Established in 2003 AER has achieved a partnership for nature conservation and tourism between the tourist industry (tour-operatours, guesthouses) and organisations acting in nature conservation (NGOs, protected areas, local authorities, consultants, local individuals).

52 members & 4 partners:
- 3/5 privat sector (e.g. tur-operatours, guesthouses, guides);
- 1/5 entities based on nature conservation (e.g. NGOs like WWF, CAPDD Bihor, Mioritics Association, ADEPT Foundation etc.)
Possible ecotourism destinations in Romania

- Tara Domneacelor - Calimani
- Tarnava Mare - Hartibaciu
- Tusnad - Sfanta Ana
- Padurea Craiului - Apuseni
- Marea Maramures
- Macin & Dobrogea
- Danube Delta
- Tara Branului - Piatra Craiului
- Cheile Nerei
- Horezu & Bucila

Map showing various regions in Romania with potential ecotourism destinations.
Our team for DDBR CC assignment

**Expert working group:**
- Calin Hodor – biodiversity expert (AER);  
- Víctor Musat (AER);  
- Alexandru Dorosencu (INCDD);  
- Alois Lang (Neusidlersee NP – Austria);  
- Andrei Blumer (AER)

**Extended WG:**
- INCDD, WWF

**Consultation with:**
- Tulcea County Council
Methodology

- Rapid literature assessment (02.2014);
- Building up the expert group (02-03.2014);
- Workshop with DDBRA for agreeing the concept of Carrying capacity and its application to DDBR (24-25.02.2014);
- Contacting and exchange of information with Danube Riparian Forest Neuburg-Ingolstadt Germania (3-5.03.2014);
- Workshop of expert group with DDBRA, INCDDD, Ivan Patzaichin Association, County Council of Tulcea (5-6.05.2014).
Carrying Capacity: a threefold concept:

- ecological;
- local socio-economical;
- users/visitor.
The 4<sup>th</sup> dimensions of Carrying Capacity in relation with impact:

1. Impact generated by **number of visitors** correlated with **time scale** and **seasons**;

2. The impact correlated with the **behavior** of visitors and **pattern** of visits;

3. The impact correlated with the type of **tourism** or **recreation** activities, and the local tourism **offer**;

4. The impact correlated with the **characteristics and performance of the administration system**.
“How much is too much?” (Ioannides & Billing, 2005)

“How much of the change from the natural conditions is accepted, function of the main objectives of a destination” (Stankey & Cole, 1985), Limits of Acceptable Change.

CC is not about obtaining a unique quantifiable and comparable value, but about:
- a working framework;
- a process oriented tool;
- a set of standards and criteria defining LAC specific for destination.
Carrying Capacity of the DANUBEPARKS Study

- Hypothesis 1: A certain **defined radius** to wildlife's points of interest is needed to guarantee its protection.

- Hypothesis 2: Visitors cause impacts on wildlife. Nevertheless, not the attendance but the **behaviour** is the crucial factor.

- Hypothesis 3: **Educational programs** encourage the comprehension of sensitivity of wildlife and regulations. In consequence this leads to adapted behaviour (e.g. sticking to paths, reducing noise, etc.).

- Hypothesis 4: Visitors allowed to **camp overnight and anywhere** in park areas are more likely to disturb animals. Consequently, more settlements in the park area do have the same effect.

- Hypothesis 5: A clear visitor guidance concept helps wildlife to adapt to regularly frequented areas. Anyway, retreat areas for wildlife are necessary.

- Hypothesis 6: Wildlife is sometimes more sensitive to disturbances. **Specific regulations** (e.g. attendance, closure of some parts of the park, etc.) during this period reduce impacts.
Rezervația Biosferei Delta Dunării

Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve

Romania
**Context of the assignment: Danube Delta**

Recreation and Tourism Zoning (2009) funded by WWF and developed in partnership with Detant Consulting

**SLOW versus FAST experience.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of experience</th>
<th>Average stay in the Danube Delta</th>
<th>Resource use</th>
<th>Positive impact on local communities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Slow</td>
<td>More than 2 days</td>
<td>Low consumption rate</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fast</td>
<td>Less than 2 days</td>
<td>High consumption rate</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Context of the assignment: Danube Delta

Recreation and Tourism Zoning Study (2009) funded by WWF and developed in partnership with Detant Consulting

Type of experience.

