning for you.
- Rubbish bins to be emptied daily.

Garden

- Try to have as many shade trees as possible around your beach, plant them if you have to.
- Clearly think about the location of the trees so the guests can rest safely under them (e.g. don't plant them under coconut trees - best to hand-pick all nuts early before they ripen).
- Flowers will also grow on the beach, these will make your beach bures/fales more attractive.
- A hedge is more preferred than a fence or wall (i.e. you are trying to be as environmentally friendly and aesthetic as possible).
- Grow a variety of tropical fruits and agricultural food crops for your guests to enjoy – preferably organically.

Waste Management

Poor waste management can damage your business easily as it presents a bad image to your guests (i.e. rubbish lying around, bad smell to the area).



- Organize a good system for your rubbish.
- Keep 1 bin for all rubbish, to be picked up by rubbish truck when it comes around.
- Always keep a separate bucket for leftover food as they can be used to feed animals.
- You can have a rubbish rack to put filled rubbish bags on, make sure to tie the mouth of the bag tight, make sure the rack is high so that dogs cannot jump onto it.
- Plastic bottles can be used to store cool drinking water in the fridge.
- Encourage composting of your organic wastes.

Protect against Marine pollution

- Make sure that the toilet wastes have no effect on the sea: that is why you should seek professional help when building your toilets and showers.
- Try to encourage fellow villagers not to dump their wastes into the sea.
- Educate the villagers on safely maintaining the sea.
- Try to encourage the village to ban the use of fish poisons, dynamite for fishing, crow bars, etc.
- It is not good to sell seashells to visitors, especially because you are supposed to be environmentally friendly.
- Seashell necklaces are also not to be encouraged.

Beach Protection

- Protect existing plants and trees as the roots are useful in holding the sand together (slow the erosion process).
- Seawalls, although they are for a good cause, do have their side effects which could be more damaging than good (e.g. you could have done harm to the natural view of the area, could also cause more erosion of the sand).
- Try to encourage your village to avoid taking sand from the beach for personal use or commercial use.
- Provide groins (stone walls protruding into the sea) to encourage sand to be deposited nearby.

Security

Try to reduce security risks as much as possible.



Theft



- Always advise your guests of the security risks at check-in so that they are aware of such threats.
- Either provide a locked room in your house where you can lock all valuables in for safety, otherwise, try to add a lockable box as part of your bures/fales for the guests to lock away their money, passports, cameras, wallets, etc. The key can then be kept with you.
- It is better if day visitors are distinguished from overnight guests (i.e. you can have a detour route around the bures/fales for visiting guests). If possible, try to employ family members, otherwise, village members or anyone whom you can really trust.
- Try to get one of your family members to patrol the area during the night, especially when the guests are asleep.
- It is always much easier to control intruders with a hedge surrounding the area, a fence would ruin the natural scenery around your bures/fales.
- Discourage visitors/intruders at night time and take extra precautions with single women sleeping alone.

Fires



- Advise the guests that bures/fales burn easily and they should be extra careful when smoking or using mosquito coils.
- Do not allow candles in bures/fales.
- Ensure that the electrical wiring is secure and safely installed.
- Always provide an ashtray for smokers to use, prevents from throwing their cigarette butts all over the place, thus preventing pollution and avoiding fires.
- In case of a fire, evacuate guests immediately and try to contain the fire with buckets of water and sand and fire extinguishers.

Cyclones



- In case of cyclone warnings, advise guests of the risks and encourage them to return to the main town or city if there is time. Should they have no transport, it is your duty to escort them safely to safety.
- Should there be no time to make it to the main town or city, then you should escort your guests to the nearest concrete shelter to wait out the storm.
- Always be prepared for such natural disasters: have candles, batteries, torches, extra blankets, radio, food, medications, etc.

Guests' Safety

Cuts and burns



- Be prepared to deal with medical problems: it is important that you have first aid knowledge and to also train your staff so that anyone is able to deal with a problem at anytime.

Dangerous sea currents

- Reduce risks of guests getting swept out to the sea by advising safety areas for swimming.
- Place a sign on the beach in an area commonly passed by guests advising them of such information.
- Danger areas should be marked by flags and advise guests to keep a good distance from the flags.
- Always have someone on the lookout when any of your guests are swimming.
- Always be sure to act accordingly in emergencies, have a boat ready near the beach at all times (either a motorboat or canoe). Also have flippers and life jackets available nearby.
- Teach all staff to swim and how to do rescues.

Poison Marine life



- Always advise guests of dangerous sea creatures which exist.
- Make sure you have the knowledge of how to deal with various injuries from the following;
 - Jelly Fish
 - Corals
 - Sea Urchins
 - Cone Shells
 - Stingray



Other annoyances

Remember to inform guests where they can find help if they require it.



- Have a family member sleep in any vacant bures/fales nearby to be more prompt to any problems which can arise during the night (e.g. locals entering the area and asking the guests for cigarettes, money, etc.)
- Seek the assistance of the Village Council to ensure the security of your bures/fales and guests.
- Always try to remove any still water nearby as it can act as a breeding ground for mosquitoes.
- Try to ban dogs (keep stray dogs from the Resort as they frighten guests, spread diseases and cause too much noise).

4.4. Accounting and Bookkeeping

Financial Management

Financial Management is about “looking after the money”

Poor financial management and accounting is common in failed businesses and is a major cause of community conflict.

An ecotourism business receives income from tourist payments. It also has many expenses(wages, office & telephone costs, etc).

Net profit (the money left over after all Expenses have been paid) can be:

1. invested back into the business to make it grow (by buying new equipment, staff training etc);
2. saved in a bank account;
3. distributed to the community; or
4. used for community projects.

DEFINITIONS

Retail Price

What the tourist actually pays.

Tour Expenses

The cost to run your ecotour- guide fees, vehicle hire, etc. OR the amount you must save each year to

Operating Expenses

The costs to operate your business - rent, electricity, phone, mail, book-keeping etc.

Depreciation

The amount your equipment (motors, boardwalks etc) reduces in value each year replace them when they break.

Gross Profit

Profit before paying operating expenses of your business.

Net Profit

Profit after paying operating expenses of your business.

Commission

The amount paid to someone who sells your product. Commissions are usually calculated into retail prices.

Budget

An estimate of your income and expenses Each year.

How to look after the money

A Step by Step checklist

Consult with the community / Tourism committee to make sure they understand financial management systems. Calculate the Tour / Accommodation Price to include:

- all of the products expenses (guide wages, tourist food, etc);
- profit margin for the tourism business and community, including money to meet operating expenses and depreciation;
- commission for travel agents.

Compare your retail prices to make sure your products are competitively priced against other similar ecotourism products.

Review all costs and prices annually

Involve the community / tourism committee in decisions on money and profit distribution.

Set up a business bank account for all tourism income and expenses requiring at least 2 signatories for any withdrawals.

Set up an accounting system to record:

- all tourism income
- all tourism expenses.

Calculate the net profit / loss at the end of each quarter and the end of the year.

Work with an accountant to audit accounts annually and fulfill taxation requirements.

‘Open’ the accounts for the community to inspect each quarter.

Work out a budget for your business. If you want a Bank Loan, the banks may require a budget so they are confident you can repay the loan. To work out a budget for 1 year, calculate your total tourism income, total expenses and expected profit or loss.

Some Handy Hints

- Any church or community financial obligations can be included as an expense in your budgets.
- Seek professional help to work out retail prices and set up the accounting system.

- Depending on the size and complexity of your ecotourism business you may choose to:
 - contract out book-keeping;
 - investigate account keeping computer packages; or
 - train a book-keeper in the community to work in your a small business
- Disputes over money can destroy trust in community businesses. Set up an accounting system that is simple and easy to check:
 - use tickets or vouchers for all tourists as a way to check that all tourist income is received and recorded.
 - deposit all income into a Business Bank Account and require 2 (or more) signatures from respected community representatives for withdrawals;
 - ‘open’ the accounts each quarter for community inspection;
 - Have an independent accountant audit the accounts annually.

Some Do’s and Don’ts

- DO** Make sure the community is involved in financial decision-making and that they understand the financial system that you are using.
- DO** Keep your books up-to-date.
- DO** Take advantage of Government Small Business Advice and training.

Accounting Procedures

For a typical community of small business.



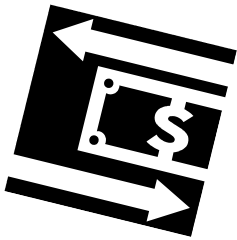
Forms of Payment

- Cash- Check currency and convert favorably. Request Bank Exchange rate to be faxed weekly.
- Credit Card- Take details accurately by e-mail (in 2 separate e-mails for security reasons) or by phone/fax (e.g. Name, Number, Expiry Date, and Type of Card: Visa etc.).
- Travellers Cheques.
- Telegraphic Transfers (TTs).
- Write receipt immediately and record all payments in Bank Deposit Books.

Banking (Daily Procedures)

- Transactions for the day should be cut off at least 1 hour before bank closes in order for banking to be done. (Any monies received after this time, especially monies from night shift, should be included in banking the following day and locked away carefully overnight).
- All deposit books should show all payments into the accounts (even TTs).

