

# GUESTHOUSE DEVELOPMENT GUIDE



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## FOREWORD

The Papua New Guinea Tourism Promotion Authority (PNGTPA) in its endeavour to assist Papua New Guineans' develop tourism products and services to an acceptable standard have once again come up with this *"Guest House Development Guide"*. This basic manual or guide book will assist and guide industry members on Guesthouse development rather than getting oral advice on an adhoc basis without covering the entire aspects from the initial stages of guesthouse planning to the final operational aspect of it. This guidebook is delivered in sections following a step by step process beginning with looking after your guests, managing your guesthouse and running a business.

We prefer you not to read the whole guidebook in one go but, rather read through the topics one at a time. Remember that this booklet is only a general guide and it does not provide full coverage of guesthouse development. You may find that not all points mentioned will be applicable to your establishment so you need to go through and mark the information which is most relevant to you.

The Papua New Guinea Tourism Promotion Authority (PNGTPA) as a lead government agency responsible for developing and promoting tourism in the country is fully committed and will give its unwavering support to Papua New Guineans venturing into tourism industry.

We earnestly hope that this Guide book will surely provide you the much needed tips and serve as guide to develop your Guest House to a standard acceptable by your guest and most important fetch the much needed income for your business.

We wish every success in your operation.

Peter Vincent  
Chief Executive Officer  
PNG Tourism Promotion Authority

November 2007

## INTRODUCTION

The manual is designed in the form of simple and easy-to use check lists of ideas and handy advice. Many of these points mentioned may seem obvious at first but is often the little things like clean washbasin or a free coconut drink that make the difference between guests who stay overnight and those who stay for two.

### ***What is a guesthouse?***



**A house built separately for guests**

A house in the village that is separate from other houses, purposely built for guests that would provide rooms for paying guests to sleep.

There are three main parts to the Manual:

**Part One** is designed to assist you with looking after your guests, understanding their needs and welcoming them.

**Part Two** focuses on how to manage your Guesthouse, prepare food, care for your environment and provide security for your guests.

**Part Three** provides you with general advice about running your business, financial planning, marketing and staff training.

Here are a few tips to help you get the most out of the Manual:

- Try to read one section or topic each week and work on that before moving on to the next topic
- Take time to discuss each new topic with your family, community or business partners and see how it can be applied to your business

## PART ONE: LOOKING AFTER YOUR GUESTS

By the end of part one you should have a greater understanding of your guesthouse visitors, the reasons why they come, what their needs are and how to welcome them.

The success of your guesthouse is like a store. It depends on the service you provide. You will always go back to the store where you received friendly service, but you are not likely to recommend one where you were treated badly.

In the same way, if you really look after your guests they are more likely to stay longer and tell their friends about your place. The first step towards looking after your guests is to try and learn more about them and their needs.



**Make sure your guests are well taken care of in your guesthouse**

### ***Your Guests***

Here are some points to think about when you are trying to identify the different types of guests that stay in your guesthouse:

#### Everyone is different

Just like Papua New Guineans are different to Fijian and Solomon Islanders so are Australians different to Japanese and Germans different to British. But nationality is only one way you can categorise your guests.

#### How long are they staying?

You can group your guests by how long they are staying at your guesthouse eg. Day visitors, overnight visitors, long-stay visitors or weekend visitors. Long-stay visitors are your most valuable customers so make sure they receive good service.

#### Have they stayed at a Guesthouse before?

Someone who has not stayed at a guesthouse before may be slightly nervous and is going to need special care and help from you in order to settle in.

#### Are they repeat visitors?

Regular customers are very good source of income. Be sure to give a special welcome to returning guests and make them feel at home. You might even like to give them a little extra for their money or a special discount rate.

#### What form of transport are your guests using?

This may provide you with a hint about what kind of guests you are getting. PNG locals arriving on a local bus/ship will probably stay for the day. Overseas guests arriving on the local bus or in a hire car will tend to stay for several nights. Guests arriving on a tour operator bus will probably stay for a few hours so make sure you tell them about your facilities so they can return another time and stay for a night or two.



### ***Why they stay in a Guesthouse***

When someone comes to stay in a Guesthouse they are likely to be having a break from their normal life and want different types of experiences. Here are some examples:

OVERNIGHT GUESTS may come to stay in your Guesthouse:	OVERSEAS GUESTS may come to stay in your Guesthouse:	DAY GUESTS may come to stay in your Guesthouse:
To have a change from their normal working life	To meet PNG people and learn about their traditional life	To have a change from their normal working life
To rest, relax and enjoy the sun, the beach and swim in the sea/river	To have a cultural and educational experience	To give the family a special outing and have fun together
To get close to nature	To participate in an activity	To have a day away from the

	like surfing or bird watching	city
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## ***How to get guest information?***

Every time someone comes to stay in your guesthouse try to find out about their needs, likes, dislikes so that you can ensure they have an enjoyable time. At the same time you can build up your knowledge of your guests. Here are some ideas for how you can do this:

### Talk to your guests

You can learn a lot simply in conversation as most guests will either speak English or Tok Pisin. Respect your guest's privacy when they are in their rooms though, try to choose the right time to talk. This could be during or after meals or when guests are sitting in a common area.



**Informally talk to guests in the common area**



Notice the  
traditional  
blinds

### Invite suggestions

Why not give your guests the chance to help you improve your Guesthouse by providing a 'Suggestion Box'. A 'Suggestion Box' could be a small wooden box with a narrow hole in the top where guests can put ideas they have for improvements. It can be locked with a small padlock. It is more confidential and can provide more honest opinions than your Visitors Book or conversations with guests. Leave some paper and a pen beside the box so guests can write down their suggestions and post them into the box for you to read later.



### Keep a detailed visitors book

By making a detailed Visitors Book you can find out a lot about your guests. Make your book as attractive as possible, keep it clean and design it with care. Ask one member of each group of guests to fill in the following categories; name, nationality, occupation, number of people in the group, number of nights stayed, activities during stay and comments.

Name
Date
Nationality & Occupation
No in group & no of nights stayed
Activities during stay
Comments

At the end of each month you can try and analyse the information.

### Map of the world

It is a good idea to have a map of the world on display in your common area. Your guests can then point out their country by sticking coloured pins on the map. This can also help show you where your visitors come from.

### Encourage community feedback

Talk to members of your village/community about their contact with visitors and discuss ways to resolve any problems that arise.

## **Guests Needs**

Although all guests are different, some facilities and services are the same to all guests' satisfaction. These can be grouped into six different categories. Each of these are numbered and explained in detail further in the manual.



When a new guest arrives try to convince them that your guesthouse is a nice place to stay

#### 1. Welcome

Guests need to feel welcome and well looked after in your guesthouse. They need to know all about your facilities and services, village laws, curfews, restrictions and other cultural issues such as dress codes.



## 2. Facilities

Guests need a comfortable place to sleep, eat and relax and a clean and accessible place to wash. They may also like to have facilities to wash and dry their clothes, make a BBQ and park their car in the shade.

