

An underwater photograph of a coral reef. In the foreground, a large, yellowish-brown sea anemone with numerous white, tube-like tentacles is prominent. Two orange and white clownfish are swimming among the tentacles. The background shows a deep blue ocean with various other fish and coral structures.

**Sustainable Nature-based
Tourism in the Coral Triangle**

TOURISM INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

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The Coral Triangle and the Nature-based Tourism Project

The Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries and Food Security (CTI-CFF) is a multilateral partnership of six countries formed in 2007 to address the urgent threats facing the coastal and marine resources of one of the most biologically diverse and ecologically rich regions on earth. The Coral Triangle is a region of extraordinary marine biodiversity that includes the six countries – Malaysia, Indonesia, Timor-Leste, the Philippines, Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea.

Sustainable tourism is essential to conserving the Coral Triangle's coastal and marine resources and to ensuring food security and livelihoods for millions of people in the region. It provides an opportunity to harness a dynamic industry to preserve one of the world's most unique ecosystems and areas of high conservation value.

Developing and Promoting Sustainable Nature-based Tourism in the Coral Triangle (the nature-based tourism project) is an Australian Government funded initiative implemented by WWF. It aims to assist the six countries of the CTI-CFF to develop a long-term approach to more sustainable tourism in the region.





The aims of the project are to:

- ▶ Promote world class, high quality visitor experiences
- ▶ Enhance the value of tourism to local, regional and national economies
- ▶ Increase the role of marine protected areas in those economies and local communities
- ▶ Build support for protecting our natural and cultural assets

● The Coral Triangle

The project focuses on the long-term business opportunity a Coral Triangle nature-based tourism brand could present for the whole region and what would be necessary to support and promote it.

Purpose of the document

The Coral Triangle Sustainable Nature-based Tourism Project looks to find ways to develop and accelerate ‘the right kind of tourism’ in the six countries making up the CTI-CFF. It looks to find a realistic balance between tourism development, local communities and conservation.

It focuses on the long-term business opportunity a Coral Triangle nature-based tourism brand could present for the whole region and what would be necessary to support and promote it.

It is also intended to encourage and assist the tourism industry to accelerate its investment in nature-based tourism within the Coral Triangle.

This investment prospectus seeks to introduce projects that, if funded, could make a significant difference in pursuing the objectives of sustainable tourism in the Coral Triangle. It relates to three countries – Timor-Leste, Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea.

The project seeks to assist in unlocking the potential US \$204 billion in value from nature-based tourism in the Coral Triangle, whilst supporting the development of a more balanced tourism sector across the region that will protect its marine areas of high conservation value, and helping to support the broader socio-economic needs of each CTI-CFF country more effectively over the long term.



Coral Triangle Tourism Destination Vision

A sustainable and low-impact tourism industry flourishes and supports vibrant communities, strong local economies, and contributes to the conservation of the outstanding marine and coastal environment of the Coral Triangle.

“It is my hope that by planting the seeds in developing the Coral Triangle as a sustainable marine tourism destination, future generations 100 years from now will stand amongst the shores of the Coral Triangle and be in awe of the legacy of a pristine coastal and marine environment that we will have left behind.”

U.S. Ambassador to Indonesia Robert Blake

4th CTI-CFF Regional Business Forum,

August 27–29, 2015



Guiding Principles Across All Coral Triangle Countries



Conservation of natural and cultural values is paramount to the long-term sustainability of the region for its community and visitors



The **visitor experience** will be grounded in the culture and nature of the destination



The **local culture** will be unharmed by growth in tourism



Community benefits will be achieved through the delivery of tourism opportunities



Marine and coastal resources will be improved through education of the community and tourists



The **destination's character** will be retained through effective design, planning and management of infrastructure

The Three Coral Triangle Sites

It truly is a nature and adventure tourist's dream location.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Made up of more than 600 islands, with at least 800 indigenous languages, boasting unrivalled biodiversity, a range of ecosystems and truly jaw-dropping marine environments; despite the sometimes challenging nature of travel in PNG, it truly is a nature and adventure tourist's (NATB) dream location.

