Multi-Country Destination Development: An Opportunity to Stimulate Tourism in the Americas

Basic Introductory Report

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This report was prepared by Professor Don Hawkins, Eisenhower Professor of Tourism Policy with the assistance of researchers Jose Melenez and Faezeh Behzadnejad at the International Institute of Tourism Studies, School of Business, George Washington University, Washington, DC, USA. http://business.gwu.edu/about-us/research/international-institute-of-tourism-studies/
1 Introduction

A multi-country destination trip is defined as a single trip that includes visitation to destinations shared by two or more countries that offer and promote a joint tourism product or route. Promoting multi-country destinations can be an efficient and profitable strategy to attract visitors that might not otherwise consider visiting the destination. This is particularly true in the case of tourists from long-haul source markets, who want to make the best of a long-haul trip by combining various countries in the same area that complement each other and enrich the travel experience. In the case of the Americas this can be of particular interest to increase the share of tourists from Europe and from Asia and the Pacific, which today represent respectively 17% and 7% of all international tourist arrivals in the region.

It should be noted that a multi-destination strategy can also apply to destinations within a single country, but the focus of this report is on linking two or more countries. There are five fundamental challenges to consider when developing a multi-country destination tourism strategy in order to yield maximum benefits for consumers, tour operators/suppliers and travel distribution channels:

- Travel facilitation (visas and border crossing)
- Air, ground and water transportation connectivity
- Positioning and branding to reach major tourist generating markets
- Role of tour operators, hotel chains and travel suppliers in development of innovative tourism products
- Routes development through regional cooperation and infrastructure investments

In view of the above, and in order to carry out a successful multi-country destination strategy, the countries involved need to develop and implement a strong regional integration system. The more advanced the integration system is, the more opportunities will be generated for tourism. The following sections describe potential opportunities to be realized, constraints to be overcome and lessons learned from experiences in the region and the world.
2 Travel Facilitation

Governments involved in multi-country tourism collaborations need to align visa policies for third countries, evaluate the possibility to establish multi-country visas and simplify visa processing as well as enhancing services at border crossings. Travel facilitation is a set of policies and mechanisms to make destinations easy to visit. Travel facilitation has direct effects on the visitor experience and the tourism sector at large. UNWTO and WTTC estimate that improving visa processes could generate between US$35 billion to US$206 billion additional receipts by 2015 in the G20 economies, resulting in as many as 5.1 million new jobs. Research by UNWTO and the WTTC (2013) showed that policy improvements in visa facilitation across APEC countries could generate up to US$ 89 billion in international tourism receipts and between 1.0 and 1.4 million new jobs. Furthermore, eliminating travel visas at the bilateral level is expected to more than triple travel flows between countries (Lawson & Roychoudhury, 2013). It is important to develop visa facilitation agreements that comply with immigration and security standards. This need was recognized by the T20 in the Merida Declaration (UNWTO, 2012):

“Leveraging new technology, including electronic visa processes and delivery, as appropriate to the visa regime of each State, could make travel more accessible, convenient and more efficient without a diminution of national security. Bilateral, regional and international cooperation on visa and other travel facilitation arrangements could be explored to allow international visitors to move more freely and efficiently. We therefore propose, at each Member States’ discretion, the exploration, and possible implementation of bilateral regional and international visa facilitation programs and other travel facilitation regimes which benefit the entire region.”

2.1 Opportunities

UNWTO (2014) has identified 5 key areas to enhance visa facilitation for tourism. The following is an analysis of these key areas applied to developing multi-destination strategies in the Americas:

2.1.1 Improve the delivery of information

Information on visa procedures and restrictions is a great opportunity to facilitate travel involving multi-country trips. Making information on entry formalities readily available and accessible for tourists is fundamental in the trip planning process. This also applies at border crossings, as tourists seek information on customs restrictions and security considerations. Taking advantage of this opportunity can be easily achieved by providing updated information on official travel sites and fostering a travel-friendly mentality for personnel at border crossings.
2.1.2 Facilitate current visa processes

The tourist experience starts when a potential visitor decides to travel to a destination. One of the first steps in planning a trip is to obtain a visa so it is important to establish an efficient and welcoming process at this initial phase. Factors that influence this process include personal interviews, official documents, certificates, ease of finding a consulate, associated fees, uncertainty of getting the visa, etc. The better use of information technology by service providers and understanding of visa policies can facilitate visa processes.

2.1.3 Differential treatment to facilitate tourist travel

Different tourist segments can benefit from establishing flexible visa and travel procedures. This can be applied by easing visa restrictions depending on the travelers’ background, the means of transportation or the purpose of the visit. For example, excursionists of cruise ships can be allowed to disembark from the ship within certain geographical space without having a tourist visa. In addition, low risk travelers that comply with certain immigration and security criteria can be treated in fast lanes at points of entry to reduce waiting times and allow customs and immigration officers to focus on other types of travelers.

2.1.4 Institute eVisa programs

EVisas represent a great opportunity to facilitate travel as they reduce the time and facilitate the process to obtain visas. EVisas also present the opportunity for governments to substantially reduce their costs as they do not require a large network of embassies and consulates. According to the UNWTO Visa Openness report of 2014, the Americas are the second most open region in the world regarding eVisas.

2.1.5 Establish regional agreements

Regional agreements are a key opportunity to facilitate travel within the region for both international tourists within and outside the region. Bilateral agreements allowing travelers to travel without a visa is a first step; however regional agreements that allow travelers from a third country to travel freely in a predetermined region (i.e. number of countries within a multilateral agreement) is seen as the next step in visa facilitation, particularly when developing a multi-country collaboration strategy. In the Americas, there are a number of international organizations that are promoting regional agreements related to travel facilitation: Alianza del Pacifico, Andean Community, Association of Caribbean States
(ACS), Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), Latin American Integration Association (ALADI), Organization of American States (OAS), Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), Southern Common Market (Mercosur), The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Union of South American Countries (UNASUR).

2.1.6 Smart Travel

A recent study by the World Economic Forum (2014) recognizes smart travel as a model to be adopted by governments and the private sector to unlock growth and job creation in the travel and tourism industry. The study defines smart travel as an all-encompassing solution to security and border control that begins with the visa application process and ends once the traveler has returned to the original destination. Smart travel includes data-sharing between government agencies to allow for cross checking of passenger data and improve efficiencies at security and border control. To implement such improvements, smart travel requires state-of-the-art technology to integrate airport and visa screening processes to eliminate bottlenecks and enhance security. In addition, smart travel strategies will require countries to improve efforts towards bilateral and regional cooperation on visa policies, mainly focusing on the expansion of common visa areas that allow visitors to move from one country to another without a visa, or even passports, or burdensome border controls.

2.2 Constraints and Lessons Learned

While the benefits and opportunities of travel facilitation appear to be many, there are important constraints that need to be dealt with by governments and the private sector, e.g.:

- Security screening and risks (i.e. drug and weapon trafficking) continue to be a constraint in implementing travel facilitation programs in the region.
- Immigration control is also an ongoing constraint in the region due to low levels of information system integration between countries.
- Countries in the region also have tight regulations on agricultural and animal-based products that put a constraint in the region due to the requirement for special customs screenings at entry points.
- Trafficking of cultural handcrafts can also pose a threat to travel facilitation, as there is risk of illegal commercialization of antiques and cultural artifacts.
International Seminar on Multi Destination Opportunities for Regional Integration

- Costs associated with poor travel facilitation is also a constraint in the region. Paying for value added taxes in countries without properly installed tax refund services, continues to be a constraint in the region as well as other levies and fees for entry and departure. The added value that could be generated by lowering these levies could be translated into an increase in revenue for in-country speeding that has a greater impact on the economy.

- Establishing common visa frameworks (such as the Schengen area) will require strong regional leadership and numerous negotiations and investments to implement travel facilitation initiatives. While this might create resistance to change in the region, ultimately the reduction in costs as a result of sharing visa processing and traveler screening, and the increase of receipts and jobs generated by additional tourism may overcome this initial resistance.

