Multi-destination - an opportunity to stimulate tourism in the Americas

Concept note

A multi-destination tourism trip is defined as a single trip that includes the visit to more than one destination. Therefore, a multi-destination tourism concept implies a strategy shared by two or more countries that offer and promote a joint product or route.

Increasingly, multi-destination can be an efficient and profitable tool to attract visitors that might otherwise not consider visiting the destination. This is particularly true in the case of tourists from long-haul source markets, who want to make the best of a long-haul trip by combining various countries in the same area that complement each other and enrich the travel experience.

In the case of the Americas this can be of particular interest to increase the share of tourists from Europe and from Asia and the Pacific, which today represent respectively 17% and 7% of all international tourist arrivals in the region.

In this scope, there are five fundamental challenges to consider when developing a multi-destination tourism plan, as operators and consumers would evaluate those destinations that yield maximum benefits and easy of:

1. Travel facilitation (visas and border crossing) within the destinations
2. Air or ground transport/connectivity within the destinations
3. Common branding and image
4. Common products / routes
5. Business view: the role of tour operators and hotel chains

In view of the above, and in order to carry out a successful multi-destination strategy, countries involved need to develop and implement a strong regional integration system. The more advanced that integration system is, the more opportunities will it generate for multi-destination tourism.

Thus, countries involved need to align visa policies for third countries, evaluate the possibility to establish multi-destination visas and simplify visa processing as well as border crossings.

On the other hand, considering the importance of air connectivity, in a successful multi-destination strategy, countries also need to advance bilateral and multilateral negotiations aimed at creating a network that will ensure the adequate offer of transportation among the destinations involved. In cases like the Mercosur, where there are two geographically large countries and two smaller countries involved, interconnectivity should be regarded both from the air as well as from the ground perspective. A similar approach would be applicable to Central America, considering
equally the geographical scope. In the case of the Caribbean, air connectivity becomes a fundamental factor to ensure an efficient multi-destination strategy.

Once border processes have been improved, new technologies implemented for higher efficiency and air connectivity properly addressed, destinations can advance in the area of product development, marketing and promotion in order to build a solid brand that embraces the countries involved in that multi-destination proposal in a coherent manner. The branding or image of the destination will be key to its success and the way in which the source countries perceive the strength of the multi-destination.

UNWTO will bring together experts and tourism stakeholders from the whole region to debate the challenges and opportunities in advancing multi-destination and regional tourism integration in the Americas. Main topics for discussion will be the following:

- connectivity
- travel facilitation
- branding
- Investment in infrastructure
- role of tourism fairs
- tour operators