



Dominica



Case Study #1

Portsmouth Indian River Tour Guides Association (PIRTGA), Dominica



SUMMARY OF GOOD PRACTICES

- *Infrastructure development*
- *Institutional support*
- *Use of common property resources*
- *Capacity-building and skills development*
- *Tourism impact management*

BACKGROUND

Dominica is situated at the northern end of the Lesser Antilles, lying between the two French islands of Guadeloupe to the north and Martinique to the south. The island is 29 miles long and 16 miles wide and marketed as 'The Nature Island of the Caribbean'. It is volcanic in origin and ruggedly beautiful with towering mountains and 365 rivers. The Indian River runs through dense forest into Prince Rupert Bay at Portsmouth town in the northwest. River tours commenced informally in the 1970s but have since become an organised and important tourism attraction in Dominica.

DESCRIPTION OF TOURISM ACTIVITY

Guides give visitors a one-mile up-river tour while interpreting the nature. There used to be a popular Bush Bar en route selling 'dynamite rum' but a new modern catering facility is under development. Different types of tourist markets are catered to including cruise ships that dock at Cabrits Berth, yachts, tour operators, self-drive, schools and residents. Yacht visitors are a more profitable market than cruise tourists as tour operators pay lower rates per head and as most cruise liners dock at the capital, Roseau. PIRTGA has 30 male members who are certified tour guides and have local wooden boats. Guides work on a rota basis.

IMPACTS

The Indian River tour is a major economic activity in the area and has had a significant impact on local livelihoods. Estimated tour fees injected into the local economy were approximately US\$80,000 in 2006. Start-up capital for boat purchase is low and can be repaid in one season. Positive economic impacts include job creation and income-generation for river guides and souvenir vendors, reinvestment of profits into other local enterprises (e.g. housing construction and accommodation rentals) and an increase in skill levels in tour guiding, hospitality services, business management and organisational development. A stronger organisational capacity has increased the ability of the tour guides to influence national decision-making. Environmental impacts have included a greater local appreciation of biodiversity, stronger collective management of natural resources and improved infrastructure (retaining wall) to prevent erosion.

CRITICAL FACTORS AND INSTRUMENTS

Market Access

Investment in infrastructure development has been important for product development and improved physical access to the river. A building constructed with donor assistance that is owned by the Forestry Division is used as a reception area and by vendors. The EU-funded Eco-Tourism Development Programme (ETDP) has built a retaining wall to stabilise the embankment and upgraded the embarkation jetty.

Commercial Viability

PIRTGA is successful due to its proximity to a natural attraction and clientele. The Association offers an attractive quality product and has addressed health and safety issues. Life jackets are provided. Tour operators and the National Development Corporation (NDC) successfully market the product.

Policy Framework

Dominica's Community Tourism Policy was prepared by the ETDP and forms part of the national Tourism 2010 Policy. The policy states, "actively open up opportunities for rural communities, local people and the informal sector to increase their involvement in the tourism industry, particularly in tourism planning and the running of enterprises". Institutional support from the Forestry Division, NDC and ETDP has enabled PIRTGA to successfully operate the tour guiding business. Access rights to the Indian River have been crucial as the tourism activity takes place in a protected area.

Implementation

Capacity building has developed skills and all PIRTGA members are certified tour guides. The National Development Corporation (NDC) has trained members in tourism awareness; quality customer services and has certified guides. The Forestry Division has improved environmental awareness and nature interpretation skills.

Tourism impact management by members is notable. Advocacy by PIRTGA successfully changed the law to prohibit the use of outboard motors on the river (Act 10 of 2002 Power Craft Prohibition) as this was diminishing visitor experience and negatively impacting on water quality, flora and fauna. Members advise yachts on where to anchor to prevent damage to the coral reef and police the harbour on a voluntary basis. PIRTGA continues to lobby for the installation of mooring buoys for yachts to improve environmental management and security. The Association also has responsibility for cleaning up any debris on the river.

