



Living National Tourism Strategic Action Plan: 2018-2025 DRAFT

Introduction

The country's brand – Destination Guyana – and wealth of natural and cultural heritage are valuable assets that have the potential to benefit all Guyanese, yet the travel and tourism industry remains a nascent sector whose potential has yet to be realized. Developed by the Department of Tourism and Guyana Tourism Authority under the Ministry of Business, the aim of this living National Tourism Strategic Action Plan for Guyana is designed help the Guyana of Guyana meet its aspiration of becoming a Green State, become a leading sustainable tourism destination in the Latin America – Caribbean region, and be relevant to everyone even tangentially engaged in the travel and tourism industry.

In order to realise the potential of the travel and tourism sector, inter-ministerial and multi-sectoral collaboration is required — among stakeholders from the national to local level — in the design and development of policies, national and regional strategies, and action plans will enable the sector to take advantage of the interlinkages and cross-cutting economic impacts of tourism and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)ⁱ. Therefore, tourism will be used as a catalyst to mobilise all stakeholders to work together for positive change and to maximize the positive impacts of travel and tourism in key areas of National Development including infrastructure, safety and security, social services, environmental conservation, natural and cultural heritage preservation, and wildlife protection.

This plan will guide sustainable long-term tourism development through 2025 and beyond. It is informed by the Green State Development Strategy and input from governmental departments, the tourism private sector, civil society and community leaders. It is designed to provide an overview of the strategic goals, objectives, and activities, and key performance indicators (KPIs) to guide the development of tourism through 2025 with emphasis on priority actions to be taken over the next two years. It provides the roadmap necessary to strengthen the GTA and the Department of Tourism (DOT), to create the

required systems to take the organisations to scale, develop new products to respond to and increase market demand, and improve the return on investment and impact (ROI) on all tourism activities.

The intention is to refine this 'living plan' on an ongoing basis based on input from the Ministry of Business responsible for tourism, the GTA Board of Directors, GTA management team and other key stakeholders inclusive of a public comment period and incorporation of the latest industry research, data and trends.

2018-2025 Strategic Overview

Mission

National Tourism Policy: To raise the profile of Guyana as a tourism destination that emphasizes the development of a sustainable, and essentially, though not exclusively, nature-based product that exceeds visitor expectation while making a substantial contribution to the national economy and to the enhancement of the quality of life of all Guyanese.

Guyana Tourism Authority: To develop and promote sustainable tourism in Guyana through collaboration to maximise local socio-economic and conservation outcomes and improve the visitors' experience.

Department of Tourism: To elaborate the Policy Framework and define the strategic directions as would support the development of sustainable tourism and diversify the product profile of Destination Guyana.

Vision 2025

National Tourism Policy: To be recognised internationally, by the year 2025, as a leading sustainable destination.

Guyana Tourism Authority: To be recognised locally and internationally as a premier destination for protecting its natural and cultural heritage, providing authentic experiences, and benefitting residents.

Vision 2030

Vision 2030, which depicts Guyana's long-term achievements through its Green State Development Strategy, is as follows: "A Green, Inclusive and Prosperous Guyana that provides a good quality of life for all its citizens based on a sound education and social protection, low-carbon resilient development, green and decent jobs, economic opportunities, individual equality, justice, and political empowerment. Guyana serves as a model of sustainable development and environmental security worldwide, demonstrating the transition to a de-carbonised and resource efficient economy that values and integrates the multi-ethnicity of our country and enhances the quality of life for all Guyanese."

Realising these visions is not only about creating and implementing a cohesive national brand, website and marketing strategy but bringing out the true voice of Guyanese -- a country and people that are welcoming and proud of their diversity and heritage -- and effectively amplifying that to the world.

Values

The *National Tourism Policy* rests upon the premise that tourism must be respectful of local environment, cultures and traditions; must provide service excellence; and be governed by principles of fair trade and accountability.

Guyana Tourism Authority's values:

- Act with integrity (transparency, accountability, strong work ethic)
- Work collaboratively (maintain open communication)
- Lead with service
- Think creatively
- Get it done (results oriented, adaptability)

Brand Promise

Magnificent and virtually untouched, Guyana lies on South America's northern coast. It is home to nature's riches: an exceptional array of birds and unusual wildlife, conserved rainforest and welcoming indigenous and multi-ethnic people with a fascinating story to tell – a vibrant yet serene discovery awaits.

Strategic Goals, Objectives, Activities and KPIs

In order to realise the Government of Guyana's vision for tourism and for becoming a Green State, develop, implement, and maintain a living National Tourism Strategic Action Plan. Align the National Tourism Strategic Action Plan with the Green State Development Strategy, draft National Tourism Policy, and other relevant strategies (e.g., Ministry of Business Strategic Plan 2016-2020, National Tourism Policy Green Paper, PAC Strategic Plan), plans and budgets in order to support the achievement of the UN SDGs.

Strategic Goal 1. Optimise Nationwide Socio-Economic and Conservation

Outcomes from Tourism

1.1 Increase Alignment and Strengthen the Enabling Environment for Tourism

1.1.1 Strengthen Alignment between the Department of Tourism (DoT) and GTA. Clarify roles and responsibilities between the Department of Tourism and GTA. Based on best practice, the Department of Tourism is responsible for developing evidence-based policies, socializing them and securing inter-ministerial collaboration and private sector support, strengthening and improving the transparency of tourism related rules and regulations, leveraging Guyana's relations with and membership of regional and international bodies and leading the development of the national tourism strategy at a national

level. GTA is responsible for implementing the strategy, destination marketing, and product development.

