

ANNUAL REPORT 2014 OF THE ECNC LAND & SEA GROUP

2014, Tilburg, Leiden, Barcelona

Overall operations of the ECNC Land & Sea Group

In 2014, the ECNC Land & Sea Group made further steps in enhancing cooperation. The management team of the Group convened several times, while discussing both strategic and operational issues.

The management team prepared for the Board meeting of the ECNC Land & Sea Group in Istanbul, Turkey, on 26 November 2014. The Board adopted a coherent and pro-active vision on the future of the ECNC Group and agreed on the establishment of a Pan-European Land & Sea Stakeholder Forum. It also welcomed the establishment of a revue-based entity, which would work with the Group on issues as restoring and revitalising ecosystems, ecosystem services and habitats.

The Board and management team of the Group decided on a slim governing and management structure of the ECNC Group and its EEIG, based on the statutes of the ECNC Land & Sea Group EEIG.

It was confirmed that the MEDCENTRE would act as region office of the Group in the Mediterranean region.

The site management Eurosite joint the ECNC Land & Sea Group as official observer.

Several initiatives were implemented in 2014 and new project concepts developed. In the below chapters you will find information about those activities.

PROJECTS EXECUTED BY ECNC LAND & SEA GROUP IN 2014

Project	Activities
<p>BojanaTour</p> <p>Fostering and bringing together coastal Southwest Balkans nature, tourism and civil society involvement through Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM)</p> <p><i>On-going for Critical Ecosystems Partnerships Fund, USA</i></p>	<p>This ECNC Land & Sea Group project uses ICZM as framework to pursue sustainable development in Ulcinj Municipality (Montenegro), particularly in the Bojana River Delta where the actions take place and focus on nature and tourism.</p> <p><i>Activities in 2014 included:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Reinforcing the links with related initiatives (already started in project proposal phase), and engaging stakeholders in ICZM (kick-off meeting, interviews, state-of-the-art report regarding ICZM in Ulcinj, focusing on links nature-tourism and stakeholders mapping).2. Two ICZM workshops for local authorities, civil society and private sector representatives. Participatory meetings are leading to a Common ICZM Vision for Ulcinj and Bojana Delta, assuring coherence with other national policies and initiatives and their downscaling to the local level. This vision will include a management model that fosters responsible tourism and nature conservation, among other coastal issues.3. A two-days training focused on best and worst cases in similar contexts. A sub-grant programme aiming at implementing concrete actions by local entrepreneurs and associations on e.g. resources efficiency, quality certification, nature-based products (local food, handicraft, hikes, shows) was started in 2014. A call for proposals was launched and 7 projects were selected, some of them were already completed by the end of the year.4. A communication strategy and related tools to achieve engagement and interest for the project has been smoothly implemented. This strategy will be enhanced in 2015 to become a Responsible Tourism Communication Strategy in Bojana Delta <p>The project is coordinated and led by ECNC Group and project pilot activities are developed in close cooperation with Green Step and UBA. Furthermore, a Steering Committee comprising external crucial stakeholders and project partnership will monitor and validate project achievements. For more details, please refer to the project website: www.bojanatour.org</p>
<p>QualityDestination</p> <p><i>Ongoing with support of the EC Life+ NGO grant (in 2014)</i></p>	<p>Launched in 2013 and developed as part of the EU NGO 2014 programme, QualityDestination is an ECNC Land & Sea Group initiative. It links with EUCC's QualityCoast Programme and will contribute to the proposed 7th Environment Action Programme by developing a set of sustainability criteria for cities. This programme aims to involve 30 municipalities across different regions of Europe.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cooperation agreement developed with NHTV Breda – QualityDestination has been presented

