



VIST Awards!
Vision for Innovation in Sustainable
Tourism Awards

**SPOTLIGHT ON
UNSUSTAINABLE TOURISM**

REPORTING IRRESPONSIBLE TOURISM



VISTAwards – Examples of Unsustainable Tourism: Submission Form

In the VISTAwards, bad practice as well as good practice is being showcased - a spotlight will highlight nominated tourism-related unsustainable and irresponsible stakeholder actions related to any given destination. Examples might be: a piece of unjust government policy, poor governance, inappropriate property or destination development, corporate greed, harmful environmental business services/practices, oppressive and unfair social behaviour, unsustainable use of technology, etc...

Submit Your Own Example

In order to submit an example of irresponsible or unsustainable tourism activity to the VISTAwards you have to fill in the following information form. The form asks you questions that cover an *Agenda 21*-based analysis of the economic, environmental, socio-cultural and institutional processes of sustainable development in general. The questions focus this broad *Agenda 21 Sustainable Consumption and Production* framework through the lens of the tourism sector-specific *Global Sustainable Tourism Council's* criteria for sustainable tourism, and are formulated according to knowledge needed for preparation of a case for the purposes an EU impact assessment (IA) /, national environmental impact assessments (EIAs), national/regional strategic environmental assessments (SEAs) and territorial planning decision support.

Legal Notice

When you submit an Unsustainable Tourism Development Form you should avoid publishing any material which is abusive, vulgar, defamatory, inaccurate, harassing, hateful, threatening, invading of others privacy, or violates any EU or national law.

DestiNet does not accept any responsibility for the content of your information, and you agree to indemnify and hold the Portal and its agents harmless with respect to any legal or financial claim based upon your submission.

Please note that the structure of the form allows for a short summary (Qu11 A and 11B) or more detailed description of the issue (Qu 12 onwards). Therefore allow 20 minutes to 2 hours to fill in the form once you have the information. Read all the questions first, then fill in the form. It is likely that you will not have all the information to hand, but you should answer all compulsory questions (marked with an *asterisk).

A: IDENTIFICATION DETAILS

1. TITLE OF REPORTED IRRESPONSIBLE OR UNSUSTAINABLE ACTIVITY/BUSINESS:*

Sochi 2014 Winter Olympics

2. DATE OF SUBMISSION:* **UPDATED:**

01.03.2014

3. INFORMATION SUBMITTED BY:*

Gordon Silence-

4. REPRESENTATIVE OF (IF APPLICABLE):*

Olympic Truce Peace Campaign Support Coordinator,

5. CONTACT EMAIL:*

Gordon.sillence@gmail.com

6. NAME OF PROJECT/BUSINESS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ACTIVITY:*

Russian Government

7. ADDRESS:*

8. LOCATION:*

9. WEB ADDRESS (IF APPLICABLE):*

10. CONTACT PERSON (IF KNOWN):*

President V.Putin

VISTAS Spotlight on Irresponsible Tourism Development

B SUMMARY:*

11A. NATURE OF UNSUSTAINABLE ACTIVITY (-IES)* (Please state nature and extent of the problem(s))

Construction of Olympic facilities for the 2014 Winter Olympic in the resort of Sochi (pop 400,000)

Construction of a railway link through the Sochi National Park

Expenditure of an estimated 50 billion USDs of State money that has exceeded all budget predictions and spent controversially.

11B. HOW DOES THE ACTION/PROJECT/ACTIVITY DEMONSTRATE IRRESPONSIBLE AND UNSUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT, ACTIONS OR EFFECTS?*

The Sochi Winter Olympics has left a story of irreversible damage to ancient ecosystems, rivers, flora and fauna. Among the environmental issues that protestors have been up in arms about during the construction projects are the deforestation of the Mzymta River valley and the fact that toxic waste dumped into the river itself. Territories of the Western Caucasus UNESCO World Heritage site have been removed from World Heritage protection and crushed-stone quarries are being mined in the reserve areas of the Sochi National Park.

