

UNSPOILED BEACHES? DON'T LET DROWNING SPOIL THEM!

Drowning Prevention & Rescue 2013 Conference
NPO Safe Coastal Tourism
25/4/2013
Dublin

What do we know?



INTERNATIONAL LIFE SAVING FEDERATION

Per year 400,000 tourists drown in the sea,
worldwide,
because of unawareness or underestimation
of the dangers of the sea.

On top of the ten per cent drowning victims we also have to take into consideration a number of drowning related victims: firstly those who were saved and resuscitated too late and who suffer bleeding brain or other damages. Secondly those victims of diving or surfing accidents who suffer from decompression, paraplegia/quadriplegia, etc. and finally those victims of accidents during professional activity: they suffer from a variety of problems. These water related victims should not be forgotten.

We estimate that half of the real drowning accidents take place in the sea, which means that about 800,000 people die every year by drowning in the sea. Most often they drown during recreational activities, but also because of accidents while boating, surfing, diving or during professional activities. The other 400,000 drown in all kinds of inland artificial or natural waters. Less accidents happen in swimming pools because of more safety measures.

About 400,000 people of the aforementioned 800,000 people who drown in the sea, drown because they don't know or underestimate the dangers of the sea. The others drown because of accidents while boating, diving, surfing, fishing, or because of fauna/flora (sharks), suicide, alcohol abuse, etc. Most of them are inland tourists. We assume that 2 % of 400,000 people, are foreign tourists, which means that = worldwide = one foreign tourist per hour is dying by drowning in the sea.

Harald Verwecke
Secretary General

International Life Saving is a member of the General Association of International Sports Federations (GAISF) and the International Olympic Committee (IOC). International Life Saving is registered by the Netherlands Olympic Committee (NOC), the Netherlands Royal Coast and Port Guard (Rijkswaterstaat) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

One of those victims in 2011 was BAVO.



Bart, brother of Bavo, who was with Bavo, survived the tragedy.

He can testify to what happened.

“We didn’t have the slightest idea of this kind of danger.”

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- ▶ How could this happen?
- ▶ Is it bad luck? Wrong timing? Wrong place?
- ▶ Have they been reckless?

Our search for answers led to:

Nobody or nothing spoke against their plan to have a nice little swim in that big ocean.

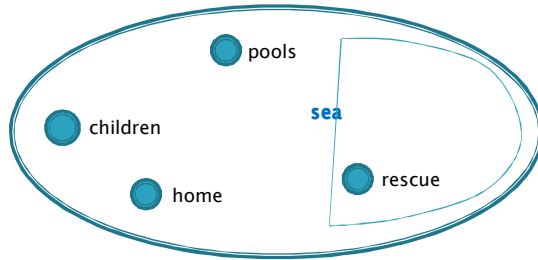
HOW IS THAT POSSIBLE?

We looked for answers in the context of South Africa and Flanders.

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HOW IS THAT POSSIBLE?

Prevention of drowning



A LOT OF EFFORTS !>
Lifesaving South Africa, NSRI,
Swimming South Africa

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HOW IS THAT POSSIBLE?

Touristic stakeholders
(public and private) provide



A LOT OF EFFORTS!

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HOW IS THAT POSSIBLE?

Touristic stakeholders
(public and private) provide

Touristic stakeholders (UNWTO):

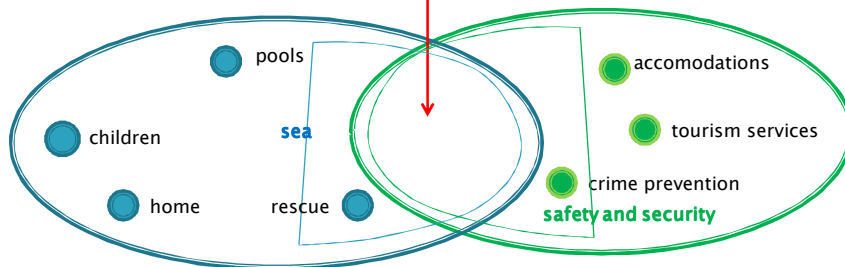
- National governments;
- Local governments with specific competence in tourism matters;
- Tourism establishments and tourism enterprises, including their associations;
- Tourism employees;
- Tourism education and training centers;
- Local populations and host communities at tourism destinations through their representatives;
- ...

