

**ASSOCIATION OF CARIBBEAN STATES
Directorate of Sustainable Tourism**

**REGIONAL TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN
TOURISM STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION WORKSHOP
Panama, November 12, 2015**

REPORT

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The meeting was opened by **Mr. Julio Orozco Perez**, Director of Sustainable Tourism, Association of Caribbean States (ACS), who extended greetings on behalf of the ACS Secretary General thanking the participants for their attendance. He gave an overview of the ACS and the work of the Directorate, indicating that the objective of the workshop was to gather the relevant Regional and International Organisations to discuss topics related to Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Tourism. He also highlighted the important role of TVET to tourism competitiveness and the need to improve quality standards and the availability of education and training opportunities. He further thanked the Panama tourism Authority for the kind hospitality and support provided in hosting and organising the workshop.

Mr. Ricardo Sandoval, Director of Planning and Tourism Development of the Panama Tourism Authority, welcomed the participants to Panama indicating it was an honour for Panama to host this important meeting, extending greetings from the Minister and Vice Minister of Tourism. He gave an overview of Panama's tourism experience inclusive of goals to enhance TVET opportunities. He further thanked the ACS for taking the initiative to convene the meeting.

Introductions and remarks from the participating Representatives of Regional and International Organisations followed with the representatives providing a brief overview of the work of their organisations and their specific portfolios. Thanks were extended to the ACS for the organisation of this meeting and the Panama Tourism Authorities for the kind hospitality.

Following the introductions, **Director Orozco** made mention of the support and collaboration received from the French Development Agency (AFD), as a strong counterpart, and for the assistance in funding the Regional TVET study indicating that this meeting is a follow-up to the outcomes and recommendations of the study. He made special mention of the support provided by Mr. Malpel the liaison officer of the AFD who worked with the ACS in the implementation of the consultancy.

The representative of AFD, Project Officer, **Ms. Marie Joly** acknowledging the thanks and commendations from Mr. Orozco, informed that the topic of TVET was very important for the AFD. She added that her organisation was very interested in the next steps and follow-up to the study, indicating that the Regional Director for AFD in the Dominican Republic would be the principal liaison moving forward. She also extended greetings from Mr. Malpel to Mr. Orozco and his team at the ACS for the excellent work and coordination related to the project, adding that he sent his best wishes and regrets that he was not able to attend the workshop in person.

REGIONAL TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN TOURISM STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION WORKSHOP

SESSION 1. Presentations of the Partners

The Representatives of the Regional and International Organisations delivered a 5-7 minute presentation on their respective work programmes, outlining their priority focal areas, main activities related to TVET and current and pipeline projects as follows:

- **Caribbean Association of National Training Authorities (CANTA);**

Presentation by **Dr. Wayne Wesley**, Executive Director, HEART Trust/NTA in Jamaica and current president of CANTA who gave an overview of the scope and functions of CANTA, an overview of the CANTA work programme and the key standards and certification programmes that has been developed at various levels. He informed the meeting that the ACS can present to CANTA information that can lead to the development of a CVQ – qualifications that are relevant to the tourism industry specifically.

- **Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO)**

Mrs. Sharon Banfield-Bovell, CTO Regional Human Resource Development Consultant, gave an overview of the CTO, its composition, membership and programmes in sustainable tourism, human resource development and others. She highlighted upcoming high-level workshops and events and gave an overview of the main projects and activities related to education and training, foremost of which was the move to E-Technology, to have training resources available online. She also listed the various training programmes developed and available by the CTO in the area of human resource development.

- **Pan American Confederation of Schools of Hospitality, Gastronomy and Tourism (CONPEHT)**

Mr. Ramón Martínez, President of CONPEHT and Director of the Intercontinental University Foundation, gave an overview of the work of CONPEHT as well as the various initiatives available through CONPEHT and the strategic Axis that guide their work. He highlighted the importance of co-operation and collaboration with both Academic Institutions and other Organisations related to education and training. At the conclusion of his presentation, Mr. Martínez presented to Director Orozco, a book commemorating the **25 years of CONPEHT** existence. He also invited all the workshop participants to send to him their contact details in order to send complimentary copies of this publication. Director Orozco thanked the representative of CONPEHT for the kind gesture, highlighting their focal role in joining the Hospitality and Tourism Schools in the Region, adding it is hoped that CONPEHTs membership can be extended to include institutions in the English speaking Caribbean states most of which are not currently part of CONPEHTs membership.

