

**PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE**

**Assessment of the sustainable tourism development model
of Banská Stiavnica based on the
CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development**

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Baseline information

1. Baseline information is necessary to enable informed decisions to be taken on any issue. A minimum of baseline information is needed to enable impact assessment and decision-making and it is recommended that its compilation follow the ecosystem approach.
2. For tourism and biodiversity, the baseline information should include information, as appropriate, on:
 - (a) Current economic, social and environmental conditions at national and local level, including current and planned tourism development and activities and their overall positive and negative impacts, as well as development and activities in other sectors;
 - (b) Structure and trends within the tourism sector, tourism policy and tourism markets and trends, at national, regional and international level, including information based on market research as necessary;
 - (c) Environmental and biodiversity resources and processes, including any special features and sites of particular importance and protected areas, and identifying those resources that may be off bounds to development due to their particular fragility and those resources identified by existing analysis of threats;
 - (d) Culturally sensitive areas;
 - (e) Benefits from, and costs of, tourism to indigenous and local communities;
 - (f) Information on damage done to the environment in the past;
 - (g) National biodiversity strategies, action plans and reports and other sectoral plans and policies relevant for tourism development and biodiversity;
 - (h) National, subnational and local sustainable-development plans.
3. Baseline information should take into consideration all sources of knowledge. The adequacy of the baseline information available will need to be reviewed, and where necessary, further research and information-gathering can be undertaken to fill gaps that may be identified.
4. All stakeholders may contribute relevant information to this process, including indigenous and local communities. To this end, there is a need for capacity-building and training to assist stakeholders in documenting, accessing, analysing and interpreting baseline information.
5. Collation and synthesis of information provided will need to be undertaken by an appropriately qualified team, drawing on a range of expertise, including expertise in tourism and in biodiversity issues, and in traditional knowledge and innovation systems.
6. In order to ensure that all relevant information, its credibility and reliability, are considered, all stakeholders should be involved in review of the collated baseline information available, and in the synthesis of this information.

7. Baseline information should include maps, geographical information systems and other visual tools, including already identified zoning schemes.
8. The baseline information-gathering and review process should make full use of the clearing-house mechanism under the Convention on Biological Diversity, as well as other relevant networks such as the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, World Heritage sites and Ramsar sites.
9. Requirements for site-specific information in relation to proposals for tourism development and activities at particular locations are set out in the notification process, and its compilation should follow the ecosystem approach. To enable impact assessment and decision making, the basic information required includes:
 - (a) *Site-specific aspects:*
 - i. The various laws and regulations and plans that may be applicable to the specific site, including overviews of:
 - a. Existing laws at local, subnational and national levels;
 - b. Existing uses, customs and traditions;
 - c. Relevant regional and international conventions or agreements and their status, and cross-boundary agreements or memoranda of understanding (MoUs);
 - ii. Identification of various stakeholders involved in or potentially affected by the proposed project - including stakeholders in governmental, non-governmental, and private sectors (particularly those from the tourism sector), and indigenous and local communities - along with details concerning their participation in and/or consultation on the proposed project during its design, planning, construction and operation;
 - (b) *Ecological aspects:*
 - iii. Detailed indication of the protected and biodiversity significant areas;
 - iv. Specifications on the ecosystems, habitats, species;
 - v. Quantitative and qualitative information on the loss of habitats and species (main reasons, trends);
 - vi. Indexing of species;
 - vii. Identified threats;
 - viii. Existing zones, ecological zones and existing tourism zones within the ecological zones;
 - ix. Ecologically sensitive zones and zones where ecological disasters have or will most likely take place;

Development aspects:

- x. Summary of the proposed project, why and by whom it is proposed, estimated outcomes and possible impacts (including impacts on the surrounding areas and transboundary impacts), and quantitative and qualitative data on these aspects;
- xi. Description of the stages of development and the various structures and stakeholders that may be involved at each stage;
- xii. Description of current land-uses, infrastructures, tourism facilities and services and their interaction with proposed operations.

In accordance with the guidelines, the basis of the proposed project was a carefully undertaken feasibility study, with the objective to gather all baseline information necessary for responsible decision-making.

Comprehensive evaluations were carried out in the field of biodiversity, tourism and marketing, giving a general overview on the current state of play, analysing the significant opportunities of the region and also drawing attention to the possible threats. The compiled reports were focusing on the interlinkages of the natural and cultural heritage, as these two aspects are the most important strongholds of the region, thus the most important ground for the proposed project. The adequacy, consistency and relevance of the compiled information has been evaluated by external experts, pointing out the still existing information gaps and formulating their recommendations regarding further actions to be taken. The Guidelines state that “Collation and synthesis of information provided will need to be undertaken by an appropriately qualified team, drawing on a range of expertise, including expertise in tourism and in biodiversity issues, and in traditional knowledge and innovation systems“. According to this requirement, the composition of the involved experts corresponds to the scope and fields of activity concerned, and was suitably selected with regards to the necessary expertise and insight into both local and regional conditions. In this matter, the role of external experts cannot be overestimated, as they might give a broader view and help to place the findings of the local experts to a wider context, at the same time underlining the possible shortfalls of their evaluations.

The reports utilised a wide range of available sources of information, though the involved range of stakeholders has not included local community to a sufficient extent. The reports were prepared by local experts, but other representative of indigenous people were not involved in the compilation of baseline information. However, it can be assumed that implementation of the relevant section of the Guidelines (“All stakeholders may contribute relevant information to this process, including indigenous and local communities. To this end, there is a need for capacity building and training to assist stakeholders in documenting, accessing, analysing and interpreting baseline information.”) would have required unreasonable effort at this early stage, also taking into consideration the time constraints and the experienced lack of cooperation and commitment from some of the involved stakeholders. Nevertheless it is important to inform local people from the very first steps, also bearing in mind that the smart communication of the fact that their town and its surroundings have been selected as a model area because of the outstanding natural and cultural values, may have fostered their local/regional identity and their devotion to the area, and this way their commitment towards the project could have been increased. The issue of training and education of local inhabitants was later addressed, and also efforts were taken to actively engage all stakeholders in later phases of the project.