- One important constraint that still appears to be present in the region is lack of government cooperation through negative reciprocities in visas. While requiring visas for tourists can generate funds for governments from visa fees, the economic impact of gaining tourists that can be repelled by visa restrictions is much greater. For instance, UNWTO (2014) analyzes reciprocity on open visa policies by regional and economic blocs. As of 2014, CAFTA-DR (a free trade agreement between seven economies in the Central American and Caribbean region and the USA) has a low reciprocity (29%) on open visa policies between their Member States. On the other hand, APEC has high open visa policies reciprocity (84%), which is quite relevant since this bloc is also composed of important long-haul outbound markets.

2.2.1 Visa free multilateral agreements in the Americas

As mentioned before multilateral agreements between countries are an opportunity to facilitate both intraregional travel and long-haul travel in the framework of a multi-destination strategy. While attracting long-haul travel seems to be a considerably attractive objective for the Americas (due to superior average expenditures) facilitating intraregional travel is an untapped potential within the region. In the region, several multilateral agreements and organizations have been successful in eliminating visa restrictions between neighboring countries. Some of the lessons learned from these organizations include:

*(a) Negotiate visa agreements as regional blocs with other blocs representing key outbound markets.*
(b) Increase flexibility of entry requirements (increased day allowance, preferential treatment at border crossings and allowing nationals of member states to travel within the bloc without a passport).

The following is a brief analysis of lessons learned from initiatives within regional blocs in the Americas:

- Alianza del Pacifico - Third country visa program: The Alianza del Pacifico is a regional economic bloc composed by Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico and Peru. The bloc has successfully suppressed visa requirements for nationals of all the participating economies and has developed promotional efforts to increase travel within the bloc. The alliance is currently looking at eliminating visa requirements for nationals from outsider countries that have permanent residency in a country within the alliance. One of the lessons learned from this initiative is working on an agreement that satisfies all the parties and that is in line with the national laws. For example some of the current discussion is around the definition of tourists for each country and the types of trips that will be allowed under this initiative. The countries are also working on devising implementation mechanisms that are in line with security and border control policies.

- Mercosur: In the Asuncion Declaration (Mercosur, 2005) the Mercosur countries stated the importance of border cooperation to facilitate border crossings for citizens from Mercosur. One of the key issues in this regard was implementing common statistics and data management system to deal with potential security threats such as drug, weapons and people trafficking.

- Andean Community: This regional bloc has also been working on travel facilitation with two key projects. First, the Right to Travel Freely established within the 503 Decision of the Andean Community (CAN, 2001) that states that nationals of any of the participating countries can travel between countries by only showing a national identification card. This benefit also extends to legal permanent residents at the member states. Tourist benefiting of this agreement also have the right to be treated as nationals from the visiting country in what refers to public services on migrations, national security and public health. In addition, tourists under this regime are excluded from any additional screening within 90 days of travel. The second project is the establishment of Binational Centers at Frontiers, which are border crossing offices where services from two countries are integrated to facilitate the flow of travelers, baggage, goods and vehicles.
OECS Tourism Desk: Facilitating Travel in the Caribbean: The OECS archipelago, comprising nine small Caribbean islands in close proximity to each other, is linked by some of the best sailing waters in the world. To maximize the potential business and economic value from the yachting sector requires facilitation of seamless intra-island travel for yachts visiting the OECS single marine space. To this end, the OECS Tourism Desk has worked closely with the Caribbean Customs Law Enforcement Council (CCLEC) to develop SailClear, a web-based pre-arrival notification system targeting the yachting community, which offers business-friendly entry arrangements that are consistent with the desire for hassle-free travel, without compromising border security.

2.2.2 Trusted traveler programs

- CARICOM Passport and CARIPASS: The Caribbean Community has been working on a CARICOM Passport as a defining symbol of regionalism that allows for hassle-free travel for CARICOM nationals. The CARICOM passport has helped boost intra-regional travel by standardizing immigration forms, and establishing common lines at ports of entry for citizens. One next step is to establish the CARIPASS, which will allow citizens and legal residents of CARICOM Member States to become part of a Trusted Traveler Regime. After being considered eligible for the programs, CARIPASS holders will have expedited customs and border screening through self-service immigration gates, airports and sea ports. Nevertheless, to date the program has not yet been fully established due to ongoing negotiations on defining the needed legislation in the participating countries.\(^1\)

- US. Trusted Traveler program: As defined by the U.S. Homeland Security Agency, trusted traveler programs provide expedited travel for pre-approved, low risk travelers through dedicated lanes and kiosks. Frequent border crossers can apply to the US Trusted Traveler Programs by paying a small fee, committing to a background check and an official interview. When admitted to the program, travelers enjoy the benefit from automated border clearance through dedicated lanes. To date the US has established four different trusted traveler programs: Global Entry, NEXUS, SENTRI and FAST.\(^2\)

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\(^1\) [http://www.caricom.org/jsp/single_market/travel.jsp?menu=csme](http://www.caricom.org/jsp/single_market/travel.jsp?menu=csme)

• **APEC Business Travel Card (ABTC):** The ABTC allows pre-cleared business travelers, to have facilitated short-term entry to participating member economies resulting in fast and efficient travel. The ABTC removes the need to individually apply for visas or entry permits, saving valuable time, and allowing multiple entries into participating economies during the three years the card is valid. Card holders also benefit from faster immigration processing on arrival via access to fast-track entry and exit through special APEC lanes at major airports in participating economies. To date 19 economies of APEC are fully participating in this program, and a total of 34,000 active travel cards exist. While this applies to business travelers only, a similar model could be applied to vacationists by applying the security and processing protocols of the ABTC.³

• **Working Groups on Travel Facilitation:** Since Travel Facilitation is a process that is not only dependent on the tourism sector agencies, working groups appear as a best practice to bring together other government agencies, tourism transportation companies, and operators of border crossings and tourism entry points. Travel facilitation working groups can be fundamental in developing multi-country destination strategies as they can analyze current and future travel trends, conduct industry research, and serve as advocates for travel facilitation. Some examples include:

  • **CTO Aviation Committee:** In 2012 the CTO formed a high level committee on aviation and travel facilitation. This committee has set forth a specific task force, which recommends a review on visa regimes, the creation of an ED card or immigration card to standardize entry and exit procedures enabling airlines to reduce costs and improve customer service.

  • **IATA Passenger Facilitation:** The International Air Transport Association (IATA) has established the Passenger Facilitation Working Group under the Passenger Experience Management Group. Its objective is to drive projects and standards that support bringing together airlines, airports and governments to propose solutions towards improving processes in the passenger experience. The working group has developed best practices and standards to enhance the passenger journey. In addition, it is working on improving the quality of passenger data transferred from airlines to governments to reduce the number of transmissions and fines by mismatching data. Another key activity is using existing technology and infrastructure to ensuring security access and improve the passenger flow through security checkpoints. Finally,

the working group is pilot testing an automated border control process to reduce waiting times without compromising security.\(^4\)

- **World Economic Council: Global Agenda Council on the Future of Travel and Tourism.** The council is composed of high level experts, leaders of international tourism organizations, academics, and tourism ministers and is currently focused on two key areas in recognition of their importance as integral themes for the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index: Sustainability and Enabling Secure Travel. The Enabling Secure Travel recognizes the importance of moving forward with regional visa agreements and smart visas and leading an initiative to examine the interconnection of travel facilitation, security and data sharing, and develop creative solutions such as a global trusted traveler program. \(^5\)

- **APEC Tourism Working Group:** This working group is composed of all leaders and ministers of tourism from the APEC region. Its mission is to promote sustainable and inclusive tourism development in the APEC region that will enable Member Economies to increase their competitiveness while consolidating regional objectives, including policy alignment, facilitating travel, among others. The working groups fall under the APEC Travel Facilitation Initiative that focuses on collaborating with key international travel associations, promoting improvements in passenger security screening at departure points and immigration and customs processing on arrival, and fostering regional adoption of best practices and the pursuit of “next generation” approaches to facilitating regional travel. The Tourism Working Group is currently working on a Program called “Developing Smart Traveler Programmes to Facilitate International Travel in the APEC Region”. \(^6\)

\(^4\) [http://www.iata.org/whatwedo/workgroups/Pages/pfwg.aspx](http://www.iata.org/whatwedo/workgroups/Pages/pfwg.aspx)


3 Air, Ground and Water Transportation Connectivity

Considering the importance of connectivity for a successful multi-country destination strategy, countries need to advance bilateral and multilateral negotiations aimed at creating a network that will ensure adequate transportation connectivity among the destinations involved. In cases like the Mercosur, where there are two geographically large countries and two smaller countries involved, interconnectivity should be regarded from both the air and ground perspective. A similar approach would be applicable to Central America, considering its geographical scope. In the case of the Caribbean, air and water connectivity becomes a fundamental factor to ensure an efficient multi-country destination strategy.