According to the NGO, Environmental Watch on North Caucasus (ENWNC), Russia, the Sochi 2014 Organising Committee, the Russian Olympic Committee and the city of Sochi, have not complied with binding guarantees that are stipulated in the Olympic Contract. "Information we have gathered while monitoring developments throughout the construction projects show that a unique environment has been damaged irreparably over a large area."

http://eandt.theiet.org/magazine/2014/02/images/640_sochi.jpg accessed 1st mar

See also Vision on Sustainable Tourism in Travel Mole http://www.travelmole.com/news_feature.php?news_id=2010189)

The Sochi Winter Olympics, as a large scale event, has impacted in the following ways:

- *Caused irreparable damage to the Sochi National Park Mountain habitat*
- *Threatens the ground water supplies to the host population through construction dumping*
- *Has inadequately relocated parts of resident population*
- *Has exploited of migrant workers and volunteers*
- *Lack of strategy to implement Olympic Truce values*
- *Association with assertion of homophobic values*
- *Police brutality to curb protests during the Games in full view of the media*

C FURTHER DETAILED DESCRIPTION:

12A WHO ARE THE OTHER STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED?*

The Russian Government, the International Olympic Committee, the UN. The Corporate Olympic Sponsors, Sochi regional council, local residents, Olympic visitors

12B WHAT PART ARE THEY PLAYING? Please provide details of the issue in the table below. Please describe positive and negative Impacts according to different stakeholders relationship to the issue. If negative, please describe potential mitigating actions.

Impact analysis	Qualitative assessment/+-	Quantitative assessment/+-	Alternatives/ Options	Comments
<p>How does the action/project/activity effect socio-economic processes in the local community, alongside other potential economic impacts?</p>	<p>. At the hefty sum of \$8.5bn, the rail and road link that will transport organisers, competitors and spectators from the airport and the sea to the mountains has been the single most expensive transport construction for the Games. Despite Russian President Vladimir Putin's claim when Russia won its Olympic bid in 2007 that these Games would be as "green as can be", the construction of this rail and road link has generated significant numbers of protests from environmental campaigners, activists and organisations, who have been shocked and</p>	<p>Coming in at an eye-watering \$51bn, 500 per cent more than was originally predicted, Sochi 2014 is the most expensive Olympics Games in history. In preparation for the 2014 Winter Olympics, 183 infrastructure facilities have been constructed and modernised in Sochi. Among them new roads, railways and transport hubs, as well as a rise in the region's energy capacity by two and a half times. The most costly of these infrastructure developments, at \$8.7bn, has been the controversial new 31-mile Adler-to-Krasnaya</p>	<p>An Olympic Games that is put together by the stakeholders with a genuine Agenda 21 fully in mind.</p>	<p>If President Putin had spent 50 Billion on peace or just one tenth of that, what would have been the result of this Winter Olympics? Instead whilst he was applauding at the Olympics he was urging the Ukrainian government to deal more forcibly with street protestors, just as his Olympic Security Cossack forces set an example by beating up those teen-age pussy girls in full view of the media. This was the man who shook hands with Thomas Bach of the IOC and Ban Ki Moon of the UN, and all the corporate sponsors who made this winter Olympic deal at the cost of the Russian people, and others.</p>

	<p>appalled at the detrimental effect of the construction in this formerly pristine area of the Western Caucasus.</p> <p>It also prompted opposition politicians, Boris Nemtsov and Leonid Martynyuk, to release their calculations that the project cost the Russian state three times more than the delivery and operation of a new generation of Mars rovers cost Nasa</p>	<p>Polyana combined rail track and road, but it was also named as the Major Tunnelling Project of the Year at an international awards ceremony - so was it worth the money?</p>		
<p>How does the action/project/activity effect cultural heritage and have other potential socio-cultural impacts?</p>				
<p>How does the action/project/activity effect the environment and have other potential environmental impacts.</p>	<p>The environmental issues have been particularly surprising as initial design plans were being made in conjunction with Greenpeace Russia and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), in order to minimise disruption to</p>	<p>Much to the surprise of the world it's being held in a sub-tropical region of Russia, where significant snowfall every year is not a given and the temperature, which averages around 8'C in February, only occasionally gets as low</p>		