As a result of the multi-faceted evaluations, the reports cover a wide range of information on the model area, including

- International environment (EU programs, projects)
- Legislation background (EU and national level; both with regards to nature conservation and tourism: nature and landscape preservation, protected areas, agriculture, water, construction and buildings, international conventions in the field of biodiversity) – including the possible impact of the project in terms of support it might give to the national legislation
- Institutional framework (competent decision making and implementation bodies, both with regards to nature conservation and tourism: government, ministries, municipal and local authorities, NP Directorates, agricultural institutions, water management institutions, building and construction institutions, educational and scientific institutions, NGOs etc.)
- Business climate (investments, structure of employers and entrepreneurs, SME sector, employment rates, human resources)
- International, regional and national trends in tourism
- Management capacity of the region, possible structures for the co-ordination of activities
- Nature and biodiversity aspects (location, features and development of nature and landscape protection, natural values, geological composition, climate, pedology, flora, fauna, habitats, communities, ecosystems, protected areas and ecological networks, water sources, lakes);
- The cultural heritage (cultural historical information, previous land-use and conservation management, aesthetics, ethnography, history, architecture and archaeology),
- Built environment, architecture (castle, religious buildings, technical monuments, the use and condition of historical buildings)
- Agriculture and forestry (area and conditions of cultivated land, such as meadows, pastures etc., animal breeding, vineyards, structure and ownership, market for products)
- Technical infrastructure (water line, sewage, gas, electricity, waste collection and treatment, transport and roads, landscape management , e.g. forests, parks, paths)
- Informational infrastructure (tourist information offices, internet, orientation system, information panels, marking and general upkeep of trails)
- Evaluation of the quality of services (food, appearance of restaurants, offers in tasting, other animations, accommodation, food, tour operators, transport and services for the motorist, and other services, such as banks and financial services, medical services, security)
- Evaluation of existing products (tourism offers, including different forms of tourism, guide services, museums and galleries, cultural and sporting events, water recreation / lakes, services and shops, theatre, and winter recreation.)
- Tourism (history of tourism activities, competition, structure and number of visitors, market research, marketing strategy)

- Public awareness about tourism and nature conservation (tourism, industry, agriculture, traffic, cultural values, traditions, natural assets, development schemes, interest of local people, etc.)
- Possible sources of funding (EU pre-accession funds, Structural Funds, national resources, reallocation of local taxes, industry, etc.)
- Identification of stakeholders

The reports are illustrated with maps and other visual tools, making use of GIS too.

On the basis of the information, the most appropriate sites of the project were selected, taking into consideration the possible threats the undertaken activities may pose on the area, and also evaluating the possible benefits the project might bring in terms of development in several fields, including among others the improved cooperation among stakeholders, the sustainable use of biodiversity elements in the natural habitats and rural areas surrounding the city, financial support and increased income for the local people.

In this matter, the opportunities of developing organic farming and the promotion of local products as part of the regional tourism offer should be further investigated, with a view of developing the whole supply chain as a source of income for the surrounding rural area, so as the benefits of tourism are not only concentrated in the town.

The issue of economical benefits is likely to become a cornerstone in the process, as the region is characterized by a serious decline in employment opportunities. In this context the section “Benefits from, and costs of, tourism to indigenous and local communities” of the Guidelines could have been given more emphasis, with more detailed and if possible, numerical data. Nevertheless it is clear that at this early stage of the project no such estimates could have been appropriately calculated. This aspect is also in relation with the already mentioned lack of overall involvement from the local community, as their participation would be essential in the determination of the impacts they are exposed to due to tourism. The interaction between local people and tourists should be paid more attention, especially with regards to the quality of such interactions. The attitude of indigenous people towards tourists is an important factor in how visitors experience and perceive the destination, therefore their attitude and behaviour should be included in the baseline information. This could be the basis for a later training, not only for professional caterers, but also for general population to help to develop better relations with the guests, as put forward among the objectives of human resources development.

In spite of the fact that the cultural heritage is a critical factor in both the selection of BS as a model area, and as a potential for tourism development, the cultural aspect of the project primarily focuses on the technical monuments and built environment deriving from the mining history of the town. Other implications of culture and tradition are not given sufficient emphasis, except for the possible local products of craftsmen. Other assets of intangible cultural heritage, including the relationship of local people to their history, whether they have folklore costumes, traditional food, popular costumes, and how they are relating to all these could be an important . These aspects are important as possible attractions for tourists, but also as sources of income for local population.

The marketing report states that appropriate internet presence is existing, but there is no information on the image of the region and Banská Stiavnica given by these internet sites: it would be useful to know how the town is positioned in these offers.

Despite the huge tourism potential of the region, several barriers were identified hindering sustainable tourism development. Later phases of the project were focusing on these problematic issues, trying to address most of these external and internal barriers.

Identified weaknesses: lack of information *on* tourists, lack of information *for* tourists, lack of appropriate human resources, lack of well-prepared offers, lack of coordination of development, lack of infrastructure, lack of connection between nature conservation and tourism, lack of communication, lack of promotion and marketing, lack of implementation of existing legislation.

Several of these weaknesses were addressed by the project: for collecting visitor data the methodology have been developed, and the required data obtained. In this matter the most sensitive area was the structure of tourists arriving in the area, concerning their number, construction of age and social status, duration of stays, seasonality, spending etc. The existence of such statistical data is an essential basis for the identification of the future direction of development, therefore the relevant information must be acquired. This kind of data is missing in most of tourism destinations, so this problem must be tackled, and the possible solutions must be thoroughly examined.

Developing appropriate human resources, communication and coordination was later targeted by a series of training seminars, as detailed below.

Vision and goals

Vision

1. An overall vision for sustainable tourism development in harmony with the goals and objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity and other related conventions, such as the World Heritage Convention, is important for the effective management of tourism and biodiversity, and for ensuring that this also contributes to income generation and poverty reduction and a reduction of threats to biodiversity. The vision developed at the local level, while reflecting local priorities and realities, should take into account, as appropriate, national and regional tourism development strategies, policies and plans for economic and social development and for land-use, as well as the baseline information and review. It should be based on a multi-stakeholder process including indigenous and local communities that are or may be affected by tourism development.

