

Capacity Building Workshop on Tourism skills planning & Development in Anuradhapura District



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Conducted by

District Secretariat Anuradhapura

In collaboration with Skills for Inclusive Growth (S4IG)

24 | 25 May 2023 – Hotel Rajarata, Anuradhapura





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1 Background

Overview of Capacity Building Workshop on Tourism skills planning & Development

The picturesque city of Anuradhapura, a renowned tourist destination in Sri Lanka, set the stage for the two-day Capacity Building Workshop on Tourism Skills Planning & Development. Hosted at the esteemed **Hotel Rajarata** on the **24th and 25th of May**, this workshop brought together industry experts, government officials, and key stakeholders to explore strategies for enhancing the tourism sector in the Anuradhapura District.

Anuradhapura, with its rich historical significance, holds a special place in the hearts of both locals and international visitors. Having served as the capital of Sri Lanka for a significant period in history, it boasts ancient ruins, sacred sites, and a vibrant cultural heritage. However, despite its prominence, the full potential of Anuradhapura's tourism industry remains untapped.

In light of this, the workshop aimed to address the challenges faced by the tourism sector in Anuradhapura and foster discussions on effective skills planning and development. Led by the **Skills for Inclusive Growth program (S4IG)** in collaboration with the Anuradhapura District Secretariat, the workshop brought together stakeholders from the Ministry of Skills Development and Vocational Training, Tourism Authorities, Provincial and District Level Administration, Industry, Community-Based Organizations, and the Donor Community.

The event served as a platform for participants to share insights, exchange best practices, and explore innovative strategies for promoting sustainable tourism growth in the district. Through interactive sessions and engaging discussions, the workshop focused on developing a comprehensive understanding of the current state of the tourism industry in Anuradhapura and identifying areas for improvement.

Furthermore, the workshop delved into capacity building initiatives, emphasizing the importance of training government officers as coaches to enhance the business skills of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) engaged in the tourism sector. The program's objective was to equip these officers with the necessary tools and knowledge to guide and support MSMEs in their entrepreneurial journey.

The workshop also emphasized the significance of digital marketing and online platforms in promoting tourism businesses effectively. Participants explored various digital marketing strategies, including harnessing the power of social media, to target and engage potential tourists in a rapidly evolving technological landscape.

Overall, the Capacity Building Workshop on Tourism Skills Planning & Development in Anuradhapura District provided an invaluable opportunity for collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and strategizing. It aimed to pave the way for sustainable growth and development, ensuring that the tourism sector in Anuradhapura reaches its full potential as a world-class destination.

2.Objective of Capacity Building Workshop on Tourism skills planning & Development

1. Evaluate and bridge skills gaps: The workshop's primary objective was to evaluate and bridge the existing skills gaps within the tourism sector in Anuradhapura. By employing various skills gap measurement methodologies, participants gained valuable insights into the specific areas that require improvement. Armed with this knowledge, they were able to design targeted training programs and initiatives aimed at enhancing the skill sets of tourism professionals in the district.
2. Enhance proficiency in business coaching: A key focus of the workshop was to equip participants with enhanced business coaching skills tailored to the unique demands of the tourism industry. Through engaging discussions and knowledge sharing, participants gained valuable insights into effective business coaching strategies. This objective aimed to empower participants to provide valuable guidance and mentorship to Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) involved in tourism-related ventures.
3. Unleash the untapped potential: The workshop sought to raise participants' awareness regarding the untapped potential of tourism in the Anuradhapura District. By shedding light on lesser-known destinations and highlighting opportunities for development, participants gained a fresh perspective on the district's tourism landscape. This objective aimed to inspire participants to explore and promote these hidden treasures, enticing more visitors and stimulating sustainable tourism growth.
4. Cultivate collaboration among stakeholders: Recognizing the importance of collaboration, the workshop provided a conducive platform for stakeholders from diverse sectors, including government officials, tourism authorities, industry representatives, and community-based organizations, to unite for the common purpose of tourism development in Anuradhapura. This objective aimed to foster synergistic partnerships, facilitate the exchange of innovative ideas, and encourage joint initiatives that would maximize the collective impact of stakeholders in promoting responsible and inclusive tourism practices.
5. Formulate comprehensive action plans: Building upon the discussions surrounding skills gap evaluation, business coaching, and unlocking untapped potential, the workshop aimed to facilitate the formulation of comprehensive action plans for tourism skills planning and development in Anuradhapura. Participants were guided in creating actionable strategies, including the implementation of targeted training programs, the launch of impactful promotional campaigns, and the establishment of a robust digital presence. These plans were aimed at augmenting skills, enticing visitors to lesser-known destinations, and ensuring the long-term growth and sustainability of the tourism sector in the district.

