



## **Living Guyana Tourism Strategic Action Plan: 2018-2025** **updated April 17, 2019**

### **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 full 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 Guyana Tourism Strategic Action Plan is to help the Republic of Guyana meet its aspiration of becoming a Green State, continue to be recognized as a leading sustainable tourism destination globally, and be relevant to everyone even tangentially engaged in the travel and tourism industry.

In order to realize 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. Structured collaboration between key stakeholders within the private, public and civil sectors will enable the tourism sector to take advantage of the interlinkages and cross-cutting economic impacts of tourism and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)<sup>i</sup>. 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 includes our vision, four primary objectives, the key activities to achieve them, and key performance indicators (KPIs) to track our progress in the areas of tourism management, development, and marketing through 2025 with emphasis on priority actions to be taken over the next two years.

In Annex 1, the related time frames, priorities, ease of implementation, estimated costs, funding sources and responsible parties have been defined. Whereas, the Ministry of Business' Success indicators for the GTA Director: 2018-2020 are outlined in Annex 2.

The plan provides the roadmap necessary to strengthen the Guyana Tourism Authority (GTA) and the Department of Tourism (DOT), to raise the profile and impact of each organization, improve the enabling environment for tourism development, build tourism capacity, increase market demand, develop new products based on market demand, and improve the positive socio-economic and conservation outcomes from 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 DOT, 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 maximize 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 recognized internationally, by the year 2025, as a leading sustainable tourism destination

*Guyana Tourism Authority:* To be recognized 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.”

Realizing 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 realize the Government of Guyana's vision for tourism and for becoming a Green State, develop, implement, and maintain a living Guyana Tourism Strategic Action Plan. Align the Guyana 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. Optimize 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.**

Maintain clarity of the roles and responsibilities between the DOT and GTA and align work plans and budgets on an annual basis. Based on best practice, the DOT is responsible for developing evidence-based policies that are aspirational, 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. The GTA is responsible for developing and implementing the Guyana Tourism Strategic Action Plan, developing policies for improving the enabling environment for tourism development, capacity building, destination marketing, and product development.

### **1.1.2 Maintain a High Level of Inter-ministerial and Multi-sectoral Collaboration.**

Continuously 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. Formalize structured partnerships with sister governmental agencies to implement the Green State Development Strategy to address issues related to waste, energy and water, to promote and protect natural and cultural heritage, and to support sustainable tourism development. Align the tourism priorities and budget with the EPA, GCAA, PAC, SBB, and the Bureau of Standards among others in order to take a more coordinated approach to tourism development. Align and optimize an integrated sales, marketing and destination development strategy with Guyana's tourism industry and related initiatives (e.g., PAC's NPAS expansion strategy). See Annex 2 for more information.

**1.1.3 Strengthen policy making capabilities** within the DOT and GTA by instituting the extensive stakeholder consultations through a working group for new prioritized policy considerations in order to garner the necessary support required 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 organizations to optimize benefits for Guyana's participation within key organizations including but not limited to UNWTO, WTTC, OAS, ACS, and CTO. Institute the planning necessary to achieve optimal outcomes from attending regional and or global UNWTO and WTTC events starting in 2020.

**1.1.5 Strengthen Regional Tourism Governance and Capacity.** The DOT 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; establish regional governance of tourism activities through Tourism Committees and Working Groups that are designed to evolve into Regional Destination Management Organizations (RDMOs); 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 & Management Action Plan (see 1.1.10), build on existing tourism circuits (e.g., Rupununi) and support the development of new tourism clusters starting with the Essequibo River and Coast, the Northwest Coast, and Berbice). Work with key stakeholders in the lower Essequibo and other regions to develop formal tourism circuits and implement a structured approach to collaboration, covering marketing, transportation offerings, and product and infrastructure development. 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.). Build capacity for scaling up the development of RDMOs and create a toolkit that includes elements such as a governance TOR, business model and business plan templates.

**1.1.7 Update the GTA Act and Regulations.** Strengthen the GTA Act to ensure that it remains up-to-date and relevant and to maximize the social, economic and conservation outcomes associated with the tourism sector. 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. Complete the stakeholder engagement process for the Indigenous Tourism regulations, and see the process through for securing the necessary approvals for the GTA Act and Regulations from Cabinet, the Attorney General and the National Assembly.

**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 quantifiable impacts from sustainable tourism development on an ongoing basis; 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 in collaboration with CARICOM, Guyana Energy Agency, the Office of Climate Change, and the Department of Energy. Advocate for and foster innovative energy efficient and renewable energy investments and self-financing mechanisms. Secure buy-in for renewable energy and energy efficiency within the accommodations sector. Work with CARICOM to secure buy-in and support from GPL, Department of Energy, Department of

Environment, and Guyana Energy Agency to empower sustainable energy production and use through the tourism value chain and implement a pilot program in one municipality, one protected area and two receptive indigenous communities. 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.** Complete the market analysis and the mapping of prioritized strategic visitor flows (SVFs), destination development opportunities, and needs to inform tourism product and infrastructure development priorities. Maintain and institutionalize a living Destination Development & Management 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 visitor flows; and community receptivity. Complete a multi-layered map outlining where tourism infrastructure and product exists, SVFs, and where new infrastructure and product are 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. Maintain a list of investment opportunities and implement an action plan for securing investment in collaboration with GO Invest.