## 3. Food

Good traditional food is an important part of the Guesthouse experience. But remember that food hygiene is essential and should be given the highest priority. Guests also need a safe supply of cool drinking water.

## 4. Attractions and activities

Try to inform your guests about nearby attractions and you might like to provide activities that will give them a chance to experience something new and different from their home. But make sure to advertise **only** what you can actually provide otherwise they may be disappointed when you do not provide.

## 5. Environment

Guests usually prefer a clean and attractive natural environment so you need to think about properly taking care of your rubbish as well as making an attractive garden with trees, flowers and shady areas.



**Plant trees & flowers to create a natural environment**

## 6. Security

Guests need to feel that they are safe and their belongings are secure in your Guesthouse. You also need to help protect your guests from food poisoning, fire, dangerous sea current if you are by the sea, tropical cyclones and other annoyances like stray dogs and mosquitoes.

## ***Meeting and Greeting***

Guests like to feel welcome and well looked after in your Guesthouse. In order to provide this welcoming service effectively you need to develop your communication skills. Here are some tips about meeting and greeting new guests:

#### Be clean and tidy

If you are clean and efficient you give them the impression of a well run business and tourists are more likely to decide to stay. If you are working in the garden or kitchen, keep a clean shirt somewhere handy to put on when a new guest arrives and make sure your hair is tidy. First impressions are important and make a lot of difference.

#### Welcome person

It is a good idea to have only one person who welcomes the newly arriving guests as a large family group may be confusing and threatening especially for an overseas visitor. You could perhaps take turns to be on 'welcome duty' each day.

#### Welcoming

The most important thing to remember is to be genuine in appearance and attitude. Greeting tourists in your own language will add to their experience, if there is someone in the family who speaks some English and can explain everything then this is a bonus and can help in making a visitor feel at home. Remember to show guests the price list so that they know what to expect.

## **Settling In**



**Show guests what is available at your guesthouse**

Once the guest have decided to stay at your guesthouse there are a number of things you can do to help them settle in and feel at home. Here are some ideas:

#### Introduce guests to your staff and family

Guests are not only looking for a place to stay but also to meet new people and make new friends. Introduce your guests to the members of your staff or family/community who work at your Guesthouse. Tell them what job each person does. You may like to have a photo of each member of your staff and write their name up on a board so guests can see and remember them.

#### Choosing a room

Most overseas visitors like to feel that they have a choice when they purchase a product or service. You should show them the rooms (if you have more than one) that are available and ask them which one they would prefer. You may also need to ask them whether they want a single or double mattress.

#### Welcome drink

Your guests may be tired and hot after a long journey. Invite them to sit in a comfortable place while you prepare their room. Bring them a welcome drink of fresh coconut 'kulau' (or boiled cold water if they prefer) and some fruits while they wait. These should be free of charge.

#### Prepare the room

If the room they have chosen is not already prepared this should be done as quickly as possible. When you prepare their room be sure to:

- Fix the light bulb/lamp
- The mosquitos nets should also be fixed up and ready
- Sweep the floor clean
- Put out the bed things
- And do not forget to lay out any mats

#### Show guests to their rooms

When the room is ready:

- Offer to help your guests with their bags
- Show them where the light switch/lamp is and how to arrange any blinds and mosquito nets
- Show them any other special features in your guesthouse and what to do if it rains or is windy during the night
- Tell them where you are sleeping in case they need help in the night

#### Tour of facilities

Your new guests may want to see your facilities before they decide to stay with you. First take them around to see the rooms and, if you do not have a room prepared, explain to your guests how you will make it comfortable for them. Then show them the dining and common areas. Finally show them the shower and washroom and any other facilities you have.

If guests have not already had a tour, you should offer to take them around and show them all your facilities.



**Show guests your facilities**

Show them:

- How the shower works,
- Where they can wash their hands,
- Where they can get cool drinking water,
- Explain how the village is arranged and where the nearest store is
- Remember to tell them about your suggestions box and visitors book

### Meals

It is important to tell your guest about the food you offer and when you can serve it. You should try, if possible to give your guests a choice about both the time they want to eat and what they want to eat.



Make sure to ask your guests if they have any special needs like vegetarian diabetic or baby foods

### Information about activities

If you offer special activities like fishing trips or services like laundry, you should tell your guests about this. It is a good idea to have all these things written down so your guest can refer to an 'activities book' or "activities board" at any time.

### Village/Community rules



**Guests must know community rules, like this notice in Kamba Village, Madang**

It is important to let your guests know the village rules especially if they are from overseas. Tell them:

- When/if there is a curfew
- Let them know about how to dress on the beach and in the village.

If they are staying on a Sunday you can invite them to church with you, tell them:

- What time the service starts,
- How long it lasts,
- How they should dress and
- Advise your guest about making a contribution for the church collection.

## PART TWO: MANAGING YOUR GUESTHOUSE

By the end of Part Two you should have a greater understanding of how to design your facilities, prepare food, look after your surroundings and provide for your guests safety and site security.

### ***Site Planning***



**Plan & decide ahead before building your guesthouse**

Before you build anything, you have to decide where everything is going to go.

Whether you are using a single building for your guesthouse or developing a small complex of detached buildings, start laying out your Guesthouse by choosing where the main building will be where tourists will arrive, eat, and socialize.

Even if this is not the first building you actually construct, you must decide from the beginning where it will be located.

- It should not be on a main road, but it should be the first building you see along the path from the road.
- It should have a view, something to look at: a beach, a river, a mountain etc...
- In coastal areas, it should catch the breezes across the site.
- It should not be in the village.

### Design

The traditional nature of some guesthouses can be one of the main attractions for overseas guests, so you should try to keep the design of your guesthouses as local as possible. This means that you build using the highest quality local bush material.



Cool and breezy on the Coast



**A coastal guesthouse**

- Make each Cabin a little room with walls, in which case provide a tiny veranda, or a place to sit under the house.
- Use local material for thatching the roof.
- Use big windows, with storm blinds that can cover them when the wind blows the rain.
- Put shade plants towards the sunset, so the low sun does not make the house hot.

Warm and cosy in the Highlands



**A Highlands guesthouse**



- Provide just one window, with a view.
- Make sure there are no gaps in the walls.
- Build a fireplace or install a small stove.

Try NOT to use:

- Plastic or tarpaulin blinds
- Corrugated iron roofing
- Plastic strings for your blinds

Although these modern materials may last longer and are less work to maintain, they are also less attractive and will not provide your guests with a proper PNG experience. If you already have some of these 'foreign' additions, try and replace them or in case of the roofing iron cover it with the bush thatching. While maintaining the basic traditional design, it is possible to make some simple additions or adaptations which will make the overseas guest more comfortable. Here are some ideas:

- Overseas guests often like to read when they are in bed. The light should be positioned at the end of the room where the visitors head will be so that the light is not blocked by material on top of the mosquito net.
- If the guesthouse is raised off the ground, wide wooden steps can be built on the side for guests to sit and look at the view or leave their shoes.
- A wooden shelf could be built in the roof of the guesthouse for bags and guest belongings.
- Wooden pegs can be fixed to some of the support posts in the rooms for guests to hang their towels or wet clothes on.
- A door mat might be provided so guests can wipe the ground from their feet when entering their rooms.
- A small traditional broom can be provided for guests to sweep the ground from their rooms.

