



AFAR REGIONAL STATE

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

2026–2035



NATURE • CULTURE • HERITAGE

TEN YEAR STRATEGY



AFAR REGIONAL STATE

Tourism Development Strategy

2026–2035

A ten-year framework for destination development, living culture, local enterprise and professional leadership.

AFAR REGIONAL STATE TOURISM BUREAU

September 2026

Developed by Project Green Consulting

Financed by Samara University



Afar Regional State

Tourism Development Strategy 2026–2035

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A shared commitment to Afar's future



ATO IBRAHIM CUMMAD

Head, Afar Regional State Tourism Bureau

Afar's tourism future must be shaped by its people. Our landscapes and heritage attract attention, but the lasting value of tourism will be found in capable local enterprises, skilled young professionals and communities that take part in decisions about their culture and livelihoods.

This strategy provides a common direction for that work. It connects the improvement of established destinations with cultural routes, visitor services, workforce development and accountable management. It calls on public institutions, communities, businesses and education providers to work through clear responsibilities and measurable results.

For the Tourism Bureau, implementation means coordinating action and listening to the people affected by it. We will use this framework to focus our collective effort on the quality of the visitor experience, the protection of heritage and wider opportunities for Afar residents.

A shared commitment to Afar's future



DR. MOHAMMED USMAN DARASA

President, Samara University

Tourism development brings research, learning and regional service into a shared field of action. Afar's living culture, landscapes and human-origins heritage offer important opportunities for education, while the sector needs practical skills and reliable evidence to turn those opportunities into lasting benefits.

Samara University's financing of this strategy reflects the importance of connecting knowledge with regional development. The framework provides a basis for cooperation among researchers, public institutions, communities and tourism businesses, and gives particular attention to the preparation of future sector leaders.

The university's perspective is that learning should support useful work. Research can improve planning and interpretation; professional education can strengthen service quality; and mentoring can help emerging leaders take responsibility. This strategy creates a shared platform for those contributions to Afar's tourism future.

Foreword

Tourism offers Afar a practical opportunity to strengthen livelihoods, develop enterprises, protect heritage and share the region's identity with visitors. The quality of this development will depend on how well the sector connects its exceptional resources with capable people, dependable services and coordinated institutions. The people of Afar must have a central role in shaping the experiences offered and in benefiting from the opportunities created.

The Afar Regional State Tourism Development Strategy 2026–2035 provides a common direction for public institutions, communities, tourism businesses, investors, education providers and development partners. It sets out the priorities needed to improve existing tourism products, develop new experiences, strengthen visitor services and create a more inclusive and competitive destination. Cultural routes and community-based experiences will bring greater attention to places, knowledge and livelihoods that have received limited visibility in tourism development.

Implementation requires a shared commitment to quality, cultural respect, safety and environmental stewardship. Regional and local institutions will coordinate their responsibilities, businesses will develop and deliver reliable services, and communities will participate through arrangements that respect their choices and rights. The Afar Tourism Development Fund will support priority projects and the education of future tourism leaders through a lawful and accountable institutional framework.

The strategy establishes the goals, actions, responsibilities and performance measures through which this direction will be delivered. Its success will be reflected in functioning tourism products, skilled employment, viable local enterprises, satisfied visitors and the continued strength of Afar's cultural and natural heritage.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

FGD — Focus Group Discussion

GIS — Geographic Information System

KII — Key Informant Interview

KPI — Key Performance Indicator

M&E — Monitoring and Evaluation

PPP — Public-Private Partnership

SWOT — Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

TVET — Technical and Vocational Education and Training

Institutional names in the action tables identify the public body responsible for the relevant function. The Afar Regional Tourism Bureau coordinates implementation; each responsible body assigns an accountable officer and works with the listed partners.

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Executive Summary

The Afar Regional State Tourism Development Strategy 2026–2035 provides a ten-year framework for developing a competitive, inclusive and sustainable tourism sector. It places people and living culture at the center of product diversification while strengthening the management and visitor experience of the region's geological, archaeological and natural attractions. The strategy connects destination development with local enterprise, professional skills, responsible investment and effective public administration.

Historical reporting records more than 251,000 domestic and foreign visitors in 2022/2023 and an expansion to sixteen tourism sites by 2023. These figures provide context for recovery and product development; current performance requires consistent annual measurement. The sector assessment, informed by stakeholder engagement, attraction-site visits, visitor research and tourism statistics, identifies constraints in product diversity, interpretation, access, visitor facilities, accommodation, safety, community participation, workforce capability, investment preparation, governance, marketing, data and development support.

Afar's tourism opportunity extends beyond the promotion of individual attractions. Visitors can engage with cultural knowledge, craft, food, oral traditions, pastoral landscapes, salt-related livelihoods, human-origins heritage and natural environments through coordinated experiences. The strategy will improve established tourism products and develop cultural routes that connect willing hosts, enterprises and service hubs. Communities will participate as decision makers, product owners, practitioners, suppliers and professionals.

The vision is to position Afar as a leading sustainable tourism destination distinguished by its living culture, extraordinary landscapes and human-origins heritage, where tourism creates lasting value for residents and visitors. The mission is to develop and manage diversified experiences through community participation, capable institutions, professional services, responsible investment and protection of cultural and natural resources.

Implementation is organized around nine strategic pillars: Tourism Product Development and Diversification; Tourism Infrastructure, Visitor Facilities and Safety; Tourism Investment Promotion and Private Sector Development; Destination Management and Institutional Strengthening; Destination Branding, Marketing and Promotion; Human Resource Development and Community Empowerment; Sustainable Tourism, Conservation and Heritage Protection; Digital Transformation and Tourism Intelligence; and Establishment of the Afar Tourism Development Fund.

The product-development program will map and assess resources, improve twelve priority tourism products, establish six operational cultural routes, develop thirty-six market-tested cultural experiences and support twenty diversified itineraries by 2035. Cultural routes will address the Uwwa and Yallo corridor; Galalu, Samarobi and Hadale Ela; Dulacha and Lake Leado; Serdo, Eli Dar and Dobi; Semera and Logia; and Afar salt heritage and community memory. Route development will proceed through host agreements, verified services, pilot operations and market testing.

The Afar Tourism Development Fund will mobilize lawful tourism-related revenues and other contributions, support eligible development projects and educate future leaders. Its establishment will include legal review, transparent governance, separate collection and award responsibilities, independent

audit and public reporting. The leadership program will connect scholarships, professional study, paid placements and mentoring with practical roles in Afar's tourism institutions and businesses.

The implementation period comprises foundation and pilots during 2026–2028, expansion during 2029–2031, and consolidation during 2032–2035. The Afar Regional Tourism Bureau will coordinate delivery with responsible regional institutions, woreda administrations, communities and private partners. The action-plan tables identify the activities, timing, responsible bodies, implementing partners and results required under each goal. Pillar-specific KPI tables and a common monitoring mechanism will support quarterly implementation reviews, annual performance assessment, a midterm evaluation in 2030 and a final evaluation in 2035.

01

INTRODUCTION



A common direction for tourism development, community opportunity and destination quality.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Afar Regional State has a distinctive combination of living culture, geological landscapes, human-origins heritage, protected areas, lakes and hot springs. The region's tourism identity is associated with resources such as Erta Ale, Dallol, the Danakil landscape, Lake Asale, Hadar and the Awash area. These attractions provide a strong basis for specialist travel, education and discovery. Their tourism value is strengthened by the knowledge, livelihoods, hospitality and contemporary life of the communities who inhabit and manage these environments.

Tourism development has given considerable attention to recognized attractions, while many community resources remain weakly connected to formal tourism activity. Cultural knowledge, food, craft, oral expression, architecture, markets and local enterprise can broaden the visitor experience when they are developed with willing practitioners and organized through dependable services. This requires a stronger connection between resource identification, product design, community participation and market distribution.

The development needs are also practical. Access, accommodation, interpretation, sanitation, communication and emergency preparedness determine which visitors can be served and how consistently tourism products can operate. Institutional coordination, workforce capability and investment preparation are essential to improving these conditions. Tourism growth must be managed within environmental limits and must protect cultural rights, local water use and other livelihoods.

The strategy establishes a coordinated response to these opportunities and constraints. It brings product development, visitor services, enterprise, skills, governance, marketing, conservation, technology and dedicated development support into a common framework for the period 2026–2035.

1.2. Purpose and Scope of the Strategy

The purpose of the strategy is to guide the development, diversification, management and promotion of tourism across Afar Regional State. It establishes the strategic goals and actions through which public institutions, communities and businesses will improve tourism competitiveness and extend the sector's contribution to regional development. The strategy provides clear implementation responsibilities and a performance framework for assessing results.

The geographic scope covers the region's attraction sites, host communities, tourism corridors, gateway towns and supporting service areas. The thematic scope includes cultural tourism, geological and adventure experiences, archaeological and educational tourism, nature-based activities, appropriate wellness experiences and domestic and diaspora travel. Product development will connect these themes according to market needs and local operating conditions.

The strategy addresses both destination-wide systems and site- or route-level delivery. It covers resource assessment, product design, infrastructure and services, safety, local enterprise, workforce development, investment facilitation, destination governance, marketing, digital services and conservation. The Afar

Tourism Development Fund forms a dedicated pillar for project support and the education of future leaders. All years in this strategy refer to the Gregorian calendar.

1.3. Methodology Used

The strategy was developed through a mixed-method approach combining qualitative consultation, field assessment, visitor research and documentary review. Key tourism stakeholders were interviewed to establish sector priorities and implementation constraints. Interviews with Afar Regional Tourism Bureau heads and experts addressed institutional responsibilities, destination development and sector management. Field trips covered tourism attraction sites across Afar, while a focus group discussion held in Addis Ababa examined the region's tourism development direction. A tourist satisfaction survey provided a visitor perspective.

The analysis organized these different perspectives around demand, supply, the enabling environment, governance and sustainability. SWOT analysis, stakeholder analysis, product-readiness assessment and implementation-gap analysis were used to connect the sector diagnosis with practical strategic responses. The resulting framework links the identified challenges to goals, actions, responsible institutions and indicators.

1.4. Stakeholder Engagement Process

Stakeholder engagement included tourism operators and other key industry participants, regional tourism leadership and technical experts, and participants in the Addis Ababa focus group discussion. The process brought together institutional, business and destination perspectives on Afar's tourism potential and operational constraints. Attraction-site visits added direct consideration of the places and services through which tourism is delivered, while the tourist satisfaction survey incorporated visitor experience into the assessment.

Implementation will maintain this engagement through regular public-private dialogue, community product panels, destination coordination and annual performance reviews. Host communities will participate in decisions on cultural access, experience design and local service provision. Businesses will contribute to product testing, skills development, promotion and service improvement. Education and research institutions will support professional development and performance assessment.

Consultation and operational agreement serve different purposes. Participation in strategy discussions does not replace the consent required for cultural recording, hosting, use of land or access to private spaces. Product-level agreements will define these matters with the individuals, communities and competent institutions concerned.

1.5. Alignment with National and Regional Development Goals

Tourism development will contribute to economic diversification, employment, enterprise growth, cultural continuity and responsible use of natural resources. The strategy connects these objectives to the region's practical priorities through local supply chains, professional capability, improved services and investment in tourism opportunities. Women, young people and communities beyond established tourism centers will receive attention through accessible participation pathways.

Implementation will operate within the applicable national and regional frameworks for tourism, land use, investment, labor, environmental protection, heritage conservation, public administration and revenue collection. Responsible institutions will integrate the actions into their sector work programs and coordinate activities that cross institutional mandates. The Fund will be established through the legal instruments required by the competent authorities.

The strategy also advances the principles of decent work, sustainable communities, responsible consumption and partnerships. These principles are reflected in the design of products, workforce programs, enterprise support, environmental management and public accountability rather than treated as separate activities.

1.6. Strategic Planning Framework

The planning framework connects the sector diagnosis to a shared vision, mission, guiding principles, strategic objectives and nine complementary pillars. Each pillar contains an overview, strategic goals, goal descriptions, their importance to Afar, targets, strategic actions and an implementation roadmap. The action-plan tables translate these commitments into institutional tasks and delivery periods, while the KPI tables define the performance measures.

Strategic choices follow four connected considerations: the value of the experience to visitors; the role and benefit of communities; the capacity to deliver and maintain services; and the protection of cultural and natural resources. Product development will proceed through assessment, design, implementation and review. Expansion will depend on functioning services, willing hosts and evidence that the product can operate successfully.

02

METHODOLOGY



Stakeholder knowledge, field assessment and visitor research translated into strategic action.

2. Methodology

2.1. Introduction

The methodology combined primary data collection and documentary analysis to examine tourism conditions, stakeholder priorities and visitor experience. Its purpose was to identify the constraints preventing Afar's tourism resources from generating wider and more consistent development benefits and to translate those constraints into practical strategic responses. The assessment considered tourism as a connected system of attractions, people, enterprises, institutions and services.

2.2. Methodological Framework

The methodological framework comprised preparation and scoping, situational assessment, strategic formulation, and review and finalization. Preparation defined the geographic and thematic scope and the issues requiring investigation. Situational assessment brought together interviews, attraction-site visits, focus group discussion, tourist satisfaction research and documentary review. Strategic formulation organized the findings and development priorities into goals and actions. Review assessed the consistency between the diagnosis, strategic choices, implementation responsibilities and performance measures.

Qualitative analysis was used to identify institutional and operational issues and to explain their implications for tourism development. The tourist satisfaction survey added the visitor perspective. Site assessment supported consideration of access, facilities, interpretation, management and environmental conditions. The methods provided different forms of evidence and were used together in developing the sector assessment.

2.3. Data Collection Methods

2.3.1. Desk Review

The desk review examined tourism resource descriptions, destination information, development proposals and relevant planning materials. It provided a foundation for understanding the region's resource base, tourism geography, existing strategic priorities and institutional requirements. Cultural-route materials supported consideration of communities and experiences beyond the best-known attractions.

2.3.2. Key Informant Interviews

Multiple interviews were undertaken with key tourism stakeholders in Afar. Interviews were also conducted with heads and technical experts of the Afar Regional Tourism Bureau. These consultations brought operational and institutional perspectives into the strategy-development process and provided a basis for examining tourism development priorities, coordination and delivery requirements.

2.3.3. Focus Group Discussion

A focus group discussion on the development of tourism in Afar was undertaken in Addis Ababa. The discussion formed part of the engagement process through which sector perspectives and strategic options were considered. Its role within the methodology was to support joint examination of development issues and the relationships between tourism products, institutions, enterprises and markets.

2.3.4. Field Visits and Attraction-Site Assessments

Field trips were undertaken to attraction sites throughout Afar. The field component placed the assessment in the physical context of tourism delivery and supported consideration of the resources, access and services on which visitor experiences depend. The strategy translates site-level requirements into coordinated priorities for product improvement, facilities, safety and resource management.

2.3.5. Tourist Satisfaction Survey

A tourist satisfaction survey was undertaken as part of the strategy-development process. Visitor experience was therefore included alongside institutional and business perspectives. The continuing performance framework will maintain satisfaction measurement and connect visitor feedback to improvements in interpretation, services, information, safety and the overall quality of tourism experiences.

2.4. Analytical Techniques

SWOT analysis organized the region's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Stakeholder analysis examined the institutions and groups responsible for tourism delivery and the relationships needed for implementation. Product-readiness analysis considered whether resources could be developed and operated through clear access, host participation, interpretation and service arrangements. Gap analysis examined the distance between current sector conditions and the capabilities required by the strategy.

The sector assessment draws specific qualitative conclusions about product concentration, service gaps, participation, governance and development capacity. These conclusions provide the basis for strategic choices. Targets express the results to be achieved during implementation and are distinct from measurements of past performance. Each target is linked to an indicator and evidence source so that progress can be assessed consistently.

2.5. Validation and Finalization

The strategic framework is organized to maintain a direct relationship between the sector challenges, objectives, goals and implementation actions. The finalization process checks that each action has a responsible institution, a delivery period and an identifiable result, and that each goal has a performance measure. It also checks consistency across the narrative, action-plan tables and monitoring framework.

The Afar Regional Tourism Bureau will lead the formal adoption process with the competent regional authorities and participating institutions. Annual implementation planning will confirm institutional assignments, current operating conditions and action sequencing. Changes to strategic goals or targets will be recorded through the established review process so that accountability remains clear.

2.6. Limitations

Tourism conditions vary by season, destination, visitor segment and operating environment. Site conditions and access can change after assessment, and satisfaction responses describe the experience of the people surveyed rather than every visitor. Qualitative consultation identifies issues and priorities but does not by itself establish their statistical prevalence across the entire region.

Reported visitor totals and international estimates do not share a confirmed reference period or counting method. Site designation totals also require reconciliation with an inventory of functioning products. They provide historical and indicative context, while comparable annual baselines will be established through the regional performance register. The strategy therefore uses a continuing monitoring system to update performance information and test outcomes during implementation. Research records, recurring visitor surveys, host feedback and administrative reporting will be maintained together. Current access, environmental conditions and service readiness will be checked before each route or product begins operating and whenever material conditions change.

2.7. Summary

The methodology provides a multidisciplinary basis for tourism planning by combining stakeholder engagement, institutional consultation, field assessment, visitor research and documentary analysis. The sector assessment identifies the challenges requiring coordinated intervention, while the strategic framework converts those challenges into goals, actions and measurable results. Continued monitoring and evaluation will keep implementation responsive to changing conditions.

03

SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS



The visitor economy, the resources that sustain it and the constraints that shape the next decade.

3. Situational Analysis

3.1. Tourism Demand Analysis

Afar combines a specialist international expedition market with a broader domestic and international visitor economy. Reported tourism performance for the 2022/2023 fiscal year exceeded 251,000 domestic and foreign visitors. This historical recovery figure demonstrates an existing visitor base, but does not establish current demand, the number of distinct individuals, overnight stays or the distribution of visits between destinations. It must be interpreted with its reporting period and counting coverage.

Separate estimates place annual international tourism at approximately 8,000–12,000 visitors, without a specified reference year or a consistent annual series. These estimates indicate the scale of a specialist market; they cannot be combined with the 2022/2023 total to calculate domestic arrivals, market shares or growth. The strategy will develop products for several visitor segments while strengthening annual measurement of arrivals, site visits, overnight stays and visitor satisfaction.

3.1.1. International and Specialist Tourism

The estimated international volume points to a relatively specialized market in which reliable operations and distinctive experiences are essential. Erta Ale, Dallol and the wider Danakil landscape provide a recognized basis for geological and adventure travel, while Hadar supports human-origins and educational interests. These markets require competent guiding, accurate interpretation, dependable logistics and clear information about operating conditions.

Cultural routes can complement expedition itineraries through locally hosted learning, craft, food, oral history and salt-heritage experiences. They should also be available as independent products. Operator trials and actual bookings will establish which combinations attract demand and extend visits; the estimated international volume alone does not justify large-scale expansion of accommodation or facilities.

3.1.2. Domestic and Diaspora Tourism

The combined visitor total establishes the importance of examining tourism beyond the international expedition segment. It does not provide a separate domestic or diaspora count. Product development will therefore test domestic residents, diaspora visitors, families and organized learning groups as distinct markets, with demand assessed through bookings, visitor research and repeat use.

Short cultural experiences in Semera and Logia, community workshops and heritage-learning itineraries can serve visitors with different travel durations and service expectations. Partnerships with local operators, education institutions and community enterprises will connect these experiences to transport, accommodation and clear booking arrangements. Diaspora demand will be measured directly rather than inferred from the regional total.

3.1.3. Educational and Research-Related Tourism

Afar's human-origins heritage, geological environments and living cultural knowledge provide opportunities for structured educational travel. Institutions and operators need clear learning objectives, specialist interpretation, permissions and appropriate safeguarding. Educational products should involve qualified experts and community practitioners, with roles defined according to the knowledge and experience being shared.

3.1.4. Visitor Experience and Market Development Implications

The visitor journey depends on access, accommodation, campsites, utilities, interpretation and emergency preparedness. Reported road constraints, limited organized desert camps and interruptions to water and electricity help explain why exceptional attractions do not automatically produce dependable experiences. These operating gaps support the priority given to basic services, hospitality capability and route readiness.

The tourist satisfaction survey provides a basis for identifying experience improvements, while repeat surveys will measure change. Visitor totals do not establish satisfaction, average stay or participation in cultural activities. The Tourism Bureau will report these measures separately and link feedback to specific service improvements, product testing and marketing decisions.

3.2. Tourism Supply Analysis

The reported destination portfolio expanded from ten to sixteen tourism sites by 2023. This historical count indicates an effort to broaden the offer, but designation alone does not establish whether a site is accessible, interpreted, serviced or commercially operational. The opening resource inventory will distinguish designated sites, visitor-ready products and operating cultural routes, and record each resource's custodian, location, condition and service needs. Cultural resources and community enterprises must be included alongside recognized natural attractions.

3.2.1. Cultural Resources and Community Experiences

Afar's cultural resources include oral traditions, craft, food, architecture, pastoral knowledge, markets, social memory and contemporary creative activity. These resources are held and practiced by people and cannot be developed in the same way as a physical attraction. Participation, interpretation and commercial arrangements must be agreed with those who provide the experience. Tourism offers should reflect living and changing communities, with space for everyday enterprise and contemporary expression.

The principal development gap is the conversion of selected, community-approved resources into reliable products. A visitor experience needs defined content, a host, a suitable setting, service standards and a way to book. Cultural routes provide a framework for connecting these elements across participating places, while short workshops and gateway experiences provide accessible entry points for different markets.

3.2.2. Geological, Archaeological and Natural Resources

The Danakil Depression and Dallol offer salt landscapes and geothermal formations, while Erta Ale is a major volcanic attraction. Hadar, within the Lower Valley of the Awash, is internationally significant for human-origins research, including the discovery of Lucy, dated to approximately 3.2 million years ago. Awash and Yangudi Rassa national parks form part of the wider nature-tourism resource base, subject to their respective conservation and access requirements.

The development opportunity is to connect these resources with accurate interpretation, local guides and community enterprises. Salt heritage, pastoral knowledge and cultural learning can add depth to established journeys without reducing communities to an attraction. Scientific claims, wildlife offers and access conditions require current verification before promotion, and visitor use must follow custodial, environmental and safety requirements.

3.2.3. Accommodation, Food and Supporting Services

Accommodation and supporting services are unevenly distributed between gateways and remote attractions. Expedition travel commonly uses gateway bases such as Semera and Mekele before onward journeys and desert camping. Limited organized camps and gaps in water, power and hospitality services restrict itinerary choice. Mekele's role as a gateway outside Afar also strengthens the case for developing suitable services and supplier relationships within Afar.

