



**Standing Committee
for Economic and Commercial Cooperation
of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (COMCEC)**

Proceedings of the 13th Meeting of the COMCEC Tourism Working Group

“Sustainable Destination Management in the OIC Member Countries”



**COMCEC COORDINATION OFFICE
February 2019**



**Standing Committee
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of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (COMCEC)**

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE 13TH MEETING OF THE
COMCEC TOURISM WORKING GROUP
ON
“Sustainable Destination Management
in the OIC Member Countries”
(February 5th, 2019, Ankara, Turkey)**

COMCEC COORDINATION OFFICE

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For further information, please contact:

Mr. Gökten DAMAR
Expert

Ms. Ayten AKMAN
Expert

COMCEC Coordination Office
Necatibey Caddesi No: 110/A
06100 Yücetepe
Ankara/TURKEY
Phone : 90 312 294 57 10
Fax : 90 312 294 57 77
Web : www.comcec.org
e-mail : tourism@comcec.org
gdamar@comcec.org
akacar@comcec.org

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
1. Opening Session	2
2. The COMCEC Tourism Outlook.....	3
3. Sustainable Destination Management Strategies: Global Trends and Success Factors.....	5
4. Sustainable Destination Management Strategies: Selected Case Studies, Main Challenges, Recommendations and Prospects	7
5. Success Stories of the Member States	12
5.1. Afghanistan	12
5.2. Turkey	12
5.3. Iran	13
5.4. Malaysia	13
5.5. Azerbaijan	14
6. Policy Options for Risk and Crisis Management in Tourism Sector: Recovery from Crisis in the OIC Member Countries	15
7. International Institutions’/ Private Sector’s Perspective	16
7.1. WORLD TOURISM ORGANIZATION (UNWTO)	16
7.2. GLOBAL SUSTAINABLE TOURISM COUNCIL (GSTC).....	17
8. Utilizing the COMCEC Project Funding.....	18
9. Closing Remarks.....	19
Annex 1: Agenda of the Meeting.....	20
Annex 2: Program of the Meeting	21
Annex 3: The Policy Recommendations	23
Annex 4: List of Participants.....	26

Introduction

The 13th Meeting of the COMCEC Tourism Working Group was held on February 5th, 2019 in Ankara, Turkey with the theme of "Sustainable Destination Management Strategies in the OIC Member Countries." The Meeting was attended by the representatives of 13 Member States, which have notified their focal points for the Tourism Working Group namely Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Cameroon, Egypt, Gambia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Uganda, Tunisia and Turkey. Representatives of the COMCEC Coordination Office, SMIC, SESRIC, UNWTO and GSTC have also attended the Meeting.¹

At the outset, the representative of the COMCEC Coordination Office informed the participants about the tourism outlook of the Member Countries. The participants considered sustainable destination management strategies in tourism sector through focusing on the Analytical Study titled "Sustainable Destination Management Strategies in the OIC Member Countries" prepared for the Meeting with a view to enriching the discussions.

The participants had the chance to discuss the policy options for enhancing the cooperation in this important field during the policy debate session. The Room Document based on the findings of the Analytical Study submitted to the Tourism Working Group Meeting and the answers of the Member Countries to the policy questions sent to the Member States by the COMCEC Coordination Office were the main inputs for the discussions during moderation session.

COMCEC Coordination Office also presented the COMCEC Project Funding Mechanism and informed the participants of its details.

The Representatives of the Member States have shared their experiences, achievements and challenges regarding destination development and institutionalization strategies in tourism sector in their respective countries.

Lastly, the international institutions' perspectives and private sector efforts were also reflected to the discussions.

¹ The list of participants is attached as Annex 4.

1. Opening Session

In line with the tradition of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the Meeting started with the recitation from the Holy Quran. At the outset, Mr. Selçuk KOÇ, Director in the COMCEC Coordination Office introduced the COMCEC and its activities briefly.

Mr. Ramin ATEEQZADA, Tourism Marketing Director from Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism of Afghanistan was elected as the Chairman of the Meeting. Mr. ATEEQZADA introduced himself and thanked all the participants for electing him as the Chairman of the Meeting.

2. The COMCEC Tourism Outlook

Dr. Gurel CETIN, consultant from the COMCEC Coordination Office and scholar at Istanbul University, has presented some of the key developments of tourism industry in the World and in the OIC Member Countries. In his presentation, Dr. CETIN provided an overview of the importance of tourism as a socio-economic phenomena and the current state of the industry in the World and in the OIC Region.

He underlined the importance of tourism particularly for developing economies and expressed that tourism has experienced continued growth over the past eight years and become one of the most rapidly developing industries in the world. He shared various figures demonstrating that a strong tourism sector could contribute in many ways to development and the economy.

Various key tourism trends were also mentioned by Dr. Cetin such as demographic (ageing population, growing middle class and millennials) and behavioral changes (quest for authenticity and novelty, emerging destinations), advancements in technology (internet, distribution channels, sharing economy), crises and risk management (types and impacts of crises) and sustainability implications for tourism (best practices).

He then shared some figures about the current state of tourism industry in the World through displaying World arrivals and receipts between 2000 and 2017. Dr. Cetin stated that global tourism arrivals had grown from 678 million in 2000 to 1.3 billion in 2017. Dr. Cetin also provided tourism market shares of different regions related to tourism arrivals and receipts and stated Africa, Middle East and Asia Pacific regions are growing at a larger pace than the destinations in Europe and Americas.

