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DELIVERABLE 2: SALES AND MARKETING STRATEGY FOR REVISED DESTINATION WEBSITE

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Table of Contents

Acronyms	4
Executive Summary	5
Introduction	6
Roles and Responsibilities	7
Brand Strategy	9
Target Markets	9
Consumers	10
Domestic Market	11
International Market	12
Competition & Pricing	12
Messaging Strategy	13
Website Strategy	14
Search Engine Optimization	18
Search Engine Advertising	19
Blog	20
Social Media	22
Facebook	22
Twitter	23
YouTube	24
Social Media Campaign: Visit Chocó	25
Lead Nurturing: Email Marketing	26
Indirect Sales	27
Local Hotels	27
Trade Marketing	28
Website Trade Portal	29
Trade Sales Tools	29
Trade Newsletter	30
Measuring Success	30
PR & Media	31

Acronyms

BIOREDD+	Biodiversity - Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
CMS	Content Management System
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CTE	Community Tourism Enterprise
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
PNN	Parques Nacionales Naturales (National Natural Parks)
PPC	Pay Per Click
PPM	Pay Per Mille
PPP	Pay Per Performance
PR	Public Relations
RSS	Rich Site Summary
SEO	Search Engine Optimization
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Executive Summary

The goal of this document is to present a comprehensive marketing plan for the Chocó Community Tourism Alliance. The activities proposed in this strategy support the achievement of BIOREDD+ program results by improving tourism marketing in Nuquí/Utría National Natural Park, which in turn supports sustainable economic growth in the region.

The overall objective of Solimar's subcontract is to assist BIOREDD+ to carry out the next phase of its ecotourism activities in the Nuquí/Utría National Natural Park area, supporting the conservation of Colombian biodiversity, while supporting USAID's and the Government of Colombia's commitment to sustainably manage and utilize environmental assets, and preserve biodiversity for economic growth.

This strategy illustrates activities to be completed by Solimar International and Palenque Tours on behalf of the Chocó Community Tourism Alliance. Many of the activities described in this strategy exceed the contractual scope of work for both Solimar International and Palenque Tours, however they have been included in this strategy as they are seen as key drivers of program success.

Detailed information about the operational structure, management, and business goals of the Chocó Community Tourism Alliance is available in Deliverable 3: Business Plan for Destination Marketing Alliance. More information about the Chocó Community Tourism Alliance brand and brand strategy is available in Deliverable 4: Updated Tourism Brand Messaging Strategy.

Introduction

In late 2013, four community tourism organizations on the Pacific coast of Colombia formed an Alliance in an effort to collaboratively market their region, standardize service standards, share best practices, and manage the destination. The organization consists of community tourism associations in the Colombia department of Chocó. The four community tourism enterprises are:

- *Corporacion Comunitario Termales* which offers guided hikes in the rainforest
- *Jovi Guias Pinchinde* which offers river tours
- *Ecoguias Coqui* which offer river tours
- *Playa Blanca*, a family that operates a restaurant on a small island remarkable for its white-sand beaches and good snorkeling.

The communities themselves are clustered along the coast about an hour south of the town of Nuquí, Colombia. Except for Playa Blanca, each of the communities is each comprised of roughly 200-500 people, nearly all of who are ethnically Afro-Colombian. Playa Blanca is comprised of a single family that operates tourism services within Utria National Natural Park, by concession of the Parks Department of Colombia.

This marketing strategy is designed to promote the Alliance to a global market of travelers in an effort to drive direct bookings of the Alliance's tourism products and to create sales partnerships with members of the travel trade.

Due to the limited nature of the Alliance's marketing budget, this strategy prioritizes cost-effective, targeted marketing tactics designed to deliver tangible results and quantifiable indicators of success. This strategy leverages online marketing tools to reach new and existing audiences. This reflects a rapidly shifting paradigm in tourism marketing wherein consumers are increasingly turning to online travel planning tools to decide where to travel and plan their experiences within destinations.

A 2012 Google survey of travelers indicates the importance of a strong online presence for businesses and destinations that market to consumers:

- Fewer than 6% bothered with offline resources like magazines and newspapers.
- 43% reported that the Internet prompted them to book a travel experience.
- 49% reported that review sites influenced their decision to book a hotel.
- 62% reported that they read travel reviews and traveler comments when planning their trip.
- 83% of respondents reported that they preferred to use online resources to research their most recent holiday.
- 85% of respondents reported that they used search engines to plan their most recent trip.

This marketing strategy recommends the use of several online marketing channels to build a strong online brand presence for the Alliance while promoting the Chocó region as a destination. By developing a strong online presence, the Alliance will position itself to be found by travelers in all stages of the travel-planning process, which will allow it to capture not just the market share of travelers already intending to visit the destination, but also to influence prospective travelers that are comparing different destinations for their next trip.

Concurrent with its outreach to consumers, the Alliance will market to members of the travel trade in an effort to expand sales partnerships with tour operators and travel agents in key source markets. This strategy will rely on targeted outreach to prospective partners that are likely to sell the Alliance's product. The Alliance will support sales partners with regular marketing collateral, which will encourage sales partners to market the Alliance to their clients and help them close more sales.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Alliance faces many logistical challenges in the implementation of this strategy, including:

- **Language challenges:** The Alliance must communicate with target audiences in North America, Europe and South America, which requires language skills in at least English and Spanish and preferably also German and French.
- **Communication challenges:** Given that the most important tool in the Alliance's marketing strategy is the Internet, the successful implementation of this strategy requires consistent and dependable Internet access as well as technical skills to navigate complicated marketing technologies. The communities represented by the Alliance do not have dependable access to the Internet.