3. Background of the Participants

The workshop garnered participation from a diverse group of individuals, ranging from high-ranking government officials responsible for executive decision-making to development officers actively engaged in various aspects of tourism in Anuradhapura District.

These participants brought a wealth of knowledge and experience to the table, reflecting the multidimensional nature of the tourism sector. The government officers offered valuable insights derived from their involvement in policy formulation and strategic planning at a higher administrative level. Complementing their expertise, the development officers brought firsthand experience and practical understanding of implementing and managing tourism initiatives.

Their active involvement ensured that the workshop's discussions and outcomes remained rooted in the realities and challenges faced within the Anuradhapura District's tourism industry. Through their collective expertise and unwavering dedication, the participants played a pivotal role in shaping fruitful discussions, sharing best practices, and crafting strategies to propel the growth of tourism skills planning and development in the region.

List of Participants

1. R.M.N.DILRUK RATHNAYAKA
2. K.B.D.B. DISSANAYAKE
3. D.B. SARATH
4. W.M.G.HANSIKA
5. B.G.H.NAMALIKA
6. W.M.M.D.B.EKANAYAKE
7. RENUKA SHYAMALI WITHANACHCHI
8. M.D.P.H. DISSANAYAKE
9. D.W.SENEVIRATHNA
10. S.N.G.W.MALA KUMARIHAMY SALUWADANA
11. S.V.PRASANNA NILAME
12. N.P.K.SENEVIRATHNA
13. D.M.N.D.K.DIWAKARA
14. T.K.DE COSTA
15. B.M.K.S.BASNAYAKE
16. N.G.WICKRAMASINGHE
17. R.M.N.K.RATHNAYAKE
18. S.K.T.M.D.B.RANAWAKA
19. S.A.C.L.DASANAYAKE
20. C.S.DISSANAYAKE
21. A.L.NAWARATHNA
22. H.B.RUWAN NAYANA ABEYSINGHE
23. R.M.SUMIT RATNAYAKE
24. M.A.WIMALARATHNA
25. M.P.DISSANAYAKE
26. K.V.S.NAYANANANDA
27. K.L.I.S.PERERA
28. I.A.LATHEEF
29. N.M.P.NAWARATHNA
30. P.B.DAYARATHNA
31. N.B.KRISHANTHA KUMARA
32. PRAMUDHITHA KANDAMBI
33. H.H.WAJIRA VISHWANATH SOMASIRI
34. SHELTON INDIKA BANDARA

4. Content of the Workshop

It has been selected following topics as the essential subject coverage in this program.

- Role of District Secretariat in Promoting Tourism Sector MSME's with special focus on Digitalization and Business Coaching.
- Central Province Tourism Development. Present Status and Future Prospects.
- Skill Gap Management
- Digital applications in tourism sector MSME development
- Introduction to business coaching
- Skills gap measurement
- Digital applications in tourism sector MSME development
- Introduction to business coaching
- demonstrate digital applications in MSME development
- demonstrate business coaching- Problem diagnosis
- Program review and sharing experience- Skills gap analysis
- Program review and sharing experience- digital applications
- Clarifying issues and additional learning support
- Field Visit to demonstrate digital applications in MSME development
- Field Visit to demonstrate Business Coaching -Problem diagnosis

