

LEARNING MINDS
AFRICA LOCAL BOOKING
CAPACITY BUILDING FOR SME
TOUR OPERATORS IN EAST
AFRICA

13 May 2022, Arusha

*Learning Minds
Africa*

P.O Box 10572
Kaloleni road 30
Kaloleni, Arusha

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1. Executive Summary

The following table intends to give a quick overview of your activities. Please also indicate the respective countries, e.g. "Total number of people reached: 1 K, 2 T, 1 U, 2 R, 1 B, 1 S".

Name of the Project	Capacity building for Tour Operators
Name of the Organization	Learning Minds Africa
Organization is active since	2018
Number of People in the Organization	5
Project Duration	6 Months
Any other Stakeholders involved?	Ugandan Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities, Ugandan Tourism Association, Tanzania Tour Operator Association, Sustainable Tourism and Travel Agenda (Kenya).
EAC member states involved	Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Kenya
Total Number of people reached	7307 people have been reached
Benefit for people reached	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enable accommodation owners to offer flexible net room rates to tour operators (increase room occupancy specially for locally owned accommodation). 2. Tour operator benefit from flexible net room rates (increased room booking commissions revenue). 3. Online marketing knowledge and skill building for tour operators opening up new opportunities and increased itinerary profit margins. 4. East African Tourism stakeholder's knowledge sharing (destination updates, insides knowledge, opportunities of shared marketing.)
Number of events organized	<p>There have been 7 events organized. These are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Team meeting, drawing board design educational and marketing videos 2. Tour operator & TATO Tanzania Tour Operator Association meetings in Arusha 3. Tour operator and accommodation owners, Rwanda Tourism Board, meeting in Kigali 4. Meeting members of ZITO (Stone-town) 5. Meeting Association of Uganda Tour Operators, Ministry of ICT and Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and Uganda Tourism Board in Kampala 6. Meeting Judy Kepler of Sustainable Tourism and Travel Agenda. 7. Tour operator Workshop (Intro Online Marketing)
Number of people participated in events	Rwanda 19 Arusha 5
Benefit for people participating in events	Knowledge and awareness of the benefits of Local Booking flexible net room rates, the Regional Tourism Forum and Online Marketing Workshop
Number of beneficiaries (Number for each EAC Country)	503 is the number of total beneficiaries. 237 through subscript to Local Booking Flexible net

(Number of Youth) (Number of Women)	room rates 266 through workshop and meetings Tanzania 221 (42 Female, 25 Youth) Uganda 33 (14 Female) Rwanda 19 (7 Female) Indirect Beneficiaries through social media platforms Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram 21300
Concrete impact on beneficiaries	1. Strengthened local connections between accommodation owners and tour operators. 2. Strengthened regional connection between tour operators, guides and accommodation owners.
Number of paying customers	0
Frequency & amount of purchase	0
Number of jobs created	So far 237 tour operators are subscrip to Local Booking flexible net room rates. Increased room commissions will lead to opportunities of increase of staff members and/or better wages.
Sort of jobs & income	marketing and sales, administrative and operational staff.
Further activities planned ?	1. Launch Workshops 2. Launch Community Board - Knowledge transfer across borders - Shared marketing
Financing secured for further operations?	* Co-founder investment

2. Introduction and Background -

Local Booking is focusing on SME Tour Operator Capacity building in East Africa. This is in recognition that the EAC Partner States are endowed with rich in natural resources that offer great opportunities for tourism. These resources have high potential to generate wealth and contribute to social-economic transformation of the EAC economies. Their exploitation and pay-off has, however, been limited.

Tour operators in the different East African countries offer very similar itineraries and the lack of product differentiation has led to downward spiraling price competitions. SME tour operators also struggle to build enough trust with customers in order to sell itineraries directly to them. This combined with the tour operators' limited capacity, resources and technical knowledge forces tour operators to pay high commissions to international online travel agents based abroad, in order to find customers. Fixed net rooms rates also cause tour operators to miss out on room booking commissions.

SME Tour Operator Development

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) represent the biggest part of all registered entities in nearly all tourism service activities in majority of the East African countries, averaging 80% in number or reaching 90% if the micro enterprises are also considered. Only a few of these firms will grow into medium- and large-sized firms and reach customers direct. This is because they face a number of constraints limiting their expansion including:

Absence of a holistic regional trade and industry development approach including private sector and SME promotion policies; Low level of product transformation and differentiation, and dependence on international travel agents, resulting in a low value-added ratio per capita; Poor internal technical and, technology practices affecting their competitiveness on external markets; High online visibility costs; Insufficient integration to the international capital markets; Difficult access to technology and information, and lack of the local and regional capacity & development of local room booking activities, among others. The EAC Secretariat has recognized both the important role played by the SMEs in employment creation and development of the EAC region and also the challenges they face, and has prioritized their development.

Identifying knowledge & skills needs

We examined the challenges faced by tour operators in promotions of their products and services to customers in Cities: Arusha, Kampala, Kigali, Towns: Karatu, Stone Town and Iringa and rural places: Kondo, Ruhua and Manyara. The challenges that were found includes lack of tourism marketing professionals especially in rural places. Language barrier of employees was mentioned also as a challenge specially writing where by most of marketing managers, driver guides, travel consultant and other company's officials lack a good command of communication skills. Know how on (online) marketing skills and techniques on how to carry out marketing activities is among of the important factor for marketing success of any company. Lack of (online) marketing skills and techniques is among one of the biggest challenges that faces tour operators in the study area. Our findings also imply that many tour operators are not aware on effective and reliable marketing skill and techniques that will enable them to penetrate in the market and being able to receive a significant number of clients.

With regards to the problem of Information Technology (ICT), we found that effective and efficient application of ICT for tourism marketing and tour operation is a challenge that many tour operator face.

Poor marketing segmentation and targeting has been noted as a weakness among many tour operators to attract the potential customers.

Results through open ended questionnaire shows also that the other challenges facing tour operations in promotions of their products includes: - tough competition from tour operator; lack of marketing digital skills, lack of cross border destination information, lack of collective or joint marketing among tour operators, strong buying power of customers, fixed rates of sellers and huge cost advantage of larger tour operator companies.

2. Objectives of the project

1. To develop a centralized online room-booking website (B-B) and an e-marketplace (B-C) for domestic and international travelers based on cooperative frameworks and networks at the destination level.
2. Creating a Communication Forum. Locally registered SME tour operators, accommodation owners and stakeholders across East Africa can connect, communicate and network with one another seamlessly and effortlessly, in order to benefit from potential opportunities, create free flowing knowledge, and streamline and coordinate delivery.
3. Offering Digital and Online Marketing Workshops. Effective marketing helps small businesses learn the online habits of customers so they can better target ideal customers. It relies on solid market

research to inform the next course of action. Smart small businesses do not make assumptions. They use digital tools to learn what their target customers searches for and need.

What the Program entails

Research of small, medium and larger tour operators in cities, towns and rural areas in East Africa, and determining appropriate measures for interventions at regional level, and develop a curriculum for implementation of the relevant intervention measures. We equip tour operators with tools and strategic knowledge, so they can innovate and differentiate their itineraries in order for them to offer products with added value and sustainable profit margins well designed for domestic travelers and international.

