

COMPETITIVENESS STRATEGY

Roadmap for the Tourism Industry in Splitsko-Dalmatinska County, 2003-2006



DEVELOPED BY
The Croatia Tourism Cluster

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Preface

Written at the end of 2002 and the beginning of 2003, this roadmap supports efforts by the Ministry of Tourism, and regional cluster representatives to set the industry on a competitive trajectory. This strategic endeavor marks a new spirit of cooperation in the industry. The report authors held in-depth discussions with industry stakeholders, conducted workshops, visited tourist destinations, hotels, and related businesses, and studied the benchmarks set by similar industries in other countries. Stakeholders from every link in the value chain (hoteliers, tour operators, restaurants, concessionaires, transport operators, shopkeepers, museums), academia, key ministries and departments, and allied and supporting industries have devoted their time and expertise to pursuing a common goal—a competitive tourism industry focused on strategic growth and value addition.

The ideas, targets and strategies proposed in this roadmap are wholly those of the cluster and were developed with the guidance and support of tourism experts including Dr. Crist Inman and Paulius Kulikauskas. The heads of the working groups, listed below with the working group each led, gave their time and organized fellow participants to focus on particular issues:

<i>Working Group Head</i>	<i>Topic</i>
Julije Skelin	Marketing and branding
Vedran Pražan	Product development
Srđan Mladinić and Stanko Geić Ph.D.	Human resources
Goran Kovačević	Infrastructure
Božo Sinčić	Legal and regulatory environment

The cluster would also like to acknowledge the contributions of all who provided information or ideas and who participated in the development of this report—particularly the significant efforts of Tomislav Vintar, the cluster coordinator.

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Dalmatian Tourism and Development Issues

The many problems plaguing tourism in Croatia are concentrated on the Dalmatian coast and its islands. Low-value mass tourism flourishes on the Dalmatian coast, depleting resources and driving historic towns to gentrification. During the high season the Dalmatian islands suffer surges of visitors. When the season is over it is apparent that the communities are not thriving, that they suffer a poor quality of life characterized by isolation and rudimentary services. Dalmatian businesses in particular cannot attract high-spending customers because they are not service-minded. Therefore, Dalmatia needs to make a concerted effort to convert its tourism offerings into the high-quality, diverse products that can compete on the global market.

Strategic Objectives

These strategic objectives for Dalmatia complement and supplement the goals of the National Strategy:

1. Develop an international image for Dalmatia as a high-quality tourism destination by emphasizing the region's spectacular pristine nature and living heritage, and the authenticity of the visitor's experience.
2. Instill a service-minded and creative attitude toward tourism by encouraging lifelong learning among entrepreneurs, staff, officers, and communities.
3. Improve intermodal transport infrastructure for travel within Dalmatia and to other parts of the country.
4. Increase transparency, endorse competition, rationalize privatization, and remove administrative barriers for small and medium-sized tourism businesses and small and medium-sized businesses offering services related to tourism.
5. Reposition lodging capacities from houses for rent into family hotels and pensions

Regional Initiatives

These regional initiatives emphasize Dalmatia's tourism development by focusing and complementing Croatian national initiatives. They are planned for a three-year period, with an interim evaluation at the end of that period. Detailed timelines for each initiative are followed by a summary timeline for the Dalmatia roadmap.

1. DEVELOP DALMATIAN BRAND AND QUALITY PRODUCTS

This initiative aims for a framework and network for development of tourism products based on cultural tradition, cultural heritage sites, nautical tourism, adventure tourism, and integrations of traditional “domace” food and agricultural produce. Other projects for this initiative could include