This seemingly unlimited natural resource base for tourism is reflected in its overall potential for growth, with the total market forecast expected to increase from US \$496 million to US \$2.1 billion and NABT from US \$99 million to US \$950 million by 2035.

The region identified as the initial site for NABT development through this project is the northeast corner of West New Britain centered around Kimbe Bay. This location was decided on after extensive consultations with representatives of the PNG government and following a number of field visits to Kimbe Bay and other potential regions of PNG with high NABT potential.

Kimbe Bay and northeast West New Britain possess a range of attributes that are particularly well suited to NABT. The region boasts a pristine marine environment, stunning reefs, and a volcanic landscape lush with lake and river systems. From truly immersive cultural experiences, ranging from visiting WWII historical sites to birdwatching, nature experiences, and the potential for both single or multi-day treks; It is no exaggeration to say that just about every experience the nature and adventure tourists seek is potentially available within Kimbe Bay and the surrounding area.

In addition to its extensive marine biodiversity, the region is renowned for its beautiful tropical islands, excellent diving and snorkelling, coral reefs and World War II wrecks.

SOLOMON ISLANDS

The Solomon Islands is an archipelago within Melanesia that consists of six major islands and over 900 smaller islands.

The site selected for this project is part of the outer Western Province. It encompasses Ghizo, Rendova Kolombangara and Tetepare Islands as well as Munda, Marovo and Vona Vona Lagoons.

The Western Province is a high marine biodiversity area with one of the most biologically rich ecosystems in the Solomon Islands. The area around Ghizo Island was assessed and enabled the inclusion of the Solomon Islands in the Coral Triangle. In addition to its extensive marine biodiversity, the region is renowned for its beautiful tropical islands, excellent diving and snorkelling sites, coral reefs and World War II wrecks. There are many traditional sites, including head hunting shrines.

The central mountains of the island and remote villages also offer opportunities for land-based adventures and community-based tourism.

TIMOR-LESTE

Timor-Leste encompasses the eastern part of the island of Timor as well as the nearby islands of Ataúro and Jaco, plus Oecusse, an area separate from the rest of Timor-Leste within Indonesian West Timor. Timor-Leste is perhaps the destination least known for its nature-based tourism potential within the Coral Triangle.

Considerable conservation and sustainable tourism initiatives on Atauro combined with its proximity to the capital Dili resulted in Ataúro Island being selected as the site for the nature-based tourism project. Situated 25km from Dili, Atauro is 25 km long and 5 km wide with a population of around 8000 people.

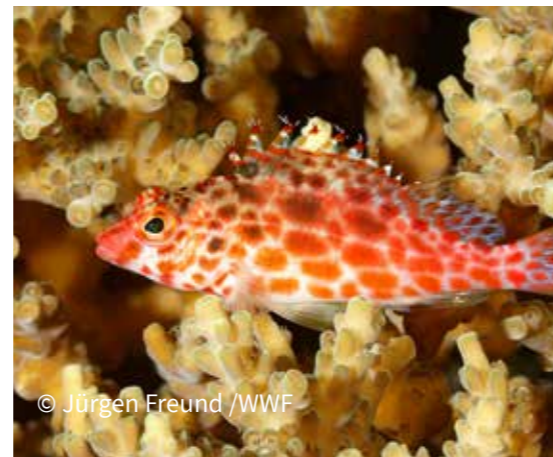
Ataúro Island boasts a series of marine and community conservation reserves, exceptional diving and extensive marine wildlife. The island's remote villages and central mountains also offer opportunities for land-based adventures and community-based tourism, showcasing the region's untapped potential for sustainable nature-based tourism.



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A destination plan has been prepared for each pilot site. These plans identify opportunities for sustainable tourism around three core themes.



Theme 1: Conservation through stewardship

There are significant opportunities to develop new visitor experiences or value add to others based on participation in conservation activities.

Visitors and the local community have the opportunity to contribute to conservation which supports the outstanding marine and coastal resources of the Coral Triangle and the preservation of high conservation value areas.



