

# Minutes of the Workshop on Stakeholder Involvement for Development of Sustainable Tourism and the Meeting of the CEEWEB Sustainable Tourism Working Group



Donji-Milanovac | Đerdap National Park | Serbia

June 28th — July 1st, 2007

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**CEEWEB Sustainable Tourism Working Group 2007**

– The meeting is supported by the European Commission –

# Day 1

## Meeting of the CEEWEB Sustainable Tourism Working Group (STWG)

- Opening of the meeting and introduction of the participants
- Organizational and technical issues

## Status-Quo of the STWG project proposal and its implementation

## Start of the workshop on stakeholder involvement

- Introduction
- Stakeholder brainstorming session
- Input and experiences from different speakers

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## Meeting of the CEEWEB Sustainable Tourism Working Group (STWG)

### Introduction

A word of welcome was made by Milka Gvozdencovic (Young Researchers of Serbia), Kristina Vilimaite (CEEWEB) and Katrin Gebhard (ETE), on behalf of the STWG organizing this meeting.

The meeting took place in the head office of the management of Đerdap National Park, located in the town of Donji-Milanovac, Serbia. This meeting was the first STWG meeting in 2007, but succeeds four meetings of the STWG held in 2006. The meeting has been attended by the representatives of NGOs active in the field of sustainable tourism in Bulgaria, Poland, Serbia and Ukraine. The participants shortly introduced themselves and explained their interests and current projects they work on.

### STWG brochure

The brochure on sustainable tourism is presented and disseminated to the participants. This brochure is available in English and Serbian, translations to Polish, Slovakian Czech, Romanian and Ukrainian are underway. Mariya Achkova offered her help in translating the brochure to Bulgarian. Kristina Vilimaite will provide her with the information needed for the translation.

### Manual

Katrin Gebhard elaborates on a manual on sustainable tourism development which could be developed by the STWG. The manual shall serve as guideline for people that have a possibility to start developing sustainable tourism in their communities (NGOs, municipality staff, community leaders, entrepreneurs, etc). It will explain how to assess the tourism potential, which tools to use and which steps to take in the further process of tourism development. The manual will be based on the draft publications elaborated by the STWG during 2006, covering already basically the topics of tourism assessment, product development and tourism impact assessment and monitoring. The outcomes of the workshop in Đerdap shall serve as a case study for the section of the manual on tourism assessment by using

SWOT analysis as a tool. In the course of 2007, (possibly 2008), the manual shall be completed, including further topics and more case studies from the STWG, e.g. from Bulgaria and Romania.

