

Sustainable Tourism Strategy & Destination Development Plans for the World Heritage Properties in Suriname

2022-2030

October 17, 2022



Central Suriname Nature Reserve
World Heritage Natural Site



Jodensavanne Archaeological Site
Tentative List – Nominated in 2022



Historic Inner City of Paramaribo
World Heritage Cultural Site

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With financial support from the Japanese Government and technical cooperation from UNESCO World Heritage Center, and the UNESCO Cluster Office for the Caribbean, tourism and World Heritage stakeholders in Suriname came together to develop the following Sustainable Tourism Strategy & Destination Development Plans for the World Heritage Properties in Suriname. The Strategy calls for 5 national strategic initiatives and 27 destination development priorities.

NATIONAL STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

1. **Adopt Co-Management Policy for World Heritage properties** to ensure local communities are involved in tourism management, sharing of site entrance fees, and play an active role in safeguarding the sites.
2. **Establish a Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) Concession System** to increase the number of, and quality of, tourism services located within and around the World Heritage properties.
3. **Increase Accessibility to and within Suriname** by attracting more flights to the country, improving road conditions, public transportation, and domestic flights.
4. **Improve International and Domestic Marketing Efforts** by strengthening the private sector role in the governance of the Suriname Tourism Board and increasing marketing budget allocation
5. **Establish the Suriname Sustainable Tourism Fund** through tax policy reform ensuring that hotel taxes are reinvested in local destination management organizations (50%) and national marketing efforts (50%).

DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

Historic Inner City of Paramaribo

1. Establish The Paramaribo World Heritage Authority
2. Establish a Destination Mgmt Organization
3. Launch a Branding and Marketing Campaign
4. Wayfinding & Interpretation Signage
5. Invest in Destination Beautification Initiatives
6. Create a Walkable Entertainment District
7. Visitor Services Investment Program
8. Support Events & Festivals

Central Suriname Nature Reserve

1. Change Stinasu's Mandate & Role
2. Witagron Community Tourism Enterprise
3. Raleighvallen Co-Management Agreement
4. Raleighvallen Ecotourism Infrastructure
5. Raleighvallen Joint Venture Concession
6. Raleighvallen Air Services Development
7. CSNR Researchers Network & Research Stations
8. New CSNR Concessions
9. Launch A CSNR Branding And Marketing Campaign

Jodensavanne Archaeological Site

1. Friends & Ancestry of Jodensavanne
2. Jodensavanne Researchers Network
3. Jewish Heritage in the New World biannual Conference
4. Lesson Plans & Educator Resources
5. Field Trips at Jodensavanne
6. Mobile app with Audio guide & augmented reality
7. Weekend Boat Tours
8. Regional DMO
9. Regional Branding and Marketing Campaign

INTRODUCTION

Suriname is a country rich with natural and cultural attractions and a history of welcoming different cultures and visitors to this small South American country that lies between the Caribbean Sea and the immense Amazon Rainforest.

Tourism was once an important contributor to the national economy with almost daily arrivals of Dutch, European, and American visitors seeking an off-the-beaten path adventure. However, due to a variety of factors including civil unrest, the COVID-19 pandemic, and lack of government support for the tourism industry, has resulted in a decline in visitor arrivals and spending. Suriname and the country's World Heritage properties have much to gain by attracting more visitors and leveraging the tourism industry to support the safeguarding of the Outstanding Universal Values (OUV) of these World Heritage properties.

When Suriname and these World Heritage properties are considered a desirable place to visit then residents of Suriname and the communities living around these properties will also benefit. When the Surinamese Government prioritizes the tourism industry and creates an enabling environment that

makes it easier for the tourism industry to start and operate profitable businesses, the country will also attract private investment, quality jobs, a talented work force, valuable new public revenue streams and, if managed wisely, a more equitable distribution of economic opportunity for local communities.

When asking any tourism professional in Suriname, regardless of race or socio-economic status, they acknowledge that Suriname has all the ingredients to become a successful tourism destination. The World Heritage properties of the Historic Inner City of Paramaribo, the Central Suriname Nature Reserve are two of the most famous tourism attractions in the country. The settlement of Jodensavanne and Cassipora Creek Cemetery on the tentative World Heritage list is a lesser-known tourism attraction, but its proximity to Paramaribo and rich history represent a tremendous opportunity to use tourism to help safeguard this site and support the economic development of the surrounding community.

Yet, as a draw for attracting more visitors, Suriname underachieves, and these World Heritage properties are not realizing their full tourism potential. For most

international travelers, Suriname is hardly known and not top of mind for travelers looking for ecotourism or cultural experiences. Even the residents of Suriname are unaware or uninterested in visiting these World Heritage properties in the country.

This Sustainable Tourism Strategy and the Destination Development Plans within are intended to:

- Explain why expanded tourism is important for the prosperity of Suriname and the safeguarding of the country's World Heritage.
- Analyze the characteristics and potential of the tourism market.
- Identify strategies for attracting more visitors to Suriname and these World Heritage properties.
- Develop models for tourism development that involve local communities in decision making, management, protection, and receiving economic benefits from visitors.



CHAPTER 1 INVESTIGATION & ANALYSIS

INVESTIGATION METHODOLOGY

To assess Suriname's current condition as a tourism destination, as well as the tourism potential of the three sites, a steering committee was formed made up of representatives from the following organizations:

- Suriname National Commission for UNESCO
- The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture
- Ministry of Transport, Communication and Tourism
- Ministry of Land Policy and Forest Management
- Suriname Tourism Board
- Nature Conservation Division of the State Forest Management Service
- Suriname Built Heritage Foundation
- Jodensavanne Foundation

The steering committee with the support of an international tourism consultant sought the opinions of travel industry experts and heritage managers to develop a road map for enhancing the competitiveness of Suriname as a tourism destination and identify strategies to leverage tourism to support the sustainability of the country's

cultural and natural assets and maximize and spread the benefits of tourism development throughout the country.

The steering committee organized site visits to the World Heritage properties where interviews were conducted with site managers, tourism service providers, and nearby communities.

The steering committee also organized a tourism planning workshop to build consensus with the tourism industry and government authorities around a common vision, for the future development of the Suriname tourism industry and specific objectives to be achieved in implementing a Sustainable Tourism Strategy.

The tourism planning workshop was designed to answer four simple questions:

1. **Where Are We Now?** – An analysis of Suriname's and the three sites current competitive position and major challenges to and opportunities for enhancing that position.