3.1 Opportunities

3.1.1 Transportation Hubs

The Latin American and Caribbean region has a great opportunity due to the existence of three of the most important air transportation hubs in the western hemisphere: Bogota, Colombia and El Salvador for Avianca; Lima, Peru and Santiago de Chile for LAN; and Panama City, Panama for Copa Airlines. A hub is defined as “a major sorting or switching center in a many-to-many distribution system; the key is that the flow between a set of origin–destination cities passes through one or more hubs in the route to the final destination” (O’Kelly and Miller, 1994:p.31). Although hubs are mainly related to airline practices, they can be understood as places strategically located within the transportation (air, water and ground) system. Having 3 hubs in Latin America is beneficial for developing multi-country destination trips because tourists have more flight connections available to visit a group of countries that might not be as appealing as visiting individual destinations.

3.1.2 Air liberalization and its influence on connectivity

While at the international level there is a trend towards liberalization, some countries still regulate competition, accessibility and capacity of airlines to operate to their airports (Duval & Lohman, 2011). Air liberties have a direct impact on connectivity because airlines can increase or decrease routes and frequencies depending on the liberalization level of a country. Furthermore, liberalization can benefit tourism because the ability of passengers to fly to a destination increases as more air liberties are in place (Duval & Lohman, 2011).
In addition, air liberalization can lead to increased air service levels and lower fares, which in turn stimulates additional traffic volumes, facilitates tourism, trade, investment and other sectors of the economy and brings about enhanced productivity, economic growth and increased employment (IATA and InterVISTAS, 2014). The benefits of liberalization are illustrated below:

![Benefits of Air Liberalization](image)

As an attempt to remove air barriers, IATA has set forth the IATA`s Agenda for Freedom which is a statement of policy principles to guide the negotiation and implementation of air services agreements. The Agenda was launched at IATA`s Annual General Meeting held in Istanbul in June 2008 and signed by 7 countries. It seeks to give airlines the commercial freedom to operate like any other global business and remains open for states to endorse on a voluntary basis (IATA, 2015).

### 3.1.3 Border crossings

Border crossings (checkpoints) are points where tourists can enter or exit from one country to another. These are usually located between neighboring countries providing control services to prevent entrance of undesirable people or illegal goods. The improvement of border crossing facilities and procedures are a key element for strengthening multi-country destination trips because tourists have fewer constraints for visiting various countries in one trip, therefore increasing tourist flows.²

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8 [http://www.adbi.org/files/2014.05.27.wp483.connecting.south.asia.southeast.asia.pdf](http://www.adbi.org/files/2014.05.27.wp483.connecting.south.asia.southeast.asia.pdf)
3.1.4 Transportation Infrastructure

Transportation infrastructure is defined as the sum of facilities, services and structures that are needed for air, ground and water transportation functionality. For tourism, the main purpose of infrastructure could be understood as the provision of means to access destinations. Infrastructure plays an important role for multi-country destination trips because it makes destinations more appealing for tourism development and can connect various regions.

In the Americas, infrastructure for transportation varies between countries because each one has different geographic characteristics that pose specific challenges to afford tourists’ mobility (IADB, 2011). According the IADB (2011) ground transport is the main transportation mode in Latin America due to the existence of roads for different types of vehicles (buses and cars) capable of easily adapting to market changes. Nevertheless, the lack of financing and proper management is constraining the development of roads with higher quality standards. One example of transportation infrastructure connecting two regions is the Interoceanic Highway between Peru and Brazil. The Highway was a priority project of the South American Regional Infrastructure Initiative (Integracion de la Infraestructura Regional Suramericana – IIRSA) and aimed to contribute to decentralization and creation of social balance as well as interconnecting both countries. The 1,500 miles of Highway runs from the Peruvian coast, through the Andes, to the Brazilian Amazon.

3.1.5 Cruise seasonality

Currently, cruise ships and new high-speed ferries are popular means of transport used by tourists, particularly in the Caribbean (Duval & Lohman, 2011). In fact, cruise tourism is considered one of the fastest growing sectors in the travel industry, with an average increase of 10% per year in the last 30 years (Tourism New South Wales, n.d.). Nevertheless, traditional sales of cruise packages presents high seasonality problems based on the main outbound markets’ vacation seasons and the destinations’ summer season. Multi-destination strategy presents an opportunity for governments and cruise ships companies to develop off-season packages and benefit from offering services to specialized travelers.

3.2 Constraints and Lessons Learned

- Unserved air routes could be understood as those origin-destination routes which do not have direct routes and are currently served by connecting flights. In the region, intra-regional and domestic unserved air routes can be considered as a constraint in facilitating cost and time efficient multi-destination strategies.
• Internal demand for intra-regional and domestic travel also poses a constraint for multi-destination travel as for some routes the low demand can discourage cruise and airline companies to operate shorter routes rather than operate longer routes that connect on busier airports.

• Inadequate border crossing infrastructure can affect connectivity because of the lack of capacity to process large number of tourists in high seasons.

• Current efforts by major airlines in the United States to question open sky policies and to attack foreign airlines receiving government subsidies may impede airline liberalization and connectivity.

3.2.1 South American Regional Infrastructure Initiative (Integración de la Infraestructura Regional Suramericana – IIRSA)

The IIRSA focuses on promoting basic infrastructure, transportation, communication and energy, and providing the basis for greater commercial and social integration in South America. IIRSA’s action plan has three objectives:

• Coordinating plans and investments
• Harmoniously integrating regulatory aspects
• Seeking out innovative public and private financing mechanism

The agreement was adopted by 12 countries (Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, Surinam, Uruguay and Venezuela) in 2000. The South American governments identified 31 priority projects from 335 projects with a total of $ 4.3 billion estimated costs. The initiative has received technical and financial support from the Andean Development Corporation, the Inter-American Development Bank, Fonplata, the United Nations Development Program, and others.

The South American basic infrastructure has been established on new geo-economic territories integrating the 12 countries. The 10 integration and development axes are showed in Figure 2.
The accomplishments of IIRSA are related to territorial planning and coordination, strategic environmental and social evaluation, production and logistic integration, evaluation of investment projects and establishing transnational projects. A similar infrastructure map could be developed in the Americas with special emphasis on tourism development within a multi-country context.⁹

⁹ [http://www.iirsa.org/admin_iirsa_web](http://www.iirsa.org/admin_iirsa_web)  
4 Positioning and Branding to Reach Major Tourist Generating Markets

Once enhanced travel facilitation and transport connectivity have been achieved, the public and private sectors in the collaborating countries can develop cooperative marketing programs in order to build a solid brand that embraces the destinations involved in a multi-country strategy and can appeal to long haul source markets.

4.1 Opportunities

4.1.1 Motivations for Multiple-Country Trips: Travelers’ Perspective

Despite the fact that data on travel patterns are fragmentary, “there is sufficient evidence to suggest that a majority of tourists visit more than one destination when they travel” (Tideswell & Faulkner, 1999). There is also a strong demand for discovering several countries in a region during a single trip. According to data released by the TravelSat in 2015, travelers consider several neighboring countries when planning a long-haul trip (Figure 3). Different motivations behind making a multiple-country trip are explained from a traveler’s point of view in the following figure:

Figure 3: Travelers mostly envisage alternative destinations from the same region (Travelsat)
4.1.1.1 Collecting places

There is a desire in travelers to visit additional places to compete with fellow travelers and belong to a unique group of privileged individuals that have extensive travel experiences (Timothy, 2002). This process of enumerating the destinations visited is called place collecting. People might collect places either with a specific goal (e.g., to ski in different locations) or with a more general tendency to be exposed to more and more destinations or set foot in unusual places.

4.1.1.2 Variety and Novelty Seeking

There is a basic internal need for variation and novelty in human beings that creates satisfaction (Maddy, 1968). As national boundaries have obvious impacts on the natural environment, socio-cultural aspects and economic operations (Timothy, 2002), travelers willing to diversify their experiences during a trip are often attracted to cross those boundaries and have multiple-country travels.

