

## Procedure for the design of the "GreenRoad" tourism product for Ecotur S.A. travel agency

### Procedimiento para el diseño del producto turístico "GreenRoad" para la agencia de viajes Ecotur S.A.

### Procedimento para a concepção do produto turístico "GreenRoad" para a agência de viagens Ecotur S.A.



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#### ABSTRACT

Every moment that passes in the process of social evolution makes evident the increasing concern for the welfare of the human future, since many of the activities that are carried out cause strong negative externalities. In this position, it is found the tourist activity, which is why the development of a sustainable tourist model, ideal for family time, becomes an imperative need. This research arises from the problem of not taking advantage of the resources of the "El Trébol" Integral Forestry Farm in Havana del Este, for the development of rural tourism. Therefore, the general objective was established as follows: To propose the design of the GreenRoad tourist product for the Ecotur S.A. travel agency. In order to achieve this objective, an applied, descriptive and field

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research was carried out and a methodology on the design of tourist products was used, to which some modifications were made to achieve a better adjustment with the objective of the work. In the development of the research, a series of techniques and methodological tools were used, among which the O'Meara test and non-probabilistic random sampling were used, using the Statistica SPSS program. The main result was the proposal for the design of the GreenRoad tourism product in order to promote environmentally responsible tourism.

**Keywords:** travel agency; agrotourism; GreenRoad; tourism product; rural tourism

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## RESUMEN

Cada momento que transcurre en el proceso de evolución social hace evidente el incremento de la preocupación por el bienestar del futuro humano, pues muchas de las actividades que se realizan provocan fuertes externalidades negativas. En dicha posición, se encuentra la actividad turística, por lo que se convierte en una necesidad imperante el desarrollo de un modelo turístico sostenible, ideal para el tiempo en familia. La presente investigación surge ante la problemática del no aprovechamiento de los recursos propios de la Finca Forestal Integral "El Trébol" de la Habana del Este, para el desarrollo del turismo rural. Por ello, se establece como objetivo general: Proponer el diseño del producto turístico GreenRoad para la agencia de viajes Ecotur S.A. Para el cumplimiento del objetivo, se desarrolló una investigación aplicada, descriptiva y de campo y fue utilizada una metodología sobre el diseño de productos turísticos, a la cual se le realizaron algunas modificaciones para lograr un mayor ajuste con el objetivo del trabajo. En el desarrollo de la investigación, se utilizaron una serie de técnicas y herramientas metodológicas, entre las que se destacan el *test* de O'Meara y el muestreo aleatorio no probabilístico, a partir del programa Statistica SPSS. Como principal resultado, se obtuvo la propuesta del diseño del producto turístico GreenRoad en aras de promover la actividad turística ambiental responsable.

**Palabras clave:** agencia de viajes; agroturismo; GreenRoad; producto turístico; turismo rural

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## RESUMO

Cada instante que decorre no processo de evolução social torna evidente a crescente preocupação com o bem-estar do futuro humano, uma vez que muitas das atividades que são levadas a cabo causam fortes externalidades negativas. Nesta posição, a atividade turística é encontrada, pelo que se torna uma necessidade imperativa de desenvolver um modelo de turismo sustentável, ideal para o tempo em família. Esta investigação surge do problema de não tirar partido dos recursos próprios da Quinta Florestal Integral "El Trébol" de Habana del Este, para o desenvolvimento do turismo rural. Portanto, o objetivo geral é estabelecido como: Propor a concepção do produto turístico GreenRoad para a agência de viagens Ecotur S.A. Para alcançar o objetivo, foi desenvolvida uma investigação aplicada, descritiva e de campo e foi utilizada uma metodologia sobre a concepção de produtos turísticos, à qual foram feitas algumas modificações para se conseguir uma melhor adequação ao objetivo do trabalho. No desenvolvimento da investigação, foi utilizada uma série de técnicas e ferramentas metodológicas, entre as quais se destacam o teste O'Meara e a amostragem aleatória não-probabilística, do programa Statistica SPSS. Como resultado principal, a proposta de concepção do produto turístico GreenRoad foi obtida a fim de promover a atividade de turismo ambiental responsável.

**Palavras-chave:** agência de viagens; agro turismo; GreenRoad; produto turístico; turismo rural

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## INTRODUCTION

In the year 2020, humanity faces an invisible but deadly enemy that has caused unprecedented human and international economic damage, the Covid-19 pandemic (Korstanje, 2020). The pandemic has slowed the pace of consumption in the face of the closure of trade and the confinement of people. Tourism is one of the most affected economic sectors and it is expected in the future the practice of tourism, based on nature and conservation-oriented employment (León & Cárdenas, 2020), as well as the demands for the correct application of biosecurity measures established worldwide and in the country, in particular, to avoid new contagions. It is considered unpostponable

that the first step of the tourism sector is to rethink the tourism model at local and global level and that urgent and necessary measures are taken to ensure that travel is, in all cases, respectful and sustainable, thus contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda (SEO/BirdLife, 2020).

