

## Directorate of Sustainable Tourism Strengthens Artisan Network with Meetings & Workshops



The Directorate of Sustainable Tourism (DST) of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) organized the “1st Training Workshop for Focal Points and the Regional Network of Artisans in Tourism of the Greater Caribbean”, and the “4th Meeting and 5th Workshop for the Strengthening of Capacity Building of the Regional Network of Artisans in Tourism of the Greater Caribbean” on Thursday 22nd - 23rd November 2018 respectively in Panama City, Republic of Panama.

These Workshops fall under its Programmatic Area of “Community-Based Tourism” and are specifically included in the project entitled, “Strengthening the Handicraft Industry in the Tourism Sector of the Greater Caribbean”.

The 1st Training Workshop for Focal Points and the Regional Network of Artisans in Tourism of the Greater Caribbean was an unprecedented meeting that facilitated dialogue and fostered linkages between the Representatives of the Network and the Government Representatives in their respective countries, namely from: Barbados, Republic of Colombia, Republic of Guatemala, Jamaica, Republic of Mexico, Republic of Nicaragua, Republic of Panama, the Dominican Republic and Saint Lucia. Additionally, this event contributed not only to the creation of strategic public-private alliances but also strengthened the handicraft sector in the Region.

Participation in these meetings also included representatives from the Republic of Turkey in its capacity as ACS Observer Country and Project Donor, the Panama Tourism Authority, the General Directorate of National Handicrafts - Ministry of Commerce and Industry of Panama, the Spanish Association of Scientific Experts in Tourism (AECIT), and as special presenters, Amphoras of the Sea and Cabo de Gata-Níjar - Nature Park from Spain.

During the first workshop for Focal Points, several topics were presented with the aim of strengthening the handicraft industry in the Greater Caribbean, including cooperation for the protection and promotion of handicrafts in the Greater Caribbean and a case study on the incorporation of craft companies to the value chain of the tourism sector in the South of Spain. Similarly, each country made presentations based on a situational diagnosis of the Handicraft Sector, the exchange of information on development models, policies and success stories.

Furthermore, during these Workshops, the representatives of the Network were trained in best practices of Digital Marketing, strategies to enhance their presence in Social Media, E-Commerce and Graphic Documentation of the handicraft product. This is with the aim of connecting tourism stakeholders and MSMEs of handicrafts, providing skills so that they can tell the story behind their products and showcasing their works to finally use handicrafts as a tool to potentiate local tourism

activities and competitiveness.

Also incorporated for the first time was a Mentoring Session during which the artisans mentored each other by sharing their personal experiences as well as practical information pertaining to their craft and topics that contribute to the entrepreneurial growth of the artisanal sector. They also agreed to incorporate the information learnt based on their areas of expertise in the Updated Plan of Action.

Among the main outcomes of the events is the commitment made by the Focal Points to form a Working Group that will discuss the way forward to ensure the growth and success of the Network and that will support the ACS to strengthen the handicraft sector in the Greater Caribbean.

Full gallery <https://flic.kr/s/aHskJwMAC2>