1.1.2 Improve Alignment between the GTA, the DoT and other relevant departments within and outside of the Ministry of Business. Initiate a mechanism to foster inter-ministerial collaboration between key ministries linked to travel and tourism. Align the tourism priorities and budget with the EPA, Aviation, PAC, SBB, and the Bureau of Standards among others in order to take a more coordinated approach to tourism development. Align and optimise an integrated sales, marketing and destination development strategy with Guyana's tourism industry and related initiatives (e.g., PAC's NPAS expansion strategy).

1.1.3 Strengthen policy making capabilities within the Department of Tourism by instituting the appropriate stakeholder consultations for new prioritised policy considerations in order to improve the enabling environment for tourism development and raise the level of tourism operations in Guyana. Recognise Tourism as an Export Industry and incentivise it to encourage investment in the sector for both existing and new facilities. Tourism should be granted the same tax benefits of all other export sectors, in order to improve industry's completeness.

1.1.4 Pursue Regional and International Integration. Achieve a more effective integration of Guyana into regional and international tourism organisations to optimise benefits for Guyana's participation within key organisations including but not limited to UNWTO, WTTC, OAS, ACS, and CTO.

1.1.5 Strengthen Regional Tourism Governance and Capacity. The Department of Tourism will bring more regional stakeholders to the forefront of decision-making in tourism as follows: strengthen stakeholders in each Region through consultations aimed at identifying marketable tourism attractions and viable tourism projects via a demand driven approach; engage stakeholders in each region in activities aimed at promoting more caring attitudes towards environmental and destination resources in the Regions; work with Regional authorities to plan and implement activities that foster more customer and visitor-friendly attitudes; and engage central government with a view to including Tourism as a line item in regional budgets.

1.1.6 Strengthen Regional Tourism Development. Informed by the living Destination Development Action Plan (see 1.1.10), build on existing tourism circuits (e.g., Rupununi) and support the development of new tourism clusters (e.g., Essequibo River and Coast, Berbice). Advocate for tourism funding to be allocated to Regional Development Councils with an emphasis on strengthening existing RDMOs (i.e., Visit Rupununi) and the establishment of new RDMOs to increase financial sustainability and regional coordination, focus marketing efforts, and increase financial sustainability. Design a network of tourism product specific routes (e.g., birding trails, wildlife trails, ecotourism routes, etc.)

1.1.7 Update the GTA Act. Strengthen the GTA Act to ensure that it remains up-to-date and relevant and to maximise the social, economic and conservation outcomes associated with the tourism sector. Draft and propose specific amendments to the Act, provide the rationale for the proposed revisions,

consult with any affected parties, and make any necessary edits before putting forward the proposed revisions to the GTA Board of Directors for their consideration prior to submission to the Ministry of Business by September 2018 and to Cabinet by October 2018. Ensure the GTA's ability to enforce regulations, become financially semi-autonomous, and lead tourism development across governmental agencies is addressed in the revision of the Act.

1.1.8 Support the Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Ensure that tourism policy supports economic development/green growth and climate compatible tourism development and tourism plans are linked to the SDGs with an emphasis on Goals 8, 12 and 14: devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products; develop and implement tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for sustainable tourism which creates jobs and promotes local culture and products; and increase the economic benefits from the sustainable use of marine and terrestrial resources through sustainable resource management

1.1.9 Support Climate Adaptation and Mitigation measures in the Tourism Sector. Promote energy efficiency, renewable energy and sustainable policy and management initiatives in the tourism sector. Advocate for and foster innovative energy efficient and renewable energy investments and self-financing mechanisms. Reduce demand for fossil fuels for transport and for electricity generation from the tourism industry to generate substantive foreign exchange savings in fuel investments.

1.1.10 Create a Demand-driven Destination Development Master Plan. Create and institutionalise a living Destination Development Action Plan through participatory planning and mapping via a train-the-trainer methodology. Evaluate and map existing and new product development opportunities based on market and trade readiness; market demand; strategic visitors flows; and community receptivity. Map where tourism infrastructure and product exists and where new infrastructure and product is needed (i.e., accommodations, activities, access) over the next 5-10 years based on visitation projections. Map and vet tourism infrastructure development priorities to inform tourism development. Outline the process for securing investment.

1.1.11 Land Use Planning and Protection. Work with the relevant agencies to create and implement a national land use plan that would support the development of ecotourism and other sustainable forms of tourism. Propose legislation that would include environmental protection clauses for sensitive and fragile nature tourism areas. Support the development of management plans for sensitive tourism sites, including a system to track visitation and use data and demographics.

1.1.12 Improve Guyana's Top Tourism Sites and Support Protected Area Business Planning. Support the identification of ecotourism zoning within existing protected areas and conservancies. Support the development of protected area business plans and the establishment of a system for tendering and awarding concessions with compulsory provisions for environmental management systems, green building, and experience working in protected areas and with local communities. Start with a pilot project centered on realising the commercial revenue potential of Kaieteur National Park in a way that enables the PAC to cover its operational costs, achieve its conservation aims for the park, and maximise

the socio-economic benefits to Chenapau (“conservation tourism”). Through the pilot, secure additional funding through the tending and concessioning system to supplement the donor funding from KfW for the building of a new lodge within Kaieteur National Park. Building on successes and lessons learned, implement the model in other protected areas and priority tourism hot spots.

