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things we learned from the Caribbean Tourism Organization's Sustainable Tourism Product Development Workshop -

Developing Viable & Sustainable Tourism Products: The Singapore Model'



The July event held at Radisson Aquatica Resort Barbados saw Caribbean tourism industry practitioners from the public and private sectors, who are involved in tourism product development, come together with the facilitator from Singapore, Mr. Christopher Khoo, to reveal the following key learnings:

1. Tourism Satellite Accounts

The importance of having an effective data collection system/framework that will help to drive effective and long-term decision and policy making.

2. Tourism Master Plan

The importance of developing a comprehensive tourism master plan; one that is innovative and creative, and then implementing it. A good plan is not enough...execution of the various phases and elements of the plan are key. Consistency in effort, attention to details and competent staff at all levels are critical to achieving success.

3. Tourism Industry Licensing and Regulations

The strategy of tying the renewal of licenses in the industry to the submission of occupancy information and the collection of relevant data from the industry. There is also the importance of enforcing penalties if standards and expectations are not met.

4. The Singapore Model

The Singapore model is more of a philosophy and mindset. Caribbean destinations will have to have more of a mindset like Singaporeans to be able to achieve their level of success. Lots of value is placed on having a culture of excellence. "If we are going to do something, we are going to do it right."

5. Cultural Heritage Tourism

Cultural heritage tourism is the memory of the soul of a nation. Importance must be placed on the preservation of our sites and attractions.

6. Stakeholder Consultation

Stakeholder consultation is a key factor in ensuring the sustainability of your tourism product. It should be early, relevant, regular, extensive, informational and fully participatory.

7. Strategic Tourism Partnerships

There is a need for greater inter-ministry and interagency coordination and dialogue. This is important for buy-in and ownership of tourism projects and priorities.

8. Product/Market Matching

The need to conduct a comprehensive product inventory/audit, in addition to doing extensive market research so that there could be appropriate product matching. Your product should mirror image your market and vice versa.

9. Attractions

There is a need for relevant and meaningful interactive and immersive experiences at attractions – museums, heritage sites, etc. – in order to have sustained success.

10. Clustering Tourism Products

The importance of clustering tourism products and allowing them to feed off of one another as tourism products tend to die when left on their own. Clustering aids in keeping products alive as well as helps in branding the specific tourism zone/area.