The size and location of additional accommodation demand have not been quantified through a consistent room, bed and occupancy series. Investment preparation will therefore assess seasonal bookings, existing capacity, utilities and operating capability before selecting sites or facility sizes. Priorities include maintainable camps, appropriate lodge and accommodation upgrades, food services and community enterprises linked to cultural routes. Local purchasing and quality standards will connect these investments to Afar-based producers and service providers.

3.2.4. Product Distribution and Tourism Enterprises

Tour operators, guides, accommodation businesses and transport providers organize much of the visitor journey. Their relationships with host communities and local enterprises influence the range of experiences sold and the distribution of tourism opportunities. New products need dependable distribution arrangements and transparent responsibilities for bookings, cancellations, service delivery and host payments.

Enterprise support should prioritize practical management, product quality and repeat business. Local businesses require pathways to formal participation that are understandable and proportionate to their scale. Product development, investment support and skills training will be coordinated so that enterprises can use the opportunities created by the strategy.

3.3. Infrastructure and Enabling Environment

3.3.1. Access and Mobility

Inadequate access to remote geological attractions constrains reliable itineraries, emergency response and the participation of surrounding communities. Roads, crossings, wayfinding and transport arrangements must be assessed together with the destinations and cultural experiences they serve. Priority will go to constraints that prevent an otherwise viable product from operating, with delivery and maintenance assigned to the competent infrastructure authorities.

3.3.2. Visitor Facilities and Basic Services

Limited structured desert camps and interruptions to electricity and water weaken service reliability. Sanitation, shade, drinking-water arrangements, waste handling and visitor orientation are essential at established attractions and emerging cultural routes. Facilities must respond to expected use, heat, water availability, accessibility and the capacity of local operators to maintain them.

Visitor-information desks, sanitation improvements at Erta Ale and safety service points are relevant facility priorities. Existing and planned facilities will be inventoried and inspected before additional construction is commissioned. A facility will count as operational only when its responsible institution, staffing, supplies and maintenance arrangements are in place.

3.3.3. Safety and Emergency Preparedness

Tourism operations must respond to extreme heat, remote terrain, geological hazards and changing access conditions. Guides and operators need tested communication, clear incident procedures and realistic referral arrangements. Route readiness must be assessed as an operating condition, with authority to postpone or stop departures where required controls are not in place.

3.3.4. Digital Connectivity and Business Support

Uneven connectivity affects visitor communication, bookings, payments and reporting. Digital services must be designed around available infrastructure and user capability. Offline information, alternative communication and clear settlement procedures are necessary alongside online systems. Business development also requires accessible information on registration, investment procedures, training and commercial partnerships.

3.4. Institutional and Governance Framework

The Afar Regional Tourism Bureau will coordinate destination development and strategy implementation. Regional institutions responsible for culture and heritage, finance, revenue, investment, infrastructure, environment, security, skills and digital services will deliver actions within their respective mandates. Woreda and municipal administrations will coordinate local services and work with host communities, site custodians and enterprises.

Effective governance requires a clear distinction between coordination, regulation, project delivery and commercial operation. A regional coordination mechanism will resolve shared constraints, while route and

site agreements will assign practical operating responsibilities. The strategy does not transfer statutory powers between institutions; it organizes their collaboration around tourism outcomes.

Communities will participate through appropriate representation and individual hosting and service agreements. Businesses will contribute to development and delivery while remaining accountable for service quality and employment practices. Universities and training providers will support research, skills and evaluation. The Fund will have a defined legal mandate and governance structure with independent oversight of its collection and project-support functions.

3.5. SWOT Analysis of the Afar Tourism Sector

Strengths

- Distinctive geological, archaeological and natural resources with strong specialist-tourism appeal.
- Living cultural knowledge, craft, oral traditions, food and contemporary community enterprise.
- Established attraction recognition and gateway towns that can support a wider range of products.
- Opportunities to connect tourism with local guiding, services and supply chains.

Weaknesses

- Concentration of products around a limited set of attractions and insufficient cultural experiences.
- Uneven access, accommodation, interpretation, sanitation and emergency preparedness.
- Limited enterprise and workforce capability and weak links to continuing market demand.
- Fragmented coordination, destination information and performance reporting.

Opportunities

- Community-led cultural routes and new domestic, diaspora and educational products.
- Improved interpretation and cultural connections that add value to existing itineraries.
- Responsible investment, local supplier development and practical digital business adoption.
- Dedicated development support and advanced learning through the Tourism Development Fund.

Threats

- Access disruption, heat, geological hazards and other operational shocks.
- Water stress, environmental degradation and damage to cultural or archaeological resources.
- Cultural misuse, exclusion and declining host support where tourism is poorly managed.
- Delayed projects, insufficient maintenance and skills development without employment outcomes.

3.6. Benchmarking Report

Benchmarking focuses on the operating practices required of a competitive and responsible destination. The relevant comparison is between Afar's development needs and the capabilities that enable tourism products to function: a defined market, a reliable visitor journey, community participation, clear management, professional services and protected resources. This approach directs attention to practical improvements that can be applied within Afar's geography and institutional setting.

Product-development practice emphasizes complete experiences and connected itineraries. For Afar, this means linking attractions with interpretation, hosts and services and testing cultural routes before expansion. Community-tourism practice emphasizes clear participation, defined rights and practical enterprise support. For Afar, this means agreements that make hosting choices and service relationships visible.

Destination-management practice emphasizes accountable coordination and performance review. For Afar, this means named responsible institutions, route-management agreements and a regular process for resolving constraints. Workforce practice emphasizes demonstrated competence and employment progression. For Afar, this means practical assessment, paid placements and continuing professional development.

Sustainable destination practice emphasizes resource limits and operating responsibility. For Afar, this means environmental screening, cultural protocols, maintenance and condition monitoring. Digital practice emphasizes current information and usable tools. For Afar, this means maintaining reliable official services and strengthening basic enterprise and reporting capability before adding complexity. These benchmarking conclusions guide the design of the strategic goals and actions.

3.7. Summary of Tourism Sector Challenges in Afar

The sector assessment identifies thirteen connected challenges. Their combined effect is to limit product diversity, service reliability, local participation and the ability to sustain development. The following findings define the priorities to be addressed through the strategic pillars.

1. Limited product diversity and concentration around known attractions

Tourism activity is concentrated around a small number of recognized natural attractions. Living culture, local knowledge, craft, food and community life are insufficiently organized into bookable experiences, leaving many communities outside the main visitor economy.

Strategic implication: Expand the product inventory; enhance existing experiences; develop cultural routes and community products. This response is delivered through pillar 1.

2. Weak interpretation and incomplete visitor experiences

Attractions are not consistently supported by clear interpretation, locally informed storytelling or linked activities. Visitors can encounter exceptional resources without a sufficiently developed learning experience or opportunities to engage with surrounding communities.

Strategic implication: Improve scientific and cultural interpretation, guide materials and connections between attractions and host enterprises. This response is delivered through pillars 1, 6 and 8.

3. Inadequate access and essential visitor services

Remote attraction access, limited organized desert camps and interruptions to water and electricity constrain dependable tourism operations. Sanitation, shade, wayfinding and waste handling remain essential gaps to address when improving established destinations and opening cultural routes.

Strategic implication: Prioritize access constraints and maintain essential facilities at route and destination level. This response is delivered through pillar 2.

4. Limited accommodation and hospitality choices

Accommodation and expedition services are concentrated in gateway bases, with fewer dependable options near remote attractions. The absence of a consistent room, bed and occupancy series also limits investment decisions. Service expansion requires site-specific demand testing, utilities and viable operations.

Strategic implication: Prepare appropriate accommodation and service investments and strengthen hospitality skills and quality standards. This response is delivered through pillars 2, 3 and 6.

5. Safety and emergency-response constraints

Heat, long travel distances, difficult terrain and geological hazards place significant demands on operators. Uneven communication and emergency arrangements make preparedness and current operating decisions essential to every route.

Strategic implication: Establish route-specific safety protocols, trained teams, communication tests and coordinated incident response. This response is delivered through pillar 2.

6. Limited community participation in tourism value chains

Proximity to an attraction does not automatically provide residents with business, skilled employment or influence over tourism. Hosting, representation and commercial relationships need clearer arrangements to support meaningful participation.

Strategic implication: Establish host agreements, cultural enterprises, local purchasing relationships and accessible skills pathways. This response is delivered through pillars 1, 3 and 6.

7. Fragmented governance and implementation responsibility

Tourism responsibilities extend across several regional and local institutions. Weak coordination, inconsistent destination management and limited follow-through on shared priorities can delay delivery and leave service problems unresolved.

Strategic implication: Assign accountable institutions, strengthen coordination and establish route management and quarterly performance reviews. This response is delivered through pillar 4.

8. Workforce and leadership capacity gaps

The sector needs stronger practical capability in guiding, interpretation, hospitality, business administration, safety and digital services. Training must connect to paid work and provide progression into supervisory, management and public leadership roles.

Strategic implication: Introduce competency-based training, placements, enterprise management support and a future tourism leaders program. This response is delivered through pillars 6 and 9.

9. Investment preparation and enterprise-development constraints

Potential opportunities require clearer market information, project appraisal, service arrangements and administrative support. Smaller enterprises face additional barriers in business capability, market connections and access to suitable support.

Strategic implication: Prepare appraised opportunities, strengthen investor aftercare and provide practical enterprise and supplier support. This response is delivered through pillars 3 and 9.

10. Fragmented marketing and incomplete market intelligence

Destination communication gives uneven attention to the full range of Afar experiences. Inconsistent information and weak links between promotion, distribution and bookings limit the effectiveness of campaigns and market partnerships.

Strategic implication: Strengthen the Visit Afar brand, cultural storytelling, targeted campaigns and repeat-market partnerships. This response is delivered through pillars 5 and 8.

11. Pressure on fragile resources and cultural integrity

Sensitive landscapes, water resources, archaeological sites and living culture require clear visitor limits and management responsibilities. Poor waste practices, unplanned development and unauthorized cultural use can undermine the assets and community support on which tourism depends.

Strategic implication: Apply safeguards, resource plans, cultural protocols and community stewardship before and during operations. This response is delivered through pillar 7.

12. Weak tourism data and performance accountability

The reported visitor total relates to 2022/2023, the international estimate lacks a defined reference year, and the historical site count does not measure operating readiness. These measures cannot establish a common current baseline or domestic market share. Consistent definitions, dated records and follow-up to visitor, host and enterprise outcomes are required.

Strategic implication: Consolidate the research baseline, standardize reporting and use annual reviews and independent evaluations. This response is delivered through pillars 4 and 8.

13. Insufficient continuity in tourism development support

Tourism projects, maintenance and professional development require sustained support across the implementation period. A dedicated, accountable mechanism is needed to connect resource mobilization with priority projects and the education of future sector leaders.

Strategic implication: Establish the Afar Tourism Development Fund with lawful revenue mechanisms, transparent project selection and leadership support. This response is delivered through pillar 9.

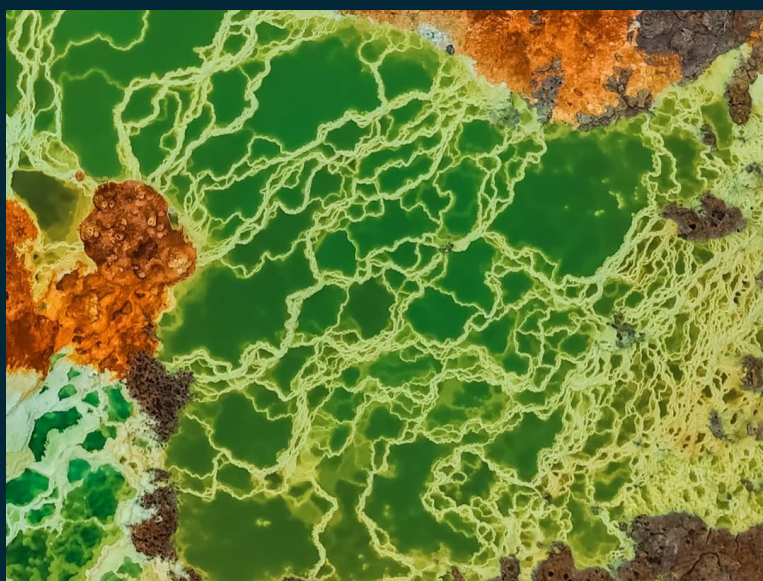
3.8. Conclusion

The historical visitor total and reported expansion of tourism sites show an existing platform for development. The specialist international market and persistent gaps in access, camps, utilities and hospitality indicate that future performance depends on product quality and reliable operations. Additional site designations must be accompanied by interpretation, services, accountable management and measurable use.

People and culture provide the main opportunity to diversify future products and extend participation beyond established attractions. Cultural routes will connect willing hosts and enterprises with gateways and wider travel circuits. The strategy combines this diversification with targeted infrastructure, viable investment, professional skills, resource protection and improved tourism statistics so that growth is measured through visitor experience and local outcomes as well as volume.

04

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK



A shared vision, clear objectives and the principles that guide implementation.

4. Strategic Framework

4.1. Introduction

The strategic framework establishes a common direction for tourism development in Afar over the period 2026–2035. It links the region's living culture, landscapes and heritage with the capabilities needed to deliver high-quality experiences and wider local benefits. The framework is built around a vision, mission, guiding principles, strategic objectives and nine complementary pillars.

The priorities are mutually supporting. Diversified products need services and market access; enterprises need skills and predictable institutions; communities need meaningful participation; and the destination needs protection of its resources. The Fund will support development priorities and future leadership within a transparent legal and institutional framework.

4.2. Vision Statement

To position Afar as a leading sustainable tourism destination distinguished by its living culture, extraordinary landscapes and human-origins heritage, where tourism creates lasting value for residents and visitors.

4.3. Mission Statement

To develop, manage and promote diversified Afar tourism experiences through community participation, professional services, capable institutions, responsible investment and the protection of cultural and natural heritage.

4.4. Guiding Principles

Community Participation and Local Benefit

Residents will participate in the design, ownership and delivery of tourism experiences. Development will create practical opportunities for local enterprise, skilled work and supply relationships, with attention to communities outside established tourism centers.

Cultural Respect and Living Heritage

Cultural practitioners and communities will determine the knowledge, spaces and activities they share. Tourism will respect privacy, cultural permissions and the right to withdraw, and will support the transmission and continued development of living heritage.

Sustainability and Resource Stewardship

Tourism will operate within environmental and heritage limits. Development and operations will protect water, landscapes, archaeological resources and ecosystem condition and will maintain essential local uses.

Safety and Service Quality

Visitors and workers will be supported by competent personnel, dependable services and tested operating procedures. Products will be promoted and operated only when their essential access, safety and service requirements are met.

Inclusion and Professional Opportunity

Women, young people, persons with disabilities and residents of remote communities will have accessible opportunities to participate in tourism. Training and leadership pathways will connect learning to practical work and enterprise progression.

Partnership and Accountability

Institutions, communities and businesses will work through clear responsibilities and transparent decisions. Public reporting, complaints mechanisms and independent review will support confidence and corrective action.

Evidence and Adaptive Management

Research, visitor feedback, community experience and operational records will guide decisions. Implementation will be reviewed regularly, with changes recorded and assessed against the strategy's intended outcomes.

4.5. Strategic Objectives

Strategic Objective 1 – Diversify Tourism Products and Strengthen the Visitor Experience

Objective Description: Develop a balanced portfolio of cultural, natural, geological and heritage experiences, with people and culture central to new product development. Improve the quality of established products and create routes that connect lesser-known places with dependable services.

Rationale: A broader product range will extend participation, strengthen the depth of visits and enable Afar to serve different markets.

Target: By 2035, operate six cultural routes, thirty-six market-tested cultural experiences, twelve upgraded priority products and twenty diversified itineraries.

Strategic Objective 2 – Expand Local Enterprise and Inclusive Professional Opportunity

Objective Description: Increase the role of Afar residents in tourism delivery through viable enterprises, local supply relationships, practical training and progression into skilled work and leadership.

Rationale: Tourism contributes to regional development when residents participate as capable providers, employees, managers and owners.

Target: By 2035, achieve a seventy-five percent two-year survival rate among supported enterprises and a seventy percent six-month work or enterprise outcome among eligible training completers; support eighty future tourism leaders.

Strategic Objective 3 – Improve Visitor Services, Safety and Destination Competitiveness

Objective Description: Strengthen access, basic facilities, hospitality quality, interpretation and emergency preparedness across priority destinations and routes.

Rationale: Reliable services and professional operating conditions are essential to visitor satisfaction and the successful operation of diversified products.

Target: By 2035, resolve eighteen priority access or service bottlenecks, achieve ninety-five percent functionality among assessed visitor facilities and maintain current safety approval for all operating routes.

Strategic Objective 4 – Strengthen Governance, Market Access and Tourism Intelligence

Objective Description: Improve institutional coordination, operating standards, the Visit Afar brand, targeted promotion and the quality of tourism data and digital services.

Rationale: Clear responsibilities and credible information connect development activity to market demand and measurable results.

Target: By 2035, achieve timely completion of eighty-five percent of annual implementation milestones, current approved information for all published operating routes and verified data for ninety-five percent of core indicators.

Strategic Objective 5 – Sustain Heritage and Establish Accountable Development Support

Objective Description: Protect cultural and natural resources, strengthen community control and establish the Afar Tourism Development Fund to support projects and future professional leadership.

Rationale: Conservation, local legitimacy and institutional continuity are essential to the lasting value of tourism.

Target: Apply required safeguards to every supported project before commitment; achieve eighty-five percent host satisfaction with control over participation and ninety percent continued functionality among Fund-supported projects assessed twelve months after completion.

4.6. Strategic Pillars and Thematic Areas

The strategy is implemented through nine pillars. Each addresses a distinct requirement for destination competitiveness and contributes to a common outcome: diversified, professionally managed tourism that benefits Afar residents and sustains the resources on which the sector depends.

4.6.1. Tourism Product Development and Diversification

The pillar will establish a comprehensive tourism resource inventory, enhance existing products, develop cultural routes, strengthen community cultural enterprises and introduce complementary special-interest experiences. Product development will combine commercial testing with community agreements, cultural protection and environmental management. The intended outcome is a diversified portfolio that attracts different visitor segments, encourages longer and repeat visits, and distributes benefits more widely across Afar.

4.6.2. Tourism Infrastructure, Visitor Facilities and Safety

This pillar will remove critical access constraints, improve essential visitor facilities and institutionalize safety and emergency preparedness. Small, maintainable improvements will accompany investment in accommodation and other commercially operated services. The intended result is a network of destinations and routes with reliable services, higher visitor satisfaction and an effective response to operational incidents.

4.6.3. Tourism Investment Promotion and Private Sector Development

The pillar will strengthen local enterprises, prepare sustainable investment opportunities and connect tourism demand to regional suppliers. Public institutions will coordinate approvals and aftercare, while businesses will carry responsibility for commercial delivery and employment standards. Success will be measured through operational investments, enterprise survival, dependable supplier relationships and broader local participation.

4.6.4. Destination Management and Institutional Strengthening

This pillar will strengthen the Afar Regional Tourism Bureau's coordination role, assign accountable delivery institutions, establish destination operating arrangements and embed evidence in management. A common action register, quarterly reviews and annual reporting will connect the strategy to routine institutional work. The intended outcome is a responsive tourism administration that sustains implementation and resolves cross-sector constraints.

4.6.5. Destination Branding, Marketing and Promotion

The pillar will strengthen the destination brand, build targeted promotion and develop lasting market partnerships. Campaigns will feature products that are ready to receive visitors and will be assessed through qualified inquiries, confirmed bookings, visitor feedback and repeat business. Domestic and educational travel will receive particular attention as sources of continued engagement with Afar's culture and heritage.

4.6.6. Human Resource Development and Community Empowerment

This pillar will build a competent workforce, connect learning to employment and strengthen community enterprise governance. Training institutions, employers and experienced practitioners will deliver courses and placements matched to operational needs. The future leadership program under the Tourism Development Fund will complement this system through advanced study, mentoring and applied leadership development.

4.6.7. Sustainable Tourism, Conservation and Heritage Protection

The pillar will apply safeguards to tourism development, protect community control over living culture and improve resource management at tourism sites. Site custodians, communities, operators and competent public authorities will share defined responsibilities. The intended outcome is continued tourism activity that maintains heritage condition, respects local rights and avoids displacement of essential livelihoods.

4.6.8. Digital Transformation and Tourism Intelligence

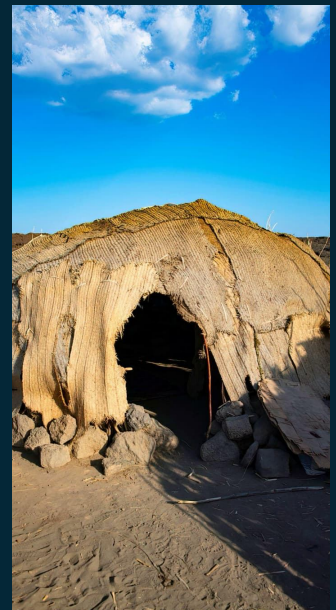
This pillar will improve the official tourism information service, establish a coordinated tourism data system and support business adoption of useful digital tools. Online services will be accompanied by offline information and accessible assistance. Technology performance will be judged through accuracy, usability, reporting quality and the ability of tourism enterprises to serve customers reliably.

4.6.9. Establishment of the Afar Tourism Development Fund

This pillar will establish the Fund, diversify its lawful revenue mechanisms, implement transparent project support and create a future tourism leaders program. Collection, appraisal, award decisions, implementation and audit will have separate responsibilities. The intended outcome is an accountable institution that translates mobilized resources into functioning tourism projects and capable Afar professionals.

05

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREAS AND GOALS



Nine complementary pillars connect Afar's tourism resources with capable people and dependable delivery.

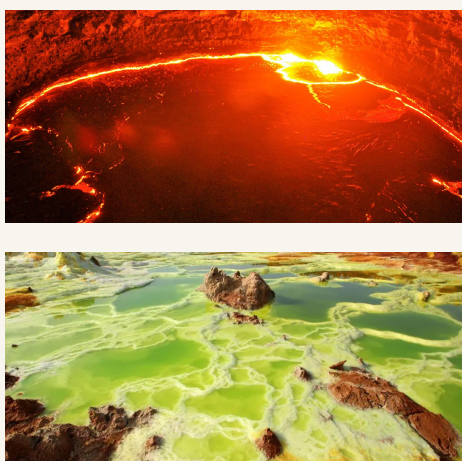
5. Strategic Priority Areas and Strategic Goals

The following pillars set out the strategic goals, actions and implementation roadmap.

