

Project Title: ITACA Improving Tourism Action in CADSES Area

Priority: 3. Landscape, natural and cultural heritage

Measure: 3.2 – Protecting and developing natural heritage

1. Region Karlovy Vary – (CZ) 270.000 €
2. Investon, s. r. o. (CZ) – 80.000 €
3. City of Košice (SK) – 100.000 €
4. Harsanyi Janos College (HU) – 100.000 €
5. **Polish partner** (PL) – 100.000 €
6. Province of Ferrara (IT) – 129.000 €
7. Amitié (IT) – 80.000 €

Tot. 859.000 €

ERDF contribution: 487.500 for new member states;

104.500 for Italian partners

Total: 592.000 €

ERDF contribution for LP: 34,45%

1.1 – Short description of the project

ITACA promotes a sustainable economic & spatial development based on a better integration between preservation of nature and its wise economic exploitation via eco-tourism based on forestry and wetlands of which the territories involved are rich. This goal will be pursued through:

- a trans-national legal study to guide local decision-makers in land use, forestry assistance & private land-owners participation programmes, etc;
- a trans-national marketing study to promote public/private investments to create (or reinforce) ecological corridors, correlating them to two specific eco-tourism product: cycling and fluvial tourism;
- actions to update the capacity of managers and operators of natural protected zones to stabilize a right balance between nature preservation and tourism exploitation, by utilising Natura 2000 network's achievements too;
- a unitary brand depicting the natural areas involved (potentially usable for a trans-national tourism package) and dissemination activities.

(1.000 characters)

WP 1 – MANAGEMENT AND COORDINATION – RESPONSIBLE PARTNER: KARLOVY VARY REGION

1.1 Coordination: the LP will produce a detailed operative work plan specifying the tasks, outputs and deadlines to be respected. There will be regular meetings (at least 4 meetings, 1 for each semester); the LP will appoint both a project co-ordinator and a Financial Manager. This will be done in respect of the relevant regulations, in particular EC No 438/2004;

1.2 Reporting: every 6 months, partners will provide an activity report to the LP. The activity report will include information on the operation's progress, as well as a comparison of initially established targets and those achieved. The LP will control the documents and together with PP6 compile the joint progress report for the whole project twice a year.

1.3 Monitoring: periodic review will detect possibilities for improvement in project organisation via a self administered assessment form that will be prepared by the evaluation partner for completion by each partner during the trans-national meetings and the results communicated to the LP.

1.4 Financial administration: introduction to the financial and administrative rules of CadSES Interreg IIIB during the kick-off meeting, distributions of the regulations. All partners will prepare at least once a year a cost statement to be certified at national level to allow the LP to claim for payment in respect of at least 1 of the 4 official deadlines.

1.5 Organisation of focus groups, involvement of local stake-holders, creation of a local and trans-national consensus to the project and adaptation and tuning of the general model to local needs, interests and opportunities.

WP 2 –TRANS-NATIONAL LEGAL STUDY – RESPONSIBLE PARTNER: MUNICIPALITY OF KOSICE

2.1 This trans-national legal study intends to investigate how the following issues are addressed in Europe and at even wider international level in order to single out good examples of interaction between heritage nature preservation and regional development:

- zoning regulations
- land-use planning
- forestry assistance programmes
- private land-owners participation
- ecological concerns in tourism development.

The main scope of the study is to draw up a common legal framework capable of orientating local decision-makers in dealing with the above mentioned issues.

It will be conducted through desk (examination of existing documentation) and field researches (interviews, focus groups etc.)

2.2 The trans-national study's findings will result in a guideline summarizing the good example identified (in particular, with regard to how private land-owners are involved in policies of public interest. In fact, many natural areas are owned by private and their involvement is often decisive for a correct natural heritage preservation and valorisation); it will be a valid support both to improve the capacities of local public administrations in natural heritage management and to refine the regional development plans of the areas involved. The document "Process of Implementing and Updating the State Tourism Policy Concept in the Czech Republic up to 2006, issued by the Ministry of Regional Development in November 2004, for example, recognises that *"issues related to environmental protection were not systematically examined in the planning of the development of tourism in the Czech Republic"* (p.7). This situation, with different levels, is common to all the participating partners.