Goals

2. The main goals are established to maximize the positive benefits of tourism to biodiversity, ecosystems, and economic and social development, and of biodiversity to tourism, while minimizing negative social and environmental impacts from tourism, and can cover, *inter alia*:

- (a) Maintenance of the structure and functioning of ecosystems;
- (b) Sustainable tourism compatible with biodiversity conservation and sustainable use;
- (c) Fair and equitable sharing of benefits of tourism activities, with emphasis on the specific needs of the indigenous and local communities concerned;
- (d) Integration and interrelation with other plans, developments or activities in the same area;
- (e) Information and capacity-building;
- (f) Poverty reduction, through the generation of sufficient revenues and employment to effectively reduce threats to biodiversity in indigenous and local communities;
- (g) Protection of indigenous livelihoods, resources and of access to those resources;
- (h) Diversification of economic activities beyond tourism to reduce dependency on tourism;
- (i) Prevention of any lasting damage to biological diversity, ecosystems, and natural resources, and of social and cultural damage, and restoration of past damage;
- (j) Ensuring the effective participation and involvement of representatives of indigenous and local communities in all aspects of the development, operation and monitoring of tourism activities;
- (k) Zoning and control of tourism developments and activities, including licensing and overall targets for and limits to the scale of tourism, to provide a range of activities for user groups that meet overall visions and goals;
- (l) Empowerment through participation in decision-making;

- (m) Access by indigenous and local communities to infrastructure, transport, communications and healthcare provisions laid on for tourists;
- (n) Increased safety for indigenous local communities;
- (o) Increased social pride;
- (p) Control of tourism development and activities including licensing and clear indication on the limits to the scale and type of tourism development.

8. In relation to sharing of benefits arising from tourism and the conservation of biodiversity with indigenous and local communities, it should be noted that benefits may take various forms, including: job creation, fostering local enterprises, participation in tourism enterprises and projects, education, direct investment opportunities, economic linkages and ecological services. Appropriate mechanisms need to be established/ evolved to capture the benefits.

9. The vision and goals will form the basis of national strategies or master plans for sustainable development of tourism in relation to biodiversity. Such plans should also incorporate consideration of biodiversity strategies and plans. In addition, biodiversity strategies and plans should include consideration of tourism issues.

10. Governments will normally coordinate this process at national level. This process may also be undertaken at more local levels by local government, and by communities at community level. Where local and community level vision and goals for tourism and biodiversity have been set, these may be taken into account by governments when preparing the national level vision and goals, for example through workshops at the local level.

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12. The vision and goals will form the basis of national strategies or master plans for sustainable development of tourism in relation to biodiversity. Such plans should also incorporate consideration of biodiversity strategies and plans. In addition, biodiversity strategies and plans should include consideration of tourism issues.

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As the project is based on the Guidelines, during all phases the above vision was taken into consideration, and the process is basically in line with the listed goals. As the maintenance of ecosystems, sustainable use, the protection of indigenous livelihoods and prevention of natural, social and cultural damages are one of the primary focus of the project, and are ensured by the Habitat Management Plan and the Visitors Management Plan developed in the 2nd phase of the project. This latter also addresses the issue of zoning and control of tourism developments and activities.

Integration and interrelation with other plans was also taken into consideration, and continuous consultations with the other stakeholders were aimed to achieve this end. Other initiatives are going on in the same area, namely the Geopark and the Landscape Ecological

Plan. This latter one is especially useful as a tool to multiply the effects of the model project, as LEP is an input to the Slovakia-wide regional development system, giving the opportunity to appropriately integrate biodiversity and socio-economic considerations into national development strategies. In this context the statement made by one of the external experts on the question of “competition or cooperation”, should be even more stressed: cooperation and division of labour within a region is an effective way to attract tourists in the area, where different attractions may provide alternatives and can supplement each other, with an overall benefit for the whole region. This issue is very important to address, and more emphasis could be given to wider regional cooperation. In phase 2 a marketing strategy was developed, in cooperation with international and local experts. The report claims that “The consultation with other selected regions in Slovakia were considered too“, but no further information is available on the cooperation with other municipalities with regards to the development of the marketing strategy, and no reference is made to the correlation with a common marketing strategy of the region (e.g. possible opportunities of cooperation with other mining cities, with a view to establish a thematical route on mining cities).

Information and capacity-building was also an important and soundly carried out component of the project. The basic topics identified were:

- Tourism and Environment
- Sustainable Tourism Offers
- The Cultural and Natural Heritage
- Leisure Activities and Nature Protection
- Marketing and Eco-labels

In the 3rd phase, 10 additional education seminars were organized with the following topics:

- Introduction to tourism; impacts of tourism on the environment;
- Tourism offers In Banská Stiavnica and its vicinity;
- Introduction to sustainable tourism;
- Introduction to marketing;
- Banská Stiavnica in the eyes of tourists;
- Vision – its purpose and development; vision of tourism development in Banská Stiavnica;
- Zoning plan and its role in tourism development; zoning plan of Banská Stiavnica
- Certification in tourism;
- Preparation of promotion materials;
- Tourism associations – purpose, functions and forms.

The consequences drawn from the above seminars, which should be taken into consideration when such events are organized:

- practical aspects should be emphasized, being problem-based and solution-oriented, avoiding generalities and technical terms
- local issues should be addressed, possibly including outdoor activities to give on-field examples
- require some input from the participants, which could be discussed, preferably with the presence of a town representative
- intensive distribution of information is necessary: before the lectures to attract more participants, and after the lectures to present the outcomes to other stakeholders

This latter is especially important, as the recommendations and comments of the participants with regards to tourism development, include several issues that could be solved immediately by drawing the attention of local people to these problems, and making them realize that a slight change in their attitude could have major impact. There were several other observations that could be used to influence decision-makers if put forward as a common position of local people.

Participation in decision-making and involvement of local communities was given a special emphasis from the beginning, taking into consideration the serious deficiencies in this field revealed by the compiled baseline information. The selected area was characterized by a lack of coordination of activities and a lack of communication, so the project had to address this fundamental shortcoming and establish the means of intra-community communication and help the stakeholders to acquire some basic information, before making partnerships and enabling their participation in decision-making. The concerned stakeholders were brought to roundtables, which was a way of communication so far neglected in the tourism development of the town. It was clearly visible from the beginning, that new links and contacts were created, contributing to the higher level of co-ordination and collaboration. The influence of the roundtables was increased by the presence and participation of the Mayor, and the knowledge of the Town Hall members with regards to the requirements of sustainable tourism development also grew considerably. However the representation of the tourism industry and local tourism entrepreneurs was rather low in the first set of roundtables, partly explained by their previous experience on the uselessness of such roundtables. The attendance of the three roundtables of phase 2 was higher, with a visible improvement in communication, and an increasing interest in further enhancement of cooperation. This tendency is underlining the necessity for the long-term continuation of such activities in spite of initial difficulties and lack of interest.

Recommendations were formulated from the very first phase, emphasizing several times the need for setting up a kind of coordination body: *“cross sectoral body, which is co-ordinated by the local government, and consists of the representatives from the different sectors. [...] At the town administration an environment and development department has to be set up. This would co-ordinate the work of the environment and development council’s activity, who is a body with the representatives of the different sectors, including science, business, NGOs, and GOs.”* In another part of the report it is put like *“setting up a formal or informal association of all tourism (and tourism-related) providers and motivating them to be active and to participate. The main functions of the association should include the collection, processing and distribution of information for members, joint marketing and advertising, co-ordinating the creation of packages, collecting information on possible financial sources and looking for additional ones, advocacy of member interests on the local and regional level, as well as education and training.”* The attempts to create such a body in the form of regular roundtables were not completely successful, its official operation soon ceased, but informal information exchange continued among some of the stakeholders.

