



TOUR OPERATORS INITIATIVE

FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Activity Report 2008

In 2008, the Tour Operators' Initiative for Sustainable Tourism Development (TOI) started the implementation of the Mesoamerican Reef Eco-region project, the first joint activity identified by the cooperation with WWF.

Two new members joined the TOI. TLB Destinations, incoming Lebanese tour operator, became member in January 2008. To participate in, and contribute to local development initiatives, TLB founded CIFA (Centre d'Insertion par la Formation et l'Activité), a non-profit organization, which offers practical training for university students; social development for the unemployed; job opportunities to improve living standard of local community; improved relations between private and public sectors; assistance in the establishment of micro-enterprises; and intervention to support deprived school children and enable them to participate in TLB's outings.

Transat, a vertically-integrated international tour operator which operates from Canada and Europe, joined the TOI in July 2008. It offers a variety of holiday travel products, including packages, tours and cruises to more than 60 destination countries the world over, with a focus on Europe, Mexico, the Caribbean, countries of the Mediterranean Basin and Asia. It has 6,000 employees, as well as subsidiaries and facilities in eight countries, and provides dream vacations to approximately 2.5 million travellers each year. The company's Board of Directors formally adopted a broad sustainable tourism policy.

TOI members approved unanimously at the Annual General Meeting, held in Geneva on 27 October 2008, the future strategy developed by Kaspar Hess, Special Advisor to the Board, with TOI Board members. The TOI will soon open up to entities other than tour operators while keeping the main focus on the tour operating business. These new entities are namely affiliate members, key partners and key sponsoring partners. The latter, by becoming owners/co-owners of a project, would allow the TOI to work more in destinations and create an extensive projects portfolio.

The new organizational structure represents a key opportunity for the TOI to renew its image; work more in destinations; cope with new emerging needs of the travel and tourism industry and safeguard their interest through sustainable tourism. This future strategy will be implemented by the Board over 2009.

COOPERATION WITH DESTINATIONS

TOI Cooperation with WWF

After meetings with key local partners, and together with the Mesoamerican Reef Tourism Initiative (MARTI), a joint Initiative of Conservation International and Amigos de Sian Ka'an Riviera, a Workshop on Building Partnerships for Sustainable Tourism Business and Biodiversity Conservation was held on 25 June 2008 in Playa del Carmen.

The Workshop, facilitated by Gabor Vereczi, Chief, Environment and Quality, Sustainable Development Department of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), started up an international dialogue with local key stakeholders and tourism source markets on sustainable business in Riviera and Costa Maya, aimed at developing a strategic action plan for the implementation of the **Mesoamerican Reef Eco-region project**.



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Representatives from most agencies at the local and state levels, including several NGOs, local tourism business stakeholders and federal agencies such as the National Commission of Protected Natural Areas (Comisión Nacional de Areas Naturales Protegidas, CONANP) and Congress representatives actively participated.



Mr. Gabor Vereczi, Chief, Environment and Quality, Sustainable Development Department, UNWTO, facilitated the TOI workshop in Mexico

At the very beginning of 2009, first meetings with key partners will be held for developing and implementing the **Andaman Sea Eco-region** project. The tourism industry is expecting the number of tourists in Thailand to considerably grow. In particular after the tsunami it would be crucial to influence the sustainable development of the coast.

A third destination in the **Mediterranean region** will be soon identified.

Side (Turkey)

The TOI is planning for 2009 a Workshop with the participation of interested business stakeholders coming from other Turkish regions with the main aim of duplicating the Side project in other Turkish destinations. A follow-up visit to Side will also take place.

