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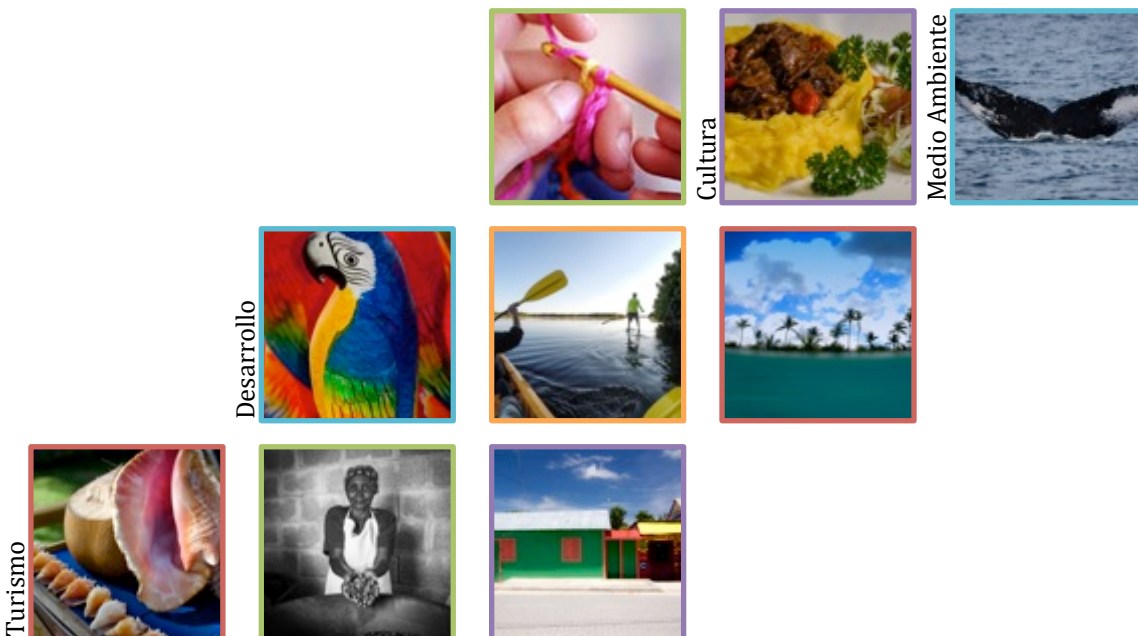
CONSORCIO DOMINICANO
DE COMPETITIVIDAD TURÍSTICA

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM (USAID-CDCT)

CA No. 517-A-00-12-00001

FINAL REPORT

January 1, 2012 – April 30, 2014



April 2014

This Report was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development and prepared by the Dominican Consortium for Tourism Competitiveness (CDCT). It was made possible thanks to the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under the Cooperative Agreement No. 517-A-00-12-00001 (USAID Sustainable Tourism Empowerment Program-STEP) implemented by prime recipient CDCT. The contents and opinions expressed herein are the responsibility of the Environmental Protection Program and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID.

Cover Information:

Different areas of intervention of the Sustainable Tourism Empowerment Program
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Sustainable Tourism Empowerment Program

Cooperative Agreement Information

Contract Information

This program is the result of Cooperative Agreement No. 517-A-00-12-00001 between USAID and the Dominican Consortium for Tourism Competitiveness (CDCT). The CDCT is a Dominican NGO whose main objective is to promote sustainable tourism in the Dominican Republic on the basis of the "cluster" model. This agreement was signed on December 29, 2011, with 24-month duration for a total of US\$ 2.4 million dollars.

Reporting Period

January 1, 2012 to April 30, 2014

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Acronyms:

ADOMPRETUR	Dominican Association of Tourist Press
AED	Academy for Education and Development
ASONAHORES	Association of Hotels and Tourism of the Dominican Republic
BTC	Caribbean Tourism Exchange
CCN	Centro Cuesta Nacional
CDCT	Dominican Competitive Tourism Consortium
CENADARTE	National Center for Crafts
CICOM	Information and Communication Centre
CNC	National Competitiveness Council
CONPEHT	Pan American Confederation of Schools of Hotel, Catering and Tourism
DR	Dominican Republic
DR-CAFTA	Dominican Republic- Central America Free Trade Agreement
FENADARTE	Dominican Federation of Artisans and related organizations
GSTA	Global Sustainable Alliance
GWU	George Washington University
INFOTEP	National Institute of Technical Training
MARENA Fund	National Fund for Environment and Natural Resources
MIC	Ministry of Culture
MITUR	Tourism Ministry
OPETUR	Tour Operators Association
PMP	Program Monitoring Plan
PUCMM	Pontificia Universidad Catolica Madre y Maestra
SEMARENA	Ministry of Environment
SMME	Small and Medium Enterprises
STEP	Sustainable Tourism Empowerment Program
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
UCSD	Catholic University of Santo Domingo
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNIBE	Universidad Iberoamericana
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USAID- DSTA	USAID-Dominican Sustainable Tourism Alliance
USAID-STEP	USAID-Sustainable Empowerment Program
USG	United States Government

A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The USAID- CDCT Tourism Empowerment Program is the result of a Cooperative Agreement No. 517-A-00-12-00001 between USAID and the Dominican Consortium for Tourism Competitiveness (CDCT). The CDCT is a Dominican NGO whose main objective is to promote sustainable tourism in the Dominican Republic on the basis of the "cluster" model. This agreement was signed on December 29th, 2011, with 24-months of duration for a total of U\$ 2.4 million dollars. Nonetheless, on December 2013, USAID granted CDCT a no-cost extension for four months in order for the program to fully comply with objectives making 28 months the total program duration.

The USAID-CDCT Sustainable Tourism Empowerment Program (STEP) general objective was tourism empowerment as a continuation of the cluster formation processes that was started with the previous program on tourism cluster formation, USAID - Dominican Sustainable Tourism Alliance (USAID-DSTA)-Associate Award No. 517-A-00-07-00105-00-. This continuance focused on triggering the implied leaders to own the future of furthering the development of their local tourism clusters. Thus, in order to comply with the mentioned outcome, the programs framework resulted in the following:

1. **Overview of USAID-DR Mission:** to support local economic growth following the precepts of environmental and social sustainability.
2. **Program Objective:** To promote, support and implement sustainable tourism initiatives that help the local development and contribute to sustainability, financial autonomy and institutional strengthening of tourism clusters and CDCT.

In context, the CDCT was born around this framework becoming a Dominican organization that seeks to further help institutionalize aid for tourism clusters, promoting synergies with public institutions and donors to provide support to the sector. In short CDCT behaves as the “Cluster of all Tourism Clusters”.

In order to reach the mentioned overall objective USAID-CDCT-STEP Program developed three main intermediate products:

- I. Clusters and CDCT obtain financial Sustainability from sources other than USAID;
- II. Environmental and Cultural Tourism Enhanced in Cluster Destinations and
- III. Sustainable Tourism positioned as a competitive means of diversifying the DR tourism sector.

The scope of work of the program benefitted the 10 tourism clusters that are members of CDCT located in the following destinations:

Barahona	Samana
Constanza	Santo Domingo
Jarabacoa	La Altagracia
Montecristi	La Romana
Pedernales	Bayahibe
Puerto Plata	



The two year and four months program counted with several national and international partners such as:

- » Dominican Association of Tourist Press (ADOMPRETUR)
- » Association of Hotels and Tourism of the Dominican Republic (ASONAHORES)
- » Tour Operators Association (OPETUR)
- " Caribbean Tourism Exchange (BTC)
- " Centro Cuesta Nacional (CCN)
- » Information and Communication Centre (CICOM)
- » National Center for Crafts (CENADARTE)
- » Pan American Confederation of Schools of Hotel , Catering and Tourism (

CONPEHT)

» National Competitiveness Council (CNC)

»Dominican Federation of Artisans and related organizations (FENADARTE)

" National Fund for Environment and Natural Resources (Fund MARENA)

» National Institute of Technical Training (INFOTEP)

» Ministry of Tourism (MITUR) »
Ministry of Culture (MIC)

" Ministry of Environment" Pontificia Universidad Catolica Madre y Maestra (PUCMM)

» Catholic University of Santo Domingo (UCSD)

" Universidad Iberoamericana (UNIBE)	» United Nations Educational , Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
" George Washington University (GWU)	
" Solimar International» The Nature Conservancy (TNC)	»The International Institute of Tropical Forestry for USAID

The USAID-CDCT Program exceeded most of the program targets demonstrating significant accomplishments in the categories of training/capacity-building, climate change awareness and adaptation training, and environmental awareness activities.

An overview of the overall accomplishments program results to date include:

- *8 organizations are considered sustainable and mature as a result of the USAID funds that were part of the USAID-CDCT program.*
- 52 firms have received USAID assistance to obtain the Dominican Treasures certification that endorses international quality control, environmental standards and other voluntary processes or regulations.
- 62 cultural products have been introduced into the local tourism offer
- 73 climate change and adaptation trainings and activities were carried out
- 2,140 training workshops were conducted on climate change and environmental awareness with the support of USAID
- 19,782 people consumed sustainable tourism products
- *5,296 training conducted to enhance professional performance and improve the quality of Small and Medium enterprises related to Dominican tourism with USAID assistance (Standard Indicator)*

B. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

I. The origins of the Cluster movement in Dominican Republic

The renowned Dominican economist Antonio Rodríguez Mansfield, around 2000-2005, was the first to officially speak of the cluster concept in the Dominican Republic. This economist had been an avid advocate for competitiveness since the early 90's and subsequently the cluster model based on the theory of Michael Porter.

Micheal Porter's Theory: *“A geographical concentration of enterprises, institutions and universities that share an interest in a particular economic and strategic sector. These associations generate a collaboration that allows members to address joint projects of all kinds, from outreach and promotion of the sector or creating shared capacities”*

Mr. Rodriguez Mansfield promoted the cluster concept in the country at a business level, mainly in the agricultural and tourism sectors; in addition he also presented this model to Dominican State institutions (such as the National Competitiveness Council - CNC) as well as international organizations among which we cite the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Mr. Rodriguez Mansfield strongly advocated for the country to adopt this concept in order to improve the business climate and raise competitiveness level of all economic sectors.

From this moment on, clusters in the agricultural and tourism sectors started emerging, followed by clusters in the industrial and technology sectors that also counted with the support of the CNC and USAID¹.

a) 2000-2003: The first Tourism Cluster in Dominican Republic

In the year 2000 the cluster concept began empirically in Romana-Bayahibe when hoteliers decided to come together under an association, moving away from traditional development based on an integrated sector standpoint for tourist destination. This vision included the implementation of international certifications, the conservation of natural and cultural resources and most importantly the integration of the community.

Years later, when the cluster model concept became better known, hoteliers of the area made it their own, thus forming the first tourism cluster of the country. This tourism cluster focused most of its efforts on sustainable development, another new concept in the country. Their actions revolved around the main pillars of sustainability, and results were noticeable right away. A few of their achievements were the following:

- GREEN GLOBE Certification of most of their hotels by almost 100%

¹ USAID supported the country during the process of implementation of the cluster model under the DR-CAFTA framework.

- Blue flag certification, making Bayahibe the first beach to receive this certification in the American continent,
- Community formation programs,
- Environmental conservation programs such as endemic species conservation i.e. The *Pereskia quisqueyana* or Bayahibe rose (today the national flower of the country), among a few others.

b) 2003-2007: The Formation of a Tourism Cluster network

By the year 2003, the sustainability perceptions are understood by clusters to be a general basic element for a healthy tourism growth. Likewise, advances are reached in competitiveness aspects understanding the necessity to strengthen these new institutions (clusters) that were seeking the integration of actors involved in sector value chains defending shared development strategies.

USAID supported the strengthening process by financing the first Tourism development strategies in Romana-Bayahibe, La Vega, and Puerto Plata, hiring important American consultancy firms.

These development strategies intended to mark the main course of action so that tourism clusters would work under the bases of specific sustainable tourism goals. Chemonics International under the USAID Competitiveness and Policy Program (CPP) led this USAID support with the help of implied tourism clusters. Among the many achievements of this program were the promotion and implementation of new certifications such as the Blue Flag certification, concentrated specifically in the North (Puerto Plata) and East (Cabeza de Toro) destinations.

