

Challenge to Sustainable Tourism in the Caribbean

- The health of Caribbean economies is closely related to the health of its tourism industry since the Caribbean is tourism-dependent
- Enhancing sustainable tourism would promote economic development, poverty eradication and improvement of quality of life
- Tourism growth & sustainability in the Caribbean are facing Health, Safety and Environmental Sanitation (HSE) threats, including disease outbreaks/crises, resulting in declined tourism arrivals
- High and increasing visitor arrivals increases the potential for visitors and locals transmitting or acquiring diseases from each other, typified by H1N1 in 2009, Chikungunya in 2013 and Zika in 2015
- Reduced tourist numbers can contribute to adverse economic and social burden on Caribbean economies

The SOLUTION

- In January 2014, the Caribbean Public Health Agency in collaboration with the Caribbean Tourism Organization established the **Regional Tourism and Health Program** to address the HSE threats to tourism
- The aim is to improve the health & safety of visitors and locals and thereby contribute to Caribbean tourism being more competitive, resilient and sustainable

KEY BENEFITS:

- Fewer, less costly outbreaks/ adverse health events in tourism
- Safer, healthier, better quality tourism product and destination
- Increase in the reputation, comparative advantage, hence marketability of Caribbean tourism
- Enhanced capacity in food safety, health & environment sanitation
- Industry-wide, real time tourism early warning and response surveillance system to avoid /reduce illness spread and negative publicity

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Components of the Regional Tourism & Health Program (THP)

The THP will address the HSE threats impacting on sustainable tourism in the Caribbean through an integrated approach of combining surveillance, training and standards.

- **Surveillance:** Tourism Health Information, Surveillance, Monitoring (early warning) and Response system (THMRS)
- **Capacity building:** Food & Environmental Safety Training & Certification
- **Standards:** Health, Safety & Environment Standards & Certification
- **Healthy workforce:** Health and Safety in the Tourism Workplace

Regional THMRS system: Web based real time tourism surveillance system for early alerts and response to negative events; regional protocol/guidelines for managing illnesses in tourism for stay-over (hotels/guesthouses) and cruise ships arrivals for standardised response and users manuals and training to assist countries in improving their laboratory methods to test for pathogen and to respond to any HSE outbreaks in hotels and cruise ships.

Health, Safety and Environmental Sanitation (HSE) Standards and Certification

HSE standards are crucial for promoting healthier, safer better quality tourism products. This component will review national, regional and foreign best practices and update the existing regional standards to meet current regional & international HSE tourism standards and work with Regional and International Standards Organization to develop a recognized certification system.

Food Safety and Environmental Sanitation Training and Certification

This will include: advanced food and environmental safety and certification; HACCP, investigation, prevention and control of outbreaks, department specific food safety training and pathogen-specific training.

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