In recognition of these challenges, the Alliance has formed a partnership with Palenque Tours S.A.S. of Medellín to act as the sales and marketing representative of the Alliance in exchange for a 20% commission on sales. Palenque Tours was selected out of a pool of over ten Medellín-based tour operators that Solimar met with for the following reasons:

- Palenque Tours has native language skills in English, Spanish and German, the most important languages among the Alliance's target markets.
- Palenque Tours has demonstrated an interest in developing and marketing community tourism products in Chocó and has experience marketing and selling tours in region.
- Palenque Tours has ties to German outbound tour operators, which will be key to promoting the Alliance in that market.
- Palenque Tours has deep ties to the Colombian media, which it will leverage to promote the Alliance.

Unless otherwise noted, Palenque Tours will be responsible for implementing the activities outlined in this strategy, per the conditions of its separate memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the BIOREDD+ Project. Solimar International will support Palenque Tours in the implementation of this strategy through four phases:

Phase 1: Systems configuration and content creation

(February – March, 2014)

- Solimar International will develop and launch marketing platforms described in this strategy, including the Alliance website and social media platforms.
- Solimar International and Palenque Tours will work collaboratively to develop marketing content and create marketing collateral.
- Solimar International will benchmark key performance indicators to track program success.

Phase 2: Capacity building and marketing strategy implementation

(April – May, 2014)

- Solimar International will manage the day-to-day implementation of this marketing strategy, including outreach to travel trade and active marketing to consumer markets.
- Palenque Tours will support the implementation of this strategy under the strategic guidance of Solimar International.
- Solimar International will build Palenque Tours' capacity to implement this strategy through regular communication and a marketing training workshop on site.
- Solimar International will monitor and report on key indicators of program success.

Phase 3: Strategic support

(June – August, 2014)

- Palenque Tours will take over the day-to-day implementation of this marketing strategy.
- Solimar International will be available for regular consultation and provide strategic and tactical support to Palenque Tours as needed.
- Solimar International will monitor and report on key indicators of program success.

Phase 4: Handover

(September, 2014)

- Palenque Tours will manage the day-to-day implementation of the marketing strategy.
- Palenque Tours will monitor and report on key indicators of program success.

- Palenque Tours will be responsible for determining the strategic direct of marketing activities moving forward.

Brand Strategy

The development of a strong brand is crucial to the Alliance's effort to communicate what the region has to offer to target markets and to differentiate itself from the competition. In January 2014, Solimar International conducted a brand visioning workshop with representatives of the four communities participating in the Alliance. During the branding workshop participants were asked to share:

- Their opinion on the strengths and weaknesses of the destination
- Their impression of the target markets for the destination
- What colors, symbols, and images ought to be used in the brand

Based on the input of the community members during the branding workshop, and with the feedback of members of the BIOREDD+ team, Solimar International has created the following visual identity for the Chocó Community Tourism Alliance:



A complete description of the brand as well as brand use guidelines is available in Deliverable 4: Updated Tourism Brand Messaging Strategy submitted on February 28, 2014.

Target Markets

The Alliance's marketing activities will target two major audiences: consumers (travelers) and travel trade (tour operators and travel agents).

The Alliance will broadly target travelers that are motivated to visit destinations and patronize businesses that embrace the tenants of ecotourism and community-based tourism, including:

- Authenticity
- Uniqueness
- Quality
- Active participation

Globally, this market is defined by relatively high incomes and travel budgets in excess of \$2,000 per year. This market tends to be experienced travelers who value relatively “undiscovered” or lesser-visited destinations. This market tends to be over 45 years old. The largest source markets for this type of traveler are North America and Western Europe.

This market is drawn largely from the adventure and soft adventure travel market, which spends over \$263 billion annually in tourism receipts. This market experiences average yearly growth of 65%, driven by consumer demand for “natural and cultural discovery”.¹

While this market is increasingly turning to the Internet to plan travel experiences, it is still served by a global network of tour operators and travel agents, many of which specialize in ecotourism, community tourism or “green travel” experiences. These niche operators and agents will be the Alliance’s target market.

Consumers

Traveler Profile

A 2013 survey of travel agents conducted by Travel Guard found that ecotourism products, including wildlife and cultural activities, attract more sophisticated travelers than typical beach holiday products.²

- 51% of respondents reported that “green travel” as a motivator for travel decisions has remained constant for the past ten years and 24% reported that interest in “green” travel is the highest it’s been in the past decade.
- Asked what ecotourism activity was most popular among their clients, 22% of agents answered “animal-related activities like safaris and bird watching”, 18% answered “visiting national parks”, and 16% answered “learning about local culture by attending community events or visiting villages”.

¹ Bricker, Kelly S. *Trends and Issues for Ecotourism and Sustainable Tourism*.

<http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/4099Presentation%200.1%20Kelly%20Bricker%20-%20full%20presentation.pdf>

² Ecotourism Travel Trends, April 2013. Accessed at:

<https://www.travelguard.com/newsroom/tgupdate-april2013-Ecotourism-Travel-Trends/>

- Asked the average age of their clients that booked ecotourism activities, 64% of agents reported that the average age was over 45 years old, 24% reported that the average age was 35-45, followed by 25-34 (11%). Fewer than 1% of their clients were 18-24 years

To get a sense of what type of consumer is currently buying travel packages in the Nuquí region, Solimar International conducted a survey of ten Colombian businesses that sell packages to the destination in December 2013. Three of the businesses were hotels near Nuquí and seven were tour operators based in Medellín. The survey revealed:

- The majority of tourists buying Chocó packages are Colombian. Colombians made up 67% of the sales of the ten businesses.
- Europeans accounted for 27% of the market. Of these, nearly all were German, Swiss, Dutch or English.
- North Americans accounted for 9% of all sales. Of these, 100% were from the United States.
- Only 1% of the clients of all ten businesses were from a country other than Colombia, Germany, Switzerland, France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom or the United States.