5.Pool of Resource Persons



Mr.Thangavel Sakthivell,
Business Advisor, Skills for inclusive Growth



Prof Sunil Chandrasiri
Professor of Economics, University of Colombo



Mr.Krishantha Bopage
North Central Provincial Director of Tourism



**Mr.Samantha Pathirathna,
Chairman,PASSAsia.**



**Prof.Nalin Abesekara,
Open University of Sri Lanka**

6. Structure and Schedule of the Workshop

Day 1				
Time	Session No.	Session Title	Resource person	Methodology
9.30- 9.40	1	Welcome speech	Mr. Sugath will propose a name	
9.40-9.50	2	Getting to know		
9.50-10.00	3	Work arrangements	Sakthi/Gamini	
10.0-10.20		Tea break		
10.20-10.50	4	Role of District Secretariate in promoting Tourism sector MSMEs with special focus on digitalization and business coaching	Mr. Sugath Nayananda – Director Planning, DS	P
10.50-11.15	5	NCP Tourism development - Present status and Future prospects	Mr. Krishantha Bopage – Director Planning, NCP	P
11.15-11.30	6	Introduction to Tourism - International Sri Lankan and Regional	Mr.Thangavel Sakthivell	P/D
11.30-12.00	7	Skills gap measurement	Prof.Sunil Chandrasiri	P/D
12.00 -12.45	8	Digital applications in tourism sector MSME development	Mr.Samantha Pathirana	P/D
12.45-1.00-1.15	9	Introduction to business coaching	Prof.Nalin Abeysekera	P/D
1.15- 2.15		Lunch break		P/D
2.00-3.00	10	Field Visit to demonstrate digital applications in MSME development		FW/D/CS
3.00-3.30		Tea		

3.30-5.00	11	Field Visit to demonstrate business coaching- Problem diagnosis		FW/D/CS
Day 2				
9.00-10.00	11	Program review and sharing experience- Skills gap analysis	Entire team	D
		Tea		
10.30 - 10.45	12	Video on Digital applications	Entire team	P
10.45-11.30	13	Program review and sharing experience- digital applications	Entire team	D
11.30 - 12.15	14	Clarifying issues and additional learning support	Entire team	D
12.15-12.30	15	Program Review	Participants	D
12.30 – 1.30		Lunch		
1.30-3.00	16	Field Visit to demonstrate digital applications in MSME development		FW/D/CS
3.00- 5.00	17	Field Visit to demonstrate Business Coaching -Problem diagnosis		FW/D/CS
5.00-5.15	18	Concluding remarks		

7 Output of the Sessions - Method

Day 1: Session 04

Role of District Secretariate in promoting Tourism sector MSMEs with special focus on digitalization and business coaching.- Mr.Sugath nayanananda

This comprehensive lecture on the role of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Sri Lanka's economy covered a wide range of aspects. It followed a structured order, addressing the following key points:

1. Defining SMEs: The lecture commenced by providing a clear definition of SMEs, which are businesses falling within a specific size range. Factors such as revenue, number of employees, and capital investment determine the categorization. The lecture emphasized the significance of SMEs in driving economic growth, generating employment opportunities, and fostering innovation.
2. Categorizing SMEs: The lecture then focused on categorizing SMEs based on their sector, scale, and ownership structure. This classification allowed for a deeper understanding of the diverse landscape of SMEs in Sri Lanka and the unique challenges they encounter.
3. Production Types in SMEs: Next, the lecture delved into the different types of production prevalent in SMEs, including manufacturing, services, and agriculture. By exploring the distinct

characteristics and requirements associated with each production type, participants gained valuable insights into SME operations.

4. Role of SMEs in Sri Lanka: The lecture highlighted the significant contribution of SMEs to Sri Lanka's economy. These enterprises play a crucial role in employment generation, poverty reduction, and overall economic development. Furthermore, they foster entrepreneurship, regional development, and contribute to export earnings, thereby diversifying and strengthening the national economy.

5. Integrating Small Businesses into Global Value Chains: An important aspect addressed in the lecture was the necessity of connecting Sri Lanka's small businesses to global value chains. By integrating SMEs into these chains, they gain access to new markets, technology, and expertise. This integration ultimately enhances productivity, competitiveness, and sustainable growth.

