



Good Practice Story Title: A New View of the Lošinj Undersea

Destination: Lošinj Islands

Country: Croatia

Submitting Organization: Mali Lošinj Tourist Board

Category:

- X Destination Management
- Nature & Scenery
- Environment & Climate
- Culture & Tradition
- Thriving Communities
- Business & Marketing

Destination description:

The Lošinj archipelago, nestled in the northern Adriatic in Croatia, is renowned for its natural beauty, mild climate and rich history.

With over 1,200 different plant species, including aromatic and medicinal herbs and plenty of sunny days, it is the ideal destination for nature lovers and outdoor enthusiasts.

The archipelago boasts a long maritime tradition, evident in its historic buildings and museums. Its charming narrow streets, captain's houses and picturesque ports exude an authentic Mediterranean spirit.

The archipelago is also a popular spot for wellness and health centres, having developed as a climatic health resort since the 19th century due to its favourable climate and clean air.

The local cuisine reflects a rich fishing tradition, with restaurants offering fresh seafood and specialties made from local ingredients.

The Lošinj archipelago is perfect for those seeking a blend of natural beauty, cultural heritage, a relaxing atmosphere and responsible, sustainable destination management.



Summary of Good Practice Story:

The project entitled “A New View of the Lošinj Undersea”, led by the Blue World Institute and funded by the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, aims to educate both locals and visitors about marine environment conservation, promoting sustainable tourism. By renovating the Lošinj Marine Education Centre and introducing innovative content, the project raises awareness of marine life protection among the local population and tourists. Results include the augmented reality module entitled “Scan the Island,” which offers educational materials on natural heritage via QR codes, and an acoustic experience of underwater noise through VR glasses, highlighting the impact of noise on marine fauna. New information panels disseminate knowledge about environmental conservation, fostering awareness of the importance of natural heritage. This project contributes to nature protection and educates future generations.

Issues faced:

The project “A New View of the Lošinj Undersea” tackles several key issues:

- Awareness and education: How to effectively inform and educate all age and interest groups about the need to preserve the marine environment?
- Innovative content: How to introduce educational and innovative content accessible to all users, enhancing the value of specific locations on the island?
- Sustainable tourism: How can the project contribute to the development of sustainable tourism for the benefit of nature?
- Underwater noise: How to raise awareness of the adverse effects of underwater noise on marine fauna, especially dolphins?
- Technological tools: How to effectively use technology such as augmented reality and VR glasses for environmental education?
- Positive awareness: How to develop a positive awareness about preserving natural heritage among locals and visitors?

The Blue World Institute is dedicated to addressing these questions through this project to ensure the protection and conservation of Lošinj marine environment.



Solution:

“A New View of the Lošinj Undersea” introduces solutions for preserving the Lošinj marine environment:

- Education centre: Upgrading the Lošinj Marine Education Centre with innovative educational content.
- “Scan the Island” app: Developing an AR app, providing educational materials on natural heritage, environmental protection, biodiversity and the significance of Natura 2000 areas via QR codes at three educational points.
- VR experience: Offering a VR simulation of underwater noise to demonstrate impact on marine fauna, especially dolphins.
- Information panels: New panels enhance environmental awareness and conservation knowledge.

These solutions foster sustainable tourism, raise awareness among locals and visitors, and preserve marine environment.

Methods, Steps, and Tools applied:

The project entitled “A New View of the Lošinj Undersea” employs diverse methods, steps and tools to achieve its goals of education and preservation of the marine environment. Here is a detailed overview:

1. **Condition analysis and planning** – data collection: A thorough analysis of the marine environment and the existing infrastructure of the educational centre was conducted. Data on biodiversity, dolphin presence and condition, and the impact of human activities on the marine ecosystem were collected. Based on this data, a detailed plan of activities and goals was developed, identifying key intervention and education points.
2. **Renovation and upgrade of the Education Centre** – space renovation: The physical space of the Lošinj Marine Education Centre was renovated to accommodate new educational content. Necessary equipment, including VR glasses, interactive screens and technical equipment for the “Scan the Island” app installation, was procured.
3. **Development of educational content**: An augmented reality module for the mobile app was developed, providing information about the island’s natural heritage at three educational points via QR codes. The app includes interactive materials on Natura 2000 areas, environmental protection, biodiversity and the cultural, fishing, and aquaculture features of Lošinj. An acoustic experience of underwater noise was created using VR glasses, allowing users to feel the impact of noise on marine fauna, especially dolphins. New information panels were designed and installed, conveying knowledge about environmental conservation and the marine ecosystem in an original and accessible way.





