

Creating Strategic Partner Acquisition Project Guideline for Duara Travels

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| <p>With increasing scientific understanding and felt negative effects across the world, people are more concerned on sustainability issues than ever before. The notion that everyone has their share to do for better tomorrow is starting to be accepted. Corporations realize their role by launching Corporate Social Responsibility programs that aim to increase their positive impact. Some companies take this aim even further by placing the social mission as their sole purpose that is to be accomplished by commercial means. These kinds of companies are called social enterprises.</p> <p>The thesis is commissioned by Duara Travels, which is a for-profit social enterprise operating in travel industry. The company's aim is to create positive social and economic impact in rural communities of developing economies with an underlying mission to shape the income distribution in tourism industry. The company provides authentic travel experiences to its customers by providing three- and six-night village-experiences in communities aimed to foster cultural exchange and community empowerment.</p> <p>The thesis is conducted as a project that produces a product. The final product is a guideline for strategic partner acquisition in Duara Travels' destination for Duara Travels. The guideline is based on knowledge that is accumulated in theoretical and operational phases of the thesis.</p> <p>The theoretical part of the thesis consists of two main themes. First theme examines issues of corporations acting as drivers for sustainable development. Concepts such as Corporate Social Responsibility and Social Entrepreneurship are examined. The second theme examines is strategic collaboration between organizations. The issues are examined with an emphasis on tourism industry.</p> <p>In the operational part of the thesis, the author conducts a partner acquisition project for Duara Travels. The project is conducted as a pilot, providing knowledge base for the final product. The author conducts a trip to Bali, Duara Travels' most popular destination, as a part of the project. In the destination various methods of acquiring partners are put into practice. The project is described in detail, laying out the plan, execution as well as reflection in each part of the project.</p> <p>The discussion gathers the knowledge accumulated in theoretical and operational part. Based on the knowledge acquired, the guideline is built. The guideline is built as a checklist. Its purpose is to act as a roadmap rather than strict manual, leaving space for contextual appliance and future improvement.</p> | |
| Keywords Sustainable tourism, Strategic collaboration, Social entrepreneurship, Project-based | |

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1 Introduction

The following scenario might sound familiar many: astonished by the beautiful views and amazing stories of a certain place, you decide to book a trip there as your next holiday destination. Quickly thought, in the destination you start noticing that the place is different from the image that you had received. Instead of empty golden sand beaches, you might find yourself surrounded by flacks of people, mainly other tourists. Rather than having displays of the local culture in shops and markets, you find yourself surrounded by shopping malls and international hotel- and food chains. Having a quick look, it would be hard to differentiate whether you are in Eilat in Israel or Kutak in Bali.

The founders of Duara Travels, a social travel enterprise from Finland, had many a similar experience on their travels around the world. In addition, they had noticed that the wealth generated by the tourism industry was not benefiting the local communities as much as it could have but mainly a few local wealthy individuals or expats. The three founders created Duara Travels to bring more sustainable and authentic travel to the world – to tackle the mentioned problems.

This thesis is commissioned by Duara Travels and is produced in a project form. The purpose of the project is to develop local-level partnerships for Duara Travels in the destination of Bali, Indonesia. On the course of the project, a trip will be done to the destination to contact and meet the potential partners. The planning and theoretical learning happens before going to the destination, the operational part happens in the destination, and the evaluation happens after coming back from the destination.

The project creates a good base to further my theoretical and practical learning. In choosing the topic, one of the main motivations to go further with a project was the possibility for operational work. Since I personally feel thriving and learning the most in an operational environment, I feel that a project like this is the most suitable way to produce this thesis.

Furthermore Duara, as a social enterprise, promotes many of the things that I personally value. When working with a company like this, it gives a big boost of motivation to know that I am doing something practical to further the values that I truly care about. After graduation, my wish is to work in a field related to sustainable development. The project provides me with a good possibility to acquire theoretical and practical knowledge in the issues of responsible and sustainable development.

1.1 Defining Project and its Objectives

At the time of writing this thesis, Duara doesn't have distribution channels directly in its destinations. Duara needs more customers to become a self-sustainable company. The company's hypothesis is that travellers who are already in the destination are a potential customer group for Duara. Thus, it is beneficial to establish a distribution channels directly in the destinations.

The project will be conducted as a pilot. It will test how a concept of acquiring sales partners directly in the destination. Based on the piloting project, an evaluation will be made how the concept works and how it could be developed so that it can be implemented in all Duara's destinations. Based on the evaluation, a guideline will be written for Duara Travels that helps in implementing similar project in the rest of Duara's destinations.

In the following chart the project is divided into three main phases: planning phase, operational phase and evaluation phase. The graphic below visualises an overview of the project, its phases with their own respective goals and the primary goal of the project being the final product. In the planning phase a project plan is written which acts as a roadmap for the project. Next, in the operational connection is established in the destination, aiming to yield 10 meetings and 1 deal. Finally, an evaluation is made of the project success reflecting to the success criteria set. Based on the project, evaluation and theoretical review a guideline will be written pointing out recommended practices in similar future projects. The guideline is the final product of the project.

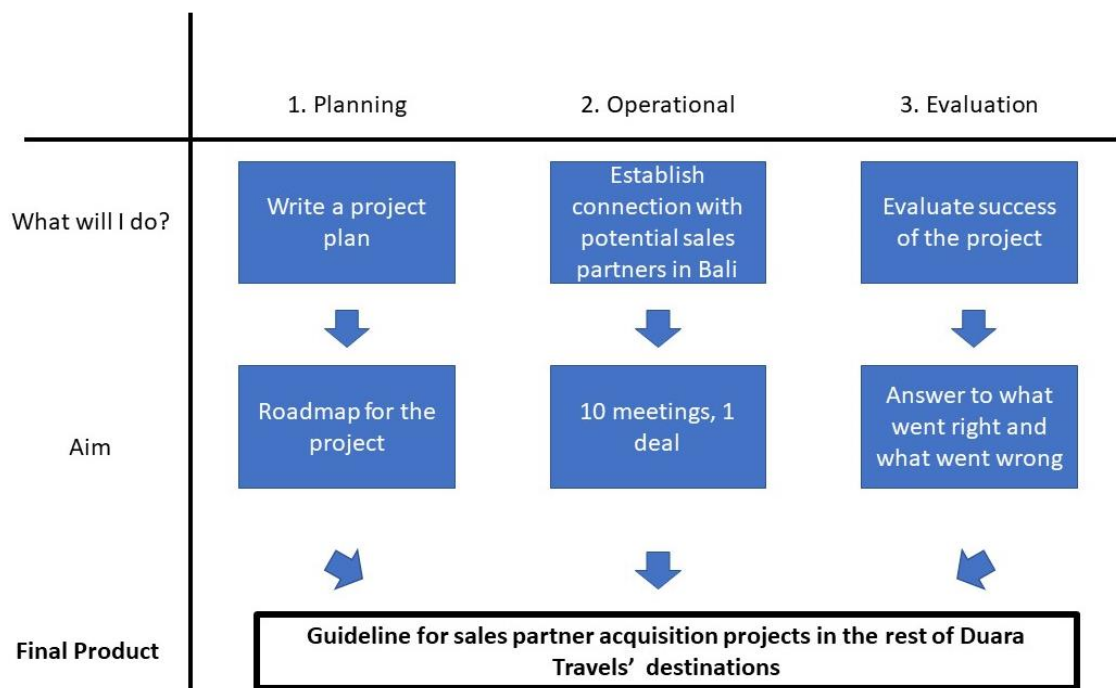


Figure 1. Project phases, aims and final product

1.2 Defining Project Success: Success Criteria

To define success of the project, it is helpful to establish a set of success criteria before embarking on the project. Once the project is finished, reflecting if the success criteria has been met, helps in assessing the project effectiveness and finding possible learning points for future projects. The criteria act as measuring tools of how successful the project has been. Traditionally, the assessment criteria have been divided into three different categories: time, cost and performance. The following chart depicts success criteria for this project. Since the project does not have a budget, cost measurements are not included. (Kerzner 2009, 7-8; Beeye 2018).



Figure 2. Project success criteria

The first criterion examines if the project was on schedule and if it was not, how much late it was. The second criterion examines if the project milestones, stated on the project plan, have been achieved and if not, how many have been completed out of all. The third criterion examines if the final product of this project, a guideline for Duara Travel's, has been completed. The two final criteria examine if the commissioning party, Duara Travels, has seen value in the project and the final guideline.

1.3 Commissioning Company: Duara Travels Oy

Duara Travels is an online service promoting sustainable travel by offering travellers to access and experience an authentic community life in their destination villages. The online-service allows travellers to browse, book and pay their stay in a selected village. The destination villages are in low-income countries that are popular among international tourists but don't have the structure to equally distribute the wealth created by the tourism industry. (Duara Travels 2018; Vierros 2017, 6-8.)

Through the online service, one can book a three or six night long 'village experience'. The experience includes accommodation with a local family, three meals and the possibility to participate in the local activities. Each village includes 3 to 5 families that accommodate travellers in turn as well as an English-speaking contact person that helps in practical issues such as arranging the accommodation. The villages are rather plain and simple in the Western standards, but they still must meet certain requirements. They must have the ability to provide meals, a separate room with a lock to the traveller and washing facilities. The villages must also possess an existing livelihood as well as have some earlier contact point to the Western culture. (Duara Travels 2018; Vierros 2017, 6-8.)

The company was created in 2015 by three enthusiastic travellers: Annika Järvelin, Johanna Vierros and Elina Voipio. They all had got wonderful experiences from their travels. Still there was something in the development of tourism industry that was troubling all of them. In many destinations the wealth generated by the tourism industry kept flowing to the pockets of expats and wealthy individuals but not to the people in need of an official livelihood and regular income. They also noticed that in popular destinations it was hard to experience and feel the local lifestyle and culture. The development of tourism industry had led to the development of generic hotels, restaurants, yoga studios, etc, that tended to the needs of big amounts of tourists and had little connection to the authentic local culture. Many people around them shared the notion of disappointment. The solution to the problems was Duara Travels. (Duara Travels 2018; Vierros 2017, 6-8.)

Duara Travels' solution lies in its business model. The payment of the village stay is divided amongst the shareholders as following: The family hosting receives 40%, local contact person receives 10%, a community investment circle receives 10% and Duara Travels receives 30%. The remaining 10% goes to covering the international transfer costs. The payment division model ensures that the money generated stays in the destination and benefits the local families and community. By receiving accommodation in a village, the traveller gets a possibility to observe and experience the local life in its authentic form. The traveller will also know that his/her payment helps the village. (Duara Travels 2018; Vierros 2017, 6-8.)

Duara Travels, as a social enterprise, places the creation of socially responsible travel as its main mission. The growth of the company and the profit created is goes to expanding and developing the service further. Profit creating is essential for Duara travels to further its mission. As a social enterprise Duara uses metrics such as impact generated to measure their success in addition to financial metrics. (Duara Travels 2018; Vierros 2017, 6-8.)

In August 2018, the company operates in 23 villages in seven countries: Tanzania, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Vietnam, Kenya and Nicaragua. Four villages are in Indonesia; three in the island of Bali and one in the Island of Lombok. In its three-and-a-half-year journey the company has sold slightly more a thousand night in the destinations. The company has provided economic opportunities for the village communities and contact persons. The social impacts include a mutual culture and language learning possibility between the parties included. (Duara Travels 2018; Vierros 2017, 6-8.)

2 Setting the Scene: Indonesia and Bali

The project is focusing on Duara Travels' destinations in Bali, an island belonging to the Republic of Indonesia. Therefore, it is helpful to possess at least an elementary understanding of the country and the region of Bali. In the following chapters I will briefly introduce the basic facts of the regions as well as introduce the volume and importance of tourism in the region.

2.1 Republic of Indonesia

With the 4th largest population in the World and the largest economy in Southeast Asia, the Republic of Indonesia (commonly referred to as Indonesia) is certainly a country deserving to be scrutinized closely. The country is an archipelago located in between the Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean straddling the equator (Figure 1.). Most of the archipelago has a tropical climate. The country lies along the Ring of Fire, a belt of active volcanoes and earthquake epicentres. Thus, the Indonesian archipelago is filled with volcanoes and it is prone to experience earthquakes frequently. (The World Factbook 2018).

As a tropical country with thousands of islands, Indonesia has lots of white untouched sand beaches and an ever-growing young population ready to seize the opportunity to create their living through tourism. With the current trend growing tourism industry and consumers that are seeking new places to visit Indonesia seems like a potential place to see growth of international arrivals. The constant volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, and big tsunamis, that are often broadcasted all over the world through international press, might decrease the attractiveness of the country, scaring potential consumers to safer environments.



Figure 3. Location of Indonesia shown in green on map (User Name: Addicted04 2009)

87.2% of Indonesian population adhere to Islam making it the most populous Muslim majority country in the World. Despite the religion unites most of population, Indonesia is culturally diverse country inhabited by various ethnic groups, with all their distinct religions and own language. Currently the number of individual languages listed in Indonesia is 719 (Ethnologue 2018). The biggest ethnic group of the country are the Javanese (40% of the population) residing on the Island of Java, which is also one of the most densely populated places on earth. (The World Factbook 2018).

With such vast variety of cultures and languages, Indonesia is sure to attract culture-hungry tourists. As a Muslim-majority country, Indonesia has an advantage to attract an ever-growing Muslim consumer population from countries such as Saudi-Arabia, and United Arab Emirates. On the other hand, Islam's reputation in the Western countries is not at its all-time high now, and prejudices amongst the consumers might hinder demand from Western consumers. Since the country's independence, there has been conflicts between different ethnic groups, which have in some cases lead to violent outbursts. If consumers and businesses see the country as a conflict-prone area, it will have negative impact on its tourism development.

Despite being the largest economy in Southeast Asia Indonesia still struggles with many economic problems. The country is struggling with problems such as poverty, unemployment, corruption and unequal resource distribution among its regions. Comparing indicators measuring the country's development, such as GDP (Gross Domestic Product) per capita and HDI (Human Development Index), with developed countries such as Finland and the United States, Indonesia falls far behind them (World Bank 2018; United Nations Development Programme 2015; The World Factbook 2018.)

With underdeveloped economy, Indonesia can attract foreign tourists and businesses with its low costs. Food and accommodation costs might be even ten times lower than in European destinations. The local labour is also very cheap, attracting surely foreign investments. Corruption and undeveloped infrastructure are factors that drive investors away from the country. The poverty and often underdeveloped service sector might also discourage foreigner tourists from travelling to the country.

The tourism sector in Indonesia has seen a huge surge on the course of the past decade. The number of international tourism arrivals to Indonesia has three folded from 4.8 million arrivals in 2006 (World Bank 2018) to 14.4 million international arrivals in 2018 (UNWTO 2019). Tourism industry is a globally growing business, it has outperformed the global

economy in growth for the past several years. The general development is reflected in the rising tourism arrival numbers in the country as well as new governmental policies striving to boost the development of travel and tourism industry. (World Economic Forum 2017, 3 & 186-187.)

The Travel and Tourism competitiveness report, a report that measures factors that contribute to the attractiveness to develop travel and tourism in a country, places Indonesia on the 42nd place out of the 136 countries that it compared. The report stated that the leading factors of Indonesia's attractiveness are affordable prices, and the recognition of natural and cultural resources. The biggest hindering factor includes the ill-management of environmental issues: deforestation, waste water management and loss of biodiversity are big problems in Indonesia. Another major hinderance is its lack of tourism service infrastructure. (World Economic Forum 2017, 3 & 186-187.)