However, clusters evidenced institutionally important organizational weaknesses given Dominican reality. A controversial discussion was carried out on whether clusters should be legalized, knowing that they weren't in other countries. Yet, given local processes involving staffing, services (power, communications, etc.), access to aid funds requirements among others forced to assume a change in Porters model and it was decided that clusters in Dominican Republic should be legalized in order to be able to legally operate. This process would occur in the following period.

This phase ended with the formation of nine tourism clusters including the Tourism Cluster of Pedernales who formed with CNC support.

In 2006 the idea of having a Cluster network or a “Cluster for all clusters” emerged into what today is the Dominican Consortium for Competitive Tourism (CDCT). The original intention of CDCT formation was to have a space where cluster experiences and best management practices could be shared amongst cluster members.

c) 2008-2011: Tourism Clusters Institutional Strengthening and Promotion of Sustainable Tourism in the DR

Through the following years 2008-2011 USAID supported strengthening of tourism clusters and

promotion of sustainable tourism in the DR by financing the USAID-DOMINICAN SUSTAINABLE TOURISM ALLIANCE PROGRAM (USAID-DSTA). This program was executed under the Global Sustainable Tourism Alliance (GSTA), which was made up of four implementer allies for a period of 5 years and a total investment of US \$ 12 million. The areas of focus for this program were sought at a national level and each ally headed their area of expertise.

USAID-DSTA Program Allies:

1. **Academy for Education Development (AED):** Headed the communication and social integration, strategies as well administrated the program funds on behalf of GSTA.
2. **George Washington University (GWU):** supported a comprehensive training program to develop a Tourism Observatory.
3. **The Nature Conservancy (TNC):** supported the program with Environmental interventions as well as, conservation and good environmental management practices in the tourism sector.
4. **Solimar International:** Supported cluster diversification of tourist destinations, as well as supported in the areas of strengthening small business management.

Nine tourism clusters were formed as a result of this program. Some of the major achievements of the program were:

Institutional Strengthening Achievements

- Legalization and formalization of clusters,
- Clusters developed annual work plans (AWPs).
- Clusters are initiated in the formalization process for managing cooperation funds.
- Clusters developed financial analysis and reports to its membership based on transparency.
- Clusters learned to develop their business plans.
- Clusters learned to develop processes based on transparency acquisitions.
- Clusters hired executive and operating personnel on the basis of selection by competition and job profiling.
- Clusters developed their communication strategies (newsletters, websites, etc.).
- Clusters developed inventory of each of theirs natural and cultural resources.

Marketing and Product Development Achievements

- Identification of Tourism Projects to be supported and reinforced: FUNDS FOR DESTINATIONS.
- The creation of the DOMINICAN TREASURES certification.
- Management Training programs in tourism SMMEs.
- Designing business plans for clusters and SMMEs.

Training and Educational Formation

- The development of the first certificate on Tourism Destination Management. A process of holistic views for tourism areas and the need to manage themselves.

- INFOTEP Ecotourism Workshop that today, thanks to USAID EMPOWERMENT, is becoming a regular national offered course for Ecotourism subjects on a technical level.
- Strengthening of CDCT and local NGOs.

C. THE DOMINICAN CONSORTIUM FOR COMPETITIVE TOURISM

The Dominican Consortium for Competitive Tourism (CDCT) is an entity that ties together tourism clusters in the Dominican Republic, along with other public and private institutions to propagate sustainable tourism and equity in the Dominican tourism system.

This institution was conceptualized during 2006, but it was not until 2009 that the Consortium was legally structured as a non-for profit institution. From that moment on, CDCT counted with a legal structure, a hierarchy and statutory guidelines that define its organic functioning.

Mission -The Road - : CDCT aims to promote and support dominican tourism and its sustainability though the local “cluster” model: instigating community involvement ,as well as public-private partnerships.

Vision -The Dream-: CDCT significantly contributes to sustainable tourism development in the Dominican Republic, promoting joint management of destinations between public, private and community increasing the countries competitiveness.

I. CDCT Institutional Objectives:

General Purpose -Focus, Global Action-: To promote activities across the board in all destinations to propagate competitiveness and sustainability of Dominican tourism though the diversification of supply, improved business climate, promotion, workforce development, environmental conservation, community inclusion and public- private partnerships.

Specific Objectives:

- To promote public and private financial investment, job creation, as well as creating a sustainable business climate in the area of influence of the cluster members.
- Fostering synergies that strengthen the social base of the cluster members. Promote addressing crosscutting issues that strengthen the development of sustainable tourism in the Dominican Republic.
- To represent its members before government institutions, both executive and legislative, as well as to the institutions of national and international cooperation and the private sector.
- Monitor tourism development through indicators.
- Provide updated information to all its members and the general public and promote the exchange of experiences and lessons learned.
- Contribute to the creation of social capital that contributes to the sustainability and development of the country, especially in regards to the appropriation of tourism by communities.
- Promote the positioning of destinations of each cluster member in the most competitive tourism markets.
- Promoting innovation programs to support social inclusion in the sector.

II. CDCT and International Cooperative Funds

In 2011, the CDCT made a coincided proposal with its members, developed and structured by the CDCT technical team and finally presented to USAID as a strategic ally and main financier of the model since its conception. At the end of the year (December, 2011) the USAID-Program Sustainable Tourism Empowerment was approved in the amount of \$ 2,400,000, which would last for two years and 4 months from January 2nd 2012 until April 2014.

The program acquisition manifested a breakthrough in the institutional strengthening process of CDCT as it resulted in the creation of a strong financial and administrative structure, technical structure, and systematized their policies and corresponding operation manuals.

D. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The USAID- CDCT Tourism Empowerment Program is a Cooperative Agreement No. 517-A-00-12-00001 between USAID and the Dominican Consortium for Tourism Competitiveness (CDCT). The CDCT is a Dominican NGO whose main objective is to promote sustainable tourism in the Dominican Republic on the basis of the "cluster" model. This agreement was signed on December 29, 2011, with 24-month duration for a total of US\$ 2.4 million dollars. On December 2013, USAID granted CDCT a no-cost extension for four months in order for the program to comply with program objectives.

As mentioned before, The USAID-CDCT Tourism Empowerment Program (STEP) main goal was tourism empowerment in order to continue the processes that begun with the previous program on tourism cluster formation, USAID -Dominican Sustainable Tourism Alliance USAID-DSTA (USAID Associate Award No. 517-A-00-07-00105-00. The STEP program targeted empowering cluster leaders in each implied destination. Thus, in order to comply the mentioned outcome, the programs framework resulted in the following:

1. **Overview of USAID-DR Mission:** to support local economic growth following the precepts of environmental and social sustainability.
2. **Program Objective:** To promote, support and implement sustainable tourism initiatives that help the local development and contribute to sustainability, financial autonomy and institutional strengthening of tourism clusters and CDCT.

In order to reach the mentioned overall objective USAID-CDCT STEP Program developed three main intermediate products:

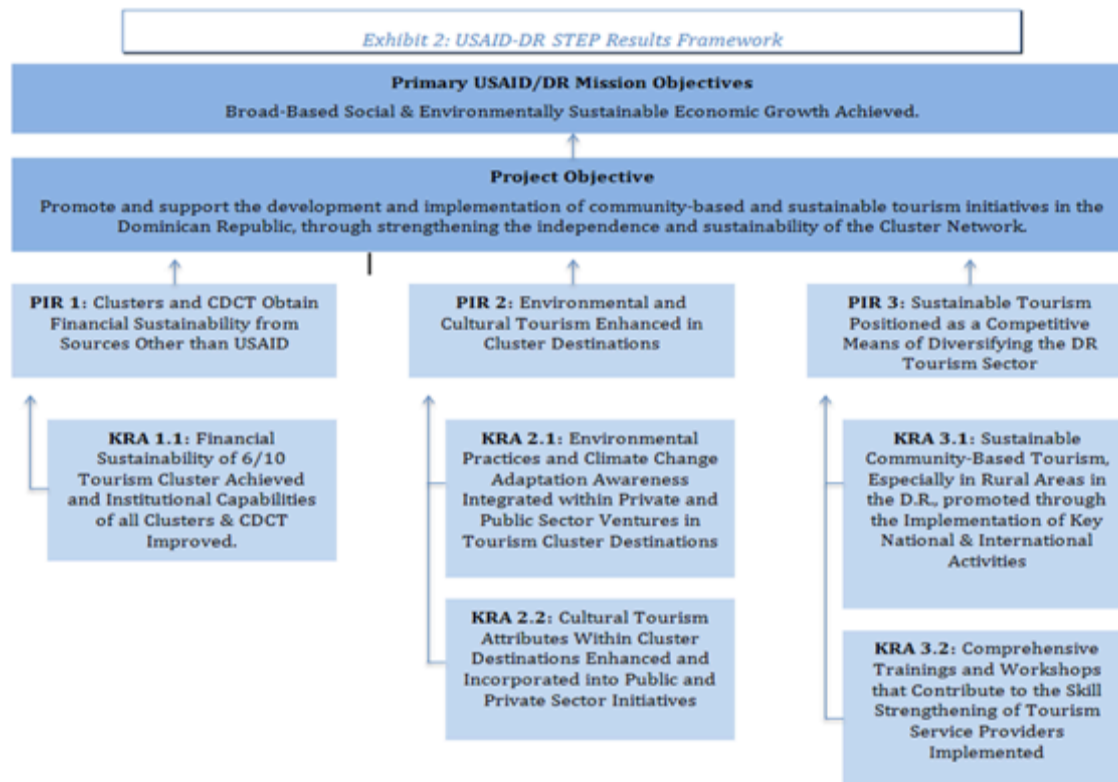
PIR 1: Clusters and CDCT obtain financial Sustainability from sources other than USAID.

PIR 2: Environmental and Cultural Tourism Enhanced in Cluster Destinations and

PIR 3: Sustainable Tourism positioned as a competitive means of diversifying the DR tourism sector.

The following chart refers to the program objective framework: Each indicator is described in detail below.

a) USAID- DR STEP RESULTS FRAMEWORK:



In order to measure project progress and attained goals, while having an impact on USAID standard indicators, USAID's *Sustainable Tourism Empowerment Program*, implemented by the Dominican Consortium for Tourism Competitiveness (CDCT) developed a 7-indicator performance plan.

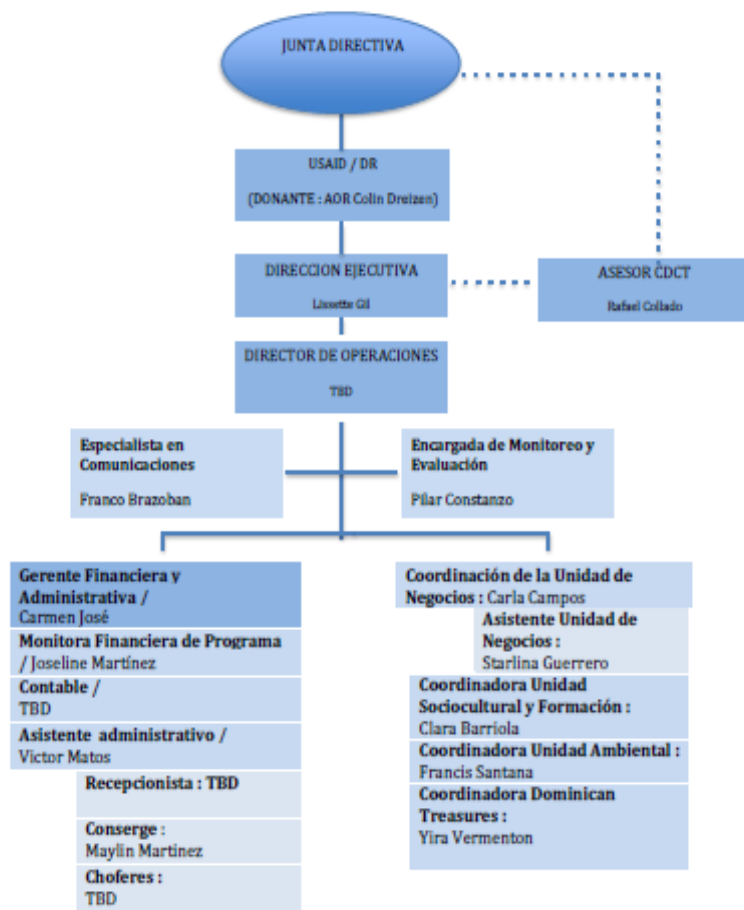
The following Table refers to the mentioned program indicators and its impact up until April 2014, after 2 years and 4 months of program implementation.

