



## Center on Ecotourism and Sustainable Development

Stanford University and Washington, D C

Transforming the Way the World Travels

### Market Research Department:

#### Tracking Consumer & Industry Trends in Sustainable Tourism

The Center on Ecotourism and Sustainable Development (CESD) is launching a Market Research Department that will collect, study, interpret, and disseminate information about consumer and industry trends in sustainable tourism and ecotourism. This unit will regularly produce a range of commissioned surveys and reports for industry, government, NGO, and trade association clients, as well as information for the media so that the private and public sectors can make more informed decisions.

#### The Need for Market Research on Sustainable Tourism

In studying consumer demand and market trends in sustainable tourism over the past four years, CESD researchers found that there was little publicly available information. In 2005, CESD published a report *Consumer Demand and Operator Support for Socially and Environmentally Responsible Tourism* based on a range of existing surveys and studies. This report and CESD's two Ecotourism Fact Sheets (one global, one on the U.S.) have been widely used. Based on these publications, several companies have proposed that CESD, with its credibility as an NGO with a strong academic base, set up a department that would systematically collect data on consumer and industry trends around responsible travel. CESD has taken a close look at current sources of tourism-related data, and concluded that there is indeed a gap in the 'landscape' of data sources on environmentally and socially responsible tourism and related leisure activities. A large number of consulting firms, academic institutions, trade and travel associations, government offices, and development agencies regularly produce standard market intelligence on the broader tourism industry, but few specifically address eco- and sustainable tourism, and no one appears to be doing so in a credible and a systematic way.

CESD's Market Research Department is being housed at the Stanford University office. Its staff will include at least one economist, a business consultant, a researcher with media and public relations experience, and administrative support staff. The Department will also utilize CESD affiliated faculty and graduate students from pertinent Stanford departments. The Department's research will be conducted in full compliance with Stanford University's academic standards and regulations. Where appropriate, analysis will be peer-reviewed, and the project manager will collect and monitor qualitative comments from reviewers. The success of this project will be measured in three ways: quality, quantity, and breadth of dissemination.

We plan to make a portion of the Department's research available to the public and the press in order to raise awareness about broad trends and attitudes toward sustainable tourism. CESD has identified a range of audiences and clients to whom more specific market and consumer data is very valuable, including governments, development agencies, a range of tourism-related businesses, universities, conservation NGOs, trade and travel associations, and foundations. By making certain reports available for a fee in the growing sustainable tourism market, and by executing specifically-commissioned studies, after a brief start-up period the Market Research Department will generate sufficient revenue to sustain its operations.

#### About CESD

The Center on Ecotourism and Sustainable Development (CESD) was founded in 2003 as a non-profit, multi-disciplinary research and policy institute devoted to harnessing the world's largest economic sector--travel--as a tool for economic development and natural resource conservation. The only center of its kind in the United States, CESD operates out of offices at Stanford University and in Washington DC with a mission to transform the way the world travels. CESD staff work with agencies, businesses, and local communities around the world to provide unbiased monitoring and evaluation of tourism practices and recommendations to improve them. Examples of CESD's work includes: "green" certification; Travelers' Philanthropy; indigenous rights in tourism areas; impacts of cruise tourism, as well as books and other publications, courses, and conferences.

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