2.2 Bali

Bali is one of the thousands of islands that comprise the Republic of Indonesia. It lies between the Java island, the most populous island of the country, to the west and Lombok island to the east (see figure 2 & 3). Bali, not dissimilar to the rest of the Indonesian archipelago, has a tropical climate. The driest season is from June to October and the rainy season starts in October and ends in March. March. A volcanic mountain chain stretching from west to east, splitting the island in two, creates the most distinctive feature of the island's topography with active volcanic peaks. (Bali Tourism Board; worldatlas.com, 2018; New World Encyclopedia, 2018.)



Figure 4. Location of Bali in Indonesia shown in green (User Name: Anonylog 2008)

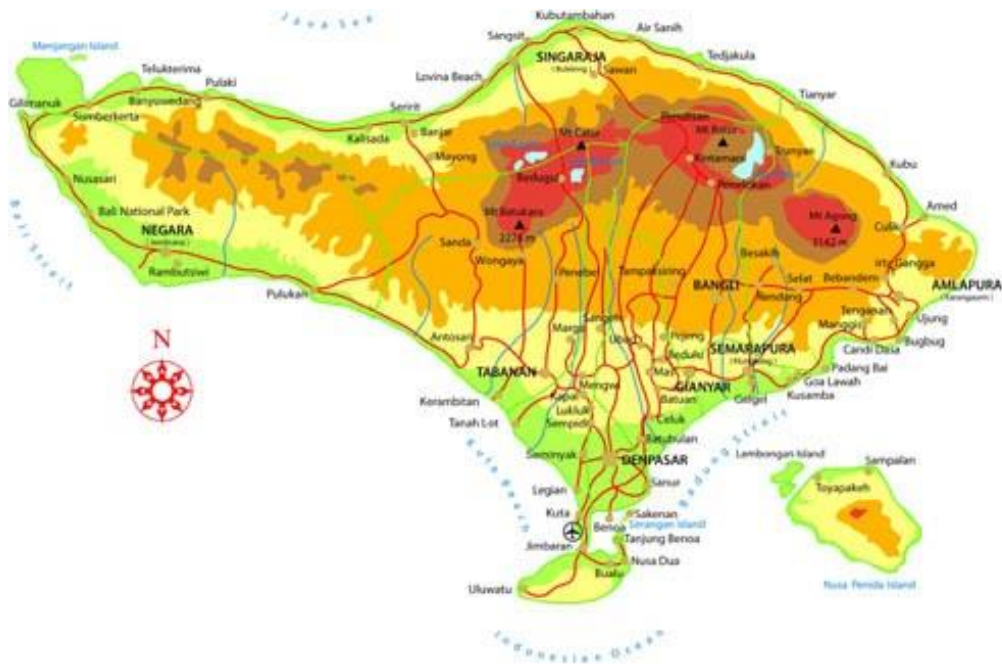


Figure 5. Map of Bali (Bali Tourism Board)

The population of Bali in 2014 was 4,1 million, and the projections are that the population will grow in the future since the island is experiencing a significant population growth. The island's area is 5,780 km², which means that the island is rather densely population. For the sake of understanding the scale: Bali's area is 2% as big as Finland's area. Approximately 90% of Bali's population are of Balinese origin, an ethnic group with own culture and own language. A big factor that makes the island of Bali and the Balinese people unique is that most of the Balinese adhere to Hinduism and Bali is the only Hindu-majority province in the Muslim prominent Indonesia. (The Bali Today 2018; The Jakarta Post 2012; MapFight 2018; Statistics Indonesia 2010.)

The island of Bali is considered as the tourism capital of Indonesia. In 2018 out of 14.4 million international travellers Indonesia, 8.2 million travelled to Bali (57% of the total international visitors). Bali is also a hot stop for domestic tourism, and it is estimated that the Island attracts at least same number of domestic tourists from other parts of Indonesia than foreign tourists. (MasterCard 2018; UNWTO 2019; South China Morning Post 2018.)

Tourism industry plays an extremely crucial role on the island being the leading sector in the local economy. In 2014 the tourism sector amounted of approximately 65% of the island's GDP (direct and indirect) and employed approximately 1.2 million people. The tourism sector has grown rapidly in Bali during the previous decade, and the projections show that the same trend will continue. (Statistics of Bali Province 2018; Antara & Sri Sumarniasih 2017, 34)

The growing tourism sector has had a numerous of positive impacts on Bali. The positive impacts of tourism industry are factors such as the tourism industry being significant source of foreign exchange, it creates new marker goods and services produced locally, it increases the population's income level as well as job opportunities on the island. When properly managed, tourism can also increase the recognition and protection of local cultures as well as the local environment. In 2017 Bali's local officials declared a 'garbage emergency' after a tide of plastic covered Bali's beaches on plastic waste. The move was a response to the fears that the waste might me endangering the tourism business. The emergency status drew attention to Indonesia's plastic problem and has prompted action to fight the problem. (Antara & Sri Sumarniasih 2017, 35; The Telegraph 2017.)

The rapidly growing tourism industry has also caused negative effects on the island. Since the small size, the island is prone to suffer from over-exploitation by the tourism industry. Especially the environment is under stress by the growing industry. The Jakarta Post reported (2011) that 200 out of the island's 400 rivers have already dried up due to the over-consumption of water by the industry. On average, a single tourist residing at a four-star holiday resort ends up spending three times more water per day than a whole Balinese family. The waste management on the island is generally undeveloped and can't handle the growing amount of garbage created by the industry. This has led to mountains of rubbish piling up all over the island - hidden from the eyes of tourists. The toxics from the rubbish mountains often leak to the surrounding waters, causing harm to the nature, for instance damaging the coral reefs surrounding the island. (SBS 2014.)

The Balinese society and culture has always been tightly connected to the land that they own. Due to the growing demand in the tourism industry, many locals have been pressured into selling their lands to large companies. The loss of land has fractured some of the structures of traditional Balinese society and culture. The Island lives and breathes of tourism and is greatly dependant on it. The huge dependency on a single industry creates economic vulnerability. In the end of 2017, a volcanic mountain Mount Agung erupted, leading to the drop in the number of visitors. The effect hit hard on the local economy, devastating and creating big uncertainty amongst a significant number of the local inhabitants, who lived off tourism. (ABC 2012; The York Times 2017.)

Tourism industry has certainly created big boom in the Balinese economy, creating wealth and jobs. Despite this, it is not uncommon to see local protesters in Bali speaking against the current development. The protestors don't oppose tourism per se, and they see tourism as a generally positive phenomenon. Their message is to drive the development to a

more sustainable direction and choose positive long-term effects rather than quick gains with devastating long-term effects (ABC 2012). Personally, I share many of their concerns. As Duara Travels' core ideology is to strive towards sustainable development, I am very happy to have them as a commissioning party this thesis and to collaborate with them.

3 Corporate Responsibility and Sustainable Tourism

In a 1970 issue of The New York Times, economist Milton Friedman published his now-famous statement that businesses' *sole* purpose is to generate profit for its shareholders. He stated that companies that consider responsibility issues are always less competitive, having more binding constraints, than those who do not consider responsibility issues. (Friedman 1970).

Despite the wide acceptance of Friedman's statement in the business sector, there has not been universal endorsement to the view. In the recent decade's years opposing voices have been growing. Already in 1979 Kenneth Mason, a CEO of a major US Company stated that: "Making a profit is no more the purpose of a corporation than getting enough to eat is the purpose of life. Getting enough to eat is a requirement of life; life's purpose, one would hope, is somewhat broader and more challenging. Likewise, with business and profit.". Mason states that profit making should act as a fuel for broader changes rather than being the goal itself. Acknowledgements from companies and scholars that social responsibility might be a strategic advantage rather than a hinderance have been surfacing. Governmental actors are also addressing Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) issues: European Union, as an example, has actively strived to develop CSR programs and guidelines since the 1990's. (GreenBiz 2006; Juutinen & Steiner 2010, 20; Jutila 2008, 3.)

3.1 Corporate Social Responsibility

Common universally accepted definition of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) does not exist. The various commonly used definitions are based on the same fundamental ideas and differences lay mainly in the contextual factors (Dahlsrud 2008). European Commission (2018) defines CSR as companies taking responsibility for their impact on society. United Nations Industrial Development Organization known as UNIDO (2018) expands the definition of CSR further by differentiating CSR from separate charity projects, stating that CSR is a tool that companies use to integrate social and environmental concerns through their business operations. Cambridge Dictionary (2018) highlights the voluntarily nature of CSR by stating that corporate social responsibility refers to the idea that a company should be interested and willing to help the society.

CSR must be company led and not directly enforced by the public authority although some laws direct the companies in the direction of following CSR principles. Thus, when practicing CSR, corporations are implementing practices that go beyond the minimal re-

requirements of law, highlighting the voluntarily nature of CSR stated in the Cambridge Dictionary definition (2018). The positive impact must be realized through the business activity of the company, for it to be counted as corporate responsibility. Separate philanthropic campaigns alone don't count as corporate responsibility as stated in the UNIDO (2018) definition. Classically corporate responsibility is based on the three pillars of sustainability: environmental pillar, social pillar and economic pillar. (Juutinen & Steiner 2010, 21; European Commission 2018)

3.2 Strategic CSR

While common definitions of CSR focus on its positive social impact, studies have shown that there is a positive correlation between social responsibility and companies' financial performance. This vantage point is referred to as 'strategic CSR'. Costs spent of CSR are shown in studies to be compensated for by a range of direct and indirect benefits. Financial benefits may come into realization through being more energy-efficient, which reduces material costs. Taking good care of the employees reduces occupational health care costs and increases productivity. Taking care of responsibility also increases company's positive image which may lead to increased demand. When CSR is well integrated into company's strategy it brings opportunity to find new markets and innovate. (Harmaala & Jallinoja 2012, 58-59; Mikołajek-Gocejna 2016, 70-77.)

From this point of view, CSR can be seen solely as a strategic financial investment and profit increase is often the main motivator for many companies to engage in CSR. It is hard to assess companies' main motivation to engage in CSR when researching from outside the company. CSR is not defined by the motivation, so even if companies engage only in order to gain financial benefits, their efforts it still counts as CSR. In his Wall Street Journal article Karnani (2010) highlights that while often acting in their own self-interest, companies engaging in CSR are still greatly benefitting the society. (Camilleri 2012, 68-74).

3.3 Three Pillars of Sustainability

This chapter takes a specified look into the three pillars of sustainability. Each of the pillar is described, and practical examples are given.



Figure 6. Three pillars of sustainability (Swish Maintenance Limited 2015)

The environmental dimension refers to companies tracking and reducing their negative impacts on the ecological environment. In practice it can mean sustainable uses of resources by favouring recycled materials, using suppliers that favour renewable energy sources, reducing the usage of water by deploying new technologies, etc. In addition, on having less negative impact on environment, these practices can increase the competitiveness of a company. A company lessening the amount of in the packaging usually reduces the overall material spending for the company. (Investopedia 2017; Sorsa 2010, 17.)

The social dimension refers to the corporate managing that is has the support of its employees, stakeholders and the community that it operates in. There are many ways that the companies achieve that all fall under the main principle of taking good care of the parties included. Inside the company it can mean taking good care of the employees by learning and listening to them in developments, giving flexible schedules or offering good maternity and paternity benefits. For community it can mean investing in the local public projects. The social dimension also reaches the stakeholders means for example that its suppliers are not using child labour or other unethical methods. (Investopedia 2017.)

Economic dimension means that the company is profitable and competitive, leading to long-term economic viability. This dimension is crucial since for it to take care of the environmental and social aspect, it must be economically on a stable basis. Chasing profit at any cost does is not economically sustainable since, maximizing profits in a short-term

could be detrimental for the company in the long-term, thus not being sustainable. Economic aspect includes the economic effects also on company's shareholders such as: owners, employees, subcontractors and the government. (Elinkeinoelämän keskusliitto 2019; Investopedia 2017; FrontStream 2013.)

The three dimensions are interconnected and should not be scrutinized in isolation. Including employees in decision making can increase company's innovativeness and productivity leading it to be more economically viable. Changing an unethical stakeholder to an ethical one might increase the costs in a short-term but at the same time company's goodwill and reputation might increase leading to increase in sales and overall profit in long-term. Another example of interconnectivity of the aspects might be that a company might invest so much in environmental and social aspects that the company will not be economically sustainable anymore and goes bankrupt. Implementing positive improvements might cause much more harm than good to the company in a bigger scale. The examples exhibit the importance of holistic approach in thinking of sustainability. (Investopedia 2017; FrontStream 2013; Sorsa 2010, 17.)

3.4 Sustainable Tourism

Sustainable Tourism refers to practices in tourism industry that follow the key elements of sustainability, mostly referred to as three pillars of sustainability (de Lange & Dodds 2017, 1978). UNWTO (2005), a leading international organisation in tourism field, defines sustainable tourism as: "Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities". The UNWTO definition highlights positive impact on each stakeholder involved, not limited to the destination, but extending it to visitors and stakeholders for instance. UNWTO definition addresses the need to focus on both current and future benefits: short-term development gains must not be acquired at the expense of long-term development. Edgell (2006, 123) states that: "sustainable tourism is achieving quality growth in a manner that does not deplete the natural and built environment and preserves the culture, history, and heritage of the local community and improves the welfare of local people." Edgell's definition follows the same principles as the UNWTO's while adding an emphasis on growth. He states that sustainable tourism is quality growth and it must increase the welfare of local people, going beyond just addressing their needs. (Edgell 2016, 1-14 & 30).

In 1950 there were 25 million international tourists. By the year 2017 the number was approximately 1,3 billion tourists. That number is expected to rise to two billion by 2030 (National Geographic 2016, 55; UNWTO 2018a, 11). If the development continues as predicted, the number of international tourists will be grown about 7900% in 80 years. The sharp rise is due to the factors such as: increase in leisure time, greater individual prosperity, faster and cheaper travel and more available destinations. In the year 2018 tourism industry accounted for 10,4% of Global Development Product (direct, indirect and induced) and generated more than 300 million jobs (direct, indirect and induced), 1 in 10 of the world's total jobs (WTTO 2018, 3-4). Tourism is one of the biggest industries in the world and it is growing faster than the rest of the world's economy. By examining the statistical numbers, it is evident that the industry has and will continue to have a huge impact on the globe. Thus, it is crucial that the practices in the industry are planned, implemented and monitored carefully following the principles of sustainable development. (Edgell 2016, 1-14, 30).

3.4.1 Sustainable Tourism Development

Sustainable Tourism Development is the process of developing and monitoring the tourism field according to the values of sustainability. Considering principles of sustainable development when planning tourism activity is crucial: absence of planning and monitoring has already led to issues in many destinations: overcrowding, pollution, overbuilding, to mention some. Spain, a country with the second most international tourist arrivals in the world (UNWTO 2019) has suffered partly from bad planning and management. The biggest cities in Spain have been on headlines lately after a wave of anti-tourist protests. The locals are raising their voice against the rapid growth of rent prices due to the vastly growing amount of holiday apartments. The rapid growth of prices has been attributed mainly to the lack of monitoring in licence regulation on holiday apartment sector. There are fears by the officials that the anti-tourist protesters will steer away tourists from Spain (BBC 2017). The situation is an example that shows how disregard of sustainable development can backfire by creating problems that hinder the destination from long-term development. (Edgell 2016, 1-14, 30).