He also compared contribution of tourism sector to the OIC member countries with those of the World averages. The OIC Member Countries have recorded 150 billion USD receipts from 187 million arrivals in 2017. Dr. Cetin also pointed out the low per tourist spending in the OIC Region. He stated that currently OIC is earning 750 USD per arrival whereas the World average is around 1000 USD. Hence he suggested that the OIC Member Countries need to focus on improving per tourist spending besides the volume in arrivals in order to increase the total value created from tourism. Top 10 destinations among the OIC member states concerning arrivals and receipts were also displayed during his presentation.

Dr. Cetin then mentioned about the current state of tourism in some member countries such as Turkey, Malaysia, Indonesia, Tunisia, Morocco, UAE, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Finally, Dr. Cetin shared various strengths of the OIC member countries (natural, cultural and human resources, authentic experiences, competitive prices, and dynamic economies) as well as various challenges the member countries face concerning destination planning (infrastructure,

visa facilitation, safety and security, investments) and marketing (product development and diversification, promotion and image building, service quality).

Questions & Remarks

Question: When it is mentioned about the best practices, one of the important issues is finance. Generally in many countries the tourism demand is highly seasonal. In this respect, do you have any suggestions in this regard?

Answer: Seasonal tourism has a negative effect on local community and on the environment etc. Different techniques can be utilized to mitigate these negative effects, such as limiting certain sights, providing some taxes etc.

3. Sustainable Destination Management Strategies: Global Trends and Success Factors

Mr. Rafi-uddin Shikoh, Managing Director of DinarStandard, gave this presentation. He first shared the research methodology which consisted of primary and secondary research. The primary research involved an online survey, in-depth interviews and field visit case studies. The secondary research consisted of desk-based case studies, the review of academic research papers, and publications from international organizations, including the UNWTO, the UNESCO, WTTC, and others.

Mr. Shikoh then shared the UNWTO's definition of sustainable tourism. He then went on to explain that tourism can have a positive and negative impact on a destination's natural assets, and shared examples of both positive and negative impacts involving social, economic and environmental aspects.

Next, Mr. Shikoh pointed out that three of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are linked to tourism, namely goals 8, 12, and 14, which are focused on inclusive and sustainable economic growth, sustainable consumption and production, and the sustainable use of oceans and marine resources.

In discussing challenges to sustainable tourism strategies implementation, Mr. Shikoh shared the top strategies, which include lack of awareness, prioritization of economic objectives over environmental and social issues, inadequate coordination and incorporation into wider policy on the different governmental levels, weak stakeholder involvement and support, insufficient resources committed to sustainability strategies implementation, the lack of coordination between the various departments and different levels of government.

Mr. Shikoh then demonstrated how the UNWTO's twelve goals for sustainable tourism are linked to the triple bottom line approach of assessing the social, economic and environmental effects of tourism on a destination. The UNWTO's twelve goals for sustainable tourism, include ensuring the competitiveness and local prosperity of the destination, improving local employment conditions in the tourism sector, securing equal distribution of benefits from tourism, and ensuring the well-being of the local community as well as empowering them through the use of a participatory approach in tourism planning and decision making, providing tourists with a fulfilling experience, using resources efficiently, and respecting the cultural heritage of the destination, protecting the physical integrity, environmental purity and biological diversity of the natural areas and habitats.

In terms of the role of DMOs with regards to sustainable tourism, Mr. Shikoh demonstrated how DMOs marketing, operational and strategic areas of responsibility involved activities that served sustainable tourism goals. However, he pointed out that there are many other governmental and non-governmental bodies involved in the development and implementation of sustainability goals through regulations and strategies, which operate on international, regional, national, and local levels.

Mr. Shikoh then explained that sustainable destination management addresses five core areas or parameters, which include a supportive regulatory environment, stakeholder engagement, effective tourism sustainability strategies, access to financing tools and monitoring destination sustainability.

In terms of establishing a supportive regulatory environment, Mr. Shikoh explained that it involves imposing sanctions, taxation and financial incentives; establishing regulations regarding land use, and planning and development; rules related to employee rights, tourists' health and safety, environmental protection, protection of local communities, use of non-renewable resources, and equal access. A supportive regulatory environment also involved implementing environmental impact assessments to encourage tourism businesses to monitor their environmental footprint.

As for engaging sustainable tourism stakeholders, Mr. Shikoh shared types of stakeholders which need to be engaged. They include DMOs, regional and international organizations, educational and training institutions, government bodies, NGO's, the tourism industry, the local community, as well as tourists themselves.

Mr. Shikoh shared that the survey conducted for the study demonstrated low levels of involvement and collaboration in tourism sustainability strategies; close to half of the respondents reported being only informed of strategies as opposed to being consulted or involved.

Next, Mr. Shikoh shared six sustainable tourism strategies that address each of UNWTO's sustainable tourism goals. These strategies are: managing demand and seasonality, ensuring local community well-being, increasing awareness, ensuring tourist satisfaction, protection of cultural heritage, and managing environmental impact.

