

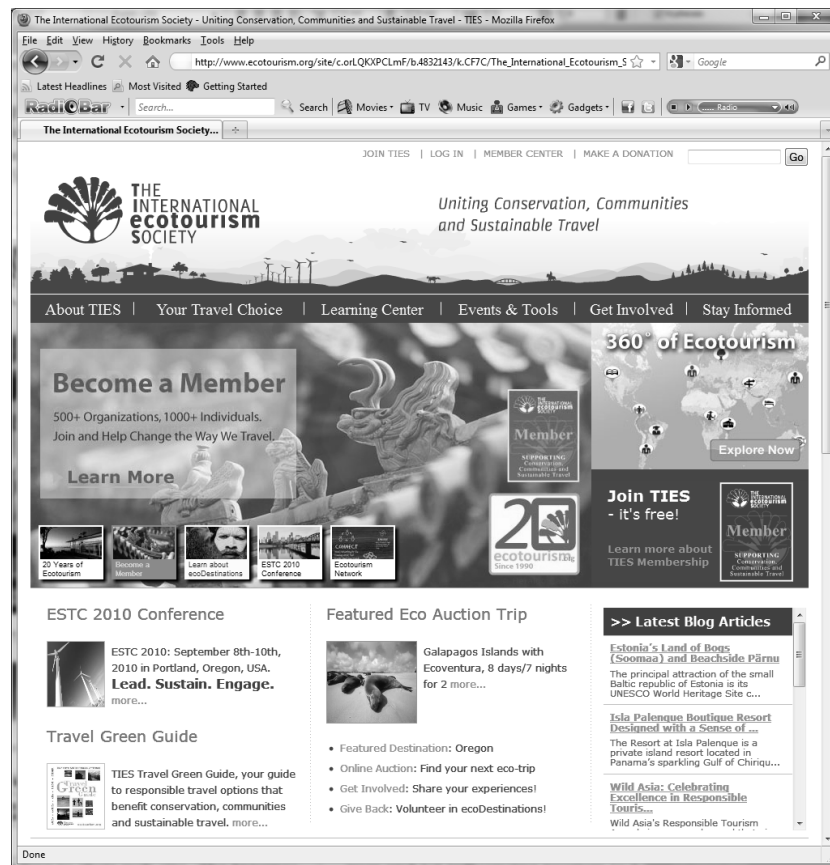
# internet site review

<http://www.ecotourism.org>

## The International Ecotourism Society

Ecotourism is currently one of the fastest growing market segments within the tourism industry and has subsequently attracted great attention in the academic community engaged in tourism research. Therefore, in this issue of *Journal of Tourism* a web site of The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) will be presented.

According to TIES, ecotourism development could empower local communities around the world to fight against poverty and to achieve sustainable development. TIES strives to accomplish these goals by: (a) creating an international network of individuals, institutions and tourism industry which are interested in ecotourism develop-



According to their web site, The International Ecotourism Society is the world's oldest and largest international ecotourism society and its primary goal is to be global source of knowledge and advocacy uniting communities, conservation and sustainable travel. The mission of TIES is promotion of travel modalities that would be in function of environmental protection and improvement of well-being of local communities.

ment, (b) educating tourist and tourism professionals regarding the ecotourism issues and (c) influencing tourism industry, public institutions and donors to integrate the principles of ecotourism in their operations and policies.

On the home page of the TIES web site, visitors can find most recent information and updates about different issues concer-

ning ecotourism. Home page features most recent news concerning ecotourism conferences, ecotourism destinations, worldwide ecotourism networks, hyperlinks to different blog articles that are covering ecotourism topics, opportunity for visitors to become a TIES member, to donate money and to get involved in ecotourism activities etc. Besides its home page, TIES web site is comprised out of six different sections named "About TIES", "Your Travel Choice", "Learning Center", "Events & Tools", "Get Involved" and "Stay Informed".

On the web section named "About TIES" visitor can find out more about TIES organization itself. On this part of the web site the mission and vision of the TIES are presented as well as people that are employed by TIES, TIES board of directors, their projects and partnerships. Visitors can also find out more about the award that TIES organization is awarding every year to different individuals for their achievements in the field of ecotourism development. The winner of TIES "Lifetime Achievement Award" for 2008 is Chandra de Silva, the founder of the Ranweli Holiday Village in Sri Lanka. Chandra de Silva is pioneering entrepreneur and inspirational leader whose dedication to sustainable community development has touched numerous lives in Sri Lanka and beyond.

Section of the TIES web site named "Your Travel Choice" is intended for visitors that would like to know more about ecotourism travel possibilities and that are planning trips to ecotourism destinations. This section of the web site features very informative interactive map named "Ecotourism Explorer", it provides different tips for travelers on how to make their travel environmental friendly, it provides online access to a tourist guidebook named "Travel Green Guide", it provides list of ecotourism destinations, access to a forum about eco traveling and other content relevant for this field. The third section of TIES web site named "Learning Center" provides access to a different learning resources such as handbooks, eco studies, research papers, ecotourism eBooks which are mostly accessible and downloadable free of charge. Very in-

teresting part of this web site section is part named "Multimedia Room" which provides e-learning opportunities for everyone by providing free access to TIES workshop videos, participation on TIES webinars and access to TIES YouTube channel which features latest ecotourism trends. Videos from TIES workshops and participation on webinars is allowed only to registered members.

The fourth section of the TIES web site is called "Events & Tools" and is dedicated to networking between ecotourism professionals and businesses. This part of the TIES web site presents information about marketing opportunities, conferences and events, it provides B2B resources etc.

Section of the TIES web site named "Get Involved" encourages visitors to get involved and become more active in the field of ecotourism. Here visitors can find out more about different levels of and benefits of TIES membership, about volunteer opportunities, about money donation to support ecotourism etc.

The last section of the TIES web site, called "Stay Informed" provides latest news from the field of ecotourism, links to TIES blog and press room, possibility to sign-up for a free electronic newsletter and access to a calendar of event which can be searched by region and on which every visitor can submit its own event.

In technical terms, TIES web site is very sophisticated. The web site loads very quickly, the design is clean and attractive, the navigation is, thanks to breadcrumbs, very simple, intuitive and user oriented which makes this web site very pleasant for browsing. TIES web site also features numerous web 2.0 functionalities, such as Google maps mashup, Google calendar, YouTube channel etc., which makes this web site very interactive and encourages visitors to come back and revisit. Finally, it can be concluded that TIES web site is a very sophisticated, interesting and informative and that is a very good web resource for anyone interested in finding more about ecotourism.

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