Theme 2: Experience village life

A competitive advantage of Coral Triangle destinations is the welcoming nature of the communities and the opportunity for travellers to stay in locally-managed accommodation.

It is the simplicity of village life that is so attractive to visitors along with the opportunity for genuine, authentic engagement with the local community.



Theme 3: Adventure into the Coral Triangle

With its extensive marine environment, the Coral Triangle is a haven for water-based activities. The biodiversity of the land also lends itself to extensive and exciting adventures.

At the heart of the Coral Triangle Sustainable Tourism Project is the opportunity to connect visitors to and immerse them in the outstanding marine and coastal environment.

The opportunities identified have been outlined in the following pages in order to determine market direction and attract investor interest.



The Opportunities

The destination plans for the three sites identify a range of actions that have the potential to generate growth in nature-based tourism and activate the Coral Triangle brand. Each action requires some level of investment from government, the private sector and/or from donor agencies. Many projects require a staged approach with preliminary planning and government or donor investment prior to readiness for private sector investment. Several projects would benefit from a consistent approach and investment across all countries.

The table below summarises the overall investment requirements for the three Coral Triangle countries. Following that, the high priority investment requirements for the Coral Triangle and the three country sites are summarised.

SUMMARY OF ALL INVESTMENT NEEDS

PROJECT	FUNDING SOURCE		
	GOVERNMENT	DONOR	PRIVATE
CORAL TRIANGLE WIDE PROJECTS	GOVERNMENT	DONOR	PRIVATE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement strategic Coral Triangle clean-up program 		●	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pursue establishment of additional marine protected areas and protected natural areas across the Coral Triangle 	●	●	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish Coral Triangle micro-financing project 	●	●	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend and/or duplicate successful science-led marine conservation volunteering program 		●	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen the supply of local produce and cafes/restaurants 		●	●
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop sustainability principles and guidelines for building, maintaining and managing eco- lodges 			●

PROJECT	FUNDING SOURCE		
	GOVERNMENT	DONOR	PRIVATE
CORAL TRIANGLE WIDE PROJECTS			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop voluntary minimum standards for guesthouse or eco-lodge style accommodation • Establish standards for vessel and human interactions with marine wildlife • Implement business support training and mentoring projects • Implement workplace training for small tourism operators • Facilitate product distribution through a centralised web-based reservations system • Develop safety standards required for nature and adventure-based activities • Fund micro-finance program for purchase and maintenance of safety equipment 	●	●	●
SOLOMON ISLANDS			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement master planning for marine safari, Tetepare Head Hunters Multi-Day Trail and Mt. Tepalamengutu summit walk on Kolombangara • Create a network of moorings and dock facilities • Develop graded track and trail maps for both terrestrial and aquatic trails • Establish reliable air links between Western Province and Honiara • Build telecommunications infrastructure • Establish experience development programs 	●	●	●

PROJECT	FUNDING SOURCE		
	GOVERNMENT	DONOR	PRIVATE
TIMOR - LESTE			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create eco-lodge • Develop and implement master planning for marine and terrestrial guided experiences linking villages • Establish experience development programs 	●	●	●
PAPUA NEW GUINEA			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement master planning for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brialla Area Adventure Trail • Kove Cultural Experience • Live-aboard marine expeditions • Mahonia Na Dari Conservation Stay • Establish experience development programs • Develop graded track and trail maps for both terrestrial and aquatic trails • Establish reliable air links between West New Britain Province and Port Moresby • Build telecommunications infrastructure • Create a network of moorings and upgrade of Kimbe port facilities • Develop a website to promote WNB 	●	●	●

Coral Triangle wide investment needs are ideally suited to government and donor funding

Conservation of the marine and coastal environment

- Initiate a strategic Coral Triangle clean-up program – including education of communities and promoting the process, lessons and successful outcomes of the Solomon Islands clean-up campaign elsewhere in the Solomon Islands and Coral Triangle with the goal of establishing a pristine environment
- Work with communities to pursue establishment of additional marine protected areas and managed areas across the Coral Triangle
- Seek funding for a Coral Triangle micro-financing project (see example of WWF Western Province micro- financing project – see: <https://blog.wwf.org.au/2014/07/celebration-solomon-islands/>) focused on two core areas – (i) sustainable energy and (ii) conservation tourism initiatives
- Explore extending and/or duplicating science-led marine conservation volunteering programs (eg Blue Ventures) across the three countries