In terms of the priority level of sustainability policies, the majority of the survey respondents felt that ensuring tourist satisfaction should be the highest priority area, followed closely by planning tourist developments, the protection of natural and cultural heritage, and managing demand and seasonality. Increasing awareness of sustainability issues and ensuring local community well-being were rated as high to medium priority areas by more than half of the

sample. Ensuring non-renewable resources sustainability and reducing pollution were at the end of the list but still with half of the respondents rating it as a high to medium priority area.

In terms of sustainable tourism funding, Mr. Shikoh shared that funding is usually from both domestic and foreign sources. Domestic funding involves public sources such as local and national government; and private sources, such as private financial institutions and conservation organizations. Foreign funding involves bilateral investors and donors, regional development organizations, and international development organizations, as well as financial institutions. Some of the innovative financing tools include green bonds and sukuk, energy efficiency facility loans, smart incentives for eco-certification, enterprise challenge funds, crowdfunding, and voluntary contributions from tourists.

Mr. Shikoh then discussed sustainable tourism indicators, which usually measure economic, social and environmental impact, and compared three different indicators developed by the UNWTO, the Economist Intelligence Unit, and the European Commission. In terms of survey results, 60% of survey respondents were aware of indicators used at their destination.

Questions & Remarks

Comments: The media can negatively affects the image and tourism development of a destination.

Question: How the diverse stakeholder profiles was managed and reflected to the report? And how the different concerns and priorities were reflected in this report?

Answer: Each country has different needs, for example what is necessary for one country might not be necessary for other. Some countries are mature in tourism sector even in their sustainability initiatives and others are not mature in tourism. They were grouped in 4 groups and it will give various countries a guide to use in terms of the practices they can apply.

4. Sustainable Destination Management Strategies: Selected Case Studies, Main Challenges, Recommendations and Prospects

In his second presentation, Mr. Shikoh shared case study findings, compared tourism sustainability practices of OIC member states versus global best practices, shared the main challenges of OIC member states, and provided policy recommendations for the OIC member states.

For each case study, Mr. Shikoh shared the country's sustainable tourism strategies, its approach to stakeholder engagement, funding sources for sustainable tourism, monitoring and evaluation practices, and lessons learned.

For the Maldives, which was a field visit case study, the lessons learned were that continuous monitoring is needed to ensure adherence to sustainability standards, tourism stakeholders need to be more involved in the development of tourism sustainability regulations, support from international organizations, such as the UNWTO in the Maldives' case, can be instrumental in developing destination-specific monitoring tools for sustainable tourism.

For Oman, which was the second field-visit case study, the lessons learned were that it is best to target the right tourists that are in line with its sustainability efforts; diversifying accommodation to include guest houses, homestays, camps, heritage lodges, green lodges allows the community to benefit; entry fees to wildlife reserves fund conservation efforts and raise awareness about ecosystems; private sector leading sustainability efforts, ahead of legislation.

For Uganda, which was also a field-visit case study, the lessons learned were that limiting tourism in protected areas while increasing price can generate revenues while protecting local areas; revenue share with local communities helped community development and conservation efforts, but utilization needs improvement; regional cooperation can play an important role in sustainable destination management; improvement is needed in monitoring of tourism impact on parks and local communities; more incentives are needed to encourage investment in sustainable tourism projects.

For Denmark, which was a desk-based case study, the lessons learned were that strategies are more effective when part of wider sustainability efforts and strategies, it is important to identify sustainability issues and set a clear strategy to tackle them; presenting a good business case for sustainability can facilitate adoption; one of the motivations for adopting sustainable and environmentally-friendly policies for stakeholders is the financial benefit, regional projects can benefit from funding from regional organizations.

For Italy, a desk-based case study, the lessons learned were that the increase in the number of visitors can have negative environmental and cultural impacts, destinations should plan to avoid over tourism before a crisis situation actually occurs, good communication channels have to be established between the private and public sector, and tourists' impact on the environment should be measured using quantitative as well as qualitative indicators.

For Jordan, another desk-based case study, the lessons learned were that financial and technical assistance from bilateral donors and international bodies are instrumental, Jordan has taken steps towards sustainable tourism but needs further regulation, and that the private sector is involved in strategy development at a national level, but local/ regional engagement can be improved.

For Palestine, the last desk-based case study, the lessons learned are that the political and social circumstances of a destination condition directly affect its growth, the improvement of human resources through guide training programs, education, and language teaching has to be established in order to preserve Palestine's historical, cultural, social, and religious heritage in the city of Al Quds and to protect it.

Next, Mr. Shikoh compared the OIC member country sustainable tourism practices with global best practices for each of the five parameters discussed in his first presentation. In terms of creating a supportive regulatory environment, in non-OIC countries, governments develop and enforce policies, while private sector and NGOs implement sustainable practices. Whereas in the OIC member countries, mainly governments in some instances non-governmental organizations, are involved in promoting sustainable tourism practices.

In terms of stakeholder engagement, in non-OIC countries, umbrella organizations ensure coordination among public, private and non-governmental organizations; while the OIC member countries have some formal structure that aligns the broader tourism industry with sustainability efforts but falls short on the process of ongoing engagement and consultation.

As for effective sustainable tourism strategies, strategies in non-OIC countries covering sustainable tourism are comprehensive, and the tourism sector is encouraged through incentives for sustainable practices. Whereas in the OIC member countries, many of the initiatives are still emergent.