Project**Activities**

- as a guest lecture on sustainable travel and tourism;
- Agreement reached with BookDifferent on cooperation - ECNC is a beneficiary of the donation facility on the Bookdifferent website and listed as one of the beneficiaries for donations for clients of Bookdifferent;
 - Participation in the process to establish a 'Green Deal' for sustainable tourism between the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs and partners from the environmental and travel sectors;
 - Various project activities, promotion and networking.
 - Destinations across South Eastern Europe (Western Balkans and Turkey) are being engaged
 - The QD website has been developed to facilitate membership and sponsorships.
 - The programme has become a member of GSTC – Global Sustainable Tourism Council in Canada.
 - Social media (Facebook and Twitter) has been developed.
 - A promotional video of the programme is close to being finalized, along with a marketing plan and strategy for 2014-2015.
 - Information seminars have been held with selected destinations in the Black Sea/ Turkey.
 - Four new destinations in the Eastern Black Sea Region of Turkey have been accepted as members of the QD Programme.

Joint discussions continue to finalize the criteria, rules and financial implications for destinations that want to become QualityDestination. Membership guidance and local experts are mobilized to attract more destinations to become member of the programme. For more information, please refer to the programme website: www.qualitydestination.info

Green Impetus for Tourism destinations

*Ongoing with support of the Netherlands
Ministry of Economic Affairs*

This ECNC Group related project was launched in July 2014. Contributing to the promotion and development of sustainable tourism destinations, it aims to engage 12 pilot destinations for participation (6 Dutch and 6 foreign). The partners of the project together with other organisations agreed on a Green Deal for Greening Tourism. The project kicked off with a lot of enthusiasm. In terms of progress for testing locations, within the last four months of 2014:



Project	Activities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 Dutch and 1 border region (destination) have confirmed interest and involvement;• 2 other Dutch destinations are engaged for further negotiations;• 3 international (Turkish & Spanish) destinations are interested to become participants• A learning toolkit was developed as a part of testing and training for pilot destinations. <p>In the early months of 2015 several destinations in The Netherlands now have joint the project as pilots.</p>
<p>Healthy Seas: a journey from waste to wear</p> <p><i>Ongoing with support various businesses, private fund, EC Life+ NGO grant</i></p>	<p>In 2014 the ECNC Land & Sea Group continues to coordinate and roll-out the development and implementation of the initiative ‘Healthy Seas’ – a journey from waste to wear. Recycling marine litter into textile products, primary actions in 2014 focussed on three regional pilots in Europe - North Sea (Netherlands and Belgium), Adriatic Sea (Italy, Slovenia and Croatia) and Mediterranean Sea (Spain) and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identifying hot spots (e.g. shipwrecks, coral reefs) in the pilot regions where ghost fishing net removal should be focussed.• Organizing diving trips to recover waste fishing nets with the involvement of volunteer divers, salvage companies and other stakeholders. In 2014, 31 tons of ghost fishing nets were removed, by 50 volunteer Healthy Seas divers.• Continuing to identify and involve a wide range of local and stakeholder groups (divers, salvage companies, fish farms, fishermen, NGOs, governments and the general public), as part of the actions to recover waste fishing nets from seas and to prevent that waste reaching land-fill sites;• Establishing waste fishing net reception facilities along the coasts in the pilot regions (including environmental permit, collection unit, etc.) where local awareness-raising actions will take place. <p><i>Other activities in 2014 include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Being showcased at European level for Circular Economy during the EC’s 2014 Green Week (June, Brussels) and attracting the attention of Commissioner Potočnik as well as over 1,000 participants. Additionally, Healthy Seas was profiled during the marine litter panel discussions;



Project**Activities**

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- Continuing promotion of the Initiative to highlight the problem of marine litter and the solutions possible and increase understanding within key stakeholder groups – this is achieved through various communication activities (website, social media, publications, presentations, press releases, TV and radio interviews);
 - Continuing to make a solid ‘business case’ and attracting new economic business relationships – for example, the Kaufland supermarket chain in Germany.
 - For more information, please refer to the Healthy Seas website: <http://healthyseas.org/>
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Projects in development in 2014

In 2014, several ECNC Land & Sea Group project proposals were in the process of development, including projects:

- * in business and biodiversity related issues,
- * on sea-based orientation of coastal municipalities,
- * training courses, and
- * addressing marine litter and the Mediterranean.

Various of those project concepts are expected to be kicked-off in 2015.