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Both tourist destinations and experts identified the need to create a European level network for exchange of experiences, questions and ideas between tourism destinations to ensure a sustainable development of tourism. Tourism-Site is a response to the needs identified through several studies realised for the European Commission.

Tourism-Site asbl has been created as a non-profit association in August 2001, under Belgian law. It is a network for the sustainable development of tourism destination in Europe. The founding partners of Tourism-Site are the Agence Française d'Ingénierie Touristique (AFIT / F), Observatoire du Tourisme à Bruxelles (B), Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council (UK), and OGM (Organisation-Gestion-Marketing / B). At this moment, the network is financially supported by ONE North East (UK), Secrétariat d'Etat au Tourisme (F) and materially supported by the organisations of the founding members.

The Tourism-Site network is open to every European country (EU and non EU members), but also to candidate countries. Both tourism destinations and professionals in the tourism sector can become a member of Tourism-Site. The list of the 180 members Tourism-Site counts today can be consulted on the Tourism-Site website www.tourism-site.org.

The network allows:

- Exchange of experience, knowledge, good practice, ideas, etc. through the Internet, during meetings and thematic seminars
- Identification of topics on which further research is needed to ensure sustainable development of tourism
- Evaluation and improvement of the competitiveness of the European tourism and to set up a local Agenda 21
- Collaboration and partnership between destinations and EU members.

As a European network, Tourism-Site aims to offer its services in five languages (English, French, Italian, Spanish and German).

Members exchange information in an informal and rapid way through the exchange forum of the website. The information on the forum is grouped around several themes to facilitate the discussion between members and the evaluation of their needs. The network co-ordinator makes identification forms of the members and urges members and experts with the necessary expertise to respond to the questions. He also tries to find appropriate advice and guidance for the members. Useful documents and additional information about the topics under discussion can be stored in the virtual library of the website.

Twice a year, meetings with members will be organised to discuss the development of the network and the users' satisfaction. Three technical meetings a year will be organised around one of the themes of the forum that have shown to be very relevant to an important number of the network members. Four study tours a year will be organised to visit examples of good practice in member destinations. Publications about technical meetings and study tour are accessible to members.

The trial period, started on 15 October 2001, is now ended. The official launch meeting of Tourism-Site took place in Brussels last 7 October 2002.

The network counts today 180 members (among them about 10 experts) from 15 countries. The first thematic meeting took place on 9 April 2002 in London. The 25 participants worked actively on the theme "Sustainable Tourism and the Involvement of the Local People:

Examples of Good Practice throughout Europe". The minutes of the meeting can be download from the website under technical meetings.

A second thematic meeting has been organised in Turin the 16th of October 2002, the theme tackled was "Major Events and Afterwards? From a Sustainable Issue".

Tourism-Site is a young network in full evolution and expansion.

Now we can say that one of the real assets of the Tourism-Site project is the use of new technologies, which make the network very interactive and user-friendly. The network deals with the daily concerns of the destinations and is focused on exchange of useful and concrete information about sustainable tourism. Tourism-Site thus expresses the ambition to become a partner for the member destinations in managing the development of sustainable tourism.