

## INVOLVEMENT OF LOCAL TOURIST BOARDS INTO EU PRE-ACCESSION FUNDS FOR TOURISM PROJECTS: THE CASE OF PRIMORSKO- GORANSKA COUNTY

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### **Abstract**

One of the most important principles of sustainable tourism development implies that tourism should be initiated with the help of broad-based community-inputs and the community should maintain control of tourism development. One of the possible means to implement this principle is through active involvement of *local authorities* in creating and implementing sustainable tourism projects. Hence this process should be oriented to contribute towards the benefit of the entire community (through creating new jobs, increasing the competitiveness of the destination, etc...), its leading coordinators should be the representatives of local tourism organizations (tourist boards).

Another issue related to the pro-active approach of local tourism authorities in creating and supporting tourism projects includes the financing of these projects. This article brings an overview of grant schemes within EU pre-accession funds that provide possibility of co-financing joint (sustainable) tourism projects among different regions (countries) and are available to applicants from Croatia.

This article looks at linking two above mentioned issues (tourist boards as significant stakeholders of local sustainable tourism development and possibilities of EU co-financing the same).

Following topics shall be discussed, focusing on the employees and the management of tourist boards of municipalities and cities in the Primorsko-goranska county as a referenced area:

- *level of knowledge and experience regarding the possibilities of co-financing tourism oriented projects from EU pre-accession funds*
- *level of motivation for creating such type of tourism projects and applying them for financing from EU pre-accession funds*

With the purpose of gathering relevant data, small-scale research was conducted on a sample of tourist boards of cities and municipalities within Primorsko-goranska County. Information have been collected by a method of survey through questionnaire, than analyzed and now presented through this article.

**Keywords** Sustainable tourism, EU pre-accession funds, Tourism associations