The definition of a sustainable tourism model is, therefore, nothing more than the response of the very future of the sector for the coming years, full of uncertainty, models to which agrotourism and some ecotourism alternatives are adjusted as recreational activities included within the modalities of tourism in rural areas, which can be articulated with one or more of the phases related to agro-livestock and forestry production, in addition to agro-industry, handicrafts or gastronomy for the conformation of sustainable products (Evgrafova et al., 2020).

Among Cuba's valuable resources are the Integral Forestry Farms, such is the case of "El Trébol", located in Havana del Este, which opportunities, that have not been taken advantage of, are considerable due to the fact that they are located near hotel complexes in a tourist area. Studying its resources and potential for the integration of tourism products could generate alternatives for its integral development, in coherence with current times, as well as diversify the tourism offer in Havana.

As a beginning of the study, in the Integral Forest Farm "El Trébol", a research of a Diploma Work of the Faculty of Tourism of the University of Havana was carried out during the first months of 2019. As a result, a series of actions were proposed to the travel agency Ecotur S.A. for the development of the tourist activity in that territory. Among them, the creation of products that take advantage of the resources offered by the natural space and that adjust to the sustainability models stands out. Due to the application and relevance of the results, they were published in May of that year in the magazine "Mundo Turístico", which made the information available to the authorities of the sector. As a continuity of this line of research, it is appropriate to propose the design of the GreenRoad tourism product for the Ecotur S.A. travel agency.

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## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research presents a position framed in a mixed methodology, since it contemplates qualitative and quantitative aspects. Among the theoretical methods used, the analysis-synthesis method was used to process the information from the bibliography consulted and the induction-deduction method was used to adapt a series of data collected in the bibliographic review and in the statistical reports that were not immediately up-to-date.

As regards empirical methods, documentary analysis was used through the study of research carried out on the subject. Likewise, participatory observation was used and semi-structured interviews were conducted with specialists and managers of the facility under study and of the travel agency Ecotur S.A. Similarly, the brainstorming technique and the Expert method were used.

Several procedures were analyzed, such as Kotler (2000), the procedure for the design of tourism products by Pérez et al. (2020), the methodology for the Development and Promotion of Tourism Products by Perelló (2001), the procedure for the design of tourism products by the Mexican Ministry of Tourism (SECTUR, 2003) and the conversion of resources into tourism products by Martín (2006). A comparative analysis of these proposals was then carried out.

Based on this analysis, it was taken as base the procedure for the design of tourism products, proposed by Semassa (2007), cited by Pérez et al. (2020), since it uses as a reference the analysis of documents and the selection and comparative analysis of several methodologies for tourism product design for travel agencies, and not only takes into account the criteria common to the authors studied, but also includes other criteria that, despite their little use by the authors mentioned, are essential in the current management of tourism products.

It should be clarified that some adjustments were made to this procedure in order to correspond to the characteristics of the object of study at the destination. Thus, the procedure to be used is designed in three phases and 10 stages as follows.

## **Phase 1:** Diagnosis of the tourism situation

### Stage 1: Inventory of attractions and tourist resources

The resources and attractions around which the activities integrated in the value chain to generate the offer could be defined were detailed. For this purpose, participatory observation was used in the place where the product will be developed, as well as interviews with workers and managers of the premises, and a descriptive sheet of the resources and attractions was drawn up.

### Stage 2: Demand analysis

To analyze demand, a segmentation by benefits was carried out, of an estimated "x" number of TripAdvisor website comments, based on the total number of customers who consumed activities of the tourism modality to which the designed product belongs.

The calculation was based on the formula proposed by Ruiz and Parreño (2013) for finite populations, as shown below:

$$n = \frac{N \cdot z^2 \cdot p \cdot q}{e^2 \cdot (N - 1) + z^2 \cdot p \cdot q}$$

Where:

N: total population size

z: statistic of the normal distribution for the selected confidence level (1.64) Confidence level 90%.

p: percentage of times a phenomenon is assumed to occur in the population (0.5)

q: is the non-occurrence of the phenomenon or probability of failure (1-p = 0.5)

e: sampling error or deviation from the estimated true value (10% = 0.1)

n = ?

A non-probabilistic random sampling was performed, taking into account the considerations of Ruiz & Parreño (2013) and Perelló (2005), so that all elements of the population had the same chances of being selected. After tabulation of the comments, they were entered into the Statistica SPSS program for grouping into clusters, according to the frequency of selection of the benefits, and the customer profile was formed. Based on this analysis, a bibliographic review was carried out to obtain information describing the trend behavior of the segment under study at national and international level.

### Stage 3: Strategic analysis

#### *Step 1: External and internal analysis*

The supply was analyzed according to the macro- and micro-environment. In the company's macro environment, the PEST factors were analyzed, according to Serra (2002): political-legal, economic, social-cultural and technological, as well as environmental. For the study of the microenvironment, Porter's 5 forces were analyzed, according to the same author.