SME Tour Operator Regional Capacity and Development

The overall objective of Local Booking in the East Africa is to contribute to the economic growth, poverty reduction and environmental sustainability, and to facilitate regional socio-economic, tourism trade integration of the East African countries through regional capacities of Tour Operators.

Specific objectives

Local Booking will focus on sustaining Small and Medium-sized Enterprises' (SMEs) growth and upgrading to the internationally competitive levels, and supporting intra-regional partnerships and inter-regional market integration so as to prepare the countries for the market liberalization and opening to direct trade with potential customers and enabling accommodation owners to offer flexible net room rates direct to tour operators, to keep revenues local. The project pursues the following specific objectives:

- to render local network and frameworks favorable and conducive to the development and improvement of competitiveness of small and medium-sized tour operators;
- to establish / strengthen capacities of the national / regional / tourism supply chain infrastructure with focus on the creation and development of SMEs;
- to develop and improve productivity and competitiveness of local tour operators through enhancing flexible net room rates, local and regional networks and a regional communication forum to facilitate knowledge sharing, and to promote exchange, collaboration and partnerships across regional borders.

3. Did you collaborate with any other organizations

Tanzania Association of Tour Operators (TATO) represents over 256 tour operators from both Mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar. TATO is also responsible for maintaining high quality and standards amongst its members. TATO encourages the Local Booking initiative.
(letter attached / appendix)

A first discussion ZATO (Mr Khalifa) has taken place in January 2022, encouraging a follow-up meeting to establish a collaboration with Zanzibar Association of Tour Operators.

Association of Uganda Tour Operators, Ministry of ICT and Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and Uganda Tourism Board in Kampala to propose a public private partnership.

Discussion with HotelOnline in Kenya an online presence technology solution for locally owned accommodation to increase room occupancy, with 5000 different properties in their portfolio.

Discussion with Sustainable Tourism and Travel Agenda - Judy Kepler to share portfolio to raise awareness of Local Booking to Kenyan Tour operators and Accommodation owners.

4. Report of the Project Activities

What has been implemented as per the work plan agreed? Report on the different activities implemented, dates, venue, objectives, and number of participants, output and outcomes as well as results plus pictures. Please number the activities accordingly.

1. Technology development

Digitalisation is bringing unprecedented opportunities for SME Tour operators in East Africa to access and adopt new business models and processes, upgrade their position in global tourism value chains and integrate into digital ecosystems. Digitalisation brings significant potential benefits to SMEs - it helps them to become more efficient, free up time and resources to focus on strategic tasks, and increase their capacity to enter new markets, internationalise operations and increase revenue.

1.3 Activity Meeting Between Product manager and Frontend Developer

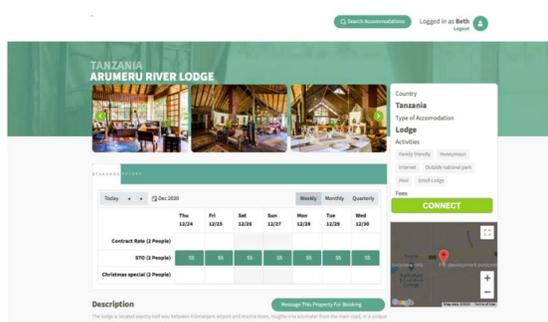
Designing for a community experience brings new design challenges and solutions for sites to capture the collective creativity of members and, ultimately, create value. The value of content and interaction come from members. To foster valuable contributions, we are designing the Community Board with two goals in mind: to show the value of the community, and to make it easy to browse and contribute. A valuable community is one that answers questions, helps solve problems, and generally makes life better for the users by taking advantage of helpful information. Learning Minds Africa & Local Booking development the flexible net room rates for SME tour operators in East Africa:

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=pgD8XyvJKeE>

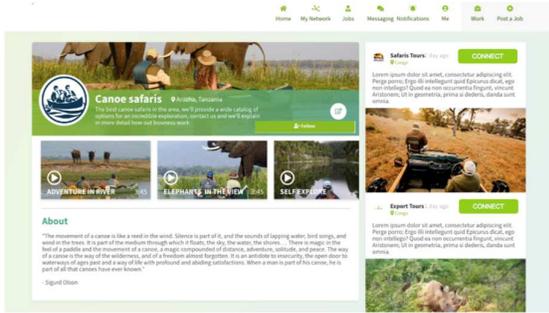
<https://www.localbooking.com>



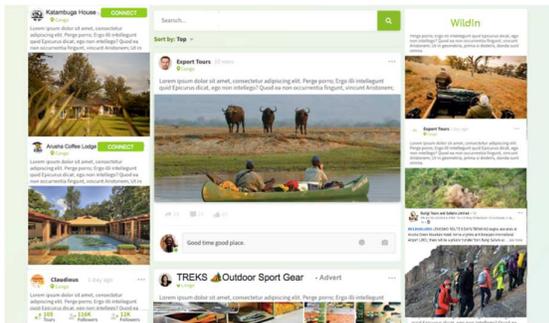
Landing Page



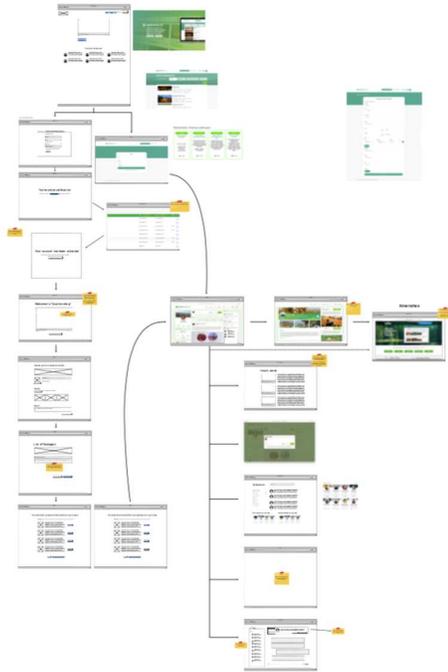
Accommodation profile
Flexible net room rates



Tour operator profile



Connect button & newsfeed



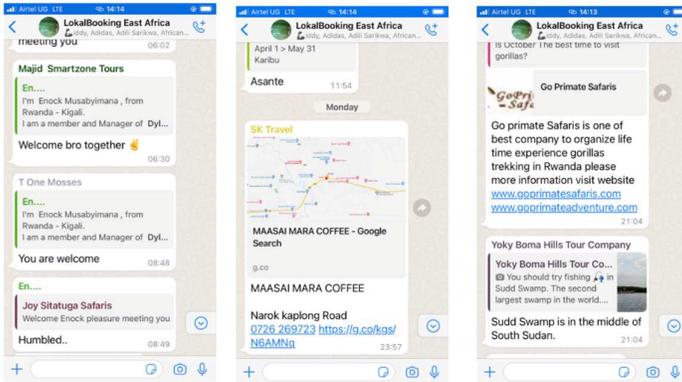
Community Board Wire -

frame

List of Users: <https://youtu.be/odYgVMR-fcQ>

In our effort to: Improving and connecting operations along tourism value chains and ecosystems, streamlining and coordinating delivery across borders in East Africa. We test the community board by setting up Cross Border Tour Operator WhatsApp groups.

