We used value-focused thinking as a framework for planning tourism in Guimaras, Philippines. Our objective was to help government officials and stakeholders devise new strategies for developing rural tourism. The developing-world setting and a pre-existing commitment to a planning alternative that faced severe obstacles made our work difficult. We clarified the planning context, assessed the tourism market potential, and structured objectives with a series of interviews. In a multi-stakeholder workshop, the objectives were ranked and weighted, and new alternatives were developed. Tourism planning in Guimaras has been substantially changed as a result of these activities, with two new approaches being pursued. This case study, and our past experience, suggest value-focused thinking is useful "decision therapy."

In his Value-Focused Thinking [1992] Keeney provides insights about the fundamental role of values in all aspects of decision making. He offers a framework for structuring decision processes by focusing on the values of interested parties, which are the basis for clarifying information requirements, creating new alternatives, and evaluating alternatives. Virtually all published case studies of value-focused thinking have concerned situations with fairly favorable conditions for the analyst, including organizational commitment to clarify a decision context, orga-
Value-focused thinking can be simply described as deciding what is important and then how to achieve it. It draws its conceptual basis and applied techniques from the writing on multiple-objective decision analysis [Keeney and Raffia 1976]. Its public policy applications draw on structuring objectives for policy decisions in multi-stakeholder contexts [Edwards and von Winterfeldt 1987; Keeney 1988]. The basic steps of value-focused thinking are (1) structuring the fundamental objectives important to achieving a given decision or sets of decisions, (2) using fundamental and means objectives to create new alternatives that are likely to be more broadly supported than the conventional possibilities, and (3) using objectives to define information requirements and to evaluate alternatives [Keeney 1992]. Both qualitative and quantitative applications are possible.

**The Guimaras Planning Context**

Guimaras is a tropical island of about 60,000 hectares (148,200 acres) with an economy based primarily on subsistence agriculture and with no significant urbanization. The island has been a source of natural resources (such as timber and fish) for urban centers but has received little infrastructure for development in the process. Massive deforestation, collapsing fisheries, degraded soils, and minimal sustained economic development have been the result. About 75 percent of the 130,000 residents live in poverty, making Guimaras one of Philippines' poorest provinces.

After Guimaras was declared a full province in 1992, it obtained new administrative and planning responsibilities to
better control its future development. While these changes created optimism, they also exacerbated long-standing obstacles to local planning and development. These include a lack of formal planning processes; opportunistic and ad hoc land development; a dearth of materials, information, and technical expertise; and limited infrastructure, particularly communications (there is only one (cellular) telephone and no regular provincial newspapers or local radio stations) and transportation (there are few paved roads and infrequent public transport).

We used value-focused thinking in a setting that would challenge most decision-support models.

Consultants for the Guimaras government identified tourism as the cornerstone of the provincial strategy for economic development. The first major initiative in this sector was a pilot project sponsored by the federal government for cooperative “farm-based” tourism. The Guimaras Cooperative Farm Tourism Project is based on the rhetoric and ideals of the 1986 Philippines People Power Revolution. The project’s memorandum of agreement indicates that its general objective is “to render maximum socioeconomic benefit to the local community through the collective and entrepreneurial effort of cooperatives” while pursuing “sustainable rural development.” Its authors identified cooperatives as “the viable structure which shall support and sustain a planned strategy for an agri-tourism merger” [Government of Philippines 1994]. Cooperatives are entrepreneurial grassroots organizations whose members are organized workers in one sector (for example, basket makers or rice farmers). “Farm tourism” was left undefined in the memorandum of agreement to provide the local community with an opportunity to contribute to decision making and become “empowered” in the spirit of 1986.

The project faced many obstacles. First, typical funding delays were exacerbated by a lack of communication, focus, or coordination in both Guimaras and Manila. Second, virtually no Guimarasons had heard of “farm tourism,” and few had any previous contact with tourists. Third, important technical information about key aspects of tourism development was lacking, as evidenced by a lack of market research and analysis. Finally, there were great disparities in the professional experience among key stakeholders, creating confusion over roles and responsibilities, specifically among the national, provincial, and local government personnel, the members of the cooperatives and the members of the small existing tourism sector.

