



3rd EURO - ASIAN MOUNTAIN RESORTS CONFERENCE

“Innovative Strategies for Sustainable Mountain Tourism Development”

4 - 7 April, 2017, Tbilisi, Georgia

CONCEPTUAL BASIS:

- Mountains cover approximately 24% of the world's land surface. They range over every continent and have been a source of wonder and inspiration for the visitors due to their climatic characteristics, diverse landscape and wildlife, scenic beauty, biodiversity and unique attractions.
- The development of mountain regions as tourism destinations dates back to the 18th century. Over the last two decades, the demand for winter tourism has been facing a slowdown and stagnation due to several exogenous factors as well as the changes in the consumer patterns, particularly in Europe. The mountain destinations are seeking innovative strategies to respond to the current and future challenges in order to optimize the value of return on investments in infrastructure and to maintain their competitive edge.
- Visitors are increasingly looking for new and diversified experiences in mountain destinations all through the year. The emergence of this new market segment, together with the need for the destinations to adapt their tourism supply to the impact of climate change and to expand the tourism season beyond the peak of winter tourism, presents an excellent opportunity to devise a new strategic approach to mountain tourism.
- The *new and/or innovative* strategic approach must encompass:
 - i)** a long-term integrated planning, **ii)** sustainable investment policies and incentive mechanisms for the businesses and a regulatory framework, **iii)** a diversified, innovative and tailor-made product portfolio to be adapted to the needs of the new market segments and **iv)** an efficient and pro-active governance model and structure (e.g. PPPs).

While doing this, the development and management strategies must highly respect the protection of the biological diversity, authenticity, social equity and the benefits for the local economies and communities.

OBJECTIVES OF THE CONFERENCE:

Pursuant to the previous two editions of the *Euro - Asian Mountain Resorts Conference* held in Almaty (Kazakhstan) in 2013 and Ulsan (Republic of Korea) in 2015 respectively and taking into consideration the context of the **International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development**, the **3rd Conference** aims at:

- Identifying once again the current environmental, structural and market oriented challenges in mountain destinations and exploring the opportunities to maximize the economic potential and social change for the local communities through a sustainable mountain tourism development and management,
- Understanding the need to develop a “mountain tourism culture” for stimulating activities in these areas as well as encouraging entrepreneurs to invest in mountain tourism,
- Creating a platform among all the relevant partners for dialogue and to exchange experience and expertise as regards the mature mountain destinations of Western Europe and the new developments in East Europe and Asia,
- Exploring the current and future trends regarding the behavior patterns of the mountain visitors and the possibilities for attracting the niche markets through innovative products and experiences.

THEMES TO BE COVERED:

The thematic structure will constitute three major pillars: **i)** sustainable development and planning, **ii)** investments and incentives and **iii)** operational issues and **will cover the following:**

- The future of mountain tourism (market trends, challenges, seasonality, sustainability issues: e.g. climate change),
- Integrated land use, infrastructure and transport planning for mountain destinations, operational structures and models (PPPs),
- Investment policies, incentive models and instruments to attract investors and entrepreneurs, governance and regulation,
- Diversified products and experiences (e.g. sports events) to improve the competitive advantage,
- Innovative practices for marketing use of IT and smart devices, safety and security standards.

TARGETED PARTICIPANTS:

- National Tourism Administrations/Organizations,
- UNWTO Affiliate Members,
- Local authorities, municipalities and regional administrations in mountain areas,
- International and/ or regional associations/networks with focus on mountain development,
- Mountain destinations(DMOs), regional DMOs,
- Ski resort developers, investors and infrastructure providers,
- Associations and institutions related to snow tourism, adventure tourism, spa and wellness tourism, outdoor sports activities, ecotourism.
- Academic institutions, scientists and experts related to mountain tourism research.
- IT providers.