

SLOVENIA TOURISM REPORT 2008

DRAFT ANNUAL TOURISM REPORTING TEMPLATE

1. INTRODUCTION

Council Decision 86/664/EEC of 22 December 1986¹ establishing a consultation and cooperation procedure in the field of tourism foresees that “each Member State shall send the Commission, once a year, a report on the most significant measures it has taken and, as far as possible, on measures it is considering taking in the provision of services for tourists which could have consequences for travellers from the other Member States”.

With the publication of the “Agenda for a sustainable and competitive European tourism”, the Commission announced that “in order to strengthen the collaboration with and among Member States, their current annual reporting through the Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC) will be used to facilitate the exchange and the dissemination of information about how their policies and actions safeguard the sustainability of tourism”.

This Communication was welcomed by the Competitiveness Council conclusions (22nd-23rd November 2007) and by the Presidency Conclusions of the Brussels European Council of 14th December 2007.

The main aims for the reporting process are:

- to be able to monitor the level of implementation of the “Agenda for a sustainable and competitive European tourism” by Member States;
- to facilitate the exchange of experiences among member States with regard to how they tackle issues which are important for the competitiveness and sustainability of European tourism.

MS reports referring to year n shall be sent to the European Commission by the end of February of year $n+1$.

If the reports are sent in English, the deadline is shifted to the end of April.

2. ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

This section should provide an overview of the main organisational structure to illustrate how tourism is organised and managed, to identify linkages and to identify the engagement of other organisations/stakeholders.

The information required will only need to be prepared fully in year 1 as it will subsequently only be necessary to provide details of any changes.

¹ Official Journal L 384, 31/12/1986 P. 0052 – 0053.

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2.1 Please identify the National Bodies responsible for tourism (Ministry and also any separate/related National Tourism Organisation), including key areas of responsibility, and their relationship to other national bodies. (maximum of 1.000 characters)

Tourism policy lies within the purview of the **Minister for the Economy** and is part of the overall economic policy of Slovenia. Administrative and legislative issues concerning tourism are delivered to the **Tourism Directorate** established in August 2004. The Tourism Directorate consists of two departments: **the Department for Promotion and Development of Tourism** (national policy on tourism and structural policies co-ordination, foreign and EU relations in tourism) and **the Department for Investment Policy and Business Environment Development** (the national tourism budget, legislation in sector and EU Structural Funds budget). The promotion of Slovenia as a tourist destination the corresponding marketing activities are the responsibility of the **Slovenian Tourist Board (STB)**. The STB was set up in 1995 by the Government as a partly-commercial, state-funded organisation. The STB provides certain services on a fee basis for the tourism industry. It is responsible for managing the National Tourism brand "I feel Slovenia", supporting creativity and innovation in the design of new products and services (f.e. the Sower Award Competition), promoting internationalisation and diversification of the guest and visitors structure, R&D in the field of tourism, etc.

Ministry of the Economy Slovenia

<http://www.mg-rs.si>

Slovenian Tourist Board

<http://www.slovenia.info>

2.2 Please, describe what organisations/agencies are used to deliver services at the national and regional level and the services that they deliver. (maximum 800 characters)

To encourage small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), including those in tourism, to invest at any phase during their lifecycle, to support SMEs through subsidies, favourable loans and guarantees for loans taken, Slovenia founded the **Slovene Enterprise Fund (SEF)**. Through the **Public Agency of the Republic of Slovenia for Entrepreneurship and Foreign Investments (JAPTI)**, the Government enhances Slovenia's general economic competitiveness via technical and financial assistance to national and foreign entrepreneurs, businesses and investors.

Slovene Enterprise Fund (SEF)

<http://www.podjetniskisklad.si/index.php?id=86>

Public Agency of the Republic of Slovenia for Entrepreneurship and Foreign Investments (JAPTI)

