



Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs,
Government of the People's
Republic of Bangladesh

Tourism Destination Management Plan for the Bandarban Hill District, Bangladesh (2017 – 2027)



About ICIMOD

The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) is a regional knowledge development and learning centre serving the eight regional member countries of the Hindu Kush Himalaya – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal, and Pakistan – and based in Kathmandu, Nepal. Globalisation and climate change have an increasing influence on the stability of fragile mountain ecosystems and the livelihoods of mountain people. ICIMOD aims to assist mountain people to understand these changes, adapt to them, and make the most of new opportunities, while addressing upstream-downstream issues. We support regional transboundary programmes through partnership with regional partner institutions, facilitate the exchange of experience, and serve as a regional knowledge hub. We strengthen networking among regional and global centres of excellence. Overall, we are working to develop an economically and environmentally sound mountain ecosystem to improve the living standards of mountain populations and to sustain vital ecosystem services for the billions of people living downstream – now, and for the future.



About MoCHTA

Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs (MoCHTA), created as a result of the peace accord in 1997, is a decentralised Local Government system which is responsible for overseeing sustainable development activities in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT). The CHT combine three Hill districts of Bangladesh viz, Bandarban, Khagrachhari and Rangamti districts. MoCHTA recommends the staffing for the Regional and three Hill District Councils.

MoCHTA is working collaboratively with ICIMOD to reduce poverty among mountain people through increased resilience and the unlocking of new livelihood opportunities through tourism pilot project interventions in Ruma Upazila of Bandarban Hill district. The project aims to promote inclusive, responsible and equitable approaches to tourism development process. The pilot project is implemented through Bandarban Hill District Council (BHDC).

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the Governments of Afghanistan, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Bhutan,
China, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Norway, Pakistan, and Sweden, and Switzerland.

Tourism Destination Management Plan for the Bandarban Hill District, Bangladesh (2017 – 2027)

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Foreword

Finalization of the tourism Destination Management Plan (DMP) for Bandarban Hill District is yet another good work of ICIMOD that has been serving the mountain people living in the Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH) region. It is my great pleasure to introduce the plan that aims to position Bandarban as the 'Heart of the Hill Tracts'. Bandarban offers one of the finest views of Bangladesh with its impressive rivers, magnificent waterfalls, lakes and cultural and ethnic diversity. Here people live in harmony with nature that attracts tourists who wish to spend a few days far from the maddening world.

The Ministry of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs realizes that tourism growth should be carefully managed to provide easy access and quality experiences for visitors, to ensure maximum benefits for local communities and to direct sustainable environmental and cultural development. This Tourism Destination Management Plan provides clear directives for achieving quality and sustainable tourism growth in the area.

Implementing the plan will no doubt require the collective energy and efforts of public, private and community leaders and organisations. I trust that the plan will have the full support of all government bodies, private sector, community based organisations and development partners.

I wish to sincerely thank the many organisations and individuals who have contributed to the formulation of the plan especially the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), other contributors are the Bandarban Hill District Council, civil and military agencies, relevant government ministries, private sector organisations, NGOs and members of different ethnic communities.

I sincerely believe the Destination Management Plan (DMP) will immensely help in achieving the objective of the project by enhancing sustainable tourism development and management in Bandarban and bringing benefits for the local communities.

Naba Bikram Kishore Tripura, ndc
Secretary, Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs
Government of Bangladesh

Foreword

The Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), endowed with rich natural landscapes and diverse ethnic communities, has great potential to become a popular destination for adventure, culture, and community-based tourism. And realizing this potential holds promise for addressing poverty in the CHT. The unique positioning of CHT, and Bandarban in particular, has led to a rapid increase in the popularity of this destination. While domestic tourism has shown positive growth, challenges remain to shape this growth as inclusive, equitable and responsible. Accessibility, communication, and appropriate development of tourism and human resources remain major challenges for the CHT to address as it looks forward.

The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) and the Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs (MoCHTA) have teamed up to promote sustainable tourism development in Ruma Upazila in Bandarban. Implemented under the Support to Rural Livelihoods and Climate Change Adaptation in the Himalaya (Himalica) initiative, this pilot project aims to promote inclusive, equitable and responsible tourism, with particular emphasis on bringing benefits to local communities, by increasing their resilience and unlocking new livelihood opportunities.

Himalica is focusing on building the capacity of the Bandarban Hill District Council (BHDC) – the local government body of the MoCHTA – to manage tourism in the Hill district in a sustainable manner. The formulation of this Tourism Destination Management Plan is a crucial step to begin the process of developing and managing tourism strategically. This is to ensure that tourism development in Bandarban is on the right track to achieve the three pillars (environmental, social and economic) of sustainable development.

As tourism is a cross cutting issue, collaboration across sectors and with multiple stakeholders (Ministry, Councillors, Commissioners, Security, Unions, Private Sector and Community) is crucial for achieving sustainable development outcomes for tourism. In this regard, the Tourism Destination Management Plan places high importance on management frameworks that ensure inclusive decision making processes.

On behalf of ICIMOD, I would like to thank MoCHTA, BHDC, Hill district community of Ruma Upazila, Bandarban, and The Journey tourism consulting and management group for their contributions and support in completing this important document.

David Molden, PhD
Director General
ICIMOD

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Development of the Tourism Destination Management Plan for the Bandarban Hill District, Bangladesh, is a challenging and an iterative task, the success of which would not have been possible had it not been for the collaborative partnership and processes.

Gratitude is first expressed to the community members of Ruma Upazila, Bandarban. Through their constant and close interactions and insightful information, the process of developing this document became very effective and productive.

The publication was possible as a result of the untiring efforts of the team of professional from ICIMOD, BHDC and the Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs (MoCHTA). We would also like to thank to Kyaw Shwe Hla, Shwe Mong Marma, Md. Jubayer Salehin, Ndu, Psc, Shampa Rani Saha, Harun Or Roshid and Raj Gyawali.

We express our gratitude to Naba Bikram Kishore Tripura, ndc, Secretary MoCHTA; David Molden, Director General and Eklabya Sharma, Deputy Director General of ICIMOD for their inspiration and guidance. Special thanks also goes to ICIMOD colleagues Rucha Ghate, Chanda Goodrich Gurung and Sanjeev Bhuchar.

Last but not least, gratitude also goes to Christopher Butler and his editorial and layout team for their great support in reviewing and printing this document.

Executive Summary

The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) signed a letter of agreement with the Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs (MoCHTA) for implementing a pilot project to support rural livelihoods through tourism development in the Bandarban district, and more specifically in the surrounding hills of Ruma Upazila (sub-district).

The pilot project aims to enhance sustainable tourism development and management, with particular emphasis on benefits for local communities. Pilot interventions aim to impact at both community level to increase incomes of target groups in 10 paras of Ruma Upazila and at strategic level through the development of this Tourism Destination Management Plan.

An analysis of tourism performance reveals that tourism is already a major economic force in Bandarban and that tourists spend more than Tk 1 billion per annum in the area. While foreign tourist arrivals are rare, domestic tourism demand for Bandarban has shown good growth over the past few years. Revenues accruing to local entrepreneurs and communities have unfortunately not matched the growth in tourist numbers and tourism investment has been of a relatively limited scale. The limited scale and scope of tourism products and services in the area presents a major opportunity cost to the region, since it is clear that a large percentage of visitors are day-visitors or come for short overnight stays, resulting in limited expenditures, and economic and employment spin-offs.

Based on an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT), 40 key gaps have been identified in the Bandarban tourism destination value chain, including lack of coordination among tourism stakeholders, poor tourism management capacity in the Bandarban Hill District Council (BHDC), limited variety of accommodation facilities and tourism activities, low brand awareness of the area, gaps in services and products quality, security and permit restrictions, poor site and trail planning, land tenure uncertainties and limited involvement of local communities in tourism.

The situation analysis also found that tourism development is in its infancy in Bandarban Hills. Developing the sector to its full potential will require the support of a range of stakeholders, representing government bodies, private sector and community interests. It will be important for all national and local stakeholders to adopt and support a bold Tourism Vision 2025 for Bandarban, which is:

Bandarban Hill District will be nationally and internationally known as the most attractive and authentic nature and culture destination in Bangladesh. The area will have a thriving, sustainable tourism industry, with the local citizens prospering and sharing in the benefits of tourism.

Various ambitious targets have been set, i.e. to increase the number of visitors to Bandarban by 10% per annum, to increase the daily expenditure per domestic visitor from Tk 1,550 to Tk 2,500 in Bandarban overall and from Tk 1,350 to Tk 2,000 in Ruma, to increase the percentage of visitors staying in Bandarban for 2-3 nights from 37% to 45% and those staying 4-7 nights from 37% to 40%, to retain at least 70% of tourist expenditure in the local economy, to increase tourist expenditure on local produce and handicrafts from Tk 200 to Tk 500 per visitor and to ensure that at least 80% of those employed in tourism is from the local population.

It is clear that the area's main strength lies in the natural beauty of the Sangu River valley and surrounding mountains, supported by a variety of unique cultures of the local communities in the area. This includes traditional rural lifestyle, and jum practices, the beauty of the topography and landscapes, the freshness of produce, the variety of fauna and flora, the natural adventures on offer, etc. Therefore, Bandarban should be positioned as "the Heart of the Hill Tracts"*.

Based on the success factors for tourism growth identified in the situation analysis, four core goals will be pursued namely:

1. To organise and plan effectively for tourism growth;
2. To develop attractive and sustainable tourism products and services;
3. To promote a popular brand and image; and
4. To maximise local participation and benefits.

* "Heart of the Hill Tracts" is not meant to be a brand slogan; it is only meant to express the basis for differentiating Bandarban tourism

It is clear that the strategy should focus on the domestic market and that Bangladesh's main cities and surrounding districts should be targeted in the next 2 – 3 years. Product development and marketing efforts should be aimed at specific market segments, including:

- Segments for immediate expansion, which the area is ready to receive, including: a) 'Soft Adventurers' who visit the area for environmental and scenic beauty, to have a social time together away from the city rush and b) 'Trekking' on continuous hiking and boating trails through the area, in search of active and adventurous experiences.
- Higher spending growth segments for expansion in the short to medium term, including a) 'Family Recreationists' doing outdoor activities (e.g. soft hiking, boating) and authentic community and nature-based recreation, b) 'International Explorers' who thrive on eco-heritage experiences (including expatriates living in Bangladesh) and c) 'Special Interest' travellers such as climbers, hikers, and river rafters.
- Segments from which to extract additional value, i.e. SAVE (Scientific, Academic, Volunteer and Educational) travellers, who are professionals working for universities, NGOs, development organisations, etc.
- Segments for organic growth i.e. segments that will grow naturally as interest increases and that do not require serious investment in human and physical resources. These include 'Organised group tours' and 'Day-trippers' from surrounding areas on a recreational trip.

The following strategies and supporting actions are proposed for achieving the strategic goals.

Goal 1: Organising and planning effectively for tourism growth

- **Strategy 1: Adopt a sustainable spatial development approach**
 - Formulate a spatial tourism guide plan for the area, consulted with and agreed by local communities and public sector partners.
- **Strategy 2: Streamline tourist security and movement**
 - The departments responsible for security to agree on a clear policy, processes and roles for dealing with tourist security.
 - Agree on a system and process for issuing entry tickets to the proposed Ruma and Tanchi conservancy areas, which should serve as permits for traveling around the entire area.
 - Assess the process of issuing international entry permits to Bandarban and improve processes and time frames for issuing security clearances.
 - Involve local communities in a programme of community volunteerism, to look out for safety of visitors, provide them with information and advice, etc.
 - Initiate a road safety programme, including road improvements at specific danger points along tourist routes and training drivers of tourist vehicles in safe driving practices.
- **Strategy 3: Provide a business environment conducive to tourism growth**
 - Formulate a tourism development policy for Bandarban District as a binding policy that directs the efforts of all public and private sector entities.
 - Conduct a detailed assessment of infrastructure capacity to identify gaps in road access, water and electricity delivery and sanitation infrastructure.
- **Strategy 4: Strengthen institutional capacity and collaboration**
 - Appoint a suitably qualified senior official and support staff with adequate expertise in tourism development, with the sole mandate for implementing the tourism policy and destination management plan.
 - Form a Bandarban tourism forum with a comprehensive membership representing all government ministries, agencies, women's groupings and traditional community leadership structures in the area.
 - Form the Bandarban Tourism Association (BANTA), a local, membership-based Tourism Association for the private tourism owners for having a strong voice and for achieving a balance between "top-down" and "bottom-up" tourism development. The document provides guidelines regarding the roles and establishment of BANTA.

- o Establish functional committees under BANTA at sub-district/upazilla level, comprising members representing different services such as guide committees, boat management committees, waste management committees, yarn bank committees, and toilet management committee.
- o Develop guidelines for the overall functioning of BANTA and its committees, in line with the principles of responsible tourism.
- o Establish a tourism levy of around Tk 80 per person entering the proposed conservation zone, to be charged by the BANTA offices at Bandarban, Ruma and Tanchi, once the association has been established.

Goal 2: Developing attractive and sustainable tourism products and services

- Strategy 1: Improve and expand the range of experiences, facilities and services ('products') in line with target market needs
 - o Launch a continuous tourism development and investment programme for expanding and maintaining the range of tourism products and experiences and building the capacity of local tourism service providers. Priorities should include improving and expanding tourist accommodation; improving food quality, hygiene and variety with a focus on promoting women's traditional skills; mapping, signposting and landscaping of walking and hiking trails; developing picnic sites; providing toilets and rest facilities at main tourist sites; improved banking facilities; and launching concessions on government-owned land for local entrepreneurs to provide adventure activities such as river rafting, mountain cycling, and horse-riding.
- Strategy 2: Improve tourism business and investment conditions
 - o Based on the proposed spatial development guide plan, investigate, formulate and approve a programme and package of public-private-community tourism investment support.
 - o Establish an enterprise training and mentoring programme and where possible involve more successful and established local and national business owners as mentors.
 - o Launch a small business loan scheme that can provide local level tourism entrepreneurs, especially women, with start-up funding.
- Strategy 3: Improve packaging of tourism experiences
 - o Map GPS coordinates of all attractions and experiences in Bandarban and develop a database with short descriptions, directions, photographs and video clips of each experience/attraction.
 - o Contact tourism operators and tour guides in surrounding areas and cities such as Dhaka, Chittagong and Cox's Bazar and discuss and identify opportunities for incorporating Bandarban tourism experiences into a broader regional package.
 - o Launch a trails development programme in partnership with local communities and tour guides. Ensure that trails provide good opportunities for capture of expenditure by local communities e.g. tea and refreshment points, shops, restaurants, camping and homestays, etc.
- Strategy 4: Improve product and service quality
 - o Conduct an audit of each tourist site and visitor area in Bandarban, identify gaps in quality of visitor facilities and start a programme of site improvements.



Stakeholders express commitment to the Bandarban Tourism Vision

- In consultation with local communities, make detailed site development plans for major attraction sites like Boga Lake, Keokradong, Shoilo propat, the main waterfalls in the area, tourist boat stations, etc. to ensure that everything is done in a properly planned manner.
- Identify hospitality facilities (accommodation, restaurants) that are aiming at tourists and advise them on actions to be taken to improve quality and monitor progress. Female ownership and participation should specifically be encouraged.
- Consider a basic quality assurance system, i.e. providing businesses with a checklist of quality criteria relating to visitor comfort, safety, hygiene and cleanliness, etc. and providing them with a certificate of approval issued by the proposed Bandarban Tourism Association.
- Develop a service-training programme for local enterprises and staff, including a series of basic service training workshops.
- **Strategy 5: Conserve and protect the natural resources and biodiversity of the area.**
 - Support NGOs and relevant government ministries in raising environmental awareness among tourism enterprises and encouraging sustainable environmental practices such as anti-littering, fuel-efficient cooking, and solar energy usage
 - Conduct an audit of waste management practices and collaborate with local communities and authorities to improve waste management practices and technologies
- **Strategy 6: Develop events as tourism catalysts**
 - Establish a Bandarban events management committee, representing the local tourism organisation (BANTA) and the main government and community stakeholders, to decide on and organise suitable events.
 - Organise at least one national level sport or cultural event every two to three years, supported financially by the BHDC and local businesses

Goal 3: Maximising local participation and benefits

- **Strategy 1: Support community-based tourism investment**
 - Agree on a policy and ownership model for community-based investment support, identify communities (paras) in Bandarban (especially in Ruma Upazilla) who wish to pursue such opportunities and work with them in implementing community-based tourism products.
- **Strategy 2: Strengthen local supply chains**
 - Identify local products (agricultural produce, handicrafts, etc.) that are suitable for the tourism market, engage local communities in discussing and agreeing on value-adding opportunities for such products and improve quality, packaging, branding (e.g. with Bandarban brand tag) and presentation of higher value products for easy purchase.
 - Support producers of tourism-related products (handicrafts, foodstuffs, etc.) with seed funding, appropriate training and organisational support, to produce adequate quantities and qualities of such products and to package and present them attractively.
 - Strengthen supply links with hotels, restaurants and retailers in more developed areas such as the Cox's Bazar area to ensure that supply chains in Bandarban develop as the industry expands. In addition the many natural products of Bandarban Hill District, should be packaged and presented in a suitable format for visitors consumption.
- **Strategy 3: Develop local tourism skills and human resources**
 - Develop and present short, practical training courses for local tourism providers in Ruma and Tanchi Upazillas in partnership with local training institutes, focusing on a) guide training and guide operating codes and b) training of hospitality providers. The training initiatives should make a special effort to involve local women.
- **Strategy 4: Strengthen functional committees at local level**
 - Empower sub-district/upazilla level committees and local community groups by building their capacities to manage businesses and services linking farm and non-farm based products with tourism supply chains and ensuring their participation in the decision making process.

