Minutes of CEEWEB Sustainable Tourism Working Group Meeting
Osijek/Croatia; April 2-4, 2006

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Minutes by: Kristina Vilimaite

Presentation of the organizations

1. Milka Gvozdenovic, Young Researchers of Serbia (Serbia and Montenegro)

The organization is mainly active in nature conservation and in general deals with topics related to environment and ecology. However, YRS sees sustainable tourism (ST) as an opportunity, especially as first steps for tourism in protected areas are currently taken in Serbia. YRS organizes summer camps, where it is possible to include some education on sustainable tourism into the programme... YRS is also an umbrella organization for other NGOs dealing with environmental research. Obedska Bara is an area with ST potential. Problem raised: in the curricula of tourism education ST is not included. It would be good to distribute brochures on ST in the high schools.

2. Tijana Spasic, Ecolibri Bionet (Serbia and Montenegro)

The organisation does not have a project on tourism, but wants to start working in this field. Some activities of the organisation: education, workshops on sustainable biodiversity conservation. The NGO is involved in the IUCN Green Belt project on Stara Planina (Old Mountains). The organisation has independently produced film about Stara Planina (Old Mountain on the border with Bulgaria) as a promotion material. It is film about cultural and natural heritage this area - area with sustainable tourism potential. National park Djeerdap (Iron Gate Gorge) is an interesting area for starting a project. Some plans for activities are developed together with the IUCN Green Belt Programme there. However for now they remain just plans because of the lack of funds.
3. Saska Bogdanova, Eco-mission (Macedonia)

The organisation does not have any projects on sustainable tourism yet, but there are no NGOs in Macedonia working in ST field, therefore it is a good opportunity to be a pioneer. So far, the organisation is as well focused on nature and environmental issues. National strategy on tourism development is being developed in Macedonia, Dragi Pop-Stojanov from MAKMONTANA is participating in the development of eco-tourism related parts. There is a potential for ST development in the country.

4. Kruno Kartus, Osijek Greens (Croatia)

Osjecki Zeleni have not done a project devoted to ST yet, but promoted some sites that do sustainable/eco tourism. The Croatian government is pushing for mass tourism and this way endangers protected areas. Current project: Journalist project application made. The essence of the project: a) identification of interesting sites, e.g. mills, b) bringing journalists there to write articles, that c) inspire local municipalities to renovate the sites for tourism development. Cooperation with two national parks (Papuk and ??) is difficult. At least in Papuk the management of the PA is likely to be sensitive to nature issues. Osijek Greens is a regional organization, but has good contacts at the national level.

5. Siim Kuresoo, Estonian Fund for Nature (Estonia)

Conservation, sustainable development and education are the main fields of ELF’s work. Siim is responsible for volunteers and sustainable holiday projects and represents his organization in the Estonian ecotourism association. The LIFE project on ST site development was implemented by ELF. The ELF is very closely linked and cooperating with the Estonian Eco-Tourism Association.

6. Maria Achkova, EO Rhodope (Bulgaria)

EO Rhodope is a local association which is active since 1995. Biodiversity conservation and tourism are two of their main areas of work. Further, some summer camps were organized. The organization runs a tourism information centre in a village (tourist information, local crafts and arts centre). There is an Association on Alternative Tourism existing in Bulgaria. Also a national strategy and regional plans for ecotourism exist, but the strategy, issued in 1993 has not been adopted by the Council of Ministers. Status of Rhodope Mountain is not clear, the western Rhodope is not protected. A proposal for the establishment of a protected area exists, but was blocked three years ago due to economic reasons (timber trade). Currently there is a resource use conflict between a mining company and environmentalists – at this stage sustainable tourism development could be proposed as a long-term economic alternative to mining.

7. Karmen Lopez-Quintana, Youth Environment Europe (YEE) (Czech Republic)

YEE has a working group on ST, chair of the working group – Nature Trust Malta. The cooperation between the working groups should be established. Kristina and Karmen will discuss the details separately.

Summary: Currently, more or less all organisation are focused on environmental topics and nature protection; sustainable tourism development is – if at all – still a side issue.