Pilot - Community Board for Knowledge Sharing across borders

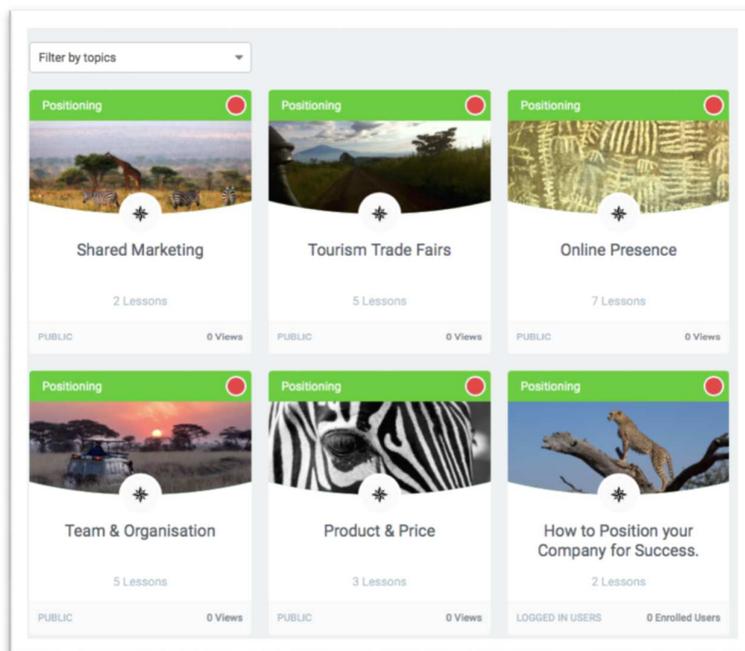
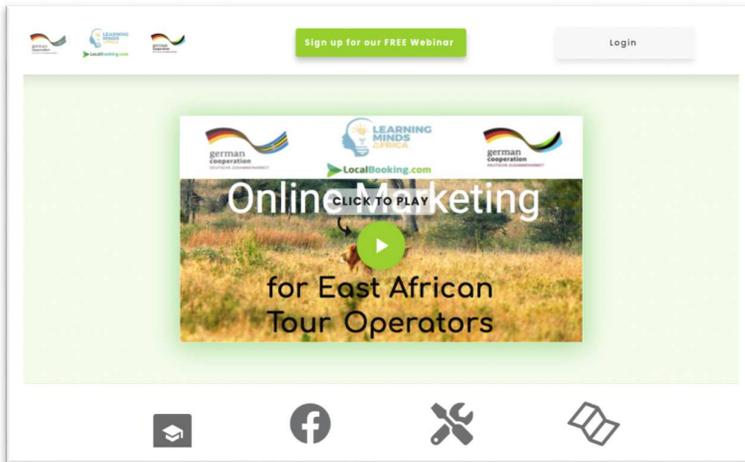


We launched a Community Board Pilot by creating an East African tour operator WhatsApp group. We currently have 293 Tour operators, guides and accommodation owners on two groups. Participants use the Local Booking WhatsApp groups to ask questions, share knowledge, find opportunities and connect business opportunities across borders.

Design of Local Bookings educational portal. Tour operators learn and master the complexities of topics like positioning, product & price and online presence. Through Local

Booking's educational portal, Local Booking offers free webinars, workshops and three-day paid live training courses. The sheer volume of educational content available to customers and buyers is a huge differentiator for Local Booking. In an effort to educate people so they understand better how they can create greater efficiencies or greater sustainability within their operations, you become a trusted advisor, and even more, you become a partner they want to do business with when the time is right.

localbooking.com.wpcomstaging.com (launch of the educational arm will be end May)



1.3.1 Online/Offline Meeting tour operators

When it comes to the functional aspects of design, tour operator, accommodation owners input is vital to the success of a project. It is therefore important to make these

stakeholders consider themselves part of the design team. We take their input seriously. Functional needs are best discussed with the people who will use the App. Trust works both ways, designers need to trust the knowledge of the stakeholders and in turn stakeholders will trust designers to create the best design solutions for the problems they have.

Aim of the meetings - trust and input. The outcome is collaboration. We organized a series of 7 meetings at Moivaro Lodge receiving 60 tourism stakeholders.



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EXPO - The theme of the EXPO was “Promotion of Resilient Tourism for Inclusive Socio-economic Development.” The theme is informed

by the need to develop the tourism sector in a sustainable manner following the devastating impact on the sector by the COVID-19 pandemic. The travel and tourism sector, globally, was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic more than any other economic sector.

Local Bookings aim of meeting the different stakeholders was to raise awareness of Local Booking - the flexible net room rates. The outcome was positive with 37 new tour operator signups to the Local Booking website.



Local Booking met with 71 different tourism stakeholders during the three-day event; Tourism Boards, Tour operator and hotel Associations and East African tour operators and accommodation owners in Tanzania (& Zanzibar), Rwanda, Uganda, South Sudan, Burundi and Kenya.



1.3.2 Publications

Publications Since COVID most offline marketing channels like magazines and newspapers have decreased in popularity and online marketing channels like Facebook and Instagram hugely increased in popularity. Among our marketing channel research hereby comments from a Ugandan journalist: For now, however, this much is true: this global health pandemic has completely exposed the precariousness of especially the print media industry in Uganda so much so that something ought to

be done to keep it alive and kicking. For a long time, newspapers and the few, mostly lifestyle, magazines that exist have been struggling to survive as a going concern. An order reason to use online social media for our advertisements is that you can track how many people saw the advertisement, engagement and likes. Therefore, instead of using print we used Facebook and Instagram in order to reach our target customers.

