COUNCIL OF EUROPE

COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS

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RECOMMENDATION No. R (99) 16

OF THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS TO MEMBER STATES

ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT TRAINING

FOR THOSE INVOLVED IN THE TOURISM SECTOR,

INCLUDING FUTURE PROFESSIONALS

(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 9 September 1999
at the 678th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 15.*b* of the Statute of the Council of Europe,

Referring to the Stockholm Declaration on the Human Environment (1972), the World Charter for Nature (1982), the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro (1992) and the aims of Agenda for Change 21 (1992);

Recalling the Berlin Declaration made at the International Conference of Environment Ministers on Biodiversity and Tourism (1997);

Acknowledging the contribution made by Council of Europe work in the environment and tourism fields, particularly the study drawn up by its Group of Specialists "Tourism and Environment" on environmental management training for tourism professionals, and considering the urgent need for such training;

Taking account of the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (1995) and of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention);

Recalling Recommendation No. R (91) 8 on the development of environmental education in school systems and Recommendation No. R (94) 7 on a general policy for sustainable and environment-friendly tourism development, which advocates that tourism professionals should receive environmental education and training;

Noting that tourism is becoming one of the most important economic activities in Europe, and throughout the world, and considering that it creates jobs and often constitutes an additional or even alternative activity in areas where other economic sectors are in decline;

Recognising that properly structured tourism helps to conserve the natural and cultural heritage, is a source of economic prosperity, human well-being and wealth for municipalities, regions and

countries, and brings people together and makes social and intercultural exchanges possible in both rural and urban settings;

Recognising that a healthy, preserved environment is the main basis of tourism;

Considering that human beings have a right to a healthy, ecologically balanced environment;

Noting that the constant growth of tourism, in conjunction with other activities, may upset the balance of the ecosystem and damage landscapes, social structures and the cultural heritage by generating fierce competition for resources and services, thereby putting increasing pressure on the environment and, in the long term, jeopardising the very future of tourism;

Underlining that tourism development relies on increasingly high-performance technology which makes it easier for tourists to travel rapidly to the remotest and most fragile environments;

Convinced, considering the multiplicity of tourism occupations, of the partial responsibility of tourism professionals to maintain and conserve environmental assets, and of the need to promote a resource management model which shows greater regard for solidarity between individuals and peoples;

Emphasising the almost total lack of training programmes with an environmental dimension for tourism professionals, planners, managers, co-ordinators, decision-makers and financial backers at a time when a growing number of business leaders are making environmental conservation part of company policy;

Convinced that it is necessary to incorporate environmental management principles into tourism training programmes, at all levels and for all tourism occupations, and to continue the action already taken to promote a new code of ethics for tourism in order to improve its quality and competitiveness, and considering that environmental education and training are central to any long-term strategy for the protection and conservation of biodiversity and landscapes;

Recommends that the governments of member States:

a. ensure that the principles of biological and landscape diversity protection and sustainable development are included in the curricula of schools, institutes and universities providing tourism education, as well as in vocational training programmes, in accordance with the principles set out in the appendix to this recommendation;

b. encourage environmental management initiatives among tourism professionals, at all levels and in all sectors, including planning the management and co-ordination of tourist infrastructures and facilities, in a concern to ensure sustainable tourism development and to create the necessary conditions for such development;

c. ensure that environmental management training is tailored to different target publics and to participants' roles (promoters and financial backers of tourist facilities, government departments and local authorities);

d. ensure that training programmes provide different tourism operators with as much information and as many practical tools as possible so that greater consideration can be given to the environment in the design and management of tourist facilities and activities, by making the necessary resources available, and foster alternative forms of tourism (eco-tourism, green tourism, etc);

e. ensure that national education and training systems take account of current requirements for the administration and environmental management of tourism businesses throughout the course and teach these as a main subject and not as an option;

f. ensure the widest possible dissemination of this recommendation among all interested parties, particularly those in charge of training programmes;

g. advise on and monitor environmental management training programmes for tourism professionals by all appropriate means.