1.1.13 Infrastructure Planning and Development. Informed by the living Destination Development Action Plan, collaborate with the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and other relevant agencies to facilitate the prioritization of tourism infrastructure development needs. These include short- to long-term needs. Examples of current priorities include but are not limited to:

- expanding select airstrips
- improving existing and establishing new priority networks (e.g., Linden to Lethem, a secondary linkage to International airports), including converting wood bridges to concrete, upgrading drainage systems, and improving access roads leading to the main attractions in the tourism corridors
- improving the stelling in Georgetown to attract small ships, improving stellings in the Essequibo circuit, and over time developing a deep-water harbor
- improving public amenities such as rest stop facilities, public signage and interpretation in all of the major tourism corridors
- mandate the provision of adequate, disabled persons-friendly amenities and conveniences as a prerequisite for licensing of food and beverage establishments at tourist attractions

1.1.14 Investment Planning and Portfolio Development. As part of the living Destination Development Action Plan, create a landscape-level Investment Plan for lodging and activity development in priority existing and new tourism circuits with an emphasis on protected areas, indigenous communities, and the hinterland. Identify prioritised sustainable tourism development investments within each region based on their distinctive attributes and unique features. Evaluate investment opportunities, private-public partnerships, and private-public-community partnerships based on economic modelling designed to address tourism constraints and make tourism opportunities actionable. Ensure joint ventures within communities consider local governance and ownership policies and principles. Develop a portfolio of investment opportunities. Develop templates for the design, ownership structure and business models. Facilitate investment and product development.

1.1.15 Demonstrate Thought Leadership. Build on the recent success of the OAS Congress and demonstrate thought leadership in the travel and tourism sector (e.g., align the tourism sector’s goals with the SDGs; define conservation tourism and community led tourism, and create a plan for taking these concepts to scale; adopt and implement new global guidelines for indigenous tourism, the Adventure Travel Guide Standard, etc.). Secure speaking engagements at prominent events (e.g., ITB, Global Travel & Tourism Summit, etc.). Secure sectoral participation in global awards programs (e.g., Sustainable Destinations Top 100, WTTC Tourism for Tomorrow, etc.).

1.2 Drive Tourism-Related Business

Drive business from the core, tactical and investment markets in North America, Europe, and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) through integrated marketing, sales and communications plans leveraged with support from global partners (i.e., international airlines and outbound tour operators) and the domestic travel trade (e.g., THAG, domestic airlines, Visit Guyana).

1.2.1 Build Trade Partnerships. Identify existing and secure new key trade partners in priority markets (e.g., outbound tour operators, online travel agencies (OTAs), peer-to-peer platforms); and develop more dynamic and consistent personal relationships with them through Customer Relationship Management (CRM), select relevant trade shows, and product development and influencer-oriented trade familiarization trips (fams). To increase the availability of marketing resources, increase market reach, and drive market demand, create cooperative marketing campaigns that enable different levels of buy-in and brokering through THAG, regional destination management organizations (RDMOs), and chambers of commerce. Target the initial campaign timeframes during shoulder seasons and other timeframes when the tourism sector needs to drive demand.

1.2.2 Drive Demand through Media and Influencer Relationships and Travel Ambassadors. Build deeper personal relationships with travel and tourism media and social media influencers through CRM, Media Fams, and innovative product development (e.g., explore the required inputs, outputs and costs for establishing a Travel Ambassador program and digital campaign involving famous Guyanese like Letitia Wright, C.C.H. Pounder, and Mario Van Peebles). Work with marketing representatives to secure trade media coverage of GTA's work and tourism in Guyana in general in prominent online and printed publications.

1.2.3 Track, Measure, and Report Results. Measure and report on the results, ROI, and benefits from all marketing activities on an ongoing basis and determine the results derived from engaging in select historical activities (event management/expo participation, billboard and print advertising, marketing to filming/production companies, printing select collateral).

1.2.4 Improve Trade Show Relevancy. Revise GTA's approach to trade shows, consider niche shows not currently included in the budget that enable direct linkages with target markets (e.g., PURE Life Experiences, ATTA AdventureNEXT South America), and identify potential revisions to the budget for 2018 and new inclusions on an annual basis. Host a GTA-led event that mirrors the programming of AdventureNEXT South America in 2020.

1.2.5 Make it Easier to Travel to Guyana. Conduct a review of immigration systems with a view towards streamlining a set of regulations that would allow the granting of visas on arrival to those bona fide visitors not in possession of entry visas.

1.3 Develop Product based on Market Demand and Guyana's Strengths

Prioritize and facilitate the development of world-class tourism product that is aligned with Guyana's value proposition in partnership with community leaders, tourism businesses and other key stakeholders

1.3.1 Develop and Implement Fund Development Activities. Develop and maintain a database of donors and development agencies and identify their funding priorities and interests related to tourism (e.g., enterprise development, green growth) including prioritised sectors (see 2.1.1). Secure funding for prioritized product development that is market-driven and is market-ready or near market-ready and is aligned with Guyana's existing strengths and market demand (e.g., nature/birding/wildlife tourism, conservation tourism, sports tourism, sports fishing, SAVE travel, community-based and indigenous tourism, and experiential tourism such as homestays and in-home dining). Secure multi-year funding at the level of the USAID GSTI project.

1.3.2 Scale up Community Tourism Development. Evaluate existing community tourism development projects, and create a Community-owned and Led Tourism Framework and action plan to scale up community tourism development in collaboration with the Ministry of Indigenous People's Affairs among others. Evaluate the potential for formalising the establishment of an application-driven system for visiting select, remote indigenous communities that are receptive to tourism.

1.3.3 Scientific, Academic, Volunteer and Educational (SAVE) Travel. Assess the potential to strengthen SAVE travel in Guyana and develop a SAVE Travel Development Plan. Strengthen existing partnerships and build new partnerships with Universities, NGOs, faith groups, and other scientific, academic, and philanthropic organisations that serve Guyana. Collaborate with governmental agencies such as the Guyana Wildlife Management Authority and the Wildlife Scientific Authority to refine and implement the SAVE Travel Development Plan.