1.3.2 LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram Posts



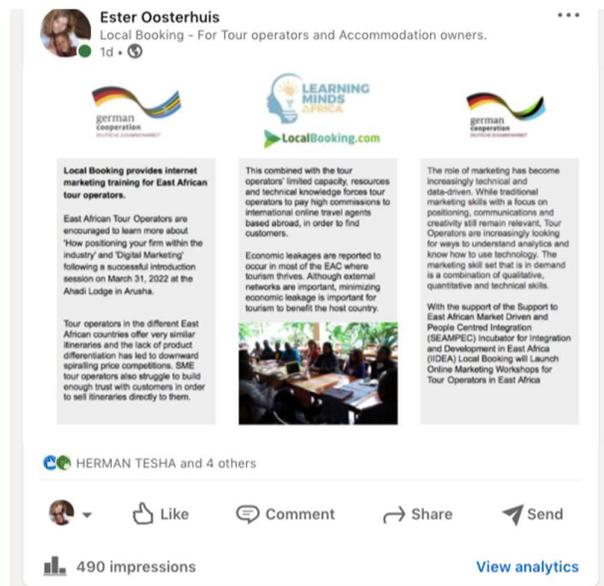
2.0 Knowledge and skill development

2.2 Online

Advertisement Facebook and LinkedIn



2.2.1

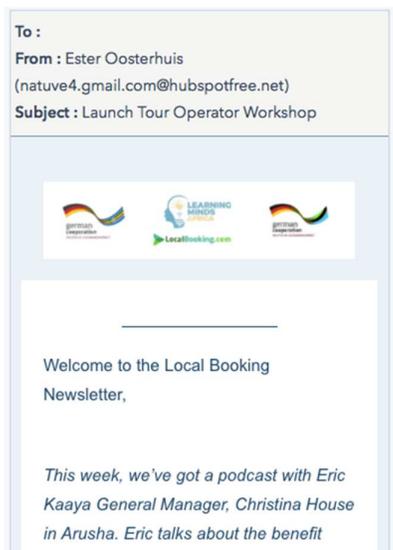


Email Marketing

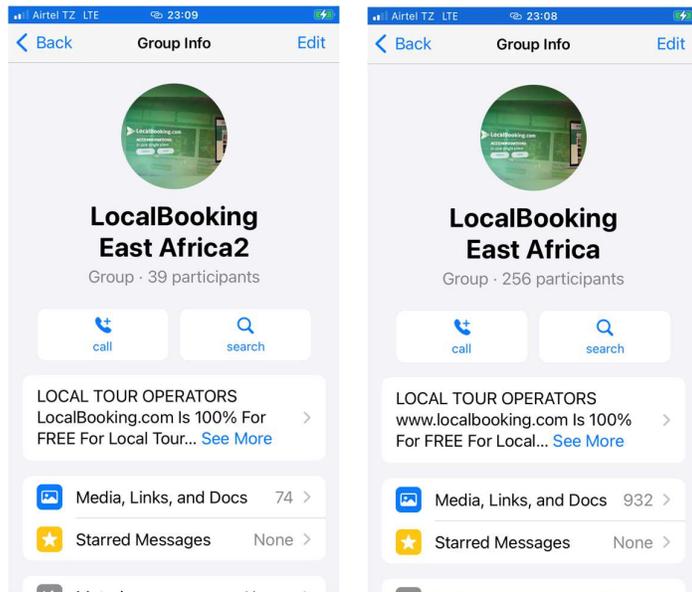
Through our email marketing and Local Bookings newsletter we acquire contacts organically. Local Bookings newsletter is personal and valuable by featuring tour operators and accommodation owners, we introduce tour operators to accommodation owners by featuring new accommodation signups. Engaging buyers and suppliers across East African borders. Local Booking aims to offer weekly newsletter content that is relevant, valuable and personal.

With Hubspot (plugin to Wordpress to connect with the educational arm) and ActiveCampaign (Email Automation) we can segment Local Bookings newsletter subscribers. Subscribers are on different journeys and their motivations for engagement will vary. Local Booking segment the list of subscribers to always anticipated, personal, and relevant. The real power of email marketing lies in automation.

332 (tour operators) subscribers to our email list



2.2.2 Advert - Tour Operators on WhatsApp - 295 Members from Tanzania, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda.



WhatsApp Adverts have been proven to be the most responsive Social Media channel to reach and interact with SME tour operators in East Africa.



Local Booking visited Arusha, Zanzibar, Kampala and Kigali. The main objective of the visits to the different East African countries was to introduce Local Booking's flexible net room rates, the regional community board and to introduce the online marketing workshops to tour operators.

3.3.3 Marketing meeting Arusha

The meetings in Arusha have been to identify the gap to bridge the rapid development of online marketing. Identifying the knowledge gap is a key link to investments, a competitive business model,

development ability, and to a degree of opening East African SME Tour Operators to the outside world. 60 meetings have taken place in Arusha.

After identifying, Local Booking launched a regional online marketing Workshop for Tour Operators in East Africa below the first of a series of meetings in Arusha as a means to improve competitiveness and capacity.

Introduction: Online Marketing Workshop and East African Regional Tourism Forum.

"Capacity Building for Tour Operators in East Africa"

Thursday 31st March 2022 for Arusha members
10:00 – 12:00 Ahadi Lodge (Sakina Morovian)

Dear Tour Operators / Local Booking members,

Over the past weeks, we at 'Learning Minds Africa' have worked hard on setting up the 'Capacity for SMEs Tour Operators in East Africa' Knowledge & Skill Project. A long awaited project that will help SME Tour Operators to increase knowledge and Skills about 'Competitive Advantages' and 'Online Marketing'. We introduce a Regional Forum for Knowledge Sharing ultimately to build capacity by bringing East African SME tourism providers together on one platform.

After our first meeting in your Arusha office, our group meetings or during EARTE we are now ready to officially start the project. We therefore would like to invite you to the project kick-off meeting where you will be given a full overview of the project.

Here is what we will cover in the kick-off. Project overview: What changes will the Online Marketing Workshop and Regional Tourism Forum bring about and how you can benefit. We'll give you the background so that you can see the big picture. Q & A: We want to make sure you have all the information you need to benefit from the project. Therefore, we have set aside some time to answer any questions you might have.

The kick-off is a very important meeting, because it will give you clarity on potential benefits of the project. Therefore, I kindly ask you to participate. Therefore, please join us! For more information: +2578283602 (WhatsApp) natuve4@gmail.com

I look forward to meeting you all! Let's make this project a success!
Thank you and best wishes.

Ester Oosterhuis

Ester Oosterhuis
CEO Local Booking Inc.

Local Booking - For Tour operators and Accommodation owners.

Followers 11,711

Talks about #travel, #tourism, #ecotourism, #hospitality, and #sustainability

Ester Oosterhuis
Local Booking - For Tour operators and Accommodation owners.

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Local Booking provides internet marketing training for East African tour operators.

East African Tour Operators are encouraged to learn more about 'Your positioning your firm within the industry and Digital Marketing' following a successful introduction session on March 31, 2022 at the Ahadi Lodge in Arusha.

Tour operators in the different East African countries offer very similar businesses and the lack of product differentiation has led to increased operating price competition. SME tour operators have struggles to build enough trust with customers in order to sell themselves directly to them.

The role of marketing has become knowledge intensive and data-driven. While traditional marketing skills such as a focus on traditional online trade agents based almost, in order to find customers.

Economic linkages are reported to occur in most of the EAC where tourism thrives. Although external networks are important, minimizing economic leakage is important for tourism to benefit the host country.