Length of Stay

The majority of travelers who visit the region purchase vacation packages of 3-5 days. Packages of 5-7 days were also popular. Only one operator sold travel packages of fewer than 3 days.

Average Age

Based on records kept by the community tourism associations of Jovi, Termales, and Coqui, we know that that the average age of travelers who visited the communities in 2013 was slightly over 33 years old. However, this number probably skews slightly young as 2-3 large groups of school children reduced the average age by several years.

Domestic Market

Colombians account for the majority of travelers currently visiting Chocó and are a significant market for the Alliance. The majority of these are visiting Chocó for a long weekend, generally with their families. The largest share of Colombian travelers is from Medellín, as only Medellín offers direct scheduled flights to Nuquí. Although they may conduct some research online, most Colombian travelers purchase vacation packages from tour operators and travel agents that operate storefront sales office in Medellín or Bogotá.

International Market

Colombia is one of the fastest growing tourism destinations in the world. International tourism arrivals to the country have increased by nearly 300% over the past decade and Colombia has consistently outpaced regional tourism growth since at least 2000³.

The United States is the largest single source market for international arrivals to Colombia, accounting for nearly a quarter of all international arrivals. Europe accounts for the next largest share of visitors at 20%, followed by Venezuela (16%), Peru (7%) and Brazil (7%).

According to the survey conducted by Solimar International, nearly 40% of travelers that arrived in the Nuquí region in 2013 were from Europe or North America. This is clearly already a major market for the destination. Given the rapid growth in rates of international arrivals in Colombia and the global rise in international tourism, this is likely to only grow in the coming years.

International source markets will be the primary target audiences for the Alliance's marketing activities for a number of reasons:

- The local competition to reach international markets is much less fierce than that of markets in Medellín and Bogotá, since the majority of local competitors only market to Colombians.
- As a result of the Alliance's partnership with Solimar International and Palenque Tours (which has German roots), it will benefit from a deep understanding of the North American and German markets, and established professional networks within the travel trade in those markets.
- Given the rapid growth in international arrivals to Colombia and the fact that relatively few of these travelers are currently visiting Chocó, there is a potential for much more rapid growth than there is among Colombian markets.
- International travelers are less affected by regional travel patterns, so by focusing its marketing on international travelers, the Alliance can drive business during what are otherwise slow periods, such as mid-week and low season.

Competition & Pricing

As a provider of community-based tourism activities, the Alliance has no significant competition in the region. There are a few activity providers that offer diving, kayaking and surfing products, but none of these are in direct competition with the Alliance, which will market experiences away from the beach, such as river tours and hiking in the jungle.

The Alliance will encounter competition in its efforts to bundle, market and sell multiday itineraries. The Alliance's competition is the handful of mid- to high-end accommodation

³ Colombia: Back on the Map of World Tourism, World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) 2009, 17.

providers in the region that offer comparable multiday packages. The majority of these hotels are located in the area of Guachalito, between the communities of Termales and Jovi. These hotels offer multiday packages that bundle accommodation, meals, local transportation, activities and guiding services. These hotels are of similar quality and offer products at a similar price to the Alliance. Since these businesses offer similar products and are located within a few hundred yards of one another, they are primarily differentiated based on price:

Hotel	Location	Quality	Approx. Price per Night ⁴
Las Cabañas de Beto y Marta	Guachalito	High end	\$ 320,000
El Cantil Cabañas Ecológicas	Guachalito	High end	\$ 316,000
Cabañas Nautilos* (<i>includes airfare</i>)	Guachalito	Mid-range	\$ 230,000
Morromico	Morromico	High end	\$ 220,000
Chocó Community Tourism Alliance			\$ 216,000
Piedra Piedra	Guachalito	Mid-range	\$ 190,000
La Joveseña	Guachalito	High end	\$ 180,000

Messaging Strategy

Proexport identifies two major motivators that drive tourism in the region: nature and adventure. Within these buckets, Proexport identifies the following activities and attractions as primary motivators of travel to the region:

Nature	Adventure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whale watching • Bird watching • Marine turtles • Venomous frogs • Scuba diving • PNN Utria • Mangroves • Orchids 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scuba • Surfing

In addition to these motivators, the Alliance will message the following activities and attractions:

Culture	Geography	Soft Adventure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous community visits • Afro-Colombian community visits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beaches • Rain forest • Mountains and volcanoes • Hot springs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hiking • Canoeing and kayaking

⁴ High season average, per person, based on double occupancy

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gastronomy • Artisanal fishing and agriculture • Artisanal goods and handicrafts • Music 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waterfalls • Warm weather • Remote location 	
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The Alliance’s messaging will include a mix of these motivators. Messages around the geography, in particular the beaches and rain forest, are especially compelling for travelers; however, focusing marketing messages exclusively on beach vacations fails to properly differentiate the Alliance and the destination vis-à-vis regional competitors. The Alliance’s largest competitive advantage is in its ability to deliver authentic community experiences, so this should factor heavily into its marketing messaging.

Community and cultural tourism is a large and growing niche market. By properly messaging its cultural offering, the Alliance will reach a valuable target market:⁵

- In a 2011 survey of Conde Nast Traveler readers, 93% reported that travel companies should be responsible for protecting the environment.
- In the same survey, 58% of respondents reported that their hotel choice is influenced by the support that the hotel gives to the local community.
- In a 2012 TripAdvisor survey, 71% of respondents said that they plan to make more eco-friendly choices in the next 12 months.
- In a 2012 Nielsen Wire survey, 66% of consumers from around the world reported that they would prefer to buy products and services from companies that have implemented programs to give back to their communities.
- The same survey reported that 46% of consumers are willing to pay extra to patronize businesses with corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs.

