



Draft Terms of Reference for the National Tourism Task Force

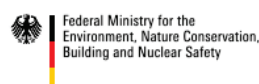
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Note: This Draft Terms of Reference for the National Tourism Task Forces has been elaborated for the seven member states to the Carpathian Convention and is developed as a blueprint, which should be adapted and finalized to the needs of a specific country in consultation with stakeholders.

Project “Support for the Implementation of the Strategy for Sustainable Tourism Development in the Carpathians”

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Draft Terms of Reference for the National Tourism Task Force

Background

The basis for comprehensive international cooperation in the Carpathians was laid down by “**The Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians**” (Carpathian Convention), which was adopted and signed by the seven Parties (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Ukraine) in May 2003 in Kyiv, Ukraine, and entered into force in January 2006.

The purpose of the **Strategy for Sustainable Tourism Development of the Carpathians** is to determine common actions and measures in order to value and sustainably use the outstanding natural and cultural assets for sustainable tourism development of the Carpathians.

This strategy aims at harmonizing and coordinating country-specific approaches by providing a common understanding and umbrella platform for planning and management. The strategy is not a stand-alone activity; it is part of the comprehensive effort of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention to coordinate the responsible use, protection and promotion of the Carpathians as a tourism destination.

In line with the objectives of the Carpathian Convention, the 3rd Meeting of the Conference of the Parties adopted in May 2011 the **Protocol on Sustainable Tourism** to the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians. In this Protocol, which is in force since 29th April 2013, the Parties decided the following in Article 27 (Implementation), Paragraph 3: *The Conference of the Parties shall develop and adopt the Strategy on Sustainable Tourism Development in the Carpathians, which will accompany the implementation of this protocol.*

The Fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP4) to the Carpathian Convention (Mikulov, Czech Republic, 23rd – 26th September 2014), by its Decision COP4/6 para 3, adopted the Strategy for Sustainable Tourism Development of the Carpathians, welcomed the Background Document and took note that the Strategy aims at the implementation of relevant paragraphs of the Protocol on Sustainable Tourism adopted at COP3.

In the strategy in chapter 4.1 - institutional arrangements - the establishment of a **National Tourism Task Force (NTTF)** is planned: *Each Party establishes a National Sustainable Tourism Task Force in order to communicate Carpathian Sustainable Tourism initiatives to the wider governmental structure and bodies. Stakeholders' institutions working in different fields (e.g. tourism development, education, culture or business) may be invited to join this task force. The aim of the task force is to strengthen and monitor the effective implementation of the Strategy for Sustainable Tourism Development of the Carpathians and the Protocol on Sustainable Tourism and to formulate recommendations to the CC-WGST.*

Aim and objectives of the strategy

As stipulated in the strategy, the aim of the National Tourism Task Force (NTTF) is to exchange information on the implementation of the Protocol on Sustainable Tourism and its Strategy with stakeholders at national and sub-national levels.

Objectives of the NTTF are to foster communication among stakeholders involved in tourism at different levels with a clear target on the Carpathian part of the country and to create synergies with existing strategies relevant to tourism at national and sub-national levels.

The role of the NTTF is not that of a decision-making body, but to formulate recommendations to support the implementation of sustainable tourism by the different stakeholders groups.

Institutional set-up of the NTTF

There are several options to set-up the NTTF at national or sub-national level:

- In case a “body” (e.g. tourism board, scientific tourism committee) already exists at the national level, the NTTF could be integrated into such. However, it is advised that such a body will either form a NTTF sub-group or the agenda of each meeting distinguishes between general topics and those topics relevant for the Carpathians.
- Alternatively, the government may decide to establish the NTTF separately from existing bodies for that part of its country, which has been defined as the “part belonging to the Carpathians”.

(Note: In the finalized ToR only the relevant text may appear, e.g. “The NTTF is established within the scientific committee.....”)