2. **Where Do We Want to Be?** A process for defining a consensus vision for sustainably growing the industry, maximizing local benefits, and minimizing negative social and environmental impacts.

3. **How Do We Get There?** The objective in answering this question is to define action plans for achieving the vision, prioritize them, and agree on public and private sector roles and responsibilities.





4. **How Do We Turn Ideas into Action?** The most critical question in any planning process. The goal of this phase of work is to turn action plans into implementation plans that include a management plan, timelines, responsibilities, budgets, sources of financing, milestones, tools for measuring results, and a process for refining and updating the plan as the implementation process moves forward.

The vision, strategies, and action plans presented in this document are the result of these consultations.

SITUATION ANALYSIS - SURINAME

The situation analysis serves as the foundation for the development of a Sustainable Tourism Strategy for Suriname's World Heritage properties and for addressing core challenges to and opportunities for enhancing these tourism sites' competitive position.

The following data from the **World Travel and Tourism Council** reports on the economic and employment impact of Travel & Tourism in Suriname. This data developed, in conjunction with Oxford Economics, provides a vital tool in helping public and private sector bodies understand the value Travel & Tourism brings to the Suriname economy and the trends resulting from the global pandemic.

Suriname Key Data		
2019	2020	2021
Total contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP:		
 2.3% of Total Economy SRD 1,645.0MN (USD 90.2MN)	1.1% of Total Economy SRD 651.7MN (USD 35.7MN) Change: -60.4% Economy change: -15.9%	1.3% of Total Economy SRD 752.4MN (USD 41.3MN) Change: +15.5% Economy change: -2.7%
Total contribution of Travel & Tourism to Employment:		
 4.6 (000s) 2.3% of total jobs	3.3 (000s) 1.9% of total jobs Change: -29.4%	3.4 (000s) 1.9% of total jobs Change: +4.8%
Visitor Spend:		
International:		
 SRD 1,067.4MN 3.4% of total exports (USD 58.5MN)	SRD 280.5MN 1.0% of total exports (USD 15.4MN) Change: -73.7%	SRD 232.0MN 0.9% of total exports (USD 12.7MN) Change: -17.3%
Domestic:		
 SRD 536.2MN (USD 29.4MN)	SRD 301.7MN (USD 16.5MN) Change: -43.7%	SRD 461.9MN (USD 25.3MN) Change: +53.1%

THE SURINAME TOURISM EXPERIENCE

The following description from Lonely Planet perfectly summarizes the competitive advantages of Suriname and the experience waiting for visitors.

“South America's smallest country, Suriname is a warm, dense convergence of rivers that thumps with the lively rhythm of ethnic diversity. From Paramaribo, the country's effervescent Dutch-colonial capital, to the fathomless jungles of the interior, you'll get a genuine welcome to the country – whether from the descendants of escaped African slaves, Dutch and British colonialists, Indian, Indonesian and Chinese indentured laborers or indigenous Amerindians.

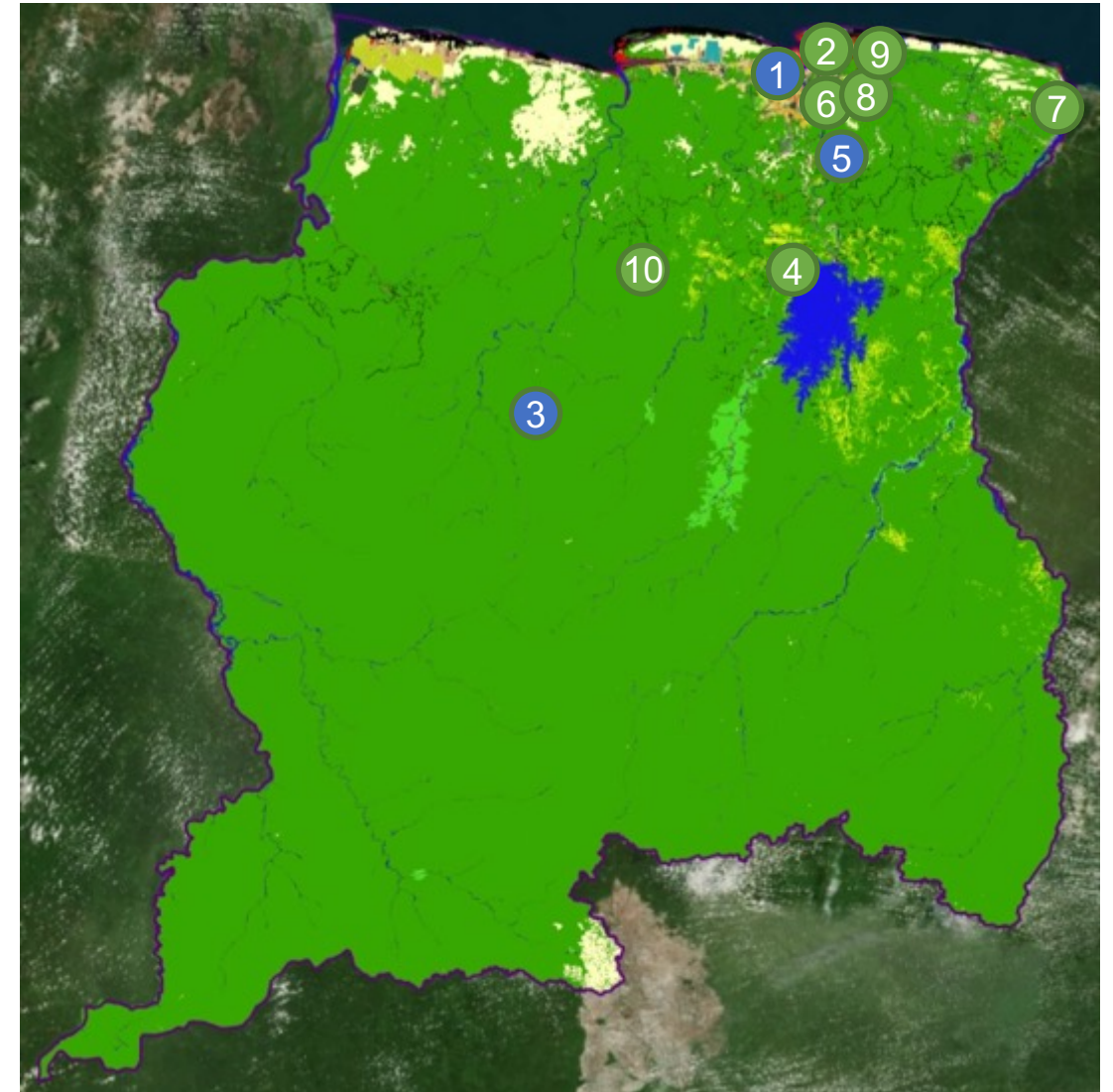
Charismatic Paramaribo is loaded with gorgeous architecture, party-hard night spots and some excellent restaurants, while the untamed jungle, just a few hours away by road or boat, could not be more of a contrast to Paramaribo's chaotic traffic. It's relatively easy to get around this river-heavy, forest-dense country, even if the mix of languages can make communications interesting. Best of all, sumptuous and spicy cuisines from all over the world can be found here, making mealtimes a joy.”



