

visit.brussels days 2022

Day 2 : 29.09.2022

Session: visit.brussels welcomes the city of Bordeaux, awarded European Capital of Smart Tourism 2022

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Summary

Background :

Bordeaux tourisme has worked on the development and implementation of a new tourism strategy over the last years. In the city and the metropolitan area new facilities appeared (congress center, cycling paths) and the consultation and governance process on tourism policy has been reshaped. The session focuses on the experience of Bordeaux and the activities that led to obtain the title of the European Capital of Smart Tourism 2022.



Introduction :

The city of Bordeaux has embraced change in tourism from different perspectives in recent years. Studies were made on the city's and region perception, potential areas of development and territorial marketing needs. During the pandemic the political majority also changed after the elections, adjusting some of the priorities, but keeping the commitment for evolution. Some challenges have not been addressed yet, but is work in progress.

Sustainability :

Bordeaux has initiated its way towards integrating different international initiatives based on evidence.

Following an audit the tourism office became certified ISO20121 (norm for Sustainable events). Next, taking as base business tourism, it joined the GDS-Index (Global Destination Sustainability Movement). In 2021 it ranked 9th, with 78%.

For the tourism office it was important to meet the different guidelines and also set up a process that streamlines activities and motivates all the organisation towards the required goals.

Among further activities, a more eco-responsible website was built, where also a Corporate Social Responsibility filter was added, and the data centre had to become energy efficient. A monitoring is also made of the social media in terms of consumption. The CO2 monitoring and efficiency is measured by a local agency (My Destination).

Activities at local level and with residents:

Since 2017 a dedicated web portal - "Un air de Bordeaux" – has been put in place, as well as a webzine for local tourism.

New activities have been tested in the whole metropolitan area with Vacances and familles, as well as those related to wine tourism.

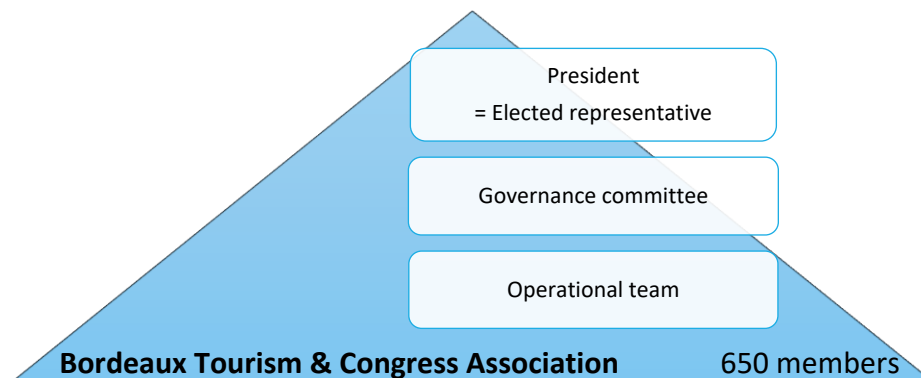
The pandemic required to enhance the activities towards a public close to the destination. To support tourist guides the initiative "Bordeaux sends you on a tour" (Bordeaux vous envoie balader) offered a 50% discount for guided tours (existing and new ones) for a week, in order to capture the local clientele.

Governance:

Prior to starting the work on the transformation of the destination offer, studies were made with TCI Research on how do residents feel about tourism and whether they feel involved in shaping the activities. While tourism had a positive perception, only 16% of them thought they were involved. (A factor that also need to be taken into account to involve residents, is that in France it is estimated that 40% of visitors are friends and family, who show the destination).

Based on the analysis results, stakeholders were brought together and a process was put in motion, as well as a structure (Agora Bordeaux). Various online workshops were held, from which 780 ideas came out. Those ideas were restructured according to targets / segments / mix of people (business, residents, etc.) into 55 topics, followed by another series of workshops, which concluded in 32 targeted actions.

The work continues within Agora Bordeaux, which monitors the actions implementation within the current 5 year strategy and works towards a new pluriannual strategy.



New opportunities and way forward:

The establishment of High speed train line (TGV) between Paris and Bordeaux has been a great added value in bringing tourists to the city. It has also brought new residents, which also need to be taken into account when shaping urban policies.

While 60% of visitors of Bordeaux are from France, emphasis is also put on foreign markets. In Europe mainly Spain and Belgium, while on other continents more mature markets (Canada, USA, Japan, Australia).

Business tourism benefits from a renewed infrastructure, Palais de la Bourse, and is strongly promoted thanks to the work with competitiveness clusters and local (business) associations. Local companies are also mainly involved in congresses thanks to the clusters and schools. Moreover, specific trainings are given on MICE activities by the tourism office.

Wine tourism is a key attraction for the whole region, and the city also organises in June its Wine Days. An event both addressed to local residents, as well as visitors. A first attempt to combine both audiences in a steered manner during it was done in June 2022. While the results have been limited, the initiative shall continue with a revised format.

The positive results coming out from the Greeters network encourage to foster the work at local level. The cycling paths network is under development and the strategy for cycling tourism is being reviewed.

The coming years will continue to be focused on sustainability across all levels, economic development, and strengthening local and business tourism.

Thanks to the title of European Smart Tourism Capital, obtained through all the work explained at the session, Bordeaux also benefits from a marketing budget and opportunity to showcase its experience towards other destinations.