

Terms of Reference (TOR)

Individual Expert to Identify Three (3) Investment Projects Ready to Offer (IPROs) in Suriname's Eco-Tourism & Leisure Sector

Client/Contracting Authority: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Business and Cooperation (Suriname Investment & Trade Agency (SITA))

Location: Paramaribo with field missions to selected interior sites

Contract Type: Individual Consultant (lump-sum, deliverables-based)

Expected Level of Effort (LoE): 70–80 person-days over 12 weeks

Anticipated Start Date: TBC

1. Background & Rationale

The Suriname Investment and Trade Agency (SITA) was established by the Government by State Decree of November 11, 2021, as the only national competent authority, to act as an agent or promoter to attract, facilitate, and improve trade, export, and investment in Suriname. The specific objectives of SITA are: i) attracting FDI greenfield and expansion projects to Suriname, ii) strengthening the capacity of both current exporters - to expand their export volumes, particularly those operating in non-extractive industries and services - and potential exporters who will export for the first time, and iii) promoting linkages between local and foreign companies.

Suriname is internationally recognized as **the world's most forested nation**, with roughly **93% tropical forest cover**, exceptional biodiversity (e.g., **~715 bird species**), extensive river systems and two UNESCO World Heritage properties—**Central Suriname Nature Reserve (CSNR)** and the **Historic Inner City of Paramaribo**—plus **Jodensavanne** on the Tentative List. These endowments, alongside a multicultural society and a hurricanefree location, position Suriname to compete in highvalue eco and heritagebased tourism. Yet international awareness remains low, air access is limited, product depth is thin, infrastructure to remote sites is costly, and sector data and standards are uneven. Workforce capacity gaps are material, and regulatory clarity—especially around longterm lease/concession models and heritage incentives—constrains private investment.

Recent analytics confirm the scale of the opportunity and the work ahead. World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC, 2024) estimates Travel & Tourism's **direct GDP contribution at USD 35.4 million in 2023 (≈1.0% of GDP)** and **total contribution at USD 83.6 million (≈2.3%)**, with **2,022 direct jobs (0.9%)** and **5,043 total jobs (2.3%)**. Visitor exports were **USD 39.3 million** in 2023. WTTC projects **direct GDP growth of ~4.7% p.a.** and **total GDP growth of ~5.0% p.a.** to 2034, with **international arrivals forecast around 273,000 by 2034**. Leisure spending accounted for **~61.7%** of internal T&T spending in 2023, with business travel—partly linked to energy sector activity—at **~38.3%**. These signals indicate scope to grow nature and culture segments while leveraging businessrelated travel as a feeder.

At the policy level, the **MultiAnnual Development Plan (MOP) 2022–2026** targets an **increase of 50,000 tourists and ~9,000 new jobs**, embedding tourism within diversification, connectivity, green growth and datadriven implementation. The **National Adaptation Plan (NAP) 2019–2029** prioritizes **tourism in the medium term (years 3–6)** and calls for mainstreaming climate risk into sector planning, stronger governance and financing, and active engagement of Indigenous and Maroon communities consistent with Free, Prior and Informed Consent FPIC. The **updated National**

Biodiversity Strategy & Action Plan (NBSAP) 2024–2035 sets targets to expand and effectively manage protected areas (towards **30% terrestrial, marine and wetland coverage**), promote comanagement models and align tourism with biodiversity outcomes and ecosystem services.

For UNESCO sites, the **Sustainable Tourism Strategy & Destination Development Plans 2022–2030** define **5 national strategic initiatives**—including adoption of **co-management policy**, creation of a **PPP concession system**, improved **air and internal access**, strengthened **marketing/branding and governance**, and establishment of a **Suriname Sustainable Tourism Fund**—plus **27 destination priorities** for Paramaribo, CSNR and Jodensavanne (illustrative examples in that strategy include co-management/JV concessions, research stations, and destination management/branding measures).

Within this context, SITA intends to catalyze private investment by preparing **three (3) Investment Projects Ready to Offer (IPROs)** that are aligned with the IDB Loan Program (SU-L1056) Components 2 and 3, market-justified, environmentally and socially responsible, climate-resilient, and structured for rapid progression to feasibility and financing. The assignment will integrate Suriname’s reform agenda around: (i) **global image building & connectivity**; (ii) **regulatory reform** (data collection under a Tourism Development Act, **flexible lease/concession frameworks**, heritage incentives); and (iii) **ecosystem development** (workforce partnerships and a **Sustainable Tourism Certification** pathway). Priority screening geographies include **Bigi Pan, Upper Suriname, Galibi, Coastal Albina, North Commewijne**, and flagship nature/heritage assets (e.g., **Brownsberg, CSNR, Paramaribo UNESCO core/buffer areas**), subject to stakeholder validation and E&S screening.

