



## Education and Innovation in the Tourism Industry

### **Creating a steering/stakeholder group in each country including members from the industry**

The first IO was to establish a concrete platform in each country that includes members from the industry. The aim was to use this platform for sharing ideas on best practices and decide on the most relevant topics to focus on. In terms of methodology we believe that by establishing this platform with relevant companies in the tourism industry in each region participating in the project, the dialogue between the industry and education organizations will be open and beneficial for all.

In the south region of Iceland, the gathering of people from the industry went well and members from different fields of tourism participated in the initial meeting. At the meeting, one member was chosen to be the contact person between the project and the platform as well as to take part in the international work meetings scheduled through the project. Like stated in the interim report the platform held two meetings where we talked about issues most pressing regarding education and development. There it is also stated that the base of the “best practise guide” consist of semi-regular meetings and e-mail correspondence.

Half way into our E+ project, a new project was formed through the Icelandic Tourist Board. This project has the objective of creating a “Destination Management Plan” or DMP (<https://www.ferdamalastofa.is/static/files/ferdamalastofa/Frettamyndir/2016/okt/tom.pdf>) for each region in Iceland. In South Iceland, the work has begun and one part of that project was to create a work-group that comprised of various stakeholders in different areas of the region to have profound discussion with. The role and purpose of the working groups is to bring out the vision that each region would like to stand for regarding tourism, as it is important that such a project is on the terms of the regions themselves. The group work includes: tourism development in harmony with the environment, the population and the tourism industry. As many of the stakeholders in the DMP project are the same as in our project, the Icelandic partners decided to collaborate with the DMP project managers and use both the venue (work groups) and the results from those meetings to build on even stronger platform and continuous conversation regarding our project. Therefore it is safe to say that the creation of a concrete platform has been realised and even enhanced due to DMP work. Regarding the creation of “best practise guide” it has also developed through the method and form of the platform interaction, used in the DMP.

As stated in the interim report in the case of Spain and Scotland, the access to the industry is different but through their own specific channels the partners have a good relationship with the industry.

In Malaga, there is a long history of working with the industry through the Faculty of Tourism at the University. This mature relationship was used as the base for a concrete platform in Malaga. There is also great collaboration with the Malaga tourist office (<http://www.malagaturismo.com/en>) that gives great insights to current affairs in the industry. The director of the tourist board attended the first meeting in Iceland as well as relevant meeting/activities in Malaga.

Situations are similar in the Highlands and Islands region of Scotland, where a long and established relationship between the university of Highlands and Islands and Scotland's national tourist board (<https://www.visitscotland.com/about-us/>) that serves as the link to the travel industry and the companies. The Scottish partner decided that it would be better for their team to attend the meetings themselves (i.e. the three people from the University whom were working on the project) rather than have a representative from the industry as part of the meetings and the other two partners agreed to that.

As both partners are running high standard facilities in Tourism in their Universities, a strong relationship with the industry is a crucial part of their existence. This relationship was there for defined as their concrete platform as it is used in the same way as the output was set up. Both partners met up with their platform before the first partner meeting in Iceland to have similar discussion as the Icelandic partner had with its platform. Considering the different situations with each partner in relation with the tourist industry and tourist boards, the partners decided that a design of a "best practise guide" was not relevant for the Highlands/Islands and Malaga.