Mission

The UNWTO Development Assistance Department is dedicated to meeting the specific technical assistance needs of Member States and regions, in support of their efforts to build a competitive and sustainable tourism sector and, to ensure that they benefit from the transfer of knowledge and technology resulting from the Organization’s development assistance activities, in pursuit of the UN Millennium Development Goals.

Objectives

The aim of UNWTO’s Development Assistance is to raise awareness, among national tourism administrations and local communities of Members States, of the socio-economic importance of tourism and to improve their capacities through dissemination and replication of best practices so as to enable them to manage their tourism sector without any external assistance. In accordance with the UN Millennium Development Goals, UNWTO will also promote sustainable livelihoods and combat poverty through the implementation of projects within its ST-EP Programme (Sustainable Tourism – Eliminating Poverty).

Main Areas of Development Assistance Opportunities for Member States

- Human Resource Development in Tourism
- Sustainable Development of Tourism and Quality Issues
- Market Intelligence and Promotion
- Statistics and Economic Measurement of Tourism
- Information Technologies and Communications in Tourism
- Crisis Management
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Tourism has become, over the years, one of the most dynamic and successful industries of the world. Its capacity to create employment, combined with its capacity to generate foreign revenue through tourism receipts, has made it a priority sector for many governments intent on using the benefits of tourism in promoting socio-economic development.

In 2007, tourism performed extremely well with 903 million international tourist arrivals worldwide representing a growth rate of 6.6 per cent over 2006. These arrivals generated a total of US$ 856 billion in tourism receipts – a growth rate of 5.6 per cent over 2006. This translates to over US$ 2 billion spent on tourist activities worldwide per day.

However, 2008 presents a totally different scenario due to the current global economic and financial crisis provoked by the collapse of the North American real estate market, the weakening of major banking and financial institutions, the collapse of stock markets, and, the fluctuations in oil prices. This crisis has, in turn, had a ripple effect on some of the major industries of the world such as energy and agriculture and, it is expected to have an effect on the tourism industry as well.

While tourism continued to thrive for the first several months of 2008, the slowdown experienced in the second quarter led to global tourism growing only by 3.7 per cent between January and August 2008, while the growth for 2007 as a whole had been 6.6 per cent. This slowdown was experienced most during the period of summer holidays of countries in the northern hemisphere where the diminishing purchasing power of European and North American consumers caused them to spend less in holiday destinations and to change their behaviour patterns. This implied less expenditure on restaurants, entertainment and shopping and cheaper options for accommodation and transport.

Needless to say, the impact of this crisis will vary from country to country and from region to region depending on specific tourism demand shifts, respective local economies, labour markets, disposable incomes, travel budgets and overall consumer confidence.

UNWTO, however, remains confident that tourism will continue to demonstrate its resiliency. Tourism has become an integral component of the modern lifestyle and while possible, households will prefer to modify their holiday patterns rather than eliminating them altogether.

Therefore, taking into account the enormous impact tourism has in today’s world and understanding the way in which tourism can play an important role in promoting socio-economic development, the UNWTO has a Department of Development Assistance whose mission is to provide its Member States with technical expertise and guidance on a variety of issues of contemporary concern in tourism. The Department’s roles and responsibilities are many: it is responsible for implementing our Sustainable Tourism – Eliminating Poverty (ST-EP) Programme, as well as the Millennium Development Goal projects funded by the Government of Spain which are implemented through the collaboration of several UN agencies under the overall aegis of the United Nations Development Programme. It also responds directly to any Member State’s need for technical assistance from macro-level development through tourism master planning to micro-level assistance on issues such as tourism satellite account development or hotel classification.

Ultimately, Development Assistance is the arm which UNWTO uses to materialize its vast experience and technical knowledge into practical, useful assistance with the ultimate objective of developing a quality, sustainable and competitive tourism industry which brings rich dividends to its Member States and their people.

Francesco Frangialli
Secretary-General
Introduction

The global tourism industry continues to consolidate itself as one of the most important industries of the world, particularly as a motor for socio-economic development. Many countries have realized that in order to have a sustainable, effective, efficient and successful tourism industry, sound tourism policies need to be put in place. Furthermore, if the objective of tourism is to promote economic development, there is a vital need to better understand exactly how tourism impacts on national economies – in which sectors, to what degree, and the extent of benefits which accrue to the local people. Similarly, if the intention is to spread the economic benefits of tourism to all layers of society, avenues and opportunities for product diversification and empowerment of local communities in tourism development need to be explored. And, finally, to promote competitiveness and in order to guarantee the long-term sustainability of their tourism industries, efforts need to be made to provide quality tourism services which can rapidly adapt and meet the needs of a constantly changing global scenario.

The needs of Member States for development assistance have reflected these emerging priorities and, in 2008, the Department of Development Assistance focused its efforts on technical assistance projects which prepared tourism policies and tourism development master plans at national and local level to provide strategic guidelines and methodological frameworks for the sustainable development of tourism; formulated tourism satellite accounts to better understand the impact of tourism on a national economy; and, provided improvements in tourism services through the formulation of hotel classification criteria and updated and improved curricula for diploma programmes in hospitality management, to name a few. In total, the Department carried out 10 sectoral support missions and 12 development assistance projects.

While technical assistance projects focus mainly at the central or provincial government level, UNWTO fully realizes the need to be more pro-active at the local community level, particularly in pursuit of the UN Millennium Development Goals which promote tourism as a sector for poverty alleviation. For this purpose, the ST-EP Programme was launched with focus on providing specific capacity-building tools for local communities with extremely low incomes to equip them to embrace tourism as a source of sustainable livelihood. In 2008, a total of 41 ST-EP projects were under implementation in Africa, Central and South America, Asia and Europe. A new set of ST-EP projects is proposed to be launched in 2009.

Given the large number of development assistance activities carried out in many countries across the globe, it has been fundamental that strong partnerships be forged not only with the Governments of Member States, but also with development agencies, NGOs, private sector and academia. These partnerships serve several important functions: firstly, by merging the financial resources and technical expertise of several institutions, it has been possible to increase the number of countries which have received technical assistance and has also widened the scope and quality of projects. Secondly, it has also minimized the risk of duplicating efforts or contradicting recommendations made by institutions on an individual basis, by adopting a collective approach through the establishment of partnerships. Some of our active partners in 2008 included the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) which has been our most long-standing partner for technical assistance projects; and, the Netherlands Development Organisation SNV and the Governments of the Republic of Korea, Italy and France who have been the prominent partners for our ST-EP projects. Nevertheless, what is most rewarding is that our list of partners is continually expanding and diversifying and many institutions, which perhaps had not paid much attention to tourism as an important economic activity, are now placing tourism as a priority activity in their agendas.

The achievements of 2008 give me immense satisfaction. Our success has been due firstly to the Secretary-General and UNWTO Management for their leadership, to all my colleagues in the UNWTO Secretariat for their guidance and technical inputs, and, above all, to my colleagues in the Department of Development Assistance for their diligence and professionalism.

I am convinced that the number and scope of our activities will continue to grow in 2009. I would like to take this opportunity to also express my gratitude to the UNWTO Member States for reposing their trust and confidence in us to assist them in developing an industry which is not only sustainable in the long-term, but results in direct socio-economic benefits for the local people.

Harsh Varma
Director of Development Assistance Department
**Sectoral Support Missions**

Sectoral Support Missions are of short duration (2-4 weeks) and are carried out at the request of countries or groups of countries to identify, evaluate and describe specific technical assistance needs. They usually result in direct UNWTO recommendation reports (Technical Assistance Missions) or in the formulation of detailed project proposals to be funded by UNDP and/or other financing sources (Project Formulation Missions).

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One of the many mosaics at the archaeological site of Heraklea, near Bitola in FYR Macedonia

A view of the Red Sea and Tiran Island from the Sheraton Sharm el-Sheikh Hotel in Egypt

A view of the Lanín volcano from the Lanín National Park in Argentina

Participants of the capacity-building course on tourism conducted in Montenegro for SNV Balkans tourism advisors

Participants of the workshop on Development of a National Tourism Marketing Strategy in Ghana
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<td>Egypt</td>
<td>Project Formulation Mission for the Review of the Hotel Classification System and Development of an Implementation Framework</td>
<td>To prepare a project document for the implementation of the revised classification system in the country</td>
<td>In 2007, Egypt recorded 11 million international tourist arrivals, according to the UNWTO World Tourism Barometer, undergoing a period of consolidated growth for the country’s tourism sector since 2003. The country’s hospitality sector has experienced a similar growth during these years to meet additional visitor demand. In order to raise standards in the sector and promote further growth, the Government is carrying out a validation of its recently developed system that would serve to meet visitor expectations and provide clear guidelines for newly developed establishments. A detailed review was conducted in all areas of the existing physical and quality-based classification criteria. Subsequently, recommendations were made for amendments to the criteria in accordance with international standards. Based on the outcomes of the review, proposals were made for the development of a suitable monitoring and inspection system, including procedures for its implementation. Additionally, the mission made an assessment of the existing capacity of the team of hotel inspectors and future training requirements for the upgrading of skills in order to manage the new system.</td>
<td>UNWTO, Ministry of Tourism of Egypt, and the Egypt Hotel Association</td>
<td>The project document was submitted to the Government and is awaiting approval.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia</td>
<td>Project Formulation Mission for the Implementation of the National Sustainable Tourism Strategy (2008-2012)</td>
<td>To design a project for the implementation of the National Sustainable Tourism Strategy</td>
<td>In 2007, UNWTO carried out a project for the formulation of a National Sustainable Tourism Strategy (2008-2012) in partnership with the Government of FYR Macedonia and UNDP. The primary aim of the project is to develop the tourism industry in a sustainable manner as an engine for socio-economic development through the generation of foreign receipts and the creation of employment, as well as a mechanism to preserve and promote Macedonia’s unique cultural and natural heritage. The five-year strategy covers the key themes of marketing, human resources, products, socio-economy, natural and cultural heritage management and investment, to provide an overall developmental framework to be implemented by the Government and industry. The mission carried out a full review of the tourism strategy in order to conceptualize the implementation of activities. A project document was formulated to execute activities including developing guidelines for the establishment of a National Tourism Office; developing pilot projects to provide marketing assistance to attract tour operators in source markets and improve waste management in Kratovo; delivering training workshops on destination development to regional and local tourism operators; and, giving advice on developing signage to tourism and transport authorities. The outcomes of the mission activities have been incorporated into a project document that was subsequently formulated which also draws on best practice for implementing a national tourism strategy.</td>
<td>UNWTO, Government of FYR Macedonia, UNDP</td>
<td>The project document was submitted to the Government of FYR Macedonia and UNDP for its final approval.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>Workshop on Development of a National Tourism Marketing Strategy</td>
<td>To deliver a workshop for tourism stakeholders on developing a national tourism marketing strategy for Ghana</td>
<td>A four day workshop was held in Accra, Ghana, to engage public and private stakeholders in developing a framework for key marketing issues and solutions, as a basis for a comprehensive future marketing strategy. The workshop was organized within the framework of the Tourism Development Project of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), which aims to strengthen public-private partnerships for the tourism sector, and as a follow-up activity to the UNWTO technical assistance mission conducted to Ghana in 2007 on Tourism Branding. The objective of the mission was to provide support for the marketing of the country as a strong regional tourism destination. The workshop elaborated on a number of key marketing themes, including branding, identifying target markets, working with the media and tour operators for promotion, market research and strategy implementation. Based on the points raised during group discussions and debate, the workshop devised guidelines for a strategic marketing plan, drawing on the experiences of participants working in both the public and private sectors. There was an overall consensus that Ghana has the opportunity to be positioned as the prime entry destination for West Africa, as a safe environment offering high quality attractions and facilities with a broad appeal. Due to the strong performance of the tourism sector in the country, there is tremendous potential for tourism to make a major contribution to job creation and poverty reduction in Ghana.</td>
<td>UNWTO, Ministry of Tourism and Diasporan Relations of Ghana, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and SNV Netherlands Development Organisation</td>
<td>The Working Paper detailing the agreed strategy and conclusions of the workshop was submitted to the Government of Ghana.</td>
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Indonesia

Mission Title
Training Programme in the State of Punjab on Managing Tourism Destinations – Strategies and Actions for Success

Overall Objective
To provide training to public tourism officials on key themes regarding destination management and tourism development

Key Elements
UNWTO conducted a two-day training course in Amritsar in the State of Punjab for tourism officials at the district level. As UNWTO had already been working closely with the State of Punjab for the formulation of a Tourism Master Plan, a number of sessions were devoted to providing officials with an overview of key aspects of tourism policy, strategy and planning, including assessing destination competitiveness, tourism marketing strategies, destination image branding and target market selection. The remaining sessions were dedicated to destination management issues, including human resource solutions, information management and responsible tourism.

The seminar was delivered in an interactive format to allow the participants to gain an improved understanding of the planning and management approaches and guidelines. Discussions also took place during each session on specific issues arising from the main themes and how the principles could be applied locally in individual districts. The seminar concluded that a sound vision exists for tourism in the State as a whole, and a number of challenges must be addressed for the vision to be effectively implemented. Marketing and promotion are central requirements for the future development of tourism, as is the need for establishing public-private partnerships, in order for a tourism sector to grow that is government-led but private sector-operated.

Partnership
UNWTO and the State Government of Punjab

Status
The training course was completed in February 2008.

Palestine

Mission Title
Technical Assistance Mission for the Recovery and Development of the Palestinian Hotel Industry

Overall Objective
To conduct a situation analysis of the hotel industry in Palestine and formulate an action plan for the recovery of the sector

Key Elements
Over the past several years, the Palestinian tourism industry has suffered continuous setbacks due to political instability and the prevailing security situation in the region. This has brought significant financial losses, which, in turn, have had severe repercussions on the industry’s many small and medium businesses, resulting in closures and a fall in productivity. The Palestinian Authority has therefore sought the assistance of UNWTO to address the current downturn and formulate a strategy to restore confidence in the industry.