Amidst these obstacles, provincial tourism planners had identified only one “farm tourism” alternative for Guimaras and it was being actively pursued. Spurred by the province’s development focus and the desire to establish something tangible, local project personnel began to develop a “farm estate” (which could eventually include a farm house, agri-forestry, crops, and livestock) on a marginal, poorly situated site called Macopo Falls. Commitment to this “farm estate” concept is exemplified by the efforts of an
industrious local government official in Guimaras who did not wait for federal funding to begin developing the site. He began road construction without a formal site plan, leading to heavy erosion. Like others, the official had become deeply committed to developing the Macopo Falls site as a “farm estate.” Meanwhile, the interests and preferences of other stakeholders, including potential tourist customers, received little attention.

Part of this task was to create options that would allow participants to save face.

Previous studies by outside experts, conducted without the benefit of input from Guimarason stakeholders, had sketched broad strategies for tourism development [COWIConsult 1992; PPCG 1994; Warren 1994]. We understood that our task was to help Guimarasons develop implementation strategies that would be likely to develop tourism successfully, although how success should be defined and measured in this context was not clearly defined.

Soon after his arrival, Trousdale realized from initial assessments that, while the concept of developing a farm estate at Macopo Falls was the strategy to which government officials were committed, there were strong reasons to explore other alternatives. These included the poor physical attributes of the site, lack of clarity about what the farm estate or farm tourism should entail, lack of understanding of the segment of tourism markets to serve, and lack of involvement of cooperatives or other Guimarason stakeholders who would play a major role in implementation.

Our task then became one of reexamining the project to see if there were better ways to achieve the fundamental objectives. An important part of this task was to create options that would allow key participants to save face if a decision was made to back away from the commitment to develop the Macopo Falls site immediately. Two factors made this change in direction possible. First, the memorandum of agreement had identified the Federation of Cooperatives as the lead implementing agency for the project and also required additional stakeholder input from nongovernmental organizations. Promoting meaningful stakeholder involvement would encourage broader perspectives on the decision and allow government personnel to adopt a more supportive role. Second, Trousdale had a chance to introduce a new planning approach, because he could take responsibility for the process. Other stakeholders could then challenge the existing plan by developing new alternatives and creating momentum from within a larger decision-making group. In this way, local organizations (who would be responsible for implementation and ultimately the long-term success of the project) could initiate change without taking on the responsibility for trying something new.

A workshop process adapted from Gregory and Keeney [1994] that involved value-focused thinking seemed an appropriate way to discuss fundamental objectives and means to achieve them. It would also provide us with an opportunity to involve a broad range of stakeholders in creating better alternatives.
Preparation for the Workshop

To develop an understanding of the decision context and to prepare for a tourism-planning workshop on Guimaras, we followed several steps: identifying and interviewing stakeholders before the workshop, conducting an assessment of the tourism market, structuring the fundamental objectives, and clarifying the means to achieve them.

Identifying and interviewing stakeholders

We conducted an initial set of interviews to clarify objectives and establish a common factual basis about the planning context for presentation at the workshop. The interviews were also helpful in developing personal relationships with key individuals and uncovering concerns and organizational relationships not documented in previous planning efforts. Within the Filipino culture, this latter aspect of the interviews proved to be crucial to the success of the project.

We were able to identify many of the key local stakeholders through previous studies found in government files. However, several other groups, organizations, and individuals not previously part of the planning process would be affected by or could contribute to the farm tourism project. We suggested to government officials that these groups should be offered a chance to participate. Initially, they resisted the suggestion of expanding the number of stakeholder groups because they were concerned that the established group might lose control and apprehensive that too many participants would slow project development. We offered three reasons for a more inclusive process. First, wider inclusion would foster greater cooperation, which would be mandatory for implementing the project successfully. Second, an expanded group of stakeholders could discuss concerns over equity of tourism development in terms of who benefits and who does not. Finally, inclusion would minimize future conflict, integrate the farm-tourism project with other projects and activities, and help create new alternatives.

