2Bparks
MAINSTREAM

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Preface: 2Bparks Perspective and Mainstream

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Often perceived as a limit of economic growth, protected areas nowadays claim their role in the horizon of sustainability. In order to effectively become a key factor of development, the value of nature and landscape must be better understood and respected. Protection is the foundation to any kind of enhancement policy for protected areas. The entire local and economic community should participate in the protection goals and the 2Bparks perspective.

Participation is the most crucial factor for achieving the 2Bparks perspective, indeed for all the pilot plans that have been elaborated and implemented during the project time, the assumed participation as a model of planning, sometimes when creating new networks, always contributing to the effectiveness and factuality of the plans themselves. Building the action plans and taking into account the different points of view and opposing territorial issues allowed the partners to create place-based programs that are tailored to reach the local objectives within a transnational dimension.

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

- designed new tools, tailored for improving the territorial plans and the marketing strategies, such as: the Roadmap for the managers, a notebook for sustainable tourism, an e-calendar and a sourcebook;
- developed transnational tasks involving different target groups, such as economic operators in the 2Bparks cluster, young researchers 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 on a territorial level.

At the beginning of the project, the partners developed a common approach for the sustainable development of the MED Protected Areas as well as a step by step planning procedure, but it was only after the pilot local implementation that a Transnational Strategy was created and tailored for all pilot territorial contexts and was made ready for transferability.

The Transnational Strategy developed through the continuous debate among the partners and based on project results. It has been especially designed to lead to a concrete and joint follow-up of the local development pilot plans and the local strategic tourism plans. The Transnational Strategy tackles the common concerns that had been assessed in the target protected areas, notably:

- the compatible "use" of the protected area resources for sustainable growth;
- the proper fruition of the protected areas;
- the increase of knowledge and awareness about the protected areas.

Promoting the compatible use of protected areas requires adopting action plans that are suitable for improving spatial and environmental plans; it means involving economic operators in a process of green business development and it demands administrative and political commitments. A proper fruition of the protected areas needs both educational tools for understanding the protected areas as well as creating a specific territorial marketing strategy for improving the sustainable tourism offer. Increasing knowledge and raising awareness requires tools and agreements between research institutes and the protected areas management board, as well as new educational programs.

The Transnational Strategy consists of:

- the Proposal for the capitalization of the Local Development Pilot Plans' results;
- the Joint marketing strategy for the Local Strategic Tourist Plan follow-up;
- the guidelines for implementing the 2Bparks platforms (Sourcebook, Edu-platform and E-calendar);
- the economic operators' cluster rules.

The 2Bparks Transnational Strategy contributes to an increased value of the protected areas. In fact, the partners benefited from the transnational dimension: the continuous exchange of experience and ideas generated a creative context, where it was possible to innovate practices and propose improvements to the planning and the policy. The transnational approach also allowed the partners to reinforce the territorial marketing strategy following the win-win logic, transcending any localism. Being a part of a Eu-

ropean network generated certain opportunities and increased the value of the actions that were then carried out on a local level.

The transnational cooperation enabled an experts' network to be created in addition to the consortium. The partners cooperated actively to build an expert group of skilled people and an institutional network ready to widen the level of cooperation. The presence of experts and skilled people was a guarantee for the mainstreaming process that was initiated at the end of the project implementation period.

Mainstreaming the strategy and the 2Bparks perspective remains the real unresolved challenge at the end of the project. Finally, the partners and the experts agreed that is crucial to capitalize on these results and to disseminate the determined tools and methodologies if the project is to remain an active and current one.

Executive summary

The recognized value of protected areas (PA) lies in enhancing their purpose and unique characteristics: biodiversity conservation, the preservation of landscapes and seascapes, the enhancement of their recreational value, the development of the environmental services and the creation of social and cultural benefits. These are important objectives, which require a sound and effective management. For this reason, PA play an important role for sustainable territorial policies. Often perceived as limiting economic growth, PA must face anthropic pressures and reconciling economic interests with ecological requirements. These are precisely the significant challenges that can lead to further territory development.

The first steps in managing this challenge are to recognize the problems and identify the appropriate tools. In this context, new integrated plans for local sustainable development are necessary to merge the common concerns with the transnational framework. The PA planning and management tools, presented in chapters **The Self-assessment Guide and the Roadmap for Protected Area Managers** and **Notes for the Roadmap to Develop Regional Approaches and Action Plans** represent a series of practical contributions for PA planning and management, on the one hand identifying the reference points to defining the planning tools and, on the other hand, providing a roadmap for protected area managers to develop specific approaches and actions.

The chapter **Local Development Pilot Plans and Local Strategic Tourism Plans: a Place-based Approach of the 2Bparks Perspective** focuses on the territorial approach with which to meet the perspectives and the objectives of 2Bparks. The authors define the objectives of the Local Development Pilot Plans (LDPP) and the Local Tourism Strategic Plans (LTSP). The efforts on how to improve and capitalize the results of those actions are presented in the chapter **A Proposal to Capitalize the Project Partners' Local Development Pilot Plans**. The selected cases of **LDPP in the Po Delta and the Bessilles Departmental Park** testify to how improving the environmental and landscape planning can identify new and important places for experimentation. Here, the participatory approach emerged as the definitive

tool for promoting educational paths and territories in terms of sustainable tourism and territorial development.

The next few chapters of the publication focus on issues that are related to the development of sustainable tourism in the 2Bparks PA and the neighbouring territories; its aim is to promote an integrated approach to PA management, to balance environmental conservation and protection with economic and social factors and to support responsible growth. **The 2Bparks Joint Marketing Strategy** is presented, providing an overview of the common objectives and shared strategic guidelines, as well as the marketing mix envisaged to support the promotion of sustainable tourism in the 2Bparks PA (and the surrounding territories).

Two Local Tourism Strategic Plans (LTSP) are summarized: the **LTSP in the Natural Regional Park of Serre** and the **LTSP in Alentejo Litoral**. During the project, eight LTSP were developed, all based on a common participatory methodology for fostering sustainable tourism as a key factor of cohesion and compatible growth.

The experimental action to jointly promote the 2Bparks Protected Areas (e-calendar) is outlined next, which was coordinated by the University of Athens and participated in by all the partners. This experimental action is basically an electronic calendar of events, which gathers and presents environmental and cultural events promoted by the protected areas or their surrounding regions.

The chapter **2Bparks Environmental Clusters** describes the implementation of the clusters: this is an activity intended for group enterprises and socio-economic operators who are committed to adopting sustainable business strategies, therefore contributing to the enhancement of the MED Protected Areas and to environmental protection and conservation in general. The common criteria adopted for the implementation of the clusters are summarized and an example is given to illustrate how the **economic operators can contribute to the development of sustainable tourism** (Troodos Regional Tourism Board) and how they can be involved in supporting environmental protection.

When the proposal of the 2Bparks project was being submitted to the European Territorial Cooper-

ation Fund, it was identified that most of the management plans for protected areas did not focus particularly on educational and awareness programs, but placed more emphasis on promoting a public understanding of the protected area. It is now clear how essential it is to establish a correlation between the problems that the PA must face (anthropogenic pressures, inadequate financing, a lack of cooperation between different sectors and institutional cooperation, elementary management capacity, increased demand for resource, users' conflicts) and the priorities for educational, training and communication programs.

The 2Bparks project partners are ready and pleased to be able to offer sustainable educational paths and accumulative knowledge patterns for the decision makers and managers, for the local authorities, for the wider private sector, for the research institutes, the universities and schools, for our families. In the following chapters, the main results of the educational activities are described. **The 2Bparks Interoperable Tools** describe the Sourcebook and the Edu-platform developed by the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. The Sourcebook is a spatial knowledge and exchange information platform enabling users to navigate through any kind of sources (publications, images, videos, books, papers, journals, marketing plans, guidelines) related to PA, while the Edu-platform is a distant learning tool available for universities, research institutes, schools and other bodies to build and share e-lectures.

The Transnational Educational Camp chapter describes an educational touristic activity and didactic practice, which was transnational from a binary perspective: both the lecturers and the trainees were from different countries. The camp was held in Attica in the Protected Areas of Schinias and more than 50 researchers had the chance to discuss the common methodologies and problems of environmental management and protection.

In the next chapters, selected experimental educational actions are summarized. Following the concept of "Places of Sense", **school educational methodologies and experimental actions in landscape education** were organized at the Po Delta Regional Park. **E-lectures for Primary and Secondary Schools in Slovenia** are presented, with focus on three e-lectures introduce the contents of the Pot ob reki Iški – Okljuk interpretative trail to children and youths and encourage them to visit the

trail. Two e-lectures on water were also created and included in the Vesela šola national program in the 2012/2013 school year in Slovenia. **Educational laboratories** in selected areas are described (Troodos National Forest Park, Alentejo Litoral), providing a new framework for integrated training.

The next two chapters are dedicated to the **2Bparks photography contests and awards**. They are a unique way of bringing young people to PA, so that they can observe and experience them in a focused manner. The participating youths absolutely proved themselves, depicting man and nature in the Troodos National Forest Park, the Natural Reserve of the Lagoons of Santo André and Sancha and the Ljubljansko barje Nature Park in an interesting, educational, expressive, occasionally dramatic and sometimes even negative light. Raising awareness in young people is the key element for the future of protected areas. The transnational dimension of the project is emphasized with the short presentation of the **2Bparks Transnational Award – Places of Sense**.

The sustainable development of protected areas, their roles and values are discussed in the chapter **2Bparks Mainstreaming: Life after the Project**, illustrated with the case of the 2Bparks Environmental Clusters, which are an interesting example of an approach to balance conflicting interests and to reconcile the protection and the conservation of the protected areas with economic development. A few guidelines are proposed to support the transferability of the methodology adopted by 2Bparks into other MED regions.

The experience of coordinating and managing the 2Bparks project from the point of view of the general project manager is described in the chapter **Managing a Transnational Cooperation Project: Understanding from the 2Bparks Experience**. Tips for transnational coordinators are included on how to effectively and successfully manage the project.

In order to reach the project goals, it was necessary to establish an intensive communication and dissemination of the project ideas in devising the activities and achieving the results. This is described in the last chapter of the publication. The chapter **Results of the Dissemination** includes an overview of the communication and dissemination activities during the project. Here, the 2Bparks International Symposium on Sustainable Tourism is also summarized, describing its importance as a forum sharing

ideas and jointly discussing good practices for environmental sustainability and tourism management.

The publication is rounded up with the 2Bparks message "Responsible sustainable development in protected areas", which is a timeless message that transcends this project and should be continually observed by future generations.

2Bparks Project Presentation

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The Territorial Cooperation Framework

The project Creative Sustainable Management, Territorial Compatible Marketing and Environmental Education To Be Parks (2Bparks) was co-funded by the European Community under the framework of the MED Programme – an EU transnational cooperation program covering all the Mediterranean regions.

It involved a large partnership and represents a wide geographic coverage: 11 partners, 7 countries (Italy, Greece, Spain, Portugal, Slovenia, France, Cyprus), 10 Regions (Veneto, Calabria, Piemonte, Andalusia/Jaén, Languedoc-Roussilon, Thessalia, Attiki, Alentejo, Slovenia, Troodos) and included Protected Areas (PA) that are characterized by a high biodiversity and a complex of terrestrial and marine habitats of excellent representation of the MED environment:

- rivers and wetlands: the Po Delta Regional Park, the Ljubljansko barje Nature Park, the Sado Estuary Natural Reserve, Santo André and Sancha Lagoons Natural Reserve, the Lame del Sesia Nature Park;
- hinterland med zone: the Bessilles Departmental Park;
- mountain/med maquis: the Troodos National Forest Park, the Sierra de Andújar Natural Park and the Natural Regional Park of Serre;
- coastal zones: the Schinias-Marathon National Park and the Southwest Alentejo and Vicentine Coast Natural Park;
- lake: the Protected Area of Lake Karla;
- mountain zones: the special reserve of Sacro Monte di Varallo.

The project partners were:
- Lead Partner: Spatial and Strategic Planning Department, Veneto Region (Italy)
- Natural Regional Park of Serre (Italy)
- General Council of Hérault (France)
- Province of Vercelli (Italy)
- Region of Thessaly (Greece)
- Andújar City Council (Spain)
- Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Anton Melik Geographical Institute (Slovenia)
- University of Athens (Greece)
- Troodos Regional Tourism Board (Cyprus)
- RCDI, Development and Innovation Network (Portugal)

The partnership was established on the basis of mutual acquaintance and through the collaboration of experts. 2Bparks stems from the capitalization of the results of the similar projects in the past: Slow Tourism, Coast to Coast, ARCHICHARTER, INTERCOTOUR, TERRED'ACQUA BEACHMED in the field of sustainable tourism; ISOLABELLA, aiming at integrating economy into the sustainable management of coastal areas; NATREG in the field of protected area spatial planning and management, the DEDI Digital Encyclopaedia of natural and cultural heritage in Slovenia; the ARISTHOT platform for e-learning.

Transnational Approach

Nature conservation, sustainable development and resource enhancement are EU common concerns, which require a strong cooperation among countries and regions. In the MED space, these issues were of particular interest because of the specific characteristics of the area. The human and economic pressures and the natural hazard had to be managed on a local scale, but with a wider and shared EU perspective. The challenge that was undertaken by the project required a transnational approach and a multilevel partnership from East to West. 2Bparks focused and included the main types of MED ecosystems.

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

The Pilot Action Plans were implemented and arranged to guarantee the transferability of the 2Bparks strategies to territories, transcending any kind of localism; but, most importantly, to reach the project's transnational dimension.

In this horizon of cooperation, the partners' competences in the fields of spatial and landscape planning, sustainable tourist promotion, education and research and stakeholders involvement became relevant especially for mutual learning.

The capitalization strategy assumed by the project allowed the partners to treasure their own past experience, 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 were approved on a territorial level, the clusters of economic operators had been launched and it was open for new members. Administrations, institutions, politicians, stakeholders and enterprises jointed efforts to reduce the gap between knowledge and practice, research and jobs opportunities, lifestyle and awareness.

Context, Background and European Framework

The definition of PA adopted by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) identifies PA as "*areas dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity, of natural and associated cultural resources, managed by legal means*". The purposes for which a Protected Area had been established, managed and assigned to a IUCN category may differ, but they are all territories that are affected by more or less heavily impacting economic activities.

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 a regional planning context*" with an innovative governance perspective.

In the past years, many events and meetings resulted in a shared idea of a Federation of Mediterranean Parks. The IUCN Center for Mediterranean Cooperation and UNEP-MAP were among the leading actors in this process. The Call for Collaboration towards an Association among the Mediterranean Parks, promoted by the IUCN, was addressed to the management board of Protected Areas; it aims to achieve essential collaboration in order "*to increase the general awareness of environmental issues, to draw the attention of international organizations to the role and potential of MED PA*", tackling "*the relationship between the safeguarding biodiversity and the sustainable development of local and national communities*".

In this context, the scientific community devised useful guidelines and self-assessment tools at the

PA managers' disposal, by means of some influential global/EU networks, such as: IUCN, Eurosite, Europarc, but also networks that were founded under the framework of Interreg.

Some of these tools include: the Eurosite "management toolkit", the EuroCharter of sustainable tourism, the UNEP's guide for Planning and Management Sustainable Tourism in PA, the Alparc's "Best practices in environmental education", the IUCN's guide for "building biodiversity businesses". All these and other tools may be helpful, but choosing the right one can be demanding for managers, because of the variety of issues and PA typologies they have to deal with in conjunction with the current legislation and socio-economic local cases. The EU directives in the Natura 2000 framework require 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 fact, the solution to the core question, which will improve the effectiveness of the PA plans, is somewhat contradictory: the participatory approaches are becoming more frequent, but not widespread enough to join the common planning practices, even if this is recommended by subsidiary and generalr principles.

Consistently with the strategy that encourages 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 the sustainable business and creative marketing.

2Bparks Scope and Objectives

2Bparks assumed the principle of sustainable development as a general guideline and finality: it boosted a compatible growth of the MED Protected Areas and a balanced development where conflicting interests were answered in joint integrated plans.

Looking at natural heritage as a factor of responsible development, the 2Bparks project promoted sustainable economic patterns to improve the attractiveness of the territory and the awareness of MED protected area values.

The general aim of the project was to increase the MED protected areas' sustainability and attractiveness, to integrate environmental issues into the core institutional thinking and into private investments choices.

The project arose from the common instances that cross administrative borders and regards natural heritage and protected areas as factors of responsible development. The specific objectives are:

1. Improving management and planning tools that will ensure participation, in order to:
   - improve the resources allocation in the Protected Areas by defining Action Plans that are based on a common perspective and developed with a place-based approach;
   - upgrade institutional capacities by providing tools for the managers and by making access to knowledge simpler;
   - boost responsible behavior among the economic operators by creating environmental clusters, which share a joint marketing strategy and foster a "biodiversity business".

2. Continuing sustainable tourism and increasing the territories' attractiveness in order to:
   - stimulate the quality of the tourism by increasing the offer and implementing a shared territorial marketing strategy;
   - promote MED Protected Areas as an exemplary tourist destination where natural and landscape heritage can coexist with businesses and where new job opportunities can be created.

3. Reducing the gap between research and decision makers and raising collective awareness on PA values in order to:
   - improve the experts' and managers' skills by promoting integrated networks between universities, institutes and public bodies and by providing new tools for education;
   - improve people's and the new generation's behavior so that they are 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 that are consistent with the vision of Europe 2020, the project appealed for:
   - participatory planning for compatible spatial and environmental management;
   - sustainable tourism for smart territorial growth and marketing;
   - training and awareness for inclusion and raising awareness.

The PA managers, planners, decision makers, researchers, territorial stakeholders and civil society were involved by PPS in the experimentation of:
- the PA Action Plans;
- the marketing strategy and the joint promotional actions;
- the integrated networks of learning communities.

The project deliverables were planned with a high degree of capitalization and transferability.

The followings project outcomes were implemented for ensuring that the project continues in the long term:
- the **Roadmap**, which is not a handbook, but a user-friendly tool, designed to support the Protected Areas managers in orienting themselves among the multitude of existing guidelines (Eurosite, Europarc, IUCN) and in selecting the most suitable ones;
- the **Notebook** for sustainable development and tourism: a collection of good experience presented during the 2Bparks SYMPOSIUM that boasts a high level of transferability;
- the **Sourcebook** and the Edu-platform that ensure a continuous knowledge system updating and reduce the gap between the public authorities and the research institutions;
- the **2Bparks Transnational Cluster** for group enterprises, socio-economic operators and public bodies that are committed to adopting sustainable business strategies, contributing to the environmental protection and enhancement in general;
- the **Local Development Pilot Plans**, which represent the territorial implementation of common strategies, are tools for the long-terms results on a local level;
- the **Local Tourism Strategic Plans** and the related **Territorial Marketing Strategy** that are designed to support the follow-up of the pilot plans.

A Place-based Approach for Long-term Sustainability and a Shared Strategy and Tools for the Networking Follow-up

The place-based approach adopted by the partners, within the Local Development Pilot Plans and the Local Tourism Strategic Plans, ensures that the project will achieve the program objectives on the local level, where sustainable policies and plans will actually be implemented. Those pilot plans, which were elaborated on 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 for them.

Step by step, the partners:

• created interpretative schemes/diagnoses for the pilot areas: each project partner selected a specific topic for the interpretation consistency with the pilot area features and with the current planning frameworks. For example:

– Landscape and Environmental Interpretation Schemes in the Po Delta Regional Park, in the Ljubljansko barje Nature Park, in the Schinias-Marathon National Park and in the Bessilles Department Park;

– environmental and socio-economic diagnoses in the Sierra de Andújar Natural Park, in the Natural Regional Park of Serre and in Lake Karla, in the Troodos National Forest Park, in the Parks of the Alentejo Region and in the park of the Province of Vercelli.

• assessed the constrains and opportunities with the stakeholders and the local community and, in some cases, experimented with new planning horizons (for example, Places of Sense in the Veneto Region, the Unusual Walks in the Hérault Dpt and the educational trails in Slovenia) and services (the sports area center in Cyprus and the honey museum in Andújar, the brand project in Serre);

• elaborated and adopted action plans, spatial and environmental planning tools and a tourist development program.

In addition to the pilot action plans, the consortium created some common tools and handbooks.

Among the tools available at http://2Bparks.mygis.gr, and through the project web site www.2bparks.org, there are also:

• the Sourcebook, where good practices, studies and PA guidelines were stored and can be easily accessed, is ready for managers, planners and research consultants;

• the Edu-platform available for universities and research institutions to share the e-lectures and educational tools in the long-term;

• the E-calendar for the promotion of events that take place in the 2Bparks PA.

The guidelines include:

• the Self-Assessment guide and the Roadmap where issues have been joined with the guidelines in a European context;

• the Notebook on sustainable protected area development, where contributions by European experts who attended the symposium have been systematized;

• the territorial marketing strategy: a guideline for the partners to improve their pilot action plans and the Economic Operators improvement and enlargement.

Partners benefited from the transnational dimension during the entire project implementation period: the continuous exchange of experience and ideas generated a creative context, where it was possible to improve practices and propose planning and policy improvements.

The transnational approach also enables the territorial marketing strategy to be reinforced by following the win-win logic, transcending any kind of localism. Feeling part of a European network generated opportunities and increased the value of the actions carried out on a local level.

The Self-Assessment Guide and the Roadmap for Protected Area Managers

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The Roadmap and the Self-Assessment Guide were developed by the Region of Thessaly in November 2011, in the framework of Phase 3.1 of the 2Bparks project.

In recent years, it has been recognized on an international scale that protected areas are only worth creating and maintaining if they fulfill their stated aims, which are biodiversity conservation, landscape and seascape preservation, recreational value enhancement, development of environmental services and the creation of social and cultural benefits. To fulfill these goals, protected areas need sound and effective management.

For this to become a fact, it first needs knowledge on the problems and the appropriate tools. Is this so difficult to achieve? Actually no, but it requires time, guidance and open minds. Managers must realize that efficiently managing a protected area does not mean answering calls, producing one flyer a year and organizing excursions for students. Protected area (PA) management is a multi-dimensional task that demands the same skills as 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 in sync with the international trends, building and re-building strategies, restructuring, correcting and finding funds.

When realizing the extent of the protected areas on a global scale (the sum of the protected areas covers 10% of the world's land surface), but also bearing in mind that more than 30% of the global protected areas were established within 1991–2000, one is left with the conclusion that the issue of sound management is undoubtedly urgent, but also that "park management" is still in the stage of its early childhood.

The goal of the "Roadmap for Managers and Self-Assessment Guide" is to add a small stone of knowledge to the evolution of park management worldwide.

PA Management Problems

Managers of protected areas around the world face a very crucial problem. They lose control not only when trying to find solutions, but, already when identifying the problems of their protected areas. The global online library offers a wide range of tools for the solution to their problem, but a lack of the skills to find them or spending too much time identifying the gaps does not lead to the target. The profiles of the protected areas are numerous and the problems differ greatly from one another. However, there are common categories that can be customized in each different environment, context and social framework at a later stage.

It is a fact that the range of the problems in protected areas is huge. The 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 deter him or her from the actual goals, which are to satisfy the environmental protection needs, to consider the spatial planning restrictions, to mind the promotion of social development, to protect the economic development and the profits, to secure the participatory processes and to take care of many other parameters that will be analyzed next.

Park management is not a one-way road. "Simply forbidding" has exactly the opposite results, which leads to a huge increase of pressure: from the local communities that feel they have been dispossessed of their land (demanding their land back), from 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 actually necessary).

The list of the main problems of PA management, based on the critical management activities, was created. It was based on the work of the 2Bparks partners, as well as on critical points in the international literature.

These critical management activities and problems are analyzed in the Roadmap for Managers and the Self-Assessment Guide in detail to help managers understand whether a problem exists in their protected area and start working on the solution, based on the global tools that are provided in the second part of

the Roadmap and Guide. Based on international sources and upon finding all the partners, the Roadmap proposed an extended list of solutions for each one of the problems detected in the first part of the work.

Criticial problems based on the critical management activities of protected areas (in descending significance)

No.	Critical Management Activities	Critical Problems
1	Law Enforcement and Surveillance	Lack of control on human dangers or inappropriate behavior to the environment
2	Working with Local Communities	Distance between the 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 minimal or non-existent
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 the 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 the ecosystems
15	Fire Management	Loss of forest stock and wildlife
16	Species Management	Degradation of the biodiversity
17	Communication, Publicity and Marketing	Low awareness from the non-local communities
18	International Networking	Isolation of the protected area

Notes for the Roadmap to Develop Regional Approaches and Action Plans
Gérard Wolff, General Council of Hérault

Definition of the Roadmap

The aim of the Roadmap is to provide a guide with a series of steps for progressively and effectively reaching the goals of a project manager.

Several sub-objectives may be proposed to highlight the role of the 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 ideas on the topics of water scarcity and drought.
- Foresee the stages from the design to the realization.
- Propose and set up a local action plan.
- Maximize/optimize the success potential of the local projects.

In short, there is no single way to achieve a roadmap; it is more a route that fits the needs, constraints and opportunities of any stakeholder. This module consists of the right hints, keys and practical experiments that will help the actors in water management to implement their project.

This Roadmap may also be used during a decision making process.

The Roadmap Heading to Local Actions

The following logical flow chart is built around a 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.

In achieving a transfer of experience, the user may benefit from:

- An 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 studies as well as theory.

The Context of the Water Core Experiments in Each Country and Region

This part is not a broadly detailed review on the legislation of each involved country, nor a study on the comparison between the legislative or regulatory environment in Europe. Such an analysis may be found in specialized leaflets or books.
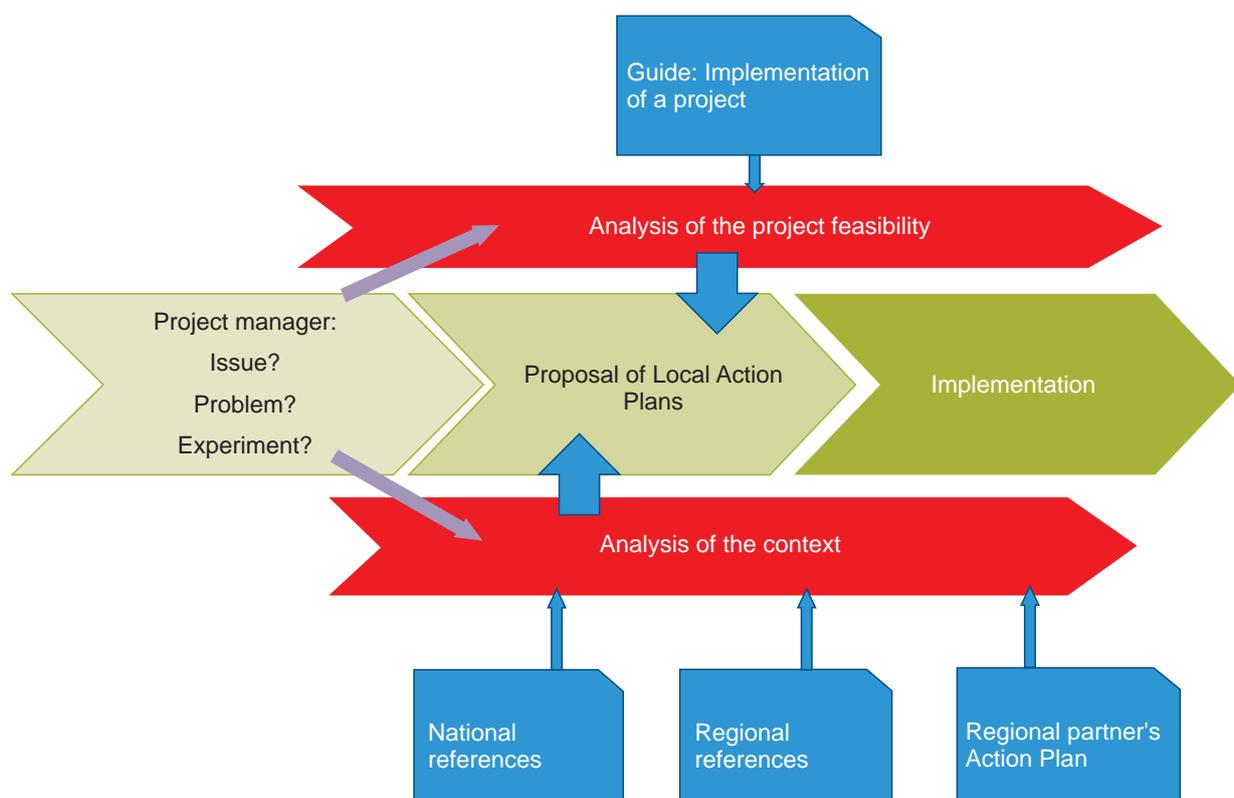
This part of the module is rather an overview that bridges the factsheets and some developments on the national and regional scale, giving the reader a better understanding of the legislative frame in which the action took place.