A detailed assessment was conducted of the hotel sector in the four major towns Bethlehem, Ramallah, East Jerusalem and Jericho; the physical state of hotels; existing operating standards within establishments; and overall occupancy rates. UNWTO has developed an integrated Action Plan for the recovery of the sector and provided recommended actions for the short, medium and long-term. The recommendations focus on strengthening institutional management for tourism affairs, allocating additional support for marketing activities, establishing training programmes for hotel staff and securing funding for the upgrading of hotel facilities.

Partnership
UNWTO and the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities of the Palestinian Authority

Status
The report was submitted to the Palestinian Authority.
**Country**  
Qatar

**Mission Title**  
Project Formulation Mission for the Assessment of Tourism Statistics and Development of a Tourism Satellite Account (TSA)

**Overall Objective**  
To undertake a review of the existing system of tourism statistics in Qatar and provide recommendations for their further development

**Key Elements**  
Following a request of the Qatar Tourism and Exhibitions Authority (QTEA), UNWTO conducted a technical assistance mission to Qatar to assess the current system of tourism statistics by the Government. The Government is overseeing a significant investment in the country’s tourism infrastructure, particularly in the hotel sector, which has brought into focus the greater need for accurate data and statistics to be collected. Tourism statistics are at a nascent stage of development in Qatar. UNWTO worked closely with QTEA officials to identify the government ministries and agencies engaged in the collection of tourism-related data and meetings were held with a range of departments to gain an overview of the division of work and responsibilities. A number of presentations were also delivered on the role of tourism statistics during the mission to familiarize officials with the standard procedures related to tourism statistics. The mission highlighted a number of recommendations for priority action, including the establishment of an inter-institutional working group to ensure enhanced cooperation among the associated agencies and the coordination of designated activities. Recommendations were also provided to develop a working level of data through the preparation of procedures for inbound, outbound and domestic tourism, including survey design. In order to further assist the Government in the implementation process, a project document was also prepared by UNWTO for the development of a TSA, which has been approved by QTEA.

**Partnership**  
UNWTO, QTEA and the Ministry of Interior of Qatar

**Status**  
The mission report and project document was submitted to QTEA in June 2008.
Development Assistance Projects

At Country Level

**Bahrain**
Development of a Classification and Grading System for Hotels and Accommodation Establishments (May 2008 and ongoing)

**Botswana**
Formulation of a Tourism Policy (February - August 2008)

Support for the Development of Community-based Tourism through the Community Resilience Programme (December 2008 and ongoing)

**China**
Design and Development of a Diploma Programme in Hospitality Management at the Guilin Institute of Tourism (November 2006 - December 2008)

**Egypt**
Development of a National Sustainable Tourism Strategic Plan (March 2007 and ongoing)

**India**

Master Plan for Integrated and Sustainable Development of Tourism in the States Orissa and West Bengal (October 2007 - June 2008)

Tourism Development Master Plan for the State of Punjab (January 2008 and ongoing)

**Oman**
Development of a Tourism Satellite Account (TSA) (May 2008 and ongoing)

**Rwanda**
Tourism Development Master Plan (October 2008 and ongoing)

**Timor-Leste**
Formulation of a Tourism Policy (June - July 2008)

Regional Project

**China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan**
Silk Road Initiative (SRI) (February 2005 and ongoing)

- Third Regional Silk Road City Mayors’ Forum, Almaty, Kazakhstan (2 - 4 September 2008)
- First Meeting of the Eminent Persons Group, Madrid, Spain (5 December 2008)

Development Assistance Projects are usually of long duration and aim to assist governments in sustainable tourism development; institutional strengthening at central and regional levels; formulation of development policies and guidelines; fostering of partnerships in tourism development and promotion; management of cultural and natural resources; recommendations for improved accessibility to tourism destinations; and application of destination management skills.
UNWTO has commenced project activities in collaboration with the Government of Bahrain to develop a national hotel classification system. Bahrain is experiencing a significant development of its tourism infrastructure, particularly in accommodation, which is undergoing an expansion in capacity to meet existing tourist demand and to prepare for the further development of the sector. The primary aim of the project is to develop a system for assessing hotels and other accommodation establishments with an emphasis on key quantitative and quality standards in line with international benchmarks. The system would serve to improve the quality of information to visitors on the range of accommodation facilities and services available in the country, as well as help to continually improve overall standards in the industry.

The first phase of the project was completed in June 2008 following a technical assistance mission to Bahrain by UNWTO, which undertook detailed consultations with a wide range of government departments, hotel operators and travel trade organizations on the state of the hospitality sector to identify the main issues on key aspects of the project including classification criteria, subletting, and developing an implementation strategy. A number of initial workshops were held with local operators to familiarize stakeholders with the project’s structure and the way forward. Following the completion of the first phase, preparations have been carried out in conjunction with the Government for the implementation of the second phase, which would provide training to a team of local assessors to implement the newly developed assessment procedures and carry out pilot assessments under the new system. Activities are scheduled to continue towards the end of 2008 with the final system presented to the Government in mid-2009.

**Botswana**  
**Formulation of a Tourism Policy**  
**(February - August 2008)**

The Government of Botswana has collaborated with UNWTO to formulate a new tourism policy. Botswana is endowed with a wealth of natural and cultural resources which have the potential to drive forward tourism development in a country that is both economically and politically stable. With tourism arrivals to the region steadily increasing, there is an opportunity for Botswana to benefit from this growth and develop the country’s tourism sector as an engine for socio-economic growth. The Tourism Policy prepared by UNWTO covers an expansive range of key policy issues. Firstly, it outlines the background to the current tourism sector, while identifying the challenges to realizing growth; secondly, the Policy sets out a vision for the tourism industry in Botswana and the core principles and goals that would guide the future work of industry stakeholders; and thirdly, the Policy proposes policy recommendations for the building blocks of the tourism sector, including developing infrastructure, investment, marketing and promotion, human resource development, tourism regulation, resource management and community participation. The fourth section defines the roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders in Botswana’s tourism industry to ensure effective implementation of the Policy.

One of the important features of the project’s approach was the wide engagement of national and local stakeholders in the consultation process as a means of helping understand the main issues constraining sustainable tourism growth in the country and identify suitable strategies to address these challenges. Workshops were organized with representatives of the tourism industry to propose recommendations for the Tourism Policy, many of which were subsequently incorporated into the final version. Additionally, the overall policy formulation process was overseen by a Reference Group (consisting of representatives from a range of government departments), whose role was to review all areas of tourism policy and take forward its implementation.

Project activities were completed in August 2008 and the Tourism Policy was submitted to the Ministry of Environment, Wildlife and Tourism of Botswana.

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**Botswana**  
**Support for the Development of Community-based Tourism in Botswana through the Community Resilience Programme**  
**(December 2008 and ongoing)**

The Government of Botswana has launched a programme in support of the National Strategy for Poverty Reduction (NSPR). A key component of the programme is the Community Resilience Project (CRP) whose aim is to promote community-driven development for local citizens to assume greater responsibility for their own social and economic betterment through an appreciation and strategic utilization of the resources – natural, man made, acquired skills – that reside in the community. CRP is being piloted in seven communities. Four of these, namely Lerala, Chobokwane, Old Naledi and Maunatlala, have identified tourism as a potential driver of local economic development, due to assessments of their tourism assets, in particular, natural resources and local culture.

Since October 2008, UNWTO has begun working in partnership with UNDP and the Ministry of Local Government of Botswana (MLLG) to provide technical and advisory assistance to the tourism component of the project. Activities will focus on carrying out assessments of the tourism potential of each CRP site and provide strategic directions on how community-based tourism can be effectively harnessed as an economic activity. Guidelines will be drawn up in the key areas of product development, marketing and promotion and management. Finally, a framework will also be prepared for establishing effective coordination mechanisms among key players in the public and private sectors for community-based tourism.

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**Bahrain**  
**Development of a Hotel Classification and Grading System for Hotels and Accommodation Establishments**  
**(May 2008 and ongoing)**

UNWTO has commenced project activities in collaboration with the Government of Bahrain to develop a national hotel classification system. Bahrain is experiencing a significant development of its tourism infrastructure, particularly in accommodation, which is undergoing an expansion in capacity to meet existing tourist demand and to prepare for the further development of the sector. The primary aim of the project is to develop a system for assessing hotels and other accommodation establishments with an emphasis on key quantitative and quality standards in line with international benchmarks. The system would serve to improve the quality of information to visitors on the range of accommodation facilities and services available in the country, as well as help to continually improve overall standards in the industry.
China  Design and Development of a Diploma Programme in Hospitality Management at the Guilin Institute of Tourism  
(November 2006 - December 2008)

Since 2006, UNWTO has provided technical assistance to the Guilin Institute of Tourism for the development of a diploma course in hospitality management. The key objectives of the project are to assist the Institute to develop curricula and courses for its diploma programme in hospitality management, and to provide training to the Institute’s teaching staff. Much progress has been achieved to date, with the curricula having been developed for the first year of the diploma programme, and the delivery of training in partnership with the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. This training has enabled the faculty members to receive a high degree of knowledge transfer and capacity-building for the delivery of the new courses in preparation for the next academic period.

Project activities during this year have focused on developing the curricula for the second year of the diploma programme, with the design and planning of the future syllabus for the third year, and devising a quality assurance system. In addition, further training has been provided to the teaching staff with a view to implementing the second year of the pilot programme. Approximately 40 students have also enrolled in the programme and have provided their feedback as to how the curricula and teaching methods can be further improved. Following the completion of food and beverage (F&B) facilities in the institute last year, these were formally opened this year and will help enhance the value of the institute’s teaching programmes. Project activities were successfully completed in December 2008.

Egypt  Development of a National Sustainable Tourism Strategic Plan  
(March 2007 and ongoing)

UNWTO has provided technical assistance in an advisory capacity to the Government of Egypt for the country’s new National Sustainable Strategic Plan. In drafting its development plan for the tourism sector “Vision 2020”, the Government has set a number of ambitious goals to achieve high sustainable tourism growth, poverty alleviation, reduced income disparity and increased gender equality. The Government has extended its firm support to tourism activity as a key source of socio-economic development for the country through foreign exchange revenues, which can be spread to different parts of the country. In order to meet these objectives, a strategic plan is required to identify actions to capitalize on Egypt’s comparative tourism advantages and approach development in a sustainable manner through a focus on product diversification.

UNWTO has provided advisory support to the Government for the preparation of the Strategic Plan, which has been conducted over a number of phases: the first phase of the project focused on carrying out analysis of the existing conditions of the tourism sector through site visits and consultations with stakeholders, including infrastructure, human resources, marketing and environment; the second phase was devoted to the preparation of the Strategic Plan for the year 2020 through extensive market research, which involved developing a marketing strategy, land use plans, a development strategy for SMEs and a plan for human resource development; and, the third phase has prepared a 5-year Action Plan to improve tourist facilities and services, implementing a marketing and promotional programme, a risk and crisis management plan and a programme for human resource development.

India  Master Plan for Integrated and Sustainable Development of Tourism in the State of Uttarakhand  
(August 2007 - April 2008)

UNWTO completed a project in Uttarakhand State to prepare a Tourism Development Master Plan. Uttarakhand is endowed with a wealth of natural resources located in a pleasant setting, with eco-tourism and winter sports particularly prominent. Tourism is therefore a major economic activity in Uttarakhand which contributes to over 4 per cent of the State GDP and employs 2 per cent of the population. Indeed, there is great potential for this fast-growing industry which mainly draws on domestic tourism arrivals. The main objective of the project was to support the Government of India in its endeavour to promote high quality sustainable tourism infrastructure, facilities and products in the prime tourist zones of the State, for the development of the next generation of high quality tourism.

The Master Plan outlines policy recommendations and action plans for a number of key areas, including physical planning, environmental management, tourism infrastructure, greater community participation in tourism and market effectiveness. One of the challenges of the project was to develop suitable policy interventions to address the constraints faced by the tourism sector, which primarily include upgrading transport infrastructure, improved awareness of environmental protection, incorporating the natural heritage of Uttarakhand more fully in the tourism zones and strengthening the institutional management of tourism at the national, state and local level. Following extensive research and studies that were carried out, the project sought to identify the zones and resources that could be mobilized most effectively to create viable and sustainable tourism growth for the State, including natural and cultural-based tourism products. Planning frameworks for 7 tourism zones were subsequently identified for the implementation of priority actions. The final report was submitted to the Government of India and State Government of Uttarakhand in April 2008.
India  Master Plan for Integrated and Sustainable Development of Tourism in the States of Orissa and West Bengal  
(October 2007 - June 2008)

An extensive project has been completed in the States of Orissa and West Bengal in India to develop comprehensive Coastal Tourism Master Plans for both regions. Tourism is a growth industry for Orissa and West Bengal, which is underpinned by the diversity of tourism products which include culture, religion, nature, adventure, eco- and beach tourism. While not therefore a nascent activity, both States have the capacity and potential to further develop their tourism to increase their appeal to domestic and overseas markets, through the strengthening of key aspects of their respective tourism sectors.

The project conducted detailed reviews and assessments of the existing tourism sectors of each State. The Master Plans provide policy guidelines for the sustainable development of coastal areas for tourism, particularly with regard to the need to observe best practice in environmental management and coastal zone regulations, in order to strengthen the management of natural resources. Additionally, the Master Plans also outline recommended measures for developing key infrastructure (transport and utility services) and the institutional management of tourism affairs by Central Government agencies and State public bodies.

Following the completion of project activities, the Master Plans were submitted to the respective State Governments of Orissa and West Bengal in July 2008.

India  Tourism Development Master Plan for the State of Punjab  
(January 2008 and ongoing)

UNWTO has completed a Tourism Master Plan for the Government of the State of Punjab. At present, tourism in Punjab comprises a number of segments, including business, religion and leisure. Cultural heritage and rural tourism is also evident but have been underutilized as resources. Despite its fragmented nature within the State, tourism is a successful industry in Punjab, with an estimated 4 million tourists arrivals forecast for this year, which generates a significant contribution to the State GDP. Based on the analysis carried out for the Master Plan, Punjab has the potential to increase this figure still further to 10 million by 2023 if certain standard and basic conditions are met.