With the support of the support East African Market Driver and People Center Integration (SEAMPIEC) Institute for Integration and Development in East Africa (IDEA) Local Booking will Launch Online Marketing Workshops for Tour Operators in East Africa

HERMAN TESHA and 4 others

Like Comment Share Send

413 impressions View analytics

Guest List for the Arusha Tour Operator Meeting - Capacity for Tour Operators in East Africa

Thursday 31st March 2022. Starting 10:00 AM – 13:00 PM, Arusha

Ref	Name	Organisation and Function	Email address	Signature
1	ROBERT MUSAJI	KIMIGORI JE SAFARIS LTD	sakea@kimigori-tourism-tanzania.com	<i>[Signature]</i>
2	MASELE OSTAR	EMU SAFARI	lmsafaris@gmail.com	<i>[Signature]</i>
3	SILVIA MUNDI	TRAVEL FOR CHANGE TANZANIA	info@travel-forchange.tz	<i>[Signature]</i>
4	GEDSON KASTAI	Gedson adventures - Plains/Peaks Ltd	info@gedson-adventures.com	<i>[Signature]</i>
5	M FRAZIER MUSAJI	Pinnacle Adventures	pinnacleadventures@gmail.com	<i>[Signature]</i>
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				

Meeting: "Capacity Building East African SME Tour Operators"

Keeping Revenues Local

1st March 2022, AHADI LODGE Arusha

Time (GMT)	Activity	Facilitator	Operator	Notes
09:30 - 10:00	Arrival of guests and registration			
10:00 - 10:15 (15 Min)	First Part: Introduction Moderator / Participants	Moderator: Ester Oosterhuis		
10:15 - 11:30 (1 Hr 15 Min)	Introduction: Online Marketing - Competitive Advantage	Ester Oosterhuis		
11:30 - 12:30 (1 Hr)	Q & A Group Discussion 1: Differentiation What are your thoughts about differentiation? Could you see your advantage in a product differentiation? Yes/No? Why?		Participants are invited to share their thoughts and ideas	
12:30 - 12:45 (15 Min)	Introduction: East African Regional Tourism Forum			
12:45 - 12:46 (1 Sec)	Objective - Action driven			
12:46 - 12:55 (9 Min)	1. Workshop Competitive Advantage 2. Participation in the Regional Forum - joint ventures (horizontal integration) 3. Implementing Differentiation and online marketing (Vertical Integration)		Ester Oosterhuis	
12:55 - 12:56 (1 Sec)	Q & A Participate			
12:56 - 13:00 (4 Min)	Summary, Conclusion and Call to action		Ester Oosterhuis	



Global Theme: 'Keeping revenues local'

Regional Theme: 'Capacity for SME tour Operators in East Africa'
13th Sept 2021 - 13th May 2022

Introducing: Regional Forum Board and Online Marketing Workshop
30th - 31th March 2022

Concept Note

1. Intro

Learning Minds Africa and Local Booking, selected SME tour operators in Arusha to meet at the ADHADI LODGE on Thursday 31st March 2022 to bring awareness of the Workshop, 'Online marketing' and the launch of Local Bookings 'East Africa Regional Tourism Forum'.

Local Bookings East African Regional Tourism Forum is designed to bring relevant East African public and private tourism stakeholders onto one platform. Where they can discuss common challenges and opportunities associated with the tourism industry and exchange good practices for boosting the capacity of East African tourism entrepreneurs, especially SMEs.

In addition to peer learning and information/knowledge sharing, the overall goal of Learning Minds Africa and Local Booking is to horizontal (cross-border) and vertical integrate (shortening the supply chain) SME Tour Operators, increase revenue and bring inclusion by connecting operations along tourism value chains and ecosystems, streamlining and co-ordinating delivery.

2. Background

Learning Minds Africa and Local Booking researched the difficulties for tour operators to connect to potential customers. The results through open ended questionnaire shows that the other challenges facing tour operations in promotions of their products includes: - tough competition between tour operators and lack of marketing digital skills, lack of cross border destination information and communication, high cross-border accommodation rates, lack of collective or joint marketing among tour operators.

The findings also imply that many tour operators are not aware of online marketing skill and techniques that will enable them to penetrate into the market and able to receive a significant number of clients. Know how on online marketing skills and techniques on how to carry out marketing activities is among one of the most important factors for company success. Lack of these marketing skills and techniques is one of the biggest challenge that tour operators face.

The lack of digitalisation of SME tour companies in East Africa and online marketing skill and knowledge varies across geographic locations and size of the company. Opportunities and barriers of digital technologies create an uneven playing field, which is exacerbated by a growing gap between tech-driven and globally connected tour operators, and traditional micro and small tour operators characterised by low-tech and online marketing practices.

SMEs that do not invest in their digitalisation and online marketing will not survive, let alone thrive in the future. Policy makers have an important role to play to help tourism businesses of all sizes, including the more traditional and smallest firms, to engage with the digital revolution, and thrive in response to these paradigm-shifting technologies.

3. Objectives of the East African Tourism Forum and Workshop

1. The main objective of the meeting is to raise awareness Marketing Workshop and share the benefits of the Regional Tourism Forum.

2. Stimulate interest by clearly connecting tour operators with personal experience to demonstrate the relevance of the Workshop content and blending these experiences with new data and content.

3. Questions asking for opinions, observations, or recall to open a discussion or topic, that leads to open-ended questions

4. Giving tour operators the freedom to generate ideas through brainstorming, review of relevant data or opinions about competitive advantages and online marketing.

5. Expected Outcome

1. Awareness and interest



3.3.4.

Meeting Zanzibar.

Meeting in Zanzibar with Tour Operators and the Zanzibar Tour Operator Association ZATO.

A first discussion ZATO (Mr Khalifa) has taken place in January 2022, encouraging a follow-up meeting to establish a collaboration with Zanzibar Association of Tour Operators. ZATO brings together Tour operators in Zanzibar to unite and support tour operators in Zanzibar for the purpose of marketing Zanzibar as a sustainable tourism destination in the Indian Ocean.

Local Booking had planned several group meetings with Tour Operators. Unfortunately, Local Booking had to cancel the group meetings. The reason to cancel the group meetings in Zanzibar was due to a new outbreak on Zanzibar of Omnicron: *UN 13 January 2022 – After a six-week surge, Africa’s fourth pandemic wave was driven primarily by the Omicron variant. As of 11 January, there have been 10.2 million COVID-19 cases in Africa. Weekly cases plateaued in the seven days to 9 January from the week before. In countries experiencing a surge in cases, the fast-spreading Omicron variant has become the dominant type. While it took around four weeks for the Delta variant to surpass the previously dominant Beta, Omicron outpaced Delta within two weeks in the worst-hit African countries.*

The main aim of meeting Tour Operators was to bring awareness to Tour Operators about the relevance of the project’s product in terms of flexible Net-room rates, Knowledge share through the community Board and in the tour guiding sector. The major output was bringing the relevant partners for the project on board. Local Booking met Zanzibar based Tour Operators in person:

Name	Company	Email
Jackline Enock	Jafa Zanzibar Tours	info@jafazntours.co.tz
Namiya M. Haji	Mtutu Tours	info@mtututours.co.tz
Aisha	Aisha Zanzibar	info@aishazanzibar.com
Issam R. Mussa	Issam Tours	info@issamtours.com
Majid	Smartzone Tours	info@smartzonetours.co.tz
Shauri Kondo	Zanzibar Nature Trails	info@zanzibarnaturetrails.com
Jake	Zanzibar Aquaholics	info@aquaholics-zanzibar.com



