

# Minutes of the Training on Strategic Tourism Development of the CEEWEB Sustainable Tourism Working Group



Remetea | Trascau Mountains | Romania  
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Edited by

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**CEEWEB Sustainable Tourism Working Group 2007**

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# Day 1

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

- Opening of the meeting
- Introduction of the participants
- Goals and agenda of the training
- Presentation on Trascau Mountains. *Horatiu Popa, Green Echoes Association, Calin Pop, Albamont*

## Start of the training

- Common Ground: Discussion on basics of sustainable tourism & introduction on strategic tourism development. *Kristina Vilimaite, Katrin Gebhard*
  - Strategic Tourism Development: Why to plan & how to plan. *Katrin Gebhard, ETE*
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## Meeting of the CEEWEB Sustainable Tourism Working Group (STWG)

### Opening of the Meeting

Horatiu Popa and Katrin Gebhard welcomed the participants and gave a short introduction of the workshop.

### Introduction of the participants

Representatives of NGOs from Bulgaria, Romania, Macedonia, Serbia and Poland working in the areas of tourism were divided into pairs to prepare short presentations of each other. Their expectations connected to the workshop concentrated on sharing experiences from various countries, networking and learning about tourism development planning.

### Presentation of the goals and agenda of the training

Kristina Vilimaite presented the agenda and goals of the training, i.e. introducing strategic tourism development to the participants, and confronted it with their expectations.

### Presentation on Trascau Mountains (Horatiu Popa, Calin Pop)

Horatiu Popa and Calin Pop shortly presented the Trascau Mountains region, where the workshop had been held. They gave basic information on geography, history and biodiversity of the region and introduced local people, traditions and already existing tourism infrastructure and offers.

The presentation led to a discussion on the type of tourism welcome in the area, especially on bikers and off-road tourists.

## Start of the workshop

Common Ground: discussion on the basics of sustainable tourism & introduction on strategic tourism development (Kristina Vilimaite, Katrin Gebhard)

In order to check the understanding of sustainable tourism among the participants and wanting to explain them the need of strategic tourism planning, the participants were divided into groups and given roles to play in a discussion on tourism (roles: mayor, protected area staff, local entrepreneur, outside investor).

Katrin and Kristina asked the following questions:

Why do you want sustainable tourism to be developed?

- better management of the protected area and tourism
- improve employment situation
- keep ownership of land, preserve it for future use
- keep traditions
- have money for family
- cooperation of local people
- preserve traditional way of living
- long-term position on the market
- impact assessment for better management
- info center for protected area
- get better public infrastructure (roads)
- encourage locals to access funding
- build capacity of locals
- get more tourists from abroad
- build partnerships
- preserve protected area
- facilitate development of tourism services through education of locals
- use a market niche
- open new areas for tourism
- alternative to unsustainable tourism developments
- income for protected area
- provide alternative income for locals in order not to allow unsustainable use of resources
- preserve ambience and authenticity of locals
- develop for "green" market niche
- access funds
- better marketing, eco-brand
- prevent depopulation
- get tourists from the country

What problems might come along with sustainable tourism development?

- (too many) tourists endanger environment
- lose money due to market fluctuations
- resistance of locals to nay type of tourism development
- fake culture, commercialisation, traditions not living
- lack of agreement inside the community – danger of external investors/competition
- infrastructure not in line with development (roads)

- mass phenomena of individual services (impacts accumulation)
- development gets more complex
- capacity of people to deal with the development in integrated way
- segregative thinking
- competition between locals
- trust-related problems
- cultural drift – locals take over the way of life of the city people (threat to the traditional way of life)
- lack of human resources
- need for fast money
- “others should do it”
- lots of effort – start of small successes attracts external competition
- too rapid or one-sided development
- property sold for second homes (change to a holiday resort)
- lack of marketing and customers
- debts
- changes in socio-economic-political structure
- conflict of interests
- misunderstanding of sustainable tourism – expansion and unsuccessful development
- overreliance on tourism

Katrin summed up that tourism development might bring both, good and bad results, what implies the need of proper management and strategic development.

