

# [2Bparks]

Creative sustainable management,  
territorial compatible marketing  
and environmental education  
To Be Parks

*Component 3 and Component 4  
A collection of partner papers*



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*The contemporary European and global context encourages us to face many challenges in our territories. As specified in the “Europe 2020” strategy, the priorities are oriented to a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. In this framework, the Veneto Region believes that the sustainable development of the territory is an important issue. These objectives has been the back-ground of The 2Bparks project , exploring the connections between the environmental issues and development scenarios.*

*As Lead Partner of the project, we are fully convinced that sharing good practices, integrating strategies and aims in a trans-national perspective has been a goal, and is a good starting point to enhance the future activities of all the foreigner institutions of the MED area involved in the project.*

MARINO ZORZATO  
Veneto Region - Vice President

*Sustainable management, compatible marketing and environmental education are the key words of the 2Bparks project. All the target areas involved in the project are of high environmental interest, to better develop the core strategy of the project: the reconciliation of the conflicts between the protection of the environment and the economic development of society and territory. In these fragile territories lie unexpected opportunities of promotion and enhancement: they represent a resource, in particular for the territorial marketing and the environmental education.*

SILVANO VERNIZZI  
Veneto Region - Regional Secretary for Infrastructures

*The planning tools today are deeply different from the past. For decades, the main issue has been to properly design settle-ments and infrastructures, almost considering the protected and natural areas as residual zones, as “enclaves” to preserve far away from the interactions with anthropic activities. Today we have to reverse the perspective, conceiving the protected areas not as distant islands of naturalness, but as the “core” of new strategic visions for the sustainable development of the territory, preserving their value but also including them in the development strategies and re-linking them to the real dynamics of trans-formation of our territories. The 2Bparks project has been an important tool to develop this approach, trying to bring up the role of protected areas and made them the protagonists of development scenarios. Especially in the Med Area, characterized by a variety of beautiful environments, the protected areas cover an important role for developing new strategies in terms of management, tourism, green economy, biodiversity, and in general for the weel-being of the populations living there.*

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Municipality of Andújar

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Natural Regional Park of Serre

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# preface

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## *2Bparks perspective and mainstream*

*Raffella Lioce, Veneto Region*

Often perceived as a limit of economic growth, nowadays protected areas claim their role in the horizon of sustainability. The value of Nature and Landscape should be better understood and respected, to become effectively a key factor of development. Protection is the basis of any kind of protected areas enhancement policy. To the protection goals and to the 2Bparks perspective should participate all the local and economic community.

Participation is necessary to achieve the 2Bparks perspective, indeed all the pilot plans elaborated and implemented during the project time, assumed participation as a model of planning, sometimes creating new networks, always contributing to the effectiveness and concreteness of the plans themselves. Building the actions plans taking into account different points of views and opposite territorial issues allowed the partners to arrange place based programs tailored to reach local objectives within a transnational dimension.

With the aims to reconcile economic requirements with natural and environmental instances in the MED Protected Areas (PA), with the aim to foster the sustainability of spatial and territorial marketing plans of PA, starting with the assessment of common needs and concerns and taking into account past practices, the 2Bparks partners:

- designed new tools, tailored for the improvement of territorial plans and of marketing strategies, such as: roadmap for manager, notebook for sustainable tourism, e-calendar and sourcebook;
- developed transnational tasks involving different target groups, such as economic operators in the 2bparks Cluster, young researcher in the transnational edu-camp, schools and children in common educational activities and in a transnational school contest award;
- provided local action plans for the follow up of the project at territorial level.

At the beginning of the project, a common approach for the sustainable development of the MED Protected areas and a step by step planning procedure have been designed by the partners, but it was only after the pilot local implementation that a Shared Transnational Strategy was created and tailored for all pilot territorial contexts and ready for transferability.

It is a Transnational Strategy, developed through the continuous debate among the partners and based on project results. It has been defined especially to lead to a concrete and joint follow up of the local development

pilot plans and the local sustainable tourism plans.

The Transnational Strategy tackles the common concerns assessed in the target protected areas, notably:

- the compatible “use” of the protected areas resources for a sustainable growth;
- the proper fruition of Protected areas;
- the increase of knowledge and awareness about PA.

Promoting the Compatible use of Protected Areas requires the adoption of action plans suitable to improve spatial and environmental plans; it means involving economic operators in a process of green business development and it demands for administrative and political commitments.

A proper fruition of protected areas needs both educational tools for Protected areas understanding and the creation of a territorial marketing specific strategy for sustainable tourism offer improvement.

The increase of Knowledge and awareness requires tools and agreements between research institutes and PA management board, plus new educational programs.

The transnational strategies is made of:

- the proposal for the capitalization of the LDPP results
- the territorial marketing strategy for the LTSP follow up;
- the guidelines to implement the 2Bparks platforms (sourcebook, edu-platform and e calendar);
- the economic operators cluster rules.

The 2BparksTransnational Strategy flows into a wide perspective of protected areas value increase.

Actually, the Partners benefit from the transnational dimension: the continuous exchange of experiences and ideas generated a creative contest, where it was possible to innovate practices and proposing planning and policy improvement. The transnational approach allows also to reinforce territorial marketing strategy under the logic win-win, overpassing any localism. Feeling part of an European network generates opportunities and increase the value of the actions carried out at local level.

The transnational cooperation enables the creation of an experts network, besides the consortium.

The partners cooperated actively to build an expert pools of skilled people and an institutional network ready to enlarge the cooperation level.

The presence of expert s skilled people is a guarantee for mainstreaming process opened by the end of the project implementation period.

Mainstreaming the strategy and the 2Bparks perspective: that's the real challenge that remains open at the end of the project. Capitalizing results and disseminating tools and methodologies defined represent the compulsory way to maintain the project alive: a way the partners and the experts agreed on.

# project presentation

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## *2Bparks creative sustainable management, territorial compatible marketing and environmental education To Be Parks*

*Raffella Lioce, Silvia Galli, Roberta Galli, Veneto Region*

*Protected Areas (PA) play an important role for sustainable territorial policies. Often perceived as a limit to economic growth, PA have to face up anthropic pressures, reconciling economic interests with ecological requirements. New integrated plans are fostered by the 2Bparks project with the scope to improve PA sustainable growth, to increase awareness and diminishing economic and social impacts, reducing the risk of losing MEDiterranean ecological balance.*

### **The territorial cooperation framework**

The 2Bparks project has been cofunded by the European Community under the framework of the MED programme: a territorial cooperation programme covering all the Mediterranean regions.

It involves a large partnership and presents a wide geographic coverage: 11 partners, 7 Countries (Italy, Greece, Spain, Portugal, Slovenia, France, Cyprus), 10 Regions (Veneto, Calabria, Piemonte, Andalusia/Jaén, Languedoc-Roussillon, Thessalia, Attiki, Alentejo, Slovenia, Troodos) and includes Protected Areas (PA) characterized by a high biological diversity and a complex of terrestrial and marine habitats of excellent representativity of Med environment:

- *rivers and wetlands*: regional park of Delta of Po River Ljubljansko Barje Landscape park, the Nature Reserve of the Sado Estuary, the Nature Reserve of the Santo Andre and Sancha Lagoons, the Lame del Sesia Park,
- *hinterland med zone*: Bessilles' Departmental Park;
- *mountain/med maquis*: Troodos National Forest Park, Sierra de Andújar Nature Park and Serre regional park Coastal zones: National Park of Schinias - Marathon and the Nature Park of Alentejo coast;
- *lake*: Protected Area of Lake Karla;
- *mountain zones*: the special reserve of Sacro Monte di Varallo.

Partners are:

Lead Partner: Veneto Region Spatial and Strategic Planning Dpt (Italy)

Natural Regional Park of Serre (Italy)

General Council of Hérault (France)

Province of Vercelli (Italy)

Region of Thessaly (Greece)

Municipality of Andújar (Spain)

Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Anton Melik Geographical Institute (Slovenia)

University of Athens (Greece)

The Troodos Regional Tourism Board (Cyprus)

RCDI, Development and Innovation Network (Portugal)

Partnership born on the basis of mutual acquaintance and through the collaboration of experts.

2Bparks stems from the capitalization of past project results: *Slow Tourism, Coast to Coast, ArchiCharter, IntercoTour, TerreD'Acqua, BeachMed* in the field of sustainable tourism; *Isolabella* aiming at integrating economy into sustainable management of coastal areas; *NatReg* in the field of protected areas spatial planning and management. *Dedi Digital Encyclopedia of Protected areas; Aristhot* platform for e-learning.

## Transnational approach

Nature conservation, sustainable development and resource enhancement are EU common concerns, which requires a strong cooperation among countries and regions. In the Med space these issues are of particular interest because of the peculiarities of the Area. Human and economic pressures and natural hazard have to be managed at local scale, but with a wider and shared EU perspective. This challenge assumed by the project, required a transnational approach and a multilevel partnership from East to West. 2Bparks focuses and includes the main types of Med Ecosystems.

The complementarity of partners' competences and experts skills has been taken into account when the project has been designed, in order to ensure that all the partners could benefit from transnational cooperation: during the project implementation, the partners experimented a shared approach to the common need of integrating sectorial policies into protected areas management, balancing conflicting interests, promoting protected areas social inclusion and awareness.

Pilot Action Plans have been fostered and arranged to guarantee the transferability of 2Bparks strategies to territories, overpassing any kind of localism; but-most of all-to reach the project transnational scope. In this horizon of cooperation, the partners' competences in the fields of spatial and landscape planning, sustainable tourist promotion, education and research, stakeholders involvement, became relevant in terms of mutual learning.

The capitalization strategy assumed by the project allowed the partners to treasure past experiences, to systematize good practices and to benefit from each other's knowledge. By the end of the project new networking tools and guidelines were ready for follow up and mainstreaming; new plans and programs have been approved at territorial level, the clusters of economic operators have been launched and it was opened for new members' entrance. Administrations, Institutions, politicians, stakeholders and enterprises joined their efforts to reduce the gap between knowledge and practices, research and jobs opportunities, style of living and awareness.

## Context, background and European framework

The definition of PA adopted by IUCN identifies PA as "areas dedicated to protection and maintenance of biological diversity, of natural and associated cultural resources, managed by legal means". Different can be

the purposes of which a Protected Areas is established and managed and assigned to IUCN category, but all are territories affected by economic activities, more or less impacting.

As stated during the Protected Areas World Congress "Protected Areas should not be islands in the sea of development, but part of every country's strategy for sustainable" development and "must be set in regional planning context" with an innovative governance perspective.

In the past years, many events and meetings brought to share the idea of a Federation of Mediterranean Parks. Among the leading actors of this process we find IUCN Center for Mediterranean Cooperation and UNEP-MAP. The Call for Collaboration towards an Association among the Mediterranean Parks, promoted by IUCN, is addressed to the management board of Protected Areas; it aims at achieving essential collaboration "to increase general awareness of environmental issues, to draw the attention of international organisms to the role and potentialities of MED PA", facing up "the relationship between the safeguard of biodiversity and the sustainable development of local and national communities".

In this context, the scientific community places useful guidelines and self-assessment tools at PA managers disposal, by means of the main world/Eu networks, such as: IUCN, Eurosite, Europarc, but also networks born under the framework of Interreg.

Among these tools we find for example: the Eurosite "management toolkit", the EuroCharter of sustainable tourism, the UNEP's guide for Planning and Management Sustainable Tourism in PA, the Alparc "Best practices in environmental education", the IUCN guide for "building biodiversity business"... All these and many other tools can be helpful, but their choice can be demanding for managers, because of the variety of issues and PA typologies they have to face up in conjunction with the current legislation and socio-economic local instances. EU directives in the framework of Natura 2000 requires members to implement a process taking "account of economic, social and cultural requirements and regional and local characteristics" to ensure PA conservation. As a matter of the fact, it is the conflict of interests the core question to be solved to improve the effectiveness of PA plans: participatory approaches are becoming more frequent, but not so widespread to embed common planning practices, even if it is recommended by the subsidiary and gender principles.

Consistently with the strategy that calls operators and citizens to become more respectful and aware of PA values and opportunities, it is advisable to recognize them as protagonists of PA development and environment protection, sharing sustainable business and creative marketing.

## 2Bparks Scope and objectives

2Bparks assumes the principle of sustainable development as general scope and finality: it boosts a compatible growth of MED Protected Areas and a balanced development where conflicting interests find answers in participated and integrated plans.

Looking at natural heritage as a factor of responsible development, the 2Bparks project promotes sustainable economic patterns to improve territorial attractiveness and the awareness of MED protected areas values (PA). The **general aim** of the project is to increase MED protected areas sustainability and attractiveness, integrating environmental issues into core institutional thinking and into private investments choices.

Arose from the common instances, that cross administrative borders, the project looks at natural heritage and protected areas as factors of responsible development.

Specific objectives are:

1. Improving management and planning tools ensuring participation, in order to:
  - improve resources allocation in the Protected Areas, by defining Action Plans based on a common perspective and developed with a place based approach;
  - evolve institutional capacities, by providing tools for managers and by easing access to Knowledge;
  - boost responsible behaviors among economic operators by creating environmental clusters, sharing joint marketing strategy and fostering "biodiversity business";



2. keeping up the sustainable tourism and increasing the territorial attractiveness, in order to:
  - foster tourism quality, by increasing offer and arranging a shared territorial marketing strategy;
  - promote MED Protected Areas as tourist exemplary destination, where natural and landscape heritage could coexist with business and where new jobs opportunities could be created;
3. reducing the gap between research and decision makers and arousing collective awareness about PA values, in order to:
  - improve experts and managers skills, by promoting integrated networks between;
  - Universities, Institutes and public authorities and by providing new tools for education;
  - better people behaviors and growth new generation able to respect the value of nature, environment and culture, by designing educational paths for the learning community.

### Project key outputs and results

To reach the project objectives, consistency with the vision of Europe 2020, the project appeals to:

- participatory planning for compatible spatial and environmental management;
- sustainable tourism for smart territorial growth and marketing;
- training and Awareness for awareness and inclusion.

PA managers, planners, decision makers, researchers, territorial stakeholders and civil society have been involved by partners in the experimentation of protected areas Action Plans; marketing strategy and Joint Promotional Actions; integrated networks of learning communities.

Project deliverables have been planned with an high degree of capitalization and transferability.

The followings outcomes of the project have been delivered in order to ensure project continuity in the long run:

- the **Roadmap**, which is not a further handbook, but an user friendly tool, designed to support Protected Areas managers in orienting themselves among the multitude of existing guidelines (Eurosite, Europarc, IUCN) and selecting the most suitable ones;
- the **Notebook** for sustainable development and tourism: a collection of the good experiences presented during the 2BParks SYMPOSIUM with an high level of transferability;
- the **Sourcebook** and the Edu-platform, to ensure a continuous Knowledge system updating and to reduce the gap among public authorities and researchers institutes;
- the **2BParks Transnational Cluster** to group enterprises, socio-economic operators and public bodies which are committed to adopt sustainable business strategies, contributing to the environmental protection and enhancement at large;
- the **Local Development Pilot Plans**, representing the territorial implementation of common strategies, are tools for the long terms results, on local level;
- the **Local Sustainable Tourism Plans** and related Territorial Marketing Strategy designed to support the follow up of the pilot plans.

### Place based approach for long run sustainability and shared strategy and tools for networking follow up

The place based approach adopted by the partners, within Local Development Pilot Plans and Local Sustainable Tourism Plans ensures the achievement of project and programme objectives at the local level, where sustainable policies and plans will be actually implemented. Those pilot plans elaborated at local levels,

under the 2Bparks perspective and the 2Bparks transitional framework, tackled economic and territorial instances of MED protected Areas, designing new scenarios of development.

Steps by steps, the partners:

- elaborated interpretative schemes /diagnosis of the pilot areas: each pp selecting a specific topic for the interpretation consistency with the pilot area features and with the current planning frameworks. For example we have:
  - *Landscape and Environmental Interpretation Schemes* in Regional Park of Po Delta (Veneto Region) in the Ljubljansko Barje Landscape park (Slovenia), in the National Park of Schinias –Marathon) and in the Bessilles Department Park (Hérault Dpt),
  - environmental and socio-economic diagnosis in the Sierra of Andujar, in Park of Serre and in Lake Karla (Thessaly region), in Troodos National Forest Park (Cyprus), in the Parks of the Alentejo Region (Portugal) and in the park of the Vercelli Province.
- assessed constrains and opportunities with the stakeholders and the local community and - in some case - experimenting new planning horizons (for example Places of sense in Veneto Region, Unusual walks in Hérault Dpt and educational trails in Slovenia) and services (sports area center in Cyprus and honey museum in Andujar, brand project in Serre);
- elaborated and adopted action plans, spatial and environmental planning tools and tourist development program.

Beside the pilot action plans the consortium created some common tools and handbooks.

Among the tools available at <http://2Bparks.myGis.gr>, and also through the project web site [www.2bpark.org](http://www.2bpark.org), we have:

- the sourcebook, where good practices, studies and PA guidelines are stored and can be easy accessed and found, is ready for managers, planners and researchers consultations;
- the edu-platform available for universities and research institutes to share e-lectures and educational tools in the long run;
- the e-calendar for the promotion of events that take place in the 2Bparks PA.

Among the guidelines we have:

- the Self assessment guide and the roadmap where issues have been crossed with guidelines available at European context;
- the Notebook on protected areas sustainable development, where contributions provided by European experts that attended the symposium have been systematized;
- territorial marketing strategy: a guideline for the partners to improve the pilot action plans and the Economic Operators improvement and enlargement.

Partners benefited from the transnational dimension during all the project implementation period: the continuous exchange of experiences and ideas generated a creative contest, where it was possible to innovate practices and proposing planning and policy improvement.

The transnational approach allows also to reinforce territorial marketing strategy under the logic win-win, overpassing any localism. Feeling part of an European network generated opportunities and increased the value of the actions carried out at local level.











# 1. Introduction

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*Giovanna Monsutti, Veneto Region*

The recognized value of Protected Areas lies in the enhancement of its aims and characteristics: biodiversity conservation, preservation of landscapes and seascapes, enhancement of recreational value, development of environmental services and creation of social and cultural benefits. These are important objectives to be achieved, which require a sound and effective management. For this reason, Protected Areas (PA) play an important role for sustainable territorial policies. Often perceived as a limit to economical growth, PA have to face up anthropic pressures reconciling economic interests with ecological requirements: this is a significant challenge that can cause a “new” development of the territory.

To manage this challenge, the knowledge of the problems and the identification of appropriate tools are the first step to take.

In this context new integrated plans for the local sustainable development are necessary to relate common concerns and transnational framework.

Thinking at parks and protected areas as recreational places only, is a reductive way of conceiving potential of the territory, in fact regional parks could represent a driving force for MED Regions: nature conservation, sustainable development and resource enhancement are EU common concerns, which requires a strong cooperation among countries and regions.

For this purpose, planning and marketing strategies must be reconsidered in a perspective of a different development, considering a wider compatible growth, beyond any simple protection instance. Reconciling ecological requirements with economical and social issues means integrate planning policies into protected areas strategy. In this context, the project 2Bparks allowed the development of contributions from different countries, contributing to the comparison of issues, problems and strategies.

This publication is a collection of papers describing the main project outcomes elaborated under the phases 3.1 “Sharing integrated management approach for MEDPA” and the phase 3.2 “Experimental actions: Local Development Pilot Plans (LDPP)”.

Papers are organized in sections, to lead the reader into the path that the authors have carried out following the project’s objectives.

The section **2. Protected areas planning and management tools** collect a series of practical contribution from Region of Thessaly and General Council of Hérault that, on the one hand, identify the reference points to define planning tools and, on the other hand, provide a roadmap for protected areas managers to develop specific approaches and actions.



The section **3. The scope of the 2Bparks LDPP: a place-based approach to reach shared objectives of sustainable development in the MED protected areas**, with the contribution of Veneto Region and Andujar City Council, focus on the territorial approach to meet the perspectives and the objectives of 2Bparks. The Authors define objectives of Local Development Pilot Plans and Local Sustainable Tourism Plans and how to improve and capitalize results of actions.

**The section 4. The Local Development Pilot Plans: applied methodologies and results** collect the experiences that Partners have developed in their territory, identifying the specificities to improve, the methodology used, the experimental actions and participation approach, the results, and finally the communication plan and the objectives of the promotional action.

These experiences testify how improving the environmental and landscape planning can identify new and important places for experimentation. The participatory approach emerges as a real tool for educational path and territorial promotion, in the perspective of a sustainable tourism and territorial development.







## 2. Protected areas planning and management tools

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### *Results of the benchmark of partners past experiences. How to improve the planning tools*

Region of Thessaly



The report is a synthesis of the results of the partners' filled-in questionnaires on experiences to capitalized, developed by the Region of Thessaly in November 2011, in the framework of Phase 3.1 of the 2Bparks project.

The report was based on the answers of the partners' questionnaires in eleven (11) fields:

1. PA Management Plans
2. PA Marketing Strategies
3. Campaigns and Independent Promotional Actions
4. Academic Work on PAs
5. Training Actions
6. PA Management Handbooks and Guides
7. ICT Tools for PAs
8. Tourism Packages for PAs
9. Studies for Employment and Business Initiatives

10. Studies for Tourism Demand in PAs

11. Local, Regional, National, European PA Networks

The methodology followed included the specification of indicators on the evaluation of the special nature of the good practices and experiences that have been recorded by the project partners, matching of indicators with the good practices and experiences, development of diagrams that analyze the performance of each country in each category of the questionnaire and commenting of the differences of the partners' indicators.

The six (6) basic indicators on the bringing out of the special nature of the good practices and experiences recorded by the project partners were:

1. Innovation (encoded with the symbol "IN")
2. Viability (encoded with the symbol "V")

3. Factor for Policy Change (encoded with the symbol "FPC")
4. Iterativity (encoded with the symbol "IR")
5. Factor for Local Participatory Processes (encoded with the symbol "FPP")
6. Factor for Knowledge Transfer (encoded with the symbol "FKT")

At second stage, the answers of the partners' questionnaires were put in tables by partner, field and good practice / experience.

At third stage, for each good practice / experience, the answer of each partner was examined and a relevant indicator was attributed.

At fourth stage, each field was put in table per indicator and partner and corresponding diagrams were created.

The procedure was finalized with comments on results.

Regarding the management plans of protected areas that have been recorded by the partners, it is being noted that:

1. The Veneto area and Italy on a wider scale show the highest performance in participatory processes.
2. The Hérault area and France on a wider scale show indications of innovation in their approaches.
3. The Thessaly area and Greece on a wider scale as well as the Troodos area and Cyprus on a wider scale show the most intensive indications of viability of their PA management plans.
4. The Troodos area and Cyprus on a wider scale show the highest performance of their management plans in the issues of policy change and knowledge transfer.
5. No area shows indications of iterativity of its plans.

Regarding the marketing strategies for protected areas that have been recorded by the partners, it is being noted that:

1. The Veneto area, Vercelli area and Italy on a wider scale, as well as the Troodos area and Cyprus on a wider scale, show the

highest performance of marketing strategies knowledge transfer matters.

2. The Troodos area and Cyprus on a wider scale show the most intensive indications of contribution of their marketing strategies in the viability of protected areas and in the change of policies, as well as the most intensive indication of innovation of marketing strategies.
3. The Veneto area, Serre area, Vercelli area and Italy on a wider scale, as well as the Thessaly area and Greece on a wider scale, present the highest performance of marketing strategies in participatory processes.
4. No area provides indications of iterativity of strategies.

Regarding campaigns and independent promotional actions for protected areas that have been recorded by the partners, it is being noted that:

1. The Veneto area and Italy on wider scale as well as the Balears area and Spain on a wider scale show the most intensive indications of innovation of the promotional actions.
2. The Veneto area and Italy on a wider scale show the highest ability of iterativity of the promotional actions of their protected areas, while their actions show also performance in knowledge transfer issues.
3. The Veneto area, Vercelli area and Italy on a wider scale, the Balears area and Spain on a wider scale, the Thessaly area and Greece on a wider scale and the Troodos area and Cyprus on a wider scale show the most intensive indications of contribution of promotional actions in the viability of their protected areas.
4. No area provides indications of contribution of its promotional actions in the change of policies and enhancement of participatory processes.

Regarding the academic work on PAs that have been recorded by the partners, it is being noted that:

1. The Veneto area, Vercelli area and Italy on a wider scale, as well as the Balears

area and Spain on a wider scale show the most intensive indications of innovation in the production of academic knowledge for protected areas.

2. The Veneto area and Italy on a wider scale show the highest capacity for contribution of the academic knowledge produced in the sector of protected areas in knowledge transfer.
3. The Hérault area and France on a wider scale, as well as the Thessaly area and Greece on a wider scale, show the highest capacity to contribute in academic knowledge produced in the sector of protected areas in policies change.
4. The Hérault area and France on a wider scale show the highest capacity to contribute in academic knowledge produced in the sector of protected areas in enhancing participatory processes and the viability of protected areas.
5. No area shows indications of a capacity for iterativity of the academic knowledge produced for the protected areas to other areas, too.

Regarding the training actions in protected areas that have been recorded by the partners, it is being noted that:

1. The Andújar area and Spain on a wider scale show the most intensive indications of innovation in training actions in protected areas, but also the training actions show most perspectives to contribute in policies change.
2. The Veneto area and Italy on a wider scale show the widest perspective for iterativity of the training actions in protected areas.
3. The Vercelli area and Italy on a wider scale and the Thessaly area and Greece on a wider scale show significant indications of contribution of training actions in protected areas in the development of participatory processes.
4. The Ljubljana area and Slovenia on a wider scale and the Veneto area and Italy on a wider scale show significant indications for contribution of training actions in protected areas in knowledge transfer to other areas.

5. The Thessaly area and Greece on a wider scale and the Ljubljana area and Slovenia on a wider scale show significant indications of contribution of training actions in protected areas to the viability of their protected areas.

Regarding the management handbooks and guides for protected areas that have been recorded by the partners, it is being noted that:

1. The Andújar area and Spain on a wider scale show the most intensive indications of innovation in the management handbooks and guides for protected areas.
2. The Veneto area and Italy on a wider scale show significant indications of contribution of the management handbooks and guides for protected areas in policies change.
3. The Thessaly area and Greece on a wider scale and the Veneto area and Italy on a wider scale show significant indications of contribution of the management handbooks and guides for protected areas in the enhancement of participatory processes in their protected areas.
4. The Veneto area and Italy on a wider scale show significant indications of contribution of the management handbooks and guides for protected areas in the enhancement of knowledge transfer to other protected areas.
5. The Thessaly area and Greece on a wider scale as well as the Ljubljana area and Slovenia on a wider scale show significant indications of contribution of the management handbooks and guides for protected areas in the viability of their protected areas.
6. No area shows indications of iterativity of the management handbooks and guides.

Regarding ICT tools for protected areas that have been recorded by the partners, it is being noted that:

1. The Veneto area and Italy on a wider scale show the most intensive indications of innovation in ICT tools for protected areas.
2. The Vercelli area and Italy on a wider scale show significant indications of contribution of ICT tools for protected areas in the viability of their protected areas.

3. No area shows indications of contribution of ICT tools for protected areas in the change of policies, the iterativity of tools, the enhancement of participatory processes and the transfer of knowledge.

Regarding the tourism packages for protected areas that have been recorded by the partners, it is being noted that:

1. The Andújar area and Spain in general show the most intensive indications of innovation in the tourism packages for protected areas and also of contribution of tourism packages in the enhancement of participatory processes in protected areas and of viability of the protected areas.
2. No area provides indications of contribution of the tourism packages for protected areas in the change of policies, the iterativity of the tools and the transfer of knowledge.

Regarding studies for employment and business initiatives that have been recorded by the partners, it is being noted that:

1. The Thessaly area and Greece on a wider scale show the most intensive indications of innovation and significant indications of contribution of the studies in the enhancement of participatory processes in the protected areas.
2. The Andujar area and Spain on a wider scale and the Thessaly area and Greece on a wider scale show indications of contribution of studies for the protected areas in the change of policies and the viability of protected areas.
3. No area shows indications of contribution of the studies for the protected areas on the iterativity of the tools and the transfer of knowledge.

Regarding the studies for tourism demand in protected areas that have been recorded by the partners, it is being noted that:

1. The Thessaly area and Greece on a wider scale show indications of contribution of the tourism demand studies in the viability of the protected areas.

2. The Balears area and Spain on a wider scale show significant indications of contribution of the studies in the enhancement of participatory processes in the protected areas.
3. No area shows indications of innovation of the studies and of their contribution in the change of policies, the iterativity of the tools and the transfer of knowledge.

Regarding the cooperation networks in which protected areas participate, which have been recorded by the partners, it is being noted that:

1. The Thessaly area and Greece on a wider scale show the most intensive indications of innovation in cooperation networks.
2. The Balears area and Spain on a wider scale show significant indications of contribution of the networks in which their protected areas participate in the change of policies.
3. The Ljubljana area and Slovenia on a wider scale show significant indications of contribution of the networks in which their protected areas participate in the enhancement of participatory processes in their protected areas.
4. The Thessaly area and Greece on a wider scale as well as the Andujar area and Spain on a wider scale show significant indications of contribution of the networks in which their protected areas participate in the enhancement of transfer of knowledge to other protected areas.
5. The Balears area and Spain on a wider scale and the Veneto area and Italy on a wider scale show significant indications of contribution of the networks in which their protected areas participate in the securing of their viability.
6. No area provides indications of iterativity of the networks in which they participate.

It is being noted that:

1. The Andújar area and Spain on a wider scale show the most indications of innovation of their good practices and experiences.
2. The Troodos area and Cyprus on a wider scale show the most indications of contribution of

- good practices and experiences in change of policies.
3. The Veneto area and Italy on a wider scale show the most indications of iterativity of their good practices and experiences.
  4. The Andújar area and Spain on a wider scale show the most indications of contribution of their good practices and experiences in the enhancement of participatory processes in their protected areas.
  5. The Veneto area and Italy on a wider scale show the most indications of contribution of their good practices and experiences in knowledge transfer to other protected areas.
  6. The Thessaly area and Greece on a wider scale, the Andujar area and Spain on a wider scale and the Troodos area and Cyprus on a wider scale show the most indications of viability of their good practices and experiences.





### *The self-assessment guide and a road map for protected area managers*

Region of Thessaly



The roadmap and self-assessment guide was developed by the Region of Thessaly in November 2011, in the framework of Phase 3.1 of the 2Bparks project.

Dealing with Protected Areas (PA) means first “knowledge of the problems” and “appropriate tools”. Is this so difficult to achieve? Actually no, but it needs time, guidance and open minds.

Managers have to realize that to operate a protected area efficiently does not mean to have a phone to pick up, to produce one flyer each year and to organize excursions for students.

PA management is a multi-dimensional task that needs the same skills with managing a very competitive firm: knowing the customers’ needs, knowing the enemies, knowing the advantages and disadvantages, finding the appropriate staff, evolving each day with the international trends, building and re-building strategies, restructuring, correcting and finding funds.

If we realize the extend of protected areas on a global scale (the total protected areas globally cover 10% of the world’s land surface), but also bear in mind that more than 30% of protected areas globally have been established within the decade 1991 – 2000, we will end up with the conclusion that the issue of sound management is definitely urgent, but also that “park management” is still at its early childhood.

Scope of the “Roadmap for Managers and Self-Assessment Guide” is to add a small stone of knowledge in the evolution of park management worldwide.

#### **First Part: PA Management Problems**

Managers of Protected Areas around the world face a very crucial problem. They lose control not only to find solutions, but, already to identify the problems

<b>No.</b>	<b>Critical Management Activities</b>	<b>Critical Problems</b>
1	Law Enforcement and Surveillance	Lack of Control on Human Dangers or Inappropriate Behavior to the Environment
2	Working with Local Communities	Distance among Protected Areas and the Citizens
3	Management Planning	Lack of Concrete Management Planning with Monitoring Indicators
4	Building Governance Capacity	Lack of Skills to Achieve Sound and Effective PA Management
5	Developing Sustainable Tourism	Lack of Exploitation of the Tourism Potential of the PA
6	Education and Awareness	Low Awareness and Knowledge of Citizens and Young People on the Resources, Needs and Perspectives of the Protected Area
7	Working with Regional Authorities	Distance and Conflicts among PA Managers and Local Government
8	Applying Research	Research is Either Minimum or Absent
9	Demarcation and Zoning	Land Uses are not Clear to Apply Efficient Management
10	Promoting Sustainable Resource Use	Conflicts on Natural Resources Use between Communities and Protected Areas
11	Monitoring	Lack of Control on Impacts of Management
12	Infrastructure Development	Lack of Appropriate Infrastructure
13	Financing and Fundraising	Lack of Funds for Sound Operation, Staffing and Activation of the PA Operator
14	Restoration	Degradation of Ecosystems
15	Fire Management	Loss of Forest Stock and Wildlife
16	Species Management	Degradation of Biodiversity
17	Communication, Publicity and Marketing	Low Awareness of the Non-Local Communities
18	International Networking	Isolation of Protected Area

of their Protected Areas. The global online library offers a wide range of tools for problem solution, but lacking the skills or avoiding spending time to identify the gaps, does not lead to the target. The profiles of protected areas are several and the problems not the same. However, there are common categories that can be, at a second stage, customized in each different environment, context and social framework.

It is a fact that the range of problems of protected areas is huge. Managers are asked to apply strategies with multi-parametric extensions. When applying a policy or a change, the protected area manager needs to balance several interests, a fact that can mislead him/her from the actual goals, i.e. to satisfy the environmental protection needs, to consider spatial planning restrictions, to mind the promotion of social development, to protect economic development and profits, to secure participatory processes and to take care of so many other parameters that will be analyzed next.

Park management is not a one-way road. “Just forbidding” has the exactly opposite results, leading to a huge increase of pressure: by local communities feeling that have been dispossessed of their land (demanding land back), by extractive industries and developers (arguing that locking valuable resources undermines economic and social development) and from within many parts of government (which end up questioning themselves if all these protected areas are somewhat finally necessary).

Based on the work of the 2Bparks partners, as well as on critical points of the international literature, the main problems of PA management, as listed in descending significance, and based on the critical management activities (matched horizontally) are represented in the table.

These critical management activities and problems are being analyzed by the Roadmap for Managers and Self-Assessment Guide in detail to help Managers understand if each problem exists in their protected area and to start working on its solution, on the basis of the global tools provided in the 2nd part of the Roadmap and Guide.

## Second Part: Global Tools for Managers

Based on international sources, and upon the findings of all partners, the Roadmap proposes an extended list of solutions for each one of the problems detected in the 1st part of the work done, namely:

- tools for Law Enforcement and Surveillance
- tools for Work with Local Communities
- tools for Management Planning
- tools for Building Governance Capacity
- tools for Developing Sustainable Tourism
- tools for Education and Awareness
- tools for Working with Regional Authorities
- tools for Applying Research
- tools for Demarcation and Zoning
- tools for Promoting Sustainable Resource Use
- tools for Monitoring
- tools for Infrastructure Development
- tools for Financing and Fundraising
- tools for Restoration
- tools for Fire Management
- tools for Species Management
- tools for Communication, Publicity, Marketing
- tools for the Isolation of Protected Areas



## NOTES FOR A ROADMAP TO DEVELOP REGIONAL APPROACHES AND ACTION PLANS

Wolff Gerard, General Council of Hérault

### 1. Definition of a roadmap

The aim of a roadmap is to provide a guide with a series of steps in order to reach progressively and effectively the goals of a project manager.

Several sub-objectives may be proposed to highlight the role of a roadmap in the context of the current e-learning website:

- Take advantage of the experiments shared by the partners in different European regions
- Seek and find out ideas on the topics related to water scarcity and drought
- Foresee the stages from the design to the realization
- Propose and set up a local action plan
- Maximize/optimize the potential of success of the local projects

In short, there is not one single way to achieve a roadmap, but a route that fits the needs, constraints and opportunities of any stakeholder. This module consists in giving right hints, keys and practical experiments, in order to help the actors in water management implementing their project.

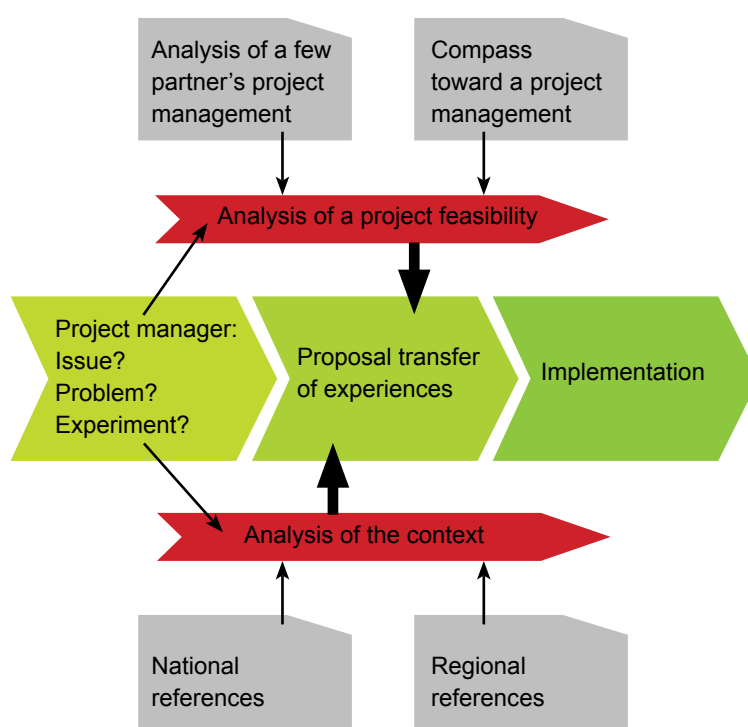
This roadmap may also be used in the frame of a decision making process.

### 2. A roadmap heading to local actions

The following logical flow chart is built around the central axis from the very first concept of a project to its implementation. Therefore, the presentation is organized around both experiments, successful investments, initiated by the project partners, and milestones on the road to the expected output.

To achieve the proposal of a transfer of experiences the user may benefit from:

- The analysis of the context with national and regional references (laws, regulations,...), but also examples of real experiments throughout the handbook and the action plan set by each region
- The analysis of the project feasibility, based on case study and on theory



### 3. The context of the Water Core experiments in each country and region

This part is not a broad detailed review on the legislation of each involved country nor a study focusing on comparison between the legislative or regulatory environment in Europe. Such an analysis may be found out in specialized leaflets or books.

This part of the module, is rather an overview bridging the factsheets and some developments on the national and regional scale, that allows the reader a better understanding on the legislative frame in which the action took place.

As conditions of carrying out an investment or a specific course of action are vast, it is more effective to present and summarize the background closely connected. As consequences, potential stakeholders will have good chances to figure out why and how the project could be successfully implemented under certain national or regional circumstances depending on different laws (the EU framework directives are quite differently translated in each country depending on dedicated issues or organizations).

### 4. Analysis of a project feasibility

#### *A general approach: compass toward a project Management*

Those following steps can be pinpointed by the project manager or management team from the definition and design of the transfer until its achievement and evaluation.

These are milestones on the path to the expected goals, and it must be completed and integrated by other specific literature.

#### *Design or engineering phase*

##### A - Overall viability

- Definition of the project: goals, purposes, resources, qualities of standards, success criteria, project deliverable, measurable objectives, risks
- Feasibility: schedule, resources (staff, materials,...); costs; social acceptance; across-the-board approach.
- Monitoring, evaluation indicator

##### B - External partner availability or external resources

- Stakeholder's involvement
- Steering committee
- External funding (impact on delay, impact on quality, etc...)

##### C - Institutional decision making process

#### *Implementation phase*

##### A - Plan of the different step of the project

- Resources
- Budget
- Acceptance
- Level of quality
- Risk
- Communication

##### B - Implementation

- Selection of a set of variables to get controlled on a regular base (time, cost, quality, risk, acceptance, information)
- Controls and monitoring of activities during the implementation process

##### C - Closure

- Assessment phase
- Comparison between the aim/goal and the result in term of quality, delays, overcosts
- Draw conclusions and lessons learned



3. The scope of the 2bparks LDPP: a place-based approach to reach shared objectives of sustainable development in the MED protected areas

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### 3. The scope of the 2bparks LDPP: a place-based approach to reach shared objectives of sustainable development in the MED protected areas

#### *Local Development Pilot Plans and Local Sustainable Tourism Plans: a place based approach of the 2Bparks perspective*

Raffella Lioce, Veneto Region



Local Development Pilot Plans (LDPP) and Local Tourism Strategic Plans (LTSP) can be considered the territorial implementation of the 2Bparks perspective. Planning the sustainable development of MED protected areas, starting from the deep understanding of the features, the strengths and the weakness, the protection requirements and the needs of compatible growth, represents a shared concerns and a common goal of the 2Bparks Consortium.

The 2Bparks Local Development Pilot Plans have been designed in order to:

- Improve the environmental, spatial and landscape planning framework, identifying new “spaces and horizons for experimentation”;
- Provide educational tools, defining innovative actions to close scientific interpretation of the site with educational path and territorial

promotion;

- Improve the sustainable tourism, by designing new product and services and creating promotional actions.

A participatory approach has been developed by all the partners to elaborate the LDPP and the LTSP: different tools and procedures have been adopted and experimented by the partners in this field, for example: questionnaires and interviews, focus groups and operative meetings, traditional and innovative workshops, including the workshops on the spot, web tools and so on. Participation allowed to close the LDPP to real territorial needs making them more effective.

The interpretative schemes or the diagnosis report developed by the partners took into account both environmental features and economic issues, being aware that only merging nature and humans,

reconciling interests and needs and innovating the vision and common perception of the protected areas, the sustainable development can be implemented and reached.

The Local Development Pilot Plans have been elaborated by:

- The Lead Partner: Veneto Region Spatial and Strategic Planning Dpt (Italy)
- The General Council of Hérault (France)
- The Province of Vercelli (Italy)
- The Region of Thessaly (Greece)
- The Municipality of Andújar (Spain)
- The Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Anton Melik Geographical Institute (Slovenia)
- The University of Athens (Greece)

The LTSP have been elaborated by:

- The Natural Regional Park of Serre (Italy)
- The General Council of Hérault (France)
- The Province of Vercelli (Italy)
- The Region of Thessaly (Greece)
- The Municipality of Andújar (Spain)
- The Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Anton Melik Geographical Institute (Slovenia)
- The Troodos Regional Tourism Board (Cyprus)
- The RCDI, Development and Innovation Network (Portugal)

The LDPPs have been arranged with objectives of interpretation for spatial and economic planning, in general, while with the LTSPs the partners defined peculiar actions in the specific field of the sustainable tourism. In the case a partner developed both LDPP and LTSP, the second represented a sort of deeper step of the LDPP.

The elaboration of the LDPPs and LTSPs can be divided in 3 main phases:

1. Preparation phase
2. Planning Process
3. Implementation and Review

The **preparation phase** ensured that all the LDPP and LTSP took advantage from past and good

example, having their roots on:

- the benchmark of past experiences suitable for capitalization, the literature review and the Self-Assessment Guide and the 2BParks Roadmap;
- the desk analysis of current planning framework;
- the desk analysis of landscape, environmental and economic issues, and in particular of the identification of tourism resources located within the pilot areas or the neighbouring (for LTSP).

The **planning process** can be divided in two phases: the participation phase and designing.

The first one enabled the creation of scenarios shared at local level, having the scope of:

- seeking and finding out ideas;
- understanding of the needs of local communities;
- sharing the way to include sustainably the economic and social instances into protected areas plans;
- involving economic operators in the pilot plans implementation fostering green business.

The designing phase allowed to:

- foresee the stages from the idea to the design and from the design to the realization;
- propose and set up the local action plan.

The **implementation and review** guarantees to maximize/optimize the potential of success of the local projects.

The **Steps by steps procedure** developed during the planning process has been shaped, by the 2Bparks partners as following:

- identification and specification of the area of intervention;
- interpretation, diagnosis and the analysis of the current situation according to all available data in order to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in the pilot areas and surroundings;
- involvement of local community and territorial

stakeholders;

- selection of an underlying theme and specification of the intervention strategy;
- activation of a communication plan.

Intervention strategies have been elaborated with a place based approach, determining different implementation of a common step by step procedure towards a shared scope.

Partner	PILOT ACTION PLANS with a place based approach to reach 2Bparks scope	Actions towards project objectives
Veneto	“The Place of Sense in the Delta Po: atmosphere for a local development pilot plan in the Po Delta River Regional Park – experimental approach for landscape interpretation approach	Action: To improve the landscape regional plan and improve resources allocation in the Protected Areas To develop innovative territorial marketing tools To integrate landscape into educational programs To better people behaviors and growth new generation able to respect the value of nature, environment and culture, by designing educational paths for the learning community
Serre	Strategies for a common label for local firms and the protected area	Actions: To promote sustainable tourism involving local enterprises and firms in a process of sustainable development To boost responsible behaviors among economic operators
Hérault	Schéma d’interprétation des aires protégées” / promenades inédites	Actions: To understanding natural and cultural environment and to promote educational tourism walks To foster tourism quality, by increasing offer and arranging a shared territorial marketing strategy To promote Med Protected Areas as tourist exemplary destination, where natural and landscape heritage could coexists with business and where new jobs opportunities could be created
Vercelli	The protected areas of Vercelli Province: a driving force of sustainable development	Actions: To increase Parks’ sustainable fruition coordinating local authorities and stakeholders, tourist supply. To promote Med Protected Areas as tourist exemplary destination, where natural and landscape heritage could coexists with business and where new jobs opportunities could be created
Thessaly	“Integrated Local Pilot Development Plan for Karla Lake” / “Strategic Plan for the Promotion of the Sustainable Tourism of the Karla Lake”	Actions: To involve local community in a development process To identify the process to promote lake as tourist destination
RDCI	“Sustainable Tourism in Alentejo Coast”	Actions: To involve local community and economic operators in a sustainable tourism program where nature represents a key factor and must be protected To foster tourism quality, by increasing offer and arranging a shared territorial marketing strategy Tto boost responsible behaviors among economic operators To promote new destination bettering services and product

Andujar	LDPP for Regional Development and Economical Promotion: The regeneration of Del Val Gardens and the Honey Museum. LTSP for Tourism Promotion	Actions: To better the attractiveness of the area and promoting sustainable development To foster tourism quality, by increasing offer and arranging a shared territorial marketing strategy
ZRC SAZU	LDPP planning appropriate areas for the interpretation of PA trail along the Iška River and the interpretation centre Plan a sustainable tourist offer with a help of a natural tourist guide.	Actions To better planning tools and identify best interpretation areas (places) To promote new educational tourism services and product To better people behaviors and growth new generation able to respect the value of nature, environment and culture, by designing educational paths for the learning community
UoA	'Understanding Coastal Environment'/ Educational Tourism: National Park of Schinias	Actions: To bring research community closer to local authorities and societies via promotional and tourism educational actions and to improve experts' and managers' skills To enhance people behaviors and growth new generation able to respect the value of nature, environment and culture, by designing educational paths for the learning community
Cyprus	Troodos: The Green Heart of Cyprus - Nature and Cultural Park: New Gates for the Park, /Improving educational and the sport centers.	To foster tourism quality, by increasing offer and arranging a shared territorial marketing strategy To promote Med Protected Areas as tourist exemplary destination, where natural and landscape heritage could coexists with business and where new jobs opportunities could be created





Reconciling economic interests with nature and landscape required different solutions for each different protected areas, as well as arranging a tourism action plan needed tailored actions. Doing it in a transnational context creates the preconditions for experiences and knowledge exchange, offering the partners the possibility to learn each other and to develop a creative atmosphere where new solutions can be found, sometimes overpassing the planning framework in favor of a more general promotional and educational context.

We refer to:

- The idea of Places of Sense promoted by Veneto Region and implemented within the LDPP of the Regional Park of Delta Po River, which became the underline theme of the 2Bparks transnational award and of a common promotional tool: the 2Bparksapp.
- The idea to close interpretation to education and common awareness, the underline theme Man and Nature and the need to close research and management, which became the engine of the LDPPs developed in the protected areas of the Hérault department, in the Ljubjansko barje Landscape Park and in National Park of Schinias in Marathon and in the Regional park of Delta Po River. From these LDPPs born the school contest award dedicated to “Man and nature”.
- Man and Nature means also economy and environment. This paradigm became the basis of the strategy adopted by the LDPP of the Lake Karla by Thessaly Region, but also the opportunity to link LDPPs to the transnational clusters of economic operators.
- The concept that Nature can become a tourism product to be managed and promoted sustainably has been included in all the LTSPs: this implies sport, specialized activities (such as bird watching and scholastic tourism and education), implies complementary product and services based on resources potentiality (such as Sun & Beach, Landscape and cultural Touring, Residential Tourism, Gastronomy and Wines). This concept has been enclosed in all the LTSPs and became the underline theme of the Territorial Marketing Strategy designed by RCDI.

As a result, on one side the place based approach adopted by partners, within the LDPP and the LSTP ensures the achievement of project and programme objectives at the local level (where sustainable policies and plans will be actually implemented) and on the other side the transnational context ensured a wide perspective that should mainstream the 2Bparks Message and Vision in the long run, when the actions of the plans will take place at local level.





### 3. The scope of the 2bparks LDPP: a place-based approach to reach shared objectives of sustainable development in the MED protected areas

#### *The transnational added value of 2Bparks project partners results*

Andújar City Council



Analyzing the LDPP's we can resume the following results:

The **Veneto Region** is implementing an innovative approach to solve problems at transnational level, the methodology of LDPP "Place of sense" contributes to develop the notion of "Place of Sense": meanings, sources (cinema, art, perceptions, sensations, traditions, literature ...), typologies and their potentiality as a new tool for spatial planning and develop the potential value of the Places of Sense in three different fields: education, marketing, planning, with particular attention for the collection of good practices and guide lines for each field. Furthermore, for each one of these fields, we tried to integrate other actions included in the 2bparks project (especially promotional and educational).

The **transnational contribute of Hérault** aims to favor the environmental quality and to be a part of the sustainable development local strategy, with several actions: renovation of the outside lighting (especially solar and wind lights), selective sorting, restoration of the green ways biodiversity by making a more ecological management. Following the main concept of the "Place of Sense, the Hérault plan on Bessilles area contributes to join many factors as education, marketing, economy to raise awareness of the biodiversity of the area, but also of its management via recreational and aesthetic means, by calling upon the imagination and by delivering a simple and immediate message, with strong cultural references, within a spirit of popular education, to encourage civic virtue and eco-citizenship, particularly in the core zone to allow an appropriation of different areas in Bessilles,

especially including naming and symbolization of a few places in the core zone, to open the discovery space and propose well-marked pathways.

The **approach of Andujar** represents a quite different methodology respect to the other ones but it permits to give a new vision in the transnational approach, it's focused in the promotion of new alternative crops of cotton, for example, oil seeds, and the use of local natural resources for the production of biomass for energy purposes; the development of the fruit production based on new species and subtropical and tropical varieties for fresh consumption or transformed, the introduction of the viti-viniculture with new technologies of production, processing, marketing and distribution; the realization of social projects such as the settlement of farmers and improvement of housing and schooling; the systematized dissemination of training and information.

The **Lake Karla experience in Thessaly** assures a development strategy based on an integrated and multi-sectoral planning method and the complementarity of actions and projects, bringing together stakeholders, assets and the overall objective. In this context, the specific objectives of the Local Development Plan are developed, incorporating individual priorities. The specialization of the Development Strategy at the level of thematic pillars was based on specific characteristics, problems and disadvantages of the area and in pursuit of complementarity, synergy and cohesion of individual actions in order to increase the effectiveness of development interventions.

The **Slovenia experience** represents th need of protection of the protected area, enabling people to experience the nature, cultural traditions and spiritual values of a certain space of extraordinary character. One of the most important aim is to establish protected areas for visitors, The presence of visitors in protected areas can often have a harmful effect on a fragile environments, which is in contrast to the original objective of protecting the unique and diverse natural areas. On the other hand, promoting

tourism in a certain area by experiencing the nature prompts respect and awareness from the local inhabitants about the uniqueness of the protected areas and nature in general. The final objective is therefore that a well-managed infrastructure in the protected area would evoke interest among the locals and visitors about the meaning of nature conservation and protection, the cultural heritage and raise awareness about the important activities

The Local Development Pilot Plans in the **National Park of Schinias** represents the implementation of the 2Bparks strategy of Mediterranean Protected Areas (MED PA) development at local level, both in terms of environmental plans improvement and in terms of sustainable tourism promotion. In order to achieve the project goals within the territory of the National Park of Schinias, the team made use of four basic methodological tools; research activities, experimental approach, participatory approach and dissemination activities so as to optimize the local community, academic community and stakeholders' involvement in the project activities.

## Results of transnational approach

Resuming the contents of the LDPP's we can analyze the most important principles and activity useful for transnational approach:

**1. Definition of common procedures:** all the partners use and share a common plan to develop the actions provided in each LDPP, the methodological tools are: research and analysis activity, experimental actions, participatory approach and communication and dissemination activity, following the example of UoA in park of Schinias.

**2. A common strategy is defined as a multisectoral approach,** considering internal as external factors, using economic and social elements of each area as well as other tools as literature, cinema, innovative Energy process, new production process to applicate in local areas. This example is shared according to the example of Veneto and Hérault.

**3. Formulation of common response and support to resolve criticality:** the multisectorial approach is one of the solutions, but, at the same time, each partner considers the sustainable development of the area as a necessary element to resolve the first criticality represented by external factors as industry, pollution etc.... For this reason the example of Slovenia about the protection of the area is considered as one important step to resolve this kind of criticality. The approach of Andujar is the most relevant about the capacity to innovate the internal process to resolve criticality, this partner is investing in sustainable and natural production process to create a local economy directly inside, using traditional product and elements, in this way it's possible to reduce the influence of external negative factors and to resolve economic and social problems in the area.

**4. Connecting the LDPP results to policy cycle, to be part of a largest programme:** the contribute of each LDPP is considered a san innovative form to manage and develop a protected area. The methodology of governance and the participatory approach allow for a full cycle based of shared strategy to be implement in the areas.

**5. Set out how the results can contribute to improvements in policymaking:** the results of each plan contribute to assure new elements for new policies, starting with new innovative process based in alternative form for the utilization of plants and soil as well as biomasses production. The solution is to use other approach to increase the value of the area, permitting an easy process for decision making.

**6. Communication and added value of a transnational strategy:** Veneto found an alternative method to promote its area, "the place of sense" connecting each place to literature, movie, poetry, in that way it could be possible to assure a better diffusion of the promotional message. An innovative approach about communication and promotion is based on an educational process, in the case of UoA, to involve students in the activity connected

to reserved areas, this represents an example of reproduction of good practice at transnational level, followed by other participants. During the development of activity it was very clear the concept that the best promotion is represented by the real value of the activities and related innovation, in this case the strategy of Slovenia appears the most adequate: diverting visitors to less vulnerable areas and indirectly help conserve the nature, encouraging the visitors to have a sense of duty to the nature and cultural landscape and increasing the sustainable offer of the protected areas and with that visitor satisfaction.

The most important principles for transnational activities:

1. Analyzing the LDPP's, finally we can establish a series of common principles to share at transnational level:
2. Multisectorial approach: it's necessary involve various elements and aspects of a local area, as well as natural, economic, social, cultural.
3. Using external factor to improve the promotion of a local area as well as Veneto did with the place of sense, connecting the attractive zone to elements connected to literature, cinema and poetry.
4. Improving the participatory approach, common element, present in each territory, considering the role of stakeholders, citizens, visitors, policy makers.
5. Innovating the production process and the activities inside, as Andujar in the case of the investment in biomasses and in new products.
6. Considering the sustainable development and the defense against external factors, as in the case of Slovenia, permitting, at the same time, the respect and consideration of the visitors as a resource for the area.





### 3. The scope of the 2bparks LDPP: a place-based approach to reach shared objectives of sustainable development in the MED protected areas

#### *A proposal to capitalise project partners LDPP*

Antonio Jesús Rodríguez, Andújar City Council



The aim is to assure a capitalization of results of LDPP's, considering, the analysis of each document and the need to obtain a real efficacy of the projects.

The first problem to solve is:

- How to capitalize on the results: identify the stage of policy development in which the project and its evolution are put.
- How to impact on policy development: identify individuals capable of ensuring the exploitation of project results and the modalities of their involvement.

We have to bear in mind that capitalization of 2Bparks projects, and the Partners LDPP and experimental actions take place at different levels:

1. General Level of MED Programme
2. Capitalization to partners of the project

3. Capitalization to policy makers in MED area.

The proposal to capitalize project partners results is organized according to the following phases:

- first step: the added value of transnational activity;
- second step: developing common policies;
- third step: Identification, role of subjects and methods of involvement;
- fourth step: understanding and sharing results;
- fifth step: Communication.

#### **Capitalization first step: the added value of transnational activity**

The LDPP's are the result of a transnational activity. The added value of transnational cooperation is

that these needs and problems can be resolved with better solutions if people from several countries approach the problem together, coordinating their actions by exchanging information and by continuously communicating.

Transnational cooperation impacts and effects are largely qualitative and related to the intangible assets of the beneficiaries. They include innovative solutions testing, identification of joint approaches as well as the establishment and strengthening of transnational networks.

This recognition process and review of experiences are the capitalization that represents the starting point of all the process.

A transnational project produces effects which, as we have seen, are intangible. For them to result in regional and national policy development, they should be shared with the political/administrative jurisdiction, evaluated, communicated and effectively used.

In general, it's possible to capitalize according to a process of assimilation of results transforming what has been acquired (either individually or institutionally) by the organization and individuals.

It's necessary to acquire knowledge and skills (results), produced in the LDPP areas, to a specific problem or challenge. The first objective is to make results available so LDPP's do not operate in isolation, overlap or duplicate.

We can start with:

- Definition of a threat or common need. At this stage the most common actions are focused on research and study of the phenomenon and / or campaigns to create awareness.
- Formulation of common responses. This phase involves the LDPP's, experimental actions, trial solutions and definitions of methods and tools.
- Implementation of concrete support to solve criticality. At this stage it is possible to plan common means of cooperation and coordination, schedules, or combined regulations according to the results of analysis of LDPP's.

## **Capitalization second step: developing common policies**

By the capitalization process we can pass from the perception of the problem, analyzed in the LDPP, to the formulation of responses, from testing possible solutions to their implementation. In other words, all the process consists in the development of common policies through the development of strategies and common activities.

In order to assure a real transfer of result it needs:

1. Connecting the LDPP results to policy cycle, to be part of a largest programme.
2. Set out how the results can contribute to improvements in policymaking.
3. Creation of Synergy. During project capitalization it is important to review the ability to integrate the project with existing ones (created synergy). Synergies should be sought at project or program level.

The synergies which develop may also have a different basis and, above all, different intensities:

- thematic synergies: projects address the same themes;
- operational synergies: the project is functionally integrated;
- strategic synergies: the project is preparatory to larger-scale intervention.

## **Capitalization third step: identification, role of subjects and methods of involvement**

Once the LDPP's are defined, stakeholders that benefit from the development of specific policies should be identified and involved according to a participatory process. This is related to three different categories:

1. Target groups: individuals, citizens as final beneficiaries of the policy. The goal of each project is the implementation of policies that can be translated into an advantage or the reduction of a problem for certain individuals (target group). A priority task of the project is to clearly define which groups of subjects should benefit from the evolution of policy.

2. Stakeholders: individuals, groups of individuals or institutions that may be, directly or indirectly, positively or negatively, affected by this project and for that to exert an influence on decision-makers.
3. Relevant actors: holders of specific responsibilities and political skills.

Ideally at the identification stage, the need for research and study makes it extremely useful to involve universities and research centres in the partnership. On the other hand, the 'construction' of knowledge must be through the active participation of stakeholders.

Consequently in the formulation phase it is essential that those who have institutional competence on the subject (elective assemblies, regional governments, ministries) and who are the recipients of political action (representatives of diffuse interests) be directly involved. In addition, in this case, the participation of stakeholders is recommended to get useful feedback on the policies that are implemented.

Finally, in the implementation phase, the fundamental role must be played by actors implementing policies; the involvement of agencies and public administrations is essential.

### Capitalization fourth step: understanding and sharing results

For results to be communicated and transferred at the policy level, partners must have a clear awareness of the impact that the project has produced. The main difficulty is identifying and measuring results in terms of intangible effects.

Evaluation of the effects of cooperation may differ in intensity. It can be done internally by one or more meetings (brainstorming - focus groups) and be led by one of the partners. In this case benefits are represented by economy and speed. On the other side, it can be more structured and adopt more sophisticated methods such as analysis to potential users (customer satisfaction), requests for opinions to people performing similar functions (peer review), case studies or surveys of beneficiaries. In this case, it is useful to provide an assignment to an external expert evaluator.

Key points for setting the assessment/self-assessment activities:

1. Decide what to assess and why. What are the objectives of the project? What was the initial situation? What were the key activities? What has been achieved in practice? What has changed? What were the main lessons? Were the indicators appropriate? Is the project economically sustainable?
2. Identify the most appropriate valuation methodology, e.g. questionnaires, case studies, focus groups, customer satisfaction etc., the added value of knowledge, time and costs.
3. Share and validate the results.
4. Disseminate the results of the evaluation to partners and stakeholders.

