



ernest

European Research NEtwork
on Sustainable Tourism



NEWSLETTER 2 – December 2009

What's inside?

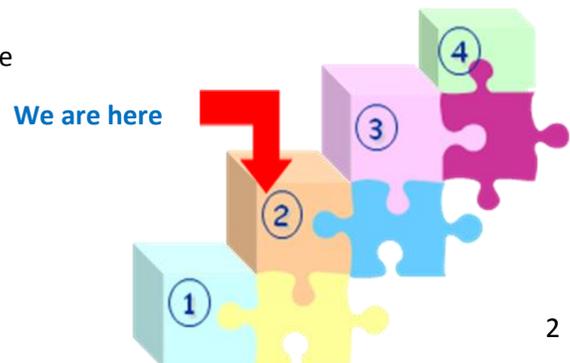
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Name of the project	European Research Network on Sustainable Tourism
Acronym	ERNEST
Project number	219438
Theme and type of action addressed by FP7- Work programme	Coordination of regional and national activities (ERA-NET scheme) – Coordination actions. ERNEST is a horizontal ERA NET action, not directly linked to one specific cooperation theme but with much European added value
Starting date	01 September 2008
Duration of the project	48 months
Partners	Regione Toscana (IT) – Project Coordinator Cité de la Culture et du Tourisme Durable (FR); Basque Government - Industry, Commerce and Tourism Department (ES) Prefecture of Ilia (GR); South-East Regional Development Agency (RO); Govern de les Illes Balears (ES); Regional Development Agency of North Hungary (HU); South West Tourism (UK); Danish Forest and Nature Agency, Nord Zealand (DK); Generalitat de Catalunya (ES); Conseil Régional d'Aquitaine (FR); Regione Emilia Romagna (IT); The Agency for the Support of Regional Development Kosice (SK); Regione del Veneto (IT); Visit Wales (UK)

Project Update

ERA-NETs of the 7FP include the following **activities** to foster coordination and cooperation between programmes

- 1 – Systematic **exchange of information** and good practice
- 2 – Definition and **preparation** of common actions
- 3 – Implementation of **common actions**
- 4 – Financing of **transnational research**



Activities and results achieved so far

- ✓ **Improvement of communication, development of better reciprocal knowledge and promotion of trust-building among the stakeholders acting in the field of sustainable tourism**

An open dialogue with the regional stakeholders was engaged in order to present the project and to discuss some of the information available on the regional systems. Contacting the key actors on the issue of sustainable tourism, a real overview of the territory, from different perspectives was outlined: definitions of sustainable tourism; activities and policies in this sector; regional best practices in the field of research and sustainable tourism, but also regional weaknesses in these fields. Within ERNEST project, the partners have the opportunity to promote collaboration and dialogue at regional and interregional level.

- ✓ **Identification and exchange of information and knowledge on structures and research programmes**

The work carried out in **Information Exchange** Work Package (WP 2), coordinated by Basquetour (Basque Tourism Agency) was based on an intense dialogue between project partners regarding their regional policies, strategies, programmes and technological capabilities and laid the basis for identifying, defining and implementing joint activities. All ERNEST partners were requested to provide

information about regional industry, the tourism sector, research policy and priorities concerning sustainable tourism practices and measurement, and existing sustainable tourism programmes.

- ✓ **First steps undertaken for the definition and preparation of joint activities**

ERNEST fosters the coordination among actors with a common shared vision on sustainable tourism, offering the chance to share the work already undertaken at regional level and to take it further, to make it more productive and efficient through exchange and through the planning and implementation of joint activities.

Under the coordination of the project partner Cité de la Culture et du Tourisme Durable which has a wide experience in the field of research, training and evaluation, during the third project meeting, participatory sessions were organised for the discussion of the actions to be included in the plan for the implementation of common activities. The joint activities currently under study have been grouped into three main categories: „knowledge” (structured knowledge exchange activities), „governance” (development of common governance methods & interregional evaluation procedures) and joint call/research” (this third part includes the preparatory activities of the joint call for research into sustainable tourism which is due to be launched in September 2010).

What are the objectives of the joint action?