Since the conditions of carrying out an investment or a specific course of action are vast, it is more effective to present and summarize the background. Consequently, the potential stakeholders will have a good chance 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 the dedicated issues or organizations).

Analysis of the Project Feasibility

A General Approach: a Compass toward the Project Management

The following steps can be determined 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 they must be completed and integrated with other specific literature.

Design or the Engineering Phase

A – Overall viability
- Definition of the project: the goals, purposes, resources, qualities of standards, success criteria, project deliverability, measurable objectives, risks.

- Feasibility: the 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 …)

C – Institutional decision making process

Implementation Phase
A – Plan of a different step of the project
- Resources
- Budget
- Acceptance
- Level of quality
- Risk
- Communication …

B – Implementation
- Selection of a set of variables to be controlled on a regular basis (time, cost, quality, risk, acceptance, information …).
- Control and monitoring the activities during the implementation process.

C – Closure
- Assessment phase.
- Comparison of the goal and the result in terms of quality, delays, over budget costs …
- Draw conclusions and lessons learned.

Local Development Pilot Plans and Local Strategic Tourism Plans: a Place-based Approach of the 2Bparks Perspective

Raffaella Lioce (Tea Engineering, Veneto Region consultant)

Local Development Pilot Plans (LDPP) and Local Tourism Strategic Plans (LTSP) are the practical territorial implementations of the 2Bparks perspective. Planning the sustainable development of MED protected areas, starting from a deep understanding of the features, the strengths and the weaknesses, the protection requirements and the needs for compatible growth, is a shared concern and a common goal of the 2Bparks Consortium.

The 2Bparks Local Development Pilot Plans were designed to:
- improve the environmental, spatial and landscape planning framework, identifying new "spaces and horizons for experimentation";
- provide educational tools, thus defining innovative actions that will round out the scientific interpretation of the site with educational paths and territorial promotion;
- improve sustainable tourism by designing new products and services and creating promotional actions.

A participatory approach was used by all the partners to elaborate the LDPP and the LTSP: different tools and procedures were adopted and the partners in the field operated with them, for example: questionnaires and interviews, focus groups and operative meetings, traditional and innovative workshops, including workshops on the site, web tools and so on. This participation allowed the partners to open 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 the environmental features and the economic issues, being aware that sustainable development can only be implemented and achieved by merging nature and humans, reconciling interests and needs and innovating the vision and common perception of the protected areas.

The Local Development Pilot Plans were elaborated by:
- Lead Partner: Spatial and Strategic Planning Department, Veneto Region (Italy)
- General Council of Hérault (France)
- Province of Vercelli (Italy)
- Region of Thessaly (Greece)
- Andújar City Council (Spain)
- Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Anton Melik Geographical Institute (Slovenia)
- National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Faculty of Geology and Geoenvironment (Greece)

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

The LDPPs were created for the interpretation of the spatial and economic planning, in general, while the partners defined the individual actions in a specific field of sustainable tourism with the LTSPs. In cases, where a partner developed both the LDPP and the LTSP, the second represented a sort of deeper level of the LDPP.

The elaboration of the LDPP and the LTSP can be divided into **3 main phases:**
- Preparation phase
- Planning Process
- Implementation and Review

The **preparation phase** ensured that all the LDPP and the LTSP took advantage of past and good examples, basing on:
- the benchmark of past experience that is suitable for capitalization, the literature review and the Self-Assessment Guide and the 2Bparks Roadmap;
- the desk analysis of the current planning framework;
- the desk analysis of the landscape, the environmental and economic issues, and the identification of the tourism resources that are located within the pilot areas or the surroundings in particular (for LTSP).

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

The first one involved creating the scenarios that are common on a local level and include:
• seeking and finding ideas;
• understanding the needs of the local communities;
• sharing the way to sustainably include the economic and social instances into the protected areas plans;
• involving economic operators in the implementation of the pilot plans by encouraging green business.
The designing phase enabled the partners 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** guaranteed that the local projects' potential for success was maximized/optimized.
The **Step-by-step procedure** developed during the **planning process** was created by the 2Bparks partners for the:
• identification and specification of the intervention area;

• interpretation, diagnosis and analysis of the current situation based on the available data in order to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in the pilot areas and the surroundings;
• involvement of the local community and the territorial stakeholders;
• selection of an underlying theme and specification of the intervention strategy;
• activation of a communication plan.
The intervention strategies were elaborated with a place-based approach, determining different implemenations of a common step by step procedure towards a shared scope.

Coordinating the economic interests with the nature and landscape required different solutions for each protected area, as well as arranging a tailored tourism action plan. Performing this in a transnational context creates the right preconditions for experience and knowledge exchange, offering the partners the possibility to learn from each other and form a creative

Actions within the project partners' LDPP

Project partner	PILOT ACTION PLANS with a place-based approach to reach the 2Bparks scope	Actions towards reaching the project objectives
Veneto Region	The Place of Sense in the Po Delta: atmosphere for a local development pilot plan in the Po Delta Regional Park: experimental approach for landscape interpretation approach	To improve the regional landscape plan and the resource allocation in the Protected Areas To develop innovative territorial marketing tools To integrate the landscape into educational programs To improve people's behavior and educate the new generations 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	To promote sustainable tourism involving local enterprises and firms in a process of sustainable development To boost responsible behavior among the economic operators
Hérault	The Interpretative plan for Bessilles departmental park	To understand the natural and cultural environment and to promote educational tourism walks To foster the tourism quality by increasing the offer and arranging a shared territorial marketing strategy To promote Med Protected Areas as tourist exemplary destinations, where natural and landscape heritage can coexists with businesses and where new jobs opportunities can be created

Vercelli	The protected areas of Province of Vercelli: a driving force of sustainable development	To increase the Parks' sustainable fruition with coordinating the local authorities and stakeholders and the tourist supply. To promote Med Protected Areas as tourist exemplary destinations, where natural and landscape heritage can coexists with businesses and where new jobs opportunities can be created
Thessaly	Integrated Local Pilot Development Plan for the Karla Lake / Strategic Plan for the Promotion of the Sustainable Tourism of the Karla Lake	To involve the local community in the development process To identify the process promoting the lake as a tourist destination
RCDI	Sustainable Tourism in the Alentejo Coast and the Santo André and Sancha Lagoons	To involve the 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 the offer and arranging a shared territorial marketing strategy To boost responsible behavior among the economic operators To promote new, better destination services and products
Andújar	LDPP for Regional Development and Economic Promotion: The regeneration of Del Val Gardens and the Honey Museum	LTSP for Tourism Promotion To improve the area's attractiveness and promote sustainable development To foster tourism quality, by increasing the offer and arranging a shared territorial marketing strategy
ZRC SAZU	LDPP planning appropriate areas for the interpretation of PA trail	To improve the planning tools and identify the best interpretation areas (places) To promote new educational tourism services and products To improve people's behavior and educate the new generations to respect the value of nature, environment and culture, by designing educational paths for the learning community
University of Athens	Understanding Coastal Environment/Educational Tourism: Schinias-Marathon National Park	To limit research to promotional and tourism educational actions and to improve the experts' and managers' skills To improve people's behavior and educate the new generations to respect the value of nature, environment and culture, by designing educational paths for the learning community
Troodos	Troodos: The Green Heart of Cyprus – Nature and Cultural Park: New Gates for the Park/Improving educational and sport centers	To foster tourism quality, by increasing the offer and arranging a shared territorial marketing strategy To promote Med Protected Areas as tourist exemplary destinations, where natural and landscape heritage can coexists with business and where new jobs opportunities can be created

atmosphere where new solutions could be found, sometimes transcending the planning framework in favor of a more general promotional and educational context. Such examples include:

• The idea of Places of Sense promoted by the Veneto Region and implemented within the LDPP of the Po Delta Regional Park, which became the underlining theme of the 2Bparks transnational award and of a common promotional tool.

• The idea to limit interpretation to education and common awareness, the underlining topic Man and Nature and the need to limit research and management, which became the engine of the LDPP that were developed in the protected areas of the Hérault department, in the Ljubljansko barje Nature Park, the Schinias-Marathon National Park and in the Po Delta Regional Park. The school contest award dedicated to "Man and nature" emerged from these LDPP.

• Man and Nature also included the economy and the environment. This paradigm became the basis of the strategy adopted by the LDPP of the Lake Karla in the Thessaly Region, but also the oppor-

tunity to link the LDPP to the transnational clusters of economic operators.

• The concept that Nature could become a tourism product that is managed and promoted sustainably was included in all the LTSP: this implied sport, specialized activities (such as bird watching and scholastic tourism and education), complementary products and services based on the resource potential (such as Sun & Beach, Landscape and Cultural Touring, Residential Tourism, Gastronomy and Wine). This concept was enclosed in all the LSPT and became the underlining theme of the *Joint Marketing Strategy* designed by RCDI.

As a result, on one side, the place-based approach adopted by the partners within the LDPP and the LTSP ensured that the program and the program objectives were achieved on a local level (where sustainable policies and plans will actually be implemented); on the other side, the transnational context ensured a wide perspective that should mainstream the 2Bparks *Message and Vision* in the long-term, when the actions of the plans will take place on a local level.

A Proposal to Capitalize the Project Partners' Local Development Pilot Plans

Antonio Jesús Rodríguez (Andújar City Council)

The aim is to assure the capitalization of the LDPP results, based on 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 the policy development in which the project and its evolution are put.
- **How to impact policy development**: identify the individuals who are capable of ensuring the continuation of the project results and the modalities of their involvement.

One must bear in mind that the capitalization of the 2Bparks projects, the Partners LDDP and experimental actions take place at different levels:

1. **General Level of the MED PROGRAM**
2. **Capitalization to the project partners**
3. **Capitalization to the policy makers in MED area.**

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

Step one: **The added value of a transnational activity**
Step two: **Developing common policies**
Step three: **Identification, the role of the subjects and the methods of involvement**
Step five: **Understanding and sharing the results**
Step five: **Communication.**

Capitalization step one: The added value of transnational activity

The LDPP are the result of a transnational activity. The added value of the transnational cooperation was that these needs and problems could be resolved with better solutions if people from several countries approached the problem together, coordinating their actions by exchanging information and by continuously communicating.

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

This recognition process and review of the experience are the **capitalization** that represents the starting point of the entire process.

The effects that a transnational project produces are, as may be observed, intangible. For them to result in regional and national policy development, they must be shared with the political/administrative jurisdiction, evaluated, communicated and used effectively.

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

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

The start of the process includes:

- The definition of a threat or common need. At this stage, the most common actions are focused on the research and study of the phenomenon and/or campaigns to raise awareness.
- The formulation of common responses. This phase involves the LDPP, experimental actions, trial solutions and definitions of the methods and tools.
- The implementation of tangible support to solve the critical point. At this stage, it is possible to plan the common means of cooperation and coordination, the schedules, or the combined regulations according to the analysis results of the LDPP.

Capitalization step two: Developing common policies

Through the capitalization process, the partners pass from the perception of the problem, analyses in the LDPP, to the formulation of the responses, from testing the possible solutions to their implementation. In other words, the process consists of the development of common policies by developing the strategies and common activities.

Insuring a real transfer of the results requires:

1. Connecting the LDPP results to the policy cycle, to be part of a larger program.
2. Set out how the results could contribute to policy-making improvements.
3. The creation of synergy. During the project capitalization, it is important to review the ability of the project to be integrated with the existing ones

(creating synergy). Synergies should be sought on a project or program level.

Additionally, the developed synergies may have a different basis and, above all, different intensities:
- Topical synergies: the projects address the same topics.
- Operational synergies: the project is functionally integrated.
- Strategic synergies: the project is prepared for a larger-scale intervention.

Capitalization step three: Identification, the role of the subjects and the involvement methods

Once the LDPP are defined, the stakeholders who benefit from the development of the specific policies should be identified and involved through a participatory process. This is divided into three different categories:

1) Target groups: individuals, citizens as final beneficiaries of the policy. The goal of each project is to implement the policies that can be translated into an advantage or a reduction of the problem for certain individuals (a target group). A priority task of the project is to clearly define which groups of subjects should benefit from the evolution of the 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 the 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 centers in the partnership. On the other hand, the 'construction' of the knowledge must be achieved through the active participation of the 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 the stakeholders is recommended for getting useful feedback on the policies that are implemented.

Finally, in the implementation phase, the actors who are implementing policies play a fundamental role; the involvement of agencies and public administrations is essential.

Capitalization step four: Understanding and sharing the results

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

The evaluation of the effects of the cooperation may differ in intensity. It can be done internally in one or more meetings (brainstorming: focus groups) and led by one of the partners. In this case, the benefits are represented by economy and speed. On the other side, it can be more structured and more sophisticated methods can be adopted such as an analysis to potential users (customer satisfaction), requests for opinions of the 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.

The key points for establishing 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 evaluation 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 the partners and stakeholders.

Capitalization step five: Communication

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

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

Practical tools to share and capitalize the results:

- How advanced was the policy compared to the plan?
- analyze the results and achievements of the 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 a plan on how to evolve the policy of the area
- identify programs and projects with which to build synergies and define its type

Places of Sense: Atmospheres for a Local Development Pilot Plan in the Po Delta – Experimental Approaches for Landscape Interpretation Schemes

Chiara Quaglia, Nicola Boscolo (Veneto Region, Spatial and Strategic Planning Department), Raffaella Lioce, Roberta Galli, Silvia Galli (Tea Engineering)

Protected Areas (PA) play an important role for sustainable territorial policies. Often perceived as limiting economic growth, PA must face anthropic pressures and reconcile economic interests with ecological requirements.

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

Regional parks represent a driving force for MED Regions. Operators, citizens and policy makers often prefer to look at Parks only as recreational areas and not as a factor of sustainable development. Here, the economic potential of nature can be improved and landscapes can become a tool for territorial growth.

Plans and marketing strategies must be revised, transcending any kind of localism in order for them to become actual tools for a wider compatible growth, beyond any simple instance of protection. The ecological requirements must be reconciled with the economic and social issues by integrating sectorial policies into the park plans and strategy.

Nature conservation, sustainable development and resource enhancement are concerns that are common to the EU, requiring a strong cooperation among the countries and regions.

The Pilot Action Plans have been designed to implement the 2Bparks joint strategies, becoming a place-based tool for the 2Bparks transnational implementation: the LDPP represents the implementation of the 2Bparks strategy of the MED PA development on a local level, both for improving the environmental plans and the sustainable tourism promotion.

In this perspective, the 2Bparks LDPP developed in the Veneto Region chose to focus on the landscape, which is considered to be the result of human and nature interaction: the place where different interests and instances can find a new balance.

The Veneto Region target area is the Po Delta Regional Park.

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

The ACTION PLAN was created based on the principles of subsidiarity, equality and sustainability. Its innovative character relies on the experimental underlined topics: *THE PLACES OF SENSE*.

Content of the Experimental Action

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

But before the contents of the LDPP, an introduction to what constitutes a Landscape Plan is required. Recently, the Spatial and Strategic Planning Department, Veneto Region signed an agreement with the national government to jointly develop a Landscape Regional Plan and the Po Delta, which represents a pilot experience of a specific landscape ambit plan.

According to the "National Code of Cultural and Landscape Heritage" (Legislative Decree no. 42/2004), two public administrations (state and region) have to cooperate in Italy when determining the definitions of the guidelines and the criteria related to the activities of protection, planning, reclamation and landscape enhancement and the management of the related works. In the Veneto Region, the two public administrations involved in landscape planning were the Spatial and Strategic Planning Department,

Veneto Region, and the Regional Direction for the Cultural and Landscape Heritage, with the Superintendencies as their peripheral organs. Since July 2009, these institutions have been 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, which involved members of both institutions. One of the aims of the regional plan was to organize the territory into homogenous areas (called "Ambiti di Paesaggio"), and one of these first experimental areas is the Po Delta, which, together with the Venice Lagoon Area, is the ambit called the "Coastal Adriatic Arch, the Venice Lagoon and the 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 the European Landscape Convention, which identifies the Landscape as "part of the land, *as perceived by the 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 the landscape policies. For this reason, the Convention stresses how important it is that the values given to the landscape by the experts take the local inhabitants into consideration, their social perceptions, their collective memories, their aspirations and the natural, social and economic forces. The landscape plan must define the policies for the protection of the landscape, also by determining the transformations that are compatible with the landscape values, as well as the measures for the enhancement of the landscape, including the objectives for sustainable development.

The subject of the LDPP deepens within the framework of the European Landscape Convention: the notion of "Places of Sense" of the Po Delta. What is a Place of Sense? What 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 the LDPP aims to answer. On the first question: it is hard to define what a "Place of Sense" is. It is a combination of the material and non-material components of perception. The material component must include not only sight, but all five senses. The non-material values must be especially considered: they can be memories, traditions, symbols, history, etc. The non-material values can be discovered in many ways: through the eyes of artists (poetry, literature, photography, movies) and of the local peoples' perceptions, individual and collective, common or specific.

Methodology

The main methodological steps for experiencing the LDPP "Places of sense" are quite evident in the structure of the Notebook, which summarizes the methodological aspects and the undertaken actions. The steps were the following:

- Develop the notion of a "Place of Sense": meanings, sources (cinema, art, perceptions, sensations, traditions, literature …), typologies and their potential to be 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 information) and the bottom-up participatory approach, involving the actors and stakeholders on site.
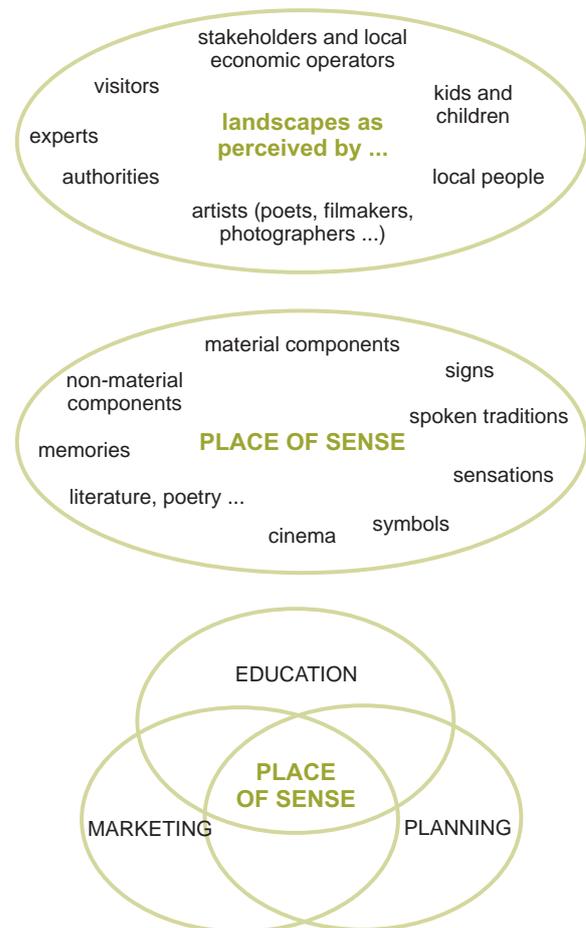
Scheme of the European Landscape Convention for the notion of Landscape; sources for the detection of "Places of sense"; fields of interest

- Define a matrix for the analysis of the places, trying to mix the qualitative and quantitative approaches: the sensitive value is identified as a 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 to the collection of good practices and guidelines for each field. Furthermore, other actions included in the 2Bparks project (especially promotional and educational) were attempted to be integrated for each one of these fields.

- Select a few "places of sense" for a specific analysis and development scenarios.

Experimental Approach

The first step was the direct measurement by the decision makers and planners, mainly by brainstorming; focus groups; site visits; interviews. Next, involving a panel of experts and local stakeholders in organized workshops. Thirdly, starting an experimental participatory process of a landscape collective preferences; assessing what tries to reduce the subjectivity of land-

the sound of landscape

the smell of landscape

the taste of landscape

touching the landscape

landscape views

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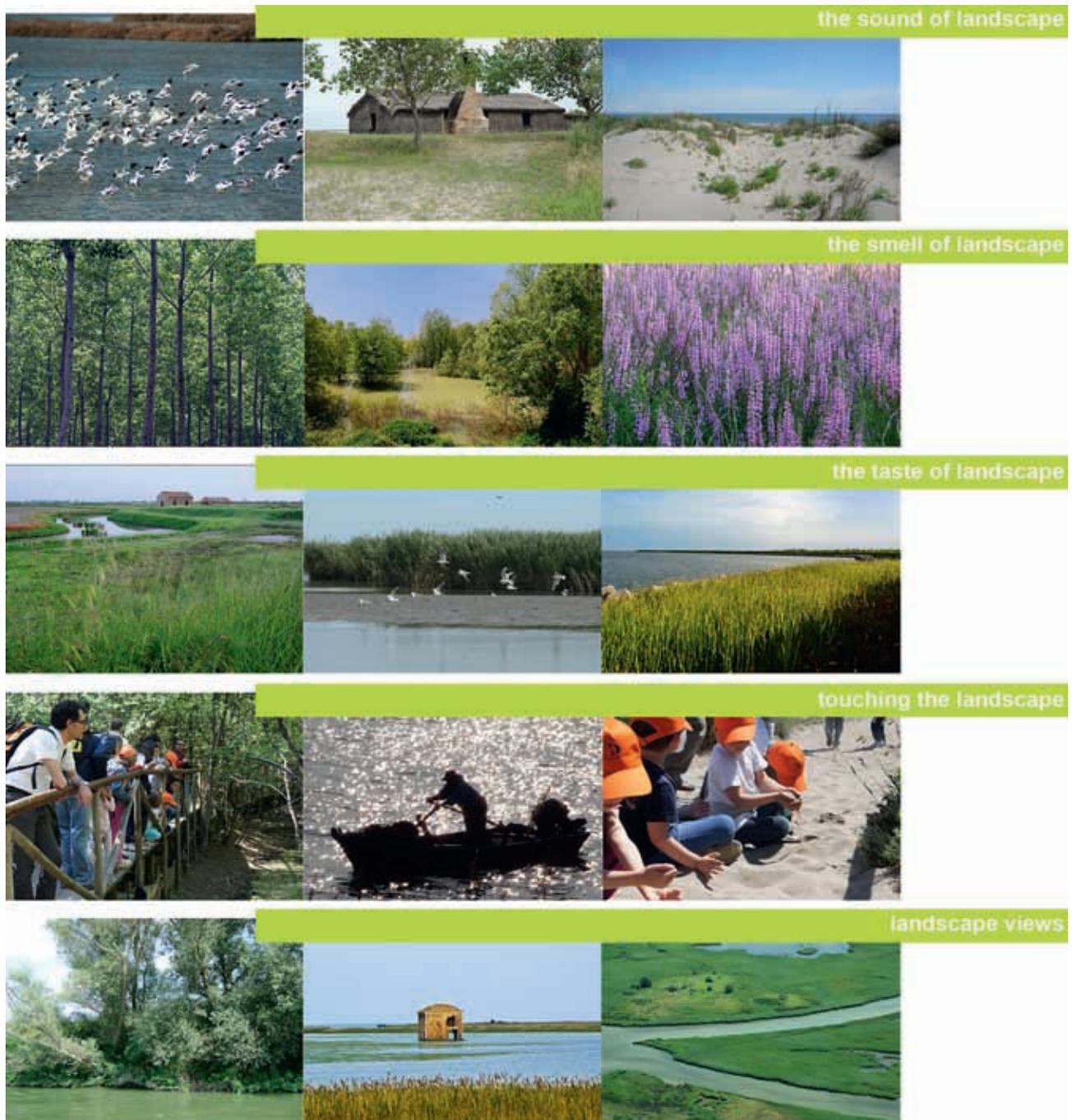
scape planning: local meetings and public events were organized with the two-fold aim of spreading 2Bparks to the mainstream and of involving the local community in a co-planning process for the landscaping choices. The foreseen results: to define a methodological approach to social landscape value assessment, to identify the most important "places of sense", to design and plan a sense of place for a shared landscape plan.

Participatory approach

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

First Survey

The first survey lasted one day and took place in the area of the Po Delta Regional Park, where the members of both institutions involved in the Landscape Plan (State and Region) as well as the other collaborators and local experts visited the area on 19 July 2011.

The survey started at the Visitors Center of the Park with a lecture on the 2Bparks project and its contribution in the context of the Landscape Plan, but this was the only formally structured moment. All the other phases took place outdoors, visiting places that were chosen for their particular characteristic of being a "place 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 people's perception of the place. Like "Scano Boa", a land between the wetlands, river, beach and sea that was the setting for a book by Cibotto Gian Antonio and a movie in the 1950s. The group visited the area by boat, and then walked through the dunes and on the beach, trying to perceive the material and immaterial features that inspired the artists and increased the value of that landscape.

For delving deeper into both the anthropic and naturalistic assets that form the landscape heritage characteristics of the area, the group visited the Cà

Vendramin Musem, an example of industrial archeology that testifies to the work of man by controlling the river course and draining the land around it, and the Maistra branch, spectacular for its wide variety of birds and vegetation.

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

The visited places included: Porto Tolle, Visitors center; Scano Boa; Taglio di Po, Cà Vendramin Foundation Center; Po di Maistra. There were about 40 participants: members of the Superintendence of Architectural and Cultural Heritage, Verona, Members of the Regional Direction for the cultural and landscape heritage, Members of the Spatial and Strategic Planning Department, Veneto Region, staff of the Po Delta Regional Park, the local authorities and experts. The most positive aspect of the first site visit was that the professional experts and authorities (who are not inhabitants of the park area) familiarized themselves with the characteristics of the Po Delta landscape, not by a formal and technical approach (as is usually the case), but by a direct contact with the nature and the local territories. It was also important that the group of the participants were supported during the entire survey by the explanations of the local professionals who shared their local perceptions and point of view.

Second Survey

A second survey that lasted one day took place on 27 June 2012 in the area of the Po Delta Regional Park where the members of both institutions involved in the Landscape Plan (State and Region) as well as the other collaborators and local experts visited the area.