Sustainable tourism development can have a great positive impact both on destinations and on the tourism businesses themselves. Sustainable tourism can help local communities to increase their income and quality of life as well as preserve and maintain or clean the environment they are living – leading to more attractive and competitive destinations. Both the locals and the travellers can expand their worldview by creating meaningful inter-

cultural interactions and thus decreasing the possibility of intercultural conflicts in the moment and future. Customers, more interested and educated on sustainability than ever before, are looking for sustainable options, giving market advantage to sustainable companies. Based on these factors, it is certainly in the industry's own interest to strive for sustainable tourism development. (Edgell 2016, 1-14, 30; Camilleri 2012, 155)

3.4.2 CSR and Sustainable Tourism

As companies in the tourism industry have become more aware and educated on the benefits and importance of sustainability, motivated by the financial gain or another factors, an ever-growing number of tourism enterprises have started striving towards sustainable tourism development through CSR programs. Big multinational tourism organizations such as UNWTO and WTTC have also been in the development, robustly supporting sustainable tourism development. Henderson (2007) states that the tourism industry exhibits closer relationship with the environment and society than other industries on average. The huge impact that tourism industry has on its operating environment is amplified by the rapid growth of the industry. Today, it is rather a rule than an exception that big tourism corporations implement CSR strategies and proudly showcase them to ever conscious and demanding consumers. On the following chapter, examples are presented, from small, medium and big operators in the field. (Camilleri 2012, 155-170).

3.4.3 Good CSR Practices in Tourism Industry

In the January of 2015 National Geographic Society, started a program 'Unique Lodges of the World' that gathers tourism properties around the globe together that actively adhere to the principles of sustainable tourism development. National Geographic released an impact report in 2016 where they systematically reviewed the efforts of each of the property in their efforts. (National Geographic 2016, 4-10).

A member of the program, Zafara Camp in Botswana in a partnership with several safari companies are making a co-effort to save critically endangered black rhinos in the area. They are trying to save black rhinos from neighbouring countries as well as push for robust anti-pouching monitoring. Thus far they have been able to save 40 black rhinos from neighbouring countries and the first births of new rhinos have been documented. This development preserves the biodiversity of the area as well as increases the attractiveness of the place for tourists benefiting local resorts and safari companies. This development has contributed at least to the environmental by preserving the indigenous rhino population,

economical pillar, by increasing the attractiveness of the resort for tourists coming to enjoy the vivid wildlife. (National Geographic 2016, 22).

In Tanzania, Rubondo Island Camp, another member of Unique Lodges of the World program has been establishing microenterprise development programs in the local community with their partnering organizations. Some of the project yielded by the development program has led to local market gardens, from where all the vegetables used in the lodge are bought. The lodge, in cooperation with other organizations, is also supporting the local park's chimpanzee habituation project. By far the projects have economically benefited some 2000 local villagers, including women and children, as well as helped to protect biodiversity of the area. (National Geographic 2016, 44).

TUI, the world's leading tourism business, launched TUI Care Foundation in 2016. The foundation's mission is to create positive impact in its destinations worldwide. The positive impact is achieved by the program TUI Foundation runs in its destinations. The projects fall under three categories: empowering young people through education, projecting the natural environment and developing destinations with the local communities. The foundation states that it is striving to create positive social impact through tourism. The foundation is one part of TUI Group's CSR-strategy and is tightly connected to its parent company. (TUI Care Foundation 2019).

Hotel Gayatri, is a boutique hotel, in Bali in the town of Ubud. The very core of hotel's business principle is to provide authentic Balinese heritage experience while retaining purist's attitude to sustainable, ethical as well as cruelty free principles. They try to produce as much as possible their own vegetables and fruits from their own land organically while employing and educating the local workforce in the surrounding community. The products that cannot be produced by themselves are acquired from carefully selected partners that share their values of sustainability. The hotel recycles all its waste, in an environment that is facing big waste management problems. The hotel workers receive a wage above that of the average in the industry. The workers receive help for transportation costs as well as get holidays and monetary help for religious holidays, which helps them maintaining the indigenous culture of Bali. The architecture in the hotel is authentic local style and all the rooms are themed and connected to the Balinese culture. (Gayatri 21 December 2018; Gayatri 2019).

In the Finnish Lapland, Levi – the biggest ski resort in Finland has focused heavily in sustainability. In the end of 2018, the resort received an international environmental ISO-

14001 certification as the first ski resort in the Nordic countries. The 14001 is an internationally recognized certification that requires organizations to conduct good and systematic environmental management systems and is granted and monitored by an external auditor (ASQ 2019). The ski resort is using automatization to be more energy-efficient in managing their ski slopes. They have set up an extensive waste management system that covers the whole resort. They are also constantly making efforts to prevent environmental erosion in the area. In addition to saving monetary saving in energy costs, they have differentiated themselves from competing ski resorts in the Nordics. (Levi 2019).

3.5 Creating Shared Value (CSV)

While CSR is always realized through company's operations and separate philanthropic charity projects do not count as CSR, it rarely modifies the company's core business model. CSR is often considered as an additional effort: opportunity to increase company's profits as well as manage operational risks, with its separate allocated budget, as a response to external pressure points. Nike as an example, started putting emphasis in its transparency and sustainability only after consumer boycotts, and the company is now a model example of a corporation successfully implementing a CSR-strategy. (Harmaala & Jallinoja 2012, Porter 2010, Lepage 2015).

A new concept rose to popular knowledge when professors Porter and Kramer (2011) introduced the concept of Creating Shared Value (CSV) in their Harvard Business Review article. As opposed to CSR, which is often seen as an add-on to company's business operation, in CSV companies solve societal problems with their profitable business models. In CSV model, the increase of the company's operational volume will create both financial and social value, as solving a social issue is in the very core of the business model. Finding and addressing social needs brings *opportunities* for businesses to create both financial and social value and thus getting an advantage in the capitalistic competition and creating social good. In this model the motivation to drive social change comes from inside the company itself as opposed to a CSR in which the motivation for social impact often rises from outside the company and is limited to a finite CSR budget. (Porter & Kramer 2011; British Assessment Bureau 2016, Lepage 2015).

3.6 Social Entrepreneurship

The concept of 'social entrepreneurship' first emerged in the 1980's. In the past 10 – 15 years social entrepreneurship has gained a lot of attention in: practice, educational institutions, governmental institutions and media. The underlying idea in social entrepreneurship

is to tackle social problems by entrepreneurial means. Friedman (2005) describes practitioner of social entrepreneurship as someone who combines a "...business school brain with a social worker's heart". There is not yet consensus of the exact definition of social entrepreneurship and various definitions exist in the academic literature. (Dees 2007, 24; Abu-Saifan 2012, 22).

The sharp rise in interest on social entrepreneurship has been attributed to at least two prominent benefits. Firstly, its innovativeness has been recognized in creating novel solutions to social problems that are increasingly complex in their nature. As opposed to big centralized government initiatives, social entrepreneurship decentralizes the innovation process across big variety of people who can do quick small-scale testing on their ideas and often raise private funding. Secondly, an increasingly tougher financial environment, unprecedented competition, stronger accountability expectations and accumulating social demands has created the need for public sector to be more innovative and entrepreneurs to be socially responsible – creating new roles for both parties. Against this backdrop, social enterprises are perfect mechanisms in the middle ground of the two sectors, combining entrepreneurial innovativeness with social responsibility. (Bacq & Janssen 2011; Guo & Bielefeld 2014, xv-xiii, Dees 2007, 26).

3.6.1 Defining Social Entrepreneurship

There is no consensus of a strict definition nor a clearly defined academic understanding of social entrepreneurship. In their literature review Dacin, Dacin & Matear (2010) found 37 academic definitions for social entrepreneurship. Despite the myriad of different definition, there is a consensus in an academic literature that social entrepreneurial organizations all have solving societal problems as their primary mission and leading motivation. The lack of clear definition hinders the research and if properly defined, social entrepreneurship can become an important stream in the entrepreneurship literature. Scholars are attempting to build a clearer definition on the phenomenon by reviewing and combining the existing literature alongside researching the latest practices in the field. (Sloan, Legrand & Simons-Kaufmann 2014, 52; Abu-Saifan 2012, 22).

After an extensive literature review, Bacq and Jansen (2011, 388) suggested the following definition:

"Social entrepreneurship is the process of identifying, evaluating and exploiting opportunities aiming at social value creation by means of commercial, market-based activities and of the use of a wide range of resources." (Bacq & Jansen 2011, 388).

The definition approaches social entrepreneurship as a set of actions with an underlying motivation to create social good. It does not limit social entrepreneurship based on the type of organization. The definition highlights the underlying motivation behind the action, unlike CSR that does not consider the motivation. The definition states that the action is commercial and market-based, meaning that social entrepreneurship is economic-value creating action, excluding donation-based charitable activity from the definition. The use of wide range of resources stated in the definitions, implies that in social entrepreneurship human and financial resources are acquired from all sectors, mobilized and combined in novel ways to foster the impact and innovation process.

Bacq and Jansen (2011) noticed in their research that 'social entrepreneur' and 'social entrepreneurship organization' (also referred to 'as social entrepreneurial venture (SEV)' or 'social enterprise') often appear in the terminology of social entrepreneurship literature. Due to the lack of common definition, these terms are often used interchangeably with social entrepreneurship, leading to confusion. Bacq and Jansen (2011) specify that 'social entrepreneur' refers to an individual and his/her qualities as the agent of creating social impact through entrepreneurial activities. On the other hand, 'social entrepreneurship organization / SEV / social enterprise' refers to the qualities of organization as an agent of social impact creation, initiated by one individual or a group of individuals. These terms are helpful when examining specific aspects inside the social entrepreneurship but should not be confused with the wider term of social entrepreneurship.

3.6.2 SEV – A Model for Shared Value?

Social enterprises take place in three forms: non-profit, for-profit and a hybrid that combines practices from both models (Dees 2007, 28). Abu-Saifan (2012, 26) provides a useful chart where he places SEVs on the spectrum of entrepreneurship. In the chart, a line is drawn between a charity and a non-profit social enterprise and on the other side of the spectrum between a for-profit social enterprise and a company with a CSR strategy.

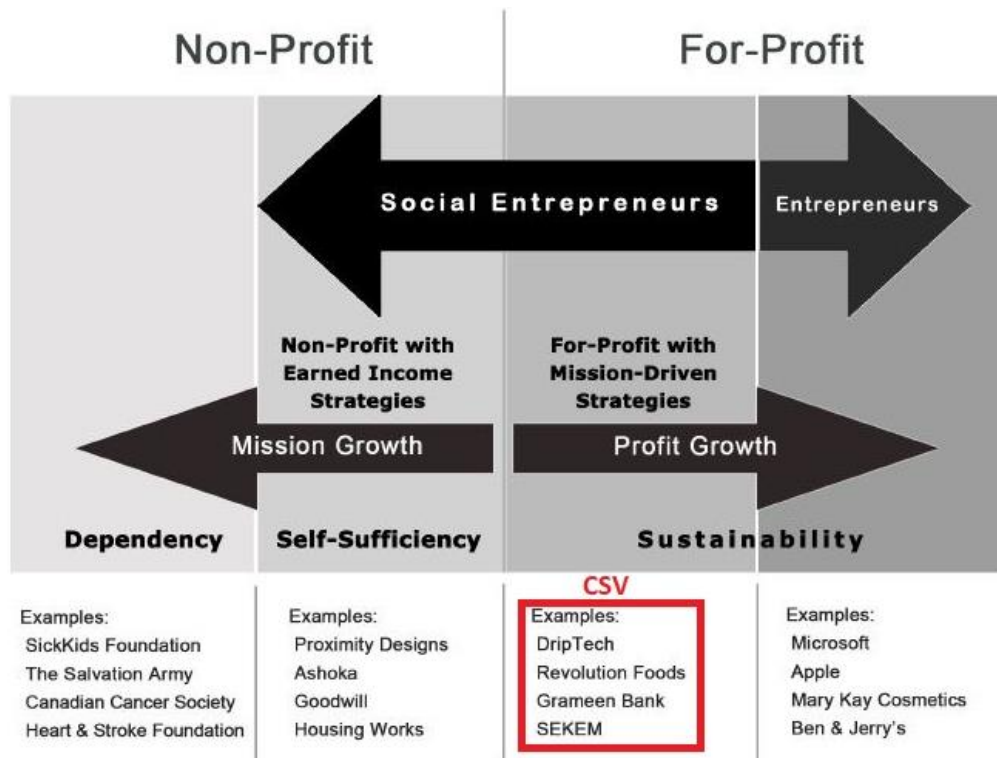


Figure 7. Chart based on Abu Saifan's (2012, 26) depiction of boundaries of social entrepreneurship with CSV-companies highlighted

An organization that relies solely on donations does not classify as a SEV since they should be self-sufficient and generate own income. On the other side of the spectrum: an organization that implements CSR strategy as an add-on without having an impact on its core business model, cannot be categorized as a SEV since they always have the social mission as a central part of the business model and as the core motivation. (Abu Saifan 2012, 26; Bacq & Jansen 2011, 388; Dees 2007, 28).

Porter, co-author of the article introducing Creating Shared Value (CSV), points out in an interview by Driver (2012, 424) that SEVs can be creating shared value (CSV). As CSV means (see 3.6) that company must create both social and financial value, SEVs operating with a non-profit model, creating income solely keep self-sufficiency and focusing only on creating social value is not creating shared value. For-profit SEVs create both – financial and social value and fit inside the definition of CSV.

Bangladesh based Grameen Bank is a for-profit SEV, founded by the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize Winner Muhammad Yunus. The company operates in microfinance, providing credit to the poor who don't have means to access funds. Microfinancing has become one of largest banking services on earth and in addition to the social impact it has, it can gen-

erate profitable opportunities for companies. Grameen Bank has lifted 65% of its 7.5 million borrowers from extreme poverty, while generating profit from its operations. (Dees 2007, 24; Grameen Bank 2019).

Porter points out the potential of SEVs as bridge builders, leading with their example and bringing CSV to the agenda of bigger companies. For instance, the microfinancing sector has now caught the attention of big banks, who have noticed the opportunities it can bring, showcased by the smaller SEVs. (Driver 2012, 425).

Tony's Chocolonely, is a Netherlands based for-profit SEV, producing and selling chocolate. Their core mission is to transfer the chocolate production 100% free of slave-labour. The company has caught attention of the ever-conscious consumers – and has been successful in Netherlands as well as introduced the product to many countries outside the Netherlands. In a panel discussion on sustainable production of cocoa-been, van Zanten (20 February 2019) from Tony's Chocolonely told that the company is now working together with big companies such as Nestlé who until recently have neglected the problems of cocoa-bean production almost completely. Now they are building a system together to track the value chain of cocoa, based on Tony's Chocolonely's model. This showcases Porter's point of how smaller SEVs can be bridge-builders, or as Ynzo van Zanten half-jokingly stated SEVs as being small annoying mosquitos aiming to make the bigger actors in the room to react. (van Zanten 20 February 2019; Tony's Chocolonely 2019).

