



TOURISM FOR NATURE IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN BIOSPHERE RESERVES



Side Event at CBD COP 9

Thursday, 22 May 13:15 – 14:45

Stresemann Institute Room S17/18

Snacks and drinks will be provided.

Implementing the CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development

The side event introduces the experiences made within the GEF-UNEP Project 'Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity through Sound Tourism Development in Biosphere Reserves in Central and Eastern Europe'. The project is supported by UNEP-GEF and has been implemented from March 2005 until May 2008 and aims at strengthening the protection of globally significant mountain ecosystems in the three Biosphere Reserves Babia Gora (Poland), Aggtelek (Hungary) and Šumava (Czech Republic) through the development of new tools and innovative management systems with a special focus on tourism-related uses of these important sites.

The project is a model case for the implementation of the CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development. As such, the project demonstrates in which way local development related to tourism can contribute to the biosphere reserves' goal of sustainability. Various new approaches have been tested that represent incentives for sustainable economic activities in the field of tourism. The ecological, economic and social impacts of tourism-related activities are being monitored by newly developed indicators.

While one of the main project goals was clearly the conservation of biodiversity, the main focus of the project's activities has been lying on demonstrating that the implementation of the CBD tourism guidelines leads to benefits for local economies as well as for nature conservation and fosters communication of the relevance of ecosystem services to a broader public.

While Ecological Tourism in Europe (ETE, Bonn/Germany) has been coordinating the project's implementation, the activities have been implemented by the three Biosphere Reserves in partnership with regional NGOs working in the field of ecology, environmental conservation and tourism development. The national parks within the Biosphere Reserves contributed with their staff's expertise on environmental issues, regional spatial management and regional tourism development. All activities were

carried out together with local, regional and national partners and stakeholders of biodiversity conservation and tourism development, including the cross-border protected area partners and the surrounding local communities.

Throughout the project, numerous activities have been carried out. In all three biosphere reserves the core activity was the development of a tourism management plan together with the key stakeholders. This process has been accompanied by awareness raising and capacity building programmes, model initiatives of sustainable tourism development and the elaboration and testing of indicators, guidelines and manuals for sustainable tourism development. The activities are complemented by various scientific studies in the field of ecosystem services and tourism.

The project is presented at COP 9 as a model case for the implementation of the guidelines that demonstrates how to better reach and capture the economic and social benefits of protected areas. The goal of the side event is to discuss how the outcomes and experiences of the project could be used and further developed.

AGENDA

Welcome and introduction

The GEF project - A model case for sustainable tourism management

Sustainable tourism development in the Šumava Biosphere Reserve

Panel discussion:

The implementation of the CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development: Next steps

Set of background documents:

- Background Study on institutional and management frameworks in the Biosphere Reserves Aggtelek (Hungary), Babia Góra (Poland) and Šumava (Czech Republic)
- Criteria for Sustainable Tourism for the three Biosphere Reserves Aggtelek, Babia Góra and Šumava
- Sustainable Tourism Management Planning in Biosphere Reserves - A methodology guide
- Sustainable Tourism - Training the Trainers Program
- The Trail Planning Guide. An insight into the process of planning interpretative trails. Principles and Recommendations

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. Its member organisations work in the fields of nature conservation and environmental protection, sustainable tourism, youth, leisure activities and culture. ETE is offering information and education about environmentally friendly and sustainable forms of tourism for tourism providers as well as for tourists. ETE also organises conferences, expert meetings, information events, seminars and workshops, both on the national and the international level.

www.oete.de

www.tourism4nature.org