1.3.4 Foster the Development of Experiential Travel and the Sharing Economy. Meet the increase in global market demand from travelers who want more authentic, engaging, and active travel experiences by enabling the development of an experiential travel sector. Invest in developing and delivering travel experiences through tourism operators and sharing economy platforms that establish direct connections between hosts and visitors, and enable visitors to meet local people, access locally offered services and visit communities. Focus product development on guided activities, homestays, in-home dining, transportation and vehicle rentals.

1.3.5 Leverage Guyana's Strengths to Develop Niche Tourism Product. Support the development of thematic routes and niche products based upon Guyana's strengths.

- Nature-based and Adventure Travel. Continue to identify, develop, and promote nature-based and adventure product and create revenue capture systems for key sites where possible. Implement duty free concessions for adventure travel equipment. Train local guides in adventure activities (e.g., mountain biking, sea kayaking, whitewater rafting), the international Adventure Travel Guide Standard, the British Expeditionary Society certification program or the equivalent, and Wilderness First Responder or the equivalent.

- **Wildlife Spotting and Birding.** Advocate for the protection of species and their habitat and promote the economic value of wildlife to tourism within communities receptive to tourism development. Rebrand Guyana's offering as "South America's Big 5" and continue to promote it as the land of the giants. Map locations of key wildlife species. Continue to build on the development of new birding sites and lists. Update the strategic action plan for birding, which may include but may not be limited to updating website content for birding, offering fam trips and guide training and equipment specific to birding, producing birding maps, implementing marketing campaigns such as birding photographic competitions, and hosting the Caribbean Endemic Bird Festival.
- **Heritage Tourism.** Foster alignment and collaboration with the National Trust of Guyana including but not limited to joint fundraising for prioritized projects, mapping cultural heritage sites, raising awareness of the value of cultural heritage, advocating for the protecting of intangible and tangible cultural heritage, and developing and implementing a competitive tendering and concessioning system in priority heritage sites. Explore the potential to develop market appealing, heritage-driven trails and sites for the purpose of attracting visitors and supporting the protection of cultural heritage. Support the development and implementation of the beginning of the Caribbean rum route to tell the story of rum for ship to shop.
- **Sports Tourism.** The Department of Tourism will develop an awareness programme for Sports Associations in Guyana; strengthen collaboration with the Department of Sport, Ministry of Education with a view towards increasing the budgetary allocations for the development of sport infrastructure; prepare a catalogue of prominent sports heritage venues, buildings and structures; develop training programmes that target Sports Associations aimed at strengthening capacity in the area of events management, entrepreneurship and customer service; develop an annual calendar of major sports events to be marketed by the GTA; and plan for the creation of a Sports Tourism Officer position as a liaison between the Department of Tourism and the Department of Sport, Ministry of Education.
- **Sports Fishing.** Develop the niche market through the development of an overarching regulatory framework, replication of successful models (e.g., Rewa Eco-lodge), and sports fishing development strategy, which may include but may not be limited to mapping sport fishing zones, developing guidelines for sports fishing resource management and service provision, and hosting an annual sport fishing festival to promote awareness locally, regionally and internationally.
- **Entertainment and Events.** Build on the portfolio of entertainment and events through the design a body of tax and other incentives to encourage greater regularity and increased investments in the entertainment and events sub-sector, event management capacity building, fostering green event management best practice, and the provision of technical assistance from the GTA. Support the development of new events with an emphasis on culinary, artistic, musical or other heritage of Guyana.
- **Agritourism.** Leverage the Cooperation Agreement between the Minister of Tourism and the Minister of Agriculture to development an agro-tourism sector based on helping select agricultural sites, production processes and agricultural products become tourism attractions.

- Domestic. Develop an overall marketing and enhancing awareness strategy to encourage domestic travel including but not limited to a Weekend Getaway initiative and a “Why I Love Guyana” video campaign profiling residents and visiting diaspora.
- Cruise Tourism. Implement the Guyana Cruise Sector Development Action Plan and prioritize the development of river and small ship cruising and yachting.
- Multi-destination. Develop more multi-destination itineraries involving, for example, Barbados, Suriname, French Guiana, and Brazil

1.3.6 Empower Urban Regeneration through Placemaking. Drive interest in Guyana as a destination by developing Georgetown as the country’s gateway to tourism through placemaking (i.e., motivating and mobilizing all key stakeholders involved in tourism, municipal planning, food and beverage, shopping, business and real estate owners in creating a shared vision and taking action to manage public spaces for mutual benefit and job creation and share the beneficiaries’ stories). Secure funding from CDB for a pilot project linked to their new urban regeneration policy. For example, develop walking routes, leverage current efforts to improve access to the seawall, increase the availability of local cuisine and beverages through meal hosting and rum tourism, etc.

1.3.7 Determine the Feasibility of Securing World Heritage Inscription for Sites of Outstanding Universal Value. Identify governmental agencies and site managers who are interested in moving World Heritage Sites that are on the Tentative List to inscription on the World Heritage List and determine the highest potential sites and requirements for securing inscription.