Managing your guesthouse is about looking after your facilities and making sure they are in good condition and that your services are of a high standard. Doing this will help to ensure a high level of guest satisfaction.

This section examines your main facilities and outlines many ideas about how you can improve and maintain them at a low costs including:

- Location
- Design
- Maintenance and
- Housekeeping



High quality  
does not  
always mean  
high costs and  
high prices

## ***Guesthouses***

Your Guesthouse is a very important facility as this is where guests will spend most their time.

### Location



**Choose your guesthouse location wisely**

It is important to think carefully about the location of your guesthouse before you start to build. People have a reason for coming to your establishment. What is it? Great place, a good beach, a nice lake, a wonderful coral reef, a deep cave, a spectacular view, a nice waterfall, etc, cultural activities – local to your area, a stop on the way to somewhere else, a break in the journey etc...

You need to consider a number of factors:

- The size and shape of your land area will control how many rooms you can build and how they can be spaced out.
- To ensure your guests have privacy you should have a minimum of 10m between your guesthouse and the nearest building.
- Plant trees and other vegetation between your guesthouse and other buildings to increase guest privacy.

- Ensure rooms are not too far away from the washrooms and dining area.

#### Maintenance and housekeeping



**Make sure you regularly maintain your guesthouse**

You will need to regularly check your guesthouse and see if the roof is still waterproof and the blinds are not damaged. Remember to ask you guests if the room was comfortable and conduct a proper check of the room when guests leave. Here are some things to remember for your housekeeping:

- Clean sheets should be provided for all new guests. Sheets should be changed and washed with washing powder every three days for long stay guests. You should make sure there are no holes in the sheets and regularly replace old or stained ones
- Every three days you might like to ask your guests if they would like to move their belongings so you can clean the room. Mattresses and pillows should be beaten well and placed in the sun after each guest
- Mosquito nets should be checked for holes and aired in the sun after a guest leaves
- Mats need to be shaken and swept free of ground

#### Toilets and showers

Your washrooms are perhaps the most difficult and expensive part of your facilities to design and maintain, but they are also important. A great welcome and a big smile amount to very little if the toilets are dirty and there is no water in the shower.

#### Location

Remember that both toilets and showers present an environmental threat for your business. If you are planning to build new showers or toilets it is important that you carefully consider the best location for it. If you are close to the beach try to avoid building toilets directly on the beach. You need to locate your washrooms on a firm ground inland on the side of the guesthouse.

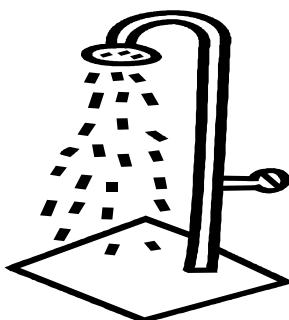


### Design

The type of toilets and showers you decide to build will depend on your budget and environmental considerations such as drainage and the availability of water. Your main choice is between a flushing toilet with septic tanks, a pit latrine or a composting toilet. Currently the flushing toilet with septic tank is the most popular design but be aware that it uses large amounts of fresh water. Pit latrines pose serious threat to your environment and are not recommended at attraction sites. Composting toilets are a new type of toilet which does not use water and protects the environment.

Whatever kind of toilets and showers you need will depend on the maximum number of rooms you expect to have in your guesthouse. As a rough guide you should try to provide one toilet and shower for every four rooms. There are many ways of making your toilet facilities more comfortable at a quite low cost. Here are some ideas for the design of the toilet and shower:

- Each toilet should have a small bin, a toilet paper holder, a small shelf for flowers and wooden pegs behind door for clothes and towels
- Make sure all the toilets and showers have lockable doors and indicate which are the showers, toilets or changing rooms with a neat sign on the door
- The ideal shower should be larger enough to have a wet area for showering and a dry area for drying and dressing. In the wet area you need a small shelf to hold soap and shampoo, this can be wooden but needs to have a small hole in the centre to allow the water to drain out
- The shower head should not be less than 1.9m above the floor to allow for tall guests. The dry area needs a mat on the floor, a mirror on the wall and two or three pegs to hang clothes on. It should be separated from the wet area with a shower curtain/door of some sort



- Use ceramic tiles on the floor if you can afford them because they make the area more comfortable, attractive and easier to clean

- Outside the shower you can place a bucket of water so guests can wash any sand of their feet before they go in
- You need a place behind the washrooms where guests can wash their hands. This can be a very simple tap and bucket or a proper sink but there needs to be somewhere for the water to drain away and a place to hold the soap. It is also a good idea to have a mirror above the wash stand
- If you have a lot of day visitors you might want to consider having a simple open shower if you are by the beach or a tap so guests can wash off the sand or sea water after bathing, and you can reserve the best showers for overnight guests. The beach shower/tap can just be a simple pipe arrangement but if it is right on the beach you should ask guest not to use soap or shampoos as this will affect your beach environment.

#### Maintenance and housekeeping

Whether you have a pit latrine, a septic tank or composting toilets you need to carefully monitor its effect on the surrounding environment. Cleanliness is absolutely vital in the toilet and shower area. It is important to pay attention to the following:

- You should regularly clean the walls and keep them freshly painted in light colours
  - The number of times you have to clean your toilets and showers every day will depend on the number of guests you have
  - If you have a lot of guests you will need to sweep numerous times during that day and check that everything is still clean
  - Try to add fresh flowers everyday and use spray/mosquito coils to ensure ants and mosquitoes stay away
  - Check in the afternoon that if there is a light, it is working properly and there is enough toilet paper
- 
- You might find it best to have a roster showing which of your family or staff should be looking after the toilets on which days.



Be careful as poor maintenance of toilet facilities will quickly destroy your business

#### **Dining Facilities**

All guesthouses need a clean and comfortable place where they can serve food for their guests.



**Your guesthouse eating area might have a view**

### Location

Guests may like to enjoy a view of the sea while they have their meals so choose a nice location on some high ground or build a dining room up a little to give a good view. The location of the kitchen will depend on the layout of your land but it should not be too far from the dining facilities.

### Design

The design of your dining facilities will depend on your average number of guests.

LOTS OF GUESTS	SMALL NUMBER OF GUESTS
(Per night) it will be worth building a proper enclosed dining area with a number of tables and individual chairs. Or you could have a large 'C-shaped' table open in the middle and at one side to help with food serving.	A long rectangular table under a thatched roof may be more practical and can provide a good opportunity for social contact.

Sometimes you might like to give guests a different experience by holding a BBQ on the beach/river and making a fire where they can sit around in the evening, sing songs and play the guitar. It may be a good idea to have a poster of different fish/vegetables on the wall in the dining area so you can point out the type of local fish/vegetable your guests are eating.

#### Maintenance and housekeeping

You need to ensure that the dining area is always cleaned after each meal so that it remains free from insects and germs. During the meal ensure that all cats and dogs are well away from the area and light a mosquito coil under the tables. It is good to put fresh flowers on your tables for each meal and even nicer if you use a clean tablecloth on the table every time.