3.6.3 Social Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Tourism

The rise of social entrepreneurship is reflected on the rising number of social enterprises in the tourism industry. Social tourism enterprises put the values of sustainability as the core of their operations. It is recognized that the tourism industry has the potential to be a major driver of social value creation, thus creating huge possibilities for social entrepreneurship in the field. Especially in the context of developing economies social tourism enterprises are important drivers for economic and cultural development, filling the gap that the absence of governmental support system creates. (Altinay, Sigala & Waligo 2016; de Lange & Dodds 2017, 1977-1992).

In their study, researching the connection between social entrepreneurship and sustainable tourism, de Lange & Dodds (2017) recognized that social entrepreneurship in the tourism field can stimulate the whole industry to become more sustainable. It can happen through: growing the field by introducing new sustainable products, increasing the pressure on existing firms with sustainable innovations and facilitating implementation of social

and environmental regulations. At the time, impact-oriented sustainable tourism is still a niche, and it is become widely acknowledged fact that the industry needs transform into more that direction. Echoing Porter's (2012, in Driver 2012, 425) statement: social enterprises can be bridgebuilders in the transformation. (de Lange & Dodds 2017, 1977-1992).

3.6.4 Good Social Entrepreneurship practices in Tourism Industry

Duara Travels is a for-profit social enterprise operating in the tourism industry. It aims to create positive social and economic impact in rural communities of developing economies in Africa, Asia and Latin America with an underlying long-term aim to shape the income distribution in the tourism industry (see chapter 1.3). Duara Travels has a transparent business model that aims to create social value as well as generate profit. Since the social value is central part of the company, and harder to measure than the financial value, the company has made a social impact research on its activities. The research found that the outcomes of Duara Travels have been mainly positive in the destinations: slightly increased income levels, increased level of English-skills and a satisfaction to showcase own culture were some of the positive impacts revealed by the research. (Vierros 2017, 7-9 & 59-65).

Skwachàys Lodge from Vancouver is a boutique hotel and a social enterprise operating in the hospitality field. Its mission is to support artists from indigenous population and promote and educate people on the culture. The hotel rooms are themed on the aboriginal culture and showcase the art of local indigenous artists. The profits from its accommodation-services go to the housing-unit in the same building that houses local indigenous artists. The hotel also has a gallery that showcases and sells artworks of the artists. The hotel is a good example how combining social mission can bring added value to the business, since the hotel's uniqueness will surely attract consumers. (Skwachàys Lodge 2018).

Juha's guesthouse is located in the one of the poorest towns in Israel - Jisr az-Zarqa. Despite the town's location in the coast of the Mediterranean Sea and between two famous tourist destinations – Netanya and Haifa – the town didn't receive any tourists for a long time, and the local community, comprising of Arab Israelis, was suffering from poverty. In 2014, Juha's guesthouse, a for-profit social enterprise, offering accommodation services was opened as the first guesthouse in the town as a Jewish-Arab private co-venture. The co-founders discovered the added value in providing unique and authentic experience in the non-crowded beaches of Mediterranean. Juha's guesthouse invests in the local community and sources its innovation and workforce from it. The increased amount of tourism

in the village has opened possibilities for other entrepreneurs in the town to open their ventures: creating a positive snowball effect in the town. The guesthouse is investing in programs striving for Arab-Jewish understanding, adding another layer of social value. Recently the town made into the famous Lonely Planet book, showcasing how a social enterprise can spark the development of a whole destination. (Juha's Guesthouse 2018, Hanien 2017).

While CSR-programs seem to be a norm in the tourism industry nowadays, that is not the case with impact-driven social tourism enterprises. Tourism, that puts sustainable development to core of its operations, is still a niece in the industry. Dodds & de Lange (2017) stated the difficulty of finding case examples and data on social tourism enterprises. While researching for case examples, I experienced the same difficulty of finding data, indicating to the small amount and small body of literature. Most of the examples I found are from small and medium enterprises leaving out the big companies out from this development. Looking for future projections, one can come back to Porter's (2012, in Driver 2012, 424) statement of SEVs being disruptors, pacemakers and eventually bridge-builders between creating social value and big companies' sustainability agendas. (Dodds & de Lange 2017, 1977-1992).

4 Strategic Collaboration

This chapter examines strategic collaboration. Due to the heavy focus on tourism industry of this thesis, strategic collaborations will be examined in the context of the tourism industry.

Value of strategic alliance for organizations has been recognized for a long time. The value is especially evident in tourism due to the fragmented and clustery nature of the industry, consisting of several sectors and stakeholders that cannot operate in isolation. Facing an ever-growing amount of pressure to turn towards sustainable practices, the industry and scholars also recognize the value that collaboration can bring in pursuit of sustainable future. (Graci 2013, 39; Reid, Smith & McCloskey 2008, 582; Bramwell & Lane 2000, 1-19)

4.1 Defining Strategic Collaboration

Strategic collaboration is a process in which organizations and/or individuals join their forces to reach goals that cannot be attained by the parties individually. In the process of collaboration, parties gain new possibilities: they share their knowledge and expertise, expand each other's networks and get access to financial and social resources beyond their individual reach. (Graci 2013, 27-28).

Strategic collaboration takes place in many forms, such as: channel partnership, wholesaler partnership, merger and acquisition, marketing, licensing, franchising, philanthropic partnership, etc. (Mäkelä 2010, 32). In tourism research, strategic alliance is mentioned frequently as a common practice of collaboration in the tourism industry.

After reviewing literature on the topic, Pansiri (2005, 1099) suggests a following definition for strategic alliance:

“Strategic alliances are purposive tactical arrangements between two or more independent organisations that form part of, are consistent with participants’ overall strategy, and contribute to the achievement of their strategically significant objectives that are mutual beneficial.” (Pansiri 2005, 1099).

Pansiri's (2005, 1099) definition highlights the mutual benefits gained by the parties that are line with their individual strategic goals. The definition also highlights that the parties in strategic partnership are independent organizations, excluding such partnerships as joint

ventures or mergers from the definition. According to Badart (2017) there are at least three main dimensions to look at in strategic alliances: product and/or technology engagement, joint solution marketing and joint sales engagement.

4.2 Collaboration Process

Motivation of collaboration initiation often lies in a problem that the parties seek to solve but that is too intricate to be solved individually (Gray & Wood 1991). Wang & Fesenmaier (2007) list forces that may bring parties together to start a collaboration. One force is a crisis that affects both parties and forces them to find a solution to tackle the problem. The crisis can come in a form of economic or technological change in the field that parties cannot address individually. Partnerships may arise also from informal networks that already exist between parties. A visionary leader might see the potential in partnering with another organization, being the trigger for partnership. Alternatively, a third-party organization, commonly referred to as a bridging organization, might see the potential yield of the partnership and bring the parties together. (Wang & Fesenmaier 2007).

A big body of research exists on the process of collaboration. Common approach on the topic is to depict an evolution process of a partnership. Many authors suggest frameworks of evolution, commonly referred to as 'life cycle models'. After reviewing several life cycle models and conducting a case study Caffyn (2000, 226) suggests a six-phase life cycle model in tourism collaborations. (see image 13234r43t).

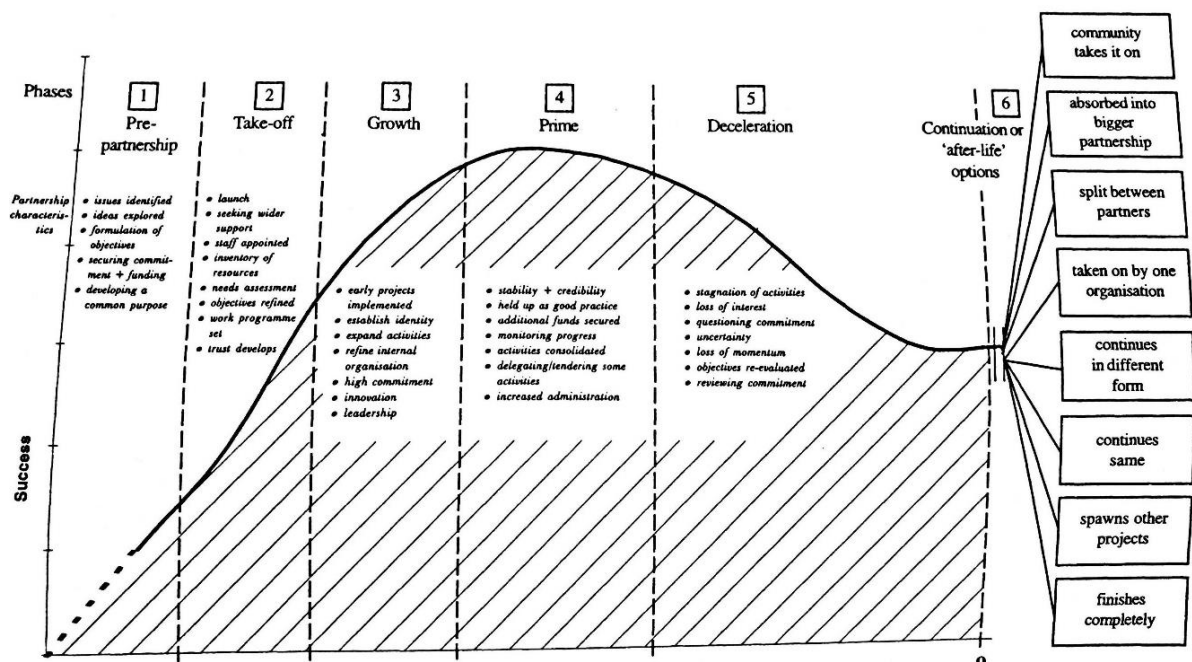


Figure 8. Tourism partnership life cycle model (Caffyn 2000, 226)

In Caffyn's model (2000, 226), first comes a pre-partnership phase. In this stage partners identify issues, explore ideas and develop a common purpose. The parties must fully understand the nature of the process: agree on the problem, underlying philosophy of solution, common objectives and purpose. The second phase is a take-off stage: in this stage partnership is launched formally – official contracts written, and objectives are defined more precisely. A project manager might be appointed, and the trust should be solid between partners. The third stage is growth stage. In the growth stage first co-projects are implemented, best practices are explored, and the partnership begins to build its own identity. (Caffyn 2000, 225-229)

Fourth phase in the model is a prime-phase: success has been made and possible additional funding secured due to the achievements. The partnership can be ended after this stage. If it continues, it enters, the fifth, deceleration-phase. In this stage the partnership is starting to stagnate, or uncertainties will occur. The partnership can be terminated officially in this stage. Alternatively, objectives and practices can be re-calibrated, leading to partnership continuing successfully. If the partnership survives, the sixth-phase will be continuum phase and if it didn't, it is an after-life phase. On sixth stage, the partnership faces eight possible routes to follow on, such as partnership being terminated, continuing the same, absorbed into bigger partnership or some other party taking the lead of partnership. (Caffyn 2000, 225-229).

Life cycle models don't often take into consideration the evolving nature of partnership. The partnership is constantly impacted by external, internal, and inter-organizational factors. The practice and structure of the partnership change constantly when best practices are pointed out on the course of partnership. External forces, such as changes in political practices or changes in funding might affect the partnership. For the partnership to be successful, the parties involved be adaptive and prepared for changes. (Reid & al. 2008, 583).

Trust between the parties is also an important factor leading to successful partnerships. The trust evolves from the interactions between the parties. Trust increases when the parties perceive each other's actions reliable, efficient and competent. Before the partnership, existing networks and relationship affect perception of each other's credibility and legitimacy. Perception of stakeholders' role and power in the partnership also effect on how the trust will develop. (Kohler & Park 2019, 100).

4.3 Benefits of collaboration

Collaborations arise from parties having a common issue that can be solved better by joining forces. The collaboration process allows parties to pool their knowledge, share expertise, capital and other resources. This leads to more effective use of resources, decisions made based on bigger body of information, that in turn may lead to more effectiveness and innovation. All this brings competitive advantage to collaboration parties in a fast-changing environment that requires constant innovation to in competition. The term 'coopetition' is prevalent in the tourism industry. It is a combination of 'cooperation' and 'competition' and refers to competitors cooperating to get a mutual advantage. (Graci 2013, 27-28; Edgell 2016, 123).

When creating public policies or developing destinations, the involvement of each affected party helps to predict and prevent conflicts; hearing the viewpoint from every party helps to predict possible pitfalls. When looking for ways to prevent these pitfalls, the pool of knowledge with a wide variety of viewpoints, helps to source the best possible solution. When creating and deciding on governmental policies, it is seen as democratic practice and even a moral obligation to involve the parties that will be affected to the development process. (Bramwell & Lane 2000, 1-19; Graci 2013, 27-28)

When focusing on sustainable tourism developments, the collaboration becomes increasingly cross-industrial and governmental due to the scale and complexity of sustainability issues. The involvement of the community is widely recognized as a gold standard practice when developing sustainable destination. Involving local community helps to find practices that create real benefit for locals and enables the authentic presentation of local culture. When the local community is involved and benefit from tourism, the positive development continues, and initiatives start to arise from the community. It is important to have an equal stance between the organizations and communities; having a dialogue between the parties rather than one party commanding the other. (Bramwell & Lane 2000, 1-19; Sloan & al. 2014, 54).

4.4 Sustainable Travel Partnerships in Global South

In the beginning of 2019, the Finnish Association for Fair Tourism (FAFT) released comprehensive guidelines on promoting fair travel to the global south. The term global south commonly refers to less wealthy nations and is used to replace terms such as 'developing' or 'less developed' that often carry a divisive connotation. The guideline includes a section that guides tour operators providing trips to the global south in building fair partnerships. (The Finnish Association for Fair Tourism 2019).

To build fair partnerships in global south, it is important to

- Understand the local culture and customs, by researching and preferably visiting the destination
 - Ensure that the local population will financially benefit from the partnership
 - Recognize your role and potential in promoting sustainable development in the destination
 - Actively monitor that the principles of sustainable development are realized in your and your partners' operations
 - Promote dialogue and mutual learning as equal partners
 - Commit to long-term sustainable partnerships that leave space for learning and iteration rather than short and seasonal contracts
 - Always respect human rights, dignity and equality in operations, encounters and communications
 - Adopt a mindset of constant learning, reflection and re-education
- (The Finnish Association for Fair Tourism 2019)

The guideline released by The Finnish Association for Fair Tourism (2019) gives directions for individuals travelling to the destinations of global south as well as guidelines for how to communicate about travel in global south. The two other dimensions as left out from closer examination in this thesis due to the focus on partnerships.

5 Process Description

This chapter is a detailed description of the project conducted. The chapter is divided into sub-chapters that each represent a phase in the project. The sub-chapters are formed as following: Firstly, my initial plan and goals for the phase are described. Secondly, detailed description of the action that took place is described. Finally, each phase is reflected against the original plan and goals.

5.1 Receiving Commission

Plan: My desire was to write an operational thesis that is related to sustainable development. I learn by doing and enjoy in engaging in real challenges. On the course of university studies, I have grown an interest in sustainable development. Thus, it was concluded that the best way to combine operationality and sustainability would be to write the thesis for a company operating in the field of sustainable tourism. The aim was to reach out to companies that fill the criteria and inquire about possibility to do conduct an operational project.

What happened: Duara Travels fit well into the criteria of sustainable tourism. I reached out to the co-founder of the company by phone call. The co-founder welcomed the idea of doing an operational project. On the first phone call a task was given to me to develop ideas for the company. Those development ideas would be presented to another co-founder who eventually became my contact-person from the company for the thesis project.