- 01 Tourism Product Development and Diversification
- 02 Tourism Infrastructure, Visitor Facilities and Safety
- 03 Tourism Investment Promotion and Private Sector Development
- 04 Destination Management and Institutional Strengthening
- 05 Destination Branding, Marketing and Promotion
- 06 Human Resource Development and Community Empowerment
- 07 Sustainable Tourism, Conservation and Heritage Protection
- 08 Digital Transformation and Tourism Intelligence
- 09 Establishment of the Afar Tourism Development Fund

PILLAR 01

Tourism Product Development and Diversification



OVERVIEW

Afar's tourism resources combine living culture, pastoral knowledge, craft, food, oral traditions and contemporary community life with volcanic landscapes, salt lakes, archaeological heritage, protected areas and hot springs. The development priority is to turn this range into well-organized experiences that visitors can understand, purchase and enjoy, while residents retain control over their participation. Tourism product development therefore covers the whole visitor experience, from interpretation and hosting to itinerary design and reliable service delivery.

The concentration of tourism around a small number of recognized attractions limits the participation of other places and communities. Inadequate interpretation, weak links between attractions and local enterprises, and a limited variety of bookable cultural activities reduce the depth of visits. Cultural routes will address these gaps as a specific goal within a broader program of resource mapping, product improvement and diversification. People and culture will receive priority in the development of new experiences and future projects.

The pillar will establish a comprehensive tourism resource inventory, enhance existing products, develop cultural routes, strengthen community cultural enterprises and introduce complementary special-interest experiences. Product development will combine commercial testing with community agreements, cultural protection and environmental management. The intended outcome is a diversified portfolio that attracts different visitor segments, encourages longer and repeat visits, and distributes benefits more widely across Afar.

5.1. Tourism Product Development and Diversification

5.1.2. Strategic Goals

The following strategic goals establish the development priorities, intended results and actions for this pillar. Implementation will follow the phased roadmap and the responsibilities set out in the action-plan tables.

Strategic Goal 1 – Map, Document and Assess Afar Tourism Resources

GOAL DESCRIPTION

Establish a comprehensive and regularly maintained inventory of natural, cultural, archaeological and community tourism resources. The inventory will consolidate attraction-site assessment information, document living cultural expressions with permission, and classify resources by visitor readiness and development requirements. Public information and restricted cultural records will be managed separately.

IMPORTANCE TO AFAR

The concentration of attention on known attractions obscures the wider range of resources available across Afar. A reliable inventory will guide product selection, improve the distribution of development activity and identify the services and partnerships required before promotion. Community participation will ensure that documentation reflects local knowledge and agreed limits on access.

Tourism resources assessed within the regional inventory

100%
2028

100%
2031

100%
2035

Strategic Actions

A1.1.1

Consolidate the Regional Tourism Resource Inventory

Bring attraction-site assessments, local resource records and cultural information into a common inventory. Record resource type, location, condition, custodianship, access, supporting services and current use. Extend documentation to lesser-known community resources through woreda-level engagement, and obtain permission before recording cultural knowledge or images.

A1.1.2

Assess Product Readiness and Development Requirements

Apply common criteria to access, interpretation, host participation, environmental sensitivity, services and market potential. Classify resources as operational, requiring improvement or requiring further development. Produce a prioritized development schedule that gives attention to cultural resources and underserved places as well as established attractions.

A1.1.3

Establish a Tourism Resource Database and Planning Map

Create a regional resource database with clear responsibility for updates and quality control. Publish only information approved for public use and protect sensitive cultural and archaeological locations. Use the map to coordinate product development, infrastructure and visitor information across destinations.

A1.1.4

Institutionalize Community Participation in Product Selection

Establish a representative product panel for each cultural corridor and a process for households, practitioners and enterprises to participate voluntarily. Agree hosting limits, representation, image use and complaints procedures. Review participation annually and allow hosts to withdraw from activities without losing unrelated public services.

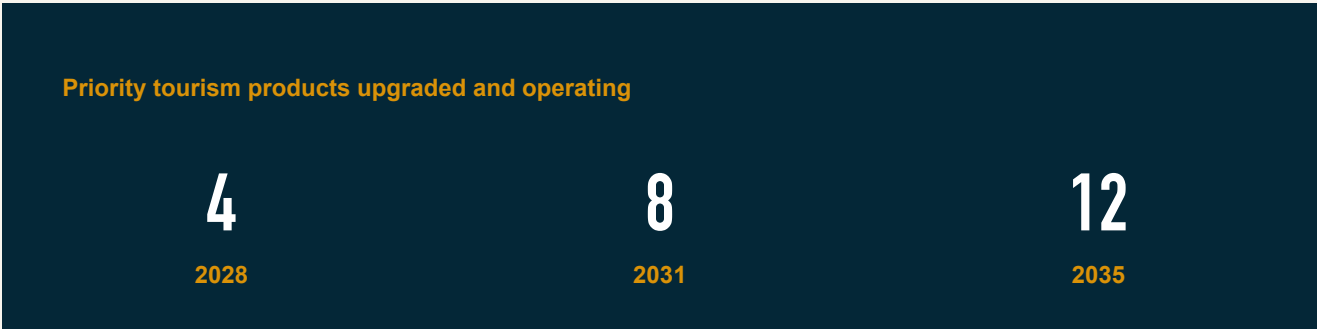
Strategic Goal 2 – Enhance and Revitalize Existing Tourism Products

GOAL DESCRIPTION

Improve the experience offered at established attractions through accurate interpretation, reliable visitor management and stronger connections to surrounding communities. Product enhancement will cover geological, archaeological, protected-area, lake and hot-spring experiences and the service hubs that support them. Improvements will be coordinated with infrastructure, safety and conservation responsibilities.

IMPORTANCE TO AFAR

Recognized attractions create an entry point for visitors to discover Afar, but their wider value depends on the quality and depth of the experience. Better interpretation and cultural connections will encourage learning and additional activities, while clear visitor management will protect sensitive resources and improve satisfaction.



Strategic Actions

A1.2.1

Prepare Product Improvement Plans for Priority Attractions

Prepare improvement plans for twelve priority tourism products, selected through resource assessment. Address visitor arrival, interpretation, local guiding, cultural connections, service gaps and management responsibilities. Coordinate the plans with the responsible infrastructure, safety and conservation institutions before implementation.

A1.2.2

Upgrade Interpretation and Visitor Experiences

Introduce accurate and accessible interpretation at established natural and heritage attractions, including geological and human-origins resources. Develop guide materials, visitor orientation and approved interpretive content that connects landscapes with the people who live in them. Use qualified specialists for scientific and archaeological information and local practitioners for cultural knowledge.

A1.2.3

Connect Established Attractions with Community Services

Work with operators and host enterprises to include cultural learning, locally provided meals, guiding and craft experiences in existing itineraries. Establish clear booking arrangements and distinguish optional activities from the main attraction visit. Review whether communities receive actual business and whether the added experiences meet visitor expectations.

A1.2.4

Improve Gateway and Visitor Orientation Experiences

Strengthen visitor orientation in Semera, Logia and other agreed service gateways. Combine practical travel information with exhibitions, cultural storytelling, local products and short guided experiences. Use suitable existing premises and establish daily operating and content-update responsibilities.

Strategic Goal 3 — Develop Community-Led Cultural Routes

GOAL DESCRIPTION

Create a coordinated network of cultural routes that connects willing host communities, practitioners, local enterprises and complementary attractions. Each route will have a coherent theme, agreed host participation, bookable experiences, verified services and an accountable operating arrangement. Routes will be developed through community design, market testing and progressive expansion.

IMPORTANCE TO AFAR

Cultural routes can bring lesser-known places into the tourism economy and create direct opportunities for storytelling, guiding, crafts, food and cultural learning. Their value lies in meaningful engagement with people and contemporary life. Community leadership will protect dignity and strengthen local ownership while route coordination makes experiences accessible to the market.

Operational cultural routes

2

2028

4

2031

6

2035

Strategic Actions

A1.3.1

Design and Pilot the Cultural Route Portfolio

Prepare six route dossiers covering theme, host participation, itinerary, services, access, interpretation and operating arrangements. Select two pilots through readiness assessment and undertake paid trial departures. Resolve host, safety and service issues before public launch, then expand successful routes through annual operating reviews.

A1.3.2

Develop the Uwwa and Yallo Pastoral Knowledge and Market Route

Link willing hosts and practitioners in the Uwwa and Yallo corridor through pastoral knowledge, craft, architecture, food and market experiences. Agree visits around livelihoods and market schedules, verify names and connections, and train local interpreters. Geological extensions will complement the cultural itinerary where access and operating conditions allow.

A1.3.3

Develop the Galalu, Samarobi and Hadale Ela Living Culture Route

Create a coordinated route through participating communities, with storytelling, craft, architecture and locally chosen public cultural activities. Agree the role of each host location and preserve the right to limit participation. Connect the experiences through dependable transport, guiding, visitor services and common booking arrangements.

A1.3.4

Develop the Dulacha and Lake Leado Community Learning Route

Design experiences that connect participating communities with pastoral landscapes and seasonal water environments. Combine cultural workshops, local interpretation and appropriate nature observation, with wildlife and water-safety assessment for any lake activity. Confirm host locations and access in the field before itineraries are published.

A1.3.5

Develop the Serdo, Eli Dar and Dobi Livelihoods and Exchange Route

Work with local practitioners and enterprises to interpret pastoral livelihoods, salt-related work and exchange. Organize approved cultural learning and workplace interpretation without disrupting work or exposing visitors to unsafe areas. Route operations will follow current access decisions and tested communication arrangements; border extensions require a separate authorization process.

A1.3.6**Develop the Semera and Logia Makers, Food and Stories Route**

Build a gateway-based network of craft workshops, food experiences, storytelling and contemporary cultural enterprise. Offer short sessions and day itineraries for residents, domestic visitors, diaspora families and travelers entering or leaving the region. Support practitioners to operate in suitable venues and connect offers to hotels and tour operators.

A1.3.7**Develop the Afar Salt Heritage and Community Memory Route**

Develop community-led interpretation of salt-related knowledge, labor, exchange and changing livelihoods around the Lake Asale cultural landscape. Combine approved oral histories, practitioner-led learning and suitable visitor stops. Use alternative interpretation venues where workplace access is inappropriate, and avoid staging historical activities as if they represent current everyday practice.

A1.3.8**Establish Route Management and Market Distribution**

Assign an accountable route manager, agree host and operator responsibilities and publish clear visitor terms. Establish booking, host rotation, payment, cancellation and complaints procedures. Develop independent sales relationships and assess repeat demand, host satisfaction and service performance before adding departures or extending routes.

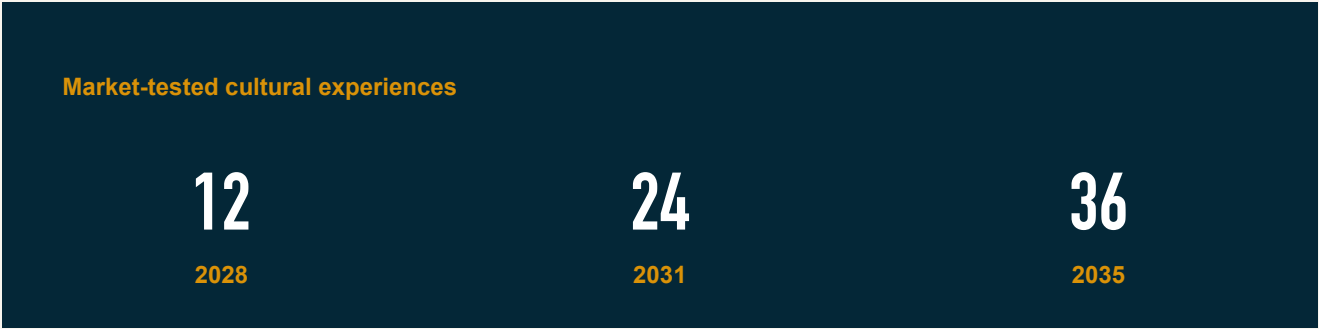
Strategic Goal 4 – Develop Cultural Experiences and Strengthen Community Participation

GOAL DESCRIPTION

Develop distinctive visitor experiences based on Afar craft, food, oral traditions, architecture, cultural expression and community knowledge. Practitioners will determine what can be shared and will participate as paid providers and product owners. Cultural transmission and community representation will be integrated into experience development.

IMPORTANCE TO AFAR

A diversified cultural offer creates practical opportunities for residents whose skills are not reflected in attraction-based tours. It supports women, young people and experienced knowledge holders through different roles and services. Structured hosting arrangements will improve product quality while protecting privacy and the continuity of everyday life.



Strategic Actions

A1.4.1

Develop Bookable Craft, Food and Cultural Learning Experiences

Support practitioners to turn selected skills into defined visitor sessions with clear content, duration, group limits and service standards. Prioritize hands-on craft, food learning, oral expression, architecture and community knowledge where contributors choose to participate. Test products with paying visitors and refine them through host and visitor feedback.

A1.4.2

Equip Shared Cultural Enterprise Spaces

Identify suitable existing venues for craft, food and interpretation activities. Provide appropriate equipment and accessible arrangements for hygiene, shade, display and visitor interaction. Agree ownership, use and maintenance responsibilities with participating enterprises and protect normal community use of the spaces.

A1.4.3

Strengthen Cultural Transmission and Community Interpretation

Support paid learning partnerships between experienced knowledge holders and younger practitioners. Develop Afar-language narratives and approved translations for use in tourism, with contributors controlling disclosure and attribution. Maintain an archive with public and restricted access arrangements and enable communities to revise or withdraw material.

A1.4.4

Develop Community-Chosen Cultural Events and Markets

Support public cultural occasions, markets and learning days selected by participating communities. Improve hosting, accessibility, visitor information and waste arrangements, and connect willing practitioners to local buyers and tourism operators. Private ceremonies and customary proceedings will remain outside advertised visitor programs unless their custodians explicitly authorize a suitable public activity.

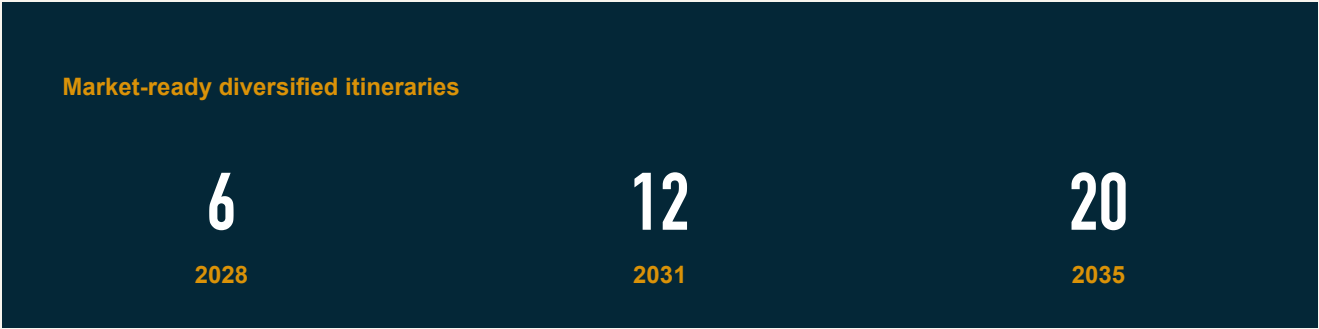
Strategic Goal 5 – Diversify Special-Interest and Domestic Tourism Products

GOAL DESCRIPTION

Develop complementary educational, nature, geological, wellness and short-stay products that connect Afar's heritage with local interpretation and community services. Product design will consider travel time, season, visitor interests and the practical requirements of different markets. The portfolio will include accessible gateway experiences and longer specialist itineraries.

IMPORTANCE TO AFAR

Afar can serve more than one type of traveler. Domestic visitors, diaspora families, students and specialist groups require different formats and service levels. Diversification will broaden participation, strengthen the use of regional service hubs and reduce dependence on a narrow set of itineraries.



Strategic Actions

A1.5.1

Develop Domestic, Diaspora and Educational Tourism Packages

Design short cultural and heritage itineraries for domestic travelers, diaspora families, schools and universities. Match travel time, learning objectives, accommodation and safeguarding to each group. Establish repeat-sales partnerships and offer gateway-based alternatives when longer journeys are unsuitable.

A1.5.2

Strengthen Geological and Human-Origins Learning Products

Develop specialist interpretation and educational itineraries linking geological and human-origins resources with approved community experiences. Work with qualified researchers, site custodians and guides to distinguish scientific explanation from local oral accounts. Provide accessible learning materials and enforce the permissions required for archaeological and protected sites.

A1.5.3

Develop Responsible Nature and Wellness Experiences

Assess nature observation, protected-area, hot-spring and lake-based opportunities for environmental suitability, safety, water requirements and visitor demand. Develop modest experiences with qualified operators and site custodians where conditions permit. Avoid unverified therapeutic claims and ensure that tourism does not displace essential local resource use.

A1.5.4

Integrate Cultural Products with Regional Travel Circuits

Work with operators to link cultural routes and community experiences with established travel circuits and appropriate interregional journeys. Maintain cultural routes as products that can also be purchased independently. Review visitor feedback, actual bookings and host outcomes to expand the itineraries that perform well.

5.1.3. Implementation Roadmap

Phase 1: Foundation and Pilots (2026–2028) — Complete the tourism inventory and readiness assessment; secure host agreements; improve interpretation at priority attractions; prepare six cultural-route concepts and operate two selected pilots. Begin practical cultural workshops and test short domestic and educational products.

Phase 2: Expansion and Development (2029–2031) — Expand to four operating cultural routes and broaden the range of community experiences. Integrate successful cultural products with existing nature and heritage itineraries. Strengthen distribution partnerships and refine products through host and visitor feedback.

Phase 3: Consolidation and Sustainability (2032–2035) — Operate six cultural routes and a diversified portfolio of market-tested experiences. Consolidate quality, community participation and repeat business. Refresh products through cultural learning, interpretation and ongoing review of visitor demand.

PILLAR 02

Tourism Infrastructure, Visitor Facilities and Safety



OVERVIEW

Tourism in Afar depends on access, dependable visitor facilities and an operating system suited to long travel distances, heat, difficult terrain and remote attractions. Roads, sanitation, shade, drinking water, waste services, communication and emergency response determine whether a tourism experience can be delivered consistently. Infrastructure planning must respond to the requirements of residents as well as visitors and protect essential local water and land uses.

Service gaps interrupt journeys, reduce comfort and make tourism operations more difficult. Facilities without maintenance arrangements lose their usefulness, while safety plans without trained personnel and tested communications provide inadequate protection. The priority is to improve the functioning of tourism corridors and service points through coordinated works and clear operating responsibilities.

This pillar will remove critical access constraints, improve essential visitor facilities and institutionalize safety and emergency preparedness. Small, maintainable improvements will accompany investment in accommodation and other commercially operated services. The intended result is a network of destinations and routes with reliable services, higher visitor satisfaction and an effective response to operational incidents.

5.2. Tourism Infrastructure, Visitor Facilities and Safety

5.2.2. Strategic Goals

The following strategic goals establish the development priorities, intended results and actions for this pillar. Implementation will follow the phased roadmap and the responsibilities set out in the action-plan tables.

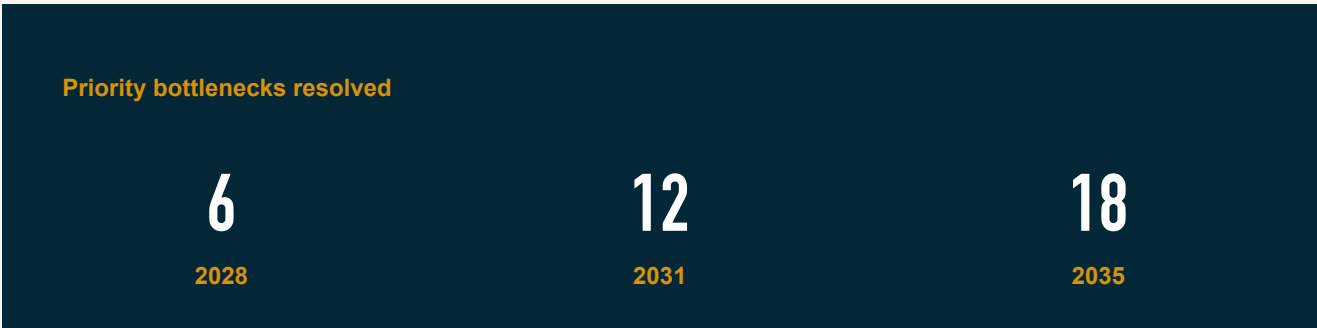
Strategic Goal 1 – Improve Access to Priority Tourism Destinations

GOAL DESCRIPTION

Improve access to priority destinations by identifying and resolving the road, crossing, wayfinding and utility constraints that most directly affect tourism operations. Tourism requirements will be integrated into the work of the competent infrastructure authorities, with clear delivery and maintenance responsibilities.

IMPORTANCE TO AFAR

Reliable access is essential for visitor confidence, community market participation and emergency response. Targeted improvements can enable cultural-route development and improve existing circuits while avoiding works that cannot be maintained.



Strategic Actions

A2.1.1

Audit access and utilities for candidate routes

Inspect transport, water, sanitation, communications, land permissions and seasonal constraints; rank small works and refer major roads to sector plans.

A2.1.2

Deliver priority small access improvements

Procure limited spot repairs, drainage, crossing protection and wayfinding only within approved technical designs and land agreements.

A2.1.3

Maintain route services seasonally

Use performance-based maintenance agreements and pre-season inspections; publish dated access updates with an offline alternative.

Strategic Goal 2 — Develop and Maintain Essential Visitor Facilities

GOAL DESCRIPTION

Provide essential visitor facilities and maintain them through defined operating arrangements. Priority facilities include sanitation, shade, drinking-water arrangements, waste management, rest areas and accessible visitor service points. Facility design will respond to local conditions and user needs.

IMPORTANCE TO AFAR

The quality of basic services shapes visitor satisfaction and host wellbeing. Functional facilities reduce pressure on communities and strengthen the reliability of both established attractions and emerging cultural routes.

Funded facilities passing functionality audit

85%

2028

90%

2031

95%

2035

Strategic Actions

A2.2.1

Agree facility designs and operating contracts

Assess water availability, accessible design, land rights, waste removal and maintenance charges; prioritize existing structures.

A2.2.2

Install basic route facilities

Install low-water sanitation, shade, safe drinking-water arrangements and waste storage through approved designs. Coordinate these works with the shared cultural enterprise spaces under Goal 1.4 and assign caretakers before opening.

A2.2.3

Fund and verify facility upkeep

Cost cleaning, water provision, consumables, waste transport and replacement; match user revenue to service commitments and close unsafe facilities.

Strategic Goal 3 — Strengthen Tourist Safety and Emergency Preparedness

GOAL DESCRIPTION

Establish a coordinated tourism safety and emergency-response system for operating destinations and routes. The system will cover risk assessment, visitor briefings, guide competence, communications, referral arrangements, incident reporting and decisions to suspend operations when conditions are unsuitable.

IMPORTANCE TO AFAR

Afar's heat, remote terrain and geological environments demand practical preparedness. Consistent safety arrangements protect visitors and workers and support the credibility of the region as a professionally managed destination.

