



Virtual Workshop on “Developing Sustainable Ecotourism in West African OIC Member Countries”

28 – 29 May 2024

Time: 11:00 – 14:00 (Ankara time – UTC +3)

Registration Link: <https://erp.sesric.org/events/2024-Workshop-EcotourismInWestOICAfrica/Apply>

1 Background and Objectives

With its stunning landscapes, rich flora and fauna, and diverse safari experiences, cross-border parks in Africa stands out as premier destinations for ecotourism. Recognising this, West African OIC Member Countries have encompassed ecotourism as an essential tool for socio-economic growth, wildlife, and biodiversity conservation, can generate sources of income and employment opportunities for local communities as well as preserving natural and cultural heritage. Ecotourism¹ is particularly valued for its contribution to providing an important source of foreign currency. The indicators show that Sub-Saharan Africa’s wildlife and nature-based tourism industry generates an estimated USD 29 billion annually. Meanwhile, the safari industry brings in USD 12.4 billion in annual revenues for the region². Thus, sustainable ecotourism is a crucial focus for governments seeking sustainable economic growth, with tourism already being an eminent dimension of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Furthermore, due to their significant contributions to the ecosystem, these cross-border parks have been declared as UNESCO World Heritage Sites³.

Moreover, innovation and entrepreneurship play pivotal roles in shaping sustainable tourism through public-private partnerships (PPPs). These collaborations are vital for integrating cutting-edge solutions and business models that can significantly enhance the management and attractiveness of ecotourism sites. In addition, start-ups are increasingly pivotal in shaping the future of sustainable and ecotourism, leveraging innovation and nimble business practices to address environmental challenges while enhancing the tourist experience. They are also at the forefront of integrating new technologies into sustainable and ecotourism, revolutionizing how these sectors operate and enhance both conservation efforts and the visitor experience. Their role often complements larger-scale efforts by governments and corporations, providing unique solutions that can be integrated into broader ecotourism strategies.

In light of this, building upon lessons learned from the “Regional Project on Sustainable Tourism Development in a Network of Cross-Border Parks and Protected Areas in West Africa”, SESRIC under its Tourism Capacity Building Programme (Tourism-CaB) and Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT) under its TOURDEV Programme relating to the Tourism Sector will organise a Workshop on “Developing Sustainable Ecotourism in West

¹ The definition of ecotourism provided by the UN Tourism encompasses all nature-based tourism types wherein visitors’ primary purpose is to observe and appreciate the natural environment and the indigenous cultures that exist in these areas: <https://www.unwto.org/sustainable-development/ecotourism-and-protected-areas#:~:text=According%20to%20the%20UN%20Tourism's,cultures%20prevailing%20in%20natural%20areas>

² World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), *The Economic Impact of Global Wildlife Tourism*, (2019, London)

³ World Heritage Convention (UNESCO), “Safeguarding of Trans boundary Heritage Sites for Sustainable Development and Peace in Africa”, February 25, 2019.



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African OIC Member Countries” on 28-29 May 2024 through an online video conferencing platform.

The workshop aims to bring together experts from international and regional communities to exchange ideas regarding the challenges of ecotourism in cross-border parks and protected areas in West African OIC member countries and explore possible solutions to overcome them. The workshop is intended to contribute to ecotourism development within the West African OIC countries.

The workshop will cover the following topics:

- Vision and strategy for ecotourism in Africa;
- Conservation and environmental protection;
- Innovation driving Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) for sustainable tourism;
- Infrastructure and services development to support sustainable ecotourism in OIC member countries;
- Policy and regulatory frameworks related to ecotourism; and
- Challenges and opportunities for developing sustainable ecotourism in West African OIC member countries.

2 Target Audience

The target groups for this workshop are the Representatives of Tourism Ministries and Authorities Members of the Regional Project on “Sustainable Tourism Development in a Network of Cross-Border Parks and Protected Areas in West Africa”.

3 Logistical Details

- The workshop will be held virtually through the Zoom platform on 28-29 May 2024, with presentations and discussions.
- A question & answer session will follow each presentation.
- Simultaneous translations will be provided between English and French.
- Speakers are requested to send their presentations to training@sesric.org and icdt@icdt-oic.org by 24 May 2024.



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4 Draft Work Programme

Day 1: 28 May 2024	
11:00 – 11:20	Opening Remarks by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Mr. Mamoudou Bocar SALL, Assistant Director General, ICDT</i>• <i>Mr. Mamadou Aliou Barry, Principal Advisor, Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality</i>• <i>H.E. Zehra Zümriüt SELÇUK, Director General, SESRIC</i>
11:20 – 11:50	Ecotourism in Africa: UN Tourism’s Vision and Strategy <i>Mrs. Lydia BEBE KUM, UN Tourism Officer, Regional Department for Africa</i>
11:50 – 12:20	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engaging the Tourism Sector to Drive Conservation Efforts in West Africa <i>Mr. Mohamed ATANI, Head of UNEP Office for West Africa</i>• One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme: Offering Implementation Framework and Tools to Tackle Climate Change, Plastic Pollution, and Food Waste in the Tourism Sector <i>Ms. Svitlana Mikhalyeva, Coordinator of the One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme, UNEP</i>• Tourism as a Vector of Environmental Conservation and Economic Development: Case Study of East African Draft Sustainability Standards <i>Mr. David Rubia, Programme Officer, Regional Office for Africa, UNEP</i>
12:20 – 12:25	Break
12:25 – 12:50	Innovation Driving Public-Private Partnerships for Sustainable Tourism <i>Ms. Addaia ARIZMENDI, UN Tourism Officer, Innovation, Education and Investments Department</i>
12:50 – 13:20	Adapting to New Realities—Post-COVID Infrastructure and Service Development for Sustainable Ecotourism: Learnings from Southeast Asia and the Caribbean <i>Prof. Dr. Vikneswaran NAIR, President, DISTED College of Malaysia</i>
13:20 – 13:40	Türkiye’s Nature Conservation and National Parks <i>Ms. Aynur ERTURHAN, Specialist of Agriculture and Forestry, Forestry Engineer, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of the Republic of Türkiye</i>



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13:40 – 14:00	<i>Türkiye’s Experience in Promoting and Marketing Ecotourism</i> <i>Ms. Burcu GEZEROĞLU, Product Marketing Group Manager, Türkiye Tourism Promotion and Development Agency</i>
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Day 2: 29 May 2024

11:00 – 12:20	<i>Challenges and Opportunities for Developing Sustainable Ecotourism in West African OIC Member Countries</i> <i>Speakers: Guinea (tbc), Benin (tbc), Burkina Faso, The Gambia (tbc), Guinea-Bissau (tbc)</i>
12:20 – 12:25	<i>Break</i>
12:25 – 13:55	<i>Challenges and Opportunities for Developing Sustainable Ecotourism in West African OIC Member Countries (Cont.)</i> <i>Speakers: Mali (tbc), Mauritania (tbc), Niger (tbc), Senegal (tbc), Sierra Leone (tbc)</i>
13:55 – 14:00	<i>Wrap-Up Session and Farewell</i>

*All times are indicated in Ankara (UTC +3) time. Please refer to: https://time.is/compare/1100_28_May_2024_in_Ankara for time difference information

5 Registration

To access to the registration page, please point your browser to:

<https://erp.sesric.org/events/2024-Workshop-EcotourismInWestOICAfrica/Apply>

Or scan the below QR code:

