REGIONAL SUSTAINABLE TOURISM POLICY AND INTERSECTORAL PLANNING WORKSHOP

DECEMBER 1-3, 2005
Barbados Beach Resort Hotel, Barbados

SUMMARY REPORT
INTRODUCTION

The Regional Sustainable Tourism Policy and Intersectoral Planning Workshop was held at the Barbados Beach Resort, Barbados, from December 1-3, 2005.

The Workshop included key decision makers from CARIFORUM member countries’ Ministries, Departments of Tourism and several regional organizations. Opening remarks were delivered by Mr Vincent Vanderpool-Wallace, Secretary General of the Caribbean Tourism Organization, Mr Joachim Zeller, Head of operations of the European Union, of the Honourable Noel Lynch, Minister of Tourism and International Transport. The Programme Director for the Caribbean Tourism Project Unit as well as the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Tourism and International Transport of Barbados were also present for the opening ceremony.

The participant group included major government actors from different CARIFORUM countries and CTO’s wider Caribbean membership, who work in the areas of policy making, planning and sustainable tourism development. The regional stakeholder organizations included the Association of Caribbean States, The Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, Association of Caribbean Commissioners of Police, The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency, The Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery, The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture and the Caribbean Hotel Association consultants for the Caribbean Regional Sustainable Tourism Development Programme. While there was some non-CARIFORUM country presence, there was a notable absence of CARIFORUM country representatives from Jamaica, Dominican Republic, Bahamas, Suriname, Guyana and Dominica. Jamaica, Bahamas and Dominica Republic were participating in the World Tourism Organization, General Assembly Meeting in Africa. Guyana an Dominica though confirmed their participation did not attend. CTO was however successful in securing the participation of one representative from Haiti.

Approximately, fifty participants were expected to attend the workshop, including at least one representative from CARIFORUM country members. The total number of persons that attended the workshop was thirty-eight including seven persons from the Ministry of Tourism of Barbados, EU, CTPU, CTO directors and four CRSTDP advisors to the programme. Twenty-six registered as participants with the participation of eight CARIFORUM countries and representatives of
seven regional organizations that actively participated during the workshop. (see participation list)

In addition, a few persons not registered for the workshop came to specific sessions because of interest in a particular topic and/or as moderators.

WORKSHOP PROGRAMME BACKGROUND

The Caribbean Regional Sustainable Tourism Development Programme’s (CRSTDP) main objective is to make the Caribbean tourism sector more competitive and more sustainable, contributing to economic growth and poverty reduction.

The EU funded programme is expected to lead to the formulation of a regional policy framework for sustainable tourism that can assist National Tourism Organizations to re-evaluate and possibly adapt their strategies.

Policy Development based on an active, dynamic and systematic interactive process with the assigned “programme officers” to lead this initiative, is one of the guiding principles established for the development of the Regional Sustainable Tourism Policy Framework.

To this effect, the programme, through CTO, as one of its implementing agencies, has contemplated and programmed a series of four Regional Caribbean Sustainable Tourism Policy and Intersectoral Planning Workshops for active consultation within CARIFORUM members and for the benefit of all Caribbean countries in the region.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORKSHOP

The workshop was held at the Grand Barbados Beach Resort in Barbados, which was convenient and well located. The workshop was able to secure computer and video equipment, a customized banner, printing of workshop materials, supplies, etc, readily available. In addition, the workshop had the services of CTO administrative and support staff. CTO’s directorate and staff were helpful in ensuring the support of the smooth execution of the workshop with support from the host country.
After the official Opening Ceremony welcome remarks, address and protocol, Ms Mareba Scott, CTO Sustainable Tourism Product Specialist presented a programme overview and objectives and structure of the workshop.

The first working session was held on Thursday, December 1, starting 9:45 and the final session ended as programmed on Saturday, December 3 at 1:00 pm. Sessions on other days started at 8:30 and ended at 5:00 pm daily with the exception of the closing day. The total contact hours for the workshop were around 21 hours including opening and closing sessions. (See Workshop Programme).

Ms Mareba Scott from CTO closed the workshop as programmed on the third day. Ms Scott gave thanks to all the participants and she indicated in her final remarks the programme’s commitment to include workshop recommendations in the development of the Regional Sustainable Tourism policy framework. She also invited for their participation and of their countries to the next Regional Sustainable Tourism Policy and Intersectoral Planning workshop, programmed for the third week of March, 2006 in St. Lucia.

Fourteen certificates of participation were signed and delivered to individuals who present during the entire workshop.

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**WORKSHOP PROGRAMME OVERVIEW**

The purpose of the workshop was to bring together at the regional level, national tourism representatives and planning officials to examine and discuss current and emerging sustainable tourism policy issues, and priorities in their national level and regional contexts, and provide valuable inputs and recommendations for inclusion in the Regional Sustainable Tourism Policy Framework.

The main workshop objectives are to assist in the development of the regional policy framework, through consultation and feedback of all selected participants representing their member countries and to present guidelines to assist National Tourism Organizations in enhancing their national policies while fostering sustainable tourism strategies, linkages within the region and the transfer of policy-making and implementation know-how.

This workshop saw four central themes being discussed to assist participants in assessing and sharing their national views on emerging and important sustainable tourism issues not currently included, not yet considered or reflected in their own sustainable tourism national policies.
Participants were provided with background material including one issue paper related to every theme in the workshop and which was hung on CTO’s website for perusal and information.

The issue papers and the presentations along with a list of questions generated by each presenter provided the necessary background information for the working groups’ discussions and recommendations.