**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. Work with the DOT and other key stakeholders to 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 tourism business plans in protected areas 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 pilot projects centered on realizing the commercial revenue potential of Kaieteur National Park and Shell Beach Protected Area in a way that enables the PAC to cover its operational costs, achieve its conservation aims for these protected areas, and maximize the socio-economic benefits to the indigenous communities associated with these protected areas ("conservation tourism"). Through the pilots, secure additional funding through the tendering 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.** Maintain regular communication with the Ministry of Public Infrastructure (MOPI) to identify infrastructure development projects and discuss the implications linked to tourism. Informed by the living Destination Development Management Action Plan and continuous stakeholder consultation, work with the MOPI and

key stakeholders in the tourism private sector to identify, prioritize, and propose improvements in infrastructure. Partner with the MOPI other relevant agencies, and the Tourism & Hospitality Association of Guyana (THAG) to implement priority improvements in infrastructure to improve accessibility, safety, and the visitor experience (Annex 3). Partner with the Ministry of Public Communications to identify prioritized ITC hubs linked to tourism and partner with INet to help communities monetise and cover the cost for their service.

**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. Secure government and donor support for the prioritized sustainable tourism development investments that have been identified within each region which highlight 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. Host a workshop and trade fair at the annual National Toshias Council Conference to empower indigenous communities and foster matchmaking between receptive communities and interested businesses.

**1.1.15 Demonstrate Thought Leadership.** Build on the success of the OAS Congress and the recognition as the world's #1 "Best in Ecotourism" and Top 10 Sustainable Destination, 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 sustainable destinations, sustainable businesses, indigenous tourism, the Adventure Travel Guide Standard, experiential travel, etc.). Secure speaking engagements at prominent events (e.g., ITB, WTTC Global Travel & Tourism Summit, etc.). Secure sectoral participation and continue to apply for 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, online travel agencies, 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 by establishing and maintaining a vibrant Customer Relationship Management (CRM) within the

GTA, 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 and secure matching funding to enable different levels of buy-in and brokering through THAG, RDMOs, and chambers of commerce. Target the initial campaign timeframes during shoulder seasons and other timeframes when the tourism sector needs to drive demand and increase occupancy rates. Secure a destination account with Trip Advisor, and train the travel trade in how to populate and manage listings.

**1.2.2 Drive Demand through Media and Influencer Relationships and Travel Ambassadors.** Continue to strengthen international and national marketing and PR efforts in order to increase awareness and market demand and attract travelers whose interests are aligned with Guyana’s strengths. Build deeper personal relationships with travel and tourism media and social media influencers through CRM, Media Fams, and innovative marketing campaigns and product development. 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. Markedly increase the digital footprint of the Guyana tourism sector by working with marketing representatives and trade media and marketing outlets to secure earned trade media coverage of GTA's and DOT'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.** Continuously strengthen the 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 new inclusions on an annual basis. Host a GTA-led event that mirrors the programming of AdventureNEXT South America by 2020.

**1.2.5 Make it Easier to Travel to Guyana.** Partner with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Department of Citizenship and Immigration to make visas more accessible, ease visa restrictions within key investment markets, and enable more seamless travel across neighboring borders. Conduct needs assessment for visa regulations to be changed- targeted markets. 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. Lobby for a more seamless travel across neighboring borders.

## **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 and core brand pillars (i.e., Nature & Wildlife,



Culture & Heritage, Active Exploration, Birding, and Conservation) 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 maintain knowledge of their ever-changing funding priorities and interests related to tourism through the lens of sustainable development (e.g., enterprise development, women and youth empowerment, indigenous communities, green growth) including prioritized 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 for development assistance at the level of the USAID GSTI project through IDB, USAID or the EU.

**1.3.2 Scale up Community Tourism Development.** Continue to evaluate, monitor, and scale-up support for existing community tourism development projects through partner organizations. In collaboration with the Ministry of Indigenous People's Affairs among others, successfully complete the piloting of the Community-owned and Led Tourism Framework and action plan and regularly update both based on lessons learned and inputs from key stakeholders. Evaluate the potential for formalizing 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.** Strengthen SAVE travel in Guyana through the implementation of the SAVE Travel Market Development Plan, and complete the short-term, 15-month action plan which concludes April 2020. With support from GTA's market representatives, strengthen existing partnerships and build new partnerships with prioritized Universities, NGOs, faith groups, and other scientific, academic, and philanthropic organizations that serve Guyana. Collaborate with the University of Guyana Department of Natural Sciences and 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. Secure donor assistance to invest in developing and delivering travel experiences through tourism operators, MSMEs, 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.** Actively collaborate with the sister governmental agencies, the tourism private sector, donors, development agencies, and receptive communities to facilitate sustainable product

development. Support the development of tourism product and 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. Continue to promote Guyana as the land of the giants. Map locations of key wildlife species. Continue to build on the development of new birding sites and lists. Create a new strategic action plan for birding, which may include but may not be limited to securing the complete list of bird species that have been spotted in Guyana, offering fam trips and guide training and equipment specific to birding, producing birding trails, implementing marketing campaigns such as birding photographic competitions, and hosting the Caribbean Endemic Bird Festival by 2020 or 2021.
- Heritage Tourism. Continue to 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. Develop market appealing, heritage-driven trails and sites for the purpose of attracting visitors and supporting the protection of cultural heritage beginning with the Rum Route and Participatory Integrated Site Analysis focused on the tri-lakes initiation in Region 2. Support the further development and implementation of the Rum Route to tell the story of rum for ship to shop.
- Sports Tourism. The DOT 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 DOT's efforts to lead the development of an overarching regulatory framework, GTA's replication of successful models (e.g., Rewa Eco-lodge) with an emphasis on Warapoka and Moraikobai as the next two prioritized destinations, and eventual development of a 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 of tax and other incentives to encourage greater regularity and increased investments in the entertainment and events sub-sector, continue to foster green event management best practice through the new GTA event support and sponsorship application, and build event management capacity through the provision of training and technical assistance from the GTA. Support the development of new events with an emphasis on culinary, artistic, musical or other heritage of Guyana.
- Agritourism and Culinary Tourism. Leverage the Cooperation Agreement between the Minister of Business and the Minister of Agriculture to develop Guyana's culinary tourism sector based on creating an inventory of existing agritourism and culinary tourism products, identifying and prioritizing existing products to be strengthened and select agricultural sites, production processes and agricultural products to become new tourism attractions. Link visitor ready products to the tourism value chain with an emphasis on domestic tour operators and sharing economy platforms, and promote them through these partners and through the GTA's marketing platforms.
- Diaspora and Domestic. Support the GTA's marketing representatives in North America and in the UK to implement marketing and enhancing awareness strategies to increase visitation from first, second and third generation Guyanese living in the United States, Canada and England. Continue to implement marketing and enhancing awareness strategies that encourage diaspora and domestic travel including but not limited to discounted package offerings, targeted marketing campaigns, and a "Why I Love Guyana" video campaign.
- Cruise Tourism. Continue to implement the Guyana Cruise Sector Development Action Plan, prioritize the development of river and small ship cruising and yachting, and leverage the cruise tourism taskforce model to ensure a seamless and high-quality visitor experience.
- Multi-destination. Develop more multi-destination itineraries involving, for example, Barbados, Suriname, French Guiana, Panama and Brazil. To realize the potential of the new accord, place emphasis on building partnerships with key tourism stakeholders in Suriname.