A review of stakeholders and their potential roles in tourism development revealed two groups that had not been included in previous planning activities: (1) the existing tourism industry of Guimaras and (2) residents of the local barangays (villages). Local officials agreed that these groups would subsequently be represented in the planning process and in the workshop.

We invited individuals to participate as stakeholder representatives in the workshop for various reasons. Some were government employees, answerable to elected officials, who had specific expertise and were responsible for project implementation (for example, the provincial tourism officer and the provincial agricultural officer). Others were elected officials (for example, the president of the federation of cooperatives). Still others were sent as representatives of various stakeholder groups (for example, community-based NGOs and the resort owners association). One tourist also participated. We sought broad representation to obtain diverse views and to make better recommendations to the accountable decision makers.

Establishing the tourism market

Virtually none of the interviewees
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seemed aware of the constraints affecting Guimaras tourism development. Hence, we conducted a review of the tourism market before the workshop based on interviews, available statistics, and professional judgment. This market review provided several insights about the farm-tourism project. First, a successful project could diversify the opportunities for tourism offered on Guimaras and Philippines by creating a unique product, which would help maintain viability in an increasingly competitive tourism industry. Available data also showed that tourist visits to Guimaras were highly seasonal, with a predominance of day trips by Filipinos from urban centers on other islands. Foreign or overnight visitors averaged fewer than five per day in 1995. In that year, the existing resort sector had only a 30-percent annual occupancy rate [Trousdale 1997]. Based on this information, we identified potential markets and made short- and long-term market projections. Interviews with the department of tourism indicated that it would take at least five years to develop additional tourism markets for Guimaras.

Identifying and structuring objectives

We relied on two sources of information to clarify the preliminary objectives for planning tourism on Guimaras before the workshop. First, we extracted numerous objectives (most implied, some explicitly stated) from various government plans, policies, and farm-tourism project documents. Some were fundamental objectives for all government activity on Guimaras (for example, to improve the standard of living), while others were objectives related to the farm-tourism project (for example, to strengthen cooperatives). Second, when conducting interviews with stakeholders, we asked questions to clarify their views on objectives. We simply asked what they thought farm tourism meant and what they thought important to achieve with the farm-tourism project. Not surprisingly, given the lack of clarity regarding the project, those interviewed often voiced objectives that did not fit with those from planning documents. Different individuals were pursuing a wide variety of unstated, often unrelated objectives under the guise of the farm-tourism project. Such confusion could easily have led to uncoordinated action or conflict.

Value-focused thinking may be recognized as a simple form of "decision therapy."

We structured the information drawn from reviewing documents and the interviews into two products: (1) a set of fundamental objectives for all government activity on Guimaras, including the farm-tourism project, and (2) a set of means objectives available to achieve the fundamental objectives, including means associated with the farm-tourism project. We used methods for structuring these value hierarchies discussed by Keeney [1992]. We reviewed the two products with the stakeholders to obtain feedback and ensure that they made sense from the perspectives of those interviewed. These are the fundamental objectives for tourism development on Guimaras, and the primary means to achieve the objectives: (1) "Promote an improved standard of living and quality of life." The means to
achieve this objective include promoting educational opportunities, improving delivery of basic services, promoting strong community morals, promoting local cultural heritage, and promoting a manageable and stable population.

(2) "Maximize environmental quality." The means to achieve this objective include promoting environmental preservation, promoting rehabilitation (forests, critical watersheds, coral reefs), conserving agricultural and agri-forestry land, minimizing visual degradation of landscape, and minimizing pollution.

(3) "Promote equitable institutional development." The means to achieve this objective include promoting empowerment of the people and promoting an efficient and coordinated provincial government.

(4) "Maximize sustainable economic benefits." The means to achieve this objective include strengthening cooperatives, promoting employment opportunities, promoting balanced economic development, promoting efficient transportation, promoting equitable distribution of economic benefits, promoting self-sufficiency in food production, minimizing economic leakages, promoting access to capital, minimizing opportunity costs, promoting labor-intensive activities, promoting efficient use of resources (materials and energy), and promoting a favorable investment climate.