Website Strategy

Overview

The Alliance will develop a single website, www.VisitChocó.com, designed to represent the Alliance and drive bookings of multiday vacation packages. The Alliance’s website will be its most important tool in reaching its audiences and making direct sales.

The Alliance’s website is the hub of its online marketing activities. Other marketing activities will be designed to drive visitors to the website, while the website itself will be designed to convert these visitors into bookings.

⁵ Bricker, Kelly S. *Trends and Issues for Ecotourism and Sustainable Tourism*. <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/4099Presentation%200.1%20Kelly%20Bricker%20-%20full%20presentation.pdf>



The website will convert website visitors into bookings or sales leads through the following calls to action:

- Book a tour: Leads to a form where website visitors submit an inquiry to the Alliance’s sales partner (Palenque Tours).
- Ask an expert: A contact form where website visitors can contact the Alliance’s sales partner for more information about the product or the destinations, or for general assistance planning a trip.
- Sign up for the newsletter: An email capture for visitors to continue to receive information about the destination.
- Subscribe to the blog: An email capture to get blog content delivered directly to email inboxes.
- Follow on social media: Links to the Alliance’s social media platforms.

Content Strategy

The Internet has become the most important tool in the travel planning process for travelers, yet there is very little information about the Chocó region available online because there is no entity exclusively dedicated to actively promoting the region. This presents a valuable opportunity for the Alliance to fill that gap. The Alliance’s website strategy will be based on becoming the most comprehensive source for travel planning information for travelers. As a result, the website will look less like a typical tour operator business website and more like a destination website.

This strategy has many advantages, including:

- By presenting objective, practical travel planning information, the Alliance gains brand credibility among target audiences, increasing the likelihood that website visitors book a package through the Alliance rather than a competitor.
- By redefining its audience from *people who want to participate in a community tourism experience* to *anybody considering a trip to Chocó*, the Alliance expands

its potential market greatly, presenting an opportunity to sell its packages to prospective travelers who were not previously considering a community tourism experience.

- By shifting the focus of its promotion away from the Alliance itself and toward the destination as a whole, the Alliance has the opportunity to drive more total arrivals to the destination while ensuring that those arrivals visit more places and patronize more businesses within the destination.
- By building a website that has the framework to highlight to other businesses (such as hotels), the Alliance has the opportunity in the future to sell these businesses directly to travelers, earning a commission on each transaction (for more information on this arrangement, see Deliverable 3: Business Plan for Destination Marketing Alliance).

Website Content

Solimar International and Palenque Tours will develop the website content. Content will be organized under the following top-level navigation menus:

- **About Chocó:** This will include pages with information such as how to get there, typical weather, frequently asked questions, and information about the people and culture.
- **Accommodation:** The website will include listings of those hotels and posadas in the region that have offered the Alliance discounted rates or sales commissions.
- **Information about activities:** A listing of the more popular activities in the region, with compelling visual imagery to inspire travelers.
- **Communities:** Information about each of the participating communities, with an explanation about why visitors should consider visiting each.
- **Travel Packages:** Descriptions of each of the Alliance's multiday travel packages, with the option of booking a tour directly from the site.
- **Blog:** This will lead to the website's blog content.
- **Contact:** Various methods of contacting the Alliance's sales partner, including email, phone, or Skype.

All website content will be available in English, Spanish and German. Website users will be able to navigate between the three languages via buttons on each web page.

Content Management System

The website will be built and managed using the content management system (CMS) Joomla. A CMS is a software that stores every piece of website content, such as text, photos, videos or documents. Joomla is one of the most popular CMS available because it is free and its code is open-source. The Joomla platform will allow the website manager to add, remove, or edit website content with relative ease, since it does not require technical skills such as coding to make changes. The Alliance website will be built using

an existing Joomla website “template” to keep website development costs as low as possible.

Online Bookings

The website will feature booking forms where website visitors can indicate their interest in any product offered by the Alliance. When submitted, these inquiries will be delivered instantly and automatically to Palenque Tours’ sales office by email. It will be the responsibility of Palenque Tours to follow up on each inquiry and close each sale.

When it is launched, the website will not include an online payment option such as credit card processing; however, this functionality may be built in at a future date.

Website Management, Hosting and Maintenance

The website will be developed by Solimar International. Upon completion of the website, management of the site will be transferred to the Alliance’s sales and marketing partner, Palenque Tours. After the website is handed over, Palenque Tours will be responsible for day-to-day management of the website and for its promotion through marketing activities. In return for managing and marketing the website, Palenque Tours will receive all booking inquiries that are submitted through the website.

The cost of the website domain name (URL) and one year of hosting will be paid by Solimar International. Thereafter, hosting and maintenance costs will be the responsibility of Palenque Tours.

Measuring Performance

The most important indicator of website performance will be the number of sales inquiries that the Alliance receives through the website. This figure will be tracked and reported by the Alliance’s sales and marketing partner, Palenque Tours.

Secondary indicators of website performance include:

- Website traffic: the total number of visits the website receives.
- Unique visitors: the total number of people who visit the website, where each person is only counted once regardless of how many times they return to the site.
- Bounce rate: the percentage of people who leave the website having viewed only one page.

The Alliance will use Google Analytics to track website performance. Google Analytics is a powerful, free, user-friendly analytics tool that tracks a wide variety of website performance indicators using a tracking code that is installed in the website code.

