



Sustainable Development in **SOUTH ASIA TOURISM**

Best Practices from CESTour's Centers of Excellence

Editors: Martha Friel and Emma Zavarrone



Sustainable Development in South Asia Tourism: Best Practices from CESTour's Centers of Excellence

Editors

Martha Friel

Assistant Professor, Economics and Business Management, Faculty of Arts and Tourism,
IULM University, Milan, Italy

Emma Zavarrone

Associate Professor, Social Statistics and Demography, Faculty of Communication,
IULM University, Milan, Italy



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

Project Number – 617991-EPP-1-2020-1-AT-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP

The present document was developed and edited by the partner institutions of the Erasmus+ project CESTour “Centers of Excellence in sustainable tourism to boost economic development and enhance university-business cooperation in Southern Area”, under the coordination of the University of FHJ. The results, views and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors, and the European Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein. All contents generated by the CESTour project are protected by intellectual property laws, in particular copyright.



Publication and Editorial services facilitated by

Journal Press India
Delhi, India

Title: Sustainable Development in South Asia Tourism: Best Practices from
CESTour's Centers of Excellence

Editors: Martha Friel and Emma Zavarrone

Print published by: JOURNAL PRESS INDIA
Publisher's address: A-4/17, 1st Floor,
Sector-15, Rohini,
Delhi - 110 089, India
Mobile: 8826623730; Tel: +91-11-42631517
Website: www.journalpressindia.com
E-mail: info@journalpressindia.com

First Edition, February 2024

ISBN: 978-81-956810-8-2 (eBook)
ISBN: 978-81-956810-9-9 (Print)
DOI: 10.17492/jpi.CESTour.022402

Copyright © 2024 Editorial matters IULM University, Milano, Italy; individual chapters, the contributors

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

The publisher is not responsible for authors' and editors' expressed opinions, view, and the contents of the published manuscripts in this book. The originality, proof reading of the manuscript and errors are the sole responsibility of the authors and editors.

CHAPTER 3

Description of the Cases' Framework and Development

Martha Friel and Emma Zavarrone

1.0 Introduction: The Development of WP5 in the Broader Context of the CESTour Project

The CESTour project set out with the ambitious goal of promoting sustainable tourism and transferring fundamental knowledge to develop a more sustainable tourism industry in the project areas. This long-term commitment aimed to create a lasting impact within the tourism sector and improve the expertise level in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the involved countries - India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka - while also contributing to enhancing excellence in teaching.

At the heart of the CESTour project was the desire to strengthen collaboration between universities and businesses in the tourism sector across India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. This in order to promoting sustainable practices in tourism and enhancing education. The long-term objective was to enhance graduates' employability by providing a more current and industry-relevant education.

Strengthening collaboration between universities and businesses in the tourism sector to promote sustainable tourism brings significant advantages. This synergy allows students to practically apply theoretical concepts learned during their studies, acquiring industry-relevant skills. Additionally, it facilitates knowledge exchange between the academic and business spheres, enabling universities to tailor educational programs to real sector needs while businesses benefit from innovative ideas from academic institutions.

This close collaboration can also foster research and development of innovative projects in sustainable tourism, bridging the gap between theory and practice and preparing students for real challenges in the tourism sector. Lastly, the university-business cooperation creates internship, apprenticeship, and employment opportunities for students, ensuring education tailored to sector needs and enhancing competitiveness in the job market.

In line with these objectives and to consolidate results across other work packages (WPs), the CESTour project included specific activities in WP5 aimed at enhancing collaboration between tourism sector businesses and universities. This directly involved students from the centers of excellence for sustainable tourism.

Specifically, WP5 involved at least five students or student groups from each center of excellence in the seven partner universities in order to link them with tourism companies, entrepreneurs, NGOs, and local associations. They worked on concrete case studies on sustainable tourism, aiming to create a “catalogue” of best practices.

Through vocational training courses/research projects in WP4 and dissemination activities (WP6), as well as during regional multiplier events (WP2), students working within CESTs and tourism students had direct contact with key stakeholders. As a result of this collaboration, each student working within the CESTs and those interested in participating were matched with a stakeholder, creating a case study.

