



AcTour: Active Tourism for Sustainable Development

Leonardo da Vinci Transfer of Innovation

Project no: 2011-1-BG1-LEO05-05043

III e-NEWSLETTER. JULY 2012

Ana Savsek, Litija Development Centre

PROJECT PROGRESS

2nd Project Meeting: Leon, Spain

From 25 to 26 April 2012, the second meeting of the partners in the EU project Active tourism was held in the Spanish town of Leon. The project is implemented under the Lifelong Learning Programme. It involves four partners from different European countries: a licensed provider of vocational education and training (INFOCENTER EOOD, Bulgaria), an NGO connecting travel suppliers (Latvian Rural Tourism Association Lauku Celotajs), a counselling centre from Spain (IRMA SL) and a public development centre from Slovenia (Litija Development Centre).



The AcTour project, “Active Tourism for Sustainable Tourism Development”, aims at introducing active tourism as a new professional activity in the rural areas through vocational training. Special emphasis is put on green tourism, with the main target group being entrepreneurs in the rural areas (restaurant and family hotel owners, mountain guides, sports instructors, heritage interpreters, etc.), as well as persons with disabilities and seniors.

At the meeting in Spain, partners discussed the ongoing project activities and the task allocation within the project. They focused particularly on the preparation of the project website, cooperation agreements, formation of the training curriculum, the project brochure, dissemination campaigns and the preparation of the content and financial reports on the project progress.

On the second day, a public project presentation was held in the Town Hall of La Pola de Gordon near Leon. In addition to presenting basic information, also participating organisations presented themselves. The project partners were welcomed by the Mayor of



AcTour: Active Tourism for Sustainable Development

Leonardo da Vinci Transfer of Innovation

Project no: 2011-1-BG1-LEO05-05043

the town. La Pola de Gordon among other things participates also in the UNESCO MaB (Man and Biosphere) Project Programme, which deals with natural protected areas.

A visit to Spain was also an opportunity for the partners to see a good practice example in the field of active tourism in Vegacervera. They visited **Guheko**, a company dealing with the implementation of active tourism (caving, adrenaline rush, paintball, etc.). In addition, they also offer accommodation. There are 40 full-time employees, joined by further 100 during the summer season.



Project Website

In the recent months, the content for the project website www.activetourism.org was collected and prepared.

The coordinator of the AcTour project, the Bulgarian partner INFOCENTER AD, is responsible for editing the website and entering the content. All partners contributed the content for the website and the photographs of active tourism from Latvia, Spain, Slovenia and Bulgaria (biking, hiking, diving, mushroom hunting, white-water rafting, paragliding, adventure sports, horse riding, etc.).





The website structure has been set up in agreement with partners and consists of the following areas:

- Project (description, objectives, target groups, partnership, international meetings)
- Results (e-informants, the brochure, skills map, pilot implementation, cooperation agreements)
- Training Curriculum
- Training Guide
- Dissemination
- Stakeholder Database
- Photo Gallery (project activities, active tourism activities)

In order for the website to be well-visited and to achieve its purpose, the project partners will promote the website in their countries. Thus, the aim of promoting active tourism with examples of good practices from different European countries will be achieved.

1st Reporting Period

AcTour was launched in October 2011 and will run until March 2013, a total of 18 months.

The project is divided into three reporting periods:

- 1st Reporting Period (October 1 2011 – March 31 2012)
- 2nd Reporting Period (April 1 2012 – September 30 2012)
- 3rd Reporting Period (October 1 2012 – March 30 2013)

At the end of March, the first reporting period of the project ended. All partners prepared content and financial reports on the project progress for their countries. This will be followed by two further periods of six months.

In the context of the second project period, the following key activities are currently performed: the website content preparation, the project brochure preparation, linkups with partner organisations and cooperation agreements, dissemination event organisation and training curriculum preparation.

JOB-RELATED TRAINING MODEL FROM SLOVENIA

Additional training on the preparation of tourist programmes, promotional activities, communication skills, product attractiveness, language skills, etc. are of great importance for the business of tourism providers to be successful.