**1.3.6 Empower Urban Regeneration through Placemaking.** Partner with the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) and Georgetown business associations (e.g., Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club of Georgetown, etc.) to implement a placemaking initiative in order to empower community leaders, business and real estate owners, and residents to take ownership of public places, clean up Georgetown, and make it a nicer place to live and visit. Drive interest in Guyana as a destination by developing Georgetown as the country's gateway to tourism. Motivate and mobilize 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. Support the establishment and development of a Georgetown Tourism Working Group as part of the larger Regional network of Tourism Working Groups and Committees being created to drive bottom-up tourism development. Secure the grant funding that the CDB has earmarked for a pilot project in downtown Georgetown linked to their new urban regeneration policy. Ensure the generation of quick wins centered on improving prioritized public spaces and facilities.

**1.3.7 Determine the Feasibility of Securing World Heritage Inscription for Sites of Outstanding Universal Value.** Continue to work with the National Trust and Permanent Delegation of the Republic of Guyana to UNESCO to 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. Continue to try to garner pro bono or preferred rates for technical assistance to complete an updated dossier for historical Georgetown.

## **1.4 Institutionalize a Sustainable Tourism Framework**

Institutionalize a sustainable approach to tourism management, development, and marketing. 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.** Complete the process for evolving the existing tourism standards and regulations and implement the new sustainable tourism regulations that include the Global Sustainable Tourism Council's baseline criteria for tourism businesses and are adapted to each sub-sector of tourism in Guyana. Implement sustainable tourism standards for community-led and owned tourism, indigenous tourism, adventure travel, and the experiential travel in order to adequately address deficiencies and promote growth in these areas. Provide tools for the tourism private sector to adopt sustainable tourism best practices and meet the requirements of the new sustainable tourism regulations. Continue to partner with the Guyana Energy Agency to complete energy audits throughout the hotel sector and to ensure successful outcomes from the hotels that are moving toward becoming energy independent (i.e., Cara Lodge and Baganara Island Resort). Scale up the promotions of the Visitor Guidelines for Sustainable Travel through the GTA, DOT and tourism private sector.

**1.4.2 Implement Sustainable Destination Frameworks.** Become the first country in Latin America and the Caribbean to be certified to an internationally recognized sustainable tourism standard. Secure the support offered by the CDB to certify Guyana to the international Green Destinations Standard. Continue to address the gaps in terms of the criteria that require documentation and evidence of compliance and prioritize related activities to demonstrate compliance with them. Evaluate the potential to adopt a sustainable destination standard a national level, the benefits, and the requirements for implementation.

**1.4.3. Empower Consumers and the Tourism Sector to Support Wildlife Conservation.** To address issues related to the illicit wildlife trade and poaching, work with THAG, the Department of Wildlife, Fish, and Environmental Studies, and other key stakeholders to continuously strengthen wildlife regulations, monitor and enforce wildlife regulations, and educate and inform tourism stakeholders in how to identify and report illicit wildlife activities. Reduce demand for wild meat and fish through trade and consumer education.

**1.4.4. Reduce Waste and Improve Waste Management.** Guyana’s long-term environmental, social and economic wellbeing is at risk. The natural beauty of Guyana is overshadowed by the poor management of solid waste in cities, towns and communities. Develop a strategy for reducing waste and managing it better. Scale up measures to enhance waste collection and disposal services, transform waste into useful resources, and boost anti-littering enforcement efforts. Place more emphasis on waste reduction and resource recovery, creating sustainable financing measures, and improving the coverage of waste collection services.

## 1.5 Take GTA’s Marketing and Communications to the Next Level

Lead with targeted marketing and inspire increased visitation and the economic value each individual traveler represents 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.** Continue to make a concerted effort to reach the target markets, market segments, and audiences most attracted by Guyana’s unique value proposition. Maintain market representation in Guyana’s core markets and investment markets, and continue to demand excellence through monthly reporting and measurement of KPIs. Continue to update and share Guyana’s messaging hierarchy.