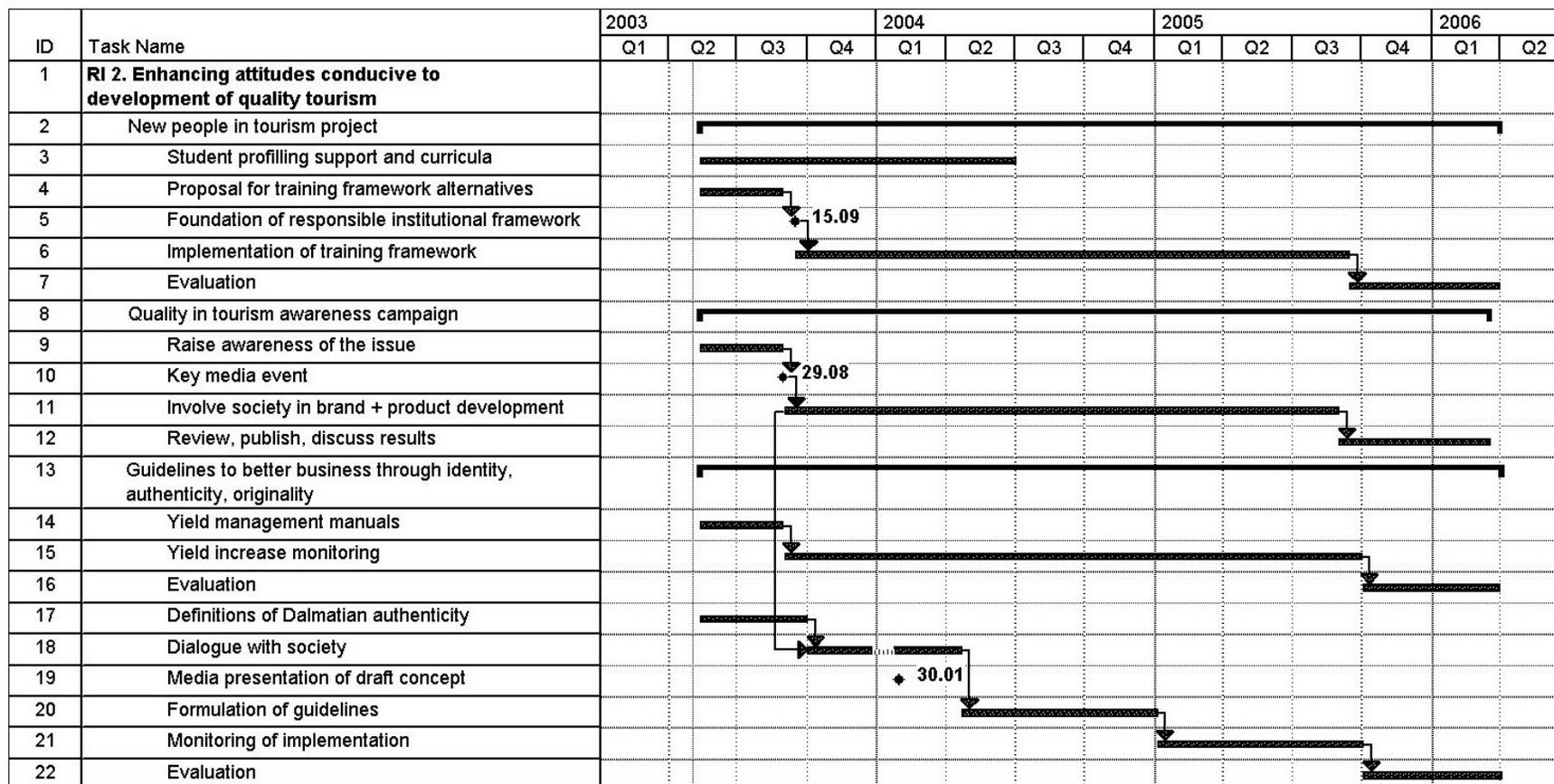
- A guide to treasures of ancient civilizations in Dalmatia,
- An architectural redesign study,
- Accreditation of sailing schools, and

Guidelines for tourism signage.

ID	Task Name	2003				2004				2005				2006		
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3
1	RI 1. Develop Dalmatian brand and quality products															
2	Association of Small Family Hotels for Authentic Experience (Cross-regional Project)															
3	Istria															
4	Dalmatia															
5	Congress of SOHO															
6	other regions															
7	Evaluation															
8	Certificate of Authentic Tourism (Experience)															
9	Development of proposal															
10	Implementation															
11	Launching event															
12	Monitoring															
13	Evaluation															
14	Guidelines for products															
15	Book on traditional Dalmatian food															
16	Manual of authentic Dalmatian souvenirs															
17	Monitoring of use															
18	Evaluation															

