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PRESERVE BEST PRACTICES

- Highlights of Successful Examples
for Sustainable Tourism

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Preserve Project

Europe is the home of some of the most beautiful places in the world and it is still hiding secret treasures somewhere; this is the reason why tourism has always been strictly connected to economic development and growth. However, many examples show that badly planned branding of landscape and cultural heritage assets can be a threat to the beauty and diversity of the European territory. For this reason European regions must be careful when developing their cultural heritage strategies. If they want to fully benefit from their tourism assets, they must think in sustainable terms and use the right indicators. In order to respond to this issue the PRESERVE project was conceived: PRESERVE attempted to raise the awareness of local and regional representatives on sustainable tourism and to illustrate how certain measures could be taken on a policy level. This was done through a mutual learning process among the 14 regions involved in the project and through the exchange of good practices, shared problems and development of solutions to find new, innovative approaches to sustainable tourism. This was further achieved through dissemination conferences and a best practice publication for regions outside the partnership. Preserve aimed to improve the effectiveness of regional policies, specifically focusing on cultural heritage and landscape policies as a factor of economic development.



- (1) to foster exchange of experience and improve capacities and knowledge of local and regional stakeholders
- (2) to identify and share best practices
- (3) to improve local and regional policies

Peer Review Methodology as Good Practice

The advanced methodology at the core of PRESERVE contributed directly to the innovative character of the expected results. This was achieved by sending a group of international experts to a region in order to assess its innovation management structure in a selected sector of interest. The initial point was a checklist providing standards by which all members of the review team could

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make a consistent judgment about the effectiveness of sustainable tourism in the host region. Thereby, a certain amount of objectivity was ensured in the review.

The experts, then, conducted interviews and the collected evidence assisted the peers in making a primary assessment of tourism performance against the checklist. The on-the-spot peer review consisted of a one-week visit to the host region which was interested in improving its tourism strategies in a sustainable way. This allowed them to conduct an in-depth analysis of the respective region. During this visit the peers held meetings with stakeholders to ascertain the strengths and weaknesses of the host region's tourism characteristics. Afterwards, the

peers prepare an extensive assessment report with a series of recommendations for improvement. Considering the conclusions of this report, the members of the sector group prepared together with the involved actors a strategic implementation plan setting out its process. By carefully involving all the parties, it was ensured that the outcome would be of mutual interest and benefit.

Because of the implementation-oriented outcomes and the direct involvement of the representatives of the stakeholder groups into the peer reviews, the results were concrete implementation plans (incl. action plan and policy recommendations) and they considerably surpassed expectations. The reviews led to a set of recommendations which were used by participating regions to create effective strategies in sustainable tourism policy, as well as to improve existing ones in line with EU and regional policies and priorities. It should be noted that this particular methodology played an important role in contributing to the success of the project.

Furthermore, partners worked together to publish a toolkit as one of the outputs of the project. It is ready to be used by other regions to carry out similar initiatives and benefit from the valuable insights. This project is a prime example of a successful implementation of an innovation plan by closely working together and involving all interested parties.

METHODOLOGY PEER REVIEWS FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