TOP ATTRACTIONS

Interviews with tourism industry professionals and a review of tourism information online recommends the following top ten destinations to visit in Suriname. As expected, this list includes the World Heritage properties of the Historic Inner City of Paramaribo, the Central Suriname Nature Reserve and Jordensavanne from the tentative list, further demonstrating the importance of safeguarding these sites and highlighting their importance to the tourism industry.

- 1 **Paramaribo**
- 2 Commewijne River / Frederiksdorp
- 3 **Central Suriname Nature Reserve**
- 4 Brownsberg Nature Park
- 5 **Jodensavanne**
- 6 Mariënborg
- 7 Galibi Nature Reserve
- 8 Peperpot Nature Park
- 9 Warappa Kreek
10. Voltzberg



SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths

Suriname enjoys ...

- Ethnic diversity & welcoming hosts
- Year-round warm weather
- 93% of original tropical rainforest cover
- Rich biodiversity including 715 species of birds
- A network of navigable rivers
- Uncrowded & off the beaten path
- Diverse communities with strong living traditions
- Friendly, affordable and accessible exoticism
- Delicious food

Opportunities

Suriname can potentially take advantage of ...

- Post COVID-19 travel trends
- Travelers looking for exotic and off the beaten path destinations
- A welcoming and diverse society
- Adventure travel opportunities
- Scientific, Academic, Volunteer, and Educational (SAVE) Travel
- A rising middle class interested in domestic travel
- Local festivals and events

Weaknesses

Suriname tourism is challenged by ...

- Government's lack of prioritization of the sector
- Limited international marketing & awareness
- Limited number and frequency of flights
- Safety and security perceptions
- Limited number of luxury accommodations
- Poor road quality in the interior
- Access to financial capital for entrepreneurs
- An industry impacted by COVID-19
- Economic pressures from extractive industries

Threats

Suriname tourism can be affected by ...

- Global recession
- Future pandemics
- Climate change
- Unmanaged tourism development
- Natural disasters
- Change in resident's attitudes towards visitors
- Degradation of the natural environment
- Crimes against visitors



CHAPTER 2 THE SUSTAINABLE TOURISM STRATEGY

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM POLICY GUIDELINES

To ensure sustainable tourism development and conservation of World Heritage Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), UNESCO World Heritage Centre recommends the following policy guidelines for tourism development:

1. Tourism development should contribute to the protection, conservation, presentation and transmission of OUV.
2. Tourism should generate sustainable socio-economic benefits to communities in ways that are consistent with the conservation of the properties.
3. Planning for tourism development and visitor activity should be undertaken in an inclusive and participatory manner.
4. Tourism infrastructure and visitor facilities should be carefully planned, sited, designed, constructed with no adverse impacts to OUV .



2030 VISION FOR TOURISM AND WORLD HERITAGE



During the Tourism Planning Workshop, participants were asked to imagine it is the year 2030 and describe how tourism is supporting the Suriname economy and safeguarding World Heritage.

While each group worked separately and provided different vision summaries, the main areas that were common of each statement included the following main points:

- The Suriname tourism industry will be re-energized with commitments from the Government and private sector to work collaboratively to invest and support the industry's growth and competitiveness
- Suriname will be internationally known by discerning travelers for its incredible biodiversity, diverse cultures, and considered a must visit tourism destination competing with Costa Rica, Brazil, and Peru
- Suriname will maintain its authenticity and integrity even as visitation and investment increase. Through strong conservation efforts World Heritage properties will continue to conserve and protect its Outstanding Universal Value where communities continue to practice living traditions while also improving their standard of living and benefiting more from tourism.
- Suriname will have more direct flights from important source markets and transportation within the country will improve with better road conditions and affordable internal flights
- World Heritage properties will be co-managed by government, private sector, and local communities creating shared economic benefits and conservation commitments
- A diverse local tourism workforce will meet the demand of the tourism industry and have the skills needed due to strong education partners
- Through private investments in new tourism lodging, Suriname will offer up market accommodations that will attract high value visitors that are willing to spend more in the country

2030 SUSTAINABLE TOURISM VISION STATEMENT

By the year 2030, Suriname will be internationally known as an authentic destination where world heritage and tourism stakeholders work together to improve the well-being of local communities, by conserving the common cultural and natural heritage of outstanding universal value, driving economic prosperity through appropriate tourism management, benefitting the natural environment and so celebrating Suriname's rich diverse cultures.

Planet – People - Profit

NATIONAL STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

During the strategic planning process tourism and World Heritage stakeholders identified the following strategic initiatives that need to be implemented at the national level for achieving the 2030 sustainable tourism vision and supporting the sustainable development of the World Heritage properties.

- 1 Adopt Co-Management Policy for World Heritage properties** to ensure local communities are involved in tourism management, sharing of site entrance fees, and play an active role in safeguarding the sites. Jodensavanne's management model should be used as a benchmark with community representation on the management board, community employment, and revenue sharing of entrance fees.
- 2 Establish a Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) Concession System** to increase the number of, and quality of, tourism services located within and around the World Heritage properties. Where possible concessions should encourage Joint Ventures between private investors and local communities.
- 3 Increase Accessibility to and within Suriname** by attracting more flights to the country, improving road conditions, public transportation, and domestic flights.
- 4 Improve International and Domestic Marketing Efforts** by strengthening the private sector role in the governance of the Suriname Tourism Board and increasing marketing budget allocation. A robust and comprehensive tourism website for Suriname is needed where specific programs/itineraries should be featured that include the WH priorities.
- 5 Establish the Suriname Sustainable Tourism Fund** through tax policy reform ensuring that hotel taxes are reinvested in local destination management organizations (50%) and national marketing efforts (50%).