1.4 Institutionalise a Sustainable Tourism Framework

Guide tourism in a way that achieves the optimal balance of visitation, economic impact, biodiversity and natural resources conservation, and resident quality of life

1.4.1 Strengthen Tourism Standards and Regulations. Work with the private sector to evolve the existing tourism standards and regulations and implement establish new sustainable tourism standards for community owned and operated tourism, indigenous tourism, adventure travel, and the sharing economy in order to adequately address deficiencies and promote growth in these areas. Integrate sustainable tourism regulations into GTA’s licensing system and provide tools for the tourism private sector to adopt and implement environmental management systems to improve energy efficiency, conserve water, reduce solid waste, and increase the adoption of renewable energy, for example. Develop and actively promote Visitor Guidelines for Sustainable Travel.

1.4.2 Implement Sustainable Destination Frameworks. Benchmark Guyana’s performance against the international Green Destinations Standard, identify gaps, and prioritize activities to address them. Evaluate the potential to adopt a sustainable destination standard a national level, the benefits, and the requirements for implementation.

1.5 Take GTA's Marketing and Communications to the Next Level

Lead with targeted marketing and inspire increased leisure travel visitation through progressive branding, marketing and communications tactics and methodologies and an integrated approach involving GTA and its marketing subcontractors and the tourism private sector.

1.5.1 Narrowly focus marketing and communications on target markets. Make more of a concerted effort to reach the target markets, market segments, and audiences most attracted by Guyana's value proposition. Secure and maintain market representation in Guyana's primary markets.

- Countries: USA, Canada, UK, Germany (phase 1) and LAC and other European destinations (phase 2)
- Segments: 'Travel to discover new frontiers', Wanderlusters, Guyanese Diaspora
- Demographics: Generation X and Millennials, well-educated and traveled individuals, and those whose familial heritage is linked to Guyana
- Adventurers: Soft - attracted by unknown destination, require comfort – largest segment; Hard - attracted by unexplored wilderness – looking for physical challenges; Key message - Appeal to explorer in people (at all levels)
- Nature tourists: Unspoiled viewing opportunities for unusual and exciting species; opportunities for general and specialist interest, as well as photography tours; birding - both general tourist and specialist birders; key message - Unique opportunity to see five-star nature
- Cultural tourists: Indigenous culture - way of life, community involvement in delivering tourism; opportunities to celebrate and preserve Guyana's cultural diversity and identity through engagement in diverse cultures through music, festivals, cuisine; Guyana's rich history – a story waiting to be told; Key message - Numerous opportunities for authentic engagement with variety of cultures

1.5.2 Develop and Implement an Integrated Marketing and Communications Strategy. Employ a fully integrated communications mix, including social media, content development, web development, public relations, partnerships/promotions, paid media/influencers and email marketing to maximize exposure, engagement and ROI. Clearly define the unique value propositions for target audiences, and what quality means in the tourism sector given the expenses associated with travel in relation to the value visitors receive (i.e., the focus is on the quality of the visitor experience, which is priceless, and not on the quality of lodging and the amenities ["Deep Travel" concept]).

1.5.3 Effectively Target Existing Visitors. Develop a strategy to reach the increasing number of business travelers visiting and expats living in Guyana, develop new products that meet their needs, and engage them in taking leisure trips along the coast and in the interior during their time off. Engage the tourism private sector to improve pricing based on volume, fixed and variable pricing, packaging, and implement a Weekend Getaway pilot initiative in 2018.

1.5.4 Aggressively Ramp Up Digital Marketing Efforts. Develop regularly evolve social media, content and social media marketing strategies based on measurable results. Build internal capacity to implement

a rich, impactful, innovative yet cost effective organic and paid strategies that engages target niche markets with compelling promotions driven by innovative content and web marketing and social media activities. Create a powerful website and content for each stage of the buying cycle. Aggregate departmental databases within the GTA and increase targeted marketing campaigns including email marketing. Work with THAG to build up the database of domestic travel trade, and work with marketing subcontractors to develop an opt-in email database of visitors, and international travel trade, media, influencers and key stakeholders with an emphasis on determining their interests. Create and distribute valuable, relevant and consistent content through various channels to attract and retain a clearly-defined audience—and, ultimately, to drive consumer action.

1.5.5 Strengthen Fulfillment. Develop and implement a system to engage and refer prospective visitors that express interest in visiting Guyana through social media, the new GTA website, and other web-based channels and provide them with exceptional and timely customer service

1.5.6 Improve the Visitor Welcome at Ports of Entry. Improve the visitor welcome and the availability of tourism information and resources at the four main ports of entry into Guyana: Cheddi Jagan International airport, Ogle International Airport, Lethem and the Moleson Creek Terminal.

Key Measures

- Visitor arrivals increase an average of at least 8% annually over the next eight years and there is a marked increase in lodging demand over the same timeframe, resulting in attracting 500,000 visitors by 2025
- Hinterland visitor arrivals from overseas increase 20% from 2019 (currently 90% coastal) and an annual increase of 10% annual increase from 2018.
- There is a 10% increase in leisure and business visitation (currently ~30% overall) and a measurable increase in visitor spend by 2020
- A baseline for national and regional destination management and development needs is established

Strategic Goal 2. Support and Empower Guyana’s Tourism Industry and Communities

2.1 Increase Financial Sustainability

Secure financial resources to deploy tourism programs that fulfill the unique opportunities and challenges as defined by the Ministry of Business and the tourism industry.

