

Sustainable Tourism Program Overview



**CONSERVATION
INTERNATIONAL**

Our Mission:

Conservation International believes that the Earth's natural heritage must be maintained if future generations are to thrive spiritually, culturally, and economically. Our mission is to conserve the Earth's living heritage—our global biodiversity—and to demonstrate that human societies are able to live harmoniously with nature.



Providing a Framework for Strategic Tourism interventions that foster economic growth, reduce poverty and create business incentives to conserve biodiversity.

Tourism in Developing Countries

With more than \$2.4 billion earned each day, tourism is currently the world's largest and fastest growing industry, capturing 10% of the global economy and allowing roughly a quarter of a billion of the wealthiest people to travel to some of the least developed countries in the world.

Tourism as a tool for sustainable socio-economic development is being increasingly utilized by donors and beneficiary countries. National governments include tourism in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers as a means to:

- generate alternative incomes in rural areas
- finance infrastructure improvements
- diversify employment opportunities
- attract foreign direct investment, and
- generate revenue and drive general economic development

Tourism is one of the few industries that, when appropriately planned, can meet the economic needs of communities, conservationists and governments alike. With 700 million people traveling each year, nature-based tourism is a growing source of revenue for the management of the more than 33,000 Protected Areas worldwide, as well as for the communities living within and around them. These nature-based tourism stakeholders are an important ally in the struggle to preserve the natural environment.

Conservation International (CI) has nearly 20 years of experience working in nature-based tourism in the areas of:

- planning and developing community-based enterprises
- creating protected area public-use management plans
- training and capacity building
- developing competitiveness strategies with stakeholders
- working with the private sector to develop good practice guidelines
- creating strategic partnerships within the tourism industry, foundations and individuals for conservation

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Key Tourism Constraints:

- ❖ Policy Constraints (e.g. land tenure)
- ❖ Lack of/poor links to higher yielding end-markets and tour operators
- ❖ Short visitor stays at sites/destinations, few benefits retained at sites/destinations
- ❖ Poor backward linkages to agriculture, local labor force, other inputs
- ❖ Lack of appropriate financing options, low-quality financial products and services

Our Approach

Increasing the value of the standing biodiversity is essential to conservation.

In tourism value chains (TVCs) the long term competitiveness of products or services depends on the protection of the natural resources on which they are founded. We provide a framework for the development of strategic tourism interventions that foster economic growth, reduce poverty and create business incentives to conserve biodiversity in Biodiversity Hotspots and Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA).

Our role is not simply about attracting more tourists; thoughtful tourism policies, strategic planning and community involvement in tourism development can help ensure the sustainable use of natural resources. This enables local communities, who are the stewards of important biodiversity, to realize the maximum benefits from tourism development where appropriate.

Working closely with country programs and building on our experiences in Madagascar and Ecuador, CI uses the TVC framework to increase the competitiveness of micro and small enterprises in the tourism sector. This innovative approach yields economic growth, poverty reduction and increased conservation by proactively tackling each of the five key tourism constraints (see box).

We utilize the framework to identify actors in the value chain, their functions, roles, relationships and power dynamics. The framework also reveals opportunities and constraints, incentives for upgrading, behavior change, as well as information and benefit flows between critical actors in the tourism sector.

The TVC framework provides a comprehensive taxonomy for organizing and understanding constraints to the competitiveness of nature-oriented tourism and for systematically identifying potential interventions.

Where We Work

For nearly 20 years, CI has implemented ecotourism projects around the world, including in the following countries:

Belize	Ecuador	Panama	Cambodia	Indonesia	South Africa
China	Madagascar	Suriname	Bolivia	Ghana	Peru
Brazil	Guatemala	Philippines	Colombia	Mexico	Venezuela

The Tourism Toolkit

CI's Tourism Toolkit includes materials related to:

- ❖ Value chain analysis
- ❖ Good practices guidelines for tour operators
- ❖ M&E systems for tour operators
- ❖ Marketing
- ❖ Community awareness and education
- ❖ Ecotourism assessments
- ❖ Product development, and
- ❖ Business Planning (Available online at www.ecotour.org)