- address global issues and specific common geographical issues;
- find common answers to common problems;
- achieve a common voice;
- develop common governance principles'
- achieve a critical mass

Joint actions - possible strategic issues

- to develop a framework for coordinating regional research programmes;
- to contribute to the implementation improvement of project tasks;
- to bring added value through interregional cooperation;
- to develop the knowledge;
- to reduce research fragmentation;
- to contribute to the project sustainability

a set of transversal technical and communication tools are being developed by CCTD as a support to the implementation of the WP3 activities (joint activities):

- a complementary pool (complementary collection of data)
- development of a data consultation tool/search engine for joint activities (NETJAC)
- exchanges of good practices
- creation of a tool for the evaluation of tourist projects/sustainability of destinations
- workshop with the universities and research centres to be held in Brussels, at the Open Days – October 2010

✓ **Interregional events**

The third ERA-NET ERNEST project meeting took place in Gréoux les Bains/France on 10th-11th of September 2009 and it was hosted by Cité de la Culture et du Tourisme Durable.

The main issues focused on:

- project management and progress, outreach and communication actions with a special attention to the regional & interregional events which the partners are expected to organize within the Ernest project;
- consultation process on the selection of the most relevant common actions to be included in the action plan
- accession into the ERNEST consortium of the three new partners, presentation of their regional research programmes, policy and priorities concerning sustainable tourism;

- approval by the Steering Committee of the two surveys produced as outcome of the WP2:
- *"Mapping of regional policies, strategies, programmes and capabilities"*
- *"Interregional comparison"*



ERNEST - AN OPEN NETWORK OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM RESEARCH

Welcome New Partners

By attracting these regions, ERNEST will have an even greater role in addressing problems of research fragmentation in Europe.

Visit Wales (UK)

**The Agency for the Support of
Regional Development Kosice,
Slovakia - ASRD**

**Regione del Veneto
(Veneto Region) - IT**



Visit Wales (UK)

The tourism sector in Wales is estimated to be worth £3.5bn to Wales, greater than the combined national budgets for education and enterprise in Wales. Around 80,000 jobs are directly or indirectly dependent on the vitality of tourism and a relatively high proportion of those jobs are protected from outsourcing because tourism is primarily a service delivered on-site, in person to customers.

Tourism represents around 7% of total Welsh employment, a higher proportion than in any English region other than the South East. Wales benefits from extensive cultural and natural assets that offer considerable potential for residents and visitors to enjoy. The tourism sector in Wales is punching beneath its weight compared with its main competitors in terms of profile and the value of tourism to the economy.

Visit Wales is the Welsh Assembly Government's tourism team, within the Department for Heritage. *Visit Wales* is responsible for the promotion and development of tourism in Wales. *Visit Wales* has taken over the functions of the former Wales Tourist Board. The role of *Visit Wales* is to deliver the Welsh Assembly Government's Tourism strategy. *Visit Wales'* strategic approach seeks to improve the competitiveness of Welsh tourism, raise the profile and status of the industry and increase recognition of its economic performance, adopt a customer-focused approach which understands and responds to market needs, improve understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the different organisations involved in tourism and identify opportunities for effective partnership working and to promote growth in tourism through sustainable means.

Research programmes owned or managed

Visit Wales has worked on Objective 1, 2 and 3 programmes at both strategic and project level, securing over £50m over the previous EU programming period, as well as Interreg III B & C projects. Currently, *Visit Wales*, Welsh Assembly Government (VW, WAG) in collaboration with a number of other key partners has secured £35m ERDF under the Environment for Growth theme of the EU Convergence Programme in Wales. *Visit Wales* will be the lead for two of these projects - coastal tourism and sustainable tourism. In broad terms, the coastal tourism project will be seeking to implement key, eligible elements of the coastal tourism strategy with a focus on Green Sea and coastal watersports/recreation activity.

Actors that undertake research activities on sustainable tourism

Visit Wales works collaboratively with the other National Tourism Organisations in the United Kingdom and also coordinates the Wales Tourism Research Partnership, which brings together all Welsh local authorities, the regional tourism organisations and the national heritage and outdoor recreation bodies. *Visit Wales* has also worked with Cardiff Business School on Tourism Satellite Accounts and economic/environmental impact models. Other relevant stakeholders are the Welsh Assembly Government, Welsh Local Government Association, CADW, Countryside Council for Wales.

The Agency for the Support of Regional Development Kosice, Slovakia - ASRD

The *Kosice Region* has a strategic position, neighboring Hungary, Poland and Ukraine being a border region of the European Union. It always was at the crossroads of all big trading routes – North, South, East, West, rich in history, with multi ethnical population and cultural tradition. It is an attractive country with two national parks: Slovak Paradise and Slovak Karst (*Biosphere reserve*), the *Tokaj wine region* etc., although the region is quite underdeveloped, reaching just 39% of the average of the growth domestic product (GDP) of the EU member states. So, the use of nature with proper and adequate development of tourism which would not harm the nature might be an alternative source of income and thus the way how to improve quality of lives of the locals.