b) Results Framework- USAID- SUSTAINABLE TOURIM EMPOWERMENT POGRAM

Indicators with numbers assigned		Up until 2014		% Reached
1	Number of institutions, mature and viable organizations in the areas of competence strengthened as a result of USAID assistance (Standard Indicator)	Target	10	80%
		Actual	8	
2	Number of climate change adaptation and environmentally-friendly activities implemented	Target	48	152%
		Actual	73	
3	Trainings in climate change conducted with USAID support (Standard Indicator)	Target	1000	214%
		Actual	2.140,00	

4	Number of cultural products incorporated into the local tourism offer	Target	40	155%
		Actual	62	
5	Number of people who consume Sustainable Tourism products at Cluster and Dominican Treasures level.	Target	10.000	127%
		Actual	12.721,00	
6	Trainings conducted to improve professional performance and raise the quality of Dominican tourism SMEs with USG assistance (Standard Indicator)	Target	1.400	378%
		Actual	5.296,00	
7	Number of companies receiving assistance from USAID for obtaining international certification in quality control, environmental process standards and other volunteer certifications or regulations (Standard Indicator)	Target	20	260%
		Actual	52	

c) CDCT Functional Structure that implemented the USAID-STEP program



The following chart demonstrates the functional structure in which the USAID-STEP program was developed. The functional structure managed to stay the same regardless the turnout of employees. At the end of the program, personnel was reduced, yet the thematic areas were still carried out by other employees and CDCT was able to maintain its operative purpose.

E. SUSTAINABLE TOURISM EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM RESULTS

I. PIR 1: The Tourism clusters and CDCT reach financial sustainability

As mentioned previously, in order to reach the first program indicator result CDCT had a general program budget of US\$2,400,000.00 with a total of US\$444,859.36 for clusters to be able to execute activities that could eventually lead them to become financially sustainable. These activities had to meet the following criteria's:

- Impact on local tourism dynamics
- Support training and development of key players in the tourism value chain
- Contribute to institutional strengthening of cluster and tourism destinations
- Generate revenue for financial sustainability and each tourism cluster, as well as CDCT

Thus, the methodology implemented to reach PIR 1:

1. Presentation of activities proposed by the cluster based on the allocated budget. All implicated clusters had equitable allocation receiving funds regardless of their institutional level of maturity. Local empowerment from cluster members was pursued given that each member could contribute to these activities assuming each ones ability as entrepreneurs in the tourism sector to execute projection and planning exercises for each cluster financial sustainability plan.
2. Every Sustainability Plan was previously evaluated from the economic feasibility point of view by the Business Unit's technical team. Investment levels and economic returns were analyzed, yet also considering other qualitative impacts that respond to other expected program outputs (PIRs).
3. As a lesson learned from the previous USAID- DSTA Program, this program opted to centralize the management of funds, purchasing, and procurement, thus avoiding the need for clusters to have the management of funds consistent with its monthly production reports and media presentation. This would allow clusters to exclusively focus their efforts in the implementation of activities. The commitment to respond efficiently to USAID policy regarding fund management would be taken on 100% by CDCT and its finance team. This would streamline processes and facilitate the implementation of controls and audits.

Additionally, to ensure compliance with the indicator, a gradual dismounting of USAID funds was designed. The plan consisted of three phases that are described below and involve the gradual and parallel adoption of financial responsibilities of the members of each tourism clusters.

Phase 1: During the first six months of 2012 (year 1 of the program) all staff of the existing tourism clusters would be funded completely by the USAID- CDCT-STEP program, reaching a budget ceiling previously defined and distributed equally to all tourism clusters that were part of the program. On June 30th, 2012 the first phase had culminated, and thus beginning July the 1st of the same year, 80% of all clusters in the country successfully took on the wages and salaries of its staff. Only the Ecotourism Cluster of Pedernales could not meet this first phase of

clearance. In addition, The Tourism and Cultural Cluster of Montecristi an emerging cluster, the youngest of all tourism clusters, still required the support of the Program with the technical support of a senior consultant who would support them in the process of institutional strengthening for the 2012 year.

Phase 2: For the first twelve months of 2012 the Program would cover all operating costs for each of the tourism clusters such as communications, office supplies, electricity, equipment, and office rent. This phase ended on December 31st, 2012, having clusters cover these costs initiating January 1, 2013. 90% of the clusters assumed operating costs successfully including the “young and emerging” tourism and cultural cluster of Montecristi. The Eco tourism cluster of Pedernales was the only one that could reach the 2nd phase.

Phase 3: The first 20 months of the implementation period was devoted to the implementation of sustainability activities of tourism clusters and CDCT. This phase involved the USAID Empowerment Program’s support plan designed to ensure revenue generation as part of the financial sustainability of the clusters and CDCT action. This phase would end, according to the program design June 30th, 2013. This date was extended to July 31st, 2013 and, furthermore all the way to April 2014.

If we consider the measuring elements of financial sustainability of each of the clusters, the following aspects:

1. Cluster empowerment to assume the payment of wages and salaries of its staff without the support of USAID funds.
2. Cluster empowerment to assume the payment of there own operating costs.

We can infer that 80% of Dominican tourism clusters are economically sustainable tourism clusters beginning from January 1st, 2013, except – *at the time-* for the two cases mentioned above (Montecristi and Pedernales).

a) Regarding CDCT and the financial dismounting of funds:

The CDCT placed a technical team to implement the Program at a national level completely financed by the program. This technical team would be active only for the first 20 months accordingly with the work plan and the indicators designed.

Nevertheless, after the no-cost extension the Tourism and Cultural cluster of Montecristi proved to be sustainable opting and earning funds from other international donors in order to strengthen the work that they have accomplished. On the other hand the tourism cluster of La Altagracia struggled at the very end of the program closing their physical offices at the beginning of the no-cost extension. In hindsight, the cluster is still pushing for success and planning elections for this July 2014, as well as taking an active role in CDCT board of directors acting as 1 of 4 vocals.

The 8 tourism clusters that are sustainable according to program key indicators are the following:

1. The Tourism and Cultural Cluster of Puerto Plata
2. Tourism Cluster of Samana

3. Tourism Cluster of Romana- Bayahibe
4. Tourism Cluster of Santo Domingo
5. Tourism and Productive cluster of Barahona
6. Eco Tourism Cluster of Constanza
7. Eco Tourism Cluster of Jarabacoa
8. Tourism and Cultural Cluster of Montecristi

** For the moment, La Altagracia and Pedernales Clusters don't meet the required points to be considered as successful clusters. Yet, in both cases there are actions that should be followed. The Pedernales cluster has managed to get more outside sources funds to re-establish its cluster, and the Cluster of La Altagracia had demonstrated leadership into taking an active role in the CDCT board of directors, as it prepares to celebrate elections and continue to pursue a successful cluster.

Summary of Indicator Impact (Jan. 2012-April. 2014)														
	Indicator	PIR	KRA	Target Total	Target Year 1	Target Year 2	PMP 1 (Jan - Sep 2012)	PMP 2 (Oct. 2012 - Mar. 2013)	PMP 3 (Apr.- Sept. 2013)	PMP 4 (Oct. 2013 - Mar. 2014)	Final Impact PMP (April 2014)	Total Actual Impacts	Pending Impacts	Total % Executed
1	Number of institutions, mature and viable organizations in the areas of competence strengthened as a result of USAID assistance (Standard Indicator)	1	1.1	10	0	10	0	0	0	0	8	8	2	80%

b) Investment on Tourism Cluster Sustainability under the Tourism Empowerment Program (USAID-STEP) 2012-2014

CLUSTER	TOTAL PRESUPUESTADO	GASTOS MESES ANTERIORES 2012	Gastos acumulados 2014	GASTOS ACUMULADOS (2012/2014)	Diferencia presup. Y Ejecutados al 30/4/2014	BALANCE DISPONIBLE
A. Cluster Altagracia	1,221,450.87	717,851.97	0.00	1,221,450.87	0.00	0.00
B. Cluster Barahona	2,721,594.20	1,799,538.20	40,675.00	2,713,893.20	7,701.00	7,701.00
C. Cluster Bayahibe-La Romana	2,067,613.86	1,211,594.40	0.00	2,067,613.86	0.00	0.00
D. Cluster Constanza	2,340,546.11	614,667.72	211,050.00	2,490,546.11	-150,000.00	-150,000.00
E. Cluster Jarabacoa	808,984.81	598,934.81	0.00	842,725.91	-33,741.10	-33,741.10
F. Cluster Montecristi	1,786,238.18	718,838.18	21,058.90	1,712,965.85	73,272.33	73,272.33
G. Cluster Pedernales	708,410.07	705,983.27	0.00	708,410.07	0.00	0.00
H. Cluster Puerto Plata	2,717,316.38	1,649,916.38	0.00	2,746,835.75	-29,519.37	-29,519.37
I. Clúster Santo Domingo	2,699,435.84	509,172.00	1,122,863.85	2,699,980.80	-544.96	-544.96
J. Clúster Samaná	2,633,316.09	1,326,126.73	151,475.00	2,633,316.09	0.00	0.00
Fondos de los Cluster	19,704,906.41	9,852,623.66	1,547,122.75	19,837,738.51	-132,832.10	-132,832.10

On April 30th 2014, clusters had executed about 100.67% of total sustainability funds assigned by the program. Yet, the Tourism clusters of Pedernales, La Altagracia and Jarabacoa, did not present a proposal for the 2013 work plan, thus explains their non existent executed funds for that year. The funds that weren't executed or assigned were redirected to the Dominican Treasure component of the STEP program.

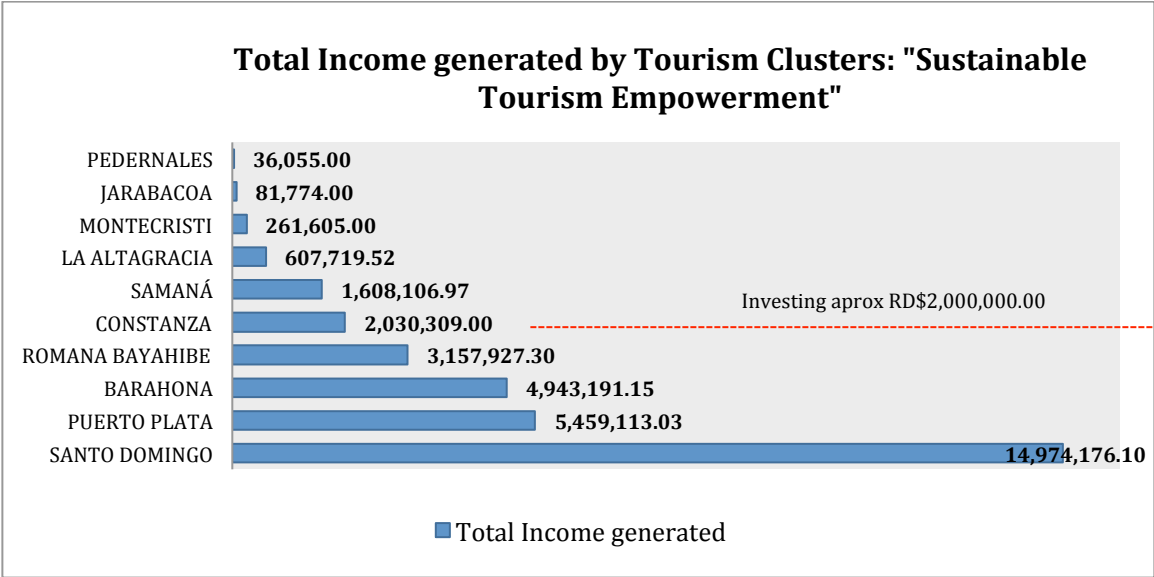
The following table demonstrates the amount of money that was generated due to the mentioned sustainability activities. In total RD\$33,159,977.07 was made by tourism clusters representing

about 60% more than the amount that was invested by the STEP program, indicating turnout success of such activities.

c) Generated Income by Tourism Clusters through Sustainability Activities 2012-2014

CLUSTER	2012 Year 1	2013 Year 2	2014 Year 3	Total Income generated
BARAHONA	876,194.50	3,062,708.65	\$1,004,288.00	4,943,191.15
CONSTANZA	187,705.60	1,808,934.40	\$33,669.00	2,030,309.00
JARABACOA	81,774.00	0	\$0.00	81,774.00
LA ALTAGRACIA	166,379.00	441,340.52	\$0.00	607,719.52
MONTECRISTI	42,000.00	91,840.00	\$127,765.00	261,605.00
PEDERNALES	36,055.00	0	\$0.00	36,055.00
PUERTO PLATA	2,646,511.00	2,183,668.03	\$628,934.00	5,459,113.03
ROMANA BAYAHIBE	1,728,172.28	844,755.02	\$585,000.00	3,157,927.30
SAMANÁ	675,104.54	803,833.43	\$129,169.00	1,608,106.97
SANTO DOMINGO	8,318,402.95	5,712,853.07	\$942,920.08	14,974,176.10
				<u>33,159,977.07</u>

Although, It's important to point out that only 4 out of the 10 Tourism clusters managed to generate more money than that invested by the STEP program. A few other clusters came close, and moving forward now have the platform and the lessons learned making these activities stronger in the years to come. In the case of Montecristi and Pedernales, who are far from reaching the STEP-investment goal, did reach and manage to get other international donors to fund their continuation, indicating a maturity level that many others haven't reached, and securing their success in the near future.