Solimar International will work with Palenque Tours to track and report website key performance indicators for the first six months of marketing activities.

Monthly website traffic targets:

	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Website Visits		500	500	750	750	1000	1000	1250	1250	1500

Search Engine Optimization

Overview

Search engine optimization (SEO) is the process of improving a website's rank for given search terms on the results pages of search engines such as Google. A website's position on search engine results pages is directly related to the number of people who visit the site. A June 2013 study by Chitka, an online advertising network, found that the top listing for a given term on Google's results page receives over 33% of the search traffic for that term. The second result receives only 18% of search traffic, and the third result receives only 11%. The results drop off precipitously after that, with the fourth, fifth, and sixth results receiving only 8%, 6% and 4% of the traffic respectively. The study also concludes that it is crucial to be on the first page of results, as 92% of the total traffic for a given search term goes to results on the first page.⁶

Each search engine has its own algorithm to calculate a website's rank on its results page. These algorithms are kept secret and are adjusted frequently (several times per day) to prevent marketers from "gaming" the system and to ensure the most accurate results for the end user. However, despite how search engines may tweak their algorithms, search engine rankings are always based on two general factors: on-page elements and off-page elements.

On-page SEO

On-page SEO elements are factors that the search engine uses to determine how relevant a website is to each search term. The most import of these is the website content itself, including the use and frequency of keywords and phrases. On-page SEO elements also include "back-end" components such as meta-tags, page descriptions and site navigation.

Solimar International will contribute to the on-page SEO of the Alliance's website by using targeted keywords in website text, using proper "meta tags" and adhering to SEO best practices while developing the website. The website blog will also contribute to the

⁶ Lee, Jessica, *No 1 Position in Google Gets 33% of Search Traffic (Study)*.
<http://searchenginewatch.com/article/2276184/No.-1-Position-in-Google-Gets-33-of-Search-Traffic-Study>

website’s on-page SEO by regularly publishing content that targets specific valuable keywords.

Off-page SEO

Off-page elements are how a search engine determines a website’s trustworthiness. These factors include how many other websites link to a given website and how trust-worthy *those* websites are. Other factors a search engine may consider are how long website visitors tend to stay on a given site or the age of the website’s domain name. Inbound links from other websites are the most important element of off-page SEO. Search engines treat these links like votes of confidence from other sites, so they determine the overall authority of the website.

To increase the number of websites linking to the Alliance website, the Alliance will implement several activities, including:

- The development of a media strategy to increase the number of mentions of the Alliance and increase the number of articles that include links to the Alliance website.
- The Alliance will encourage key audiences to share blog content, which will lead to links back to the Alliance website.
- The Alliance will implement a social media campaign with links to relevant landing pages on the Alliance website.

Measuring Performance

To measure the website’s search engine optimization, the Alliance will use Google Analytics to track the total share of website traffic that originates from search engines. The Alliance will set a target of at least 30% website traffic from search engines beginning three months after website launch. (In month one, the Alliance would expect the bulk of its website traffic to originate from people involved in the project who would be visiting the site directly. There is also typically a delay between when a website is launched and when it is “indexed” by search engines and begins appearing in results.)

Monthly SEO Targets

	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Traffic from Search		30%	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%

Search Engine Advertising

Major search engines, Google in particular, offer opportunities for marketers to pay to appear in search results. Marketers use search engine advertising networks to define

particular search terms they would like to rank for, then set their advertising budget. The search engine will show the advertised website to search engine users who search for related search terms. There are essentially three models for search engine advertising:

- Pay per mille (PPM): The advertiser pays the search engine based on the number of people who see the advertisement.
- Pay per click (PPC): The advertiser pays the search engine each time somebody clicks on the advertisement.
- Pay per performance (PPP): The advertiser pays the search engine each time somebody click on the advertisement, then performs a desired activity on the advertiser's website, such as filling out a form or completing a purchase.

There are unique benefits to advertising on search engines, such as the ability to target very specific audiences, the flexibility to change advertisements quickly and easily, and access to detailed performance analytics. Nevertheless, we do not recommend that the Alliance spend money on search engine advertising. Due to the relative absence of high-quality online content related to travel in the Chocó, the Alliance's website should be able to rank for relevant search terms "organically" (without having to pay to improve its rank).

Blog

Like traditional websites, blogs are platforms that publish content on the Internet. The main difference between a blog and a website is that blog content is updated regularly and published chronologically, as opposed to a website which is usually composed of static content arranged thematically. Other important features of a blog are the integration of comment forms that allow readers to interact and respond to content and content syndication via Rich Site Summary (RSS) feeds.

The Alliance will introduce a blog within its website framework. The blog will feature inspirational and informational content about the destination and the project, including special events, destination news and updates, and general travel planning information. Palenque Tours will be responsible for writing and publishing blog content.

The Alliance will publish blog content that targets specific keywords and phrases that are commonly searched in search engines like Google. This will improve the website's SEO and help drive website traffic.