However, some official and well-established forum should be developed, to help bring people, businessmen and the decision-makers of the municipality to a common position, as this would be essential in realizing among others “Fair and equitable sharing of benefits” and “Increased social pride”.

Increasing the level of consciousness and commitment of businessmen should be specifically targeted, as their conviction and engagement is critical in providing to local people as much benefit from the project as possible. The private sector should be addressed cautiously, with concrete facts and figures on the positive impacts sustainable tourism management can bring to them in terms of income and investment opportunities, at the same time avoiding raising ungrounded expectations. In this matter the active participation of private sector

representatives in the training seminars and roundtables is a promising sign that could contribute to the enhancement of their awareness.

Gaining the commitment and participation of local people would also require that the material and financial benefits, that is new employment opportunities, increased income, infrastructural development in the town with regards to waste management, transport and other services (in line with “Access by indigenous and local communities to infrastructure, transport, communications and healthcare provisions laid on for tourists”) are demonstrated to local population, as usually people are not willing to make efforts without direct and visible return on their investment. In this matter general awareness raising and education might have some effect, but takes a long time, due to the general distrust and aversion towards all kind of change and innovation – an unpleasant heritage of the last decades in CEE countries.

Thus this issue is in close connection with poverty reduction and the “diversification of economic activities beyond tourism to reduce dependency on tourism.” The local community should be given a perspective on the overall development of the town and the region, and they should see how tourism development fits into that picture and supports the general development objectives. The topic was also dealt with in the training seminars, but education activities should continue to really make a difference in people’s mind.

Objectives

The objectives focus on actions to implement specific elements of the overall vision and goals, and may include clear activities and the time by which these will be achieved. Objectives should be performance-based (e.g., construction of an interpretative trail to aid development of local guide services) and process-based (e.g., establishment of an operational management system for tourism and biodiversity). As with the vision and goals, it is important to involve and consult with all relevant stakeholders, and especially the tourism industry and indigenous and local communities that are or may be affected by tourism development, in the process for setting objectives.

Objectives should be specific and should include specific areas identified in clearly delineated zones listing the types of activities and infrastructure that would be acceptable and should be developed. It should also outline the impact management measures that would be appropriate, and intended markets (with greater detail, as set out in the notification process, being required for proposals for tourism development or activities at specific locations).

Governments may also wish to consider:

(a) Measures to ensure that sites designated at international level, such as Ramsar or World Heritage sites or Biosphere Reserves, are accorded appropriate legal recognition and government assistance at the national level;

(b) Establishing reserves based on the biosphere reserve concept and incorporating sustainable-development objectives, generating income and employment opportunities for indigenous and local communities, and promoting appropriate product development;

(c) Measures to ensure that sites, at the national level, such as national parks, reserves and marine conservation areas are accorded appropriate legal recognition, have management plans and are provided necessary government support;

(d) Strengthening the protected area network and encouraging the role of protected areas as key locations for good practices in the management of sustainable tourism and biodiversity, taking into account the full range of protected area categories;

(e) Use of economic policy tools to encourage the channelling of part of total tourism revenues towards supporting the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, such as conservation of protected areas, education, research programmes, or local community development;

(f) Encouraging all stakeholders, as well as the private sector, to actively support the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable use of its components.

Governments will normally coordinate this process at national level. This process may also be undertaken at more local levels by local government, and by communities at community level. Where local- and community-level objectives for tourism and biodiversity have been set, these may be taken into account by governments when preparing national level objectives.

The focus of the chapter on Objectives is primarily national governments, stating that the process may be undertaken at more local levels as well. One of the aims of the project was to ensure that the local government is aware of such necessities, and take appropriate steps to implement such measures. The adopted “Principles of Tourism Development” show the direction the local government is willing to take in this field, covering among others planning and management, the respect of existing legislation, the use of economic tools and investment incentives and encouraging stakeholder participation. The long term implementation of the principles and the resulting consequences cannot be seen yet.

Legislation and control measures

1. Respect for existing national legislation and appropriate regulatory mechanisms and tools, such as land-use planning, protected area management plans, environmental assessment, building regulations and standards for sustainable tourism, are essential for the effective implementation of any overall vision, goals, and objectives. A review of legislation and control measures could consider, as appropriate, the legislation and control measures available for implementation of the overall vision, goals and objectives for tourism and biodiversity, their effectiveness, including enforcement, and any gaps that may need to be addressed for example, by revision of—or the development of additional—legislation and control measures.
2. The review of legislation and control measures could include, *inter alia*, assessment of the effectiveness of any provisions for resource management, access, and/or ownership by communities, especially indigenous and local communities that are traditional use areas for their livelihoods and cultural purposes; addressing existing collective rights of indigenous and local communities; and for enabling these groups to make decisions about tourism development and activities, amongst other forms of development and activities, in these areas.
3. Legislation and control measures considered could include measures for:
 - a) Effective enforcement of existing laws, including the participation of all stakeholders;
 - b) Approval and licensing processes for tourism development and activities;
 - c) Controlling the planning, siting, design and construction of tourism facilities and infrastructures;
 - d) Management of tourism in relation to biodiversity and ecosystems, including vulnerable areas;
 - e) Application of environmental assessment, including assessment of cumulative impacts and effects on biodiversity, to all proposed tourism developments, and as a tool to develop policies and measure their impacts;
 - f) Setting national standards and/or criteria for tourism that are consistent with overall national or regional plans for sustainable development and national biodiversity strategies and action plans:
 - xi. Environmental quality and land-use criteria in and around tourism sites;
 - xii. Development of a decision-making process with environmental and cultural sustainability guidelines for new and existing tourism development within the designated goals and objectives of the site's different zones and within the limits of acceptable change;
 - g) Integrated land-use management;
 - h) Ensuring inter-linkages between tourism and cross-cutting issues, including agricultural development, coastal zone management, water resources, etc.;

- i) Mechanisms to resolve any inconsistencies between policy objectives and/or legislation in a manner that takes into account the interests of all stakeholders;
- j) Application of economic instruments, including tiered user fees, bonds, taxes or levies, for the management of tourism and biodiversity;
- k) Creating incentives for sustainable tourism development in line with the provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity and Agenda 21 through relevant economic mechanisms;
- l) Supporting private sector voluntary initiatives consistent with these Guidelines, such as certification schemes and providing opportunities for the private tourism sector to contribute to management initiatives through direct donations, in-kind services, and other voluntary initiatives consistent with these Guidelines, and relevant policies;
- m) Avoiding tourism development or activities outside those areas set out in the objectives;
- n) Monitoring, control of and provision of information on activities related to collection and trade of biological and related cultural resources within tourism sites.