	<p>the ancient ecosystems in the Sochi National Park, which the new road/rail link passes directly through. Both organisations have since withdrawn from the project as they felt their concerns and recommendations were falling on deaf ears.</p> <p>.</p>	<p>as freezing.</p> <p>Sochi, built on swampy ground next to the Black Sea and known as Russia's 'Summer Capital' with the reputation of being the Miami of Russia, is probably not the first place that would spring to mind when choosing a location for sporting events that take place on snow and ice. In fact, snow in Krasnaya Polyana, which is on the lower slopes of the Caucasus Mountains and where many of the events will take place, is often so scarce that the Olympic organisers have stored nearly half a million cubic metres of snow in vast refrigerated reservoirs as a back-up. The test runs planned for the slopes in the winter</p>		
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		<p>of 2013 had to be cancelled due to a lack of snow. These reserves were deployed through the use of 200 snow making machines that made the competition possible.</p> <p>The Russian state department that was responsible for the construction project, Russian Railways (RZD), declared that, in order to reduce the area under development and preserve Sochi National Park's unique natural landscape, wherever possible bridges and flyovers would be 'built. As such, 71 bridges and flyovers, totalling 38km in length and crisscrossing the Mzytma River, have been constructed.</p> <p>The design of these</p>		
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		<p>bridges and flyovers saw them built in kit form from standard components. Bridge designers also had to contend with the fact that the region is subject to earthquakes, so a curvature radius of 600 to 1,200m was used for most of the rail bridges. Their beam spans range from 18 to 34m and the trussed girders from 55 to 110m.</p> <p>Tunnels and bridges</p> <p>The largest bridge constructed is a 766m cable-stayed road bridge, which has 82m-high pylons with a maximum span of 312m. At the location of this bridge the river runs directly below the line of the road so the length of the bridge meant pylons did not have to be</p>		
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		<p>embedded into the river bed.</p> <p>Additionally, 12 tunnels have also been bored through the mountains, including a 3.2km road tunnel, a 4.6km railway tunnel, and a service-cum-evacuation tunnel. The International Tunnelling Award recognises the engineering achievements in creating them in such a difficult natural environment.</p> <p>The excavation of all the tunnels was done using 13m diameter tunnel shields, capable of boring at a rate of 300m a month, which when laying tunnels many kilometres long are out by only 3mm when they meet. The new electrified train lines that run through them will</p>		
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		climb 560m with a maximum gradient of 1 in 25. At Adler, where the new train line starts, the station has been rebuilt as a major interchange hub as passengers using the Sochi airport line have to change here for Olympic venues. It's also providing a park and ride facility to reduce road congestion along the Black Sea coast.		
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13. CAN YOU REFER TO ANY MONITORING/CERTIFICATION SYSTEM THAT THIS EXAMPLE IS COVERED BY OR IS RELATED TO? (See www.destinet.eu to check if your example is listed in relationship to any certificates or awards)

UNEP Investigations

Major concerns about the environmental impact of the road/rail track, raised by organisations such as Greenpeace Russia, EWNC and the WWF, prompted the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) to instigate a second Expert Mission to investigate the issues, way back in January 2010. The mission saw UN experts visit sites along the construction path that were considered sensitive, as well as and other sensitive sites in the region.

The report that was issued after the investigation revealed that the assessments carried out by Russian Railways on the impact on flora and fauna in Sochi National Park had mostly been based on literature about the subject rather than field studies. The short-term view of the

assessments was also a concern as: "the assessments focused on the direct impacts of the projects to the immediate surrounding and did not take into account the cumulative and synergetic effects of the various projects on the ecosystems of the Sochi region and its population."

As the construction projects come to an end and the immediate environmental impacts have been revealed, it would seem that the report's recommendations for a comprehensive assessment of the long-term environmental impacts and implementation of a monitoring programme, were not carried out at any meaningful level.

In the conclusion the report stated: "Effective engagement of stakeholders and using experiences of international best practices could make Sochi 2014 a unique environmental showcase. Sochi 2014 also presents a major opportunity to raise environmental awareness and care for the environment, particularly in the Sochi region. It is an important opportunity for best practices on waste management and sustainable transport to be implemented in Sochi."

