

# *Competing with the Best:* **Good Practices in Community-Based Tourism in the Caribbean**



CARIBBEAN



***Competing with the Best:***  
**Good Practices in Community-Based  
Tourism in the Caribbean**



**CTO**



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**



**CARIBBEAN REGIONAL SUSTAINABLE  
TOURISM DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME**



**PHOTO CREDITS**

3 Rivers - DOMINICA  
Walkerswood - JAMAICA  
SLHTP - Anse la Raye - ST LUCIA  
La Ruta del Café Ucodep - DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

# The Caribbean Regional Sustainable Tourism Development Programme

This manual is an output of the 8th European Development Fund (EDF) Caribbean Regional Sustainable Tourism Development Programme (CRSTDP), which is a five-year (2003-2008) programme funded by the European Union. The overall objective of the Programme is to contribute to economic growth and poverty alleviation in the 15 CARIFORUM states through increased competitiveness and sustainability of the Caribbean tourism sector. CARIFORUM comprises Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago.

## The Caribbean Tourism Organization

The Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO), with headquarters in Barbados and marketing operations in New York, London and Toronto, is the Caribbean's tourism development agency and comprises 32 member governments and a myriad of private sector organisations and companies. The CTO's mission is to provide, to and through its members, the services and information needed for the development of sustainable tourism for the economic and social benefit of the Caribbean people. The organisation provides specialised support and technical assistance to member countries in the areas of marketing, human resource development, research, information management and sustainable development.

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## Acronyms

ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific
ACTUAR	Asociación Costarricense de Turismo Rural Comunitario y Conservacionista
ALRSF	Anse La Raye Seafood Friday, St. Lucia
APEIS-RISPO	Asia Pacific Environmental Innovative Strategies - Research on Innovative and Strategic Policy Options
BWA	Bureau of Women's Affairs, Jamaica
CANARI	Caribbean Natural Resources Institute
CARIFORUM	Caribbean Forum of ACP states
CBT	Community-Based Tourism
CPP	Community/Private Partnership
CPR	Common Property Resources
CRSTDP	Caribbean Regional Sustainable Tourism Development Programme
CTF	Community Tourism Foundation, Barbados
CTO	Caribbean Tourism Organization
DFID	Department for International Development, UK
EDF	European Development Fund
EU	European Union
ETDP	Eco-Tourism Development Programme, Dominica
FTTSA	Fair Trade in Tourism South Africa
GEF-SGP	Global Environment Facility - Small Grants Programme
GPI	Good Practice Inventory
HERITAS	Heritage Tourism Association of St. Lucia
HTU	Heritage Trails Uganda
IICA	Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
IIPT	International Institute for Peace through Tourism
JIDC	Jamaica Industrial Development Corporation
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MTPNP	Morne Trois Pitons National Park, Dominica
NACOBTA	Namibian Community-Based Tourism Association
NDC	National Development Corporation, Dominica
NS	Nature Seekers, Trinidad

PCV	Peace Corps Volunteers
PIRTGA	Portsmouth Indian River Tour Guides Association, Dominica
PPT	Pro-Poor Tourism
REACT	Rural Enterprise Agricultural Community Tourism
REST	Responsible Ecological Social Tours, Thailand
SAD	Stakeholders Against Destruction, Trinidad
SCF	Sustainable Communities Foundation, Jamaica
SHWG	St. Helena's Women's Group, Jamaica
SLHTP	St. Lucia Heritage Tourism Programme
SNV	Netherlands Development Organisation
SOS	Save Our Sea turtles, Tobago
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
TEA	Toledo Ecotourism Association, Belize
TIDE	Toledo Institute for Development and Environment, Belize
UCOTA	Uganda Community Tourism Association
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UWI-SEDU	University of the West Indies - Sustainable Economic Development Unit
WIDECAST	Wider Caribbean Turtle Conservation Network
WWF	World Wildlife Fund International
Youth PATH	Youth Poverty Alleviation through Heritage Tourism

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At the heart of this publication are the practical experiences of the community-based tourism projects themselves. The case studies are the result of creativity, hard work and perseverance in often challenging circumstances. Community-based organisations, donors, non-governmental organisations, tourism companies and statutory agencies have given generously of their time to respond to requests for information, answer questions, provide photographs and review case studies prior to publication. Without their support this manual would not have been possible.

