



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts

Level 8 & 9, Tower C,
International Waterfront Complex,
1A Wrightson Road, Port of Spain
Trinidad and Tobago

Phone: 624-1403
Fax: 624-6737

December 20, 2022

MEDIA RELEASE

Castara Selected for UNWTO Best Tourism Villages Upgrade Programme

The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts (MTCA) wishes to congratulate the Castara Tourism Development Association on Castara's selection for participation in the Upgrade Programme of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)-Best Tourism Villages (BTV) initiative.

Castara was among three tourism-based villages submitted by the MTCA for consideration in the UNWTO Best Tourism Villages Initiative, 2022, which also included Siparia and Lopinot. The north-eastern Tobago community was selected from approximately 130 applications from 57 countries.

According to the UNWTO, a Best Tourism Village label is awarded to a village that is "an outstanding example of a rural tourism destination with recognised cultural and natural assets that preserves and promotes community-based values, products and lifestyle ... and has a clear commitment to sustainability in all its aspects". Villages that do not fully qualify to receive the Best Tourism Villages label, but have the potential, are accepted into the Upgrade Programme. Castara was recognised as one of twenty villages with this potential and, under the Upgrade Programme, will receive support from UNWTO to improve the areas identified as gaps during the evaluation process.

The Ministry therefore extends congratulations to Castara on its selection to this prestigious programme.

"Castara has clearly demonstrated, through this achievement, its great potential to become an outstanding example of a first-rate rural tourism destination. This recognition will undoubtedly boost the Ministry's community-based tourism thrust. We are extremely proud of all the communities that have participated in the UNWTO Best Tourism Villages initiative since its inception in 2021 and encourage other tourism-based communities to come on board," said Minister of Tourism, Culture and the Arts, Senator the Honourable Randall Mitchell.

The MTCA views community participation in this initiative as pivotal to the development and expansion of the Community Based Tourism niche. The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts remains committed to assisting communities across Trinidad and Tobago to understand the value of tourism to their socio-cultural, environmental and economic well-being and will continue to provide the support necessary to achieve success in this area.

###END###