

SCIENTIFIC, ACADEMIC, VOLUNTEER, AND EDUCATIONAL TRAVEL

CONNECTING RESPONSIBLE TRAVELERS
WITH SUSTAINABLE DESTINATIONS



Sustainable Tourism: International Cooperation for Development
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Primary Authors

Kristin Lamoureux
Donald Leadbetter
George Washington University

Contributors

Roberta Hilbruner, USAID
Donald E. Hawkins, George Washington University

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Foreword

International tourism and travel arrivals have been on the rise for decades, growing rapidly thanks to the combined effects of technology, rising prosperity, and mobility. Although sun-and-sand and other mainstream destinations comprise a large segment of the travel industry, there is a significant market of tourists wishing to travel off-the-beaten-path and make a positive contribution to destinations. Indeed, this market is growing today as sophisticated travelers seek new experiences and travelers of all types seek to avoid the growing crowds.

In response to the continuing growth of international travel, destinations around the world are seeking to differentiate and position themselves for the attention of travelers. Increased competition demands sophisticated differentiation strategies that target niche travel markets chosen based on the assets and capabilities of the destination. One such growing niche market is that for **Scientific, Academic, Volunteer, and Educational (SAVE)** travel.

SAVE travelers are driven by the desire to engage in travel experiences involving close interaction with the nature, culture and people of the destination in ways that advance knowledge (their own or that of others) or that involves contribution to the enhancement of the destination. SAVE travelers place high value on the natural, social and cultural assets of the place they visit and naturally adhere to the principles of sustainable tourism.

The targeting of SAVE travelers is a strategy that can be utilized by any destination, but is especially useful in certain circumstances. If a destination has an abundance of tourism assets that are similar to those of competitors, there is an opportunity to use them in a different, innovative way and target unique markets such as the SAVE market.

Developing countries are seeking to utilize travel and tourism as key components of economic growth. Travel and tourism development offers many advantages to these countries. Tourism is a labor-intensive industry that supports a wide variety of jobs in many sectors. Many governments in developing countries support the growth of tourism as a source of job creation, economic development, and tax revenue. Tourism also provides employment opportunities for vulnerable populations such as youth, women, and the less advantaged. Tourism thus provides an entryway into the workforce.

Frequently, developing countries seeking to strengthen their tourism industry face a variety of challenges. Human resources, air and ground transportation infrastructure, financial capital, safety & security, travel facilities; in each of these vital components of the travel industry, developing countries often lack the capacity necessary to satisfy the demands of mainstream tourists. Holidaymakers who prefer sunbathing on the Mediterranean coast are unlikely to be found roughing it in the tropical jungle. This puts developing countries at a disadvantage as they attempt to utilize the assets they do possess to create a compelling travel and tourism product.

For SAVE travelers, a lack of development can be an attraction in itself. Many enjoy the unique experiences that can only be had off-the-beaten-path where infrastructure might be lacking. Science-focused travel organizations give their customers the chance to join and participate in field studies around the world, ranging from counting new species in the jungle to helping at archaeological digs. International volunteers are also more likely

to tolerate less developed conditions, especially when volunteer supported projects are well designed and volunteers feel that they are making a positive difference.

For a country with underdeveloped infrastructure and a poorly trained tourism workforce, SAVE travelers can play an important role in nurturing the nascent stages of tourism development. They choose to visit places that others avoid, tolerate and even enjoy rustic conditions, and handle delays and inconveniences with patience and grace.

However, none of that means a developing destination should expect SAVE travelers to simply show up of their own accord. Like any other travel segment, SAVE travelers have expectations as well. A minimum level of safety and security is required. It will vary, but most SAVE travelers prefer access to at least basic medical facilities. Most importantly, SAVE travelers need a compelling reason to choose a destination, whether it's in a developing or developed country. They travel with a purpose, whether to further scientific knowledge, enhance their education, volunteer to help others, or some other way of traveling to do good.

This toolkit will describe the steps necessary for designing a SAVE travel and tourism development strategy. It provides guidance for the development of a SAVE center, an entity with a mission *to enable the destination to create travel and tourism products that service the SAVE travel market and to link those products to their respective markets*. Most of all, the guidebook seeks to provide practical tools, including assessment surveys, that can aid in the development process.

Purpose: To assess a country or destination's suitability for a SAVE travel strategy; to gather the information necessary to develop a SAVE strategy; to identify stakeholders and determine the institutional setting of a SAVE center(s); to identify gaps in a country/destination's ability to attract the SAVE travel market; to develop centers to link sending (marketplace) organizations and receiving (destination) organizations.

Audience: Local resident or expatriate professionals engaged for short or long term periods as individuals or as team members in the planning or conduct of sustainable travel projects in developing countries which are sponsored by donors, government agencies, NGOs, consulting firms, universities, businesses, and other key players.

Acknowledgements: The development of this guide would have been impossible without the hard work that has come before in the promotion of SAVE travel. Dr. Donald Hawkins, Eisenhower Professor of Tourism Policy at The George Washington University, spearheaded the crystallization of the concept of SAVE travel and has been at the forefront of its promotion. Many of the travel and tourism development professionals affiliated with Solimar International have vigilantly promoted SAVE travel, not least founder and President Chris Seek; Simon Jones; Jim Phillips; James Dion; Matt Humke; David Brown; Jennifer Park; Annessa Kaufman; and Milena Nikolova. Thanks also to Simon and Milena for use of their SAVE Center Bulgaria business plan. Juan Luna-Kelser, tourism development specialist and Adjunct Professor at George Washington University; Brad Weiss, Ethiopia Sustainable Tourism Alliance; and Jessie McComb, Global Sustainable Tourism Alliance, have all worked as ambassadors of SAVE travel and importance of traveling to do good. Thank you all.

Unit 1: Introducing SAVE Travel

Objectives:

At the end of this unit, participants should be able to understand:

1. The SAVE travel concept
2. The market segments of SAVE travel
3. The benefits for a destination of attracting the SAVE market
4. Strategic approaches to SAVE travel development

1.1 Scientific, Academic, Volunteer, and Educational Travel

SAVE travel represents a growing segment of the global travel industry that differs in several key respects from more conventional forms of mass travel. SAVE travel is particularly distinct from mass tourism in terms of the contributions it can make to people and places as well as the impacts that it has on hosting destinations. It represents a range of tourists who travel to a destination to engage in research, learning or volunteer travel. By definition, those attracted to SAVE travel tend to be interested in activities that can be readily harnessed to natural and cultural heritage preservation efforts and that contribute to the improvement of local lives.

SAVE activities benefit not only local economies by increasing tourist visits but also often lead to longer-term economic benefits at a national level by building the capacity of tourism, educational, scientific and cultural institutions. Moreover, since SAVE activities often involve insertion within local communities and/or activities in areas removed from mass tourism enclaves, the economic benefits and opportunities generated by this form of travel tend to be more broadly distributed than those that arise from the mass tourism industry. Finally, SAVE activities offer new models for sustainably supporting the core activities and developing the capacity of the scientific, research, academic, and heritage conservation communities within countries that host SAVE destinations.

Globally, there has been enormous growth within the SAVE travel industry. In 2003, the cumulative number of voluntourism projects in the top ten receiving countries for international volunteering was 223. By 2007, the number had reached 1,741, a seven-fold increase (Tomazos & Butler, 2009). According to Tomazos and Butler (2009) there are 146 voluntourism organizations worldwide that send thousands of voluntourists around the world each year. There are volunteer opportunities on every continent of the world with the top five receiving countries being China, India, the United States, Indonesia and Brazil (Tomazos & Butler, 2009). The range of volunteer projects is just as large and diverse, including building homes and schools, caring for wildlife, providing medical aid, teaching children, and restoring architecture, along with many more (Rogers, 2007).

Additional research has been conducted that illustrates strong growth in the interest in voluntourism. A multi-phased survey methodology was employed in a study entitled "Voluntourism: Give a Little, Gain a Lot", authored by Merriah Michel and Dan Mille of the Georgian College Research Analyst Program in collaboration with Planeterra, Gap Adventures, and The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) in 2010. Phase one was

an online survey distributed through the membership databases of Planeterra, Gap Adventures, and TIES, with links on Facebook, Twitter, and consumer websites. Ultimately, 1,073 responses from more than 70 countries were collected, with approximately 60% being prospective voluntourists. The survey examined the motivations and expectations of current and prospective voluntourists and sought an understanding of how they choose a travel company. Data was also gathered on voluntourists' level of satisfaction with past international voluntourism experiences, and the results provided a general profile of the voluntourist.

The survey showed evidence of strong interest in voluntourism in all regions of the world. While survey respondents chose South America as their top destination (with 71% of respondents) interest in Africa was almost as strong (60%) and outstripped interest in Asia (59%). Respondents were mainly motivated by their interest in environmental conservation, community tourism projects and community development. Although many voluntourists were interested in travelling abroad for over a month, affordability was important. Voluntourists were also concerned with knowing exactly where their money was being used.

CASE STUDY: **Voluntourism – Give a Little, Gain a Lot**

Merriah Michel and Dan Mille's international survey of over 1,000 travelers examined motivations, preferences, and expectations of those who actively volunteer or want to volunteer while they travel. One key finding: the importance of **CLARITY!** Voluntourists want to clearly see that their money and effort is benefiting a legitimate need in the community. [Follow this link](#) to access the report.

1.2 The SAVE Travel Alliance

The Global SAVE Travel Alliance was formed to promote the development of SAVE travel on a global scale. The Alliance was formed as a result of the collaborative efforts between the four founding partners: The National Geographic Society (NGS), Counterpart International (CI), The George Washington University (GW), and the Honduras Institute of Tourism (HIT). Dr. Donald Hawkins, Eisenhower Chair of Tourism Policy at The George Washington University, was appointed as Chairman of the Alliance. The Alliance has partners across a number of countries, including Australia, Canada, Ecuador, Honduras, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom.

The objective of the organization is to enable linkages between responsible travelers and destinations interested in pursuing sustainable growth. The targeting of SAVE travelers has been integrated into travel development strategies in a number of places where SAVE Travel Alliance partners have worked. More comprehensive programs designed around the SAVE concept are currently being developed in Way Kambas National Park (Sumatra, Indonesia) and as part of the Southern African Slave Wrecks and Heritage Route Project (South Africa, Mozambique and Angola), as well as others.

RESOURCE: The SAVE Travel Alliance

Visit the website of the SAVE Travel Alliance at www.save-travel.org.

1.3 SAVE Market Profiles

The SAVE market is a segment that includes travelers who engage in activities with specific and sometimes significant positive impact on the destination. The SAVE market segment includes:

Scientific

Profile: Individuals or groups who seek ways to contribute to the advancement of science and to help with the acquisition of knowledge about the world. Conversely, scientific travelers may be interested in just learning more about a specific scientific niche.

Benefits for Destinations: Scientific research takes time and requires extended stays with longer economic impact. Scientific expeditions hire local workers, live in the communities, eat local food, utilize local transportation and buy local goods—leading to positive economic impacts in surrounding communities. In addition, scientists have the capacity to gather information on valuable destination assets, cultures, etc. and preserve or present this information for the communities, which in turn helps raise the profile of local assets and the destination in general.