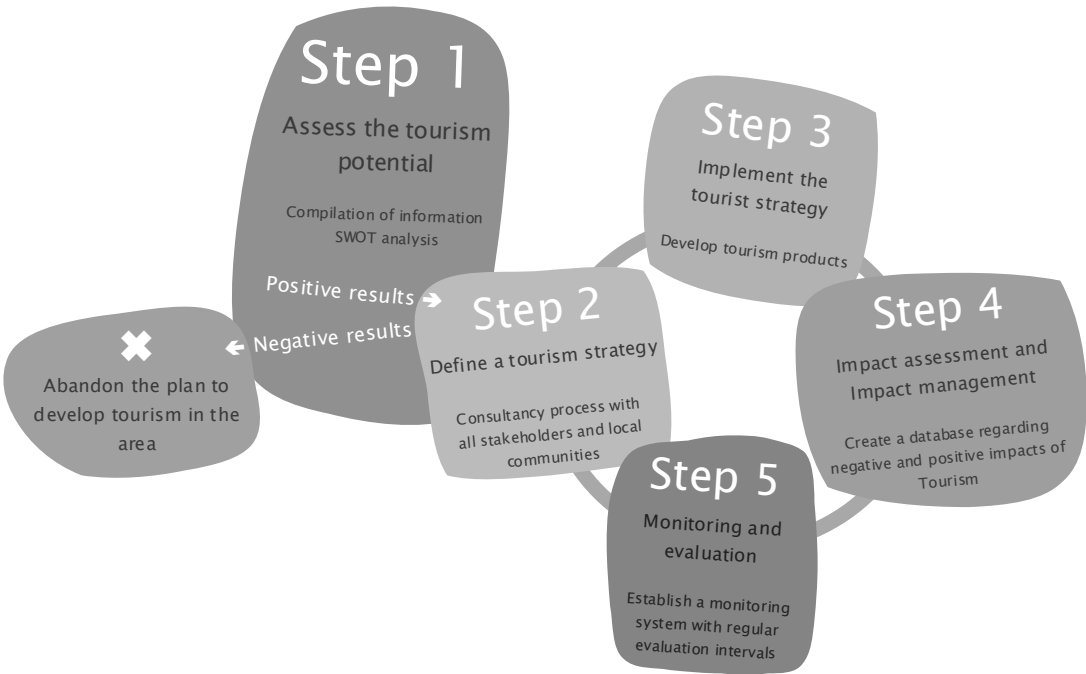


Figure showing the Cycle of Sustainable Tourism Development, to be used in the manual.

**EC Agenda on sustainable tourism**

The Agenda for a Sustainable and Competitive European Tourism was developed by the Tourism Sustainability Group (TSG) of DG Enterprise. Michael Meyer from ETE, Germany, and former chair of the STWG is a member of the TSG, however, due to other responsibilities he has no possibility to attend the meeting of the TSG. DG Enterprise was requested to replace Michael Meyer with another representative of CEEWEB, however the response was negative. Based on this report the European Commission will probably develop a Communication. Public consultation was open till June 14; CEEWEB submitted the comments on behalf of the STWG.

Kristina Vilimaite stresses that the overall approach of this document on sustainable tourism is good. Milka Gvozdenovic, however, has some problems with the formulation of the concept of sustainable tourism, focusing more on the sustainability of the tourism sector than on sustainable development.

**Belgrade Conference NGO statement**

The Belgrade Conference is a high level meeting of the Environment for Europe process. CEEWEB was contacted by Milena Bokova from Bluelink, Bulgaria, with a proposal to get involved in developing an NGO statement on sustainable tourism. A draft has been prepared, however has not been read by the majority of the participants. Kristina Vilimaite explains the importance of this statement and therefore advices the participants to provide comments when necessary (see appendix for this draft NGO statement). The deadline for submitting comments is the 30th of July.

## Status-Quo of the STWG project proposal and its implementation

The STWG will focus on the implementation of sustainable tourism in three model project sites: Strandja Nature Park (Bulgaria), Nature Park Apuseni Mountains (Romania) and Đerdap National Park (Serbia). In order to start these projects CEEWEB is currently waiting for the decision about the European Union core funding for 2007.

Rossen Vassilev states that it is important to involve stakeholders whenever possible, while at the same time speaking a common language about what sustainable tourism represents. He also explains that the problems usually relate to mentality problems i.e. stakeholders not working together. He also asks if this pilot project would focus on the whole Đerdap National Park / Strandja Nature Park or just in one village. Kristina Vilimaite answers that there are both, pros and cons of working in one community or in a bigger region. While it is easier to start from one settlement, it is important to think how to make an area become a successful tourism destination. It is more efficient to develop marketing, tourism impact management and balanced offers for tourists when working in a region or at least few neighboring villages.

Due to the absence of Horatio Popa, who works for the NGO Green Echoes Association which will be responsible for the project implementation in Romania, information about the proposed project area in the Apuseni Mountains (Rimet and Intregalde communities in Trascau Mountains) has been given by Kristina Vilimaite (reference <http://www.parcapuseni.ro> ).

Being the employee of Strandja NP, Ivan Kamburov provides some information about Strandja Nature Park (reference <http://www.discoverstrandja.com> )

Đerdap National Park was presented by Milka Gvozdencovic on day 3, before starting with the stakeholders interviews for the tourism assessment in Donji Milanovac (reference <http://www.npdjerdap.co.yu> )

## Start of the workshop on stakeholder involvement

### Introduction

Benjamin Carey from Dunira Strategy, Edinburgh UK, opens the workshop on stakeholder involvement. After a short general introduction on the key issues of sustainable tourism he explains why the involvement of all stakeholders – from local people, to households and businesses and to authorities on all levels – is of such vital importance for a long-term success of any sustainable development in the tourism sector.

### Stakeholder brainstorming session

In order to get a better insight into the different interests and motivations of stakeholders within the different sectors involved in tourism – and thus to be able to better understand and argue with those –, the STWG held a brainstorming session. Divided into three groups, the STWG observed “Businesses”, “Local and regional authorities” as well as “Households” and worked out possible motives, problems and potential solutions.

