

ANNEX 2.D: JAMAICA

Project Name: Environmental Audits for Sustainable Tourism (EAST)	Contract Number: PCE-5559-C-00-3021-00 LAG-I-816-98-00005-00 (Phase III) LAG-I-00-99-00019-00, Task Order No. 816 (Phase IV)
Project Duration: 1997-2005	Funding Mechanism: IQC - Water, Integrated Water and Coastal Resources Management
Strategic Objective: 532-002 Improved quality of key natural resources in selected areas that are both environmentally and economically significant.	
Donor Agencies/Partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PA Consulting Group • Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association (JHTA) • Jamaica Manufacturers Association (JMA) • Government of Jamaica Ministry of Industry and Tourism • Government of Jamaica National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA) • Jamaica Bureau of Standards • Tourism Product Development Company (TPDCo) • Government of Jamaica Human Employment and Resource Training Trust/National Training Agency (HEART Trust/NTA) 	

Context

In recent years, the mass resort market has become increasingly competitive, with the steady rise in capacity of destinations such as the Mexican Caribbean, Dominican Republic, and Cuba. Many of these locations have been adding more than 1,000 hotel rooms annually for several years and, together with the growth of the pleasure-cruise industry, have resulted in increasing competition for smaller, traditional Caribbean destinations such as Jamaica.

With more than 150 licensed hotels and 13,500 rooms, Jamaica's economy is heavily dependent on tourism, which is the nation's leading generator of foreign exchange earnings and revenue. Given the competitive nature of tourism in the Caribbean region, this sector is especially vulnerable to any degradation of its coastal resources. However, during recent decades, negative impacts from improperly planned urban and tourism developments, such as poor solid waste and sanitation practices have affected water quality and near shore ecosystems, especially in the important north and northwestern tourism destinations of Negril, Ocho Rios, and Montego Bay. For its own self-preservation, Jamaica's tourism industry had to address the impacts of its own operations on the natural resources that sustained its wellbeing.

In other locations, such as Port Antonio in the northeastern parish of Portland, tourism and the general economy have been in steady decline. With both the railroad and local airport closed, the area is a mountainous road trip of 2 hours 30 minutes from Kingston. Capturing only 15,000 visitors out of an annual total of approximately 1.3 million to the island in recent years, and with occupancy rates significantly below 20 percent, some of the area's hotels and attractions have closed their doors, and the area has witnessed an exodus of labor to other parts of the island. The irony is that the parish is the birthplace of tourism in Jamaica, and was a favorite destination for Hollywood stars and writers in the 1950s and 1960s.

In 1997, with support from regional and local environmental initiatives (Caribbean Hotel Association/Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism, and the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association, respectively), USAID launched a new, collaborative partnership to fund the introduction of environmental management systems and best practices in small (less than 100 rooms), locally owned hotels, which comprise more than three-quarters of all hotel properties in Jamaica. In recent years, as the project evolved, the project scope has been expanded to encompass — among other things — an integrated, environmental destination program for the Port Antonio area.

Project Objectives

USAID/Jamaica's environment program's goal has been to improve natural resources quality in selected areas across Jamaica. Major project activities have focused on improving wastewater management, helping the government develop environmental policies, and promoting environmental best practices in coastal zone management, watershed management, and sustainable tourism.

The objectives of the EAST project were:

- Consolidate and expand the application of sound environmental management in the hotel/tourist industry and manufacturing sector, with an emphasis on creating linkages between these sectors and with the community
- Develop environmental champions in the hotel and manufacturing industries to encourage adoption of best environmental management practices by others in their industries
- Build the capabilities of both Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association and the Jamaica Manufacturers Association to offer environmental management services to their members (and non-members)
- Work with vocational and tertiary institutions to include best environmental management practices in their hospitality and tourism curricula
- Transfer the lessons learned from the first phase of the project to other businesses in Jamaica and the wider Caribbean
- Design and implement a pilot plan for Port Antonio/Portland as a model for a sustainable tourism destination program