The blog will adhere to the following best practices for search engine optimization:

- Blog post includes 2-3 keywords
- Keyword(s) appear naturally 3-5 times in post
- Blog post title contains (at least) one keyword
- Blog keyword is used in URL

- Blog post uses keywords in H2 titles
- Blog post title is less than 75 characters
- Blog post is at least 150 words
- Blog post contains clear call to action
- Keywords are identified in blog metadata
- Metadata is fewer than 155 characters
- Images contain unique alt tags
- Blog contains 1 link to external website
- Blog post contains 1-3 links to the Alliance website pages and other blog posts
- All links open in a new window

The blog is also an opportunity for the Alliance to project a brand “voice” and communicate directly with prospective travelers. For the sake of brand consistency, the blog will adhere to the following style standards:

- Blog author is identified by name, photo, and 1-2 line bio
- Blog title is compelling: a question, a list, a checklist or an authoritative statement
- All blog content is original and previously unpublished
- Blog post is 150 - 400 words
- Blog content follows consistent grammar rules
- Blog post contains at least one image, preferably more
- Blog tone is informal but informative
- Avoids conditional words like “probably, maybe, should, might, potentially”
- May use infrequent contractions (won’t, aren’t, don’t, I’ve, you’ve, we’re)
- Does not assume that reader has seen previous blog posts
- Paragraphs are 3-8 lines
- Sentences are short and to the point
- Includes links where appropriate
- Contains a call to action for lead generation or contact information
- All blog posts are published in English, German, and Spanish

Measuring Performance

The primary metric of success for the blog will be blog post views, which indicates the number of people who read each blog post. This will be tracked using Google analytics.

	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
# of Blog Posts Published (per month)	1	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Blog post views	20	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80

Social Media

Social media allows a tourism brand to come to life, and the social media platforms should demonstrate the Alliance's unique voice and inspire visitors through regular, engaging dynamic images and stories. Building a loyal and interactive online community is critical to positioning the Alliance in the decision set for potential Chocó travelers. A vibrant online community allows those who have already visited the region to share their experiences and provides those who are interested in traveling with a resource to make an informed decision.

Social media channels are becoming more and more abundant, each with a unique platform for engagement. In order to maximize limited resources, it will be crucial to prioritize the platforms that are most important and effective for the identified target markets. Many businesses falter by overextending their online presence and diffusing their efforts.

The following platforms have been selected as the most beneficial for the Alliance's marketing program. Solimar International will configure and launch each of the following social media platforms. Palenque Tours will be responsible for the day-to-day management of each platform:

Facebook

Overview

Facebook is a social networking platform that connects people and keeps them up to date with friends through photo, link, and video sharing and commenting. There are also an increasing number of Facebook "apps" through which users can deepen their experience with the platform. For example, apps can aggregate travelers' reviews or photos of destinations or can display sample itineraries. Facebook allows two types of users: individuals who have "profile" pages, and organizations, which have "fan" pages. The Alliance will maintain a presence on Facebook through fan pages.

Facebook has over 900 million active users. It has become such a ubiquitous social media tool that simply maintaining a business profile page is a signal to consumers of a business's legitimacy. The Facebook business page serves as a powerful medium to reach new audiences, interact with the Alliance's online community, solicit customer support, promote content that links back to the Alliance homepage, and to allow loyal customers to further engage with the community tourism enterprise.

The Alliance will maintain two Facebook business pages, one in English and one in Spanish. The Alliance may introduce a German-language business page in the future but will not be expected to launch a German-language page from the beginning due to time constraints. Except for the language difference, the content on both pages will be essentially the same. The Alliance will post original content to each page at least once per

day. This content will be inspirational and valuable to the Alliance’s fans. Examples of good content are:

- Events
- Contests
- Ask a question
- Ask fans to fill in the blank
- Offer trivia
- Ask fans to post photos
- Weekly themes (i.e. trivia Tuesday, photo Friday)
- Local news, weather, updates, milestones
- Funny stories
- Great photos or videos
- Links to relevant content on other websites

This type of content is intended to engage the Alliance’s fans and provide them a reason to continue following the Alliance and to share its content with their friends. The content will not be overtly self-promotional, but rather will focus on content that is interesting and valuable to people who have visited the region or are considering a trip.

Measuring Success

The primary metric to measure success on Facebook will be the number of “fans” that the business page has. In addition, the Alliance will use Facebook’s built-in “Insights” feature to gain a deeper understanding of its community’s interaction with its content, such as which posts are the most “liked” and most “shared”, as well as detailed demographic information about its fans, which it will use to ensure that it is reaching its target markets.

	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
# of Facebook Fans	50	150	250	350	450	550	650	750	850	950

Twitter

The term “micro-blog” was developed to define Twitter – a platform that aggregates updates from users that are no larger than 140 characters. Twitter has become one of the world’s fastest growing social media tools. The brevity of the messages and the speed with which content can be spread encourages instantaneous dialogue about recent events, new products, or Internet content.

The Alliance will use Twitter to listen to ongoing conversations and engage directly with prospective travelers. The Alliance will use social media monitoring and publishing software such as TweetDeck to follow Twitter conversations relevant to particular

keywords and phrases (such as “community tourism”, “Colombia + tourism”, or “Chocó Colombia”). This will allow the Alliance to engage with travelers discussing the destination in real time.

By engaging with these audiences, the Alliance has an opportunity to direct them towards relevant marketing content (e.g. blog posts or website) or answer questions directly.

Measuring Performance

The primary metric of success will be the number of Twitter “followers” that the Alliance’s Twitter handles have.

An insightful secondary metric is the number of website visits that the Alliance receives that originate from links embedded in Tweets. This is measurable using Google Analytics or from using custom, trackable URLs using services such as bit.ly or ow.ly.

	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
# of Twitter Followers	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55

YouTube

Tourism by nature is highly visual. Video is an exceptional means of conveying detailed stories in a quick, digestible way. YouTube is the second most utilized search engine after Google for those making travel-related decisions.

The Alliance will create a YouTube channel where it will aggregate videos highlighting the destination. The Alliance will only maintain one YouTube channel that will include content in English, German, and Spanish. There are several videos already available that the Alliance can be highlighting, including promotion videos produced by Proexport. In addition, the Alliance will encourage visitors to post their own homemade videos from the destination.

Measuring Success

YouTube makes it easy to track the number of views that each video receives, but the Alliance should not measure its success based on the number of people that view its content. It is more important that the Alliance simply has the videos available, as they are inspirational sales tools for prospective travelers.