Receipts and Cheques



- Records of Receipts and Cheques must be updated daily and given to the Financial Manager
- Receipts to be recorded onto the exact Ledger daily.
- Cheques to be recorded from cheque butt with a payment voucher filed in the Payments Folder in a sequence manner. NOTE: all supporting documents for the payment, as well as a receipt, should be attached to the Payment Voucher.
- Vouchers should be coded with the appropriate code.
- To be reported daily to Financial Manager for cash flow purposes.

Merchandise Ledgers (postcards, calendars, etc.)

- Recorded in Control as soon as the product is sold, together with the receipt number (Cash register System is best)
- To be reconciled at the end of the day and reported to the Financial Manager (this does not include a brief stock take).
- If possible, it would be best to have separate ledgers for each product or use multi-account cash register.
- Stock to be carefully locked away, especially the ones which are difficult to trace at all times (e.g. phone cards, etc.)

Controlling the Ledgers

- Present client with merchandise and collect payment.
- Write out a receipt for the amount and issue to client.
- Enter the item on the particular ledger.
- At the end of the day, stocktaking should take place.
- Balance the ledger to the stock daily and report weekly to Financial Manager. Always have a handy supply of stock.

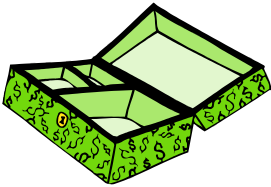
Wages/Salary

- Each Employee must clock-on using time card in the morning and clock-off in the evening OR



- Sign in the time book controlled by Managers in the morning and the evening (i.e. print name, time started/ time finished, signature, date).
- The same procedure should take place when employees leave office for lunch breaks.
- Working hours to be filled out by Managers (e.g. employees names, normal hours, time and a half, double times, sick leave, annual leave, etc.).
- Provide employees' hours to Financial Manager for processing payroll at least 2 days before payday.
- Managers also responsible for cashing payroll cheques and paying out cash to staff.
- All staff must sign for uplifting pay.

Petty Cash



- Petty Cash Vouchers should be filled out by claimant.
- Voucher should be approved by Office Manager before cash is paid out.
- Any receipts should be returned and attached to support Petty Cash Voucher.
- Vouchers should be controlled.
- Vouchers should support the claim for reimbursement. All receipts to be attached to the Payment Vouchers.
- Vouchers should balance with the figure on the cheque, should balance the figure in the control, while at the same time the control should also show the balance of cash on hand.

Refunds

- All refunds must be approved only by Operations Manager/Assistant Manager.
- Cancelled Bookings are to be partially refunded, i.e. total amount less bank charges, less 20% cancellation fee = net amount refundable.
- Should refund be a result because of mistakes on the part of staff, total amount received to be refunded in full.
- All refunded documents to be attached to the client's file and filed away in the Refunds Folder.
- Refunds to be avoided at all costs. To avoid mistakes, double-check all flight times, pick-up times, driver's schedules, etc.

Chart of Accounts

- Every type of item will have its own code in this chart (e.g. all items related to office will have their own codes, all items related to vehicles will have their own codes and so on for other departments, e.g. wages, entertainment, marketing, accounts, etc.).
- All expense vouchers should be coded for accounting purposes.

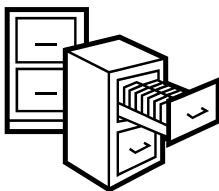
- These codes will represent each item in reporting.
- The accounting system will then identify and sort all items according to the codes, thus the system will be able to report on total expenses and total revenues associated with different items.
- Reconciliation will be made easier.
- Budget wise, you can control expenses so that departments do not exceed their budget limit.

Invoices



- When an invoice is received, pull the original copy of Purchase Order from file and attach to invoice.
- File in the Payables File.
- Every Friday, the Payable File should be processed and forwarded to Financial manager for processing the Payment Vouchers as well as cheques.
- Enter all vouchers into control book. (i.e. according to cheque numbers).
- Those who uplift cheques must sign, and if delivered by drivers, the driver must sign the Control Book and client to sign on copy of vouchers.
- Payments to be made every Monday to suppliers, etc.

Administration of Accounts



- Purchasing of goods:
 - (i) Get information from suppliers over the phone.
 - (ii) Get out Purchase Order (i.e. name of supplier, goods to be purchased, costing).
 - (iii) Purchase Order to be approved and signed by Manager.
 - (iv) File the original copies for further reference.
 - (v) Take copy of Purchase Order to the suppliers.
 - (vi) Goods supplied to be signed for by Managers.
 - (vii) Goods to be reconciled with the original copy of the Purchase Order.
 - (viii) When an invoice has been received, attach to it the original copy of the Purchase Order for Manager's/Accountant's reference (so they are sure the goods on the invoice were authorized and received).
 - (ix) Get invoice ready for payment-Place in Payable File.

List Suppliers:

- (i) Supplier directory must be updated.

5. DEVELOPING AND OPERATING AN ECO-TOUR

5.1. Tour Guiding and Interpretation

The following guidelines will help your Tour Guides do a better job.

Read these before going on a tour!

1. Meet & greet your tourists. Find out where they are from, and what they want to do and see.
2. Try to do what the tourists want to do (if you can), not just what you want to do.
3. Think about your tour before you go on it. Make sure that you are really organized before it happens.
4. Be friendly with the tourists. They want to get to know you a little bit. Try to think of them as “new friends”.
5. Talk with the tourists alone without a guide or an assistant.
6. Never leave tourists alone without a guide or an assistant.
7. Think about what problems you may have on the trip and how to avoid them. Take all necessary actions to avoid these problems.
8. Be honest, professional, clean and well dressed.
9. Make sure the tourists get a good night’s sleep on overnight tours.
10. A good guide always tries to make his/her guest tour better.

Tour Guiding

Competent, informative, and friendly tour guides are essential for successful tours.

Tour Guides often spend more time with tourists than anyone else. How well the guides do their job is often how tourists decide if the tour or tourism project is good or bad. Guides are like ‘ambassadors’.

Tour Guides may have many different tasks as part of their job, but they should all:

- Give good “customer service”
- Make sure tourists are safe
- Provide information and interpretation about the area and tourist attractions.

DEFINITIONS

Customer Service

Looking after the needs of your tourists and making them happy and safe. Remember “the customer is always right”.

Interpretation

In tourism means helping tourists to understand, appreciate, respect And protect the local culture and environment.

How to select and manage tour guides

A Step by Step checklist

Select tour guides from the community who:

- Are friendly, confident and enjoy working with people;
- Have good language and communication skills;
- Are willing to work hard and are committed to ecotourism;
- Are enthusiastic about working with tourists and helping them learn about the local culture and environment.

Identify the range of tour guide’s duties needed to operate the tour.

Identify what is needed for good “customer service” for this tour.

Identify any potential safety issues (dangers) for tourists and develop a Safety Plan for guides to follow.

Develop an Interpretation Plan – the things you will talk about and show tourists. Think about the following things while you are planning your interpretation program:

- Make it entertaining and be friendly;
- Encourage tourists to participate and use all their senses (e.g. smell a local plant, taste local food, weave a coconut basket);
- Help tourists to appreciate and respect your unique culture and environment.

Organize tour guide training. Options for training include:

- Customized training for guides focused on your ecotour and the precise skills they will need to operate it
- Tour guide training through the government education system
- “on the job training” with another tourism company in a similar field
- First aid and safety training.

Some Handy Hints

- Select guides who are enthusiastic and committed to tourism and have good communication and language skills.
- Female guides are equally important as male guides. They are sensitive to tourist needs, can explain women’s unique cultural perspective, and are preferred by many women tourists.
- Encourage guides to value their cultural knowledge and practices. What may seem ordinary for the guide may be a unique experience for a tourist (e.g. how local food tastes, how it is gathered and prepared; or local beliefs and practices for raising children).
- Tourists are often not as physically strong as locals or may not be well adjusted to the local climate and conditions. Guides must be especially careful to identify what is dangerous for tourists so they can prevent injury and sickness.
- Monitor the success of tours so you can learn what works well and what should be changed or improved.

Some Do's and Don'ts

- DO** Encourage guides to watch tourists' body language carefully to see what interests them on the tour, or if they are tired, thirsty or feel unsafe.
- DO** Encourage guides to adjust their tours to focus on the things that interest their tourists.
- DO** Encourage guides to use their local traditional knowledge in ecotourism talks and presentations. Tourists want to learn about local life, values and ideas.
- DO** Plan the tour carefully, but encourage flexibility. Encourage guides to interact with their tourists and talk about what interests them.
- DO NOT** Choose guides because of community status, but because they are enthusiastic and skilled with tourists.
- DO NOT** Think that tourists want a lot of western scientific information such as scientific names of plants and animals. They prefer learning local knowledge. A tour is not a "fact finding" mission.
- DO NOT** Fix the tour plan 'in cement', or both the guides and tourists will get bored.

Interpretation & Signage

Interpretation is an important part of a Tour Guide's job and an important part of all ecotourism products.

Interpretation is more than just giving facts about your tour site or area!

Interpretation means helping tourists understand the natural environment and local cultures. In many ways, a tour guide or interpreter is like a teacher.

There are different ways of interpreting and providing interpretive information to visitors.

You can use:

- Oral interpretation: such as storytellers, commentaries (a guide talking);
- Written interpretation: such as written, brochures, pamphlets, signs.
- Visual interpretation: show them physical samples, explain on site.