Approach

Throughout several phases, the EAST program evolved into a national sustainable tourism program. It began in 1997 as a demonstration of the benefits of improved environmental management in the hotel and manufacturing sectors. The first phase included the undertaking of environmental audits, training in environmental management systems (EMS), and supplying environmental equipment for 14 small hotels in Negril. This was soon extended to include Port Antonio, Montego Bay, Ocho Rios, and the South Coast region, as well the auditing of 10 manufacturing facilities in Kingston/St. Andrew. The program was again extended in 1998-1999 to include additional hotel/manufacturing audits, introduction of the

Green Globe 21 certification, analysis of financing and economic incentives for both tourism and manufacturing, and the development of an institutional plan for the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association (JHTA) to sustain the efforts of the EAST project long after the project is completed.

An EMS is a systematic framework for integrating environmental management into an organization's activities, products, and services. A critical step in any organization's adoption of an EMS is identifying those aspects of operations (e.g., use of chemicals in housekeeping, landscaping) and introducing changes in the facilities and practices that minimize the impact of the organization on the natural and social environment. The EMS standard distinguishes itself from environmental performance standards in that it focuses on the organizational aspects and the process for determining appropriate levels of environmental performance, rather than prescribing specific technology criteria.

Two concepts that are important in understanding how an EMS works are (1) continuous improvement and (2) best environmental management practices or "best practices." The concept of continuous improvement implies that the organization can begin at any level of environmental performance. Through an iterative cycle of setting policies, planning environmental objectives and targets, implementing specific actions, measuring the results, and reviewing the overall effectiveness of the program, the organization will improve its environmental performance over time.

In June, 2002, EAST activities were coordinated with two other USAID/Jamaica projects: CWIP and R2RW. This coordination occurred under an Integrated Water and Coastal Zone Management Program that has comprehensively dealt with water quality and other environmental issues within selected basins and receiving coastal waters. EAST's principle counterparts have been the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association, Jamaica Manufacturers Association, Ministry of Tourism and Sport, Natural Resources Conservation Authority, and Jamaica Bureau of Standards.

In addition to continuing to focus on EMS and environmental best practices, emphasis was also placed on educating young people about responsible tourism. As a result, the project worked with various educational institutions in the region to promote responsible tourism through sustainable development, including Runaway Bay HEART Hotel and Training Institute, by developing and implementing a "green" curriculum. Moreover, EMS and certification were introduced for natural attractions for the first time.

Increasingly, EAST activities have been designed to transfer successful policies and practices to the wider Caribbean through development of case studies, presentations at regional conferences, and coordinating visits of public- and private-sector decision makers to Jamaica, as well as through the Certified Hotel Environmental Managers Initiative, which encompassed several other countries in the Caribbean.

In May 2003, USAID extended the project for an additional 24 months, with this phase focusing on establishing a "green destination" in the parish of Portland. EAST also helped implement a related economic development plan that addressed increased employment by creating new, environmentally sensitive, economic opportunities for the region.

Together with the JHTA, the project spearheaded a sustainable development process by promoting an integrated tourism development approach through the establishment of the Portland Destination Management Group (PDMG). A multi-stakeholder entity, the latter supports the implementation of sound environmental programs within the general Port Antonio area. The goal of the group is to achieve international recognition by certification at the destination level from Green Globe 21 — a feat that has been accomplished in few other destinations in the world, such as Dominica.

Achievements

Over its project life, EAST became the centerpiece of industry and government efforts to improve the environmental performance of Jamaica's tourist industry, and its findings and practices have been introduced in other countries of the Caribbean and elsewhere. In addition, the project has strengthened the linkages between tourism and other sectors such as manufacturing, as well as civil society.

EMS and Certification

Of the 62 hotels in the EAST program, 30 have received environmental certification, and an additional 30 are actively implementing EMS in their operations. The first five hotels in the world to receive Green Globe 21 certification are located in Jamaica, and the country has the largest number certified to date.

The results have been significant in reducing water, chemical, and energy consumption, as well as solid waste and wastewater disposal. For example, data for five large hotels that implemented EMS indicate a total annual net savings of 52 million gallons of water and enough electricity to provide power to more than 7,000 Jamaican households, thus reducing carbon dioxide emissions by 2,100 tons.