4.1.1.3 Numerosity

People tend to judge “amount” on the basis of the number of units into which a stimulus is divided (Prokkola, 2010) because more pieces of something typically conveys the perception of greater quantity; this concept is known as numerosity heuristic (Monga & Bagchi, 2012). This cognitive behavior suggests that visiting multiple destinations in multiple countries during a single trip can create a higher perceived value in the consumer’s mind before, during and after the trip.

4.1.1.4 Economic Motive

Consumer surplus is an economic measure of consumer satisfaction and is defined as the difference between what the consumer is willing to pay for a good/service and its market price. As travel costs are shared between several destinations in a multi-destination trip, such trips generate sizable consumer surplus benefits (Mendelsohn et al., 1992). This is particularly the case for long-haul travelers because of the higher airfare costs associated with such travels and the lower possibility of revisiting a remote destination in the near future. The case of New Zealand is an indicator of such a correlation as most of its tourists are long-haul travelers and the multi-destination trip is the primary type of trip in this country (Oppermann, 1995). Economic rationalism has also been recognized as a factor that makes travelers minimize their travel costs by considering the spatial characteristics of their trip when making multi-destination travel decisions (Kim & Fesenmaier, 1990).


4.1.1.5 Lower Perceived Risk

Any travel planning, whether it is for an individual or a group of people, involves some degree of uncertainty. In case of a group travel, heterogeneity of preferences and diversity of benefits sought increase the risk of dissatisfaction even more (Tideswell & Faulkner, 1999). Therefore, including more destinations in a single trip seems to be a logical attempt to reduce the uncertainty risk (Kim & Fesenmaier, 1990).

4.1.2 Motivations for Multi-Country Travels: Destination Perspective

4.1.2.1 Cumulative Attraction

The presence of compatibility between a given set of attractions can create a synergy that makes the attraction power of the combination larger than the sum of its parts. This cumulative attraction has two potential sources in the tourism context: similarity and complementarity. As it is shown in Figure 4, both similar and complementary destinations have the potential to create cumulative attraction only if they are logistically compatible, which means that they can be visited in a single trip.

![Diagram showing two modes of interdependency among destinations create cumulative attraction](image)

Figure 4: Two modes of interdependency among destinations create cumulative attraction

4.1.2.2 Special Interest Appeal

A combination of thematically similar destinations can be the center of attention for special interest tourists looking for a variety of different experiences in their field of interest. The Niche Tourism Market Database created for the Caribbean in 2008 includes the following market profiles: Bird Watching, Charity Tourism, Culinary (or Gastronomic) Tourism, Cultural, Heritage and Historic Tourism, Cycling, Diving, Extreme Sports, Festivals, Fishing, Golf, Health, Wellness and Spa, Homestays,
Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, Exhibitions (MICE), Sailing, jetting, Soft Adventure, Sports Tourism, Trekking, Wedding and Honeymoons, and Wildlife Tourism.

4.1.2.3 Complementarity

Each destination can attain a competitive advantage over another by offering products of a specific theme. This advantage can be gained by either a lower relative opportunity cost (cost advantage) or an ability to gain differential advantage by creating differentiated products. If different destinations – each specialized in the areas in which they have the highest competitive advantage – combine their resources, they can serve as complementary attractions and gain an additional competitive advantage as a group (Bramwell & Lane 2000) (Figure 5).

Figure 5: A Multi-country travel allows taking the best from each destination to enhance the overall travel experience (TravelSat)

Multi-country trips, whether they include similar or complementary destinations, will lead to product diversification and competition in price and quality among destinations. This can increase the overall market penetration (increasing the share in the existing markets) and can provide the basis for developing new markets (e.g. attracting new market segments) as well. A destination included in multi-country travel packages will secure its visitation through the generative power of not only its own attractions but also those of other destinations (Lue et al., 1993).
Some examples of multi-country travel packages offered in the market for Latin America and Caribbean are provided in Table 1. The gateway for most of the itineraries presented is generally a city with high international transportation capacity. It can be argued that the prevalence of multi-country packages, as with multi-destination packages, depends on factors like location and size of the destinations, the tourist attraction base, and the composition of visitors (e.g., short-, medium-, or long-haul markets) (Oppermann, 1995).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Travel Program</th>
<th>Days</th>
<th>Provider</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peru &amp; Colombia Highlights</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Chimu Adventures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru, Mexico &amp; Cuba Adventure</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Chimu Adventures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil, Argentina &amp; Chile with Salvador &amp; Easter Island</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Monograms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South America &amp; Antarctic Explorer (Chile, Peru, Brazil, Argentina, Antarctica)</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Chimu Adventures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buenos Aires to Rio with Kids (Argentina &amp; Brazil)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Chimu Adventures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wild Patagonia Overland (Chile, Argentina,)</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Chimu Adventures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Wine Trail (Chile and Argentina)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Chimu Adventures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico &amp; Peru Ancient Cultures (Mexico and Peru)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Chimu Adventures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterfall and Mountain Explorer (Guyana and Venezuela)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Chimu Adventures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discover the Galápagos &amp; Peru- Cruise from Lima to Quito (Ecuador)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Avalon Waterways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highlights of Peru and Antarctic Wildlife Safari</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Chimu Adventures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Caribbean (Tampa, Grand Cayman, Aruba, Curacao, Lucia, Antigua, St. Thomas and San Juan)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Holland America Line</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Examples of multi-country travel packages in the Latin America and Caribbean region (Source: Google search)

4.1.2.4 Joint Marketing

Building destination awareness in potential source markets through marketing campaigns is costly. However, regional marketing cooperation with neighboring countries can offer economies of scale and boost competitiveness. This has particular implication for smaller countries where creating larger tourism regions can attract more tourists that are interested to stay longer and spend more. Another advantage of developing multi-country travel routes is the potential to attract a more diversified
market base which results in a more balanced distribution of visitors among different destinations (Oppermann, 1995).

In 2013, after the recognition of yachting as a key niche by the member states of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, public and private sector stakeholders from all nine member states formed a committee and developed an action plan for the yachting sector. They aimed to mobilize the shared benefits of the economic union. As a result of a joint marketing effort, the region is now promoted as a single destination for yachting activities: “Many Islands, One Caribbean”. Among other benefits, sharing their resources has allowed them to promote the region in several international sailboat shows.

Caribbean Week in New York is another successful example of joint marketing efforts. It is the largest and most effective promotional event organized annually by the Caribbean Tourism Organization. Many strategic partners including tourism officials, private sector, investors and media representatives converge on this event to promote the region and build networks.

4.1.3 Social Media, Emerging Technologies and E-Tourism

Social networks are profoundly transforming the business environment and how tourism enterprises interact with their customers. Online reviews are a valuable tool that reflects customers’ satisfaction level and have thus become an inseparable part of making travel decisions. New techniques developed for collecting and analyzing big data are providing valuable insight to understand market demand and consumer behavior. The rapid spread of smartphones is revolutionizing the tourism industry and reforming travel experiences. Among other advantages, technology facilitates travel bookings, which is now one of the main components of e-commerce. All the aforementioned technological trends offer growth opportunities for multi-country travels by facilitating the decision making processes for the customers.

4.1.4 Tools for Travel Planning

Many software products are available for professional travel management with a wide range of available features (e.g. auto-ticketing, GDS/OTA integration, flight booking, itinerary creation, rental car reservation, hotel reservation, marketing management, CRM, etc.). These systems provide the flexibility required for designing individually managed tours and customized multi-country travel packages.
The tools that were originally developed for travel agents and tour operators are now becoming increasingly accessible to individual travelers. Online travel agencies represented about 13% of the global travel market in 2013, and they are currently growing faster than the total market, according to PhoCusWright (Nolter, 2015). Some examples follow:

- User-friendly web sites and mobile applications are making it possible to quickly organize and manage elaborate travel itineraries. As a consequence, independent travel to unfamiliar destinations is becoming more common.
- Tripit is a free online platform for creating a simple and helpful master itinerary based on booking confirmation emails.10
- Tripwant is a tourism online platform that serves as a distribution chain between travelers (users) and tour operators (partners) by facilitating the flow of information. Travelers can browse the site directory, select and book their favorite tour, and share their experience with other users as well as the tour operator.11

4.1.5 Emerging Economies: Chinese Market Example

The expanding Chinese middle class with its increasing wages will provide a constant source of new customers and higher revenues (MacGregor, 2013). Recently, Intercontinental Hotels Group in partnership with Oxford Economics published one of the most comprehensive studies of the Chinese travel market ever conducted. According to that report:

- “Chinese demand for long-haul travel will experience huge levels of growth, making China the largest source market for long-haul travelers by 2020.
- Per-trip spending by Chinese travelers is expected to grow nearly 75% in nominal terms by 2023.
- International Cities are the primary destinations for Chinese outbound travelers, with over 85% heading for major cities around the world.”