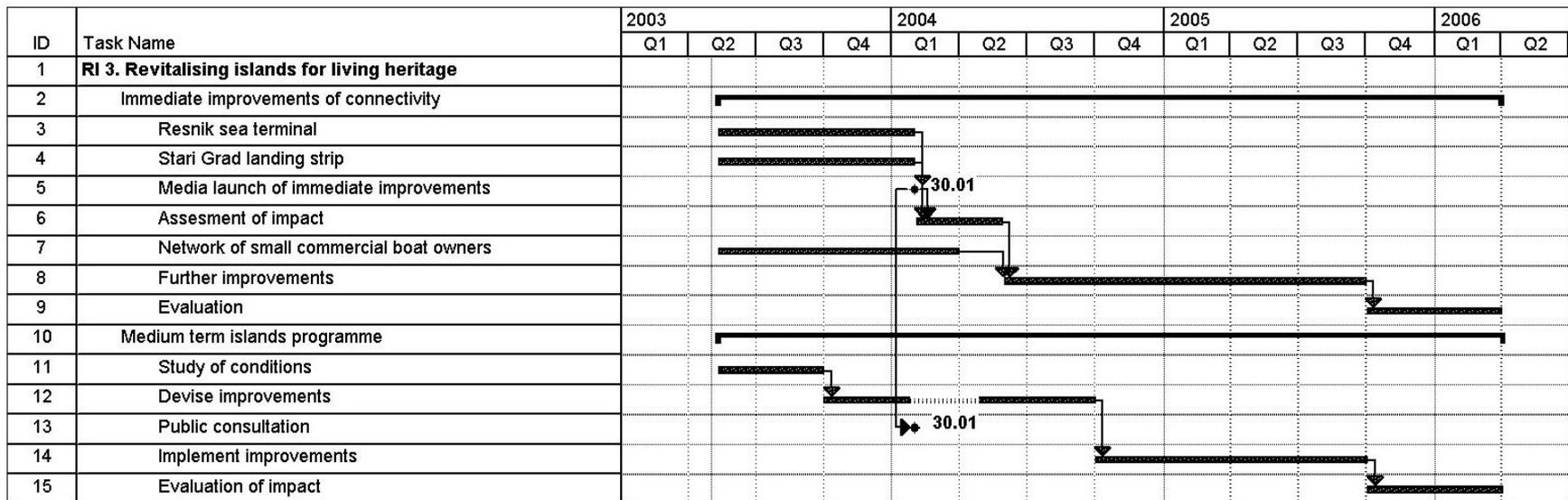
2. ENHANCE ATTITUDES CONDUCTIVE TO DEVELOPMENT OF QUALITY TOURISM

This initiative aims to offset the legacy of totalitarian thinking, enhance the traditional Dalmatian mindset about the services and hospitality industry, instill new attitudes needed for quality tourism services, and promote new people in the industry. Other projects for this initiative could include accreditation of individual members of the tourism and hospitality industry.