The participants were organized in two different groups. The first group visited some places of interest, in terms of tourist activities, urban settlements, environmental areas, seeing the different types of landscape and their potential and/or critical aspects. During the visit, the focus was on coastal areas and their development: tourist facilities on beaches (Boccassette, 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, the Maistra Branch of the Po River, "Via delle Valli" itinerary, Isola della Batteria …): this activity related to the landscape plan, which included new tools of communication (like a video) in addition to the ordinary tools of the plan (cartography and texts).

The objectives included:
• visiting the target area a second time, more focused on the specific aspects of landscape values perception in the most visited areas of the Po Delta;
• discussing the main criticisms and opportunities directly in the field, in contact with the local experts;
• experiencing video-shooting in addition to the traditional planning tools.

The visited places included: the Pinewood and Botanical garden of Rosolina; Ca' Pisani; Po di Maistra; Ca' Cappello. Museo Civiltà Contadina; Via delle Valli; Scanno Cavallari.

There were about 40 participants: the local authorities and the technical staff of the Veneto Region, the Veneto Superintendencies and the Po Delta Regional Park, the video operators.

The most significant activity was that some aspects of the landscape of the Po were discussed "in the field" by the decision makers of the Landscape Plan together with the local stakeholders. The video-shooting was an experiment that was successfully included in the plan and has now been exported and applied to other areas of the Veneto Region.

Workshop

The individuality of the places of sense was helped by the participation of the representatives of the 9 municipalities that are involved in the project. A workshop took place in January 2012; here, a specific questionnaire was submitted to the participants, asking them to propose the most significant "places of sense" in their territories. The results are included in the list of the places of sense.

Added Value and Results

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

The first achievement was to formally introduce the notion of "places of sense" as a tool for spatial

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Fausto Tonazzo

Raffaella Lioce

planning, in particular in the area of the Landscape Plan.

The second achievement was to select a few "places of sense" in the Po Delta by combining different approaches (qualitative and quantitative, bottom up and top down).

The notebook was implemented by taking into account the participatory results and included both the methodological issues and the applied procedures: design, planning and marketing tools were analyzed and provided under the framework of "2Bparks Mainstream".

Qualitative assessments of landscape resources can best be approached through directly measuring the landscape perceptions. This approach yielded information that was relevant to the plans for landscape improvement and protection.

Communication Plan and the Scope of the Promotional Actions

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

The final results of the LDPP "Places of Sense" were communicated and spread 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 and is useful for replicating the LDPP in other areas of the Veneto Region. It also describes the determining process of the Places of Sense in the Po Delta and includes a list of the Places of Sense with photographic and iconographic images.

The integration with other project actions was also expressed: the transnational **award** was 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 also involved new communication technologies, by developing specific **applications** for smartphone and Iphones. In this tool, the places of sense are described with evocative photos, videos, drawings and illustrated on a map with all the useful information for visitors.

Local Development Pilot Plan in Hérault: The Interpretative Plan for Bessilles Departmental Park

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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 activity program aimes to encourage the 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 program centered 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 other domains that are managed and enhanced as protected areas. All these domains are integrated in the departmental heritage. This is the case of the Bessilles Departmental Park.

The PA represent an important diversity ranging between several points of view: cultural (archaeology, built heritage …), geological, landscape, ecological or social (pastoralism, spare time activities: mountain biking, fishing …). The PA are spread over the entire Hérault territory except the lagoons and the sand dunes milieu.

As part of its policy to improve this heritage, the General Council of Hérault has encouraged several activities regarding management, expertise and awareness for many years.

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

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

Methodology

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

The service included the interpretative plan, the conception and the installation of the support on site. It accommodated the management and the protection of the PA with the economic and occupancy stakes.

Experimental Approach

The realization of the interpretative plan 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 highly 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 an ideal place for leisure activities in a protected environment. For 30 years, this 35 hectare area has been an enjoyable area with its pine forest, its extensive meadows and its varied facilities (picnic areas, barbecue areas, stretch of water, verdure theatre).

The sports activities are quite varied: an outside swimming pool, sport fields, tennis, a bowling pitch, mini golf. A mountain bike pathway runs here as part of an approved course by the French Federation of Cycling and it is the starting point of 240 km of marked routes.

Lastly, visitors can participate in tree-climbing as a leisure activity.

Several actions were carried out in order to improve the environmental quality and join the models of sustainable development local strategies: upgraded street lighting (especially solar and wind-powered lights), selective trash sorting and richer biodiversity on the green surfaces that was achieved with a more ecological management.

Visitors are predominantly local families, tourists (especially clients of the holiday village), school groups and other groups organizing events on the site, recreational athletes.

The interpretative scheme was carried out in 3 phases:
• Phase 1: Designing the interpretative scheme (inventory / diagnosis / proposals / action plans);
• Phase 2: Conception and realization of the interpretative plans;
• Phase 3: Manufacturing, monitoring of physical work on site.

PHASE 1: The interpretative scheme

This plan was a tool, serving as a diagnosis for designing the implementation of the enhancement of Bessilles Park. The aim of this diagnosis was to get to know the area's potential, to describe the development proposals and the interpretative measures that are inherent here, to organize the planned implementation into a hierarchy and to estimate the cost of this effective concept and realization.

This plan includes:
• a diagnosis of the existing state;
• remediation proposals that deal with the elements that have been determined as dysfunctional;

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• proposals for ways of raising the visitors' awareness;
• estimating the costs of in order to measure the necessary budgetary commitments so that they can be implemented.

The natural and scenic heritage of the site, the identity and the richness the community, and the existing public services were taken into account in order to:
• define the educational potential of these elements (character identity, demonstrativeness);
• measure the challenge in dealing with the corresponding topic on the possible frequenting of various locations in the area;
• propose the first steps towards an implementation of the plan.

This diagnosis consisted of the following points:
A-1 / The analysis phase
• ecological and landscape analysis to define the interpretative goals, a photographic report for the site interpretation;
• bibliography and documents (regulatory protections, sensitivity of the environment …);
• proximity of the services (tourist and sport equipment, accommodation, catering, tourist information, business activities …);
• existing park elements: pedestrian and road access, welcome areas, parking, capacity of the site, size, visits and consequences (degradation …);
• valorization and management: equipment (picnic areas, pathways, signs, markings, animations);
• analysis of the existing offer on leisure and sport activities, determining the constructions that are made available to the public and the services offered by the community or the private operators;

- analysis of the potential visitors. Analysis of the different Park users (context, state of mind). Welcome capacity of the Park. Evaluation of the grounds;
- analysis, definition and organization into a hierarchy of the interpretation potentials (levels of interest). This phase was performed with the use of a field service, the existing documentation and several interviews).

A-2 / The proposals phase

Definition of the interpretation topics: the objectives, the common thread, the contents, the message formulation for the visitors and locals.

Proposals and choices for the human resources and the materials for interpretation:

- Choices on the means of the interpretation (fixed or temporary) that would be applied in harmony with the defined topics.
- Pathways and markings, accompanied visits or not (with or without a booklet), itineraries with cartography: Interest? Type? Length? Time? Difficulty? Starting points? Security and protection?
- Suggestions on the materials and the graphic choices for creating the interpretative elements and the technical specifications.

Participatory Approach

Two kinds of approaches were applied.

1. The institutional participatory approach. It must be mentioned that this plan did not come through a public participatory approach. Even though the Bessilles Park is the property of the General Council of Hérault, no local communities (or other public entities) decided to be a part of the project (even the Montagnac Municipality in which the park is located). The project was encouraged by the General Council

of Hérault and guided by the public requirements. With this interpretative plan, the General Council of Hérault answered to a public demand. However, a participatory approach did exist with the private stakeholders: the interpretative intention was accompanied by a concern for local development, including the 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 was interested in the following routes direction with regard to the interpretation of the heritage of the park:

- The establishment of an animal-themed playground in the heart of the park.
- The establishment of an interpretive trail for children of a playful nature, based on an exploration book that allows for a kind of investigation/game in the area.
- The establishment of an interpretive trail for the general public; this would most likely be useful for midseason holidaymakers who are generally more interested in nature than summer holidaymakers.
- Tourist information on the specifics of the natural and regional heritage, particularly via a website or multimedia processing.
- A summer program with cultural activities to the topic of nature/heritage. These activities could be "integrated" into the VVF event program (if the topics are free of charge).

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

=> The forest adventure park offers groups and individuals tree-climbing activities and an educational trail (the barefoot trail can be visited independently using a worksheet). The treetop course contributes

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to a playful and original approach to the pine forest, accompanied by information/guidance from activity leaders. The barefoot trail reinforces an educational approach to local natural and ethnological heritage.

2. The participatory approach of the public. Visitors come to Bessilles Park mainly to benefit from its pleasant scenery. Unfortunately, the curiosity towards nature and biodiversity are limited. The information offer on the biodiversity is limited, whereas the natural heritage in the park is quite interesting. Because of this, some elements of the park remain unknown to both the tourists and the locals. The interpretative plan resolved these negative points by:

- making the visitors/the general public a part of discovering of this protected area;
- involving them in the necessary conservation of this PA (awareness).

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

Added Value and Results

The interpretative scheme for Bessilles aimed to identify the development opportunities of the area, in order to interpret (in the "museological" sense) its identity and heritage for the visitors who frequent it.

This work includes:

- a diagnosis of the existing state;
- remediation proposals that deal with the elements that have been determined as dysfunctional;
- proposals for ways of raising the visitors' awareness;
- estimating the costs of in order to measure the necessary budgetary commitments so that they can be implemented.

Bessilles receives between 120,000 and 140,000 visitors each year.

The park's heritage interpretation was aimed toward emphasizing the spirit of the place, its identity and its richness.

To do this, some means were designed to manage the site and its visitors:

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

The interpretation provides the visitor with the numerous factors that are crucial for understanding the park's message.

It seeks to:

- provide a list of interesting sights that focus on showcasing the "beautiful" aesthetic factor;
- provide knowledge: a didactic and cognitive factor;
- provide the visitors with a pleasurable, dynamic experience: a playful factor (note that this may be an intellectual dynamic as is the case for chess players, for example).

The interpretation also seeks to evoke some realizations on the values of society and the individual. It is not confined to explanations. It uses analogies, provokes the visitor to question things and change their attitude. With this message, the interpretation is a form of food for thought.

The practical applications tried to follow these principles as closely as possible. Direct management by the activity leader is the most effective means of ensuring a high quality interpretation. The activity leader must, in essence, act interactively, constantly adapting to the audience. However, the leader's presence is not permanent. The use of indirect management overcomes this absence but never has the same efficiency, regardless of the interactivity of the media.

The key ideas for the interpretation in Bessilles are:

- To raise awareness of the biodiversity of the area, but also of its management regarding the recreational and aesthetic elements, by activating the visitors' the imagination and delivering a simple and immediate message with strong cultural references with a spirit of popular education.
- To encourage civic virtue and eco-citizenship, particularly in the core zone.

• To allow for an appropriation of different areas in Bessilles, especially the naming and symbolization of a few places in the core zone.
• To open a discovery area and propose some well-marked pathways.

The validated means of interpretation give an account of:
• The nature identity: animals. This can take the shape of metal sculptures of insects (cicadas, dragonflies, spiked magician, butterflies), animal totems (snake, scorpion, frog, owl) and an animal- themed playground.
• The 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.
• Managed areas and areas for interpretation.
• Events: a management-event staff on the site, a nature outings program, a summer program for the "Arts des chemins" ("Arts of paths") shows.

The majority of the proposed elements of interpretation are playful (animals, insects …), because a large part of the visitors are families with children.

Communication Plan and Scope for the Promotional Actions

Phases 2 and 3 of the public procurement contract deal predominantly with the communication and the promotion of the action.

PHASE 2: Conception and realization of the interpretative means
This includes:
• the realization of the texts and the concept of the illustrations/pictures (photographs, watercolors, drawings, plans, pathways …);

• the digitization;
• the graphic concept in its entirety (page settings, templates …);
• the delivery of the computer templates.

PHASE 3: Manufacturing, monitoring of the physical work on site
To obtain the highest quality of all the media, the service provider consented to gain the approval of the General Council of Hérault before manufacturing any of the interpretative material (this includes signs, outside interpretative panels, security elements …).

In actual terms, 1 or 2 of the pre-existent access pathways on Bessilles area were equipped with signboards (explanation of the progress, the target users, the purpose, which tour, etc. The pathways are quite easy to complete and they take different lengths of time to complete. Their principal purpose is for the visitors to discover the area in a free and an independent way (converted lawn and stretch of water, pine forest, viewpoints over the surrounding area …).

The creation of an observation platform with a landscape guide map (in relation to the pathways) was proposed for the coastline plain (viticulture areas, Bassin de Thau, Mont Saint-Clair …). This platform, which is a place for observation and contemplation, is in line with the ecological management plan of the park, which foresees a minimal development, efficient safety measures and the integration of the environment).

The following interpretative elements were validated:
• 5 panels with information about the area, 1 of these describing the pathways and Bessilles in general (see attached images in PDF).
• 1 observation platform with a panoramic guide map (not yet completed).
• The materialization / creation of 1 or 2 access pathways.

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Part of the General Council of Hérault's website or a separate site will be 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 functioning 360 degree virtual tour.

People serving in the interpretation: the management-event staff on site will serve several purposes:

- Maintain a presence on the 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 the fire risks, waste management, respect for the rules in the area.

- Provide all kinds of information about the area and the regional heritage.

Events and animations are possible but the topics, the dates and the durations still have to be determined. Additionally, an ambitious program of nature outings for the general public and a summer program for "Arts des chemins" ("Arts of paths") shows have been proposed.

In 2012, the Bessilles Departmental Park as a PA benefited from 3 nature outings within the context of the "*Unusual Walks*" (component 3 of PP3's 2Bparks project). For example, the nest boxes for European Rollers were most notably installed during the outings in Bessilles within the framework of the "*Unusual Walks*".

The 2Bparks Joint Marketing Strategy

Alexandra Mendonça (RCDI, Development and Innovation Network)

The purpose of the 2Bparks Joint Marketing Strategy is twofold:
- to define a common strategic approach for the development and promotion of sustainable tourism, founded on the natural heritage of the protected areas (PA) that are involved in the project;
- to provide a general framework that will support the outline of the Local Tourism Strategic Plans (LTSP) and that will locally promote sustainable tourism models based on participatory solutions.

This paper provides the general background about the 2Bparks Protected Areas and the neighboring territories. It discusses the main opportunities and challenges that are related to the development of sustainable tourism and defines a common vision and the main strategic guidelines concerning the segmentation of the target markets, the competitive positioning and the differentiation attributes of the 2Bparks territories. Based on this shared vision, a 2Bparks marketing strategy is proposed, mainly addressing 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 neighboring territories were considered in the scope of the Joint Marketing Strategy, as listed in the following table.

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 experimenting with solutions that aim to reconcile nature conservation with sustainable tourism development and its promotion.

The Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Target Protected Areas

The considered protected areas all together represent a size of over **425 thousand hectares** of natural heritage, benefiting from a regional, national or international protection status. Most of the protected areas are part of the Natura 2000 network and therefore include SPA (Special Protection Areas, according to the Birds Directive) and/or SAC (Special Areas of Conservation, according to the 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): the Santo André and Sancha Lagoons Natural Reserve and the Sado Estuary Natural Reserve in Portugal, both included in the Ramsar List of wetlands of international importance, Southwest Alentejo and Vicentine Coast Natural Park in Portugal, the Po Delta Regional Park and the Protected Area of the Sesia Valley, in Italy, the Ljubljansko Barje Nature Park in Slovenia, the Schinias-Marathon National Park and the Protected Area of Lake Karla in Greece;
- mountain and forest areas: the Sierra de Andújar Natural Park in Spain, the Special Reserve of Sacro Monte di Varallo and the Natural Regional Park of Serre in Italy, the Troodos National Forest Park 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, fish, 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, the Special Reserve of Sacro Monte di Varallo in Vercelli, Italy, deserves particular mention, because it is classified as a World Heritage Site (WHS). Some sites within other protected areas or their adjacent zones are also listed as WHS by UNESCO, as it is the case of the prehistoric pile-dwellings in the Ljubljansko Barje Nature Park in Slovenia and of the ten Byzantine churches in neighboring communities of the Troodos National Forest Park in Cyprus, the three situations referring to cultural nominations.

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

Protected Areas	Territorial Scope (Neighboring Territories)	Regions/Countries
Santo André and Sancha Lagoons Natural Reserve Sado Estuary Natural Reserve Southwest Alentejo and Vicentine Coast Natural Park	Municipalities of Alcácer do Sal, Grândola, Odemira, Santiago do Cacém, Sines	Alentejo Litoral, Portugal
Sierra de Andújar Natural Park	Municipality of Andújar	Jaén, Spain
West PA: Albine, Réals, Rives de l'Arn, Savignac, Vézoles, Vieulac, Center PA: Bessilles, Olivettes, Salagou + Mourèze and Liausson, Vias North-North East PA: Fesquet, Fondespierre, Font du Griffe 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 the Sesia Valley	Province of Vercelli	Vercelli, Italy
Po Delta Regional Park	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 Nature 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
Schinias-Marathon National Park	Municipality of Marathon	Attica, Greece
Troodos National Forest Park	Communities of Amiandos, Platres, Prodromos, in the Limassol District	Limassol District, Cyprus

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

In spite of the diversity of the protected areas and the 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 Organization 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 the development of all the protected areas and the neighboring territories to a smaller or greater extent and their sustainable tourism approaches with a focus on
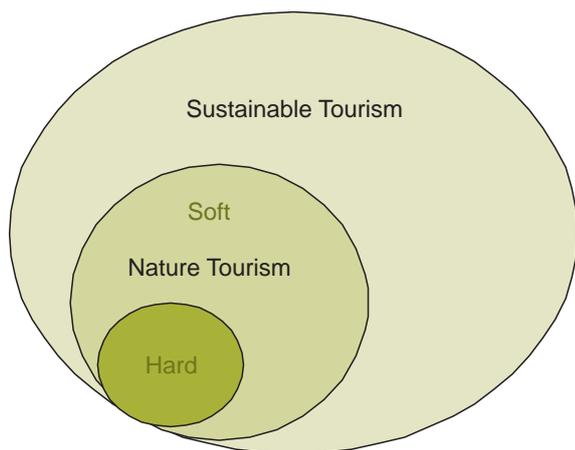
nature-based tourism activities (in short, *nature tourism*).

A broad definition of nature naturism 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 wide range of experiences based on the fruition and interaction with the 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 and require specialized knowledge or training and refer to specific market niches.

Nature-based tourism experiences can therefore include the following (not exclusive) categories:
• low intensity outdoor activities (e.g. fauna and flora observation, landscape observation, walking, recreational swimming);
• educational activities (e.g. learning about the natural environment, biodiversity and nature conservation);
• nature sports (e.g. hiking, trekking, biking, canoeing, horse-riding, surfing, diving …);
• specialized activities (e.g. bird-watching).

All the protected areas and their neighboring territories have the resources and the 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 the use of other complementary tourism products, offering the visitors blended experiences.

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
Santo André and Sancha Lagoons Natural Reserve	*	*	*	*		*
Sado Estuary Natural Reserve	*	*	*	*		*
Southwest Alentejo and Vicentine Coast Natural Park	*	*	*	*		*
Sierra de Andújar Natural Park	*	*	*		*	
21 PA in the Department of Hérault	*	*	*			
Special Reserve of Sacro Monte di Varallo	*	*	*		*	
Protected Area of the Sesia Valley	*	*	*			
Po Delta Regional Park	*	*	*			
Natural Regional Park of Serre	*	*	*		*	
Ljubljansko Barje Nature Park	*	*				
Protected Area of Lake Karla	*	*			*	
Schinias-Marathon National Park	*	*		*		
Troodos National Forest Park	*	*	*		*	*

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

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 wine culture), sun and beach (as an extension of nature tourism, but 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 organized in most of the target PA/neighboring 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 the motive for a visit" (Ljubljansko Barje Nature Park);
- "the tourism identity and local tourism products are undefined and barely innovative" (Sierra de Andújar Natural Park);
- "nature tourism in Province of Vercelli is poorly developed" (Special Reserve of Sacro Monte di Varallo and the Protected Area of the Sesia Valley);
- "the almost total absence of a system of tourism stakeholders acting on an integrated level, both on public and private levels …" (Natural Regional Park of Serre);
- "lack of a shared vision for the region tourism development", in Alentejo Litoral (Santo André and Sancha Lagoons Natural Reserve, Sado Estuary Natural Reserve and the Southwest Alentejo and Vicentine Coast Natural Park);
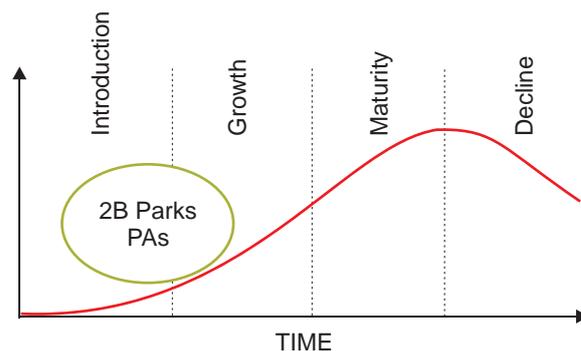
The **tourism demand** is moderate and results mainly from the domestic market (frequently of a regional origin), while foreign tourists have limited importance in most PA, which is associated with the undefined identity and low profile of these territories as nature tourism destinations.

The only relevant exceptions refer to the Po Delta Regional Park (Italy) and the Schinias-Marathon National Park (Greece) that disclose a more structured and consistent tourism offer, 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 the neighboring 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.

The typical destination characteristics related to their life cycle stage are summarized in the table below, clearly illustrating that different evolution stages require diverse marketing approaches. Obviously, the environmental impacts are dissimilar with regard to the evolution stages, being rather pernicious in destinations that have evolved to saturation and decline situations.

In the 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. The marketing strategies should therefore focus on building awareness and promoting the destination products and differentiation attributes.

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

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

	Introduction	Growth	Maturity	Saturation/Decline
Destination Characteristics				
Tourist 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	Coincidental visitors	Innovators	Followers	Cheap mass market
Image and attractions	Low	Very high	High	Low/very low
Tourists are perceived as	Guests	Guests	Customers	Foreigners
Marketing Response				
Marketing Target	Awareness	Inform	Persuade	Loyalty
Strategic Focus	Expansion	Penetration	Defense	Defense/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
Environmental impacts				
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., 2000: Marketing the Competitive Destination of the Future

These issues are discussed under sections 4 and 5, including some recommendations to communicate the environmental and social concerns underlying the overall marketing approach to support sustainable tourism.

Main Opportunities and Challenges

Consumer Trends

The long term forecasts of the World Tourism Organization (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 somewhat higher in the decade 2010–2020 (3.8%). In line with these forecasts, the international tourist arrivals grew by 4% in 2012, overpassing for the *1 billion tourist* mark (overnight visitors) for the first time. In 2013, the tourist arrivals are estimated to continue growing at 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.

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

In spite of the world's challenging conditions and the uncertainty about the evolution of the global econ-

**International tourist arrivals to reach
1.8 billion by 2030**

International tourism, World

International Tourist Arrivals, million

source: World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) ©

No major change in share by purpose of visit

International tourism by purpose of visit

International Tourist Arrivals, million

Leisure, recreation
and holidays

VFR, health
religion, other

Business and
professional

source: World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) ©

omy, the travelling industry is proving to be rather resilient and will be able to overcome the negative impacts of the on-going financial and economic crisis.

Nevertheless, the 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 in 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 the surrounding 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 im-

portant 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 analyze the evolution of the tourism demand and supply patterns to identify new trends and possible opportunities.

Evolution of Business Models:
*ICT is revolutionizing 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 get information on destinations and to buy tourism products and services online. The spread of mobile technologies is also facilitating access to tourism information and products not only before, but also during the travel. In addition, online social networks also play an important role on the travel decisions of the 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.

ICT are introducing profound changes in the tourism market, resulting in the increased digitization of all the processes along the value chain, thus bringing both opportunities and challenges for tourism organizations. 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 customization and a flexibility of services, therefore contributing to increasing the consumers' satisfaction.

ICT are also an important tool for reinforcing businesses profitability, allowing them to increase their efficiency levels (e.g. operational cost reduction, disintermediation and reduction of fees), and their supporting promotion and distribution (e.g. the Internet enables all types of organizations, regardless of their size, to promote and distribute their products directly to the 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 IT, through high levels of integration, interconnectivity and interoperability between the organizations.

Web social networks and blogs

Online social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, as well as specialized 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 recognized 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 social media, integrating them in their marketing approaches,

Mixed seasonality patters … and travelers are getting older

Tourists are getting older, as pointed out in the 2012/2013 World Travel Trends Report. In 2012, the number of travelers 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 cannot travel during the school periods, making short breaks increasingly more 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 the discounts. University and secondary school students also go on field educational trips and on leisure excursions in the low periods. Tourists from Scandinavian countries are less inclined to travel during the summer time, to enjoy the favorable weather conditions at home.

It is therefore important for destinations to identify the seasonality patterns of their different market segments and to build on the solutions for attracting a balanced mix of tourists year-round to maximize their occupancy rates and the overall revenue.

Consumers are looking for authentic travel experiences

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

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

The Adventure Travel Trade Association (a US-based global association) states that adventure travel is an important, fast developing market with an estimated turnover of about USD 89 billion in 2009 (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 the age categories to include older people.

Standard traditional travel packages are mature products and are approaching the 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 behaviors 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 recognized as a key reference. Nevertheless, people with accessibility requirements are not adequately cared for 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 entire value chain, from the information and booking, to the 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 also results 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 the 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 the local communities and to the 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 the public and private stakeholders and involving the local populations in order to deliver collaborative solutions for the improvement of the tourism sector.

Based on the global objectives, the **marketing objectives** were outlined in response 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 raising awareness about 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 the seasonal variation of the tourism demand, aiming to optimize the overall yields, while minimizing the 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 PA as a tourist resource, benefitting from natural heritage as a joint marketing tool for sustainable tourism development;
- involve the stakeholders and local population in creating a 2Bparks "hospitality culture".

Main Strategic Guidelines

Segmentation Approach
An *a priori* segmentation approach was followed, based on criteria that will 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 age, gender, income as criteria); Psychographic segmentation (based on lifestyles and motivations); Behavioristic segmentation (addressing personal behaviors and preferences related to specific tourism products or activities).

A **behavioristic segmentation** was adopted, considering that this approach is focused on the visitors' relationship with the tourism product, therefore providing a broad basis to all the 2Bparks destinations that 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.

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

These broad segments should be refined to allow for the development of effective messages for the target segments trough the most appropriate communication channels, bearing 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.

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 that it is built on the attributes that all the territories share, leading to a global competitive positioning that will exceed the sum of each individual region.

The **value proposal** that will differentiate the 2Bparks territory from others 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 the 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, the complexity increases when a group of destinations is addressed globally.

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 intangible 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 a common brand name, 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 the product quality and consistency:

- the development of collaborative solutions among the different players is a key success factor, considering that the diverse operators and stakeholders that will deliver the tourism products are interdependent on each other;
- well-trained staff and a culture of hospitality is another fundamental factor that will differentiate the areas from others and result in customer satisfaction, taking into account that the tourism product is an intangible experience related to the individual interaction between the service supplier and the visitor;
- customization and flexibility are essential to meet the specific requirements of the visitors, including the appropriate solutions and services to provide inclusive tourism products, regardless of the physical condition and age of the 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 the service consistency and quality on a permanent basis is crucial to allow for timely responsive actions whenever required;
- last, but not least, the commitment of the tourism operators to responsible environmental good practices is essential to provide a reliable sustainability profile of the 2Bparks destination.