<http://www.japti.si/home>

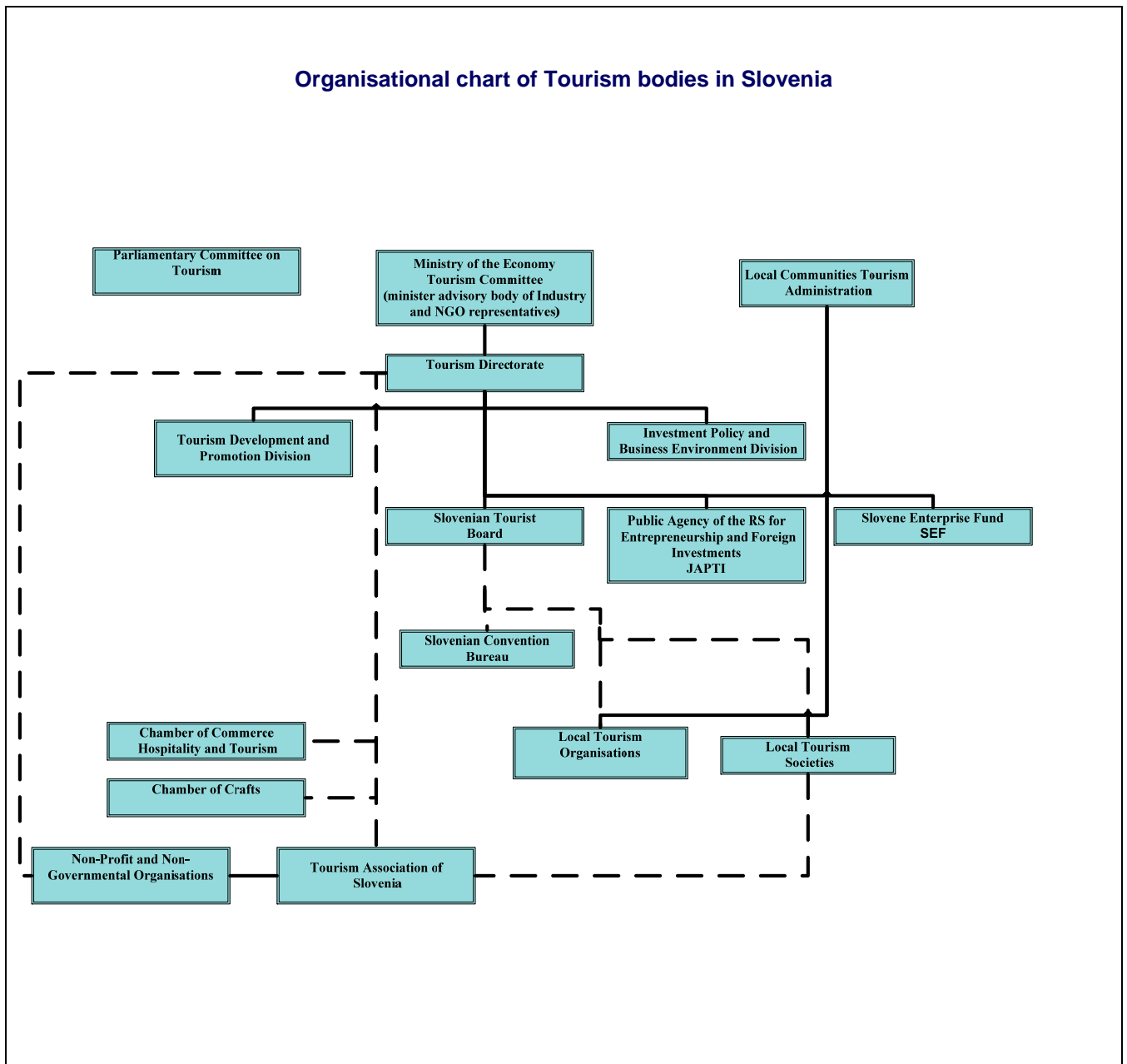
2.3 Please, describe which other bodies and organisations are involved at the national level and the process for involving them. (maximum 800 characters)

The most important civil society organisation in the field of tourism is the **Tourist Association of Slovenia (TAS)**. It is the oldest non-governmental tourism organisation in Slovenia (in the year 2005, it celebrated its centenary) and incorporates more than 550 local tourist societies throughout the country. Other important organisations at national level are **the Chamber of Commerce, Hospitality and Tourism** - <http://eng.gzs.si/slo/> (representing among others by compulsory membership the interests of all leisure and tourism entrepreneurs) as well as the **Chamber of Craft** <http://www.ozs.si/eng/prispevek.asp?IDpm=19> (representing among others the interests of the tourism small entrepreneurs and craftsmen) and the **Trade Union for Tourism and Catering workers**. There are two major tourism associations at national level which represent the interests of their members (voluntary membership) - **the Association of Slovene Travel Agencies** and the **association of Slovene small Hoteliers**. There are two separate associations; The

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Slovenian Convention Bureau, link: <http://www.slovenia-convention.com/> and **National Tourist Association of Slovene tourism Industry** which was founded on December 16, 1993 with the aim to promote tourism in Slovenia as its strategic economic and development opportunity. The Association performs activities of public interest in Slovenia and abroad, link: <http://www.ntz-nta.si/>. **Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia - www.stat.si** is in charge of collecting and disseminating data in tourism.