ASRD (www.arr.sk) was founded in 2003 by the Kosice Selfgoverning Region to support the regional development towards enhancing the quality of lives of local communities in the region. The Agency's mission is to contribute to more effective and dynamic sustainable

development and the tourism has been identified as a priority area for interventions.



ASRD is a public, independent non-profit institution operating under public orders and acts in close cooperation with the founder - the Kosice Selfgoverning Region and cooperating with the key local and regional stakeholders. *ASRD* is active in cooperating with any other partners in this field.

Research programmes owned or managed

ASRD has managed several international projects related to the regional development topics such as: definition of specific management and operative tools for the development of economic opportunities in rural areas with special focus on development of sustainable tourism; setting-up of an integrated regional development strategy for the Pan-European transport corridor historically known as „Via Regia“; identification of new job opportunities for the rural and regional development graduates. Moreover, the projects were focused on social affairs and environment issue.

Actors that undertake research activities on sustainable tourism

KSR (Kosice Self-governing Region) as the key partner in the region is dealing with sustainable tourism as one of the key development priorities. The Tourism Department is a structure created within KSR. ASRD collaborates with them on developing strategic documents for sustainable tourism promotion (sub-regional strategies for tourism development had been prepared and adopted by the Regional Council). KSR, in its effort to contribute to the development of sustainable tourism in the region, has established the Regional Tourism Board, bringing together key stakeholders from public, business and non-governmental organisations sectors. ASRD is member of the Regional Tourism Board.

Regione del Veneto

Veneto is one of the most visited regions in Italy counting a number of important tourism destinations and different landscapes. The same area encloses lakes, mountains, sea sites, historical cities (for example Garda Lake, Dolomites, Venice, Verona, Padua, etc.). In 2008, 60 million of bed-nights and 14 million of arrivals have been registered in Veneto. The

local society has always been responsive to environmental policies and to sustainable approaches and the region has set during the last years significant financial resources to realise a good balance between market and environment development.



Veneto Region is the local authority entitled for the implementation of tourism policies, for the valorisation of natural and cultural heritage and for the promotion of Veneto as a tourism destination. In recent years, actions in the field of sustainability have been implemented encouraging studies on the impact of tourism activities on environment and society. A sustainable approach has been also adopted in the implementation of financing programmes for the development of tourism such as DOCUP 2000 – 2006 and POR 2007 – 2013. *Veneto Region* also acquired experience in the management of EU project on sustainable tourism. During the last years, *Veneto Region* has financed research activities on tourism sustainable development and set up a steady network among Universities and Studies Centres.

Research programmes owned or managed

Within the framework of the Regional Operational Programme 2007 - 2013 (ROP), *Veneto Region* supports local communities and enterprises in order to develop research and improve their competitiveness and innovation attitude. The programme includes two actions for sustainable tourism: the first is aimed to valorisation of cultural heritage in support of sustainable tourism while the second concerns innovative projects on sustainable tourism in the perspective of the preservation of natural resources and landscape.

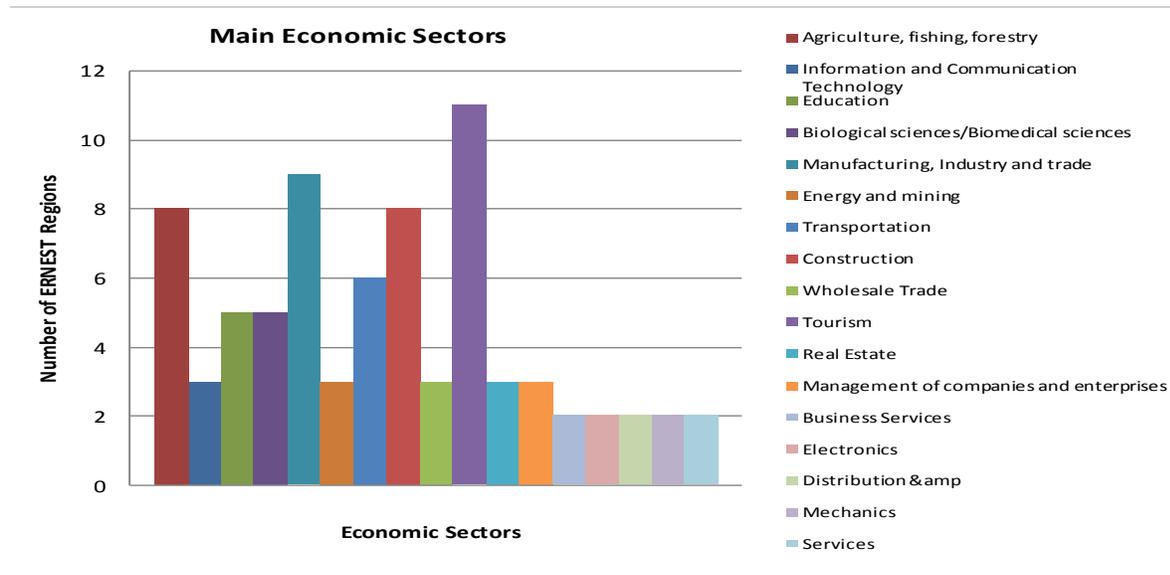
Actors that undertake research activities on sustainable tourism