- Countries: Phase 1 - USA, Canada, and UK (core markets), and Germany, Austria, Belgium, Netherlands, and Luxemburg (investment markets); and Phase 2 - Latin America, Caribbean, China, and other European destinations
- Segments: ‘Travel to discover new frontiers’, Wanderlusters, Guyanese Diaspora, MICE and Sports Tourism travellers, and domestic travelers
- Demographics: Generation X and Millennials (investment markets), and well-educated and traveled individuals who are 35-60 and earn US\$150,000 combined household income per annum, and those whose familial heritage is linked to Guyana (core markets)
- Adventurers: Soft - attracted by unknown destination, require comfort – largest segment; Hard - attracted by unexplored wilderness – looking for new destinations and authentic experiences and are not deterred by physical challenges; Key message - Appeal to explorer in people (at all levels)
- Nature/wildlife/Birding 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 that is increasingly being told through Guyanese; Key message - Numerous opportunities for authentic engagement with variety of cultures

### **1.5.2 Maintain and Implement an Integrated Marketing and Communications**

**Strategy.** Regularly update the integrated Marketing & Communications Strategy & Action Plan: 2019-2023 based on visitation data. Continue to lead quarterly integrated marketing and communications meetings with all marketing subcontractors to ensure all marketing activities are complimentary and mutually reinforcing. Employ a fully integrated communications mix, including social media, content development, web development, public relations (PR), partnerships/promotions, paid media/influencers and email marketing to maximize exposure, engagement and ROI. Maintain a clear definition of the unique value propositions for target audiences, and what quality and authenticity 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”/high-end experiences concept]).

### **1.5.3 Effectively Target Existing Visitors and Improve Yield Management Practices.**

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. Continue to engage the tourism private sector to improve yield management practices; implement pricing strategies based on volume fixed pricing, and seasonal pricing; support businesses in establishing pricing based on actual fixed and variable expenses; and support the development and promotion of discounted packaging.

**1.5.4 Aggressively Ramp Up Digital Marketing Efforts.** Scale up social media, content and social media marketing strategies based on measurable results. Continue to 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. Enhance the new GTA website and create significantly more content for each stage of the buying cycle to drive website visitors to plan their trip. Complete the process of developing an institutionalized system for scaling up the new integrated GTA database, improve CRM, 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.** Strengthen the system for engaging and referring prospective visitors that express interest in visiting Guyana through social media, the new GTA website, and other web-based channels to licensed tourism businesses and ensure the provision of exceptional and timely customer service.

**1.5.6 Improve the Visitor Welcome at Ports of Entry.** Continuously 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**

- The level of inter-departmental ministerial collaboration and number of multi-stakeholder partnerships increases
- 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 from 10% in 2018 to 20% from 2019 (currently 90% coastal)
- There is an average annual 20% increase in leisure and business visitation and a measurable year-on-year increase in visitor spend
- A baseline for national and regional destination management and development needs is fully established and maintained
- At a global level, Guyana is recognized annually as a leading sustainable destination

## **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.** Maintain a map of the donor landscape with input from relevant ministries (e.g., Ministry of Business, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Foreign Affairs). Maintain and understanding of their needs and continue to prioritize the opportunities that have the most significant potential and 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 financial and in-kind support from ExxonMobil and local companies like GTT and Demerara Distillers Limited

**2.1.2 Realize the Potential for Cost Recovery within the GTA.** Finalize revenue generation opportunities, secure Board input and approval, 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 more in-depth needs assessment with donor support, review existing training curriculum, develop standardized 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 continue to develop and implement train-the-trainer modules designed to build their capacity and enable transfer of knowledge
  - Develop and deliver multi-tiered training for tour guides with an emphasis on managing group dynamics, interpretation, and safety training programs covering everything from basic first aid to advanced emergency medicine (e.g., through NOLS or 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 business marketing training programs 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, video and website production, etc.)
  - Develop and implement a licensing training program and train trainers in different regions to help tourism businesses become licensed, and develop and implement an assessor training program and train trainers in different regions on how to assess the level of compliance for tourism businesses that want to be licensed.
  - Develop and deliver training programs on how to meet international safety, quality and sustainability standards and to secure licensing from the GTA. Create a seminar that provides an overview of Guyana's travel and tourism industry and is designed to



- help related organizations and businesses in Guyana take advantage of the marketing and training benefits GTA offers once the new licensing system is in place.
- Develop and deliver training programs on yield management and pricing strategies as previously noted
  - Develop and deliver training programs on niche product development such as experiential travel
  - Educate, inspire and mentor future leaders through a GTA Future Leaders internship program, monthly GTA-Visit Guyana-University of Guyana roundtables, and an annual tourism career fair during tourism awareness month. Secure resources to build the capacity of tourism professionals and future leaders (e.g., CDB, CI GROW initiative, SUNx-Maurice Strong Legacy Scholarships)
  - Professionalize and promote travel and tourism as a career path

**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, Communities, and RDMOs.** Complete the development of toolkits for tourism businesses, indigenous communities, and RDMOs. Empower tourism activity providers with the tools they need to improve visitor safety, the sustainability of their offerings, and the quality of the visitor experience.

## **2.3 Strengthen Data Collection and Aggregation**

**2.3.1 Implement Tourism Satellite Accounting.** Implement the action plan for operationalizing Tourism Satellite Accounting by 2025. 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), evaluate the potential for implementing an integrated approach to data collection, management, and monitoring; and 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 demand-based data and completing the process for determining the direct and indirect economic -impact of tourism and supply-based data with an emphasis on accommodation occupancy levels. Continue to secure technical assistance to implement the TSA.

**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 Residents and Visitors.** 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. In collaboration with the Bureau of Statistics, develop and implement a methodology for surveying resident perceptions of tourism and raising their awareness of the benefits of tourism, and for surveying visitor spending through an automated on-line sponsored survey at CJIA and Eugene F. Correia International Airport (ECIA) that is linked to the provision of complimentary Wi-Fi. Improve the E/D cards to secure more detailed and valuable information from visitors.