2.4 Please provide a diagram/organogram of the organisational structure for tourism identifying the relationship between national, regional and local bodies. Provide also a short description of the core responsibilities and competencies of each of the organisations. Include also information regarding the direct and indirect links between other departments, stakeholder organisations and unions. Information about mechanisms of decision making process participation from outsider organisations, e.g. forums, advisory committees is also requested. (maximum of 2.000 characters)



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In Slovenia, Tourism is part of overall economic policy and particular of SMEs and competitiveness policies. Tourism as a typical multi-sectoral issue which request intensive structural policies coordination is regulated by a diversity of national laws. The legislative authority in tourism affairs is vested to the national Government as Slovenia still hasn't introduced the second level of self- governance, the provincial level. Tourism legislation is also affected by European Union legislation, e.g. in the realm of consumer protection, internal EU market-services, customs and tax-duties, migration, etc.

National level:

The Slovenian Parliament established the Parliamentary Committee on Tourism. The responsible National Tourism Authority (NTA) is the Ministry of the Economy/ Tourism Directorate. The Tourism Committee was established a few years ago as an advisory body to the minister responsible for tourism. It includes representatives of tourism industry associations of interest, Chambers of commerce and crafts, Trade unions and the Slovenian Tourist Board (STB). Slovene Tourist Board was set up in 1995 by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia as a partly - commercial, state founded organization, STB provides certain services on a fee basis for firms in Slovene Tourism Industry (e.g. organization of promotion and marketing activities of the firms in foreign markets, Tourism fairs etc.).The Slovene Government adopts the STB annual working programmes. STB operates 4 offices in Europe, cooperates with many foreign offices worldwide on contractual basis and in some cases STB operates with the support of the Slovene economic diplomacy worldwide. STB carries out strategic national marketing and promotion activities based on product knowledge and market trend analysis, provides annual working programme which is based on five years programme and implementation policies of National Strategy for Tourism development.

Provincial level:

According to current situation Slovenia still hasn't introduce the second level of self-governance, the provincial /regional level. Consequently Slovenia does not have provincial government responsible for tourism and provincial tourist offices in charge of tourism promotion in and outside of Slovenia. The function of tourism development (without promotion and marketing of tourism and tourism legislation) at regional level is performed by the 12 Regional development Agencies which are responsible to the Regional Councils comprised by regional mayors of local communities responsible for regional (12 statistics regions) tourism development and co-responsible for implementation of national legislation and national development objectives of Slovene tourism at regional level.

Local level:

At local level each Mayor and Community Council are also co-responsible for the tourism development in community/destination. Locally collected "Tourist tax" (amount of tax which is collected on accommodation services); have to be used by the local community to establish and maintain tourism facilities and for other tourism development purposes at local level.

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2.5 Please provide information about financial data, including spend on tourism as a percentage of overall government spend, the level of national funding support for tourism marketing, the amount of EU funding support made available for tourism and data concerning the support to SMEs and Destinations. (500 characters)

TOURISM BUDGET

The financing of Slovene Tourism, 2007–2008

Budget (EUR)	2007	EUR 2008
National and European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) budget: co-financing budget for investments in tourism infrastructure construction and development of tourism destinations (national budget: 25% in 2007 and 15% in 2008)		14,891,728 28,978,531
Ministerial budget: tourism policies implementation programme, R&D in the field of HR, overall quality of tourism products and stimulation of services, sustainability and competitiveness), support of tourism NGO (TAS) programme and activities, etc.	692,800	781,846
STB: annual working programme and STB operational costs, national budget	8,226,697	8,456,537
JAPTI and SEF	47,000,000	87,000,000

The main funding source for the promotion and development of Slovenia as a tourism destination is the annual state budget. However, when marketing and promoting Slovenia as a tourism destination and particular tourist products abroad the amount of public funds spent should be matched/co-financed by the travel and tourism industry. Slovenia, as a Member State of the EU, is able to use Structural Funds through different Sector Operational programmes.

To achieve the quantity objectives of the DPPST 2007–2011, Slovenia, along with the ERDF, encourages an investment cycle based on the high quality renovation of existing facilities and the construction of new tourist capacities, as well as the development of tourist destinations.

With national and ERDF funds, the first investments cycle in tourism infrastructure from the previous financial period (2004–2006) was completed last year, providing EUR 45 million to support 36 tourism investment projects. To date, the supported projects have created 1,035 jobs and 4,449 new beds. For the 2007–2013 financial periods, EUR 145 million is allocated for tourism infrastructure development. With these funds, support will be provided to: private tourism infrastructure (76 projects already chosen on the basis of two public tenders), public investments in tourism infrastructure, tourism-related sport and recreational infrastructure, infrastructure for young tourists, investments in conservation of natural assets and restoration of cultural heritage assets, and investments in developing destination management.

3. POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

3.1 Is there a current National Strategy for tourism? Yes No

If yes, please, provide information in bullet point format about the key aims, objectives and priorities of the strategy highlighting those that are designed to address sustainability issues in economic, environmental and social terms in particular those related in the six aims included in the Agenda. In

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preparing the tourism strategy, explain how consideration has been given to the 9 principles set out in the Agenda (para2.3 p5) and given in the appendix. (maximum 1.000 characters)

The strategic objectives of Slovene tourism are set out in the current document in force **Development Plan and Policies of Slovene Tourism 2007–2011** (DPPST 2007-2011). This is the key strategic document in the field of tourism, highlighting the importance of tourism for the Slovenian economy, individual industry tourism stakeholders, tourism destinations and local communities. DPPST 2007–2011 sets out three quantitative objectives (raising the volume of the tourism infrastructure, raising the volume of arrivals and overnights stays, improving the visibility of Slovene tourism) and three **qualitative objectives** (de-centralisation of tourism, reduction of seasonality, promotion of changes). The implementation measures of DPPST 2007–2011 objectives that are the common responsibility of all governmental sectors and structural policies influencing tourism are set out through the following specific policies:

- Sustainable and regional development policy;
- Promotion and marketing policy of Slovenian tourism;
- Human Resources development policy;
- Investment policy and product development policy;
- Policy for overall quality of Slovenian tourism (quality labels and branding, accommodation classification and certification, direct service quality raising, etc.);
- EU, international, regional and cross-border co-operation in tourism.

In 2008, our basic measures and activities of the tourism policy were focused on ensuring successful development of tourism, increasing the recognition on foreign markets of Slovenia as a tourist destination, promoting SMEs start-ups and implementation of the investment cycle within the planned scope, promoting the development of Human Resources in tourism and stimulating an increase in quality of tourist goods and services.

3.2 Who was the initiator and who is responsible for its implementation? (maximum 200 characters)

Development plan and Policies of Slovene Tourism 2007-2011 is a common document of all the stakeholders in Slovene tourism: private sector, civil society, local tourist organizations and public sector. It has been developed and formed as a private-public partnership document on the Ministry of the Economy initiative. During preparation procedure governmental level cooperate closely with private and non-governmental sector in order to make an agreement on common goals, measures and activities as well as on defining the role and responsibility of the particular stakeholder/partner. .

3.3 How is the strategy monitored and how often? (maximum 500 characters)

In 2001, we prepared a feasibility study for implementing TSA in Slovenia. In 2004, the first project, "Implementation of TSA in Slovenia", was completed with statistical data according to the TSA methodology for 2000. In 2007, we carried out the second project "Economic Importance of Tourism in Slovenia in 2003 and Extrapolation of Statistics for 2006 (using the TSA methodology)". Further TSA evaluations will be carried out on a regular basis by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, firstly with data for 2009, and then on a triennial basis. Along with TSA, Slovenia carries out periodical evaluations of progress towards the DPPST 2007–2011 objectives. Realisation of the general strategic goals and objectives of Slovene tourism is evaluated each year at the Slovenian Tourism Forum. This is the key policy co-ordination platform between the private, public and civil sectors, at which representatives of all tourism stakeholders meet and discuss results, and agree on the future activities and challenges of Slovene tourism.

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3.4 What tourism specific legislation exists? (maximum 500 characters)

Act on Catering Industry

In order to assure a good quality of services and high level of consumer protection, in the Catering Industry Act requirements regarding minimum standards or conditions for the performance of certain services (e.g. catering, cooking, etc.) are preserved. There are requirements on minimum technical conditions, minimum services, measures and conditions according to classification of the accommodation facilities, minimum sanitary and health conditions. There were some changes to the Catering Industry Act adopted in the year 2007 (RS NDR. 4/06 AMD 60/07), regarding minimum level of education of the tourism entrepreneurs, which is not regulated any more and some other improvements. *In the catering sector the safety of services also includes adequate execution of health and sanitary provisions within the HACCP mechanism.*

Tourism Promotion Act

The Tourism Promotion Act had been adopted by the Parliament in December 2003 and was published in January 2004 (Official Journal Nr. 2/04). It is entirely harmonised with the EU legislation.

The Tourism Promotion Act defines planning and implementation of the tourism policy and its organization at the national level and at the level of the tourist destination. It defines the value and the purposes of the tourist tax as well as other instruments for implementation of the tourism policy. The act also lays down conditions concerning organising and selling of package travel, package holidays and package tours as well as performing the services of tourist guides and tourist escorts. It is based on principles of sustainable development and public-private partnership and principle of equal treatment of the economic, social and environmental components.

Act on Mountain Guiding

It defines requirements regarding the profession "Mountain guide" and conditions for establishment and providing mountain guiding services.

Some other, general legislation with impact on Tourism sector

- Consumer Protection Act
- Code of Obligations,
- The umbrella act for companies is the Companies Act, which defines the *performance of business activities in Slovenia.*
- *Gaming Act,*
- Law regarding health protection, concerning products, which, appearing to be other than they are, endanger the health or safety of consumers
- Law on drown protection, implemented in the field of bathing water sanitary conditions and standards, first aid equipment and rescue procedures, baths and swimming pools technical conditions and standards and baths classification standards
- Law on trade concerning the consumer in respect of contracts negotiated away from business premises.
- Entrepreneurship Promotion Act,
- Crafts Act,
- Environmental protection Act,
- Sports Act, etc.