### Capitalization fifth step: communication

The importance of communication and information activities is more relevant when more projects are characterized by intangible effects. In this type of project as 2Bparks, communication seems essential to achieve the overall objective (policy development).

The transfer of results necessarily needs effective communication and information. The strategy of communication and information should be set during preparation of the project when stakeholder involvement is defined.

Practical tools to share and capitalize results:

- How advanced was policy compared to plan? analyze the results and achievements of other partners LDPP; analyze other similar local and regional programs; check the status of national or European policies; identify further research, studies or analysis relevant to the topic.
- What is the impact of the LDPP on the policy cycle? define how you intend to evolve the policy of the area; identify programs and projects with which to build synergies and define its type.







## 4. The Local Development Plans: applied methodologies and results

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### *LDPP in Veneto Region: Places of Sense: atmospheres for a Local Development Pilot Plan in the Po Delta - Experimental approaches for landscape interpretation schemes*

Chiara Quaglia, Nicola Boscolo, Raffaella Lioce, Veneto Region

Contributors: Roberta Galli, Silvia Galli



Protected Areas (PA) play an important role for sustainable territorial policies. Often perceived as a limit to economical growth, PA have to face up anthropic pressures reconciling economic interests with ecological requirements.

In this challenge context new integrated plans for the local sustainable development are necessary to boost at local common concerns and transnational framework.

Regional parks represent a driving force for MED Regions. Operators, citizens and policy makers often prefer look at Parks only as a recreational areas and not as a factor of sustainable development. Here economic potentiality of nature could be improved and landscapes could become a tool for territorial growth. Plans and marketing strategies should to be revised, overpassing the localism and becoming

actual tools for a wider compatible growth, beyond any simple protection instance. Ecological requirements must be reconciled with economical and social issues integrating sectoral policies into parks plans and strategy.

Nature conservation, sustainable development and resource enhancement are EU common concerns, which requires a strong cooperation among countries and regions.

The Pilot Action Plans have been provided taking into 2Bparks joint strategies, becoming a places based tool for a the 2Bparks transnational implementation: LDPP represents the implementation of the 2Bparks strategy of MED Protected areas development at local level, both in terms of environmental plans improvement and in term of sustainable tourism promotion.

In this perspective, the 2BParks LDPP (Local Development Pilot Plan) developed in the Veneto Region choose to focus on the landscape, considered as the results of human and nature interaction: the place where different interests and instances can find a new balance.

Veneto Region target area is the Regional Parks of the Delta Po River.

Here to develop innovative governance patterns for planning, an agreement has been signed among the Regional Spatial Planning Department and the Regional Parks Board; participation has been ensured by involving central and local authorities in the landscape planning process. Consistency with the general 2Bparks project scope, landscape and environmental considerations have been integrated into spatial plans, into a territorial marketing and into educational programs.

The Action Plan has been elaborated on the basis of the principles of subsidiary, equality and sustainability. Its innovative character relies on the experimental underlined themes addressed: *The Places of Sense*.

### Content of the experimental action

The framework of the LDPP developed by Veneto Region is strictly connected with the current landscape policies and plans experienced in that context, with a particular focus on the bottom-up approach suggested by the European Landscape Convention. The objective has been to integrate the traditional tools of spatial planning increasing the local awareness and merge different points of view on landscape, under the notion of "Places of Sense", a concept that has been introduced to remark the sensitive, symbolic, common value of some particular places, and imagine integrated scenarios for their development.

But before explaining the contents of the LDPP, an introduction to what is a Landscape Plan is needed. Recently, Veneto Region Spatial and Strategic Planning Dpt signed an agreement with the National Government to jointly develop the Landscape Regional Plan, and the Po Delta represents a pilot experience of a specific landscape ambit plan.

In Italy, according to the "National Code of cultural and landscape heritage" (Legislative Decree n. 42/2004), two Public Administrations (State and Region) has

to cooperate in the definitions of guidelines and criteria related to activities of protection, planning, reclamation, and enhancement of the landscape and the management of related works. In Veneto Region, the two public administrations involved in landscape planning are the Veneto Region Spatial and Strategic Planning Dpt and the Regional Direction for the Cultural and Landscape Heritage, with the Superintendencies as its peripheral organs. Since July 2009 these institutions are co-operating for the Landscape Regional Plan, and a specific Committee (*Comitato Tecnico per il Paesaggio*) has been created to support this co-planning process, involving members of both institutions. One of the aims of the regional plan is to organize the territory in homogenous areas (called *Ambiti di Paesaggio*), and one of these first experimental areas is the Po Delta, which forms with the Venice Lagoon Area the ambit named "Coastal Adriatic Arch, Venice Lagoon and Po Delta" (*Arco Costiero Adriatico, Laguna di Venezia e Delta del Po*). A specific Landscape Ambit Plan is now under elaboration for this area. Beyond the "National Code", the plan must also be seen in the context of European Landscape Convention, which identifies the Landscape with "*part of the land, as perceived by local people or visitors, which evolves through time as a result of being acted upon by natural forces and human beings*", and puts the people in the heart of landscape policies. For this reason, the Convention stresses on how important it is that the values given to the landscape by the experts takes into consideration local inhabitants, their social perceptions, their collective memories, their aspirations and the natural, social and economic forces. The landscape plan shall define the policies for the protection of the landscape, also by determining the transformations which are compatible with landscape values, as well as measures for the enhancement of the landscape, in relation to objectives for sustainable development as well.

In the framework of the European Landscape Convention, let's deepen the subject of the LDPP : the notion of "Places of Sense" of the Po Delta. What does it mean a Place of Sense? Which are their opportunities for the development of the territory? How can they be an innovative tool in spatial planning? These are some of the questions which the LDPP aims to answer. About the first question:

it is hard to define what is a “Place of Sense”. It is a combination of material and non-material components of perception. The material component has to include not only the sight, but all the five senses. But especially de non-material values have to be considered: they can be memories, traditions, symbols, history, etc. The non-material values can be discovered in many ways: through the eye of artists (poetry, literature, photography, movies) and of local people perceptions, individual and collective, common or experts.

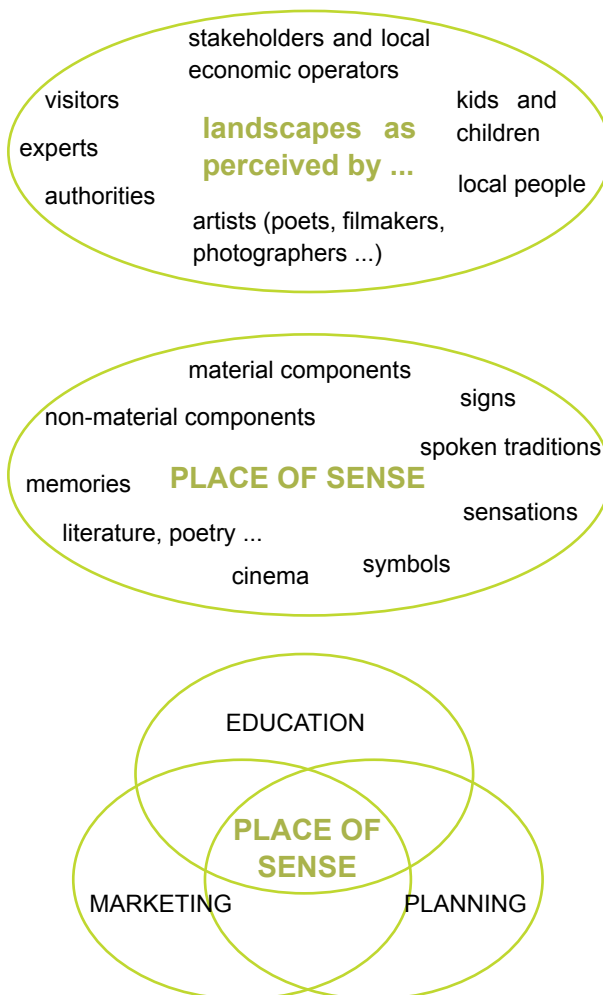
## Methodology

The main methodological steps for experiencing the LDPP “Places of sense” are pretty evident in the structure of the Notebook, which summarizes the methodological aspects and the actions undertaken. The steps have been the following:

- Develop the notion of “Place of Sense”: meanings, sources (cinema, art, perceptions, sensations, traditions, literature ...), typologies and their potentiality as a new tool for spatial planning.
- Detect the “places of sense” in the Po Delta area: create a short list merging the top-down sources (literature, planning tools, institutional informations) and bottom-up participatory approach, involving actors and stakeholders on site.
- Define a matrix for the analysis of the places, trying to mix qualitative and quantitative approach: the sensitive value is identified in function of three main categories: perceptions, signs, arts-memories.
- Develop the potential value of the Places of Sense in three different fields: education, marketing, planning, with particular attention for the collection of good practices and guide lines for each field. Furthermore, for each one of these fields, we tried to integrate other actions included in the 2bparks project (especially promotional and educational)
- Select a few “places of sense” for specific analysis and development scenarios.



*Region of Veneto. Territorial framework of landscape area “North-Adriatic coast, lagoon of Venice and Po Delta”*



*Scheme of the European Landscape Convention for the notion of Landscape; sources for the detectin of “Places of sense”; fields of interest*



## Experimental approach

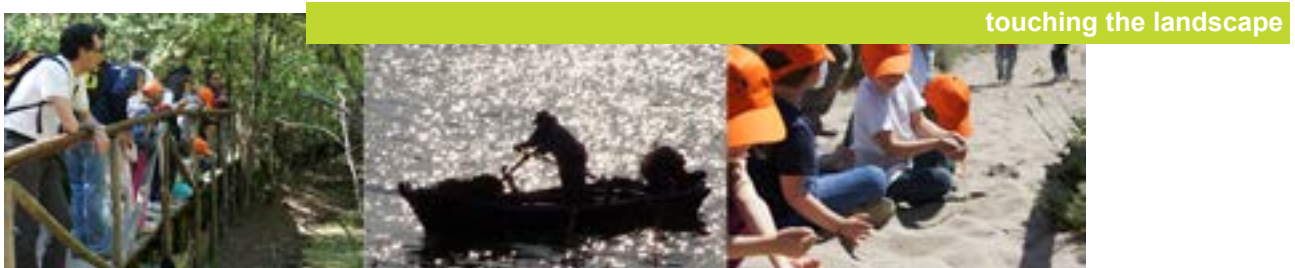
Firstly, direct measurement by the decision makers and planners, mainly organizing brainstorming; focus groups; site visits; interviews.

Secondly involve a panel of experts and local stakeholders organizing workshops.

Thirdly start an experimental participatory process of landscape collective preferences assessment trying to reduce subjectivity on landscape planning:

local meetings and public events have been organized with the double aim to spread 2Bparks mainstream and to involve local community in a co planning process for landscaping choices.

Foreseen results: defining a methodological approach to social landscape value assessment, identifying the most important “places of sense”, design and planning the sense of place for a shared landscape plan.



## Participatory approach

Public participation approach to landscape of the area of the Park, instead of statistical based methods, has been applied in the landscape plan of the park. The scenic quality of the area should be seen by both planners and people as a value for sustainable development to be preserved and managed. Surveys, workshops, focus groups have been the main tool to collect together different people, stakeholders, approaches, studies and points of view.

### 1. First survey

A first survey, one day lasting, took place in the area of the Po Delta Park to visit the area with the participation of members of both the Institutions involved in the Landscape Plan (State and Region), other collaborators and local experts, on 19 July 2011.

The survey started at the Visitors Center of the Park with a lecture about 2Bparks project and its contribution in the context of the Landscape Plan, but this was the only formally structured moment. All the other phases have taken place in the open air, visiting places which were chosen for their particular characteristic of being “places of sense”.

How to measure the “sense” of a place, how to choose it? For example, recognizing how artists, writers, poets, directors described that place in their works, which influence the people perception of the place, and also are influenced by her.

Like Scano Boa, a land between wetlands, river, beach and sea, which has been the setting of a book by and a movie of the 1950s.

The group visited the area by boat, then walking through the dunes and on the beach, trying to perceive the material and immaterial features that inspired the artists and increase the value of that landscape.

To go deeper into both the anthropic and naturalistic assets which form the landscape heritage characteristics of the area, the group visited also the Cà Vendramin Museum, an example of industrial archeology that testifies the work of man in controlling the river course and draining the land around it, and the Maistra Branch, spectacular for wide variety of birds and vegetation.

The objectives of the first site visit have been the following:

- take a first survey of the Po Delta ambit and discover some “places of sense” (Scano Boa above all);
- let the local experts, who also are inhabitants of the Delta, share their knowledge and collaborate with external experts.

The places visited have been: Porto Tolle, Visitors center; Scano Boa; Taglio di Po, Cà Vendramin Foundation Center; Po di Maistra.

The participants were almost 40 people: members of the Superintendence of Architectural and Cultural Heritage, Verona; members of Regional Direction for the Cultural and Landscape Heritage; members of the Veneto Region Spatial and Strategic Planning Dpt; staff of Po Delta Regional Park; Local Authorities and experts.

The most positive aspect of the first site visit has been that the professional experts and authorities (which are not inhabitants of the park area) become familiar with the characteristics of the Po Delta landscape, not by a formal and technical approach (as usual), but by a direct contact with the nature and local territories. It's also important that the group of participants have been supported during all the survey by the explanations of local professionals, with their local perceptions and point of view.

### 2. Second survey

A second survey, one day lasting, took place on 27 June 2012 in the area of the Po Delta Park to visit the area with the participation of members of the institutions involved in the Landscape Plan (State and Region), other collaborators and local experts. The participants were organized in two different groups. The first group visited some places of interest, in terms of touristic activities, urban settlements, environmental areas, getting a scenery of the different typologies of landscape and their opportunities and/or critical aspects. During the visit, the focus has been specifically about coastal areas and their development: touristic facilities on beaches (Boccasette. Scanno Cavallari); wooden coastal areas (Rosolina); harbors (Porto Levante).

The second group was a technical group (regional staff and video operators) who experienced the

video shooting of particular aspects of the landscape of the po delta (Adria and its urban center, Maistra Branch of the Po river, “Via delle Valli” itinerary, Isola della Batteria...): this activity is related with the landscape plan, which includes new tools of communication (as video is) behind the ordinary tools of the plan (cartography and texts).

The objectives have been the following:

- take a second visit of the target area, more focused on specific aspects about the perception of landscape values of the most visited areas of the Po Delta;
- discuss the main criticisms and opportunities directly on the field, in contact with local experts;
- experience the tool of video-shooting in addition to the traditional planning tools.

The Places visited have been: Pinewood and Botanical garden of Rosolina; Ca’ Pisani; Po di Maistra; Ca’ Cappello. Museo Civiltà Contadina; Via delle Valli; Scanno Cavallari

The participants were almost 40 people: Local authorities and technical staff of Veneto Region; Veneto Superintendencies and Delta Po Regional Park; video operators.

The most significant activity has been that some aspects of the landscape of the Po have been discussed “on the field” by the decision makers of the Landscape Plan, in common with local stakeholders. The video-shooting has been an experimental action which is successfully included in the plan, and has been now exported and applied in other areas of the Veneto Region.

### 3. Workshop

The individuation of the places of sense was helped by the participation of representatives of the 9 municipalities involved. A workshop took place on January 2012; in that occasion, a specific questionnaire has been submitted to the participants, asking them to propose the most significant “places of sense” in their territories. The results have been included in the list of places of sense.





## Added value and results

Due to its experimental approach, the LDPP is not strictly focused on specific achievements, but its most important value concerns its methodological aspects and the expected replicability of the methodology in other areas.

The first achievement has been to formally introduce the notion of “places of sense” as a tool for spatial planning, in particular in the Landscape Plan of the area.

The second achievement has been to select a few “places of sense” in the Po delta combining different approaches (qualitative and quantitative, bottom up and top down)

The notebook have been elaborated taking into account the participatory results and will includes both methodological issues and applied procedures: design, planning and marketing tools will be analyzed and provided under the framework of “2Bparks Mainstream”.

Qualitative assessments of landscape resources can best be approached through direct measurement of landscape perceptions. This approach yields information relevant to plans for landscape improvement and protection.

## Communication plan and scope of promotional actions

In the first phase, during the elaboration of the LDPP, several events have been organized to spread the notion of “Places of Sense”: Many conferences and workshops (in events like “Geo-oikos” in 2010 and 2011 and the “Week of the Environment” in 2012) took place, and also other actions like the educational laboratories and the activities with the economic operators have been integrated under the framework of the idea of “Places of Sense”, to strengthen the communicative potential of this concept, like a territorial “brand”.

The final results of the LDPP “Places of Sense” have been communicated and spreaded through its main output: the Notebook called “Places of Sense - atmospheres for a Local Development Pilot Plan in the Po Delta”. The notebook describes the methodology and the approach, useful to replicate the LDPP in other areas of the Veneto Region.

It describes also the detecting process of the Places of Sense in the Po Delta, with the list of the Places of Sense with a deep photographic and iconographic images.

The integration with other actions of the project has been also experienced: the transational award is based on the notion of “Places of Sense”, involving all the partners in a common participatory process. The promotional actions for the Places of Sense involved also the new communication technologies, with the development of a specific application for smartphone and Iphone. In this tool the places of sense are described with evocative photos, videos, drawings and showed in a map, with all the information useful for visiting.





### ***LDPP in Hérault: the “Schema d’interprétation des aires protégées”. The Interpretative plan for Bessilles departmental park***

*Jean-Pierre Vigouroux, Luc David, Sophie Vinualès, L’Euzière Association and Guillaume Rivel, Xavier Boutolleau, General Council of Hérault*



#### **Content of the experimental action**

The General Council owns approximately 8000 hectares of natural space, including over 6000 hectares acquired through the Departmental Tax of Sensitive Natural Areas (a new planning tax); this tax enables counties that levy it to acquire, manage, preserve and develop remarkable natural areas, sites and landscapes, and open them to the public (unless the environment is too fragile).

The activities programme aims to encourage Hérault locals and visitors to enhance their views of the county’s Protected Areas (PA) by focusing on the different types of areas, from the coast to the hinterland. The General Council established an activities programme centred on certain PA

open to the public, which were chosen as the most representative due to their ecological, scenic, social and/or cultural value.

Otherwise, apart from this tax, the General Council has also acquired others domains which are managed and enhanced as protected areas. All this domains are integrated in the departmental heritage. That’s the case of the Bessilles’ Departmental Park. The PA present an important diversity throughout several points of vue: cultural (archaeology, built heritage...), geological, landscape, ecological or social (pastoralism, spare time activities: rambles, mountain bike, fishing...). PA are spread on all Hérault territory except lagoons and sand dunes milieu.

As part of its politic to improve this heritage, the General Council of Hérault encourages from many

years several activities of management, expertise and awareness.

Educational tools are also made for general public. This is a part of the General Council's desire which is to protect environment, to make general public sensitive to biodiversity and to show to the public the cultural and natural wealth of these PA.

The aim of the present action in Bessilles is to confort with the general public the enhancement and the acknowledge of a such PA. This means that an interpretative plan for Bessilles departmental park (F-34530 Montagnac, France) had to be made.

## Methodology

This interpretative scheme could have been done as a part of a public procurement contract. The chosen stakeholder has defined the ecological interpretation potential of this departmental domain (with cultural and pastoral aspects). He has describe the enhancement ways throughout interpretation plans (facilitations, park settlements, equipment,...). He has realized the implementation of these plans in situ (from the conception/manufacturing until the fitting).

Then the service has included the interpretative plan, the conception and the installation of the supports on site. It has accommodated the management and the protection of the PA with economical and occupancy stakes.

## Experimental approach

The realization of the interpretative plan has ended up in enhancement of the Bessilles departmental park by showing the heritage elements which compose its own identity.

This development made a sensitization possible for the general public on high frequented areas. It had to contribute to a quality welcome and to the assessment in the natural heritage of the park (landscape, biodiversity) and of its interests (spare time activities, ecological management, protection against risks of fire). This had been done with the respect of a sustainable management goal.

Bessilles Park is a privileged place for spare time activities in a protected environment. For 30 years,

this domain which covers an area of 35 hectares, offers a pleasurable area with its pine-wood, its large lawn and its equipments (picnic areas, barbecues, stretch of water, verdure theatre).

The sports activities are also privileged: outside swimming pool, sports fields, tennis, bowling pitch, mini golf. A mountain bike pathway also exists: it's a part of an approved area by the French Federation of Cycling and it's a starting point of 240 kms of marked out tours.

At last, a tree-climbing activity completes the spare time activity.

To favor the environmental quality and to be a part of the sustainable development local strategy, several actions have been made: renovation of the outside lighting (especially solar and wind lights), selective sorting, restoration of the green ways biodiversity by making a more ecological management.

Public is mainly composed by local families, tourists (especially clients of the holiday village), school groups and other groups organizing events on the site, sportsmen.

The interpretative scheme has been done around 3 phases:

- Phase 1: the interpretative scheme itself (inventory / diagnosis / proposals / action plans);
- Phase 2: Conception and realization of the interpretative means;
- Phase 3: Manufacturing, monitoring of realization and laying on area.

### Phase 1: the interpretative scheme

Note that phases 2 and 3 are developed hereafter (see: *Communication plan and scope of promotional actions*).

This plan is a tool which permits to frame and to go along with the implementation of the Bessilles park's enhancement by making a diagnosis. The aims of this diagnosis are to know the potentialities of the area, to describe the development proposals and the interpretative measures inherent in this domain, to organize into a hierarchy the implementation and to put a cost on the effective conception and realization.

This plan approaches:

- diagnosis of the existing;
- remediation proposals dealing with elements that have emerged as dysfunctional;
- proposals for means of discovery and raising awareness for visitors, according to several options or modules;
- costing these means in order to measure the necessary budgetary commitments in order to implement them.

The natural and scenic heritage of the site, the identity and the richness of any community, and the public and existing services are thus taken into account in order to:

- define the educational potential of these elements (character identity, demonstrativeness);
- measure the challenge in dealing with the corresponding theme in relation to the current or supposedly possible frequentation of various locations in the area;
- propose the first steps regarding the means to be implemented.

This diagnosis has integrated the 2 following points:

#### **A-1 / The analysis phase**

- ecological and landscaping analysis to define the interpretative goals, photographic report for the interpretation of the site;
- bibliographical et documentary works (regulatory protections, sensitivity of the environment...);
- proximity services (equipments for tourists and sports, accommodations, catering, touristic informations, business activities...);
- actual fitting-out: pedestrian and road access, welcome areas, parking, welcome capacity of the site, actual confines, visits and consequences (stamping, degradations...);
- actual valorization and management: equipments in situ (picnic areas, pathways, signs, markings, offered animations);

- analysis on the actual offer concerning spare time and sports activities, knowing the constructions made available to the public and the services offers by the community or the private operators.
- analysis of the potential public. Analysis of the different users of the Park (context, states of mind). Welcome capacity of the Park. Confines evaluation.
- analysis, definition and organization into a hierarchy of the interpretation potentials (levels of interest). This phase was realized from a field service, existing documentation and interviews).

#### **A-2 / The proposals phase**

- Definition of the interpretation themes: objectives, common thread, contents, messages formulation for visitors and locals. Proposals and choices for the human resources and the materials for interpretation:
- choices of interpretation means (fixed or temporary) to apply in harmony with the defined themes;
  - pathways and markings, accompanied visits or not (with or without booklet), itineraries with cartography: interes? Type? Length? Time? Difficulty? Starting points? Security and protection? Areas crossed over?
  - suggestions on materials and graphic choices to create for the interpretative furniture and the technical specification.

### **Participatory approach**

Two kinds of approaches may be explained.

#### **1. The institutional participatory approach**

We have to mention here that this plan did not come under a public participatory approach. Even if the Bessilles Park is a General Council of Hérault's property no local communities (or other public entities) decided to be a part of the schema project (even the Montagnac Municipality where is located the Park). The project has been encouraged by the General Council of Hérault and guided by the public requirements. With this interpretative plan the General Council of Hérault

has also answered to a public demand. However, a participatory approach has well existed with private stakeholders: the interpretative intention was accompanied by a concern for local development, including development of tourism via a partnership with French holiday villages (hereinafter VVF) and with the forest adventure park (a private contractor installed with the agreement of the General Council of Hérault). The VVF is interested in the following routes regarding the interpretation of heritage of the departmental park:

- establishment of an animal-themed playground at the heart of the departmental park;
- establishment of an interpretative trail for children, with a playful nature, based on an exploration book allowing for a kind of investigation/game in the area;
- establishment of an interpretative trail for the general public; this would most likely be useful for midseason holidaymakers, who are more attracted by nature than summer holidaymakers;
- tourist information on the specifics of the nature and regional heritage, particularly via a website or multimedia processing;
- summer programme of cultural activities on the themes of nature/heritage. These nocturnal activities could be “integrated” into the VVF event programme (if they are free).

Note that the VVF has an interesting botanical trail for the newcomers to the subject.

The forest adventure park offers groups and individuals tree-climbing activities and an educational trail (the barefoot trail is performed independently using a worksheet). The treetop course contributes to a playful and original approach to the pine forest, accompanied by information/guidance from activity leaders. The barefoot trail reinforces an educational approach related to local natural and ethnological heritage.

## **2. The participatory approach of the public**

Visitors mainly come in Bessilles Park to benefit of its pleasant verdant scenery. The use and the curiosity towards nature and biodiversity are unfortunately limited. Otherwise, the information offer on the Domain’s biodiversity is reduce whereas the Park

has an interesting natural heritage. Because of this, some points are still unknown from both tourists and local public.

The interpretative plan permits to resolve these negative points by:

- taking visitors/general public part in the discovery of this protected;
- involving them in the necessary conservation of this PA (awareness).

This educational scheme is an invitation to discover this area, and it also encourages locals and visitors to appreciate this local natural heritage.

## **Added value and results**

The interpretative scheme for Bessilles aims to identify opportunities for the development of the area, in order to interpret (in the “museological” sense) its identity and heritage for the sizable public that frequents it.

This work approaches:

- diagnosis of the existing;
- remediation proposals dealing with elements that have emerged as dysfunctional;
- proposals for means of discovery and raising awareness for visitors, according to several options or modules;
- costing these means in order to measure the necessary budgetary commitments in order to implement them.

Bessilles receives between 120.000 and 140.000 visitors each year.

Heritage interpretation aims to bring out the spirit of a place, its identity, and its wealth. To do this, we design means to mediate the site and its visitors:

- direct mediation: events, testimonies from actors, programme of activities on the site;
- indirect mediation: facilities and various other means, such as signs, games, guidebooks, markings, multimedia devices, etc...

Interpretation calls upon several factors regarding the understanding of the message by the visitor.



It seeks to:

- provide things to “see” and prefer to show the “beautiful”: aesthetic factor;
- provide things to understand: didactic and cognitive factor;
- provide pleasure in action or within a dynamic: playful factor (note that it may be an intellectual dynamic as is the case for chess players, for example).

Interpretation also seeks to bring about a realization. It questions the values of society and the individual by trying to arouse the interest of the latter.

It is not confined to explanations. It evokes, uses analogies, or “provokes” in order to encourage questioning and change attitudes. The message of interpretation is thus also food for thought.

Practical applications try to stick to these principles. Direct mediation by an activity leader is the most effective means of ensuring high quality interpretation. The activity leader is, in essence, interactive: they adapt to the audience. However, their presence is not permanent. The use of indirect mediation overcomes this absence but never has the same efficiency, regardless of the interactivity implemented in the media used.

The key ideas for interpretation in Bessilles are:

- to raise awareness of the biodiversity of the area, but also of its management via recreational and aesthetic means, by calling upon the imagination and by delivering a simple and immediate message, with strong cultural references, within a spirit of popular education;
- to encourage civic virtue and eco-citizenship, particularly in the core zone;
- to allow an appropriation of different areas in Bessilles, especially including naming and symbolization of a few places in the core zone;
- to open the discovery space and propose well-marked pathways.

The validated means of interpretation give an account of:

- a Nature identity: animals. The forming can be metal sculptures of insects (cicadas,

dragonflies, Spiked Magician, butterfly), animal totems (snake, scorpion, frog, owl) and an animal themed playground;

- identified locations: bird woods, dragonfly lake, eco-citizen square, cicada plaza, and insect island;
- pathways: “The tour of Bessilles”, “Nature Explorers” (children’s trail), a footbridge over the lake, an observatory on the lake (with jetty access in the reeds), a “pram” path;
- a managed and interpreted areas;
- events: mediation-event staff on site, nature outings programme, summer programme for *Arts des chemins* (“Arts of paths”) shows.

Most of purposed means of interpretation are playful (animals, insects...) because a large part of the general public is composed by families with children.

## Communication plan and scope of promotional actions

The phases 2 and 3 of the public procurement contract are specially related to the communication and the promotion of the action.

### Phase 2: Conception and realization of the interpretative means

The service contains:

- the texts realization and the illustrations/ pictures conception (photographs, watercolours, drawings, plans, pathways...);
- the digitisation;
- the graphic conception on its whole (page setting, templates...);
- the delivery of the computer templates.

### Phase 3: Manufacturing, monitoring of realization and laying on area

To obtain a highest quality on all medias, the service provider has insured the impression and the manufacturing following until the installation of all the interpretative elements validated with the General Council of Hérault (it means: signs, outside interpretative supports, security elements, laying and little masonry).



In concrete terms, 1 or 2 pre-existent access pathways on Bessilles area have been materialized with signboards (explanation of the progress, for who, which interest, which tour, etc...). The pathways are quite easy and they offer different lengths of time. Their principal aims are the discovery of places in a free and an independent way (converted lawn and stretch of water, pine-wood, viewpoints on the area or surroundings...).

The creation of an observation platform with a landscapes guide map (in relation with the pathways) has been purposed on the coastline plain (viticulture areas, Bassin de Thau, Mont Saint-Clair...). This platform, which is an observation and a contemplation place, is in line with the ecological management plan of the Park which foresees a minimum development, an efficient safety measures and an integration of the environment).

The following interpretative means have been validated:

- 5 thematic signs on the domain, 1 of which concerns pathways presentation and Bessilles presentation on its whole (see attached images in PDF);
- 1 observation platform with a panoramic guide map (not actually done);
- the materialization / creation of 1 or 2 access pathways.

Part of the General Council of Hérault's website or a separate site will necessary to host files, for online viewing or download:

- the sound files in connection with the "Bird woods" QR codes sign;

- the "Explorer's book" for the children's trail;
- a 360 degrees virtual tour that is working.

People serving interpretation: mediation-event staff on site will also permit to answer to different goals:

- maintain a presence on site;
- offer activities and nature outings planned for school, the general public, and groups of children;
- carry out spontaneous nature events for the general public according to the general principle of "raiding";
- raise awareness of fire risks, waste management, respect for the rules of usage for the area;
- provide all kinds of information about the area and regional heritage.

Events and animations are possible but the topics, the dates, the durations are still have to be decided. By the way, an ambitious programme of nature outings for the general public and a summer programme for *Arts des chemins* ("Arts of paths") shows have been purposed.

In 2012, Bessilles departmental park, as a PA, has also benefited from a 3 nature outings within the context of the "Unusual Walks" (component 3 of PP3's 2Bparks project). For example, nest boxes for European Rollers have most notably been installed during outings in Bessilles done within the framework of the "Unusual Walks".



Bessilles' Departmental Park





### *LDPP in Vercelli: Development of the province through the development of its Parks*

*Davide Benasso, Province of Vercelli and Sara Vavassori, Coclea soc. coop. soc., agency for local development consultant)*



#### **Content of the experimental action**

The following document shows the Local Development Pilot Plan that Province of Vercelli decided to implement for a better planning of the local development actions. This Plan has been edited by the Province, which, in order to make the 2Bparks project closer to territorial necessities, has involved two Protected Areas, local authorities for environmental protection, along Sesia river: “Ente di gestione delle Riserve Pedemontane e delle Terre d’Acqua” and “Ente di gestione dei Sacri Monti – Riserva Naturale del Sacro Monte di Varallo”. The project area is between Varallo and Vercelli.

#### Objectives of the Plan:

- to individuate and promote programming strategies for the 2 Protected Areas in order to involve stakeholders, economical operators and people to improve the fruition and economy of the Parks with a clear idea of sustainable development;
- to implement a project, aimed at local operators, people and politicians, to boost the management and development of the local country;
- to increase abilities and competence of technicians, operators and administrators in the environmental and development themes;
- to stimulate new and creative developmental approaches;



administrators;

- listening and understanding the more pressing demands;
- outlining and planning shared actions.

30 operators participated and they almost unanimously accepted to join the project's next phases. It was asked each stakeholder to express his/her knowledge about the local system and economy: main cultural and historical sites, most interesting and attractive Parks, best gastronomic products, economic situation, tourist services and information channels. They analysed the actual situation and they decided together the guidelines for a Local Development Pilot Plan.

Following the described educational meeting, the Plan requires to do two or three focus groups, into the Parks, dedicated to active participant stakeholders. The focus groups aim to define effective actions for the development of local business next to the Parks. Sustainable business is intended to be the key for cohesion and sustainable growth for this country. This Plan wants to create an operators' cluster, closely related to the Parks, and to support several activities and actions that they can start together, especially on supply and demand.

The role of the Protected Areas will be to actively participate to the focus groups encouraging the activities decided by the stakeholders, even by supporting the start up of their projects.

- to make people aware of the Parks' value, importance and beauty, and to spread a new culture of sustainable development and business.

All the stakeholders were invited at one first meeting, that had a double purpose: to make the stakeholders know more about the Protected Areas and their heritage (such as culture, environmental biodiversity and tourist itineraries) and to involve them in the following actions through a participatory approach. Especially it was aimed at:

- increasing the acquaintance between Parks and economic stakeholders;
- increasing the acquaintance between economic stakeholders and local

Objectives of the focus groups:

- to start a participated path for local economic stakeholders;
- to present The Province Programs on Job and Work;
- to create an operators cluster supported by local Authorities for the territory's improvement and growth;
- to implement effective actions;
- to plan development processes that can continue.

### Methodology

The participatory process supports the definition of a group of actions, that will allow the creation of a stakeholder and authorities cluster, in order



to evaluate the feasibility of a permanent shared sustainable business system designed to improve and promote every aspect of local country. At the moment it's not possible to list precisely the actions that are going to be implemented, because they can be decided during the focus groups, but they will follow these main steps:

1. Promoting Parks through promoting the economic stakeholders;
2. Outlining common services and systems;
3. External visibility, on a National and International scale of the Parks, attracting new people for a new economy;
4. Promoting of a sustainable business.

### Experimental approach

Local authorities were interviewed about actions of territorial development and environmental protection already complete or still to carry out. The interview was aimed at the individuation of possible development actions in order to improve the Parks' attraction factors.

It has been conducted a census about the stakeholders placed in the country next to the Protected Areas. The census and mapping of stakeholders was made through contacts with the Parks, the chamber of commerce (local authority for the enterprises' development and protection), several local associations and the tourist offices. In the area near the Parks these tourist operators were mapped.

At the same time, the territory's attractions have been mapped: protected areas, museums, natural and cultural heritage, rice mills, wine producers and all the other recreational places.

### Participatory approach

Coclea soc. coop. soc. coordinates and manages the project. It is an agency for the local development, which handles environmental sustainability, protection of natural resources, improvement of cultural vision, education and environmental communication.

The methods adopted to manage this process have a participative nature and it implies the active

participation of the whole territory (local agencies, economic operators and local communities).

### Added value and results

According to the short period, the Province of Vercelli has focused on the protection and promotion of work as the aim of its action, using specified resources to protect and favour employment, supporting unemployed people and the weak segments of the population, business venture and enterprises, also in terms of credit relief and subsidies to hiring. It has been planned a special Program aiming at enhancing economical development and job offers, within which the 2BParks project has been inserted as an important element of Strategic Axis 5.

One of its crucial themes is the improvement of the territory's quality, essential objective both for Vercelli and Valsesia country, according to which actions and great amount of resources have been activated, preparing further goals. The dimension of the quality of land must value the social and cultural heritage, sector that will have to find a fundamental role in the next steps of the strategic debate.

The extraordinary Program Lavoro&Sviluppo (Work&Job) is composed by axis, measures and actions in order to organize the available intervention and to propose a coordinated plan which, endorsing the necessity of work and business, invests in the most important aspects of the socio-economical and occupational local situation considering also the local characteristics, the difficulties and opportunities that can be catch.

The Strategic Axis by which the program is articulated are three, following these great themes: 1) infrastructure 2) job and 3) support to enterprises. In each of them - according to the need and the actual possibilities of action - it can be targeted sectors for specified actions, identified as "measures", thanks to which we can outline single operative efforts.

Looking to Axis 3 the measure 3.5 considers significant actions connected to initiatives that have been already powered up to better the attractive poles of territory and its typical characteristics' that should enforce the localized factors.

3.5 ATTRATTIVITA' DEL TERRITORIO	V A	3.5.1 Progetto Eu Rice Routes: le strade del riso europee	Provincia di Vercelli
	G A	3.5.2 Eu Rice School: la scuola europea del risotto	Provincia di Vercelli
	V A	3.5.3 Programma MED - Progetto "2BeParks" (Obiettivo Cooperazione Territoriale Europea)	Provincia di Vercelli

### Communication plan and scope of promotional actions

A preliminary contact with Vercelli's press provided some articles that present 2Bparks LDPP and the Program where it has been inserted.

Some educational meeting, in close cooperation with the Parks authorities and the stakeholders involved in the previous actions, will be organized for journalists. They will be focused on the promotion of Vercelli country and the local business. The meetings will consist in a guided tour into the two Protected Areas, during which all the journalists will test structures and services and can see the quality of territory.

It should be noticed that the educational meeting could be an effective instrument for a better contact with local press agencies and the promotion of the Plan and its guidelines, especially within the local community (further educational meetings might be organized for citizens and schools). In order to involve national press on territory's promotion on a larger scale, the project coordination team has already activated contacts to make some important articles. Considering the extreme importance of web visibility, it has been chosen the magazine "Latitudes Life – Travel Attitude", an online magazine specialized in travels and reportages, for the first article about the southern part of Vercelli country.



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per gli appassionati delle passeggiate  
nella natura, del cicloturismo  
e delle escursioni a cavallo*



**H** è il piacere di presentarvi un'ospite d'eccezione, famosa ed elegante. Come vorrei che fosse così semplice. Mi ritrovo invece maestro di cerimonia con un compito più arduo, farvi dimenticare una serie di luoghi comuni e indurvi ad apprezzare una vecchia signora con qualche difettuccio, che in troppi comunque tendono a denigrare esageratamente. Mi impegno in veste di avvocato e tutore dai attacchi calunniosi di chi magari l'ha incontrata solo di sfuggita o per limitare i paragoni inutili e poco edificanti di chi probabilmente neppure l'ha mai frequentata.

leggi tutto l'articolo ✍





### *LDPP in Andújar: Plan for Regional Development and Economical Promotion*

Antonio Jesús Rodríguez, Andújar City Council



#### **Content of the experimental action**

Andújar and its Natural Park, needs an instrument that would achieve concrete targets in the economic, environmental and social fields. Thus, we have developed a LDPP, called “Plan for Regional Development and Economical Promotion” that push their economic growth, the improvement of the environment and increasing the quality of life of its citizens, maintaining influence in their regional environment and with the ambition to transcend all the country for its economic importance.

To reverse the trend of the progressive ageing of the local population, the abandonment of the productive activities of the primary sector and the higher task of school dropout, it is essential to implement a LDPP, “Plan for Regional Development and Economical Promotion”, which will aim at the improvement of the municipality, the Natura Park and its surroundings with a vision in the medium and long term.

This plan will incorporate certain actions, such as the development of modern forestry via plantation of noble forest species of fast-growing (planted forests) on abandoned agricultural land; afforestation of the serranía (slopes, meadows, moorland...); the promotion of agro-tourism in small villages or hamlets of the municipality and proper rural tourism in the area; the expansion of hunting and sport fishing; the protection and conservation of the environment (conservation of flora and fauna, zones of the network “Natura 2000”, etc.); the promotion of new alternative crops of cotton, for example, oil seeds, and the use of local natural resources for the production of biomass for energy purposes; support for crops and local products (medicinal plants, bee-keeping, etc.); the development of the fruit production based on new species and subtropical and tropical varieties for fresh consumption or transformed; the introduction of the viti-viniculture with new technologies of



production, processing, marketing and distribution; the realization of social projects such as the settlement of farmers and improvement of housing and schooling; the systematized dissemination of training and information; etc.

These actions will be appropriate whit wheather, social and economic conditions of the area and be carried out in a coordinated manner to mobilize synergies local, provincial, regional and national; drawing on, where appropriate, support from the structural funds (in particular from the Feader Fund) and the Cohesion Funds of the European Union (EU), during the period 2007-2013, as well as of the European Investment Bank (BEI).

## Methodology

For the elaboration of the LDPP we designed a participatory process with institutions, entities, associations, entrepreneurs and investors that would allow us to define a final document as a basis for the development of future actions. So we've used the structure defined in the "Guidelines for Developing a Management Plan" adopted at the meeting of the project 2Bparks in Andújar. February 2011.

As tool for developing our work, we used the following documentation:

- Strategic plan of the city of Andújar;
- General urban management plan, PGOU;
- Integrated management of Natura 2000 sites.

The methodology adopted takes place in three phases:

1. Preparatory Phase;
2. The Planning Process;
3. Implementation and Review.

### 1. Preparatory Phase

To identify the framework of the protected area, the key features, the present and anticipated financial and human capacities, as a preparatory phase we elaborate a *economic, environmental and social diagnosis for Andújar*.

In this diagnosis we included the following topics:

- Demographic structure, active population, employment and unemployment;

- Basic infrastructure (transport, telecommunications, housing...);
- Social services (education, health, sports, leisure time...);
- Environment;
- Status and prospects of productive sectors (current situation and prospects):
  - Primary sector;
  - Industrial sector;
  - Tertiary sector (tourism).

### 2. The Planning Process

We prepare the first Step: (Data collection, resource assessment, stakeholder assessment) before launch the Public consultation to evaluate the resource and socio-economic information.

We develop this public consultation in a workshop with stakeholders that takes place on 24th of June 2011 (see workshops documentation).

In this workshop we present the basis of the LDPP, describe the main instruments for Regional Development and define first Experimental actions. We start working in 3 of then:

1. Collaboration in Anducab 2011, Horse Competition, that took place between 9th and 11th of September, as main elements for economical and sustainable development inside Natural Park Sierra de Andújar and surroundings.
2. Collaboration in livestock fair 2011, as an elements for economical and sustainable development inside Natural Park Sierra de Andújar and surroundings.
3. Participation in Ibercaza 2011. Andújar city council had a stand of information with information of 2bparks project. Ibercaza 2011, fair of hunting and fishing in the province of Jaén, reached its fifth edition, with great expectations, backed by the results obtained in Ibercaza 2010, with its 150 exhibitors and 19,000 visitors in three days, became a real reference point for hunters and fishermen from all Spain met in Jaén, a few dates in preparing the opening of the Veda.

This process is based in a participatory approach with stakeholders. That's why, working with the result of experimental actions (list...) and the public participation, we prepare the draft of the LDPP.

To recover the opinion and collaboration of different stakeholders we open a Blog with eight different focus groups.

1. Forest action
2. Acting for environment
3. Agricultural and livestock
4. Industrial and business development
5. Rural tourism and leisure
6. Rural social development
7. Technological performances: Andújar Digital
8. Other future activities

The final draft of the LDPP with the conclusions of the Blog was presented to the stakeholders on 7th February 2012 and presentation to mass media the 13th of February.

## Experimental approach

Inside all actions of LDPP we developed two as pilot projects:

1. Honey Museum
2. Regeneration of Del Val's Gardens

### 1. Museum of Honey

The wide and varied range of indigenous products from Andújar, offers an alternative cultural leisure, where you can choose to trace the origins of the town or discover the secrets of their tradition. That is why the idea of making a Museum of honey of Andújar, taking advantage of our ancestors had developed traditional beekeeping in a rather important, and so to occupy a space designed to learn and enjoy the story.

Our purpose is to highlight the intrinsic wealth of ethnological heritage and opportunities offered by the wealth derived from honey and tradition, through the development of consistent actions in Cataloging and Inventory beekeeping heritage, to restore this heritage trails set around to this heritage and organize gastronomic.

The predisposition of this project to the sharing of experiences and knowledge will enable cooperation to be successful, as we are aware of the importance this has for its traditional product areas and can contribute to their economic recovery.

### 2. Regeneration of Del Val's Gardens

The grounds of Del Val, are an area of 14.500 square meters in the previous area of Andújar Natural Park and the main access to the Natural Park.

This unused area of the city should become an area of special interest for the leisure time not only of citizens of Andújar, but visitors to the city as well as a stimulus for outdoor activities.

Therefore seeks to value 12,000 square meters of gardens for public use, and the construction of two major tracks or areas of activity. In these two areas will be held the Annual Awards Horse Fair of Andújar (Anducab),

In the area also will be built the Taxidermy Museum, with more than 700 stuffed animals with an area of 1,700 square meters divided on two floors, which will stimulate tourism and local economy.



*View of Del Val's Gardens. Before and After of regeneration*

## Participatory approach

The target groups involved in the LDPP were

- Institution and relevant bodies involved in PA management;
- Regional development and environment agencies;
- Universities, training and education centres;
- Tourist providers and operators;
- Chambers of Commerce;
- Managers of protected areas;
- Local media (newspapers, radio, TV).

The participatory approach was developed by four concrete actions:

1. Public consultation in a workshop with stakeholders that takes place on 24th of June 2011. The main objective of the workshop was to inform about the project, and to introduce and start a debate about the LDPP and the experimental actions to develop in the future.
2. Website: From the first of September 2011 we start with the web: [2bparksandujar.blogspot.com](http://2bparksandujar.blogspot.com) as the main place for collaboration. With the invitation and later participation of the stakeholders through the Blog, we open a great range of people and institution that can participate in developing the LDPP
3. Focus Group. (13th January 2012). The main objective of the group was coordinating the elaboration of the LDPP with the conclusions of the blog, and to collect the final information of the planning process. Other objective is to start with the final conclusions and define last meeting for LDPP presentation.
4. Workshop for final presentation of LDPP. (7th February 2012). The main objective of the workshop was to present the final conclusion of the LDPP, the study about *economic, environmental and social diagnosis for Andújar* and the conclusions of the Web debate and the 8 focus group:

1. Forest action
2. Acting for environment
3. Agricultural and livestock
4. Industrial and business development

5. Rural tourism and leisure
6. Rural social development
7. Technological performances: Andújar Digital
8. Other future activities

## Added value and results

The main objectives of the LDPP are to provide a horizontal platform that covers, justifies and effectively coordinates the different vertical actions within the framework of a coherent concept. These actions will be carried out in the form of projects drawn up according to all administrative requirements and technical and financial engineering.

We should underline the fact that our project is not to confine ourselves to a mere temporary compromise confined to make some investments in the field of some economic sectors - which by their very nature, extent of the challenges and limited resources would be limited - in the municipality but rather intervention of mobilizing all actors present and potential, endogenous and exogenous, public and private, within the framework of a global project conception, necessary to trigger sustainable rural development in the area. That is why we intend to become proponents and promoters of new performances of new companies, a new image of the municipality, its inhabitants and its products, taking advantage of local, provincial, regional and national synergies with the simultaneous support of policies, measures and, where appropriate, of the financial instruments of the EU.

In addition, as project promoters, our contribution will be to form groups of people, inside and outside of the municipality, to which we'll motivate to bring resources and invest in actions and economic activities that we propose in this LDPP, creating new opportunities for employment, development and wealth for all residents of Andújar and its region.

The results of the LDPP are described in the activities to be done:

### Forest action

- A. Reforestation of slopes and meadows of mount public
- B. Promotion of crops and products associated

with the forest

- C. Intensive forestry (planting of trees of essence Nobles on lands abandoned by agriculture)

#### **Acting for environment**

- A. Conservation of biodiversity and Natura “2000” network
- B. Protection and sanitation of the riverbed and the Guadalquivir River basin
- C. Observation and nature interpretation and centre network of observatories environmental
- D. preservation of the natural park sierra de Andujar

#### **Performance agricultural and livestock**

- A. plan for restructuring and modernisation of the Sector del Olivar
- B. Plan for the reorganization of the cotton sector
- C. Fruit and horticulture
- D. Viti-viniculture
- E. promotion of traditional products and innovative products
- F. use of biomass of agricultural origin for the production of renewable energy

#### **Business development and industrial action**

- A. Ground Industrial and industrial parks
- B. Logistics centre Inter-modal
- C. Environmental technology park of renewables
- D. Agro-industrial estate and agri-food distribution services

#### **Rural tourism and leisure**

- A. Hunting tourism and hunting hostel
- B. Association and sport fishing shelter
- C. Practice of hiking
- D. Municipal riding school
- E. Performance in the village of the Encinarejo and course of the Jándula River on its way
- F. Action in the village from the Hill of the Cabezo
- G. Network of hotels and hostels
- H. High performance Athletics Centre

#### **Rural social development**

- A. School of crafts
- B. School of hotel and catering business of the

Sierra de Andújar

- C. Digital village

#### **Technological performances: Andújar Digital**

- A. Technological centre of Andújar
- B. Regional broadband network
- C. Tourism excellence
- D. Industrial network
- E. Creation of an educational network
- F. Communication channels with citizen
- G. Gran foraid to families, associations and special groups
- H. Employment and vocational orientation
- I. public Internet access centres
- J. Digital Town Hall: ICT infrastructure

#### **Communication plan and scope of promotional actions**

We elaborate two main actions of promotion of the plan:

##### **1. The web for participatory process**

In the workshop of 24h June 2011 the stakeholders working in the LDPP of Andújar, propose the use of new instrument for documents and to share information, and collaboration web to work in Pilot Plans and definition of LDPP.

This Web [2bparksandujar.blogspot.com](http://2bparksandujar.blogspot.com) was really usefull to to define the experimental actions through the web and know it's mainly used to follow the concrete actions of the LDPP and the experimental actions.

##### **2. Press conference. Presentation of Plan for Regional Development and Economical Promotion**

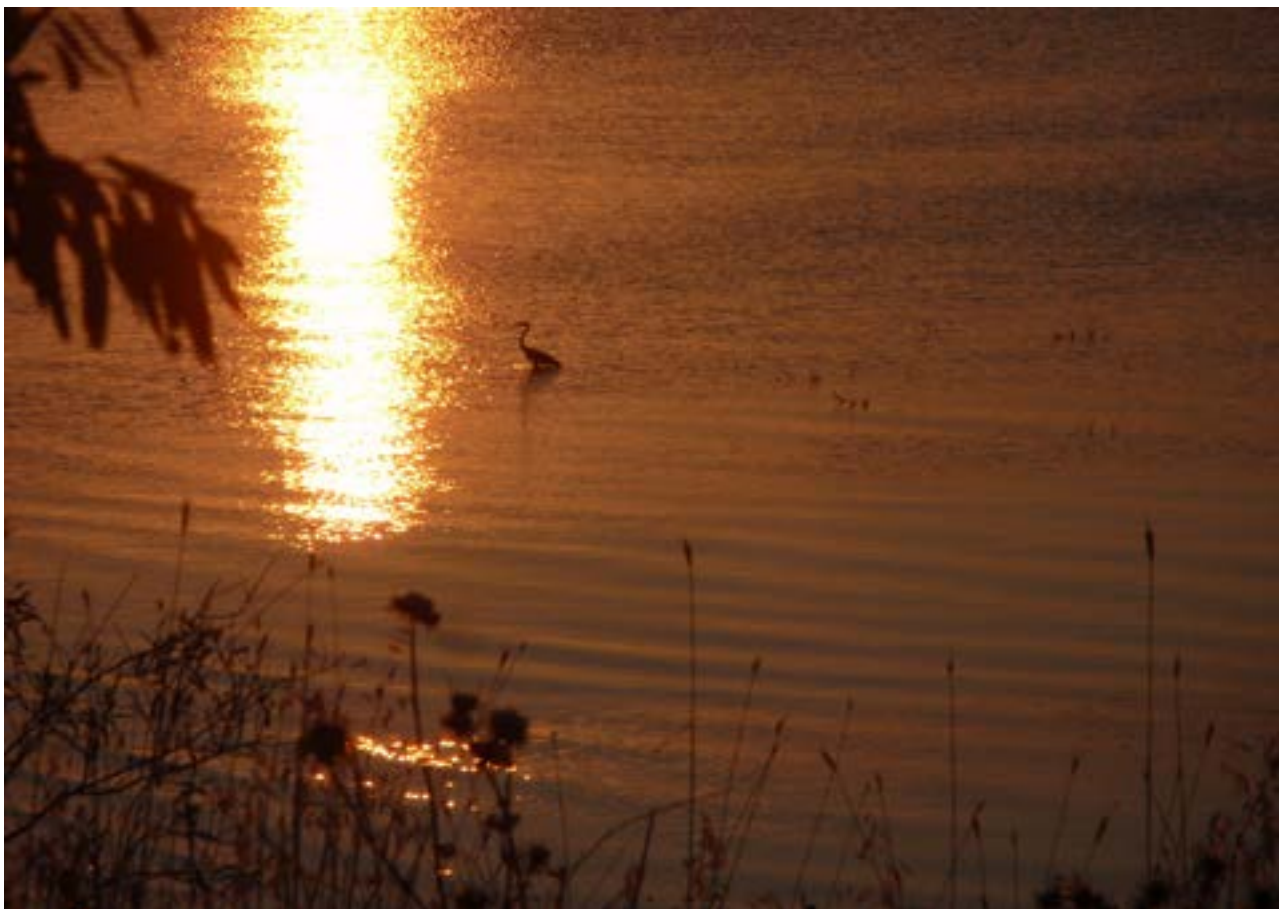
Inside Phase 3.2, Experimental actions: Local Development Pilot Plans (LDPP) we develop with stakeholders a Plan for Regional Development and Economical Promotion. The final results of this project was presented to mass media, made by Joaquín Luque Arenas, Concilior of Local Development in Andújar City Council. In the presentation participates María Eugenia Cuervo from Andújar municipality and María Flamarique. External expert in charge of LDPP development.





### *LDPP in Thessaly: Integrated local pilot development plan for Karla lake*

Region of Thessaly



#### Scope of the Plan

Scope of the pilot development plan was the investigation of the development interventions that are needed to take place in order to find the correct way to manage the protected area of Lake Karla. These interventions do not include actions for the sustainable tourism development of the region, as these were considered separately in the Local Strategic Tourism Plan developed.

The general-strategic development objectives of the study area are:

1. the enlargement, modernization and systematic production and economic basis for improving the competitiveness of the local economy;
2. the exploitation of the opportunities and the proper adaptation to the changes brought about by the forthcoming reconstruction of Lake Karla;

3. the creation of multi-employment conditions of the residents to create additional incomes;
4. the demographic stability and rising of living standards;
5. sustainable development in the study area, with the exploitation and preservation of the natural and cultural environment.

The three specific pillars on which the categorization of priorities for intervention was based, are:

1. the natural and built environment;
2. the local community and culture;
3. the local economy - activities.

## Methodological approach

The preparation of the Local Development Pilot Plan of the Protected Area of Lake Karla was based:

- A) On the results of the deliverables that have been implemented by the Region of Thessaly in the framework of the 2Bparks project, in particular:
- 1) report on experiences to be capitalized from the Region of Thessaly;
  - 2) synthesis report on the evaluation and comparison of partners' experiences to be capitalized;
  - 3) report on the analysis of the results of questionnaires for the recording of problems, experiences and proposed solutions in the wider area of the Lake Karla;
  - 4) roadmap for managers and self-assessment guide.
- B) On the local consultations with the participation of relevant stakeholders of the region, which specified the action plan based on the updated data available and the activities that take place in the area of intervention, namely the Local Workshop that took place on 1st March 2012 in Stefanovikio, Thessaly (described below).

The procedure for the preparation of the pilot development plan was:

- specification of the area of intervention;
- analysis of the current situation in the region, according to all available data. Elaboration of a SWOT analysis in order to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in the region;
- specification of the strategy for the region;
- development of intervention priorities and indicative activities;
- development of indicative budget and timetable.

## Actions and main results

The development strategy ensures an integrated and multi-sectoral planning method and the complementarity of actions and projects, bringing

together stakeholders, assets and the overall objective. In this context, the specific objectives (themes) of the Local Development Plan are developed, incorporating individual priorities. The specialization of the Development Strategy at the level of thematic pillars was based on specific characteristics, problems and disadvantages of the area and in pursuit of complementarity, synergy and cohesion of individual actions in order to increase the effectiveness of development interventions.

The tables below present the proposed priorities for intervention and indicative measures and actions, indicative budget and timetable. The proposed plan is configured to not require large costs, but with little cost to be immediately effective in changing the profile of the area.



AXIS 1: DEVELOPMENT OF THE BUSINESS CONTEXT AND ATTRACTION OF INVESTMENTS

Measure Actions	Title	Budget (€)	Timetable
1.1	Promotion of Business Cooperation, Internationalization of Enterprises and Import of Quality Policy	135.000	10.2012 - 06.2017
1.1.1	Composition and Operation of Local Quality Pact – LQP	64.000	10.2012 - 06.2017
1.1.2	Development of Quality label “Lake Karla” and Elaboration of Prescriptions for labeling	12.000	10.2012 - 10.2012
1.1.3	Development and Operation of an Internet Market (e-Market Place) for the Promotion of regional products and the Collaboration of Local Enterprises	36.000	11.2012 - 06.2017
1.1.4	Development of Information System to provide continuous information to local entrepreneurs about International Business Meetings and Opportunities	23.000	01.2013 - 06.2017
1.2	Strengthening of Enterprise for young people, Promotion of Innovation, investments attraction and promotion of local production	257.000	07.2012 - 06.2017
1.2.1	Elaboration of a Guide about Investment Opportunities, Enterprise Incorporation and Tax methods	35.000	01.2013 - 05.2013
1.2.2	Implementation of Skills Development Seminar for the Strengthening of Business Profitability (Creation / Websites, English, Information Technology, Taxation, Marketing, Management, Human Resource Management, etc.)	44.000	04.2013 - 06.2017
1.2.3	Enactment and organization of annual “Innovation Awards”	18.000	06.2013 - 06.2017
1.2.4	Website Development and Operation for the Promotion of Local capacity and comparative advantage of the Local Area	16.000	09.2013 - 06.2017
1.2.5	Elaboration of Strategic Marketing Plan for the Promotion of the Region and its Products	24.000	07.2012 - 11.2012
1.2.6	Organisation of Outdoor Annual Exhibitions of Local and Regional Cooking Products ("Lake Product & Gastronomy Shows")	120.000	04.2014 - 06.2017

AXIS 2: IMPROVEMENT OF QUALITY OF LIFE

Measure Actions	Title	Budget (€)	Timetable
2.1	Improvement of the region and promotion as a Site of Special Landscape of quality of life	414.000	09.2012 - 06.2017
2.1.1	Elaboration of Architectural Specifications in cooperation with the scientific capacity of the area, involved Chambers - Production of a Guide for the Promotion of Entrepreneurs, Citizens and Planning Services	26.000	09.2012 - 03.2013
2.1.2	Elaboration and Institutional Registration of the Incentives for Citizens and Enterprises for the Improvement of Existing Sided of Houses / Enterprises - agreements with financial institutions for of loans on concessional terms	10.000	04.2013 - 06.2013
2.1.3	Enactment and Organization of the Annual Embellishment Awards in villages (houses, shops, courtyards, gardens) "ARTEMIS - Embellishment Week of Villages"	18.000	04.2014 - 06.2017
2.1.4	Improvement of Entrance and the overall profile of the Landscape of the villages using local raw materials	120.000	03.2015 - 09.2015
2.1.5	Small Scale Restoration Projects and embellishment of public spaces of the study area	240.000	10.2015 - 05.2016
2.2	Strengthening of actions for Environmental Protection	372.000	07.2012 - 06.2017
2.2.1	Enactment and Organization of Three (3) days per year for the cleaning of the Region and the Lake in cooperation with schools and volunteer groups	15.000	07.2012 - 06.2017
2.2.2	Creation of 'Network of Volunteers for the Protection of Karla Lake from natural and man-made hazards "Activation of Voluntary Guarding and the Lake	10.000	07.2012 - 06.2017
2.2.3	Organisation of Awareness Campaign for Residents on the Protection of Natural Environment of Karla Lake	76.000	04.2013 - 06.2017
2.2.4	Syntax and Conclusion of Voluntary Environmental Agreements of Local and Regional Enterprises Affecting the Environment of Karla Lake	8.000	07.2015 - 11.2015
2.2.5	Creation of a Targeted Website for the Promotion of Environmental Features of Karla Lake, Guidelines for the Protection, and Promotion of Fauna and Flora	23.000	09.2012 - 02.2013
2.2.6	Supply and Set of Recycle Bins and Issue of Brochures / Information Signs - Training of Residents and Visitors	120.000	01.2016 - 09.2016
2.2.7	Planning, Creation and Set of signs at the area to inform visitors about the natural environment	120.000	10.2016 - 05.2017

AXIS 3: CREATION OF A COOPERATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE REGION

<b>Measure Actions</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Budget(€)</b>	<b>Timetable</b>
3.1	Promotion of Partnerships with Local Authorities and Local Social Groups	40.000	01.2013 - 06.2017
3.1.1	Enactment and Implementation of Four (4) Permanent Consultation Thematic Workshops of Local Government with the Citizens	20.000	01.2013 - 06.2017
3.1.2	Twinning with Villages of Europe	20.000	07.2013 - 06.2017
3.2	Activation of Homogeneity Factor, internal migrants and Friends of Lake Karla	42.000	09.2012 - 06.2017
3.2.1	Establishment and Operation of a Friends of Karla Lake Network	12.000	09.2012 - 06.2017
3.2.2	Organisation of Annual Conference for Greeks in foreign countries and Friends of Karla Lake	20.000	01.2013 - 06.2017
3.2.3	Development of Annual Program of Hosting children of Greeks living in foreign countries	10.000	07.2013 - 06.2017





### *LDPP in Slovenia: An interpretative scheme for the LDPP of the Ljubljansko barje*

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#### **Content of the experimental action**

Protected areas are intended for “protecting and preserving biotic diversity, natural and corresponding cultural sources, by basing the management on legal protection or other effective means” (Parks for life 1994; cv: Mikuš 2006). The act of protection, which is the most prevalent means of nature protection – nature, plant and animal conservation –, also has other important set objectives, like scientific exploration, tourism and recreation, education, using resources in natural ecosystems according to the principles of sustainability, and ensuring the preservation of cultural and traditional elements (Skoberne 2004; cv: Hribar, Šmid Hribar and Erhartič 2009, p. 13).