Academic:

Profile: Individuals or groups that travel with the intention of participating in experiential learning activities leading to credit for formal degree programs or courses offered by higher education institutions; for example, field studies in anthropology, archaeology, languages, conservation biology and others.

Benefits for Destinations: Academic groups have a tendency to visit more remote places in the interest of study and are more willing to interact with local communities. They often do not require sophisticated facilities and services. In most cases, academic travelers travel in groups and often for extended periods of time, which is linked to economic benefits for local communities. Like scientific groups, they have the power to raise awareness on the importance of a destination's assets and to spread the word among their networks.

Volunteer:

Profile: Individuals or groups that travel with the intention to participate in specific activities that will contribute to the betterment of society. These could be travelers associated with the growing number of organizations supporting volunteer programs or independent travelers.

Benefits for Destinations: In recent times, travelers, particularly youth, have shifted from what was originally just traveling or studying abroad to incorporating service into the learning experience. Often volunteers spend a long period of time at the destination without needing sophisticated facilities and services. Depending on background and skills, volunteers can contribute to the capacity building of local communities and other stakeholders as well as help with product development, physical improvement of areas, and other elements of developing destinations. In addition to making a contribution to the enhancement of the community and the destination, their extended presence is linked to

direct economic benefits. Volunteers will also often spread the word about a destination, improving access to other travel markets.

Educational:

Profile: Individuals or groups that travel to enhance their knowledge, for personal gratification rather than academic credit. This type of educational experience could include learning a language or acquiring another skill in traditional dances, handicrafts, orienteering, etc. Programs leading to some credential or certificate of completion involve longer trips and higher expenditures for value-added activities (e.g. guided interpretation) directly benefiting local people.

Benefits for Destinations: The acquiring of skill or knowledge usually requires extended stays at the destination as well as increased interaction with local communities. In the cases when the focus of the educational experience is associated with the local culture or traditions this contributes to the strengthened pride of communities and to the raised profile of local attractions.

CASE STUDY: CUSO-VSO – Volunteers for the World

CUSO-VSO is a non-profit, international development agency that works through volunteers, each year sending hundreds of volunteers to collaborate on development projects. It is the North American member of VSO International, a worldwide alliance of Voluntary Service Organizations. CUSO's volunteers are typically skilled professionals seeking to share their expertise and focus on long-term solutions. Access their annual report and more information about them at their website [by following this link](#).

1.4 Approaches to SAVE Travel Development

There are several models that a destination can choose from when implementing a SAVE travel development strategy.

National tourism strategy

One approach to SAVE travel development is for the Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Culture, or other appropriate body to adopt a SAVE travel development strategy as a component of their national tourism plan. Advantages to this strategy can include access to funds, buy-in from other stakeholders, assistance and legitimacy when applying to donor organizations for support, an enhanced profile for the strategy, and more.

CASE STUDY: Honduras

In 2004, four tourism stakeholders entered into a Memorandum of Understanding to collaborate on the development of SAVE travel in Honduras. This included the Honduras Institute of Tourism, the national body responsible for tourism development. As a result of this level of institutional support, SAVE travel has remained a focus on Honduras' travel development. The Memorandum can be downloaded [by following this link](#).

Destination level

A SAVE travel strategy can also be adopted at a regional or local level.

- A **destination management organization (DMO)** could identify SAVE as a priority target market, much as [Glasgow, Scotland](#) has successfully targeted the MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Expositions) market as a priority.
- A **travel operation or supplier** could target the SAVE market and orient its products and marketing towards SAVE tourists. [Dusit International](#), a Thai-based hospitality group, partnered with the Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau to target the MICE market.
- A SAVE center could be a **self-supporting, independent** entity designed to attract, host, and serve the SAVE market. The Bulgarian Heritage National Association has proposed such a center for the Municipality of Smolyan in order to contribute to economic growth in the region through sustainable travel.
- A SAVE travel development strategy could be adopted by a **dispersed set of stakeholders** working together to target the SAVE market. In regions lacking a centralized destination management organization, such a SAVE initiative could be the first steps towards forming a DMO.

1.5 Conclusion

SAVE travelers are driven by the desire to engage in travel experiences involving close interaction with the nature, culture and people of the destination in ways that advance knowledge (their own or that of others) or that involves contributing to the enhancement of the destination. SAVE travelers place high value on the natural, social and cultural assets of the place they visit and naturally adhere to the principles of sustainable travel.

The targeting of SAVE tourists is a strategy that can be utilized by any destination but is especially useful in certain circumstances. If a destination has tourism assets that are similar to those of competitors, there is an opportunity to use those assets in a different, innovative way and target unique markets such as the SAVE market.

Developing countries are seeking to utilize travel as a key component of economic growth. Tourism development offers many advantages to these countries. Travel is a labor-intensive industry that supports a wide variety of jobs in many sectors. Many governments in developing countries support the growth of tourism as a source of job creation, economic development, and tax revenue. Tourism also provides employment opportunities for vulnerable populations such as youth, women, and the less advantaged. Travel thus provides an entryway into the workforce.

Frequently, developing countries seeking to strengthen their travel industry face a variety of challenges. Human resources, air and ground transportation infrastructure, financial capital, safety & security, travel facilities; in each of these vital components of the tourism industry, developing countries often lack the capacity necessary to satisfy the demands of mainstream tourists. Holidaymakers who prefer sunbathing on the Mediterranean coast are unlikely to be found roughing it in the tropical jungle. This puts developing countries at a disadvantage as they attempt to utilize the assets they do possess to create a compelling travel product.

For SAVE travelers, a lack of development may be an attraction in itself. Many enjoy the unique experiences that can only be had off-the-beaten-path where infrastructure might be lacking. Science-focused travel organizations give their customers the chance to join and participate in field studies around the world, ranging from counting new species in the jungle to helping at archaeological digs. International volunteers are also more likely to tolerate less developed conditions, especially when volunteer supported projects are well designed and volunteers feel that they are making a positive difference.

For a country with underdeveloped infrastructure and a poorly trained tourism workforce, SAVE travelers can play an important role in nurturing the nascent stages of travel development. They choose to visit places that others avoid, tolerate and even enjoy rustic conditions, and handle delays and inconveniences with patience and grace.

However, none of that means a developing destination should expect SAVE travelers to simply show up of their own accord. Like any other travel segment, SAVE travelers have expectations as well. A minimum level of safety and security is required. It will vary, but most SAVE travelers prefer access to at least basic medical facilities. Most importantly, SAVE travelers need a compelling reason to choose a destination. They travel with a purpose, whether to further scientific knowledge, enhance their education, volunteer to help others, or some other way of traveling to do good.

This course will describe the steps necessary for designing a SAVE travel development strategy. It will explicitly describe the necessary baseline information that needs to be gathered, provide tools for the information gathering process, and describe how to form that information into a tourism strategy. In the end, the course user will be able to apply a strategic approach to developing SAVE travel in a destination.

Unit 2: Assessment Process – Overview and Conceptual Framework

Objectives:

At the end of this unit, participants should be able to understand:

1. The process and elements of developing a SAVE travel strategy
2. The conceptual framework for a national SAVE travel assessment

2.1 Steps for developing a SAVE travel strategy

The following section gives an overview of the activities necessary to develop a SAVE travel strategy for a country, region, or destination. It is designed to give a general description of the steps that will be necessary. Section 2.2 describes in more detail baseline information that needs to be gathered to assess the different components of SAVE travel development. The following units will describe the information gathering process in detail.

Assess the suitability of a country/destination for a SAVE travel strategy

Before designing a SAVE travel strategy, it is important to determine whether the SAVE tourist market is the right “fit” for the destination. The information gathered in the assessments described in this course will go a long way towards making that determination. Questions that must be answered include:

- Does the country/destination possess suitable resources for SAVE travel? Examples include natural resources appropriate for scientific travel, academic opportunities that could attract study abroad participants, a non-profit sector able to welcome foreign voluntourists, and opportunities for life-enriching activities.
- Is there adequate infrastructure for welcoming SAVE tourists?
- Is the tourism workforce prepared to welcome SAVE tourists?
- Are there regulatory barriers to attracting the SAVE market?

In addition to such practical considerations, thought must be given to whether a country or destination should target the SAVE market just because it has the capacity to do so. It may be the case that a destination already possesses a diverse travel portfolio and that the effort necessary to attract the SAVE market may not be justified by the potential economic gain. The decision to target the SAVE market should be made with strategic consideration of the other elements of a destination’s travel profile.

Identify stakeholders, determine institutional setting of a SAVE center or network

A successful SAVE travel development strategy will require collaboration and cooperation from a wide range of stakeholders. It will be necessary for the tourism development practitioner to identify these stakeholders and demonstrate to them the potential of targeting the SAVE market. Stakeholders will be described in more detail in unit three.

It is also necessary to determine the institutional setting of a SAVE center or network, as described in Unit 1. Possibilities include adopting SAVE tourism development as a national strategy; supplier-driven SAVE target marketing; developing a self-sustaining SAVE center; and developing a SAVE strategy within a destination marketing or management organization.

RESOURCE: Destination Marketing Association International

Destination Marketing Association International (DMAI) is the world's largest resources for destination marketing organizations and has members in over 30 countries. DMAI's Resource Center contains valuable information on destination marketing and management, including resources related to niche market segments. [Follow this link](#) for more information on how destinations have targeted particular travel niches.

Inventory existing SAVE opportunities and suppliers and their characteristics

In many destinations, SAVE travel already exists; it just isn't identified as such. Inventorying existing SAVE opportunities and their characteristics is a necessary step for several reasons. First, it illustrates that targeting SAVE travel is already a viable strategy. Second, it assists with identifying stakeholders who can provide information about their customers and advice about targeting SAVE tourists. Finally, it will raise the profile of SAVE travel and cluster pre-existing travel into an identifiable niche.

Identify potential markets

Once it's been determined that a country has the capability to offer SAVE travel opportunities, it's necessary to identify specific potential markets. To begin the process, examine existing data about in-bound travel to determine source markets. Research can then be done on potential size of the SAVE market within those sources.

Another important source of information about potential SAVE tourist markets is existing tour operators already offering SAVE opportunities. Organizations and tour operators can provide information about source markets, lengths of stay, and existing promotions.

Identify gaps and barriers in a country/destination's ability to attract the SAVE market

The assessment process described in this module will provide the information necessary to identify gaps and barriers that could prevent the targeting of the SAVE market. Examples:

- **Regulatory (barrier)** – Visa laws that restrict voluntourism
- **Workforce (gap)** – inadequate or insufficiently trained workforce
- **Transparency (barrier)** – Lack of clarity regarding the benefits of SAVE tourists' time, money, effort, and contributions

Establish minimum criteria and standards for volunteer receiving organizations

For SAVE travel development to be sustainable, SAVE opportunities have to be authentic, of good quality, and mindful of environmental concerns. SAVE travel suppliers need to meet the safety, health, and security requirements of the market. A primary concern of voluntourists is transparency in regards to the proper use of their

voluntourism contributions to the community. In the long term, a system of quality standards could be created, perhaps evolving into a certification system, to address these issues.