Appendix to Recommendation No. R (99) 16

Basic principles governing environmental management training for tourism professionals

I. Objectives

1. Environmental management training programmes are designed to improve tourist operators' abilities and skills in the following areas:

- preservation of natural ecosystems (coastal and marine, mountains, watercourses and adjacent wetlands, inland wetlands, forests and grasslands);

- conservation of landscapes and of the cultural and biological heritage;

- limitation of the use of mineral and energy resources;

- management of water resources;

- control of pollution and disturbance;

- promotion of the quality of life;

- incorporation of environmental concerns into all economic activities;

- interest in global problems.

2. Such courses will provide all operators with knowledge, skills and values that will help to change their behaviour and encourage decisions conducive to sustainable tourism. Vocational training will help them to apply what they have learnt to specific environmental situations.

Training must:

a. raise participants' level of knowledge and improve their understanding of the ecological, economic, social, political and cultural interrelationships that shape the development of sustainable tourism. This theoretical basis should always draw on practical examples;

b. instil new behaviour with a view to better management of the environment – in other words, develop environmental attitudes and values. Active teaching should be provided with a view to raising such environmental awareness;

c. develop students' knowledge, abilities and skills by giving them experience in dealing with environmental problems: they must learn how to identify, analyse and diagnose a problem; how to find, assess and process the necessary information; how to take decisions; and how to prepare, implement and evaluate an action plan.

II. *Method*

1. Training programmes must go beyond the simple formulation of concepts and offer a systemic approach and emphasise the global nature of the environment as a combination of natural and human factors, pointing to its close links with the economic management of tourism projects. Environmental phenomena must be explained with particular reference to interrelationships, complex exchanges, feedback and reciprocity rather than to straightforward causal relationships.

2. Tools and training for environmental management already developed by universities, research centres and training facilities, particularly in the field of active teaching practices, environmental education and environmental management training, must be exploited through adaptation to tourism; the same applies to the new technologies, notably information technology and telematics.

3. Training should take an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approach. It should cover various areas relevant to tourism and the environment, such as history, culture, economy and society.

4. A practical approach, drawing on numerous examples, should emphasise observation of phenomena and field analysis, with considerable involvement of the trainees. They must be allowed to carry out their own experiments, measurements and observations on site.

5. Programmes should be based on active teaching: the training plan should include a real-life project, showing participants working in this sector how they can pursue their activities in alternative ways. A compulsory supervised project should be completed: a practical training period including the organisation of a project should be the logical outcome of all training courses.

III. *Content*

1. As recommended by the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy, training programmes in the tourism sector should illustrate the ten principles that must be applied in sectors using natural resources:

- principle of careful decision-making;

- principle of avoidance;

- principle of precaution;

- principle of translocation;

- principle of ecological compensation;

- principle of ecological integrity;

- principle of restoration and re-creation;

- principle of best available technology and best environmental practice;

- principle of polluter pays;

- principle of public participation and public access to information.

2. Each programme must be tailored to the target audiences and their roles (decision-makers, managers, co-ordinators, business planners).

It is desirable for programmes to comprise three modules:

2.1.   **A general module** providing participants with an adequate understanding of various aspects of the environment, and of the complex processes linking the environment to human activities. By bringing all participants up to the same level, this module will ensure the use of common terminology and facilitate subsequent dialogue.

The following topics should be offered:

A. Understanding the "environment" system

- The environment as a global system

- The environment as a multi-dimensional system

- The environment as a resource

B. Damage to the environment

- Pollution

- Waste

- Natural and technological hazards

- Impairment of quality of life

C. The relationship between tourism and the environment

- Tourism and geography

- Tourism and local development

- The impact of tourism on the environment

D. Environment and ethics: towards environment-friendly tourism

- A cared-for, protected and conserved environment

- Tools for developing environment-friendly tourism

- Environmental management of tourism

2.2. A **specific module** covering the knowledge to be acquired according to target public, focusing on planning management, supervision and co-ordination.

