



Market Development Portfolio Committee (PFC) Report on activities

Period covered: May 2012 – May 2013

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1. Indaba 2013 proposal, September 2012

The Alliance Secretariat, in seeking to provide tangible benefits to its membership, put forward a proposal to Alliance members (certification organisations/programmes) to have a stand at Indaba 2013 on a cost-sharing basis. The objective of the proposal was to make it more feasible/affordable for certification programmes to participate at the show.

The following organisations were invited:

- (i) Eco Awards Namibia
- (ii) Eco Tourism Kenya
- (iii) Botswana Tourism Organisation
- (iv) Heritage Environmental Management Company
- (v) Responsible Tourism Tanzania

Due to poor uptake (primarily attributed to resource constraints), it was decided not to go ahead with the project in 2013. However, the matter has been tabled for discussion at the 2013 Annual meeting.

The invitation sent to targeted Alliance members is attached as Annexure 1.

2. Alliance website

Included in the 2012 – 2015 Alliance work plan was the need to give the Alliance website a re-vamp, as the site was not user-friendly and had been dormant since 2010 as a result of resource constraints.

The Alliance Secretariat secured the services of four experts from SAP, a global consulting company, to work on, amongst other things, a plan for re-mapping and re-vamping the website as well as ideas for increasing *traffic*. The team of consultants participated in this assignment as part of SAP's corporate Sabbatical programme – a four week pilot programme designed to provide in-kind services to non-profit organisations in various countries across the Globe.

A concrete plan (inclusive of re-mapping) was completed November 2012. The newly revamped website went live on 18 February 2013. The website also has a marketing resource centre. Formally registered Alliance members are invited to submit relevant/appropriate content for publication on the site. The website can be viewed at: www.sustainabletourismalliance.co.za. Planned activities to

drive traffic to the Alliance website are indicated in Annexure 2. Support in increasing traffic to the site is required from the Alliance membership. As such, members have been requested to post a link to the Alliance website on their respective sites. Traffic and associated activity to the site is monitored monthly by the Alliance Secretariat.

M&E results for the previous website (relevant for the period May 2012 – February 2013) are provided in the table below.

Table 1: Alliance (old) website M&E results May 2012 – February 2013

No. of visits per month to website	831
No. of unique visitors per month to website	687.8333
Average inverse bounce rate	65%
Daily average visits to Alliance website	27.14583
Average pages per visit on website	1.9925
Average time spent on website (h.m.s)	00:01:48
Monthly % of Alliance website visits from referring sites	19%
Monthly % of Alliance website visits from direct traffic	20%
Monthly % of Alliance website visits from search engines	61%

Table 2: Alliance (new) website M&E results March 2013 – April 2013

No. of visits per month to website	474
No. of unique visitors per month to website	333
Average inverse bounce rate	57%
Daily average visits to Alliance website	15.55
Average pages per visit on website	3.21
Average time spent on website (h.m.s)	00:04:53
Monthly % of Alliance website visits from referring sites	32%
Monthly % of Alliance website visits from direct traffic	27%
Monthly % of Alliance website visits from search engines	41%
No. of debate topics/polls	2
No. of participants in debate/polls	20

3. Alliance Facebook

The Secretariat continued to maintain the Alliance Facebook page, which currently has 281 'likes'. To view the page visit: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Sustainable-Tourism-Certification-Alliance-Africa/85765278790?ref=ts&fref=ts>. Alliance members and other visitors to the Alliance website are invited to 'like' the Alliance Facebook. Members are also invited to provide suitable stories for the page. We need members to help make the Alliance's presence on Facebook dynamic!

Number of Facebook "likes" = 289

4. Travel Foundation Research Project

From July 2012 to March 2013 the Alliance Secretariat, with funding from the Travel Foundation¹, implemented a project aimed at bringing together existing market intelligence and consumer insights on sustainable travel/consumption in the UK, and creating new market insights for Fair Trade and sustainable tourism in this market. Research findings are intended to guide the marketing efforts of sustainable tourism certification organisations, the broader Alliance membership and the tourist industry in relation to product development and communications with consumers and tour operators. The research report is attached as Annexure 3.

5. Belgian Development Agency (BTC) Project

Building on the aforementioned project, the Alliance Secretariat is currently implementing a project funded by the Belgian Development Agency (BTC) which, amongst other activities, looks to replicate the Travel Foundation project in four additional European source markets (Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Sweden). These markets have been identified as priority markets due to their high demand for sustainable/ethical products, in combination with relatively high numbers of tourism arrivals to South/southern Africa. The research findings were presented in the second Annual Conference on 9 May 2013 and will be made available in the members section of the Alliance website.

6. Alliance newflash, August 2012

The Secretariat circulated a newflash on 2 August 2012 to 410 newflash subscribers (including registered members, media, tour operators and stakeholders interested in Sustainable Tourism). The newflash is attached as Annexure 4.

Subsequent to launch of the Alliance website, a decision was taken to use the website as a resource to communicate further news and developments. As such, no further newflashes releases have been circulated. Writing newflashes is time consuming and actual readership does not warrant the investment. It is more efficient and effective to drive communications via the website and Facebook page.

¹ www.thetravelfoundation.org.uk

Annexures

Annexure 1 Invitation to identified Alliance members re Alliance stand at Indaba 2013

Annexure 2 Plans to increase traffic to Alliance website

Annexure 3 Travel Foundation research report

Annexure 4 Alliance newflash