Promotion and Distribution

The fast growing importance of ICT and the consequent dematerialization of the transactions are redefining the relations between the tourism suppliers

and the customers, bringing a new range of opportunities for an increased interaction, both for the distribution and the promotion solutions.

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

Further steps should be taken to create a more ambitious platform, to disseminate wide-raging information on the 2Bparks Protected Areas and to promote the product mix of the 2Bparks territories.

Specific efforts addressing online 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 the 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 and through the implementation of the 2Bparks environmental clusters that will encourage the adoption of sustainable environmental practices by the economic operators. Additional steps were also taken with implementing individual experimental actions and by sharing good practices to promote sustainable tourism models.

The work developed so far established a foundation for further development, capitalizing on the gained experience to consolidate the transnational dimension of 2Bparks.

Local Tourism Strategic Plan in the Natural Regional Park of Serre

Jlenia Tucci, Debora Pititto, Maria Teresa Scrivo, Vittorio Martino, Giuseppe Corallini, Giuseppe Sergi, Stefano Grenci, Maria Rosanna Varì (Natural Regional Park of Serre)

Objectives and Scope

The Natural Regional Park of Serre intends to pursue an effective tourism marketing strategy that leads to a balanced development of the territory. It should enhance the tourism offer through an integrated communication plan that promotes its territorial identity.

Overall objective

The strategy for the tourism development area encompasses the concept of a corporate image as a tool for highlighting the uniqueness of the territory in its natural, historical, and cultural characteristics. This communication plan and the determined visual identity expressed this uniqueness. The design and promotion of the coordinated strategy convey a sense of belonging to the territory and this approach significantly enhances its attractiveness, which reflects positively on the emergence of new business initiatives in the field of tourism.

The specific objectives of the tourism marketing strategy for the territory

In order to adopt a strategy for the creation of the "Parco delle Serre product", the following objectives were identified for territorial marketing:

- increase the level of awareness of the characteristics and the value of the area's natural landscape, its culture, economy and existing manufacturing and the current tourism influx. The definition of these characteristics took into account the opinion of the resident population, the local stakeholders and the actors;
- strengthen the area's image by increasing the visibility and marketability in favor of cultural and environmental tourism by means of an ad hoc promotion (territorial brand of quality, promotion tools, integrated land, events, etc.).
- improve the quality of the tourism by enriching the range of services to include the cultural and environmental sectors, regional food and wine;
- to promote the tourism economy through the diversification and promotion of the integrated land systems, the qualification of infrastructure and territorial marketing actions;
- protect, enhance and promote the territorial assets in order to increase the attractiveness of tourism;

- enhance and make available the environmental, natural and cultural tourism products (guided tours etc.).
- increase the supply of the local products.

Methodology

The methodology used a bottom-up approach, which involved all the relevant territorial actors.

These were the chosen set of methodological tools:
- organize or co-organize a promotional campaign of the park that has all the requirements for an effective action in coordination with the institutions (Mountain Communities, provinces, regions);
- referral promotion of less seasonal markets: short holidays, foreign visitors, oriented segments of interest and special activities and educational segments;
- encourage visits in the low season through multiple initiatives such as art exhibitions, entertainment, conferences, etc.;
- create brochures and leaflets that support the marketing efforts and make the park's website available

Natural Regional Park of Serre

in multiple languages, systematically updated and able to offer a system of computerized reservation systems for booking visits to the park;

• improve the dissemination of information and visibility of the entire territory and promote large numbers of adequate marketing efforts of the local products aimed at the visitors (notice boards in accommodation units, shop windows, open businesses, demonstrations of craftsmanship etc.), gradually building a local tourism industry.

Characterization and Analysis of the Target Territory

The tourism offer of the Natural Regional Park of Serre is varied; therefore, it was crucial to identify the segments and market niches that are interested in forms of holidays other than that which characterizes the traditional Calabrian tourism, that is, the seaside. An analysis of the demand carried out with the field method, using questionnaires, showed that the park has a distinct tourism vocation.

However, the almost complete absence of a tourism system where the stakeholders act on an integrated level, both on public and private levels made it impossible to pinpoint the target areas of the "Parco delle Serre product". Therefore it was decided that such targets, types of tourism would be identified as a priority by the park.

The most important tips, in addition to the natural characteristics, are represented by the following:

1) Religious Tourism: successful management of the Carthusian Monastery of Serra São Bruno, an oasis of prayer and mysticism as well as a rich, stunning natural environment, attracts record high numbers of tourists, thanks to the annual prayer meetings becoming very popular. Good administration allowed the suitability of the area to welcome Pope Benedict XVI, who was attracted by the importance of the religious site and the perfect and cozy natural environment. The distribution of brochures and various television documentaries and radio programs recorded in the specified area have allowed for the continuity of the tourism influx throughout the various tourism seasons.

2) Cultural popular music tourism: a great success in the tourism footprint can be attributed to two important musical events, repeated in the last decade and showing an extraordinary evolution. These events cater to special categories of tourists as well as the mainstream sectors. The park comes alive thanks to these events and the offer includes

Michelangelo Serra

ancient Calabrian folk traditions where ethnic instruments are played. The concerned areas of the park are Spadola and Badolato, with the musical projects "Love folk" and "Tarantella Power", respectively.

3) Gastronomic tourism: the wide variety of food and wine products has allowed the territory to be characterized by "product recall". These are biological products that use artisanal methods. One of the qualified stakeholders who was able to bring in resources to transform the area into a sustainable tourist attraction was the Slow Food Association that operates in the Ionian side of Lametino / Reventino the Natural Regional Park of Serre. These stakeholders protect the agriculture and the rural landscape and also promote raising awareness in schools, the development of products in the cottages and they give support to agricultural activities for young entrepreneurs by engaging in the protection of chestnut trees. They share projects in collaboration with other public stakeholders (town of St. Catherine, Badolato, Guardavalle, Davoli, Satriano, Cardinal, Serra S. Bruno). Thanks to the many shop windows, exhibitions and fairs of local products and tastings, they managed to raise awareness about the typical gastronomic culture of the area of the park to national and international levels, increasing the tourism interest for those who love the Food & Wine routes.

4) Tourism education: this is a cross-section target for those indicated above as it needs to be brought to the attention of the teachers, co-workers and cultural workers who are active in the schools of the park by bringing ideas and opportunities that are consistent with the various educational needs.

Strategic Plan

In order to draw up a strategic plan, it was necessary to take a photograph of the reference area that would allow for an analysis of highlights the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the Natural Regional Park of Serre.

This analysis was performed after collecting and studying the socio-economic data, supplemented by information obtained through the questionnaires.

The SWOT analysis is a survey used to support the choices of the local stakeholders that is the answer to the need to analyze the alternative scenarios of the territory development.

Giuseppe Pisani

Implementing and Monitoring the Strategic Plan
The definition of a proper tourism development model means to define the objectives and instruments of the implementation and the stakeholders' monitoring the entire territory to create, strengthen, promote and sell the territory in all its complexity.

Therefore, the strategy that the Natural Regional Park of Serre intended to pursue was to work together with the local actors toward a "more sustainable development of tourism", which takes into account the environmental, social and economic impact that tourism can generate and that at the same time consider the needs of the visitors (current and potential), the businesses, the environment and the local population. A strategy of this kind required the consolidation of its role as an active park tourism policy and the strengthening of local forms of cooperation and joint planning among the local actors as well as the establishment of forms of public-private partnerships.

Since the Natural Regional Park of Serre is a protected area, it must strive towards the development of sustainable forms of tourism. Sustainability and the contextual quality of tourism businesses is an essential goal for competing with other tourist destinations, to attract new tourism demand and build customer loyalty.

The Natural Regional Park of Serre began moving this direction when it worked on the construction of an eco-territory concept. This is a tool for land management that focuses on the relationship between the public and private sectors in the identification of the actions that favor the development of sustainable territories.

A quality brand for the territory of the park served to unambiguously identify this territory as a guarantee of product quality and for the activities it carries out, representing an added value that is in itself very effective.

Criticial problems based on the critical management activities of protected areas (in descending significance)

STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES
• 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 a "welcoming host".	• Creation of a system of an integrated tourism offer (environment, culture, local products). • Promotion of a new tourist area on a European and international level. • Boost the tourism sector through activities that can develop a continuous know-how and new business and employment opportunities by strengthening the ties and the economic benefits of the other sectors in the local system. • Creating a brand of "territorial" quality.

WEAKNESSES	THREATS
• Low awareness of the potential of the area from the residents. • Low promotion of the territory. • Low integration and coordination among the local actors involved in the 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 the summer. • Insufficient cooperation.	• Excessive concentration of tourism in some areas (mainly coastal). • Prevalence of traditional policies rather than innovative ones. • Sense of private initiative and enterprising insufficiently disseminated. • Difficulty to promote the area and tourism initiatives by the operators. • Excessive loss of competitiveness of the village, in favor of other competing locations (coastal). • Difficulty to build an integrated tourism offer. • Limited time of stay due to the poor supply of tourism services. • Management of non-strategic paths of territorial development. • Management of rigid accommodations (most hotels are open only in high season periods).
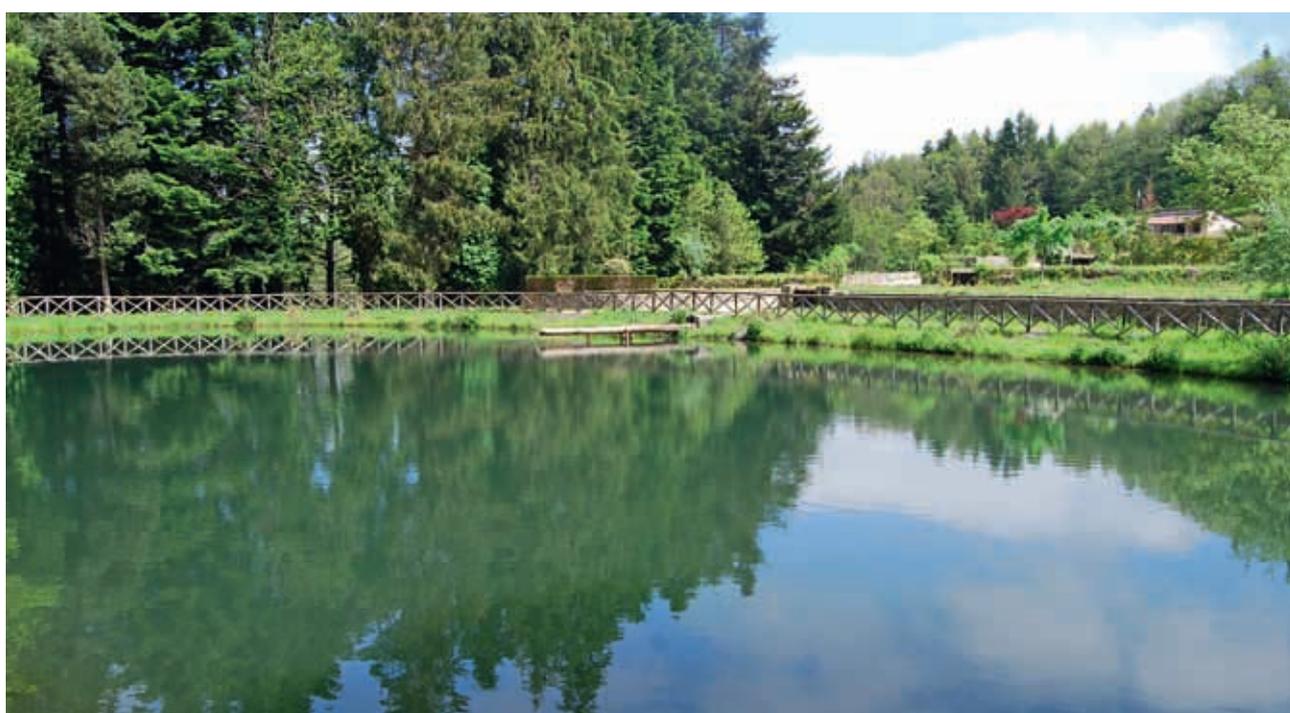
Natural Regional Park of Serre

The strategy should be implemented by means of cooperation between the local, provincial and regional resources. In addition to these, the importance of alliances on a broader level such as with other local tourist systems, other parks, other regions and other countries should not be underestimated. The park should overcome the logic of seeing itself as a "fenced garden": it should develop collaboration projects and initiatives and create opportunities for exchanges and contacts and it should seek alliances to be able to better meet its objectives.

The main challenge that the park intends to address in the next five years is to grasp the potential of sustainable tourism to create benefits for the local communities and the economy, relying on the specific quality of the local natural resources, cultural heritage and aggregating institutions, operators and population in a synergistic effort of building the tourism system.

The definition of the territory-product, competition analysis and the identification of the territorial development strategy allowed for the definition of the policies of the marketing mix (product, price, promotion and distribution) for the development of the territory of the Natural Regional Park of Serre.

Local Tourism Strategic Plan 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 that was adopted for the development of the plan, in particular the workshops/focus groups that were organized 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. Extending over 5,309 km^2 and a population of 94,200 (13% of the total population of Alentejo), Alentejo Litoral is organized into 5 municipalities: Alcácer do Sal, Grândola, Odemira, Santiago do Cacém and Sines.

The territory combines small urban centers with a rural landscape and a coastal area that spreads along 179 km of shoreline. The largest city is Sines (11,300 inhabitants), but its proximity to Santiago do Cacém and Santo André creates a larger urban system of 25,300 inhabitants.

Three protected areas are located in this region: the Santo André and Sancha Lagoons Natural Reserve (RNLSAS), the Sado Estuary Natural Reserve

Silene littorea, Santo André Lagoon Nature Reserve

(RNES) and a Nature Park (PNSACV) located in the southernmost part of the Alentejo coast. Only RNLSAS is completely 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:
- a library review to understand the state of the area and the general framework concerning the tourism development in the region. The most important analyzed documents include: the National Strategic Tourism Plan (PENT), rev. 2012; the Regional Strategic Land Use Plan (PROT Alentejo), 2010; the Land use plans of the three Protected Areas in Alentejo Litoral; the 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 the local agents and authorities: the managing boards of the protected areas in the region, the representatives of the involved municipalities, the managing board of the Entrepreneurs Association of Coastal Alentejo (AEAL), Alentejo Litoral inter-municipal committee (CIMAL), the 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 follow, including the selection of the participants to be invited to the brain storming workshops;
- the organization of three workshops, each lasting half a day. Building on their own professional experience and knowledge of the local conditions, the participants were invited to discuss the ideas for the development of nature tourism in the region. The conclusions of the debate plan were sent to all the participants in the form of a preliminary action for the contributions and to promote the commitment with the implementation of the plan.

Characterization and Analysis of the Target Territory

Brief overview

Alentejo Litoral has an area of 5,309 km², representing 17% of the total area of Alentejo. With a population of 94,249 inhabitants (2011), the population density is slightly lower than the Alentejo average, respectively, 18 and 24 inhabitants per km².

The economic structure of Alentejo Litoral is diversified. Industrial activities represent 47% of the region's Gross Value Added (GVA). Services and commercial industries balance the economic structure, accounting for almost 43% of the GVA; agriculture, forestry and fishing represent a decreasing trend with only 10%.

The Sines deep water port ranks first in cargo quantity on a national level. It is the country's main gateway for its 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 the national GDP is only 1.3%, although the 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 the 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 ocean influence, which reduces the 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 have now been converted into summer tourism villages.

The inland landscape is marked by cork tree forests and small scale agriculture in a mild hilly territory. In the Sado valley, around the estuary wetlands, rice is an important production on medium/large size farms. Pine forest also provides some products for

Linaria lamarckii, Santo André Lagoon Nature Reserve

commercial use, particularly in the Municipality of Alcácer do Sal, but the industrialization of these products has not been fully developed.

The rich biodiversity that characterizes the ecosystems of the Sado and Mira estuaries and of the Santo André and Sancha natural lagoons, the rich marine life and the forest habitats of the 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 Natural 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. The economic activities in the reserve and the surrounding area are small scale agriculture, livestock production, fishing, tourism and local commerce. The valuable natural heritage with a high diversity of habitats and endemic and threatened species includes 54 species of fish, 12 species of amphibians,

15 species of reptiles, 29 species of mammals and 241 species of birds. It is also an important corridor for the 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 Natural 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 was mostly formed by low floodplains (altitude 10 to 20 meters) and marsh areas and it also includes dunes, a river and sea beaches and a few Pleistocene and Miocene outcrops. Part of the reserve consists of wetlands bordering the estuary, where the traditional activities were salt panning, 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.

- *Southwest 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 the spring and autumn migrations of birds and insects. The landscape is marked by steep cliffs that have been given various forms and coloring 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 the protected areas in Portugal's mainland.

The sandy beaches are unique in their extension and unspoiled environment, combined with a pleasant climate and ocean characteristics very much appreciated for surfing, kite-surfing, and marine life observation. The rich and diversified natural heritage, however, also supports other forms of tourism, related

Rui Rodrigues

The breaching of the Santo Andre Lagoon

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 the vestiges of Palaeolithic settlements. Local gastronomy is another tourism resource, as it combines the typical gastronomy of Alentejo with the rich marine products.

Taking advantage of the rich natural and cultural resources, the local authorities and tourism operators have developed an interesting cultural agenda. Every municipality organizes local product fairs and cultural festivals. The most international of all is the World Music Festival organized every summer by the Municipality of Sines.

Despite the authenticity of the region, the tourism infrastructure and support services are moderately developed in Alentejo Litoral. The three protected areas are provided with nature interpretation and visitor centers, 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 centralized by ICNF.

Construction and occupation in 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, beaches 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 the 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 hours distance.
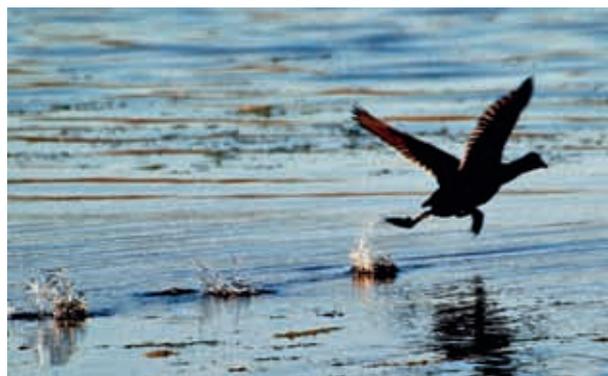
Fulica atra, Santo André Lagoon Nature Reserve

The municipalities of Alcácer do Sal and Grândola are also served by the national railway and regular bus services are available in all the cities.

Tourism offer

The total lodging capacity in Alentejo Litoral was estimated at 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 the total lodging due to the Troia-Comporta developments. The average overnight stay is 2.4 nights, higher than the average of the Alentejo region (1.7).

The 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 companies 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 complementary. The 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 the cities and villages of the region. Surfing and other water sports (kite surfing, body boarding) have flourished in the Alentejo Coast in the past decade. The rich marine life invites 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

Himantopus himantopus and *Ciconia ciconia*, Santo André Lagoon Nature Reserve

Tróia and 4 other camps are being implemented in the new resorts.

Nature tourism is widely recognized as quite appropriate for the characteristics of Alentejo Litoral and it has been attracting tourism operators to the territory. Around 30 tourism companies 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 companies 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 its seat 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 organizations 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 implementing the national tourism policies on the Alentejo level 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 the Alentejo tourism on the national market. There is another Agency (Regional Agency for the Tourism Promotion of Alentejo, ARPTA) 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 area administration boards have produced guidelines to inform visitors about the activities that are permitted 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.

Concerning 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/
• litoral-alentejano.com/pt/turismo/
• www.alentejolitoral.pt/

The website 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 the local actors as a good model for this territory. It can contribute to reducing the 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 from foreign countries, mostly from the European Union. The most important foreign markets are Spain (in the 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% in mainland Portugal. The seasonal variation is important, as July–September accounts 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 prevalent 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). Almost 30% of the tourists declared a preference for private accommodation.

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 private lodging.

The large majority of tourists visiting Alentejo prefer to travel by car (80%). Flying and driving is an option for almost 4% of tourists, while 6% choose tourism buses. Camping vans and RVs are used by 4.2% of tourists.

For tourist motivations, the survey reveals that holidays, recreation and leisure are the major reason for choosing Alentejo (80%), while business trips represents less than 3%. Visiting family and friends accounts for the rest.

The 5 most important attributes referred by tourists choosing the destination Alentejo were:
- enjoying the landscape and nature (9%);
- tranquility/relaxing environment (8.5%);
- cultural and historical resources (8.3%);
- gastronomy (8%);
- experimenting local traditions (7%).

Tourists expectations about Alentejo were not very high, but the final appreciation was quite satisfactory (97% of the tourists declared satisfied, 55% extremely satisfied), and 89% of tourists expressed an intention to repeat the visit.

The results of this survey refer to the entire Alentejo region. Another study (Brandia Central, 2009) specifically addressing the perceptions of national tourists towards Alentejo Litoral concluded that the two major attributes contributing to the attractiveness of the region are the *natural landscape* and the *climate*.

SWOT Analysis

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
• 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).	• 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.
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
• 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.	• Lack of a shared vision for the region's 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.

The uniqueness and diversity of the natural resources are highlighted as a major asset for promoting the region, but some constraints still have to be overcome, particularly a better cooperation between the tourism operators, the protected areas management on local and national levels and the regional and local authorities.

There is a general consensus is that the value of the region's natural heritage can bring tourism and, consequently, the need to respect the nature conservation requirements. However, the 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) enhanced nature tourism as one of the developing products in Alentejo. It recommended 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 were proposed for the LTSP.

Overall objectives:
- To benefit from the natural heritage as a marketing tool for tourism development in Alentejo Litoral.
- To strengthen the integration of the nature conservation objectives into the tourism model of Alentejo Litoral.
- To optimize a sustainable balance between the economic benefits and the environmental and socio-cultural costs.

Marketing objectives:
- To develop and structuralize the product of 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 the neighboring territories.
- To reduce the seasonal variation of the tourism demand in Alentejo Litoral.

Operational goals:
1) To increase and enhance the 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 neighboring territories) by 5% by 2015.
3) To increase the share of foreign visitors by 3% by 2015.
4) To improve the tourism infrastructure and services (e.g. information, quality standards), thus increasing the satisfaction ratings of the tourists.

CORE STRATEGIC OPTIONS
General considerations
The existing resources and the experience that have already been initiated in the Alentejo Litoral suggest the development of a nature tourism model based on an integrated strategy supported by the complementarity of the tourism products.

Unspoiled sandy beaches, a rural environment and preserved landscapes, wide under-populated spaces, tranquility and safety are the ingredients for unique experiences compatible with the richness of natural resources and the fragility of the ecosystems.

Promoting Alentejo Litoral as a regional destination with an integrated tourism offer based on nature tourism is a realistic approach that gathers general consensus. To pursue this vision, the marketing strategy enhanced the nature tourism product and promoted complementarity with other products, under the common denominator of the valorization of the natural heritage.

This strategy aimed to 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, the most important foreign markets to target are Germany, United Kingdom, the Netherlands, the Scandinavian countries, France and Italy, which altogether represent 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 that is shared by all the actors and an intense institutional cooperation.

Segmentation strategy
The criteria adopted for the market segmentation referred to the age of the visitors and their interest in nature fruition. Considering the characteristics of the tourists visiting Alentejo and the major attributes specifically valued by the visitors in Alentejo Litoral,

the target segment resulted from the combination of the following two variables:

• visitors (male and female) within age groups up to 44 years;
• individuals, couples and families with specific motives related to interaction with nature, including low intensity activities, as well as nature sports and specialized 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 on the development of an integrated offer of high quality tourism services that will meet the visitors' expectations.

An inspiration from Poon's flexible specialization 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 organizational and managerial principles, including quality, flexibility, customization, 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 is the case of Alentejo Litoral, is a challenging undertaking, in particular due to the diversity of the involved stakeholders and the complexity of their relations, for the development, production, distribution and promotion of the 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 recognize themselves as business partners and have little in common, except for being on the supply side of the tourism market. National, regional and local public authorities are also key players that have responsibilities, for example, over the conservation of natural and cultural heritage and the construction and maintenance of supporting infrastructures such as the roads and the signaling systems, as well as the planning and regulation of the sector. Nevertheless these public bodies do not consider themselves a part of the tourism industry, although they are also contributing

Phoenicopterus roseus, Santo André Lagoon Nature Reserve

Pedro Santos

to the tourism products and to defining the profile of the destination.

Understanding interdependence and developing collaborative solutions was therefore the first key factor for successfully developing the "nature tourism" product in Alentejo Litoral.

This product consisted of an entire range of locally offered facilities and services (e.g. transport, accommodation, food and beverage, specialized nature tours, nature sports, recreational activities), plus all the environmental resources (protected areas, unspoiled beaches, unique landscapes) and the 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 emphasizing its uniqueness, it was therefore essential to guarantee the visitors' satisfaction.

A feature to take into consideration in this integration process was 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' experience. Supporting these enterprises in the development of innovative solutions and creating local partnerships for the delivery of unified experiences was fundamental and therefore highly recommended.

Developing nature tourism and attracting the appropriate target segments should also promote the reduction of seasonality through specialized offers (e.g. bird-watching, horse-riding), as well as through events that aim to increase the demand during the low season.

Finally, nature tourism was also envisaged to contribute to the preservation of the natural resources by increasing the awareness of the visitors and the 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 their 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 costs of living and employment rates, as well as the efficiency and competition among the local suppliers also have to be considered in the pricing balance.

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 large 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 labor costs) is also contributing to the price levels.

Place/Distribution

The selection of the distribution channels (i.e. the range of actors that bring together the tourism demand and supply) was extremely important for guaranteeing that the target segments are successfully reached. The channels and organizations that should be the 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 (who are currently dominant in the region) usually make direct arrangements and use their own transport, while foreign travelers tend to be more influenced by intermediaries, such as travel agencies.

A range of appropriate travel agencies and tour operators specialized in nature tourism should be selected as major distribution channels in the selected foreign markets (Germany, United Kingdom, the 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 Alentejo Litoral. Building long-lasting partnerships with these players

Rui Rocha Santos

The South West Alentejo Coast Natural Park

will contribute to successfully consolidating the region as a nature tourism destination.

The development of the ICT has revolutionized the tourism industry, defining new paradigms in terms of interactivity between tourism suppliers and consumers. The Internet allows consumers to look for information, organize and purchase their trips online. To build an electronic comprehensive tool was of outstanding importance to support the distribution of Alentejo Litoral products and reach the target audiences on both national and international markets. This Internet tool will reduce the dependency on traditional distribution channels and will also be much more effective in promoting specialized products to small market segments.

Furthermore, electronic distribution will contribute to the enhanced interaction and collaboration among the local suppliers, allowing local resources to be integrated and all-in-one solutions to be created.

Promotion

The improvement of the communicating channels to increase the awareness on the specific issues related to nature tourism should rely on a coordinated message to support an effective promotion campaign, involving the relevant stakeholders and tourism suppliers in Alentejo Litoral.

The "brand" Alentejo Litoral is not clearly perceived by national visitors who 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. The 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 the 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 it difficult to create a consistent image and branding.

This is a relevant aspect to be discussed and agreed upon among the regional and local stakeholders, reaching a consensus on the brand name and the lead message to be transmitted.

Designing and implementing a cost-effective communicational mix to promote nature tourism in Alentejo Litoral will require the combining of different interests and joint 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 organized in two different categories: above and below the line.

