**PRELIMINARY DRAFT PLAN OF ACTION REVISION 3**

Trinidad and Tobago places high priority on the areas outlined in the Plan of Action. We will continue to support the projects and activities identified in this document and will therefore seek to work in tandem with the Secretariat and Member States to effectively realise the goals outlined.

1. **SUSTAINABLE TOURISM**

**1.1 Establishment of the Sustainable Tourism Zone of the Greater Caribbean (STZC)**

Trinidad and Tobago has no objections or amendments to Section 1.1 Establishment of the Sustainable Tourism Zone of the Greater Caribbean (STZC). Since the inception of the STCZ project in 2001, the ACS has persistently pursued the realisation of this regional vision achieving a milestone in 2013 by gaining a majority signatory support from ACS Members and Associate Members for enforcement of the zone. While the organisation has comprehensively outlined the benefits of participation in the STCZ to its members, after almost 15 years, they have not yet received the full support for the implementation of the Sustainable Tourism indicators. There may be limited awareness and understanding of Sustainable Tourism and its value to the overall growth and development of the country as a whole.

The Ministry of Tourism and the Tourism Development Company has sought to foster a closer working relationship with the ACS through dialogue and participation in meetings in recognition of the value of the STCZ initiative. This led to the nomination of the Maracas to Las Cuevas Zone along the North Coast of Trinidad to be part of the STCZ.

Trinidad and Tobago commends the ACS for the STCZ initiative, which essentially is a commitment to the Greater Caribbean region to provide unyielding support through each destination’s journey. Whilst many noteworthy activities have been completed in an effort to raise awareness of the importance of the initiative, it behoves the ACS to employ additional strategic approaches to optimise the use of its resources.

**Recommendations to increase awareness of the STCZ initiative**

1. Commission a study to determine the level of understanding and awareness of the initiative among its members. One of the main issues surrounding sustainable tourism is whether or not the concept is clearly understood and more so in the context in which one exists. Therefore, it is imperative for the ACS to engage in research to determine:
2. The level of understanding of sustainable tourism in the region
3. The understanding and awareness levels regarding the STZC 3; and
4. The needs of each member country as it relates to the ST policy development and implementation
5. Engage other key groups within the regional tourism system. A key leverage point at the micro level for the ACS and the STZC is the tour operator group i.e. both outbound and inbound tour operators. The level of influence by tour operators on the demand for particular products is far greater than the marketing efforts of the destination.
6. Involve champions for the STZC. These are internationally well known individuals in their respective fields with a singular passion of advancing the environmental sustainability cause. If the ACS can secure at least two members to become exemplars, where they have implemented the indicators and are seeing tangible benefits, then there is a possibility that they too can become ambassadors who can beckon to other members to commit to the initiative.

**1.2 Training and Capacity-Building**

These are key interventions to nurture the professional development of staff, inspire behavioural changes and raise the quality of service delivery at the destination. These interventions must not be offered on a one-off or *ad hoc* basis, but must be applied consistently in concert with some aspect of assessment to ensure that the participants have truly understood the concepts, make it their own and able to apply them effectively. Three aspects that should be considered are:

1. Offering certification for the training contemplated
2. Using mentors and coaches to reinforce and hone kills already learnt
3. Developing train the trainer programmes so that a wider catchment can be targeted

**Tourism Security**

It will be difficult for businesses to survive in an environment that is fraught with insecurity especially those in the tourism industry. If left unchecked, a destination’s growing lack of security can threaten the viability and sustainability of the industry. The application of intervention strategies to reduce the crime rate and increase the visitor’s perception of safety and security is critical to the sector.

Trinidad and Tobago would like to recommend the inclusion of a Crisis Management Plan to deal with potential threats to the security at a destination. This has become a necessity in light of recent global threats to tourists.

**1.3 Community Tourism**

Support of community tourism initiatives in accordance with decisions stemming from the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) Meeting of Regional Tourism Organizations, as well as support of the development of tourism-related Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises through regional partnerships and collaboration to contribute to their sustainability and growth.

Trinidad and Tobago has no objections to this section.

**Disaster Risk Reduction**

4.1 Continuance Project to SHOCS II

4.2 International Diploma (virtual) in Risk Management and Disaster Reduction in Spanish and English

4.3 UNGGIM Caribbean Project

4.4 Caribbean Territorial Information Platform for Disaster Prevention

4.5 Addressing Regional Vulnerabilities

Comments

Trinidad and Tobago fully endorses the items listed in 4.1 to 4.5. These programmes are aligned to our country’s core priority areas of Readiness and Risk Reduction which can also be a vehicle to strengthen our knowledge base and improving competencies. Our country has also vouched to support efforts by other partners namely the University of the West Indies and Land and Surveys Division.

**CARIBBEAN SEA COMMISSION**

**5.1 Definition of Special Area in the Context of Sustainable Development**

Trinidad and Tobago would like to emphasise that the need for the designation of the Caribbean Sea as a special area remains valid and especially relevant to provide an international platform for addressing sub-hemispheric matters that can contribute to improved and collaborative governance, resilience and adaptation to the various threats to the sustainability of the Caribbean Sea for the peoples of this region and generations to come. We recall our participation in the Symposium held last November where we underscored Trinidad and Tobago’s commitment towards addressing the problems affecting the Caribbean Sea and the sustainability of its resources. We view this as a priority, we are cognisant of the fact that protecting the Caribbean Sea means protecting our common heritage.

**5.2 Follow up on the 1st Caribbean Sea Commission Symposium**

Trinidad and Tobago wishes to convey support for the Action Plan with regard to the invasion of the **Sargassum Seaweed,** it is not only timely and imperative, but constituted a critical issue affecting the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of Tobago. It is suggested that the mechanism of the ACP be used to facilitate collaboration with pertinent African countries in order to facilitate forecasting and hemispheric collaboration since it has been reported that some Coastal African States are also affected.

With regard to **Coastal Erosion,** Trinidad and Tobago strongly supports the implementation of specific measures to facilitate costal protection. The use of natural barriers and the sharing of the associated best practices is also strongly supported. Trinidad and Tobago also supports the strategies to manage and control the **invasive lionfish** and the collaborative efforts of regional partners.

*Generally, the priority actions pertinent to these three areas of concern and articulated are fully endorsed by Trinidad and Tobago.*

**5.3 Annual Meeting of Experts to improve dialogue between scientists and policy makers**

Trinidad and Tobago understands the need to improve communication between policy makers and scientists in an effort to create and where necessary improve the nexus between policy and the scientific support for strategy in a more pragmatic way.

**5.4 Caribbean Sea Commission Databank**

Trinidad and Tobago supports the establishment of the Caribbean Sea Commission Databank and urges that the Caribbean Sea Commission develop synergies with other regional projects/initiatives involved in similar activities to mitigate against duplication of efforts and better mobilization of financial resources and skills.