The NTTF shall be coordinated by the government, which is a Party to the Carpathian Convention and reports on its progress of implementation. The Focal Point for the Carpathian Convention is appointed by the government and is normally located in the Ministry of Environment or related Ministries. Concerning the topic of tourism in the Carpathian Convention, the Ministry of Environment coordinates with the Ministry responsible for the tourism sector (e.g. Ministry of Economy; Regional Development, etc.) and appoints its separate Focal Point.

The Focal Point for Tourism (insert name of governmental institution) of (insert country) to the Carpathian Convention coordinates the establishment and operational function of the NTTF. The Focal Point is responsible for collecting the first list of stakeholders, who will become members of the NTTF. The list of stakeholders is open and can be amended at any time after the establishment of the NTTF.

The NTTF should include a wide range of stakeholders relevant to tourism, from governmental and non-governmental bodies and institutions to tourism sector representatives, scientific and educational sector as well as the financing sector. This is to ensure that the most relevant information on tourism planning and development in the Carpathians is circulated within this group.

During the first meeting, members of the NTTF might elect a chair and a rapporteur for a defined period of time – either for one meeting or a number of meetings. The chair and rapporteur, together with the Focal Point will compile contributions to and results of the meeting and make it available to the public. The Focal Point might use relevant information to report back to the Carpathian Convention and its Tourism Working Group.

Core tasks of the NTTF

Baseline for the operation of the NTTF are the two consecutive action plans of the strategy. First of all the **Country Action Plan** with 27 actions in chapter 3.1 of the strategy and furthermore the **Joint Action Plan** in chapter 3.2 of the strategy, which outlines 25 actions, to be implemented with participation of two or more countries and its stakeholders in a trans-boundary and/or Carpathian wide manner.

According to the strategy the first priority tasks to be discussed and executed are:

1. Communicating the Carpathian Tourism Strategy through a wide network of relevant stakeholders (e.g. local and regional governments, non-governmental organizations, science sector, and tourism business sector)

The NTTF shall liaise with the relevant stakeholder networks and institutions covering the entire geographical scope of the Carpathians in the country and if necessary beyond the country borders.

2. Establishing a structure for the implementation of the Country Action Plan

The NTTF should frequently examine the 27 actions of the Country Action Plan of the strategy regarding its feasibility and if the actions are in line with country-specific strategies and planning documents (to be specified in the final ToR, depending on which documents the NTTF wants to refer to).

The current priorities in the Country Action Plan are recommendations and might not fit to emerging situations in the country and the availability of funds. Therefore, the NTTF should periodically propose certain priorities on the implementation of the Country Action Plan.

3. Identifying financial support for the implementation of the strategy

In line with item 2, the NTTF shall identify and recommend the most relevant financial instruments for the implementation of the actions of the strategy, not limited to the Country Action Plan. The NTTF might also want to give an input to the database provided by ETE and continue to improve and update, as well as to ensure the public access to the gathered information.

4. Developing and implementing a communication strategy

The NTTF may decide to draft a strategy on how to communicate their operation, networking and communication with stakeholders in the country.

5. Developing a reporting format and report on the achievements of the NTTF

The NTTF may decide to develop a format for reporting, which will be used by the rapporteur to deliver information to the members of the NTTF as well as to the Focal Points of the Carpathian Convention and the stakeholders in the country.

6. Reviewing the Joint Action Plan

The NTTF may want to deliver recommendations to the government and other stakeholders on the review of the Joint Action Plan of the strategy and how to implement its relevant components in the country.

Annex 1:

Extract of the Strategy on Sustainable Tourism Development of the Carpathians (chapters 3.1 and 3.2; pages 6-9)

