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SUSTAINABLE TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES IN THE CARPATHIANS

BACKGROUND DOCUMENT

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Background document

October 2006

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Sustainable Tourism Opportunities in the Carpathians: Background document

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The **Central and East European Working Group for the Enhancement of Biodiversity (CEEWEB)** is an international network of non-governmental organisations working together to protect the natural heritage of Central and Eastern Europe. The mission of the network is the conservation of biodiversity through the promotion of sustainable development. The network contains over 70 environmental organisations from 17 nations. One of the four working groups of CEEWEB focuses on sustainable tourism. The working group aims at making tourism in Central and Eastern European countries sustainable through joint activities, such as information exchange, promoting good practices, training and education, policy-making, pilot projects and lobbying.
www.ceeweb.org

Ecological Tourism in Europe (ETE) was founded in Bonn, Germany, in 1991 as a forum of national organisations that support environmentally friendly and socially responsible tourism. ETE is offering information and education about sustainable forms of tourism and carries out regional model projects designed to promote sustainable tourism as a basis for or support of sustainable regional development in Germany and other European countries. ETE furthermore organises conferences, expert meetings, information events, seminars and workshops, both on the national and the international level. In Central and Eastern Europe the organisation has been active for 12 years, focusing on capacity building, tourism management and regional tourism development, mainly in mountain regions and protected areas.
www.oete.de

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In addition, a variety of individuals and organisations played a key role as partners and supporters, in particular during the elaboration of the case studies, which form both the backbone and flesh of this document.

The authors therefore wish to express their sincere appreciation to all those who contributed with their time, knowledge and efforts to the development of this document and to its sensible embedding in real life needs and threats in the Carpathians.

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Executive Summary

In the context of growing worldwide tourism, economic development through tourism has gained remarkable popularity in the past few decades. Furthermore, tourism is very often praised as a suitable instrument for using natural resources while contributing to the protection of the environment at the same time. Both factors might explain why the trend of tourism development is also intensively pursued in the Carpathian countries, with their wide mountainous areas and numerous protected areas.

This document is intended to serve as a guideline for all national bodies, organisations and individuals responsible for tourism development in the Carpathian countries. It intends to help the reader to gain a realistic sense of the status quo of tourism in the Carpathians, through various examples of best practices and lessons learned. Current hotspots have been identified to show where tourism development has clearly exceeded the carrying capacity and led to dramatic consequences for nature and people. Best practice examples show how sustainable tourism development may contribute to harmonised cooperation between man and nature. Last but not least, potential hotspots highlight where tourism development is presently at a turning point, and thus at the ideal moment for intervention. At these destinations, responsible bodies can intervene and contribute to a well thought-out tourism development process which is oriented towards best practice examples and the principles of sustainability instead of short-term profit and unsustainable development.

One of the main purposes of this document is to propose a set of recommendations (e.g. strategy for future tourism development in the Carpathians) in order to support changes and related initiatives at different governmental levels throughout the Carpathians towards even more strengthened and enhanced ways and means for a sustainable future of the region. The recommendations are first and foremost addressed to the governments, but they also appeal to non-governmental organisations and the tourism sector itself.

The document was developed by the ad hoc CEEWEB Carpathian Tourism Working Group (CCTWG) with the help of national scientists from each Carpathian country. As the CCTWG mainly consists of practitioners that work on the ground in the field of sustainable tourism development in their countries, the group had the unique opportunity to showcase realistic case studies of how tourism development is currently being carried out in the Carpathians.

List of Case Studies

- Eco-tourism in the Northern Area of Piatra Craiului National Park — an example of local services development in Brasov/Zarnesti, Romania
- Impacts of the International World Music and Land Art Festival "SHESHORY", Ivano-Frankivsk region, Ukraine
- Seminars on Sustainable Tourism in Banska Stiavnica, Slovakia
- Over-reliance on Tourism in Sovata, Romania
- Unfinished Ski Centre in Crni Vrh, Kucaj Mountain, Serbia
- The Ecological Farm of Mr. and Mrs. Kavka — Vyskovec (Bile Karpaty), Czech Republic
- The Azure San River Programme for Better Resource Management, Poland
- Awareness Raising in the Tourist Area Vydrovo Valley, Central Slovakia
- Unmanaged Tourism at the Certoryje National Nature Reserve — Lucina Recreation Area (Bile Karpaty), Czech Republic
- Ski Lift Splinters on Pilsko Mountain, Beskid Żywiecki
- Exceeded Carrying Capacity in Slavs'ke area, Lviv Oblast, Ukraine
- Traditional Events in the National Park Djerdap and its Vicinity, Serbia
- The Gömör-Torna Festival in Aggtelek (Hungary) and Slovensky Kras (Slovakia)
- Community Actions in Przysłop Hamlet, Poland
- Loss of Traditions and Artificial Commercialisation of Customs in Bran, Romania
- Potential for Tourism Development around Czorsztyński Reservoir, Poland
- Opportunities for Sustainable Tourism on Danube River in the Djerdap National Park, Serbia
- Tourism Development as an Alternative for Controversial Industrial Developments in Roşia Montană, Romania

I. Introduction

1 Purpose of the Background Document on Sustainable Tourism Opportunities in the Carpathians¹

Tourism, like other sectors, uses resources, generates wastes and creates environmental, cultural and social costs and benefits in the process. For sustainable patterns of consumption and production in the tourism sector, it is essential to strengthen national policy development and enhance capacity in the areas of physical planning, impact assessment, and the use of economic and regulatory instruments, as well as in the areas of information, education and marketing. A particular concern is the degradation of biodiversity and fragile ecosystems, such as coral reefs, mountains, coastal areas and wetlands. (CSD7 — Work Programme on Tourism, 1999)

Given the current utilisation of the Carpathian mountain region by the tourism sector, it is clear that the demands mentioned above need to be fully integrated into planning and management at all levels (e.g. regional, governmental, local) considering the principles of sustainability, as requested by the United Nations Commission for Sustainable Development.

Against this background, the document addresses the current situation of tourism in the Carpathians by highlighting economic, environmental and cultural impacts of tourism through case studies from all over the Carpathian countries. On the one hand, the document singles out examples of “hot spots” where tourism poses a highly significant threat e.g. to the environment. On the other hand it aims to present locations where tourism is at least partially working properly. In this regard, the Background Document presents a number of case studies where specific components of tourism development have been successfully implemented. These cases are also applicable to other destinations in the Carpathians and thus can be used as lighthouse examples. The same is true for the case studies on negative impacts of tourism in the mountainous areas — if tourism development takes on similar patterns in other locations, the negative impacts will be comparable. Finally, by means of three exemplary cases, the document attempts to show that sustainability principles can be a viable alternative in different kinds of locations — destinations with uncontrolled tourism development, regions with as yet no tourism development at all, and areas where sustainable tourism can represent a better option for the use of local resources than through unsustainable industrial development.

It is then the responsibility of the respective governments to create a productive environment and the necessary framework conditions for tourism to develop. This document

¹ Hereafter referred to as the Background Document

intends to support governments in their quest to find wise means to develop tourism in the Carpathians, considering the need to fully integrate sustainability in all sectors, in the light of the Rio process. Furthermore, it provides recommendations on how to address future tourism development in the Carpathian Convention and to overarch the existing legislative and voluntary framework.

The Carpathian mountain region provides a high number of goods and services, which are of interest not only to those people living in the region, but also to those depending on the resources (e.g. water supply, forest production, climate exchanges). This dependency needs to be taken into account when considering conservation and the sustainable use of the region, as well as the establishment of a legislative background.

There is no intention for this document to create a comprehensive and complete picture of the current situation, but rather to highlight the good practices and worst cases of tourism development in the Carpathians, and in this way inspire the reader to contribute to the replication of the former and stand for the prevention of the latter. The document pinpoints a variety of locations in the Carpathians where opportunities exist to develop sustainable tourism for the benefit of socio-economic prosperity of communities and the preservation of natural values.

2 Reference of the Background Document to the Carpathian Convention, the Alpine Convention and the CBD

In Europe there is one legally binding document dealing with tourism development on a regional-mountain scale: the Tourism Protocol of the Alpine Convention. This Background Document and its recommendations fully consider and take into account the following guiding principles and regulations from international and EU levels.

The Background Document gives reference and recommends the implementation not only of Article 9 (sustainable tourism) of the Carpathian Convention, but also integrates approaches implied by Articles 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 11, 12 and 13. These consider the thematic areas of sustainable use of natural resources as well as of training and education as cross-cutting issues that need to integrate the means of sustainable tourism and vice versa.

The Background Document considers further international agreements which are of vital interest in the context of sustainable tourism development in the Carpathians and which therefore need to be mentioned in particular:

- The decision 7/3 of the United Nations General Assembly and its Commission for Sustainable Development (CSD) at its 7th session in 1999, the Work Programme on Tourism;

- The objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), respectively its decision COP/7/14 on the Guidelines for Biodiversity and Tourism Development; the Background Document in particular implements paragraph 10 of this decision (*Invites all Governments to integrate these Guidelines in the development or review of their strategies and plans for tourism development, national biodiversity strategies and action plans, and other related sectoral strategies, at appropriate levels in consultation with interested stakeholders including tourism operators and all members of the tourism sector*);
- The outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 and its recommendation expressed in paragraph 43, as well as the initiative on *Halting the Loss of Biodiversity by the year 2010*.

As requested by the European Union and its Aquis Communautaire, the Background Document fulfils requirements described in the following provisions:

- The Habitats Directive 92-43-EEC and the Birds Directive 79-409-EEC, which require the management of ways of utilisation, including tourism, in areas identified to ensure stable and long-term quality of habitats and species;
- Agenda 21 for Tourism of the European Commission, which requests efforts to be taken to decrease negative and increase positive impacts of tourism.

3 Development of the Background Document

The document was developed by the ad hoc CEEWEB Carpathian Tourism Working Group (CCTWG) with the help of national scientists from each Carpathian country. The *Sustainable Tourism Development in the Carpathians: Market and Stakeholder Analysis* prepared by Solomyia Omelyan in July 2005 (Omelyan Report) served as the main resource for the CCTWG when choosing the topics to be included in the document. As the CCTWG mainly consists of practitioners that work on the ground in the field of sustainable tourism development in their countries, the group had the unique opportunity to showcase realistic case studies of how tourism development is carried out currently in the Carpathians. In order to use this chance, it was decided to create a report that, by means of detailed case studies, mirrors the actual state of tourism in the Carpathian countries and therefore highlights both positive and negative impacts of tourism regarding all three pillars of sustainable development (economic, environmental and socio-cultural). Additional case studies were included to emphasise that sustainable tourism development is a viable option in different types of locations. From the emerging picture then conclusions can be drawn and recommendations given.

In this way, the Omelyan Report, which allows for a broad overview of the situation of sustainable tourism markets and stakeholders in the Carpathians, and the background document from the CCTWG with its visualisation of opportunities for sustainable tourism development through in-depth descriptions of specific case studies, perfectly complement one another.

The CCTWG group consists of a number of NGOs active in the field of sustainable development and/or environmental conservation in the Carpathians. Most of the members also participate in the CEEWEB Sustainable Tourism Working Group, where they enlarge their knowledge and skills in the field of sustainable tourism and exchange their experiences with professionals from all over Central and Eastern Europe. CEEWEB itself is a network of more than 70 NGOs from Central and Eastern European countries focusing on biodiversity related issues.

The main strength of this group is that its members are rich in practical experience gathered during years of work in their countries with the local population. This applied background enables the CCTWG to a) contribute with on-the-ground examples to a realistic appraisal of the current situation in their countries regarding sustainable tourism development; and b) to elaborate a down-to-earth strategy for the future development appropriate to the real needs of both nature and people of the Carpathians.

Additionally, the document was verified by scientific partners from various institutes and universities. The list of members of the CCTWG and other contributors can be found in Annex 2.

4 Structure of the Background Document

The document basically consists of two vital parts. The first section (chapter II) broaches the issue of both negative and positive impacts of tourism on given destinations in the Carpathians. The purpose of this chapter is threefold. First, by means of negative examples from the different countries, the damaging effects that unmanaged tourism can have on a region shall be pointed out. Second, the document showcases best practice examples in order to highlight how well thought-out, sound tourism development can enhance the overall situation of a destination. The individual examples are clustered according to their focus on economic, ecological and socio-cultural issues. Third, the case studies in a subchapter on selected future opportunities state that sustainable tourism development may have tangible benefits in such locations where tourism potential is not yet utilised sufficiently, as well as where uncontrolled tourism developments or unsustainable industrialisation are threatening the wellbeing of communities and nature.

The outline maps at the margin of each case study help the reader to pinpoint the location of the case studies. In addition to national borders, the maps show the outlines of the entire

Carpathian Ecoregion, along with the national proposals for the scope of application of the Carpathian Convention. The different types of impacts defined by the case studies are indicated by a set of symbols in the outline maps. A legend explaining the meaning of the symbols as well as a legend to the outline maps are provided in Annex 1.