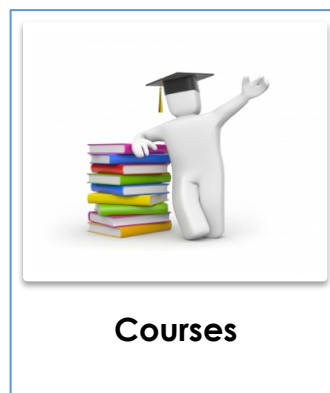
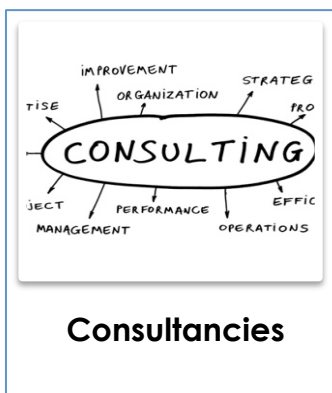


d) CDCT SUSTAINABILITY PLAN AND SUCCESS INDICATOR

CDCT financial sustainability is also contemplated within PIR1, so that when the USAID-STEP ends, the institution can continue its mission of promoting sustainable tourism in the DR. For that reason, sustainability activities were organized, like the previous once that the very clusters carried out.

The assigned funds for the following activities were structured in order to comply with other Project indicators. It is important to understand that thanks to the USAID-Program these activities already have their platform and the lessons learned, which makes it easier to be carried out by CDCT with out international donations.

- **FODATUR:** is the first annual Dominican Tourism Forum that provides a space for discussion of the sectors tendencies, good practices, and innovation.
- **AVENTURATE:** The first and most important Sustainable Tourism fair that allows grassroot SMME an opportunity to promote their individual projects directly to consumers.
- **CERTIFICATE ON DESTINATION MANAGEMENT:** Graded certificate in order to train cluster leaders, appointed government officials and local government.
- **MEMBERSHIPS:** Each cluster member of CDCT must pay a monthly fee.
- **DOMINICAN TREASURES:** In order for the certificate to sustain itself members are required to pay an annual fee.
- **CONSULTANCIES:** CDCT will provide technical services to clusters and outside institutions.



e) Activity Income Table for the years 2012-2014:

ACTIVIDAD	INGRESOS 2012	INGRESOS 2013	INGRESOS 2014	Cuentas Por Cobrar	Totals
Fodatur 2012	1,019,318.80				1,019,318.80
Fodatur 2013		2,719,152.08			2,719,152.08
Aventurate 2013		783,723.13			783,723.13
Aventurate 2014			379,000.00	298,825.00	677,825.00
Diplomado GD	321,411.50	7,296.00		69,500.00	398,207.50
Dominican Treasures	8,000.00	62,880.00	135,233.72		206,113.72
Membresía		80,000.00		260,000.00	340,000.00
Consultorias	408,600.00	7,620.00			416,220.00
Capacitaciones	125,300.00	35,000.00			160,300.00
Otros	12,575.20	8,725.02			21,300.22
TOTALES	1,895,205.50	3,704,396.23	514,233.72	628,325.00	6,742,160.45
Certif. Banco Popular					275,000.00
Cuenta en US\$					573,225.42
TOTAL					7,590,385.87

II. PIR.2 Environment and Cultural Tourism enhanced in cluster destinations

This second sub target program is divided into two sections:

1. Related to cultural initiatives developed locally as a product of strategic public- private alliances.
2. Concerning awareness raising and creating environmental awareness and especially introducing issues related to climate change adaptation.

The USAID-CDCT-STEP program, at 28 months of execution, has supported a number of important projects, businesses and tourism products, completely fulfilling PIR.2. For the length of the project, there have been 50 actions that enhance cultural and natural attractions in cluster destinations. Several of these activities include:

Puerto Plata

1. Loma Isabel de Torres (nature- excursion)

Samana

2. “ De la Vieja Pan”: (Local Bread Shop)

La Altagracia

3. Laguna Bavaro (nature- excursion)

Romana-Bayahibe

4. Festival del Mango (festival)

Santo Domingo

5. Rincon Dominicano (Gift shop)
6. Ruta del Chivo (historic excursion)
7. Mercado de Artesania de Agora Mall (Crafts market in agora mall)
8. Feria de Turismo Alternativa “AVENTURATE” (eco tourism fair)

Barahona

9. Paper Mache (crafts)

10. Ruta del azucar (sugar raute)

11. Festival del Surfing (surfing festival)

12. Campenato de Vela “Palito Seco” (Sailing tournament)

Constanza

13. Festival de Primavera (Spring Fair)

14. Expo Feria artesanía de bamboo (fair)

15. Fresh Market invierno (fresh Market)

Jarabacoa

16. Concuerto de las Montanas (concert)

Montecristi

17. Centro de Interpretacion de la Sal (Salt interpretation museum)

18. Circuito del Centro Historico (Historical excursion)

a) Environmental Practices and Climate Change Awareness integrated within public and private ventures in cluster destinations.

One of the main units that make up CDCT is the Environmental Unit, which for the life of the program, was highly efficient substantially surpassing the indicators established by the program on both indicators that address it. Though out the program the Environmental Unit offered an extensive program of workshops, courses and lectures offered through throughout the country level, successfully implementing 72 climate change adaptation and environmentally- friendly activities, meeting 152% of the targeted goal. The targets for this indicator were surpassed every implementing year.

In addition, though the program a total of 2,140 individuals were trained around climate change adaptation efforts meeting the programs total objective by 214%, being the total targeted number 1000 individuals. The targeted goal for this indicator was met every implementing year demonstrating great calling in each of the different activities and trainings. This indicator was under the Environmental Units supervision, where events were carefully planned along with the different cluster areas and Dominican Treasures projects.

The following table demonstrates targeted versus actual met objectives in detail though out the program, around the mentioned objectives.

	Indicador	PIR	KRA	Target Total	Target año 1	Target año 2	Impactos PMP 1 (enero - septiembre 2012)	Impactos PMP 2 (octubre 2012 - marzo 2013)	Impactos PMP 3 (abril - septiembre 2013)	Impactos PMP 4 (octubre 2013 - marzo 2014)	Impactos totales actuales	Impactos pendientes a abril 2014	Totales porcentuales ejecutados
2	Número de actividades implementadas favorables al medioambiente y sobre adaptación al cambio climático	2	2.1	48	30	18	24	25	17	7	73.00	-25.00	152%
3	Número de personas capacitadas en el cambio climático y medio ambiente con el apoyo de la USAID (Indicador Estándar)	2	2.1	1,000.00	650	350	554	407	834	345	2,140.00	-1,140.00	214%

b) Cultural Tourism attributes within cluster destinations enhanced and incorporated into public and private sector initiatives

	Indicador	PIR	KRA	Target Total	Target Year 1	Target Year 2	PMP 1 (Jan - Sep) 2012)	PMP 2 (Oct. 2012 - Mar. 2013)	PMP 3 (Apr- Sept. 2013)	PMP 4 (Oct. 2013 - April 2014)	Total Actual Impacts	Pending Impacts	Total % Executed
4	Number of cultural products incorporated into the local tourist offer	2	2.2	40	25	15	19	17	4	22	62.00	-22.00	155%

There have been 62 cultural products incorporated into the local tourism offers, meeting program goal by 155%. In contrast with the other indicators, this indicator did a lot better the first year round other than the second. The reason for this difference with other indicators could be attributed to the fact that products achieved were already identified once project was started and were given priority.

Later (second year), cultural products were identified as the project moved forward. In hindsight, many of the cultural products introduced in the first year have been impacting other indicators such as indicator 5 (Number of people who consume sustainable tourism products) though the different Tourism Information Centers created, museums

habilitated, and rehabilitation of recreational park areas including a few nature trails. For the most part, this demonstrates project indicator success, given that by achieving one-indicator goals others get impacted as well.

Puerto Plata, Samana, La Altagracia, Santo Domingo, Barahona, Montecristi, Constanza, Jarabacoa and finally in San José de Ocoa, have supported projects that, today, are part of a diversified tourism in each of the destinations mentioned, and thus and the country. As part of the extension this “alternative” tourism initiatives (alternative to the "sun and beach” tourism that has the biggest market share in the country) where inserted into a national map of alternative tourism combined with nature trails developed over the past four years by the USFS through the work of Jerry Bauer. As a result of the program, this map is ready to get printed.

III. PIR 3: Sustainable Tourism position as a competitive means of diversifying the DR tourism sector.

This 3rd PIR indicator has three indicators and is based on supporting micro, small and medium sustainable tourism enterprises.

a) Sustainable community based tourism, especially in rural áreas in the D.R. promoted through the implementation of key national and International activities.

The program managed to propagate 12,721 individuals to consume sustainable products at Cluster and Dominican Treasures destinations including Dominican Treasures. The first year the target for this indicator was 6,000, which was not completely met then. The second year the target was 4,000, yet the program practically doubled results, surpassing the targeted total.

This indicator could have been further impacted during AVENTURATE 2014 celebrated at the beginning of April, CDCT sustainable and alternative tourism fair where 7,061 individuals assisted were informally counted for. Yet, to make people flow faster visitors were not required to formally register during the sustainable tourism fair.

	Indicador	PIR	KRA	Target Total	Target año 1	Target año 2	Impactos PMP 1 (enero - septiembre 2012)	Impactos PMP 2 (octubre 2012 - marzo 2013)	Impactos PMP 3 (abril - septiembre 2013)	Impactos PMP 4 (octubre 2013 - marzo 2014)	Impactos Final PMP (Abril 2014)	Impactos totales actuales	Impactos pendientes a abril 2014	Totales porcentuales ejecutados
5	Número de personas que consumen productos de Turismo Sostenible a nivel de las Zonas Clústeres y Dominican Treasures	3	3.1	10,000.00	6,000	4,000	895	4,224.00	7,272.00	330	0	12,721.00	-2,721.00	127%
6	capacitaciones realizadas para mejorar el desempeño profesional y elevar la calidad de las MiPYMES turísticas dominicanas con asistencia de la USG (Indicador Estándar)	3	3.2	1,400.00	900	500	2,916.00	1,256.00	624	500	9	5,305.00	-3,905.00	379%
7	Número de empresas que reciben asistencia de la USAID para obtener la certificación de control de calidad internacional, las normas de procesos ambientales y otros voluntarios o regulaciones (Indicador Estándar)	3	3.1	20	12	8	4	4	8	22	14	52.00	-32.00	260%

<i>Trainings conducted to improve professional performance and raise the quality of Dominican tourism SMMEs with USG assistance (Standard Indicator)</i>	Target 1,400
	Actual 5,305

This indicator has been the most successful according to M&E recordings for the program achieving 379% of the target goal. Though the trainings conducted to improve professional performance and raise the quality of Dominican SMME with USG assistance 5,296 people were trained.