Majid - Smartzone Tours



Jake - Aquaholics



Mussa - Issam Tours Trails



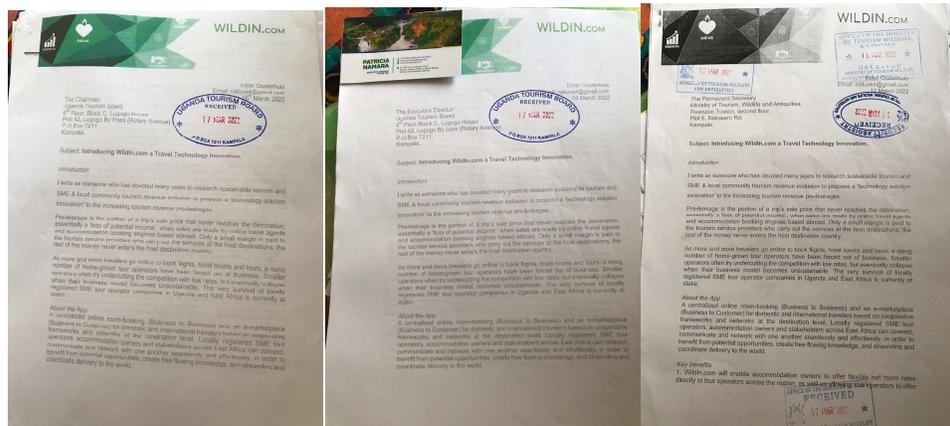
Shauri Kondo - Zanzibar Nature

3.3.5 Meeting Kampala

By the time I visited Uganda (March 2022), Uganda had just come out of quarantine and Tour Operators preferred to attend an online meeting with Local Booking.

The aim of the Uganda visit was to look for a public private partnership. The reason for this aim is that non-official sources of data are currently attracting interest on how different types of data can be used to fill specific data gaps, especially with regard to making tourism more sustainable by regional SME capacity building. Local Booking focused during this visit on: what are the perspectives of the commercial operations and national statistical offices that respectively produce and might use Local Bookings data; and which incentives, business models and protocols are needed to leverage non-official data sources within the official statistics community?

The major output was bringing the relevant partners for the project on board. These attended and included; Tour Operators, Hotel Owners and Uganda Tourism Associations and the Ministry of Tourism, wildlife and antiquities. These will help to push the project initiative forward.



Our first meeting was with the ministry of Information, Communication, Technology and National Guidance (ICT) in Kampala. We met with Assistant Commissioner - National Guidance Mr. Bakalikiwira Jonah Jackson who, after our presentation, suggested launching the platform under a

different name as the commissioner worried that the name LocalBooking.com might be too similar to Booking.com. This is the reason you find a different work name 'WildIn' on the proposals to the Ministry of Tourism Wildlife and Antiquities.

From the Association of Uganda Tour Operators (Uganda's leading Tourism Association) I met with the CEO Mr Albert Kasori and the Public Relations Officer Nancy Okwong. From the Ugandan Tourism Association, we met with Mr Richard Kawere. At the Tourism Board we met with the CEO Miss Lilly Ajarova.

Local Booking Uganda Tour Operators office visit.

name	Campany	Contact
Priscilla G Ojambo	Triple Tree Homestay Safaris	tripletree18@gmail.com
Hellen Katusabe	Strar Mount Safaris	hellen@starmountsafaris.com
Julia Mugenyi	Adena Tours & Travel	adenatours@outlook.com
Mohammad Farahat	Maujza Volgrass Tours & Travel	+256700676420

3.3.6 Meeting Kigali

The aim of the visit to Kigali was awareness of Local Booking and benefits and to find out the number of hotels that a Tour operator uses for its customers, the scope of the loss of room booking commissions (problem), and are Tour Operators willing to connect with Accommodation owners and vice versa. The reason for this aim is to determine the sustainability and scalability of Local Booking in East Africa.

How many people have been reached by the project directly and indirectly? How many of them are youths? How many are women? You can use or adjust the following format.

<i>Gender</i>	<i>Face to face</i>	<i>Interaction</i>
<i>F (directly)</i>	120	Office meeting, or in small group - Interview and workshops Determine challenges Female tourism entrepreneurship, determine knowledge gap, how shared marketing with Female entrepreneurs across East African borders can solve marketing cost.
<i>M (directly)</i>	192	Office meeting, or in small group - Interview and workshops Determine challenges tourism entrepreneurship, determine knowledge gap and how joint-ventures across East African borders can increase knowledge and opportunities
<i>Age group 18 - 22 (Freelance guides)</i>	23	1 on 1 meeting Determine the challenges that Freelancers face - Freelancers learn from freelancers across borders and how Local Booking can help Freelancers to create a portal where Freelancers can create their profile and offer their services across East Africa.
<i>Age group 22 - 65</i>	289	Creating Awareness & regular interviews to customize Local Bookings technology and workshops.
<i>Tanzania</i>	191	
<i>Kenya</i>	16	
<i>Rwanda</i>	44	
<i>Uganda</i>	34	
<i>Burundi</i>	2	
<i>South Sudan</i>	2	

Group 1: Total number of people (face to face) reached (gender, age groups, EAC countries)

+ Please briefly describe your interaction between your project and this group

<i>Gender</i>	<i>Event & Workshop</i>	<i>Interaction</i>
<i>F (directly)</i>	35	Participants in online or offline webinar, workshop or tourism trade fair meeting
<i>M (directly)</i>	112	Participants in online or offline webinar, workshop or tourism trade fair meeting
<i>Age group 22 - 65</i>	147	
<i>Tanzania</i>	53	
<i>Kenya</i>	16	
<i>Rwanda</i>	44	
<i>Uganda</i>	34	
<i>Burundi</i>		
<i>South Sudan</i>		

Group 2: People actively participating in events & workshops (gender, age groups, EAC countries)

+ Please briefly describe your interaction between your project and this group

<i>Gender</i>	<i>Face to face</i>	<i>Life Improvements</i>
<i>F (directly)</i>	120	Increased room booking commission revenue, online visibility Local Booking offers a secure and open place for capacity and knowledge transfer Female entrepreneurs are encourage and the open door culture of Local Booking encourages Female entrepreneurs to open up reveal challenges and solve challenges by working together with other Female entrepreneurs on Local Booking across East African borders.
<i>M (directly)</i>	192	
<i>Age group 18 - 22 (Freelance guides)</i>	23	Increased room booking commission revenue, online visibility Local Booking offers a secure and open place for capacity and knowledge transfer
<i>Age group 22 - 65</i>	289	Increased visibility to potential employers across East African borders.
<i>Tanzania</i>	191	
<i>Kenya</i>	16	
<i>Rwanda</i>	44	
<i>Uganda</i>	34	
<i>Burundi</i>	2	
<i>South Sudan</i>	2	

Group 3: People with substantial life improvements through your project (gender, age groups, EAC countries)

+ Please briefly describe your interaction between your project and this group

+ Please briefly quote a few of the most-affected persons on what your project means for them

The community: Local Booking has 11K followers on LinkedIn, 1.4K Facebook, 592 Instagram followers, 295 on WhatsApp. Email marketing, LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram has been the platforms we used for communicating the project activities.

1. Describe the Communication interventions -

What have you conducted? Describe the output, outcomes and results achieved with pictures, media clips, videos, links etc.