Above the line promotion can include, for instance, publicity in the press, on the 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 a whole to optimize the efforts, not explicitly differentiating the several sub-regions, like Alentejo Litoral. This also appears to be 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, the organization of press trips. Both regional agencies have mostly adopted this approach to promote Alentejo.

Below the line solutions also appear to be the best techniques for the promotion of Alentejo Litoral, considering its cost-effectiveness. The specific approach to be followed should be integrated with the overall communication strategy for Alentejo, while still allowing it to differentiate the specific attributes of Alentejo Litoral. Although focusing in particular on the nature tourism product, the 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 proposed marketing strategy, as well as on the conclusions and the main issues discussed with the stakeholders who participated in the local workshops. Building on existing experiences and on-going initiatives, ten 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. The success of the implementation of these actions opens the way for more ambitious undertakings.

The table below shows the 10 actions proposed and their contribution to the operational goals indicated above.

Eight out of the ten actions aim at improving the tourism offer in terms of better visiting conditions, services and quality. The other two actions (action 2 and 3) are intended to increase the demand from the target markets.

The action plan is envisaged for a time span of 24 months, in which time it is to produce the envisaged outputs and results.

Territorial Workshops / Roadshows

Three local workshops were organized in collaboration with the Municipalities of Santiago do Cacém and Sines and with the involvement of AEAL (Association of Entrepreneurs of Coastal Alentejo), between 19 and 21 September 2012. Each workshop gathered 9 to 15 people from different professional standpoints, including the local government, the protected areas management authority, the regional and local agencies and private business operators of the local tourism and leisure sector. The total number of participants in the three workshops was 34.

Each workshop lasted half a day. Each participant received a brief note on the objectives and the methodology of the event with the invitation. The program 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

Actions	Oper. Goal 1 To increase and enhance the tourism offer related to nature tourism (business operators, facilities, products)	Oper. Goal 2 To increase the number of visitors in the protected areas by 5% by 2015	Oper. Goal 3 To increase the share of foreign markets by 3% by 2015	Oper. Goal 4 To improve tourism infrastructure and services (information, quality)
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 – Smartphone application to access information on the tourism offer		V		V
Action 10 – Improving environmental quality of businesses and services	V	V		V

of its valorization 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 that the pursuit of sustainable tourism objectives must face.

The model adopted for the three workshops was similar. The program included two initial presentations by the 2Bparks project team, one to present the project, the other to explain the objectives and the focus of the workshop.

Following these presentations, the floor was given over to the participants. The debate was organized according to the SWOT analysis methodology: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The participants were asked to present their positions and to write down the ideas they thought to be most 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 also took part in the debate, represented on 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 and 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 on the technical level. There were 9 participants, most of them local private business operators.

2Bparks E-calendar

Niki Evelpidou, Nikolaos Tsoukalas, Konstantia Chartidou (University of Athens, Faculty of Geology and Geoenvironment)

Content

The 2Bparks e-calendar 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 the maps and locate the events of their interest. A multi-criteria search (by city, date, domain, etc.) helps the user find the highlighted events. This common database, linked to the project and the partners' websites, acts as the basis for mutual actions promoting the pilot areas after the project completion. In particular, the e-calendar is a means to support the project joint marketing strategy, in terms of transnational actions that will improve territorial growth and attractiveness, encouraging sustainable business investments, especially towards the 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 the 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 sustainable development. Therefore, the 2Bparks e-calendar aims to increase the effectiveness of the protected areas in preserving the biodiversity and providing the solutions for a long-term ecological, social and financial sustainability.

The 2Bparks e-calendar application constitutes a common topical reorganization tool for events that were promoted in the Mediterranean protected areas, improving the knowledge society and governance within the protected areas. In this framework, the 2Bparks e-calendar aligns with the project's objectives by helping protected area managers to bring rationality to the decision of when the economic requirements and social instances have to be reconciled with the environmental issues of the protected areas' policies/plans.

Moreover, the 2Bparks e-calendar promotes the involvement of the economic and civil society as effective actors of protected areas enhancement, while reinforcing the building of biodiversity businesses, improving the skills and the capacities. Furthermore, the 2Bparks e-calendar works as an element towards the increase of the collective awareness of the values and opportunities that protected areas represent, the dissemination of the culture of sustainable development and the straightening of sustainable tourism in those areas.

The balance between the improvement of the 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 speaking about protected area management and regarding them as an opportunity to change economic models in favor of sustainable development, there are three key factors:
- planning and management for protection;
- sustainable tourism and marketing for compatible growth;
- education and research for skills and awareness.

By integrating the environmental concerns into the decision-making processes by developing sustainable tourism and awareness, the 2Bparks e-calendar contributes to the sustainable utilization of the natural resources and strengthens the connections between the Mediterranean societies, the economies and the protected areas.

The 2Bparks e-calendar network can become a functional tool against protected area fragmentation, in favor of natural and cultural heritage enhancement.

Methodology

The implementation and design of the 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 can cope with the initial goals and objectives of

the application. At this point, there has been adequate communication with the various target groups/groups concerned, such as the local protected area managers, university departments, researchers, planners and the general public in order to understand and collect the 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 the 2Bparks e-calendar application is its development and especially its visualization technology, which makes it possible to show data in the form of maps. The visualization of data as maps has become increasingly popular, with numerous 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. The improvements in usability through the improved user interfaces account for the increased popularity of these visualization techniques.

The development of the 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 a sustainable spatial marketing strategy).

3) Function Stage: Usability

The 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 appropriately parameterized in order to support the mapping of events (festivals, educational seminars, conferences, meetings etc.) and to improve the wide capabilities of searching for them. The system is completely web-based and does not require the installation of additional software on the PC, apart from the browser and the related plugins. Its functionality is not dependent on the web browser or the operating system of the working station and also completely supports the most popular web browsers (Firefox, Internet Explorer, Chrome, Opera, Safari) that cover the total of the internet users.

Using the 2Bparks e-calendar, the user has the capability of searching based on multiple criteria

and exporting the results of a search in the form of an image or in the form of a table. It also provides the potential for exporting the map that appears in form of an image (.jpg, .png), .kml document (for its editing through Google Earth Plugin) and .pdf.

Furthermore, the tables that appear can also be exported in an .xls format and in addition, the user has the option of uploading data that have been designed locally on their computer, which appear directly on an information level that they choose in the network platform.

To ensure that it is user friendly, the 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 them. The user can also adjust the layout of the site in order to fit to their 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 appear, 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

e-calendar Functionalities:
- Map navigation
  – Zoom in / Zoom out
  – Point information ("what is under here")
- Selection
  – Point selection
  – Area selection
  – Clear selection
- Digitization
  – Point digitization a point when providing the e-calendar map with a new entry
- Map overview
- Filtering
  – By related domain
  – By related subject

E-calendar contents:
Educational 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 & management,
  – sustainable tourism & marketing,
  – education and research
• by related subject
  – nature,
  – culture & history,
  – local products

been given to the stakeholders to import events and additional information through the 2Bparks e-calendar platform.

Through the 2Bparks e-calendar, the 2Bparks project has successfully presented a wide geographical coverage that includes 11 partners (7 countries) and numerous protected areas characterized by a high biodiversity and a complex of terrestrial and marine habitats representative of the Mediterranean environment.

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.

The 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 the 2Bparks e-calendar is the dominant component of its platform. The 2Bparks

e-calendar is a collective effort and contribution of many interest groups (such as the 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 planning of a community intervention and become part of it.

The 2Bparks e-calendar is a modern marketing tool since it provides the user with the ability to view all the actions and the events concerning the protection and utilization of the protected areas in the Mediterranean countries. Also, in order to inform the general public, several publicity activities have been made.

Free access and distribution of information is the first and most important step towards a participatory planning procedure and decision making process. It is particularly important to mention that the 2Bparks e-calendar is designed in order to manage and promote the actions and the events that are related to

Communicating Consulting + Deciding Together = Acting Together

the protected areas using geo-information systems. In essence, the platform constitutes a source of information about the activities that take place in the protected areas of the Mediterranean countries. At the same time, it responds to the need for the creation of a system for participatory planning, which makes the information accessible.

Thusly, the 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

The 2Bparks e-calendar gives the user the opportunity to search for expeditions that are organized in the protected areas of any Mediterranean and European country, based on the multiple search criteria (subject, axis, date, city, etc.), as well as to list events that they host / organize themselves. It is a tool that can be used by researchers or students, 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 with the fact that PP9 has committed to hosting the platform for the next 5 years after the project's lifetime, provide a valuable communication platform ready to assist all the target groups. In essence, the gap between the heterogeneous and deviant groups of people is bridged through the 2Bparks e-calendar as it is easier than ever to communicate with each other and attend a meeting relating to their field of interest that they may have never been aware of in any other case. In this framework, the internal and external capacities of groups working on a specific protected area are enhanced; the networking capabilities are widened and people can directly compare theory and practice, work on a combinatory basis between knowledge and practical experience.

Policy makers, park 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 the economic growth of the area in this way, as well as its tourism attractiveness. The tool will undoubtedly lead to the promotion of the protected areas that are not as well-known to the wider public, invigorating the society of the area,

while representing the springboard for further development and turning the protected areas into a pole for investments and evolution in the sector of sustainable development. Consequently, the interested parties could take advantage of the 2Bparks e-calendar in order to overpass the old-fashioned methods that 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 represent the linking element 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 the e-calendar. This tool could involve the creation of an archive manager, with which the party could consult to find the necessary information for the place of the event, expedition or seminar. In these archives, the user could have the option of finding useful information for the previous events and their locations, such as the history of the place, culture, similar events that have taken place, a presentation of the attendees and their contact details. In this manner, the e-calendar will constitute the 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 efforts to organize a perfect event by considering the comments and the feedback of the last attendees and participants.

On another level, the 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 of the program and the planned activities.

In conclusion, the 2Bparks consortium will maintain the integrated network of the target groups via the platform, ensuring that the information is updated and transmitted to all the sectors and countries. The platform will be used by the 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 on 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 the 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.

2Bparks Environmental Clusters
Alexandra Mendonça (RCDI, Development and Innovation Network)

The Environmental Clusters are an important part of the 2Bparks activities, intended for group enterprises and socio-economic operators who are committed to adopting sustainable business strategies, therefore contributing to the enhancement of the MED Protected Areas and to environmental protection and conservation in general.

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 the environmental clusters is reducing harm to the local environments, reducing the negative impacts on the natural and cultural heritage and maximising the social and economic benefits to the local communities, therefore contributing to the overall sustainability.

For the purpose of the clustering activities, the following general criteria were adopted to define a **sustainable business**:

- uses resources in a sustainable way (e.g. reducing the 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 the local economies (e.g. providing employment opportunities and locally sourcing goods and services);
- involves the local communities, customers and the general public, creates 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 a higher efficiency of the resource use and increased business feasibility.
- **It helps to differentiate itself from its competitors**. Environmental and social issues are becoming increasingly important to a customer's decisions. Responding to these issues with a responsible approach will ensure the differentiation from other competitors and will increase the businesses' competitive capacity in the global market.
- **It helps to diversify and to improve products and services**. A sustainable strategy helps gain insight into the business, providing the grounds for diversifying and improving the quality of products and services, thus enabling the companies to retain their existing clients and to reach new clients.
- **It provides a new angle for marketing and promotion**. Acting as a model of responsible and innovative business improves the company's public visibility and its overall perception.
- **It creates the dynamics for economic growth**. The effect of the above factors combined with the development of inter-relations with twining and complementary operators creates the dynamics for economic growth in the environmental cluster.

In short, *a sustainable strategy will enhance the business image, save money and contribute to the increased business opportunities and revenues* for the economic operators in the involved MED territories.

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 an efficient resource use and the minimisation of greenhouse gases emissions (GHG), as well as a minimisation of the production and the recycling of waste and waste waters, therefore reducing their environmental impacts, protecting the biodiversity and tackling the issues related to climate change.

The operators should respect the European, national and regional legislation related to the environ-

ment, along with the regulations referring to the economic and social issues set out by the local, regional and national authorities.

The customers (local residents and tourists) can make more sustainable choices if some efforts are made to communicate clear information on environmental behaviour and environmental good practices adopted by the cluster members. In this respect, the 2Bparks label should be associated with sustainability whenever possible, supported by the underlying data related to the environmental performance of the operators.

The cluster members are encouraged to actively participate in the initiatives and processes that were 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 the collaborative work and sharing the information and experience to: integrate sustainability into the management practices, secure the active participation of the members in developing sustainable activities and generate strong environmental clusters on a local/regional level and in the Mediterranean area as a whole.

Although it is not compulsory that the cluster members adopt formal environmental management systems, they must 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 obtained results to customers, suppliers and the general public to create environmental awareness.

Specific Rules Applicable to Cluster Members

The cluster membership is a **volunteer process based on the self-commitment of the socio-economic operators** who have integrated sustainability into their management practices and are willing to improve their environmental performance.

The selection of the members is based on the relevant sustainability issues and rules, which 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 recognize what operators are already doing and motivate them to take further steps to improve their performance;
• to have a flexible approach because the environmental and social priorities probably vary with different types of businesses and in 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 organizations; therefore, each operator will evaluate their own priorities and level of involvement, provided that the minimum rules for admission are achieved;
• 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:

• 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 the environmental and social performance and publicly report the achieved results at least once a year;
• commitment to follow good management practices related to the 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 the information on the sustainable business policy of the candidate members, addressing the selected issues, as well as some additional aspects to characterize the business profile. The candidate member had to implement at least one good practice in each category to be allowed admission into the cluster.

The application form was prepared so as to be able 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 a Sound Tourism Development

Stephanie Christou, Kyriakos E. Georgiou (CCEIA – UNIC)

Since its independence, Cyprus has depended heavily on the tourism sector. Up to 1990, the tourism model promoted by the Cyprus Tourism Association (CTO) was based on the 'sun and sea' model that focused 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 also in the context of the decline of the competitiveness of the market and the current economic crisis, the CTO strategy has shifted towards a different direction, trying to encompass the rural and mountainous areas of Cyprus in the tourism product of the Republic and extend the tourist season/period.

As mentioned above, the tourism model that was applied in Cyprus until recently was based on mass tourism and seasonality and led to an environmental degradation of the areas where it was developed as well as in the wider area of the Republic. However, in the last twenty years, the CTO has made a turn in this strategy. The CTO's 2011–2015 Tourism Strategy objectives include: a) expanding the annual season period to the winter season and b) to improve the sustainability of the tourism business. Among its proposals is development based on respect of the local environment and culture (CTO, 2010). The objectives of the CTO's strategy are shared by The Troodos Regional Tourism Board, the Troodos Tourism Company, the Troodos Network and other relevant organizations and the 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 sustainable tourism development. The general idea for clustering is greatly needed in the area. Up to now, the economic developers in the area have been working on an individual level, a fact that reduces their potential for development, deprives them of several opportunities and holds back the more general sound development of Troodos's communities. The kind of development that is desired now must be based on the principles of sustainability with respect to the local environment, trying to minimize their environmental impact but also to reduce the operational costs and be more viable and competitive to ensure the economic survival and development in the area.

The overall idea behind the environmental clusters, as developed in the context of the 2Bparks project, is to group enterprises, socio-economic operators and public bodies that are committed to adopting 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 a need for a joint effort for the sustainable development of protected areas. Mediterranean protected areas are under severe environmental pressures in many cases when developed in terms of tourism. A grouped awareness raising and motivation of the local economic operators for their joint efforts to reduce the harm to the local environments, reduce the negative impacts on the natural and cultural heritage and maximize the social and economic benefits for the areas is of the utmost importance.

Troodos Regional Tourism Board

Troodos Regional Tourism Board

There is a need for entrepreneurs or other economic operators on a Mediterranean, European and worldwide level to develop sustainable practices and the overall idea of sustainable development which, by definition, encompasses environmental, social and economic aspects.

To this point in time, the first informational meeting was organized in the village of Platres, in the context of the World Environment Day on 5 June 2012, where several local economic operators from the wider Troodos area were invited and a presentation was made for them about 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. The local economic operators from the Troodos communities were invited; these included mostly hoteliers, restaurateurs, agro-tourism businesses, local traditional food product industries, and 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 relevant objectives of the 2011–2015 strategy. The documents provided by the phase coordinator were translated into the national language and distributed at the meeting, as well as the application form. The criteria for 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 clearer that there is a need for local business clustering and a general collaboration in the area; the concept of a sustainable business was developed and its benefits for the communities were highlighted. Some relevant good practices and examples were distinguished during the meetings. Moreover, the importance of specific synergies was highlighted. Even though, many efforts are still needed in the area for raising awareness and a holistic strategic planning that will take in mind the difficulties that the local businesses must face. 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 sustainable use of resources that will save the businesses costs, minimizing their negative impacts on the environment, e.g. minimizing their waste and use recycling, supporting local economies by employing locals and involving local communities, customers and the general public, creating environmental awareness. It was specifically stressed that with all of the above energies, the 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 the dissemination of their energies were also highlighted as being of great importance.

The promotion of protected areas was noted as something that transcends national borders. A special note was made to the fact that raising awareness on the dynamics of ensuring a sustainable operation of businesses on a local level, which will not only have local benefits but also on a Mediterranean/ European level, will help the protection of the environment in the Mediterranean and contribute to tourism development and the attraction of a more aware target market. The specific clustering will help them differentiate themselves not only from other national mar-

Troodos Regional Tourism Board

Troodos Regional Tourism Board

kets but also on a wider European and a worldwide level and make them more competitive on the tourism map. Currently, the Troodos Regional Tourism Board is organizing a second Roadshow for the collection of the application forms and the clarification of the clusters and another one for giving the Membership Certificate of 2Bparks Environmental Clusters. The main cluster types that have adhered to 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 supporting 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. A joint promotion of the natural and regional products and cultural values will be accomplished through the Local Tourism Strategic Plan. A bottom-up approach was followed by promoting and preserving the PA by engaging the locals and the community councils to enable private investments in traditional culture and environmental data resulting in added value products parallel with environmental protection. Environmental clustering will supplement the overall marketing strategy for the area based on the concept and practices of sustainability.

The 2Bparks Interoperable Tools

Niki Evelpidou (University of Athens, Faculty of Geology and Geoenvironment), Andreas Vassilopoulos (External Expert, AVMap GIS SA, Technological Education Institute of Chalkis)

2Bparks expands the capacity of the protected area (PA) operators, citizens and policy makers to generate environmental, social, economic benefits for the local communities of the MED Protected Areas by educating diverse target groups and providing valuable ICT tools for the exchange and update of knowledge. While focusing on sustainable development and not just enhancement of the recreational dimension of the PA, the project produced two key tools in order to:

- transcend localism;
- produce joint marketing strategies;
- increase collective awareness of PA values.

The two tools are the 2Bparks **Sourcebook** and the 2Bparks **Edu-platform**. The combination of these two tools is local, regional, national and cross-border. The tools are both in English and other languages, but they can be easily transferred into new languages. The topic areas relate to protected areas, to either environment, management or tourism sustainability or new technologies. The tools can host any additional topic related to protected areas: either for the legal framework of their management or for the new geo-environmental and cultural features of new added protected zones. 2Bparks located studies, marketing strategies, networks, didactic material and made them all accessible to anyone during the project's lifetime and after the end of the funding period as well. Additional sources of information do exist, but many of them are scattered across different institutions and are difficult to access, even for those whose profession it is to develop and implement such activities in the field of protected areas. This offers the tools to promote the environmental management and economic sustainability of the Mediterranean zone. The databases and the contents of both tools were launched in 2012 and they are now fully functional. The partnership will keep them alive and up-to-date after 2013 by promoting them in other projects and networks, by informing local societies about their benefits, by pursuing new funding opportunities to expand those tools.

The 2Bparks Sourcebook

Scope

The 2Bparks Sourcebook is a continuous and up-to-date spatial knowledge system available for the public, the experts, the tourism operators, the local stakeholders, the researchers, the tourists and the local societies. The sourcebook contains data (descriptive data, links and images) for any type of sources (books, papers, journals, etc.) related to the management, the research and the tourism sustainability of protected areas.

The 2Bparks Sourcebook capitalizes on the DEDI experience, updating information, ensuring the links with the project partners' websites while increasing the collective understanding, spreading information and studies and simultaneously providing valuable digital material for e-lecture preparation. On another level, the 2Bparks Sourcebook maintains an integrated network of experts, ensuring that scientific information is updated and that a team of transnational experts is available to assist the regions with the development of PA projects.

In particular, the sourcebook is a means of support to the project's joint marketing strategy in terms of the transnational actions that improve territorial growth and attractiveness, encouraging sustainable business investments, especially towards the youth.

Conclusively, the 2Bparks Sourcebook works as an element of the continuous capitalization of 2Bparks, providing information, good practices and tools that are accessible through specific archives and electronic data systems and complies with the ultimate goals of the project like helping the protected area managers bring rationality to their decision, when economic requirements and social instances have to be reconciled with protected areas and the environmental issues of protected area policies/plans. At the same time, the sourcebook aligns with the involvement of the economic and civil society as effective actors of protected area enhancement, the building of biodi-

versity businesses, the improvements of skills and capacities. In the same framework, the sourcebook attempts to increase the collective awareness of protected area values and opportunities while disseminating the culture of sustainable development and implementing sustainable tourism in protected areas.

Functionality and Usability

The sourcebook application is the geographical "2Bparks Sourcebook", which has been developed by parameterizing the MYGIS 2.1 software with unlimited licenses of use. This system is based on the MyGIS software (http://www.mygis.gr/), which allows the mapping of any type of descriptive data (e.g. city plans, reports, sources, publications, photos, videos etc.). The system is totally web-based and does not demand the installation of any additional software on the PC apart from the browser and the related plugins. Its functionality is not dependent on the web browser or the operative system of the working stations. As MyGIS is based on web architecture, it does not depend on the operation system of the working station. MyGIS completely supports the most popular web browsers (Firefox, Internet Explorer, Chrome, Opera, Safari) that cover the total of the internet users.

Potential

The 2Bparks Sourcebook is a system that is available to the public, the experts, the tourism operators, the local stakeholders, the researchers, the tourists and the local societies. It is a free public tool that can be used by researchers, scientists, and managers for recording and disseminating their work (sources, papers, announcements, books, databases, videos, etc.) all over the Mediterranean zone. At the same time, the sourcebook allows free access for all the end users in order to search for material in their area of interest, regardless of whether they are aware of the specific writers and publishers, since they can search the sourcebook database by simply navigating on the map. The free access, the user friendly environment, the classification of the sources in combination with the fact that University of Athens has committed to host the platform for the next 5 years after the project's lifetime, provide a valuable communication and knowledge platform ready to assist all the target groups. In essence, the gap between
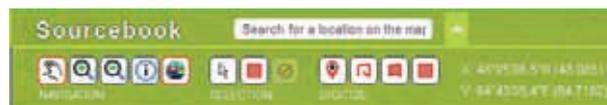
the researchers, scientists, managers, public authorities and private sector is reduced, while, at the same time, the geographical borders neither hinder the cooperation, nor sustain the heterogeneous working environments. Instead, the internal and external capacities of groups working on a specific protected area are enhanced, the networking capabilities are widened and people can directly compare theory and practice and work on a combinatory basis between knowledge and practical experience.

Policy makers, park managers and tourism operators can take advantage of the best practices stored in the sourcebook in order to study other European methodologies and adopt the perspective of long-term policies that enable sustainable development of the protected zone. They can transcend the old-fashioned methods that had been applied up to now and bring transnational strategies down to local level, so as to consider environmental protection, financial growth and social issues before applying a marketing strategy.

Moreover, the Sourcebook is a useful tool for students and researchers, teachers and professors. It can be used as an open library in a supplementary way to traditional educational methods by combining the large quantity of information and skills concerning geography and literature, protected area bibliography, real-life practices and assessment of applied strategies. The general public can also take advantage of the platform and examine the resources before visiting places in their country or abroad.

In essence, the Sourcebook increases the collective awareness of protected area values, while disseminating the cultural, natural and geographical characteristics of the areas. The 2Bparks consortium will maintain the integrated network of the target groups via the platform, ensuring that the scientific information is updated and transmitted to all sectors and all countries. The dynamic of the sourcebook is that it worked as a core element of the capitalization of all the 2Bparks deliverables during the project's lifetime. This is not the limit, since the actual use of the platform is just beginning. The platform will be used by all the partners' institutes in order to store new archives. The on-going promotional activities of the platform ensure its future use. The fact that Uni-

versity of Athens 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 sourcebook can host data for any country all over the Mediterranean, all over Europe and practically all over the world. The maps and the background data are already developed in such a way as to store the numerous data for any place and to serve as many users as possible.

The 2Bparks Edu-platform

Aims and Objectives

The 2Bparks project partners developed and implemented a user-friendly educational tool: the 2Bparks Edu-platform. Its purpose is to bridge the gap between

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

The BENEFITS of open and distance learning

- balancing the inequalities between age groups;
- extending the geographical access to education;
- expanding the capacity for education in new and multidisciplinary subject areas;
- effering the combination of education with work and family life;
- enhancing the internationality;
- dimension of educational experience.

research activities and practice by developing training tools for user groups that will assist them in increasing the employment potential and capacity of the protected area management. The platform's objective is to stimulate distance learning, to provide e-lectures on protected areas and to allow feedback after the educational training has been completed. The adopted philosophy was to produce an educational framework that can be adjusted to any type of course, any type of end users, any type of protected areas either located in Greece, Italy, France or Slovenia. The key point was to remove the barriers to the issues' training and to allow the students, pupils, trainees in general to get involved whenever they want, wherever they want and to study what they need.

Many trainees, pupils, students, younger or older researchers and interested non-experts may find it difficult to attend specific courses in traditional classrooms. They might live on a small island and not in a big city; they might be unable to travel or might face physical disabilities preventing them from attending the real courses. The 2Bparks Edu-platform brings the educational material (theory, practice, videos, images, maps, workbooks, etc.) directly to any interested person. There is no cost for attending the courses; the only necessary elements for somebody to attend the courses are the will, time and interest.

Furthermore, it serves as an information exchange system in terms of the level and quality of the information, while at the same time doubling as a partners' forum and a Content Management System. It is in-

Project info
Partners
School-age courses
Student & researcher courses
Sourcebook
Events
Contact

Edu-platform

2bparks **Edu-platform**, a training tool available for the public, is developed by 2bparks partners in order to increase knowledge and enhance capacities in the field of Protected Areas. The platform hosts distant learning material for two different target groups: school – age pupils and grown up people (either students, researchers, managers). The courses can either be part of a school or other class – course, part of an entertaining family session or they can be regarded as stand alone didactic material.

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student & researcher courses

tended for sharing information and best practices in a renewing and diversifying learning and capacity-building environment.

The edu-platform currently hosts distance learning material on environmental technologies such as GIS and environmental practices. The platform is also ready to host and provide a wide range of courses on the managerial issues, the preservation methods of protected a areas, descriptive courses for the environmental parameters, the historical background, the cultural settings or the problems of specific protected areas. The courses can either be a part of a school or other class course, part of an entertaining family session or they can even be regarded as stand-alone didactic material.

Resources

The edu-platform encompasses two sessions of courses;
a. GIS for environmental management;
b. environmental practices in the field (Applied Geomorphology and Photogeology).

The platform is developed as a bilingual one (Greek – English), but has the infrastructure to accommodate any language. Some time has been set aside for the pilot use of the platform, which will allow an assessment of the platform usability, thus ensuring that it conforms to the end users' needs.