As has been shown throughout the project these international best practices were largely ignored and responsible waste management was way down on RZD's 'list of priorities. Rather than demonstrating care for the unique natural environment in the region and creating 'an environmental showcase', the Sochi 2014 rail and road construction projects have been cited by many as an environmental disaster.

14. GOOD GOVERNANCE QUESTIONS

14A CAN YOU ESTABLISH ECONOMIC, ENVIRONMENTAL OR SOCIAL DRIVERS AND UNDERLYING CAUSES OF THIS SITUATION? (IF YOU ARE FAMILIAR WITH THE DRIVING FORCE, PRESSURE, STATE, IMPACT, RESPONSE (DPSIR) MODEL, PLEASE APPLY)

14B CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE GOVERNANCE CHAIN AND FINANCING PROCESSES BEHIND THE ACTIVITY? (STATE OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS ESTABLISHED AT A NUMBER OF ADMINISTRATIVE LEVELS AND DEPARTMENTS)

Another concern was the reluctance of the various stakeholders of the project to engage with each other to ensure that the environmental impact was managed with a holistic approach. However, the UNEP report did also state that the UN inspectors had been impressed with these same stakeholders' willingness to engage with them.

14C CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE POLICY CONTEXT OR PROVIDE AN OVERVIEW OF EXISTING GOVERNANCE MEASURES ON THIS ISSUE? (STATE POLICY OBJECTIVES THAT CORRESPOND TO THE PROBLEM/ROOT CAUSES OR SOLUTIONS)

14D ARE YOU AWARE OF DIFFERENT SITUATIONS ACCORDING TO EUROPEAN OR UN MEMBER STATES?

The London 2012 Games and the Sochi Olympics all show the current version of a private (corporate) marketing business model for the Games, adopted by each UN member who ends up as a host city.

14E HOW CAN THIS PROJECT/ACTIVITY/DESTINATION BE IMPROVED?

The act of mainstreaming sustainability into large scale tourism events such as the Olympics is fundamental to improving the IOC chosen host city's approach to the Games.

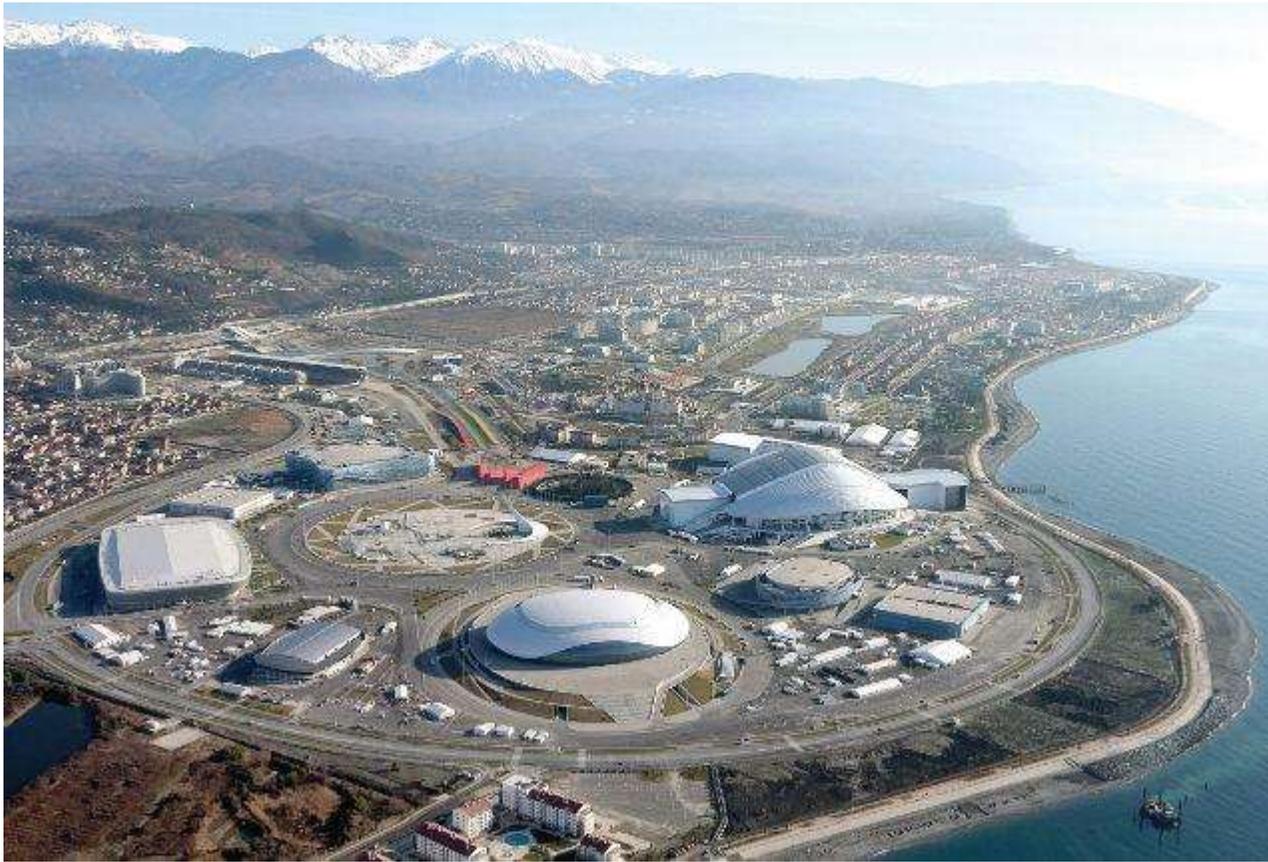
14F WHAT OTHER DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS/ALTERNATIVE WERE POSSIBLE?(COMPARE THE OPTIONS, WEIGHING-UP POSITIVE/NEGATIVE IMPACTS AND EFFECTIVENESS OF PREFERRED OPTION IN ACHIEVING OBJECTIVES)