**Group 1**  
Businesses

<p><b>Motives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Status</li> <li>• Market attracts visitors attracts income</li> <li>• Clustering of businesses to increase efficiency and to share experiences and customers</li> <li>• Improving skills</li> <li>• Input from the authorities e.g. by reducing taxes and supporting chances for starting a business</li> <li>• Pride, contributing to the community</li> <li>• Future prospects for next generations</li> </ul>	<p><b>Problems</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of understanding</li> <li>• Absence of cooperation</li> <li>• Lack of knowledge, ideas and information</li> <li>• Lack of investments</li> <li>• Lack of confidence</li> </ul>	<p><b>Solutions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training on business skills</li> <li>• Fund-raising</li> <li>• Information dissemination</li> <li>• Awareness-raising</li> <li>• Easy and clear conditions for obtaining financial resources</li> </ul>
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**Group 2**  
Local and regional authorities

		<p><b>Solutions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and define who to approach</li> <li>• Develop a strategy for each specific sector and individual (what is the concrete message?)</li> <li>• Lobby at the highest levels through personal contacts</li> <li>• Cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary approach</li> <li>• Adequacy to situation/site specifics</li> <li>• Allow the process the needed time to mature</li> <li>• Start multi-lateral and then work in smaller groups</li> </ul>
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**Group 3**  
Households

<p><b>Motives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New source of income</li> <li>• Creating jobs</li> <li>• Improve infrastructure</li> <li>• Protecting traditional culture</li> <li>• Need for entertainment</li> <li>• Long-term guarantees</li> <li>• People want to stay in their villages</li> <li>• Support cooperation with the</li> </ul>	<p><b>Problems</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of know-how</li> <li>• Lack of coordination</li> <li>• Lack of financial resources</li> <li>• Corruption</li> <li>• Poor planning and control</li> <li>• Local disparities/differences</li> <li>• Human factor</li> <li>• Language skills</li> </ul>	<p><b>Solutions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Marketing</li> <li>• Indicate local champions and pioneers in sustainable tourism</li> </ul>
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authorities

- Spreading risks
- Communicating with different cultures and people

## Input and experiences from different speakers

Following the more theoretical – though vividly illustrated – introduction on participation in sustainable tourism, two guests from Serbia share their experiences with the STWG.

Mr Slobodan Simic, park manager of the Special Nature Reserve Zasavica, introduces his protected area and tells about his experiences and strategies in involving the local people within and adjacent to the SNR Zasavica into project activities and developments related to sustainable tourism development and management. (reference <http://www.zasavica.org.yu> )

Ms Violeta Orlovic explains the work of her organization, E-team, which is working in the field of sustainable tourism all over Serbia. Being as well involved in the process of developing sustainable tourism in Zasavica she very demonstratively completes the picture given by Mr Simic's through her "outsider" opinion. Furthermore, she shared additional up-to-date information and experiences from a recently conducted survey about stakeholder involvement with the group.

# Day 2

Involvement of businesses  
Introduction of Đerdap National Park  
Excursion to Đerdap National Park

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## Presentation

By Benjamin Carey from Dunira Strategy, Edinburgh UK, on the involvement of businesses in sustainable tourism

Benjamin Carey established Dunira Strategy in 2002 after a career in tourism management. His principle skills lie in business analysis, process re-engineering and project management, with particular emphasis on revenue management, marketing strategy and sustainability.

He has significant experience working with NGOs and the public sector. As a former trustee of the research and advocacy organization Tourism Concern, he has a particular interest in the sustainable management and economic integration of tourism development.

Benjamin is visiting fellow in the International Centre for Responsible Tourism at Leeds Metropolitan University and a visiting lecturer in the School of Marketing and Tourism at Napier University Business School.

Chairman of Tourism Society Scotland, he is also an active member of Slow Food's regional committee for South East Scotland.