**Dining table should be cleaned after meals**



## ***Common Facilities***



**There needs to be a common area for guests**

In addition to the rooms, washrooms and dining area, it is a good idea to have some common areas for your guests. These include areas for children to play, areas for sports, and places where guests can relax on comfortable chairs in the shade and read books or talk to other guests.

### Location

Common areas are normally located near the centre of your guesthouse, but this will depend on the layout of your other facilities.

### Design

On the beach you could have wooden sun chairs with some shade for use during the day and in the central area you could have a small area where books, magazines, games and a guitar and other

things can be found. Make sure there are cushions and mats available and that the lights are good enough for reading in the evening. If your Guesthouse gets popular with day visitors you should also try to make some swings and a volleyball court for the guests.

#### Maintenance and Housekeeping

As with all the other facilities your common facilities need to be kept clean and tidy at all times:

- If you have a television remember to inform your guests about what time they can watch news
- Ask them if they need a mosquito coil
- Only play music if it is requested and make sure the volume is low after 9pm
- Try to pick a newspaper whenever you are in town as guests will often appreciate this

### ***Booking Facilities***

If at all possible you should try to have a telephone and even a fax machine so that guests can make bookings in advance. This makes it easier for you to plan your activities, shopping and room preparation. Here are some tips about taking a booking on the telephone:

- Your telephone manner is very important to guests. Try to ensure someone who speaks English always has the job of answering the telephone
- Keep a booking diary beside the phone so you can write down when the guests would like to come, how many rooms they require and how many people will sleep in each room

Name
Number of guests
Date of arrival
Date of departure
No of rooms requested

- Check that there are rooms available on that date and ask the guest what time they plan to arrive
- Thank the guests and tell them they are confirmed and you look forward to seeing them
- Always make sure you fully understand what the person has said even if you have to ask them to repeat it several times - it is essential that you get the booking correct
- If there is no one around to who speaks good English the person who answers the phone would be able to at least ask for a name and a telephone number and say "My mother will call you back later" or whatever is appropriate.



If you do not have a phone connection, you might consider getting mobile phone if coverage works in your area

### ***Additional Services***

In addition to the above if you have the time and opportunity, you might like to earn some extra money by adding to the services you provide. There are also services that you can provide at no extra costs simply to enhance guest satisfaction. Here are some examples of both types of service:

- Provide a laundry service for your guests  
Clothes's washing is an activity which can be contracted out to the village, or to a local women's group. Spreading small business opportunities around your community will encourage support for your guesthouse.

Some tourists - especially backpackers will want to wash their own clothes. For these guests, provide: access to a water tank, a flat concrete or well-drained gravel area, some buckets or washtubs, a clothesline + pegs. The laundry should be 'back of the house'- out of sight of the main areas of your guesthouse

- Offer a snack menu for guests so that they can order food anytime
- Offer to make picnic lunches or BBQs at midday or in the evening
- Advertise you facilities for office parties and other village functions
- Arrange a variety of different activities and tours
- Have canoes, snorkelling gear or bikes available for hire at an hourly or daily rate
- Provide a common fridge for guests to store their own food and drinks

Whatever additional services you offer make sure that you have these written on your price list so guests know how much to pay.

## ***Preparing Food***



**Food should always be fresh 1**

The quality of the food you serve your guests will affect their satisfaction with your guesthouse as well as the prices you charge. There are three areas to consider:

- Menu planning
- Food preparation and
- Food serving



You should note that quality and variety are usually more important than quantity especially for overseas guests

### Menu planning

Different guests like different types of food. For some guests eating traditional food will be part of the cultural experience but others will find it hard to eat. You need to try to adapt your menu towards the kind of guests you have staying. Here are some general things to remember and some useful tips:

- If you have just one group of guests give them a choice of food
- If you are not able to give a choice of food make sure to put up a menu every morning in the dining area for guests to see. You could also use a black/white board to write up your menu
- Ask if your guests have young children be sure to consult them about what the children like to eat. Always have a few tins on hand like spaghetti or baked beans for the children. If your guests have a young baby offer to assist them heating bottles or mashing up food
- Always use fresh food from your village gardens when possible
- Always prepare more than one dish so guests that do not like one can have the other. You might like for example to have one traditional dish such as taro and another international dish like rice
- Try to vary the evening menu so you have something different every day of the week



- You might like to put the food out in dishes so your guest can serve themselves as this helps to reduce waste

Here are some ideas for different meals:

- Breakfast

Ask them the night before if your guests prefer a PNG or European breakfast

EUROPEAN BREAKFAST	PNG BREAKFAST
Fruit, eggs, toast, butter and jam with tea, coffee and milk	Kaukau, coconut rice, fish and plenty of fruits

- Lunch

Sometimes your guest may also like you to provide lunch or a picnic for them. Ask your guests the night before what they would like. On Sundays you might like to ask guest if they would like to join in on your family meal.

- Evening meal

You should vary your evening meal between chicken, fish and red meat. Try to vary the way you cook these; roast, grill fry, boil, poach. In general overseas guests do not tend to like fatty or tinned meals such as corned beef or lamb flaps. Many people also prefer food that is not fried. Try

grilling or poaching fish instead of frying it. Alongside the meat you should provide either rice or another starchy food such as potato or kaukau and you can also have some green vegetable like cabbage. Try to always provide fresh fruit for desert along with tea or coffee.

- Fruit

Tropical fruits are popular with guests. Make the most out of this free food by growing fruits yourself. Try to serve a variety of fruits, not just pawpaw and bananas find mangoes, pineapples, guava, passionfruit and others when they are in season. You might like to contact your agricultural centre to learn about growing a greater variety of your own fruits.

- Drinks and snacks

You should provide your guests with as much boiled iced water as they want - free of charge and with all meals. This drinking water must be boiled for at least ten minutes to remove bacteria and then placed in a clean container cooled and placed in the fridge. Some guests might also like to have a kulau, soft drink, coffee and biscuits at some other time of the day. You should try to either have these things available or let your guest know where they can be purchased. Guests will also appreciate free bananas and pawpaw. You can hang a bunch of bananas near the common area for your guest to snack on whenever they like.