University Ca' Foscari of Venice set up a training programme in economy and management of tourism services. University of Padua set up a training programme management of cultural heritage for tourism and governance of tourism

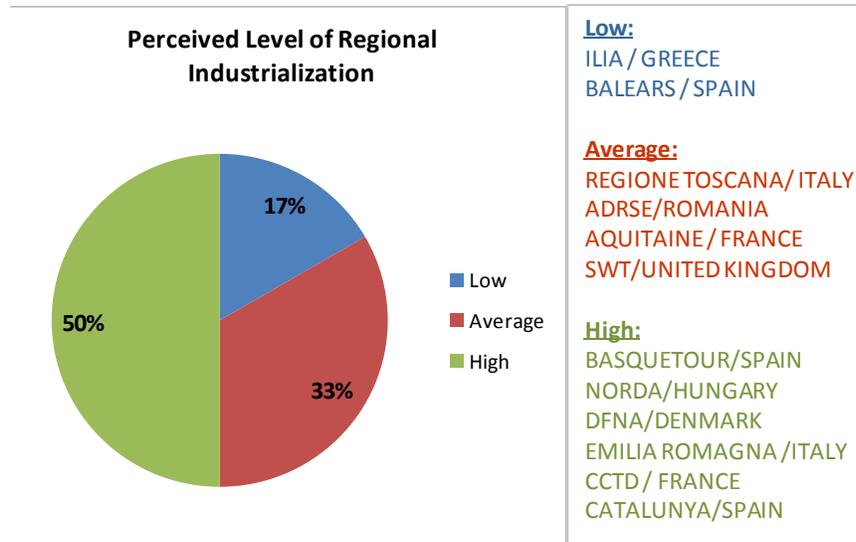
destinations. CESQA - Centre of Studies on Quality of Environment is part of the Engineering Chemical Processes Department of the University of Padua. Its main research branches are risk assessments, sustainable development, eco-management systems, ethical and environmental certifications, territorial environmental management, etc. (www.cesqa.it). Ciset-International Centre of Studies on Tourism Economy is in charge of measurement, research and post degree training on tourism economy. It is member of the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) and is recognised as an outstanding research centre on tourism issues. (<http://venus.unive.it/ciset/>). IDEAS is an inter – department centre of University Ca' Foscari of Venice which performs analyses on the interactions among environment, economy and society (<http://www.centroideas.eu/>).

Outcomes of Work Package 2 – „Information Exchange”

The results of the [Survey 1](#) – “Mapping & Coordination of Regional Policies, Strategies, Programmes & Technological Capabilities” identified useful background information and provided some general direction and understanding about the interests, goals and accomplishments of each region.



Tourism was identified as a main economic sector in the partner regions along with Manufacturing, Industry and Trade; Agriculture, Fishing and Forestry, and Construction. Additionally, over 80% of Partners perceived their region as having either an *Average* or *High* level of industrialization.



Thirty-two sustainable tourism programmes were listed by eleven project partners. Each region proved to have distinctly different goals and needs in terms of sustainable development, however, some emerging patterns were noted.

Most importantly, the results reveal that even differences exist between region's economy, research policy and actions in sustainable tourism development, common criteria and goals do exist.