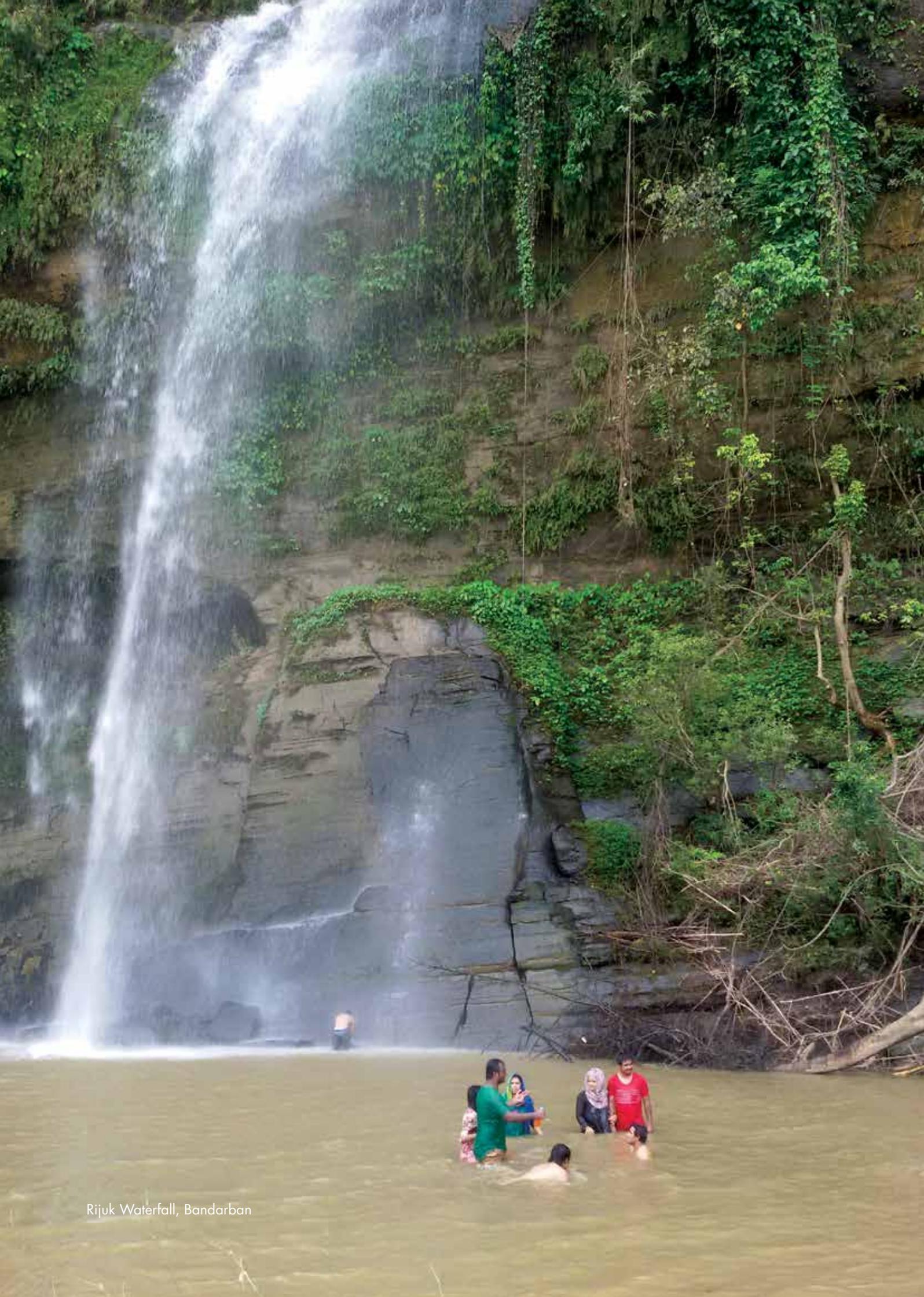
Goal 4: Promoting a attractive brand and image

- **Strategy 1: Develop and promote an attractive brand identity**
 - Formally adopt the logo and slogan developed by the Himalica project as the trademark for promoting Bandarban as a tourism destination. Review the logo and slogan after two years to check if it remains the most appropriate trade mark and slogan for promoting the area.
 - Where appropriate, create and endorse sub-brands e.g. for handicrafts, food, cultural performances etc. depicting their own identities, yet strengthening and echoing the values and principles of the Bandarban 'parent' brand.
 - Apply and promote the brand identity at all relevant tourist 'touch points' within and outside the Bandarban area.
- **Strategy 2: Market Bandarban as a popular and safe tourism destination**
 - Promote Bandarban as a must-visit destination and make it easy for higher spending travellers to plan and arrange trips through online (internet) promotion and reservations, promoting the area to travel agents and tour operators in the country, encouraging positive media coverage, encouraging visitors to spread a positive message about Bandarban, etc.
- **Strategy 3: Provide adequate visitor information**
 - Establish BANTA tourist information offices in Ruma Bazar and later Tanchi to provide tourists with information on the area, make bookings with BANTA members, process levy payments and issue entrance permits and serve as a base for the tourist guide associations.
 - Improve directional and tourist signs at various levels, ranging from district level to para and site levels.
 - Develop and maintain an excellent website with good content, excellent photography, product listings and interactive maps. Local culture and diversity should be emphasised.
 - Produce a printed map and brochure of the area and distribute these widely through accommodation establishments, tour guides, information offices, etc.
- **Strategy 4: Improve visitor statistics and research**
 - Work closely with the police services to obtain the numbers of both international and domestic (Bangladesh) visitors entering Bandarban, Ruma and Tanchi on a monthly basis.
 - Conduct bi-annual short, random visitor surveys in summer and winter to obtain a picture of visitor demographics, activities, expenditure patterns, etc.

Tourism in Bandarban is in the early stages of development. It is not recommended that tourism development be rushed and that demand grow too rapidly in the immediate future, before the tourism sector in the area has prepared properly for expansion. A phased implementation programme is proposed including:

- Phase 1 (Years 1-2) Consolidation: laying sound foundations through devising a proper guide plan, making some immediate product improvements, promoting the brand and strengthening institutional capacity and coordination.
- Phase 2 (Years 3-5) Escalation: Broadening the area's ecotourism positioning, expanding investment and increasing the involvement of local communities and women entrepreneurs.
- Phase 3 (Years 6-10) Expansion: Full-out expansion of natural and cultural products and experiences, conducting continuous marketing and broadening public-private partnerships.

The plan concludes with an implementation action framework that prioritises the various proposed strategies and actions.



Rijuk Waterfall, Bandarban

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) is a regional intergovernmental knowledge and learning centre serving the eight regional member countries of the Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH) – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal, and Pakistan. ICIMOD seeks to improve the lives and livelihoods of mountain women, men, and children now and for the future. ICIMOD's Support to Rural Livelihoods and Climate Change Adaptation in the Himalaya (Himalica) programme aims to support vulnerable mountain communities in the HKH region to adapt to climate and socio-economic changes.

The Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh offers a unique tourism destination that is rapidly rising in popularity, especially among domestic markets. The district of Bandarban in particular, benefiting from its distinct natural and cultural features, increasingly improving security situation and easy access routes via Chittagong and Cox's Bazaar, has experienced a strong increase in tourist arrivals in recent years. However, haphazard and uncontrolled tourism development will damage the ecosystems, erode cultural and spiritual values and cause irreversible damage to livelihoods from tourism in the long term. Therefore, this district deserves immediate attention in support of sustainable tourism development.

The function of tourism has been formally transferred to the three Hill District councils under the Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs (MoCHTA), of which the Bandarban Hill District Council (BHDC) is one. However, the council has not been adequately equipped to perform the tourism function entrusted to it, prompting ICIMOD to step in and support BHDC in developing tourism. In this respect ICIMOD signed a letter of agreement with MoCHTA to implement a pilot project under Himalica. The project aims to support rural livelihoods through tourism development in Bandarban district, and more specifically in the surrounding hills of Ruma sub-district (see Figure 1, map or area).

1.2 Objectives

The pilot project aims to enhance sustainable tourism development and management in Bandarban district, with particular emphasis on benefits for local communities. Good practices in the district will hopefully be replicated across the Chittagong Hill Tracts. The pilot interventions aim to impact at two levels:

- i. Community level: Increase income of target groups from engagement in tourism and tourism-supply activities in 10 paras of Ruma Upazilla, with the broader support from MoCHTA and implemented by the Bandarban Hill District Council (BHDC). Some quick gain business and infrastructure support activities will also be carried out to generate interest of communities in the pilot project.
- ii. Strategic level (this document): Develop a Tourism Destination Management Strategy through the facilitation of multi-stakeholder process and institutional capacity building of the Bandarban Hill District Council. The objective of this assignment is to assess the opportunities and challenges of sustainable tourism development as a source of livelihoods for local people in the pilot sites, and support local tourism stakeholders through the formulation of a sustainable tourism strategy and Destination Management Plan (DMP) for the Bandarban district (with emphasis on Boga Lake). In addition, to recommend actions for building the capacity of line offices of MoCHTA for the uptake and monitoring of the DMP, based on an implementation plan with specific actions and timelines.

Figure 1: Map of Bandarban main tourist towns and attractions

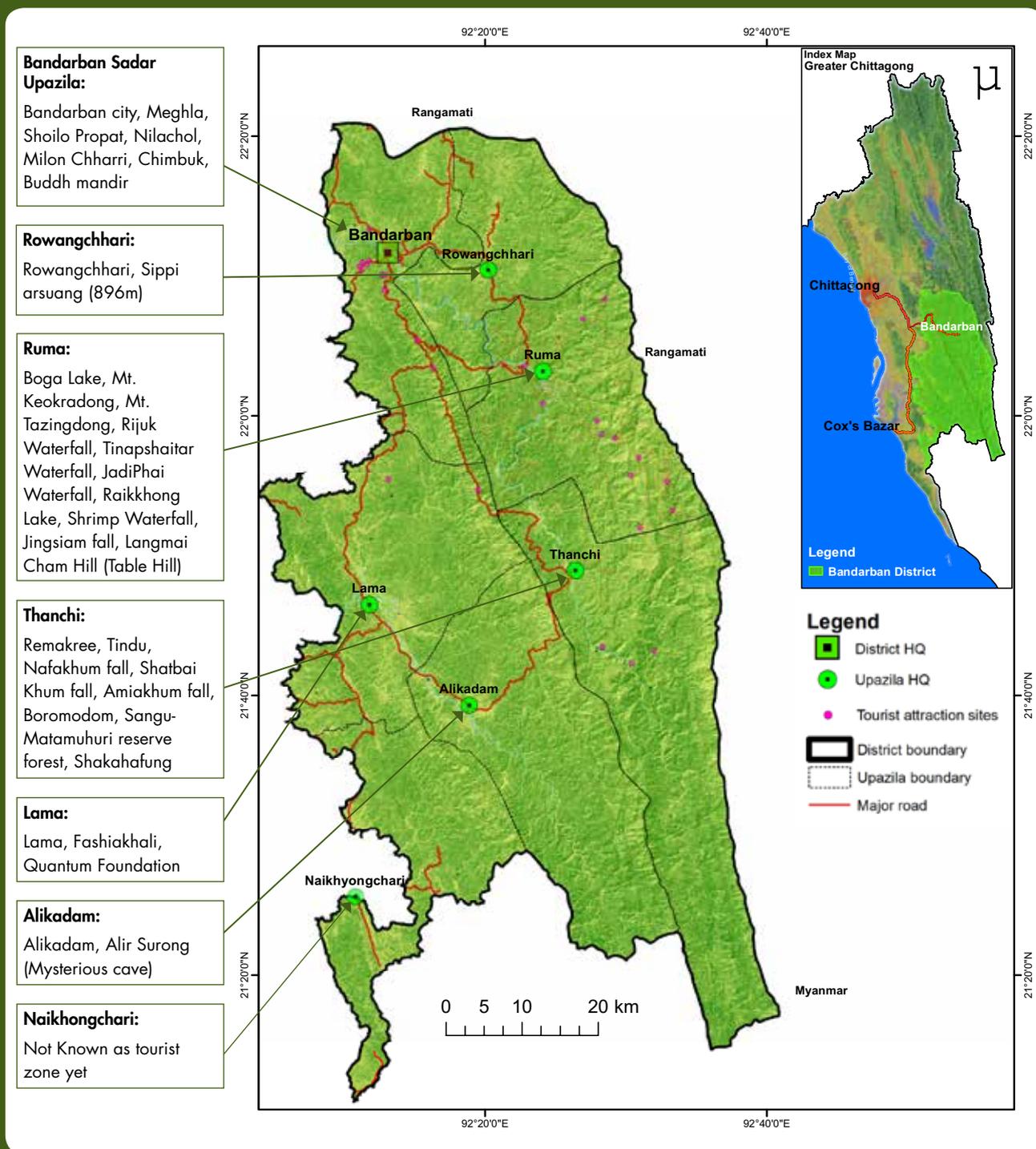


Figure 2 below presents the overall governance structure for the Chittagong Hill Tracts. As can be seen, the governance framework for the Hill Districts is complex and includes a range of formal governance levels ranging from national (MoCHTA) to village (Para) levels. The traditional (Chieftain) system of governance occupies another, parallel governance stream as an important line of decision-making.

Figure 3 presents the organogram for the Bandarban Hill District Council. As can be seen, there is no provision for economic and/or tourism development, although the tourism development function is legally assigned to the BHDC.

Figure 2: Overall governance system for the Chittagong Hill Tracts¹

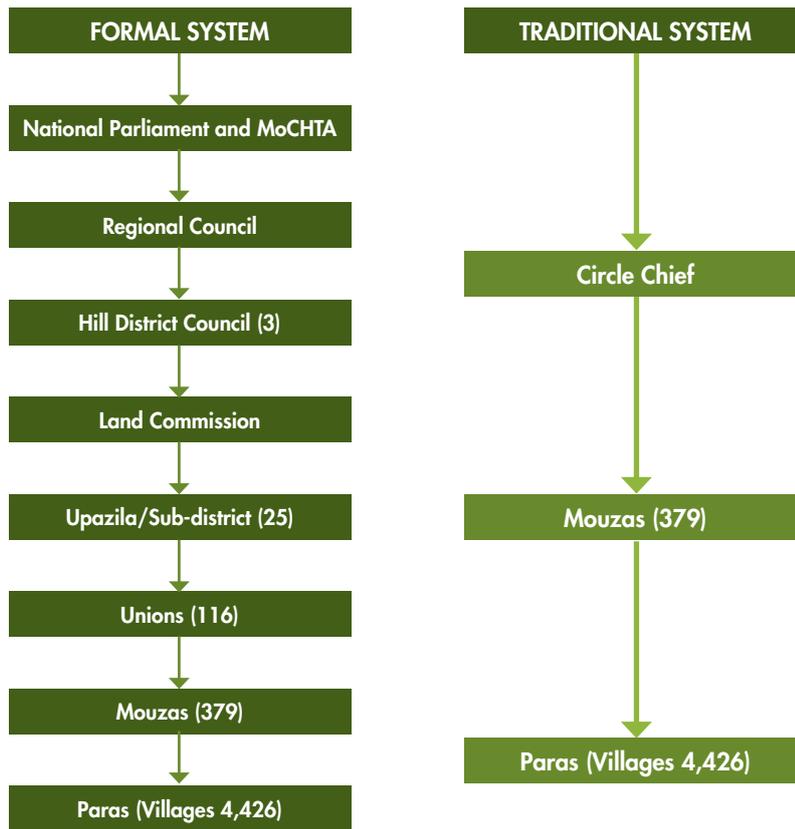
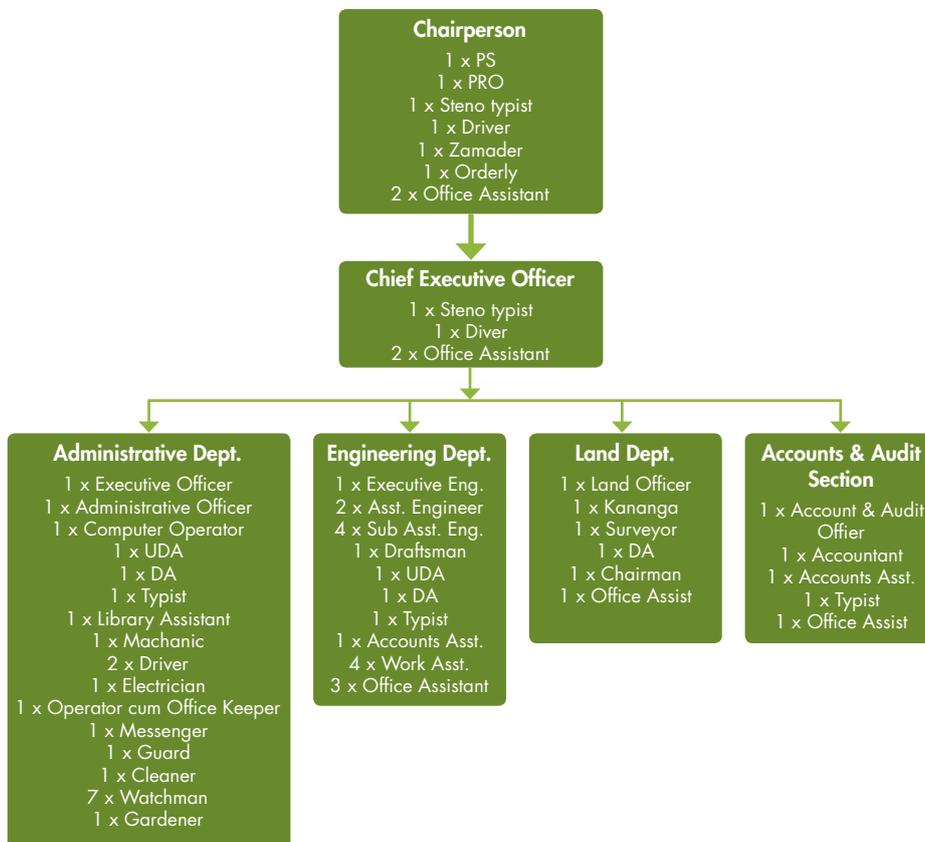