#### *Step 2: SWOT Analysis*

The weaknesses, threats, strengths and opportunities for the design of the new product were detailed, based on the SWOT study according to Serra (2002).

### **Phase 2: Product design**

### Stage 4: Product structure

#### *Step 3: Concept and benefits*

Ideas were generated using the "brainstorming" technique with the support of specialists from the travel agency under study in order to define the product itself, its name, location, travel time, capacity and the explanation of the itinerary, based on the attributes that characterize the attractive resources.

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*Step 4: Service delivery processes*

The physical and material requirements were analyzed, as well as the minimum equipment necessary during the tour, in correspondence with the desired level of comfort to satisfy the clients.

*Step 5: Concept test*

Based on interviews and field analysis, relevant studies were carried out to determine whether the product had a favorable level of acceptance, making its application feasible.

Stage 5: Price determination

Fixed and variable costs were defined using the formula  $P(x) = CT_u + Bu$  according to Serra (2002) and a possible selling price for the travel agency of the designed product was determined.

Stage 6: Feasibility study

*Step 6: Environmental evaluation of the product*

The potential profitability of the designed product was evaluated from an environmental point of view, in accordance with ecological principles. For this purpose, the opinion of the director of the facility was taken into account, as well as that of other specialists linked to the subject through the interviews carried out.

*Step 7: Economic evaluation of the product*

The break-even point was performed and analyzed according to Serra (2002) to make the necessary adjustments or rethink the design.

*Step 8: Qualitative feasibility analysis.*

From the qualitative point of view, the Expert Method was used to apply the O'Meara test according to Ruiz and Parreño (2013). The acceptance criterion was: develop the product if it acquires a criterion higher than 8 points, carefully analyze the continuation



or stoppage when it is between 8 and 6 and reject the product if it had a score lower than 5.9. The stages of the test application were 1- selecting experts (for this purpose the Delphi Method, proposed by Reguant and Torrado (2016) was used) 2- identifying the evaluative factors and 3- classifying the ideas (a higher final score will have a higher possibility of success).

### **Phase 3:** Product marketing management

#### Stage 7: Positioning

The strategy for positioning the product in the consumer's mind was defined. With the support of the actions proposed for promotion, it was involved in the market insertion process.

#### Stage 8: Promotion

A series of actions were established to publicize the offer through brainstorming and consultation with marketing specialists of the travel agency under study.

#### Stage 9: Distribution channels

The different distribution channels for the designed product were defined, both direct and indirect.

#### Stage 10: Feedback

Based on the brainstorming, the bases were established through which information on the degree of customer satisfaction (internal and external) and the main suggestions can be obtained.

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## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Phase 1: Diagnosis of the tourism situation

#### Stage 1: Inventory of attractions and tourist resources

The Integral Forestry Farm "El Trébol" (FFI-ET in Spanish) belongs to the Unidad Empresarial de Base Silvícola of Havana del Este, an entity of the Empresa Forestal y Producciones Varias of Havana, founded in 2006. The total area of the farm is 120.77 hectares located in Bacuranao, specific address on 7th Street between 13 and 14, Santa María Loma, Havana del Este, Cuba. The fundamental activity is the promotion and protection of forests through forestry; agricultural production, with areas destined to the production of viands and vegetables, as well as the generation of meat and milk derived from the breeding of poultry, pigs and cows (Reyes, 2019)<sup>1</sup>.

The main resources and areas with potential for agrotourism, located indistinctly in the largest portion of the farm's territory, evidenced a natural environment that favors the interrelation of people with the rural environment. In identifying the distinctive features of the place, the access roads and the general infrastructure of the farm were highlighted, which are conducive to the development of tourism activities. The infrastructure exhibits in the vicinity of the farm house a rustic wood and metal multipurpose shed, but essentially to carry out handicraft work based on wood and bamboo. In addition, a small rustic house is erected on the basis of wood and guano, whose essential function is to watch over the production of charcoal, the main source of foreign exchange of the farm.

The fauna includes several types of domestic livestock, as well as a diversity of wildlife that are distributed according to local conditions and the availability of food and water. In the locality, three families were identified that grouped a total of six tree species among all the stands of the farm's heritage, a trail of a variety of fruit plants, planted with spices, aromatic plants and coffee for self-consumption. In addition, it a northern

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<sup>1</sup> Reyes, E. Á. (April 15, 2019). Potentiality of the Integral Forest Farm for the creation of supply. ("Author", Interviewers)

coastal strip with shallow waters, dunes that form part of the beaches of eastern Havana and a characteristic flora and fauna.

The central element of the territory morphology is the agroforestry culture (forestry, agriculture and animal husbandry) based on the knowledge, beliefs and behavioral patterns of the farmer, his family, employees and the community. This includes the material means (technologies) used by its members to communicate with each other and solve their needs of all kinds.