6. Challenges Faced by SMEs in Sri Lanka: The lecture shed light on the key challenges faced by SMEs in Sri Lanka, such as limited access to finance, inadequate infrastructure, technology adoption barriers, and regulatory challenges. Participants gained a comprehensive understanding of these barriers and the need for targeted interventions to support SME growth and development.

7. Common Global Challenges for SMEs: The lecture also addressed common challenges faced by SMEs worldwide, including limited managerial capacity, market access constraints, and resource limitations. Participants were introduced to effective strategies aimed at overcoming these challenges and promoting the growth and sustainability of SMEs.

8. Marketing Strategies for SME Growth: Various marketing strategies were discussed in the lecture to foster SME growth. These strategies included market segmentation, branding, digital marketing, and customer relationship management. Implementing these approaches can help SMEs expand their customer base, increase sales, and strengthen their market presence.

9. Leveraging E-commerce for SME Development: The lecture emphasized the significance of e-commerce adoption as a vital tool for SME development in Sri Lanka. Participants learned about the advantages of online platforms in terms of market reach, cost-effectiveness, and accessibility. E-commerce provides SMEs with opportunities to expand beyond traditional boundaries and tap into global markets.

10. Benefits of E-commerce: The lecture highlighted the advantages of e-commerce for SMEs, such as increased market visibility, improved customer targeting, reduced operational costs, and streamlined logistics. Participants were encouraged to explore e-commerce platforms as a means to scale their businesses and compete in the digital economy.

Day 01: season 05

NCP Tourism development - Present status and Future prospects -Mr. Krishantha Bopage Director Planning, NCP

During this session, a comprehensive overview of the tourism industry in the North Central Province of Sri Lanka was provided. The lecture covered the following key points:

1. Geographical Advantages of North Central Province: The lecture commenced by highlighting the

strategic geographical advantages of the North Central Province in Sri Lanka. Situated in the heart of the island, the province boasts breathtaking landscapes, including ancient ruins, cultural heritage sites, and serene natural surroundings.

2. North Central Province as a Tourist Destination: The lecture emphasized the significance of the North Central Province as an attractive tourist destination. With its diverse attractions, such as the UNESCO World Heritage Sites of Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa, the region draws both domestic and international tourists seeking cultural experiences, historical exploration, and spiritual encounters.

3. Current Tourism Status in North Central Province: An overview of the current tourism status in the North Central Province was provided in the lecture. It highlighted the growth in tourist arrivals, the development of accommodation facilities, and the increasing popularity of unique experiences like temple visits, wildlife safaris, and meditation retreats.

4. Promotional Strategies: The lecture discussed the strategies employed to promote and develop tourism in the North Central Province. This included collaborations between government bodies, tourism stakeholders, and local communities to create sustainable tourism practices and enhance visitor experiences.

5. Tourism Infrastructure and Services: The lecture focused on the existing tourism infrastructure and services in the North Central Province. Participants learned about the development of transportation networks, accommodation options, and tourist facilities such as visitor centers, interpretation centers, and guided tour services.

6. Challenges Faced by the Tourism Industry: The lecture highlighted the challenges faced by the North Central Province's tourism industry. These challenges encompassed issues such as seasonality, limited investment in infrastructure, the need for skilled human resources, and the preservation of cultural and natural heritage.

7. Opportunities for Tourism Development: The lecture shed light on the opportunities available for tourism development in the North Central Province. Participants explored avenues such as community-based tourism initiatives, archaeological tourism, agro-tourism, and the promotion of sustainable practices that align with the region's unique offerings.

8. Future Prospects and Development Plans: The lecture presented the future prospects and development plans for tourism in the North Central Province. This included strategies for diversifying tourism products, improving accessibility to remote areas, and preserving and showcasing the rich historical and cultural heritage of the region.