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

During the consultation between government, industry, and civil society, the following 10 principles were identified to guide the strategy implementation:

- 1. Whole of Government Approach** - Successful tourism development requires the involvement of all parts of government, at the local and national level, working in harmony to support a competitive industry.
- 2. Focused on Sustainability** - Tourism planning and development must take full account of Suriname's current and future economic, social, and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities.
- 3. Destination Regeneration** - Visitor spending should be contributing to improving the destinations they visit and creating benefits for local communities.
- 4. Private Sector Driven** - Tourism development should be market-driven and industry-led, in partnership with government and civil society.
- 5. Support Community Tourism** - Increase the participation and economic benefits of local communities living near or within World Heritage properties
- 6. Distribute Tourism Benefits beyond Paramaribo** - Expand tourism development efforts and benefits beyond the capital to achieve more balanced growth.
- 7. Champion the Value of Tourism** - The industry and government needs to engage with residents to highlight and champion the value of year-round, managed tourism and the positive impacts it has on local communities.
- 8. Diversification and Innovation** - Diversify and grow the country's market base in response to changing market profiles and preferences.
- 9. Foster Collaboration** - New models of tourism governance are needed to foster collaboration between the private sector, local communities, and with the government.
- 10. Destination Stewardship** - Tourism growth must be balanced with the protection of natural and cultural resources and the aspirations of host communities.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Successful implementation of this strategy should be measured through a set of meaningful indicators useful for evaluating and measuring tourism competitiveness in Suriname over time and to guide the government in their policy choices. The following indicators have been organized by the following major categories

Economic Goal	Socio-Cultural Goal	Environmental Goal
<p><i>Ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contributing to poverty alleviation.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• % Increase visitation• % Increase expenditure• % Increase tourism jobs• % Increase avg length of stay• % Increase in revenue of community tourism enterprises• % Increase in SMEs in Suriname• Value of New Investments	<p><i>Respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• % Increase in cultural activities/traditional events• % of residents with an understanding and appreciation of cultural values• % Increase in the number of local companies related to local culture (crafts, music, gastronomy)• % of residents reporting satisfaction with tourism• % tourist satisfaction with visit to Suriname	<p><i>Make optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• % increase in protected area land within Suriname• % of tourism business with adequate waste management resources• % of tourism businesses taking actions to reduce water consumption and energy reduction• National forest coverage %• % reduction in commercial hunting and collection of wildlife for trade



CHAPTER 3 HISTORIC INNER CITY OF PARAMARIBO DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT PLAN

INTRODUCTION

The following introduction is taken from the Historic Inner City of Paramaribo World Heritage City Management Plan 2020 – 2024 to introduce the destination and the challenges identified in the management plan.

Paramaribo is unique in many ways - its multicultural aura and origins, the celebration of numerous festivals, flavourful cuisine, and the city as a place and host with its historic wooden structures – indigenously crafted South American materials fused into new architectural forms with European inspiration. These characteristics have been recognized internationally following a rigorous multi-stage evaluation process as having Outstanding Universal Value - in 2002, Paramaribo was placed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Additional criterion cited was the creation of “a new architectural idiom” and “a unique example of contact” with “indigenous cultures...”(2). The importance of this designation cannot be overstated as there are only 190 cities worldwide on the World Heritage List, with only 8 cities in the Caribbean – and the Historic Inner City of Paramaribo as the only cultural World Heritage property in Suriname (3).

However, Paramaribo is not unique in the problems it is facing. It's World Heritage designation offers no

protection from the rapid changes experienced by most historic cities in the latter half of the 20th century. Typical causes of decline include loss of housing and employment, the exodus of retail activities, increased use of automobiles and their congestion, inconvenience and lack of space, and abandonment of historic buildings in favor of larger newer lower maintenance facilities elsewhere.

This flight of people and activities has left a void and generated negative associations of the Historic Inner City which are accompanied with physical deterioration and undesirable social groups, the cost and difficulty of redevelopment, and expensive maintenance of historic buildings⁴. Paramaribo is suffering from all of the above. There are many reasons to revive the city center – recovery of economic property values, increase tax revenues, improvement of buildings, and decreasing crime - but the most important reason of all is pride.

Fortunately, there are many advantages that Paramaribo has over other cities. Paramaribo

remains at the heart of Suriname culture as evidenced by numerous festivals; it is the seat of Government and home to major religious institutions. It is also where visitors enter the country and where they expect to start on their journey of understanding of Suriname, its history, culture, and people. Finally, one major advantage for Paramaribo, is its prestigious World Heritage designation, an announcement to the world of the city's Outstanding Universal Values. With this recognition, there are important, and required, responsibilities including protecting the values which make the city special.

Historic Inner City of Paramaribo World Heritage City Management Plan 2020 – 2024

The following destination development plan is intended to provide a tourism strategy for the Historic Inner City and complement the recommendations of the management plan.

TOURISM STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES

Strengths

- Entry point into the country and included on all visitor itineraries
- In-tact built heritage with interesting architecture
- Location – heart of the city and home to the city's main tourism attractions
- Real city – not a tourist attraction
- Strong management & protection in place
- National pride in the heritage and protection of the historic center
- Cultural events that are interesting to visitors
- Fort Zeelandia offers a concentrated cluster of refurbished historical buildings with interesting stories and offers a walkable tourism area
- Local markets provide a uniquely cultural experience and introduce visitors to the diversity of the country

Weaknesses

- Limited accommodations (hotels & home rentals) available in the Historic Inner City
- Few residents live in the Historic Inner City resulting in a feeling of a “ghost city” after working hours
- Interpretation and wayfinding signage is limited
- Traffic and parking
- Heritage buildings are neglected and a cost burden for government, private sector, and residents
- Lack of restaurants or retail shops for visitors
- Lack of a visitor entertainment district with a walkable area offering dining, retail, art galleries, and cultural performances
- Overlapping government control/management
- Limited support from the tourism industry to develop, manage, and market the Historic Inner City and Paramaribo as a tourism destination
- Limited information distribution to public audiences

HISTORIC HISTORIC INNER CITY OF PARAMARIBO VISION STATEMENT

To create a lively, beautiful, safe, and welcoming city that enhances the quality of life for all Surinamese while openly sharing with visitors and protecting the World Heritage city's Human and Outstanding Universal Values.

