

Establishing a Network of European Rural Villages for the Development of Sustainable Tourism

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Abstract

The paper deals with the research activity carried out by the Authors in the context of the European Project “Listen to the Voice of Villages”. The focus is on the governance asset and tools able to enhance sustainable tourism development in European rural villages. The subject of the research activity regards the Project’s first year, dedicated to structural analysis of the target territories and the definition of the methodology in order to identify existing governance networks. The Authors have elaborated on such basis a governance model, adaptable to the peculiar characteristics of every area, able to foster the creation of Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) where they do not as yet exist, or to improve their activity. In the following two years the implementation of a transnational association is foreseen (Vital Villages Association) to support local development and to certify the sustainability of the process, in order to raise international visibility of European rural villages as tourism destinations.

Keywords: rural villages, destination governance, sustainable tourism, networking