For more info see: <http://www.dunira.com>

### Short abstract of the presentation's main points

- Working with tourism is a passionate thing, we are all tourists ourselves so don't underestimate your own capabilities. Establish a multi-stakeholder approach, it is your destination and therefore you set the rules. Sustainable development has to be lead locally. Learn from the practices – do not try to reinvent the wheel.
- When starting implementing sustainable tourism consider the context, sustainability, integration, education and capacity. The difference of tourism as compared with other sectors is that it is founded on a location. What is the distinctiveness of that location for instance, and how to create social and economic opportunities?
- Identify the local champion. The ones that start tourism should be passionate, networked and influential in order to achieve results.
- Tell stories, focus on your presentation, involve the emotional aspect and bring marginal products to the open. Celebrate food for instance.
- Everything should be market-led, make sure it is practical and achievable. Tourism is a marketing challenge, as long as the products are good, it all comes down to marketing. People should know about tourism management and distribution channels like using internet for promoting destinations.
- An undertaking should be strong enough to be economically viable and the best kinds of employees might have to be paid for as everyone involved should benefit from sustainability. Do therefore not rely too much on volunteers.

- Marketing tourism is about the four Ps; Product, price, promotion and place. Subsequently there are the four Cs; customer value, cost to the consumer, communication and convenience.
- Ultimately people are after a better world for themselves. Tourist facilities are important, visitors need facilities to eat, sleep and wash themselves. For instance, health and safety are important issues in the world of tourism as tour operators are responsible for accidents.
- At the end sustainable tourism, like all forms of tourism, comes down to satisfaction and earning a living.

## Introduction to Đerdap National Park

Two representatives of Đerdap NP, Mr Dejan Pavlovic and Ms Vesna Vandic introduced the Djerdap NP and shared their experiences regarding NP Management and Tourism with the group. (reference <http://www.npdjerdap.co.yu> )

Milka Gvozdenovic further explained about the potentials for tourism in the NP and described her vision of a future tourism development project in Djerdap.

## Excursion to Đerdap National Park

After the presentations, an excursion was organized in the afternoon, where the group had the opportunity to visit one of the main attractions of the national park – the Iron Gate in the Danube, seen from two great viewpoints high above the river. Further a guesthouse of the NP was visited.

# Day 3

## Scenario Game

### SWOT assessment on participatory sustainable tourism development in Djerdap

- Short repetition on how to conduct a SWOT assessment (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats)

### Site visits and assessment of the area in groups

- Two groups visited and worked in Donji-Milanovac, the third group in the nearby village of Rudna-Glava

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## Scenario Game

In order to visualize the participants' own experiences with stakeholders and to work on how to get stakeholders interested in sustainable tourism a game is set up.

The situation is a stakeholder meeting in the imaginary city of Grid. However, due to the developments taking place in the Bulgarian Strandja NP certain similarities have been deliberately introduced in this game to inspire the participants.

- Mayor – Rossen Vassilev
- Tourism agency – Polina Kireva
- Farmer – Boban Milenkovic
- Park manager – Ivan Kamburov
- Local NGO – Teodor Vasilev
- Hotel developer – Małgorzata Bytom

### **Course of the Scenario Game** – short summary

To begin with, the farmer proposes developing tourist accommodation on his premises and asks for assistance.

The mayor first asks why he has been invited as a participant to this meeting anyway. To his opinion, the authorities should decide hence discussing about tourism development is not useful at all. Besides, the mayor is elected – NGOs are not elected by the people, so how can they speak for them?

The tourist agency explains that they are very interested in expanding the opportunities for tourism development. They are known with this region and could therefore be of valuable help in developing tourism in the near future.

Investing in future developments are not of any interest to the mayor as he prefers development to be taken place now, at this very moment.

The hotel developer agrees to this statement and invites everyone to participate in order to start things up.

The park manager on the other hand clearly states that this area is of benefit for the whole nation, not just for one municipality. Regarding its rare fauna a protected status should be guaranteed. The mayor however wants to develop his city and is not interested in compensating the nature reserve and the local people living within it. According to the park manager everyone is interested in developing the idea of sustainable tourism and farmers already started working on this. Some have interesting ideas,

for instance by focusing on wellness. The park offers excellent opportunities where visitors can enjoy the beauties of nature.

The hotel developer agrees that this park offers an opportunity as it attracts people, however the mayor should decide on this. Why building several small houses if you can build one hotel, the hotel developer questions. The tourism agency likes the idea of sustainable tourism, but expects problems with the hygienic expectations of visitors.

