



## **The project ‘*Manejo eco-sostenibile de la Laguna del Diablo*’, promoted by Mondial Assistance and ICEI has closed**

***Mondial Assistance and ICEI have presented the final report on the results obtained in the project to create a micro, eco-sustainable tourism business financed by the sale of in e-mondial.it policies in the Dominican Republic. A new project in the Canaçari area, Amazon Basin, Brazil, also announced.***

**Milan, 17 November 2008.** The total contribution which **Mondial Assistance**, international leader in assistance, travel insurance and international services, paid to *Istituto Cooperazione Economica Internazionale (ICEI - International Economic Co-operation Institute)* was **€37,646**. The money was to promote the preservation of bio-diversity and, at the same time, improve the living conditions of the local population, setting up a micro tourism company, run by the group of women called *El Futuro del Rincon*, in the area of the Laguna del Diablo – Las Galeras in the Dominican Republic. This aid was made concrete by setting aside two euros for every E-mondial policy sold through the Mondial Assistance portal [www.e-mondial.it](http://www.e-mondial.it) between August 2006 and September 2008. This enabled ICEI and the insurance company to tangibly demonstrate the possibility of **joining social and environmental sustainability with the economic sustainability of a micro tourism company**, in an area of the Dominican Republic where the tourism packages offered traditionally only provide for all-inclusive resorts and beaches.

### **The context**

The Dominican Republic has absorbed 30% of the more than 4 million new tourists to the Antilles in the last decade, clearly distancing the other competitor countries in the region and becoming the third-placed target of tourism in the Caribbean. Italians account for the highest number of visitors to the island. The Dominican tourist industry is currently the most important source of possession of precious foreign exchange, but the social and environmental costs of tourism are high and can be noted particularly in the increase in female prostitution and the development of the so-called infant neo-prostitution, which takes place in the squares, on the beaches and in Dominican tourist areas. The precarious economic conditions of the families of the minors involved are the main cause of this situation.

The Samaná province, in the north-east of the Dominican Republic, is the emerging tourist destination of the country. Other areas, such as Las Galeras, Playa Rincón and Playa Frontón, etc. have been little visited to date and had minimal reception structures. The people of these new and promising destinations of the province are mainly farmers and fishermen who have little familiarity with international tourism and the problems it generates. The risk, now, is that the same situation as has already occurred in the historic tourist centres of the island, such as the increase in minor delinquency, the supply of drugs and prostitution (also involving minors), will be repeated in this area. All these consequences of the lack of valid alternatives, among other things, to allow the local population to have lawful benefit from the tourist industry.

### **The ICEI and Mondial Assistance operation**

With the great influx of international tourism in the area of Las Galeras, the work of ICEI and Mondial Assistance has been aimed at preventing the repetition of the conditions that have led to other areas of the country being afflicted by the plague of sexual tourism and scarce attention to the environmental impact of tourism. Mondial's contribution was used by ICEI for the creation

of a project divided into three main areas – creation of the infrastructures, training members of the community and the spread and promotion of experience at a local level.

As far as **creation of the infrastructures** is concerned, construction of the one used as both a tourist information point and for the spread of information on the project and responsible, sustainable tourism has been completed. In addition, a kiosk used as a refreshment and relaxation point for tourists has been set up. Here they can find the group 'Women of the Laguna del Diablo' who offer them drinks and fresh fruit juice made with the traditional products of the area. Lastly, two paths leading to the lagoon, which can be followed on foot or horseback, have been laid; information signs and panels have been installed along them describing the local flora and fauna.

The work of **training members of the community**, concentrated on the women and young people of the area, has seen the organisation of various laboratories to illustrate the importance to the community of protecting bio-diversity as wealth for the area and the local population, also from the tourism point of view, in addition to a further analysis course of one month on the native flora and fauna and another course on the preservation of aquatic eco-systems. A course on administration and accounting for micro-businesses, held by a professor recognised by INFOTEP (National Institute for Professional Training), has also been arranged.

Lastly, there was the **spread and promotion of experience at a local level** through the creation and distribution of informative and promotional material to tourist operators in the area.