It was envisaged that the workshops would allow participants:

- To identify and bring to the table issues, problems or concerns that require national and regional policy response
- To enhance the analysis of sustainable tourism issues
- To contribute to the discussion of issues and the formulation of the regional policy agenda
- To integrate intersectoral planning as a critical element for effective sustainable tourism development
- To learn how to assess alternative policy options based on a strategic approach to policy
- To view policy development as a process and based on a cycle model
- To contribute to the overall process and guiding principles for the development of the Regional Sustainable Tourism Policy Framework
- To share ‘best practices’ with other member countries in the formulation and implementation of their national tourism policies

The workshop was targeted to programme officers who are involved in the development of tourism policy and assigned by country members to lead the CRSTDP. The invitations were also extended to individuals in Ministries responsible for National, Sectoral and Environmental Planning.

The three days of the workshop took the form of the workshop presenters delivering five papers and a case study in plenary sessions followed by group discussions. (see presentations and issue papers)

The CRSTDP advisor, responsible for this particular component, Mr Luis Chaves presented at the first plenary session and elaborated on the importance of
understanding policy making within a policy cycle process and presented to the audience the findings of a situational analysis of all CARIFORUM national tourism policies drawing conclusions for the entire region.

The second plenary session was conducted by Mr Alyson Forte, Director of Research and Planning from the Ministry of Barbados who used Barbados as a Case Study to demonstrate how their sustainable tourism policy was developed. The first two sessions concluded with a round table discussion, followed by a questions and answers period.

The following four presentations of the workshop saw the establishment of two working groups to deal and cover four different but related issues that are critical for policy considerations to ensure integrated sustainable tourism development:

1. Health, Safety and Security, presented by Guest lecturer, Dr Peter Tarlow, President, Tourism and More, Inc.

2. The role of research in Sustainable Tourism Policy, presented by Mr McHale Andrew, CRSTDP Adviser

3. Human Resource Development, presented by Ms. Yvonne Armour-Shillingford, CRSTDP Adviser

4. Information and Communications Technology, presented by Mr Paul Ridoutt, CRSTDP Adviser

The two working groups’ discussions were facilitated by either the presenter or a specially assigned moderator where questions presented and responses/recommendations were reported back to the plenary as a potential input into Caribbean Regional Sustainable Tourism Policy framework. (See workshop group discussion outcomes and recommendations). The working group reports were presented by the assigned working group member and discussed in each plenary session.

The workshop stimulated a significant amount of discussion and there was a high level of participation from all those in attendance. As one of the main goals, the workshop allowed the various country representatives and regional organizations present to share, discuss and exchange their views and for first time, address from a policy making standpoint some of the problems and issues for sustainable tourism development.

The workshop also enabled participants to share their experiences and best policy practices of their own, allowing the participants to question themselves in a series of issues and put together a group of recommendations for consideration for the policy framework. A whole series of new aspects came out of the
workshop for participants to consider and apply to their own national level contexts.

The division of the plenary into two smaller groups was beneficial as it provided the participants to freely discuss more openly, the issues and their own special cases in much detail. The working groups generated intense but harmonious discussions, as all agreed that all of the chosen themes brought in new perspectives and aspects that could apply to their own national realities. (see individual presentations)

A participant’s evaluation form was submitted and results condensed at the end of the workshop. Overall, the participants considered the workshop to be extremely informative, helpful and interesting. The issue papers and presentations provided new and updated material to the participants on new emerging issues and aspects on sustainable tourism and policymaking. There is a clear need for better coordination, more integration and sectoral management approach towards tourism policy development and hereby its implementation. (See issue papers for each presentation theme)

OVERALL EVALUATION

The majority of participants rated the workshop as excellent; and good to excellent in choice of topics, presentations, moderators and discussions. The engagement of CRSTDIP advisers in this workshop proved to be beneficial to all and for the linking of all programme components. (See presentations)

The participants felt that the workshop met their expectations regarding its contribution and assisting in providing a good platform for the development of the regional sustainable tourism policy framework and that the workshop presented credible guidelines to enhance their national policies.

Although, the workshop was well promoted perhaps, the main constraint was its timing in terms of the dates that unfortunately coincided close to several other important international tourism related events. As a consequence a number of participating CARIFORUM countries and other regional countries could not attend or send their respective representatives.

The information and recommendations presented and inputs given by the participants are seen as important in charting the way forward for the programming and content of the next workshop.
Based on the given recommendations, the participants in future workshops will be provided more guidelines for action for their discussion groups prior to the actual presentation.

The participants suggested a whole list of topics and issues for consideration for future workshops that are been considered for the next workshop scheduled for the third week of March 2006 in St Lucia. (See workshop evaluation report, details on next workshop venue contact CTO)

The strength of the workshop is that it is viewed as a participatory process, as part of the entire programme and as part of a series of programme events designed to involve all participants and stakeholders, providing opportunities for consultation. It allows for a continued process of understanding and capturing meaningful inputs and important issues towards the development of the framework.

As a result of the workshop, three countries informally and individually requested assistance for the possibility for Mr Chaves to expand on the findings of the research of the situational analysis and share the individual results with their countries. Mr Chaves, responded to them that the CRSTDP on the third year of the programme has contemplated for technical assistance to CARIFORUM countries to strengthen their national sustainable tourism policies and that this should not be a problem but an opportunity to provide assistance as contemplated in the main objectives of the programme.

Overall, this workshop initiates the start of a process for CARIFORUM countries and others, thinking and working together and providing some good understanding of the required process and of the policy issues that will serve as the ground for a more sustainable tourism environment. More country participation is anticipated for the next policy workshop and active engagement in this process.