

TO DO!95

Socially Responsible Tourism

- International Contest -

Award Winner „Sua Bali“

**represented by Mrs. Ida Ayu Agung Mas,
Sua Bali, Bali, Indonesia**

Rationale for the Award

by Klaus Betz

1. Introduction

The assessment of „Sua Bali“ was carried out during a stay in Bali from December 10th and 17th, 1995. At the request of the Studienkreis für Tourismus und Entwicklung e.V. the structure and concept of the holiday resort „Sua Bali“, as described in the documents submitted for the contest, could be verified there and then without any problems. Thorough discussions about the chances and risks of tourism took place with Mrs. Mas. She is the owner of the project which is situated in the village of Kemenuh. Moreover, the expert was accompanied by the owner of the resort to look at the sore points of the island with regard to tourism, and they also visited weaving units, carpentry workshops (production of bamboo furniture) and rice fields in Kemenuh and the surrounding villages.

2. Background

Bali has become the target for mass tourism with about 2 million holiday makers annually. The influx of visitors can be divided into three main market sources. For Australians Bali is the „Mallorca at the front door“ (one and a half hours flight and cheaper than at home), for the Japanese it is an attractive „golf course destination“, for Europeans, finally, it is the heavenly „dream holiday“ par excellence, since Bali abounds with exotic culture, with colourful religious rites, dances, music performances etc. (study tour in combination with beach holiday). The masses of holiday makers to Bali mainly concentrate on the tourism centres of Nusa Dua, Kuta and Sanur - around the capital of Denpasar. The hinterland with its temples, rice terraces and the handicraft scene in and around Ubud (wood carvers, stone masons, paintings - on the trail of Walter Spiess) forms more or less the backdrop for interesting day excursions; for a „Kyangang-Tiga-Tour“ as the local people say. This describes a standard excursion which always includes three obligatory highlights, such as: temple - shopping - rice terraces.

From this point of view Bali, as a tourism destination, has long adjusted to „international standards“, although at the same time it is still able - outside the tourist centres - to live an everyday life deeply rooted in religion. At the cross-roads of these two spheres, conflicting situations are emerging (commercialization of culture and religion) and these will increase unless a specifically Balinese concept can be realized. „Sua Bali“ could serve as a model in this situation.

3. Sua Bali

3.1 Assessment/Appraisal

The idea behind „Sua Bali“ is to create a reasonably sized holiday resort for western tourists in an eastern, in a Balinese, setting - in such a way that the social and cultural aspects, and the ethnic-religious backgrounds respectively, are taken into account. The name „Sua Bali“ was given on purpose, since it means „meeting Bali“ or „getting to know Bali“. Sua Bali is not really a catchment area for people searching for the meaning of life, but rather a bridge between cultures - a bridge which enables people to get to know each other in a better way, something which is threatened by modern tourism.

3.2 Objectives and concept

For this reason the holiday resort with six guest houses is situated at the outskirts of the village of Kemenuh and is arranged in the manner of a traditional Balinese farmstead. As a

consequence the architecture - the hardware - absolutely corresponds to the local type of construction and fits into the surroundings.

This plan is based on an „entrepreneurial philosophy“ - the software of Sua Bali - which follows two basic patterns. Firstly, the „philosophy of balance“, secondly, the „Grya principle“. While the Hindu-oriented philosophy of balance always strives to overcome contradictions and divergent interests, the Grya principle offers, so to speak, the accompanying measures; according to unwritten rules its aims are both to bring about a harmonious co-existence - also and explicitly so in dealing with „foreigners“ - as well as to influence the everyday life of a community in a farmstead or to govern the working processes in an enterprise, just as a training concept would do. In this context priority is always given to responsible, holistic actions serving communal and entrepreneurial relationships.

3.3. Appraisal of the project in view of the contest criteria:

- **Contest criterion:
Participation of the local population (preliminary stage)**

In line with the above mentioned philosophy, Mrs. Mas has involved the population of Kemenuh in the planning and gradual realization of Sua Bali - in numerous individual discussions and in the „Banjar“, the village council. This was done in order to make sure that the concept of Sua Bali is truly in line with the traditions and behavioural patterns prevailing in the village of Kemenuh. The involvement of the local population can also be seen from the following contest criteria.