Concerning funding, both public and private domestic sources are used to fund sustainable tourism initiatives in the OIC and leading non-OIC countries.

In terms of monitoring destination sustainability, non-OIC countries have formal procedures in place for continuous monitoring and reporting on destination sustainability, and indicators used are internationally recognized and comprehensive. Whereas for the OIC member countries, the focus is on measuring the economic impacts of tourism and to some extent on measuring environmental impacts, but there is a lack of formal procedures for continuous monitoring and reporting on destination sustainability.

Furthermore, Mr. Shikoh expressed that destinations can be segmented in a matrix by their dependence on tourism and their sustainability risk, and the policy recommendations can be tailored based on where each country falls within this matrix.

He then shared a policy recommendations framework, which mapped each of the sustainable tourism strategies against UNWTO's sustainable tourism goals and the UN's SDGs, as well as mapping them to the five sustainable destination management parameters.

In terms of the first of the five parameters, which is a supportive regulatory environment, governments can establish and enforce policies that promote the adoption of sustainable tourism practices, as well as impose sanctions and incentives conducive to sustainable tourism practices.

Regarding the stakeholder engagement parameter, the OIC member countries need to have an umbrella organization that encompasses government sectors, DMOs, tourism businesses to streamline sustainable tourism efforts, as well as form strategic alliances with airlines and other entities.

Concerning the access to financing tools parameter, the member countries may benefit from international funding for sustainable tourism projects, regional organizations to support sustainable tourism efforts and provide funding, and encourage private sector financing and investment in sustainable tourism.

In terms of the monitoring of destination sustainability parameter, the OIC member countries can monitor performance, translate and implement Agenda 2030 in a sustainable tourism context, align science, policy, and capital in pursuit of sustainable tourism, develop key performance indicators (KPIs) for sustainability, develop an OIC-level sustainable tourism monitoring system, and DMOs should play a role in monitoring performance.

Mr. Shikoh then provided policy recommendations for each of the sustainable tourism strategies. For increasing awareness, the OIC member countries may conduct local media campaigns to increase local community as well as tourist awareness of tourism sustainability issues.

In terms of the protection of natural and cultural heritage, the member countries can seek to list natural and historical heritage sites on UNESCO'S World Heritage List, assign adequate resources to sustainable development efforts, issue regulation to protect cultural and natural heritage assets, benefit from multilateral organizations charged with the protection of shared natural or cultural heritage sites, and protect biodiversity.

With regards to managing demand and seasonality, the OIC member countries should develop effective carrying capacity policies and practices. They may embrace the Paris Climate Agreement. They can build capacity at the community level, and create a culture of sustainable entrepreneurship with a view to ensuring community well-being. In addition, the OIC member countries may take measures to ensure tourist satisfaction by providing innovative products and services, ensuring a quality experience, and monitoring tourist satisfaction.

5. Success Stories of the Member States

5.1. Afghanistan

On behalf of Afghanistan, Mr. Ramin ATEEQZADA, Tourism Marketing Director from Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism of Afghanistan made a presentation on the Sustainable Destination Management Strategies in the Afghanistan.

At the beginning of his presentation, he informed the participants of Afghanistan tourism potential. He also mentioned about Afghan government's strategies for the development of tourism industry. He gave information on the axes of this marketing strategy as the following:

- Institutionalizing the culture of tourism and developing domestic tourism.
- Supporting and strengthening the private sector,
- Promotion of Afghanistan as a rich, ancient and the most influential culture and civilization in engaging with the countries at the region,
- Strategy of tourism for developing tourism industry on base of market research and analyses,
- Dividing tourism resources and adjusting tourism programs for attracting international tourists,
- Capacity Building,
- Developing Relations with international organizations, Domestic tourism agencies for stable tourism development.

Lastly, he put forward following suggestions:

- Developing Afghanistan Tourism Industry, such as, Capacity Building Programs for the Afghan Tourism departments
- Supporting Afghan Tourism Department in attracting more domestic and foreign tourists,
- Organizing training programs
- Developing tourism Guides,
- Promoting tourism facilities,
- Inviting Afghan tourism employees to different international programs to learn more on tourism affairs.

5.2. Turkey

Gürsel GÜNDOĞDU, expert from Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Turkey, made a presentation on destination management experience of Turkey.

At the outset, he gave information on tourism development process and destination management principles. He also shared the Turkey Tourism Strategy's (2023) main objectives as the following:

- To ensure sustainable development of tourism,
- To extend the tourism season throughout the year by diversifying tourism products,
- To extend the tourism activities from coastal and urban areas to rural and interior regions,
- To be one of the top five countries considering tourism income by the year 2023.

He concluded his presentation by mentioning about the destination management organizations of Turkey namely, Kayseri Erciyes A.Ş., Ejder 3200, Antalya Promotion and Tourism Development Inc., Belek Tourism Investors Union, İstanbul Convention & Visitors Bureau and Antalya Convention Bureau.

5.3. Iran

On behalf of Islamic Republic of Iran, Ms. Masoumeh ALLAHVERDI, Senior Expert, Iran Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization, made a presentation on Aras Geopark-Iran.

In her presentation, she informed the participants about Iran's tourism potential. Iran has more than one million historic, cultural and natural sites. She continued her presentation by mentioning about Aras Geopark in Iran, through expressing its geological and cultural heritage, as well as natural resorts with amazing flora and faunas in the area.

