



# **MBOKA 2008**

## **Banjul, The Gambia**

**October 18-22**

- Business-to-Business meeting
- Online market place
- Suppliers inventory
- Match making
- Tour operator meetings
- Sustainability standards
- Regional co-operation

# Promoting tourism for sustainable development

West African Travel Market is an initiative facilitating co-operation between tourism businesses from West Africa and the European travel trade. West African Travel Market is an open platform where local businesses and communities, international tour operators, investors, ngo's and governments can meet to support a sustainable development of the tourism sector in West Africa. It is established as a permanent initiative offering an integrated set of instruments and actions such as an online market event, international marketing support and an annual West African Travel Market Business-to-Business event which will take place in Banjul, The Gambia on October 18-22, 2008.

## West Africa Tourism

West Africa is a still unexplored region relatively close to Europe. It offers a great variety in people, culture and traditions with abundant beauty. To diversify their economies, West African countries are increasingly focusing on tourism development. The region, already a well known destination for backpackers, has recently become an emerging tourism destination. Growth rates in the tourism industry are expected to reach over 5% per year in the next decade with an above average increase in investments and employment. West Africa offers attractive investment opportunities for enterprises involved in tourism & hospitality and related activities.

## Regional Co-operation and capacity building

The strategic objective of the initiative is to support West African governments and tourism industry to develop tourism in a manner that contributes to both local economic development and to poverty alleviation, community empowerment and the protection of the environment. West African Travel Market supports the exchange of experiences and the strengthening of promotional skills and competences. Specific attention is given to the co-operation of West African tourism boards, tour operators and suppliers in order to jointly promote West Africa as a sustainable destination at international markets.



### Community Based Tourism in Cameroon

The North West Cameroon community based tourism network invites visitors during their stay to experience directly the traditional village life by for example staying with a local family. Activities include joint meals with local population, gathering water together with the children, pounding fufu-corn for dinner, shopping at the local market, walking to the waterfalls and caves, riding horses and milking. Participating homestays all followed a training programme in hospitality. The income gained from tourism directly benefits the local population and motivates them in protecting the nearby natural areas. The initiative is supported by the Dutch Development Agency SNV Highlands Bamenda.



### Hotels in The Gambia: local economic linkages

With the support of UK tour operators a demonstration farm has been set up and links have been created with hotels and restaurants to purchase fresh, locally grown vegetables. The farm is open to visitors and a tour is organised. A "Train a Farmer" programme has also been established to encourage young people to grow vegetables for the tourism market, providing them with a means to generate an income while remaining in their villages, rather than having to move to the city to find employment. Farmers are taught how to grow different kinds of crops as well as new production methods, including organic farming.



## The market for sustainable tourism

European consumers increasingly expect the companies they buy from to ensure that their products provide not just quality and value-for-money, but also safeguard the natural and social environment. As a result, changes in the travel trade are turning towards more socially and environmental responsible ways of doing business.

More and more tour operators prefer contracting suppliers who work in a more responsible manner. European tour operators associations such as the Dutch ANVR, the UK Federation of Tour Operators and the German Forum Anders Reisen have recently committed their members to integrate more sustainable tourism products in their packages. They work together in the Travelife initiative, promoting sustainability in the European Tour Operator sector.

## Sustainable Tourism standards

The initiative will support the development of regional standards for sustainable tourism. Standards will include environmental, social as well as cultural aspects and will be linked with existing standards and systems such as the international tour operators Travelife standard and the standards of European ecolabels for sustainable tourism. African suppliers are able to conduct a self-evaluation of their social and environmental performances by completing a sustainability checklist. The system compares their rating with those of other tourism businesses and provides local suppliers with help, advice and support on how to improve their business.

## Online market place

The West African Travel Market's online business-to-business platform offers comprehensive, reliable and up-to-date information on currently available sustainable tourism offers in the West African region. Product information is accessible for international tour operators, journalists, travel book writers and other tourism professionals. All products have been screened based on quality and sustainability criteria. The list of products ranges from accommodations, community-based tourism products, inbound tour operators, protected areas and sustainable West African destinations.

