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GLOBAL SUSTAINABLE TOURISM ALLIANCE

ADVANCING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AROUND THE WORLD

THE CHALLENGE

Global tourism is one of the world's largest industries, providing powerful impetus to create new jobs and new businesses particularly in developing countries. Rapid growth in global tourism over the past twenty years has led many developing nations to use this industry to promote economic growth. A well-planned tourism industry has the potential to reduce poverty, protect biodiversity, manage natural resources, and improve gender equity, global health, education, and local governance.

THE APPROACH

USAID has teamed up with leading tourism development institutions, conservation organizations, tourism practitioners, and private sector tourism industry leaders to create the Global Sustainable Tourism Alliance (GSTA). The alliance designs, finances, and implements sustainable tourism development in emerging economies, fragile states, post-conflict and high biodiversity countries. It provides USAID missions, partners, and practitioners with a process to identify tourist destinations, assess their needs, and assist them in developing an integrated approach to sustainable tourism development. GSTA supports activities to help expand and sustain tourist flows to developing countries while increasing tourism investment and national tourism revenue. Furthermore, these activities generate new employment opportunities and incentives for responsible stewardship of natural resources and cultural heritage among local populations.

PARTNERS

Academy for Educational Development, The George Washington University, Solimar International, The Nature Conservancy, Conservation International, Citizens Development Corps/Tourism Development Corps, Counterpart International, EplerWood International, Nathan Associates, National Geographic Society, Rainforest Alliance, RARE, University of Hawaii, UNESCO World Heritage Centre, U.S.D.A. Forest Service-Heritage Design.



RESULTS

- The GSTA is active in three countries (Ecuador, Mali, and the Dominican Republic), negotiating with two others, and in discussion with several more.
- In Ecuador, the first GSTA initiative country, a total of \$3.9 million has been leveraged by local governments, private sector, GSTA partners, and investors to implement a project involving 141 institutions.
- By January 2008, GSTA had worked with over 100 private sector companies to support GSTA objectives.
- Periodic training programs continue to educate and build the capacity of GSTA implementing partners in applying sustainable tourism tools, best practices, standards, opportunities, and innovations to better accomplish development goals.

