

Destinación Lake Atitlán

A Marketing and Communication Strategy, Action Plan, and Benchmarking Analysis



DESTINATION LAKE ATITLÁN

Marketing and Communication Strategy, Action Plan, and Benchmarking Analysis for the Lake Atitlán Region of Guatemala

Table of Contents

LIST OF TABLES.....	4
LIST OF FIGURES.....	4
CONSULTANT TEAM	5
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	7
RESUMEN EJECUTIVO.....	9
ACRONYMS	12
INTRODUCTION/PURPOSE.....	14
SCOPE OF WORK.....	14
THE ROAD AHEAD.....	14
METHODOLOGY.....	14
PART 1: STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT	16
1.1 SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS	16
1.2 ROLE OF SOLOLÁ SUB-COMMISSION & STRATEGIC PLAN.....	20
STRATEGIC TOURISM PLAN OF LAKE ATITLÁN	20
1.3 OTHER IMPORTANT TOURISM STAKEHOLDERS	23
PUBLIC SECTOR.....	24
PRIVATE SECTOR.....	24
CIVIL SOCIETY.....	24
COMMUNITIES.....	25
DONORS.....	25
MEDIA.....	25
TOURISTS.....	25
STAKEHOLDER GRID.....	26
1.4 GUATEMALA COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS	26
GUATEMALA AND ITS REGIONAL COMPETITORS.....	28
GUATEMALA AND ITS COMPETITIVE POSITIONING.....	30
GUATEMALA AND ITS COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGES	30
1.5 LAKE ATITLÁN HIGHLIGHTS	33
1.6 MARKET FOR GUATEMALA (INTERNATIONAL & NATIONAL).....	34
CURRENTLY IDENTIFIED TOURIST PROFILE	36
1.7 PERCEPTION ANALYSIS.....	36
EXPLORATORY SURVEY RESULTS.....	37
1.8 TOURIST SURVEYS.....	38
DEMOGRAPHICS OF SAMPLE.....	39
SURVEY RESULTS.....	39

1.9 SUMMARY OF PART 1	41
PART 2: ANALYSIS & STRATEGIC SOLUTIONS: <i>COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM</i>.....	43
2.1 WHAT IS CBT?	43
COMPARISON WITH CONVENTIONAL TOURISM	43
2.2 IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM IN LAKE ATILTÁN.....	44
2.3 EXAMPLES OF CBT IN LAKE ATITLÁN	45
2.4 ADVANCING CBT IN LAKE ATILTÁN.....	48
CBT - TOURISM MARKET SEGMENT OR A TOURISM MANAGEMENT PROCESS	48
INTRODUCING THE SAVE MARKET SEGMENT	48
2.5 CBT DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS	52
2.6 PROPOSED ACTIONS FOR DEVELOPING CBT IN LAKE ATILTÁN.....	54
CBT BROCHURE & CAPACITY BUILDING TOOLKIT.....	54
DEVELOPMENT OF S.A.V.E. MARKETS.....	55
ATITLÁN BOAT MOBILE.....	56
PEDESTRIAN FRIENDLY PANAJACHEL	57
STAY ANOTHER DAY CAMPAIGN	57
PROFESSIONAL TRAINING IN EVENT MANAGEMENT.....	58
CBT DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS	59
2.7 GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS	59
2.8 SUMMARY OF PART 2	61
PART 3: ANALYSIS & STRATEGIC SOLUTIONS: <i>MARKETING & POSITIONING OF LAKE ATITLÁN</i>	62
3.1 BRANDING AND POSITIONING	62
IMPORTANCE OF BRANDING AND POSITIONING	62
BRAND RESPONSE TO “SOUL OF THE EARTH”: GUATEMALA	62
BRANDING & POSITIONING LAKE ATITLÁN.....	62
3.2 PROPOSED ACTIONS FOR EFFECTIVE MARKETING & POSITIONING OF LAKE ATILTÁN	64
BRANDING COMPETITION	65
MARKETING DISTRIBUTION STRATEGY AND MARKETING DISTRIBUTION SCORECARD	65
KEEP LAKE ATITLÁN BEAUTIFUL CAMPAIGN	66
3.3 GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS	67
3.4 SUMMARY OF PART 3	67
PART 4: ANALYSIS & STRATEGIC SOLUTIONS: <i>CRISIS MANAGEMENT IN LAKE ATITLÁN</i>.....	69
4.1 TOURISM AND CRISES MANAGEMENT.....	69
THE CONTEXT OF CRISIS	69
RISK IN GUATEMALA.....	69
CURRENT CRISIS MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS IN GUATEMALA.....	70
4.2 CRISIS MANAGEMENT: NATURAL DISASTER AND CRIME - PREVENTION, MITIGATION AND RECOVERY	71
DISASTER PREVENTION	72
CRISIS MITIGATION	73
DESTINATION RECOVERY.....	75
4.3 PROPOSED ACTIONS FOR EFFECTIVE CRISIS MANAGEMENT IN LAKE ATILTÁN.....	78

CRISIS MANAGEMENT TOOLKIT FOR STAKEHOLDERS	78
CRISIS COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGN	79
4.4 GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS	80
4.5 SUMMARY OF PART 4	82
PART 5: ANALYSIS & STRATEGIC SOLUTIONS: <i>DEVELOPING A REGIONAL DESTINATION MANAGEMENT STRATEGY</i>	84
5.1 CREATING A REGIONAL DESTINATION MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION	84
WHAT IS DESTINATION MANAGEMENT?	84
WHAT IS A DMO?	84
STEPS TO CREATION OF A DMO	88
5.2 SYSTEM FOR MEASURING EXCELLENCE IN DESTINATIONS (SMED)	88
ADOPTING SMED FOR LAKE ATITLÁN	89
TESTING SMED IN LAKE ATITLÁN	89
RESULTS AND FINDINGS	90
5.3 PROPOSED ACTION FOR ESTABLISHING LAKE ATILTÁN AS A DESTINATION	95
LAKE ATITLÁN DESTINATION WEBSITE PORTAL	95
ADOPTING SMED FOR LAKE ATITLÁN	97
5.4 GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS	98
5.5 SUMMARY OF PART 5	98
PART 6: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS	100
6.1 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS	100
PROMOTING CBT:	100
MARKETING AND POSITIONING	100
CRISIS MANAGEMENT	100
DESTINATION MANAGEMENT	100
6.2 NEXT STEPS	100
APPENDICES	102

List of Tables

Table 1: Economic Analysis - Guatemala's Central American Neighbors	18
Table 2: Guatemala Rankings	18
Table 3: Ranking Among Latin American and Caribbean Regions.....	19
Table 4: Analysis of competing destinations' attractions	27
Table 5: Economic Impact from tourism among Central American countries	27
Table 6: Comparing Guatemala and the Region	29
Table 7: Sample Survey Responses.....	38
Table 8: Tourism Markets	48
Table 9: SAVE Categories and Benefits	49
Table 10: Lake Atitlán CBT Product Matrix.....	51
Table 11: Potential Online CBT Distribution Outlets.....	53
Table 12: DMO Roles	87
Table 13: Strengths and weakness of types of governance.....	88
Table 14: Importance and Performance Ratings for SMED Guiding Principles	90
Table 15: The Mean Scores by Stakeholder Groups.....	94
Table 16: The Mean Scores by the Municipalities of Residence	94
Table 17: ANOVA Test Results by Municipalities of Residence.....	95

List of Figures

Figure 1: Stakeholder Grid.....	26
Figure 2: Guatemala's Ranking in TTCI.....	30
Figure 3: Resplendent Quetzal,Scarlet Macaw and Toucansome of the most attractive bird species found in Guatemala	32
Figure 4: Travel Demand Within Guatemala.....	34
Figure 5: Guatemala's International Arrivals.....	35
Figure 6: Tourism Growth and Development	35
Figure 7: Distribution of surveyed visitors to Lake Atitlán	39
Figure 8: Factors Impacting Decision of Tourists to Visit Lake Atitlan.....	40
Figure 9: Importance of Factors Impacting Tourist's Decision to Visit Atitlan	40
Figure 10: Experience of Tourists with Service Products while Visiting Lake Atitlán.....	41
Figure 11: Participation Types	45
Figure 12: Lake Atitlán tourism market segments	50
Figure 13: Distribution System for Lake Atitlán CBT Products.....	54
Figure 14: Pedestrian Friendly Panajachel Map.....	57
Figure 15: Building a Strong Brand Based on Keller's (2002) CBBE Model	63
Figure 16: Local structure for mitigation strategy.....	75
Figure 17: Proposed Crisis Communication System.....	79
Figure 19: Respondents' Affiliates	91
Figure 21: Importance-Performance Grid with Principle Ratings for the Lake Atitlán.....	93
Figure 22: Proposed Structure of DMO Intranet.....	96

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Special Thanks

The consultants on this project would like to extend their sincere gratitude for the efforts and resources that USAID, Counterpart International and the Solola Commission for Tourism extended in support of this project. The technical, logistical, and knowledge support provides assisted greatly in the success of this program.

Executive Summary

This executive summary details the research, findings, and recommended actions of a team of 24 consultants from The George Washington University and Universidad del Valle de Guatemala who were commissioned by Counterpart International and funded by USAID to develop a *Marketing and Communications Strategy and Action and Benchmarking Analysis of Community Based Tourism for the Lake Atitlán region of Guatemala* for the Sololá Tourism Commission and INGUAT. This document was developed in June and July 2008 using a multi-step approach involving a preliminary research period, field-work, analysis, and actionable steps to strengthen Lake Atitlán as a competitive travel destination.

Through the preliminary research period the team negotiated terms of reference for its work with Counterpart International, formulated its methodology, identified important stakeholders, and conducted background studies for the project. Market research included an analysis of industry trends; an examination of world, regional, and in-country competitors; consumer and product research; and identification of Guatemala and Lake Atitlán's unique offerings. In addition, the team conducted an in-depth analysis of over 30 destination websites for locations within Guatemala as well as competing destinations. From this research the team was able to ascertain specific techniques the tourism industry in Lake Atitlán can use to gain a competitive edge in the region and on a global level. Additionally, the team researched public perceptions of Guatemala by conducting a survey using a convenience sample of over 200 potential tourists and scrutinizing references of Guatemala in major English newspapers from the past few years. Fact-finding during this period involved development of a risk analysis for Guatemala and studying tourism trends in Central America and Guatemala.

The preliminary research period was followed by an intensive field-work phase from June 14-29. Throughout the process the consulting team focused on identifying actionable steps toward enhanced economic and social impacts of tourism. Further, the team focused on propositions for improved product offerings with a focus on community-led development and management of products. Emphasis was placed on practices that ensure the preservation of the rich natural environment and cultural heritage found around Lake Atitlán. Over the course of the project a concerted effort was made by the team to reach out to all stakeholders including the public and private sector, civil society, local communities, international cooperation agencies, and media.

Based upon the negotiated scope of work, the team focused upon delivering actions around the following four key components:

1. A strategic positioning strategy outlining actionable steps toward improving the image and brand of lake Atitlán as a competitive tourism destination;
2. A marketing plan for Atitlán as a sustainable tourism destination targeting national and select priority international markets;
3. Development of a crisis communications strategy and basic support materials outlining responsibilities and actions to be undertaken by the tourism-related stakeholders in the Lake Atitlán region;

4. Analysis of the potential for developing community-based tourism in Lake Atitlán.

These key components are each aligned with specific strategies identified in the Tourism Strategic Plan for Lake Atitlán funded by INGUAT and IDB and presented by Grupo GDT on behalf of the Sololá Tourism Commission.

Overall findings and recommendations can be found in the full report along with detailed information, estimated budgets, sources of funding and resources for the each of the listed actions plans:

COMMUNITY BASED TOURISM

- CBT Distribution Channel
- Community Based Tourism Brochure
- CBT Capacity Building Toolkit
- Development of S.A.V.E Approach
- Low Impact Water Sports
- Professional Training in Event Management
- Pedestrian Friendly Panajachel
- Boat Excursion

DEVELOPING A REGIONAL DESTINATION MANAGEMENT (DM) STRATEGY

- Creating a Regional DM Strategy
- Website as a Marketing and Information Tool
- Webstie Optimization
- Importance/Performance Analysis

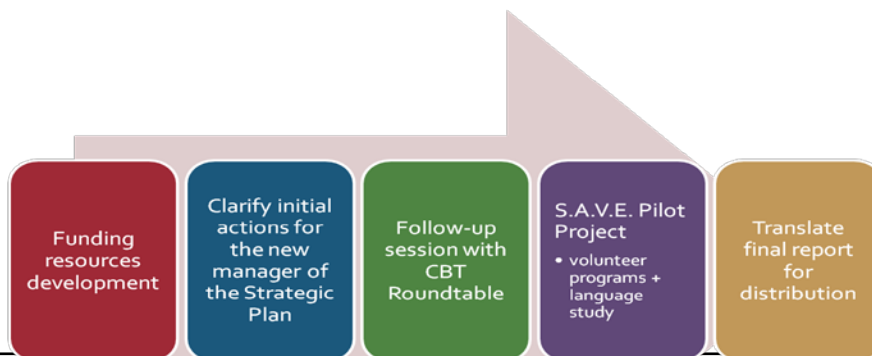
CRISIS MANAGEMENT IN LAKE ATITLÁN

- Crisis Communication Toolkit
- Campaign: “Promoting Piece of Mind”
- Crisis Management Toolkit for Stakeholders

MARKETING & POSITIONING OF LAKE ATITLÁN

- Branding Competition
- Media PR Toolkit
- Stay Another Day Campaign
- Keep Lake Atitlán Beautiful Campaign

Key next steps, as identified by the team include: funding and resource development, clarifying initial actions for the new manager of the Strategic Plan, a community based tourism roundtable follow-up session, a S.A.V.E. Pilot Project, and translation of the final report for distribution to key stakeholders in the Atitlán region.



Resumen Ejecutivo

Este documento de síntesis detalla la investigación, los resultados y las acciones de un equipo de 24 consultores provenientes de la Universidad de Washington y de la Universidad del Valle de Guatemala, quienes fueron comisionados por Counterpart International, financiado por USAID, para desarrollar una *Estrategia de Marketing y de Comunicaciones y el Análisis de Acción y Benchmarking Basado en Turismo Comunitario para la Región del Lago Atitlán en Guatemala* para la Comisión de Turismo en Sololá e INGUAT. Este plan de acción fue desarrollado en junio de 2008, utilizando un enfoque de varias fases que implicaba un período preliminar de la investigación, trabajo de campo, el análisis y pasos procesables para fortalecer el Lago Atitlán como un destino.

En el período preliminar de la investigación el equipo negoció los términos de referencia para su trabajo con Counterpart International, formularon su metodología, identificaron los actores de turismo importantes y los estudios de base para el proyecto. El estudio de mercadeo incluyó un análisis de las tendencias de la industria, una evaluación internacional, regional y local de los competidores, consumidores e investigación del producto, y lo único que ofrece Guatemala y el Lago de Atitlán. Además, el equipo realizó un profundo análisis a más de 30 sitios web de las localidades dentro de Guatemala así como destinos competitivos. De esta investigación el equipo pudo comprobar que las técnicas en la industria del turismo en el Lago Atitlán se pueden utilizar para ganar una posición competitiva en la región y a nivel global. También, el equipo investigó las percepciones públicas de Guatemala por medio de encuestas a una muestra conveniente de 200 turistas potenciales e indagando referencias a Guatemala en periódicos ingleses importantes durante los últimos años. El estudio, durante este período, implicó el desarrollo de un análisis de riesgo para Guatemala y el estudio de las tendencias del turismo en Centroamérica y Guatemala.

El período preliminar de la investigación fue seguido por una fase intensiva de trabajo de campo del 14 al 29 de junio. A través del proceso, el equipo consultor se enfocó en la identificación de pasos procesables hacia impactos económicos y sociales de turismo. De la misma forma, el equipo se centró en proposiciones para mejorar la oferta de los productos con una perspectiva en el desarrollo de la participación comunitaria y manejo de productos. El énfasis fue puesto en las prácticas que aseguran la conservación del medio ambiente natural rico y del patrimonio cultural encontrado alrededor del Lago Atitlán. Sobre el curso del proyecto, un esfuerzo concertado fue hecho por el equipo para llegar a todos los actores del turismo incluyendo el sector público y privado, sociedad civil, comunidades locales, agencias de la cooperación internacional y medios.

Basado sobre el alcance negociado del trabajo, el equipo se enfocó a entregar las acciones alrededor de cuatro componentes clave:

1. Estrategia de Posicionamiento que resume los pasos procesables hacia la mejora de la imagen y la marca del Lago Atitlán como un destino competitivo en el turismo.
2. Plan de Mercadeo para Atitlán como un Destino Sostenible de Turismo que se concentra en los mercados nacionales e internacionales como prioritarios.

3. Estrategia para el Desarrollo de las Comunicaciones de Crisis y Materias Básicas de Apoyo que resumen las responsabilidades y acciones de los actores relacionados al turismo en la región del Lago Atitlán.
4. Análisis del Potencial para el Desarrollo del Turismo Basado en la Comunidad en el Lago Atitlán.

Cada uno de estos componentes claves se alinea con estrategias específicas que han sido identificadas en el Plan Estratégico del Turismo para el Lago Atitlán financiado por INGUAT y el BID y presentado por el Grupo GDT a nombre de la Comisión de Turismo de Sololá.

Las investigaciones y recomendaciones que encontramos a lo largo del reporte contienen información detallada, presupuestos detallados, fuentes de investigación y recursos para cada una de las acciones

DESARROLLO DEL MANEJO ESTRATÉGICO PARA EL DESTINO REGIONAL

- Creación de un destino regional
- Manejo estratégico del destino
- Página web como herramienta de mercadeo e información
- Optimización de la página web
- Importancia de análisis

MERCADEO Y POSICIONAMIENTO DEL LAGO ATITLÁN

- Competencia para crear una marca
- Caja de herramientas para mediaPR
- Media PR Toolkit
- Campaña “Quedate un día más”
- Campaña “ Mantén el Lago de Atitlán bello”

MANEJO DE CRISIS EN EL LAGO DE ATITLÁN

- Caja de herramientas para la comunicación de crisis
- Campaña “ Promover la paz mental”
- Caja de herramientas para los actores para el manejo de crisis

TURISMO BASADO EN LA COMUNIDAD

- Canal de distribución para el turismo basado en la comunidad (TBC)
- Folleto para el turismo basado en la comunidad
- Capacidad para la elaboración de herramientas para el turismo basado en la comunidad
- Acercamiento en el desarrollo del turismo científico, académico, voluntario y educativo
- Excursiones en bote
- Bajo impacto en los deportes acuáticos
- Entrenamiento profesional para el

listadas en el plan:

Los pasos clave a seguir, identificados por el equipo de trabajo son los siguientes: Desarrollo de investigación y recursos, aclarar las acciones iniciales para el nuevo administrador del Plan Estratégico, la mesa de turismo comunitario, turismo científico, académico, voluntario y educativo (S.A.V.E. por su significado en inglés). Es un proyecto piloto y traducido del reporte final para tribuirlo a los actores interesados en la actividad turística de la región de Atitlán.



Acronyms

ACE	Adventure, Community, and Ecotourism Program
A.I.D.A.	Attention, Interest, Desire, Action
AMSCLAE	Lake Atitlán Basin Sustainable Management Authority
ANACAFE	National Coffee Association
ANOVA	An Analysis of Variance
APOCS	Sololá Association of Organic Coffee Producers
ASISTUR	Tourism Assistance Office
ASLAT	Lightermen of San Pedro Association
CAMTUR	Chamber of Tourism
CAT	Local Tourism Community
CBT	Community Based Tourism
CDM	Comprehensive Disaster Management
CED	World Center of Excellence for Destinations
CEDA	Disaster Emergency Response Agency
COE	Commission for Operation in Emergencies
CONAP	Council for Protected Areas
CONRED	The National Organization for Reducing Emergencies
CRED	Center for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters
DMO	Destination Management Organization
ECC	Emergency Coordinating Committee
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GTB	Ghana Tourist Board
GW	The George Washington University
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HR	Human Resources
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
INGUAT	Instituto Guatemalteco de Turismo (National Tourism Administration)
IPA	Importance-Performance Analysis

ISDR	International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
LARA	The Lake Atitlán Resort Association
MARN	Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources
NATR	North Andaman Tsunami Relief
NDMO	National Disaster Management Organization
NTA	National Tourism Authority
NTO	National Tourism Organization
OFDA	Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance
PR	Public Relations
PROLAGO	Association for the Environmental Protection of Lake Atitlán
RTO	Regional Tourism Organization
S.A.V.E.	Scientific, Academic, Volunteer, Education
SMED	System for Measuring Excellence in Destinations
TAG	Tourism Action Group
T&T	Travel and Tourism
TEOC	Tourism Emergency Operating Center
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNEP	United Nations Environment Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UVG	University Del Valle Altiplano
WEF	World Economic Forum
WHO	World Health Organization
WTTC	World Travel & Tourism Council

Introduction/Purpose

Scope of Work

The scope of work that was negotiated between The George Washington University (GW) and Universidad del Valle de Guatemala (UVG) Consulting Team and the Alianza para el Turismo Comunitario Project led by Counterpart International (CPI) and funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) identified four main areas of work to be addressed during the consulting engagement. The consulting project was envisioned by the clients as an opportunity to further elaborate upon and create implementation strategies for the Strategic Development Plan for Lake Atitlán embraced by the Sololá Tourism Sub-commission.

The tasks initially identified and negotiated between the GW/UVG consultant team and the client were as follows:

- Identify a positioning strategy to improve the image and brand of Lake Atitlán as a tourism destination
- Develop implementation actions for the strategic plan developed by the Sololá Sub-commission
- Raise awareness and provide training tools for local agents regarding Community-based Tourism, and
- Establish a crisis communication strategy and supporting materials.

This final report reflects the tasks identified in the scope of work and tackled by the consultants before, during, and after conducting field work at the destination. During the two weeks of field work however, it became evident that, in addition to the need to adequately position and improve the image of Lake Atitlán, there is a significant need for coordination of individual efforts of organizations involved in the promotion and marketing of the destination. This need led to the development of a recommendation to establish a regional Destination Management Organization (DMO). The inclusion of actions towards the establishment of a regional DMO for Lake Atitlán was discussed with the client and included as an additional area of work to be addressed during this assignment.

The Road Ahead

Based on preliminary research and extensive discussions with active stakeholders the consultant team identified realistic opportunities to enhance local sustainable tourism by strengthening destination management efforts and maximizing benefits of community-based tourism. The proposed actions will help realize these opportunities by improving market accessibility, building on security and crisis management, and molding the image of Lake Atitlán as a safe, prepared, and vibrant destination with an intimate relationship to nature, cultural heritage, and a sense of adventure culminating in an unforgettable experience for the tourist.

Methodology

The consulting project for the Lake Atitlán region of Guatemala followed a strategic and well-planned, multi-step process:

▪ **Team Formation**

The consulting team, led by Dr. Donald Hawkins, Mr. Rony Mejia and Ms. Milena Nikolova comprises of 16 consultants from The George Washington University, concentrating in the fields of Tourism Administration, Business Administration, and International Affairs, alongside 8 consultants from Universidad del Valle de Guatemala, majoring in Ecotourism. The consultants comprise a total of 220 years of professional training and experience.

▪ **Background Research**

The consultants conducted more than 1,000 hours of background research on Lake Atitlán, sustainable tourism best practices, marketing strategies, and administered an online survey with 209 respondents to gather information about perceptions of Guatemala.

▪ **Field Surveys**

With the purpose of understanding stakeholder positions better, a field survey was carried out in the Lake Atitlán region. 180 surveys of tour operators, hotels, other businesses and tourists were conducted in the communities around the lake to comprehend current issues in the region.

▪ **Field Interviews**

During the consulting process, the GW/UVG team organized 30 interviews with stakeholders to understand current actions and potential opportunities for advancing community-based tourism in the Lake Atitlán region.

▪ **Strategic Formulation and Planning**

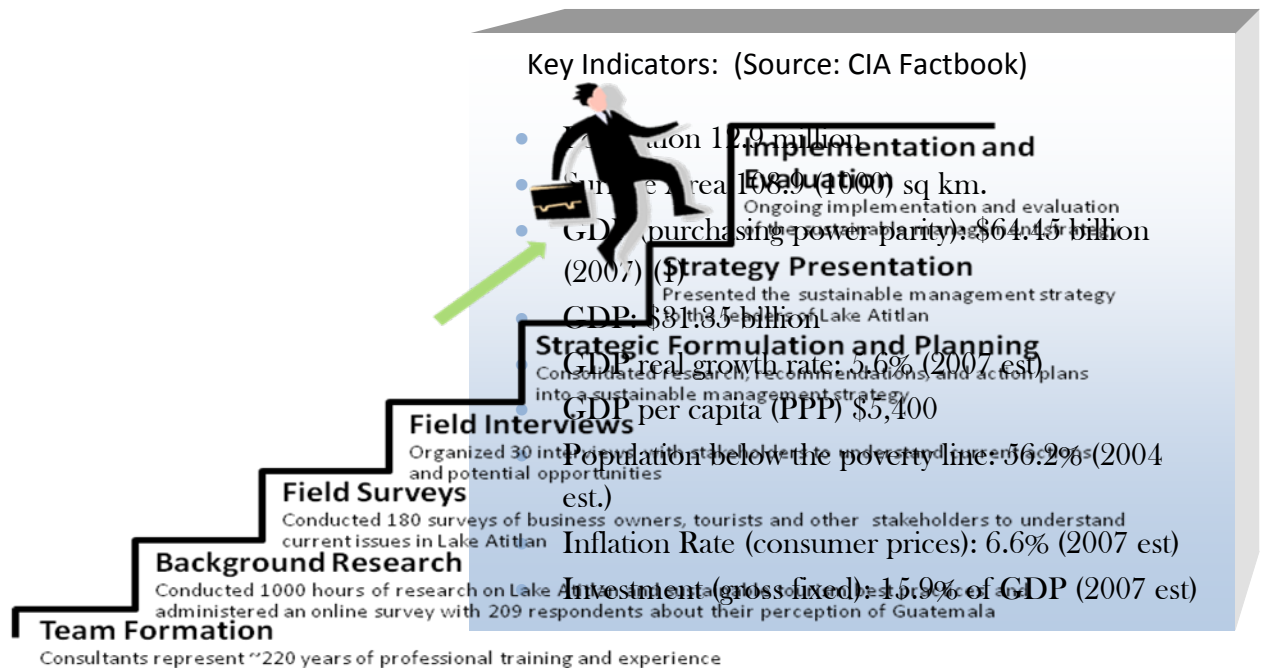
To consolidate the relevant research, surveys, interviews, recommendations and action plans into a sustainable management strategy, the consultant team engaged in an in-depth strategic planning process.

▪ **Strategic Presentation**

The presentation of the sustainable management strategy was delivered to the leaders and stakeholders of the Lake Atitlán region as well as to stakeholder in the tourism industry in Guatemala City. The presentation will also be shared with stakeholders in the United States in September 2008 in order to strengthen the awareness and recognition of community-based tourism.

▪ **Implementation and Evaluation**

An ongoing implementation and evaluation of the sustainable management strategy is currently underway, in order to monitor the effects and outcomes of the consulting project.



PART 1: STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT

1.1 Situational Analysis

Tourism can play an important role in advancing the economic status of a country going through social and economic transition. The sector crosscuts multiple industries and involves numerous stakeholders. In formulating this project’s recommended strategy, the consulting team considered the region’s history, as well as current challenges facing tourism and development in general. The team worked towards a strategy based on the competitive advantage of the Lake Atitlán region.

About Guatemala

Bordered by Mexico, Belize, Honduras, and El Salvador, Guatemala is the most populous country in Central America and a place of dramatic contrasts. The political system is a Presidential Representative Democracy with a multi-party system (CIA World Factbook, 2008). Executive power is exercised by the government, legislative power lies in the government and the Congress of the Republic (158 seats) and the judiciary is independent (CIA World Factbook, 2008). The country boasts an abundance of natural resources and a relatively young population (CIA World Factbook, 2008).