Associated with this, there is also a predominant rural agro-livestock culture with specific traditions that identify the local community, which shows a sense of belonging to the site and the available resources. This leads to a marked concern and interest in the development and conservation of the farm's natural spaces.

To make the activity viable in general, the farm has infrastructure in the surrounding area that, although not in optimal conditions, shows the basic structure of an urbanization and some establishments to promote tourism development. This is complemented by valuable natural resources of interest to potential visitors.

In addition, there are elements of historical value, such as the plaque dedicated to the Cuban forester Álvaro Barba Machado (1923-1962)<sup>2</sup> on the FFI-ET property.

### Stage 2: Demand analysis

For the segmentation by benefits, first, a sample of 96 comments on the TripAdvisor website was selected, estimated from the total number of customers who consumed rural tourism activities in Havana destination in 2018, information obtained from the statistics of the travel agency Ecotur S.A. Two clusters were identified: the first is the largest, representing 62% of the total analyzed, while the second represented 38% of the comments analyzed. The benefits grouped in the first cluster are contact with nature, participation in agricultural and livestock activities, as well as recreation and environmental protection. This type of visitor is interested in large, natural and healthy spaces, surrounded by animals and traditional organic foods. Thus, it was found that

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<sup>2</sup> Promoter of reforestation plans at the beginning of the Cuban Revolution

most of the agro-tourists who come to Cuba are mainly looking for the benefits provided by the product.

According to Domínguez (2019)<sup>3</sup>, these clients are looking for an escape from the routine that allows them to free themselves from the stress of daily life, open places that provide them with a certain degree of security, and also see that these are offered by some agricultural communities. They are looking for relaxation, fun, rest, knowledge of the culture, flora and fauna, in contact with nature and rural residents, which shows that they are interested in everything from observation and tours in a natural environment, to active participation in agricultural work, with programmed walks, horseback riding and, in general, tourist activities in rural areas.

### Stage 3: Strategic analysis

#### *Step 1: External and internal analysis*

#### **Macro environment**

Policy: The vast majority of countries have medium- to long-term tourism policies, strategies and plans. There is much similarity in terms of their tourism policy priorities, which focus on improving competitiveness, sustainability and inclusiveness, as well as enhancing the quality and attractiveness of the tourism offer. Tourism policy occupies a place within the national economic policy of any country and is obviously determined by higher-level guidelines with respect to the functioning of the national economy as a whole.

In Cuba, the importance of tourism policy has been endorsed by the nation in the Guidelines of the VII Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba. The Cuban Ministry of Tourism has elaborated a set of legal regulations (resolutions) and policies (such as agreements or circular letters) that have been modified, naturally, throughout the years of its existence as an entity. The policy guidelines for tourism are fourteen and are focused, among other aspects, on attracting foreign currency, competitiveness,

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<sup>3</sup> Domínguez, F. L. (March 29, 2019). Tourism offers in natural environments in Cuba. (Author, Interviewers)

commercialization, development of modalities, increase in visitor arrivals, promotion and use of Information and Communication Technologies (Mesa Lago, 2019).

Economy: Tourism has the best economic performance among the branches and constituted the second largest source of foreign exchange between 2014 and 2018. Cuba ranks third in tourism revenues and significantly increased its share in the Caribbean. The behavior of tourism activity in Cuba has generally been upward since 1990. The year 2019, had a complex tourism scenario materialized in 4 million 275 thousand visitors, which represented a decrease of 9.2% in relation to 2018, due to the strict measures of the U.S. government against the development of this sector in Cuba (Ayala Castro, 2020).

Cultural and social: The behavior of tourism, worldwide, responds to the strengthening of the natural, cultural, historical and social values of each destination. Artistic manifestations enrich popular culture, contribute to the discovery of an attractive philosophy and new knowledge for the contemporary world, and constitute highly attractive opportunities for tourism. The design of routes designed by the AAVV Ecotur in rural communities has made it possible to show their customs, music, crafts, gastronomy, leaving an important mark for a new dimension of local and social development. Likewise, it is emphasized that these products are based on sustainable tourism development by combining the interests of the tourist and the community, in an interaction of respect for the natural environment and biodiversity (Domínguez, 2019).

Technology: One aspect to take into consideration, at the international level, is the growing informatization of society, specifically in Cuba, through the implementation of mobile data by 3G, more recently by 4G and its new offers, as well as the opening of new parks and WIFI zones (Artiles Brito & Echenique Veliz, 2019).

Environment: Respect for nature is one of the trends in the consumption of products worldwide, so the proper management of the environment becomes a premise for international visitors. In Cuba, environmental legislation with its regulations is increasingly strict and the law that regulates the relationship with the environment is number 81. One of the current trends in tourism demand is the growing awareness of

environmental issues and the shift from passive to active vacations in outdoor spaces (National Assembly of People's Power, 1997).