4. MEASURES AND INITIATIVES

This section provides Member States with an opportunity to outline specific initiatives and policies that are or are going to be adopted to manage and develop tourism activity in ways which respond to the key challenges of the Agenda and which fall within the six main aims of the Agenda itself.

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1 Economic prosperity

- a. To ensure the long term competitiveness, viability and prosperity of tourism enterprises and destinations.
- b. To provide quality employment opportunities, offering fair pay and conditions for all employees and avoiding all forms of discrimination.

2 Social equity and cohesion

- a. To enhance the quality of life of local communities through tourism, and engage them in its planning and management
- b. To provide a safe, satisfying and fulfilling experience for visitors, available to all without discrimination by gender, race, religion, disability or in other ways.

3 Environmental and cultural protection

- a. To minimise pollution and degradation of the global and local environment and the use of scarce resources by tourism activities.
- b. To maintain and strengthen cultural richness and biodiversity and contribute to their appreciation and conservation.

4.1 Please set out, briefly, the steps which have been or will be taken, if any, to address the 7 key challenges for the delivery of sustainable and competitive tourism, covered in the TSG report and referred to in the 'Agenda'.

4.1.1 Reducing the seasonality of demand. (maximum 200 characters)

With a view to reducing seasonality and the discordance of regional development in tourism, Slovenia provides two basic measures; distributing school holidays in different regions and in different holiday periods and promoting and encouraging investments in tourism infrastructure (with different public incentives and ERDF grants) in areas with thermal and health water springs (hot springs and mineral-rich springs are located throughout the whole territory of Slovenia, mostly in the interior and in remote regions). Spa and health destinations allow year-round visits to those areas and assist in developing tourist flows from well established coast and mountain destinations to the interior of Slovenia and more remote regions.

4.1.2 Addressing the impact of tourism transport. (maximum 200 characters)

Common tourism, transport and environmental policy measures to sustain "Soft Mobility in Tourism" projects (road, rail, sea and air mobility) remain a challenge that will have to be tackled in the future programming period. However, in the transport area, a number of cycling paths have been created throughout Slovenia (mostly in towns and suburbs in order to respond to the issue of poor public transport networks), which represent the necessary infrastructure for national tourist cycling products supported and promoted by the STB. http://www.slovenia.info/?aktivne_pocitnice=0&srch=1&srctype=spc&wp_id= wp_100_0_56_1_0_14&search_KrajName_wp_100_0_56_1_0_14=&searchStr_wp_100_0_56_1_0_14=&searchCategoryId_wp_100_0_56_1_0_14=144&lng=2

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4.1.3 Improving the quality of tourism jobs. (maximum 200 characters)

The gap between demand and the supply of skilled personnel is the major problem of the Slovenian catering industry. Registrations in tourism and hospitality schools are decreasing each year. To improve this situation, the Slovenian tourism administration, in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce, Chamber of Tourism and Catering, Chamber of Crafts and the National Institute for Vocational Education and Training, organises activities such as workshops, seminars and media campaigns to support and promote vocational, entrepreneurial skills in tourism- and hospitality-related jobs. The recent "We know how to do it" media campaign and the first national labour/job exchange in tourism and hospitality have met with a wide response. We are considering new measures to support overall improvement of working conditions in tourism sector. These should help employers to enhance the attractiveness of workplaces, as highly satisfied and motivated workers are the best assurance in raising the productivity and quality of tourist services.

4.1.4 Maintaining and enhancing community prosperity and the quality of life in the face of change.

(maximum 200 characters)

Most local communities in Slovenia are rural communities. With the exception of larger cities, the national territory is considered a rural area eligible for EU measures and funds intended for the promotion of rural development in Europe. Rural Slovenia, with its multitude of local communities and rich natural and cultural heritage, has huge development potential. A sustainable tourist industry which takes into due consideration the social paradigm and the interests of the local population is thus one of the key development instruments in rural local communities and a promoter of more balanced rural development. Development of the non-agricultural economy, such as tourism, enjoys support under Axis 3 of the Rural Development Programme. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development, responsible for this area, coordinates interests and tourist, social, environmental and cultural measures, as well as other structural policies that may have an impact on tourist entrepreneurship in rural areas. The key interest of Slovenian tourist policy is to develop, on the basis of the natural and cultural assets of rural Slovenia (farms, rural towns and villages, wine-producing areas, mountain areas) competitive, attractive, high-quality and sustainable tourist products, maintain the settlement of rural areas, create job opportunities and thus offer the local population the possibility of increasing their income, and to local communities to develop and progress. The Ministry of Economy and the STB cooperate with all competent line ministries and tourist operators, at both national and local level, in drafting "Slovenia's Rural Tourism Strategy". It will be the basis for implementation of a comprehensive structural policy, further development of additional already existed rural tourist products. The STB supports and promotes rural tourism products of national importance.