I presented each development idea to the company-contact in a meeting that we set up. We discussed each development idea and I got the company's take on them. Eventually the topic to focus further on was the partnership development. It was chosen based on the company's need as well as my personal interest. Two meetings followed up after choosing the main topic where we would brainstorm ideas and form the eventual boundaries of the project.

Reflection: My plan to do an operational thesis connected to sustainable development was reached. I consider this phase to be successful. Duara Travels is a rather new company with a novel business model, which further increased my satisfaction for the project.

5.2 Project Plan

A proverb states: “Failing to plan is planning to fail”, and thus the project started with writing a project plan (see appendix 1). Project plan is an essential part of any successful project. Kerzner (2009, 411–414) lists four basic reasons for project planning: to reduce uncertainty, to improve efficiency, to obtain a better understanding of the objectives and lastly to be able to monitor the work.

Plan: I aimed to find a comprehensive project plan template from online resources and to spend approximately three days in filling it. My goal was to define carefully the boundaries of the project and leave some room for flexibility within the boundaries. Since I would be going to a new environment and do a pilot project, it was important to leave room for changes in the project plan.

The primary benefits I was aiming from a project plan were to

- Evaluate the size of the project by defining the work required
- Create an order for the tasks to be completed in
- Create a timetable for the project in order to monitor the process and stay in schedule
- Predict and prepare for the pitfalls in the project
- Create transparency to communicate the project to necessary stakeholders

What Happened: On the course of browsing several project plan templates, I came into a conclusion that any of the browsed ones wasn't suitable for my project nor my preferences. I decided to take elements from several templates and guides to build my own my project plan. On the following paragraphs I will briefly explain the different parts that I included in my project plan.

The project plan starts with project summary. The summary states the problem that the company is facing, hypothesis on how the problem could be solved by the project and description of the project. The aims of the project are divided in to short-term aims and long-term aims.

After summarizing the project, I have listed milestones that show the process of the project. Under each milestone, tasks are listed that need to be completed in order to reach that milestone. Based on dividing the project into milestones and smaller tasks I created a project flow chart. The flow chart visualises the order of the milestones and interdependencies between different tasks.

Schedule for the project is depicted in a form of a Gantt chart. Gantt chart is a horizontal bar chart used to visualise the project plan over time (TeamGantt 2018). On the left-hand

side can be seen all the milestones to be reached. The bars that correspond to each milestone show the time on a timeline dedicated to each task.

Despite the rather small scale of the project, I included a visual communication plan. The plan states all the stakeholders in the project, the preferred communication channels between the stakeholders and well as the planned frequency of communication.

The last final part of the project plan is a risk analysis. Since the project has an experimental nature, I found it essential to include a risk analysis. The risk analysis was created in a form of a chart stating possible risk scenarios and an evaluation of their probability and consequences. Three different levels are used to evaluate both the probability and consequence: low, medium and high. A prevention and mitigation strategy for each of the risk scenario listed.

Reflection: The project plan brought the me more comprehensive understanding of the amount of task to be completed in the project. This helped me in drafting the schedule. The act of dissecting the project into milestones and smaller tasks transformed the project into a more manageable entity. During the project work, I found the plan as a good guideline on the direction to be taken as well as measurement of advancement. The schedule was not followed precisely, and some adaptations had to be made. Nevertheless, the plan worked as an indicator of direction to be followed.

5.3 Operational Part 1: Establishing Base

This chapter describes the first operational part of the project. The first part includes acquiring base information about the destination and Duara's operations in there. Furthermore, it includes creating visual communication materials for the support of further steps in the project.



Figure 9. Operational part 1: milestones and tasks

5.3.1 Mapping Out the Operational Field and Potential Partners

Plan: The first planned task was to acquire knowledge on the operational nature in the destination. Along this task, the plan was to gather a list of potential partner companies in the destination. Initial understanding of the nature of operational field was to be gathered by making observations on the surroundings as well as talking with locals and travelling foreigners. Since values of sustainability are at the very core of Duara's operations, the potential partner companies gathered in list would have to share these values. The potential partner companies were limited into destination-based organizations such as: tour providers, travel agencies, hotels, guest houses and NGO's.

What happened: The first two weeks in the destination were spent adjusting to the new environment and gathering initial insights. The first insights were that most tour sales happened in small stands that were scattered around tourist areas. All of the stands looked fairly similar and the values of sustainability and responsibility were rarely communicated. The marketing was very straightforward and seemed to compete with affordable prices.

During the stay in the destination, I engaged in several discussions with travellers and locals alike. The travellers shared their experiences on tours participated and hotels stayed in. Based on these conversations, the notion that sustainability was not the top priority with many operators was strengthened. In the discussion with local people, my understanding of Balinese culture was widened. From the discussions, an understanding that the culture seems to be rooted in community and family was gained. A dozen recommendations of organizations that I should be contacting was received in the conversations.

After the first two weeks of adjusting in the destination, I started to do online research. The search terms included following: 'sustainable tourism Bali', 'sustainable tourism Indonesia', 'sustainable tourism South-East Asia', 'village tourism Bali', 'sustainable hotel Bali', 'ecological tourism Bali', 'ecological tourism Indonesia', 'social travel Bali. On course of doing the online research, it proved that the research to seek sustainable partners was more effective online. Opposed to the original plan of limiting the research for destination-based actors, I started to research sustainable foreign-based companies. The foreign-based companies were travel agencies and trip organizers providing trips from their home country, mainly Australia and New Zealand, to Indonesia. After a discussion with my company contact person, a decision was made that they could be added to the list of potential partners.

The following table depicts the number of organizations included in the list of potential partners. The table is divided into categories based on the nature of the company. The categories are: local travel agency / tour operator, international travel agency / tour operator, local hotel / resort, local NGO. Some companies gathered on the list did not fit into any of the mentioned categories. Thus, they were gathered under a category of 'others.' Companies under the last category of 'others' were organizations such as: governmental organizations, wellness and meditation studios as well as co-working places.

Table 1. Number of potential partners gathered by category

| Category | Amount |
|---|---------------|
| Local Travel Agency / Tour Operator | 11 |
| International Travel Agency / Tour Operator | 13 |
| Local Hotel / Resort | 10 |
| Local NGO | 3 |
| Others | 6 |
| | 43 |

The category of 'International travel agencies / tour operators' included the biggest number of companies. The second category with the second highest number was 'local travel agencies and/ or tour operators.' The third biggest category was 'local hotel / resorts.' and the category with the fewest number organizations was 'local NGO's.' The category of 'others' included six companies.

Reflection: Comparing to the original plan, the adjustment phase and potential partner mapping look longer than planned. The phase took four weeks, being the longest single task in the project. During the four weeks, elemental understanding of the destination and operational culture was achieved.

Against my personal assumption that there would be plenty of companies based on sustainable values, it was rather difficult to find operators based on sustainable practices. In the initial phase of mapping my physical surroundings, I felt at times rather desperate due to the lack of potential partners. As extended my research online, the task however got much easier.

I did not state a number of companies that I aimed to gather in the list of potential partners. The number in the list ended up being 43 companies. Especially after the initial phase of not finding any potential partners, I am personally pleased with the number.

5.3.2 Increasing Knowledge about Duara and its Operation in Bali

This sub-chapter describes the task of increasing knowledge on Duara's operations in Bali.

Plan: The plan was to increase knowledge on Duara's operation in Bali by reading material available online as well as going to the destinations. The material to be read was village information provided in Duara's website, customer reviews posted by Duara's customers as well as reading customers' personal blog posts on their Duara experience in Bali. It was planned that a one-day visit to a destination as well as a three night-visit, experiencing the full customer journey, to another destination would be made.

What happened: Since Duara Travel's websites has extensive information on all their destination countries and destination villages, a throughout reading of them was made. The information includes facts on location, accessibility and extensive description of the local lifestyle and culture. Duara Travels collects actively feedback from their customers which can be found from the website. Duara's customers have also written a big body of personal blogs on experiences. Reading the material brought many insights of how the concept look liked from the customer's point of view. The customer's point of view was extremely valuable to study since all the information I had gathered before that point had come from inside the company itself.

As planned, trips to the village destinations were made, to further grow my knowledge on Duara Travels in Bali. First, a one-day visit Duara's Sabtu village in Gianyar region was made. On the visit I spent time with the village contact person as well as the host family. I was able to get first hand experiences from them from the local's point of view, which was highly valuable. Furthermore, I got to see and feel the premises, which was a much more widened my understanding of the place and concept hugely. It was a holistic and eye-opening experience to be physically in the village destinations, that could not have been achieved by reading and examining pictures. Furthermore, I learned a lot about the local culture and worldview by engaging in a long discussion with the English-speaking village contact person, who even showed me a local ceremony in the village temple.

The second trip was made to another Duara's destination in the village of Perasi. This time, the experience was done fully with the customer role, following the normal customer journey that any other Duara's customer would take. I booked the stay online, discussed with the village contact person and stayed three nights in the village with a local family.

Reflection: The goal to get more familiar with Duara's concept was certainly achieved as a result of the reading and physical visits. The reading acted as a good basis, but the biggest value came from visiting the destinations. After becoming more familiar with the concept, other customers' experiences as well as experiencing it myself, it was much easier to communicate the concept further. The knowledge gained also helped to steer the direction to be taken with potential customers. I could evaluate better from the list of potential partners, which kind of companies would fit the best to be partners.

5.3.3 Production of Communication Material

This sub-chapter describes the process of creating communication material (see appendix 2 and 3). The material was created to support the partnership acquisition by acting as a support when communicating Duara's concept to the potential partners. In addition, it would act as marketing material to handed to potential customers.

Plan: The plan was to produce a power point presentation for the meetings, posters and flyers to be handed out as well as stickers. It was planned that I would create the content to the material and the design would be made by the company contact person. The desired benefit was to communicate Duara's concept more effectively, help to show the brand image of Duara Travels, build trust between the company and potential partners as well as to be physical marketing material to be handed out.

What Happened: The process of creating the material ended up being rather fast. The content for the material was compiled mainly from the existing content that were found I Duara's other presentations. some contextual edits were done. The company contact person is responsible for the visual image of Duara and is a highly skilled graphic designer. Thus, she edited the content into the design quickly and with very high standard. The stickers were given to me before I went to the destination. The rest was sent via email when I was in the destination and the physical material was printed out in the destination.

Reflection: The goal of creating the communication material was achieved. The benefits predicted in the planning section were also mainly achieved. When meeting with potential partners, the material acted as a good visual support, simultaneously conveying Duara's brand image. The posters, flyers and stickers acted mainly as marketing material, and I handed them out to people. The high quality of the design was noticed by potential partners as well as potential customers – a lot of appraisal was made of the company's visual

image. Since Duara is a small and unknown company, this built a much-needed trust and legitimacy.

5.4 Operational Part 2: Creating the Connection

This chapter describes the second operational part of the project. The second part consists of establishing connection with the potential partner companies by utilizing the contact list created in the first operational part and setting up meetings with potential partners to discuss the partnership proposal.

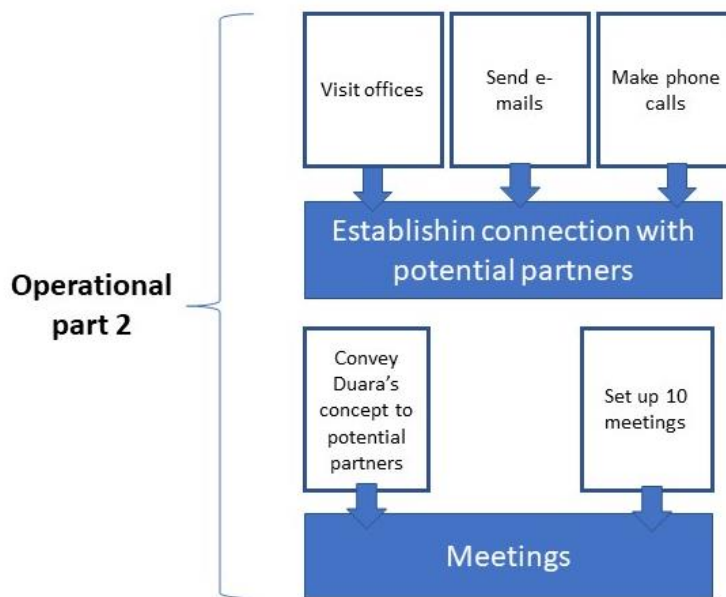


Figure 10. Operational part 2: milestones and tasks

5.4.1 Establishing Connection

Before setting up the meetings, a connection is established with potential partners.

Plan: The first attempt to establish connection with potential partners was sending a partnership proposal e-mail. To reduce the workload, a template (appendix 4.) would be created before sending the emails. The goal of this phase was to receive 20 responses from potential partner organisations.

What happened:

The list of potential partners compiled in the first part included 43 potential partner companies. After further researching the companies on the list some companies were left out

and not contacted. Some organizations were left out from the list due to the lack of evidence of real sustainability effort. After gaining more knowledge on Duara's operations and concept, some companies were left out due to the perceived incompatibility with Duara's concept. Some companies were left out due to having a different target customer group. The table below lists the number of companies contacted from the initial list.

Table 2. Number of potential partners contacted

| Category | Contacted / On list |
|---|----------------------------|
| Local Travel Agency / Tour Operator | 8 / 11 |
| International Travel Agency / Tour Operator | 13 / 13 |
| Local Hotel / Resort | 4 / 10 |
| Local NGO | 1 / 3 |
| Other | 4 / 6 |
| | 30 / 43 |

After having the final list of companies to be contacted, the first set of emails were sent. If a response was not achieved within 14 days, a remainder email was sent. Some of the companies that I approached were based near my place of stay in the destination and I went to their physical offices to inquire if a response was not received. I purchased credits on Skype to call international phone calls to parties operating from abroad who had not responded to the first email. On the table below is the number of connections established. A connection in this context means a reply to the email.

Table 3. Number of connections established with potential partners

| Category | Connection / Contacted |
|---|-------------------------------|
| Local Travel Agency / Tour Operator | 4 / 8 |
| International Travel Agency / Tour Operator | 4 / 13 |
| Local Hotel / Resort | 2 / 4 |
| Local NGO | 1 / 1 |
| Other | 1 / 4 |
| | 12 / 30 |

From the 30 companies reached out to, eventually 12 responded. The responses after the first set of emails was very low and majority of the answers came after approaching the organizations again.

The email account used for the project was a temporary account with Duara's domain. Due to the few responses received after the first round of emails, a suspicion arose that the mails sent from the temporary account ended up in receivers' trash folders. I tested this assumption with a number of my acquaintances and the result was that some email hosts sorted the mails that I had sent to the trash folder. Nevertheless, I had received 12 answers and after discussing with my contact person, a decision was made that I would focus on building a relation with them. The contact information of companies that have not responded was saved in the shared folder to be potentially used in future project by Duara staff.

Reflection: As was predicted in the plan, the e-mail template saved a lot of time and effort when sending the emails. It acted also as a good structure with all the necessary information to be sent. The goal of establishing 20 connection was not met, with the final number being 12. This number could have raised by solving the email problem mentioned or being active with calling the companies after the first set of emails sent. This was a good learning point of the importance of active engagement by all communications methods available.