10 https://www.tripit.com/
11 http://www.tripwant.com/
It is often assumed that the greater the travel distance, the bigger the destination must be in order to be considered as a travel option (Bieger, as cited in Hartman, 2012). Considering the distance between China and the Americas, it can be concluded that multi-country travel packages will have a high demand among the Chinese middle class in the years ahead.

4.2 Constraints and Lessons Learned

Despite all the positive outcomes of joint multi-country marketing efforts, there are also some challenges that need to be overcome. Building multilateral partnerships in a sector – as fragmented as tourism – is sometimes very time consuming and difficult. “The perceptions and misconceptions that partners hold about one another, especially when environmental problems related to tourism are a concern, can cause copious conflicts” (Doppelfeld, 2012). Some other negative consequences such as harmful competition, political opportunism, reinforcement of existing power structures, and bureaucratization of the partnership process can also be relevant in this context (Timothy as cited in Doppelfeld, 2012).

Another problem that might arise when destinations in different countries want to collaborate is that “each country must give up some degree of national interest in planning and marketing efforts for the good of the greater unit” (Timothy, 2002). This is especially crucial for reaching an agreement on the shared brand and determining the degree of exposure of different attractions in the marketing plan. While major attractions are more likely to receive the major share of promotional exposure, the role of smaller attractions in increasing the overall attraction power should not be underestimated (Lue et al., 1993). The commitment to a shared definition of image is a necessary condition for success in cross-border planning, defining the core businesses and commercializing the cross-border products (Hartman, 2012).

Doppelfeld (2012) suggests that the following three challenges are common to cross-border cooperation between destinations located in borderlands: First, borderlands are generally underdeveloped due to their peripheral geographic position. Second, all partnering countries need to give up some degree of sovereignty in order to facilitate collaboration. Lastly, the existence of disproportionality in the level of development, knowledge, capacity power, infrastructure, or access to resources between partnering countries can lead to conflicts. An additional drawback against multi-country trips is the negative impact that instabilities within one destination can have on other destinations included in the same package. Travel warnings issued by states due to increased health or
security concerns and factors like negative media coverage of one particular destination can affect travelers' perception of the whole package and their travel decisions.

It can be concluded that as various factors are involved in cross-border cooperation and the initial relationship between countries varies in each case, there is no custom-made solution for implementing cross-border destination development (Hartman, 2012). What can be generalized is that the presence of a shared interest in regional development and a desire for applying creative solutions to improve cross-border cooperation are essential prerequisites for successful multi-country tourism development. The following principles suggested by Hartman (2012) can be used as a basis for cross-border cooperation:

- Long-term planning and development of the destination
- Commitment to cross-border cooperation in tourism at all levels
- Creation of marketable cross-border products
- Professional management and marketing
- Efficient distribution of financial funds, particularly for marketing tasks within the entire destination

The development of competitive products and strong core businesses is the key for any successful marketing strategy in a multi-country context and is thus investigated in the following section.
5 Role of Tour Operators, Hotel Chains and Travel Suppliers in the Development of Innovative Tourism Products

The tourism industry can be viewed as a linked chain, as described in Figure 6, stretching across tourist generating regions, transit routes, and destinations. The links are diverse, including informal connections whereby consumers obtain services from independent firms and facilities; formal connections achieved by units co-operating through principal-agency relationships and through wholesaling deals; and formal connections via the common ownership of units within different sectors.

Figure 6: Multi-Country Product Development Chain
(Source: Donald E. Hawkins, International Institute of Tourism Studies, George Washington University, 2015)
5.1 Opportunities

5.1.1 Niche Tourism Products

Today, an increasing number of tourists are willing to have as many experiences as possible within a single vacation. Satisfying this demand requires “several countries cooperating to offer a variety of products and programs, thus contributing to differentiating the local product[s]” (UNWTO, 1999). When destination management/marketing organizations are looking for potential destinations for cross-border cooperation, they should be well aware of their product offerings so that they can strategically create optimum bundles.

A more detailed understanding of the existing travel itineraries is very relevant to destination marketing because of the following reasons (Tideswell & Faulkner, 1999): (1) a valuable insight can be gained from the combination of destinations and attractions included in travel itineraries of different market segments; (2) building linkages and creating relationships with other destinations can draw attention to potential multiple-destination synergies that can be exploited for developing collaborative strategies; (3) a spatial analysis of travel itineraries, in conjunction with understanding the market demand patterns and a particular region’s tourism assets, can enhance the product development procedure towards optimal itineraries.

5.1.2 Border Tourism

A typical case of multi-country travel packages arises when a popular destination is located in a borderland. For example, the strategic position of Iguazú Falls in Triple Frontier (the tri-border area along the junction of Paraguay, Argentina, and Brazil) has been the key factor to the prevalence of multi-country vacation packages offered in this region. The natural appeal of border areas among tourists can also lead to the organic growth of tourism in border areas particularly where large population bases exist in the region (Timothy, 2002).

Cross-border cooperation can reduce the barrier effect of borders and create the synergy that benefits both countries more than their individual effort. This type of partnership can occur at various scales and take on a range of forms (Timothy, 2002): from multilateral regional alliances to informal local agreements as in the case of the Tumen Region which follows.
5.1.3 Greater Tumen Region

The Greater Tumen Region (GTR), consisting of China, Russian Federation, Mongolia and Republic of Korea, can be considered as one of the fastest growing regions in tourism worldwide. The Greater Tumen Initiative (GTI) is an intergovernmental cooperation mechanism among these countries focusing on the priority areas of transport, trade and investment, tourism, and energy. Multi-Destination Tourism in GTR is a project developed by this initiative that aims to make the GTR one of the most desirable international destinations in the world. The 2013 research report developed for this project provides a comprehensive framework for developing an efficient partnership and strengthening cooperation between member countries’ tourism sectors. According to this report (MacGregor, 2013), developing cross-border tourism routes and corridors is a viable, progressive and appealing strategy for development of multi-country tourism. Figure 8 provides an algorithm based on the approach used in this study.
MacGregor (2013) classified the routes he designed into three groups based on their implementation timeframe as presented in Table 2. He also provided a brief description of all the suggested routes followed by an implementation action plan and a marketing strategy for each of the routes. The report can be downloaded at: http://tumenprogramme.org/?info-2-115.html

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Implementation Time-frame</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short-term</td>
<td>2013-2014</td>
<td>Routes that can be implemented almost immediately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium-term</td>
<td>2014-2015</td>
<td>Routes that still require physical planning, infrastructure improvement, training and construction to finish before they can be visited.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term</td>
<td>2015-2017</td>
<td>Routes that will require several levels of governmental cooperation, infrastructure upgrading, extensive marketing actions, building a GTR brand and developing a greater awareness of the GTR as a destination</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Classification of suggested multi-country routes in the GTR (MacGregor, 2013)

5.1.4 Lake Constance Area

Cross-border tourism cooperation in Europe has only intensified since the mid-1980s (Hartman, 2012). Lake Constance, shared by Germany, Switzerland, and Austria, provides a good example of such a mutually beneficial cooperation in tourism. Cross-border cooperation in the Lake Constance area has over a hundred years of history and international efforts to protect Lake Constance is considered as one of the first and best examples of international environmental resource management worldwide.
(Blatter, 2001). The presence of such a cooperative atmosphere also led to the formation of the International Bodensee Tourism (IBT) in 1997.