No matter which type of interpretation techniques you use, all good interpretation should:

- Be an interactive experience between the tourist and the environment and/or culture,
- Get tourists actively doing something, and
- Involve as many senses (sight, hearing, taste, touch and smell) as possible. Don't be afraid to let tourists touch, smell and taste things (but make sure they are all HARMLESS to people).

How to Plan an Interpretation Program - A Step by Step checklist

- Contact the person/community who owns the resource being interpreted. They should be involved in how the tourism resource (such as a waterfall or a special building) is presented/interpreted to tourists.
- Identify your main tourist market. Different types of tourists want different types of interpretation. What are they interested in? You should identify these things with your Market Research.
- Identify the special, unique things about your area or tour site, including natural and cultural features. Talk about, or interpret, these special and unique things in your area. Often that includes your own cultural knowledge.
- Develop the best techniques, or the best way of communicating with your audience. Do you have good guides who can communicate and interpret well? Or maybe for non-English speaking tourists, you may need a written sheet in their language, or simple English. If you plan to have many large tourist groups, a sign might be a good way of reinforcing important messages.
- Define clear goals for your interpretation. What messages do you want tourists to take home with them?
- Train your ecotour guide to be interpreters!! Bring in professional trainers if necessary.
- Plan how you will evaluate your interpretation. Like your business as a whole, the interpretation part needs ongoing evaluation to make sure that it is effective, and that the tourists like it. Did the tourists leave your tour with a better understanding of the nature/culture? Did you open their mind and eyes, or just their wallets?

Some Handy Hints

- Good Interpretation is often the difference between a boring tour and an excellent memorable tour.
- Interpretation is a form of education that tries to change the way tourists think and behave. It helps them understand and better respect local culture and the environment. Use interpretation as part of your strategy to manage any impacts from tourism.
- Guides make very good interpreters. They can:
 - make personal connections with the tourists. They can adjust the content of what they say according to the interests and background of the tourists with them;
 - answer questions and get tourists to participate more in the tour activity;
 - adjust their language to suit their audience. For example, the way you talk to Japanese or Chinese with limited English skills needs to be different from the way you talk to Americans who can easily speak English.
- Written interpretation can have some advantages over oral interpretation. Written materials can:
 - provide a permanent record of the tour
 - repeat and emphasize key messages that guides may have already said. This is important if you are trying to change tourist behavior on perception through interpretation;
 - help self guided activities (such as rainforest walks without a guide).

Some Do's and Don'ts

- DO** Remember that the trend within tourism is that many tourists want an educational (learning experience) part to their holiday. Most tourists do not want to just sit on a beach and drink cocktails. More and more, tourists want to learn something new from their holiday and to have an educational experience in the natural environment.
- DO** Make interpretation fun and entertaining. Use storytelling skills! Use personal stories and anecdotes. Share a joke or a funny story.
- DO** Train your tour guides in communication skills.
- DO** Make a tour interactive – involve the tourists by making them use their five senses (sight, touch, smell, taste & hearing). For example, do not just talk about coconuts, give the tourists a chance to feel a coconut, taste a coconut and smell a coconut.
- DO** Let the tourists experience a small part of YOUR life – let them see the world “through your eyes”.
- DO NOT** Underestimate how interested tourists will be in even what you think are the most common daily activities and items.

Take the coconut for instance – many tourists have only seen coconut meat sold in plastic containers in a supermarket. Seeing the real coconut palm tree with the nut still attached, can fascinate them. They also love to try to open the husk and drink the milk (remember – let the tourists use their senses of smell, touch and taste!!!)
- DO NOT** Tell just facts. Tell stories and make it fun. Let the tourists experience a small part of your life – to see you through their eyes.
- DO NOT** Lie. If you do not know something, do not make an answer up – tell the tourists that you do not know, but will try and find out for them.

Who Makes a Good Interpreter?

All good interpreters must be:

- friendly and want to work with tourists;
- dynamic and enthusiastic about what they do;
- spontaneous and able to adapt their tour on demand;
- creative;
- good storytellers;
- be knowledgeable about what he/she is talking about;

MOST IMPORTANTLY.....

**Interpreters must have good communication
and customer service skills.**

How to Help Tourists Understand Interpretive Signs

The following guidelines will help you design effective interpretive signs which tourists will read and understand better.

1. Choose the right location

- Make sure signs are easy to see and are in the right location. For example, not behind a tree or behind bushes which might grow up in front of the sign
- Put signs close to the thing that the sign is about!

2. Attract attention to the sign

- Use clear headings. These attract attention and tell the reader what the sign is about
- Use color, pictures and diagrams in the signs
- Use color contrasts (however, remember red and green are not good colors for signs).

3. Make signs easy to read and understand

- Use big letters, not too many words, and words that are easy to understand
- Emphasise or highlight important points
- Include summaries in signs, repeat important information
- Organize the information in a logical way.

4. Make the signs interesting

- Use the right writing style for your market
- Ask questions (“can you see the mangrove seedlings?”)
- Address the reader directly and encourage readers to do things (“feel the leaf of this plant. Why do you think it is called leatherwood?”)

5. Other Points

- Do not use too many signs
- Do not use signs with too much variation in style
- Use durable, non-reflective materials.

Case Study: Interpretive Sheet, Cave Tour, Solomon Islands

Source: terra firma associates & Komarindi Conservation Area, Solomon Islands

Interpretive (information) sheets help tourists understand more about what they are seeing. Local communities can use these sheets to express key messages that you want all tourists to understand. If the Interpretive Sheet is nicely designed, it can serve as a 'take-home' souvenir for the tourists. They could also use the sheets to promote your place to friends and family.

POHA CAVE – Vatuluma Posovi THE OLDEST ROCK ART IN MELANESIA

Excavation of the Cave

The rock carvings in the Poha Cave are the oldest known artwork in Melanesia. Excavations from the cave have been dated at 6000 BP (Before Present), but according to some theories the rock carvings may be even older.

This site is also the oldest known site for human habitation in the Solomon Islands. The Rock art here is like an ancestral "book", not written but carved in stone, describing what life was like for people in those times.

The cave is known locally as Vatuluma Posovi. Vatuluma means cave and Posovi is the name of a local cultural hero.

No traditional stories are associated with the Rock carvings but there are a number of clearly recognizable designs. Some of these are similar to rock carvings found elsewhere in the Pacific.

Most of Poha cave was buried under mud until recent years. The rock carvings were rediscovered by a Honiara resident in the 1960's. Unfortunately proper excavation procedures were not followed. So the diggings could not be used to accurately assess the age of the carvings. Other pits dug near the mouth of the cave have helped to assess the area more accurately.

Diggings from the cave include charcoal from fires, animal bones, a bird 6 feet high, now extinct, and a number of human bones. Carbon 14 dating techniques were used.

In the top of the cave were found the wallet and photographs of a Japanese soldier who hid here during the World War II. A number of Japanese soldiers graves can be found across the river.

The Poha Cave is a precious ancestral record

Help preserve it. Do not touch the cave walls or ceilings

Work on the Poha Cave has been supported by the National Museum and Guadalcanal Cultural Centre. Over 1000 rock art sites have been registered in Guadalcanal alone. Much work remains to be done.

Bookings must be made in advance with the community or with Travel Agents in Honiara.

5.2. Designing Tour Programs and Itineraries

Designing a Tour Programme

One of the differences between a casual guide and a professional guide is a good plan. A good plan is one that is well thought-out, properly tried and tested and achievable in the time available without rushing or boring the visitors. There are several important aspects to consider when designing your tour programme.

- **The type of visitors taking the tour**

Different visitors have different needs. Are they young or old, adventurous or cautious, professional or family group?

- **The length of time available for each tour**

Think about the time available for the tour and how it can best be used to avoid rushing or late arrivals home.

- **Keeping to time**

Keeping to time is very important. Your clients may have only a few days in your country and will be annoyed if they have to wait half-an-hour for a late tour bus. Similarly, they may have a business meeting scheduled for when they return. So coming back on time is very important.

- **What type of tour you are organizing?**

We can think of tours as being either a general sightseeing tour or a specialized tour. General sightseeing tours normally stop at various sites around the island. Specialised tours can include nature walks, birdwatching, canoe rides or simply picnic trips to the beach. They tend to concentrate on one or two areas, rather than the whole island. Once you have decided who your clients are, and the length and type of tour it is, you are ready to start preparing the tour itinerary.

Preparing the tour itinerary

The first thing to decide is where you will take your clients. Let's look at a general sightseeing tour by drafting a list of sites and think about the following questions:

- **How accessible are the sites?**

You don't want to waste too much time going to a remote site if it's not interesting.

➤ **What kinds of activities are possible at the site?**

This tells you how long you need to stop at each site. If swimming is involved you will need a longer time, compared to a viewing point, while you will need to trial a guided walk to see how long it is and the level of difficulty.

➤ **Do the communities want to have visitors in or near their village?**

Visit the proposed sites in advance and consult with the owners about whether they would like your group to visit. This is a good opportunity to find out about the local legends as well as dangers such as cliffs, slippery rocks or sea currents. At community-run attractions, be sure to meet with the committee members and find out their concerns, what they can provide and how much they will charge you.

➤ **What facilities are available?**

Check the facilities in advance so you can warn tourists that it's the last chance for a toilet stop before lunch.

➤ **Do all the other tour companies visit this site?**

Be wary of visiting the same sites as everybody else. Work together to avoid crowding. Try to be different by creating tours that are better but different from any of the others. This way you have a chance of not only capturing the existing market but also establishing new and potential markets.