Within WP5, each student/group was tasked with analyzing a chosen sustainable tourism case—a business, experience, or destination—and developing a concise profile to examine innovative strategies, evaluate their impact, and define the sustainability and scalability of proposed solutions. Students received support from internal and external mentors throughout this case development process.

After finalizing the cases, each center of excellence organized a local event based on these case studies. During these events, students presented their analyses to a local panel of experts consisting of academic teachers and business representatives. Each case was evaluated using a common evaluation framework provided by the WP leader, and a winning case was selected for each university.

The case study challenges significantly contributed to the specific objectives of the CESTour project. They provided an opportunity to analyze the current state of the tourism industry in the involved countries, identifying and cataloguing existing sustainable practices, thus creating a vital knowledge base of best practices in sustainable tourism.

Additionally, these challenges actively engaged students in case study analysis and development, enabling them to acquire in-depth knowledge and practical skills related to sustainable tourism concepts. Involvement of business mentors provided valuable practical experience, supporting students’ capacity-building in this field.

Moreover, the case study challenges contributed to enhancing the operational capabilities of excellence centres, allowing students to actively participate in initiating new activities for these centres.

A crucial aspect of these challenges was enhancing cooperation between universities and businesses in the sustainable tourism sector. They established a tangible bridge between the academic and business worlds, contributing to sharing and integrating innovative knowledge and practices.

Ultimately, the case study challenges acted as a catalyst in creating collaboration networks among European and Asian partners involved in the project, facilitating the exchange of international experiences and knowledge and further extending the impact and scope of the benefits obtained through the CESTour project. Considering the achieved results and events conducted by various partners, it can be affirmed that students involved in centers of excellence actively identified and proposed diverse and interesting case studies offering insights into various priorities and areas of intervention in sustainable tourism in individual partner countries. These cases will be discussed in the subsequent sections after a summary of the guidelines presented in the next section.

2.0 WP5 Outputs: The Guidelines for Cases' Development

For the implementation of activities outlined in WP5, the project planned that the WP leader, namely IULM University of Milan, had to develop a series of guidelines as an output. Specifically, IULM developed guidelines for case analysis, for creating presentation videos for each of the case studies intended for social media communication, and for reporting the results obtained through the challenge events.

The initial step in carrying out the WP activities was drafting the guidelines for composing the case study. These guidelines were finalized after a meeting with all partners in December 2022. The shared guidelines included directions for case drafting and producing promotional videos to showcase and promote the case studies on social media.

The template for case study descriptions was detailed, aiming to provide an in-depth analysis of sustainable tourism projects. These guidelines gathered uniform information for individual cases, making them categorizable and analyzable according to similar criteria.

The case analysis grid was divided into four main sections, each serving a specific purpose. The first section, "Case Context," introduced the operating environment of the company or institution, covering geographical, historical, and operational details, services offered, target audience, and financial structure crucial for understanding the unique context of the case study.

The second section, "Innovation in Sustainable Tourism," focused on the challenges faced by the company or institution in sustainable tourism. It detailed the sustainable initiative or project, emphasizing introduced changes and the activities required for implementation. Market trends and internal organizational dynamics were also analyzed.

The third section, “Impact,” assessed the effect of the sustainable project, considering its effects on customers, the organization itself, and the development of the Center of Excellence, if relevant. Participants were asked to evaluate social, environmental, and economic impacts for different target groups and assess the overall effectiveness of the initiative within this section.

The fourth section, “Conclusions,” provided a final reflection on project implementation. It identified the strengths of the entrepreneurial initiative/innovative project, analyzed, highlighted potential improvement areas, and evaluated the possibility of replicating the initiative in other contexts.

This structure allowed for a clear and detailed organization of necessary information to understand and evaluate case studies in sustainable tourism. Each section focused on specific elements enabling stakeholders to analyze the initiative, assess its impact, and identify key aspects for its success or potential improvement.

An example was also provided within the template to facilitate case drafting further and ensure uniformity in the case analysis approach. The provided case was solely for internal use among the CESTour project partners. Although the company mentioned in the case study was real, some aspects relating to its description and the innovation proposal in sustainable tourism were specifically structured for illustrative and exemplary purposes to help students identify key aspects to analyze in their cases.