### Strategic Tourism Development: Why to plan & how to plan (Katrin Gebhard)

Katrin started with defining tourism management as an integrative approach aiming at minimising negative impacts of tourism while optimising profits for the local communities and their environment and the explanation of its goals.

She mentioned the reasons for strategic planning (e.g. to decide on the future development according to the interests and needs of the people, to create benefits and to protect natural and cultural heritage) and presented some definitions of a strategy (e.g. a long term plan of action designed to achieve a particular goal).

She mentioned Tourism Development and Management Plans (to be later presented by Stephanie Roth), explained that a strategy has to be long-term and, as a framework for the plans, elaborated earlier.

Further Katrin presented the basic elements of a strategy:

- Assessment
- Vision, Goals and Objectives
- Framework Conditions
- Action Plan (incl. activities, time table and responsibilities)
- Monitoring and Review

The need of assessment preparation was discussed – it is putting the information together necessary for the decision “to do/not to do”, setting the realistic objectives and further becomes the basis for monitoring. Polina Kireva mentioned “the rule of 5 Ps”: Proper Preparation Prevents Poor Performance.

Ways of assessing the situation mentioned by Katrin:

- inventory

- SWOT analysis (mentioned was the importance of understanding the difference between Strengths–Weaknesses and Opportunities–Threats: the first concern the inside situation, the latter outside)
- benchmarking
- designing of scenarios

Framework conditions are: the approach, international and national processes and related strategies (e.g. CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism).

Vision, goals and objectives are the way of identifying the direction of development. Katrin mentioned the differences between them, especially the fact of a vision being rather an unrealistic, ideal and not necessarily achievable imagined future state. The terminology concerning the issue was discussed (differences, “deliverables”).

Kristina presented the methodology of a visioning exercise and asked the participants to imagine future state of tourism development in their areas. She explained that the aim of the exercise is achieving a common vision of all the stakeholders. After having their own visions, the participants should draw them, present and find common points.

Mentioned was visioning in a way of drawing one common “vision” on one piece of paper, followed by commenting on post-it papers, and the key-point of not-talking during the exercise.

The following discussion raised also the issue of obstacles (e.g. limited imagination), necessity of facilitation (exercise was found “tricky”), impossibility of applying it in a conflict situation and necessity of being preceded by an assessment.

Katrin stated that action plan is important as a “checklist” of timeframe and responsibility, and the monitoring system requires identification of criteria and needs to be connected with all the other parts of the strategy.

Katrin mentioned some of the basic requirements for strategy and tourism management/development plans:

- stakeholders involvement
- target group specific design
- bottom-up approach (if possible)
- approval and ownership by stakeholders.

Stakeholder involvement and target group identification lead to broad applicability and acceptance of the worked out document. The bottom-up approach, in comparison to the top-down one, means the initiative of public and stakeholders and provides the feeling of “owning” the strategy/plan.

In the discussion Stephanie raised the necessity of stakeholder involvement into planning from the very beginning, a strategy/plan should not be an outside initiative; if they are involved they would follow their own vision (Stephanie, Polina).

These can be achieved with the usage of consensus decision making – the idea was explained by Kristina Vilimaite.

Kristina and Katrin asked the participants to divide into three groups and take a decision in the way of achieving consensus on the following issue:

You are a group of experts in tourism development invited to help a community to start developing tourism in sustainable way. The local mayor gave you a list of persons that are willing to get involved in developing tourism. You can only invite 10 persons to the first meeting. Please choose from the list:

- A local leader that really speaks a lot
- Woman that is well known for singing well
- Very smart but ill-tempered tourism expert
- Locally very much respected pessimist
- Local bar owner
- A man and a woman from a local NGO (they only come if both are invited)
- Woman from a local planning authority
- Woman from a regional development board
- Woman that teaches others to make local handicrafts
- Man that recently learned to make local handicrafts
- Consultant that helped municipality to get EU funding for a playground
- Primary school teacher
- Mother in law of the mayor
- A painter
- IT specialist
- Journalist from a local newspaper
- Man that owns a bakery
- A foreigner woman that has just inherited a big house that is on a cultural heritage list
- Man from a producers cooperative
- Woman from a protected area administration.