- **International Labour Organisation (ILO)**

Ms. Kanae Tada, Junior Professional Officer (Skills Training and Employment Policies), Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean, spoke briefly on the work of the ILO, indicating various initiatives engaged in partnership with the ACS and others. She highlighted the entrepreneurship training for artisans and SMEs and the workshops with ACS and CINTERFOR provided for TVET councils/National Training Agencies on skills anticipation in Tourism.

REGIONAL TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN TOURISM STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION WORKSHOP

- **Inter-American Centre for Knowledge Development and Professional Training (ILO-CINTERFOR)**

Mr. Adolfo Enrique Deibe, Director ILO-CINTERFO, made mention of the scope of work of his organization, and their mandate as it relates to labour standards, adding that their interest for the next three years was to have policies for growth and in that framework supporting professional and vocational training. He made mention of initiatives previously executed in collaboration with ACS, highlighting the importance of inter-Agency collaboration in this critical area. He reiterated the interest and commitment of CINTERFO to support and participate in this process, through technical assistance as well as the knowledge and expertise gained from work in the region to contribute to advancements in the merger of these two critical areas: TVET and Tourism.

- **Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)**

Dr. Lorraine Nicholas, Tourism Specialist, OECS Secretariat, provided information on the work programme of the OECS highlighting the main focal areas and current and pipeline initiatives in each area. She added that the main focus of the OECS at this time was to strengthen and consolidate efforts in making the economic union of the OECS countries a reality and define a single space and economy. In the area of TVET, the OECS was engaged in a project to develop an Eastern Caribbean Institute that offers specialized training in tourism, as well as a research centre for tourism and a scholarship foundation. Currently efforts were focused on forming a network of all the Hospitality training institutes in the region, and mapping the courses with specialized training programmes and courses.

- **Secretariat for Tourism Integration of Central America (SITCA)**

Mr. Ely Barillas, Coordinator for Cooperation, Ministry of Tourism of El Salvador and representative of SITCA, gave an overview of the historical establishment of SITCA, in the framework of Central American Tourism Council, highlighting the seat of the Secretariat in Managua, Nicaragua. He indicated that the scope in this regard is to promote multi-destination tourism to the countries of Central America, support and enhance tourism growth and development in the countries of the region and promote tourism in the region through harmonised marketing and promotion efforts. He also mentioned the programme of work of SITCA, the priority focal areas and the main initiatives as part of the work programme, adding that he looked forward to collaborating with all the organisations present.

SESSION 2: Presentation of the Results of the Study and Regional TVET Framework

Director Orozco introduced **Mrs. Carmen Rosa Perez**, General Manager of CERTIFICA as the consulting firm hired to conduct the activities related to the Training for Careers in Sustainable Tourism project, implemented by the ACS and sponsored by AFD.

Mrs. Perez presentation focussed on the process to implement the study, the results obtained and their relevance, highlighting the main conclusions and findings. The proposed Regional TVET Framework was also presented where the roles and functions of the various stakeholders and groups were outlined, as well as recommendations for implementation and next steps. She highlighted the need for clear standards, an agreed process and priorities

REGIONAL TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN TOURISM STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION WORKSHOP

with the aim of having a Regional TVET Policy and labour competency standards for the Tourism Sector.

DISCUSSION FORUM:

This session focussed on discussion and feedback to the Proposed Regional Framework with the aim of agreeing on a way forward for implementation and next steps.

Director Orozco opened the session indicating what was needed was to develop a road map to support implementation of the Regional TVET framework and plan of action proposed by the consultants, that would guide co-operation among the various stakeholders gathered at this meeting. He continued that the organisations gathered needed to come to consensus and agree on what we can propose to the region in the area of TVET for the tourism sector. **Ms. Amanda Charles**, the ACS Sustainable Tourism Advisor added the goal in this regard was to determine what is required and most feasible, that could be supported by the TVET specialised Agencies and Regional Tourism Organisations gathered and define a way forward to strengthen TVET for the Tourism sector, to include harmonising existing initiatives. **Mrs. Perez** of CERTIFICA clarified that the most important aspect was to agree on the role and functions of the various bodies that would comprise a Regional Alliance or working group.