For these reasons, one of the most important aims of protection is to enable people to experience the nature, cultural traditions and spiritual values

of a certain space of extraordinary character. Establishing protected areas for visitors represents one of the important goals, one of the purposes for the existence of such areas and is consequently one of the protected area managers’ most important tasks. The presence of visitors in protected areas can often have a harmful effect on these fragile environments, which is in contrast to the original objective of protecting the unique and diverse natural areas. On the other hand, promoting tourism in a certain area by experiencing the nature prompts respect and awareness from the local inhabitants about the uniqueness of the protected areas and nature in general. The final objective of all the participants is therefore that a well-managed infrastructure in the protected area would evoke interest among the locals and visitors about the meaning of nature conservation and protection, the cultural heritage and raise awareness about the

important activities (Baldauf et al. 2010, p. 12). When forming the interpretative contents, the following goals were set:

- to divert visitors to less vulnerable areas and indirectly help conserve the nature;
- to encourage the visitors to have a sense of duty to the nature and cultural landscape and
- to increase the sustainable offer of the protected areas and with that visitor satisfaction.

The term interpretation has only seldom been used in the context of protected areas in Slovenia and has not been widely established. The Dictionary of Standard Slovenian (2012) defines interpretation as a) “acting, causing the meaning, the content of something to be understood; explanation” and as b) “artistic creation”. The interpretation in this context refers to the first definition.

Interpretation is a communicational process that explains the meanings and mutual connections of our natural and cultural heritage through a direct experience, objects, locations and the landscape (Veverka 2011a, p. 35).

The interpretation of nature is also a counterweight to man’s destructive intervention in nature. The concept saw its beginnings in the developed industrial society of the late nineteenth century, when people first attempted to conserve parts of nature, especially by protecting certain areas of nature (national parks). In the mid-twentieth century, nature conservationists recognized that they needed the support of the visitors to these areas to run them successfully. An interpretation is a tool with which to bring nature and cultural heritage closer to the visitors and local inhabitants. The starting point is the realization that nature is conserved by those who know it, understand it, cherish it, identify with it. In addition, an interpretation also benefits local tourism, offering an experience to the visitor that is increasingly valued (Baldauf et al. 2010, p. 28).

One of the shorter, but more concise definitions of the terms also explains an interpretation as the translation of the experts’ text into the language of the general public (Ogorelec 2004; Veverka 2011b). A well-rounded interpretation usually demands a considerable amount of input effort. Interpretative trails are no rarity in Slovenia, but they seldom

abide by the principles of interpretation. The communicational process in accordance with the Tilden principles only becomes interpretational when (Veverka 2011b, p. 26):

- it raises the visitor’s interest, preferably in a provocative way;
- it applies to the visitors’ everyday life;
- it explains the interpretation’s main content in a creative, unique and unforgettable manner;
- it strives for a unified message (using adequate graphic displays, etc.).

Article 67 of the Nature Conservation Act (Official Gazette 96/04) classifies landscape parks within the group of protected areas that are “natural areas possessing great abiotic, biotic and landscape diversity and numerous diverse valuable natural features which may be intricately and functionally interconnected”.

Article 71 of the same act defines a landscape park as an area with emphasized high-quality and long-term interaction of people and nature and with a high ecological, biotic and landscape value.

The Ljubjansko barje Landscape Park was established with the Decree on the Ljubljansko barje Landscape Park with the intention of “protecting natural values, preserving biotic diversity and sustaining and strengthening landscape diversity” (Official Gazette 112/2008). One of the goals of protecting an area is to enable the inhabitants of the landscape park to have a satisfying residential experience by encouraging sustainable development. The promoted values in a landscape park therefore include social and economic development, meeting environmental standards, a sustainable use of natural resources, preserving cultural heritage and maintaining the recognizable characteristics of the area. The park is divided into three protected areas with different set protection regimes for each area. The entire area of the park, however, forbids any actions, interventions, placements or carrying out any activities in any scope, time and manner as would endanger the park goals and would exacerbate the hydrological, geomorphological and environmental characteristics of the park from the aspect of achieving a favorable state of plant and animal

species and habitats, securing suitable hydrologic conditions and preserving landscape diversity and the scope of extensive meadows (Official Gazette 112/2008).

Establishing a landscape park and its operating regimes therefore means more than realizing the preservation of plant and animal species and their habitats; it also entails the involvement of the local inhabitants, local communities, interest groups and entrepreneurial incentives into all the sustainably oriented activities that are involved in planning and managing a protected area (2012 Park establishment). The park's main purpose is to conserve nature and provide a relaxing environment for people.

The interpretation of Ljubljansko barje may help people better understand their own natural environment. The interpretation of Ljubljansko barje is perceived as part of the recreational and tourist offer. In addition to its imbedded values that are the subject for nature conservation and cultural heritage protection, Ljubljansko barje also has a great recreational and tourism potential for Ljubljana and other settlements in its surroundings (URBI 2007, p. 12).

## Methodology

One of the first steps toward the set goals was designing the form, which served as the foundation for generating the interpretation contents. The introductory parts of the form (1: location, 2: outline of the interpreted area) are intended for giving a basic presentation of the area: its placement in the immediate and broader area and a brief description of the relief characteristics, bodies of water, predominant vegetation, and land use, as well as the key socio-geographic features such as the predominant settlement type, the population of each settlement, and their socioeconomic composition. Because we wish to avoid sensitive areas in creating additional interpretive content, we have also inventoried the presence of currently protected areas for each selected area.

Part 3 is designated for listing the valuable features of individual areas. This is a key foundation for shaping the topics, goals, and content of the interpretation. The natural values and cultural

heritage have been inventoried for each selected area through desk research, taking into account both those that are protected through legislation as well as those that have only been documented. After completing all the fieldwork activities, any potentially missing valuable features were added.

Part 4 is dedicated to traffic accessibility to the area and to commercial, service, and leisure activities in it. Special attention was paid to the paradigm of sustainable mobility.

Part 5, to which we dedicated our central attention, focuses on interpretation; specifically, its topic and goals. The selection of the topics was connected with the predominant type of values in a particular area and represents the main topic or underlying element of the interpretation. The second step was to select up to three interpretation goals we aimed to achieve in a particular area. In line with the selection of the topics and goals, we concluded by proposing stops along the nature trails.

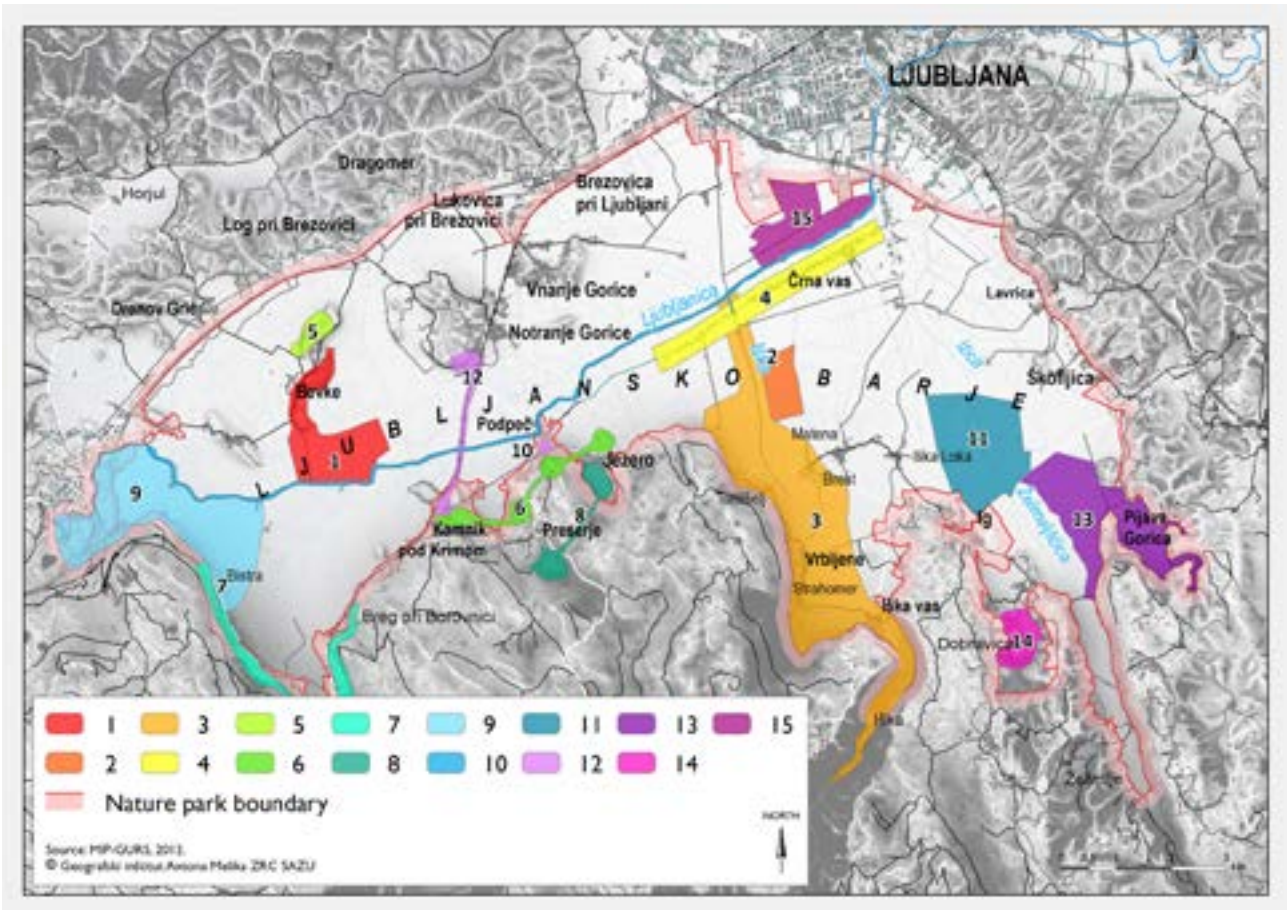
## Experimental approach

We completed the form through careful deskwork and fieldwork to inspect the covered area, and thus selected areas that are suitable for interpretation, avoiding the most strictly protected areas in the process. We recorded fifteen areas that are suitable for interpretation:

- the springs of the Ljubljanica River – extensive springs on the contact of the karstic and boggy terrain;
- the ethnologic heritage of Bevke and its surroundings – the cohabitation of man and nature through time;
- old points of orientation (churches) – historical points of orientation above the basin floor of Ljubljansko barje;
- Iška – the triple characteristics of the Iška River plain: ravine, alluvial fan, marsh;
- Later colonization (Črna vas and Lipe) – remnants of one of the last colonizations in Slovenia;
- Iški morost – habitats in Iški morost;
- Ljubljanica – the main water vein in the Barje basin;
- Mali plac – a rare remnant of peat-moss raised bog;



- Pile dwellers – the pile dwelling culture;
- Substitute habitat at the construction site at the Barje landfill: creating a substitute habitat;
- Quarries – using local stone for construction;
- Pijava Gorica – the habitats near Pijava Gorica;
- Karst hinterland – the karst polje and karst lake;
- The Draga Valley and its hinterland – forest and ponds as living environments;
- Technical heritage (Borovnica, Bistra) – the traffic and hydro energy technical heritage.



*Fifteen areas in Ljubljansko barje, suitable for interpretation*

For a clearer explanation in filling out the interpretation forms, a detailed example with the case of Iška is given in the following pages.



## INTERPRETATION AREA NAME: IŠKA

### I - LOCATION

1. Country: Slovenia
2. Broader discussed area (protected area, landscape): Ljubljansko barje Landscape Park
3. Immediate discussed area (established name): Iška
4. Municipality (ies): Ig
5. Settlement (s): Brest, Iška, Iška vas, Lipe, Strahomer, Tomišelj, Vrbljene
6. Cartographic display (indicate the immediate discussed area on the cartographic display of the broader discussed area):

### II - INTERPRETATION AREA OUTLINE

7. Brief outline (geographic location, relief characteristics, bodies of water, vegetation, prevailing land use, land settlement: number of inhabitants, settlement type (urbanized, suburbanized, rural, condensed, dispersed), employee occupation:

The area is located on the south-eastern edge of Ljubljansko barje and encompasses the majority of Iški vršaj, which descends evenly into a level and boggy marsh basin. The Iška River flows along the southern and western edge of the area. In the upper stream, the river has carved a 300 to 400 m deep gorge called Iški vintgar. In the Pleistocene, it deposited an extensive alluvial fan on the transition from the gorge to Ljubljansko barje. This fan represents an important water source, as it supplies a third of the population of Ljubljana with water. Fields and gardens are predominant in this area rich in fertile soil. Brest (325 inhabitants), Iška vas (400), Strahomer (155), Tomišelj (307) and Vrbljene (242) are roadside settlements, Iška (227) is an elongated, and Lipe (89) an elongated roadside settlement (2011). According to data from 2002, a large portion of all the employees from the settlements are employed in the service sector; this is especially expressed in Lipe (77.3%) and Tomišelj (73%), and somewhat less in Strahomer with a 42.6 percent share. Strahomer also stands out in the larger share of employees in agriculture (11.1%), while Vrbljene has one of the greater portions of households that produce food (83.1%).

8. Protected areas (the presence of existing protected areas):

The interpretation area is in the first and third protection area of the landscape park.

The far most northern edge of the area extends to the Ljubljanica River, which has been defined as a natural monument (no. 4036) with an area surface of 118 ha in the Decree on the Ljubljansko barje Landscape Park. A smaller part of the area extends to the Iški morost natural reserve (no. 4071, 63 ha), where some of the best examples of wet marshy meadows can be found.

Almost the entire area (except the settlements) falls within the Natura 2000 area. It is divided into two areas: the Krim Highlands: Menišija (no. 3000256) and Ljubljansko barje (no. 5000014).

### III - VALUES

9. Natural values (from official registers and possible missing values):

No.	Type	Name	Description
167	Hydrologic, geomorphologic	Ljubljanica	The Ljubljanica River downstream of Vrhnika
78	Geomorphologic, hydrologic, botanical, geologic, zoological	Iška with Zala - gorge	The Iška and Zala gorges with Iški vintgar, Skalni mož in Vrbica and Votli kamen in Iška, thermophilic deciduous forests with clusters of black pine.

There are four other natural values in addition to the mentioned two (the names in bold closely relate to the interpretation topic).

10. Cultural values (from official registers and possible missing values):

No.	Type	Name	Dating	Description
13067	Secular architectural heritage	Vrbljene – village well along the road	Mid-twentieth century, 1939	A disused village well; a well with a concrete oblong trough and a cast iron pump. It was built in 1939.
20447 / 2020447	Secular architectural heritage	Iška - Sawmill Iška 14 homestead	Mid-nineteenth century	A working water-powered Venetian single-blade sawmill, most likely dates back to the mid-nineteenth century. It has a spade-shaped spindle, which works well in the shallow level rise. The sawmill is located in a wooden outbuilding and has stone built foundations with an adjoining cottage for the sawmill worker (Russian stove).

There are forty-seven other natural values in addition to the mentioned two (the names in bold closely relate to the interpretation topic). Along with the mentioned values, there are also occurrences of archaeological heritage, memorial heritage, settlement heritage and sacral architectural heritage.

11. Prevailing value types:

Geomorphological natural values, geological natural values, hydrological natural values, secular architectural heritage

#### IV INFRASTRUCTURE AND SUPERSTRUCTURE

12. Traffic accessibility (bus, train, tram, car, bicycle, gondola, pedestrian; direction, connection frequency, name, surface type for commonplace access types, internet address):

The Ljubljana Public transport line 19I has recently been extended to the turning circle in Iška vas ([http://www.lpp.si/sites/default/files/lpp\\_vozniredi/MPP/Linija19.html](http://www.lpp.si/sites/default/files/lpp_vozniredi/MPP/Linija19.html), [http://sl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mestni\\_avtobusni\\_liniji\\_%C5%A1t.\\_19B\\_in\\_19I\\_\(Ljubljana\)](http://sl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mestni_avtobusni_liniji_%C5%A1t._19B_in_19I_(Ljubljana))), while the other settlements (Brest, Strahomer, Tomišelj, Vrbljene) are connected to the turning circle by a long-distance bus line ([http://www.lpp.si/sites/default/files/lpp\\_vozniredi/PPP/ig\\_zapotok.html](http://www.lpp.si/sites/default/files/lpp_vozniredi/PPP/ig_zapotok.html)); the bus runs numerous times daily from Monday to Saturday. The Iška settlement does not have a bus connection and the 19B line runs through Lipe every day ([http://www.lpp.si/sites/default/files/lpp\\_vozniredi/MPP/Linija19.html](http://www.lpp.si/sites/default/files/lpp_vozniredi/MPP/Linija19.html)).

A large portion of the area is covered in the recommended, unmarked cyclists' route "Mihaelov krog" cycling trail.

13. Service activities (accommodation, snack bar, restaurant, tourist farm, convenience store, museum, rental shops, public bathroom, post office, bank, ATM, gas station, other; name, address, opening hours, internet address; cell phone service, internet access (Wi-Fi,...)):

The Iški vintgar restaurant in Iška (<http://www.iski-vintgar.si/>) is open from April to October.

In Brest: Pizzeria Mars (<http://www.slodesign.com/mars/>), Mavec Mihaela snack bar (Brest 33) and the Sonček convenience store (Brest 46).

The Dobra vila restaurant is in Lipe (Lipe 11).

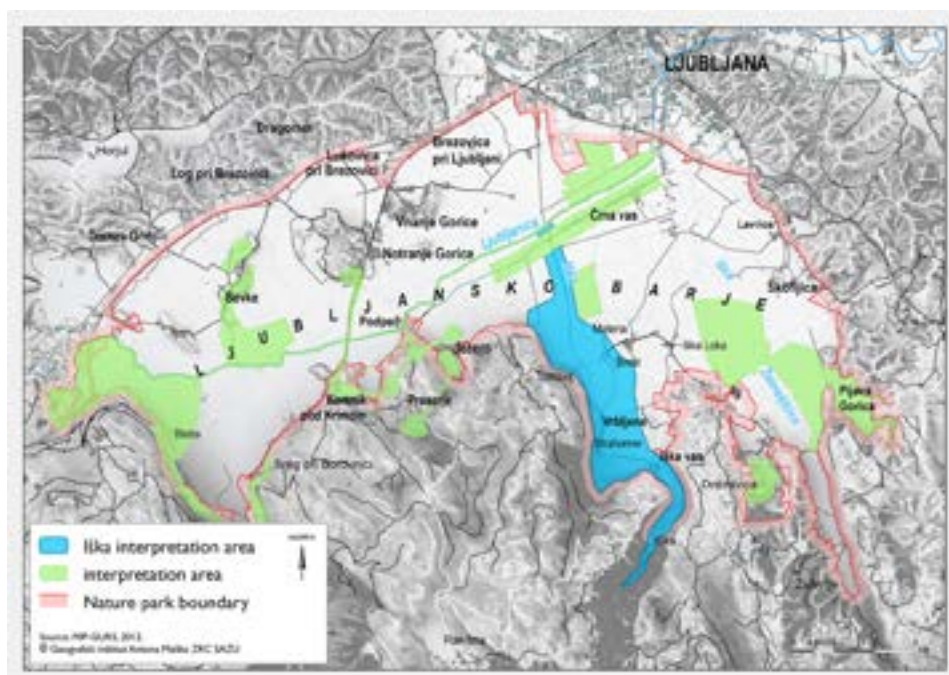
In Staje one finds the farm Pri Klančarju (<http://www.kmetija-klančar.si/core.php?pageid=index>), also offering accommodation (Staje 6).

## V INTERPRETATION

14. Interpretation topic (e.g. Life of a pile dweller in the past):  
The triple characteristics of the Iška river basin: gorge, alluvial fan, marsh
15. Interpretation goals (up to 3, e.g. demonstrate man's adjustment to floods):  
Learning about different geomorphologic characteristics of the river basin, the role and meaning of groundwater and surface water, settling on the contact of the alluvial fan and the marsh, water use
16. Interpretation content (an approximate list of the trail stations):  
Gorge, alluvial fan, marsh, springs, river, groundwater, reshaping of the riverbed, flourmill, sawmill, log driving, water pumping
17. Notes:  
Part of the area falls within the first protection area of the landscape park.

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Iška interpretation area

## Participatory approach

During the process of searching for areas, suitable for interpretation, cooperation with Ljubljansko barje Landscape Park board and other experts was established. This cooperation included numerous site visits, with the main emphasis on Iška interpretation area. Activities included hiking through Iški vintgar, researching river banks in the Iška lower stream and other site visits with focus on Iški vršaj, flour mills and sawmills in Iška river basin and so on. Therefore, the cabinet work was systematically upgraded with field work and included other participants with the scope of better cooperation between both institutions and better understanding of the area.

## Added value and results

By designing interpretative trails and other interpretation contents on the area of Ljubljansko barje Landscape Park, we do not wish to drastically increase the number of visitors to the protected area, even though we do not necessarily see this as problematic if it is planned well and in accordance with the existing infrastructure. Research namely shows the number of visitors is not the deciding factor in burdening a certain area, but their “quality” or awareness. This quality can only be achieved through education, especially using the interpretation media.

Presenting natural and cultural values in the form of a nature trail is one of the most popular forms of interpretation. Carefully planned interpretation media could offer a number of advantages to protected areas: creating enthusiasm, pride, and the feeling that it is necessary to help; guided visits; increasing public support for the manager, and increasing visits and revenues. The nature trail will therefore not be a goal, but a means and a tool for managing the park.

Protecting Ljubljansko barje as a landscape park was undoubtedly a measure in the right direction, but merely protecting it will not suffice. Protection actually means interaction with people to the greatest extent, who need to have the park and nature brought closer to them.

The positive effects of the forming interpretation



*Above: Hiking in Iški vintgar*

*Center: Exploring Iška river banks in the Iška lower stream*

*Below: One of the manmade channels on Ljubljansko barje*



regulations' effect on the general development of Ljubljansko barje will:

- raise the general culture and the locals' awareness about their environment,
- raise the quality of the recreation space and help the visitors get acquainted with the area and experience it better,
- raise the locals' and visitors' interest for the area and with that an increased need and care for preserving this area.

### Communication plan and scope of promotional actions

We carried out extensive work on developing interpretive contents along the Iška River to demonstrate of quality interpretation. The great diversity of Iška makes it an exceptionally interesting river because it flows through a karst gorge, meanders through a gravel alluvial fan, and continues its course through a manmade channel through the marsh to the Ljubljanica River. The anticipated Iška Nature Trail (Component 4) will run the Iška village to the river's outfall into Ljubljana. It will be furnished with ten signboards. They will present the three catchment areas of the Iška River, various geomorphological features of the catchment area, the role and significance of groundwater and surface water, the settlement where the alluvial fan meets the marsh, and water use in the past and present. The topics of the signboards will be: the catchment area, gorge, alluvial fan, marsh, hydrological features of the river, groundwater and drawing water, floods, human intervention in the river channel, sawmills, and log driving.

The nature trail will be primarily intended for individual visitors and families, especially for cyclists, because there is a considerable walking distance. The attractiveness of the walking trail will also encourage visitors to come to the outdoor classroom. This would be especially attractive for families and organized groups, especially school groups.

The nature trail will be complemented by interactive educational e-lectures (Component 5) planned for three difficulty levels (younger primary school, older primary school, and high school and adult). They will be freely available on the internet.

The Iška Outdoor Classroom (Component 4) will be set up in Iška Vas alongside the Iška River at the current recreational area. This relatively small space will allow us to create interesting teaching tools and attractive picnic areas will be set up in the vicinity. Possible subject matter includes the differentiation between various kinds of rocks and soil types (by volume, weight, texture), drawing water from the groundwater in various ways, simulating water flow, creating simple objects from stone and wood, building toy watermills, and so on.



*Above: One of the settlements on the Iška alluvial fan on the contact with karst edge*

*Below: The only active sawmill in the Iška river basin*





### ***LDPP in Athens: Understanding coastal environment status***

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#### **Content of the experimental action**

Marathon is located in the northeastern part of the Region of Attica, in the Prefecture of Eastern Attica. It holds a total area of 97 km<sup>2</sup>. The National Park of Schinias-Marathon is located in the northeastern part of Attica, just 45 km from the center of Athens. The study area is bounded north by the road from Marathon-Kato Souli, east by the mountain formations of Punta, Drakonera and Karoumbalo, ending on the Kynosourapeninsula (Mytikas) west by the housing settlement of judicial officers and south, the study area leads to the beach of Marathon. Administratively, the area of the National Park belongs to the municipality of Marathon. It constitutes the most important coastal ecosystem in Attica, and presents a very interesting landscape and is based on a delicate water balance. The area spans to 13,84 km<sup>2</sup> (including the marine area).

#### **Establishment and use zones**

In 2000, with the 22-6/3-7-2007 Presidential Decree (Decree 395 D 2000), the marine and land areas of Schinias were characterized as part of the National Park, zones and the permitted activities per zone were defined:

- Zone A1.* Wetland Area of Nature Protection
- Zone A2.* Hilly Area in Kynosoura Peninsula
- Zone A3.* Halepi, Pefki and Koukounaria Forest Area; area of Nature Protection
- Zone A4.* Area of Makaria springs; conservation Area
- Zone A5.* Marine Area of Marathon Bay
- Zone B1.* Area of Environmental Education
- Zone B2.* Area of Recreation, Tourism and Housing
- Zone B3.* Coast of Marathon Bay

With the law 3044/2002 (GGG 197A 2002), the

Management Authority of Schinias National Park was established, amongst others.

In terms of business policy development for the enhancement of the local society, the Faculty of Geology and Geoenvironment established a Local Development Pilot Plan (LDPP). The development and the international competitiveness within the Mediterranean, the occupation standards for the following generations, the territorial cohesion as well as the integrated policy for the protection of the environment have led to the creation of such a pilot program, through which an alternative way of tourism is demonstrated, specifically, the ecotourism.

## Methodology

Local Development Pilot Plans (LDPP) represent the implementation of the 2Bparks strategy of Mediterranean Protected Areas (MED PA) development at local level, both in terms of environmental plans improvement and in terms of sustainable tourism promotion. In order to achieve the project goals within the territory of the National Park of Schinias, the UoA team made use of four basic methodological tools; research activities, experimental approach, participatory approach and dissemination activities so as to optimize the local community, academic community and stakeholders' involvement in the project activities.

The outline of activities realized entailed the delivery of research activities, as described below, in coherence with the delivery of questionnaires within the UoA case study area of the National Park of Schinias – Marathon. The participatory approach was activated next, with the last stage or relevant activities coinciding with the experimental approach activities. Dissemination and communication activities followed the LDPP activities from the beginning of its implementation while the dissemination approach includes deliverables which are expected to maximize the LDPP communication during the last period of the 2Bparks project and beyond the project lifetime (i.e. audiovisual spot).

In terms of the Research Approach, the University of Athens team delivered the following activities:

1. Report on Educational Tourism in Greece, delivered as an annex to the LDPP; the report refers to a study set up in order to

examine other practices specifically applied in educational tourism. The UoA LDPP is based on the idea of educational tourism in Protected Areas. In that respect, the UoA team performed a bibliographical research relevant to educational activities in Greece in the last decades, the sector activities initiated from, the disadvantages of such activities and what is necessary to be done. A very important issue depicting from that research was that the UoA LDPP is the first initiative originated by an academic institution, which is a very important factor when it comes to handling issues of educational tourism.

2. Report on Educational Tourism in the Mediterranean, delivered as an annex to the LDPP; this study was set up in order to examine other practices specifically applied in educational tourism in other Mediterranean (MED) countries. This study followed the corresponding study for the Greek territory. This study investigated corresponding issues in the rest countries. The study concluded that Greece is the most 'old-fashioned' country in such issues, perhaps due to the previous narrow minded local authorities and due to the lack of cooperation between the research, public and private sector.
3. Roadmap to Schinias, delivered both in Greek and English, as an Annex to the LDPP: this report refers to a marketing plan focused on the UoA LDPP and case study area of the National Park of Schinias – Marathon.
4. Environmental map of the National Park of Schinias – Marathon Protected Area (PA) which will also be used in terms of the 2Bparks notebook.
5. Realization of site visits within the LDPP case study area in order to gather data
6. Sources and information relevant to the LDPP case study area were gathered, studied and uploaded in the 2Bparks project sourcebook.

## Experimental approach

The activities relevant to the experimental approach of “the Educational Tourism: Understanding coastal environment; case study: National Park of Schinias” LDPP refer to the realization of the

Transnational Educational Camp which was held as an experimental action within the University of Athens (UoA) case study area of the National Park of Schinias.

On October 23-24th 2012, the Faculty of Geology & Geoenvironment of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens organized the Transnational Education Camp on the subject "Studying the Environment - Protection and Management". The main aim was to attract post graduate students and researchers activated in the study, management and preservation of environmental protected areas (parks, forests, lagoons, etc.) The topics that were discussed by the scientific team were the Environment, the Natural Disasters and Environmental Impact, the Remote Sensing in Environmental Research, the Mapping Geomorphic Environments, the Geochemical Sampling & Analysis, the Sampling and Dating Analysis of Geomaterials, the Environmental Management of Forests, the Geoarchaeology, the Paleogeographical and Geoenvironmental Reconstruction and the Potential Geoparks.

The first day of the Transnational Educational Camp took place in the University Campus, Faculty of Geology and Geoenvironment while the second day of the Camp was held in the National Park of Schinias – Marathon. The aim of the fieldtrip was the briefing of students regarding the protected area. During the educational camp activities, 5 stops were realized within the area of Marathon and National Park of Schinias, in order to address issues of geography, geomorphology, palaeogeography of the territory, the evolution, the different environments, the Management of the region and the natural hazards; in-situ measurements of surface water physicochemical parameters, using portable analytical instruments, the stabilization of sand dunes in coastal areas and the problem of wildfires in the Mediterranean region, sediment transportation, the sand dune fields, the notches, the palaeogeography and tectonics of the area.

## Participatory approach

### Process of the participatory approach

The participatory approach refers to activities which immediately involved the LDPP and 2Bparks project target groups either in forming the LDPP itself or by

involving them in more interactive tools, operating auxiliary to the LDPP. The activities refer to the following components:

1. The UoA team delivered questionnaires in the Greek language to assist in identifying the PA region and the relevant target groups' needs, in terms of the case study area, the social, economic and environmental development (Questionnaire 1: managers, Questionnaire 2: citizens, Questionnaire



Stills from the realization of the Transnational Educational Camp activities

- 3: visitors, Questionnaire 4: stakeholders, Questionnaire 5: students ).
2. The UoA team developed e-lectures on the topics of modern technologies applied in Protected Areas' management and research and on environmental practices, which will also be incorporated in the 2Bparks project *Eduplatform*.
  3. The realization of a Territorial Workshop with the Municipality of Marathon; the discussion focused on the aims and activities of the 2Bparks project, the environmental education and the successful cooperation between UoA and the Municipality of Marathon. The Territorial Workshop was divided in 5 thematic categories, namely the aims and actions of the 2Bparks project, the issue of environmental education, while another session was dedicated to questions and answers with the Mayor of Marathon, regarding the National Park of Schinias. The workshop concluded with a discussion about the cooperation between the UoA and the municipality, in terms of the Local Development Pilot Plan (LDPP)

community to become an integral part of conservation efforts and benefit economically from those efforts.

4. Practical knowledge of recording environmental data for students and experts in environmental sciences; in conjunction to the development of educational tourism, the project activities in the Schinias protected area aim at attracting student groups working within ecology, natural resources, conservation and parks management as well as students and academics across the environmental sciences and land use management. Students enrolled will be able to work in protected areas, to study the ecology of the systems and the strategies that are being employed in managing them. Discussion sessions about the historical, legal/political and practical experiences in managing protected areas will also be tackled. Students will engage in hands-on activities, including monitoring and ecological studies.
5. Familiarization with innovation technologies, services and new products of protected areas management

## Added value and results

### Objectives

1. Touristic Park use via educational tourism both in Greece and abroad; the aim is to work with local community and invest in sustainability through events and ongoing relationships with educational institutions. Park Open days may attract dozens of people who receive local flora and fauna tours and learn about park activities. Additional activities with reference to the travel and Tourism industry may be realized, providing the chance to learn about sustainability, supporting in future career making decision.
2. National park of Schinias protection activities; human activities assessment so as to place specific zones under restrictions in the interest of conserving the natural environment, its surrounding waters and the occupant ecosystems of the National Park.
3. Financial support to local community; indicate specific activities which will allow the local

### Results

1. Design and implementation of the "Understanding coastal environment" training school including theoretical and hand-on activities and course such as touring the park protected area, familiarizing with mapping methods and coastal erosion studies.
2. Development of a sourcebook which will facilitate the students research for relevant references and bibliography.
3. Development of an e-calendar for disseminating, registering and searching relevant events.
4. Development of a user friendly educational tool (*Eduplatform*) encompassing two sessions of courses; the educational tool will run via the UoA while the GeoEnvironmental Institute has committed to hosting the *Eduplatform* in the institution's servers for the following five years. The educational tool sessions are as follows:
  - a. GIS for environmental management and
  - b. Environmental practices on the field
5. Establishment of Earth Sciences Schools visits in the Park Area by relevant Universities,



Schools and Departments in Greece and abroad.

### **Added value of the experimental action**

It is expected that during the 2nd semester of 2013, the collaborating institutions (UoA, GeoENVI and the Municipality of Marathon) will meet to discuss further activities beyond the project scope and lifetime. The meeting will define each institution's contribution to the project activities:

- UoA and GeoENVI will provide the scientific expertise for the delivery of relevant activities, the courses design and set-up, the research support and the annual involvement of students
- The Municipality of Marathon will provide the project activities with the location infrastructure (conference and meeting rooms, space for desk-based education activities, a vessel in terms of fieldwork and coastal zone measurements).

The added value depicting from this collaboration refers to the fact that the involved institutions aim to establish activities on an annual basis which will enforce the local community and will assist in raising environmental awareness.

The implementation of the experimental action activates interventions, relevant to green entrepreneurship, green markets, sustainable use of natural resources, identification, mapping and valuation of biodiversity services, research and development relevant innovative products and services, sustainable agriculture and ecotourism.

The UoA LDPP and the steps taken managed to bring transnational practices down to the local level and adjust them to the needs of the Greek protected area of Schinias – Marathon while at the same time reducing the gap between universities, the public and the private sector in terms of developing and managing protected areas.

### **Communication plan and scope of promotional actions**

#### **Communication means**

The communication means activated for the dissemination of the LDPP activities refer to the

following tools:

1. e-papers delivered in reference to the case study area, the National Park of Schinias – Marathon and its most significant spots in terms of research activities and the LDPP itself;
2. the delivery and reproduction of the Notebookentitled 'Understanding coastal environment - case study of Schinias' - also acting as a fieldtrip guide for the 2ndday of the Transnational Educational Camp;
3. press releases, relevant to the activities of the LDPP (i.e. the realization of the Transnational Educational Camp);
4. the delivery of a Press Conference, held during the commencement of activities of the 2nd day of the Transnational Educational Camp at the Museum of Marathon Race, on October 24, 2012.

#### **Promotional actions and Scope**

5. The development of an audiovisual spot to promote both the UoA LDPP and the 2Bparks project during the last months of the project implementation and further to the 2Bparks project lifetime.
6. The final LDPP was prepared in Greek while a summary of it has also been published in English. The aim is to allow all involved stakeholders from both the local authorities and the local community involved in the LDPP case study area to make the most out of the LDPP results and outcomes.
7. Other activities related to the sustainability of the LDPP refer to the supply of equipment for the realisation of the educational seminars in the area (a small refrigerator Marine Ultra 25 and two sets of 2 INTEK KT 900 EE walkie-talkies and a VHF/UH FM, Power 7W transmitter), so as to facilitate the realization of seminars, educational camps and site visits in the area of Marathon, in terms of educational activities for the sustainability of the LDPP after the lifetime of 2Bparks.









# 1. Introduction

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*Alexandra Mendonça, RCDI, Development and Innovation Network*

This section of the publication is focused on issues related to the development of sustainable tourism in the 2BParks Protected Areas (PA) and neighbouring territories, to promote an integrated approach to PA management, balancing environmental conservation and protection with economic and social factors, to support responsible growth.

The project involved a mix of different purposes within this Component (Sustainable tourism and joint marketing strategy 2Bparks), addressing, in particular:

- Increasing awareness on the 2BParks ProtectedAreas, combining concerns referring to nature protection with the sustainable fruition of the unique Mediterranean natural heritage;
- Increasing the territorial cohesion of 2BParks regions through a shared marketing approach, responding to common needs of the PA involved in the project;
- Sharing common objectives and actions to reconcile environmental protection and economic development, respecting the carrying capacity of ecosystems;
- Promoting the development of sustainable tourism activities and supporting responsible economic growth, while reflecting the distinctive nature and characteristics of each

Protected Area and region;

- Improving institutional cooperation among stakeholders at local and regional level, involving public authorities, non-governmental organisations and the business sector, to contribute to nature protection and to promote sustainable tourism models.

These topics were organised into five thematic areas, which are illustrated through several papers prepared by the 2BParks partners, to describe the approaches followed and the work developed along the project, under Component 4.

**Marketing strategy and sustainable tourism development** (section 2). The 2BParks Joint Marketing Strategy is presented, providing an overview of common objectives and shared strategic guidelines, as well as the marketing mix envisaged to support the promotion of sustainable tourism in the 2BParks Protected Areas (and surrounding territories). The 2BParks International Symposium on Sustainable Tourism is also summarised, disclosing its importance as a forum to share ideas and jointly discuss good practices for environmental sustainability and tourism management.

**LTSP – Local Tourism Strategic Plans** (section 3). Eight LTSP are presented, providing an interesting overview on the work developed locally





by each partner, based on a common participatory methodology, to foster sustainable tourism as a key factor of cohesion and compatible growth.

**Good practices for development of sustainable tourism** (section 4). This section depicts the good practices developed in the Po Delta Regional Park (Veneto Region) and in the National Park of Schinias-Marathon (University of Athens), to promote sustainable tourism. These two PA did not participate in the LTSP activities, thus prepared contributions to share their specific experiences, addressing similar objectives as the LTSP.

**Experimental actions** (section 5). The experimental marketing actions to include Protected Areas into tourism offer, developed by several partners (Veneto, Troodos, Vercelli and Hérault) are addressed under this section. The experimental action to jointly promote the 2BParks Protected Areas (e-calendar), coordinated by the University of Athens, and participated by all the partners, is also outlined. This experimental action refers to an electronic calendar of events, which gathers and presents environmental and cultural events promoted by the Protected Areas or within their surrounding regions.

**Clustering Economic Operators** (section 6). The implementation of the 2BParks Environmental Clusters is described under this section. The common criteria adopted for the implementation of the clusters are summarised and three different examples are presented to illustrate how the economic operators can contribute to the promotion of the Protected Areas (Po Delta Regional Park), to the development of sustainable tourism (Troodos) and how they can be involved to support environmental protection. These clustering activities although formally considered as part of Component 3 of the project, disclosed stronger connections with the activities developed under Component 4, addressing the reconciliation of economic development and protection of the natural heritage.





## 2. Marketing strategy and sustainable tourism development

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### *The 2Bparks joint marketing strategy*

Alexandra Mendonça, RCDI, Development and Innovation Network and Sérgio Santos, TerraSystemics, Lda.



The purpose of the 2Bparks Joint Marketing Strategy is twofold:

- Define a common strategic approach for the development and promotion of sustainable tourism, grounded on the natural heritage of the Protected Areas (PA) involved in the project;
- Provide a general framework to support the outline of the Local Tourism Strategic Plans (LTSP), to locally promote sustainable tourism models, based on participatory solutions.

This paper provides the general background concerning the 2Bparks Protected Areas and neighbouring territories, discusses main opportunities and challenges in relation to the development of sustainable tourism and defines a common vision and main strategic guidelines concerning the segmentation of target markets,

the competitive positioning and the differentiation attributes of the 2Bparks territories. On the basis of this shared vision, a 2Bparks marketing strategy is proposed, addressing mainly the product mix and possible promotion and distribution solutions.

### General Background

#### The 2Bparks PA and Territories

##### *Who we are*

The 2Bparks partnership extends over the Mediterranean Basin, encompassing seven countries and ten regions that host a significant number of Protected Areas.

According to the territorial span and specific objectives of the 2Bparks partners, **33 Protected Areas** and corresponding neighbouring territories were considered in the scope of the Joint Marketing Strategy, as listed in the following table.

### Protected Areas and Territorial Scope of the Joint Marketing Strategy (PA Listed from West to East)

Protected Areas	Territorial Scope (Neighbouring Territories)	Regions/Countries
Nature Reserve of the Santo Andre and Sancha Lagoons Nature Reserve of the Sado Estuary Southwest Alentejo and Vincent Coast Natural Park	Municipalities of Alcácer do Sal, Grândola, Odemira, Santiago do Cacém, Sines	Alentejo Litoral, Portugal
Sierra de Andújar Nature Park	Municipality of Andújar	Jaén, Spain
West PA: Albine, Réals, Rives de l'Arn, Savignac, Vézoles, Vieulac, Centre PA: Bessilles, Olivettes, Salagou + Mourèze and Liausson, Vias North-North East PA: Fesquet, Fondespierre, Font du Griffé and Lavagnes, Mas Dieu, Mas Neuf, Moulin Neuf, Restinclières, Roussières, Saint-Sauveur, Vernède	Department of Hérault	Languedoc-Roussillon, France
Special Reserve of Sacro Monte di Varallo Protected Area of Sesia Valley	Province of Vercelli	Vercelli, Italy
Regional Park of the Po Delta	Municipalities of Adria, Ariano nel Polesine, Corbola, Loreo, Papozze, Porto Viro, Porto Tolle, Rosolina, Taglio di Po	Veneto, Italy
Natural Regional Park of Serre	Provinces of Catanzaro, Reggio Calabria and Vibo Valentia	Calabria, Italy
Ljubljansko Barje Landscape Park	Municipalities of Borovnica, Brezovica, Ig, Ljubljana, Log- Dragomer, Škofljica Vrhnika	Ljubljana Urban Region, Slovenia
Protected Area of Lake Karla	Municipal Departments of Kanalia, Kerasia, Rizomilos, Stefanovikio, in Municipality of Rigas Fereos	Thessaly, Greece
National Park of Schinias-Marathon	Municipality of Marathon	Attica, Greece
National Forest Park of Troodos	Communities of Amiandos, Platres, Prodromos, in Limassol District	Limassol District, Cyprus

These Protected Areas are representative of the multiplicity and uniqueness of the natural values, ecosystems and biological diversity of the Mediterranean region, constituting an excellent basis for experimentation of solutions envisaging to reconcile nature conservation with sustainable tourism development and promotion.

#### ***The natural and cultural heritage of the target Protected Areas***

The considered Protected Areas represent all together a length above 425 thousand hectares of

natural heritage, benefiting from regional, national or international protection status. Most of the protected areas are part of the Natura 2000 network and therefore include SPAs (Special Protection Areas, according to Birds Directive) and/or SACs (Special Areas of Conservation, according to Habitats Directive).

The Protected Areas have different dimensions and characteristics, ranging from wetlands and Mediterranean maquis to forest and mountainous areas, as illustrated in the following examples:

- Wetlands (e.g. river basins, lakes, lagoons, coastal areas, marshes): Nature Reserve of the Santo Andre and Sancha Lagoons and Nature Reserve of the Sado Estuary, in Portugal, both included in the Ramsar List of wetlands of international importance, Southwest Alentejo and Vincent Coast Natural Park, in Portugal, Regional Park of the Po Delta and Protected Area of Sesia Valley, in Italy, Ljubljansko Barje Landscape Park in Slovenia, National Park of Schinias-Marathon and Protected Area of Lake Karla, in Greece;
- Mountain and forest areas: Sierra de Andújar Nature Park, in Spain, Special Reserve of Sacro Monte di Varallo and Natural Regional Park of Serre in Italy, National Forest Park of Troodos, in Cyprus.

As a whole, the target Protected Areas embody exceptional landscapes and enclose rich and well-preserved natural resources of outstanding ecological value, including hundreds of flora and fauna species (e.g. birds, reptiles, fishes, amphibians, mammals), namely endemic and threatened species, as outlined in each of the Local Tourism Strategic Plans.

In addition, the target territories also embrace relevant cultural heritage and traditions, gastronomy and wine resources, as well as religious landmarks. In this scope, deserves particular mention the Special Reserve of Sacro Monte di Varallo, in Vercelli, Italy, which is classified as a World Heritage Site (WHS), while some sites within other Protected Areas or their adjacent zones are also listed as WHS by UNESCO, as it is the case of prehistoric pile-dwellings in Ljubljansko Barje Landscape Park, in Slovenia, and of ten Byzantine churches in neighbouring communities of the National Forest Park of Troodos, in Cyprus, the three situations referring to cultural nominations.

Finally, the PA are also rather diverse concerning their location, which varies from remote rural areas to the vicinity of large conurbations, therefore resulting in different economic and social backgrounds, as described in more detail in the Local Tourism Strategic Plans.

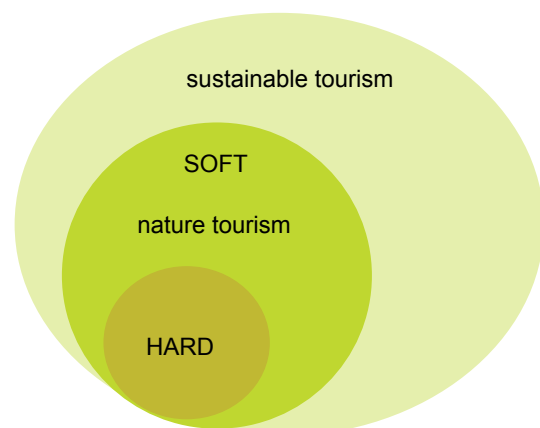
In spite of the diversity of the Protected Areas and surrounding territories, they all share common objectives for the development of sustainable tourism, building on their natural and cultural resources,

therefore resulting in a mix of actual and potential tourism products, as discussed in the next section.

### **Sustainable tourism and the tourism products of the target area**

Sustainable tourism is defined by the World Tourism Organisation as “Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social, and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities” (WTO, 2005). This sustainability model underlies the overall 2Bparks project concept and all the Protected Areas and neighbouring territories have been developing, in a lower or larger extent, sustainable tourism approaches, with a focus on *nature based tourism activities* (in short, *nature tourism*).

A broad definition of nature tourism refers to the motivation of tourists to be engaged in activities or experiences that are related to the natural environment, whether for relaxation, discovery or adventure. Therefore, nature tourism includes a large range of experiences based on the fruition and interaction with natural environment, which can be segmented into “soft” and “hard”, activities. The soft (or low intensity) activities are mostly related to appreciation and learning, representing the great bulk of the nature tourism market. The hard activities are more physically demanding, or require specialised knowledge or training and refer to specific market niches.



Nature based tourism experiences can therefore include the following (not exhaustive) categories:

- Low intensity outdoor activities (e.g. fauna and flora observation, landscape observation, walking, recreational swimming);

- Educational activities (e.g. learning about natural environment, biodiversity and nature conservation);
- Nature sports (e.g. hiking, trekking, biking, canoeing, horse-riding, surfing, diving....);
- Specialised activities (e.g. bird-watching).

All Protected Areas and their neighbouring territories have resources and potential conditions to develop different categories of soft and hard nature-based tourism. Furthermore, other resources such as cultural heritage, local gastronomy and wines, cultural and religious traditions enable to exploit other complementary tourism products, offering blended experiences.

Resulting from the analysis of the different resources and characteristics of the PA, the joint portfolio of potential tourism products of 2Bparks territories was outlined, considering as a base criterion that at least two Protected Areas in different countries/regions should share the same product, to allow its inclusion in the common product mix.

In addition to nature tourism, five other tourism products were selected: landscape and cultural touring (mostly based on cultural motivations, but sharing common features with low intensity nature activities), gastronomy and wines (based on the rich and diversified Mediterranean cuisine and winery), sun and beach (as an extension of nature tourism and not envisaged as mass tourism oriented), religious tourism (supported by relevant traditions in specific PA) and residential tourism (second dwellings).

### **The tourism demand and offer in the target area**

The tourism offer is inadequately organised in most of the target PA/neighbouring territories and the potential tourism products are not fully developed, notably nature tourism.

This situation is comprehensively described in the Local Tourism Strategic Plans and can be illustrated with a few quotations:

- “The tourism offer in the area is only basic, lacking accommodation facilities and alternative tourism services” (Protected Area of Lake Karla);
- “Not a developed, recognized tourism destination”; “(tourism products) ...do not

address a specific target group and therefore do not present a motive for visit” (Ljubljansko Barje Landscape Park);

- “Tourism identity and local tourism products undefined and barely innovative” (Sierra de Andújar Nature Park);
- “Nature tourism in Vercelli Province is poorly developed” (Special Reserve of Sacro Monte di Varallo and Protected Area of Sesia Valley);
- “The almost total absence of a system of tourism stakeholders acting on an integrated level, both at public and private levels...” (Natural Regional Park of Serre);
- “Lack of a shared vision for the region tourism development”, in Alentejo Litoral (Nature Reserve of the Santo Andre and Sancha Lagoons, Nature Reserve of the Sado Estuary, Southwest Alentejo and Vincent Coast Natural Park).

The tourism demand is moderate and results mainly from the domestic market (frequently from regional origin), while foreign tourists have limited importance in most PA, which is associated to the undefined identity and low profile of these territories, as nature tourism destinations.

The only relevant exceptions refer to the Regional Park of the Po Delta (Italy) and the National Park of Schinias-Marathon (Greece), that disclose a tourism offer more structured and consistent, attracting both domestic and foreign visitors, on the basis of their natural heritage and other complementary resources.

The analysis of the characteristics of the nature tourism offer and demand in the target PA and neighbouring territories suggests that these destinations are in the Introduction stage of their life cycle (e.g. Lake Karla) or in initial Growth stages (most of the other PA), except the two PA mentioned above (Po Delta and Schinias-Marathon), which are in a more advanced Growth situation.

Typical destination characteristics related to their life cycle stage are summarised in the table below, making evident that different evolution stages require diverse marketing approaches. Obviously, environmental impacts are dissimilar, according to the evolution stages, being rather pernicious in destinations that have evolved to saturation and decline situations.

**Joint Portfolio of Tourism Products in the 2Bparks Territories (PA Listed from West to East)**

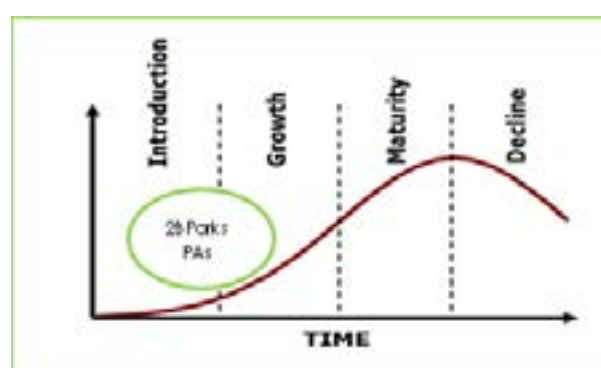
Protected Areas	Nature Tourism	Landscape & Cultural Touring	Gastronomy & Wines	Sun & Beach	Religious Tourism	Residential Tourism
Nature Reserve of the Santo Andre and Sancha Lagoons	*	*	*	*		*
Nature Reserve of the Sado Estuary	*	*	*	*		*
Southwest Alentejo and Vincent Coast Natural Park	*	*	*	*		*
Sierra de Andújar Nature Park	*	*	*		*	
21 PA in Department of Hérault	*	*	*			
Special Reserve of Sacro Monte di Varallo	*	*	*		*	
Protected Area of Sesia Valley	*	*	*			
Regional Park of the Po Delta	*	*	*			
Natural Regional Park of Serre	*	*	*		*	
Ljubljansko Barje Landscape Park	*	*				
Protected Area of Lake Karla	*	*			*	
National Park of Schinias-Marathon	*	*		*		
National Forest Park of Troodos	*	*	*		*	*

In early stages, as it is the case of the 2Bparks territories, destinations gather a low number of tourists, provide few accommodation facilities, their image is not yet well defined and their attraction capacity is small. Marketing strategies should therefore focus on building awareness and promoting the destination products and differentiation attributes.

The marketing mix should thus respond to the above requisites and should also be used to encourage responsible behaviours by tourists and environmentally sustainable practices by the tourism industry.

These issues are discussed under sections 4 and 5, including recommendations to communicate the environmental and social concerns underlying the

overall marketing approach, to support sustainable tourism.





**Life Cycle Stage, Destination Characteristics, Marketing Response and Environmental Impacts**

	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>Growth</b>	<b>Maturity</b>	Saturation/Decline
<b>Destination Characteristics</b>				
Tourists Number	Few	Many	Too many	Many
Growth Rate	Low	Fast growth	Fast growth	Slow growth/ Decline
Accommodation Capacity	Very low	Low	High	Very high
Tourist Types	Drifters	Innovators	Followers	Cheap mass market
Image and attractions	Low	Very high	High	Low/very low
Tourists are perceived as	Guests	Guests	Customers	Foreigners
<b>Marketing Response</b>				
Marketing Target	Awareness	Inform	Persuade	Loyalty
Strategic Focus	Expansion	Penetration	Defence	Defence/Reintroduce
Marketing expenditure	Growing	High	High	Falling/Consolidating
Product	Basic	Improved	Good	Deterioration/Decay
Promotion	Introduction	Advertising	Travel trade	Travel trade
Distribution	Independent	Independent	Travel trade	Travel trade
<b>Environmental impacts</b>				
Environment and landscape	Unspoilt	Improved	No respect	Polluted/Damaged
Heritage Conservation	Unspoilt	Improved	No respect	Decay//Damaged
Ecological disruption	Unspoilt	Improved	No respect	Decay//Damaged
Pollution related to tourism	Negligible	Low	High	Very high
Congestion and traffic	Low	Low	Very high	Very high
Erosion	Low	High	Very high	Very high

Source: Adapted from Buhalis, D., *Marketing the competitive destination of the future*

## Main Opportunities and Challenges

### Consumer trends

The long term forecasts of the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) for the period 2010-2030 indicate an overall average growth rate of 3.3% per year, while the growth tendency is expected to be a little higher in the decade 2010-2020 (3.8%). In line with these forecasts, in 2012 the international tourist arrivals grew by 4%, overpassing for the first time 1 billion tourists (overnight visitors). In 2013, the tourist arrivals are estimated to go on growing to a similar or slightly lower pace, between 3% and 4%.

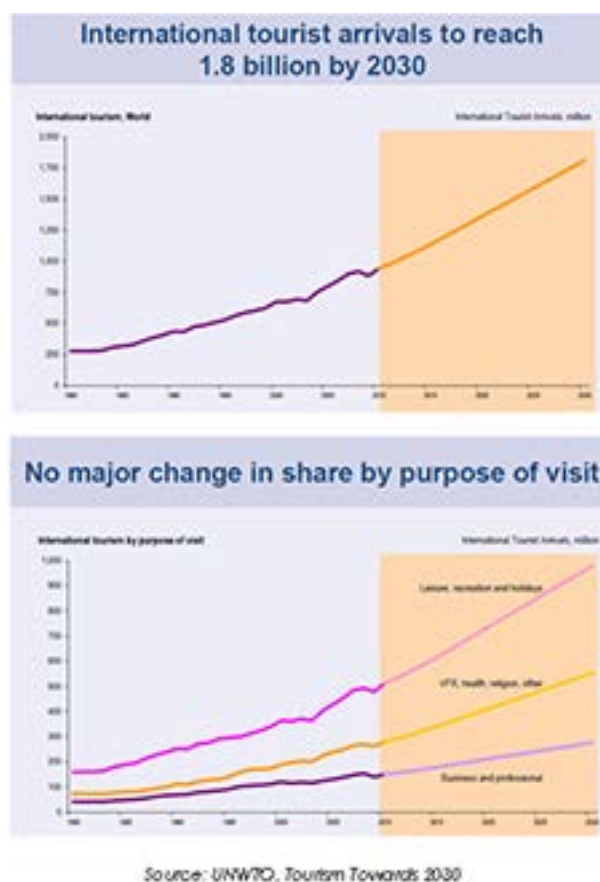
According to UNWTO Tourism Towards 2030, the long-term tourism growth pattern will be more moderate, sustainable and inclusive. A lower elasticity of travel to GDP and a shift from falling transport costs to increasing transport costs are also expected.

Share by purpose of visits will maintain past trends, with motivations related to leisure, recreation and holidays on the top position, followed by situations referring to visits to friends and relatives (VFR), health or religion.

In spite of the world challenging conditions and the uncertainty about the evolution of the global economy, the travelling industry is proving to be rather resilient and to be able to overcome the negative impacts of the on-going financial and economic crisis.

Nevertheless, evolution patterns disclose diverse trends in the different world regions. Europe showed a moderate growth of 2% in 2012 (overall trips by Europeans), which is expected to be maintained in 2013. In contrast, Asia-Pacific and South America have been the fastest growing origin regions in recent years and the emergence of a new middle class in the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China) had a fundamental role supporting the upward tendency in the tourism industry.

On the other hand, Europe is (still) the world leading destination, representing 52% of total international tourism arrivals (corresponding to 43% of total receipts), in 2012. Part of the 2Bparks PA and territories are located in some of the world's most important tourism destinations, as it is the case of France, Italy and Spain (listed among the top ten world destinations), while in Greece, Cyprus



and Portugal the tourism industry is also a very important contributor to the GDP. Yet, the 2Bparks territories are not major tourism spots in the scope of their own countries and they address specific target segments not related to mass tourism. It is therefore relevant to further analyse the evolution of tourism demand and supply patterns, to identify new trends and possible opportunities.

### Evolution of business models

#### ***ICT is revolutionising the tourism management and marketing***

According to the World Travel Trends Report 2012/2013, the Internet was the major distribution channel for travels, in 2012, with 54% of bookings online, while travel agencies dropped to 24%. Consumers are increasingly using ICT to collect information on destinations and to buy tourism products and services on line. The spread of mobile technologies is also facilitating access to tourism information and products not only before, but also during travel. In addition, web social networks are also playing an important role on the travel decisions of consumers.

The Internet and the increased portability of devices (e.g. tablets, smartphones) supports the interaction between tourism enterprises and consumers and is resulting in the re-engineering of the entire process of developing, managing and marketing tourism products and destinations.

ICTs are driving profound changes in the tourism market, resulting in the increased digitisation of all processes along the value chain, thus bringing both opportunities and challenges for tourism organisations. These changes are leading to strategies that are “customer centric, profitability driven and partnership enabled” (Buhalis and O’Connor, 2005).

Consumer centric approaches provide higher levels of interactivity between the consumer and the tourism suppliers, allowing product customisation and flexibility of services, therefore contributing to increase consumers’ satisfaction.

ICTs are also an important tool to reinforce businesses profitability, allowing to increase efficiency levels (e.g. operational cost reduction, disintermediation and reduction of fees), and supporting promotion and distribution (e.g. the Internet enables all types of organizations, regardless of their size, to promote and distribute products directly to customers).