A. Setting up a tourist activity

    a. Designing a tourist project

- Analysis of the natural and human environment

- Impact analysis

- Environmental assessment

- The climate factor

    b. Choosing a site

- Biological diversity criteria

- Landscape criteria

- Town planning criteria

    c. Planning a project in detail

- Choice of materials

- Building design

- Site management and supervision

B. Managing a tourist activity

    a. Environmental assessment of tourist accommodation and facilities

- Familiarity with the tourist facility

- Familiarity with the surrounding environment

- Environmental assessment

    b. Environmental audit of accommodation and facilities

- Energy consumption

- Consumption of natural resources: water

- Emissions

- Waste management

c. Environmental management tools

- Tools for analysis: eco-audit, environmental assessment

- Environmental technologies

- Environmental strategies: eco-labelling, eco-investments

- Environmental management systems.

C. Supervising tourism development

a. Analysis of the relationship between tourism and the environment

- Analysis and evaluation tools

- Indicators

- Geographic information systems and remote sensing

b. Assessment of project sustainability

- Impact study

- Strategic assessment

c. Decision-making

- Choosing a planning option

- Communication and information

- Impact management and monitoring

D. Co-ordinating tourist activities

a. Assessment of the reception area, the activities and their impact

- Familiarity with the reception area and evaluation of the surrounding environment, particularly the socio-cultural conditions

- Awareness and assessment of the impact of tourist infrastructures, facilities and activities

- Assessing the impact of one's activities

b. Familiarity with the legislation

- Protection and conservation issues: example of a regional nature park

- Familiarity with the legislation on access to nature, traffic and various activities: legal aspects

    c. Adapting the activity to the environment

- Choosing the forms of tourism (ecotourism)

- Organising various activities or routes in accordance with ecological criteria and the legislation

- Interpretation

2.3.   An application module offering a professional, practical approach should enable participants to assess their skills by taking part in a project. Such training periods, which might, for example, entail the design or management of environment-friendly tourism activities, should be supervised by university staff and professionals.

IV. Training methods and duration

1. Training may be provided in the form of activities, courses, workshops, seminars and field trips. Emphasis should be placed on simulation techniques (role playing, round tables, computer simulation, etc).

2. The duration of training will be left to states' discretion and will, in any event, depend on the type of training concerned (comprehensive training, in-service training, etc).

V. Preliminary steps prior to setting up training courses

1. A number of specific precautions must be taken when setting up training courses, and the suggested methodological approach should be implemented as follows:

- Inventory/assessment of existing training courses (in the same field and at a similar level);

- Identifying the profile of the target public, its expectations and objectives;

- Specifications: content and methodology of possible training courses on core themes (framework);

- Devising training courses (basic training packages divided into training products);

- Trial workshop for these training programmes;

- Organisation, analysis, evaluation and improvement of the programmes.

2. An inventory/assessment of existing training structures (in the same field and at the same level) must cover at least the immediate vicinity of the training location, but should also incorporate a wider area.

3. The training needs of tourism operators and future tourism professionals should also be assessed. Specifications for possible training courses should focus on key topics relevant to environmental tourism management.

4.   The main themes to be addressed in the training courses should include:

- Tourism and environment;

- Space and local and regional potential;

- Design, implementation, management, co-ordination and supervision of tourism development.

The methods thus developed should lead to the identification of computer-based tools.

5.   Training packages should then be devised with a view to devising training programmes geared to specific needs. In particular, they should satisfy the needs expressed by particular groups of tourism professionals seeking additional training in environmental matters and be tailored to the specific areas concerned (a consistent effort must be made to relate training to the site and geographical area in question).

6.   Such packages take the form of "training products" which may be adapted according to the target public and the time available:

- Short training courses;

- Seminars;

- Workshops on specific topics;

- Multimedia (CD-ROM, Internet).

7.   The holding of an initial workshop for the training courses will afford an opportunity to assess, confirm and adjust their framework and content. The final programme can then be organised and funding arranged. Training courses should be evaluated regularly.