### **Conclusion**

As a result of this work, there will be a contribution to the increase in the income of families in the community, protection of the environment and the species in it and an improvement in the social and economic conditions of the community, with the level of income of the families running the micro-business rising.

The whole experience has also led to the publication of the book '**Vieni a vedere, un viaggio fuori dal solito villaggio**' ('Come and see, a journey out of the usual village'), a photographic diary of the latest experience in the Dominican Republic by **Enrico M. Franchini**, Corporate Communications Director, and **Valentina Armanasco**, ICEI collaborator. The project is part of the **Mondiality** programme started at the beginning of 2008 by the Italian business unit of Mondial Assistance. The company has embraced the theme of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) with *Mondiality*, a word created by joining 'Mondial' and 'Responsibility', developing it along the three axes of social responsibility – towards the interior and employees, towards customers and towards the whole of the society.

For information: [www.mondiality.it](http://www.mondiality.it)

### **The new project in Amazonia**

The collaboration between ICEI and Mondial Assistance in supporting eco-tourism and sustainable tourism will not be ending with the work in the Dominican Republic. A new project, financed by the insurance company in the same way (i.e., through setting aside two euros for each consumer policy sold through the site [www.e-mondiali.it](http://www.e-mondiali.it)), has been activated in Brazil in the Amazon region of Canaçari. The project aims to contribute to the improvement of the socio-economic conditions and the environmental and cultural safeguard of the peoples of Médio Amazonas (Amazonas state, Brazil) through a model of participation in sustainable development which integrates the preservation of natural resources (aquatic and forest), eco-compatible production and community tourism. Additional details will be given in the near future.

### **The Mondial Assistance group - an operation in the world every 3 seconds**

An international leader in assistance, travel insurance and personal services, Mondial Assistance group currently counts more than 9,350 employees speaking 40 different languages and working around the world through a network of 400,000 service suppliers and 180 correspondents. Its services, which the group supplies in all five continents, are used by 250 million people, 4% the entire world population. The Mondial Assistance group is a member of the Allianz. [www.mondial-assistance.com](http://www.mondial-assistance.com)

**Mondial Assistance in Italy** started on 1 January 2002 following the merger by acquisition of CEA – *Compagnia Europea di Assicurazione*, by Elvia Italia (historic companies belonging to the RAS group). In 2007, the consolidated turnover of Mondial Assistance in Italy was greater than Euro 114,700,000. The holding it belongs to, Mondial Assistance group, is an international leader in the assistance, services and travel insurance sectors. In Italy, Mondial Assistance has about 520 staff of whom more than 180 work in the Operational Centre which provides 24hr a day service, 365 days a year, amongst other things. In 2007, the Operational Centre received more than 1,200,000 calls and handled 228,000 cases. [www.mondial-assistance.it](http://www.mondial-assistance.it)

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**Note on the forecast declarations**

Some of the statements in this text could be declarations of future expectations and forecast data based on the current management vision and have risks known and unknown which may cause the results, performances and events to change from those explicitly or implicitly contained in those statements. In addition to the expressions which are forecasts because of the context in which they can be found, words like 'could, would, should, is/are expected, is/are forecast, it is considered, it is believed, it is estimated, potentially, etc.' and similar expressions are a feature of statements which make forecasts. The effective results, events and performances could be considerably different from those forecasts as, without limitation, (i) general economic conditions, including the economic conditions of the business areas and markets in which, in particular, Allianz group operates in; (ii) performance of the financial markets, emerging markets included; (iii) frequency and extent of claims; (iv) taxes and trends in mortality and illness; (v) levels of persistence; (vi) extent of the insolvency of credits; (vii) level of interest rates, (viii) exchange rates, including the Euro-US dollar exchange rate; (ix) changes in laws and regulations, including monetary convergence and the European Monetary Union; (x) changes in the policies of the central banks and/or foreign governments; (xi) impact of acquisitions (e.g. Dresdner Bank) including the matter of the relative integration, and (xii) general competitiveness factors on a local, regional, national and/or international basis. Many of these factors could occur with greater probability or intensity as the result of events like 11 September 2001 and later events.