This chapter also concentrates on the activities that national governments should undertake in order to provide for the appropriate legal framework for the sustainable development of tourism. This project has among the objectives to contribute to national legislation to a certain extent, by serving as a demonstration model, and spreading the results to regional, national and even international level. The effects of the project on legislation and control measures may be far-reaching through cooperating with the Landscape Ecological Plan, and incorporating the findings of the studies prepared under this project to this regional development instrument.

On the level of local government the adopted Principles of Tourism Development aim to achieve the above detailed goals. These principles include all the fields of proposed legislation and control measures, such as the enforcement of existing laws, integrated management and planning of tourism activities in accordance with the regional development strategy taking into account the interest of local inhabitants and respecting the appropriate forms and quantity of tourism in given areas and zones as defined by the zoning plans. This – if implemented – would also ensure that tourism activities are avoided outside the areas selected for this purpose, and also that in the areas, where tourism is permitted, the carrying capacity and the limits of acceptable change are respected. The development of infrastructure would also be realized so as the cultural and natural heritage of the town and the surrounding area is fully preserved and even restored. The Principles also promote the use of economic instruments with the aim to invest the deriving income in the protection of this heritage for the benefit of the local community. In this matter also the involvement, awareness raising and participation of all stakeholders is fostered through education and regularly held roundtables. The consideration of interlinkages and cross-cutting issues is also addressed by the cooperation of various public and private entities undertaken by the Town Council by the adoption of these Principles. This document is so far unique in its kind, so it has an outstanding significance and can be a powerful tool in distributing the achievements of the project and in helping such initiatives in other regions in the future. However, the implementation of the Principles is not comprehensive so far, and this might be an important

sign that also on governmental level not only legislation, but its effective implementation should be enforced.

Private sector voluntary initiatives are supported by the development of a criteria set, the Regional Certificate in Banská Stiavnica. The introduction of such a certification scheme triggered some discussions during the project, with regards to its feasibility, the inadequate legislation framework, bureaucracy and the lack of financial resources necessary for its implementation. As a result, the planned certification system is aiming to start from a relatively modest level, to be later developed to a more comprehensive system including more stringent criteria of quality management and environmentally friendly practices. The scheme would be introduced stepwise so that the business sector is not discouraged by too high requirements. The criteria are grouped in three categories:

- *care of the environment*, including measures concerning energy saving, waste management, water supply management, transportation and architecture;
- *care of the customer*, including the sections noise, option possibility, hospitality, well-being of guests and information webpage about the facility;
- *support of the region*, including cooperation with local suppliers, selling local products, information about the region, local registration and seat of the facility and membership in regional tourism association.

The criteria set puts *quality* in the foreground, though the environmental aspect remains very strong. More detailed requirements are described separately, to show what a more advanced criteria system would include.

Impact assessment

1. Impact assessment for sustainable tourism development in ecosystems should be based on the “Guidelines for incorporating biodiversity-related issues into environmental impact assessment legislation and/or processes and in strategic environmental assessment” developed by the Convention on Biological Diversity and contained in the annex to decision VI/7 (paras 1-24).
2. At national level, Governments should normally undertake assessment of impacts associated with the overall vision, goals and objectives for tourism and biodiversity. In addition, this process may also be undertaken at more local levels by local government, and by indigenous and local communities.
3. Proposers of tourism developments or activities should assess the potential impacts of their proposals and provide information on this through a notification process.
4. Governments will normally undertake evaluations of the adequacy of impact assessments submitted by proposers of tourism developments or activities. These evaluations will need to be undertaken by an appropriately qualified team, drawing on a range of expertise, including expertise in tourism and in biodiversity management, and also involving those indigenous and local communities that would be affected by the proposals. There should be public access to the documentation.
5. If the information provided is not sufficient, or the impact assessment inadequate, then further impact assessment studies may need to be undertaken. The proposer may be requested to undertake such studies, or the Government may decide to undertake these studies, and may request funds from the proposer for this purpose, as appropriate. Other stakeholders, including biodiversity managers and indigenous and local communities that may be affected by a proposed development, may also provide their assessments of impacts associated with specific proposals for tourism developments or activities, and provisions may be needed to ensure that any such assessments are taken into account by decision-makers.
6. Indigenous and local communities concerned should be fully involved in impact assessment. Their traditional knowledge should be acknowledged and considered for impact assessment in particular tourism projects that affect their sacred sites or lands and waters occupied or used by indigenous and local communities.
7. Sufficient time should be allowed considering the different conditions and circumstances to ensure that all stakeholders are able to participate effectively in the decision-making process for any project using information provided by the impact assessment. Such information should be provided in forms that are accessible and comprehensible to all the various stakeholders involved.
8. Impacts of tourism in relation to the environment and biological diversity may include:
 - a) Use of land and resources for accommodation, tourism facilities and other infrastructure provision, including road networks, airports and seaports;
 - b) Extraction and use of building materials (e.g., use of sand from beaches, reef limestone and wood);
 - c) Damage to or destruction of ecosystems and habitats, including deforestation, draining of wetlands, and intensified or unsustainable use of land;
 - d) Increased risk of erosion;

- e) Disturbance of wild species, disrupting normal behaviour and potentially affecting mortality and reproductive success;
- f) Alterations to habitats and ecosystems;
- g) Increased risk of fires;
- h) Unsustainable consumption of flora and fauna by tourists (e.g., through picking of plants; or purchase of souvenirs manufactured from wildlife, in particular such endangered species as corals and turtle shells; or through unregulated hunting, shooting and fishing);
- i) Increased risk of introduction of alien species;
- j) Intensive water demand from tourism;
- k) Extraction of groundwater;
- l) Deterioration in water quality (freshwater, coastal waters) and sewage pollution;
- m) Eutrophication of aquatic habitats;
- n) Introduction of pathogens;
- o) Generation, handling and disposal of sewage and waste-water;
- p) Chemical wastes, toxic substances and pollutants;
- q) Solid waste (garbage or rubbish);
- r) Contamination of land, freshwater and seawater resources;
- s) Pollution and production of greenhouse gases, resulting from travel by air, road, rail, or sea, at local, national and global levels;
- t) Noise.