In all of the years the project was implemented this particular indicator always surpassed the agreed targeted number. This was made possible through alliances with key educational institutions like INFOTEP and APEC, as well as other educational facilities. More so, the project was very successful of securing qualitative attendance by identifying those more interested and with the required drive to implement new professional strategies.

In addition to trainings, SME involved with the program have undergone the process of achieving the Dominican Treasure certificate, which entails, bettering service and products all round. The improvement has been more evident with social media and web content management, where a quality increase demonstrating corporate responsibility and best management practices are highlighted.

<i>Number of companies receiving assistance from USAID for obtaining international certification in quality control, environmental process standards and other volunteer certifications or regulations (Standard Indicator)</i>	Target 40
	Actual 52

As a result of the Tourism Empowerment program 52 companies received assistance from USAID for obtaining international certification in quality control, environmental

process standards and other volunteer certifications or regulations “ Dominican Treasures”. This indicator achieved its target by 260%.

During the first year this indicator did not meet project goal as the targeted number was 20 companies, and the actual amount certified for the first year was a total of 8 certified companies. Yet, the second year the targeted amount was 12 companies and the actual amount more than doubled the goal with a total of 30 companies certified.

For the most part, a lot of preparation had to take place in order for companies to be certified, many improving because they wanted to meet Dominican Treasures standard. As the Dominican Treasure brand grows and becomes more known, more and more companies are interested in being a part of it.

b) Number of Institutional supported by the program though the Dominican Treasures Certification



The Dominican Treasures certification was launched formally on April 2012, based on global sustainability standards by the World Trade Organization (WTO). The long term purpose of this certification would be the formation of a platform of alternative tourism products and complementary services enhancing environmental and cultural tourism location at cluster destinations.

Cluster Destination	Dominican Treasure (description)
Samana	1. Zip Lines Adventures (Excursion)
	2. Chalet Tropical Village (Eco-lodge)
	3. Taíno Park (Excursion/ Theme Park)
	4. Parada La Manzana (Restaurant)
	5. D' Vieja Pan Inglés (Tradictional
	6. Eco Campo La Sangria (Eco-lodge)
	7. Clave Verde (Eco-Lodge)
	8. Whale Samana (Excursion)
	9. Museo de las Ballenas (Excursion)
La Romana	10. Museo Arqueológico Regional Altos de Chavón (Museum)
	11. Fundación de Corazón a Corazón (Solidarity Excursion)
	12. Cumayasa Sky Adventure (Excursion)

	13. Laguna Bávaro (Excursion)
Bayahibe	14. Arte Cuseco (crafts)
Moca	15. Complejo Ecoturístico Sereno la Montana (Community Lodging)
Santo Domingo	16. Atarazana Restaurante (Gastronomy)
	17. Trikke República Dominicana (Excursion)
	18. Museo de la Porcelana (Museum / Excursion)
	19. Museo Mundo del Ámbar -Amber World Museum- (Museum)
	20. Mesón de Bari (Restaurant)
Constanza	21. Altocerro Villa, Hotel & Camping (Mountain Lodge)
	22. Aguas Blancas (Restaurant)
	23. Villa Pajón (Mountain lodging)
	24. Dulcería Doña Benza (Gastronomy)
Jarabacoa	25. Casa Tranquila (Group Hostal)
	26. Sonido del Yaque (Lodging)
	27. Complejo Ecoturístico Angostura (Restaurant / Excursion)
	28. Rancho Baiguate (Adventure Tourism)
	29. Rancho Olivier Bed & Breakfast (Lodging)
	30. Aroma de la Montaña (Restaurante)
	31. Rancho La Aurora (Lodging)
	32. Rancho Jarabacoa (Excursion)
Barahona	33. Restaurante Brisas del Caribe (Restaurant)
	34. Ruta del Azúcar (Excursion)
	35. De Mi Siembra Productos Artesanales (Gastronomy)
	36. Rancho Platón (Eco-lodge)
Puerto Plata	37. Monumento Natural Saltos de la Damajagua (Excursion)
	38. Tubagua Plantation Ecovillage (Lodging)
	39. Natura Cabana Boutique & Spa (Lodging)

	40. Casa Museo General Gregorio Luperón (Museum)
	41. Skina Bar & Restaurant (Restaurant)
	42. Teleférico de Puerto Plata (Excursion)
	43. Santuario de Mamíferos Marinos Estero Hondo (Excursion)
	44. Chocolate de la Cuenca de Altamira -El Chocal- (Excursion)
	45. Cuevas de Cabarete (Monumento Natural Lagunas Cabarete y Goleta -El Choco- (Excursion)
	46. Mares Restaurant & Lounge (Restaurant)
	47. Hacienda Cufa (excursion)
Montecristi	48. Soraya & Santos Tours (Excursión)
	49. El Morro Eco Adventure Hotel (Alojamiento)
	50. Casa Museo Generalísimo Máximo Gómez & José Martí (Museo)
	51. Centro de Interpretación de la Sal (Environmental Excursion – Cultural – Educational)
Pedernales	52. Hostal Doña Chava (Lodging)

F. Impacts-at a Glance

After implementing the Sustainable Tourism empowerment program successfully, CDCT has positive projections. The following are program impacts at a glance.

1. CDCT strengthens due to 1) Program Achievements; 2) Important Strategic Alliances
2. The cluster concept is institutionalized in the Dominican Republic, effectively viewed as an operational model that supports local development.
3. The CDCT and cluster members improve their relations with state institutions, both locally and nationally (MITUR, MIC, MA, MC, INFOTEP OPETUR, CNC, DOMINICAN MUNICIPAL LEAGUE....)
4. The alternative Tourism concept that CDCT promoted with DOMINICAN TREAURES is widely accepted.
5. Dominican Tourism SMME has been given exposure opportunity.
6. The Sustainable Tourism concept has been widely discussed
7. A new participation strategy for local empowerment has been created.
8. New discussion spaces have been created for the analysis and discussion of the Dominican Tourism system (i.e. FODATUR)
9. The Destination Management, and its scope have been widely discussed highlighting the importance of forming specialist for this area.
10. Co-management agreements between clusters and public sectors have been signed (i.e. Laguna Bavaro, Guibia, Parque María Montes)
11. Climate change awareness has been created, thus the need for adaptation, although much is still to be done in this area.
12. New access for opportunities within destinations are created (i.e. Regular flights to Barahona)
13. Local tourism security committee are formed (Barahona, Samaná, Romana-Bayahibe)
14. Cultural resources and spaces are recovered, as well as natural spaces
15. Tourism events activities are diversified, yet there is still to an events calendar at a national level in which all these activities are grouped.
16. New professionals are prepared on cauterization and Sustainable Tourism topics.

Among many others, these are some of the products of CDCT, Tourism Cluster, allies and the unwavering support of the USAID program in DR.

G. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMENDATIONS

I. Dominican Consortium for Competitive Tourism

The CDCT is entirely satisfied and proud of the achieved results in the 28 months of the the USAID-STEP. All the achievements were due to CDCT professional and technical team demonstrating commitment, professionalism, and above all drive and determination. However, to ensure future sustainability and relative presence the following is recommended:

- As a USAID-STEP result, the CDCT has been positioned as a representative and an advocate of the sustainable tourism concept at a national level. Moving forward CDCT is challenged to prove the effectiveness of international donors in its institutional strengthening capacity, being an institution that was created under an international cooperation program and is now challenged to stand alone, financially sustain itself and more so keep carrying out its mission values and goals.
- CDCT has revisited and modified its organization statues in order to expand the membership of the organization. As it was conceived only cluster presidents could be part of the board of directors. Currently, CDCT is evaluating other individuals that are focused on other sector to become members of CDCT board of directors in order to purposely enrich and strengthen its basis and CDCT corporate goals.
- CDCT should maintain a solid and permanent technical team along with an empowered board of directors, which could continue to look for the necessary means to continue to strengthen the institution. The technical team should advocate to carryout the established agenda and be able to look for more ways the institution can become financially sustainable.

II. DOMINICAN TREASURES

Dominican Treasures is one of the most important platforms for CDCT left from the USAID-STEP program, being the most effective way the organization has to diversify and promote sustainable tourism. The initiative is one of the most transcendental in the country and has even had mention as one of the most important news in the Dominican tourism system. Furthermore, important enterprises are approaching the given platform on their own in expectations of being shortly inspected, and finally becoming a part of this network.

The Dominican Treasure initiative faithfully responds to CDCTs mission and vision, yet it doesn't generate enough income to substantially contribute to CDCT's financial sustainability plan. In the long run, Dominican Treasures could be sustainable if much more SMME are able to be certified (a goal of 100 enterprises by 2015), regardless this component alone contributes to impacting other program and mission indicators such as indicators 5,6, and 7.

For the immediate future, CDCT will be looking for further funds that could trigger DT sustainability, as CDCT will continue to certify SMMEs in order to reach the mentioned goals. Just as important new acquired funds will be directed to:

- First and far most, CDCT would find funding to further sharpen DT entrepreneurs skills, which would provide each project with the necessary tools to exploit even more the business they have at hand.
- Work on ecological interpretation and signage for the projects. Most of the projects that are certified are low income and signage wouldn't be a priority otherwise.
- CDCT is looking forward to being able to further support Climate Change adaptation and Best environmental Management trainings and workshops for given enterprises. The DT certificate stands for sustainable tourism and many of the individuals involved don't necessarily have the educational base to scientifically understand environmental issues. CDCT believes that with the right language and methods DT could further apply such practices and knowledge.
- Many projects that are certified aren't fully equipped according to DT standards. With the USAID funding CDCT was able to acquire basic equipment and training for establishments that met every other DT standard. It will be a challenge to be able to this without immediate funding, but will be strongly considered if any funding is obtained.
- Promoting DT is a mayor and necessary component of the given certification. For the time being CDCT will focus on promotion through the means that were bettered with the USAID-STEP program: webpages, twitter, Facebook, and most importantly the public-private partnerships built that could aid us when needed. With further funding DT could try to reach more public (at a possible international level) and have a presence in international fairs that concentrate on philanthropic, environmental, and/or adventure tourism.

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H. ANNEX

SUMMARY OF INFCATOR IMAPPCT JAN. 2012-APRIL 2014

Summary of Indicator Impact (Jan. 2012- April. 2014)													
	Indicador	PIR	KRA	Target Total	Target Year 1	Target Year 2	PMP 1 (Jan - Sep 2012)	PMP 2 (Oct. 2012 - Mar. 2013)	PMP 3 (Apr.- Sept. 2013)	PMP 4 (Oct. 2013 - April 2014)	Total Actual Impacts	Pending Impacts	Total % Executed
1	Number of institutions, mature and viable organizations in the areas of competence strengthened as a result of USAID assistance (Standard Indicator)	1	1.1	10	0	10	0	0	0	0	8	10	80%
2	Number of climate change adaptation and environmentally-friendly activities implemented	2	2.1	48	30	18	24	25	17	7	73.00	-25.00	152%
3	Trainings in climate change conducted with USAID support (Standard Indicator)	2	2.1	1,000.00	650	350	554	407	834	345	2,140.00	-1,140.00	214%
4	Number of cultural products incorporated into the local tourist offer	2	2.2	40	25	15	19	17	4	22	62.00	-22.00	155%
5	Number of people who consume Sustainable Tourism products at the level of Cluster Areas and Dominican Treasures.	3	3.1	10,000.00	6,000	4,000	895	4,224.00	7,272.00	330	12,721.00	-2,721.00	127%
6	Trainings conducted to improve professional performance and raise the quality of Dominican tourism SMEs with USG assistance (Standard Indicator)	3	3.2	1,400.00	900	500	2,916.00	1,256.00	624	500	5,296.00	-3,896.00	378%
7	Number of companies receiving assistance from USAID for obtaining international certification in quality control, environmental process standards and other volunteer certifications or regulations (Standard Indicator)	3	3.1	20	12	8	4	4	5	39	52.00	-32.00	260%