Historic Historic Inner City of Paramaribo World Heritage City Management Plan 2020 – 2024

DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

During the strategic planning process tourism and World Heritage stakeholders identified the following goals to attract more visitors and investment to the Historic Inner City, improve the visitor experience, and ensure tourism supports the safeguarding of the World Heritage City’s Outstanding Universal Value.

1 ESTABLISH THE PARAMARIBO WORLD HERITAGE AUTHORITY

Originally proposed in the Historic Inner City of Paramaribo World Heritage City Management Plan 2020 – 2024, this Authority would ensure the protection and coordinated management of the Historic Inner City. The Management Plan and State of Conservation (SOC) Reports identify the lack of a central authority for policy and decision making as one of the key challenges facing the conservation of the World Heritage City’s OUV.

Actions needed to achieve this goal include:

- Develop a briefing paper to assist lawmakers understand the need for establishing the Authority and the policies and resources required
- Advocate for new legislation that would create the Authority and allocated budget

Performance Indicator: Authority established

2 ESTABLISH A DESTINATION MGMT ORGANIZATION

Creating a Destination Management Organization (DMO) made up of all tourism stakeholders in Paramaribo (including those outside of the Historic Inner City) will create a single entity to act as a central communication channel for both stakeholders and visitors. It will lead the management and marketing of the City to attract meetings/events and leisure visitors for the purpose of enhancing the tourism economy.

Actions needed to achieve this goal include:

- Enact tax policy reform to ensure 5% of hotel taxes collected in Paramaribo are allocated to the DMO (See National Strategic Initiative #5)
- Legally establish the DMO with a Board of Directors made up of public and private tourism stakeholders

Performance Indicator: DMO established

3 LAUNCH A BRANDING AND MARKETING CAMPAIGN

An aggressive and creative branding and marketing campaign is needed to promote Paramaribo as a tourism destination and as a perfect location for meetings and events. The campaign should include the development of a City Brand and digital marketing assets including a website for the city that helps visitors and meeting planners find information and book their visits or meetings in the destination.

Actions needed to achieve this goal include:

- Develop a City Marketing Plan that identifies target markets, activities, and key marketing performance indicators
- Develop a City Brand, website, and marketing materials that will inspire visitation and increase length of stay in the city.

Performance Indicators: 20% increase in visitors to the city

DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

4 WAYFINDING & INTERPRETATION SIGNAGE

One consistent complaint among visitors is their frustration navigating the city, finding attractions, and learning about the importance of historical sites. A uniform system of wayfinding and interpretative signage is needed to improve the visitor experience and bring the city's rich history to life. Cultural walking tours could also be established by creating a circuit of historical sites with interpretation signage at each site.

Actions needed to achieve this goal include:

- Keeping visitors in mind, design, produce and maintain a legible and consistent system of wayfinding signs
- Identify main attractions in the city and ensure each has an interpretative signage panel that tells the stories of the sites

Performance Indicator: Interpretative and wayfinding signage in place

5 INVEST IN DESTINATION BEAUTIFICATION INITIATIVES

Destination beautification initiative will help the city attract more visitors, provide positive word of mouth publicity, lifts the spirits of residents, and creates community pride. Destination beautification is not only about planting flowers and doing creative landscaping. It includes cleaning the garbage that litters the city's streets and public spaces. This will also result in the lowering of crime rates.

Actions needed to achieve this goal include:

- Identify areas that require improved maintenance and beautification
- Improve sidewalks, street lighting, and public spaces
- Involve residents in the beautification projects

Performance Indicator: 90% visitor satisfaction

6 CREATE A WALKABLE ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT

Fort Zeelandia is considered one of the best attractions in the city and offers a car free walkable area and home of the Suriname Museum and a single restaurant. However, other historical buildings are occupied by foundations and government offices providing little value to visitors. These buildings should be concessioned to retail stores, art galleries, accommodations, and restaurants to create a single walkable entertainment district.

Actions needed to achieve this goal include:

- Develop a Master Plan for Fort Zeelandia that identifies a mix of visitor services and attractions
- Develop a visitor center at the site that will provide an appropriate starting place for tourists visiting the city

Performance Indicators: # of new commercial businesses opened

DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

7 VISITOR SERVICES INVESTMENT PROGRAM

One of the weaknesses of the Historic Inner City is the lack of visitor services and the feeling of a “ghost city” after working hours. This combined with the cost burden for the Government to maintain historical buildings creates an opportunity to develop an investment program designed to incentivize private development and rehabilitation of historic buildings. Government should establish a restoration/maintenance fund for private monument owners to incentivize the upkeep of their property and make available historic buildings to private investors on the condition of investing in services to accommodate visitors (Accommodation, retail stores, restaurants).

Actions needed to achieve this goal include:

- Establish a Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) Concession System, restoration fund, and investment incentive scheme
- Promote investment opportunities and incentives to private investors

Performance Indicator: # of new businesses catering to visitors

8 SUPPORT EVENTS & FESTIVALS

From the weekly bird signing competitions to annual festivals including Avondvierdaagse, Pagara Estafette, Owru Jari, Ketu Koti, and Winti Pré, Paramaribo residents know how to celebrate life. These festivals and events bring the city to life and offer visitors rich cultural experiences. These events need to be promoted to visitors and made accessible. Additional events should also be hosted throughout the year, especially during holiday and tourism high seasons (ie Music concerts, movies on the lawn)

Actions needed to achieve this goal include:

- Develop an annual event calendar
- Work with accommodation providers and tour operators to create special packages for events
- Host regular smaller events to bring the Historic Inner City to life in the evening

Performance Indicator: # of visitors attending events in the city





CHAPTER 4

CENTRAL SURINAME NATURE RESERVE DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT PLAN

INTRODUCTION

The following introduction is taken from the CSNR Management Plan to introduce the destination and the challenges identified in the management plan.

The preservation of the Central Suriname Nature Reserve (CSNR) began with the foresight and commitment of the Government of Suriname to establish a national protected area for the people of Suriname and the world. Through the work of local, national, and international stakeholders, CSNR is now recognized as a natural resource of global importance and is inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List. Today, as one of the geologically oldest and most stable places on the planet, the CSNR, coupled with its regional setting, is the last major tropical wilderness on Earth.