Historical Legacy

During the first millennium A.D. the Mayan civilization flourished in Guatemala and the surrounding regions (CIA World Factbook, 2008). The Colonial Period (1524 - 1821) left Guatemala with a legacy of a rigidly stratified society, with European-born Spaniards at the top, and the Mayan indigenous population at the bottom (Lonely Planet, 2007). Guatemala won its independence from Spain in 1821. In the second half of the 20th century, the country went through turmoil, with a variety of military and civilian governments, and a painful 36-year guerrilla war, which left more than 100,000 dead and created an estimated 1 million refugees (Lonely Planet, 2007).

Culture: Living Maya

Stretching from modern Honduras, through Guatemala, Belize, and Mexico, the Mayan civilization is often noted as the most brilliant in prehistoric American (Lonely Planet, 2007). Development of independent city-states and heavy city buildings characterize the Classic Period of Mesoamerican civilization. The history of a civilization that built the centers of Chichen-Itza, Palenque, Tulum, and Tikal are more evident in Guatemala than in any other Central American country. Mayan history is especially evident in rural areas. Traditional dress and local markets distinguish various destinations (Aventouras, n.d.). The patterns and embroidered motifs in clothing indicate in which village the weaver lives (Aventouras, n.d.).

Guatemala boasts an indigenous population of 65%, the highest percentage of all its regional neighbors. While the official language of Guatemala is Spanish, in rural areas people speak one or more of the 23 recognized indigenous languages, including Quiche and Kekchi.

Economic Situation

Guatemala is among the ten poorest countries in Latin America. The main agricultural products are coffee, sugar, and bananas, accounting for about one-tenth of GDP, two fifth of exports, and half of the labor force (CIA World Factbook, 2008). The GDP per capita is \$5,000. The service sector is the largest component of the GDP at 58.7%, followed by agriculture (CIA World Factbook, 2008). Tourism is repeatedly referred to as a continuously increasing source of revenues. On July 1, 2006, Guatemala joined the Central American Free Trade Agreement between the US and other Central American countries. This has helped spur investment, especially in the export sector (Amnesty International, 2006). The below chart is an economic analysis of how Guatemala measures up against its Central American Neighbors.

TABLE 1: ECONOMIC ANALYSIS - GUATEMALA'S CENTRAL AMERICAN NEIGHBORS

	Total Area (km sq.)	Coastline (km)	Population	GDP (PPP) \$ Billion	GDP Growth Rate	Inflation % Increase	Unemp. %
Guatemala	108,890	400	13,002,206	\$67.45	5.6%	6.6%	3.2%
Belize	22,966	386	301,270	\$2.34	3.0%	2.8%	9.4%
Costa Rica	51,100	1,290	4,195,914	\$55.95	6.1%	9.3%	5.5%
El Salvador	21,040	307	7,066,403	\$35.97	4.7%	4.9%	6.6%
Honduras	112,090	820	7,639,327	\$24.69	6.0%	6.4%	27.8%
Nicaragua	129,494	910	5,785,846	\$18.17	2.9%	9.8%	5.6%
Panama	78,200	2,490	3,292,693	\$29.14	7.8%	5.1%	7.2%

SOURCE: CIA FACTBOOK

Every year the World Bank ranks the ease of doing business in world economies. The index averages countries' percentile rankings on 10 topics, made up of a variety of indicators, giving equal weight to each topic (Doing Business Report, 2008). Topics include issues such as the ease of starting a business, dealing with licenses, employing workers, registering property, paying taxes, enforcing contracts, and a number of others. A high ranking on the doing business index means the regulatory environment is conducive to the operations of business. In 2007, Guatemala was ranked 114 out of 178 countries. It ranked especially low in dealing with licenses, scoring 167 out of 178, right next to Tajikistan and Albania. Table 2 illustrates how Guatemala stacks up against its Central American neighbors. Belize ranks the highest out of all the countries, while Honduras ranks the lowest. Out of seven countries, Guatemala is 5th.

TABLE 2: GUATEMALA RANKINGS

Ease of Doing Business Rank	Starting a Business	Dealing with Licenses	Employin g Workers	Registerin g Property	Gettin g Credit	Protecting Investors	Paying Taxes	Trading Across Borders	Enforcing Contracts	Closing a Business

114	128	167	105	23	68	122	116	116	98	86
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SOURCE: 2007 WORLD BANK DOING BUSINESS REPORT

TABLE 3: RANKING AMONG LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN REGIONS

Country	Overall Ranking (1-178)	Ranking Among Latin American and Caribbean Region (1-31)
Guatemala	114	23
Belize	59	8
Costa Rica	115	24
El Salvador	69	14
Honduras	121	25
Nicaragua	93	17
Panama	65	11

SOURCE: 2007 WORLD BANK DOING BUSINESS REPORT

Economic and Development Challenges

The distribution of income remains unequal with about 56% of the population below the poverty line (CIA World Factbook, 2008). The unemployment rate is at 3.2%. The ranking for Doing Business (2008) reveals the challenges that a tourism entity may face in Guatemala. Tourism is an intensive human resource business with high capital investments but the country currently ranks low in employing workers and protecting investors. As the government moves forward with reforms, it needs to consider establishing a regulatory framework that would encourage business development.

Like many developing countries, Guatemala faces a number of development challenges. The UN Development Index 2007/2008 (2007) ranks Guatemala 118th pointing to challenges that include poverty, illiteracy, lack of education and medical facilities in rural areas (Lonely Planet, 2007). The government strives to provide better services for their citizens, especially curtailing crime. Poverty as well as unequal distribution of income, resources, and opportunities are road blocks to an improved business climate to attract more private investment (WEF, 2008). Securing revenues to finance public expenditure for health, rural infrastructure, and education is the focus of the new government (WEF, 2008). Tourism is seen as one of the major factors that will accelerate broad-based economic growth and poverty reduction (WEF, 2008). The government of Guatemala is focusing on increasing legitimacy, transparency, and efficiency of public institutions, investing in human capital, and promoting more inclusive trade and private sector-led growth (WEF, 2008).

Diaspora

Guatemala is the top recipient of remittances in Central America, with an estimated 1 million of its population living abroad, mostly in the United States. Remittances account for a primary source of foreign income, equivalent to nearly two-thirds of exports - more than the combined value of exports and tourism (CIA World Factbook, 2008). The Guatemalan diaspora is an important segment of the market worth paying attention to in developing tourism marketing plans.

1.2 Role of Sololá Sub-Commission & Strategic Plan

Tourism Sub-commission of Sololá (Subcomisión de Turismo de Sololá)

The mission of the Tourism Sub-commission of Sololá's is to manage, coordinate and support the activities and efforts of the private and public sectors, as well as international cooperation organizations, geared at developing tourism in the Department of Sololá. The Sub-commission is composed of volunteer members who have been appointed to help redirect current tourism development in the region. Additionally, it is directly in charge of the implementation of the Plan Strategic Plan for Lake Atitlán. The Sub-commission, with the financial support of INGUAT, has hired a manager who will be responsible for implementing the Tourism Plan. The newly-hired manager is expected to begin with the appointment in July 2008.

Fieldwork interviews and consultations conducted as part of this project established some gaps in the perceptions for the role and impact of the sub-commission among local stakeholders. These are discussed and addressed in the recommendations section of this report

Strategic Tourism Plan of Lake Atitlán

The Strategic Tourism Plan for Lake Atitlán was created as a result of a project supported by Instituto Guatemalteco de Turismo (INGUAT) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB). The project, which contemplates the creation of a strategic tourism plan to promote a viable sustainable development and quality model for stimulating the tourism sector of Lake Atitlán, was completed in September 2007.

The plan has established two missions for Lake Atitlán.

Mission 1:

The tourism associations of Lake Atitlán with the participation of INGUAT as the governing institution for tourism in Guatemala commit to coordinate activity between public-private action and the participation of the civil society in the tourism, to consolidate and to fortify sustainable tourist development and to position this region as a first class tourism destination.

Mission 2:

To become a first class tourism destination management of tourism space (land use), suitable regulations, protection of the cultural and natural resources, the promotion and development of new products and markets, the improvement of the quality of services, promotion of tourism and the qualification and information of the resident communities must be pursued.

Additionally the Plan has established three visions as follows:

Vision 1:

In 2010, tourism will represent the essential element of the economic development of Lake Atitlán and its surroundings, will have become the main drive for improvement in the quality of life of its citizens, will have contributed in a significant manner to accomplish development of the area, while preserving the region's natural and cultural resources.

Vision 2:

The businesses located in the region will develop an appropriate infrastructure, strengthened by managerial productive processes and quality services offered, available human resources with the qualifications and necessary technical capacity and will have a greater degree of conscience regarding conservation and protection of the environment.

Vision 3:

Lake Atitlán will be recognized as a competitive destination nationally, regionally and internationally and will have managed to transmit an appropriate image to the specialized segments that make up the tourism demand through suitable promotion and commercialization of Atitlán's tourism products leading to its consolidation as a first class destination.

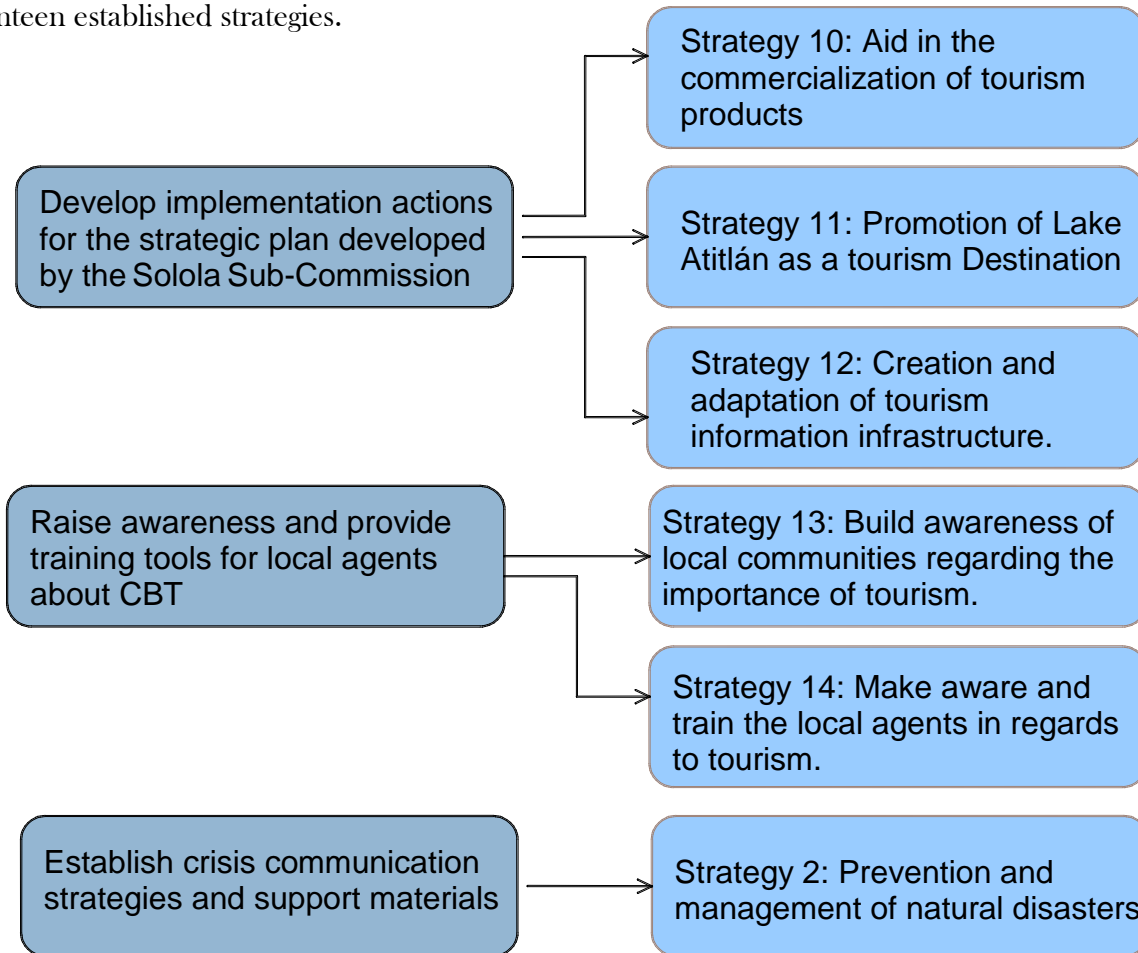
As suggested in the document itself, the total cost for implementation of the Strategic Tourism Plan of Lake Atitlán was estimated at three million US dollars. At the inset of this consulting project a limited amount of initiatives had been undertaken in accordance with the strategies stipulated by the plan. Among the specific actions taken towards the implementation was only an Image workshop organized by the Sub-commission and held in Panajachel in September 2007. The results of the image workshop were incorporated in the ideas for creating a brand for Destination Atitlán.

The Plan also created 17 focus strategies listed below:

1. Management and Development of regions with tourism aptitudes.
2. Prevention and Management of Natural Disasters.
3. Improvement of the Ease of Access to the Destination.
4. Creating added value to tourism attractions and resources.
5. Create a supply of activities aimed at specialized tourism segments.
6. Provide recreational equipments integrated to the surroundings
7. Beautification of landscape surrounding urban areas.
8. Cooperation between of natural and cultural resources management and conservation and the interest of tourism.
9. Creation of the tourism brand for Lake Atitlán linked to the Guatemalan National Tourism Brand.

10. Aid in the commercialization of tourism products
11. Promotion of Lake Atitlán as a tourism Destination.
12. Creation and adaptation of tourism information infrastructure.
13. Build awareness of local communities concerning the importance of tourism.
14. Build awareness and train the local agents in regards to tourism.
15. Training of human resources linked to the rendering of tourism services
16. Institutional strengthening of Tourism.
17. Monitoring and evaluation of the Plan

As illustrated below, the scope of work of this consulting project is directly linked to seven of the seventeen established strategies.



1.3 Other Important Tourism Stakeholders

There are six major categories of stakeholders including the public sector, private sector, communities, civil society, donors and media. Each sector is comprised of entities that play key roles in the image and positioning of tourism in the region. In order to avoid the risks of not involving any of the sectors in the consultative process and the promotion of tourism in Lake Atitlán, the GW/UVG consulting team carefully analyzed the current stakeholder networks. The sectors have differing degrees of power within

their respective categories. Influence, power and interest play a role in the development of social networks. Detailed descriptions of stakeholders within the 6 major groups can be found in Appendix 1.

Public Sector

The public sector has an important role in growing Guatemala's tourism sector and particularly tourism in Lake Atitlán. It is the governing force that determines and enforces policy thus guiding the actions of its constituents. It represents Guatemala on a global scale and helps project the image of the country to potential tourists around the world.

Private Sector

The private sector consists of large and small businesses whose main motivation is profit. Since tourism is a private-sector-led industry the success of businesses could extend beyond themselves to the broad community. Small and large tourism businesses play a key role in the creation of Guatemala's image and enhancement of its tourism product portfolio. The businesses that are part of the distribution channel of the tourism industry within the region include hotels, restaurants, transportation, travel agencies, tour operators, merchants, handicraft artisans, and others.

Hotels, restaurants and transportation operators provide services that meet the basic needs of tourists. Without accommodation, food and a means of getting to a destination, the location is not a viable option for a tourist to stay for a long period of time. It is important to engage these stakeholders in strategic planning and destination management processes as their functions support the image projected by the entire tourism sectors. Travel agencies provide access and information to tourists. They are intermediaries that enhance the image of the destination and can steer the tourist to make decisions throughout their trip.

Tour operators may not be used by every tourist, but are important contributors to the experience and memories that travelers collect at the destination. Tour operators can be from within the Lake Atitlán area or from the greater region as many destinations within Guatemala are combined together in various packages.

Merchants and their suppliers such as the local artisans provide tangible symbolic objects to represent the image of the area that a tourist takes home and shares with other potential travelers. Finally, associations such as Friends of the Lake, The Lake Atitlán Resort Association and Cojolyá, Mayan Women Weavers provide standardization and advocacy for the differing areas of the private sector. Collectively associations strive to provide a positive image for the region as a whole and promote tourism through their membership.

Civil Society

Civil society organizations give communities a voice in their future by serving community needs, promoting partnership and investment in community development, fostering civic engagement and advocacy for policy reform. Civil society includes NGO's and academic institutions. Among the many important for tourism NGO's and academic institutions in Guatemala are the Guatemala Community Tourism Alliance, Guatemala Sustainable Forestry Alliance, PROLAGO and the University del Valle Altiplano.

Communities

The community stakeholders include the local residents and expatriates. The local residents of Lake Atitlán are comprised of three major ethnic groups - T'zutujil, K'iche', and Caqchikel. The T'zutujil are agrarian, growing corn, beans, and squash and also known for keeping a few domestic animals such as sheep, pigs, and chickens. The K'iche' are one of the largest surviving Maya groups and their language is the widely used in the Indian population. Conquered by the K'iche' Maya in the fifteenth century, the Caqchikel allied themselves with the Spanish in the 1520s to retaliate against them. The Caqchikel lost much of their lands, and many became agricultural laborers. Political repression caused many to leave Guatemala for Mexico and the United States in the 1970s and 1980s. (Every Culture, 2007).

Expatriates residing in the Lake Atitlán region have a viable presence. They come from different countries including the US, Holland, Germany and France and have set up residence in Guatemala for various reasons. They serve as business owners, teachers, volunteers and retirees and whose age range is from their twenties to eighties (Finewood, 2002). Expatriates with their diverse backgrounds can provide resources to the elevation of the regions image. They are also important stakeholders to consider because their incentives for being a part of the community may differ from the native residents.

Donors

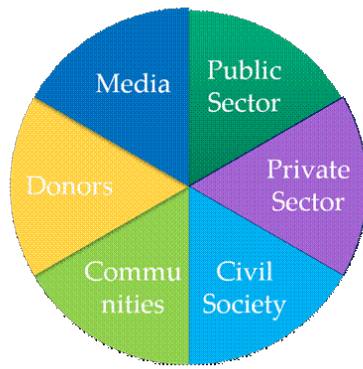
Donors provide the financial support to sustain and develop tourism in developing areas such as Lake Atitlán and the country as a whole. Examples of donors in Guatemala are USAID, IADB, Foundation for Conservation in Guatemala and American Electric Power Foundation. Their interests may be on a grander scale than for tourism alone, but their contributions to economic development and the betterment of communities both directly and indirectly impacts tourism. In many cases donor resources are managed by local or international organizations, which commit to implementing specific projects. A good example is the client that initiated the current consulting program - the Guatemalan office of Counterpart International implementing the USAID-funded Alianza para el Turismo Comunitario Project.

Media

The media is a key player in communicating and portraying the image of Guatemala and Lake Atitlán on national and international level. Through TV, radio, print and the Internet the projection of a destination can be negatively and positively impacted by what is communicated to the general public. It is important for the media to be included in stakeholder engagements in order to ensure dissemination of proper and correct information. Negative news of the destination can take away potential tourism dollars and thus pose a risk for the tourism community.

Tourists

Tourists are obvious stakeholders since they are the customers a destination is trying to attract and serve. They provide economic growth by spending their money at the destination and perpetuate the perception of tourism offered in the region through their experience via conversation, blogs and reviews.

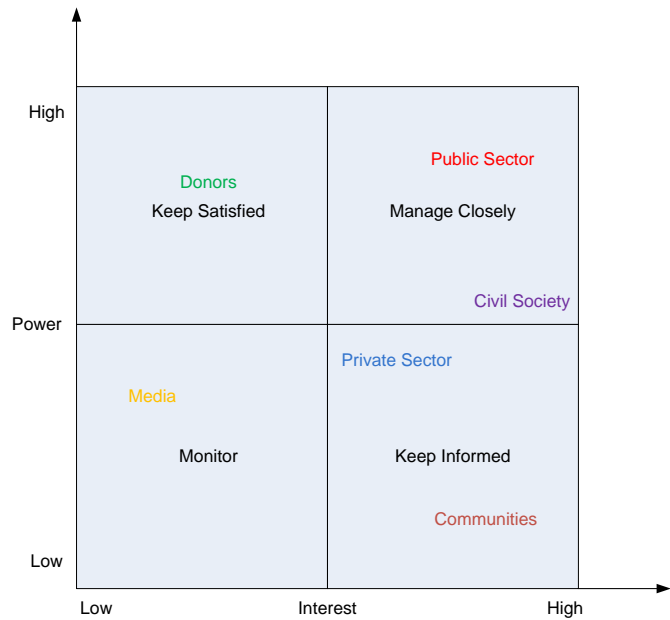


- Identify Risks
- Assess Influence and Interest
- Determine Power Dynamics
- Identify Impacts – Benefits/Conflicts
- Identify Networks
- Evaluate Links
- Recommend Potential Strategies

Stakeholder Grid

The stakeholder grid below shows the strategic positioning of the identified categories of stakeholders. Depending on where the stakeholder falls within the grid, future efforts advancing tourism in the lake Atitlan region should take into account the level of power and interest each stakeholder has. With that assessment specific actions in the future could be taken to keep the stakeholder satisfied, manage closely, monitor or keep informed.

FIGURE 1: STAKEHOLDER GRID



1.4 Guatemala Competitive Analysis

Guatemala is surrounded by countries committed to developing tourism with offerings similar to its own. Despite this competition Guatemala has done well attracting tourists and is well-positioned to be the regional leader in the future. Currently, only Costa Rica attracts more international tourists. In terms of economic impacts of tourism however, some of the countries in the region have reached much higher employment and GDP rates.

TABLE 4: ANALYSIS OF COMPETING DESTINATIONS' ATTRACTIONS

Country	Archeology and Culture	Sea and Sun	Ecotourism and Adventure	Shopping	Business
Guatemala	Yes		Yes		
Belize		Yes	Yes		
Costa Rica		Yes	Yes		
El Salvador					
Honduras	Yes	Yes			Yes
Nicaragua	Yes	Yes	Yes		
Panama		Yes		Yes	Yes

TABLE 5: ECONOMIC IMPACT FROM TOURISM AMONG CENTRAL AMERICAN COUNTRIES

Country	% of Gross Domestic Product (2007)	% of Employment from tourism (2007)	International Tourist Arrivals (2005)
Guatemala	6.8	5.9	1,360,000
Belize	26.4	26.6	237,000
Costa Rica	13.5	13.1	1,453,000
El Salvador	9.1		1,154,000
Honduras	9.3	7.65	754,000
Nicaragua	6	5.1	
Panama	12.1	11.6	754,000

Guatemala and its Regional Competitors

Tourists are attracted to Guatemala for its ancient and living Mayan culture, historical colonial cities, and diverse natural landscapes that include volcanoes, jungles, mountains, and lakes. It is a very popular destination for budget travelers and is considered an excellent location for learning Spanish. The most visited destinations within the country are the colonial city of Antigua, the Lake Atitlán region, Guatemala City, the famous market town of Chichicastenango and the ancient ruins of Tikal.

According to the UNWTO (2006) in 2005 Guatemala ranks 76th in the world for international tourist arrivals with 1.36 million. Only Costa Rica ranked higher in the region. The contribution of travel and tourism to GDP in 2007 was 6.8% and is expected to rise to 7.1% in 2008 (WTTC, 2008). At the present time the contribution from the tourism economy comprises to overall employment rates of just 5.9% (WTTC, 2008). Some of the political challenges that the country has experienced in the past have also stunted the growth of tourism industry and its economic importance.

Belize is a very successful tourism destination with attractions to satisfy all types of tourist. Belize offers pristine beaches, world renowned scuba diving, rainforests, Mayan ruins, African influence and an incredibly diverse population. Belize has been free of both political strife and natural disasters, which adds perceptions for safety to its attractiveness. Surprisingly, 2005 statistics showed that Belize only saw 237,000 tourists giving it a ranking of 131 in the world for international tourist arrivals (UNWTO, 2006). Belize is expected to derive 26.4% of its GDP from the travel and tourism economy in 2008, which will account for 26.6% of overall employment (WTTC, 2008). All of these factors make Belize one of the most successful tourism destinations in the Central American region.

Costa Rica is one of the worldwide tourism leaders and is considered a model for ecotourism development. The country's primary draw is its wealth of natural attractions, including tropical rain and cloud forests, active volcanoes, pristine beaches, national parks, mountain ranges. The country boasts twenty natural parks and 8 biological reserves; Costa Rica's tropical forests are home to 1,500 species of trees and 850 species of birds. Like Belize and unlike the rest of Central America, the country has experienced long-lasting political stability. In 2005 Costa Rica saw the arrival of 1,453 million (UNWTO, 2005) tourists ranking them 72nd in the world for international tourist arrivals (UNWTO, 2006). In 2008 the travel and tourism industry in Costa Rica is expected to account for 13.5 % of the country's GDP and for 13.1% of overall employment (WTTC, 2008).

El Salvador like Guatemala, has beautiful mountains and volcanoes while sporting a pristine coastline. Unfortunately this small and densely populated country has been home to several dictatorships and weak governments resulting in an unstable economic environment and poverty. Tourism is beginning to emerge as an important economic sector though, compared to other countries in the region, it is still in its infancy. According to UNWTO (UNWTO, 2006) in 2005 El Salvador ranked 81st in the world for international tourist arrivals with 1.154 million tourists. According to WTTC (2008) its contribution in 2008 is expected to be 9.1% of the country's GDP but is expected to decrease over the coming decade.

Honduras, despite its turbulent political history, has been increasingly successful in attracting tourists. Honduras offers rich culture, the archeological ruins of Coban, world-renowned diving in the Bay Islands, beautiful beaches and stunning natural landscapes. Honduras has for the most part improved its once tarnished image but still struggles with high crime rates, particularly in the major cities of Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula as well as La Ceiba, the coastal port town delivering travelers to the Bay Islands. Honduras lags behind Guatemala in regard to international tourist arrivals. According to the UNWTO (2006) in 2005 the country saw 754,000 tourists. Tourism is expected to contribute 9.3% to the Gross Domestic Product and account for 7.65 of total employment in 2008 (WTTC, 2008).

Nicaragua, the largest of the Central American countries, has had a very tumultuous recent history, much like its neighbors Guatemala and El Salvador. Similar to these two countries, Nicaragua offers beautiful natural landscapes, volcanoes, islands, premier scuba diving, a rich history and vibrant culture. Though it has recovered from political instability, its economy is still troubled and tourism remains underdeveloped. Tourism contributes only 6% of the country's GDP and accounts for just 5.1% of employment (WTTC, 2008).

Panama offers one thing that none of the other countries in the region can: a cosmopolitan city with great shopping and a world-renowned water canal. The country's most well known attraction is the Panama Canal although its tourism assets include much more: beautiful beaches, dazzling coral reefs, stunning variety of bird species and other natural wonders. In 2005 Panama ranked 99th in the world based on international tourist arrivals (UNWTO, 2006). According to the UNWTO (2006) in 2005 the country had 754,000 visitors. Panama gets a healthy contribution from the tourism sector accounting for approximately 12.1% of the GDP and 11.6% of total employment (WTTC, 2008).

