

Goals – Activities – Outputs

The protection of globally significant mountain ecosystems is conformable with the enhancement of living conditions for the local people living in the area. This shows the UNEP/GEF project which takes place in selected Biosphere Reserves in Central and Eastern Europe.



The UNEP/GEF project partners aim to achieve this goal through:

- developing innovative management systems for tourism management planning
- combining sustainable tourism development and biodiversity conservation
- raising awareness and building capacity
- ensuring long term sustainable impacts of tourism activities
- initiating tourism model initiatives and activities (e.g. revitalisation of local culture and architecture)
- involving local stakeholders and communities in the process of sustainable tourism development
- ensuring the distribution of returns for conservation purposes as well as for the benefit of the local population
- supporting international cooperation and transboundary cooperation

The project partners developed together a series of guiding documents which reflect the commonly agreed concepts and principles of sustainable tourism development and management planning:

- A methodology guide on tourism management planning in Biosphere Reserves
- A trail planning guide for the design and construction of interpretative trails
- A training compendium on sustainable tourism
- Criteria for sustainable tourism

All documents are available at www.tourism4nature.org.

Guiding Principles

CBD Guidelines

The project is conceived as a model project for the implementation of the Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development to the Convention on Biological Diversity (adopted in 2004). Based on the principle of multi-stakeholder participation and cooperation, these guidelines provide a management framework that shows stakeholders in tourism development and nature conservation how to develop tourism which is ecologically, economically and socially sustainable.

International Cooperation

International cooperation is one vital element of the project, as it ensures the necessary exchange of information, best practices and lessons learnt among experts and decisionmakers from different countries. In the scope of the project, cross border cooperation is particularly essential in order to achieve an integrated tourism management of the protected areas on both sides of the border – and thus the protection of transboundary ecological corridors and biological diversity.

The Carpathian Convention

The project partners are engaged in and contribute to the implementation of the Carpathian Convention. They are involved in the European Carpathian Project of the INTERREG IIIB/CADSES programme to which 19 partners, mostly from the Carpathian countries, contribute with their experience in sustainable regional development. These experiences were integrated into a background document on 'Sustainable Tourism Opportunities in the Carpathians' that has been developed by the CEEWEB Carpathian Tourism Working Group.

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Tourism for
Nature



Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity

through Sound Tourism Development
in Biosphere Reserves in Central and
Eastern Europe

2005 – 2008





The Biosphere Reserves:

Aggtelek Biosphere Reserve

HUNGARY

[Information on the web: www.anp.hu/anp]

A Unique Karst Area

The Aggtelek Biosphere Reserve is situated in a vast karst area which belongs to the southern limestone foothills of the Carpathian Mountains. Due to the variety of the karst landscape and the climatic conditions, different types of oak and beech forests can be found. Rock steppes and open rock grasslands are also typical. The variety of ecosystems goes along with a rich diversity of fauna, including some species characteristic to the higher Carpathians, e.g. Ural owl, Lynx and several butterfly species. The karst caves that stretch out over more than 500 km are a unique habitat where many rare and endemic species, e. g. the cave shrimp, the cave bug and various bat species live.

The total population of the two villages within the Biosphere Reserve mount up to 1,000 people. Most of them are working in forestry, agriculture and livestock farming. Recently more and more people got also engaged in the tourism business.

The rich flora and fauna of the Aggtelek Karst and the enchanting landscape are worth a visit throughout all seasons. The main attractions are the caves, e.g. the tradition of visiting the Baradla cave being over 100 years old.



The Biosphere Reserves:

Šumava Biosphere Reserve

CZECH REPUBLIC

[Information on the web: www.npsumava.cz]

The Green Roof of Europe

Situated in the heart of Europe, the Šumava Biosphere Reserve belongs to the Bohemian Forest which is the most extensive continuous forest of Central Europe. In the Šumava Mountains, many biogeographically isolated and relic plant and animal populations survived from the early Holocene. Beech and spruce forest communities represent the dominant biotope, but also a great variety of floral meadows, grasslands, peat bogs and riparian wetlands can be found. Šumava Biosphere is home to a unique fauna of invertebrates, forest fowl like birds and several species of grouse, lynx, red deer, European stag and river otter. At the same time, the territory can be seen as cultural landscape where human activities have been present for centuries.

From the tourism viewpoint, the Šumava Mts. represent a destination with a long tradition, recently experiencing a new increase after the political change in the beginning of the 1990s. Many old neglected buildings have been saved for pensions, cottages, small hotels or other forms of services. Despite the fact that most of the old traditions were tattered after World War II, many old local skills have reappeared both to fulfil a gap in the local tourism market and to satisfy natural needs of self realisation.

The Biosphere Reserves:

Babia Góra Biosphere Reserve

POLAND

[Information on the web: www.bpn.babia-gora.pl]

The Queen's Beauty

Babia Góra – for its special beauty known as “Queen of Beskidy” – is the highest massif in the West Beskidy Mts. which form part of the Western Carpathians. With a peak of 1725 m, Babia Góra is a perfect example for the zoning of plant communities in European mountains. The rich flora is a place of living for a variety of animals, among them even wolf and bear. Most numerous is the insects’ world with several thousands of species, some of them only existing in Babia Góra.

Besides the natural treasures, Babia Góra also owns a specific cultural heritage shaped by different nations, religions and cultures that have influenced the local communities. Although today abandonment of traditionally managed lands occurs, a lot of traditional activities practiced for centuries by local people are preserved until now. Local dialect and customs are still maintained, however, they need to be promoted and supported in view of cultural and social changes that take place in the area.

The number of tourists visiting the Biosphere Reserve increased from 40.000 in 1991 to nearly 80.000 in 2003, offering tourist a wide spectrum of activities, e.g. hiking, cycling, horse riding, skiing, local culture and folklore.

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