Share results and mobilize action

Once the baseline data necessary to develop a SAVE travel strategy has been collected, next steps will include building awareness, sharing results, and mobilizing action. Tourism development practitioners should identify national or regional champions of SAVE travel who will assist in the next step, the comprehensive development of a SAVE travel strategy. Champions could include suppliers eager to target a lucrative market or government officials seeking to catalyze economic development through travel.

Navigate from assessment to program design – a SAVE travel strategy

Once baseline data has been collected and travel stakeholders have agreed to support the development of SAVE travel, a SAVE strategy must be designed that identifies strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats; specifies target markets; addresses gaps and barriers to SAVE travel development; and addresses issues of sustainability. Unit seven describes the elements of a SAVE travel strategy in more detail.

Monitor and evaluate

As with any development strategy, it is vital to determine metrics for measuring success. Indicators could include the number of SAVE opportunities available; the number of SAVE tourists welcomed by a region or destination; and the amount of economic activity generated by SAVE travel. Monitoring and evaluation will be discussed in greater detail in unit eight.

CASE STUDY: Community-Supported SAVE Travel

An example of community-initiated SAVE travel: Residents of a small island off the coast of Thailand proactively sought to benefit from increased travel in their part of the country as well as the global growth in voluntourism in general. The Kohn Sukorn community, working with the SAVE Travel Alliance as an intermediary, opened its doors to voluntourists, specifically targeting travel development professionals interested in gaining hands-on experience in connecting a community-based tourism initiative to domestic and international markets. [Follow this link](#) to download more information about the initiative.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

The following section describes in greater detail the variables about which more information must be gathered in order to design a SAVE travel strategy.

1. Suitability

A SAVE travel strategy is appropriate for some countries and destinations and not as appropriate for others. Factors to consider when determining suitability include:

- **Resources** – Does the country or destination contain adequate resources for supplying SAVE opportunities? Are these resources being managed sustainably with an eye towards conservation? The majority of SAVE travel depends on natural and cultural resources, making their conservation of utmost importance.
- **Infrastructure** – For many SAVE tourists, less developed levels of infrastructure may not be an impediment, especially for those engaging in scientific or volunteer travel. However, for every travel activity, an adequate level of infrastructure must exist in order to for the product to be delivered. There must be adequate transportation networks to bring tourists to and from the destination. There must a level of communication that at least allows the SAVE supplier to advertise his product. Accommodation and meals will need to be provided, although requirements and preferences will vary widely.
- **Suppliers** – Are there national or local travel suppliers interested in attracting the SAVE market? Without buy-in from travel suppliers, a SAVE strategy will accomplish little. Supplier must be convinced of the potential of the SAVE market.
- **Products** – In addition to existing SAVE opportunities (see variable three), are there potential SAVE products, opportunities, and experiences that could be developed to take advantage of the available resources? For example, a region may possess a rain forest with a variety of flora and fauna. It may be the case that scientists have yet to catalog the forest completely, thus creating the opportunity to develop a scientific travel product.
- **Regulatory environment** (visas, volunteer regulations, etc.)

2. Stakeholders

The development of a sustainable SAVE strategy will require collaboration from as many stakeholders as possible in a highly participatory process.

- **Travel suppliers/operators** – Necessary to provide SAVE travel opportunities and receive SAVE tourists. Strong market research will be necessary to convince them of the potential of SAVE travel.
- **Regulatory agencies/government** – Necessary to remove regulatory barriers, support workforce development, encourage transparency, provide founding, and assist with international marketing.
- **Destination Management/Marketing Organizations** – Vital to supporting a travel development strategy. DMOs can convene stakeholders, spearhead marketing and promotion, assist with workforce development, and more.
- **Associations** – A catchall category that includes travel industry groups such as hotelier associations, workforce unions, and other concerned parties. Their buy-in will contribute to the sustainability of a SAVE travel strategy.

3. Existing SAVE opportunities

In many destinations, SAVE opportunities and products already exist. They just aren't labeled as such. Conducting a preliminary inventory of existing SAVE opportunities will help establish the baseline scenario and identify challenges and opportunities.

4. Market assessment

A destination's ability to offer SAVE travel opportunities isn't enough. Destination managers and travel suppliers must be able to identify and profile potential markets for SAVE products in order to justify a SAVE strategy, informed by a knowledge of the following:

- **Where** do tourists currently come from? What are the main feeder markets? What is the potential for SAVE travel from those markets? Are SAVE-like activities, such as volunteering, popular activities within those feeder markets?
- **Who** are the tourists arriving in the destination currently? Demographic and psychographic profiles are vital for assessing the potential for voluntourism originating in those markets.
- **Size** – Is out-bound travel from current feeder markets growing, or is the volume shifting to other markets?
- **Behavior** – What are the current travel behaviors and preferences of the feeder markets? Does the opportunity exist to tap the potential for voluntourism, or do existing preferences indicate that a strong preference for traditional tourism?

5. Barriers and gaps

A destination may be prevented from pursuing a SAVE strategy due to existing barriers or gaps in its travel environment.

- **Regulatory** – In some countries, volunteer visas do not exist. Voluntourists are thus prevented from staying longer than their tourist visa allows, preventing long-term volunteer opportunities. A country may have laws pertaining to volunteer work that do not distinguish between domestic and foreign volunteers and make it difficult to adopt a SAVE model. Other regulatory barriers must be carefully investigated and addressed on a country-by-country basis.
- **Infrastructure** – As discussed in the section on suitability, a destination may not possess adequate infrastructure to accept SAVE tourists, although the expectations of the SAVE market regarding accommodation and provisions can vary widely.
- **Supply** – A country may simply have an inadequate supply of travel products or even resources to pursue the SAVE market.
- **Workforce** – A common challenge in developing countries is providing an adequate travel and tourism workforce prepared to welcome tourists and understand their needs and preferences. This is less of an issue with SAVE tourists, who are generally less demanding and more independent than mass-market tourists. Nonetheless, SAVE travel suppliers also need adequate workforce to attend to voluntourists needs.

6. Standards and criteria

For many SAVE tourists, an important criterion for selecting a travel provider is proof of a quality product that meets certain quality standards.

- **Transparency** – A primary concern for voluntourists is assurance that their contributions are directly assisting the local community and are not resented, wasted, or fraudulently misdirected.
- **Environment** – SAVE travel depends on natural and cultural resources. Thus, SAVE travel suppliers should be expected to incorporate conservation and sustainability into their product design.
- **Safety, Security, and Sanitation** – The expectations of SAVE tourists will vary, but SAVE travel suppliers should be required to meet certain standards for each.

An effective SAVE travel strategy will call for the collaborative design of a set of standards and criteria that clearly define expectations. This could evolve into a certification program.

RESOURCE: **Voluntourism 101 – Operator Self Check Guide**

The staff of PEPY Tours, a bicycle-tour company in Cambodia, designed a self-check guide for tour operators who wish to or already incorporate volunteer projects into their trips. It is also an excellent tool for travel development practitioners. The guide provides invaluable tips and assistance for designing high quality voluntourism. Access the guide by [following this link](#).

2.3 Conclusion

Before the process of developing a SAVE travel strategy can begin, extensive information must be gathered about the existing travel sector of a country or destination. A comprehensive profile of the sector must be created that encompasses all important variables, including resources, infrastructure, suppliers, markets, regulatory concerns, workforce assessment, and stakeholders. Now that we've clearly defined the information we need to gather, the next two units will describe the information gathering process.

Unit 3: SAVE Resources, Stakeholders, and Suppliers

Objectives:

At the end of this unit, participants should be able to understand:

3. The characteristics of SAVE travel resources and how to assess their potential
4. The range of stakeholders involved in developing a SAVE strategy
5. The characteristics of SAVE travel suppliers

Units three and four describe in greater detail each of the factors of analysis that should be considered during the assessment process. These factors will correlate to the assessment tools provided at the end of Unit 5. For each factor, important characteristics will be discussed in detail that should be included in the assessment process. Examples will be provided of each type of factor to provide guidance.

3.1 SAVE Travel Resources

The first step in assessing a country or destination's potential for SAVE travel is to identify resources that can be (or are being) utilized as SAVE travel products. A simple brainstorming session, with other travel experts helping if available, to identify as many resources as possible is a great way to get started. At this stage, the goal is to identify general resources that could be incorporated in a SAVE travel product. This is not meant to produce an exhaustive list of resources, which would be difficult when considering a large area or entire country. Rather, this first step is designed to help identify the most promising resources with the best potential.

There may be resources that are already utilized for SAVE travel by suppliers and operators that offer SAVE experiences, but the activities are not specifically labeled as such. Identifying existing opportunities will help you with identifying and cataloging the resources they utilize. More will be said about identifying existing SAVE travel suppliers in section 3.3.

The following section provides guidance for identifying resources appropriate for each sector of SAVE travel, along with some examples.

Scientific

Scientific travel typically takes place in natural areas and wildernesses, including forests, grasslands, deserts, mountains, valleys, and even lakes and streams. An inventory of national parks and other protected lands provides an excellent starting point. The goal is to identify those resources within the country or destination that might appeal to the scientific tourist. Where in the country is there a need for scientific travel? Is there scientific research currently happening? Perhaps there are scientific organizations who could use assistance but don't know how to take advantage of the growth of voluntourism. Identify the most promising resources.

One popular type of scientific travel deals with issues of conservation. The massive growth in environmental awareness of the last few decades has created a large market

of travelers interested in contributing to environmental protection efforts. For example, several organizations, including Pacific Environment, have been working to protect the environment of the Pacific Rim. In a textbook example of scientific travel, Pacific Environment seeks volunteers to assist with trail work around Lake Baikal in Russia. The goal is to create greater awareness of the fragile ecological state around the lake and provide more visitors with the chance to appreciate its natural beauty, thus increasing support for environmental protection. A description of their program can be found by [following this link](#).

In addition to active experiences that could involve inventorying flora and fauna or assisting with conservation projects, scientific travel can also include more passive learning adventures, such as visiting astronomy observatories or unique geological formations. The U.S. state of Hawaii has [promoted science travel](#), utilizing its astronomy center and volcanoes. This type of science travel could be especially appealing for children, possibly enticing school trips to a destination.

RESOURCE: **Earthwatch Institute**

Earthwatch Institute is one of the most successful organizations in the field of scientific travel. From their website: “Earthwatch Institute is an international non-profit organization that brings science to life for people concerned about the Earth’s future. Founded in 1971, Earthwatch supports scientific research by offering volunteers the opportunity to join research teams around the world. This unique model is creating a systematic change in how the public views science and its role in environmental sustainability. Today Earthwatch recruits close to 4,000 volunteers every year to collect field data in the areas of rainforest ecology, wildlife conservation, marine science, archaeology, and more. Through this process, we educate, inspire, and involve a diversity of people, who actively contribute to conserving our planet.”

Learn more about the Earthwatch Institute at their website, www.earthwatch.org.

Academic

The most visible type of academic travel, as well as the most economically significant, is the study abroad market. Every year, millions of students choose to spend time away from their home university, ranging from a period of weeks to an entire academic year. Study abroad is rarely thought of as travel, but it certainly meets the World Tourism Organization’s criteria of an individual spending time away from their usual environment and not receiving a wage while in their destination (although it is true that some students work while they are abroad).