Operating routes passing safety readiness review

100%

2028

100%

2031

100%

2035

Strategic Actions

A2.3.1

Set route operating and closure protocols

Coordinate local security, health, geological and transport advice; define heat, access and communication triggers without inventing universal thresholds.

A2.3.2

Equip and test response arrangements

Assess radios or satellite communications, first aid, trained responders and referral transport; procure only equipment that can be maintained lawfully.

A2.3.3

Run exercises and incident learning

Conduct pre-season exercises and post-incident reviews; publish operational changes without exposing personal data; suspend departures when prerequisites fail.

5.2.3. Implementation Roadmap

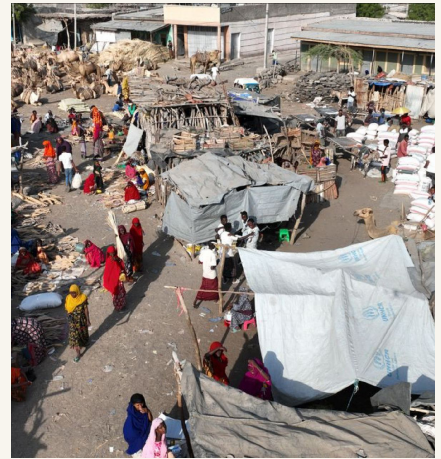
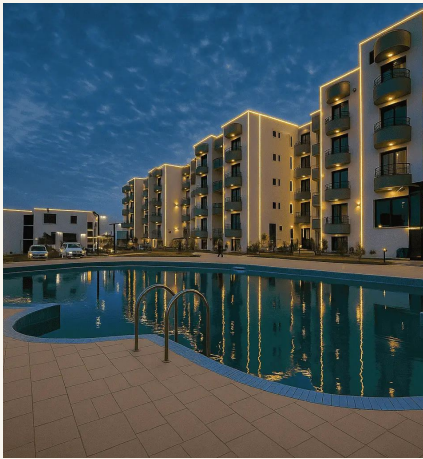
Phase 1: Foundation and Pilots (2026–2028) — Audit route access and service gaps; prioritize works; define facility operators; establish safety protocols and test communications on pilot routes.

Phase 2: Expansion and Development (2029–2031) — Extend service improvements to expanding routes and priority sites; strengthen maintenance contracts and emergency coordination; monitor facility condition and visitor satisfaction.

Phase 3: Consolidation and Sustainability (2032–2035) — Sustain reliable access and facilities, replace deteriorated equipment, and improve service quality through regular audits and emergency exercises.

PILLAR 03

Tourism Investment Promotion and Private Sector Development



OVERVIEW

Private enterprises connect tourism resources to the market through accommodation, guiding, transport, food, cultural experiences and distribution. Afar needs investment that strengthens this value chain and creates opportunities for local businesses. Investment promotion must therefore give equal attention to viable larger projects and the enterprises through which communities participate in tourism.

Incomplete project preparation, uncertain service conditions, limited business support and weak purchasing relationships restrict investment and enterprise growth. Promotional listings alone do not resolve these constraints. Investors need clear procedures, reliable information and prepared opportunities; local entrepreneurs need practical assistance, market access and appropriate financing relationships.

The pillar will strengthen local enterprises, prepare sustainable investment opportunities and connect tourism demand to regional suppliers. Public institutions will coordinate approvals and aftercare, while businesses will carry responsibility for commercial delivery and employment standards. Success will be measured through operational investments, enterprise survival, dependable supplier relationships and broader local participation.

5.3. Tourism Investment Promotion and Private Sector Development

5.3.2. Strategic Goals

The following strategic goals establish the development priorities, intended results and actions for this pillar. Implementation will follow the phased roadmap and the responsibilities set out in the action-plan tables.

Strategic Goal 1 – Strengthen Local Tourism Enterprises

GOAL DESCRIPTION

Strengthen the capability and survival of local tourism enterprises through business diagnostics, practical coaching, registration support and market connections. Support will cover guiding, cultural experiences, food, craft, accommodation and complementary services, with accessible pathways for women and young entrepreneurs.

IMPORTANCE TO AFAR

Local enterprise development determines how widely tourism benefits reach Afar residents. Businesses need repeat customers, sound management and suitable support to remain active beyond initial training or registration.

Supported enterprises trading after 24 months

65%

2028

70%

2031

75%

2035

Strategic Actions

A3.1.1

Provide business diagnostics and registration support

Recruit openly, assess skills and market links, assist lawful registration and banking, and separate grants from loans.

A3.1.2

Broker fair purchasing contracts

Agree host rates, deposits, cancellations, payment timing and transparent commissions between operators, accommodation and local suppliers.

A3.1.3

Connect enterprises to suitable finance

Match proposals to small grants, savings and regulated lending; provide cash-flow coaching without government loan guarantees unless separately approved.

Strategic Goal 2 — Attract and Facilitate Sustainable Tourism Investment

GOAL DESCRIPTION

Prepare a portfolio of sustainable tourism investment opportunities supported by market assessment, clear land and access arrangements, service requirements and environmental and social appraisal. Facilitation will continue through approvals, implementation and operational aftercare.

IMPORTANCE TO AFAR

Investors require credible projects and predictable administration. Careful preparation improves the likelihood of operating investments and reduces the risk of facilities that fail to serve visitors or surrounding communities.

Projects passing investment readiness gate

3

2028

6

2031

10

2035

Strategic Actions

A3.2.1

Prepare a verified opportunity register

Review existing proposals and private operations; record permissions, demand, site ownership, water and energy needs; remove duplicates.

A3.2.2

Commission staged project appraisals

Start with existing accommodation upgrades, modest camps and community services; undertake full studies only after preliminary viability.

A3.2.3

Operate investment aftercare

Track financing close, construction, operation, local hiring and supplier payments; resolve administrative issues through existing mandates.

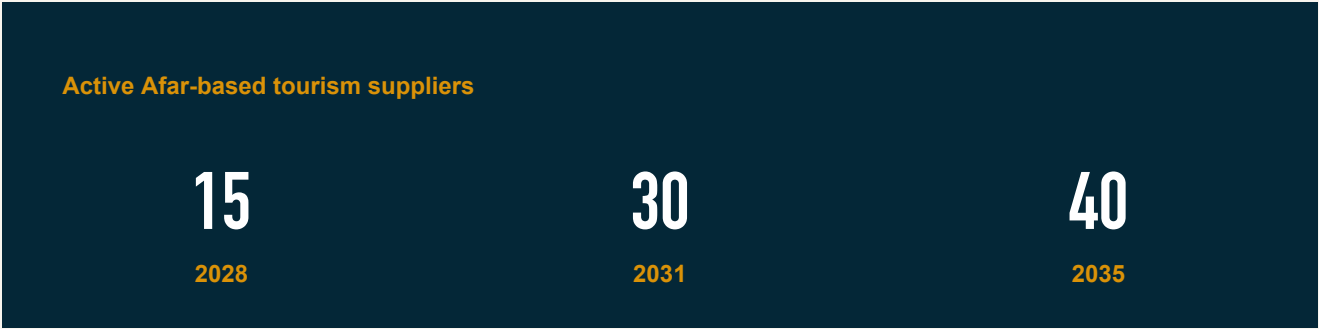
Strategic Goal 3 – Strengthen Local Tourism Supply Chains and Employment

GOAL DESCRIPTION

Connect tourism businesses with capable Afar-based suppliers and establish dependable purchasing and employment practices. Supplier development will address quality, consistency, hygiene, delivery and documentation, while business reviews will support fair treatment of workers and suppliers.

IMPORTANCE TO AFAR

Tourism supports the wider regional economy when accommodation providers, operators and attractions buy local products and services. Strong commercial relationships enable producers and small enterprises to benefit from visitor demand.



Strategic Actions

A3.3.1

Map supply opportunities

Match food, craft, transport, maintenance and interpretation needs to willing local suppliers and realistic quality requirements.

A3.3.2

Improve supplier quality and delivery

Support packaging, hygiene, scheduling and procurement documentation; use practical buyer trials rather than attendance-only training.

A3.3.3

Monitor payment and work standards

Review invoices, payment delays, working conditions and complaints; agree corrective actions with businesses and relevant labor authorities.

5.3.3. Implementation Roadmap

Phase 1: Foundation and Pilots (2026–2028) — Identify enterprise needs, establish support services and prepare a verified investment register. Complete initial project appraisals and connect tourism buyers with local suppliers.

Phase 2: Expansion and Development (2029–2031) — Support enterprise expansion, bring appraised investments into operation and deepen purchasing relationships with local producers and service businesses.

Phase 3: Consolidation and Sustainability (2032–2035) — Consolidate enterprise survival, investment aftercare and supplier quality. Review the distribution of opportunities and address barriers facing new local entrants.

PILLAR 04

Destination Management and Institutional Strengthening



OVERVIEW

Destination management brings the institutions responsible for tourism, culture, infrastructure, investment, security, environment and local administration into a common delivery system. Afar's dispersed attractions and multiple tourism corridors require clear decisions at regional, woreda, site and route levels. Coordination must result in resolved problems, functioning services and timely implementation.

Fragmented responsibilities, inconsistent standards and weak performance information reduce accountability. Communities and businesses need to know who manages a destination, where to raise complaints and how decisions affecting tourism will be made. Regional leadership must be supported by capable local structures and regular engagement with the private sector and host communities.

This pillar will strengthen the Afar Regional Tourism Bureau's coordination role, assign accountable delivery institutions, establish destination operating arrangements and embed evidence in management. A common action register, quarterly reviews and annual reporting will connect the strategy to routine institutional work. The intended outcome is a responsive tourism administration that sustains implementation and resolves cross-sector constraints.

5.4. Destination Management and Institutional Strengthening

5.4.2. Strategic Goals

The following strategic goals establish the development priorities, intended results and actions for this pillar. Implementation will follow the phased roadmap and the responsibilities set out in the action-plan tables.

Strategic Goal 1 – Strengthen Tourism Governance and Implementation Coordination

GOAL DESCRIPTION

Establish clear responsibility for strategy implementation at regional and local levels. The Afar Regional Tourism Bureau will coordinate a delivery mechanism that brings responsible institutions together around approved actions, deadlines and measurable results.

IMPORTANCE TO AFAR

Tourism outcomes depend on decisions by several institutions. Clear ownership and regular resolution of delivery problems are essential to prevent fragmentation and sustain implementation through changes in personnel.

Annual milestones completed on time

70%

2028

80%

2031

85%

2035

Strategic Actions

A4.1.1

Confirm mandates and nominate delivery owners

Map current institutional functions, name focal persons and adopt the responsibility matrix; confirm whether an existing committee can provide oversight.

A4.1.2

Staff a small delivery secretariat

Assign planning, community liaison, finance coordination and M&E functions within the Afar Regional Tourism Bureau; use secondments before creating new posts.

A4.1.3

Run quarterly delivery reviews

Review milestones, funding, host concerns and unresolved dependencies; escalate decisions with a named owner and deadline.

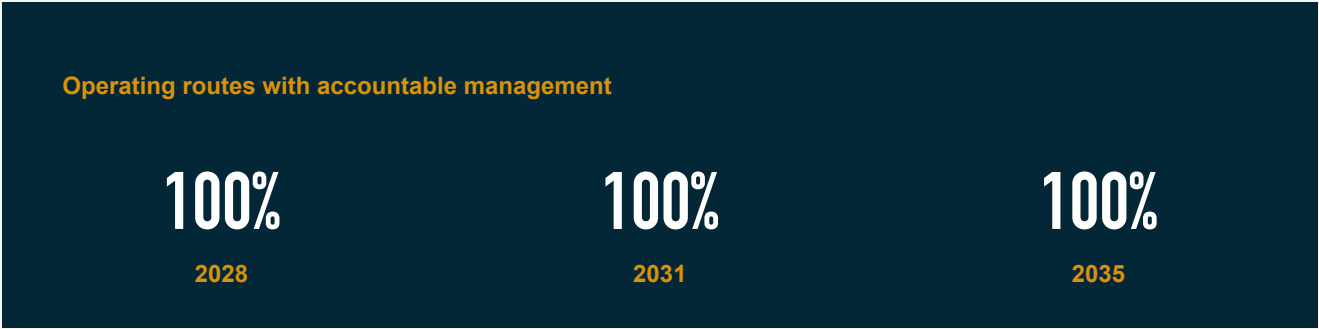
Strategic Goal 2 – Improve Destination Management and Service Standards

GOAL DESCRIPTION

Strengthen destination operating standards and accountability through clear route-management agreements, service requirements, inspection and complaints handling. Standards will reflect applicable law and the practical needs of visitors, businesses and hosts.

IMPORTANCE TO AFAR

Travelers need consistent service and communities need an accessible response when tourism causes problems. Defined operating arrangements make responsibilities visible and allow corrective action before failures become persistent.



Strategic Actions

A4.2.1

Agree route management models

Compare community enterprise, contracted operator and woreda-supported models; define manager duties and avoid assigning tax powers.

A4.2.2

Introduce proportional service standards

Align with applicable licensing and food, transport and guide standards; design practical inspection forms and corrective periods.

A4.2.3

Verify compliance and resolve complaints

Use risk-based inspections, confidential interviews and time-bound corrective notices; refer statutory enforcement to competent authorities.

Strategic Goal 3 – Strengthen Tourism Research and Performance Management

GOAL DESCRIPTION

Establish a tourism performance system that converts research, administrative records, visitor feedback and community experience into management decisions. Annual reviews and independent evaluations will assess delivery, outcomes and the continuing relevance of interventions.

IMPORTANCE TO AFAR

Implementation cannot be judged through activities alone. Reliable evidence enables the region to identify what is working, address unequal outcomes and redirect effort when actions do not produce the intended results.

Core indicators with verified current data

80%

2028

90%

2031

95%

2035

Strategic Actions

A4.3.1

Consolidate the Tourism Research and Performance Baseline

Consolidate research and administrative records into a dated tourism performance register, distinguishing distinct visitors, site visits, overnight stays, domestic and international segments, and designated and operating sites. Reconcile the historical visitor and site totals with reporting coverage. Maintain satisfaction measurement and publish comparable annual results.

A4.3.2

Operate the annual results system

Fund field collection, quarterly checks, host feedback and annual performance reporting; use the KPI dictionary and retain denominator coverage.

A4.3.3

Commission independent evaluations

Review process and outcomes in 2030 and sustainability in 2035; use contribution analysis and follow comparable nonparticipant groups where feasible.

5.4.3. Implementation Roadmap

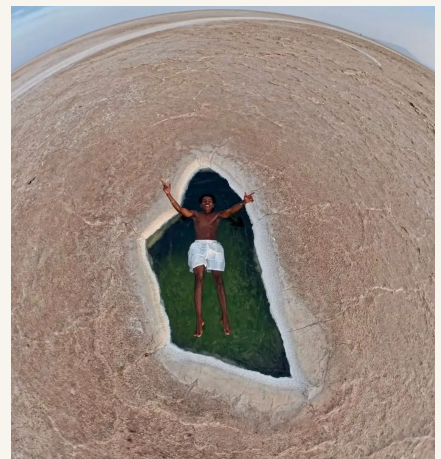
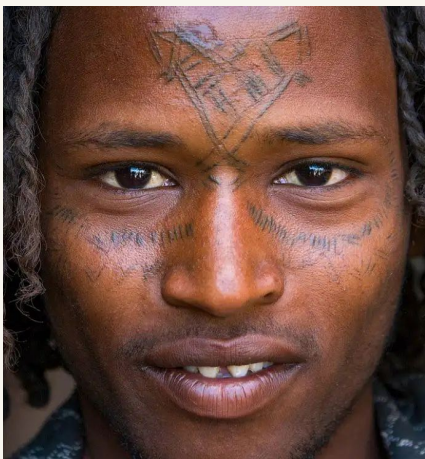
Phase 1: Foundation and Pilots (2026–2028) — Confirm delivery responsibilities, establish the coordination mechanism and local destination arrangements, and introduce a common implementation register and reporting system.

Phase 2: Expansion and Development (2029–2031) — Strengthen compliance, resolve recurring delivery constraints and use annual reviews and the midterm evaluation to adjust implementation.

Phase 3: Consolidation and Sustainability (2032–2035) — Institutionalize service standards, performance reporting and community accountability. Use the final evaluation to inform the next planning period.

PILLAR 05

Destination Branding, Marketing and Promotion



OVERVIEW

Afar's destination identity must communicate its people, living culture, landscapes and heritage through a consistent visitor promise. Visit Afar will connect the region's distinctive resources with clearly described experiences for domestic, diaspora, educational and international markets. Marketing will encourage discovery beyond the most familiar attractions while maintaining the appeal of established tourism circuits.

Fragmented promotion, limited cultural storytelling and weak links between campaigns and bookable services reduce the effectiveness of destination communication. Visibility is useful only when travelers can find accurate information, contact dependable providers and purchase an experience that matches its description. Community participation in content development is essential to accurate representation and cultural respect.

The pillar will strengthen the destination brand, build targeted promotion and develop lasting market partnerships. Campaigns will feature products that are ready to receive visitors and will be assessed through qualified inquiries, confirmed bookings, visitor feedback and repeat business. Domestic and educational travel will receive particular attention as sources of continued engagement with Afar's culture and heritage.

5.5. Destination Branding, Marketing and Promotion

5.5.2. Strategic Goals

The following strategic goals establish the development priorities, intended results and actions for this pillar. Implementation will follow the phased roadmap and the responsibilities set out in the action-plan tables.

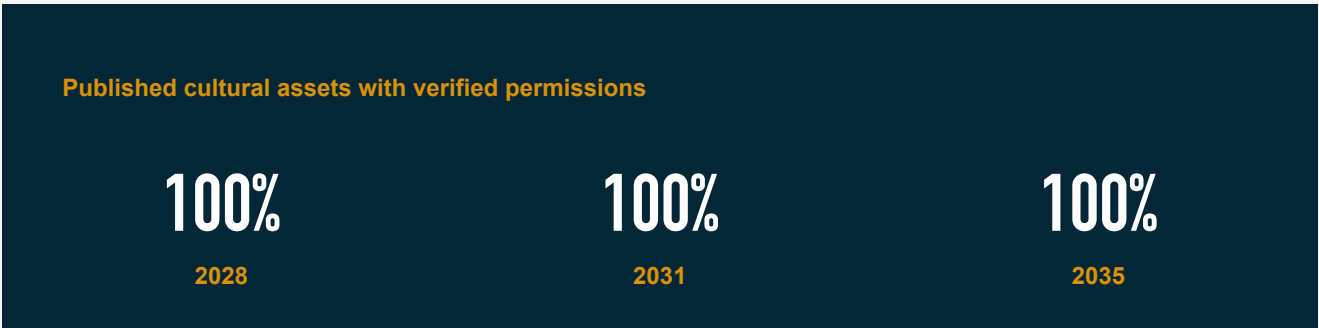
Strategic Goal 1 – Build and Promote a Distinctive Visit Afar Brand

GOAL DESCRIPTION

Develop and consistently apply a Visit Afar brand that represents living culture, people, landscapes and heritage accurately. Community-approved storytelling, quality content and clear publication standards will guide promotion across public and partner channels.

IMPORTANCE TO AFAR

A distinctive and credible brand helps travelers understand the range of experiences Afar offers. Participation by cultural practitioners protects representation and brings contemporary community life into destination communication.



Strategic Actions

A5.1.1

Develop the cultural brand narrative

Retain Visit Afar identity and develop community-approved themes around living knowledge, hospitality and exchange; test language with hosts and markets.

A5.1.2

Produce licensed cultural content

Commission local storytellers, photographers and translators with contributor payments and limited-use agreements; avoid depicting private ceremonies as bookable products.

A5.1.3

Review representation and withdraw outdated content

Maintain a request channel and remove withdrawn or inaccurate material; update operating status before campaigns.

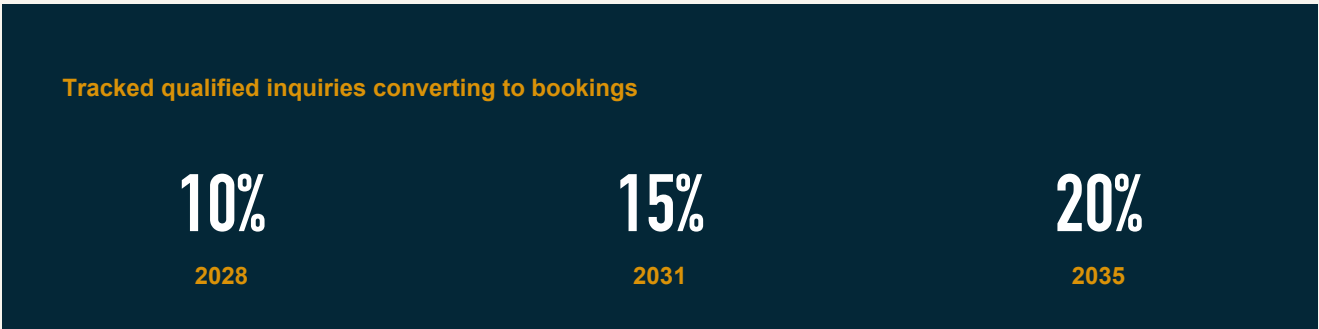
Strategic Goal 2 – Strengthen Targeted Tourism Marketing and Promotion

GOAL DESCRIPTION

Undertake targeted tourism promotion based on visitor segments, product readiness and evidence of commercial response. Campaigns will connect travelers to verified products and providers, with performance measured from inquiry through booking and visitor feedback.

IMPORTANCE TO AFAR

Promotion must produce useful demand for enterprises and communities. Targeted campaigns improve the connection between destination visibility and the actual purchase of high-quality experiences.



Strategic Actions

A5.2.1

Segment markets and set campaign tests

Use the tourist satisfaction research, operator feedback and product testing to select domestic, diaspora and specialist market segments. Define the offer, audience, booking pathway and performance measures for each campaign, and test messages before wider promotion.

A5.2.2

Run measured cultural-route campaigns

Promote only routes cleared for sale; combine trade partnerships, educational outreach and modest digital campaigns with bookable offers.

A5.2.3

Improve offers using conversion evidence

Quarterly compare inquiry quality, booking cancellations, season and local receipts; redirect budget to tested offers and suspend ineffective channels.

Strategic Goal 3 — Expand Domestic, Diaspora and Educational Tourism

GOAL DESCRIPTION

Develop sustained domestic, diaspora and educational tourism through relevant products, repeat partnerships and community-approved cultural programs. Travel opportunities will be designed around different interests, practical travel conditions and the requirements of learning groups.

IMPORTANCE TO AFAR

These markets can broaden participation in Afar tourism and strengthen repeat travel. Long-term relationships with operators, education institutions and diaspora networks provide a more dependable foundation than isolated promotional events.

