

SUSTAINABILITY CERTIFICATION THROUGH QUALITY ASSURANCE

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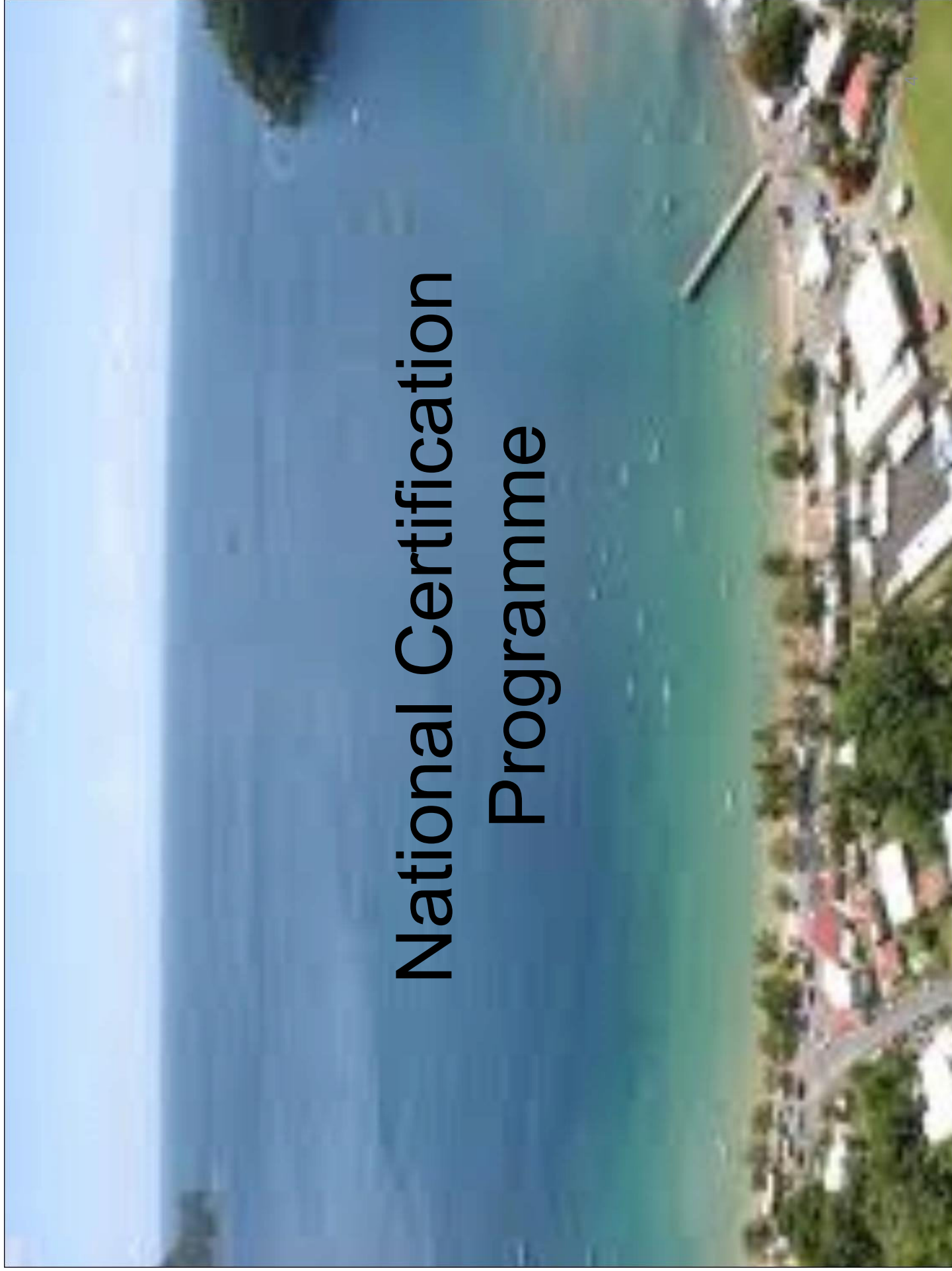
Vision

To ensure that our local tourism products and services achieve and maintain **high standards of excellence** for the delivery of a **quality visitor experience**

Impact of Quality Assurance



National Certification Programme



What is TTTIC?

Trinidad and Tobago Tourism Industry Certification

- A national certification programme designed to ensure that operators and service providers in the tourism industry conform to national standards of quality in their operations.
- First and only tourism industry certification programme in the Caribbean
- Developed and administered by T&T's national agency for industry standards and certification (TTBS-Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards), in conjunction with the tourism authorities.



