

Edinburgh College helps Egypt's tourism industry



One of the largest colleges in Scotland is delivering expert training in sustainable and green tourism practices to the next generation of Egyptian tourism workers.

Edinburgh College was chosen by the Egyptian Tourism Federation (ETF) and the British Council as the training provider to deliver courses to Egyptian industry leaders, who are then rolling out the training in Egypt.

The ETF is taking on the training – part of the British Council's Skills for Employability project – to make the Egyptian tourism industry more sustainable and customer friendly. Eight members of the ETF recently travelled to Scotland to complete the programme at Edinburgh College. They undertook training in two courses – Introduction to Green Hotels and Customer Care Training – and are now training other industry professionals in Egypt to deliver the courses across the country. College staff will also visit Egypt to provide more professionals with the training.

The training is aimed at a grassroots level by targeting frontline hotel staff and focusing on those who can make a considerable difference to the industry. Staff in Egypt will receive training in waste management practices in administration areas, reception, housekeeping, kitchen and catering departments, as well as focusing on issues such as energy efficiency and water conservation. The Customer Care Training Course covers the basic principles and standards of customer care needed by employees when dealing with tourism customers in Egypt.

Edinburgh College was chosen following its successful similar training programme at the Mingachevir Tourism College in Azerbaijan, which was extended to a two-year contract because of its positive uptake by the students, staff and local hoteliers. As well as being impressed with the college's Azerbaijan courses, the ETF was also inspired by Scotland's preservation of natural heritage sites.

Lorraine Farquharson, lecturer at Edinburgh College's Centre of Tourism and Hospitality, which developed the training, said: "It has been a pleasure to share our experiences and expertise with the Egyptian Tourism Federation to help them establish a greener tourism industry at home. Green tourism is a relatively new concept and we're proud that Edinburgh College is leading the way in this field."

Lorraine added: "The new partnership is a great example of the college's role in delivering high-quality vocational training that can be applied in a practical way, at home and abroad. The issue of green tourism and sustainability is a relevant and topical issue not only for Scotland but for the modern tourism industry across the world. Our training reflects this and is up-to-the-minute within the sector, which is why the college has been chosen to deliver the sustainable training programme to meet the needs of local and global industry. We look forward to seeing the benefits the training will have on the Egyptian industry as a whole."

Tourism is one of Egypt's largest industries, employing 2.83 million people and generating an average of 11.3 per cent (£5.4billion) of GDP. In 2011, 9.5 million tourists came to Egypt, largely from its three main tourism markets led by Western Europe and followed by Eastern Europe and the Middle East. Due to the huge influence of tourism, the training the ETF will receive at Edinburgh College is vital to develop green industry schemes.

During the ETF's visit to Scotland, the delegates met with The

Minister for External Affairs and International Development, MSP Humza Yousaf, to discuss how Scotland can support and develop a stronger relationship with Egypt.

Mr Yousaf said: “The Scottish Government welcomes opportunities to build relations between Scotland and Egypt. Scotland has exemplar schemes and operational expertise to offer to the world and we were happy to look at ways in which we could advise the delegates on issues of green tourism.

“Tourism and education are two key economic sectors we’re very proud of and initiatives such as this show Scottish institutions like Edinburgh College winning contracts and helping to share their expertise across the world and in turn delivering for the Scottish economy.”

As part of its ongoing international work – which involves engaging with hundreds of new international students and professionals from around the world each year – Edinburgh College is also in discussions with institutions in Central America and North Africa about delivering travel and tourism training.

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