Sustainable tourism

- Develop a strategy for strengthening the supply of local produce and cafes/ restaurants in each country
- Generate basic sustainability principles and guidelines for building, maintaining and managing eco-lodges across applicable Coral Triangle areas and conduct local training on related standards
- Establish voluntary minimum standards for guesthouse or eco-lodge style accommodation, which could evolve over time into a system of classification and grading covering the other sectors. Implementation should be staged to facilitate compliance and be matched by a small grants scheme to provide access to essential capital investment in the most appropriate infrastructure and/or supply of equipment
- Adopt international standards for vessel and human interactions with marine wildlife as the benchmark to be used throughout the Coral Triangle and implement appropriate training and compliance

Industry development

- Develop business support and training, including a five-year mentoring project to be implemented across the Coral Triangle that commits to long-term relationships and connects local businesses with the right skills and expertise
- Facilitate business and workplace training for small tourism operators, which could also involve potential international workplace exchanges
- Provide access to finance, in particular micro-financing schemes as outlined above
- Supporting product distribution through a centralised on-line reservations system, including on-line development by tourism operators through targeted training. This should segment packaging and bundling to match the key market segments' motivations and expectations.
- Through targeted training, tourism operators should tailor their offerings by creating itineraries and product packaging and bundling that matches key market segments' motivations and expectations

Safety and natural disaster preparedness are additional areas for development. While this does not necessarily require high cost investments, major infrastructure is essential to ensuring the delivery of safe and quality visitor experiences. It is also important to enhance the perception and protect the reputation of the Coral Triangle for target market segments. There are a number of key actions to take:

- Identify and communicate a set of safety standards required for nature and adventure-based activities as well as for commercial road and sea transport. These standards should be realistic for the setting and not so onerous that compliance is unlikely, particularly given the lack of capacity or resources for effective enforcement
- Facilitate access for to funds for small-scale operators (via low-cost loans or grants) for the purchase and maintenance of safety equipment



Diver Tetepare © James Morgan / WWF



Vangunu, Solomon Islands
© Edward Parker / WWF



Honiara © Soh Koon Chng / WWF



Nusatuva clown fish © James Morgan / WWF

Opportunities in the Solomon Islands

Masterplan development

Master planning needs to be undertaken for three specific experiences:

- Ultimate marine safari to create the Western Province Adventure Trail, connecting the key places across the region by air, sea or road transport and providing supporting infrastructure such as moorings and docking facilities
- Tetepare Head Hunters Multi-Day Trail and associated signature experiences on Tetepare, including the option of a luxury eco-lodge
- Mt Tepalamengutu summit walk on Kolombangara, which could also be extended to include a broader network of trails across the island as well as identification of and upgrade to a network of eco-lodges

A number of considerations should be made with regard to the master planning process:

- Defining the overall concept and experiences to be offered, including the mode of transport and type of adventure activities offered, involving detailed:
 - Consultation with the community
 - Consultation with research and conservation partners where relevant
 - Assessment of demand and target market segments, including willingness to pay and potential price points
- Conducting site assessment and feasibility analysis, which considers the range of accommodation options and facilities, access to and combination of nature, adventure and cultural activities as well as site capacity
- Identifying the services, infrastructure and facilities required to support the experience(s)
- Developing a site plan and design guidelines
- Utilizing wildlife experience management
- Developing and implementing a business plan for operations

Cost estimate: \$AUS100,000-150,000

Essential infrastructure requirements

Both the National Tourism Plan and the Policy Statement of the Western Provincial government identify a number of infrastructure initiatives that are essential to supporting sustainable tourism, the growth of the visitor economy and encouraging new tourism operators to commence business in the region. The highest order priorities are outlined below:

