

Minutes of the Sustainable Tourism working group meeting
 (the meeting took place during CEEWEB Annual Meeting,
 on 15 November 2005)

Participants:

	Name	Organisation	E-mail
1.	Siim Kuresoo	Estonian Fund for Nature	siim@elfond.ee
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5.	Mirna Stanic	Green Action, Croatia	mirna.stanic@zg.t-com.hr
6.	Michael Meyer	ETE, Germany	m.meyer@oete.de
7.	Edita Stojic-Karanovic	Danube – River of Cooperation, Serbia and Montenegro	danube-org@yubc.net forumdanube@yahoo.com
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9.	Kruno Kartus	Osijek Greens, Croatia	kruno@zeleni.hr
10.	Milka Gvozdenovic	Young Researchers of Serbia, Serbia and Montenegro	milkag@eunet.yu
11.	Kristina Vilimaite	CEEWEB, Hungary (minute taker)	kvilmaite@ceeweb.org
12.	Enisa Imamovic	Danube – River of Life, Serbia and Montenegro	enisa@freestart.hu

Other registered WG members

13.	Saska Bogdanova	ECO-MISSION, Macedonia	sash_sk2001@yahoo.com
14.	Dragi Pop-Stojanov	MAKMONTANA, Macedonia	product@mt.net.mk
15.	Elitza Gramadska	NAUNYC, Bulgaria	naunyc@scas.acad.bg naunyc@hotmail.com
16.	Natalija Angelova	Macedonian Ecological Society	jugan_5@yahoo.com mes@iunona.pmf.ukim.edu.mk

Intro

Michael told about the history and activities of Sustainable Tourism (ST) working group (WG).

External relations

CEEWEB together with ETE has applied for CADSES project. It includes the development of Sustainable Tourism strategy for all Carpathians. The WG may contribute. 100,000 EUR is allocated. The project can directly influence policy making in the Carpathian Convention countries. Will be approved in 2006, implementation will start in September 2006. Others involved – UNEP (GRID-Warsaw and Secretariat in Vienna), WWF, the Regional Environmental Center (REC), Carpathian Ecoregion Initiative (CERI), etc. Everybody is invited to contribute (stakeholder consultation sessions and drafting).

WG can benefit by acquiring additional knowledge from GEF funded *Tourism for Nature (T4N)* project implemented in Hungary, Czech Republic and Poland by ETE.

ETE is applying to EU Socrates. Project includes T4N countries and Slovakia – training scheme on sustainable tourism.

ST will be discussed at the meeting in Bolzano/Italy in Dec 2005 in relation to Alpine, Carpathian and future Balkan Convention.

ETE is applying for project in Low Tatra NP in Slovakia for communicating nature conservation to local inhabitants.

Application stage to GEF with project in Serbia on financing of protected areas, and there are other smaller projects implemented by ETE.

Expectations of the members of STWG

- Milka: improve knowledge (personal and of organisation); organisation plans to start working on ST
- Mirna: activities on ST expected in the future
- Anna: MELP is implementing SD projects and would be interested to contribute to the implementation of Carpathian Convention. YEE has ST working group, info exchange btw the two WGs is possible.
- Mariya: the organisation's work is focused on mountain Rhodope. Tourism information center functions. Needs practice, practical knowledge and is looking forward to visible results
- Siim: get ideas how others do it. Estonian Fund has own eco-label for tourism.
- Edita: focus – nautical tourism, nautical route through Danube. Expects to gain knowledge on ST and protected areas, is interested in cross-boarder cooperation
- Dominika: guide training on ST and ecology is needed, interested in Carpathian project, heritage part of the Carpathian Convention, to do! Conferences, exchanges are of interest as well.
- Kruno: plans to develop tourism programme in a particular area in Croatia. NEST consults on the financial sustainability of the NGO activities. Expects to work in partnership with other organisations and the whole group.
- Karmen: in March 2006 in Malta YEE member organisation has conference on Sustainable Tourism

Summary by Michael about expectations:

1. Common interest – increase in knowledge (information, experience and how to put things to practice). There are organisations working in ST to a certain extent. Urgency for concrete actions in the countries is understood
2. Projects
3. Carpathian Convention (political aspects, not projects). Cooperation with the Northern Alliance for Sustainability (ANPED) is possible on this.

Some proposals, ideas

- Important – think about lobbying activities for sustainable tourism
- Work on better relation between ST and agriculture-rural development.
- Develop urgent action plan for mitigating tourism development in Bulgaria and locate the way how CEEWEB can help
- Provide training for hotel owners
- Socrates funds could be received to cover travel expenses to trainings planned in 2006
- Communication is important – WG mailing list should function

Selection of the chair

Chair: Michael Meyer for 12 months

Co-chairing: shared responsibility between Mirna (main contact person for the chair) and Mariya. After 12 months one of them will take over the responsibilities of the Chair.