![Figure 9: The Around Lake Constance Bike Tour Map by tripsite](https://www.tripsite.com/site/assets/files/1262/lake_constance_12_day.jpg)

International Bodensee Tourism was founded as a destination management organization (DMO) aiming to build a unified brand and market the entire Lake Constance region as a single tourism destination. The Lake Constance region has been divided into several sub-destinations with their own DMOs responsible for establishing the core businesses, which should be designated by the IBT (Hartman, 2012). Today, many tours are available for a multi-country trip around the Lake including bike tours and Medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque tours.

Despite the success achieved by IBT in planning and implementing a comprehensive destination management strategy, Hertman (2012) recognized two main challenges: (1) although the cooperation works well on the destination and sub-destination scales, it does not facilitate direct collaboration between enterprises; (2) although IBT has been successful in using the area’s internationality as a unique selling proposition, it still faces a challenge in combining the diverse tourism products offered around the lake within one brand. While business, event, and short-holiday tourism are the major offerings in the Swiss and Austrian destinations, the German destinations offer more traditional recreation and spa products.
5.1.5 Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park (GLTP)

Shared ecosystems have resulted in many cases of cross-boundary cooperation as seen in over 130 protected areas located in 98 countries (Zbiez, as cited in Doppelfeld, 2012). The Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park (GLTP)—Africa’s largest conservation area—was created in 2001 when Mozambique’s Limpopo National Park (LNP), South Africa’s Kruger National Park (KNP), and Zimbabwe’s Gonarezhou National Park (GNP) were united (Figure 10). The partners mainly aimed to optimize benefits for biodiversity conservation and economic development of local communities by creating a world-class ecotourism destination with extensive involvement of the private sector.

![Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park](image)

According to the Peace Parks Foundation [website](#), the GLTP currently offers a variety of cross-border products that have been developed in partnership with a variety of stakeholders. Examples include self-drive 4x4 trails, transboundary wilderness trails, the Trans-Limpopo Walking Trail, a cross-border tourism node currently under development in the heart of the park.

5.2 Constraints and Lessons Learned

- It is difficult to create a product that reflects the diversity anticipated from a multi-country travel experience while making the different pieces appear to the visitor as consistent parts of a single product.
• Conflict might arise between different destinations (and attractions) on issues like choosing the brand or marketing mix for the whole product.

• Multi-destination trips are more complicated to monitor and study than single-destination trips. The complexities of collecting data are further amplified when borders fall in favor of multi-country visitations. The fact that almost all countries (as well as UNWTO) only measure and report the number of international tourist arrivals without tracking their stops in other countries during the same trip, partly explains why so little is known about this increasingly common travel behavior. Global distribution systems can have a significant role in resolving this issue because of their exclusive access to such information. Currently, those systems compile all the segments of multiple-country travels in the same manner as single destination travels between any two nodes.

• Electronic linking of various cross-boundary tourism supply chains is also a challenge that needs to be properly addressed. Hartman (2012) suggests uniting the individual key players to create a cross-border network of providers. Not only will this simplify and facilitate decision-making and purchasing stages for customers but it will also strengthen the perception of the whole region as a single destination (Hartman, 2012).

5.2.1 Cross-Border Cooperation in Latin America

The Association of European Border Regions (ABER) conducted a study in 2010 to include the European Union (EU) Regional Policy into the Latin American context. Based on the study, ABER developed an initial report on the situation of cross-border cooperation (CBC) in Latin America and conducted two case studies in the region. They also prepared a road map for cross-border cooperation in this region in close partnership with the EU (ABER, 2010). Some of the key findings of the study are as follows:

• Entities at different levels (supranational, national, regional and local) must “debate thoroughly about a clear strategy, specific and common financial resources, and a distribution of tasks and responsibilities.” Non-public actors (civil society) and the economic sector (e.g. Chambers of Commerce) should also be active participants in CBC.

• Successful CBC in Latin America should be based on the following key elements:
  o Step by step development (first the tasks, then the structure)
- Strengthening of regional and local tasks and responsibilities
- Strategic/programmatic approach
- Real joint projects
- Permanent working structure per cross-border area (informal, later formal) as the main player (joint decision-making bodies, joint secretariat and staff);

- In order to strengthen social and economic cohesion without affecting sovereignty, genuine cross-border programs should be put in place. Because of the successful experience of Europe in this regard, a stronger process of cooperation in territorial development between the EU and Latin America would be very helpful.”

- Brazil can play a leading role in promoting CBC in the continent as it has 16,000 kilometers of borders with almost all South American countries (except Chile and Ecuador).
6 Tourism Route Development through Regional Cooperation and Infrastructure Investments

A themed multi-country tourism route brings together a variety of activities and attractions that would not independently have the potential to entice long haul tourists to visit and spend time and money in more than one country. Successful route development requires that attention be given to regional cooperation and infrastructure investment. Also, attention needs to be given to areas covered in earlier sections of this report including travel facilitation, transport connectivity, product development and strategic marketing.

6.1 Opportunities

6.1.1 Regional Cooperation Networks

The IADB Tourism Sector Framework Document (TSFD) (IADB 2014) prioritizes lines of action that will contribute directly to the sustainable use of regional public goods that are shared tourist attractions, while also facilitating the mobility of visitors and tourism services across borders. The TSFD cited an example of regional integration in Asia. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) launched a series of regional integration investments in 1992 aimed at promoting the tourism industries of member countries as a single destination, building on the similarities and complementarities between their scenic and cultural assets, as well as loose visa requirements and comparable levels of services and infrastructure. The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2010) found that these efforts led to an increase in international tourism earnings from US$17 billion in 2000 to US$54.6 billion in 2008. For this reason, tourism is one of the four pillars in ASEAN’s regional integration efforts for the 2009-2015 period, together with air transportation, health, and e-commerce (Chheang, 2013). In the Greater Mekong sub-region of Southeast Asia, a series of projects aimed at developing multinational tourism circuits were effective from 1992 to 2007 for promoting regional development (Asian Development Bank, 2008).

Trade can also become a powerful engine for regional development. Free trade agreements can be used to facilitate regional cooperation, including tourism. These include the following:

- Canada, Mexico and United States: North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA; 1994)
- Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela - Mercosur (1991)
- Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru - Andean Community (1969)
- Colombia – USA (2012)

The Organization of American States (OAS) is strategically positioned to promote regional cooperation among member states. The mission of the Culture and Tourism Section of the Organization of American States (OAS) is to support the development of tangible and intangible cultural and tourism assets and cement new and established links between the tourism and culture sectors to enhance the contribution of both sectors to economic and social development in OAS member states.

Executing this mission underscores the importance of promoting cultural heritage as an opportunity for social inclusion in order to ensure national and regional identity, strengthening productivity and competitiveness of the tourism industry through training and capacity building, identifying avenues for cultural exchange through tourism, strengthening small and medium tourism enterprises and promoting public policy dialogue in these key sectors. By acting as the technical secretariat for the Inter-American Meeting of Ministers and High Authorities on Culture and the Inter-American Congress of Ministers and High-Level Authorities of Tourism, the Culture and Tourism Section of the OAS facilitates the Inter-American political and technical dialogue towards the development of culture and tourism in the Americas, including partnerships with the following regional bodies:

**Andean Committee for Disaster Prevention and Response**

**Andean Community (CAN)**

**Association of Caribbean States (ACS)**

**Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism**

**Caribbean Community (CARICOM)**

**Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA)**

**Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association**

**Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO)**
As a case in point, the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) has embraced multi-destination tourism as an efficient and profitable mean to develop and improve economic activity within many communities in the Caribbean region through its Sustainable Tourism Directorate. This has contributed to the advancement of the realization of the Sustainable Tourism Zone of the Caribbean (STZC). ACS Members recognize that most of the factors that will enhance multi-destination tourism will also positively impact on the development of intra-regional tourism and single destination tourism. The
objective of this programmatic area is to utilize Multi-Destination Tourism as a tool to preserve the “Caribbean” destination market share in extra-regional markets and increase intra-regional tourist flows.

For example, with the aim of enhancing the entrepreneurial opportunities and other benefits generated by tourism, and in order to enhance the connectivity between tourism and culture, and also support efforts aimed at the formalization of the informal sector, ACS, the Organization of American States and the International Labor Organization (ILO) have partnered to support the establishment of the Regional Network of Artisans of the Greater Caribbean with the recognition of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). The network has been conceived as a private-public partnership forum which will engage in activities to support capacity-building and business skills enhancement for artisans through creating opportunities for training, networking and the exchange of knowledge and best practices to contribute to business and professional development.