➤ **What time you will be visiting the different sites?**

Timing is important. Some sites and tour activities are better in the early morning when it is cool (walking, cycling), others fit well with the hottest time of the day (resting, swimming, visiting indoor sites), while others are only possible in the afternoon or evening (viewing sunsets, etc.).

Ideas for a tour itinerary:

- **Landscapes**
Be on the look-out for good view points and unusual scenery.
- **Nature**
Try to find places of special interest in terms of native trees, mangroves, wildlife or marine species.
- **Culture**
Think about visiting places with authentic traditional architecture, customs and performances.
- **History**
Look for old buildings and monuments and find out about their history.

- **Everyday activities**
Don't forget the everyday things such as a garden, plantation, village home or bathing pool as these may be of great interest to your guest.
- **Tours with a special focus**
Think about some original tour itineraries such as a specialized handicraft tour or a village cultural tour.

➤ **How does the whole tour fit together?**

When you have a draft tour plan, go through it and check the balance of sites and activities as well as the timings. Where are the toilet stops, viewpoints, lunch breaks, swimming places? Imagine the tourists only have one day (this will be the case if it is a cruise ship group). Does your tour give them a balanced view of both traditional and modern ways of life? Does it show them enough to make them want to return?

➤ **Take a practice tour**

Before you take a new tour route, you need to test it to ensure all the arrangements and timings are both possible and practical. Try to take a friend so you can practice your storytelling along the way.

Writing the itinerary

Once you have decided what will be included in your tour, you will need to write it down in a way that is accurate, carefully prepared and well presented. Ensure all essential information is included such as pick-up and drop-off points and times, sites of interest, food and any extras provided, the tour price, what to wear and bring.

If you have a special cultural activity such as a village tour, ceremony or a visit to the local church, it is important to tell clients about dress codes before they leave. Make sure you have an extra T-Shirt or a *sulu/lavalava* in the bus for a tourist who may have forgotten their own. Don't forget to allow for things such as the time taken to get off and on the bus, traffic congestion and toilet stops. What will you do if it rains?

Information you will provide on the itinerary will form the basis of your clients' expectations, so don't exaggerate the number of flying foxes you are likely to see or you may end up with a disappointed group.

Example: Time plan for flying fox day tour

<i>Time</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Notes on commentary Storytelling</i>
<i>0730</i>	<i>Pick-up minibus equipment & lunch</i>	
<i>08.15</i>	<i>Collect tourists from Tokatoka Hotel</i>	<i>Introductions</i>
<i>08.30</i>	<i>Collect tourists from Trade Winds Inn</i>	<i>Introduction & Tour Briefing</i>
<i>08.45</i>	<i>Leave for Bula Vinaka Village</i>	<i>Island life, Cyclone damage</i>
<i>09.30</i>	<i>Arrive at Bula Vinaka Village</i>	<i>Getting “leid” with flowers</i>
<i>09.45</i>	<i>Begin walk to Flying fox crater through Forest</i>	<i>Forest as a house</i>
<i>10.45</i>	<i>Arrive bat crater</i>	<i>Life as a bat</i>
<i>11.00</i>	<i>Leave bat crater, walk to Moce Beach</i>	<i>Village Gardens</i>
<i>12.00</i>	<i>Arrive Moce Beach, swim, snorkel, relax</i>	<i>Palm tree climbing</i>
<i>12.45</i>	<i>Picnic Lunch at Moce Beach</i>	<i>Moce Beach story</i>
<i>13.30</i>	<i>Return by bus to Bula Vinaka Village</i>	<i>Afternoon activities</i>
<i>13.45</i>	<i>Arrive Bula Vinaka Village</i>	<i>Women tell meke/dance story</i>
<i>14.00</i>	<i>Meke and Dance performance by women</i>	
<i>14.00</i>	<i>Begin village tour</i>	<i>Village layout and Fiji mataqali chiefly system</i>
<i>15.15</i>	<i>Canoe tour through mangrove lagoon</i>	<i>Life in mangroves</i>
<i>16.00</i>	<i>Depart Bula Vinaka Village</i>	<i>Guitar songs by young men</i>
<i>16.30</i>	<i>Farewell story at Cokabau Island View Lookout</i>	<i>Legend of the sea</i>

Example of a Tour Booking Form

Source: *Island Safaris, Vanuatu*

ISLAND SAFARIS of

a Non Profit organisation funded by the New Zealand Government, European Union, VIBA, the Port Vila CCI and Vanair

PO Box 133 - PORT VILA - VANUATU Tel/Fax (678) 23288 & 26779 - E-mail:

islands@vanuatu.com.vu

BOOKING FORM

First Name.....Surname.....Date of birth.....
Company or Agency.....
Address.....
City.....Post Code.....State.....
Country.....Tel/Fax.....E-mail.....

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

BOOKINGS: All passengers must be aware of the poor standards of accommodation and catering available in Vanuatu outer islands: most Adventure Lodges have no electricity, no telephone, shared shower and toilet facilities, only cold water available, Food supplies in the island s can be scarce and catering facilities very basic: no alcohol, bier or cold storage. Tours are subject to weather condition. A booking form should be completed by the person making the reservation and / or responsible for the group. Documents will released once Island Safaris is in possession of a signed, completed booking form.

DEPSIT & PAYMENTS: A 25% deposit per booking is required to confirm arrangements. If balance is not received 30 days prior to departure, we reserve the right to cancel all arrangements and retain a cancellation fee equal to the deposit amount.

CANCELLATIONS: Cancellation fee applies as follows:

Between 31 and 11 days prior to start of services.....10%
Between 10 days and 3 days prior to start of services.....50%
Within 3 days of start of services.....100%

REFUNDS: No refunds will be made for unused accommodation, meals, tours or other services not utilised once your travel has commenced. There will be no refunds for changes of itinerary. Included in the travel costs may be charges for normal booking procedures, communications, administration, custom owners fees, etc., Island safaris tours are inclusive tour package and itemisation of costs might not be possible. All fares and rates quoted are accurate at time of printing and are subject to change at any time due to unpredicted currency fluctuations or accommodation & local costs.

INSURANCE: Comprehensive travel and cancellation insurance is strongly recommended.

BOOKING RESPONSIBILTIES: Island Safaris will do its best to make sure that your travel arrangements are satisfactory and we accept liability for, but only to the extent of, any loss or damage sustained by you as the result of our negligence or that of our employees or agents. However, Island safaris cannot accept any liability of whatever

nature for the acts, omission or default, whether negligent or otherwise, of airlines, coach operators, shipping companies, hoteliers or other persons providing services in connection with your travel pursuant to a contract between themselves and yourself (which may be evidenced in writing by the issue of a ticket, voucher, coupon or the like) and over whom we have not direct and exclusive control. Island Safaris do not accept any liability in control or in tort for any injury, damage, loss, delay, additional expenses or inconvenience caused directly or indirectly by force majeure or other events which are beyond its control, or which are not preventable by reasonable diligence on its part. It includes, but is not limited to war, civil disturbance, fire, floods, unusually severe weather, acts of God, acts of Government or of any authorities, accidents to or failure of machinery or equipment or industrial action (whether or not involving Island Safaris employees and even through such action may be settled by acceding to the demands of a labour group).

HEALTH WARNING: Please note that in some areas of Vanuatu, Malaria is present and that preventive treatment is recommended, consult your Doctor.

I undersigned confirm my acceptance of the above condition,

I hereby provide my Bank Card/Credit Card Number and authorize Island Safaris to debit the amount of

.....from my invoice....., should my payment not reach Island Safaris before my arrival in Vanuatu.

Card No

.....Signature.....

Cardholder

Expiry date

Signature of the passenger

Or guardian (for passengers under 18 years old

.....

5.3. Planning and Delivery of Tour Commentary

Planning your commentary, or story telling, is one of the most important parts of your tour preparation. Your family, school friends and other villagers will have taught you many stories. As you travel around, keep a notebook for new stories and legends; there is always something new to learn, even at the most familiar site. You may need to write detailed notes for some stories, while you may remember others with just a list of key points. Try to find the stories of the areas that you plan to visit from local people or books on local legends. Ask yourself:

- What is special about the site we are visiting?
- What sites and sounds may be new to visitors?
- What types of vegetation and wildlife will we see along the way?
- What smells, sounds and tastes will visitors be exposed to?

Simple

Remember your visitors are on holiday. They stand a better chance of remembering a story that has a simple storyline.

Interesting

Stories and facts need to be interesting to your visitors. You can help create interest by comparing something from your daily life with the daily life of your visitors. For instance, visitors who are keen gardeners back in New Zealand may be fascinated by your village gardens but less interested in observing birds.

Entertaining

You don't need to sing and dance to be entertaining. Having fun with your guests, sharing a joke (be careful though) or raising some interesting questions or even some mysteries may be enough.

Story Lines

Having a clear story line makes it easier for visitors to understand and remember what you said. The story line is the central idea or message that you try to portray. Here are some examples about how you might plan your commentary based on a story line.

Village Stories

Interesting stories can develop from the smallest aspects of village life. A guided walk through a village can be a good introduction to life in your island country. You can explain how the different houses are used and how they are made and where the family members sleep. When you pass the church, tell the visitors about the importance of church in village life, and if you pass by a grave you may like to explain about funeral customs.