Chapter III concludes the lessons learnt from the previous chapter and derives recommendations on how to implement the experiences in a future development approach for tourism in the Carpathian countries.

5 Links with the Carpathian Project

This Background Document was developed in the frame of the Carpathian Project² supported by the EU Community Initiative INTERREF IIIB CADSES Neighborhood Programme. The project aims to develop the Carpathian Convention into an operational and truly transnational platform allowing for the implementation of the most relevant EU policies across the Carpathian region. The project shall demonstrate that environmental and developmental objectives can go hand in hand, if the future is built on the region's advantages and potentials, and typical mountain challenges are addressed in a coordinated manner.

The Carpathian Project aspires to take a strategic approach. It will determine a common strategic vision in order to build consensus and develop strategies and policies according to the principles accorded by the Carpathian Convention to contribute to harmonious territorial integration across the region. To this end, a set of actions will be implemented ranging from activities on the ground to facilitation and development of protocols to the Carpathian Convention and related action plans in such fields as biological and landscape diversity, sustainable tourism, sustainable agriculture, forestry and rural development.

One of the Carpathian Project's actions on the ground is the development of "Via Carpatica", a trail network that runs through all of the Carpathian countries and combines projects and sites with sustainable tourism development. This trail network will not only underline the importance of a joint strategic approach across the Carpathians, but will also support the individual sites in a practical manner through the exchange of best practices and common publicity.

Sustainable Tourism Opportunities in the Carpathians is an attempt to justify the need for developing a sustainable tourism protocol to the Carpathian Convention and a respective strategy. It also seeks to visualise the potential benefits of sustainable tourism development to be implemented by the Parties to the Convention, taking a coordinated approach.

² Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians in a Transnational Framework Project

II. Thematic Hotspots

In the context of the worldwide growth of tourism, economic development through tourism has gained remarkable popularity in the past few decades (www.biodiv.org). Furthermore, tourism is very often praised as a suitable instrument for using natural resources while contributing to the protection of the environment at the same time. Both factors might explain why the trend of tourism development is also intensively pursued in the Carpathian countries, with their wide mountainous areas and numerous protected areas.

Tourism is not the "white industry" it was often made out to be. No matter which form it takes, tourism always impacts the environment and the culture of the host country. The intensity of these impacts, however, does depend on the form of tourism carried out. The question of whether tourism in a specific area is environmentally friendly and socially responsible depends to a high degree on the disposition and the quality of the tourism management (including instruments for visitor control, environmental education, etc.) (Ceballos-Lascuráin, p.55f.). Where management is competent in terms of sustainability, tourism is indeed a good alternative, especially when safeguarding ecologically sensitive areas against more environmentally damaging uses (Revermann/Petermann, p.98). Irresponsible management, on the other hand, can result in even more serious impacts, precisely because they take place in particularly vulnerable areas of the country.

1 Economical Dimension

The influence tourism exerts on the economy of a region can be difficult to grasp. Contrary to the visible damage, such as the harm inflicted by downhill racing in a forest, the distortion of the local economy is often a creeping process. Likewise, the enhancement of the local economy also needs time to become apparent, as the sustainable approach is geared toward long-term profitability and very often shows only small successes in the beginning.

1.1 Positive Impacts

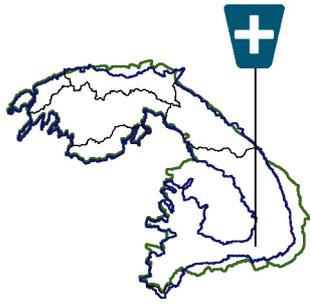
Tourism can generate income for individuals just as well as for whole communities in very different direct and indirect ways. It creates employment, supports the private sector and generates taxes, revenues and investments. This upswing not only ***enhances the economic living conditions*** of the destination but also ***contributes to the social stability*** of the region and thus to the ***well-being of locals and guests***.

The main pre-condition that tourism needs to bring about all of these advantages is the ***engagement of local businesses***. Achieving this task requires that the local population is able — or enabled, if need be — to fulfil the demands of newly established job opportunities through ***training and capacity building measures***. In a second step, ***a local supply network based on the diverse needs of the tourism branch*** could be established, so that both tourism and all other local businesses are mutually profiting from each other. The results are, firstly, a ***long-term viability of the economic sector*** of the destination and, secondly, a ***diversified economic structure*** which is not solely dependent on tourism.

1.1.1 Stimulation of local economic cycles

Tourism can provide a boost to the local economy

Although “tourism” is a single concept, it actually consists of many different elements. Tourism development can result in advantages for economic sectors which do not directly belong to the tourism industry. The consequence is that tourism can initiate a boost to the entire local economy, if the goods and services needed for tourism are supplied by the local producers. This includes, for example, farmers (food production and supply), craftsmen (construction works) and local handicraft traders (selling of local products) as well as tourist guides, owners of accommodation facilities and restaurants, etc.



Case Study: Eco-tourism in the Northern Area of Piatra Craiului National Park — an example of local services development in Brasov/Zarnesti, Romania

Originally targeting large carnivore protection, the Carpathian Large Carnivore Project supported the development of sustainable tourism in the commune of Zarnesti in the Southern Romanian Carpathians. Large carnivores represent one of the main tourist attractions in this region. The economic upswing in and around Zarnesti due to this carnivore-based tourism was enormous and comprised all kinds of businesses in the region — from guides, to accommodation providers and handicraft sellers. In return, the economic advantage derived from tourism served as the best argument for large carnivore conservation.

In the Northern Area of the Piatra Craiului National Park, the Carpathian Large Carnivore Project (CLCP) was established as a joint initiative of several national and international partners. The project began in 1993 with the main goal of creating a model area for the conservation of large carnivores in the Southern Carpathian Mountains. Since then, however, this goal has been expanded into a more complex approach that now focused on four different components:

- research on wolves, bears, lynx and people;
- management and conservation;
- rural development;
- public awareness.

The rural development component included two main elements: development of eco-tourism and the establishment of a fund to support local conservation and development. The eco-tourism element was designed to demonstrate to local communities that large carnivores are not just a burden for livestock production, but that their existence in the surrounding forest can in fact contribute to income generation. Both elements were designed to produce benefits for the local people, bringing sustainable development to the region and ultimately achieving greater awareness and acceptance of large carnivores on the part of the local population.

Eco-tourism was introduced to the region in 1996, mainly focusing on the community of Zarnesti, based on its specific attractions — the existence of wolves, bears and lynx in one of the most spectacular landscapes in the Carpathians. Already in 1997, a number of travel agencies included trips to the Piatra Craiului area in their catalogues, and eight international ecotourist groups visited the area.

All of the tourism development aspects of the project were performed with a high degree of professionalism, aiming at a high quality tourist experience supported by solid local services that could compete with any other eco-tourism offer around the world.

The activities on eco-tourism development were channelled in three directions:

1. Creating a tourism infrastructure in the town of Zarnesti and the communities around Piatra Craiului based on local, small-scale family businesses;
2. Designing attractive tourist programmes with a focus on large carnivores;
3. Marketing and bringing tourists from Western Europe into the area of Piatra Craiului.

The number of tourist groups (from Switzerland, Germany, Austria, UK, Sweden, Norway, and USA) sent by international travel agencies increased from eight in 1997 to more than 100 in 2002. Also the number of individual travellers rose notably from a very small number of individual tourists in the year 2000 to already 380 in 2002. The total number of tourists is still increasing today.

Before 1997, Zarnesti had no tourism-related infrastructure at all. Therefore, the main challenge that CLCP faced involved stimulating the development of eco-tourism services, starting from the ground up. Over the years of the project, an increasing infrastructure was developed, including several guesthouses, a tour operator, 10 trained and licensed nature guides, a bike rental business, horse-cart transport services and a handicraft shop for the merchandising of local crafts.

This enumeration makes it clear that the upswing of tourism in the region had effects on a broad scale of businesses directly or indirectly related to tourism. It can be safely concluded that tourism development in the area of Zarnesti boosted the local economy.

Even after the CLCP officially ceased to operate in 2003, most of the local services and infrastructure it gave rise to kept developing. For example, the handicraft shop opened in 2000 with one local producer. By 2006, there were already 85 local residents supplied the shop with handmade products. During a good tourism season, the local producers could earn the equivalent of an extra salary selling their handicrafts. Considering that the unemployment rate in Zarnesti exceeded 50 percent, and most of the local producers were either housewives or unemployed, the economic impact for them was significant.

Generally, the revenue generated through eco-tourism has been monitored by the CLCP in order to effectively communicate the economic power of eco-tourism development at the local, regional and national levels, and to gather support for conservation measures. One of the most important characteristics of eco-tourism in the Zarnesti area was that a large portion of the revenues remained at the local level. The income was high enough for the local market to represent an attractive economic alternative to unsustainable land-use practices. Figures collected from the CLCP demonstrated that eco-tourism did have a significant economic impact with respect to local development and conservation in Zarnesti.

In 2001-2002, the local portion of the total revenue generated by the eco-tourism programme was about 46.5 percent. This demonstrates that a substantial amount of money — EUR 400,000 (about EUR 140,000 in 2001 and EUR 260,000 in 2002) — remained at the local community level. In 2001-2002, the average income in Zarnesti did not exceed EUR 1,800 per year. Thus the local money generated through eco-tourism represented the equivalent of more than 100 full time jobs over two years.

* The information contained in this case study was taken from the 2001 and 2002 Annual Reports of the Carpathian Large Carnivore Project (www.clcp.ro).

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Tourism development can support the creation of a local supply network

Tourism, as already described above, has a complex structure which requires a great deal of additional services to function properly. Corresponding to the tourism chain, these are, for example, accommodation facilities, agricultural production or the manufacturing of handicrafts. This interdependency between tourism and diverse suppliers may lead to the establishment of a supply network that benefits all related sectors and businesses. Tourism development provides an increase in demand, whereas the suppliers are responsible for their fulfilment. In this way, tourism can be seen as a driving force for the development of the regional economy.

Case Study: Impacts of the International World Music and Land Art Festival "SHESHORY", Ivano-Frankivsk region, Ukraine

An annual world music festival created opportunities for local people to sell their produce and provide tourists with accommodation. While the 10,000 visitors stay in the area for only a few days, the event kicked off the development of traditional businesses.

Sheshory is a picturesque village mainly populated by Huzuls, an ethnic group found in the Ukrainian Carpathians. In the summer of 2006 the village hosted the International World Music and Land Art Festival for the fourth time. The festival brought into the small Carpathian village about 300 famous musicians and dancers from Ukraine and 11 other countries, including Poland, the Czech Republic, and Romania. The number of guests in 2006 reached 10,000, double the figure from the year before. Environmental awareness aspects were strong in the programme of the festival; the organisers also encouraged the initiatives of the local population in developing environmentally responsible businesses. For example, one of the achievements was the creation of a waste management system for the village, including installation of garbage bins and contracting a company for garbage collection.

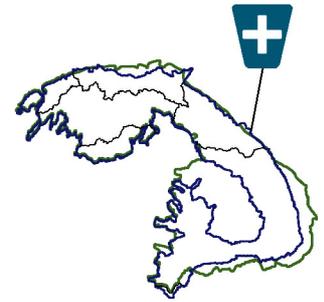
Huzuls have rich traditions, preserved through difficult times, including such skills as wood carving and weaving. While the event lasted only three days, the craftsmen were preparing for the festival for few months in advance. The handicrafts were sold during the festival at the street market. Local residents held workshops on making traditional handicrafts to the tourists.

Villagers were also able to accommodate a significant proportion of guests in their houses and by renting space for tents. The hosts started using the Internet to advertise their accommodations so that they are utilised outside of the festival duration also. Locally produced food was offered to the tourists in the village and at the festival location. The creation of a regional brand for local food production is planned to enhance the positive economic impacts of the festival.

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1.1.2 Capacity building and training for the local population resulting in the creation of long-term employment possibilities

Enabling local people to take advantage of new and additional job opportunities

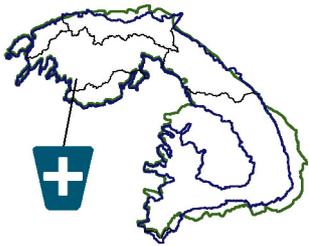
Tourism development according to the principles of sustainability regards the participation of the local population as one vital part of the concept. In order to guarantee this participation, it is essential to provide adequate information, capacity building and training measures that enable the local population to make optimal use of the new possibilities tourism offers. What additionally distinguishes jobs in a tourist destination dedicated to sustainability is the effort of real capacity building and education of the local people (qualification) as well as the intent to create long-term job opportunities (long-term approach of tourism development) and which are less affected by seasonality.

Case Study: Seminars on Sustainable Tourism in Banska Stiavnica, Slovakia

Banska Stiavnica is among the most strikingly beautiful and historically interesting towns in Slovakia, surrounded by scenic protected landscape. However, the local people do not utilise the opportunities for tourism development sufficiently. A training programme fostered tourism development and directed it towards the sustainable use of resources to assure the preservation of the attractiveness of the area for future generations.