### **Micro-environment**

Current competitors: The Cuban archipelago has natural resources with a significant scenic and cultural value throughout its territory, so the interest in the development of tourism modalities that use these resources is remarkable. Hence the existence of a high competitive power, with less relevance in the capital because, as a result of the dynamism of city life itself, other activities prevail in the preference of tourists who visit them.

In the province of Pinar del Río, the "La Guabina" and "Mil Cumbres" farms can be found. In the young province of Artemisa, it can also be observed the flora and fauna, go horseback riding and hiking in the farms "Charco Azul" and "La Burgambilia", located in the municipality of Caimito. Located in Havana, there is the "Vista Hermosa" farm and the "El Diamante" farm in the municipality of Boyeros, where, in addition to admiring the flora and fauna, it is a space for the practice of agrotourism. The "Fiesta Guajira" farm, located in Baconao Park, and the "Los Giros" farm, in the Dos Palmas region of Santiago de Cuba, where indigenous values of nature and culture are shared in areas of high landscape and historical value. In Baracoa, Guantánamo, there is the "La Esperanza" farm, where visits to the cocoa plantations and boat rides on the Toa River stand out.

Potential competitors: The threat posed by potential competitors to the GreenRoad product is high, if we take as a reference products that specialize in sustainable agricultural and livestock activities of tourist interest in the Cuban provinces, except for the capital. Examples of these competitors include the "Finca Marta" Family Agroecological Project, which aims to demonstrate the potential of agroecology to achieve a fair agri-food system, in Caimito, Artemisa, Rancho "Paraíso", located in Villa Clara and the "La Hermosa" farm in Cárdenas, Matanzas. In addition, the "La Fortaleza" farm, in the province of Santiago de Cuba, is an example of the hard work for sustainable agricultural and forestry development on agroecological bases.

It should be noted that, specifically in the province of Havana, the record of potential competitors is insignificant, so the threat in that territory for the materialization of the idea of the product is low.

Substitute products: The threat posed by the presence of products that offer similar services in a different and alternative way is low, if analyzed taking territoriality as a reference, since in Havana there are none with these characteristics. On the contrary, if the analysis is carried out in the provinces of Artemisa or Pinar del Río, there is a strong threat, since there are specific destinations very well positioned as nature products, with excellent quality and countless benefits, in coherence with the preferences of the agro-tourist profile, such as Las Terrazas, in the Sierra del Rosario.

Suppliers: In order to supply some of the necessary inputs, the FFI-ET has an orchard where all kinds of crops and condiments are harvested, as well as numerous fruit plants, an economic relationship in which the supplier's bargaining power is irrelevant. Products that are not grown on the farm can be obtained from Guanabo-Agro, located on 494th Street between 3rd and 5th, Guanabo, as well as from other suppliers such as ITH, Bravo S.A., Tauro, Pesca Caribe and Frutas Selectas.

Clients: GreenRoad is an offer where activities in a natural space prevail, differentiating it from the majority of options corresponding to different modalities. Therefore, the client's bargaining power is low, reducing the possibility of choice, although it is convenient to keep in mind the alternatives offered by other destinations in the country.

#### *Step 2: SWOT Analysis*

#### **Strength**

- Existence of considerable resources and potential for agrotourism at the "El Trébol" Integral Forestry Farm in Havana del Este
- Proximity to tourist resorts in Havana del Este, as well as to the coastal area
- Specialization of the FFI-ET in forestry and agricultural production
- Access roads and infrastructure conducive to the development of tourism
- Existence of a website where the GreenRoad offer is promoted

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## Weaknesses

- Level of demand preference compared to other destinations
- Lack of knowledge of the tourism offer
- Undeveloped infrastructure for tourism purposes

## Opportunities

- Post-Covid 19 tourism adjusted to sustainability models
- Cuba ranks third in tourism revenues and significantly increased its share in the Caribbean
- Trends in tourism demand towards a growing awareness of environmental issues and a shift from passive to active vacations, in open-air spaces
- Low rivalry among competitors oriented to this type of product in Havana
- Lack of potential competitors and substitute products in Havana

## Threats

- International context affected by the Covid-19 pandemic
- Low recognition of Havana as a rural tourism destination
- Threat of substitute products with greater recognition in provinces near Havana

## Phase 2: Product design

### Stage 4: Product structure

#### *Step 3: Concept and benefits*

## The Product

The "GreenRoad" tourism product is an excursion to be developed at the "El Trébol" Integral Forestry Farm in Havana del Este, where visitors will have the opportunity to carry out agro-tourism activities as an alternative to tourism in rural areas. According to Martín (2006), it is defined as follows:



**Simple product:** The client will be able to enjoy a natural space conducive to exchange with the local host culture (knowledge, beliefs and behavioral patterns) and learn about good environmental practices.

**Basic product:** GreenRoad" offers the possibility of interacting in a natural space by carrying out activities such as: observation of the rustic shed for handicraft work (carpentry), passing through the family self-consumption, observation of animals, walking along the trails of fruit plants and others.