The objective of the project was to carry out a comprehensive analysis of the strengths and weaknesses governing the tourism industry in Punjab and to provide strategic directions as to how State and local authorities can help address any weaknesses while building on strengths in order to meet the sector’s long-term objectives. The Master Plan therefore provides a number of key recommendations to State tourism authorities for the sector’s continued growth, including proposals for better integrated physical planning arrangements, institutional strengthening and public-sector led coordination for tourism activity, development of tourism data and statistics, upgrading human resources and tourism marketing. As part of the project activities, 4 demonstration projects were also prepared providing guidelines for the development of nature tourism resorts, cultural heritage resorts, as well as religious tourism products. Field activities were completed in September 2008 and the draft Final Report was submitted to the Government in November 2008.

Oman  Development of a Tourism Satellite Account (TSA)  
(May 2008 and ongoing)

In recent years, UNWTO has closely collaborated with the Government of Oman to provide technical assistance for the development of the country’s system of tourism statistics. This year, a project was launched to assist the Government in the production of a Tourism Satellite Account and build on the significant progress made towards its final construction. Project activities commenced with the first technical mission which reviewed existing statistics, the work conducted by UNWTO in previous assignments and outlined methodologies and procedures towards achieving a TSA. Based on the assessments carried out, recommendations were provided for the revision of key surveys and questionnaires for inbound, outbound and domestic tourism expenditure and the procedures for their implementation. Statistics relating to flow of travellers, the supply-side and national accounts were also reviewed. In all activities, the need to align statistical procedures with international standards was highlighted, with reference to UNWTO’s International Recommendations on Tourism Statistics 2008.

The first project report was submitted to the Government of Oman upon the conclusion of the first field mission in May, and a second mission was fielded in November 2008 to review the implementation of the working programme and other statistical recommendations made by UNWTO.

Rwanda  Tourism Development Master Plan  
(October 2008 and ongoing)

The Government of Rwanda has requested the assistance of UNWTO for the formulation of a sustainable Tourism Development Master Plan. Rwanda has made excellent progress in developing and managing its tourism sector in recent years. Tourism has been identified as a priority sector to achieve the country’s development goals which are set out in the ‘Vision 2020’ strategy. Nevertheless, the early success achieved by the tourism industry has allowed negative effects to emerge, such as unfettered tourism activity in some areas, which has led to concerns of sustainability and natural degradation. There is a need for a Master Plan to guide the development of tourism in the country over the next few years, which would serve as a road map to enable the objectives set out in the strategy to be realized.
The project has 11 clear objectives that would focus around the formulation of the Tourism Development Master Plan. These objectives cover a wide range of policy areas that would include developing a national tourism planning framework to ensure that tourism development is well-balanced and physical development in the country is controlled; carrying out detailed planning in selected Tourism Development Areas (TDAs); revising the regulatory framework for tourism to maintain quality standards and strengthen the tourism sector; improving the institutional arrangements for the management of tourism in the country by the public and private sectors; formulating marketing plans to develop a unique brand for Rwandan tourism; providing recommendations to diversify the tourism offer in the country and develop new tourism products; developing a strategy to upgrade human resources in the tourism sector; an economic strategy to maximize the benefits from tourism at all levels and stimulate investment; developing a plan to help develop small and medium enterprises and community-based tourism through a “bottom up” approach; and devising tourism awareness campaigns to sensitize all sections of society on the role and benefits of tourism. Project activities commenced in October 2008 and are to continue in 2009.

Timor-Leste  Formulation of a Tourism Policy (June - July 2008)

UNWTO has provided technical assistance to the Government of Timor-Leste to develop a Tourism Policy. As a burgeoning democratic State, tourism in Timor-Leste is a steadily growing activity. Notwithstanding, it has been proven that the contribution of tourism to local communities can be immensely valuable as a key economic and social driver for development. The Tourism Policy was developed through consulting widely with stakeholders to identify the main constraints faced by the tourism sector and propose suitable policy responses.

The Tourism Policy prepared by UNWTO articulates a vision for the future of tourism in the country and focuses on seven key issues that were identified as priority areas. These include the development of general infrastructure and upgrading existing standards in accommodation and beverage establishments; the strengthening of key tourism institutions in the country to make a more effective contribution to raising standards; promoting investment to seek higher levels of investment through incentives and establishing an enabling business environment; the diversification of tourism products in identified tourism zones, particularly at the community level; increasing tourism awareness through developing educational initiatives; developing a highly distinctive brand for Timor-Leste as a tourism destination through targeted marketing activities; and developing a legal framework to support the effective implementation of the Master Plan by the Government. Project activities were concluded in July 2008 and UNWTO submitted the Tourism Policy to the Government.
The team of consultants and Steering Committee members of the Tourism Master Plan project in Uttarakhand, India

The World Trade Centre is one of the most emblematic landmarks in Bahrain

Officials of the Guilin Institute of Tourism, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University and UNWTO in front of the new campus of the Guilin Institute of Tourism in China

Long-stretched beaches are a typical scene along the coastal strip of Orissa and West Bengal in India
From 2 - 4 September 2008, the Third Regional Silk Road City Mayors’ Forum was held in Almaty, Kazakhstan. The Forum, which was organized within the framework of the Silk Road Initiative, brought together prominent figures in the Silk Road tourism industry, including central government officials, city mayors, local authorities and the private sector to discuss developing measures to facilitate travel within the region. The Forum covered a wide range of issues involving the roles of public and private stakeholders in the long-term development process, and consisted of a series of keynote presentations and panel discussions. The key themes discussed during the Forum included the mobilization of local communities for tourism development; the development of a Silk Road visa to improve the facilitation of travel; and the role of the business community in promoting regional cooperation and promoting social responsibility and citizens-based initiatives.

UNDP and UNWTO have constituted an Eminent Persons Group (EPG), comprising high-level international personalities from diverse fields, to act as panel adjudicators to evaluate applications from candidate cities. The first meeting of the EPG was held at the UNWTO headquarters in Madrid on 5 December 2008. The purpose of the first meeting was to discuss the scope of the scheme and agree upon a broad framework for the implementation and delivery of the Awards.

Eligible cities will be requested to provide an exposition of their historical links to the Silk Road, as well as the creative inspiration that has derived from the Silk Road for the benefit of tourism, including social, cultural environmental and infrastructural criteria. The title of “UN Silk Road City” would subsequently be bestowed upon cities which have been considered by the EPG as having sufficiently illustrated their commitment to the Silk Road principles and sustainable tourism.
Indian tourism has gone from strength to strength in the last decade, recording impressive double digit growth rates year after year. What in your opinion are the major reasons for such a high level of sustained growth over such a long period of time?

Tourism sector in India achieved spectacular success in recent years and registered growth rate which surpassed the global average. There are many reasons for this, the most important being the launch of successful media campaigns under the brand name “Incredible India”, showcasing India’s rich and diverse heritage and tourist places. Besides these, initiatives for developing bilateral and international cooperation for the development and promotion of tourism also contributed to this growth. “India–China Year of Friendship Through Tourism” and “India-Japan Tourism Exchange Year” were two such initiatives which involved undertaking series of activities showcasing India’s tourism attractions in these two markets. We organized several major international events in New York, Beijing, Shanghai, Singapore, London, Berlin in the last one year projecting India’s economy, culture, heritage and art forms to the international community. Upgrading of infrastructural facilities at important tourist destinations has led to enhanced visitor experience thereby leading to increased numbers, many of which are also repeat visitors. We have also introduced many new tourism products to cater to different requirements of a tourist. All these initiatives have together contributed to arrival of increased number of tourists to India.

We are perturbed by the recent terrorist attacks in Mumbai. We, in India, like so many other countries are combating terrorism, which the global community acknowledges has no national or international boundaries. It is a source of great encouragement to us that the ‘global traveller’ is determined not to allow terrorists win in their nefarious activities. Undeterred by the recent attacks in Mumbai, we are resolute in our determination to make India an attractive yet safe destination and let the economic benefits of tourism percolate to the common man.

Between 2006 and 2008, UNWTO has prepared Tourism Development Master Plans for the states of Uttrakhand and Punjab and, Coastal Tourism Development Plans for the states of West Bengal and Orissa. These projects have been the result of the Government’s intention to diversify its product base. Could you please share with us your Government’s policy towards product development in India?

We have already taken several initiatives to diversify India’s tourism products to cater to different tastes and requirements of tourists worldwide. Rural tourism, cruise tourism, medical tourism, ecotourism and adventure tourism are some of the new products which are being promoted to give travellers a varied experience. We are very keen to expand rural tourism and integrate it within the existing circuits to help revive traditional arts and crafts and support livelihoods of the rural artisans and craftsmen. Similarly, development of ecotourism is very high on our agenda to promote and preserve environmental and cultural heritage. These activities form part of the Government’s larger policy of an inclusive growth. Efforts to promote new tourism products will continue as part of future strategy for tourism development along with promotion and marketing of old products which are already well established in the international tourism market.
A large part of the success of India’s tourism has been due to the excellent “Incredible India” promotional campaign. What is the next phase of this campaign? What are the new and emerging markets which India is focusing on?

The “Incredible India” campaign was launched with the aim of capturing everything about India and making it a global brand. The spurt in number of international tourists travelling to India is a clear indicator of the success of the “Incredible India” campaign. It has enabled India to penetrate the global market and reach the targeted consumer through all forms of media. “Incredible India” has had many facets right from its inception. In the initial years, it boasted of the country’s great monuments and images of beautiful locales. It then focused on promoting yoga and ayurveda. Then, there was a promotion of various fairs and festivals. We also spoke of the grand wildlife of our country. We showed various hues of India through black and white images and one-liners. This year, the focus has been on the vibrancy and diversity of India. We often hear foreign tourists commenting that India is a colourful country. So, we used the inherent colours of India to showcase various tourism products. We have an aggressive growth target of 10 million tourists in 2010. We are hopeful that the forthcoming Commonwealth Games 2010 will help us achieve this target. We have recently partnered with BBC World News globally for a six-part travel series, “Travel India”. This will help us present the diverse facets of the country for the benefit of travellers.
To accelerate efforts to achieve the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Government of Spain has committed €528 million to UNDP to establish the MDG Achievement Fund (MDG-F). Under this new fund, UN agencies collaborate to formulate and implement projects in various thematic areas, such as Environment and Climate Change, Culture and Development, Youth Employment and Migration, and Private Sector and Development. In several countries, UNWTO is actively involved in developing and implementing tourism components of the MDG-F projects. The UNWTO Development Assistance Department is providing technical support to the formulation and implementation of tourism activities of the MDG-F projects.

In 2008, UNWTO provided its inputs to develop and implement tourism activities in the following MDG-F projects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Name of project</th>
<th>Lead agency (in bold) and other participating UN agencies</th>
<th>UNWTO key responsibilities</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>Conservation and Sustainable Management of Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Yasuni Biosphere Reserve</td>
<td>UNDP, UNESCO, FAO, UN HABITAT, UNIFEM, UNWTO</td>
<td>Develop sustainable tourism code of conduct and norms for tourism businesses and communities working on rural and community tourism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>The Dahshur World heritage Site Mobilization for Cultural Heritage for Community Development</td>
<td>UNFPA, UNDP, UNICEF, UNIFEM, WHO, FAO, UNESCO, UNHCHR, UNWTO</td>
<td>Develop sustainable cultural tourism model</td>
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<tr>
<td>Honduras</td>
<td>Creativity and Cultural Identity for Local Development</td>
<td>UNDP/ ILO, UNICEF, UNESCO, FAO, UNV, UNWTO</td>
<td>Organize and/or strengthen 8 traditional fairs that incorporate cultural and tourism promotion elements</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nicaragua</td>
<td>Cultural Recovery and Creative Productive Development on the Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua</td>
<td>UNWTO, UNDP, UNICEF, UNESCO, ILO, UNIDO</td>
<td>Establish sales and promotion venues for cultural products produced on the Caribbean Coast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Development Capacities for Improving Employment and Self-Employment Opportunities for Young People</td>
<td>IL/UNDP, UNFPA, FAO, UNIDO, UNWTO</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>Promoting Initiatives and Cultural Industries in Senegal</td>
<td>UNESCO, UNDP, UNICEF, UNWTO</td>
<td>Identification of training needs for professionals in the tourism sector (hotels and restaurants), and development and implementation of tailor-made training programmes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>Alliances for Cultural Tourism (ACT) in Eastern Anatolia</td>
<td>UNDP, UNICEF, UNESCO, UNWTO</td>
<td>Develop a Destination Management Plan focusing on cultural tourism</td>
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</table>
The ST-EP Programme focuses on enhancing UNWTO’s longstanding work to encourage sustainable tourism - social, economic and ecological - with activities that specifically alleviate poverty, delivering development and jobs to people living on less than a dollar a day.

Following the launch of ST-EP, activities have concentrated primarily on resource mobilization and awareness-raising of the initiative. As a result of the initial fundraising process, a number of donors and development organizations offered their financial support to the ST-EP Programme with significant contributions.

Important partners in the first years of the ST-EP initiative have been the Government of the Republic of Korea, SNV Netherlands Development Organisation and the Governments of Italy and France. Since then, other governments and organizations have also provided significant contributions to the ST-EP initiative, such as the Government of Macao S.A.R. China, the Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), and the Flemish Government.

One of the main objectives of the ST-EP Programme is to work with governments, NGOs, bilateral and multi-lateral organizations, businesses and the local communities to identify and implement a wide range of projects which would clearly show a reduction in poverty through tourism development. ST-EP projects focus on enhancing the contribution of tourism to poverty alleviation and are primarily implemented in the least developed countries, as well as in poor regions of other developing countries.

The implementation of ST-EP projects started towards the end of 2005. Since then, the portfolio of ST-EP projects has rapidly expanded, thanks to the generous contributions from the various partnerships both at the institutional and individual project level.

Since 2006, the ST-EP Programme has launched a total of 69 country-specific projects in 27 countries, and 3 regional projects involving 21 countries in West and Southern Africa, out of which some 30 have already been completed.

