

**ASSOCIATION OF CARIBBEAN STATES (ACS)
27th MEETING OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM
(SCST-27)**

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORATE OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

This report covers the activities of the Directorate of Sustainable Tourism for the period July 2015 to June 2016. It outlines the achievements made with respect to the Plan of Action of Pétion-Ville and the execution of projects and initiatives in implementing this Directorate's Work Programme.

Included among the most important activities is the **25th Meeting of the Special Committee on Sustainable Tourism (SCST-26), convened in Port of Spain, Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, on July 22-23, 2015.**

In order to facilitate dialogue and the exchange of experiences on sustainable tourism among the countries of the Greater Caribbean, prior to the Meeting of the SCST, the **Workshop on the results of the Regional Cooperation Mechanism of the Sustainable Tourism Zone of the Greater Caribbean (STZC-RCM) project** was held on July 22, 2015. This Workshop allowed for the presentation of the tools created during the development of the project. In that regard, the initiative that is headed by the ACS, the Sustainable Tourism Zone of the Caribbean (STZC), held a prominent place on that occasion and a Report was presented on the process and advancements made in establishing the Zone.

Also convened was the **2nd Meeting of the Ad-Hoc Steering Committee of the STZC**, which is a technical advisory group whose purpose is to support the establishment of the 'Zone' and which is made up of regional and international organisations working in the field of Sustainable Tourism. These Meetings that were held in Trinidad and Tobago, were attended by approximately fifty three (53) participants, among them delegations from seventeen (17) ACS Member and Associate Member States, as well as representatives of important regional and international organisations, such as the Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO), the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), the Caribbean Association of National Training Agencies (CANTA), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), to name a few.

The following is a breakdown of the accomplishments related to the different programme areas of the Sustainable Tourism Work Programme for the period 2015-2016.

1. SUSTAINABLE TOURISM ZONE OF THE CARIBBEAN (STZC)

The Directorate completed the third phase of the STZC, the Regional Cooperation Mechanism (RCM), which was executed with cooperation and financial assistance from the Regional Council of Martinique and the INTERREG IV Caribbean Space Programme.

As follow up to the presentation of results, the Regional Workshop to Standardise the Tourism Sustainability Indicators of the Tourism Zone of the Greater Caribbean was held on November 13, 2015 in Panama City.

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Attending said Workshop were the following institutions: the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), the Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO), the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), the Secretariat of Central American Tourism Integration (SITCA), The CARIBSAVE Partnership, as well as representatives of the Ministry of Tourism of Colombia, the Panama Tourism Authority and representing the Chairman of the Special Committee on Sustainable Tourism was the delegate of the Guatemalan Tourism Institute (INGUAT), participating on behalf of Guatemala.

The consulting firm MC Consultants delivered the presentation on the webpage of the Sustainable Tourism Zone, which will not only serve as a tool for implementing the tourism sustainability indicators but will also facilitate the self-evaluation that must be performed by each country on their selected destination.

As a result of this workshop, it was agreed that all institutions will recognise the various initiatives existing in the region and that they are related to the implementation of tourism sustainability indicators, including those of the STZC Convention of the ACS.

With respect to destinations for the STZC, this Phase III of the RCM has produced an increase, with thirty four (34) destinations being proposed by 25 ACS Member States and Associate Members.

In terms of following up to the project to raise the competitiveness of the tourist destinations in the Greater Caribbean through tourism sustainability certification, arrangements have been made through the Special Fund of the ACS, for this initiative to be financed by the Territorial Collectivity of MARTINIQUE and the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP). The project was also presented to the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). This proposal was supported by the Republics of Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica and Nicaragua. The DST is currently awaiting the final response from the IDB for the approval of the project.

2. STRENGTHENING OF CAPACITY BUILDING IN THE TOURISM SECTOR

The "Training for Careers in Sustainable Tourism" Project was financed by the French Development Agency (AFD) and yielded among its results, the Study on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Tourism in the Greater Caribbean and the Directory of Tourism Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions in the Region, in addition to which, eight country profiles related to TVET were presented. These results were presented during the 26th Meeting of the Special Committee on Sustainable Tourism and revealed the status and needs regarding TVET in the tourism sector in the Greater Caribbean, as well as the proposal for a Regional Framework to implement future programmes for vocational training and capacity building.