WP 3 TRANS-NATIONAL MARKETING STUDY - RESPONSIBLE PARTNER: PROVINCE OF FERRARA

3.1. Realisation of a trans-national marketing study to correlate ecological corridors to specific nature tourism products. Even if not always recognised at legislative-institutional level, all the areas involved in the project have ecological corridors; the challenge is how to link them with specific tourism products on sustainable basis, a critical issue common to all the participating partners.

The marketing study is articulated on three levels:

- a) analysis of the ecological corridors existing in the areas involved (especially characteristic of biodiversity in forestry and wetlands) and of their potential attractiveness for tourists;
- b) analysis of two pilot market segments: cycling-tourism and fluvial tourism (potential market size, composition, expenditure capacity etc.). This activity is also intended to match *"the absence of marketing studies aimed at the development of the potential of tourism in individual regions"* stressed by the above mentioned document (p.9)
- c) economic-financial analysis to forecast cost and revenues as well as the break-even point related to the promotion and management of a fluvial tourism product and a cycling-tourism product. This level is relevant for the local authorities involved as promotional tool to persuade private entrepreneurs to invest in these specific market segments. The participating areas have already created (or are creating) the basic tourism-related infrastructure (the "hardware"); that is

missing is the “software”, namely groups of private operators who are working in cooperation with public authorities to valorise natural heritage, by preserving it , with new ideas and initiatives.

The trans-national study will be carried out via desk and field researches, with a bottom-up approach through the involvement of any relevant local stakeholders.

WP 4 - CONCEPTUAL MANAGEMENT OF TOURISM IN NATURAL PROTECTED AREA (NATURAL PARKS AND PROTECTED LANDSCAPES AREA): RESPONSIBLE PARTNER: HARSANY JANOS COLLEGE – BUDAPEST

4.1 This action line intends to update the capacity of managers and operators (guards etc.) of natural protected zones of the areas involved by the project to stabilize a correct balance on mid-longer term between nature preservation and tourism exploitation, by utilising the best practices achieved and documented through the Natura 2000 network. In particular, two topics will be developed:

- creating literature that narrate the natural landscape to educate natural parks visitors about all aspects of biodiversity and provide them with a better understanding of it;
- preparing information concerning how to plan paths (especially for didactic purposes) in forestry and wetlands areas;
- implementing a pilot info centre in Poland to deliver information to different audiences (tourists, stakeholders etc.)

The WP will be achieved through:

- workshops targeted to natural parks managers and operators. They will be organized in co-operation with representatives of the Natura 2000 network (for example in the field of management plans).
- desk and field researches
- pilot action

WP 5 - DISSEMINATION - RESPONSIBLE PARTNER: KARLOVY VARY REGION

5.1 Design, implementation and development of the project website: scopes, functionalities, graphics etc. The website will be the privileged instrument of the external communication concerning project activities: seminars, workshops, conference. All relevant documents of public interest will be downloadable from it, in such a way as to obtain a multiplier effect. The project website will also contain a sensible map of the natural areas involved; bibliographic finding aids; images;

5.2 Development of an unitary image (and related brand and motto) of the natural areas aggregated by the project (potentially usable to set up a trans-national tourism package). All the areas involved in the project lack of an adequate communication strategy related to their natural areas surrounding the more known urban centers. This is true for the Karlovy Vary region, where whilst its historical thermal centers (Karlovy Vary, Mariánské Lázně, Františkovy Lázně) boast a worldwide fame originated by a long tradition commenced about 250 years ago, its countryside marked by diffused forests, beautiful hills, rivers and lakes is quite less known. This is true, even if in a less accentuated manner, for Ferrara, famous in Italy for its relevant cultural heritage, but less known and visited for the attractions of its countryside (typical rural towns, wetlands, Po river basin etc.). Kosice and Zawiercie are new comers at all.

5.3 Realisation of national workshop (1 per country) and one final trans-national conference, to facilitate the exchange of experiences among people participating in the previous national workshops and present the final results of the project

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