Recycle any plastic water bottles so that guests can take a bottle of water

### Food preparation



**Hands should be clean when preparing food**

It is very important that you not only make tasty attractive food but also prepare the food safely so your guests do not become sick. Here are some simple things to remember:

- Make sure all your utensils are clean before you start cooking
- Always wash your hands with soap before touching any food
- Keep your cupboards clean and tidy
- Always keep clean tea towels handy
- Do not re-freeze foods which have already been frozen and defrosted
- Keep meat separate from vegetables and other things in the base of your freezer
- Always check chicken is cooked right through the bone and is not at all red
- Prepare meat and vegetables on different cutting boards and with different knives and wash the utensils well afterwards
- Always wash your hands well after handling food especially raw meat and chicken
- Wash all vegetables in clean/boiled water
- Not all reef fish are acceptable to overseas guests so be especially careful to avoid serving the smaller and more colourful fish which may cause a bad reaction to those who are not used to them
- Use only boiled water for making ice
- Keep your kitchen clean and do not allow children or animals like chickens, cats and dogs in the area. Be especially careful that cats do not get on the cutting boards or near the dishes as they can spread diseases

- Be careful when re-heating foods to cook them very thoroughly but do not serve left-over food to your guests
- Make sure your kitchen is well maintained especially your stove/cooker (to avoid against fire) and the fridge
- Throw away food from your freezer if the power is off for long enough for the food to defrost

### Food serving



**Decide whether food should be self served by the guest or plated by guesthouse staff**

Let guests know what time meals are served. If you only have a few guests ask what time they prefer to eat and try to cater to their needs. Most guests will like to eat breakfast between 7 - 10am, lunch between 12 - 2pm and supper between 6 - 8pm.

Many people prefer to serve themselves instead of being given a large plate, and this way you can also avoid too much wastage. If you arrange the different dishes in the middle of the table guests can take what they like. Although it may be difficult at first to get quantities right, in time you will find out how much is needed.

Remember that food can be part of the cultural experience; be sure to explain to your guests what the different dishes are when you put them on the table. You might also like to show your guests your food garden and encourage them to try local recipes and see how the food is prepared.

#### Self-served Guesthouses

Some Guesthouses allow guests to prepare their own food. In this case visitors need to have access to the common fridge and cooking facilities. Guests should be asked to label their food so it is not confusing with your own. You should also make sure someone in your family is responsible for keeping the kitchen clean and tidy.

## ***Attractions and Activities***



**Let guests know what attractions & activities are on offer such as canoeing**

The attractions and activities available nearby your guesthouses are of great importance to your business, because they encourage your guests to stay longer with you. Some activities also have the benefit of providing a little extra income for your family.

### Identify your attractions

An attraction can be any special feature of your area which guests are interested in visiting.

NATURAL ATTRACTION	CULTURAL and MAN-MADE ATTRACTIONS
Caves	Ancient artefact sites
Waterfalls	Traditional buildings

Rivers/lakes	Traditional craft making/sing sings
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With your family make a list of all the attractions in your area with directions of how to get to each one, you could also offer to take guest to visit them. Guests who arrive in their own car may like to make a day trip from your guesthouse and return again for the night.

- Make a list of possible day trips and offer to prepare a picnic lunch for your guests at a small cost
- Organise and take your own day trips and provide transport if required
- When giving guests directions always check carefully that you have been clear and they have understood. Try to draw a small map to help visitors find places of interest
- If you would like to learn more about how to guide tourists contact your local Provincial Tourism Bureau/Office

#### Arranging activities

All guests are different, some will like to have an active holiday visiting all the attractions of the area and others will prefer to have a quite relaxing time on the beach. What is important is that your guests are informed about the different possibilities. Here are some ideas about possible activities:





Overseas guests will often feel uncomfortable if they are not sure if they should be paying for an activity or not. Be clear about which activities are free and which they have to pay for and outline what they get for their money

- Fishing trips

Overseas visitors often want to learn how to throw a net, paddle a canoe or use a spear to fish with. You can show them how, for a small fee during an afternoon lesson. Remember to check that the boat is safe and that guests can swim. If possible always provide life jackets when taking guests out in a boat or canoe and do not risk going out if there is a storm coming, currents are strong or the wind is rough.

- Snorkelling or surfing

If your guests would like to snorkel or surf either show them the best places to go and give them information about the currents and tides. You may also like to hire out snorkelling equipment for a small price but remember to rinse this properly in clean water after each use to extend its life.

- Walking tours



**Guests might like to take a trek around village sites**

Guests may be interested to have a guided tour around your village with someone who can speak English. A guide could show them the church and the meeting house and other sites of interest and explain how the village is organised.

- Plantation tours

Guests may be keen to be shown around a plantation as there will be many new plants they have not seen before. A guide could take them around the plantation and identify the different plants and their uses. And take them to show how copra, cocoa, coffee, tea or rubber is made. You could also visit the forest or show them any special natural features like caves or rock formations. You might like to end the tour by showing guests how to prepare and cook local foods or medicines.

- Craft instruction

Overseas visitors may be interested to learn how to weave traditional mats and baskets out of palm or coconut leaves, make tapa cloth, bilums or see a carver at work. If someone in your family or village is knowledgeable about any of these crafts you could take your guest to visit them. Maybe they will even buy something.

- Sunday activities

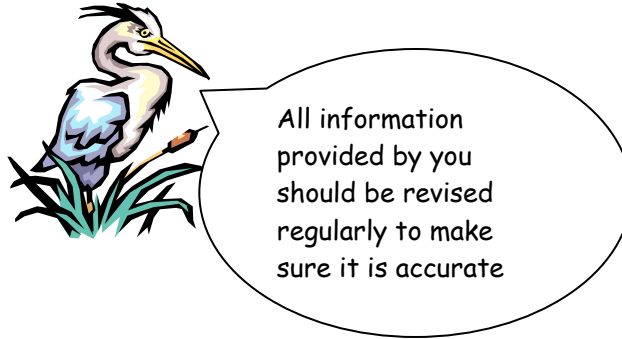
You will often have guests staying with you on a Sunday and you can provide them with information about church services, dress codes and behaviour.

### Informing guests about activities

Good clear and accurate information is very important when you are planning tourists' activities. Be honest about what you can provide so

you do not disappoint your guest. There are several ways you can provide information about activities:

- It is an advantage to have an information section at your guesthouse where you could have your telephone, brochures information board, newspapers, magazines, books, maps. This should also be your reception area or part of your common room
- You could have a white/black board located in the common area where you could have a list of the different activities and their prices. You could also use the board to write up the names of your family, meal times, high and low tide and any information about sea currents, curfews, church service bus timetables and rates etc...
- You may like to make a special book for your guests where you list all the activities, the prices, length of time and who can organise them.
- It is not a good idea to try to provide too many activities. Instead you might like to try to specialise in one of two things like canoe tours or snorkelling, You can then advertise these on your brochures and guests will come especially for that particular activity



Whichever way you choose to provide your guests with information, make sure you draw their attention to it when they first arrive so that they can plan the length of their stay with you.

### ***Looking after your Environment***

PNG has a very special natural environment and it is important to take pride in its protection. Your environment is a valuable asset for your business. No one wants to stay in a dirty environment, so it is up to you to look after it. Here are some ideas for maintaining and improving your environment.

#### Cleaning your area

Clear and rake your area every morning and remove any rubbish, or seaweed at the beach. Make a sign asking people not to litter and look out for offenders. Check your area again during the day to remove any litter left by day visitors, and rubbish on the beach after high tide. Make your job easier by installing bins along the beach, but make sure

they are regularly emptied. You should also try to ensure there are not too many stray dogs, chicken or pigs in your area and remove coconuts from the trees before they become dangerous.

#### Making a garden

It is good to have as many trees as possible in your area to provide both shade and privacy.



