Small Destinations and experiential tourism EVENT REPORT













SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

The seminar was the first seminar on **Sustainable Tourism** – the current theme of the **SERN Thematic Wall (STW)**. The purpose of the STW is to deepen the engagement of network members in topics crucial to the network's priorities. The focus on **Sustainable Tourism** during spring of 2025 seeks to promote SERN's work on **Green and sustainable communities.** This is done by examining how local actors can **reap the economic and social benefits of tourism**, while ensuring tourism does not interrupt social and ecological systems.

During this live webinar, small destinations and experiential tourism were discussed: first in four presentations, then through a wider discussion. As tourists demand more authenticity, experiential tourism offers meaningful engagement with local cultures. Small destinations, which might not have large tourist attractions, can offer experiences close to the local community, enabling immersive experiences.



More information at: sern.eu



SERN Speakers



JOHAN CAVALLINI Svensk **Destinations** utveckling

Opportunities and challenges for small destinations in relation to the trends of experiential tourism

Johan discussed changing trends micro-destinations become tourism. as more accessible, and tourists crave more authentic experiences. This demand small destinations are able to fulfill, however, a careful strategy are needed as to not overwhelm the local community. Johan suggested working with GAP-analysis, and making sure to engage local people and businesses through workshops and focus Only with community, groups. competitiveness be ensured.



as become Increasingly evident. Defined as smaller, lesser-known location with distinct tourist appeal, micro destinations offer visitors unique cultural, atural, and historical attractions that often contrast with mainstream tourism

sustaining local experiential tourism. However, they are also vuln tourism's negative impacts, as limited resources and knowledge can hinde efforts to create systainable tourism.









Wine as a tool for sustainable development

natural landscape of the area.

engaging local wine producers, Bertinoro has sought to develop tourism in a way

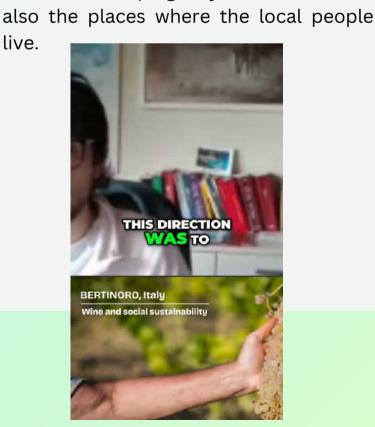
which considers the unique area. A key aspect has been to foster local cohesion,

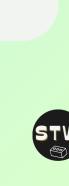
and not developing only tourist areas but

Serena and Federico presented how the municipality of Bertinoro has worked with wine, to build sustainable practices for tourism. Wine is an important part of local culture in the village, which has roots back to medieval times. The growing of wine also reflects the unique

SERENA ANTINORI & **FEDERICO GAGGI** Municipality of Bertinoro

live.







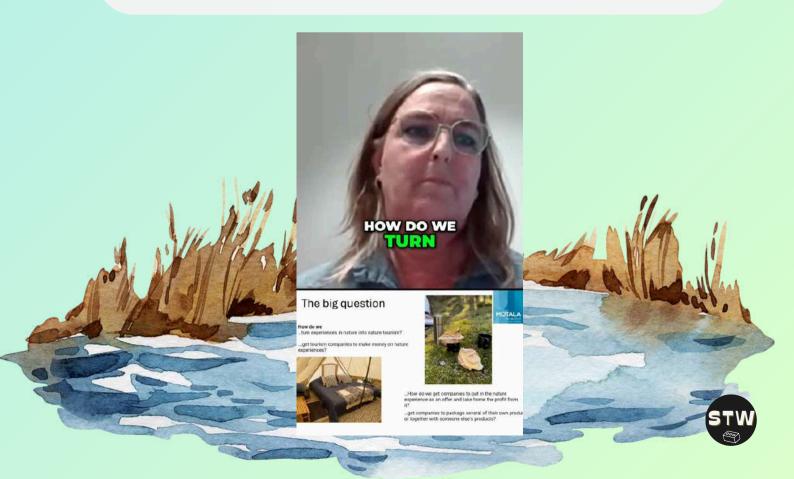


PIA AXELSSON Motala Municipality



Sustainable Tourism linked to our Nature

Pia discussed the work the Swedish municipality of Motala has done to promote sustainable tourism in their area. Motala offers through its beautiful lake-covered landscape, unique opportunity outdoor tourism, which is important for the municipality and local businesses to take advantage of. Moreover, Pia highlighted how the municipality has worked with making local inhabitants feel part of large events hosted in the municipality, but also how the Motala works with other municipalities: seeing each other not as competitors but as complements to each other.







SONIA GERONIMO GAL L'Altra Romagna



Experiential tourism and place marketing: The Romagna Autentica Model

Sonia presented how GAL L'Altra Romagna has worked with promoting tourism in the eight inner mountain valleys of the Emilia-Romagna region. Recognizing that each valley has its own unique customs, culture, and profile of experiences, the organization embarked on a rigorous process to ensure the best possible framework for promoting tourism. This was done through:

- 1) mapping the **types of experiences** available,
- 2) promote through institutional channels,
- 3) using typical product marketing and
- 4) **project promotion** and a communication campaign.









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In the final part of the seminar, different aspects from the talks were brough up and discussed. Participants recognized how difficult it can be to engage the local community in tourism endeavors, making local inhabitants feel part of events and owners of investments made. Trying to involve locals, also by targeting part of the experience to them, as well as trying to keep locals informed were highlighted. It was also found important to take a bottom-up approach to planning.

The challenges of larger scale cooperation were also brought up. Is there a risk of loosing local identity, when working together to promote a larger area? The benefits of larger collaborations were highlighted: it makes it possible to make long-term strategic choices, benefiting the community for years to come. A challenge for smaller municipalities can however be the resources needed to build collaborations, as in smaller municipalities one office will often be managing everything, making it hard to find time and staff enough to realise the visions and ambitions in the area.







Thank you to all speakers!

NEXT STW EVENT:

Attracting and retaining talents

1st of April 14.30-16.30 CET Live webinar



