

CONCEPT NOTE

Edo State Tourism Capacity Building & Destination Visibility

To: The Senior Special Assistant to the Edo State Governor on Tourism and Creative Economy — Dr. Munirat Antoinette Lecky

From: Sherpaverse Ltd.

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1. Executive Summary

Edo State possesses some of Nigeria's most significant cultural and heritage assets, including internationally recognized historical, artistic and cultural traditions that positions the state as a natural tourism hub within West Africa, with strong potential to drive tourism growth, youth employment, and destination visibility. In the current tourism landscape, success is increasingly determined by skilled human capacity, clear destination narratives, and digital-ready visitor experiences.

Following recent engagements, Sherpaverse Ltd. proposes a tourism development initiative designed to deliver visible and measurable outcomes within a short timeframe, while establishing a scalable foundation for broader tourism development in Edo State.

This project is grounded in community-based, sustainable and regenerative tourism principles ensuring that local people remain central beneficiaries and long-term stewards of Edo State's cultural, heritage, and tourism assets.

2. Identified Gaps and Opportunities

Based on discussions and sector observations, the following gaps and opportunities have been identified:

- High cultural and heritage value with limited structured destination visibility
- Need for tourism-ready human capacity, particularly among youths and host communities
- Shortage of modern, certified guides and visitor-experience professionals
- Demand for interventions that produce quick, visible outcomes
- Opportunity to pilot scalable, community-centered programs that can expand into long term tourism development and local economic participation

3. Proposed Initiatives

A. Edo State Capacity-Building Program

A targeted capacity-building programme designed to equip Edo youths and tourism stakeholders with practical skills for immediate engagement in the tourism economy.

Key Components:

- Tourism fundamentals and Edo destination knowledge
- Heritage interpretation and cultural storytelling
- Visitor experience and service excellence
- Guiding and hospitality standards
- Digital storytelling for tourism
- Responsible tourism practices

Expected Outcomes:

- A certified cohort of tourism-ready youths targeting 150+ participants
- Improved quality of visitor engagement across tourism sites
- Creation of trained “Edo Tourism Ambassadors” drawn from local communities for deployment across museums, heritage sites, hotels, and during events
- Strengthened youth participation in tourism value chains

B. Edo State Destination Visibility & Branding

A short-term destination visibility and experience-development aimed at strengthening Edo State’s tourism narrative and visitor readiness.

Key Components:

- Destination storytelling and identity positioning rooted in local heritage
- Rebranding of heritage and cultural assets into signature tourism routes
- Experience framing that highlights authentic community narratives

Expected Outcomes:

- A clear and coherent destination narrative for Edo State
- Market-ready branding and promotional assets
- Improved digital visibility
- Strong foundation for future festivals, experience routes and destinations, and community activation initiatives

4. Implementation Approach

Sherpaverse Ltd. will adopt a lean, collaborative, and result-oriented approach, emphasizing;

- Stakeholder consultation and co-creation
- Youth inclusion
- On-site, practical implementation
- Alignment with global best practices and sustainability principles
- Community-based and regenerative tourism principles, ensuring skills, value, and stewardship remain within local ecosystems

5. Timeline

The proposed interventions are designed for short-term delivery:

- Capacity building program: 3 – 4 weeks
- Destination Visibility & Branding: 6 – 8 weeks

6. Conclusion

This approach provides Edo State with a low-risk, high-impact entry point into strengthening its tourism sector. By focusing on community-centred capacity building, destination visibility, and regenerative tourism principles, the State can achieve immediate, visible results while laying the groundwork for long-term tourism development, cultural preservation, and inclusive economic growth.

Sherpaverse Ltd. looks forward to partnering with the Edo State Government to position tourism as a practical driver of youth empowerment, community development, and sustainable prosperity.