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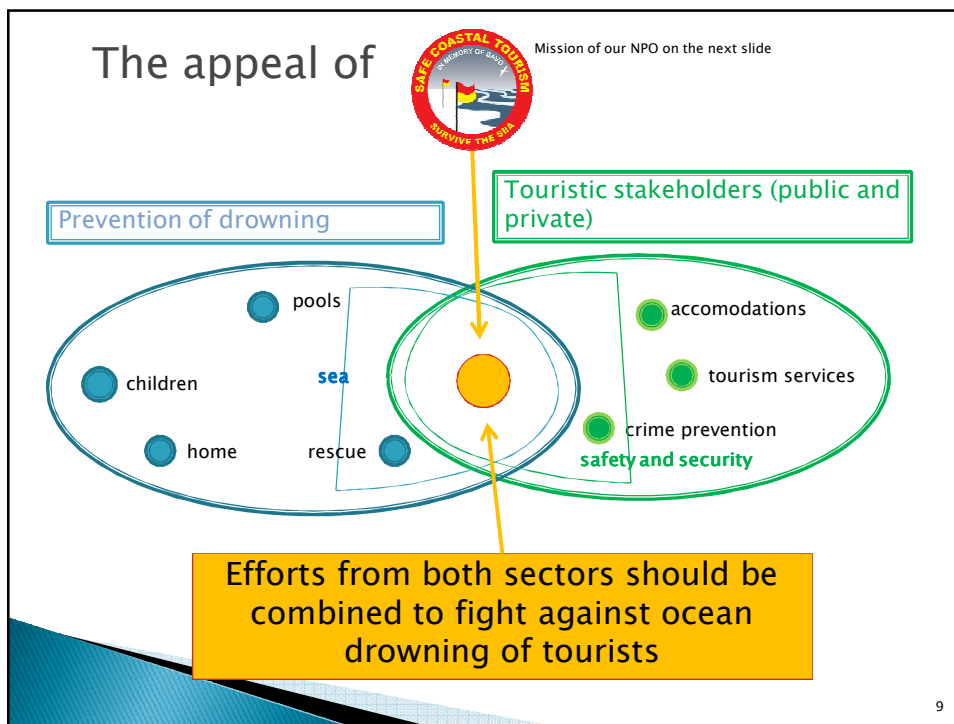
Too little mutual interest
Too little common awareness

Prevention of drowning

Touristic stakeholders (public and private) provide:



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What should be done?

What should be done?

1. Focus on prevention of the risk of drowning
2. A dialogue between experts on open water (sea) safety and tourism

FIRST

Focus on prevention of
the risk of drowning!

"It is believed that the vast majority of drowning incidents can be prevented and that prevention, rather than rescue or resuscitation, is the key intervention by which to reduce drowning."

(Rogmans & Wilson, The prevention of drowning, 2006)

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How?

By providing tourists with **honest** and
objective information

> *Global Code of Ethics on Tourism*

Article 1 (public sector)

Article 6 (private sector)

