

# CITY GUIDES

## Evaluation report

### Introduction

Evaluation of a project as City Guides is difficult because of the very various situations in the participating countries and of the partners. In this report we present the process of development of the training, execution of training programs, the acquisition of candidates and the production of the training guide for organizations. Secondly we present the meaning of the participants in the final conference, held in November 2007 in Zwolle, The Netherlands. The original forms are available at our desk.

Thirdly we will discuss the rules and regulations influencing the execution of the programs and the development of tourist activities on local level.

### Development and execution of training programs

The aim of the project was (and still is) to stimulate cultural historic organizations in cities and villages in Europe to establish for their members (or interested persons) a training program to become a local guide. City Guides has developed a support manual for cultural historic organizations in these smaller cities and villages how to establish such training program. Organisations, city councils, regional councils, individuals etc. are proud on their monuments, famous inhabitants, architecture, religion and local characteristics. The project has been developed from a Dutch point of view: free entrepreneurship, no strict rules or regulations, many (small) cities and villages with heritage items that are visited by regional or national visitors. Already during the first European workmeeting the differences between the southern and northern countries in Europe became clear. Volunteers guiding visitors and not earning a living with this job was almost unbelievable. No license or permit of the local authority and no regulations for quality, safety or content of presentation was unbelievable.

This resulted in the discussion about of non-regulated countries and the regulated countries. The differences are enormous.

In the non-regulated countries there are (almost) no limitations to undertake tourist activities on a commercial or non commercial basis. Organisations are free to offer their services to tourists and the offered activities can be done by foot, by bicycle, by scooters, skating, in the evening or in the daytime, as a serious city walk or with a story as red thread, in a humoristic way, a theatre way, special walk for kids, as a search or hunting walk, barhopping, religious walks, etc. The entrepreneur develops the offer, acquire clients and executes the tour.

The regulated countries have a national board of tourism which supervises the offers by tourist organizations for guiding tourists. Organisations and guides are member of a association or federation of tour guides. The education of these guides often is part of the educational program at a university, is checked by the tourist board, must answer certain rules and levels (language, university) and even the number of official guides is managed. Entrepreneurship in this sector is not free and you need a license, registration, etc.

The quality of guiding in the regulated countries is checked and supervised by official organizations, in the non-regulated countries entrepreneurs and cultural historic organisations have to maintain their quality by themselves. Many organizations in the non-regulated countries train their guides, have developed additional training and refreshing courses, work visits, etc. For individuals and small groups it is difficult to maintain their level of quality, safety and their content.

The developed and presented book 'City Guide Training on local level' (isbn 978-90-812549-1-5) is a guide for cultural historic organisations to establish professional training for local city guides. Partners have executed training programs, have improved their pilot programs and still offer their program to persons aiming to become city guide. During the project partners have educated over 100 persons as local city guide and improved (or developed) their training program. The University of Veliko Tarnovo in Bulgaria has trained local guides and presented a local guide in Bulgarian language. Cooperation with regional or national organizations as for example in the UK with the organization that trains guides for their Green Badge or with the national organization of tourist information centres (in NL) has been established.

## **Seminar**

Over 65 persons have attended the international seminar entitled "Cityguiding in an experience economy". This seminar was the final activity in frame of the project. At the end of this seminar 29 participants have presented their evaluation form. The evaluation was short and to the point and while presenting your completed form you received a box with information materials, presentations on a memory stick and the developed book.

The participants were very satisfied with the invitation, the reception by the students, the presentations about Imagineering and the practice presented by mr. Maggs and mr. Fowler and the exercised in the afternoon.

In general the participants were satisfied with the organisation, the program and the overall activities.

Most participants were surprised by the offered practice: theatre walk, GPS-walks, iPod tours, bicycle guiding and scooter guiding. Participants could give their preferences and 76% did this. Imagineering, citymarketing, the offered practice, storytelling and the difference between regulated and non-regulated countries were for many participants a real disclosure. Meeting colleagues, discussions about developments and application of ICT in Cityguiding and the fact that many problems of guiding are the same all over the world were remarks made by the participants. (refer to the graphic).

## **Rules and regulations**

During the project partners in the regulated countries had difficulties to develop and to offer training because this was outside the official procedures. Innovative organisations that have indicated a need for new developments and a need for trained guides for special objects or local characteristics had to develop new ways to answer these needs. It was emphasised that tourist business needs flexibility, innovations, entrepreneurship but on the other hand also quality control, safety and professionalism. Guides have to know how to act in case of accidents, etc.

## **Conclusions**

The production of a guide that supports cultural historic organisations in Europe to organise education and training of local city guides helps to fulfil a certain need.

In the project team were a lot of discussions about the regulations in the regulated countries and the feeling of limitations of developments, innovations and entrepreneurship. It was emphasised that there is a difference between the small touristy centres with most regional or national visitors and the very big and ancient centres as Rome, Athens, etc. with tour guides being employed by organisations and having a full time job.

The small centres need possibilities to present their cultural historic characteristics, their local colour, they have also the right to be proud at their culture and history. This project has stimulated these developments and emphasised this need.

A local license can demand rules for quality control and rules for safety but also give space for entrepreneurship, innovation and application of modern technologies.

City Guides - evaluation

Evaluation forms

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	no answer	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	no answer
1 Invitation	19	6	4	0	0	0	66%	21%	14%	0%	0%	0%
2 Reception	18	10	0	1	0	0	62%	34%	0%	3%	0%	0%
3 Project information	14	14	1	0	0	0	48%	48%	3%	0%	0%	0%
Practical experience from guides												
4 UK	18	9	1	0	1	1	62%	31%	3%	0%	0%	3%
5 Organisation of associations	10	5	8	4	1	1	34%	17%	28%	14%	3%	3%
6 Imaginering	23	5	1	0	0	0	75%	17%	3%	0%	0%	0%
7 Practice of Imaginering	14	11	2	2	0	0	48%	38%	7%	7%	0%	0%
8 Citymarketing	8	8	10	2	1	1	28%	28%	34%	7%	0%	3%
9 Organisation seminar	18	11	0	0	0	0	62%	38%	0%	0%	0%	0%
10 Satisfied with themes	15	10	4	0	0	0	52%	34%	14%	0%	0%	0%
11 Overall rating	14	14	1	0	0	0	48%	48%	3%	0%	0%	0%
12 Most interesting	22	0	0	0	0	7	76%	0%	0%	0%	0%	24%

