

CONSERVING BIODIVERSITY THROUGH BEST PRACTICES IN THE HOTEL INDUSTRY

The Experience of the 'Roteiros de Charme Hotel Association', Brazil

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Biodiversity is a vital asset to the tourism industry. Travelers, tourism operators, investors and professionals all have an inherent interest in the conservation and the sustainable use of the biodiversity resources. The tourism sector can directly help to finance the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and it has also proven to be one of the most effective public awareness raising tools for environmental protection.

The 'Roteiros de Charme Hotel Association' was founded in Brazil in 1992, as a private, non-profit organization. The Association currently comprises 50 independent hotels, inns and ecological refuges, from Northern to Southern Brazil, which recognize the importance of environmental and social responsibilities for the sustainability of their operations and destinations. The critical location of various member hotels, which are set in conservation areas and fragile ecosystems such as the Atlantic Forest and the Pantanal, points to the importance of a continuous and sound environmental program.

The Roteiros de Charme members are devoted to the preservation of 42 tourism destinations where they are established through the conservation of their natural ecosystems and environmental education. All hotels of the Association seek to serve as centres to generate multipliers for social and environmental practices in the communities in which they operate.

The United Nations Environment Programme, (through its Division of Technology, Industry and Economics) and Roteiros de Charme Hotel Association have cooperated since 1999 when the Association developed and adopted its voluntary 'Ethics and Environmental Code of Conduct' with the technical collaboration of UNEP. In 2003, a 'Memorandum of Cooperation' was signed and has been renewed twice with the goal of continuing collaboration on training, awareness raising, and to further implement the Association Code of Conduct.

Given the synergies in their respective programmes and mandates, Roteiros de Charme Hotel Association, UNEP-DTIE, and the Secretariat for the Convention on Biological Diversity (SCBD), Montreal, have also identified opportunities for tripartite cooperation through the joint implementation as partners in projects of common interests. Such agreement



aims to monitor the contribution of the tourism industry to the 2010 SCBD target of significantly reducing the loss of biodiversity. In 2007, Roteiros de Charme was accepted as an affiliate member of the UN World Tourism Organization's Business Council.

OBJECTIVES

The goal of the Association's sustainability programme is to:

- Test the efficiency and feasibility of wide application of the environmental and business indicators developed by Roteiros de Charme regarding its Ethics and Environmental Code of Conduct
- Improve gradually and continuously the cadre of local professionals who are trained to embrace the principles of sustainable tourism
- Foster a venue to reduce habitat and biodiversity loss through the application of best practices
- Contribute to the maintenance and integrity of surrounding protected areas

MAIN ACTIVITIES

The implementation of the directives in the Ethics and Environmental Code of Conduct by all members of the Roteiros de Charme Association include the application of best management practices focused on target areas related to the Code (available at www.roteirosdecharme.com.br).



The monitoring of the implementation of the Code of Conduct is carried out independently and annually by professionals hired for this purpose by the Roteiros de Charme Association. The first environmental evaluation is carried out within six months of admittance into the Association (a selection process of hotel candidates is made annually through a set of criteria on service, quality, environmental and social commitment). The evaluation includes a report containing findings on potential environmental impacts and recommendations. During the evaluation personnel training is carried out and meetings are held with local partners and the hotel's service providers. Subsequent environmental evaluations are held annually to identify progress and barriers.

Other internal tools used are: environmental checklists, environmental bulletins, best practice electronic forum and intranet for members.

Activities developed by the Association include:

- Environmental education of hotel employees and their families through seminars, talks and courses and target areas related to the Environmental Code of Conduct
- Implementation of projects and activities aiming to generate social benefits and improvement in the quality of local communities. Examples of these projects are marine aquaculture, reforestation programme, and horticulture projects
- Encouraging efforts in support of existing protected areas systems and biodiversity corridors such as the creation of private reserves
- Participation in local, national and international fairs, conferences and meetings aiming at sharing experiences and mobilizing partnerships towards common goals
- Participation in local academic and scientific projects, such as conservation of manatees, Hyacinth Macaw, the Blue-fronted Amazon Parrot and the Jaguar

EXPECTED RESULTS

The Association's activities have contributed to reducing pressures and impacts through:

- Preventing pollution from untreated sewage, depletion of fresh water supplies, and potential contamination of aquifers and marine environments

- Decreasing generation of solid waste and inappropriate waste disposal
- Preventing loss of critical habitats and pressures on local fauna and flora
- Strengthening public awareness of biodiversity issues for staff, local inhabitants, visitors and guests
- Supporting endangered species conservation projects
- Preventing inappropriate design, building and land-use
- Promoting sound guest consumption patterns

SOME OF THE RESULTS OBSERVED ARE:

- 30% to 40% reduction in energy consumption
- 70% of member hotels use solar energy for water heating
- 30% of member hotels have and protect natural water sources in their own hotel properties
- 100% of wastewater generated is treated and reutilized for non-potable purposes in 10% of member hotels
- 100% of member hotels reuse, reduce and recycle solid waste in different degrees; 35% have organic vegetable gardens and compost organic waste in their properties.
- at least 50 different environmental and social initiatives at local destinations are supported by member hotels
- at least 100 local companies of service providers and suppliers are involved in the environmental programme

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Helenio Waddington, President

Monica Borobia, Director of Environment

Roteiros de Charme Hotel Association

Visconde de Pirajá, 414 sls. 921/922, Ipanema

Rio de Janeiro, RJ – Brazil CEP 22410-002

Phone: + 55-21-22871592;

www.roteirosdecharme.com.br

hotel@roteirosdecharme.com.br



Convention on
Biological Diversity