United Nations World Tourism Organization

<http://ethics.unwto.org/en/content/global-code-ethics-tourism>

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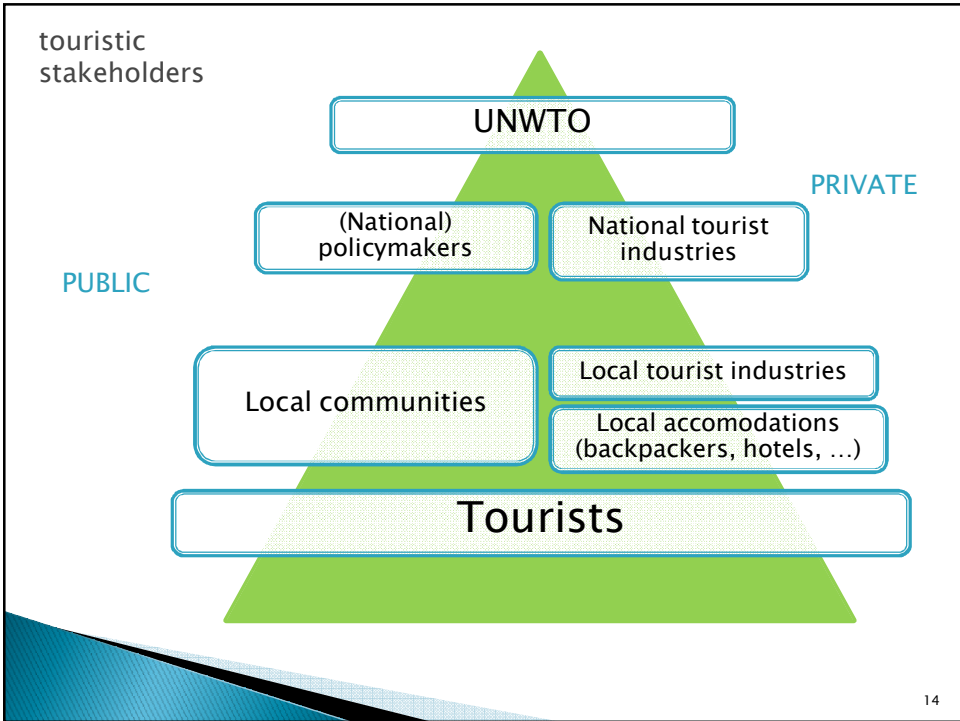
What should be done?
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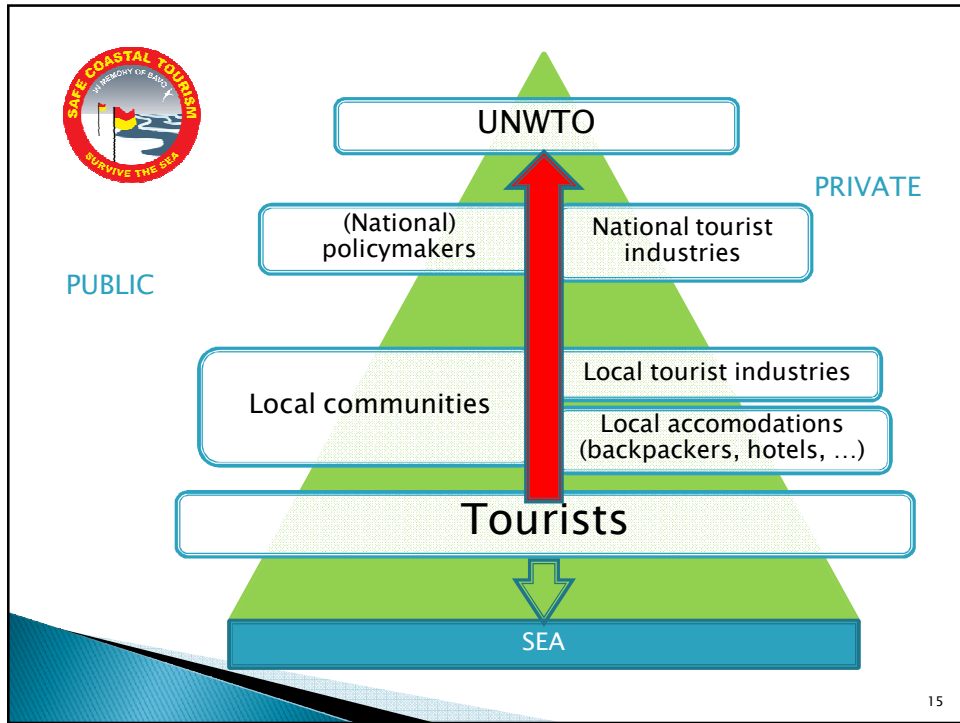
SECOND

