



Ecotourism Training Session 1 Report

**Integrated Livelihoods Improvement and Sustainable Tourism in
Khuvsgul Lake National Park**

Ministry of Environment and Tourism Mongolia
30 October 2017



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DRAFT

Acknowledgements

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1 Background

1.1 Introduction

This Ecotourism Training Session 1 Report details the outcomes of the training held at Khatgal from October 17-21 2017.

The program was designed and tailored to support community livelihoods in KLNP and promote community based tourism in Khatgal and Khankh settlements. Training design occurred following the July field trip and assessment of issues affecting ecotourism and Khuvsgul Lake National Park.

1.2 The training program

Date	Program	Trainers	Participant numbers
Monday - Tuesday	Travel to Khatgal and set up training rooms and program	Badral Yondon, Dave Bamford, Gereltuv Dashdoorov Shatarsaikhan Biziya, Janet Mackay, and Tumendelger Humbaa	
Wednesday October 18 0900-12.30	Community Tourism Vision workshop	Janet Mackay, Gereltuv Dashdoorov and Tumendelger Humbaa	
Wednesday October 18 0900-12.30	Visitor Management – principles and practices	Dave Bamford, Badral Yondon	
Wednesday October 18 2-5.30	Tourism product development workshop	Dave Bamford, Gereltuv Dashdoorov and Tumendelger Humbaa	
Wednesday October 18 2-5.30	Tourism, national parks and environmental awareness	Janet Mackay, Badral Yondon and Tumendelger Humbaa	
Thursday October 19 0900-12.30	Handicrafts product development	Shatarsaikhan Biziya, Janet Mackay, Badral Yondon and Tumendelger Humbaa	
Thursday October 19 2-5.30	Handicraft packaging	Shatarsaikhan Biziya	
Thursday October 19 0900-5.00	Tour guide training and interpretation	Dave Bamford, Gereltuv Dashdoorov and Tumendelger Humbaa	
Friday October 20 0900-12.30	Hospitality and customer service	Janet Mackay, Badral Yondon and Tumendelger Humbaa	
Friday October 20 0900-12.30	Small business management and finance	Dave Bamford, Gereltuv Dashdoorov and Tumendelger Humbaa	
Friday October 20 2-5.30	Hospitality and customer service	Dave Bamford, Gereltuv Dashdoorov and Tumendelger Humbaa	
Friday October 20 2-5.30	Small business management and finance	Janet Mackay, Badral Yondon	

Saturday October 21 0900 – 1.30	Handicrafts product development and packaging	Shatarsaikhan Biziya, Janet Mackay, Badral Yondon and Tumendelger Humbaa	
Saturday October 21 2-4pm	Community tourism association meeting	Badral Yondon, Dave Bamford, Gereltuv Dashdoorov Shatarsaikhan Biziya, Janet Mackay, and Tumendelger Humbaa	
Sunday 22-Monday 23	Travel back to Ullan Batar	Badral Yondon, Dave Bamford, Gereltuv Dashdoorov Shatarsaikhan Biziya, Janet Mackay, and Tumendelger Humbaa	

1.2.1 Acknowledgements

The study team would like to thank Ms xxxxxxxx from the MON (48216) Integrated Livelihoods Improvement and Sustainable Tourism in KLNP for accompanying the field trip and for assisting the team with her time and expertise.

Appreciation is also due for the insights received from Khatgal Governor Mr Ganbaatar were most helpful, as were the meetings with the KLNP Director Mr Batdelger Dorjgoo.

Thanks are also due to Bayarmagnai Dashdemberel and the team at Khatgal for their logistical support for the training program.



2 Training evaluation

Overall program

The training program was considered very successful by the project team. This is supported by the evaluation forms completed at the end of each program. (see appendix for evaluation results)

The combined skills of the project team with international and national specialists provided an excellent combination of examples for each of the training courses. Whilst international examples provided context and new ideas, the Mongolian examples were invaluable in showing participants initiatives that had been successful and how they had been achieved in their own country.

The addition of multi-media/videos etc would enhance the training, but the technical support will need to be available to do this (sound, wifi etc).

The team recognised that training could have been better conducted in more relevant locations. Customer service and hospitality, for example, could have been conducted in a lodge or ger camp where practical demonstrations could have been made of the material being presented. Guest houses could showcase what they do as part of this training.