Based on the data collected and presented in Survey 1, a qualitative summary was prepared and submitted in the [Survey 2](#) – “**Interregional Comparison**”. There were identified:

- Points in common and complementary between systems and programmes;
- New opportunities and gaps in research;
- Proposed solutions for existing weaknesses/problems;
- Potential areas for cooperation and wider exploitation of results.

These two levels of information exchange lay the basis for further joint activities and collaboration among ERNEST partners.

The two deliverables of WP 2 – “Survey 1 – Mapping & Coordination of Regional Policies, Strategies, Programmes & Technological Capabilities” and “Interregional comparison” are available on www.ernestproject.eu

PARTNERS NEWS – REGION OF TUSCANY

Euromeeeting 2009 - 7th edition 'Regional Policies for a Sustainable and Competitive European Tourism'

The 7th edition of the Euromeeeting international conference held on the 5th and 6th of November 2009 in Florence, in the beautiful Renaissance location of the Fortezza da Basso conference citadel, has represented an important opportunity to focus on the state-of-the-art of regional policies for a sustainable and competitive European tourism, more precisely on:



- **the necessity to innovate tourism developing a new, more sustainable and competitive, European tourist offer**
- **the crucial role of the regions**
- **the European structural funds seen as a tool for supporting and implementing regional policies for sustainable and competitive tourism**
- **Tourism in Europe: Competitiveness, Sustainability, Research and Innovation**
- **the challenge of Sustainable Tourism in the Italian tourist destinations**

Experts and representatives of the European Commission D.G.s Industry, Regio, and Tren, of many European regions (mainly, but not limited to, those belonging to the NECSTouR and/or ERNEST networks), representatives of European universities and stakeholder, delivered up-to-date information, case studies and opinions on the selected topical themes, on the most interesting and innovative experiences and on future scenarios.

The event was also the occasion for organizing the meeting of the Policy and Advisory Group of **ERNEST project** and the General Assembly of the **NECSTouR network**, the European association of regions, institutions, public and private organizations which believe in the principles of sustainability of tourism.

More info on the Euromeeeting conference, including the speakers' presentations, can be found on www.necstour.eu

Region of Tuscany: brand new sustainable tourism policies

The regional government of Tuscany has approved in September 2009 the regional project “**Tuscany: a sustainable and competitive tourist destination**”.

The project has the objective to foster the sustainability of tourism by means of a vast number of coordinated actions concurring to the implementation on the regional territory of the principles of the [“European Agenda for a sustainable and competitive European tourism”](#) and of the NECSTouR association’s statute. The project incorporates also the actions which Tuscany will perform from 2010 onwards as member of the ERNEST team (common actions and the joint call)

The first regional call, published in October 2009, foresaw the possibility for the Tuscan Municipalities to receive grants for the setting up of “**Local sustainable & competitive tourist observatories**”, in charge of measurement of tourist-related phenomena and organization of participative processes.

The purpose of the call is that of supporting the tourist destinations willing to implement sustainable tourist policies inspired to the NECSTouR model.

The information collected, together with the participative processes results, can help the tourist destination to identify the tourist impact, the development trends and the development pace desired by the local community, and therefore lead to the production of specific action plans.

Next steps

The 4th project meeting

The fourth project meeting will take place in Catalunya on the 18th and 19th of March 2010. The meeting will be the occasion to discuss how the project is proceeding, define the final version of the WP3 common action plan and lay the basis for the activities of the WP4 (launching of an interregional joint call for research on sustainable tourism).

Implementation of joint research activities on sustainable tourism

The ERNEST attempts to go beyond the individual regions and the individual state in the field of sustainable tourism, bringing the actors together to coordinate and add value to their individual activities, following a long term and flexible approach.

After the approval of the action plan, working groups will be formed to undertake the joint actions that have been agreed upon. The Final Report on Joint Activities, to be produced at the end of the WP3, will analyse all the joint activities implemented within the ERNEST project in the field of sustainable tourism research and recommendations for continued cooperation and will also include an analysis of the project's performance.

Publication of the joint call

One of the main objectives of all the ERA-NETs is the publication of one or more joint calls.

A joint call is a joint activity where several or all of the national or regional R&D programmes participating in an ERA-NET come together in pooling financial and administrative resources and publishing a call for proposals on a common theme.

In the case of ERNEST, research proposals are invited from consortia of two or more countries to address research questions from within the broad framework of sustainable tourism (more specific topics will be identified in the call construction phase).

The joint call will be launched in September 2010.

For further information regarding the ERNEST project, please visit:

<http://www.ernestproject.eu>

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