The results of group work were quite similar concerning the people chosen, but the methodology was different. One of the groups simply voted, one prioritised the stakeholders, one reached consensus on 8 out of 10 places (all the groups stated the reason was lack of time).

The participants agreed that achieving consensus, though being useful and including all the stakeholders into the process, requires a lot of time and is not always possible.

# Day 2

## Continuation of the training

- Tourism management plans & other tools for strategic tourism development. *Stephanie Roth, ETE*

## Excursion: Hiking in Trascau Mountains

## Continuation of the training

- Community fundraising, *Chris Worman, Agora*
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## Tourism management plans & other tools for strategic tourism development (Stephanie Roth)

Stephanie started with the presentation of basic goals of tourism management plan:

- Influences and controls tourism development
- Decreases the threats to the natural and cultural environment
- Provides sustainable alternatives.

She stated that tourism management plan is a written document created in a consultative process and showed some descriptions and information about it, and presented 8 steps towards it:

- Getting started
- Identifying & Working with Key Stakeholders
- Baseline Information
- Vision & Goals
- Objectives & Work Program
- Impact Assessment & Impact Management
- Monitoring & Review
- Approval & implementation

Important is that the plan is elaborated with the involvement of stakeholders, and the socio-economic impacts outside the protected area. The plan may be approved and implemented by some authority, but it's not the main goal.

Important is the proper impact assessment – Stephanie offered to send a presentation of a good assessment to the interested participants. Assessments should be based on the data both from inside and outside protected area (satellite photos, socio-economical data), they help in establishing proper monitoring system development and is necessary for choosing what we want to work on.

Stephanie further presented an example of a Tourism Management Plan that has just been elaborated within ETE's GEF project in Babia Gora (Poland).

The project "Tourism for Nature" ([www.tourism4nature.org](http://www.tourism4nature.org)) is being realised in three biosphere reserves in Poland, Czech Republic and Hungary.

ETE found Biosphere Reserves good frameworks for tourism management: quite often protected areas staff wants to develop tourism, but they have mandate only inside the protected area, outside it the support of community is needed. Necessary is the assessment of socio-economical impacts of tourism

outside the protected area. PA managers either do not have a mandate to properly develop tourism, don't want to get involved or are not allowed to do it.

The model initiative in Babia Gora take place in the Biosphere Reserve, protected area, its buffer zone and transition zone, where the Biosphere Reserves concept had not been implemented earlier.

Excursion: Hiking in Trascau Mountains

Community fundraising (Chris Worman)

# Day 3

## Continuation of the training

- Presentation of results of the tourism potential assessment – JtD Project: Serbia. *Ivan Svetozarevic*
- Presentation of results of the tourism potential assessment – JtD Project: Bulgaria *Polina Kireva, Jordanka Dineva, Ivan Kamburov*
- Presentation of results of the tourism potential assessment – JtD Project: Romania. *Horatiu Popa*
- Group work: Identification of options for tourism development in the presented project sites
- News from CEEweb office & work program 2008
- Evaluation of the meeting and workshop
- Conclusions & closure of the meeting

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Presentation of results of the tourism potential assessment – JtD Project: Serbia (Ivan Svetozarevic)

Presentation of results of the tourism potential assessment – JtD Project: Bulgaria (Polina Kireva, Jordanka Dineva, Ivan Kamburov)

Presentation of results of the tourism potential assessment – JtD Project: Romania (Horatiu Popa)

Group work: Identification of options for tourism development in the presented project sites