http://www.slovenia.info/en/Kulinarika-in-vino.htm?kulinarika_in_vino=0&lng=2

http://www.slovenia.info/en/Kulinarika-in-vino.htm?kulinarika_in_vino=0&lng=2

4.1.5 Minimising resource use and the production of waste. (maximum 200 characters)

Minimising resource use and the production of waste is part of Slovenia's environment policy. There are no targeted measures within the tourist policy, except those measures for promoting the adoption of international environmental certificates for the tourist infrastructure (EU Flower Certificate for accommodation facilities and Blue Flag for bathing water quality) and for promoting the environmental sustainability of investment projects co-financed by ERDF funds.

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For the purpose of long-term conservation of the basic development potentials of tourism such as natural, cultural, social and man-made resources, Slovenia has elaborated all appropriate sectoral planning documents, legislation and implementing measures in the area of air and water quality (drinking water and waste water), quality of housing and construction of industrial facilities, and adequate spatial planning, including environmental impact assessment and environmental capacity assessment.

4.1.6 Conserving and giving value to natural and cultural heritage. (maximum 200 characters)

Slovenian tourism policy is founded on an overall sustainable development paradigm, based on long-term use of the fundamental development potentials of tourism – natural, cultural, social and man-made resources. Slovenia has produced the appropriate supportive sector planning documents, legislation and implementing measures with a broad impact on tourism. Particularly important is legislation concerning protected areas (national, regional and landscapes parks, Natura 2000 areas), which represent the basis for nature-friendly tourist products. Construction of tourist infrastructure and residential construction is subject to obligatory environmental impact assessment and environmental capacity assessment (Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive.) To support sustainable tourism projects, the Government assesses applications under calls for tenders for co-financing construction of tourism infrastructure and additionally encourages investors that associate investment projects with sustainable criteria on preservation and revitalisation of cultural heritage, and environment-oriented investments. Slovenia participates in the pilot project “European Destinations of Excellence” and grants national awards to winning destinations. In cooperation with the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Economy and all the protagonists of cultural tourism in Slovenia, the STB is drafting a Strategy of Development and Marketing of Slovenia’s Cultural Tourism. The STB supports and promotes cultural tourism products of national importance.

http://www.slovenia.info/en/Naravna-in-kulturna-dediščina.htm?znamnitosti_kulturna_dediscina=0&lng=2

4.1.7 Making holidays available to all. (maximum 200 characters)

For the time being, Slovenia has no special systems to support tourism for all, such as holiday vouchers or cards. On the other hand, Slovenian legislation does provide for a universal system (i.e. for all social groups of employed and retired workers) of holiday bonuses (the amount of which is defined by the Government in agreement with the social partners for each year as a percentage of the average wage). The holiday bonus is a taxable emolument, paid in cash, not exclusively linked to the annual leave, and as such often used to alleviate the difficult social condition of the beneficiaries. Various trade unions and NGOs in Slovenia (Red Cross, Caritas, Slovenian Association of Friends of Youth, etc.) make their own holiday facilities accessible to young people, the elderly and persons with disabilities at lower-than-market prices, which are partially covered by the state. In line with the activities of the Commission aimed at the promotion of so-called “social tourism”, Slovenia decided to carry out a comprehensive analysis of status, potentials and needs in the area of the diversified social tourism offering in Slovenia, and the establishment of the necessary support environment. Slovenia has also joined the European project “Calypso”, which is pursuing the same objectives.

4.2 As key challenges may change over time, please identify any other areas that are becoming a new challenge. (maximum 600 characters)

Promotion and marketing policy of the Slovenian tourism

To improve the marketing, promotion and visibility of Slovenian tourism, the Ministry of the Economy and the Slovenian Tourism Board launched a new tourism brand for Slovenia “I FEEL SLOVENIA”. This is an exceptional slogan and the brand also includes a logo (Slovenia is the only state in the world with the word “LOVE” in its name, the colour used is green it should represent nature and environment friendly and hospitable Slovene tourism);

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Slovenia hopes to use this as the unique means of promotion of Slovenian tourism. This completely new and clear image, a new technique of branding, aims to set Slovenian tourism products and services apart from the international competition, and should create new attention and attract visitors in a wider global context.

Enhancing co-operation and networking

The Slovenian Convention Bureau- <http://www.slovenia-convention.com/home/> was founded by the Ministry of the Economy and the Slovenian Tourist Board and is now a partnership of the key players in Slovenian convention tourism. The body oversees the quality and promotion of Slovene convention services and acts as a professional intermediary between meeting planners and suppliers, assisting organisers in selecting the most appropriate solution for their event.