#### **Growing flowers & shrubs near your guesthouse has any uses**

- Flowers and other shrubs can also help make your guesthouse attractive and cool
- A hedge can be a more attractive form of security than a fence or a wall
- Try to grow a wide variety of tropical fruits for your guests

#### Hide the Rubbish

Place these things at the back of your Guesthouse

- Garbage
- Laundry

Place these things at the front of your guesthouse



**The guesthouse area should be clean & tidy**

- Outdoor Space
- Sitting Shelters
- Main House or Haus Kibung
- Rooms and Veranda

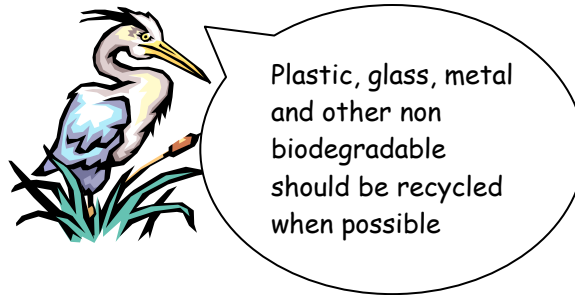
#### Waste Management

Poor waste management will quickly destroy your business. No one wants to swim at a smelly beach/river or see rubbish lying around, so it is important that you are careful with all your waste. Try to organise a good system for you waste and work out who in your family/staff is responsible for waste collection and disposal. There are two main types of solid rubbish you will have to dispose of non-degradable and biodegradable. Make

yourself separate bins for each of these types of rubbish.

- Raw vegetable matter can either be disposed of in the garden and used for compost or be fed directly to your pigs and chicken (be careful not to put cooked foods in this compost as it will attract rats)
- Cooked food can be given to your animals
- Be sure to provide a special bin for waste food when you have day visitors making a BBQ and ask them not to leave bones as this will attract animals
- Paper can be composted when buried away from your area
- Human waste is biodegradable and a composting toilet can successfully protect your marine life and environment
- Plastic bottles can be used to store clean water in the fridge. If this is not possible it should be compressed as small as possible and taken to a collection site or buried in a pit far from your area
- It will be much easier to keep your guesthouse area clean if you provide rubbish bins in the toilet and shower areas as well as near guesthouses and on the beach as well. But make sure these are not too big to be lifted and emptied by one person





#### Protect against marine pollution

The health of your marine environment is closely connected to the health of the coral reef. Here are some ways to help you protect your reef:

- Seek advice from appropriate agencies on the design and maintenance of toilets and encourage others in your village to do the same
- Encourage your village not to dump any rubbish in the sea
- Teach your children about careful rubbish disposal
- Encourage your village to create village rules against littering and destructive fishing methods such as dynamiting or using poisons
- Advise tourist and villages not to remove shell, coral, sea cucumber and other animals or plants from the reef or beach. You can do this by placing a notice in a common area
- Use noticeboards to ask people to protect the environment by not littering or collecting corals or shells

- It is not a good idea for you or other villagers to sell sea shells to your visitors as this encourages the over-harvesting of marine life species

#### Beach protection

Your beach may often be subject to erosion especially during very high tides and storm surges. As your beach may be a vital part of your product this is very important. There are several ways of protecting your beach against the sea:

- Protect existing vegetation as plant roots are very good at keeping sand together.
- Tree planting can be a very effective way of holding the sand together
- Sea walls can be an expensive and difficult undertaking and it might spoil the beach view and natural atmosphere of your guesthouse.

### **Site Security**

It is in your interest to keep your site secure from all manner of threats such as theft, fire and tropical cyclones and other annoyances. Each of these are discussed briefly below:



Theft has the potential to destroy your business so you must make every effort to prevent it happening

### Theft

There have been many cases of theft from guesthouses so you need to give serious consideration to security measures. Some overseas guests may have their passports, money, credit cards and tickets with them and other things which they need to keep safe while they are swimming, sleeping or going on tours. Assist your guests by taking some of the following steps to keep them safe:

- Inform your guests of security risks when they arrive and advise them to keep their valuables out of sight and never leave them unattended on the beach
- Provide either a locked room in your house or make a locked box where guests can leave their bags and valuables
- Try to establish a hedge or some way of restricting access to your guesthouse (note

that wire fences can spoil the look of your site)

- Try to separate day visitors from overnight visitors
- If possible only employ people from your family or village who you can really trust to work at your guesthouse
- Buy a security light and give one of your family or villager the job of patrolling the area when you have guests staying

### Fire

Remind your visitors that guesthouses made of bush material burn easily and they should be very careful when smoking or using mosquito coils. If you provide kerosene lamps or BBQ facilities for your guests show them how these can be safely used. Do not allow the use of candles in guesthouses as these pose a big fire hazard. Also be sure that all electrical wiring is properly installed and maintained. If a fire does break out evacuate your guests to a safe area and use buckets of water to try to put the fire out as quickly as possible.

### Other annoyances

Other problems you may encounter include;

- Guests leaving without paying
- Guests vandalising the site and
- Becoming drunk and disorderly or
- Disrespectful to village rules

If you are worried about a particular group you can refuse to let them enter the guesthouse or turn them away at the gate. If you are worried that they will not pay, be sure to collect the fees soon after arrival or least take a deposit. If their behaviour becomes very bad and annoys other guests at your guesthouse or threatens your facilities you should ask the guest to leave.

## ***Guest Safety***

It is in your interest to try your best to keep your guests happy and safe whilst they are staying with you. The main risks to your guest's safety are from:

- Minor cuts and burns
- Dangerous sea currents
- Poisonous marine life
- Food poisoning and
- Other annoyances



Try to take a first aid course and keep a well stocked 1<sup>st</sup> aid box

### Minor cuts and burns

Minor cuts and burns are a common occurrence at guesthouses particularly if you have BBQ facilities. Be prepared to deal with any minor injuries your guests might suffer. Here are a few tips for treating small injuries but remember if you are unsure what to do always seek medical advice quickly.

- For small cuts, remove any particles from the wound and apply pressure with a clean cloth until bleeding stops. Clean the wound with an antiseptic solution and then apply a clean bandage or plaster. Instruct the guests to keep the injured area clean and dry until it is fully healed
- For burns, immerse the injured area in cold water and soak, keeping the water cool. Pat dry and apply a clean dressing to the area
- For sunstroke and dehydration, cool the patient down and give plenty of fluids.
- For any type of bruising, apply ice to the area with a cloth pad

### Dangerous sea currents



#### **Guests need to know the dangers of the sea for coastal guesthouses**

Many beach areas have dangerous currents and openings in the reef where guests who are unaware can get swept out to sea in a short time. There are several things you can do to reduce the risk of this happening:

- Provide your guests with information about where they should and should not swim by using a signboard placed in a prominent position on the beach or in the common area
- Keep a lookout when you know your guests are swimming or surfing
- Make sure you know what to do in an emergency and where you can find the nearest boat with a motor or canoe
- Have at least a canoe ready for use in case rescue is needed
- Try to make sure one of your family is trained in first aid procedures