Active repeat-sales partnerships

6

2028

12

2031

18

2035

Strategic Actions

A5.3.1

Develop short cultural learning offers

Co-design half-day and short overnight options around gateways with clear learning objectives, age suitability and host fees.

A5.3.2

Contract repeat-sales partners

Engage domestic operators, education institutions and diaspora associations without assuming airline or institutional commitments.

A5.3.3

Support community-chosen public cultural occasions

Use an opt-in calendar of public events and learning days; support host planning and waste services; never promise access to private rituals.

5.5.3. Implementation Roadmap

Phase 1: Foundation and Pilots (2026–2028) — Develop the Visit Afar brand framework, commission community-approved content, identify priority segments and establish initial market partnerships.

Phase 2: Expansion and Development (2029–2031) — Expand cultural-route campaigns and domestic and educational travel partnerships. Improve conversion through booking evidence and customer feedback.

Phase 3: Consolidation and Sustainability (2032–2035) — Consolidate repeat markets and partnerships, refresh destination content and focus promotion on products with sustained quality and local benefit.

PILLAR 06

Human Resource Development and Community Empowerment



OVERVIEW

Tourism competitiveness depends on the capability of the people who welcome visitors, interpret culture, operate businesses and manage destinations. Afar requires practical skills in hospitality, guiding, language, safety, food hygiene, enterprise management and digital services. Community knowledge and professional service skills must be developed together.

Training that is disconnected from employment and enterprise demand has limited lasting value. Remote communities face additional barriers to participation, including travel, language, timing and access to training providers. Women and young people need pathways that lead from learning to paid work, enterprise ownership and management responsibilities.

This pillar will build a competent workforce, connect learning to employment and strengthen community enterprise governance. Training institutions, employers and experienced practitioners will deliver courses and placements matched to operational needs. The future leadership program under the Tourism Development Fund will complement this system through advanced study, mentoring and applied leadership development.

5.6. Human Resource Development and Community Empowerment

5.6.2. Strategic Goals

The following strategic goals establish the development priorities, intended results and actions for this pillar. Implementation will follow the phased roadmap and the responsibilities set out in the action-plan tables.

Strategic Goal 1 – Develop a Skilled and Professional Tourism Workforce

GOAL DESCRIPTION

Build a competent tourism workforce through practical, modular training and independent assessment. Courses will combine hospitality and business skills with cultural interpretation, language, safety and digital capability, and will be accessible to workers in different destinations.

IMPORTANCE TO AFAR

Service quality depends on demonstrated competence. Training linked to Afar's operating conditions will improve visitor experiences and enable local residents to take on skilled roles across the tourism value chain.

Participants passing practical competency assessment

70%

2028

80%

2031

85%

2035

Strategic Actions

A6.1.1

Design competency-based curricula

Assess gaps with employers and hosts; develop modules in interpretation, respectful hosting, safety, hygiene, language, pricing and digital tools.

A6.1.2

Train and assess route workers

Provide field-based cohorts scheduled around livelihoods; include women, youth and persons with disabilities through suitable adjustments.

A6.1.3

Maintain professional competence

Agree recognition with competent authorities; keep a verified skills register and fund refresher exercises and peer learning.

Strategic Goal 2 – Connect Tourism Training with Employment and Enterprise Opportunities

GOAL DESCRIPTION

Connect tourism learning to paid placements, employment and viable enterprise activity. Employers and training providers will agree placement responsibilities and support learners through the transition into work, with follow-up to assess sustained outcomes.

IMPORTANCE TO AFAR

Completion of a course is only the beginning of a livelihood pathway. Practical work experience and employer relationships improve the relevance of training and help participants overcome barriers to entry.

Completers in tourism work after six months

50%

2028

60%

2031

70%

2035

Strategic Actions

A6.2.1

Negotiate paid placements

Secure employer descriptions, supervision, fair compensation and safeguarding provisions before enrolling placement cohorts.

A6.2.2

Provide inclusive learner support

Offer transparent transport, accessibility and care-related support according to demonstrated need; avoid automatic quotas unsupported by applicant availability.

A6.2.3

Track graduates and improve courses

Follow cohorts at 6, 12 and 24 months; assess pay, job relevance, enterprise survival and barriers; revise courses with employers.

Strategic Goal 3 — Strengthen Community Tourism Enterprise Management

GOAL DESCRIPTION

Strengthen the management of community tourism enterprises through practical training in representation, record keeping, member reporting, contracting and dispute resolution. Enterprise governance will make participation, responsibilities and decisions understandable to members.

IMPORTANCE TO AFAR

Community enterprises need transparent arrangements to maintain trust and deliver consistent services. Strong governance reduces exclusion and disputes and helps participating residents exercise meaningful control over tourism activities.

Participating host enterprises passing governance review

75%

2028

85%

2031

90%

2035

Strategic Actions

A6.3.1

Train community enterprise managers

Provide practical sessions in accounts, member rights, host rotation, conflicts of interest and contracting using real transactions.

A6.3.2

Support transparent member reporting

Introduce simple ledgers, oral reporting meetings and accessible payment statements; retain confidential individual information.

A6.3.3

Review inclusion and remedy disputes

Check who receives work and income, who bears hosting costs and who is excluded; mediate within lawful and rights-respecting processes.

5.6.3. Implementation Roadmap

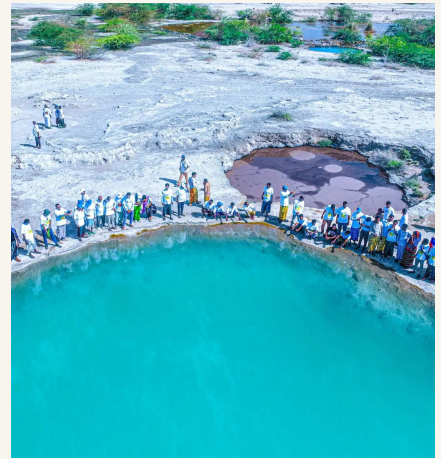
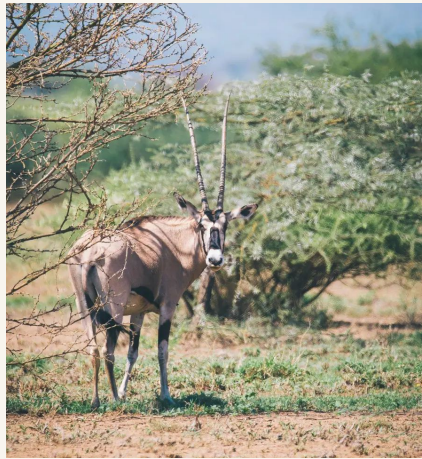
Phase 1: Foundation and Pilots (2026–2028) — Assess skills needs, develop practical curricula and train initial cohorts. Establish employer agreements, learner support and community enterprise management training.

Phase 2: Expansion and Development (2029–2031) — Expand competency assessment, paid placements and continuous professional development across operating destinations. Track employment and enterprise outcomes.

Phase 3: Consolidation and Sustainability (2032–2035) — Strengthen progression into supervisory and management roles, maintain professional standards and institutionalize employer-led curriculum review.

PILLAR 07

Sustainable Tourism, Conservation and Heritage Protection



OVERVIEW

Afar's cultural, natural and archaeological resources are the foundation of tourism and require active stewardship. Tourism must operate within the limits of fragile geothermal areas, volcanic landscapes, desert ecosystems, water resources and heritage sites. Living culture also needs protection through respect for people's authority over knowledge, images, private life and participation.

Environmental pressures, poor waste management, unplanned construction and inappropriate cultural access can damage resources and local support for tourism. Conservation cannot be treated as a later activity after a product opens. Environmental and social screening, visitor management and maintenance must form part of every development decision.

The pillar will apply safeguards to tourism development, protect community control over living culture and improve resource management at tourism sites. Site custodians, communities, operators and competent public authorities will share defined responsibilities. The intended outcome is continued tourism activity that maintains heritage condition, respects local rights and avoids displacement of essential livelihoods.

5.7. Sustainable Tourism, Conservation and Heritage Protection

5.7.2. Strategic Goals

The following strategic goals establish the development priorities, intended results and actions for this pillar. Implementation will follow the phased roadmap and the responsibilities set out in the action-plan tables.

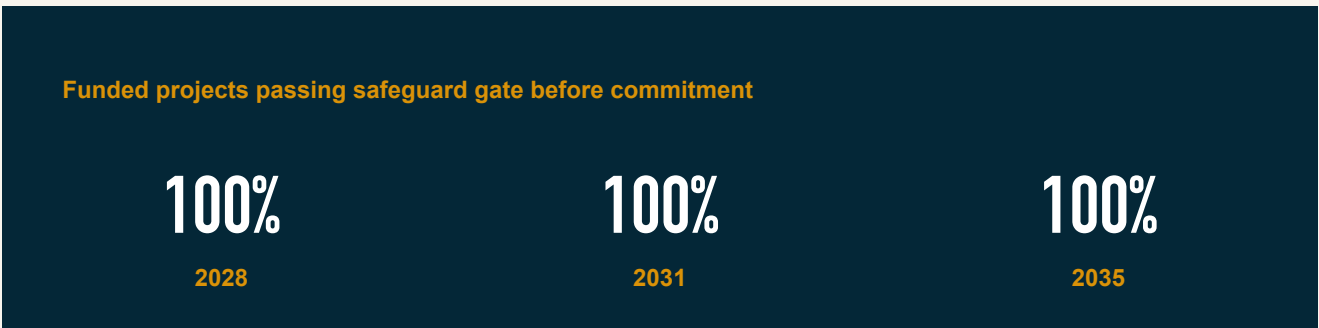
Strategic Goal 1 – Integrate Sustainability into Tourism Development

GOAL DESCRIPTION

Integrate environmental, social and heritage safeguards into tourism project selection, design, implementation and operation. Development will proceed through screening and the approvals required by the relevant authorities, with mitigation and monitoring responsibilities assigned before work begins.

IMPORTANCE TO AFAR

Avoiding damage is more effective than attempting to repair it after development. Safeguards protect the resources on which tourism depends and improve confidence among communities, visitors and responsible investors.



Strategic Actions

A7.1.1

Adopt a proportionate safeguard screening process

Review applicable law and institutional mandates; define water, land, labor, heritage, waste and access screening with escalation to formal studies where required.

A7.1.2

Prepare site and route management safeguards

Determine acceptable use with communities and competent specialists; define restricted spaces, habitat protection, waste removal and review triggers.

A7.1.3

Verify compliance and remedy damage

Inspect funded works and operating services; fund corrective measures under approved plans and suspend noncompliant activities.

Strategic Goal 2 — Safeguard Living Culture and Community Participation

GOAL DESCRIPTION

Protect community authority over cultural participation, knowledge and representation. Cultural protocols, paid stewardship and confidential host feedback will guide how tourism interacts with daily life and living heritage.

IMPORTANCE TO AFAR

Tourism should strengthen cultural continuity and local agency. Respect for permission, privacy and the right to withdraw is essential to sustaining willing participation and preventing the misuse of cultural resources.

Hosts satisfied with control over tourism participation

75%

2028

80%

2031

85%

2035

Strategic Actions

A7.2.1

Adopt cultural access and media protocols

Specify household permission, individual image consent, child protection, private ceremonies, knowledge restrictions and permitted translations.

A7.2.2

Support paid community stewardship

Contract local monitors for agreed cultural and heritage protection functions; clarify that monitoring is not a coercive policing role.

A7.2.3

Measure host wellbeing and participation

Assess income, workload, privacy, conflict and cultural learning; allow confidential withdrawal and revise route schedules when burdens rise.

Strategic Goal 3 — Improve Environmental and Heritage Resource Management

GOAL DESCRIPTION

Reduce tourism pressure on water, energy, waste systems and sensitive natural and archaeological sites. Resource plans, practical improvements and regular condition monitoring will guide visitor use and operational changes.

IMPORTANCE TO AFAR

Afar's environmental conditions make efficient resource use and careful site management essential. Tourism must maintain ecosystem and heritage condition while protecting the resources needed by residents and other livelihoods.

Operating sites complying with resource plans

80%

2028

90%

2031

95%

2035

Strategic Actions

A7.3.1

Assess water waste and climate requirements

Measure likely tourism demand against community and ecosystem needs; set seasonal operating arrangements and specialist-designed limits.

A7.3.2

Introduce practical resource improvements

Install metering or records, refill systems where water is safe, solar support where maintainable, and waste transfer arrangements.

A7.3.3

Monitor heritage and environmental condition

Maintain fixed observation points and logs; protect archaeological access and review geology-related operations with specialists; do not promise formal geopark recognition.

5.7.3. Implementation Roadmap

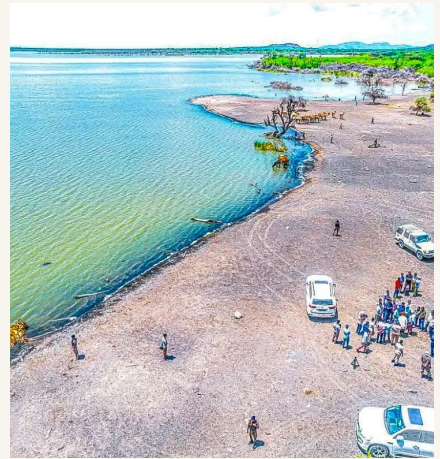
Phase 1: Foundation and Pilots (2026–2028) — Adopt screening procedures and cultural protocols, assess sensitive sites and agree priority visitor and resource management plans.

Phase 2: Expansion and Development (2029–2031) — Apply safeguards across tourism development, strengthen community stewardship and install practical waste, water and resource improvements.

Phase 3: Consolidation and Sustainability (2032–2035) — Maintain heritage and environmental condition, resolve compliance failures and adjust tourism intensity where monitoring identifies pressure.

PILLAR 08

Digital Transformation and Tourism Intelligence



OVERVIEW

Digital services enable visitors to discover Afar, compare experiences, contact providers and obtain practical information. They also help enterprises manage transactions and enable institutions to monitor tourism performance. Afar's digital transformation must work across uneven connectivity and different levels of business and visitor capability.

Inaccurate destination information, disconnected records and limited digital business skills weaken both market access and management. Complex systems that cannot be maintained locally can create additional dependence. The priority is dependable information, simple reporting, practical payment options and clear responsibility for updates and data protection.

This pillar will improve the official tourism information service, establish a coordinated tourism data system and support business adoption of useful digital tools. Online services will be accompanied by offline information and accessible assistance. Technology performance will be judged through accuracy, usability, reporting quality and the ability of tourism enterprises to serve customers reliably.

5.8. Digital Transformation and Tourism Intelligence

5.8.2. Strategic Goals

The following strategic goals establish the development priorities, intended results and actions for this pillar. Implementation will follow the phased roadmap and the responsibilities set out in the action-plan tables.

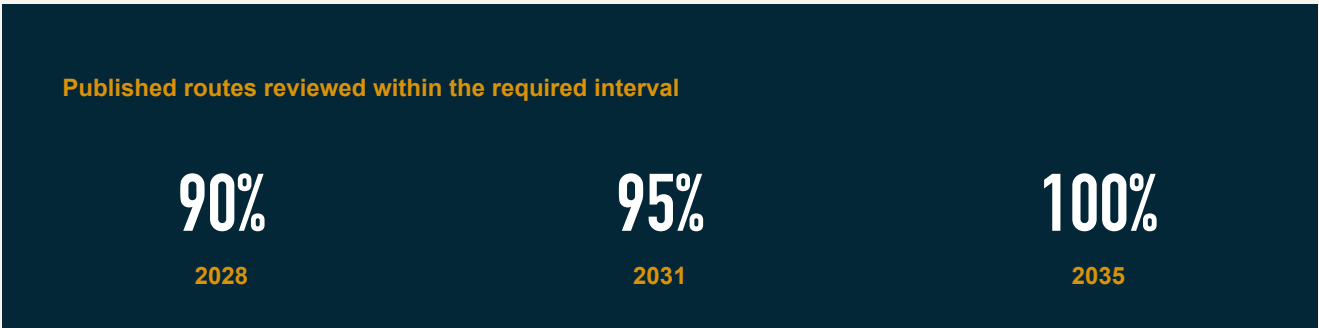
Strategic Goal 1 – Strengthen Digital Visitor Information and Market Access

GOAL DESCRIPTION

Maintain accurate, accessible and current tourism information across official digital channels. Visitors and partners will be able to find approved descriptions, operating conditions, service contacts and cultural-route information, supported by practical offline materials.

IMPORTANCE TO AFAR

Reliable information reduces uncertainty and improves the match between visitor expectations and actual services. Clear responsibility for content is especially important when route conditions or community hosting arrangements change.



Strategic Actions

A8.1.1

Audit existing digital services

Review the official Visit Afar website, destination maps and business information. Confirm ownership, accessibility, language coverage and content responsibilities; improve weak functions and connect verified cultural products to the service.

A8.1.2

Add cultural route and host information

Publish approved narratives, route readiness, contact and enquiry options, language support and downloadable route cards; omit private host coordinates.

A8.1.3

Maintain information and enquiry handling

Assign editors and response standards; record changes, withdraw unavailable offers and reconcile enquiries with consenting operators.

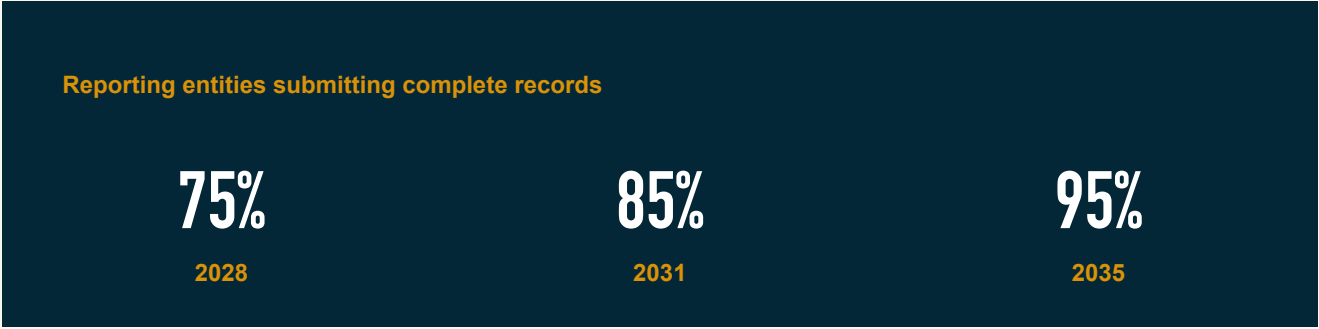
Strategic Goal 2 — Establish an Integrated Tourism Data and Intelligence System

GOAL DESCRIPTION

Establish a coordinated tourism information system with common definitions, reporting responsibilities and data-protection arrangements. Institutions and enterprises will submit proportionate records that support performance monitoring without collecting unnecessary personal information.

IMPORTANCE TO AFAR

Comparable and reliable records are needed for planning and accountability. A practical system reduces duplication, strengthens tourism intelligence and protects sensitive personal and cultural information.



Strategic Actions

A8.2.1

Define data governance and common identifiers

Agree minimum data, lawful purposes, access roles, retention periods and deduplication; separate marketing consent from mandatory records.

A8.2.2

Build simple reporting and reconciliation tools

Use offline-compatible forms, a controlled database and dashboards; avoid biometric systems and unnecessary bespoke apps.

A8.2.3

Maintain data quality and security

Test backups, permissions, incident response and vendor exit; correct duplicates and train entity focal persons.

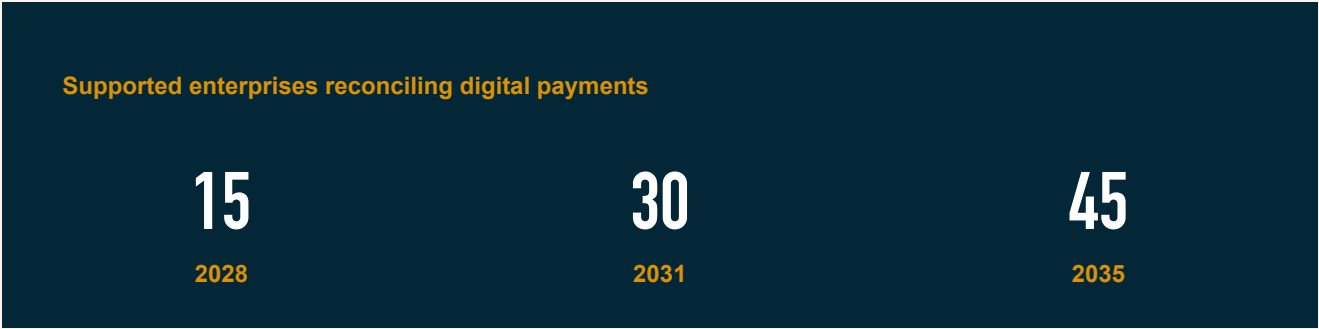
Strategic Goal 3 – Expand Digital Business and Payment Adoption

GOAL DESCRIPTION

Support tourism enterprises to use appropriate digital payments, business listings, communication and booking tools. Adoption will be accompanied by practical training, reliable settlement arrangements and alternatives for users affected by connectivity or access barriers.

IMPORTANCE TO AFAR

Digital capability improves market access and customer convenience when systems work in everyday operations. Enterprise support must focus on usable services and the ability to resolve failed transactions or communication problems.



Strategic Actions

A8.3.1

Assess payment and connectivity needs

Compare available regulated services, fees, identity requirements, offline fallback and settlement times with willing enterprises.

A8.3.2

Support practical business adoption

Train enterprise teams using real payment reconciliation, digital listings and enquiry responses; provide shared devices where justified.

A8.3.3

Review service reliability and costs

Check payment delays, failed transactions, fraud reports and user exclusion; renegotiate services or restore alternatives as needed.

5.8.3. Implementation Roadmap

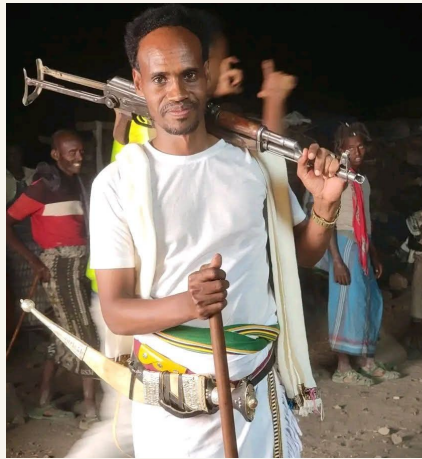
Phase 1: Foundation and Pilots (2026–2028) — Audit official digital services, establish content ownership and data rules, and introduce usable route information and reporting tools.

Phase 2: Expansion and Development (2029–2031) — Extend verified information and business adoption, improve integration of reporting records and support dependable payment and connectivity arrangements.