Workshop Activities and Results

The one-day workshop was attended by 35 participants representing nongovernmental organizations, all provincial government offices related to tourism development, local residents, private industry, and tourists. The agenda for the workshop was (1) to establish the planning context, including the conditions of the tourism market and target markets for farm tourism; (2) to review the project objectives; (3) to create and clarify alternatives; and (4) to organize a farm-tourism committee to follow through with the results of the workshop.

Reviewing objectives

After discussing the conditions of the tourism market, we reviewed a draft summary of objectives for the farm-tourism project and discussed how we would use the objectives during the workshop. We urged participants to raise any concerns about the draft objectives or add any objectives they felt were missing (for example, one participant noted the importance of international relations and recognition). After revising the objectives we asked participants to first rank, and then weight, stated changes in how well the fundamental objectives are achieved in terms of their importance for Guimaras. We allowed ties. Our primary purpose was to give the participants a chance to reflect on what they were trying to achieve with the farm-tourism project, rather than to use the results as a basis for quantitative analysis [Keeney 1992].

To establish performance ranges for the objectives, which are needed to prioritize objectives, we asked participants to think about and compare how achieving the objectives would differ if (a) farm tourism were not developed on Guimaras (that is, the status quo were maintained) and (b) if farm tourism as it was explained and discussed in the workshop were developed. We told them that the importance of an objective should increase as the range of
achievement increases [Gregory and Keeney 1994]. We stressed that prioritization should reflect the value differences related to possible alternatives and the range of impacts, and not just the participants' general values in life [Hämäläinen, Salo, and Poysti 1995].

First, we compared, ranked, and weighted the fundamental objectives against each other. Then, we ranked and weighted the first-tier means to achieve each fundamental objective. We chose this approach because it reinforces the importance of the overall decision setting and is appropriate when participants are unfamiliar with the problem in question [Hämäläinen, Salo, and Poysti 1995]. We hoped that by considering the relative importance of the objectives and the means-end relationships, participants would achieve an improved understanding of the broad range of objectives and ways to achieve them. In turn, we hoped this understanding would foster more creative thinking about potential farm-tourism alternatives.

We then asked the participants to keep their work sheets and, as we clarified or created alternatives, they could change their judgments based on any new information that they thought might affect the differences in ranges of the listed objectives. We gave them opportunities to make changes throughout the day. We also set aside time for this purpose at the end of the workshop. Some participants made extensive changes, whereas others made none. We hoped this iterative process would make the participants more comfortable and familiar with the objectives and the trade-offs they were making.

We will not discuss the quantitative results because the main focus of the workshop was on creating alternatives rather than eliciting value trade-offs. In general, the average weights for all objectives were quite similar, perhaps reflecting in part the lack of prespecified performance ranges for the objectives. Qualitatively, the results showed that a much wider set of objectives was important in developing tourism on Guimaras than had been evident in the original memorandum of agreement and consultant reports (both of which emphasized economic benefits). The exercise highlighted important reasons to pursue the farm-tourism project and important factors that could be means to achieving success.

Creating and clarifying alternatives

Most of the workshop time was spent in a group discussion of farm-tourism alternatives. To begin, each participant offered an answer to the question, What is farm tourism? To create an environment that fostered creativity and innovation, we made sure that participants expressed all ideas and made no judgments or comments until everyone had exhausted his or her list of ideas [Fisher and Ury 1981]. We encouraged individuals who felt constrained by English to use Hiligaynon, which was then translated into English.

Some participants felt that the term farm inhibited their visions of the project. The term farm seemed to preclude tourism opportunities related to history and religion, which could be shared with the visitors and would provide a perspective on Guimaras complementary to the farming emphasis. The farm-tourism label seemed to unnecessarily constrain project opportuni-
ties and was a potential source for disagreement. As Gregory and Keeney [1994] observed, “disagreements tend to occur when the initial statement of the decision context explicitly or implicitly rules out either objectives or alternatives that certain stakeholders consider important.” After agreeing that farm tourism could be viewed broadly, the group supported any expression of farm tourism that involved the island’s people, resources, and settlements.

Participants articulated many creative and viable ideas in the discussions. All participants felt that farm tourism should be activity based and a learning experience. We drew out issues of authenticity, scale, spontaneity, spatial distribution, and timing in the discussion. On the basis of the discussion we structured three distinct alternatives: (1) excursion farm tourism, (2) barangay farm tourism, and (3) farm-estate tourism.