5.4.2 Meetings

After establishing connection with 12 potential partners, the next phase was to try to set up and attend meetings with them.

Plan: The goal stated in the project plan was to set up and attend 10 meetings with potential partners. The preferred method was face-to-face meetings and if this was not possible a Skype or telephone meeting would be proposed. The benefits of meetings that were strived for were building trust and legitimacy, being able to explain the rather new concept individually and discuss how a potential partnership would look like based on the nature of each company.

What Happened: As the e-mail responses started coming, some parties immediately agreed for a meeting and a place and date was agreed on. Some parties on the other hand immediately let know that they were not interested in partnership. The declinations were justified by reason such as having different focus or different target customer group. Some stated that the company was still too small and would be interested in partnership once the company has potentially grown more. Some companies asked for more information after the first approach. After explaining the concept more throughout manner and

answering to questions wither a meeting was set up or a message was received that they are not interested in partnership.

The end result was six meetings. Most of the meetings happened face-to-face with only one happening through Skype due to the company being based abroad. The face-to-face meetings happened mostly in the potential partners' offices with one taking place in a cafeteria. The following table depicts with whom the meetings took place and the date and place of the meetings.

Table 4. Meetings with potential partners

| | Company | Meeting Place / Date |
|----|---|--|
| 1. | Local Travel Agency / Tour Operator (1) | Company offices, Sanur, Bali / 21.11 |
| 2. | International Travel Agency / Tour Operator (1) | Online, Skype / 23.11 |
| 3. | Local Travel Agency / Tour Operator (2) | Company offices, Ubud, Bali / 24.11 |
| 4. | Local Travel Agency / Tour Operator (3) | Company offices, Sanur, Bali / 26.11 |
| 5. | Local Hotel / Resort (1) | Hotel premises, Ubud, Bali / 28.11 + 18.12 |
| 6. | Local Travel Agency / Tour Operator (4) | Cafeteria, Sanur, Bali / 29.11 |

Four companies that I met up with are Indonesian-based medium or big travel agencies. One company is an abroad based travel agency and one company an Ubud-based boutique hotel. The meetings lasted approximately one hour and happened in a relatively short time-period: the first taking place on 21 November 2019 and the last one on 29 November 2019.

All the six followed mostly a similar course: Firstly, everyone in the meetings introduced themselves. Sometimes the potential partner companies had more than one representative in the meeting. Then, I started by introducing Duara Travels: the company's history, values, business model and concept and the current focus. In this part, the power point presentation created earlier helped greatly. After telling about Duara Travels, the other party's representatives told about their company, concept and current focus. After I presented the proposed partnership model (see appendix 5.), which followed with a free dis-

cussion on if the company had interest in partnering with Duara Travels and how the potential partnership would look like. The discussion often also involved topics such as general tourism development in Bali and sustainable tourism development in Bali. The meetings ended in summing up what had we had been discussing and stating the following steps.

Reflection: The goal stated in the plan to set up 10 meetings was not met. However, reflecting on the 12 connection that I established, 6 of them lead to a meeting.

The benefits strived for from meetings were mostly achieved. Since Duara Travels is a new company with a novel concept, it was helpful to meet the companies and showcase that Duara Travels is a legitimate company with a potential concept and business model. The concept was not fully understood from the initial email, so meeting up with the parties helped in conveying Duara's concept and business model. Since every potential partner worked in different ways, meeting and discussing face to face was a good way to showcase that there were many ways to gain mutual benefit from partnership. The agility of Duara Travels was understood by the potential partners.

In the first meetings I was rather nervous due to the new nature of the situations. Despite this, the meetings went rather well and as I experienced more meetings, I started to become more confident. The meetings provided me with professional knowledge having learned how the business meeting usually goes and gaining insight from the industry professionals

5.5 Operational Part 3: Sealing the Partnerships

The third operational part of the project was agreeing on partnership.



Figure 11. Operational part 3: milestone and task

Plan: The goal in the project plan was to sign one partnership project during the project. Preferably the partnership contract would be signed in destination.

What Happened: Majority of the meetings held resulted in further steps being agreed on. I took actively notes during the meetings and uploaded them on the company folder. The next steps agreed on are stated in the following table.

Table 5. tähän joku kiva otsikko

| | Company | Meeting outcome / next steps |
|----|---|---|
| 1. | Local Travel Agency / Tour Operator (1) | - Interested in partnership → Tries Duara as a customer - further actions based on the experience. |
| 2. | International Travel Agency / Tour Operator (1) | - Interested in partnership; marketing and sales → New connection after reflecting the meeting |
| 3. | Local Travel Agency / Tour Operator (2) | - Not interested in partnership: different target customer segment → Will contact themselves if any changes mind |
| 4. | Local Travel Agency / Tour Operator (3) | - Interested in partnership Tries Duara as a customer → further actions based on the experience. |
| 5. | Local Hotel / Resort (1) | - Interested in partnership → Second meeting in person → Further discussion on e-mail |
| 6. | Local Travel Agency / Tour Operator (4) | - Interested in partnership → Further discussion on e-mail |

Five of the six companies met up with were interested in partnership. The company that was not interested stated that their target customer segment is different, and they do not see that a partnership would yield much benefits for either of the parties. Two Bali-based travel agencies / tour operators wanted to try Duara's village experience themselves and decide on the partnership based on this experience. One party, international travel agency was very interested in partnership and suggested content marketing partnership in addition. A Local hotel was very interested in sales partnership and a second face-to-face meeting was held with them. After the second meeting, correspondence is continuing via email due to the departure from the destination. One local travel agency was interested in partnership with Duara Travels, but after a discussion with my contact person, we decided that the company would not be a good fit for Duara.

At the time of the writing no partnership contract has been signed and the discussions are still ongoing. Due to a personal time limit, the correspondence has been transferred to Duara staff and the project has ended on my part.

Reflection: The goal of signing one partnership deal was not been achieved. The negotiations turned out to be lengthier and more complicated than I initially thought and due to my personal time constraints, a deal was not signed in the project. However, at the time of writing the discussions are still ongoing and could result a deal being signed. I am disappointed that the goal was not achieved, but still pleased that a deal might be signed.

5.6 Final Product: Building the Guideline

This chapter discusses the essential findings used for building the final product. The findings are based on the insights gathered from the literature review and the project conducted. The insights used for the final product will be listed and categorized.

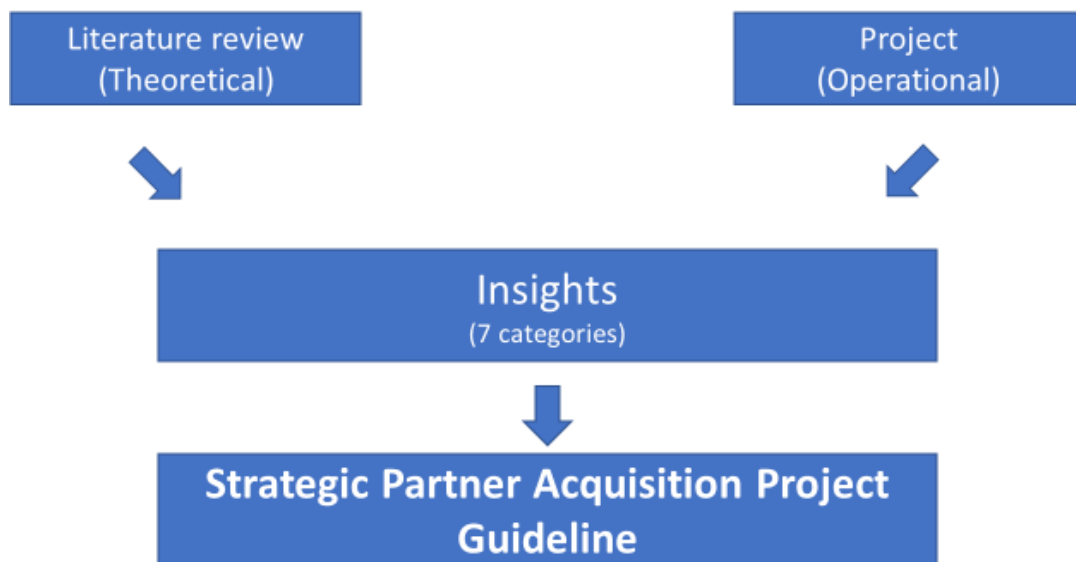


Figure 12. The process of building the final product

The guideline (see appendix 6.) is built with an assumption that the goes to the destination. It is rather general on purpose to be fit for adaptation based on the destination. The guideline uses a simple division based on the timeline of the project and is divided into three parts: Before the destination, in the destination and after the destination. The guideline attached is the first version and I welcome future users to improve it based on new insights.

5.6.1 Planning, Measuring and Reflecting

The benefits of planning are well established in the project management literature. The essential benefits include reducing overall uncertainty, obtaining better understanding of

objectives, improving efficiency and creating a base of project monitoring. The author's experience in the project is in line with the literature confirming the benefits planning.

The planning builds a good base to project measurement and reflection. In order to evaluate if the project is going into right direction and has been successful, it is good to set milestones and success criteria in the planning section which can be reflected later. Reflection after project completion is also important in order to transfer the knowledge gained in the project to be used in further operations. The completion of points below ensure that a project worker gets the benefits of planning, measuring and reflecting.

Before in Destination

- List milestones to be achieved in project
- Dissect milestone into small tasks
- Place milestones on a timeline; set deadlines
- Set success criteria; e.g. 50 connections, 20 meetings, 2 deals, etc.
- Draft a project plan, based on the milestones

In Destination

- Track your progress and reflect on project plan

After in Destination

- Evaluate success reflecting on the project plan
- List issues learned
- Make suggestions for future direction, practices and projects

5.6.2 Increase Knowledge on Destination

This category focuses general learning on the destination. It includes such points as learning on: the role of tourism in destination, local customs and culture, essentials of local language and history of the destination. The author found this learning extremely helpful in the destination. Learning about culture from locals and literature helps to understand the point of view of potential partners. Furthermore, knowing about local culture and simple vocabulary helps to build trust between parties. The Finnish Association for Fair Tourism (2019) joins in this conclusion by emphasizing learning as an important part in building fair partnerships. Thus, the following points are recommended to take in order to gain learning.

Before in Destination

- Read news articles, travel blogs, related social media content, Duara customer reviews, etc. on destination
- Contact Duara contact-person and discuss the project (pay for his/her time)

- Discuss with people who have visited the destination
- Learn essentials of local culture and language
- Read books on destination / country / continent (fiction and/or non-fiction)

In Destination

- Observe with curious attitude and take notes
- Discuss and ask from local people
- Continue active reading on destination

5.6.3 Internal Company Communication

In project management literature, failure in communication is listed as one of the common project pitfalls. Thus, the guideline created has several points that focus on creating a smooth and effective practices in internal company communication.

The author included an internal communication plan as part of the project plan. The best practices found from the plan in terms of internal communication has been the creation of a shared project folder as well as deciding on regular Skype-meeting time. The shared folder makes managing and sharing project folders easier. The regular Skype meetings were a good channel to report on the project progress, share problems and pitfalls and brainstorm on the following steps and overcoming pitfalls. In addition, face-to-face meetings before and after in destination were found to be an effective communication method. They provided a possibility for planning and reflecting as well as knowledge transfer between the company members. The listed steps below help in creating good internal communication practices.

Before in Destination

- Create a shared folder for Duara travels staff in a cloud service platform: upload contact list, reports, communication material, etc.
- Meet up with the team: present plan and receive feedback
- Agree on regular Skype meetings, e.g. every 2 weeks: report on progress, reflect together and brainstorm on further action

In Destination

- On regular Skype meetings: report on progress, reflect together and brainstorm on further action
- Update notes on company cloud folder

After in Destination

- Meet with the team: summarize trip, share learning points and contemplate further action

5.6.4 Networking

On course of the project, networking was found to be one of the most essential success factors for partnership building. The issue of networking was briefly discussed in the literature that I reviewed but the biggest insight came from experiential base. When in destination, discussions, often unexpectedly, would result in new leads or insights. In the case of this project, I found that there are many entrepreneurial communities in the destination. The communities organize many professional events that one can search on several platforms, one being social media platform Facebook. I personally joined a co-working space that made it easy to find the community and events. Thus, it is recommended also in the guideline. The ability to network requires a personal willingness from the project worker to be active and find the people.

Before in Destination

- Join destination based entrepreneurial social media groups and introduce your project

In Destination

- Actively engage with locals and expats in destination
- Be active on social media; join groups and look for related events
- Join a local co-working space and attend their events

5.6.5 Practicalities

This chapter gathers practical actions that support the project work. The points were figured out while doing the piloting project. These points came into realization often through trial and error.

Before in Destination

- Buy flexible flight tickets – for unexpected schedule changes in project
- Purchase Skype credits for affordable foreign phone calls

In Destination

- Rent a scooter or use a ride sharing application for affordable transportation to get to meetings
- Purchase a local sim-card

5.6.6 Partner Relations and Trust Building

This category gathers points related to the very core of the project. The partnership building and trust building are highly connected. As Kohler and Park (2019, 100) describe:

trust building is an essential factor when building partnerships. The points gather give direction from the initial phase of mapping out the partners to communication and contract negotiating.

Before in Destination

- Search for potential partners online
- Draft a template of email to be sent to potential partners – find example template on shared folder
- Prepare contact cards, posters, flyers and power point presentation (prints in destination)
- Start contacting potential partners found online

In Destination

- Meet potential partners preferably in person
- Dress according to the local business etiquette in meetings
- Use power point presentation as a visual support in meetings
- Hand out contact card and other visual material
- Inform about the length of your stay in destination
- After meetings, send an e-mail summary of issues discussed and next steps to be taken

After in Destination

- In case of ongoing partnership building – keep active communication via e-mail or skype
- Prefer that same person stays touch with potential partner – if not, let other party know of the change

5.6.7 Personal Wellbeing

Since the project worker is a main driving factor in the project, it is essential to take care of his/her wellbeing. Despite the careful planning, there are many uncontrollable and unpredictable aspects in projects, that make the project worker prone to stress and anxiousness. For the project to thrive, the project worker must drive. Thus, I have seen in important to include aspects on personal wellbeing to the final guideline. Under this chapter, points are gathered that helped me in the pilot-project to take care of my wellbeing as well as insights of what might have helped more are included.

Before in Destination

- Make sure that the project schedule is not too tight and leave space for rest

In Destination

- Adjust and settle to the new destination in the beginning of the trip
- Enjoy the local culture and make friends
- Share your experiences and possible troubles with a fellow human being

After in Destination

- Throw a party to celebrate your successful trip

6 Discussion

This chapter assesses the success of the project by reflecting on the success criteria set at the beginning of the project. After the assessment, suggestions for future projects and focuses for Duara Travels are given. Finally, an estimation of personal learning is made.

6.1 Project Success

Project success is assessed by reflecting if the success criteria stated at beginning of the project have been met. Each success criterion is analysed separately, and justifications are given. The assessment reflecting each criterion on if it has been achieved, partly achieved or not achieved.

