

Strategic Alliances for Tourism Sustainability in the Greater Caribbean



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Based on the premise held on the importance of tourism and sustainability in the Greater Caribbean Region, it is imperative to strengthen the implementation of sustainable practices through the elements that have contributed to its development, namely the variety of languages, ethnic groups, cultures and biodiversity, among others, which have allowed the Region to become established as a global destination among European and North American markets.

Tourism sustainability recognises the need to ensure that the natural, cultural, social and financial resources are managed adequately. Maintaining this equilibrium poses a challenge for the Greater Caribbean, hence the reason why there is a need for decisive participation from the public and private sectors, as well as involvement from communities through their organisations and institutions, in order to work harmoniously toward achieving sustainability in the long term and meeting the needs of the inhabitants and visitors of the Region

In this respect, conscious of its responsibility as a regional organisation, the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), through the Directorate of Sustainable Tourism (DST), has established the Sustainable Tourism Zone of the Greater Caribbean (STZC), the very First Sustainable Tourism Zone in the World.

The STZC emerged as a proactive and innovative initiative. One of its primary objectives is to bridge the gap between tourism and sustainability by incorporating the principles of sustainable development into comprehensive planning. This will consequently contribute to the diversification of the tourism product and improve intraregional travel through initiatives that focus on the development of market niches. In addition, it seeks to establish the Greater Caribbean Region as a Multi-destination travel option by means of development, competitiveness and the promotion of its

natural and cultural heritage.

As a crucial element for strengthening the STZC, the ACS has consolidated strategic alliances with a series of institutions and organisations for the creation of a network for tourism sustainability development, among them: the World Tourism Organisation (WTO), the Central American Tourism Integration Secretariat (SITCA), the International Centre for Regional Approach to Languages (CIGAREL), the French Development Agency (AFD), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), Fair Travel, the Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO), the Inter-American Centre for Knowledge Development in Professional Training (CINTERFOR), Sustainable Travel International (STI), the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), the Pan American Confederation of Schools of Hospitality, Gastronomy and Tourism (CONPEHT), the Organisation of American States (OAS), the Caribbean Association of National Training Agencies (CANTA), among others.

As it relates to Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in tourism, efforts have been undertaken with CONPEHT, CINTERFOR, CANTA and other Regional Organisations to establish the Regional TVET Framework, which would contribute to strengthening the quality of tourism services in the Region.

In order to consolidate the STZC and recognise the importance of the other tourism sustainability initiatives that exist in the region, an alliance was forged with STI during the 27th Meeting of the Special Committee on Sustainable Tourism (SCST) in July 2016 in Nicaragua.

Additionally, as part of an initiative to support the marketing of destinations that belong to the STZC, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the German Organisation, Fair Travel, which will create a Green World Map to market sustainable tourism destinations. This initiative will involve no cost for the ACS Member States and Associate Members.

With respect to the cultural and language diversity of the Greater Caribbean, the alliance between the ACS and CIGAREL allowed for the first exchange of students and professionals to learn French in Guadeloupe, which took place in December 2015, with participation from three ACS Member Countries, namely Costa Rica, Dominica and Guatemala. Plans are underway to execute the next exchanges among ACS Member Countries and Associate Members.

Without a doubt, tourism sustainability in the Greater Caribbean Region would not be possible without the cooperation and support of the regional and international organisations of the public and private sectors in addition to the communities which promote the adoption of measures necessary for tourism as an economic activity, to operate on the principles of quality and responsibility, thus resulting in environmental protection and the development of systems and strategies in accordance with the principles of Sustainable Tourism.

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