To make things clear, the mayor says that the municipality does not think about forbidding developments, there is a need for development and EU funds. The NGO leader points out that the future should be considered first, not focusing on short term successes only. The park manager states that the local people are ready to be involved in tourism development and that there initiatives are a big potential for EU funds. The mayor is of course needed in this process as he has the necessary networks. Indeed the hotel developer says, tourism is popular and attracting visitors will benefit the local community.

The tourist agency asks what the farmer can offer regarding tourism. According to the farmer he can offer good hygienic standards, although he learnt that visitors like poor conditions where there is no abundance of luxury. The hotel developer does not agree with the farmer's opinion on that, she says that tourists are after some kind of luxury.

The tourist agency is very much interested in sustainable tourism because they experienced a decline in the traditional kinds of tourism focusing on big hotels and beach resorts. The hotel developer mentions that her hotel has some interesting ideas on ecotourism.

The farmer on the other hand has knowledge about local handicrafts and knows some people who are certainly willing to be involved in producing local handicrafts. The hotel developer thinks it is a good idea that these products can be sold in the hotel's shop.

At this point Kristina Vilimaite interrupts by mentioning that the role of the NGO is minor and not exactly as unbiased as should be in this kind of stakeholder meetings. She therefore suggests the leading role of a moderator, which can be of useful help in coming to an agreement instead of creating a wider gap between the stakeholders' interests.

After this game Kristina Vilimaite points out that no agreement has been made. She questions whether the hotel developer could have been convinced of other options. From the beginning on this developer has been regarded as an obstacle and a burden for sustainable tourism. In fact the hotel developer is there to invest. Convincing her of moving businesses from the nature reserve to the city center would certainly have appealed to her.

Kristina Vilimaite explains that everyone has a motivation for what he or she does, but it is not always the same as what they say. Therefore, ask an investor how much money he or she has and what exactly they want to do with that money.

For the participants and observers it has been interesting to play and observe this game. This certainly could have reflected a daily situation and therefore illustrates that communication with each other is an important factor. Although the involvement of many stakeholders from different backgrounds is important, it is even more important that they listen to each other motives in order to come to an agreement on developing sustainable tourism.

### **Tips and tricks of organizing stakeholder meetings**

- Have an external facilitator
- Set the rules of communication for the meeting to assure equal participation of all and possibility for everybody to express their opinion
- Enforce the rules
- Have no prejudice

- Look through the eyes of others – what is their real motivation?
- Offer alternative solutions
- Macro-view – be aware about the whole system, not only about the details

After a short explanation by Katrin Gebhard about how a SWOT assessment needs to be worked out (see the appendix), the participants are divided into three groups, each undertaking three interviews on location.

The rest of the day consists of carrying out these interviews in order to get the information needed to set up a SWOT analysis. The groups will assess and present these SWOT analyses to the other participants on the fourth day.

# Day 4

## Finalization of the tourism potential assessment

- Presentation of the findings by the working groups

## Conclusions and closing of the meeting

Open end

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## Finalization of the tourism potential assessment

All the three groups that conducted a SWOT analysis in either Donji-Milanovac or Rudna-Glava have categorized the result of the interviews and have presented them to the rest of the participants.

### Group 1

Donji-Milanovac

Interviews with the representative of the local tourism organization, a restaurant owner and the director of the local Lepenski Vir hotel

<b>Strengths</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Existing tourism facilities (hotels, restaurants, homestays)</li><li>• Tourist organization</li><li>• Basic cooperation with three other municipalities on the concept of the Danube Riviera</li><li>• Attractive scenery (Danube, Djerdap NP)</li><li>• Cultural assets (Lepenski Vir Neolithic settlement, castle)</li><li>• Traditional customs (Bučka, gold washing, woodwork)</li><li>• Festivals, manifestations, sailing regattas</li><li>• Hotel offers attractive prices for the low-season</li></ul>	<b>Weaknesses</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lack in cooperation between tourist office, NP authority, hotel and local people (unprofessional behaviour and communication)</li><li>• Lack of touristic information points and signs</li><li>• No local NGO or other institution</li><li>• Poor waste management</li><li>• Language problems</li><li>• Lack of education and awareness raising</li><li>• Infrastructure problems</li><li>• Poor marketing</li><li>• No tourism products</li><li>• Target groups are not defined to appropriate offers</li><li>• Low food quality</li></ul>
<b>Opportunities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Investments in agriculture</li><li>• Growing interest in alternative forms of tourism</li><li>• Possibilities for EU funding</li><li>• Cross-border EU accession projects</li><li>• Incentives for economic development from the government</li><li>• The NP authority changes its management</li><li>• Recently built water treatment plant</li><li>• Creation of a waste dump</li><li>• International agreements</li></ul>	<b>Threats</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Poor infrastructure</li><li>• Hunting tourism</li><li>• Political instability</li><li>• Pollution of the Danube</li><li>• External investments are none</li><li>• Bird flu</li><li>• No member of the EU (legal obstacles, visa)</li><li>• Hydropower plant (environment, water level)</li></ul>