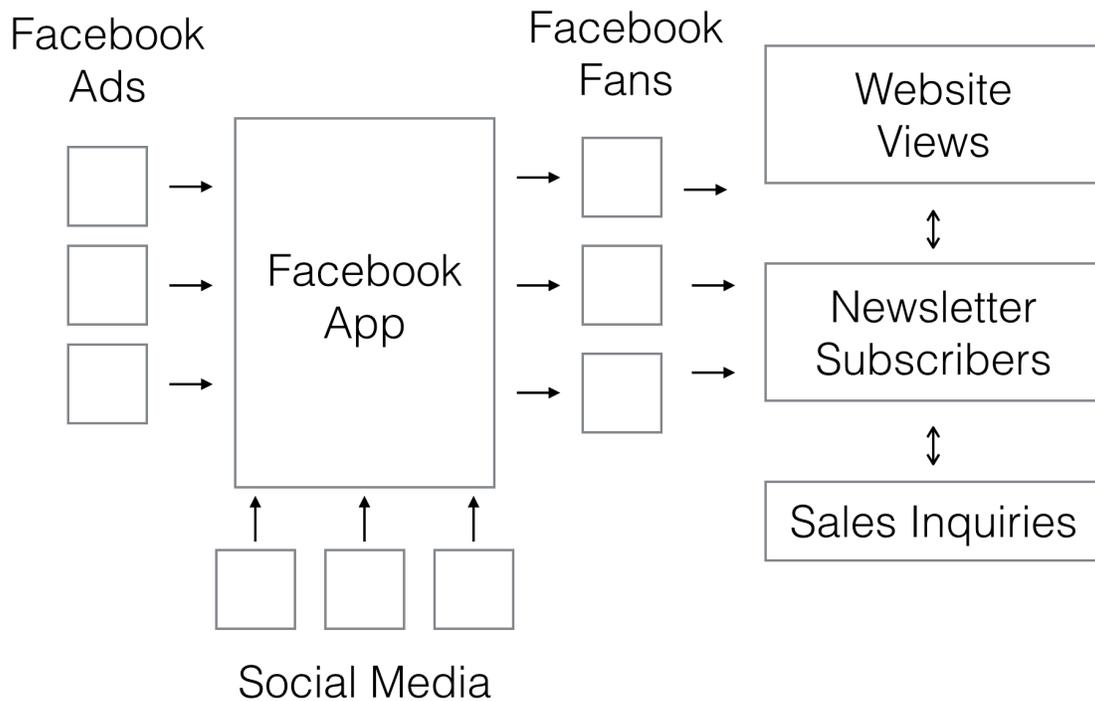
	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
# of Videos posted to YouTube	1	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11

Social Media Campaign: Visit Chocó

The Alliance will kick off its marketing implementation with a social media campaign designed to promote the brand, rapidly grow the size of its online community and deliver low-season sales. The campaign will be built around the message “Visit Chocó” and will promote the Alliance’s 7-day/ 6-night vacation package. The campaign will highlight those elements included in the package that make the region a unique destination, including Utría National Park, stunning natural areas, biodiversity and community experiences.

The campaign will be hosted on a “like-gated” Facebook “app” that will be embedded on the Alliance’s English-language Facebook page. This will require a Facebook user to “Like” the Alliance’s Facebook page in order to view the content. Once a user has liked the fan page, they will be able to view the app, which will include an inquiry form for users who are interested in traveling to Chocó, a newsletter sign up for travelers who are considering a trip but not yet ready to book, and a link to the Alliance website for travelers who are interested in learning more about the destination.

The campaign will be promoted with a series of targeted Facebook advertisements, and will be cross-promoted on the Alliance’s other social media channels. The Facebook app will be developed and hosted using a social media marketing software such as GroSocial.



Measuring Success

The campaign success will be measured using three primary indicators:

- The number of inquiries that are submitted via the app to Palenque Tours
- The number of people who sign up to receive more information by email
- The number of new Facebook fans generated during the campaign

Lead Nurturing: Email Marketing

Overview

Newsletters remain one of the most popular tools for tourism organizations to communicate with their audiences. Newsletters have the potential to reach a large number of people and are a simple way to keep the Alliance top of mind amongst various target markets. Newsletters are a good way to engage potential travelers and drive them to the website. As with other channels, good content is crucial to ensure the newsletter is opened and read. The average open rate in the tourism industry is 19%.

The Alliance will develop six separate email lists:

- English-language travelers

- English-language travel trade
- Spanish-language travelers
- Spanish-language travel trade
- German-language travelers
- German-language travel trade

In the case of newsletters, the trade and consumers have different interests and needs, and content must be curated differently. The trade newsletter will consist of brief updates from the destination and links to updated downloadable marketing content (see “Trade Marketing” below). Consumer newsletters will focus more on inspirational content and include content aggregated from the Alliance’s blog, as well as updates from social media and inspirational visual content.

The Alliance will distribute one newsletter per month, alternating between trade and consumer newsletters.

Measuring Success

The main metrics of success will be the following:

- The number of people who sign up to receive newsletters (both members of trade and travelers)
- The number of people who open each email
- The number of people who “click through” each email (meaning they perform a desired action, such as clicking on a link embedded within the email body)

The Alliance will use an email marketing platform such as Mail Chimp to design and deliver the emails. Mail Chimp provides detailed analytics on email marketing performance making it simple to track the metrics above.