Our email marketing (newsletter) to promote Local Booking and Local Bookings Online Marketing Workshop for East African Tour Operators will gain momentum with our free downloadable PDF Lead Magnet (3 steps to a Competitive Advantage) that we will advertise on LinkedIn and Instagram & Facebook, the Workshops landing page and Workshop will be live on June 20.

2. Describe the M & E intervention implemented -

Please describe the output, outcomes as well as results attained (include pics etc.)

Data Source:

Tour operator's sign-up with their company email, all signed-up tour operators will be verified (locally registered companies only will be allowed access to Local Booking flexible net room rates), after being verified the tour operator automatically will go to the users list. - the sign-up data remains where it currently resides, and it remains under the control of the administrators, ones signed-up, the user behavior will be recorded at trackers. To measure retention rates, or interest rate.

Local Tour Operators 237

Accommodation owners 12

Data will be collected on the inter action between tour operators and the accommodation owners after a tour operator has send a provisional booking, a questionnaire on gained commissions will be send by email and are voluntarily filled out by the tour operators to measure; provisional bookings made and commissions gained.

Data on the Workshops will be measured by signed-up participants and google analytics. Google analytic will be used to measure the participant engagement in the Workshop less materials (opening rate, retention)

Data on the Region Tour operator community Forum will be measured by sharing information & google analytics.

We track the participants list by age, gender and by country, location (city, town or rural) and seize of the company.

3. Achievements during the project implementation period -

Outline and explain the achievements and showcase the success stories registered during the project time frame. See below the table for projects achievements registered during the project elaborated for specific activity.

2. To what extent do the outcomes of the project match the objectives of the original proposal? -

Please further indicate to what extent (in %) you fulfilled every single objective of the original proposal and briefly elaborate on that.

3. Project's lasting impact and sustainability -

OUTPUTS: Detail all Planned and actual activities carried out during the reporting period and the actual outputs. Explain any deviation between the planned and actual activities and propose follow-up actions.				
Description of activities planned for the reporting period	Output targets		Level of achievement (achieved/planned) in per cent	Explanation (s) / Performance / Remarks
	Planned	Achieved		
1.3 Meeting to develop the detailed technical execution plan	Invite technical partners and other relevant partners so as to determine the first milestone.	✓	100%	The App has been developed and is accessible online with over 237 Tour Operators profiled. And 12 Accommodations.
1.3.1 Online/Offline meetings with SME tour operators and accommodation owners. Associations, Boards and Announcement of support received from IIDEA IRTF	Design Brochure and business cart and print. Meeting with sales team. Secil Ngowa and Ester Oosterhuis to create a plan how to reach tour operator and accommodation owner stakeholders. Advert on Facebook and Instagram.	✓	100%	The marketing material was all as expected and delivered. The Sales meeting was held and successful with a clear plan on how to reach stakeholders and the Local Booking announcement on Face Book and Instagram had over 20000 impressions and over 1800 likes.
1.3.2 publications in local newspapers and magazines	During COVID-19 outbreak it was advised to keep adverts digital.	✓	100%	Blogs and Adverts were placed on social media.
2.2	Online Advertisements on Facebook and LinkedIn	✓	100%	We wrote an article about our upcoming Workshops to create awareness.
2.2.1 Email marketing	Setting up ActiveCampaing and creating our first Newsletter	✓	100%	The Newsletter was well received and this responded into several Local Booking signups from Tour operators and Accommodation.

2.2.2 Adverts on tour operator WhatsApp groups	Local Booking website, flexible net room rate.	✓	100%	WhatsApp group has proven to be the best media channel to reach Tour Operators and to get them to interact
2.2.3 Documentation of positive status - IIDEA support - radio interview.	A podcast interview was created to shown to Tour Operators during meetings and workshops	✓	100%	The podcast explained the problem, the solution and how capacity and help with marketing and increased revenue through room booking commissions
3.3 Advertisement Facebook and LinkedIn	Weekly Blogs were written and posted on Facebook LinkedIn	✓	100%	The Blogs helped to explain the problem and solution and help bring awareness to the tour operators of upcoming workshops.
3.3.1 Email marketing	Our second Newsletter was launch using ActiveCampaign highlighting the upcoming workshops	✓	100%	The Newsletter was send and well received and resulted in a workshop with 19 participants in Kigali
3.3.2 WhatsApp Marketing	For awareness of Local Bookings website and online workshop, we connected with 44 Tour Operators from Uganda on WhatsApp.	✓	100%	We used WhatsApp call to invite Tour operators for the Workshop and explain Ugandan Tour Operators about Local Booking resulting in 27 signups for the Local Booking website.
3.3.3 Marketing Meetings 100 stakeholders Arusha	For awareness of Local Bookings website and online workshop,	✓	100%	During Design workshops we connected to 70 Tour operators from Arusha and during EARTE we spoke to and connected with over 50 tour operators from Arusha resulting in over 100 Tour Operator signup of the Local Booking website.
3.3.5 Marketing Meetings 100 stakeholders Kampala	The meetings the stakeholders in Kampala were to look for a private public partnership.	✓	50%	It was time consuming to meet with tourism stakeholder officials and although our proposal was positively received further meetings are

				needed to create a partnership.
3.3.6 Marketing Meetings 100 stakeholders Kigali	Meeting and coordinating with the Tourism associations to recruit the Tour Operators for the website and workshops	✓	80%	We met with 40 Tour Operators in the office and invited them for our Workshop that resulted in 19 participants. A newsletter was send out to 80 Tour Operators for awareness and invitation to our Offline and Online Workshops
3.3.7. 5 Marketing Meetings 100 stakeholders Nairobi	The Seminar subject was how to create sustainable tourism products. Local Booking explained how East Africa Tour Operator capacity can contribute sustainable tourism	✓	80%	33 Tour Operators were approached by WhatsApp and Local Booking was live interviewed by Sustainable Tourism Agenda (STTA) Jody Keper Gona from Nairobi there were 60 tourism stakeholders from Nairobi participating in this online Seminar.
3.3.8. Video clips and photography for projects activity.	Several video were created for the purpose of education and marketing	✓	100%	The final video was edited to present a summary of Local Booking Tour Operator capacity building and the competitive advantages of connecting Tourism stakeholders across East African borders
3.3.8.1 Journalists and media invited to cover the project success - IIDEA support stories	Three journalist were approached and resulted in one podcast interview and one article posted on LinkedIn	✓	50%	The project team conducted a pre-launch of the project and App and decided that official launch would be done later, due to a change in founding partner.

4. Describe the Lesson Learnt during the Implementation of the Project

Meeting with Tour Operators after feedback from the previously given webinars, I learned that

although webinars are informative, the new learned knowledge is often hard or cumbersome to implement and therefore often not considered by tour operators. As the latest economic crisis showed, if tour operators want to survive in a competitive global market, it has to continuously improve its processes.

Tour operators are very eager to connect and create joint-ventures across East African borders for the purpose of shared marketing & knowledge transfers.

What are some of the Challenges encountered during the Project Implementation?