The development of a university’s ability to attract international students is typically managed by university officials. However, there could be opportunity for travel development professionals and other stakeholders to collaborate with a university and offer services and expertise to strengthen the university’s academic “product”. An inventory should be made of universities and credit-granting institutions, taking note of those already attracting international students.

Academic travel can also refer to short-to-medium-term activities leading to credit at an institute of higher learning. This could take the form of field studies for science programs;

short-term international trips (typically one to two weeks) that are part of a longer curricula, in topics ranging from business to law to the humanities; or individuals conducting research in pursuit of their degree. Identifying opportunities to attract these tourists requires creative thinking and a careful analysis of resources. For example, tourism authorities in the Douro Valley, Portugal were seeking ways to attract more international and domestic tourists. They invited a team of tourism graduate students from The George Washington University to assess their tourism sector and provide development assistance. The team spent two weeks in the Douro Valley, generating economic activity and sharing their experiences with their friends and family, contributing to word-of-mouth about the area as a tourism destination.

RESOURCE: **Open Doors Report**

The **Open Doors Report** produced by the Institute for International Education provides comprehensive information on international students and scholars studying or teaching in the United States and on U.S. students studying abroad for academic credit. The report includes analyses that illustrate the economic impact of educational travel. For more information about the report, [follow this link](#).

Volunteer

Assessing potential resources for volunteer travel can be a daunting task, especially over a large geographic area. The best approach for identifying potential resources for volunteer travel is to divide the destination into smaller, manageable sections.

Volunteer travel can mean many different things, and the key to identifying opportunities is creativity. Seek unique volunteer opportunities that would differentiate the destination. Don't disregard an unusual opportunity off-hand without first giving it serious consideration.

Volunteer travel can occur in many different contexts. It can be humanitarian in nature, such as assisting at an orphanage or school. It can be service oriented, such as helping to build a house or cooking at a soup kitchen. It can take place with an organization with a long operational history, or it can occur during a one-time event. The list is virtually endless. An important point to remember is that different voluntourists are typically attracted to different types of volunteer opportunities. Some may enjoy working with children. Others may want to avoid children and instead prefer helping with the upkeep of a park or nature area. It is thus advantageous to the destination to cultivate a range of volunteer opportunities.

There are many organizations involved in volunteer travel, and researching them online can help with the process of developing volunteer opportunities in a destination. One of the most useful resources is **VolunTourism.org**, (website: www.voluntourism.org). On their website, one can find tools and discussions about voluntourism from the perspectives of destination managers, tour operators, suppliers, communities, travel planners, and travelers. The site also contains a list and links to the websites of destination management organizations that have actively pursued voluntourism. A review of their strategies can inform the process of voluntourism development in other destinations.

Educational

Over the last twenty years, one of the strongest trends in travel has been the growth in demand for educational experiences outside of a classroom or academic setting. Educational tourists are seeking more than just relaxation. They have a desire to enhance their knowledge, to learn about a subject they are passionate about, or perhaps to acquire a new skill.

The definition of educational travel can be almost as broad as the definition of volunteer travel. In order to develop educational travel opportunities, it is necessary to identify what is unique about a particular destination that can be taught to others? Are there special attractions, cultural resources, activities, or phenomena that could be used to teach others? For example, France attracts many visitors who travel specifically to take lessons in French cooking. Destination managers should identify comparable differentiating possibilities.

RESOURCE: [Tourism Review](#)

Tourism Review is an online news portal publishing a variety of articles on the tourism industry. [Follow this link](#) to review their informative section on educational travel.

Data Collection

The following information should be collected about each potential resource:

Resource

Description

Location

Type of SAVE travel applicable

Current usage (already utilized for SAVE travel?)

Ownership (public or private?)

Contact information

Condition

Additional comments

3.2 SAVE Travel Stakeholders

In order for a travel development professional to orient a destination towards targeting the SAVE market, it will be necessary to get travel stakeholders to agree to the strategy. The more stakeholders there are targeting SAVE tourists, the more attractive that destination will be for that market niche.

For example, many countries are choosing to target medical tourists. Medical travel is a relatively new phenomena in which individuals living in countries with high medical costs travel to another country to undergo a medical procedure for a lesser cost than at home. Costa Rica, for example, has made a conscious decision to target medical tourists. The Costa Rica Tourism Board provides information to medical tourists and works with hospitals, tour companies, and accommodation and transportation providers to create packages for medical tourists. [Follow this link](#) to access an article describing Costa Rica's hosting of the Medical Travel International Business Summit.

Travel and tourism stakeholders can be classified into the following categories:

- **Private Sector** – Tour operators, service providers, suppliers, intermediaries, travel agents, travel wholesalers, and other businesses catering to the needs of tourists.
- **Public Sector** – Government offices concerned with tourism, such as: Ministries, Offices, and Departments of Tourism; destination management/marketing organizations; convention and visitors bureaus; national tourism offices.
- **Associations** – Tour operator associations; hotel/accommodation associations; tour guide associations; membership organizations for travel stakeholders.
- **Academia** – Students and teachers of travel and tourism management, conservation and preservation, heritage management, sustainability, destination management, etc.
- **General Public** – Travel development and destination management is most effective when it has the support of the public and local community.

Data Collection

The following information should be collected about each stakeholder. The example given is for illustrative purposes:

Stakeholder	Wilderness Adventures Inc.
Category	Private Sector (tour operator)
Description	Tour operator offering excursions on the Blue River.
Location	Main office on Main Street
Contact information	505-222-9876
Potential for supporting SAVE travel	High
Additional comments	Owner expressed enthusiasm for the SAVE market

CASE STUDY: **European Tourism Stakeholders Conference**

To review an example of tourism stakeholders collaborating in the design of travel management strategies, [follow this link](#) to review documentation from the European Tourism Stakeholders Conference held in Madrid, Spain in 2010.

3.3 SAVE Travel Suppliers

Given the large variety of travel activities encompassed by the SAVE criteria, it can be expected that the majority of destinations will possess assets and resources that can be used for SAVE travel. However, simply having resources is insufficient. SAVE travel operators, suppliers, and organizations are necessary to welcome SAVE tourists.

The first category to research consists of entities with the potential to welcome SAVE tourists but who currently are not. Due to the many forms of SAVE travel, potential suppliers can include a variety of organizations in a range of circumstances. One approach for identifying potential SAVE travel suppliers is to consider the categories of SAVE activity.

Scientific

Suppliers could include: research organizations, laboratories, universities, development organizations, conservation associations, scientific institutions, geographic societies, observatories, educational institutions, and more.

Academic

Suppliers chiefly consist of credit-granting institutions of higher education.

Volunteer

Suppliers could include: tour operators that could offer a volunteer experience; organizations that serve children, such as orphanages and schools; animal shelters and refuges; service organizations; religious institutions; government offices; development organizations; and more.

Educational

Suppliers could include: community organizations; clubs and associations; cultural institutions; arts centers; museums and galleries; and more.

Data Collection

The following information should be collected about each potential supplier:

Supplier

Category

Description

Location

Contact information

Potential for supplying SAVE travel

Additional comments

The second category to research consists of organizations that are already offering SAVE travel experiences and opportunities. Given the rapid growth of international volunteer travel, it is very likely that SAVE travel activities are occurring in a majority of destinations. Methods of research to identify existing SAVE activities include Internet search, consulting professional networks, and on-the-ground research.

Data Collection

The following information should be collected about existing SAVE opportunities:

Name of organization

Type of organization

Objectives of organization

Category of SAVE travel (can be more than one)

Nature of experience offered

Market profile information

Most common age group

Top countries of origin

Level of income

Year the organization began offering SAVE travel

Length of opportunities

Range

Average

Type of accommodations offered

Price – details on what is included

Marketing and sales techniques

Visa requirements

Challenges

Plans for the future

Comments

3.4 Conclusion

This unit addressed three of the factors of analysis that must be researched in preparation of the development of a SAVE travel strategy for a destination or country. The information gathered about these factors will reveal the potential for SAVE travel in a destination and directly impact the recommendations of the SAVE strategy. The quantity and quality of resources available will make the initial determination of whether SAVE travel is feasible in a destination. Buy-in from tourism stakeholders will be necessary for the strategy to succeed. Finally, there must be suppliers to welcome SAVE tourists. The next unit will describe three additional factors that will impact SAVE travel development.

Unit 4: SAVE Regulations, Infrastructure, and Markets

Objectives:

At the end of this unit, participants should be able to understand:

1. The regulatory environment affecting SAVE travel
2. The elements of infrastructure that can affect SAVE travel
3. The process of identifying potential SAVE markets

Unit 4 describes in greater detail three additional factors of analysis that should be considered during the assessment process. These factors will correlate to the assessment tools provided at the end of Unit 5. For each factor, important characteristics will be discussed in detail that should be included in the assessment process. Examples will be provided of each type of factor to provide guidance.

4.1 Regulatory Environment

In order to develop SAVE travel, destination managers must be aware of regulations, rules, laws, and policies that can affect development strategies. The most important are regulations dealing with visa requirements and laws related to volunteering. Additionally, the overall level of transparency in a country or destination can have a serious impact on the ability of a voluntourism sector to attract SAVE tourists.

VISA REGULATIONS

Travelers with a desire to volunteer abroad face a complex web of confusing and time-consuming visa regulations. Every country has its own set of rules, and the process of determining and applying for the proper visa can be so daunting, potential volunteer tourists can be dissuaded from taking the time to figure it out. A quick [search on line](#) at Lonely Planet's discussion board turns up thousands of entries on the topic of "volunteer visas", and much of the advice given is contradictory. No two voluntourists seem have acquired the same visa using the same process!

Such complex regulations are a serious liability for any destination seeking to develop voluntourism. A destination lacking clarity on proper visa type and the proper application procedure will face difficulty attracting volunteer tourists.

Visa types

Not every country offers the same categories of visas. Even neighboring countries with high-traffic borders may have vastly different regulations and procedures. Another determining factor is the citizenship of the tourist. Countries have different visa requirements for the citizens of different countries.

The most common visa categories relating to voluntourism include the following, but there may be additional visas to consider, depending on the country:

- **Volunteer visa** – A temporary visa allowing the holder to engage in volunteer activities that do not offer paid compensation and are not considered to be employment. The length of a volunteer visa is typically 30, 60, or 90 days. For

example, [Brazil](#) offers a volunteer visa that covers “activities undertaken on behalf of charitable organizations and these activities must not constitute employment in any form, paid or unpaid, with or without contract.”