Evaluation of the meeting and workshop

Participants evaluated the training using the method of an evaluation tree. The results are as follows:

good	medium	bad
Facilitation		
you are becoming better and better in facilitation; teach us too	facilitation improved but still could have been stronger; discipline	
very good		
minding the time		
good		
good and warm		
perfect		
Structure of the training		

very good to see part result of part evaluation; good use of “active work” and energisers	leave a half of the day for part of the meetings that turned out to be much more of interest and for additional things	
well organised with good timing	ok, little bit longer than I expected	
	need minutes	
	good	
<b>Food and logistics</b>		
Great pleasure and more info about Romania and Transylvania	Printed short Romanian-English list of expressions (thank you, good day)	
Really nice and food almost like my mother’s	No time after lunch	
Multumesc		
Delicious! No time after lunch		
Good to be removed from the retrace! Better focus and attention		
I’m loving it		
Very good to see where local community is with/at tourism facilities		
Too delicious food		
Food was perfect		
Good offer and big meals all these days		
multumesc		
<b>Trascau Mountains and the hike</b>		
Perfect (but too short)	Bad the management	
Now I know why you want to show these mountains to others	Mountains are beautiful and trip was refreshing but too short	
Beautiful		
Just great		
<b>Community fundraising</b>		
Very good ideas; useful		
Good and useful		
I am looking forward to establish SE in Apuseni		
Very good presentation		
<b>Preparing the ground</b>		
	Too little time	
	Medium - nothing else to add	
	Some good ideas, but much info was already known	
<b>WS: strategy (visioning/consensus)</b>		

Good, interesting, with a lot of practical exercises	Could have been more concrete	Too basic – lecture format made technical subject a bit dull
Interesting exercises	interesting	
Helpful to try it	Not so clear	
Interesting	Effective exercises	
<b>WS: Tourism Management Planning</b>		
Too general, but good	Pretty good	
	Really interesting, need more focus	
	Right after food – no concentration	
	Too short time	
	I needed it a bit more practical – I'm not sure how to apply it	
	Too less time	
	Ok	
	Needed interaction – not all lecture to be clear	
<b>Tools for planning</b>		
Excellent	Not concrete examples	
Good idea with the work groups	Your presentations about branding and fundraising were too general	
Very interesting, could have needed more time	More time	
<b>Assessment presentations</b>		
The best part		Lack of info and preparation time on assessments (hard to comment or contribute)
Exiting and interesting		Not clear enough
Experience exchange		
<b>WS: Future options for project sites</b>		
Good new ideas		
Great		
Really good		
Good ideas and hopefully results		
Interesting to see how it is going and what is the situation in the countries		
Brought up more ideas for project site		
Useful		

## News from CEEweb office & work program 2008

Kristina shortly presented the history of the Sustainable Tourism Working Group and Joining the Dots project (2006–2007) and the news from CEEweb itself.

She mentioned:



- the change of the name of the network: from “Central and East European Working Group for the Enhancement of Biodiversity” to “CEEweb for Biodiversity”
- establishment of the Policy Working Group
- work on Tourism Protocol and Strategy of the Carpathian Convention
- opportunity to participate in the meetings of other Working Groups for the interested members
- plans of CEEweb to work on the EU policy level

Kristina presented the possibility of organising two Working Group meetings and workshops in 2008, asking participants to give the ideas of workshops they would like to have.

The results of the brainstorming are as follow:

- brand development
- facilitation and conflict management
- participatory tools
- basic (tourism) business skills and financial instruments
- product development
- marketing and public relations
- tourism in the EU (policies, sustainability, structures, CBD guidelines, “insider” knowledge)
- fundraising

In the way of prioritising the participants chose the ones they found the most useful:

1. tourism in the EU (policies, sustainability, structures, CBD guidelines, “insider” knowledge)
2. basic (tourism) business skills and financial instruments
3. product development
4. marketing and public relations
5. facilitation and conflict management

## Conclusions & closure of the meeting

Kristina Vilimaite and Katrin Gebhard closed the meeting and wished all the participants merry Christmas and happy New Year.

## Appendix – List of participants

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