### ***Key Measures***

- Secure at least US\$500,000 through existing and new funding mechanisms, matching our marketing budget, development assistance, and grants by April 2020
- 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
- Secure standardized training curriculum for all prioritized subject areas by 2020 and a new Tourism & Hospitality Institute by 2021
- Determine visitor expenditure trends for 2017-2018 and accommodation occupancy levels in 2019 and implement TSA by 2025

## **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 International Air Connectivity and Domestic Air Transport.** Maintain a partnership with CJIA, Guyana Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA), and the MOPI to improve international air connectivity to primary tourist markets with support from the GTA’s marketing representatives. Work with the Transport and Harbours Department (T&HD) to improve international ground transit to primary tourist markets. Partner with the five local airlines to improve and reduce the cost of domestic air transit within the interior. In collaboration with GCAA, implement a pilot project centered on reinstating regularly scheduled flights into at least two prioritized tourism-related airstrips by April 2020. Determine the feasibility of implementing a system for concessioning priority airstrips on a competitive basis to reduce the travel costs.

**3.1.3 Improve Visitor Safety and the Tourism Narrative.** In collaboration with the Ministry of Public Security and Guyana Police Force, and the Police Complaints Authority, the DOT will lead the implementation of a tourist safety and assistance program (e.g., modeled off of comparable programs like Guatemala's PROATUR program) and work toward improving the reliability of search and rescue operations. Place emphasis on the area between the CJIA and Georgetown/East Coast Demerara, the heritage tourism route in downtown Georgetown, and at selected, major tourist sites around the country. Continue to work with leaders in local media to change the narrative on safety and improve Guyana's brand image and meet with them at least twice annually. Engage the Ministry of Communications, international media, and private sector leaders to support the change in the narrative about Guyana through content development with an emphasis on storytelling.

**3.1.4 Identify and Secure Strategic Partners.** Complete the strategic partner mapping exercise to identify and prioritize prospective partners and sponsors (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). Continue to target and secure prioritized strategic partners.

**3.1.5 Enhance Tourism Awareness.** Continue to 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. Implement multiple Top 10 campaigns in 2019 focused on increasing the adoption of sustainable tourism best practice and raising awareness of the value of tourism.

## **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., research on the multiplier effect of tourism, the market size and economic value of nature-based tourism, etc.). Continue the practice of implementing NDAs and confidentiality agreements with new GTA hires and with tourism private sector partners to foster more information sharing, and implement a confidential system for hotel market data and benchmarking through STR Global by securing at least 10 participating hotels.

**3.2.2 Create a Positive and Progressive Policy and Regulatory Environment.** Engage policymakers within the GRA 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, buy-in and endorsement from the tourism private sector and other key stakeholders to identify and prioritize policy proposals (e.g., THAG, Private Sector Commission, NRDDDB, Visit Rupununi, etc.).

**3.2.3. Improve the Insurance and Credit Conditions.** Continue to support THAG to implement an insurance premium pool program that is designed to ensure domestic tourism providers meet international insurance requirements. Enable investors and the MSMEs to access bank loans at favourable interest rates and secure the requisite lands and financing. 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.** Complete the process for markedly strengthening the GTA regulations and licensing system. To foster movement toward international standards, 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. Create an integrated and standardized system for licensing including but not limited to preparing tourism businesses to be assessed, conducting on-site assessments, determining compliance, and identifying specific areas of major and minor non-conformity with the regulations. Implement the new guidelines including the Visitor Guidelines for Sustainable Travel and the visitor code of conduct in indigenous communities, and the new regulations (i.e., outfitters, experiential travel, destination management companies, and indigenous tourism). 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, and work with the EPA and City Council to create a single process for licensing accommodations in Georgetown.

**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 and the quality and sustainability of the visitor experience. Create a system that enables online self-assessment submissions and timely feedback on actions to be taken to address non-conformities with compliance.

**3.2.6 Empower Guyana's Youth and Women.** Partner with and support relevant agencies to 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 programs and 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 including Resident and Visitor Surveys (see 2.3.3). Inventory and assess GTA's current and future-planned communications, engagements, events, programs, trainings, etc. that engage the industry and public and ensure messaging is on point and effective capacity;).

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

### ***Key Measures***

- Implement new tourism policies and incentives on an annual basis that improve the enabling environment for tourism development
- Secure on average at least one new international airline serving CJIA or ECIA per annum through 2025
- A significant increase in licensed operators by 2020 inclusive of an approved list of operators, 50% of operators actively becoming licensed or licensed in 2019 and 70% licensed by 2020
- 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

## **Strategic Goal 4. Raise the Profile and Impact of GTA and the DOT as Professional Organizations**

### **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.** Update the living Guyana Tourism Strategic Action Plan with the Ministry of Business, Department of Tourism, and GTA Board members, management, staff and key partners and stakeholders at least once per annum. 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.** Continue to identify and pursue opportunities to continuously strengthen the organizational structure and capacity to better align with the DOT's and GTA's organizational objectives including improving

HR policies and systems, strengthening on-the-job training and professional development opportunities, and attracting new talent. Work with the GTA Board HR Committee to make year on year improvements.

**4.1.3 Support Professional Development.** Identify each individual employee's professional development needs once per annum, actively 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, RDMP development, project management, etc.)

## **4.2 Increase Organizational Effectiveness**

Lead effective organizations by continuously reviewing, improving and documenting policies and processes/procedures to improve operational efficiencies and organizational 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 Annual Work Plans and Monitor KPIs.** Continue to align organizational mission, goals and objectives with annual work plans, weekly priorities, and individual job descriptions. Strengthen and 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 organizational activity and how these processes can be improved and streamlined

**4.2.3 Improve Employee Welfare and Quality of Work Life.** Implement HR policies that exemplify best practice within a semi-autonomous governmental agency based on existing precedents and applicability within our national context. Continue to develop and implement organizational systems to enable GTA to scale up the number of staff and the impact of the organization. Complete the GTA Employee Handbook and revisit it annually to identify opportunities to implement progressive policies within the existing law. Maintain a social committee and activities that foster employee engagement and involve the team at the DOT in it. Meet off-site at least once annually to revisit and refine as necessary the organization's vision, mission, goals and objectives; discuss and solve for organizational challenges; and to engage in teambuilding exercises.