The use of a national handicrafts specialist, Ms Shatarsaikhan Biziya, was extremely valuable in demonstrating a broad range of examples from elsewhere in Mongolia. The practical exercises that were used enabled participants to get actively engaged and develop new concepts they could adapt for Khuvsgul.

The biggest challenge was keeping the programs within the short period of time allocated to each. This was exacerbated by large numbers of participants at each program and the need for consecutive translation. Participants were also very interested in the content and keen for discussion.

A further challenge was that participants were across a diverse range of skills...from those that knew a lot about the topic and had a lot of experience to those that had none. This issue could be resolved if we knew in advance the skill level of participants and could separate groups or ensure training material was targeted to the level required. Regardless, the skills and knowledge of more advanced participants was shared with others that added value to the program.

We have recommended changes to the next training program to address these challenges.

Training outcomes

In addition to upskilling participants, there were a number of opportunities and challenges identified through the program and discussions with participants. These are summarized as follows

Codes of conduct – a more user-friendly presentation of these documents would better enable them to be widely distributed to visitors and stakeholders (see example in Appendix) including all visitors coming through the entry station.

Environmental management

- developing a strategy for overcoming issues of disposable plastics – bottle and bags
- Resolving toilet systems and disposal of human wastes

Handicraft sales – ensuring adequate and equitable channels to market including sales of handicrafts at the Visitor Centre

Visitor management – whilst the park manager has identified ways to consider managing visitors during peak periods, the park management and staff identified the urgent need for a tourism/visitor management plan for the park that would have the strength of plan of management status

Increasing visitor numbers – there were concerns expressed that there are significant challenges with high visitor numbers at peak periods now and that will be exacerbated with increased infrastructure associated with the Loan project if effective management is not implemented in the meantime.

Community Tourism Association – ongoing discussions during training focused on the value of operators working together closely to generate new products and partnerships. At the conclusion of the week, industry representatives met and formed the new Khatgal Community Tourism Association.

Community tourism vision

The half day community vision workshop was extremely well attended (including several members of the Tourism Sub Council) and seemed to meet a strong community need. Participants discussed at length their vision for the future of tourism in the area.

The following summarizes the key outcomes from the discussion:

Sustainable well managed tourism that enables good quality environmental management and preserves and celebrates nomadic culture

Khatgal and Hankh as vibrant hubs with high employment and excellent living conditions

A focus on ecotourists and those that respect local values as the target market

Focus on growing spend rather than growing numbers

Issues will have been resolved

- *Environment will have improved*
- *Experience offering will have increased*
- *Spread of development will have been managed*

Strong desire for industry and community working closely together

This will require a clear and articulated tourism plan for the destination.

Logistics

The logistics for the week were coordinated by the Ecotourism project team based in Khatgal. Whilst things generally ran smoothly, there are some improvements that could be made for subsequent training

Numbers – we had indicated that numbers between 15 and 20 were deal for all programs, there were up to 40 people in several of the courses. This made it difficult to engage everyone in interactive discussions.

Rooms – the training rooms were too small for the numbers of people that were involved. They were also not suitable for breaking out into interactive workshops nor for being able to provide tea/coffee and opportunities for networking at breaks. We would recommend that future training use local lodges that will also enable learning for the venue for programs such as customer service and hospitality.

Start-up – it is critical that rooms are ready for on time start up with fires going well in advance etc

Next training program

In terms of the next training program, we have suggested some changes that will enhance the program but this will also require effective communication between the program and the likely participants as follows:

- Participants need to have clarity in relation to the courses offered well in advance and trainers need to know the level of skill/knowledge of trainees
- Ensure all trainees know which program is when and can do back to back courses suited to their skills if required

Additional changes we propose include

- Product development workshop as a full day
- A separate and more advanced interpretation skills program
- Offer Customer Service and Hospitality plus Business Development and Finances as a full day program on the same day.
- Continue with handicrafts product development and handicrafts packaging as a full combined day program
- Focused and more advanced visitor management for park staff that looks at site management and improvements

Other potential training identified for the future included

- Cooking and menu development for tourism
- Biodiversity and species identification (for interaction)
- Biodiversity research skills (Park management)

- Experience and attractions development in national park (park managers)
- Trans border cooperative management (with Russia)
- Ranger exchanges

The project team held discussions with the park manager after the training and he indicated that 90% of his staff were involved in the training and were very pleased with the program. We believe there would be significant benefits in a study tour for senior park management and members of the Tourism Sub council to look at effective visitors management and allied issues.

