

Report of the Preparatory Meeting of the Donors Conference for the Financing of the Regional Project on Sustainable Tourism Development in a Network of Cross-Border Parks and Protected Areas in West Africa

27-28 January 2011, Casablanca - Kingdom of Morocco

The Steering Committee of the Regional Project on "Sustainable Tourism Development in a Network of Cross-Border Parks and Protected Areas in West Africa" met on 27 and 28 January 2011 at the Headquarters of the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT) in Casablanca (Morocco) . This technical meeting was devoted to the preparations of the Donors Conference for the Financing of the project, to be held on 27 and 28 May 2011 in Dakar - Republic of Senegal.

This event was preceded by a restricted coordination meeting held on 26th January 2011 (ICDT/UNWTO/ Regional Coordinator of the Project).

This meeting was attended by:

The following Representatives of the Project's Member States:

Republic of Guinea (Regional Coordinator of the Project), Republic of Mali, Islamic Republic of Mauritania, Republic of Niger and Republic of Senegal.

➤ **The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO):**

- Director of the Regional Programme of the UNWTO for Africa

➤ **And the following OIC institutions:**

▪ **The IDB Group:**

- The IDB Regional Office in Rabat.

▪ **The Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT)**

(The list of participants is enclosed herewith in Annex 1)

It should be noted in this respect that SESRIC has not sent any Representative to this meeting despite the invitation sent to it and to the other members of the Steering Committee.

I/ OPENING SESSION:

The meeting was chaired by Mr. Houcine Rahmouni, Counsellor to the Director General of the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade.

- In his welcoming address, Mr. Houcine RAHMOUNI welcomed all participants on behalf of the Director General. Then he highlighted the efforts of the OIC to strengthen cooperation between Member States in the field of tourism through the organization of regular conferences of the Tourism Ministers of the OIC, Tourism fairs and forums. He then reaffirmed the interest of the OIC Secretary General, Dr. Pr. Ekmeleddin IHSANOGLU in this Regional Project.

He finally expressed satisfaction at the excellent work achieved by the project steering committee and in particular, the finalization of the feasibility study and the portfolio document of funding opportunities for submission to donors and funders to tackle the executive phase of the project in the best possible conditions.

II/HOLDING OF THE MEETING

After the opening ceremony, the Committee considered and adopted the following agenda of the meeting:

1. Report of the Regional Coordinator of the Project;
2. Review of the Portfolio of funding opportunities to be submitted to Donors;
3. Review of the list of partners / Donors and Funders to be invited to this conference;
4. Scale of distribution of the expenses of the Donors Conference;
5. Organisation of the Donors Conference in Dakar: Format (Workshop and B2Bmeetings);
6. Draft Programme of the Conference
7. Practical organization modalities (Letters of invitation, visas, transport and accommodation, press ...);
8. Setting up of an electronic platform for exchanges between the parties concerned.
9. Date and venue of the next meeting

1. Report of the Regional Coordinator of the Project:

- The Regional Project Coordinator, Mr. Mohamed SAKHO, has in his speech conveyed the cordial greetings and wishes of full success to the proceedings of this meeting of HE Mrs. BALDE Hajda Mariama Bah, Minister of Hotel Business, Tourism and Handicrafts of the Republic of Guinea and reaffirmed the support and commitment of the Republic of Guinea to spare no effort in cooperation with recipient countries of the project, to make this project a living reality.

He added that this meeting marks an important turning point in the implementation of the project. In fact, with the approval and validation in December 2009 in Madrid by the committee and the project's Members States of the various reports worked out within the framework of the feasibility study of the project, he can tackle the phase of donors and funders mobilization in order to start its implementation.

He concluded his speech by expressing his deep gratitude to the Director General of ICDT for his generous hospitality and excellent working conditions to facilitate the proceedings of the meeting.

2. Review of the portfolio of funding opportunities to be submitted to Donors:

- In his speech, the Regional Director of the UNWTO for Africa, Mr. Ousmane NDIAYE introduced the portfolio of funding opportunities that will be presented to donors at the donors conference for the financing of the project to be held on 27 and 28 May, 2011 in Dakar. While recalling the different stages of its implementation, he added that the project also meets the objectives of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), particularly Goal 1 (eradicating poverty and hunger) and Goal 7 (environmental preservation) protecting and conserving biological diversity of the different parks and Protected Areas and Goal 8 (global partnership) by forging alliances and creating synergies between partners and the project stakeholders.

He stressed that the project covers 8 topics:

1. Issue of biological diversity;
2. Infrastructure needs in the public sector;
3. Facilitating private sector investment;
4. Product development;
5. Fight against poverty;
6. Marketing and promotion;
7. Legal framework and governance;
8. Study of Ecotourism in river basins.

He ended his speech with a summary of funding needs based on each subject, and hoped that the proceedings of this meeting will lead to concrete recommendations that will identify all the parameters of organizing the donors conference and thus encourage the subsequent implementation of the commitments to be made by donors and economic and financial partners of the project.

The document of the portfolio of funding opportunities to be submitted to donors was unanimously validated and adopted.

- The representative of the IDB Group, Mr. Abderrahmane EL MEDKOURI outlined the policies and procedures of his institution in the field of projects financing while affirming that the financing of tourist projects are not included among the priority axes of IDB.

