



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 ICDDT under its TOURDEV Programme relating to the Tourism Sector will organise a Workshop on “Developing Sustainable Ecotourism in West African OIC Member Countries” on 28-29 May 2024 through an online video conferencing platform.

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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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 session 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 session 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">• H.E. Latifa EL BOUABDELLAOUI, Director General, ICDT• H.E. Zehra Zümriit SELÇUK, Director General, SESRIC
11:20 – 11:50	Ecotourism in Africa: UN Tourism’s Vision and Strategy (tbc) <i>Dr./Mr./Ms. Name SURNAME, Designation, UN Tourism</i>
11:50 – 12:20	Conservation and Environmental Protection <i>Dr./Mr./Ms. Name SURNAME, Designation, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)</i>
12:20 – 12:30	Break
12:30 – 13:00	Innovation Driving Public-Private Partnerships for Sustainable Tourism <i>Dr./Mr./Ms. Name SURNAME, Designation, UN Tourism</i>
13:00 – 13:30	Infrastructure and Services Development to Support Sustainable Ecotourism <i>Dr./Mr./Ms. Name SURNAME, Designation, Islamic Tourism Centre of Malaysia</i>
13:30 – 14:00	Türkiye’s Policy and Regulatory Frameworks related to Ecotourism <i>Dr./Mr./Ms. Name SURNAME, Designation, Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Türkiye</i>

Day 2: 29 May 2024	
11:00 – 12:20	Challenges and Opportunities for Developing Sustainable Ecotourism in West African OIC Member Countries <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dr./Mr./Ms. Name SURNAME, Designation, Benin• Dr./Mr./Ms. Name SURNAME, Designation, Burkina Faso• Dr./Mr./Ms. Name SURNAME, Designation, Gambia• Dr./Mr./Ms. Name SURNAME, Designation, Guinea• Dr./Mr./Ms. Name SURNAME, Designation, Guinea Bissau
12:20 – 12:30	Break



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12:30 – 13:50	<i>Challenges and Opportunities for Developing Sustainable Ecotourism in West African OIC Member Countries (Cont.)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Dr./Mr./Ms. Name SURNAME, Designation, Mali</i>• <i>Dr./Mr./Ms. Name SURNAME, Designation, Mauritania</i>• <i>Dr./Mr./Ms. Name SURNAME, Designation, Niger</i>• <i>Dr./Mr./Ms. Name SURNAME, Designation, Senegal</i>• <i>Dr./Mr./Ms. Name SURNAME, Designation, Sierra Leone</i>
13:50 – 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:

