



**GTRCMC**  
GLOBAL TOURISM RESILIENCE  
& CRISIS MANAGEMENT CENTRE

# MULTI-DESTINATION ARRANGEMENT:

## *A complementary tourism development strategy*

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**R**egionalism has been long established as a viable framework for promoting integration and cooperation in trade and other areas to enhance the region's competitiveness deepen its integration into the global economy and address major socio-economic problems such as poverty and unemployment. A large market created by integration can promote economies of scale, sharing of economic costs and benefits, knowledge and skill transfer and the pooling of resources to meet common goals for effectively tackling shared challenges and risks. Tourism has been identified as one of the sectors that enjoy enormous potential to promote regional integration. The integral role that cross-border collaborations will play in promoting tourism competitiveness within regional contexts was recognized at the 2017 United Nations World Tourism Organization's (UNWTO) international tourism conference that was staged under the theme "Building Private-Public Partnerships for Sustainable Tourism for Development" and commemorated the designation of 2017 as Year of Sustainable. At the end of that conference the consensus adopted was that regional governments and the private sector should work more closely to advance regional integration by fostering and harmonizing legislation on air connectivity, visa facilitation, product development, promotion and human capital.

Indeed, the tourism industry is highly competitive and demands sustainable and innovative marketing strategies to ensure long term success. Therefore, to this end, it has become increasingly necessary to strengthen co-operation networks between countries, so as to increase and better share the revenues generated by tourism. One of the strategies that can be employed in tourism to promote regional integration is the concept of a multi-destination arrangement. The multi-destination strategy is one of three legacy outcomes from the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) in 2017. A multi-destination arrangement is based on joint partnerships involving governments airlines, hotels, tour operators and attractions that will enable visitors to seamlessly travel two, three or more geographically proximate nations and stay over in each destination.

Its promotion is consistent with the growing view by tourism experts that the future fortunes of the tourism in specific regions region may lie in economic convergence between complimentary economies rather stand-alone approaches. The suggestion is that economies of a similar size with shared vulnerabilities, similar level of development and shared geographical borders could better achieve complementary and could integrate better from an economic and commercial perspective. This would constitute a rational approach to economic integration that will allow the benefits of tourism to be spread across more economies in a region, thereby generating more economic opportunities for a greater number of people. Indeed, successful multi-destination arrangements can increase both intra -regional and extra-regional tourist flows and promote mutual benefits for more destinations in the region.

The value of a multi-destination arrangement is that, as an approach to tourism development, it adds value to the tourism experience, while expanding the benefits of Tourism to more than one destination. In this regard, multi-destination tourism can be considered one of the complementary means to diversify the Regional Tourism Industry while capitalizing on a Region's natural and cultural assets and contributing to social and economic growth. From a visitor's perspective, a multi-destination tourism package will afford travellers the opportunity to experience different destinations/localities, with each experience fulfilling a different desire of the visitor. In establishing multi-destination critical mass will be created for large investments in hotels, infrastructure, agriculture and manufacturing. Furthermore, small and medium-sized businesses will enter the market providing more goods and services, employing more people and generating more revenues for governments.

Several regions have already begun to explore the feasibility of multi-destination arrangements. Government agencies, tourism boards and private companies from seven countries in Central America have launched a joint partnership to promote multi-destination travel in the region offering travel packages at special rates. Eight packages are being promoted on and tours include destinations in two, three or even all seven countries. Options include offers to enjoy, for example, ecotourism in Costa Rica, culture in Guatemala and beach destinations along the Caribbean coastline in Honduras. Similarly, Jamaica currently has four multi-destination arrangements with the government of Cuba, The Dominica Republic and Panama and another in the pipeline with the government of the Cayman Islands.

These multi-destination arrangements are aimed at advancing regional integration by fostering and harmonizing legislation on air connectivity, visa facilitation, product development, marketing and human capital development. The convergence of the five countries has also created a market of over 60 million potential visitors and has been promoted as a package, through the respective tourist boards to large tour operators, airlines and cruise-lines. This constitutes a major development for tourism's growth and expansion in the Caribbean area, as it has brought five of the largest markets in the region together. The agreements have created a mega-market that will now be able to attract the big airlines, the large tour operators but more importantly destinations will now be able to entice the new emerging markets of the far distances of Asia, Africa and Eastern Europe.

in spite of its potential benefits from a regional perspective, some prerequisites have to be met for the successful implementation of multi-destination arrangements. Governments need to work for closely to examine the issues of tourism costs, air connectivity, the harmonization of visa policies, airspace usage, and pre-clearance arrangements. One possibility that can be effectively explored is that of adopting measures that would enable tourists to travel more conveniently to and among the countries of the Region, such as visa waivers for select countries or a multiple entry visa. There should also willingness and commitment on the part of the countries to coordinate marketing, product development and investment strategies. Governments are also urged to explore incentives and strategies to strengthen regional carriers; enhance intra-regional travel; and through joint airlift agreements, increase linkages between regional- and international-based airlines as part of a broad-based strategy to boost tourist arrivals.



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