9. Marketing and Promotion Campaigns: The lecture emphasized the importance of marketing and promotion campaigns to increase the visibility of the North Central Province as a tourist destination. Participants learned about effective strategies to showcase the region's unique selling points, engage with target markets, and leverage digital platforms to reach a wider audience.

Overall, this session provided valuable insights into the present status and future prospects of tourism in the North Central Province. It covered key aspects such as the region's geographical advantages, the current state of tourism, challenges and opportunities, future development plans, and marketing strategies. Participants gained a deeper understanding of the North Central Province's tourism potential and were equipped with knowledge to contribute to its sustainable growth and development.

Day 1: Session 07

Skill Gap Management- Prof. Sunil Chandrasiri

The lecture titled "Analyzing the Skills Gap in Sri Lanka's Tourism Sector" delivered valuable insights into a conceptual framework for assessing skills gaps and the specific skill requirements within the tourism industry. The lecture covered the following key points:

1. **Conceptual Framework for Skills Gap Analysis:** The lecture introduced a conceptual framework for analyzing skills gaps in the tourism sector. Participants gained an understanding of a systematic approach to identify, measure, and address the disparities between the skills possessed by the workforce and those demanded by the industry.
2. **Categorization of Skills:** The lecture emphasized the theoretical foundations and subject domains used to categorize skills within the tourism sector. These domains included economics, psychology, sociology, and medical science. Participants explored how these domains contribute to the development of cognitive, soft, and technical skills within the industry.
3. **Three Skill Categories:** The lecture presented three broad categories of skills that are crucial to the tourism sector. Cognitive skills, such as analytical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making abilities, were discussed. The importance of soft skills, including communication, teamwork, and customer service, was emphasized. Furthermore, participants delved into the significance of technical skills related to specific tasks and technologies relevant to the tourism industry.
4. **Skill Requirements in the Tourism Sector:** The lecture provided survey findings on the skill requirements within the tourism sector. Participants gained insights into the specific skills and competencies sought by employers in areas such as hospitality management, tour guiding, customer relations, event planning, and destination marketing. This information enabled participants to identify existing skill gaps and formulate strategies to bridge them, ensuring a competent and competitive workforce in the industry.

By covering these key points, the lecture on analyzing the skills gap in Sri Lanka's tourism sector equipped participants with a conceptual understanding of skills analysis frameworks, skill categorization, and the specific skill requirements within the industry. This knowledge empowered them to identify areas for skill

Development and devise strategies to bridge the gap between current skill levels and the desired competencies needed for a thriving tourism workforce in Sri Lanka.

Day 1: Session 08

Online session on Tourism and Business coaching - Mr.Samantha Pathirathna

The session primarily focused on the intersection of tourism and business coaching, highlighting the various platforms and smart tools available for promoting tourism and business coaching. Participants were introduced to the potential of leveraging these platforms to enhance their businesses and attract more tourists. The session emphasized that becoming a successful business coach could lead to earning a decent income while providing valuable services to others, creating a win-win situation.

Furthermore, the session delved into the art and science of business coaching, discussing the skills and techniques necessary to effectively coach and support entrepreneurs. Participants learned about the principles and strategies involved in guiding businesses towards success, addressing challenges, and seizing opportunities. The session emphasized the importance of understanding the unique needs and goals of each business and tailoring coaching approaches accordingly.

Overall, the session provided insights into the potential of tourism and business

coaching, showcasing the various platforms and tools available for promoting tourism and coaching services. Participants gained a deeper understanding of the financial benefits of becoming a business coach and the significance of adopting a thoughtful and strategic approach to coaching.