**Integrated or augmented product:** There will be a system for the consumption of drinking water, which will consist of not selling water bottles, but there will be strategically located large bottles, which will allow visitors to fill their thermoses with water for drinking. This will avoid the use of these plastic containers in order to generate less garbage, in line with the worldwide recycling campaign against plastic.

**Name of the product:** "GreenRoad"

**Location:** Bacuranao, 7<sup>th</sup> St. between 13 and 14, Santa María Loma, Havana del Este, Cuba.

**Attractions that are visited:**

- **Natural attractions:** family self-consumption, trails of fruit plants, northern coastal strip
- **Cultural attractions:** rustic shed for handicraft work (carpentry), rustic house for the surveillance of charcoal production, a plaque dedicated to the Cuban forester Álvaro Barba Machado (1923-1962)

**Travel time:** 8 ½ hours.

**Capacity:** 12 - 15 pax.

**Explanation of the itinerary:** The touristic offer was conceived to be carried out twice a week in the first instance, but it is expected to increase to four times a week once it reaches a better position in terms of demand.

- **8:00 am** - Pick up of the clients at the hotel where they are staying by a Transtur bus and a specialized tour guide, which contributes to the understanding of the language
- **8:30 am** - Arrival at "El Trébol" Farm, where the owner of the farm and all its workers will officially welcome the group of visitors and explain its social function
- **8:45 am** - "Welcome cocktail" where a series of dishes made with fruits and products from the farm will be offered
- **9:00 am** - Beginning of the tour, accompanied by a specialist with great knowledge about the characteristics of the farm

The first point you will see is the rustic warehouse for handicrafts (carpentry), where you can appreciate the different tools for handicraft work. You will also be able to pass through the family self-consumption area, where you will find some crops such as spices, aromatic plants, fruit trees and coffee.

Passing through the Vía Blanca, to continue through the vegetation area of the farm, you will see the plaque dedicated to the Cuban forester Álvaro Barba Machado (1923-1962), promoter of the reforestation plans at the beginning of the Cuban Revolution, which would indicate the inclusion of historical elements in the offer to highlight many of the benefits that the Cuban people have been able to appreciate thanks to the Revolution. As you advance, you will continue along trails where you can appreciate fruit trees, which will allow you the possibility of tasting fruits directly taken from the trees, until you reach the rustic house of surveillance of charcoal production, a point where you will have a stay and, if you wish, you can ride a horse, for which, if you do not have the vast knowledge, you will have the support of the specialist who accompanies you.

- **11:00 pm** - Return to the farm house to enjoy the preparation and consumption of a delicious typical peasant meal. The main attraction is that these people participate in the preparation of the meal and witness the roasting of the meat, which will contribute to liven up the atmosphere with the delicious aroma. In addition, they will be able to go to the family self-consumption to obtain some aromatic plants to season the lunch or other products that are necessary
- **2:00 pm** - End of the tour and arrival at the coastal area. You can spend some time to enjoy the marine ecosystem and take a swim in the sea, if they wish

- **4:00 pm** - Arrival of the bus back to the place where they are staying. All the staff will meet to give them a big farewell and wish them to come back soon
- **4:30 pm** - Approximate time of arrival at their lodging place

**Product benefits:** "GreenRoad" allows expanding the offer of services and experiences in natural spaces in the city of Havana, diversifying those that have conventionally existed in this tourist pole, without assuming additional costs for public services. It will achieve an increase in the economic value of this natural space, as well as to value, in a respectful and sustainable way, the resources provided by the Integral Forestry Farm and to obtain economic benefits, which will favor the family that welcomes visitors and the economic sector in general.

#### *Step 4: Service delivery process*

For the tour, the agency Ecotur S.A. has a team of qualified guides who are fluent in English as a second language. They have a microphone device for the use of the guide to ensure greater comfort, both for the specialist and for the excursionists, which allows the message to reach the latter in a better way. The minimum equipment necessary for the use of the clients is at their own expense and will be the camera, water and comfortable clothes. Transportation is guaranteed by the travel agency itself, which has a contract with the transport company Transtur S.A. for the transportation of the clients from the hotels to the farm. The places to be visited have the appropriate infrastructure to provide the services offered to clients, as well as specialized agroforestry guides. In addition, there is a stable supply of food products for lunch and welcome cocktails.

#### *Step 5: Concept test*

For the test of concept, the Ecotur S.A. agency itself was taken as a stakeholder, since it plays a fundamental role in the development, implementation and control of the offer, which is the main economic beneficiary. The potential of the different places pending analysis for future inclusion in the offer was discussed with the commercial team. Likewise, visits were made to the places that were projected for inclusion, with the objective of obtaining information on their demand, prices, level of professionalism of their human resources, achieving a feedback that allows obtaining relevant data for this proof of concept. After all the analyses developed, it was decided that the application of

the proposed product is feasible, although elements such as strict compliance with schedules and the adequate condition of the attractions must be required for the correct development of the product.