Rural tourism service providers are not experts in all these areas; this means that different types of training have to be provided for them to learn the skills which will enable them to provide more effective and good-quality services.



The Heart of Slovenia (Srce Slovenije) represents an area in the central Slovenia which offers many interesting experiences. Among the most popular recreational activities are cycling, hiking, horse riding, water sports and adventure sports. Together with Jarina Cooperative Society, Litija Development Centre has provided counselling, training and help with development of tourist activities for many years.

Recently, the tourism pillar of the Heart of Slovenia brand has gained a significant technical partner for further content and project development and activities in the field of tourism by signing the cooperation agreement with the Slovenian Faculty of Tourism Studies – Turistica. The cooperation agreement focuses primarily on the development of tourist facilities in the area of the Heart of Slovenia. This includes formulation of expert opinions, preparation of regional and international analyses, guidelines for raising the quality of the offer and promotion of the area as a tourist destination. At the same time, the Heart of Slovenia will become “a testing ground” and a study centre for testing new approaches in tourism and for knowledge and innovation transfers in tourist economy and social environment. This year’s activities have already been outlined, focusing especially on the promotion of family-run businesses in tourism and the development of some tourist spots in the Heart of Slovenia.

Turistica seeks to develop a programme of functional training, focusing on identifying opportunities for family-run businesses in tourism. This is a great opportunity for the area as the Heart of Slovenia includes a large number of small tourism providers, whose work could be more integrated and effective with regard to opportunities for family-run businesses.

Moreover, in the rural areas also some stakeholders with potential tourist infrastructure, which has not been effectively utilized yet due to the lack of ideas and knowledge, have been detected.

To successfully implement agreements, Litija Development Centre has invited tourism providers to submit their suggestions and wishes. This will help increase the creative space potential and the quality of life in the Heart of Slovenia.

A good practice example: Geoss Adventure Park

In the village of Slivna, near the geometric centre of Slovenia (GEOSS), a new adventure park for children and adults opened its door in July 2011. Visitors can rise from the ground up to the tree crowns and experience a great adventure. More skilled ones and those eager for adrenaline can try themselves at a height of 11 metres, while the moderate ones can do that at a height of 1 metre.

GEOSS Adventure Park offers four climbing routes of varying difficulty, which take between two to three hours. At different heights (from 1 to 11 m above ground), 61 climbing elements are arranged. The easiest difficulty level is suitable for children aged four and upwards. Each participant selects an appropriate difficulty level by themselves.

Visitors are given safety equipment produced by Petzl, Singing Rock and Climbing Technology, while trained instructors control the general safety. The park is constructed in accordance with the EU standard EN 15661-1 and as such provides a 100% safety of all visitors.

Thanks to the shade of the trees, visitors can enjoy the adventure park to the fullest also in the hot summer months. Furthermore, a variety of refreshing drinks is also available. The park is actually a big playing ground, ideal for social gatherings.

Parents or other attendants can either encourage their heroes in the pleasant shade of the trees, rest on the benches in the park or stroll along well-kept forest paths.





AcTour: Active Tourism for Sustainable Development

Leonardo da Vinci Transfer of Innovation

Project no: 2011-1-BG1-LEO05-05043

CLIMBING ROUTES:

Yellow route: for children aged four and upwards - 10 stations

Green route: for children aged 6 and upwards (minimum height of 140 cm), accompanied by an adult, a maximum of 3 children – 15 stations

Blue route: for children aged 11 and upwards (minimum height of 160 cm), accompanied by an adult, a maximum of 3 children – 16 stations

Red Route: from 15 years onwards (minimum height of 160 cm) - 20 stations

Children under 16 years have to be accompanied by an adult.

More information available on www.pustolovski-park-geoss.si, e-mail: info@pustolovski-park-geoss.si, or on the phone: +38630/332-332

The adventure park was co-funded by the European Union; the construction was fully supported by the local action group Heart of Slovenia.

