

INTERNATIONAL TASK FORCE ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

THE MARRAKECH PROCESS

The Marrakech Process is a dynamic multi-stakeholder platform to support: 1) the implementation of projects and strategies on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) and 2) the elaboration of a Global Framework for Action on SCP – the so called the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on SCP (10YFP). The process responds to the call of the WSSD Johannesburg Plan of Implementation to develop a 10YFP to support regional and national initiatives to accelerate the shift towards SCP patterns, thus de-linking economic growth from environmental degradation. The proposal for a 10YFP will be reviewed by the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) during the 2010/11 two-year cycle.

UNEP and UN DESA are the leading agencies of this global process, with an active participation of national governments, development agencies, business and industry, civil society and other stakeholders. The first meeting devoted to developing the 10YFP took place in Marrakech, Morocco in June 2003, hence the name.

THE TASK FORCES

The Marrakech Task Forces are multi-stakeholder mechanisms of the Marrakech Process, building North-South cooperation and implementing concrete projects at national and regional levels. They are voluntary initiatives led by governments in cooperation with various partners from developing and developed countries, who commit themselves to carrying out a set of concrete activities focusing on specific themes of SCP. The Task Forces main objectives are to develop, test and build capacity to apply SCP policies tools, share knowledge and good practices, and contribute to the elaboration of the 10YFP.

To date, seven Task Forces have been created: Cooperation with Africa (led by Germany), Education for Sustainable Consumption (led by Italy), Sustainable Building and Construction (led by Finland), Sustainable Lifestyles (led by Sweden), Sustainable Products (led by United Kingdom), Sustainable Public Procurement (led by Switzerland) and Sustainable Tourism Development (led by France).

ITF-STD OBJECTIVES

The International Task Force on Sustainable Tourism Development (ITF-STD) was officially created at the UNEP Governing Council in Dubai, United Arab Emirates in February 2006, when France announced its willingness and commitment to initiate and chair this International Task Force under the Marrakech Process.

Its main objectives are 1) to encourage the implementation of actions that promote sustainable tourism through the development of support tools and 2) present new initiatives and support existing ones that may inspire pilot projects and good practices in other countries. The ITF-STD focuses its work on four priorities:

- Increasing awareness of the links between tourism and climate change. On the one hand, to anticipate and adapt to the impacts of climate change on tourist destinations, and on the other, to increase the sense of responsibility of the tourism sector on its contribution to greenhouse gas emissions, with the aim of reducing its footprint.
- Increasing awareness of the impacts tourism has on the environment and biodiversity, focusing on prevention initiatives, notably in protected and ecologically sensitive areas.
- Protecting and showcasing the world's cultural and natural heritage by promoting the sustainable management of resources and fostering employment in tourism destinations, particularly in developing countries.
- Promoting adequate governance at all levels to guide sustainable tourism development, taking into account local conditions and the diversity of stakeholders.

OUTCOMES OF THE ITF-STD

The Marrakech Task Force on Sustainable Tourism has completed a 3-year programme of work that resulted in the development of capacity building tools, policy recommendations and guidelines, new partnerships and networks on sustainable tourism. More specifically, the Task Force members have submitted 27 projects to the chair of the ITF-STD, the French government. These projects have been developed under the auspices of, initiated by or accelerated by the Task Force. In cooperation with the ITF-STD, these projects have generated more than € 3.5 million worth of activities on sustainable tourism, promoted significant social and environmental impacts at all levels, and leveraged a number of other local and national SCP and tourism related projects.

INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS OF THE ITF-STD

Four high level meetings and one International Task Force Steering Committee meeting have been convened to discuss sustainable tourism issues, define future projects, and analyse and evaluate current programmes of the Task Force on Sustainable Tourism Development (ITF-STD). They are:



International Task Force on Sustainable Tourism Development

- Paris, France: 18th-19th September 2006

The First International Meeting defined the main areas of the Task Force's Work Programme and served as a forum to engage and obtain commitments from the participating countries and organisations towards specific activities. The members agreed to orient their work towards six areas: 1) Task Force management; 2) policy tools; 3) good practices; 4) education and capacity building; 5) strategies and pilot projects; and 6) information, communication and networking.