Goals of the STWG

First of all, the aim is to establish the core group with a common level of information and experience. The meeting participants confirmed the readiness to participate in the forthcoming meetings of the STWG in 2006.

The WG meetings could be organized for different geographical regions in the future.

As the WG receives core funding from EU, therefore the group has obligations to report about the activities and achievements. The Chair requested to receive a short report from each organization (from each of the WG
members) about the experience gained and how it is used in their organizations and their countries. The report should be approximately half a page long. The participants confirmed that they are ready to provide such a report before the next CEEWEB Annual Meeting.

The members will also think what projects can be included into the CEEWEB annual report (either related to the ST or other projects in line with CEEWEB goals, with photos).

The STWG benefits to a great extend from the work of the GEF Project “Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity through Sound Tourism Development in Biosphere Reserves in Central and Eastern Europe”, which is currently undertaken by E.T.E. and national partners in the countries Poland, Hungary and Czech Republic. Within the scope of this project, technical reports have been produced on the topics of tourism management planning, trail guidelines, training for sustainable tourism, etc. which now serve as background documents for the workshops held in the STWG. The GEF Project and the STWG are therefore complementing each other in an excellent way by sharing and distributing experiences in and knowledge on sustainable tourism all over CEE/SEE countries.

Country reports

The template for the country fact sheets on the situation of sustainable tourism was revised. The members of the working group decided to prepare the country reports for the next working group meeting (deadline of submission to Katrin: two weeks before the next meeting).

For the revised template please refer to the Annex 1. The template with suggested sources (international and national) will be sent around as well as the Omelan report.

All organisations which belong to the Balkan should think about their contribution to the Balkan Convention. It was proposed to think about writing a Balkan report (based on the appropriate country reports) as preparatory material. This issue will be discussed in more detail during the next STWG meeting.

SWOT training

During the WG meeting a training on SWOT analysis was done, with a study trip to the nearby town of Djakovo.

SWOT Homework

On the proposal of Michael the WG members agreed to make a SWOT for an area back home. The deadline is together with the Country Reports (two weeks before the next meeting). Kruno will finalise the SWOT for Djakovo.

A short SWOT will be done in the next meeting.

Next meetings

Location and date of the next meeting

Two possibilities will have to be considered regarding the location of the next WG meeting. First priority: National Park Eifel, Germany near Köln. – Date: June 11-14, 2006

Second priority: National Park Babia Gora, South of Poland – Date: June 4-7, 2006 (but June 6 is not good for Tijana) or June 7-10 may be an option if does not conflict with Kristina’s calendar.

Germany is the first priority, but depends on the availability of additional funding sources for the trip from the home town of the participants to the next airport of a low-fare airline (Germanwings, SkyEurope, Wizzair,
The members will check the possibility to co-finance the trip to Germany and will send the decision of their organisation to Katrin by Wednesday, April 12.

Third meeting

Impact assessment and Impact Management will be the topics of the third meeting. So far, two options have been proposed by the chair for the location of this meeting: the biosphere reserve Menorca (Spain) or a biosphere reserve on an island near Naples (Italy). Additional proposals are welcome, but the location has to be within a biosphere reserve. It should take place at the end of October. Further the chair is currently discussing the possibility of co-funding this meeting by UNESCO, which at the same time means the extension of the meeting group by additional participants.

Publications

A The publications on specific ST related topics

In total, three publications will be prepared. Covered by the trainings, their topics will be the SWOT analysis, Product development and Impact assessment and management. They will be published on the Internet in English and in local languages (at www.CEEWEB.org and websites of the members). While the publications will not be printed in a printing house, the version for printing with an office printer will be downloadable from the Internet.

**Target group of the publication:** regional NGOs and other stakeholders that can influence the sustainability of tourism (municipalities, academia, etc.)

The publications will serve as material for trainings when translated to local languages.

The theory should be presented through an example – how SWOT was done in a specific area, how local people were involved, what results were achieved. Some theory should be provided in parallel to the case study. Short examples from other countries can be included. The length – approx 6-7 pages (with photos it can be a little longer). **The participants confirmed that they will be able to translate the publications to local languages.**

The Serbian example (Zasavica) will be used as the main case study, the SWOTs prepared by all countries as homework may be used as side examples.

