International Seminar on Destination Management – New Challenges, New Solutions

Guatemala City (Guatemala), May 15th 2019

Concept note

I. Background

In recent years, there has been increasing recognition of the need for sound and planned management of tourism destinations. From traditional marketing and promotion boards the trend is for Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) to become leading organizations with a broader mandate which includes strategic planning, coordination and management of a full range of activities within an adequate governance structure with the integration of different stakeholders operating in the destination under common goals. Destinations where such an organization is not still in place are increasingly creating or plan to create a DMO as the organizational entity to lead the way.

These developments stem from the urge to achieve an optimal management of the destination which ensures that the various authorities, all relevant stakeholders and professionals are coordinated by a leading entity under a coherent strategy and a collective vision in pursuit of a common goal, the competitiveness and sustainability of the destination. This approach should also engage the residents and the local community in the tourism policy and decision-making process and its implementation in a truly Public (P) – Private (P) – Community (C) approach.

Destination management takes a strategic approach to link-up the sometimes very isolated and occasionally diverging elements for the better planning and management of the destination calling for a coalition of many organizations and interests working under a coherent strategy in pursuit of this common goal led and coordinated by the DMO.

Within the framework of the 64th meeting of the UNWTO Regional Commission for the Americas, an event that annually gathers the Ministers of Tourism of the Americas Region, the UNWTO organizes this International Seminar on Destination Management – New Challenges, New Solutions with the aim to address the new challenges in destination management and the role of Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) whose remit is being enlarged as part of this evolution from promotion and marketing to a holistic destination managing approach.

II. Objectives

The Seminar will discuss current challenges and opportunities facing destination management at national and local levels including the changing role of Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) and the development of smart destinations, through the:
- exchange of ideas and good practices in destination management by bringing together decision makers and public stakeholders from the Americas involved in the formulation and implementation of tourism policies and promoting public-private partnerships;
- discussion of the specific challenges related to urban tourism planning and management;
- promotion of strategic tools to strengthen institutional capacities and governance of DMOs and sharing experiences with one of the first DMOs recently awarded with UNWTO.QUEST Certification;
- discussion of the concept, challenges and opportunities of building a ‘smart destination’;
- analysis of different governance models and structures and new ways of thinking and collaborating to ensure a truly Public (P) – Private (P) – Community (C) approach.

The Seminar will address questions such as:

- What are the new challenges for tourism policy makers and how are they adapting to ensure an integrated destination management approach and secure public-private partnerships as well as public/public cooperation?
- What are the main challenges that DMOs are facing and how are they addressing them?
- How are DMOs adapting to changing market conditions?
- How can DMO’s align their policies and actions with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?
- Which are the key performance areas in destination management and how they can be measured and monitored?
- How can destinations maximize visitor value while ensuring the competitiveness and sustainability of the destination in the long run and catalyze the benefits for the local economy and the residents?
- What is a ‘smart destination’ and what does that entail for DMOs and policy makers?
- How to maximize the use of big data and technology to better plan, measure and manage tourism?
- How can governance be reinforced at destination level? What is the ‘ideal’ tourism governance model?