A dialogue between experts on open water (sea) safety and tourism

Mocke, Z.S. (2012). *Perceptions of Beach Experts Regarding high Risk Hazards to Recreational Beach Users in a Time of Climate Change* (Masters Thesis), Newcastle: Newcastle University.
<http://www.mediafire.com/?388jngmvyq9753b>

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SAFE COASTAL TOURISM
IN MEMORY OF BART
SURVIVE THE SEA

PUBLIC

PRIVATE

The Secretary-General

Ref:SGZ/2012

Madrid, 2 August 2012

To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of the UNWTO Secretariat, I am pleased to hereby recommend the Safe Coastal Tourism association as a trustful project partner considering their aims and objectives of promoting the safety and wellbeing in coastal destinations as stated in the attached document.

This non-profit association has been established by the family and friends of a promising young man from Flanders - Belgium, Bavo Verheyden (21), who became a drowning victim on April 18th, 2011. He was accompanied by his older brother Bart, physician in Zeehuis-Lehuratine Hospital Complex, who nearly drowned on that same occasion.

UNWTO has been addressed by Ms Carolina Danneels and Ms Lieve Verheyden, founding members and members of the Board of Directors of the registered Non-Profit Association Safe Coastal Tourism. As a result, Ms Caroline Danneels has been invited to speak at the 11th meeting of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics, coordinated by UNWTO (Rome, Italy, 12-13 July 2012). Ms Danneels provided the Committee an account of the dangers and risks that represent the lack of information on safety prevention and security prosecution measures at many coastal destinations. The efforts of Safe Coastal Tourism to promote and advocate for safety precautions at beaches and marinas across the globe were publicly commended by the Committee, which recommended that facilitating accurate information to tourists in terms of safety of beaches and coastal resorts should be a priority for destinations (see <http://media.unwto.org/en/press-releases/2012-07-13/world-committee-tourism-ethics-calls-safe-coastal-tourism>).

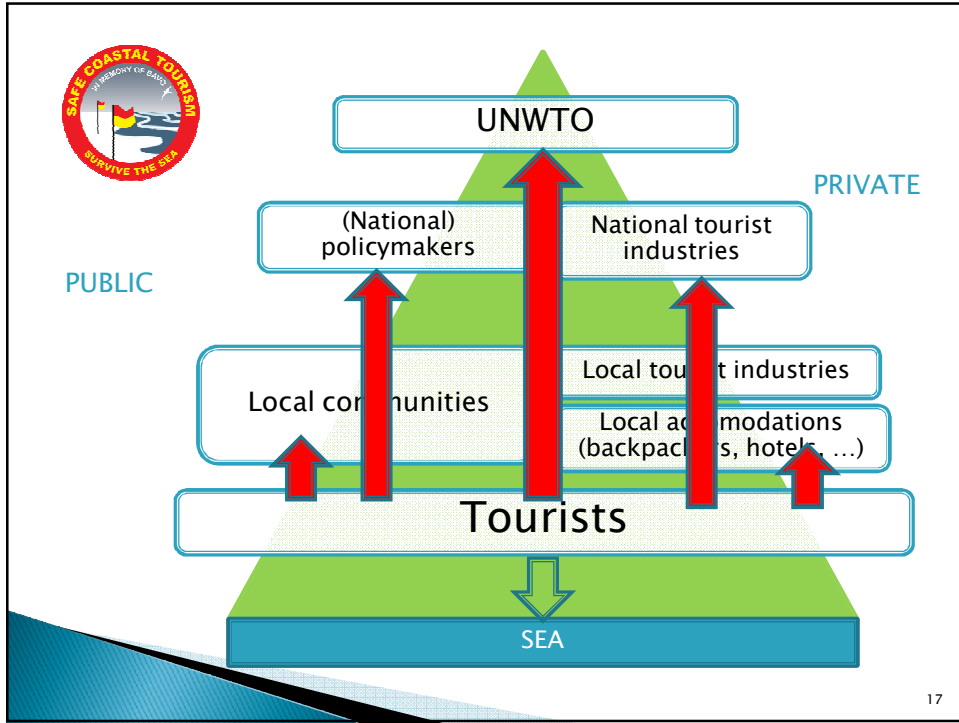
For all above, we would appreciate your support to Safe Coastal Tourism.