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## Foreword

Community-based tourism is not a new concept. International experience has been documented in several destinations in Africa, Latin America and Asia yet community-based tourism development is not well known in the Caribbean. There is an emerging chorus of voices, however, exchanging experiences, gaining momentum and trying to define what this concept means to our diverse region.

There is a sense that international definitions are too narrow, not tailored to small island developing states and that the interpretation of community-based tourism should be broader in the Caribbean. It should encompass economic linkages such as farmers supplying hotels in St. Kitts and harvesters of sea moss in St. Lucia as well as a tour guide cooperative in Tobago, fish fry vendors in Barbados, weavers in Jamaica and village excursions in the Dominican Republic.

It is my belief that all tourism in the Caribbean should be community-based tourism. Tourism should be of, by, for and with the full consent and embrace of the community. Defining it in any other way marginalises an effort that should be at the heart of our sustainable development. Communities are the carriers of our culture and our lifeboats to the future.

This manual introduces community-based tourism developments in the Caribbean and the international arena. It highlights critical factors and instruments, key lessons learnt and profiles good practices. The ten case studies give practical examples of how communities have successfully used tourism as a tool for sustainable development and gained market advantage by doing so. This publication is not exhaustive but aims to help guide and inspire you to better practice. I encourage practitioners and policy-makers to use this resource to put local people back in the picture and truly make a difference to the region.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'V. Vanderpool-Wallace', with a stylized, flowing script.

Vincent Vanderpool-Wallace  
Secretary General and Chief Executive Officer  
Caribbean Tourism Organization

# I. Introduction

The Caribbean is more dependent on tourism to sustain livelihoods than any other region of the world. Globalisation has left most Caribbean small island nations limited alternative economic options. Tourism is the main foreign exchange earner in most Caribbean countries and employs about one third of the region's labour force. CTO member countries have only 1 percent of the world's population but attract 3 percent of global tourism arrivals and expenditure. According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the Caribbean received 22.5 million stay-over arrivals, 19.8 million cruise passenger visits and about US\$21.5 billion in expenditure in 2005.

The trend of development that characterises the region's dependency on tourism, however, has seen the resources of numerous communities utilised by the state and companies with community members receiving marginal benefits. In view of the high level of visitor arrivals to the region, community-based tourism is relatively undeveloped in the Caribbean. ***The importance of community-based tourism is its emphasis on active participation and empowerment of local people in the tourism opportunity.***

Several good practices in community-based tourism have recently emerged in the Caribbean, particularly in less developed tourism destinations and repositioned markets. Documentation of regional experience to date, is limited, yet the approach is gaining increasing attention from governments, donors and progressive tourism companies in their pursuits of sustainable development agendas.

The CTO has a mandate to promote sustainable tourism in the Caribbean and disseminate good practices to its membership. The purpose of this manual therefore is to showcase community-based tourism case studies in the region that have enabled local people to participate in the tourism opportunity and brought benefits to the wider community. The manual should assist member countries and other interest groups to adopt and adapt strategies to enhance community-based tourism and the sustainability of the tourism industry in the region.

## II. Objectives and Methodology

The main objectives of the assignment were to:

- (1) *Assist in establishing a clearer understanding of the terms 'community-based tourism' and/or 'community tourism' and present acceptable working definition(s).*
- (2) *Identify and compile good practices in community-based tourism through a review of regional and international case studies.*
- (3) *Develop a manual of community-based tourism in the Caribbean that highlights good practices in critical areas, provides guidelines to initiatives and encompasses the widest possible representation of case studies from CTO member countries.*

The duration of the assignment was three person-months and the research was undertaken between June and October 2006.

The methodology was comprised of the following:

### 1. Literature Review

Relevant published and unpublished documents were reviewed to develop acceptable working definition(s), identify critical factors, lessons learnt and compile good practices.