Measures toward consumer protection

Responsibility for consumer protection in Slovenia is vested in the Consumer Protection Office - <http://www.uvp.gov.si/index.php?L=1> of the Republic of Slovenia and this includes protection measures concerning tourism products and services. All protection measures are harmonised with EU consumer protection Directives. Special tourism consumer protection measures introduced include licensing of tourist and mountain guides.

4.3 Please identify and describe a specific initiative, which is related to the 7 key challenges, that is innovative/ successful and which would be of interest to or of help to other Member States. (maximum 2.000 characters)

The Sower Award Competition and the Bank of Tourism Potentials of Slovenia

The Ministry of the Economy and the Slovenian Tourist Board two years ago launched two projects oriented toward innovation, productivity and quality-based growth in Slovenian tourism. The first – the **Sower award competition** - http://www.slovenia.info/?ps_sto=0&lng=2 is a competition created for tourism SMEs, which aims to stimulate creativity and innovation in Slovenian tourism. The second project is the foundation of a **Bank of Tourism Potentials of Slovenia (BTPS)**. With the BTPS, Slovenia aims to support the realisation of excellent and innovative ideas, which need financial support or an investor. <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Banka-turistinih-prilonosti-Slovenije-Bank-of-Tourism-Potentials/47660342868> **The BTPS invites everyone who has "€nergy" to offer** (i.e. financial resources but also material resources and labour) and **invites everyone who has "i-deas" to offer** ("i-deas" because without good ideas, tourism is missing the dot on the i) to deposit either ideas or financial resources at this special bank account. These "i-dea deposits" in a BTPS bank account will help to make tourism in Slovenia better, more successful and more original. Clients who agree to the general operating conditions of the BTPS are presented to the public in a discreet manner. Potential customers, partners, funders – anyone interested in a particular deposit – can advertise. This ensures that compatible pairs of providers and customers are brought together, while guaranteeing appropriate protection for their business secrets.

5. MECHANISMS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Three mechanisms for implementing the Agenda were identified in the "Agenda": sustainable destinations, sustainable businesses and responsible tourists.

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5.1 Sustainable destinations: What support is given to strengthen destination management at the regional/ destination level (supportive policy environment, knowledge networks, training programmes, establishment of measures/indicators for benchmarking, etc.)? (maximum 600 characters)

To adapt best to global standards of comfort and service, the prime aim of Slovenian national tourism is to define precisely our destinations on the local and regional level. This is an ongoing process. The next step, according to DPPTS 2007–2011 will be restoration of appropriate destination management and setting up internationally comparable quality standards, sustainable indicators for sustainable destination management, products and services. To speed this process Slovenia will also apply a "promotion of changes" sub-policy with different projects and actions; stimulating co-operation and networking (setting up the Slovenian Convention Bureau), stimulating specialisation (financial support for SMEs willing to introduce the EU flower certificate for eco-accommodation, and introduction of the new e-technology hotel self-categorisation system), stimulating innovation (the Sower award competition).

5.2 Sustainable businesses: What support is given to strengthen the sustainability and competitiveness of businesses (supportive policy environment, orientation of business support services to sustainability, training, financial incentives, etc.)? (maximum 600 characters)

Helping tourism SMEs to face global competition and sustainability

General governmental support to stimulate industry and SMEs in Slovenia (including tourism SMEs) aims to improve access to sources of funding and to make visible the investment challenges in Slovenia (including the investment challenges in tourism infrastructure projects). Slovenia set up the **SEF** – the national finance institution for SMEs-to encourage investment at all phases of an SME's lifecycle, and to ensure more favourable sources of funding for development investments undertaken by enterprises through subsidies, favourable loans and guarantees for loans. With **JAPTI**, the Government enhances Slovenia's general economic competitiveness through technical and financial assistance to entrepreneurs from home and abroad, businesses and investors.

To help tourism SMEs and industry to adapt best to this process, the tourism administration publishes special manuals and carries out permanent seminars for direct service quality improvements. To support sustainable tourism projects and investments, the Government assesses applications under calls for tenders for tourism infrastructure construction co-financing and additionally encourages investors that associate investment projects with sustainable criteria on preservation and revitalisation of cultural heritage, and environment-oriented investments

Slovene Enterprise Fund (SEF) <http://www.podjetniskisklad.si/index.php?id=86>

Public Agency of the Republic of Slovenia for Entrepreneurship and Foreign Investments (JAPTI)
<http://www.japti.si/home>

5.3 Responsible tourists: What support is given to promote responsible choices by tourists (e.g. sustainability in education, national marketing and media campaigns, promotion of certification schemes)? (maximum 600 characters)

Raising public and tourist awareness in tourist areas of the importance of conservation and protection of natural resources and the natural and cultural heritage as basic resources for the development of tourism is carried out at the national and local level by the Tourist Association of Slovenia (TZS). The TZS consists of more than 600 tourist societies, i.e. non-profit non-governmental civil societies of tourism fans. At the local level, tourist societies carry out numerous projects.