He added that upon the invitation of the OIC, IDB has been associated to this process since its initiation.

He then outlined that the Portfolio of Funding opportunities highlights the issues of sub-regional development and fight against poverty that could raise the interest of IDB and its windows in compliance of the applied guidelines.

3. Review of the list of partners /donors / Funders to be invited to this conference:

Participants reviewed a preliminary list of donors, and agreed that its dissemination shall be made with restrictiveness. They proposed to complement it by classifying the partners, donors and funders in several categories including:

- Multilateral donors
- Bilateral donors;
- Private Donors:
 - Insurances and Banks;
 - Foundations;
 - Oil and Gas Companies;
 - Industrial groups;
 - Mines Groups;
 - Airlines;
 - Agro-food Groups;
 - Public Works and Civil Engineering Groups;
 - Hotel Business and Tours Operators;
 - Telecom Enterprises;
- Miscellaneous.

ICDT committed itself to finalise the list of donors in consultation with the UNWTO before 5 February, 2011 in order to start sending invitations.

4. Scale of Distribution of the expenses of the donors conference:

Participants completed a Scale of distribution of the expenses of the Donors Conference in accordance with Annex 2.

5. Organization of the Donors Conference in Dakar: Format (Workshop and B2B meetings):

During this Conference workshops and B2B meetings gathering the focal points of the project's Member Countries as well as partners, donors and funders will be organized in order to discuss the modalities of participation in the project funding.

A Coordination meeting of the Members of the Steering Committee and Focal Points will be organised on 26 May 2011 for this purpose.

6. Draft Conference Program:

Participants adopted the draft conference program as contained in (Annex 3)

7. Practical organization modalities (Letters of invitation, visas, transport and accommodation, press ...):

Invitation letters to donors will be co-signed by their Excellencies the OIC Secretary General and the UNWTO Secretary General coupled with a participation form and the Portfolio of Funding opportunities containing a CD on the project feasibility Study. These letters should be sent before **February 16, 2011**.

Besides, it was agreed that the Minister of Handicrafts, Tourism and Relations with the Private Sector and the Informal Sector of the Republic of Senegal will invite his counterparts of the Project Member States to participate in this conference. The UNWTO will provide to the Senegalese side, the document of the portfolio of funding opportunities to be enclosed to the invitation letters.

Participants suggested that HE the President of the Republic of Senegal, Chairman of the OIC send letters of invitation to the following personalities:

- HE the President of the Republic of Guinea, whose country ensures the Project Coordination;
- H.E. the OIC Secretary General;
- H.E. the UNWTO Secretary General;
- H.E. the President of the IDB Group
- HE the President of the World Bank;
- HE the Director of KOICA (Korea International Cooperation Agency)
- H.E. the President of the ST-EP Foundation;
- H.E. the President of the Commission of the ECOWAS;
- H.E. the President of the Commission of the WAEMU;
- H.E. the President of the African Development Bank (ADB).

The representatives of the recipient countries, the UNWTO and ICDT expressed the wish that the support of IDB be examined, notably through the Islamic Solidarity Fund and the Special Programme for Development in Africa (SPDA),

Participants suggested that:

- The letter of invitation of His Excellency the President of the Republic of Senegal, addressed to HE the President of the IDB Group, reflects the priority characteristic of this project for Member States and the importance of its themes in social - economic and regional development.
- Their Excellencies. Prof. Dr. Ekmelddin. Ihsanoglu, and Dr. Taleb Rifai, respectively Secretary General of OIC and the UNWTO, pay a visit to HE Dr. Ahmed Mohamed Ali, President of the IDB Group, for the support of his institution that will enable the effective implementation of this project and the participation of his institution in the proceedings of the Dakar conference.

8. Setting up of an electronic exchange platform between the parties concerned:

ICDT and the UNWTO and the Republic of Senegal (International Fair of Tourism, Cultural Industries and Crafts Arts: TICAA) have decided to create an electronic link in their respective sites for better dissemination of information about the project and the donors conference.

Besides, participants agreed on the following:

- Participants requested Member States to provide to ICDT as much as possible documentation to make a documentary film. ICDT will consider the possibility of making a documentary film on Cross-Border Parks and protected areas on this basis and on the basis of the documentation that will

be provided by the “Cabinet Sécheresse consultants” via the UNWTO. To that effect, letters should be addressed by the ICDT to the Ministries of Tourism and / or of the Environment Members of the project to provide the necessary documentation.

Once this documentary film is prepared, it will be sent to Member states for comments and remarks.

- To recommend to the recipient States of the project to provide to the Conference their regulations in the field of investments and business climate.
- Notwithstanding the measures and modalities of invitations above mentioned, ICDT and the UNWTO will take charge of dispatching invitations to donors and funders.

9. Date and venue of the next meeting:

Participants agreed to organize in the first half of April 2011 in Dakar, an evaluation meeting of the preparatory work of the Conference with the participation of ICDT, UNWTO, the Regional Coordinator, and the Republic of Senegal. This meeting will be followed by a Press Conference organized by the Minister of Handicrafts, Tourism and the relations with the Private Sector and Informal Sector of the Republic of Senegal, the Director General of ICDT and the Executive Director of the UNWTO.

Done in Casablanca on 28 January 2011