- **Tourist visa** – Many countries do not offer a volunteer visa, and in some of them, volunteer work can be done while holding a tourist visa. However, there are typically strict rules regarding volunteer activity. For example, in [Australia](#) travelers may volunteer while on a tourist visa under these conditions: (1) “the main purpose in visiting Australia is tourism, and any voluntary work remains incidental to this; (2) the work involved would not otherwise be undertaken, in exchange for wages, by an Australian resident; (3) the work is genuinely voluntary and that no remuneration is received in return for the activities.” However, note the following addendum: “It is acceptable, under the conditions of the Tourist visa, to receive meals and accommodation or reimbursement for out-of-pocket living expenses in return for voluntary work.”
- **Work visa** - A potential disadvantage of a volunteer or tourist visa is the time limit placed on the traveler. Many volunteer and tourist visas are valid for 60, 90, or 180 days. Although this is likely sufficient for most volunteer travelers, there are voluntourists and volunteer receiving organizations interested in making longer commitments. In some countries, it may be possible to apply for a work visa allowing for a much longer stay. However, a voluntourist on a work visa may be considered a foreign worker, and there are usually strict laws associated with the number of and activities of foreign workers. In some countries, temporary work visas are available that allow for volunteer work. Note that the exact meaning of a “work visa” can change from country to country. Some countries may offer both a work visa and a business visa, while others may offer just one of them.
- **Business visa** – This type of visa typically refers to business-related travel for which no payment or remuneration is received. This may include participating in exhibitions, attending a speaking engagement, or participating in a conference. In some countries, this can also include engaging in volunteer work. [In the United States](#), for example, voluntourists can apply for a B-1 business visa that allows the individual to participate in voluntary service programs. A voluntary service program is “an organized project conducted by a recognized religious or nonprofit charitable organization to provide assistance to the poor or the needy, or to further a religious or charitable cause.”
- **Student visa** – Individuals engaging in academic study for credit will require a student visa. According to the SAVE criteria, these individuals are SAVE tourists by virtue of living and studying in a foreign country. However, if they wish to engage in addition volunteer activities while on a student visa, other regulations may apply.

Visa process

Another consideration for the voluntourist is the visa application process, which will vary from country-to-country. In many cases, a voluntourist will need a sponsorship letter from the volunteer organization in order to apply for the appropriate visa. Again, there is a great amount of advice available online regarding the visa application process, much

of it contradictory. Some individuals recommend avoiding the trouble of obtaining a volunteer visa and simply volunteering while on a tourist visa. Others recommend arriving in a country on a tourist visa and then applying for a volunteer visa while in country. Still others warn of the possible repercussions of engaging in volunteer work while holding the wrong type of visa.

Responsibility of volunteer-receiving organizations

Due to the complexity of visa requirements, it is the responsibility of those offering SAVE travel opportunities to assist potential voluntourists through the visa process. By offering guidance and advice, a SAVE supplier can greatly enhance the appeal of their product. Thus, travel development practitioners must also have detailed knowledge of visa regulations in their country in order to assist suppliers.

CASE STUDY: Providing Visa Assistance

Children Walking Tall is a UK-registered charity that works to assist street children in India. Potential volunteers from the United Kingdom can find [extensive information](#) at their website on volunteer visa requirements. Providing this information in a clear and thorough manner enhances the appeal of the organization to potential voluntourists.

LAWS RELATED TO VOLUNTEERING

In many countries, laws and regulations related to volunteer work can be as complex as the visa regulations described above. Possible legal issues relating to volunteer work can include safety and sanitation conditions, discrimination, insurance requirements, risk management, worker's compensation, and child labor. As with visa regulations, travel development practitioners must have detailed knowledge about a country or destination's laws relating to volunteer work.

TRANSPARENCY

Transparency in a social context refers to openness and honesty about an organization or individual's actions. It implies accountability, honesty, disclosure, particularly in regards to finances and costs.

In the voluntourism context, transparency operates on two levels. First, there is the issue of transparency within a volunteer-receiving organization. Voluntourists demand accountability and transparency from the organizations they give their time, money, and effort to. Voluntourists need assurance that their contributions are directly benefiting the community. In this context, transparency includes financial accountability. This demands willingness on the part of the receiving organization to provide information about governance, finance, outcome measurements, and operating costs. An organization must be open to inspection, adhere to all regulations, provide required operating and financial reports in a timely fashion, and keep accurate records. In the words of the chief development officer of the Florida-based Children's Home, Inc., "nonprofit transparency means that everything we do must be clearly understood and open to review and thoughtful discussion by all stakeholders to gain their complete confidence and respect."

Transparency also refers to the openness of government policymaking. A potential volunteer tourist's perception of an organization's transparency is going to be influenced by the overall level of transparency in the country. Although there may be little that an

organization or travel development practitioner can do about national levels of corruption, it is necessary to be aware of the issue and adjust accordingly. For example, in a country with high levels of corruption, an organization may want to highlight their transparency frequently and prominently in order to provide reassurance.

RESOURCE: Transparency International

Transparency International is the recognized authority on global corruption and releases regular reports on corruption and transparency around the world, including an annual ranking of the world's most corrupt countries. For more information, [follow this link](#) to their website.

4.2 Infrastructure

In the context of SAVE travel, the issue of infrastructure assessment can be more complex than expected. The level of infrastructure development required to attract SAVE tourists can vary widely depending on the type of activity and the independent traveler.

Before determining the type of SAVE tourists that a destination should target, travel development practitioners should assess several aspects of national and regional infrastructure.

Air Transportation Infrastructure

International voluntourists must be able to access your destination. Aspects of air transportation infrastructure to consider include:

- Number of airlines
- Number of and density of airports
- Availability of international flights
- Availability of domestic flights
- Number of arrivals and departures
- Extent of air connections to overseas feeder markets

Ground Transportation Infrastructure

Voluntourists must be able to access your SAVE opportunities. Aspects to consider include:

- Quality of roads
- Quality of railroads
- Quality of port facilities
- Overall quality of ground transportation network
- Road density
- Quantity of roads

Travel Infrastructure

No matter the type of travel activity, a country or destination must possess at least a minimum travel and tourism infrastructure in order to provide for the needs of voluntourists. Aspects to consider include:

- Hotel rooms and other types of accommodation
- Banking facilities
- Restaurants and meal providers
- Car rental availability

Internet and Communication Infrastructure

Both voluntourists and travel stakeholders have communication needs that must be met in order to facilitate voluntourism activities. Aspects to consider include:

- Internet availability, especially broadband
- Telephone networks
- Mobile phone capability

Safety and Security

Most voluntourists require a certain level of safety and security in a destination in order to consider traveling there. Aspects to consider include:

- Crime rates
- Reliability and presence of police and security forces
- Transportation accident rates

Health and Sanitation

The expectations and demands of voluntourists for sanitary conditions and medical facilities will vary widely, but some level of availability will be expected. Aspects to consider include:

- Number and capacity of hospitals
- Physician density
- Sanitation conditions
- Access to safe drinking water

RESOURCE: World Economic Forum – T&T Competitiveness Index

The World Economic Forum conducts regular analysis of the travel and tourism sector and reports on issues of travel development and competitiveness. The Forum's "Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report" is a valuable asset for analyzing the elements of travel and tourism infrastructure described above. More information about the Forum, its work in travel and tourism analysis, and the report can be found on their website by [following this link](#).

4.3 Potential markets

A vital component of developing a SAVE travel strategy is a market assessment. This refers to the process of identifying a destination's actual and potential source markets and determining their wants, needs, and preferences. Having this information on hand will help destinations and travel suppliers make decisions about the type of services and products to be offered.

A market assessment also gathers information about who the target market is, their characteristics, and their information sources about a destination. Understanding these elements of a target market helps the destination management professional design effective marketing strategies.

Market Assessment Process

For the SAVE travel development practitioner, a two-step market assessment process is recommended.

1. Assess the current tourist markets for the country or destination; then
2. Assess the potential for voluntourism within those markets.

A good resource for the SAVE travel development professional to begin gathering market data is by examining existing travel research already conducted for the country or destination in question. In many countries, a wealth of information is already available regarding travel feeder markets. If so, then step one will involve a careful analysis of existing information.

If this information is available, the next step will involve assessing the potential appeal of volunteer travel for specific feeder markets. This is not an exact science, but a general assessment can be done by gathering information on levels of volunteer activity within those feeder markets themselves. This information is often available on the Internet. For example, volunteering is a very popular activity in the United States, and there is a great deal of information about it available on line. It thus stands to reason that travelers from the United States may be interested in volunteering while they are abroad.

If feeder market information is not available, the market assessment process will become more complicated, and the extent of research possible will depend on the level of resources available. A key source of information about feeder markets will be travel suppliers operating within the country or destination. They can be surveyed and asked to supply information about their customers. This information is especially valuable if it comes from travel suppliers also offering SAVE opportunities. For an example of a survey to give to existing SAVE travel suppliers, see Annex B.

Elements of a Market Assessment

A market assessment gathers information about the following, as reflected in the market assessment tool.

- **Market size** – Refers to the actual market, or number of current visitors to a destination, as well as to the potential market.

- **Market characteristics** – Refers to the different aspects of the market, such as:
 - Origin
 - Demographics
 - Psychographics (psychological characteristics)
 - Purpose of travel
 - Mode of transportation
 - Motives
 - Spending habits
 - Length of travel

- **Market needs, preferences, and motivations**
 - Accommodation
 - Transportation
 - Type of volunteer activity
 - Preference for mix of travel and volunteering
 - Motivation for travel

- **Sources of information**
 - Media and internet
 - Friends and family
 - Word of mouth

- **Market trends**
 - Growing or shrinking?
 - Destination preferences
 - Economic forecast

Sources of Market Data

As indicated above, many countries gather extensive data about their travel sector. The first place for the SAVE travel development practitioner to begin the market assessment process is by gathering existing data. This can be supplemented with additional input from travel suppliers if needed. There is also extensive information available on volunteer activity in many countries. Again, start by gathering existing data.

If there is insufficient data available, the extent of data collection will be determined by the amount of resources available. Information can be gathered by distributing surveys and questionnaires to tourists and travel suppliers.

Utilizing Market Data

Analyzing market data will provide guidance on the following:

- Offering types of SAVE activities of most interest to feeder markets
- Meeting preferences and demands of SAVE travelers
- Reaching SAVE travelers through the right communication channels

4.4 Conclusion

Units three and four described the factors of analysis that must be assessed in order to design a SAVE travel development strategy, and the tools and checklists to use in the assessment process are provided at the end of Unit 5. It is necessary to gather this baseline information in order to craft an effective development strategy that is appropriate for the destination. The next unit will describe the assessment process.

Unit 5: The Assessment Process

Objectives:

At the end of this unit, participants should be able to understand:

1. Preparing for the assessment process
2. Data collection tools
3. Data collection methods

5.1 Preparing for the Assessment Process

Before we describe the assessment process, it is helpful to review the following:

- The steps in designing a SAVE travel development strategy;
- The baseline knowledge required to design an effective strategy;
- The way to go about acquiring that knowledge.

SAVE Strategy Development

Unit two described the necessary steps for designing a SAVE travel development strategy.

1. Assess the suitability of a country or destination for a SAVE travel strategy.
2. Identify stakeholders and determine institutional setting of a SAVE center or network.
3. Inventory existing SAVE opportunities and suppliers.
4. Identify potential markets.
5. Identify gaps and barriers in a country or destination' ability to attract the SAVE market.
6. Establish minimum criteria and standards for volunteer receiving organizations (note that this step can occur at the beginning of the development process or once a SAVE market strategy is underway).
7. Share results for the knowledge gathering process and mobile action.
8. Collaboratively design a SAVE travel development strategy.
9. Monitor and evaluate progress.

Elements of SAVE Travel

Unit two then described in more detail the elements of SAVE travel about which information must be gathered in order to complete the strategy development process.