The trainers can build up courses quickly for any subject. For the new instructors, who wish to build their courses about any aspect of protected areas, there are three basic steps:
1 identifying the target population (what is the target population, why this population, how to identify their skills, the age range, the circumstances of the students' learning);
2 market research (what courses does this population want, which data is necessary and from whom will it be collected, what is the best format for the course);
3 making the curriculum accessible to all (languages, emphasis on the adaptation of the courses imported from another country, dissemination strategy).

Target Groups

The edu-platform currently hosts distant learning material for two different target groups of trainees: school-age pupils and adults (students, researchers or managers) and several target groups of trainers: school teachers, university lectures, research center staff, local authorities, decision makers, environmental managers, cultural resource managers, other educational institutions. They can be divided into two big groups:
• internal: teachers, university lecturers;
• external: government, local authorities, employers, families, community bodies.

The Edu-platform E-lectures: Environmental Practices in the Field – Applied Geomorphology

Niki Evelpidou, Isidoros Kampolis, Konstantia Chartidou (University of Athens, Faculty of Geology and Geoenvironment)

Applied geomorphology e-learning courses refer to the application of geomorphology theory for the confrontation of geomorphological hazards such as erosion phenomena and floods. The present uploaded courses contain two topical units about erosion and flood issues. Erosion and floods are the most common catastrophic geomorphological processes that pose significant stress on the built environment and on human activities. By introducing the main processes that lead to the development of erosion and flood phenomena, as well as the produced landforms to the recipients, the lecture attempts to familiarize people with the basic theory of the issues. The lectures after that refer to the modeling process of the pre-mentioned geomorphological phenomena. The lectures are complemented with presentations and videos about erosion and floods. At the end of the courses, an exercise is provided on a dam construction.

The main recipients of these e-learning courses are academic students in Earth Sciences Department (Geology, Geography), professionals working on environmental projects and the general public. Academics and professionals will enhance their knowledge of the basic theory and the models that are used for the approach of these geomorphological processes, while the public will be sensitized and informed about environmental issues. The developed lectures and the audio-visual material are available in Greek. Below, more analytical information is presented on the structure of each unit on Applied Geomorphology. Each unit (erosion, floods) follows a common structure: the first part is comprised of the basic theory and the second part of the models that were used for the arithmetic approach to erosion and floods.

Erosion

The erosion unit is divided into two parts: the first one is about the theory of erosion issues and the second contains the multimedia (a PPT presentation and videos).
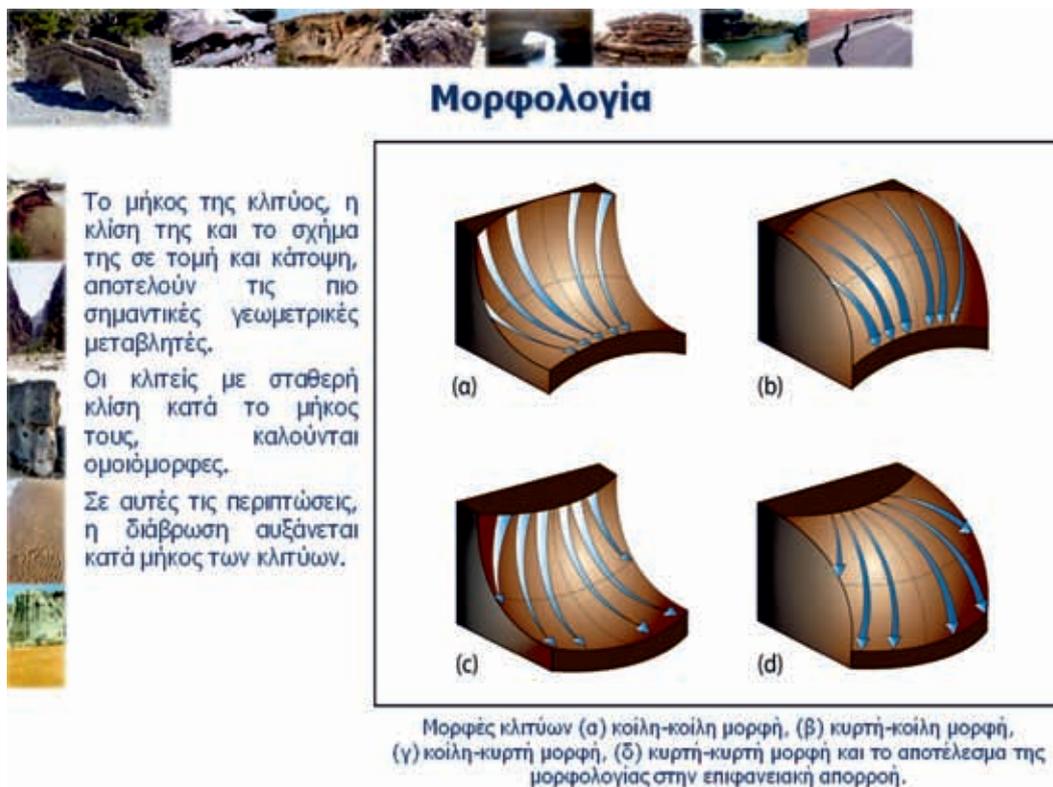
Example from the runoff erosion presentation (morphology – main factor influencing erosion)

Example from the runoff erosion presentation (erosion risk calculation)

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Example from the coastal erosion presentation

The theory includes runoff and coastal erosion. In both sections, the main factors controlling erosion phenomena are presented as well as the produced landforms. A brief presentation on the models used in erosion issues is provided next. The theoretical part consists of three ppts: two for runoff erosion and one for coastal erosion. In addition, six videos are included that refer to different erosion examples: two for runoff erosion and four for coastal examples.

Floods

A similar segmentation is followed in the floods unit. The flood theory is divided into fluvial floods and coastal ones. In the first part on fluvial flooding, the information on the processes that are responsible for this type of floods is provided and different flood types are described. Then, the practical use of flood risk maps is presented and how they can contribute to the proper flood management planning. An extended briefing for two flood risk models is also provided about the FLORETO-KALYPSO and the HOWAD-Prevent models. Both models provide flood resilience solutions based on the flood risk of a specific site.

The second part is referred to coastal flooding. The main factors influencing the sea level rise are

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Example from the coastal erosion presentation

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Example from the coastal erosion presentation
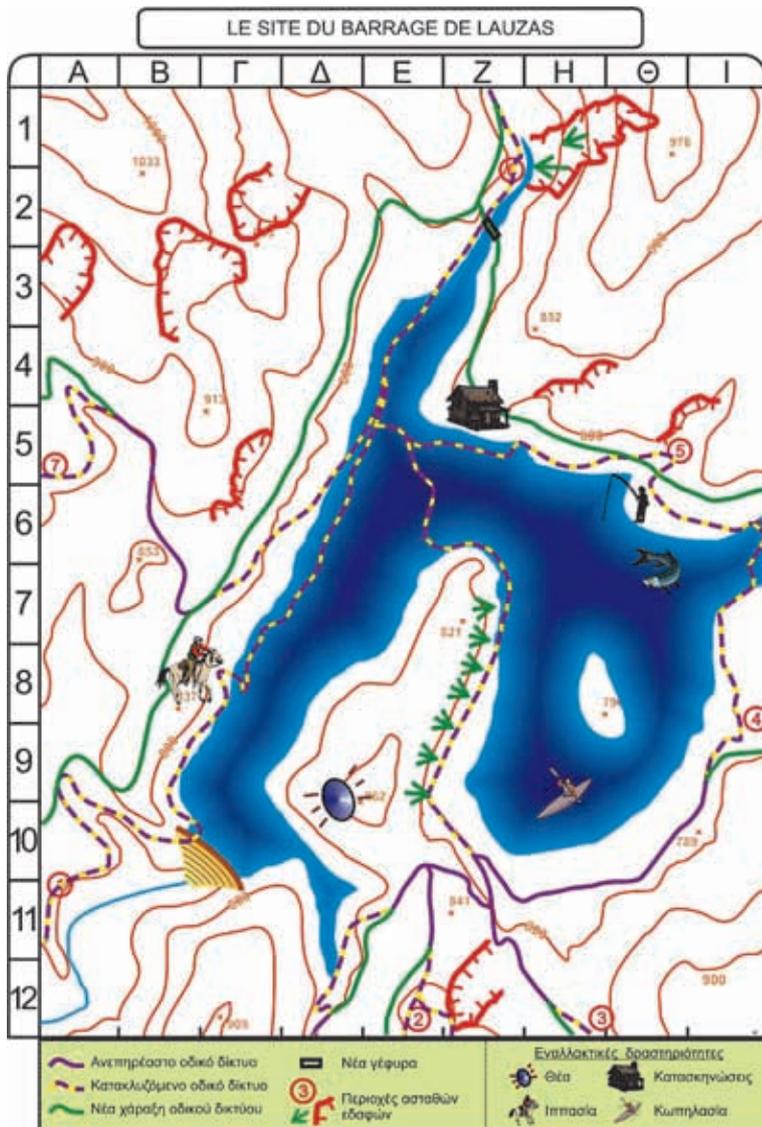
Example from the dam construction exercise

presented and the respective processes taking part are described. The final section of this part ends with the introduction of a coastal flood risk model, developed by NOAA, called the Sea Level Rise and Coastal Flooding Impact and a presentation on a coastal barrier design tool, developed by a Cyprian company.

The theory on flooding is complemented with four multimedia elements (videos): two for fluvial floods and two for coastal floods.

Dam Construction Exercise

This is a photo-interpretation exercise, where the exercise recipients are expected to interpret the inun-dation basin provoked by the dam construction, the places that are vulnerable to landslides and to give potential to the places of tourism facility construction due to the presence of the technical formed lake. On the figure, the blue area represents the interpretation of the inundation basin due to the dam construction; the brown amphitheatic shape represents the dam; the red lines the landslide prone areas; the little horse represents riding areas; the kayak areas represents the kayak activities and the black house the camping facilities.

Transnational Educational Camp

Niki Evelpidou (University of Athens, Faculty of Geology and Geoenvironment), Andreas Vassilopoulos (External Expert, AVMap GIS SA, Technological Education Institute of Chalkis)

Scopes and Objectives

The Faculty of Geology & Geoenvironment of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens organized a Transnational Education Camp on the subject "Studying the Environment – Protection and Management" from 23 to 24 October 2012.

The main aim of the Transnational Educational Camp 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, Natural Disasters and Environmental Impact, Remote Sensing in Environmental Research, Mapping Geomorphic Environments, Geochemical Sampling & Analysis, the Sampling and Dating Analysis of Geomaterials, the Environmental Management of Forests, Geoarchaeology, Paleogeographical and Geoenviromental Reconstruction and Potential Geoparks.

The scientific coordinator of the Transnational Educational Camp was Dr. Dr. MSc. Niki Evelpidou, Assistant Professor of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. The Educational Camp was held with the participation of representatives from all the 2Bparks partners. Furthermore, the University of Athens and Partners 8 and 11 contributed to the educational camp activities by delegating external experts on topics such as the Environmental Management of Forests, Sustainable Tourism Management in a Marine Protected Area and Sea level Changes.

Specifically, the transnational camp activities recorded participation from a total of 22 trainers and 41 trainees from 7 Mediterranean countries (Greece, Cyprus, Italy, Spain, France, Slovenia and Portugal) and the following institutions:

- National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Faculty of Geology and Geoenvironment, Greece
- National Center for Scientific Research, CNRS, France
- National Marine Park of Zakynthos, Greece
- University of Santiago de Compostela, Spain
- NCSR Demokritos, Greece
- University of Piraeus, Greece
- Republic of Cyprus, Department of Forests, Cyprus
- Mediterranean SON Network, Greece
- Harokopion University, Greece

The trainees received a bag of promotional material for the 2Bparks project, guidelines about the camp, a notebook and a fieldtrip guide 'Studying the Environment: Protection and Management', which included analytical information about the fieldtrip of the second day of the camp, each stop, the description of the area of Marathon and the Schinias-Marathon National Park and information regarding the geography and geomorphology of the area.

Transnational Camp Day 1

The first day of the Transnational Educational Camp took place in the University Campus, at the Faculty of Geology and Geoenvironment. The Educational Camp organizer, Dr. Evelpidou, the representative of the Publicity and Public Relations Committee, Dr. Kouskouna, the Head of the Department of Geography & Climatology, Dr. Maroukian, and the Head of the Faculty of Geology & Geoenvironment, Dr. Sta-

Niki Evelpidou, University of Athens

Niki Evelpidou, University of Athens

Niki Evelpidou, University of Athens

Niki Evelpidou, University of Athens

matakis, welcomed all the participants on behalf of the University of Athens.

During the first day, the subjects that the scientific team tackled analyzed were issues on the environment.

Transnational Camp Day 2

The second day of the Transnational Educational Camp was held in the Schinias-Marathon National Park. The aim of the fieldtrip was to brief of students on the protected areas. During the educational camp, five stops were realized within the area of Marathon and Schinias-Marathon National Park. Specifically, the first stop was the Museum of the Marathon Race. The tour guide of the museum presented the history of the Marathon Race.

The second stop was the Observation Station in the area of Dikastika, Kynosoura Peninsula. Dr. Evelpidou, Dr. Merino, Dr. Pavlopoulos and Dr. Pirazzoli analyzed the geography, geomorphology and palaeogeography of the territory, the evolution, the different environments, the management of the region and the natural hazards. During the field excursion, the students used a mobile GIS mapping and they were trained how to find the coordinates of the position.

Moreover, the methodology of RTK GPS was presented to the trainees of the course by Dr. Vasilakis. The RTK GPS equipment contains a base antenna mounted on a tripod and a rover antenna that collects the location measurements.

The third stop was in the Schinias Wetland. The representatives of UoA, Dr. Argyraki and Dr. Vassilatos took in-situ measurements of surface water physicochemical parameters during the field excursion, using portable analytical instruments. The data on temperature, the pH/Eh, the electrical conductivity and the dissolved oxygen were collected and linked to the spatial data with the use of a palm top computer. Although the activity was a short demonstration of on-site data collection, the issues of sampling site selection, sample handling and analytical quality control procedures were also discussed and the basis of data interpretation was set.

The fourth stop was in the Littoral Pines Forest. Dr. Merino focused on two specific cases during the field excursion: the stabilization of the sand dunes in the coastal areas and the problem of wildfires in the Mediterranean region. The restoration of vegetation is the most effective method of stabilizing the coastal dunes. The degraded coastal dunes are usually stabilized by planting with perennial dune

Niki Evelpidou, University of Athens

Niki Evelpidou, University of Athens

grasses, such as beachgrass (Ammophila arenaria) and other (i.e. Spartina sp.).

The last stop was in the Schinias coastal zone. Dr. Evlepidou, Dr. Merino and Dr. Pirazzoli tackled the issues on the sediment transportation, the sand dune fields, the notches, the palaeogeography and the tectonics. They noticed that the sand dunes are widely developed throughout the coastal zone of Schinias and they are stabilized, as evidenced by the vegetation that has grown on them.

The trainees received a certificate of attendance by the end of the day 2 of the camp.

Results

The camp was transnational from a binary perspective: from the point of view of the combination of the lecturers, the lectures coming from different countries and from the point of view of the participants (researchers and students) who attended the courses. All of them had a chance to see the protected area of Schinias in Greece and discuss the common methodologies and problems in the disciplines of environmental management and protection.

The local authorities were very satisfied with the camp's publicity and the overall outcome. The University of Athens carried out the transnational camp as a demo activity of the local development pilot plan on educational tourism in protected areas. The Municipality of Marathon has arranged a meeting with the Greek team in the last semester of 2013 in order to examine the practical aspects of establishing the camp on an annual basis.

A number of promotional activities were undertaken both before the realization of the camp inviting the students and researchers and after the event when disseminating the camp results.

From the Concept of "Places of Sense" to Different Approaches of Landscape Education

Raffaella Lioce, Roberta Galli, Silvia Galli (Tea Engineering), Chiara Quaglia, Nicola Boscolo (Veneto Region, Spatial and Strategic Planning Department)

The 2Bparks approach to landscape education for sustainable development can trace its origins to the Local Development Pilot Plan (LDPP) elaborated by the Veneto Region within the 2Bparks project. The LDPP was arranged within the framework of the Regional Landscape Plan: Ambit of the Coastal Adriatic Archer, taking into account both the current planning situation on a regional and territorial level and the objectives of the 2Bparks project, which fosters the necessity to reconcile economic requirements with ecological instances in the MED protected areas.

The pilot area designated by the Veneto Region for the implementation of 2Bparks is the Po Delta Regional Park, where it was possible to experiment with new tool planning, promotion and awareness. It was possible to experiment with:
- the planning tools for sustainable development, transcending administrative boundaries;
- the marketing strategies for an innovative promotion of the area;
- the educational approaches for stimulating the correct and responsible behaviors and for promoting landscape as a factor of social inclusion and sustainable development.

The underlined topic adopted in the Veneto Region to develop the LDPP and the marketing and education activities refer to the concept of "*Places of Sense*". The idea of putting the "Places of Sense" in the core planning system of the park was born from the generally meager knowledge of this part of the Veneto territory: most of the people who do not live in the area associate to the Po Delta not as a place of sense, but think of it as being in an economic depression and being very remote. But then, when entering this area, which is the youngest territory in Italy, born only 600 years ago with the expansion of the Po River Delta, one discovers unexpected atmospheres and suddenly understands the history and perceives its everyday potential. With that, certain places emerge as having great sense, places that illustrate values and conflicts, places that yearn for the visitors' renewed attention and that display great opportunities for a sound sustainable development implementation.

What does a Place of Sense mean? It is hard to define what a "Place of Sense" is; the European Landscape Convention (ELC) mentions three categories in relation to them:
- places of perceptions, where it is possible to feel the place through the five senses;
- places of interactions, where the signs of the interaction between man and nature tell the story of the area;
- places of symbols, where the signs of the local culture and identity remain alive and timeless.

Indeed, the ELC identifies landscape as "*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*": it "*contributes to the formation of local cultures, … contributing to human well-being and the consolidation of the European identity;* it is *an important part of the quality of life for people everywhere.*"

In other words, it can be said that a place of sense is characterized by a combination of material and non-material components of perception and understanding: the material component must include not only the sight, but all five senses; but the non-material values especially must be considered: they can be memories, traditions, symbols, history. Those non-material values can be discovered in many ways: through the eyes of artists (poetry, literature, photography, movies), through the memories of local people, though the perceptions of the communities and tourists and through expert research.

The material and non-material values of the places of sense can also become tools for creating educational paths for sustainable development and be aimed towards landscape awareness.

In the LDPP framework, where three categories of places of sense were defined, three educational approaches are proposed:
- sensorial and emotional approach (for the places of perceptions);
- semiotic and cognitive approach (for the places of interactions);
- symbolic and representative approach (for the places of symbols).

The *sensorial approach* emphasizes the role of the five senses in perceiving the landscape. The direct

outdoor experience is of great importance, because the environment and the landscape cannot be understood passively or merely through books.

The senses can be employed to improve the common teaching methods: sight, taste, touch, smell and hearing are means with which to learn, especially in an outdoor context. The literature on environmental activities often encourages the children and young students to touch and feel the places around them. The use of the senses helps the process of "awakening", giving the children and the students a chance to come to the conclusion that if they do not care about the nature, culture and landscape, they can lose them and worsen their living conditions.

A sensorial approach to education allows a positive attitude towards sustainable development to be promoted and achieved through direct discovery experience.

The *semiotic approach* focuses on the meaning of the landscape and its signs.

Semiotics look at the signs of the landscape, as they represent the traces of human and nature interaction. Approaching the landscape education with a semiotic cognitive method means teaching children and young students to recognize the signs and landscape matrixes, understand when and how they have been traced; it means developing their capacity to read the landscape texture on the site itself, on a picture and on a map; it means going over the history, understanding the evolution of the place and thinking about the future of it.

The *symbolic approach* to the landscape education suggests "reading" the landscape as a hypertext where the symbols are the nodes of the conceptual network, made of the physical aspect and the cultural elements and values. The symbols can be physical elements like a monument, but they can also be intangible: this can be discovered through the archives, the literature, the fine arts and the cinema, the technology, the web and the collective memories and traditions. A place where an artist lived or created operas, a cinematographic set, a place where some important events happened and marked the local identity: those symbolic places can be used to educate the young generation to be respectful of such values for the future development. At the same time, this symbolic place can become an atmosphere for landscape planning and for an innovative marketing strategy that is defined with a vision for the youth.

A Proposal of Educational Paths

Different programs and paths can be defined for each educational approach that take into account the target groups, the scholastic curriculum and, most importantly, the educational finalities and the didactic objectives.

Discovering experiences can be suggested to kids; knowledge activities can be applied in primary school, secondary school students can develop the analysis; the critical understanding and constructive proposals can be elaborated on a university level.

Generally, the educational scope involves raising the level of awareness about the landscape and sustainable development in the new generation, while the didactic objectives change depending on the school target, but are always oriented towards increasing the students' skills and knowledge.

Each program adopts three levels of actions:
- practices in the classroom "about the landscape";
- experiences outdoor "in the landscape";
- considerations and proposals "for the landscape".

Practice in the classroom is a prerequisite to understanding the scope of the educational paths and to learn about the environmental and landscape issues; practice enables the students to see the experience in the landscape better, creating a sort of expectation for the site visit itself.

The outdoor experience is the core exiting action of the educational path; it can be a site visit or a site research; it creates and boosts interests about the environment, the landscape and sustainable development.

The final considerations are important, because they adjust the emotions and knowledge and stimulate a proposal for sustainable development of the area and boost correct behaviors in the long term.

Tools can be very different: games (such as bird man's buff, treasure hunt, telescopes …), didactic worksheets, a working group, interviews, theatrical performances, archive research, but also music and typical products, flowers and cameras, colors and other materials, and also bicycles, horses, the sky …).

Results of the 2Bparks Experimental Actions

A group of experts elaborated in detail some of the proposed paths that are part of the 2Bparks project, identifying the phases and steps.

Some of the proposed 2Bparks educational paths

	Early childhood programs	**Primary school programs**	**Secondary school Programs I**	**Secondary School Programs II**
Sensorial approach AWARENESS	Discover the places through the five senses	Hear the sounds of the landscape; Feel the scent of a place; Touch the place you live or stay in; Describe your feelings and compare with others	Know the taste of the landscape and understand the value of local production; Describe your feelings and compare with other	Describe your feelings and compare with others
Semiotic approach KNOWLEDGE	Educational stories written for kids and with kids	Understanding the signs of the landscape (individualizing the anthropic and natural elements): how can human impact on the nature be reduced?	The landscape as a result of past actions: Dynamic analysis	Study the landscape to understand how to reduce the ecological imprint on the Earth
Symbolic approach ATTITUDE			Arts, literature and cinema to understand a place	Arts, literature and cinema to understand and plan a place

These include:
- The semiotic approach in kindergarten and preschool (4–6 years)
- The sensorial approach in primary school (7–9 years)
- The semiotic approach in primary school (9–11 years)
- The symbolic approach in secondary school (12–15 years)

The semiotic approach proposed in kindergarten and preschool (4–6 years) appeals to the children's imagination.

The idea to involve children in writing and painting a story is innovative if directly linked to a school trip and an environmental program, but simple and very effective, if directly linked to a place to be discovered during a school field visit. The path is structured in four phases, as described below:

- *Phase 1. In the classroom: spark creativity and create expectations.*
  - Step 1.1: the teachers and experts identify the main character of the story; it could be an animal, a flower, a natural or anthropic element. The character must be defined in relationship with the place to be visited (for example a snowflake for a mountain, a fish for a lake or sea …), then the teachers ask the children to image and de- scribe the main character: what is it like? Where does it live or stay? What does it think? …, taking notes about what the children say.
  - Step 1.2: the teachers show the children pictures and play sounds that relate to the place where the character lives, that being the place the kids will visit. Then, they ask the children to describe what the main character of the story could do during the day in such a place. Later, the teachers tell an adventure including other characters and observe the children's emotions.

Raffaella Lioce

Learning about the landscape in the school Dame Inglesi

- *Phase 2. In the classroom: writing and acting out the story.*
  - Step 2.1: the teachers and experts write the final version of the story, taking into account what the children said and their emotions.
  - Step 2.2: the teachers prepare a marionette and involve the children in a performance for the parents.
  - Step 2.3: the experts involve the parents in organizing an open workshop that addresses the laboratory and landscape issues.

- *Phase 3. Outdoor in the places of the story: keeping a watch-out for the characters.*
  - Step 3.1: with the help of the local guides, the teachers, experts, children and parents visit the places of the story, creating sensorial experiences for the children, while they are engaged in discovering and looking for the story characters. In the meantime, the teachers record the sounds of the places.
  - Step 3.2: an awareness workshop is organized during the site visit for the parents to tell them the history of the visited places.

Learning in the landscape, school Dame Inglesi

Raffaella Lioce

- *Phase 4. In the classroom: considerations through designing the story.*
  - Step 4.1: the teachers organize activities involving children in the representation of the story: not only drawing or sketching, but also making collages from different materials, such as cotton, wood and wool. During the activities, the teachers play the sounds that were recorded during the site visit to recreate the atmosphere.
  - Step 4.2: providing each participant a copy of the story written and designed together.

The sensorial approach in primary school (7–9 years) can be implemented by integrating the landscape in different subjects, for example:

- listening to the sounds of the landscape in Music and Science;
- smelling the landscape fragrance in Science (flora);
- touching different materials to understand the environment in Technology;
- discovering the past of the students' own place of residence in History and Geography, comparing what they see today with historical pictures and films.

There should be planned practices, experiences and end considerations for each of the proposals. Emotions, feelings and perceptions are the means for this path. The tools include different materials, sounds books and worksheets, as well as natural elements.

The children are asked to describe emotions and their perceptions in terms of the smells and sounds, the sensation of touch and taste and their emotions upon seeing the landscape.

The semiotic approach in primary school (9–11 years) enables children to recognize the signs of the landscape by understanding its significance. The path can be structured as:

- *Phase 1. Practices in the classroom and at home.*
  - Step 1.1: choose a picture of a place you know: describe what you see and how you see the elements of the place, individualize the main signs and try to objectively copy the image.
  - Step 1.2: do the same exercise, but by taking a picture from the window of your room: describe your immediate landscape.
  - Step 1.3: interview your parents, while also understanding that there are different points of view.
  - Step 1.4: show your own landscape to your classmates and look at others'. Share different views.

Raffaella Lioce

Learning about the landscape in the school Patronato Lenoe XIII

• *Phase 2. Homework: The landscape along the route.*
 – Step 2.1: ask for your parents' help in observing the landscape along the road from home to school, or on the way towards holiday destinations; print a map from the web, take it with you on the way, note down elements that attract your attention and mark them on the map.

• *Phase 3. In the classroom: What does landscape mean?*
 – Step 3.1: try to create a definition of the landscape.
 – Step 3.2: look for a definition of landscape in the dictionary and in the Internet.
 – Step 3.3: understand the official definition (teachers or expert explanation).

• *Phase 4. In the classroom: know about the school trip destination: a protected area.*
 – Step 4.1: what does a protected area mean, what is and is not permitted in a protected area and why?
 – Step 4.2: find information on the web, listen to the experts' explanation, look at pictures, films and documentaries on the place you are going to visit.

• *Phase 5. Outdoor experience in the field with teachers and parents.*
 – Step 5.1: with the help of the guides, discover the place and do the same exercise from the classroom (including sensorial paths): listen to the sounds and smell the fragrances, touch the place, find the signs and the elements, sketch what you see and note down what you feel, compare with others, ask parents to do the same. Do your best, because the best sketch or report could be awarded! But most of all, enjoy yourself while understanding the values of the landscape in a protected area.

