



Call for Student Research, 2012 - 2016

Fair Trade Tourism (FTT) is a non profit initiative that promotes equitable and sustainable tourism in South Africa, primarily through facilitating a voluntary certification programme that awards a special Trademark (label) to businesses that comply with specific criteria, including fair wages and working conditions, fair operations, fair purchasing, fair distribution of benefits, ethical business practice, and respect for human rights culture and environment. In turn, the FTT Trademark – the first of its kind in the world – conveys certain benefits to certified establishments, including improved access to niche markets.

FTT has reviewed its strategy for 2012 - 2016 and has identified five strategic goals:

1. Create a sustainable Fair Trade Tourism organisation.
2. Increase and diversify the supply of FTT-certified products, so as to improve geographic reach and attract new customers, in a manner that is consistent with the principles of transformation and inclusive socio-economic development.
3. Apply FTT standard and principles to tourism value chains in order to develop the niche market and increase benefits to destination stakeholders.
4. Increase demand in international and domestic tourism source markets.
5. Establish the basis for a global FTT system by extending and adapting services to customers in other countries and securing buy-in of main stakeholders.

FTT has identified a number of student research projects that will support the achievement of these strategic goals. Some of the projects identified by FTT will be completed using desktop research methods while others entail field research. Accordingly the list of topics developed by FTT will appeal to international as well as South African students, including international students focusing on desktop research in their home countries. FTT believes that collaborating with student researchers and their institutions is an excellent way of building shared capacity in a way that will ultimately contribute to the growth of Fair Trade in Tourism in South Africa and beyond.

For 2012 - 2016, the following research topics have been identified. These topics are intended as broad guidelines that will enable interested students to formulate more specific research questions, depending on their particular interests and requirements:

1. Market Research

- **Comparative study:** in a particular market, survey 'responsible' tour operators and compare their attitudes / practices to a comparable number of 'mainstream' operators. Determine the extent to which their clientele, market offers, structures, practices, etc. differ, if at all.
- Survey to determine **awareness levels** in a particular market, e.g. UK outbound travel industry: Do tour operators know about 'Fair Trade' / 'Fair Trade in Tourism'? Do they use alternate terms / language to describe these concepts?
- Survey of **consumers' attitudes/knowledge** about tourism certification (labels, logos, trademarks) within a particular market (e.g. Switzerland, Germany, Canada etc.). Does certification influence their buying behaviour and, if so, why? This type of study could be undertaken in collaboration with one or more tour operators.
- Conduct a **survey of tourists** who have visited one or more FTT-certified establishments over the past X months. Were they aware of the connection to FTT before they booked? Did they find branding on site? Did knowing they were patronising a fair business enhance their travel experience? Would they look for FTT-certified products in future? How do responses vary between international and domestic guests? Can responses be segmented using other categories?
- To what extent are **South African consumers** interested in purchasing fairly operated and fairly traded holidays? Are certain segments more likely to buy into this concept than others? Do they assume it to be more expensive?

2. South African Industry Research

- Survey of **South African travel trade** (e.g. SATSA members) to determine awareness, knowledge and opinions about Fair Trade in Tourism in general, and about FTT more specifically.

3. Southern Africa Industry Research

- **Country policy analysis:** For any SADC country, what policies / policy instruments are in place to encourage sustainability within the tourist industry? What role/s do the various government departments/ministries play in driving this agenda? What steps could government take to improve its effectiveness? Where governments do not seem to play an active role in this arena, what other bodies are assuming this role and what is the nature of their activities?
- **Country product inventory:** For any SADC country, what if any initiatives are in place to differentiate sustainable tourism products/practices? Which if any of these are locally-developed? Which are most successful, and why? How many products in the country could be deemed sustainable, and what would be the basis of calculation?

INTERESTED IN ANY OF THE ABOVE PROJECTS?

Please speak to your supervisor(s) and then contact FTT. Ideally we'd like to hear from you in conjunction with your supervisor(s), clearly introducing your proposed research topic including objectives, methodology, time frames and type of cooperation requested from FTT. Before embarking on your project, please refer to FTT's **Policy on Student Research**.

Although FTT does not fund student research, we can assist researchers to access information, experts and other people. We may also be able to facilitate publication and/or presentation of research findings, e.g. on the FTT website.