



Building Capacity for an Adventure Travel Guide Certification Program:

FINAL REPORT

OVERVIEW

In 2014, Pandion was hired by the Adventure Travel Trade Association (ATTA) to conduct research on the existence of international standards and certification programs for adventure travel guides. After presenting the results of this project at the Adventure Travel Worlds Summit in October of 2014, Pandion CEO Dan Moore worked with ATTA to facilitate a working group to create the first international standard for adventure travel guide: the Adventure Travel Guide Standard (ATGS).

In Summer of 2018 talks were convened between Norwegian Centres of Expertise (NCE) and representatives of the ATGS Governance Board to discuss the concept of creating a certification for adventure guides. NCE already has a training program developed in line with the ATGS. It is of interest to the outdoor and adventure travel sector to have a guide certification program that would ensure Norwegian guides are all performing at a base level. This certification would have a greater impact if it was eventually tied to an international certification.

Starting in February of 2019 Pandion conducted research to determine the feasibility of an international certification program. Specifically, is there enough interest internationally for a certification, and are these destinations willing and able to help fund the creation of this certification?

To determine feasibility, Pandion Consulting & Facilitation completed the following.

PHASE 1 – RESEARCH DESTINATIONS

Pandion identified 40 destinations to target as founding members of the guide certification program. Destinations were ranked based upon their ATDI ranking, the existence of a strong adventure tourism industry, as well as a nationwide destination marketing organization or tourism development entity. In addition to identifying the destinations, contact information was documented for conducting outreach. (See attached excel spreadsheet).

PHASE 2 - CREATE FUNDING MODEL

The first step to build an adventure travel guide certification program is to determine the cost of creating this program. (See attached budget)

Funding needs to cover the following phases:

1. Create International Certification:



- a. Assembling and convening an advisory board, representing all funders, to oversee the creation of the certification.
 - b. Assembling and convening a team to create the standard, including representatives from the funding destinations as well as industry experts.
 - c. Conducting research to build the foundation of the certification.
 - d. Creation of the certification program.
2. Create Framework for Certifying body:
 - a. Structure and makeup of the organization which will carry out the certification.
 - b. Form governance board from initial funders and key geographic positions.
 3. Launch Certification
 - a. Hire leadership positions at certification organization.
 - b. Release certification globally and obtain signatories.

In addition to determining the cost it will need to be decided different levels that destinations can commit to. Some countries will have greater resources than others, but, excluding lesser abled countries will reduce the legitimacy of the certification.

PHASE 3 – CONDUCT OUTREACH TO TARGETED DESTINATIONS / ASSOCIATIONS

After compiling the list of destinations to target, Pandion created a survey to distribute to the contacts identified. The survey contained the following introduction and 7 questions:

Guide Certification Survey

Adventure travel is a rapidly growing sector of the travel industry. Guided experiences are an important component of the adventure travel sector and as adventure travel continues to grow there has been a greater emphasis on standards for adventure travel guides. In 2015, the [Adventure Travel Guide Standard](#) was released precisely to create a framework for guides, businesses and destinations to use when recruiting, training and managing guides.

This survey is to determine whether there is interest at the destination level to participate in an international adventure travel certification program.

Question 1:

Does your destination currently offer guided adventure travel* experiences?

Yes / No

(*From the [2018 ATDI](#) report released by George Washington University and the Adventure Travel Trade Association “To meet the definition of adventure travel, a trip must take an individual outside of his or her regular environment for more than twenty-



four hours—and for no longer than one year—and include at least two of the following three experiences: participation in a physical activity, a visit to a natural environment, and a culturally immersive experience.”

Yes / No

Question 2:

Does your destination currently have a certification program specific for Adventure Travel Guides?

Yes / No

Question 3:

If you answered yes to the previous question, please describe the program and / or insert a link.

Question 4:

If an international certification for adventure travel guides existed (aligned with the [Adventure Travel Guide Standard](#)), would you promote this within your destination and encourage local guides to become certified?