#### Stage 5: Price determination

The fixed and variable costs were determined (Table 1), as well as the net price to be offered to the travel agency: 34 CUC, which includes a 15% profit for the supplier. The daily income, which assumes the total number of clients for whom the offer is intended, is 510 CUC and the profit to be obtained is 68 CUC.

**Table 1** - Cost sheet

<b>Costs</b>	<b>Fix costs (CUC)</b>	<b>Variable costs (CUC)</b>
Transportation	194	
Tourist guide service (3.50 CUC/h)	28	
Farm infrastructure	40	
Welcome cocktail		2
Typical farmer's lunch		10
<b>Total</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>12</b>

Source: Own elaboration

#### Stage 6: Feasibility study

##### *Step 6: Environmental evaluation of the product*

The proposed product is identified with ecological principles and potentially involves a high systemic profitability between nature, society and its economic development, which demonstrates its high environmental profitability (Domínguez, 2019). It contributes to the better conservation and improvement of soils and protection against climate change, offers ecosystemic stability, allows ecological water management, contributes to the reduction of environmental pollution and the rescue of the culture of agriculture (Reyes, 2019).

*Step 7: Economical evaluation of the product*

The minimum number of people, who must buy the offer so that the income is equal to the profit and not obtain losses, is 12; but this is not profitable because the purpose of any business is to generate income, so it must be sold to a minimum of 13 people. In addition, when analyzing the costs and income with the maximum and minimum number of people, who can have the product, it is corroborated that the minimum profit for one day of making the offer is 24 CUC and the maximum is approximately 68 CUC. This shows that although it is feasible, the level of feasibility is low, so it is convenient, from an arduous development in increasing promotional work, to increase the demand to raise the frequency of realization of the offer, as long as the load capacity of the facility is not affected, because the price should not be increased, as it is a differentiating element of the competition that has established them much higher.

*Step 8: Feasibility qualitative analysis.*

The 8 experts were defined, and the factors to be evaluated were defined, classified and scored, and the corresponding calculations were made (Table 2).

**Table 2** - O'Meara test application

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Absolute value</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Weighted value</b>
Market capacity	0,06	9,1	0,5
Required distribution channels	0,03	9	0,3
Relationship to current product line	0,05	9,5	0,5
Price-quality ratio	0,07	9,2	0,6
Competitiveness	0,06	8,5	0,5
Influences on sales of existing products	0,05	9,5	0,5
Product life/activity	0,05	9,1	0,5
Duration	0,06	9,4	0,6
Breadth of the market	0,07	9	0,6
Influence exerted on the product by the season and the economic situation	0,04	8,7	0,3
Exclusivity of product design	0,07	9,2	0,6
Possibility of functioning	0,07	9,5	0,7

Production facilities required	0,03	9,6	0,3
Personnel and technologies required	0,03	9,5	0,3
Raw materials required	0,02	9,3	0,2
Growth potential	0,06	9,4	0,6
Market position corresponding to the product	0,06	9,7	0,6
Market entry	0,05	9,3	0,5
Expected number of end consumers	0,07	9,3	0,7
	1		9,4

Source: Own elaboration

The scale used is the one proposed by O'Meara, where the numerical value 10 corresponds to very good, 8 to good, 6 to fair, 4 to poor and 2 to very poor. When evaluating the results obtained in this table, a score of 9.4 points was obtained, which falls in the range that allows developing the product, so it is considered that it is qualitatively feasible.

### **Phase 3:** Product marketing management

#### Stage 7: Positioning

To achieve a favorable perception of the product, a positioning strategy based on the attributes and benefits offered to the consumer was designed:

*To adjust the promotion and, therefore, the recognition of the "GreenRoad" tourist offer to the principles of sustainability and its distinction with other offers in Havana.*

As an offensive strategy, it will use its strengths to channel the promotion of the offer, highlighting its main attributes and benefits of environmental sustainability. In this way, the opportunities and particularities offered by the environment, such as post-Covid sustainability models, outdoor activities and the low level of specialized competition in this type of product in Havana, will be used to capture the interest of the demand.

#### Stage 8: Promotion

Taking into account that the product is to be incorporated into the investment portfolio of the Ecotur S.A. Travel Agency, the following actions are proposed for its commercialization:

- Promote the product through Ecotur S.A.'s website, the Cuba Travel website and the promotional media of the agencies with which the company has a contract
- Incorporate the product in the development of sales through Amadeus
- Elaborate a promotional video of the "El Trébol" Integral Forestry Farm
- Promote the product at various national and international tourism sector events
- Carry out community impact and environmental protection activities to make headlines in the different mass media
- Establish contracts with the agency "Publicitur"
- Make agreements to promote the product on important foreign websites with a consolidated position in the market
- Create a GreenRoad product website where all the elements of the offer are highlighted

### **Website-blog design**

The "GreenRoad" website, located at <http://greenroadclub.wordpress.com>, was created on June 18, 2019, with the help of the site <http://es.wordpress.com>. The pages highlight the larger elements of the product that may be of interest to capture the interest of those who visit. The keywords used were: GreenRoad, tourist destinations, sustainable, rural tourism and agrotourism.