SPREADING THE WORD ON SUSTAINABILITY

In 2008, the Tour Operators' Initiative has organized and participated in many events, such as:

- PRESENTATION OF THE TOI/WWF COOPERATION AGREEMENT AT THE FAIR TRADE REISEPAVILLON, IN THE STUTTGART NEW EXHIBITION GROUNDS, STUTTGART, GERMANY, 18 TO 20 JANUARY 2008
- MEETINGS WITH STRATEGIC PARTNERS (TOI/WWF/MARTI MESOAMERICAN REEF ECOREGION PROJECT) AND FIELD VISIT, PLAYA DEL CARMEN AND CANCUN, MEXICO, 24 TO 30 JANUARY 2008
- MEETINGS WITH HIGH-LEVEL OFFICIALS AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL (TOI/WWF/MARTI MESOAMERICAN REEF ECOREGION PROJECT), MEXICO CITY, MEXICO, 1 TO 2 APRIL 2008
- PACIFIC ASIA TRAVEL ASSOCIATION (PATA) CEO CHALLENGE CONFRONTING CLIMATE CHANGE, ORGANIZED BY THE PACIFIC ASIA TRAVEL ASSOCIATION (PATA), BANGKOK, THAILAND, 29 TO 30 APRIL 2008
- LA CAIXA RESPONSIBLE TOURISM DAYS / IMPROVING THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES THROUGH TOURISM ACTIVITY, ORGANIZED BY VIA AND LA CAIXA FOUNDATION, BARCELONA, SPAIN, 27 TO 28 MAY 2008
- TOI/WWF/MARTI WORKSHOP ON BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM BUSINESS AND BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION, PLAYA DEL CARMEN, MEXICO, 25 JUNE 2008
- TOI MEMBERS, WWF AND MARTI/AMIGOS DE SIAN KA'AN REPRESENTATIVES MET WITH LOCAL TOUR OPERATORS, HOTELIERS, THE DIRECTOR OF THE RIVIERA MAYA HOTELS ASSOCIATION (ASOCIACIÓN DE HOTELES DE



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- LA RIVIERA MAYA, AHRM), PLAYA DEL CARMEN, MEXICO, 26 JUNE 2008
- VI MEETING OF THE SUSTAINABLE TOURISM NETWORK OF COLOMBIA "SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS, SUCCESSFUL DESTINATIONS" (VI ENCUENTRO DE LA RED DE TURISMO SOSTENIBLE DE COLOMBIA "EMPRESAS SOSTENIBLES, DESTINOS EXITOSOS"), SANTA MARTA, COLOMBIA, 3 TO 5 SEPTEMBER 2008
 - PANEL ON CULTURAL HERITAGE BETWEEN CONSERVATION AND MARKETING AT THE INTERNATIONAL BOOK FAIR, FRANKFURT, GERMANY, 18 OCTOBER 2008
 - TOI ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, GENEVA, SWITZERLAND, 27 OCTOBER 2008
 - EXPERTS WORKSHOP ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AT WORLD HERITAGE SITES (WHS) / UNESCO-UNWTO, BLATTEN B. NATERS, SWITZERLAND, 28 TO 30 OCTOBER 2008
 - MEETING WITH WWF MEDPO AND WWF ITALY, ROME, 21 NOVEMBER 2008
 - SECOND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM, RICCIONE, ITALY, 28 TO 29 NOVEMBER 2008

TOI/WWF CORE GROUP MEETINGS

- COLOGNE, GERMANY, 10 APRIL 2008
- HAMBURG, GERMANY, 6 JUNE 2008
- HELSINKI, FINLAND, 4 JULY 2008
- ROME, ITALY, 20 NOVEMBER 2008

BOARD MEMBERS MEETINGS:

- BASEL, SWITZERLAND, 22 FEBRUARY 2008
- HELSINKI, FINLAND, 3 JULY 2008
- MUNICH, GERMANY, 26 SEPTEMBER 2008
- FRANKFURT, GERMANY, 12 DECEMBER 2008

TOI STRATEGIC MEETINGS:

- COLOGNE, GERMANY, 11 APRIL 2008
- COLOGNE, GERMANY, 3 TO 4 JUNE 2008
- MADRID, SPAIN, 18 TO 19 SEPTEMBER 2008

MEETINGS OF THE CODE:

- EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING, PARIS, FRANCE, 8 FEBRUARY 2008
- ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, BERLIN, GERMANY, 8 MARCH 2008
- STCOM AND EXCOM MEETINGS, FLORENCE, ITALY, 23 APRIL 2008

For more information on TOI: Tour Operators' Initiative (TOI) Secretariat

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