**ENCUESTA: INDICADORES QUE DEFINEN UN CLUSTER EXITOSO
LISTA DE COMPROBACIÓN**

Los indicadores para medir el éxito de los clústeres turísticos en la República Dominicana están definidos en las siguientes categorías de temas:

A. CAPACIDAD Y FORTALEZA INSTITUCIONAL

B. DESARROLLO DEL TURISMO SOSTENIBLE EN EL DESTINO

1. Organización 1. Socio-Cultural (Equidad social) 2. Liderazgo Institucional en el Destino 2. Ambiental (Conservación)

3. Estrategias

3. Económico (Eficiencia) 4. Membresía

5. Sostenibilidad Financiera

6. Políticas y Código Ético de Miembros

AÑO

1 INDICADOR SÍ NO

A. CAPACIDAD Y FORTALEZA INSTITUCIONAL

ORGANIZACIÓN

1. El cluster cuenta con un Organigrama claro y funcional

2. La Junta Directiva se reúne por lo menos una vez al mes a revisar y dar seguimiento a los planes de trabajo

3. Director/a Ejecutivo/a ha sido contratado/a en base a unos términos de referencia adecuados

4. Todas las posiciones del cluster están avaladas por Descripciones de Puestos

5. El cluster cuenta con un Manual de Políticas y Procedimientos

6. El cluster cuenta con un Plan de Trabajo anual

7. El cluster cuenta con comités de trabajo operativos y eficientes

8. El cluster cuenta con una oficina adecuada para sus operaciones

LIDERAZGO INSTITUCIONAL EN EL DESTINO

1. Todos los subsectores públicos, privados y comunitarios están representados (cadena de valor) en la membresía

2. Junta Directiva seleccionada y formalizada (Presidente, Vice-Presidente, Secretario, Tesorero)

3. Junta Directiva actual representa por lo menos 3 subsectores de la cadena de valor

4. Junta Directiva formada por líderes más preponderantes del sector turístico del destino

5. Hay equidad de género en la conformación de la Junta Directiva

ESTRATEGIAS

1. El cluster cuenta con por lo menos 3 proyectos sometidos para la diversificación turística del destino

2. El cluster cuenta con por lo menos 3 proyectos ejecutados para la diversificación turística del destino

3. El cluster cuenta con por lo menos 2 acuerdos de cooperación con otras instituciones

MEMBRESÍAS

1. Todos los miembros del cluster pagan su membresía

2. Incremento del 25% anual del número de miembros

3. El 50% de los miembros del cluster son mujeres

SOSTENIBILIDAD FINANCIERA

1. El cluster cuenta con un Plan de Negocios hasta el 2012

2. El cluster cuenta con otros ingresos por actividades no vinculadas a DSTA

3. El cluster está implementando su Plan de Negocios

4. El cluster está recibiendo beneficios económicos de las actividades del Plan de Negocios

5. El cluster llega al punto de equilibrio de costos versus ingresos

POLÍTICAS Y CÓDIGO ÉTICO DE MIEMBROS

1. El cluster cuenta con un Código de Comportamiento establecido (qué se espera de usted como miembro del cluster y qué usted puede esperar de los otros miembros)

2. El cluster ha establecido unos códigos éticos que promueven la sostenibilidad en el ejercicio profesional de las empresas miembros (cómo los miembros serán sostenibles y promoverán la sostenibilidad)

COMUNICACIONES

1. Presencia mensual en por los menos 3 medios de comunicación

2. Conocimiento por parte de todos los actores del Turismo del país sobre la existencia del CDCT y sus acciones

3. Conocimiento de la prensa especializada sobre el CDCT, los clústeres turísticos y sus actividades

9. TURISMO SOSTENIBLE

SOCIO-CULTURAL

1. De las personas capacitadas por el cluster, el 50% son mujeres

2. El cluster cuenta con un 30 % de miembros que son organizaciones/proyectos comunitarios

3. El cluster ha hecho por lo menos 3 actividades dedicadas a la protección de la historia/cultura del destino

AMBIENTAL

1. El cluster ha promovido al menos 3 acciones ambientales en el año

2. El cluster ha desarrollado al menos 3 actividades a favor de la conservación y preservación de las áreas protegidas del destino

3. El cluster ha dado al menos 3 capacitaciones vinculadas a la gestión ambiental del destino

ECONÓMICAS

1. El cluster ha promovido la apertura de por lo menos 1 Centro de Información Turística en el destino

2. El cluster ha ejecutado por lo menos 3 acciones encaminadas a promover el destino (sin contar Centros de Información Turística)

3. El cluster ha ejecutado por lo menos 3 acciones vinculadas a mejorar la competitividad del destino

4. El cluster ha ejecutado por lo menos 3 actividades encaminadas a mejorar el clima de negocio

SUCCESS STORIES

First certification program in the Dominican Republic



Dominican Treasures is present in 11 touristic destinations: Barahona, Constanza, Jarabacoa, La Altagracia, Moca, Pedernales, Puerto Plata, Romana-Bayahibe, Samana and Santo Domingo.

Through the use of a variety of promotion strategies, such as website, social network, guide, bulletins, media tours, fairs, promotional material and publications, Dominican Treasures has become an excellent platform to promote small and medium touristic businesses in the nation and internationally.

Additionally, the certified products and services have developed their potential in the tourism business setting through safe food handling, culture of tourism and communication which enhances their efficiency and responsibility with the environment.

Dominican Treasures is thankful with USAID given the investment in equipment and technical supervision towards the accomplishment of the quality and sustainability criteria in order to provide an optimized service to its clients.

Dominican Treasures is an innovative certification alternative for the new market settings. Dominican Treasures' aim is to improve the visualization of the Dominican Republic as a touristic destination.

These small businesses are the result of family entrepreneurship, individual visions as well as the great effort made by organized community groups which foresee tourism as an entrance to development

At the Dominican Republic, there is a clear need to find alternatives to complement the traditional touristic offers to outstand the Dominican culture and its authenticity. It is also important to mention that there is a growing group of consumers who are looking for a unique experience in contact with nature, quality services and personalized attention.

To fulfill these objectives the United States has been contributing to sustainable development in the Dominican Republic through financing programs. As a result the program Dominican Treasures was developed. This is a project from the Dominican Consortium for Touristic Competitiveness, which grants a certification those touristic products and services that fulfill standards of quality and sustainability, which at the same time are based on the Global Criterion for Sustainable Tourism.

The challenges to several of these businesses were evident. The strategies to promote were inexistent and led to lack of knowledge; there were little alternative offers and an evident need of technical assistance and training. The project started with the aim to reach an economical and community development. We started by identifying different projects along the country. While the visits we found people who understood the conceptuality of Dominican Treasures and others who recognized the value of the brand, however there was certain disbelief and resistance to becoming part of the project. As a consequence the efforts to agglutinate all businesses to become part of a network became a challenge. Nevertheless we were convinced of their charm, historic and touristic and scientific values, richness of their cultural and historic resources, and the potential to become part of a promising alternative to tourism in the country.

The contribution of the cooperation agreement with USAID is acknowledged by Dominican Treasures. Currently there is a network that holds 52 certified products and alternative touristic services within the country, being the most relevant ecolodges, boutique hotels, museums, recreation and gastronomy. These businesses withhold the sustainable development model which objectives are to preserve natural and cultural resources, adopt good practices and quality criteria, support and promote local crafts and community integration as the fundamental matrix to development.



THE BARAHONA TOURIST AND PRODUCTION CLUSTER PROMOTES KEY

ACTIONS IN FAVOR OF TOURISM



The Barahona Tourist and Production Cluster, a crucial actor in the transformation of Barahona

The Barahona Tourist and Production Cluster is a place for dialogue and fraternity, for sharing ideas and making commitments where all actors, both big and small, can contribute their ideas and work together to make tourism an inclusive and sustainable activity.

Since its creation, the cluster has received financial support from the People of the United States of America and the technical collaboration of the Consorcio Dominicano de Competitividad Turística (CDCT) [Dominican Consortium of Tourist Competitiveness]



Curso de papel mache a mujeres de Barahona

USAID has been instrumental, not only promoting the partnership model in several economic sectors of the Dominican Republic, but also in creating the 10 tourist clusters members of the CDCT. Consequently, it will always share the achievements and progress made by these organizations because, as to the others, USAID has provided the Barahona cluster systematic support and has been largely responsible for these successful outcomes.

The Barahona Tourist Cluster is among the most dynamic in the country, creating a visible transformation in the tourist area. Sponsored by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) since its beginning, the cluster has taken steps to become a consolidated and mature institution that advocates for turning Barahona into a province with sustainable tourism and for visualizing tourism as one of the main economic sources in Barahona.

Efficient management of a tourist destination involves creating products, improving local capacities, effective marketing. The Barahona Tourist Cluster shows tangible results in this direction.

This Cluster has succeeded in bringing together all the authorities for a common goal and a shared vision. After extensive negotiations with the governor and the different city councils, it has been appointed by the Ministry of Tourism administrator of the recently inaugurated Maria Montez Park, a clear demonstration of confidence in the Cluster.

They have foreseen implementing sports tourism on their coasts and while it is seen as a weakness, some activities have already taken place such as the "Larimar Surfing Championship" and the "Vela Palito Seco Regatta". Both were conducted with parallel environmental actions which include the Lionfish hunt and a Clean-up Day at the Birán River to repopulate the swamps. Hang gliding was promoted and handcrafts were sold by local artisans.

With these activities, the Cluster aims to highlight the natural and cultural features of the area as assets for a competitive, sustainable and inclusive tourism. This also demonstrates the success of the Cluster as an integrating agent, since all the initiatives were made in partnership with the organizations that are linked to the activities.

The Sailing School was also created, providing Barahona youth with a healthy option that can also be promoted as a tourist activity.

Another important action of the Cluster is the integration of local authorities and actors to form the "Tourism Security Commission", which meets regularly to address security issues and find solutions.

The Barahona Cluster also provides training in the region including craftwork for women, customer services, environmental issues and others, thus making the destination more competitive.

Thanks to the support from the people of the United States, the women and the communities have been incorporated in tourism activities with the least negative impact on natural resources and increased financial income.

SUCCESS STORY: The Trail of the Senses: First accesible nature trail of the country



With the inauguration of the Trail of The Senses ends the USAID-STEP program Carried out by CDCT.

The inauguration of the Trail of the senses on April 22nd 2014 –earth day- also served as the closing event for the two year program carried out by CDCT “Sustainable Empowerment Program” (USAID-STEP) financed by the US government through its Agency for International Development (USAID). This program focused on local empowerment of sustainable tourism initiatives leaving important milestones benefit for the country on sustainable development.

This important event for both the program and for the continued efforts in sustainable development and tourism, counted with the presence of the U.S. ambassador James W. Bruster, USAID country director Alexandra Panehal, and other local government representative of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, the Disability National Council, and the National Botanical Gardens, as well as members of the community of individuals with disability and key individuals that impacted the 2.4 million empowerment program.



In order to provide opportunities for people with disabilities to learn about, enjoy and explore nature in a healthy natural recreational space, the Dominican Tourism Competitiveness Consortium (CDCT), lead the opening of the

first nature trail accessible for people with disabilities at the National Botanical Gardens "Dr. Rafael M. Moscoso", "

The Government of the United States through its Agency for International Development (USAID) financed the construction of this trail, in technical collaboration with the United States Forest Service (USFS) through the " Sustainable Tourism Empowerment Program" (USAID-STEP) implemented by CDCT. In addition, the accessible trail project counted with the unconditional support of the Disability National Council (CONADIS), being the largest national government institution specializing on inclusion of people with disabilities.

"The Trail of the Senses", as its name implies intends to stimulate the habilitated senses of individuals with disabilities, using signage with Braille supervised by the National School for the Blind, an audio guide produced and sponcerd by World Voices starring Cynthia Ortiz and Reynaldo Infante, and a visual guide with sign language produced by the Dominican Audio guide, as well as touchable 3-D images by a local plastic-artist.

With the construction of the trail of the senses, the CDCT advances in promoting inclusive tourism in the Dominican Republic. This initiative is part of CDCT's mission of promoting tourism competitiveness and sustainability in the country through the cluster model, the inclusion of communities and public-private partnerships.