Phase 3: Consolidation and Sustainability (2032–2035) — Maintain reliable systems, strengthen data quality and cybersecurity, and adopt new functions only where they improve visitor or business outcomes.

PILLAR 09

Establishment of the Afar Tourism Development Fund



OVERVIEW

The Afar Tourism Development Fund will provide a dedicated mechanism for supporting tourism projects and developing future leaders of the sector. Its purpose is to mobilize lawful contributions from tourism and other sources and apply them to agreed development priorities. The Fund will support projects that strengthen visitor services, cultural routes, community enterprises, resource protection and professional capability.

Tourism development requires continuity across project preparation, delivery, maintenance and workforce development. A dedicated Fund can help coordinate these needs when it has a clear legal basis, transparent governance and effective controls. Tourist taxes or levies require examination of the competent taxing authority, the collection mechanism and the effect on visitors and businesses before enactment.

This pillar will establish the Fund, diversify its lawful revenue mechanisms, implement transparent project support and create a future tourism leaders program. Collection, appraisal, award decisions, implementation and audit will have separate responsibilities. The intended outcome is an accountable institution that translates mobilized resources into functioning tourism projects and capable Afar professionals.

5.9. Establishment of the Afar Tourism Development Fund

5.9.2. Strategic Goals

The following strategic goals establish the development priorities, intended results and actions for this pillar. Implementation will follow the phased roadmap and the responsibilities set out in the action-plan tables.

Strategic Goal 1 – Establish the Legal and Institutional Framework of the Fund

GOAL DESCRIPTION

Establish the Afar Tourism Development Fund through the required legal and institutional instruments. Define its mandate, governance, administrative arrangements, eligible activities, reporting duties and relationship with existing public institutions.

IMPORTANCE TO AFAR

A dedicated Fund needs a lawful basis and clear accountability to sustain public confidence. Sound institutional design will prevent duplication and provide the foundation for transparent resource mobilization and project support.

Fund readiness conditions completed

8

2028

8

2031

8

2035

Strategic Actions

A9.1.1

Complete the legal and fiscal options study

Examine the legal authority for establishing the Fund and for each potential tourism-related tax, levy or contribution. Define the competent approving and collecting institutions, taxpayer protections and compatibility with existing charges. Recommend an institutional arrangement that fits the regional public-finance system.

A9.1.2

Prepare and secure required instruments

Consult businesses and communities; draft establishment and collection instruments only for the legally supported option; confirm treasury and audit treatment.

A9.1.3

Put governance and staffing in place

Appoint a representative board, use a small hosted secretariat, separate collection and award roles and test conflicts and complaints processes.

Strategic Goal 2 – Diversify Lawful Tourism Revenue and Resource Mobilization

GOAL DESCRIPTION

Develop a diversified and lawful resource-mobilization system for the Fund. Assess tourist taxes or levies, approved public contributions, grants, voluntary donations and other permissible sources, and establish transparent collection and reconciliation arrangements.

IMPORTANCE TO AFAR

Depending on one source exposes tourism development to disruption. A suitable mix of lawful mechanisms can support continuity while keeping obligations clear for visitors, businesses and contributing partners.



Strategic Actions

A9.2.1

Test revenue bases and charge options

Assess accommodation-based tourist taxes or levies and other legally permissible visitor charges alongside grants, public contributions and voluntary support. Examine the collection base, exemptions, administrative requirements and effect on destination competitiveness. Select instruments through legal review and consultation before submitting them for approval.

A9.2.2

Pilot lawful collection and reconciliation

After authority and readiness, pilot one instrument with registered collectors, clear receipts, monthly remittance and paper fallback; no multiple levy stacking.

A9.2.3

Secure and manage non-levy contributions

Prepare grant and sponsorship proposals, a voluntary donation policy and diaspora contribution channels; prohibit donor influence over award decisions.

Strategic Goal 3 – Finance and Oversee Priority Tourism Development Projects

GOAL DESCRIPTION

Support tourism projects through transparent selection, appraisal, implementation oversight and verification of continued service. Eligible projects will address priority visitor facilities, cultural routes, community enterprises, conservation and skills development.

IMPORTANCE TO AFAR

The purpose of resource mobilization is to deliver useful outcomes. Project support must produce functioning services and community benefits, with clear responsibilities for implementation and maintenance.

Fund projects functional twelve months after completion

80%

2028

85%

2031

90%

2035

Strategic Actions

A9.3.1

Adopt investment windows and appraisal rules

Set eligible activities, scoring, safeguards, co-financing, maintenance requirements and appeal routes; use other pillars delivery budgets rather than create duplicate grant allowances.

A9.3.2

Appraise and monitor competitive awards

Issue open calls sized to available cash and approved commitments; verify milestones before disbursement and record beneficiaries and procurement.

A9.3.3

Verify project outcomes and recovery actions

Visit completed projects at 6 and 12 months; stop further disbursement for material noncompliance and apply lawful recovery or redesign processes.

Strategic Goal 4 — Educate and Develop Future Afar Tourism Leaders

GOAL DESCRIPTION

Develop future Afar tourism leaders through scholarships, professional study, management fellowships, paid apprenticeships and mentoring. Learning pathways will connect education to practical work in tourism administration, enterprises, hospitality, cultural interpretation and destination stewardship.

IMPORTANCE TO AFAR

Long-term tourism development requires capable people who can lead institutions and businesses. Advanced learning linked to Afar assignments will strengthen professional progression, succession and the sector's ability to manage change.

Supported leaders in relevant Afar roles after twelve months

50%

2028

60%

2031

70%

2035

Strategic Actions

A9.4.1

Design scholarship and fellowship pathways

Map employers and qualified providers; define transparent selection, needs support, mentor duties and applied community or business assignments.

A9.4.2

Finance selected future leader cohorts

Select participants through transparent criteria covering merit, leadership potential, financial need and relevance to Afar tourism. Support accredited study, professional training, paid placements and mentored assignments. Agree completion requirements with providers and connect each participant to a practical career pathway in the regional tourism sector.

A9.4.3

Track leadership progression and contribution

Trace participants at 6, 12 and 24 months and then annually; measure completion, relevant work, management responsibility, enterprise survival and knowledge transfer.

Strategic Goal 5 – Ensure Fund Transparency, Accountability and Performance

GOAL DESCRIPTION

Maintain Fund integrity through separation of duties, transparent records, independent audit, public reporting and effective complaints procedures. Regular review will assess governance, project performance and the development contribution of the Fund.

IMPORTANCE TO AFAR

Accountability protects the Fund's resources and legitimacy. Contributors, applicants and communities need evidence that decisions are fair, obligations are met and supported activities deliver lasting results.

Annual Fund reports and audits issued on time

100%

2028

100%

2031

100%

2035

Strategic Actions

A9.5.1

Establish Fund financial controls

Adopt separation of duties, monthly reconciliation, commitment ceilings, retention rules, procurement and fraud reporting; integrate existing financial systems.

A9.5.2

Maintain public accounts and external audit

Publish quarterly receipt and award summaries and annual audited accounts; distinguish taxes, grants and donations; respond to material findings.

A9.5.3

Review Fund costs fairness and effectiveness

Test administrative costs, collection burdens, distribution, political interference and outcomes; revise rules through competent approval.

5.9.3. Implementation Roadmap

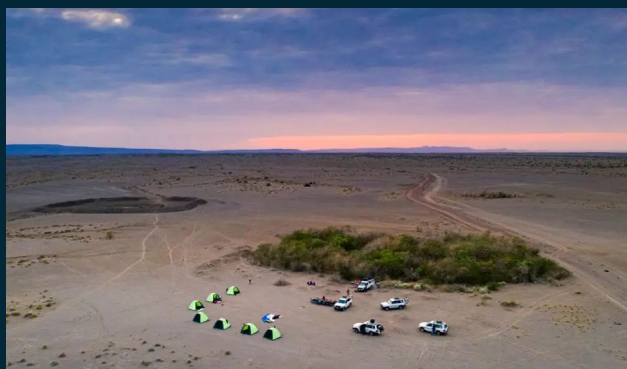
Phase 1: Foundation and Pilots (2026–2028) — Complete legal and institutional design; enact the required instruments; establish governance and controls; test revenue collection when authorized; prepare project and leadership award procedures.

Phase 2: Expansion and Development (2029–2031) — Operate transparent collection and award cycles, support priority projects and leadership cohorts, and conduct the independent midterm review.

Phase 3: Consolidation and Sustainability (2032–2035) — Strengthen collection compliance, verify the lasting performance of supported projects and track leadership progression. Use independent evaluation to improve the Fund and sustain its development role.

06

ACTION PLAN



Responsibilities, delivery periods and measurable results for every strategic goal.

6. Action Plan Table

The action plan assigns delivery responsibilities, implementation periods and measurable results for every strategic goal. The responsible body leads delivery and reporting; implementing partners provide the technical, local or commercial contribution required. The Afar Regional Tourism Bureau coordinates quarterly reviews and records corrective action where milestones are delayed. Activities beginning in 2026 commence during the final quarter of the year; no earlier-year completion is assumed.

Action Plan Table – Pillar 1: Tourism Product Development and Diversification

No.	Key Action (Specific and Measurable)	Timeline	Responsible Body	Implementing Partners	Target / Indicator
Strategic Goal 1 – Map, Document and Assess Afar Tourism Resources					
A1.1.1	Consolidate the Regional Tourism Resource Inventory. Bring attraction-site assessments, local resource records and cultural information into a common inventory.	2026–2027	Afar Regional Tourism Bureau	Woreda administrations; culture and heritage authorities; communities; universities	One regional inventory covering all assessed attractions and participating community resources by 2027.
A1.1.2	Assess Product Readiness and Development Requirements. Apply common criteria to access, interpretation, host participation, environmental sensitivity, services and market potential.	2027–2028	Afar Regional Tourism Bureau	Operators; site custodians; infrastructure and environment authorities	All resources in the regional inventory classified by readiness by 2028; classification reviewed annually.
A1.1.3	Establish a Tourism Resource Database and Planning Map. Create a regional resource database with clear responsibility for updates and quality control.	2027–2029	Afar Regional Tourism Bureau	Regional digital services; culture and heritage authorities; woredas	One maintained regional database and public tourism planning map operational by 2029.
A1.1.4	Institutionalize Community Participation in Product Selection. Establish a representative product panel for each cultural corridor and a process for households, practitioners and enterprises to participate voluntarily.	2027–2035	Regional culture and heritage authority	Woreda administrations; community representatives; women and youth organizations	Six product panels and 36 renewable host agreements in operation by 2035.

No.	Key Action (Specific and Measurable)	Timeline	Responsible Body	Implementing Partners	Target / Indicator
Strategic Goal 2 – Enhance and Revitalize Existing Tourism Products					
A1.2.1	Prepare Product Improvement Plans for Priority Attractions. Prepare improvement plans for twelve priority tourism products, selected through resource assessment.	2026–2028	Afar Regional Tourism Bureau	Site custodians; operators; communities; works and heritage authorities	Twelve product improvement plans completed by 2028.
A1.2.2	Upgrade Interpretation and Visitor Experiences. Introduce accurate and accessible interpretation at established natural and heritage attractions, including geological and human-origins resources.	2027–2035	Afar Regional Tourism Bureau	Heritage and park authorities; universities; guides; cultural practitioners	Four upgraded products by 2028, eight by 2031 and twelve by 2035.
A1.2.3	Connect Established Attractions with Community Services. Work with operators and host enterprises to include cultural learning, locally provided meals, guiding and craft experiences in existing itineraries.	2027–2035	Afar Regional Tourism Bureau	Operators; host enterprises; hotels; cultural practitioners	Community service components integrated into all twelve upgraded products by 2035.
A1.2.4	Improve Gateway and Visitor Orientation Experiences. Strengthen visitor orientation in Semera, Logia and other agreed service gateways.	2027–2031	Afar Regional Tourism Bureau	Municipal administrations; hotels; cultural enterprises; transport providers	Three functioning gateway orientation services by 2031.
Strategic Goal 3 – Develop Community-Led Cultural Routes					
A1.3.1	Design and Pilot the Cultural Route Portfolio. Prepare six route dossiers covering theme, host participation, itinerary, services, access, interpretation and operating arrangements.	2027–2035	Afar Regional Tourism Bureau	Communities; operators; woredas; safety and infrastructure authorities	Six dossiers; two operational routes by 2028, four by 2031 and six by 2035.

No.	Key Action (Specific and Measurable)	Timeline	Responsible Body	Implementing Partners	Target / Indicator
A1.3.2	Develop the Uwwa and Yallo Pastoral Knowledge and Market Route. Link willing hosts and practitioners in the Uwwa and Yallo corridor through pastoral knowledge, craft, architecture, food and market experiences.	2027–2028	Afar Regional Tourism Bureau	Host communities; woreda administrations; cultural practitioners; operators	Uwwa and Yallo route dossier, host network and operating agreement completed by 2028.
A1.3.3	Develop the Galalu, Samarobi and Hadale Ela Living Culture Route. Create a coordinated route through participating communities, with storytelling, craft, architecture and locally chosen public cultural activities.	2027–2028	Afar Regional Tourism Bureau	Host communities; woreda administrations; cultural practitioners; operators	Galalu, Samarobi and Hadale Ela route dossier and host agreements completed by 2028.
A1.3.4	Develop the Dulacha and Lake Leado Community Learning Route. Design experiences that connect participating communities with pastoral landscapes and seasonal water environments.	2027–2028	Afar Regional Tourism Bureau	Host communities; woreda administrations; cultural practitioners; operators	Dulacha and Lake Leado route dossier and service-readiness assessment completed by 2028.
A1.3.5	Develop the Serdo, Eli Dar and Dobi Livelihoods and Exchange Route. Work with local practitioners and enterprises to interpret pastoral livelihoods, salt-related work and exchange.	2027–2029	Afar Regional Tourism Bureau	Host communities; woreda administrations; cultural practitioners; operators	Serdo, Eli Dar and Dobi route dossier and operating assessment completed by 2029.
A1.3.6	Develop the Semera and Logia Makers, Food and Stories Route. Build a gateway-based network of craft workshops, food experiences, storytelling and contemporary cultural enterprise.	2027–2028	Afar Regional Tourism Bureau	Host communities; woreda administrations; cultural practitioners; operators	Semera and Logia cultural route with contracted providers prepared by 2028.

No.	Key Action (Specific and Measurable)	Timeline	Responsible Body	Implementing Partners	Target / Indicator
A1.3.7	Develop the Afar Salt Heritage and Community Memory Route. Develop community-led interpretation of salt-related knowledge, labor, exchange and changing livelihoods around the Lake Asale cultural landscape.	2027–2029	Afar Regional Tourism Bureau	Host communities; woreda administrations; cultural practitioners; operators	Salt heritage route dossier, approved interpretation and hosting arrangements completed by 2029.
A1.3.8	Establish Route Management and Market Distribution. Assign an accountable route manager, agree host and operator responsibilities and publish clear visitor terms.	2027–2035	Afar Regional Tourism Bureau	Host enterprises; operators; hotels; woreda administrations	All operational cultural routes have management agreements and at least two active sales channels.
Strategic Goal 4 – Develop Cultural Experiences and Strengthen Community Participation					
A1.4.1	Develop Bookable Craft, Food and Cultural Learning Experiences. Support practitioners to turn selected skills into defined visitor sessions with clear content, duration, group limits and service standards.	2027–2035	Regional culture and heritage authority	Practitioners; tourism enterprises; health authorities; training providers	Twelve market-tested experiences by 2028, twenty-four by 2031 and thirty-six by 2035.
A1.4.2	Equip Shared Cultural Enterprise Spaces. Identify suitable existing venues for craft, food and interpretation activities.	2028–2032	Woreda administrations	Host enterprises; culture and health authorities; infrastructure services	Twelve shared cultural enterprise spaces functioning by 2032.
A1.4.3	Strengthen Cultural Transmission and Community Interpretation. Support paid learning partnerships between experienced knowledge holders and younger practitioners.	2027–2035	Regional culture and heritage authority	Knowledge holders; young practitioners; universities; training providers	Seventy-five completed mentoring partnerships and six community interpretation collections by 2035.

No.	Key Action (Specific and Measurable)	Timeline	Responsible Body	Implementing Partners	Target / Indicator
A1.4.4	Develop Community-Chosen Cultural Events and Markets. Support public cultural occasions, markets and learning days selected by participating communities.	2028–2035	Regional culture and heritage authority	Communities; municipalities; cultural enterprises; operators	An annually updated calendar of community-approved public cultural activities from 2028.
Strategic Goal 5 – Diversify Special-Interest and Domestic Tourism Products					
A1.5.1	Develop Domestic, Diaspora and Educational Tourism Packages. Design short cultural and heritage itineraries for domestic travelers, diaspora families, schools and universities.	2027–2035	Afar Regional Tourism Bureau	Schools; universities; diaspora associations; operators; hosts	Six packages by 2028 and eighteen active repeat-sales partnerships by 2035.
A1.5.2	Strengthen Geological and Human-Origins Learning Products. Develop specialist interpretation and educational itineraries linking geological and human-origins resources with approved community experiences.	2027–2031	Afar Regional Tourism Bureau	Universities; geological and heritage institutions; guides; communities	Four specialist learning itineraries tested and operating by 2031.
A1.5.3	Develop Responsible Nature and Wellness Experiences. Assess nature observation, protected-area, hot-spring and lake-based opportunities for environmental suitability, safety, water requirements and visitor demand.	2028–2035	Afar Regional Tourism Bureau	Park and environment authorities; health services; investors; communities	Four appraised nature or wellness experiences operating by 2035.
A1.5.4	Integrate Cultural Products with Regional Travel Circuits. Work with operators to link cultural routes and community experiences with established travel circuits and appropriate interregional journeys.	2028–2035	Afar Regional Tourism Bureau	Operators; neighboring tourism authorities; host enterprises; accommodation providers	Twenty distinct market-ready itineraries by 2035.

Action Plan Table – Pillar 2: Tourism Infrastructure, Visitor Facilities and Safety

No.	Key Action (Specific and Measurable)	Timeline	Responsible Body	Implementing Partners	Target / Indicator
Strategic Goal 1 – Improve Access to Priority Tourism Destinations					
A2.1.1	Audit access and utilities for candidate routes. Inspect transport, water, sanitation, communications, land permissions and seasonal constraints; rank small works and refer major roads to sector plans.	2026–2027	Regional roads and infrastructure authorities	Transport; health; woredas; hosts	Six route service audits with priced scopes and referral list.
A2.1.2	Deliver priority small access improvements. Procure limited spot repairs, drainage, crossing protection and wayfinding only within approved technical designs and land agreements.	2027–2032	Regional roads and infrastructure authorities	Roads agency; woredas; community panels	Eighteen accepted small-work interventions; major road construction separately appraised.
A2.1.3	Maintain route services seasonally. Use performance-based maintenance agreements and pre-season inspections; publish dated access updates with an offline alternative.	2028–2035	Woreda administrations	Works; operators; route managers	Six route service plans funded and inspected annually.
Strategic Goal 2 – Develop and Maintain Essential Visitor Facilities					
A2.2.1	Agree facility designs and operating contracts. Assess water availability, accessible design, land rights, waste removal and maintenance charges; prioritize existing structures.	2027–2028	Regional roads and infrastructure authorities	Health; water; hosts; disability representatives	Twelve facility designs with signed owner and operator responsibilities.

No.	Key Action (Specific and Measurable)	Timeline	Responsible Body	Implementing Partners	Target / Indicator
A2.2.2	Install basic route facilities. Install low-water sanitation, shade, safe drinking-water arrangements and waste storage through approved designs.	2027–2031	Regional roads and infrastructure authorities	Woreda; health; contractors	Twelve facilities accepted and operational with caretakers.
A2.2.3	Fund and verify facility upkeep. Cost cleaning, water provision, consumables, waste transport and replacement; match user revenue to service commitments and close unsafe facilities.	2028–2035	Woreda administrations	Hosts; health; works	Annual service contracts and a facility performance register.
Strategic Goal 3 – Strengthen Tourist Safety and Emergency Preparedness					
A2.3.1	Set route operating and closure protocols. Coordinate local security, health, geological and transport advice; define heat, access and communication triggers without inventing universal thresholds.	2026–2027	Regional security and emergency services	Health; security; works; operators; hosts	Six route protocols approved by competent technical authorities.
A2.3.2	Equip and test response arrangements. Assess radios or satellite communications, first aid, trained responders and referral transport; procure only equipment that can be maintained lawfully.	2027–2029	Regional security and emergency services	Health; telecoms; operators; woredas	Six tested response arrangements with named duty contacts and fallback methods.
A2.3.3	Run exercises and incident learning. Conduct pre-season exercises and post-incident reviews; publish operational changes without exposing personal data; suspend departures when prerequisites fail.	2028–2035	Regional security and emergency services	Operators; health; community panels	Annual drills and corrective-action closure verified for each operating route.

Action Plan Table – Pillar 3: Tourism Investment Promotion and Private Sector Development

No.	Key Action (Specific and Measurable)	Timeline	Responsible Body	Implementing Partners	Target / Indicator
Strategic Goal 1 – Strengthen Local Tourism Enterprises					
A3.1.1	Provide business diagnostics and registration support. Recruit openly, assess skills and market links, assist lawful registration and banking, and separate grants from loans.	2027–2032	Regional enterprise development authority	Woredas; chambers; legal and finance advisers	Sixty enterprise development plans linked to realistic markets.
A3.1.2	Broker fair purchasing contracts. Agree host rates, deposits, cancellations, payment timing and transparent commissions between operators, accommodation and local suppliers.	2027–2031	Regional enterprise development authority	Operators; hotels; host enterprises	Thirty repeat-purchase agreements with payment records.
A3.1.3	Connect enterprises to suitable finance. Match proposals to small grants, savings and regulated lending; provide cash-flow coaching without government loan guarantees unless separately approved.	2028–2035	Regional enterprise development authority	Fund; regulated lenders; development partners	Forty enterprises receive appropriate financing decisions and follow-up.
Strategic Goal 2 – Attract and Facilitate Sustainable Tourism Investment					
A3.2.1	Prepare a verified opportunity register. Review existing proposals and private operations; record permissions, demand, site ownership, water and energy needs; remove duplicates.	2027–2028	Regional investment authority	Tourism; land; water; communities	One register refreshed annually with explicit readiness grades.

