

## Type II Partnership Proposal presented by the French Government

### **TITLE: Sustainable tourism for sustainable development in emerging countries**

#### **PARTNERS:**

Sponsors of the initiative (complete address):

ARTODEV, Agence Régionale d'Appui et Conseil en Tourisme et Développement Regional (Regional Agency for Support and Consulting on Tourism and Development) in Burkina Faso

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Partners: Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Department of International Cooperation and Development [DGCID]/Department of Development and Technical Cooperation [DCT]/[European Business School]EAP), Ministry of Public Amenities, Transport, Housing, Tourism and Maritime Affairs (Department of Tourism, Mission for International Affairs), French Agency for Tourist Engineering (AFIT)

Associated participants: "Fair tourism" group within the French Platform for Fair Trade (this group unites associations and NGOs committed to finding a solution to this problem), Permanent Conference on Rural Tourism, ELVELLAH (Mauritanian NGO), CROQ'Nature (registered travel association), etc.

#### **DESCRIPTION:**

##### **A brief description and connection with Agenda 21 or the Millennium Declaration:**

In global terms, international tourism is now the leading source of export revenues. For many countries, it is also an indispensable means of acquiring foreign currency, even though studies agree that in the case of developing countries, less than an estimated 30% of this revenue remains in the host country.

Nevertheless, this is often the mirage on which a number of developing countries base their assumptions of rapid development. Far from being a factor in sustainable development, however, tourism frequently fosters inequality and instability in these countries in the same way that a heavy industrial activity is virtually inaccessible to all emerging countries, bearing in mind the sizeable investment required. A lack of training structures often results in a workforce that is both inadequate and unskilled. These inequalities are exacerbated by environmental and socio-cultural pollution and the perverse effects of tourism, which are all the more apparent in countries where major differences exist between the host populations and their tourist clientele.

However, given the existing potential in these countries in terms of natural as well as cultural and human resources on the one hand, and the very marked increase in clientele looking for a "different holiday experience" on the other, promoting a controlled tourist industry may provide these countries with a very worthwhile lever for sustainable development.

The development of sustainable tourism must be based on three fundamental criteria: 1 – active involvement of host populations in a tourist industry that respects their cultural identity, environment and socio-economic interests, 2 – preservation of biological diversity, and 3 – economic viability of the initiatives undertaken.

From this perspective, the development of tourism must be totally integrated into the country in such a way as to foster local development, so that local populations can, on the one hand, gain understanding of the basic mechanisms necessary to assume responsibility for managing tourist projects and on the other hand, receive a significant share of the profits.

This sustainable tourism must act as a catalyst for multiple jobholding, encourage social and regional innovation, be adapted to the country's cultural roots, and facilitate the preservation of natural and other types of heritage.

Although these goals have led to increasing initiatives aimed at providing an answer to the problem, this type of tourism remains in short supply, whereas criticism and disappointment are frequently voiced regarding not only the reality of the product offer but also the application of qualitative criteria and even the contribution of tourism to the sustainable development of emerging countries.

In developed countries, however, and particularly in France, alternative solutions, initially seen as marginal, have made it possible to investigate new, less aggressive and more sustainable approaches to tourism that have not only met with public approval but also contributed to advances in the tourist industry's thinking and practices. These approaches involve rural and social tourism, which have in common a commitment to the tourist project's human dimension and its interest in the host countries from the viewpoint of overall development. For some time now, experiments based on these initial successes have

been under way, particularly in Africa.

The project's purpose is to use experiments currently being carried out in various countries in order to analyze the conditions conducive to developing forms of tourism in line with the stated sustainability criteria, and to suggest methodologies for implementing these new approaches as well as for their follow-up and evaluation. This will involve transforming experimentation into development programmes for emerging countries and offering validated methodological tools to national authorities.

The first phase will consist of identifying experiments in progress, selecting the "best practices," and analysing and evaluating them in order to identify the appropriate model-building parameters. This "expertise" will be able to make use of comparative data from similar experiments carried out in developed countries, particularly in fragile rural areas.

The financial and methodological assistance for these experiments will make it possible to verify, during a second phase, the feasibility of their increased use and of their ability to have a greater impact on the diversification and qualitative improvement of tourism in these countries.

At the same time, the project will develop follow-up and evaluation methods that take into account notions of sustainability as well as the qualitative and intangible aspects of the impact made by this type of tourism on populations and areas, culminating in the creation of systems for monitoring the impact of tourism in the countries concerned.

This action will result in the creation of a permanent forum or platform for exchanges and technical assistance between all operators in this sector, in order to facilitate the dissemination of these experiences, the use of tools specifically adapted to dealing with this problem (training, assistance, advice, expertise, etc.) and the organized marketing of this sustainable tourist offer in domestic and international markets.

Once the pilot operations have been analyzed, evaluated and then modelled around a common core that can be adapted to different geographical contexts, the project aims to promote the method and tools with the various national and local authorities in emerging countries, in order to compile a list of suitable areas, and implement the methodology for introducing a sustainable tourism project to support sustainable development.

The project will directly benefit village communities involved in developing this form of tourism as well as local authorities, who should enjoy an increase in revenues from tourism and a greatly enhanced image abroad. It will indirectly benefit customers, who will have access to better information about the products available and a more diversified offer, and who, because of the labels that can be used, will have greater confidence in the redeployment of monetary flows towards local populations.

The links with Agenda 21 concern in particular:

- Fighting poverty through the development of economic activities;
- Conserving and promoting biodiversity;
- Developing cultures and the cultural heritage of emerging countries;
- Promoting sustainable development by revisiting a cross-cutting economic sector;
- Implementing a mild form of globalization that encourages exchanges.

#### **Expected results:**

The anticipated results are an increase in this type of tourist product offer, in the number of tourists visiting emerging countries and in the revenues of village communities; the implementation of development plans in these communities; and a growing number of private companies offering this type of product.

The cultural and natural heritage of these countries will be recognized. Local populations will be better able to take responsibility for their development and will benefit from exchanges and transfers resulting from contacts with customers.

#### **ESTIMATED TIMETABLE for implementation:**

Project feasibility study completed in September 2002  
Project launch end of 2002

#### **EXPECTED MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION:**

Financial assistance of 1,220,000 euros from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

**Additional information is available on the web site: [www.diplomatie.fr](http://www.diplomatie.fr)**