



MONTENEGRO DESTINATION STEWARDSHIP AWARD FINALIST 2010

CASE STUDY

Montenegro is a nation that successfully embraces its dedication to sustainable development in both national policy as well as implementation of destination stewardship practices at the local level.

Montenegro's policy efforts to protect its natural heritage date from 1991, when the country declared itself the world's first 'Ecological State'. Ten years later, Montenegro formed the Office for Sustainable Development and, in 2008, The Montenegrin Parliament adopted the Tourism Development Strategy to 2020, a comprehensive blueprint aligned with changing global travel patterns, and the growing ecological and social consciousness of the travellers. Montenegro was interested in attracting.



Following the implementation of this destination-wide stewardship policy, local and private sector developers have embraced the new vision of sustainability in implementing their tourism development plans, contributing at the local level to the country's national destination principles and practices.

One example is Porto Montenegro, a recently opened marina intended to be a premier nautical tourism hub in the Mediterranean. In addition to offering all the services of a world-class marina, the port project rehabilitates a pre-existing but defunct naval shipyard, and has included a major pollution clean-up of the Bay of Kotor. The five-year clean-up effort has involved the disposal of lead and other harmful metals submerged or leaking into the bay from the former shipyard. In addition to environmental rejuvenation, the social and economic impacts of Porto Montenegro are helping to drive income into the local bay communities and provide jobs to industry workers who left the area when the older Communist-era shipyard ceased to be operational.

CASE STUDY

To complement the current dominance of coastal tourism, a principal goal of the 2020 Sustainable Tourism Development Master Plan is to expand tourism to the beautiful underdeveloped interior regions of the country as a way of also generating economic income for poorer interior regions of Montenegro. Durmitor National Park has become one of the focal points for this project and Montenegro's Wild



Beauty campaign highlights the natural heritage of the region.



In addition to international marketing, national policy has sought to bolster local tourism entrepreneurship through comprehensive guide workshops, language training, and business seminars that include sustainable tourism awareness and education. Infrastructural advances in the region include trail development, marking, signposting, and the implementation of a codified Mountain Trail Law, which have been instrumental in the development of the hiking and biking tourism sectors. In 2006, the region hosted 63% more tourists than in 2005, and in 2008 over 30 new alpinist licenses were issued to meet the growing need for advanced-level trail guides. Through careful planning and co-ordination between national park, government and local entrepreneurs, Durmitor and other northern regions have experienced significant growth in the last five years, becoming the centre for Montenegro's growing adventure travel market.

In addition, in order to address the impacts of growing tourist traffic, Montenegro has launched a countrywide Eco-tax to help minimise any negative ecological footprints from vehicle travel. The proceeds from the Eco-tax, which in 2008 exceeded €6.5 million, are allocated to pollution control, wastewater reclamation and forest preservation.

Nationally, Montenegrin officials are dedicated to educating the public on the benefits of long-term sustainable tourism. Public transparency and stakeholder involvement are sought in national tourism projects, and high-level government officials, including the Minister of Tourism, frequently speak about the 2020 Sustainable Tourism Development Master Plan.

Montenegro has set itself apart, both in terms of vision and practice, also writing binding sustainable tourism guidelines for the public and private sectors into its National Tourism Law. However, what makes Montenegro's story unique is the country's ability to foster sustainable tourism practice across its tourism economy at the destination level, from tourist guide training and local infrastructure development to larger projects like the Durmitor National Park and Porto Montenegro.