DANUBE PARKS STEP 2.0

„Anchoring the Danube River Network of Protected Areas as Platform for Preservation of Danube Natural Heritage”

WP6 TOURISM

Building joint quality for joint tourism services

Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve, Romania
1. Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve  
2. Srebarna Nature Reserve  
3. Kalimok-Brushlen Protected Site  
4. Rusenski Lom Nature Park  
5. Persina Nature Park  
6. Djerdap National Park  
7. Gornje Podunavlje Special Nature Reserve  
8. Kopački Rit Nature Park  
9. Lonjsko Polje Nature Park  
10. Duna-Dráva National Park  
11. Duna-Ipoly National Park  
12. Dunajské Luhy Protected Landscape Area  
13. Záhorie Protected Landscape Area  
14. Donau-Auen National Park  
15. Donauauwald Neuburg-Ingolstadt
WP6 Building joint quality for joint tourism services

Tourism Activities:
6.1. Joint Development of a DANUBE PARKS Visitor Centre
6.2. Basis for future joint products: Assessment and Quality guidelines
6.3. Implementing quality: social diversity in tourism
6.4. Implementing quality: Carrying capacities for visitor management

Activities in Project raised the importance of the Network in this field, stressed by co-operations with ICPDR, Danube Competence Center (DCC) and Danube Tourist Commission (DTC).

Budget: 486,076.00 Euro
External: 228,300.00 Euro
Investment: 44,500.00 Euro
6.1. Joint Development of a DANUBEPAKRS Visitor Centre

THE DANUBEPAKRS VISITOR CENTRE
- a gateway to Protected Areas
- a milestone for presenting the value of the Danube River Network of Protected Areas on Danube wide scale
- present the role of Protected Areas as part of ONE interrelated ecosystem
- bring the focus of visitors in Protected Areas more on the transnational perspective
- stress the importance of each site within the Danube-wide network and the importance and concrete examples of transnational cooperation
- motivate visitors also to go to Protected Areas in upstream or downstream countries
- boost the Danube Protected Areas as a transnational network of tourist destination as one larger European Tourism Destination.
Contribution of DANUBEPARKS STEP 2.0 is to close the gap of a visitor centre with Danube-wide focus by elaborating a CONCEPT for a DANUBEPARKS visitor centre which includes the planning for an indoor and an outdoor exhibition.

Location: DÖMÖS (Duna-Ipoly NP)
- located in the central part of the Danube
- easily reachable from Budapest
- situated in one of the most developed tourist regions of the Danube.

DINPI (activity responsible) will:
- subcontract the indoor and outdoor planning of the visitor centre
- coordinate the inputs of all partners
- organize two task force meetings

All partners: - involvement in the joint planning process
- assure the perception as "crystalization point" for Danube wide nature tourism
- raise the competence of each PA through "learning by doing" in the design of visitor centers.
Results:
- JOINT CONCEPT of the indoor and outdoor exhibition for the DANUBE PARKS visitor centre based on the results of the 6.2. Activity “Assessment and quality guidelines”
- inputs delivered by experts from each PA to jointly elaborate a concept for a common DANUBE PARKS visitor centre
- “best practice” for the adopted quality guidelines and “learning by doing” for the planning of local visitor centers.
- based on the concept elaborated in DANUBE PARKS STEP 2.0, the implementation of the visitor centre itself by Duna-Ipoly NP as a capitalization of this project in the next years.
For anchoring this future node of communication to the public and for linkages between all the DANUBEPARKS visitor centers, a digital information corner (touch-screen) will be established in one already existing visitor centre of each Protected Area.

Advantages of a digital information corner:
- easily update with new information and/or new partners in the future
- raise attention for the network in the main gateways to the Protected Areas.
- present the Danube as ONE interrelated ecosystem with big values for nature tourism

Djerdap NP (responsible partner) will:
- coordinate the info-corner in the visitor centers activity
- subcontract the transnational part of the digital info-corner
- organize one task force meeting
Milestones are:
- Task Force Meeting Tourism in November 2012 in DINPI with first discussions on the indoor and outdoor exhibition of the future DANUBEPARKS visitor centre, and the contributions needed from all partners; one day training with external expert trainer.
- Task Force Meeting Tourism in spring 2013 in Djerad NP with main discussion topic interactive info-corners.
- Further discussions at the Task Force Meeting Tourism in autumn 2013 in DDNPD.
- Task Force Meeting Tourism in March 2014 in DINPI with final discussions on the exhibition in the DANUBEPARKS visitor centre.
- Presentation and adoption of the CONCEPT for a DANUBEPARKS visitor centre.
- Installation of the digital info-corners in existing centres of the PP.
All PP:
- active participation in planning process for DANUBEPAKRS visitor centre
- establishment of digital info-corner in their visitor centre (with exception of DDNPD)
- provision of information and pictures for digital info-corner.