Yes / No

Question 5:

Would your destination be willing to invest in creating this certification program if it came with advantages to being an early adopter?

Yes / No

Question 6:

If you answered yes to either Question 4 or 5, please complete the following:

Name:

Organization:

Contact email:

Phone number:



Survey results can be seen by visiting the following website:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-TMNLBB5Y7/>

In addition to reaching out by email, the ATWS communication platform was utilized to contact prospective destinations. This proved more effective than general email. The objective for this phase was to identify a minimum of 3 destinations interested in pursuing a certification program. In total, five destinations completed the survey - approximately 10% of contacts. All five responded that they would like to be a part of investing in an adventure travel guide certification program. Four of the five destinations will have representatives at ATWS. The fifth, Estonia,

PHASE 4 – FORM WORKING GROUP FROM PARTNER DESTINATIONS

Initially, it was intended to get interested destinations committed and on board to begin creating the certification program. Due to the timing of this phase of the project it is recommended to convene a meeting at ATWS of interested destinations to determine next steps as five out of the six destinations will have representatives at ATWS. Estonia is the only destination interested in guide certification, but not attending ATWS. Currently committed to attend this meeting are the following:

1. Guyana
2. Sweden
3. Costa Rica
4. Switzerland
5. Norway (NCE)

It may be useful to reach out to delegates from targeted destinations to attend this meeting, despite not representing a tourism board or organization. Additionally, ATTA will be invited to participate.

CONCLUSION

At this stage there are six identified countries that are interested in pursuing a certification program. Assuming these six can agree on the budget and framework, it is possible to begin this work immediately following ATWS. Additionally, once these six destinations are on board, there will likely be other destinations interested in getting engaged. Meeting in person at ATWS will help solidify the first steps.



APPENDIX 1 - PROPOSED BUDGET

	ITEM	DETAILS	TOTAL PRICE
PANDION LABOR			
		Action	
PHASE 1	Create International Certification	Estimated: 6 months	\$73,500.00
PHASE 2	Create Framework for Body	Estimated: 3 months	\$30,375.00
PHASE 3	Launch Certification	Estimated: 2 months	\$18,500.00
		TOTAL PANDION	\$122,375.00
SUB-CONTRACT			
	Item	Vendor	
PHASE 1	Create International Certification	Estimated: 6 months	
	SENIOR Contractor A	Leads a team	\$13,200.00
	SENIOR Contractor B	Leads a team	\$13,200.00
	INTERMEDIATE Contractor C	Leads on a project	\$13,200.00
	INTERMEDIATE Contractor D	Leads on a project	\$13,200.00
		TOTAL PHASE 1:	\$52,800.00
PHASE 2	Create Framework for Body	Estimated: 3 months	
	SENIOR Contractor A	Leads a team	\$6,600.00
	SENIOR Contractor B	Leads a team	\$6,600.00
	INTERMEDIATE Contractor C	Leads on a project	\$6,600.00
	INTERMEDIATE Contractor D	Leads on a project	\$6,600.00
		TOTAL PHASE 2:	\$26,400.00
PHASE 3	Launch Certification	Estimated: 2 months	
	SENIOR Contractor A	Leads a team	\$6,600.00
	SENIOR Contractor B	Leads a team	\$6,600.00
	INTERMEDIATE Contractor C	Leads on a project	\$4,400.00
	INTERMEDIATE Contractor D	Leads on a project	\$4,400.00
	Marketing Contractor	Helps to promote the certification	\$26,400.00
		TOTAL PHASE 3:	\$48,400.00
		TOTAL SUBCONTRACTORS:	\$127,600.00
SUPPLIES			
	Item	Vendor	
	Printing		\$275.00
	Research and data		\$1,100.00
		TOTAL SUPPLIES	\$1,375.00
		PANDION COSTS	\$122,375
		SUB-CONTRACTED SERVICES	\$127,600
		SUPPLIES	\$1,375
		TRAVEL COSTS	\$0
		TOTAL COSTS	\$251,350