A complete listing of all ST-EP projects and their worldwide and regional distribution is presented from pages 22 to 24, with those under implementation in 2008 highlighted accordingly. A selection of ST-EP projects are featured in more detail from pages 26 to 31.
In 2008, significant progress was achieved in the consolidation and expansion of partnerships within the ST-EP Programme.

SNV, the UNWTO ST-EP Foundation and UNWTO signed a Memorandum of Understanding for a three-year partnership for the period 2008 – 2010. The aim of the partnership is to sustainably pull 20,000-25,000 households out of poverty through direct employment and income earned in the tourism sector. In order to achieve this aim, the partners have developed a three-year Action Plan for the implementation of ST-EP projects which are being funded through the partnership, with advisory services from SNV experts in the field and coordination and backstopping support from UNWTO officials. All projects aim to achieve tangible impacts through applying one or more of the seven ST-EP mechanisms. Important components in the projects are strategy development, impact measurement and cooperation with the private sector. The priority countries in which partnership activities take place are: Albania, Bolivia, Cambodia, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Ghana, Honduras, Kenya, Mozambique, Nepal, Nicaragua, Peru, Rwanda and the United Republic of Tanzania.

The Government of Italy is Continuing its Support to the ST-EP Programme

Through the Voluntary Contribution from the Government of Italy, UNWTO is implementing ST-EP projects in Ghana, Guatemala, Mali, Nicaragua and Senegal, as well as a regional project which focuses on multi-destination marketing for 7 countries in West Africa. These ST-EP projects are mostly being implemented in close collaboration with Italian NGOs in the beneficiary countries.

In 2008, UNWTO has developed several new proposals for ST-EP projects in West Africa and Central America, which have been submitted at the end of the year to the Italian Government for approval.

Cooperation between China National Tourism Administration and World Tourism Organization on ST-EP

A Memorandum of Cooperation on ST-EP between the China National Tourism Administration (CNTA) and World Tourism Organization was signed by Mr. Shao Qiwei, Chairman of CNTA and Dr. Taleb Rifai, Deputy Secretary-General of UNWTO in Shanghai on 19 November 2008.

The memorandum signifies that China, an important Asian Member State, has joined UNWTO’s global effort in the fight against poverty through tourism. On the occasion of the signing ceremony of the Memorandum of Cooperation, Tsingtao Brewery Company Ltd. handed over a cheque of US$ 500,000 to Guizhou Provincial Tourism Administration for the first ST-EP project to be implemented in China.

Witnessing this important and joyful occasion were representatives of Chinese provinces including Anhui, Guangxi and Yunnan, representatives of Chinese cities such as Guilin and Huangshan, and representatives of the Hong Kong Tourism Commission and the Macau Government Tourism Office. A representative of the American Express Shanghai Office was also present at the ceremony.

A meeting between the UNWTO Regional Representation for Asia and the Pacific and the Planning and Finance Department of CNTA was held after the signing ceremony to explore the possibility of expanding the ST-EP Programme to more provinces in China such as Anhui, Guangxi, and Yunnan, and the feasibility of establishing a fund for the development of tourism in the rural areas in China.

New Partnership with Tsingtao Brewery (China)

UNWTO has signed an agreement with the Tsingtao Brewery Company Ltd. and the Guizhou Provincial Tourism Administration of China. The framework agreement has secured an initial contribution of US$ 500,000 to provide micro-credit financing to local initiatives and tourism-related projects in the Province.

The funds will be used to particularly support the local production of handicrafts and distribution to tourists. An implementation agreement is also to be finalized for the execution of projects with the allocated funds.
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<tr>
<th>Country / Region</th>
<th>Project</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>AFRICA</strong></td>
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</table>
| Cameroon         | Development of a Network for Promotion and Capacity-Building for Running Bird Watching Tours  
Sustainable Community-based Tourism and Private Enterprise Development in Ebogo |
| Ethiopia         | Chencha-Dorze Tourism and Handicrafts Development Project  
Ecotourism Development in Bale Mountains National Park  
Konso Community Tourism Project  
Pro-Poor Tourism Business Linkages with Accommodation Providers |
| Ghana            | Development of Eco-Cultural Tourism in Butre and Dixcove  
Development of Local Market Linkages in Tourism Supply Chain and Community-based Tourism Enterprises Capacity for Poverty Reduction in the Western Region  
Savannaland Destination Tourism Programme |
| Guinea           | Ecotourism Development in Sangareah in the Dubreka Region |
| Kenya            | Enhanced Market Access for Community-based Tourism Products  
The Kitengela Footbridge Project |
| Madagascar       | Development of Community-based Ecotourism in the Anjozorobe-Angavo Protected Area  
Creation of a Network for Responsible Tourism  
Expanding Ecotourism Activities: Agricultural Supply to Hotels in Sangha  
Expanding Ecotourism Activities: Ecotourism Promotion in Siby  
Expanding Ecotourism Activities: Guides Training in Mopti  
Expanding Ecotourism Activities: Guides Training in Djenné, Sangha and Siby  
Health Protection for Female Artisans in Djenné |
| Mali             |         |
| Mozambique       | Community-based Lodges Training Programme  
Supporting Platform for Inhambane ST-EP Tourism Initiatives |
| Rwanda           | Guidelines for Community-based Tourism  
Congo-Nile Trails |
| Senegal          | Responsible Tourism Promotion in Saint Louis and Louga |
| South Africa     | Pro-Poor Tourism Leadership and Empowerment Training to Pondoland Community Trust |
| Southern Africa  | Marketing Support for Community-based Tourism in Southern Africa (RETOSA Network) |
| United Republic of Tanzania | Cultural Tourism Enhancement and Diversification Programme  
Pangani-Saadani Coastal Protection |
| West Africa      | Multidestination Marketing Programme for Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo  
Network of Cross Border National Parks and Protected Areas in 9 Countries: Benin, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Sierra Leone |
| Zambia           | Village Action for Sustainable Tourism |
| **AMERICAS**     |         |
| Bolivia          | Improving of Local Guiding Services in San Javier and Concepción  
Small and Medium Enterprise Development in Rurrenabaque  
Strengthening Community-based Tourism |
| Colombia         | Sustainable Community-based Tourism Development in Providence Island |
| Ecuador          | Competitiveness and Enterprise Management for the Strengthening of Community-based Tourism (FEPTCE Network)  
Fostering Rural Community-based Tourism and Inclusive Business within the Framework of Effective Destination Management along the Inca Trail (Qhapac Ñan Project) |
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<td><strong>Ecuador</strong></td>
<td>Fostering Sustainable Tourism through the Development of Inclusive Business in Galapagos Islands</td>
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<td>Local Tourism Planning for the Consortium of Provincial Governments (CONCOPE)</td>
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<td>New Technologies for Communication and Competitiveness for Tourism Microenterprises (TIC Project)</td>
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<td>Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas</td>
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<td>Tourism Micro-Enterprises, Micro-Credit and Poverty Reduction (MET Project)</td>
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<td>The Coffee Route in Quiché and Verapaces (Phase II)</td>
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<td><strong>Honduras</strong></td>
<td>Connecting Local Tourism Products and Services with the Marina Copán Hotel in Copán Ruinas</td>
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<td>Establishing Linkages between Garifunas’ Small Businesses and the Bahía de Tela “Los Micos Beach &amp; Golf Resort”</td>
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<td>Sales Increase through the Innovation of Culinary Culture</td>
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<td><strong>Nicaragua</strong></td>
<td>Connecting Local Food Providers with Larger Entrepreneurs in Mainstream Destinations</td>
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<td>Strengthening Rural Community-based Tourism in Ayapte within the Framework of Effective Destination Management along the Inca Trail (Qhapac Ñan Project)</td>
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<td>Strengthening Rural Community-based Tourism in Puno within the Framework of Effective Destination Management along the Inca Trail (Qhapac Ñan Project)</td>
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<td>Sustainable Development for the Families of La Encantada</td>
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<td>Sustainable Tourism and Birdwatching at Luichupuco</td>
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<td><strong>ASIA</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Cambodia</strong></td>
<td>Mekong Discovery Trail and Tourism Development Master Plan for Kratie Town</td>
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<td>Mekong Discovery Trail</td>
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<td><strong>China</strong></td>
<td>Tourism and Handicraft Production in Guizhou Province</td>
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<td><strong>Lao PDR</strong></td>
<td>Capacity-Building in Conservation Planning and Management in Viengxay District</td>
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<td>Tourism Planning and Promotion for Viengxay Caves</td>
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<td>Village-based Tourism Development in Ban Kandone and Ban Tahin</td>
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<td><strong>Lao PDR/Viet Nam/Nepal</strong></td>
<td>Research on Multi-stakeholder Collaboration in Sustainable Tourism</td>
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<td><strong>Nepal</strong></td>
<td>Great Himalaya Trail Development in West Nepal: Linking Formal and Informal Enterprises to Tourism Markets to Reduce Poverty</td>
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<td><strong>Viet Nam</strong></td>
<td>Development of Handicraft Villages in Ha Tay Province</td>
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<td><strong>EUROPE</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Albania</strong></td>
<td>Korca Region Tourism Destination Development and Management Programme</td>
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<td>Sustainable Tourism Legislation</td>
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</table>

These projects are being carried out in 2008. A total of 41 ST-EP projects are under implementation in 2008.
ST-EP PROJECTS WORLDWIDE

Regional Project
Marketing Support for Community-based Tourism in Southern Africa (RETOSA Network)
Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Malawi, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Regional Project
Network of Cross Border National Parks and Protected Areas
Benin, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone

Regional Project
Multidestination Marketing Programme
Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Togo

Regional Distribution of ST-EP Projects

- Africa: 43% - 31 projects
- Americas: 36% - 26 projects
- Asia: 18% - 13 projects
- Europe: 3% - 2 projects

Regional Distribution of ST-EP Funds

- Africa: 44%
- Americas: 32%
- Asia: 18%
- Europe: 6%
Interview with Mr. Jin Zhiguo
President of Tsingtao Brewery Company Ltd.

Tsingtao Brewery is the largest and most prestigious brewery in China – what motivated it to establish a partnership particularly with the UNWTO ST-EP Programme to support sustainable tourism initiatives in China?

An enterprise is not living alone but exists in a social environment. When it gains profit from the society, it shares social responsibility. As the largest, and the most known beer company, Tsingtao Beer is keeping its eyes on the social development while developing itself. It is the Olympic year this year, as the official sponsor for the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, we are promoting the Olympic spirit while we are successfully marketing our product. Thus we are fulfilling the responsibility as an enterprise. It is the strong sense of social responsibility that facilitated our choice for the ST-EP project. Meanwhile, we are deeply encouraged by the UN Millennium Development Goals, and we are ready to join hands with UNWTO to promote tourism which will act as a primary socio-economic tool for sustainable development and as a key agent in the fight against poverty.

In its participation in the UNWTO ST-EP Programme, Tsingtao Brewery is providing financial support to a tourism and handicraft project in Guizhou Province. How do you think this project can help generate income and jobs for the rural people in Guizhou?

Tsingtao Beer Company will put US$ 500,000 for the ST-EP project in Guizhou. The traditional mode of poverty reduction are “blood infusion”, one-time investment will not help to achieve poverty elimination. We hope we are “generating blood” this time by supporting the handicrafts production in the ethnic areas in Guizhou in the form of micro-credit financing. Our existing sales network will facilitate the sales of the handicrafts. In this way, we can help establish capital and keep it rolling and help more people to shake off poverty. In order to ensure allocation of the money to the ethnic people, a strict supervision system will be established.

How do you assess the possibilities that other donors, both from the private and public sector in China, will join the ST-EP Programme and contribute to the China-wide ST-EP Fund?

The promotion of ST-EP Programme and the establishment of the ST-EP China Fund are focused on the poor population and it is a great course, and it needs social participation and support. To make our project in Guizhou successful, firstly we will emphasize the right use of the money through close supervision. Secondly, strict management will be introduced to ensure the quality of the handicrafts. Thirdly, a healthy sales network will be used for the sustained development of the project. If the above three preconditions can be achieved, poverty elimination can be realized while there is a profit return to the enterprise and an increase of social value. The success of the project will surely encourage more engagement of the Government and more enterprises. I am confident in the success of the project.
ST-EP Programme

ST-EP PROJECTS

Albania Korca Region Tourism Destination Development and Management Programme

The Korca Region is located in the southeast corner of Albania and offers a good balance of nature and culture-based tourism development opportunities. Although the region’s tourism industry is still in its infancy, a number of small hotels do exist in the two larger centres of Korca City and Pogradec City. At the present time, the vast majority of tourists to the region are domestic, but international tourists are commencing to travel to and through Korca.

The Korca Region Tourism Destination Development and Management Programme aims to create local economic growth by developing the the region into a flourishing international and domestic tourism destination, utilizing its numerous natural and cultural attributes.

The project will effectively market Korca Region in domestic and international markets based upon viable regional products. To this end, a market analysis was carried out to serve as a basis to formulate a marketing and product development strategy for the region. Furthermore, a tourism value chain analysis will be undertaken to gain a greater understanding of the operating context for formal and informal tourism enterprises, including SMEs that are providing goods and services to these enterprises. Based on the value chain analysis and the product development strategy, seed funding will be mobilized and training will be provided to entrepreneurs to upgrade existing tourism enterprises and develop new ones. The project will also actively lobby to make public and private funds available and provide seed funding to improve relevant tourism-oriented infrastructure, such as roads, water, power, and signage.

A tourism database is being developed to monitor the project results and provide relevant management information to public and private sector stakeholders. The database also serves as a pilot in the ST-EP programme to develop and test new statistical methodologies to measure the local economic impact from tourism at a local or provincial level.

Ethiopia Chencha-Dorze Tourism and Handicrafts Development Project

DorZe communities inhabit the highlands in Chencha District, in the south of Ethiopia, and are famous for the production of textiles from weaving cotton. Tourism is an upcoming economic activity in the district. Tourists visit the area to experience traditional weaving, the unique housing style and the spectacular mountain scenery. Along the main road of the district, there are some sales points where farmers place their handicrafts for sale. However, the qualities and the designs of the handicrafts require improvements to appeal to tourists and thus attract more income to the producers. Furthermore, there is a lack of trained guides in the area to take tourists around and show the unique Dorze villages.