TABLE 6: COMPARING GUATEMALA AND THE REGION

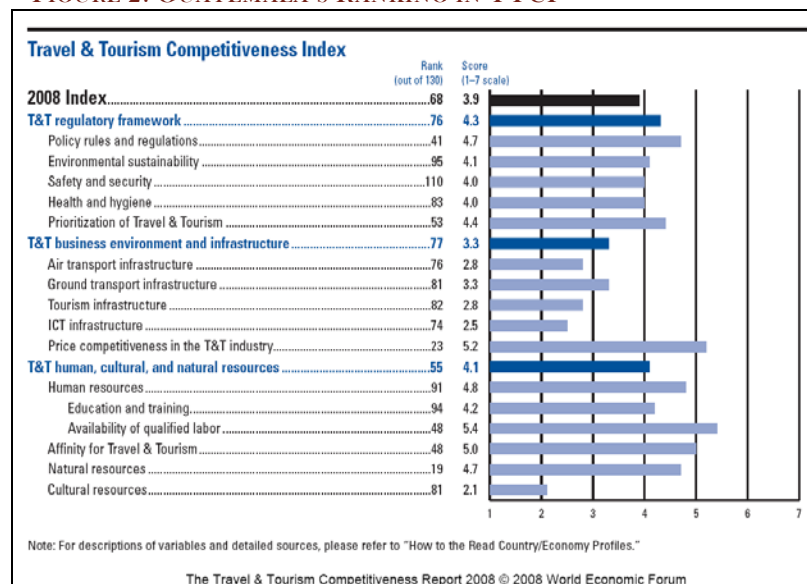
	Total Visitor Arrivals (in thousands) for 2006	Air Arrivals as % of Total Arrivals 2006	Leisure % of Visitors 2006	Business % of Visitors 2006	Other % of Visitors 2006	Expected% of Employment from Tourism as of 2008	Travel & Tourism Growth Expected for 2008	Tourism as % of Total GDP Expected for 2008
Guatemala	1,502	33	44	21	35	5.9	2.8	6.8
Belize	247	73	95	5	0	26.6	1.0	20.8
Costa Rica	1,725	71	N/A	N/A	N/A	13.1	1.2	13.5
El Salvador	1,138	30	29	26	45	7.9	0.1	9.1
Honduras	739	48	54	18	28	7.65	2.4	9.3
Nicaragua	773	34	74	17	9	5.1	5.4	6.5
Panama	843	80	44	29	27	11.6	1.4	12.1

Guatemala and its Competitive Positioning

Guatemala, like all other Central American countries, is basking in the benefits of tourism. According to the World Economic Forum (WEF) in 2006 the population of Guatemala was 12.9 million, earning a GDP of 30.3 with an overall GDP growth of 4.9%. Based on numerous factors such as performance, natural resources and economy, competitively Guatemala is ranked 64th out of 130 countries, which means that it has ample opportunity for growth and development. Three areas in which Guatemala ranks high are natural resources, ranked 19th; price competitiveness of the travel and tourism (T&T) industry, ranked 23rd; and T&T government expenditure, ranked 38th. All areas that Guatemala has succeeded in are important in increasing tourism demand within the country.

In the recently published Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index (TTCI) WEF identified three key areas related to tourism in which Guatemala should try to improve its performance: safety and security, quality of road infrastructure, and environmental sustainability (WEF, 2008). There are other key attributes that rank lower than the three mentioned above, however, these three are extremely important to the growth of tourism and interest of international travelers. Road infrastructure is important for improving access throughout the country. Given that Guatemala’s main tourist market is the independent backpacker, transportation and easy access are vital to allow free exploration of all areas of the country. Safety and security are a concern for all international tourists and if improved, can directly lead to a significant increase in arrival numbers. It is important to note that as Guatemala is growing as an economy and tourism destination, it needs to follow the principles of sustainable development and ensure that the currently available sites and attractions will remain the same in the future.

FIGURE 2: GUATEMALA’S RANKING IN TTCI



Guatemala and its Comparative Advantages

Despite some of the mentioned earlier development challenges, Guatemala exhibits a number of comparative advantages. The country is well-positioned to grow its tourism based on the rich Mayan culture and history, stunning natural landscapes, abundant flora and fauna, and variety of adventure and sporting activities.

Natural Landscape

Guatemala offers nature enthusiasts a variety of unspoiled natural environments. In total, the country has 92 protected areas, 19 unique ecosystems and boasts over 30 volcanoes, many of which can be climbed.

The Western Highlands consist of a chain of volcanoes, which reach up to 12,500 ft. This region is the most fertile in the country and produces much of the nation's agriculture. The jewel of the region is Lake Atitlán, which exudes a timeless beauty. The lake has been described by many as the most beautiful in the world. The lake, volcanic in origin, is the deepest in Central America, surrounded by three volcanoes, and inhabited by local indigenous communities.

The Central Highlands is an ecotourism paradise rich in flora and fauna, incredible cave systems, and large dense cloud forests of unparalleled beauty. The Mario Dary Biotope Preserve, in particular, is impressive both as a tourist destination and conservation area. It was created to protect the Quetzal, a strikingly colored bird found in the tropical regions of the Americas, which is the national symbol for the country. In addition, tourists can experience a dense cloud forest and enjoy hiking trails. Semuc Champey, in Coban, is the site of limestone pools fed by waterfalls and surrounded by lush jungles.

Besides Atitlán, Guatemala boasts other spectacular water systems. Lago de Izabal - Guatemala's largest lake, hosts the Refugio Bocas del Polochic - the country's largest freshwater wetlands and home to an array of wildlife. Emptying out from Lago Izabal is the Rio Dulce that travels east through jungle environment and empties into the Caribbean Sea.

Monterrico on the Pacific Coast is home to the stunning wetland area called the Biotopo Monterrico-Hawaii. This large and intricate waterway is home to a vast array of wildlife and flora.

The vast Peten region, known specifically for its abundance of archeological sites invites the intrepid traveler into the thick jungle which is a shelter to over 300 species of birds and exotic animals including jaguars and pumas.

Flora and Fauna

Guatemala has 7,754 (USAID, 2002) species of plants ranging from coastal mangrove forests and wetlands to the tropical rainforests located in Peten as well as pristine pine forests, grasslands and cloudforests. There are over 250 species of mammals, 700 species of birds and 300 species of reptiles and amphibians (USAID, 2002). Guatemala is home to many exotic birds including Quetzal, Parrot, Toucan and Macaw. The country's vast array of animal species includes the ocelot, jaguar, and puma.

Though the country has environmental issues that need to be addressed, it has carved out 92 protected areas accounting for 29% (USAID, 2002) of the national territory acting as a safe haven for its abundance of flora and fauna.

FIGURE 3: RESPLENDENT QUETZAL, SCARLET MACAW AND TOUCANSOME OF THE MOST ATTRACTIVE BIRD SPECIES FOUND IN GUATEMALA



Adventure and Sports Activities

Guatemala offers the adventure-seeker a variety of activities. Three main destinations in the country, Xela, Antigua, and Atitlán offer guided treks up active volcanoes. The Western Highlands is a great location for trekking and visiting with local communities.

The Peten and Caribbean regions offer Jungle treks leading to remote Mayan sites.

Extreme sport enthusiasts will delight at the opportunity to paraglide from a mountain peak onto the shores of Lake Atitlán. White water rafting, of varying degrees of difficulty, is possible throughout the country.

Indigenous Community/ Mayan Culture

While all countries in Central America are still represented by the indigenous population, Guatemala's population is at 65% indigenous, the highest of all its neighbors. Mayan culture is most evident throughout the Western Highlands and specifically in Lake Atitlán, with a number of communities maintaining traditional lifestyles around the lake. The mixing of Catholicism and indigenous Mayan beliefs is embodied in Santiago Atitlan (Aventouras, n.d.). While the official language of Guatemala is Spanish, in rural areas people speak one or more of the 23 recognized indigenous languages, including Quiche and Kekchi.

Tourists, specifically interested in scientific, academic, volunteer and educational (SAVE) tourism products are keen to experience life and customs of local communities. This segment is not very developed as of yet but has the capacity to draw interest to and develop tourism. With proper product development and marketing it could develop into a successful niche market. Suggestions on how to realize this potential are described in the recommendation section of this report.

Colonial Cities and Ancient Ruins

Guatemala has more Archeological sites than any other country in Central America. Tikal, the most famous of all ruins sites in the region is an awe-inspiring ancient Mayan site. Its towering pyramids rise high above the thick jungle canopy. The ruins of Tikal include more than 3,000 structures, including palaces and temples (UNESCO, 1979). This archeological wonder is well preserved and because of its cultural significance has been named a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

1.5 Lake Atitlán Highlights

Lake Atitlán is one of the three most visited destinations in Guatemala. The lake is surrounded by three volcanoes, steep hillsides, and traditional Mayan village communities. The lake offers the discerning tourist a variety of activities including adventure, culture, nature, voluntourism and educational activities.



Nature

Lake Atitlán is considered to be one of the most beautiful scenic landscapes in the world. It offers breathtaking views and is surrounded by three awesome volcanoes. There are nature reserve parks where one can see a variety of birds, monkeys and other wildlife among groves of banana trees, coffee plantations and pristine forests.

Adventure

Lake Atitlán offers an abundance of outdoor activities for the brave of heart. Among its many activities are paragliding, scuba diving, horseback riding, kayaking, canopy ziplines as well as volcano treks. Panajachel has many tour operators able to organize activities and provide guides if needed.

Cultural

Lake Atitlán is rich in Mayan culture and is home to three different ethnic groups maintaining their traditions and customs through dress, ceremonies and festivals. Visitors can experience this unique environment in any of the thirteen villages surrounding the lake. Village communities have preserved traditional handicrafts and textiles and can demonstrate to visitors traditional ways of dying and weaving cloth into beautiful handmade garments. Certain villages such as San Juan La Laguna have incorporated traditional Mayan ceremonies in their tourism offerings.

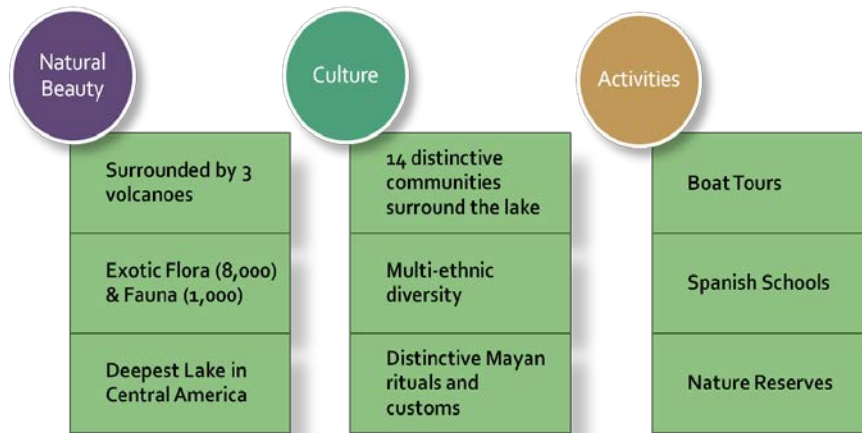
Education

Atitlan attracts tourists interested in educational opportunities. There are many opportunities to enroll in Spanish classes, especially in San Pedro. These schools are spread out throughout the villages around the lake and offer home-stays as part of the cross-cultural educational experience. They are often combined with opportunities for volunteer work, for example teaching local children or contributing to reforestation efforts in the area.

Voluntourism

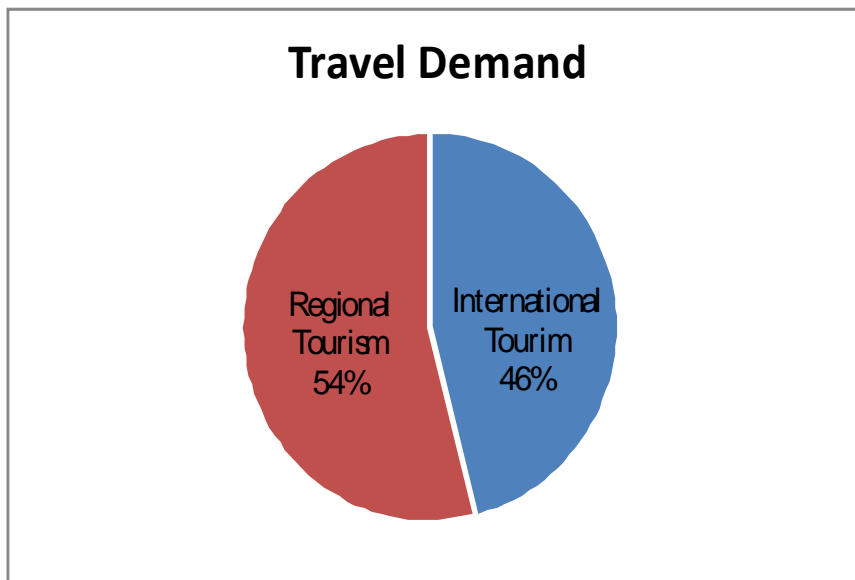
The lake is a hotspot for volunteer organizations, including church groups searching for opportunities to do charitable works in the various lakeside communities. An example is found in San Lucas Toliman where a volunteer project run by San Lucas Mission, provides the opportunity to work in schools, build houses and work on agricultural projects.

For more details on the characteristics and travel preferences of these and other relevant tourist segments see Appendix 2.



1.6 Market for Guatemala (International & National)

FIGURE 4: TRAVEL DEMAND WITHIN GUATEMALA

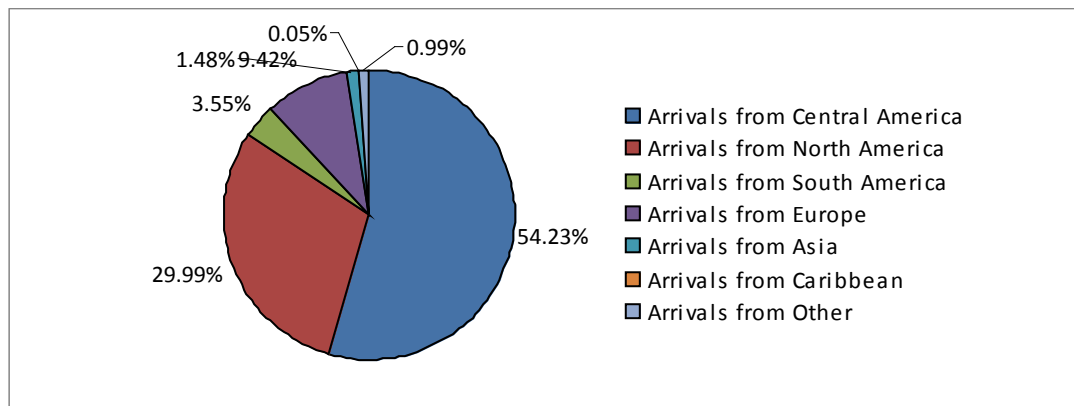


SOURCE: CENTRAL AMERICA TOURISM COUNCIL, 2006

Demand for travel within Guatemala is divided into two markets, international and regional, with international tourism earning 46% (Central America Tourism Council, 2006) of inbound tourists and the additional 54% (Central America Tourism Council, 2006) coming from regional tourism. Of the

international tourism market the two highest markets are the North American market, comprising 30% and the European market comprising 12% of all international tourism arrivals (Central America Tourism Council, 2006). The remaining 4% is a combination of several other regions (Central America Tourism Council, 2006). The main regional source destination is El Salvador (Central America Tourism Council, 2006). Because the majority of international visitors come from North America, this region provides the most accessibility to and from the country. Daily, there are 18 flights from the United States to Guatemala (Central America Tourism Council, 2006), as well as 11 additional flights three times a week (Central America Tourism Council, 2006). From Europe there are only 4 daily direct flights into Guatemala departing from London, Madrid and Milan (Central America Tourism Council, 2006).

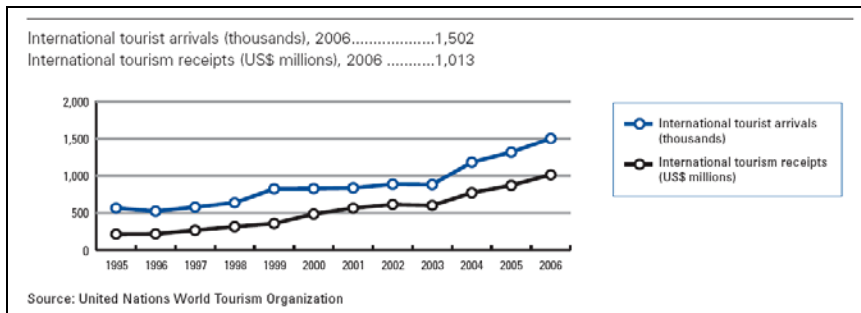
FIGURE 5: GUATEMALA'S INTERNATIONAL ARRIVALS



In 2006, according to information posted by the Central America Tourism Council, Guatemala preformed second overall in inbound international tourism arrivals with 1,454,600,000 visitors (Central America Tourism Council, 2006), behind Costa Rica which had 1,725,300,000 (Central America Tourism Council, 2006). In 2006 Costa Rica received only 19% more inbound tourists than Guatemala (Central America Tourism Council, 2006), however this produced annual revenue that was 61% higher than that of Guatemala (Central America Tourism Council, 2006). Costa Rica also outshined Guatemala in terms of average trip duration, with an average duration of 11.1 days (Central America Tourism Council, 2006) compared to the average of 7.6 days (Central America Tourism Council, 2006) for Guatemala, which is 46% shorter than that of Costa Rica. In terms of daily expenditure, Panama produced the highest with \$496 (Central America Tourism Council, 2006), which is more than four times the next closest country, Costa Rica.

As displayed by information published in the October 2007 edition of the UNWTO World Tourism Barometer Central America has continued to shine in tourism growth and development outperforming the rest of the Americas (see Figure 6). Based on forecasted information (WTO Barometer, October 2007), Central America is predicted to continue on the current development path, increasing international tourist arrivals and country revenues.

FIGURE 6: TOURISM GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT



Currently Identified Tourist Profile

During the months of August through September 2006, Opinion Research and Casabel joined forces to conduct tourism research within the Guatemala region. The objective of the joint effort was to collect information to understand and identify the tourism profile of inbound and outbound visitors. INGUAT and other interested parties and entities were seeking the data for guidance of future efforts to promote tourism development within Guatemala. Research focused on defining characteristics of tourists, understanding their behavior within Guatemala, identifying destinations and activities, as well as creating a structure of the expenses for outbound and inbound travelers. The data was collected through face-to-face interviews based on a quantitative, simple random sample. Inbound interviews were conducted upon arrival into the country and outbound interviews were conducted upon departure. The sample size of inbound tourists was 19,200 with a 99% confidence level and the outbound sample size was 16,800, also with a confidence level of 99%. Research was collected at 18 of the 22 entry points into the country, at both airports, at 2 of the 4 ports, as well as at 14 of the 16 land immigration stations. From the following research study mentioned above, Opinion Research and Casabel identified the following tourist profile:

- Traveling adult between 25-44 years old
- 4 out of 10 have a Bachelor degree or higher level of education
- Traveling alone or in families ranging from 2-4 people (most are married)
- Half traveling for leisure

Of outbound tourists, 82% were headed to four main destinations, in descending order, El Salvador, United States, Mexico, and Honduras. The research study also established that 20% of expenditures are spent on lodging and food and that the top activities are visiting villages, cities, beaches and islands, and visiting archeological sites and churches.

1.7 Perception Analysis

A consumer’s perception of a country will impact his or her decision it. Media and branding both help shape consumer’s perceptions; together they develop a schema - the knowledge and experiences that connect to form one’s understanding of the world. While schemata change as a person consumes new information, deeply ingrained schemata are difficult to change (Anderson, et. al., 1984). Tourism marketing initiatives promoting Guatemala as a tourism destination should make a successful effort to create positive schemata among potential travelers.

Guatemala's brand image as "The Soul of the Earth" was developed by the well established branding agency Interbrand after a comparison with regional competitors and an analysis of the country's unique offerings (Interbrand, n.d.). Interbrand consulted a variety of stakeholders across Guatemala and worked to incorporate the rich and large indigenous perspective into the final brand proposition. However, despite the rigor of the effort to investigate, design, and finally launch Guatemala's brand in 2005, it does not yet seem to have achieved significant recognition amongst the mainstream population in the United States.

Exploratory Survey Results

In order to understand how Guatemala's brand and image fit into one's schema, it is important to first understand current perceptions. An online exploratory survey was administered in which respondents were asked to comment on their perception of Guatemala as well as the likelihood that they would travel to Guatemala. Of the 209 respondents, 63.16% identified as female and the average age in this group was 31.23. Of the group of respondents, 83.25% are currently living in the United States. The majority of respondents have taken a trip outside of their home country in the past 12 months and more than 85% plan to take at least one trip out of their home country in the coming 12 months. It was important to discover how many people were planning to take a trip outside of their home country in the next 12 months in order to ascertain if this group of respondents could be considered as a potential market for Guatemala.

Each respondent was asked what his or her opinion about safety in Guatemala for tourists was. Only 1.44% perceived Guatemala to be "very dangerous." These respondents cited Guatemala's long civil war, political unrest, and news reports as being the reason why they believed Guatemala to be very dangerous for tourists. On the opposite end of the spectrum, 9.09% of respondents perceived Guatemala to be "very safe" for tourists. Perhaps most telling, however, was the fact that nearly a quarter of the respondents simply had "no opinion" about safety in Guatemala.

Over 60% of respondents stated it was "highly unlikely" they would visit Guatemala as a tourist in the next three years. The stated reasons for not wanting to visit the region as a tourist included such statements as:

"I have never thought of visiting Guatemala... you don't really hear about it much, not sure what to expect if I were to visit"

"I have not heard of Guatemala in terms of tourism, if I were to choose Latin American country for tourism it would either be Mexico or perhaps a place I know someone lives, ex. Venezuela"

"I have entertained the idea of going to Guatemala before, but there are so many other places that I am interested in going to first. It's possible if I read

The statements respondents made explaining their reason for not having a desire to travel to Guatemala in the near future can be categorized under 5 subheadings, shown below with sample respondent statements:

TABLE 7: SAMPLE SURVEY RESPONSES

Category for given reason not to visit Guatemala as a tourist	Example responses from survey
1. Lack of knowledge/awareness about the area as a tourism destination	“Never thought about it...Guatemala does not have a strong market presence”
2. Have not encountered positive information about the region	“news and poverty”
3. More interested in visiting other countries in the region (e.g.: Costa Rica, Mexico)	“I’d rather visit Belize, next door, since they speak English”
4. Finances	“Because my budget does not allow me to go at the moment”
5. Distance/accessibility	“Proximity and interest”

While the statements from respondents can be grouped into these five categories, numbers two through four relate back to the first point: lack of knowledge/awareness about the area as a tourism destination. For instance, those who stated finances to be a hindrance to traveling in the region are likely not aware of the value one is able to achieve while traveling in Guatemala, or the low budget options easily available to tourists. One respondent, a 25 year old male from the United States, stated, “I know little to nothing about the country, and have a much clearer sense of other countries I’d like to visit.” When prompted to use three adjectives to describe Guatemala, the respondent stated he had no opinion about Guatemala. This type of response was not isolated, rather, it came up time and again amongst respondents who stated they would likely not plan a trip to Guatemala within the next three years.

Even those who have traveled to Central America in the past mentioned not being aware of any distinguishing factors that would set Guatemala apart from other destinations to visit. One respondent, a 28 year old female from the United States stated, “Although I would love to visit, it’s just not one of my priorities at the moment. One really doesn’t hear anything positive or negative, ex: I want to go to Costa Rica because I have heard and seen how beautiful it is. Guatemala, there’s not much to it.” An excel file with respondents’ answers can be found in Appendix 3.

1.8 Tourist Surveys

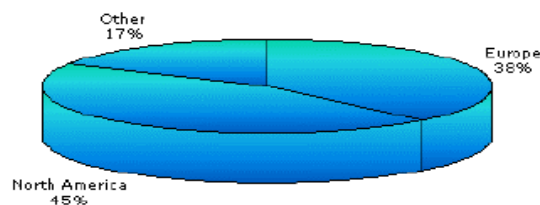
In addition to identifying the various market segments of tourists to Lake Atitlán, the GW/UVG team used a convenient sample approach to interview 116 tourists in order to ascertain their perception of Lake Atitlán as a tourism destination. The survey [see Appendix 4] queried tourists about what factors were important in their decision to visit Lake Atitlán, their opinion about different services or products they experienced during their visit, and what types of products or services would interest them in staying longer. The collected data was tabulated and compared to the results of a workshop conducted in September 2007 with more than 50 stakeholders from the Atitlán tourism sector. A detailed table included in Appendix 5 compares the responses from the workshop with those of the tourists. Finally, in

addition to surveying tourists, 24 hotel and tour operators were interviewed about the services and products they offer, the market segment they predominantly serve, and their opinion about what types of services and products they believe would entice tourists to extend their vacations in the area. A complete data set of the sample is available in Appendix 6.

Demographics of Sample

Of the 116 tourist interviews conducted, the median age was 30.03 years old and 43.18% were male and 56.82% were female. The majority of tourist indicated their permanent country of residence to be in North America while 38% were from a European country. The remaining 17% were from Asia, the Middle East, or Latin America. The average length of stay for this segment of tourists was 16.38 days, a length of stay that can be attributed to the number of students and volunteers interviewed who tend to spend between two weeks to three months on their education and/or projects. Detailed tourist demographics are provided in Appendix 7.

FIGURE 7: DISTRIBUTION OF SURVEYED VISITORS TO LAKE ATITLÁN

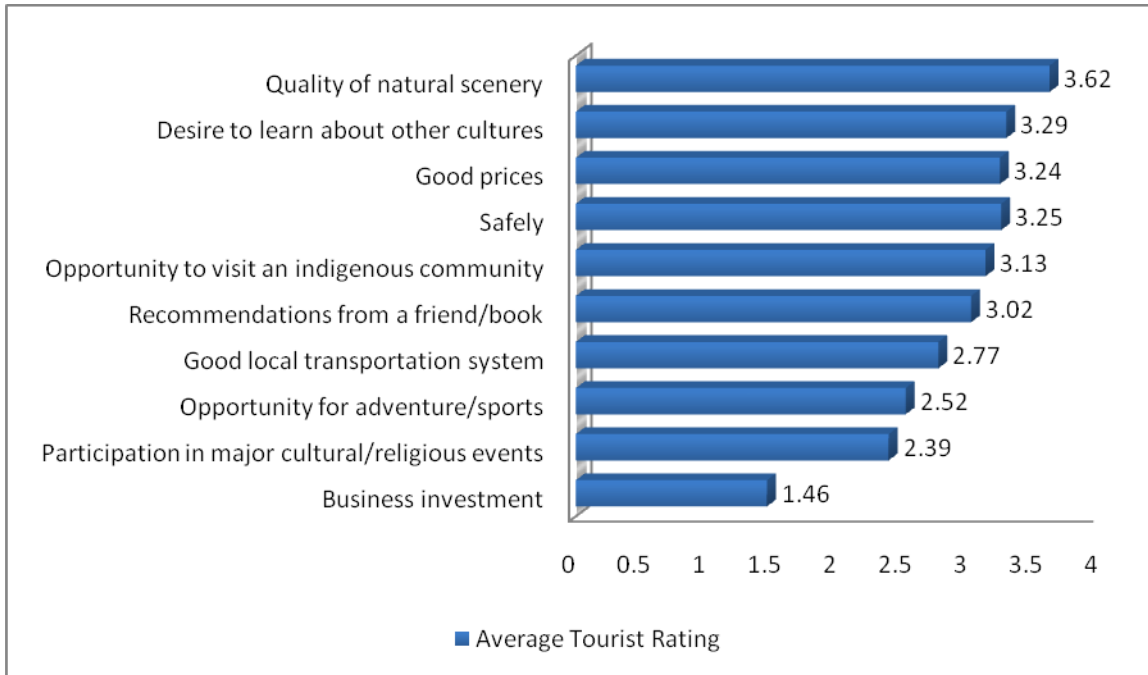


Survey Results

Tourists were asked to rate 10 factors that impacted their decision to visit Lake Atitlán on a scale of one to four, with one being not important at all and four being very important. The results for all respondents were averaged both as a whole as well as for a smaller segment of tourists who stayed in the area for less than one week.

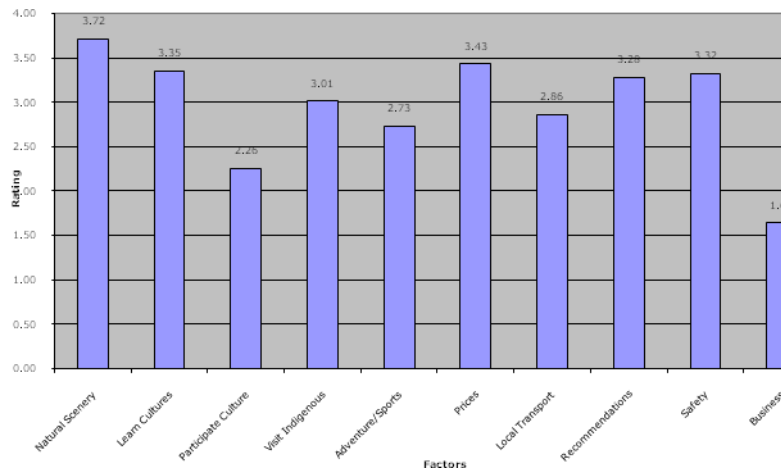
For the full sample of 116 respondents, tourists indicated they were most influenced by the “quality of natural scenery & landscapes/environment” in deciding to visit the area. Second on the list of factors most influencing the decision of a tourist to visit the area was “a desire to learn about other cultures, their way of life and heritage”. Figure 8 below breaks down the results of this section of the survey. In contrast, Figure 9: Importance of Factors Impacting Tourist’s Decision to Visit Atitlan shows the results from tourists who spent 7 or less days in the area. For the segment of tourists who spent less time in the area, “good price for quality received” was the second more important factor in deciding to visit Lake Atitlán, while “quality of natural scenery & landscapes/environment” was still the most important factor.