**Kristina, Milka and Katrin will develop the case study core.** They will start working on the topic on 27th of April. The goal is to have an advanced draft before the next WG meeting, so that it can be finalised then.

B The brochure on sustainable tourism

The brochure should first of all present the concept and the benefits of sustainable tourism. It should also promote the STWG of CEEWEB.

It will be prepared in English and in local languages and printed in a printing house. It should be high quality and a full colour publication. Ideally, it should be printed in all CEEWEB member’s languages, but it may happen that due to financial reasons some language versions will not be printed this year, but the following year.

Kristina will send to the STWG the size and other details about the brochure. Afterwards, all members are asked to check with the publishing houses they typically work with, the costs for printing. So, finally the cheapest printing house can be found for printing the brochure.
The deadline for the publication is October, as CEEWEB will have a stand at the COP 1 of the Carpathian Convention, which provides a perfect opportunity to present the brochure to the public. Kristina will make the timeline with the tasks and deadlines.

**Layout/Contents**

The brochure should look like an unfolding tourist map. The map will present an imaginary sustainable tourism area. The icons – tourist attractions, infrastructure, etc. will be described in such a way that it explains concept and benefits of sustainable tourism.

Side 1: the map and icons will be described in general way.
Side 2: Cover of the map; all the members of the working group will be presented here with their logo and 5 sentences of description; also the work programme of the WG will be shortly outlined. Alternatively, it was discussed that the icons presented in general on the map can be illustrated with concrete examples from different countries (photos and description).

For the draft list of icons for the map please refer to Annex 2.

**The WG for the development of the brochure: Kristina, Maria, Milka, Dimitar.**

**Projects**

**Funding sources**

- Embassies
- Socrates - small grants for meetings and other small actions. Their Neighbourhood programme allows including some organizations from the countries outside EU. Next deadline in September. Possible to negotiate the activities with the national Socrates agencies.
- GEF, through implementing agencies – UNEP and UNDP. Small and medium size projects. E.g. 200,000 USD in many countries in Balkans.
- UNEP has own funds (50,000USD). ETE can support in developing proposals and establishing contacts with UNEP national and regional offices.
- UNESCO has small amounts of money, as well as UNESCO Venice office.
- Dutch Swish, Norwegian funds, USAID.
- Trans-boundary cooperation project can attract a lot of matching funds.

**Project ideas**

- “Biking/hiking the Balkans” – development of ST sites along the biking/hiking paths. In such case international and national funding can be easily combined.
- capacity building
- two pilot projects (proposals should be developed till the Annual Meeting)
- interaction between big cities with nearby protected areas.

*Deadline for preparing the list of national funding sources – two weeks before the next meeting.*

**Pilot projects**

Especially those sites are of interest, where ST is needed or where the local population is already aware of the opportunities ST might offer to them. Other criteria: protected area (IUCN), preferably trans-boundary, but not necessarily, should be in an area without current ST projects, any country.

The pilot phase of the project should follow the logic of the trainings – gathering background info, figuring out the problem with stakeholders, stakeholder awareness building, and action plan. This would lead to the development of a full scale project.

Note: A pilot project is like a seed. If it grows, it may have a real impact on the country.
Networking tools

Newsletter “Diversity”

One page in each issue will be devoted to the achievements of the WG. For example in April a short report about the meeting appears, in June the country reports and the SWOT publication are promoted, and later other publications will follow (kind of capacity building articles written).

Distribution of the newsletter: the contact data can be collected, but it would be the best to ask the contact persons (especially in the case of NGOs) if they wish to receive the newsletter in PDF or printed.

Web

“Tell a friend” option can be included to the CEEWEB website.
A password-protected member area for the group would be useful.
A short description of the activities of the member organisations and logos should be included into the members list. The same goes for the ST brochure – Kristina will send the corresponding template.

Other means of communication
Communication through Skype, voipstunt (and ICQ) are possible and desireable. Thus, all members will send their nicknames/addresses for those tools to Katrin till April 14, so that we can publish online.

Sub-regional groups

The Chair raised a question, that it would potentially be better for the group to have sub-regional meetings (North Europe, Carpathian countries and Balkan countries). The group did not object, but decided to postpone this decision to a later stage, when more organisations from the Carpathians and Northern Europe are present in the meeting. The question will be revisited at the next meeting.