No.	Key Action (Specific and Measurable)	Timeline	Responsible Body	Implementing Partners	Target / Indicator
A3.2.2	Commission staged project appraisals. Start with existing accommodation upgrades, modest camps and community services; undertake full studies only after preliminary viability.	2028–2033	Regional investment authority	Finance; land; environment; investors	Ten independent appraisal packages with go, redesign or stop decisions.
A3.2.3	Operate investment aftercare. Track financing close, construction, operation, local hiring and supplier payments; resolve administrative issues through existing mandates.	2028–2035	Regional investment authority	Tourism; business associations; finance	Annual pipeline report separates inquiries, commitments and realized expenditure.
Strategic Goal 3 – Strengthen Local Tourism Supply Chains and Employment					
A3.3.1	Map supply opportunities. Match food, craft, transport, maintenance and interpretation needs to willing local suppliers and realistic quality requirements.	2027–2028	Regional enterprise development authority	Hotels; operators; producer groups	Six corridor supplier maps and twelve buyer commitments by 2028.
A3.3.2	Improve supplier quality and delivery. Support packaging, hygiene, scheduling and procurement documentation; use practical buyer trials rather than attendance-only training.	2028–2032	Regional enterprise development authority	Buyers; health; training providers	Forty suppliers complete accepted trial orders.
A3.3.3	Monitor payment and work standards. Review invoices, payment delays, working conditions and complaints; agree corrective actions with businesses and relevant labor authorities.	2028–2035	Regional enterprise development authority	Labor; host representatives; buyers	Annual procurement and decent-work review with documented remediation.

Action Plan Table – Pillar 4: Destination Management and Institutional Strengthening

No.	Key Action (Specific and Measurable)	Timeline	Responsible Body	Implementing Partners	Target / Indicator
Strategic Goal 1 – Strengthen Tourism Governance and Implementation Coordination					
A4.1.1	Confirm mandates and nominate delivery owners. Map current institutional functions, name focal persons and adopt the responsibility matrix; confirm whether an existing committee can provide oversight.	2026–2027	Afar Regional Tourism Bureau	Regional executive; finance; legal; woredas	Approved delivery charter and one accountable owner for every action.
A4.1.2	Staff a small delivery secretariat. Assign planning, community liaison, finance coordination and M&E functions within the Afar Regional Tourism Bureau; use secondments before creating new posts.	2027–2035	Afar Regional Tourism Bureau	Finance; civil service; partners	Four core functions staffed with annual performance agreements.
A4.1.3	Run quarterly delivery reviews. Review milestones, funding, host concerns and unresolved dependencies; escalate decisions with a named owner and deadline.	2027–2035	Afar Regional Tourism Bureau	Steering committee; route managers	Quarterly decisions and annual delivery reports published in accessible form.
Strategic Goal 2 – Improve Destination Management and Service Standards					
A4.2.1	Agree route management models. Compare community enterprise, contracted operator and woreda-supported models; define manager duties and avoid assigning tax powers.	2027–2029	Afar Regional Tourism Bureau	Hosts; woredas; legal; operators	Six route management agreements approved before launch.

No.	Key Action (Specific and Measurable)	Timeline	Responsible Body	Implementing Partners	Target / Indicator
A4.2.2	Introduce proportional service standards. Align with applicable licensing and food, transport and guide standards; design practical inspection forms and corrective periods.	2027–2028	Afar Regional Tourism Bureau	Health; transport; labor; legal	One route service manual and annual inspection schedule.
A4.2.3	Verify compliance and resolve complaints. Use risk-based inspections, confidential interviews and time-bound corrective notices; refer statutory enforcement to competent authorities.	2028–2035	Afar Regional Tourism Bureau	Woredas; relevant regulators; host panels	Annual compliance reports and documented complaint closure.
Strategic Goal 3 – Strengthen Tourism Research and Performance Management					
A4.3.1	Consolidate the Tourism Research and Performance Baseline. Consolidate research and administrative records into a dated tourism performance register, distinguishing distinct visitors, site visits, overnight stays, domestic and international segments, and designated and operating sites.	2026–2028	Afar Regional Tourism Bureau	Statistics function; university; communities	A dated, reconciled performance register with counting definitions by 2027; comparable annual reporting from 2028.
A4.3.2	Operate the annual results system. Fund field collection, quarterly checks, host feedback and annual performance reporting; use the KPI dictionary and retain denominator coverage.	2027–2035	Afar Regional Tourism Bureau	M&E focal points; independent verifier	Nine annual reporting cycles with accessible findings.
A4.3.3	Commission independent evaluations. Review process and outcomes in 2030 and sustainability in 2035; use contribution analysis and follow comparable nonparticipant groups where feasible.	2030–2035	Afar Regional Tourism Bureau	Independent evaluator; finance; host representatives	Midterm and final evaluations with management responses.

Action Plan Table – Pillar 5: Destination Branding, Marketing and Promotion

No.	Key Action (Specific and Measurable)	Timeline	Responsible Body	Implementing Partners	Target / Indicator
Strategic Goal 1 – Build and Promote a Distinctive Visit Afar Brand					
A5.1.1	Develop the cultural brand narrative. Retain Visit Afar identity and develop community-approved themes around living knowledge, hospitality and exchange; test language with hosts and markets.	2027–2028	Afar Regional Tourism Bureau	Regional culture and heritage authority; hosts; communications	Brand narrative and representation guidelines approved by participating panels.
A5.1.2	Produce licensed cultural content. Commission local storytellers, photographers and translators with contributor payments and limited-use agreements; avoid depicting private ceremonies as bookable products.	2027–2031	Regional culture and heritage authority	Local creators; hosts; Afar Regional Tourism Bureau	Sixty approved content assets with rights metadata.
A5.1.3	Review representation and withdraw outdated content. Maintain a request channel and remove withdrawn or inaccurate material; update operating status before campaigns.	2028–2035	Afar Regional Tourism Bureau	Culture; digital; hosts	Annual audit and documented removal response for all controlled channels.
Strategic Goal 2 – Strengthen Targeted Tourism Marketing and Promotion					
A5.2.1	Segment markets and set campaign tests. Use the tourist satisfaction research, operator feedback and product testing to select domestic, diaspora and specialist market segments.	2027–2028	Afar Regional Tourism Bureau	Operators; host businesses; research	Four tested segment briefs and a conversion measurement plan.

No.	Key Action (Specific and Measurable)	Timeline	Responsible Body	Implementing Partners	Target / Indicator
A5.2.2	Run measured cultural-route campaigns. Promote only routes cleared for sale; combine trade partnerships, educational outreach and modest digital campaigns with bookable offers.	2028–2035	Afar Regional Tourism Bureau	Operators; hosts; diaspora networks	Eight annual campaign cycles with verified sales and cost per booking.
A5.2.3	Improve offers using conversion evidence. Quarterly compare inquiry quality, booking cancellations, season and local receipts; redirect budget to tested offers and suspend ineffective channels.	2028–2035	Afar Regional Tourism Bureau	Afar Regional Tourism Bureau; operators; M&E	Quarterly optimization records and an annual campaign return review.
Strategic Goal 3 – Expand Domestic, Diaspora and Educational Tourism					
A5.3.1	Develop short cultural learning offers. Co-design half-day and short overnight options around gateways with clear learning objectives, age suitability and host fees.	2027–2029	Afar Regional Tourism Bureau	Schools; universities; hosts; operators	Six cultural learning offers connected to Pillar 1 packages, with transport and safeguarding arrangements by 2029.
A5.3.2	Contract repeat-sales partners. Engage domestic operators, education institutions and diaspora associations without assuming airline or institutional commitments.	2028–2035	Afar Regional Tourism Bureau	Education partners; operators	Eighteen active sales relationships by 2035.
A5.3.3	Support community-chosen public cultural occasions. Use an opt-in calendar of public events and learning days; support host planning and waste services; never promise access to private rituals.	2028–2035	Regional culture and heritage authority	Communities; woredas; operators	Eight annual promotional calendars linked to community-approved cultural programs, 2028–2035.

Action Plan Table – Pillar 6: Human Resource Development and Community Empowerment

No.	Key Action (Specific and Measurable)	Timeline	Responsible Body	Implementing Partners	Target / Indicator
Strategic Goal 1 – Develop a Skilled and Professional Tourism Workforce					
A6.1.1	Design competency-based curricula. Assess gaps with employers and hosts; develop modules in interpretation, respectful hosting, safety, hygiene, language, pricing and digital tools.	2027–2028	Regional tourism and skills authorities	TVET; university; culture; operators	Four modular curricula with accessible Afar-language learning support.
A6.1.2	Train and assess route workers. Provide field-based cohorts scheduled around livelihoods; include women, youth and persons with disabilities through suitable adjustments.	2027–2035	Regional tourism and skills authorities	Accredited providers; operators; hosts	Three hundred participants complete training and competency assessment by 2035.
A6.1.3	Maintain professional competence. Agree recognition with competent authorities; keep a verified skills register and fund refresher exercises and peer learning.	2028–2035	Regional tourism and skills authorities	Tourism; trainers; operators	Annual refresher cycle and competency expiry tracking.
Strategic Goal 2 – Connect Tourism Training with Employment and Enterprise Opportunities					
A6.2.1	Negotiate paid placements. Secure employer descriptions, supervision, fair compensation and safeguarding provisions before enrolling placement cohorts.	2028–2035	Regional tourism and skills authorities	Employers; labor; training partners	One hundred twenty paid placement opportunities through 2035.
A6.2.2	Provide inclusive learner support. Offer transparent transport, accessibility and care-related support according to demonstrated need; avoid automatic quotas unsupported by applicant availability.	2027–2035	Regional tourism and skills authorities	Women and youth representatives; Fund	One hundred fifty needs-assessed support awards.

No.	Key Action (Specific and Measurable)	Timeline	Responsible Body	Implementing Partners	Target / Indicator
A6.2.3	Track graduates and improve courses. Follow cohorts at 6, 12 and 24 months; assess pay, job relevance, enterprise survival and barriers; revise courses with employers.	2028–2035	Regional tourism and skills authorities	M&E; training providers; employers	Annual tracer report linked to curriculum and placement changes.
Strategic Goal 3 – Strengthen Community Tourism Enterprise Management					
A6.3.1	Train community enterprise managers. Provide practical sessions in accounts, member rights, host rotation, conflicts of interest and contracting using real transactions.	2027–2031	Regional enterprise development authority	Culture; finance trainers; host panels	Thirty-six enterprise management teams complete applied training.
A6.3.2	Support transparent member reporting. Introduce simple ledgers, oral reporting meetings and accessible payment statements; retain confidential individual information.	2028–2035	Regional enterprise development authority	Host members; route managers	Thirty-six enterprises use agreed reporting and grievance procedures.
A6.3.3	Review inclusion and remedy disputes. Check who receives work and income, who bears hosting costs and who is excluded; mediate within lawful and rights-respecting processes.	2028–2035	Regional enterprise development authority	Woredas; independent facilitator; host panels	Annual inclusion review with tracked remedial actions.

Action Plan Table – Pillar 7: Sustainable Tourism, Conservation and Heritage Protection

No.	Key Action (Specific and Measurable)	Timeline	Responsible Body	Implementing Partners	Target / Indicator
Strategic Goal 1 – Integrate Sustainability into Tourism Development					
A7.1.1	Adopt a proportionate safeguard screening process. Review applicable law and institutional mandates; define water, land, labor, heritage, waste and access screening with escalation to formal studies where required.	2026–2027	Regional environment and heritage authorities	Legal; heritage; finance; communities	One screening manual and trained appraisal staff.
A7.1.2	Prepare site and route management safeguards. Determine acceptable use with communities and competent specialists; define restricted spaces, habitat protection, waste removal and review triggers.	2027–2031	Regional environment and heritage authorities	Culture; park and heritage managers; woredas	Twelve management plans for priority cultural and sensitive natural locations.
A7.1.3	Verify compliance and remedy damage. Inspect funded works and operating services; fund corrective measures under approved plans and suspend noncompliant activities.	2028–2035	Regional environment and heritage authorities	Independent specialists; community monitors	Annual safeguard report and evidence of corrective-action closure.
Strategic Goal 2 – Safeguard Living Culture and Community Participation					
A7.2.1	Adopt cultural access and media protocols. Specify household permission, individual image consent, child protection, private ceremonies, knowledge restrictions and permitted translations.	2027–2028	Regional culture and heritage authority	Hosts; legal; child protection; operators	One protocol co-approved with host panels and used in visitor briefings.

No.	Key Action (Specific and Measurable)	Timeline	Responsible Body	Implementing Partners	Target / Indicator
A7.2.2	Support paid community stewardship. Contract local monitors for agreed cultural and heritage protection functions; clarify that monitoring is not a coercive policing role.	2028–2035	Regional culture and heritage authority	Heritage; hosts; woredas	Thirty-six stewardship agreements with transparent duties and payments.
A7.2.3	Measure host wellbeing and participation. Assess income, workload, privacy, conflict and cultural learning; allow confidential withdrawal and revise route schedules when burdens rise.	2028–2035	Regional culture and heritage authority	Independent research; community panels	Annual host wellbeing review informs renewal and closure decisions.
Strategic Goal 3 – Improve Environmental and Heritage Resource Management					
A7.3.1	Assess water waste and climate requirements. Measure likely tourism demand against community and ecosystem needs; set seasonal operating arrangements and specialist-designed limits.	2027–2029	Regional environment and heritage authorities	Water; health; heritage; community panels	Six route resource plans and sensitive-site referrals.
A7.3.2	Introduce practical resource improvements. Install metering or records, refill systems where water is safe, solar support where maintainable, and waste transfer arrangements.	2028–2032	Regional roads and infrastructure authorities	Water; environment; operators	Twelve verified resource-efficiency upgrades.
A7.3.3	Monitor heritage and environmental condition. Maintain fixed observation points and logs; protect archaeological access and review geology-related operations with specialists; do not promise formal geopark recognition.	2028–2035	Regional environment and heritage authorities	Heritage; research; park managers; local stewards	Annual condition reports guide site limits and rehabilitation priorities.

Action Plan Table – Pillar 8: Digital Transformation and Tourism Intelligence

No.	Key Action (Specific and Measurable)	Timeline	Responsible Body	Implementing Partners	Target / Indicator
Strategic Goal 1 – Strengthen Digital Visitor Information and Market Access					
A8.1.1	Audit existing digital services. Review the official Visit Afar website, destination maps and business information.	2026–2027	Afar Regional Tourism Bureau	Tourism; site administrator; hosts	One verified service audit and prioritized upgrade scope.
A8.1.2	Add cultural route and host information. Publish approved narratives, route readiness, contact and enquiry options, language support and downloadable route cards; omit private host coordinates.	2027–2029	Afar Regional Tourism Bureau	Culture; route managers; operators	Six route pages and accessible offline materials linked to verified offers.
A8.1.3	Maintain information and enquiry handling. Assign editors and response standards; record changes, withdraw unavailable offers and reconcile enquiries with consenting operators.	2028–2035	Afar Regional Tourism Bureau	Tourism; route owners	Annual content and service support with monthly route reviews.
Strategic Goal 2 – Establish an Integrated Tourism Data and Intelligence System					
A8.2.1	Define data governance and common identifiers. Agree minimum data, lawful purposes, access roles, retention periods and deduplication; separate marketing consent from mandatory records.	2027–2028	Afar Regional Tourism Bureau	Legal; statistics; finance; hosts	One data governance protocol and compatible entity identifiers.
A8.2.2	Build simple reporting and reconciliation tools. Use offline-compatible forms, a controlled database and dashboards; avoid biometric systems and unnecessary bespoke apps.	2027–2029	Afar Regional Tourism Bureau	M&E; finance; route managers	One tested reporting system with paper reconciliation and export capability.

No.	Key Action (Specific and Measurable)	Timeline	Responsible Body	Implementing Partners	Target / Indicator
A8.2.3	Maintain data quality and security. Test backups, permissions, incident response and vendor exit; correct duplicates and train entity focal persons.	2028–2035	Afar Regional Tourism Bureau	M&E; independent tester	Annual security and data-quality reviews with remedial actions.
Strategic Goal 3 – Expand Digital Business and Payment Adoption					
A8.3.1	Assess payment and connectivity needs. Compare available regulated services, fees, identity requirements, offline fallback and settlement times with willing enterprises.	2027–2028	Afar Regional Tourism Bureau	Regulated payment providers; Regional enterprise development authority	One options assessment and six corridor connectivity plans.
A8.3.2	Support practical business adoption. Train enterprise teams using real payment reconciliation, digital listings and enquiry responses; provide shared devices where justified.	2028–2033	Regional enterprise development authority	Digital; providers; trainers	Forty-five enterprises complete practical adoption checks.
A8.3.3	Review service reliability and costs. Check payment delays, failed transactions, fraud reports and user exclusion; renegotiate services or restore alternatives as needed.	2028–2035	Regional enterprise development authority	Finance; payment providers; host panels	Annual user and settlement review.

Action Plan Table – Pillar 9: Establishment of the Afar Tourism Development Fund

No.	Key Action (Specific and Measurable)	Timeline	Responsible Body	Implementing Partners	Target / Indicator
Strategic Goal 1 – Establish the Legal and Institutional Framework of the Fund					
A9.1.1	Complete the legal and fiscal options study. Examine the legal authority for establishing the Fund and for each potential tourism-related tax, levy or contribution.	2026–2027	Regional finance authority	Legal affairs; revenue; tourism; federal counterparts as required	Signed legal and fiscal options report with an approval pathway.
A9.1.2	Prepare and secure required instruments. Consult businesses and communities; draft establishment and collection instruments only for the legally supported option; confirm treasury and audit treatment.	2027–2028	Regional finance authority	Legal; revenue; regional executive and legislature	Approved instruments or an explicit decision to retain a non-levy facility.
A9.1.3	Put governance and staffing in place. Appoint a representative board, use a small hosted secretariat, separate collection and award roles and test conflicts and complaints processes.	2027–2028	Regional finance authority	Tourism; community representatives; private sector; audit	Eight readiness conditions independently verified before operations.
Strategic Goal 2 – Diversify Lawful Tourism Revenue and Resource Mobilization					
A9.2.1	Test revenue bases and charge options. Assess accommodation-based tourist taxes or levies and other legally permissible visitor charges alongside grants, public contributions and voluntary support.	2027–2028	Regional revenue authority	Finance; businesses; tourism; legal	Verified base study and recommended instrument with sensitivity analysis.

No.	Key Action (Specific and Measurable)	Timeline	Responsible Body	Implementing Partners	Target / Indicator
A9.2.2	Pilot lawful collection and reconciliation. After authority and readiness, pilot one instrument with registered collectors, clear receipts, monthly remittance and paper fallback; no multiple levy stacking.	2028–2029	Regional revenue authority	Finance; collectors; regulated payment providers	Pilot reconciles assessment, receipts, refunds and treasury deposit before expansion.
A9.2.3	Secure and manage non-levy contributions. Prepare grant and sponsorship proposals, a voluntary donation policy and diaspora contribution channels; prohibit donor influence over award decisions.	2027–2035	Regional finance authority	Tourism; development partners; corporate and diaspora networks	Annual contribution pipeline distinguishes signed receipts from prospects.
Strategic Goal 3 – Finance and Oversee Priority Tourism Development Projects					
A9.3.1	Adopt investment windows and appraisal rules. Set eligible activities, scoring, safeguards, co-financing, maintenance requirements and appeal routes; use other pillars delivery budgets rather than create duplicate grant allowances.	2027–2028	Regional finance authority	Tourism; culture; environment; community and private representatives	Fund manual with four windows and standardized appraisal forms.
A9.3.2	Appraise and monitor competitive awards. Issue open calls sized to available cash and approved commitments; verify milestones before disbursement and record beneficiaries and procurement.	2028–2035	Regional finance authority	Technical appraisal team; independent reviewers	Annual award rounds with scores, decisions and project monitoring.
A9.3.3	Verify project outcomes and recovery actions. Visit completed projects at 6 and 12 months; stop further disbursement for material noncompliance and apply lawful recovery or redesign processes.	2029–2035	Regional finance authority	Independent verifier; hosts; line institutions	Annual post-completion review and corrective-action report.

No.	Key Action (Specific and Measurable)	Timeline	Responsible Body	Implementing Partners	Target / Indicator
Strategic Goal 4 – Educate and Develop Future Afar Tourism Leaders					
A9.4.1	Design scholarship and fellowship pathways. Map employers and qualified providers; define transparent selection, needs support, mentor duties and applied community or business assignments.	2027–2028	Regional tourism and skills authorities	Fund; universities; TVET; employers; host representatives	Program manual with scholarships, apprenticeships and management fellowships.
A9.4.2	Finance selected future leader cohorts. Select participants through transparent criteria covering merit, leadership potential, financial need and relevance to Afar tourism.	2028–2035	Regional tourism and skills authorities	Fund; qualified providers; employers	Eighty distinct participants supported by 2035 under approved award ceilings.
A9.4.3	Track leadership progression and contribution. Trace participants at 6, 12 and 24 months and then annually; measure completion, relevant work, management responsibility, enterprise survival and knowledge transfer.	2029–2035	Regional tourism and skills authorities	Independent evaluator; employers; Fund	Annual alumni report informs cohort size and curriculum decisions.
Strategic Goal 5 – Ensure Fund Transparency, Accountability and Performance					
A9.5.1	Establish Fund financial controls. Adopt separation of duties, monthly reconciliation, commitment ceilings, retention rules, procurement and fraud reporting; integrate existing financial systems.	2027–2028	Regional finance authority	Treasury; revenue; internal audit; legal	Controls tested before first receipt or award.

No.	Key Action (Specific and Measurable)	Timeline	Responsible Body	Implementing Partners	Target / Indicator
A9.5.2	Maintain public accounts and external audit. Publish quarterly receipt and award summaries and annual audited accounts; distinguish taxes, grants and donations; respond to material findings.	2028–2035	Regional finance authority	Independent external auditor; board	Eight annual independent audits and accessible public summaries.
A9.5.3	Review Fund costs fairness and effectiveness. Test administrative costs, collection burdens, distribution, political interference and outcomes; revise rules through competent approval.	2030–2035	Regional finance authority	Independent reviewer; businesses; host representatives	Three independent Fund reviews in 2030, 2033 and 2035.

07

RISK ASSESSMENT AND MITIGATION



Practical measures to protect visitors, communities, heritage and implementation.

7. Risk Assessment and Mitigation

Tourism implementation will be managed through regular assessment of risks to visitors, workers, communities, resources and institutional delivery. Responsible institutions will monitor early warning conditions and take corrective action before risks undermine the strategy. The regional coordination mechanism will review major risks quarterly and immediately following a material incident or change in operating conditions.

