

## Creative Tourism as a Strategy for Strengthening Creative Economy in Sri Lanka

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Sri Lanka facing dual problems of weak creative economy performance on the one hand and the non-adoption of creative tourism on the other provides the background to the study, and the introduction of 'creative tourism' is considered a strategy for addressing both problems simultaneously. Despite worldwide adoption of creative tourism, little research has explicitly examined destination level creative tourism strategy development, and a ready-to-use framework to provide guidance and direction to countries does not exist to date. This informed the purpose of this research which addresses its research statement: What are the components of creative tourism strategy? A three staged study that comprises of both quantitative and qualitative methodology was adopted. A multi-journal review was conducted in stage 1 to identify the creative tourism strategy components used by previous studies. In stage 2, using normative Delphi technique creative tourism strategy components appropriate for Sri Lanka were identified and the findings were validated in stage 3 using a survey. The study found 22 creative tourism strategy components that fits well with both typical stages of strategy development and Porter's Diamond model. The study provides a unique contribution to existing knowledge as it is underpinned by hybrid lenses of strategic management and marketing theory that seems rare in creative tourism research. The need for collaborative partnerships between various stakeholders led by the government is considered the main implication to practitioners to ensure the successful introduction of creative tourism to Sri Lanka.

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