



CENTER FOR
RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

Strategic Plan

CREST Reimagined: Empowerment, Action, and Legacy:
A Strategy for 2023-2026



Reflecting on Our Identity

A Message from the CREST Team

Answering the questions “Who are we” and “Where are we going” has been a rewarding, albeit challenging, endeavor. It should come as no surprise that after months of work to define the direction of CREST, we developed our strategic plan in large part by reflecting on our past.

At the heart of CREST’s identity is the word ‘center’, defined by Webster as: a point, area, person, or thing that is most important or pivotal in relation to an indicated activity, interest, or condition.

A center may grow, change, or adjust, but a center’s core almost always remains unchanged. Centers are places where people gather to share ideas, debate policy, fix issues, obtain information, and drive change. Above the nitty gritty of our strategic plan is the idea that CREST has, and will remain, a center for travel and tourism.

Being a center allows us to invite academics, community leaders, and corporate executives to the same table. It allows us to extend a hand to destinations when they need additional resources, while ensuring that true change is driven by local leadership. With tourism as our channel for impact, we are eager to use our role as a center to protect the environment, create equitable livelihood opportunities, bridge people to cultural heritage, and share knowledge.

As we embark on implementation of this strategic plan, we will hold steadfast to our belief in CREST as a center: A center of ideas, empowerment, innovation, and progress for travel & tourism.





Reimagining Our Purpose

CREST's Renewed Mission and Vision to Scale Impact, Deepen Partnerships, and Enhance Focus.

OUR VISION

A world where travel benefits communities and the environment.

OUR MISSION

To be a center of tourism knowledge, empowerment, and action for destination communities.



CREST's CORE Values

Anchoring Our Mission, Strategy, Culture, and Purpose



Travel is important and can positively impact destinations.



Principles of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion drive our work.



Collaboration, partnership, and dialogue trump competition.



We make decisions after listening to multiple perspectives and examining the evidence.



Our approach to tourism work is holistic, with a focus on the natural, cultural and spiritual elements of place.



Destinations and communities are at the core of what we define as 'responsible travel.'

Counteracting Four Key Threats



Overtourism



Climate Change



Poverty & Inequality



Loss of Natural & Cultural Heritage

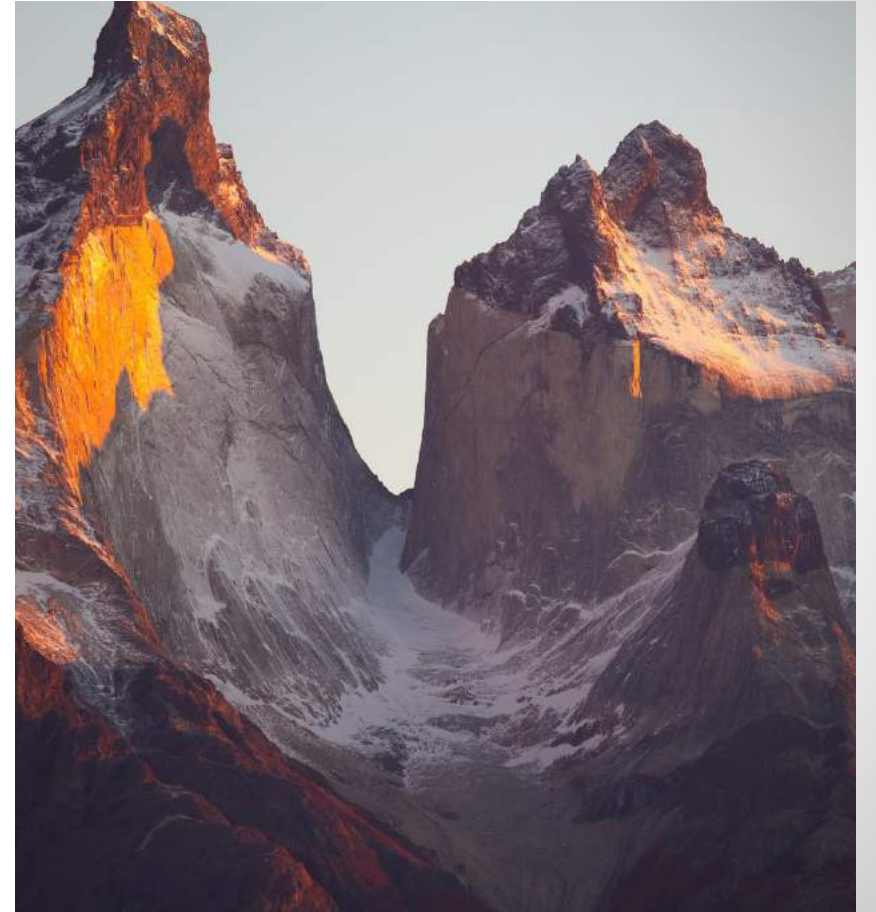
These four threats loom large in today's world. Three of them exist irrespective of tourism, yet when tourism is practiced irresponsibly, it can amplify these challenges. CREST seeks to turn this dynamic around: our work focuses on mitigating these threats.