- **Contest criterion:
„Strengthening of awareness among the local people towards the positive and negative impacts of tourism development in their daily economic, social and cultural life“**

In many discussion rounds Mrs. Mas informed the village population about the chances and risks of tourism. This was done, just to give a few examples, through a painting contest in the village school (manners and behaviour of tourists as children experience it every day), through discussions with teachers in Sua Bali, through group and individual talks with younger and older members of the village. Themes discussed on these occasions especially related to the commercialization of cultural-religious events (for instance the arrangement of marriages for rich western couples in the Hindu-Balinese style). Other subjects discussed were the economic disadvantages in the case of „modern“ buildings (maintaining the village style), in comparison to the advantages of the traditional way of building (thatched roofs), as well as the idea to install a Bungee-Jumping platform within the bounds of Kemenuh (this led to the platform being refused for Kemenuh, but not for a neighbouring village).

- **Contest criterion:
„Participation of a broad local population strata regarding the positive economic, social and cultural effects of tourism“**

The staff of Sua Bali predominantly hails from Kemenuh or neighbouring villages. The same goes for construction workers and craftsmen who constructed the guest houses in the Balinese style. Building materials and furniture for Sua Bali were also purchased in the vicinity. Commodities for the daily needs also come either from the village or from local markets in the vicinity. The village of Kemenuh reaps the benefits of around seventy or eighty percent of the employment impact and of purchases handled, the rest goes to neighbouring villages.

Each guest has to pay 1 US Dollar extra per night which Sua Bali gives to the village community. This helps finance various cultural and social tasks or measures to improve the village infrastructure. So far about 900 Sua Bali guests with 5000 overnight stays have contributed around 3 700 US Dollars for cultural and infrastructural measures and around 4 500 US Dollars for social concerns.

- **Contest criterion:**

„Guarantee of the attractiveness of jobs in tourism for the local people by improvement of working conditions in relation to payment, social security, working hours, education and training“

With up to 10 employees Sua Bali has a staff which is beyond average proportions. Mrs. Mas thinks that this is necessary so that all employees - who on top of their slightly above average salary also get free board and lodging in Sua Bali - are able to comply with their communal obligations in their home villages. If one of the employees is expected to assist in the preparation of a temple festival or to attend a cremation ceremony in her/his home village, these tasks take precedence over the work in Sua Bali, and no salary cut is made. The underlying rationale is that no employee should become uprooted from his/her home village and thereby - philosophy of balance - lose his/her equilibrium.

Mrs. Mas grants continued payment of remuneration in the case of illness, the same is true if an employee gets pregnant; she assists her employees by granting them interest free loans without fixed repayment commitments (in case of marriage or the construction of a home temple), and she finances the language courses in German or English for her employees - mostly after one year in employment. The previously mentioned „Grya principle“ apparently creates a feeling of great satisfaction among the staff, which in turn induces/encourages them to stay for a relatively long period, from between one and a half to three years, which is quite unusual in this sector. Still, over the last few years it has also happened that some of the staff, when they had reached a certain degree of training, succumbed to the glittering world of tourism, in order to work in „real hotels“ with prestigious names.

- **Contest criterion:**

„Reinforcement of the local culture as well as the cultural identity of those living in tourism destination areas“

As can be seen from the refusal on the part of the village community to sell the rice fields of Kemenuh to an investor (in order to build a golf course), and furthermore, as can be gathered from the refusal of another investor's request to install a bungee jumping platform within the bounds of the village, Sua Bali is adamant in concentrating its efforts to shape its own tourist programmes in a way that these are distinctive of the country and its lifestyle. From the cookery course, to introductory courses with wood carvers or painters, the programmes offer discussion rounds with local experts on themes such as architecture, medicine, pedagogic, tourism or rice cultivation. Sua Bali offers almost everything likely to bring about a better understanding of one another.