What is TTTIC?

- TTTIC is jointly executed by the Tourism Development Company Ltd (TDC), the Tobago House of Assembly (THA)- Division of Tourism and Transportation, and TTBS
- TTBS was contracted to provide independent third party assessments of the tourism operators for certification



Why TTTIC?

- Provide operators with guidelines to implement procedures for efficient business management.
- Allows tourism SMEs to be more competitive.
- Increases visitor confidence in booking tourism services.
- Provides an avenue for addressing visitor feedback.
- Provides an avenue for T&T to differentiate its tourism product.



Standards currently under TTTIC

- Tour Guides
- Tour Operators
- Tourist Transport Providers (Tourist Taxis)
- Hotels and Guesthouses (> 7 rooms)
- Bed and breakfast/ Self-catering facilities (< 7 rooms)

Upcoming Standards

- Villas
- Eco-lodges
- Recreational Dive Operations
- Tourism Information Centres
- Sites and attractions
- Tourism water-based activities

TTTTIC Highlights

- Inclusion in the Compulsory Licensing of Tourist Accommodation (in progress).
- TTTIC is used as a model to develop a regional certification programme; the Caribbean Regional Organization for Standards and Quality (CROSQ) has patterned the regional accommodation standard after our local accommodation standards.
- Aligned to the National Tourism Policy in achieving the key success factor of delivering an “internationally competitive tourism sector.”



How do we evaluate TTTIC?

- Visitor Relationship Management System (VRMS)
- TTTIC Survey of certified operators
- Surveillance Audit
- Mystery Shopper

International Environmental Programmes



Environmental Conservation

- To promote and encourage the adoption of **sustainable and responsible practices** in all aspects of tourism development.
- The environmental programmes comprise the following:
 - Environmental awareness programmes
 - Blue Flag
 - Earthcheck

Environmental Conservation

– Strategic Approach

- Networking and actively participating with key environmental agencies, government ministries, NGOs and CBOs e.g. Nature Seekers
- Developing relationships with funding agencies e.g. UN Centre for Development of Enterprise
- Using certification as a vehicle for a broader environmental management approach – coastal zone management
- The promotion of environmental awards and recognition programmes - to highlight good practices and innovation amongst local tourism operators at an international level.

Earthcheck

- Completed Pilot Project assisted through funding received from the Centre for Development of Enterprise (CDE) – EU/ACP funding agency in Brussels.
- Seven (7) hotels and guesthouses are participating in the Pilot Project-currently being Earthcheck assessed

Blue Flag 2011 – 2012

- Establishment of FEE - Trinidad and Tobago
- Blue Flag Mentor Visit – VP of FEE
- Meeting of the Blue Flag National Committee
- Las Cuevas Beach Management Committee – zoning for Las Cuevas Beach
- MOU with TTBS for water quality testing
- Environmental Education Activities
- GAP assessment and close-off for non-conformities

Environmental Conservation Evaluation Strategies

- User satisfaction and perception surveys for Blue Flag sites.
- Evaluation of the commitment of properties to Earthcheck programme through follow-up site visits.
- Mystery shopping with TTTIC

Challenges faced...

- inadequate funding
- heavily subsidised services for example, training
- limited membership fees
- limited marketing and promotion of quality schemes
- limited understanding and buy-in by farmers
- lack of registration and membership for certification systems

Benefits of the Quality Assurance Initiatives

- Leaders in quality standards and training for the Caribbean tourism industry.
- Strong integrated approach to dealing with proliferation of certificates and sustainability
- Highly qualified and committed staff
- Repository of knowledge and innovation
- Effective delivery of service to the sector
- Client centric – responsive and accessible to stakeholders
- Potential Access to the national Green Fund

Challenges faced...

- Certification criteria are seen as onerous especially for small to medium enterprises.
- Voluntary nature of programmes
- Dependence on local external agencies for participation in programmes
- Absence of national recognition programmes/ rewards for quality systems, environmental and customer service excellence.

Benefits of the Tourism Quality Cluster

- Certification programmes are being used as a model for regional programmes.
- Recognition is increasing for sustainable tourism certification brands, regionally and internationally.
- Effective and productive partnerships between and among stakeholders
- Increasing number of industry champions for sustainable certification tourism initiatives.