Please list the biggest challenge on top and sort the others in descending order.

1a. Obstacle: Covid-19 pandemic still impacts tourism in numbers

1b. Solution: Create resilience through domestic tourism. Domestic tourism can be triggered by setting up cross border networks and focusing on itinerary specialization and differentiation.

Religion, wellness, sports or outdoor events can trigger domestic tourism if the events are specialist, well executed and well marketed across East African borders like Kili Trails and Motocross events, Golf tournaments, Music, Art and Dance events, Agriculture events but also hiking group networks formed through regional outdoor fairs.

Cross border network of connecting Cultural Heritage sites - guides need story telling training and increase knowledge on the history and uniqueness of the sites.

5. What are the Recommendations for the Integration Process from the Project?

The following were the recommendations from the implementation and consideration for the project;

The EAC Partner States to develop an EAC Tourism visa including all 7 countries. This will make regional travel easy, smoothly, and friendly.

EAC Partner States to develop digital questionnaire forms and integrate it at border points for measuring purposes, transparency and enabling to solve problems and improve the overall border crossing experience for cross border itineraries and domestic regional travel.

6. Next Quarter Work Plan and Budget as per the agreement

Planned Activities	Objectives	Output	Budget Line (extract from the agreed budget)	Responsible
Jan. - Feb				
Road Trip; Karatu, Arusha, Moshi, Dar es Salaam, Zanzibar.	Awareness	Tour Operators signing up for our Webinars	TZS 8,979,474.-	Ester Oosterhuis and Secil Ngowa
Story Skill workshop	Clear message	Clarity about what Local Booking is offering		Learning Mind and Local Booking Team
Create Story board for Educational / Marketing video's	Online Marketing and Online learning	Clarity about what Local Booking is offering. Tour operator knowledge & skill building.	TZS 750,000.-	Ester Oosterhuis and Sam Obea
Design and launch landing page Local Booking	signing up tour operators and accommodation owners	Increase of users, increased value per added user. (Network effect)		Ester Oosterhuis
Online Marketing	Awareness	Increase users	TZS 400,000.-	Ester Oosterhuis Secil Ngowa Facebook & LinkedIn

Building email list	Newsletter	Increase participants	TZS 140,000.-	Ester Oosterhuis and Secil Ngowa
Launch Newsletters	recruiting tour operators for our online learning and awareness of flexible net room booking offerings at Local Booking	Trust, awareness, updates	(see above)	Ester Oosterhuis
Tour operators beginning to use Local Booking room booking website.	Capacity building; knowledge transfers across borders, local rates across borders. through the efficient and effective exchanges of knowledge and information between the different organizations that need to collaborate to implement delivery of cross border services.	Transforming the process of communication between tourism service providers in East Africa across borders. Opening up new and highly creative ways of delivering tourism services and enhancing the visitor experience. Presenting opportunities to take advantage of digital advancements to handle transactions, capture and process information and data on tourism supply and demand, while also improving and connecting operations along tourism value chains and ecosystems, streamlining and coordinating delivery. Bringing SME tourism providers together on one platform and offering a creative way to deliver East African as one destination to the world.		Ester Oosterhuis, and the tech team - Patrick Wensel, Sebastian and Nikhil
First Meeting Tanzania Tourism Board	Awareness of Local Booking	Collaboration		Ester Oosterhuis and Maria from TTB
Meeting Tour operators and Accommodation owners in Kigali	Awareness of Local Booking Webinars and flexible net room rates offered at Local Booking	Increase users across borders		Ester Oosterhuis + Emmanuel based in Kigali
March - April				
Launch Online Workshops	Knowledge and skill development	close the knowledge and skill gap. Online Marketing (for online visibility)		Ester Oosterhuis & Secil Ngowa
Launch Community Board - (for now) private Facebook group	Knowledge transfer across borders	enabling opportunities for cross border joint ventures		Ester Oosterhuis
Meeting Uganda Safari Guides Association	Youth inclusion	Provide market access and information for guides to tour operators (Guides Employers)		Ester Oosterhuis
Meeting tour operator & hotel Associations in Uganda	Awareness	Maximising impact		Ester Oosterhuis
Meeting tour operators in Uganda in their Offices	Awareness	Maximising impact		Ester Oosterhuis
Visit three rural cultural and natural heritage projects	Awareness	Maximising impact		Ester Oosterhuis

7. Conclusion and Way Forward

All planned project activities have been executed according to the project work plan. Our next plan is now ensuring that the project sustains itself. We are have already established an agreement with a co-founder investor to further support the initiative.

Conclusion

Thank you to GIZ for believing in and supporting the Local Booking - Learning Mind Africa project. The project has been a success and a great learning experience, and it is already having an impact on the lives of East African SME tour operators. Local Booking will continue to advance this initiative in the fight to present East Africa as a single preferred tourism destination.

Way forward

Local Booking's business concept will create a "new socio-economic dynamic," bringing a new mindset to how local entrepreneurs can develop and expand tourist initiatives across East African borders. Cross-border tour operator collaborations provide shared marketing opportunities. If a customer had a wonderful safari with a tour operator in Rwanda, that tour operator can promote the services of his joint venture partner in Tanzania, Kenya, or Uganda, and vice versa.

As intermediaries between tourists and tourism service providers, tour operators play an important role. Consumer choices, supplier practices, and destination development patterns can all be influenced by tour operators. Because of this unique role, tour operators can make an important contribution to achieving sustainable development goals, as well as protecting the environment and cultural resources. Local Booking/Learning Minds aims to further contribute to regional capacity for SME tourism service providers as well as the transition of nature-based tourism to a more sustainable economic pattern.

East African countries have a diverse range of natural resources and stunning landscapes, and Local Booking's itinerary platform will continue to enable SMEs to offer East Africa as a single destination. To accomplish this, tourism should be viewed holistically, bringing together the best of the region, its people, nature, and products. Local Booking acts as a representative for many SMEs across East Africa, bringing them together on one platform and offering a unique way to present East Africa to the rest of the world.

8. Pictures

Please included some pictures of different activities from your project with a brief description.

Meeting Accommodation owners:

Accommodation owner signing up with Local Booking and offering flexible net room rates to locally registered tour operators in East Africa. Accommodation owners enable Tour Operators to offer rates to their customers for competitive rates to their customers inclusive their mark-up. Keeping revenues local. Accommodations that have signed up are awarded a certificate (*see above*).



One of the reasons for the relatively low take-up of women tourism entrepreneurs in East Africa can be attributed to the lack of support, knowledge and capacity. Finding Female Guides brought us outside Arusha, Kondo, Iringa and Manyara where Female Guides are hired to guide Cultural Heritage sites.



From the meetings with the Female guides we learned that these interesting but off the beaten track Cultural Heritage site are poorly marketed by tour operators to their customers. To encourage tour operators to visit Cultural Heritage site off

the beaten track for the purpose of sustainability and job creation. Local Booking will introduce a star rating system for rural inclusion. Tour Operators offering and visiting off the beaten track Cultural Heritage site will receive rural inclusion stars that will be visible on the Local booking profile visible to potential customers.