The following are the main decisions and recommendations stemming from the discussions:

- Recommendation from the **SITCA** representative of the need to identify resources for implementation of the Regional TVET framework. He also inquired as to the approach proposed to be adopted by the ACS to implement the Regional TVET Framework.
- Recommendation by **CANTA** representative to explore establishing TVET councils. As it related to funding, he shared the best practise of Jamaica indicating that the Government added a 3% levy on the payroll of every private enterprise to fund the National HEART Trust, Jamaica's National Training Agency. He also outlined the process as done by Jamaica which includes a role for private sector entities in the approach to certification. He further suggested that the Ministries of Education and/or labour respectively with responsibility for TVET standards and certification may be a starting point. He offered that the approach could be to build on the foundation developed by CANTA and other national and regional institutions that have already developed Competency based programs. He also raised for consideration aspects of policy formulation, delivery and regulations, and suggested that the focus at the regional level be on setting the framework and the actual implementation be done at the national level, in constant dialogue with the private sector entities.
- The representative of **CONPEHT** informed that schools which are responsible for training at the technical level are mainly focussed on competencies which could be a strength and reiterated the support of his organisation to mobilise its membership. He also highlighted the practical component or internship, indicating on-the-job training as a solution to verify that the person has received the required training and is able to function effectively.
- In response to Mrs. Perez' comment that the meeting attendees needed to consider a number of questions/issues as they related to the roll out of the programme and whether all groups (school leavers, those already employed in the sector, unemployed persons seeking to gain skills, etc.) will be targeted at once, the representative of **CTO** suggested starting with those persons already working in the industry whose skills needed to be upgraded. As it related to the organizational framework, which

REGIONAL TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN TOURISM STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION WORKSHOP

encompasses defining the roles, functions and scope at the Regional, National and Local levels, she suggested that the approach could be to review the mechanisms of CANTA and CONPEHT with a view to utilising the best aspects of these initiatives. She also recommended that the wording needed clarification suggesting Regional TVET Framework for Tourism in the Greater Caribbean. This was seconded by the CANTA representative and approved by the meeting. She reiterated the CTO's commitment to support the efforts and outcomes generated from the group's discussions indicating that the CTO would lend its efforts in advocacy as well as lobbying its member states.

- The representative of **CINTERFOR** shared from the experience of various countries in Latin America and the Caribbean as it relates to institutional TVET models, indicating that the challenge often encountered with gaining certification/recognition of TVET programs as compared to well established traditional academic programs. He emphasised that in various countries there are various capacities and access to funding as well as national competency standards already established. He suggested that Tourism authorities can align with strong institutions with the necessary structure and also access financing through private tourism and other entities. He added that CINTERFOR can play a role in forging a bridge between the tourism authorities and TVET Agencies as was done in previous initiatives which also looked specifically at the tourism sector.
- From a Tourism Authority perspective, **Mrs. Elsa Judith Santizo Juarez De Rodriguez**, Administrative Adviser of the Guatemala Tourism Board (INGUAT) shared that INGUAT has a mandate to provide training in tourism. She agreed that it was important to incorporate the private sector, adding that indeed competency standards were needed but there is also need for incentives both as it relates to private sector investment in training to get qualified employees and fair compensation to employees commensurate to qualification and experience.
- **Mr. Juan Portugal**, Head of Community Tourism of the Panama Tourism Authority highlighted changing mindsets at the public level that can compromise TVET policies and programs. He continued that the discussions were very timely to define best practises at the national levels which can be replicated among the various countries. He suggested that due consideration be given to issues related to indigenous populations, migration and illegal immigration, foreign investment, the sustainable development goals, and conservation of the environment and culture. He suggested a Tourism policy approach was needed as it relates to defining what is needed for the training of human resources.
- **Director Orozco** presented the idea to create a working group and suggested that we commit to engaging the various tourism authorities to reinforce the idea of harmonisation of TVET standards and certification in tourism. This proposal was approved. The Representative of **CINTERFOR** voiced support for the ACS leading and coordinating the proposed Working Group.
- The representative of the **OECS** agreed that the convening of this meeting provides a good opportunity to be informed of opportunities which can be beneficial to its member countries and subsequently engage the participation and support of its member states, with the aim of strengthening collaboration with the ACS and other regional and International organisations in this critical area of education and training in tourism. She also offered that there needs to be clear distinction in terms of the scope of the

REGIONAL TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN TOURISM STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION WORKSHOP

framework and additionally to include in the establishment of the Regional TVET Working Group, the specific focus on tourism, in terms of tailoring the regional TVET strategy to the Tourism sector.

- **Director Orozco** thanked the participants for their very valuable and constructive feedback outlining the functions and roles of the various partners gathered to leverage available platforms to deliver to our member institutions and countries a practical system and mechanism for TVET in tourism and gain their endorsement. He continued that the ACS would rely on their collaboration to move forward with this initiative, recognising that individual organisations have strengthened and relationships with specific stakeholders that are related to this topic and can lead efforts in this regard.

At the conclusion of the discussions the workshops participants approved the draft **Regional TVET Framework for Tourism in the Greater Caribbean**, to be coordinated by the ACS. Additionally, a schematic outlining the functional levels of co-operation at the Regional, National and Local level was drafted and approved, indicative of the stakeholders as well as co-operation organisations to be outreached.