Finally, tourism products are delivered by a multitude of suppliers; therefore the tourism industry is highly dependent on successful partnerships, which can be boosted by the ITCs, through high levels of integration, interconnectivity and interoperability between organisations.

### ***Web social networks and blogs***

Web social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, as well as specialised travel blogs, are becoming more and more influential on the consumers travelling decisions, therefore affecting the demand in the tourism industry.

According to a Google survey in 2011, around 40% of tourists recognise that social network comments influenced their travel options and 50% based their travel planning on reviews and experiences from other people, collected on the Internet ((ITB World Travel Trends Report 2012/2013).

In line with the consumer centric approaches outlined in the previous section, tourism destinations should take advantage of the opportunities provided by the web social media, integrating them in their marketing approaches,

### ***Mixed seasonality patterns... and travellers are getting older***

Tourists are getting older, as pointed out in the 2012/2013 World Travel Trends Report. In 2012, the number of travellers aged over 55 years increased to 23%, while 35% are in the 15-34 age group and 42% are aged between 35 and 54.

Although most tourists tend to concentrate their holidays in the peak summer months, in particular families with children that cannot travel during the school periods, short breaks are becoming increasingly frequent all year round.

Moreover, different market segments have diverse seasonality patterns. Elderly and retired people prefer to travel during the low season, to take advantage of discounts. University and secondary school students also go on field educational trips and on leisure excursions in low periods. Tourists from Scandinavian countries are less inclined to travel during the summer time, to enjoy the favourable weather conditions at home.

It is therefore important to destinations to identify the seasonality patterns of their different market segments and to build on solutions to attract a balanced mix of tourists along the year, to maximise occupancy rates and overall revenue.

### ***Consumers are looking for authentic travel experiences***

Important changes in tourist’s behaviour are emerging, with consumers demanding more authenticity in their travel experiences and looking for more interaction with local communities.

On the supply side, new concepts (or redefinition of existing concepts) for tourism products are also gaining visibility, such as adventure tourism, which can be assimilated to nature based tourism, considering they both share common characteristics related to the authenticity of experiences, nature fruition and environmental and social concerns.

The Adventure Travel Trade Association (a US-based global Association) refers that adventure travel is an important, fast developing market, with an estimated turnover, in 2009, around USD 89 billion (international outbound from America and Europe only, excluding air travel costs) and estimated growth rates of 17% since then (ITB World Travel Trends Report 2012/2013).

The soft market segments of adventure tourism (the same as for nature tourism) are those providing

more growth opportunities, encompassing a diverse range of customers and disclosing a tendency for broadening of age categories, to include elder people.

Standard traditional travel packages are mature products and are approaching a saturation stage of their life cycle. Although this is a long term process, it encompasses growing opportunities for more sustainable forms of tourism, based on responsible behaviours involving both tourists and the travel industry.

### ***Accessible tourism for all***

In 2005, the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) established a resolution supporting “accessible tourism for all”, which is recognised as a key reference. Nevertheless, people with accessibility requirements are not adequately cared by the tourism industry.

The European Network for Accessible Tourism (ENAT) defines tourism for all as “making travel and tourism destinations, products and information suitable for all those who have particular accessibility needs, their families and friends”. This implies accessibility solutions along the whole value chain, from information and booking, to transportation, accommodation, catering and tourism services at the destination.

ENAT estimates that the potential market of accessible tourism in Europe is around 133 million people, including people with disabilities (80 million) and their travelling companions. Worldwide this group will range from 600 to 900 million people, according to the same source.

The ageing trend of the European and other developed countries population results also in accessibility requirements for elder people with mobility restrictions or other disabilities.

This is no longer a niche, but an important market segment that should be addressed accordingly by destinations, through comprehensive accessibility solutions and marketing, to promote inclusive tourism.

### **Common Vision and Objectives**

The shared strategic vision underlying the 2Bparks marketing strategy is twofold:

- Promote sustainable tourism activities, supporting responsible economic growth;
- Benefit from natural heritage as a resource for sustainable development, encouraging a holistic approach to environmental protection and tourism promotion.

The overall objectives resulting from the shared strategic vision were defined on the basis of three axes, taking into consideration the global framework of the 2Bparks territories and their common needs and ambitions:

- Contribute to the sustainable development of local communities and to local job creation, balancing economic benefits and environmental and cultural costs;
- Strengthen the integration of nature conservation objectives into the tourism models of the 2Bparks regions;
- Establish effective partnerships, including public and private stakeholders and involving the local populations, to deliver collaborative solutions for the improvement of the tourism sector.

Based on the global objectives, the marketing objectives were outlined to respond to the requirements of the Introduction and early Growth stage of the 2Bparks territories life cycle, therefore focusing on the structuring of the tourism offer and on building awareness on the destinations:

- Develop and further structure nature based tourism and other complementary products of the 2Bparks portfolio, to provide authentic, blended and diversified tourism experiences;
- Identify and attract new market segments, to reduce seasonal variation of tourism demand, viewing to optimise overall yields, while minimising peak periods of tourism pressure;
- Promote 2Bparks PA and regions as an authentic and unique MED destination, building on common environmental and

- cultural attributes, while respecting and enhancing the specific identity of each region;
- Promote the 2Bparks Protected Areas as a touristic resource, benefitting from natural heritage as a joint marketing tool for sustainable tourism development;
- Involve stakeholders and local population to create a 2Bparks “hospitality culture”.

- Gastronomy & Wines
- Sun & Beach
- Religious Tourism
- Residential Tourism

These broad segments should be refined to allow the development of effective messages to the target segments, through the most appropriate communication channels, having in mind that the **2Bparks common core product refers to nature based tourism**, which should be combined with other relevant complementary products, according to the specific resources of each 2Bparks region.

## Main Strategic Guidelines

### Segmentation Approach

An a priori segmentation approach was followed, based on criteria envisaged to produce a useful grouping to match the common strengths of the 2Bparks destinations, which are mainly related to environmental attributes.

Four classical segmentation techniques are commonly used: Geographic segmentation (e.g. distinguishing between domestic and foreign tourists); Demographic segmentation (e.g. using as criteria, age, gender, income); Psychographic segmentation (based on lifestyles and motivations); Behaviouristic segmentation (addressing personal behaviours and preferences related to specific tourism products or activities).

A behaviouristic segmentation was adopted, considering that this approach is focused on the visitor’s relationship with the tourism product, therefore providing a broad basis to all 2Bparks destinations, which share a portfolio of common products.

It must however be stressed that the tourism market is increasingly sophisticated and fragmented, therefore additional variables related to geographic criteria (e.g. origin of tourists), demographic criteria (e.g. age, gender) or psychographic criteria should be added by each 2Bparks destination, to produce a multivariable approach and to refine the key segmentation proposed hereafter.

Broad target segments will be defined considering the main purpose of the visit, in relation to the 2Bparks product mix:

- Nature based tourism
  - Soft activities
  - Hard activities
- Other tourism products
  - Landscape & Cultural Touring

### Competitive positioning and differentiation attributes

In general, 2Bparks territories are under-positioned and in most cases potential customers only have a vague idea about the destination. The joint marketing approach is envisaged to support the construction of a common image and identity building on the attributes shared by all the territories, leading to a global competitive positioning that will exceed the sum of each individual region.

The value proposal to differentiate the 2Bparks territory relies on its unique and well preserved natural heritage, together with genuine cultural resources, rich gastronomy and wines, offering an authentic and varied tourism experience, based on sustainability concerns.

### Marketing Mix Strategy

The marketing mix strategy is envisaged to simultaneously take into consideration the requests and expectations of tourists, the interests of the stakeholders and economic operators of the tourism sector and the overall environmental and social concerns of the 2Bparks destinations.

Balancing all these interests is a complex task even for one single destination, consequently complexity increases when a group of destinations is globally addressed.

The marketing mix strategy is therefore mainly focused on more relevant shared issues related to product and promotion/distribution, considering that a common pricing strategy will be practically impossible to outline.



## Product

Tourism products result from the amalgamation of individually produced tourism services (e.g. transportation, accommodation, catering, entertainment) and a wide range of public tangible and immaterial assets, such as nature values and landscapes, socio-cultural heritage and atmosphere (Buhalis, 2000). All these components should be branded altogether under the joint destination name 2Bparks.

To allow common branding, the product offer of the 2Bparks territory should be globally improved, leading to a coherent and well-structured shared product mix. A few guidelines are proposed to improve product quality and consistency:

- The development of collaborative solutions among the different players is a key success factor, considering the interdependence of the diverse operators and stakeholders to deliver the tourism products;
- Well trained staff and a culture of hospitality is another fundamental factor to allow differentiation and customer satisfaction, taking into account that the tourism product is an intangible experience, which is related to the individual interaction between the service supplier and the visitor;
- Customisation and flexibility are essential to meet the specific requirements of visitors, including appropriate solutions and services to provide inclusive tourism products, regardless of the physical condition and age of visitors;
- Blending the different tourism products to satisfy the demand of distinct target segments is also a major factor of success in an increasingly fragmented market;
- Monitoring service consistency and quality on a permanent basis is crucial to allow timely responsive actions, whenever required;
- Last, but not least, commitment of tourism operators to responsible environmental good practices is essential to provide reliability to the sustainability profile of the 2Bparks destination.

## Promotion and Distribution

The fast growing importance of ICT and the consequent dematerialisation of transactions are redefining the relations between tourism suppliers and customers, bringing a new range of opportunities for increased interaction, both for distribution and promotion solutions.

Positioning the 2Bparks territory on the Internet channel is therefore crucial. First steps have been given through a joint promotional tool – the e-calendar – which disseminates information on the environmental and cultural events promoted by the 2Bparks Protected Areas, or within their surrounding regions.

Further steps should be taken to create a more ambitious platform, to disseminate wide-ranging information on the 2Bparks Protected Areas and to promote the product mix of the 2Bparks territories. Specific efforts addressing the web social media should also be considered (e.g. Facebook, YouTube) to increase awareness on 2Bparks and MED natural heritage.

## Implementing the 2Bparks Joint Marketing Strategy

The 2Bparks Joint Marketing Strategy was envisaged to support the implementation of Local Tourism Strategic Plans, based on a transnational approach, to balance environmental conservation and protection, with economic growth.

This purpose has been accomplished through the preparation of eight LTSP, built on common guidelines (see section 3) and through the implementation of the 2Bparks environmental clusters, to encourage the adoption of sustainable environmental practices by economic operators (see section 6). Additional steps were also taken by the implementation of individual experimental actions (see section 5) and by sharing good practices to promote sustainable tourism models (see section 4).

The work developed so far established the basis for further developments, capitalising on the experience obtained to consolidate the transnational dimension of 2BParks.



### *Symposium on sustainable tourism*

*Niki Evelpidou, Eleana Karkani, Ioanna Koutsomichou*, University of Athens, Faculty of Geology and Geoenvironment



### Introduction

On October 22th, 2012 the Faculty of Geology and Geoenvironment, of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens hosted the Sustainable Tourism Symposium on protected areas (“2Bparks Sustainable Tourism Symposium”).

The Symposium gathered participants from educational institutions, research networks, managers of protected areas and national parks, non-profit organizations activated in the environmental sector, government agencies, private entities and international organizations from seven (7) European countries, with the purpose to present and exchange views on the management of tourism and environmental sustainability, within protected areas and National Parks.

The discussion focused on the contribution of the project 2Bparks practices in designing new scenarios on management of protected areas in

the Veneto region of Italy, the contribution of the research network MedPAN in the management of protected areas in the Mediterranean, alternative forms of tourism as implemented in the National Park of Dardia - Lefkimi - Soufli, civil protection forest areas in Cyprus, restored forests in Spain, creating environmental tourism guides in the case of Slovenia, the presentation of the study area of the National Park of Schinias - Marathon (historical background, strengths and weakness of the park) the development of educational activity through tourism as dictated by the instructions of UNESCO, the economic and social impacts of marine protected areas in the islands of Greece, the management of public assets through the development of parks and good practices in the Park Sintra in Portugal, environmental awareness and information on protected areas and best practices in tourism management from specific areas of study in Greece, Italy, Cyprus and Portugal.

The speakers who participated in the Symposium were representatives of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, the University of Piraeus, the Veneto Region of Italy, the Marine National Park of Zakynthos, the Management Body of Mount Parnonas and Wetland Moustos, the University of Cyprus and the Department of Forestry, the Park Sintra - Monte da Lua Portugal, representatives of UNESCO, Mediterranean SOS Network, University of Compostela in Spain, GORMICE d.o.o. Congress & Marketing Agency of Slovenia and WWF Hellas.

### Description of Symposium

The Sustainable Tourism Symposium took place in the University of Athens, in the Main Building, Alkis Argyriades Amphitheatre. The President of the Organizing Committee, Dr. Niki Evelpidou, Mrs Raffaella Lioce, representing the Spatial and Strategic Planning (Lead Partner of the 2Bparks project, Veneto Region) and the Head of Faculty of Geology & Geoenvironment, University of Athens Dr. Stamatakis welcomed all the participants of the Sustainable Tourism Symposium.

In the first session of Symposium the scientific team tackled issues relevant to the subject of "Tourism Management".

Mrs Lioce presented the 2Bparks Project and analyzed its objectives and deliverables.

Mr. Sourbes, the Director of the National Marine Park of Zakynthos, through his presentation gave the definition of Sustainable Tourism and presented the Network of Managers of Marine Protected Areas (MedPAN).

Mrs. Dimitrakopoulou, the Head of the Department of Information of the Management Body of Mount Parnon, through her presentation informed the participants on the protected area of Mount Parnon and Wetland Moustos.

Mr. Georgiou and Mrs. Christou from the Cyprus Center for European and International Affairs - University of Nicosia, Cyprus tackled issues about the Tourism in Cyprus, the National Strategy on Tourism 2011 – 2015, the Troodos Mountainous Region and the Regional Strategy on Tourism.

Dr. Lamas, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Parques de Sintra - Monte da Lua, talked about the management of the main public properties in the Cultural Landscape of Sintra.

Dr. Tselentis and Mr. Manoglou representing the University of Piraeus presented the economic and social impacts of Marine Protected areas on islands. The second session of the Symposium was dedicated to "Environmental Sustainability".

Dr. Pypaert from the UNESCO Venice Office, explained to the audience "When tourism serves educational purposes".

Mrs. Roumelioti from the MEDITERRANEAN SOS Network analyzed the case of the National Park of Schinias – Marathon and specifically its historical background, strengths and weaknesses.

Mrs. Apih, GORMICE d.o.o. Congress & Marketing Agency, presented the case study of Slovenia, the Ljubljansko barje Nature Park and the development of tourist guides.

Dr. Merino from the University of Santiago de Compostela, Spain presented the benefits and the main threats of trees and forests; the result from this lecture was that forest plantations should be managed in a sustainable way by selecting the most appropriate lands, adopting the intensity of the harvesting to the capacity of the soils and implementing silviculture management.

Mr. Tsintides, Chief Conservator of Forests dealt with issues on forests and forest policy, the Protected Areas in Cyprus and the Troodos National Forest Park.

Mrs. Quaglia, from the Spatial and Strategic Planning Department, Veneto Region tackled issues about the Landscape Plan in the Veneto Region and its objectives and strategies.

Finally, Mr. Liarikos, the Conservation Programmes Coordinator for WWF Hellas presented the alternative forms of tourism and nature protection in Greece using as a case study the National Parks of Dadia – Lefkimi - Soufli.

At the beginning of the Sustainable Tourism Symposium the President of Organizing Committee Dr. Evelpidou distributed to each one of the participants, a backpack with educational material and supporting documentation on the Symposium activities.

Participants decided to gather the papers presented in the Symposium and generate a volume on the Symposium's proceedings, that it will be part of 2Bparks Notebook.



*Two images of the Symposium*







### 3. 2Bparks Local Tourism Strategic Plan

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### *LTSP in Serre Regional Park*

*Jlenia Tucci, Debora Pititto, Maria Teresa Scrivo, Vittorio Martino, Giuseppe Corallini, Giuseppe Sergi, Stefano Greci, Maria Rosanna Vari, Natural Regional Park of Serre*



#### **GUIDELINES**

*Depending on the specific local characteristics and objectives, the LTSP are different. Nevertheless, to allow comparison and cross-checking of different experiences Partners are asked to describe their Local Tourism Strategic Plans (LTSP), following a common template, as proposed hereafter. Sources of information should be indicated, when applicable.*

#### **LOCAL TOURISM STRATEGIC PLAN** **Objectives and scope**

##### **Objectives of the report**

The Park of Serre is an area rich in land resources: environmental, natural, historical, cultural, religious. These, if optimally coordinated by a public unanimously recognized by the local tourism stakeholders, the Park

Authority, are the basic factors of the model of tourist use of the product “Park of Serre.”

##### **Territorial scope of the target area**

The tourism development plan (LTSP) proposed here, wants to have an impact in an area whose perimeter administrative fall 26 municipalities in three provinces of the Region of Calabria, with a resident population of 66,768 units to 1/1/2011. In this political context are part of the nearly 18,000 hectares of protected area as they fall four SIC, Sites of Community Interest, one of which, the Lake of the Angitola, was recognized as a “wetland of value Internazionale” within the meaning of the RAMSAR Convention.

The 26 municipalities that make up the territory of the Park of Serre are remarkably heterogeneous in terms of geographical location, availability and variety of the natural and cultural history in them

covered by it. They range from purely territories in the mountains (Serra San Bruno, Brogborough, Nardodipace, etc..) To others in the plains, and others, again, with a strong appeal situated directly on the sea: Lace, overlooking the Tyrrhenian Sea and Davoli, San Sosthenes, Badolato, to name a few, overlooking the Ionian Sea. This disparity in, however, turns out to be a great resource potential in terms of tourism, as if well managed and organized, allow the creation of a tourist offer varied by the remarkable ability to attract the flow of visitors.

## Methodology

The methodology used for the preparation of the Strategic Plan for Local Development has been promoted following a methodological approach inspired by the Project Cycle Management or Management of the life cycle of the project. The design process was divided into 3 phases:

1. Analytical phase: analysis of the context (the territory of the Park of Serre at various levels of investigation), identification of supply and demand planning (current and potential), the definition of the product-territory and conducting the analysis of the competitive environment;
2. Phase strategic representation of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis) of the context of intervention, identification of the territorial

positioning on the market, targets and defining a development strategy that would make the product-winning territory;

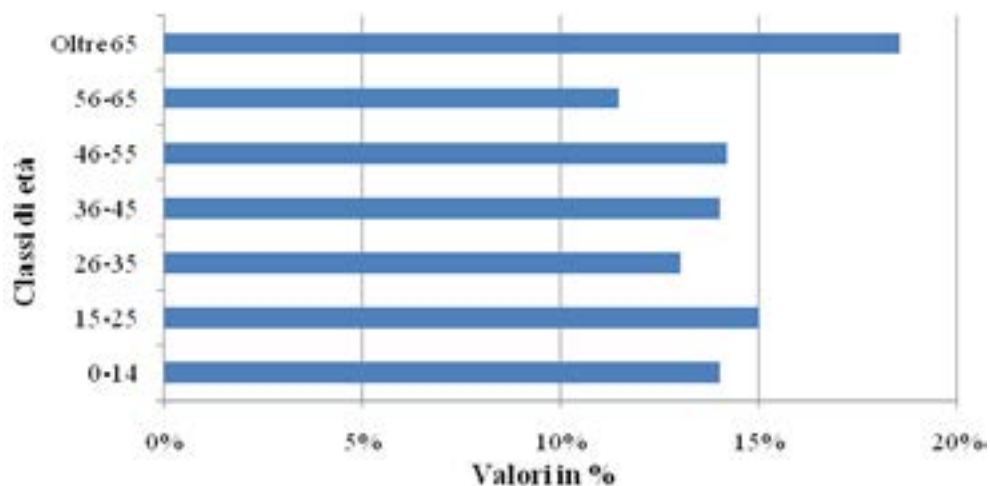
3. Operational phase: in line with the results of analytical and strategic phases was outlined the marketing mix of actions for territorial development and, accordingly, the first actions have been identified for the construction of territory and product-development and marketing promotion of the same

Consider also that the preparation phase of LTSP was preceded by the administration of two types of questionnaires (search for the field type): the first aimed at tourists, citizens, Public Administration staff and local stakeholders. Whose purpose was to understand the level of awareness of the respondents to be in a protected area, the degree of satisfaction and expectations of the same at the extent and quality of services in the area. The second time to understand if the Park of the Serre tourism stakeholders are able to attract streams of visitors.

## Characterizations and analysis of the target territory

### Brief characterisation of the target territory

The tourism development plan (LTSP) proposed here, wants to affect an area in which administrative perimeter fall 26 municipalities in three provinces of the Region of Calabria, with a resident population of 66,768 units to 1/1/2011.

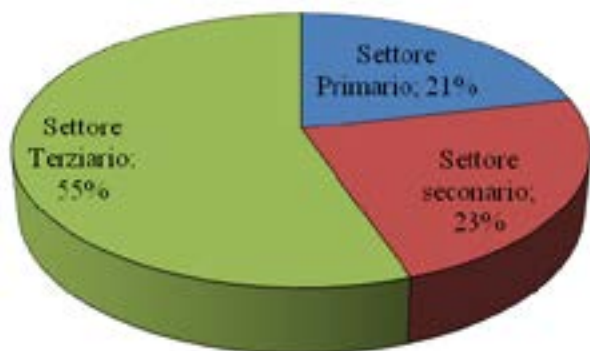


Resident population in municipalities in the Park distinguished by age.  
% Values. year 2011  
Source: Our elaboration on ISTAT data



In this political context are part of the nearly 18,000 hectares of protected area as they fall four SIC, Sites of Community Interest, one of which, Lake dell'Angitola, was recognized as a "wetland of value Internazionale" under the RAMSAR convention . The park lies, therefore, in a mostly mountainous territory, which reaches its highest point on Mount Pecoraro which with its 1423 meters is the highest

of Vibo Valentia. On the hill, then, very close to the sea, Lake dell'Angitola. While many municipalities who own a portion of land within the protected decline on the sea: Pizzo, on the Tyrrhenian Sea; Davoli, San Sosthenes, Badolato, Santa Caterina and Guardavalle on the Ionian Sea. This strain localization would be a great resource potential in terms of tourism, as if well managed and organized, allow the creation of a tourist offer varied by the remarkable ability to attract the flow of visitors.



Production activity of PNR Serre divided by macro economic sector. % Values. year 2011  
Source: Our elaboration on ISTAT data

The points of interest of the "Nature-Wildlife" path	
Name	Short description
Le Carbonaie Serra San Bruno (VV)	Very few settlements of small businesses for the production of coal, in the "Croce Ferrata" in Serra San Bruno. Rare presence, now, on the Italian territory, as to be regarded milestone for the paths related to industrial archeology.
Sentiero Archiforo Serra San Bruno (VV)	The route starts at the nursery located in "Rosarella" at an altitude of 900 m to arrive at an altitude of 1080 m in the place that the locals call "the Ammienzu of Petra" or the Lord's Stone: a gigantic granite boulder that makes even more epic this stretch of forest.
Cascate del Marmarico Bivongi (RC)	114 m high, is the highest waterfall of Calabria and the southern Apennines. The name "Marmarico" has origins dialect and means "slow" or "heavy", and is due to the effect that carries the water from going down this long jump that makes it seem almost motionless.
Cascate di Pietracupa Guardavalle (CZ)	From the mountain hut "Zessi" that leads into the prepared path that leads us, in a surreal atmosphere, up to the waterfall where it forms a sparkling lake.
Lago Angitola Maierato (VV)	Artificial lake at the mouth of the river Angitola, occupies an area of approximately 1.96 km <sup>2</sup> . Recognized in 1975 as a natural oasis of the WWF.
Villa Vittoria e il Laghetto  Mongiana (VV)	Park "Villa Victoria" owns 400 acres of botanical gardens, wildlife trails. Inside you can admire various animal and plant species, where, among other things, are bred and studied the fallow deer and roe deer. A short distance from the park is the lake, a body of water surrounded by pine and fir trees that provide shade to the numerous tables and wooden benches that make up the picnic area.
Santa Maria del Bosco Serra San Bruno (VV)	The area includes the eponymous regional Sanctuary, the beautiful lake of San Bruno and a picturesque natural setting composed mainly of fir trees.
Monte Pecoraro Mongiana (VV)	Monte Pecoraro, near the Casa Roadhouse on the SS 110, with its 1423 meters is the highest mountain in the Serre Calabresi and the province of Vibo Valentia. From here, you can admire spectacular views. Along the way, it is not uncommon to come across herds of cattle grazing.
Bagni di Guida Bivongi (RC)	Location of Bivongi near the torrent Stilario, once known as the "Holy Waters" for its medicinal properties due to sulfide-alkali elements. You are familiar with its use since 1870 but have been known since the time of the Byzantines and also in the pre-Byzantine style.
Il rifugio del brigante Gerocarne (VV)	Environmental site located in the village of Morano, surrounded by green forests of Serre. The area was included in the circuit sentieristico Regional called "the way of the Ferriere.

<b>The points of interest of the "Nature-Wildlife" path</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Short description</b>
Pietre Megalitiche Nardodipace (VV)	They are located in the "Elder", of uncertain anthropogenic origin, may date back to the V-III millennium BC. The first of the two structures is about 10 meters high, the second has a height of 4 meters.
Grotte trogloditiche Polia (VV)	These caves with the characteristic revenue to the mouth of the oven dug into the tuff walls of the hill, under Trecroci. The stationing of the cave dwellers in Polia is confirmed by several flint artifacts, surfaced here and there in large numbers as a result of frequent seismic upheavals that have battered the country.
Lago di Ferdinanda Bivongi (RC)	Beautiful artificial lake surrounded by forests of beech and fir of great natural value.
Lago Lacina – Brognaturo (VV)	The reservoir of Lacina is an artificial lake which is located in wetlands in fact called the "Lacina," Greek name used to describe the basin from which the river Alaca. It 'an area with a high diversity of plant species, there are more than 300, 26% of which are rare.

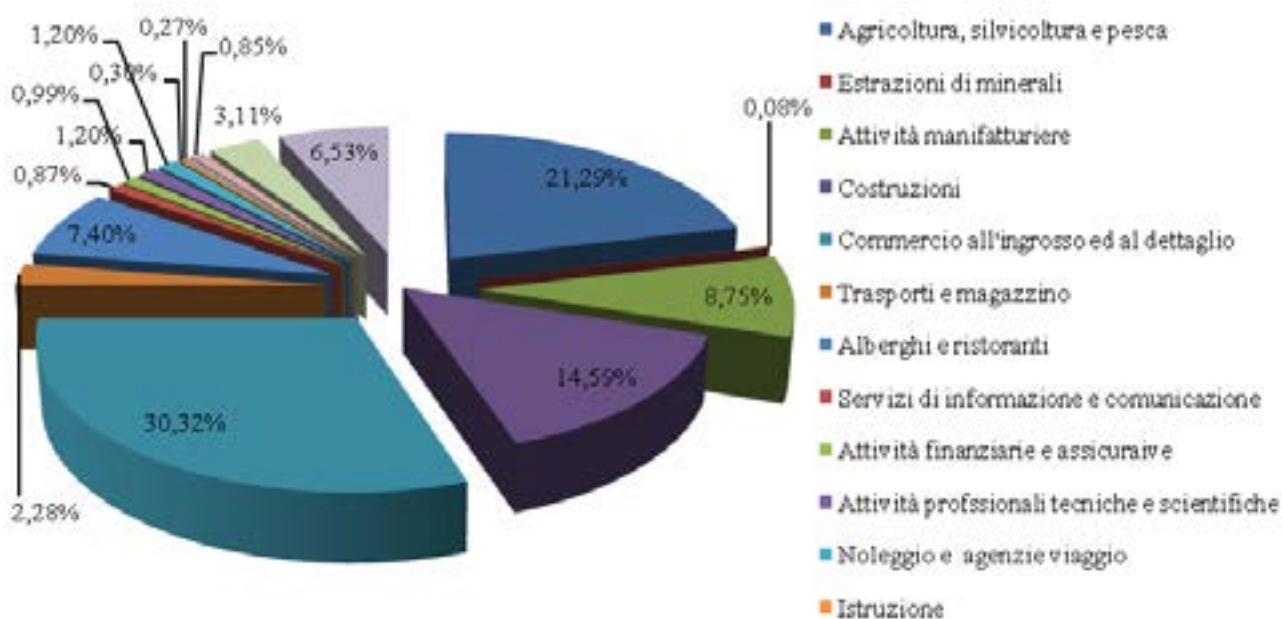
<b>The points of interest of the "Historical-Cultural" path</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Short description</b>
The historic town Serra San Bruno and the Churches Serra San Bruno (VV)	Shows the most representative place within the town. From this place can be visited other places of high interest of the historical-cultural-artistic.
The Charteuse of Serra San Bruno and the Museum Museo Serra San Bruno (VV)	Founded between 1090 and 1101 by Bruno of Cologne, the Charterhouse is the first Carthusian monastery in Italy and the second in any order. Within the same walls, lies the Certosa Museum allows visitors to experience something of the Carthusian life.
The Cattolica of Stilo Stilo (RC)	Small Byzantine church plant in central square, dating from the tenth century. Since 2006 is part of the list of candidates to join the list of UNESCO World Heritage sites.
Castello Aragonese Pizzo Calabro (VV)	Aragonese Castle, known as "Murat Castle", built in the second half of the fifteenth century by Ferdinand I of Aragon in defense of the Kingdom. It is a quadrangular building on the one hand and the other on the sea surrounded by a deep moat.
Castello Normanno Arena (VV)	Founded by Norman sec. XI, largely rebuilt (between the XVI and XVII) by the Marquis Conclubet and by the Dukes of Acquaviva, destroyed by the earthquake of 1783 remain leftover corner towers of type → Aragonese and Spanish sections of the perimeter walls and the ruins of a grand medieval aqueduct intended to supply water to the Castle.
The historic town Badolato and the Churches Badolato (CZ)	It 'a small medieval village perched on a hill 240 meters above sea level. It has 12 churches, all of great artistic value.
Monastero Ortodosso di S. Giovanni Theristis Bivongi (RC)	Bivongi main monument, is a period of transition from architecture Byzantine, Latin-Norman (XI century)

<b>The points of interest of the "Nature-Wildlife" path</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Short description</b>
Ferdinanda Bivongi (RC)	Site of archaeological importance and landscape nestled in the woods of beech trees of the Serre, not far from the "Niagara Marmarico." It was the summer residence of the Bourbons and home of the famous Bourbon Ferriere, closed after the unification of Italy.

The economic sector is presented, in late 2011, with 5,271 active companies located in the territory of the NRP of the Serre. An analysis by macro economic sector, then, (you can see how the productive activity of the Park is oriented toward the service sector, thanks to the presence of numerous restaurants and tourist accommodation that show evidence of how the territory is present a strong tourist vocation.

### Characterisation of the tourism resources

Characterisation of the tourism offer and demand  
 Tourism offer-analysis of the production system by sector of economic activity is that the sector oriented to meet the tourist offer and that is in hotels and restaurants is equal to 7.4% of all businesses operating within the administrative boundary of the Park.



### Tourism demand

As there is no detailed statistical surveys, it is only possible to estimate the presence and arrivals on the territory of the park using the data derived from the consultation of some registers of museums and Pro-Loco.

To confirm this, a careful field research carried out using questionnaires to open application built specifically for the subjects identified before, the method desk, tourism stakeholders such as of the

Park of Serre has shown that lack to date of the strong subjects , integrated with each other that are able to attract, guide and quantify the flow of tourists in and about the territory. Thus, to fulfill this request were analyzed those individual companies that could, at least, be in possession of a visitor log able to quantify the number of visitors / tourists in the area in a given period.

In the localities monitored were detected the following data:

**Tourist flows in the years 2009/2012 at Museo della Certosa - Serra San Bruno - VV**

MONTHS	PRESENCE			
	YEAR 2009	YEAR 2010	YEAR 2011	YEAR 2012 (only 4 months of the year)
TOTAL	27.394	25.157	27.345	3274

**Tourist flows: Monastero di San Giovanni Theristis - Bivongi - RC**

MONTHS	PRESENCE			
	YEAR 2009	YEAR 2010	YEAR 2011	YEAR 2012 (only 4 months of the year)
TOTAL	3.300	3.450	2.958	783

**Tourist flows: Villa Vittoria - Mongiana - VV**

PRESENCE Year 2011	
Schools	2.583
Organised Groups	1.310
Single Groups without touristic guide	5.000
TOTAL	8.893

EVENT: Palio Ribusa - Stilo (RC), which annually attracts about 30,000 to 40,000 tourists in three days.

**Tourist flows: Cattolica di Stilo**

MONTHS	PRESENCE	
	YEAR 2010	YEAR 2011
TOTAL	28.030	28.252

These results have allowed us to reason about the degree of attractiveness of the areas and the potential tourist development that these are capable of generating when there is the presence of a well-structured organization.



<b>Strenghts</b>	<b>Opportunity</b>
<p>Natural heritage and cultural history of great value  Environmental context-natural landscape  Presence of typical local products  Presence of valuable cultural and religious elements associated with Saint Bruno  Natural propensity to “welcoming host”</p>	<p>Creation of a system of integrated tourism offer (environment, culture, local products)  Promotion of a new tourist area at European and international level  Boost the tourism sector through activities that can develop a continuous know-how and new business and employment opportunities, with the strengthening of ties and the economic benefits to other sectors of the local system  Creating a brand of “territorial” quality</p>
<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<p>Low awareness of the potential of the area by the residents  Low promotion of the territory  Low integration and coordination among local actors involved in tourism promotion  Deficient public transport services  Concentration of tourist flows in some areas  Poor selection of hotel facilities  Low diversification of services offered by the accommodation  Poor utilization of local handicraft fabrics  Offer of events concentrated in summer  Insufficient cooperation</p>	<p>Excessive concentration of tourism in some areas (mainly coastal)  Prevalence of traditional policies rather than innovative  Sense of private initiative and enterprising insufficiently disseminated  Difficulty to promote the area and tourism initiatives by operators  Excessive loss of competitiveness of the village, in favor of other competitors location (coastal)  Difficulty to build an integrated tourism offer  Limited time of stay due to poor supply of tourism services  Management of non-strategic paths of territorial development  Management of rigid accommodations (opening of most hotels occurs only in high season periods)</p>

## Strategic Plan

### Objectives

The main objectives of territorial marketing identified are attributable to the following:

- Increase the level of awareness of the characteristics and environmental landscape value of the area, culture, economy and manufacturing existing and potential tourist through present;
- Strengthen the area’s image by increasing the visibility and marketability in favor of cultural tourism;
- Improve the quality of tourism by enriching the range of services and contributing to the cultural sectors, environmental, food and wine;

- To promote the tourism economy through diversification and the promotion of the integrated land systems, the qualification of infrastructure and territorial marketing actions;
- Protect, enhance and promote territorial assets;
- Enhance and make available the environmental, natural, cultural, offering tourism products dedicated (guided tours etc ...);
- Increasing the supply of local products.

### Core strategic options

Strategic positioning: This section is shown in tabular form the current and desired positioning of

the territory of the Park of Serre compared to the 4 main types of product-offer outlined for the territory of the same name:

1. "Nature & Landscapes";
2. "Art, History and Culture";
3. "Events and Religious Traditions";
4. "Products Traditional Local."

Product	Target Market		main weaknesses	Development actions
	Italy	Foreign countries		
Nature and landscapes	Sicily, Apulia, Campania, Lazio, Lombardy, Tuscany	Germany, Benelux, Great Britain, Scandinavia, USA	Scarcity of leisure services. Promotional policy to be strengthened	Creating a service offer (sports, routes, excursions, guided tours) for green tourism..
Art, History and Culture	Sicily, Apulia, Campania, Lazio, Lombardy, Tuscany	Germany, Benelux, Great Britain, Scandinavia, USA	Promotional policy to be strengthened.  Low average stay.	Creating a scheme to enhance the common cultural-historical and artistic level. Implementation of the trademark "I'm with the Park"
Cultural and Religious Traditions	Sicily, Apulia, Campania, Lazio, Lombardy, Tuscany	Germany, Benelux, Great Britain, Scandinavia, USA	Promotional policy to be strengthened	Creating a system of promotion events
Typical local products	Sicily, Apulia, Campania, Lazio, Lombardy, Tuscany	Germany, Benelux, Great Britain, Scandinavia, USA	Lack of integrated offer of products in the area. Creating a brand "Serre Park"	Experimenting with new formulas promotion / support for products with transportation common carriers.

The table will be provided with a summary analysis of the positioning of the park compared to the 4 components of the product-territory identified and referred to 4 survey items: current market segments, segments of target markets (referring to the Italian and foreign), the major deficiencies and development interventions to improve the supply.

### Marketing Mix Strategy

The marketing policy mix (product, price, promotion and distribution) for the growth of the territory of the Park Greenhouses can be summarized as follows:

*Product* - The product-territory Parco delle Serre must be "built" in tune with what is required and expected by the customer-user to investigate the maximum satisfaction.

*Price* - The price policies are related to the life cycle of the product and the perception of the tourist-user of the territory. The product Parco delle Serre can be placed in an intermediate stage between "introduction" and "development" than the life cycle: from this it is clear that at this stage we need investment (public and private) and the adoption of a pricing policy low profit margin.

*Promotion* - The promotion policy should sell the unique accommodation on the edge of the Serre as a mix of incomparable charm, relaxation, nature and hospitality and traditions.

*Distribution* - The distribution policies that may affect

the offer must be in line with current developments in the tourism market: therefore assume strategic importance of the creation of portals offered on online purchase (Booking, Expedia) and the presence in the catalogs range of travel agencies and tour operators local, regional and national.

### Action Plan

The definition of tourism development model adopted by the Parco delle Serre implies the sharing of all the actors of the territory and the sharing of objectives and tools to create, strengthen, promote and sell the land in all its complexity. The action plan outlined involves the construction of a number of actions which have been appropriately summarized in the following table:

ACTION n.	NAME	PEOPLE INVOLVED	DURATION	COST IN EUR
1	INVOLVE ALL THOSE WHO ARE ENGAGED IN THE TOURISM SECTOR, IN THE PROTECTED AREA AND SURROUNDING AREAS IN ITS DEVELOPMENT AND IN ITS MANAGEMENT	ALL LOCAL CITIZENS	2013-2017	5.000,00
2a	ENHANCE AND PROTECT THE NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE AREA FOR AND THROUGH TOURISM.	Local Authorities, Environmental Associations, Private operators of farms and tourist accommodation	Maggio 2013	15.000
2b	ENHANCING AND PROMOTING THE NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE AREA FOR AND THROUGH TOURISM.	Local Authorities	2013	50.000
3	PROVIDE ALL VISITORS AN EXPERIENCE THAT IS PERCEIVED IN HIGH QUALITY '	Local Authorities, Environmental Associations, Private operators of farms and tourist accommodation	2013-2014	10.000
4	INCREASE BENEFITS FROM LOCAL TOURISM ECONOMY	Farmers and wine producers, operators, restaurateurs, Trade Associations	2013-2017	15.000,00
5	INCREASE THE APPEAL OF THE TERRITORY ENCOURAGING THE TRANSNATIONALITY '(Planning the network of hiking trails)	PA	2013-2017	500.000,00
			TOTALE	595.000

## Implementation and Monitoring of the Strategic Plan

The implementation phase is the necessary condition for the start of the above actions.

- Fostering coordination between the stakeholders involved in the process of implementation of the Plan (LTSP) to promote an integrated system of park-tourism sector;
- Promote the participation of companies and the PA for a more effective and shared planning of promotional initiatives, most notably the adherence to the eco-territorial "I'm with the Park";
- Adhere to national and international promotion channels (Booking, Tripadvisor and similar channels).

A fundamental prerogative is to promote the interest of the parties involved in the development of local tourism product, whether public or private, starting with the promotion of the eco-territorial become the starting point for the creation of the "system area". This interest has to support the whole process of implementation of the Plan, otherwise there is the risk of not achieving the expected results.

The monitoring of the activity can take place through a limited number of persons to whom will be given the responsibility for the organization and marketing of the "territorial system" that are internal to the park and act as a link with the tourism stakeholders and evaluate customer satisfaction of reference. The results (number of customers, accommodation, attendance in the structures of services, ...), are measured in numbers and expressed in economic terms, they can be easily controlled. A good relationship and a comparison between operators and technicians of Protected Areas will allow monitoring of the interaction.

An activity of continuous measurement of the performance and evaluation of the degree of satisfaction by the operators of the Agency, aims to redefine every time the more efficient strategies to implement r to make any corrective actions.

## TERRITORIAL WORKSHOPS / ROAD SHOWS

### GUIDELINES

*Considering that territorial workshops/road shows are a specific deliverable of this phase, Partners are asked to describe the events organised following a participatory approach, to involve public and private stakeholders on the preparation and dissemination of the LTSP. Please describe the objectives, details, participants and results of the workshops /road shows. Please note that this part is intended to incorporate further developments of section "1.2 –Methodology" of Part 1, focusing specifically on workshops/road shows organised, to ensure a participatory approach*

### Territorial Workshop: the importance of protected areas between opportunities and constraints

#### Scope and Objectives

Evaluate with public administrators the opportunities offered by the protected area while respecting the constraints in terms of the establishment of environmental protection and regional planning.

#### Details and Participation

June 15, 2012, from 10.30 to 13.30 in Serra San Bruno-at the headquarters of the Park.

Participants: Mayors of the municipalities of the Park, directors, representatives of associations

#### Evaluation

Starting the dialogue with the authorities intervened aimed at creating awareness and assents to the territorial development actions undertaken by the Park of the Serre.

#### Documentation

Agenda, attendance sheet, photos.

## **Territorial Workshop: the importance of dialogue between schools and institutions as a means of promoting culture environment**

### **Scope and Objectives**

Start a dialogue with educational institutions aimed at sharing a culture of environmental and territorial identity.

### **Details and Participation**

October 8, 2012 - Certosa di Serra San Bruno-at the event Clean Up the World  
or Participants: teachers participating in the day of environmental education

### **Evaluation**

Start a dialogue with educational institutions aimed at sharing a culture of environmental and territorial identity and continuous demand of the presence of the operators of the Park within schools.

### **Documentation**

Agenda, attendance sheet, photos





### *LTSP in Hérault - Program of “Unusual walks”*

*Raphaëlle GHOUL , Isabelle CHUNG, COOPERE 34 association: education network for environment, Gérard Wolff, General Council of Hérault*



#### **Objectives and scope**

As part of its heritage development policy, the Hérault General Council has for several years been promoting various acts of expertise, management, and education; the production of educational tools completes this desire to protect the environment and to inform the general public of the natural and cultural wealth of these areas.

In this context, the Council wishes to establish a general entertainment program in some of the protected areas open to the public, chosen from the most representative of ecological, pastoral, social and/or cultural value.

The objective of the activity program is to bring more public and visitors to Hérault and to enrich their views regarding the Department of Hérault's

protected Areas, by focusing on the different types of areas. This educational program will be an invitation to explore these areas, as well as encouraging the appreciation of local natural heritage.

#### **Methodology**

The program “Unusual walks” has been designed as a follow up of a series of annual campaigns. As a consequence the benefits increase with experiences, improvements are still registered although the different steps of the process remain the same and are reminded hereafter.

- The inventory of the natural sites has led to sort 21 protected areas out of 120 (totalizing

8000 hectares)

- The protected areas have been chosen on the base of several criteria such as:
- The capacity to host visitors by means of improved facilities: parking lot, secured paths
- High interest of the visitors in the field of biodiversity, landscape, cultural heritage etc.
- Updated information depending on the success of previous visits
- The General council of Herault has organized a tender procedure in order to select an operator (Coopere 34) to implement and organize an educational campaign for 2012.

*COOPERE 34*, Coordination for Environmental Education (Coordination Pour l'Education Relative à l'Environnement), is an environmental education network in the Hérault territories.

It currently has about sixty associated organizations, local authorities and individuals. An informal network started in 2003, COOPERE has been a voluntary association since 2008. It derives from the initiative of an association network and is supported by local communities and the state.

It works closely with other regional networks for Environmental Education towards Sustainable Development (Education à l'environnement vers un Développement Durable - EEDD) in Languedoc Roussillon.

This network aims to promote and develop environmental education in the Hérault territories by linking educational stakeholders.

### **Characterizations and analysis of the target territory**

The entire territory of the general council of Herault takes advantage of its protected areas.

Meanwhile in order to have a more global view at departmental level, the department of Hérault can be split into 3 geographical areas:

**West:** Albine, Réals, Rives de l'Arn, Savignac, Vézoles, Vieulac

**Centre:** Bessilles, Olivettes, Salagou + Mourèze and Liausson, Vias

**North-North East:** Fesquet, Fondespierre, Font du Griffon and Lavagnes, Mas Dieu, Mas Neuf, Moulin Neuf, Restinclières, Roussières, Saint-Sauveur, Vernède.

Visitors may have different expectations depending on their social background, professional status, and on whether they live in rural or urban areas, etc.

Protected areas, embedded on the whole territory, allow different profiles in a large diversity, meant to satisfy the need of the major part of citizens regardless of their social background.

In that sense, the "unusual walk" strives to provide a wide range of activities and interests for the visitors (see also the part "Implementation and monitoring of the strategic plan")

As a consequence, it is possible to observe the following trends, depending on the attendance statistics:

The Centre (Heart of Hérault) has no problem with visitors' attendance with a high average (between 15.6 and 48).

The North-North East (11.0) and West (12.4), however, have a low average attendance

The West's average is particularly low if we remove the areas of Vieulac and Albine: 5.6 average attendance for the West.

Note that the West has a total visitor count that is very low compared to the Central and North-North East, amounting to 309 visitors versus 501 and 540. Areas suffering from a lack of average attendance for zones already identified for 2012 (see more detailed table in the annex) are in particular:

- The West: Savignac (3.0), Réals (5.0), Vézoles (8.0)
- The North-North East: Mas Dieu (5.0), Fesquet (7.7), Fondespierre (9.5), Moulin Neuf (9.3)

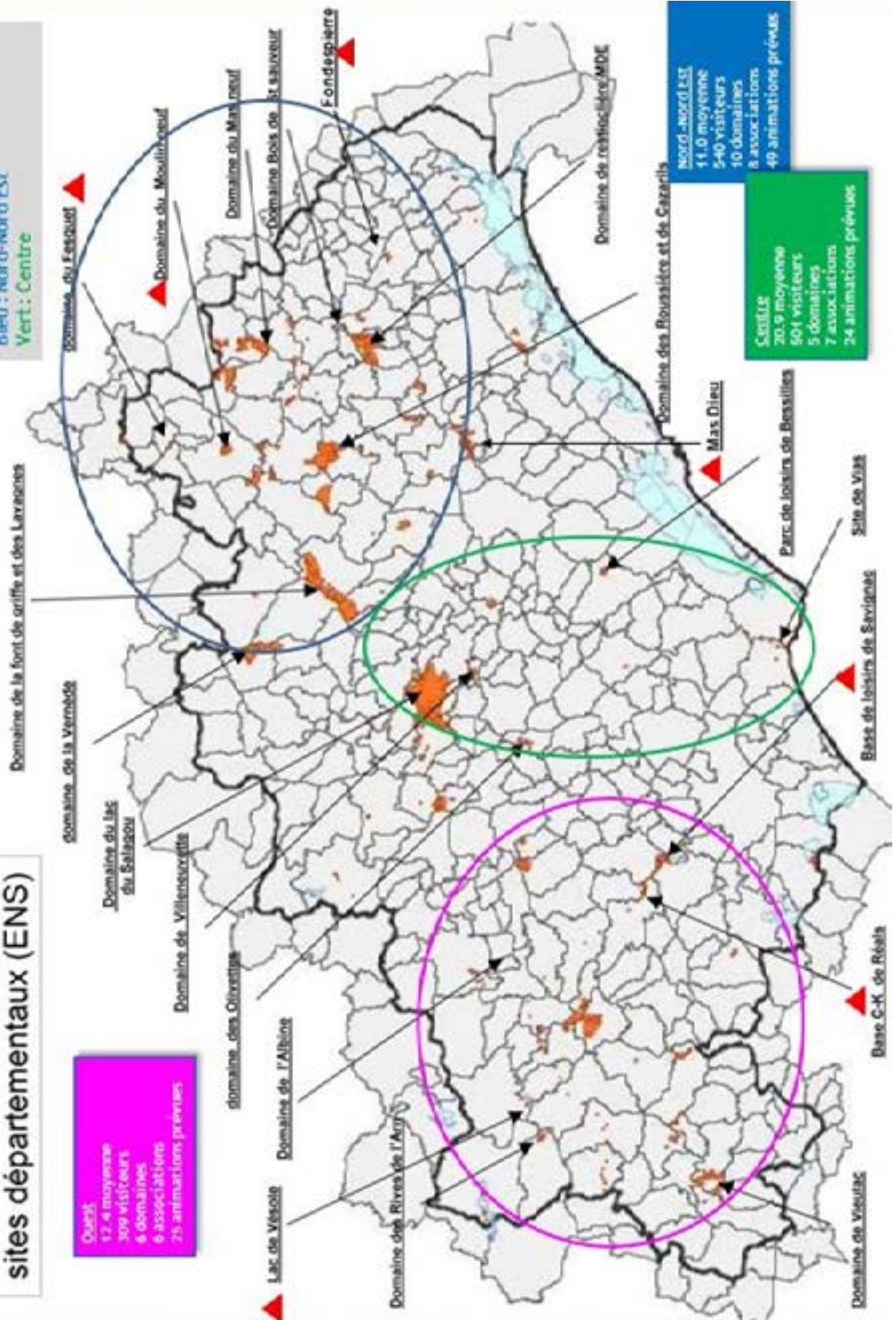


# Carte de localisation des sites départementaux (ENS)

▲ Domaines les moins fréquentés

## 3 zones géographiques

Ouest : Rose  
 Bleu : Nord-Nord Est  
 Vert : Centre



## Strategic Plan

The General Council of Hérault with its operators (Coopere 34 and its own partners) tried to organize several categories of outings as much as possible.

Cat. Events	n°
A (guided)	94
B (events)	1
C (spontaneous)	2
D (sportive)	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>98</b>

Regarding the so-called nature walks, some associations worked to make their events generate ideas and spread knowledge in a fun and artistic way. To do this they proposed walks, visits to producers or even more manual activities such as stone carving.

It is worth noting that only 4 outings took on a fundamentally different form: spontaneous or sportive. This innovation for educating new (less informed) audiences will be worked on for years to come. This takes time, exchanges between the activity leaders in the field and other protected areas actors (approaching sports clubs, outdoor sports, field managers, local sub-departmental collectives, etc.)

The staff in charge of programming the "unusual walks" focused on the previous statistics from 2006 to 2011 (on the following table) in order to analyse the attendance rhythm for each protected areas. Conclusions were quite easily drawn in order to make some improvement also based on the environmental policy for the protected areas set by the board of representatives. **(See table n. 1)**

Amongst the positive points, there is the regular increase of the total attendance including the Nature celebration and a global recognition of the role of the General Council of Hérault on these fields. However the participation level of the "Nature celebration" is unequal and the cancellation rate evolves between 6 and 8%.

## Implementation and Monitoring of the Strategic Plan

The data has been registered for the last campaign and show a significant rise of the attendance from 931 in 2011 to 1350 in 2012, but also an increase of the P.A. in which outings and sessions were organized (21). As a consequence, the targets, objectives and means were quite easily defined.

table n. 1

Year	N. P.A.	Mean global attendance *	Total attendance (Nature celebration included)	Attendance Nature celebration	Total activities offered	Nature celebration events	Cancelation in %	Time frame	Duration in months	New P.A.s	Mountain bike week ends
2006		9,0			90						
2007		10,0			115						
2008		13,0			89						
2009	10	14,9	835	135	56	10	6%	avril-nov	8		1
2010	12	16,2	1053	171	65	8	7%	mai-nov	7	3	1
2011	13	14,5	931	139	64	8	8%	avril-nov	8	1	1

\* Mean global attendance calculation = Total attendance including Nature celebration / Total of events or outings



**table n. 2**

Year	N. P.A.	Mean global attendance *	Total attendance (Nature celebration included)	Attendance Nature celebration	Total activities offered	Nature celebration events	Cancelation in %	Time frame	Duration in months	New P.A.s	Mountain bike week ends
2012	21	15,9	1 350	108	85	7	13%	Avril-nov	7	7	0

\* Mean global attendance calculation = Total attendance including Nature celebration / Total of events or outings

A major objective consisted in increasing the number of both events and visitors (see the part “Objectives and scope”). (See table n. 2)

Another target was set on the themes proposed to the visitors. A particular attention has been given to offer a larger variety of events. In the right column, the list appears with classical environmental topics but also cultural ones, as food tasting, agroforestry, Land art, urbanism, geology, astronomy, etc.

This allows for the offer to be enriched in order to cater to a wider public.

(See table n. 3)

The successful implementation process also depends on a wealthy network of small and medium-sized organizations already involved in awareness-raising as shown in the table n. 4.

The 18 organizations held 57.5 days of events, which is equivalent to 115 half-day events.

As mentioned previously, some associated organizations co-designed events using two organizations, which explains the difference between the total number of 98 events versus 103. Finally, the implementation of the strategic plan was also built on communication on a large scale giving the known results for 2012.

Principle: distribution is intended to be:

widespread, including a reorder scheduled for late September and brought forward to late August to boost communication

strategic, targeting essential places: tourist offices, General Council public receptions, associations, community centres and events, etc.

partnership-based, supported by the detailed

knowledge of the associations taking part and essential places designated by the Hérault General Council

### Summary of distribution in 2012

30 000 copies

2 distribution campaigns: late April and late August

258 distribution points

Tourist offices, Hérault General Council public receptions, companies and associations, events, community centres, etc.

Geographic coverage: 5 zones of Hérault to cover 21 areas: the Montpellier urban agglomeration, Pays Cœur d’Hérault, Haut Languedoc and Vignobles, Biterrois territory, “Garrigues” territory (Ganges)

(See table n. 5)

### Territorial workshops / road shows

#### The Larzac Brebis Tour

This event is devoted to sport activities especially for mountain-bikers. It was located on a high land in the northern part of Hérault’s territory. A rural path is categorized as the “Green network” composed by different kinds of open rural roads (usually not open to the car traffic) linked all the PA of the territory, on which hikers/mountain-bikers can find a site of interest after a walk/ride of roughly 30 km.

During the summer 2012 Larzac high land hosted the event with more than 700 riders and approximately 1000 visitors during this sporting rally shared with the official federation of cycling.

table n. 3

	SNA Sites	Themes	Approach	Dates
<b>Total</b>	<b>21 departmental areas</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8 months</b>
98 outings planned 85 outings carried out  Over: 57.5 activity days  With: 1350 participants 15.8% average	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Site de l'Albine</li> <li>2. Parc de loisirs de Bessilles</li> <li>3. Domaine du Fesquet</li> <li>4. Domaine de Fondespierre</li> <li>5. Domaine de La Font du Griffé et des Lavagnes</li> <li>6. Domaine du Mas Dieu</li> <li>7. Domaine du Mas Neuf</li> <li>8. Domaine du Moulin Neuf</li> <li>9. Domaine de l'Olivette</li> <li>10. Base de Réals</li> <li>11. Domaine de Restinclières</li> <li>12. Domaine des Rives de l'Arn</li> <li>13. Domaine des Roussières</li> <li>14. Domaine de Saint-Sauveur</li> <li>15. Lac Salagou</li> <li>16. Base de loisirs de Savignac</li> <li>17. Domaine de la Vernède</li> <li>18. Lac de Vesoles</li> <li>19. Vias</li> <li>20. Vieulac / Minerve</li> <li>21. Manufacture Royale de Villeneuve</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food/tasting event</li> <li>• Agroforestry</li> <li>• Amphibians</li> <li>• Archaeology</li> <li>• Astronomy</li> <li>• Biodiversity</li> <li>• Mushrooms</li> <li>• Water</li> <li>• Fauna</li> <li>• Aquatic fauna</li> <li>• Fire</li> <li>• Flora</li> <li>• Forest</li> <li>• Geology</li> <li>• Insects</li> <li>• Land Art</li> <li>• Birds</li> <li>• Heritage</li> <li>• Urbanism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Artistic</li> <li>• Fun</li> <li>• Night-time discoveries</li> <li>• Sportive</li> <li>• Cultural: theatre, storytelling, music</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• April: 5</li> <li>• May: 26</li> <li>• June: 12</li> <li>• July: 13</li> <li>• August: 8</li> <li>• September: 16</li> <li>• October: 12</li> <li>• November: 6</li> </ul>

table n. 4

	Structure	Event day	Number of events
1	Amis de Villeneuve	1.5	6
2	Aphyllante Environnement	5	5
3	ARE	2.5	3
4	Cebenna	3	5
5	Concordia	1	1
6	CPIE Bassin de Thau	2	4
7	CPIE des Causses Méridionaux	5	7
8	CPIE du Haut-Languedoc Héraultais	4	7
9	Demain la Terre !	2.5	3
10	Ecologistes de l'Euzière (Les)	6	12
11	LPO 34	2	4
12	Manufacture des Paysages (La)	1.5	3
13	Matorral	4.5	11
14	Mayane	4	8
15	Millefeuilles	4	8
16	Parsemila	2.5	5
17	Passe Muraille (Le)	5.5	9
18	Pic'Assiette	1	2
		<b>57.5</b>	<b>103</b>

table n. 5

258	Distribution of SNA brochure 1012	End of April	End of August	Total
68	Tourism offices	6500	3265	9765
25	GC 34	4820	0	4820
19	Associations	2810	0	2810
7	Events	2300	0	2300
22	Community centres	1900	1100	3000
23	Heritage sites	1610	250	1860
17	Parks, gardens, natural sites and "environment" structures	1530	250	1780
31	Town halls	1315	0	1315
15	Counties, communities and urban agglomerations	950	0	950
31	Businesses, sports and miscellaneous	1400	0	1400
	<b>Total</b>	<b>25135</b>	<b>4865</b>	<b>30000</b>



### *LTSP in Vercelli Province*

*Davide Benasso, Province of Vercelli and Sara Vavassori, Coclea soc. coop. soc., agency for local development, consultant*



#### **Objectives and scope**

The LTSP of the Province of Vercelli tries to define an action tourist plan for its Protected Areas that manages to increase Parks' fruition, coordinating local authorities and stakeholders with tourist supply. The target area is Vercelli province, more specifically the Regional Protected Areas included in its territory: Ente di Gestione delle Riserve Pedemontane e delle Terre d'Acqua, Ente di Gestione dei Sacri Monti - Riserva Speciale del Sacro Monte di Varallo, Ente di Gestione delle Aree Protette della Valle Sesia. These Parks are located in two very different environments (the flat Vercelli plain and Valsesia slopes) more than 70 km away. For this reason the project decided to consider not only the territory included within the Parks boundaries, but also the adjacent areas and the ones connecting

the Parks. This guaranteed a heterogeneity of local stakeholders (the Province, 5 municipalities, 90 economical operators) and allowed the definition of a LTSP focused of course on Parks, but also encompassing all Vercelli territory.

#### **Methodology**

The Province of Vercelli organized a professional team to manage the definition process for the LTSP. This team is characterized by undertaking facilitation of local development processes that favour topics such as environmental sustainability, natural resources' protection, utilisation of new technologies, education and environmental communication.

The first step has been the analysis of economical activities developed in 2011 by the Province. Then



there has been a contact with Aziende Turistiche Locali (the agencies for local tourism promotion) to identify all the stakeholders that could be interested in the actual definition of the LTSP.

The project adopts a participatory approach, involving the civilian and economic community as the main interested in the valorisation of the territory, in its sustainable development and promotion. For this reason all the operators that are located close to the river Sesia in the connecting area between the Parco delle Lame del Sesia and the Riserva naturale del Sacro Monte di Varallo are involved since the beginning. Chief administrators and technicians of the Parks are also invited to participating, to allow the building of a shared path, aimed at the establishment of a territorial cluster of which also the Protected Areas will be part. All the participants have been asked to answer a questionnaire on local supply and demand. Then stakeholders met in 2 workshops, with the aim of generating a sense of belonging to the project and to the places (the Protected Areas) and of imagining an evolution of such areas through concrete touristic development and territorial marketing actions of which they will be the main actors.

## Characterization and analysis of the target territory

### Environment

The project takes place in a type of landscape characterised by an important diversification, due to the different environments of involved Protected Areas. This natural oasis contrasts clearly with the surrounding landscape, characterized by the rice monoculture. Here, in fact, is the reign of cane fields, the yellow nannufari (similar to water lily) on the still waters of the “lame” and the willow trees on the banks. This is an ideal habitat especially for aquatic bird populations. The Sacro Monte di Varallo is a different kind of Park, since it has been completely built by men. In spite of the fact that the territory has been deeply modified by man, the covering forest has reconstituted itself slowly and moreover has enriched the floral life, of which 421

different species have been identified. Inside the sacred fencing the natural environment has taken on the aspect of a Renaissance garden.