Newsletter Subscription Targets

	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
# Consumer subscribers	2	4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20
# of Trade Subscribers	0	0	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	6

Indirect Sales

Local Hotels

Although the Alliance’s primary market for online marketing will be individuals that are in the planning phase of their trip, there is a strong secondary market of travelers that have already arrived in the destination and are looking for day activities. These travelers will be located primarily in hotels around the Guachalito area. The Alliance will offer a 20% sales commission to local hotels that sell Alliance products.

Print Collateral

To facilitate these indirect sales, the Alliance will produce a rack card or brochure and distribute copies to local hotels. The collateral will highlight the Alliance’s products and list pricing and contact information. The collateral will also describe how community tourism supports participating communities. Travelers who wish to purchase Alliance products will do so directly through their hotel.

Trade Marketing

The objective of travel trade marketing is to create solid relationships with high-value tour operators and travel agents, to convince them to sell the Alliance’s tour products, and provide them with the tools they need to sell the Alliance to their clients. The success of travel trade marketing relies on the relationships that we establish.

If the tour operator is currently....	...then to be successful, we must:
Selling community tourism products in destinations other than Chocó	Encourage them to add Chocó to their Colombia portfolio
Selling Chocó but not selling Chocó community tour products	Encourage them to add community tourism products to their Chocó offerings
Selling Amazon and/or Caribbean destinations in Colombia but not offering Chocó, or offering Chocó only as a custom offer	Encourage them to add an actual Chocó itinerary to their portfolio

The Alliance will begin by developing a database of all tour operators and travel agents that it will focus on with targeted marketing activities. These tour operators will serve target markets in Colombia, the United States, and Europe, in particular Germany. This database will consist of travel agents and tour operators who are likely to sell the Alliance’s tourism products. To determine which tour operators and travel agents are likely to sell the Alliance’s tourism products, we will target travel trade members who currently:

- Sell community tourism products in destinations other than Chocó
- Sell products in Chocó, but not community tour products
- Sell similar products in Colombia but do not offer trips to Chocó, or only offer customized trips to Chocó

Once these companies are identified, Solimar will work to identify the correct contacts within the company. Typically, we seek to add the contact responsible for marketing and

the contact responsible for product development.

The next step is to begin communication with prospective partners, through phone calls. The first phone call to every member of the database serves as an introduction to the product and the resources and tools that will become available in the coming months. These resources include the following:

Website Trade Portal

The Alliance website will include a “trade” page, where members of the travel trade will be able to download marketing tools, get access to the latest destination information, sign up for a trade newsletter, and be able to contact the Alliance’s sales partner directly.

Trade Sales Tools

The Alliance will make the several sales tools available to trade partners. These tools are intended to help trade partners market and sell the Alliance’s products directly to their clients. These tools include:

Chocó Factsheet

A simple 1-2 page document with basic talking points and educational material about the Chocó region.

Alliance Factsheet

Marketing copy and images about the Alliance, which trade partners can share directly with their clients.

Marketing Image Gallery

Several high-resolution images that the Alliance provides for trade partners to download royalty-free.

Marketing Copy Gallery

Text that trade partners can copy and paste into their own marketing collateral. This could include descriptions of the destination, attractions and sample itineraries.

Social Content

Downloadable content ready to publish to Facebook and Twitter.

Trade Newsletter

The Alliance will deliver a newsletter to the travel trade every two months. The newsletter will include updated marketing content, including social media and blog copy that's ready to publish.

Measuring Success

Solimar International will work with the Alliance's sales partner, Palenque Tours, to compile the initial trade database, draft the initial trade marketing content, and configure the marketing systems. The day-to-day implementation of the trade marketing program will be the responsibility of Palenque Tours.

The trade marketing program will be measured by the following metrics:

- Number of tour operators and travel agents in Alliance's database
- Number of tour operators and travel agents contacted by the Alliance
- Number of tour operators and travel agents subscribed to the newsletter
- Number of tour operators and travel agents who make a sale of the Alliance products

Trade Marketing Projections

	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
# of operators in database	0	0	0	50	50	50	50	50	50	50
# of operators contacted	0	0	0	0	25	25	25	25	25	25
# of operators subscribed to newsletter	0	0	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	6
# of operators that make a sale	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

PR & Media

Overview

Public Relations (PR) for community tourism enterprises is rapidly evolving with the advancement of online technology and traveler trends. It continues to be one of the most effective ways to showcase a product and build a brand.

The PR strategy for promoting the Alliance is founded on traditional public relations fundamentals while adding progressive tactics and technology to more effectively generate media coverage for the destination. There will be a focus on the niche media with the highest propensity to convert target consumers through their publication readership or broadcasts' viewers. Many travel bloggers have attracted greater readership than traditional print media, and as such many blogs are seen as a legitimate travel media source. For this reason, professional travel bloggers will be considered in the PR mix within this PR strategy.

Media Database

The Alliance will compile a database of members of the media that have published or are likely to publish stories related to community tourism and/or Chocó. The database will include the press member's name, publication, phone number, email address, and Twitter handle.

Outreach

The Alliance will generate four press releases per year, which it will forward to members of its media database. These will be followed up with phone calls to individual journalists as needed.

Media Events

The Alliance is planning a launch event in either Bogotá or Medellín to publicly announce the creation of the Alliance, its brand, and promotional platforms including website. The Alliance will invite all media contacts as well as key public and private sector stakeholders to the event.

Press Trips

Proexport Colombia has indicated a willingness to facilitate a press trip to the Chocó region to highlight the Alliance's tourism products. The Alliance will continue to work closely with Proexport to identify high-value members of the media to target with invitations to participate in the trip.

Media Outreach Projections

	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
# of media in database	0	10	10	15	15	20	20	25	25	30
# of media contacted	0	10	10	15	15	20	20	25	25	30
# of media mentions	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	2	0