Figure 3: Organogram of the Bandarban Hill District Council



Source: Official website of the Bandarban Hill District Council

¹ Ashrafuzzaman, (2014). The Tragedy of the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh: Land Rights of Indigenous People, Thesis in fulfillment of Master of Science in Development Studies, Lund University

1.3 Methodology

This Tourism Destination Management Plan was formulated through a process of intensive fieldwork and stakeholder engagements and consultations that included, among others, the following actions and events:

- A rapid assessment of the current status, gaps and opportunities in tourism², which informed the objectives and strategies contained herein (2013/14).
- A thorough assessment of the Bandarban tourism value chain (2015³).
- Various field observation visits and participation in tourism activities by the consultant team (during 2016).
- A ‘visioning’ workshop conducted with a cross-spectrum of Bandarban stakeholders, where they defined their expectations of tourism and key issues to be addressed for optimising tourism growth (June 2016).
- Personal and group interviews with a wide spectrum of public, private and community stakeholders to obtain first-hand their needs and expectations (September-October 2016).
- Drawing on good practices/experiences derived from ICIMOD’s tourism development work in Myanmar and from the consultant’s engagements in Asia (India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, China and others) over the past decade.
- Conducting a report validation workshop, chaired by the Secretary of MoCHTA and attended by more than 80 public, private and community representatives (April 2017). Various changes and improvements were made to the document based on stakeholder contributions during the workshop.

² Hasan, et. al. (2013). Rapid Assessment of the Context and Current Status of Tourism Development and Management in Bandarban, ICIMOD, unpublished report

³ Gyawali, V. (2016). Assessment of Tourism Value Chain | Bandarban, Bangladesh, unpublished report



Domestic tourists at Nilachol Area in Bandarban

2 The Current Tourism Situation

2.1 Value and Performance of Tourism in Bandarban Hill District

Detailed information regarding tourist arrivals and expenditure for Bandarban Hill District is limited. No reliable information exists regarding the composition, profile and expenditure of existing tourists. While foreign visitors are tracked through issuing of entry permits, domestic tourist numbers are not well accounted for. Collecting and maintaining reliable statistics for monitoring tourism growth and performance should be a priority focus area in the future. Nevertheless, the following facts provide an indication of recent tourism performance in Bandarban District.

Foreign tourists comprise a tiny share of Bandarban tourism demand. Foreign tourist arrivals are carefully monitored, as all foreign visitors need a permit to enter the area. Only 565 foreigners visited the area in 2015. A comparison with the first three months of 2016 indicates that foreign arrivals in the first quarter of 2016 exceeded 60% of total foreign visitor arrivals in 2015. It is apparent that foreign visitor numbers have been declining in recent years, with Afroz and Hasanuzzaman⁴ (2012) reporting around 1,200 foreign visitors in 2012.

More than 60% of foreign visitors in 2015 were from six countries, namely India, Germany, American Samoa, Spain, Australia and the Netherlands. Although comparatively high visitor arrivals were recorded during both periods from American Samoa, Japan, France and Korea the figures are too limited to establish any reliable country-market pattern. The majority of foreign visitors are attached to governmental and non-governmental support programmes in the area.

The large majority of visitors to Bandarban are Bengalese. ICIMOD's rapid assessment of tourism development in Bandarban⁵ provides some estimates and tourism demand and supply. The following key figures pertain:

The analysis of the tourism performance reveals that:

- Given the limited foreign arrival numbers and the security requirements imposed on foreigners, it is clear that tourism in Bandarban will, for the foreseeable future, depend largely on domestic tourism and that foreign tourism could be pursued in the medium to longer term.
- The size of the domestic tourism market in the Bandarban Hill District is already substantial. Given the constant rise in household incomes in Bangladesh, tourist numbers are expected to grow rapidly during the next five to ten years. Visionary and responsible future planning will be very important to avoid negative environmental and social impacts associated with poorly managed tourism growth.
- The average expenditure per visitor of around USD 20 is low and is expected to grow as the national economy expands. It will be important to Bandarban's service providers to provide the quality of products and services in order to capitalise on growing domestic affluence

Table 1: Estimated tourist value and performance in Bandarban and Ruma (2013)

Indicator (Estimates)	Bandarban District overall	Ruma Upazilla
Estimated number of visitors per annum	700,000	8,000 – 10,000
Total tourist expenditure	Tk 1 billion (US\$ 13 m)	Tk 12 mil (US\$ 150,000)
Average daily expenditure per visitor	Tk 1,550	Tk 1,350
Length of stay	4 – 7 nights: 37% 2 – 3 nights: 37% 1 night: 26%	2 – 3 nights: 80% 1 night: 18%
Number of tourist beds	3,500	500
Average occupancy		
- Peak season (Oct – March)	60% – 80%	40% – 60%
- Off-peak season	20% – 40%	10%
Number of tourist vehicle seats	1,650	320

⁴ Afroz, N. and Hasanuzzaman, M. (2012). Problems and prospects for tourism in Bangladesh: Bandarban District Case. Global Journal of Management and Business Research, Vol. 12 Issue 23, Global Journals Inc.

⁵ Hasan, et. al. (2013). Rapid Assessment of the Context and Current Status of Tourism Development and Management in Bandarban, ICIMOD

- The relatively short length of stay indicates that most tourists come to the area on short weekend breaks and that longer stays are limited. The challenge for Bandarban is to develop as a centre for relaxation and longer holidays
- The area is typical of a destination that is in the early (exploration) stages of the tourism destination life cycle. The sector depends on more robust market segments in search of adventure and outdoor activities such as trekking and boating, complemented by a limited degree of cultural travel and some family sightseeing and special interest travels such as agro-tourism, and botanical tourism.
- The level of tourism entrepreneurship and business activity in the Bandarban Hill District is very limited i.e.:
 - Tourism services (hospitality, tours, guiding, etc.) are largely aimed at the entry cost level of the market – the majority of hospitality establishments and facilities range from budget level to one or two-star quality.
 - While accommodation capacity in and around Bandarban Sadar is limited, it is growing in range and quality and the recently opened Sairu resort adds a luxury dimension to other mid-range facilities such as Nilgiri, Venus, and Holiday Inn and the various entry-level resorts in the area.
 - In the surrounding tourist towns of Ruma, Tanchi and Lama, accommodation is very limited and consists of basic entry level guesthouses and basic self-catering cottages at Boga Lake.
 - There are no local tour brokers or reservation offices based in the study area, except for individual local guides and transport providers who are able to arrange and package boat trips, transport services, accommodation, etc. on behalf of tourists or external tour operators.
 - Transport services, especially tourist transport by Chander Gari is adequate and supply is driven by market demand
 - There is a substantial number of local tour guides based in the area, however, they are poorly trained and are largely self-taught through on-the-job experiences.
 - Tourist entertainment, restaurant and shopping facilities (e.g. local goods and handicrafts) are limited with limited attention paid to visitors’ needs and requirements.
- Concerning the broader tourism economy, it is clear that, despite the potential spin-off effects of the industry, the tourism backward and forward linkages are very limited.
 - The limited level of tourism services (both in size and quality) results in visitors and tour operators bringing along supplies and equipment from outside of the region. This results in a high leakage factor with a limited proportion of overall tourism receipts remaining in the region.
 - The underdeveloped nature of the tourism industry stifles the development of secondary tourism supply industries such as repair and maintenance services, construction supplies, fresh produce, financial services and many more.
- Seasonality has a major influence on the sustainability of tourism businesses. While tourism demand is vibrant during winter, occupancies are relatively low during the summer-monsoon period.

In summary

Domestic tourism demand for Bandarban has shown good growth over the past few years. Revenues accruing to local entrepreneurs and communities have unfortunately not matched the growth in tourist numbers and tourism investment has been of a relatively limited scale. The limited scale and scope of tourism products and services in Bandarban Hill District presents a major opportunity cost to the region, since it is clear that a large percentage of visitors from Dhaka, Chittagong and Cox’s Bazar visit Bandarban Hill District only as day-visitors or short overnight stays, resulting in limited expenditure and economic and employment spin-offs.

Capitalising on the magnificent natural and cultural resources on offer and turning the region into a national and international tourism success story will require a commitment and investment by the government, local communities and private entrepreneurs.

2.2 Key Tourism Challenges and Opportunities

2.2.1 Evaluation framework

The following framework (Figure 4) represents the main areas of tourism destination competitiveness, as a basis for assessing the status of Bandarban’s tourism sector.

2.2.2 SWOT analysis

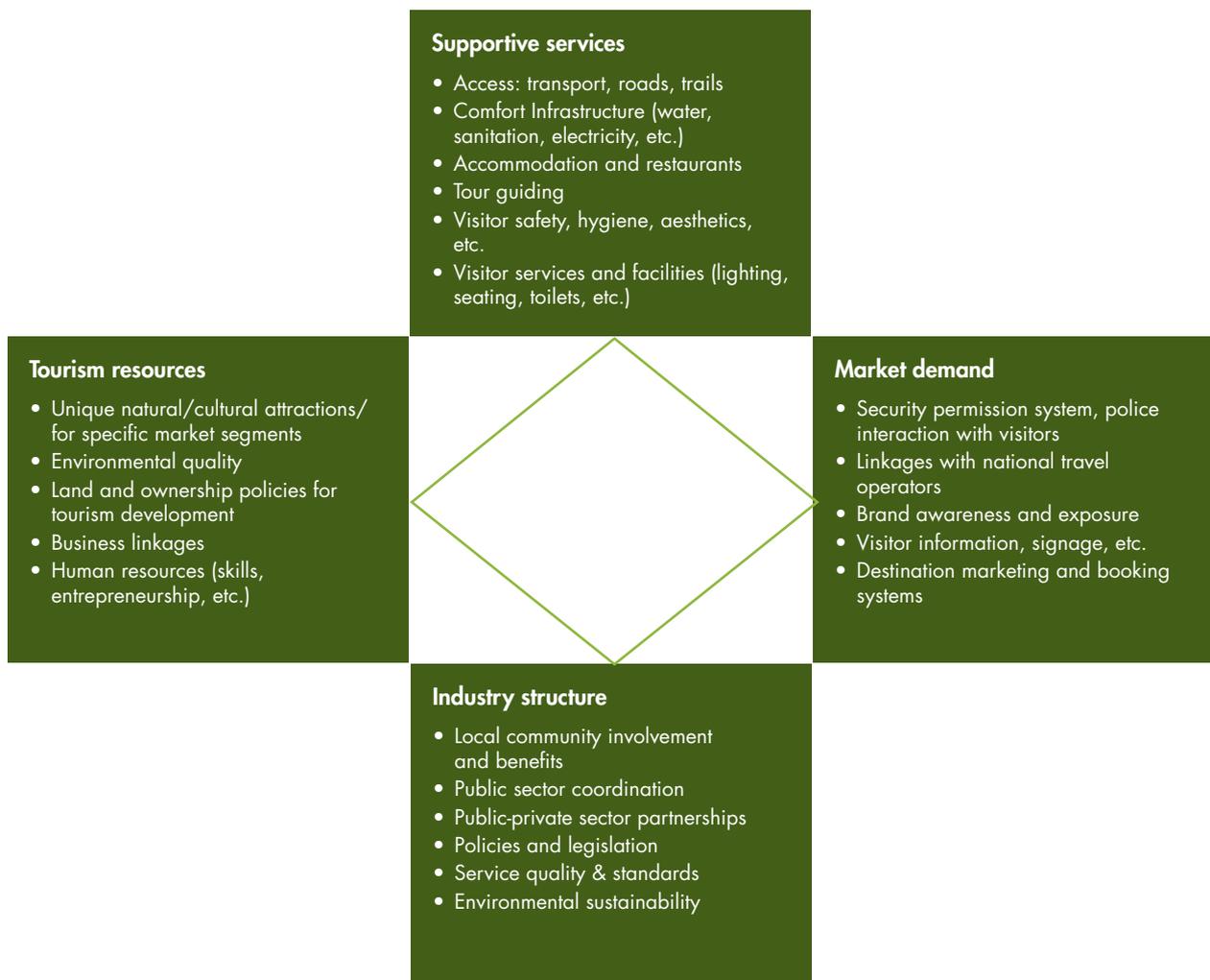
Based on the framework, the following strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) are identified for the tourism sector in Bandarban (Table 2).

2.2.3 Destination value chain assessment

The destination value chain presented in Figure 5 below represents the various processes involved in tourism value creation in Bandarban, i.e. growing tourist expenditure and jobs in the local economy.

Based on the SWOT analysis, 40 key gaps have been identified in the Bandarban tourism destination value chain, as highlighted in the text boxes attached to the value chain diagram. These gaps will be addressed in the destination management plan. The aspects highlighted in orange colour are considered to be of critical importance for tourism to develop to its maximum potential.

Figure 4: **Destination assessment framework**



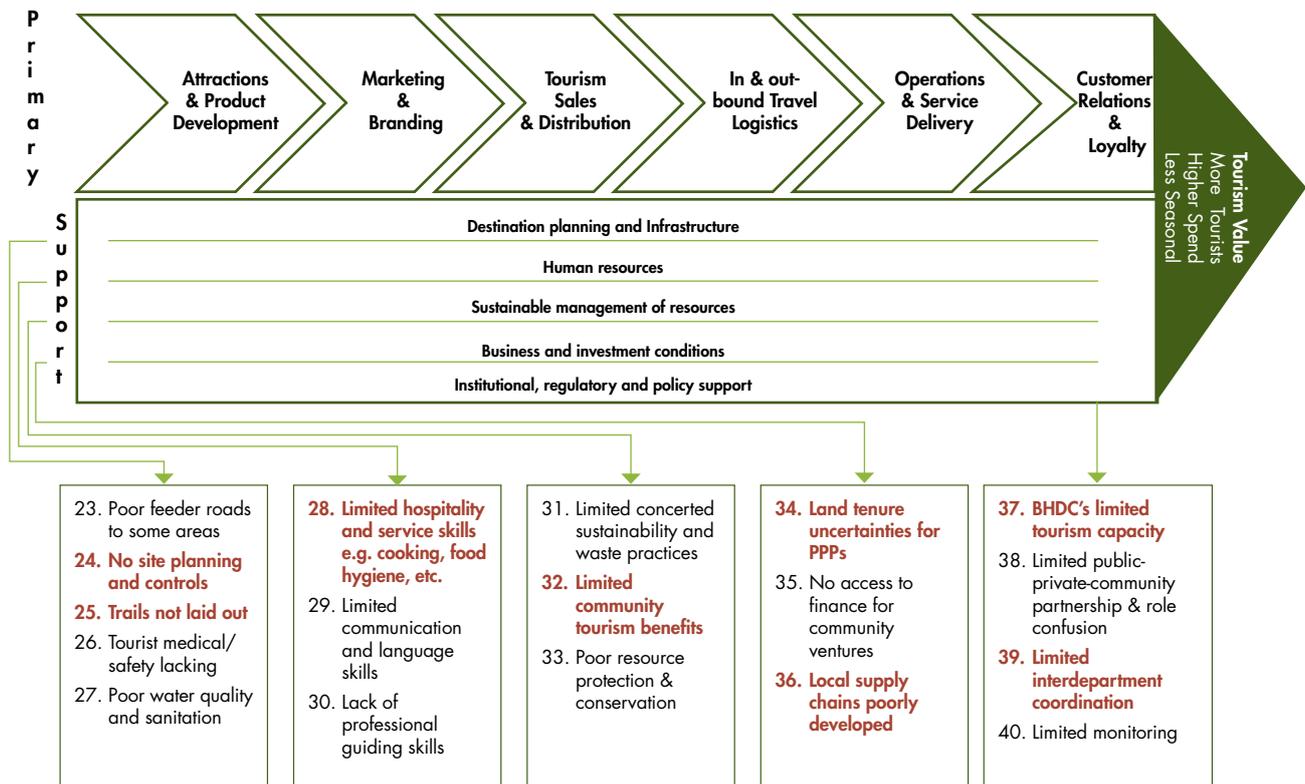
Source: The Journey adapted from Michael Porter’s ‘diamond’ framework