DDBRA will participate in the planning of the DANUBEPAKRS visitor centre and, due to its huge area and the higher number of visitor centers, DDBRA will install 2 digital info-corners (touch-screens) in 2 existing visitor centers.

Target value: 14 info-corners.

6.1. Budget: 175,494.00 Euro
   External: 59,300.00 Euro
   Investment: 44,500.00 Euro
6.2. Basis for future joint products: Assessment and Quality guidelines

DANUBEPARKS project developed the Nature Tourism Strategy that aims to the implementation of sustainability and quality criteria of the touristic and educational offers.

DANUBEPARKS STEP 2.0 will implement a Danube wide assessment tour and define joint quality guidelines for touristic offers for each area, as well as joint branding by DANUBEPARKS.

Quality of tourism in Protected Areas is linked to ecological sustainability and in-depth nature experience.
Quality guidelines for tourism, education and regional development in the Protected Areas:
- will be developed after the assessment tour (May – June 2013)
- will be done in cooperation with partners from existing networks (e.g. PanParks, EuroParcs)
- can have different purposes (e.g. an internal guideline of what we aim for, as opposed to a kind of certification system that also has external communication and promotion aspects)
- will probably focus on visitor centers etc
- will serve as an orientation for all future capacity building measures and jointly developed products
-a recommended course outlined for future capacity building will be elaborated after the assessment tour until autumn 2013.
The Assessment tour:
- planned for May – June 2013
- assess the tourism offers all along the Danube (all Protected Areas, other visitor centers and museums dealing mainly with the Danube River and its nature).
- analyze the gaps in offers and messages transported
- will be used for capacity building measures "on the spot"
- the results will be presented in a workshop in DDNPD in autumn 2013
- a report and a map will be published

Protected Area representatives will join parts of the travel for experience exchange.
In each part, a selected topic/problem will be discussed in an area that is representative. That Protected Areas on spot get feedback on their specific issues and the others are "learning by consulting".

Result: after the development of the quality guidelines and the assessment tour, a capacity building plan will be developed to jointly implement the quality that is aimed for.
Milestones:
- Tourism Task Force Meeting - autumn 2012 (Kick-Off Meeting), discussion on quality guidelines and plans for assessment tour.
- Task Force Meeting Tourism in November 2012 in DINPI for first discussions on activity 6.1.
- Tourism Task Force Meeting - spring 2013 in Djeerdap NP: presentation of exact plans for assessment and draft of quality guidelines
- Assessment Journey in May – June 2013 all along the Danube, results in autumn 2013.
- Publication of quality guidelines and capacity building plan in autumn 2013.

CoI: Subcontracting the assessment experts, organization of the assessment tour, organization of one task force meeting together with Kick-Off-Conference.
NPDA: Subcontracting the quality guidelines experts (Christian Baumgartner – Naturefriends International).
DDNPD: organization of the workshop in autumn 2013
Djerdpap NP: organization of one task force meeting in spring 2013.

All PP: preparing visit in their areas, participating at a part of the trip.

6.2. Budget: 132,050.00 Euro
   External: 60,000.00 Euro
6.3. Implementing quality: social diversity in tourism
- new innovative topic supporting the general diversity ethos of DANUBEPARKS (biodiversity as much as social diversity)
- development of offers for people with disabilities (a pilot project- DDNPD and LKR N-S)
- exemplary implementation of the new quality standards tested for the development of new offers for a specified target group.
- results will be discussed and tested transnationally in a workshop organized in DDNPD in autumn 2013.

Milestones:
- Task Force Meeting Tourism in DDNPD in autumn 2013 with focus on pilot project experience exchange and transfer new experiences to all partners.
- Established as part of visitor offers in DDNPD & Neuburg-Ingolstadt in summer season 2014.

