

ASSOCIATION OF CARIBBEAN STATES (ACS)

24TH MEETING OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM (SCST-24) AND 2ND PREPARATORY MEETING OF THE 3RD MEETING OF MINISTERS OF TOURISM OF THE GREATER CARIBBEAN (TMM-3)

Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, July 16-17, 2013

BRIEFING DOCUMENT ON TOURISM POLICING THROUGH ENGAGEMENT OF AT-RISK YOUTH

1. INTRODUCTION

The Caribbean Region is undoubtedly one of the most Tourism dependent regions in the world. Critical to the survival of the industry in the region is the maintenance of the image of the Caribbean as a safe haven. However, threatening to tarnish that image and, consequently, threaten the industry, are increasing levels of crime in a number of countries, including crime against visitors. These incidents range from petty harassment by vendors to robberies and on to more serious and violent crime. Crime against tourists can cause foreign governments to announce travel advisories, thereby inducing their nationals to alter their vacation plans, which might include choosing alternative vacation destinations. Even isolated incidents can produce a ripple effect when victims warn their friends and family and/or potential visitors are dissuaded or allayed by stories in the media. Among the immediate impact of such impediments are loss of revenue for airlines, hotels and the industry as a whole. However, the longer-term impact may include fewer repeat visitors and permanent damage to the image of the destination as a location for tourism investment.

Considering the opportunities and linkages offered by the Tourism Industry to contribute to socio-economic development, and in particular youth entrepreneurship and employment, the Directorate has considered to develop a project to explore through horizontal cooperation and the sharing of best practices, the options and alternatives for the establishment and standardisation of National Tourism Police Units.

2. GOALS / OBJECTIVES

Overall Objective:

The **Tourism Policing through Engagement of At-Risk Youth** Project seeks to *strengthen regional capacities in the area of visitor safety and security with particular emphasis on creating employment opportunities for the youth, while simultaneously enhancing visitors' experiences at the destination to contribute to more visitor-friendly and safer destinations.*

Specific Project Objectives:

Specifically the project seeks to strengthen regional capacities in the area of tourism policing through:

- The transfer of knowledge, best-practices and experiences of countries with Tourism Police units utilising knowledge exchange mechanisms and south-south co-operation.
- Delivery of training, technical assistance and subsequently documentation to increase the competencies of law enforcement and tourism stakeholders in the Greater Caribbean Region, as it relates to visitor safety and security, with particular emphasis on creating employment opportunities for the youth, while simultaneously contributing to safer tourism destinations.

3. COMPONENTS

Component 1 - Survey and Study on Tourism Policing in the Greater Caribbean Region

The first phase in the execution of the project is the development of a Survey aimed at achieving a broad overview of Tourism Policing in the Region, through identification of the challenges and needs that confront Regional Tourism and Law enforcement Agencies, while also exploring the opportunities for the engagement of youth. The survey will facilitate the development of a Study which shall be entitled “**Safer Shores: Exploring Opportunities for the Engagement of Youth in the Tourism Sector**”.

Component 2 - Regional Best-Practice Framework and Curriculum

The second phase and a related purpose of the study is the development of the Regional Best-Practice Framework and Curriculum for Tourism Policing, targeted to the engagement of youth, which will serve as the training tool for the Tourism Vigilance Programme (TVP). It has been conceived that the Framework will suggest through analysis of regional and institutional best practises the central themes and topics for training and instruction.

Component 3 - Regional Project Tourism Vigilance Programme (TVP)

As the third phase a Regional Programme targeted to the training and engagement of unemployed and at-risk youth in ACS Member and Associate Member States would be implemented, utilising the Training Manual and Workbook developed.

Component 4 – National Workshops

The fourth phase will focus on co-ordination and support of National Initiatives to include hosting of the National Technical Training Workshop for local implementation and institutionalizing of the TVP.

4. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

This project forms part of the boarder initiative to strengthen the Regional Tourist Safety and Security Network (RTSSN), an initiative of the Directorate of Sustainable Tourism, which seeks to facilitate dialogue and cooperation among Regional Tourism and Disaster Agencies. The objective in this regard is to contribute to the development of coordinated and integrated response mechanisms and strategies on issues related to crime and harassment against tourists, disaster and risk mitigation, and management.

Under this programmatic area, the ACS aims to fulfil its mandate to establish a regional cooperation mechanism on tourist safety and security through the co-ordination of inter-agencies collaboration for drafting specific plans of action at the regional, national and

institutional level. In the fulfilment of this mandate, the ACS has facilitated various fora to promote dialogue and increase awareness and importance of this issue at the Regional level.

This project is designed as a proactive approach to produce documentation and establish agreements, strategies and procedures based on Regional and International best practices to strengthen Regional capacities as it relates to issues of Safety and Security in general and more specifically in the area of Tourism Policing. This project will result in not only equipping locals and in particular at-risk youth with the skills, knowledge and tools to manage and mitigate during incidents of crime and crisis, but will also aid in propelling the marketing of the region as a safe and visitor-friendly haven.

5. PROJECT BENEFICIARIES / TARGET AUDIENCE

The principle beneficiaries would be the Regions Youth particularly At-Risk-Youth who are among the most vulnerable. These youth would benefit directly from the training and it is expected that they will gain employment in one of the new jobs that would be created as a result of the project. Additionally the knowledge and skills gained would increase their overall employability which would make them more self-sufficient and productive members of society.

In addition to this primary group, additional beneficiaries would include:

- Governments/National Authorities in the Fields of Tourism, National Security and Disaster Risk Management in ACS Member and Associate Member States
- Regional Organizations in the Fields of Tourism, National Security and Disaster Risk Management
- Travel & Tourism Industry Stakeholders
- Residents of and visitors to the Greater Caribbean
- Researchers and Academicians

6. PROJECT STATUS

As it relates to project implementation required foremost is identification of funding for project activities in collaboration with an ACS Member or Associate Member State. The Directorate has initiated outreach to various funding Agencies and Donor Countries, an activity which is ongoing, while still awaiting a response.