Table 2: Assessment of tourism Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)

Strengths/opportunities	Weaknesses/challenges
Tourism resources	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topography/scenery – undulating, hills, lakes, rivers, highest peaks in Bangladesh • Limited population density, space, escape • Unique culture – population, traditions, languages, lifestyle, food differ from rest of the country • Specific agricultural and handicraft skills and traditions at community level • Interesting jum agriculture with variety of produce (various grains, rice, coffee, mango, cashew nuts, etc.), straight from the soil • Some progress has been made with capacity building, improved visitor facilities and identifying product opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources are generally undervalued for tourism – almost all facilities and services offer entry level quality and pricing • Increasing signs of environmental pressures, pollution, unsustainable agricultural practices and degradation of natural habitats • Limited tourism, hospitality and entrepreneurial skills and practices • Limited community trust and constructive engagement • Poorly developed tourism, agricultural and handicraft value chains and linkages • Sensitive and unique social structure, traditions and beliefs prone to disruption by outside influences • Uncertainty of land tenure and approvals with no land title
Market demand	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rise in Bangladesh household income and growing domestic tourism demand for Bandarban experiences, especially from main cities with Dhaka being a major source market • Consistent growth in budget and entry level accommodation facilities, especially around Boga Lake and Bandarban town • Good transport access and easy reach from key centres • An organized guiding association in Ruma Bazar with guides providing booking facility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permitting and security measures for entering the Bandarban Hill District and key sites are major market constraints for both Bengali and foreign citizens • Tourism demand suffers from negative and often uninformed perceptions relating to personal health and safety • Limited expenditure per visitor with mostly low-spending and short stay visitors • Tourism demand is highly seasonal • The destination brand is not well known and tourism stakeholders do not follow and promote a clear market image • The area is not effectively promoted through a public-private destination marketing effort • Limited product diversity, with similar type and quality of facilities, activities, etc. almost exclusively targeted at the entry price level • Very few tour operators in Bangladesh promote and sell the area • Bandarban and Ruma Upazilla have limited tourism links with the rest of hill districts
Supportive services	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fair supply of bus and jeep transport to sites • Relatively good tourist boat facilities on Shangu River • Some supply of budget-level accommodation, ranging from very basic community guest houses to formal budget level guest houses in Ruma and more upmarket hotels and guest houses especially in and around Bandarban town • Good supply of local guides, with 80-90 guides operating from 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodation is of a limited standard and range - mostly low-cost accommodation and limited accommodation diversity • Catering and food services need improvement in quality and diversity • Activity providers (boat, road transport, etc.) have limited tourism and service skills • Vital tourism infrastructures e.g. sanitation (toilets, showers, clean water, etc.), waste management, etc. are poorly supplied at key tourism spots • Tourist safety measures (life jackets, view railings, etc.) are questionable at many spots and no effective rescue services in case of health or safety emergency
Industry structure	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guides are organized with three local guide associations operating in the small Ruma Upazilla • Transport and hotels associations in Bandarban are fairly well organized • Substantial community sensitization and micro level planning has occurred under ICIMOD and other NGOs; needs implementation of prioritized actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak governance structure for tourism • Lack of a collective vision and support for tourism development • BHDC has very limited tourism skills and no professional tourism department • The various governmental institutions that impact on tourism are poorly coordinated and cooperation is limited • The local industry is poorly linked with tour operators in Dhaka and Cox's Bazar and the area does not feature on tourism circuits • There is no inclusive local tourism forum and guide associations are fragmented • Inadequate financing channels and sources to cultivate local entrepreneurship • Factional tensions are evident in Boga Lake and possibly other places • Lack of tourism experience and understanding of backward and forward linkages

Figure 5: Summary of gaps in the Bandarban Hills destination value chain

<p>1. Limited accommodation/hospitality variety</p> <p>2. Limited activities -culture, sport, adventure, etc.</p> <p>3. Limited packaging routes /activities</p> <p>4. Limited community interaction</p>	<p>5. Unclear market image and low destination brand awareness</p> <p>6. Limited online marketing</p> <p>7. No targeted promotion drive</p> <p>8. Poor local marketing skills</p>	<p>9. Poorly orga-nised booking and ground handling</p> <p>10. Poor operator/ agent knowledge and partnerships</p> <p>11. No online transactinging</p>	<p>12. Security and permit constraints</p> <p>13. Poor links with surrounding hill regions & coast</p> <p>14. Language/ signage limitations</p> <p>15. Health risks</p>	<p>16. Limited service and facility quality</p> <p>17. Price inconsistency</p> <p>18. Local guide skill limitations</p> <p>19. Poor visitor amenities and information</p>	<p>20. Poor local tourism awareness/ participation</p> <p>21. No client databases</p> <p>22. Limited customer communication abilities</p>
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Brown = Critical

Cultural assets of Bandarban Hill District (Mro community performing traditional dance)





Traditional crafts for the tourist market

3 Towards Tourism Growth

Tourism development is in the early stages in Bandarban Hills. Developing the sector to its full potential will require the support of many government and private parties. It will be important for national and local stakeholders to agree on a clear vision of how tourism should develop in the area and the actions that should be taken to develop the sector.

3.1 A Tourism Vision

Based on the field visits and stakeholder discussions, the following vision is proposed.

3.2 Growth Objectives

The following objectives will be pursued for achieving the vision and increasing tourism revenues for the local economy and communities.

1. Volume: Increase the number of visitors to Bandarban by 10% per annum
2. Revenue: Increase the daily expenditure per domestic visitor from Tk 1,550 to Tk 2,500 in Bandarban overall and from Tk 1,350 to Tk 2,000 in Ruma, Upazila.
3. Length of stay: Increase the percentage of visitors staying 2-3 nights in Bandarban from 37% to 45% and those staying 4-7 nights from 37% to 40%
4. Leakage: Retain at least 70% of tourist expenditure in the local economy and increase tourist expenditure on local produce and handicrafts from Tk 200 to Tk 500 per visitor
5. Employment: Increase job creation through tourism, by ensuring at least 80% of those employed in tourism is from the local population

Tourism vision 2025

Bandarban Hill District will be nationally and internationally known as the most attractive and authentic nature and culture destination in Bangladesh. The area will have a thriving, sustainable tourism industry, with the local citizens prospering and sharing in the benefits of tourism.

3.3 Growth Strategy in a Nutshell

3.3.1 Building a unique market positioning

The first step in unlocking Bandarban Hill District's tourism potential is agreeing on a market positioning that will distinguish the district from other Hill Districts and tourist areas in Bangladesh.

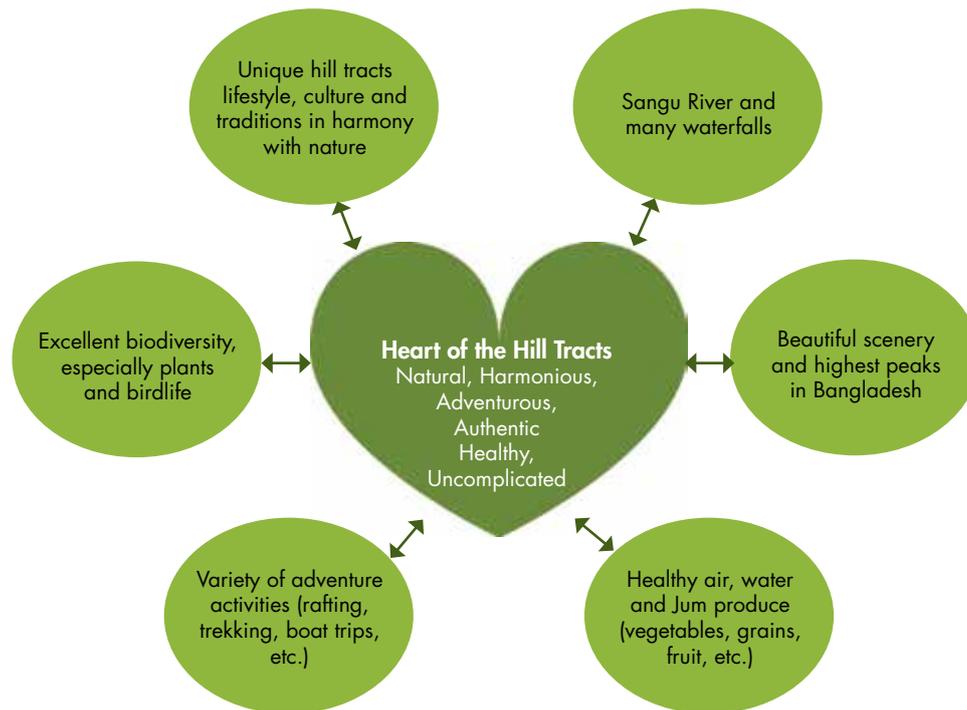
Figure 6 below presents the main components of Bandarban's tourism attractiveness. It is clear that the area's main strength lies in natural beauty of the Sangu River valley and surrounding mountains, supported by the variety of unique cultures of the local communities in the area. This includes the traditional rural lifestyle and jum practices, the beauty of the topography and landscapes, the freshness of produce, the variety of fauna and flora, the natural adventures on offer, etc.

Although some of these aspects are also available in other Hill districts, it is known that Bandarban offers the best variety and quality of such experiences. Therefore, it will be most effective to position Bandarban as "the heart of the Hill Tracts"⁶

To develop and strength this positioning, the authorities and industry will have to protect, conserve and further develop the unique natural environment and cultural traditions of the area.

⁶ "Heart of the Hill Tracts" is not meant to be a brand slogan; it is only meant to express the basis for differentiating Bandarban tourism

Figure 6: Elements of a differentiated tourism positioning for Bandarban

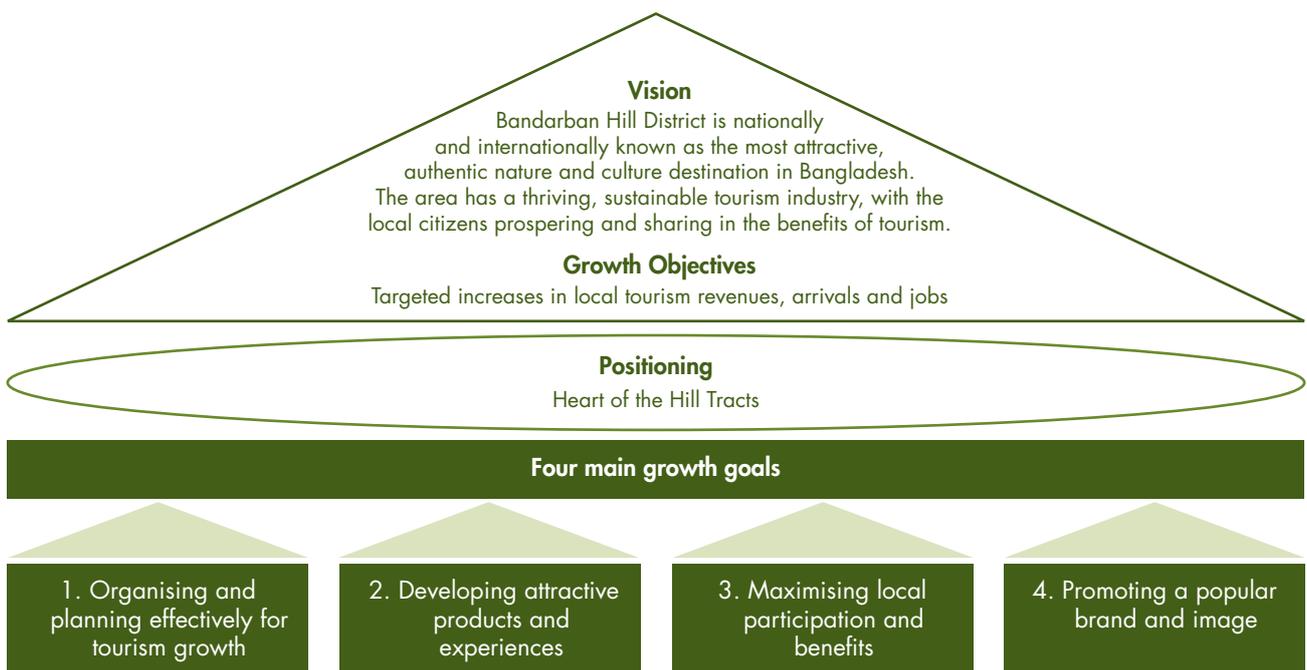


3.3.2 Four strategic goals

Based on the success factors for tourism growth identified in the situation analysis, a four-pronged approach is proposed to achieve the vision, growth objectives and market positioning, namely:

1. Organising and planning effectively for tourism growth;
2. Developing attractive and sustainable tourism products and services;
3. Maximising local participation and benefits; and
4. Promoting a popular brand and image.

Figure 7: Main growth goals



3.3.3 Target market segments

It is clear that the focus of the strategy should be on the domestic market and that Bangladesh main cities and surrounding districts should be targeted in the next 2 – 3 years. Product development and marketing efforts aimed at the international market should be limited and very targeted, aimed at specific market segments rather than individual countries.

In selecting potential market segments to target, two factors should be considered, namely i) the potential (size and expenditure) of the segments and ii) the ease (readiness and cost) of attracting the segments, as presented in Table 3 below. Based on this analysis, the following market segments should be targeted:

Segments for immediate expansion: Strategy: Continue capturing immediately

These are segments that deliver fair value and the area is, to a large degree, ready to receive right now. Product improvements could add further value and increase local expenditure and benefits.

- **Soft Adventurers:** Students and mature friendship groups, 20-50 years of age, from Dhaka, Chittagong, Cox's Bazar. They visit the area for environmental and scenic beauty, to have a social time together, away from the city rush. The segment offers medium value potential but is easy to attract and host. They usually work through local guides to make arrangements or on repeat visits may book direct with transport and accommodation providers.
- **Trekkers:** Mostly younger travellers on continuous hiking and boating trails through the area, in search of active and adventurous experiences. The segment offers moderate value potential only, however their money spent goes to the local communities and they are relatively easy to attract and host. Arrangements are usually made through local guides.

Short to medium term growth segments: Strategy: Invest for growth

Future development and marketing efforts should concentrate on expanding Bandarban Hill District's products and image to higher spending segments that seek relaxation and wellness in an unspoilt environment. This could include family recreationists doing outdoor activities (e.g. soft hiking, boating) and authentic community and nature-based recreation; up-market international explorers who thrive on eco-heritage experiences (including expatriates living in Bangladesh); and special interest groups such as climbers, hikers, and river rafters. These segments demand accommodation throughout the price ranges, i.e. from home stays to high-quality facilities. While these tourists could deliver higher value, Bandarban is less ready to receive them right now and more investment is required in the short term. These are:

- **Active families and friends:** Traveling as small parties of 2-10 persons, age group 30-50 and usually including mixed gender. They enjoy an escape from the city and scenery but prefer comfort and good service. They often plan their own itineraries and book services directly or through the Internet. This is a high value segment that requires investment in human and physical resources to ensure high quality experiences and service levels over the next 5 – 10 years.
- **Special Interest visitors (e.g. cultural, adventure, etc.).** These segments could be linked to specific events and occurrences, e.g. cultural festivals and pilgrimages, bird migrations, etc.

Segment to maximise value: Strategy: Leverage value

- **SAVE (Scientific, Academic, Volunteer and Educational) market.** These are professionals that work for universities, NGOs, development organisations etc. and they are usually favourably inclined to support local services and community ventures. They are easy to attract as they are mandated by their employers and opportunities for them to spend locally should be maximised.