Banska Stiavnica is located in central Slovakia, in the neovolcanic Stiavnicke Vrchy Mountains (1,009 metres above sea level at the highest point). The region is well known for silver and gold mining from the 13th to the 18th century. Its Mining and Forestry Academy, which existed between 1764 and 1919, was one of the most important educational institutions on mining, nature and forest management in Europe.

The historical town of Banska Stiavnica, which features technical monuments in its vicinity, is listed in the UNESCO World Heritage List. The region around Banska Stiavnica is a Protected Landscape Area (PLA) and features several small-sized reserves and Natura 2000 sites. Besides the natural assets, the cultural heritage — notably the technical monuments (remains of mining), the artificial lakes with connecting channels and the historical centre of the town of Banska Stiavnica with its many impressive architectural and historical monuments — is also highly valuable.



It is obvious that the area has a high potential for tourism development. However, the advantages are not sufficiently utilised. Therefore a set of seminars focused on tourism development was organised. Altogether at least 70 people from public bodies, small private businesses and the general public participated in at least in one of the seminars.

The seminars were organised within the project Promoting Sustainable Tourism in Central and Eastern Europe — A Demonstration Model Applied to the Natural and Cultural Heritage of Banska Stiavnica. This project was intended to support sustainable tourism development in the Banska Stiavnica region. It was implemented by the association of the NGO Ecological Tourism in Europe (Germany) and Amber Trail (Slovakia), in 2001-2005.

Both the content and form of the 10 seminars were shaped by the main goal of attracting and educating stakeholders in order to involve them in the tourism development process. The topics of the seminars included, among others, positive and negative impacts of tourism on the environment, the vision of Banska Stiavnica's development and the role of tourism in it, and marketing and certification of tourism.

Most important outcomes of the seminars:

- *General awareness raising among the local population:* The people interested in tourism came to understand the meaning of sustainable tourism. Generally, the appropriate means of tourism development and operation became much more public and frequently represented topics in local debates, articles and in meetings of the city council. A large part of the population realised that local cultural and natural heritage are assets worthy of protection and that they can be utilised for tourism.
- *Establishment of a tourism association:* It was realised that local natural and cultural heritage are among the main marketing advantages of the region and that they are therefore worth protecting. In this context, the strong need for a tourism association was declared by the small local entrepreneurs. The establishment of the association in the beginning of 2006 can be regarded as a direct result of the seminars. The main goal of the association is to improve the environment for tourism businesses regarding collaboration, coordination, joint marketing and common lobbying.
- *Joint elaboration of tourism development priorities:* The participants of the seminar jointly elaborated general priorities for tourism development and

operation in the region. These priorities then served as guiding principles during various meetings and discussions related to tourism development.

- *Establishment of tourist facilities:* The seminars gave the “final kick-off” for the establishment of two small businesses — on the one hand, a private accommodation in Banska Stiavnica and on the other hand a guide-business with a strong focus on pupils and students.
- *Adjusting the operation of small businesses in tourism:* The seminars positively influenced the collaboration and networking between businesses and provided a common understanding of how the cultural heritage should be used for tourism in the region.

It has to be mentioned that these results mainly concern the local population and small businesses. The commitment of the local authorities was generally rather low. However, in order to achieve the successful implementation of sustainable tourism the participation of all the stakeholders is necessary.

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1.2 Negative Impacts

External Investments into the tourism sector may drain money out of the region. This ***financial drain*** considerably weakens local economic cycles and results in an ***unequal distribution of benefits*** among the local population. The increase in local costs in the course of tourism development additionally contributes to the intensification of local disparities. Another problem is posed by the ***overestimation of tourism*** as the sole way out of economic problems. Moreover, external investments may bring a sudden boost to a tourist region but then leave the local economy in long depression if the destination proves to be unsuccessful.

1.2.1 Distortion of the public economy

Tourism is very often overestimated as the sole way out of economic problems of a region.

In the last decades, tourism is more and more regarded as a miracle cure for the economy of destinations that meet the necessary pre-conditions (e.g. natural and/or cultural treasures). However, to count on tourism as the sole

economic factor, i.e. to create a “tourism monoculture”, creates a high degree of dependency on external factors (natural hazards, political situation in host and sending countries, new tourism trends) and makes the local economy very vulnerable. In this way, the long-term stabilisation of the local economy cannot be guaranteed.

Case Study: Over-reliance on Tourism in Sovata, Romania

Sovata is a town famous for its salt resources and its Dolina lakes. In former times. The salt in Sovata was once mined for profit, but today it is almost exclusively used for (spa) tourism, and the town’s whole economic structure, including trade and services, is oriented towards the tourism sector. Sovata’s main attractions, the salt lakes, are now threatened because of the overload of tourists, meaning that the town’s attractiveness for tourists is about to significantly decrease in the near future. This slump may then mean a severe economic crisis for the city, which relies so heavily on tourism.

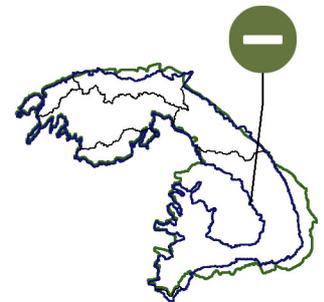
The town of Sovata is located at the Western border of the Gurghiului Mountains, which form part of Romania’s Eastern Carpathians. The area around Sovata is famous for its rich biodiversity. In the immediate vicinity of Sovata, two sites are designated to become part of the Natura 2000 network of protected areas starting from 2007. The neighbourhood of the town is a concentration area of bears, especially in the autumn.

The particularity of Sovata is the fact that it is the only town of the “Salt District” (an area famous for its huge salt reserves) and its five salt lakes (Dolina lakes), which are used for spa tourism. Bear Lake, a protected area, is the biggest and best known of the lakes.

The attraction of the lakes is based on their unique formation, with a surface layer made up of freshwater, while the lower layers consist of salt water. The salt concentration increases with depth, creating separate, well defined layers which do not intersperse. The surface layer lets through the sun’s rays, which then heat up the lower layers. In this way, the heat and water temperature also increase with depth. Bear Lake is the biggest heliotherm-dolina drift lake in Romania.

Besides spa tourism, Sovata is also a ski resort, ensuring tourists stream in year round. Thus, the tourism sector generally represents the sole driving force for the town’s economy.

Sovata is a rather well-known tourist resort that attracts a big number of domestic and foreign (above all Hungarian, German and Swedish) tourists. At



present, there are at least six huge hotels, 17 villas and 24 guesthouses offering accommodation to the visitors. Further "unofficial" possibilities for housing are additionally offered. According to an interview with the resort manager in July 2006, the hotels in the 2005 summer season had an occupancy rate of about 67%. That the town was from the beginning (1884) designed to support mass tourism can be seen in the town's infrastructural division into "normal" town and resort. The town's surroundings, however, have never been taken into account when planning tourism. Therefore, there are virtually no designated trails in the forests, which results in tourists causing irreversible damage to the future Natura 2000 sites. Appropriate codes of conduct are missing as well.

Another problem the mass of visitors poses to the area is related to the lakes themselves. The temperature of Bear Lake, Sovata's main and representative attraction, has continuously decreased over the years. When the phenomenon of heliothermic was first observed, the temperature of the lake's hottest layer was 80°C. By 1902, the temperature had decreased to 61 °C; by 1910 to 51 °C; and in 1965 the measurements indicated 33 °C.

This process, which threatens this unique lake, directly correlates with two factors: the infiltration of freshwater (solved by the draining of a massive nearby freshwater lake, Lake Tineretul or Youth Lake) and the increasing number of bathers, as their swimming is mixing up the water layers of the lake. In order to limit the impacts, the local authorities imposed bathing restrictions. Still, considering the huge numbers of visitors, these measures will probably only slow down the process, not stop the irreversible damage done to the lake.

Mass tourism also implies mass traffic (including noise pollution), which until recently has been unrestricted in the town. The problem attracted attention after the guests in several hotels started complaining about the unbearable noise. The solution was to ban traffic from the lakes' vicinity. On the other hand, this measure caused massive discontent amongst tourist travelling by car, who cannot find parking places in the town. Also, some villa owners are complaining about a serious decrease in guest numbers since the measures were introduced.

Sovata is a relatively new settlement. In the beginning, its inhabitants lived from salt mining and lumbering. This changed when they realised the potential of the salt lakes (used for the treatment of different diseases) for tourism. Mass tourism appeared virtually from one day to the next, giving an economic boost to the locality and creating new jobs. Demographic data proves this boost: from 1850 to 1930, the town's population tripled. By 1900,

the population numbers had reached 2,000, and by 1910, it had exceeded 3,000. During communism, the process was even more accelerated, since most major companies from bigger nearby cities owned villas in Sovata, thus creating even more jobs and encouraging the population influx. According to the 1992 census, Sovata now has around 9,000 inhabitants.

The huge risk regarding this immense growth process is that tourism represents the one and only basis for it. Besides lumbering and a couple of small enterprises, the local population is fully dependent on the tourism industry. The locals work in hotels, restaurants and shops in the resort, they produce handicrafts to sell to tourists or they work as guides. Apart from that, there are no job alternatives in the region, and the area is not highly suitable for agriculture.

Since there is increasing evidence that mass tourism currently causes serious damage to the main attractions of Sovata, i.e. the lake and the future Natura 2000 sites, a slump in tourism activities has to be expected soon. Due to the overall orientation of jobs towards tourism, the absence of tourists will not only cause unemployment in jobs directly related to tourism, but will also affect related businesses indirectly, e.g. handicraft production.

Sovata certainly is neither extremely large nor does it have a vast number of hotel beds compared with the country's main beach and ski resorts, and a number of other spa resorts in the country. Nevertheless, it demonstrates that mass tourism and over-reliance on tourism — even on a smaller scale — may pose severe threats to a community's economy.

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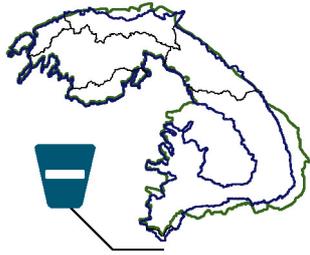
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1.2.2 Increase in local disparities

External investments allow sudden boosts but may bring forth a long depression if the destination proves to be unsuccessful.

External investments are generally geared towards short-term profit and are therefore only made in promising tourist regions. There the available financial resources allow for a rapid growth of tourism facilities. If, however, the destination does not prove to be successful or deteriorates, the investor quickly withdraws from the region and searches for a new target area. Some investors go bankrupt, and formerly attractive tourist areas are abandoned —

buildings remain unfinished for years, and the local population is left behind with their unfulfilled expectations.



Case Study: Unfinished Ski Centre in Crni Vrh, Kucaj Mountain, Serbia

The example of Crni Vrh Mountain shows how grandiose but unsuccessful tourism development combined with political instability, corruption and a lack of legislation may cause long-term damage to the affected region. The construction of a new ski centre in Crni Vrh demolished existing tourism facilities and caused environmental damages to the mountain. The tourism centre was never finalised, which led to even more harmful effects. The local economy was distorted and the formerly recreational area is threatened with ore mining developments that will have even harsher environmental impacts.

Crni Vrh is situated near the town of Bor and about 50 km from the Djerdap National Park. Although it is outside of the National Proposal of Serbia for the scope of application of the Carpathian Convention, it belongs to the South-East Serbian region, which, together with the Djerdap National Park and the entire Kucajske Mountains, is treated as one tourism region in the Serbian Strategy of Tourism Development till 2015.

The Crni Vrh Mountain has always been famous for winter tourism and has represented an important tourist destination for decades. The mountain (with its highest peak at 1,043 m) represents a fork that separates the rivers Timok in the east, Mlava in the west and Pek in the north. The massive of Crni Vrh is rich with forests, especially beech, as well as with various flora and fauna species and beautiful landscapes. The proximity of the road Bor–Zagubica and thus the good accessibility, the mountain climate with deep beds of snow that last almost until May, the evergreen forests and the clean mountain air made the Crni Vrh mountain attractive to scores of visitors.

However, at the beginning of the 1990s, some big Serbian investors recognised the great potential of this tourist area and started to plan a tourism centre of a new dimension. According to the planners of the project, the ski centre would have been spread over a territory of 210 hectares and it would have consisted of a luxurious hotel (Hyatt type) with over 850 beds, an apartment village, numerous ski trails, tennis and golf courts, a sports gymnasium and even a heliport. The Serbian oil industry enterprise (NIS) was the biggest investor in this project (with 56% of all investments). Since the beginning of the development of the tourism centre altogether USD 70 million have been invested.

These planning activities and investments were accompanied by new spatial planning rules (e.g. regarding building grounds) unfavourable for the local population. Further, ski elevators have been removed. Around 1995, the number of visitors and thus the overall income generated from tourism significantly decreased. Some parts of the area were even controlled by the police (special security forces) and visitors were forbidden. The result was the total collapse of the local tourism sector at Crni Vrh Mountain.