Alternative 1: Excursion farm tourism. An excursionist is a day visitor. In the context of developing farm tourism, operators would run excursions from either the resorts on Guimaras or from nearby large cities of Iloilo or Bacolod. Excursion farm tourism would take advantage of the existing tourism market (local and foreign) on the island by designing specific tours to events, exhibitions, and activities. It would also help initiate the development of festivals. This alternative would require close coordination with the resorts of Guimaras and promotion in the Iloilo and Bacolod markets. The events, exhibitions, activities, or places to be interpreted would be spatially dispersed. All participants agreed that this concept could be implemented quickly. It would not require any large investments in infrastructure and would serve as a starting point to expand beyond the farm-estate project conceived for the Macopo Falls site.

Alternative 2: Barangay farm tourism. Barangay farm tourism would be spatially distributed and would call for tourism development in selected barangays (villages) throughout the island, with the primary beneficiaries being the members of the federation of cooperatives. Most participants felt that learning about farm life must involve learning about barangay life. This alternative included three possible subconcepts: (1) a barangay lodge, (2) a guest house (a separate house but one associated with a family), and (3) a homestay or bed-and-breakfast program. The participants devoted the most discussion to this alternative covering a range of topics from impacts to implementation.

Alternative 3: Farm estate tourism. The farm-estate alternative was the most familiar alternative to many of the participants. The concept focused on the Macopo Falls site and called for construction of an entire farm (crops, livestock, fishponds, and other components) and a lodge or farm house on the site. The group discussed many issues, but the most significant were temporal planning constraints, raised for the first time in the workshop. The provincial department of agriculture representative stated that it would take at least five years to develop an interesting, working farm at Macopo Falls. He identified procurement procedures as an additional problem to be considered when planning.
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for tourism development in tandem with agricultural development. The time period for developing the farm site paralleled the department of tourism’s estimate that it would take at least five years to develop a market for this product.

Evaluating the alternatives

The alternatives identified are not mutually exclusive. While there was discussion about which alternatives would best achieve the stated objectives, most of the discussion regarding alternatives concerned project timing and phasing. New information presented during the work shop strongly influenced this discussion. A better understanding of objectives also enabled some of the participants to offer clearer arguments about the pros and cons of the proposed alternatives. A broader characterization of the range of potential objectives also had the effect of leveling the playing field among participants with different experience and education levels.

One indicator of the success of the methods we used was that the participants reached consensus on project concepts and timing. They agreed that exhibits, events, tours, and festivals should be developed immediately for the excursion-farm-tourism market segment. Next, participants felt that the barangay-farm-tourism alternative should be promoted. Finally, they wanted to see estate-farm tourism ready for tourists after five (or more) years.

The proposed phasing offered a number of advantages. First, the low initial cost would reduce the financial risk of the project. Second, because this is an experimental effort, the opportunity for incremental development would allow for learning over time, and perhaps most important, it would allow key project personnel to gain valuable experience. Third, the participants would develop more complete understanding of how the different alternatives would affect the objectives. Finally, the farm-tourism project could be integrated with other provincial and municipal development plans under consideration.

Effects on Guimaras Tourism Planning

This initial workshop furthered the tourism-planning process on Guimaras in several ways. It structured and clarified local values, elicited local knowledge regarding the impacts of competing and complementary activities, created important new alternatives, and made participants aware of the obstacles to introducing a new tourism strategy without an understanding of tourism markets or means of implementation. It also changed the thinking of participants. For example, at a follow-up meeting to the workshop, the president of the federation of cooperatives stressed the need to expand the farm-tourism task force in order to consider the values of as many stakeholders as possible. He also stressed that the site should be the Island of Guimaras, not simply the Macopo Falls site, to better achieve the project objectives.