SESSION 4. Establishment of the Regional TVET Tourism Working Group and Dialogue on Future Collaboration

- i. The workshop participants agreed to the establishment of the Regional TVET working Group with the following designation:
English- **Regional TVET Working Group for the Tourism Sector**
Spanish- **Grupo de Trabajo Regional de EFTP para el Sector Turismo**
French- **Groupe de Travail Régional de l'EFTP pour le Secteur du Tourisme**
- ii. It was agreed to review the **Implementation Plan for the Regional TVET Framework for Tourism in the Greater Caribbean** in the context of the working group. It was agreed **Thursday November 26th, 2015** would be the deadline for receipt of feedback and comments from the partners. The ACS would disseminate the final documents by **December 3rd, 2015**. Mrs. Perez of CERTIFICA agreed to send the plan of action document in word format. She also explained the definition of the proposed Virtual Network for the Greater Caribbean, an online portal to serve as a repository of competency standards, national policies, information on TVET systems, frameworks, CBET models, Agreements and resolutions among others.
- iii. It was also agreed that the ACS would follow-up to define a date for future meetings to discuss follow-up activities and next steps. Director Orozco indicated that he would like to hold a follow-up meeting next year.

SESSION 5. WORKSHOP CONCLUSIONS

- The **Regional TVET Framework for Tourism in the Greater Caribbean** based on labour competencies was approved and the participating organisations committed to support implementation of the framework.

REGIONAL TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN TOURISM STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION WORKSHOP

- The **Regional TVET Working Group for the Tourism Sector** was established to support the harmonization of Regional TVET approaches, with the commitment of the participating organisations to be part of this working group.
- A **Joint Communiqué** on the workshop outcomes and main conclusions was finalized and approved, which emphasized the importance of education and vocational training to tourism growth and competitiveness, as well as the commitment of the organisations present to support advancement in this regard. The organisations also reaffirmed the contribution of education and training to human resource development and consequently to having a highly skilled and trained tourism workforce, with the professional skills needed to ensure that the Region meets expected international standards.

CLOSING REMARKS:

Director Orozco in his closing remarks highlighted the importance for the Working Group to meet and establish communication channels. He thanked the participants for the constructive discussions which contributed to the success of the meeting and expressed his appreciation to the Panama Tourism Authority for the excellent arrangements in hosting. He also reiterated to the AFD and the representative, Mrs. Marie Joly, the immense gratitude of the ACS for the ongoing support and assistance in funding the Training for Careers in Sustainable Tourism Project and Consultancy. He further commended the CERTIFICA team of consultants for a highly efficient and successful conclusion to the consultancy and for their recommendations to improve this critical area of TVET as it related to the tourism industry.

Delegates were invited to offer closing remarks, during which the **CANTA** representative expressed his thanks to the ACS for the invitation to be part of the workshop, indicating he was encouraged by the level of dialogue and engagement, which has made him realise that there is need for this type of dialogue to explore developing TVET strategies for other sectors. He commended Director Orozco and his team at the ACS for their foresight and leadership in this regard.

The representative of the **AFD** made mention of the importance for donors to be part of this dialogue, adding her thanks to Director Orozco for extending the invitation. She also mentioned that the AFD was very pleased with the outcomes of the study and management of the consultancy by the ACS, adding that AFD views the ACS as a strategic regional partner and would seek to continue collaborating with the ACS in this and other areas. She informed that the AFD office in the Dominican Republic is committed to continue supporting regional initiatives, indicating that the organisation has 12 strategic priorities, which include tourism and renewable energies which are linked. She made mention of the collaboration with the National Institute of Technical and Vocational Training (INFOTEP) to develop a Tourism Hotel School in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, adding that the approach is to include practical experience with instructional knowledge and extend training to other countries in the Region.

In her closing remarks, **Mrs. Daisy Trujillo**, Head of International Technical Cooperation, Panama Tourism Authority, commended the participants for having very productive deliberations indicating that it was a pleasure for Panama to host such an illustrious gathering, and that they looked forward to welcoming the representatives on their next visit. **Mr. Juan Portugal**, Head of Community Tourism of the Panama Tourism Authority adding his commendations to the ACS and the workshop participants on the success of the meeting, extended an invitation to the participants to take the time to enjoy some of the attractions and night life of Panama, and to come again.

**REGIONAL TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN
TOURISM STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION WORKSHOP**

ANNEX A / ANEXO A / ANNEXE A

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS / LISTA DE PARTICIPANTES / LISTES DE PARTICIPANTS

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**REGIONAL TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN
TOURISM STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION WORKSHOP**

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