The Chencha-Dorze Tourism and Handicrafts Development Project aims to develop Dorze area as a tourist destination in the southern circuit so that 200 households will earn increased income through employment in local lodges and through new and improved products and services provided to tourists and tourism enterprises. The project is managed by the Chencha District Administration that is formulating a Strategic Plan for Tourism Development in the area and will take the lead in organizing marketing activities. Handicraft producers are given support to make more attractive products for tourists, improve their sales points and reduce their costs by setting up a bulk input supply scheme for the weaving materials. The project will assist the handicraft producers to sell their textiles to hotels and other tourism enterprises in Ethiopia. Links will also be established between local farmers and hotels for the supply of apples that are widely grown in the district. Furthermore, new activities, such as hikes, horse riding tours and cultural performances, will be developed to attract more tourists and to keep them longer in the area.

One small lodge is operational in the district and a new lodge is under construction. The project is closely collaborating with these lodges to ensure that local people can provide goods and services to them. In consultation with the lodge owners, training needs are identified and local people will receive training on the skills needed to obtain employment in the two lodges.

Ghana Development of Local Market Linkages in Tourism Supply Chain and Community-based Tourism Enterprises Capacity for Poverty Reduction in the Western Region

Tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors of Ghana’s economy, recording an average annual growth rate of 12 per cent, and the Government attaches great value to enhancing tourism’s contribution to poverty reduction and local sustainable development.

Ghana’s Western Region has a high potential for tourism development. Its rich cultural and natural heritage make the region very much attractive to local and international tourists: European trading forts which were used during the slave trade are now opened to visitors; the 190km stretch of tropical beaches; wide areas of tropical jungles; its friendly people; the old architectural styles of its picturesque villages hosting cheerful festivals (Sekondi Kundum), among others.

However, the Western Region is still not benefiting enough from the steadily growing tourism industry and poverty is still widespread, affecting 34 per cent of the population. Therefore, the project’s strategy aims to elicit pro-poor growth to achieve remarkable positive impact on the social and economic situation of poor living in tourist areas.

The project’s core activity is promoting local people’s engagement in micro, small and medium enterprises supplying goods and services to the tourism industry. At the same time, the formal tourism sector is being encouraged to
invest in domestic goods and services. The project is being implemented by the Italian NGO Ricerca e Cooperazione in partnership with Ghanian institutions, international NGOs and local actors, giving a notable contribution to the building up and strengthening of a “network for Pro-Poor Tourism”. Local communities’ capacity in the sustainable management of their natural and cultural resources is also being improved.

The project builds on previous experiences gained from another ST-EP project in Ghana which focused on establishing pro-poor business linkages between tourism enterprises and local communities in Butre and Dixcove. The current project is supporting more than 100 micro, small and medium enterprises, including 7 community-based enterprises in Busua, Butre, Dixcove, Akwidae, Miamia, Cape Three Points, and Axim.

It is expected that more than 400 people will benefit from project activities, which encompass the development of new touristic products (i.e. bikes hiring, hiking paths and canoe paddling), training, strengthening of marketing at domestic and international level, as well the organization of awareness campaign on sustainable management, generating about 100 new permanent jobs.

Guatemala The Coffee Route in Quiché and Verapaces (Phase II)

Motherland of Peace Nobel Prize winner Rigoberta Menchú, and rich in natural and cultural heritage, the Department of El Quiché is one of Guatemala’s poorest regions recovering from the legacy of civil war.

The communities’ Mayan cultural roots and the wonderful landscapes of tropical mountain forests offer unique opportunities for tourism development. The magnificent cloudy forest, located in the Cuchumatanes Sierra between 2,000 and 2,400 m of altitude, has a great importance for hydrological balance and is rich in flora, such as epiphytes, mosses, ferns, bromeliads, orchids and lichens, as well as in fauna, especially howling monkeys, birds, snakes, pumas, jaguars and quetzals.

In close collaboration with Guatemalan local and national institutions, the project is supporting local Quiché communities in the municipalities of Usrpanán, Chicamán and San Cristobal Verapáz in developing ethno and eco-tourism activities in harmony with the local communities’ lifestyle and traditions.

Hiking trails with interpretative signs, produced by carpenters and craftsmen belonging to the community, are being designed and installed in the forest surrounding Laj Chimel, a small village whose name means “small water pool” in local language, as well as at Río Chixoy and through the sacred mountain of Cerro Xocobé. At Río Chixoy, “tubing” rides (one or two km rafting on car tire tubes) have been organized, enriching the tourism offer and creating new employment.

Improvements are being made in the accommodation options of hosting tourists in local families’ homes, with an exclusive opportunity to share their cultural tradition and daily activities, as well as in rustic shelters with toilets and shower. The communities’ full involvement in the selection and construction of lodging and camping areas minimizes the possible negative impact on the environment and their social and economic activities.

Member of the communities, especially women, are being trained in meals preparation and tourism guiding. Communities have also been trained to allow tourists to participate in the elaboration of crafts and farming activities of the region, as well as to learn to play marimba, the local traditional musical instrument. Municipalities and private sector tour operators are being involved in promotional and marketing activities to increase tourist flows to the area.

Through all these activities the project, implemented by the Italian NGO Movimondo, is at the same time fostering the local communities’ social and economic development and contributing to preserve the natural environment, its rich biodiversity and a unique cultural heritage.

Nicaragua Strengthening Rural Community-based Tourism (RENITURAL Network)

RENITURAL is a network of community-based organizations working on rural community-based tourism in Nicaragua. More than thirty initiatives have joined together to represent the interest of a growing sector in the tourism landscape of the country. Rural and community-based tourism is an alternative source of income to the long-established rural economic activities (small-scale fishery, farming or livestock), and is an important tool to fight poverty and preserve the environment in Nicaragua.

Sharing the network’s vision on the development of tourism, UNWTO is supporting RENITURAL within the framework of a broader project aimed at strengthening sustainable tourism in Nicaragua, which involves activities in the Solentiname Islands and in Laguna de Apoyo.

Communication and marketing are a challenge for RENITURAL. In partnership with the National Tourism Institute (INTUR), the project is targeting this challenge by developing a communication and marketing strategy. Quality promotional materials have been developed and distributed, and sales manuals have been prepared for all the network initiatives, enabling visitors to make centralized bookings at RENITURAL offices. In the near future, a website facilitating online booking will also be operational.

In addition, the project is also focusing on improving the quality of RENITURAL’s offer in order to make Nicaragua’s rural destinations more competitive on the national and international tourism market. Through active learning in capacity-building workshops and exchanging experiences with similar programmes in neighbouring countries, the network’s members have been working to improve their
tourism services and strongly believe that this, together with the right promotion, will generate alternative resources for their communities, as well as enable them to enhance the quality of their living.

As the project approaches its end, RENITURAL has grown in size and in visibility. The network has become a key player in tourism development in Nicaragua. This year’s highlights include the network’s hosting of the second Latin-American Forum on Rural Tourism and its participation in the Central America Travel Market, the region’s most important international travel fair.

Peru Strengthening Rural Community-based Tourism in Aypate within the Framework of Effective Destination Management along the Inca Trail (Qhapac-Ñan Project)

The archaeological site of Aypate is located in the Peruvian province of Ayabaca at the western end of the Andes mountain range. Its pre-Colombian vestiges remain magnificent and yet little known on top of the Aypate hill at 2,916 meters above sea level. Its Inca features clearly reflect the importance of Aypate as an administrative centre during the Tahuantinsuyo (Inca Empire). The whole area is surrounded by a mist forest full of beautiful orchids, birds, white-tailed deer, which makes it the perfect location for culture and nature lovers.

Within the framework of the Qhapac-Ñan Project (Inca Trail Project), the Governments of Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru have joined efforts to develop tourism which is based on the patrimonial and natural resources in different destinations along the Inca Trail. The Inca Trail Project aims to develop interregional circuits around distinguished locations such as the archaeological site of Ingapirca in southern Ecuador; the archaeological site of Aypate in northern Peru; the archaeological site of Tanka Tanka in the region of Puno and the Lake Titicaca in southern Peru; and Lake Titicaca, Lake Menor and the archaeological site of Tiwanaku in western Bolivia.

By developing a diversified and attractive community-based tourism offer along the Trail, together with the establishment and strengthening of several Destination Management Organizations (DMOs), the project will enable communities to position authentic quality products in the market, and ensure that benefits coming from tourism reach the poor.

In Aypate, the project is being implemented under the coordination of the University of Piura. In order to enhance the current tourism offer of the archaeological site, participatory sessions are held with community members with the objective to identify potential competitive products that could be offered to tourists such as; bird watching excursions; naturalist paths; trekking routes; mountain bike itineraries; community lodging structures; restaurant services; and handicrafts. Members of the communities of Cujaca, Olleros, Lagunas and Tacalpo will receive specialized training to improve and develop the selected products and DMO Noramazónica will ensure the marketing of the circuit. It is expected that 50 families will directly benefit from the implementation of this specific component of the Inca Trail Project, whereas a larger number of families will benefit from the infrastructural improvements in the area.

Senegal Responsible Tourism Promotion in Saint Louis and Louga

With the support of CISV, an Italian NGO, this project aims to reinforce responsible tourism as a sector that generates income for communities, while at the same time safeguarding and enhancing the cultural, social and environmental heritage of the regions of Saint Louis and Louga in northern Senegal.

These two regions possess a great deal of tourism potential that remains largely untapped, aside from the beaches of the Langue de Barbarie, the Djoudj National Bird Sanctuary, and the city of Saint Louis, which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

This project reinforces the work of four local community-based organizations that are involved in the development of responsible tourism. These are:

- Socio-Economic, Sport and Cultural Association of Farmers of Waalo (ASESCAW) which groups together 12,000 farmers in and around the commune of Ross Bethio;
- the inter-village economic interest group of seven villages in Djoudj, on the periphery of the Djoudj National Park, composed of 350 members;
- the Association for the Development of the Keur Serigne Louga Quarter (ADKSL) with 500 members; and
- the permanent association for the International Folklore and Percussion Festival of Louga (FESFOP), with some 350 members.

Activities currently being executed by this project are, among others, the establishment of a community-based lodge managed by the farmers’ association ASESCAW on the shores of Lake Guiers; repairs and the installation of renewable-energy equipment at the Djoudj community-based lodge; the creation of a cultural village in Louga in the context of the Percussion Festival; and the development of homestay lodging in a disadvantaged neighbourhood of Louga. The main objective of the creation of these three community-based lodges and the promotion of homestay lodging is to generate supplementary income for the poorest strata of the population. Economic profitability of these community-based accommodation facilities is expected to be attained by the second year of operations. The reinforcement of accommodation facilities and the preparation of promotional support measures should contribute to a 20 per cent increase in responsible-tourism visits in northern Senegal.
Capacity-building sessions and awareness-raising activities among the communities will make it possible to create at least 50 direct jobs and 200 indirect jobs.

United Republic of Tanzania Cultural Tourism Enhancement and Diversification Project

In 1996, the Tanzania Tourist Board (TTB) with support from SNV launched the Tanzania Cultural Tourism Programme with the aim to develop and promote cultural excursions organized by local people. By 2007, TTB had helped establish 24 Cultural Tourism Enterprises (CTEs) that provided employment and income generating opportunities to some 200 households, and the annual number of tourists making cultural excursions with these enterprises had grown to 30,000. The programme’s products offer tourists to Tanzania an insight into the way of life of the local people. Most CTEs are located in the northern part of the country and focus on offering hiking tours. Geographical expansion and diversification of products are required to guarantee a further growth of cultural tourism and to enhance its local economic impact.

The Cultural Tourism Enhancement and Diversification Project aims to strengthen, expand and diversify the CTEs in Tanzania. In collaboration with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, the project is developing guidelines and a quality standard and monitoring control system for CTEs. The Tanzania Association of Cultural Tourism Operators (TACTO) was established by the project to formulate a strategic plan and lobby for creating a good enabling environment for cultural tourism development in Tanzania. The project will actively identify new locations in the country with potential for cultural tourism development; provide training on topics like business planning, guiding, handicrafts, meal preparation and customer care to some 250 local people; and advise existing CTEs on possibilities to diversify their products. An important component of the project is the promotion of cultural tourism in Tanzania. To this effect, the project is developing a marketing strategy and a website for cultural tourism (www.tanzaniaculturaltourism.com). In addition, the project will prepare brochures and other marketing materials, organize familiarization tours, publish articles in newspapers and travel magazines, and participate in national and international travel fairs.

In three years time, the project expects to create 10 new CTEs in Tanzania and increase the annual number of visitors making use of the CTEs services to 50,000. This growth will create employment and income generating opportunities for 250 poor households, whereas over 1000 households will benefit from the village development fees paid by all visitors, the voluntary donations received, and the infrastructure created to support the tourism development in the area.

Viet Nam Development of Handicraft Villages in Ha Tay Province

In Viet Nam, the ST-EP Programme completed a project on handicraft and tourism development in the province of Ha Tay. Ha Tay province has a centuries-long tradition in handicraft production and accounts for the largest number of craft villages in the country, many of them well-known for the production of bamboo and rattan wares, lacquer wares, wood carving, mother-of-pearl inlays, textile, embroidery, stone carving, among others. The aim of the project is to enhance income-generating opportunities for the local poor families in Ha Tay province through sustainable village-based handicraft and tourism development.

The project was implemented in three stages: during the initial stage, the Strategic Planning component, two important documents were formulated on tourism development that is linked to handicraft: 1) Recommendations for Planning and Policy Strategies for Handicraft Villages Tourism in Ha Tay Province and 2) Pilot Project Plan for Phu Vinh Handicraft Village (pilot model village identified by the project). These documents provided the framework for project implementation and were approved by all project partners in January 2008.

In component two, Community Organization, Training and Capacity-Building, more than 300 local poor people received strategic and relevant skills training as a foundation for further engagement in income-generating activities linked to sustainable tourism development and village handicraft tourism.