### Cultural resources

The Province of Vercelli and its Parks have plenty of cultural attractors. In the areas included in the project, the main cultural attraction is the Sacro Monte di Varallo, the historical complex commemorating life and Passion of Christ, divided in 44 chapels and having 800 full size statues and more than 4000 fresco-painted characters. In addition to the famous Mount, Varallo can offer: an art gallery, a natural history museum, a museum dedicated to Cesare Scaglia, a Valsesian painter, Museo Comola, telling us the story of a successful migrant. In addition, Valsesia is the land of Valsers, a small ethnic group that can still teach us tradition and values. And of course, we cannot forget eno-gastronomy and its culture: rice is the most typical product of the southern areas, and the best in term of quality and quantity, especially in the known dish, the “panissa”. The closer we get to the mountains, rice disappear, while grapevine becomes more and more common, and the famous wines from Gattinara, very known in national and international markets.

### Supporting infrastrucutre

Vercelli territory has a complete and efficient road network and trains and coaches helping users reaching Parks. It is in the centre of important routes that join Torino, Milano and Genova.

### Tourism offer and demand

The nature tourism in Vercelli province is characterized in very different ways according to the various areas. It is poorly developed around the Parco delle Lame del Sesia. The rice is the main product that develops the economy of this area, an healthy economy, but it is not yet recognised as a strong tourist attraction that could bring visitors to this territory. Unfortunately, up to now, only a few rice mills have developed didactic activities and only some farms (grange) have developed wine and food proposals which are not yet connected between them but are potentially interesting. The Parco delle

Lame del Sesia is mostly visited by local people living around Vercelli who are looking for leisure, walks by the river or in the wood, riding horses or bikes and bird watching. The Park has developed school tourism: laboratories and guided tours with expert environment teachers. The Sesia river brings nature tourism mostly to the higher mountainous area where people can walk and practise fluvial sports. Varallo and the Riserva del Sacro Monte di Varallo are not known as naturalistic places for tourists but as religious, cultural destinations.

Anyway, the territory could be a destination for the nature tourism developed in itineraries lasting from 1 to 2 days. In order to have a complete view of Vercelli province we should not forget the food and wine tourism that characterizes the land connecting the 2 Parks and which comes from the high quality wine growing production. On the whole, this area that includes also Vercelli town, offers the following facilities: 90 restaurants, 60 hotels, 3 hostels, 2 campsites, 5 farms and didactic rice mills, 17 sport associations, 4 local corporations for the tourism promotion and guided tours. On the whole province there are 6100 beds. The tourism here is mostly composed of individual tourists and some groups (addressed to Vercelli town or Sacro Monte di Varallo) but only a few business companies.

The tourist services are different considering the nature lovers and the sportsman. The Parco delle Lame del Sesia offers a cooperative of environmental educators that manages the didactic services and guided tours. Sacro Monte di Varallo manages this service with its own operators and ecological guards. An association of tourist guides organizes all the tours in the province, focusing on cultural attractions, but it is also available for tours around the whole territory. There are also many freelance tour leaders. In the Grange territory some of the farms/ rice mills have riding stables so that they can organize horse rides along river Sesia. Parco delle Lame owns 40 bicycles that can be used to visit the area. In the Varallo area there are fifteen sports associations offering several activities, from fluvial sports to climbing or mountain biking.

Tourist operators usually promote their activities in an independent way, using the web too. Most

of their promotion is addressed to travel agencies and tour operators, while the networks are not yet developed. It must be pointed out that some tourist operators have founded 2 units that aim to promote all their services and activities through the web.

Two offices of the Local Tourist Promotion Agency (ATL), requested by the Regione Piemonte and the Province of Vercelli, are located in Vercelli and Varallo as information points.

During the last five years the tourists have increased considerably from 273.300 in 2006 to 313.00 in 2010.

Anyway, it is true that the tourism in Vercelli province represents 2% of the whole regional tourism of Piemonte. The higher percentage of tourists is from other regions of Italy rather than from Piemonte, while a smaller percentage comes from abroad.

Concluding, tourists are spread all over the year, but most come during summer time; the snow lovers come to Alta Val Sesia during the winter. The average tourist stay in Vercelli province is of 3 days. According to what we said above we can conclude that the tourism in this territory is not specific, but fragmented in different targets, looking for amusement, nature, sports, culture or religious itineraries.

## Strategic Plan

### Objectives

The participants to the territorial workshop defined the main objectives of the Strategic Plan:

- Development of the tourism potential of the Protected Areas through a supervised growth, that is through a preservation process, respecting and evaluating the natural cultural resources and the social values system of the local population and operators;
- Drawing the attention of the tour operators towards the Protected Areas in order to promote cooperation and the creation of a combined offer;
- Encouraging the qualification of environmental factors both natural and

social, macro (concerning the area) and micro (concerning the industry), making the tourist sector support the improvement of life conditions for local people and tourists;

- Increasing business profitability and the economic impact of tourism in the territory, involving in the development project all the areas not yet considered (areas around the Parks);
- Creating a “tourist identity” of the area and increasing the knowledge and image of the territory and its opportunities on the market;
- Developing an integrated system of promotion and marketing to be shared by local stakeholder and Protected Areas, using the new means of communications;
- Developing new tourist products for a diversified market that could be able to involve all the available resources of the area and to extend the touristic season;
- Strengthening and qualifying the support services system (information, sports, amusement and new services for the tourists, etc.);

### **Marketing strategy**

In order to delineate a Strategic Plan for the sustainable development of tourism in the area, the project team studied a range of marketing strategies. For this project we prefer using the Lauterborn (1993) classification of marketing, named 4C. This choice is explained by the need of concentrating on potential customers, rather than on the tourist product, seen the complexity and the structure of the attractions' mix available on the territory.

1. Consumer models - We refer to those consumer “models” which could be attracted towards the product and to the customer's satisfaction. For the territory of Vercelli we have to consider the present offer: a) attractions of cultural and religious tourism; b) attractions of natural tourism; c) attractions of open-air leisure activities and sports; d) attractions of food and wine tourism. Each of these elements potentially identifies different models of consumers. A suitable marketing

strategy has to consider those elements as a whole and it has to build up links among the different attractions that could be able to address consumption beyond the single categories.

2. Costs - In such a delicate economic period, the cost policies can have a deep impact on the success of the touristic offer, also considering that it is part of a very competitive market. Potential factors of success can be:
  - a) The creation of a business network among the operators which could give way to better offers from the point of view of costs.
  - b) The upgrading of the service sector and the starting of “share economy” experiences could positively affect the cost control.
  - c) The creation of more suitable offers for the present consumption trend and the purchasing tendency of the tourists (short stays, daily excursions, extension of the “groupage” policies to segments not yet involved).
3. Communication - In this context, communication must be a wider concept compared with the “traditional” word of promotion, which includes public relations, advertising and every kind of relationship between touristic offer and the consumer. Communication policies will be based on the concepts a) Access to networks of present users; b) Interconnection of formal and informal nets; c) “Share economy” and “shared experience”.
4. Profit - Thanks to the use of web-based services (web, social networks, social media, “mobile” services) it is possible to suggest hybrid models of purchase that makes it easier to find the product, acquiring information on the offer system, creating communication and in general, increasing the relationship between the offer and the single consumer, customizing the offer and achieving the customer loyalty which would be unthinkable employing the traditional means.

According to the marketing classification and to the necessity of the Strategic Plan to respond to the local demand, the Province of Vercelli decided to adopt the strategy of segmentation. This strategy has to consider an articulated touristic product that is, in a certain way, not uniform. The result is the identification of many niche segments (usually composed in single groups “spot”) and of a strategy that is able to build up a general offer that could mix up the different segments. The better segmentation techniques are those which suggest an approach of disaggregation and a model of flexible fragmentation in order to create a very flexible offer that could reproduce the peculiar geo-morphological characteristics of Vercelli territory and its cultural and natural attractions (for example a proposal for a cultural/religious tourism that considers also light activities on open air, in which the link is the food and wine proposal so that it could meet different “spot” groups).

If the advantage of the diversification of a certain product as the one of the protected areas of Vercelli is evident (the mix of offers and different tourist typologies), this does not immediately guarantee a successful competitive position, considering the strong competition of the “minor” tourist territories of a rich and various country as Italy is, even when considering only the South or the North-West of Italy. Evaluating the uniqueness of Vercelli territory we have to think about an attraction that could involve different segments: being in Italy, the answer is predictable and it is represented by the food and wine offer. In this case, it will be the quality rice production (thanks to which, the territory is well known) and the wine area of Gattinara.

### **Action Plan**

An Action Plan is going to be set immediately and achieved in a one-year time, but with an extension of three years. The Plan is organized into the following macro areas with related resources and expected time.

#### **1. CLUSTER OF TOURIST OPERATORS**

- Creation of an operators’ cluster spread over the territory around the Protected

Areas, at their disposal, which is aware of the ecotourism and of the environmental sustainability of the facilities and services – organization of duties and responsibilities.

- Start of the process in order to obtain environmental quality certifications for the facilities (2Bparks, ECOLABEL, others...)
- Characterization of a policy for the environmental sustainability on the tourist offers (itineraries on the Parks, certified environment facilities, transport sustainability).

#### **2. SYSTEM BETWEEN PROTECTED AREAS AND TOURIST OPERATORS**

- Exchange of materials between Protected Areas and operators (printings, web sites, promotion and distribution of information) – Parks as centres for collecting information about the territory and their operators and reinforcement of the information system and of the assistance for the tourists.
- Agreement between the Parks and the facilities in order to help each other in case of proposals, events, activities, groups.
- Encouraging the Parks’ staff and the operators in order to build a “tourism consciousness” and to create a comfortable environment for the visitors.
- Control of the quality and availability of the natural environment and its access.
- Mapping of itineraries (naturalistic, cultural, food and wine, didactic) in a continuous way between the Parks and the facilities in order to create a sustainable tourist “system”.

#### **3. PRODUCT AND MARKETING**

- Detailed analysis of the demand (target>schools, eco tourists, cultural tourists, sport tourists; origin: Piemonte/Lombardia, abroad).
- The product - creation of the tourism offer based on “the system”: different packages for targets related to the Protected Areas and to the facilities and services.
- Mutual marketing: contact with Tour Operators and Travel agencies through an

organized, centralized mediation on the mutual offer system.

- Creation of a mutual discount system between the services/facilities of the “system”

#### 4. COMMUNICATION

- Drawing up a communication plan that, in relation with the products and the connected markets (action 3), could find the most suitable instruments, among those in particular the web on the most advanced versions (3.0).
- Creation of a photographic portfolio of the Parks and the territory, facilities and services included, addressed to the advertising and communication.
- Production of one or more promotional materials (press/multimedia-ex. videos) related to the “system” and to the accessibility of the territory (presentation of the heritage, of the new itineraries, of the operators cluster and of the packages); evaluation of applications for new mobile systems.
- Dispatch of materials through institutional and private channels to the fairs and sector events (thinking of Expo 2015).
- Social medias and web sites: promotion of the Protected Areas and of the “system” through the web (institutional sites Parks and Province, Facebook profiles, Twitter, YouTube and Flickr of the Local units and operators, ForSquare, blog related to the sector or to the customers target underlined on action 3) – Keyword advertising to be considered.
- Collection of contacts and data base from events and activities and following direct marketing (newsletter, fax and mail) for the events/services of the “system”.
- Public relations and fund raising towards public authorities and private sectors in order to support the communication activities for the promotion of the system and the new itineraries/touristic products
- Contacts with the local, national,

international and sector press in order to promote the “system” – press releases, press conference for the launch of the “system”, educational for the journalists.

- Media advertising (to be considered)

### Implementation and Monitoring of the Strategic Plan

The participatory approach adopted by the 2Bparks project has laid the foundations so that it was immediately possible to implement of the Strategic Plan, at least of its initial phases. The dialogue between the Parks and private operators represents the necessary condition for the starting of the actions mentioned above. An essential prerogative is the interest focused on the local tourism development (both public and private). To that end, it is essential to provide the instruments for monitoring the actions and results, that could improve the actions and to analyse the Plan, making some possible changes considering the aims we want to achieve. The stability of a coordination in the operators cluster and the respect for roles and personal duties are signs of good management and efficiency of the team and that allows a constant, reliable dialogue with the Parks and Institutions. The supervision, also internal, of the adoption of environmental qualifications in the facilities and services can make for a conscious development process. In the same way it is useful to identify one or a limited number of persons to whom the responsibility of the organization will be given – marketing and booking of the tourist itineraries of the “system”. In this process the Parks have a role of collectors for the information system, and of support for the tourist; they have the duty of collecting the informative materials and maintaining the signage and accessibility. A good relationship and a confrontation between operators and technicians of the Protected Areas will allow the monitoring of the mutual action. The efficiency of the communicative actions will be evaluated through the profile of clients using the itineraries, the events or the packages of the “system” and through an analytic study of



the communication instruments, using Google Analytics, Facebook Insight, Hootsuite. All these information crossed with the financial results of the product will allow the definition and the progressive measurement of the achievement of the objectives fixed by the communication (improve the local “system”, extend the visitors net, the number and the level of satisfaction).

### Territorial workshops / road shows

The Province of Vercelli organized two territorial workshops: a stakeholders meeting and a focus group for operators. They involved local stakeholder to define LTSP.

**First Territorial Workshop:** 9th October 2012, Albano Vercellese (VC), Ente di Gestione delle Riserve Pedemontane e delle Terre d’Acqua

The meeting was aimed at the presentation of the 2Bparks project to the territory as a chance of thinking about the need of activating a process of local tourism development, that, through actions of environmental awareness and territorial marketing, could be able to increase the amenities of the territory. The meeting’s main objective was to involve public and private entities related to the Protected Areas of Sacro Monte di Varallo and of Lama del Sesia and to start a work in progress that could allow the comparison of the offer and of the customers and the creation of a mutual action program for the promotion of the services and the



*The First Territorial Workshop*

territory (LTSP). The meeting also had the purpose to approach the operators to the Parks introducing their natural, cultural heritage also as a possibility of tourist itineraries.

More than 30 people attended the meeting, public authorities and private operators, that represented the whole area involved on the project. All the participants took part in the participatory process and they pointed out the need of a system and of a mutual Action Plan that could be able to improve the management of the services and to increase the exposure of single subjects and the territorial marketing. The key points for a Action Plan that emerged were: analyzing the data (owned by single operators and ATL) related to the present tourist flow in order to understand the customer needs and interests; Mapping and putting on the system the present heritage, also the minor one; creating a system among the operators, strengthening the current systems (consortium and tourist associations); Spotting new suitable products for the needs of the customers; Spotting new kinds of marketing and booking with the help of local touristic agencies; improving the communication through the web sites, social network, mobile applications. The coordinators considered those aspects as essential steps for the creation of an action plan. The meeting ended with the filling of a questionnaire about the local tourism demand-offer and with the suggestion of keeping the contact with the project coordination in order to have a more detailed discussion about some specific subjects.

**Second Territorial Workshop:** 4th December 2012, Varallo (VC), Ente di gestione dei Sacri Monti – Riserva Speciale del Sacro Monte di Varallo

The meeting represented the continuation of the participatory process adopted on the first workshop and its evolution. It was particularly aimed at:

- Presentation of data obtained from the questionnaires filled by the first meeting attendees;
- Mapping of the natural and cultural heritage of the territory related to the project and definition of potential touristic itineraries

according to the customer targets.

- Choice of crucial actions in order to define a LTSP: products, marketing system, assignment of the roles in the operators team.
- Possibility of organizing an educational session for journalists about the Parks and the facilities/services

The workshop was attended by 70% of authorities and facilities who attended the first meeting, which is a sign of interest in the proposal we made, and reveals strong acceptance of the participatory process and to the need of sharing. The creation of a cooperative system and of mutual actions are the first requests coming from the attendees, that found an answer on the LTSP and on the proposal, made by the 2 private tourist subjects (consortium and association), of having a role in the coordination of the operators' cluster, mainly meeting the communication needs and the need of strategic marketing actions. A debate was opened about the instruments to be employed and it ended with the request of a special attention to 2.0. communication. The Parks together with ATL offered themselves as collectors of information and materials and also as guarantors of the environment protection and heritage accessibility.

The presentation of the data obtained from the questionnaire sent to all the facilities and then the processing of a shared analysis of the demand-offer of the territory, enabled the identification of the reference customer targets: schools, eco tourists, cultural tourists, sports tourists. The mapping of the facilities and services and the connection with the local heritage has facilitated the identification of some potential itineraries addressed to the customer targets.

The information provided and the choices made during the meeting allowed the project coordination to draw up the Action Plan, which will be given to the authorities and operators during the next meeting in may 2013.



*The Second Territorial Workshop*





### *LTSP in Andujar*

Antonio Jesús Rodríguez, Andújar City Council



### Objectives and scope

The main aim of the LTSP, called in Andújar Touristic boost plan (Plan de Dinamización Turística) is the promotion of tourism in the area of Andújar, with the participation and cooperation of institutions and citizens of the area, making it, the touristic Boost Plan, a viable consolidation of common interests and strategies for the real development of tourism in the area of Andújar and the Natural Park.

Specific objectives:

- Position at Andújar and its region as a tourist destination in the national and international market.
- Strengthen, diversify and integrate tourism, heritage, natural and monumental offer.
- Improve the urban and natural landscape of the municipality.
- Development of a sustainable tourism (from the point of view of economic, patrimonial and social sustainability).
- Reinforce the identity of the region of Andújar, based on concepts of unity, complementarity and participation.
- Encourage the creation of a national heritage of quality and interest and increase the professionalism of the services...
- Increase levels of income through tourism development.
- Protect, optimize, and put in value and tourist use the natural resources and heritage of the region.
- Promote the tourism industries and innovative projects.
- Study and design of policies and strategies for product, price, promotion and marketing.



- Sensitize and involve citizens and local agents in a culture of tourist quality.
- Involve the local population as a participant and beneficiary of the Plan.
- Strengthening, support and integration of the business sector (associations,...).
- Articulation of resources, services and tourism as product and its integration as a destination.
- Create a complementary offer competitive.
- Expand and improve the spaces of tourist use.

## Methodology

For the elaboration of the LTSP we designed a participatory process with institutions, entities, associations, entrepreneurs and investors that would allow us to define a final document as a basis for the development of future actions.

So we used methodology based in three phases:

- Phase I: Base Paper.
- Phase II: Participatory process
- Phase III: Preparation of LTSP and Experimental actions.

### *Phase I: Base Paper*

This documents includes and Analysis and diagnosis of the touristical situation of Andújar Natural Park. The second part of this document is SWOT analysis

### *Phase II: Participatory process*

We present the Base Document in a workshop for stakeholders on 28/5/2012, as the beginning of a participatory process for the final LTSP. In this workshop we start working in the strategic lines of the LTSP with the entrepreneurs, associations and all kind of people involve in the touristic development of the Natural Park.

In the workshop of 28h may 2012 we present too a website, as a new instrument to the stakeholders working in the LTSP of Andújar to start a debate and to share documents and information, and collaboration web to work in the final implementation of LTSP and Pilot Plans.

From the 24th of may we start with the web: <http://2bparksltsp.blogspot.com.es/>

### *Phase III: Preparation of LTSP and Experimental actions*

One month later, in a workshop celebrated on 27/06/2012 we present the first conclusions of the participatory process and define first Experimental actions. The final strategic lines of the LTSP are:

1. Historical and artistic heritage
2. Natural heritage
3. Tourism infrastructure
4. Activities
5. Services
6. Marketing
7. Job creation and competitiveness in the tourism sector.

In this seminar we establish a first battery of activities for experimental actions:

- promotion of local cuisine and tapas (Tapa's Fair and Tapa's route);
- marketing: creation and dissemination of touristic materials about the natural park and the city;
- making a tourism website for promotion of tourism use of the Natural Park;
- creating a mobile tourist application.

This process is based in a participatory approach with stakeholders. That's why, working with the result of experimental actions and the public participation, we prepare the draft of the LTSP.

### **Characterizations and analysis of the target territory**

"Sierra de Andújar" Natural Park it's located in the South of Spain, in Andalucía, and our municipal territory is fundamentally occupied by the Nature reserve of Andújar's Mountain range.

Andújar's municipal area has a total surface of 963 km<sup>2</sup> (3 times bigger than Malta).

Andújar's municipal territory has a strategic enviable situation, to half a way between the capital of Spain (Madrid) and the south extreme (Cadiz).

The Guadalquivir river divides Andújar's municipal area, which is the biggest of the province, in two differentiated areas: one of fertile plain and field, in the southern part, and the Sierra Morena in the northern part (most of the highland sector constitutes the Nature reserve of mountain range of Andújar). The agriculture is very varied. There is an absolute control of the olive as unique growing, it also has livestock and hunting as agrarian predominant activities. The oil industry, the textile, that of the furniture of wood, the craftsmanship and the ceramics are other sources of economic dynamization close to the catering and hotel management, which takes advantage from the natural tourism and its strategic emplacement.



Route for the European Days of Natural Parks

### **Characterisation of the tourism resources**

Can Andújar be a tourist destination?

For new tourism, it has no previous knowledge of a destination, the choice of the same is going to be influenced by the mental image having the same, and this image will come defined by the location of the place and its communications, by the same public services, by the quality of the environment, by the available tourist resources, the conservation of cultural heritage, customs and traditions of the area, etc.

As well, we will do a summary analysis of these factors for our town:

1. Situation and its communications: Of all is known that Andújar has an enviable geographic location

being virtually gate Andalusia to the rest of Spain. In terms of its communications, the situation nears the highroad of Andalusia, mostly, and proper communication for railway makes up Andújar to and from anywhere in the Centre and South of the Peninsula part it there is no more than 3-4 hours of travel. We are talking of a population of over 20 million inhabitants.

2. Public services: Our city's public services have been increased considerably during the past years. In addition, the city of Andújar has an important offer of non-commercial services on the basis of the following headings:

- *food service*: important choice of restaurants, bars and auxiliary. Good value for money and volume of units. Good distribution in the city;
- *repair services*: good diversified offer;
- *professional activities*: wide range of specialized professional services (health, free professional or commercial agents).

3. The quality of the environment: Andújar has a treasure that is unknown even for a large majority of the inhabitants of our town. The Sierra de Andújar, its marshes, streams, its fauna, its flora; In summary, everything around the Andújar Natural Park is a treasure to exploit that we all have. We must emphasize Andújar as the region which concentrates the largest reserve of Iberian lynx at the global level.

4. Tourist resources: This variable should always be studied from two perspectives, one of the primary offer of accommodation and entertainment, and the other of complementary tourism. Well, if we intend to exploit the treasure of the sierra, both the supplementary and primary supply must increase and improve both quantitative and qualitative. Andújar city council has resources to be put in value.

5. Conservation of cultural heritage: An important effort has made, for years and by the City Council, to restore and enhance the Andújar heritage

destroyed during the civil war, Andújar lost much of its historical and cultural wealth. However, it boasts a significant number of churches of different architectural styles, palaces and stately homes and other many elements of great historical and cultural value.

6. By the Customs and traditions of the area: Andújar, traditional city. There is a great tradition in our town about Pottery and crafts. All of them are derived from the great influence that Muslim culture left in our city. Andújar is also internationally known for its Marian fervour, on your saw is the shrine of Holy Mary of the head which is visited annually by hundreds of thousands of people. Characterisation of the tourism offer and demand

### **Strategic Plan**

Promotion of tourist activities in the area of Andújar, with the participation and cooperation of institutions and citizens of the area, making the tourist boost Plan a viable option of consolidation of interests and strategies, for the true tourist development of the region.

The main strategic lines of the LTSP are:

- Management and tourism development, creating and diversifying the offer.
- Recovery of urban and rural heritage.
- Protection of the environment.
- Introduction of new productive activities and the enhancement of production, encouraging diversification of economic activity and business associations.
- Development of a network of marketing of local products.
- Training and qualification of human resources, with particular attention to groups of young people and women.
- Technological innovation in raw materials, production, handling and marketing of smes, adapting them to the new requirements defined by the standards, quality and the market in general.
- Search for new sources of employment and the improvement of training, both in

the use of new technologies and to the professionalization of human resources.

- Improve the introduction of parameters of quality, regional organization and promotion of organic products.
- Action, mobilization and articulation of the different social and economic agents from the region so that they are the real protagonists of their development process.
- Creation and consolidation of activities for the improvement of the quality of life and the space of the rural populations.
- Integrate and unite institutions, economic sectors and society in general through the valorisation of natural, human and financial resources in order to create employment and improve the quality of life of the inhabitants.
- Promote, encourage and promote the revitalization of the business sector, supporting the intersectorality and business networking.

### **Marketing mix strategy of the Plan**

- Improve the quality of the tourist offer
  - strategy to improve our knowledge of visitors;
  - study for knowledge and monitoring of the level of satisfaction and the needs of the visitor in the tourist services in the area.
- Strategy for the management of quality
  - promoting systems of certification of quality for the tourism sector;
  - creating tourist destination/product or brand quality.
- Strategy for the identification of new markets
  - development of audio guides and GPS guides;
  - creation of a route for disabled people;
  - strategy for the creation of a specific tourist offer;
  - develop a market study;
  - design of thematic routes (route Equestre, religious route, etc.);
  - creation, adaptation and signposting of

- routes;
- design of a social tourism package for people with limited economic resources.
- Strategy of education and interpretation
  - training courses for teachers;
  - educational project;
  - creation of a school exchange program;
  - design of informative material.
- Strategy for public information
  - documentation centre.
  - information points and interpretation equipment;
  - responsible for marketing and promotion strategy;
  - creation of a quarterly newsletter;
  - educational portal and web portal;
  - system information, and interactive signage system for information points.

### **Implementation and Monitoring of the Strategic Plan**

For monitoring and management of the Plan shall constitute an Executive Committee, with the objective that the development and implementation of the actions included in the Tourism Promotion Plan, are carried out in accordance with the approved plan. The Commission, assisted at all times by the staff of LTSP will consist of the following members:

- Representative of the Ministry of Economy and Finance. Interior Secretary General of Tourism.
- Representative of the Ministry of Tourism of the Junta de Andalucía.
- Mayor-President of the Local Corporation.
- Councillor for Local Development and Local Tourism Corporation.
- Representatives of business associations in the locality.
- Managing Director of LTSP.

Public investment would depend on the provision of financial agents, but could serve as guidelines for the characteristics of boosting tourism plans in

similar environments, a number between 3 and 4 million euros, with a running time of three to four years. This funding would be distributed equally among the three levels of government involved: General Secretariat of Tourism of the Ministry of Industry, Tourism and Trade, Ministry of Tourism, Trade and Sport of the Junta de Andalucía and City of Andújar. The amounts, distribution and performance conditions would be heard in a cooperation agreement between these three institutions. In that convention would provide that the management of Andújar LTSP would be for the City Council of Andújar, being also responsible for the implementation and justification of the corresponding action projects.

### **Actions**

Inside the actions we included only the experimental and local actions

1. Heritage-historic-artistic
  - 1a. Rehabilitation and recovery of emblematic architecture for use / products;
  - 1b .Tourist revival of historical centres.
2. Natural heritage
3. Tourist infrastructure
  - 3a. adequacy and beautification;
  - 3b. tourist signs;
  - 3c. creation of interpretation and documentation centres and tourist information;
    - ethnological Museum of Arts and crafts in the gardens of the Val;
    - taxidermian museum;
    - honey museum.
4. Complementary activities
5. Services
6. Marketing
  - 6.a. Promotion
    - Web page
    - Tourist application The Tourist App, Travel Guides
  - 6.b. Products
    - Hunting tourism
    - Video and photographic routes
    - Equestrian events: Contest Anducab

7. Job creation and competitiveness in the tourism sector
  - 7.a. Recovery and promotion of activities productive.
    - Development and promotion of hunting and local products
  - 7.b. Business boost.
  - 7.c. Continuous improvement and competitiveness of the workforce.



*Action of promotion of Tapas*

### Territorial workshops / road shows

#### Workshop 28.05.2012 - Presentation of the Base Document for the LTSP

This first encounter with tourism entrepreneurs, partners and institutions of the park was intended to present the basic documents for the preparation of LTSP and set the stage for discussion of the strategic lines underlying the LTSP and start identify possible actions to develop pilot project in this field.

In this seminar was introduced a debate about The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism and the second phase accession for tourism enterprises to it. The workshop was developed on 28/05/2012 in Andújar with the participation of 13 stakeholders. In the final debate of the conference the following conclusions were drawn:

#### A. Plan for tourism boots:

Attendees mostly concluded that it is necessary to make a plan for tourism boost, but it has to meet the following requirements:

1. Be Realistic: in the context of economic crisis in which we find ourselves and with decreasing grants in infrastructure, we should look to dynamic actions that can be carried out.
2. Use of existing resources. Investing in improving the tourist potential we already have rather than developing new ones.
3. Targets and actions. It is necessary that the plans are executed to avoid creating false expectations of both tourists and entrepreneurs.

#### B. Action be taken:

In the general debate we established a series of requirements and recommendations for public managers to boosting tourism. Among them stood out:

1. Innovation in tourism. Creating a tourism website and mobile application.
2. Tourist promotion. Tourist materials necessary.
3. Promotion of "Tapas" (bar snacks).
4. Avoid duplication of activities and establish unique calendar.
5. Enhance the promotion of the natural park enterprises.
6. Touristically uses of natural park.
7. Capitalize resources of the natural park.
8. Capitalize on religious tourism.



### **Territorial workshop 27.06.2012 - Strategic lines and experimental actions**

The main goal of this second workshop is to share with reponsables of tourism and business of the park with collaborative work developed through the web, presenting the findings of the previous seminar 28/05/2012 and establish pilot actions to develop in the future as part of LTSP.

The workshop was developed on 27/06/2012 in Andújar with the participation of 15 stakeholders.

In this seminar we established the principals actions to continue till the completion of the project:

1. **Innovation in tourism. Creating a tourism website and mobile application.** It is necessary to create a website to enable the tourist information unify the city, and to complement the natural park attraction. This website should be the future home of online tourism promotion activities including applications for mobile
2. **Tourist promotion. Tourist materials necessary.** Tourism businesses (hotels, restaurants, travel agencies, etc..) Required information material to offer the tourist firsthand without having to refer them to the information office. Especially generic information, and contacts for specific information.
3. **Promotion of "Tapas".** "Tapas" (bar snacks) are an important element for the promotion of the city, and we must promote that culinary tourism through fair of tapas and the "tapas route".
4. **Avoid duplication of activities and establish unique calendar.** There are specific days and weekends are full of activities, including day and time agreeing, what causes you to lose the profitability of the same, and even monopolize municipal resources and the hotels and restaurants of Andújar, while other weekends are completely empty.
5. **Boots promotion of the natural park enterprises.** This debate group suggests a conference to mark the European Day of Parks to promote these companies

### **Territorial workshop 25.02.2013 - Evaluation of experimental actions**

The main objective of this meeting is to discuss the proceedings in the previous seminar in item 3: *Promotion of Tapas in Andújar*. For this purpose we have analyzed the performance of "Tapas Route" as well as issues concerning the organization of the "Tapas Fair"

The workshop was developed on 25/02/2013 in Andújar with the participation of 16 stakeholders.

The meeting assessed the following issues:

1. **Good welcome of tourist material.** Is assessed as very positive the tourist material 2bparks made by the project, which allows tourists to offer comprehensive information on tourism in the city
2. **Evaluation of the "Tapas Route".** The "tapas route" is proving a hit with audiences and sales, also having many tourists in the province. It was decided to extend the offer of Route until April 7.
3. **Tapas Fair.** We propose to organize a Tapas Fair as central event to promote tourism on 5, 6 and 7 April with the best tapas of the tapas route.



*Workshop for evaluation of Experimental actions*



### *LTSP in Alentejo Litoral*

Alexandra Mendonça, Ana Catita, RCDI, Development and Innovation Network



#### **Objectives and scope**

This section presents the Local Tourism Strategic Plan (LTSP) for the Alentejo Litoral Region (Coastal Alentejo Region), in Portugal, including a brief description of the approach adopted for the development of the Plan, in particular the workshops/focus groups organised to ensure a participatory approach.

The territorial scope of the LTSP is Alentejo Litoral, one of the 5 NUTS III subdivisions of the Alentejo region in Portugal. With an extension of 5,309 Km<sup>2</sup> and a population of 94.2 thousand (13% of the Alentejo total population), Alentejo Litoral is organised in 5 municipalities: Alcácer do Sal, Grândola, Odemira, Santiago do Cacém and Sines. The territory combines small urban centres with rural landscape and a coastal area that spreads along

179 Km of shoreline. The largest city is Sines (11.3 thousand), but its proximity to Santiago do Cacém and Santo André creates a larger urban system of 25.3 thousand inhabitants.

Three protected areas are located in this region: the Nature Reserve of the Santo Andre and Sancha Lagoons (RNLSAS), the Nature Reserve of the Sado Estuary (RNES) and a Nature Park (PNSACV) located in the southernmost part of the Alentejo coast. Only RNLSAS is totally included in the Alentejo Litoral region. The other two are shared by the border regions, respectively, the Lisbon Region (in the North) and the Algarve (in the South). The three protected areas have a high biodiversity level and very sensitive ecosystems, particularly the two wetland reserves (RNLSAS and RNES).

## Methodology

The methodology adopted for the preparation of the LTSP included the following steps:

- Library review to understand the state of the art and the general framework concerning the tourism development in the region. Most important documents analysed include: National Strategic Tourism Plan (PENT), rev. 2012; Regional Strategic Land Use Plan (PROT Alentejo), 2010; Land use plans of the three Protected Areas in Alentejo Litoral; Visitation and Communication Plan for the Protected Areas National Network (ICN, 2008);
- Collection of data and statistical information to characterize the tourism situation in Alentejo Litoral;
- Preparatory meetings with local agents and authorities: managing boards of the Protected Areas in the region, representatives of the Municipalities involved, managing board of the Entrepreneurs Association of Coastal Alentejo (AEAL), Alentejo Litoral inter-municipal committee (CIMAL), Alentejo Litoral Tourism Board and the Regional Agency for the Tourism Promotion of Alentejo (ARPTA). The objective of these meetings was to define the scope and methodology for the LTSP and the participatory approach to be followed, including the selection of participants to be invited to the brain storming workshops;
- Organisation of three workshops, each with half-day duration. Building on their own professional experience and knowledge of the local conditions, participants were invited to discuss ideas for the development of nature tourism in the region. Conclusions of the debate, in the form of a preliminary action plan, were sent to all participants for contributions and to promote commitment with the implementation of the plan.

## Characterization and analysis of the target territory

### Brief overview

Alentejo Litoral has an area of 5,309 Km<sup>2</sup>, representing 17% of the Alentejo total area. With a population of 94,249 inhabitants (2011), population density is slightly lower than the Alentejo average, respectively, 18 and 24 inhabitants per Km<sup>2</sup>.

The economic structure of Alentejo Litoral is diversified. Industrial activities represent 47% of the region Gross Value Added (GVA). Services and commercial industries balance the economic structure, accounting for almost 43% of GVA, as agriculture, forestry and fishing represent only 10% and a decreasing trend.

The Sines deep water port ranks first in cargo quantity at national level. It is the country main door for energy supply (oil, coal and natural gas) and it is now becoming a worldwide reference for container cargo. An industrial and logistics area of 2,000 hectares has developed in association with the port. The contribution of Alentejo Litoral to national GDP is only 1.3%, although GDP per capita is high above the national average (disparity index of 143) due to the industrial development of Sines.

### Tourism Resources

Alentejo Litoral is a diversified territory where physical, cultural and social characteristics interact and create a wide range of tourism resources.

The climate of Alentejo is typically dry, with very high summer temperatures and mild winters. In Alentejo Litoral this Hot-Summer Mediterranean weather is under the maritime influence that reduces seasonal and daily variations.

The Alentejo Litoral coast extends from the Sado Estuary to the Algarve region, over 179 km of an almost continuous stretch of sandy beaches. The estuary is separated from the sea by a sand ridge, the Tróia Peninsula. In the southernmost section of the coast, rocky cliffs surrounding smaller beaches create a different landscape. All along the coast, old small fishermen settlements are now converted into summer tourism villages.

Inland landscape is marked by cork tree forest and

small scale agriculture in a mild hilly territory. In the Sado valley, around the estuary wetlands, rice is an important production in medium/large size farms. Pine forest also provides some products for commercial use, particularly in the Municipality of Alcácer do Sal, but industrialisation of these products is not fully developed.

The rich biodiversity that characterises the ecosystems of the Sado and Mira estuaries and of the Santo André and Sancha natural lagoons, a rich marine life and the forest habitats of inland led to the classification of 222 thousand hectares of land in the Natura 2000 Network.

As mentioned, three protected areas are located in the Alentejo Litoral:

- *The Santo André and Sancha Lagoons Nature Reserve (RNSAS)* was created in 2000 to protect the outstanding ecological value of the two wetlands that include important botanical and fauna values, in particular birds. The Reserve also covers the surrounding dune ridge and the marine fauna. It has an area of 5,246 hectares, including 3,110 ha of land area and 2,137 ha of marine area. Economic activities in the Reserve and surrounding area are small scale agriculture, livestock production, fisheries, tourism and local commerce. A valuable natural heritage, with high diversity of habitats and endemic and threatened species, includes 54 species of fishes, 12 species of amphibians, 15 species of reptiles, 29 species of mammals and 241 species of birds. It is also an important corridor for spring and autumn migrations of birds and insects. The Nature Reserve is included in the international list of wetlands (Ramsar Convention), as well as in the Natura 2000 Network.
- *The Sado Estuary Nature Reserve (RNES)* was created in 1980 to protect the estuary from pollution and to safeguard the biological diversity of the area. It is located in the North section of Alentejo Litoral, along the sandy stretch of the Troia Peninsula, over an area of 23,160 hectares. It is mostly

formed by low floodplains (altitude 10 to 20 meters) and marsh areas and it also includes dunes, river and sea beaches and a few Pleistocene and Miocene outcrops. Part of the reserve consists of wetlands bordering the estuary, where traditional activities were salt production, rice production and fish farming. In 1996 the Reserve was included in the Ramsar Convention list and in 1999 a Special Protection Zone was classified in the Nature 2000 Network.

- *The South West Alentejo and Vicentine Coast Natural Park (PNSACV)* is the finest preserved stretch of European coastline, covering over 110 km, from Porto Covo in Alentejo Litoral, to Burgau in Algarve. It was declared as a Protected Landscape Area (equivalent to the IUCN Category V) in 1988, to safeguard the outstanding landscape and the natural and cultural heritage of the coast from strong development pressures. In 1995 the protected area was reclassified as a Natural Park. The Park has an area of 131,000 ha and includes a high diversity of habitats and endemic and threatened species. It is also an important corridor for spring and autumn migrations of birds and insects. The landscape is marked by steep cliffs that have been given various forms and colouring by centuries of erosion.

The three protected areas are managed by the Institute for Nature Conservation and Forests (ICNF), the government body responsible for nature conservation and biodiversity policies, as well as for the management of all Protected Areas in Portugal Mainland.

The sandy beaches are unique in their extension and unspoiled environment, combining with a pleasant climate and ocean characteristics very much appreciated for surfing, kite-surfing, and marine life observation. The rich and diversified natural heritage supports however other forms of tourism, related both to the protected areas and to activities outside these areas, including nature observation and nature sports.



Cultural heritage is also an important asset. The territory is rich in archaeological vestiges and historical monuments, including Mirobriga (the most important and well preserved roman site in the region), as well as several castles and fortresses along the coast, some built over vestiges of Palaeolithic settlements. Local gastronomy is another tourism resource, as it combines the typical gastronomy of Alentejo to the rich marine products.

Taking advantage of the rich natural and cultural resources, local authorities and tourism operators have developed an interesting cultural agenda. Every municipality organises local products fairs and cultural festivals. The most international of all is the World Music Festival organised every summer by the Municipality of Sines.

Despite the authenticity of the region, tourism infrastructure and support services are moderately developed in the Alentejo Litoral. The three protected areas are provided with nature interpretation and visitor centres, trails and information boards. Some of the support services in the protected areas are being affected by severe financial constraints, as local administration boards of the protected areas do not have financial autonomy, all revenues and costs being nationally centralised by ICNF.

Building and occupation of the coastal area is controlled by strict land use regulations. The Tróia Peninsula is the most important tourism area with a big concentration of hotels and other accommodation facilities, beach and sailing infrastructures. The Comporta area, in the southern part of the Sado estuary, is also well equipped with small hotels, restaurants and other tourism facilities.

Some large golf resorts have been authorized near the shore, behind the dune ridge, and are now being developed: Comporta, Pinheirinho, Terra Nova, all located in the Municipality of Grândola.

Apart from the hotels, inns and tourism residences in cities and villages (Alcácer do Sal, Grândola, Santiago do Cacém, Vila Nova de Santo André, Sines, Porto Covo, Vila Nova de Mil Fontes) the region offers a large number of rural hotels and small rural resorts.

Alentejo Litoral is easily accessed by the major national motorways, either from Lisbon, from Algarve and from Spain (Elvas/Badajoz). The airports of Lisbon and Faro

serve the region at 1-2 hour distance.

The municipalities of Alcácer do Sal and Grândola are also served by the national railway and regular bus services are available in all cities.

### **Tourism offer**

Total lodging capacity in Alentejo Litoral was estimated in 4,125 beds in 2010, 65% of which are in rural resorts and rural hotels. This represents a capacity of 44 tourism beds per 1000 residents, which is much higher than the general capacity of Alentejo (16 beds per 1000 residents). Grândola concentrates almost 30% of total lodging due to the Troia-Comporta developments. Average overnight stay is 2.4 nights, higher than the average of the Alentejo region (1.7).

Hotel offer is complemented by 12 camping sites distributed along the coastal area, plus one in the Pessegueiro island, off the Porto Covo shore.

The number of firms of the hotel and restaurant sector with headquarters in Alentejo Litoral was 1,137 in 2009.

The Alentejo Litoral tourism offer includes a diversity of activities, with some complementarity. Sea and beach activities were already mentioned as they are the first drive for summer visitors and are supported by a large number of holiday residences in all cities and villages of the region. Surfing and other water sports (kitesurf, bodyboard) have flourished in the Alentejo Coast in the past decade. A rich marine life favours diving and boat trips.

Other open air sports, such as off-road driving, biking, ballooning, hiking, horse riding, windsurfing and canoeing in the natural lagoons, in the Santa Clara-a-Velha reservoir and in the Mira river, complement the mix of open air activities offered in Alentejo Litoral.

Golf is a growing activity in Alentejo Litoral. One of the best golf camps in the country is located in Tróia and 4 other camps are being implemented in the new resorts.

Nature tourism is widely recognized as quite appropriate to the characteristics of Alentejo Litoral and it has been attracting tourism operators to the territory. Around 30 tourism firms are registered in official sites, operating along the coast and in the

protected areas, offering services in nature sports and other leisure and recreational activities. Some of these firms often offer integrated activities, as they complement each other.

In the protected areas, bird watching is the most important tourism activity. The Portuguese Bird Society (SPEA) has a centre in the RNLSAS and promotes science and education activities. Hiking, landscape and flora observation are the motivation of the majority of the visitors of the protected areas, but riding is also becoming popular.

Several organisations are promoting tourism in Alentejo Litoral. This dispersion of efforts is seen as an inefficiency of the model. There is a regional agency dedicated to implement at Alentejo level the national tourism policies and to plan and implement the specific tourism strategies for the region (Regional Tourism Board of Alentejo, Turismo do Alentejo, ERT). This agency is also responsible for promoting Alentejo tourism in the national market. There is another Agency (Regional Agency for the Tourism Promotion of Alentejo, ARPETA) specifically targeting the foreign markets. Both Agencies cover the Alentejo Litoral in the scope of their activities.

Furthermore, local governments (municipalities) have tourism offices and websites with information for visitors as well as for investors. The protected areas administration boards have produced guidelines to inform on the activities allowed in the territory and the support services available. Moreover, the national authority (ICNF) has prepared studies on the resources that can be used for tourism activities and the potential of nature tourism in the Portuguese protected areas.

In what concerns Internet promotion, in addition to the websites of the municipalities, three institutional websites are oriented to promote tourism in Alentejo Litoral, as a whole:

- [www.costaalentejana.com.pt/](http://www.costaalentejana.com.pt/)
- [litoral-alentejano.com/pt/turismo/](http://litoral-alentejano.com/pt/turismo/)
- [www.alentejolithorl.pt/](http://www.alentejolithorl.pt/)

The website [www.visitalentejo.pt/](http://www.visitalentejo.pt/) also promotes Alentejo Litoral, in the scope of the Alentejo Region. Based on the diversity and high value of the natural

resources and complementing the sun and beach activities, nature tourism is seen by local actors as a good model for this territory. It can contribute to reduce seasonal effects of “sea and sun” tourism and to differentiate from the other tourism areas in Portugal. However, land use conflicts are very common as nature conservation objectives often collide with the interests of tourism developers, local government, residents and even visitors. Moreover, the protected areas management is perceived by all these actors as a constraint to tourism-based local development.

### **Tourism demand**

In 2010, 137,654 guests stayed in Alentejo Litoral (20% of all guests in Alentejo), representing a total of 307,195 nights in the region. Most tourists (83%) are from the domestic market, while 17% originate in foreign countries, mostly from the European Union. The most important foreign markets are Spain (in a leading position), Germany, France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Italy.

The net-bed occupation rate in Alentejo Litoral is 23%, comparing to 28% in the Alentejo region and 38% for mainland Portugal. Seasonal variation is important, as July-September account for 50% of nights in Alentejo Litoral (37% in Alentejo and 40% in Portugal).

A recent tourist survey in Alentejo (Turismo do Alentejo (ERT), 2011) shows the age group 35-44 as the most represented (28%), followed by the 25-34 group (23%). The gender distribution is fairly balanced, although there are 5% more males than females.

Friends, family and the Internet are the dominant sources of information for tourists visiting Alentejo. Almost 42% of all tourists choose to stay in hotels and pousadas (historical hotels), while camping attracts only 5.4% of tourists (increasing to 7.4% in the summer). Preference for private accommodation was declared by almost 30% of tourists.

According to this survey, the average overnight stay is 3.2 in winter and 4.5 in the summer. These numbers are higher than the official statistics that do not report on private lodging.

The large majority of tourists visiting Alentejo prefer

to travel by car (80%). Fly and drive is an option for almost 4% of tourists, while 6% choose tourism buses. Camping vans and RV are used by 4.2% of tourists.

For tourist motivations, the survey reveals that holidays, recreation and leisure are the major reason to demand Alentejo (80%), while business travelling represents less than 3%. Visiting family and friends account for the rest.

The 5 most important attributes referred by tourists choosing the destination Alentejo were:

- Enjoying landscape and nature (9%)
- Tranquillity/relaxing environment (8.5%)
- Cultural and historical resources (8.3%)

- Gastronomy (8%)
- Experimenting local traditions (7%)

Tourists expectations regarding Alentejo were not very strong, but final appreciation was quite satisfactory (97% of the tourists declared satisfied, 55% extremely satisfied), and 89% of tourists expressed the intention to repeat the visit.

The results of this survey refer to the whole Alentejo region. Another study (Brandia Central, 2009) specifically addressing the perceptions of national tourists towards Alentejo Litoral allows to conclude that the two major attributes contributing to the attractiveness of the region are the natural landscape and the climate.

### SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Diversified and unique fauna and flora in the protected areas. Preserved natural resources. Sea and beach activities already attract tourists. Cultural heritage Sun and mild temperatures all year round. Contrasting environments: inland rural areas / sandy shore and sea. Multiple and interrelated tourism resources. Residents' hospitality and authenticity of the environment. Strategic location: close to Lisbon, easily accessible from inland Spain. Some existing tourism offer (some accommodation capacity already installed, surf, hiking, boat trips, bird-watching, horse riding).</p>	<p>Highly sensitive ecosystems. Low infrastructure level (roads, beaches, tourism information, public services). Insufficient reception conditions for visitors in the protected areas. Lack of on-site information and signaling for visitors. Lack of high quality accommodation. Local work force insufficiently skilled for tourism. Proximity of the Sines Industrial Area (heavy industry). Lack of knowledge of the protected areas regulation by private operators. Insufficient information about the activities permitted in the protected areas.</p>
Opportunities	Threats
<p>Great potential for nature tourism: bird-watching, horse riding, trailing and hiking, etc. Science and educational activities. Compatible and complementary different tourism products: sea and beach, nature tourism, resorts and golf. Attracting foreign demand from Northern Europe.</p>	<p>Lack of a shared vision for the region tourism development. Lack of institutional and legal coordination affecting land use and licensing in the protected areas (too many authorities and contradictory regulation). Uncontrolled tourism flows (mass tourism). Growth of informal businesses. Lack of financial resources, both for private investment and for the protected areas management. Climate change</p>

The uniqueness and diversity of natural resources are highlighted as a major asset to promote the region, but some constraints still have to be overcome, particularly concerning a better cooperation between tourism operators, the protected areas management at local and national levels and the regional and local authorities.

There is general consensus on the value that the region natural heritage can bring into tourism and, consequently, the need to respect nature conservation requirements is generally accepted. However, critical issues to be resolved are related to the territory infrastructure, tourism information and the development of a local culture oriented to tourism.

## Strategic Plan

### Objectives

The National Tourism Strategic Plan (PENT) enhances Nature Tourism as one of the developing products in Alentejo. It recommends a better organization of the tourism offer and an effort to increase the number of visitors. In line with these orientations and with the conclusions of the SWOT analysis, the following objectives are proposed for the LTSP.

Overall objectives:

- To benefit from natural heritage as a marketing tool for tourism development in Alentejo Litoral
- To strengthen the integration of nature conservation objectives into the tourism model of Alentejo Litoral
- Optimise a sustainable balance between economic benefits and environmental and socio-cultural costs

Marketing objectives:

- To develop and structure the product Nature Tourism in Alentejo Litoral
- To promote the three Protected Areas of Alentejo Litoral as tourism resources
- To increase the offer of tourism activities

inside the protected areas and neighbouring territories

- To reduce seasonal variation of tourism demand in Alentejo Litoral

Operational goals:

1. To increase and enhance tourism offer related to the fruition of natural resources (business operators, facilities, training).
2. To increase the number of visitors in the protected areas (and neighbouring territories) by 5% until 2015.
3. To increase the share of foreign visitors by 3% until 2015.
4. To improve tourism infrastructure and services (e.g. information, quality standards), viewing to increase the satisfaction ratings of tourists.

### Core strategic options

#### *General considerations*

The existing resources and the experiences already initiated in the Alentejo Litoral suggest the development of a nature tourism model based on an integrated strategy supported by the complementarity of tourism products.

Unspoiled sandy beaches, a rural environment and preserved landscapes, wide under populated spaces, tranquillity and safety, are ingredients for unique experiences compatible with the richness of natural resources and the fragility of ecosystems.

Promoting Alentejo Litoral as a regional destination with integrated tourism offer based on nature tourism is a realistic approach that gathers general consensus. To pursue this vision, the marketing strategy should enhance the nature tourism product and promote complementarity with other products, under the common denominator of the valorisation of natural heritage.

This strategy should aim at support the effective penetration and subsequent consolidation of the position of Alentejo Litoral in the national and international markets of nature tourism. According to the PENT orientations, most important foreign markets to target are Germany, United Kingdom, Netherlands, the Scandinavian countries, France

and Italy, which represent altogether 91% of this segment in Europe.

The key words for the marketing strategy of Alentejo Litoral are: nature tourism, product complementarity, biodiversity conservation. Of course this means a vision shared by all actors and intense institutional cooperation.

#### *Segmentation strategy*

The criteria adopted for the market segmentation refer to the age of the visitors and their interest in nature fruition. Considering the characteristics of the tourists currently visiting Alentejo and the major attributes specifically valued by the visitors in Alentejo Litoral, the target segment results from the combination of the following two variables:

- Visitors (male and female) within age groups up to 44 years;
- Individuals, couples and families having specific motivations related to interaction with nature, including low intensity activities, as well as nature sports and specialised activities (e.g. bird-watching).

#### *Competitive positioning and differentiation attributes*

The differentiation attributes of Alentejo Litoral relate to its unique landscape, preserved natural resources, unspoiled beaches and mild climate.

The competitive positioning of the region will rely on these attributes and in the development of an integrated offer of high quality tourism services, to meet the visitors' expectations.

Inspiration from Poon's flexible specialisation model (Poon, A., 1993) is envisaged, taking into consideration that the tourism industry is being changed by new global conditions and needs to adopt new organisational and managerial principles, including quality, flexibility, customisation, innovation, diagonal integration and last, but not least, environmental soundness.

#### **Marketing mix strategy**

Middleton and Hawkins affirm that "a marketing perspective is essentially an overall management orientation reflecting corporate attitudes that, in the case of travel and tourism, must balance the

interests of shareholders/owners with the long-run environmental interests of a destination and at the same time meet the demands and expectations of customers"

Balancing these interests and marketing a destination, as it is the case of Alentejo Litoral, is a challenging undertaking, in particular due to the diversity of stakeholders involved and the complexity of their relations, for the development, production, distribution and promotion of tourism services. These issues are hereafter discussed in the scope of the marketing mix strategy proposed for nature tourism in Alentejo Litoral.

#### *Product*

The major difficulty in developing a "tourism product" results from the fact that there is a multitude of private enterprises and public bodies delivering the services that constitute the product. A hotel, a nature park, a bus company or a restaurant are all part of the product, but they do not recognise themselves as business partners and share little in common, except from being on the supply side of the tourism market. National, regional and local public authorities are also key players, having responsibilities, for example, over the conservation of natural and cultural heritage and construction and maintenance of supporting infrastructures such as roads and signalling systems, as well as on the planning and regulation of the sector. Nevertheless these public bodies do not consider as being part of the tourism industry, although they are also contributing to build the tourism products and to define the profile of the destination.

Understanding interdependence and developing collaborative solutions is therefore the first key factor to successfully develop the "nature tourism" product in Alentejo Litoral.

This product consists of the entire range of facilities and services offered locally (e.g. transport, accommodation, food and beverage, specialised nature tours, nature sports, recreational activities), plus all environmental resources (protected areas, unspoiled beaches, unique landscapes) and socio-cultural heritage.

In short, the nature tourism product to be sold to



the visitor is an intangible experience that is made up of many contributing components that need to be integrated and managed altogether. To improve the quality of the different services that are part of the product, as well as to globally differentiate the product by emphasising its uniqueness is therefore essential to guarantee the visitors satisfaction.

A feature to take into consideration in this integration process is that the services are mostly provided by small and micro-enterprises that dominate the sector numerically, in Alentejo Litoral. Individually, these micro-enterprises are not major players, but collectively they provide the local experience and the specific fruition of the nature tourism product. They are therefore highly relevant for the quality of the visitors' experiences. To support these enterprises in the development of innovative solutions and create local partnerships for the delivery of unified experiences is fundamental and therefore highly recommended.

Developing nature tourism and attracting appropriate target segments should also promote the reduction of seasonality, through specialised offers (e.g. bird-watching, horse-riding), as well as through events viewing to increase demand during the low season. Finally, nature tourism is also envisaged to contribute to the preservation of the natural resources by increasing the awareness of visitors and local inhabitants on the exceptional quality of those resources and by providing funds for their conservation and management.

#### *Price*

Defining global pricing solutions for a specific product or destination is a rather difficult process because prices are determined simultaneously by the selling strategies of the local enterprises (which are not easy to co-ordinate, since each operator has its own policy) and by the marketing strategies of distributors at the places of origin.

In addition, national economic conditions in relation to the international market, local cost of living and employment rates, as well as efficiency and competition among local suppliers must also be considered in the pricing balance.

The Alentejo Litoral is not targeting mass integrated

tourism, therefore it is not expected to suffer significantly from the bargaining power of the large tour operators, representing bulky volumes of tourists.

On the other end, premium prices are only possible if a unique experience is offered. Visitors may pay a premium price if the product is considerably better than that of competitors' destinations. Nevertheless, tourists are increasingly experienced because they have travelled widely and are getting more difficult to impress. Global competition, in particular the upsurge of new destinations in developing countries, (with lower labour costs) is also contributing to influence price levels.

#### *Place/Distribution*

The selection of the distribution channels (i.e. the range of actors that bring together tourism demand and supply) is extremely important to guarantee that the target segments are successfully reached.

The channels and organisations that should be most effectively used to give the potential visitors to Alentejo Litoral the best access to this nature tourism destination are discussed under this topic.

Domestic tourists (which are currently dominant in the region) usually make direct arrangements and use their own transport, while foreign travellers tend to be more influenced by intermediaries, such as travel agencies.

A range of appropriate travel agencies and tour operators specialised in nature tourism should be selected as major distribution channels in the selected foreign markets (Germany, United Kingdom, Netherlands, the Scandinavian countries, France and Italy). Those channels should be provided with Information and promotion materials and should also benefit from educational trips, as well as incentives to the staff, for the promotion of the Alentejo Litoral. Building long lasting partnerships with these players will contribute to successfully consolidate the region as a nature tourism destination.

The development of ICT has revolutionised the tourism industry, defining new paradigms in terms of interactivity between tourism suppliers and consumers. The Internet allows consumers to look for information, organise and purchase their travels

on-line. To build an electronic comprehensive tool is of outstanding importance to support the distribution of Alentejo Litoral products and reach the target audiences both in national and international markets. This Internet tool will allow to reduce dependency on traditional distribution channels and will also be much effective to promote specialised products to small market segments.

Furthermore, electronic distribution will contribute to enhance interaction and collaboration among local suppliers, allowing to integrate local resources and build all-in-one solutions.

### *Promotion*

The improvement of communicating channels to increase awareness on the specific issues related to nature tourism should rely on a co-ordinated message to support an effective promotion campaign, involving relevant stakeholders and tourism suppliers in Alentejo Litoral.

The “brand” Alentejo Litoral is not clearly perceived by national visitors, which define its territorial scope in an imprecise manner, although they are able to outline its major attributes, as shown in the Central Brandia study mentioned in section 1.3.3. Information about the assessment of foreign visitors is not available, but empirical evidence suggests that perceptions will tend to be even vaguer than those of national tourists.

At least three different designations are used to address this specific coastal area in institutional websites promoting the territory – Costa Alentejana, Litoral Alentejano, Alentejo Litoral – therefore making difficult to create a consistent image and branding.

This is a relevant aspect to be discussed and agreed among the regional and local stakeholders, getting consensus on the brand name and the lead message to transmit.

Designing and implementing a cost-effective communicational mix to promote nature tourism in Alentejo Litoral will require to combine different interests and join efforts to achieve potential synergies.

The promotional mix can include advertising, public relations, personal selling and any other forms of

communication to reach the target consumers. These techniques are usually organised in two different categories – above and below the line.

Above the line promotion can include, for instance, publicity on press, radio, television or poster campaigns. These options tend to be rather expensive and have not been used recently to promote Alentejo Litoral in the national or foreign markets. In this scope it must be noted that the regional agency responsible for the institutional promotion of Alentejo in foreign markets (ARPTA) addresses the Alentejo region as whole, to optimise efforts, not differentiating explicitly the several sub-regions, as Alentejo Litoral. This appears to be also the case of the promotion activities targeting the domestic market, following the integration of the Regional Agency for Tourism in Alentejo Litoral in “Turismo do Alentejo, ERT”.

Below the line promotion covers activities such as participation in tourism fairs and similar events, public relations, organisation of press trips. Both regional Agencies have adopted mostly this approach to promote Alentejo.

Below the line solutions appear also to be the best techniques to adopt predominantly for the promotion of Alentejo Litoral, considering the cost-effectiveness relation. The specific approach to be followed should be integrated with the overall communication strategy for Alentejo, allowing however to differentiate the specific attributes of Alentejo Litoral. Although focusing in particular in the nature tourism product, promotion should address the destination Alentejo Litoral as a whole, exploring complementarities among the different tourism products.

### **Action Plan**

The action plan presented in this section draws upon the marketing strategy proposed as well as the conclusions and the main issues discussed with the stakeholders participating in the local workshops. Other than designing an overall strategy for the region, the option was for a more pragmatic approach. Thus, building on existing experiences and on-going initiatives, 10 key actions were defined. Three major concerns steered the

definition of these actions: (i) to consolidate positive aspects, (ii) to deal with the most urgent constraints identified, (iii) to match PENT orientations for Alentejo and Nature Tourism in particular.

The proposed actions are thought to be both feasible and effective as just a first step in the consolidation of Alentejo Litoral as a real nature tourism destination, taking on the richness of the

resources of the 3 protected areas. Succeeding the implementation of these actions opens the way for a more ambitious strategy.