3.1 Country Action Plan

Objective 1: ESTABLISHING OF SUPPORTIVE CONDITIONS FOR THE SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PRODUCTS AND SERVICES, INCLUDING DEVELOPMENT OF A MARKETING SCHEME FOR THE PROMOTION OF THE CARPATHIANS AS A UNIQUE SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DESTINATION		
	Activities	Proposed start¹
1	Initiate destination and/or country specific tourism product development (e.g. rural tourism, slow tourism, heritage tourism, ecotourism in protected areas, spa tourism, dark sky parks, social tourism and handicapped tourism), focusing on all seasons	Year 1
2	Identify and support the establishment of Carpathian wide authentic clusters of sustainable tourism products , e.g. thematic tours (e.g. architecture, cuisine, land use, mixed cultural/technical heritage etc.), agro tourism, hiking, cycling, ski touring	Year 1
3	Identify, assess, and where applicable, remove conditions unfavorable for the development of sustainable tourism	Year 1
4	Set principles and develop guidelines on sustainable tourism infrastructure and activities	Year 1
5	Support rural tourism which is maintaining traditional land use (e.g. beekeeping, food production)	Year 2
6	Support the establishment of regional Carpathian touristic (destination) brands contributing to the preservation of landscape character and tangible/intangible cultural heritage, possibly connected to a Carpathian brand	Year 2
7	Support the development of cross-border tourism cooperation , favorable visa regime where applicable, and linking of trails-implementation to joint cross-border tourism products	Year 4
8	Establish incentive measures for local tourism businesses developing and implementing sustainable tourism products, incl. measures for removing barriers to effective sustainable business operations	Year 4
9	Ensure participatory involvement (e.g. workshops, online consultations) of local communities in regional product development	Year 5
10	Develop programs for promoting and funding the preservation of local cultural and natural heritage through tourism	Year 6

Objective 2: DEVELOP INNOVATIVE TOURISM MANAGEMENT, FULLY INTEGRATING THE NEEDS OF LOCAL PEOPLE AND ECONOMIES AND OTHER SUPPORTING SECTORS, AND RESPECTING THE PRESERVATION OF NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE		
	Activities	Proposed start
11	Establish the Sustainable Tourism Task Force as part of the Sustainable Tourism Working Group of the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians	Year 1
12	Enhance the national coordination structure and encourage establishment of management centers on sustainable tourism, if applicable, in the Carpathians	Year 1

¹ Proposed start of the activities is after the adoption of this strategy at COP 4, e.g. Year 1 is 2014.

13	Support the integration of the Carpathian dimension into the national and regional coordination of sustainable tourism	Year 2
14	Zone the key touristic areas with a focus on carrying capacity issues, and implement assessment measures based on EIA process principles	Year 3
15	Contribute to a common set of indicators on the effects of implemented policies and strategies to develop sustainable tourism in the Carpathians	Year 3
16	Develop programs for promotion of local cultural heritage tourism in the Carpathian countries taking into account the specificity and diversity of all the regions and sub-Carpathian areas	Year 3
17	Enhance and support trans-boundary cooperation by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> organizing „both-sides“ events (fairs, exhibitions, workshops, etc.) design trail network from „both-sides“ perspective introducing non-Schengen border crossings solutions for tourist movement (if applicable) new tourist border crossings, new bridges and footbridges over border rivers tourist business initiatives 	Year 4
18	Establish a working group for assessing tourism impact on natural and cultural heritage (including Protected Areas), also using the results of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) processes and other tools	Year 4
19	Support the establishment of destination management organizations (DMO) in key touristic areas (if applicable) to implement sustainable tourism management schemes with local stakeholders	Year 5
20	Develop a system of incentives to support the improvement and use of local supply chains to and from tourism	Year 6
21	Establish and support a Carpathian Coordination Platform , if applicable and based on available funding	Year tbd
22	Revise National Tourism Development Strategies by incorporating the principles of sustainable tourism and the Carpathian dimension	As appropriate

Objective 3: ESTABLISH A CONTINUOUS PROCESS OF AWARENESS RAISING, CAPACITY BUILDING, EDUCATION AND TRAINING ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT AT ALL LEVELS

	Activities	Proposed start
23	Create a platform for cooperation of farmers linked with tourism entrepreneurship (to be integrated into the common online Carpathian platform on sustainable tourism)	Year 1
24	Establish a system of continuous education and training for relevant target groups on sustainable tourism development, e.g. education programs at schools, raising awareness of the public in regards to natural and cultural heritage	Year 2
25	Enhance international cooperation of entities responsible for sustainable tourism development in individual Parties	Year 3
26	Implement campaigns , especially in the Carpathian part of the country, to raise the awareness among local population of sustainable tourism and the Carpathian Convention	Year 3
27	Contribute to a common Carpathian education, interpretation and awareness raising program	Year 6

