

STRENGTHENING CAPACITIES IN THE FIELD OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM FOR DEVELOPMENT

Technical Cooperation Projects on Capacity-Development at the National and Sub-Regional Level

BACKGROUND

Tourism-related opportunities and the different ways to translate them into development challenges have been widely recognized at the national and the international level. It is now broadly accepted that sustainable tourism can be instrumental in sustaining developing countries' efforts for economic diversification and can significantly contribute to poverty reduction and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Most African countries have therefore recognized the potential of tourism as a tool for economic diversification and poverty reduction. As a result, there has been a proliferation of sectoral studies, specialized publications and subsequent action plans to give tourism a more prominent role in their economies. According to the key findings of those studies, several factors hindering tourism development have been identified, among which the lack of technical and managerial training and the fact that key actors, such as local populations, are often neglected in the design and implementation of truly sustainable tourism products. Poor involvement of private sector representatives in the decision-making process has also been evoked.

their related benefits. Ensuring sustainability in the tourism sector implies cross-sectoral interactions and participatory approaches. Collaboration mechanisms among authorities, civil society and private sector stakeholders must be put in place, with the objective of rationalizing tourism strategies and policies at the national level and decentralizing action plans and relevant resources at the local level. Aware of that, a number of African countries willing to address sustainable tourism issues requested UNCTAD's assistance in this field.



UNCTAD'S EXPERTISE AND APPROACH

UNCTAD is the primary body of the UN system to deal with interrelated aspects of trade, investment and development. UNCTAD's mandate (Accra Accord, April 2008) highlights the contribution of tourism for sustainable development in developing countries, including in the least developed ones. UNCTAD's expertise is therefore recognized in the areas of investment analysis, e-inclusive strategies and human resources development. UNCTAD's approach in this last sector, put forward by the TrainForTrade programme, relies on the fact that local authorities and communities should be included in the design, implementation, and promotion of tourism products and activities as well as in the sharing of

A PROCESS BASED ON MULTI-STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE

TrainForTrade, UNCTAD's programme specialized in human resources development, has developed a process that aims at strengthening local capacities in sustainable tourism for development, through capacity-development, multi-stakeholder dialogue, support to policy formulation and improved access to information. It mainly targets Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Guinea, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Senegal and Togo. It will also include UEMOA and ECOWAS Commissions. It is designed to benefit directly local communities through increased participation in the national policy dialogue.



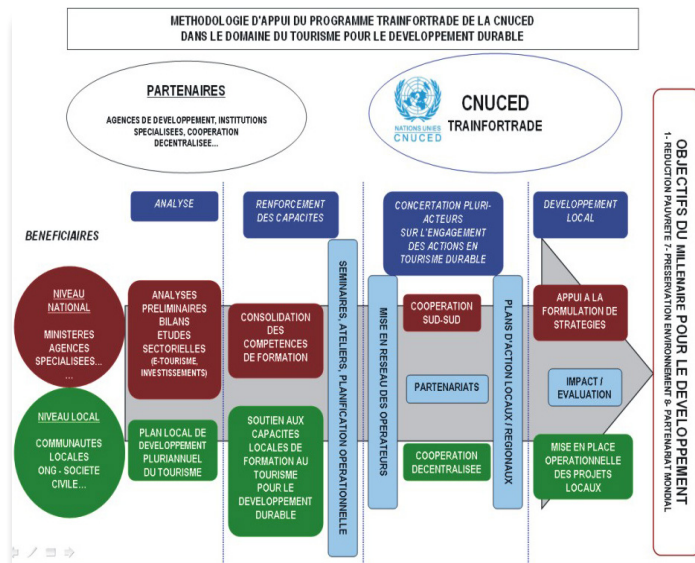
ACTIVITIES AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Since 2006, several provinces of Madagascar have benefited, through their decentralized cooperation agreements, of TrainForTrade “Sustainable tourism for development” seminars, gathering public, private sectors and civil society. In November 2007, 51 tourism stakeholders from 7 West African countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Togo) participated in a distance-learning seminar on the theme. In 2008, a coordination meeting on the initiatives in the field of tourism and sustainable development was organized by the UNCTAD’s TrainForTrade programme in Bamako. Participants from Burkina Faso, Guinea, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, and Senegal asked for the extension of UNCTAD training activities on “Sustainable tourism for development” and called for a renewed support, from the inception, of national and sub-regional tourism-related projects.

Since December 2008, a technical cooperation project is being implemented in Benin, in close cooperation with the International Trade Center (ITC) to jump-start sustainable and community-based tourism activities.

Further activities will now aim at:

- Strengthening institutional, technical and training capacities at the sub-regional level (through tailored training seminars, including training of trainers and distance learning sessions; preparation of client-oriented pedagogical material; advisory services)
- Fostering multi-stakeholder dialogue (through inter-institutional mechanisms at the national and local level, exchange of best practices at the regional level, prospect of innovative partnerships with decentralized cooperation, creation of a regional network)
- Increasing sub-regional integration through support to policy formulation on sustainable tourism for development (through ad-hoc assessment activities and advisory services).



PARTNERSHIPS

UNCTAD through the TrainForTrade programme serves as a facilitator in the policy dialogue and the decision-making process at the national and local level. Partnership-building is a core part of its sustainable tourism for development projects. By creating linkages, through collaborative planning and common activities, UNCTAD contributes to the implementation of MDG 8, on Global Partnership for Development, in the tourism sector.

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