FIGURE 8: FACTORS IMPACTING DECISION OF TOURISTS TO VISIT LAKE ATITLAN



*4 = very important; 3 = important; 2 = not very important; 1 = not important at all

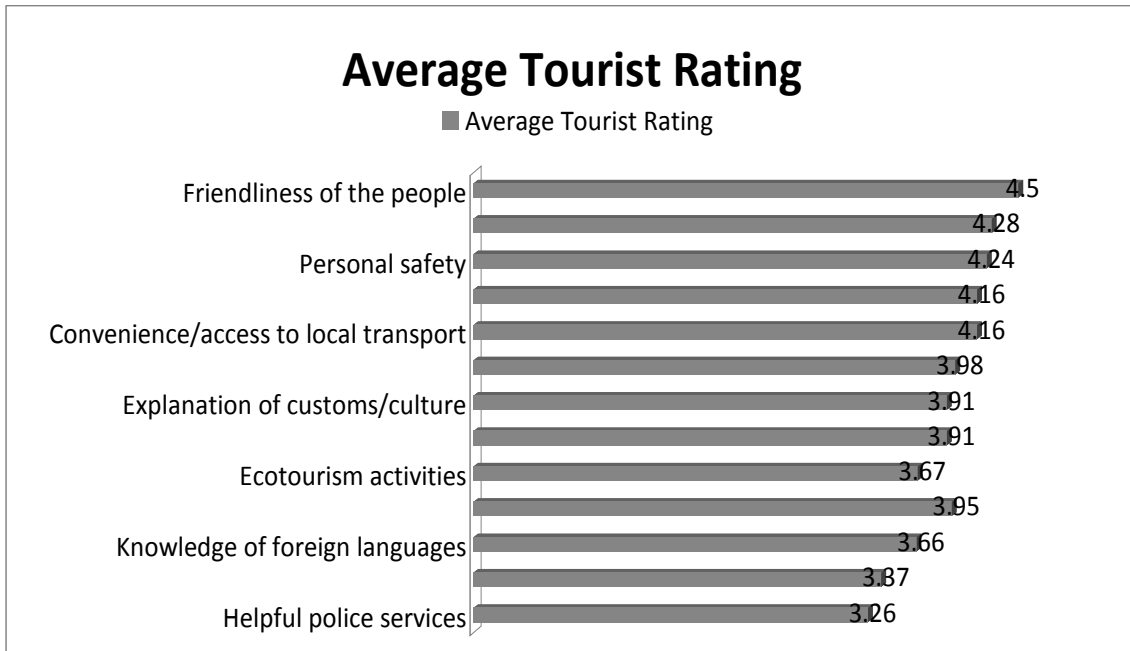
FIGURE 9: IMPORTANCE OF FACTORS IMPACTING TOURIST’S DECISION TO VISIT ATITLAN (SAMPLE 7 OR LESS DAYS)



While tourists tended not to rank the opportunity for adventure/sports activities as a high priority in visiting the region, when asked to rate their experience with a variety of products and services in the area on a scale of one to five, with five being excellent, the average ranking for adventure activities was 3.91, a rating between “good” and “fair” (See Figure 10: Experience of Tourists with Service Products while Visiting Lake Atitlán). Additionally, tourists stated they would be enticed to extend their stay in Lake

Atitlán if they had access to more water activities and sports, a point that served as the impetus for a recommended action detailed in full later in this document.

FIGURE 10: EXPERIENCE OF TOURISTS WITH SERVICE PRODUCTS WHILE VISITING LAKE ATITLÁN



* 5 = excellent; 4 = good; 3 = fair; 2 = bad; 1 = very bad

In addition to an analysis of data to determine gaps between products/services offered and the experiences with those products/services of tourists, the results of the tourist survey were compared with the responses of stakeholders collected during a branding workshop in 2007, the results of which can be found in Appendix 5.

1.9 Summary of Part 1

Guatemala has a creative and colorful brand image as “The Soul of the Earth.” Despite all the efforts and rigors with current brand launched in 2005, Guatemala does not yet seem to be recognizable amongst high-yield markets. There is a need to establish connections with major media outlets to make Guatemala distinguishable an attractive brand and tourism destination. It is important for this brand to be embraced by all stakeholders and collectively used to market the country. Regarding the regional level, while Lake Atitlán is one of the most visited destinations in the country and has competitive advantages, such as natural beauty and rich Mayan culture, the destination does not seem to make the most of its attraction for marketing and positioning.

In the interviews with over 20 hotel owners and tour operators, the vast majority of them stated that they use the internet, travel agencies and pamphlets as their primary method of advertisement. These are all strong promotional tools that could help bring more tourists to Lake Atitlan if used properly. However, the individual marketing efforts of the business owners are not efficient. 83% of the business owners interviewed stated that they maintained their own website. However, if they worked together, they would

avoid competing each other and would be able to reach their target population more effectively. In other words, there is a strong need for a unified marketing effort to promote Lake Atitlan as a whole.

It was also found that 55% of the hotel owners and tour operators interviewed did not know anything about the Sololá Sub-Commission and its strategic plan. Thus, there has been limited community buy-in and support for the Commission. In order for the organization to be effective in Lake Atitlan, ways must be identified to raise awareness of the Commission and to obtain more community involvement.

PART 2: Analysis & Strategic Solutions: *COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM*

2.1 What is CBT?

Comparison with Conventional Tourism

While no single definition exists for community-based tourism (CBT), the major elements required for 'true' CBT entail a host community that has a primary role in tourism activities and that is actively engaged and participates in the development and implementation of sustainable tourism. In addition to the high-level of local control and ownership, CBT ventures bring social and economic benefits first and foremost to the host community.

The GW/UVG team defined CBT as *a process for developing and managing tourism that engages and benefits the local community as well as tourists*. It is not, as many would describe, a product, service or market segment. Many tourism products and services can be developed in a way that maximizes the benefits and minimize negative impacts for the local community, thus making them community-based tourism products and services.

The direct involvement and ownership of the host community is the main point of difference between CBT and other types of tourism. Benefits from CBT should be felt by everyone in the host community regardless of their status, location and size, level of wealth, involvement, or ownership. Additional points of differentiation between CBT and other forms of tourism include:

- Retention of a significant share of tourism revenue in the community
- Sustainable utilization of local resources and capacities
- Engagement of local stakeholders with a 'real' voice in the process
- Utilization of tourism operations to achieve broader community goals, for example, environmental protection, cultural preservation, or poverty alleviation
- Addressing of community needs, which are balanced with the expectations of tourists, and
- Minimization of the negative impact of tourism, including less friction between local communities and visitors.

Regardless of the positive characteristics of CBT, the support and direct involvement of the community is of key importance. Therefore, each community must assess whether or not it would like to initiate CBT development and whether it is an appropriate process for achieving community goals. A *one-size fits all* approach cannot be used to apply CBT models to multiple destinations. Each community should determine their specific objectives and goals before engaging in CBT.

CBT is used to support a range of objectives for sustainability: economic, socio-cultural, and environmental objectives. This balance entails that CBT not only be focused on potential economic development opportunities for a community, but addresses other objectives that will help maintain long-term sustainability.

2.2 Importance of Community-based Tourism in Lake Atitlán

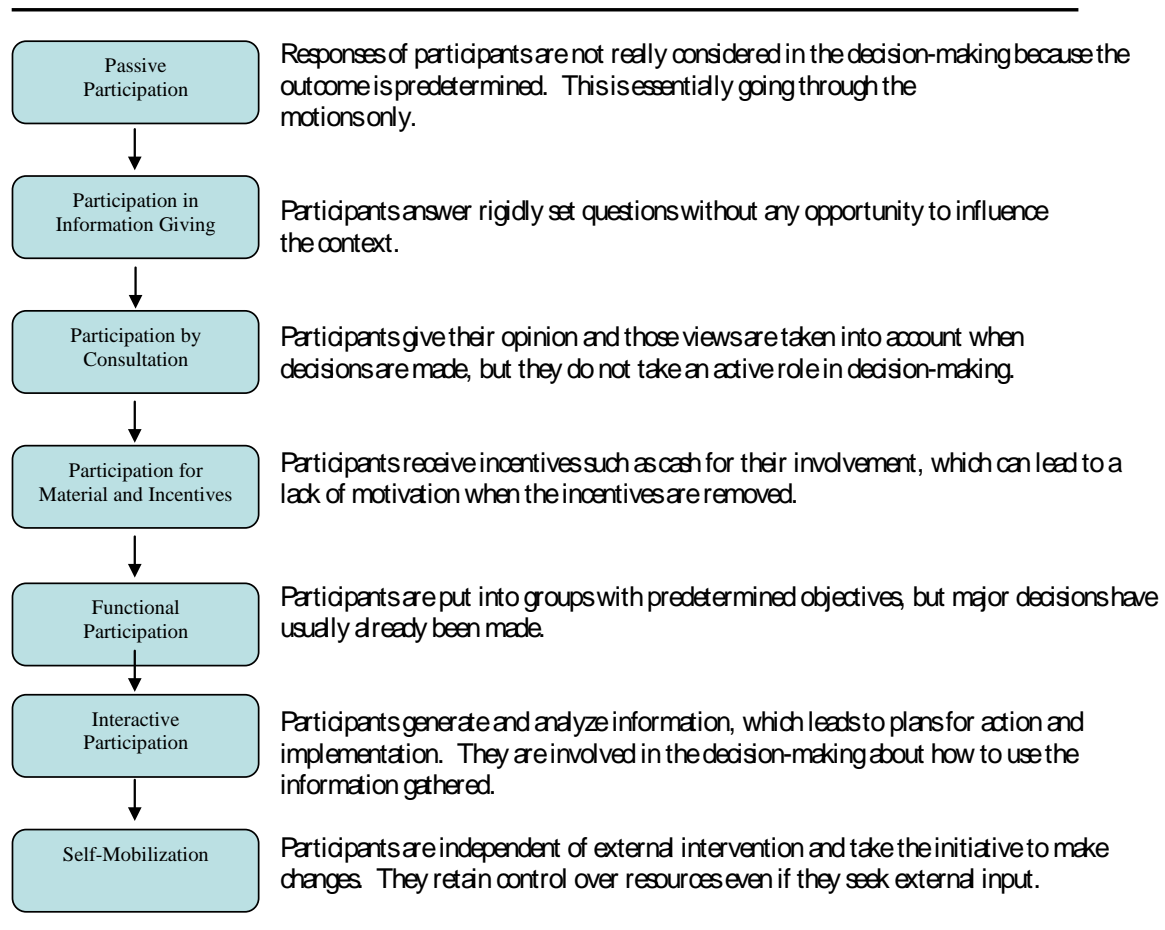
Even though Lake Atitlán is the second most visited destination in Guatemala, the Department of Sololá is the fourth poorest department in the country (Calderón-Barrios, 2007). This shows that economic benefits from tourism in Lake Atitlán are not reaching the host communities of the region. Given the uniqueness and beauty of Atitlán's people, their cultures, and natural environments, CBT has been identified as a possible 'missing link' for local people to realize the benefits of sustainable community-based tourism offerings.

The main economic objectives of CBT in Lake Atitlán should include poverty alleviation through the creation of jobs, services and supplementary income activities. The beauty of Lake Atitlán is the main attraction for tourists to the destination and therefore, the protected areas and ecosystems in and around the lake become critical to the success of sustainable tourism in the area. The environmental objectives for CBT would include decreasing dependence on subsistence activities, reducing illegal activities such as poaching, developing greater environmental appreciation and awareness of the importance for conservation activities, and enhancing stewardship and management of natural resources. The bottom line is that the communities around Lake Atitlán must appreciate the environment and other resources upon which tourism in the area relies.

Enhancing social structures and the conservation of culture are also important CBT objectives for the communities in the area. CBT might seek to stimulate infrastructure development such as the development of roads, communications, healthcare, and education. Such initiatives not only improve the overall experience of visitors in the area but improve the quality of life of local residents. In addition, CBT can also help to enhance and preserve local cultures. The traditional ways of life are an important attractor for visitors in the area and this can become a valuable motivator for indigenous communities to retain customs and continue passing them on to future generations. Community-led tourism offerings that raise awareness on local traditions are great ways to facilitate cultural understanding through mutual learning between the hosts and guests.

Active participation and empowerment of the communities involved in CBT is essential in achieving the aforementioned objectives. Figure 6 present the different types of participation that are possible in engaging various stakeholders. Building capacity through the development of skills empowers communities to take an active stake in the outcome of CBT. This in turn promotes healthy interactions between tourism, ecosystems, and communities, which are essential conditions for the long-term sustainability and success of CBT in Lake Atitlán.

FIGURE 11: PARTICIPATION TYPES



2.3 Examples of CBT in Lake Atitlán

Several examples of CBT currently exist in the Lake Atitlán area. The following examples highlight an array of CBT products and associations that can be evaluated by others wishing to develop CBT in their community.



Ijat'z Cooperative, San Lucas Toliman

Ijat'z is a cooperative farm that produces, processes, and sells organic coffee and functions as an agro-ecological center providing educational recycling programs, and supporting women's initiatives. The cooperative also offers training programs for women and micro-finance for entrepreneurs.

By purchasing their products, tourists support and encourage organic coffee production, which helps to maintain biodiversity by improving habitat conditions, protects the basin from toxic chemicals often used in traditional coffee-farming processes, and benefits local farmers and community projects. By joining the Sololá Association of Organic Coffee Producers Ijat'z has

Jovenes Mayas Association, San Marcos

Jovenes Mayas Kaq'chikel is a community-based local guide association located in San Marcos la Laguna. The association was implemented as a community-based initiative formed by 14 Mayan youth. Its main priorities include the conservation of local flora and fauna and the preservation of Mayan culture in San Marcos.

The association's principal CBT products are guided tours that explore the cultural and natural wealth along local trails, such as the Old Mayan Trail to Santa Lucia Utatlan, and the walk to Santa Cruz la Laguna. Additionally, Jovenes Mayas offers tours, which highlight the maguey plant and teach tourists about its historical role and importance in the production of bags, ropes and construction material that are made with the pants fibers. Another local attraction is a medicinal plant tour which puts the tourist in touch with the native plants of the region and their use.



Copikaj Association, Santa Clara

Copikaj is a cooperative based in San Juan la Laguna that works with artisans who weave baskets from natural fibers. Their primary functions are to buy and sell weavings, offer technical assistance to artisans, and provide micro-loans to artisans and women who want to start micro-enterprises. The cooperative is made up of around 125 members who grow their own cañaveral (the plant that provides the fibers for weaving) and sell 40 different kinds of baskets, 19 styles of woven decorations, and 3 types of lamps. Cañaveral is native to the area and the organization has researched ways to ensure that using Cañaveral will not damage the ecosystem.

An integral component of the Copikaj cooperative is its respect for and promotion of the indigenous culture that is native to the area, K'iché Mayan. The K'iché community in Santa Clara has a long tradition of textile production, especially baskets. Furthermore, the cooperative focuses on social issues in Santa Clara. Its stated vision is to improve the welfare of the artisans, represent the daily work of the local culture, and

La Cooperativa Spanish School, San Pedro

The Cooperative School of San Pedro is a Spanish School that strives to incorporate local initiatives into the school's mission by encouraging teachers and students to give back to the host community. The school is directly involved in two local programs. The first initiative is an outreach program, which currently helps 16 families in severe economic hardship with the supply of basic goods such as beans, rice, eggs and hygienic goods. Additionally, the school is involved in helping an under-funded local elementary school by subsidizing education in arts, music and physical education. The initiative of the Cooperative helps pay the salary of two professors of this local elementary school.

In addition to these two programs, students in the Spanish school have opportunities to volunteer in the community whether by teaching a foreign language at the local school or volunteering at a local hospital. Students may also enhance their experience by electing to stay with a local family during their study, in which case they pay a predetermined fee to the host family.

Similar models of Spanish schools incorporating community-based service activities exist, especially in the community of San Pedro where there is a high concentration of schools. These



Association of Ecotourism Guides Rupalaj K'istalin, San Juan la Laguna

The Association of Ecotourism Guides Rupalaj K'istalin consists of 18 members/partners. Formed in 2003, the association offers several different tours to visitors of the community. These include a cultural circuit that incorporates several of the local artisan cooperatives, medicinal plant education, and local colonial architecture; a natural circuit that involves several popular and scenic area hikes; and an adventure circuit that includes camping, and several longer hikes to waterfalls. The association also connects tourists with other tourism products in the area, such as painter and weaver associations, which offer lessons and demonstrations. The association also partners with the Chajil Ch'upup Association of Fisherman, which offers tours to teach tourists about traditional fishing techniques in their traditional canoes.

While most of the economic benefits assist the families of the guides, the Association of Ecotourism Guides Rupalaj K'istalin benefits the greater



2.4 Advancing CBT in Lake Atitlán

CBT – Tourism Market Segment or a Tourism Management Process

The Strategic development plan for Lake Atitlán identifies four potential tourism market segments, which have the potential to realize the greatest competitive potential of Lake Atitlán. Table 8 lists the four high-yield market segments.

TABLE 8: TOURISM MARKETS

Tourism Market	Development Stage	Main Market
Nature Based Tourism/Eco Tourism	Product Development	International
Adventure Tourism/Sport Tourism	Product Development	International
Cultural Tourism	Product Development	International and regional
Community Tourism	Product Development	International

Following the two weeks of fieldwork conducted in Lake Atitlán the market segments identified in the plan were revisited. As a result, the GW/UVG team suggested a couple of adjustments to the proposed market structure.

First, Community Tourism was removed as one of the proposed market segments for Lake Atitlán. The recommendation of the team to discontinue viewing CBT as a market segment derives directly from the stated earlier definition of Community-based Tourism as a *process for developing and managing tourism* and not a specific type of tourism product or segment. Community-based tourism should therefore be integrated to all proposed market segments as a *process* for developing sustainable and responsible tourism for Destination Atitlán.

Introducing the SAVE Market Segment

Additionally, the GW/UVG team suggested the incorporation of the S.A.V.E (Scientific, Academic, Volunteer and Educational) tourism market segment as a substitute for the community tourism market. S.A.V.E. stands for Scientific, Academic, Volunteer and Educational market segment. The development of this fast growing market segment in the area has the potential to enhance conservation and promote sustainability of the destination's geographic, environmental and cultural character. According to the SAVE Travel Alliance (2008), non-profit network facilitating linkage between S.A.V.E. destinations and markets, the S.A.V.E. concept of tourism is "a strategy that integrates the market demand and untapped supply of four specific niche markets: Scientific, Academic, Volunteer, and Education. The key to the strategy is geotourism, a philosophy that works to sustain and enhance, rather than hinder the local destination."

Tourists who fall within the S.A.V.E. segment are characterized as those willing to learn and help local people, the environment, and the society visited. Additionally, S.A.V.E. tourists seek more than just a recreational and relaxing vacation, but wish to interact with local residents in remote destinations preferring to stay longer and in less sophisticated accommodation than the average tourist. A destination wishing to develop for the mainstream mass tourism segment would need heavy infrastructure development, enormous investment, and long-term project management. Conversely, the development of the S.A.V.E. market would require significantly less investment and infrastructure.

By developing the S.A.V.E. market segment in Lake Atitlán, communities could develop the destination niche tourism opportunities and attract responsible travelers in a way which would be both sustainable and economically-viable. S.A.V.E. tourism activities would facilitate healthy partnerships and collaborations between local communities, academic institutions, development organizations and tourists. Moreover, the activities of S.A.V.E. tourists could add value to existing tourism products and uncover new tourism opportunities. Table 9: SAVE Categories and Benefits describes the four categories of SAVE travelers and their activities in details. A concept brief on SAVE travel is provided in Appendix 8. The rationale behind this proposition is that the available resources and already existing products in the Lake Atitlán region are a very appropriate fit for this relatively new segment. In addition, compared to most other tourism market segments, SAVE tourism has higher potential to generate socio-economic benefits for the local community. S.A.V.E. tourist are international tourists, thus the proposed change would not affect the inbound tourism market mix envisioned for the destination.

TABLE 9: SAVE CATEGORIES AND BENEFITS

	Profile & Activities	Benefits for Destination
Scientific	Scientists interested in conducting scientific research within fields such as biology, archaeology, or anthropology with the purpose of contributing to general human knowledge	Scientific research requires extended stays with longer economic impact. Scientific expeditions hire local workers, live in the communities, eat local food, utilize local transportation and buy local goods. Scientists have the capacity to gather data on valuable destination assets, which destinations do not have.
Academic	Individuals or groups participating in experiential learning activities leading to credit for formal degree programs or courses offered by higher education institutions such as field studies in anthropology, archaeology, languages, conservation biology and others.	Academic groups have a tendency to visit more remote places and are more willing to interact with local communities. They often do not require sophisticated facilities and services
Volunteer	Individuals or groups that travel with the intention to participate in activities that contribute to the betterment of society. They could be individual travelers or	Voluntourists specifically search for places with socio-economic challenges with the intention to contribute to the development of their communities. Volunteers often

	travelers associated with the growing number of organizations supporting volunteer programs.	spend a long period of time at the destination, contribute with knowledge and other resources, and do not require sophisticated facilities and services.
Educational	Individuals or groups that travel to obtain knowledge for personal gratification rather than academic credit. Examples include learning a language, craft or acquiring another skill. Programs leading to some credential or certificate of completion involve longer trips and higher expenditures directly benefiting local people.	Educational travelers usually look for extended stays at the destination as well as increased interaction with local communities. In the cases when the focus of the educational experience is associated with the local culture or traditions this contributes to the strengthened pride of communities.

With the proposed adjustments, the main market segments in the Lake Atitlán region remain nature, adventure, culture (including religion and history) and S.A.V.E. The tourism products will be produced on the basis of the four market segments in accordance with the image the lake and the objective to grow community-based products and services. The connection between the communities, products and markets are illustrated in Figure 12.

FIGURE 12: LAKE ATITLÁN TOURISM MARKET SEGMENTS



Most of the tourism products associated with the outlined above segments are niche-driven. With the incorporation of community-based tourism as a management process Lake Atitlán products and services will connect tourists with local organizations and associations thus benefiting residents, conserving local culture and heritage, and minimizing the negative environmental impacts of tourism. With over 14 communities in bordering or in close proximity to Lake Atitlán, CBT should be the basis for tourism development in the region. The Lake Atitlán area is currently in the initial stages of CBT development. As revealed by the brief cases presented earlier, several local associations having integrated local communities and resources in an effort to strengthen various CBT products. Based on the current resources in each community the product matrix can be illustrated as follows.

TABLE 10: LAKE ATITLÁN CBT PRODUCT MATRIX

Category \ Destination	Ecotourism	Adventure	Culture	S.A.V.E.
San Juan	✓		✓	✓
San Pedro	✓		✓	✓
Panajachel	✓	✓	✓	✓
Santiago	✓		✓	
San Marcos	✓	✓	✓	✓
Santa Cruz			✓	
Santa Clara	✓	✓	✓	✓
San Lucas	✓	✓	✓	✓

This matrix should help both the communities and the local destination management entities understand the potential tourism resources and develop the feasible products and tourism plans.

Some examples of specific components found in each of the four areas are as follows.

- **Nature:** Aims to preserve and protect the nature and wildlife in each community.
 - Coffee tour
 - Natural reserve
 - Ecological park
 - Bird watching
 - Beaches and lakeside activities

- **Adventure:** Focuses on the sport activities by effectively incorporating natural resources and community assets.
 - Paragliding
 - Kayaking
 - Diving
 - Zip-lining and rappelling
 - Hiking
 - Adventure trail
- **Culture:** To enhance traditional and indigenous culture and religion, and promote the local handicraft skills and quality, thus benefiting the local communities.
 - Colonial church
 - Village tourism
 - Woven handicrafts with natural dyes
 - Wood furniture
 - Soaps and candles
 - Basket weaving
 - Festivals
 - Religious ceremonies
- **S.A.V.E.:** To encourage tourists to participate in CBT through volunteering and educational programs.
 - Cooperative Spanish schools
 - Environmental education
 - Agro-ecological center
 - Reforestation program

The product and market matrices with CBT highlights will help to develop a strategic plan to strengthen the awareness of CBT tourism and minimize the level of tourism leakage from the communities. Moreover, it will help the stakeholders in the Lake Atitlán area differentiate their tourism products and market segments.

2.5 CBT Distribution Channels

It is necessary to note that while CBT operations may not follow a traditional business model, in certain senses they still need to operate like a business. The importance of marketing CBT products is generally undervalued, leading to insufficient allocation of marketing funds. Building capacity for marketing as well as developing partnerships with tour operators (local and foreign) is vital for the success of CBT projects. The long-term sustainability of a CBT product portfolio depends on the ability of the destination to connect to the marketplace just like any other tourism destination, and that require connections to external distribution channels.

Given the frequency with which travelers utilize the internet to plan their journeys, having a website or a fully-updated page on a regional online travel portal is a crucial first step for community-based tourism

operations. Making the details of the product and contact information readily available on the Internet will increase the CBT operation's ability to reach a wider audience. However, building a website is not enough to ensure heightened awareness and more visitors. The website must be connected to other channels, and marketing materials must be distributed through them.

Responsible travel, sustainable tourism, and community-based tourism are all buzz phrases that are becoming increasingly popular in the tourism industry. There are already a number of travel websites and tour operators around the world that promote the principles of responsible and sustainable travel, and make travelers aware how CBT products in Lake Atitlán could be highly beneficial. Websites such as www.responsibletravel.com offer a free platform for registering and promoting CBT products, and tour companies such as Intrepid Travel (www.intrepidtravel.com) prefer to incorporate community-based products into their travel itineraries in order to promote sustainable tourism. A table of potential CBT distribution channels is presented below. More details, specific contact information and outlined steps are included in a specific action plan included in the action plan introduces later in this section.