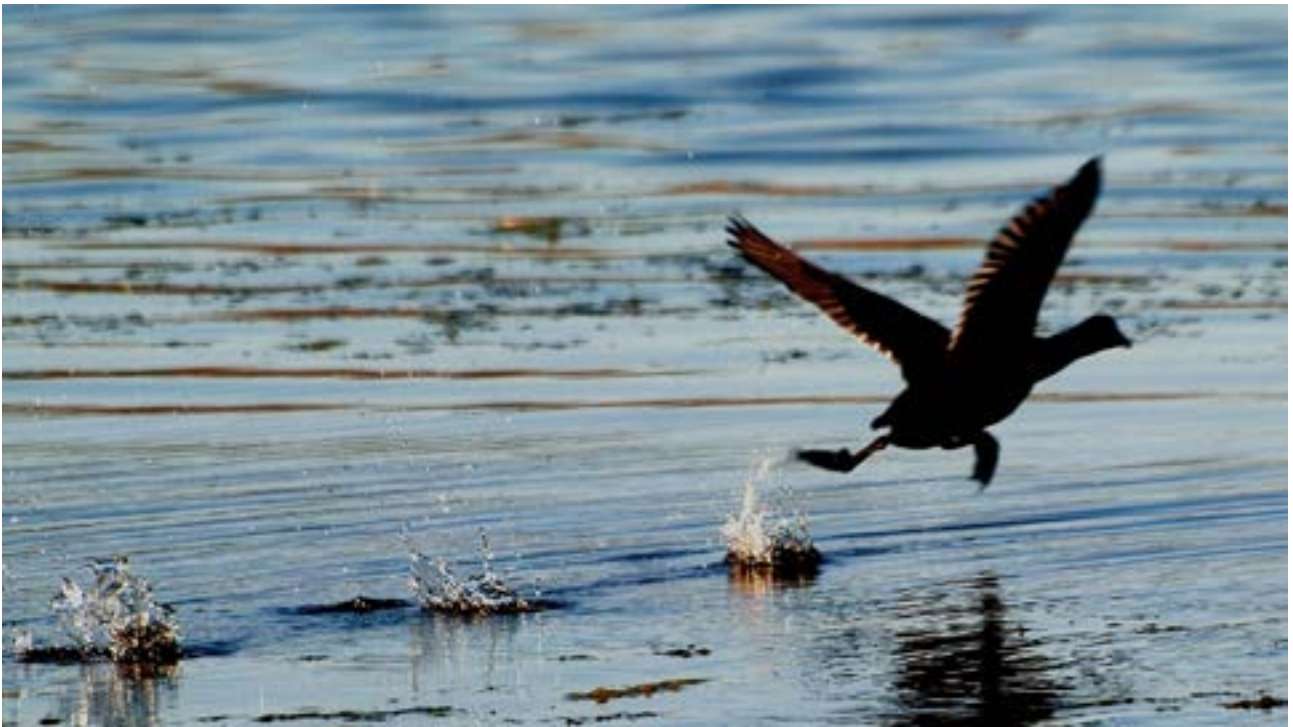
The table below shows the 10 actions proposed and their contribution to the operational goals indicated above. The table is followed by a short presentation of each action.

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Oper. Goal 1 To increase and enhance tourism offer related to nature tourism (business operators, facilities, products)</b>	<b>Oper. Goal 2 To increase the number of visitors in the protected areas by 5% until 2015</b>	<b>Oper. Goal 3 To increase the share of foreign markets by 3% until 2015</b>	<b>Oper. Goal 4 To improve tourism infrastructure and services (information, quality)</b>
Action 1 – Operational coordination of regional actors	V			V
Action 2 – Integrated distribution management system for the destination	V	V	V	V
Action 3 - Development of a communication campaign oriented to foreign markets		V	V	
Action 4 – Monitoring tourism quality	V			V
Action 5 – Tourism oriented education and training	V			V
Action 6 – Improving on site information				V
Action 7 – Production of a tourism investor guide in relation to the 3 protected areas	V			V
Action 8 – Production of a guide for nature tourism activities		V		V
Action 9 – Smart phone application to access information on tourism offer		V		V
Action 10 – Improving environmental quality of businesses and services	V	V		V

Eight out of the 10 actions aim at improving the tourism offer, in terms of better visiting conditions, services and quality, responding to the key requirements set by the PENT. The other two actions (action 2 and 3) are intended to increase demand in specific markets, also in line with the PENT guidelines.

### Territorial workshops / road shows

Three local workshops were organised in collaboration with the Municipalities of Santiago do Cacém and Sines, and also with the involvement of AEAL (Association of Entrepreneurs of Coastal Alentejo), between 19 and 21 September 2012. Each workshop gathered 9 to 15 persons from



*Fulica atra*, Santo André Lagoon Nature Reserve



*Silene littorea* and *Linaria lamarckii*, Santo André Lagoon Nature Reserve



different professional standpoints, including local government, the protected areas management authority, regional and local agencies and private business operators of the local tourism and leisure sector. Total number of participants in the three workshops was 34.

Each workshop had half day duration. With the invitation, each participant received a brief note on the objectives and the methodology of the event. The programme was designed to allow for as much debate among the participants as possible, after two brief interventions by the project team.

The main objective of the workshops was to debate and seek solutions for the consolidation of a sustainable tourism model in Alentejo Litoral and to support the preparation of the local action plan (LTSP) addressing the development of nature tourism, benefitting from the 3 protected areas located in the region, which are highly relevant tourism assets.

The debate focused on the natural heritage and cultural attributes of the region both in the perspective of its valorisation through tourism and its conservation as valuable natural resources. The discussion was built on the experience of the participants, addressing in particular the constraints and difficulties faced to pursue sustainable tourism objectives.

The model adopted for the three workshops was similar. The programme included two initial presentations by the 2Bparks project team, one to present the project, the other to explain the objectives and focus of the workshop.

Following these presentations, the floor was given to participants. The debate was organised according to the SWOT analysis methodology: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Participants were asked to present their positions and to write down the ideas they thought to be more relevant. These notes were collected at the end of the workshop to be used as inputs for the LTSP.

The first workshop took place in Santiago do Cacém, at the Town Hall, on 19 September 2012. It was sponsored by the municipal administration that took also part in the debate, represented at the political level. There were 10 participants from different local and regional institutions and private businesses.

The second workshop took place in Grândola, at the Municipal Library, on 20 September 2012. It was sponsored by: the municipal administration that took part in the debate, represented at the political level; the Entrepreneurs Association of Coastal Alentejo (AEAL). There were 15 participants from different local, regional and national institutions, the academy and private businesses.

The third workshop took place in Sines, at the Sines Tecnopolo, on 21 September 2012. It was sponsored by the municipal administration that took part in the debate, represented at the technical level. There were 9 participants most of them local private business operators.



*Drafting ideas in the LTSP Workshops in Alentejo Litoral*





### *LTSP in Ljubljansko barje*

*Bojan Erhartič, Aleš Smrekar, Mateja Šmid Hribar, Jernej Tiran*, Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Anton Melik Geographical Institute



#### **Objectives and scope**

The Ljubljansko barje Landscape Park is situated in the southern part of the Ljubljana Basin and therefore lies in close proximity to the capital city, Ljubljana. It is also part of the Ljubljana Urban Region. The Ljubljana Urban Region unites 26 local authorities with around 500,000 inhabitants, making it the most densely populated part of Slovenia. It is the most prosperous Slovenian region, with a strong developmental potential and economic strength, a concentration of quality human resources, knowledge and enterprise.

Ljubljansko barje is the largest Slovenian and southernmost European peat wetland. Similar areas are a true rarity in Europe nowadays, due mainly to intensive farming and urbanization. The

cohabitation of people and nature has created a unique and highly diverse cultural landscape, an endless mosaic of meadows, litter woodlands, fields, ditches and hedges that maintain a high level of biodiversity. This interlacement of different habitats is home to many plants, birds and insects that can rarely be seen elsewhere in Slovenia and Europe.

In addition to declaring Ljubljansko barje a landscape park in October 2008, it is also an ecologically important area, a special protection area for 22 bird species, a special conservation area for 23 animal and one plant species as well as nine habitat types. Ljubljansko barje, home to numerous endangered species, has been proclaimed a Natura 2000 site, protecting rare and endangered species and their habitats. Furthermore, Ljubljansko barje is inscribed

on the UNESCO World Heritage List. The following areas in Ljubljansko barje have a protected status under the Nature Conservation Act: three biodiversity conservation areas, 51 natural values and six protected areas. There are 460 units of cultural heritage, including three national monuments and 18 monuments of local importance.

The landscape has retained its traditional character, seeing that the high groundwater and regular flooding prevent intensive farming and reduce its economic prosperity. Regardless, the most prevalent economic activity is agriculture, especially on the area's fringes and solitary hillocks as well as on mineral and shallow organic soils where marsh horsetail is thriving.

Ljubljansko barje is economically tied to the hinterland and especially to the heavily populated outskirts on the southern parts of Ljubljana, which extend into the barje, as do a number of towns such as Vrhnika and Škofljica. The settlements are usually placed on the edges of Ljubljansko barje on slightly elevated positions and therefore cannot be reached by the floods. Inside the marsh, the settlements are

located near or atop solitary hillocks.

The Local Tourism Strategic Plan (LTSP) for Ljubljansko barje was developed in order to establish and manage the landscape park as a sustainable tourism destination. This strategic document represents the foundation for a more competitive cooperation in developing and marketing sustainable tourism. In addition to establishing cooperation among key interested parties in the area, the document aims to get support from the residents.

### Methodology

In the preparation of the LTSP for Ljubljansko Barje, internationally tested desk and field research methodologies for the production of tourism development and marketing plans were used as well as established approaches in developing tourism destinations.



*Ljubljansko barje Landscape Park*

Table: The following methodological activities were undertaken

Methodological activity	Means of implementation
<b>1. Problem analysis</b>	
Situation analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examination and analysis of the input data and the available sources;</li> <li>• Conduction of an introductory survey among representatives of municipalities to obtain quantitative and qualitative data on their visions, plans and views of the existing positioning, problems, opportunities;</li> <li>• Organization of a workshop with representatives of the public, private and civil sectors to establish key challenges;</li> <li>• Situation analysis and analysis of market trends with regards to sustainable tourism;</li> <li>• Development of conclusions and challenges as the basis for planning.</li> </ul>
<b>2. Model development (vision, goals, mission, development-marketing concept)</b>	
Definition of a development policy, vision for development, market position and product strategy	Drawing up a development model using the methodology for the production of development strategies based on the problem analysis and workshops with representatives of the public, civil and private sectors.
<b>3. Determining measures (by areas)</b>	
Development of an action plan by areas (priorities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduction of an additional survey among representatives of municipalities to obtain information on the state of and plans for cycling, learning or thematic routes;</li> <li>• Development of project measures necessary for the implementation of the development concept.</li> </ul>

One of the elements of sustainable tourism and marketing strategy is the planning and preparation of two interpretive trails, the Učna pot Bevke and the Pot ob reki Iški – Okljuk interpretive trails. The the Anton Melik Geographical Institute of the Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts in collaboration with the Ljubljansko barje Landscape Park prepared the outline of the interpretation contents for the area of Ljubljansko barje. In 2011, the institute carried out field research to analyze the natural and social potentials of Ljubljansko barje. The research indicated which areas are most suitable for incorporating interpretive trail in the area of the Ljubljansko barje Landscape Park.

The Bevke interpretive trail was designed the same year in collaboration with the local community and it was officially unveiled in September 2012. The contents of the planned Pot ob reki Iški – Okljuk interpretive trail are complete and need only to be physically placed into the space.

### Characterizations and analysis of the target territory

As a tourist destination, Ljubljansko barje represents a geographically delineated natural tourist destination, despite crossing seven municipalities. Taking into consideration the existing tourism infrastructure and tourism services, Ljubljansko barje



is not a developed, recognized tourist destination. However, it has all the necessary resources to be a competitor on the sustainable tourism market. It has a comparative advantage due to its position on the outskirts of the Slovenian capital, which means it is easily accessible and has a strong background in generating demand and marketing in the scope of Ljubljana. With its rural character and unique natural and cultural resources, Ljubljansko barje contributes an important addition to the tourist offer of Ljubljana. The supporting tourism infrastructure in the area also mainly relates to Ljubljana, including the Ljubljana Jože Pučnik Airport and the modernized road and rail network.

Still, Ljubljansko barje is a landscape park—a special protection area—and its potential can only lie in balanced, well-considered, sustainable tourism. One of the key comparative advantages of Ljubljansko barje is its rich and well-preserved natural and cultural heritage, having unique features on a European level. Among the natural treasures

are the Ljubljanica River, the Podpeč quarry, the Podpeč karst lake, the Ponikve uvala, the Iška vintgar gorge, the seven ponds in the Draga Valley, the peat bog of Mali Plac, the Goričica moss and the Želimejščica Valley. The cultural resources refer mainly to pile-dwelling heritage and furthermore include a number of museums and galleries (the most renowned being the Technical Museum of Slovenia), smaller castles, churches and some educational trails. There is a lack of a high-quality, authentic gastronomic offer that would build on the characteristics of the area.

While there are natural and cultural resources in Ljubljansko barje, these generally do not represent an important motive for visits and are not integrated in the experiential tourism products. There are no attractions of such importance that would create a visibility of the area, present a motive for visits and therefore generate revenue.



*The Ljubljanica River is a source of great tourist potential*



### SWOT analysis of Ljubljansko barje

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Natural values;            Unique environment left by many cultures;            Establishment of the Ljubljansko barje Landscape Park;            Part of European areas protected under Natura 2000;            In close proximity to Ljubljana;            Potential of visits due to the proximity to the capital;            The Ljubljanica River as a water transversal - connecting Ljubljana and Ljubljansko barje;            Good accessibility;            Delineated geographical area;            Important water protection area for drinking water in the wider area;            Low urbanization; absence of mass tourism;            Some good practice examples.</p>	<p>Fast paced changes of the environment (slow but continuous decline of plant and animal species);            There is no tourist offer (inns, hostels, farms), nor tourism providers;            There are no central attractions that would serve as an important motive for visits;            Lack of an interpretation of the natural values;            Unmanaged biking and walking routes;            No bike rental services;            In case of tourist demand, announcement in advance is required;            Poor image;            Lack of products with a protected designation of origin;            Local fragmentation, incoherent tourist offer;            Lack of awareness of the tourism potential in the local community (and private sector);            Poor marking or signaling due to administrative barriers;            Poor roads;            Lack of organized ecotourism markets;            Illegal waste dumps; monoculture – corn.</p>
Opportunities	Threats
<p>New trends in the international tourism market and new, changing values that suit the destination;            The fact that such areas are becoming increasingly rare in the world;            Building a recognizable image of Ljubljansko barje (through local storytelling);            Developing tourism programs designed for nature appreciation (according to target groups) and tourism packages (2 hours, half day, full day tours);            Ljubljanica as the transversal river connecting Ljubljana and Ljubljansko barje and a walkway along the river;            Organized navigation on the Ljubljanica River;            Organization of bike rental along the Ljubljanica River for guests arriving to barje by boat;            Organized biking and other recreational routes;            Revival of pile-dwelling heritage;            Educational tourism;            Learning farms;            Volunteering - involvement in local campaigns;            Themed info points;            Park &amp; Ride; sustainable transport to and within the Park;            Development of distinctive and authentic memorabilia;            Offering local products with a protected designation of origin;            Nature conservation offers numerous possibilities for the production of high-quality, healthy food, for the development of organic farming and activities arising from environmental potentials.</p>	<p>Too high expectations of tourism that is not valued accordingly;            Negative attitude of the local population toward the Park and tourism;            Development of products that do not meet the vision of the Park;            No partnership between the providers;            Uncontrolled visits (pollution);            Mass tourism;            Irreversible exploitation of natural resources (not in a sustainable manner);            Loss of cultural landscape;            Depletion of the healthy environment (peace, noise, clean water, air);            Climate change – lack of projections, scenarios;            Excessive urbanization;            Threat of immigrants (sleeping villages) and illegal construction;            Mismatch of legislation and action plans;            Unsustainable agriculture</p>

The tourist products have not been completely developed; they do not address a specific target group and therefore do not present a motive for visit. The tourism offer currently consists of a list of activities; including walking or hiking, jogging, biking, hot-air ballooning, bird watching, visits to the Technical Museum of Slovenia and off-road driving. There is a potential to develop a number of tourist products, promote and market them to targeted audiences through storytelling. The Local Tourism Strategic Plan addresses these issues.

Ljubljansko barje offers 273 permanent beds or 295 beds in total. This includes two hotels (Hotel Mantova and Granvid) and the Rakitna Youth Health Resorts (outside the landscape park). There are no smaller providers in the area (private rooms, tourism farms, etc.) This number does not include accommodation within the area of the Municipality of Ljubljana, even on the outskirts.

Due to a lack of managed attractions that collect an entrance fee and with this record the visit and due to the lack of developed integral tourist products, the demand and its financial impact on the area is small. According to the Slovenian Statistical Office, the six municipalities (Borovnica, Brezovica, Ig, Log – Dragomer, Škofljica and Vrhnika) had 7,254 overnight stays in 2009. There are large numbers of (daily, hourly) visitors In Ljubljansko barje, however, the statistics are unknown. Furthermore, the park's image among its visitors is quite poor; the visitors regard it as a free-of-charge grounds for various activities and often do not behave respectfully (e.g. littering, illegal waste dumps).

The visual identity and design of the Ljubljansko barje brand has been established and efficiently communicated through the existing communication tools (e.g. website, brochures). Furthermore, the brand is strongly recognizable through nature-based photographs. Due to the lack of integrated tourist products, the materials are mainly of informative and promotional nature and not sales-oriented.

## Strategic Plan

Considering the fact that Ljubljansko barje is

a protected area that follows the principles of sustainable development, the tourism strategy aims to maximize the benefits of tourism through adding value. Its intention is to attract more environmentally aware visitors who are willing to pay more for a sustainable experience. The main motives for visiting Ljubljansko barje are therefore recreation, discovering and learning.

The main objective of LTSP is the sustainable valorization (e.g. adding value) of Ljubljansko barje. The specific objectives are defined according to the four operational priorities:

### **1st priority: Developing sustainable tourism based on unique natural and cultural heritage.**

- The objective to establish sustainable tourism as the basic development model accepted by all key interested parties;
- The objective to promote Ljubljansko barje as a landscape park that holistically, efficiently and creatively implements the concept of sustainable tourism;
- The objective to establish tourism as an important facilitator in the implementation of sustainable measures on all levels and in all areas.

### **2nd priority: Developing attractive, authentic tourist offers, products and programs that are recognizable through the stories of Ljubljansko barje.**

- The objective to develop attractive, integrative tourist products that raise the visibility of the park;
- The objective to develop comprehensive experience and therefore enhance the competitive positioning and attractiveness of the tourist offer;
- The objective to increase the monetary flow from tourist visits.

### **3rd priority: Enhancing the visibility and image of Ljubljansko barje.**

Table: The main motives for visiting Ljubljansko barje, target groups and key areas

	Tourism product	Target groups	Key locations, providers
<b>RECREATION – ACTIVE HOLIDAYS</b>			
Motive: Recreation	Biking Hiking Dog walking Jogging Horse riding Hot-air ballooning  Hunting Fishing Cross-country skiing	1. People who live in the immediate vicinity. Residents of Ljubljana who search for close destinations for activities and relaxation. 2. People with an interest in a particular sport (balloonist, fishermen, hunters), who also live in the surrounding area (mostly in Ljubljana and the hinterland).	Municipality of Ig / / / 8 individual providers A number of Slovenian and foreign providers / A network of fishing clubs /
<b>TRIPS AND EXCURSIONS</b>			
Motive: Discovery	Natural heritage  Cultural heritage (historic, technical, archaeological)  Museums and galleries (Thematic) interpretive trails Carriage rides river excursions by boat Events  Gastronomic offer  Picnics	1. Residents of Ljubljana looking for alternative ideas and possibilities for interesting short trips (e.g. families, organized groups, couples (25+), dynamic seniors). 2. Visitors from other parts of Slovenia, who are looking for alternative ideas and possibilities for interesting trips, possibly in combination with a visit to Ljubljana (e.g. families, organized groups, couples (25+), dynamic seniors). 3. Foreign (stationary) tourists or visitors to Ljubljana who are already in the capital and are looking for ideas for excursions to the vicinity.	A number of natural resources in the municipalities A number of cultural resources in the municipalities 8 providers 3 interpretive trails A number of providers 6 providers A number of events organized in the municipalities A number of providers of various quality in the municipalities 26 organized picnic locations in Iški vintgar Gorge
<b>LEARNING EXPERIENCES</b>			
Motive: Learning	Lectures and workshops “Barje, do I know you?”  (Themed) programs for school science days (Themed) interpretive trails  (Themed) workshops (adapted to specific interests)  Museums and galleries  Bird watching and studying flora and fauna Seminars, presentations, business meetings Team-buildings	1. Individuals and organized groups with special interests (e.g. photographers, bird watchers, archaeologists) from Slovenia and abroad. 2. Schools and educational institutions - at different stages according to the topic - from Slovenia and abroad. 3. Companies as part of team-building programs. 4. People from the surrounding areas (especially Ljubljana and its hinterland), who are interested in specific topics and/or workshops.	Ljubljansko barje Landscape Park Public Institute Some associations and the Public Institute 3 interpretive trails managed by municipalities / 8 providers, including the Technical Museum of Slovenia 1 provider Some providers in Vrhnika Some providers

- The objective to position Ljubljansko barje as a unique, attractive and easily accessible landscape park where tourists can relax, learn and discover, just on the outskirts of the capital;
- The objective to attract and please the demanding and environmentally conscious tourist who respects the values of the park and acts accordingly;
- The objective to enhance the visibility and image and thus add value to the tourism product.

**4th priority: Establishing attractive and innovative partnerships.**

- The objective to establish long-term, active and innovative partnerships that provide for resources (knowledge, people and financial resources);
- The objective to attract all key interested parties that bring about tourism development;

- The objective to develop high-quality tourist offer and experience on the destination level through active partnerships with tourism providers at the destination.

As already indicated, the segmentation strategy is based on the motive for a visit as well as on the geographically themed areas. The segmentation on the motive for a visit communicates and promotes the tourism offer to targeted audiences, while the segmentation in geographic areas visualizes the themed offers in the area. Geographically themed areas bind the tourist offer to specific historic periods and establish a themed tourist offer.

**Implementing and Monitoring the Strategic Plan**

The action plan focuses mainly on activities that will help develop a competitive and effective tourism and that will establish strategic development-marketing activities for sustainable tourism. These actions are

Table: The main motives and positioning concept.

Motive for a visit	Differentiation attributes	Positioning concept
RECREATION (Outdoor experience)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A seemingly infinite natural green park</li> <li>• On the outskirts of the capital</li> <li>• Not crowded</li> <li>• The feeling of being away from the city</li> </ul>	Ljubljansko barje – a seemingly infinite green park, just on the outskirts of Ljubljana, makes us move and fills us with energy.
TRIPS AND EXCURSIONS (Discovery experience)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rich and unique history</li> <li>• Fascinating stories</li> <li>• Natural values and resources unmatched on the European level</li> <li>• On the outskirts of the capital</li> <li>• The Ljubljanica River that connects Ljubljana and Ljubljansko barje</li> </ul>	Ljubljansko Barje – rich natural and cultural heritage telling us millennia-old stories.
LEARNING (Learning experience)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pile-dwelling culture</li> <li>• Rich history dating to the Roman times</li> <li>• Archaeological findings</li> <li>• Flora and fauna: surprising biotic diversity</li> </ul>	Ljubljansko barje: a unique “nature’s classroom”.

defined according to the four priorities:

**1st priority: Developing sustainable tourism based on the unique natural and cultural heritage.**

- To prepare a plan on how to manage tourist visits to the most sensitive areas and calculate the carrying capacity of the area;
- To design a green policy, coordinating it with local communities and communicating with tourist providers;
- To prepare a communication plan with all key interested parties on the importance of environmental protection and sustainable management;
- To prepare a plan to encourage sustainable transport;
- To create a common brand for products from Ljubljansko barje and develop a marketing plan;
- To develop a program for promoting volunteering;
- To identify European projects and other grants intended for promotion of sustainable tourism.

**2nd priority: Developing an attractive authentic tourist offer, products and programs that are communicated through the stories of Ljubljansko barje.**

- To design tourism programs or packages for each integrated tourist product (recreation, discovery, learning) and target groups;
- To prepare development plans to establish geographically themed areas;
- To design the project of the Ljubljanica River as a water transversal;
- To set up the outdoor museum (reconstruction of a pile dwelling village);
- To prepare a circular plan of walking, biking and horse riding routes;
- To prepare a plan to design and set up signs and information boards (a) at the entrance points of the park and (b) at the rest areas on

park trails;

- To prepare the project “Souvenir from Ljubljansko barje”.

**3rd priority: Enhancing the visibility and image of Ljubljansko Barje.**

- To prepare a list of authentic events at Ljubljansko barje;
- To design stories of Ljubljansko barje according to the individual areas and target groups;
- To educate specialized tour guides of Ljubljansko barje;
- - To design a system for monitoring the number of visitors and measuring their levels of satisfaction;
- To manage the brand of Ljubljansko Barje;
- To design the ljubljanskobarje.si web page as the central information/promotional platform;
- To give concrete expression and establish marketing activities for the promotion of Ljubljansko barje through Ljubljana Tourism and the Slovenian Tourism Board.

**4th priority: Establishing attractive and innovative partnerships.**

- To manage the human resources of the Public Institute for the field of tourism;
- To establish a professional project team within the Public Institute for tourism.

The situational analysis and the development strategy of Ljubljansko barje as a sustainable tourist destination foresee the preparation of an implementation program. The implementation program, to be included in the annual work program of the Ljubljansko Barje Landscape Park Public Institute, will define a concrete program of activities, their schedules and the dynamics of outputs.

One of the elements of the strategic plan implementation is creating two interpretive trails in Ljubljansko barje. The Anton Melik Geographical institute of the Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts in



collaboration with the Ljubljansko barje Landscape Park prepared the outline of the interpretation contents that range from exceedingly natural science-oriented to cultural contents (flora, fauna, geology, relief, hydrology, archaeology, construction, old knowledge, and others). We strived to have the interpretation areas evenly distributed throughout the entire landscape park.

In the process, the employees of the Anton Melik Geographical Institute ZRC SAZU in collaboration with the local community designed the exceedingly ethnologically themed Bevke interpretive trail. The trail starting point lies on the southern edge of the Bevke Village and makes a round trip through Ljubljansko barje Landscape Park. The length of the route is about 6.5 km and it is equipped with ten interpretive panels.

In addition to the already documented archaeological (pile dwellers) and animal (corn crane) contents between the settlements of Iška and Črna vas, numerous other contents have been identified, applying to the fields of geology, hydrology and soil, as one of the greatest values of the marsh are the water and the surface on which the water flows. These values are clearly recognizable along the Iška River, making them suitable for interpretation. Iška is an extremely interesting river due to its great diverse character, because it runs through a karst gorge, meanders on a gravel alluvial fan and continues its way in an artificially made river basin over the marsh basin to the Ljubljanica River.

The planned Pot ob reki Iški – Okljuk interpretive trail will run from the Iška Village to its confluence with the Ljubljanica River and will follow the cycling route as delineated on the newest map of Ljubljansko barje. The trail will be about 13 km long and due to the length and flat terrain, it will be best experienced with a bicycle. Both ends of the trail are accessible with public transport. The trail will be marked by 11 panels. The interpretive trail is also complemented by worksheets on three levels of difficulty (young elementary school, older elementary school, secondary school and adults).

## Territorial workshops / road shows

The project partner organized two workshops with representatives of the public, private and civil sectors. The main objectives were:

- To establish key challenges in developing Ljubljansko barje as a sustainable tourist destination;
- Situation analysis of tourism in Ljubljansko barje and its potentials;
- Identification of key challenges;
- Discussion of best practice examples;
- To present the strategic development and marketing plan for the Ljubljansko barje sustainable tourist destination;
- Discussion of the development-marketing strategy;
- Drawing up conclusions of the workshop.

Prior to the first workshop, key interested parties were identified to ensure their inclusion in the process of developing the tourist strategy.

A brief summary of the achieved results:

- Active inclusion of all interested key parties;
- Lack of awareness of the potential of tourism in the local community;
- The interested parties shared their views, ideas and identified their problems;
- Through the workshop, the parties contributed to the contents of the development-marketing strategy;
- Obtaining additional input information;
- Investigating opportunities and avoiding threats;
- Building trust and a feeling of togetherness at the destination;
- The interested parties shared their views about the strategic development and marketing plan;
- The interested parties shared their views about the problems and opportunities arising from the development-marketing strategy;
- Discussion on future steps and implementation of the action plan;
- Supplementing, checking and upgrading the documents.



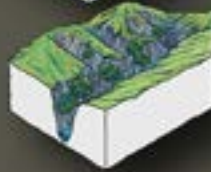
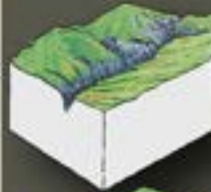
## POT OB REKI IŠKI – »OKLJUK«



### DIVJI VINTGAR



Iški vintgar je **slikovita soteska** med Krimom in Mokrcem. Ali veš, kaj je soteska? To je zelo ozka in globoka dolina v obliki črke V, s strmimi pobočji. Ker ima soteska Iška ponekod skoraj prepadne stene, jo nekateri imenujejo tudi **vintgar**. Vrezana je v obsežne sklade dolomita in apnenca, na nekaterih mestih je globoka tudi več kot 400 metrov! Nastala je zaradi hitrega ugrezanja bližnjega Ljubljanskega barja. Velike višinske razlike so povzročile **hitrejše vrezovanje Iške**. Ker so bila v hladnejših obdobjih pobočja verjetno manj poračena, je Iška še toliko lažje odnatale gradivo in ga odlagala na širšem vrhaju.



Iški vintgar je nastal s hitrim vrezovanjem reke v skalno podlago. Oglej si njegov poenostavljen razvoj v treh korakih.

Na zemljevidu si ogledaj, kake razmoleke je porečje Iške. Ali prepoznaj globoko vrezano sotesko Iškega vintgarja!



V Sloveniji imamo peščico sotesk, ki jih imenujemo vintgar. Prvi je bil oziroma pomekovan Vintgar pri Bledu, ki je dobil ime po bližnjem naselju Vintgar. 'Vintgar' ... se imenovali staza vintgar za kuko pojube Karjanske karste, temelj' vključno le za romanično dežel ob Radovim med bližnjim Hranim in Dobrovno ... je že leta 1951 zapisal poznavalec ljudskega izraza Rudolf Barjara. Pa vintgar se je ime Iški vintgar uveljavilo že pred drugo svetovno vojno.

#### NAGRAJNA IGRA

Kako imenujemo sotesko s prepadnimi stenami?

SELO:

- lokality dolina: C
- vintgar: H
- barje: E



V najlepšem delu soteske Iškega vintgarja je dovolj prostora samo za reko.



## UČNA POT BEVKE



### BARJANSKI TRAVNIKI

Vidno Ljubljanskega barja se je skozi stoletja spreminjal od domnevnega plitvega jezera prek močvirja do barja. Zanj so značilne barjanske rastlinske vrste in debele plasti šote. Ker je bila **šota vlažnih pomembno gorivo**, jo je dovek do začetka 20. stoletja skoraj v celoti odstranili.

Ljubljansko barje danes ni več **gravo barje**, ampak neskončen preplet vlažnih travnikov, stešnjikov, lagov, mejic, rijv ... Ti predstavljajo pomembno zatočišče za številne živali in rastline. **89 vrst metuljev, 48 vrst kačjih pastirjev in 258 opaženih vrst ptic** je le delček predstavnikov živega sveta, ki pritrinjajo najlepši živalski in botanični vrti daleč naokoli.



Prepletanje različnih življenjskih okolij je največje bogstvo Ljubljanskega barja, saj v tej raznolikosti najdemo dom številne vrste živali in rastlin.



Šota je danes na Barju le še za vzorec, njena nahajališča so močno omejena. Pred nekaj sto leti pa je pokrivala celotno Ljubljansko barje v višini več metrov. Šota se nastala kot kurivo za ogrevanje, za delovanje tovarn v Ljubljani in poskušano celo za pogorjanje vlakov in tedi na pami pogori!



**Močvirski tulipan** ali **lagarica** (frilana melogrini) je znanlec ponikla na mokrotnih travnikih, ki jih kmetje obdelujejo na tradicionalen, ne intenziven način. Je ena najbolj prepoznavnih raj na poplavljenih travnikih ravnih Ljubljanskega barja in pokriva tudi glavo bogjuna, mastlote poti. Cvet lagarice najdemo v kar petih globlji slovenskih občin. Cveti marca ali aprila, ko se trave še rumene in poljedane od snega.

Pisar, močvirski tulipan je omejena in zmanjševana vrsta, zato jih ne smemo nabirati ali uničevati!

Above, one of the panels of the Učna pot Bevke interpretive trail

Below, one of the panels of the Pot ob reki Iški – Okljuk interpretive trail



### *LTSP in Thessaly*

Region of Thessaly



#### **Objectives and scope**

During the latest years, it has been recognized at international level that the conservation of protected areas is valuable if they fulfill their defined aims, one of which is the enhancement of their value and their exploitation as leisure destinations.

To achieve this, especially in protected areas where tourism activity is almost zero, appropriate strategies and actions are required from local actors so as to develop the local tourism product from scratch in terms of sustainability and focusing on environmental protection.

In this framework, the purpose of the current strategic plan is to investigate the necessary actions and interventions in order to achieve the sustainable tourism exploitation and development of the protected area of Lake Karla.

The strategy on sustainable tourism development for the protected area of Lake Karla, based on the current situation of the area analysed by the Local Development Plan, on the results of the operations that took place within the framework of the 2BPARKS project focused on sustainable tourism in Karla and the results of local consultations, is summarized as follows:

«Development of a Sustainable Tourism Product for the Protected Area of Lake Karla from Scratch in terms of Quality, Local Identity, Protection of Environmental – Cultural Resources and Safety of Life and the Environment»

According to this framework, the objectives of the strategy are:

1. Reduction of the rural exit and assuring the viability of the area by creating new job



- positions and enhancing the local income.
2. Enhancing the protection of the area of Lake Karla.
  3. Securing the viability of the Lake Karla Rehabilitation Project.
  4. Development of a new competitive tourism pole in Thessaly.
  5. Development of a sustainable tourism model that will constitute a guide for the whole region of Thessaly.
  6. Strengthening the trust of residents to the State and the Local Government.

## Methodology

The preparation of the action plan has been based on the results of the deliverables that have been implemented until today by the Region of Thessaly and also of the venues and territorial consultations organized in Thessaly within the framework of the 2BPARKS project. Particularly:

1. Report on Experiences under exploitation from the Region of Thessaly,
2. Synthesis Report on the Evaluation and Comparison of Partners' Experiences to be Capitalized,
3. Report on the Analysis of the Results of Questionnaires for the Recording of Problems, Experiences and Proposed Solutions in the Wider Area of Lake Karla,
4. Roadmap for Managers and Self-Assessment Guide,
5. Proceedings of the Local Consultation Venue entitled: "Alternative Tourism Development of the Protected Area of Lake Karla",
6. Proceedings of the Local Consultation Venue entitled: "Sustainable Development of the Protected Area of Lake Karla: Citizens discuss with Development Actors and Vote for the Future of their Area",
7. Proceedings of the Local Consultation Venue entitled: "Nature, Local Identity, Quality, Awareness and Networking".

The procedure for the preparation of the strategic plan for the promotion of sustainable tourism development followed the below steps:

- Specification of the area of intervention (included in the framework of the Deliverable 2.3.1 «Integrated Local Pilot Development Plan for the Protected Area of Lake Karla»).
- Analysis of the current situation in the region, according to all available data (included in the framework of the Deliverable 2.3.1 «Integrated Local Pilot Development Plan for the Protected Area of Lake Karla»).
- Preparation of SWOT analysis to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in the region (included in the framework of the Deliverable 2.3.1 «Integrated Local Pilot Development Plan for the Protected Area of Lake Karla»).
- Analysis of the proposals that emerged from the 7 foresaid deliverables.
- Definition of the strategy for the area.
- Development of intervention axes and indicative activities.
- Development of indicative budget and timetable.

## Characterizations and analysis of the target territory

Sustainable is the one who is constantly rejuvenated and more specifically the one who lived in the past, lives today and will exist in the future, provided that it won't be destroyed. The word "sustainability" is commonly referred to natural and energy resources, meaning that the environment offers what humanity needs to survive so that these natural resources can continuously be renewed in order that the future generations will keep living with them.

Concerning sustainable development, it refers to the planned and implemented economic growth, taking into consideration the protection of the natural habitat and viability. Viability implies that exploitation rate of natural resources is slower than the renewal one. If not, environment degradation will be caused.



According to the classical definition, sustainable development is the one that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, namely the providence so as the current exploitation not to undermine the one of the future generations.

As a consequence, sustainable development consists of three components: environmental, social and economical, which require political consideration. Sustainable (viable) development comes within these three components. Today, it is important that the environmental problems created by tourist growth to the environment become known and a series of initiatives are undertaken.

The incompatibility of the tourist activity with the environment has caused a series of problems, such as local architecture distortion, cultural and environmental disturbance, infringement and construction of areas with exceptional natural beauty (mass tourism has brought positive economical results in many areas, however has destroyed both the environment and society). The critical relationship between tourism, as a wealth source, and economy, imposes a rational management so that the tourism resources will be used without getting exhausted. As part of this aspect, a special relation between tourism activity and available resources is emerging and plays a key role in any form of tourism development.

According to the above, over the last years, the need emerges for an environment-friendly tourism, named sustainable, and defines the model management of natural ecosystem and renewable natural resource model. This model fosters that the environmental, economical and social activity must assure the constant exploitation of natural resources and not to harm the environment and the future of coming generations.

It should be clear that sustainable tourism isn't a separate form of tourism, but this term can be used to characterize every tourism type. It is a term used to describe all environmental practices in tourism related with: the management of natural resources, the use of water and energy, gentle transportation, waste, biodiversity and wildlife management, access of disabled people, improvement/

promotion/ distribution of agricultural and handicraft products, employment of trained staff according to the sustainable development principles coming from local community, development and evaluation of architectural/ cultural and natural heritage, revival of traditional methods for the use of natural resources, such as water mills, organic cultivations, etc., preservation and promotion of traditional local culture, social responsibility and business efficiency. In order to study sufficiently the concept of sustainable tourism, its principles must be presented and understood: firstly, it is not limited to certain types of tourism but pertains to every tourism demand. Secondly, the principle of spatiality is the basic stand, according to which the tourism capacity is sustainable when is under control whether the operation of facilities is in accordance with the number of existing infrastructure and whether the natural habitat and resources can stand the corresponding volume of tourists without causing distortion and contamination problems. Thirdly, it does not approve the maximization of tourism activity at any cost to the environment (on the contrary, it supports the moderation, the balance and the enduring viability of every tourism activity). Additionally, it doesn't require large investments or extensive research but completes the current tourism development practices. Finally, it rejects the short-term gain in favor of the long-term one and supports that needs must be met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

In recent years, tourism stakeholders, non-governmental organizations and educational programmes attempt to make a shift in tourism from a hard traditional form to a milder one. This is a response to the current crisis in tourism and a wealth of new options, like the agri-tourism, congress, religious and winter tourism in the scope of the approaching of the relation between tourist experience and various cultural activities. The target of these new tourism forms is the familiarization of the tourist with the landscapes, food, songs, dance, painting, hiking and creation during vacations.

The development of alternative tourism forms was proposed as a way out for an upward growth path.

In this case, tourists organize their trip in which the autonomous choice and tour with little or no use of organized tourism services prevails. The feedback of tourism development is the main objective for the achievement of a different development model throughout the supply infrastructure creation which will upgrade the tourism product, the life of society, the present and the future.

The requirements for sustainable tourism development are the following: firstly, the development must be environmentally tolerable in the long term. Secondly, it must create sustainable economic benefits to developing regions. Thirdly, it must be morally and socially in accordance with the local communities, and fourthly, it must ensure the preservation of culture for the future generations. Necessary conditions for successful operation and profitability of the following actions, according to the European Union, the World Tourism Organization and other international entities, is the collaboration of all those involved in the tourism process, the local participation in the combination of tourism development, the training of professionals, citizens and tourists and the high quality of tourism services and facilities.

Regarding cooperation, the collaboration of various public and private sectors may be mentioned. As a result, it is necessary that some problems of these areas will be solved, such as the control of consumption of drinking water and non-renewable energy sources, aiming to their irrational use reduction, waste reduction, reassurance over recycling, control of the problems caused by congestion and pollution, organization and control of tourism access to ecologically sensitive areas, financing for environmental protection programmes, incentive grant and assistance to tourism businesses.

Regarding local participation, the local communities, with the participation of the local stakeholders, the public, tourism industries, non governmental, environmental and cultural organizations, citizens' organizations, etc., and the frequent contacts with the local population considering that they are the ones who design and develop the desirable type of tourism.

Regarding education, it must be a highly professional training not only for people involved in tourism,

educational programs related to concepts, criteria, benefits and practices of sustainable tourism, education and certification on social, cultural and environmental sustainable issues for citizens and tourists, who can be informed of environment, culture, local customs and needs of each tourist destination, in order to achieve their gradual integration with the social and nature environment.

Regarding quality, the concept of qualitative tourism isn't necessarily coincided with the concept of luxurious or expensive tourism. It refers to this type of tourism activity that protects the resources of tourism, attracts tourists who respect the local community and environment and offers tourist attractions, facilities and services that correspond to the value of the money spent on them.

The dominant parameters of the sustainable tourism development are the following: specific plan for tourism development to achieve a balance between the society, economy and environment, measure reinforcement, local development linkages between the economy, research, education and marketing sectors, specific institutional frameworks that promote the sustainable tourism development and the local participation, measures and policies that contribute to the promotion of local environment and use of alternative tourism forms as basic axis of local tourism development.

The alternative tourism forms are characterized by the existence of a dominant specific incentive for demand related to particular issues, for example nature tourism, travels, adventures, sports, touring, environment and acquaintance with local tradition. In alternative tourism forms, tourists usually choose a place to organize and conduct the voyage in which prevail the autonomous choice and tour and with little or no use of the organized tourism services. As alternative tourism forms, are considered these forms that mainly use cleaner infrastructure, adapted to the environment and are able to develop and disseminate various tourism activities in mainland while, at the same time, support the local development process and the retention of local people in their place. These forms are not affected by seasonality and deal with groups of tourists with touristic interest. Simultaneously, are characterized

by various activities conducted in the development field depending on the specific landscape features (mountain, religious, agri-tourism, etc).

The characteristics of alternative tourism are the following: the reception is carried out by low capacity tourist units rather than large hotel units, there are local stakeholders instead of large enterprises, impacts affect the local population and environment less and there are more possibilities for favorable acceptance on the part of local communities. The economic benefits remain in the local community.

For the region, alternative tourism is a great development chance, given that it offers job opportunities, retains the rural population in the areas and meets the needs of local societies to escape from the isolation and to communicate. Additionally, the impacts on the environment are less important or even non-existent. The aim of alternative tourism is to create a supply infrastructure able to respond to different types of demand and contribute to the basic principle of sustainability, namely the development feedback.

Some of the types of alternative tourism that can be developed in the protected area of Lake Karla, are the following: a) religious tourism, which includes visits to religious places of worship (ie. monasteries) for the participation in religious festivals, ceremonies or pilgrimage etc., b) educational tourism, where students learn about museums, archeological sites,

landscapes, environment, etc, c) mountain tourism, with the advantage to overcome the seasonality as it covers a wide range of activities such as climbing, cycling, hiking, kayaking etc, d) sport tourism which usually attracts professionals and aims to promote sport exercise, like climbing, cycling, hiking, kayaking, etc, e) cultural tourism, with the purpose of visiting cultural and historic sites, traditional settlements and the acquaintance with the local cultural customs, events, etc, f) ecotourism, which includes tourism in protected areas, such as lakes, forests, river deltas, etc, and in biotopes, bird paths, etc, g) agri-tourism, which includes tourism activities harmoniously blended with the rural area. The characteristics of agri-tourism are the following: takes place in rural areas, traditional settlements, villages with outstanding natural beauty, protected areas etc. Moreover, it does not have to do with occasional or seasonal employment but is an extra income source for the local farmers.

### Strategic Plan

The tables below present the proposed priorities for intervention and indicative measures and actions, indicative budget and timetable. The proposed plan is configured to not require large costs, but with low cost to be immediately effective in changing the profile of the area.

#### AXIS 1: Investigation and Assessment of Resources, Perspectives, Capacities and Tolerance of the Area of Intervention for the Development of Sustainable Tourism

Measure/ Action	Title	Budget (€)	Timetable
1.1	Recording and Analysis of Current Resources of the Area in Collaboration with all Relevant Stakeholders	6.000	01.2013 - 03.2013
1.2	Assessment of Sustainable Tourism Capacity	2.000	03.2013 – 04.2013
1.3	Investigation of all Potential Tourism Forms (Alternative and Conventional) that can be Developed in the Area	10.000	03.2013 – 05.2013
1.4	Description of the Final Tourism Model of the Area	12.000	05.2013 – 09.2013
1.5	Development and Assessment of Scenarios of Tourism Development Impacts to Local Employment	6.000	09.2013 – 12.2013
1.6	Development of a Strategy for Compensation Benefits	6.000	09.2013 – 12.2013
	<b>Total</b>	<b>42.000</b>	<b>01.2013 – 12.2013</b>

## AXIS 2: Tourism Spatial Planning – Land Use For Tourism

Measure/ Action	Title	Budget (€)	Timetable
2.1	Land Zoning (Tourism Infrastructure Development Zones, Absolutely Prohibited Access Zones, Partial-Seasonal Access Zones, Free Access Zones etc.)	10.000	09.2013 – 12.2013
2.2	Water Zoning (Absolutely Prohibited Access Zones, Recreational Zones, Activity Zones, etc.)	6.000	09.2013 – 12.2013
2.3	Evaluation of the General Spatial Planning Framework for the Spatial Concentration of Activities	15.000	09.2013 – 12.2013
2.4	Itineraries' Network Plan with Thematic Tourism Categorization	15.000	09.2013 – 12.2013
2.5	Study on Supporting Infrastructures for the Facilitation of Tourism Activities	12.000	01.2014 – 04.2014
2.6	Specification of Observation Points for the Protected Area with Thematic Tourism Categorization	8.000	09.2013 – 12.2013
	<b>Total</b>	<b>66.000</b>	<b>09.2013 – 04.2014</b>

## AXIS 3: Design of Specifications and Institutionalization of Tourism Development Control Authorities in Terms of Quality, Local Identity, Protection of Environmental – Cultural Resources and Securing Life and the Environment

Measure/ Action	Title	Budget (€)	Timetable
3.1	Tourism Risk Analysis and Emergency Plan Development	12.000	09.2013 – 12.2013
3.2	Elaboration of Security Specifications for Enterprises - Stakeholders that organize Alternative Tourism Activities in the Protected Area of Lake Karla	18.000	01.2014 – 04.2014
3.3	Elaboration of Visitor Flow Control Programme	6.000	01.2014 – 04.2014
3.4	Elaboration of Accessibility Specifications for Disabled People	9.000	01.2014 – 04.2014
3.5	Elaboration of Environmental Behavior Specifications for Citizens, Visitors and Enterprises	6.000	01.2014 – 04.2014
3.6	Elaboration of Specifications of Sustainable Agriculture and Animal Breeding Practices	15.000	04.2013 – 09.2013
3.7	Elaboration of Quality Specifications for Tourism Services and Facilities	27.000	09.2013 – 02.2014
3.8	Elaboration of Local Food Specifications	9.000	04.2013 – 07.2013
3.9	Development of the Quality Label "Lake Karla" and Conducting a Plan on Label Terms	10.000	03.2014 – 05.2014
3.10	Composition of Citizens' Network for Environmental Protection	1.000	04.2013
3.11	Composition of Local Quality Pact for Tourism – LQPT	12.000	06.2014 – 10.2014
	<b>Total</b>	<b>125.000</b>	<b>04.2013 – 10.2014</b>

**AXIS 4: Organizing Training Seminars for the Population on Entrepreneurship Development in Tourism in Terms of Quality, Local Identity, Protection of Environmental – Cultural Resources and Securing Life and the Environment**

Measure/ Action	Title	Budget (€)	Timetable
4.1	Training Seminars for Local Residents on the Environmental and Cultural Capital of the area and its Possible Use, as well as on Environmental Behaviour	6.000	09.2013 – 12.2013
4.2	Training Seminars for Local Residents on Funding, Development and Operation of Tourism Businesses	6.000	09.2013 – 12.2013
4.3	Training Seminars for Young People as Tour Guides in the Protected Area	6.000	11.2014 – 02.2014
4.4	Annual Environmental Summer School	24.000	07.2014 07.2015 07.2016 07.2017
4.5	«School of Lake Karla» (Traditional Rowing and Fishing Training with Traditional Boats)	40.000	06.2017 – 12.2017
4.6	Training Seminars for Entrepreneurs on Quality and Local Identity Issues	6.000	03.2014 – 06.2014
4.7	Training Seminars for Tourism Entrepreneurs on Life Safety and Environmental Hygiene	6.000	04.2014 – 07.2014
4.8	Training Seminars for Farmers and Breeders on the Development of Sustainable Production Practices	6.000	10.2013 – 01.2014
4.9	Training Seminars for Farmers and Breeders on Product Certification	6.000	10.2013 – 01.2014
	<b>Total</b>	<b>106.000</b>	<b>09.2013 – 12.2017</b>

**AXIS 5: Development of Guides for the Activation of the Alternative Visitor**

Measure/ Action	Title	Budget (€)	Timetable
5.1	Local Flora Guide	16.000	04.2013 – 10.2013
5.2	Local Fauna Guide	16.000	04.2013 – 10.2013
5.3	Guide of Local Traditional Products	10.000	04.2013 – 07.2013
5.4	Guide of Local Traditional Recipes	8.000	04.2013 – 04.2013
5.5	Guide of Ecological Behaviour in the Protected Area of Lake Karla	12.000	04.2013 – 07.2013
5.6	Guide of Natural and Cultural Routes	24.000	01.2014 – 05.2014
5.7	Thematic Maps (Environment, Culture, Local Products, etc.)	24.000	06.2013 – 10.2013
	<b>Total</b>	<b>110.000</b>	<b>04.2013 – 05.2014</b>



**AXIS6: Design of Specifications and Institutionalization of Tourism Development Control Authorities in Terms of Quality, Local Identity, Protection of Environmental – Cultural Resources and Securing Life and the Environment**

Measure/ Action	Title	Budget (€)	Timetable
6.1	Development of Routes and Trails	120.000	01.2014 – 12.2014
6.2	Signposting in the Area	150.000	10.2014 - 06.2015
6.3	Four (4) Bird Observatories (Platforms, etc.)	60.000	01.2014 – 12.2014
6.4	Eight (8) View Spots	40.000	01.2014 – 12.2014
6.5	One (1) Automatic Rental Center of Nature Tourism Equipment (Bicycles, Boats, etc.)	160.000	01.2015 – 12.2015
6.6	One (1) Parking Zone at the Protected Area Entrance	80.000	01.2016 – 12.2016
6.7	Creation of Municipal Shelter – Hostel (1st Accommodation of the Network «Nature Hotels»)	300.000	01.2014 – 12.2015
6.8	Creation of Environmental Information Center – Tourism Kiosk	200.000	01.2017 – 12.2017
6.9	Sport Camp Creation	250.000	01.2016 – 12.2016
6.10	Small Harbor Construction	150.000	01.2017 – 12.2017
6.11	Planning of Thematic Tourism Packages	45.000	01.2017 – 12.2017
6.12	Composition of Two (2) Women Cooperatives	60.000	01.2014 – 10.2014
6.13	Composition of two (2) Business Networks (Agriculture – Livestock)	60.000	01.2014 – 10.2014
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1.675.000</b>	<b>01.2014 – 12.2017</b>

**AXIS7: Organization the Promotion/ Diffusion and Marketing of the Area –Area Marketing Strategy**

Measure/ Action	Title	Budget (€)	Timetable
7.1	Elaboration of Strategic Area Marketing Plan	45.000	11.2014 – 04.2015
7.2	Website Development and Operation for the Promotion of the Cultural and Environmental Heritage of the Area	30.000	04.2013 – 12.2017
7.3	Elaboration of Signposting Requirements Plan	15.000	05.2014 – 09.2014
7.4	Elaboration of Booklet for the Promotion - Diffusion of the Area and its Competitive Advantages	18.000	05.2015 – 07.2015
7.5	Creation of a Commercial TV-Spot in Greek and English Language	24.000	05.2015 – 07.2015
7.6	Development of 3-month Internet Newsletter (e-newsletter) on the Actions and Tourism Product Development	8.000	01.2016 – 12.2017
7.7	Institutionalization of the Annual Day of Lake Karla - Hiking and Health in Nature, Lake Cleaning (ROADSHOW LAKE KARLA)	18.000	06.2016 06.2017
7.8	Actions for the Integration of the Area in European Networks for Protected Areas where Alternative Tourism is Developed	30.000	01.2017 – 12.2017
	<b>Total</b>	<b>188.000</b>	<b>04.2013 – 12.2017</b>

**AXIS8: Monitoring and Evaluation of Tourism Development to Secure Prompt Corrective Actions**

Measure/ Action	Title	Budget (€)	Timetable
8.1	Annual Registration of Visitors' Number and Profile	40.000	06.2013 – 10.2013 06.2014 – 10.2014 06.2015 – 10.2015 06.2016 – 10.2016 06.2017 – 10.2017
8.2	Annual Tourist Satisfaction Survey	40.000	06.2013 – 10.2013 06.2014 – 10.2014 06.2015 – 10.2015 06.2016 – 10.2016 06.2017 – 10.2017
8.3	Constant Environmental Impact Monitoring	30.000	01.2014 – 12.2017
8.4	Constant Monitoring of Tourism Impacts on Local Economic and Social Development	30.000	01.2014 – 12.2017
	<b>Total</b>	<b>140.000</b>	<b>06.2013 – 12.2017</b>

According to the previous data, the total budget and timetable of the «Strategic Plan for the Promotion of the Sustainable Tourism Development of Protected Area of Lake Karla» is as follows:

**Total Budget**      **2.452.000 €**

**Total Timetable**    **01.2013 – 12.2017 (5 years)**

### Implementation and Monitoring of the Strategic Plan

The strategic plan has not started yet. Issues for its implementation and monitoring are under negotiations.

#### Territorial workshops / road shows

1. Organized the 3rd Local Meeting in Thessaly on 23rd March 2012. The specific meeting was a consultation workshop among regional authorities and the citizens to propose, evaluate and decide on the content of the Local Strategic Tourism Plan for the Protected Area of Lake Karla. Participants were: citizens, the Region, the Municipality, the Management Body of the Protected area, Local Community Offices, the University of Thessaly, technical chambers, sport associations, hotel owners' associations and cultural associations. The concept of the meeting was "Speech for the Citizen" and its title: "Sustainable Alternative Tourism Development of the Protected Area of Lake Karla based on Seasonality".

The participants were invited through a formal document.

The meeting had a high success and was supported by promotion material, namely:

- a) folder for the participants including the agenda, brochure and newsletter of 2Bparks;
- b) 2 banners;
- c) badges for the participants.

The concept included:

- a) greetings by regional political representatives;
- b) short presentation by an expert;
- c) one proposal per citizen;

- d) assessment of each proposal by expert panels;
- e) voting for each proposal and f) discussion.

2. Organized the 4th Local Meeting in Thessaly on 26th April 2012. The specific meeting was a consultation workshop among regional authorities and the citizens to propose, evaluate and decide on the Marketing and Promotion Strategy for the Protected Area of Lake Karla and the potential of its integration to the Eurocharter Network of Protected Areas. Participants were: citizens, the Region, the Municipality, the Management Body of the Protected area, Local Community Offices, the University of Thessaly, chambers of commerce, sport associations, hotel owners' associations, local tourism business owners and cultural associations. The concept of the meeting was "Mixed Panels of Citizens and Actors" and its title: "Nature, Local Identity, Quality, Recognition and Networking".

The participants were invited through a formal document.

The meeting had a high success and was supported by promotion material, namely:

- a) folder for the participants including the agenda, brochure and newsletter of 2Bparks;
- b) 2 banners, c) badges for the participants.

The concept included:

- a) greetings by regional political representatives;
- b) short presentation by an expert;
- c) proposals by mixed panels;
- d) announcement and collection of proposals;
- e) final announcement and voting;
- f) discussion.

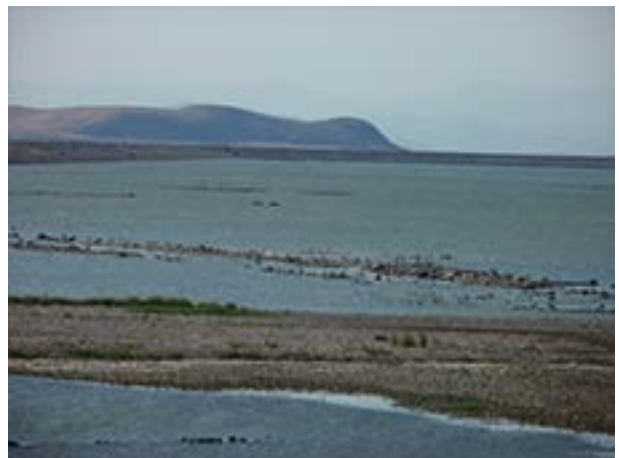
3. Organized a Roadshow on 20th May 2012, Sunday, entitled *Roadshow Lake Karla 2Bparks 2012*, a multi-thematic venue near the water of Lake Karla, near the lake's nature, fauna and flora. The Roadshow included contests and demonstrations of equestrian and archery, venues for children and interactive games (puppet show, treasure search), painting contest, a fair with local traditional products, telescopes for citizens to look at the area's fauna and flora with the help of experts, info-structures with local NGOs and Environmental Education

Centers informing citizens on the lake's issues. The first three winners of each of 4 contests that took place (painting, equestrian for experienced, archery, equestrian for starters) were awarded with the 2BPARKS prize.

The venue was also supported by the Municipality of Rigas Fereos and the Management Body of the Eco-Development Area of Karla – Mavrovouni – Kefalovryso – Velestino.

The venue had a high success and was supported by promotion material, namely:

- a) 5 banners;
- b) 500 hats;
- c) the development of a final video.



*Some images of Thessaly Region*





#### *LTSP in Troodos*

*Stephanie Christou, Kyriakos E. Georgiou, Natasa Economou, CCEIA –UNIC*



#### **Objectives and scope**

The title of our Local Tourism Strategic Plan is “Troodos: The Green Heart of Cyprus – Nature and Culture Park”. The wider idea and the objective behind this plan is the development of a marketing strategy that projects and promotes Troodos as an authentic and unique destination in Cyprus that encompasses environmental values as well as cultural, where sustainable tourism that, as it entails, respects the above values, can be one of the main economic activities that can contribute majorly to the economy of the area, its upgrade and to the survival and viability of the surrounding of the National Forest Park communities.

The LTSP focuses on the Protected Area of Troodos National Forest Park but the sustainable development and protection of the Troodos Natural

Forest Park and that of the communities’ must be interlinked. The wider perspective for Troodos is to be dealt with and promoted as a unified entity but each village will also project its own special characteristics and products, but as a part of a whole. Improving the quality of services and activities for the public and tourists in a sustainable way will help the area to become a real treasure for the communities living around the park, in a way that will contribute to their survival. Furthermore, the cultural characteristics, the wine, gastronomical tradition of the villagers will attract visitors that will also want to visit the Natural Park.

Through the LTSP, the Troodos Regional Tourism Board aims to the upgrade of the quality of the Troodos product and its promotion in a context of nature conservation and environmental protection values. A joint promotion of natural and regional

products and cultural values is to be accomplished through the plan. A bottom-up approach is followed by promoting and preserving the PA by engaging locals and community councils to enable private investments on traditional culture and environmental data resulting to added value products on parallel with environmental protection (Christou, 2012).

## Methodology

The methodology followed at a first stage was to conduct a Desk Research. For the preparation of the Local Tourism Strategic Plan, Desk Research was conducted for gathering and analyzing secondary data for the area. More specifically, the Strategic Plan for Troodos was reviewed, the 'Study for the calculation of the carrying capacity and the estimation of the potentiality of the development of an integrated tourist product for rural areas (2005)' of Cyprus Tourism Organization, the LIFE Management plan for the area NATURA 2000 CY5000004 "Troodos National Forest Park", the marketing, product and quality-value Action Plans of the Troodos Regional Innovation Program, and the web-pages of the community councils of the villages and the web-pages of the Department of Forests. The level of the implementation of the strategies and plans was assessed and the needs of the communities were studied at a first stage through the specific methodology as well as governmental and non-governmental initiatives for the area, including the aspect of harmonization with the European Acquis Communautaire.

At a second, main level, field research was conducted. A bottom – up approach was followed based on a deliberative process. Workshops and meetings with local stakeholders were organized. One of the most basic components for the successful implementation of our LTSP is the adoption of a participatory approach. The involvement of PA managing bodies, local enterprises, local authorities and organizations in the promotion of sustainable economic activities, capitalizing the opportunities resulting from the touristic potentialities of the PA is taking place.

