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| **T/Operators/SPP-2019** | **1. Project Category/Code:** |
| **Tour operators chain and connectivity** | **2. Project Title** |
| **Paragraph-33 E. Sector: Tourism, Work Programme 2022** (ECO Secretariat - Tehran, January 17-26, 2022) | **3. Inclusion in ECO Project List: date of approval of ECO Work Program by RPC**  |
| Main goal was to establish a network among major tour operators in ECO region for providing ECO Tourism Package that would be so useful for increasing number of tourists and tourism revenues.  | **3. Project Objectives** |
| N.A.  | **4. Project Budget (US$)** |
| **-** | **5. Project Funding Source** |
| **ECO Secretariat** | **6. Project Coordinator** |
| **-** | **7.International/Regional Partner** |
| **18 months**  | **8. Duration of Project**  |
| **2022** | **9. Project Starting Time** |
| **Completed**  | **10. Project Progress**  |
| **11.** **Results of the Project****Completion of implementation of Project’s Outputs**The First Forum of the ECO Heads of Tourism Associations, Unions and other Tourism Stakeholders held on 20 June 2022 agreed to set up a Tour Operator Network among ECO Member States as an effective outcome, and requested that nominations of interested tour operators be submitted to the Secretariat to facilitate the establishment of the network. After receiving nominations from Member States, a network of tour operators was established, this now has over 350 participants. The first Meeting of the ECO Tour Operators Network was held virtually on 22 November 2022. In addition, a Facebook group page and WhatsApp group have been set up in order to facilitate the communication between members of the network. So far in 2023, three meetings of ECO Tour Operators Network have been organized on 12 April 2023, 29 May 2023, and 2 July 2023. ECO Tour Operators’ Network ensures an efficient exchange of data and knowledge sharing between the members and provides a discussion platform for the development of joint tourism packages in different areas. Tour operators from different countries are now able to share information about their cities and provinces which have numerous tourist attractions, infrastructures and facilities in the fields of Cultural/Historical, Scientific, Industrial/Business, Nature-Based, Religious, Health and Mass Tourism. Tour operators as representatives of the private sector, now also have the opportunity to cooperate in promoting regional tourism and to establish the relevant contacts from other countries to further strengthen the regional tourism industry. Various activities such as B2B meetings that could bring the participants of the network psychically together to cooperate for joint efforts like combined tour packages are being considered well as the organization of an ECO Tour Operators Forum as the future steps in the context of the project. |
| **12. Date of Completion:** 22 November 2022 |
| **13. Lessons learnt from Project:** 1. The level of awareness among tour operators working in different Member States about ECO and regional tourism cooperation is at a low level.
2. With such projects, different contributions could be made to regional works and efforts in the field of tourism, and cooperation of businesses can be established by creating specific sub-groups for tourism sub-sectors; for example, health tourism operators group.
3. In terms of knowledge and experience sharing, it is important to make this network permanent and sustainable and expand the network with new business partners in different countries.
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