- A **network of moorings and dock facilities** would facilitate a number of signature experiences, including access for small-ship or expedition and live-aboard cruises as well as limiting the impact of diving and snorkelling day trips. It is recommended that the region's extensive waterways be assessed through the master planning process outlined above to identify the most important points for new moorings or docking facilities.
- Moorings would also facilitate the 'marine safari' concept, link to supporting activities and tours delivered by local communities, and enable the growth of local produce and handicraft markets.
- The network of moorings would require a booking system, similar to the itinerary booking scheme operating in the Galapagos Islands in Ecuador.
- Develop **graded track and trail maps for both terrestrial and aquatic trails**. These should highlight the best aquatic and terrestrial trails for kayaking, trekking and mountain biking. Integrate accommodation options and highlight key features or supporting experiences connected to the trail. This is particularly important given the rise of interest in combination-adventure. It is also important to outline the key risks or challenges associated with particular tracks or trails and any mitigation strategies, which may be as simple as what preparations the traveller should take or pointing out where it is unsafe to swim.
- Develop reliable air links between Western Province and Honiara. For example, provide **Solomon Airlines air passes** that facilitate access into one regional airport and out of another, such as flying into Seghe and out of Gizo. That could be packaged with a sea transport option between the two airports, helping to establish and build awareness of the potential for a 'marine safari' style Western Province Adventure Trail.
- **Telecommunications infrastructure**, particularly to improve internet services that are essential for building awareness of the region's product and experience offer and promotion. This is already identified as a high priority in the National Tourism Plan and Western Provincial Government's Policy Statement.

Cost estimate: \$AUS2-5 million

Experience development programs

To develop signature experiences, it is essential to develop a range of immersive, nature, adventure and cultural-based activities. These can be delivered by the local community. They may involve a range of niche activities, which in themselves will be attractive to certain market segments - those specifically interested in bird-watching or heritage dives, for example.

There are a range of specific activities that are integral to the delivery of the signature experiences, including:

- Guided tours to sacred sites, such as the head-hunter sites on Tetepare Island
- Guided tours to specific sites, such as the wild cave tour at Titiru on Rendova Island or summit hikes
- Opportunities for wildlife interactions, such as turtle or dugong sightings, diving with sharks and bird-watching
- Opportunities to taste local produce or participate in a local feast
- Specific options for day or night-time activities that could be offered to the expedition or live-aboard cruise market

These supporting experiences need to be structured to determine how each activity links to the delivery of a signature experience while also being undertaken independently. Determining the capacity, price point and commission structure is essential to ensure that these experiences are market ready and enable a quality visitor experience to match expectations.

This requires a dedicated program to encourage resource owners and other members of the community to develop ideas for activities that can be packaged as part of the experience offer of the region. A key barrier to market entry is lack of capital and low levels of capacity to deliver such services. This could be addressed through a broader micro-financing scheme designed for local communities that provides a small amount of seed funding from an initial fund for small-scale, community-based tourism initiatives, similar to the already successful women's micro-financing scheme administered by WWF out of the Western Province office, based in Gizo. It could be matched by a five-year mentoring program, which enables the local business operator to access relevant services and expertise at the right stage in the business establishment and management cycle, from development of their business plan through to marketing and the structuring of contracts. It could also help to fund purchasing essential equipment, such as safety equipment. There are two additional considerations: ensuring agreement with resource owners on access and a benefits-sharing model; and centralised marketing support, potentially through the Solomon Islands Visitors Bureau (SIVB).

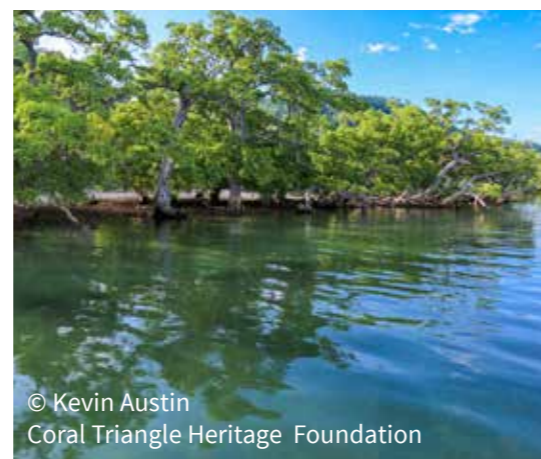
Cost estimate: \$AUS150,000-200,000



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Coral Triangle Heritage Foundation

Opportunities in Timor-Leste

Accommodation

A site offering views of the marine environment has the potential to be an iconic image for the island and could offer an aspirational development that would encourage visitors to other accommodation. The development could be a partnership between a village and an investor.