### Poisonous marine life

Not only are currents and waves a danger to swimmers but there is also a number of sea creatures such as jellyfish, corals and sea urchins which pose a threat to your guests. Here is some advice about what to do if your guests are affected:

- Jelly Fish

If someone is stung by a jellyfish, first pour clean sea water over the injured parts. Next remove the tentacles carefully and gently. To avoid further injection of the victim or yourself use a towel, laplap, thick leaf or glove to grasp the tentacle. To remove any remaining tentacles apply a dry powder such as flour or baby powder and scrape gently with a knife. Then rinse the area again with sea water and then with alcohol, antiseptic or urine. Finally neutralise the venom with a solution made from water and baking soda (use just enough water to dissolve the powder)

- Corals

In case of coral injury, clean wound immediately by rubbing gently with hydrogen peroxide, alcohol, antiseptic, iodine or mercurochrome. Once it is clean, continue to apply antiseptic treatment and frequently change the dressing. A coral wound is highly vulnerable to infection so be sure to clean the



wound carefully and ensure all coral fragments are removed,

- **Sea Urchin**

Apply vinegar, sea water or urine to the area and then quickly remove the spines with tweezers. Pull them out straight so they do not break off. If they break off seek medical attention. If they are all removed use the 'hot water treatment' described below

'Hot Water Treatment'

Heat water but not burning hot, immerse as much of the limb as possible for 15 to 19 minutes depending on the seriousness of the injury and state of victim. If injury is very serious, cease treatment and get the victim to hospital. Note that cone shells, spined fish and sting rays can be extremely serious and the victim should be transferred to hospital as soon as possible.

Food poisoning

If food poisoning does occur give the patient fluids to prevent dehydration. If the patient suffers severe diarrhoea and vomiting make up a 're-hydration solution' of sugar, salt, and water and give the victim as much as possible and then seek medical attention.

Other annoyances

These might include interference and harassment from outsiders, mosquitoes and stray dogs. There

have been cases where guests have complained about people arriving at off times of the night to beg for cigarettes or ask for money. In some cases this has involved sexual harassment. This is an alarming situation and compromises the safety of your guests as well as harming the reputation of your business. To safeguard against such problems you are advised to do the following:

- If a guesthouse is vacant have one of your family/staff sleep nearby so they can quickly come to the rescue if a problem develops
- Bring the issue of security at the village council meeting to be discussed
- Inform the visitors where they can find help if they need it

Mosquitoes can also be a real problem for guests who are not used to them. The view at your guesthouse will not seem so beautiful and the food not so good if they have large itchy bites on their legs. Here are few tips for reducing the number of mosquitoes.



**Providing mosquito nets is a good idea**

- Try to clear away potential breeding areas such as any still waters nearby
- Issue guests with mosquito coils (but make sure they do not use them in the rooms at night as this could create a fire hazard)
- Use mosquito coils or other systems for repelling the mosquitoes in the dining area at meal times and in the bathrooms
- Try to keep all dogs away from your guesthouse as they can frighten the guests and are also a risk for spreading disease

**IMPORTANT NOTE**

Security is vitally important for your business. It is important that you hold regular training sessions with your family/staff so that they know what to do in different emergency situations such as fire, drowning, tropical cyclone, sick guests, drunk guests, injured guests, theft etc... Many emergencies can be avoided by careful behaviour from your family/staff. Make yourself an emergency plan of action so you know what to do "just in case the worst happens".

## PART THREE: RUNNING YOUR BUSINESS

The third part of this Guidebook aims to give you some helpful information about running your business, from the business plan to financial matters.

### *Elements of Success*



**Making your guesthouse a success requires hard work and long term commitment**

Your guesthouse will be a success if:

- People want to come - Guests bring in money. The more guests, the more money.

- Guests are happy with their stay - They will not come back unless they are satisfied with the experience.
- They are happy to pay money - part of that experience is feeling that your guesthouse is good value for money
- Your guests tell others what a great time they had - Word of mouth is the best advertising. People trust their friends.

### ***business Planning***

You must have a Business Plan. Seek help from somebody experienced to assist you with a business plan. You must do a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) Analysis first before you can start your guesthouse. Check first on what strengths you have that makes you to go into the business of running a guesthouse? What are the weaknesses that you need to address before you start? What are the opportunities for you to capitalize on? What are the threats that you need to be aware of? Should have plans to address that.



A business plan helps you to think about your service, your markets and financial matters and can help you avoid making expensive mistakes

A good business plan is like a road map, it shows you where you are now, where you want go and how to get there. Having a business plan can help you in all aspects of your business. It will assist you in your applications for loans and a business license as well as your marketing and development of facilities. The key parts of the plan include:

- Your business profile (a description of the type of business you are running)
- Your key strengths and weaknesses
- Opportunities and threats from outside your business
- Your vision for the future and action plan on how to achieve it
- A description of the key people in your business (their experiences and skills)
- Your marketing and sales ideas and

- Your financial plan including start-up costs, sources of finances, cash flow and financial performance

#### Business vs. Personal

You may sometimes find that there is a conflict between your business obligation and the PNG way of life. There may be pressures on you from your family and village to lend money. But if your business is to survive you must separate your family finances from your business finances. If you fail to do this, your business may fail.

The best way to do this is to have two passbook accounts at your bank; a personal and a business account.

PERSONAL ACCOUNT	BUSINESSACCOUNT
Lend only what you can afford	Do not take money from your business or you will find you do not have enough left over to pay your business expenses



If yours is a community-run guesthouse the problem of separating finances is even more difficult. Make sure that there is a definite line of responsibility for different aspects of the guesthouse including the finances and make sure that clear records are kept of all money coming in and going out.



It is very important that you separate personal matters from cultural matters. The minute you mix the two the business will suffer.

Think carefully before spending any money.

- Make a simple drawing of what you plan to build.
- Make a list of all the materials you will need to build it.
- Make another list of all the things you will need to furnish it.
- Now look at the list and THINK!  
*How many non-traditional items can you make from village materials?*

## ***Business Finances***



**A guesthouse is a business so needs to be treated like one**

When you make a profit you should pay yourself and your family members/ staff first and put the rest in the bank to be used for the business expenses (into your business passbook account).

### Costing and pricing

Costing is the process of working out how much it costs to run your business. Working out your costs is part of your financial planning. Once you have worked out all your costs you can start thinking about how much you will sell each product or service for. There are no 'set rates' for a guesthouse. Your prices are up to you and depend

on the facilities and services you offer as well as other facts. When you are working out your pricing you have to think about:

- What does each product or service actually cost?
- What your competitor is charging and how does the quality of your product or service compare to others?
- What kind of customers are you aiming at?
- What volume of sales are you hoping for?

For example, if you are trying to decide how much to charge for breakfast you need to first think about:

- What is the total cost of making and serving the breakfast?
- How much do other guesthouses charge for breakfast?
- How does your breakfast compare with theirs? ( You should charge less than your competitors if your breakfast is not as good as theirs )
- Do you want a lot of people to have breakfast paying a low price or a few people paying a high price? (If you choose the latter you will need to be sure you provide a really high quality breakfast.)