In order to broaden the range of possibilities of knowledge of the offer, it was linked to Facebook (GreenRoad) and Twitter (@LlabonaMelissa) profiles, where all the updates of the site and each of the publications that were made were published.

To check the level of acceptance of these promotional actions, after the first month (until July 18) an analysis of the statistics of the site and the linked networks was carried out in order to outline a strategy and actions that would facilitate the achievement of the objective. The analysis of the results, during the trial period, allowed us to make a strategic planning for the promotion and implementation of the blog with greater

acceptance. The objective was to achieve the highest number of visits in the shortest possible time, and the strategy selected was of the push type, as shown in table 3.

**Table 3** - Action plan for the promotion and implementation of the blog

Action	Procedure	Responsible	Frequency	Contingency plan
Invite through the Facebook profile	Subscribe the Facebook profile to the social media manager's profile and invite all his friends to indicate that they like the site.	Commercial Specialist.	Once a week.	Promote the site through Ecotur S.A. agency's Facebook profile
Make constant publications on Facebook.	Post on the Facebook profile all the content information of the website.	Commercial Specialist.	Three times a week.	To use the e-mail of the product
Send blog subscription invitations via email.	Send subscription invitations to the blog where they would find the link to access it.	Commercial Specialist.	Once a week.	Use Messenger or WhatsApp as a way to encourage subscription to the blog.
Distribute posters and flyers promoting the blog.	They will highlight the address of the site and will be disseminated by points close to places with WIFI connection.	Commercial Specialist.	Bimonthly	Design presentation cards of the site with the same content.
Make personal diffusion of the existence of the site.	Interested persons and entities will be informed about the existence of the site.	All.	Spaces when deemed appropriate.	To make phone calls to interested entities.

Source: Own elaboration



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### Stage 9: Distribution channels

As the main form of direct distribution, the product will be available at the different points of sale of the Ecotur S.A. agency. In addition, it is intended to allow the purchase request through a process induced by the promotional website of the product, since on its home page you can find the e-mail address with the name of the product ([greenroadclub99@gmail.com](mailto:greenroadclub99@gmail.com)).

Indirectly, Ecotur S.A.'s own tour operators will be used: Destino World, Cubautrement, Aventoura, SKEDIO, Profil Cuba Reisen, Tropik Vedeta, Daiquiri Tour, Cuba for Travel Latitud Cuba, La Coronación, Tiambo Divitur, Top Caribe, Huwans, ACUC. In addition, the incorporation of the product to the Global Distribution System (GDS) "Amadeus" is proposed.

### Stage 10: Feedback

#### Internal client feedback system

- Surveys: In order to determine the employees' perception of the farm, who are key to the success of any business, and to learn about their concerns and disagreements, internal customer satisfaction surveys will be conducted on a monthly basis
- Meetings with personnel: Meetings with all employees will be held once a month, where all members of the organization must participate to raise their concerns, needs and new proposals for the development of services. With the contact personnel, a constant exchange will be maintained to know the opinions obtained from the visitors, directly, through the provision of the services

#### External client feedback system

- Surveys: Satisfaction surveys will be conducted to obtain information from customers regarding the services provided and the product in general
- Attention to complaints and claims: At the farewell, customers will have access to a complaints and suggestions mailbox, which will allow them to express their criteria and dissatisfaction with the services provided. These complaints will be

dealt with as quickly as possible to prevent them from becoming claims. Otherwise, the complaint may be received through the Complaint Form or mail [greenroadclub99@gmail.com](mailto:greenroadclub99@gmail.com)

### **In general**

- The creation of the GreenRoad tourism product makes it possible to take advantage of the El Trébol farm's own resources and promote environmentally responsible tourism
- The target demand segment for this product is travelers with an agro-tourist profile
- The costs for the materialization of the offer are low, since all the natural resources of the farm will be available as a fundamental attraction, as well as for the elaboration of the gastronomic offers
- The price at which it will be marketed is much lower than that of the competition, which constitutes an advantage in the market
- It can be affirmed that it demonstrates a decisive environmental feasibility, which constitutes an attractive element of marked importance for its development
- It will be distributed through both direct and indirect channels

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**Conflict of interest:**

Authors declare not to have any conflict of interest.

**Authors' contribution:**

*Yennifer Sánchez Borges* and *Melissa Caridad Sánchez Llabona* designed the study, analyzed the data and prepared the draft. Were involved in the collection, analysis and interpretation of the data. Reviewed the writing of the manuscript and approved the version finally submitted.



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