Visitors are looking for ways to immerse themselves in unique and outstanding natural areas, and are often prepared to pay for distinctive and quality accommodation. The current range of accommodation on Ataúro Island includes home stays, village stays, guest houses, lodges and one hotel. There are no iconic eco-accommodation properties that deliver a world class marine adventure experience on the island. This project is about exploring the feasibility of the construction of a high-end branded eco-lodge (e.g. National Geographic) that enables the visitor to immerse themselves on the edge of the ocean – to be built as market forces demand.

An eco-lodge needs to reflect the following:

- Conserves the surrounding environment - development has minimal impact during and post construction
- Complements the landscape and cultural context through careful attention to form, landscaping and colour, as well as the use of localised architecture
- Uses alternative, sustainable means of water acquisition and reduces water consumption
- Provides careful handling and disposal of solid, liquid and sewage waste
- Meets energy needs through passive design to achieve greater sustainability
- Works with the local community
- Offers interpretive programs to educate visitors about the surrounding natural and cultural environments
- Contributes to sustainable local development through research programs

The approach would be:

- Discuss concept with villages and conservation partners to identify possible locations where a lodge could be accommodated
- Undertake a feasibility study and subject to findings, seek investment interest

Cost estimate feasibility study: \$AUS100,000

Master planning for guided experience opportunities

There are currently a number of walking trails identified in the Ataúro Island website as well as a small number of well-known walks including to the island's peaks. Some kayaking is offered by accommodation businesses, but there are no guided experiences.

With much of the island inaccessible by vehicle, several villages are only able to be reached by foot or boat. This creates a unique situation in villages and a distinctive story about the lifestyle on the island.

There are some excellent opportunities for guided itineraries that enable the visitor to travel around the island including its highest peaks with overnight stays at three villages. Some sections could also be undertaken by kayak, and luggage could be transported between most villages.

A guided experience would enable story telling along the way, would overcome language issues, and would enable introductions and ensuring appropriate responses to cultural issues by guests.

The opportunity to circumnavigate the island with overnight stays in villages could also be attractive to some visitors. Establishing simple moorings at inaccessible sections of the coastline would improve safety and enable stopping points. A similar experience could be provided for sailing vessels including live-aboards if appropriate moorings were to be installed.

Master planning is required to determine the optimal mix of land and sea-based itineraries linking with village stays to create a small number of new overnight and multi-day experiences. Key considerations include:

- Village interest and capacity
- Walking track suitability and infrastructure needs
- Inner reef and island navigability and visitor safety for water-based activity
- Business feasibility analysis including consumer testing
- Accommodation and hospitality options, needs, capacity and training needs
- Additional services, infrastructure and facilities required to support the experience(s)
- Wildlife experience management
- Business plan for operations

Cost estimate: \$AUS100,000

Experience development programs

Village visits will be an important part of the Ataúro Island experience where the visitor has the opportunity to engage with the community and observe or participate in an activity that is everyday life for the village. This might include handicraft production, painting, local music and instrument making or performance. Activities such as these also offer visitors the chance to buy local works which contributes to the economy but also enables the visitor to share their memories with friends back home.

A simple walk in a village with a local community member can be a memorable experience for the visitor. It offers the opportunity to see everyday life and have it explained. There can be added value with local produced being offered, handicrafts for sale, a visit to the school. Ultimately it comes down to the interest of a community in having visitors come into their life, and the opportunities they would like to provide. Working with villages to understand their aspirations for tourism, the impact it may have, and what they need to do will be a critical part of this.