Getting the price right is especially important for guesthouses because you mostly cater to travellers who are very price sensitive. They can always go to your competitor if they think your price is too high. But to provide 'value for money' is more important than what price you charge.

#### Price List

Once you have decided about your pricing policy you need to make a price list. The price list can be on a printed piece of paper or written up on a board. You can separate prices for overnight and day visitors. Overnight visitors should be given a price per person per night and a price per person per meal. Day visitors should be given the price for parking, day use of a guesthouse and the option of lunch. Always write your prices in PNG Kina.

Once you have made your price list, you need to display it in a prominent position. When a new guest arrives you can show it to them so they know what to expect. From time to time you need to increase your prices in line with, for example, rising electricity costs. When you do this do not cross out the old price, this is very unprofessional, instead make a completely new list or re-paint your board.

Value for money is when guests are getting what they pay for and a little bit extra. If you charge the same as other guesthouses, you need to make sure your service is as good as theirs.



## **Marketing**



**How will you spread the word that you have guesthouse?**

People need to know where to find you. How?  
Arrange for your guesthouse to be promoted by...

- The Provincial Tourism Bureau/Office
- Hotels
- Travel Agencies
- Travel Books
- Formal advertising in newspapers, television, radio or business directories

Marketing is about letting people know that you exist. You cannot expect visitors to come and stay with you if you do not let them know why they should come and how to get to you. Before you start advertising your guesthouse; stop, go back to your business plan and think about these questions:

- Who are my customers?
- What do they want? (What are their likes and dislikes, what price are they prepared to pay)?
- Who are my competitors and how are they doing their marketing?
- How much money can I afford to spend on marketing?

These are several different ways of marketing your guesthouses, some of which will not cost you much, here are some ideas:



You can not afford **not** to spend on marketing. If guests are not coming you either have not got your facilities/ services right or your marketing is not good enough

#### Word of mouth

The cheapest and most effective way of marketing your guesthouse is to satisfy your guests. Give your guests a good time and they will advertise for you. They will recommend your guesthouse to their friends and people they meet during their travels.

#### Sign

It is extremely important that you have a clear and attractive sign near the road in order to encourage passing visitors.



**Create a guesthouse sign that is clear & attractive**

#### Brochures and Business cards

You might like to try to produce a simple brochure which you could be photocopied and left at the airport, provincial tourism bureau. If you can, you should include:

- Your name and telephone number
- An attractive sketch, picture or map
- Directions about how to get to your guesthouse and
- A list of your facilities and activities.

It is very important that you only advertise services you can actually provide, be honest about your business or guests will be disappointed. If you cannot afford a colour brochure, use coloured paper to print on and make yours stand out from the rest.



### Other mediums

One very good way to spread your name is to get some T-shirts printed with the name of you and your guesthouse, the location, and a picture of the beach. Your family/ staff could wear this as a uniform and you could give them as a leaving present for your best guests or sell them cheaply so that guests buy them and in this way provide an international advertisement for your guesthouse.

Another idea is to place an advertisement in flight magazines. You could check the provincial or national tourism authorities when journalists or film crews from overseas are visiting so you can invite them to stay at your guesthouse free of charge. You will often be rewarded with a good write-up in an international publication. You might also offer the same kind of familiarisation visits to the tour operators too, so they understand better what you have to offer.

### Contacts

Use any business contacts you have in your home town to help you promote your guest house. Talk with tour operators and tour guides and encourage them to bring day trips to your guest house. Offer them special rates and special services. Visit budget hotels in town and talk to the receptionists to find out about their customer's needs. Leave a supply of brochures or business cards with them.

You might like to offer special rates for these operators to visit your guesthouse.

#### Collective marketing and cooperation

In order to market your business more effectively you could form a marketing group with other guest house operators and produce a joint brochure. This is a good idea if there are many other guest house businesses located in your area. Together you could make a brochure to give tourists with information about individual guesthouses as well as more general information about staying in one of these guesthouses.

- What to expect,
- Telephone numbers
- Prices
- Contact people, and
- Mode of transport to get there

### ***Staff Training***

You need to train your staff in order to provide a high quality service for your guest even if they are just your family members. Everyone in your family who comes into contact with guests needs some basic communication and public relation skills. They also need to make a serious commitment to guest satisfaction and professionalism if your business is to be a success. In addition some of your family or staff could benefit from special training like the

cook or the person taking bookings. Here are some ideas about how to improve the services provided by your family...

#### Use this manual

Go through this Manual slowly with your family/staff so that they have a greater awareness about the many different aspects of your business. Put particular stress on the section about how to welcome guests. You should discuss the section on preparing food with your cook and try to implement some of the recommendations.

#### Training schemes

Investigate the different tourism and hospitality courses and consider sending one or more of your family/staff members to improve their skills.

#### Hold regular staff meetings

Try to hold a regular weekly meeting with all your staff to talk about how things are going, raise any problems and talk about how they can be solved. This is also a good opportunity to discuss how to make improvements to your facilities and services and how to implement the advice from this manual.

#### Visit your competitors

It is useful to visit other guesthouse operators on a regular basis in order to see how they are doing things and get ideas about how you might improve your services. You might like to invite fellow operators to visit your business and discuss ways

of improving services, facilities and profits. You can also get new ideas by visiting some of the better hotels and watch how guests are being greeted and served.



**Visit other guesthouse to see how they are run**

### ***Where to go for further support***

When you start up a guesthouse business there are many things you need to learn about. In this Manual there is only room for the basics, many specific things you will need to seek further advice about, like:

- Learning cooking skills
- Building guesthouse and toilet blocks, and
- Preparing your business and marketing plan

There are two types of support you can receive.

<b>TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE</b> Is when you are provided with an expert free of charge or with minimal costs, to help you plan some aspects of your business or train you and your staff/helpers.	<b>FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE</b> Is when you are provided with funds in cash or kind to undertake a particular project.
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#### Technical assistance

Places to go to for technical assistance, first and foremost should be your local Tourism Bureau or Provincial Tourism Office, Provincial Business Development/Commerce Officer, Papua New Guinea Tourism Industry Association (PNGTIA), Papua New Guinea Tour Operators Association (PNGTOA) or The Tourism Promotion Authority (TPA).

#### Financial assistance

Cash support usually has some restrictions concerning who can benefit and how much money the beneficiary should contribute themselves, and PNGTPA does not provide direct financial assistance.

PNGTPA in liaison with the National Development Bank (NDB) has established a Credit Facility to service the small to medium enterprises in the

tourism sector. *Get in touch with your local NDB Office or Tourism Office for more information.*



**Guesthouse development can contribute to your livelihood**

## CLOSING NOTE

It is not always easy to make a success for your guesthouse business. It is only through hard work and good business planning that you can make your guesthouse succeed. We have outlined some of the most important points to consider in running your guesthouse business. If you follow the advice given here, you will be on the right track to satisfying your guests.

We have tried to make this manual as up to date and accurate as possible but no doubt things will change and you will find things overlooked. Write to **PNGTPA** and tell us which parts of the manual we need to change and improve for next time. This will remain a useful resource for guesthouse operators for some time to come.

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