1. To determine the **suitability** of a destination for SAVE travel, information must be gathered about the destination's resources, infrastructure, suppliers, products, and regulatory environment.
2. Identifying **stakeholders** requires inventorying travel suppliers and operators, regulatory agencies and government bodies, travel management organizations, and industry-affiliated association.
3. It is necessary to conduct an inventory of **existing SAVE products**.
4. It is necessary to conduct a **market assessment** to identify the most promising target markets and develop marketing plans to reach them.

Factors of Analysis

Units three and four then described in detail the specific factors of analysis about which information must be gathered. They are as follows:

1. **Inventory** of SAVE resources
2. **Inventory** of SAVE travel stakeholders
3. **Inventory** of potential and existing SAVE travel suppliers
4. **Regulatory environment** assessment
5. **Infrastructure** assessment
6. **Target markets**

This is the list of items about which the travel development professional is going to gather information during the assessment process. Analyzing that information will then inform the design of a SAVE travel development strategy.

5.2 Data Collection Tools

Unit five contains tools that can be utilized during the assessment process and that correspond with the factors of analysis. Make as many copies as necessary for the assessment process, but be sure to keep a blank original!

Tool 1 – Inventory of SAVE Resources

The “SAVE Resources” checklist describes the information that should be gathered about each potential SAVE resource, as follows:

Resource
Description
Location
Type of SAVE travel applicable
Current usage (already utilized for SAVE travel?)
Ownership (public or private?)
Contact information
Condition
Additional comments

Tool 2 – Inventory of SAVE Travel Stakeholders

The “SAVE Travel Stakeholders” checklist describes the information that should be gathered about each potential stakeholder, as follows:

Stakeholder
Category (Scientific, Academic, Volunteer, or Educational)
Description
Location
Contact information
Potential for supporting SAVE travel
Additional comments

Tool 3 – Inventory of Potential SAVE Travel Suppliers

The “Potential SAVE Travel Suppliers” checklist describes the information that should be gathered about each potential supplier, as follows:

Supplier
Category
Description
Location
Contact information
Potential for supplying SAVE travel
Additional comments

Tool 4 – Inventory of Existing SAVE Travel Suppliers

The “Existing SAVE Travel Suppliers” checklist describes the information that should be gathered about each existing supplier, as follows:

- Name of organization**
- Type of organization**
- Objectives of organization**
- Category of SAVE travel (can be more than one)**
- Nature of experience offered**
- Market profile information**
 - Most common age group**
 - Top countries of origin**
 - Level of income**
- Year the organization began offering SAVE travel**
- Length of opportunities**
 - Range**
 - Average**
- Type of accommodations offered**
- Price – details on what is included**
- Marketing and sales techniques**
- Visa requirements**
- Challenges**
- Plans for the future**
- Comments**

Tool 5 – Regulatory Environment Assessment

The “Regulatory Environment Assessment” tool contains sections for gathering information about visa regulations, relevant laws on volunteering, and issues of transparency.

Tool 6 – Infrastructure Assessment

The “Infrastructure Assessment” tool contains sections for gathering information about the following aspects of national and regional infrastructure:

- Air transportation**
- Ground transportation**
- Travel and tourism infrastructure**
- Internet and communication infrastructure**
- Safety and security**
- Health and sanitation**

Tool 7 – Market Assessment

The “Market Assessment” guide contains sections for gathering information about the following aspects of potential target markets:

- Market (country or region)**
- Market size**
- Market characteristics**
- Market needs, preferences, and motivations**
- Sources of information**
- Market trends**

Section 5.3 Data Collection Methods

Data can be collected using the following methods:

- **Firsthand knowledge** held by the travel development practitioner will lay the groundwork for the data collection process.
- **Surveys** can be conducted of travel stakeholders
- **Interviews and meetings** can be held to collect more detailed information from travel stakeholders.
- **Reviews of existing data** will be used to collect information about each of the factors of analysis.
- **Internet research** will also be used to collect information about each factor.

Section 5.4 Conclusion

Unit five described in detail the information that should be gathered about each factor of analysis. During the assessment process, it is worthwhile to be as thorough as possible. More information gathered now will result in a more informed design process that will result in a more effective development strategy. The next unit will describe the data collection process.

1. Inventory of SAVE resources

This section is intended to help identify the most promising resources within a country or destination that could be or are being utilized to attract SAVE tourists. Use a new copy of the checklist for each resource.

RESOURCE
DESCRIPTION
LOCATION
TYPE OF SAVE TRAVEL APPLICABLE
CURRENT USAGE (already used for SAVE travel?)
OWNERSHIP (public or private)
CONTACT INFORMATION
CONDITION
ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

2. Inventory of SAVE travel stakeholders

This section is intended to help identify and gather information about travel stakeholders.

STAKEHOLDER
CATEGORY (S, A, V, or E)
DESCRIPTION
LOCATION
CONTACT INFORMATION
POTENTIAL FOR SUPPORTING SAVE TRAVEL
ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

3. Inventory of potential SAVE travel supplier

This section is intended to help identify potential travel suppliers – tour operators with the potential to add a SAVE opportunity to their portfolio.

SUPPLIER
CATEGORY (S, A, V, or E)
DESCRIPTION
LOCATION
CONTACT INFORMATION
POTENTIAL FOR SUPPORTING SAVE TRAVEL
ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

4. Inventory of existing SAVE travel suppliers

This section is intended to help identify travel suppliers who already offer SAVE opportunities.

NAME OF ORGANIZATION		
TYPE OF ORGANIZATION		
OBJECTIVES OF ORGANIZATION		
CATEGORY OF SAVE TRAVEL (can be more than one)		
NATURE OF EXPERIENCE OFFERED		
MARKET PROFILE INFORMATION	Most common age group	
	Top countries of origin	
	Level of income	
YEAR THEY BEGAN OFFERING SAVE TRAVEL		
LENGTH OF OPPORTUNITIES	RANGE	AVERAGE
TYPE OF ACCOMMODATIONS OFFERED		
PRICE – DETAILS ON WHAT IS INCLUDED		

**MARKETING AND SALES
TECHNIQUES**

VISA REQUIREMENTS

CHALLENGES

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

COMMENTS

5. Regulatory Environment Assessment

This section is intended to help identify and describe regulatory issues that could affect the development of SAVE travel.

REGULATORY ISSUE	DESCRIPTION
VISA REGULATIONS	
VOLUNTEER LAWS	
TRANSPARENCY	
OTHER	

6. Infrastructure Assessment

This section is intended to help gather information on different aspects of national and regional travel-related infrastructure.

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Availability of international flights

Availability of domestic flights

Number of arrivals and departures

Extent of air connections to
overseas feeder markets

Number of airlines

Number of and density of airports

GROUND TRANSPORTATION

Quality of roads

Road density

Overall quality of ground
transportation network

Quality of railroads

Quality of port facilities

TRAVEL INFRASTRUCTURE

Hotel rooms and other accommodations (quantity and quality)

Banking facilities

Restaurants and meal providers

Car rental availability

INTERNET AND COMMUNICATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Internet availability, especially broadband

Telephone networks

Mobile phone capacity

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Crime rates

Reliability and presence of police and security forces

Transportation accident rates

HEALTH AND SANITATION

Number and capacity of hospitals

Physician density

Sanitation conditions

Access to safe drinking water

7. Market assessment

This section is intended to help identify and gather information about potential target markets. For each market, use a new checklist.

MARKET (COUNTRY OR REGION)

DESCRIPTION

MARKET SIZE

CHARACTERISTICS

**NEEDS, PREFERENCES, AND
MOTIVATIONS**

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

MARKET TRENDS

Unit 6: Data Analysis and Recommended Actions

Objectives:

At the end of this unit, participants should be able to understand:

1. The levels of analysis to apply to the data collected during the assessment process
2. Forming recommendations for SAVE travel development, reflecting the conceptual framework outlined in unit 2

6.1 Data Analysis

Unit five described the assessment process for gathering the information necessary for designing a SAVE travel strategy for a destination. The process requires gathering information about six factors of analysis:

- SAVE resources – What resources does a country or destination possess that could be utilized in the development of SAVE travel? Examples could include wilderness areas, higher education institutions, schools and orphanages, archaeological sites, performing arts centers, animal refuges, and homeless shelters.
- SAVE travel stakeholders – What organizations, departments, offices, businesses, associations, ministries, non-profits, universities, citizens, and so on will it be necessary to work with to develop SAVE travel? This could include government travel and tourism authorities, travel suppliers and tour operators, local community groups, university faculty, scientists, and much more.
- Potential and existing SAVE travel suppliers – What opportunities already exist in the destination for SAVE travel? It may be the case the tour operators are already offering SAVE experiences. Also, who are the potential SAVE travel suppliers? This could include tour operators who offer traditional activities with the potential to add a SAVE component to their portfolio of products.
- Regulatory environment: What are the regulations and laws that might affect the development of SAVE travel? This could include visa regulations and laws concerning volunteer activities.
- Infrastructure Assessment: Does the destination possess the necessary infrastructure to service SAVE tourists? Factors to consider include transportation, accommodation, safety and sanitation, communication, and other elements of travel infrastructure such as banks and car rental facilities.
- Target markets: What are the most appropriate target markets? Information must be gathered about the best potential markets and their characteristics, including market size, demographics, psychographics, preferences, sources of information, and trends.

After information about each of the factors has been gathered, the next step is to analyze the data. The process involves several levels of analysis, which is necessary in order to properly design holistic recommendations for SAVE travel development that address issues, barriers, and gaps throughout the travel management system.

At Every Level

Whether you are developing a SAVE travel strategy for a destination, a region, or an entire country, there are factors of SAVE travel that must be addressed no matter the scope of the development project.

- Suitability of SAVE travel – Analyzing the data collected through the assessment process will allow you to determine the suitability of SAVE travel for the destination. Questions to answer include:
 - Does the destination possess adequate resources, suppliers, and infrastructure to attract SAVE tourists?
 - Is the regulatory environment friendly towards SAVE travel?
 - Is there a need to develop SAVE travel? If so, how much effort and resources should be directed to SAVE travel development?
- Identifying key stakeholders – Travel, by its nature, involves a range of businesses, suppliers, wholesalers, and other stakeholders from many different sectors. A travel development strategy will require buy-in from as many stakeholders as possible. The assessment should identify the key stakeholders who should then be involved in the development of a SAVE strategy.
- Identifying best target markets – Analyzing the data collected through the assessment process will allow the selection of the most promising target markets.
- Gaps in the ability to serve the SAVE market – Analyzing the data will allow you to identify what’s missing in a country, region, or destination’s ability to serve the SAVE travel market. Filling these gaps will be one of the vital functions of the SAVE travel development strategy designed in partnership with travel stakeholders. Gaps in the ability to serve the SAVE market can include:
 - Insufficient infrastructure
 - Insufficient travel and tourism workforce
 - Insufficient resources – A destination may not possess resources that can be readily utilized for SAVE travel.
 - Insufficient travel suppliers
- Barriers to SAVE tourism development – Analyzing the data will allow you to identify barriers to attracting SAVE tourists. Reducing or eliminating barriers will be one of the vital functions of the SAVE travel development strategy. Barriers can include:
 - Visa regulations
 - Laws restricting volunteering

At the national level

If the SAVE travel development plan is national in scope, there are unique considerations that must be addressed.