2.1.1 Identify and Activate External Funding Opportunities for Tourism Development. Map the donor landscape with input from relevant ministries (e.g., Ministry of Business, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Foreign Affairs). After identifying needs and prioritising opportunities that have the most significant potential, determine relevance with donors’ aims, build relationships with them, and secure larger

amounts of funding from institutions such as UNDP, IDB (through MIF and Compete Caribbean), EU Delegation to Guyana, CARICOM (e.g., through the European Development Fund) and the World Bank Group (through Guyana's Low Carbon Development Strategy - World Bank Group); smaller amounts of funding from receptive Ambassadors like the British High Commission Georgetown and High Commission of Canada in Georgetown, Guyana (through the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives); and support from ExxonMobil and local companies like GTT and Demerara Distillers Limited

2.1.2 Realize the Potential for Cost Recovery. Identify and implement sustainable financing mechanisms for the GTA in collaboration with the private sector and the Guyana Office for Investment. This will be realized through a fee-based system and over time, cost recovery mechanisms for the GTA's licensing and training programs as well.

2.2 Strengthen the GTA's Approach to Training and Capacity Building

Provide development and training opportunities to build local capacity, meet the tourism sectors' needs, and enable tourism businesses to become licensed.

2.2.1 Expand the Existing Curriculum and Build Trainer Capacity. Complete a needs assessment, review existing training curriculum, and determine the tangible outcomes that have been derived from trainees and what additional training programs are needed. Create and deliver new training programs through the following approach:

- Identify trainers in each region (e.g., Visit Rupununi and the Bina Hill Institute) and develop and implement train-the-trainer modules designed to build their capacity and enable transfer of knowledge
 - Develop and deliver training programs covering everything from basic first aid to advanced emergency medicine (e.g., through the GPHC Emergency Medicine Residency program offered through Vanderbilt University Department of Emergency Medicine)
 - Develop and deliver training programs that are centered on service quality and representing Guyana's brand, and empower tourism sector employees and residents to contribute to delivering a positive visitor experience. Make customer service training compulsory for front-line staff and service providers (including immigration and customs officers, security personnel, staff working in food concessions, taxi and bus drivers) in such appropriate areas as customer service, personal hygiene, road courtesy, basic knowledge about Guyana.
 - Collaborate with relevant taxi and bus operating services to institute Tourism Awareness training programmes that target drivers who transport visitors, in order to inculcate attitudes of courtesy, honesty and fair business practices in those service providers.
 - Develop and deliver training programs that provide rural communities with on-the-ground guidance, training and support for business management and growing tourism in the local area based on packaging and promoting their unique offerings, and that help communities strategize on how to develop and market specific, unique tourism products inclusive of a framework for creating immersive experiences

- Develop and deliver comprehensive training presentations for the travel trade inclusive of key sales messages targeting niche markets following a review of the current materials, social media marketing, content marketing (e.g., via TripAdvisor, etc.)
- Develop and deliver training programs on ecotourism and experiential travel
- Secure resources to educate future leaders (e.g., Maurice Strong Legacy Scholarships, Destination Development Action Planning and mapping from Swisscontact, and the Adventure Travel Guide Standard from the Adventure Travel Trade Association, and CTO's training curriculum)
- Create a seminar that provides an overview of Guyana's travel and tourism industry and is designed to help related organisations and businesses in Guyana take advantage of the opportunities GTA offers once the new licensing system is in place

2.2.2 Support the Establishment of a Tourism & Hospitality Institute. Partner with the Ministry of Education to secure the resources from CDB necessary to develop a restaurant and hotel facility and provide visitor experiences through the requisite hands-on and theoretical training for all areas of the industry, including but not limited to the visitor welcome and reception; branding, marketing and sales; culinary arts, food and beverage management/controls, and services; supervisory and basic housekeeping; interior décor/design; airport operations; and tourism experience design, packaging, and delivery. Provide scholarships to vulnerable and disadvantaged populations.

2.2.3 Develop a Toolkit for Tourism Business and Communities. Create a toolkit for guides, tour operators, and indigenous communities offering activities to empower tourism activity providers with the tools they need to improve visitor safety and the quality of the visitor experience.

2.3 Strengthen Data Collection and Aggregation

2.3.1 Implement Tourism Satellite Accounting. In collaboration with relevant ministries (e.g., Guyana Revenue Authority, Guyana Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Communications, Ministry of Public Infrastructure), strengthen the system for collecting and aggregating data on visitors and the visitor experience, and for collectively compiling and distributing information on tourism with an emphasis on the direct and indirect economic -impacts in order to implement Tourism Satellite Accounting in 2020. Secure technical assistance to ensure TSA is implemented.

2.3.2 Strengthen Visitor Profiling. Strengthen visitor profiling and co-relate statistics with comparable countries to inform brand strategies and to evaluate and optimize marketing programs (e.g., through market leaders like Longwoods International).

2.3.3 Survey Visitors. Develop and implement a methodology for determining visitor spending before the end of 2018 in preparation for the implementation of TSA in 2020. Work with the airport authorities and the Ministry of Communications to implement a short survey in the international airport for arrivals and departures that provides access to complimentary Wi-Fi

Key Measures

- Secure at least US\$500,000 through existing and new funding mechanisms, matching our marketing budget, development assistance, and grants
- A marked increase in stakeholder engagement, participation in trainings and train-the-trainer programs, and in sharing, aggregating and disseminating data and tourism-related information
- Implement TSA in 2020

Strategic Goal 3. Champion the Value of Tourism

3.1 Develop Strategic Alliances

Grow and align strategic domestic, regional, and global partnerships to leverage matching funding, resources, and capacity to address key issues and opportunities

3.1.1 Determine the Feasibility of offering Grant Opportunities. Determine the feasibility of establishing a competitive Grant Program to address key issues and opportunities (e.g., regional product development) and require applicants for larger grants to demonstrate a cash match (e.g., 25%)

