

Ensuring A Successful Implementation of the Tourism Communication
(COM(2010) 352 Final)

Submission from European Union of Tourist Officers (EUTO)

Best Practice Examples

N.B. This submission includes examples of best practice from EUTO member countries as well as EUTO initiatives.

1) IMPROVING PROFESSIONAL SKILLS:

i) Vocational Management Training for the European Tourism Industry (VocMat)

The VocMat project was designed to develop an innovative, flexible training method for middle and senior management in the European tourism industry. Research had identified skills and knowledge gaps amongst tourism managers mainly due to difficulties in accessing high-level qualifications linked to vocational training. With the exception of a limited offering of short courses and initiatives, high-level management training was mainly available through attending universities and colleges. For an industry operating on a 24/7 basis, leaving the workplace to attend courses presents problems because of lack of time; high costs; replacement of staff on training; access and distance but tourism specific management qualifications through e-learning were not readily available. The VocMat model was developed to address these barriers and, to support the exchange of best practice across European countries, a transnational pilot group from the United Kingdom, Iceland, Estonia, Catalonia, Italy, Malta and Turkey studied together to test the VocMat model. For more information see www.vocmat.com

ii) EUTO Study Visits and Workshops

EUTO organises cross border activities that enhance professional networking and are open to both public and private sector participants. EUTO's Study Visits & Workshops are a good example of this: a range of well-known and highly skilled professionals share their experiences in well-documented presentations while participants exchange information on best practices in their countries during interesting and very interactive workshops. The current Study Visit Programme is well-established and covers visits to Iceland, Estonia, Malta, Latvia, England, Catalonia and Italy. Focussing on sustainable tourism, themes have included 'Our Future is Now'; 'Revive the Past to Build the Future'; and 'Attractions and Events as Catalysts for Regeneration and Social Change'.

Associations in membership of EUTO also carry out study visits and exchanges. For information on EUTO contacts and to find out more about EUTO Study Visist, included presentations made by speakers, see www.euto.org

2) PROMOTE THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABLE, RESPONSIBLE and HIGH-QUALITY TOURISM:

i) Sustainable Tourism Resource Centre

VisitScotland's Sustainable Tourism Resource Centre has been created specifically to support tourism businesses by providing information on sustainable business practices and promoting how these practices can benefit businesses. The website covers examples of best practice, the Green Tourism Business Scheme, 'tips' on how to improve profitability through a sustainable approach to tourism, downloadable resources and a DVD. For more information see http://www.visitscotland.org/business_support/sustainable_tourism.aspx

ii) Quality Assurance

Quality of product, service and welcome are key to a positive holiday experience. VisitScotland's quality assurance schemes are acknowledged to be leading edge with other countries coming to them for advice in setting up similar schemes which are based on the quality of the tourism product or experience rather than simply the number of facilities in a particular tourism product. Involving extensive industry and visitor consultation, the 'star' remains at the heart of the scheme alongside customer feedback and recognising and rewarding excellence through gold awards. The majority of the tourism industry in Scotland participates in this voluntary scheme with 70% of tourism businesses and 90% of tourist attractions engage with Scotland's quality message. For more information see http://www.visitscotland.org/business_support/quality_assurance.aspx

iii) Destination Management Handbook

This is a tool kit for sustainable tourism management, which is available free of charge on the Visit England corporate website. It provides best practice guidelines for a range of destination management topics. The destination planning section outlines the planning framework, best practice in developing partnerships and engaging industry. The destination development section explores ways to manage a destination sustainably and encourage business engagement in quality and skills development. There is a section on destination monitoring which details how good practice in destination management includes recording and monitoring trends in business volume and value, and visitor behaviour and satisfaction. It shows how this can be used to inform responsive, relevant development and marketing programmes and to benchmark destination and organizational performance against other areas. The destination marketing section provides advice on adopting a strategic approach at the outset of any

market planning, targeting markets, defining the product, identifying the right media and implementing campaigns. The provision of quality information to visitors in a destination is key to generating high satisfaction levels. The destination information section identifies the core components of visitor information provision, outlines the options for delivery, and identifies the emerging technologies affecting the future provision of visitor information.

iv) Destination Performance UK (DP:UK)

DP:UK is a membership organization (and EUTO member) for local authority tourism services committed to the principles of performance management and best practice. The key element of DP:UK's work to facilitate performance management and assessment is the annual Destination Intelligence, formerly known as the Baseline Statement. The Destination Intelligence, by means of an annual questionnaire completed by DP:UK members, captures data about the tourism resources, activities and performance of member authorities and reproduces it in table form by category group. This enables members to compare their tourism operation with similar destinations and assists future trend analysis. Apart from participating in the Destination Intelligence research, one of the main reasons members join DP:UK is to benefit from the networking opportunities offered by category group meetings. Meetings often include presentations from members on initiatives which their particular destination has undertaken; they also focus on issues which the group may wish to examine in detail: in the past these have included TIC matrices, retailing in TICs, brochure evaluation, local performance indicators, local industry surveys. Group work often lends itself to the production of advice sheets which are published for the benefit of the membership as a whole.