4. **Education & community engagement:** Workshops and lectures for various age groups, including locals, schools and tourists, were organized to raise awareness about the importance of preserving the marine environment and to promote sustainable practices. The local community was actively involved in project activities, encouraging participation in environmental conservation through volunteer programs and initiatives.
5. **Promotion and dissemination:** A comprehensive media campaign was conducted, involving local and national media, social networks and websites, to inform the public about the project and its activities. Collaboration was established with local and international partners, including ecological organizations, academic institutions and travel agencies, to disseminate project results and ensure sustainability.
6. **Evaluation and monitoring:** Continuous monitoring and evaluation of all project activities were conducted to ensure quality and goal achievement. Feedback from participants and users of educational content was regularly analysed. Progress and results reports were prepared and regularly submitted to relevant stakeholders.

By implementing these methods, steps and tools, the project entitled “A New View of the Lošinj Undersea” successfully contributes to education and awareness about the importance of preserving the marine environment, promoting sustainable tourism and protecting the natural heritage of Lošinj island.

Achievements and Results:

As a result of our project activities, we’ve developed high-quality, innovative educational content at the Lošinj Marine Education Centre:

- Augmented reality module – “Scan the Island” app

One specific goal of the project was to create three educational points on Lošinj, where QR codes lead to an augmented reality module in an app featuring educational materials about Lošinj natural heritage. “Scan the Island” is a mobile app allowing users to learn about the importance of Natura 2000 areas, environmental protection, biodiversity, and the cultural, fishing and aquaculture features of the island in a simple, entertaining and structured way. Users can gain insight into the importance of dolphins in maintaining the health of the seas and mitigating the impacts of climate change.

- Acoustic experience of underwater noise through VR glasses

The Adriatic Sea faces significant pressure from human activities that can negatively affect marine fauna. One of the greatest threats to large marine vertebrates in the Adriatic is underwater noise. Seasonal variations in the intensity of nautical tourism and the associated increase in noise and the number of vessels are considered one of the main causes of sound pollution, adversely affecting the



dolphins and altering habitat usage in the Cres-Lošinj waters. Using VR glasses, visitors can experience the impact of underwater noise.

- New information panels

The new information panels inform about the environment, research and the need for nature conservation, accumulated through years of association's work. They also foster the development of positive environmental awareness among a broader audience.

Lessons Learned and Advice:

The primary goal of the project is to successfully inform and educate all age and interest groups of islanders and visitors to Lošinj about the need to preserve the marine environment, the island's greatest natural asset. For this reason, we have introduced innovative content accessible to all users, which will serve educational purposes and also add value to specific locations on the island. This project contributes to the development of sustainable tourism for the benefit of nature. By renovating the current space of the Lošinj Marine Education Centre, enhancing its educational content, and introducing innovative features, we aim to engage and raise awareness among the local population and numerous visitors to Lošinj about marine life, its conservation and protection.

The future of our natural heritage, which we leave for future generations, will depend on the results of our current efforts to educate them.

Recognitions and Additional References:

- Mali Lošinj – Global Green Destinations Days 2019 – host destination
- Mali Lošinj – Silver Award by the Green Destinations Certification Committee (2019)
- Mali Lošinj – Silver Award by the Green Destinations Certification Committee (2022)
- Mali Lošinj - Top 100 2020 - Good Practice Story
- Mali Lošinj - Top 100 2021 - Good Practice Story
- Mali Lošinj - Top 100 2022 - Good Practice Story
- Mali Lošinj - Top 100 2023 - Good Practice Story

