

Leading the way to sustainable tourism on the ground

On the tiny, pristine Lastovo Island, one of more than 1000 islands stretching down Croatia's coastline, the first joint project of a partnership between WWF and the Tour Operators' Initiative (TOI) is taking place. Since 2005 the partners have been assisting national authorities and the local community in an initiative to officially establish a Nature Park. WWF and TOI provided input into the sustainable management plan, and established pilot projects to ensure sustainable tourism activities, thus contributing to the development of the island.

In 2008 the first common pilot project in the WWF Meso-american Reef Ecoregion will begin: in the Riviera and Costa Maya in Mexico, WWF and TOI will work towards the adoption of Good Environmental Practices by TOI hotel suppliers, which means reductions in potable water consumption, waste water generation and solid waste generation.

They will lobby for the integration of sustainable Siting, Design and Construction practices to avoid the continuation of inappropriate and unplanned tourism development.

They are additionally striving to achieve a significant contribution from tourists to the effective management and financial sustainability of Natural Protected Areas.



TOUR OPERATORS INITIATIVE
FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

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WWF and TOI – Partners for Nature

A Partnership Solution

Coastal and marine areas with spectacular sandy beaches, coral reefs and mangrove forests are particularly attractive as tourist destinations. But there are potential negative impacts that tourism activities might cause to local communities and the environment such as the generation of water, soil and atmospheric pollution, habitat destruction and loss of biodiversity, in particular in protected areas and areas of outstanding biological value.

WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature) and the Tour Operators' Initiative for Sustainable Tourism Development (TOI) believe that tourism activities, if well managed, have the potential to play a positive role in the sustainable development of tourism destinations.

The TOI and WWF thus signed a Cooperation Agreement in October 2006 to encourage development of sustainable tourism.



WWF and TOI agreed to focus their efforts and activities:

- to improve the management of protected areas where tourism is an important economic activity,
- to raise awareness in visitors of the values of biodiversity and in tourism entrepreneurs of the relevance of biodiversity conservation to the tourism business,
- to create a network of exemplary tourism destinations where conservation and economic objectives support and mutually reinforce each other, by establishing a communication platform between tourism companies and WWF activities in the conservation of biodiversity,
- to inform and advise local, national and regional decision makers on market preferences and demand, considering the need to present evolving growth trends with the market's increasing concern for balancing economic development and conservation values, and
- to maximize the synergies and minimize overlaps to better respond to the challenges of sustainable tourism at the local and global levels.

WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature)

Established in 1961, WWF operates in more than 100 countries working for a future in which humans live in harmony with nature. WWF is currently funding around 2,000 conservation projects and employs almost 4,000 people across the planet. Our mission is to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by

- conserving the world's biological diversity
- ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable
- promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption.

80 percent of tourism activities touch the very special and vulnerable coastal and marine biodiversity. Thus WWF recognized strong alliances between conservationists and responsible tour operators and planners to preserve the treasures of the earth. WWF is engaging with the tourism industry, to advance and demonstrate best practice and policy on conservation efforts.

For more information, please visit:
www.wwf.de and www.panda.org



Tour Operators' Initiative for Sustainable Tourism Development (TOI)

Most tour operators recognize that a clean and safe environment is crucial to safeguard the future of the tour operating business and therefore a group of tour operators joined forces to create the Tour Operators' Initiative for Sustainable Tourism Development (TOI) in March 2000.

The Initiative is an Association of tour operators that serves as a network which is, global in scope and commitment and, in character, voluntary, non-profit, and open to all tour operators, regardless of their size and geographical location. It has been developed by tour operators with the support of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), who are also supporting members of the Initiative.

Under this international umbrella, tour operators who are members of the Initiative will be able to respond to international agendas while creating a platform to develop activities and projects to address the environmental, social, economic and cultural aspects of sustainable development within the tourism sector.

For more information, please visit:
www.toinitiative.org.

