

Press Release

Freiburg, February 2005

SUVOT project: Sustainable Vocational Tourism

Kick off meeting

The SUVOT project, SUstainable and VOcational Tourism, a three years INTERREG IIIC project, held its kick off meeting in Rimini, Italy on 31 January 2005. The meeting served to strengthen the partnership and set the project work plan and share of tasks.

The SUVOT project aims to reinforce the action lines of the Network of Cities for Sustainable Tourism (NCST), formed of 16 local authorities (hence policy-makers) who signed a common charter committing themselves to actively contribute to the promotion of sustainability in coastal areas by refining and transferring the outputs achieved. The project also aims to advise local governments in other tourist areas to define solid strategies for sustainable quality tourism.

SUVOT will strengthen the NCST, enlarging its activities beyond the Mediterranean coastal area and including the vocational tourism as a potential strong market-driven force towards sustainability.

The main objectives of the project are:

- to analyse new consumption patterns as well as the vocations and environmental features of the involved areas as well as their sustainable policies (through a "Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) analysis") to elaborate recommendations for all stake holders in the tourist industry and achieve an integrated and competitive model of sustainable & vocational tourism;
- to formulate and prepare adequate tools (brochures, training materials etc.) with which the Network of Cities for a Sustainable Tourism can effectively promote sustainable and vocational tourism in Europe within a wider campaign, by facilitating cooperation between public or public-equivalent bodies across Europe, with particular regard to the interregional exchange of experience and know-how.

The project involves ten partners from various European regions at different stages and with unique characteristics in tourism development. This combination helps, on one side, to fight the negative effects of mass tourism and develop new concepts, strategies and operative tools to keep their leadership - also in the future. From the other side, to learn from the experience and identify how to prevent mistakes and address tourist development plans on sustainable basis from the outset.

The partners are: Province of Rimini, lead partner (Italy), Blackpool Borough Council (U.K), Foundation for the legacy of al-Andalus development (Spain), Kallithea-Rhodes (Greece), Municipality of Lloret de Mar (Spain), Mountain Community of the Giovo (Italy), Bologna Municipality (Italy), Bistonas Development Agency (Lithuania), Mid Sweden University (Sweden) and ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability (European Secretariat).

The following activities are foreseen for the first half a year period:

- Creation of a Knowledge Resources Guide (or toolbox) focusing on (a) benefits of the eco-label and Environmental Management Systems; (b) application of the techniques to assess the carrying capacity of tourist destinations and (c) other forms of best practice;
- Workshop/Study visit in Rimini, involving policy makers to present and disseminate the Knowledge Resources Guide

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