As a follow up action, the Regional Consultation Workshop to establish the Regional Framework for Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) was held on November 12, 2015 in Panama City (Host country through collaboration from the Panama Tourism Authority). This Workshop was attended by the following institutions: ILO, ILO-CINTERFOR, AFD, CANTA, SITCA, CTO, OECS and CONPEHT.

During the course of said workshop, consensus was reached and approval given for the Regional Work Framework, for which a Plan of Action has been developed, which was also approved by the participating organisations, having agreed that priority would be given to developing capacity building in the tourism sector. A representative of the host country took part in this Workshop as an observer,

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while a delegate of Guatemala participated in its capacity as Chairman of the Special Committee on Sustainable Tourism of the ACS.

In order to consolidate strategic alliances in the area of TVET, the ACS signed in April 2016, an agreement of understanding with the Pan-American Confederation of Hospitality and Tourism Schools (CONPEHT), which include approximately 90 educational centres in Latin America and Spain.

In addition, the Directorate also focuses its efforts on development to support mechanisms that would facilitate the implementation of a Student Exchange Programme among ACS countries to learn the languages of the Greater Caribbean using a cultural immersion format. One of the most important activities was the creation of a Database of Language Teaching Institutions in the Region, which connects academic institutions with accredited language programmes that also have the capacity to accept students.

The Directorate coordinated with the Regional Council of Guadeloupe and the Guadeloupe International Centre for a Regional Approach to Languages (CIGAREL), the execution of the first exchange of students associated with the tourism sector, which took place from December 6-17, 2015, with the participants being selected from the Republics of: Costa Rica, Dominica and Guatemala.

Each group comprised of 12 students and one coordinator, who were involved in a 10 day immersion programme at said centre, with the aim of improving their proficiency in the French language and their knowledge of French Caribbean culture.

With respect to Tourism Security, the Regional Working Group was created, which agreed to commence the exchange of experiences and institutional information in the following areas: Capacity Building, Crisis Management and Destination Image Recovery, which is currently being developed.

3. COMMUNITY TOURISM

The Directorate carried out actions that allowed the formalisation of the Regional Network of Artisans in Tourism of the Greater Caribbean, with which a plan of action has been defined. It currently has the support of the Network for the creation of the Database of the Handicraft Sector of the Region, through the dispatching of an electronic survey by the ACS that would provide information on artisans and the institutions involved in the area.

Through the Special Fund of the ACS, a Project Concept Document (PCD) was prepared and the objective of the initiative is to: "Create awareness of possibilities and provide information, tools and strategies to raise competitiveness and maximise the business opportunities generated by Tourism for women and artisans in the tourism sector, thereby strengthening the Network and supporting the promotion of the handicraft product".

This project was presented to the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) with support from the Republics of: Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica and the Dominican Republic. The ACS is awaiting a response from the entity.

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As regards Community Tourism, information is being gathered to create the Database that will systematise the initiatives existing in the Region, for which an electronic form has been dispatched to the tourism authorities of Member States and Associate Members requesting said information.

Lastly, with respect to collaboration with Regional and International Agencies, it should be underscored that the ACS, through the DST, has established and consolidated strategic alliances that have laid a solid foundation for the development of the actions undertaken by the DST, whose goal is to have an impact on tourism sustainability management in the Greater Caribbean. The following are among the regional and international organisations that form part of the DST collaboration platform:

World Tourism Organisation (WTO)	Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO)	Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)
Secretariat of Central American Tourism Integration (SITCA)	Organisation of American States (OEA)	Territorial Community of Martinique
Guadeloupe International Centre for a Regional Approach to Languages (CIGAREL)	Pan-American Confederation of Hospitality and Tourism Schools (CONPETH)	Spanish Association of Scientific Experts in Tourism (AECIT)
Panama Tourism Authority	Guatemalan Tourism Institute (INGUAT)	Nicaragua Tourism Institute (INTUR)
Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism of Colombia	Ministry of Tourism/ Tourism Development Company of Trinidad and Tobago	Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC)
French Development Agency (AFD)	Inter-American Centre for Knowledge Development in Vocational Training (CINTERFOR)	Fair Travel International
International Labour Organisation (ILO)	Sociedad Portuaria de Cartagena (Cartagena Port Society)	Sustainable Travel International (STI)