**4.2.4 Determine the Viability of Opening a Welcome Center.** 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 Center 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 DOT and GTA divisions/departments

**4.3.1 Develop Cross-functional Teams.** Meet with the GTA senior management team monthly to foster inter-divisional and departmental collaboration. 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., maintaining cross-organizational collaboration and open communication; taking ownership of job description level roles and responsibilities and SMART goals, completing performance appraisals in a timely manner, etc.).

### ***Key Measures***

- 100% of DOT's and GTA's staff are working toward the Guyana Tourism Strategic Action Plan, setting targets and benchmarks, tracking the inputs and outputs, and measuring the results
- Employee welfare, quality of work life, engagement, and teamwork improves/increases as measured by bi-annual employee surveys
- The DOT's and GTA staff's perception of operational efficiencies and effectiveness and quality of work life increases as measured by bi-annual employee surveys
- The DOT and GTA are known as great places to work as measured by third-party recognition and unsolicited applications for employment

## **Annex 1: 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.



## Annex 2: Inter-Ministerial Collaboration for Sustainable Tourism Development

Ministry	Priority Activities	Lead Agency (GTA unless otherwise noted)
<b>Ministry of Business</b>	<b>Strengthen the Enabling Environment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with GO Invest to develop an investment portfolio, matchmaking with investors, and prioritizing policy and incentive recommendations</li> <li>• Work the Small Business Bureau to determine how the GTA can complement their efforts to foster MSME development</li> <li>• Actively promote Guyana’s tourism investment projects targeting investors with international market and air transport linkages, as well as local investors.</li> <li>• Develop in collaboration with the GTA tourism strategy, policy, and product and in implementing regional governance for destination development*</li> <li>• Support the National Exhibition Centre with planning key or select Ministry’s events to raise the quality and standard of those events.</li> </ul>	*DOT
<b>Ministry of Indigenous People’s Affairs</b>	<b>Community Development and Investment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the implementation of the Community-led and Owned Tourism framework and action plan*</li> <li>• Prioritize receptive communities for tourism development, build their capacity, and link them with the tourism value chain and align resources to support implementation and scale up impact</li> <li>• Identify suitable/desirable areas for eco-lodges, develop project profiles for each, including the preferred means of financing</li> <li>• Seek consensus on which agency is legally responsible for Sports Fishing and elaborate a Sports Fishing Policy with clear guidelines for fishing activity in prescribed fishing zones*</li> </ul>	*DOT (policy-related implications)  *DOT
<b>Ministry of Social Cohesion</b>	<b>Cultural Heritage Preservation and Promotion</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise awareness of the value of tangible and intangible cultural heritage; advocate for protecting heritage sites; promote developed cultural heritage sites*</li> <li>• Support the expansion of tourism based upon established traditions in song, dance, performance and sports</li> <li>• Support the National Trust in mapping of cultural heritage sites and jointly pursue funding for the development of priority cultural heritage preservation, education, and sustainable cultural heritage tourism projects and programmes</li> <li>• Support the pursuit of World Heritage inscription for Georgetown*</li> <li>• Support the development and implementation of a competitive tendering and concessioning system for select cultural heritage sites on a pilot basis for location appropriate businesses (e.g., for art galleries, coffee shops)*</li> <li>• Evaluate the feasibility of jointly operating a visitor welcome center with the Department of Culture and National Trust of Guyana</li> </ul>	*DOT (policy-related implications)  *DOT (policy-related implications)