PUERTO PLATA AND ITS SUCCESSFUL TOURISM COLLOQUIA



The Tourism Cluster of the Puerto Plata destination reflects along with the new generations



The POP SUMMIT was a forum held in November of 2011 with the aim of sharing general knowledge about a tourist destination and its importance in the development of the region, as well as conducting a campaign to strengthen the image of Puerto Plata. As a follow-up to the conclusions of this event, the *Tourism Colloquia of the Puerto Plata Destination* came into being, thus becoming the perfect excuse for the main stakeholders in the destination to continue reflecting on the major challenges faced today.



Initiating these colloquia in the universities ensures the commitment of the Cluster to a generation that is aware of what the destination demands and to become part of the solution.

The Puerto Plata Tourism Cluster was among the first to be established and has come a long way towards strengthening the commitment of all those involved in the tourism sector by learning to work together. Thanks to the contribution of the people of the United States, the entity not only exists, but also demonstrates the progress that shapes a better future for the destination. The 500 young people (284 women and 216 men) who participated in these gatherings are proof that there is a future in continuing this important work.

The Puerto Plata Tourism Cluster aims to have this destination regain the position it once enjoyed on the global tourism map. This destination has suffered a decrease in the number of tourists and, as a result, many important hotels have been forced to shut down, thus negatively affecting hundreds of workers that depend on this industry.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has provided ongoing support to the Cluster and its activities, which has resulted in the commitment of all stakeholders to jointly improve the destination. One of the actions taken by the Cluster to achieve this objective is the implementation of *tourism colloquia* that encourage reflection on the tourist sector and the challenges to be faced.

The goal of these gatherings is to convey a message of unification, establish criteria, and discuss the best possible solutions concerning the destination's needs and aspirations. The audience, made up of students, teachers and public authorities from various higher education institutions in the tourism sector in Puerto Plata, seeks to lay the foundations in the tourism field with the new generations that are being trained today. The panelists, some 25 in all the various gatherings, represent the most prominent business people in the destination, as well as the leading institutions in the region.

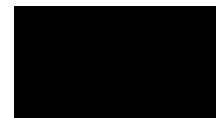
Three successful colloquia:

1st Tourism Colloquium: February 16, 2012, in which 177 people participated. The topics addressed were: "Organization of Destination Management: from theory to practice", "Destination Marketing", "Emergence and Development of the Hospitality Sector", "Tour Operations: Concept and Scope of Tour Operators", "Puerto Plata, a Tourist Destination: an offer to attract clients", and "The Importance of Qualified Human Resources for the development of a destination."

2nd Tourism Colloquium: March 15, 2012, attended by 209 people. The topic addressed was "Quality of Hotel Infrastructure: Are the hotels in the North prepared to receive tourists?" and "Complementary Tourism."

3rd Tourism Colloquium: April 11, 2012, attended by 115 people. The following topics were addressed: "As a tourist destination: what transport model is good for us and what should we do to achieve this?" and "As a tourist destination: What education model is good for us and what should we do to put it into practice?"

USAID, like the Cluster, is committed to training and capacity-building as essential tools for development. For this reason we celebrate, along with the Cluster, the active participation of the hundreds of students who today are aware of their role as the takeover generation and of their empowerment to achieve the benefits of tourism.



RESCUE OF LOCAL CUISINE TO DIVERSIFY THE INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE

TOURIST OFFER



An icon of Samané Cuisine rescued through Dominican Treasures

Dominican Treasures is a seal of sustainable tourist quality, Dominican authenticity and marketing platform, based on global sustainability criteria, that sponsors small and medium tourist businesses with emphasis on community ventures. It increases the quality level and makes these micro enterprises (Mipymes) more competitive and capable of reaching their target market.



D'Vieja Pan team with the winning University This seal was created with the financial support of the People of the United States of America, who also provide financial support to the Mipymes, and was born under the umbrella of the Consorcio Dominicano de Competitividad Turística (CDCT) [Dominican Consortium of Tourist Competitiveness].

USAID has been instrumental in the support given to these small businesses, facilitating training on different areas and donating equipment to enhance the quality of all the Dominican Treasures distributed at national level in the 10 Tourist Clusters that comprise the CDCT.

Before and after the remodeling



The seal Dominican Treasures was created with the financial support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to diversify the tourist offer relying on the support of the tourism micro enterprises (Mipymes). D'Vieja Pan is a Dominican Treasure that aims to maintain tradition and preserve local culture.

This project, located in Samaná, was started by Benita (mother of "La Vieja") who used to sell door-to-door local traditional dishes that were originally brought to the region by freed slaves during the regime of Boyer. These included Johnny cakes, yautia bread (a type of corn), English bread, coconut cake, cornbread, etc. This activity has been the family's livelihood for three generations.

Albertina de Peña, also known as "La Vieja" (old lady), started this business in her home maintaining the original recipes and using handcrafted tools. Her children are currently running the business. The past three generations have been led by women, and now her eldest daughter heads the family team with her mother.

"D' Vieja Pan" is the perfect stop and a great option to present the local culture and tradition to cruise ships visiting Samaná. Based on this, and with USAID support, these facilities were recently remodeled.

This transformation was achieved using an innovative bidding contest with various universities, which also served as a model to bring together the academic community in a societal action, originating relevant proposals from numerous multi-disciplinary groups in the hotel industry, architecture and communication. Proposals were submitted within a specific financial ceiling and were screened by a jury made up of local authorities and representatives of various organizations at the local and central level and with different background and expertise.

The result is a renovation that has uplifted local self-esteem, in addition to training courses on adequate management for the staff of D'Vieja Pan; a cultural recovery; a complementary and sustainable option for tourists, particularly cruise ship passengers who make a significant contribution to the area and the empowerment of the business owners who participated in this venture together with authorities and the academic community.

This has been a very successful project!



The "Vieja" with handcrafted tools



THE SANTO DOMINGO TOURISM CLUSTER, SUCCESSFUL AS A DESTINATION MANAGER



The Santo Domingo Tourism Cluster: the key to the transformation of the destination

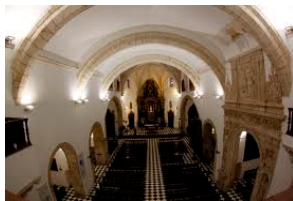
The Tourism Cluster of Santo Domingo is a space for dialogue, fraternization, ideas and commitment, where all tourism actors, large and small, have a place to contribute their ideas and work together, so that tourism becomes, in effect, an activity that is "good for all".

Since its inception, it has had the financial support of the people of the United States and the technical collaboration of the Dominican Consortium of Tourism Competitiveness (CDCT).



Carriages painted by Dominican artists

USAID has been a key player not only in the promotion of the associativity model in various economic sectors of the Dominican Republic, but also in the establishment of the country's 10 tourist clusters. For this reason, USAID can always echo the achievements and progress of these institutions since, like the others, the Cluster of Santo Domingo has been provided with support in a systematic way, which to a great extent has allowed for the showcasing these important results.



Museum Church of the Convento de los Dominicos



The Tourism Cluster of Santo Domingo is one of the most dynamic in the country. Created in the year 2006 under the auspices of the National Council for Competitiveness and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), it has been taking steps towards consolidation as a mature institution that advocates turning Santo Domingo into the thriving urban destination it once was.

The predominant scenario at the time of the entity's founding was one of little interaction between local actors, despite their interaction in a metropolis in which the major commercial activity of the country is centered, since it is the capital. In addition, there was virtually no linkage with communities, nor did there exist an entity thinking about re-launching Santo Domingo as a destination. Later there arose the possibility of creating the Cluster and of bringing together all the tourism actors for the development they wished to attain. Although many years full of learning have passed in order for these actors to work together in harmony, it has definitely been worth the effort, because there are countless accomplishments.

Proof of this is that only in this year 2012, the Cluster has consolidated highly relevant projects for tourist destination diversification, as well as for the preservation and promotion of cultural values that make Santo Domingo a unique place, not only in the country, but also in the region.

One of the outstanding achievements is the advocating for and successful development of "The Sole Agenda", which consists of the union of all the actors in the tourism sector working together towards the achievement of specific objectives and the avoidance of the duplication of efforts, in order to guide the destination efficiently.

The Cluster has also worked with the **Association of Carriage Owners** so that this emblematic means of transportation used by our tourists along the Malecón Area of the city could use beautifully painted carriages decorated by notable Dominican painters. In collaboration with City Hall, the Cluster has promoted the enhancement of an important coastal area with the inauguration of **Güibia Plaza**, a dream come true, and assumed the management of shops selling delicious food and local crafts, thus allowing the generation of funds that contribute to the economic sustainability of the institution. In addition, the Cluster has promoted the diversification of the tourism offer by incorporating two new products which it has supported: the **Religious Museum of the Convento de los Dominicos with audio guides**, thus making this architectural and cultural jewel available for tourist visits and, on the other hand, the **Ruta del Chivo**, a historical tour in vintage cars that visit the places representative of Trujillo's Tyranny.

And if that were not enough, the Cluster has also assumed that promotion and education is an essential part of its role as destination manager. It has participated in major tourism fairs this year, both nationally and internationally (**Fitur-Madrid**, **Sea Trade - Miami-Dade -Punta Cana**). Regarding training, the Cluster provides the "**Anfitriones de Santo Domingo**" and "**Líderes formando Líderes**" programs, thus improving the skills of the labor force.

The efficient management of a destination involves the creation of products, optimizing local capabilities, and effective marketing. The Tourism Cluster of Santo Domingo shows tangible results in that direction.



SUCCESS STORY

Sustainable Tourism Businesses Access New Markets

Aventúrate tourism fair provides an opportunity for ecotourism businesses to obtain clients first hand



Complejo Ecoturístico Rio Blanco promoted its tours and offered coffee tastings to interested clients that visited them in **Aventúrate**

“Aventúrate is an ideal event for small projects to promote themselves, as we notice that the clients that visit the fair are eager to find alternative tourism products that allow them experience the Dominican Republic in the most authentic way possible.”

Community run tourism businesses like the Complejo Ecoturístico Rio Blanco a small eco lodge owned by a coffee farmers cooperative in the mountainous area of Bonao, have historically struggled to promote themselves as their limited budget don't allow them to invest in ample marketing initiatives. This cozy lodge that boasts excellent customer service skills remain hidden from potential clients who are drawn to coastal resorts that have no problem investing in comprehensive marketing campaigns. But things have changed since USAID's Sustainable Tourism Empowerment Program began hosting **Aventúrate**, a local tourism fair designed for the Dominican tourism market where tourism businesses like Rio Blanco, which have something unique and authentic to offer, are able to showcase their products and meet potential clients first hand. In just two editions of **Aventúrate**, more than 12,000 people have gotten to know first hand the range of sustainable tourism experiences they can enjoy in the country, and more than 80 alternative tourism products have had the opportunity to meet these potential clients first hand.

Aventúrate is part of a larger USAID initiative that seeks to achieve broad-based social and environmentally sustainable economic growth by promoting and supporting the development of community-based and sustainable tourism initiatives in the Dominican Republic. USAID provides assistance to support the competitiveness and growth of small Dominican businesses, primarily in the rural sector, by identifying new market opportunities. The Dominican Consortium for Tourism Competitiveness (CDCT) is the local NGO tasked with implementing the Sustainable Tourism Empowerment Program under a two and a half year Cooperative Agreement with USAID. The CDCT is committed to hosting **Aventúrate** annually; therefore ensuring long lasting results.

Miguelina Butrón, owns *Turismo Rural* a small tour operator that is exclusively marketing and selling products such as the Complejo Ecoturístico Rio Blanco after realizing that traditional tour operators were not interested in selling sustainable tourism products due to the small net gains as compared to the large resorts. Miguelina says that “**Aventúrate** is an ideal event for small projects to promote themselves, as we notice that the clients that visit the fair are eager to find alternative tourism products that allow them experience the Dominican Republic in the most authentic way possible.”

Seeking to foster public private sector partnerships to boost the results of this event, the Ministry of Tourism (MITUR) vowed its support during both editions of **Aventúrate** held during the USAID's program. Milka Hernández, who is in charge of the local tourism market for MITUR stated, “what is remarkable about **Aventúrate** is that Dominicans who attend leave the fair with the impression that they have just discovered a Dominican Republic that they did not know existed.”

