

ASSOCIATION NAME - BELTA
COUNTRY - Brazil
National Report for FELCA AGM – 2010

AGENTS & Associations

Around 300 agents are operating in Brazil. Some of them are small agencies or travel agencies that sell other tourism services other than only educational programmes. There are also Brazilian students that decided to open an agency after having had experienced the destination as students. It is happening particularly with those who have studied in Australia.

BELTA congregates 76 organizations, and 59 of them are agents making an account of approximately 600 point of sales in Brazil, 36 of them offer also inbound programs in the country.

Since last year there is an association of exchange agencies that work with Australia and New Zealand. There are eight members and they do not act according to ethical rules. For instance one of them has recently just public informed that the agency guarantees Australia visa for clients. This has been reported by Belta to the Australian Embassy because we believe this is not a fair way of promoting an agency or destination.

Market Growth/Decline

In 2009 Brazilian economy has grown. The Brazilian currency (Real) has risen in comparison to US dollar, Pound and Euro and it is maintaining this year. The young people are very interested to have an international experience for preparing themselves for the work market. Language courses and high school programmes are growing nowadays. Besides that English courses other languages as Spanish, French, German and Italian are becoming more popular among students.

The more popular countries are Canada, United States, United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand for English courses.

For Spanish courses, the most popular is Spain. Argentina is increasing and Chile is becoming known for Brazilian students.

In 2009, 140,000 Brazilian students travelled for educational proposes and we are estimating 160,000 to 170,000 for 2010.

We are organizing a market research with a specialized company for this year in order to have official numbers for the Brazilian market.

Visa regime – any new difficulties?

BELTA has a strong relationship with the Consulates and Embassies of US, UK, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, and others. They take part of our fair (ExpoBelta) every year with booths and lectures about visa, destination and educational system. This year, US were ExpoBelta's guest of honour with a 32 organisations among Consulate, Embassy, Education USA and American Universities.

Particularly US and UK Consulate are working very close with BELTA and offering visa training to the BELTA members.

Nowadays there is no restriction visa for Brazilian students. However student has to be a genuine student. The visa authorities count on BELTA members support for enrolling genuine students. For this reason the relationship has become stronger.

Government Relations – any developments with your or other governments?

Since May 2005, BELTA administers the Brazilian Exchange Bureau (BBI) with the support of EMBRATUR. The purpose of this partnership is to internationally promote Brazilian programmes that focus on foreign students through the promotion of the programme “Study in Brazil”. It promotes Brazil’s education programs to foreign students and foreign exchange companies. It includes many initiatives to promote Brazil abroad and showcase the country as one of the best educational destinations in the world. Thus, it publicizes specialized educational programs, such as the most recognized undergraduate and extension programs, as well as high school courses, Portuguese courses, among others.

BELTA, via Brazilian Exchange Bureau, is taking part at several events in 2010, organizing a famtrip to Brazil for showing the educational programmes for international agents as well as training the Brazilian agents and universities for working with inbound programmes.

On the other hand BELTA is signing a Technical Cooperative Agreement with EMBRATUR. BELTA will then be responsible for the commercialization and actions for promoting Brazil into the Educational Market starting at the end of September 2010.

Other key issues for the industry?

As an umbrella organization for International Education and Exchange in Brazil, BELTA is working on the reunion of all agents involved in the educational sectors, private, governmental, community, and nonprofit organizations, among others.

According to the proposal of last year, BELTA’s Board of Directors developed a plan to capitalise the organization. Therefore, BELTA is now able to invest in the promotion of the agent’s image in the market as well as the importance of international education experience for the Brazilian public.

Initiatives/Developments for your association?

As last year, BELTA’s board of directors objective is improving the performance of the members through famtrips, trainings, meetings and regional activities; maintaining and improving the relationship with consulates and international organizations; seeking sponsors; strengthening BELTA products, such as BELTA Magazine, ExpoBelta and BELTA Online. BELTA is also building an active performance in the segment working with entities of the educational and tourism sector, considering that EMBRATUR and Ministry of Tourism see BELTA as an important player in the market; sending financial reports each 3 months to the associates; organizing annual workshops to the staff of the associated companies. BELTA is also reevaluating the current processes to be more effective to its associates.

The regional activities of BELTA members will be a great improve because since now the branches are paying an extra monthly amount that will be applied in regional marketing promotions.

BELTA has created a commission in order to improve the Ethic Code and another commission to improve the benefits of the members that are paying more contribution for their branches.

Felca Agency Accreditation Code

BELTA will be highlighting the importance to adhere to the Felca Agency Accreditation Code to its members from now on.