In component three, Marketing, Promotion and Site Development, a Marketing Strategy and Promotional Plan for Phu Vinh village and Ha Tay province was developed and approved by all project partners in September 2008. In this component, the project also developed and produced a set of promotional materials for tourism in handicraft villages in Ha Tay. As a final activity, the project carried out small-scale infrastructural improvements in Phu Vinh, such as building of an instruction board to the village; upgrading of public toilet; and buying some decorative items for the showroom.

With poverty alleviation as the primary element, the project hopes to deliver more income to poor families in Ha Tay’s handicraft villages by creating an improved visitor’s experience in selected villages and engaging the local community in tourism activities, thus resulting in increased tourist spending and expansion of employment in these villages.
One of the community-based lodges established during the ST-EP project in Senegal.

Young craftswomen making rattan products in Phu Vinh, Viet Nam.

Tubing rides in the river Chixoy is a unique tourism product in the El Quiché Region in Guatemala.

The archaeological site of Aypate in Peru.

Local fishermen are one of the groups engaged in supplying goods and services to the tourism industry in Ghana.
Mountainous landscape of the Korca region in Albania

One of the many community-based tourism establishment in Nicaragua

A local guide taking tourists on a cultural excursion in Tanzania

A traditional house of the Dorze community in Ethiopia
One of the first activities within the ST-EP Programme in Ecuador was to support the sustainable tourism component of PLANDETUR 2020 (Tourism Development Plan 2020) with a view to including poverty reduction strategies in policies for sustainable tourism development. Your work through the Ministry of Coordination for Cultural and Natural Heritage of Ecuador is focusing on this area. Could you tell us about forthcoming initiatives in this connection on the part of your Ministry and related ministries such as MINTUR in Ecuador?

The Ministry of Coordination for Cultural and Natural Heritage of Ecuador, together with the Government, is strengthening and promoting the proposals regarding sustainable tourism that are included in the PLANDETUR.

Firstly, we are facilitating inter-ministerial action and coordination. Sustainable tourism requires links between tourism and other areas of public policy so that tourism can be included in proposals and initiatives for local development, generating equal opportunities, with a special focus on women and young people. For this, our Ministry is facilitating the coordination between the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Environment, which turns out to be one of the key links with great potential for promoting sustainable tourism development. In this connection, we are supporting initiatives for the development of sustainable tourism in protected areas; especially in two of Ecuador’s prime natural assets – Galápagos and Amazonia, as well as in other areas having high levels of biodiversity.

In addition, in line with the actions provided by the Tourism Development Plan PLANDETUR, we are focusing on the restoration of the natural and cultural heritage. This is a very innovative initiative that is subsequent to the approval of the PLANDETUR at the end of 2007. Moreover, it is closely related to one of the priorities established by the National Government regarding the restoration of both tangible and intangible, natural and cultural heritage. It means that in 2009 we will have established the Network of Museums, the Network of Archaeological Sites and the Cultural Routes.

With this same objective of recovering the national heritage while also promoting local economies, the Ministry of Coordination for Cultural and Natural Heritage and the Government have established 4 main routes:

• Spondylus Route along the coast of Ecuador

This is a two-nation route with the participation of Peru. It is the old Ecuadorian sun route, offering sun and sand, but has now been transformed into a route that includes museums, archaeological sites, cultural activities along the Ecuadorian coast and ancestral traditions relating to the Spondylus shell, a thousand-year-old tradition forming part of pre-Columbian cultures.

• Qhapac Ñan Route

This project involves 6 Andean countries (Ecuador, Colombia, Peru, Bolivia, Chile and Argentina) and also offers important opportunities for local economies.

• Network of Heritage Towns

The idea behind this network is that these towns should not only follow sustainable management models but should also become tourist attractions and strengthen their potential for cultural tourism.

• National Unity Railway

It is important to point out to the international readers that the railway in Ecuador has been described as one of the most complicated in the world. The Ecuadorian railway is a tremendous feat of engineering linking the coast and the Andes, and was built exactly 100 years ago. The National Government has therefore placed priority on the rehabilitation of the railway as a route mainly for the use of tourists, as it passes through very varied landscapes and cultures. The railway has received recognition as part of the nation’s historic heritage.
The Ministry of Coordination for Cultural and Natural Heritage, together with the Ministry for Tourism, is carrying out several emblematic projects, including the Qhapac Ñan in which the ST-EP Programme is participating in a pilot project in the south of the country. What does your Ministry hope to achieve in connection with the Qhapac Ñan as a route that should bring tourism and economic development, and what actions are planned for this year?

This is one of the National Government’s emblematic projects and comprises two main lines of work:

Firstly, with regard to the heritage, we are working with UNESCO and with another five countries (Colombia, Peru, Chile, Argentina and Bolivia) on the application for the declaration of Qhapac Ñan as a world cultural route. The Pilgrims’ Road to Santiago de Compostela in Spain and the Silk Road are examples of this type of route that have been declared world cultural heritage. This declaration should generate great cultural and tourism potential and opportunities for all 6 countries. We hope to complete the application in 2009. Various research activities are taking place around this route, involving multidisciplinary teams of archaeologists, anthropologists, historians, etc. Work is also being done on compiling historic documentation on the Route. In fact, the Qhapac Ñan is not the Inca Road as it used to be known, but is pre-Inca, so it holds very great historical significance.

In addition to tourism and economic development, the Qhapac Ñan is being promoted as a route linked to the development of local communities. The Qhapac Ñan passes through over 100 indigenous communities, over 55 local government administrations, and 7 protected areas. This gives an idea as to the relevance of working on the Qhapac Ñan for tourism and local development. All the work is being done in a coordinated way between the Ministry of Coordination for Cultural and Natural Heritage and the Ministries of Tourism, the Environment, Social Inclusion, Agriculture and Culture. We are working with all of them on the different product lines and sectorial agendas linked to the Qhapac Ñan. The idea is to provide the Qhapac Ñan and its surroundings with quality tourism services (signposting, accommodation services, catering, guides, traditional handcrafts, organic agricultural products linked to typical Andean foods, etc.). And with regard to culture, we have included part of the agenda of the Ministry of Sport in order to promote physical culture and walks around the Qhapac Ñan.

The Ministry of Tourism has been an essential part of the MET project (Tourism Micro-Enterprises, Micro-Credit and Poverty Reduction), financed by the ST-EP Programme. What does your Administration think about the importance of micro-finance to support local tourism development, and what are the main projects of the Ministry of Coordination for Cultural and Natural Heritage in this area?

This is a very important point. The efforts being made by the UNWTO are advantageously in line with those currently made by the National Government to strengthen the National Microfinance System. Microfinance can help communities to improve their handcrafts, their food supply, their housing, etc. and other income-generating activities linked to both the Qhapac Ñan and the Railway Route, etc.

The local development approach adopted in work relating to both the Qhapac Ñan and the Railway Route requires this type of support in the form of access to microcredit. We are also working with the Ministry for Economic Policy on how to connect indigenous communities to banking and financial services, not only for credit purposes.

I would like to take the opportunity of this interview to announce that in early 2009 we will be launching a credit and microcredit incentive programme to be called “Socio Patrimonio” (Heritage Partner). This programme will offer incentives, not only in terms of credit, for anyone wanting to join in order to place greater value on our heritage. This also reflects the turnaround in the way the Government sees and manages the heritage. We do not want it to be static, something to be looked at, having little relevance for the population and to be enjoyed only by elites. We want the heritage to form part of the life and processes of the people, and we believe this is essential for managing it in a sustainable way. We believe this “Socio Patrimonio” project will be a good opportunity for democratizing the use of the heritage by the people, while obviously respecting all the technical standards for preservation, encouraging people to feel the heritage is theirs, and to respect and enjoy it.
UNWTO forms part of the Joint Programmes for the Yasuní Biosphere Reserve and for the provinces of Esmeralda, Chimbó and Sucumbíos, financed by the UNDP-Spain Fund to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. How do you see tourism in protected areas and cultural tourism in the framework of the programmes in which UNWTO participates in?

These two programmes are the result of a joint effort made by the United Nations System and the Government of Ecuador, and respond to the country’s need for work in such important areas as the Yasuní National Park and the provinces of Esmeralda, Chimbó and Sucumbíos. They also bring together the priorities of both the National Government’s inter-sectorial agendas and the inter-agency agendas of the United Nations System in Ecuador.

The Inter-cultural Programme will help by working in one of the central areas of the Qhapac Ñan, namely the province of Chimbó which is also present in the emblematic projects for the Railway Route and the Heritage Towns. Although Chimbó is located in a very valuable heritage area, it is also an area with high poverty levels. This has been a contradiction in the past, in that development has been promoted without consideration for the heritage. Instead of making the heritage the main asset on which sustainable development of the communities can be based, it has been neglected and left to deteriorate, without being included in plans for economic development.

Inter-cultural dialogue and inclusion of the indigenous and Afro populations are matters that have not been promoted in Ecuador to date but, after the recent approval of the new constitution, it is now a constitutional mandate. Ecuador’s new constitution requires recognition of this inter-cultural dialogue and recognition of this diversity and cultural wealth which had not previously figured in public policy. The Inter-cultural Programme is therefore a very strategic project.

The Yasuní Programme is also a strategic project that forms part of the Government’s proposal for responsibility to be shared by the international community for keeping the oil in the ground and preserving the area’s biodiversity. The responsibility for conservation is not just for the Ecuadorians but also for the international community because Ecuador is maintaining and helping to preserve one of the world’s lungs in Amazonia. But Yasuní is much more than this. Yasuní is not just a park but the communities that live in it, and it represents an enormous challenge for international cooperation. This programme will give us the opportunity to work together with the United Nations on this. Moreover, it coincides that during the year of the implementation of the programme and the year 2009 is to be the “Year for Amazonia as a Tourism Destination”, as declared by the OTCA (Organization of the Treaty for Cooperation in the Amazon), which should facilitate work on sustainable tourism in this area.

Before we come to the end of the interview, I would like to stress that, for over two decades, UNWTO has been building up an increasingly precise concept and agenda for sustainable tourism, which has been very important for the agendas of the Member States as well. The role of the UNWTO in placing matters relating to sustainability (social-economic, environmental, cultural) on the agenda, together with its Member States, is very important and one of the most relevant contributions made to Ecuador. Since 2000, at least from the point of view of my experience of the Ministry of Tourism, we have been making joint efforts with the UNWTO in this shared agenda for sustainable tourism.

Other matters of importance which the UNWTO has helped place on the agenda of Member States are Tourism and Protected Areas and the Prevention of Sex Tourism, on which publications have been produced and research carried out, both of which are very useful for the Member States. In retrospect, now that we are consolidating this agenda in Ecuador, I acknowledge the importance of this technical support being provided by the UNWTO as a United Nations agency.

For this reason I would like to request that the UNWTO continues to provide this technical support, thus helping to consolidate on the agendas of its Member States the new approach towards tourism that is required by today’s world. That is, tourism cannot come at any cost but must be increasingly responsible. The efforts being made by the UNWTO, at least in the case of Ecuador, are falling on fertile ground.
Iguanas are among the signature animals of the Galápagos Islands, a UNESCO World Heritage Site in Ecuador.

One of the many groups of local tourism entrepreneurs in Ecuador who have completed a training programme on micro tourism business development and management as part of the activities of the MET project.

The Amazonia Region of Ecuador
The ST-EP Programme is very active in Lao PDR with the implementation of five ST-EP projects in the country. What did your Administration expect from the ST-EP Programme when it was first launched in 2002 and what significance does it have now for the Lao National Tourism Administration (LNTA)?

First of all, on behalf of the Lao National Tourism Administration, I would like to express my highest appreciation and thanks to UNWTO for its consistent cooperation by developing technical assistance and funds to Lao tourism development, thus contributing to the growth of tourism in Laos.

I have learnt that the World Tourism Organization in collaboration with UNCTAD launched a new initiative named ST-EP: Sustainable Tourism - Eliminating Poverty in 2002. ST-EP projects have a significant contribution to local residents to get employment and generate income to their families and communities. The communities’ and stakeholders’ participation in tourism development become now a positive trend and core aspect for the conservation of the cultural heritages and for the protection of natural environment. This is in line with the socio-economic development plan of the Lao government that placed tourism among one of the priority sectors to support, contribute and alleviate the poverty in the country.

Are you satisfied with what the ST-EP projects have achieved in Lao PDR and why?

I am satisfied with the ST-EP projects in Laos and I express my highest appreciation and thanks to the ST-EP Programme for assisting Lao tourism promotion and development through projects such as Tourism Planning and Promotion for Viengxay Cave; Capacity-Building in Conservation Planning and Management in Viengxay District; Tourism Law Implementation; Voices of Viengxay; and Ban Kandone and Ban Tahin Village-based Tourism Development.

Tourism products created by local residents of the project areas attracted tourists as well as societies. The increase of tourist arrivals has helped Laos heighten the awareness of the local residents towards tourism that contributed to poverty reduction by generating income and employment and tourism helps educate them with various learning and new experiences, thus helping them to pay attention to the protection of nature and culture.

In order to make these projects sustainable and effective, more efforts are in need in terms of management, marketing and human resources training. The Lao National Tourism Administration takes therefore this opportunity to request the continued support and assistance from UNWTO.

In Viengxay, an area of historic and cultural importance for Lao PDR, the ST-EP Programme completed three inter-related projects. Among one of the many outputs delivered was the formulation of a Tourism Master Plan for the town of Viengxay. What measures have been taken by the Government of Lao PDR towards its implementation?

After receiving the assistance provided by UNWTO to formulate a Tourism Master Plan for the town of Viengxay, the document was submitted to the Government of Laos for consideration. The document was approved in principle. The Government advised the Lao National Tourism Administration to improve the paper by adding the support areas to Viengxay into the Master Plan. The Lao National Tourism Administration already implemented the advice of the Government by engaging planners, architects and others concerned authorities to do the improvement and now the document has already been submitted again to the Prime Minister’s Office.