6.1.2 Infrastructure Investment

World Bank Group President, Dr. Jim Kim, has identified global infrastructure as a critical need the World Bank can help fill and a key financing arena where the institution will likely compete with emerging financiers from Asia and elsewhere. Dr. Kim cited the need for approximately $1 trillion in infrastructure investment globally to combat extreme poverty, embracing a sector that the bank shied away from in previous decades. The Global Infrastructure Facility, launched at the bank’s annual meetings in 2014, was created to bridge the gap in declining infrastructure funding worldwide. “We firmly believe that continued investment in infrastructure is going to be critical to ending extreme poverty by 2030,” Kim said. “And in order for us to do that work, we’re making transparent our failings of the past, and putting forward a plan to correct these weaknesses in the future.”

In the Americas, the Tourism Strategy Framework Document – TSFD - (IADB 2014) noted that “There is evidence that public policies aimed at promoting the development of tourism products are effective—given a suitable macro context for tourism—in generating … economic benefits, in particular through investment in (i) the development of natural and cultural public goods that are attractive to tourists; (ii) the provision and improvement of basic infrastructure and services; (iii) marketing and promotion; and (iv) the development of regional circuits.”

For example, the Association of Caribbean States with funding support of the Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation (AMEXCID), has launched a program to modernize and improve maritime-port infrastructure that would facilitate developing regional trade and identifying potential routes
for offering short-distance maritime transport service for freight and passengers in the Greater Caribbean, taking into account the expansion of the Panama Canal.

6.1.3 Heritage Routes

At the UNWTO/UNESCO World Conference on Tourism and Culture (UNWTO 2015) in Siem Reap, Cambodia, Kishore Rao, the Director of the World Heritage Center, stressed the importance of transnational cultural tourism products such as heritage routes. In UNESCO’s perspective, and as applied in the context of the World Heritage Convention, “a heritage route is composed of tangible and intangible elements of which the cultural significance comes from exchanges and a multidimensional dialogue across countries or regions that illustrate the interaction of movement, along the route, in space and time”. Rao said that “Cultural Heritage Routes have huge potential to encourage widespread community participation in cultural activities to raise awareness of a common cultural heritage. When established on cultural and social principles, these Routes represent a resource for innovation, creativity, small business creation, and cultural tourism products and services development. Cultural Heritage Routes provide markets and products and contribute to tourism revenue generation in remote destinations”. There are several multi-country heritage routes already inscribed on the World Heritage List—Jesuit Missions Route (4 countries), Qhapac Nan, or the Andean Road system (6 countries), the Mayan Route (five countries), the Silk Road (12 countries) and the Routes of Santiago de Compostela (2 countries). The following routes present opportunities to expand long haul travel from major generating markets to the Americas (UNESCO, 2015).

6.1.3.1 Jesuit Route

The Jesuit missions of the Guaranís represented one of the most important cultural initiatives in the colonization of Latin America. Dubbed the “Jesuit Route,” the 30 localities, dating back from 1609 to the mid-18th century, are scattered along the borders of modern-day Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay. The Society of Jesus was the prime mover behind a series of impressive achievements in town planning, architecture and the applied arts, as well as the social and economic organization of the Guaranís.

With the collaboration of UNESCO, the countries concerned drew up a plan of action in 1978 to preserve and restore sites and remains of the missions that had been deteriorating since the Jesuits’ expulsion in 1768. The medal presented in Figure 11 was struck to commemorate the event. In 1983, five missions in Argentina and Brazil were inscribed on the World Heritage List, while a further two in 40
Paraguay were listed in 1993. An international campaign for the missions’ protection and restoration was also launched in 1988 (UNESCO, 2015).

![Jesuit Missions Route](image)

**Figure 11: Jesuit Missions Route**

### 6.1.3.2 Qhapaq Ñan, Andean Road System

This site is an extensive Inca communication, trade and defense network of roads covering 30,000 km. Constructed by the Incas over several centuries and partly based on pre-Inca infrastructure, this extraordinary network through one of the world’s most extreme geographical terrains linked the snow-capped peaks of the Andes – at an altitude of more than 6,000 m – to the coast, running through hot rainforests, fertile valleys and absolute deserts. It reached its maximum expansion in the 15th century, when it spread across the length and breadth of the Andes. The Qhapac Ñan, Andean Road System includes 273 component sites spread over more than 6,000 km that were selected to highlight the social, political, architectural and engineering achievements of the network, along with its associated infrastructure for trade, accommodation and storage, as well as sites of religious significance.
6.1.3.3 La Ruta Maya

William Garrett, the former editor of National Geographic Magazine, proposed the creation of a Mayan Route, a dedicated tourist route connecting important Mayan archaeological sites and nature preserves across Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador. The boundaries of the proposed route encompassed thousands of archaeological sites and hundreds of thousands of acres of pristine jungles, forests, wetlands and wildlife habitat. As an additional incentive to tourists, the Mayan Route includes several international airports and is relatively easy and inexpensive to reach. From the Pacific Ocean to the Caribbean Sea, the Mayan Route is a 1,500-mile journey that ideally transports the visitor through the remains of over 3,000 years of Mayan history. Unfortunately the creation of a unique link between these sites is still a “work in progress”.

Various travel companies do tours of portions of the Route, usually including two to three countries in their itineraries. Some of the most attractive sites from an archaeological and architectural perspective include Palenque (Chiapas region of Southern Mexico), Chichén Itzá and Tulum (Yucatán, Mexico), Tikal (northeastern Guatemala) and Copan (northwestern Honduras). All are located within driving distances of airports and remain relatively accessible.¹²

¹² [Link](http://www.frommers.com/articles/2365.html#ixzz3Tiiyfqis)
6.1.3.4 Forts of the Caribbean

Touring historic forts provides a historic element to a sun-and-sea getaway, thus expanding the vacation experience. Touring a fort is an outdoor activity, with lots of exercise strolling the battlements and fortress grounds. Since forts naturally occupy the high ground as a position best for defense, they offer some of the most thrilling sea views to be found. There are many historic forts throughout the Caribbean, since over the centuries islands changed hands time and again between the British, French, Spanish and Dutch. Here are five of the most intriguing:

- Fortaleza Ozama, Dominican Republic: Construction of the fort was begun by the Spanish in 1502 and was completed by 1508. The fort's walls are solid blocks composed of sea coral. The fort was so well fortified it never suffered a defeat in battle.

- Castillo de San Felipe del Morro, Puerto Rico: The fort occupies a prime position in Old San Juan overlooking San Juan Harbor. The fort was initially built by the Spanish in 1540 for basic defense of the harbor. As the need for defense grew more critical, Castillo de San Felipe del Morro grew into the massive six-level structure that still stands today. The fort is now part of the US National Park Service and has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

- Brimstone Hill Fortress, St. Kitts: Built by the British to defend against French forces in 1690 and over the course of decades was built up and buttressed by slave labor. Brimstone Hill Fortress is now a UNESCO World Heritage site and is considered to be one of the best preserved forts in the Caribbean.

- Fort Berkley, Antigua: Part of Nelson's Dockyard National Park, the fort was constructed in 1704 to defend Antigua's English Harbor. Fort Berkley was considered to be such a formidable defense by opposing forces that it was never attacked since to do so would have resulted in certain defeat. The site includes the Dockyard Museum, which chronicles the naval history of Antigua's English Harbor, with an emphasis on the personal effects and deeds of Antigua's national hero, Admiral Horatio Nelson.

- Citadelle Laferrière, Haiti: This is a mountaintop 19th century fort in the northern part of Haiti, located about 17 miles from Cap Haitien. The 4.3 mile trail begins on paved stone, but the final quarter to the fort is so steep that visitors have the option of making the approach on horseback. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Citadelle is 3,000 feet above sea level and is arguably the
most awe-inspiring fort in the Caribbean. It took 15 years to construct and was completed in 1820.

6.1.4 Slave Route

The Spanish arrived in Cuba shortly after 1492. Its soil was ideal for growing sugar cane, but was not developed at first due to Spain’s quest for gold in the Americas. The first enslaved Africans were taken to Cuba in 1513 but did not arrive in large numbers until the late 1700s. The last slave ship arrived in Cuba in 1867. The various slave trade routes are presented in Figure 13.