Train the trainer

Several members of the Tourism sub-Council were involved in the training and had identified a desire to become trainers. We recommend a separate session for them on the next training visit to refine their approach and target who trains in what areas.

3 Proposed January training program

Day one	Travel to Khankh	Badral Yondon, Gereltuv Dashdoorov, Shatarsaikhan Biziya, Lisa Cheogyal, and Tumendelger Humbaa
Day Two		
Day Three 0900 - 1600	National parks, tourism and environmental management including focused visitor management for local sites	Gereltuv Dashdoorov, Lisa Cheogyal and Tumendelger Humbaa
	Handicrafts product development and packaging	Badral Yondon, Shatarsaikhan Biziya, and Tumendelger Humbaa
Day Four 0900 - 1600	Hospitality and customer service Business management and finance	Badral Yondon, Lisa Cheogyal, and Tumendelger Humbaa
	Product development workshop	Gereltuv Dashdoorov, Lisa Cheogyal, and Tumendelger Humbaa
Day Five	Travel to Khatgal	Badral Yondon, Gereltuv Dashdoorov, Shatarsaikhan Biziya, Lisa Cheogyal, and Tumendelger Humbaa
Day Six 0900 - 1500	Advanced interpretation	Gereltuv Dashdoorov, and Tumendelger Humbaa
	Business mentoring (by appointments)	Badral Yondon, Shatarsaikhan Biziya, Lisa Cheogyal
Day Seven	Travel to UB	Badral Yondon, Gereltuv Dashdoorov, Shatarsaikhan Biziya, Lisa Cheogyal, and Tumendelger Humbaa



Appendix 1

Evaluation of training

Appendix 2 Example of Codes of conduct

**NIUE
TOURISM BUSINESS**

Code of Practice

As consumers become more sophisticated, and the natural values of a destination are recognised, it is increasingly important to be able to demonstrate a commitment to sustainable development and encourage continuous improvement from the tourism industry and more responsible behaviours and actions by visitors.

THE PRINCIPLES

- Quality in tourism service delivery
- Proficient in tourism business
- Effective communication with customers
- Commitment to staff training
- Respect for cultural difference
- Attention to safety and security
- High standards of cleanliness and hygiene
- Care for the local ecosystem
- Reduction of waste and pollution
- Support for the local community
- Implementation and use of the code

ACTIONS

SERVICE AND PROFESSIONALISM

- Marketing and promotional materials are accurate and truthful in the nature, price and quality of the service provided
- Every effort is made to ensure guests expectations are met in the provision of service and facilities
- The business complies with all relevant laws of Niue
- The business must not allow or accommodate any form of discrimination (racial, religious, gender, disability)
- Staff are given required training and instruction in their area of work, personal hygiene and grooming and environment and cultural policies
- Procedures for the prompt handling of complaints are in place, and enquiries and refunds are dealt with properly and consistently

SAFETY & CARE

- Staff and management are trained and equipped to deal with all emergencies and emergency procedures are clearly displayed
- Cleanliness and hygiene are observed in all areas of the business operations
- Considerable care is taken in the operation and maintenance of facilities to ensure a safe environment for guests and staff at all times
- All customers and staff are treated with equal respect and consideration

SUSTAINABILITY

- Tourism activities are compatible with the local ecosystem, cultural heritage and traditions
- Tourism business is respectful of local cultural protocol and tourists are well informed about local customs, values and appropriate dress code and conduct
- Tourism business works closely with the local community and uses local labour, goods and service wherever possible

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NIUE VISITOR CODE OF CONDUCT

golden rules for your stay in Niue

With your help we can ensure Niue continues to be a great place for everyone to enjoy.

During your stay we ask that you:

- Treat all people with respect and politeness.
- Respect cultural and religious protocols and beliefs and act in a manner consistent with Niuean philosophy.
- Appreciate that not everything in Niue will be the same as in your own country.
- Respect Niue, its environment and facilities.
- Contribute to Niue's commitment to responsible tourism through appropriate waste management, energy and water conservation.

Golden Rules (from circular callouts):

- Appreciate that there may be seasonal variances
- Take all rubbish with you when you leave
- Refrain from going down sea tracks near churches during church services
- Do not swim at beaches that are closed during katoama (yellowstripe goatefish) season or when a Fono is also in place
- Dress modestly, appropriately and avoid nudity in public
- Honour our no swimming tradition near village greens or churches on Sundays
- Avoid walking through populated areas or villages in your swim suit

Fakaane, thank you

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