Day 2: Session 09 **Introduction to Tourism-International, National and Regional** **- Mr. Thangavel Sakthivell**

The workshop titled "Introduction to Tourism: International, National, and Regional" offered a comprehensive overview of the tourism industry, exploring various crucial topics. The session covered the following key areas:

1. **Defining Tourism:** The workshop began by providing a clear understanding of tourism and its significance in the global, national, and regional contexts. Participants gained insights into the various components and stakeholders involved in the tourism sector.
2. **Evolution of Tourism Definitions:** The session emphasized how advancements in technology have reshaped traditional definitions of tourism. Participants learned how emerging technologies have influenced travel patterns, information access, and decision-making, leading to a shift in the understanding of tourism.
3. **Importance of an Updated Database:** The workshop stressed the significance of maintaining an up-to-date database for making informed decisions and implementing effective promotional campaigns. Participants learned how a comprehensive and accurate database assists in identifying target markets, understanding consumer preferences, and tailoring marketing strategies accordingly.
4. **Identifying the Target Audience:** The session explored the process of identifying the target audience for promotional activities. Participants were introduced to various techniques and tools for segmenting and analyzing the market, enabling them to identify and reach the most relevant audience for their tourism-related businesses.
5. **Leveraging Social Media Platforms:** The workshop delved into the effective use of basic social media platforms as powerful tools for promoting tourism businesses. Participants learned strategies to enhance visibility, engage potential customers, and drive traffic to their businesses by leveraging social media effectively.

Overall, the "Introduction to Tourism" session provided participants with a solid foundation in understanding the tourism industry at the international, national, and regional levels. It covered the evolution of tourism definitions, the importance of maintaining updated databases, target audience identification, and leveraging social media platforms for business promotion. These insights equipped participants with the knowledge and tools to make informed decisions and effectively promote their tourism-related businesses in today's digital age.

Day 2: Session 10 Introduction to Business Coaching - Mr. Prof. Nalin Abeysekara

The workshop on "Introduction to Business Coaching" delivered valuable insights into the fundamentals of coaching and its significance in building successful client relationships. The following key topics were covered:

1. **Effective Communication with Clients:** Participants learned about the importance of communication in business coaching. The session emphasized using client-friendly language and avoiding technical jargon to establish trust and rapport.
2. **Coaching vs teaching:** The workshop highlighted the distinctions between coaching and teaching. Participants understood that coaching empowers clients to discover their own solutions, while teaching focuses on imparting knowledge and instructions.
3. **Leadership and Influence:** Participants were introduced to the four aspects of leadership: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. They gained insights into how these elements contribute to effective coaching and inspire clients to achieve their goals.
4. **Roles of the Coach and Client:** The session clarified the distinct roles of coaches and clients in the coaching relationship. Participants recognized that coaches facilitate growth, support, and accountability, while clients take responsibility for their progress and decision-making.
5. **Relationship Marketing:** The workshop explored the concept of relationship marketing in business coaching. Participants learned the importance of building strong, trust-based relationships with clients for long-term success. Strategies to nurture and maintain these relationships were discussed.
6. **Entrepreneurial Mindset:** Participants were encouraged to cultivate an entrepreneurial mindset as business coaches. The session highlighted characteristics such as adaptability, creativity, risk-taking, and resilience, emphasizing their positive impact on coaching outcomes.

Overall, the session provided an introductory understanding of business coaching, focusing on effective communication, the distinctions between coaching and teaching, leadership and influence, relationship marketing, entrepreneurial mindset, and the importance of holistic well-being. Participants gained a solid foundation to embark on their journey as business coaches, fostering meaningful and impactful relationships with their clients."

8. Participant Feedback / Comments

"We greatly appreciate the value of this program. In Matale, we have a considerable number of SMEs and tourism service providers who require guidance to enhance their businesses. One major challenge they face is a lack of knowledge in digital marketing and leveraging online platforms effectively. Staying abreast of current trends is vital for their survival in today's world. As government officers, it is our duty to identify areas for improvement and assist these entrepreneurs in achieving sustainability. This program has provided us with the technical knowledge necessary to coach and support small businesses. We extend our gratitude to S4IG for organizing this enriching experience."



"In the current challenging climate, where government funding for new projects is constrained, the timely support offered by S4IG through this program is highly valuable. This commendable initiative directly addresses the growth and development requirements of SMEs in the tourism sector. The program has equipped us with the essential skills and knowledge to effectively guide these businesses. Collaborating with organizations such as S4IG plays a crucial role in fostering sustainable opportunities and facilitating the success of these entrepreneurs."



9. Images of the Workshop





