Title of the Story: SUSTAINABILITY SUCCESS STORY – MALI LOŠINJ

Destination Name: Mali Lošinj

Country: Croatia

Submitter name: Mali Lošinj Tourist Board

Email address: losinj@visitlosinj.hr

Nomination Category: (Please check the boxes that indicate the focus of your story)
- Culture & Communities
- Environment & Climate
- Nature & Ecotourism
- Islands & Seaside
- Immediate responses in dealing with the COVID-19
- Post COVID-19 recovery
- One of the 17 SDGs* (if yes, which one)

*The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, were adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030. The 17 SDGs are integrated— that is, they recognize that action in one area will affect outcomes in others, and that development must balance social, economic and environmental sustainability. What are the Sustainable Development Goals? https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/

For further information on Tourism for SDGs: http://tourism4sdgs.org/

Find detailed instructions for submitting good practices here
DESCRIBE YOUR GOOD PRACTICE STORY

Address each aspect of your good practice story in the different sections being specific including relevant quantitative and qualitative information.

**Issues faced**
Cres - Lošinj archipelago is home for more than 250 bottlenose dolphins. Most of the individuals can be identified by photographs thanks to natural marks such as cuts and scars on their back fin, the part which is always to be seen when they come out to the surface to breathe the air.
There are many threats to Cres-Lošinj dolphin population. Pleasure boating can physically obstruct their movements whilst engine noise may disrupt their navigational senses. Although among the most resistant and adaptable cetacean, good dolphins are gradually dying out in many parts of the world. The intentional killing and accidental catch in fishing-nets represent an evident threat.
Since 1995 Croatian law has protected all cetaceans in our waters from physical harm and harassment.

**Methods, steps and tools applied**
In 1987 a team of the Research Institute Tethys started a long research of biology, ecology and social structure of the community of bottlenose dolphins that colonize the sea around the islands of Cres and Losinj. Today these dolphins are one of the best-explored groups in the whole Mediterranean. In 1998, Tethys wanted to close the project, researches and local residents decided to breathe new life into the activities as they recognised the contribution of the dolphin population for future development of the Lošinj municipality. The Blue World Institute of Marine Research and Conservation was founded in 1999. The Blue World Institute is an independent non-profit organisation set up with the intention to carry out scientific research and conservation of the marine environment as well as educational activities, with an emphasis on the Adriatic Sea and the wider Mediterranean basin.

**Key success factors**
Recognising their invaluable role in the ecosystem, our research focuses on large marine vertebrates with an aim to contribute to the protection and conservation of the whole marine environment. This is achieved through cooperation with competent authorities, development of innovative management measures, creation of partnerships with relevant stakeholders and involvement of the public through awareness-raising and education. Research on protected species is conducted under permits issued by relevant authorities following national legislation of the countries where we operate and is carried out following a set of voluntary adopted set of standards and norms ensuring animal welfare. In recent years, we have expended the geographical aspect of our research to open bases on Vis Island (2008) and in Murter Island (2013).
Lessons learned

With partner organisations we supported the development of surveying programs in Montenegro, Italy and Albania. Bringing all of this work together with the aim of providing basing wide data, we conducted aerial surveys of the whole Adriatic Sea in 2010 and 2013. The results of these surveys present the first ever data on distribution and abundance of cetaceans, sea turtles and in the Adriatic and are setting the reference point for a regular monitoring programme.

Results, achievements and recognitions

In cooperation with Blue World we have created a program - Dolphin watching tour in which guests have the opportunity to learn more about those creatures, and also learn how to behave in the vicinity of the dolphin. Considering a way of life, love and respect for sea, guests can go in search of dolphins. The lectures about the dolphins, the behavior on boat and around the dolphins precedes the trip to the sea.

Additional references

Provide links to further information. Pictures and videos should be available for download either from Youtube, Vimeo or other Cloud-based (Google/ One Drive) download URL.