



## Newsletter no. 2

### **BenchTour Benchlearning in the tourism sector**

#### **A project sponsored by means of the European Union**

BenchTour is a Leonardo da Vinci – Transfer of Innovation project having as main goal to improve the learning processes in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) based on motivation, participation, learning and change processes, using an effective method (called Bench-Effect), that was tested before in other sectors, with very good results. Now this method is applied within BenchTour Project in the tourism sector.

After 10 months of implementation (September 2009 - June 2010), the project made some important steps towards its goals, and all the 8 partners from 5 countries have a good cooperation in order to reach the best results of their work.

An analysis of the state of the art in tourism sector has been already done in Germany, Poland, Italy and Romania to find which the strengths of the tourism in each area are and what sectors from tourism needs more focus.

Based on the results of the transnational report, the project partners decided to approach the common areas **nature and culture**, and within these areas the sectors *accommodation and gastronomy*. Within the accommodation sector, the partnership aims to involve accommodation providers that offer also additional services like bike renting, hiking, cultural programs, living on the farm, etc. For these sectors more specific benchmarks or indicators will be evaluated.

#### ***Collecting information and setting up bench-marks***

Since Italy, especially Tuscany area is a good practice example (successful in the tourist sector), the Italian partner (Pixel) together with the Spanish partner (Florida Centre de Formacio) defined suitable bench-marks, after a study was carry out on questionnaire basis and interviews in Tuscany area. Additional best practices from companies in Tuscany were collected. The bench-marks defined consists in measurable success factors, such as marketing, matter of networking, willingness to improve skills and knowledge in management, customer satisfaction, but also quantitative bench-marks (turnover, occupancy etc.) .

Bench-marks identified will be used by the German, Polish and Romanian enterprises to do a self-check.

#### ***Future steps***

***SMEs from Germany, Poland and Romania will have the chance to take part in the bench-effect method!***



The companies will attend training programmes, seminars, workshops, tutoring, designed according to the company's needs. Also the trainings can be provided individually or within a group.

All the details will be presented individually or during a short time workshop. SMEs participation will be expressed in a letter of commitment, and then they will be included in a survey, in which the analysis and interpretation will be based on the Tuscany benchmarks. Weak and strong performance marks are basic indicators for a SWOT analysis that will be done with the SMEs. The SWOT analysis itself is then the base for an individual training programme to improve the SME's performance.

Based on the internal comparison to the tourist bench marks, companies will receive tailor-made training. The companies will be involved in the whole process for at least one year, in different phases such as:

- Training
- Reflexion (assisted by a tutor)
- Exchange of experience with participants of other countries

During the training the participants will set themselves realistic goals and deadlines for their companies. By consciously working on the goals, by planning to practice and implement learned knowledge and by reflecting upon achievements, success or failures, the bench-effect method becomes in fact a continuous learning process that is implemented in the work place.

At this stage all the partners are preparing the selection of the SMEs to participate in the process of learning to improve performances.

More details about the project, stages and future activities can be found at the following address: [www.benchtour.eu](http://www.benchtour.eu). On the web site you have the possibility find more about the project and to download interesting materials.

We would like to inform you in our newsletter about the progress of BenchTour on a regular basis. It will be also possible to take part on a training set up by the BenchTour project.

If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Best regards,  
Your team of BenchTour

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