Roberta Galli

Learning on the Po River, school Santa Dorotea

Roberta Galli

Learning in the landscape at San Basilio, school Santa Dorotea

• *Phase 6. Back to the classroom: what do I remember about the experience in the field?*
  – Step 6.1: back in school, organize some activities to cement the experience in the students' minds and to increase awareness of all the participants and the parents: write stories, write poetry, draw the landscape you liked the most, share your final consideration and proposals with all the participants, etc.

The symbolic approach proposed in secondary school (12–15 years) has its roots in the idea that the landscape is full of cultural identity symbols. For example, thinking about the Po Delta Regional Park, the symbols can be found in local literature and in the films that have been staged there, where Italian realistic cinema was born in the '50s. Students can be invited to learn about the place by reading and watching films; they can be involved in analyzing the differences among the current situation and the ones that were filmed and told by artists. In this way, they can experiment in an innovative way how to read the landscape dynamically and to learn about its identity.

Students can also be invited to interview the local people during the site visit or develop an archive research anytime by doing comparisons among their own and others' understanding and feelings about the place.

Poetry written by a child

Le meraviglie del Delta del Po
il Po è un fiume pieno di sorprese
di cui tante meraviglie sono emerse.
Il dolce fruscio del vento che ti accarezza la pelle,
L' acqua torpida che riflette sull' orizzonte,
il dolce cinguettio degli uccelli,
le dune piene di piante selvatiche
di cui il profumo ti stupisce.
una vera e propria meraviglia.
Quando sei sulle rive del fiume
ti sembra di essere in un sogno
perché tutto quello che ti sta attorno
diventa una magia.

Anna Flavia Dalla Grana

E-lectures for Primary and Secondary Schools in Slovenia

Bojan Erhartič, Aleš Smrekar, Mateja Šmid Hribar, Jernej Tiran (Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Anton Melik Geographical Institute)

As part of the educational activities within the 2Bparks project, ZRC SAZU designed and created 3 online freely accessible e-lectures that relate to the Pot ob reki Iški – Okljuk interpretative trail http://www.ljubljanskobarje.si/potepanja-po-ljubljanskem-barju/ucne-poti/2rekaiska.

Three e-lectures were connected to one another, thus creating dynamic educational paths, offering children (as well as teachers) different ways to get familiarized with the material. The e-lectures are currently freely accessible from the Ljubljansko barje Nature Park website, from browsers as well as from smartpads and smartphones.

The purpose of the e-lectures is to introduce the contents of the Pot ob reki Iški – Okljuk interpretative trail to children and youths and encourage them to visit the mentioned trail. One lecture is intended for children between the ages 8 and 10 and the other for children from 12 and 14, while the third is intended for secondary school students. The purpose of the lectures is for the children to become acquainted with the contents through the text, the multimedia material and the additional links and for them to simultaneously test their knowledge with whimsical assignments. The manner of introducing the content and the level of difficulty are adapted to the children's age. All three e-lectures are available in Slovenian and English on the Ljubljansko barje Nature Park website http://www.ljubljanskobarje.si/potepanja-po-ljubljanskem-barju/ucne-poti/2.

The first steps of creating the e-lectures were already taken during the DEDI project and were upgraded within the 2Bparks project in collaboration with the Abellium company and diversified with new modules such as jigsaw puzzles, playing memory, guessing the sound and narrating a story by moving and placing images onto a bigger picture. In technical terms, the lectures run from the EDU-plexor[1] platform, which is an integral publishing and information system that allows the entire e-contents generation process to be managed and controlled and was developed by Abelium.

In addition, ZRC SAZU is in the process of negotiating to include and upload all three lectures in Slovenian and English including the instructions (using the SCORM package) to the Moodle[2] web application, from where any application user will be able to download the e-lecture into their e-classroom.

In connection to this, two lectures on water were included in the Vesela šola[3] national program in the 2012/2013 school year.

The Methodology of E-lectures Content Preparations

Prior to starting the e-lectures, the primary school and secondary school curriculums needed to be studied so that the contents of the e-materials could be linked to the subjects as well as possible. A special table was created with a list of educational goals for all the subjects that were deemed to at least partially coincide with the "Pot ob Iški – Okljuk" interpretative trail. When creating the Sawing and Grinding e-lecture, intended for the first triad of primary school, the curriculums of the following subjects were considered: Environmental Studies (topics: time and environmental education) and Slovenian (topics: language and literature). The e-lecture From the Spring to the Tap, intended for the third triad of primary school, included subjects like Geography, History and Natural Sciences. The contents of the third e-lecture on the three-fold characteristics of the Iška River, intended for first-year secondary school students, deals exclusively with Geography.

The e-lectures are designed in an intuitive manner and enable the students to solve them independently. The friendly Salameander character, the mascot of the Pot ob reki Iški interpretative trail, was created to accompany the students on their way of discovering the e-lecture. In addition, ZRC SAZU prepared didactic

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[1] Edu-plexor http://www.abelium.eu/development/edu.plexor

[2] moodle https://moodle.org/ Course Management System (CMS), also known as the Learning Management System (LMS) or Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) is a free online application for teachers to create educational pages online.

[3] The Vesela šola project is a mass competition in general knowledge for children, unique in Europe. It delivers knowledge in a fun and interesting way and has been encouraging children to gain knowledge and skills in a creative and integral way ever since 1968. In 1980, it was awarded the highest national prize in education. Since 2012, Vesela šola has also been present online with its web portal, significantly increasing the number of participating children, because a subscription to the paper copy of the magazine is no longer a prerequisite.

recommendations for the teachers for each e-lecture, focusing specifically on the intertwining characteristics of the e-lecture and the individual curriculums. A specially created table gives information on the set educational goals, examples of activities, proposed contents and didactic recommendations; its purpose is to encourage teachers to include the e-lectures in their yearly curriculum preparations. This is followed by in-depth instructions on executing the lecture in class, with each slide being accompanied by: the work done by the teacher, the work of the student, the curriculum execution and the educational goals. The teacher may adjust the educational form from blackboard lessons to individual work or work in pairs and groups, where knowledge is passed from one to another and is not merely formed by individual experience. The presented contents place special focus on research. The students can research by themselves or together with the teacher.

The indicative content of the e-lectures that were drawn from texts and prepared for the "Pot ob reki Iški – Okljuk" interpretative trail were connected as closely as possible to the descriptions of natural and cultural heritage in the DEDI online encyclopedia www.dedi.si, a short video and audio clips and are freely accessible in the RTV digital archive http://tvslo.si/ as well as in other similar credible online sources.

E-lecture: Sawing and Grinding (8–10 years)

The e-lecture focuses on flour mills and sawmills that once stood along the Iška River. First, the child observes the pictures to get to know the nature and purpose of the sawmill and flour mill, who manages them and what they are used for. Through the lesson, the child learns how our ancestors used water-powered flour mills and sawmills to grind flour out of wheat and saw boards out of logs, using concrete examples to help the child understand the meaning of heritage. The e-lecture consists of 21 slides; usually, an e-lecture begins with a short text with instructions, followed by an assignment. However, since this e-lecture is intended for the youngest school-aged children, some additional playful modules, like jigsaw puzzles, playing memory, guess the sound and storytelling by placing images onto a picture were used. The sound of the old saw in Iška vas sawing and an audio and video clip of a Slovenian folk song, encouraging children to sing along were also used. Both clips were generated as part of the 2Bparks project.

One of the individual slides of the Sawing and Grinding e-lecture

E-lecture: From the Spring to the Tap (12–14 years)

The purpose of this e-lecture is to demonstrate water's path from the spring to the home faucet. The introductory part introduces Slovenia as rich in water, but also brings attention to the fact that water richness can no longer be taken for granted. In the next section, the e-lecture focuses on the Iška River in the Ljubljansko barje Nature Park, where it is followed from the spring in the Iška Gorge to the water pump in Brest. The students are familiarized with the concept of groundwater, which is an important source of fresh drinking water in the pilot area. They also learn that water was pumped using wells in the past, but today the Brest waterworks contributes roughly a tenth of the drinking water for Ljubljana and most of its surroundings. The e-lecture was upgraded with additional external links, maps, illustrations and multimedia material.

E-lecture: The Triple Character of the Iška River (from 15 on)

In this e-lecture, the students learn about the influence of a river on the countryside using the example of the Iška River. Iška is a relatively short river; however, it is possible to observe the several different natural landscapes it has co-created on its 29 km of flow. The student is first acquainted with Iška in its spring and upper stream, where it co-created the Iška Gorge, followed by a demonstration of the piling (accumulation) of material that the river deposits after it loses its transportation strength; the final part shows the river flowing slowly towards Ljubljansko barje due to the very slight fall of the flow before its final confluence with the Ljubljanica River. The e-lecture places special focus on the anthropogenic interference into the river basin, when man reshaped the stream, cut its meanders and deepened the channel in order to increase the river outflow. The text complements different interactive cartographic and multimedia material, schematic illustrations, illustrations and external links.

## E-lectures on Water Included in the Vesela šola National Programme

In collaboration with the Mladinska knjiga publishing house, which prepares online lectures for Vesela šola, two e-lectures on waters in Slovenia were created in February 2013. One lecture was intended for
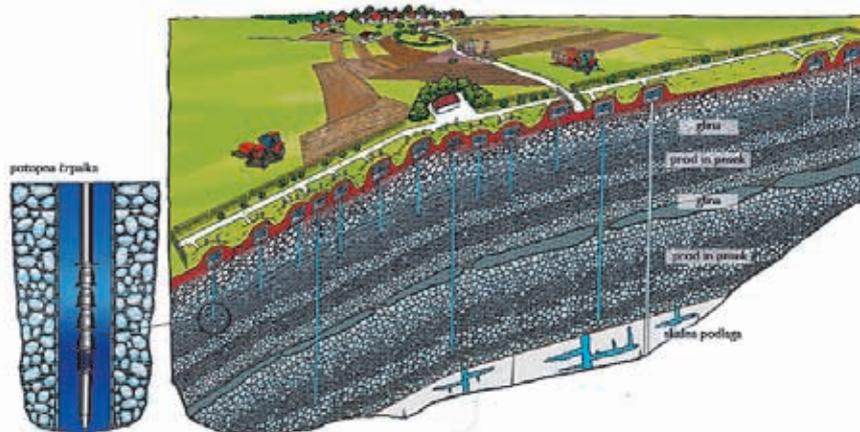
Vodarna Brest. (Ilustracija: Marjan Pečar)

One of the individual slides of the From the Spring to the Tap e-lecture
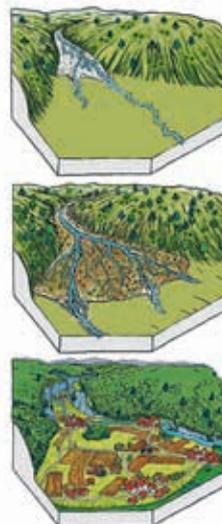
One of the individual slides of the Triple Character of the Iška River e-lecture

One of the individual slides of the Waters in Slovenia e-lecture (Vesela šola National Programme)

children from 9 to 11 and the other for children from 12 to 14. Both lectures consisted of a written part that was published in the February issues of Pil and Pil Plus Magazines and an online part, published on the Vesela šola webpage (PIL) http://www.vesela-sola.net/veselasola.net/portal/ucne_poti/pil-voda-2013 0304/indexstate=1 and (PIL PLUS) http://www.vese-lasola.net/veselasola.net/portal/ucne_poti/plus-voda-20130304/indexstate=1. Both lectures are included in the materials for the school and national competition in Vesela šola knowledge.

Educational Laboratories in Vercelli: Lame del Sesia Nature Park

Davide Benasso (Province of Vercelli), Sara Vavassori (Coclea soc. coop. soc., agency for local development), Renato Tonello, Stefano Aietti (Park of Sacro Monte di Varallo), Carlo Bider, Agostino Pela (Park "Lame del Sesia")

From October 2011 till the end of 2012, the Protected Area "Lame del Sesia", managed by "Ente di gestione delle Riserve Pedemeontane e delle Terre d'Acqua" organized an experimental educational activities schedule for children, families and citizens as an opportunity to approach the park.

It should be noted that many schools come to the park. 66 classes visited it during the school year 2011–2012, for a total amount of 1300 students. Several educational programs consisted of workshops that were organized in the classes to analyze specific topics.

For all these reasons, the protected area Lame del Sesia decided to focus the attention on children's education in extra-curricular time during the 2Bparks project, involving the families, with the conviction that the aim of environmental education is to bring citizens to the park.

During these last two years, a program of events was defined that focused on the knowledge of the forest and the river (flora and fauna), the use of natural materials, the study and research of the ancient crafts of the countryside and the production of artifacts.

Almost 300 people attended the events (10 persons for each workshop, from 20 to 40 for guided tours).

Objectives

These activities had a dual purpose:
• to offer the citizens some opportunities to approach the park in order to get to know it better and to make it a regular destination for leisure and enjoyment, increasing their environmental awareness;

• to provide a scientifically planned schedule of guided didactic tours and laboratories that would also be valid for other protected areas (parks on plain, wetlands).

Organizers: the protected area "Lame del Sesia" with the expert group of CEA (Centro Ricerche Atlantide), an association of naturalistic guides and environmental educators.

What: Interactive laboratories and didactic site visits

Why: To start a process to increase children's and families' awareness about the park and its values

When: October 2011 – December 2012

Methodology

The workshops were organized in an interactive way. The covered topics were: trees and roots properties, flora, fauna, especially birds of prey and macroinvertebrates, herbs, ancient crafts, animal mimicry, sounds and colors of nature.

The park decided to dedicate the laboratories not only to children but also to adults, in order to propose some experiences for the whole family with a language suitable for everybody, and to increase the socialization between them.

To stimulate participation, the laboratories were organized in two parts: the first part was a lecture and explanation of the topic, aimed at increasing the specific knowledge of the participants; the second part was developed as a scientific or creative workshop aimed at the direct and personal involvement of the participants with the realization of a product

Lame del Sesia Nature Park

Lame del Sesia Nature Park

Lame del Sesia Nature Park

ence and experiments conducted by the participants, organized site visits in the park.

Output Results and Evaluation

The protected area considered these educational activities to be important for the population to approach the park. It was a good experience in the sense for the active participation of the citizens. The activities allowed a close-knit group of people close to the protected area to be created, interested in the environment and its protection. The participants requested further opportunities to make similar activities. The participation of the children and adults together created the conditions to make the families able to take charge of educational growth, including the environmental one.

that they could take home. In some cases, the expert and naturalistic guides, who enabled the direct approach to the environment through sensory experi-

Lame del Sesia Nature Park

Educational Laboratories in the Santo André and Sancha Lagoons Natural Reserve, Alentejo Litoral, Portugal

Ana Felício (RCDI, Development and Innovation Network)

"The Environment Throughout the Year" – General Approach

This section summarizes the concept of the on-going environmental education program in the Santo André and Sancha Lagoons Natural Reserve in Alentejo Litoral. The program started in October 2012 and will end in mid-June 2013. The main objective is to increase the students' knowledge and awareness on the environmental and cultural values of the protected area and foster their responsible attitudes and actions.

The environmental education program involves 388 students from 4 kindergartens and 10 primary schools. All of the participating schools are neighboring schools, thus allowing for the creation of a strengthened relationship between the children and the nature reserve.

The topic of the experimental education program is "The Environment Throughout the Year". The objective is that the children learn the major features of the four seasons in the nature reserve.

The program combines field and classroom activities. The students are organized in 10 groups (including two different schools together) who visit the nature reserve once every month at the Monte do Paio Environmental Interpretation Centre. During each visit, the children typically arrive around 10 a.m., have outdoor activities in the nature reserve during the morning, then have lunch all together and spend the afternoon mostly indoors to develop activities related to what they have seen in the field. They leave the nature reserve around 3.30 p.m.

After two field days, each group meets again at the third month at the nature reserve to present to the students of the other school the materials they have developed in class and to share their experiences.

There are a total of 21 teachers and kindergarten educators engaged in the program who accompany the students during the visits. The visits are assisted by a 2Bparks educator, within the scope of the collaboration agreement with a local NGO. The staff of the nature reserve is also involved in the visits. The municipality of Santiago do Cacém is also involved and provides transportation for the students.

One of the 10 groups at Monte do Paio

Parents and family are also invited and welcome to attend the field activities at Monte do Paio at any point.

The first day of environmental education activities: in October, the day is naturally dedicated to learning about autumn.

The children arrive in the morning and after expending some energy playing freely in the yard, they are gathered to listen to the teachers, the 2Bparks educator and the nature reserve staff explaining how the day will proceed. It is also an opportunity for them to be reminded of the rules that apply when visiting a protected area.

The first exercise is then to close their eyes and experience the sounds and silences of nature.

Afterwards, they are divided into three groups and start walking around the protected area to observe and identify the existing trees. The groups are accompanied by two teachers, the 2Bparks educator and the nature reserve staff.

The children are asked to reply to some questions such as:
- Is it a fruit tree or not?
- If it is a fruit tree, does it produce fruit in the autumn?
- Are the leaves evergreen or deciduous?
- Are the leaves indented or not?

Throughout the morning, the children collect items that they find along the path that will be used in the afternoon activities. This can be sticks, leaves, fallen fruits, snails, small stones, etc.

Feeding the ponies

The morning ends with a much appreciated activity: picking herbs to feed the ponies and donkeys.

After lunch, three activities take place in three different rooms: observing the autumn fruits, making an imaginary autumn tree and performing the autumn weather.

When observing and exploring the autumn fruits, the students focus on the shape, the color, the texture and the size of the fruit. To explore the flavor of the fruits, one child is blindfolded and tries to guess which fruit it is being given to taste. Adjectives abound and the students learn about the outsides and insides of the autumn fruits. The teachers share some information on how to cook and eat those fruits and on how to take advantage of some of their medicinal properties.

Making an imaginary autumn tree proves to be great fun. The kids are given a bare tree trunk in a vase that they have to "dress" with all the items collected in the morning. The resulting three autumn trees are lively and beautifully decorated with leaves, fruits and flowers.

Finally, a third activity explores the children's ability to act and perform autumn sounds and movements. Some children are told to behave like trees and some other children imitate blowing wind and make the trees move and "dance". In this way, the autumn wind can be enjoyed after all.

It was a full day at the nature reserve and it is now time to go back.

The children have learned and experienced what autumn brings and have certainly begun to appreciate this season more.

Within a month, it is time to come back to Monte do Paio for the next set of activities and to see how the environment has changed since October.

The second day of the 2Bparks environmental education activities. In November, it is time to go back to the Santo André and Sancha Lagoons Natural Reserve to learn more about autumn.

The first group exercise

Ana Felicio

Questions and answers

The children are very excited by the time they arrive at Monte do Paio. The sky is grey, but the children's joy is always colorful.

Again, the yard is the starting point: the children, the teachers, the 2Bparks educator and the nature reserve staff form a big circle that takes up the entire yard. It is the first group exercise and it is both used to remember what was taught in October and give some hints on what the children will be learning today. Two topics are highlighted: the dew and the forest litter.

The time has now come to go to the pine forest and look for the forest litter. This time, the children were divided into groups beforehand. All of them have a little personalized round paper on their lapel with big letters A, B, C painted on.

The long walk through the pine forest begins. Each group observes the trees, the bushes and the soil.

After walking for a while, the children are gathered around a picnic table in the middle of the pine forest to think and repeat a bit about what they have already discovered and what they might still find out.

Just like in October, today the children will also collect several items that they find along the way and that will be used for some of the afternoon activities. The 2Bparks educator asks why the forest litter is important to the fauna and flora of the nature reserve. She also asks why do some of the tree leaves fall. The children start interpreting the nature using their imagination and logic.

There is a lot of curiosity about the "little animals" that live in the forest litter, making the magnifying glass into a much disputed object.

Meanwhile, it is lunch time. Back to the yard, each child gets lunch from their little backpacks. French fries are shared and sweets exchanged.

In the afternoon, three activities take place simultaneously in three different rooms, just like in October. But all the activities are new.

In one room, a slideshow of the nature reserve is presented by the staff of the protected area. There are images of the fauna and flora and also of the annual opening of the lagoon to the sea that some of the children have witnessed already.

In another room, the children learn to make a paper windmill. In October, they learned how to play with the "air in movement", today they learn that the wind can also produce energy. There is no hesitation as to which color to choose to make the paper windmill: pink for girls and blue for boys.

As soon as the paper windmills are ready, the children run to the yard to try them out. The result is that both pink and blue paper windmills work very well.

In the third room, some experiments take place. The children observe the bits and pieces of forest litter collected in the morning and try to guess what it is composed of. In another experiment, the children learn what dew is and why it sometimes appears on a cold morning. They learn that is it possible to "make" dew out of an empty can, some ice and a glass of water from the fridge.

After all the groups circulated in the three rooms, another day of the 2Bparks environmental education activities has come to an end at Monte do Paio.

The next visit to the Nature Reserve will be in December. It will be a sum-up day, where a group from one school will show a group of another school what they have learned in their two previous visits to the nature reserve.

2Bparks Photography Contests

Bojan Erhartič, Aleš Smrekar, Mateja Šmid Hribar, Jernej Tiran (Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Anton Melik Geographical Institute)

"Seeing a truly great photograph instantly changes you, a photograph like this can change your life. Even though you may not be aware of it, there is a shift in you, a spiritual shift. A single, communicatively very powerful photograph can completely transform you. That is the power of the photograph, the power of a moment frozen in time."

Joe McNally

Out of all the senses, sight is the one that gives us the most perfect picture of the world around us. Words are often insufficient to describe everything the eye detects. But a photograph has the power to draw us in; it attracts us, awakens our imagination and makes us think. The process of people's perception of the world is mysterious, because the same images prompt different interpretations in each of us.

Documentary photography, which was the focus of the international photography competition for the youth, is conditioned by the authenticity and credibility of the given moment, because it depicts reality as it is. The competition was held in three countries (Cyprus, Portugal, Slovenia) and focused predominantly on the attitude and influence of man, modern society and technology on nature conservation in a positive as well as negative sense in three pilot protected areas: the Troodos National Forest Park, the Santo André and Sancha Lagoons Natural Reserve and the Ljubljansko barje Nature Park.

In the course of the centuries and the millennia, man has created a mosaic-like intertwinement of different environments in Europe that offer refuge to numerous plant and animal species. This millennia-long harmony of man and nature has been quickly disintegrating in the past few decades, prompting the establishment of numerous protected areas around the world, whose purpose is to protect biodiversity, landscape diversity and encourage sustainable development. But the road from the protection to the realization of its purpose is usually long and winding. Part of the 2Bparks project involved reaching out to young people by organizing a photography competition, to persuade them to visit, observe and experience protected areas in a focused manner. The competition spoke to young people to focus their attention on the intertwinement of the numerous elements of natural and cultural heritage and for them to realize that they are a part of this story, a part of this park as well. The concept's design was derived from famous French photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson's quote: "*The joy of looking, sensitivity, sensuality, imagination, all that one takes to heart, come … That joy will exist for me forever*," using the photographed man-nature relationship to install a sense of awareness and environmentalism in young photographers. We stand firmly behind the belief that raising awareness in young people is key for the future of these parks, which is further supported by Senegalese poet and environmentalist Baba Dioum's thought: "*In the end we will conserve only what we love. We will love only what we understand. We will understand only what we are taught.*"

A good photograph, as the young people have certainly demonstrated in all three participating countries, has a great communicative value, regardless of the technique in which it is shot. The general view is that a good photograph is defined principally by an interesting motif. The participating youths have absolutely proven themselves, depicting man and nature in the Troodos National Forest Park, the Santo André and Sancha Lagoons Natural Reserve and the Ljubljansko barje Nature Park in an interesting, educational, expressive, occasionally dramatic and sometimes even negative light. In the end, the future of protected areas depends on them, the youths. Parks – 2B or not to be?

Thanks to all the young participants from Cyprus, Portugal and Slovenia for helping us create an unforgettable experience within the 2Bparks project!

Selected photos from the photo competition in Troodos National Forest Park (page 108-109)

Lemythoy Highschool, Sholi Mitsi

Lemythoy Highschool, Sholi Mitsi

Lemythoy Highschool, Sholi Mitsi

Lemythoy Highschool, Sholi Mitsi

The school contest award in Slovenia

As part of the 2Bparks project in collaboration with the Ljubljansko barje Nature Park and the Gea Magazine, a photography competition for young people up to 26 years was held, entitled "Ljubljansko barje: Man and Nature". As the title suggests, the topic of the competition was man's attitude toward nature in Ljubljansko barje. This activity was organized to encourage young people to visit, observe and experience protected areas. The competition was published in the GEA magazine and on the webpages of Mladinska knjiga, the Ljubljansko barje Nature Park and the Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts on 1 February 2012.

The competition encouraged young people to look for the intertwining of the numerous elements of natural and cultural heritage when looking for motifs, as the Ljubljansko barje Nature Park is an area of extraordinarily cultivated nature with an expressed cohabitation of man with nature dating back several thousands of years. The assignment was to capture moments that depict the attitude and influence of man, modern society and technology on the conser-

vation of nature in a positive as well as a negative sense. An additional requirement was for the photos to depict more than only elements of nature, but that they should have a message relating to the competition topic.

Each author could participate with up to six digital or digitalized photographs in JPEG format. Computer manipulation of the photographs was permitted, but not photo montage. On 13 April 2012, a special, free educational workshop for young photographers was held in the hall of the Notranje Gorice Culture Center (Ljubljansko barje Nature Park). The introductory lecture was intended for contemplation on the attitude and influence of man, modern society and technology on nature conservation (in a positive as well as negative sense). The young photographers were reminded about the meaning of a photograph's message. This was followed by the practical portion of the workshop with a presentation and practical test of photography techniques and searching for motifs in the immediate vicinity of Notranje Gorice.

The young photographers who took part in the competition were divided into three groups:

Still life – winning photograph in category A

Miha Predalič

Gregor Bolha

Yellow skydiver – winning photograph in category B

A. photographers up to a completed primary education;
B. photographers up to a completed secondary education;
C. photographers up to a completed university education or up to 26 years.

23 authors responded to the competition with 115 photographs. The expert judging panel consisted of Barbara Zupanc (director of the Ljubljansko barje Nature Park), Bojan Erhartič (research fellow at ZRC SAZU), Anja Leskovar (editor-in-chief of GEA magazine) and Oskar Karel Dolenc (master of photography from the Photographic Association of Slovenia, EFIAP, Fotoklub Ljubljana); the panel looked through and graded the photographs on 28 May 2012. The judges selected 22 photographs for the short list. Based on their grades, the judges assigned three first, three second, two third prizes and two additional promotional prizes of the Ljubljansko barje Nature Park.

Nina Žnideršič

Tranquility – winning photograph in category C

2Bparks Transnational Award – Places of Sense

Chiara Quaglia, Nicola Boscolo (Veneto Region, Spatial and Strategic Planning Department), Raffaella Lioce (Tea Engineering)

Why the Award "Places of Sense – 2Bparks"?

The naturalistic and environmental values of protected areas are usually well known, scientifically recognized and already safeguarded. On the contrary, all the suggestive, symbolic, sensitive, artistic characteristics have not yet been recognized with the same accuracy, maybe due to their non-material value and the impossibility of applying a scientific approach. That is why the "Places of Sense" are important for the people who live, visit and take care of the protected areas (PA); they represent an adjunct value for a sustainable territorial marketing: they can attract visitors, stimulate sustainable business strategies, promote sustainable tourism, enhance cohesion and compatible growth and develop innovative economic activities.