However, after the fall of Slobodan Milosevic's regime, all investments in this mountain region stopped and the Crni Vrh was left "under construction". Although in 2003 the Russian petrol company Lukoil was said to be interested in continuing the construction of the ski centre, the work was not resumed.

Instead, in June 2006, the Serbian Mining and Energy Minister signed a concession contract on ore prospecting and mining on Crni Vrh.

In this way, the external investments in the ski centre were doubly harmful to the mountain and its inhabitants. It not only destroyed the formerly prospering tourism industry, but also led to the replacement of tourism — which at least had the potential to be oriented towards sustainable forms — in favour of less environmentally friendly resource utilisation. The ore mining and the further processing of ore will do considerable harm to the nature, and the people of Crni Vrh will end up again completely — if temporarily — dependent on one type of industry.

Moreover, the promises that were given to the local population related to the tourism development of the region have already been completely forgotten. In June 2006 the Serbian Government announced that the new tourism centre in South-Eastern Serbia is going to be Stara Mountain, and invited investors to this area. Nobody talks about Crni Vrh any more.

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Bor Municipality: www.bor030.net

Serbian Government: www.serbia.sr.gov.yu

2 Ecological Dimension

The dependencies between tourism and nature are indeed intricate. Based on natural treasures as one of the main tourist attractions, the tourism industry also highly affects the environment in which it takes place. In all cases, the development of a region into a tourist destination changes the situation for nature and people. The characteristics of this change, however, highly depend on the way tourism development is managed in the prevailing destination. Enhancement of living conditions for the local population and of the environment can be achieved, but the exact opposite is equally possible.

2.1 Positive Impacts

Tourism development which is dedicated to the principles of sustainability and obeys a responsible use of natural resources can minimise the negative effects of tourist activities and may even contribute to an improvement of the environment in a destination.

The pressure on natural resources due to an increased number of visitors and nature-based activities requires the ***establishment of a comprehensive resource management system***. The claim for such a system was only raised due to the demands of the tourists and its realisation was feasible only due to the additional income out of this sector. Moreover the ***income generated from tourism*** can be partly used for ***nature protection***, so to say as an investment in the future existence of one of the destination's main attractions. Special nature protection activities can even be conducted with the help of the local population or tourists, so that a double effect can be achieved — the conservation of nature and the ***sensitisation and education of the people*** about environmental concerns.

2.1.1 Use of tourism-related income for nature protection

Financing of nature protection efforts through tourism

Very often national sources for the funding of nature protection are insufficient and the organisations or people responsible have to search for alternatives. Against this background, well-managed tourism, e.g. in protected areas, appears to be a very good way to use natural resources for the purpose of generating income. On the one hand, it prevents the occurrence of other damaging forms of utilisation and on the other hand, parts of the obtained earnings can even flow back into the conservation of the environment and

thus contribute to the long-term maintenance of sound natural conditions. Benefits to the nature protection range from tourism-generated income by protected areas to the conservation measures carried out directly by private operators of tourism facilities.

Case Study: The Ecological Farm of Mr. and Mrs. Kavka — Vyskovec (Bile Karpaty), Czech Republic

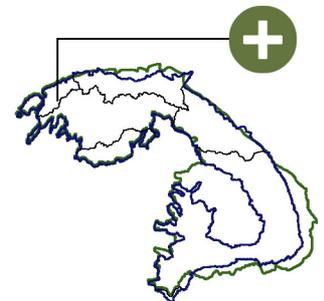
Small is beautiful, as evidenced by this example of a well kept farm providing tourism services in a vulnerable nature area. Additional income from tourists is necessary to make a living from pasture grazing. Therefore what for the Czech farmer means income, the same for the protected area management means nature conservation. This is an example of one of many good practices in the Carpathians of how benefits to local farmers can also advance nature conservation.

Vyskovec belongs to the Moravske Kopanice region in the central part of the Protected Landscape Area (PLA) of Bile Karpaty. It is an area with scattered settlements and only few permanent residents. This also partly explains the poor infrastructure and accessibility of the area. The area is mostly used for seasonal and weekend recreation.

The region is also characterised by high unemployment and an ageing population. The main income source is still agriculture and most of the area is managed by larger agriculture companies — former socialist cooperative farms that prefer the old ways of land management and agricultural production. However, the area also hosts fragments of well preserved areas of outstanding natural value and a unique landscape.

Mr. and Mrs. Kavka successfully run a well kept farm in Vyskoviec. In consultation and cooperation with the administration of the PLA, they significantly contribute to landscape management. For example, the farmers cleared several hectares of old pastures from scrub (hawthorn, blackthorn and dog rose), which decisively improved the quality of the site. This initial management measure was followed by regular sheep grazing, which now keeps the cleared sites in good condition. This measure was part of the PLA Management Plan for such locations in the Bile Karpaty PLA. In addition, the buildings on the farm are either traditional or at least respect the traditional architecture.

Besides their engagement in nature conservation measures, the Kavkas also offer sustainable agro-tourism services to their visitors. The ECEAT-certified



farm (certification by the European Centre for Ecological Agriculture and Tourism is based on a number of quality and sustainability criteria) allows tourists to gain insight into and take part in the every-day activities of the farm. The farm also sells its own produce to the tourists.

In this context, the Kavkas pursue a sensitive promotion of nature conservation by contributing to their visitors' knowledge about the Bile Karpaty PLA with personal information, informational materials and recommendations regarding trips and further contacts.

At six to eight people, the capacity of the accommodation facilities is reasonable and proves to be suitable for this type of location. The advertisement for the farm is well thought-out and directed at a specific kind of tourists — namely to those who appreciate the values which the PLA has to offer and who will not mind the insufficient infrastructure and the difficult accessibility of the farm. The farm has its own website (www.dvorec-kavka.cz) and advertises its offer on selected tourist information servers, including the web page of PRO-BIO, the Czech Association of Ecological Farmers.

Another peculiarity of the Kavkas' farm is the fact that a major part of the money earned is invested back into local nature and landscape conservation measures. Following the success of the first management measures applied on recommendation of the PLA Administration to plots overgrown by scrub, Mr and Mrs Kavka have now rented further plots which they manage and use for grazing. They are proud of their active role in the nature conservation in the Bile Karpaty PLA, just as the PLA is proud of them, as the Kavkas keep the landscape alive and manage it in a way that supports biodiversity. There is a small wetland not far from the farm, which has been partially destroyed and is in poor condition at present. The Kavkas took interest in this important biotope and, with help from the PLA, would like to try to restore it and take over the management of the site in the future.

The type of tourism services chosen for the farm respects the character of the landscape, wisely uses the potential of the area, and allows for nature conservation. It is exactly the kind of tourism which is suitable for such a vulnerable location. It provides income for the owners while at the same time supporting the nature conservation efforts of the Bile Karpaty PLA.

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Sustainable tourism development affords the establishment of responsible resource management and thus contributes to the conservation of resources.

In many rural areas in the Carpathians, adequate resource management of waste, water and energy is still lacking. In some places it does not exist at all. The reasons are manifold and range from a lack of financial sources and national support to the non-recognition of a corresponding need by the locals. Tourists, however, expect clear water, sound natural scenery free from waste and a well-regulated energy supply. In this way, tourism development can be a trigger for management efforts that primarily benefit the local environment and the local population.

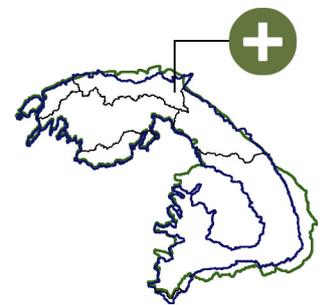
Case Study: The Azure San River Programme for Better Resource Management, Poland

The Azure San River Programme, coordinated by the Association of Tourist Districts of Dynowskie Foothills, serves as an example of how the enhancement of a region's tourism potential can be fostered while at the same time the conservation of the local natural assets through better resource management is being supported.

The Azure San River is one of the biggest in the Carpathians and plays an important economic role for the whole Voivodship of Podkarpackie (West Bieszczady), from where the river flows towards the Ukraine. The landscape surrounding the river has high tourism potential due to numerous natural and landscape values (e.g. the Landscape Park Gór Słonnych or the Nature Reserve Polanki), which are protected in protected landscape areas and several smaller nature reserves.

The Association of Tourist Districts of Dynowskie Foothills (Związek Gmin Turystycznych Pogorza Dynowskiego — ZGT) works in the fields of tourism (infrastructure) development, promotion of local resources regarding culture heritage and environmental conservation, and thereby seeks to unleash the area's potential.

This association recognised two important facts: that tourism represents one of the most promising tools for economic development and thus a decrease in unemployment in the rural areas adjacent to the river, and that a sound environment is a decisive pre-condition for drawing tourists and thus for a flourishing tourism industry. Therefore the ZGT initiated the Azure San River Programme, which aims at the conservation of the river and its drainage area.



This programme includes, among others, the construction and modernisation of sanitary infrastructure, a sewage treatment plant and communal waste disposal works. Additionally, the programme supports organic farming initiatives, trade and additional service industries related to tourism. The numbers of tourists in the Podkarpackie Voivodship rose from 200,000 visitors in 2004 to 400,000 in 2005.

In this way, the programme not only provides for the accomplishment of tourism's preconditions, but also serves as a motor for local infrastructure development and better management of the local resources in the area.

Summarising, the outcomes for the local population, the local environment and for tourists include the supply of clean water from the San River, the preservation of flora and fauna related to the river, the development of rural tourism as well as the support of agricultural development towards organic farming and thus the production of healthy food.

Additional side-effects of the Programme's initiative were courses for environmental education as well as nature and culture conservation activities.

The Azure San River Programme is compliant with EU Guidelines regarding environmental conservation, the Development Strategy for the Voivodship Podkarpackie and the United Nations Programme for sustainable regional development. It is also harmonised with three districts' development strategies. Moreover, the project gained acceptance from local communities and the municipal and district governments. Therewith, the basis for successful implementation due to broad backup from different decision-making authorities as well as from different levels of development planning is guaranteed.

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2.1.2 Environmental awareness raising through educational activities in the course of sustainable tourism development

The concept of sustainable tourism contributes to a better understanding of nature among the local population and tourists

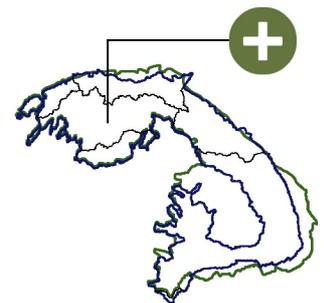
The approach of sustainable tourism development implies the inclusion of the local population into the development process. This means firstly, supplying them with all relevant information about the tourism strategy and secondly, the intention to raise the locals' understanding of the targeted development. Therefore environmental education workshops or campaigns are often included into the sustainable tourism development process. Furthermore, additional activities and initiatives, such as waste collection, informative events or the construction of a nature education trail, contribute to the enhancement of the locals' — and also the tourists' — environmental awareness.

Case study: Awareness Raising in the Tourist Area Vydrovo Valley, Central Slovakia

Visitors come to the Vydrovo valley in order to see a piece of Slovak forestry or railway history, to spend leisure time in a clean and peaceful environment and to explore the atmosphere of Slovak rural villages. Tourism development in the area took place in cooperation with a local NGO, uniting a number of volunteers, a forest company, the municipality, and a railway company. Natural values of the area are well understood both by the visitors and tourism developers. One of the main attractions in the area, the Forest Open-Air Museum, is of great interest to the young generation. The museum has become a well known attraction for local inhabitants, schools and families.

The Tourist Area in Vydrovo valley is located in central Slovakia, near Čierny Balog, a village with 5,100 inhabitants. It is situated away from the main communication lines at the foot of the Veporské hills. Due to its remoteness, the community in Čierny Balog is rather conservative and the development is slow. The unemployment rate is always above the national average.

Among the main attractions of the area is the Forest Open-Air Museum, an educational path which is 3.5 kilometres long and contains 48 stops. Information boards and three-dimensional exhibits at the stops show the history and the current situation of Slovak and worldwide forestry, of the wood processing industry, and of natural forest ecosystems. The Forest Open-Air Museum was built in an environmentally friendly way, using natural



materials adjusted to the local terrain and the conditions of Vydrovo valley. A total of 20,000 tourists visited the museum in 2005.

The narrow-gauge Čiernohronská railway is another tourist attraction. It was used to transport wood in the last century from valleys around Čierny Balog. Today it operates for visitors and inhabitants of the micro-region Čierny Hron. The rails go from the main station in Čierny Balog to the Vydrovo valley (2 km) and to Chvatimech (13 km). Furthermore, there is a small museum about the history of the Čiernohronská railway, built by a youth group in the main station of Čierny Balog. Visitors can see historical wagons and how workers used to load lumber onto the wagons by hand.