KEY LESSONS LEARNT

1. *An enabling tourism policy and supportive institutional arrangements can facilitate CBT development.*
2. *Location matters and proximity to clientele is important.*
3. *Tourism income is highly seasonal and variable.*
4. *Organisational development of a CBT association can require long term external support for capacity building and product development.*
5. *Stakeholder communication, collaboration and capacity building are required to ensure the sustainability of natural resources on which tourism depends.*
6. *Sensitisation improves community cooperation in the collection of government user fees for protected areas.*
7. *Advocacy by community-based organisations can influence national decision-making.*
8. *Social issues in the wider community can compromise the quality of a tourism product.*

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INFORMATION SOURCES

Portsmouth Indian River Tour Guides Association.

Eco-Tourism Development Programme, Ministry of Tourism and Private Sector Relations.

Forestry Division.

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CASE STUDY #2

Giraudel/Eggleston Flower Group Inc., Dominica



SUMMARY OF GOOD PRACTICES

- *Funding mechanisms*
- *Product development on traditional activity*
- *Support of tourism companies*
- *Institutional support*
- *Capacity-building and awareness*
- *Community leadership*
- *Collective benefit distribution*

BACKGROUND

The neighbouring villages of Giraudel and Eggleston are close to Roseau, high up beneath Morne Anglais, the third highest mountain in Dominica. The communities are adjacent to the Morne Trois Pitons National Park (MTPNP), which was enlisted as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1998. There was a need to develop alternative income-generating activities as the designation of the conservation area conflicted with traditional livelihoods such as fishing, hunting, farming and logging. Furthermore, the cultivation of bananas (previously the 'green gold' of the Windward Islands) was reducing due to the removal of protected markets.

A 'Women in Agriculture' Group began in 1984 comprising 10 women with average individual farm sizes of 1.5 acres. It promoted traditional flower growing and other horticultural activities. The group has grown into an 18 member community-based organisation, the Giraudel/Eggleston Flower Group, registered as a NGO in 2005.

The Group secured support from the United Nations Development Programme/Small Grants Programme (UNDP/SGP) in 2003, supplemented by the Community Tourism Foundation (CTF) in Barbados and the EU-funded Eco-Tourism Development Programme (ETDP), to develop community tourism to conserve the area, diversify economic activity and reduce poverty.



UNDP/SGP Project objectives were:

- a) To educate and train farmers in environmentally friendly agricultural practices.*
- b) To educate villagers about the Morne Anglais area.*
- c) To protect, preserve and cultivate rare and useful plants and trees.*
- d) To develop a recreational and educational centre to enhance the area.*
- e) To provide and augment community income.*
- f) To provide an additional ecotourism attraction for Dominica.*

Activities have included the establishment of an annual flower show, the development of a botanical garden and visitor reception, home garden tours, improvement of a Morne Anglais hiking trail, village beautification and training and sensitisation.

DESCRIPTION OF TOURISM ACTIVITY

The Giraudel Flower Show was held in 2004 to much acclaim and attracted approximately 4,000 domestic, regional and international visitors over 2 days. When the botanical garden and multi-purpose permanent buildings are fully developed, annual flower shows and other events, guided tours, a creole café, plant nursery and vegetable production are planned.

The flower show was not held in 2005/6 due to factors outside the control of the Group. These included drought and the lack of a permanent water supply, storm damage to temporary structures, inaccessibility due to water pipe development and the lack of a permanent site. These constraints are being resolved.

Home garden tours for cruise passengers on the Princess and Holland-America cruise lines and stay-over visitors began in 2005 at the request of Whitchurch Travel Agency, the largest tour operator in Dominica. Tours have a maximum of 10 tourists to ensure product quality and authenticity. Income is also generated by flower sales and displays for events and hotels.

Guiding on the Morne Anglais trail has been complicated by land ownership issues and multiple entry points and routes. The Group has recommended that the Village Council is in a better position to further develop and manage this tourism activity.

IMPACTS

The income-generating potential of cut flower and vegetable production is being maximised through diversification into tourism. These are important economic activities in the area for women and increasingly men with the reduction in banana production. Tourism has also generated collective income for rural development projects - entrance and stall fees from the flower show in 2004 raised approximately US\$10,000, some of which was used to provide refrigeration in the local health centre. The project has also led to stronger organisational capacity from improved group management, the provision of a community recreational and training facility in the botanical garden, greater environmental awareness and better knowledge of flora in the area and the cultivation of rare useful plants and trees.

