Project description

Background

Tourism is an important growing activity with a high impact on the economical and social development of Albania. This sector of the economy accounts for 4.1% of national GDP and 160 thousand jobs. However, the sector is linked to the use of numerous natural resources and its recent development has been rather uncontrolled.

There are no appropriate solid waste management systems in Albania’s tourist regions. Waste is usually discharged indiscriminately at the nearest available site, including roadsides, riverbanks and open land. Wastewater is put into the ground, into valleys or rivers, or discharged directly into the sea.

The present inclination to prioritise short-term economic gains has resulted in several negative environmental impacts, such as increased waste and air pollution, as well as greater pressure on natural resources and the landscape. It threatens the development of tourist industry.

Major problems are that there are no standards for sustainable tourism management. Resources and measures required for monitoring and enforcement of environmental protection plans are absent. Furthermore, levels of awareness of sustainable tourism approaches among relevant stakeholders, in particular small and medium enterprises (SMEs) active in tourism development, are low.
Objectives

The overall objective of the project was to incorporate sustainability into tourism development, focusing on non-coastal tourism. This had the long-term aim of reversing current trends of unsustainability within the tourism sector. In practical terms, this translated into a desire to build capacities to meet the following goals:

- Promoting adequate policies for sustainable tourism development at macro and micro-economic level;
- Defining new ways to incorporate environmental protection into tourism development;
- Integrating and implementing new environmental managerial practices in tourism to deal with issues such as pollution, waste and unpurified sewages;
- Developing and trialling a National Environmental Label to strengthen particularly SMEs active in the tourism sector;
- Promoting greater awareness among the Albanian tourism sector of international environmental standards and other environmental information;
- Creating an effective link between the scientific community involved in tourism and decision makers;
- Supporting the establishment of a new administrative structure dealing with sustainable tourism development in Albania; and
- Compiling and disseminating best practices in sustainable tourism development.

The project aimed at tackling these various constraints by working with an array of partners, and through on-the-ground application of newly developed approaches.

Results

The LIFE CBSTD project successfully developed several tools and instruments to promote the concept and implementation of sustainable tourism in Albania amongst the range of stakeholders. The project achieved groundbreaking environmental certification amongst tourism operators in Albania. The challenge is now to see whether the project’s tools continue to be implemented.

The CBSTD project generated Albania’s first Carrying Capacity Assessment (CCA) Report on a tourist area - Durres Bay. The Italian partner, the Institute of Methodologies for Environmental Analysis (IMAA/CNS), provided guidance based on CCA and Advanced Local Energy Planning (ALEP) techniques. From this, an ‘Operating Manual’ to evaluate the impact of anthropogenic activities on the territory was developed and the first report carried out by the University of Tirana.

The project used CCA assessment to identify policy objectives, with actions and indicators, for sustainable tourism development, and a description of four tourism development scenarios. The beneficiary elaborated policy guidelines on sustainable tourism development in Albania. Further practical guidelines on
implementation of sustainable tourism development principles” set out how tourism service providers in Albania can establish an Environmental Management System to control their environmental impact.

A significant output of the project was the National Environmental Label. The label represents a standard for the evaluation of tourism establishments and encourages them to improve their environmental performance. It covers: nature and landscape protection; environment friendly tourism activities; efficient use of water and energy resources; locally produced healthy foods; environmentally friendly waste collection and management; and information.

The beneficiary conducted a study on how to build awareness of the label and training sessions were organised for 25 managers and employees of 11 tourism operators. With support from a consultant, four of these tourism establishments had achieved the label and eight were certified by ISO 14001 by the project’s end. The awards ceremony for the six hotels, a travel agency and a commercial centre in Durres raised awareness of the accreditation process.

The CBSTD project produced a web portal and video DVD as well as publishing newsletters and brochures to raise awareness on the project and National Environmental Label. Two workshops and a seminar were held to discuss the project with tourism operators and local authorities in Durres Bay.

The CBSTD project has shown what can be achieved by Albanian tourism operators and hopes to encourage others to follow the same process. Whilst the project carried out a study on the establishment of a Sustainable Tourism Centre, a major challenge for future impact remains the relative lack of engagement the project was able to achieve from the relevant Albanian institutions and the lack of environmental monitoring expertise. It remains to be seen how supportive the Ministry of Tourism and local governments will be towards application of the tools and instruments developed under the project.

Further information on the project can be found in the project's layman report and After-LIFE Communication Plan (see "Read more" section).

Environmental issues addressed:

Themes

Land-use & Planning - Spatial planning
Services & Commerce - Tourism and Accommodation
Information - Governance - Environmental training - Capacity building

Keywords

environmental management, environmental impact of tourism

Natura 2000 sites
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Beneficiaries:

Coordinator: Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Tirana
Type of organisation: Professional organisation
Description: The Chamber of Commerce of Tirana (CCI), is a public body representing the business community of Tirana in its relations with the state, to support and protect its legal economic interests and to encourage the development of trade and industry.

Partners: University of Tirana (Faculty of Economy), Albania IMAA-CNR, Italy Quality Program SaS, Italy CONFINCOM, Albania MoTCYS, Albania

Administrative data:

Project reference: LIFE06 TCY/AL/000202
Duration: 22-JAN-2007 to 21-DEC-2009
Total budget: 720,778.00 €
EU contribution: 504,545.00 €
Project location: Mediterr. Albania (AL) (Albania Shqipëria)

Read more:

Newsletter: Article-Paper Title: CBSTD Newsletter No. 5 Year: 2009 No of pages: 6
Project web site: Project's website
Publication: After-LIFE Communication Plan Title: After-LIFE Communication Plan Year: 2009 No of pages: 11
Publication: Layman report Title: Layman report Year: 2009