5.4. Malaysia

On behalf of Republic of Malaysia, Mr. Khairiah KAMARUDDIN, Senior Assistant Secretary from Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture Malaysia, made a presentation on National Ecotourism Plan 2016 -2025 of Malaysia.

At the outset, he mentioned history of tourism developments in Malaysia. He informed the participants about the approaches for ecotourism development in Malaysia. Then, He explained the 5 focus areas of ecotourism as the following;

- Investment in Ecotourism
- Tourism Concessions
- Synergy between Ecotourism & Conservation
- Ecotourism Marketing
- Ecotourism Clusters

Lastly, he shared proposal of Destination Coordination Group (DCG) Structure. He underlined, Ecotourism destinations are located in remote places and rarely able to achieve economy of

scale. Ecotourism operators and other stakeholders within a destination commonly work in silos, they lack synergy and network to fully optimise the potential of the area.

Clusters are an initiative to integrate various tourism products in a cluster including one or more major attractions in a concentrated area. Destination Coordination Groups (DCG) will carry out integrated planning, knowledge sharing and conflict resolution based on the cluster development, which comprises of:

- i) product development (create variety of activities, enhance and develop existing activities);
- ii) human resource (courses for capacity building for tourist guide and nature guides);
- iii) infrastructure and facility (enhance connectivity and facilities);
- iv) marketing and promotion (integrating marketing approach, leveraging social media and technology marketing); and
- v) destination management (tourism information centre, signage, integrated entrance fee for tourism attractions in the cluster)

5.5. Azerbaijan

On behalf of Azerbaijan, Mr. Azer ORUCEV, Consultant from Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Azerbaijan made a presentation and shared his country experience in sustainable destination management.

At the beginning of his presentation, he informed the participants on Strategic Planning Framework in Azerbaijan. He continued his presentation by mentioning 3 key stakeholder groups that DMOs aim to support: Local tourism related businesses/public sector, Visitors and Local community.

He concluded her presentation by underlying future self-sustainability of the Destination Management Organizations. He gave information on the axes of self-sustainability as the following:

- Sponsorships
- Marketing material sales
- Rentals
- Public facility fees
- Service Commission fees
- Advertising fees
- Tour selling “Official guided tours”

6. Policy Options for Risk and Crisis Management in Tourism Sector: Recovery from Crisis in the OIC Member Countries

The session was moderated by Mr. Ramin ATEEQZADA, Tourism Marketing Director from Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism of Afghanistan. At the outset, Mr. ATEEQZADA stated that the Room Document, prepared by the COMCEC Coordination Office in light of the findings of the research report prepared for the Meeting and the answers of the Member Countries to the policy questions which have already been sent by the CCO, would serve as the basis for the discussions in the moderation session.

At the beginning of the session, Mr. Selçuk KOÇ, made a brief presentation on the responses of the Member Countries to the policy questions on sustainable destination management strategies. After presenting the questions and responses of the Member Countries, Mr. KOÇ introduced the Room Document including draft policy advices.

Afterwards, Mr. ATEEQZADA gave the floor to all delegations asking their opinions and comments for each policy advice. The participants provided their comments, which have been reflected to the attached room document to be submitted to the 35th Session of the COMCEC.

The policy recommendations highlighted by the participants are as follows:

- Improving community participation fair representation by offering human resources training, capacity building and certification programs, enhancing local value chain, integrating local production into procurement and minimize leakages, encouraging local entrepreneurship in tourism, conducting media campaigns as well as raising tourist awareness about tourism sustainability.
- Identifying KPIs for sustainable tourism development based on international standards and climate change agreement to monitor each country's performance against a set of pre-determined indicators and to encourage remedial actions when targets are not met.
- Identifying current and potential tangible and intangible tourism resources by taking into consideration destinations carrying capacity, and their long term protection and survival while avoiding over tourism.
- The required mechanisms (e.g. voluntary contribution, tourist tax, environmental fees) might be introduced to fund the sustainability activities that aim to protect, preserve the local quality of life and minimize the costs associated with tourism.
- Ensuring effective destination planning and marketing in such a way that the supply and demand meet at the optimum level and diversified.

7. International Institutions’/ Private Sector’s Perspective

7.1. WORLD TOURISM ORGANIZATION (UNWTO)

Ms. CLAUDIA LISBOA, Technical Coordinator from UNWTO, made a presentation about “Tourism: A Key Sector for the 2030 Agenda”.

At the outset she expressed that UNWTO is responsible for promotion of sustainable and accessible tourism in the field of tourism. Tourism is a drive for the economic growth and development, supports the sector in advance of knowledge and tourism policies worldwide. UNWTO encourages the implementation of global codes of ethics in tourism in order to maximize tourism socio-economic contribution while minimizing the possible negative effect.

Over the decade, tourism has become one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world, creating jobs, investment, and infrastructure and promoting education among people. The sector is a vital peeler for national strategies and economic diversification. The value growth of tourism sector is important to achieve the tourism agenda goals. Tourism is also the mainly income industry for many developing countries.

Tourism produces employment benefit in many related sectors from construction to agriculture and communication. These dynamics turn tourism into key area for socio-economic progress. Tourism sector is a major force for sustainable development requiring integrated policy framework and encourage stakeholder cooperation. UNWTO encourages countries to put tourism in their national agenda to get the ultimate outputs from tourism the aim is to make tourism smarter, create better jobs, facilitate travel and protect our heritage.