Regarding the guidelines for social media videos, these were also provided by the WP5 leader, IULM University, and shared with the partners. The indications provided insights on increasing awareness and usefulness regarding the analyzed sustainable tourism case studies. The video production had two main objectives: one internal to the CESTour project, used for communication and development of the Centers of Excellence, and one external aimed at maximizing visibility for the studied case through social media.

During the video creation process, emphasis was placed on the primary objective of the CESTour project, providing clear directions to ensure clarity in the central message for the selected audience. Efforts were made to engage the target audience by adjusting the video length for chosen social platforms and considering using English subtitles if the local language was used.

Some guiding questions helped define the main message to convey, the key objective, the choice of the most suitable social platform, the ideal audience, the story structure in the video, and the best visual and narrative elements to communicate the desired message effectively. Students were advised to focus on a specific, innovative, or unique aspect of the case study to make the video more impactful and engaging.

Guidelines were also provided to describe the results of the Local Case Challenge Events. These guidelines focused on detailing the outcomes of the Local Events of the Case Challenge. Partners were asked to provide detailed information regarding the Agenda, Participants (including an attendee list), Date and location, Main activities and results obtained, and Media coverage (including images in the document, links, etc.). These directions aimed to ensure comprehensive documentation of the local events, capturing both logistical aspects and the primary results, including media resonance through relevant images and links.

Lastly, the final template provided to partners was related to the case evaluation grid. This was structured to descriptively assess all the different sections of the case analysis on a scale from Excellent to Not adequate. The evaluation grid also included two sections for evaluating the videos and pitches.

3.0 The Cases, Challenges and New Partnerships with the Sector

Based on these guideline documents, students, supported by their mentors, completed the analysis of 35 cases, which were then presented within the framework of the Local Case Challenge Events organized by each partner university.

The diversity within these 35 cases represents a fascinating mosaic of initiatives in the context of sustainable tourism across India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. Beyond the diversified geographical distribution, these cases encompass a wide range of experiences and initiatives, providing an in-depth analysis of multiple facets within the sustainable tourism sector in these three countries. From eco-tourism and adventure tourism projects to innovative collaborations between public and private sectors, the variety of explored contexts highlights the extensive impact sustainable tourism can have on diverse communities and various socio-economic and environmental settings.

Furthermore, the broad spectrum of explored sectors, including aspects such as local community engagement, promotion of traditional craftsmanship, and adoption of low-impact environmental tourism practices, allowed students to grasp the importance of a multidimensional approach in addressing the challenges and opportunities within the sector.

The inclusion of unique initiatives among the selected cases, such as virtual tourism experiences, the establishment and growth of community-based hospitality ventures driven by female entrepreneurs, and initiatives focused on the preservation and elevation of local traditions encompassing agriculture, traditional cuisine, and craftsmanship, not only underscores the diverse tapestry of sustainable tourism but also serves as a wellspring of invaluable insights essential for forging novel partnerships.

These partnerships are instrumental in cultivating wider synergies that bridge the realms of academia, industries, and local communities, with a fundamental aim to revolutionize the paradigms governing the organization and execution of tourism experiences.

Each partner university identified an outstanding case study within the sphere of the case challenges conducted between August 2023 and January 2024. These case challenges played a dual role: significantly enhancing the Centers of Excellence (COEs) visibility while fostering a platform for extended collaboration and constructive discourse among businesses, academic institutions, and local organizations. The forthcoming sections of this volume present summaries of the 35 cases presented during the challenge (Table 1).