Primarily, four focus groups-workshops were organized a) for the coordination between the Organizations working for Troodos; b) to make the 2Bparks program known to the officers and discuss the problems that the area is facing and how we can find ways in which these can be resolved in the context of the program and organize educational programs; c) have a round table discussion between the Forestry Department, the District officer and the Head Quarters, and the Troodos Organizations, about the actions suggested and in order to define the product and specify the problems that the area is facing; d) for the organization of sports activities on a daily basis and the daily function of the Sports Activities Center. Further on, thematic field trips were pilot tested in the area, a common between the partners questionnaire was distributed to the head of the Department of Forests for its experience in the Park, a questionnaire was developed to be conducted face-to-face in the area of the TNFP for the profile and the number of the visitors, several meetings were held with local community councils, entrepreneurs and locals in the area and presentations of the program and its actions were presented on several occasions.

## Characterizations and analysis of the target territory

The Troodos National Forest Park is located in the area of Troodos which is an area of 829, 41 km<sup>2</sup> and is divided into 5 sub-regions: Marathasa, Solea, Pitsilia, The Wine – Villages and Koummandaria Region, and the Limassol Mountain Resorts. The Limassol Mountain Resorts Region surrounds the central higher elevations of Troodos where the National Forest Park of Troodos is situated. Troodos National Forest Park covers an area of 9147, 0 ha around Olympus Mountain. Its highest peak is Chionistra which is 1.952 m above sea level and the Lowest is Moni, 700m. The ownership of the Park falls under the Cypriot State. Inside the state area though, there are some isolated properties. The Troodos National Forest Park was declared as such by decision of the Council of Ministers in 1992 and

as an area for the Protection of flora and fauna by the Forest Law of 1967. Additionally, the largest part of the Park (9033, 0 ha) is included in the Natura 2000 Network and it constitutes a SAC and SPA area. (Cypruslife, n/d; Department of Forests, 2013; European Commission, 2012). The component authority for the management of the Park is the Department of Forests, under the Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment of Cyprus. A recent major amendment to the Forest Law introduced new categories that are more in line with IUCN definitions (Tsintides, 2012). Furthermore, the Forest Laws of 2012 and the new regulations on Forests replaced the former laws and regulations. As it is stated in the Forestry Department's 2012 Annual Report the new legislation more responsive to modern conceptions and approaches to conservation and sustainable management of forest resources and the new expectations and needs of contemporary Cypriot society (Department of forest, 2012). The Troodos Mountain Range constitutes the geological and morphological spine of Cyprus; the well-preserved ophiolite complex of the area was created from oceanic crust around 80 million years ago. The Troodos Mountains are covered by forests with unique natural beauty and are home to valuable habitats of plants and animals. In the wider area there are also many traditional villages that well maintain the customs of the country and several UNESCO World Heritage sites. The Park comes under the Limassol District and it includes the communities of the Amiandos, Platres and Prodromos villages (Cypruslife, n/d; Department of Forests, 2013; European Commission, 2012).

The climate of the area, like in whole Cyprus, is Mediterranean. Summers are hot and dry, while winters are cold and wet. The effect of altitude is important as it causes a decline of temperature and increased precipitation. Prodromos who is located at the highest altitude (1380 m) in relation to all the Communities the mean daily temperatures ranges around 22 ° C in July and 3 ° C in January. Precipitation in the higher regions exceeds 1000 mm. At altitudes above 1000 m snowfall each winter is marked, while on the top of Chionistra the soil is covered by snow for 3-4 months a year (Troodos

Regional Tourism Board, 2008).

The number of all the villages that come under the Troodos area is about 96 and according to the census of 2012 their population is 22,334 out of 862,000, which is the total population of Cyprus (Data drawn from the Statistical Service of Cyprus and calculated in-house). More specifically, the total population of the villages that are in the Troodos National Forest Park (Platres, Amiandos, Prodromos) is 738 residents.

The structure of the economy of the communities surrounding the Troodos National Forest Park is based mainly on agriculture and small cottage industrial family units, employing mostly members of the family and limited outside help that process agricultural and animal products into traditional foodstuffs such as marmalade, cheese, preserved meats, wine, spirits etc. There about 4 -5 villages ( Platres, Kakopetria, Agros, Prodromos and Pedoulas) that traditionally have been active in tourism. Most recently other communities got involved in agrotourism. The small number of residents of the communities and the large percentage of the elderly population residing in the communities of Troodos creates is an issue for the area. Furthermore, the spatial isolation and remoteness from major urban centers both Nicosia and Limassol from which communities are depended is another difficulty that the communities face (Troodos Regional Tourism Board, 2008).

The wider Troodos area is an area with rich cultural heritage and historical monuments. In the villages surrounding the Troodos National Forest Park there are several ancient monuments and Byzantine churches, many protected by UNESCO. Furthermore, the area has several museums. The area is also known for its distinctive local cuisine (dairy and meat products, wine and wine products, spoon sweets etc.). In the wider area there are specific villages that are well known for their crafts like pottery, traditional chairs and embroideries. The CTO has established perimetrical Cycling Routes in the Troodos Area as well as Thematic Routes and, more specifically, Gastronomic, Cultural and Religious Routes. Additionally, it has established the thematic route: "The Wine Routes" for the wine-



villages of Cyprus and the E4 European walking path that passes through the area (CTO, 2013).

At the Troodos square there is the Troodos Environmental Information Center/Visitors' Center, a Ski Center on the chionistra peak, a CTO office in Platres, a Botanical Garden in Amiandos and, in the wider area, several nature trails, camping and picnic sites, several hotels or agrotouristic guest houses. In the area there are several bank shops, police stations, fire stations, telecommunication and electricity services offices and cultural centres.

In terms of transportation infrastructure, the infrastructure of the area is not very supporting for the communities or visitors but efforts are being taken for its upgrade. Troodos is accessible mainly from Nicosia and Limassol, which have main roads leading to Troodos. These two cities are located relatively close to the two international airports of the island. The first airport is located in Larnaka and the second one in Paphos. Troodos massif is served directly by buses beginning only from Nicosia and Limassol. There is no connection of the Troodos area with the two airports, so someone has to go by bus to the cities in order to get the bus for the airport. There are however some taxis available in the area. Furthermore, there is not at the moment an interconnection by buses of the villages belonging to the Limassol Region and the villages belonging to Nicosia Region in Troodos and additionally the buses' route number is limited. Buses are the only public transportation mean in Cyprus. The car is the most common mean of transport in the country.

Troodos National Forest Park and the surrounding communities are a unique destination. In terms of domestic tourism, it is differentiated from the Sun and Sea Product-Summer product- and Troodos is promoted as an authentic and unique destination in Cyprus: The Green Heart of Cyprus a nature and culture park, offered all year round. In terms of foreign tourism, the area is an area rich in biodiversity, with several endemic species, and it is also considered as the 'Mecca' of Geologists due to its specific geology. The distances in Cyprus are quite small so it is an advantage for the area as the tourist can have a multiple experience of sceneries since the coastal areas, plains and urban environment are

really close. The mild climate is also a competitive fact for the area. Additionally, Troodos provides a relatively new type of tourism, for Cypriot fact, agrotourism and experiential tourism, which it can be considered as a trend now in several countries but also domestically.

## Strategic Plan

The objectives of the Troodos Regional Tourism Board's Local Tourism Strategic Plan can be divided in 'Global Objectives', 'Marketing Objectives' and 'Operational Objectives'.

### Global objectives

- (a) Encompass environmental and cultural values
- (b) Promote sustainable tourism
- (c) Contribute to the upgrade, survival and viability of the surrounding communities.

### Marketing objectives

- (a) Promote Troodos as an authentic and unique destination in Cyprus: 'Troodos: The Green Heart of Cyprus - Nature and Culture park'.
- (b) Promote the unique traditional culture and lifestyle
- (c) Promote the natural beauty of the environment in terms of sustainability
- (d) Upgrade the touristic product
- (e) Contribute to the local economy, business and employment.
- (f) Increase the number of tourists (domestic and foreigners at Troodos)
- (g) Expand the period of tourists' stay-all year round- Increase the annual season period in to the winter season
- (h) Expand the length of tourists' visit
- (i) Communication and dissemination of the LTSP's scopes and objectives to officials of the area and local community councils and local entrepreneurs
- (j) Improve the sustainability of the tourist business
- (k) The upgrading of the tourist experience and tourist product with significant value added.

## Operational goals

- (a) Signaling of the Park (Creation of signaled entrance-gates and informational signs for the Park)
- (b) Establishment of an 'Educenter' for environmental education and tours in the area at the premises of the Troodos Visitors' Centre which is currently underutilized
- (c) Establishment of a Sports Activities Centre for the organization and coordination of all activities offered in Troodos under the specific center
- (d) Conduct of a questionnaire on the profile of the visitors of Troodos National Forest Park
- (e) Connection of the Cycling Perimetrical Routes with Troodos's Square and registration of all routes with GPS
- (f) Workshops and meetings with government officials, management authorities, local community councils, entrepreneurs and local networks and organizations for the promotion of the development of the area in the context of sustainability and their engagement in the whole process

The approach is to provide a different type of product/service from the sun and the sea model, the intense nightlife and nightlong partying. The focus is on discerning tourists traveling either alone or with their families who would be interested to explore another Cyprus that has a lot to offer in terms of culture and nature. The strategy aims for people who love an active life and sports such as walking, biking, trekking and jogging. It also aims at people who are interested in culture, sightseeing and have spiritual longings.

Our 'Product' is the natural and cultural elements, values and qualities and local products of the Troodos National Park and the adjacent surrounding communities'. Troodos has a rich flora and fauna with about 750 species of flowering plants, 72 endemic of which 12 exclusive to the park and several protected animal species. Its geology is also distinctive and of great scientific value and interest. Additionally, several of the largest streams of Cyprus spring from the Troodos forest. The largest part of

the park is included in the Natura 2000 Network and it constitutes a SAC and SPA area. The park comes under the Limassol District and includes the villages of Platres, Amiandos and Prodomos. Many more villages are situated in the Marathasa, Solea, Pitsilia and the Wine – Villages and Koummandaria sub-regions of Troodos, picturesque villages with rich cultural, wine - making and gastronomical tradition. In the area there are several old painted churches, great examples of Byzantine art. Ten of these churches have been designated as UNESCO World Heritage Sites. In Troodos there also situated some of the most divine monasteries.

Inside the park there are several picnic sites, nature trails and walking routes and a few camping sites, cycling routes, a ski area as well as a Visitors – Information Center which is located at the Troodos square. Our basic target market are visitors, potential visitors with special interests, potential visitors with general Interests, professionals in the tourism market, residents of the area of the Mountain Resorts and opinion leaders at international level. Domestic tourism is the main type of tourism in the area currently. In terms of the external market, there are some countries that are of particular interest to Cyprus in terms of tourism inflows. These are: the UK, Germany, Greece, France, Russia, other European countries (e.g.: The Netherlands, Switzerland, Scandinavia etc.), and Israel.

In relevance to 'price', the Troodos National Forest Park has no monetary value. Furthermore, there is not an entrance fee for entering the Park. Of course, there is a fee for several of facilities offered inside the Park. But it is up to the visitor to decide to use them or not. In the context of our LTSP, an Educenter is going to be established offering some educational programs and tours in the area. A fee is going to be charged for the specific program/tour. Furthermore, in the context of the LTSP, a Sports Activities Center is going to be established as well for the housing, organization and coordination of all the activities.

The 'place' is the Green Heart of Cyprus and it constitutes the Troodos National Forest Parks and the surrounding village communities that constitute a culture and nature park.



The 'promotion' of the area and the relevant product is conducted through various energies in the framework of the promotion of Troodos as an authentic and unique destination in Cyprus utilizing its natural and cultural attributes and updating the image and the quality of the touristic product.

### Implementation and Monitoring of the Strategic Plan

The activities and actions planned for the project will be, eventually, implemented as time and resources permit. The Board runs or sponsors anywhere from 30-50 activities that attract people and tourists to the greater area.

It is important to note, that some of the activities and actions in the context of the project are carried out with the permission and assistance of the pertinent authorities such as the Forest Department that is legally the owner of the park proper.

There are delays in the implementation of the strategy mainly because the TRTB is not the owner or the administrator of the park and has to relay on other bodies and agencies for assistance in implementing the strategy. The political, social and economic crisis in Cyprus has also affected the implementation. The local partners are working hard towards the implementation of the strategy.

The LTSP is being monitored by The Troodos Regional Tourism Board and which is committed to keep support its scopes and actions.

For the purposes of the implementation/completion of the Signs at the Troodos' s entrances, that will be implemented through the LTSP, the establishment of an Ad Hoc Committee was decided that will be composed of a member of the Forestry Department, the Directress of the Troodos Development Company, a member of the Troodos Development Company and the President of Troodos Network and the EU Signer for European Programs for the Troodos Regional Tourism Board.

### Territorial workshops / road shows

At a first level, we had organized four workshops/focus groups. The first focus group was for coordination between the Organizations working for Troodos. These organizations were the Troodos Regional Board, the Troodos Development Agency and the Troodos Network.

The second focus group involved the officers of the Troodos Visitor – Environmental Information Center and an officer from the Troodos Regional Tourism Board. The aim of this focus group was to make the 2Bparks program known to the officers and discuss the problems that the area is facing and how we can find ways in which these can be resolved in the context of the program. It also involved the Coordinator of Environmental Education in order to organize the Educational Programs. These programs are currently being developed.

The third focus group was at a decisional level with officials from the Forestry Department, the management authority of the park. The aim of this focus group was to have a round table discussion between the Forestry Department, the District officer and the Head Quarters, and the Troodos Organizations, about the actions suggested and in order to define the product and specify the problems that the area is facing. Here, it was acknowledged that for the development of our LTSP the immediate and foremost need was the resolution of the identified problems. Specifically these problems were:

- Financial – lack of funds
- Lack of integrated strategy for the park
- Uncontrolled access to the Park/Absence of a survey about the number of visitors entering the Park
- Lack of signaling for the Park/No entrance gates for the Park
- Lack of signaling and information provision inside the Park
- Environmental degradation in the area of the Asbestos (Amiandos) mine/Remains of Quarries
- Lack of organization of recreational activities in the Park

- Low promotion/under-utilization of the Troodos Environmental Information Center-economically unviable.

At a second level, in relevance to the wider Troodos area, it was acknowledged that the surrounding Troodos villages are facing a population decline as, due to the lack of employment opportunities in the area, locals move to the two nearest urban centers, Nicosia and Limassol. Additionally, tourism levels are not very high as there is a low promotion of the area.

Further on, proposals were given for the solution of the immediate problems that the area is facing and decisions were taken. Additionally, dates of implementation of actions were set. Specifically, it was decided that, in the context of the LTSP, the gates of the park would be signaled so that a clear identity for the park will be formed. The delimitation of the signaling was achieved in agreement and cooperation with the Forestry Department. The same decision was taken for the signaling of three nodal points with wooden structures that will provide both information and maps of the park. Offers are being taken as well for the implementation of this work at the moment. As mentioned above, uncontrolled access to the Park also poses a problem for the area; in this context, a survey on the visitors of the park was acknowledged as of great significance and it was decided that this will be conducted four times during the four seasons of the year (fall, winter, spring, summer) so as to record the number of visitors and explore their profile and the reasons that bring them to Troodos. The survey involves now unemployed graduates with relevant degrees, in this way providing jobs for the youngsters of the area, and up to now the first 200 questionnaires were gathered covering the first season. Its results will be also used by the Forestry Department.

The creation of a Sports Activities Center was agreed with the organization of sports and recreational activities on a daily basis, such as cycling, walking, archery or a combination of these activities or/ and also with the cooperation with the federations of skiers, of mountain cycling and archery. At this meeting it was agreed that the building of the Youth

Hostel at the space in front of the Troodos square, which is under the jurisdiction of the Forestry Department, will be ceded to the Troodos Network, which is in close cooperation with the Troodos Regional Tourism Board, for this.

Additionally, during the meeting, the creation of an Environmental Activities Center-Educenter- was proposed and agreed. This will be achieved through the use and better utilization of the Troodos Visitors – Environmental Information Center and of the Troodos Botanical Garden “AG Leventis” that has already been established by the Forestry Department and is currently being expanded and enriched. The geological value of Troodos will also be projected and promoted through the organized educational programs on a daily basis. The Coordinator of Environmental Education of the Center has been hired to develop several educational programs such as “Acquaintance with the plants of Troodos, its geology, flora and fauna.

Furthermore, a fourth meeting was held with representatives of the Cyprus Ski Federation and Club, the Cyprus Archery Federation, the Cyprus Cycling Federation, and the coordinator of the Sports and Fun Center and a cooperation was build. Here, the needs of the area were identified by all the stakeholders, the perspectives of the sustainable development of the area were discussed and the establishment of the daily function of the Sports Activities Center was agreed.

Moreover, several meetings were held with local community councils, entrepreneurs and locals in the area and presentations of the program and its actions were presented on several occasions. In the context of the ‘Green days for Troodos’ organized by the Troodos Regional Tourism Board, a meeting was held with the attendance of all the bodies involved with the 2Bparks project for the expansion of their cooperation and for further decision-making. A presentation was given with the topic ‘Troodos as a Cycling Destination’, concerning the presentation that was given in Platres to journalists and managers of cycling groups from Austria, Switzerland and Germany who visited the region for the promotion of Troodos as an emerging cycling destination. The presentation included the expansion of the Troodos

cycling network of the peripheral Troodos root and its connection to the Troodos square in the context of the 2Bparks project. Another presentation was held with the topic 'Development of Thematic Tourism in Troodos', concerning the presentation of the Troodos Regional Innovation Program (TRIP) to postgraduate students of the University of Nicosia and how it is being implemented through European Projects and on that two of the thematic centers of the TRIP program are being implemented by the 2Bparks project. This was presented as an example of sustainable touristic development. A presentation with the topic 'Innovative Regional Growth' was given to students of the Department of

Tourism of the University of Nicosia of the Cyprus Tourism Organization for the actions organized to join the communities of Troodos together for the development of the area and the creation of the Troodos Regional Tourism Board, in the context of an innovative regional growth effort and that in this context, the 2Bparks Project is involved with specific emphasis given to the thematic centers and the Local Tourism Strategic Plans (LTSP). During the meetings describe above the TRTB promoted the project pilot areas as a potential new destination and in particular Troodos mountains including the surrounding area were promoted.



*"Green Days for Troodos": Meeting – Workshop in Troodos National Forest Park, Troodos Hotel, on the 2Bparks progress and the development and promotion of TRTB's LTSP.*







#### 4. Good practices for development of sustainable tourism

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### **Good practices for tourist promotion in Po Delta Regional Park**

Chiara Quaglia, Nicola Boscolo, Veneto Region



#### **1. Scope**

Territorial scope of the target area

The target area is the Po Delta Regional Park. It comprehends 9 municipalities, that are: Adria, Ariano nel Polesine, Corbola, Loreo, Papozze, Porto Viro, Porto Tolle, Rosolina, Taglio di Po.

#### **2. Characterisation and analysis of the target territory**

##### **Brief characterisation of the target territory**

“The Regional Park of Veneto of the Po Delta, whose area totally includes the whole geographical Delta, was founded 8<sup>o</sup> of September 1997 with the Regional Law n. 36. The Delta continues to expand, and it around 786 sq Kms today, of which over 160 sq Kms are valleys and lagoons. Entirely below the level of the sea (from 1 to 3 meters), except

banks, sand-banks and fossil dunes, the territory of the Park includes the six principal branches of the mouth (from north: po di Levante, Po di Maistra, Po di Batteria, Po di Tolle, Po di Gnocca or Donzella, Po di Goro).” (Source: “On the Adriatic banks: Journey through the Natural Park’s areas” – A snapshot of the Park)

“The landscape is an alternation of different environments extending from land to sea: after the country-side you can find visitable fossil dunes that correspond to ancient coast lines. Eight coastal chains have been discovered, each one dating to a different epoch, from Prehistory to 1600 A.D. Then, the banks, the “golenas” (pieces of land between the river and it banks), fishing valleys, lagoons, sands-banks, that can you visit in most parts, very rich in avifauna, with over 380 species among permanent and migratory birds and, in many arms of the river and straits of the sea, tens of aquatic

fowls, some of which unique. As for the flora of Delta, it constitutes a rare example of mixture between plain vegetation, of wet environments and sea environments. Therefore, landscapes rich in luxuriant vegetation, above all woods and pine-forests, alternates with others, bare and burnt by the saltiness in the air, then extents of poplars, of cane-breaks or of “salicornia”, a water plant that dyes whole lagoons with red in the autumn, and you can even find rare kind of orchids.” (Source: “On the Adriatic banks: Journey through the Natural Park’s areas” – The landscape)

[...] “The Park of the Po Delta is a place where the boundary between land and water is never well defined, continuously evolving, modelled by the lowering of the large river and modified by people, who have stolen a growing amount of cultivable land from the sea thanks to their ceaseless work. Throughout history, the river Po has characterized the stories and lives of people, even with some dramatic events, such as floods, for instance in 1951, which have modified the river bed and the lives and destinies of these people, in an attempt to strike, not always successfully, a balance between the river and its inhabitants.

This land is ambiguous because it is both young and extremely ancient at the same time: indeed, its hydrography dates back to 1604, when the Republic of Venice ordered the river Po to be diverted southwards, lest its waters, by depositing sand, block the southern mouths of the Venetian lagoon. Since then, the river has given rise to the youngest land in Italy, by dividing into six branches before reaching the Adriatic Sea, and forming these islands: Ariano, Cà Venier, Donzella and Polesine Camerini.” (Source: “On the Adriatic banks: Journey through the Natural Park’s areas” – The park features)

### **Characterisation of the tourism resources**

#### *Natural heritage:*

- “lagoons and brackish inlets - The lagoons of the Po Delta are 7: Caleri, Vallona, Barbamarco, Batteria, Burcio, Basson, and Bonelli Levante; the brackish inlets are 2: Sacca Canarin and Sacca degli Scardovari.”
- “fossil dunes - the dunes are sandy bodies of eolian origin, that is formed by the action of

the wind touching the soil. the most ancient one, which is the westernmost, dates back to the pre-etruscan period (about 3,000 years ago).

- “countryside - it is the environment of the delta lying farther from the sea and characterized by the lack of evident differences in height, a uniform ground, and the regular shape of the drainage channels network.
- flora and fauna: The Park is a real paradise for birds, both resident and migratory birds, and fish and shellfish. The birds, with over 370 species of nesting, migratory and wintering regular, are the most interesting part of the fauna of the Po delta. The park is home to several species of mussels and fishes: mussels, oysters and clams, pike, carp, tench, perch and catfish. In the fish farm sea bass, sea bream, mullet and eels are bred. The vegetation of the Po Delta is deeply differentiated according to the environments of woodlands, pinewoods, freshwater wetlands, Brackish Water Wetlands, Dunes, Beaches, and Sandbars ([www.parcodeltapo.org/](http://www.parcodeltapo.org/))

#### *Cultural resources:*

The main museums and areas in the Po Delta are: Archeological Museum of Adria, Centro Turistico Culturale di San Basilio, Museo Regionale della Bonifica di Ca’ Vendramin, Septem Maria Museum, Corte di Ca’ Cappello Museum, Museo delle api (Bees Museum) centro di apicoltura di Ca’ Cappellino, Litoranuem Botanical garden at Porto calei (Rosolina), Golena (floodplain) of Ca’ Pisani, La Golena (floodplain) of Panarella, fossil dunes of Donada, fossil dunes of Grillara, Visitors Centers of the Park in Porto Viro, L’Ocarina Museo Laboratorio, Rural civilization documentation Center at Cà Tiepolo-Porto Tolle, Tourist cultural center of S. Basilio-Ariano nel Polesine.

#### *Tourism equipment:*

There are tourist Information and welcoming provincial offices (at Rosolina Mare and Taglio di Po) and several Information desks and local tourist offices (Porto Viro, Adria, Porto Tolle, Rosolina). Authorized Tourist guides and nature guides and didactic tourist services  
Sailing and nature excursions

Travel Agencies (Rosolina mare, Adria, Porto Viro)  
 Rowing Nautical centers, riding schools, sport fishing, tourist fishing, bike-canoe rental.  
 Cinema (Adria and Porto Viro), Theatres (Adria), dancing (Porto Viro, Porto Tolle, Rosolina, Rosolina Mare, Albarella)  
 Farm Holiday Centres  
 (from: brochure "The Po Delta, discovering the Park")

#### *Supporting infrastructure:*

The closest airport is the Marco Polo Airport-Venice  
 The railway stations in the area of the Park are Adria and Rosolina  
 Bus lines gets to the main centers of each Municipality  
 By car, the main road is the stataal road ss 309 "Romea"  
 Some wet docks in the area of the Delta (Porto Levante, Porto Pila, Alberella, ..)

#### **Characterisation of the tourism offer and demand**

*Accommodation facilities: hotels, beds etc.: (from: NATREG EU project)*

In the area of the Park of the Po Delta there are 34 hotels (year 2009), for a total number of 1.660 beds. The 67,4 % of the beds belongs to the structures of the municipality of Rosolina, the 10,2 % to Taglio di Po, il 7,9 % to Porto Tolle e the remaining 14,5 % to the other municipalities.

About complementary accommodations, Rosolina's houses for rent play a predominant role (2172 housing for rent for a total of 11,124 beds), and camping sites, with a total of 11,908 beds.

It has to be mentioned the presence of 22 agritouristic structures, for a total of 421 beds (227 of them are in Porto Tolle) and 26 B&B, for a total of 172 beds (55 of them are in Porto Tolle).

Between 2005 and 2009 the number of hotel beds in the area grew by the 2.3%, while the complementary accommodations grew by 5.6%. As a result of these changes, the total number of beds in all the kinds of accommodations in the Park grew by 5.4%.

Looking at the municipalities detail, between 2005 and 2009 the number of beds grew in all the municipalities, with the exception of Porto Viro (-17,2 %). It has to be noticed that, with the exception of Porto Viro, all the municipalities have a percentage of growth higher than Rosolina (which is the most significant seaside-touristic village in the Park).

Municipality	2005	2009	Δ %
Adria	152	314	106,6
Ariano nel Polesine	78	112	43,6
Corbola	-	-	-
Loreo	144	162	12,5
Papozze	110	153	39,1
Porto Tolle	1.604	2.078	29,6
Porto Viro	261	216	-17,2
Rosolina	22.030	22.626	2,7
Taglio di Po	270	307	13,7

In the same time range, a qualification of the hotels of the area occurred. The number of hotel beds in 4-star hotels unchanged, the beds in 3-star hotels grew from 791 to 975 (+23.3 per cent), the beds in 2-star hotels falled down from 280 to 237 (-15.4 per cent), the beds in 1 star hotels falled down from 223 to 141 (-36.8 per cent), and the beds in touristic residences falled down from 235 to 214 (-8.9 percent).

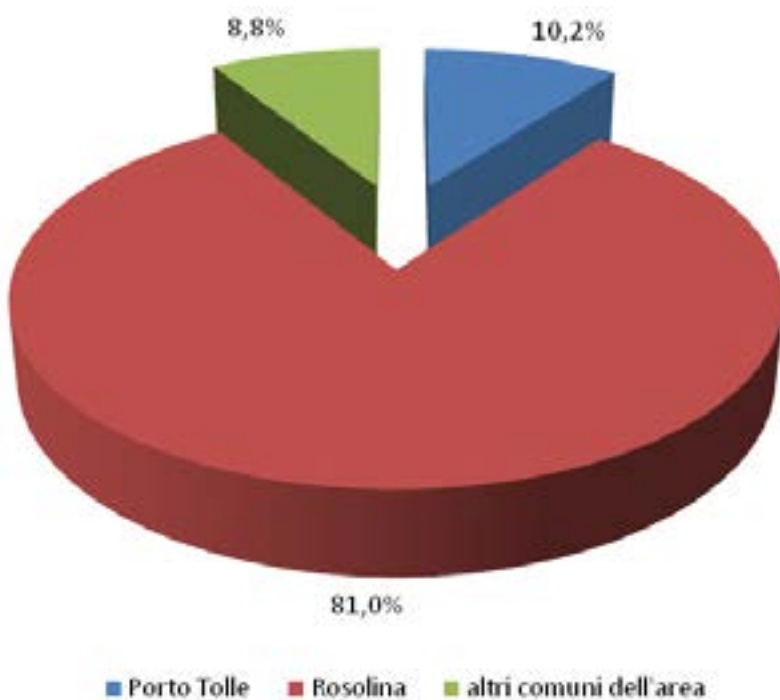
Considering the complementary accommodations, in the same time ange (2005-2009), the houses for rent in Rosolina grew by the 5,1% and their number of beds grew by the 18,1%. The agritourisms turned form 15 to 22, and their number of beds grew from 231 to 421 (+82,3 %). The number of beds in B&B structures also grew by 39,8 %.

#### **Trends of tourist movement and market segmentation**

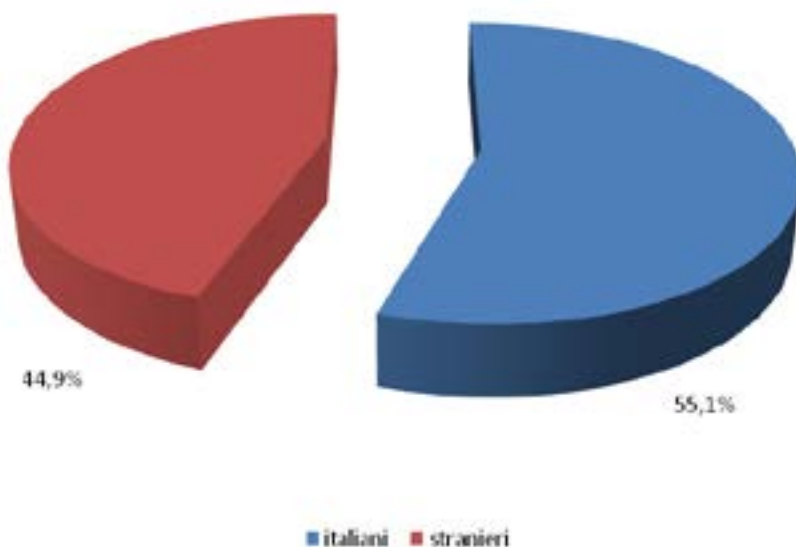
In 2010 the arrivals in the are of the Park have been 176.000. These arrivals had the following destinations: 81% Rosolina, 10,2% Porto Tolle and the remaining 8,8% the other municipalities.

About the countries of origin of the visitors, the 55,1 % of arrivals is italian and the remaining 44,9 % foreigners. It is interesting that the italian arrivals are the 54% of the total in Rosolina, 45,3 % in Porto Tolle and the 76,8 % in the other municipalities.





Arrivals in accomodations structures in the area of the Park (2010).  
Source: NATREG based on ISTAT data



Italian and foreigner arrivals in the accomodation structures in the area of the Park (2010).  
Source: NATREG based on ISTAT data

Looking at the detail of italian arrivals, the 59,9% of the italians comes from Veneto Region, the 17,1% from Lombardia, 6,9 % from Piemonte, il 3,7% from Emilia-Romagna e the remaining 12,3 % from other regions.

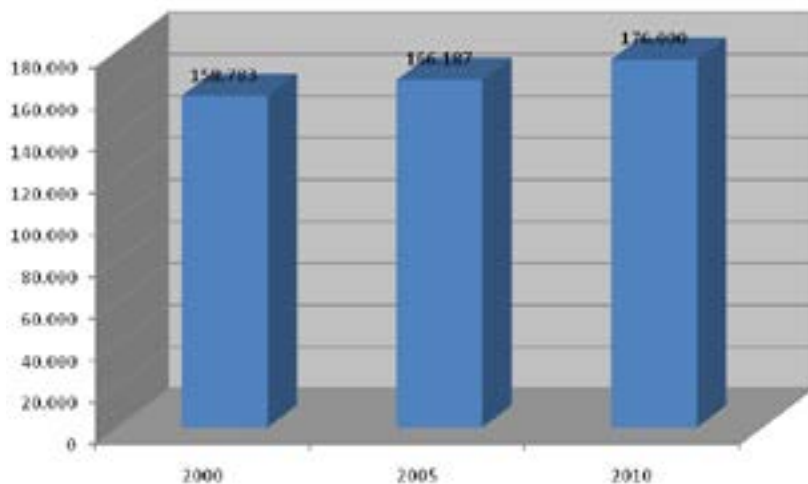
The percentage distribution is deeply influenced by the arrivals in Rosolina an Porto Tolle.

The 47,4% of foreigner arrivals is from Germany, 6,8 % from Netherlands, 6,1 % from Austria, 4,5 % from Switzerland and Liechtenstein, 3,2 % from France, 2,9 % from Denmark, 2,3 % from Russia e

the remaining 26,7 % from other countries.

The arrivals from 2000 to 2010 grew from 158,783 to 176,000 (+10.8%). In particular, during this period the Italian tourist arrivals increased from 80,561 to 97,046 (+20.5%), while those of foreign tourists increased from 78,222 to 78,954 (+0.9%).

In the same time range (2000-2010) the arrivals from Veneto Region tourists had a significant growth, from 44.805 a 58.107 (+29,7 %) and passing from 28,2 to 33 % of total arrivals.

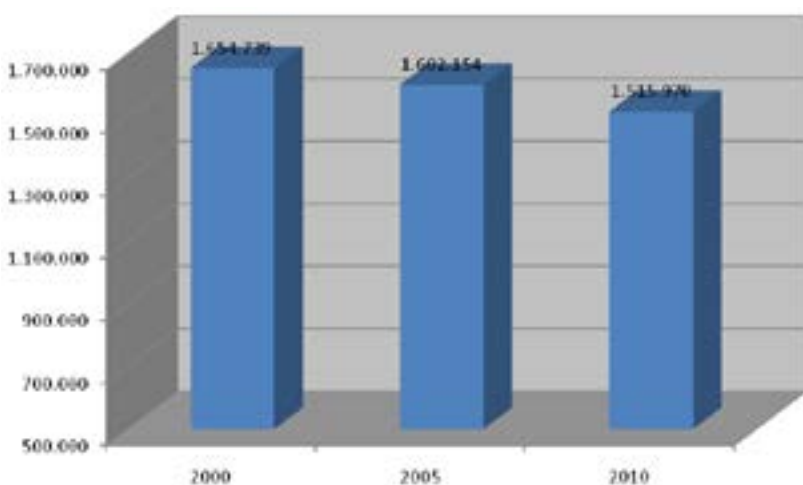


Arrivals from 2000 to 2010 – Source: NATREG based on ISTAT data

In 2010 the presences in the area of the Park have been 1.515.970. The 87,4 % of these presences occurred in Rosolina, the 8,6 % in Porto Tolle and the remaining 4 % in the other municipalities. The 52,5 % of these presences were from Italy, the remaining were from foreigner countries.

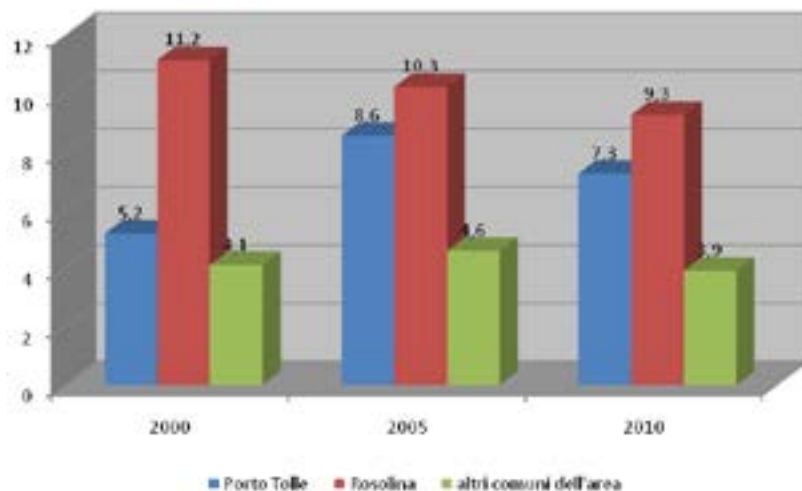
Between 2000 and 2010 the number of presences in the Park passed from 1,654,736 to 1,515,970 (-8.4%). This is a worst performance then that has registered in the same period in the bigger context of spatial reference. In fact, also between 2000 and 2010 the presences in the province of Rovigo decreased by -4.9%, while in the whole Veneto region increased by +11, 4%.

In 2010, the average length of stay is about 8.6 days. The average length of stay of foreign tourists was 9.1 days, slightly higher than that of the Italian tourists, equal to 8.2 days. The average length of stay of tourists from the Veneto is equal to 9.4 days. Between 2000 and 2010, the average length of stay has decreased from 10.4 to 8.6 days. This decline is the result of the decline in the average length of stay of Italian tourists, which rose from 10.9 to 8.2 days, and a more modest decline than that of foreign tourists, from 9.9 to 9.1 days. In this period, the average length of stay of tourists from the Veneto has declined very significantly, from 12.8 to 9.4 days.



Presences in the area of the park from 2000 to 2010  
Source: NATREG based on ISTAT data

The Municipalities detail shows that in Rosolina the average length of stay decreased from 11.2 days in 2000 to 9.3 in 2010, those of Porto Tolle from 5.2 to 7.3 days and in those of other towns area from 4.1 to 3.9 days. The general decrease occurred in the Park between 2000 and 2010 is, therefore, due to a decrease in average length of stay in the exercises Rosolina.



Average length of stay from 2000 al 2010 for Porto Tolle, Rosolina and other municipalities  
Source: NATREG based on ISTAT data

Finally, according to the suggestions of the Manual for the management of Natura 2000 sites published by the Italian Ministry of the Environment, the number of tourists per capita and per unit surface have been calculated for each municipality. These are important indicators: "... for the resources of a territory, as well as for its potential to attract visitors and users of environmental and cultural heritage, and of potential impacts caused by that use."

Reading these indicators, it is clear that the tourist movement stresses on both the social, environmental and territorial system of Rosolina, with nearly 204 presences per capita, higher than the provincial (6.89) and the regional (12.38); the second indicator is about 18117.2 presences / km<sup>2</sup>, almost 20 times higher than the provincial value (951.4) and almost six times higher than the regional one (3,307).

Municipality	presences	presenze/per capita	presences/km <sup>2</sup>
Adria	12.765	0,62	112,5
Ariano nel Polesine	6.444	1,37	79,6
Corbola	...		
Loreo	9.018	2,42	227,7
Papozze	5.392	3,21	247,3
Porto Tolle	130.290	12,78	573,0
Porto Viro	15.817	1,08	118,7
Rosolina	1.324.367	203,91	18.117,2
Taglio di Po	11.877	1,39	150,3
area del Parco Veneto	1.515.970	20,74	1.926,0
provincia di Rovigo	1.702.712	6,89	951,4
Veneto	60.819.715	12,38	3.307,0

Presences per capita and par Km<sup>2</sup> (2010) – Source: NATREG based on ISTAT data

## SWOT analysis

In this section we report a SWOT analysis that has been done in the frame of “Slowtourism” italia-slovenia project . For both internal and external factors of the Swot, the elements are distributed in five categories:

- Territory and environment.
- Economy and society.
- Accessibility.
- Institutional support and image.
- Tourist fruition.

On the base of the combinations of the Swot factors, it has been possible to hypothesize some theoretic models focused on **Strengthening, Overcoming, Mobilization** and **Controlling** strategies.

## 3. Objectives and strategic approach

### Objectives

About the tourist-recreational use of the Park, according to the Program of Development of Local Tourism Systems 2009-2011 of the Region of Veneto, the Parks in the Veneto region (6 parks) currently have a strong role in the recreation for urban residents, especially for hiking activities, coming from their living areas or the neighboring settlements, and - in the case of the Po Delta - from the seaside resorts along the coast. Tourism parks tout court is mainly driven by the scholarships: approximately 20% of schools now choose nature trails and rural for their educational tours. The tourist value of the parks Veneto is mainly linked to the creation of itineraries, combining the visit to the protected area with the discover of the area in which it is inserted.

In recent years some facilities and structures more distinctly oriented nature tourism have arisen, which offer directly to their guests some of these services and others, such as mechanical assistance for bicycles tour.

The average expenditure per visitor is reduced, while the interest in the use of the area of the Delta has grown up. An exact quantification of visitors is rather difficult, since the access is not regulated and is impossible to count the inputs.

Therefore, the touristic strategies has to face with the following phenomena:

- increasing of naturalistic and didactic tourism
- increasing of arrivals
- reduction of the duration of the average length of stay
- increasing of slow-tourism
- need to reduce the environmental impacts
- decreasing the importance of seasonality

### Core strategic options

According to the “Contest analysis of the Slowtourism area” (Source: *Project Slowtourism, Italia Slovenia programme*), the main guidelines for intervention are :

- Territory and environment
  - Promote slow tourism product in order to support the development of local productions of quality (biological) and to reduce the phenomenon of pollution.
  - Develop the area of Po Delta Park in order to
  - sensitize local people’s awareness of environmental issues, to spread ecological principles even in the hinterland, where higher polluting values are recorded.
- Economy and society
  - Strengthen naturalistic product, interest of operators in slow tourism product, demand for specific products in order to stimulate local entrepreneurship.
  - Use and spread the image of slow tourism product in order to generate income and employment.
- Accessibility
  - As the improvement of the infrastructural network of connections is expected, develop local road system in order to prolong the duration of tourist season.
- Institutional support and image
  - Use the naturalistic resources of the Po Delta Park in order to get over weaknesses of an
  - offer based mainly on bathing product.
  - Support the involvement in ad hoc fairies and events for the promotion of typical products,

- the introduction of systems for the control of quality and the creation of marketing structures in order to promote the image abroad.
  - Use the availability of financings for activities of rural development in order to develop slow tourism product and a strategic view within a network approach.
- Tourist fruition
    - Support the development of the naturalistic supply, still at an early stage within an economy with rural characteristics and related to certified typical products.
    - Use the cultural and artistic value of the area which is capable of attracting significant tourist fluxes intercepting those coming from neighboring areas as well.
    - Match an attractive wine and food element with bathing product.
    - Upgrade the system of tourist accommodation capacity.

system ability to stimulate exchanges between them.

4. Authenticity: it refers to the ability of offering non-standardized and mass products or services, which allow the visitors to realize, that they are in that specific place, not elsewhere.

5. Sustainability: it refers to the impact (or effects) of tourism on the local environment and the need for a sustainable, ecologically light, cost-effective, ethically and socially adequate approach towards the local communities.

6. Emotivity: it refers to the ability of creating exceptional moments that can stimulate some changes in the visitors' approach and mark them with attractive and nice experiences.

### **Marketing Mix Strategy**

According to the "Guidelines policy for the setting up of the slow tourism product" (Source: *Project Slowtourism, Italia Slovenia programme*), the main strategy is to setting up a slow-tourism product.

The six main "dimensions", that define slow tourism product are:

1. Time: it's the temporal dimension of companies' and territorial organization that requires a strategic policy based on a clear medium/long term planning and vision. This means that it is necessary to dedicate some time to the analysis, understanding and planning of qualitative improvements as regards activities, services and destination, both for clients and employees;

2. Slowness: it refers to the demand and the creation, promotion and supply of slow tourism services and products, through an all-inclusive, deep and involving experience, that allows the visitors to get in touch with the local communities.

3. Contamination: it refers to the relationship between persons, who have different opinions, beliefs, knowledge and cultures and to the supply







### ***Good Practices for Tourism Promotion in The National Park Of Schinias Marathon***

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#### **1. Territorial scope of the target area**

The National Park of Schinias Marathon is located in Attica, in the plain of Marathon; 40 km north - east from Athens and it is the most important coastal ecosystem in Attica, based on a delicate water resources balance. The area is 13,84 Km<sup>2</sup> wide (including the sea area). It consists of a forest of pine trees, the Great Marsh, the Peninsula Cynosure, the coast and marine zone. In the past, the wetland was part of the U.S.A. Kato Souli coastal communications station (an American Base was located in N. Makri & Kato Souli until the early 90's).

The National Park is an important natural and economic resource, with supra-local importance, as it attracts each year thousands of visitors for recreation (swimming and water sports), bird and landscape observation. Historically, the area

coincides with the field of the Battle of Marathon, and specifically with the camp of the Persians, while the Battle Trophy is within walking distance. In the wider area, there are important archaeological monuments while it maintains characteristics of the classic Attica coastal landscape.

However, urbanisation of adjacent hills and plains has led to a less attractive landscape that remains unprotected. The scattered summer residences, the road expansion, the agricultural land changes and other disturbances, have an important impact on the everyday landscape of Schinias and undermine conservation perspectives; there is a little chance that this urban sprawl can be adequately controlled by the Municipality of Marathon.

## 2. Characterisation and analysis of the target territory

### Brief characterisation of the target territory

Schinias is a land area of 9 km<sup>2</sup> with a variety of natural habitats: freshwater spring, coastal wetland, coastal sand dunes covered by a Pinus pine and Pinus halepensis forest and a rocky peninsula covered by Mediterranean marquis; the forest covers an area of about 1,20 km<sup>2</sup> on a sandy strip about 400m wide; the wetland covers an area of about 7 km<sup>2</sup>; very few coastal wetlands are still extant in the coastline of south - eastern Greece and Aegean islands. More than 320 species of flora and an important diversity of fauna species is located in the area of the national park, including threatened species and migrating birds, fish, amphibians and reptiles, which live in the wetland. The inflow of freshwater from Makaria Spring and the stagnation of fresh and brackish water in the wetland during many months of the year are essential factors for ecological habitat formation and function, for coastal forest persistence and regeneration and for land and aquatic wildlife diversity. The climate is Mediterranean, with the dry-hot summers and the mild-rainy winters being considered prominent features. The atmosphere's average annual temperature ranges from 16.5° C to 19° C. The coldest month of the year is January, while the hottest are July and August. Annual precipitation averages around 378 mm, while humidity ranges between 59% - 64%. Cloudy days average around 50 annually, while sunny days around 130, giving a total of 2,920 sunlight hours each year.

The area of Schinias is valuable for nature conservation education, environmental sensitization and outdoor recreation for more than four million people living in the Attica territory. If managed properly, it could become, without a high cost, an attractive place for hundreds of thousands nature tourists. Visitors and tourists can find a functional space for mild activities such as hiking, cycling and swimming, nature observation, bird watching and environmental education.

Schinias is very attractive for families with small children as well as for people with disabilities because of the mild inclines of the ground which facilitate movement on foot, on a cycle, a perambulator or a wheel chair. Disabled people seldom have the

possibility of contact with nature and Schinias is one of the very few flat natural tracts near a large urban area. The population of Municipality of Marathon is 8.882 residents. The economy of Marathon is based on tourism. Specifically, the major economic operators are the restaurants, the Cafés, fish taverns and generally the enterprises which are established and developed thanks totourism.

### Characterisation of the tourism resources

Schinias is the most important coastal ecosystem and landscape of Attica. The National Park of Schinias - Marathon, which is 45 km away from the Athens city centre, was founded in 2000, adjacent to the establishment of the Olympic Rowing Centre. The aim of the Park foundation was the protection, conservation, management and enhancement of the natural landscape. In 2003, the Management Board of Schinias Marathon National Park (MBSMNP) was established. Until today, it defends by all means available, the need to protect the Park. The critical factor is the environmental awareness of all parties involved. The Park is an excellent natural area of 13,84Km<sup>2</sup>, of which 9,58 is land and 4,26 sea surface. It has a unique landscape with a rare coastal pine forest, natural resources, Wetland where many migratory birds station, Mediterranean scrub, coastal dunes and an attractive beach, in which thousands of species of flora and fauna live. The existence of a significant natural area in the surroundings of a large conurbation is valuable in terms of environmental awareness and education. The importance of the territory, except the ecological, social dynamics and cultural factors, (Battle of Marathon and the archaeological sites) render the Park an ideal place for education, research and relaxation.

The Olympic Rowing Centre, which is included in the National Park area, could also be a wonderful sport and recreation centre for the residents of Attica (rowing, kayaking, hiking, biking, etc). The benefits from the establishment of Olympic Rowing Centre are: a) the restoration of the natural flow of water, with a substantial lifting of desiccation, which started in 1923 with a new, almost natural lake, b) the final removal of the existing small airport, c) the installation of modern automatic extinguishing system in the forest, d) the dismantling of the old American military base facilities, decontamination

and rehabilitation of land and e) the establishment of a National Park for the effective protection and organization of space.

The tourist infrastructures which have been developed within the park area are restaurants and beach bars. The main roads are the Marathonos Avenue, the Schinias Avenue, the Lake Marathon Avenue, and the Attika Tollway. Furthermore, the territory is connected with Athens by bus. Overall, there are 24 itineraries on weekdays, 23 on Saturdays and 22 on Sundays.

### **Characterisation of the tourism offer and demand**

Greece is the country of airline Tourism because 75 to 80% of visitors arrive in Greece by plane due to its geographical distance which separates it from the other countries of Europe. Marathon and the National Park of Schinias are located near the airport transforming the area into an easily accessible tourist destination. The statistics from a relevant research (<http://itia.ntua.gr/>) conducted through questionnaires distributed to visitors of the park (April 2006), indicated that most of them (78%) visited the area for Schinias beach and the rate of 17% is attracted to the Park for the famed pine forest.

The wide variety of landscapes of Marathon, the large number of historical monuments and the possibility of many activities suggest that opportunities are virtually limitless. Moreover, due to the environment of the area, the Ecotourism which is a form of tourism associated with various forms of tourist activity in nature ("tourism of the nature" or "naturist tourism") is developed in the area.

Another form of tourism which is developed in Marathon due to its history of Marathon Race is the Sport Tourism. This type of tourism attracts a significant rate of public and it offers a unique experience, not only to spectators of events, but also to all participants. Marathon and the National Park of Schinias have an important place in the sport tourism due to environmental, climatic, natural beauty, history, culture, heritage of the Olympic Games and sports facilities.

The National Park of Schinias - Marathon is an area of international importance, with physical and cultural factors that attract many visitors who can be informed by a modern audio guide (English -

Greek) and select one of the three routes that have been mapped. They can be informed about the wetland, pine forest, the coastal zone, the history of the territory, but also for everything relating to flora and fauna. On the hiking paths, observatories have been built where visitors can see and admire this rare ecosystem. It is particularly important that one of the three paths is configured to provide access to specific species. The information and available maps of routes and the audio guide system is developed and available by the Municipal Development Corporation of the City of Marathon, Oinois 6, at City Hall and by the official site of Municipality of Marathon [www.marathonguide.gr](http://www.marathonguide.gr).

The economy of Marathon is based primarily on tourism. The most residents are employed in wholesale and retail trade, followed by agriculture and livestock farming. Specifically, the major economic activities of the region are commercial stores (3 tool paints, 2 electrical engineering, 13 catering, dry cleaning, 5 optics etc.), recreation stores (32 café - bar – restaurant, 19 fish tavern, 2 coffee shop, 4 ballroom, 2 playground, 1 sea sports, and 2 events services), 12 constructions companies, 5 banquet halls, 22 plants' nurseries, agribusiness and orthodontic clinic. In the area of Schinias there is only one hotel (with No of rooms, 141) and in the area of Marathon there are two hotels with a total amount of 570 rooms. There is also one camping, near the sandy beach Schinias. It is located 1.000m from the Olympic Rowing Centre, a 10-15 minutes' walk.

The National Park of Schinias offers a significant variety of activities for tourists. Within the premises of the Rowing Centre, visitors can enjoy weekend walks, take part in guided tours and educational programs for children, adults and families and enjoy the tranquillity in an area safe and clean. Tourists can also do their own picnic-at special locations and visit the Information Centre. Some of the sporting events that take place in Marathon is the Marathon Race (Olympic sport) that attracts thousands of visitors and athletes tourists, sailing races in Schinias, windsurf competitions on the beach in Marathon, Marathon Triathlon which includes swimming and running, Beach volleyball games in organized bands of Schinias beach, hiking in Marathon routes and Barnabas, biking in routes of Marathon and Nea Makri.



## SWOT analysis

### Strengths

- The territory of Marathon is located close to the airport and to the territories of Rafina giving easy access to the residents,
- The roads which connect the territory of Marathon with Athens and the surrounding areas are Marathonos Avenue, Souliou Avenue, the Schinias Avenue, the Lake Marathon Avenue and Attika Tollway,
- The Marathon area is connected with the Athens city centre with regular bus itineraries during the day
- The Attika Tollway reduces the access times of residents of Marathon at the ports of Piraeus and Lavrio. Furthermore, the proximity of the Marathon area to the Port of Rafina serves the quick access to ferries to the Aegean Sea and finally through Souliou Avenue, Marathon has access to the St. Marina pier, from where ferry boats connect the mainland with Styra and Evia,
- The existence of an institutionalized protection plan for the National Park of Schinias,
- The natural environment, the beaches, the mountains; the plain enhances aesthetically the territory of Marathon and attracts many visitors – tourists,
- The municipality of Marathon has developed an innovative action for the management of agricultural residues and organic residues and participates in recycling waste successfully, offering residents the opportunity to recycle plastic, glass and paper.

### Opportunities

- The development of the primary sector and the agricultural areas in the territory of Marathon provide the area residents with more job offering opportunities,
- The expansion plan of subway until the area of Rafina is expected to reduce the access times of residents of Marathon to city centre,
- The unique natural environment of the territory, the mountain ranges, the woodlands, the wetland and beaches can be agents of tourism development,
- The archaeological sites with proper promotion can boost the economy of the municipality and they can attract many visitor - tourists,
- Olympic venues, public buildings that can

be used to service public services and the program “Help at Home” which has been helping residents of isolated settlements and the elderly.

### Weaknesses

- The insufficient connection with the airport due to inadequate transportation,
- The recession of the primary sector which would increase the unemployment,
- The increase of the value of land in areas lacking infrastructure,
- The increase of extensive illegal construction in the region of the National Park of Schinias,
- The inadequate water supply and sewerage system,
- The problematic waste management system which can cause pollution problems in the area,
- The compression of agricultural and forest area by the expansion of construction areas,
- The alteration of the natural landscape due to fires and the reckless construction,
- The environmental pressure in the territory of wetland because of tourism,
- Environmental problems at the beaches due to crowd of visitors and tourists.

### Threats

- The risk of deterioration of land uses, especially the landscape from the construction of highways,
- The development of tertiary sector,
- The extension of arbitrary buildings with risk for the agricultural and forestry sector,
- The deterioration of the wetland from the conflicting land uses,
- The destruction of the natural landscape because of fires,
- The lack of improvement of technical and social infrastructure in the territory will lead to more deterioration of living conditions for the area residents.

## 3. Objectives and Strategic Approach

### Objectives

#### Global Objectives

The aim of the foundation of the National Park of Schinias is the development of a standard National Park, which will provide education to visitors and

will influence their conduct on sustainability issues and the creation of an appropriate mechanism that acts to protect the environment of area. Meanwhile, the nature of implemented actions will trigger other Parks in Greece and Europe to implement similar practices to protect the environment, boost the sustainable tourism and accessibility for persons with disabilities in protected areas. The National Park of Schinias boasts some innovative practices for the Greek standards and has the potential to provide to its guests a range of high quality services. Furthermore, goals must be set towards the natural wealth and biodiversity conservation and development in the pursuit of new activities. The target is to highlight the park as an attraction for visitors through activities which are defined and whose operation does not disturb the natural balance.

#### *Marketing Objectives*

The municipality of Marathon, in an effort to attract many visitors – tourists uses a series of activities and actions of low cost. These actions are:

- Information Centre: immediate establishment of a special center for tourist information Organized provision of information to the media,
- Logo - FILE - Group presentation: Logo design for the tourist promotion of the territory of Marathon,
- Site Overhaul of the existing website with a full report and evidence to the existence and activities of the area administrative bodies,
- Publicity – Advertisement: Creation of tourist brochures, promotional flyers, posters, special stickers, tourist maps with content for selected forms of tourism,
- Congresses – Meetings: For the development of congress tourism the municipality has the ability to develop workshops or conferences with topics on tourism, environment, green energy etc.,
- Organization of sporting events: The municipality is able to organize sporting events, student competitions and courses and the Marathon Race which attracts thousands of athletes and tourists worldwide,
- Forest recreation program: The territory has a contrasting landscape which is available for mild various activities including cycling, horse riding, and walks in caves,

- Educational Program: Building on the history of the territory, the local archaeological interest, cultural heritage, natural beauty and the coastline, the Municipality creates channels of communication with schools and colleges to attract students,
- Workshops: Workshops targeting employees who work in local government to enrich their knowledge, education, technology as well as tourism entrepreneurs to acquire modern scientific knowledge of tourism.

#### *Operational Goals*

The operational goals which include the development compatible with the activities are:

- Tourism and recreation accordance with the principles of sustainability,
- Environmental education - information and awareness on nature activities to the public,
- The preservation of traditional uses (fishing, grazing, agriculture, etc.),
- The preservation of the natural and cultural landscape.

#### **Core strategic options**

##### *Segmentation strategy*

The territory of Marathon is a historical area with extraordinary natural landscape, offering cultural and environmental impact, marking excellent traffic during the summer and winter months, offering natural beauty with a view to attract new visitors - tourists which are interested in nature. Marathon has organized beaches, abundant restaurants and relatively small nightlife.

##### *Competitive positioning and differentiation attributes*

The tourism promotion options in the territory of Marathon and National Park of Schinias are:

- The ultimate goal is the increase of tourism in the territory during the winter months with rational use of existing landscapes. The archaeological site of Marathon as well as the Museum of the Marathon Race are known worldwide and accept thousands of native and foreign visitors every year
- Sports such as hiking, cycling, jogging are very popular in the Marathon landscapes,
- One of the competitive factors of the area is the development and of relative sports in the Olympic Rowing Centre in Marathon,

- Marathon is a popular destination for scholarly information tours,
- The area provides the possibility to develop agritourism by creating appropriate hostels and farms (based on the implementation of European programs),
- Promoting agricultural and horticultural products by creating the appropriate exhibition space to display them.

## **Marketing Mix Strategy**

### *Product*

Schinias is the most important coastal ecosystem and landscape of Attica. The National Park is an important natural and economic resource, with supra-local importance as each year attracts thousands of visitors for recreation (swimming and water sports), bird and landscape observation.

### *Price*

Schinias allocates one from the bigger beaches of Attica. In its region are shaped marshes, which constitute an important wetland, while still exists one from the bigger forests pine in Greece. Because its significant ecological value, department of region has been characterized as National Park and belongs in NATURA 2000.

### *Place*

The National Park of Schinias Marathon is located in Attica, in the plain of Marathon; 40 km north - east from Athens and it is the most important coastal ecosystem in Attica, based on a delicate water resources balance. The area is 13,84 Km<sup>2</sup> wide (including the sea area). It consists of a forest of pine trees, the Great Marsh, the Peninsula Cynosure, the coast and marine zone.

### *Promotion*

The strategies for the promotion of tourism which are implemented in the territory of Marathon are the following:

- Participation in exhibitions
- Congresses – Meetings
- Organization of sporting events
- Program of Forest relaxation
- Discount Village / Campus
- Tourist Packages
- Educational Programs
- Scholarships
- Special Events
- Workshops
- Program of religious tourism

- Information Centre
- Logo – File – Group presentation
- Website
- Advirtisement

The balance between the lifestyle and the conservation of natural resources and ecosystems, promotes sustainable development, which is supported by the following key aspects: environmental protection, economic assistance, social development and cultural diversity.

## **Action Plan**

### *Actions*

The Action Plan “Educational Tourism: Understanding coastal environment; case study: National Park of Schinias” is organised by the University of Athens (UoA) and represents the implementation of the project 2Bparks strategy of Mediterranean Protected Areas’ development at a local level, both in terms of environmental plans improvement and in term of sustainable tourism promotion. In order to achieve the project goals within the territory of the National Park of Schinias, the UoA team undertakes the following steps so as to optimize the local community, academic community and stakeholders’ involvement in the project activities:

### *Implemented Actions*

- UoA organized and hosted, in cooperation with the Municipality of Marathon territorial workshops with invited relevant commercial, educational, research and policy making stakeholders of the area,
- The project team set-up via case specific workshops. These working groups included academics, UoA researchers, GeoENVI representatives and representatives of the Municipality of Marathon and the National Park of Schinias,
- Site visits were organized in the National Park Area. Each visit operated under a specific subject of educational, research, management or economic nature.
- The UoA team developed questionnaires for different target groups such as managers/ stakeholders – students – visitors/tourists,
- The Action Plan which have been undertaken in the context of the National Park of Schinias was uploaded, along with all relevant

references, to the project Sourcebook which was developed by the UoA project team,

- In the context of the Action Plan, specific courses were designed, relevant students' notebook were developed as well, while a mapping grid were developed for the protected area; the grid was printed and utilized by students in scientific and educational visits. Furthermore, the team foresaw the purchase of specific fieldwork equipment and supplies which allowed building on the training school infrastructure for both during and after the project implementation. The equipment referred to 5 compasses, 5 measuring tapes, 5 pointed tip hammers, 1 clinometer, 1 anemometer to be used in coastal zone profiling, 1 underwater camera for underwater landforms shooting and recording, waterproof notebooks and cases, diving weights and belts,
- Spatial planning activities in the context of the training school realization; the aim was to mark the training territory, the students gathering points, the touring zones, the measuring sites on the coast and the surf zone,
- Realization of a training transnational seminar; UoA organized a two-day educational camp in selected sites within the National Park of Schinias and in the UoA premises. The event addressed young researchers and students (biology, architecture, environmental science engineering etc.),
- Throughout the project lifetime and different stages of the Action Plan, the UoA implemented case and time specific dissemination and communication activities which allowed the project to attract groups of students and academic staff for study visits in the National Park of Schinias,
- The Municipality of Marathon provided the project activities with the location infrastructure (conference and meeting rooms, space for desk-based education activities), a vessel in terms of fieldwork and coastal zone measurements. The Municipality and the National Park administrative body took all necessary measures to optimize the project dissemination via local and regional media,
- Development of an educational platform (EDUPLATFORM) in the context of integrated networking and capacity building activities.

