

INTRODUCING THE DEMINA PROJECT: A STEP FORWARD FOR DESTINATION MANAGEMENT



The world of tourism is going through a very tough period, as the Covid-19 pandemic continues to limit the lives and movement of people around the world. But even in the midst of this global crisis, there are opportunities for the planned and targeted development of professional skills that can help restart tourism and improve its management directly in tourist destinations. The new project DEMINA - Innovation and Continuing Education in Destination Management has such ambitions.

The Idea behind DEMINA

The idea behind the DEMINA project, which is co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union, was to **close the current gaps in educational materials and methodologies for destination management and strategic development of tourism.**

The project is based on an international partnership of seven professional institutions from six countries. The countries involved are the Czech Republic, Latvia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Poland and Turkey

The Institute of Hospitality Management in Prague acts as the project coordinator, other partner institutions include both universities and educational organizations and institutions in the field of public administration.

Ambitious Goals for an Ambitious Initiative

To achieve this ambitious objective, the institutions involved outlined six goals to be achieved during the implementation of the project.

The principal idea is to increase the qualification of destination organizations and teach them to work with effective tools to increase their knowledge and skills.

In this context, the project also aims to define new professional qualifications at the European level for the Destination Officer, Destination Manager and Destination Auditor.

The idea behind this is also to contribute to a greater interest in the sustainable and competitive development of tourism and regions and related policies.

Finally, the project aims to strengthen the network of experts in destination management at the EU level. This will make it possible to continuously increase their professional knowledge and skills through the exchange of professional experience.

Two Key Outputs Outlined

One of the main outputs is to create a methodological publication entitled "European model and methodology for destination management and audit", the second output will be the creation of a

training program for destination management staff and public administration staff responsible for tourism development, applicable both in the lifelong vocational training and initial vocational education of tourism staff.

As generally accepted, one of the key skills of destination teams is the ability to determine the value of a destination's potential by evaluating its components and elements, and that evaluation results are the basis for activating the potential through innovation in strategic planning, deciding on future investment in destination development and also the basis for evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of investments. Therefore, the tools for evaluating the potential and activating it will be based on the European System of Indicators in Tourism ETIS focused on sustainable development and the system of sustainability indicators of OECD.

The developed destination audit methodology (even though it is different from the standard financial audit) will also be in line with INTOSAI standards for audits focused on the implementation of the 3E principle in public finances.

Two Transnational Meetings Took Place

It is, of course, somewhat soon to make conclusions on the success of the DEMINA project, but recent developments indicate that the implementation of the initiative is going smoothly.

Two transnational meetings have taken place since the beginning of the project. And while the first meeting took place in December 2020 in an online format due to pandemic restrictions, the second one represented the first opportunity for the project partners to meet face-to-face.

The meeting took place on 10-11 October in Aydın / Kuşadası, Turkey. Together 14 participants from the six partner countries attended the meeting to discuss the current state of implementation of project activities. **During the meeting, the partners agreed on further implementation of the project activities and had the chance to take part in a field inspection of the local tourist destination**, to assess and evaluate individual destination elements on the spot and discuss the destination development with public administration representatives and other stakeholders.

Where to Find More Information?

During the implementation of the project, the finished project outputs will be available to the general professional public on the website www.demina.cz.

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