

**TURTLE CONSERVATION, ECOTOURISM AND
SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
JULY 28TH - 29 TH 2009
THE LEARNING RESOURCE CENTRE, UWI ST AUGUSTINE**

**DAY TWO – WEDNESDAY, JULY 29, 2009
Learning Resource Centre, UWI, St. Augustine**

Working sessions on thematic

The Session conducted a SWOT Analysis and recommendations were made.

Strengths

1. People
2. Natural resource base of T&T
3. Interest (mutual)
4. Geographic position of T&T (a hub)
5. Strong online presence
6. Size – big enough to have diversity but small enough to see them all
7. A number of community success stories
8. Funding – Green fund opportunities
9. Highly experienced group of conservation and ecotourism guides
10. University students eager to do research
11. Highly motivated community members
12. High presence of turtles
13. World class accommodation
14. Unique culture & communities
15. Diversity of product
16. Data collection and guide books

Weaknesses

1. Distance in the Caribbean.
2. Negative attitude/ Practices towards the environment
3. We have not defined our carrying capacity
4. Criteria for accessing the Green Fund is difficult to meet
5. Unattainable certification / Standards
6. Training and education
7. Lack of awareness of Government
8. Government Committees made up of only commercial stakeholders.
9. Poor data collection and sharing
10. Highly demotivated community members
11. Poor movement of information/ research between University and communities
12. Lack of compliance to International treaties

13. Lack of understanding of ecotourism by Policy makers
14. Seasonality of Turtles
15. Lack of adequate Infrastructure
16. Poor Institutional and legal framework
17. Not enough “Eco” accommodations
18. Outward movement of community youths
19. Lack of consultation, communication and collaboration among the sectors palyers
20. Rivalry animosity among community groups
21. Poor sustainability of business model due to lack of government support and incentives
22. Inadequate and ineffective focused marketing initiatives especially by TDC
23. TDC does not understand community or ecotourism

Threats

1. Illegal activities – drugs etc in terms of hunting and poaching
2. Criminal activities including those against tourist
3. A perception that money made from tours goes into particular hands and this affects buy in
4. Cultural pollution
5. Exploitation of knowledge and disregard of intellectual property
6. Bogus / Fraudulent ecolodge and guides
7. Poor marketing
8. Government approved degradation of the environment
9. Climate change
10. Loss of habitat and species
11. By catch

Opportunities

1. Turtles/ecotourism is now popular globally
2. Untapped markets
3. More youth programmes that must be attractive
4. Capacity building for communities
5. Advocacy and making of linkages
6. Alliances between government, private sector and communities
7. Ecotourism is one of the pillars for economic diversification
8. Signatory to international treaties
9. Carbon sequestration as ecotourism business
10. Green / sustainable economies
11. Climate change
12. Untapped sporting and cultural events e.g. coast to coast Phagwa

Recommendations

PRIORITY 1

1. Educate and create awareness of the population to what is available and how to get it.
2. Empowering of people in communities through training and Capacity Building.
3. Total Involvement of people especially at the Community level.
4. Co management agreements with community groups must be an aggressive strategy.
5. Develop Final Ecotourism Policy and get it approved.
6. Give incentives for use of environmentally friendly solutions eg. Solar energy, biogas ect.
7. Get Green Fund going
8. Help NGO's / CBO's develop and write projects to meet the criteria to access Green Fund
9. Turtle community representative should be represented on National Tourism Committee.
10. TDC needs to be more focused on ecotourism programmes especially at the community level.

Other Recommendations

1. Mentorship programmes with the youth especially in the area of artisan crafts.
2. Introduce a craft training center and the TDC must fund its operation.
3. Identify Natural Resources (Create an Inventory)
4. Expose people to natural products using a variety of media.
5. Create incentives to get people interested in developing ecotourism and conservation – “CREATE PASSION”
6. Develop Aggressive, targeted and responsible marketing.
7. Improve substance of online presence; uses the technology e.g. face book, twitter, myspace.
8. Use National Icons/ festivals.
9. Utilize the Diaspora and networks with organizations abroad.
10. Use our size strategically in our marketing/ development of tours.
11. Local and International marketing of success stories.
12. Get University Students partnering with communities in research.
13. Support Conservation and Green Initiatives especially at the Community level.
14. Standards/ Certification – increase Service quality.
15. Define carrying capacity.
16. Rationalize, regularize and make transparent the certification standards process.
17. Incentives for true eco accommodations
18. Create tours around everyday community life.
19. Collect data and make available local guide book.
20. Guidebook and data should be easily available.

