

Thursday, 20th October 2011, OECS Secretariat Castries– The OECS Council of Tourism Ministers met via video conference on Friday October 14th

, to discuss progress made on mandates given to the OECS Secretariat at their last meeting of the Council held in St. Kitts & Nevis in April, 2011.

At Friday's meeting, which was chaired by St. Lucia's Tourism Minister, Hon. Allen Chastanet, the Council charted the way forward for the implementation of the recently finalised OECS Tourism Policy. A list of priorities was strategically selected for immediate focus from the ten broad areas proposed in the Policy.

The areas that were highlighted include: Investment, Tourism Awareness, Research & Statistics, Air Transportation & Marketing. The specific actions recommended under these areas include:

- Undertaking a competitive analysis of the region's tourism sector, with a view to agreeing on the specific areas to be targeted for attracting increased investment to the OECS region
- Developing a Regional Tourism Awareness campaign to be implemented nationally in OECS Member States
- Joint representation at major trade shows, starting with World Travel Market held annually in the UK
- Conducting airlift capacity studies to empirically assess the air service needs of the region, and to guide OECS Member States' efforts at attracting and sustaining airlift

- Developing Tourism Satellite Accounts (TSAs) in OECS Member States with a view to more accurately measuring the impact of Tourism
- Improving the ED cards used in Member States with a view to adopting a standardized and more visitor-friendly card

The OECS Secretariat has allocated funds under the 10th European Development Fund (EDF) OECS Economic Integration & Trade Project, to assist in the implementation of the Common Tourism Policy. In addition to the activities undertaken at the regional level by the Secretariat's Tourism Desk, a number of proposed actions will be undertaken at the national level.

The OECS Council of Tourism Ministers convenes an annual face-to-face meeting, with Video conference meetings being held as deemed necessary.

The next face-to-face meeting of the OECS Council of Tourism Ministers is scheduled for Anguilla in April 2012.