On a village walk, you can stop and show visitors how coconut cream is made or visit someone who is making some handicrafts. Visitors often like to buy things directly from the producer and this could be an opportunity to generate some extra income for the village.

Plantation Stories

Keep your eyes open when you pass village gardens and plantations. Visitors are often interested in how different fruits and vegetables grow and are harvested. If you pass a cocoa tree, pick a fruit, break it open and pass around the beans. Explain the process involved in turning these beans into a chocolate bar. Point out different plants and explain any special medicinal uses they might have. In some situations it can be interesting to ask villagers to explain to the group what they are doing, although you may have to translate.

Managing a tour successfully requires numerous skills. You need to be an entertainer, a teacher, a friend, and a guide all at the same time.

Starting your tour

Now that you have planned your tour, including the stories you will tell and written a detailed itinerary, you are ready to look at the finer details of conducting a tour.

Your first job is to pick-up your guests at their hotels or their designated pick-up point. Ensure you have a confirmed list of clients and become familiar with their names before you leave. Welcome each passenger with a smile as they come on board, tick their names off on your list and find out their nationality. Try to make everyone comfortable right from the start.

Ensure they are seated comfortably and before you leave make sure you tell everyone in a briefing:

- Where they are going, provide a small photocopied map for everyone,
- What activities they will do during the tour and at each site,
- Where and when facilities and refreshments will be provided along the way,
- The time schedule, including the time they will return to their hotels,
- Any special cultural protocol that will need to be respected during the day,
- How to operate safety equipment such as seat-belts or life jackets, and
- How to operate windows and doors, and emergency exits.

Finally, after introductions have been completed, your main role during the tour is to interpret the natural and cultural features that your visitors have come to see. One of the most important skills you need to develop is what we call “storytelling”.

Storytelling skills

Storytelling is at the very heart of successful tour guiding. It is the process of helping your visitors understand the sites they are visiting and the way of life expressed through local culture. You can do this by pointing things out, explaining things and telling stories. Although good storytelling certainly involves a bit of research, it is not just a process of giving out information.

Responsible storytelling aims to;

- Increase visitor understanding and appreciation of a place,
- Inform visitors about the things they see,
- Create an enriching and enjoyable experience; and
- Influence the behaviour of the visitors.

Involve the visitors

Try to make your stories come alive by making good use of the props from the local environment. Pass things around for visitors to hold, smell and touch. This creates a richer and more interesting experience for them. For example, rather than just demonstrating how to open a coconut, allow your guests to have a go themselves, being careful of course that they aren't hurt in the process. Providing for a range of visitors is a major challenge - your ideal is to involve everyone, helping them personally connect with or experience your special site.

Be yourself

People like a guide with a personality, so be yourself and relax! Always gather your visitors before you start to tell a story. Think of the visitors as a group of your friends; you want to make them laugh, to entertain them and give them a good time without exaggerating or giving false information. Above all, understand what you are saying. If you have a group with limited English skills you will need to use simple words and rely on body language.

Check what you say and how you say it

Avoid too many "errs", "aahs", "OKs" and coughing, these are both distracting and irritating for the listener. Try to avoid taking a tour while you are unwell. Find a replacement, as your mood will rub off on your group and tourists don't want to be guided by someone who is sneezing or continually blowing their nose!

Use body language

Maintain eye contact with your group as this helps to build trust and sustain interest. Smile, especially if you are feeling nervous. Use your arms and body to give interest to your talk. Be dynamic. If you have a big group, find something to stand on so everyone can see you.

The right balance

Try to target your story at the right level. You don't want visitors to be overloaded with information, but at the same you also want to ensure that they are satisfied with the story you provide. Take the lead from your group. If you know that they have a special interest in handicraft, be sure to refer to this in your talk. If you can see the group is bored or tired of listening, suggest a short walk, refreshment or a moments free time rather than dragging out a story. Try to make the best of any chance happening. If you are stuck in a heavy rain, humour your guests with exciting tales of the cyclones. If you happen to see a flying fox, tell your guests about their role in the rainforest. If you are drinking a refreshing coconut drink, tell your guests about the usefulness of the coconut.

Answering questions

Make sure you are always available to answer questions. Stay close to the group and appear interested and approachable. Try to have a few reference books in the bus so that if you are unsure of a plant or animal you can look it up. Always admit when you don't know an answer to a question rather than making up something.

Being a good listener

Communication is a two way process, which means that as well as talking to your group you also have to be a good listener. Give your visitors enough time to talk amongst themselves too.

Being a role model

You are the role model. Always show respect for the local community and demonstrate appropriate behaviour to your guests. Your guests take the lead from you. Be careful to pick up any litter the group may leave, and take a bag for clearing other people's litter. Your actions will be respected by the group and you will be helping to improve the environment for your next visit.

5.4. Costing and Pricing of Tours

USE THE FOLLOWING WORKSHEETS TO CALCULATE THE RIGHT COST OF YOUR ECOTOUR AND FINANCIALLY MANAGE YOUR TOUR BUSINESS.

Example of Tour Costing

Example: West Village Tour

Here is a Tour Costing for a tour to a theoretical "West Village".

This Ecotour is a guided cultural village tour:

- Transport to and from the village is provided by bus,
 - The tour includes a canoe trip, cave tour, Men's House tour, village tour, .
-

1. What are the COSTS to run this tour?

Bus	\$60
Guides	\$20 for the group
Canoe	\$30 (This big canoe carries up to 6 people)
Equipment	\$2 per tourist - umbrellas and mosquito repellent
Walk Assistants	\$10 for group
Men's House	\$2 per tourist entrance fee
Lunch	\$5 per tourist
Village Payment	\$5 per tourist

2. Which are Individual Costs?

INDIVIDUAL COSTS: *are the costs each tourist pays*

Item	Cost per person (pp)
Lunch	\$5 each
Entry to Men's House	\$2 each
Equipment	\$2 each
Village fee	\$5 each
TOTAL INDIVIDUAL COST	\$14 per person

①

3. Which are Group Costs?

GROUP COSTS: *are shared by the whole group*

Item	Cost per Group
Bus	\$60
Guides	\$20
Canoe	\$30 per canoe
Walk Assistants	\$10
TOTAL GROUP COST	\$120

4. Calculate Group Cost Per Person

TOTAL GROUP COST IS \$120: so what is the **GROUP COST** per person

		Number of Tourists			
		1	2	3	4+
	TOTAL GROUP COST	\$120	\$120	\$120	\$120
②	GROUP COST Per Person	$\$120 \div 1 = \120	$\$120 \div 2 = \60	$\$120 \div 3 = \40	$\$120 \div 4 = \30

5. What is the Total Cost per person?

① INDIVIDUAL COST pp (\$14) + ② GROUP COST pp = ③ TOTAL COST pp

		Number of Tourists			
		1	2	3	4+
①	TOTAL INDIVIDUAL COSTS	\$14	\$14	\$14	\$14
②	GROUP COST pp	\$120	\$60	\$40	\$30
③	TOUR COST pp	\$134	\$74	\$54	\$44

6. Profit Mark-up and calculating the NET COST

In this case, the tour operator decided they wanted \$10 per person profit.

So...NET COST = ③ TOUR COST + \$10

7. Working out the Retail Tour Price

The Tour Agent who sells the product charges a 25% Commission Fee.

So...RETAIL COST = NET COST x 1.33 (1.33 = 1 divided by 75%)

		Number of Tourists			
		1	2	3	4+
①	TOTAL INDIVIDUAL COSTS	\$14	\$14	\$14	\$14
②	GROUP COST pp	\$120	\$60	\$40	\$30
③	TOUR COST pp	\$134	\$74	\$54	\$44
	③ + \$10 = NET COST	\$144	\$84	\$64	\$54
	NET COST X 1.33 (Commission Rate) = RETAIL PRICE	\$191.52	\$111.72	\$85.12	\$71.82

8. Setting the Final Retail Prices

When you look at these figures you may decide to:

- Set the Retail Tour Price at \$100 per person for 2 - 4 tourists.
- Set a Discount Group Tour Price of \$75 for groups of 5 or more

Tour Payment Sheet

It is very important to keep good financial records.

The Tour Payment Sheet below should be used for every tour that you operate. *Res T9.4 - The Accounts Sheet*, should also be used to keep track of income and expenses, but on a monthly basis.

Name of Tour
Date:
Completed By

INCOME		
Net Cost of Tour	Number of tourists	Total Income <i>(Net Cost x number of tourists)</i>

TOUR EXPENSES				
	Item	Cost per person	Number of tourists	Total
<i>Individual Tourist Expenses</i>				
<i>Group Expenses</i>				
TOTAL EXPENSES <i>(add all Individual & Group expenses)</i>				

GROSS PROFIT <i>(GROSS PROFIT = Total Income - Total Tour Expenses)</i>	
---	--

Accounts Sheet

Source: terra firma associates, Community Ecotourism Development Manual

The information from each tour payments sheet should be entered into your accounts records at the end of each month. At the end of the year, the Annual Profit/Loss is easily calculated.

You can also use this accounts sheet to estimate a Budget for a year in advance.