Table 1: Cases with Authors and Mentors

Country	University	Case no.	Case Title	Authors	Mentors
India	BIMTECH	1	Global Himalayan Expedition: Integrating Sustainability in Adventure Tourism	Samreen Kaur and Sidra Rehman	Prof. Manohar Sajnani
India	BIMTECH	2	Ecoplore: Truly Eco-friendly and Sustainable	Swati Khanna and Akanksha Kesarwani	Prof. Rahul Singh
India	BIMTECH	3	Kumbh Mela and Sustainable Tourism	Rohit Mukhopadhyay	Ms. Svadha Rai
India	BIMTECH	4	Not on Map	Anshuman Sharma	Dr. Shalini Singh
India	BIMTECH	5	Snowlion Expeditions Pvt Ltd: A Case Study on Adventure Tourism	Sweta Sinha and Piyush Khatri	Dr. Veenu Sharma
India	IPE (Institute of Public Enterprise)	6	Agri-Tourism and Local Community Development: A Case of SAMTFMACS in Aruk Valley, Andhra Pradesh	R Kishore	Prof S Sreenivasa Murthy
India	IPE (Institute of Public Enterprise)	7	Local Art Development and Sustainable Tourism: A Case Study on Mahabalipuram	K Prashanth	Prof Ch Lakshmi Kumari
India	IPE (Institute of Public Enterprise)	8	Community Based Eco-Tourism: A Case Study on Vana Vihari, Maredumilli, Andhra Pradesh, India	D Sai Venkata Sastry	Prof S Sreenivasa Murthy
India	IPE (Institute of Public Enterprise)	9	Tourism on Tribal Culture and Development: A Case Study on ITDA and TSTDC, Medaram Eturnagaram	M Sai Mouli Verma	Dr Maschendar Goud
India	IPE (Institute of Public Enterprise)	10	A Case Study on Cruise Tourism: A Case of Ponnami Tourism	N Sree Saily Siva Pujitha	Prof Ch Lakshmi Kumari
India	NIRMA University	11	Net Zero Sustainable Tourism: A Case Study of Vinyasa Ashram	Sameeksha Ahuja, Ark Dutta, Rahul Basandani, Ashlesha Sethi, Souvik De, and Himanshu Chauhan	Dr. Himanshu Chauhan

Country	University	Case no.	Case Title	Authors	Mentors
India	NIRMA University	12	Empowering local artisans through sustainable tourism: A case study on Kachchh	Nurvi Bhand, Anushka Vijaywargiya, Anushtha Seiwani, Muskan Khazanchi, Spandana Gupta, and Diljeetkaur Makhija	Dr. Diljeetkaur Makhija
India	NIRMA University	13	GMVN's (Garhwal Mandal Vikas Nigam) Holistic Approach to Sustainable Tourism	Prakash Paul, Rajdeep Bandyopadhyay, Bhavya Sharma, Rumela Tapadar, Sharnav Kundu, and Mayank Bhatia	Dr. Mayank Bhatia
India	NIRMA University	14	Virtual Tourism	Chaahat Sisodia, Hardik Sathe, Nikhil Sharma, Divya Gautam, Nirja Raghani, and Punit Saurabh	Dr. Punit Saurabh
India	NIRMA University	15	Sustainable Tourism – Overtourism: A Case Study on Nainital	Digesh Shah, Jainam Mehta, Anubhav Jain, Rahul Pandey, Shashwat Khandelwal, and Parag Rijwani	Dr. Parag Rijwani
Nepal	Global College International (GCI)	16	Panauti Community Homestay	Sadrish Marasini	Mr. Rishav Dev Khanal
Nepal	Global College International (GCI)	17	A Case Study on Tourism Event and Research Center	Raj Giri	Ms. Mahima Karki
Nepal	Global College International (GCI)	18	Bhaktapur Jatra Committee: The Role of Bisket Jatra in Promoting Local Traditions & Preserving Cultural Heritage	Pukar Karki	Mr. Kishor Kumar Gautam
Nepal	Global College International (GCI)	19	Bhairavnath Topi Pasal	Sumina Shrestha	Ms. Manuza Khatiwada
Nepal	Global College International (GCI)	20	A Case Study on SASA: TWA - ससः त्वाः	Kuldeep Dahal	Dr. Dev Raj Paneru
Nepal	Tribhuvan University (TU)	21	Royal Mountain Travel	Bimal Subedi	Mr. Nishan Kumar Aryal
Nepal	Tribhuvan University (TU)	22	Kritipur Community Homestay	Devina Shrestha	Prof. Ghanshyam Bhattarai
Nepal	Tribhuvan University (TU)	23	Gorkhali Handicraft	Jenish Maharjan	Mr. Nishan Kumar Aryal
Nepal	Tribhuvan University (TU)	24	Lavie Garden	Pranav Shrestha	Ms. Sunita Khatiwada
Nepal	Tribhuvan University (TU)	25	Best Heritage Tours	Sushant Bajracharya	Dr. Pashupati Nyaupane
Sri Lanka	Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka (SUSL)	26	Heritage Kandalama Where Sustainability Blooms	M.Y. Sasanki and R.S.S.W. Arachchi	Prof. RSSW Arachchi
Sri Lanka	Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka (SUSL)	27	Loris Conservation at Jetwing Vil Uyana	G.A.K. Hasanga and W.K.A.C. Gnanapala	Prof. WKAC Gnanapala