### 2. Call for Submissions

A template to identify case studies of good practice in community-based tourism was developed. It was translated into Spanish and French and sent to CTO member countries in July 2006 by email, fax and post. Responses from member countries were encouraged by email and telephone. Responses were assessed in consultation with the CTO and by additional follow-up (email, telephone) and a list of destinations and projects to be subject to field visits was drawn-up.

### 3. Field Visits and Stakeholder Interviews

Three weeks were spent on verification visits in the region and this was essential to ensure field realities were consistent with the information provided. Experience demonstrated that information on community-based tourism initiatives requires verification in most cases as the situation on the ground can change quickly over time. All case studies were subject to field visits except an initiative in the Dominican Republic that was given local verification. Field visits were undertaken in St. Lucia, Dominica, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica and Barbados.

Data was collected at the community level using key informant interviews and direct observations. Where practical, the consultant participated in the tourism activity, for example, staying overnight in accommodation or participating in a guided tour. Digital photographs were taken to illustrate the case studies. Site visits were combined with interviews with key stakeholders including government agencies, non-governmental organisations and tourism companies.

#### 4. Selection of Case Studies of Good Practice

Successful case studies were selected for the manual on the basis of objective criteria. Initiatives were selected if they demonstrated most of the following:

- a) *Active participation of local people in the planning, implementation, management and/or ownership of the tourism enterprise.*
- b) *Aspects of innovation and/or demonstration value.*
- c) *Positive and tangible net socio-cultural, economic and environmental impacts.*
- d) *Access to the tourism market.*
- e) *Commercial viability.*
- f) *Support of any relevant community-based tourism policy frameworks.*
- g) *Implementation issues (e.g. skills gap) adequately addressed and mitigation measures for tourism impacts introduced where necessary.*
- h) *Sufficient documentation to profile the case study.*

There were several significant research limitations that included:

- *Time and field visit resource constraints.*
- *Low response from CTO member countries (9 out of 32) to the call for submissions.*
- *A lack of documentation and/ or dissemination of community-based tourism experiences in the Caribbean.*



### III. Defining Community-Based Tourism

'Community-based tourism' and 'community tourism' are generally used interchangeably by both international and regional stakeholders to describe the same phenomena. 'Community tourism' is often used as an abbreviation of 'community-based tourism'. The more prevalent and preferred term of community-based tourism (CBT) is used in this manual. A plethora of definitions of CBT exist and many are eager to lay claim to the legitimacy of their own model and definition. Interpretations often reflect the focus of the stakeholder such as conservation or rights-based development and paradigm shifts occur. ***The overriding difference between CBT and other approaches is its emphasis on community participation in the tourism opportunity.*** CBT that delivers net socio-economic and/or environmental benefits is considered a form of tourism that falls under the umbrella of the leading paradigms of pro-poor tourism (PPT), responsible and sustainable tourism.

Several stakeholders in the Caribbean find international definitions of CBT restrictive as the approach has been focused on developing CBT attractions i.e. tourism products and services provided by community members directly to tourists and has not encompassed the supply of goods and services i.e. inputs such as agricultural produce to the industry. This is particularly relevant to small island developing states where the entire population may be seen as one community. For example, Nevis has a population of 10,000 - starkly different to the demographics of other destinations where CBT initiatives have developed such as Costa Rica (4 million), Uganda (25 million) and Thailand (63 million).

The Saint Lucia Heritage Tourism Programme (SLHTP), the University of the West Indies Sustainable Economic Development Unit (UWI-SEDU), the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) consider agro-tourism linkages to the tourism industry as part of CBT. These organisations concur with the Pro-Poor Tourism (PPT) Partnership that isolated 'alternative' and small-scale CBT initiatives are important but unlikely to deliver sustainable development. Changes in the way mainstream tourism is structured and operates are more likely to have the impact or create the market linkages needed to deliver the scale of net benefits to communities that would promote their sustainable development.