Sincerely,

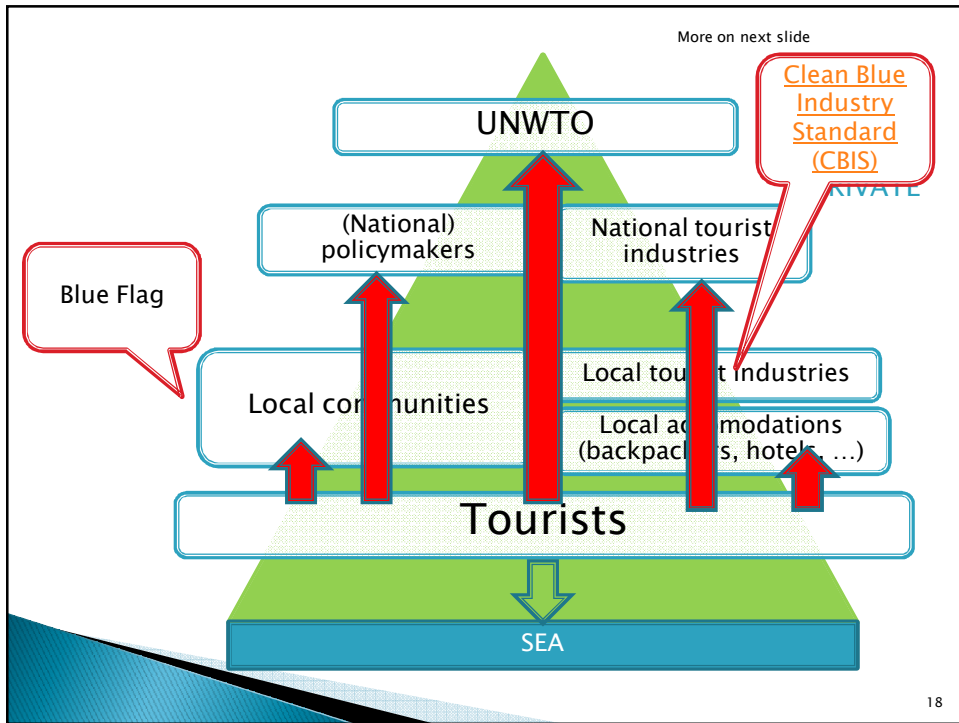
Taleb Rifai

World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) - A Specialized Agency of the United Nations
Capitán Haya 42, 28002 Madrid, Spain. Tel: (34) 91 561 81 00 / Fax: (34) 91 571 37 33 - info@unwto.org / unwto.org

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Clean Blue Med Program (Peter Myles*)

- New standard for beach management and safety to provide beach operators with the help and guidance to effectively manage the beaches
- Including
 - Comfort services advice (beach furniture, toilets, lockers, ...)
 - Beach engineering services (flood prevention measures, ...)
 - Beach services
 - zoning
 - signage
 - supervision
 - training and education for tour operators and hotels

*Steering Committee member of the International Coastal & Marine Tourism Society (ICMTS)

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New: Safe Coastal Tourism Prevention Program

Still to be designed and implemented:

- around prevention of the risk of drowning of the individual tourist with little or no knowledge and awareness
- focus on all gatekeepers of the beach
- as a key element in a coastal safety program

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Example of good practice



- Swimming and Surfing: Our lagoon is clean, our beaches are wide, unspoilt and great for swimming and surfing). In season we have lifeguards from Port St Johns on our main beach. Out of season it is all yours. Pure Paradise!