## Group 2

### Donji–Milanovac

Interviews with the owner of a private accommodation, the deputy–director of Djerdap NP the major of the local municipality and Boban Milenkovic, local owner of a private accommodation

#### Strengths

- Djerdap NP
- Archeological sites
- Danube
- Festivals
- Climate (abundance of sunny days)
- Cultural history of Donji–Milanovac
- Lepenski Vir hotel and the tourism image of Donji–Milanovac originating from the past
- Hospitality of the local people
- International bicycle network is passing by
- Domestic natural products
- A constant availability of clean drinking water is assured
- Tourism agency
- Private accommodation possibilities
- Contacts with universities

#### Weaknesses

- Poor waste management
- No tourism offers
- Poor infrastructure connections
- Lack of information
- Poor knowledge of foreign languages
- Poor marketing
- Insufficient communication between the NP authority and authorities
- Low awareness of local people about tourism
- The work of the NP is not clearly visible to the public
- Insufficient marked trails and shelters
- Not enough capacity for writing and setting up projects

#### Opportunities

- Developing touristic routes
- Developing alternative kinds of tourism
- Cooperation with other national parks
- Summer schools for children
- Local people start to get interested in offering private accommodation
- Availability of EU funding
- Raising taxes (eco–taxes)
- Expanding the current offer of festivals and working together with other villages on organizing events
- Active civil society

#### Threats

- Local people do not like the restrictions due to the NP
- Municipality plans for tourism
- Visas
- Increasing flow of ships on the Danube
- Serbian Riviera Plan
- Misunderstanding of the concept of sustainable tourism
- No plan about the carrying capacity when a sudden growth of tourism will take place
- Djerdap NP management plans focuses on wood cutting and hunting alone

### Group 3

Rudna–Glava

Interviews with the mayor of the village, the director of the local school, the owner of a restaurant and Miljan Vuletic and Marija Krisanovic, representatives of a local NGO

<b>Strengths</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Close to the EU</li><li>• Access by roads and rivers</li><li>• Unique natural and cultural assets</li><li>• Close to tourist paths (Djerdap NP)</li><li>• Festivals, sport events</li><li>• Start of the manufacture of local products</li></ul>	<b>Weaknesses</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Insufficient marketing</li><li>• Mountainous landscape makes access difficult (creating trails and provide safe hiking conditions)</li><li>• No trained staff in the village</li><li>• Language problems</li><li>• Lack of a tourism infrastructure</li><li>• Skeptical mentality</li><li>• Lack of finances to start up businesses</li><li>• Too centralized organization</li></ul>
<b>Opportunities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Marking trails</li><li>• Facilitate start-up grants</li><li>• Enforce regulations concerning the former coal mine</li><li>• Organize marketing</li><li>• Developing a common strategy for sustainable tourism in the NP and buffer zone</li><li>• Training local volunteers to participate in the preservation of tourist attractions</li><li>• Offering more private accommodation</li><li>• Popularize traditional events</li><li>• Develop agriculture to serve as a supplier</li><li>• Increase the number of stakeholders</li><li>• Create a museum</li></ul>	<b>Threats</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Forestry, wood cutting near tourist attractions</li><li>• Coal production polluting air and water</li><li>• Ruining tourist attractions due to insufficient protection</li><li>• Few representatives of the different groups of stakeholders</li></ul>

The results from this SWOT analyses will be used for further reference by the NGOs working on sustainable development in Đerdap NP, mainly Milka Gvozdenovic from Young Researchers of Serbia and Miljan Vuletic and Marija Krisanovic from a local NGO. Further on it will be used as an example for illustrating the manual on tourism assessment.