TABLE 11: POTENTIAL ONLINE CBT DISTRIBUTION OUTLETS

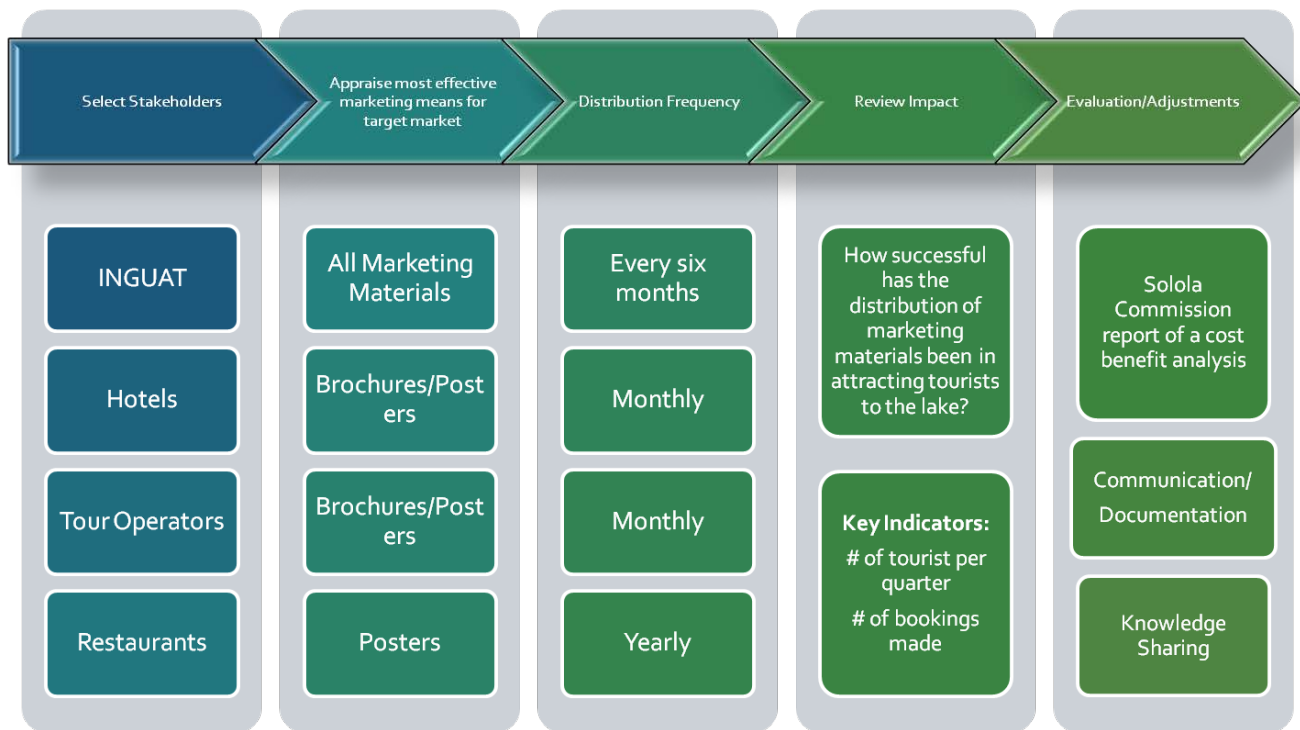
Title	Homepage
Intrepidtravel	www.Intrepidtravel.com
Responsibletravel	www.responsibletravel.com
Volunteer tourism	www.bravenewtraveler.com
Ecotravel	www.ecotravel.com
Ethicalescape	www.ethicalescape.co.uk
Earthfoot	www.earthfoot.org
Peopleandplaces	www.travel-peopleandplaces.co.uk
Slowtravel	www.slowtrav.com
Redturs	www.redturs.org
Friendsofworldheritage	www.friendsofworldheritage.com
Green Seniors	http://greenseniors.typepad.com
Intelligent Travel	www.intelligenttravel.typepad.com

CBT products in the Lake Atitlán area can benefit from marketing through booking agents, tour operators, and other travel-oriented businesses in the major regional destinations, starting with Panajachel. Within Guatemala, creating a partnership with travel agents in Antigua, Guatemala City, and Quetzaltenango is a recommended step towards linkages between CBT products around the lake and other already established tourism products in the country.

In the long term, community-based tourism products in Lake Atitlán can help establish a unique image and advantageous position for tourism in the region which can be marketed through a variety of

distribution channels internationally. One way to facilitate this is by planning familiarization tours of the lake area to mainstream travel agencies, travel writers, and the media.

FIGURE 13: DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM FOR LAKE ATITLÁN CBT PRODUCTS



2.6 Proposed Actions for Developing CBT in Lake Atitlán

In order to advance the development of CBT in the Lake Atitlán region, the GW/UVG consulting team proposes a set of specific actions leading to increased awareness and improved capacity of local stakeholders. The following section provides brief descriptions of actions; complete action plans with budgets and timelines for each are presented in the appendix section of this report.

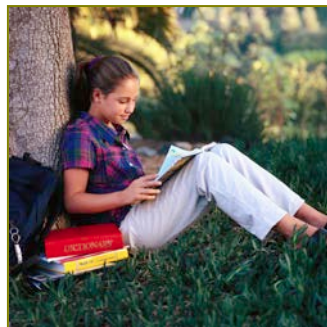
CBT Brochure & Capacity Building Toolkit



In response to the need for improved awareness of CBT principles among many stakeholders in the area, a brochure was developed to address what CBT is, explain its advantages over mainstream tourism, and illustrate the types of CBT products present in the area. The availability of these tools is expected to make communities more likely to pursue active roles in the development of tourism in their communities. A Toolkit designed for a brief workshop was developed to further develop capacity in developing and managing CBT. The CBT brochure is provided in Appendix 9 and the Toolkit found in Appendix 10.

Development of S.A.V.E. Markets

One way to begin unfolding the potential of the SAVE market segment is to launch a pilot project for the improvement of relevant products and capacities.



Pilot Project

While there are several S.A.V.E. activities in the area, they are operated individually from one another. For example, the community of San Pedro has a high concentration of Spanish schools known for their reasonable tuition rates and good quality of teaching. Some of the schools support the local community by linking students with volunteer opportunities, such as teaching English at local schools, reforestation activities, working in a health clinic, etc. While each school actively promotes their own S.A.V.E. products, there is limited coordination and linkage between the schools and other organizations.

The launch of the “Voluntelingual” Project aims to officially link Spanish schools and volunteer organizations and is the first step towards the development of an integrated S.A.V.E. tourism product portfolio in Lake Atitlán. The collaboration will promote and encourage students to participate in volunteer programs and target volunteers to study Spanish in the communities, further enriching their

experience and providing greater benefits to the local communities. In addition, the project will help enhance volunteer opportunities available in the area. Currently volunteers lack the resources and contacts desired to effectively contribute during their volunteer experience - many volunteers feel their expertise is not utilized.

Supply Side Development

As a long-term development goal, it is recommended that a S.A.V.E. Center be created at a location near the lake designed to coordinate all S.A.V.E. tourism activities in the area. In an effort to minimize costs, it would be ideal to utilize an existing facility, such as the Universidad del Valle Guatemala (UVG) Altiplano campus in Sololá with classroom and laboratory space, as well as facilities for scientific researchers. The Center could also offer a number of activities and courses, such as field study in the Lake Atitlán, or environmental and cultural education programs for tourists and the local community.

Demand Side Development

During the development of the S.A.V.E. Center it is imperative that marketing activities commence, actively targeting the niche segments. Due to the S.A.V.E. market's unique composition, dispersion and motivation, the destination may need to use a variety of less conventional marketing tools. Most likely promotion tools will include a regularly updated website with tools and elements that highlight specific programs and activities, as well as brochures and up-to-date documents describing current projects and opportunities.

The complete action plan for the development of SAVE markets with budget and timeline are included in Appendix 19.1.

Atitlán Boat Mobile



The consulting team conducted a survey of tour operators to determine the range of tourist products and corresponding challenges associated with them. The surveys reveal the “Lake Tour” as one of the most popular products being promoted by tour operators. Surveys of tourists in the area revealed a gap between expectations and existing offers. The team identified significant interest in better-organized trips, flexible packages, and more visits to lake communities. Currently, all tour operators promoting a boat tours offer an identical itinerary. Five members of the GW/UVG consulting team took a tour on June

21, 2008 in an effort to assess the current service and the potential for enhanced boat offerings. Gaps were identified in the organization of ticket sale and boat access, information provided before and during the trip, opportunities for lunch and shopping, etc. Based on these observations and analysis of the potential for improvement, the GW/UVG team proposes to enhance the “Lake Tour” experience through pre-recorded narration of information about the lake and its communities; expanded itineraries to include more villages, traditional meals and refreshments on board; expanded product portfolio including sunset cruises, private parties, etc.

The complete action plan for making Pedestrian more pedestrian-friendly with budget and timeline are included in Appendix 19.2.

Pedestrian Friendly Panajachel

Special weekly events have the potential to encourage tourists to extend their stay in Lake Atitlán. Some tourists who were interviewed indicated that tuk tuks, motorcycles and other traffic on Calle Santander created a dangerous and uncomfortable environment for pedestrians. In fact, in describing the environment one tourist strongly stated that the tuk tuks were “aggressive” and “ruined the shopping experience.” In order to improve the experience of both tourists and shoppers, and in a similar vein to Chichicastenago’s twice weekly market days in which streets are shut down, Panajachel could shut down a portion of the main street once a week. It could then offer tourists a pedestrian-friendly shopping experience prompting tourists to plan their trips in the Lake Atitlán area and in Panajachel to coincide with this day.

The complete action plan for making Pedestrian more pedestrian-friendly with budget and timeline are included in Appendix 19.3.

FIGURE 14: PEDESTRIAN FRIENDLY PANAJACHEL MAP



Stay Another Day Campaign

One of the most realistic ways of increasing the economic benefits of tourism in Lake Atitlán is to extend the length of stay of visitors who are already in the destination. Currently, tourists stay in the area only

1.5 days, which is very short. The GW/UVG consulting team suggests to launch a “Stay Another Day” Campaign based on the adopted from Stay-another-day.org idea applied in the Mekong region of Cambodia, Lao PDR and Vietnam. The idea behind the program is linking together attractions and activities that benefit the local community and that have the potential to convince visitors to spend an extra day in the destination.

The main purpose of a “Stay Another Day” Campaign for Lake Atitlán is to highlight more of the attractions and experiences that the destination can offer. The conducted assessments of currently available tourist products around the lake revealed that a number of competitive attractions and experiences were underutilized. The proposed campaign can highlight these and thus enhance the experience of visitors while deepening and expanding the economic benefits of tourism. The GW/UVG team developed a prototype brochure for a “Stay Another Day” Campaign for Lake Atitlán. The brochure is illustrated below and included in Appendix 11.

The complete action plan for the launch of a “Stay Another Day” Campaign with budget and timeline is included in Appendix 19.4.

Professional Training in Event Management

During the fieldwork the consulting team established that there are very few special events that are organized in the communities around Lake Atitlán. At the same time, the rich culture of the area and the preserved traditional lifestyle of local communities are a great opportunity to use special events to diversify the tourism product portfolio.

One of the main challenges, however, seems to be the limited local capacity and experience in organizing special events in a way that will be attractive to current and potential visitors. In order to address this gap, the GW/UVG proposes the launch of a specialized professional training in event design and coordination. The training program can be organized and managed by an already existing educational institution such as the Altiplano campus of the Universidad del Valle Guatemala in Sololá. The successful launch of professional courses in event management will not only help increase the attractive cultural products in the area but can become a profitable initiative generating income by training event professionals from all over Guatemala.

Why Stay Another Day?

The Stay Another Day campaign invites you to discover more about the authentic local culture and heritage, experience the beauty of the deepest lake in Central America and explore the richness of the surrounding landscapes.

How much do you know about Lake Atitlán? With over 14 communities in close proximity, the Lake Atitlán area offers ample experiences to choose from, regardless of your budget.

Communities to Visit

Community	Atitlán	San Marcos	San Pedro	San Pablo	San Juan	San Andrés
Atitlán	✓					
San Marcos		✓				
San Pedro			✓			
San Pablo				✓		
San Juan					✓	
San Andrés						✓

Things to Do!

- Coffee Plantation
- Natural Reserve
- Natural Tour & Park
- Eco-park
- Bird-watching
- Hiking
- Zip-lining & Rappel
- Volunteerism
- Reforestation
- Agroecology
- Spanish School
- Environmental Education Program
- Cultural Experiencing

Things to See!

- Church
- Festivals & Ceremonies
- Museum
- Heritages & Architecture
- Lake Villages

Things to Buy!

- Weaving Products
- Carpets
- Wood Furniture
- Candles
- Soaps
- Coffee
- Natural Herbal Medicine
- Handmade bracelets
- Basket Weaving

Ecotourism & Nature

Activity	Atitlán	San Marcos	San Pedro	San Pablo	San Juan	San Andrés
Volunteerism	✓					
Reforestation	✓					
Agroecology	✓					
Spanish School	✓					
Environmental Education Program	✓					
Cultural Experiencing	✓					

Adventure & Sports

Activity	Atitlán	San Marcos	San Pedro	San Pablo	San Juan	San Andrés
Zip-lining	✓					
Rappel	✓					
Hiking	✓					
Bird-watching	✓					

Culture & Religion

Activity	Atitlán	San Marcos	San Pedro	San Pablo	San Juan	San Andrés
Church	✓					
Festivals & Ceremonies	✓					
Museum	✓					
Heritages & Architecture	✓					
Lake Villages	✓					

Education & Experience

Activity	Atitlán	San Marcos	San Pedro	San Pablo	San Juan	San Andrés
Spanish School	✓					
Environmental Education Program	✓					
Cultural Experiencing	✓					

Stay Another Day !!!
With a complimentary dinner...

Visit our Tourist Center and obtain your wooden *Stay Another Day* passport to qualify for discounts NOW!!!

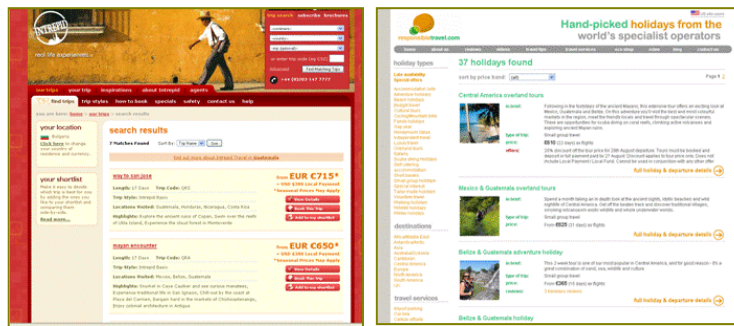
Collect four color stamps from any of our communities on your wooden *Stay Another Day* passport, and you can receive a complimentary dinner.

The complete action plan for professional training in event management with budget and timeline are included in Appendix 19.5.

CBT Distribution Channels

Community-based tourism is among the buzz phrases gaining popularity in the tourism industry, and especially in areas where tourism is seen as vehicle for economic development. There are already a number of travel websites and tour operators around the world that promote the principles of sustainable travel, and educate travelers what are CBT products and how they benefit communities. Such websites, as well as specialized tour operators can help Lake Atitlán build a set of appropriate distribution channels that will especially benefit CBT offerings. The GW/UVG consulting team has identified and listed a number of already existing channels that can easily be used. They are included in the action plan mentioned below.

The complete action plan for development of CBT distribution channels with budget and timeline are included in Appendix 19.6.



2.7 General Recommendations

In addition to the specific actions proposed and outlined above and in the appendix of this report, the GW/UVG team identified several long-term opportunities for maximized benefits through development of CBT in the region:

Establishing an Entrepreneur Grant Competition Program

A small grant competition program should be established to encourage the development of community-based tourism entrepreneurship initiatives. This program would provide small grants to innovative ideas proposed by local entrepreneurs that not only put forward the creation of quality tourism products, but incorporate community involvement and benefits. The entrepreneur grant competition can provide local entrepreneurs with opportunities to realize tourism business ideas that can otherwise be killed by the lack of available capital. In the long term, an initiative like this can stimulate the increase of small and medium sized community-based tourism enterprises.

Launch a "This month's leading attraction..." Program

A "Leading attraction" program can be instituted to recognize the diversity and richness of attractions available in the area of Lake Atitlán. The program will promote a different attraction every month by posting photos and details on the destination website, partner websites and other promotional and media

outlets. It will identify not only the most visited attractions but the newer or lesser-known places in the area. In addition to promoting the richness of tourist experiences available around Lake Atitlán the *This month's leading attraction...*” can highlight more community-owned or managed services or such that are truly dedicated to responsible operations. The leading attraction selection criteria will include the analysis of the linkages created by the attractions as well as the community participation and benefits.

Launch a Sponsorship Program for Local Cultural and Community Events

A small sponsorship program can be launched as an alternative source of resources for community events in the area. Local cultural and community events can encourage cultural exchange among local communities and visitors, and increase the attractiveness of the region. Currently due to limited resources existing events are with very limited promotion and visibility. A program that encourages small sponsorships from local or regional businesses can be mutually beneficial – it can help local community events gain visibility and popularity, and at the same time can provide an attractive venue for the promotion of sponsoring entities. In the long run, this initiative can help enrich the cultural calendar of Destination Atitlán and can help attract broader circle of domestic and foreign visitors.

Establish Stronger Linkages between Destination Lake Atitlán and Leading National and Regional Attractions

It is essential that Destination Lake Atitlán establish stronger linkages with the leading national and regional attraction. A special focus shall be given to creating linkages between national attractions and existing CBT initiatives in the destination. Packaging Lake Atitlán attractions with other popular offerings around Guatemala or the region can increase the popularity of the area as well as the flow of international visitors.

Develop Low-Impact Water Sports around Lake Atitlán

Among Lake Atitlán tourists interviewed by the consulting team, access to adventure/sports activities in Lake Atitlán ranked an average of 3.91 (between fair and good) in importance. Those who ranked Lake Atitlán's currently available adventure/sports products and services low, expressed desire for more water sports. Further, these respondents indicated that the availability of more water-related activities can motivate them to extend their stay in the area. Expanding the portfolio of water activities around Lake Atitlán to meet the demonstrated tourist demand would provide another source of revenue further contributing to the local economy. However, appropriate planning and care should be taken if the communities decide to introduce water sports. The development of low-impact water sports should only occur if it does not detract from the natural beauty of the area, increase noise pollution, or contribute negatively to other tourist's experiences, the natural environment, and desires of the community.



2.8 Summary of Part 2

In this section, community-based tourism (CBT) was discussed as a process for developing and managing tourism that engages and benefits the local community as well as tourists. Although the Strategic Development Plan for Lake Atitlán defines Community Tourism as one of the four potential market segments, CBT indicates the principles of developing and managing tourism products. CBT is not a specific market segment but a process, and tourism products in each of the four outlined segments can be developed in a way that maximizes benefits to the local community. Therefore the GW/UVG consulting team suggests a wide-scale adoption of CBT principles as a way of increasing local benefits from tourism. At the same time, it is proposed that another segment is added to the local market segment mix - S.A.V.E. (Scientific, Academic, Volunteer and Educational) tourism. This segment will substitute the Community Tourism segment originally proposed in the Plan. S.A.V.E. tourism will help the destination utilize available resources and products effectively to enrich the current product portfolio.

Definition, objectives and downsides of CBT are also discussed with emphasis on the importance of stakeholder participation. Existing examples of CBT around the lake were identified so that they can serve as a good guide to the future CBT development in the destination. Additionally, a product/market matrix with CBT highlights was introduced with the hope that it will help the destination understand its potential tourism resources and develop feasible plans. As it is often the case with CBT products, marketing of products tend to be dismissed and funds for marketing are insufficiently allocated. Thus, this report also incorporates practical suggestions on how to strengthen the distribution system for CBT products. In addition to general guidance and recommendation, this section included six specific actions that will help enhance CBT capacities and offerings around Lake Atitlán. These include a CBT toolkit and brochure, S.A.V.E. market development, introduction of low-impact water sports, introduction of pedestrian-friendly areas in Panajachel, improvement of boat tours, and launch of professional event management courses. These actions and a set of long-term recommendations are expected to further encourage sustainable tourism development in the area.

PART 3: Analysis & Strategic Solutions: *MARKETING & POSITIONING OF LAKE ATITLÁN*

3.1 Branding and Positioning

Importance of Branding and Positioning

The availability of a good and attractive tourism product portfolio is not sufficient for the success of a tourism destination. In today's competitive and dynamic world, attracting visitors is a great challenge. It requires establishing high level of awareness of the destination and establishing a memorable and emotional image that differs from that of other destinations. One of the most effective ways of achieving both is creating a strong destination brand. According to one of the leading contemporary experts in the area Simon Anholt (2002) destination branding is becoming a “crucial component of foreign and domestic policy, international relations, economic and cultural development, trade and tourism”.

Brand Response to “Soul of the Earth”: Guatemala

As part of its effort to promote and increase its tourism industry, Guatemala formulated a brand under the slogan: “Soul of the Earth.” It tries to build on the existing appeal for international backpackers and independent travelers, and develop a credible image that is attractive to the high-end cultural tourist. The brand development initiative led by Guatemala involved one of the most prominent global branding consulting companies – Interbrand. It conducted a series of focus groups to understand the perspective of a broad range of stakeholders, including tourism businesses, artists and authors, indigenous communities, and others. Findings and recommendations generated from this effort were analyzed and incorporated into the current brand of the country. This participatory approach is considered a complex but most appropriate for developing a successful destination brand.

The main objective of establishing a strong country brand is strengthening the brand identity associated with a desired destination image derived from the comparative advantages of Guatemala. The challenge comes from the fact that elements such as Mayan culture, colonial architecture, volcanoes and rainforest are characteristic to Guatemala's neighboring countries Mexico, Honduras, Belize, El Salvador and others. In order to address this challenge and still achieve a distinct brand, Guatemala needs to continue using participatory and creative ways towards distinct and memorable positioning.

Based on the already existing country brand, destinations within Guatemala should work towards strengthening their own positioning. The following steps reveal some of the principles that can help Lake Atitlán establish an attractive image that is in harmony with the already existing national brand.

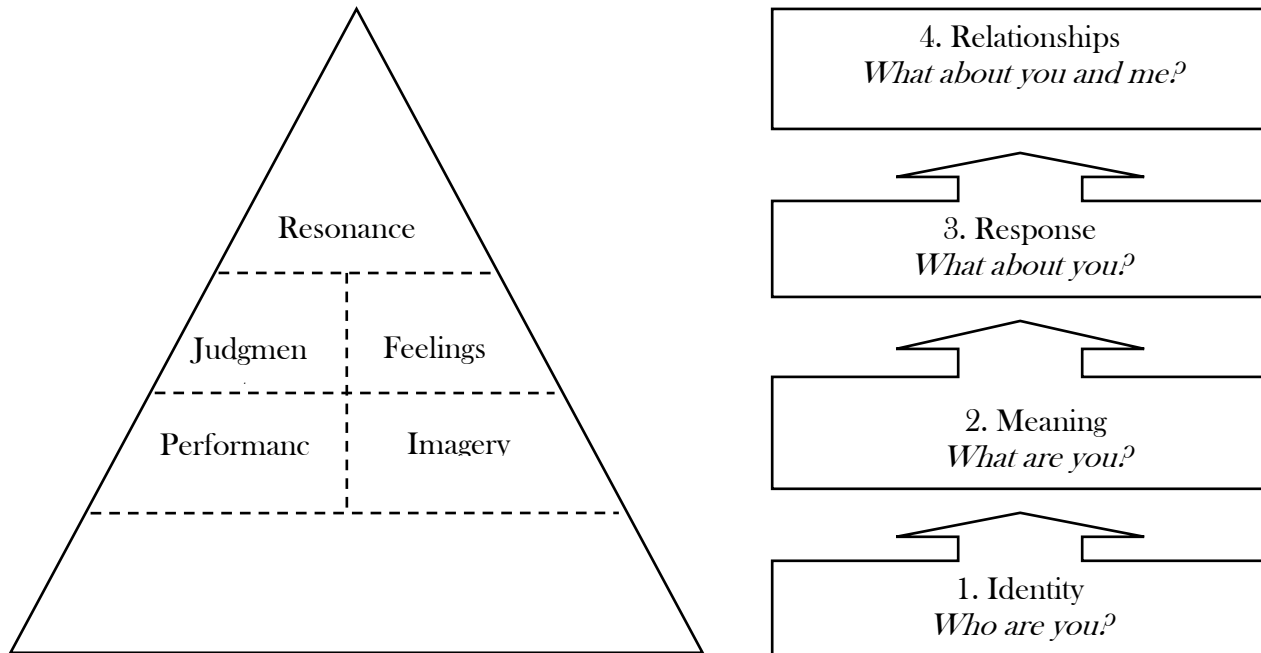
Branding & Positioning Lake Atitlán

Lake Atitlán was once called “the most beautiful lake in the world” by Aldous Huxley and the Mayan word “atitlan” means “the place where the rainbow gets its colors”. Atitlan has potential for a rich variety of water sports: fishing, swimming, diving, water skiing and boating. This, in combination with the well-preserved Mayan culture creates a unique environment that can turn into a globally competitive tourism

destination. Building a strong regional brand can create significant opportunities for Lake Atitlán in the competitive marketplace leading to greater market share and increased profits.

There are two main aspects that are of interest to entities engaged in a destination brand: (1) *What makes a brand strong?* and (2) *How do you build a strong brand?* One of the most appropriate models that provide solid guidance towards the answers of both questions is Kevin Keller's Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) model (2002). According to the CBBE model, building a strong brand can be regarded as a sequence of steps, which are brand identity, brand meaning, brand responses and brand relationships. (Keller, 2001)

FIGURE 15: BUILDING A STRONG BRAND BASED ON KELLER'S (2002) CBBE MODEL



(1) Brand Identity = *Who are you?*

When branding a product, service a place the most fundamental step is creating brand salience. Brand salience is connected to customer awareness of the brand and represents the strength of the brand's presence in the mind of the potential customer. The purpose is not to achieve general awareness, but to be remembered for specific reasons. In branding Lake Atitlán, the richness of the natural beauty of the water surrounded by volcanoes and combined with preserved Mayan culture could become a distinct combination of elements that make the destination brand stand out in the mind of people around the world.

(2) Brand Meaning = *What are you?*

Brand meaning involves establishing a brand image, i.e. the characteristics of the brand and what the brand stands for in the mind of customers. This is associated with the building of strong, favorable and unique brand associations. These are formed directly from a customer's own experiences or indirectly

through the representation in advertising or word-of-mouth. In order to build appropriate brand associations, the image/brand of Lake Atitlán should be associated not only with Panajachel, the main tourist center around Lake Atitlán, but also other attractions, such as Santa Catarina Palopo, San Antonio Palopo and Santiago Atitlán. In order to ensure consistency of brand associations local destination brand managers should work in cooperation with local and national-level travel agencies, transportation companies, airlines, hotels, and others.

(3) Brand Responses = *What about you?*

Brand responses refer to how customers respond to the brand, that is, what customers think or feel about the brand. In other words, the brand responses can be seen as the brand attitude and choice of customers. These could be rational or emotional. The rational brand judgments are strongly related to the brand quality and credibility; the emotional brand judgements are related to customers' feelings towards the brand, such as warmth, fun, excitement, security, social approval and self-respect.

In order to build evoke positive rational judgments the tourism sector in Lake Atitlán should try to achieve service standards that reduce the risk of an unsatisfactory experience/service. This could be achieved through regulations, certifications and human resource trainings that help meet customers' needs and expectations. In addition to securing positive rational judgments, the destination can engage current and potential visitors emotionally by building an image of Lake Atitlán as a warmhearted, cheerful and exciting place.

(4) Brand Relationships = *What about you and me?*

Brand relationships focus on the ultimate relationship between the product/place and the customer. This is associated with the extend to which the customer identifies themselves with the brand. This is referred to as the “brand resonance”, which can be considered as a willingness to engage with the product/destination. The very critical part of brand resonance is behavioral loyalty or the willingness of customers to purchase a product or visit a place repeatedly.

In Lake Atitlán, it is essential to create intensive and active relationships with visitors. This is possible through regular events and festivals, ensuring that the visitors would have the opportunities to visit their favorite places around the lake while experiencing new aspects of the destination. Various sports events, such as hang gliding competitions, could be held on a regular basis. Beside the biggest festival in Sololá, Nim Jij Sololá (Grand Day of Sololá) celebrated on August 15th, other indigenous festivals or ceremonies could also be designed and promoted according to the different characteristics of each lake towns.

3.2 Proposed Actions for Effective Marketing & Positioning of Lake Atitlán

In order to advance the effective marketing and positioning of Lake Atitlán region, the GW/UVG consulting team proposes a set of specific actions utilizing contemporary approaches and techniques. The following section provides brief descriptions of actions; complete action plans with budgets and timelines for each are presented in the appendix section of this report.