9. Socio-economic and cultural impacts related to tourism may include:

- (a) Influx of people and social degradation (e.g. local prostitution, drug abuse, etc.);
- (b) Impacts on children and youth;
- (c) Vulnerability to the changes in the flow of tourist arrivals which may result in sudden loss of income and jobs in times of downturn;
- (d) Impacts on indigenous and local communities and cultural values;
- (e) Impacts on health and the integrity of local cultural systems;
- (f) Intergenerational conflicts and changed gender relationships;
- (g) Erosion of traditional practices and lifestyles;
- (h) Loss of access by indigenous and local communities to their land and resources as well as sacred sites, which are integral to the maintenance of traditional knowledge systems and traditional lifestyles.

10. The potential benefits of tourism may include:

- (a) Revenue creation for the maintenance of natural resources of the area;
- (b) Contributions to economic and social development, for example:
 - xiii. Funding the development of infrastructure and services;
 - xiv. Providing jobs;
 - xv. Providing funds for development or maintenance of sustainable practices;
 - xvi. Providing alternative and supplementary ways for communities to receive revenue from biological diversity;
 - xvii. Generating incomes;
 - xviii. Education and empowerment;
 - xix. An entry product that can have direct benefits for developing other related products at the site and regionally;
 - xx. Tourist satisfaction and experience gained at tourist destination

As stated by the report, the town or the region of Banská Stiavnica doesn't have any regional development or tourism development strategy. However, the project highlights the need for such strategic planning, and even triggers more intensive preparation of strategic documents. In case steps are taken in the future in this matter, it is important to incorporate biodiversity-related issues from the earliest stage of the planning process of comprehensive development plans.

Pursuant to the CBD Guidelines on environmental assessment and also to the Directive 2001/42/EC, programs and plans with likely significant affects on the environment should be subject to strategic environmental assessment (SEA), in order to evaluate their environmental performance and to influence the way they are implemented. (According to the SEA Protocol to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (the Espoo Convention): „*A strategic environmental assessment shall be carried out for plans and programmes which are prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry including mining, transport, regional development, waste management, water management, telecommunications, **tourism, town and country planning** or land use [...].*) One of the most important strongholds of strategic environmental assessment is that it is not a post-evaluation process, but it is developed in parallel with the policy or concept, promoting environmental aspects during the preparation works. Consequently it ensures the incorporation and achievement of environmental objectives, improves the environmental integrity of plans and programs, and drives the entire policy towards sustainability by identifying development options and providing better alternatives. Presently there is no generally accepted methodology for the ex-ante evaluation of plans and programs, however, there are recommendations concerning the applicable methodology (such as the “MEANS Collection - Evaluation of socio-economic programmes”).

All above listed international agreements emphasize the importance of public access to information and the participation of the public concerned in the environmental assessment. The public participation process is not only a tool for analyzing the evaluated plan or program, but if appropriately carried out, it also provides a great opportunity to build partnerships among the local community, NGOs, authorities and the business sector by promoting the dialogue among all stakeholders concerned.

The necessary basis for ensuring public participation and involvement is an adequate level of awareness on:

- the program and its relationship with other relevant programs;
- the characteristics of the area that may be affected;
- the environmental protection objectives established on international, Community or state level, which objectives should be taken into account throughout the preparation of plans and programs;
- the possible environmental, socio-economic and cultural impacts of the program (as listed in sections 8., 9. and 10. above), and their interrelations;
- the possible measures to prevent or to mitigate these impacts;
- other development options and alternatives, with their likely effects.

Some of these topics were covered by the training seminars (Tourism and Environment, Cultural and Natural Heritage, Leisure Activities and Nature Protection – as part of the first series of seminars, Impact of tourism on the environment – in the second series). However, as the attendance of these seminars was not too high from the part of the business sector, and especially of public institutions and town representatives, all of the above topics – supplemented with information on environmental impact assessment and strategic environmental assessment processes – should be included and given priority in future training seminars, with a view of further building the capacity and raising the awareness of all stakeholders. Special attention should be paid to the role and potential of the local population in preserving traditional knowledge and cultural heritage, which is a determining factor in the tourism offer of Banská Stiavnica, as also recognized by the listing of the site as a World Heritage.

The study shows that on the Slovak side there is still a lack of regulatory frameworks with regard to the management of tourism in general and explicitly for the impacts of tourism to biological diversity. In this matter the adopted *Principles of tourism development* is a promising sign, that the town representatives are willing to develop the town along sustainable lines. These Principles may become a significant contribution to the elaboration of sustainable development plans and strategies not only on the local, but also on regional or national level, especially with regards to the information exchange and cooperation with the Landscape Ecological Plan and the zoning plan, as the main tool for future planning in the Slovak Republic.

As this initiative will serve as a very important demonstration model with far-reaching multiplier effects, it is especially important to provide appropriate opportunities for the competent and well-informed participation of the public. Since SEA is a relatively new instrument, and the relevant EU Directive should be incorporated in the national legislation of the Member States by July 2004, enhanced awareness of the public opinion may generate a wider participation in the development of the relevant legal framework and its integration with existing regulations.

Impact management and mitigation

1. Impact management is essential to avoid or minimize any potential damage to biodiversity conservation and sustainable use that tourism development or activities might cause. Proposals for tourism development or activities may incorporate proposals for impact management, but these may not necessarily be judged sufficient to deal with potential impacts on biodiversity. Therefore all stakeholders, and especially Governments that exercise overall control over tourism development and activities, will need to consider the various impact management approaches that may be necessary in any given situation. In particular, Governments should be aware that the tourism industry could provide a direct impetus for conservation of vulnerable ecosystems by supporting sustainable tourism activities that have a direct commercial interest in maintaining the vulnerable ecosystem in a good condition.
2. Tourism should be planned and managed using the internationally accepted planning methodologies (such as the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum and the Limits of Acceptable Change). In vulnerable ecosystems, based on these methodologies and relevant background information, tourism should be restricted and where necessary prevented.
3. Impact management can include, *inter alia*, measures for the siting of tourism development and activities, including establishing appropriate activities in different designated zones, differentiation between the impacts of different types of tourism, and measures to control tourist flows in and around tourist destinations and key sites, to promote appropriate behaviour by tourists so as to minimize their impacts, and to establish limits to numbers of visitors and their impacts within Limits of Acceptable Change at any site.
4. Impact management in relation to transboundary ecosystems and migratory species requires regional cooperation.
5. There is a need to identify those who will be responsible for implementing impact management and the resources that will be required for impact management.
6. Impact management for tourism development and activities can include the adoption and effective implementation of policies, good practices and lessons learned that cover, *inter alia*:
 - a) Controlling impacts of major tourist flows including excursions, cruise ships, etc., which can cause serious effects on destinations even though they are visited for only short periods;
 - b) Reducing impacts of activities outside tourism areas on adjacent and other ecosystems of importance for tourism (e.g., pollution from nearby farming activities or extractive industries may affect areas of tourism development);
 - c) Responsible use of natural resources (e.g., land, soil, energy, water);
 - d) Reducing, minimizing and preventing pollution and waste (e.g. solid and liquid waste, emissions to air, transport);
 - e) Promoting the design of facilities that are more eco-efficient, which adopt the cleaner production approach, and use environmentally sound technologies, in particular to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases and ozone-depleting substances, as set out in international agreements;

