

Center for Community-Based Resource Management (CBRM)

Natural Resources Institute, University of Manitoba

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Case Study Name:	Guides as Contributors to Sustainable Tourism? A Case Study from the Amazon		
Author:	Ester M. Pereira & Reidar J. Mykletun		
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Region:	South America		
Country:	Brazil		
Ecosystem Type:	Tropical Rainforest		
Social Characteristics:	Gateway Community		
Scale of Study:	District		
Resource Type:	Tourism		
Type of Initiative:	Research Driven-Project		
Community- Based Work:	Development Planning		
Keywords:	Guide roles, Guide contribution to sustainable tourism, Ecotourism, Manaus, Amazonas		
Summary:	The overall aim of this case study was to further the understanding of tour guides' contribution to sustainable tourism. First, it expands on Cohen's (1985) and Weiler and Davis' (1993) schematic representation of guides' roles by adding an "economy sphere" to encompass sustainable principles.		

Second, it examines the congruence between guides' roles and the study's established sustainable tourism criteria by operationalizing the framework with empirical data. Third, it analyzes the guides' population and their organization to identify possible explanations for the ways they conduct their roles. Data for this study were collected in the Municipality of Manaus in the Brazilian Amazon. Questionnaires, interviews and participant observation were applied to a sample of 36 guides, and archival data were studied to determine public sector involvement. The study concludes that guides' contribution to sustainable tourism development is low. They are mainly "pathfinders", bringing visitors to sites and local communities, without interpretation that includes the relevance of the Amazon rainforest at local and global levels, and thereby do not address sustainability issues. The shortcomings are attributed to lack of competence in interpretative skills and lack of knowledge about sustainability. Moreover, a suboptimal work organization counteracts professional skills development. Given the potential that guides have to contribute to any destination's sustainability, the paper argues that the research has relevance to other world destinations.