15_ UPDATES AND PROGRESS:

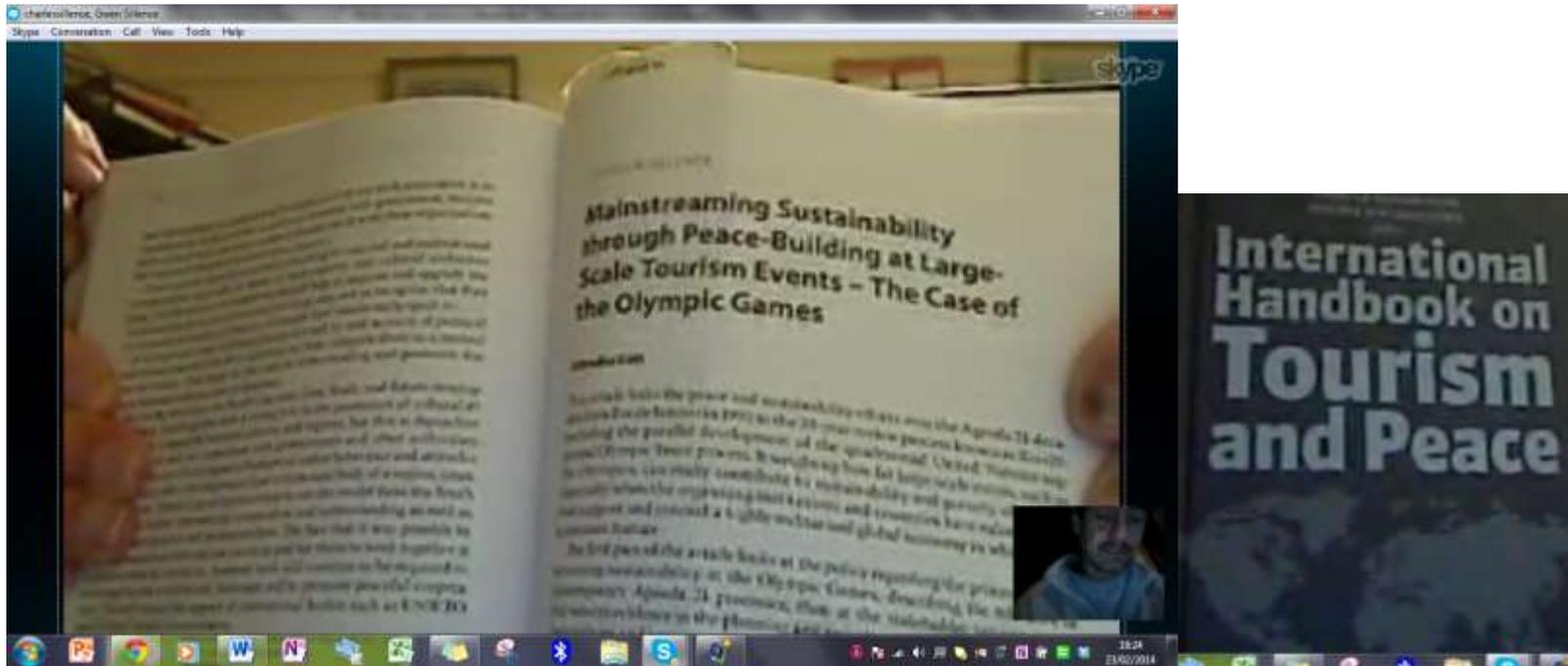
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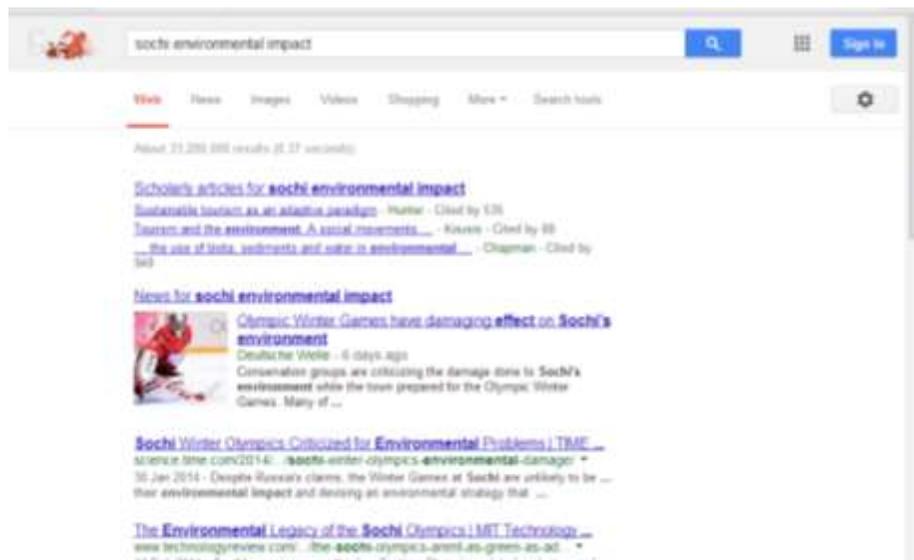
16. SUBMIT IMAGES RELATED TO REPORTED ISSUE HERE:



Sochi 2014 - The Winter Olympic Destination



Mainstreaming sustainability needs a strategy – this article in the UN Handbook on Peace and Tourism shows the experience of the 2012 Games and what can help in the build up to Brazil 2016



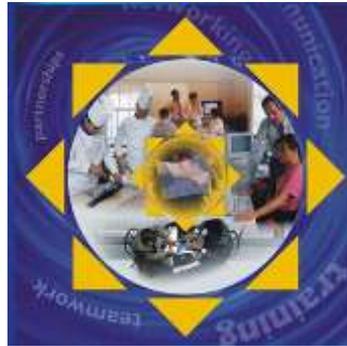
The Sochi Games generated a mass of environmental impact reporting

END OF SUBMISSION FORM:

YOUR SUBMISSION WILL BE UPLOADED AT: WWW.DESTINET.EU (SEE The VISTAwards SECTION)

MAIL TO: Gordon.destinet@ecotrans.de

This eForm (.wrd) can be found in the DestINet VISTAwards section



(This form was created for the VISTAs by Gordon Sillence in his capacity as Executive Director of UN Type II Partnership – the DestiNet Sustainable & Responsible Tourism Portal – Training, Education and Development Services 2014)