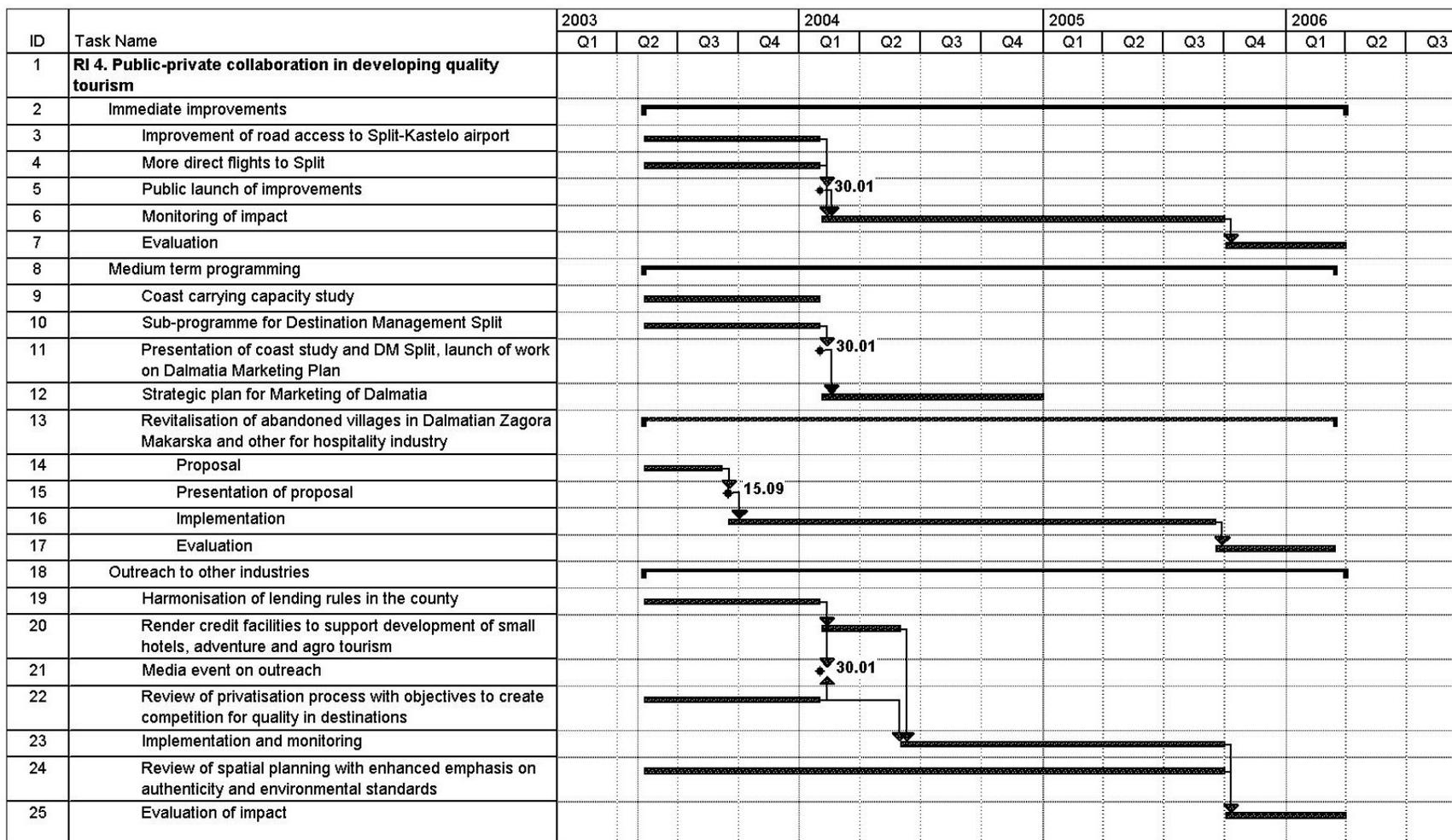
3. REVITALIZE ISLANDS FOR LIVING HERITAGE

This initiative aims to revitalize island communities and maximize the benefits of tourism to those communities. It aims to do this by improving transport and service infrastructure and interisland connectivity; counterbalancing the effect of tourism seasonality; developing living heritage in historic settlements; elevating the quality of integrated tourism products by building on cultural heritage, architecture, archaeology, agricultural produce and cultural landscapes; and developing competing and competitive hospitality industries in single destinations. Other projects for this initiative could include presenting Faros archaeology in Stare Grad and a full-year job program to offset the impact of seasonality.



4. PUBLIC-PRIVATE COLLABORATION IN DEVELOPING QUALITY TOURISM

This initiative aims to enhance and coordinate public-private collaboration for quality tourism and consider developing local clusters of destinations (for example, an Istria master plan). Other projects could include an inventory of authentic and original attractions (including food and wine) and a strategy for integrating culture, nature, adventure, and epicurean tourism.



Implementation of a Tourism Roadmap in Splitsko-Dalmatinska County

The Strategy for Tourism in Croatia is to increase the country's economic benefits from tourism while building on conservation and sustainable development. This regional roadmap is designed to complement the national objectives and initiatives and chart a course for action. It is hoped that other regions and localities will take up the challenge and develop implementation roadmaps of their own that can be integrated into the national strategy and complement the efforts of the other destinations in Croatia.

The projects identified in the roadmaps will independently touch on common national and regional issues, uniting aspects of those as appropriate. They will be undertaken by a variety of groupings including, individual businesses, private partnerships or joint ventures, local and national government, and public-private partnerships.

The possibilities for action abound. It is now in the hands of the stakeholders in Splitsko-Dalmatinska County to take responsibility, determine how best to implement the roadmap and advocate for coordination and cooperation nationally and inter-regionally.