The platform hosted online courses which initially relate to:

- School-age children
- Researchers - students of geosciences
- Protected areas administrative bodies – local authorities' staff.

#### *Actions to be implemented*

- The platform has been developed as bilingual (Greek - English) but will bear the infrastructure to accommodate all partner languages
- The EDUPLATFORM will host 2 sessions of courses which will be developed:
  - GIS for environmental management
  - Environmental practices on the field
- The UoA project activities foresee the pilot use of the EDUPLATFORM for a period of 3 months within the project partnership which will allow assessing its usability and better conforming to the end users' needs.
- UoA and GeoENVI will provide the scientific expertise for the delivery of relevant activities, the courses design and set-up, the research support and the annual involvement of students.

#### *Recourses*

For the achievement of Action Plan the University of Athens, the Geoenviromental Institute and the Municipality of Marathon cooperated with complete success. The agreement bore information on each institution's contribution to the project activities. UoA and GeoENVI provided the scientific expertise for the delivery of relevant activities, the courses design and set-up, the research support and the annual involvement of students and the Municipality of Marathon provided the project activities with the location infrastructure (conference and meeting rooms, space for desk-based education activities, a vessel in terms of fieldwork and coastal zone measurements). Moreover, the Municipality and the National Park administrative body took all necessary measures to optimize the project dissemination via local and regional media. The money that was used for the creation and the achievement of Action Plan emanated from the Project 2Bparks and the Interreg Med funding.

#### *Time frame*

Most of the action plan activities have been completed with the creation of the sourcebook, e - calendar and the EDUPLATOFORM.







## 5. Experimental actions

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### EXPERIMENTAL ACTIONS TO INCLUDE PA INTO TOURIST OFFER DEVELOPED BY VENETO

Chiara Quaglia, Nicola Boscolo, Raffaella Lioce, Veneto Region

#### Content

An experimental action to promote the 2Bparks Protected Areas as sustainable destination has been developed by the Veneto Region: an “app” for smartphones and tablets has been created. The scope is to increase the knowledge of the 2BPARKS protected areas and in particular of the Po Delta among the visitors and the local people, stimulating the wish to visit and stay there.

With the term “app” we mean all the smartphone/tablet applications as games, software, etc., which in the last few years are becoming increasingly popular as smartphones get smarter. The popularity of these mobile applications has continued to rise and today, almost every phone has a mobile app store that allows total beginners to download, install, and remove apps.

The explosion in number and variety of apps overpasses the pure funny or personal usage, and is a challenge also for the issues of public interest and the institutional bodies for communicate with the public by an innovative way.

The “app” is focused to spread contents about the environment and the landscape of the Delta using a communicative new tool, particularly attractive for young people and “smart” users.

The contents of this app are about the landscape of the 2Bparks target areas and in particular of the Po Delta area.

The pictures and the texts to describe the 2Bparks places, have been gathered through a transnational AWARD titled “Places of Sense”.

The notion of “Places of Sense” has been used as a slogan, a sort of common denominator to underline the value of some particular and evocative places, bale to attract tourists and to promote the territorial resources connected to these places and the MED protected areas part of the 2Bparks network

#### Methodology

Some methodological requirements guided the development of the application.

They are the following:

- Evocative approach: the selection of contents is finalized to catch the attention of the users, by images, drawings, videos, maps; the texts are simple, the selected images are evocative; overinformation has been avoided.
- Availability “on site”. the informations, especially the map of the places, are available in real time for the needs of users and visitors.
- Enlargement of target public: young people, students, foreign visitors, are the users that can be easily reached with this tool. Compared with the traditional communication tools already developed (website, brochures, publications, other media), this represents an added value for the protected area of the park, allowing to implement the range of people reached.

To achieve the proposal of a transfer of experiences the user may benefit from:

- The analysis of the context with national and regional references (laws, regulations,...), but also examples of reals experiments throughout the handbook and the action plan set by each region
- The analysis of the project feasibility, based on case study and on theory

#### Participatory approach

The idea to collect the 2Bparks destination, under the umbrella of the “Places of Sense” through a transnational award, represent an experimental participatory tool of selection.

All partners have been invited to participate in the award indicating the places of sense, such as those able to evocate emotions or telling the story of the territory and of the local community.

#### Added value and results

The main contents of the app consist of texts, images, descriptive information, videos and interactive maps with the location of the places of interest (especially the Places of Sense).

The application languages are Italian and English, and it is available for iPhone 5, iPad and Android devices to offer to the users the possibility to enjoy free multimedia content. The contents implement the functionalities

of the institutional website of the Park.

The app has been developed with a visually appealing design with text, images, descriptive information, videos and interactive maps of the location of the point of interest and the user's position and all relevant information.

The added value given by the app, beyond its contents, is to reach a different target public: (younger and smarter people, students, foreign tourists) than traditional communication tools already developed in the area of the park, like website, brochures, publications, other media. It also gives the possibility to get the multimedia contents directly "on site" during the visits

#### Communication plan and scope of promotional actions

The structure of the app is analogue to the structure of a common website, but pretty simplified and adapted to a faster consultation. There is a main page (home page), from which the user can view the topics and choose the ones of interest.

The informations are focused both on the 2Bparks project and PA network and the target area of the Po Delta, under the common umbrella of the notion of "Places of Sense".

The main sections are:

- The Po Delta: Geology, flora, fauna, Landscape, Man, The delta now.
- Living the delta: Assets, Museums and structures, events, hospitality,
- Park Authority: The management body, about us, where we are, projects, opportunities.
- Map: View Map and POI
- Video: interactive video section connected to places of interest (places of sense)
- Photos: photo gallery relating to places of interest (places of sense)
- Contacts: where contact section and / or interact with the representatives

The experimental app created for sustainable tourism has also a great awareness potential: app users could be simply virtual visitors that can be reached by the 2Bparks message. Therefore, the APP "places of Sense in the Med protected areas" becomes also a 2Bparks mainstreaming tool.

## EXPERIMENTAL ACTIONS TO INCLUDE PA INTO TOURIST OFFER DEVELOPED BY TRODOS

Stephanie Christou, Kyriakos E. Georgiou, CCEIA –UNIC

### PILOT ACTION 1

#### Content

Pilot test of Thematic Field Trips - six different packages

Currently, a local/regional network is being created and expanding, based on partnership relations among the PA's stakeholders for the common promotion of selected local/regional products and of the natural and cultural values of the target protected area. This is taking place in the context of the Troodos Regional Innovation Program (TRIP), a program developed by the Troodos Network, an umbrella organization which consists of a number of thematical centers set up by the youngsters of the area with the cooperation of the Local Authorities and provides sustainable development in Troodos area through eco-tourism, cultural heritage, museums, environmental actions, authentic local kitchen events and cultural decentralization activities. The network has ongoing efforts for clustering among the communities of the area and its scopes go together with the scopes of the Troodos Regional Tourism Board and of the 2Bparks project. Additionally, the president of the Troodos Regional Tourism Board is also a member of the Administrative Board of the Troodos Network and this will further help the cooperation and the implementation of our Plan. The TRIP Program specifically aims to promote innovation in alternative activities in the tourism sector, organization and promotion of the tourist package called "Troodos" based on the SMEs in the Region and help in this way in their development so that they can remain competitive and to contribute in turn to broader economic and social development of the region. Its philosophy is the set up of thematic centers that will cluster the enterprises of the area and other relevant stakeholders for the promotion of traditional products, wine and Koummandaria and traditional Cypriot arts through the creation of associations that will complement the promotion of eco-tourism.

Our LTSP, in the context of the 2Bparks project, will implement an important part of the TRIP program through its actions for clustering and promotion of the area. Additionally, the 2Bparks program will implement one of the two actions – thematic centers of the TRIP program. That is the establishment of the Sports Activities Center and the development of its services and the organization of the 'Educenter' for Environmental Activities and the design of its educational programs. These thematic centers will run in parallel with the other thematic centers that are a traditional arts center, a traditional cuisine center, a wine center, a Koumandaria-wine center and a traditional painting center in the wider Troodos area surrounding the Troodos National Forest Park.

Some pilot actions have taken place for the thematic field trips/packages that will run under the TRIP program and as part of our LTSP in the context of the 2Bparks program. Here, we offered as a pilot test six different packages to one local and one foreign tourist agent, two packages for the local agency and four for the foreign, to see if there is a demand for them. The first package was bought by the local travel agency "Aeolos" in June and was a thematic field trip to Kaminaria and Phoini villages. At Kaminaria a welcoming took place with local traditional food products, a guided tour followed at the Center of Traditional Arts and there was also a film projection. Here, the art of pottery and basketry were presented. Then lunch was offered with traditional food and wine. At Phoini village there was a visit at the 'Lokkoumi' sweet (a sweet similar to Turkish delights) production workshop and a tour was given there. After that, coffee was offered at the main square. A second package was offered to this travel agency which was a thematic field trip to K. Platres, Omodos and Arsos villages. At K. Platres there was a demonstration of how "kleftiko", lamp cooked in a wooden oven, a traditional Cypriot dish, is cooked, a guided tour to a nature trail concerning local herbs and the field trip ended with lunch with kleftiko and local wine. Following, at Omodos village, there was a visit to the workshop of traditional Cypriot sweets from preserved fruit, were participants had the chance to taste them. Then there was a visit to the workshop of traditional cookies in Arsos village and the visit ended with coffee offered at the main square.

The other four thematic field trips/ packages bought by the Swedish Agency Cecilia Delborn Vidgade vyer and took place at the middle of September. The first package included a visit to Pelendri and Agros Villages and it concerned the villages' tradition and culture. First, there was a visit to Pelendri at the UNESCO Heritage Church of Holy Cross and then lunch was offered at a traditional restaurant. Then, a visit to Agros to several local workshops of traditional products took place and after that a wine tasting visit followed to

Pelendri village again. The next package was at Kakopetria and Korakou villages where there was a visit at the Botanical Garden in Troodos National Forest Park with herbal tea hospitality in Korakou, Then lunch was offered at Kakopetria and free time was given at the village square. The next package included a visit to the Wine Villages Region and Vouni village where there was a tour to the Vouni Troodos Wine Center and wine tasting. Then there was hospitality with traditional products and a visit followed to the Linos old grape press. Lunch followed to a traditional tavern accompanied with traditional music and after that a cultural/ educational visit to Omodos and free time was given at the village's square. The fourth package offered a visit to Troodos National Forest Park and Platres village. Firstly, there was hospitality with coffee. A visit to the Troodos Visitor – Environmental Information Center followed where a film on the Park was projected and a tour to the Center's exhibitions took place. Then, a walk followed in Platres village up to the Kaledonian Waterfalls and the history of the village was explained and narrated. Free time at the village's square was also offered. All the thematic field trips took place with the escort of a guide.

### **Methodology**

The selection of specific thematic field trips/packages that would attract a specific market to the area.

### **Added value and results**

They were completed with great success and the tourism agencies involved asked for their continuation.

## **PILOT ACTION 2**

### **Content**

Experimental Actions of Environmental Education: Edubook and School Photo Contest . EUROPEAN DAY OF PARKS – Involvement of students in activities for environmental awareness raising – Creation of Edubook and Photo Contest. A three-day program

In the context of 2012's European Day of Parks, the Troodos Regional Tourism Board organized a three-day program from the 22nd to the 24th of May to involve two high schools and three primary schools from the Troodos's area in a photo competition and the development of an educational book (Edubook), respectively, for the scopes of the 2Bparks project.

The First day, at the 22nd of May, high school students, which were members of the photography club of their schools, were invited to take part in the photography contest with the theme "Man and Nature". Students walked along the nature trail "Persephoni" to take pictures and they ended at the Troodos Square where they could take part in a cycling activity and at the Troodos Environmental Information Center where they received a tour and watched an educational film about Troodos, its value and its significance as a protected area.

On the second day, on the 23rd of May, primary school students visited the Troodos Botanical Garden and the Troodos Environmental Information Center and participated in activities for the creation of the Edubook with the thematic of 'Biodiversity' of the Troodos National Forest Park. The program started early in the morning where the students at first visited the Botanical Garden where they watched an educational film about Troodos and more specifically its flora, they received an educational tour in the botanical garden and completed some worksheets on the flora of the area and learned how to recognize endemic and other plants of the Troodos National Forest Park. Furthermore, they participated in a treasure hunt in the garden in order to find some hidden papers with messages of good practices in the garden and the forest. After that, each school team was to create a poster by gluing the paper-messages on a carton and draw relative pictures on it. Students were also asked, as a homework exercise, to draw a picture of their specific experience in the Park and to write a poem.

After that, students were transported to the Troodos Environmental Information Center where they also watched an educational film about the Troodos National Forest Park with more emphasis on the area's ecosystems and fauna. There, they had a tour to the dioramas of the Center where they could see the fauna of the Forest Park with embalmed animals divided to the ecosystems that they belong. During the tour, they were given some worksheets to solve with the ecosystems of the area and they were asked to stick the right animal sticker under each ecosystem. All of the activities were successfully completed with great enthusiasm by the students.

The third day, on the 24th of May, a roundtable meeting was held which aimed at streamlining activities in Troodos Forest Park and the control of the work agreed.



**Methodology**

Involving primary and high school and primary schools kids to educational activities in the area for raising environmental awareness and organizing a roundtable meeting with officials which aimed at streamlining activities in Troodos Forest Park and the control of the work agreed.

**Participatory approach**

Involvement of students and relevant stakeholders

**Added value and result**

Students gained insight on environmental issues and further dissemination of the project was achieved at the roundtable meeting. The organization of these activities during European Days of Parks in order to promote relevant awareness.

**PILOT ACTION 3****Content and Methodology**

Pilot test of a plastic ice-skating ring in December 2012-January 2013 at the Troodos square as part of the activities that the Sport Activities Centers will offer in winter. The Troodos Regional Tourism Board is waiting for the official allocation of the Troodos Youth Hostel for the housing of the Sports Activities Center for the organization and coordination of all the sports and recreational activities held and run in Troodos. Until then, the TRTB has sent wooden houses for the housing of the activities. The plan is for the ice-skating ring to function through winter at the Troodos square.

**Added value and results**

The ice-skating ring has attracted many visitors to the area.

### EXPERIMENTAL ACTIONS TO INCLUDE PA INTO TOURIST OFFER DEVELOPED BY VERCELLI

*Davide Benasso, Province of Vercelli and Sara Vavassori, Coclea soc. coop. soc., agency for local development, consultant*

#### PILOT ACTION 1 - Photographic portfolio about PA, facilities and services

##### Content

A professional agency (Spin360°) specialized in geographical and tourist reportages made a photographic portfolio focused on Protected Areas of Vercelli province ("Lame del Sesia" and "Sacro Monte di Varallo"). The portfolio included also the local tourist operators (hotels, restaurants, services) that had decided to join the participatory process of defining the LTSP. The agency took pictures of about twenty operators and facilities.

##### Methodology

The pictures have a touristic scope: they are aimed at communicating and marketing (on print or web), in order to promote the visits to the Protected Areas, that are portrayed both as a natural place, and a place of entertainment. According to this idea, the agency took photos not only of the places, but especially of people living there and of those who created these services (a family walking in the park, hiking, biking, horseback riding, managers of facilities and tourist services, etc.).

##### Participatory approach

During a focus group, tourist operators were directly involved in the definition of the photographic portfolio in order to share the development lines of an effective communication, also analysing the photographic material already in their possession.

##### Added value and results

The production of a photographic portfolio has allowed the project team to attract tourist operators. The team could also see in person the facilities and the services that were then involved in the experimental action n.2. The photographic portfolio is not limited to portraying and representing the territory, but it is also aimed at luring the clients bringing out the local identity and culture. This is an important added value.

##### Communication plan and scope of promotional actions

The photos have been proposed for publication to various magazines (eg. article of 22th July 2012 on *Latitudeslife.com*, an online travel magazine, about a photo trip on the territory of the Lame del Sesia and the rice fields of Vercelli).

#### PILOT ACTION 2 – Definition of tourist itineraries along PA

##### Content

The tourist operators involved in the 2Bparks project mapped all the local services and facilities next to PA and defined some common thematic itineraries, composed by: accommodation, lunch, guided tours, hiking on horseback or bicycle, water sports, tasting local products.

##### Methodology

Different types of itineraries have been identified:

- Territory: Vercelli plain, next to the PA Lame del Sesia; mountain area next to the PA Sacro Monte di Varallo
- Target: individuals, groups, schools
- Theme: culture, nature, food and wine

This variety allows to respond to the interests of a wider customer base and to involve all the stakeholders who have joined the project.

In order to test the itineraries along PA, an educational trip for journalists will be organized on May. In this way the project team, PA and operators can verify their feasibility, the attractiveness degree and the aroused interest.

### **Participatory approach**

The itineraries have been developed during a territorial workshop organized for local operators and administrators, led by an experienced facilitator. The mapping of services, natural and cultural heritage during the meeting with an open discussion. The identification of the itineraries with a participatory approach could create an integrated supply.

### **Added value and results**

It was the first time during which PA were included in tourist itineraries cooperating with the private operators. Now there is a tourist local supply that shows the most beautiful things in and around Protected Areas.

### **Communication plan and scope of promotional actions**

As already mentioned, an educational trip for journalists will present itineraries and especially the link between Protected Areas and private operators. Relationship with some local and tourist newspapers will allow a large-scale promotion. The websites of the Parks will host the description of the tourist supply. At the offices of the Parks the materials of the private stakeholder will be exhibited, and vice versa.

## **PILOT ACTION 3 – Territorial marketing with social networks**

### **Content**

The experimental action has been proposed by the PA and the local tourist operators during the territorial workshop aimed at the definition of LTSP. They expect to realize it as soon as possible. The PA and the tourist and commercial activities need to be promoted through social networking sites such as TripAdvisor, Foursquare and Wikilock. Users will be offered a specialist support for the activation and the use of these tools, in order to define some geo-marketing strategies about the territorial supply. Moreover, thanks to Facebook 2BParks\_Vercelli profile and PA profile, Facebook users will be invited to use their smartphone application to contact it.

### **Methodology**

a) Preparatory activities: creation of a Facebook profile. The Facebook profile is the strategic starting point for the social promotion of the territory, aimed at increasing the project network (other projects, actual and potential users, ...) and the connection with other interesting channels such as TripAdvisor and Foursquare, which offer free communication tools for “business” users like hotels, restaurants, shops, etc. A profile for 2Bparks and its PA has been created.

b) TripAdvisor: the famous site is used by millions of people around the world to write and read reviews of hotels, restaurants and tourist attractions. It offers a free insertion of business activities. The free profile can continuously update information, insert photos and videos, receive notifications about user reviews and answers. Other free promotion tools are: integration of widgets on the company website, i.e. the logo (highly recognizable) of TripAdvisor, the scores obtained by people who voted on TripAdvisor and the invitation to write reviews and publish photos. The site also offers a company profile available upon subscription, which allows to enhance the promotional tools offering: banner ads, special offers, partnership opportunities and integrated placements.

c) Foursquare: this social network, users use to “say where they were” (check in), offers a free registration for business users and direct access via Facebook and Twitter. The business user becomes part of a network of activities and geo-referenced visible on a map. The users that explored a place can identify local services and facilities (or the point of natural and cultural interest), read the reviews submitted by other users and write his own. The business user can also insert special offers and promotions on their profile visible on the map. The application also offers a series of features that make the interaction fun and a continuous in time experience thanks to prizes and awards given for the achievement of objectives.

d) Wikiloc: it is a “GPS location-shared community”, which allows travellers to share nature, sports, culture itineraries uploading them to the web or directly from smartphones, creating GPS tracks and entering descriptions, details and photos. The itineraries are automatically uploaded on Google Earth. Other users can comment the uploaded itineraries and add more details. The platform is also linked to a forum available in several languages.

The community is a very useful tool for travellers, but also for the promotion of territory and companies; thanks to the comments and geo-referenced descriptions of their outdoor activities, users become promoters of the places they visit.

#### **Participatory approach**

The participatory approach is typical of social networks, building networks of individual contacts, sharing and exchanging them.

#### **Added value and results**

By combining these tools it is possible to define a strategy of territorial low-budget marketing, taking advantage of the sharing dynamics of web users.

#### **Communication plan and scope of promotional actions**

The activities included in this action have a specific promotional nature:

1. Creating a Facebook profile of the territory and its PA and content management by PA and operators;
2. Promotion of natural and cultural attractions of the PA by TripAdvisor, Foursquare and Wikiloc. The platforms listed above will be enriched with historical, cultural and natural information provided by the Province of Vercelli and its PA.
3. Companies support through the delivery of a brochure to promote the company / services through web tools to become part of a territorial network.

### EXPERIMENTAL ACTIONS TO INCLUDE PA INTO TOURIST OFFER DEVELOPED BY HERAULT

General Council of Hérault

#### Content

Participation in the Biodiversity day on 24th and 25th may 2012

Location: city of Montpellier

Organization and participation in the fair: Agropolis International, LABEX CeMEB Biodiversité (Centre Méditerranéen de l'Environnement et de la Biodiversité), Associations (Montpellier Main Verte - Le Passe Muraille - APIEU - Etat des Lieux - Les Ecologistes de l'Euziere - C'Mai - Mayane - Mosson Coulée Verte), LPO : Ligue pour la protection des Oiseaux de l'Hérault, Office National de la Chasse et de la Faune Sauvage, Réseau des gestionnaires d'espaces naturels protégés du Languedoc-Roussillon, Radio Terra One, Société d'Horticulture et d'Histoire Naturelle de l'Hérault, Syndicat Apicole "l'Abeille héraultaise", Tela Botanica, Parcs nationaux de France, Conservatoire régional des Espaces Naturels, Aquarium Mare Nostrum, Développement Solidaire et Durable, University (Irstea - UMR TETIS - Maison de la Télédétection), Centre de recherche sur l'agriculture et du développement (CIRAD), IRD Editions, Office Pour les Insectes et leur Environnement, Réseau Semences Paysannes, EID Méditerranée, VDN - Voile de Neptune, Cité du Corps Humain – Montpellier City

#### Methodology

The preparation of a booth has been done in partnership with the city of Montpellier.

#### Participatory approach

The whole organization has been designed in order to multiply the opportunities for Montpellier's inhabitants to discover the impact of biodiversity in our daily life.

Several workshop were planned on the flora, fauna, bee's life, ecosystems, fishes etc.

#### Added value and results

Located in the center of Montpellier, at the Charles de Gaulle Square, the number of visitors that came to discover the biodiversity annual fair was numerous.

#### Communication plan and scope of promotional actions

A lot of people stopped at the stand held by the general council of Hérault to discuss about the outings, location of PA. Brochures and program could be handed to each request of information. plan and scope of promotional actions.





## EXPERIMENTAL ACTIONS TO JOINTLY PROMOTE THE 2BPARKS PROTECTED AREAS, DEVELOPED BY UNIVERSITY OF ATHENS

*Niki Evelpidou, Nikolaos Tsoukalas, Konstantia Chartidou*, University of Athens, Faculty of Geology and Geoenvironment

### Content

The 2Bparks e-calendar ([www.2bparks.org](http://www.2bparks.org)) is an electronic calendar of Protected Areas' (PA) events, which gathers and presents events promoted in the Mediterranean and the wider European zone. The events are stored in a web-based GIS platform in order to enable the user to easily navigate on the maps and locate the events of his interest. A multi-criteria search (by city, date, domain, etc.) helps the user find the events he shouldn't miss! This common database, linked to project and partners' websites, acts as the basis for mutual actions promoting the pilot areas, after the project completion. Particularly, e-calendar is a mean to support the project joint marketing strategy, in terms of transnational actions which will improve territorial growth and attractiveness, encouraging sustainable business investments, especially towards youth.

Protected Areas (PA) all over the world play an important role for sustainable territorial policies and they are often perceived as a limit to economic growth. Protected Areas have to cope with economic interests for regional development combined with the ecological requirements. Consequently, new integrated plans based on a transnational framework will be fostered to improve Protected Areas, which represent the added value for Mediterranean attractiveness, not only as recreational areas but also as a factor of sustainable development.



There is a strong connection between the protection of fragile areas, the enhancement of natural resources and the sustainable development. Therefore, 2Bparks e-calendar aims to increase the effectiveness of the protected areas in preserving biodiversity and providing solutions for a long-term ecological, social and financial sustainability.

The 2Bparks e-calendar application constitutes a common thematic reorganization tool for events promoted in the Mediterranean Protected Areas, improving the knowledge society and governance within the Protected Areas. In this

framework, 2Bparks e-calendar aligns with the project's objectives by helping protected areas managers to bring rationality to decision, when economic requirements and social instances have to be reconciled with protected areas environmental issues of protected areas policies/plans.

Moreover, 2Bparks e-calendar promotes the involvement of economic and civil society as effective actors of protected areas enhancement, while reinforcing the building of biodiversity business, improving skills and capacities. Furthermore, 2Bparks e-calendar works as an element towards the increase of collective awareness of protected areas values and opportunities, the dissemination of the culture of sustainable development and the straightening of sustainable tourism in those areas.

The balance between improvement of lifestyles and well-being on one side and preserving natural resources and ecosystems on the other, promotes sustainable development supported by the following key aspects: environmental protection, economic development, social development and cultural diversity.

When we speak about Protected Areas management and we look at them as an opportunity to change economic models in favour of sustainable development, we deal with three key factors:

- planning and management for protection,
- sustainable tourism and marketing for compatible growth
- education and research for skills and awareness

By integrating environmental concerns into decision-making processes, developing sustainable tourism and awareness, 2Bparks e-calendar contributes to sustainable utilization of natural resources and strengthens the connections between Mediterranean societies, economies and protected areas.

2Bparks e-calendar network can become a functional tool against protected areas fragmentation, in favor of natural and cultural heritage enhancement.

## Methodology

The implementation and design of 2Bparks e-calendar is based on a series of actions, which are included in four major stages:

### 1) Research Stage - Information Gathering

The main requirements and the necessary standards, to be met by the platform, have been identified so that it could cope with the initial goals and objectives of the application. At this point, there has been adequate communication with various target groups/groups concerned – such as local protected areas managers, university departments, researchers, planners and the general public in order to understand and collect necessary information on their needs and develop a user friendly platform.

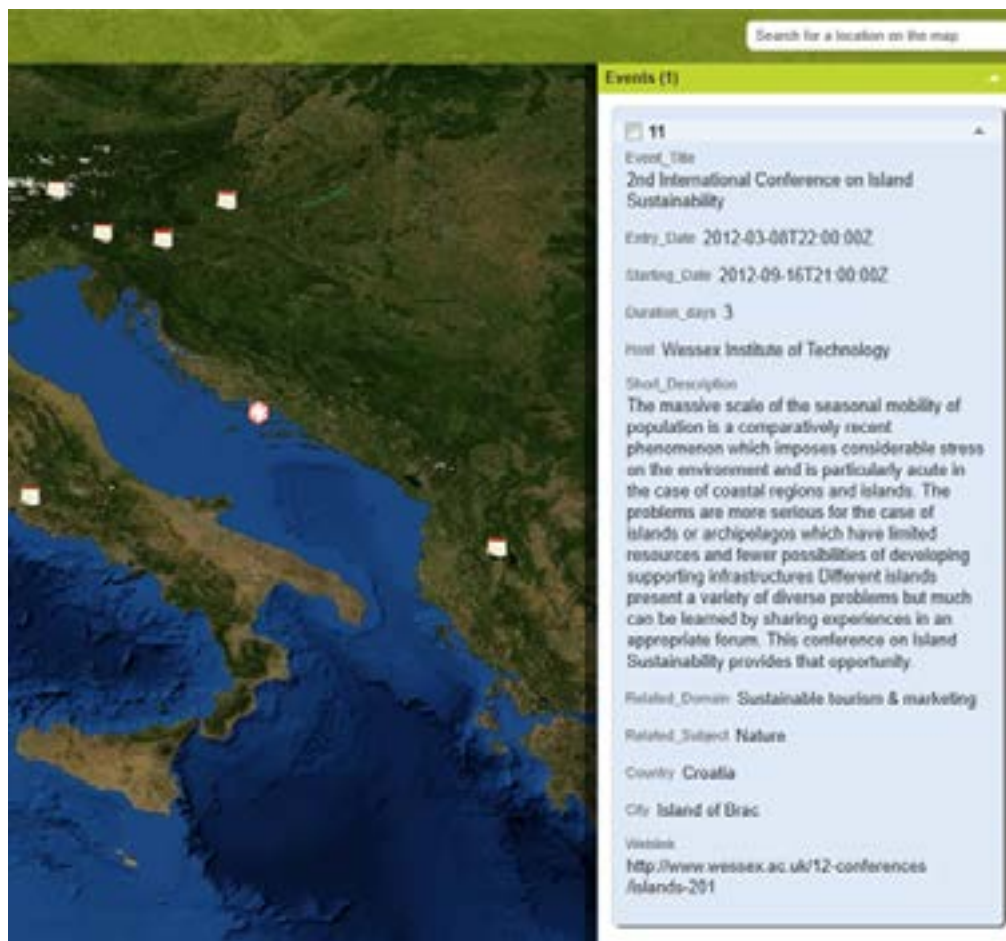
### 2) Design Stage – Development

A range of development technologies is available for different operating platforms in order to develop GIS web-based applications. An important part of 2Bparks e-calendar application is its development and especially its visualisation technology, which makes it possible to show data in the form of maps. Visualisation of data as maps has become increasingly popular, with numerous of websites presenting geographic data. The popularity of web-based mapping applications arises in large part through the wide dissemination of software that makes it easy for users and developers to publish map data. Improvements in usability through improved user interfaces account for the increased popularity of visualisation techniques.

The development of 2Bparks e-calendar was assigned to an external partner, guided by the requirements and the initial goals (promote events combining geographical, environmental, touristic data of each Protected Area, ICT applications, GIS data, fitting Public-Private needs, becoming a platform for sustainable spatial Marketing Strategy).

### 3) Function Stage - Usability

2Bparks e-calendar is based on the MyGIS software (<http://www.mygis.gr/>) that allows the mapping of any type of descriptive data. Therefore, it can be easily parameterized appropriately in order to support the



mapping of events (festivals, educative seminars, conferences, meetings etc.) and to improve the wide capabilities of searching them.

The system is totally web – based and does not demand the installation of additional software on a PC, apart from the browser and the related plugins. Its functionality is not depended on the web browser or the operating system of the working station and also supports completely the most popular web – browsers (Firefox, Internet Explorer, Chrome, Opera, Safari) that cover the total of the internet users.

With 2Bparks e-calendar the user has the capability of searching based on multiple criteria and exporting the results of a search in form of an image or in form of a table. It also provides the potential to export the map that appears in form of an image (jpg ř png), kml document (for its editing through Google Earth Plugin) and pdf.

Furthermore the tables that appear could also be exported in an xls form and besides the above, the user has the capability to upload data that have been designed locally on his computer, which appear directly on an information level that he chooses in the network platform.

To ensure that it is user friendly, 2BParks e-calendar is designed based on the User Agent Accessibility Guidelines (UAAG).

The appearance of the site refers to a windows environment in order to be user friendly and tries to “guess” what the user would prefer to do by proposing tooltips at the appropriate points, aiming to lead him. The user can also adjust the layout of the site in order to fit to its preferences (size and order of the windows), while the administrator could intervene from the appropriate web interface and modify a list of properties (such as the kind of menus that appears, the colors that should be used etc.).

#### 4) Evaluation Stage - Testing

Subsequently, a first version of the platform has been tested internally by the team of ECHS and has been given access to stakeholders to import events and additional information through 2Bparks e-calendar platform.

Through 2BParks e-calendar, 2BParks project has presented successfully a wide geographic coverage which includes 11 partners (7 Countries) and numerous Protected Areas characterized by a high biological diversity and a complex of terrestrial and marine habitats representative of Mediterranean environment.

#### **e-calendar functionalities**

- map navigation
  - zoom in / zoom out
  - point information (“what is under here”)
- selection
  - point selection
  - area selection
  - clear selection
- digitalization
  - point digitalization when providing the e-calendar map with a new entry
- map overview
- filtering
  - by related domain
  - by related subject

#### **Participatory approach**

Participatory approaches are active approaches that encourage people to share information, cooperate, learn from each other and work together to solve common problems. Participatory approaches are used in situations where a number of people must work together to resolve a common problem.

2Bparks e – calendar follows a participatory approach and thereby involves external and local actors, by giving them the opportunity to communicate and work together on a particular project.

The corporate nature of 2Bparks e – calendar is the dominant component of its platform. 2Bparks e – calendar is a collective effort and contribution of many interest groups (such as local authorities, protected areas managers, universities, researchers, ecological groups etc.). Communication with the above groups of people and with the general public helped develop a friendly platform, easily operable by everyone. The important issue to remember here is the word participatory. Participation carries with it feelings of ownership, and builds a strong base for the intervention in the community. In this manner people are integral to the

#### **e-calendar contents**

education workshops, conferences, congresses, park days, festivals, roadshows and guided trips in the context of protected areas, parks, management and sustainability.

contents are filtered:

- by related domain
  - protection planning and management
  - sustainable tourism and marketing
  - education and research
- by related subject
  - nature
  - culture and history
  - local products

planning of a community intervention and become part of it.

2Bparks e – calendar is a modern marketing tool since it provides to the user the ability to view all the actions and the events concerning protection and utilization of the Protected Areas in Mediterranean countries. Also, in order to inform the general public, there have been made several publicity activities.

Free access and distribution of information is the first and foremost step towards a participatory planning procedure and decision making process. It is particularly important to mention that 2Bparks e – calendar is designed in order to manage and promote the actions and the events that are related to Protected Areas, using geo-information systems. In essence, the platform constitutes a source of information about the activities taking place in the Protected Areas of Mediterranean countries. At the same time, it responds to the necessary need for the creation of a system for participatory planning, which is making information accessible.

Thus 2Bparks e – calendar can evolve from a dynamic information tool to a participatory and integrated planning procedure for Protected Areas in the Mediterranean region.

#### **Added value and results**

2Bparks e – calendar gives the opportunity to the users to search for expeditions that are organized in the Protected Areas of any Mediterranean and European country, based on the multiple criteria of search (subject, axis, date, city, etc.), as well as to list events that host / organize themselves. It is a tool that can be used from every researcher or student, from companies, public bodies, experts, the local stakeholders, the researchers as well as the local societies. The free access, the user friendly environment, the classification of the sources in combination to the fact that PP9 has committed to host the platform for the next 5 years after the project's lifetime, provide a valuable communication platform ready to assist all target groups. In essence, through the 2Bparks e-calendar the gap between heterogeneous and deviant groups of people, is bridged as it is easier than ever to communicate with each other and attend a meeting relating to their field of interest that in any other case may have never been aware of. In this framework, internal and external capacities of groups working on a specific protected area are enhanced, networking capabilities are widened and people can directly compare theory and practice, work on a combinatory basis between knowledge and practical experience.

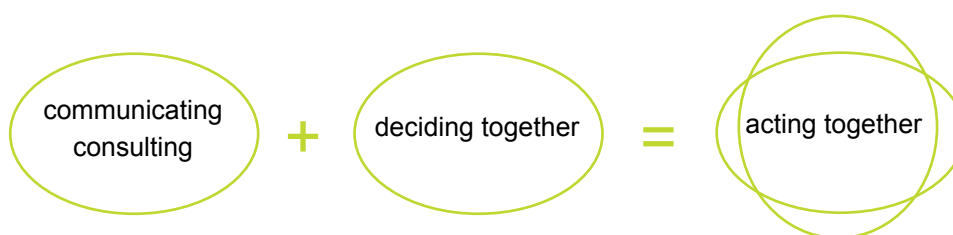
Policy makers, parks' managers and tourism operators can take advantage of the 2Bparks e – calendar capabilities and benefits as it contributes to the dissemination of events that may be organized in isolated (and not only) protected areas, enhancing and supporting in this way the economic growth of the area, as well as its touristic attractiveness. Indisputably the tool will lead to the promotion of the protected areas that are not so popular to the wider public, invigorating in this way the society of the area, while constituting the springboard for further development and turning the protected areas into a pole for investments and evolution in the sector of sustainable development. Consecutively the interested parties could exploit 2Bparks e – calendar in order to overpass the old - fashioned methods applied until now that narrowed the activities of the local community or of each public sector in the strict limits of the area or country. This initiative will constitute the linking ring among numerous institutions, companies, communities, businessmen and the wider public in terms of marketing, sustainability and prosperity.

With regard to the ultimate target of the project which is the evolution of protected areas, an additional tool could be especially interesting to be integrated in the operation of e – calendar. This tool could involve the

creation of an archive's manager to which the party could consult in order to find the necessary information for the place of the event, expedition or seminar. In these archives the user could have the option to find useful information for the previous events and its location, such as the history of the place, culture, similar events that have taken place, presentation of the attendees and their contact details. In this manner the e – calendar will constitute an ultimate tool for every interested party. Moreover the documentation that has been conducted after the event will be a guide that will support organizers in their effort to organize a perfect event, considering the comments and the feedback of the last attendees and participants.

On another level 2Bparks e – calendar, could extend its operations working simultaneously, as a platform of instant communication between parties, so that any discussion and conference could take place online through the platform, facilitating the organization procedures of any kind of event, in terms of supplies, attendees, place and time. In this manner, the participants could immediately be notified in case of any cancellation or modification in the program of the activities planned.

In conclusion, the 2Bparks consortium, will maintain the integrated network of target groups via the platform,



ensuring that information is updated and transmitted to all sectors and all countries. The platform will be used by all partners' institutes in order to store new events. The on-going promotional activities of the platform ensure its future use. The fact that PP9 will store the sourcebook to its servers for the next 5 years allows further enhancements either within another European funding initiative or within local – national frameworks. The e – calendar can host data for any country all over Mediterranean, all over Europe and practically all over the world. The maps and the background of the data are already developed in such a way so as to store numerous data for any place and to serve as many users as possible.

#### **Communication plan and scope of promotional actions**

- e-papers delivered in Greek and English language and published on [www.2bparks.org](http://www.2bparks.org)
- Announcement of 2BParks sourcebook and platform during a public event that took place in London, on January 8th 2-13 at the University of Greenwich. The event was one day mini conference (Desert restoration bites) which was organised as part of the EU funded COST Action ES1104 'Arid Lands Restoration and Combat of Desertification: Setting up a Drylands and Desert Restoration Hub'. The mini-conference constituted the first day of a three-day Workshop for Management Committee and Working Group members of COST Action ES1104, however the 1st day was open to the public. The following flyer was distributed to the participants.

The communication plan for the promotion of e-calendar will also include:

- Connection of e-calendar platform to all partners' websites
- Newsletters to research and academic community
- E-mails and letters to universities and research centres.







## 6. Clustering economic operators

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### Criteria

Alexandra Mendonça, RCDI - Development and Innovation Network



The Environmental Clusters are an important part of 2BParks activities, envisaging to group enterprises and socio-economic operators which are committed to adopt sustainable business strategies, therefore contributing to the enhancement of the MED Protected Areas and to environmental protection and conservation at large.

### Defining a Sustainable Business

The concept of “sustainable development” is widely accepted by the international community. It was described initially in the Brundtland Report, in 1987, as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”.

Although the general concept is easy to understand, it has been criticized for being difficult to apply for more practical purposes within different sectors.

In the scope of 2BParks, the practical objective related to the implementation of Environmental Clusters is reducing harm to local environments, reducing negative impacts on natural and cultural heritage and maximising social and economic benefits to local communities, therefore contributing to overall sustainability.

For the purpose of clustering activities the following general criteria were adopted to define a *sustainable business*:

- Uses resources in a sustainable way (e.g. reducing consumption of water and energy, using renewable sources of energy);
- Minimises its negative impacts on the environment (e.g. minimising and recycling waste and waste waters);
- Supports local economies (e.g. providing employment opportunities and sourcing goods and services locally);

- Involves local communities, customers and public in general, creating environmental awareness.

### Benefits resulting from a Sustainable Business

Adopting a sustainable business strategy will bring sound benefits and advantages to enterprises and other operators:

- It contributes to effective cost reduction. A good environmental performance results in effective cost reductions, providing higher efficiency of resource use and increased business feasibility.
- It helps to differentiate from competitors. Environmental and social issues are increasingly important to customer's decisions. To respond to these issues on the basis of a responsible approach will ensure differentiation from other competitors and will increase competitive capacity in the global market.
- It helps to diversify and to improve products and services. A sustainable strategy helps to gain in-sight into the business, providing the grounds to diversify and to improve quality of products and services, thus enabling companies to retain existing clients and reach new clients.
- It provides a new angle for marketing and promotion. Acting as a model of responsible and innovative business improves public visibility and overall perception of the company.
- It creates dynamics for economic growth. The effect of the above factors combined with the development of inter-relations with twining and complementary operators creates dynamics for economic growth in the Environmental Cluster, as a whole.

In short, a sustainable strategy will enhance the business image, will save money and will contribute to increase business opportunities and revenues for the economic operators, in the MED territories involved.

### General criteria applicable to select Cluster Members

The businesses and other private and public institutions participating in the 2BParks Clusters should adopt appropriate technologies and good practices to ensure an adequate environmental performance, notably for efficient resource use and minimisation of emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG), as well as minimisation of production and recycling of waste and waste waters, therefore contributing to reducing their environmental impacts, protecting bio-diversity and tackling issues related to climate changes.

The operators should respect the European, national and regional legislation related to environment, along with the regulations referring to economic and social issues set out by local, regional and national authorities.

Customers (local residents and tourists) can make more sustainable choices if efforts are made to communicate clear information on environmental behaviour and environmental good practices adopted by the Cluster Members. In this respect, the label 2BParks should be associated to sustainability, through underlying data related to the environmental performance of the operators, whenever possible. The Members of the Clusters are encouraged to participate actively in the initiatives and processes put in place or supported by the 2BParks partnership and to use the tools created by the project to promote the implementation of the Environmental Clusters, the Local Development Pilot Plans (LDPP) and the Local Tourism Sustainable Plans (LTSP).

A holistic approach was envisaged, based on collaborative work and sharing of information and experiences to integrate sustainability into management practices and to secure the active participation of Members in developing sustainable activities, to generate strong Environmental Clusters at local/regional level and as a whole in the Mediterranean area.

Although Cluster Members are not expected to compulsory adopt formal environmental management systems, they must however implement the following core steps:

- Provide information on their environmental performance, to qualify as Members;



- Sign an environmental business statement;
- Disseminate information on good environmental practices and results obtained, to customers, suppliers and public in general, to create environmental awareness.

### Specific Rules applicable to Cluster Members

The cluster membership is a volunteer process based on the self-commitment of socio-economic operators that have integrated sustainability into management practices and are willing to improve their environmental performance.

The selection of Members is based on relevant sustainability issues and rules were defined to guarantee that the accepted Members pursue a sustainable environmental and social approach. Nevertheless, particular attention was given to the following distinctive aspects:

- To recognise what operators are already doing and motivate them to take further steps to improve their performance;
- To have a flexible approach because environmental and social priorities may probably vary for different types of businesses and for different MED regions, thus some aspects will be more relevant for some activities and in some locations and not in others.
- To take into consideration that Clusters address a wide range of operators, from very small businesses to large organisations; therefore each operator will evaluate its own priorities and level of involvement, provided that the minimum rules for admission are accomplished.
- To transmit to the operators the importance of getting feedback from them, as Cluster Members, envisaging the clustering process as a partnership venture, involving transnational cooperation and opportunities across the Mediterranean area.

The minimum rules for admission as a Cluster Member are based on the main sustainability aspects summarised hereafter:

- Commitment to pursue a sustainable environmental and social policy;
- Commitment to transmit to the employees the adopted environmental and social policy, associated goals and implementation procedures.
- Commitment to monitor environmental and social performance and report publicly the results achieved, at least once a year;
- Commitment to follow good management practices related to relevant environmental issues, in particular water and energy consumption, production of solid waste, disposal and treatment of waste waters and air emissions.

An Application Form was designed to collect information on the sustainable business policy of the candidate Members, addressing the selected issues mentioned before, as well as some additional aspects to characterise the business profile. The candidate member should have implemented at least one good practice, in each category, to allow admission into the Cluster.

The Application Form was prepared to be applied to all types of possible Members, although it is mainly addressed to tourism operators such as hotels, restaurants and other providers of tourism services, which are the major target audience.



### *Involving economic operators for protected areas promotion in Po Delta*

Chiara Quaglia, Nicola Boscolo, Raffaella Lioce, Veneto Region



According with the objectives of component 3.3, an Environmental Cluster of economic operators has been created in the area of the Po Delta, becoming a part of the wide transnational 2BParks Cluster, and aimed at reducing the economic impact on the environment and to stimulate sustainable practices and business. Promoting environmental labels and developing awareness raising, the cluster is expected to generate a positive environmental impact also in terms of waste reduction and pollution generated by the economic activities (agriculture, tourist, forest, breeding, fishing, industries...).

The idea that the Protected Areas are also a factor of economic development is not yet completely understood among the most part of the operators of the area. Therefore, the creation of the environmental cluster had this main objective: collecting good practices, sharing experiences and spreading the idea that working in a PA is not a restrictive condition

but an added value for economic development.

On 18th December 2012, in Porto Viro, at the Visitors Center of the Park of the Po Delta, the regional staff presented the activities of the Environmental Cluster to a few local group enterprises and socio-economic operators, who were interested in joining the cluster. Almost 25 people took part in the meeting, including the staff, the operators interested and some journalists. The director of the Park and the regional staff illustrated the criteria and rules of admission to the Environmental cluster, and the practical objectives related to the implementation of Environmental Clusters: maximizing social and economic benefits to local communities reducing negative impacts on natural and cultural heritage and therefore contributing to overall sustainability. Part of the meeting was dedicated to share good practices: a representative of the provincial section of WWF shared with the other participants the

experience of the Oasi “Golena di Panarella”, that is an example of good practice for the sustainable management of a protected area developed by local administrations and the youth section of WWF, that created the opportunity for the development of a responsible touristic fruition.

After this meeting, the operators expressed their interest to join the cluster by delivering the application forms and signing the declaration of honour. A second meeting took place on 29th January 2013: in that occasion the Membership certificates were officially delivered to the operators with the proper requirements.

At the end of this activity, we can say that the cluster in the Po delta is characterized by two main

categories of economic operators. The first category is bed & breakfasts, restaurants, agritourisms, who basically promote local products (km0 productions), traditional recipes, fresh and seasonal foods. The second category is touristic agencies and event organizers, who center their activities capitalizing the know-how of local operators and using local resources, promoting a responsible tourism and spread environmental education (among schools, groups, families, ...).

Therefore, for all of them the key word is “local”: local foods, resources, traditions, know-how and people, to promote a sustainable development maximizing the existent opportunities and minimizing the environmental impacts.





*Two images of the Po Delta*





### *Involving economic operators to ensure environment protection in Alentejo Litoral*

Alexandra Mendonça, RCDI - Development and Innovation Network



Nature conservation and sustainable development are EU common concerns. In the Mediterranean Area these issues are of particular importance due to the high environmental quality and high biodiversity levels, namely in wetlands. Human and economic pressures need to be managed at local and regional scale, but a wider and shared Mediterranean and EU perspective contributes to ascertain solutions to face common problems and challenges. In 2Bparks, this transnational approach relies on the complementarity of partner's competences and experiences and on the vast geographical scope of the partnership, covering regions of the Mediterranean Area from East to West and encompassing different types of ecosystems and Protected Areas.

These Protected Areas possess a unique biodiversity in terms of flora and fauna and are of great environmental importance.

The environmental clustering process of 2BParks project is based in a shared approach to develop and promote Protected Areas and sustainable economic activities, namely tourism businesses, viewing to balance conflicting interests and reconciling protection and conservation of natural values with economic development. The project methodology, in particular the pilot actions, have eased the transferability of solutions and good practices among the project partners. This transferability process can surely overpass the territorial scope of the project, contributing to increase the territorial cohesion of Mediterranean Area, allowing to access common needs and outline flexible solutions related to the specificity of each Protected Area and region. This section describes the approach followed to implement the 2BParks clusters in Alentejo Litoral, Portugal and is envisaged to support transferability of the methodology adopted into other MED regions.

The overall strategic objectives addressed in the clustering process were the following:

- Contribute to environmental protection and to the efficient use of resources;
- Contribute to the diffusion of environmentally sustainable business practices, gathering economic operators and other organisations committed to responsible strategies (e.g. reducing consumption of water and energy, using renewable sources of energy, minimising and recycling waste and waste waters);
- Contribute to more sustainable communities (and therefore to social cohesion and job creation), raising awareness to Protected Areas and promoting responsible business, in particular within the tourism industry.

The implementation of the environmental cluster was organised in three steps, according to the 2BParks guidelines for this project phase, as described hereafter.

## 1. Mapping of operators

The first step related to identification of the economic operators and other relevant socio-economic organisations in the target area. Relevant possible data sources were reviewed, including the National Statistical Office databases, Regional Chambers of Commerce, Municipal and Regional Departments dealing with economic activities.

Following this research process, a comprehensive database of 293 economic operators was organised, covering as much as possible the following topics:

- Name of Organisation
- Postal Address (including postal code)
- Location (NUTS II, NUTS III, Municipality)
- Telephone, Fax, E-mail, Website
- Contact Person and Position of the Contact Person
- NACE Code and NACE Code Description
- Number of Employees (by size categories)
- Turnover (by size categories)

An incremental approach was adopted, starting with the possible available information, which was used to promote the Environmental Cluster to target

operators and to mobilise possible participants. Information is being gradually increased and updated, to allow a complete database of effective and possible Cluster Members, searchable by name of the organisation, location, NACE codes and size of the operators (number of employees and turnover).

## 2. Promotion of the Environmental Cluster

After the mapping of economic operators was accomplished the environmental cluster was promoted through e-mailing campaigns and the organisation of a territorial Road-Show.

The following orientations were adopted in the organisation of the Road-Show. Increase awareness of local businesses on the unique natural resources of the region and on environmental sustainability issues. The ICNF (Institute for Nature Conservation and Forests), which is the institution responsible for the overall management of Protected Areas in Portugal Mainland, was an active participant in the Road-Show, highlighting the richness of the fauna and flora than can be found in the Protected Areas of the region. Improve institutional cooperation among stakeholders at local and regional level, involving the business sector, public authorities and non-governmental organisations.

The Road-Show actively involved several local and regional stakeholders that shared their vision on environmental sustainability issues, providing a diversified approach, as a result of their different backgrounds and specific perspectives. In addition to ICNF, mentioned above, other relevant stakeholders include:

- ARPTA, the Regional Agency for Tourism Promotion of Alentejo, presented the detailed profile of the tourists that visit Alentejo region, providing evidence that unspoilt nature and environmental quality is an increasingly important motivation to a large majority of tourists; therefore, major attributes contributing to the attractiveness of the Alentejo Litoral region are the uniqueness of their natural resources and natural landscape;
- AEAL, the Association of Entrepreneurs of Coastal Alentejo contributed to the Road-show highlighting the importance of a good

environmental performance in the long term sustainability of businesses;

- Casas Brancas, a non-profit association from Alentejo Litoral, which gathers over 60 members, presented its own strategy for the successful development of a network of small rural hotels, restaurants and other tourism facilities, based on high quality standards and environmentally responsive solutions.

### **Demonstrate good business practices to reconcile environmental protection and economic development, respecting the carrying capacity of ecosystems**

Viewing to encourage a peer-to-peer learning process, local economic operators pursuing environmentally sustainable businesses were invited to share their good practices and experiences. Interesting examples to demonstrate that sustainable business procedures result in economic and marketing benefits for the operators included:

- A three star hotel that obtains significant cost reductions from adopting an environmentally sustainable management strategy. The unit also carries out important environmental-awareness activities among its staff, guests and local community. The environmental good practices have contributed to increase the visibility of the hotel that has got several international and national environmental labels and awards;
- A diving school that promotes an annual sea cleaning campaign, in the area where they operate; amazingly, they collect around one ton of waste every year, involving youngsters and local population. Environment protection being the core motivation, this activity has however contributed to increase the overall prominence of the company.

The Road-Show also integrated other initiatives, sharing similar or complementary objectives to the 2BParks environmental clusters, developed by other organisations and addressing the economic sector. This was the case of the EU initiative Business and Biodiversity, which is promoted in Portugal by the ICNF (Institute for Nature Conservation and Forests). ICNF presented the objectives and results

of the initiative in Portugal, allowing to confirm that interesting synergies can be promoted among Business and Biodiversity and 2BParks.

### **Support a holistic approach to provide consistency to the overall sustainable tourism strategy envisaged for the destination Alentejo Litoral**

The cluster promotional Road-Show was integrated with other project activities and events organised under Phase 4.2 (Local Tourism Strategic Plan) to optimise synergies, minimise efforts/resources and to assure steadiness to the whole programme.

Furthermore, one of the actions included in the Alentejo Litoral LTSP is envisaged to Improving environmental quality of businesses and services. Under this action it is recommended to implement a campaign to identify current problems and constraints and to outline solutions to increase environmental consciousness and to support economic operators in the implementation of good environmental practices and technologies.

## **3. Animation of Cluster Activities**

Animation and follow up solutions for the continuity of the environmental cluster, after the conclusion of the 2BParks project, were also considered, including the initiatives summarised hereafter.

- Identification of possible sources of financing to support the cluster activity in the medium term, in particular through assistance to economic operators, notably:
  - Pilot actions involving selected operators, to conduct environmental assessments and outline action plans to foster the implementation of business sustainable strategies;
  - Organisation and diffusion of a catalogue of good environmental practices and best available technologies for the tourism industry.
- Regular continuation procedures, such as:
  - Review and regular update of the database of effective and potential Members;
  - Annual update of information for each effective Member, to guarantee the renewal of the Membership Certificate.





### *Involving economic operators for a sound tourism development in Troodos*

Stephanie Christou, Kyriakos E. Georgiou, CCEIA –UNIC



Since its independence, Cyprus has dependent heavily on the tourism sector. Up to 1990, the touristic model promoted by the Cyprus Tourism Association (CTO) was based on the 'sun and sea' model based on mass tourism. This fact brought negative impacts such as environmental pressures and seasonal unemployment. At the same time, the coastal regions were the only ones benefiting from the economic contribution of tourism development (Farmaki, 2012). In this context, and in the context of a new postmodern discourse, the discourse of environmental protection and sustainable development, but as well as in the context of the decline of the competitiveness of the market and the current economic crisis, the CTO strategy has changed towards a different direction trying to encompass the rural and mountainous areas of Cyprus in the touristic product of the Republic and extend the touristic season/period.

As mentioned above, the touristic model followed up to recently in Cyprus, was based on mass tourism and seasonality and has led to an environmental degradation of the areas where it was developed and the wider area of the Republic. The last twenty years though, the CTO has made a turn on its strategy. Among the CTO's 2011-2015 Tourism Strategy objectives are: a) to increase the annual season period in to the winter season and b) to improve the sustainability of the tourist business; Among its proposals is development based on respect to the local environment and culture (CTO, 2010). The CTO's Strategy objectives are shared by The Troodos Regional Tourism Board, the Troodos Tourism Company, the Troodos Network and other relevant organizations and general public.

On this basis and in this context, the effort for the creation of environmental clusters in the area is of great importance for a sound tourism development

in the area based on sustainability. The whole more general idea for clustering is of great need in the area. Up to now, economic developers in the area have been working on an individual level, a fact that reduces their potential for development in the area, deprives them from several opportunities and holds back the more general sound development of Troodos's communities. The development sought though must be based on the principles of sustainability with respect to the local environment, trying to minimize their environmental impact but also reduce operational costs to be more viable and competitive to ensure the economic survival and development in the area.

The overall idea behind environmental clusters, as developed in the context of the 2Bparks project, is to group enterprises, socio-economic operators and public bodies which are committed to adopt sustainable business strategies, therefore contributing to the enhancement of the MED Protected Areas and to their environmental protection and conservation (2Bparks.org, 2012). There is the need for the joint effort for the sustainable development of protected areas. Mediterranean protected areas in many cases are under several environmental pressures when developed in terms of tourism, in all aspects. A grouped awareness raising and motivation provision to local economic operators for their joint development and the overall area through a realization of the benefits of reducing the harm to local environments, reducing negative impacts on natural and cultural heritage and maximizing social and economic benefits for the areas.

There is the need for entrepreneurs or other economic operators in a Mediterranean, European and worldwide level to develop sustainable practice in the overall idea of sustainable development which, as by definition encompasses environmental, social and economical aspects.

Up to now a first informational meeting was organized in Platres village, in the context of World's Environment Day on the 5th of June 2012 where several local economic operators from the wider Troodos area were invited and a presentation was made to them for the overall need for the sustainable development of the area and for environmental

clustering as well as on the benefits that will rise from it. Following that, a Roadshow was organized with five meetings in five villages of Troodos, four held in February 2013 and one in March 2013. These are Platres 12.2.13, Agros 13.2.13, Kakopetria 19.2.13, Pedoulas 20.2.13 and Omodos 13.3.13. Local economic operators were invited from the Troodos communities; these included mostly hoteliers, restaurateurs, Agrotouristic Businesses, Local traditional food product industries, chocolatiers. An overall presentation was made for them on the 2Bparks project and its objectives, on the concept of environmental clustering and a small brief on the 2011-2015 strategy relevant objectives. At the meeting the documents provided by the Phase Coordinator were translated in national language and distributed, as well as the Application Form. The criteria of entering the clusters were specifically explained.

During these meetings, several problems that the economic operators face in the area arose and a fruitful discussion took place. Through their feedback it was even more clear that there is a need for local business clustering and general collaboration in the area; furthermore the concept of a sustainable business was developed and its benefits for the communities. Some relevant good practices and examples were distinguished during the meetings. Moreover, the importance of specific synergies was highlighted. Still though, many efforts are needed in the area for awareness raising and a holistic strategic planning that will take in mind the difficulties faced by the local businesses. The current economic crisis was mentioned by most of the participants and at this point the benefits which will result from environmental clustering were highlighted. Through these clusters, a declaration of honor is going to be signed on the use of resources in a sustainable way that will save costs from the businesses, minimizing its negative impacts on the environment e.g. minimizing its wastes and use recycling, supporting local economies by employing locals and involving local communities, customers and public in general, creating environmental awareness. It was specifically stressed that with all of the above energies, benefits will result for their businesses and the area as a whole. Troodos is a remote area where the differentiation of local businesses is quite important in the context of

the preservation of the local natural environment and culture. The quality of their product and dissemination of their energies were highlighted also as of great importance.

The promotion of Protected Areas was noted as something that overpasses national borders. A special note was made to the fact that raising awareness on the dynamic of the ensuring of sustainable operation of businesses at a local level, which will note only have local benefits but also at a Mediterranean – European level, will help to the protection of the environment in the Mediterranean and contribute to touristic development and the attraction of a more sensitized target market. The specific clustering will help them differentiate not only from other national markets but also at a wider European and a worldwide level and constitute them more competitive in the touristic map. Currently, the Troodos Regional Tourism Board is organizing a second Road show for the collection of the Application Form and the clarification of the clusters and another one for giving the Membership Certificate of 2BParks Environmental Clusters. The main cluster types that have cleared so far are mainly of restaurateurs, hoteliers and other local business people. The clusters are going to be monitored by The Troodos Regional Tourism Board which is committed to keep support them.

The concept of environmental clustering is incorporated by the Troodos Regional Tourism Board in its tourism marketing strategy for the area in the context of the 2Bparks project. Through our Local Tourism strategic Plan a joint promotion of natural and regional products and cultural values is to be accomplished. A bottom-up approach is followed by promoting and preserving the PA by engaging locals and community councils to enable private investments on traditional culture and environmental data resulting to added value products on parallel with environmental protection. Environmental clustering will supplement the overall marketing strategy for the area based on the concept and practices of sustainability.



*Agros Meeting, Kakopetria Meeting, Pedoulas Meeting, Platres Meeting*







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Region of Thessaly



The Troodos Regional Tourism Board



General Council of Hérault



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Province of Vercelli



Natural Regional Park of Serre