- f) Conserving flora, fauna and ecosystems;
 - g) Preventing the introduction of alien species as a result of the construction, landscaping and operating of tourism activities, including for example from shipping associated with tourism;
 - h) Conserving landscapes, cultural and natural heritage;
 - i) Respecting the integrity of local cultures and avoiding negative effects on social structures, involving, and cooperating with, indigenous and local communities, including measures to ensure respect for sacred sites and customary users of these sites, and to prevent negative impacts on them and on lands and waters occupied or used by indigenous and local communities, as well as on their subsistence resources;
 - j) Using local products and skills, and providing local employment;
 - k) Promoting appropriate behaviour by tourists so as to minimize their adverse impacts, and to promote positive effects through education, interpretation, extension, and other means of awareness-raising;
 - l) Alignment of marketing strategies and messages with the principles of sustainable tourism;
 - m) Contingency plans for handling accidents, emergencies or bankruptcies that may occur during construction and use of facilities and which may threaten the environment and the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity;
 - n) Environmental and cultural sustainability audits and review of existing tourism activities and developments and of the effectiveness with which impact management is being applied to existing tourism activities and developments;
 - o) Mitigation measures for existing impacts, and appropriate funding to support them. Such measures should include development and implementation of compensation measures in cases when tourism has resulted in negative environmental, cultural, and socio-economic effects, taking into consideration the polluter-pays principle.
7. Governments, in cooperation with biodiversity managers, those communities that would be affected by the proposals, and other stakeholders, would normally assess the need for impact management in addition to any management measures included in the proposals under consideration. All stakeholders should understand the importance of such impact management.
8. The tourism industry can assist in promoting corporate policies on sustainable tourism and biodiversity, with defined goals, monitoring and reporting their progress publicly on a regular basis.

Planning for impact management activities is completely covered by the project. The Habitat Management Plan addresses the conservation of ecosystems and landscapes, the restriction of tourism activities or their redirection to less sensitive areas by determining the location of zones taking into consideration not only present activities, but also expected future conditions, identifying the limits of acceptable change, setting ideal management objectives, selecting management options to each objective, selecting indicators and specifying standards, developing a monitoring plan etc. Other measures were also proposed to influence tourist flows include

- Administrative tools, that is to control the movement of visitors by banning entrance to certain facilities, by limiting the numbers of daily visitors – this could be difficult to arrange, as physical barriers or guards may be required;
- Economic tools, that is to regulate the number of visitors by a properly defined pricing policy;
- Technical tools, that is the use of barriers or bypasses to channel visitors;
- Information tools, that is to provide information to the visitors on the sites of interest and also on desirable behaviour on such sites;
- Diversification of offers, to disperse concentrated tourist flow

During the project, these latter two were selected as most appropriate ways to channel the movement of tourists. The most important tool for influencing tourists by providing them information is the planned Tourist Interpretation Center. Its functions, proposed size and location, including its spatial arrangement, the necessary constructional and technical works and the design of the interior are all described in detail. The information service could provide powerful means to educate tourists on the natural and cultural heritage of the area, and also on their role to play in preserving these assets by their responsible behaviour. Other recommended measures to give a wider range of offers include the extension of opening hours of shops and museum, to offer animation and new expositions in the museums, to develop thematic routes of different length and offer also guided tours in and around the town. The realization of these proposals would already significantly contribute to the channelling of tourists. The impact of tourism activities could be further mitigated, if the acute problem of road traffic and parking places could be solved. In this matter, the restriction of motor vehicles and the regulation of parking in the inner town is proposed. Transportation and traffic is surely an issue which can't be neglected when it comes to managing the impacts of tourism.

The proposed criteria set for regional tourism certificate is also a measure supporting impact mitigation and promoting the responsible use of resources (point c), the reduction and prevention of pollution and waste (point d) and the promotion of clean technologies (point e) by including criteria on energy, waste, water supply, transportation and architecture. The criteria described in chapter “Support of the region” are especially important with regards to the use of local products, and generating income for the local population. The cooperation of accommodation facilities with local suppliers and the offer of regional meals in restaurants could significantly foster the stable operation of the whole food supply chain, benefiting the surrounding rural area as well. The creation and promotion of other products bearing a strong local identity could also improve employment opportunities for indigenous people, at the same time increasing their sensitivity and understanding of their own cultural heritage.

The *Principles of Tourism Development* adopted by the Town Council also contain impact management measures to conserve natural and cultural values and to integrate these objectives into the regional development plan as well. According to the principles, the development policies shall endeavour to minimize impacts of tourism activities on the environment. This principle will be followed in tourism infrastructure development, favouring already existing facilities, and the use of environmentally sound and traditional materials and technologies for the construction of new facilities. The town also undertakes the restoration of territories damaged by tourism. Financial instruments will also be promoted, and the income from tourism will be geared towards the protection of natural and cultural heritage, in line with point o) above.

Steps towards the alignment of marketing strategies were also taken. As a basis for developing the marketing strategy, comprehensive analysis of the already existing marketing activities was undertaken, and recommendations were formulated with regards to market

segmentation and possible target groups. An image brochure was also prepared, with the aim to create a more complex picture of the town, its history, its attractions and traditions, to draw the people's attention to the rich natural and cultural heritage.

The construction of the Municipal Information Center, together with the implementation of the criteria and the adopted principles, supported by the capacity-building and the training seminars, and the anticipated common marketing strategy with the central message of sustainability, would ensure the effective management and mitigation of the impacts deriving from tourism in the town and its surroundings.