- Paris, France: 12th-14th March 2007

The main objective of the Second International Meeting was to agree on the Task Force's Work Programme. A programme of work focusing on specific areas with concrete deliverables was designed and in addition, defined a set of projects and activities to be developed to create specific outputs from the Task Force. These projects and activities cover: 1) capacity building, 2) policy tools, 3) corporate social and environmental responsibility, 4) local governance, 5) standards and certification process for sustainable tourism, 6) financing sustainable tourism, 7) protection and promotion of natural and cultural heritage, and 8) education and communication. Examples of good practices were submitted by Task Force member countries including Bahamas, Croatia, Costa Rica, Morocco, and the US and from NGOs including Rainforest Alliance, Tourism Concern, ECOTRANS, WWF and Tour Operators Initiative. They are available at the Task Force's website.

- Paris, France: 10th-12th December 2007

The Third International Meeting reviewed the current challenges related to the financing of sustainable tourism development, explored opportunities and strengthened partnerships with multi-lateral and bilateral financing institutions and donors. It also investigated the possibility of establishing a standardized set of operational criteria for financing sustainable tourism projects that can be used to guide donor investments. One of the major achievements of this meeting was to provide the platform for financial institutions, private investors, international organisations, and developing destinations to discuss principles on sustainable investments and development projects in the tourism sector. The Sustainable Investment and Financing in Tourism (SIFT) network was conceived and discussed at this meeting.

- São José and Arenal, Costa Rica: 9th-11th June 2008

A milestone of the Fourth International Meeting was the drafting of the first set of policy recommendations to support sustainable tourism development that are structured around a simplified life cycle of the tourism value chain. These recommendations are scheduled to be presented at the CSD in 2010/2011. In relation to investments and financing, the Task Force gained further support from participating financial institutions and organizations, such as the Inter-American Development Bank/Multi-lateral Investment Fund (IADB/MIF). The World Bank Group communicated its decision to host the launch of the SIFT Network at the World Bank's headquarters in 2009.

- The Task Force's Steering Committee (Bamako, Mali 20th-22nd October 2008)

During this meeting, in the margins of the International Forum for Responsible Tourism (FITS), organized by two Task Force members, France and Mali, the policy recommendations were further developed. The members of the Steering Committee also initiated the discourse on the future of the initiative to be presented at the next Task Force meeting.

- The 5th International Meeting is being held in Marrakech, Morocco: 19th- 22nd April 2009, aiming especially to finalize the policy recommendations on sustainable tourism development which will be presented at the CSD in the 2010/2011 session when the 10YFP on Sustainable Consumption and Production will be discussed. It will also consult the members on the future of the Task Force and how to transform this initiative into a United Nations Sustainable Development Partnership.

MEMBERS

- *Chair of the Task Force:* France.

- *Member countries:* Bahamas, Brazil, Cape Verde, Cambodia, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, France, Germany, India, Madagascar, Mali, Morocco, New Zealand and Norway.

- *Partner countries:* Australia, UK, and USA.

- *Organisations:* United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO); United Nations Conference for Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), European Commission (EC), Plan Bleu, and The Central American Integration System (SICA).

- *NGOs:* World Wildlife Fund (WWF), IUCN, Rainforest Alliance, Roteiros de Charme Hotel Association, The International Ecotourism Society (TIES), Tourism Concern, and Ecotrans.

- *International business associations and companies:* International Organization for Standardisation (ISO), International Hotels and Restaurants Association, Federation Universelle des Agences de Voyage (FUAV), Bureau International du Tourisme Social (BITS), Tour Operators Initiative (TOI), Association of Corporate Travel Executives (ACTE) and International Institute for Peace through Tourism (IIPT).

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