Two natural attractions are now certified, one of which (Green Grotto Caves) was the first in the world to receive Green Globe 21 attraction certification. Three additional attractions are applying for certification. More than 15 manufacturing companies have been audited, and currently some are in the process of establishing EMS and preparing for ISO 14001 certification.

EMS participation is voluntary, so innovative incentives have been used to gain interest in the program. For example, hotel insurance in Jamaica is very costly, but subsidies are available through the Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism for a property with an established EMS. Insurance brokers also give concessions to Green Globe 21 certified hotels since they are implementing health and safety measures required for certification.

Environmental Training

Several training and educational initiatives have been undertaken, catering to various audiences. The hotel managers and supervisors in all of the EAST-assisted properties have had EMS training. A certified hotel environmental manager program for professional development has been introduced (20 managers to date have been certified).

Local consultants have been trained to conduct environmental audits and assessments for the tourism and manufacturing sectors, and Tourism Product Development Company inspectors trained for hotels and attractions.

More than 500 students have been certified in environmental best practices by the Runaway Bay HEART Hotel and Training Institute. Environmental leadership programs have been established in the hotel and tourism sector for on-the-job training. Before its ending, EAST was also working with the University of the West Indies/Jamaica to implement EMS in the hospitality management curriculum.

A Plant-A-Tree program has been established that enables tourists to purchase tree seedlings for schools to plant in a watershed; revenues from the sales are split between the schools and JHTA for funding environmental programs, including education camps for teenagers.

Integrated Destination Management

Although a nascent initiative, results are already visible. The PDMG and the setting of a single development goal have led to better coordination of activities and agenda, greater community involvement and awareness, and increased collaboration among the various interest groups in Portland Parish.

Lessons Learned

Jamaica presents some important lessons learned for other countries interested in introducing environmental management in the tourism sector and other industries:

Create incentives for voluntary action. EMS one of the most effective management tools, especially when applied to small hotel operations. However, EAST initially had difficulty in identifying 15 volunteer properties because there was no clear incentive to participate. Introducing the Green Globe 21 Certification created an incentive for continuous improvement. Annual re-certification becomes an incentive to keep the EMS operating, in time changing the mind-set from “standard practices” to “best practices” in business operations. Awards and other recognition programs encourage improvement and unleash the creative instincts (and collective knowledge) of hotel staff.

Demonstrate the benefits locally. Little or no information on the environmental performance of Jamaican hotels existed prior to EAST. Using specific examples of audit findings and EMS results from nearby hotels was much more powerful than references to experiences in other countries or even destinations within the same country. However, it can take a long time to show successes, especially at the community level.

Create environmental champions in industry. The most effective spokespersons for improving environmental management are hoteliers who have gone through the process. Their testimonials are accorded great importance since they understand the attitudes and decision-making criteria of their peers in the industry. Environmental champions are needed at virtually all levels, from owners to line staff, to overcome barriers to change. EAST was fortunate in that some of the larger resorts volunteered their expertise and staff to assist smaller properties through a “Big Brother” program.

Publicize the results. The hotel industry in Jamaica, as in other places, is very conscious about public relations. Coverage of the EAST Project, including documentary videos and national and international press coverage, has greatly raised awareness within the industry.

Institutionalize the programs. Perhaps the most important lesson is to introduce environmental management as part of an industry-wide initiative. On-site technical assistance needs to be supported by awareness and training activities. Housing the program in a hotel association like JHTA provided an excellent way to expand membership services and help redefine the industry’s reputation at home and abroad.

Empower the stakeholders. Dialogue and empowerment of stakeholders are crucial since their involvement is necessary to address environmental and social issues, and they will have eventual ownership of the process. In Jamaica, an array of national and local governmental agencies and organizations may be involved in a lengthy process typically needed to modify projects or formulate new ones. The establishment of the PDMG has helped in this regard. Since it has key public sector representatives as part of its constituency, in addition to the private sector, it should be able to signal any reforms or important needs and convey any urgency directly to the right authorities. Still, a challenge exists for the coordination and dissemination of information among all the players, and the time demand

placed on those involved. Groundwork in establishing governance mechanisms is slow in rewards and results, but necessary to sustain the process.