Country	University	Case no.	Case Title	Authors	Mentors
Sri Lanka	Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka (SUSL)	28	Walawe Nadee: Sustainable River Safari	W.H. Yatharthi and C.N.R. Wijesundara	Mr. CNR Wijesundara
Sri Lanka	Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka (SUSL)	29	Wild Glamping Gal Oya: Beacon of Responsible Luxury Camping	W.R.A.K.K. Ranasinghe and J.A.R.C. Sandaruwani	Ms. JARC Sandaruwani
Sri Lanka	Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka (SUSL)	30	Heeloya Village: Community-based Sustainable Tourism Heaven	R.A.V. Lakshan and G.V.H. Dinusha	Mr. GVH Dinusha
Sri Lanka	Uva Wellassa University (UWU)	31	CIC Agro Farm, Hingurakgoda, Sri Lanka : Icon of Sustainable Agriculture in Sri Lanka	Sampath W.S.W., Hasini G.G.A., Weerasinghe W.M.A.M., Wijerathne C.J., Sudu Arachchi S.M. and Sammani U.G.O.	Ms. U.G.O. Sammani
Sri Lanka	Uva Wellassa University (UWU)	32	Wildlife Tourism with Responsibility: The Role of Yala - Eco Teams in Promoting Sustainable Tourism	Sankalpana, K.M.S., Kumudumali, A.A.K., Wijesinghe, R.G.D.A., Niwarthana, M.L.S., Priyangika, W.M.S. and Karunarathne, A.C.I.D.	Ms. A.C.I.D. Karunarathne
Sri Lanka	Uva Wellassa University (UWU)	33	Tea Tourism and Sustainability: A Case Study of Heritage Tea Factory Hotel, Sri Lanka	A.K.R.Y. Allewela, R.A.U. Piumanthi, B.D.S.H. Dharmasena, M.K.E.A. Alwis, L.Gnanasegaram and J.P.R.C. Ranasinghe	Prof. J.P.R.C. Ranasinghe
Sri Lanka	Uva Wellassa University (UWU)	34	Sustainable Whale Watching in Sri Lanka: A Case Study on Sayuri Whale Watching	Weerabandhu, W.T.A., Bandara, P.A.U.S., Prabodima, P.G.D., Rathnayake, R.M.U.K., Epitawala, E.A.M.I. and Nawarathna, A.M.D.B.	Mr. A.M.D.B. Nawarathna
Sri Lanka	Uva Wellassa University (UWU)	35	Nature-Culture-Human Connectedness for Sustainable Tourism: A Case Study of Hiriwadunna Village, Sri Lanka	Wimalaweera, R.G.P.S., Dasanayaka, D.A.G., Dunuwila, D.C.S., Wijesundara, W.M.N.S., Umayangana, H.K.A. and Wijesundara, W.G.S.R.	Ms. W.G.S.R. Wijesundara

Authors' bio-sketch

Martha Friel, PhD is Assistant Professor of Economics and Business Management in the Faculty of Arts and Tourism at IULM University, Milan, Italy. Her activity focuses on the economy and management of culture, the creative industries and tourism.

Emma Zavarrone, PhD, is Associate Professor of Social Statistics and Demography at IULM University, Milan where she teaches statistics and textual analysis for social media and where she is deputy Rector for the Third Mission of the University.