CADSES

In the framework of the CADSES project, CEEWEB and ETE will be drafting a strategy for ST development in the Carpathians and will elaborate the corresponding sustainable tourism protocol to the Carpathian Convention. Both should be ready for the COP2 in 2008. The STWG will be involved at the very early stage – NGO consultation meetings will be organised for collecting NGO input to the first draft. All NGOs will have a great influence on the process.

Election of the 2nd co-chair

Mira has resigned, therefore the second co-chair of the WG has to be elected. The election was postponed for the next time. The second co-chair could be from a Carpathian country.
Summary: Tasks, Deadlines and Responsibilities

Country Reports
- All members of the working group will prepare the country reports for the next working group meeting → deadline of submission to Katrin: two weeks before the next meeting!
- The Omelan Report will be sent to all members as background document for the reports

Sustainable Tourism Country Fact Sheets
- deadline: June, 8

Next meeting
- all members will check the possibility to co-finance the trip to Germany and will send the decision of their organisation to Katrin by Wednesday, April 12

The publications on specific ST related topics
- Kristina, Milka and Katrin will develop the case study core. The goal is to have an advanced draft before the next WG meeting, so that it can be finalised then

The publication sustainable tourism
- The WG for the development of the brochure: Kristina, Maria, Milka, Goce
- Deadline: October, corresponding to COP 1 Carpathian Convention

National Funding Sources
- Deadline two weeks before the next meeting

Communication
- all members will send their nicknames/addresses for those tools to Katrin till April 14, so that we can publish online
Annex 1

CEEWEB STWG: Sustainable Tourism Country Fact Sheets

The goal of the exercise is to collect a comparable set of information on sustainable tourism situation for the countries represented in the working group. This will be useful for the working group members when planning country or region specific activities, and also for other interest groups working on sustainable tourism in CEE and SEE. The country fact sheets will be reviewed by the CEEWEB office, laid-out and published on the Internet. At a later stage they can serve for preparing analytical regional reports, e.g. for the Balkans.

Please follow these simple rules when collecting information:

- Mention reference sources for all the figures provided in the report.
- Wherever possible, statistical information should be provided in tables, CEEWEB will make the graphs, charts, etc.
- When filling in the template please provide the answer to the question immediately under the question.
- The following sources may be useful when collecting information:
  - Economic chamber of the country
  - Statistical office
  - Ministries of Environment, Agriculture, Forestry, Economy, Tourism
  - National branch of the World Tourism Organization
  - UN, World Bank country reports, publications of EU EEA.

Deadline: June 8.

Template for collecting sustainable tourism situation in xxx country

A. General information

- What is the area of the country in km²?
- What is the population of the country? Please provide the latest available data and indicate the year.
- What is the ethnical composition of the population (in percentage).
- Please provide information about the land use in the country, i.e. forests, agriculture land, urban areas, etc. (in percentage).
- What percentage of the territory of the country is protected?
- List the protected areas in the country according to IUCN categories.

B. Economic information (general and tourism related)

- What is the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country and GDP growth rate? Is it increasing or decreasing? Please provide the data for the last 5 years if available.
- From which countries most of the tourists are coming to the country?
- How many foreign tourists visit the country annually? Please provide the data for the last 5 years if available.
- How much foreign tourists are spending in the country (EUR)? Is the spending increasing or decreasing? Please provide the data for the last 5 years if available.
- How many of citizens are travelling abroad annually? Please provide the data for the last 5 years if available.
- Which countries are the most popular destinations for travelling abroad?
- What are the Government expenditures in the tourism sector (EUR and percentage of state budget, please indicate the year). If there is data available about sustainable tourism specific expenditures, please include separately.
- What are the Government expenditures in the other major sectors, e.g. agriculture, forestry, and also for the nature protection (EUR and percentage of state budget, please indicate the year).
- How big are the capital investments in the tourism sector (EUR and percentage of GDP, please indicate the year). If there is data available about sustainable tourism specific expenditures, please include separately.
C. Information about stakeholders