There is a stage in the valley for 800 visitors where cultural performances are held during the summer season. The programme usually comprises performances about traditions in forestry (e.g. "The Day of the Tree"), folklore group performances or alternative events for young people (e.g. cinema showings). An information centre at the entrance of the Vydrovo valley provides information about the entire area and the surrounding region. It is further possible to buy souvenirs and handicrafts made by local people there. In addition, there is a buffet and catering services, shelters, fireplaces, playgrounds and other facilities needed, including a parking place and toilets. All these facilities are made from wood in a traditional architectural style. Other services provided by the local people, e.g. horse riding, renting of sports equipment, guiding services, ecological games, shows by local artists and craftsmen are available during the weekends or at special events.

The Vydrovo valley has become a place for active leisure time not only for tourists but also for local inhabitants. The area offers high-quality recreation, helps to build up social contacts, supports tolerance between the different visitors, and strengthens the pride of the local population in their forests, their region, their village, their ancestors and the contemporary local inhabitants. Impressive information boards and three-dimensional exhibits of the Forest Open-Air Museum captivates the young generation for forest protection or for work in the forests.

In addition to the visitors, the developers of the area learn to appreciate the natural and cultural values of the region. Since 1983 summer camps for young people and children are organised every year in the Vydrovo valley. The participants help to reconstruct the Čiernohronská railway and to maintain the tourist area in the Vydrovo valley. By organising volunteer summer camps and working weekends for youth, the non-profit organisation VYDRA — Rural Development Activity (established 1997) helps to create a positive image of Vydrovo valley as a place where many young people put their energy and time

to help save traditions and the environment. VYDRA started a project for tourist area development in the Vydrovo valley in 2001. For many years VYDRA has been consulting small local entrepreneurs in the tourism sector on how to provide quality services and make a profit at the same time. Thanks to the increasing number of visitors and through the encouragement of small entrepreneurs, the number of beds in Čierny Balog rose 50 times over and the number of services 10 times (from four beds in 1997 to 200 in 2005).

In 2002 the Forest Company of the Slovak Republic was looking for an appropriate place for the Forest Open-Air Museum. Thanks to the location close to the track of a historical forest railway in the Vydrovo valley and because of the VYDRA project, the Forest Company decided to build the museum there. Čiernohronská railway has supported both of the projects. The municipality of Čierny Balog made needed grounds in the area available. The partnership of four organisations established when developing the tourist area continues during its maintenance.

The number of tourists in Čierny Balog region increased from 20,000 in 1992 to 40,000 in 1999, to 80,000 in 2005. The goals of education and tourism development are achieved without impacting sensitive natural areas. One of the aims of the Forest Company of the Slovak Republic and of VYDRA was to shift the interest of the public from the National Nature Reservation (NNR) Dobroč Virgin Forest to the tourist area in the Vydrovo valley. The Forest Open-Air Museum has been constructed in secondary forests where no rare animals or plants are in danger due to the high numbers of tourists. On the contrary, the National Nature Reservation (NNR) Dobroč Virgin Forest is an important area for Europe as it represents a unique stable forest ecosystem (climax stages and other phases of Central European virgin forest). It was even awarded the Diploma of the European Council.

The NNR Dobroč Virgin Forest is located 8 km from the centre of the village Čierny Balog. Every year about 1,000 tourists visited the NNR before the Forest Open-Air Museum was built. This visitor attendance had already had a negative impact on the fauna in the Dobroč virgin forest. After the opening of the Forest Open-Air Museum the number of tourists in the Dobroč Virgin Forest decreased to nearly zero.

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2.2 Negative Impacts

A high number of visitors, their outdoor activities and an accordant infrastructural extension — altogether the most characteristic phenomena of tourism — signify a dramatic increase in impacts on the environment of an area.

The always improving accessibility of sensitive areas is responsible for the disturbance and destruction of flora and fauna, which may entail a **loss in biological diversity** over the years. The extended infrastructure affects the **landscape character** of the area and thus causes a **destabilisation of the existing ecosystems**. Last but not least, the additional people augment the pressure on natural resources at the destination, which leads to an **exceeding of carrying capacities** and to more **environmental pollution**. Also, the global effects of tourism, most notably the contribution of tourism-related transport to the phenomenon of **global warming**, have to be mentioned.

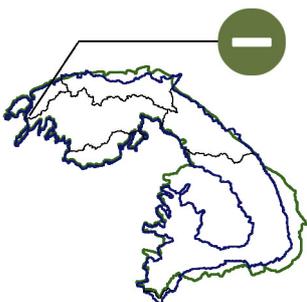
2.2.1 Landscape and nature destruction (e.g. through infrastructural expansion)

A large attendance of visitors to ecologically vulnerable areas causes a loss in biodiversity.

One main attraction of the Carpathians is the wide areas of untouched nature, which represent one of the largest biodiversity reservoirs in the whole of Europe. However, the Carpathian mountain ranges and lowlands represent highly sensitive ecosystems which are in danger due to tourist activities. Already slight changes to the balance of these ecosystems may cause the disappearance of sensitive species in flora and fauna. Therefore, the responsible control of tourism development (e.g. through a limitation in visitor numbers, zonation, etc.) is crucial for the conservation of this unique vicinity.

Case Study: Unmanaged Tourism at the Certoryje National Nature Reserve — Lucina Recreation Area (Bile Karpaty), Czech Republic

Unmanaged tourism at the Certoryje National Nature Reserve causes deterioration of natural values. Most of the valuable and vulnerable environments have come into close contact with mass tourism — a form of tourism completely unsuited for that kind of site. While for the Lucina Recreation Area the transition to sustainable tourism may not be possible



anymore, measures should be taken to prevent other, still untouched and vulnerable adjacent areas from mass tourism impacts.

The Lucina Recreation Area is a very popular location in the southern part of the Bile Karpaty Protected Landscape Area (PLA), which is also a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. A part of the recreation area lies within the borders of the Natura 2000 site. The Certoryje National Nature Reserve, one of the most valuable sites in the southern part of the Czech Carpathians, is nearby. The number of permanent inhabitants in the area is low as the vast majority of the buildings are weekend houses used for both individual and mass recreation. A small dam represents an important attraction for the whole recreation area. It is visited by a great number of tourists during the summer season and is very popular for anglers.

The natural environment of the Lucina Recreation Area is threatened by an increasing number of tourists who use this location for standard seasonal and weekend relaxation without paying appropriate attention to the vulnerability of their surroundings.

The main tourism-caused problems concern the meadows and the forest vegetation of the Certoryje National Nature Reserve. Visitors do not stay on the paths and thus destroy the species-rich vegetation. This often happens in the most vulnerable parts of the nature reserve or during the most sensitive vegetation periods. The use of bikes and motorcycles off the beaten track in particular causes serious damage to the area.

The movement of visitors within the nature reserve is restricted by law. For example, group excursions require a permit from the Ministry of Environment. However, there is practically no means of enforcing these legal codes of conduct and in the past few years these rules have been repeatedly violated.

Waste and noise pollution are also important issues in the Lucina Recreation Area. The noise level, especially high during the summer season, gets further increased through the geomorphologic conditions of the area — a narrow valley with a larger water surface that reflects the sound. The splinter development caused by tourism-related infrastructure and the introduction of ingenuous species are threatening the biodiversity.

The problems in the Lucida Recreation Area are mainly related to two decisive factors. On the one hand it is the great potential of the area as a mass tourism spot and thus the trend towards a continuously increasing visitor attendance. Many weekend houses, huts and youth camps meant for both

individual and mass recreation have been built in this area during socialism. Although today the construction of new buildings is not permitted, this ban is violated frequently, e.g. under the pretence of "reconstruction". The fact that the buildings are not adjusted to the landscape is still another problem.

The infrastructure, which had long been fully developed, and the good accessibility of the location support the increase in visitor numbers and mass tourism in the region. In this context, the significant increase in the number of cars is another severe problem.

On the other hand it is the relative weakness of the PLA administration that has no chance to ward off the negative impacts of the numerous visitors. Although the whole recreation area is located within the borders of the PLA, the administration has no real means to restrict or to stop activities that damage the natural values of the area. The powers of the nature conservation authorities are rather limited; they cannot enforce the necessary codes of conduct.

In summary, the current form of tourism, even though supported by the local municipalities, is not suitable for such a unique and valuable site. According to Czech tourism experts, a more significant and desirable transformation of the area is almost impossible to achieve due to the already existing facilities, the visitor structure, the ownership rights and the interests of the local municipalities. The lack of a well prepared strategic sustainable development plan represents a serious drawback.

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The splinter development of infrastructure as well as the connected sealing of soil disrupts the balance of ecosystems and leads to an alteration of the landscape character.

The uncontrolled expansion of tourism-related infrastructure — in the worst case big constructions (e.g. ski lifts, hotel complexes) — dissects important biological corridors for plants and animals and thus destroys not only singular hotspots (through ground sealing), but also the fragile arrangement of relations among the different ecosystems in the affected area. These changes lead to a fundamental modification of the overall landscape character — a fact that may also cause a loss in attractiveness for potential future tourists.

Case study: Ski Lift Splinters on Pilsko Mountain, Beskid Żywiecki

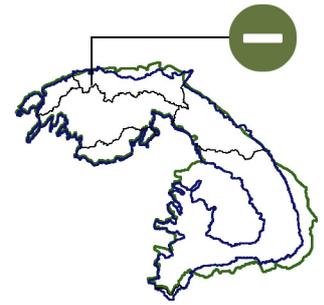
A sarcastic joke exclaims: "ski lifts are ecological investments because they do not produce smoke". In practice, such places as Pilsko Mountain on the Polish-Slovak border witness serious negative impacts on nature due to ski infrastructure development.

Pilsko Mountain is situated in Beskid Żywiecki, on the Polish-Slovak border. It is one of the most interesting and precious areas in the Silesian Voivodship in terms of landscape and biodiversity. Pilsko is one of few summits, for example, where protected dwarf mountain pine can be found. On the southern slopes one of the biggest natural mountain forest reserves covers 809 ha, and the peak of the mountain (1,557 meters above sea level) is located in Slovakia. On the Polish side, a small (15.4 ha) nature reserve was established in 1971. The area is famous for rare species (e.g. bear, lynx, wolf, wood grouse and black grouse), for being part of the Carpathian Ecological Corridor with international importance, for acting as Żywiecki Landscape Park and as a bird mainstay and gathering area within the confines of Natura 2000.

The fact that snow on Pilsko Mountain lasts comparably long is one of the causes for excessive concentration of ski infrastructure on this relatively small area. On the Polish side, ski-lift construction began in the 1980s, some of it illegally. There were cases when dwarf mountain pine (in theory under protection) was cut down for the development of ski lifts. In the 1990s the existing ski lifts were legalised, but more illegal ones appeared. During this time, ecological organisations held an extensive protest campaign and lodged a complaint against two illegal ski lifts. The General Administrative Court ordered the investor to pull them down by the end of 2005. However, full compliance with the order was not achieved until yet another intervention by the ecological organisations.

The main reasons for the environmental organisations' opposition to the ski lifts are that they alter the mountainous landscape and endanger flora and fauna species under protection.

In Pilsko, tourists ski over four species listed in the Red Book of protected species, threatening their survival when the snow layer is thin. By cutting down the protected dwarf mountain pine and large forests, room is freed up for open-space species. Also, artificial layers of snow disrupt the vegetation period, contributing to significant changes to the primal character of the area. Use of excavators, trucks and other equipment in preparing the slope is harmful to flora, but also to fauna. The noise caused by the machines as well



as music and other sounds impact animals, mostly large carnivores that must move further away from human activity. Ski slopes cut through ecological corridors and make the migration of animals difficult.

While perception of the beauty of the mountains — and therefore visual impact of skiing infrastructure — is subjective, cutting trees in strips and slope levelling may cause erosion of the ski slopes and the surrounding area. Slope slides, rock exposure, decrease in water receptivity of soil and related floods and droughts down the hill are further possible effects.

There is pressure to use more areas. However, the Polish mountains will never be up to alpine conditions and opportunities, mainly because of terrain shape, heights, climate and relatively short winter period (about 80 days in Beskidy is good for Poland, but in the Alps it is twice as long). Mass ski tourism development in the Polish Carpathians brings about a need for maintaining an artificial snow layer and developing ski slopes higher and higher. This means machines that make and maintain snow, pipelines to provide water, and heavy equipment that affects ground and soil and devastates vegetation.

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2.2.2 Increase of environmental pressures: air and water pollution, contribution to Climate Change

Exceeding the carrying capacity of both natural resources and appropriate management capabilities enlarges the environmental pollution of water, air and soil.

High visitor numbers to a destination necessitate good management. However, destinations starting with their engagement in the tourism business are very often overstrained by this task. One particular example is waste management, where exceeding the existing facility's capacities results in, for example, wild dumps in the forests or in the discharge of sewage water into rivers. Such an increase of pollution may also have negative impacts on the health of the population and therefore can burden the budget of local health institutions.

Case study: Exceeded Carrying Capacity in Slavs'ke area, Lviv Oblast, Ukraine

The Slavs'ke area attracts a significant number of tourists, which during the winter and summer seasons is above the carrying capacity of the area in terms of water supply, waste management and even the space in the mountains. This area demonstrates great economical growth and improvement of the living conditions of the local population, but such a tourism development causes significant ecological and socio-cultural problems.