The CSNR is a place for nature—where the intricate relationships that make up the web of life continue to evolve as they have for millions of years. It is a place where people can discover the wonder of the natural environment and appreciate, first hand, the richness of the Earth's heritage. It is a place where people recognize their role in the ecosystem and their responsibility to act accordingly. As one of the last great completely natural places on Earth—vast, remote, silent—it is a place where people can go to

explore the inner recesses of their natural and spiritual selves and to study and understand nature without the impact of technology. The CSNR is a place for the future—where the preservation and enjoyment of nature can contribute to an improved quality of life for all the people of Suriname.

The Government of Suriname created the CSNR for the people of Suriname and the world—for their benefit, education and enjoyment, to be maintained and made use of so as to benefit the people of Suriname while it is left pristine and unimpaired for future generations. The Government of Suriname's decision to create such a large reserve demonstrates a strong commitment to conservation. Furthermore, the Government of Suriname has made a parallel commitment to making protected area management and wild resource conservation a focal point of its national sustainable development strategy.

As long as this commitment remains strong, potential threats to the reserve can be avoided or

mitigated. However, experience in other regions has shown that such a commitment cannot be sustained indefinitely in the light of economic realities without strong public support. Up to now, the reserve remains largely unknown to Surinamers. Unless the people of Suriname understand and appreciate the globally significant ecological values of the reserve and the nationally significant economic potential of nature-based eco- tourism and research, the reserve will remain susceptible to future pressures from those who would like to exploit its resources unsustainably.

*Central Suriname Nature Reserve
Management Plan*

The following destination development plan is intended to provide a tourism strategy for the CSNR and compliment the recommendations of the management plan.

TOURISM STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES

Strengths

- Incredible untouched natural wonder
- Rich biodiversity & great birding opportunities
- Feeling of remoteness
- Strong management & protection in place
- 20+ years of tourism history and people that love the site
- Strong research product
- Helicopter access & Airplane landing strip
- Community of Kwinties in Witagron with rich cultural heritage, a long history of supporting the site, and motivated to support the development and management of the site

Weaknesses

- Road conditions make access long and painful
- Airstrip needs maintenance and flights
- Tourism infrastructure is in bad shape
- Lack of visitor services available
- Lack of interpretation around the site
- Trails are overgrown
- Need additional experiences beyond the hikes and waterfall visits
- Community of Kwinties in Witagron are not happy with the site management and their participation
- Limited information distribution to public audiences

CENTRAL SURINAME NATURE RESERVE

A SHARED VISION

The reserve's stakeholders share the following vision for sustaining the reserve's global significance as a tropical wilderness for the benefit of all Surinamese and the world community:

- The ecosystem remains in pristine condition, with diverse and abundant populations of all native species, including many which are rare or endangered worldwide.*
- The reserve is internationally recognized for its vital role in maintaining a healthy Earth.*
- The ecological, cultural, and spiritual values of the place are enjoyed by the people of Suriname and by visitors from all over the world.*
- Sustainable use (ecotourism/research) contributes to a healthy and ecologically sustainable economy for Suriname.*
- The reserve management is a model for resource stewardship and for creating social and economic value.*

Central Suriname Nature Reserve Management Plan

DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

During the strategic planning process tourism and World Heritage stakeholders identified the following priorities to attract more visitors and investment to the CSNR, improve the visitor experience, and ensure tourism supports the safeguarding of the World Heritage Outstanding Universal Value.

1 CHANGE STINASU'S MANDATE & ROLE

The semi-government Foundation for Nature Conservation (STINASU) was established in 1969 to assist the government in the development and promotion of scientific research, nature education, and nature tourism in protected areas of Suriname. At that time STINASU was needed to invest and operate ecotourism facilities. Today there is no reason for STINASU to be operating tourism businesses, instead they should be responsible for attracting and facilitating private investment in Suriname's Protected Areas.

Actions needed to implement this priority:

- Pass legislation that would change the mandate of STINASU from managing tourism businesses to facilitating private investments through concession agreements.

Performance Indicator: Legislation passed

2 KWINTIES COMMUNITY TOURISM ENTERPRISE

The community of Kwinties in Witagron have a long history of supporting ecotourism in the nearby site of Raleighvallen but are currently receiving few benefits from tourism. By establishing an enterprise, the community can designate a focal point to lead the community's ecotourism development aspirations which may include offering cultural tours, transportation, handicraft sales, accommodation, and meals to visitors.

Actions needed to implement this priority:

- Legally register a community tourism organization governed by a community representatives
- Develop a Community Tourism Enterprise Business Plan

Performance Indicator: Enterprise revenue

3 RALEIGHVALLEN CO-MANAGEMENT

The community of Kwinties in Witagron should be given the opportunity to participate in the tourism planning, decision making, and revenue sharing at the ecotourism facility of Raleighvallen. A co-management agreement that creates a co-management committee between representatives from the Kwinties, STINASU, and Nature Conservation Division of the State Forest Management Service will facilitate community and government collaboration.

Actions needed to implement this priority:
:

- Elect representatives from each organization to develop co-management agreement with committee bylaws and operating procedures
- Advocate for new policy that would enable co-management agreements

Performance Indicators: Agreement in place

DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

4 RALEIGHVALLEN ECOTOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE

The ecotourism facilities at Raleighvallen are in need of significant repairs and upgrading. Investments should incorporate sustainable design and result in room rates that range from \$25 for students to over \$200-\$500 for a luxury cabin. Additional investments in nature-based attractions including canopy towers, suspended bridges, white water rafting, ariel trams, and zip-lines will improve the visitor experience and increase revenue potential of the site.

Actions needed to implement this priority:

- Prepare a proposal for the Suriname Conservation Foundation
- Advocate for Government budget allocation
- Explore public financing from multilateral development banks in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance

Performance Indicator: Investment agreements

5 RALEIGHVALLEN JOINT VENTURE CONCESSION

With improvements to ecotourism infrastructure at Raleighvallen, private sector tourism companies will be interested in opportunities to manage ecotourism services at the site. The newly established co-management committee should release a request for proposals (RFP) from private sector companies to demonstrate their expertise and plans to maximize the benefits and minimize negative impacts of tourism at the site. Proposals will be expected to demonstrate conservation outcomes, employment commitments, input sourcing, and revenue/profit sharing with the Kwinty community.

