

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

Managua, Republic of Nicaragua: July 9th 2016
Holiday Inn Convention Center

**SUSTAINABLE TOURISM ZONE OF THE GREATER CARIBBEAN (STZC)
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Directorate of Sustainable Tourism (DST) has continued actions toward the establishment and consolidation of the Sustainable Tourism Zone of the Greater Caribbean (STZC), by following the steps that would allow Member States and Associate Members to complete the process to ratify the Convention and sign the Protocol.

Advancements have been made in the implementation of the project to develop the Regional Cooperation Mechanism (RCM), specifically in the third phase of the application of the STZC, which has been executed with cooperation and financial assistance from the Regional Council of Martinique and INTERREG IV.

The main tools for training and for validating the tourism sustainability of the Destinations of the Zone (Reference Guide for STZC Trainers and Technicians and the STZC Website) are in their completion stage, since they have been subjected to applicability tests by the DST and the Consulting Firm.

The Workshop on the Implementation of the Tourism Sustainability Indicators of the Sustainable Tourism Zone of the Greater Caribbean and the Importance of Establishing a System to Certify Sustainable Destinations was held in the Republic of Panama on November 13, 2015 and was attended by the following regional and international organisations: CARIBSAVE, the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), the Secretariat of Central American Tourism Integration (SITCA), the Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO) and the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC).

As a result, closer relations have been forged with Sustainable Travel International (STI) so as to recognise the importance of the objectives of the Sustainable Destinations Alliance for the Americas (SDAA) and the Tourism Zone of the Greater Caribbean as initiatives that are geared toward achieving tourism sustainability in the Region and obtaining support from STI, in terms of technical assistance and as a participant in STZC-related activities and projects.

Steps have also been taken toward the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with Fair Travel International, which would allow the STZC destinations to be promoted in the European market niche specialising in sustainable tourism.

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In April 2016, the DST once again circulated (through Official Note C.074/2016/SG) the Guide for the Pre-Selection of Destinations, the Destination Identification Form and the list of STZC Destinations, for the purpose of increasing the nomination of destinations by ACS Member States and Associate Members and updating the persons appointed as focal points, who will measure the indicators and their criteria as the basis for validating Destinations and who will complete the destination profile at the STZC website, in order to strengthen the geographic vision of the STZC as a regional community.

During phases I and II of the Regional Cooperation Mechanism (RCM), eight (08) destinations were nominated to join the STZC. Now, in Phase III and as a result of the steps taken, there has been an increase, with thirty four (34) destinations being nominated by 25 ACS Member States and Associate Members.

With respect to following up the project to raise the competitiveness of the tourist destinations in the Greater Caribbean by applying Sustainable Tourism certification, steps have been taken through the Special Fund of the ACS, for this initiative to be financed by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the Territorial Community of MARTINIQUE and the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP). The DST is currently awaiting the results of the evaluation performed on the project by these Institutions.