Risk Assessment and Mitigation

Risk Category	Potential Risks	Impact	Mitigation Strategies	Responsible Institutions
Access and security	Changes in access, local disruption or unclear operating permissions can interrupt routes and affect visitors and hosts.	High	Confirm current access before departures; coordinate operating decisions; maintain alternative itineraries; suspend affected services when required.	Regional security and emergency services; Tourism Bureau
Heat, geological and transport hazards	Extreme heat, difficult terrain, geological conditions or transport failure can cause serious incidents.	High	Apply route-specific protocols, trained guiding, tested communication, appropriate equipment and realistic referral arrangements.	Security and emergency services; operators; technical specialists
Water and environmental pressure	Tourism can add pressure to water, waste systems and fragile landscapes.	High	Screen projects, assess resource capacity, protect community use, monitor site condition and enforce corrective measures.	Environment authorities; woredas; site custodians
Cultural misuse and loss of host support	Unauthorized cultural recording, intrusion into private life or pressure to participate can damage trust.	High	Use explicit permissions, host agreements, cultural protocols, confidential complaints and the right to withdraw.	Culture authority; community panels; operators
Exclusion and unequal opportunity	Benefits may concentrate among a few actors while hosting or environmental burdens are more widely shared.	Medium to high	Use transparent selection, accessible enterprise support, member reporting and independent review of participation.	Enterprise authority; woredas; community representatives
Weak demand and product performance	Products may attract inquiries without repeat bookings or may not meet visitor expectations.	Medium to high	Conduct paid pilots, review bookings and satisfaction, refine products and postpone expansion where performance is weak.	Tourism Bureau; operators; host enterprises
Investment and delivery delays	Incomplete preparation, approval delays or weak contractor performance can stall development.	High	Complete appraisal, confirm responsibilities, monitor milestones and resolve cross-sector constraints through quarterly reviews.	Investment and infrastructure authorities; Tourism Bureau

Risk Category	Potential Risks	Impact	Mitigation Strategies	Responsible Institutions
Maintenance and service failure	Facilities may deteriorate when operating responsibility and upkeep are inadequate.	High	Assign an operator before commissioning; use maintenance schedules, service logs and functionality inspections.	Woredas; facility operators; infrastructure authorities
Institutional discontinuity	Staff turnover or weak coordination can interrupt delivery and lose institutional knowledge.	Medium to high	Assign alternates, maintain common records, use institutional agreements and document decisions and handovers.	Tourism Bureau; responsible regional institutions
Fund legal and governance failure	Collection without authority, conflicts of interest or weak controls can undermine the Fund.	High	Complete legal establishment before collection; separate duties; disclose conflicts; audit independently and publish results.	Finance and revenue authorities; Fund governing body
Skills mismatch and weak employment outcomes	Training may fail to meet employer needs or lead to sustained work.	Medium	Agree employer pathways before enrollment; provide paid placements; assess competence and track graduate outcomes.	Tourism and skills authorities; providers; employers
Digital and information failure	Outdated information, connectivity problems or data breaches can harm customers and institutions.	Medium to high	Assign content owners, protect data, test backups, retain offline options and respond promptly to incidents.	Tourism Bureau; digital services; providers
Measurement and accountability failure	Inconsistent definitions or unsupported completion claims can distort performance.	Medium	Use common KPI definitions, preserve source records, verify samples and record corrections transparently.	Tourism Bureau M&E function; independent evaluators

08

MONITORING AND EVALUATION



Evidence, accountability and learning throughout the ten-year strategy.

8. Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism

The monitoring and evaluation mechanism will track implementation, outputs and outcomes across all nine strategic pillars. The Afar Regional Tourism Bureau will coordinate the system with responsible regional institutions, woreda administrations, communities, tourism businesses and education providers. Completed research and administrative records will be consolidated into a dated opening performance register. Historical visitor totals, indicative international estimates and site designations will remain separate from current KPI baselines until their periods, definitions and coverage are reconciled.

Responsible bodies will update action progress quarterly and retain evidence of delivery. Annual performance reviews will combine implementation results with visitor satisfaction, host feedback, enterprise performance and workforce outcomes. An independent midterm evaluation in 2030 will assess relevance, delivery and emerging outcomes; a final evaluation in 2035 will assess sustained results and inform the next strategy.

Indicators distinguish activity from outcome. Registrations are not counted as active enterprises, training attendance is not counted as competence or employment, and route promotion is not counted as operational readiness. Percentage indicators apply only where an eligible denominator exists. Missing information will be recorded as unavailable, and changes in coverage or definitions will be disclosed in reports.

8.1. Tourism Product Development and Diversification

Product development will be monitored through the resource inventory, product inspections, host agreements, booking records and visitor feedback. The Tourism Bureau will verify resource classification, improvements to existing products, operational cultural routes and the delivery of diversified experiences. Cultural practitioners and host panels will contribute to the assessment of product quality and participation. Route expansion will follow evidence of paid operations, functioning services and continuing host agreement.

8.2. Tourism Infrastructure, Visitor Facilities and Safety

Infrastructure monitoring will combine inspection of completed improvements with regular checks of facility functionality and maintenance. Safety monitoring will cover route approval, communication tests, exercises and incident review. The responsible technical authorities will verify completion, while operators and hosts will report service interruptions. Visitor feedback will help identify recurring access, comfort and information problems.

8.3. Tourism Investment Promotion and Private Sector Development

Enterprise monitoring will track active trading, survival, supplier relationships and investment milestones. Registration and promotional interest will be reported separately from operating businesses and completed investments. The enterprise and investment authorities will verify commercial activity through business records and interviews, with attention to participation by women, young people and local suppliers.

8.4. Destination Management and Institutional Strengthening

Governance monitoring will track timely delivery of annual milestones, functioning route-management arrangements, complaints handling and the quality of performance data. The Tourism Bureau will maintain the action register and convene quarterly reviews. Annual reporting will record decisions, unresolved constraints and corrective actions. Independent evaluations will assess whether institutional arrangements improve implementation and service outcomes.

8.5. Destination Branding, Marketing and Promotion

Marketing monitoring will connect campaign activity with qualified inquiries, confirmed bookings, repeat partnerships and visitor satisfaction. The Tourism Bureau will review the accuracy and permissions of published cultural content and assess the performance of domestic, diaspora and educational partnerships. Channel reach will be reported as communication activity rather than as evidence of visits or purchases.

8.6. Human Resource Development and Community Empowerment

Human-resource monitoring will track participation, completion, competence, paid placements and subsequent work or enterprise activity. Training providers and employers will supply records, and follow-up studies will assess outcomes after six, twelve and twenty-four months as appropriate. Results will be disaggregated by sex, age, locality and training pathway where participants consent and data quality permits.

8.7. Sustainable Tourism, Conservation and Heritage Protection

Sustainability monitoring will combine project screening records, site-condition checks, resource-use information and confidential host feedback. Competent environment and heritage authorities will verify compliance, while communities will assess control over cultural participation and hosting conditions. Adverse changes will trigger review of visitor use, operating practices and project design.

8.8. Digital Transformation and Tourism Intelligence

Digital monitoring will assess information accuracy, reporting completeness and the practical use of business tools. Content owners will verify current operating-route information, and participating institutions will review data quality and security. Enterprise checks will assess whether adopted tools function in routine transactions and whether users have suitable alternatives when connectivity fails.

8.9. Establishment of the Afar Tourism Development Fund

Fund monitoring will cover institutional readiness, lawful revenue mechanisms, award decisions, supported-project functionality, leadership progression and timely public reporting. Collection, appraisal and audit records will be kept distinct. Supported projects will be assessed after completion, and leadership participants will be followed through qualification, relevant work and progression into responsibility. Independent review will examine integrity, effectiveness and the continuing value of the Fund.

Key Performance Indicator Tables

The following KPI tables define the measures, phase targets, evidence sources and reporting responsibilities. The opening-year value for each indicator will be entered from the consolidated research and performance records before the first annual report. Unavailable values will remain explicitly recorded as unavailable until measured; they will not be treated as zero. Phase targets describe strategic commitments, and any approved revision will retain the original value and the reason for change.

KPI Table – Pillar 1: Tourism Product Development and Diversification

Indicator	Definition / Measurement	2028	2031	2035	Data Source / Verification	Frequency / Lead Institution
K1.1 Tourism resources assessed within the regional inventory	Resources with a complete and current inventory and readiness record divided by all resources in the approved regional inventory; report additions and public-access status separately.	100%	100%	100%	Inventory review; field verification; community confirmation.	Quarterly; annual verification Afar Regional Tourism Bureau
K1.2 Priority tourism products upgraded and operating	Distinct products with completed interpretation and visitor-management improvements, functioning service arrangements and evidence of visitor use; count each product once.	4	8	12	Product acceptance inspections; operator records; visitor feedback.	Quarterly; annual verification Afar Regional Tourism Bureau
K1.3 Operational cultural routes	Routes with current host agreements, an approved itinerary, verified access and services, a named operator, visitor information and paid departures during the preceding twelve months.	2	4	6	Route-readiness inspections; host agreements; booking and service records.	Quarterly; annual verification Afar Regional Tourism Bureau

Indicator	Definition / Measurement	2028	2031	2035	Data Source / Verification	Frequency / Lead Institution
K1.4 Market-tested cultural experiences	Distinct bookable cultural experiences with participating-host agreement, a defined service, cultural permissions, quality checks and evidence of paid delivery.	12	24	36	Experience register; host interviews; operator and transaction records.	Quarterly; annual verification Regional culture and heritage authority
K1.5 Market-ready diversified itineraries	Distinct itineraries with contracted providers, defined customer segments, verified operating conditions and paid delivery; exclude duplicate marketing versions.	6	12	20	Product register; partner contracts; bookings; customer feedback.	Quarterly; annual verification Afar Regional Tourism Bureau
K1.6 Visitor satisfaction with tourism experiences	Respondents rating their overall experience satisfactory or better divided by valid respondents; use a consistent survey scale and publish coverage.	80%	85%	90%	Repeat tourist satisfaction surveys; post-visit feedback.	Annual Afar Regional Tourism Bureau

KPI Table – Pillar 2: Tourism Infrastructure, Visitor Facilities and Safety

Indicator	Definition / Measurement	2028	2031	2035	Data Source / Verification	Frequency / Lead Institution
K2.1 Priority bottlenecks resolved	A recorded access or service bottleneck is closed only after independent acceptance and functionality verification; major highway projects are reported separately.	6	12	18	Route engineering assessments; completion certificates; seasonal inspections.	Quarterly; annual verification Regional roads and infrastructure authorities
K2.2 Funded facilities passing functionality audit	Functioning facilities divided by funded facilities due to be operational; test sanitation, water provision, shade, maintenance and complaints access.	85%	90%	95%	Quarterly spot inspections with photographs excluding identifiable people.	Quarterly; annual verification Woreda administrations
K2.3 Operating routes passing safety readiness review	Operating routes with current access decision, trained lead, tested communications, evacuation arrangements and incident protocol divided by all operating routes.	100%	100%	100%	Pre-season exercises; independent readiness audit; incident review.	Quarterly; annual verification Regional security and emergency services

KPI Table – Pillar 3: Tourism Investment Promotion and Private Sector Development

Indicator	Definition / Measurement	2028	2031	2035	Data Source / Verification	Frequency / Lead Institution
K3.1 Supported enterprises trading after 24 months	Eligible supported enterprises with documented sales in the previous quarter at their 24-month anniversary divided by enterprises reaching that anniversary; exclude newer cohorts.	65%	70%	75%	Enterprise register; ledger sample; independent owner interviews.	Quarterly; annual verification Regional enterprise development authority
K3.2 Projects passing investment readiness gate	Projects with market assessment, legal land access, safeguards, costed operation and maintenance, financing plan and independent appraisal; a brochure alone does not qualify.	3	6	10	Appraisal dossier; investment committee decision.	Quarterly; annual verification Regional investment authority
K3.3 Active Afar-based tourism suppliers	Distinct Afar-based suppliers with completed orders from participating tourism businesses in the reporting year; verify delivery and avoid counting registrations alone.	15	30	40	Supplier invoices; annual business survey with coverage disclosed.	Quarterly; annual verification Regional enterprise development authority

KPI Table – Pillar 4: Destination Management and Institutional Strengthening

Indicator	Definition / Measurement	2028	2031	2035	Data Source / Verification	Frequency / Lead Institution
K4.1 Annual milestones completed on time	Milestones accepted by their approved due dates divided by milestones due in the year; formally revised dates remain visible alongside originals.	70%	80%	85%	Quarterly delivery register and acceptance evidence.	Quarterly; annual verification Afar Regional Tourism Bureau
K4.2 Operating routes with accountable management	Operating routes with named manager, service plan, complaint channel and reviewed host accounts divided by operating routes.	100%	100%	100%	Management agreements; complaints audit; host confirmations.	Quarterly; annual verification Afar Regional Tourism Bureau
K4.3 Core indicators with verified current data	Core indicators due for reporting with complete, quality-checked data divided by core indicators due; unavailable data are never zero.	80%	90%	95%	Data-quality register; annual independent sample checks.	Quarterly; annual verification Afar Regional Tourism Bureau

KPI Table – Pillar 5: Destination Branding, Marketing and Promotion

Indicator	Definition / Measurement	2028	2031	2035	Data Source / Verification	Frequency / Lead Institution
K5.1 Published cultural assets with verified permissions	Published cultural photographs, recordings and stories with recorded contributor permissions and approved scope divided by audited cultural assets.	100%	100%	100%	Rights register; random published-asset audit.	Quarterly; annual verification Regional culture and heritage authority
K5.2 Tracked qualified inquiries converting to bookings	Paid bookings linked to qualified inquiries divided by qualified inquiries recorded in the same mature cohort; disclose attribution window and untracked channels.	10%	15%	20%	Referral codes; operator booking reconciliation; no personal data publication.	Quarterly; annual verification Afar Regional Tourism Bureau
K5.3 Active repeat-sales partnerships	Partners with at least two paid group departures in the year and no unresolved serious host complaint.	6	12	18	Contracts; booking records; safeguarding checks where children participate.	Quarterly; annual verification Afar Regional Tourism Bureau

KPI Table – Pillar 6: Human Resource Development and Community Empowerment

Indicator	Definition / Measurement	2028	2031	2035	Data Source / Verification	Frequency / Lead Institution
K6.1 Participants passing practical competency assessment	Participants passing independent practical assessment divided by participants completing the assessed course; publish completion separately.	70%	80%	85%	Assessment rubrics; observed trips; employer feedback.	Quarterly; annual verification Regional tourism and skills authorities
K6.2 Completers in tourism work after six months	Traceable completers in paid tourism work or an enterprise with sales six months after completion divided by all eligible completers; report unknown status separately and conservatively.	50%	60%	70%	Graduate tracer survey; employer or sales confirmation.	Quarterly; annual verification Regional tourism and skills authorities
K6.3 Participating host enterprises passing governance review	Host enterprises with current member register, elected or agreed leadership, published internal accounts, payment rotation and functioning grievance mechanism divided by assessed enterprises.	75%	85%	90%	Member interviews; financial records; independent annual review.	Quarterly; annual verification Regional enterprise development authority
K6.4 Training completers	Distinct learners completing the approved course and assessment; exclude repeat attendance by the same person from the cumulative total.	80	180	300	Provider completion records; unique learner register.	Quarterly; annual verification Regional tourism and skills authorities

KPI Table – Pillar 7: Sustainable Tourism, Conservation and Heritage Protection

Indicator	Definition / Measurement	2028	2031	2035	Data Source / Verification	Frequency / Lead Institution
K7.1 Funded projects passing safeguard gate before commitment	Projects with required screening, permissions, consultation and mitigation budget before funding commitment divided by all projects committed.	100%	100%	100%	Appraisal files; independent sample verification.	Quarterly; annual verification Regional environment and heritage authorities
K7.2 Hosts satisfied with control over tourism participation	Responding sampled hosts rating control satisfactory or better divided by valid respondents; publish sample and nonresponse, with separate women and youth findings.	75%	80%	85%	Confidential host survey; grievance review; separate from operator interviews.	Quarterly; annual verification Regional culture and heritage authority
K7.3 Operating sites complying with resource plans	Audited operating sites meeting water, waste, restricted-area and agreed use conditions divided by sites audited; disclose sampling coverage.	80%	90%	95%	Water and waste logs; site-condition surveys; specialist inspections.	Quarterly; annual verification Regional environment and heritage authorities

KPI Table – Pillar 8: Digital Transformation and Tourism Intelligence

Indicator	Definition / Measurement	2028	2031	2035	Data Source / Verification	Frequency / Lead Institution
K8.1 Published routes reviewed within the required interval	Published operating-route records reviewed within 30 days and immediately after a material change divided by published operating routes.	90%	95%	100%	Editorial audit; dated route-owner confirmation.	Quarterly; annual verification Afar Regional Tourism Bureau
K8.2 Reporting entities submitting complete records	Participating entities submitting validated records by the deadline divided by entities required to report; report geographic and business coverage.	75%	85%	95%	Submission logs; reconciliation; sampled source verification.	Quarterly; annual verification Afar Regional Tourism Bureau
K8.3 Supported enterprises reconciling digital payments	Enterprises using regulated payment services and reconciling transactions monthly for at least three months; exclude inactive accounts.	15	30	45	Provider settlement summaries; enterprise ledgers; user tests.	Quarterly; annual verification Regional enterprise development authority

KPI Table – Pillar 9: Establishment of the Afar Tourism Development Fund

Indicator	Definition / Measurement	2028	2031	2035	Data Source / Verification	Frequency / Lead Institution
K9.1 Fund readiness conditions completed	Eight conditions: legal authority; mandate; board; treasury arrangements; operating manual; collection protocol; audit appointment; grievance system. Count evidence-backed conditions, not announcements.	8	8	8	Legal opinion; enacted instruments; operating readiness review.	Quarterly; annual verification Regional finance authority
K9.2 Operational lawful revenue mechanisms	Distinct legally authorized mechanisms with documented receipts, reconciliation and public reporting during the year; prospective commitments do not qualify.	2	3	4	Revenue assessment ledger; bank reconciliation; independent audit.	Quarterly; annual verification Regional revenue authority
K9.3 Fund projects functional twelve months after completion	Completed projects still meeting agreed service standards after 12 months divided by projects reaching that review point; grants not yet mature excluded.	80%	85%	90%	Completion certificates; site visits; host and user checks.	Quarterly; annual verification Regional finance authority
K9.4 Supported leaders in relevant Afar roles after twelve months	Completers with paid relevant Afar employment, enterprise activity or a documented substantial Afar assignment 12 months after completion divided by all eligible completers; disclose unknown status.	50%	60%	70%	Tracer study; employer verification; enterprise records.	Quarterly; annual verification Regional tourism and skills authorities
K9.5 Annual Fund reports and audits issued on time	Required annual performance and audited financial reports published by approved deadlines divided by reports due; no report due is n.a.	100%	100%	100%	Publication log; audit opinion; board responses.	Quarterly; annual verification Regional finance authority

Indicator	Definition / Measurement	2028	2031	2035	Data Source / Verification	Frequency / Lead Institution
K9.6 Future leaders supported	Distinct participants receiving an approved scholarship, fellowship or professional learning pathway; count each participant once.	15	45	80	Award register; provider and mentor records.	Annual Regional tourism and skills authorities
K9.7 Leadership award completion	Participants meeting the approved completion requirements divided by participants whose completion is due; exclude ongoing cohorts.	80%	85%	90%	Provider certification; mentor assessment.	Annual, when cohorts are due Regional tourism and skills authorities

Summary Table of the Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism

Strategic Pillar	Key M&E Tools and Methods	Main Indicators	Evaluation Frequency	Lead Institutions
Tourism Product Development and Diversification	Resource inventory; product and route inspections; host and visitor feedback; booking records	Tourism resources assessed within the regional inventory; Priority tourism products upgraded and operating; Operational cultural routes; Market-tested cultural experiences; Market-ready diversified itineraries	Quarterly and annual; midterm 2030; final 2035	Afar Regional Tourism Bureau
Tourism Infrastructure, Visitor Facilities and Safety	Works inspections; facility audits; safety exercises; incident reviews	Priority bottlenecks resolved; Funded facilities passing functionality audit; Operating routes passing safety readiness review	Quarterly and annual; midterm 2030; final 2035	Regional roads and infrastructure authorities
Tourism Investment Promotion and Private Sector Development	Enterprise register; supplier records; investment appraisal and aftercare reviews	Supported enterprises trading after 24 months; Projects passing investment readiness gate; Active Afar-based tourism suppliers	Quarterly and annual; midterm 2030; final 2035	Regional investment authority
Destination Management and Institutional Strengthening	Action register; coordination records; standards inspections; data-quality reviews	Annual milestones completed on time; Operating routes with accountable management; Core indicators with verified current data	Quarterly and annual; midterm 2030; final 2035	Afar Regional Tourism Bureau
Destination Branding, Marketing and Promotion	Campaign and booking records; content audits; partnership reviews	Published cultural assets with verified permissions; Tracked qualified inquiries converting to bookings; Active repeat-sales partnerships	Quarterly and annual; midterm 2030; final 2035	Afar Regional Tourism Bureau
Human Resource Development and Community Empowerment	Training records; competency assessment; placement records; graduate follow-up	Participants passing practical competency assessment; Completers in tourism work after six months; Participating host enterprises passing governance review	Quarterly and annual; midterm 2030; final 2035	Regional tourism and skills authorities

Strategic Pillar	Key M&E Tools and Methods	Main Indicators	Evaluation Frequency	Lead Institutions
Sustainable Tourism, Conservation and Heritage Protection	Safeguard files; site inspections; resource logs; confidential host surveys	Funded projects passing safeguard gate before commitment; Hosts satisfied with control over tourism participation; Operating sites complying with resource plans	Quarterly and annual; midterm 2030; final 2035	Regional culture and heritage authority
Digital Transformation and Tourism Intelligence	Content reviews; reporting records; system checks; enterprise user feedback	Published routes reviewed within the required interval; Reporting entities submitting complete records; Supported enterprises reconciling digital payments	Quarterly and annual; midterm 2030; final 2035	Afar Regional Tourism Bureau
Establishment of the Afar Tourism Development Fund	Legal and governance records; collection and award controls; project checks; leadership follow-up; audits	Fund readiness conditions completed; Operational lawful revenue mechanisms; Fund projects functional twelve months after completion; Supported leaders in relevant Afar roles after twelve months; Annual Fund reports and audits issued on time	Quarterly and annual; midterm 2030; final 2035	Regional finance authority

The annual performance report will record targets, actual results, evidence, coverage, reasons for variance and corrective actions with named owners and deadlines. The regional coordination mechanism will use these findings to revise annual work plans and resolve delivery constraints. Significant safety, cultural-rights or environmental concerns require immediate action rather than waiting for the next reporting cycle. Evaluation findings and management responses will be communicated to participating institutions, communities and businesses.

A collective contribution



Afar Regional State Tourism Bureau acknowledges everyone who contributed to the development of this ten-year Tourism Development Strategy. The participation of communities, cultural practitioners, tourism businesses, guides, public institutions, researchers and visitors helped bring the region's priorities into a common framework.

The Bureau recognizes the contributions made through stakeholder interviews, discussions with Bureau leaders and experts, attraction-site visits, the Addis Ababa focus group and the tourist satisfaction survey. Their time, knowledge and experience have been essential to the strategy-development process.

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AFAR

Tourism Development Strategy

2026–2035

A shared direction for people, culture, destination quality and the next generation of tourism leaders.