Actions needed to implement this priority:

- Develop a Request for Proposal (RFP) for managing the ecotourism facilities
- Promote the RFP to potential national and international tourism operators

Performance Indicator: Management agreement

6 RALEIGHVALLEN AIR SERVICES DEVELOPMENT

The airstrip at Raleighvallen once serviced multiple flights a week. Today the airstrip is overgrown and in need of maintenance and repair. Once improved, a concerted effort is needed to convince airlines to fly frequently and consistently to the destination. Helicopter access is available and needs to be promoted as an option to visit the site.

Actions needed to implement this priority:

- Repair the airstrip and cut down trees and branches that are blocking the flight path
- Convince airlines to establish regular service and negotiate charter rates
- Promote helicopter access

Performance Indicators: # of airflights and helicopter arrivals to the site

DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

7 CSNR RESEARCHERS NETWORK & RESEARCH STATIONS

The earliest visitors to the CSNR arrived because of partnerships with research institutions and academic programs that used the ecotourism facilities at Raleighvallen. These researchers pioneered ecotourism field studies and share a deep appreciation for CSNR and the Raleighvallen ecotourism facilities. By creating a CSNR researchers' network and specific research stations within the reserve, a community of researchers will grow and visit CSNR on a consistent basis because of the learning environment and visitor services available to student groups.

Actions needed to achieve this goal include:

- Develop an online repository for CSNR research and procedures for research permits and research publication
- Create and nurture a community of researchers with a connection to CSNR

Performance Indicator: # of educational travelers

8 NEW CSNR CONCESSIONS

One of the weaknesses of CSNR is the lack of visitor services and the challenges this creates for visitors. With the exception of the ecotourism facilities at Raleighvallen there are no visitor services within the reserve. CSNR consists of 4 million acres of tropical protected forest and numerous opportunities for low impact ecotourism around the reserve. The Government of Suriname should make available land within CSNR to private investors on the condition of investing in services to accommodate visitors. (Accommodation, retail stores, restaurants).

Actions needed to achieve this goal include:

- Establish a Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) Concession System and incentive scheme (See National Strategic Initiative #2)
- Promote investment opportunities and incentives to private investors

Performance Indicator: # of new businesses catering to visitors

9 LAUNCH A CSNR BRANDING AND MARKETING CAMPAIGN

An aggressive and creative branding and marketing campaign is needed to promote CSNR as a tourism destination and as a perfect location for adventure. The campaign should include the development of a Protected Area Brand and digital marketing assets including a website for CSNR that helps visitors and tour operators find information and book their visits or tours in the destination.

Actions needed to achieve this goal include:

- Develop a Protected Area Marketing Plan that identifies target markets, activities, and key marketing performance indicators
- Develop a CSNR Brand, website, and marketing materials that will inspire visitation and increase length of stay in the reserve.

Performance Indicators: 20% increase in visitors to CSNR



CHAPTER 5

THE SETTLEMENT OF JODENSAVANNE AND CASSIPORA CREEK CEMETERY DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT PLAN

INTRODUCTION

The following introduction is taken from the Jodensavanne Settlement and Cassipora Creek Cemetery Management Plan 2020-2025 to introduce the destination

The former settlement of Jodensavanne and the Jewish Cemetery near the Cassipora Creek bear a unique testimony and mark an important stage in the Euro-Sephardic colonization of the Western Hemisphere. Jodensavanne was in the 17th century the largest agrarian settlement in this hemisphere, established and populated by Sephardic Jews and their African and Indigenous enslaved workers. Its synagogue, of which a ruin remains, is one of the oldest still present in the Americas and is as such a reminder of pioneers of American Judaism. Nowhere else in the western world had Jews been granted a semi-autonomous settlement. Prior to Jodensavanne, the Cassipora Creek Settlement, 2 kms further South near the Suriname river, was established.

Jews fleeing the Spanish inquisition were welcomed in Suriname, first by the British and later by the Dutch, to settle and reclaim the land along the Suriname River. As part of the government policy to attract Jewish settlers, they were given special privileges, which granted them freedom of religion,

freedom of ownership and the right to have their own judicial court. Jewish merchants were especially wanted for their expertise on international trade. In 1665 they achieved a piece of land close to the Cassipora Creek to build a synagogue and to layout a cemetery. Shortly afterwards, the community moved to a hill overlooking the Suriname River where the settlement of Jodensavanne was founded.

The cemeteries of Jodensavanne and Cassipora Creek are of exceptional grandeur. The cemetery of Cassipora Creek counts 216 tombstones. The oldest grave dates from 1667. The cemetery of Jodensavanne has 452 graves. A large number of tombs is of blue stone and some of marble imported from Europe, while other graves are made of bricks. Some stones are beautifully ornamented. Inscriptions are in Spanish, Portuguese, Aramaic, Dutch and Hebrew.

The synagogue, the two Jewish cemeteries and the Creole Cemetery are the major heritage attractions.

The recently uncovered remains of the De Meza Mansion is part of the remains of the settlement, of which more still have to be excavated. The foundation of the synagogue reveals its ground-plan. The natural springs are still there and the defense line, Cordonpad is partly recognizable and accessible.

Jodensavanne and the Cassipora Creek Cemetery are national, collective and common heritage with many narratives dealing with their history. The historical sites were designated a national monument in 2009 by the national government, for their unique significance as cultural heritage.

*Jodensavanne Settlement and
Cassipora Creek Cemetery
Management Plan 2020-2025*

The following destination development plan is intended to provide a tourism strategy for the Jodensavanne Settlement and Cassipora Creek Cemetery and compliment the recommendations of the management plan.

TOURISM STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES

Strengths

- Rich heritage and stories
- Location – Proximity to Paramaribo and beautiful setting on the bank of the Suriname river
- Strong management & protection in place
- Large population of Jewish people globally that can trace their ancestry to the site that might be willing to support
- A community partner that is motivated to develop the region and with a connection to the site
- A River Resort is located directly adjacent to the site

Weaknesses

- Need a guide to really appreciate and understand the site and history. Professional guides are not easily available and national guides have limited knowledge of the site
- Limited number of visitors and ticket revenue
- By itself may not be strong enough of a product for everyone
- The site has Samuel Cohen visitor centre with an exhibition, a bathroom, parking, and two visitor camps that need upgrading
- Location requires consistent and regular maintenance that is costly
- Limited information distribution to public audiences

JODENSAVANNE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE

A SHARED VISION

The vision for the Jodensavanne Archaeological Site, is to demonstrate effective sustainable management that will:

- Conserve the authenticity of the monumental area, as well as the historical, cultural, spiritual and esthetical values of the monuments;*
- Minimize negative impacts to the cultural heritage and the environment, and maximize benefits;*
- Maximize sustainable visitor enjoyment and education.*

Jodensavanne Settlement and Cassipora Creek Cemetery Management Plan 2020-2025

DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

During the strategic planning process tourism and World Heritage stakeholders identified the following goals to attract more visitors and donations to the Jodensavanne Archeological site improve the visitor experience, and ensure tourism supports the safeguarding of the World Heritage Outstanding Universal Value.