But what does "Place of Sense" exactly mean?

A "Place of Sense" is a place, which has a deep meaning for the local population and the other visitors.

It can be a place that evokes deep feelings and sensations, or a particular heartbreaking point of view, an important place for customs and traditions, or a place which has been represented by artists (painters, photographers, filmmakers, poets …), a place, which is especially visited by tourists, or a place in which important historical events took place in the past and are still impressed in the population.

The Two Sections: "Places" and "Plans" and Results

The award consisted of two sections: the first Section was called "Places", the second "Plans". Each project partner participated in the Section 1 by submitting some "Places of Sense" of their target area (min. 3, max. 10 places per partner), selecting some representative photos and writing an accompanying explanation text.

Bojan Erhartič

One of the places of sense: A view from St. Ana

A specific committee selected the more significant and suggestive "Places of Sense" of the 2Bparks MED PA network. The committee considered both the beauty of the photos, and the non-material value of the represented place. For this reason, not only were the quality of the photos and the aesthetic aspects of the places important, but also the motivations included in the explanation text.

The selected photos (about 20 photos) were exhibited during the final conference of the 2Bparks project and published in the official website of the project.

From the selected photographs, one photo per partner was awarded during the final conference with an official ceremony and a symbolic prize. One photo above all was awarded with an additional prize.

Each partner participated in the Section 2 "Plans" by submitting their Local Tourism Pilot Plan (LTSP). The Committee selects the best LTSP (Local Tourism Strategic Plan) in the 2Bparks network – MED Area. All the LTSP were compared with regard to the sustainable promoted business strategies and their objectives in terms of cohesion and compatible growth, the promoted good practices with particular attention on their potentialities and relation to the notion of "Places of Sense" and their sustainable management.

A representative of the winning partner was invited to the final conference. On this occasion, an official ceremony took place and the winning partner was awarded a symbolic prize by the committee.

The aim of this award did not end with the award itself. The "Places of sense" that were selected were exhibited during the final conference, contribute to the dissemination of the project contents. The photos were published in the smartphone application promoted by the Lead Partner Veneto Region. In this way, a sort of network of the "Places of Sense" was created: a network of symbolic, artistic, representative and meaningful places of the MED Area, with the objective to catch the attention of the visitors, the tourist and the local people about this "sensitive" value of places and thus increase their potential for sustainable and responsible tourism and the related economical activities.

The symbol of the transnational award is a padlock: of course, if you have recently visited any city like Rome, Venice, Paris, you have seen many locked padlocks (in the railings, in the lamps, in the bridges …) in many remarkable places as symbols of these loved places, where the beauty of the views is accompanied by the deepness of the feelings. For this reason, the symbolic prize of the award is a padlock that will "lock" the places of sense together with the people and their feelings about it.

2Bparks Mainstreaming: Life after the Project

Aleš Smrekar (Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Anton Melik Geographical Institute), Alexandra Mendonça (RCDI, Development and Innovation Network)

The broad definition of the term sustainable development encourages the collaboration, co-dependency and cohabitation of three traditionally separate fields: environment, economy and society. The World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) defined sustainable development in 1987 as an "approach to progress which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". It is therefore sustainable development that preserves prosperity over time. In 2002, the United Nations added to the definition with a declaration, in which "sustainable development is linked to a collective responsibility for progress and strengthening reciprocally dependent systems: environment protection and economic and social development at a local, national, regional and global level". This represents the actual foundation to a comprehensively designed developmental paradigm of a society that will place emphasis on a simultaneous improvement of the economic, social and environmental quality of life within the one-generation as well as intergenerational fairness. In this way, the sustainability paradigm focuses on finding a balance between the economic, social and environmental pillars, which are inextricably linked and mutually reciprocal.

Protected areas are essential for biodiversity preservation and are the foundation of nearly all national and international environmental strategies. Protected areas are regarded as the most important instrument of biodiversity protection. They are intended for protecting existing operating natural ecosystems so that they can act as a place of refuge for plant and animal species. Through them, ecological systems are preserved that could not survive in intensively cultivated landscapes (land and sea). The World Conservation Union – IUCN defined a protected area in 1992 as "an area of land and/or sea especially dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity and of natural and associated cultural resources, and managed through legal or other effective means".

Protected areas differ greatly from one to another. On one hand, there are only a few areas that are environmentally so important or sensitive that access to them is completely restricted, while, on the other hand, there are areas with traditionally settled parts, which have been reshaped by man into cultural landscapes with a very high level of biodiversity.

Values are signified by everything to which people ascribe a great principled worth and consequently a certain advantage; only people can ascribe certain values to natural conditions. Our treatment of the environment, nature and natural resources is influenced by our environmental perception and our established value system: which values we notice, recognize in nature or in the wider environment.

The most recognized values of protected areas fall within environmental values, with a quiet and clean environment being in first place, followed by a preserved natural landscape and plant and animal diversity (biodiversity). Cultural heritage, tradition and keeping tradition are the values that are predominantly intended for preserving the cultural landscape and cultural values.

The role of education is of extreme importance, as it can affect the formation of values and a sense of the importance of protected areas in early childhood. The educational process is precisely the tool with which future generations can cherish, preserve and also care for a quality development and marketing of protected areas.

The economic development and fast changes that have been apparent in the urbanized as well as the rural area in recent years are quickly becoming the concern for the future fate of natural and cultural environment. In this way, protected areas can be a "polygon" for students to recognize the key values of space and also the areas where it is possible to use the examples of natural and cultural value protection to re-educate, encourage and raise awareness on a local, regional, national and European level.

Sustainable development of protected areas with an expressed developmental mobilization can be an excellent opportunity for each country and the European Union as a whole to let environmental protection live as a new possibility, as stimulating rather than hindering the development. The protection-stimulation designed protected area management can enable the preservation of the cultural landscape and the well-being of the population and with that encourage an according regional development.

Identifying the socially-economic values of protected areas means that natural value and biodiversity protection is not just a cost, but also a new developmental opportunity. Numerous issues do arise when evaluating natural values, since they are not the subject of classical market relations, which are supply and demand based, because they do not appear as goods on the market. But since natural values, biodiversity and ecosystem services have their price, it is appropriate to also evaluate them according to the benefits people can get from nature, for example, the user readiness.

The goals of protection cannot be achieved without a focused and effective management that involves planning, execution, control and overseeing the activities in the protected area; at the same time, the developmental possibilities that the protected areas as the cores of activities of sustainable development can offer the local inhabitants are not used to their full potential.

Even though individual cases of good practices do reach the environmental and economic goals for protected areas, they are not widely known. The examples that have been designed as part of the 2Bparks project are illustrative and show how a protected area can act as the instigator of regional development and create an extra added value. Although it should be stressed that no good practice can be directly transferred into other protected areas, they can serve as a role model and a research direction.

Whether the "developmental role" of the protected area is successful, is difficult to determine in an absolute sense: the expectations of the local inhabitants and the measure of whether they reach the desired quality of life level can be very different. However, it is undoubtedly true that all the protected area categories can serve as a lever for the sustainable development of local communities and regions, as a whole.

To illustrate the this discussion, the 2Bparks Environmental Clusters are an interesting example of an approach to balance conflicting interests and reconcile the protection and conservation of Protected Areas with economic development.

The environmental clustering process of 2Bparks was envisaged as grouping the enterprises and socio-economic operators that are committed to adopting sustainable business strategies, thusly contributing to the enhancement of the Protected Areas

and to environmental protection and conservation in general.

The project objectives that were addressed with the implementation of the Environmental Clusters were: reducing harm to local environment, reducing the negative impacts on natural and cultural heritage and maximizing social and economic benefits to local communities (e.g. to increase social cohesion and promote job creation), therefore contributing to the overall sustainability.

Although the general concept of "sustainability" is easy to understand, it is somehow difficult to apply for more practical purposes. In the case of the 2Bparks clustering activities, the following general criteria were adopted to define a *sustainable business*:

- uses resources in a sustainable way (e.g. reducing the consumption of water and energy, using renewable sources of energy);
- minimizes its negative impacts on the environment (e.g. minimizing 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.

To support the transferability of the methodology adopted by 2Bparks into other MED regions, a few guidelines are proposed. These guidelines are intended for providing a general framework, while flexible individual solutions related to the specificity of each Protected Area and region and its particular needs and problems should obviously be adopted as well.

Five Guidelines for Starting Environmental Clusters

1) Increase awareness of the local businesses on the unique natural resources of the local/regional Protected Area(s) and on the environmental sustainability issues.

2) Improve the institutional cooperation among the stakeholders on a local and regional level, involving the business sector, public authorities, protected areas management boards and non-governmental organizations.

3) Provide visibility to existing good business practices adopted by local economic operators to reconcile the environmental protection and economic development.

4) Encourage peer-to-peer learning processes among enterprises, to demonstrate that sustainable business procedures result in economic and marketing benefits for the operators.

5) Develop a holistic approach to providing consistency to the overall sustainable strategy on local level (i.e. integrate the cluster approach with other local/regional initiatives that address sustainability issues).

Five Guidelines for Continuing and Managing Environmental Clusters

1) The development of pilot actions involving selected enterprises, to conduct environmental assessments and outline action plans to foster the implementation of sustainable business strategies. These pilot actions can demonstrate how a sustainable business strategy will result in sound benefits and advantages to the economic operators (e.g. contribution to effective cost reductions, higher efficiency of resource use and increased business feasibility, a differentiation from competitors, product diversification, an improvement of the quality of products and services, new angles for marketing and promotion).

2) The organization and distribution of a catalogue of good environmental practices and the best available technologies for selected economic sectors (e.g. tourism industry and other sectors, depending on the specific local economic structure).

3) The implementation of regular promotion events to demonstrate good practices/technologies and to encourage institutional cooperation.

4) A systematic update of the database of potential cluster members and an annual review of information for each effective member, to guarantee the renewal of the membership.

5) The identification of possible sources of financing (on a local, regional, national and EU level) to support the cluster activities in the medium-term.

Managing a Transnational Cooperation Project: Learning from the 2Bparks Experience

Raffaella Lioce (Tea Engineering, Veneto Region consultant)

Management is Made up of People

It is a common misunderstanding that project planning is something to be done exclusively in the preparation phase.

However, the activities that are defined during the formulation phase generally do not ensure a proper implementation of the project. These activities often need to be detailed by defining some *'sub-activities'* (contributing to the implementation of the activities, just as the activities contribute to the results). While over-planning should be avoided, the following items should generally be covered during the operational planning:
- adequate timing of activities;
- adequate division of tasks and responsibilities;
- adequate estimation of means and a precise cost calculation.

See Survival Kit (Bienzle et al., 2010)

Approaching the management and the coordination of a project that is co-funded by the European Union under the framework of territorial transnational coordination programs, it is necessary to be aware that the Application Form should be "translated into a management toolkit" tailored to the partner's needs.

There is no right way to provide a management toolkit: it depends on the project structure and on the partnership features.

Defining "Who does what?" is very important, as well as how to do this. However, the planners can arrange the best management toolkit from the breakdown structure, the organizational chart, the Gantt diagrams and the cost breakdown; they can also prepare a monitoring template and arrange the best visual identity and communication plan. Despite all this, they may still realize later: all this is not enough to make the project run as planned! "*After setting the scene, typical challenges arise from the mission and structure*": this could be a partner not fulfilling their jobs, a partner

resigning from the project or a change in the administrative or political framework, etc.

During the preparation phase, the partners share the project finalities and design the project plan, being aware that a lot of time could pass from the project preparation to the implementation and something could change. How to manage the change?

When working in partnerships, it is necessary to focus on sharing experience, on learning from each other for the benefit of the institution, its staff and students … But a territorial cooperation program is not only networking: it requires a real transnational dimension of the project scope and consequentially also of the *exploitable* outputs and results. The activities and tasks must be developed jointly by the whole partnership depending on the competences and skills of the partners.

But before the schedules, before the templates and the schemes, a project is made of partners and most of all of people dealing with the project activities. If the project is transnational, it is common to meet people who come from different countries with different cultures and backgrounds or with institutions that have specific procedures and institutional frameworks.

The project manager or the transnational coordinator must steer the activities of all the partners and make sure that the project achieves the objectives as described in the Application Form*.*

"A good coordinator has a double role: he or she needs to have the technical skills for project management and for the matters concerned by the project. He or she needs also to have good leadership qualities."

"There are different approaches of a project management and project leadership … Coordinators have to find their own, authentic style of steering the project."

The coordinators can be stiff and traditional, notably task-oriented, or they can be creative and flexible, result-oriented, open to change and to daily challenge.

A project is always a project, regardless of the manager: it must achieve the goals within its life cycle while respecting the program requirements and project schedule.

A traditional manager foresees the following *"waterfall tasks: … plan, monitor, check, reschedule and validate,"* while the so-called Agile Management (usually called creative management) foresees an iterative process and the following tasks: to iterate, envisage, explore, adapt, close and celebrate.

In a Traditional Management framework, the coordinator is supposed to follow the Plan; he or she has to provide the Work-breakdown structure and the Gantt chart in advance, provide the Status reports, deliver and learn from them at the end.

In an Agile framework, the coordinator is supposed to plan as the project is ongoing, to arrange a Feature-breakdown structure, to benefit from user stories, to release the plan and to keep the story boards up to date: to deliver and learn from every iteration, to adapt the situations and coordinate the team.

The coordinator must possess the basic tools of a traditional project manager, even if he or she adopts an agile management approach. In addition, he or she must be willing to lead. He or she must be able to inspire and motivate people, to communicate effectively, to respect intercultural diversity, to build performing teams and to solve emerging conflicts inside the team: in fact, he or she has to create a sense of project ownership among the team. A good coordinator is future-oriented and people-oriented: he or she must have a project vision and believe in the innovations and works to reach results using the most suitable tools and management approach.

Agile management is a method of coordinating a project by *"empowering and trusting people, acknowledging change as norm and promoting constant feedback"* (Shuh, 2005).

As suggested by James Highsmith in the *"Agile Project Management: Creating Innovative Products"* (2010): ***"The formula for success is simple: deliver today, adapt tomorrow***", being sure objectives are achieved by the end of the project.

The creative approaches adopted during the 2Bparks project makes it possible to implement and, in some cases, to determine some **PRINCIPLES** of the agile management, such as:

- to share the project Vision as many times as possible;
- to welcome the changing requirements, even late in the development;
- the stakeholders and experts must work together continuously throughout the project;
- the partners must frequently exchange local intermediate outputs and share the problems;
- to share the decisions and allow team members to make decisions in the field they are responsible for (both on a transnational level and especially on a local level);
- to use the information for transparency and accountability;
- to provide a simple plan and adapt to the situation by keeping the key outputs constant;
- to create a core team, but not exclude the others;
- to arrange a shared path towards the project outputs, but leave the partners free to tailor it to the local needs;
- to adapt and realign the plan when necessary on the basis of the partners' feedback and the real performances;
- to celebrate the outputs and results during the meetings.

Project management vs. leadership (See Survival Kit (Bienzle et al., 2010))

Project management: the factual dimension	Leadership: the interpersonal dimension
Planning	Vision
Organization	Team building
Monitoring	Motivation, encouragement
Contractual management	Support and feedback
Financial management	Values
Reporting	Communication
	Conflict resolution
	Understanding of interaction and development processes

Good rules for the meeting organization (See Survival Kit (Bienzle et al., 2010))

- Respect the team members

- Be on time and let others know if anyone is late

- Send the agenda at least one week before the meeting!

- Handle conflicts in a constructive manner

- Ask when you do not understand (if others do understand, say "maybe I expressed this in the wrong way")

- Be helpful and supportive to the team

- Ask for help, do not struggle alone

- Follow the deadlines

- Do not be too strict, listen and try to understand, be creative in finding solutions

- Give everyone a chance to try out different roles and responsibilities in meetings

Besides the general principle of management, there are also some rules, in particular for the meeting organization.

Agile management is like steering a sailing boat, taking advantage of the wind and trying to keep the boat far from the storm. The head needs to forecast a possible crisis situation and always have a potential solution to be proposed to the "crew".

What we learned

Tips for transnational coordinators:
- anytime: trust the people working with you and give them the possibility to express themselves as best they can;
- if the phase leaders do not coordinate effectively, encourage them to act and support them by proposing solutions and tools, strive to give them the chance to fulfill their obligations. If nothing happens, try to force or delegate another PP to take over this phase or part of the tasks (always be available to do the work yourself). Again, trust the partners: be sure that somebody is ready to help;
- take responsibility for your own work, but also delegate the responsibilities and tasks and try to bring out the best out of all the team members;
- involve the policy decision makers when necessary and offer them the right quality information;

- keep track of what happens in the project, but leave enough space for self-organization and the independent work of the sub-teams;
- do not to forget the bigger picture when fragmenting the project into sub-units, work packages and tasks;
- ensure a frequent and time-efficient communication;
- develop a project vision and keep it alive;
- create a positive atmosphere during the meeting by merging technical sessions with site visits and community moments;
- arrange the draft agenda of each meeting and send it to the host in due time, asking for the partners' contribution and enclose a to-do list;
- examine the decision taken before closing a meeting and write down a decision, then include them in the time;
- be efficient in managing the relationship with the program bodies for the benefit of all the partners;
- offer support, but do not take over tasks unless you do not have any other choice;
- avoid force and be collaborative;
- be result-oriented!

In other words: keep your "sailing ship" (notably the project) on the right "route" (notably the action plan), but leave the "crew" (notably the partners) to do their jobs; face the "wind" (events and problems) improving your "trip", and keep it far from "storms"!

Results of the Dissemination

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

There is a strong connection between the protection of fragile areas, the enhancement of natural resources and sustainable development. The promotion of protected areas has a significance that crosses administrative borders: it becomes both a tool for raising the collective environmental awareness and the engine of a wider territorial durable growth.

In order to reach the project aims, it was necessary to establish an intensive communication and dissemination of the project ideas in devising the activities and achieving the results.

The project's communication strategy put emphasis on the interaction and networking among the project partners as well as with the key stakeholders and other target audiences. The project communication was strategically planned and cooperatively and systematically implemented by all the project partners.

The 2Bparks project had several distinct target groups with different communication objectives and needs. Different groups of people served to achieve different objectives, if they were identified, understood and communicated with effectively.

The target groups were:
1. The project partners;
2. The ETC MED program;
3. The local key stakeholders:
    - Ministries, national, regional, local authorities and other relevant national bodies involved in the PA management;
    - Regional development and environmental agencies;
    - Universities, research institutes, training and/or education centers, schools;
    - Chambers of Commerce;
    - NGOs;
    - Tourist providers and operators;
    - Managers of protected areas – the planners and practitioners;
    - Spatial Planners;
4. Media;
5. The General Public (Under general public, the local population in the regions of the project partners is considered as well as the local administrative and economic structures such as municipalities, local/regional tourism organizations, travel agen-

cies, managers of protected areas, planners and practitioners, spatial planners etc.);
6. Qualified transnational communities;
    - Other ETC-projects relevant for 2Bparks;
    - Transnational networks;
    - Transnational initiatives and NGOs.

During the project duration and different project activities, the communication and dissemination goals were achieved. During the preparation of the Local Development Pilot Plans, more than **8 territorial workshops** were organized in different protected areas across the MED area. These actions were key for elaborating efficient Local Development Pilot Plans with the involvement of the public and the private stakeholders. In the same manner, more than **7 territorial roadshows on environmental clusters** were organized for disseminating the opportunities that clusters and green marketing provide, to stimulate the adoption of a sustainable business strategy by the larger number of operators and to ensure continuity. In addition, more than **9 territorial workshops/roadshows on sustainable tourism** were organized, which helped the partners to build new governance pattern and to develop partnerships with the public-private local stakeholders and incoming tourist operators.

The project partners were in charge of different communication and dissemination activities according to their preferences. Altogether, more than 41 printed articles in newspapers and magazines, 96 web articles, 7 audio or video presentations were prepared and more than 60 different events saw the partners' organization or participation. More than 250.000 people were potentially reached.

The partners participated and presented the project at different events. Some more important are:
- Feira de Agosto de Grândola, Grândola, Portugal, 25th–30th August 2010
- International Trade of Tourism, Berlin, Germany, 9th–13th March 2011
- Anducab 2011, Andújar, Spain, 9th–11th September 2011
- Feria del Ganado 2011, Andújar, Spain, 10th–11th September 2011
- Ibercaza 2011, Jaen, Spain, 16th–18th September 2011

Visitors at the 2Bparks presentation at the Alpe Adria Show in Slovenia

- Slovene Regional Days, Lipica,
  Slovenia, 27th–28th October 2011
- Geo – Oikos, Verona, Italy,
  17th–18th November 2011
- Alpe Adria Show, Ljubljana, Slovenia,
  26th–29th January 2012
- Ibercaza 2012, Jaen, Spain,
  21st–23rd September 2012
- Desert Restoration Bites, London,
  Great Britain, 8th January 2013

Here are some examples of the dissemination activities and events organized by the partners:

The Faculty of Geology and Geoenvironment of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens hosted the **2Bparks Sustainable Tourism Symposium on Protected Areas** on 22th October 2012. The Symposium was a gathering of participants from educational institutions, research networks, managers of protected areas and national parks, non-profit organizations active in the environmental sector, government agencies, private entities and international organizations from seven European countries, for presenting and exchanging views on the management of tourism and environmental sustainability within protected areas and national parks.

The main discussion points focused on: the contribution of the 2Bparks project practices in designing new scenarios for a protected area management in the Veneto Region of Italy, the contribution of the Med-PAN research network in the management of protected areas in the Mediterranean, alternative forms of tourism as implemented in the National Park of Dadia-Lefkimi-Soufli, the 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 Schinias- Marathon National Park (historical background, the park's strengths and weaknesses), the development of educational activities through tourism as instructed by 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 Sintra Park 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.

Within the framework of the Sustainable Tourism Symposium on protected areas, the **Transnational Educational Camp for Young Researchers and Experts** on the subject "Studying the Environment:

Participants at the Transnational Educational Camp for young researchers and experts in Greece

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

The first day of the Transnational Educational Camp took place on the University Campus, at the Faculty of Geology and Geoenvironment. The second day of the Transnational Educational Camp was held in the Schinias-Marathon National Park. The aim of the fieldtrip was to brief the students on the protected areas.

A further example of transnational dissemination activity with international students is the **2Bparks Meets the 'Runoff Erosion' ERASMUS Intensive Program** action. With the aim being to disseminate and communicate the project activities to the research community, the University of Athens research team introduced the project tools during the realization of the ERASMUS Intensive Program, entitled 'Runoff Erosion'. The training school was held by the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. The event hosted 22 students and more than 15 professors and representatives of the academic staff from Greece, Portugal, Hungary, France and Spain.

The lead partner Veneto Region organized two actions for children and their parents entitled **Perceiving Landscapes 2Bparks** and **Listen and Develop a Tale 2Bparks.** The action started in January 2012 with the purpose of raising children's and parents' awareness on the environment, regional parks, the Po Delta Regional Park and understanding the landscape better. The feedback of the children and parents helped the Lead Partner to prepare the Regional Landscape Plan. More than 440 participants were involved in these actions. Both actions were finished in May 2012 with an educational trip for the children, their families and teachers.

The **2Bparks 'Places of Sense' Transnational Award.** The naturalistic and environmental values

of protected areas are usually well known, scientifically recognized and already safeguarded. Contrastingly though, the suggestive, symbolic, sensitive and artistic characteristics have not yet been recognized with the same accuracy. 'Places of Sense' are important to people who live, visit and take care of protected areas as they represent an adjunct value for a sus-

tainable territorial marketing: they can attract visitors, stimulate sustainable business strategies, promote sustainable tourism, enhance cohesion and compatible growth and develop innovative economic activities. A 'Place of Sense' is a place that has a deep meaning for the local population and other visitors. It can be a place that evokes deep feelings and sensations or a particular heart-felt point of view, an important place of customs and traditions or a place that has been represented by artists, etc.

The award was constructed in two sections: 'Places' and 'Plans'. In the first section, the Committee selected the more significant and suggestive 'Places of Sense' of the 2Bparks protected areas network based on their description and photographs. In the second section, the Committee selected the best Local Tourism Strategic plans of the 2Bparks protected areas network. The exhibition and awards ceremony was organized at the **2Bparks Final Conference** in Taglio di Po on 15th June 2013.

The project partners also carried out **national school awards** in Cyprus, Italy, Portugal and Slovenia.

Photo taking

Solving worksheets in the Botanical Garden

Each year, 2Bparks celebrated the **European Day of Parks (24th May)**. In 2012, the Andújar City Council organized a 2Bparks walk on new interpretative path in the Sierra de Andújar Natural Park in Spain. In Cyprus, the Troodos Regional Tourism Board organized a three day event for primary school and high school students with the emphasis on raising environmental awareness (22th–24th May 2012). They visited the Troodos Botanical Garden and the Troodos Environmental Information Center and participated in the activities for the creation of the Edu-book to the topic of 'Biodiversity' in the Troodos National Forest Park. They also visited the Troodos Environmental Information Center, where they watched an educational film about the Troodos National Forest Park with further emphasis on the area's ecosystems and fauna. On the final day, a roundtable meeting was held, aimed at streamlining the activities in the Troodos National Forest Park and the controlling the work that was agreed upon.

2Bparks joined the **World Cleanup 2012** action. The Natural Regional Park of Serre organized a waste collection action in Serra San Bruno in Italy and opened a new 2Bparks footpath in the area on the same day. More than 160 people joined the action that was held on 8th October 2012.

The Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts was a part of the volunteer-based project **Let's Clean Slovenia 2012** that was the biggest volunteer-based project and the biggest environmental project in the history of Slovenia. On 24th March 2012, they cleaned up a part of the 2Bparks pilot area in the Ljubljansko barje Nature Park, thus promoting the 2Bparks project.

Many discussion tables were organized within the project framework and one of them was the

Roundtable Development: Challenges in Ljubljansko barje on 8th November 2011 in Ljubljana, where representatives of the Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts and the Ljubljansko barje Nature Park discussed the bridge that exists between the researchers and the users. The round table participants stressed the importance of incorporating different levels of society, from the inter-sector collaboration to cooperating with local communities. Park director Barbara Zupanc pointed out that nature conservation is one of the most important aspects to be taken into consideration, as it consequently affects every other activity in the area. The landscape is changing and there are even more challenges in the area. In addition to the roundtable, the **Scientific Research Collaboration Agreement** between the Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts and the Ljubljansko barje Nature Park was signed. The agreement is a logical continuation of more than ten years of work by the researchers in the field of natural values and

Collaboration agreement

Let's clean Slovenia

cultural heritage and an additional encouragement for new research challenges in the future. The signing parties jointly agree that the more people understand Ljubljansko barje, the more they can interpret that knowledge, apply it to the space and their everyday actions and the bigger the chance that their attitude toward this unique area in the immediate vicinity of the capital city will change. Finally, an exhibit entitled **Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ljubljansko barje** was organized.

Finally, all of the described activities can be summarized with a common message that has become the informal general motto for the entire 2Bparks project: ***"Responsible sustainable development in protected areas".*** This kind of development that includes nature in its elementary concept is not only possible and beneficial, but it is in fact the best development option. The goal of the project was to preserve natural and cultural heritage while not regarding it as an obstacle to growth and development, but as an opportunity for rich sustainable development.

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