

Understanding and Enhancing Ecotourism Opportunities through Education

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Abstract : A new fast growing trend in tourism is ecotourism, in which tourists visit natural ecosystems under low impact, non-consumptive and locally oriented activities. Through these activities species and habitats are maintained and typically, underdeveloped regions are emphasized. Ecotourism provides a great alternative, especially for rural and undeveloped area. At the same time, despite its many benefits, it also poses many risks for the naturally protected areas. If ecotourism is practiced improperly degradation and irreversible damages could be the unwanted result. In addition, the lack of MSc programs in the field of Ecotourism in Europe makes it a necessity to be developed. Such an MSc program is being implemented with the lead partner the Technical University of Madrid. The entire partnership has six Universities, seven SMEs and one National Park from seven different countries all over Europe. The MSc will have 10 educational modules that will be available online and will prepare professionals that will be able to implement ecotourism in a sustainable way. Only through awareness and education a sustainable ecotourism will be achieved in the protected areas of Europe.

Keywords : ERASMUS, MSc program, protected Areas, sustainability

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