The initial workshop was also the catalyst for institutional change regarding tourism development on Guimaras. The Guimaras farm-tourism pilot project was a trial effort for a Philippine national initiative regarding farm tourism, envisioned to eventually involve sites around the country. One reason for holding the initial workshop was to provide the basis for a
planning document that would be submitted by the province of Guimaras to the Philippine government to obtain financial support for this project. After the workshop, the province used the results to help it obtain the release of funds for the project. However, the workshop results were not directly incorporated into the official Guimaras farm-tourism plan by the Philippine government, probably because the objectives of the national agency were somewhat different from those expressed in the workshop.

As a result, the Guimaras provincial tourism office was spurred to continue locally based efforts to plan for tourism that build directly on the workshop results. After the initial workshop, Trousdale was asked to make two more visits to Guimaras, again sponsored by the Canadian Urban Institute. He held a series of meetings and smaller workshops with provincial and municipal officials and other stakeholders. They developed and promoted a concept called heritage tourism to differentiate it from farm tourism. It consists of two tourism products: excursion tourism and barangay tourism, ideas that originated in the first workshop. Heritage tourism will be open to participation by all Guimarasons, not just members of cooperatives. It will involve all areas of Guimaras except the farm-estate site. The province of Guimaras and the Philippine government will work to ensure that heritage tourism and farm tourism complement each other.

Heritage tourism is a new approach to developing tourism on Guimaras focusing on the objectives that arose directly from the value-focused activities of the initial workshops. Heritage tourism has already received funding from the province of Guimaras and is the main focus of the provincial tourism office, which has developed marketing, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation plans for heritage tourism. A whole new tourism development effort has sprung from the initial workshop, along with two new alternatives.

Conclusion

Value-focused thinking provided a logical structure and decision process that the Guimaras stakeholders grasped intuitively and practiced enthusiastically. This approach overcame the inertia of anchoring on one preexisting alternative. It led to institutional change that created a local planning initiative within Guimaras to complement the national government’s efforts. It led to two new alternatives that are far more likely to provide timely benefits (in terms of the stated objectives) than the initial alternative. These results have to be judged a planning success.

These results did not surprise us, because of our experience with value-focused thinking. We speculate that value-focused thinking may eventually be recognized as a simple but powerful form of “decision therapy” or even “organizational therapy.” When confronted with a troublesome problem in a decision process or an institutional or organizational impasse, focusing on what is important to achieve from different perspectives and then creating alternatives that will better achieve those objectives will likely help decision makers better than anything else one could do. We believe value-focused thinking is a useful prescription for any
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decision-making or organizational difficulty.

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Tibor Frank, Director, International Programs Office, Canadian Urban Institute, 30 Saint Patrick Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5T 3A3, writes: “I am writing this letter to clarify the contributions of William Trousdale to the Province of Guimaras through the Canada-Philippines...
Cooperative Program in Economic Development and Environmental Protection. The program is funded by the Canadian International Development Agency and is being executed through a partnership between the Canadian Urban Institute (CUI) and the province.

"In 1995, Mr. Trousdale visited Guimaras as a graduate researcher with the support of the CUI. His work with the many stakeholders of the Guimaras Farm Tourism Pilot Project profoundly altered the original concept and inspired the development of many new tourism alternatives. In our subsequent work with officials in Guimaras it was determined that a provincial tourism strategy (as opposed to just a nationally directed farm tourism pilot project) based on these new alternatives was needed. Last year, Mr. Trousdale returned to the Philippines for several months as a CUI consultant to continue his work with the Guimarasons and to provide guidance to the province in the strategy development process.

"The results have been impressive. Mr. Trousdale's contributions helped to clarify what is important to Guimarasons, helped focus the benefits of tourism where they are most needed, and identified obstacles and opportunities that have resulted in better tourism planning. The results of Mr. Trousdale's original efforts in Guimaras have been refined. While the national farm-tourism pilot project still continues, the province has embarked on a new strategy that combines the grassroots concepts of 'barangay' and 'excursion' tourism (first conceived in Mr. Trousdale's original workshop) under the label heritage tourism. So, perhaps the most tangible evidence of Mr. Trousdale's contributions to the partnership of CUI and the Province of Guimaras is the institutional change that has resulted. Through an executive order from Guimaras Governor Emily Lopez, there is now an Heritage Tourism Implementation Task Force turning the original idea into a reality."