- Please list governmental institutions responsible for tourism, administrative tourism bodies and briefly indicate their responsibilities and the address of the webpage
- Please list national and international NGOs, associations, foundations, consultants, etc. active in sustainable tourism field in the country. Please mention the name, the main focus in one sentence and the address of the webpage
- Please list three biggest tour operators for tourism inside of the country (name, the address of the webpage, annual turnover)
- Please list tour operators offering sustainable tourism and eco-tourism services (name, the address of the webpage, services offered)

D. Legal documents

- Are there national legal documents about tourism development: strategies, laws, regulations, guidelines, other relevant documents (e.g. legislation on protected areas)?
  - Please distinguish between legally binding and non-binding legislation.
  - Please mention the name of the document, the year of publication, and the online location of the document in local and English languages if available.
  - What is the role of sustainable (or eco-tourism) in this legislation?
- What is the definition of sustainable tourism (or eco-tourism) accepted in the legislation?
- Are there any regional tourism and sustainable tourism development plans? Please mention the name of the document, the year of publication, and region it covers.
- What relevant international agreements the country has signed (CBD, GATS, etc.)?
- What legislation is lacking?

E. Initiatives

- Are there any pilot projects of sustainable tourism implemented or ongoing? Please mention the title and location of the project, duration, the implementer, webpage if available.
- Are there any initiatives from NGOs, governments or educational institutions to increase the information on sustainable tourism? Please mention the title, geographical coverage (regional or national), duration, implementer, target group, contents, webpage if available.
Annex 2

First draft – contents of the brochure on sustainable tourism

The following objects and icons can be included into the map:

Museum
Ethno-village/houses
Castle
Church
Workshops of local artists
Tourist guide giving a tour
Street festival
Festival on stage

Forest (protected)
Animals
River/lake
Fish
Wetland
Birds
Mountains

Accommodation (private houses, hotel, camping site)
Restaurants
Shops with local production (food, souvenirs)
Tourism information points
Stations – bus and railway
Cycling paths
Boats and prieplauka
Nature trails
Car/GMO free area
Bike rent
Horse rent

Local culture house or municipality building - place for local stakeholders meeting where they discuss how to develop sustainable tourism in the area. This can be used to describe the process for the development of ST action plan and provide a link to STWG resources (publications on specific ST topics) online.

It is important to structure the descriptions of the items on the map into 3-4 groups to make the reader understand the concept of ST easier. For example, they can be divided in the following way:

- **Wellbeing of people** (trust, hospitality, friendliness, pleasant atmosphere to live) and keeping traditions alive. The title for this section could be “Region alive” or something of this kind. This section should present cultural objects, festivals and tell what are the benefits for community and visitors from keeping/restoring local traditions

- **Enjoying nature and better health**

  This should tell about the ways to enjoy nature without damaging it, like bird watching, going on nature trail on the border of a strictly protected area, etc. Should stress how it is important for the community to preserve the natural values so tourists come continuously. Sustainable outdoor activities can be showcased. Such values as family, respect, joy of life should be shown through the text.

- **Prosperity that last long**

  Economic benefits for the community: employment, selling the handicrafts and local food products, accommodation, restaurants. It is important to stress that sustainable tourism guarantee long-term sustainable regional economy.
Deciding about the development of the region together
The text should be connected to the local culture house or municipality building icon. It is a place for local stakeholders’ meetings where they discuss how to develop sustainable tourism in the area. This place can be used to describe the process for the development of ST action plan and provide a link to STWG resources (publications on specific ST topics) online.

It should be mentioned that real sustainable tourism area will probably have not all, but some of the features presented in the map.

Brainstormed ideas for the title of the brochure:
- Unbelievable adventures of sustainable tourism
- Visit a better place to live!
- Something with love, like “I love sustainable tourism” – it should be based on a style used to promote the destinations of conventional tourism.

The cover of the map should include:
- the name of the brochure
- photo with happy people (either locals or tourists or both)
- CEEWEB Sustainable Tourism Working Group, the logo of CEEWEB

The back cover should include:
- Contact data for CEEWEB STWG
- Title of the brochure or slogan or “sustainable tourism” translated to all the languages of CEE, interestingly laid-out.