	<p><b>Note:</b> GTA is called upon annually to support the promotion of cultural events and sporting events. The support has been minimal over the years due to budget constraints but is expected. It is not included due to these capacity constraints.</p>	
<p><b>Ministry of Agriculture</b></p>	<p><b>Policy and Product Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define how the conservancies and related lodging facilities can be utilized for tourism activities</li> <li>• Elaborate a Sports Fishing Policy with clear guidelines for fishing activity in prescribed fishing zones*</li> <li>• Collaborate in the development of an agritourism policy that captures the best synergies in the two sectors</li> <li>• Identify suitable/desirable/receptive areas or businesses for agro-tourism, build their capacity and link them with the tourism value chain*</li> </ul>	<p>*DOT</p> <p>*DOT</p>
<p><b>Ministry of Citizenship</b></p>	<p><b>Visas &amp; Immigration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct a review of immigration systems with a view towards streamlining a set of regulations that would allow the processing of online visas and the granting of visas on arrival to those bona fide visitors not in possession of entry visas*</li> <li>• Support capacity building of Immigration Officers to improve visitor welcome experience at all ports of entry</li> <li>• Establish and implement a system for information sharing which would aid in improved decision making, monitoring the performance of the travel industry and improved security</li> <li>• Work with the relevant agencies to revise the marriage requirements for foreign nationals to make Guyana an attract wedding and honeymoon destination*</li> <li>• Conduct a review of immigration systems with a view towards streamlining a set of regulations that would allow the processing of online visas and the granting of visas on arrival to those bona fide visitors not in possession of entry visas*</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> It is advised that the Minister be engaged directly since he shares similar views on a number of issues and likes proper procedures but is open to improvements.</p>	<p>*DOT</p> <p>*DOT</p> <p>*DOT</p>
<p><b>Ministry of Education</b></p>	<p><b>Education &amp; Training</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the establishment of a Guyana Hospitality and Tourism Training Institute</li> <li>• Convene a Hospitality and Tourism Education Task Force to oversee the execution and implementation of all tourism-related policy measures in the area of education and training with an emphasis on empowering women and youth*</li> <li>• Maintain up-to-date knowledge on the establishment of a Hospitality Institute and support the process for international accreditation of its programmes</li> <li>• Establish a mechanism for continuous monitoring and evaluation of entities engaged in the delivery of hospitality and tourism education and training</li> <li>• Support the development of and establish a mechanism to deliver tourism curricula, starting from Grades 1 to change the narrative and perception of tourism and its benefit to Guyana</li> </ul>	<p>*DOT</p>
<p><b>Ministry of Finance</b></p>	<p><b>Tourism Policy &amp; Investment</b></p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a positive, progressive, and coherent policy and regulatory environment inclusive of tax benefits, which recognize tourism as an export industry for the purposes of implementing value-added, excise and import taxes for reputable international investors, and link select benefits to compliance with licensing regulations.</li> <li>• Improve the insurance and credit conditions to protect visitors and provide MSMEs with access to financing and start by developing a coherent policy proposal</li> <li>• Review the current investment concessions for the sector with a view to creating an investment stimulus package which sees the public sector investing by way of concessions granted and receiving a return on investment by way of various taxes collected in the long-term*</li> <li>• Develop mechanisms for supplementary sourcing of funds (e.g., via donor agencies, a national and local transient occupancy tax, a percentage of departure tax, a percentage of VAT from tourism-related domestic flights) to be allocated for the marketing of Guyana*</li> </ul> <p><b>Data Collection/Monitoring</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with the Bureau of Statistics of Guyana to assess visitor expenditure data and implement tourism satellite accounting by 2020</li> </ul>	<p>*DOT</p> <p>*DOT</p>
<b>Ministry of Foreign Affairs</b>	<p><b>Visas &amp; Immigration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a mechanism through the Diaspora unit to engage the Diaspora in key source market to change the negative perception of the country and encourage travel to Guyana*</li> <li>• Support the continuous development and fulfillment of bilateral and multi-lateral relations with tourism focused outcomes*</li> </ul>	<p>*DOT and GTA</p> <p>*DOT</p>
<b>Ministry of Public Security</b>	<p><b>Visitor &amp; Resident Safety</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with the MoPS and Guyana Police Force, and the Police Complaints Authority to implement tourist safety and assistance program in downtown Georgetown, and at select, major tourist sites. Initiate the engagement with an assessment of what are the greatest safety/security risks for tourists and where are they most prevalent in order to make evidence-based decisions*</li> <li>• Work with the MoPS and GCAA to improve the reliability of search and rescue operations</li> </ul>	<p>*DOT</p>
<b>Ministry of Public Infrastructure</b>	<p><b>Destination Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet regularly with the GTA, DOT and THAG to discuss issues, priorities and plans for the upgrade of port infrastructure and facilities that would impact both yacht, cruise and commercial traffic via air, land and water</li> <li>• Recognizing that existing visitor attractions cannot exist or succeed as standalone items, specifically identify and justify the implementation of the following priority action and investments in public infrastructure in identified tourism corridors: access roads to attractions, improved stappings and interior airstrips; appropriate, sufficient and user-friendly signage; and public amenities and conveniences in key locations. To inform destination development, collaborate with relevant public,</li> </ul>	

	<p>private and other agencies to undertake a comprehensive review of the transport sector from the standpoints of its users (resident and visiting), infrastructure (roads, airstrips, wharves and terminals etc.) and equipment (means of transport used)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore all mechanisms with the MoPI, GCAA, CJIA and ECIA for taking a very targeted approach based on the priorities of all of the stakeholder agencies for attracting more international carriers and offering more competitive airfare on select routes, including possibilities for lowering or eliminating the domestic air carrier fuel tax; collect data from domestic carriers on flight routes serviced, travelers serviced and seasonality</li> <li>• Work with the GCAA to determine the feasibility of licensing priority tourism routes (e.g., Kaieteur) on a competitive tender basis to ensure regular scheduled access; establish a structure of priority routes that would be served by regular scheduled weekly flights that consider seasonal variations; and provide the infrastructure necessary to enable aircraft to be based at the Lethem Airport to service airstrips throughout the interior</li> <li>• Determine the feasibility of offering, as a complement to private transport services, a public transport service within primary tourism circuits</li> </ul>	
<b>Ministry of Public Telecommunication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore all mechanisms for offering more affordable telephone and internet connectivity in prioritized remote hinterland and coastal destinations to enable micro-enterprise development</li> <li>• Create an enabling environment for communication technology companies to service tourism destinations and circuits that do not have internet connectivity (e.g. INet, Inmarsat, BGAN Satellite Wi-fi).</li> <li>• Create internet hotspots for visitors at lodges and in other popular tourism areas where connectivity is poor to enable visitors to use their social media reach effectively</li> <li>• Collaborate to modernize and improve systems to offer online services (e.g., payment processing)</li> </ul>	*DOT
<b>Ministry of Natural Resources</b>	<p><b>Product Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the Guyana Forestry Commission in mapping of viable nature-based and wildlife tourism and natural heritage sites, attractions, and circuits and jointly pursue funding for protection, tourism development, and management plans for sensitive sites</li> <li>• Collaborate in the development of wildlife curriculum for schools</li> <li>• Collaborate to develop legislation to protect fragile tourism sites</li> </ul>	*DOT
<b>Ministry of the Presidency (State)</b>	<p><b>Destination Management and Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secure resources and provide capacity to help the PAC implement tourism business plans, ecotourism zoning, and a competitive tendering and concessioning system, inclusive of a community revenue share mechanism all of which support the core conservation goals for protected areas and maximize the revenue opportunities to protect the biodiversity and cover PAC's operational costs within the protected areas and maximize community benefit*</li> </ul>	*DOT (policy-related implications)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with the relevant agencies via the Minister of State to create and implement a national land use plan that would support the development of sustainable community tourism product and facilities*</li> <li>• Provide training services to tourism guides and tourism businesses operating within and adjacent to protected areas to help to raise quality and sustainability standards</li> <li>• Support indigenous communities in developing and implementing visitor ready tourism product in and around protected areas</li> <li>• Lead the implementation of the licensing system for wildlife tourism activities to support the aims of the Wildlife Conservation &amp; Management Commission</li> <li>• Manage the application process and provide oversight of implementation for tourism film projects to support the EPA and ensure there is no negative impact</li> <li>• Work with relevant agencies to support climate adaptation and the adoption of green technology in the tourism sector</li> <li>• Facilitate the lease of land for investments in viable large-scale hotel projects in Guyana's coastal regions</li> </ul>	*DOT
<b>Guyana Lands and Survey Commission</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a mechanism to identify and map tourism hotspots*</li> <li>• Work with the GL&amp;SC as the key stakeholder agency, and other relevant agencies to create and implement a national land use plan that supports sustainable tourism development*</li> <li>• Support the facilitation the lease of land for tourism investments in collaboration with GO Invest</li> </ul>	*DOT (regional projects) *DOT
<b>Ministry of Communities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain open communication with the Regional Councils and Local Democratic Organizations to understand and support their communities' interests in tourism planning development*</li> <li>• Collaborate with the MoC to foster urban regeneration through the implementation of placemaking strategies starting in Georgetown</li> <li>• Work with the Bureau of Standards to support the implementation of the building standards they are developing within the tourism sector</li> </ul>	*DOT
<b>Guyana Revenue Authority</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with the GTA to foster the seamless implementation of policy incentives</li> <li>• Collaborate to clarify role in the licensing of Hotels (selling of alcohol on premises)</li> </ul>	
<b>Ministry of Public Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with MoPH to safeguard the health and safety of visitors</li> </ul>	
<b>Department of Public Information</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with leaders in media and the private sector to change the narrative about Guyana through content development and storytelling*</li> </ul>	*DOT and GTA