CREST's Value Proposition

An Impact Driven Commitment to Shifting the Travel & Tourism Paradigm.

Through rigorous research, strategic collaboration, and impact-driven projects, CREST empowers communities, businesses, and destinations to adopt more responsible tourism policies and practices.





The Four Pillars of CREST: Our Approach

Actionable Pathways to Transforming Tourism Practices

1. Applied Research

CREST is a hub for tourism knowledge. We connect tourism practitioners with accessible research from both academia and industry. We strive to co-develop and share a combination of resources, tourism trends, and tools that empower destinations, community nonprofits, and travel businesses to implement better practices. We serve as a nexus between research and practical application.

2. Destination Stewardship

Our work seeks to empower communities and foster shared decision-making models, ensuring tourism balances demand with environmental and cultural preservation. We focus on enhancing livelihood opportunities, and contributing to the social and economic well-being of destination communities through destination stewardship. Our technical stewardship work is centered on multi-stakeholder engagement and inclusion.

3. Advocacy & Systems Change

We want to catalyze a shift in the tourism paradigm. Through collaboration, network-building, and meaningful dialogue, we strive to encourage broader adoption of tourism practices that are accountable to the needs of destination communities and their biodiversity. Through our advocacy approach we include as many diverse voices as possible and strive for radical collaboration.

4. Education

We are committed to tourism education and strive to build the capacity of local leadership in destination communities. Our diverse platforms, projects, events, and academic affiliates network help us share, learn about, and disseminate practices effectively and widely. As a center, we foster safe spaces to develop, share, and fine-tune bold ideas.



SCALING IMPACT

3-year goals to drive meaningful change

Structured --- Innovative --- Adaptive ---
Culturally-driven --- Financially Sustainable



Programmatic Goals: Elevating Impact Through Research & Education

CREST's Strategic Goals for Building Strong Academic Partnerships and Catalyzing Progressive Tourism Dialogue

- 1 | Develop an online, searchable **knowledge center** of leading tourism research that is accessible and user-friendly for practitioners by Q4 2024.
- 2 | **Scale the Academic Affiliates network** to include at least 60 total university partners by Q4 2025, and develop a membership model for the network.
- 3 | Average **75+ participants at monthly roundtable series** with academic affiliates network by **Q2 2024**.
- 4 | **Publish quarterly trends & statistics report by Q4 2024** to grow partnerships with private sector research firms, academics, and grow our audience of practitioners.
- 5 | **Develop a program for graduate students** studying under Academic Affiliate partners to strengthen CREST research and network across institutions by Q1 2024.
- 6 | **Hire a Director of Research** position to build out more rigorous, impactful, and scalable tourism research by Q3 2024
- 7 | Implement at least one **flagship research project that advances thought-leadership** on an approach to addressing one of the four major threats.



Programmatic Goals: Empowering Destinations through Stewardship and Capacity-Building

CREST's Strategic Goals for Responsible Tourism Development and Community Empowerment

- 1 | **Replicate the Torres del Paine Legacy Fund model** in another destination community by Q4 2025, demonstrating leadership in outdoor recreation and stewardship space.
- 2 | Build reputation as destination stewardship leaders by carrying out at least **five total destination stewardship planning, implementation, or capacity-building projects** by Q2 2026.
- 3 | **Develop a capacity-building toolkit** and framework to support destinations transitioning from destination stewardship planning to implementation by Q2 2025.
- 4 | Through existing partnership with the Big Bay Stewardship Council, support the development of a tourism economy that yields **new livelihood and entrepreneurship opportunities** by Q1 2026.
- 5 | Incorporate **destination stewardship planning and implementation impact metrics** related to livelihoods, beneficiaries reached, and conservation into MEAL plan by Q1 2025.
- 6 | Leverage internal & external expertise in trail development and management to **improve natural area infrastructure in at least three destinations** by Q1 2026.



