

## ASSOCIATION OF CARIBBEAN STATES (ACS)

### 24<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM (SCST-24) AND 2<sup>ND</sup> PREPARATORY MEETING OF THE 3<sup>RD</sup> MEETING OF MINISTERS OF TOURISM OF THE GREATER CARIBBEAN (TMM-3) Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, July 16-17, 2013

## BRIEFING DOCUMENT ON PROFESSIONAL TRAINING IN TOURISM IN THE GREATER CARIBBEAN

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The Tourism Industry is intrinsically linked to the human factor. People are the immediate consumers of the Tourism Product and the extent of their experience is often significantly impacted by human interaction at the destination, accommodation or service facility. A qualified, competent and highly trained human resource has a direct correlation with the quality of service provided, which in turn influences customer perception, repeat visits and word-of-mouth recommendations; in short the overall competitiveness of the Destination. In today's competitive global market place, providing quality service to guests is an important aspect of product differentiation, which remains critical to the success of the industry.

This project is designed as a proactive approach to produce documentation and provide recommendations for strategies and procedures to strengthen Regional human resource capacities in **cross-cutting areas** necessary for a sustainable and competitive industry. The following outlines the 4 Programmatic Areas that comprises the STWP indicative of the specific interest and focus for Training and Development:

1. Establishment of the Sustainable Tourism Zone of the Caribbean (STZC) Emphasis on Environmental Stewardship; Sustainable Destination Management.
2. Visitor Safety and Security: Emphasis on Tourism Policing; Food Safety and Security; Health and Wellness.
3. Promotion of Language and Cultures of the Greater Caribbean: Emphasis on Language Learning; Business skills development for Artisans.
4. Promotion of Multi-Destination Tourism: Emphasis on Tour-guide Training, Customer-Service Training.

The ACS also has a special interest in contributing to skills building and knowledge enhancement of vulnerable groups, therefore the Training needs and priorities of these groups, should also be addressed in the research. These include *Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME's), Women, Youth and Tourism sector livelihoods for Rural, Ethnic and Indigenous communities.*

In consideration of the preponderance and rapid development of Tourism in the Greater Caribbean, as more and more countries are turning to the Sector, due to its role as a significant contributor to social and economic development, it is clear that quality of the human resources in the tourism sector will impact on the competitive advantage of the Region as a whole. Therefore, education and training play a vital role in the development of personnel with the professional skills needed to ensure that the Region meets expected international standards for productivity and services delivery.

## 2. GOALS / OBJECTIVES

### **Overall Objective:**

This initiative seeks the commissioning of a Research Publication to document the needs and priorities for Professional Training in the Tourism Sector in the Greater Caribbean, with the aim of developing a Framework for the development and implementation of a comprehensive Training and Capacity-building Programme.

### **Specific Project Objectives:**

Specifically the project seeks to enhance the productivity and competitiveness of the Regional Tourism Industry through knowledge enhancement in the area of human resource development as follows:

- Identify the specific needs and areas for Training and Human Resource Development in the Tourism Sector in the Greater Caribbean.
- Determine existing gaps and challenges in relation to Training and Capacity-Building.
- Provide recommendations to address existing needs as well as new priorities Identified.
- Develop a Framework for the implementation of a Comprehensive Program to deliver Training and Capacity building to the Tourism Sector to enhance human resource competencies and productivity.

Improve proficiencies in various aspects of the Tourism Product and Services delivery with particular emphasis on **cross-cutting areas** related to priorities of the ACS Member and Associate Member States as outlined in the Sustainable Tourism Work Programme.

## 3. COMPONENTS

**Component 1 – Assessment of Training initiatives in the Tourism Sector** The first phase in the execution of the project will focus on data collection and will entail an assessment of the availability, status, levels, accessibility including cost and the main actors providing Professional Tourism Training Programs in the Region. A key component of this activity will be the identification of the challenges, needs and priorities at the country, institutional, and Regional levels.

### **Component 2 – Study and Regional Framework on Tourism Training in the Greater Caribbean Region**

The second phase is the development of a study that documents the findings of the data collection and assessment activities, inclusive of presentation and analysis of country specific and organisational case studies and best practises. For the execution of this component, the consultant will work with focal points in ACS Member and Associate Member States. It has been conceived that the Framework will suggest through analysis of the country specific and institutional best practises the central themes and topics for training and instruction, with the objective of enhancing human resource competencies and productivity in strategic areas aligned to the Sustainable Tourism Work Programme of the ACS, and respond to the needs, gaps and priorities identified.

### **Component 3 – Presentation, Dissemination and Outreach**

The third phase will focus on activities to develop a multi-stakeholder approach to the promotion and development of professional training programs in the tourism industry, through engagement of the public and private sectors as well as Regional and International stakeholders.

#### 4. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

This project is being presented to address an identified need to elevate and enhance the quality, standard and delivery of service in the Regional Tourism Industry, by addressing the issues of Education and Training in the Sector. **The study will be a Regional Benchmark given that no such knowledge product currently exists.**

It is foreseen that the successful implementation of the project will create awareness among Regional Policy makers; drive development and implementation of Training and capacity-building activities; and ultimately strengthen the competencies and productivity of the Regions human resources. The project is further expected to contribute to the development of coordinated and integrated training mechanisms and strategies in priority areas and strategic sectors of the industry. In this regard, the ACS will fulfil its mandate as a regional platform for "consultation, cooperation and concerted action" for its member countries, within the context of addressing areas of common interest and concern and identifying solutions through drafting specific plans of action at the regional, national and institutional levels.

#### 5. PROJECT BENEFICIARIES / TARGET AUDIENCE

The principle beneficiaries would include:

- Governments/National Authorities related to Tourism and Education in ACS Member and Associate Member States
- Regional Organizations engaged Tourism Training and Capacity-Building Activities
- Travel & Tourism Industry Stakeholders
- Residents of and visitors to the Greater Caribbean
- Researchers and Academicians