6.1.5 African Diaspora Heritage Trail

The African Diaspora Heritage Trail (ADHT) is an international cultural tourism initiative that promotes socially conscious travel to sites identified as relevant and important to the global narrative of people and culture of African descent. Founded by the late David Allen when he was Minister of Tourism in Bermuda, the ADHT is designed to educate visitors and safeguard the core values and creativity of African cultures and history. The ADHT Foundation seeks to establish heritage trails linking Diaspora traditions in Africa, North, South and Central America, Bermuda, the Caribbean, Europe, and Canada by developing a network of collaborators, who identify, build, finance, promote and market cultural heritage
destinations. ADHT destinations will foster sustainable economic development, provide inspiring educational experiences, produce quality cultural products that expose visitors to authentic African Diaspora history and culture, and motivate local populations to become active participants in the preservation and dissemination of their history and culture.

6.1.6 Spanish Gold Route

Gold, looted from the Inca and Aztec peoples of South America by the Spaniards in the 16th Century, was brought to Europe through various routes presented in Figure 14.

![The Spanish Gold Route](http://deskarati.com/2012/05/05/the-spanish-gold-route/)

6.1.7 Other Possible Routes

Routes could be established to trace the Spanish exploration of the Americas, including Columbus, Cortes, Pizarro and Ponce de Leon. In addition to the routes cited above, the TSFD (IADB 2014) notes that regional public tourist attractions in the Latin America and Caribbean Region include the Amazon, the Andes and the Andean Highlands; the Pantanal, Patagonia; Ruta del Agua [Waterways Route], Ruta Colonial y de los Volcanes [Colonial and Volcano Route]; and Ruta del Gaucho [Gaucho Route].
6.2 Constraints and Lessons Learned

- Development assistance agencies are country focused and lack mechanisms for effective regional cooperation.
- Community participation and benefit sharing through enterprise development and job creation need to be included in route planning and implementation.
- According to UNESCO’s Rao, the major challenge in planning and establishing transnational cultural heritage routes “is to ensure an effective and sustainable mechanism for international coordination. Planning and management frameworks for all aspects have also to been harmonized and well-coordinated, including for tourism development. In particular, the complete story about the significance of the route has to be well interpreted at all points of tourism interest, even if the visitor travels to only one part of the route.” (UNESCO 2015)

6.2.1 Exemplary Case: The Silk Road

The 5th UNWTO Silk Road Ministers’ Meeting brought together Ministers of Tourism and high officials to discuss important projects regarding development of trans-boundary routes along the Silk Road, including the inscription of the first Silk Road Heritage Corridor on the UNESCO World Heritage List, the Verotour project, the Maritime Silk Road and the Spice Route project.

![UNWTO Silk Road Programme](http://silkroad.unwto.org/)

Figure 15: The Silk Road Program (http://silkroad.unwto.org/)

Visa facilitation, infrastructure development and marketing were the priorities identified by the 5th UNWTO Silk Road Ministers’ Meeting at ITB to advance transnational routes (ITB Berlin, March 2015). Participating countries reported on the measures taken to promote Silk Road tourism with a clear focus on visa facilitation, while calling for a more collaborative approach to marketing, namely e-marketing and
cooperation with tour operators. Ministers recognized that in spite of the progress achieved in recent years in the area of travel facilitation, this issue remains high on the agenda as it constitutes one of the major obstacles for tourism development along the Silk Road.

“It is the shared history and culture of the countries along the Silk Road that links them together. We need to enhance these links by promoting transnational route development and facilitating travel” said UNWTO Secretary-General Taleb Rifai in opening the meeting. “UNWTO remains firmly committed to working closely with our Member States to maximize the opportunities for tourism to boost trade and inclusive development across the Silk Road”, he added.

UNWTO updated participants on the implementation of the Silk Road Action Plan 2014/2015, including the actions undertaken at major international fairs such as ITB Berlin, JATA Tourism Expo Japan and WTM London. The Meeting also highlighted the importance of the inscription of the first Silk Road heritage corridor on the World Heritage list – a milestone which culminates ten years of extensive research by UNESCO and partners.

Building upon the conclusions of the recent UNWTO/UNESCO World Conference on Tourism and Culture in Siem Reap, Cambodia, UNESCO’s Rao called on tourism and culture “to work closely together to build a sustainable future for the Silk Road and ensure that tourism makes a strong contribution to safeguard the region’s unique cultural and natural heritage”. In 2013 UNESCO and UNWTO launched a project to provide policy guidance to the destinations which will develop a common sustainable tourism strategy for visitor management, site presentation and promotion along these heritage Corridors. The goal is to develop tourism for the Silk Road corridors that:

- applies sustainable approaches to destination management across the region
- improves a dispersal of visitation across the region
- increases the length of stay and yield
- creates new opportunities for investments
- strengthens international cooperation
- identifies new opportunities for public private sector partnerships

The Silk Road Tour Operators Forum, organized in cooperation with the Adventure Travel Trade Association (ATTA), provided an opportunity for adventure travel experts and Silk Road tour operators to discuss opportunities for joint product development and cooperative marketing activities. It will look at
how stakeholders can work together to raise the profile of the Silk Road as a world class adventure travel destination.

6.2.2 Benchmark: European Institute of Cultural Routes

A benchmark that might be adapted to the Americas region is the European Institute of Cultural Routes in Luxembourg. According to Executive Director Penelope Denu (UNESCO/UNWTO 2015), the Institute advises new projects and certified routes, recently in cooperation with the EU Commission and with the UNWTO Themis Foundation. The criteria for certification are that a route should illustrate a significant theme for European culture and history, include at least three countries, conduct research, organize activities and exchanges especially for young people, provide sustainable tourism products and artistic creativity around a theme. Most of the routes celebrate the positive achievements of European culture, from Mozart to ceramics, from historic thermal towns to the olive tree. But they are also seeing some cultural routes tackling some of the darker sides of European history. The Council of Europe’s cultural routes model is about concentrated on partnerships. It is a tried and tested framework for cultural routes that can be applied anywhere and to any relevant theme. But the routes need help in establishing these regional partnerships, as well as national policies that facilitate their work. They need the active support of international organisations, like the Organization of American States and its partner organizations, to work together to implement coherent strategies each in their own area of competency, then they will feel more confident and will be more convincing to create regional partnerships strategies.
7 Conclusion

This background paper has emphasized the importance of taking proactive steps to stimulate more long haul travel to the Americas by recognizing opportunities and addressing constraints in order to facilitate travel, expand transport connectivity, improve positioning to more effectively reach tourist generating markets and to engage tour operators, hotel chains and travel suppliers in the development of innovative tourism products. These goals can be materialized by developing authentic tourism routes which embrace the region’s heritage assets and are operationalized through regional cooperation and infrastructure investments.

The landmark manifesto of the Global Travel Association Coalition (GTAC, 2015) called for a coordinated approach by governments and the private sector to advance travel facilitation, infrastructure development, environmental sustainability and investment in human capital. Advocacy steps directly related to multi-country destination development included the following: 13

- “Policies to facilitate international Travel & Tourism and thus export growth which generates economic and social benefits globally.
- The expansion of transparent visa processes, visa waiver programs, regional visa agreements and trusted traveler programmes as well as seamless travel procedures at borders.
- The use of new technologies to make travel more accessible, convenient, and more efficient while enhancing security.
- The advancement of air, rail, sea and road connectivity through properly designed regulatory frameworks including measures enabling market and capital access in the context of tourism, transport and trade.
- Government and private sector co-operation to capitalize on innovative and technological resources for improving and accelerating intermodal and infrastructure development.

13 GTAC is currently comprised of the following members: Airports Council International (ACI), Cruise Line International Association (CLIA), International Air Transport Association (IATA), International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA), World Economic Forum (WEF), World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC).
• Setting and strengthening public/private partnerships to assure legislative and funding needs for improvements and expansion of infrastructure.”

It is essential for UNWTO, possibly in cooperation with the Organization of American States, to bring together experts and tourism stakeholders from the public and private sector to debate the challenges and opportunities in advancing regional tourism integration in the Americas. This technical seminar could be an important first step to develop a strategy and implementation action plans to advance regional tourism integration in the Americas Region.
8 References


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