- Low
- Local community positive impact
- High

Use of resources

Negative impact on nature

- Fast experience
- Slow experience

1 day Average stay 5 days
## Context of the assignment: Danube Delta

Recreation and Tourism Zoning Study (2009) funded by WWF and developed in partnership with Detant Consulting

### Type of experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Type of experience</th>
<th>Resources use</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Nature &amp; culture experience</td>
<td>Slow</td>
<td>Should be predominant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Leisure experience</td>
<td>Mainly fast</td>
<td>angling, sun-bathing, motorised water activities, sunny weekends,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Exception – sometimes angling is slow experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Active outdoor experience</td>
<td>Mainly slow</td>
<td>Rowing, canoeing, sailing or team building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Event experience</td>
<td>Fast</td>
<td>Events where nature is just background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Exception – can motivate for a longer stay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Sightseeing (cruises)</td>
<td>Mainly fast</td>
<td>relatively fast way of visiting each location, using motorised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>transportation means, and moving to the next location</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Principles for tourism and recreation development in the DDBR

1. Respecting conservation zones (app. 50 900 ha).

2. Promoting the slow down experience:
   - using time (for access) as a filtering factor to different locations/destinations within the Danube Delta;
   - bringing higher valorisation of natural and cultural assets by promoting and developing real ecotourism that:
     - produces significant income on the local level;
     - causes a low impact on nature.

3. Zoning for managing the fast experience.
Zoning: a tool for nature conservation and tourism management

Objectives of zoning:

1. Nature conservation in balance with local development
   - Ecological carrying capacity

2. Increased visitor satisfaction
   - Users/visitor carrying capacity

3. USP for each zone
   - Socio-economic carrying capacity
Recreation and Tourism Zoning of DDBR
Tulcea Zone

- Complementary experience that complete the holiday for those that already visited or have the intention to visit Delta
- Brings to light the highlights of the town and natural and cultural surroundings
- Brings the option for an alternative to fast Delta experience if re-wilding/flooding the surrounding land will happen

using the concept

3D: Delta – Danube – Dobrogea.
Murighiol Zone

**Well managed intensive recreation zone**

a. regulations for a better planning and control of the spatial distribution of weekend visitors and tourists;

b. diversifying, specialising and improving the quality of the tourist services;

c. Supporting local communities
Letea Zone

The core experience of the Danube Delta, with two major unique selling propositions: ethnical diversity and the oak dune forest.

designing ecotourism products / programmes that ask for a multiple day stay as well as increasing the daily valorisation.

b. a careful approach to the utilization of this sensitive nature and culture.
Vadu – Corbu Zone

It become a managed nature camping destination, with benefits for local community development.

In addition to that, the place offers good opportunities for specialised birdwatching.
Sf. Gheorghe – Sulina Zone

A different sun-sand-sea destination with a specific blend of attractions formed by
- the beach,
- the culture of the Delta (heritage and rural life) and
- its nature (maritime delta).

The motto of this zone should invite the guests to experience

the “Old River and the Sea”, based on an authentic fishermen village (Sfantu Gheorghe) or on sand and history in Sulina, altogether in a unique natural setting that also facilitates birdwatching.
A manifold and multiple season destination, with a diversified offer for two main seasons.

A. **Summer:**
- leisure experience at Portita – relaxing “3S”;
- culture tourism centred on the archaeological attractions;
- the walking and cycling destination of Danube Delta.

B. **Winter:**
- a birdwatching destination on Razim area, as an alternative to hunting (with its low valorisation);
- nature photography (digi-scoping).
The “highland” (continental part) of the Delta, getting the sense of the geomorphology of the Delta and at the same time can prove how active nature management and restoration can support the development of ecotourism by a local community.