In 2009, Asia Development Bank will support to the Ecotourism Development in Houaphanh Province approximate US$ 400,000. The fund will be allocated to improve and develop the Viengxay Caves, particularly, the improvement of tourist facilities, training and activities for developing local tourism products aimed at contributing to the poverty alleviation of poverty reduction.
Nevertheless, the Asia Development Bank’s support is still not enough for developing all the activities in Viengxay. Therefore, Lao National Tourism Administration proposes to the UNWTO to continue the support furthermore from various resources to assist Viengxay the remote district of Laos.

_The LNTA, together with the private sector and other relevant government agencies, is working hard to realize its vision of positioning the country as a premier ecotourism destination. Ecotourism development is a prominent component in many of the ST-EP projects that are being implemented worldwide, Lao PDR inclusive. Where do you see the dynamics between Lao PDR’s vision and the ST-EP Programme in this regard, and where do you see potentials in future activities of the ST-EP Programme when it comes to ecotourism development in Lao PDR?_

Generally speaking, the ecotourism development in Lao PDR and ST-EP Programme has similar guidelines and contents. At present as well as for the future, ST-EP projects have the potential and significant component to support the activities of ecotourism development in Lao PDR, contributing to the launching of small and medium size activities, capacity-building, education for local people in the field of tourism, conservation of the nature and protection of culture and enhance all stakeholders.
Mali has long been considered as a cultural tourism destination. Community-based tourism and ecotourism are also developing today. How is the destination positioning itself?

Mali continues to be a top cultural tourism destination in the West African subregion, with more than five sites included in the UNESCO World Heritage list. It intends to reinforce this position through a policy for the identification and development of new sites with a view to diversifying the country’s tourism offerings with other products such as ecotourism. In fact, my country has extensive resources in this area as well, for example, certain lakes of the central delta of the Niger River, known as RAMSAR sites, the Boucle du Baoulé National Park, and the Bafing Wildlife Reserve, which are considered as Biosphere Reserves.

Since the start of the new Millennium, the Government, aware of the benefits provided by tourism and of the need to ensure its sustainable development, decided to also place special emphasis on the promotion of solidarity tourism.

Indeed, alongside the “traditional” tourism that has greatly contributed to making our destination known and to the creation of wealth, ecotourism and what you refer to as community-based tourism constitute niche-market activities which are more and more practised by an important segment of customers of the generating markets who want to take such trips in order to better know the host communities, to interact with them and to participate in income-generating activities.

It is in order to further develop this community-based tourism that my Department has drawn up a suitable regulatory framework that paves the way for the creation of tourism associations on the part of the communities in order to promote their destinations, with the objective being to improve the preservation of natural and cultural resources and to obtain financial benefits that can contribute to poverty reduction.

Interview with H.E. Mr. N’Diaye Bah
Minister of Handicraft and Tourism of Mali

You are the Minister of Handicraft and Tourism. Are these two sectors interrelated in Mali? In your opinion, how can these two sectors have an impact on poverty reduction?

First of all, it should be said that handicrafts are a form of expression of a country’s culture, like architecture, folklore or philosophical thought. Moreover, with Malian tourism being essentially cultural in nature, the connection between tourism and handicrafts becomes evident, natural. Handicrafts, just like other forms of expression are tourism products. They are what constitutes Malian tourism and the attraction of Mali as a destination.

Handicraft products are among the primary cultural souvenirs that visitors can obtain and take home.

Handicraft is an activity that is practised by a very large portion of the population in Mali and provides a substantial part of people’s income all year round. The purchase of handicrafts by tourists provides revenues especially for the most vulnerable demographic groups living in tourism sites: young persons and women.

Furthermore, the furnishings of tourism establishments are sourced largely from the handicraft sector such as woodworking, sewing, embroidery and the other decorative arts.

Understandably, that is why in Mali these two sectors are among those that contribute to poverty reduction, not only in urban areas but also in the rural zones.
Mali has benefited from several small-scale projects under the ST-EP Programme, such as the establishment of a responsible tourism network in Mali and the drafting of a charter; the training of guides in Djenné, Sangha, and Siby and of pirogue boatmen in Mopti; the development of the local supply chain for fresh produce in the Dogon Country; and support for female artisans of Djenné. What has been the outcome of these projects?

Mali has been among the pioneer countries in Africa to benefit from small-scale projects under the UNWTO ST-EP Programme, especially in the country’s most visited and most sensitive tourism sites. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Organization for this choice and this show of interest in the promotion of Malian tourism.

It has to be recognized that these projects are already having a real impact on our tourism, most notably in terms of the quality of the service of our tourism providers, in particular, the guides of the communities of Mopti, Sangha and Djenné.

In fact, most of the guides of these localities are young people who went into this activity without having previously studied at specialized schools. This is the initial disadvantage that is in the process of being corrected by the training carried out under the ST-EP Programme.

Moreover, the ST-EP Programme supported the establishment of a solidarity and responsible tourism network throughout the country, which is well-structured and equipped with a responsible tourism charter in the interest of its members, which my Department has approved. It is this situation that has undoubtedly favoured the holding of the International Forum on Solidarity Tourism in Bamako, on 20-22 October 2008.

As for the support to the female artisans of Djenné, it has greatly contributed to improving the health of women and protecting their family members from the toxic effects of the gases emitted by the furnaces installed inside their homes. It has also contributed to the quantitative and qualitative improvement of handicraft production and to a considerable increase in the revenues of the artisans.

Regarding the project in favour of the female produce growers of Sangha in the Dogon Country, it is also expected, on the one hand, that it will lead to a quantitative and qualitative improvement in production so that this activity can better cover the fresh produce supply needs of the tourism establishments of the locality, while on the other, to provide a notable increase in the income of these women.
International tourist arrivals to Tanzania have rapidly grown in the past decade, and tourism has become the number one foreign exchange earner for the country. Who are the main stakeholders in the sector, and how is the generated income spread in the country?

In the last two decades, Tanzania has witnessed tremendous growth in its tourism industry. Visitor arrivals increased from 81,821 in 1985 to 719,031 in 2007 resulting in increased receipts from US$ 10 million to US$ 1037 million, respectively.

Our main stakeholders include: public sector (Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism and its institutions – responsible for conservation of natural and cultural resources, promotion and marketing of tourism, ministries responsible for culture, communication, infrastructure, energy and agriculture) and private sector including: tour operators, travel agents, hotel owners and the informal sector.

The income generated is spread widely in the country in terms of:

- Direct and indirect incomes to employees in the tourism industry and related sectors, plus income earned from goods and services supplied to the sector.
- Park entry fees portion that is set aside for community initiated projects.
- 25 per cent of income generated in Game Reserves is ploughed back to local communities (Municipalities for development activities).

Generally, many areas throughout the country benefit from the tourism taxes and fees pulled into the treasury and redistributed through government development projects and subsidies.

The high percentage of leakages in the tourism sector is often mentioned as a factor that limits the local economic impact from tourism. Does your Ministry have any policies and projects in place that help reduce the leakages and increase the contribution tourism makes to poverty reduction?

Although leakages are an intrinsic element of international tourism, countries need to adopt measures of reducing its levels. The key emphasis is thus not to rely solely on direct tourism expenditure, but to focus more on indirect expenditure by creating linkages to other industries, i.e. supplies to tourism businesses such as food, furnishings, fuels, arts and crafts, services etc.

Therefore, the country is encouraging operators and hotels to source their supplies from local producers and in supporting the capacity of producers of goods and services to improve the quality of their products. On the other hand, there are initiatives to further diversify the tourism product range so that the industry benefits the larger section of the society.

Furthermore, the new Tourism Act (2008), puts emphasis on the four key areas of tourism businesses (mountain climbing, travel agents, car hire and tour guiding) to be operated by locals as a strategy towards poverty alleviation.
Tanzania has actively participated in the ST-EP Programme by hosting two ST-EP seminars (in 2004 and 2007), and having two ST-EP projects under implementation. Could you briefly describe the results of the seminars, and your expectations from the ST-EP projects? How do you foresee that these ST-EP activities will help enhance the local economic impact from tourism in Tanzania?

These seminars on ST-EP have created more awareness and understanding of decision-makers, tourism planners, industry regulators, developers and the general community on how communities can use tourism to reduce poverty. Specifically, the knowledge acquired on the application of the UNWTO Seven Mechanisms is very practical and useful.

The ST-EP activities in Pangani-Saadani Coastal Community Tourism Programme and the Cultural Tourism Enhancement and Diversification Programme shall further enable local people to directly participate and benefit from tourism. This is foreseen to positively contribute to the local economic development in terms of incomes, stimulating production, and fostering quality of life in the communities, e.g. water supply, infrastructure development, education and health facilities.

The Cultural Tourism Enhancement and Diversification Programme (CTEDP) aims at improving the already existing Cultural Tourism Programme (CTP) and to provide better services and support to Cultural Tourism Enterprises, strengthening and improving marketing and quality control and the ten new cultural tourism enterprises to be established in different areas of Tanzania through facilitation of the multi-processes, training and marketing.

It expected that about one thousand households will benefit from the project: 250 households (1250 people) directly, while 750 households (3750 people) will benefit indirectly through the Seven Mechanisms. This is through supply of foods, handicrafts by local producers to tourism enterprises, home stay accommodation, and investments in infrastructure (roads, communications) etc.
Due to the increasing development assistance activities, especially in light of the implementation of ST-EP projects worldwide, the Department’s presence in the field was quite pronounced in 2008.

Our presence in the field allows us to directly monitor activities on the ground and to review the progress made and obstacles encountered in order to ensure that both quantitative and qualitative aspects of outputs are achieved and for the timely completion of development assistance projects. Our presence in the field also facilitates us to better understand the specific needs of our Members for technical assistance in order to support them in their efforts to develop the tourism industry.

The Director of Development Assistance Department, Dr. H. Varma, travelled extensively during 2008 to supervise, monitor and provide technical guidance and backstopping to the Organization’s development assistance activities.

During the course of the year, Dr. Varma visited: Botswana, Cambodia, China, Egypt, India, Iran, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Lao PDR, Republic of Korea, Thailand, and Viet Nam.

The year commenced with a trip to India for the signing of an Agreement between the State Government of Punjab and UNWTO for the formulation of a Tourism Development Master Plan. The long-term tourism policy framework (2008-2023) and development strategy for the State of Punjab would provide a clear direction and phased programme of tourism development and assist the State Government in its twin objectives of attracting greater visitor numbers and allowing tourism to make a significant contribution to the regional economy. stimulating job creation and investment. The signing ceremony was followed by detailed discussions with senior tourism officials from the Punjab State Government on the process of project implementation.

In February Dr. Varma continued to Cairo, Egypt to attend the Review Meeting of the project for the Development of a National Sustainable Tourism Strategic Plan for the country.

March started with a mission to Beijing, China for meetings with UNDP on the Greater Tumen Initiative (GTI), a programme which aims at promoting regional cooperation between China, DPR Korea, Mongolia, Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation in the fields of cross-border trade, investment, environmental preservation and tourism. In addition, issues related to tourism cooperation and development along the Silk Road were tackled during the mission. Dr. Varma then returned to India to represent UNWTO at the Second International Conference on Responsible Tourism in Destinations, held in Kochi from 22-24 March. The conference represents a key global initiative to help the tourism industry and all its stakeholders to address the problems and issues at hand – economic, environmental, socio-cultural and, above all, socio-economic. From Kochi, Dr. Varma moved on to Chandigarh to attend the Inception Meeting for the Tourism Development Master Plan Project for Punjab.

In April Dr. Varma continued with a visit to New Delhi, India to attend the Final Review Meeting for the Master Plan for Integrated and Sustainable Development of Tourism in the State of Uttarakhand. He subsequently visited Phnom Penh, Cambodia for the Review Meeting of the second phase of the Mekong Discovery Trail Project.

The objective of Dr. Varma’s visit to Gaborone, Botswana in May was to attend the Review Meeting for the project for the Formulation of a Tourism Policy for the country, which covers an expansive range of key policy issues. The meeting was followed by a 2-day workshop organized with representatives of the tourism industry to propose recommendations for the Tourism Policy, many of which were subsequently incorporated into the final version.

In June, the Director of Development Assistance travelled to Amman, Jordan to attend the International Conference on Challenges and Opportunities of Sustainable Tourism Development in the Arab World. Afterwards, he attended the Suzhou Action Group Meeting in China where he also held meetings with UNDP. Dr. Varma then continued on to Seoul, Republic of Korea to attend the ST-EP Foundation Board of Directors Meeting and the Third Silk Road Alliance Meeting. In Seoul, he also participated in the First Meeting of the GTI Tourism Council, organized by UNWTO in collaboration with the UNDP Tumen Secretariat. This landmark meeting brought together government representatives from China, Mongolia, Republic of Korea and Russian Federation to discuss strategies for promoting the tourism activities in Northeast Asia. The main outcome of the First Meeting of the GTI Tourism Council was the approval of the Charter of the GTI Tourism Council and its Action Plan for 2008-2009.

Other missions carried out by the Director of Development Assistance, which included trips to Viet Nam, Lao PDR, India and Thailand in July, focused on consultations with the respective Governments on their technical assistance needs and requirements, as well as review meetings of ST-EP projects in Lao PDR and Viet Nam.

September was marked by the organization of the 3rd Silk Road City Mayors’ Forum on “New Silk Road: from inspiring tradition to modern standards for tourism and cooperation” which was convened in Almaty, Kazakhstan, from September 2-4. During the Forum, Dr. Varma delivered a presentation on tourism cooperation and development along the Silk Road. The event forms part of the Silk Road Initiative, a programme administered by UNDP China with the participation of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, aimed at rebuilding ancient linkages among countries on the Silk Road with a view to encouraging and promoting exchanges, new ideas and collaboration in trade, tourism and investment among countries and among cities.
In October the Director of Development Assistance visited Beijing, Bangkok and Phnom Penh, where he attended the Inception Meeting for the third phase of the Mekong Discovery Trail Project.

