



Landscape of the Year – the Danube Delta **Resolution on Sustainable Tourism Development**

Tulcea /Vienna, September 2009

The Danube Delta was proclaimed Landscape of the Year 2007-2009 – in an initiative based on a close partnership between Naturefriends International, Naturefriends Romania, the Administration of the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve (ARBDD), the Danube Delta Institute, the Tulcea County Council, the City of Tulcea, the Association for Ecotourism in Romania (AER), the German Society for Technical Cooperation, and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) in Romania.

The items listed below have emerged from a number of conferences, workshops and training courses held in the Danube Delta region throughout the period of 2007-2009. They were discussed and summarised at a final conference in Tulcea, on 23 September 2009.

In light of the partnership that underpinned the Landscape-of-the-Year project, the undersigned organisations consider the five conclusions given below as both the outcome of the project and as the valid basis for the future development of tourism in the Danube Delta:

1. Positioning on the European market

The Danube Delta has the potential to position itself on the European tourism market. The regional – as opposed to the European – stakeholders have the task and the opportunity to decide on this position and to take appropriate action.

Marketing ought to focus on products that meet the criteria of sustainability and local value added.

2. More local value added thanks to slowing down

Tourism stakeholders have to devise products and programmes that are designed to lengthen the sojourns of guests and thus to increase the local value added, as opposed to the short-term stays that generate profits for foreign tour operators and investors only.

The suggested zoning of the Danube Delta for leisure and tourism (see *Recreation and Tourism Zoning Strategy for the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve, WWF 2009*) should serve as a basis for the regional tourism development.

3. Consistent professionalisation

Tourism in the Danube Delta depends on consistent professionalisation, which implies the crafting of USPs (Unique Selling Propositions) and brand marks that designate the delta as a singular European destination. A singularity that is based on the delta's rich biodiversity and culture.

Periodic training courses are supposed to consistently upgrade all tourism services.

4. Regional Tourism Board

A board (or committee) of all public and private regional stakeholders in the tourism sector – including the ARBDD, interested NGOs and in particular the SMEs (small and medium-sized enterprises) – ought to be set up. This body should be service-oriented and not state-run, and should provide a level playing ground for both local and regional authorities. It could be structured as a PPP (Public-Private Partnership) and be tasked with

- networking the stakeholders concerned
- crafting tourism products designed to create local value added and to preserve the natural and cultural assets of the Danube Delta
- providing advanced training with a view to upgrading the quality of services in the tourism sector
- developing and marketing the Danube Delta brand.

5. Carrying capacities and monitoring

The (leisure and tourism-related) carrying capacities of various parts of the region ought to be analysed, monitoring instruments for (diverse) leisure and tourism activities should be developed and applied.

The findings obtained should be reflected in periodic updates of the sustainable tourism strategy which has been jointly developed for the Danube Delta by all the stakeholders.