- Identifying priority regions for SAVE development – A SAVE travel development strategy can be national in scope, especially in regards to marketing and branding, workforce development, regulatory considerations, and other factors. However, practicality will dictate that SAVE travel development occur in the most appropriate and prepared parts of the country. Thus, analyzing the data gathered during the assessment process will allow the identification of the best regions for SAVE travel within a country.
- Determining the institutional position of a SAVE center – SAVE travel development must be driven and managed by a champion of the strategy, and thus the decision of where to position a SAVE center to perform those functions is of great importance. If the SAVE travel development plan is national in scope, the most appropriate location for a SAVE center will likely be the government office, department, bureau, or ministry that has oversight over travel development. However, there may be other factors revealed through the data analysis process that influence this decision.
- Regulatory barriers to SAVE development deserve special attention at the national level because such barriers are often national in nature. Of equal concern is the issue of transparency. A country with a record of poor transparency may be challenged to develop SAVE travel due its reputation and concern among SAVE travelers about the end results of their contributions. Efforts to address such concerns must be spearheaded at the national level.

RESOURCE: Sustainable Tourism Online

Sustainable Tourism Online is a valuable travel development resource provided by Australia’s Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre. The information center provides extensive resources focusing on three themes: Destinations and Communities, Business Operations and Parks, and Culture. The website provides numerous tools, case studies, and guidelines for destination planning, implementation, and performance measurement. Reviewing the tools and information available at Sustainable Tourism Online can provide guidance for the development of SAVE travel. [Follow this link](#) to access the Sustainable Tourism Online website.

At a destination level

At a regional, local, or destination level, there are unique considerations regarding SAVE travel development that must be addressed.

- Institutional position of a SAVE center – If a SAVE travel development strategy is regional or local in scope, determining the institutional setting of a SAVE center may be more difficult than at the national level. If the local travel industry is overseen by a destination management organization or similar bureaucratic institution, then that will be a strong contender for hosting a SAVE center. However, if a destination has no central travel and tourism management authority, it may be more difficult to clearly designate a driver of SAVE travel. Conversely, however, this could force travel stakeholders to be more imaginative and perhaps take more ownership of developing SAVE travel. A “SAVE center” can be many things. It can be a designation for a collection of travel stakeholders

who decide to cooperate on developing SAVE travel. It could be a development professional working in a foreign country on improving economic conditions. It could even be an independent, self-funded entity with facilities to host and provide for SAVE travelers. At a destination level, the decision on the institutional positioning of a SAVE center will be an inherently local decision that will be highly influenced by the information gathered during the assessment process

- Community support – Any travel development strategy requires the support of the surrounding community in order to be successful. At the destination level, a SAVE travel development strategy should have a mechanism for involving the community in the discussion. A potential indicator of community support for SAVE travel will be the presence of existing SAVE travel opportunities.
- Identifying best resources – Similar to the process at the national level, within a destination, travel developers must identify those travel and tourism resources with the greatest potential for utilization.

Considerations for travel suppliers

Analysis of the data collected during the assessment process will lead to recommendations for SAVE travel development, a process described in more detail in unit seven. In addition, the analysis process will also reveal barriers and gaps specific to travel suppliers. In order for SAVE travel development to succeed, it will be necessary to gain the support of travel suppliers and their agreement to address gaps and barriers identified during the assessment process. Issues could include, among many others:

- Inadequately trained workforce
- Unsanitary or unsafe conditions
- Lack of clarity regarding the results of volunteers' efforts
- Inadequate accommodations and/or meals

6.2. Recommendations

Following the data review and analysis process, it is time to form recommendations for the development of SAVE travel. A thorough analysis of the data collected during the assessment process should allow for recommendations to be formed on each of the variables described in the conceptual framework in unit two. The recommendations will form the basis for a comprehensive SAVE travel development strategy, which will be discussed in greater detail in unit seven.

Suitability

A recommendation should be made as to whether the country or destination is suitable for the development of SAVE travel. If so, supporting information and justification should be given. If not, an explanation should be provided. If the destination is not suitable for SAVE travel but could become suitable, a description of the gaps or barriers should be given.

Stakeholders

Recommendations should be made about which key stakeholders should be involved in the development of SAVE travel and which may be candidates to be champions of SAVE travel.

Resources

Recommendations should be developed about which SAVE travel resources are the most promising and should be utilized to attract SAVE tourists. This will guide the development process to the regions or areas with the greatest potential for SAVE travel.

Barriers and gaps

Recommendations should be developed to address barriers and gaps to SAVE travel development. This could include such diverse recommendations as suggesting modifications to visa regulations to designing workforce development plans.

Target markets

Recommendations should be developed concerning the most promising target markets for a destination's SAVE travel strategy.

Standards and criteria (optional)

In order to address concerns about sustainability, integrity, and quality, a set of standards and criteria for tour operators could be developed, based on data collected during the assessment process and input from travel stakeholders. This step can also occur later in the development of SAVE travel.

6.3 Conclusion

An analysis of the data collected during the assessment process will lead to recommendations at both the national level and destination level for SAVE travel development. In addition, the analysis will lead to recommendations for travel suppliers to strengthen their ability to host SAVE tourists. The next unit will discuss the process of translating data analysis into recommendations which, in aggregate, will form a SAVE travel development strategy.

Unit 7: Transformation – Assessment to Action

Objectives:

At the end of this unit, participants should be able to understand:

1. Gaining stakeholder support for SAVE travel development
2. Coalescing recommendations into a SAVE travel development strategy
3. The elements of a SAVE travel development strategy

Unit six described the data analysis process and key considerations at both the national and destination level, in addition to implications for travel suppliers. The unit concluded with a list of recommendations that should be developed following data analysis. Unit seven will describe next steps. After forming recommendations for SAVE travel development, it is necessary to gain stakeholder support and develop the recommendations into a comprehensive SAVE travel development strategy.

7.1 Gaining Stakeholder Support

For SAVE travel development to succeed, it will be necessary to gain the support of as many travel and tourism stakeholders as possible. The most effective travel strategies involve coordination and collaboration among all sectors of the travel and tourism industry. Not only is it desirable for multiple stakeholders to orient themselves with the SAVE travel development strategy, it is highly desirable to incorporate stakeholders into the development of the strategy. This will create a sense of ownership that will enhance the sustainability of the strategy.

Strategies for gaining stakeholder support include the following:

Awareness building

Because it is a new and unique concept, it will be necessary to build awareness about SAVE travel. This can be done through formal and informal meetings; information sessions held independently or at travel industry events; establishing an online presence and utilizing social media to create awareness; and utilizing traditional media. A helpful tactic will be gaining the early support of well-known travel stakeholders, such as academics, development professionals, or respected government officials. Having champions such as these will greatly enhance the appeal of SAVE travel.

Provide supporting data

For travel stakeholders to support a SAVE development strategy, they must be convinced that it is economically beneficial. Gaining the support of stakeholders can be helped by:

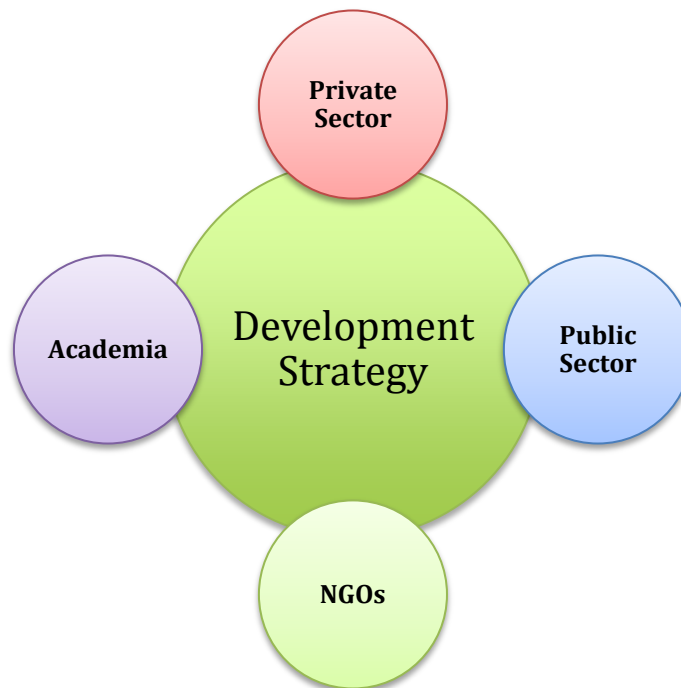
- Providing information about the growth of voluntourism;
- Providing market data about the domestic volunteering habits of the most important feeder markets for the country or destination in question;
- Providing information about the economic impact of international volunteers;
- Developing analyses of the country's SAVE resources and demonstrating how they can be used to differentiate the destination and attract SAVE tourists.

Conduct a workshop

A workshop on the topic of SAVE travel is the perfect venue to combine the two activities described above: raise awareness and provide supporting data. A workshop could be held concurrently with another travel industry event in the destination or could stand alone. Gaining the early support of a few key stakeholders could provide the momentum for suggesting a workshop that would then look attractive to other stakeholders. The workshop could be the appropriate venue for beginning the next stage of gaining stakeholder support – including stakeholders in the strategy development process.

Figure 7.1:

Collaborative Design of a SAVE Travel Development Strategy



7.2 The Development Strategy

The creation of a national or destination SAVE tourism strategy should be a highly participatory process informed by strong market research and the findings of the assessment process. The data and recommendations from the assessment will form the framework of the strategy, and the plan should address any gaps or barriers identified in the data analysis.

Figure 7.2:

Steps for Designing the SAVE Development Strategy



7.3 Elements of a SAVE Travel Development Strategy

A comprehensive SAVE travel development strategy will address the following:

Alliance for SAVE Tourism Development

A SAVE travel strategy should identify the primary stakeholders who will be responsible for leading the development of SAVE travel. This will likely be a government office, a destination management organization, a development professional, or an alliance of stakeholders. If there is a group of stakeholders who have made a long-term commitment to SAVE travel, they could be included as partners.

SAVE Travel Resources and Assets

The strategy should identify the country or destination's most prominent SAVE travel resources and assets. This will help focus SAVE development on the assets with the greatest potential for attracting SAVE tourists.

Priority Regions for SAVE Travel

Identifying the regions with the greatest potential for SAVE travel will focus development efforts appropriately.

Priority Categories of SAVE Travel

Identifying the categories of SAVE travel with the greatest potential for the destination will help focus development efforts on the right travel suppliers and best target markets.

Awareness Building and Promotion

The alliance of stakeholders supporting SAVE travel development will need to cooperate on raising awareness of this travel niche. Although SAVE travel already occurs around the world, it is not usually identified as such. Thus the strategy should include mechanisms for raising awareness and promoting use of the SAVE acronym.

Identify Target Markets

For the sake of the development plan, it is sufficient to identify the primary target markets for the country or destination. However, developing separate target market profiles and marketing plans will be necessary steps in the development process.

Recommendations for Policy and Regulatory Reform (as needed)

The strategy should address policy barriers and concerns identified during the assessment process or identified by other stakeholders. Recommendations should be made for policy changes that will facilitate the development of SAVE travel.