### End of the meeting

The meeting has been formally ended in the early afternoon with a two-hour excursion by boat on the Danube River, arranged by Milka Gvozdenovic.

# Appendix

SWOT assessment  
Draft NGO statement for the Belgrade Conference  
List of participants

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## SWOT assessment

### Technical proceedings

The SWOT Analysis is an effective tool for assessing the current situation. It is necessary for developing a master plan, a strategy or operation program for a distinct region, town or any other location. It helps to determine existing gaps, potentials and risks as well as to identify the desired direction of future development. It serves as a foundation for further planning and development in any sector. This applies to business and town management as well as tourism development. When implementing the SWOT method, four basic groups of factors can be identified.

These can be put in two main groups:

#### *Internal factors* (strengths and weaknesses)

Factors that are inherent to a region, society, project or other units; they can be influenced or changed, they are present in a given territory, their owners are identifiable, etc.

#### *External factors* (opportunities and threats)

Factors that are outside of an analyzed region (organization, project or feature), we cannot influence. They can however have an effect on any of the areas examined

	Internal	External
+	Strengths	Opportunities
-	Weaknesses	Threats

### General proceeding of a SWOT Analysis

1. Taking the inventory: determining the current situation by carrying out surveys and investigations; gathering all accessible facts and information
2. Drawing the SWOT Chart: evaluation of the current situation by identifying the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Include any of the acquired facts in one of the above described groups of factors.
3. Outlining a further strategy (plan, procedure and program) with the aim to:
  - Promote strengths and/or use them
  - Eliminate weaknesses
  - Use the opportunities offered
  - Eliminate threats

Carrying out a SWOT Analysis remains the same for every purpose. Only the thematic areas to be evaluated change depending on the field you are working for.

### **Frequent mistakes when realizing a SWOT**

- Not distinguishing between the strengths and opportunities, or between weaknesses and threats. This means that the authors do not follow the essential principle. This is that the strengths and weaknesses should refer to the internal features of the analyzed object, while the opportunities and threats refer to the external situation, in which the analyzed object is situated.
- Steps to be taken instead of opportunities: It is wrong to believe that opportunities are in fact possibilities or steps that should be taken to improve the analyzed object.
- SWOT without participation of residents: The involvement of the local population is important in all steps of tourism planning. They are the most eligible persons for the analysis of the region, because they have an inside view of what activities and services are missing. In addition, they should get involved in the strategy preparation, thus increasing the sense of “public ownership” of the strategy.

### **Contents**

In order to assess whether tourism is worth developing in a region, a broad range of information is needed as basis, which comprises aspects of both, tourism supply (potential heritage sites, business structure, infrastructure...) and tourism demand (potential markets, visitor target groups...).

### **Tourism Supply**

#### *Natural and cultural heritage / feature*

- Inventory
- Assessing tourism potential
- Vulnerability and potential carrying capacity

#### *Stakeholders*

- Identification of stakeholders (5 main categories: see analysis sheet)
- Assessment of their views and potential capacity

#### *Existing infrastructure*

- Quantification
- Assessment

#### *Existing legislation and policy priorities*

### **Tourism Demand**

- Looking for potential markets
- Assessing current markets
- Identifying the image of the area amongst outsiders

# Statement

This statement explains the opinion of a network of international NGOs that together foster a uniform approach towards the implementation of sustainable tourism in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE).

Tourism is not considered a threat but a chance to get beyond the negative issues it is very often associated with. Indeed we regard tourism, albeit in a *sustainable* form, as a positive starting point for a substantial contribution to and understanding of sustainable development. We are positive about any intention to implement a more sustainable form of tourism and acknowledge the economic, environmental and social benefits it generates.

What is of concern however is the implementation of sustainable tourism within the context of a substantial growth of tourism. Considering a competitive tourism industry as a stimulating factor for economic development and social cohesion seems to lack some of the essentials of sustainable development. Mass tourism for instance causes serious stress to the carrying capacities of local communities. It can threaten the viability of the local economy, disintegrate social cohesion and diminish a community's wellbeing.

What do we like to see prioritized?

Only support communities, businesses and visitors that want to invest in sustainable tourism. Harmonize a destination's economic viability and competitiveness with the local natural and cultural carrying capacities. The latter represent a destination's attractiveness, while income from tourism can be a substantial source of financing the preservation of these merits.