MONTH: _____

YEAR: _____

Date	No of tourists	Price per tourist	INCOME	Tour Expense	Tour Expense	Tour Expense	Tour Expense	Other Expense	Other Expense	TOTAL EXPENSE	PROFIT/LOSS
1											
2											
3											
4											
5											
6											
7											
8											
9											
10											
11											
12											
13											
14											
15											
16											
17											
18											
19											
20											
21											
22											
23											
24											
25											
26											
27											
28											
29											
30											
31											
NET PROFIT FOR THE MONTH											

Note: 'Other Expenses' include expenses that are not directly related to the daily operation of the tour (e.g. maintenance, training, marketing costs, commissions, other fees)

6. COMMUNITY TOURISM TRAINING

6.1. Cultural Factors and Community Participation

The need for integration and participation of local communities both in ecotourism projects and in the conservation of natural resources cannot be over emphasized. Most local village communities will lack direct experience in tourism and will need time to develop not only an attitude and aptitude to accepting tourism but also education and training programs to provide the necessary skills to operate ecotourism businesses.

To minimize impacts on the local culture and to develop stronger working relationships between local communities and those assisting with the establishment or implementation of projects or programs there are a number of general guidelines that should be adhered to, as follows:

- Involve local community residents as participants and as beneficiaries by making them allies in the project.
- Identify, respect and involve local leaders
- Discuss expectations with representative members of the community
- Avoid creating high economic expectations
- Become familiar with the political and institutional workings of the local community
- Clearly identify your own role as a facilitator or mentor and do not abuse your position or become too paternalistic.
- Learn from the community through their local knowledge – learning and teaching should be two-way
- Think laterally in terms of opportunities for economic development and improvements by utilizing cross-sectoral linkages
- Use support organizations that promote the training of local people
- Identify and nurture community members who are more interested in specific tasks or taking on a greater responsibility
- Stimulate the development of joint venture projects between locals, nationals and foreigners
- Always use written agreements for the contracting of services and for identifying the responsibilities and relationships between the project and the community.
- Learn and respect the values and cultural traditions of the community and seek permission to use some of these to promote the project.
- Buy as much as possible from local suppliers
- Be scrupulous and fair in dealing with money matters and do not become known as a ‘soft touch’!
- Open and honest communication will tend to eliminate ugly rumours and surprises.
- Establish relationships with neighbouring communities

It is a mistake to think that local communities can transform, in the short term, from traditional production systems and work experience to become service providers with international standards.

Example of Tourist Rules

Source: Koroyanitu National Heritage Park, Fiji

You can establish detailed 'tourist rules' to make sure that tourism activities in your area cause minimal impacts to the environment and local communities. Members of the local communities should also be encouraged to follow these rules to achieve the best outcomes and benefits in the long term. You can use the following list of rules, established by the participants of the Koroyanitu ecotourism project, Fiji, to get a few ideas for your own area.



You may enter the village only after you have been welcomed by one of the villagers.



Please do not wear hats and carry things, such as backpacks, over your shoulders.



Remove shoes and sandals when entering a village house, visitor center or the lodge.



When entering a house, shake hands with your hosts and sit down on the mat. Men can sit cross-legged; women keep legs together and placed to the side.



Wear appropriately modest clothes. Make sure your shoulders, chest, and thighs are covered. During the day, long shorts and T-shirts are ideal. At night, trousers or a sulu are best. Sulus are available for purchase or hire at the visitor centre.



If offered a bowl of yaqona (kava), clap your hands once, take the bowl and say "Bula" to the Chief and drink all the contents. Hand back the bowl and clap three times to show your appreciation.



Please ask before taking photos inside the buildings.



Please take your rubbish back to Lautoka with you.

6.2. Customer Service Skills

Customer service is about meeting the needs of your tourists, and keeping them happy. Tourists demand high quality service standards because they are paying a lot of money to come overseas to your place.

Remember...many visitors to the Pacific are repeat visitors – that is, they have been to the Pacific before and they have come back again. If we give good customer service, they will continue to come back, and bring other friends with them.

Customer Service is more than smiling at guests.....

ALWAYS REMEMBER TO:

Welcome and greet tourists. Try to learn their names and call them by their first names throughout the tour. This makes them feel special.

Look clean, professional, and tidy. Feel free to wear traditional clothing.

Be on time! It is best to arrive early and be waiting for the tourists to arrive, rather than make the tourists wait for you.

Use a friendly and clear voice. Smile when you talk – it puts tourists at ease.

Find out what your tourists' want. Talk to them and ask them questions such as:
“Why have you come to visit this place?”
“What would you be interested in seeing and doing while you are here?”

Watch their body language. Keep an eye out for signs of boredom or physical discomfort (e.g. too hot, too cold, thirsty, hungry).

Handle all complaints quickly and politely.

Tell the truth! If you do not know something, say:
“Sorry, I don't know the answer to that question, but I will find out for you”

Keep tourists safe, comfortable, happy, and well informed.

Monitor and evaluate your tours. Get feedback from the tourists by asking them:
“How did you like my tour?”
“How can my tour be better?”

Meeting & Greeting Guests

Realizing these points, you could definitely alter the quality or the type of service you provide to each particular guest.



- It is very important that you are aware of the different cultural expectations, and that could be one important way of identifying your guests (e.g. when you become familiar with Germans, you will know how to deal with them, you will also know what they will be expecting from you with respect to food, punctuality, coffee, whole-meal bread, cleanliness, etc. – all tourists differ).
- Ask if they have ever stayed in a local village style accommodation before, this will be of assistance to you (i.e. distributing your time wisely with particular guests, those who are new to this experience might need more attention than those who know what to expect).
- You may also have regular customers, these people are very valuable and very good money to your business. You could offer something special to them (i.e. a little extra for their money to show your appreciation for their continuous support of your business).
- Form of transport the guests arrive in can also give you an idea of your guests (e.g. local guests arriving on local bus most probably stay for only a day, overseas guests arriving in a hire car would probably stay several nights, those arriving on a tour operated bus would probably stay a few hours. Make sure to advise day visitors of your facilities and what you have to offer so that they might consider staying with you in future).
- Guests prefer to stay in local village style accommodation for various reasons, reasons you should well be aware of;
 - Cultural experience
 - Just to rest, relax and enjoy the surroundings
 - Get closer to nature
 - Learn about the local community way of life
 - To experience something different

Learn about your guests

The more information you know about your guests the better you can communicate and serve their needs.



- Talk to them, a simple conversation can teach various things about your guests if you really analyze what they say. Keep in mind that you must at the same time respect the privacy for guests when they are in their rooms, try to choose right timing for conversations (e.g. in the dining or guests area).
- Be open-minded and ask for suggestions from your guests on how to improve your business. You can have a suggestion box for them to insert any written suggestions they might have.
- A detailed Visitors' Book for end of the month analysis would be appropriate, to be filled out by the guests themselves.
- Ensure that you regularly communicate with the local community for feedback on their encounters with the guests along the roads, whether they were happy, disappointed, etc. This could help improve your services to try and avoid unfortunate situations.

The guest's needs

Even though all guests have various needs unique to themselves, there are some general needs which are common.

Welcome



- Guests need to be welcomed – quickly.
- They need to be well looked after in your care
- They need to be advised of all facilities on offer.

Facilities

- They comfortable facilities for their use (i.e. to sleep, to eat, to relax, to clean themselves, etc).

Food

- Traditional food is a good part of the cultural experience that guests are after. However, you will still need to cater for a European style menu when requested.
- Water should also be boiled for at least 10mins before cooling if used by guests.

Attractions and Activities

- Always inform your guests of nearby attractions.
- Direct them to these attractions if they wish to explore.
- Ensure that you advertise only what you offer so that you do not raise the guests' hopes too high, otherwise disappointments and complaints will arise.

Environment

- Surroundings should be clean as this is how guests would prefer their environment.

Good communication skills are essential:

- You must be clean and tidy: guests' first impression of their destination is of you. Normally they will conclude the way you present yourself is how they will also expect you will present your tourism product.
- Have a maximum of 2 people to actually greet the guests as a large group (or the family) can be confusing but could make guests uncomfortable having all too many eyes fixed upon them.
- Your attitude must be right: be polite, present a good smile and offer hospitality, greet them using your own language and explain that you are saying "Welcome, how are you?"
- The rest of the communication should be exchanges in the English language, very important to have good English skills.

- Explain everything to them, what you are offering, prices, payment details, etc.
- Should you lack good English skills, a dictionary would be handy for you. It is very, very important that there is no miscommunication between you and your guests.
- Be sure to offer the guests a brief tour of the area, the facilities.

Settling the Guests in

- Introduce the guests to your family members and staff. Another attraction for them would be finding new friends.
- You should also advise the various roles each person plays within your accommodation.
- Advise guests of meal times and dining area location.
- For guests who have booked in advance, you might like to prepare a simple traditional welcome when they arrive: this gesture will make them feel more welcomed.
- Always try to give your guests a choice of the room available so that they are content with where they will be staying.
- Offer them a free cool drink of coconut juice or cooled boiled water upon arriving: it will be refreshing after a long journey.
- Make sure rooms have been prepared (e.g. remember light bulbs, mattresses, mosquito net, lay out the mats, sweep the floors to clear off any sand, etc).
- When rooms are ready, offer to assist with their luggage and show them to their room.
- Give them brief instruction of how to operate the room facilities (e.g. what to do when it rains or is windy, mosquito nets, where the light switch is, etc.).
- Advise them where to seek help should they need it during the night.