Offering a program of experience development workshops and appropriate tourism training will assist in diversifying the range of products offered and the activities that villagers engage in. Training and support also need to be provided to extend the range of handicrafts available on the island as well as those that can be exported for sale in Dili or beyond. Other areas that could benefit from professional advice include product presentation, pricing and retail distribution.

Cost estimate: \$AUS80,000



Opportunities in Papua New Guinea

Masterplan development

Master planning needs to be undertaken for seven signature experiences:

- Bialla Area Adventure Trail including Lake Lamo' Auro (Hargy)
- Kove Cultural Experience
- Pago Area Village Stay
- Lolobao Island Conservation Stay and Village Experience
- Kimbe Bay Volcanic Exploration Trail
- Live aboard marine expeditions
- Mahonia Na Dari Conservation Stay

A number of considerations need to be made with regard to the master planning process:

- Defining the overall concept and experiences to be offered, including the mode of transport and type of adventure activities offered, involving detailed:
 - Consultation with the community
 - Consultation with research and conservation partners where relevant
 - Assessment of demand and target market segments, including willingness to pay and potential price points
- Conducting site assessment and feasibility analysis, which considers the range of accommodation options and facilities, access to and combination of nature, adventure and cultural activities as well as site or activity capacity
- Identifying services, infrastructure, facilities and interpretation required to support the experience(s)
- Development of a site plan and design guidelines
- Utilizing wildlife experience management

Cost estimate: \$AUS150,000

Experience Development Program

To develop signature experiences, it is essential to develop a range of immersive, nature, adventure and cultural-based activities. These can be delivered by the local community. They may involve a range of niche activities, which in themselves will be attractive to certain market segments. Those specifically interested in bird-watching or heritage dives, for example.

There are a range of specific activities that are integral to the delivery of the signature experiences, including:

- Guided tours to sacred or heritage sites
- Guided tours to and enhanced interpretation for specific sites, such as summit hikes, volcanoes or WWII heritage sites
- Opportunities for wildlife interactions, such as turtle or dugong sightings, diving with sharks and bird-watching
- Opportunities to taste local produce or participate in a local feast
- Opportunities to participate in cultural festivals or events or experience local customs
- Specific options for day or night-time activities that could be offered to the expedition or live-aboard cruise market

These supporting experiences need to be structured to determine how each activity links to the delivery of a signature experience while also being undertaken independently. Determining the capacity, price point and commission structure is essential to ensure that these experiences are market ready and enable a quality visitor experience to match expectations.

This requires a dedicated program to encourage resource owners and other members of the community to develop ideas for activities that can be packaged as part of the experience offer of the region. A key barrier to market entry is lack of capital and low levels of capacity to deliver such services. This could be addressed through a broader micro-financing scheme designed for local communities that provides a small amount of seed funding from an initial fund for small-scale, community-based tourism initiatives. It could be matched by a five-year mentoring program, which enables the local business operator to access relevant services and expertise at the right stage in the business establishment and management cycle, from development of their business plan through to marketing and the structuring of contracts. It could also help to purchasing essential equipment, such as safety equipment.

Cost estimate: \$AUS150,000

Essential infrastructure requirements

- Develop graded track and trail maps for both terrestrial and aquatic trails. These should highlight the best aquatic and terrestrial trails for kayaking, trekking and mountain climbing, caving or mountain biking. Integrate accommodation options and highlight key features or supporting experiences connected to the trail
- Construct reliable air links between West New Britain Province and Port Moresby. This may include direct international air access to Hoskins Airport. However, at this stage, improving promotion of WNB (and implicitly Hoskins Airport as the gateway) for leisure travellers by the two domestic airlines is recommended
- Establishing telecommunications infrastructure, particularly to improve internet services that are essential for building awareness of the region's product and experience offer and promotion
- To facilitate a number of signature experiences, including access for small-ship or expedition and live-aboard cruises, as well as limiting the impact of diving and snorkelling day trips, it is recommended that the region be assessed to identify the most important points for new moorings and port facilities

Cost estimate: \$AUS1-4 million

Website

Developing a website to promote WNB is a high priority and can be implemented in stages, with the initial site providing content on the region and profiling existing operators. Content from the Coral Triangle consumer-facing website (www.thecoraltriangle.com) can be utilised to provide stories on the region.

