News Release

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UN Tourism

UN Tourism to Make Residents Focus of Thassos Island's Tourism Recovery

Thassos, Greece, 11 March 2024 - UN Tourism is to work with the Thassos Municipality of Greece to put people at the heart of work to build greater resilience for the sector on the island.

In partnership with UN Tourism Affiliate Member ICF, the United Nations Specialized Agency will engage with local tourism stakeholders and residents from across the island on a series of Technical Cooperation projects. The collaborative work will focus on several key areas, all designed to accelerate recovery from the impacts of the pandemic on island tourism and on building greater resilience against future shocks.

Promoting Tourism on Thassos

The project's main scope is to support the tourism recovery efforts of the island of Thassos after the pandemic, through firstly assessing the marketing initiatives of the island of Thassos and its tourism product offer during the pandemic, and then providing recommendations on improvements. The project partners will:

- Assess the effectiveness of marketing initiatives implemented during the pandemic, with a focus on how compatible they are to current tourism trends and demands.
- Examine the Municipal authorities' and local stakeholders' views and opinions on the current tourism products of Thassos
- Research and identify international best practices regarding marketing activities for post-pandemic and identifying both short and long-term models to be implemented for Thassos.
- Identify the tourism markets that will be of importance to Thasos and identify ways of better engaging with them.

Working with Local Stakeholders

UN Tourism will also work with Thassos Municipality and ICF on the implementation of the Thassos Residents Study (TRS). The study will collect information on how local residents view and engage with tourism on the island, both in terms of the sector's economic impact

as well as its socio-cultural impacts. The study will be built around focus groups, interviews and questionnaires. The information obtained will be used for a report, to include a series of recommendations and follow-on actions if necessary.

The project was officially launched at a kick-off event, hosted by UN Tourism in partnership with Thassos Municipality and ICF (8 March) and attended by key stakeholders. The marketing activity will conclude at the end of July, with the Residents Study to run until the end of November, with results published by the end of the year.

Thassos stakeholders welcome UN Tourism support

UN Tourism Executive Director Natalia Bayona says: “Along with education and capacity building, this technical cooperation project can help create a future for the sector aligned with the sustainable development Goals. Now, when up to 25% of tourism workers in the European Union have low qualifications, we need to give them tools to find innovative ways to succeed in the tourism sector, even more taking into account that 882,000 jobs in the sector will require vocational training by 2030”

The Mayor of Thassos Island, Eleftherios Kyriakides, says: “This is a project that puts our local community at the center of the direct policies of tourism development of the island of Thassos, through synergies and collaborations, by strengthening the diversity and resilience of tourism and therefore to lay the foundations for a balanced and sustainable development of tourism sector, on our island.”

The Head of Tourism of the UN Tourism Affiliate Member ICF, Nikolaos Gkolfinopoulos adds: “The management of tourism is paramount to ensure coordination and identify and minimise potential negative impacts. The inclusion acknowledgement of residents as a key stakeholder is the right direction towards a better, more participatory governance that takes into account the interests of local communities. ICF is proud to be joining forces with UN Tourism, paving the way for a targeted tourism development that benefits both the economic and social fabrics of Thassos.”

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