2. Objectives

Overall objective: Identify and package **three high-potential eco-tourism IPROs** that are commercially viable, environmentally responsible, socially inclusive, climate-resilient, and ready for investor promotion.

Specific objectives:

1. Establish **demand drivers and target segments** (eco-adventure, birding, river/cruise, wellness, culture/heritage, scientific/research) and define Suriname’s value proposition versus comparators; quantify baseline constraints including occupancy levels, connectivity, and skills gaps.
2. **Map priority zones/sites** and enabling infrastructure; confirm land/tenure status and community interest.
3. Develop a transparent **screening & prioritization framework** incorporating Suriname’s current barriers (connectivity, data, standardization, infrastructure, leasing) and opportunities (heritage, biodiversity, diaspora links, safety, hurricane-free brand).
4. Prepare **three IPRO concept packages** with market justification, technical concepts, preliminary financial models, E&S/FPIC screening, climate and biodiversity measures, and implementation & partnership options (e.g., community–private JVs, concessions/leases, PPPs).
5. Deliver **policy-aligned advisory notes** to support the wider reform pillars: (a) global image building & connectivity taskforce inputs; (b) Tourism Development Act data schema & dashboard template; (c) options for flexible long-term leasing; (d) indicative tax/other incentives for heritage conservation; (e) outline of a workforce development and **Sustainable Tourism Certification** pathway adapted from international models.
6. Provide a practical **Action Plan** for SITA to advance each IPRO to bankability and promotion, including investor targeting, roadshow content, and data requirements.

3. Scope of Work & Key Tasks

The Consultant will execute, at minimum, the following tasks. Methodological refinements can be proposed in the Inception Report.

Task 1: Inception, Workplan

- Kickoff with SITA and the Tourism stakeholders (MTTC, Tourism Board/Authority, SHATA, Connectivity Taskforce members) to confirm objectives, governance, and decision criteria.
- **Comprehensive document review:** compile and synthesize the required document set listed in Section 1, plus any additional national/sector strategies, donor programs and regulatory texts; prepare a **Document Review Annex** with citations and implications for screening, risk, permitting, leasing/concessions, biodiversity/comanagement, FPIC, climate resilience, workforce and certification.
- Finalize methodology, sampling frame for site visits, and detailed workplan with milestones and LoE.

Task 2: Market, Connectivity & Benchmark Assessment

- Demand analysis by segment, source markets and seasonality; price/ADR and occupancy benchmarks; diaspora vs. new markets; businessrelated spillovers (e.g., oil & gas visitors) and potential crossover into nature products.
- **Connectivity review:** current routes, frequencies, seasonality, fares, load factors (where available), interline options; implications for each candidate IPRO and inputs for a Connectivity Taskforce roadmap.
- Competitor benchmarking (e.g., Costa Rica, Belize, Guyana, Aruba/Jamaica for branding/airlift, Dominican Republic for heritage incentives) covering product mix, pricing, incentives, and certification standards.
- Policy & incentive scan: investment code, PPP options, tax/lease frameworks, heritage incentives, and certification models (e.g., CSTtype system) adaptable to Suriname.
- Synthesize Suriname's USPs and constraints and define target investor/operator profiles.

Task 3: Stakeholder Mapping & Site Reconnaissance

- Field missions to assess feasibility, tenure and community interest, conservation sensitivities, carrying capacity, logistics, and security; obtain initial indications of support.

Task 4: Longlist, Screening & Prioritization

- Develop a **weighted Screening Matrix** with criteria such as market attractiveness, distinctiveness, accessibility/connection potential, capex requirement, readiness (permits/tenure), community partnership feasibility and benefitsharing, E&S risk level, climate resilience, skills availability/training needs, heritage value, scalability, and investor interest. Sites or locations with low FPIC requirements (eg government owned, already cleared forests, land not being farmed to produce food) should receive a prioritized ranking.
- **No seed concepts are prescribed.** The longlist must be built from evidence (document review, market analysis, and stakeholder inputs) and scored transparently.
- Score a **longlist of 8-10 concepts**; produce a ranked shortlist of **4-5**.
- Facilitate a validation workshop with SITA and stakeholders to agree on the **final 3 IPROs**.

Task 5: Preparation of Three (3) IPRO Packages

For each selected IPRO, prepare an investor-grade concept package (approx. 20–25 pages plus annexes) covering:

- **Project summary & rationale**, site description, target segments, and value proposition.
- **Technical concept & capacity**, including ecolodge/ecoresort typologies, lowimpact infrastructure, offgrid solutions, waste & water management, staff housing, access/jetty/airstrip needs, digital connectivity, and interpretation/experience design.
- **Ownership & partnership model**, including community–private JV or concession/lease options and indicative revenuesharing.
- **Permitting, tenure & compliance**, including conservation requirements and alignment with proposed lease flexibility.
- **Environmental & Social (E&S) screening against IFC Performance Standards**; biodiversity safeguards; cultural heritage; FPIC approach; gender/youth inclusion and MSME linkages.
- **Climate & resilience**, including lowcarbon design and adaptation measures.
- **Financials**: preliminary capex, opex assumptions, 10year cash flow, NPV/IRR, payback, and sensitivities (occupancy/ADR, capex, FX, route frequency).
- **Implementation roadmap** to feasibility and financial close, procurement options, risk allocation, monitoring KPIs.
- **Promotion materials**: 2page teaser and a 10–12slide pitch deck per IPRO.