Quality Standards (optional)

At some point during the development of SAVE travel in a destination, travel stakeholders may consider defining a set of quality standards for travel suppliers. Such a code or certification process should address sustainable business practices; conservation of natural and cultural resources; and the authenticity of SAVE travel products.

Recommendations for Addressing Gaps and Barriers

Depending on the country or destination, there may be considerable gaps and barriers to SAVE travel development identified by the assessment process or described by travel stakeholders. The development strategy can address this in one of two ways. If the gaps and barriers are not too extensive, the strategy can make recommendations for addressing them. However, if the issues require extensive and detailed planning in order to be addressed, the strategy may outline the issues and require separate and more detailed plans.

For example, a destination may have an inadequately trained travel and tourism workforce for welcoming SAVE tourists. A workforce development plan would be beyond the scope of the SAVE travel development strategy. However, the strategy should explicitly describe the gap in workforce preparedness and require a separate workforce development plan.

7.4 Conclusion

The last few decades have witnessed swift growth in international travel, and one result of this growth has been the development of numerous niche travel sectors that appeal to specific types of travelers. Destinations can take advantage of this by positioning themselves to serve these specific niches. This process, however, requires coordinated efforts on the parts of travel stakeholders within the destination. Stakeholders and destination authorities must develop sophisticated strategies to orient their products towards a specific market.

The preceding units have described the steps necessary for a destination to target a fast growing niche market – the Scientific, Academic, Volunteer, and Educational tourist. Planners must first have a thorough understanding of SAVE travel and the types of activities desired by SAVE tourists. Next, destination managers need to collect baseline data about the destination and its ability to attract and serve SAVE tourists. Finally, stakeholders must collaborate and use that information to inform the development of a comprehensive travel development strategy.

The final unit will discuss the process of monitoring and evaluating a SAVE strategy.

Unit 8: Monitoring and Evaluation

Objectives:

At the end of this unit, participants should be able to understand:

1. Monitoring the SAVE travel development process and measuring success
2. Considerations for sustainability

As with any development initiative, it is necessary to monitor the implementation process to determine success and whether changes might need to be made to the strategy. The challenge of the monitoring process is identifying items that can be accurately measured in order to judge the progress of the strategy. Unit eight suggests several possible methods for monitoring the implementation of a SAVE strategy. Additionally, in order for the travel development strategy to succeed in the long-term, it must incorporate elements of sustainability.

8.1 Monitoring and Measuring Success

When implementing a travel development strategy, it is important to devise methods for determining whether the strategy is working. Monitoring items such as tourist arrivals and tourist expenditures works well in the long-term. However, the monitoring process should also include short- and medium-term items as well. Travel development is typically a long-term process, but if there is an early perception of a lack-of-success, the strategy may lose support. By tracking short-term indicators of success, travel stakeholders will be encouraged to continue their support of the strategy, enhancing its sustainability. Several examples of items to monitor are described below. A SAVE strategy can include these as appropriate and additional indicators unique to the destination and circumstances.

Formation of a SAVE Alliance

An immediate sign of success for a SAVE development strategy is the formation of a SAVE alliance of stakeholders dedicated to pursuing the SAVE market.

Launch of a SAVE website and/or other collateral

The design and implementation of a website and other materials describing a destination's SAVE opportunities are significant indicators of a destination's embrace of a SAVE strategy.

Creation of new SAVE products and suppliers

Indicates buy-in from local stakeholders.

Media exposure

A significant indicator of success will be media coverage that brings considerable exposure to the SAVE concept and to the destination's embrace of SAVE travel.

Quality standards and/or certification system

The implementation of a quality control system will only succeed with the buy-in of a significant portion of travel and tourism stakeholders. Successful implementation of such a system would indicate broad support of the SAVE strategy.

Traditional travel indicators: arrivals, spending, sector employment, etc.

In the medium-to-long-term, tracking traditional travel indicators will be vital to determining the success of a SAVE strategy. Such indicators include tourist arrivals, tourist spending, and employment figures within the sector.

8.2 Sustainability

In order for a SAVE travel development strategy to succeed, it must be sustainable in the long-term. The most vital element of sustainability is buy-in from local travel stakeholders. Previous units have discussed the need for stakeholder collaboration, but it is worth repeating. The initiative to pursue SAVE travel may come from an outside actor, such as a development organization, or from a central government office. However, for long-term success, it is necessary for the strategy to be supported by local stakeholders. Thus a critical element of sustainability is involving stakeholders at every step of the design process in order to create a sense of ownership.

CASE STUDY: SAVE Travel Mozambique

In 2011, travel development consultant Brad Weiss conducted a SAVE assessment in the country of Mozambique. His report contains elements from the assessment process described in this course, and the final recommendations illustrate the path towards adopting a SAVE travel strategy. [Follow this link](#) to download the assessment.

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Annex A – Glossary of Terms

Destination marketing/management organization (DMO) – A not-for-profit organization charged with representing a specific destination and helping the long-term development of communities through a travel and tourism strategy. DMOs are usually membership organizations bringing together businesses that rely on tourism and meetings for revenue.

Market assessment – The evaluation of the market for a product or service, including the analysis of market trends, assessing the competition, and conducting market studies.

Market segment – A group of people that share one or more characteristics. Each market segment is unique and has the following characteristics: homogeneity (common needs within segment); distinction (unique from other groups); reaction (similar response to market).

National tourism plan/strategy – A set of regulations, rules, guidelines, directions, and development/promotion objectives and strategies that provide a framework within which the collective and individual decisions directly affecting tourism development and the daily activities within a destination are taken.

Non-governmental organization (NGO) – A non-profit, voluntary citizen’s group that is organized on a local, national, or international level and operates independently from any government.

SAVE travel – Travel undertaken for scientific, academic, volunteer, or educational purposes.

Stakeholder – A person, group, or organization with an interest in a project or activity.

Transparency – A measurement of the openness, communication, and accountability of the actions of a government, corporation, or other entity.

Visa – A government-issued document allowing a person entry into the territory for which it was issued.

Voluntourism – Travel that includes volunteer work.

Volunteer-receiving organization – An organization that receives, places, and assists voluntourists.

Volunteer-sending organization – An organization that sponsors, assists, and/or places volunteers on international projects

Annex B – SAVE Travel Provider Questionnaire

Credit – “Preliminary SAVE Tourism Assessment for Mozambique” by Brad Weiss and Miro Guarda, The George Washington University

1. Name of organization offering program _____
2. Type of organization (accommodations, NGO, university, research station, tour operator, etc) _____
3. Objectives of organization _____

4. Scientific, Academic, Volunteer, or Educational/Experiential?
(Can be more than one) _____
5. Nature of experience offered _____

6. Current/potential market profile (age, country of origin, income):
Most Common Age Group: _____
Top Countries of Origin: _____
Level of Income (High, Medium, Low): _____
7. In what year did they begin to receive SAVE tourists? _____
8. Length of participation:
Range (Minimum and Maximum): _____
Average: _____
9. Number of SAVE tourists received per year _____
10. Type of accommodations offered _____
11. Price of experience (specify what it includes) _____

12. Who is it being sold / marketed through? _____

13. On what type of visa are participants entering the country?

14. Benefits from program (to organization, community, etc) _____

15. Challenges faced _____

16. Plans for future _____

17. Interested in being part of an alliance to help create standards and market experience? _____

Annex C – Illustrative Statement of Work: National SAVE Travel Development Strategy

I. Background

The Scientific, Academic, Volunteer, Educational (SAVE) Travel Alliance was developed by The George Washington University in 2004 in partnership with The National Geographic Society, Counterpart International, and the Institute for Honduras Tourism. The goals of the SAVE Travel Alliance are to build the capacity of destinations to identify, develop, and market sustainable SAVE tourism opportunities; to deliver net benefits to local communities and environments; and to contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The SAVE Travel Alliance continues to grow as an international “network of networks” that brings together organizations who cater to the growing number of individuals worldwide who prefer this form of tourism.

Through a variety of activities the Alliance seeks to improve the global flow of information about SAVE opportunities to tourists and their service providers; to assist sustainable destinations in accessing SAVE market segments and distribution channels; to provide training and education, and design pilot programs that enable national and local officials and tourism operators to incorporate the SAVE approach into their tourism development strategies; and to provide strategic research that identifies innovative ways in which responsible tourism can contribute to sustainable benefits for host societies.

The SAVE Alliance was introduced to South Africa through the Slave Wrecks & Heritage Route Project, a collaborative effort of The George Washington University, the IZIKO Museums of Cape Town, the Slavery Museum of Angola, the US National Park Service, the International Institute of Tourism Studies, and the Southern African Heritage Resources Agency.

II. Goal

To identify SAVE tourism opportunities in South Africa by creating an inventory of Volunteer Receiving Organizations (VROs) that could service national and international SAVE markets; and to examine their interest in participating in the formation of a South African, and possibly a regional SAVE network.

III. Scope of Work

Dr. Ernie Heath, Head of the Department of Tourism at the University of Pretoria and former Deputy Director for South African Tourism, is uniquely qualified to conduct a first inventory of potential SAVE tourism providers and opportunities in South Africa. Dr. Heath will draw on his knowledge of tourism and volunteer organizations in South Africa to construct a detailed list of potential SAVE tourism operators and opportunities in South Africa that are appropriate for the national and international SAVE market.

Tasks include:

- Initial list of current and potential volunteer receiving organizations (VROs) and opportunities that are appropriate for the SAVE market
- Identifying specific VRO appropriate for the SAVE market. A VRO is any organization, business, non-profit, association, or other entity with a functioning volunteer program. Information to be gathered includes:
 - Name and address of organization
 - Nature of the organization
 - History & reputation
 - Details about their volunteer program
 - Contact information
 - Partners of VROs
 - Volunteer demographics
 - Needs for development (e.g. technical assistance, marketing, etc)
- Identify potential opportunities around which SAVE tourism can be developed. This could include a range of entities or areas of activity that currently lack volunteer programs but that could benefit from a SAVE volunteer component. Examples include:
 - Universities that could benefit from research assistance
 - NGOs that could benefit from volunteers
 - Environmental conservation efforts
 - Cultural preservation and research efforts
- Research into status of each organization or opportunity to assess suitability as a SAVE tourism opportunity; required information includes:
 - Details about current volunteer programs, if existing
 - Assessment of potential for future volunteer programs
 - Include details on factors that influence the effectiveness of volunteer programs, such as infrastructure, funding, program design, safety, security, health services, language capabilities

Final report of VROs will include initial list, identification, assessment and recommendation for further steps that should be taken to develop a South African SAVE Centre, as well as activities, such as a workshop, that would bring together a strategic selection of the organizations identified through the research to found the South African SAVE Centre.

Annex D – Illustrative SAVE Center Business Plan

SAVE Center
In Momchilovtsi, Smolyan Municipality,
Bulgaria
Business Plan

July 2009

Developed and submitted by

Simon Jones and Milena Nikolova

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A full copy of this document can be downloaded at:

http://www.gwu.edu/~iits/Sustainable_Tourism_Online_Learning/Leadbetter/Illustrative_SAVE_Center_Business_Plan.doc

US Agency for International Development

1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW

Washington, DC 20523

www.usaid.gov