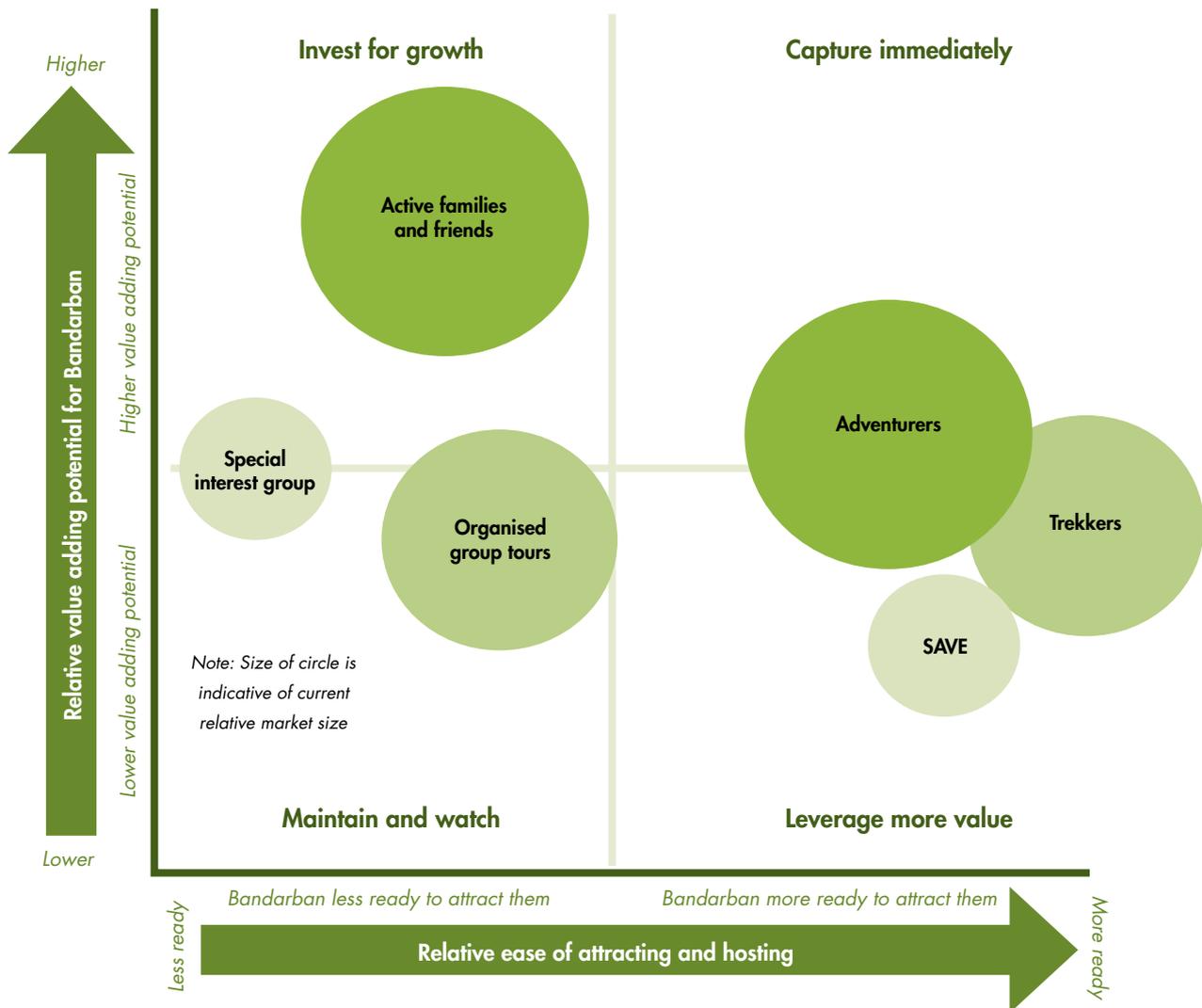
Segments for organic growth: Strategy: Maintain (provide basic amenities) and watch for opportunities. These are segments that will grow naturally as interest increases and do not require serious investment in human and physical resources.

- **Organised group tours:** These travel in groups of 20-40, usually by chartered bus and can include member societies, organised tour operator groups, educational and sport groups, etc. They visit the main sites, mainly within reach of Bandarban Sadar and they are budget conscious.
- **Day-trippers:** From surrounding areas on a recreational trip. Across age groups and demographics.

Table 3: Target market segments

Segments		Value potential Growth size and local visitor expenditure	Ease of attracting Current market share and cost of attracting and hosting them
<p>Soft adventurers</p> <p>Students and mature friendship groups, 20-50 years, from Dhaka, Chittagong, Cox's Bazar</p>		<p>Medium</p> <p>Travel in groups and are keen to 'escape' from the city rush</p> <p>Not high spenders but spend at local community level</p>	<p>Easy</p> <p>The majority of Bandarban's current visitors to Ruma and Tanchi</p> <p>Can be easily reached through web marketing and word-of mouth, current facilities acceptable</p>
<p>Trekkers</p> <p>Mostly younger travellers on continuous hiking and boating trails through the area, in search of active and adventurous experiences</p>		<p>Limited</p> <p>Numbers are limited due to security restrictions, can include foreigners</p> <p>Moderate expenditure but high local benefits on local home stays, guides and food</p>	<p>Easy</p> <p>Best trekking area in Bangladesh, area well-known for trekking and ready for expansion</p> <p>Area already known in trekking circles, current facilities entry level, and can be expanded at limited cost</p>
<p>Active families and friends</p> <p>Traveling as a small party of 2-10 persons, usually including mixed gender. Age 30-50</p>		<p>High</p> <p>Growing market as disposable income increases</p> <p>Relatively high expenditure expecting better quality of facilities and services</p>	<p>More difficult</p> <p>Mainly in Bandarban city and surrounding areas (Nilgiri, etc.)</p> <p>Require good service levels, variety of activities & attractions, multi-channel promotion</p>
<p>Organized group tours</p> <p>Short group tours by social groups and families, mainly from Dhaka, Chittagong, Cox's Bazar, range from 10-40 persons</p>		<p>Limited</p> <p>Currently mainly short stay visit tours</p> <p>Tours mostly prepaid, but expenditure in area depends on what's offered</p>	<p>Average</p> <p>Some bus tours visit the area, mainly Bandarban Sadar</p> <p>Require large accommodation and hospitality facilities, good service levels, substantial visitors facilities, promotion through operators' channels</p>
<p>Day-Trippers</p> <p>Mainly from surrounding hill districts, and Chittagong</p>		<p>Low</p> <p>Mainly more affluent visitors from Chittagong</p> <p>Mostly bring their own food, no overnight</p>	<p>Easy</p> <p>Fair level of local visitation to area</p> <p>Current awareness substantial, existing facilities and local promotion acceptable</p>
<p>SAVE (Scientific, Academic Volunteer & Educational)</p> <p>Professionals studying or working in the area with universities, development agencies, NGOs, etc.</p>		<p>Medium</p> <p>Limited numbers of scientists and NGOs doing social and environmental research and development. Use mostly basic to mid-range accommodation and facilities</p>	<p>Average</p> <p>Mainly some NGOs and government-related workers</p> <p>Early adopter market, existing facilities acceptable, word of mouth strong</p>

Figure 8: Proposed target market strategy for Bandarban



3.3.4 Strategy guiding principles

i. Focus on the tourism value chain

The key delivery elements through the tourism value chain should be monitored and weaknesses should be addressed, e.g. improvements in regulations, human resources, transport, activities, attractions, accommodation, entertainment, shopping. This will lead to a clearer understanding of where to focus for increasing the value of tourism in the local economy.

ii. Small actions leading to a bigger whole

Small scalable actions should be identified that will contribute to the bigger picture. This will lead to increased ease in process, decision-making, and implementation and evaluation. When these are successful, the scaling can be done through concerted actions and replication.

iii. Keeping stakeholders, especially local communities, involved and informed

There are multiple stakeholders in the Bandarban area, and in order to keep everyone equally involved and supportive, continuous communication should be done through workshops, consultations, press coverage, etc. This should include not only government leaders and departments, but also private operators, local communities and travellers, so everyone feels that their efforts contribute to successes. Local communities should be key participants in tourism decision-making since increased tourism will affect them most, both positively and negatively.

iv. Agile and flexible strategy that moulds to opportunities and markets

Tourism is volatile and susceptible to change. It also presents opportunities, which need to be grabbed. The strategy should be agile and easy to change according to the changes in the situation. One way to achieve this is to hold periodic re-evaluation meetings to mould the strategy to existing situations.

v. Build the clean, green and organic image of the area

Bandarban has an image of being green, clean and sparsely populated, compared to the rest of Bangladesh. This is a valuable image that needs to be strengthened through branding and marketing, and development approaches. Avoiding badly planned and operated developments in the short term will certainly yield dividends in the future and help maintain the unique market positioning of the area.

vi. Strengthen unique local character and assets

The local socio-cultural and natural assets of the area need to be strengthened. This includes local skills, unique nature, agro practices, local culture and hospitality, local architecture and construction techniques, etc. This will instill pride in the local populace and inspire them to value and conserve local traditions.

vii. Continuous focus on quality

Tourism needs continual improvements. The focus should be on delivering quality at every level and keeping everything that is done in line with the unique image of the area. This will keep the products and destination fresh and modern. The tourism professionals and management of the Bandarban Hill District Council should stay abreast of what's happening in the world of tourism.



Prantik Lake, Bandarban

4 Implementation Strategies and Actions

The following strategies and supporting actions are proposed for achieving the strategic goals.

4.1 Organising and Planning Effectively for Tourism Growth

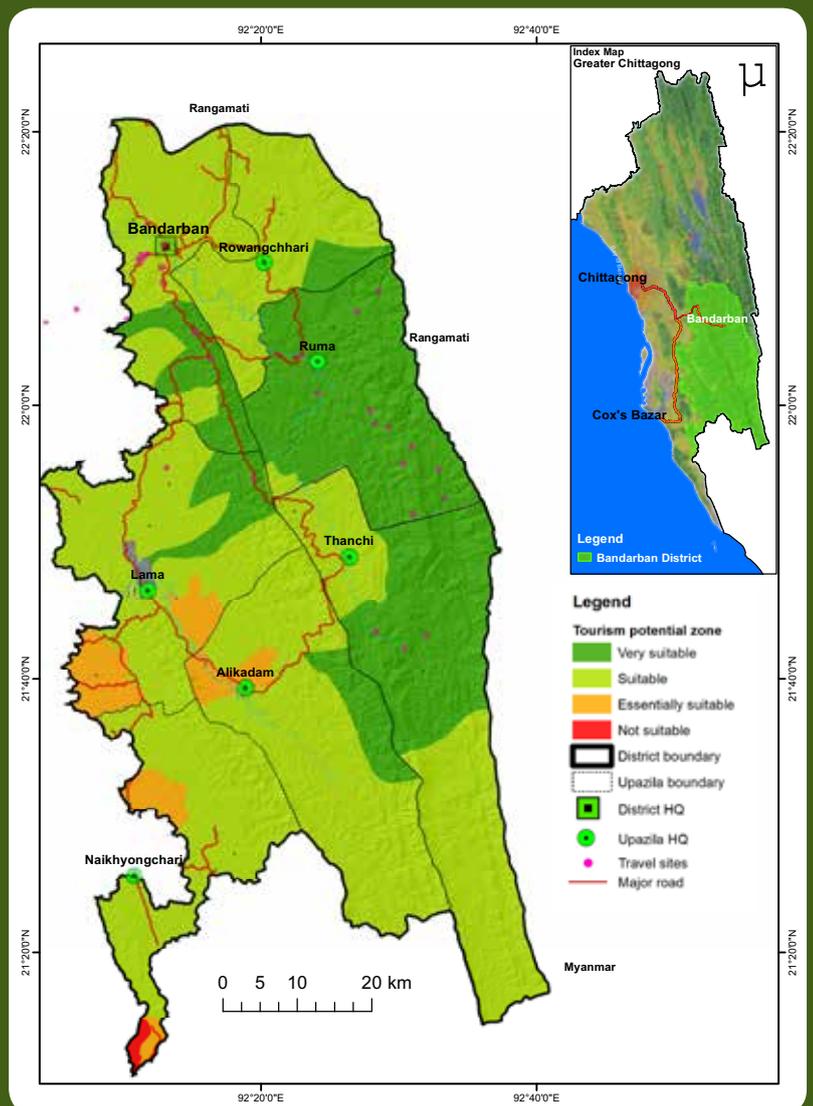
Currently many visitors are day-trippers or short-stay visitors from Dhaka and surrounding areas such as Chittagong and Cox's Bazar. One of the main reasons for this trend is the limited range and quality of tourism facilities and a limited awareness of existing tourism experiences, accommodation, and other tourism facilities on offer in the area. A major effort should be made to improve and expand the range of tourism products and services on offer and to communicate information regarding the existing range of products. The following strategies are proposed:

4.1.1 Adopt a sustainable spatial development approach

District could be broadly divided into the following two tourism activity zones, each requiring a specific development approach:

- **The Hill Entry Areas as General Tourism Development Zone:** This zone includes Bandarban Sadar, Rowangchari Upazilla, Naikhyongchari Upazilla, Alikadam Upazilla and Lama Upazilla. Most of the higher density urban settlements are in this zone and especially Bandarban Sadar serves as a 'staging post' from where travellers depart to other destinations. These areas are able to accommodate a higher volume of travellers in larger accommodation facilities. The focus should be on sustainable land-use planning (picnic and camping areas, short hiking routes, public spaces, etc.) and preservation (unique natural resources, attractions, landscapes, cultural assets (local architecture, historical structures, etc.). It should also serve as a centre for tourism commerce through cultural performances (dance, music, drama, etc.) and promotion of local art and handicrafts. A special effort should be made to encourage sustainable management practices such as waste management, anti-littering, control of alien vegetation and soil erosion in these areas.

Figure 9: Broad tourism zones in Bandarban



- **The Deep Hill Areas and Sangu River basin as Ecotourism Conservancy Zone:** Ruma Upazilla and Tanchi Upazilla. The key to creating a 'conservancy' area lies in getting all stakeholders (government, traditional governance structures, local communities, private businesses) to agree on a tourism management model. This may include identification of tourism development areas in and around paras, no-development and limited development conservation areas, trekking routes and circuits, boat mooring points, etc. Clear guidelines should be developed pertaining to environmental impacts, building restrictions and sizes, materials and designs, water, energy and waste management practices, etc. The effects of human settlement and agricultural practices on the river biosphere should be monitored and controlled and the emphasis should be put on environmental management aspects such as human waste and effluents, water pollution controls, and alien vegetation control. Communities should be encouraged to retain unique cultural traditions (art, handicraft, music and dance, cooking, etc.) and architectures as tourism assets.

These spatial suggestions are broad and provide only basic directives for expansion of tourism. It is recommended that a spatial tourism guide plan should be prepared to ensure controlled and sustainable tourism development. Since the district functions under the jurisdiction of various government organisations, the preparation of such a plan should be a joint project of the Bandarban Hill District Council, the District Administration, and other relevant Ministries under the leadership of BHDC as tourism implementing agency.

The guide plan and accompanying policy should contain:

- Different spatial development zones (in line with the broad areas described above) depending on physical, social and environmental conditions. The guide plan should demarcate specific tourism development areas e.g. for resort, hotel and campsite development; for conservation; for trekking; for commercial and retail development, etc.
- Development guidelines for each zone for ensuring optimal economic, social and environmental sustainability. These may include land ownership arrangements, development densities, height and coverage restrictions, local ownership ratios, building design guidelines, environmental management conditions (water, energy management, etc.). These guidelines should be simple and practical, and local communities should be able to implement them.
- Clarity of land ownership and tenure. Tourism investors require security of property tenure when investing in capital-intensive tourism plant and facilities. The development and communication of a clear land-ownership and land tenure system and concession policy and system is very important for tourism growth. The system should be based on the guide plan proposed above.

Action: *Formulate a spatial tourism guide plan for the area, after consulting with local communities and public sector partners. This should include a clear land-use and ownership policy in close consultation with government landowners, local communities, and traditional leadership structures in the Hills.*

4.1.2 Streamline tourist security and movement

Current security practices related to visitor permissions, movement restrictions, and reporting are not well coordinated between the police, defence force and border guards. Visitors are required to comply with varying and often duplicating procedures as the travel through the area. There does not seem to be a clear policy regarding police interactions with visitors. These practices sometimes disrupt tourists' travel plans and itineraries, restrict tourist movements and perpetuate often-unwarranted perceptions of insecurity. Tourists' access conditions and movement restrictions will have to be improved and streamlined if tourism is to reach its true potential in the area. The following guidelines may be considered:

- All tourists heading into the Ruma and Tanchi Conservancy zones should obtain an entry ticket from the proposed BANTA information offices. In issuing the ticket, visitors should complete a basic form with their basic personal information and this will be logged on a central database, accessible to all security establishments, including police, defence, and border guards. This should be arranged personally or through the tourist guides or transport operators and should come at a cost to tourists and the fees will be used to sustain the proposed BANTA. This ticket should serve as an entry permit for moving around the area and should be shown and be acceptable at police and army posts, without visitors having to again complete any other forms, only the permit number could be noted.
- This system could start off as a manual process, but should be developed as an electronic system, linked to mobile phones so as to be able to communicate with visitors when necessary.

- As explained during the meetings with the police and defence services, they are responsible for securing the area and not for the safety of individual tourists. In this respect, police should never accompany tourists in vehicles or boat transport, unless deemed essential, by the authorities. Local police officers should not decide to accompany tourist groups on an ad hoc basis.
- The security clearance system for international tourists works but is cumbersome and can take too long. The process should be streamlined with agreed time targets for issuing clearances, allowing international tour operators and their clients adequate time and certainty for making arrangements.

Action 1: *The departments responsible for security should agree on a clear policy, processes and roles for dealing with tourist security, avoiding any role confusion and overlaps that may exist and clarifying the protocols regarding interaction between tourists and security officials.*

Action 2: *Agree on a system and process for issuing entry tickets to the proposed Ruma and Tanchi conservancy areas, that serve as permits for traveling around the entire area, avoiding unnecessary time lags and harassment of tourists.*

Action 3: *Assess the process of issuing international entry permits to Bandarban and improve processes and time frames for issuing security clearances.*

Action 4: *Involve local communities in a programme of community volunteerism, to look out for the safety of visitors, provide them with information and advice, etc.*

Another important aspect of visitor safety is ensuring safe transportation of visitors. A road safety programme should be initiated, including road widening at points of danger and training of drivers to transport tourists employing safe driving techniques.