Programmatic Goals: Advocacy and Systems Change

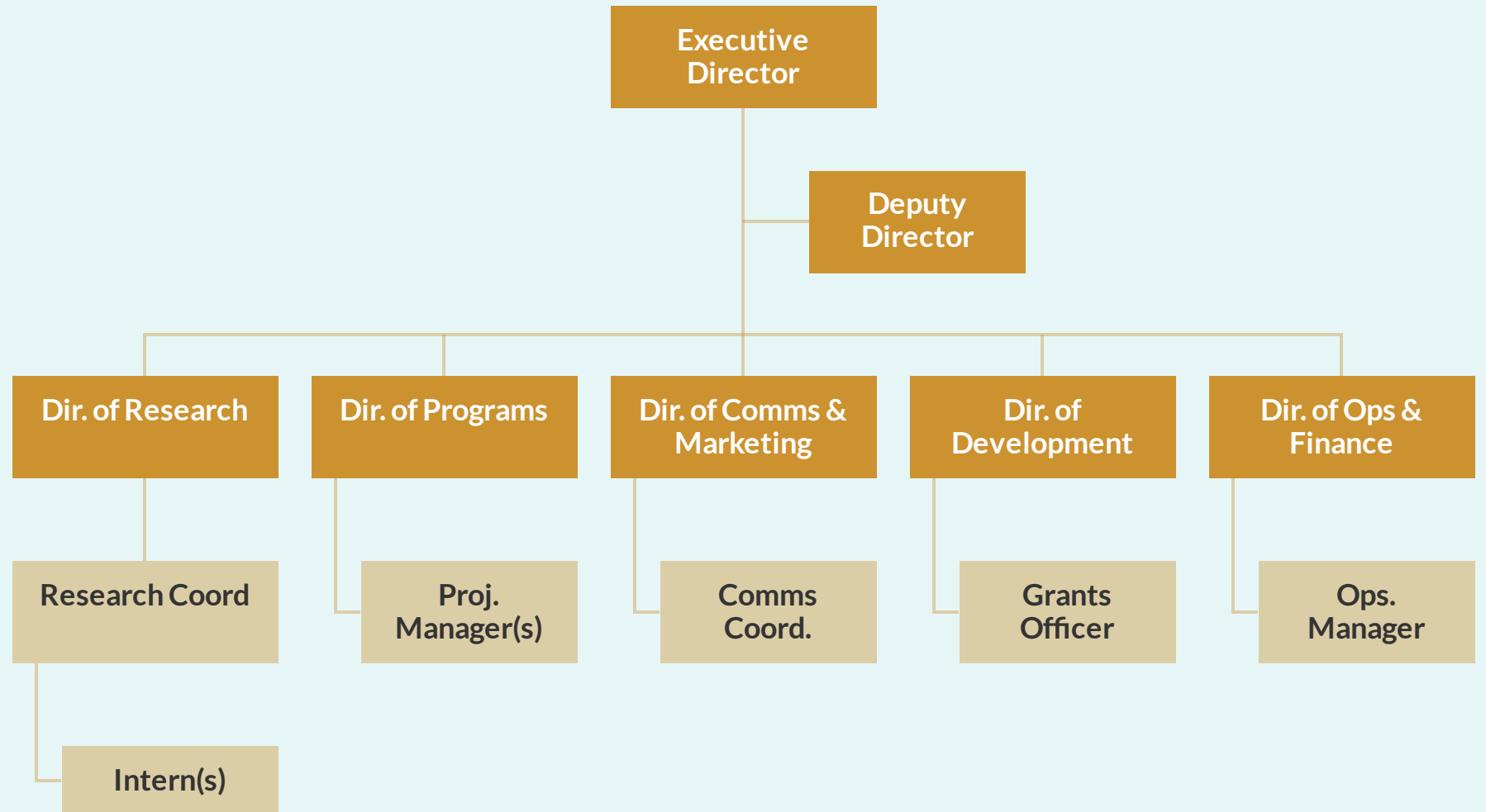
CREST's Strategic Goals for Influencing Policy and Shaping Responsible Tourism Practices

- 1 | By Q4 2024, at least one staff member is dedicated at least part-time to **advancing the Future of Tourism Coalition's** work.
- 2 | Develop a strategy, identify partners, and successfully advocate for at least one tourism regulatory change to **reduce tourism's dependency on fossil fuels**.
- 3 | Develop and distribute tourism practices **toolkit for protected area leadership** and park rangers by Q2 2026.
- 4 | Return to **in-person World Tourism Day Forum in 2024** and ensure each event coincides with an annual call to action.
- 5 | Increase frequency and scale of CREST participation in **national & international tourism fora** to grow CREST's reach and partnerships with stakeholders.

Org Chart

Growing to Q4 2026

To accomplish the goals outlined in this strategic plan, CREST envisions a robust team by the end of 2026.





Together Towards Tomorrow: Charting the Course Ahead

Thank you for being a part of this journey with us.

This strategic plan, much like the vibrant spirit of CREST, is dynamic and adaptable. It represents our **collective commitment** to be a center of impact in tourism, capable of evolving as our journey unfolds.

Our path ahead is imbued with opportunities and challenges that demand holistic responses and shared efforts. We acknowledge that the transformative power of tourism is best harnessed when we unite and listen to each other - academics, corporate executives, travelers, and most importantly, the voices of destination communities.

Community voices form the essence of our work. It is their aspirations we strive to uphold, their traditions we aim to respect, and their environment we are committed to protecting.

As we venture ahead, let us remember that this plan is as fluid as the world it aims to influence. It will grow, evolve, and adapt as CREST does. As we learn and gather insights, we will continue to refine our strategies and enhance our approaches. This **commitment to continuous learning and adaptation** is a cornerstone of our identity.

As we stand at this promising intersection of legacy and innovation, we express our heartfelt gratitude for your belief in CREST and your continued support. Thank you for being a part of our evolving story, for walking with us as we stride forward towards a more **mindful, responsible, and impactful future in tourism**.



2023-2026 Strategic Plan

Approved on May 18th, 2023

To be Improved in Perpetuity



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