CRITICAL FACTORS AND INSTRUMENTS

Market Access

Giraudel and Eggleston communities have the good fortune of being adjacent to Morne Trois Pitons National Park (MTPNP) and close to cruise and stay over markets in the capital.

Commercial Viability

*"I told the donors, this project will succeed with or without your funding – you will just speed development up!"
Group Coordinator*

Funding for product development has resulted from innovative resource mobilisation. The Group managed to raise enough funds from events, donations and loans from within the community to purchase a 2.6 acre plot of land to develop the botanical garden - an asset crucial to future tourism development. Small grants have accelerated initial infrastructure development.

Imaginative diversification of the traditional activity of flower growing has developed attractive, quality, unique tourism products. This attraction meets a niche market demand in keeping with the branding of Dominica as the 'Nature Island of the Caribbean'.

The support of tourism companies in product conceptualisation, development and marketing has been crucial. Whitchurch Travel Agency and Exotica Hotel champion the garden tours and this has generated visitor numbers in a relatively short time.

*"We are growing faster than we thought possible"
Group Coordinator*

Policy Framework

Dominica's Community Tourism Policy was prepared by the Eco-Tourism Development Programme (ETDP) and forms part of the national Tourism 2010 Policy. The policy states, "actively open up opportunities for rural communities, local people and the informal sector to increase their involvement in the tourism industry, particularly in tourism planning and the running of enterprises". Institutional support from government has been provided through an ETDP Community Tourism Development Fund grant to construct a reception centre.

Implementation

Capacity building has led to improved group management, an increase in hospitality, tour guiding, craft and culinary skill levels and improved environmental awareness.

Strong community leadership, mobilisation and organisation significantly facilitated the tourism project, which is characterised by a high level of participation and community contributions in voluntary labour, donations and loans. Giraudel/Eggleston is fortunate as it has several local residents with leadership, mobilisation, organisational development, networking, resource mobilisation, project management, business and public relations skills to effectively develop tourism.

Benefit distribution is equitable as both the flower growers and the wider community benefit from income-generated as project donations fund local development initiatives.

KEY LESSONS LEARNT

- 1. Good local governance, strong community organisation, mobilisation and contributions are important success factors.*
- 2. Some commercial tourism operators are increasingly interested in high quality CBT activities and such 'champions' are essential to success.*
- 3. Building partnerships within the community and between the community and carefully selected external agencies helps overcome traditional divisions and tensions in small communities.*
- 4. The lack of available and/or affordable land in small island developing states can constrain CBT. The Group's need to obtain funds quickly to purchase land for tourism development exemplifies the importance of the availability of finance (e.g. soft loans) that is relatively easy to access.*
- 5. Inadequate infrastructure in an area makes CBT more vulnerable to natural disasters such as droughts and tropical storms.*
- 6. Access rights to common property resources and permission to use private land for access can facilitate CBT and requires stakeholder collaboration.*
- 7. Special events require traffic management to reduce congestion.*

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INFORMATION SOURCES

Giraudel/Eggleston Flower Group Inc.

Eco-Tourism Development Programme, Ministry of Tourism and Private Sector Relations.

Exotica Hotel.

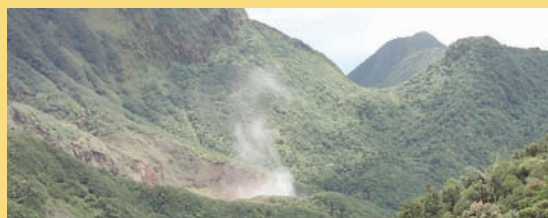
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CASE STUDY #3

3 Rivers Community Life Package in Grand Fond Village, Dominica



SUMMARY OF GOOD PRACTICES

- Product development on traditional activities
- Support of a tourism company
- Participatory planning

BACKGROUND

3 Rivers is an award winning ecotourism lodge in the southeast of Dominica that opened in 2002. All staff members are from surrounding villages. The founder was impressed by the welcome reception of guests in the area, realised how it boosted visitor enjoyment and had potential to generate additional income for local families. This seeded the idea to develop CBT and a 'Community Life Package' was established with the villagers of Grand Fond. No external funding was required just mentoring and simple training in hospitality from 3 Rivers.