Other Information

- Inform guests of village rules, curfew, dress code, etc.
- Ask if they would like to join the sermon on Sundays, advise the time, dress code, how long it lasts, making a cash contribution.

6.3. Information Technology and Computing Skills

Anyone interested in operating an ecotourism business should be computer literate if not, It is recommended that students enroll in some of the existing ‘basic level’ computer short courses already being offered by a variety of institutions (e.g. USP, TPAF) or private providers (e.g. APTECH, NZPITC). Such courses are designed for beginners with little or no knowledge in computers and assists them to attain computer literacy and proficiency. Such introductory level courses will offer the following modules:

- Computer basics – hardware, accessories, operating systems, commonly used software, including introduction to accounting packages.

- Word Processing – letters, documents, reports, notices, proposals, submissions
- Spreadsheets – calculations using mathematical formulae, data tabulation, generate graphs, create financial reports
- Databases – create data tables, arranging data, search data information, create customized forms for presentation.
- Power Point – create colourful and effective slide presentations
- Internet – using and surfing the World Wide Web (www), emailing, using search engines, creating your own web page

More advanced short courses are offered by TPAF in desktop publishing and web page development which are very relevant to those who wish to establish an ecotourism business. They also offer short courses in the MYOB accounting packages which is an essential tool for any small business operator.

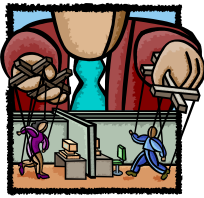
6.4. Human Resource Development

For most Community Ecotourism businesses the following job positions (other than tour guides) outlining their main responsibilities, will need to be recruited and trained.

General Manager

- Overseeing of all Business Operations.
- Ensure that all operations are running smoothly.
- Reviewing reports with all Operations Managers.
- Reports to the Board of Directors.

Operations Manager



- Ensure the business is running smoothly on a daily basis.
- Review daily activities of all staff members.
- Keep close eye on dates as well as follow up bookings with staff to avoid costly mistakes.
- Assist with the Marketing of products and services.
- Report to Accountant.
- Report to the General Manager.
-

Assistant Manager

- Normally assist Operations Manager with responsibilities delegated.
- Normally be associated with the night shift.
- Ensure the business is running smoothly on a daily basis.
- Review daily activities of all staff members.
- Keep close eye on dates as well as follow-up bookings with staff to avoid costly mistakes.
- Assist with the Marketing of products and services.



- Responsible for updating staff rosters weekly.
- Responsible for staff training.
- Report to the Operations Manager.
- Report to Accountant.
- Report to the General Manager.

Internet Booking Officer

- Reply to all enquiries immediately.
- Aim to secure as many bookings as possible.
- Answer 'Tentative Bookings' first (i.e. client's who have emailed for a second time).
- Check on hotel availability (e.g. Fiji Bed Bank).
- Follow-up all previous enquiries within 24 hours.
- Follow-up all 'Tentative Bookings' within 24 hours.
- Continue marketing through the email correspondence.
- Update Master Copy of Hotel Rates and save back-up copy.
- Make reservations for bookings (both accommodations and transport).
- Follow through with payments until booking is complete.
- Enter data into the booking software package.
- Send update rates to Marketing Director.
- Report to the Assistant Manager.



Information Officer

- Prompt friendly customer service is essential.
- Deal with all incoming enquiries.
- Booking daily tours.
- Booking Accommodations.
- Responsible for the front desk marketing and selling of merchandise (e.g. post cards, calendars, books).
- Responsible in not only updating the different ledgers daily but also providing an end of the day report of all receipts and payments for the Accountant.
- Responsible for updating files daily.
- Responsible for organizing all tours in the morning.
- Providing accurate information for tour guides every evening and morning.
- Updating the daily tour file as well as the noticeboard.
- Control of the Baggage Storage.
- Responsible for the Petty Cash and reports.
- Responsible for the mail.
- Responsible for Airport Transfers and Meet and Greets.
- Report to Managers.



Cleaners



- ***MUST*** be neatly dressed.
- Daily check on all guests rooms.
- Change sheets, towels, daily.
- Sweep & mop the used rooms daily.
- Maintain the grounds; keep clean.

Receptionist



- Switchboard (responsible for receiving all incoming calls).
- Take messages accurately.
- Re-direct all incoming enquiries.
- Update & maintain contacts, addresses, etc.
- Responsible for the Visitor's Comment Book.
- Reports to Assistant Manager.

7. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

7.1. Monitoring Visitor Satisfaction

It is essential to monitor tourist satisfaction with your tourism products.

Since “word of mouth” is the best form of advertising, it is important that your tourists have a great experience so that they will go home and tell their friends about their trip.

Tourists who come to the Pacific have to pay a lot of money. Research shows that many Pacific travelers are repeat visitors. This means, if you can make them happy, then they might keep coming back.

Visitor feedback and suggestions are also helpful because they help you:

- Understand the changing tourism markets and tourist interest;
- Monitor and maintain high quality tourism products.

Options for getting tourist feedback include:

- Guest or visitor comment books;
- One-on-one interviews
- Casual conversations (try and record comments later)
- Conversations with booking/travel agents;
- Formal questionnaires.

DEFINITIONS

Word of mouth

When a tourist tells another potential tourist about their good(or bad) experiences.

How to monitor visitor satisfaction by using questionnaires

A Step by Step checklist

- Develop a questionnaire/feedback sheet for tourists which can be also be mailed back to you.
- Get the tour guide, driver or tourism manager to handout and collect feedback sheets to tourists after each tour, or after they have stayed with you in your accommodation.
- Discuss comments with the community, tour guides, and tourism workers.
- Use recurring suggestions to change and improve tour products.
- Hand out questionnaire forms at the end of the ecotour/visitor stay, not at the start.

Some Handy Hints

- It is important to take note of regular comments and improve your product. This will help keep your guests/tourists happy. Remember word of mouth is the best (most effective and cheapest) advertising.
- The tourism market is always changing. Your products need to change with it.
- With recent trends in ecotourism, visitors want to see how local communities implement minimum impact practices and take care of the environment.

Some Do's and Don'ts

- DO** Hand out questionnaires to your visitors at the end of their stay.
- DO** Ask for feedback from tourists and ideas for improvements.
- DO** Use the feedback you receive to modify tour products.
- DO** Make sure you are getting all the questionnaires from guides/staff. (Make sure they are not hiding 'bad' feedback forms).
- DO** Learn from repeated negative feedback/comments from your visitors. Use the information to make improvements to your ecotour, which, in turn, will increase satisfaction.

DO NOT Ignore negative feedback. Find out if it is justified, and if it is, do something to fix the problem. (Generally if the same negative feedback keeps occurring it is justified).

DO NOT Take personal offence at negative comments.

Why is Visitor Feedback Important?

A Survey in Australia shows that:

- An unhappy customer will tell 10 people about their bad experience on their tour
- A happy customer will tell 2 people about their good experience.
- It costs five times the money to obtain new customers than it does to get old ones to come back.
- If a customer complains, over half will buy the tour again if their problem is resolved satisfactorily.
- Only 5% of customers complain, so when they do complain, take it easy.

WORD OF MOUTH is your best advertising tool. It is:

- 2 times as effective as radio advertising;
- 7 times more effective than newspaper or magazine advertisements;
- Surveys of tourists show that tourists rated the information that they gathered from friends and relatives as having the most impact on their travel decisions the better feedback, the more likely they were to travel to the same place.
- They also reported that they relied heavy on this type of word-of-mouth to decide on what to do while there.

Example of an Ecotour Evaluation Sheet

Source: Komarindi Conservation Area

KOMARINDI CONSERVATION AREA TOUR EVALUATION

We hope you enjoyed your tour.
Please help us make our tours better by completing this tour evaluation form!!
Thank You !!!

Which tour did you do?

Poha Cave Half Day

Poha River Full Day

Weekend Camp

Cross Island Trek

Date: _____

What was the **best thing** about the tour?

What was the **worst thing** about the tour?

Did the guide look after your **comfort and safety**? Yes No

Comment: _____

Did the guide give you enough **information**? Yes No

Comment: _____

Are there any areas where you wanted more information?

Cultural *War History* *Natural* *Tour Information*

Other: _____

Was the **cost** of the tour reasonable? Yes No

Comment: _____

How did you find out about KCA Ecotours?

Travel Agent *Friends* *Newspaper*

Other: _____



Example of a Lodge Accommodation Evaluation Form

Source: Robin Aiello, consultant

It is important to give tourists evaluation forms to fill in after they have stayed with you. You should use these to help you make sure that you are offering a product that satisfies your customers.

The Evaluation form below is a generic sample. Modify it to suit your purposes.

	Good	Fair	Poor
YOUR ROOM			
Cleanliness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Servicing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cleaning Staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Additional Comments	-----		

STAFF & SERVICE			
Check in speed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff efficiency	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff friendliness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local Knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Additional Comments	-----		

FACILITIES			
Rooms	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gardens/grounds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recreational facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Additional Comments	-----		

FOOD & BEVERAGES			
Quality of meals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality of Service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Atmosphere	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

GENERAL

Would you consider staying with us again in the future?

- Yes No

Why or why not?

.....

.....

Will you recommend us to family & friends?

- Yes No

Why or why not?

.....

.....

Why did you choose to stay with us?

- Location Cost
- Reputation Travel agent selection
- Value for money Previous experience

Other (please specify)

.....