Action 5: *Initiate a road safety programme, including road improvements at specific danger points along tourist routes and training drivers of tourist vehicles in safe driving practices.*

4.1.3 Provide a business environment conducive to tourism growth

Tourism does not occur inside a vacuum. The tourism industry will flourish only if the environment in which it operates is supportive of tourism expansion. Main aspects that need to be addressed are:

i. Provide a suitable tourism policy framework. Clear government policies are important to guide the various authorities and other stakeholders towards sustainable tourism development. Bandarban is an emerging tourism destination with many stakeholders involved and fragile natural and cultural resources. The policy should be spearheaded by the Ministry of the Hill Districts and should be formally approved by the National Government. This destination management policy could serve as a basis for formulating various policy actions/guidelines. Such policy framework should include:

- *Important action guidelines required to implement and manage tourism development in Bandarban.*
Such action guidelines should address, among others:
 - management and control of various tourist attractions;
 - tourist security management;
 - provision and maintenance of visitors facilities;
 - destination marketing;
 - managing development applications and approvals;
 - support to local communities in developing tourism products;
 - investment promotion and approvals;
 - human resources development;
 - environmental management;
 - tourism licensing requirements (if appropriate); and
 - infrastructure provision.
- *Procedures and approval processes for applying for and executing tourism development.* Again such processes should be appropriate and easy to access and should not be cumbersome with a lot of paperwork.



Multiple stakeholders with direct and indirect responsibilities in managing tourism



- *Clear roles and responsibilities for implementing and managing tourism in the area.* Many agencies and departments have a bearing on tourism and clear roles should be defined for managing the different tourism attractions, land and development approvals, tourist security, tourism planning, tourism marketing, and for applications and approvals of tourism development in such zones.
 - Bandarban Hill District Council (BHDC)
 - Defence Force
 - Bangladesh Border Guards
 - LGED Local Government Engineering
 - Roads and Highways Dept.
 - Guides Association
 - Vocational Training Institute
 - PDB (Electricity Power Development)
 - Women chamber of commerce
 - Union councils
 - King/Circle Chief
 - District administration
 - Police/Tourist Police
 - Agriculture extension programme
 - DBHE (Public Health and Engineering)
 - Hotel owners Association
 - Transport and Boat Owners associations
 - Youth Development Board
 - Trader association/chambers of commerce
 - Press club
 - Upazilla councils
 - Karbary and Mouza heads

Action 1: *Formulate a tourism development policy for Bandarban District, in consultation with all role-players involved in delivering tourism development, and have this approved at the highest level as a binding policy that directs the efforts of all public and private sector entities. The development policy should consider land-use and land-ownership arrangements as indicated in 4.2.2 below.*

ii. Improve tourism-related infrastructure. Accommodating and stimulating greater visitor volumes will require a concerted investment in visitor infrastructures such as improvements in roads that link up key tourist areas and attractions, provision of water and electricity to tourist towns and villages, waste removal and management, sewerage systems, road signage, information offices, etc.

Action 2: *Conduct a detailed assessment of infrastructure capacity, in Bandarban Sadar, Ruma and Tanchi Upazillas and tourism paras such as Boga Lake and others to identify gaps in road access, water and electricity delivery, and sanitation infrastructure. Launch a prioritised programme of infrastructure improvement in partnership with all relevant government departments.*

4.1.4 Strengthen institutional capacity and collaboration

Bandarban Hill District is faced with significant challenges in managing and planning growth in the tourism sector. Bandarban Hill District Council has the official mandate to lead the development and promotion of tourism in the District. Given the limited financial and human resources and huge tourism development challenges in Bandarban Hill District, it is important that all role-players should co-operate within a clear organizational framework and their roles should be clear to avoid duplication and wastage of resources.

i. Strengthen public sector tourism implementation and coordination capacity. There exists no tourism specialist capacity in the Council, making it almost impossible for the organisation to discharge its tourism mandate. The programmes of a large number of institutions such as the Defence Force, Police, District Administration, Land Board, Upazilla and union councils, training bodies and ministries responsible for tourism, forestry, environment, sanitation, water, roads development, youth development, social welfare and women's empowerment, among others, have a major bearing on tourism development in the area and cooperation and joint planning will be important. Successful tourism development in Bandarban Hill District will require active cooperation among the BHDC various related institutions and Ministries. To achieve this, the tourism institutional capacity of BHDC needs urgent strengthening. The main roles of the BHDC office should be:

- Adopting the strategy and action framework as a tourism development plan for the area and committing to its implementation.
- Initiating and implementing priority product development, marketing and events projects through the various workgroups and local tourism associations and with the support of NGO programmes and women's stakeholder groups in the area.

- Monitoring progress and acting as a liaison and reporting body for the various government programmes and outcomes, such as:
 - Spatial planning and allocation of land and infrastructure for tourism development;
 - Tourist security programmes and systems;
 - Providing road access, public transport and road signage for tourism purposes;
 - Maintaining and developing government-owned public tourist attractions;
 - Initiating nature and culture-based tourism facilities and programmes;
 - Promoting sustainable social and environmental management practices, including safeguarding women and children's welfare;
 - Implementing and co-ordinating tourism training and education programmes;
 - Maintaining the general upkeep, cleanliness and beautification;
 - Canvassing for sponsorships and other financial contributions to the Bandarban Hill District tourism development programme; and
 - Collating tourism performance statistics.

Action 1: *Establish a tourism unit within the BHDC and appoint a suitably qualified senior official and support staff with adequate expertise in tourism development, with the sole mandate for implementing the tourism policy and destination management plan. Their mandate, roles and responsibilities should follow the tourism policy described in 4.1.2 above and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) should guide the office.*

Action 2: *Form a Bandarban tourism forum: BHDC should play a leadership role in coordinating the efforts of the various government and institutional role-players in implementing this action framework and the BHDC Chairperson should chair the forum. The forum should have a comprehensive membership and should represent all government ministries, agencies, women's groupings, and traditional community leadership structures in the area. The following guidelines should be followed:*

- The forum should meet at least quarterly.
- The agenda of the forum should follow this destination management plan and members should report on progress at each forum meeting.
- BHDC should act as a secretariat for the forum and should be the main coordinating and monitoring agent.
- Three work-groups could be formed to steer implementation including workgroups on i) product development and entrepreneurship, ii) marketing and events, and iii) training and capacity building.

ii. Ensure strong and practical links between MoCHTA/BHDC and the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism in executing this plan: The Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism (MoCAT) is the apex governmental body in Bangladesh responsible for tourism development and promotion and as such tourism development in Bandarban should be aligned with the programmes of the tourism ministry and vice versa. This requires excellent collaboration between BHDC and the relevant units under the tourism ministry (ministry divisions, Bangladesh Tourism Board and others) in executing this plan.

Action 3: *Formalise a Memorandum of Understanding between MoCHTA and MoCAT, arrange an annual planning meeting between the two parties to formulate and agree on a tourism development action plan for the year ahead and share progress reports on a quarterly basis.*

iii. Coordinate the efforts of the private tourism industry: Currently there is a lack of coordination and partnerships among private sector stakeholders to develop and promote tourism in the area. Private businesses could achieve a lot by pooling their efforts in addressing common issues, such as marketing of Bandarban, providing visitor information and booking services, improving visitor services where the government is unable to do so, etc.

Action 4: *Form the Bandarban Tourism Association (BANTA). The establishment of local, membership-based Tourism Association in Bandarban is important for private tourism owners for having a strong voice and for achieving a balance between "top-down" and "bottom-up" tourism development. The association should fulfil the following important functions:*

- Being a private sector platform where common challenges could be raised and addressed.
- Spearhead the development of new products and attractions, e.g. community events, tourism trails, visitor facilities, etc.
- Act as a voice for the tourism industry in an area when communicating with the local authority and other local industries and interest groups.
- Manage the visitor Information points, distribute tourist information, facilitate bookings and promote members' products.

The following guidelines should apply to BANTA:

- The preferred legal structure is a local association, not for gain and based on a solid constitution that allows for member participation.
- The constitution should clearly stipulate the objectives, functions and stakeholder representation.
- Business should be charged an agreed small membership fee to join the local association and all members should be quality screened before being accepted as members.
- In return only members of BANTA will be promoted by the BHDC and represented in Bandarban Hill District marketing materials and website.
- The BHDC should facilitate the formation of the association and, once formed, should work with the association to implement specific projects or tasks. Such projects may include development of an official visitor information centre for the area, product development initiatives, community awareness campaigns, entrepreneurship development, staging of festivals, etc.
- Development agencies that are active in the area could provide administrative and implementation support to the association.
- The association should be self-funded. A suitable funding model may be the introduction of a tourism conservation levy to be paid by each visitor entering the Ecotourism Conservancy Zone proposed above. The levy could be combined with an entry permit to be issued by BANTA offices in Ruma and Tanchi. Only visitors in possession of a permit should be allowed to visit the Boga Lake, Keokradong, the waterfalls and river trips on the Sangu River. The BHDC should provide financial support for administration of the association.

Action 5: *Establish a tourism levy of around Tk 80 per person entering the proposed conservation zone, to be charged at BANTA offices at Bandarban, Ruma and Tanchi, once the association has been established. A transparent accounting and cash management system should be put in place.*

iii. Coordinate the effort of sub-district level functional groups responsible for managing tourism related activities: While tourism is a relatively new concept in Bandarban, sustained and inclusive tourism growth and positive impacts on triple bottom lines (environment, economy and culture), requires sustainable management of tourism growth, activities and impacts. There is a need for establishing and strengthening sub-district (upazilla) level institutional mechanisms as committees under BANTA, comprised of elected members representing various services. The committees should oversee operating standards at local level and should ensure that environmental and cultural heritage is managed through an inclusive, equitable and responsible tourism development processes in each sub district.

Action 6: *Establish and elect functional member committees under BANTA representing different services at sub-district/upazilla level, such as guide committees, boat management committees, waste management committees, yarn bank committees, toilet management committee, etc.*

Action 7: *Develop guidelines for the overall functioning of BANTA and the sub-district committees, in line with responsible tourism practices.*

4.2 Developing Attractive and Sustainable Tourism Products and Services

4.2.1 Improve and expand the range of experiences, facilities and services ('products') in line with target market needs

As indicated in the situation analysis the variety and quality of tourism products in Bandarban district, especially the outlying tourism areas of Ruma and Tanchi, is limited. To keep visitors longer in the area and to increase visitor expenditure the government and private sector need to invest in improving tourism products. The table below provides a range of suggestions for developing products for the various target market segments highlighted in the previous section.

Table 4: Potential product development opportunities for target market segments

Segments	Experiences, facilities and services	
<p>Day-Trippers</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer short guided hikes and tours • Package and sell local fresh produce • Develop picnic facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the menu of local dishes • Develop visitor facilities at key sites • Expand mass movement facilities e.g. ropeways, transport, etc. to key points
<p>Adventurers</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify unique and high quality sites and experiences, especially in Ruma and Tanchi and improve facilities there • Initiate and develop appropriate festivals and events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop sanitation, amenities, community guiding, trails, interpretation etc. in support of activities • Increase and improve camping sites and variety of entry-level, community based accommodation facilities
<p>Mature active & families and friends</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve range, quality and accessibility of nature and culture activities, e.g. boat trips, viewpoints, waterfalls, community handicrafts, local produce, cultural performances, etc. • Initiate and develop suitable festivals and events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve site interpretation and guiding at key sites • Improve hospitality service levels and facilities • Expand the range of accommodation and hospitality facilities • Improve packaging and presentation of local produce
<p>Organized group tours</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand the variety of activities e.g. boat trips, ropeway rides, shopping market, evening laser light shows, etc. • Improve production of suitable community produce and handicrafts markets • Initiate and develop appropriate festivals and events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and improve visitor facilities, interpretation and guiding at major tourist sites identified in the spatial guide plan • Develop group accommodation • Improve restaurants' facilities, menus and service levels • Improve packaging and presentation of local produce and handicrafts
<p>Trekking and river boating</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with boat operators to improve the variety of boating options and to make rafting more accessible and safe • Stage a major boat racing event • Develop and promote community experiences and products among boat and trekking guides and operators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with trekking operators to expand hiking route options and overnight stays, e.g. mapping, signposting, grading • Produce detailed maps of easier routes that do not require guiding and mark and signpost routes • Lobby for training and accreditation of special interest adventure guides

Action: *Launch a continuous tourism development and investment programme for expanding and maintaining the range of tourism products and experiences in Bandarban and building the capacity of local tourism service providers. Priorities should include:*

- Improving and expanding tourist accommodation, especially in Ruma, and Tanchi Upazillas;
- Improving food quality, hygiene and variety, especially in Ruma, and Tanchi Upazillas with a focus on improving and promoting women's traditional skills in e.g. handicrafts, food preparation, etc.;
- Mapping, signposting and landscaping of walking and hiking trails;
- Developing picnic sites, both on government and local community land;
- Providing toilets and rest facilities at main tourist sites; and
- Where possible, launching concessions on government-owned land for local entrepreneurs to provide adventure activities such as river rafting, mountain cycling, and horse-riding.

4.2.2 Improve tourism business and investment conditions

While the government can no doubt play an important role in stimulating tourism development, private sector ownership or partnerships have proven to be the best and most sustainable model for improving the variety and quality of tourism accommodation, transportation and other services. Private investment can occur in partnership with Government or local communities. The following strategies and actions are proposed for improving conditions for stimulating business growth:

- i. **Provide tourism investment support.** BHDC should consider a special package of investment support measures to reduce investor risk. Commercialising government-owned land may be one way of attracting private sector investment and creating strong tourism public-private-partnerships. Such an investment support package should be linked to the spatial guide plan recommended above. It could include incentives such as land concessioning by the government, support with approval of plans, tax breaks, training support, etc.

Action 1: *Based on the spatial development guide plan recommended above, investigate options for investment support, based on best practice international case studies. Formulate and approve a programme and package of public-private-community tourism investment support.*

- ii. **Support tourism Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs).** The majority of the tourism related entrepreneurs in the area are small businesses. Seasonality affects the sustainability of their businesses, service quality is generally low, business knowledge is limited and most firms face skill shortages. Many businesses do not have the required financial resources to expand their businesses.

A capacity building (technical and financial) programme will be required to assist small businesses (with a preference for women-owned businesses) in getting organized, and improving service levels and business management skills. Two training tiers may be considered, including a) an entry level program, providing especially community level entrepreneurs with basic training on hygiene, customer care, pricing and basic financial management, and b) an intermediate programme that could include cooking, housekeeping, online marketing, etc. Avenues should be found of providing local SMMEs (Small, Medium and Micro entrepreneurs) with financing and business partnerships to allow them to improve facilities and improve profits.

Action 2: *Establish an enterprise training and mentoring programme, and where possible, involve more successful and established local and national business owners as mentors.*

Action 3: *Launch a small business loan scheme, (possibly in collaboration with local financial institutions and supported by donor agencies), that can provide local level entrepreneurs with tourism start-up funding. Female entrepreneurs should be given preference to address gender imbalances.*

4.2.3 Improve packaging of tourism experiences

Bandarban offers tourists a wide variety of experiences, however these are not well presented and packaged so that visitors can easily choose and undertake their preferred activities. The following strategies and actions are proposed:

- i. **Document and present tourists with the full range of experiences offered.** The various market segments (Adventurer, Trekker, Active families and friends, etc.) have different requirements for different activities in Bandarban. These could range from easy and relaxing outdoor experiences (e.g. picnic, boat rides, short walks to waterfalls, scenic

vehicle trips, shopping for local handicrafts and produce, meals at local eateries, local cultural performances, etc.) to more challenging and adventurous activities (e.g. trekking, off-road drives, kayaking and riding the river rapids, mountain climbing, staying over with the local families etc.). All possible tourism experiences should be clearly identified, documented, and communicated to potential travellers.

Action 1: *Map GPS coordinates of all attractions and experiences in Bandarban and develop a database with short descriptions, directions and photographs and video clips of each experience/attraction. This should be used as content and interactive map on the website, Facebook page and in the proposed information offices.*

ii. Link Bandarban attractions with surrounding areas in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. From tourism perspective, Bandarban Hill District forms an integral part of a broader regional experience and the various areas and attractions within and outside the district should be linked and the tourist should find it easy to obtain information for visiting various areas in the Chittagong Hills Districts. This could include tour operators' packaging and marketing of travel routes through the area, linking and improving roads that connect various parts of the area, arrangements with bus and shuttle operators to include Bandarban Hill District on their routes, etc.

Action 2: *Contact tourism operators and tour guides in surrounding areas and cities such as Dhaka, Chittagong and Cox's Bazar and discuss and agree with them on opportunities for linking Bandarban tourism experiences into a broader regional package. Provide information and support to them.*

iii. Expand the trails network. The number and variety of boating and trekking options and routes is limited and routes are not well mapped and marked. The network of trails should be expanded and trails of various lengths, difficulty and duration should be mapped, marked, and signposted and suitable guiding and security arrangements should be put in place.

