

# **Joint proposal of the Carpathian Sustainable Tourism Platform**

The Parties commit to cooperate loyally in order to ensure the promotion of the measures contained in the Carpathian Sustainable Tourism Platform to promote tourism in the Carpathian region.

## **1. The vision of the Carpathian Sustainable Tourism Platform (CSTP)**

**The CSTP will assist the seven Carpathian Parties (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Ukraine) and its stakeholders in implementing the Protocol on Sustainable Tourism, adopted in May 2011 at COP3, and its Strategy for the Sustainable Tourism Development of the Carpathians, adopted in September 2014 at COP4.**

### **Added value of the CSTP**

The main challenge in realising the vision of socio - economic development of the Carpathians through the implementation of the Strategy for Sustainable Tourism Development of the Carpathians (Strategy) is the lack of an efficiently functioning cooperation network between institutions, the low institutional capacity of individual actors in the process, the lack of coordinated action on a regional level, and the lack of stable funding. Therefore, the Carpathian Sustainable Tourism Platform will ensure coordination of public institutions, private sector and NGOs to successfully implement the Strategy.

The CSTP will promote the intensive cooperation of the tourism sector actors from all the Carpathian countries in implementation of the tasks listed in the Strategy through an active network of relevant partners.

The CSTP aims at harmonizing and coordinating country-specific, as well as Carpathian-wide approaches by providing a common understanding and umbrella platform for planning and management of sustainable tourism. It is part of the comprehensive efforts of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention to coordinate the responsible use, protection and promotion of the Carpathians as a sustainable tourism destination.

## **2. Institutional and legal arrangement of the CSTP**

The CSTP harmonizing the implementation of the Strategy is established in the three countries: Poland (Carpathian Euroregion), Romania (Romanian National Authority for Tourism) and Ukraine (ETE/EWS), which submitted the relevant proposals, respectively:

- the CSTP Center Poland
- the CSTP Center Romania
- the CSTP Center Ukraine

In case creation of one of the above mentioned centers is not possible, the agreement may be signed between the two centers. The CSTP remains open to further Centers proposed by a Party.

The Centers together will constitute the CSTP. The Centers and the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention will prepare an Agreement, based on the present proposal, which will lay the basis for operational functions of the CSTP. The conditions and scope of the Agreement should take into account the organizational structure of the CSTP, the division of tasks, management and coordination, as well as financing.

#### **Governance and functioning of the CSTP**

The CSTP will be guided and monitored by the Working Group on Sustainable Tourism (WG Sustainable Tourism) and the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention. The CSTP will report to the WG Sustainable Tourism through the Secretariat on a yearly basis.

Representatives from the Centers and the Head of the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention will form the CSTP Steering Board, which will overview the daily operations of the CSTP. The Chair of the CSTP Steering Board will rotate among the Centers every 2 years. Regular meetings (preferably through electronic communication) are required in order to ensure efficient cooperation and smooth implementation of the allocated tasks.

The CSTP will prepare an Annual Work Plan, which will identify tasks from the Strategy to be carried out and results to be achieved. The activities will be chosen from the Joint and Country Action Plans for the Parties of the Carpathian Convention. Each task and result will be clearly attributed to one or more Centers. Cooperative tasks between Centers are encouraged.

The CSTP should implement tasks deriving from the Joint and Country Action Plan of the Strategy for the development of sustainable tourism in the Carpathians. The Centers shall agree by consensus on the tasks to be implemented.

Tasks designed in the Strategy should be transformed into projects including EU programs, in particular: Interreg Central Europe, Interreg Europe as well as others.

All the Centers will jointly develop, submit, implement and administer projects, with project leadership depending on the expertise of the partners, which will support the implementation of the Strategy.

Interested tourism sector actors will operate within the CSTP on a voluntary basis. They will be able to carry out projects as partners or stand alone on the implementation of EU or other projects. In this respect, they gain the support of the CSTP and the Carpathian Convention.

The CSTP will provide a coordinated communication platform for in-house and external experts working on the specific topics for implementing the Strategy and communication between the Parties and its stakeholders. In this respect, the CSTP, being an information hub, will ensure the flow of information in the following area: developing, maintaining and keeping up to date a common online Carpathian database on sustainable tourism; resource mobilization; exchange of good practices; product development; branding and certification; marketing and promotion; capacity building of stakeholders, businesses and destinations.

### **Reporting**

The CSTP will provide yearly reports to the WG Sustainable Tourism through the Secretariat. The Secretariat will establish a reporting system formed on results based management format. The Centers shall agree by consensus on the results based management format. Each Center will report individually on the implementation of the Annual Work Plans.

The collaboration within the CSTP shall be evaluated every 3 years by the Parties through the Secretariat and the WG Sustainable Tourism

### **3. Funding of the CSTP**

The CSTP will not have a distinct legal personality, thus will not be able to apply as a legal entity for external grants and funding. Therefore, on behalf of and for the CSTP, the Centers or participating partner organizations will apply for the relevant funding within their financial and organizational capabilities. It will be necessary to evaluate the minimum functional capacity of the CSTP, estimate its costs and commit the Centers to provide funding. The Annual Work Plan established by the Centers should be implemented through the resources of the Centers and/or external projects in an appropriately configured international partnership, guaranteeing institutional and financial stability of implemented projects.

**Project ideas / initiatives in line with the Joint and Country Action Plans**

Each Center will contribute to the Annual Work Plan containing project ideas and future initiatives in the framework of the CSTP in 3 months' time from the date of the signing the Agreement mentioned at point 2 of the Joint Proposal.