Branding Competition

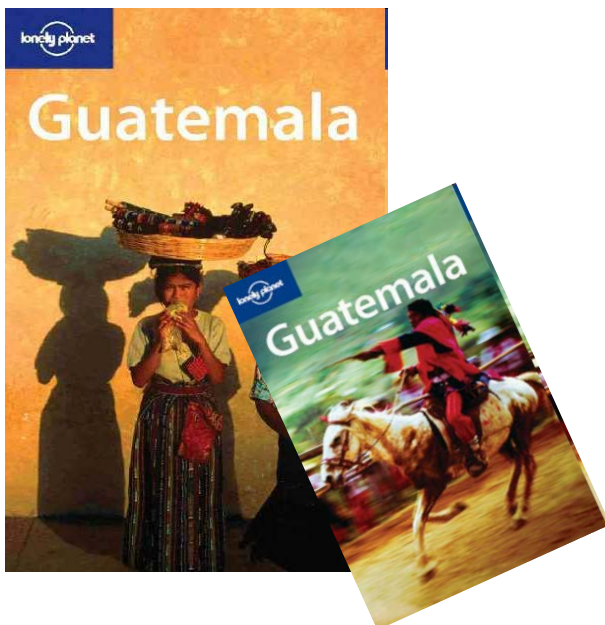


Lake Atitlán is a world class lake destination located in the highlands of Guatemala. Lake Atitlán offers many spectacular tourism products and activities, but has limited market exposure due to the limited marketing and lack of an official brand and image. Currently, the key tourism stakeholders in the area do not have unified marketing materials; the local communities have not been very actively engaged in the design or management of a destination brand. One way to involve the local community in creating a brand for the region is to launch a branding competition for the youth of the region. This will not only generate interesting and creative ideas, but will engage the families of young residents reaching out to the larger community. In order to achieve successful results of the competition and have a recognizable symbol

and brand, the competition must be set-up in a competitive and transparent manner.

The complete action plan for the organization and launch of a branding competition with budget and timeline are included in Appendix 19.7.

Marketing Distribution Strategy and Marketing Distribution Scorecard



The background research and interview with key stakeholders revealed that there is no centralized marketing committee for the region and general marketing efforts are not unified. In addition to the limited coordination among stakeholders, the lack of integrated marketing leads to limited exposure to major sources of information for tourists such as international guidebooks and magazines. The fact that the current marketing initiatives are not connected makes it impossible to assess their overall effectiveness and establish a realistic cost-benefit ration.

In order to address this gap, the GW/UVG consulting team proposes the establishment of a destination-level marketing committee within the

Sololá Commission. The existence of a unified body responsible for the conceptualizing and management of promotional efforts will lead to the development of unified pamphlets, posters and other materials that promote Lake Atitlán as a destination. In addition, the new marketing body can facilitate the process of reaching out to major media outlets such as Lonely Planet, Frommers, etc. and thus

enhance the visibility of the destination on global level. As part of its efforts the marketing committee can benefit from developing a set of marketing materials like promotional posters, itinerary brochures, etc. The GW/UVG consulting team designed and developed a sample itinerary brochure and sample posters included respectively in Appendix 12 and Appendix 13.

In addition to integrating marketing distribution, the success of destination promotion depends on careful tracking of invested resources and success. It is recommended that the proposed marketing unit adopts a marketing distribution strategy scorecard as a means of tracking and measuring the cost versus the benefit of the marketing efforts put forth by the Sololá Tourism Commission. This scorecard will enable the transaction leader of this effort to measure on a quarterly or semi-annual basis. This tool will help track where funds are coming from, what they are used for and keep track of other financial components such as an income statement and a balance sheet. The scorecard is also to be used to keep track of key monitoring and evaluation (M&E) indicators, milestones reached in the marketing efforts, any sort of supervision issues that may arise and what next steps will be undertaken for the next time period. This scorecard provides a visual snapshot and helps to focus the marketing efforts in the right area. Such a tool helps track and measure the progression of a given project, create transparency, and present hard data. If utilized efficiently and effectively, the marketing distribution strategy will present an accurate picture of cost versus the benefits of the marketing efforts put forth by the Sololá Tourism Commissions. An example scorecard is proposed in the action plan introduced below.

The complete action plan for a marketing distribution strategy with budget and timeline are included in Appendix 19.7.

Keep Lake Atitlán Beautiful Campaign

The survey conducted by the GW/UVG consulting team revealed some concern among tourists and local stakeholders about the cleanliness of the lake. Respondents in the tourist survey indicated that pollution around the lakefront as a significant turnoff. 96% of respondents stated that natural beauty of the area is a primary reason to visit and recommend Lake Atitlán as a tourism destination to friends or family. This leads to the conclusion that it is imperative that the beauty of the area be preserved and protected. There is currently no publicly-visible initiative to maintain the natural beauty and cleanliness of Lake Atitlán that is targeted at all tourists and groups who frequent the waterfront. At the same time, there are multiple groups who have an interest in cleanup and litter prevention programs but their individual projects are not connected under an all-encompassing theme that also includes tourists.

Based on background research, the GW/UVG consulting team established that studies of litter prevention programs have shown that simple reminders such as signs promoting a litter-free environment can lead to lasting



change in behavior and thus to a cleaner environment. Therefore, it is recommended to establish an ongoing beautification campaign that encourages stakeholders to take part in keeping Lake Atitlán beautiful.

The complete action plan for “Keep Lake Atitlán Beautiful” Campaign with budget and timeline are included in Appendix 19.9.

3.3 General Recommendations

In addition to the specific actions proposed and outlined above and in the appendix of this report, the GW/UVG team identified several long-term opportunities for maximized benefits through improved marketing and positioning of Lake Atitlán:

Development of a Set of Online Podcasts for Self-Guided Tours

Online podcasts are a new way to disseminate information to internet users. Millions of people download podcasts each day over a variety of topics including travel. Launching an online interactive podcast program for Lake Atitlán will help to enhance tourists’ experience. The podcasts should include information about fun things to do in Lake Atitlán, testimonials from visitors of the region and upcoming events.

Creation of a Virtual Media Corner

The destination website for Lake Atitlán should include a virtual media corner that will allow media to obtain useful information and attractive visual materials that will be used in publications. By strategically placing this information on the website and utilizing search engine optimization, the media corner will be easily accessible. Press releases about Lake Atitlán should also be written and posted regularly.

Organization of a Series of Familiarization Trips

Very few tourism related articles about Guatemala appear in major North American publications and most of them focus on crime, kidnapping, illegal immigration, weather, and political struggles. The Sololá Sub-Commission should consider sponsoring media invitations for journalists and producers to Lake Atitlán. In creating experiences for the media, the Commission will be able to influence the type of perception of journalists and, thereby, impact future coverage of Lake Atitlán. It will also create a shorter link between the Commission and the public when disasters hit the area, allowing a quicker flow of information when tourism destinations are not affected, or have been made accessible once again to travelers.

3.4 Summary of Part 3

The brand identity of lake Atitlán should be consistent with the brand image of this lake destination. Atitlán has the image of a place with exclusive natural beauty and cultural heritage. To strengthen it, it is essential to establish an active and profitable customer relationship that can be achieved through

successful branding and diversified publicity. However, currently each community has different projects that are not connected under one theme. In marketing the image of Lake Atitlán and creating a recognizable brand, it is vital that there be cooperation between all tourism stakeholders.

One way to involve the local community in creating a brand for the region is in establishing a branding competition for the youth of the region. A collaborative marketing committee should be established within the Sololá Sub-Commission to help coordinate marketing efforts of different stakeholder groups. By organizing this group, the Commission will have more control over unified marketing approaches such as “Stay another Day” and “Keep Lake Atitlán Beautiful” campaign.

Under this unified marketing committee, the Sololá Sub-Commission can undertake various marketing efforts through on and off line channels. Online Podcast and virtual Media center are examples of contemporary marketing tools that could be used.

PART 4: Analysis & Strategic Solutions: *CRISIS MANAGEMENT IN LAKE ATITLÁN*

4.1 Tourism and Crises Management

The Context of Crisis

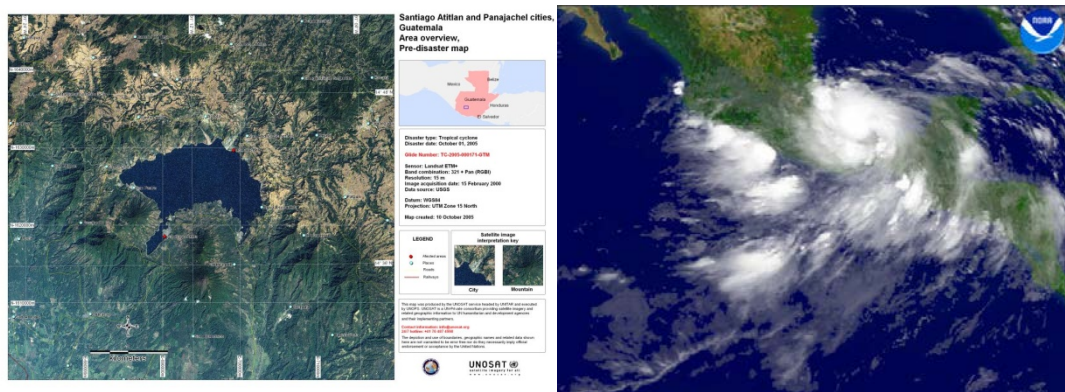
In today's world, many tourism destinations are under some level of risk associated with natural disasters, crime or terrorism. In most of the cases, destination managers choose to adopt crisis management strategies that help them deal with unusual circumstances instead of sacrificing their tourism industries.

Tourists are particularly vulnerable during crises as they are often unaware of existing recourses and protocol to cope with an unexpected situation. In addition, the tourism industry is particularly vulnerable to sudden crises-related changes in market perception. Knowledge of a crisis can result in immediate cancellations and tourists' loss of confidence in the destination. The uncertainty regarding the likelihood of a crisis may also discourage future investment decisions. In addition, the need to replace lost assets may take precedence over projects previously designed to overcome social shortcomings (ECLAC, 2003). Particularly in a developing country such as Guatemala, where local investment capital may be low, expenditures on tourism-related enterprises may only cover immediate needs for operation, without keeping disaster reduction or recovery in mind.

Risk in Guatemala

Guatemala is under a relatively high risk from natural disasters including hurricanes, volcanoes, landslides, earthquakes, and floods. The Lake Atitlán region is especially susceptible to these natural hazards due to hurricanes, subsequent flooding and land slides. According to EM-DAT, the OFDA/CRED International Disaster Database, Guatemala's most recent hurricane Stan killed 1,513 people in 2005, affected close to half a million people and caused billions of dollars in damage. The landslide caused by the rains from hurricane Stan alone buried 1,400 residents and left 5,000 homeless from Atitlán's lakeside village of Panabaj. Floods within the past twenty years have claimed 110 lives.

The Lake Atitlán region is potentially under other types of risk too. It is situated on the same continental fault line as North and South America causing occasional earthquakes. In addition, crime in the area has been at lower levels than in other parts of the country but is still a significant concern for international travelers. In light of these potential risks from natural disasters and crime, it is important for the Lake Atitlán region to adopt a crisis management strategy that includes provisions that are specifically designed for tourism. Although many crises are hard to predict, careful planning and implementation of sound disaster management strategies can reduce the potential threats and impacts. The following sections details best practice for tourism destination crisis management, action steps, and recommendations for the Lake Atitlan region based on preliminary research and fieldwork conducted on site.



Images of disaster area and hurricane Stan

Current Crisis Management Systems in Guatemala

Guatemala has an existing disaster response system with five participating institutions. A national agency known as CONRED heads the effort with a secretariat, regional department, municipality department, and local department. The decision-making group is made up of four sectors: planning, emergency services, infrastructure, and social services. For the Lake Atitlán region the four sectors are locally integrated by the Department Development Advisory Board of Sololá. In recent years, the Guatemalan Government has also taken steps to address the issue of crime by expanding the Tourism Police and establishing a specialized agency for tourist safety called ASISTUR. Despite these steps, there is still potential for more integrated actions addressing the safety of visitors and residents in the area. While the Department of Sololá currently has an intricate crisis communication and management strategy in place, there seems to be a need to expand it through the incorporation of integrated steps specifically targeted for the tourism sector.

Through interviews with various tourism stakeholders such as tour operators, representatives of the Sololá Tourism Sub-Commission and government organizations such as CONRED and ASISTUR, the GW/UVG consulting team discovered several isolated efforts for communication and management strategies during crisis situations developed based on the specific needs within each community. Among tourism service providers, interviews and research found little to no planning associated with crisis management. Some stakeholders stated that one of the main reasons the devastation from Hurricane Stan was so severe was because there was no emergency plan in place and the local population was not prepared for such a disaster. Crisis management for tourists was undertaken by external organizations and the majority of tourists were evacuated by their respective embassies.

Several gaps in tourism crisis management strategies have been identified:

- *Tourists are unaware of what to do in case of an Emergency*

Even in areas where crisis response procedures exist, there are challenges in communicating these directly to tourists. Tourism service providers indicated that tourists do not have information regarding what to do in case of crisis situations. According to various travel blogs

and tourist surveys, tourists are more aware of crime threats than natural hazards. Currently, many tourism stakeholders do not have a strategy for communicating crisis response protocol to their guests.

- *Crisis Strategies exist in various communities, but they are not shared or integrated*

In researching existing crisis management approaches in the Lake Atitlán area, the consulting team came across several localized strategies and one proposed comprehensive plan developed by ASISTUR. Many communities have created site-specific crisis response mechanisms, particularly targeted for crime. However, fieldwork observations and interviews revealed that many industry stakeholders had limited awareness of the existence of such plans and that there is no integration among the various documents developed by different communities or institutions.

- *Stakeholders are not actively involved in tourism crisis management planning*

Many tourism stakeholders, such as hotel and tour operators, can benefit from increased participation in a comprehensive crisis management strategy. Currently, the majority of stakeholders do not have crisis management plans for their operations and lack communication protocols for their guests. Most of those interviewed suggested a variety of different approaches on how they would respond to a crisis. In addition to the lack of crisis planning at the individual service provider level, there are very limited efforts to engage the local industry in an integrated effort to design and adopt destination-level disaster management procedures.

- *There is a need to strengthen the institutional mechanisms for addressing tourist crime*

Interviews with local residents and industry stakeholders revealed that the majority of tourists who become victims of crime in the area report the cases to Guatemala City police due to the difficult nature of reporting to the local police. Reports indicate that local police departments are slow and unhelpful in cases of crime against tourists. In many cases crime cases seem to remain unregistered. As a result, the reported crime rates in the Lake Atitlán area are misrepresentative of the reality. This underreporting of crime committed against tourists affects the overall crime management of the destination, especially with the subsequent reduction of police force and capacity building.

4.2 Crisis Management: Natural Disaster and Crime - Prevention, Mitigation and Recovery

Many of the leading tourism destinations around the world have experienced or are likely to experience natural disasters, crime waves or terrorist threats. They have found ways to adapt to situations of elevated risk without sacrificing their tourism industries. In many cases, this has been achieved through the adoption of crisis management strategies based on careful planning and full-scale involvement of industry

stakeholders. The following section reviews some best practices extracted from the experience of other crisis-prone tourism destinations around the world, including Maldives, Indonesia, Fiji, Turkey, the US state of Florida and others. Analysis of successful crisis management processes revealed that they are usually divided in four groups: prevention, mitigation and recovery.

Disaster Prevention

Preventing the devastating effects of disasters whenever possible should be the first step to ensuring the safety of tourists and protection of the industry as a whole. Prevention strategies depend on the nature of the expected risks. In dealing with earthquakes and hurricanes particular attention is given to sound construction based on appropriate building guidelines and zoning regimes. Although no building is completely secure against the most violent storms and tectonic movements, structural engineering and designs have evolved and continue to improve, offering increased security in the face of such risks. Floods can be avoided by building away from low-lying areas and researching soil type, density and vegetation, which provides vital information on the likelihood of landslides.

In addition to the purely technical techniques soft measures can be taken as part. Additionally, awareness programs for tourists and preparedness planning such as training of personnel, dissemination of warnings, response to warnings and testing of plans can all be used to decrease vulnerability to such hazards. Vigilantly monitoring for political strife and potential upheaval in the area and surrounding

countries as well as the spread of infectious diseases a hazard becoming more than a threat.

BARBADOS



THE COMPREHENSIVE DISASTER MANAGEMENT STRATEGY OF BARBADOS

The hurricane season of 2005 produced 23 named storms, 13 of which grew into hurricanes. Seven of these developed into major hurricanes and three eventually reached the most destructive category 5. According to a team of forecasters from Colorado State University this trend is set to continue with temperature increases in the Atlantic Ocean. The Caribbean has the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CEDA) in place to strategically tackle the effects of devastating hurricanes in the region. In 2006 the government of Barbados teamed up with the CDEA, the Ministry of Tourism, and the Barbados Tourism Association to develop contingency plans for the tourism sector in lieu of future threats. Through a collaborative effort a Comprehensive Disaster Management (CDM) Strategy was put into action. Recognizing the significance of engaging all sectors and stakeholders in the industry to work together and the importance tourism has to the economy was a driving force in the creation of the strategy. The multi-hazard plan was far reaching and touched on many sectors and delivered three critical outputs to the tourism industry:

- A Draft Tourism Sector Annex to the National Hurricane Plan of Barbados
- A Multi-Hazard Disaster Planning Framework for the Tourism Sector
- A Draft Framework for Consequence Management with a Focus on the ever present Threat of Terrorism

The main goal of the project was to contribute to the reduction of the vulnerability of the tourism sector in the Caribbean to natural

THE EMERGENCY COORDINATING COMMITTEE OF THE MALDIVES

The Maldives, a small group of islands in the Indian Ocean, is a country heavily reliant on tourism. The industry is reported to contribute 30% directly and 70% indirectly to GDP providing 25,000 jobs. The devastating impact of the Tsunami in January 2004 caused damage for more than US\$350 million and illustrated the vulnerability of the islands to a natural disaster. Since the disaster the government has invested heavily in creating a tourism sector strategy and disaster management plan, which considers a risk-reduction approach and involves building the capacity to reduce vulnerability and loss while enhancing sustainable development. Vulnerability and Risk Assessment, and an effective Early Warning System are both of extreme importance to risk reduction, and both of these activities are currently being undertaken for the Maldives under the guidance of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

Understanding the need for a collaborative approach, the Ministry of Tourism assembled all necessary stakeholders: government, resorts, private entities, communities, citizens, civil society and developed a plan from which to move forward. The Ministry established an Emergency Coordinating Committee (ECC) and Tourism Emergency Operations Center (TEOC) to serve as a focal point for the industry in the event of a crisis. The committee was designed to be tourism-specific and to work closely with the National Disaster Management Organization (NDMO). The goal was the growth of sustainable tourism in the Maldives with a specific strategic objective of creating a disaster-resilient tourism sector. This was achieved through a framework with six intermediate results culminating in the development of:

- Crisis Communication Procedures
- Environment and Safety Procedures
- Vulnerability Assessment
- Fiscal and Interagency measures established
- Capacity Building Programs
- Recovery guidelines

The ECC then appointed a leader to steer and coordinate with key stakeholders and agencies and located an operations center with all necessary equipment. The function of the committee was to command, coordinate, communicate and control all efforts to prepare, mitigate and

THE MALDIVES



Crisis Mitigation

Even with sound prevention, crises occur and when they do, a destination needs solid mitigation that limits the loss of life, natural resources, infrastructure and superstructure. The foundation of effective mitigation strategy is in participatory planning that includes local and state governments, the private

sector, stakeholders, as well as local communities. This is essential in identifying specific mitigation needs and addressing resource availability to ensure swift action in times of crisis.

Mitigation strategy includes two steps –short-term and long-term – which, therefore, leads to post-recovery phase. The short-term strategy encompasses actions that need to be taken immediately after a disaster has occurred. The long-term strategy includes the steps that should be taken the first days after a disaster has occurred and what steps will lead to recovery phase.

If a mitigation strategy is proactive and based on a coordinated prepared plan, damages and loss of life can be prevented. By assessing the potential crisis and impact, natural disaster can be predicted and steps can therefore be taken to mitigate those damages.

In preparing a relevant mitigation strategy for the Lake Atitlán area, there are several goals identified through research and fieldwork of crisis mitigation strategies. There are five important steps that should be included in mitigation planning.

1) Increase Awareness

One of the most important steps for developing mitigation strategies in the Lake Atitlán region is to increase the level of awareness in communities about the potential for crisis situations. The use of a public education campaigns is a great way to raise awareness in local communities. Furthermore, the use of trainings and workshops can be used to develop specific capacity and skills among industry stakeholders.

2) Reduce impacts

The reduction of impacts from disaster and crisis situations can be achieved through the planning of appropriate infrastructure, which withstands disasters and prevents loss of superstructure. This is possible through programs for zoning and building guidelines in the Atitlán area. It is also very important to provide for training of construction companies and workers to make sure they use special materials and techniques that would be resistant to such disasters.

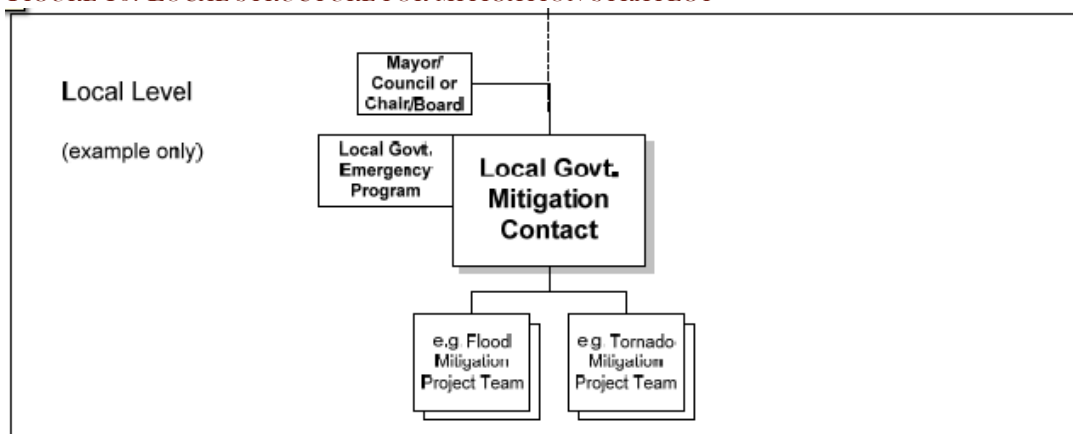
3) Improve emergency communication

Sound communication during a crisis is paramount to effective mitigation. It also ensures that reliable information is shared with all stakeholders and the media. There are some strategic steps that can be taken to improve the emergency communication. One possibility is to develop a public alert system that ensures fast dissemination of information in disaster-hit communities.

4) Grow and Develop Partnerships

A very important element of a future mitigation strategy for Lake Atitlán is ensuring good partnerships on local, national and international level. Establishing and growing strong cooperation with important institutions and organizations with capacity to help in a case of crisis enhances the effectiveness of the tourism industry. Examples of such partnership organizations include first-response teams such as fire department, police, army; international relief organizations; and volunteer non-governmental organizations.

FIGURE 16: LOCAL STRUCTURE FOR MITIGATION STRATEGY



Destination Recovery

Whether a disaster will damage the tourist industry for a long or short period of time, depends on the processes of recovery. Disaster recovery strategies incorporate actions ensuring sustainable redevelopment of damaged facilities and infrastructure accompanied by consistent and open communication that rebuilds the image of the place.

Sustainable Redevelopment

Sustainable redevelopment best practices incorporate many processes and the following section summarizes some of the ones that seem of great importance for the Lake Atitlán area.

Assessment of Losses

After a crisis, particularly natural disaster or civil unrest, it is necessary to estimate the direct damage to assets as well as indirect losses experienced by the tourism industry. This is a crucial starting point for rebuilding a destination, particularly in projecting a timeframe and setting goals for recovery and restoring pre-crisis conditions. More specifically, assessment could include damage from assets and infrastructure such as hotels, guesthouses, historical attractions, transportation vehicles, or docks (Beirman, 2003). The data can be used for comparison with pre-crisis conditions and determining what the needs are for recovery, as well as when the goals have been reached.

Aside from physical assets, environmental specialists can have an important role in assessing the disaster impact on natural resources.

Indirect Losses

Indirect losses can also have significant impact on the tourism industry, as they often come about as a consequence of the direct impact and can also be incorporated in loss assessment. These secondary effects could include potential cancellations of reservations from abroad and the costs of launching promotional campaigns to attract more tourists during destination recovery. With decreased arrivals support services such as taxis, restaurants, service providers and other local businesses also incur losses.

Reconstruction

Repair of infrastructure, rebuilding, and financing are all key elements of recovery. However, rebuilding must be strategic in planning, particularly in avoiding affected or potential vulnerable areas. Building techniques and construction materials must also have disaster impact reduction in mind along with planning of appropriate construction zones. One factor that led to increased deaths at Lake Atitlán was the fact that many indigenous communities built homes in susceptible areas without considering potential disasters. Vegetation, particularly trees and shrubbery with strong root systems—such as jatropha or bamboo—can reduce the impact of mudslides and erosion by keeping the soil intact (*Ecopreneur Database*, 2008). Therefore reforestation of deforested slopes in vulnerable regions can help shield communities and limit the impact of future disasters.

Employment

Although there is commonly loss of employment following a crisis, this loss can temporarily be compensated during the recovery period, by engaging tourism sector workers in cleaning and infrastructure recovery tasks. However, in small economies, the labor force in the construction sector may be insufficient in carrying out the level of reconstruction required by hotels and other tourism sites. To fill this gap, machinery and equipment may be imported from abroad, which might not relieve and could possibly aggravate pre-existing employment problems (Hall et al., 2003).

Tourism Industry Recovery Training

It seems that most crisis management strategies in tourism are geared towards large-scale hotels, airlines, and tour companies. However, it must be recognized that small-scale tourism businesses are faced with the same crisis and may need additional support to recover. They are often ignored due to the belief that they can simply close for bad times and return to farming, fishing, or other activities. However, business failure rates of this small scale, local businesses increase dramatically after natural disasters due to building damage, inventory, access, and general interruption of commerce that increase reliance upon these coping mechanisms.

One strategy to support entrepreneurs in restarting their small businesses is providing operational and capacity needs in the destination recovery period. For example, tourist destination Arugam Bay in Sri Lanka was severely damaged by the tsunami in 2004. Large and small-scale hoteliers in particular were faced with destruction and an upcoming high season. Donors, NGOs, and other stakeholders in Arugam Bay's tourism industry provided entrepreneurs with direct business relief - distribution of large camping tents, refrigerators, stoves, beds, to aid in the recovery efforts. As in the Lake Atitlán area tourism businesses are mostly small-scale, it could be efficient to consider specific actions for small business support.

Post-Crisis Communication

Post-crisis communication best practices incorporate a variety of processes and the following section summarizes some of the ones that seem most appropriate for the Lake Atitlán area.

Maintaining Open Communication

The instantaneous nature of global media can result in both opportunities and challenges for tourist authorities. Quick media response and outreach can mitigate adverse publicity from the beginning; ongoing communication through the recovery phase can become an important factor in restoring the confidence in a destination. The important condition for this is following carefully-planned steps, which can take the form of a series of press releases, briefings, or instituting other channels of communication such as special online crisis newsletters that help keep the media and the public updated. Although it is important to be honest and open with the media, in circumstances where national or tourist security could be compromised, it can be appropriate to share selective pieces of information. Therefore, having some of the information ready for the media would benefit reporters by facilitating their research and create an atmosphere of cooperation between the destination authorities and the media without compromising safety measures. This cooperation is crucial in that it would encourage the extension of media coverage into the restoration and recovery process.

Recovery Marketing: Regaining “Peace of Mind”

The perception of safety and security is often a major determinant in a traveler’s decision to visit a destination. Marketing is especially important in restoring confidence in a destination and repositioning its image to demonstrate its ability to once again receive tourists.

Isolation Marketing

In order to combat perceptions that the entire area has been devastated by a crisis and limit media exaggeration, destinations can highlight alternative sites and locations that are unaffected. This can be achieved by hosting large groups of reporters and travel industry professionals to the site to witness firsthand the devastation of the earthquake and discover that most tourist attractions are still intact. The significance of having tourism stakeholders present is that they could potentially serve as an additional marketing channel. More specifically, tour operators, travel retailers and wholesalers who are knowledgeable about a destination can alleviate consumer concerns and sell the destination. With direct experience at the site, they can provide more detailed information on the current situation and recovery efforts. Involving industry leaders and providing testimonies can serve as a valuable enhancement during briefings.

Reintroduction and Repositioning of Destination

After a crisis, the destination needs to be reintroduced to the public without denying the existence of the crisis itself. In crisis situations, partnerships and alliances are put to the test, as one or perhaps all involved stakeholders have to engage in intensive marketing programs to reintroduce the destination. Collaboration among tourism stakeholders—fr
developing and offering discounts promotional
Fiji presented below demonstrates the effective
serve as an example for steps that Lake Atitlán
management team.