- diversifying the tourism offer including the specific landscape of the continental Delta;
- integrating wetland restoration as an asset for tourism;
- positioning Chilia as the link with the Ukrainian part of the Danube Delta.
Crisan - Mila 23 - Caraorman Zone

The premier destination for the *slow nature experience* type of tourism

1. Establishing / enhancing the **right type of infrastructure** that would trigger only slow nature experience;

2. Developing and promoting tourism activities that will integrate into slow nature experience.
A. Sensitive species/ecosystems to tourism / attractive

1. Water bird colonies – breeding season March-June(-July)
2. White tail eagle nests – breeding season March-June(-July)
3. Moulting bird period - June-July
4. Large bird flocks on lakes - all year round (feeding, resting)
5. Water lily surface covered
7. Vipera ursini moldavica (?)- Letea, Sf.Gheorghe, Periteasca - Apr-Oct
8. Turtoise (țestoasa de uscat) – Vadu, Istria, Dolosman
9. Terapin (țestoasa de apa)
10. Sturgeon
11. Fish
12. Letea & Caraorman Forest
### Indicator for ecological carrying capacity (II)

#### B. Strictly protected zones:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>L</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Letea (South)</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>(guide training, group size, walking, horse carriage)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Caraorman</td>
<td>&lt; 10%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Belciug</td>
<td></td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>fishermen / angling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Saraturi</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>watching infrastructure. Resolving the old garbage site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Popina (local visitors?)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sacalin-Zatoane</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>(pasunat, pescuit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Garla Turceasca</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Garla de Mijloc</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Periteasca-Leahova (Portita Jurilovca)</td>
<td>?</td>
<td></td>
<td>waste management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Capul Dolosman (localnici + arheologie)</td>
<td>&lt; 5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Grindul Lupilor (not allowing grazing)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>road access. R: anglers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Insula Ceaplace (pelican)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Chituc</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td></td>
<td>camping – valorisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Istria – Sinoe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
C. Community issues

1. Sf. Gheorghe - sturgeon prohibition;
2. Land ownership - outsiders;
3. Mila 23, Crisan, Uzlina - architecture;
4. No. bed nights per type of accommodation.
D. Sensitive leisure versus tourism

1. Motorised – water vehicles
2. Small planes traffic (300m?) - Sf.Gheorghe
3. ATV / enduro - Chituc, Portita, Sf.Gheorghe, Sulina
4. Camping -- regulations: leisure, outdoor
   Camping site with minimum services. Wash, toilets, information
5. Not registered accommodation
# Defining activities and their impact: Crisan zone

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>User</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Pressure/Threats General</th>
<th>Pressure/threats/Local settings</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Need to interact</th>
<th>Tools and leverages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anglers</td>
<td>Leisure and sports (mainly FAST)</td>
<td>Boat traffic, noise, litter, camping</td>
<td>A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A9, A11, C2, C3, D1, D4, D5</td>
<td>Transportation, boat hiring, accommodation, local guides</td>
<td>Reduce litter, noise, quantity and size of the fish</td>
<td>Legalise camping spots, legalise angling spots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birdwatchers in small groups (max 20 pers)</td>
<td>Tourism (SLOW)</td>
<td>Boat traffic, approaching colonies, nesting sites and birds flocks</td>
<td>A1, A2, A4, D1</td>
<td>Transportation, boat hiring, accommodation, local guides</td>
<td>To increase the money spending into communities</td>
<td>Develop local offer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature lovers</td>
<td>Tourism (canoeing, small engine boats) (SLOW)</td>
<td>Boat traffic, approaching colonies, nesting sites and birds flocks</td>
<td>A1, A2, A4, D1</td>
<td>Transportation, boat hiring, accommodation, local guides</td>
<td>To increase the money spending into communities</td>
<td>Environment friendly transport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fun seekers</td>
<td>Leisure/tourism (FAST)</td>
<td>Boat traffic, driving into colonies, nesting sites and birds flocks</td>
<td>A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A6, A9, C2, C3, D1,</td>
<td>Transportation, boat hiring, accommodation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Environment friendly transport</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: FAST = Fast activities, SLOW = Slow activities.
The conclusions are the result of the workshops with experts and partners

1. The ecological CC is below the critical point in relation with tourism;

2. In some situations leisure and recreation activities are having an increased negative pressure;

3. Socio-economical CC is critical considering the high rate of natural resources and the low average of stay;

4. The visitor CC is exceeded because of the conflict between leisure and sport activities (fast experience) and nature and outdoor activities (slow experience).
Canotca and Rowmania Ecotourism Centre – interpretation paddling programmes
Canotca and Rowmania Ecotourism Centre – interpretation paddling programmes
Thank you for attention and…. SLOW DOWN with us in Danube Delta!

Images: Victor Musat
Mihai Moiceanu
Andrei Blumer
andrei.blumer@eco-romania.ro
Association of Ecotourism in Romania (AER)

www.eco-romania.ro
www.facebook.com/eco.romania