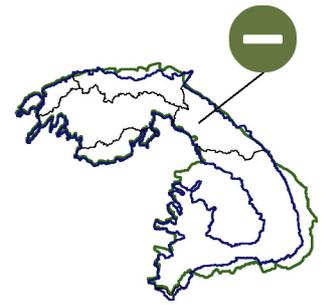
The Slavs'ke area in the Lviv oblast, one of the most popular ski resorts of the Ukrainian Carpathians, is situated 130 km south-east of Lviv. The centre of the area is a small town, Slavs'ke, with 3,600 inhabitants, but it is also a rural area with low density of local population. There are more than 200 tourist and rest homes, and private hotels. A considerable number of ski slopes of all levels are at visitors' disposal; the capacity of the slopes is nearly 4,500 people per hour. The number of tourists peaks during the New Year celebration and Christmas holidays. In summer the area is popular for family agro-tourism.

Slavs'ke is not a protected area, but the territory covers mountain landscapes (middle-mountains) and is sensitive to anthropogenic impact. The vital question is preserving nature and harmonising this effort with tourism development, which is the main source of local income. The lack of environmental awareness is yet another cause of troubles. The main environmental problems caused by tourists are summarised below.

Increased loading on the slopes and feet of the mountains. The capacity of the ski-lifts is too low for the existing volume of tourists and skiers. The crowds at the feet and the tops of the mountains cause great damage to the soil and vegetation as well as to other elements of nature. For example, the capacity of the Trostyan mountain ski lift is about 220 people per hour, but during the season more than 1,000 people often gather near the lift.

Utilisation of waste products. In 2002 the first part of a new landfill was constructed, but it is still not sufficient in capacity. Increasing waste volumes are caused by the tourist inflows, especially in winter and summer seasons.

Increased load of the water-supply system. The water supply system of Slavs'ke and the neighbouring villages is old and has a low carrying capacity. It is insufficient for the high number of tourists. For the construction of new pipelines and reconstruction of existing ones 400,000-450,000 hryvnia (EUR 60,000-67,000) are needed every year.



Increased loading and degradation on the road system and soils. This concerns the main road from the railway station to the Trostyan mountain (main ski-slope) in particular. The road is completely worn down from the heavy vehicles during the tourist seasons. Local people and tourists often use inappropriate vehicles (outdated and polluting), causing further degradation and related problems — air pollution, noise pollution and so on.

Social problems. New habits appear in the villages in the form of increased use of natural resources and greater consumption of goods and services. Young people in particular are attracted to the urban life-style and imitate their behaviour and habits.

The criminal situation is also difficult — fights (especially caused by people under the influence of alcohol) are becoming more common. There is one security guard for all of Slavs'ke, which is definitely not enough. The tourists may be in danger also because of the inappropriate equipment and absence of proper rescue facilities and capabilities. The rescue team consists of eight people, who are not paid well and do not possess special equipment of sufficient quality.

All of these problems have one general cause: the territory is not ready for mass tourism development. Government and official bodies mainly pay attention to the rapid development of mass-tourism, which is economically favourable and highly profitable. Very small attention is paid to the previous evaluation of the recreational potential of the concrete plots of land and the area in general. Sustainable types of tourism and recreational activities are given least consideration. Agri-tourism, which has been growing considerably the last few years, and can be the most sustainable form of the tourism here, is still outside the legislation base and can be described in many cases as illegal. Owners of the agri-tourism houses prefer to exist within the grey market without paying taxes and fees.

Infrastructure in the area (tourism infrastructure in particular) is in many cases outdated and over-used. Restoration and changes are often directed at image improvement, not the creation of better conditions for sustainable tourism development. Government donations or grants from different institutions are often misused.

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The journeys towards and within the destination, e.g. by plane or car and the related increase in energy use, result in CO₂ emissions and air pollution, which contribute immensely to climate change.

Regarding the volume of emissions, the highest amount is exposed during the travel to and from the destination. However, air pollution caused by energy use and the increased volume of traffic on site also have to be regarded as very harmful as they affect ecologically sensitive areas in particular. The biological diversity of the area is threatened and forests, which play a very important role in the global context as carbon sinks, will be severely damaged.

3 Socio-Cultural Dimension

Traditional and authentic lifestyles, interesting cultures and customs as well as the warm hospitality of the local population are crucial to making the stay in a destination unforgettable for visitors and have them return. These demands, however, can only be met if the number of visitors is kept at a moderate level. A destination which is overwhelmed by large tourist numbers will lose its original character and thus one of its main points of attraction for tourists. Therefore, these very important and sensitive socio-cultural aspects have to be handled with special care.

3.1 Positive Impacts

Tourism which is close to nature and people, and which does not exceed the carrying capacity of the destination in this regard, brings positive effects for both sides of the business. Tourists will enjoy interesting ***new experiences and unforgettable impressions***, while at the same time the local population benefits. Seeing that tourists value local culture and customs can lead to a new ***appreciation*** and even to a ***revitalisation of local traditions***. Locals also learn from the tourists about other countries, their traditions and their modes of behaviour. In this way, a ***cultural exchange*** takes place, which allows for ***mutual understanding*** and thus for a ***peaceful togetherness*** in the destination as well as outside.

Due to the participatory approach of sustainable tourism, tourism development may also ***support the local self-responsibility and self-control*** of development processes in the region.

3.1.1 Appreciation and conservation of the local culture

Tourism can contribute to a new self-confidence of the locals which results in their own will to keep their traditions and customs alive.

Tourists that come to rural areas in the Carpathians generally show interest and appreciation for local traditions and customs. Villages or communes that have managed to keep their traditions alive are therefore of particular attraction. At the same time, the interest of tourists in the living culture of the rural areas may even be the trigger for the local population to recognise the value of their local assets. In these cases, tourism may contribute to the conservation of these habits. Sometimes even practices, knowledge and skills

which had been forgotten might be revitalised through this new understanding of the value of their culture.

Case Study: Traditional Events in the National Park Djerdap and its Vicinity, Serbia

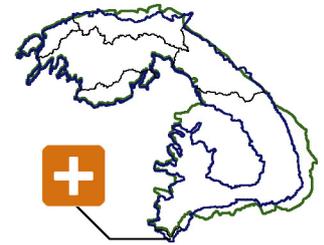
Such events as the Bucka Festival in Djerdap National Park manage to keep old traditions alive. The grassroots character of the festival, its organisation — a result of partnerships between different stakeholders — and the high motivation of the locals to promote the event to domestic and international tourists, turns the festival into a good example of how cultural traditions may support both local coherence and tourist potential of an area.

Ancient cultural monuments in the territory of the Djerdap National Park testify to the long-lasting relationship between man and nature in the area. This relationship can also be found in the long tradition of organising cultural events in the park. Despite some years of lacking investments in the tourism sector and the general development of the area, a number of grassroots activities related to local traditions survived.

In cooperation with the National Park Authority, the tourist organisation of Majdanpek and some local institutions (sport, cultural, artistic and educational), a great number of events, such as the Day of the Danube, International Children's Music Festival or the Easter Folk Festival are organised each year. These traditional events represent an important part of the local culture and are thus very important for the identity of the region.

One of the most popular events of this kind is Bucka, a fishing competition that takes place every summer (since 1984) in the small village of Tekija. It is based on an ancient local way of fishing. *Bucka* is a special pot, made from wood or metal which is around 50 cm long. According to local lore, soldiers that were stationed in the region used such pots for their meals. When they finished eating, they washed their pots in the river, causing a special noise which attracted cat fish. Once the fish came closer, they could easily be caught. This old way of fishing recreated organised every summer since 1984 in small place called.

The competition lasts for two days and usually attracts more than 100 fishermen, from all over the country. In preparation for the competition, the cooperation of the entire community is visible. In promoting the event, the local community pulls together. The pride all locals sense because of their traditional event not only strengthens their coherence, but also attracts a lot of tourists. The selling of fish to tourists has further enhanced the local



economy. However, the National Park and the Water Authorities make sure that the amount of the fish caught stays within the sustainable limits.

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3.1.2 Cultural exchange as a driving force for mutual understanding and peace

The convergence of tourists and hosts in a destination fosters a process of approximation, understanding and peace

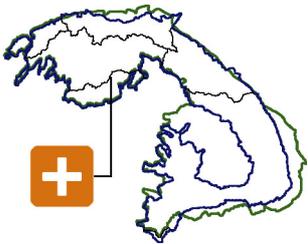
Travelling educates — a saying that is true for tourists as well as for the host communities. The convergence in a destination opens up mutual insights into different ways of living and corresponding modes of behaviour, culture and tradition. To a certain degree this confrontation demands respect for the attitudes of “the other” from both sides. The experience for tourists to be foreign in a country and the necessity to adapt to the given conditions in the destination as well as the obligation of the hosts to also tune in to the needs of the tourists may advance a process of approximation, understanding and peace — in the destination as well as outside of it.

Case Study: The Gömör-Torna Festival in Aggtelek (Hungary) and Slovensky Kras (Slovakia)

The Gömör-Torna Festival, taking place at the border of Hungary and Slovakia, represents an outstanding example of not only a convergence of tourists and hosts but also of two neighbouring nationalities. This festival offers the unique possibility of getting to know the different traditions and customs within a trans-boundary area and thus allows for the rapprochement of all participants of the festival and for international understanding. The festival is an example of mutual and shared interest, compromises, respect and responsibility. Moreover, it gives a lot of space for spontaneous networking, which reinforces internal and external communication between the nationalities and between hosts and tourists.

Environmentally the Gömör-Torna karst region is a highly valuable and sensitive area on the territory of two national parks (NP) that cross a national border — Aggtelek NP in Hungary and Slovensky Kras NP in Slovakia.

The Aggtelek National Park (ANP) is mainly known for its famous caves, but it also features a high diversity of habitats and species. Apart from this, the nice



small villages have preserved some great examples of rural and church architecture, which are of special interest to tourists. It is mainly the ANP that provides tourism services and operates objects (caves, accommodations), though some minor private tourism businesses exist.

After the changes of 1989, the unemployment rate in the region grew to over 20% and there is a tendency to diminish cultural heritage and traditional rural life. Sustainable tourism can help to stop this process and give back meaning to conservation of the local heritage to the villagers. In this socio-economic environment and in the context of nature conservation, ecological tourism is a subject of common understanding between the NP and other local stakeholders.

The first festival took place in 2001 with the participation of several organisations in the villages of Aggtelek and Jósvalfó, including the ANP. These two villages already had a few years of experience in organising their village days — one to three days of culture, folk and sport events. On the initiative of the ANP these events have been extended to a 10-days festival.

In 2003, following a simple application procedure, four additional villages joined one-day events. In 2006 a GEF project made it feasible to expand this initiative over the state border to Slovakia. With a similar application process as in 2003, the leading national monuments of the Slovakian border region — the Betlér Castle and the Krasznahorka Fort — became festival sites. In 2006 seven partners from Slovakia and 17 from Hungary were involved in organising the festival.

The festival was originally organised in Hungary within a rather challenging socio-cultural environment, where people are threatened by unemployment and disadvantaged living conditions. The organisation of the festival became more complex when the festival expanded over the border to Slovakia. The first expansion included only Hungarian-speaking settlements, because only they applied. Still, the festival intends to also invite native Slovaks, first as performers, and perhaps later as organising partners as well.

The particular strengths of the festival are manifold. First of all, the festival represents a major tourist attraction in the area, which aims, among other things, to prolong tourists' stays in the region. More time, and therefore money, spent by visitors contributes to the enhancement of living conditions of the local population. Furthermore, the festival gives both tourists and locals an understanding of the value of local traditions and customs. Traditional architecture and skills are revitalised and a sense of regional identity is created. This fact is of particular importance regarding the better

understanding between Slovaks and Hungarians, as the mutual exchange may significantly contribute to a conflict settlement between the two nationalities.

This consolidating character of the event is based on the insight of multiculturalism as one of the most eminent potentials of the region. Therefore it can be stated that one of the major purposes of the festival is to bring together the different minorities and nationalities in the area.

A network of contact people was selected which took over responsibilities for some parts and events of the festival. In this context of capacity building it was important to find key people in each of the sites and on both sides of the border. This mutual and trans-national sharing of responsibilities helps and will help to reinforce the event in the future as well.

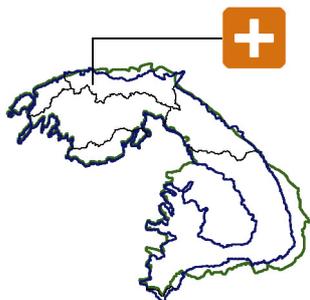
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3.1.3 Support of local participation as an enabling step towards more codetermination

Sound tourism development also means development of local codetermination

A holistic approach to sustainable tourism development (bottom-up) comprises the enabling of locals (e.g. through information and training programmes) to actively take part in the entire tourism planning and implementation process. In this way, the responsibility and control of tourism development in the region remains for the most part in the hands of the local population. This along with self-responsibility and influence on the supra-regional level can be regarded as a very important outcome and as a guarantor for a long-lasting regional increase in prosperity.