In November, Dr. Varma travelled to India to present to the Government the Final Report of the Long-term Tourism Development Master Plan for the State of Punjab, which comprises a Short-term Action Plan (2008 - 2013) and four Demonstration Projects for the State. He then continued to Iran to attend the First International Tour Operators’ Convention where he delivered a keynote presentation during the opening ceremony. The year concluded with a trip to Seoul, Republic of Korea, for consultations with the UNWTO ST-EP Foundation on the Programme of Work for 2009.
The first Iranian Tour Operators Convention was held in Tehran from 24-27 November 2008. The Convention was jointly organized by the Iran Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization (ICHTO) and the Iranian Association of Tour Operators. The Convention, first of its kind, drew more than 150 international tour operators from 43 different countries. A majority of the international tour operators were from the Far East, Western Europe and North America. A number of tour operators from the Middle East were also present. In addition, print and electronic media from different parts of the world also attended the Convention.

The Convention was formally opened by H.E. Mr. Esfandyar Rahim Moshaei, Vice President of Iran, who is also the Chairman of ICHTO. In his opening speech, the Vice President said that Iran has identified tourism as one of the priority sectors for development and a number of new steps have been taken to further develop and promote the industry in the country. The ICHTO, in collaboration with inbound tour operators and provincial governments, has formulated more than 1000 itineraries which take tourists to various natural, cultural and historical destinations within the country. Several new initiatives have been taken to augment the country’s tourism infrastructure and superstructure. Fresh investments have been made in the accommodation sector and several new hotels have been commissioned in the recent past. Similarly, a series of qualitative changes have been brought about in the structure of the country’s tourism industry with a view to extending facilities and services to tourists. He welcomed the international tour operators to Iran and asked them to see for themselves the tourism potential of the country and the variety of products Iran has to offer to a wide cross-section of tourist markets.

UNWTO was represented at the Convention by Dr. H. Varma, Director of the Development Assistance Department, who delivered a keynote address at the opening ceremony. He praised the Iranian Government and the Iranian tour operators for their initiative and hoped that the Convention would further consolidate the tourism industry in Iran and place the country on the tourism map of the world.

He said that the Islamic Republic of Iran is richly endowed with cultural attractions, and has a great number of important and outstanding archaeological, religious, historical, and ecological sites, as well as a thriving handicrafts industry. The heritage of the ancient Persian Empire and the highly influential role which Iran played in the development of the ancient Silk Road lends the country with a compelling attractiveness. To this, one must add the uniqueness of the Farsi language, a delicious cuisine, and diverse folklore. Apart from its cultural attractions, Iran is a country of tremendous natural beauty with a wide range of climatic conditions where one can experience the magical solitude of deserts to the awe-inspiring snow-capped mountains, and, from sunny beaches to majestic plains. Iran is also advantageously located on the borders of Asia and the Middle East, and a short-haul distance from major European source markets. When one combines all these factors with the renowned warmth, friendliness and hospitality of the Iranian people, there is no doubt that Iran is a tourism destination attractive to tourists from all parts of the world and from all walks of life.

Dr. Varma reaffirmed UNWTO’s commitment to assist Iran in developing a tourism industry which is economically viable, financially profitable, environmentally sustainable and socio-culturally acceptable.

After the opening day in Tehran, international tour operators were taken on a tour of some of the famous tourist sites in the country – Kish Island, Esfahan and Shiraz. The tour operators got a first-hand opportunity to see the country’s rich natural and cultural heritage as well as high quality handicrafts. The Convention ended with a workshop on the last day in which the international tour operators provided their feedback to their Iranian counterparts and discussed possible itineraries and business deals.
Mr. Kefferstein travelled to Senegal in January to study for the project on Responsible Tourism Promotion in Saint Louis and Louga. He also made arrangements with the Ministry of Tourism to provide support to UNWTO for a workshop on developing a National Tourism Marketing Strategy. In March, he conducted a mission to South Africa, Mozambique and Tanzania. In South Africa, he met with tourism advisors from East and Southern Africa to discuss collaboration in new and ongoing ST-EP projects. In Mozambique, he held meetings with the Ministry of Tourism, SNV and local NGOs for the Community-based Lodges Training Programme, and made pre-project preparations for a new ST-EP project in the Inhambane Province. In Tanzania, he collaborated with a team from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, the Tanzania Tourist Board and SNV to prepare the implementation plan for a new ST-EP project which aims at enhancing and diversifying cultural tourism in Tanzania.

In May, Mr. Kefferstein travelled to Kenya, Ethiopia and Tanzania. In Kenya and Ethiopia, he made project preparations with the Ministry of Tourism and Development Agencies for the newly approved ST-EP projects in the country. In Ethiopia, he also reviewed the progress of the Konso Community-based Tourism Project, and held meetings with the World Bank to explore possibilities for joint interventions in the country. In Tanzania, he represented UNWTO at an ILO conference on “Employment Quality in the Tourism Sector”, and made a presentation on the ST-EP Programme.

Mr. Leijzer travelled to Ghana in February for meetings with the Ministry of Tourism, SNV and the Italian NGO Ricerca e Cooperazione to review the ST-EP project in Butre and Dixcove, and to make pre-project preparations for new ST-EP projects in the west and north of Ghana. He also made arrangements with the Ministry of Tourism to provide support to UNWTO for a workshop on developing a National Tourism Marketing Strategy. In March, he conducted a mission to South Africa, Mozambique and Tanzania. In South Africa, he met with tourism advisors from East and Southern Africa to discuss collaboration in new and ongoing ST-EP projects. In Mozambique, he held meetings with the Ministry of Tourism, SNV and local NGOs for the Community-based Lodges Training Programme, and made pre-project preparations for a new ST-EP project in the Inhambane Province. In Tanzania, he collaborated with a team from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, the Tanzania Tourist Board and SNV to prepare the implementation plan for a new ST-EP project which aims at enhancing and diversifying cultural tourism in Tanzania.

In May, Mr. Leijzer travelled to Albania in July and December to collaborate with the Italian Development Cooperation and with officials from the Ministry of Tourism to prepare a project proposal for tourism development in the Divjake Karavasta National Park. He further held meetings at the Ministry of Tourism and SNV to agree on the planning of project activities in the new ST-EP project in the Korca Region and gave a keynote presentation on the ST-EP Programme at a tourism conference in Korca.

Field missions carried out by Mr. Stéphane Kefferstein, former Project Coordinator and new Regional ST-EP Coordinator for West and Central Africa, were to Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Mali, Madagascar, Niger, and Senegal.

In January, Mr. Kefferstein travelled to Niger to identify and formulate 6 ST-EP projects in the Niger Valley in the south of the country. In February, he travelled to Mali to coordinate the implementation and assessment of several ST-EP projects in the country. In April, he travelled to Senegal to launch the first activities of the project on Responsible Tourism Promotion in Saint Louis and Louga. He also held meetings with the national expert in charge of the supply study for Senegal within the framework of the project on the development of a Marketing Programme to promote multi-destination itineraries in seven West African countries (Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Benin, Togo, Senegal and Ghana).

In May, he travelled to Cameroon to assess progress of the Sustainable Rural Development Project in Ebogo. He also formulated further the project on Ecotourism Development in Lake Aying which was to be presented at the meeting of the Board of Directors of the ST-EP Foundation in June. In August, he returned to Senegal to participate in the first Steering Committee Meeting and to coordinate the activities of the Responsible Tourism Promotion Project in Saint Louis and Louga. He also held meetings and discussions with representatives of the Senegalese Ministry of Tourism and representatives of the Italian Embassy and Italian NGOs to formulate the second phase of the Senegalese ST-EP project. He also travelled to Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso where he held meetings with the representatives of UEMOA (Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest Africaine) to present the West African Multi-destination Marketing Programme Project and to discuss how to strengthen the collaboration between UEMOA and UNWTO. He also met representatives of the Italian Cooperation to discuss the new ST-EP projects to be funded by the Government of Italy in West Africa.

Mr. Kefferstein arrived mid-September in Mali to start his new assignment as Regional ST-EP Coordinator for West and Central Africa. In October, he travelled to Madagascar to proceed with the final evaluation of the Community-based Ecotourism Project in Anjozorobe.

Ms. Satur, Project Coordinator of the UNWTO Development Assistance Department, focused her field missions in 2008 on the supervision of development assistance projects and the negotiations of new projects in Africa, Asia and Europe.

Her travel to Africa included missions to Rwanda in July, October and December, aimed at the launch and implementation of the Tourism Development Master Plan Project and finalization of a proposal for a ST-EP project for the country. She also travelled to Botswana in March, August and November to attend review meetings for the Tourism Policy Project, as well as to negotiate new projects on strengthening tourism statistics and development of community-based tourism. In November, she travelled to Mozambique to represent UNWTO at a meeting of SNV Regional Advisors to discuss the status of implementation of ST-EP projects within the partnership established by SNV and UNWTO.

In Asia, Ms. Satur travelled to Guilin, China in April and November to attend review meetings for the project on preparing a Diploma Programme in Hospitality Management for the Guilin Institute of Tourism. She travelled to Timor-Leste in July for the presentation of the draft Tourism Policy prepared by UNWTO. She also represented UNWTO at the “Trail of Civilization” regional cultural tourism event held in Yogyakarta, Indonesia in July. She attended a Review Meeting of the Tourism Development Master Plan Project for Punjab in Chandigarh, India, in June.

In Europe, she travelled to Baku, Azerbaijan to attend the Forum for Silk Road Tour Operators of Islamic Countries which was held in April.
New ST-EP Regional Coordinator for West Africa and Central Africa in Bamako, effective 15 September 2008

Stéphane Kefferstein has been placed at the disposal of the World Tourism Organization by the French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs since 1 May 2006. He has worked for over two years at the UNWTO Headquarters in Madrid, first in the Sustainable Development of Tourism Department and then in the Development Assistance Department, where he was in charge of the identification, processing and technical coordination of ST-EP projects in West Africa, Central Africa and Madagascar.

He knows the continent especially well because during nearly 10 years he supervised tourism development projects funded by the European Commission and French Cooperation in Madagascar and Mali.

He is now stationed back in Mali to continue, closer to the field, the mission of the regional coordination of the ST-EP Programme for West Africa and Central Africa. This assignment to Bamako was decided in close consultation between the French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs and the UNWTO, with a view to allowing this part of Africa to benefit even more from the ST-EP Programme.

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Vanessa Satur (third from right) during a consultation meeting with H.E. Mrs. Monique Nsanzabaganwa, Minister of Trade and Industry of Rwanda (third from left)

Group photo of the participants of the Forum for Silk Road Tour Operators of Islamic Countries in Sheki, Azerbaijan
In 2009, UNWTO will continue coordinating the implementation of ST-EP projects funded with contributions from the UNWTO ST-EP Foundation, SNV, and the Government of Italy. Specific attention will be paid to projects formulated under the new partnership with SNV and the UNWTO ST-EP Foundation, which were all launched in the second semester of 2008 and will last two to three years. Serious efforts will be made to take as many partners on board as possible in this new partnership, with a view to increasing the impacts by leveraging the available contributions with other resources.

Some new insights will be made for the implementation of ST-EP projects with more focus on knowledge management; value chain analysis; collaboration with the private sector; marketing, review and monitoring; and impact measurement. Supplementary resource mobilization will take place at local levels to add value to ongoing ST-EP project activities.

At the end of 2008, IUCN the Netherlands, the UNWTO ST-EP Foundation and UNWTO signed a Memorandum of Understanding to establish a ST-EP Biodiversity Small Grants Fund that will finance tourism projects in Cambodia, Kenya, Lao PDR, United Republic of Tanzania and Viet Nam, addressing poverty reduction and biodiversity conservation. In 2009, IUCN the Netherlands and UNWTO will closely collaborate to select and launch projects that will benefit from the available small grants.

The Government of Italy has been a major partner of UNWTO in the formulation and implementation of ST-EP projects. In 2009, UNWTO and the Italian Government will further strengthen their collaboration in the ST-EP Programme through the assignment of Mr. Mauro Pedalino, an expert of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to the UNWTO. Mr. Pedalino will provide active support to the Italian funded ST-EP projects. A new portfolio of ST-EP projects for West Africa and Central America has been submitted to the Italian Government, and will be implemented in 2009 after obtaining the Italian Government’s approval.

As far as Development Assistance projects are concerned, subject to availability of external funding, several initiatives are proposed to be launched in the first quarter of 2009 which include a mix of new projects, as well as further phases of recently completed projects.

With regard to new projects, one can highlight the Hotel Classification Project for Egypt while examples of projects which are scheduled to enter new phases of implementation include the Implementation of a Tourism Satellite Account for Botswana; Phase Two of the Design and Development of a Diploma Programme on Hospitality Management for the Guilin Institute of Tourism; Implementation of the National Sustainable Tourism Strategy for FYR Macedonia; and Tourism Master Plan for Punjab, India.

Several of the current ongoing projects for 2008 will continue and are scheduled for completion in 2009. These include, amongst others, the Rwanda Tourism Master Plan and the Tourism Satellite Account Project for Oman.

UNWTO is also currently negotiating the launching of new tourism development projects such as a Master Plan for the Sunderbans region in India.
Contact us

Member States are encouraged to make use of UNWTO Development Assistance by sending in their requests for technical assistance. Please revert to us with the details of the nature and scope of the technical assistance which your country requires. Once your request is received, the Department of Development Assistance would first carry out a technical assistance mission, financed from UNWTO’s own resources, to identify and evaluate your specific technical assistance needs, and then, formulate appropriate project proposals to be submitted to various donor agencies.

To send in your request for technical assistance, please contact the UNWTO Development Assistance Department via fax at (34) 91 571 3733 or via e-mail at dev-assistance@unwto.org.

Organizations that would like to explore how to participate in the ST-EP Programme can also contact the UNWTO Development Assistance Department by e-mail at st-epprogramme@unwto.org, providing details of how they would like to join the initiative.

Publications

For more reports, publications, and latest news on development assistance activities and the ST-EP Programme, please visit our web site at:

http://www.unwto.org/develop
http://www.unwto.org/step
The WORLD TOURISM ORGANIZATION (UNWTO), a specialized agency of the United Nations, is the only intergovernmental organization that serves as a global forum for tourism policy and issues. Its Members include 161 countries and territories as well as 375 Affiliate Members from the public and private sectors. UNWTO’s mission is to promote and develop tourism as a significant means of fostering international peace and understanding, economic development and international trade.