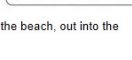
Safety Warning! Swimming on the Wild Coast

tips

Care should be taken when swimming in the oceans around South Africa. Treacherous currents and high waves can drag swimmers into dangerous situations, sometimes followed by fatal drowning. There is also a risk of shark attacks. Therefore it is strongly advised to only swim where lifeguards are operating, and to avoid desolate and unguarded beaches.

Drowning or near drowning frequently happens in South Africa's coastal areas. Tidal currents and unexpectedly high waves do happen, together with ever moving rip currents. These currents come to live in a trench between sandbars, which can be described as a powerful, narrow channel full of fast-moving water running perpendicular to the beach, out into the ocean.

Rip currents can be located by trained beach lifeguards while non-experienced swimmers can mostly not discern them.



facebook

- Save the Wild Coast Co
 - Stop mining of the Xolob beaches in the Transkei
 - I Love the Transkei
- [read more...]

Djembe Drum Par

Ethnic Percussion & R

- Private Lessons
- Team Building
- Corporate Events
- Functions
- Workshops
- School Groups

<http://www.wildcoast.co.za/swimming>

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Criteria for our program:

- safety message?
 - general versus context/area sensitive?
 - our safety message
 - our leaflet for South Africa
 - our poster worldwide
 - our spot worldwide
 - warning and/or information?
- media?

Text in orange color in this slide refers to more details in the next slide.

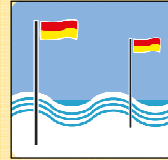
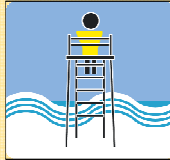


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Our safety message



Messages of Safe Coastal Tourism:



Only go to patrolled beaches!

Always keep between the red and yellow flags!

Stay in knee-high water!

If no lifeguard on duty, stay out!

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Criteria for our program:



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 - **our spot worldwide**
<http://vimeo.com/safecoastaltourism/spot>
 - warning and/or information?
- media?

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 - warning and/or **information**?
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Further information on

- Rip currents
- Tides
- High waves
- Back wash
- Shark attacks
- ...

