

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Community-Based Tourism Workshop Drives Sustainable Growth in Nariva Communities**

**Port of Spain, Trinidad – November 22, 2024:** Tourism Trinidad Limited (TTL) and the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and the Arts (MTCA), in collaboration with The Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI), successfully hosted a **Community-Based Tourism Enterprise (CBT) Workshop** for communities surrounding the Nariva Swamp. The workshop, held from November 12th to 14th, 2024, took place at the BPTT Mayaro Resource Centre, with 22 participants from Manzanilla, Mayaro, Kernahan, Ortoire, Mafeking, Biche, and Plum Mitán in attendance. This initiative also formed part of Caribbean Tourism Month 2024 activities, underscoring both organization's commitment to Theme One: Putting People First – Nurturing Our Greatest Asset, and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (2030).

Community-based tourism empowers residents to develop, manage, and own tourism products and services while prioritising the preservation of the environment and the socio-cultural assets of their communities. This workshop was a key component of **CANARI's "Experience Nariva Project,"** spearheaded by Dr. Natalie Boodram, Senior Technical Officer at CANARI. Also present at the workshop were executive officials from the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and the Arts, the Sangre Grande Regional Corporation Local Economic Development Unit, and the Mayaro/Rio Claro Regional Corporation Local Economic Development Unit.

During the opening ceremony, Acting Permanent Secretary Mr. Videsh Maharaj emphasised the importance of the initiative: "Community-Based Tourism is more than just exploring destinations; it's about creating authentic connections with people, preserving cultural heritage, and promoting environmental sustainability. Through workshops like these, we aim to equip our communities with the tools and knowledge to take ownership of their tourism assets, foster innovative products, and open new revenue streams. This aligns with the goals outlined in the National Tourism Policy (2021-2030) and Vision 2030, which emphasise the development of niche tourism products and the strengthening of our cultural industries."

Participants were introduced to the CBT Enterprise Handbook and gained insights into business development, operational improvement, and promotional strategies. They were also exposed to foundational knowledge in cultural, heritage, culinary, agricultural, and eco-tourism product development.

The opening ceremony also featured remarks from Ms. Shaneil Sutherland, Destination Development Manager at TTL, who underscored the transformative potential of CBT: "At Tourism Trinidad, we promote community-based tourism as it inspires residents to develop and oversee their tourism offerings while protecting the environment and celebrating the uniqueness that defines their communities. By embracing these principles, we can drive economic growth, foster pride in our shared heritage, and promote sustainable tourism development across Trinidad."

At the workshop's conclusion, participants expressed their appreciation, describing the sessions as engaging, enlightening, and informative. They emphasised the practical value of the

training in helping them refine business plans and enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of their CBT ventures.

This initiative highlights TTL's and MTCA's continued efforts to foster sustainable tourism development and community empowerment throughout Trinidad.

**END**



Image: (left to right front row) Keron Noor, Local Economic Development Officer, Mayaro/Rio Claro Regional Corporation, Shaneil Sutherland, Destination Development Manager, Tourism Trinidad Limited, Videsh Maharaj, Acting Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts, Stacy Ramroop, Local Economic Development Officer, Sangre Grande Regional Corporation and Dr. Natalie Boodram, Senior Technical Officer, CANARI sit alongside participants of the Community-Based Tourism Enterprise Workshop.

**For more information, please contact the Corporate Communications and Stakeholder Relations Unit:**

Phone: (868) 612-7412 Ext. 1822/ 1808

Email: [info@visittrinidad.co.tt](mailto:info@visittrinidad.co.tt)

Website: <https://visittrinidad.tt/>

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**About Tourism Trinidad Limited:**

Tourism Trinidad Limited is dedicated to promoting the island of Trinidad as a premier tourist destination, showcasing its rich history, diverse culture, and stunning natural landscapes. Through strategic partnerships and initiatives, TTL aims to increase visitor arrivals and enhance the tourism industry's contribution to the national economy.