Task 6: Reform-Support Notes & Pipeline Action Plan

- Prepare concise **Advisory Notes** (5–8 pages each) providing: (a) Connectivity Taskforce inputs and route development priorities; (b) data schema/dashboard template to underpin a Tourism Development Act; (c) options paper on lease tenure models for tourism; (d) outline of tax/other incentives for cultural heritage conservation; (e) roadmap for a Sustainable Tourism Certification program and workforce partnerships (with SHATA and training institutions).
- Portfoliolevel **Action Plan** detailing next steps, responsibilities, timelines, and technical assistance needs to progress each IPRO to bankability and launch investor outreach.

4. Deliverables & Payment Schedule

No.	Deliverable	Contents (minimum)	Due (weeks from start)	Payment %
1	Inception Report & Workplan	Methodology; site selection criteria; stakeholder map (incl. Tourism Board/Authority, SHATA, Connectivity actors); field plan; tourism data template/dashboard ; data room setup; M&E framework; Document Review Annex covering the mandatory sources listed in Section 1 with key implications and data points to be used in the screening matrix and IPROs.	Week 2	15%

2	Market, Connectivity & Benchmark Assessment	Demand analysis; connectivity review and route priorities; competitor benchmarking; policy/incentives scan; certification options; gap analysis; USPs.	Week 4	
3	Site Reconnaissance Note	Maps & site visit notes; community engagement records; tenure snapshots; risk/E&S screening summaries.	Week 6	
4	Longlist & Screening Matrix	10–12 concepts scored; shortlist of 4–5; validation workshop; agreed selection of 3 IPROs.	Week 8	30%
5	Three IPRO Concept Packages	Full concept packs with financial models, E&S/FPIC screening, climate analysis, implementation roadmap, teaser + pitch deck for each IPRO.	Week 11	
6	Reform-Support Concept Notes (full set)	Five fuller notes (≈10–15 pages each): (a) Connectivity Taskforce inputs & route-development priorities; (b) Tourism data schema/dashboard & Act implementation outline; (c) Options for flexible long-term lease models for tourism; (d) Tax/financial incentives for cultural heritage conservation (benchmarks and draft incentive menu); (e) Sustainable Tourism Certification roadmap & workforce development program design with SHATA/partners.	Week 11	30%
7	Final Report & Portfolio Action Plan	Consolidated report; portfolio action plan; investor targeting strategy; data room completion.	Week 12	25%

All deliverables will be submitted in English (Word and PDF), with financial models in Excel. Slide decks in PowerPoint.

5. Reporting & Management

- The Consultant reports to a designated staff member of SITA
- SITA will convene a **light Steering Group** for this assignment, including representatives of the Tourism Board/Authority, SHATA, connectivity/airport authorities, and relevant Ministries to validate key milestones.
- A short **biweekly progress update** will be shared with the PM and the appointed representative of SITA.
- Key validation points: (i) Inception; (ii) Shortlist workshop; (iii) Draft IPROs; (iv) Advisory Notes.
- SITA will facilitate introductions, meeting logistics, and letters of support where appropriate.

6. Consultant Qualifications

- Advanced degree in tourism development, business/finance, environmental management, economics, planning, or related field.
- 10+ years relevant experience, including at least 5 years leading ecotourism investment identification or resort/lodge development in emerging markets; Amazon/Caribbean experience is an advantage.
- Demonstrated capability in investment screening, financial modelling, and packaging projects for private investors/Development Finance Institutions (DFIs).
- Strong knowledge of E&S safeguards (e.g., IFC Performance Standards), biodiversity management, and participatory governance models, including FPIC process.
- Familiarity with spatial screening tools and climate-resilient design principles; use of open-source mapping tools is encouraged.
- Experience advising on tourism sector reform and ecosystem conservation (e.g., tourism data systems, certification schemes such as CST or equivalent, workforce programs with industry bodies like SHATA).
- Excellent stakeholder engagement skills and ability to obtain preliminary buy-in from communities, authorities, and private operators.
- Fluency in English required; Dutch and/or Sranan Tongo are assets.

Consultants will be selected in accordance with the procedures set out in the Inter-American Development Bank: [*Policies for the Selection and Contracting of Consultants financed by the Inter-American Development Bank*](#) GN-2350-15 and is open to all eligible bidders as defined in the policies.