The results obtained from **Aventúrate** were far reaching. In addition to those who attended awareness of these projects was achieved due to the abundant press coverage before, during and after the event. In the more than 300 publications recorded, the press told a story to their audience, showcasing these authentic experiences.

The Complejo Ecoturístico Rio Blanco like so many other sustainable tourism projects, are more motivated than ever to continue seeking innovative ways to promote their lodge. They are confident that with more opportunities like **Aventúrate** their small lodge will be as much of an icon in the Dominican Republic as the more common sun and sand resorts that motivate millions to flock to the island annually in search of memorable experiences.

SUCCESS STORY

Building Public Private Partnerships for Tourism Competitiveness

FODATUR is an annual forum that brings together public and private sector stakeholders to propose solutions for improving tourism development in the Dominican Republic



“We needed a space that allowed us to put our differences aside and together analyze the issues that are affecting the tourism industry as a whole. FODATUR has facilitated that space and fostered a healthy environment to promote dialogue” – Maximo Iglesias, CDCT President

The Dominican Republic has a long-standing reputation of being a leading tourism destination in Latin America and the Caribbean. The country has perfected the sun and sand all-inclusive model for tourism development, which has positioned it as a consolidated and mature destination in the region.

However, a fierce competitive environment has encouraged neighboring destinations to innovate and seek alternatives to gain a larger share of growing markets. Notwithstanding its positioning and reputation, indicators that measure tourism competitiveness for destinations worldwide (World Economic Forum), have demonstrated that the Dominican Republic has been losing competitiveness for the last five years, something that has troubled public and private sector stakeholders alike. Considering that the country lacks updated strategic plans for tourism development and that coordination between the public and private sector has historically presented challenges, the need for developing a solution to inter-institutional coordination is more urgent than ever.

In an effort to address this issue and look for ways in which the corresponding government agencies and leading private sector stakeholders could arrive at consensus on some of the issues affecting the tourism industry as a whole, the Dominican Consortium for Tourism Competitiveness (CDCT), responsible for implementing USAID's Sustainable Tourism Empowerment Program, hosted the Annual Dominican Tourism Forum (FODATUR) in 2012 and 2013 as a way of gathering relevant industry leaders to get them to discuss some of the main issues that need to be addressed in order to start improving some of the indicators that have led to the country losing some of its competitive edge in the region.

In line with USAID's commitment to work with civil society in the Dominican Republic to encourage the formation of coalitions, consortia, and networks to more effectively achieve goals and promote participation, advocacy, and oversight, FODATUR presented an innovative way to encourage joint planning and economic growth.

In an unprecedented effort, FODATUR 2012 and 2013 brought together more than 650 government officials, business owners, tourism associations, scholars, students and international speakers to discuss what needs to happen in order for the Dominican Republic to begin to develop innovative solutions for tourism development. With comprehensive Tourism Planning and Destination Management at the heart of it all, leading stakeholders have proposed: ways in which both public and private sector stakeholders may form working partnerships; solutions for reaching new tourism market segments including health, eco, luxury, cruise and convention tourism; development of new tourism areas in the country; how to link various destinations within the country in order to improve the visitor experience; environment and climate change adaptation measures that must be considered in the short and medium term; local government involvement in tourism planning and management; how to promote small business product development; amongst others.

With USAID and CDCT support, public private sector partnerships are now, more than ever, recognized as vital for tourism development. The industry as a whole perceives this forum as an annual space for dialogue, where finding common ground on issues that affect all stakeholders alike, supersede the importance that differences in opinion might have between stakeholders. FODATUR has become the annual event for tourism planning and dialogue, where key issues are brought to the table in order to look for their solutions and overcome obstacles. The CDCT is committed to hosting FODATUR on an annual basis.

Success Story: Sustainable Development and Climate Change Adaptation tools for the Tourism Sector



On February 2014 the CDCT celebrated 10 Climate Change Adaptation training workshops around the 10 tourism clusters that conform it. These workshops were the last Climate Change and Adaptation modules to be carried out under the " Sustainable Tourism Empowerment Program" financed by the Government of the United States through its Agency for International Development.



The Climate Change Adaptation workshops were completed by 5 different consultants all experts in different areas. Consultants were assigned depending on the particular settings the clusters were found in. It was left up to each cluster to identify the audience to participate in the mentioned trainings, as a result a wide array of different participants were able to be a part of the workshops such as high school students, cluster members, and local authorities.

Under the umbrella of the "Sustainable Tourism Empowerment Program" (USAID-STEP" the Dominican Tourism Competitiveness Consortium CDCT, created its Environmental Unit. Among other sustainable and environmental goals, with the creation of this unit the CDCT pledged to strengthen environmental education and awareness for Climate Change Adaptation in tourism areas of the country. Thus, this unit took the responsibility for the re-issuing of the original version of the Environmental Guide, aiming at a more updated and expanded version of this valuable educational tool. Further receiving the rights thereof, thanks to the donation of The Nature Conservancy: TNC. Successfully, CDCT worked on the now called "Environmental and Climate Change Training Guide " which contains two new chapters that further include the Climate Change and Sustainable Tourism theme.

The CDCT now offers free of charge, thanks to the support of USAID, a revised version (in print and digitally edited), of the " Environmental and Climate Change Training Guide USAID-TNC-CDCT". With this CDCT renewed its institutional commitment to the sector's competitiveness, seeking to increase awareness and education on environmental issues, knowledge of sustainable development and climate change adaptation at a national level.

This book contains seven (7) thematic modules; each chapter provides practical suggestions for activities to be implemented in-group dynamics for adults or young individuals, containing exercises that can easily be used individually or together depending on the level of focus group involved. Modules-themed and developed by professional's areas follows:

1. Environmental Education (Faustina Varela),
2. Ecology and Environment (Elfrida Pimentel, Yrvin Pimentel),
3. The Biodiversity (Theany Sánchez),
4. Protected Areas (Aleyda Capela)
5. Environmental Contamination (Cándida Domínguez y Sandy Feliz),
6. Climate Change, (Juan Mancebo) and
7. Sustainable Tourism and Climate Change (Rafael Lorenzo, Adriano Galva, Matilde Mota).



Conservando la naturaleza.
Protegiendo la vida.

TV BROADCASTING OF DOMINICAN SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Con Milady, a TV show that promotes Sustainable Development



"Con Milady" is aired on channel 33 from 8:00 to 9:00 a.m., Monday through Friday; it has national and international coverage. Every Wednesday, Lissette Gil, Executive Director of the Dominican Consortium for Tourism Competitiveness, co-produces the show. From 2011 to date, this initiative has benefited more than 30 projects on 55 TV shows already broadcasted.

In addition to the listed projects, various current topics have been addressed by leading experts, among which are the following : the media and tourism, destination management, adaptation to climate change, undersea living museums, bird watching, cultural tourism, tourism competitiveness, crafts, religious tourism, city branding, good environmental practices, and the reality of Dominican tourism, thereby achieving the goal of providing information and raising awareness among the population regarding the proper development of tourism.

USAID remains committed to reducing poverty in the Dominican Republic through this tourism development model, providing its resources to support this weekly section of the "Con Milady" TV show".

The people of the United States have been contributing to the development of the Dominican Republic's sustainable tourism for a decade through donations in dollars.

Many have benefited from USAID's intervention over the years, such as the 10 existing tourist clusters and tens of micro and small rural enterprises that have opted for tourism as a way of improving the quality of life in their communities.

Disseminating all the work that has been done in favor of a different type of tourism in the country was a great challenge, as the foundation had already been created and the results were visible. In addition, it was necessary to educate the people about this new model of tourism. To educate not only those involved, but also the general population, to understand the best way to develop this activity so that it is lasting and beneficial for all.

Promoting community tourist microenterprises and the clusters, as well as meeting the educational need regarding the scope of sustainable tourism, is today a reality thanks to the agreement signed by the *Dominican Consortium for Tourism Competitiveness*—a cluster network- and the TV Show "Con Milady". The agreement is that every Wednesday the show will be dedicated completely to topics related to tourism sustainability.

This TV show has become a real platform for the dissemination of successful tourism initiatives and projects that are an example of social and environmental responsibility. That is, of those in which visitation is translated into benefits for the local populations.

Projects such as **Sonido del Yaque** (Jarabacoa), **La Caleta** (Santo Domingo Oeste), **Aguas Blancas** (Constanza), **Rancho Platón** (Barahona), **Ruta del Jengibre** (Samaná), **Sereno de la Montaña** (Moca), **Villa Pajón** (Constanza), **Laguna Bávaro** (La Altagracia), **Clave Verde** (Las Terrenas), **Loma Quita Espuela** (San Francisco de Macorís), **Paraíso Caño Hondo** (Samaná), **Ecorutas del Oeste** (Santo Domingo Oeste), **Reserva de la Biosfera** (Pedernales), **Río Limpio** (Pedro Santana), **Eco Campo La Sangría** (Samaná), **Rancho Olivier** (Jarabacoa), **Rancho Constanza** (Constanza) and **Dominican Treasures** (DR's community projects) have been able to present the viewing public with their tourist offer and their operations in order to benefit the community, while conserving the natural resources and disseminating the cultural ones.



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Consortio Dominicano de
Competitividad Turística

CONSTANZA: THE COUNTRY'S FAVORITE DESTINATION FOR FLY IN



The Constanza Ecotourism Cluster demonstrates experience in satisfying air rally tourists



With more than 6 years of experience under the sponsorship of the United States Agency for International Development, the Constanza Ecotourism Cluster demonstrates that its sustained leadership has been essential in enrolling the Municipality in major international events.

Constanza is in a strategic geographic location, as it is more than 1,380 meters above sea level with the highest valley in the Caribbean, making it a special attraction for Fly In.

This municipality was not on the map of tourism destinations; however, the union of key players in a cluster, the combined definition of a strategic route to follow, and their tenacious efforts have made it possible for Constanza to enjoy, among other facilities, a modern aerodrome that to date has hosted three Air Rallies.

A Fly In is simply a trip in a private plane with pilots and passengers for the purpose of recreation and entertainment.

The Constanza Ecotourism Cluster has accomplished the creation of a diverse and authentic offer, making it a "must-see" destination to visit for these types of events.

The benefits have been tangible for the micro-entrepreneurs of the area dedicated to the cultivation of vegetables, fruits, and flowers; for ecological accommodations, local restaurants, shops, and musicians... in other words, for the wider community, which is ready to welcome the next air visitors!



In April of 2012, Constanza again hosted the eleventh version of Fly In International "Caribbean Aeronautic Challenge", by bringing together 50 participants from Canada, Switzerland, Australia, Croatia, France, Puerto Rico, and the United States, arriving at the 14 de Junio Aerodrome in 19 planes with the aim of getting to know Constanza's tourist attractions and vegetable production capabilities.

The visitors were met at the offices of Constanza's Ecotourism Cluster, located in the same terminal, where they were awarded a special distinction for including Constanza on their tour of the Caribbean.

The Constanza Ecotourism Cluster was the liaison for the coordination of this important visit to the municipality and was responsible for developing the trip's program.

Participation in this international event was aimed at promoting Constanza and ensuring publications leading to hundreds of thousands of people gaining access to information about the municipality's tourism offer and attractions, making it a true paradise for travelers thanks to the specialized press team from Canada and China, who played an important role during this visit. Not to mention the great impact this group has due to its large number of members, the frequency of these flights, and the profile of the participants.

As part of the agenda and from a desire to interact with the community, a local couple was chosen for the celebration of their wedding as a gift. The pilots were the special guests, and attended the wedding ceremony at the Church of San Pedro, and the wedding dinner offered by one of the best restaurants in the area, while a local orchestra, together with dancers from the *Nuestra Señora del Valle* School, entertained the guests.

The entire delegation that composed this air rally expressed their complete satisfaction with the attention and kindness they have always received in this most productive valley, giving this place a distinctive touch above all the other territories visited.

Thanks to the support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Cluster is able to carry out activities that result in income generation for the institution, as well as in economic benefits for the various businesses of this destination, and in high quality promotion, positioning Constanza in a unique and valuable niche.