Case Study: Community Actions in Przysłop Hamlet, Poland

The inhabitants of a tiny village located near the Babia Gora National Park and Biosphere Reserve in Poland make a habit of saying that they live in "harmony with the Decalogue and nature". The development of a tourism education path, which forms a section of Amber Trail, and the preservation of a local school from closure through the establishment of an environmental education centre are examples of results achieved by an association of local people.

Five hundred people live in Zawoja Przysłop on the southern ridge of the Magurka Mountain (872 m), which is part of the Beskid Zywiecki mountain range in Poland. The village lays alongside the Amber Trail running from Budapest in Hungary through Banska Stiavnica in Slovakia and towards Krakow in Poland. The development of the 300-kilometre Amber Trail was aimed at linking natural and cultural heritage conservation to community-based grassroots actions, while at the same time supporting the revitalisation of local economies. The community of Przyslop successfully translated this idea into practice. A total of 2,500 people visit the hamlet annually, which can be attributed exclusively to the local initiatives during the last five years.

With the active involvement of teachers, parents and children, the Elementary School No. 4 in Zawoja Przyslop is developing a Model Centre for Environmental Education, which shall serve not only educational, but also cultural, tourism-related and informational purposes.

The work carried out to date in this Centre opened up a chance for survival for the small school, which was threatened by a shortage of local governmental funds. Working together with the Babia Gora National Park, the school offers tourist and educational services for both groups of pupils as well as for other tourists.

An important role in catalysing these developments should be attributed to the monastery of the Order of the Discalced (Barefoot) Carmelites located in the village, which plays a significant role in forming a pro-environment attitude in the local community. Some examples of the monastery's environmental investments are the one-turbine wind farm providing electricity to the monastery, and the heat pump and solar panels, which supply heat to adjoining monastery buildings. It is the windmill which has become the symbol of the Przyslop hamlet, and it has served as an inspiration for local inhabitants to initiate and to organise various environmental and cultural activities.

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3.2 Negative Impacts

In recent years a lot of countries identified tourism as one of their main new sources of income. The resulting increase in pressure from the state or from outside through foreign investors may lead to an *irresponsible rise of visitor numbers*. Additionally, the knowledge of the local population about the visitors' expectations may contribute to a *commercialisation of traditions* and local lifestyles. The "alternative" to this superficial revitalisation of customs is a total *oblivion of former habits and values* and the adoption to modern ways of living. In the long run, this development will provoke people to have *problems in identifying* themselves with their local environment. The loss of traditional identity may result in social disturbances, including emigration, migration to cities, an ageing population, and abandoned territories.

3.2.1 Degeneration of cultural values and heritage

Large attendance in formerly authentic tourist regions may change traditional lifestyles, leading either to a loss in traditions in favour of modern lifestyles or to an artificial commercialisation of customs.

The confrontation of traditional communities with a mass of tourists with different values and behaviour will certainly have impacts on the way of living of the local population.

On the one hand, a change through rapprochement might be the consequence, i.e. the local people adapt their lifestyle to modern trends and attitudes, they learn from the foreign visitors or from their urban fellow countrymen. In doing so, the countries lose one of their main attraction points for tourists, namely their individual and characteristic originality, which distinguishes them from other international destinations with similar offers.

On the other hand, it is also possible that local people recognise the attraction their traditions exert on tourists. The result is the artificial revitalisation of customs and thus a commercialisation of traditions. This means that the customs do not regain their meaning for the local people, but they are simply performed for commercial purposes. Should tourism disappear again from the region, the tourism-related "folk-shows" and "traditions" will as well.

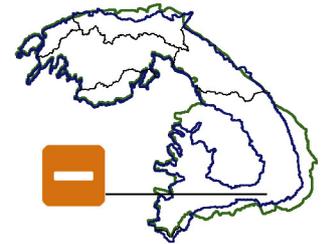
Case study: Loss of Traditions and Artificial Commercialisation of Customs in Bran, Romania

Bran village was a classic example of a sleepy farming village, until it developed suddenly as a tourist destination in the 1970's after its historic castle was artificially designated "Dracula's Castle" by the communist Ministry of Tourism, which wanted to capitalise the Dracula myth created by Bram Stoker. This development resulted in a total loss of traditions among local people in favour for commercialised "customs" invented by the famous novelist and expected by tourists.

Bran castle has no historical connections with the real-life historical characters upon which Anglo-Irish writer Bram Stoker based his horror novel. However, Bran Castle represented the "ideal" location in the opinion of Romania's Ministry of Tourism, as it was not too far from Bucharest and its airport and close to an existing hotel complex.

From the late 1980s local rural farmers were taught the benefits of "agro-tourism" — visitors staying on rural farmsteads, eating local produce, and even helping with farming tasks. These days, Bran grew quickly with the help of a rapidly growing agro-tourism marketing company, which was linked by family relationships with the Ministry of Tourism. Twenty years on, and we find now that almost every house in Bran is a guesthouse: Almost all of these accommodations have lost their traditional design, construction or decoration. Instead they all have central heating, colour televisions, ensuite bedrooms, modern tiled bathrooms, double glazing and particle board furnishings. Indeed many of the old houses have been demolished and replaced by "mini hotels" — of which many are by no means "mini" with 30 or more bedrooms. And hardly a cow, chicken, pig or horse-drawn cart in sight. Yet most of these hotels and guesthouses claim to be offering agro-tourism farm stays.

The local people of Bran, formerly steeped in tradition and local customs, partly the result of being part of the castle estate for many centuries, have lost almost all of their traditions and have commercialised their customs or introduced other "customs" that were in fact invented by the Anglo-Irish writer of the late 1800s. One cannot deny the people the right to make money out of their culture, but in fact there is no Dracula culture that predates commercial modern tourism. Dracula was almost unknown as a story and myth in this area until as late as 1977 when the communist government designated Bran as the new "Dracula's Castle".



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4 Selected future opportunities

The Carpathian Mountains, with their diverse natural treasures and long-preserved traditions, present ***a lot of ideal sites for tourism development***. In some regions there has been no advantage taken of these values so far, while in quite a number of other destinations in the Carpathians even mass tourism development has already begun.

However, if tourism development is to be sustainable in the future, the tourism-related development of the Carpathian Mountains should be based on the same overall goals: Long-term economic prosperity of local communities, the preservation of tourism's basis — sound nature and lively culture — as well as on ensuring visitor satisfaction. These goals perfectly support each other and are applicable to all kinds of (potential) tourist destinations.

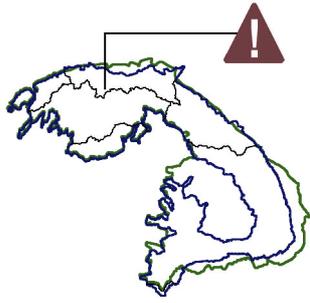
Areas where uncontrolled or mass tourism already plays an important role should try to become more conversant with the principles of sustainability. In other regions, which face the typical threats of many rural areas, e.g. high unemployment rates, a poor local economy and migration into cities, ***starting sustainable tourism development can offer a viable option with benefits for the entire local community.***

Moreover, ***sustainable tourism development can also serve as an alternative economic solution*** where less environmentally and socially friendly economic activities threaten the local nature and culture.

4.1 Benefits of sustainable tourism for areas with many visitors

A beautiful environment and rich cultural heritage may draw the attention of a lot of visitors to an area, even if tourism development there is only fragmentary or non-existent. In these cases, the negative impacts of tourism may be particularly critical, as unplanned development of singular tourist businesses and infrastructure leads to unmanageable threats for nature (e.g. through trails that cut through bio-corridors) and society (e.g. growing inequalities in a region). The consequence thereof can be the irretrievable ruin of the region's treasures and thus of its tourism-related potential.

In order to prevent such threats and to allow for a controlled development that benefits the whole local community and its environment in the long-term, comprehensive sustainable tourism development represents a suitable alternative.



Case study: Potential for Tourism Development around Czorsztynski Reservoir, Poland

A reservoir built on the Dunajec River some 40 years ago cut into the Carpathian ecological corridor and flooded a number of settlements in the area. The area around the reservoir remains precious and sensitive. Because of unmanaged tourism development the value of the area is decreasing. Yet, it is not too late to take steps to preserve the area through sustainable development based mainly on tourism

Czorsztynski Reservoir is located in southern Poland in Malopolskie Voivodship. It is an artificial reservoir on Dunajec River with an area of 1,200 ha, 12.5 km long and 1.7 km across at its widest point.

The reservoir is situated on the Carpathian ecological corridor and is surrounded by two National Parks (Pieninski, Gorczanski). The building of the reservoir in the 1960s already had a significant impact on fauna and flora, not to mention on local inhabitants, who had to move out of the flooded area.

The beauty of the landscape, cultural and natural values of the area and presence of the reservoir with its brackish waters attract a high number of tourists from the region to the area surrounding the artificial lake.

Transportation and tourism infrastructure developments started in the second part of the 20th century. Currently the number of villas, summer houses and pensions for tourists that are being built is increasing rapidly. Most of the dwellings built are suitable only for summer and the jobs related to tourism are seasonal. Chaotic site development, a lack of spatial management, and destructive changes of landscape character describe the current developments. In the neighbourhood of the nature reserve more accommodation facilities are under construction, which will cause cutting through another part of the Carpathian ecological corridor.

Such chaotic developments may have impacts not only on the environment, but also on the quality of life of the local communities and a decrease in the attractiveness of the region, while not benefiting the communities in economic terms sufficiently. Increasing the number of visitors and infrastructure development results in higher demand for water resources, significant increase in waste production, as well as soil contamination and air pollution due to increasing transport (with many people travelling by car instead of public transport).

The present situation demands that the reservoir be used in building the regional advantage, increasing the quality of life of local communities and relieving the overcrowded tourism destinations a bit in two surroundings national parks.

Development of tourism in the area taking into account the needs and opinion of local people, and planning a long-term vision of the reservoir surroundings together with the local communities could reveal a potential of the area that is more beneficial to the communities and for preservation of the nature at the same time.

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4.2 Sustainable tourism has potential in such areas where tourism is not yet developed

Development approaches very often focus on the economic sector, not taking into account the impacts of their activities on sensitive local cultures and environments in the Carpathian Mountains. On the other hand, environmentalists who are active in the natural environment of the Carpathians concentrate solely on the conservation of nature without paying attention to the necessity of the local population to make a living. The comprehensive approach of sustainable tourism based on the CBD Guidelines takes into account both important factors: the need to use natural resources for the well-being of the local population and the obligation to maintain the natural environment for both its intrinsic value and as a long-term source for the economic viability of tourism development.

Opportunities for Sustainable Tourism on Danube River in the Djerdap National Park, Serbia

Sustainable tourism can be a tool employed to assure nature protection, economic development of disadvantaged regions and the preservation of cultural heritage. The Djerdap National Park in Serbia is one of many locations in the Carpathians where the fruits of sustainable tourism are low hanging and can be successfully picked, provided that sustainable development strategies are developed and implemented.



The main feature and attraction of the Djerdap National Park's natural beauty is the Djerdap gorge — the famous Iron Gate — a 100 kilometre river gateway through the southern slopes of the Carpathian mountains. The National Park guards rich and diverse flora and fauna. There are over 1,100 plant species, remnants of the ancient Tertiary flora, significantly wiped out during the Ice Age. Fauna composition reflects a variety of habitats — brown bear, lynx, wolf, otter, eagle, owl, black stork, cormorant, and numerous species associated with aquatic, forest and meadow habitats.

Numerous archaeological sites and historical monuments are located in the National Park, such as Lepenski vir, the 8,000-year-old archaeological site with exceptionally important traces of settlements and the life of Neolithic man, Roman limes, castles, and traditional architecture. There are traditional folk songs, shepherd's dances and games characteristic of the area that call for tourist appreciation and preservation.

At the same time, from an economic point of view, this is one of the poorest regions of the country. According to the data collected by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia [1], the rates of depopulation and unemployment are also high. Socio-economic status of residents is very low and has improved modestly in recent years.

Although a lot of tourists (mostly domestic) visit Djerdap, and there even are some programmes for domestic tourists (sightseeing), they are not based on principles of sustainable tourism[3] and therefore local people do not have a chance to increase their income by offering accommodation facilities, handicrafts or agricultural products.

The area can potentially be visited by high numbers of international tourists. Currently a lot of international tourist ships and boats pass through Djerdap, mostly without visiting it because of non-adequate harbors, accommodation facilities and lack of programmes. According to the Tourist Organisation of Serbia, during the first nine months of 2005 more than 51,000 tourist ships/boats passed or stopped in Belgrade [2]. Usually most of them continue downstream to other cities and pass Djerdap National Park.

One of the biggest environmental problems in the area is waste. Residents tend to dispose of garbage at wildcat dumps, which often spill out into the Danube River. While local authorities are preparing the programmes for waste management, financial support is missing. No wastewater cleaning facilities exist.