UNWTO also encourages countries to contact and share best practices with other countries to show the possibilities in tourism. In terms of users, what they are trying to learn from UNWTO are; poverty, economic growth, sustainability in tourism sector, life on land, life below water.

She underlined that UNWTO has tools for tourism destination to become successful, marketing and promotion, DMO’s leading role, strategic planning, stakeholders UNWTO quests, UNWTO guidelines.

7.2. GLOBAL SUSTAINABLE TOURISM COUNCIL (GSTC)

Dr Ioannis PAPPAS, Director Med, GSTC, made a presentation on “GSTC: Role and Mission for Sustainable Destinations”.

At the beginning of his presentation, he mentioned especially in the terms of sustainability, which is generally misunderstood by visitors in countries. He underlined, it is a quality of a product, it is more about concrete in the market.

He also stated that the value of standards is crucial in sustainable tourism because it gives the rules about that certification and accreditation which is also important in this context about sustainability in for example, certifying a hotel or giving training to tourism employees. But this process is not easy to do in tourism market, because the hotels are not always keen on this subject.

He concluded her presentation by underlying that destination should have a road map for sustainable destination to apply. For a sustainable destination first, destinations have to create a strategy then an action plan and finally crating a marketing plan.

8. Utilizing the COMCEC Project Funding

Mr. Burak KARAGÖL, Director at the COMCEC Coordination Office made a presentation on the COMCEC Project Funding introduced by the COMCEC Strategy. The video clip shown at the outset of the presentation provided details about the rules and procedures of the COMCEC Project Funding as well as examples from the previously implemented projects.

After the video, Mr. KARAGÖL explained the timeline for the project submission and stated that the 6th Call for Project Proposals under the COMCEC Project Funding has been launched on September 1st, 2018 and will be open until the end of the September.

Mr. KARAGÖL emphasized that project topics can be found by examining; i) COMCEC policy recommendations, ii) sectoral themes, iii) outputs of the COMCEC Working Groups, iv) previous projects funded by the COMCEC, and v) COMCEC Strategy.

Then, Mr. KARAGÖL mentioned the available information on the COMCEC website regarding the COMCEC Project Funding. Mr. KARAGÖL stated that there are 6 tabs on the website namely overview, supported themes, online project submission, implemented projects, selected outputs and frequently asked questions, which can be utilized during the project submission period.

Mr. KARAGÖL shared brief information with participants regarding supported sectoral themes in tourism cooperation area. After touching upon the sectoral themes, Mr. KARAGÖL highlighted the essentials of online project submission system and reference materials that should be given an eye before submitting a project.

After briefly explaining how to reach and use the Online Project Submission System for COMCEC Project Funding, Mr. KARAGÖL also gave information on tourism projects implemented in 2018. These projects are titled “Strengthening the Resilience of Tourism Sector Against Crises through Communication”, “Training on Crisis Communication in Tourism for Selected OIC Member Countries”, “Community-Based Tourism through The Promotion of Heritage Sites for Poverty Alleviation”, “Improving Islamic Tourism Ecosystem in OIC Member Countries: Destination and Industry Development” implemented by Burkina Faso, Mali, Mozambique and SESRIC, respectively.

9. Closing Remarks

The Meeting ended with closing remarks of Mr. Ramin ATEEQZADA, Tourism Marketing Director from Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism of Afghanistan and Chairman of the Meeting and Mr. Selçuk KOÇ, Director at the COMCEC Coordination Office.

In his remarks, Mr. ATEEQZADA thanked all the Member Countries for giving her the opportunity to chair this session. He also thanked all the participants, presenters for their invaluable contributions, comments and ideas presented during the discussions.

Mr. KOÇ also thanked all the participants for their invaluable contributions. Mr. KOÇ informed the participants that the next (14th) Meeting of the Tourism Working Group will be held on September 5th, 2019, in Ankara, with the theme of “Developing Multi-destination tourism corridors in the OIC Countries.” Mr. KOÇ also highlighted the importance of COMCEC Project Funding and invited the Member Countries as well as the relevant OIC Institutions to submit project proposals to benefit from this important asset.

Annex 1: Agenda of the Meeting



13th MEETING OF THE COMCEC TOURISM WORKING GROUP (February 13th, 2019 Ankara)

“Sustainable Destination Management Strategies in the OIC Member Countries”

AGENDA

Opening Remarks

1. The COMCEC Tourism Outlook
2. Sustainable Destination Management Strategies: Global Trends, Approaches and Success Factors
3. Sustainable Destination Management Strategies in the OIC Member Countries
4. Policy Options for Sustainable Destination Management Strategies in the OIC Member Countries
5. Member State Presentations
6. International Institutions’/ Private Sector’s Perspective
7. Utilizing the COMCEC Project Funding

Closing Remarks

Annex 2: Program of the Meeting



13th MEETING OF THE COMCEC TOURISM WORKING GROUP

(February 13th, 2018, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Ankara)

“Sustainable Destination Management Strategies in the OIC Member Countries”