There have been various initiatives to develop enterprises and bring local producers into the tourism supply chain in the Caribbean. Yet much more could be done to ensure the tourism industry contributes to poverty alleviation through developing agro-tourism linkages and opportunities for the informal sector (Meyer 2006). Good practice guidelines to encourage tourism companies in the Caribbean to contribute more to the local economy are available (see Ashley, Goodwin, McNab, Scott and Chaves 2006). Therefore, to prevent duplication, agro-tourism initiatives are not represented in the case studies in this manual.

## A Selection of International Definitions of Community-Based Tourism

*“Community-based tourism consists of tourism initiatives which are owned by (one or more) communities, or as joint venture partnerships between communities and the private sector. Furthermore, it is based on four principles, being:*

- *Economically viable;*
- *Ecologically sustainable;*
- *Institutionally consolidated; and*
- *With equitable distribution of costs and benefits over participants.”*

SNV (no date) Background Paper on Sustainable Tourism.

*“Community-based tourism initiatives aim to increase local people's involvement in tourism. They are mainly small-scale (campsites, guesthouses, craft markets, local excursions) although can include partnerships with the private sector.”*

Dilys Roe (no date), International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED).

*“Community-based ecotourism is where the local community has substantial control over, and involvement in, its development and management, and a major proportion of the benefits remain within the community.”*

WWF (2001).

*“Community-based tourism is a visitor-host interaction that has meaningful participation by both, and generates economic and conservation benefits for local communities and environments.”*

Mountain Institute (2000).

*“Community-based tourism is tourism that consults, involves and benefits a local community, especially in the context of rural villages in developing countries and indigenous peoples.”*

Mann (2001).

*“Community-based tourism is tourism that takes environmental, social and cultural sustainability into account. It is managed and owned by the community, for the community, with the purpose of enabling visitors to increase their awareness and learn about the community and local ways of life.”*

REST (2006).

*“Community-based tourism is defined by its objectives as to gain local economic development, reach some forms of participation, provide socially and environmentally responsible experiences for visitors, and bring a positive effect on the conservation of natural and/or cultural resources in national parks.”*

APEIS-RISPO (2006).

*“Community tourism is both an integrated approach and collaborative tool for the socio-economic empowerment of communities through the assessment, development and marketing of natural and cultural community resources, which seek to add value to the experiences of local and foreign visitors and simultaneously improve the quality of life of communities.”*

Jamaica Community Tourism Manual (2004) quoted in Pantin, D. and Francis, J. (2005).

CTO's proposed working definition of sustainable community-based tourism is:

**"A collaborative approach to tourism in which community members exercise control through active participation in appraisal, development, management and/or ownership (whole or in part) of enterprises that delivers net socio-economic benefits to community members, conserves natural and cultural resources and adds value to the experiences of local and foreign visitors. This encompasses both tourism activities in a community and goods and services supplied to the tourism industry by one or more community members."**

At the product level CBT can encompass tourism activities that may also be described as 'eco-', 'cultural', 'indigenous', 'agro-', 'homestead', 'rural' or 'heritage' tourism and it is important to note that products are not necessarily:

- *Small-scale*

Las Terrazas Complejo Turistico in Cuba is a government-community owned and managed resort destination that includes a 26-room hotel in 5,000 hectares of replanted forest.

- *Rural*

The Oistins Fish Fry in the urban parish of Christ Church is very popular with tourists in Barbados.

- *A collective effort*

This can be referred to as 'classical CBT' and more recent focus is on community/private partnerships, micro-entrepreneurs and the supply chain to the wider tourism economy.

- *A product delivered at the community-level and/or centred on guest-host interaction*

Tourists do not visit St. Helena Women's Group in Jamaica but purchase 'calabaskets' in gift shops in all-inclusive hotels.

Furthermore, international experience demonstrates that if critical issues are not adequately addressed, weaknesses in the development process will mean that CBT products may not be:

- *'Environmentally friendly', 'culturally sensitive' or 'equitable'*

For example, issues can arise with inappropriate garbage disposal, a lack of authenticity and/or poor organisational governance where benefits are not shared appropriately.

- *Profitable*

Recent research has shown that few international projects generate sufficient benefits to either provide incentives for conservation or contribute to local poverty reduction.

- *Sustainable*

The failure rate is high and under-development of poor communities can be perpetuated.