

The Gambia, Training Seminar on Tourism and Biodiversity, from 23 to 25 April 2013

April 2013



From April 23 to 25, 2013, UNWTO organized a training seminar in The Gambia on Tourism and Biodiversity. The objective of the seminar was to give guidance to employees in the tourism sector to act as champions for biodiversity conservation and environmental protection in their enterprise and community. The training took place within the framework of the COAST (Collaborative Actions for Sustainable Tourism) project in Africa, a GEF funded project implemented by UNEP as implementing agency, UNIDO as executing agency and UNWTO as associate agency, including activities in nine countries in Africa (Cameroon, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Seychelles, and Tanzania).

The seminar was attended by 25 employees from selected hotels and small and community based tourism enterprises. A large part of the participants came from the village of Kartong at the border with Senegal, which is the demonstration site of the COAST project in The Gambia. UNWTO is collaborating with the Gambia Tourism Board and tourism stakeholders in Kartong to implement a COAST eco-tourism project in the village that aims to build sustainable livelihoods and protect the environment and biodiversity through eco-tourism development. The training seminar in The Gambia was especially meant to strengthen the link between the sustainable livelihood component and the biodiversity conservation component of this COAST project.

The seminar was organized in a participatory and interactive manner and included technical presentations, case study examples and group exercises on the following topics: sustainable tourism, biodiversity, marine and coastal biodiversity, environmental protection in tourism, environmental management in tourism, and being a champion. The participants learned to analyze the main threats to biodiversity and the environment in their destination, and discussed ideas and examples on how to act as champions for biodiversity conservation and environmental protection. On the third day of the seminar, the participants carried out a field exercise in the Sandele eco-lodge in Kartong, learning from the many good examples that the lodge provides on environmental sustainability.

Based on the examples provided and lessons learned, at the end of the seminar the participants prepared an action plan to act as champions for biodiversity conservation and environmental protection in their enterprise and community, which in particular addressed the waste management problem in Kartong. All participants indicated that the seminar had been very

relevant for their professional activities and that it had provided them with good ideas to put into practice. The participants from Kartong already agreed to carry out the first awareness raising and clean-up activities during the weekend after the seminar, as an initial step towards implementing their action plan. Based on the positive outcome of the seminar, UNWTO will explore with UNIDO and UNEP/GEF if the seminar can be replicated in other participating countries in the COAST project in Africa.

Enlace web: <http://step.unwto.org/en/news/2013-05-14/gambia-training-seminar-tourism-and-biodiversity-23-25-april-2013>