DRAFT PROGRAMME

08.30-09.00	Registration
09.00-09.05	Recitation from the Holy Quran
09.05-09.15	Opening Remarks
	The COMCEC Tourism Outlook
09.15-09.35	- <i>Presentation: Mr. Gürel ÇETİN</i> <i>Associate Professor</i> <i>COMCEC Coordination Office (CCO)</i>
09.35-09.45	- <i>Discussion</i>
	Sustainable Destination Management Strategies: Global Trends and Success Factors
09.45-10.15	- <i>Presentation: Mr. Rafi-uddin SHIKOH</i> <i>CEO/Managing Director</i> <i>Dinar Standard</i>
10.15-10.45	- <i>Discussion</i>
10.45-11.00	<i>Coffee Break</i>
	Sustainable Destination Management: Selected Case Studies, Main Challenges, Recommendations and Prospects
11.00-11.40	- <i>Presentation: Mr. Rafi-uddin SHIKOH</i> <i>CEO/Managing Director</i> <i>Dinar Standard</i>
	- <i>Discussion</i>
11.40-12.20	
12.20-14.00	<i>Lunch</i>



There will be a moderation session under this agenda item. The participants are expected to discuss the policy options/advice on sustainable destination management strategies in the OIC Member Countries. At the beginning of the session, the CCO will make a short presentation on the responses of the Member Countries to the policy questions and the Room Document.

- 14.20-15.30 - *Discussion*

15.45-15.55 - *Discussion*

- 15.55-16.10 *Coffee Break*

16.10-17.10 - *Presentation(s)*
 - *Discussion*

17.20-17.30

- *Presentation: “ GSTC : Role and Mission for Sustainable Destinations”*
Ioannis Pappas
Director Mediterranean Region
Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC)

- 17.30-17.40 *Closing Remarks and Family Photo*

Annex 3: The Policy Recommendations

THE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS HIGHLIGHTED BY THE 12TH MEETING OF THE TOURISM WORKING GROUP

The COMCEC Tourism Working Group (TWG) has successfully held its 13th Meeting on February 13th, 2019 in Ankara, Turkey with the theme of “Sustainable Destination Management Strategies in the OIC Member Countries.” During the Meeting, Tourism Working Group, made deliberations on sustainable destination management strategies in the OIC Member Countries in tourism sector. Accordingly, the participants has come up with some policy recommendations.

Policy Advice 1. Improving community participation fair representation by offering human resources training, capacity building and certification programs, enhancing local value chain, integrating local production into procurement and minimize leakages, encouraging local entrepreneurship in tourism, conducting media campaigns as well as raising tourist awareness about tourism sustainability.

Rationale:

When a tourism culture is established in the destination, locals are likely to participate more in decision-making processes and because they are the real owners of the destination, they are more likely to protect it. When for example, tourism investments are taken over by foreigners, who employ outsiders and import the inputs and raw materials, locals would be alienated with the destination and the resources. Thus, the local involvement at every possible channel should be encouraged and facilitated while continuously improving tourism’s direct and indirect benefits and value chain for locals. Such tools include percentage of local employment rules, incubation, credit facilities and support for potential local entrepreneurs, integrating local products to tourism supply chain and promoting a sustainable tourism culture while minimizing leakages from the local economy.

Policy Advice 2. Identifying KPIs for sustainable tourism development based on international standards and climate change agreement to monitor each country’s performance against a set of pre-determined indicators and to encourage remedial actions when targets are not met.

Rationale:

One of the most important factors for achieving sustainable outcomes at the destination level is effective and independent monitoring of current practices on site. Since

destinations will vary considerably, it is important that monitoring protocols are developed in context-specific and locally meaningful ways. Each member country needs to determine its position regarding its overall tourism climate, based on where it sits in destination life cycle models, what its tourism resources are, and what its total tourism budget is based on the suggested list of KPIs. This involves an on-going process of acquiring valid and reliable data across these sectors in ways that, ideally, lead to cross-country comparisons.

Policy advice 3. Identifying current and potential tangible and intangible tourism resources by taking into consideration destinations carrying capacity, and their long term protection and survival while avoiding over tourism.

Rationale:

Destinations have different natural and cultural attractions that have different levels of vulnerability to different types and volumes of touristic activity. The current and potential resources of destinations should be identified, threats should be eliminated, and their exposure to tourism activity should be managed. Their allocation needs to be limited with their capacity to handle tourist volume. This not only applies to natural resources and species but also cultural resources such as locals' way of life. Over tourism is important challenge for many tourism destinations. There are concerns about the energy consumption, resource depletion, waste management, impacts of tourism on wildlife and global warming. In this respect, carrying capacities, green certification and legislations would be tackled in the OIC region to create a more environmentally responsible tourism.

Policy advice 4. The required mechanisms (e.g. voluntary contribution, tourist tax, environmental fees) might be introduced to fund the sustainability activities that aim to protect, preserve the local quality of life and minimize the costs associated with tourism.

Rationale:

The negative side effects of tourism should be compensated by the actors who are responsible or benefiting from it. Because different tourism activities create pressures on local quality of life, the deterioration and use of resources that normally belong to locals should be paid for while the benefits of tourism towards locals should be enhanced. Tourist taxes, landing fees, entrance fees to the sites, waste taxes and so on

can be introduced to create the finances needed to invest on sustainability and correct negative consequences.

Policy advice 5. Ensuring effective destination planning and marketing in such a way that the supply and demand meet at the optimum level and diversified.

