

Conclusions of the 1st Annual CROSTO Conference - 29.11.2018.

Previous activities of CROSTO observatory since its establishment in 2016 and also the successful integration of national institutions and pilot destination on the local level, as well as the implementation of second county sustainable tourism measurement along with initial local measurement indicate the interest and the need of creating a system of measuring the sustainability of tourism in Croatia. With the improvement of the measurement methodology, we consider that we should systematically work in the following activities in the future:

Activities of project expansion

- **Increasing the number of destinations at the local level included in the national CROSTO network** - after the pilot phase has been carried out it is desirable to have continuous phasing or widening of measuring the sustainability of tourism on a larger number of destination in both the Adriatic and continental Croatia. Expansion can be carried out through two main approaches: already-involved destinations could trough train-the-trainer approaches participate in motivating, educating and introducing other destinations in the CROSTO system. Over time, a widened network of included destinations will enable benchmarking and comparisons between similar sites as important tool for destination management. Other possibilities of increasing the number of destinations is through the creation of a destination manual, which will provide in a simple and concise manner information on the measurement implementation and specific information on the required data and calculations for particular indicators.
- **Expanding regional level measurement on the continental Croatia** - after the establishment of the measurement system at the 7 coastal counties, it is necessary to expand measurement on the continental counties, where the measurement would include 21 counties. The purpose of measurement in less developed tourist counties would be informed management development, which would in the initial stages of the development of the destination ensure the monitoring of indicators relevant to the sustainability of tourism. This would prevent the problems potentially caused by uncontrolled development of tourism.
- **Use of measuring results** - results should be used as the basis for all future development strategies, plans and policies at all levels from national to local, and the basis for determining priorities and funding sources.
- **Encouraging the development of the studies of tourism carrying capacity** - for the counties and destinations exposed to massive tourism pressure and with sensitive natural or social environment. Estimating tourism carrying capacity would enable an objective assessment of how many visitors certain destination can accept, and in the development of better spatial and development plans, as well as visitors' management plans.

METHODOLOGY IMPROVMENT

- **Expansion of the list of base indicators** – current list of base indicators is solution which was initially tested the ability of data collection, calculation of the indicators, and weakness / strength of the individual indices. It has been noted that some problematic issues are not sufficiently covered by the current list of base indicators, and it is therefore necessary to establish additional 5 to 10 indicators in the area of demography, transport and nature conservation. It is also necessary to consult the future statistical framework of MST currently being developed by UNWTO.
- **Development of a methodology for proactive reporting of measurement results** - monitoring indicators of sustainable tourism has a direct function of managing tourist destinations. Therefore, reporting on measurement results and perceived trends implies not only presentation of findings at a city or municipal council but, if need be, necessarily includes suggestions for specific corrective policies and measures, and also concrete development projects. In this regard, it is advisable to elaborate the methodology for analysing the measurement results as well as the reporting methodology, which would be incentives and directives for the various actors involved in the management of tourist destinations.
- **Creating a database on tourism sustainability** - supported by all relevant national institutions, with emphasis on the Central Bureau of Statistics, but also with the support of the Croatian Environment and Nature Agency / Ministry of Environmental Protection and Energy, the Croatian Tourist Board (eVisitor), the Ministry of Tourism (eTurism), the Institute for Tourism, the Energy Institute Hrvoje Požar, Croatian Waters, Croatian Institute for Spatial Development, Oceanographic Institute and others. Based on this database it would be easier to provide data analytics, create new relevant indicators, but also continuously improvement of measurement process.
- **Development of expertise to guide the CROSTO network's destinations to sustainable practice** - to raise the knowledge and ability of the National Observatory itself to advise CROSTO network members how to measure of sustainability of tourism, improve their own practices and recognisability as sustainable tourist destinations. This implies the development of training seminars, consultation on specific issues, 'connecting' destinations with relevant sources of knowledge, guidance in the process of certification of 'green destinations'.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

- **Inclusion of measuring sustainability of tourism as EUSAIR Activity** - The Fourth Pillar of EUSAIR: "Sustainable Tourism" is concerned with developing the region's full potential in terms of innovative, sustainable and responsible tourism. In this regard, and given that the Ministry of Tourism, together with Albania, coordinates the fourth pillar of the Strategy, it is necessary to include the CROSTO Observatory's activities in the Adriatic-Ionian Strategy itself.

- **Intensifying international co-operation and creating partnerships** - opportunities for international co-operation are very extensive, covering various themes and factors. There is the opportunity for possible cooperation with other sustainable tourism observatories, international organizations UNWTO / EC and / or tourism institutions, as well as within partnerships on EU or other international projects. Topics may range from helping to set up an observatory, sharing experiences and developing common methodologies to work on specific aspects of sustainability in tourism. In this regard, cooperation in the Mediterranean area is extremely important, as tourism of the most prominent tourist macro-region of the world. In order to focus on cooperation, it is advisable to draw up a plan of priority activities.

ACTIVITIES OF PROJECT POPULARISATION

- **Popularization of the CROSTO initiative in domestic professional public and wider public** - public awareness initiative with the aim of increasing knowledge of measuring the sustainability of tourism and the implications for destination management becoming an increasingly important factor in the function of further development of CROSTO and achieve its mission.. In this respect, it is necessary to foresee the use of various techniques in communicating with the public in order to ensure their support, involvement and willingness to cooperate and to adapt their own methodologies and policies in order to achieve more integrated and successful destination management. Equally, communication with the general public aims at sensitizing them to various aspects of the sustainability of tourism, that is, their own role and responsibility in the realization of sustainable tourism practices. One of the activities would be further continuous maintenance of the CROSTO Observatory Conference.
- **Evaluation of involvement in the process of measurement** - by the relevant institution (the Ministry of Tourism / HTZ) to increase the number of destinations in the process, which is a prerequisite for concrete information on the regional level. Evaluation implies acknowledgments, certifications, and / or achieving advantages in various applications. Finally, formalization of the process through the legislative framework would be recommended.