Honest, Complete, Accurate, Uniform,
Not misleading, not provoking


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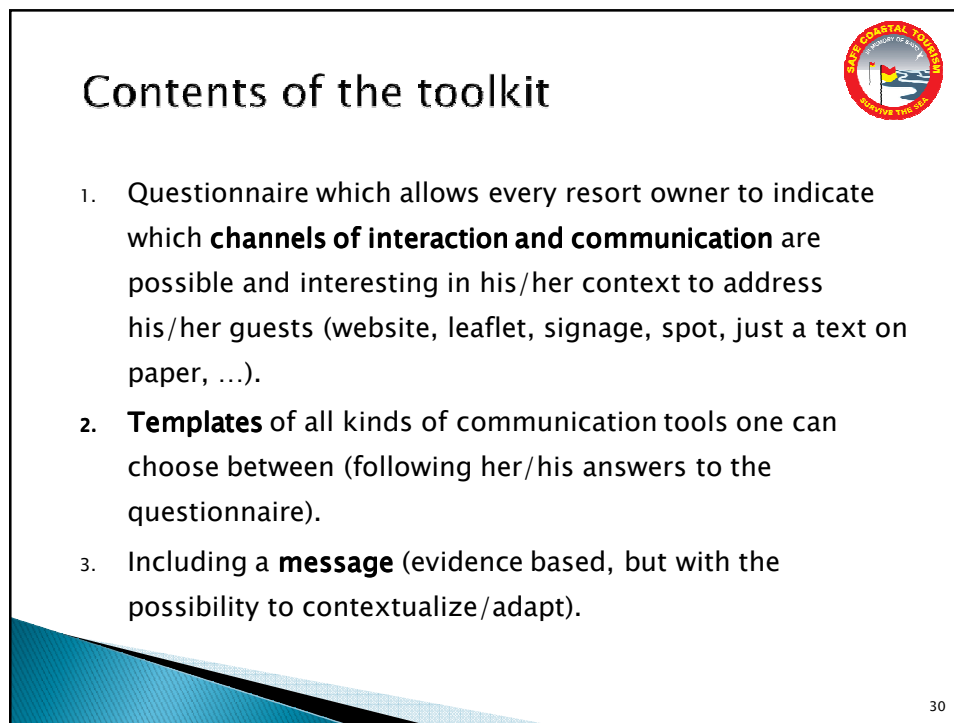
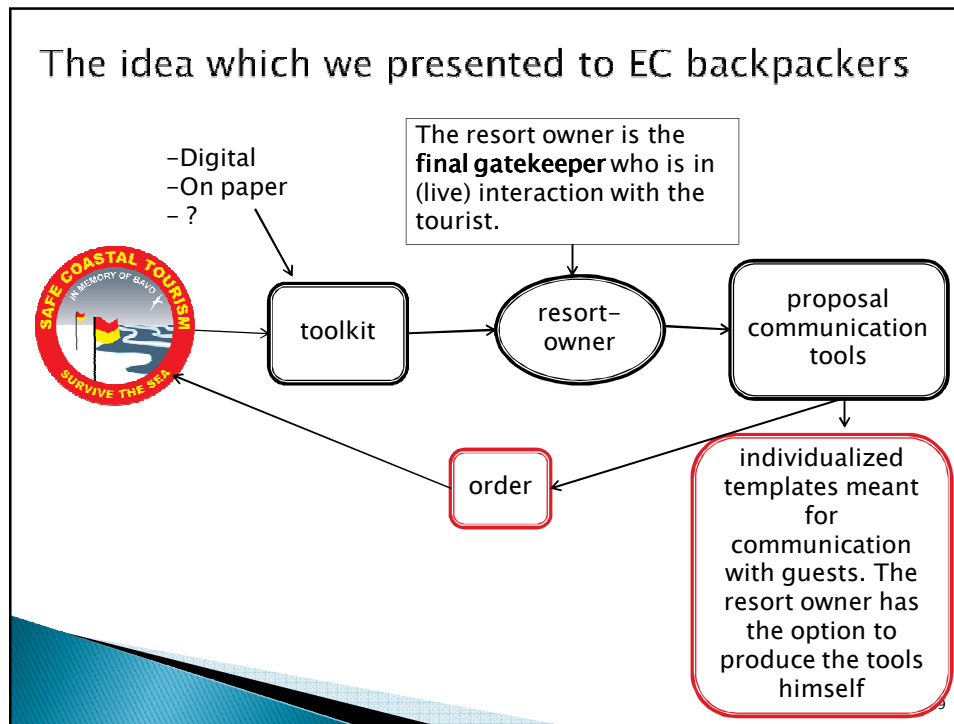
Diversity of media

(cf. diversity among travelers)

- website
- signage
- video
- flyers and posters
- table displays²
- travel guides
- oral information
- magazines
- television
- national radio

Repetition of the message supports efficiency!

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Contact details

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 - info@safecoastaltourism.org
 - E.Ruelensvest 99, 3001 Louvain, Belgium, Europe
 - Mobile: 0032 498 743 043
- ▶ Website: www.safecoastaltourism.org

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Documentary on our organization:

<http://vimeo.com/safecoastaltourism/documentary>

Thank you for your attention!

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