Notification process and information requirements

8. Proposals for tourism development and activities at particular locations in relation to biodiversity are to be submitted through the notification process. As such, this process provides the link between proposers of tourism activities and development, and the management process steps outlined above. In particular, the notification process makes specific links to the steps in the management process for impact assessment and decision-making and should take into account local, regional and national impacts. Proposers of tourism projects, including government agencies, should provide full and timely advance notice to all stakeholders who may be affected, including indigenous and local communities, of proposed developments through a formal process of prior informed consent.

9. Information to be provided as part of the notification could include:

(a) Scale and types of tourism development or activities proposed, including a summary of the proposed project, why and by whom it is proposed, estimated outcomes and possible impacts, and a description of the stages of development and the various structures and stakeholders that may be involved at each stage;

(b) Analysis of market for proposed tourism development or activities, based on market conditions and trends;

(c) Geographical description including recreation opportunity zones, outlining tourist activities and infrastructure development, and location of the site of tourism development or activities, the identity and any special features of the surrounding environments and biodiversity;

(d) Nature and extent of human-resource requirements and plans for their procurement;

(e) Identification of various stakeholders involved in or potentially affected by the proposed project - including stakeholders in governmental, non-governmental, and private sectors, and local communities - along with details concerning their participation in and/or consultation on the proposed project during its design, planning, construction and operation;

(f) The perceived roles of local stakeholders in the proposed development;

(g) The various laws and regulations that may be applicable to the specific site, including overviews of existing laws at local, subnational and national levels, of existing uses and customs, of relevant regional and international conventions or agreements and their status, and cross-boundary agreements or memoranda or understanding and any proposed legislation;

(h) The proximity of the site to human settlements and communities, sites used by people from those settlements and communities as part of their livelihoods and traditional activities, and heritage, cultural or sacred sites;

(i) Any flora, fauna and ecosystems that could be affected by the tourism development or activities, including keystone, rare, endangered or endemic species;

(j) Ecological aspects of the site and its surroundings, including indication of any protected areas; specifications on the ecosystems, habitats, and species; quantitative and qualitative information on the loss of habitats and species (main reasons, trends), and indexing of species;

- (k) Training and supervision of personnel carrying out the tourism development or activities;
- (l) Likelihood of impacts beyond the immediate area of the tourism development or activities, including transboundary impacts and effects on migratory species;
- (m) A description of current environmental and socio-economic conditions;
- (n) Expected changes to environmental and socio-economic conditions as a result of the tourism development or activities;
- (o) Proposed management measures to avoid or minimize adverse impacts from the tourism development or activities, including verification of their functioning;
- (p) Proposed measures for mitigation, decommissioning and compensation in the event of problems arising with the tourism development or activities;
- (q) Proposed measures to maximize the local benefits of the tourism development or activities on surrounding human settlements and communities, biodiversity and ecosystems, which may include, but are not limited to:
 - xxii. Using local products and skills;
 - xxiii. Employment;
 - xxiv. Restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems;
- (r) Relevant information from any previous tourism development or activities in the region, and information on possible cumulative effects;
- (s) Relevant information from any previous tourism development or activities by the proposer.

10. Categories of responses that Governments may wish to consider making in response to notification of proposals for, and requests for permission to undertake, tourism development, include, *inter alia*:

- (a) Approval without conditions;
- (b) Approval with conditions;
- (c) Request for further information;
- (d) Deferral pending further baseline research by other agencies;
- (e) Refusal of the proposal.

With regards to the steps described under this heading, all information indicated above was compiled and made accessible to all stakeholders, including decision-makers and the local community.

Education, capacity-building and awareness-raising

9. Education and awareness-raising campaigns need to be addressed to both the professional sectors and the general public and should inform them about the impacts of tourism on biological diversity, and good practices in this area. The private sector, and, especially, tour operators, could provide information more widely to their clients—the tourists—about tourism and biodiversity issues, and encourage them to conserve, and avoid adverse impact on, biodiversity and cultural heritage to respect national legislation of the visited country, as well as traditions of indigenous and local communities of that country, and to support actions in conformity with the present Guidelines.

10. Awareness campaigns explaining the link between cultural diversity and biological diversity will need to be tailored for various audiences, particularly stakeholders including consumers of tourism, developers and tourism operators.

11. Education and awareness-raising is required at all levels of government. This should include processes for increasing mutual understanding between relevant ministries, including joint and innovative approaches for dealing with tourism and environmental issues.

12. Awareness should also be increased within and outside government that vulnerable ecosystems and habitats are often located within lands and waters occupied or used by indigenous and local communities.

13. The tourism sector as a whole, along with tourists should be encouraged to minimize any negative impacts and maximize positive impacts on biodiversity and local cultures associated with their consumption choices and behaviour, for example through voluntary initiatives.

14. It is also important to raise awareness within the academic sector responsible for training and research on issues regarding the interaction between biological diversity and sustainable tourism, of the role that they can play concerning public education, capacity-building and awareness-raising on these issues.

15. Capacity-building activities should aim to develop and strengthen the capacities of Governments and all stakeholders to facilitate the effective implementation of the present Guidelines, and may be necessary at local, national, regional and international levels.

16. Capacity-building activities can be identified through the adaptive management process and can include strengthening human resources and institutional capacities, the transfer of know-how, the development of appropriate facilities, and training in relation to biological diversity and sustainable tourism issues, and in impact assessment and impact management techniques.

17. Such activities should include ensuring that local communities are equipped with the necessary decision-making abilities, skills and knowledge in advance of future tourist in-flows, as well as with relevant capacity and training regarding tourism services and environmental protection.

18. Capacity-building activities should include, but not be limited to:

- a) Capacity-building and training to assist all stakeholders, including Governments, and indigenous and local communities, in accessing, analysing and interpreting baseline information, undertaking impact assessments and evaluations, impact management, decision-making, monitoring and adaptive management;
- b) Development or strengthening of mechanisms for impact assessment with the participation of all stakeholders, including for the approval of the approach, content and scope of impact assessment;
- c) Establishment of multi-stakeholder processes involving government departments, tourism sector, non-governmental organizations, indigenous and local communities and other stakeholders;
- d) Training of tourism professionals in conservation and biodiversity issues.

19. Information exchange and collaboration regarding sustainable tourism implementation through networking and partnerships between all stakeholders affected by, or involved in tourism, including the private sector, should be encouraged.

The series of seminars organized under the project comply with the above described recommendations with regards to their content as well as to the target group, to the extent made possible within the framework of the project, as detailed under Vision and Goals. The under-representation of the town officers in the seminar is a regrettable deficiency, as the effective implementation of the Guidelines would require the competency and the commitment of the municipality. In this matter further steps need to be taken to draw their attention to the responsibility and huge potential they have in such processes.