### **Annex 3: Infrastructure Planning and Development Priorities: 2019-2020**

**Objective:** Informed by the Guyana Tourism Strategic Action Plan, the GTA and THAG wish to work with the Ministry of Public Infrastructure (MoPI) and other relevant agencies to facilitate the prioritization of tourism infrastructure development needs.

**Timeline:** MoPI has requested a list of priorities be submitted with the CRITICAL items denoted by June 2019 for consideration for their July 2020 budget submission. They will be vetted by Patrick Thompson before they are submitted to Minister Patterson.

**Call to Action:** GTA and THAG are seeking stakeholder input on the following priorities, which have been identified by the GTA and tourism private sector.

#### **Airstrips**

- Expand the following airstrips, which are listed in order of priority:
  1. **[CRITICAL]** Kaieteur National Park, which is experiencing a 10% increase in annual visitation year on year.
  2. Wichabai Airstrip which services the following tourism enterprises: Dadanawa, Shulinab, Sand Creek, Saddle Mountain, Rupanau and Wichabai Ranch. This is particularly important for Simoni as it is their nearest access in the instance of medical emergencies. Alternatively, it will take two (2) days by road to Lethem for evacuation.
  3. Bartica Airstrip for rapid medical evacuations from the Bartica Hospital. Add runway lights to facilitate emergency evacuations.
  4. Annai, Fairview, Surama, Lethem, and Karanambu Airstrip for tourism purposes. These airstrips benefit Karanambu Lodge, Caiman House - Yupukari, Massara, Kwaimatta, Quatatta, Toka, and Simoni. Add runway lights to facilitate emergency evacuations.
- Repair the following airstrips in order of priority, which have become dangerous and have damaged equipment:
  1. Orinduik Airstrip, which provides access to the falls and receives hundreds of visitors per annum.

#### **Roads and Public Amenities**

- Improve public amenities along the Linden to Mabura Hills roadway that will be completed in 2020, and improve the road/bridge infrastructure on the Linden to Lethem highway.
  1. **[CRITICAL]** GTA and THAG to meet with Dione Amsterdam, who is responsible for stakeholder engagement, to discuss this matter
  2. **[CRITICAL]** Add rest stop facilities at the following locations: Five Corners area, Mile 58, Mabura Hills, and Kurupukari Crossing
  3. Upgrade the facilities at the Molson Creek, Guyana Suriname Crossing
  4. Include public and interpretive signage at the following locations: along the Linden - Lethem Road
- Improve public amenities along the Mahdia-Pamela Landing roadway that will be completed in 2019.

1. Add a rest stop facility at the following location: Kurupukari, Mabura,
  2. Include public and interpretive signage at the following location(s): Kurupukari, Mabura, Kaieteur
- Develop a secondary road linkage from CJIA to Georgetown.
  - Improve access to and lighting within the following tourism attractions in order of priority:
    1. The access road to Amaila Falls
    2. The access road to Karasabai
    3. Inner access roads within the environs of Timehri that lead to locations such as Jubilee Resort, South Dakota Circuit.
  - Mandate the provision of adequate, disabled persons-friendly amenities and conveniences as a prerequisite for licensing of food and beverage establishments at tourist attractions.

### **River Navigation and Stellings.**

- Work with MOPI and MARAD where applicable to improve the following:
  1. **[CRITICAL]** The stelling and related infrastructure in Georgetown to attract small ships (i.e., install a proper Fender System along the GNSC pier to protect incoming ships; improve the passenger access road at GNSC; install the appropriate Aids to Navigation at the Channel; and install proper signage in Georgetown).
  2. Rehabilitate all Essequibo River navigation aids
  3. Include a floating dinghy dock facility in the rebuilding of the Bartica Ferry
- Work with the Transport and Harbours Department within MOPI (Mrs. Merchant) to improve the stellings and bridges in the Essequibo circuit in the following prioritized locations:
  1. **[CRITICAL]** Fort Island to access Fort Zeelandia and the Dutch Heritage Museum
  2. Marshall Falls near Bartica

### **Billboards**

- Identify priority areas for tourism signage and the timeline for display (e.g., short- vs. long-term)

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