Rationale:

Mass tourism involves huge numbers of tourists with relatively low spending capacity. According to Tourism Statistics, though the number of tourists is increasing, their spending has not increased as desired. Current spending in the OIC is around 750 USD per tourist which is well below the global average. Therefore, the product development and marketing activities need to target less price sensitive markets. The OIC have various potential tourism products that can attract diverse markets through an effective planning and marketing.

Instruments to Realize the Policy Advices:

- **COMCEC Tourism Working Group:** In its subsequent meetings, the Working Group may elaborate on the above-mentioned policy areas in a more detailed manner.
- **COMCEC Project Funding:** Under the COMCEC Project Funding, the COMCEC Coordination Office calls for projects each year. With the COMCEC Project Funding, the Member Countries participating in the Working Groups can submit multilateral cooperation projects to be financed through grants by the COMCEC Coordination Office. For the above-mentioned policy areas, the Member Countries can utilize the COMCEC Project Funding and the COMCEC Coordination Office may finance the successful projects in this regard. These projects may include organizing seminars, training programs, study visits, exchange of experts, workshops and preparing analytical studies, needs assessments and training materials/documents.
- **OIC/COMCEC Private Sector Tourism Forum:** In its future meetings, the OIC/COMCEC Private Sector Tourism Forum may elaborate on the above-mentioned policy areas and the sub-areas from the private sector perspective.

Annex 4: List of Participants

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS 13th MEETING OF THE TOURISM WORKING GROUP 13 February 2019, Ankara

A. MEMBER COUNTRIES OF THE OIC

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN

- Mr. RAMIN ATEEQZADA
- Tourism Marketing Director, Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism

REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

- Mr. AZER ORUJOV
Consultant, Ministry of Culture and Tourism
- Ms. SABINA YADULLAYEVA
Specialist, Azerbaijan Tourism Board

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH

- Ms. ANJANA KHAN MOJLISH
Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism
- Mr. MD. HUMAYUN KABIR
Joint Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism

REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON

- Ms. MIREILLE DELPHINE NGO NJONOK EPSE LEA
Follow -up unit Head, Ministry of Tourism and Leisure

ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT

- Mr. AMR SELIM
Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Egypt in Ankara

REPUBLIC OF GAMBIA

- Ms. FATOU BEYAI RAJI
Director, Gambia Tourism Board
- Ms. YA AWA NYASSI
Planner, Ministry of Tourism and Culture

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

- Ms. FATEMEH GHORBANI
Assistant of Director General of Tourism Planning and Development, Iran
Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization
- Ms. OZRA AZIZI
Manager Assistant, Iran culture, heritage & tourism organization (ICHTO)

MALAYSIA

- Mr. ZAIN AZRAI RASHID
Director, Ministry of Tourism
- Ms. KHAIRIAH KAMARUDDIN
Senior Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Tourism

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

- Mr. SHAMSUDEEN S. ABDULLAHI
Second Secretary, Embassy of Nigeria in Ankara

KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

- Dr. KHALED ALZHRANI
Manager of International Organizations & Committees, Saudi Commission for
Tourism and National Heritage

REPUBLIC OF TUNISIA

- Mr. SABEUR KAROUI
Inspector, National Tunisian Tourism Office

REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

- Ms. BAŞAK ÖNSAL DEMİR
Coordinator
- Mr. ENİS UĞUR
Expert, Ministry Culture and Tourism
- Mr. MUSTAFA ÖZSOY
Expert, Ministry Culture and Tourism
- Mr. GÜRSEL GÜNDOĞDU
Expert, Ministry Culture and Tourism
- Mr. FARUK ÇUBUKÇI
Expert, Ministry Culture and Tourism
- Ms. YASEMİN ÇELİK
Interpretation, Ministry Culture and Tourism

REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

- Mr. JOSEPH BARIGYE
First Secretary of Uganda Embassy in Ankara

B. THE OIC SUBSIDIARY ORGANS

**STATISTICAL, ECONOMIC, SOCIAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING CENTER
FOR
ISLAMIC COUNTRIES (SESRIC)**

- Ms. TAZEEN QURESHI
Research Assistant, SESRIC

**STANDARDS AND METROLOGY INSTITUTE FOR ISLAMIC COUNTRIES
(SMIIC)**

- Mr. LOTFI BEN SAID
Assistant Secretary General, SMIIC

C. INVITED INSTITUTIONS

**INSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS DEPARTMENT
WORLD TOURISM ORGANIZATION (UNWTO)**

- Ms. CLAUDIA LISBOA
Technical Coordinator

GLOBAL SUSTAINABLE TOURISM COUNCIL (GSTC)

- Mr. IOANNIS PAPPAS
Director Mediterranean Region

DINAR STANDARD

- Mr. RAFIUDDIN SHIKOH
Consultant

D. COMCEC COORDINATION OFFICE

- Mr. M. METİN EKER
Director General, Head of COMCEC Coordination Office
- Mr. SELÇUK KOÇ
Director

- Mr. BURAK KARAGÖL
Director
- Mr. GÜREL ÇETİN
Consultant
- Mr. GÖKTENDAMAR
Expert
- Ms. AYTEN AKMAN
Expert
- Mr. NİHAT AKBALIK
Expert
- Ms. EDA AKÇA
Expert

