



The Cyprus Tourism Organization (CTO) announces a National Competition for the selection of the Best Destination on the theme: "Tourism and Protected Areas" within the framework of the European Project "European Destinations of Excellence-EDEN"

The Cyprus Tourism Organisation (CTO), announces a National Competition for the selection of the Best Tourism Destination on "**Tourism and the Protected Areas**".

The Cyprus Competition is a result of CTO's initiative to participate in the European Programme "European Destinations of Excellence - EDEN", which is co-financed by the European Commission - Tourism Unit. A total of 22 countries will participate in the programme and each one will select their own winning destination.

The aim of this initiative is to enhance visibility of European tourism destinations particularly **protected areas** that are part of the "NATURA 2000 Network" as sustainable tourist product revolving around the environment axis. The project endeavors to bring out the values, the diversity, and the common characteristics of European tourism destinations where economic development is achieved in a way to ensure social, cultural and environmental sustainability.

The candidate destinations are protected areas and surrounding regions that are part of the "NATURA 2000 Network". The "NATURA 2000" is a coherent EU-wide ecological network of protected areas that includes zones of the Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for birds, and Sites of Community Interest (SCI) for natural habitat. It aims to protect biodiversity and conserve the natural habitat and the wild flora and fauna of these areas.

CTO encourages interested applicants to submit their candidatures by filling out an application form. Application forms and relevant information on eligibility criteria and assistance for preparing the application package are provided free of charge by the EDEN Helpdesk, established exclusively for the Competition, by calling 99877092, 99491668, 22447822 and by writing to the following email address: info@sociallab.com.

The proposals should be submitted at the CTO Offices, 19 Lemesos Avenue, Nicosia, no later than Tuesday 2nd June 2009, 12 noon.

In order to better inform candidate destinations on the EDEN project and the Cyprus Competition "*European Destinations of Excellence - EDEN*": "*Tourism and the Protected Areas*" CTO has organised an Information Seminar at its Educational Centre in Nicosia, on Friday 22nd May 2009.

The winning destination will be included in the selection team of the European Destinations of Excellence - EDEN and will be promoted at the European level by the European Commission, Tourism Unit as well as CTO. In addition, it will be promoted at the European Tourism Forum 2009. Finally, all eligible destinations will be promoted in the EDEN website.

For further information about the EDEN Programme, please contact:



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