

CYPRUS

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

TOURISM POLICY

(Main responsibility: Cyprus Tourism Organisation)

- One of the 4 principal aims of the Strategic Plan for "Tourism 2010", approved in 2004, is the achievement of sustainable development of the tourist sector in Cyprus which should also enhance the natural, cultural and social environment.

The Plan is currently under full implementation, whereas action plans are being prepared for the development of cultural tourism, religious tourism, special interests tourism - including nature tourism, etc.

The formulation of the Plan followed a process of extensive consultations with all stakeholders and organised groups in tourism as well as Government Departments, Local Authorities and the public-at-large to ensure consensus and ownership of the strategic goals.

Following approval, a monitoring mechanism was also established with progress reports prepared on a regular basis and submitted to the Council of Ministers.

- Quality and environmental systems/mechanisms are being encouraged, with incentives for the adoption of quality and environmental standards in tourist establishments (ISO 9001, 14001, HACCP, Green Globe, Eco-label, EMAS).
- An incentives scheme for small and medium enterprises for the encouragement of investment in agrotourism provides grants for, inter alia: the restoration of traditional houses and their conversion into accommodation units; traditional restaurants; workshops for handicrafts; theme routes; theme museums; information centres; etc.

LAND USE PLANNING REGULATION

(Main responsibility: Ministry of Interior)

- A strong emphasis on the preservation of the environment and the quality of the landscape in tourism development is characterizing the Town and Country Planning legislation, so that both the natural environment is protected and further enhanced and the man-made environment is aesthetically upgraded, particularly in the tourist areas.
- Local physical plans, area development schemes and the rural development policy are currently the instruments in force. Areas of aesthetic and landscape value have been declared as Coasts and Areas for the Protection of

Nature and Protected Landscapes, with very prohibitive provisions as far as development control is concerned.

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

(Main responsibility: Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment)

- Since 2001, Environmental impact assessment studies are prepared and appropriate terms set for all major tourism-related projects, such as hotels, golf courses and thematic parks, as a necessary precondition for their permitting.
- According to the provisions of the law on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment, approved in 2005, such plans, including tourism and land use ones, must now be accompanied by the preparation of a strategic environmental impact study. The study is assessed by the Environment Authority, which issues an opinion that the competent agency is obliged to take into serious consideration and subsequently submit a report on the monitoring measures it is taking for ensuring implementation of the environmental terms. The EA may also proceed unilaterally with the monitoring of any terms or conditions included in its opinion. The law provides for consulting the public, public participation in decision-making and full transparency of the decisions taken.
- Over the last few years, particular emphasis was placed in identifying and mapping habitats and species of European significance. 32 such sites have been identified and relevant management plans for 13 of them are currently prepared.
- A Forest Biodiversity Management Action Plan was adopted in 2004 and is being implemented, including national forest parks management and the construction of a network of well organized and equipped Environmental Information Centers.
- A Coastal Area Management Programme (CAMP) was initiated in January 2006, co-financed by the Cyprus Government and UNEP/MAP, aimed to put in place appropriate tools for greater and more effective coastal policy coordination, integration and synergies. CAMP Cyprus, to be completed in 2008, is oriented towards introducing and applying principles, methodologies and practices of sustainable development and tools of Integrated Coastal Area Management, such as strategic impact appraisal, carrying capacity assessment and fiscal instruments. From inception, the programme is pursued with the full participation of all stakeholders, that is government agencies, local authorities, NGOs, etc.

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