3.2 Joint Action Plan

Objective 1: ESTABLISH SUPPORTIVE CONDITIONS FOR THE SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PRODUCTS AND SERVICES, INCLUDING DEVELOPMENT OF A MARKETING SCHEME FOR THE PROMOTION OF THE CARPATHIANS AS A UNIQUE SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DESTINATION

	Activities	Proposed start
1	Develop, maintain and keep up to date a common online Carpathian platform on sustainable tourism, including products and services database, trans-boundary products and mapping, as well as good practices, with continuously updated information, and including the preparation of a Carpathian touristic map	Year 1
2	Create a Carpathian identity and make use of a logo/slogan compulsory for all those service suppliers who joined and were labeled under the Carpathian product-line	Year 2
3	Initiate and possibly create a certification and/or labeling system for sustainable tourism for the Carpathian Brand, supported by a Carpathian-wide marketing strategy	Year 3
4	Develop a Carpathian-wide quality standard system for local products and local services (e.g. “Local food”, “Local accommodation”, “Local experience – how to guide tourists”, “Code of Conduct for Tourists in the Carpathians”)	Year 4
5	Develop common principles and guidelines on tourism infrastructure and undertake activities to make them sustainable	Year 4
6	Establish a tour operators’ cooperation platform	Year 4
7	Design, where applicable, a common system of marking trails throughout the Carpathians	Year 5
8	Develop, maintain and keep up to date an online platform promoting labeled products, linking with the websites of NTOs	Year 6

Objective 2: DEVELOP INNOVATIVE TOURISM MANAGEMENT, FULLY INTEGRATING THE NEEDS OF LOCAL PEOPLE AND ECONOMIES AND OTHER SUPPORTING SECTORS, AND RESPECTING THE PRESERVATION OF NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

	Activities	Proposed start
10	Initiate resource mobilization for the implementation of the strategy at national and international level involving all relevant stakeholders	Year 1
11	Develop a common communication paper on the Carpathian Brand	Year 3
12	Define the use of the Carpathian Brand and its management structure with relation to other sectoral or geographical brands	Year 3
13	Analyze the touristic resources of the Parties based on research, to identify the key-areas and products to be involved, and undertake further detailed research	Year 3
14	Develop guidelines for contributions by the tourism sector to the conservation of natural and cultural resources	Year 4
15	Develop a methodology for monitoring the impacts of existing and planned tourism development on biodiversity and landscapes, as well as the social, economic and cultural impacts	Year 4
16	Define and implement a common set of indicators on the effects of implemented policies and strategies for developing sustainable tourism in the Carpathians	Year 4
17	Initiate the establishment of an organizational unit (Carpathian Observatory on Sustainable Tourism), contributing to the implementation of the Sustainable Tourism	Year 4

	Protocol and this Strategy by monitoring and evaluation of tourism activities in the Carpathians	
18	Develop methods for the protection of „brand-making“ elements of the Carpathians cultural heritage by implementing common projects on preservation of cultural heritage	Year 5
19	Support setting up of a common mechanism for the implementation of the strategy	Year 5
20	Develop common guidelines for the support of sustainable local supply chains	Year 6
21	Develop common guidelines for a monitoring system scheme on traffic to destinations and the flow of visitors within destinations	Year 6
22	Initiate the exchange of good practices and lessons learned from the operation of DMOs in terms of sustainable tourism in the Carpathians	Year 1

Objective 3: ESTABLISH A CONTINUOUS PROCESS OF AWARENESS RAISING, CAPACITY BUILDING, EDUCATION AND TRAINING ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT AT ALL LEVELS

	Activities	Proposed start
23	Create an online platform for education, training and sharing of best practices available to all stakeholders	Year 4
24	Create a program of workshops & conferences and study visits in order to exchange innovative experience on sustainable tourism development	Year 5
25	Exchange know-how on the contribution of tourism to biodiversity and cultural heritage conservation with other destinations	Year 6

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