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These include: promotional campaigns, activities associated with raising the awareness of the local population, tourists, tourism fans, and school-age young people of the importance of sustainable tourism for comprehensive development, raising public awareness concerning the importance of the natural and cultural heritage as the most significant elements of tourist activity, publishing brochures and organising seminars for locals and others. The Government of the Republic of Slovenia identifies the civil organisation TZS as an equal actor in the development of Slovenian tourism. Therefore, it co-finances the implementation of its activities through individual ministries involved in the content of individual projects. The civil sector and local population are also included in the legislative process. One of the regular TSZ programmes is a very popular competition entitled "Think with your own head and help tourism" carried out among elementary school pupils participating in extracurricular activities on tourism issues. This competition is extremely popular and is financed by the Government through the competent ministries. At the initiative of the Ministry of Economy, which is responsible for tourism, courses were introduced in elementary school curricula connected with tourism, and special awareness-raising programmes concerning tourism are also being introduced in kindergartens. Further, national prime-time TV broadcasts special programmes for the promotion of tourism in Slovenia and numerous daily papers have weekly supplements devoted to tourism.

Tourist Association of Slovenia (TZS) <http://www.turisticna-zveza.si/english.php>

6. DATA AND INDICATORS

Eurostat will provide, as an annex, the key statistical data required to support the reporting process covering around 20 indicators². These are mainly related to the aim of 'economic prosperity'.

Please, identify indicators that are being used or developed which could add to the range of information being provided by Eurostat, particularly in relation to social and environmental issues (other indicators from the TSG report, visitors/ residents satisfaction, etc.). (maximum 500 characters)

No additional indicators are being used in Slovenia. Three surveys: Survey on foreign tourists (three-year periodicity), Survey on foreign travellers at road border crossings (three-year periodicity) and Tourism travels of domestic population (annual data) conducted at national Statistical office (SORS) can provide data for calculation of partial indicators: 2 (Total day visitors estimate per annum or per month: only foreign visitors), 41 (% of visitors indicating that they are satisfied with overall experience), 42 (% of visitors who are on a repeat visit and % of visitors who say they will return: only first part) and 45 (% of visitors from lower socio-economic groups: only social variables for foreign tourists).

² These indicators have been selected from the 50 TSG indicators on the basis of the possibility to calculate them at the European level.

7. COMPLEMENTARY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

If necessary use the following box to provide additional complementary information that has not already been covered.

The priority measures adopted by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia to tackle the economic crisis focus on strengthening banking liquidity for better accessibility of businesses to investment funds for development projects. In tourism the measures are aimed at:

1. Strengthening the investment cycle for the development of tourism infrastructure within the framework of the promotion of tourism entrepreneurship and competitiveness. This includes:

- further support for small and medium-sized enterprises;
- investment in public tourism infrastructure;
- support for the development of the sustainable management of tourism industry companies and destinations;
- promotion increasing the quality of tourism products and services;
- promotion of innovation;
- development of human resources for the needs of tourism;
- support for the preservation and implementation of sustainable development in tourism (balanced and harmonised structural policies and implementation of measures to increase competitiveness in Slovenian tourism).

2. Strengthening activities related to promotion and marketing of Slovenian tourism. The Slovenian Tourist Board will undertake to work in close co-operation with the tourist industry to:

- organise more marketing communication campaigns co-financed by the tourist industry (in traditional tourist markets, particularly in neighbouring countries and in perspective markets not strongly affected by the financial crisis);
- organise more expert meetings, educational workshops and study trips for the purpose of improving professionalism and the knowledge needed for the planning, design, management and marketing of tourist services;
- provide further training in tourist destination management;
- set up an incubator network with the aim of promoting innovation in tourism;
- launch additional tourist service advertising campaigns intended for the general public in domestic as well as foreign mass media
- intensify public relations activities (additional study trips for journalists);
- strengthen the thematic campaign "Taste Slovenia", advertising campaigns and communication aimed at the target tourists (B2C) in the nearest markets and in moderately distant markets;
- approach more actively the development of new air routes in co-operation with the national airline;
- intensify in 2009 market communication activities in the domestic market within the framework of the promotion campaign "Home Sweet Home" to take advantage of the trend of increased holiday-making by Slovenes in their own country;
- strengthen e-marketing and website advertising in the domestic market and in the markets of

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neighbouring countries;

- strengthen the monitoring of the situation and the provision of information to key stakeholders on overall developments in tourism at home and at the European and international level (EC, UNWTO; ETC; OECD).