3.1.2 Improve Domestic Air Transport. Work with the Ministry of Business, Guyana Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA), Minister for Public Infrastructure, National Assembly, Transport and Harbours Department (T&HD) to improve international air transit to primary tourist markets and secure more competitive national and international package tour; and with the five local airlines to improve and reduce the cost of domestic air transit within the interior

3.1.3 Improve Visitor Safety and the Tourism Narrative. Work with the Ministry of Public Security and Guyana Police Force, and the Police Complaints Authority to implement tourist safety and assistance program (e.g., modeled off of comparable programs like Guatemala's PROATUR program) and to improve the reliability of search and rescue operations. Place emphasis on the area between the Cheddi Jagan International Airport and Georgetown/East Coast Demerara, the heritage tourism route in downtown Georgetown, and at selected, major tourist sites around the country. Work with leaders in local media to change the narrative on safety. Work with the Ministry of Communications, leaders within the media, and private sector leaders to change the narrative about Guyana through content development with an emphasis on storytelling.

3.1.4 Identify and Secure Strategic Partners. Complete a strategic partner mapping exercise to identify and prioritize prospective partners (e.g., trade associations like the Adventure Travel Trade Association and World Indigenous Tourism Alliance; outdoor lifestyle companies like Vortex Binoculars, Costa Sunglasses, and Hobie Kayak; and NGOs like Nia Tero, CI and WWF). Target and secure prioritized strategic partners.

3.1.5 Enhance Tourism Awareness. Aggressively communicate and disseminate events, initiatives and campaigns that are of tourism value so as to maximise public awareness and buy in and stimulate more tourism-friendly attitudes in the public at large during an annual Tourism Awareness Month and through recurring monthly promotional activities.

3.2 Improve the Enabling Environment for Tourism and Empower the Tourism Private Sector

Empower and equip Guyana's tourism industry with power of travel and issue-oriented knowledge and messaging

3.2.1 Share Knowledge. Make information on tourism trends applicable to Guyana, tourism data related to Guyana (e.g., data on visitor arrivals, hotel occupancies, etc.), and information on the value of tourism more widely available (e.g., recent research on the multiplier effect of tourism, the market size and economic value of nature-based tourism, etc.). Implement NDAs and confidentiality agreements within GTA and with tourism private sector partners to foster more information sharing, and evaluate and implement a confidential system for hotel market data and benchmarking through STR Global or similar.

3.2.2 Create a Positive and Progressive Policy and Regulatory Environment. Engage policymakers to strengthen economic development through Guyana's tourism industry. Create a positive, progressive, and coherent policy and regulatory environment inclusive of benefits and subsidies such as tax reductions or exemptions from VAT, income excise taxes, and customs duties for legitimate, reputable international and local investors. Secure input from the tourism private sector and other key stakeholders to prioritize policy proposals (e.g., THAG, Private Sector Commission).

3.2.3. Improve the Insurance and Credit Conditions. Identify a solution in collaboration with THAG to help domestic tourism providers meet international insurance requirements. Enable investors and the MSMEs to access bank loans at favourable interest rates. Evaluate the potential to develop and implement a performance-based small grants scheme to support the development of established tourism enterprises, NGOs, and RDMOs (e.g., Visit Rupununi) to expand or improve their product and service offering.

3.2.4 Update Tourism Regulations and Improve the Licensing Process. Work with the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Business to determine the core process and priorities of the licensing system, how best to evolve GTA's business model, and work with the GTA Board Licensing Sub-committee involving GTA's leadership and Product Development to develop a recommendation to the Minister to effectively markedly strengthen the licensing system. To foster movement toward international standards, develop and implement a tiered rating scheme linked to the provision of training and marketing benefits/incentives that reward businesses for voluntary and regulatory compliance with tourism quality and new visitor welcome and sustainability requirements. Develop and implement new guidelines and standards including Visitor Guidelines for Sustainable Travel (e.g., respecting cultural mores, reducing demand for wild meat and fish, etc.), experiential travel, destination management companies, and hotel restaurants. Recognize existing standards like CTO's Quality Assured program and

the Adventure Travel Guide Standard, for example. Work with the EPA to streamline the film licensing process.

3.2.5 Enable Compliance and Enforce Civil Penalties for Non-compliance. Place a greater emphasis on compliance by operators through more accessible, relevant and progressive regulations, provision of technical assistance to ensure compliance, and by making examples of tourism providers that are compromising the safety of visitors to Guyana. Create a system that enables online self-assessment submissions and timely feedback on actions to be taken to address deficiencies.

3.2.6 Empower Guyana's Youth and Women. Develop solutions to expand access to tourism opportunities to underserved populations (e.g., youth in Georgetown through peer-to-peer guide and in-home dining programs and programs like World Bicycle Relief/ Bicycles for Humanity). Strengthen the participation of women in the tourism industry through the provision of relevant trainings that enhance the skillsets of women.

3.4 Implement Feedback Mechanisms

Improve industry and public feedback channel/process

3.4.1 Establish Feedback Channels. Bring together a cross-functional GTA team to identify opportunities to improve feedback channels and processes (e.g., inventory GTA's current and future-planned communications, engagements, events, programs, trainings, etc. that engage the industry and public and ensure they have an opportunity to provide feedback in some capacity; establish and monitor the public perception and attitude Guyanese have towards Guyana's tourism industry as it contributes to the economy and quality of life).