.....

REASON FOR YOUR STAY

- Business Pleasure
- Group tour Visiting family & friends

HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT US?

- Travel Agent Friends
- Return Visit Travel magazine

Other (please specify)

.....

.....

7.2. Environmental Impact Assessment and Analysis

The Environmental Impact Assessment (or EIA) has a special purpose and there is usually a specific terms of reference to be followed to determine:

- the environmental baseline condition at each site,
- the environmental impact of the construction and operation of the associated facilities, and
- identification of any mitigating circumstances.

The EIA process is normally described in a technical report that should assess and analyse the following components of the project:

Project Description and Justification

Provides a brief description of the development plan, including a conceptual plan and the typical features of the site in terms of location, population, other economic activities, geography and natural environment. This should also include information on:

- Location criteria, including constraints
- Area of land required
- Excavation and/or clearing to be undertaken.
- Methods of storm water drainage, including details of the expected volumes and velocity of discharge and the proposed point/s of discharge.
- Justification of project, stating need and objectives
- The current timetable for the development
- Background information on a list of all consents required or consents sought with their areas of interest in relation to the project.

Description of Existing Environment

(a) Physical Environment

- Geology, landscape, and topography in relation to the different aspects of the development
- Water quality of existing water courses likely to be affected (this may include the foreshore area fronting the development). Parameters to be measured include temperature, clarity/ turbidity/ suspended sediments, conductivity, pH, dissolved oxygen/BOD and faecal coliform count.
- Examine cyclone frequencies.
- Assess the integration of the accommodation units and associated facilities in the existing environment
- Description of current wastewater treatment and disposal system practices as well as current solid waste management.

(b) Biological Environment

- Present brief baseline inventories of terrestrial flora and fauna with emphasis on endemic, rare, endangered or traditional medicinal plant species of conservation significance (as relevant).
- Locate any sensitive habitats and significant natural sites (as relevant).
- Identify species (if any) with potential to become nuisances, vectors or dangerous

(c) Socio-cultural Environment

- Existing infrastructure for access and transportation;
- Sources of water supply and evidence to state that there is enough freshwater to support the development activities.
- Archaeological, cultural or historical sites.

Potential Significant Environmental Impacts

(a) Construction

Site preparation works, vegetation clearing, effect of the development on the local topography (e.g. via earthmoving), soil stability and erosion; identification of routes that construction vehicles will use to and from the site; wastewater treatment and disposal, solid waste (including construction waste) disposal, storm water runoff and sedimentation.

(b) Operation and Maintenance

Use and disposal/reuse of surplus solid waste material/ use and storage of chemicals (as required); wastewater treatment and disposal (including water from the swimming pools); storm water runoff particularly from the golf course; sedimentation and visual impacts.

(c) Ecological impacts

Loss of, damage to and alteration of, terrestrial and marine habitats and species.

Social Study

The study area will encompass an area around the border of the development sites. The impact of the proposed project on human beings and their activities shall be assessed. Particular attention shall be paid to impacts arising from land ownership issues. Central to the purpose of the social study is to identify issues or problems, which the landowners and/or residents in or around the study area may have concerning the proposal. Hold at least one meeting in the presence of the Provincial and /or District Advisory Council. Minutes must be kept of these meetings and appended to the report.

Mitigation and Abatement Measures

The EIA study shall examine and recommend suitable mitigating and abatement measures for the adverse impacts identified. Measures recommended should be practical and readily implemental. This should include a description of the measures envisaged to prevent, minimize and where possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of the project. Appropriate conclusions should be drawn. It is useful to

summarize the environmental impacts of the proposal and outline the steps that would be taken to mitigate any adverse impacts.

7.3. Sustainable Tourism Indicators

The textbook *Tourism Management* (Wiley, 2000) by Weaver and Oppermann outlines a list of Sustainable Tourism Indicators (p. 355) that provides information on variables that can be managed and measured in tourism destinations and/or sites. The purpose of the list is to provide destination managers and planners with a comprehensive list of possibilities from which suitable and feasible indicators can be made, bearing in mind that most destinations, for political or financial reasons, may not be in a position to measure and monitor **all** of the indicators listed. Nevertheless, they provide a useful set of guidelines to assess tourism sustainability. The list of Indicators is presented under five main headings as follows:

MANAGEMENT

- Recycling and fuel efficiency performance of tourism accommodation, attractions and transportation
- Habitat enhancement and/or protection associated with presence of tourists
- Amount of tourism-related laws and regulations
- Presence of EIA procedure for tourism-related businesses
- Number of cultural heritage sites that are protected due to tourism
- Existence of a tourism-related master plan
- Existence and actions of tourism related interest groups
- Number of 'codes of ethics' and 'best/good practices' in place
- Extent of industry and tourist adherence to these codes
- Participation of tourism industry in community improvement projects
- Existence of tourism education and awareness programs
- Existence of resident education and awareness programs

CULTURAL

- Conformity of tourism architecture to local vernacular
- Percentage of visitors who are international
- Market dominance (e.g. concentration ratio)
- Extent of cultural commodification
- Position of destination in the product life cycle

SOCIAL

- Resident reactions towards tourism and tourists (e.g. 'the irridex' irritation index)
- Number of resident complaints against tourism
- Amount of crime directed against tourists and tourism industry by residents
- Amount of tourism-related prostitution.

- Percentage of tourists who are repeat visitors
- Average length of stay
- In-migration associated with tourism industry
- Ratio of residents to tourists
- Amount of tourist-instigated crime
- Psychographic profile (e.g. allocentrics, midcentrics and psychocentrics)
- Tourists satisfaction with destination
- Destination image held by visitors and potential visitors.
- Distribution of jobs by wage level and measurement of equity
- Seasonality trends
- Position of destination in the product life cycle
- Local patronage of tourist attractions and facilities
- Tourist attractiveness index (composite index)
- Social carrying capacity (composite index)

ENVIRONMENTAL

- Number of accommodation units and facilities
- Amount of land occupied by tourism-related superstructure and infrastructure
- Destruction or alteration of natural habitat by tourism construction
- Amount of erosion and number of floods and landslides associated with tourism
- Effect of tourism on biodiversity
- Effect of tourism on species distribution and populations
- Effect of tourism on introduction of exotic species
- Density of tourism facilities and tourist activities
- Concentration of tourism facilities and tourist activities
- Number of stayovers and excursionists
- Water, air, noise and solid waste emissions associated with tourism (e.g. expressed per accommodation unit and visitor night)
- Hazardous waste production associated with tourism
- Amount of litter associated with tourist activities
- Resource consumption associated with tourism (e.g. water, fossil fuels, metals, agglomerate, forest products, food)
- Levels of traffic congestion associated with tourism
- Environmental carrying capacity
- Seasonality trends
- Position of destination in the product life cycle

ECONOMIC

- Revenue earned directly from tourism
- Income multiplier effect from tourism (i.e. indirect revenue)
- Proportion of destination revenue directly and indirectly obtained from tourism (e.g. tourism as a percentage of GDP)
- Proportion of destination employment associated with tourism
- Average tourism wage as percentage of overall average wage

- Percentage of tourism jobs occupied by non-local or foreign personnel
- Extent of backward linkages with agriculture and other destination sectors
- Import content in tourism consumption
- Percentage of all imports related to tourism
- Percentage of accommodation, transport and attractions that are externally/foreign owned or controlled.
- Amount of profits and wages that are repatriated or leave the local area
- Marketing and promotion costs
- Tourism investment by residents and non-residents
- Profitability of the tourism industry and its individual components
- Seasonality trends
- Position of destination in the product life cycle
- Local patronage of tourist attractions and facilities
- Overall economic impact (composite index)

7.4. Different Expectations from Tourism Stakeholders

(1) *Villagers' Expectations*

- To have more control of Tourism Resources
- To have more direct say in Tourism Planning and Implementation
- To benefit economically in a fair and profitable manner
- To use tourism as a village-based sustainable development tool
- To use tourism as an environmental management tool
- To use tourism as an informal educational tool
- To feel socially and culturally safe, secure, even enriched
- To offer unrequited hospitality
- To be able to showcase one's culture and country

(2) *Visitors' Expectations*

- To enjoy a new set of cultural experiences
- To enjoy pristine scenic attractions
- To relax and recuperate amongst friendly smiling faces
- To feel safe and secure
- To use tourism as an informal educational tool
- To utilize Holiday Products offering excellent value-for-money
- To use tourism as a village-based sustainable development tool
- To use tourism as an environmental management tool
- To use tourism as an informal educational tool

(3) *Tour Operators' Expectations*

- To meet and hopefully exceed visitors' expectations
- To meet and hopefully exceed villagers' expectations
- To meet and hopefully exceed government's expectations

- To use tourism as a village-based sustainable development tool
- To use tourism as an environmental management tool
- To use tourism as an informal educational tool
- To have tourism research benefiting all sectors
- To benefit economically in a fair and profitable manner

(4) *Government Agencies' Expectations*

- To encourage more control of Tourism Resources by landowners
- To have all sectors consulted with respect to tourism planning
- To use tourism as a village-based sustainable development tool
- To use tourism as an environmental management tool
- To use tourism as an informal educational tool
- To have tourism research benefiting all sectors
- To help address all Sustainable Tourism Indicators
- To benefit economically in a fair and profitable manner