- **Contest criterion:**

„Avoidance, minimization of social and cultural damage caused by tourism in destination areas“

After their arrival it is customary in Sua Bali to „prepare“ the holiday guests for the village,

and to inform them on everyday village life, on the living and working rhythms, on the behaviour during a temple ceremony, on the manners expected during a visit to the village shop or even on how to „bargain“ properly with a salesman. Moreover, there is a small domestic library with books on Bali. In the case of more „complicated“ visits, e.g. to cultural-religious festivities, the guests are accompanied by Sua Bali staff. Whether and in which ceremonies the Sua Bali guests are allowed to participate in Kemenuh, is discussed with the Village Council.

- **Contest criterion:**

„Application of new methods in qualifying partnership and cooperation between the external tourism industry and the local people“

Since Sua Bali - due to its philosophy of balance - cannot be clearly classified in an internal or external category (but functions as one component of an entity, the village, the village community), this „TO DO!“ criterion can not be fully applied. One has to recognize for example that the implementation and realization of Sua Bali takes on the character of a pilot scheme and must be seen in its totality as a new approach

- * to strike an equilibrium, the „balance“ between the interests of the holiday-makers and the local people;
- * to bridge the gap between the travellers and those receiving the travellers, i.e. to move from the classical colonial servant-master relationship to a more partnership-oriented encounter. Apart from the communal work of a village community (irrigation of rice fields, temple ceremonies), the (classical German / European) idea of cooperatives and/or cooperation does not play a major role in Bali.

- **Contest criterion:**

„Creation of other favorable conditions for a socially responsible tourism development in destination areas“

Looking at the tourism policies of Indonesia up to this date - e.g. the above mentioned mass tourism at Bali's beaches - the idea realized through „Sua Bali“ will hardly be able to stimulate a snowball effect, which means that it could be replicated on other islands or in other parts of Indonesia. For one, there are not enough committed (Indonesian) people convinced of this idea who, as Mrs. Mas, are familiar with both cultures through their training and education both in the western and far-eastern way of thinking, on the other hand, there is simply no lobby for this „pilot project“, what is lacking e.g. are political „advocates“ who are not only thinking in terms of growth or favouring the realization of prestigious projects.

Perhaps Mrs. Mas will succeed in building up a lobby through her work with the „Society for Bali Studies“ (SBS) which is engaged in social and cultural issues. This is also a politically delicate/sensitive endeavour - after all, tourism in Indonesia is an issue of „national importance“.

- **Contest criterion:**

„Projects or actions entered for the contest may not violate principles of environmental compatibility“

Since Sua Bali has kept within reasonable limits as to expansion and style of construction, the tract of land covered is not unusual by local standards. On a relatively small site relatively generous looking houses/garden estate have sprung up which

correspond to a typical farmstead of a „well-to-do“ Balinese family. As mentioned above, the supply of foodstuffs is organized locally, with some products, such as fruits, being cultivated in Sua Bali (coconut, papaya, bananas).

Sua Bali has its own spring, the sewage is channeled via seepage pits to a slope grown over with reed. Since the guest houses have been designed according to the Balinese style of construction (thatched with local Alang-Alang grass) no air-condition is necessary (pleasant, natural ventilation). Sua Bali financed a small tarmac road, a bypass as it were, in order to avoid driving through the village in the evening or at night when guests arrive or leave, because in this part of the village there are hardly any cars. The tarmac on this part of the road also serves as a protection, especially during the rainy season, from the road being soaked, washed away or from erosion.

Conclusion: Of course, Sua Bali cannot solve the problems of third world tourism, but it is, nevertheless, an important paragon of a holistically oriented, sustainable and socially responsible tourism in these countries.

The expert suggests to the Jury and the organiser of the contest to award a prize to Sua Bali on the occasion of the ITB 1996 in appreciation of the work carried out by Mrs. Ida Ayu Agung Mas under difficult circumstances and in order to support her in her future endeavours.