FORMING PARTNERSHIP IN FIJI

In Fiji, tourism industry recovery was essential after two political coups in 1987 and 2000. The tourism industry responded by forming an association known as the Tourism Action Group (TAG) to coordinate marketing and pricing policies for hotels, attractions, resorts, airlines, and car rental companies during the recovery phase. The efforts were highly centralized and coordinated by the government and the private sector of the tourism industry to stimulate a price-driven recovery (Beirman,



Voluntourism

Voluntourism provides tourists with a unique tourism opportunity while feeding necessary and direct assistance to the affected area. This form of alternative tourism reflects changes in preferences of international tourists from mass packaged forms of tourism to demanding more authentic forms of travel experience. The “new tourist” can be characterized by their “need to escape from everyday routines in a bid to achieve some form of fulfillment” (Stoddart and Rogerson, 2004). The percentage of travelers planning to volunteer on vacations in 2007 nearly doubled from the previous year, jumping from 6 to 11 percent according to the latest poll by website *Travelocity*. For Lake Atitlán in particular, volunteer tourism could be beneficial for recovery and reintroducing the destination by attracting a new segment of tourists that attempts to add value to the area.

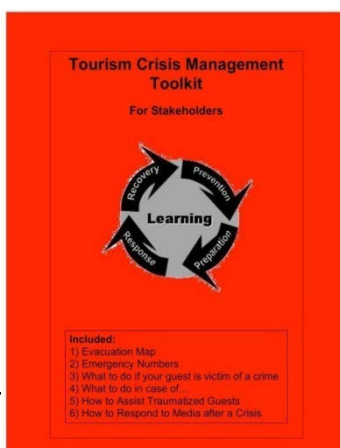
Promoting Existing Security Actions

For destinations where crime and general tourist safety is sometimes a concern, marketing to overcome fears and negative perceptions becomes increasingly important. In alleviating misperceptions about the magnitude of the problem, the destination can promote activities within the country that combat the issue. ASISTUR could effectively appeal to tourists and overcome their fears of crime promoting awareness that the government acknowledges the issue and is taking action to put the safety of tourists first. A sample crisis awareness poster is available in Appendix 14.

4.3 Proposed Actions for Effective Crisis Management in Lake Atitlán

In order to advance crisis management preparedness and capacity of the tourism industry in Lake Atitlán, the GW/UVG consulting team proposes a set of specific actions utilizing best practices from destinations in different parts of the world. The following section provides brief descriptions of actions; complete action plans with budgets and timelines for each are presented in the appendix section of this report.

Crisis Management Toolkit for Stakeholders



One of the clearly stated needs by the client and the stakeholders is preparedness for crises. Service providers such as hotels, restaurants, tour operators and others are the first point of contact for tourists in a case of emergency and need to have the capacity and resources to provide the needed support.

In order to respond to that need the GW/UVG consulting team developed a Crisis Management Toolkit that can be used as material for general training of staff at all levels in crisis procedures. The Toolkit is meant to serve as a clear reference for long-term use by industry stakeholders, whose businesses may include many employees or experience high employee turn-over rates. The toolkits include various components that address the need for more far-reaching communication of tourism crisis management strategies around the Lake Atitlán area.

The complete Crisis Management Toolkit for Stakeholders is included in Appendix 18.

The complete action plan for the distribution of the stakeholder crisis management toolkit with budget and timeline are included in Appendix 19.11

Crisis Communication Campaign

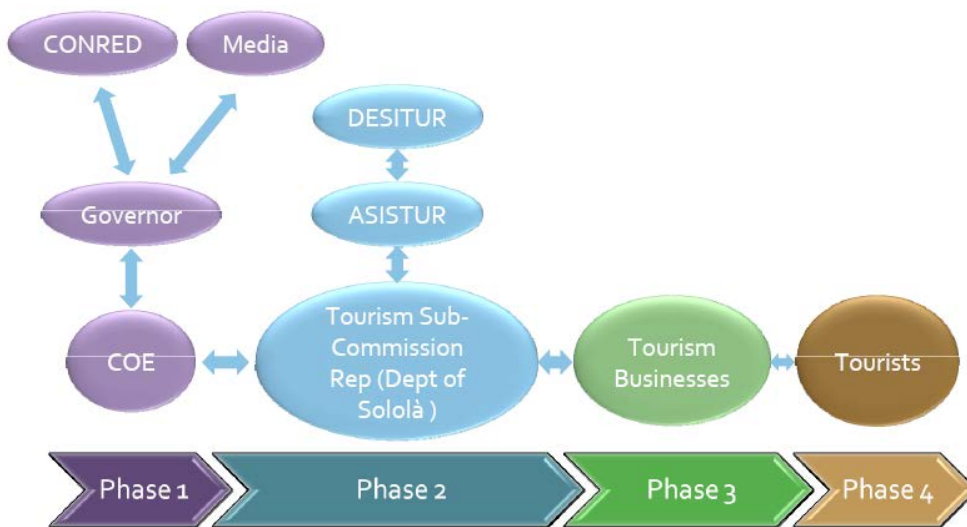
As stated earlier, one of the greatest potential gaps in cases or disaster are in communication. One of the clearly stated needs in this project was the establishment of clear channels for communication that would function in emergency situations. As discussed earlier, in crisis situations communication is important at two levels: first, among the stakeholders within the destinations; and second, between the destination and the media. To respond to that need, the GW/UVG consulting team developed a specialized Crisis Communication Toolkit, which a series of guidelines and templates for communication with the media. These include sample crisis announcement news release, guidelines for disaster news announcements and others. In addition to this, the consulting team developed a proposed system for communication flow in cases of crises (illustrated below).



The complete Crisis Management Toolkit for Stakeholders is included in Appendix 17.

The complete action plan for the distribution of the crisis communication toolkit with budget and timeline are included in Appendix 19.10.

FIGURE 17: PROPOSED CRISIS COMMUNICATION SYSTEM



4.4 General Recommendations

In addition to the specific actions proposed and outlined above and in the appendix of this report, the GW/UVG team identified several long-term opportunities for improved crisis management preparedness of the tourism industry in the Lake Atitlán area:

Website development and emergency communication plan

The team’s research revealed that there are no information outlets for tourists that provide updated guidance on current safety concerns or natural disasters. One of the opportunities for improved sense of safety for tourists is the development of a specialized security page linked to the main destination website. A link on the front page will lead to a page on security. The purpose will be two fold: The permanent page will detail the safety of the region in terms of crime and updated reports on what local authorities are doing to combat crime and the success they are having. The page will also detail areas to avoid, what to do, and who to contact in case of a crime. In the unlikely event of a natural disaster the second aspect of the webpage will be a flashing link on the front page indicating updated information is available. By clicking on the link, parties will be directed to a crisis assessment page offering reliable and up-to-date information on the crisis. This page will target tourists, media, tour-operators, and anyone with interest or ties to the region. Subsequent updates, initially posted daily, will detail the progress, how to donate or provide assistance, and when it is safe for tourists to return. The website could be promoted through a poster campaign featuring posters as the one included in Appendix 14.

Crisis Response Capabilities

With the establishment of a cohesive crisis communication strategy, key individuals need to be identified in each municipality to coordinate an emergency evacuation of tourists in the event of a disaster. Other

crucial players include the transportation sector, especially boat taxis transporting tourists from communities to Panajachel and the two hotels in Panajachel cited as collection points. To guarantee cohesion between municipalities and the crisis management team during an emergency evacuation it is essential to ensure that crisis coordinators have the necessary equipment to safeguard a smooth and orderly crisis management. These tools should include generators to assure a reliable power source, and radios and satellite phones to maintain open communication channels with the crisis communication team.

Emergency Crisis Fund

The creation of a disaster fund can assist with recovery and offsetting expenses incurred by stakeholders during a crisis. Hotels, for example, have been identified to house and feed tourists in case of an emergency and boat taxis to assist by transporting tourists from lakeside communities to Panajachel. These key players need to have assurances that they will be reimbursed for their efforts to ensure their role and swift action in case of evacuation. The fund is also designed to secure resources for immediate crisis response needs and will assist in the marketing and image recovery effort for the region. The fund will initially gain investment from donors and future funding could be adopted through a percentage tax on tourism-related purchases.

“Report a Crime” Hotline

To ensure prompt response to tourism crime a direct hotline to ASISTUR and DESISTUR will offer tourists a reliable source of assistance in reporting crimes to the police to ensure accurate records, help with transportation and housing in the event the victim cannot afford to pay for these services, aid with contacting a foreign embassy (if needed), and support through often stressful situations. Contact information will be included on posters widely distributed to stakeholders in the region and visible to tourists in hotels, restaurants, and tour operator offices.

Early Warning System

The better-prepared communities are for natural disasters the less impact there will be on the populous, tourists, and tourist businesses. Education on fast, up-to-date information on storms or any other potential threat will better prepare communities for potential threats. Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CEDA), for example, provides updated information on Hurricane movements across the Atlantic . <http://www.cdera.org/>. It is also recommended to keep up with new detection techniques which are constantly being updated to forecast earthquakes and volcanic activity.

Launch a Campaign “Promoting Peace of Mind”

Observations and interviews conducted by the consulting team revealed the existence of different elements of crisis management in the Lake Atitlán. Fieldwork revealed the existence of several specialized institutions with some level of preparedness and specialized documents such as crisis plans or strategies. Most of these institutions or documents were operating on local level and were not collaborating with other industry entities. In addition, information on such institutions or plans is not available, which was proved by the fact that the GW/UVG team was unaware of their existence until it actually met in person with the responsible individuals.

In order to improve the awareness of both industry stakeholders and tourists, the team recommends the launch of a specialized campaign that promotes peace of mind. A sound communication strategy can help all stakeholders stay informed of new ideas and best practices around the lake, share forums on how communities are coping with specific problems (i.e. crime prevention and mitigation techniques) and offer periodic educational workshops to ensure basic preparedness of stakeholders. The proposed campaign is designed to continuously evolve with the changing needs of communities and stakeholders. The workshops offered as part of the campaign will fall under two categories prevention or mitigation.



Promote Peace of Mind ...

4.5 Summary of Part 4

This section details best practices for crisis management, action steps, and recommendations for the Lake Atitlán region.

Crisis management strategies are mainly divided in three areas: prevention, mitigation and recovery. Preventing disasters is the first step to ensure the safety of the tourists and protection of the industry as a whole. Effective mitigation strategy means having a strategy for responding to a crisis in a way that involves all tourism stakeholders and limits the loss of life and resources. Destination recovery includes steps towards bringing the capacity and processes in the destinations to pre-disaster levels.

Key action steps for crisis mitigation include strengthening local capacity for emergency, establishing tourism crisis team, adopting crisis communication practices and increasing the preparedness of employees in the sector. Effective and constant communications mitigate negative publicity. Extensive cooperation with media is key for the recovery of the destination image.

Due to the isolated nature of existing strategies in Lake Atitlán, the consulting team recommended launching a campaign “Peace of Mind” which will be served as a tool for bringing stakeholder together. Crisis management toolkit for stakeholders is also proposed to effectively reach the tourists through the

chain of communication. Furthermore, website development and building response capability are also recommended for the Atilán region to cope with every possible disaster.

PART 5: Analysis & Strategic Solutions: *DEVELOPING A REGIONAL DESTINATION MANAGEMENT STRATEGY*

5.1 Creating a Regional Destination Management Organization

Numerous diverse stakeholders provide services to the tourism community in Lake Atitlán. However, often they do not communicate with each other. This has especially become evident in research on crisis communications, as well as CBT development. Currently, the Sololá Tourism Sub-Commission's mandate is to manage, coordinate and support the activities and initiatives of the private, public, and international donor sectors to orientate and develop tourism in the region. In large, the role of this newly formed institution is to implement the Tourism Development Plan for Lake Atitlán. However, many stakeholders indicated that they are not aware of the existence of the Sub-Commission or its role in tourism development. In addition, there are some gaps between key stakeholders in linking their products as a result of a fragmented communications system.

A manager to lead the Sub-Commission will begin the following months. As part of the implementation of the plan, we recommend the adoption of an integrated destination management and marketing approach to facilitate the implementation of the recommended actions in this report and to collaborate in the overall tourism development strategy. The creation of a Regional Destination Management Organization (DMO) aligns with Strategy 12 of the Tourism Development Plan for Lake Atitlán, the "creation and adaptation of infrastructure for tourism information." A destination management system will facilitate a collaborative, sustainable approach that will include all the key stakeholders.

What is Destination Management?

Destination management is a coordinated management system that includes every aspect of a destination. Some examples include but are not limited to pricing, marketing, advertising, amenities, access and attractions. Together all entities work for the common success of the entire destination. In order for the pieces of a destination to come together, cooperation and participation must be coordinated amongst all stakeholders. When all elements are working together it helps avoid duplication of efforts by various individuals in regards to training, visitor services, promotion, gap analysis and business support. Destination management systems create a common goal among all destination players.

What is a DMO?

The role of the destination management organization (DMO) is to guide and coordinate others' ideas into a common rational strategy that can be implemented by all parties. The role of the DMO is not to control the stakeholders but be the leader gathering and connecting the ideas of others, bringing together resources and expertise and a degree of objectivity to move the destination forward. DMOs seek to manage and develop stakeholders, never control the destination. Destination management is not a system that can be applied the same everywhere; it is a complex system that varies from destination to destination.

The Blackstone Valley Tourism Council in Rhode Island, USA is one example of a DMO.

Blackstone Valley Tourism Council, Rhode Island, USA

The Blackstone Valley is a river valley, historically significant as the birthplace of the American Industrial revolution. This distinct geographic and heritage area is a designated National Heritage Corridor which comprises of nine different communities. The Blackstone Valley Tourism Council is a non-profit organization, which is responsible for bringing together these communities to develop and co-ordinate sustainable tourism. Blackstone Valley Tourism Council has recently received UNWTO's best Certification for Excellence in Tourism Governance.

See www.blackstonevalleytourismcouncil.com

SOURCE: THE WORLD TOURISM ORGANIZATION: A GUIDE TO DESTINATION MANAGEMENT, DESTINATION MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION

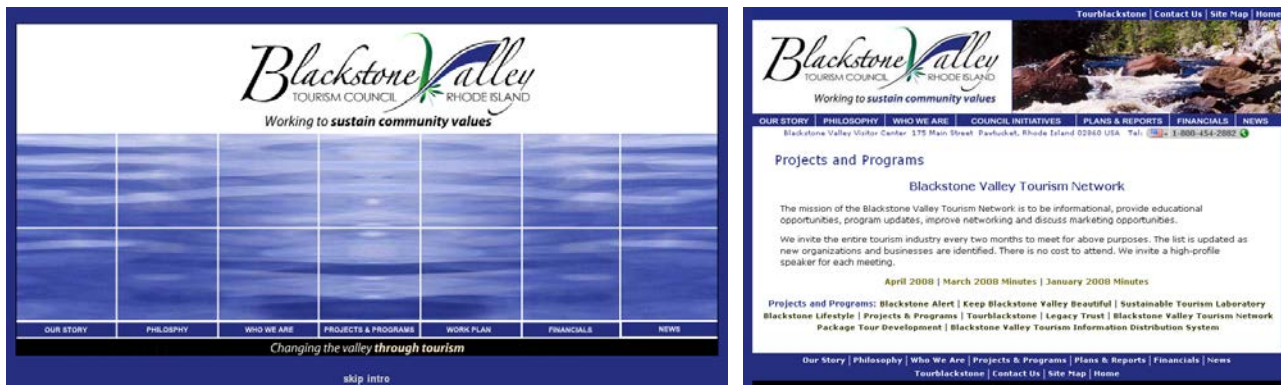
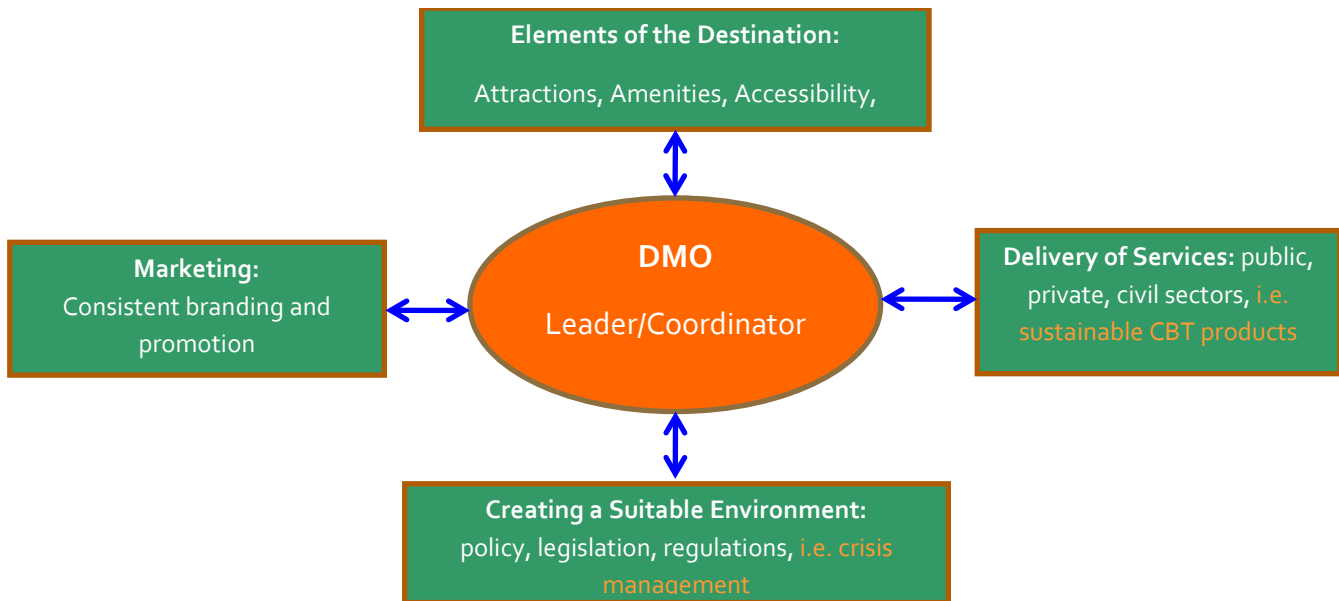


FIGURE 18: DMO DIAGRAM



SOURCE: THE WORLD TOURISM ORGANIZATION: A GUIDE TO DESTINATION MANAGEMENT

Two of a DMO's most important functions are facilitating partnerships within the industry and collaborating a unified vision of the destination and its success and as a strategic leader in developing and

marketing the destination national and internationally. A DMO is in charge and control of the success of a destination, however, unlike most other industries, the DMO does not own the product it is promoting, nor does it have actual control over the destination. Its goals include achieving return on investment, market growth, brand distinction, shareholder benefits and quality products.

According to the developed by the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Guide to Destination Management (2007), Destination Management Organizations generally fall into one of the following categories:

- National Tourism Authorities (NTAs) or Organizations (NTOs), responsible for management and marketing of tourism at a national level.
- Regional, provincial or state DMOs (RTOs), responsible for the management and/or marketing of tourism in a geographic region defined for that purpose, sometimes but not always an administrative or local government region such as a county, state or province.
- Local DMOs, responsible for the management and/or marketing of tourism based on a smaller geographic area or city/town.

Based on the provided by UNWTO guidance and the analyzed characteristics of Lake Atitlán as a tourism destination, the GW/UVG consulting team recommends the establishment of a regional level DMO. The following illustration details the specific roles and functions that fall under the scope of a regional DMO.

TABLE 12: DMO ROLES

	National	Regional	Local
Role	INGUAT	Lake Atitlán Regional DMO	Community/ Municipal Organization
Destination promotion, including branding and image	✓	✓	
Strategy, research and development	✓	✓	✓
Campaigns to drive business, particularly to SMEs	✓	✓	
Unbiased information services	✓	✓	✓
Operation/facilitation of bookings		✓	✓
Destination coordination & management		✓	✓
Visitor information and reservations		✓	✓
Training and education		✓	✓
Business advice		✓	
Product “start-ups”		✓	✓
Events development and management		✓	✓
Attractions development and management		✓	✓

SOURCE: THE WORLD TOURISM ORGANIZATION: A GUIDE TO DESTINATION MANAGEMENT

Lake Atitlán is well positioned to start developing a governance structure for a DMO. In creating a governance structure, the destination should put emphasis on efficiency, return on investment, and the role of the market. It is for this reason that a public-private partnership may be the best fit. The role of the DMO is one that will provide assistance to develop and maintain the partnership. The UNWTO (2007) outlines a number of options for the structure of the destination management entity based on the appropriate level of responsibility and involvement distributed between the public and the private sector:

- Governance Structures for DMO
- Department of single public authority
- Partnership of public authorities, services by partners
- Partnership of public authorities, serviced by a joint management unit
- Public authority outsourcing delivery to private companies
- Public-private partnership for certain functions, in the form of a non-profit company

- Association or company funded purely by a private sector partnership.

In choosing the most appropriate model Lake Atitlán should take into account the specifics of the public and the private sector, including their strengths and weaknesses revealed in the following table:

TABLE 13: STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESS OF TYPES OF GOVERNANCE

Strengths	
Public sector	Private sector
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long term strategic approach • Destination awareness creation • Public realm management • SMME support • Quality assurance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short term tactical approach • Sales focus • Customer relationship management • Focus on market opportunities • Rapid decision making • Entrepreneurial
Weaknesses	
Public sector	Private sector
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lacks a sharp focus on delivering new business • Poor at generating commercial income • Risk averse • Tolerates poor performance • Slow to take decisions • Distrusts private sector and the profit motive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lacks a concern for the wider public good • Limited interest in planning for the longer term • Has inadequate resources • Frustrated by public sector

SOURCE: THE WORLD TOURISM ORGANIZATION: A GUIDE TO DESTINATION MANAGEMENT, DESTINATION MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION

Steps to Creation of a DMO

The first step in the creation of a DMO is a Destination Management Plan (DMP). The DMP outlines the strategy for building partnerships from key stakeholders that includes steps that:

- Integrate the actions of separate organizations;
- Confirm and strengthen the link between strategy and action;
- Apply the DMO’s knowledge and expertise to the project planning of other organizations;
- Foster an evidence-based and learning approach to destination promotion and management.

5.2 System for Measuring Excellence in Destinations (SMED)

With the constant growth of tourism around the globe one of the biggest challenges in the industry is balancing growth with sustainability. To provide leadership in addressing this challenge, UNWTO in partnership with the World Center for Excellence of Destinations designed a System for Measuring Excellence in Destinations (SMED). The main purpose of SMED is to provide destinations with a set of principles (Appendix 15) that ensure the sustaining or enhancing of the geographical character of places – their environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage and the well-being of their residents. In addition to the guiding principles, SMED allows destinations to measure their success and identify the areas they need to improve.

Adopting SMED for Lake Atitlán

One of the greatest advantages that Lake Atitlán has is that it is at the beginning of the process of establishing itself as a destination. This offers the unique opportunity to incorporate from the start the most contemporary standards for sustainable development as provided by the leading global organization in the industry - UNWTO. If Lake Atitlán decides to adopt SMED it will gain two fundamental advantages:

- 1) The guiding principles of SMED will guide the strategic steps that the Lake Atitlán will be making towards increasing its competitiveness as a destination while balancing the sustainable use of its valuable resources, and
- 2) The institutionalization of a sophisticated system for measurement of excellence will facilitate the constant monitoring of its success towards achieving the strategic goals.

In addition to an opportunity to incorporate the most contemporary and widely accepted principles for destination excellence, Lake Atitlán will gain another advantage. It will be the first destination in Latin America to adopt and follow UNWTO's SMED. This will help strengthen its image in the industry as a destination that is devoted to sustainable growth and preservation of geographical character.

Testing SMED in Lake Atitlán

One of the main activities that the GW/UVG consulting team conducted during the fieldwork was conduct a specialized stakeholder survey featuring the twelve Guiding Principles of the System for Measuring Excellence in Destinations (SMED). The survey measured the performance of the Lake Atitlán area as a tourist destination and rated the importance of each principle for the destination.

Stakeholders in the Lake Atitlán area were invited to complete a self-administered questionnaire (Appendix 16), which asked them to rate the performance of the destination on each of the twelve principles and the importance that each principle has for the destination. In addition to the main set of questions a brief section collected demographic information and information about the organization, which the respondent represents. The questionnaire was translated into Spanish by representatives of the UVG consulting team. During the field research from June 17 to 25, a total of 62 questionnaires were collected. The mean performance and importance ratings for the twelve principles were calculated as shown in Table 14. The 24 mean values of performance and importance scores are used as the crossing point in conducting an importance-performance analysis (IPA) and constructing an IPA grid.

TABLE 14: IMPORTANCE AND PERFORMANCE RATINGS FOR SMED GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Principle Number	Principle Description	Mean Performance Rating	Mean Importance Rating
1	Cultural richness	3.89	6.05
2	Physical integrity of landscape	3.53	5.98
3	Biological diversity	3.47	5.84
4	Environmental purity and resource efficiency	2.81	5.78
5	Local quality of life and social prosperity	3.44	5.53
6	Local control and involvement	3.55	5.33
7	Employment quality	3.84	5.63
8	Visitor fulfillment	4.20	5.96
9	Appropriate market positioning	4.17	5.75
10	Economically viable tourism destinations and enterprise	3.88	5.71
11	Quality of governance	3.37	5.46
12	Evaluate outcomes	3.22	5.67

Results and Findings

Among the 62 respondents, fifty-seven percent belonged to a private sector organization and twenty-one percent were from governmental organizations). As Figure 20 shows, 2 out of 5 lived in Panajachel and ten percent lived in San Pedro la Laguna.