Peace Corps Volunteers (PCV) and the Eco-Tourism Development Programme (ETDP) in the Ministry of Tourism have also assisted CBT development in the area. Grand Fond is developing a 'Bamboo Café' and trail to Dernière waterfall. The lodge is keen for the Café to open to give 3 Rivers' guests more dining options. Another neighbouring village, Riviere Cyrique, requested 3 Rivers to help them develop CBT. The lodge provides technical advice and ensures there is a community contribution to CBT development.

DESCRIPTION OF TOURISM ACTIVITY

The 'Community Life Package' offers a wide range of activities including visits to an organic herb farm, coffee and cocoa plantations, bay leaf oil factory, a primary school, waterfalls, reggae and calypso band practice. Activities are hands on, for example, harvesting dasheen and learning how to cook callaloo soup or harvesting coconut and bamboo to make crafts. Approximately 25 percent of guests take part in a half-day activity and the school and herb garden are most popular.

"I'll give you my time making the plan if you give your time digging the hole"
Jem Winston,
Manager 3 Rivers





IMPACTS

In the first year of operation between October 2005 and August 2006, 233 tourists took part in different community activities and US\$4,315 was paid to village hosts. This is an important new form of supplementary income and creates meaningful visitor-host interactions.

CRITICAL FACTORS AND INSTRUMENTS

Market Access

Tourism development in southeast Dominica is relatively new and CBT would most likely not be viable without supportive tourism companies, such as 3 Rivers, developing tourism infrastructure and bringing clientele to the area. The number of stay-over tourists is growing and villagers have been enabled to participate in the tourism opportunity.

Commercial Viability

Product development based on traditional activities has several advantages. It meets tourist demand for authentic cultural excursions and the activities do not require capital start-up or extensive capacity building and do not have running costs.

The support of 3 Rivers has been crucial. The lodge helped the Grand Fond community conceptualise and develop the product and markets the excursions on the Internet and through promotional literature in the lodge. Communications, bookings and payments are also managed by 3 Rivers, which takes a modest commission to cover costs and pay taxes.

Policy Framework

The 3 Rivers and Grand Fond partnership supports Dominica's Community Tourism Policy that "encourages the formal tourism sector to cooperate and work with the informal sector, and to recognise that as well as being in the long-term self-interest of the tourism industry, this is a social responsibility and contribution to Dominica's national development objectives of improved equity, poverty alleviation and sustainable growth".

Implementation

Participatory planning initiated by the lodge has been instrumental. A meeting was held between 3 Rivers and the Grand Fond Village Council to discuss possible tourism activities in the community. Initially villagers thought they needed to develop a new tourism activity to be staged for visitors, as everyday activities were not thought to be of interest. Following sensitisation, it was agreed that the emphasis would be placed on every day activities to give an authentic insight into village life rather than developing new or staged activities. The community came up with a list of potential attractions that formed the package and 3 Rivers provided basic hospitality training.

KEY LESSONS LEARNT

1. *There is often a lack of understanding of tourism in communities.*
2. *CBT is usually an 'add-on' activity and does better when the wider destination is doing well.*
3. *Tourists are becoming more discerning and some market segments prefer authentic cultural experiences rather than staged tourism products.*
4. *Tourism companies can be valuable 'champions' of CBT and private sector driven initiatives are more likely to succeed. A common constraint for companies championing CBT is a lack of management time to devote to its development.*
5. *CBT can be successfully developed with no external funding but in-kind technical advice, training, marketing and communications support from commercial tourism companies.*
6. *International volunteers living in the community can be utilised effectively to help develop CBT.*
7. *Community contribution (e.g. time, labour, locally available building materials) is important as it increases the community's sense of ownership of and responsibility for the project.*

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INFORMATION SOURCES

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Eco-Tourism Development Programme, Ministry of Tourism and Private Sector Relations.

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