Action 3: *Launch a trails development programme in partnership with local communities and tour guides. Identify and GPS map all possible tourism hiking and boating routes in the area, assess each route to identify safety and enjoyment improvements, improve trails, signpost routes with an agreed signposting system and rate trails in terms of difficulty, time to complete, etc. This information should be provided in easy format (website and basic printed map(s)) to visitors. Ensure that trails provide good opportunities for expenditure in local communities e.g. tea and refreshment points, shops, restaurants, camping and homestays, etc.*

4.2.4 Improve product and service quality

i. Improve quality of tourism attractions and experiences: The quality and visitor readiness of commercial products (i.e. accommodation, restaurants, entertainment, tours, etc.) and public attractions need to be improved to increase the competitiveness of the destination. Product quality improvements may include the application of a basic quality assurance system and a concerted programme of investments in upgrading visitor facilities such as toilets, water, seating, signage, walkways, riverfront boat mooring and visitor boarding facilities are currently insufficient to cater to growing tourism numbers.

Action 1: *Conduct an audit of each tourist site and visitor area in Bandarban and identify gaps in quality of visitor facilities. Draft a list of improvements needed and prioritise these for planning and budgeting purposes. Start a programme of site improvements and ensure that all developments are of a high quality and respect local designs, materials and sustainable tourism technologies.*

Action 2: *In consultation with local communities, make detailed site development plans for major attraction sites like Boga Lake, Keokradong, Shoilo propat, the main waterfalls in the area, tourist boat stations, etc. to ensure that everything is done in a properly planned manner. These plans should show the locations of existing structures (buildings, roads, paths, steps, etc.) and also new proposed developments like proposed locations for tourist accommodation, bathroom and toilets, jetties and decks, pathways and boardwalks, picnic areas, etc.). Environmental threats such as water pollution, and impact on vegetation should be taken into account.*

ii. Improve hospitality quality and service levels: With tourism being a fairly new industry in Bandarban Hill District, service levels, especially in the hospitality sector (hotels, restaurants, etc.), are generally not up to scratch. The Active Family and Friends' segment, in particular, requires good services and value for money.

Action 3: *Identify hospitality facilities (accommodation, restaurants) that are aiming at tourists. Visit them to discuss their facilities and identify possible quality improvements. Advise them on actions to be taken to improve quality and monitor progress. Female ownership and participation should be encouraged.*

Action 4: *As a follow up to Action 3, a basic quality assurance system can be considered, i.e. providing businesses with a checklist of quality criteria relating to visitor comfort, safety, hygiene and cleanliness, etc. and providing them with a certificate of approval issued by the proposed Bandarban Tourism Association (see below).*

Action 5: *Develop a service training programme for local enterprises and staff, including a series of basic service training workshops, possibly in conjunction with local training colleges. Let local employees sign up to a 'Welcome Bandarban' group with regular communication about tourism developments and monitor how service levels improve and change.*

4.2.5 Conserve and protect the natural resources and biodiversity of the area.

Bandarban Hill District's tourism resources are largely based on its natural resources and biodiversity. The combination of higher altitude hills and river valleys provides a varied and unique biome that allows for a range of high-quality nature experiences such as trekking, water sport, birding, and scenic touring. In addition, the natural environment supports Bandarban's agricultural production and harvesting of jum grains and other local produce. Interviews and site evidence suggest that the natural environment in the area has unfortunately been neglected and that mass-production and river pollution are serious threats in some parts of the area. Given its positioning, environmental quality and sensitivity in developing tourism facilities will be of paramount importance to the future tourism success of Bandarban Hill District.

Since Bandarban Hill District's positioning and attractiveness relies heavily on its unique and authentic natural environment, sound environmental management practices (e.g. renewable energy technologies, water management, waste management, etc.) should be enshrined in tourism policies and legislation governing the area. In addition, the threat of climate change and the effects it may have on sensitive ecosystems of the Bandarban Hill District, require a special effort to nurture and sustain the natural resources of the area.

Action 1: *Support NGOs and relevant government ministries in raising environmental awareness among tourism enterprises and communities and encouraging sustainable environmental practices such as anti-littering, fuel efficient cooking, and solar energy usage. Spearhead this specifically among members of BANTA, by preparing a short video clip to showcase best practices elsewhere and show this to tourism owners and communities.*

Action 2: *Conduct an audit of waste management practices and collaborate with local communities and authorities to improve waste management practices and technologies.*

4.2.6 Develop events as tourism catalysts

Given its cultural traditions and variety of unique natural features, Bandarban Hill District is well suited as a destination for staging adventure, cultural and lifestyle events. Sports and cultural events could play an important role in building the image of the area, increasing tourist revenues through expenditure by event organisers, spectators and participants, reducing seasonality and spreading tourism throughout the region. Events can also provide opportunities for rallying community pride and involvement of local citizens.

In Bandarban, two broad categories of events could be pursued in the short to medium term, namely:

- Locally staged events of a national standard that are able to attract national audiences, especially during the off season. Possible events in this category could be a raft or boat race on the River Sangu or a trail running race around Ruma and Boga lake area.



The Bandarban Local Food Festival, a flagship event of the Himalica Tourism Pilot Project

Authentic Ruma cuisines on offer at the food festival



- Local community festivals that are staged by local tourism and community groups and that portray the unique assets of the area, attract tourists, and facilitate community participation and pride. This could, for example be a local food festival or a local music/choir festival.

A local events management committee should be established as part of the local tourism association (see proposal below) to plan and organize events, mobilize resources and market the events.

Action 1: *Establish a Bandarban events committee, as a workgroup of the Bandarban tourism association and consisting of the main government and community stakeholders, to decide on and organise suitable event(s).*

Action 2: *Organise at least one national level sport or cultural event every two years, supported financially by the BHDC and local businesses.*

4.3 Maximising Local Participation and Benefits

Bandarban Hill District is essentially an exploration destination with many of its key attractions located in rural areas. A successful tourism industry in the Bandarban Hill District will be largely dependent on the willingness, ability, and passion of the local community to share and open up their resources, lifestyle and culture to tourists. The communities living in these areas are not acquainted with tourism. It will be very important to raise awareness and build the capacity of community members to co-manage tourism in their areas and capitalize on it as best they can possible. Achieving a “culture of tourism” in the area will require practical demonstrations of tourism benefits and opportunities to the local community and every effort should be made to facilitate and encourage community involvement in tourism. A conducive environment should be created to safeguard the participation of vulnerable groups like women and children.

4.3.1 Support community-based tourism investment.

BHDC should work with all stakeholders and communities in the area to identify potential community-based investment opportunities and systems. Good examples exist in various countries where communities have set up elected community trusts and developed tourism facilities, either thorough the trust or in partnership with individual entrepreneurs in such communities, or as a combination of these models. Such initiatives will require the support of the government and/or donor communities and should be thoroughly consulted with local communities.

Action: *Agree on a policy and ownership model for community-based investment support, identify communities (paras) in Bandarban (especially in Ruma Upazilla) who wish to pursue such opportunities and work with them in implementing community-based tourism products.*

4.3.2 Strengthen local supply chains

Most aspects of the traditional integrated tourism clusters of enterprises (e.g. suppliers of produce, equipment, transport, maintenance and hospitality services, etc.) are underdeveloped in Bandarban Hill District. While local communities produce valuable products such as fruit, vegetables, honey, and coffee, their consumption by tourists and the tourism industry is limited and a programme should be initiated into increase local tourism supplies and tourist expenditure. This should include training and advice for quality and packaging improvement, financial start-up support and assisting local entrepreneurs in establishing supply links with purchasers elsewhere in the country.

Action 1: *Identify local products that are suitable for the tourism market, engage local communities in discussing and agreeing on value-adding opportunities for such products and improve quality, packaging, branding (e.g. with Bandarban brand tag) and presentation of higher value products for easy purchase.*

Action 2: *Support producers of tourism-related products (handicrafts, foodstuffs, etc.) with seed funding, appropriate training and organisational support, to produce adequate quantities and qualities of such products and to package and present them attractively.*

Action 3: *Strengthen supply links with hotels, restaurants and retailers in the more developed Cox's Bazar area to ensure that supply chains in Bandarban Hill District develop as the industry expands. In addition, the many natural products of Bandarban Hill District should be packaged and presented in a suitable format for visitors' consumption.*

4.3.3 Develop local tourism skills and human resources

A realistic and well-planned training and skills development plan is required, focusing on both skills training and attitudinal development programmes. These should specifically be aimed at accommodation providers, tour guides and staff of restaurants that are aimed at tourists. The involvement and participation of women has been proven as a key to success for tourism destinations around the world. Women have a knack for hospitality and are able to provide many of the products and services required by tourists e.g. home-based accommodation, local cuisines, fresh produce, crafts, and exposure to the local family culture. In addition, women are important partners in providing the special hospitality touches that can turn a visit into a true experience.

Action: *Develop and present short, practical training courses to local tourism providers in Ruma and Tanchi Upazillas in partnership with local training institutes (e.g. the vocational training school and youth development department). Training should be practical rather than theoretical. In the short term, it should focus on a) guide training and guide operating codes (e.g. fairness when making bookings, communication skills, feedback to suppliers, etc.) and b) training to hospitality providers, especially accommodation and restaurants in customer service, hygiene, etc. The training initiative should make a special effort to involve local women and should be linked to appropriate financing mechanisms (See 4.2.2 (ii) above).*

4.3.4 Strengthen functional committees at local level

The functional committees that are established under BANTA (see 4.1.4 (iii)) should be supported and empowered to function effectively on behalf of community members and organisations. The proposed BHDB tourism unit should launch an organisational support programme to develop the administrative and operational abilities and skills of those elected to serve on BANTA and the various committees.

Action: *Empower sub-district/upazilla level committees and local community groups by building their capacities to manage businesses and services linking farm and non-farm based products with tourism supply chains and ensuring their participation in the decision making process.*

4.4 Promoting a Popular Brand and Image

While Bandarban already has a favourable tourism image in Bangladesh there is no doubt that competitor destinations in the Hill Districts, the rest of the country and the South Asia region will increasingly compete for a larger share of the tourism cake. It will be important to position and develop Bandarban's authentic and largely unspoilt natural and cultural experiences as being unique and special in relation to those of other Hill Districts, the country and the region.

4.4.1 Develop and promote an attractive brand identity

A fitting brand identity and image should be developed that will become the trademark for Bandarban Hill District's marketing initiatives and products. The best destination brands are rich in emotional meanings, while at the same time having celebrity attraction i.e. people are proud to say they visited there, they tell others about the place and tourists expect a lot when visiting.

Bandarban has a high level of emotional effects on travellers, especially the feelings of freedom and enjoyment associated with escaping to the green and pristine environment. It also has various elements that could make it a brand celebrity – Hill topography (including Keokradong and other mountain peaks), the Sangu River Valley with its many waterfalls, Boga Lake, the diversity of cultural groups and traditional jum production methods are aspects that are newsworthy and could provide the basis for a strong brand. Figure 10 provides a summary of Bandarban Hill District's brand personality.

Figure 10: Bandarban Hill District Brand image



- i. **Adopt a suitable brand identity:** The Himalica project has developed a brand identity to kick-start promotion of the area. The logo and slogan ‘People & Nature in Harmony’, as displayed in Figure 11, has already been applied on signboards, benches, rest points, etc. The slogan is appropriate at these early stages of tourism development, since the challenge at this stage is more of internal marketing, i.e. to get all local stakeholders and the local population and this should be further rolled out as a destination identity. The logo and slogan could be reviewed in two years time to decide if it is still appropriate.

Action 1: *Formally adopt the logo and slogan developed by the Himalica project as the trademark for promoting Bandarban Hill District as a tourism destination. Review the logo and slogan after two years (stage 2) to check if it remains the most appropriate mark and slogan for promoting the area. The future brand direction should strive to expand the traditional image of Bandarban Hill District from an off-the-beaten-track adventure destination to one of broader appeal. The concept of ‘escape to the Hills’ and cultural diversity may be emphasised during stage 2, depending on the findings of the review.*

- ii. **Roll out the brand identity:** The above mentioned brand personality should be evident in all designs, communication, promotion and product development initiatives. Design of marketing and product elements should reflect freshness, light and authenticity and should emphasise unspoilt and uncluttered nature and authentic culture. Excellent photography will be a vital element of brand communication, with photographic angles, colours and lighting expressing the unspoilt nature and authenticity of the area. Designs should reflect an invitation to explore the area and contain elements of adventure and discovery. Some important branding “touch points” for applying the brand image may include:

- Welcome signs at entry points to the area;
- Orientation maps and signboards;
- Interpretive signs along trails and at attractions;
- Product tags on the packaging of locally produced fresh produce;
- Decals at tourist related accommodation, restaurants and shops who are members of the proposed BANTA;
- Decals on vehicles and boats belonging to operators who are members of the proposed BANTA;
- Website, social media pages, marketing materials and advertising; and
- Branding during local events.

Figure 11: Existing Bandarban logo and slogan



Action 2: *Apply and promote the brand identity on all relevant tourist ‘touch points’ within and outside the Bandarban area, as indicated above.*

Action 3: *Where appropriate, create and endorse sub-brands e.g. for handicrafts, food, cultural performances etc. depicting their own identities, yet strengthening and echoing the values and principles of the Bandarban “parent” brand.*

4.4.2 Market Bandarban as an attractive and safe tourism destination

While the emphasis in the short term should be on product and facility improvement, tourist expenditure levels are low and tourist flows are uneven throughout the year. Marketing and promotion should not be neglected. Unfortunately Bandarban has received some negative publicity over the past few years relating to insurgency and isolated incidents of personal insecurity. Such events have been few and far in between but such perceptions are perpetuated by the heavy security presence and tourist movement restrictions. Since “perceptions equal reality”, it is important that such wrong perceptions are actively addressed through targeted communication and promotion. Activities could include:

- Developing and maintaining a good website with suitable content;
- Continuously posting positive information and interesting images and video clips on social media;
- Setting up an inclusive tourist information and booking facility in Bandarban town and/or in Ruma;
- Meeting and communicating with suitable travel agents and tour operators and travel media, especially in Dhaka, Chittagong and Cox’s Bazar to promote, package and sell itineraries to the area (and beyond);
- Cooperating more closely with tourism information offices, hoteliers, tour operators, tourism suppliers, website portals and other channel partners in the rest of Bangladesh, especially in surrounding towns and regions;
- Improve internet access and support and advise tourism businesses on online booking channels and systems; and
- Launching an e-marketing initiative through publicising the website site on all marketing materials, signposts, billboards etc., increasing followers and exposure on social media and seeking specialist assistance to improve the rankings and appearance of the site on key search engines and web-portals. Links should be considered on other complementary sites.

Action: *Promote Bandarban as a must-visit destination and make it easy for higher-spending domestic visitors (Bengalese and expats) to plan and arrange trips through, online (internet) promotion, promoting the area to travel agents and tour operators in the country, encouraging positive media coverage, encouraging visitors to spread a positive message about Bandarban, etc.*



Sangu River – a major unharnessed tourist attraction, Bandarban

4.4.3 Provide adequate visitor information

Given the focus on independent families and friends and special interest segments, the availability of easily accessible visitor information is of paramount importance to attract the right kinds of tourists and especially to keep them in the area longer and get them to spend more. In addition to the existing social media (Facebook, Instagram) accounts, the following information sources should be considered:

i. Establish BANTA tourist information offices in Bandarban Sadar and Ruma Bazar. The proposed BANTA organisation should deliver benefits to its members and should play an important role in providing information and booking services to tourists. This can be achieved by providing tourist information on members' products and making bookings on behalf of members. As described in Section 4.1.3 (iii) a tourist levy should be charged to travellers wishing to enter the conservancy zones of Ruma and Tanchi and these fees should accrue to BANTA to maintain the information offices. The following guidelines, among others, should be followed in setting up the information offices.

- The first priority is for an i-office in Ruma Bazar, as this is where the majority of tourists enter the proposed conservancy zone;
- The office can be small but it should be located centrally, so visitors to the area or en route to Boga Lake and other attractions do not miss it;
- The office should issue the entry permit for enjoying the area and it should be shown at all checkpoints;
- The office should serve as a booking office for accommodation, boat rides, guided walks, etc.;
- The local guides association should have a presence there and the office should serve as a booking facility for guides;
- The office should also maintain all statistics of visitors entering the area, on behalf of the police services in the area. This role should be cleared with the Police Superintendent in Bandarban;
- The office should be manned by a trained staff member at least until 19:00 every evening; and
- It should be clearly visible and should carry the Bandarban brand and international i-Sign.

Action 1: *Establish BANTA tourist information offices in Ruma Bazar and later in Tanchi to, among others, provide tourists with information on the area, make bookings on behalf of BANTA members, process levy payments, issue entrance permits and serve as a base for the tourist guide associations.*





Knowledge products – maps and leaflets for dissemination

ii. **Improve signposting on main roads and on walking routes** to ensure independent travellers can easily find their way and purchase goods and services with the locals, including:

- Improved tourist road signs and directional signs in both Bangla and English along key roads indicating the main scenic points and directions to towns, resorts;
- Provide orientation maps at various levels, i.e. at macro level covering the area and indicating the main attractions, roads, etc. across the area and zooming in to micro level at other places such as at attractions, on trails and at paras to show the immediate trails and experiences around;
- Erect sustainable, clearly legible and durable directional signs at local level to show the locations of attractions and experiences at local (para) level; and
- Develop a unique, environmentally friendly signage system for marking hiking trails in the area e.g. markings on stone, wood.