FIGURE 19: RESPONDENTS' AFFILIATES

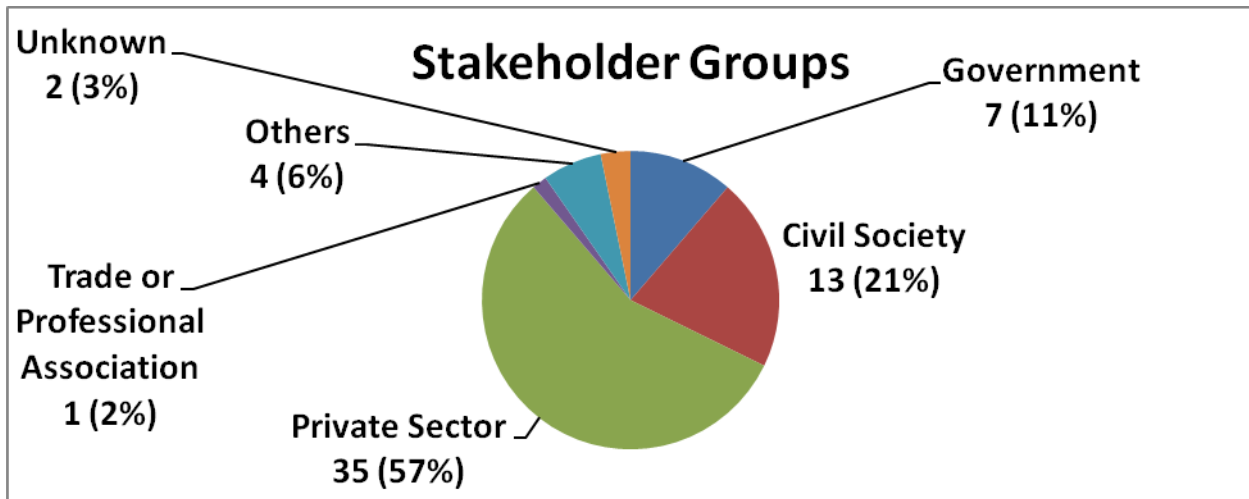


FIGURE 19: RESPONDENTS' AFFILIATES

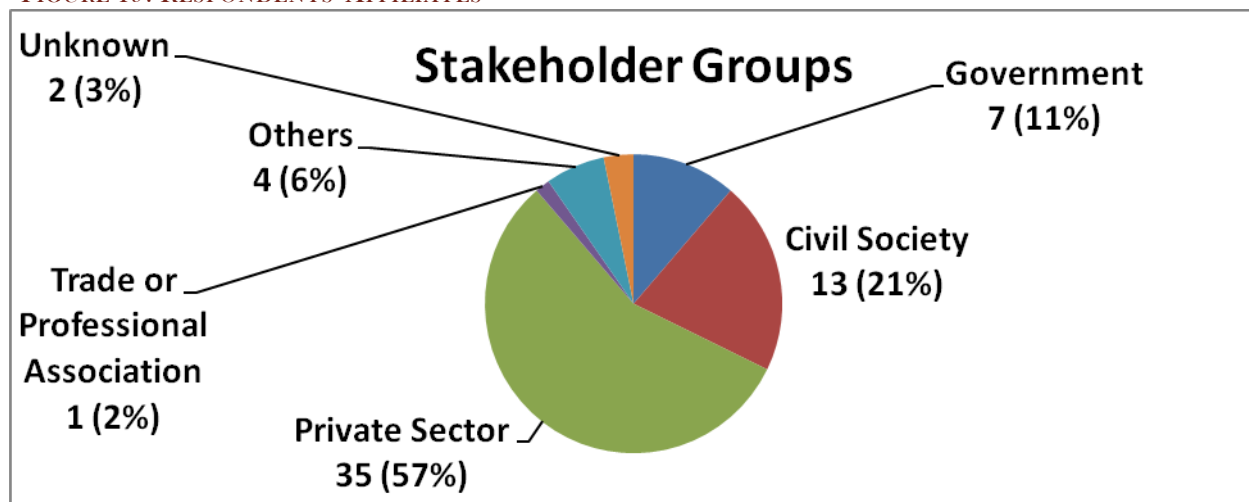
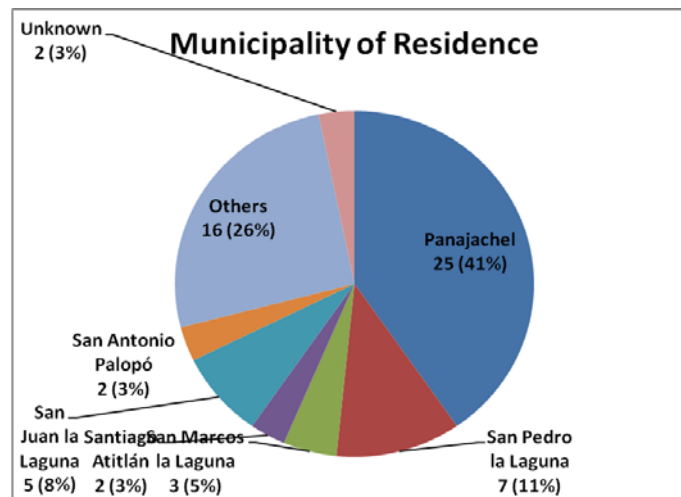


FIGURE 20: RESPONDENT'S MUNICIPALITY OF RESIDENCE



IPA provides a snapshot of how well the destination meets stakeholders' concerns while offering insights and guidelines for the destination's future resource allocation decisions. The combination of performance and importance scores of each principle are used for interpretations and extraction of recommendations. The IPA grid (Figure 21) generates four different suggestions based on importance-performance measures. For instance, the "Concentrate Here" box indicates which principles are important for stakeholders but can be improved in terms of performance. Concentrating constructive action in this area is a priority for the destination. The "Keep Up The Good Work" quadrant holds the principles that are considered important by stakeholders and where the destination performs well. Principles falling in the "Low Priority" box are those that have scored lower than the average both in terms of performance and importance. These items can be postponed for the future and do not require immediate resource allocation decisions. The "Possible Overkill" quadrant reveals which principles are considered as less important but where the destination performs well. This indicates that some of the resources invested on these principles can be relocated to support more priority activities.

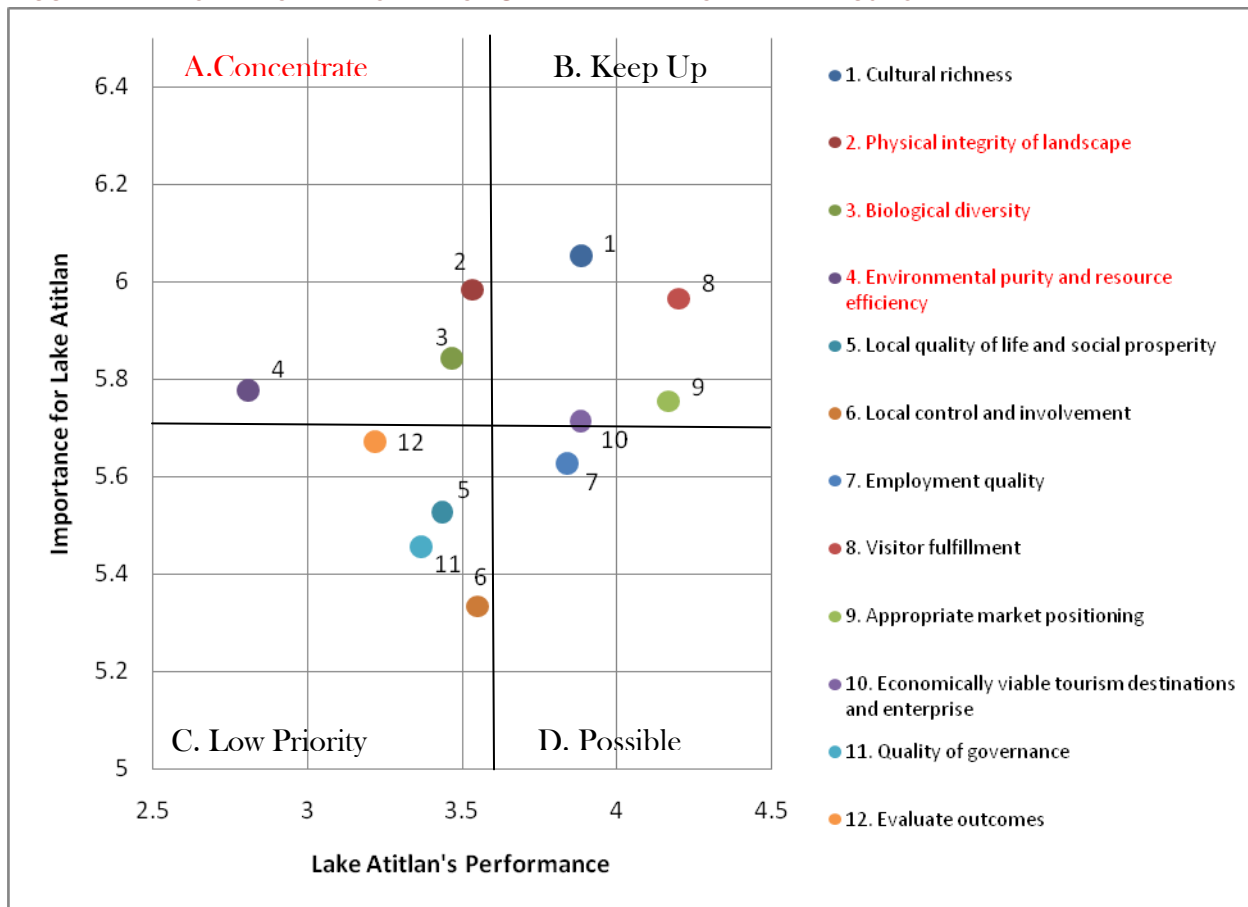
As Figure 21 indicates three principles are classified into Quadrant A, namely "Physical integrity of landscape", "Biological diversity" and "Environmental purity and resource efficiency". Stakeholders consider environmental aesthetics to be very important for the Lake Atitlán region (in fact, the tourist perception survey conducted by the GWU/UVG consulting team also shows that quality of natural scenery and landscapes/environment was the most important factor in their decision to visit the destination) and express a sense of urgency about the environmental degradation around the lake.

Three principles ("Cultural richness", "Visitor fulfillment" and "Appropriate market positioning") fall into Quadrant B. The destination should maintain the status quo in terms of its cultural products (e.g. festivals, handicrafts and language schools) and marketing, would can be further enhanced through the establishment of a regional DMO and the implementation of some of the other recommended actions.

Quadrant C includes four principles, "Local quality of life and social prosperity", "Local control and involvement", "Quality of governance" and "Evaluate outcomes". Stakeholders rated the performance of these principles low - indicating that they do not perceive the principles to be very important. As

“Employment quality” falls in Quadrant D, the destination is judged to be doing well in creating and supporting tourism-related jobs, but the stakeholders put less importance to the principle.

FIGURE 21: IMPORTANCE-PERFORMANCE GRID WITH PRINCIPLE RATINGS FOR THE LAKE ATITLÁN



In addition, the data was analyzed by cross tabulation in order to identify any perception gaps among sub-regions as well as stakeholder groups. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed to examine number of means at a time.

Stakeholder Groups

The null hypothesis of this analysis is as follows:

H_0 : All the performance and importance means of the stakeholder groups are equal to the overall mean

As a result of ANOVA test (see Table 15), only performance of principle 7 (Employment quality) showed statistically significant difference between the stakeholder groups at the 0.05 confidence level. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and it is concluded that there is a relationship between performance of employment quality and stakeholder groups.

TABLE 15: THE MEAN SCORES BY STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

Performance 7	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	32.911	4	8.228	2.693	.040
Within Groups	168.022	55	3.055		
Total	200.933	59			

Municipality of Residence

Additionally, a test was conducted to examine whether the mean performance and importance scores were related to respondents’ municipality of residence. The null hypothesis of this analysis is as follows:

H₀: All the performance and importance means of the municipalities of residence are equal to the overall mean

As a result of ANOVA test (see Table 16) again, only performance of principle 7 (Employment quality) showed statistically significant difference between the municipalities of residence at the 0.05 confidence level. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and it is concluded that there is a relationship between performance of employment quality and the municipalities.

TABLE 16: THE MEAN SCORES BY THE MUNICIPALITIES OF RESIDENCE

Performance 7 (Employment quality)	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Panajachel	25	3.84	1.573	.315	3.19	4.49	1	7
San Pedro la Laguna	8	3.00	1.852	.655	1.45	4.55	1	7
San Marcos la Laguna	3	6.67	.577	.333	5.23	8.10	6	7
Santiago Atitlán	2	2.50	.707	.500	-3.85	8.85	2	3
San Juan la Laguna	5	5.00	1.581	.707	3.04	6.96	3	7

San Antonio Palopo	2	6.50	.707	.500	.15	12.85	6	7
Others	16	3.25	1.770	.443	2.31	4.19	1	7
Total	61	3.85	1.833	.235	3.38	4.32	1	7

TABLE 17: ANOVA TEST RESULTS BY MUNICIPALITIES OF RESIDENCE

Performance 7	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	59.645	6	9.941	3.780	.003
Within Groups	142.027	54	2.630		
Total	201.672	60			

Although the IPA grid shows relatively high performance of employment quality, the results for stakeholder groups and municipalities differ. While employment quality is classified as “Possible Overkill” on the grid, the situation may vary considerably by organization type and area of residence. Further research for employment environment should be conducted to determine whether employment quality needs to be improved.

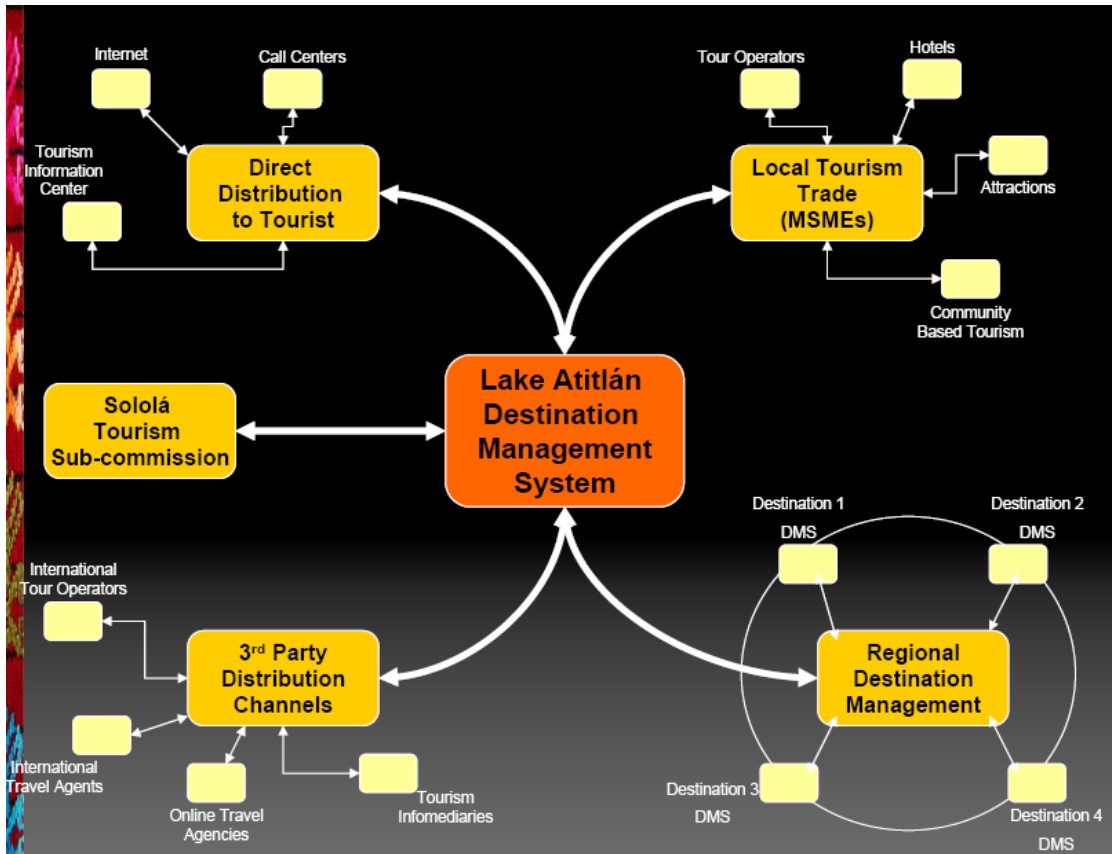
5.3 Proposed Action for Establishing Lake Atitlán as a Destination

Lake Atitlán Destination Website Portal

Fifty-eight percent of United States online leisure travelers use the internet to research places to visit (Forrester Research, 2008). As this percentage continues to steadily increase it becomes all the more crucial for destination organizations to have their own website. Furthermore, it is important that the destination website be embraced by all stakeholders. Currently, there are a few websites for Lake Atitlán, none of which is the official site for the Sololá Sub-Commission. An official website of Lake Atitlán will help bring together stakeholders to exchange and disseminate information, and is the first steps towards integrating efforts for organized destination management.

The proposed Destination Atitlán website will serve two purposes: 1) the site will help promote Lake Atitlán to potential tourists, and 2) it will include an intranet portal (Figure 22) that the Sololá Sub-Commission can use to provide useful tools and resources to all stakeholders. The intranet may also serve as a platform for discussions of important issues for the region, and as a mechanism to educate stakeholders on different topics and projects.

FIGURE 22: PROPOSED STRUCTURE OF DMO INTRANET



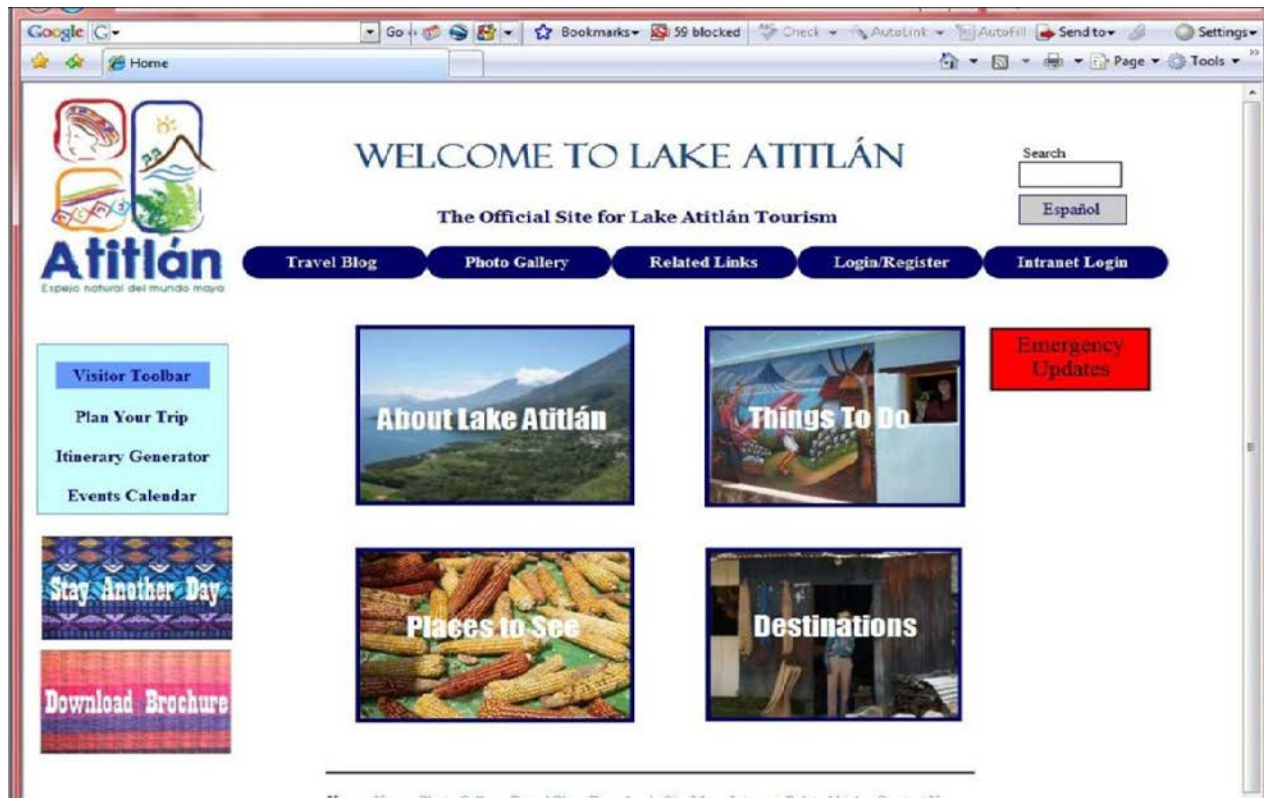
The GW/UVG consulting team proposes a website structure based on an widely used model in marketing called AIDA. AIDA is an acronym for attracting Attention, creating Interest, developing Desire and prompting Action (Perreault & McCarthy, 2002). It is used in marketing to show the sequential steps that a consumer goes through from ignorance to purchase. The model can provide a great structure for building the website for Lake Atitlán. In addition, the proposed website should include the following features providing potential tourists the contemporary features that can engage them and motivate them to travel to the region:

- Itinerary Generator
- Trip Planner
- Online Booking Capabilities
- Travel Blog
- Calendar of Events

The website should also utilize search engine optimization. Search engine optimization (SEO) is the process of improving the volume and quality of traffic to a website from search engines through natural search results for targeted key words. Optimizing the new Destination Atitlán website will help to capitalize on the growing popularity of the internet as a promotional strategy for destinations. By using

SEO properly, the site will be ranked highly on search engine results and have a high ratio of online bookings to the number of site visits.

The complete action plan for the development of an online destination portal with budget and timeline are included in Appendix 19.12.



Adopting SMED for Lake Atitlán

Lake Atitlán has is at the beginning of the process of establishing itself as a destination. This offers the unique opportunity to incorporate from the start the most contemporary standards for sustainable development as provided by the leading global organization in the industry - UNWTO. The adoption of SMED can bring two fundamental advantages: use the guiding principles of SMED as strategic steps that the Lake Atitlán will make towards increasing its competitiveness as a destination while balancing the sustainable use of its valuable resources, and institutionalize a sophisticated system for measurement of excellence that facilitates the constant monitoring of its success towards achieving the strategic goals.

The complete action plan for the development of an online destination portal with budget and timeline are included in Appendix 19.13.

5.4 General Recommendations

In addition to the specific action proposed above and in the appendix of this report, the GW/UVG team identified several long-term opportunities for maximized benefits through the establishment of a destination management entity in the region:

Establishing Links from the National to Local Level

A relationship should be established between INGUAT at the national level, the emerging regional DMO, and the local tourism organizations of the region. The creation of this relationship will ensure a cohesive marketing approach to attracting tourists not only to the Atitlán region, but to Guatemala in general. These organizations have the same goals and objectives of increasing tourism spending and extending the length of stay in the country, which is why partnership and collaboration is the most effective way to tourism development.

Human Resource Development

The idea of a DMO is relatively new for the Lake Atitlán region, and therefore the consulting team recommends that the process of growing the destination as a whole is accompanied by steps towards the building of the capacity of key stakeholders. A strategy for human resource development will assist the DMO and the destination as a whole in understanding the processes of planning, implementing, and managing the organization properly. An HR development strategy will also help the DMO evolve into a recognized and fully sustainable entity, and will increase the competitiveness of Lake Atitlán as a tourism destination.

UNWTO and Best Practice Management

The United Nations World Tourism Organization has many useful resources that could be used as guidelines for the DMO in determining best management practices, among other things. The formation of a DMO could be done as a public-private partnership between key stakeholders in the region or as a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO). The UNWTO resources can serve as helpful tools in guiding the discussions needed to plan and implement a DMO for the Lake Atitlán region.

5.5 Summary of Part 5

In this section, the strategy for integrated destination management was discussed. The Sololá Tourism Sub-commission has been newly formed and there are significant differences in the level of enthusiasm, interest, commitment and readiness to embrace of the different industry stakeholders. Coordinated destination management is needed to engage all stakeholders, create a common vision and work towards sustainable growth. The GW/UVG team recommended the creation of a regional Destination Management Organization (DMO) as a leader bringing together and connecting stakeholders' resources and ideas to move the destination forward. Taking into account the specifics of Lake Atitlán, a public-private partnership may be the best fit. To successfully create the regional DMO, destination management plan (DMP) needs to be developed based on the provided by UNWTO best practices. The newly formed regional DMO should work in partnership with national (INGUAT) and local level DMOs. As a preliminary suggestion, the GW/UVG consulting team identified the Sololá Tourism Sub-Commission as a potential institution that can lead the effort of establishing a DMO.

One of the first steps in establishing the needed partnership towards the strengthening of a new DMO is the development of a destination website and portal. This project can engage all stakeholders of the local tourism industry. It will serve as an integrated marketing channel but also as a much-needed internal mechanism for cooperation and exchange of information. In addition, the consulting team recommends the adoption of the developed by UNWTO and the Center for Excellence of Destinations System for Measuring Excellence in Destinations (SMED). The result of the conducted stakeholder survey and the importance-performance analysis demonstrates that the destination can gain a lot of benefits from adopting SMED.

PART 6: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS

6.1 Summary of Recommendations

Promoting CBT:

The recommendations related to promoting CBT are comprised of five specific actions. The first recommendation entails the development of a new market segment, S.A.V.E., which is seen as a strong fit for the Lake Atitlán area. The next actions: Atitlán Boat Excursions and Pedestrian-Friendly Panajachel, are ideas extracted from responses and comments in the tourist surveys and derive from the need to increase the average length of stay from the present average of 1.5 days. Furthermore, the potential for an increased number of local cultural and community events has been identified in response to the need for sponsors and to increase event management capacity of the destination.

Marketing and Positioning

The Marketing and Positioning Recommendations include four actions. The first suggested action is relates to the need for an established image and brand for Lake Atitlán. The next two actions begin to address the need for a distributions strategy for the tourism market to the region, as well as the identification of specific distribution system for community-based tourism initiatives. A specific marketing campaign is also suggested as a way to promote and enhance the destination.

Crisis Management

The crisis management recommendations are focused around two actions which ensure the production of communications toolkits to insure cohesion of actions among key players as well as providing general crisis guidelines to local tourism stakeholders.

Destination Management

The recommendations for Destination Management are comprised of two comprehensive actions which include the application of the system for measuring Excellence in Destinations, and the creation of a comprehensive Destination website.

6.2 Next Steps

After completing the background research and fieldwork, and laying out recommended actions for tourism development in Lake Atitlán, the GW/UVG consulting team and advisors identified priorities for follow-up to ensure that the recommended actions be implemented in the region.

The first priority is funding resources development. This includes identifying potential sources of funding for the Strategic Plan for the Enhancement of Tourism in Lake Atitlán, with priority for the specific action items recommended by the consulting team. Counterpart International, along with one member of The George Washington University consulting team, will contact national and regional level stakeholders as well as any other parties who demonstrated interest based on the presentations given on

June 25 and 26 in Panajachel and Guatemala City. Follow-up meetings to generate support for the implementation of the proposed actions will be conducted with these parties.

The next priority is to clarify initial actions for the new manager of the Strategic Plan for the Enhancement of Tourism in Lake Atitlán. INGUAT has provided funding for a manager to implement the plan with an expected start date in July 2008. Utilizing the fieldwork findings and research of the consulting team, with inside knowledge provided by the Sololá Tourism Commission, Counterpart International will prioritize action items and identify key components from the Strategic Plan.

Subsequent meetings with the new manager in Panajachel will help ensure that the resources developed by the consulting team are made available to all stakeholders involved in implementing the plan, as well as ensuring that the plan manager and the Sololá Tourism Commission optimize the resources at hand.

The third priority is based on demonstrated interest from the CBT Roundtable (La Mesa de Turismo Comunitario) regarding CBT development in the Atitlán region. The materials created by the consulting team for CBT will be distributed to the Roundtable and other CBT-related organizations in the region. Follow-up discussions will be held to engage the Roundtable in CBT development and address concerns and needs of the communities around the lake.

The fourth priority is to follow-up with research and recommendations on implementing a S.A.V.E. (Scientific, Academic, Volunteer, and Educational tourism) Pilot Project in the Lake Atitlán area. This includes identifying stakeholders in the communities around the lake who are involved in volunteer programs such as language schools. An inventory of existing projects and programs will be undertaken. From this, best practices will be identified and gaps in current programs discerned. Based on the identified potential for volunteer-study programs in the communities, recommendations and action items will be proposed for implementation.

The final follow-up component to the research, field work, and presentations by the consulting team is the translation of this report into Spanish and distribution to key stakeholders. In addition to the final report, a case study description of the follow up process and lessons learned will be written using the guidelines outlined in the SWIF (Student-Written, Instructor-Facilitated) Learning Guide.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Stakeholders

Appendix 2 Characteristics of Relevant Market Segments

Appendix 3 Respondent Answers – Pre-trip Survey

Appendix 4 Fieldwork Survey

Appendix 5 Comparison of Workshop and Tourist Responses

Appendix 6 Tourist Survey Data Set

Appendix 7 Tourist Demographics

Appendix 8 Global SAVE Travel Alliance

Appendix 9 Community Based Tourism Brochure (in English and Spanish)

Appendix 10 CBT Development Toolkit

Appendix 11 “Stay Another Day” Brochure

Appendix 12 Itinerary Brochure with sample itineraries

Appendix 13 promotional Posters

Appendix 14 crisis awareness Poster

Appendix 15 SMED Guiding Principles

Appendix 16 SMED Sample Questionnaire (english and spanish)

Appendix 17 Crisis Communication Toolkit

Appendix 18 Stakeholder Crisis Management Toolkit

Appendix 19 Action Plans

Appendix 19.1. Develop S.A.V.E. Market Segment

Appendix 19.2. Atitlan Boat Mobile



Appendix 19.3. Pedestrian-Friendly Panajachel

Appendix 19.4. Stay Another Day Campaign

Appendix 19.5. Professional Training in Event Management

Appendix 19.6. CBT Distribution Channels

Appendix 19.7. Branding Competition

Appendix 19.8. Marketing Distribution Strategy

Appendix 19.9. Keep Lake Atitlán Beautiful Campaign

Appendix 19.10. Crisis Communication Toolkit

Appendix 19.11. Tourists Crisis Management Toolkit

Appendix 19.12. Lake Atitlán Destination Website Portal

*Appendix 19.13. Apply System for Measuring Excellence in
Destinations (SMED)*

Appendix 20 Bibliography