APPENDIX 2 - FUNDING REQUIREMENTS BY PHASE

PHASE 1	AMOUNT	PRICE	
LEVEL 1		2 \$10,000	\$20,000.00
LEVEL 2		2 \$20,000	\$40,000.00
LEVEL 3		2 \$30,000	\$60,000.00
		TOTAL RAISED	\$120,000.00
		TOTAL NEEDED	\$126,300.00
		DIFFERENCE	-\$6,300.00
PHASE 2	AMOUNT	PRICE	
LEVEL 1		2 \$10,000	\$20,000.00
LEVEL 2		2 \$20,000	\$40,000.00
LEVEL 3		1 \$30,000	\$30,000.00
		TOTAL RAISED	\$90,000.00
		TOTAL NEEDED	\$63,075.00
		DIFFERENCE	\$26,925.00
PHASE 3	AMOUNT	PRICE	
MEMBERSHIP REVENUE - INDIVIDUAL		100 \$75	\$7,500.00
MEMBERSHIP REVENUE - ORGANIZATIONAL		25 \$500	\$12,500.00
LEVEL 1 - CERTIFICATIONS		100 \$50	\$5,000.00
LEVEL 2 - CERTIFICATIONS		25 \$95	\$2,375.00
TRAININGS		5 \$5,000	\$25,000.00
		TOTAL RAISED	\$52,375.00
		TOTAL NEEDED	\$39,975.00
		DIFFERENCE	-\$12,400.00

APPENDIX 3 - SAMPLE ORGANIZATIONS FOR COMPARISON

Organization	Niche	Notes	Budget
Polar Tourism Guides	Industry Association for polar guides	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Membership based(international) - Non-profit - Fee structure: Membership (company and individual) & qualification and training courses - Provide pro deals 	N/A
Approved Tourist Guides of Ireland	Association for accredited Ireland guides	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Membership based (purchased by individual guides) publicly viewed - Member of the World Federation of Tourist Guide Associations - Purely a source to advertise guide services to the public through an accredited website - Guides have different level badges 	N/A
American Mountain Guides Association	Association for mountain & climbing guides for certifications, provide resources, standards, and network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Membership and certification based - Educational Non-profit - Set the standards - Course, certifications, accreditation, advocacy & policy - International endorsed 	N/A
European Federation of Tourist Guide Associations	Qualified tourist guides in Europe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advocates for standards and quality - Membership based (all of Europe) - Trainings, seminars & courses 	

World Federation of Tourist Guide Associations	Promote tourist guides around the world	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Membership based non-profit 	"Funds will accrue from: membership dues, donations, or subsidies, a fee for attending the Federations convention, and training fees from courses."
A University Case Study on "Forming a local tour guide association"		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Partner with the county government, ministry of tourism or tourism related businesses. - Suggests becoming members of other organizations and associations i.e Ecotourism Society of Kenya. - Member fees, sponsorships, annual meetings/events 	
Certified Horsemanship Association	Certifies instructors, accrediting facilities, educational conferences/resources, and a weekly radio, webinar, and blog	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Non-profit - Sells ad opportunities! - Started first with setting standards and certify instructors, then evolved - Memberships available 	

<p>Similarly: American Canyoneering Association Association of Nature & Forest Therapy Interpretive Guides Association</p>		-	
<p>International federation of mountain guides associations</p>	<p>International guide association</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sets standards, regulatory advocacy, international trainings, resources - Revenue sources came in this order: Membership fees, partnerships, safety label, grants, other 	<p>Page 51</p>
<p>-ProGuides New Zealand -Canadian Tour Guide Association of British Colubima - Southeast Asia Tourist Guides Association</p>	<p>Hub to hire certified guides</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provides resources and trainings 	