Opportunities and Next Steps

Hopefully, increased institutional mainstreaming of environmental best practices will continue to occur. An encouraging indication is that the Tourism Product Development Company is considering incorporating these practices as standard operating requirements for licenses issued to hotel and tourism entities. Similar measures could be taken for manufacturing activities. Also, the Urban Development Corporation, which manages several of Jamaica's natural attractions such as Green Grotto Caves, has stated its intention of continued environmental certification.

The implementation of an EMS and subsequent certification remain difficult processes for many smaller hotel properties. They frequently have limited management and technical abilities, high staff turnover (especially once trained), and often inadequate sourcing capital for environmental retrofitting. While EAST set up a mechanism for assisting with the latter, continued support will be needed in the near term, and perhaps beyond, from such entities as JHTA and the Caribbean Hotel Association/Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism.

To date, progress relating to the Sustainable Tourism Destination Plan for Portland Parish has been very promising. It is hoped that the PDMG will continue its excellent work in promoting community environmental awareness building, take ownership of the Destination Certification Programme and eventually gain Green Globe 21 Destination Status for the Port Antonio area.

Related Materials and Sources of Information

<http://www.jhta.org/eastproject.htm>

Reports

Hagler Bailly Services. *Environmental Management Audit: Negril Cabins Resort, Negril, Jamaica*. Submitted to USAID, 1999.

———. *Environmental Management Audit: Coral Seas Garden Hotel, Negril, Jamaica*. Submitted to USAID, 1998.

———. *Environmental Management Audit: Fern Hill Club, Port Antonio, Jamaica*. Submitted to USAID, 1998.

———. *Environmental Management Audit: Sunshine Village Hotel, Negril, Jamaica*. Submitted to USAID, 1998.

———. *Environmental Management Audit: Grand Lido Hotel, Negril, Jamaica*. Submitted to USAID, 1997.

———. *Environmental Management Audit: Grand Lido Hotel, Negril, Jamaica*. Submitted to USAID, 1997.

———. *Environmental Management Audit: Negril Gardens Hotel, Negril, Jamaica*. Submitted to USAID, 1997.

- . *Environmental Management Audit: Negril Gardens Hotel, Negril, Jamaica*. Submitted to USAID, 1997.
- . *Environmental Management Audit: Negril Tree House Hotel, Negril, Jamaica*. Submitted to USAID, 1997.
- . *Environmental Management Audit: Negril Tree House Hotel, Negril, Jamaica*. Submitted to USAID, 1997.
- . *Environmental Management Audit: Sea Splash Resort, Negril, Jamaica*. Submitted to USAID, 1997.
- Meade, B. “Introducing Environmental Management in the Hospitality Industry: Case studies in the Caribbean.” Presentation prepared by PA Consulting Group. April 2002.
- . “Voluntary Environmental Certification for the Tourism Industry: Combining EMS and best practices.” Presentation prepared by PA Consulting Group for the International Conference on Sustainable Tourism, Rimini, Italy. June 28-30, 2001.
- Meade, B. and J. Pringle. “Environmental Management Systems for Caribbean Hotels and Resorts: A Case Study of Five Properties in Jamaica.” PA Government Services, Inc.
- PA Consulting Group. “Revitalizing tourism in Port Antonio, Jamaica” in *Viewpoint*: 39-41. PA Consulting Group, London, 2004.
- U.S. Agency for International Development. “Evaluation of USAID/Jamaica’s Environmental Programme.” 2000.
- . “From Ridge To Reef: Strategic Objective Two.” Presentation. n.d.
- . “The Importance of Governance in the Destination Management Approach: The Example of Port Antonio, Jamaica.” n.d.
- . “Voluntary Industry Initiatives in Best Practices, EMS Certification and Community Development in Jamaica: The Environmental Audits for Sustainable Tourism (EAST) Project – From Demonstration to Destination Management.” Presentation. 2004.