Illegal fishing is a big problem because in the Djerdap region fishing tourism is very popular. A contest "Zlatna bucka Djerdapa" is taking place in Tekija on the coast of the Iron Gate that attracts a number of fishing fans and curious tourists from all over the world who come to see how the catfish are caught in a traditional way. Such manifestations can be used to promote eco-tourism, responsible sport fishing and biodiversity conservation.

Cross-sector cooperation already has shown some positive results. For example, the Tourist Organisation of the Majdanpek Municipality, in cooperation with the National Water Directorate of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, is organising the celebration of the Danube Day in Donji Milanovac. However, such cases are still rare and increasing the level of stakeholder involvement and public participation is desired.

Due to the space available for this case study just a few main facts about the area could be included above, but hopefully this amount of information was sufficient to convince the reader that tourism potential in the area is very high, as is the need for sustainable development, and that there are some initiatives existing for the development of sustainable tourism offers.

Further steps would require the development of a sustainable tourism strategy for the whole area with the wide participation of stakeholders, including the local population. The development of such a plan in the context of the Carpathian Convention would provide a possibility to involve Romanian municipalities across the border for synergetic results. While the priorities of a sustainable tourism development strategy are always set by the stakeholders participating in the process, some of the outcomes of the process can be foreseen.

Tourism development according to the principles of sustainability in the area would target the socio-economic development of the community while at the same time support the conservation of the unique natural area and ensure enhanced satisfaction of tourists.

Any sustainable tourism development would have to come with and reinforce the development of waste and wastewater collection and treatment infrastructure. The successful implementation of such programmes would be much faster as the local population would be involved in defining this as a priority.

Support for entrepreneurship in the area (for example, through trainings and tax incentives) and encouragement of local networks of supply, would help

the local population to develop services and products for domestic and international tourists.

The actual implementation of the strategy would be highly probable if the stakeholders responsible for the realisation of the activities outlined were properly involved in the development of the strategy, or in other words, “own” the priorities and the plan of actions.

[1] Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia www.webrzs.statserb.sr.gov.yu

[2] National Tourist Organization of Serbia www.serbia-tourism.org

[3] AD Djerdap Tourist-Kladovo www.djerdapturist.co.yu

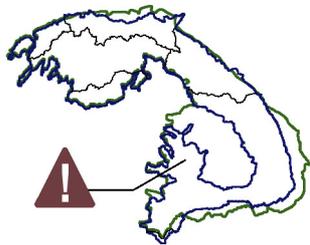
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4.3 Sustainable tourism as a better alternative

Natural resources represent one of the most important factors for economic development in the Carpathian countries. Very often, these resources are used in a rather short-termed manner, namely by exploitation through logging and mining. Pointing out merely the economic problems which follow from these forms of use, two facts have to be mentioned: firstly, that the resources can be capitalised on only once and secondly, that the benefits derived are not equally shared among the local population. Sustainable tourism development strives to avoid these shortcomings and thus represents a good alternative. It aims at conserving natural resources for the sake of enduring economic viability (continual use of resources) while at the same time using them in order to achieve benefits for the local people.



Case Study: Tourism Development as an Alternative for Controversial Industrial Developments in Roșia Montană, Romania

An old village in Romania is located on a substantial gold deposit, but is also renowned for its other treasures: a unique cultural heritage and beautiful natural scenery. The planned extraction of the precious metal would bring short-term economic benefits to the local community. Continuous benefits, however, can be only assured by a long-term strategy, such as preserving the area and developing it as a tourism destination.

Roșia Montană is the oldest documented mining settlement in Romania — it is approximately 2,000 years old. On its territory there is a historical centre

renowned for the architectural features and the age of its buildings, as well as different administrative, economic, socio-cultural buildings, a mining museum with unique exhibits, memorial houses, an archaeological reserve and beautiful scenery. Alburnus Maior (the Roman name for Roşia Montană) was extremely important in the Daco-Roman period, proof of which can still be seen in the famous Roman and Dacian mining galleries, unique in Europe in terms of size, degree of preservation and craftsmanship. Mining in the area continued till 2006 when the last state-owned mine was closed as it was not able to meet standards necessary for Romania's accession to the European Union.

Roşia Montană is well known, unfortunately, only because of the conflict that has raged for several years regarding a proposed open cast gold mine. Seen as a mono-industrial area, especially by investors, Roşia Montană is, in fact, an area with important archaeological vestiges, traditions and customs which are as much a part of the identity of the place as mining is. Moreover, mining led to the creation of a system of objects, customs and traditions which can be exploited by tourism.

The Alburnus Maior Association, a local NGO opposing the open cast mining, started the tourism development programme in 2004, implementing three tourism development projects.

The Golden Way of Roşia Montană is one of the first "Greenways" initiatives in Romania, financially supported by the Romanian Environmental Partnership Foundation. The project was implemented in 2005 and succeeded in identifying traditional customs related to mining and other aspects of local identity in Roşia Montană and neighbouring villages and to promote these as assets of the area through a "Golden Way". The inhabitants were encouraged to recognise and capitalise on local traditions through small-scale economic initiatives. Seminars and workshops were held for the local community and they were prepared to sell their products and services at the Hay Festival — FânFest Roşia Montană. A web-site at <www.drumulaurului.ro> was launched and informative tourist signs were placed in the village.

The following year, the same idea of consolidating the ability of the citizens to capitalise on agro tourist potential as a viable sustainable alternative was implemented in nearby Bucium commune, which has the same tourism potential as Roşia Montană. The Environmental Partnership Foundation supported editing and disseminating a guide on how to start a guest house, facilitating a work exchange programme between people in Bucium and people in Sâncraiu, making tourist signs, creating a website for the commune

at <www.buciumanii.ro>, disseminating brochures at national level, identifying and supporting new guest house initiatives, and promoting the cultural and natural potential of the commune at national level.

All the locals' initiatives from both Roşia Montană and Bucium were promoted during FânFest Roşia Montană, a novel festival held every year in the last week-end of August, which targeted both dynamic and adventure-seeking young people, as well as the inhabitants of the Arieş Valley area. FânFest Roşia Montană is a celebration of life and continuity in Roşia Montană. A three-day event, the festival includes varied activities and a complex entertainment programme for nature and music lovers. The idea was born out of the wish to promote the Roşia Montană area and to assist the locals in finding alternative development methods (cultural tourism, agrotourism, traditional product trade). The participants can hike in the area, visit the Mining Museum, explore the Cărnic Mountain with its Roman and Dacian mining galleries, taste the local products and take part in musical nights with popular rock and hip hop bands.

Beginning with the second edition new entertainment ideas were generated, such as hay-jumping and artificial climbing walls, poster and graffiti exhibitions and competitions, ecological film screenings, presentations on topics related to Roşia Montană, a local products fair, the launch of the tourist project and many excursions in the area with local guides. Because of the beauty of the area and of the exciting program of the festival, the number of participants rose from 4,000 at the first edition in 2004, to 8,000 at the second edition to 15,000 at the third edition in 2006.

Even though the area is promoted now for its tourism potential and not only for the mining conflict, there is still a long way to go to create proper infrastructure for tourism in the area. The Alburnus Maior development program will continue in 2007 with the launch of a tourism information centre, professional formation in tourism for the locals and, of course, the 4th edition of FânFest Roşia Montană.

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III. Recommendations

The thematic hotspots identified and the set of best practice examples were compiled from all over the Carpathian countries to realistically present the opportunities tourism can bring to the Carpathians, as well as to point out possible threats it can cause.

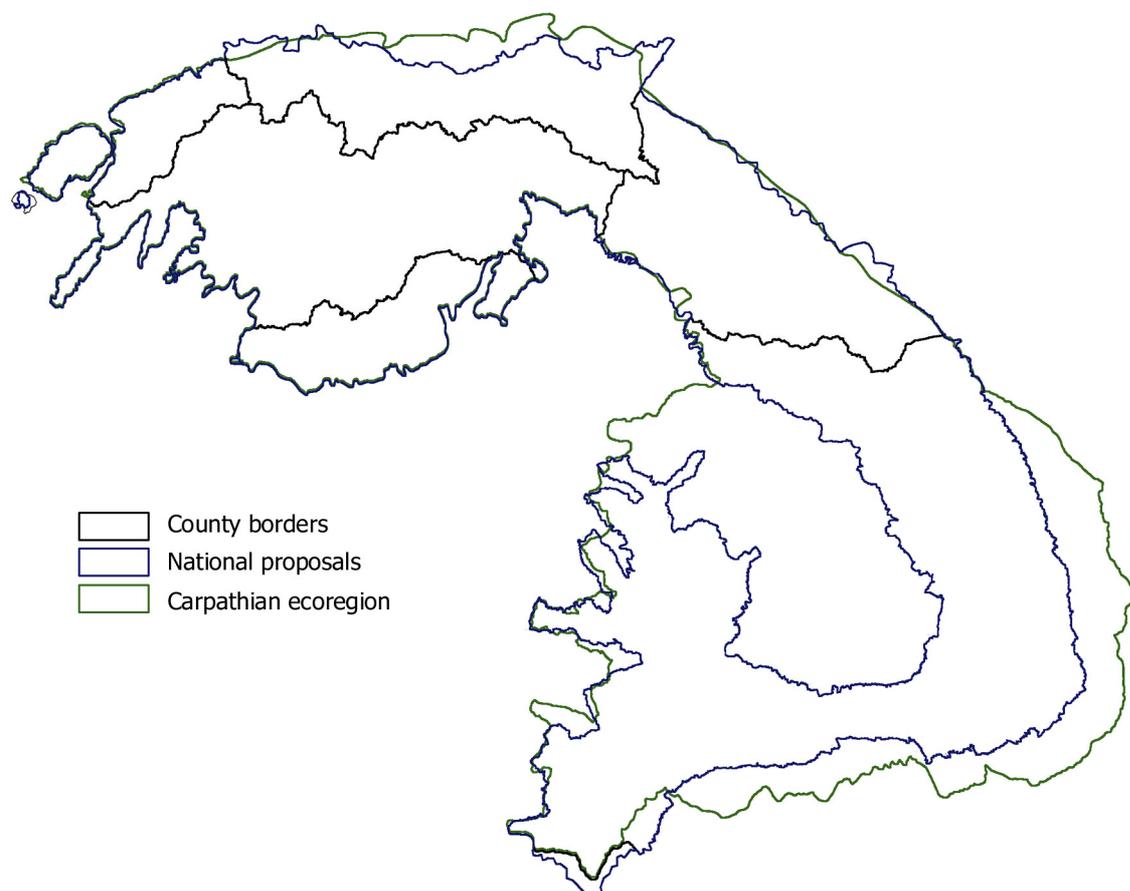
All the Carpathian countries are currently undergoing a rapid change in their economic sectors as well as in implementing actions towards the conservation and sustainable utilisation of their countries' resources.

This document proposes a set of recommendations in order to support these changes and related initiatives at governmental levels throughout the Carpathians towards even more strengthened and enhanced ways and means for a sustainable future of this region.

The recommendations are foremost addressed to the governments, but they also appeal to non-governmental organisations and the tourism sector itself.

1. For the creation of synergies in all the relevant sectors involved in tourism development and management that target the best enhancement of the mega-destination that is "The Carpathians", a ***Strategy for the future tourism development of the Carpathians*** should be developed. This Strategy should aim to provide a comprehensive and holistic approach to combine the efforts of all the Carpathian countries in finding and agreeing on actions to maintain the region for long-term tourism operations.
2. As tourism activities are widely unregulated and difficult to control, governments need to have an effective tool that helps them to find a common agreement at the regional level for advanced action regarding control and monitoring measures to ensure the high quality of their destinations in the long term. For this purpose, a ***Tourism Protocol*** under the Carpathian Convention will serve as a legal core tool for guiding the Parties and other stakeholders while they create joint mechanisms for the wise management and planning of tourism in the entire region.
3. ***Raising the awareness and building the capacity*** of those stakeholders and interest groups which are going to support the Tourism Protocol and the Strategy for the Future Tourism Development of the Carpathians should be top priorities. These efforts would ensure proper involvement and the contribution of the Carpathian people to the implementation of the goals set out and agreed by the governments under the Carpathian Convention. To this end, appropriate action needs to be undertaken to ensure that tourism operation is based on a broad consensus and does not cause adverse effects to the mountainous population, their cultural heritage and their traditional knowledge.

Annex 1: Map of the Carpathians



EURAC Research, Institute for Regional Development. Beatrice Eiselt, Flavio V. Ruffini, Thomas Streifeneder, 2006.

Data: National Proposals, Contact Points of the Carpathian Convention, 2004; Carpathian Ecoregion, DAPHNE - WWF, 2004; Seamless Administrative Boundaries of Europe (SABE2001 v1.1) © EuroGeographics.

Legend of the symbols used with the outline maps for the case studies

		Positive and negative economic impacts
		Positive and negative environmental impacts
		Positive and negative socio-cultural impacts
		Potential area for sustainable tourism development

Annex 2: List of members of the ad hoc CEEWEB Carpathian Tourism Working Group

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