Develop a strong tourism management and planning involving the opinion of all stakeholders. Support that visitors, communities and businesses enjoy the benefits of tourism in order to provide a fulfilling wellbeing. Recognize every individual's idea about how sustainable tourism can be improved on a local level.

Develop a common branding only to be used by businesses that meet the rules for sustainable tourism. Stimulate local supply chains and greater investment in people and skills. Ensure a widespread distribution of economic and social benefits from tourism among all the stakeholders.

Encourage the use of recycling, lower energy consumption and clean techniques. Recognize the natural and cultural characteristics of a region and increase the appreciation and conservation of these values. Encourage every step made by every individual towards a more sustainable form of tourism.

These challenges are set to inspire. It is our intention to visualize an alternative approach, to combine the benefits of tourism with the ones of sustainable development. The first step to take is encouraging people to invest in a form of tourism that requires adaptation. An adaptation not only to economic, socio-cultural or environmental challenges, but also to each others interests.

The process towards sustainable tourism should however not be seen as a bitter pill to be taken in the prospect of prosperity and wellbeing. It is neither a restricting process of limitations, nor is it necessarily the cure for every problem.

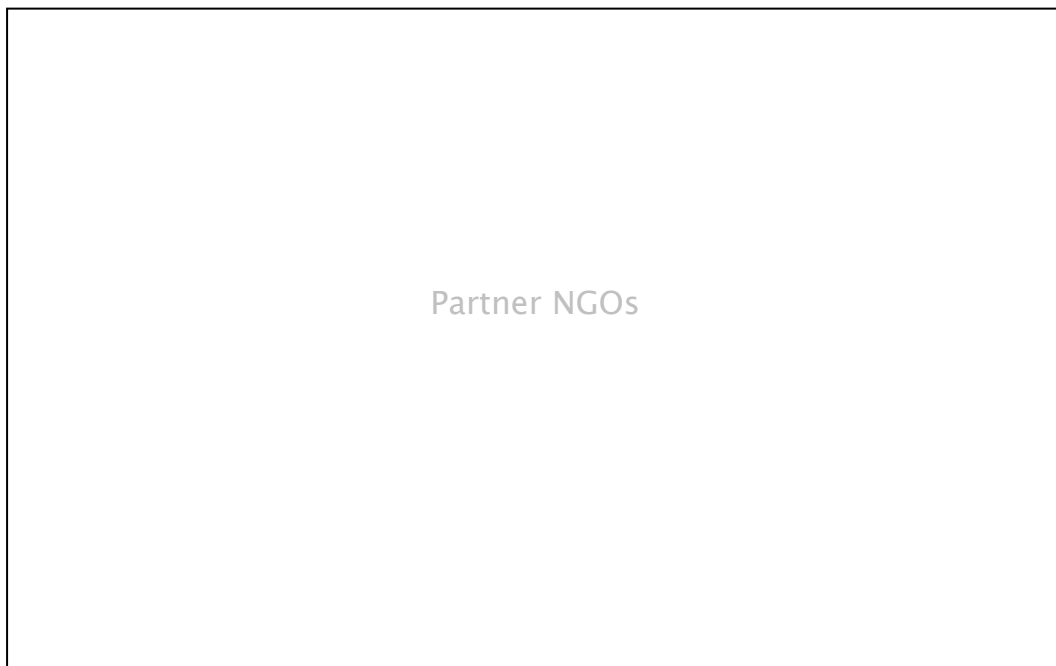
What we believe sustainable tourism represents, is a harmony between visitors and communities, between local and global businesses and between resources that are used and between those that are generated or protected.

Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) provides great opportunities for implementing sustainable tourism. The CEE region is recognized by both the European Union (EU) and this NGO network as one of Europe's regions most privileged in both natural and cultural heritage. It's a region with strong cultural identities nestled in traditional communities, while at the same time witnessing economical and political developments in a global context.

All the elements for a successful growth of tourism one might say and indeed many visitors have already enjoyed the wonderfully preserved cities and splendid countryside in the CEE region. And they should continue to do so in our opinion.

It is therefore necessary to recognize the benefits of sustainable tourism and to support any initiative, public or private, within this context. The CEE region will provide a perfect background for developing the kind of successful projects sustainable tourism needs to develop itself.

And to prove it works the way we think it does.



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