3.4.2 Prepare for a Crisis. Develop comprehensive, cross-departmental crisis communication plan to ensure GTA is ready to responsively, accurately and effectively communicate with a wide variety of audiences

Key Measures

- A significant increase in licensed operators by 2020 inclusive of an approved list of operators, 50% of operators licensed in 2019 and 70% by 2020
- The level of inter-departmental ministerial collaboration and number of multi-stakeholder partnerships increases
- A baseline measure is established for tourism investment, and five to ten new tourism investment and product development projects commence per year through 2025
- The tourism private sector and public perception of Guyana's tourism industry acting as a contributor to tangible socio-economic and conservation outcomes improves
- The enabling environment for private sector tourism development improves

Strategic Goal 4. Raise the Profile and Impact of GTA as a Professional Organisation

4.1 Improve Employee Quality of Work and Life

Attract, develop and retain top talent and improve the staff quality of work and life.

4.1.1 Engage in Participatory Action Planning. Flesh out this living National Tourism Strategic Action Plan with the Ministry of Business, Department of Tourism, and GTA Board members, management, staff and key partners and stakeholders. Identify and prioritize actions, SMART goals/key performance indicators, and roles and responsibilities at an organizational level between DoT and GTA and at employee level. Establish baselines where possible, and then track and measure the outputs and targets.

4.1.2 Consistently Pursue Opportunities for Institutional Strengthening. Identify and pursue opportunities to continuously strengthen the organizational structure and capacity to better align with GTA's objectives including improving HR policies and systems, strengthening on-the-job training and professional development opportunities, and attracting new talent within the GTA. Work with the GTA Board HR Committee to make improvements.

4.1.3 Support Professional Development. Secure resources to support employee development and identify new training and train-the-trainer opportunities that can be led internally or externally that will benefit the GTA staff and the tourism sector (e.g., for service quality, risk management/Emergency Medicine, placemaking, product development, project management)

4.2 Increase Organisational Effectiveness

Lead an effective organisation by continuously reviewing, improving and documenting policies and processes/procedures to improve operational efficiencies and organisational effectiveness

4.2.1 Maintain Stakeholder Engagement. Retain an open-door policy to maintain engagement with key stakeholders in the private, public and civil sectors – from the Coast to the Hinterland – to secure key insights and inputs, strengthen relationships and build trust and collaboration

4.2.2 Develop Living Work Plans and Monitor KPIs. Refine the process for developing and refining annual budgets and work plans and tracking and reporting on weekly goals, individual SMART goals, and the effectiveness for each GTA activity and how these processes can be improved and streamlined

4.2.3 Determine the Viability of Opening a Welcome Centre. In collaboration with the Department of Culture, evaluate the benefits of securing a new more prominent location for GTA that can double as a

Visitor Information Centre to set the tone for the overall visitor experience. If there is a business case for doing so, identify potential locations, resource requirements and ROI.

4.3 Strengthen Internal Alignment

Strengthen further the internal alignment and collaboration amongst GTA divisions/departments

4.3.1 Develop Cross-functional Teams. Develop operational divisions and cross functional teams to help improve internal alignment and engage staff in planning, problem solving, providing input, and sourcing solutions to organizational challenges (e.g., establishing a plan and goals for communicating clear and consistent policies).

Key Measures

- 100% of DoT's and GTA's staff are working toward the National Tourism Strategic Action Plan, setting targets and benchmarks, tracking the inputs and outputs, and measuring the results
- Employee engagement increases in identified areas of need
- The GTA staff's perception of operational efficiencies and effectiveness and quality of work life increases

Annex 2

Ministry of Business' Success indicators for the GTA Director: 2018-2020

Administrative

- Annual reports - completion of all outstanding annual reports. Timely presentation of subsequent annual reports starting with the 2018 report (unaudited) to be presented to me before the end of February 2019 and finalized before the end of May 2019.
- Budget - draft submission for GTA to be completed by end of May (and final by the end of June) for approval and inclusion in the National Estimates for the following year, reflecting the priorities of a multi-year Action Plan.
- Organizational structure of the GTA – to be better aligned with GTA's objectives. Adequate staffing must be hired for implementation of the work plan.
- TSA – Tourism Satellite Accounting system to be implemented by 2020.

Regulatory

- Licensed operators - significant increase in licensed operators by 2020. An approved list of operators to be compiled. 50% of operators to be licensed in 2019 and 70% by 2020.
- Standards - new standards/regulations to be drafted for hinterland, community-based/community owned and operated tourism, and the sharing economy operators to adequately address deficiencies and promote growth in these areas.
- Enforcement and compliance - greater emphasis on compliance by operators with regulations. Increased inspections and increased number of compliant operators. The development of a system that allows operators to make online self-assessment submissions and for GTA to recommend actions to be taken to address deficiencies.

Developmental

- Hinterland product enhancement - Realistic (~10 year) plan for tourism development (i.e., accommodations, activities, access). Network of eco-lodges to be created in hinterland and complemented by a diverse and well-organized range of guest activities. The development of templates for the design, ownership structure and business model and the commencement of ten such projects by 2020.
- Infrastructure development - better coordination of tourism development with infrastructure development. Mapping of hinterland infrastructure projects to inform tourism development. Approved capital infrastructure projects of other agencies must be a factor in tourism development plans for 2019 and 2020.
- Air transport - more competitive national and international package tours. Strategy to be developed for the reduction of domestic air transport costs.

Visitor trends

- Visitor arrivals - 8% average annual increase over next 8 years.

- Percentage of hinterland visitors - 20% annual increase in overseas visitors to hinterland from 2019 (currently 90% coastal). 10% annual increase in locals visiting hinterland from 2018.
- Visitor spending – Methodology to be in place before the end of 2018 for measuring this.

Donor funding

- Identification and activation of external funding opportunities for tourism development.

ⁱ UNWTO and UNDP (May 2018), *Tourism and the Sustainable Development Goals – Journey to 2030*