Action 2: *Improve directional and tourist signs at various levels ranging from area level to para and site levels.*

iii. **Develop a high quality website www.visitbandarban.com** and engage in an e-marketing campaign. The following guidelines pertain:

- The site should be strongly branded with eye-catching photographs and images that portray the best experiences on offer in the area;
- It should be mobile-friendly and easily readable on all mobile smartphones and devices;
- Routes and attractions should be digitally mapped on the website;
- The site should have links to the sites of tourism operators and separate town/para sections should be developed;
- Lists of things to see and do should also be included through photographs, and short but specific descriptions of the best experiences e.g. hiking routes, scenic spots, waterfalls, river boating, cultural visits, routes, etc.;
- The section on accommodation facilities should be interactive and descriptive, with direct email links, location maps and descriptions and photographs of rooms and other facilities;

- Features such as blogs and video clips should be considered and the site should have a section for publicising events; and
- The website will be supported and supplemented by information on social media such as Facebook, and Instagram.

Action 3: *Develop and maintain an excellent website with good content, excellent photography, product listings and interactive maps. Local cultural practices and diversity should be emphasised.*

iv. Publish and distribute suitable printed marketing materials. Two tourist information materials should be considered namely:

- A good fold-out visitors' map of the Bandarban Hill District, including links to the surrounding regional centres and clearly indicating the main scenic and cultural attractions, activity areas (hiking, rafting, birding), cultural circuits and scenic travel routes. The website and tourism information centre's contact numbers should be displayed prominently. One side of the brochure could include a map with all trails, attractions and services indicated and the other side could include information on the various attractions, paras and services. The map could be funded through advertising, spread around the edges of the map.
- A pocket size, DL shape travel booklet of the Bandarban Hill District consisting of around 10–20 pages and containing an introductory section regarding the broader region; descriptions of the towns and visitors attractions on offer in Bandarban Hill District; a fold-out map with numbered attraction points, small advertisements of the accommodation facilities, camping sites and restaurants (to be paid for by facility operators); activity areas for hiking, biking, birding and boating, and other travel tips.

Action 4: *Produce a printed map and brochure of the area and distribute these widely through accommodation establishments, tour guides, information offices, etc.*

4.4.4 Improve visitor statistics and research

A successful tourism development strategy requires knowledge, understanding and monitoring of market trends and performance. While international visitors are accurately counted through entry permits, domestic tourist numbers are not well accounted for and it is impossible to accurately estimate the number and growth of tourists to Bandarban. Without comprehensive statistics and research, it will not be possible to measure the effects of and return on tourism investment.

Action 1: *Work closely with the police services to obtain the numbers of both international and domestic (Bangladesh) visitors entering Bandarban, Ruma and Tanchi on a monthly basis. In addition, agree with accommodation enterprises in the area on a system of reporting monthly guest nights and occupancies on an anonymous basis. Track these statistics to gain an understanding of changes and fluctuations in market demand.*

Action 2: *Conduct bi-annual short, random visitor surveys in summer and winter to obtain a big picture of visitor demographics, activities, expenditure patterns, etc.*



Locals from Munlai Para participate in a community based tourism development planning exercise

5 Implementation Plan

5.1 Implementation Phasing

Tourism in Bandarban is at the early stages of development. It is not recommended that tourism development be rushed and that demand grow too rapidly in the immediate future, before the tourism sector in the area has prepared properly for tourism expansion

Figure 12: Proposed phasing of tourism development

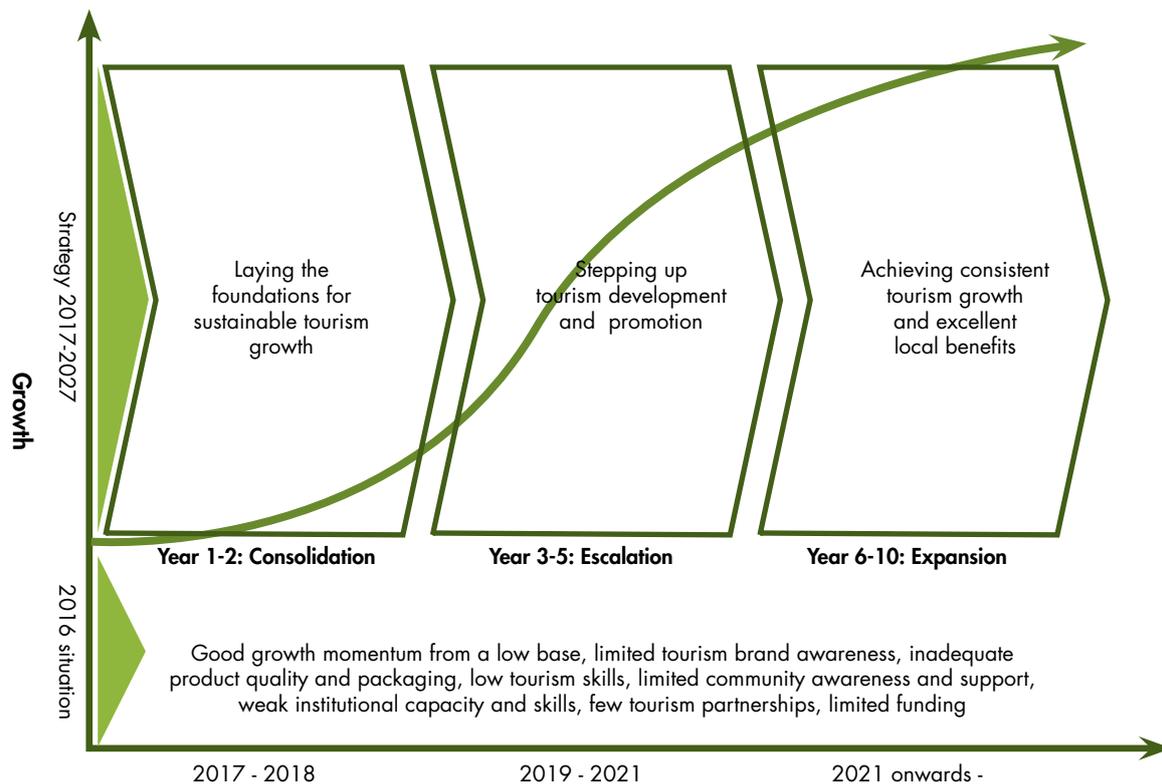


Table 5: Proposed phases of tourism expansion in Bandarban Hill District

Phase	Strategies
Phase 1: Consolidation Laying sound foundations (Years 1–2)	Clarify land use policies and agree on a sustainable development guide plan; Establish business support programmes for expanding accommodation and hospitality facilities; Do some 'quick win' product developments to improve visitor facilities and infrastructure; Establish and communicate the tourism brand; and Strengthen BHDC and private sector tourism structures.
Phase 2: Escalation Enhancing the quality and variety of tourism products (Years 3–5)	Broaden Bandarban's positioning as an upcoming ecotourism growth area; Expand local investment in tourism accommodation, restaurants and other facilities; Improve and enhance nature based experiences, activities, tourist accommodation, camping, restaurant and other facilities; and Increase involvement of local communities and private sector in decision making, nurturing a strong public-private partnership arrangement in managing tourism.
Phase 3: Expansion Achieving consistent tourism growth (Years 6–10)	Full out promotion and expansion of Bandarban as a high quality ecotourism area that appeals to a range of domestic and foreign market segments and offers a variety of experiences including scenic touring, hard and soft adventure, and various special interest activities; On-going and well planned product enhancement and expansion, emphasis on natural and cultural resource management and high quality visitor services; and High level of public-private cooperation and partnerships, with joint decision making through local tourism structures.

5.2 Implementation Framework

The following Table summarises the strategic goals, strategies and actions that have been identified as being of key importance to ensuring tourism growth in Bandarban Hill District.

Table 6: Implementation Framework for Bandarban Destination Management plan

= Immediate priority	= Short term priority	= Medium Term priority	
Goals and strategies	Actions (details in text)		Priority
Goal1: Organising and planning effectively for tourism growth			
Strategy 1.1 Adopt a sustainable spatial development approach	1. Formulate a spatial tourism guide plan for the area, consulted and agreed with local communities and public sectors partners.		
Strategy 1.2 Streamline tourist security and movement	2. The departments responsible for security to agree on a clear policy, processes and roles for dealing with tourist security.		
	3. Agree on a system and process for issuing entry tickets to the proposed Ruma and Tanchi conservancy areas, which should serve as permits for traveling around the entire area.		
	4. Assess the process of issuing international entry permits to Bandarban and improve processes and time frame for issuing security clearances.		
	5. Start a programme of community volunteerism to assist visitors and look out for visitor safety.		
	6. Initiate a road safety programme with road improvements and driver training.		
Strategy 1.3 Provide a business environment conducive to tourism growth	7. Formulate a tourism development policy for Bandarban District as a binding policy that directs the efforts of all public and private sector entities.		
	8. Conduct a detailed assessment of infrastructure capacity and launch a programme of infrastructure improvement.		
Strategy 1.4 Strengthen institutional capacity and collaboration	9. Appoint a suitably qualified senior official and support staff in BHDC for implementing the tourism policy and destination management plan and developing staff capacity.		
	10. Form a Bandarban tourism forum with comprehensive membership representing all government ministries, agencies and traditional community leadership structures.		
	11. Formalise a Memorandum of Understanding between MoCHTA and MoCAT, formulate and agree on a tourism development action plan for the year ahead and share progress reports on a quarterly basis.		
	12. Form the Bandarban Tourism Association (BANTA).		
	13. Establish functional committees at sub-district/upazilla level, under BANTA.		
	14. Develop and promote guidelines for effective functioning of each group with responsible tourism principles as basis.		
	15. Establish a tourism levy of around Tk 80 per person entering the proposed conservation zone.		
Goal 2: Developing attractive and sustainable tourism products and services			
Strategy 2.1 Improve and expand the range of experiences, facilities and services ('products') in line with target market needs	1. Launch a continuous tourism development and investment programme for expanding and maintaining the range of tourism products and experiences in Bandarban. Priorities should include improving and expanding tourist accommodation, improving food quality, hygiene and variety, mapping, signposting and landscaping of walking and hiking trails, developing picnic sites, providing toilets and rest facilities at main tourist sites.		
	2. Where possible provide concessions on government-owned land to local entrepreneurs providing adventure activities such as river rafting, mountain cycling, and horse-riding, giving preference to women entrepreneurs.		
Strategy 2.2 Improve tourism business and investment conditions	3. Formulate and approve a programme and package of public-private-community tourism investment support.		
	4. Establish an enterprise training and mentoring programme and where possible involve more successful and established local and national business owners as mentors.		
	5. Launch a small business loan scheme that can provide local level entrepreneurs with tourism start-up funding.		
Strategy 2.3 Improve packaging of tourism experiences	6. Map GPS coordinates of all attractions and experiences in Bandarban and develop a database to be used as content and interactive map on the website, Facebook page and in the proposed information office.		
	7. Discuss and agree with tourism operators and tour guides in surrounding areas and cities on opportunities for linking Bandarban tourism experiences into a regional package.		
	8. Launch a trails development programme in partnership with local communities and tour guides.		

Goals and strategies	Actions (details in text)	Priority
Strategy 2.4 Improve product and service quality	9. Conduct an audit of each tourist site and visitor area and start a programme of site quality improvements.	
	10. In consultation with local communities, make detailed site development plans for major attraction sites.	
	11. Identify hospitality facilities and advise them on actions to be taken to improve quality and monitor progress.	
	12. As a follow up to Action 3, consider a basic quality assurance system can be considered for tourism businesses and service providers.	
	13. Develop and deliver a service training programme for local enterprises and staff.	
Strategy 2.5 Conserve and protect the natural resources and biodiversity of the area.	14. Support NGOs, and relevant government ministries in raising environmental awareness among tourism enterprises and women's stakeholder groups and encouraging sustainable environmental practices.	
	15. Conduct an audit of waste management practices and collaborate with local communities and authorities to improve waste management practices and technologies.	
Strategy 2.6 Develop events as tourism catalysts	16. Establish a Bandarban events committee to decide on and organise suitable event(s).	
	17. Organise at least one national level sport or cultural event, supported financially by the BHDC and local businesses.	
Goal 3: Maximising local participation and benefits		
Strategy 3.1 Support community-based tourism investment.	1. Agree on a policy and ownership model for community-based investment support and work with selected local communities in implementing community-based tourism products.	
Strategy 3.2 Strengthen local supply chains	2. Identify local products that are suitable for the tourism market and engage local communities in improving quality, packaging, branding (e.g. with Bandarban brand tag) and presentation of such products for easy purchase.	
	3. Support producers of tourism-related products (handicrafts, foodstuffs, etc.) with seed funding and organisational support.	
	4. Strengthen supply links with hotels, restaurants and retailers in the more developed Cox's Bazar area to ensure that supply chains in Bandarban Hill District develop as the industry expands.	
Strategy 3.3 Develop local tourism skills and human resources	5. Develop and present short, practical training courses to local tourism providers in Ruma and Tanchi Upazillas in partnership with local training institutes, with a special effort to involve local women.	
Strategy 3.4 Strengthen functional committees at local level	6. Empower sub-district/upazilla level committees and local community groups by building their capacities to manage businesses and services linking farm and non-farm based products with tourism supply chains and ensuring their participation in the decision making process.	
Goal 4: Promoting a popular brand and image		
Strategy 4.1 Develop and promote an attractive brand identity	1. Formally adopt the logo and slogan developed by the Himalica project as the trademark for promoting Bandarban Hill District as a tourism destination. Review the logo and slogan after two years (stage 2).	
	2. Apply and promote the brand identity at all relevant tourist 'touch points' within and outside the Bandarban area.	
	3. Where appropriate, create and endorse sub-brands under the Bandarban "parent" brand	
Strategy 4.2 Market Bandarban as a favourite tourism destination	4. Promote Bandarban as a must-visit destination and make it easy for higher-spending domestic (Bengalese and expats) to plan and arrange trips through online promotion, promoting the area to travel agents and tour operators in the country, encouraging positive media coverage, etc.	
Strategy 4.3 Provide adequate visitor information	5. Establish a BANTA tourist information office in Ruma Bazar to provide tourists with information on the area, make bookings with BANTA members, process levy payments and issue entrance permits and serve as a base for the tourist guide associations.	
	6. Improve directional and tourists signs at various levels ranging from area level to para and site levels.	
	7. Develop and maintain an excellent website with good content, excellent photography, product listings and interactive maps.	
	8. Produce a printed map and brochure of the area and distribute these widely through accommodation establishments, tour guides, information offices, etc.	
Strategy 4.4 Improve visitor statistics and research	9. Work closely with the police services and hotels to obtain and track the numbers of both international and domestic (Bangladesh) visitors entering Bandarban, Ruma and Tanchi on a monthly basis.	
	10. Conduct bi-annual short, random visitor surveys in summer and winter to obtain a picture of visitor demographics, activities, expenditure patterns, etc.	

I am at Milonchari Now.



Annexes

Annex 1: Tourist Statistics

Foreign visitors to Bandarban, 2015 and 2016 (1st Quarter)

Name of country	2015		2016
	Total	%	Total
India	87	15.4	0
Germany	59	10.4	10
American Samoa	46	8.1	51
Spain	38	6.7	9
Australia	35	6.2	8
Netherlands	34	6.0	2
Japan	30	5.3	18
France	26	4.6	16
Korea, (South) Republic of	23	4.1	13
Russia (Russian Fed.)	19	3.4	5
Slovenia	17	3.0	0
China	15	2.7	9
Belgium	14	2.5	2
Denmark	13	2.3	7
British Virgin Islands	12	2.1	24
Canada	11	1.9	7
Malaysia	11	1.9	5
Switzerland	10	1.8	7
Nepal	6	1.1	23
Italy	4	0.7	76
Pakistan	2	0.4	13
Other	53	5.8	38
TOTAL	565	100.0	343

Source: Bangladesh Police

Foreign visitors to Bandarban (Afroz & Hasanuzzaman, 2012)	2011		2012
	1,036		1,205

Annex 2: Glossary

Tourism

A term that describes the movement and economic activity of people for every purpose other than their regular employment and normal day-to-day activity.

Visitor

Any person travelling to a place other than that of his/her usual environment for less than 12 months, for purposes other than commuting as part of normal employment.

Same day visitor

A visitor who visits a place for less than one night.

Tourist

A visitor who stays at least one night in the place visited.

International tourist

An international visitor who stays at least one night in collective or private accommodation in the country visited.

Domestic tourist

A resident visitor who visits within the economic territory of the country of reference.

Usual environment

To be outside the 'usual environment' the person should travel more than 40 kilometres from his/her place of residence (one way) and the place should not be visited more than once a week for work or study purposes, i.e. leisure and recreational trips are included irrespective of frequency.

Tourism Destination Management Plan for the Bandarban Hill District, Bangladesh was developed in consultation with a diverse range of tourism stakeholders by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) and the Bandarban Hill District Council (BHDC) under the guidance of the Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs (MoCHTA).



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