Ultimately, the website should be enhanced in stages to incorporate booking referrals or an e-commerce function for direct bookings as well as links to social media, and allow for integration of news and updates. The site should be linked directly to the WNB page with the TPA website (<http://www.papuanewguinea.travel/westernnewbritain>).

Cost estimate: \$AUS100,000

WHY INVEST?

The benefits to be gained

- ▶ Globally, tourism is forecast to grow at an unprecedented rate. Conservative modelling forecasts tourism in the Coral Triangle to grow to a value of US \$454 billion by 2035 (from US \$98 billion in 2015).
- ▶ Nature and adventure-based tourism are among the fastest growing tourism sectors and will continue to be for some time to come with the potential to grow from US \$19.7 billion to US \$204 billion in the Coral Triangle by 2035.
- ▶ The overall return on investment for these types of niche tourism far exceeds those of mass and/ or mainstream tourism; providing economic, social, environmental and cultural benefits to the people on the ground who often need those benefits most.
- ▶ The Coral Triangle region is particularly well suited to take advantage of the forecasted growth of the nature and adventure-based tourism segments, and has the opportunity to build a strong and differentiated competitive advantage in the global tourism market .
- ▶ Nature-based tourism also provides an opportunity for emerging countries to build their tourism industries in a way that both supports their communities and economy, whilst providing them with a way to avoid some of the negative impacts that mass tourism could bring.

INVESTING IN NATURE & ADVENTURE-BASED TOURISM IN THE CORAL TRIANGLE

THE 2035 OPPORTUNITY



Nature and Adventure-based Tourism (NABT) is forecast to be worth US \$1.46–US \$1.88 trillion per annum in Total Socio-Economic and Environmental Value to the Coral Triangle by 2035

- Timor–Leste US \$1.9–2.2 billion
- The Solomon Islands US \$2.1–2.5 billion
- Papua New Guinea US \$11.9–13.8 billion
- The Philippines US \$174–220 billion
- Malaysia US \$595–770 billion
- Indonesia US \$674–871 billion



The direct Economic Value NABT could provide to the 6 Coral Triangle Countries is forecast to grow to US \$159–US \$204 billion per annum

- Timor–Leste US \$210–240 million
- The Solomon Islands US \$231–273 million
- Papua New Guinea US \$1.3–1.5 billion
- The Philippines US \$19–24 billion
- Malaysia US \$65–84 billion
- Indonesia US \$73–95 billion
- (Forecasts above from 2015 Baseline Analysis)



Over the next 20 years, NABT's Weighted Return on Investment (ROI) is predicted to average 14.5–16.5% across the 6 Countries (vs. 8.5–10% for Mass Tourism)



ROI could reach as high as 29% at sites of High Conservation Value or high potential for Nature and Adventure-based Tourism (vs. 19% for Mass Tourism)



This means Nature & Adventure-Based Tourism would outperform Mass Tourism by 60–65% on average, whilst delivering significant positive Socio-Economic and Environmental Benefits to over 105 million people

The Key Findings above are based on modeling by 2iis Consulting using data from the UN Statistics Division, UNWTO, WTTC, OECD, TIES, UNEP and selected academic sources .

PROJECT PARTNERS



The Australian Government

The 'Developing and Promoting Sustainable Nature-based Tourism in the Coral Triangle' project is supported through funding from the Australian Government's Coral Triangle Initiative Support Program. Australia has been a partner of the Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries and Food Security (CTI-CFF) since 2007.



The World Wide Fund for Nature in the Coral Triangle

WWF has been pioneering conservation in the Coral Triangle for more than two decades, collaborating with partners in the private sector, governmental agencies and civil society. By providing technical expertise and funding, and promoting innovative public-private partnerships, WWF is committed to safeguard the health of the region's natural resources and to secure the millions of livelihoods that depend upon them.

The consultants



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Giant barrel sponge © Cat Holloway / WWF