## Market support

In order to increase concrete results European partners will provide active market support to sustainable African suppliers. More than 200 potentially interested European tour operators will be personally contacted and informed about West African local partners and quality products. Meetings between tour operators and African suppliers will be facilitated at major European Travel fairs such as the Dutch Vakantiebeurs, the German fair for Sustainable Tourism, Reisepavillon, the ITB in Berlin and the WTM in London.



## Ecotourism Sierra Leone

The Tiwai Island wildlife sanctuary is situated on an island in the Moya river in Sierra Leone. The area with one of the highest density of primates in the world is home to the endangered chimpanzees. The park offers a unique experience to discover the rich flora and fauna of the rainforest through forest trekking, wildlife watching and boat tours. Visitors can sleep at the visitor centre in tents, surrounded by an evergreen forest & the sounds of hornbills and monkeys calling from the canopies. The sanctuary is a community conservation programme, managed by the Island Administrative Committee, which represents both communities, government, universities & conservation organizations. All funds raised go towards the further protection of the park as well as supporting the Community Development Fund.



## Sustainable resort in Ghana

The KASAPA Centre, a small village-style holiday resort, located 40 km west of Ghana's capital Accra, is combining traditional African modes of building with modern eco-friendly technology such as clay buildings, thatched roofs, solar electricity, bio-dynamic sewage system, modern hygienic compost toilets and careful waste management. The resort organizes intercultural contact and excursion programmes in the surrounding forests, waterfalls, mountains and villages as well as workshops on dancing, drumming, singing and xylophone. The resort is managed by a local African family firm and enables staff members to display personal responsibility and commitment. It uses local services, stimulates buying of local products and involves local communities in planning and decision making. Furthermore, environmental, nature, and local cultural education activities are organized for visitors.

## West African Travel Market, MBOKA 2008

The Gambia Tourism Authority invites you to MBOKA 2008 the second West African Travel Market, a B2B event bringing together major actors involved in tourism & hospitality from West Africa and Europe.

The event includes product presentations, one-to-one business meetings, plenary sessions, familiarization trips and thematic workshops on sustainable tourism. MBOKA 2008 will take place on October 18-22, 2008 in Banjul, The Gambia.

## Who can participate?

The West African Travel Market event is open to a wide range of stakeholders:

- European tour operators searching for new and sustainable tourism products
- Sustainable products looking for market access
- Hotels and destinations interested to become more sustainable
- Governments looking for exchange of experiences and success stories
- Promotion agencies searching for partnerships
- Development agencies identifying new approaches and promising initiatives
- Private investors looking for opportunities and inspiration

## How to participate

Go to [westafricantravelmarket.com](http://westafricantravelmarket.com) for updated information on the event and registration forms.

## Contact us

Visit [www.westafricantravelmarket.com](http://www.westafricantravelmarket.com) for updated information on sustainable products, to meet with international tour operators, or to register for the MBOKA 2008 West African Travel Market in The Gambia.

## Our partners

### West African partners

West African Travel Market is supported by a broad coalition of tourism boards, industry associations and ngo's:

- Gambia Tourism Authority (GTA)
- ASSET, the association of small scale tourism enterprises Gambia
- Cameroon Ministry of Tourism
- Eco-Benin
- Nigeria Tourism Development Corporation
- ONITS, Senegal
- Sierra Leone Tourist Board
- Tour Operators Federation of Ghana (TOUGHGA)



### International Marketing support

West African products are promoted to the European markets in partnership with leading tourism marketing initiatives:

- Travelife – Market, the sustainable tourism marketing platform of the European Tour Operators' associations, linking up with 400 + tour operators looking for sustainable suppliers.
- The Federation of Tour Operators, bringing on board UK's leading tour operators.
- ReisePavillon, the German Travel Fair for Sustainable Tourism.

Technical support on sustainable tourism development, standards and marketing is provided by ECEAT – Projects, the European Centre for Eco and Agro Tourism.



### Financial support

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