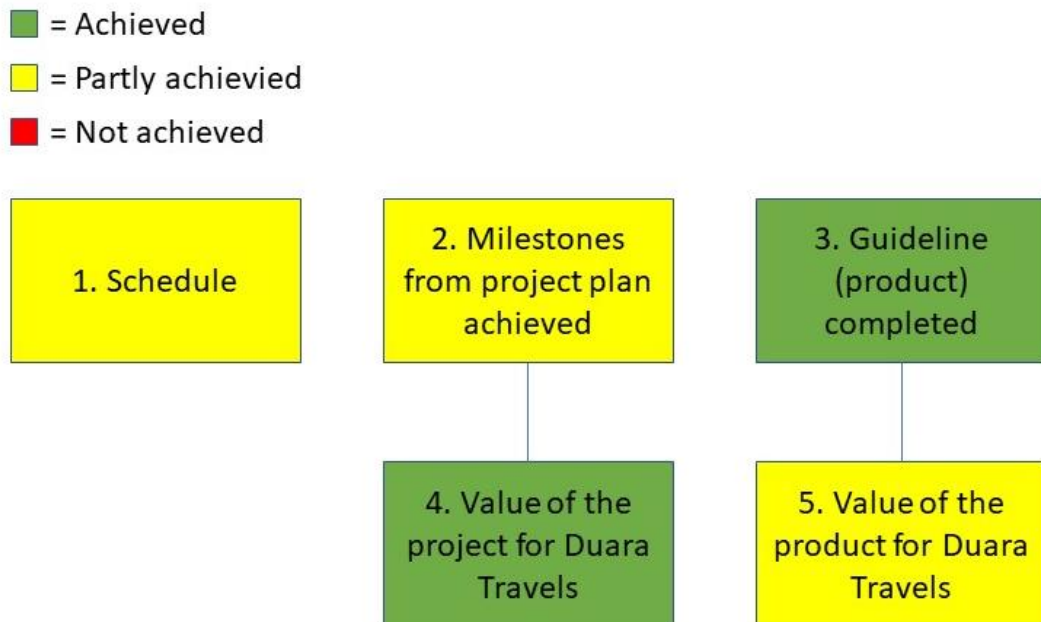


Figure 13. Assessment of Project Success

The first success criterion reflects on how well the planned schedule was followed. This is marked as partly achieved. The initial schedule for the project was from October 2018 until end on February 2019, being five months long. The project ended up being one month longer than originally planned, ending on March instead of February. The project followed its timetable well in the initial and middle stages. The last stage took longer than planned. Especially negotiations with potential partners was more lengthy and complicated process and initially predicted.

The second criterion examines if the milestones stated in the project plan were achieved. This is market as partly achieved. Majority of the project milestones were achieved. The numeral goals of setting up 10 meetings and signing one contract were only partly achieved. I ended up having 6 meetings and signing no contract. Nevertheless, the negotiation of partnership is still ongoing and might result in a contract after the project competition.

The third criterion examines if the final product of the project was completed. The end product (see appendix 7) resulting in the goal being achieved.

The fourth and fifth criteria are based on the written feedback (see appendix 7) given by the company contact person. The criteria examine the company representative has seen value brought by the project and the product to the company. First, the value of the project is examined. The company contact person states: " ...I would consider this as a very useful cooperation." Based on this statement, it can be concluded that this goal has been achieved.

Secondly, the value for the company is examined. The company contact person states: "...I see this guideline being a bit too generic, but it is definitely a start that our service design expertise can benefit from". This implies that the potential value of the end product was not fully achieved. The guideline is seen as slightly too generic by the contact person. The commissioner still sees it as a good ground that can be developed further by the company.

All in all, it is difficult to say that the project was either fully successful or not. Some aspects of the project were successful and done according to the original plan while other left room for improvement. Since this project is commissioned, the value for the commissioned is an important success criterion. While the result was not perfect, the feedback was mostly positive and encouraging. Thus, despite the project being only partly successful, I am content with the result and see the project as a great learning opportunity.

6.2 Further steps for Duara Travels

At the time of writing, Duara Travels needs more customers in order to become self-sustainable and invest in further growth. The chapter gathers suggestions on how to overcome that challenge based on the insights gained from the project work and literary review. The suggestions focus mainly on partnership building aspect of overcoming the challenge.

Duara Travels is an online-based company, making it possible for the staff to work location independently. This creates an opportunity for the staff to actively visit the destinations. The value of personal connections and face-to-face meetings was noticed in the project.

On course of the project it became evident that physically meeting the stakeholders was more efficient and smooth than text-based communication that had sometimes resulted in confusion and misunderstanding. By actively engaging with the stakeholders face-to-face, a better understanding can be gained and based on it, operations can be developed further. Partnership building with local operators is more efficient in person than online. If further partnerships are strived to be built with destination-based operators, I see it necessary to do it from the destination. Being in the destination creates an overall insight and understanding of the local culture and way of operating which helps to develop Duara's operations further. The project also highlighted the value of networking in the destination. By actively networking new insight can be gained, partnerships established, and new village destinations found.

Thus, I recommend Duara Travels staff actively to travel to the destinations and develop operations directly from there. If further destination-based partners are to be looked for, I see it necessary to do it in the destinations.

Porter (2012, in Driver 2012, 424) states that social enterprises are pioneers and bridge-builders between new innovative sustainable practices and traditional way of operating. With the recent rise of sustainability trend as a backdrop, I see a lot of possibilities for Duara Travels focusing on partnerships with more traditional travel companies that are facing ever-growing pressure to become more sustainable.

Research on the interest of traditional travel companies to develop partnerships with social travel enterprises would be beneficial for Duara Travels. Since Duara is an online-based business, the geographical division is not a big hindrance and the research should be extended to many potential countries. Markets that are perceived to be forerunners in sustainable issues include: The Nordic, German, French, Dutch, Canadian, Australian and New Zealand. These countries, being rather wealthy, have also customers that can afford to travel and Duara's products.

6.3 Personal Learning

The beginning phase of the thesis includes a review of scientific literature on topics such as sustainable business and tourism, social entrepreneurship and strategic collaboration in business. The time spent on reviewing has increased my knowledge on the issues reviewed. This has increased my ability to interpret and critically review and examine further information on the topic. On the age of mass information, I find the ability to conduct a critical review increasingly important and the skill will surely be helpful in my further research and projects.

The thesis is made in an operational form with a project being in the core of the thesis. Reviewing literature on the topic of project management before the project has increased my theoretical understanding of project work. Furthermore, the project conducted has provided me with learning opportunities and experiential knowledge on managing projects. Since a lot of operation in working life takes form of projects, I see the theoretical and experiential knowledge gained as extremely valuable.

The thesis project included a field trip to the destination of Bali, Indonesia. The culture and way of life in the destination differed greatly from the one that I have been grown up in. The new environment provided me with a lot of new experiences and cultural learning. In addition to the sole joy of learning new cultures, the cultural learning provided me with new perspectives on issues that in Western world seem to be taken for granted. In an ever-globalizing world where cross-cultural interactions happen daily the skill of cultural learning is sure to provide me with value now and in the future.

On the course of my studies, I have grown an interested in sustainable development. In the literature review section, principles of sustainability as well as sustainable development in a tourism context were discussed in detail, which has deepened my knowledge on the topic on top of the knowledge accumulated on school lectures. As I deepened my knowledge, a greater clarity was formed that I want to focus on sustainability issues on my future professional career. The deepened knowledge has opened many paths on how to approach issues of development and, I am glad that I see some of the paths appealing to myself. As the thesis is done in the final part of the studies and my transition to the professional life is approaching, this thesis has been a great help in guiding me towards my next steps in professional career.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Project Plan

Project Plan for Anton Vaisman's Bachelor's Thesis project

This document includes a plan of my thesis project. The document is created before the initiation of the project and is subject to changes.

Project Summary: Project and its aims

Duara Travels needs more customers to turn itself into a self-sustainable business. After a certain threshold of customer number is reached, the company will be self-sustainable and able to invest in further growth. Duara Travels is a sustainable enterprise and growth means furthering the company's vision of promoting sustainable tourism and creating authentic experiences for travellers.

At the moment, Duara doesn't have distribution channels directly in its destinations. The company's hypothesis is that travellers who are already in the destination are a potential customer group for Duara. Thus, it is beneficial to establish distribution channels directly in the destinations.

The project will be conducted as a pilot. Based on the piloting project, a guideline for similar projects in the rest of Duara Travel's destinations is made.

The goal of the operational part is to get in contact with ten potential sales partners in the Destination of Bali, Indonesia. Out of the ten contacts, the goal is to establish one sales partnership. The product that the project produces is a partner acquisition project guideline.

Project Milestones

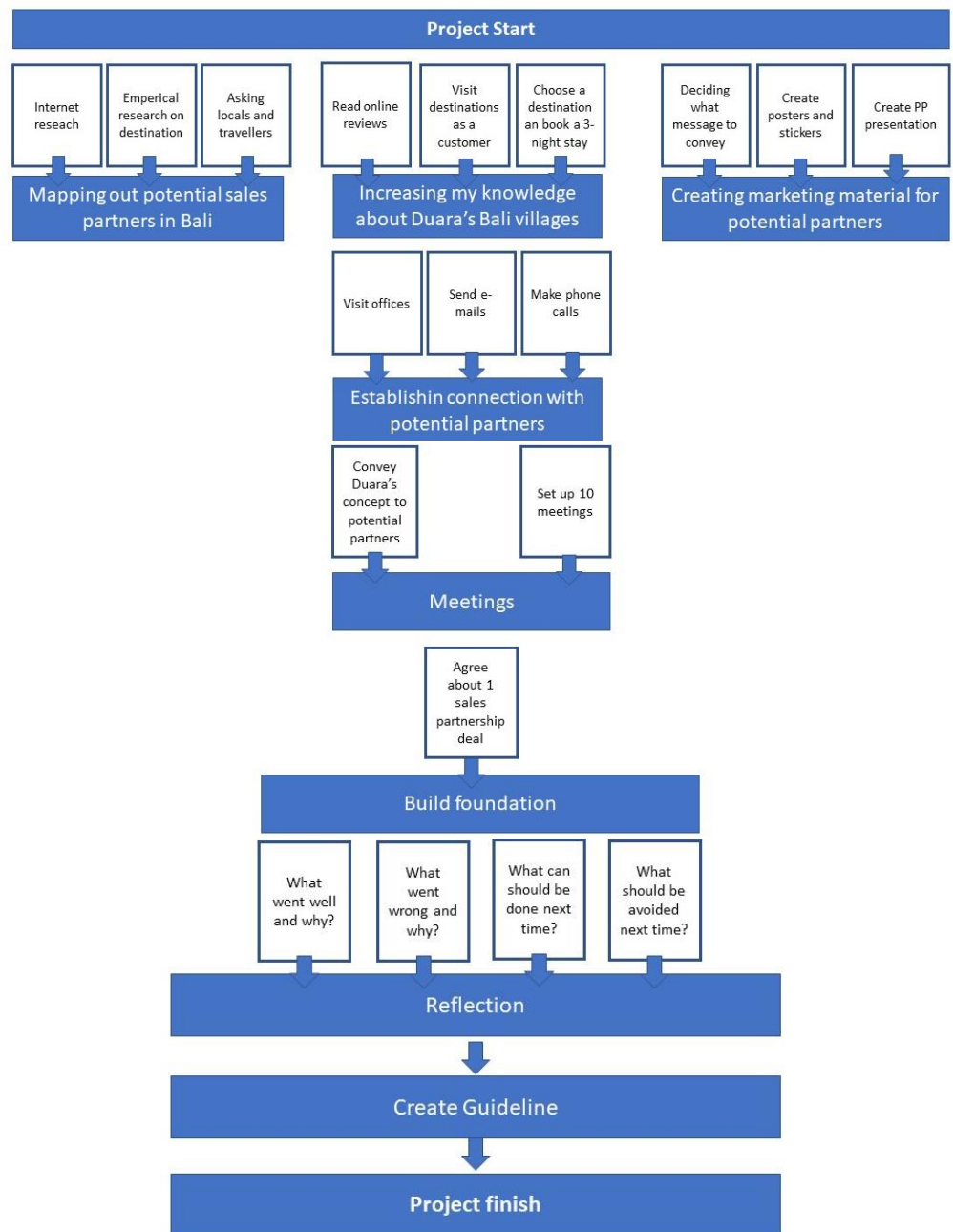
In the following list I have listed milestones to be achieved and what tasks each milestone consists of.

- A. Mapping out potential partners in destination
 - a. Research on internet
 - b. Observing the business hot spots in destination

- c. Talking with locals as well as travellers
- B. Deepening understanding about Duara's destination villages
 - a. Deciding which village(s) to visit
 - b. Booking a 3-trip trip
 - c. Visiting a destination as a customer
- C. Establishing connections with local potential sales partners
 - a. Visit offices
 - b. Send e-mails
 - c. Make phone calls
- D. Creating material to tell about Duara communicate to potential partners
 - a. Deciding what message to convey
 - b. Create posters and stickers
 - c. Create a PowerPoint presentation
- E. Meetings
 - a. Communicating Duara's concept and material with the connection established
 - b. Setting up the meetings
- F. Foundation of sales partnership in Bali
 - a. Set up 10 meetings in all
 - b. Agree about 1 deal
- G. Analysing the operational part in the destination
 - Answering the following questions:
 - a. Did I achieve the milestone of creating foundations of partnerships?
 - b. What went well and why?
 - c. What well wrong and why?
- H. Analyse the concept
 - Answering the following question:
 - a. Is the concept feasible?
 - b. Is the concept scalable?
 - c. Which practices are good?
 - d. Which practices should be avoided?
 - e. Which practices should be added?
 - f. Further steps and suggestions

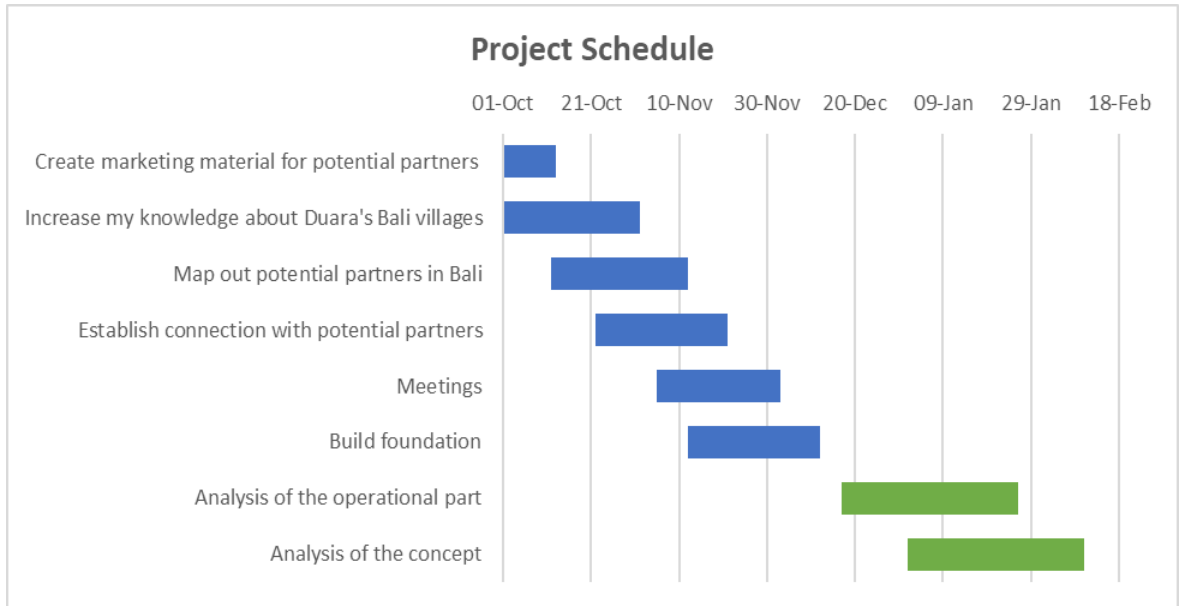
Project flow chart

The following chart is a flow chart of the project. The blue boxes include milestones and the white boxes include sub tasks to be completed to reach a milestone.



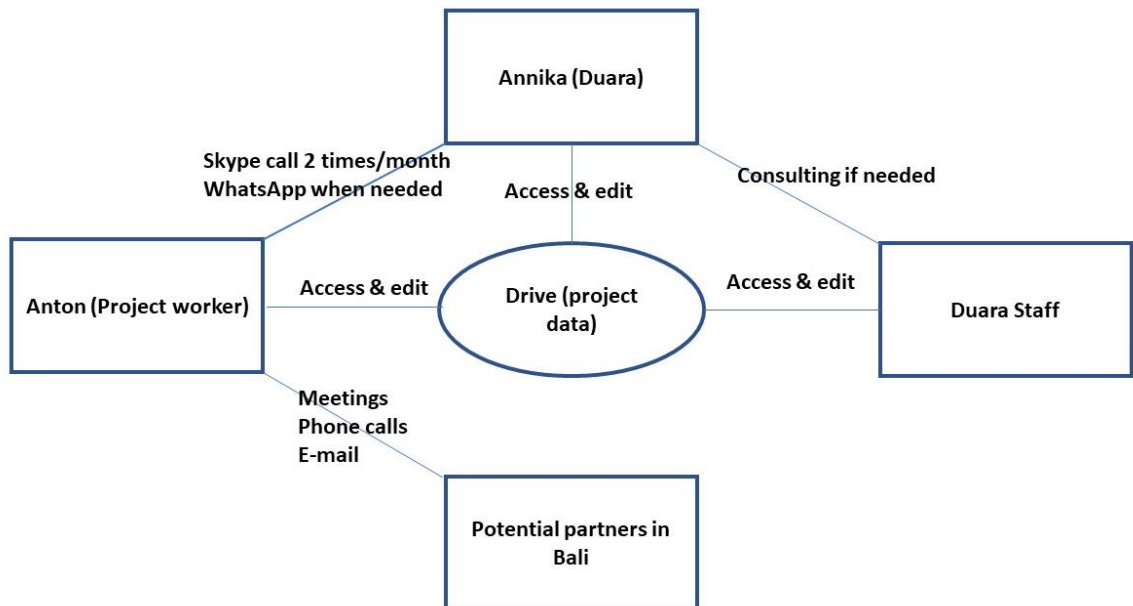
Project Schedule as a Gantt Chart

The following Gantt Chart includes the project schedule. Blue blocks are operational parts and green blocks are analytical parts.



Communication Plan

The following chart depicts planned communication in the project.



Risk chart

| Risk | Likelihood | Impact | Mitigation Strategy |
|-------------------------------|------------|--------|---|
| Earthquake / volcano eruption | Low | High | - Follow the news / warnings: so, in case the hazard happens, ready to evacuate to a safe place |

| | | | |
|--|-------------|--------|--|
| Lose / someone steals my important items | Low -Medium | High | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have a travel insurance ready before the trip - Take especially good care of the most important items (passport, computer, wallet, etc.) - Take photocopies of the most important documents - Avoid being in a vulnerable state with strangers - Having extra budget reserved for these kind of situations |
| I will get sick (1-2 weeks) | Medium | Medium | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Take good care of personal hygiene - Avoid eating food that hasn't been cooked properly - Carry a diarrhoea medication all the time - In case of sickness, rearrange schedule, prioritize tasks and rest well |
| I will get severely sick (2 – 8 weeks) | Low | High | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Take all the needed vaccinations before travelling to Indonesia - Find out where are the best hospitals and if treatment is covered by my travel insurance - Having a contact with Annika from Duara – possibility to do rearrangements - Having flexible flight tickets that allow the departure dates to be changed |
| Contacted companies are not interested | High | Medium | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I will practice a sales pitch with Annika before the trip - Create good marketing materials - Choose only potential partner companies to contact - Switch focus of the study to asking why they are not interested and finding out if I can do something about the cause |
| Language barrier | High | Medium | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If there are difficult language barriers, I can contact Duara's contact person and hire him/her as a translator - Learn basics of Bahasa Indonesia before and during the travel |

| | | | |
|----------------------------|------|--------|--|
| Cultural misunderstandings | High | Medium | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Read about the Balinese culture before and during the travel - Talk to locals as much as possible - Talk to people who have visited Bali - Talk to travellers in the destination - Consult Duara's contact person for help |
|----------------------------|------|--------|--|

Appendix 2. Visual communication material: Poster

Tired of being a tourist?

Peek behind the tourism scene and live with locals.

FEATURED IN:

BUSINESS INSIDER

MONOCLE

COSMOPOLITAN

★★★★★

"Staying in Gadungan village was a great experience - the family is lovely, and you really get a feel for the real Bali. It is great to experience the daily life of a typical Balinese family, and you can get as involved in the rice picking and planting processes, and cooking as you like. I would highly recommend this to anyone who wants to break up their holiday with something a bit different."

★★★★★

"My stay in Sebatsu was one that enriched my travels in Bali tenfold. Over the course of 3 days I learnt so much regarding Balinese culture, traditions, rituals, ceremonies and language. My hosts were extremely welcoming and the room was comfortable and clean. The food was amazing and I almost wanted to help cook my food so I can make more at home. My host Wayan and his wife were lovely and Agus my contact and guide gave me one of the best days outside of I started travelling. All in all an amazing experience."

Book a 3 night village stay and experience the everyday life with locals – with no other tourists around

www.duaratravels.com/indonesia

Facebook icon Duara Travels
 Instagram icon duaratravels
 Twitter icon #duaratravels

DUARA
travels

Tired of being a tourist?

Live with locals.



Chaffeur

Resort

Guide

Spa

Shopping

Cuisine

Book a 3 night village stay and experience the everyday life with locals – with no other tourists around
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travels

Appendix 4. E-mail template

Subject Sustainable Travel Partnership with _____ and Duara Travels
From Anton Vaisman <anton@duaratravels.com>
To
Date



Dear people of _____,

While doing research of travel companies who share our company's values of sustainable travel and seem reliable I came across _____. I am happy to see that as a company with strong values of sustainability you are already so well established with so many destinations. Your values of **providing meaningful experiences in a sustainable way** seems to be in line with our values.

I am working in a sustainable travel company from Finland called Duara Travels.

What is Duara Travels?

We offer 3 and 6 night authentic village experiences to our customers who seek to experience the local culture while having an positive impact on the local communities.

Since we have started:

- We have 25 village destinations in 6 different countries: Indonesia, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tanzania & Kenya.
- We have accommodated more than 1000 nights in the villages
- We have made a positive impact on several village communities
- The average feedback from our customers is **4,5/5 stars**

We are a social enterprise, 60% of the price rate stays in the destinations, helping to empower the local communities. Our business model is transparent and the customer will know exactly how his/her money will be distributed.

The village experience includes

- 3 or 6 nights living in the village.
- 3 meals a day
- Activities with the locals: cooking food, visiting the fields, craftsmanship, visiting cultural and religious ceremonies, etc.
- Locked room and washing facilities
- Local English speaking contact person who is reachable and ready to help if needed

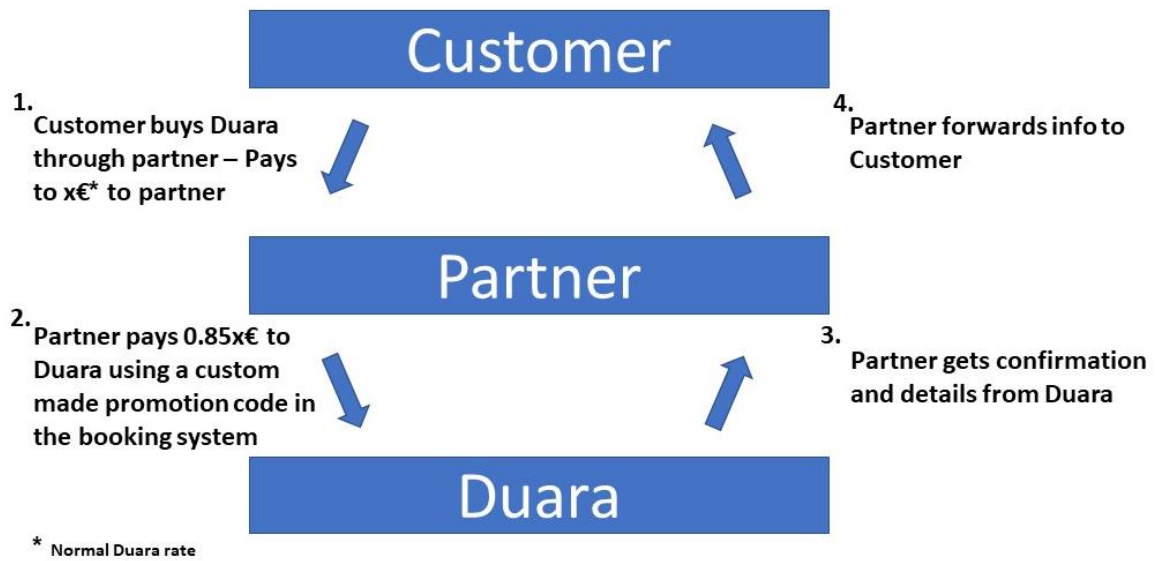
The reason for contacting you **is to inquire about a partnership with _____**.

We are in several successful partnerships with companies such as Visit.org, Local Package and Globethics. We would very much like to partner with a sustainable and reliable player such as _____. I would be more than happy to discuss more, learn about your company and also tell something about our journey.

Let's be in touch and promote sustainable travel together!

With Warm Regards

Appendix 5. Structure of Proposed Partnership



Appendix 6. Final Product: Partner Acquisition Project Guideline

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Partner Acquisition Project Guidelines

This is a guideline for partner acquisition project. The guideline requires that a trip is made to the destination. Firstly, the guideline introduces the simple structure of the project. Then, a bulletin list is made for each project step to guide the project worker. The bulletin list is directional and can be interpreted based on each context.

- PLAN
- RESEARCH
- REACH OUT
- CONNECT
- MEET UP
- NEGOTIATE
- REFLECT

BEFORE THE DESTINATION

IN THE DESTINATION

AFTER THE DESTINATION

Before the destination

Duration approx. 1 month

| PLAN | INCREASE KNOWLEDGE | PARTNERSHIP & TRUST BUILDING | INTERNAL COMMUNICATION | NETWORK | PRACTICALITIES | WELLBEING |
|---|--|--|--|--|---|--|
| List milestones to be achieved in project. | Read news articles, travel blogs, related social media content, Duara customer reviews, etc. on destination. | Search for potential partners online. | Create a shared folder for Duara travels staff in a cloud service platform: upload contact list, reports, communication material, etc. | Join destination-based entrepreneurial social media groups and introduce your project. | Buy flexible flight tickets – for unexpected schedule changes in project. | Make sure that the project schedule is not too tight and leave space for rest. |
| Dissect milestone into small tasks. | Contact Duara contact-person and discuss the project (pay for his/her time). | Draft a template of email to be sent to potential partners – find example template on shared folder. | Meet up with the team: present plan and receive feedback. | | Purchase Skype credits for affordable foreign phone calls. | |
| Place milestones on a timeline; set deadlines. | Discuss with people who have visited the destination. | Prepare contact cards, posters, flyers and power point presentation (prints in destination). | Agree on regular Skype meetings, e.g. every 2 weeks. | | | |
| Set success criteria: e.g. 50 connections, 20 meetings, 2 deals, etc. | Learn essentials of local culture and language. | Start contacting potential partners found online. | | | | |
| Draft a project plan, based on the milestones. | Read books on destination / country / continent (fiction and/or non-fiction) | | | | | |

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In the destination

Duration approx. 2 months

| MEASURE | INCREASE KNOWLEDGE | PARTNERSHIP & TRUST BUILDING | INTERNAL COMMUNICATION | NETWORK | PRACTICALITIES | WELLBEING |
|---|--|--|--|---|--|--|
| Actively track your progress and reflect on project plan. | Observe with curious attitude and take notes. Discuss and ask from local people. Continue active reading on destination. | Meet potential partners preferably in person. Dress according to the local business etiquette in meetings. Use power point presentation as a visual support in meetings. Hand out contact card and other visual material. Inform about the length of your stay in destination. After meetings, send an e-mail summary of issues discussed and next steps to be taken. | On regular Skype meetings: report on progress, reflect together and brainstorm on further action. Update notes on company cloud folder. | Actively engage with locals and expats in destination. Be active on social media; join groups and look for related events. Join a local co-working space and attend their events. | Rent a scooter or use a ride sharing application for affordable transportation to get to meetings. Purchase a local sim-card. | Adjust and settle to the new destination in the beginning of the trip. Enjoy the local culture and make friends. Share your experiences and possible troubles with a fellow human being. |

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After the destination

Duration varies

| REFLECT | INCREASE KNOWLEDGE | PARTNERSHIP & TRUST BUILDING | INTERNAL COMMUNICATION | NETWORK | PRACTICALITIES | WELLBEING |
|--|--------------------|--|---|---------|----------------|--|
| Evaluate success reflecting on the project plan. List issues learned. Make suggestions for future direction, practices and projects. | | In case of ongoing partnership building – keep active communication via e-mail or skype. Prefer that same person stays touch with potential partner – if not, let the other party clearly know of the change. | Meet with the team: summarize trip, share learning points and contemplate further action. | | | Throw a party to celebrate your successful trip. |

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Appendix 7. Duara Travels Contact Person Feedback

"As his Thesis, Anton helped Duara Travels to design the partner acquisition strategy and to test it in practice. From the beginning he was very responsive, had plenty of suggestions on how to develop the partner acquisition process and had a very hands-on attitude, which we liked. The project scope and mission changed a bit from the original plan along the way, and took more time than planned in the beginning, but the decision of doing most of the Thesis in Bali ended up to be a good choice, as it really gave us tangible results.

In Bali Anton was working independently from the distance, but we were regularly in contact online. He took a great effort to find us local sales and marketing partners. He contacted plenty of potential leads, met many of them and helped us to close the deals and to make contracts with couple of the most potential ones. At this stage, it is pretty early to evaluate how useful these partners will be for us in the future, but Anton has definitely made it a lot easier for us to start a pilot test with them.

Anton also tested two of our existing village destinations in Bali and interviewed our local coordinators. Probably the most beneficial result of his stay, however, was the new village destination he found for us. He stayed in the village for few days and made sure to introduce Duara's village stay concept to the locals, made agreements with the hosts and helped us to set up the online village profile on our website. I was really satisfied to notice how smoothly Anton adapted our concept and was able to independently take the process forward.

The end result of this project was guidelines for partners acquisition. The idea is that the guidelines could work in any new destination Duara enters. As such, I see this guideline being a bit too generic, but it is definitely a start that our service design expertise can benefit from.

Based on the learnings from this project, I think Anton has good competence in conclude partner deals and drive sales processes. I would consider this as a very useful cooperation."

-Annika Järvelin, Founder of Duara Travels"