6.3. Budget:  41,518.00 Euro
             External:  2,000.00 Euro
6.4. Implementing quality: Carrying capacities for visitor management

Nature tourism is one of the most important fields for the parks to show their potentials to the public and to stakeholders and to improve and foster environmental education, but:

- there is very little known about the carrying capacity of natural reserves when it comes to tourism and its activities in areas of high biodiversity.
- very little scientific research is done so far to deal with the effects of intensive touristic use of natural reserves.
- park managers within the DANUBEPARKS Network feel very uncomfortable and have a great lack of knowledge on the impact of tourism on species and habitats in their parks.
- question is not only if tourism is already causing problems to the parks, but where are future perspectives to improve and boost tourism in the parks without endangering its value.
As a pilot, **DDBRA** and **LKR N-S** will assess their carrying capacities and integrate their gained know-how into a joint transferrable **CARRYING CAPACITY TOOL**, that will be made available to all partners of the network at the workshop in DDNPD in autumn 2013.

This workshop will also be used for experience exchange on visitor guiding instruments, where DDBRA will present plans for a tourist handbook (including maps, useful information, visitor rules, etc) based on the carrying capacity assessment (to be produced in 2014).

The scientific experts working for species and habitats sensitive on human disturbance from WPs 4 and 5 of this project will integrate their specific knowledge here.

The partners from Romania and Germany do therefore plan to do some scientific research to find out the potentials of the carrying capacities within at least one of the parks and to develop a tool (access on excel based) that allows park managers to estimate their carrying capacities in a very simple way.
Work to be done: (by NI/DDBRA)
- Research on scientific literature (NI)
- Developing a score sheet to access touristic infrastructure in the parks (NI)
- Developing a matrix on species and habitats to define their sensitivity against tourism (as is done in some parks in the US) (NI)
- Research on the field and case studies in one of the parks (Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve) (DDBRA)
- If necessary within a second park (possibly Danube riparian forest Neuburg-Ingolstadt) DDBRA/NI)
- Making an attempt to recommend on what kind of impact each specific habitat or species can tolerate (DDBRA)
- Taking with certain differences and uncertainties (existing infrastructure, sensitivity of species…) (DDBRA)
- Designing and developing a tool for all partners to make it easy for park managers to screen their park and find out their specific carrying capacity (NI)
- Common final report (NI and DDBRA)
Milestones:
- Tourism Task Force Meeting in autumn 2012 (at the Kick-Off conference), discussion of the scientific research program
- Task Force Meeting Tourism in DDNPD in autumn 2013 with focus on pilot project experience exchange
- Application of carrying capacity tool by partners of the Network in Period 4

Role of each partner:
**LKR N-S:** subcontracting assessment experts, development of assessment tool, pilot assessment, coordination of the carrying capacity assessment tool together with DDBRA experts.

**DDBRA:** subcontracting assessment experts, development of assessment tool, pilot assessment, production of tourist handbook based on carrying capacity assessment, cooperation with LKR N-S, integration of experts from WPs 4 and 5.

**DDNPD:** organization of the workshop in autumn 2013 (same as in act. 6.3) to transfer the experiences to all partners.

6.4. Budget: 137,014.00 Euro
    External: 107,000.00 Euro
WP 6 Outputs:

- DANUBEPARKS info-corners established in PA visitor centers by installation of interactive touchscreens/14. (Djerdap NP, all - period 4)
- Assessment tour and study including map and gap analysis/1. (CoI, all - period 3)
- Quality guidelines for tourism and education offers including capacity building plan/1. (LP- NPDA, all - period 3)
- Offers for people with disabilities developed/2. (DDNPD, LKR N-S - period 3)
- Carrying capacity tool developed and tested/1. (DDBRA and LKR N-S- period 3)
- Tourist handbook based on carrying capacity/1. (DDBRA- period 4)
- Task force meetings/5. Organization: CoI /LKR N-S, DINPI, Djerdap NP, DDNPD.
WP 6 Results:

- Indoor and outdoor exhibition planning DANUBEPARKS visitor centre/plans for visitor centre/2 (defined as output). (DINPI, all - period 4)

- Awareness for quality management raised in Protected Areas and joint development goals established/minimum 12 PA adopt decision regarding quality guidelines/12. (LP- NPDA, all - period 3)

- Awareness for the needs of people with disabilities raised/minimum 10 PA present at TFM with experience exchange on these special offers/10. (DDNPI and all - period 3)

- Improved compatibility of nature protection and tourism by consideration on carrying capacities/no of project partners sharing the results and the potential future use of the results of the carrying capacity study/14. (DDBRA and all - period 4)
Thank you for your attention!