COTOUR - COOPERATION TO UPGRADE TOURISM AND REGIONAL PRODUCTS

Programme zone / Zone de programme:
West / Ouest

Type / Type
Individual Project / Projet Individuel

Topic / Thème
INTERREG programmes / Programmes INTERREG

Problem description / Description du problème ciblé par le projet
The idea of COTOUR operation was developed between the Economic Council of East Flanders (EROV) and University of Gent (UGent) in Belgium, Malopolska Agency of Regional Development (MARR) in Poland, Regional Council of Sicily (AAFRS) in Italy, Telsiai County Governor Administration (TCGA) in Lithuania and Regional Council of Limousin (CRLIM) in France. All institutions involved in the operation have a broad experience related to regional development. The most relevant projects [EU PHARE ACE Programme (1996-2001), INTERREG IIIB Project Euregio-Scheldemond (1999-2000), Project FUTURA (1999-2002), Regional Products Euregional (2003-2006), PIC Interreg IIIB Project MéRITE] make an excellent base for further interregional collaborations such as collaborations with other regions. The regions involved, i.e. Malopolska (Poland), Telsiai (Lithuania), Sicily (Italy) and Limousin (France), are quite well motivated to develop regional tourism. Regional managers followed some courses at the University of Gent on regional development. As a result, the common idea to introduce an Interreg IIIC project was created and everyone is focussing on regional tourism development based on interregional exchange. The main objective of COTOUR operation is to create a strategy for upgrading tourism as a tool for regional development. From the Strategic Touristic Plan, a structural component focussing on training of the actors is implemented. The idea is to work more specific on training of local initiators who will use new knowledge and expertise to upgrade tourism, for example by development of regional products. Linked to the general objectives, specific case studies are worked out in particular regions involved. Finally, communication and promotion activities are developed as follow: communication seminars, website of the operation, DVD, and promotional activities including press coverage with the name of Interreg IIIC Programme. In the communication seminar, the discussion will be stimulated between regional initiators and local authorities to adapt regional touristic policy. Further with communication in the region the whole Strategic Touristic Plan will be promoted. Main activities of the operation are management and cooperation, expertise exchange workshops, training programmes for regional initiators, and communication seminars. These four types of activities are expressed in four components. The expected outputs of the operation are meetings, workshops, trainings, seminars, the Strategic Orientation Round (SOR) analysis, TOURGuides, website, promotional materials and Reports to the INTERREG IIIC Programme. The major result of COTOUR relates to development and improvement of policies for regional development. Creation of a well designed strategy to upgrade tourism and a structure for interregional collaboration are the potential long-term impacts of the operation. Stimulating access to tourism operators database in and between regions is foreseen.

Overall objective / Objectif général de l'opération

Expected results / Résultats attendus
Activities / achievements so far

The main objective of COTOUR operation is to create a strategy for upgrading tourism as a tool for regional development in five European regions: East Flanders in Belgium, Sicily in Italy, Malopolska in Poland, Telsiai in Lithuania and Limousin in France. The Strategic Touristic Plan will be developed after realisation of two structural components focussing on expertise exchange and training of local initiators. Regional initiators will use new knowledge and expertise to upgrade tourism, for example by development of regional products.

During the first semester of the operation, the two main activities took place as planned: 1/ The start-up meeting of 3 days in Gent, East Flanders in Belgium, by the Lead Partner 1 (EROV); 2/ The Training Programme(1) of 5 days in Krakow, Malopolska region in Poland, by Partner 4 (MARR). Participants of the first interregional meeting in Gent consisted of 16 delegated people from 5 regions involved in the operation. In the second meeting in Krakow, there were 21 delegated people and 10 regional/ local representatives from Malopolska region in Poland. The number of good practices identified in COTOUR operation is 7, i.e. these are the case studies about the touristic success stories in the regions, as presented during the meetings (2 cases in East Flanders, 1 case in Sicily, 1 case in Malopolska, 1 case in Telsiai and 2 cases in Limousin). All of them were transferred to the partners extending their experience and knowledge about marketing, management and innovation in tourism sector. The involvement of partners is satisfactory as expected and planned in the operation's proposal. All six partners of COTOUR have actively performed their roles while participating in the two achieved meetings. They contributed to the Progress Report through Activity Reports that were sent on time to the Coordinator. The motivation of the participants and good ambiance during the meetings had a positive influence on carrying out the planned activities. The delegations of experts, regional initiators and local authorities are contributing in an excellent way as documented in the first major output of
the first semester, i.e. TOURGuide 1.

More information:
has been designed and is currently under construction