The co-chairs will be the main contact persons for the tourism working group members. Therefore all the correspondence should be sent to Mirna, who will decide if to involve the chair. If Mirna needs help, she will contact Mariya.

Work Programme

Taking into account the increasing pressure on habitats and species exerted by tourism related activities, there is a need that NGOs push tourism development towards sustainability. For this aim it is necessary to improve the capacity and enhance the knowledge of NGOs working on tourism and biodiversity, as due to a lack of capacity, financial and human resources they are not having the possibility to solve those problems just by themselves.

For this reason CEEWEB members established the Sustainable Tourism Working Group in 2003 to tackle the specific problems in this area and determined to make full use of the International Guidelines for Biodiversity and Tourism Development of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Overall objective

To make tourism in Central and Eastern European countries sustainable through joint activities, such as information exchange, promoting good practices, training and education, policy-making, pilot projects and lobbying.

Objectives

- Ensure that all stakeholders understand and are aware of sustainable tourism according to the definition of Commission on Sustainable Development.
- Change the attitude and behaviour of relevant stakeholders towards sustainable tourism, with regard to e.g. undertaking, planning, management and development through training and education.
- Influence decision bodies (e.g. governments, industry, NGOs) at all levels to respect the principles of sustainable tourism in policy-making.
- Develop common pilot projects addressing the components and proving the feasibility of sustainable tourism.

Activities

1. Compile a reasonable set of information on sustainable tourism.
2. Develop a comprehensive document for training and education through compiling existing experiences and provide it through e.g. online training programs.
3. Organize training/education courses for the Working Group in order to achieve a common level of understanding of sustainable tourism (within the framework of 'CEEWEB Academies').
4. Create ways and means (Internet, discussion groups, electronic and printed publications) among the CEEWEB NGOs as well as among the stakeholders for spreading the information regarding sustainable tourism in CEE.
5. Identify and create ways and means for implementing the concept of sustainable tourism in CEE through the selection of different cases in different countries.
6. Use suitable resources and funding programs for implementing pilot projects.
7. Promote the implementation of the European Agenda 21 for Tourism.

Tasks and responsibilities

	Tasks	Responsible person(s)	Deadline
1	2-page country reports will be provided by the members of the working group based on the template developed by Kristina	Michael resends available info about Carpathian country situations to Kristina	December 1, 2005
		Kristina provides everybody with the template	December 23, 2005
		WG members prepare information according to the template and send information to Mirna	January 31, 2006
2	The group will evaluate the existing training modules and provide feedback to Mirna by a particular deadline.	Michael sends outline of the trainings to everybody	December 1, 2005
		WG members send comments about the outline to Mirna	January 15, 2006
3	Four trainings (that include WG meetings) will be organised with topics for training, locations, and external experts chosen by the WG. Specific focus – training of trainers so in 2007 the working group members are able to organise similar trainings in their countries.	Michael analyses the questionnaires collected at ST Academy and sends to everybody	January 1, 2006
		Mirna will prepare and distribute to the WG members a 1-2 page questionnaire based on which the topics, locations, experts will be decided	January 15, 2006
		WG members fill in the questionnaire and send to Mirna	January 21, 2006
		Mirna evaluates the questionnaire and shares results with everybody	February 5, 2006
		Places of the trainings chosen	February 15, 2006
		Trainings take place, the 4 th should be combined with CEEWEB annual meeting	2006: 1 st : March (in Croatia) 2 nd : beginning of June 3 rd : end-September 4 th : end-November
4	Prepare publication on specific ST related topics covered in the trainings and publish on the Internet (in English and in local languages at www.CEEWEB.org and websites of the members)	Choosing the material to be published, agreeing the timeline and responsible persons	Right after each training course
	Promotional brochure – hard copy in English and local languages	Deciding about the concept and contents of the brochure, agreeing the timeline and responsible persons	During the first training

5	Plans for action in Croatia and Bulgaria to be developed by Mariya and Kruno/Mirna, the WG will support the planning and implementation	Plans distributed to the WG members	1 week before the first training
		Discussion about the implementation of the plans, agreeing the timeline and responsible persons	During the first training
6	The countries will make a half page summary of the available funding sources for ST in their countries and propose a location for a pilot (model) project	Michael provides the WG members with the general list of funding sources	Jan 31, 2006
		WG members summarise country-specific funding sources and suggest model area (input sent to co-chairs)	1 week before the first training
		Further steps discussed	During the first training
7	European Agenda 21 for Tourism: publicise through the websites if approved	Discuss further actions	At second training in June, 2006

Other activities

- Kristina will prepare draft online website by January 15 and send the link for everybody to comment.
- Linking YEE WG (active in South and East Europe) and CEEWEB WG. Official letter will be prepared by the chair and CEEWEB Policy Office and sent to Anna and Karmen to be forwarded to YEE ST WG by January 15.
- Conference on Sustainable Tourism in Malta – Karmen could represent CEEWEB there, she will check the details
- Discuss the WG work programme for 2007 during the third training (end-September)