1 FRIENDS & ANCESTRY OF JODENSAVANNE

Millions of Jews in the Americas can trace their ancestry to Jodensavanne but few are aware or understand the significance of the site and role of the early Jewish settlers in Suriname. By creating a friends of Jodensavanne association, the site will benefit from a community of people interested in supporting the site through annual membership dues, fundraising support, participating in volunteer activities, and receiving regular updates from the site. The association should also help research their ancestry in Suriname.

Actions needed to achieve this goal include:

- Establish a membership organization and promote on the website
- Send “friends” information about the site on a regular basis

Performance Indicator: # of members

2 JODENSAVANNE RESEARCHERS NETWORK

Surinamese and international researchers have played an important role in identifying and documenting the cultural heritage of the Jodensavanne site. By creating a researchers' network, a community of researchers will grow and visit Jodensavanne on a consistent basis and share their findings with each other. This network will facilitate the on-going research needs of the site and attract more educational and volunteer travelers to Jodensavanne.

Actions needed to achieve this goal include:

- Develop an online repository for Jodensavanne research and procedures for research permits and research publication
- Create and nurture a community of researchers with a connection to the site

Performance Indicator: # of network members

3 JEWISH HERITAGE IN THE NEW WORLD BIENNIAL CONFERENCE

Creating a biannual conference on **Jewish Heritage in the New World** is a strategy to bring together “friends of Jodensavanne” and the researchers from around the world to meet, network, and celebrate the heritage of the site on a yearly basis. This conference will play an important role to expand these networks, further research and knowledge about the site, and remind people of Suriname about the site’s World Heritage and Outstanding Universal Value.

Actions needed to achieve this goal include:

- Schedule the conference and fundraise through the “friends” group to host the event
- Identify Jewish Heritage Researchers to be invited to speak at the conference

Performance Indicators: # of people that attend the conference

DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

4 LESSON PLANS & EDUCATOR RESOURCES

Jodensavanne plays an important role in youth education and this not only supports the mission of the site but also a strategic tool to raise awareness about the site and attract more "friends", researchers, and visitors. By creating lesson plans and educator resources for teachers in Suriname and around the world, thousands of children and their families will be introduced to the site and learn how they can support the site by becoming a "friend" or visiting the site.

Actions needed to achieve this goal include:

- Develop lesson plans and educator resources for different ages and host on the site's website
- Distribute the lesson plans and resources to schools in Suriname and Jewish schools around the world

Performance Indicator: # of lesson plan and resource downloads

5 FIELD TRIPS, STUDY TOURS, AND VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

Jodensavanne regularly hosts field trips and study tours but these are customized based on inquiries from school groups. To grow this market, specific programs/itineraries need to be developed that can be used to promote the site as an ideal location for field trips and week-long study tours. Also volunteer activities should be organized and promoted including monthly group clean ups and individual long term volunteer internships for international gap year travelers that will be asked to pay a volunteer fee.

Actions needed to achieve this goal include:

- Develop field trip and sample week-long study tour programs and fees
- Develop volunteer activities and fees
- Post programs on the site's website

Performance Indicator: Revenue from educational and volunteer travelers

6 MOBILE APP WITH AUDIO GUIDE & AUGMENTED REALITY

A mobile app for the Jodensavanne site would greatly enhance the visitor experience. This app could offer visitors an audio guide of the site, augmented reality to see what the settlement would have looked like historically, and a way for visitors to research ancestry and the stories behind the burial sites. Every gravestone creates a unique opportunity to share a story about the heritage of the site including those that were enslaved on the plantation. A potential scavenger hunt could also be included on the app to provide "edutainment" for children visitors.

Actions needed to achieve this goal include:

- Develop the mobile app with the support of IT company and researchers
- Promote the app on the website and at the site entrance

Performance Indicators: # of app downloads

DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

7 WEEKEND SCHEDULED BOAT TOURS WITH CERTIFIED GUIDES

One of the most popular ways to visit Jodensavanne is by taking a scenic boat ride from Paramaribo to the site. This type of tour is generally reserved for organized tour groups that book through a local tour company. To increase the number of visitors to the site, especially the Surinamese residents of Paramaribo, the site should partner with a private tour company to offer regularly scheduled boat tours with a certified guide that is knowledgeable about the site on the weekend. This would allow couples and small families to visit the site by boat at an affordable price.

Actions needed to achieve this goal include:

- Establish a concession agreement with a private tour company to offer this tour on a consistent basis
- Promote the tour on the site's website and through social media and public relations

Performance Indicator: # of visitors booking tour

8 REGIONAL DESTINATION MGMT ORGANIZATION

Creating a Regional Destination Management Organization (DMO) made up of the three communities surrounding the area of Jodensavanne will create a more comprehensive visitor experience that combines the site with other nearby attractions. The community of Redi Doti is already in discussions with two other neighboring communities to try and establish a regional tourism organization. By supporting this effort, Jodensavanne site will also benefit as more visitors discover the region.

Actions needed to achieve this goal include:

- Organize a meeting with tourism leaders of the three communities to establish the DMO and agree to add a visitor fee to guest bills to support the financial sustainability of the organization.
- Develop day and multi-day packages to the region that include Jodensavanne and other nearby attractions

Performance Indicator: DMO established

9 LAUNCH A REGIONAL BRANDING AND MARKETING CAMPAIGN

An aggressive and creative branding and marketing campaign is needed to promote the region surrounding Jodensavanne as a tourism destination and as a perfect location. The campaign should include the development of a Regional tourism Brand and digital marketing assets including a website for the region that helps visitors find information and book their visits to the destination.

Actions needed to achieve this goal include:

- Develop a Regional Marketing Plan that identifies target markets, activities, and key marketing performance indicators
- Develop a Regional Brand, website, and marketing materials that will inspire visitation and increase length of stay to the region.

Performance Indicators: 20% increase in visitors to the region.

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This Sustainable Tourism Strategy and Destination Development Plans were drafted by international tourism consultant, Chris Seek from Solimar International

