

CEETO OUTCOMES & SUCCESS STORIES

A collection of good practices and outcomes resulted from the implementation of CEETO Interreg CE Project.



Interreg
CENTRAL EUROPE



CEETO

European Union
European Regional
Development Fund

ABOUT CEETO PROJECT AND THIS BROCHURE



The project CENTRAL EUROPE ECO-TOURISM: TOOLS FOR NATURE PROTECTION aimed to implement an innovative governance system for tourism management, based on a participatory planning approach and on the principles of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas. Through CEETO, we learned different lessons regarding Sustainable Tourism management in Europe:

THE VALUE OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

On the one hand, through an extensive questionnaire, we collected different perceptions on the importance of Sustainable Tourism for Protected Area managers and local communities.

Sustainable Tourism is seen as a resource that can greatly contribute to the preservation of biodiversity and species inside Protected Areas and has great potential for disseminating information. Besides conservation, experts usually regard Sustainable Tourism as beneficial for local communities as a source of profit to service providers, offering job opportunities for women and providing a diversity of jobs in rural areas.

CEETO SUCCESS STORIES

On the other hand, CEETO project was an opportunity to test different Sustainable Tourism practices in European Protected Areas. In this booklet, you will find eight success stories, which portray some of these solutions and cover different topics relevant for the sustainable management of tourism.

A USEFUL SOURCE OF KNOWLEDGE

To end with, the CEETO project has provided opportunities to different Sustainable Tourism experts to discuss and exchange relevant knowledge. All this expertise has been collected in several outputs, which are summarized in this booklet and that help manage tourism in a more sustainable manner.

EMPOWERING PARTICIPATORY PLANNING THROUGH THE “SAINT GALLEN METHOD”

▶ PO DELTA REGIONAL PARK, ITALY.

▶ PARK DESCRIPTION

The Park protects the largest complex of wetlands in Italy, and one of the most important wildlife sanctuaries in Europe for nesting, migratory and wintering water birds. In the Park, natural environments are intertwined with cultivated and densely populated areas.

▶ CHALLENGES

One issue was the lack of cooperation between local actors in the joint development of Sustainable Tourism proposals. Another challenge was related to the relocation (+ seasonal adjustment) of tourists who tend to crowd in a few areas of the Park and for short periods of the year.

▶ SOLUTION

The Park decided to establish a participatory planning processes in order to increase the participation and involvement of local stakeholders in the design of the tourist offer of the Park. Consequently, a five-year Sustainable Tourism Action Plan was developed and approved on 2nd July 2019 according to the logic of sustainability, the lengthening of the period of tourism fruition, the “hidden places” attractiveness enhancement through communicative innovation and the training of visitors’ centre operators.

The “Saint Gallen” method was implemented by 8 events involving 39 stakeholders, clustered in “focus groups” working on Park’s maps, in order to represent both the “macro” flows (long distance itineraries) and the “micro” flows (local trips). The result of this consultation allowed identification of the visitor flows inside the Park and plan a set of activities that converged in the five-year Sustainable Tourism Action Plan. e visitor flows inside the Park and plan a set of activities that converged in the five-year Sustainable Tourism Action Plan.



ESTABLISHING NEW ACCESSIBILITY METHODS AND PARKING RULES

▲ PARK DESCRIPTION ▲ APPENNINO TOSCO EMILIANO NATIONAL PARK, ITALY.

Established in 1997, this vast Protected Area extends between Emilia and Tuscany across the main mountain ridge, reaching the height of 2.120m of M. Cusna and surrounded by meadows, bilberry heath, beech woods and coniferous forests, deep valleys and torrents, small, quiet mountain lakes and precious peat bogs.

▲ CHALLENGES ▲ Usual access to the Park relied on private vehicles which lead to the congestion of roads and parking areas, an excessive environmental and acoustic pollution and blocking the passage of rescue vehicles. Furthermore, the lack of knowledge of the particularities of the Park lead to an insufficient respect of its natural values.

▲ SOLUTION ▲ In order to promote sustainable accessibility, the Park's managing authority, in collaboration with the municipality of Corniglio, deployed a free shuttle bus service, available during the summer season of 2019. On the shuttles worked also a local guide who, during the journey, provided information and increased awareness on the specificity and the nature delicacy of the Protected Area. They sought to ensure appropriate behaviour of visitors, in compliance with the Park's rules of conduct.

During shuttle service hours, the road connecting the sites of Cancelli and Lagoni was reserved for non-motorized vehicles, horses and walkers. Access by car was allowed until 10 am with the possibility to park for free at Lagoni sanctuary parking (subject to availability), while parking on the road was forbidden. At the same time, an analogous solution that included the deployment of a shuttle service and road closure to promote the use of this alternative transport mean, was adopted in the Pietra di Bismantova Area.



IDENTIFYING VISITOR'S PROFILE WITH ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

▶ PARK DESCRIPTION

NIRANO'S MUD VULCANOS NATURE RESERVE, ITALY.

The "Salse di Nirano Nature Reserve was the first regional reserve to be established in Emilia-Romagna region in 1982. It is located in the lower Apennines hills and protects the largest system of mud eruptive systems (Mud Volcanoes) of the region; a 20 hectares "moon-like" hilly basin environment.



▶ CHALLENGES

The visitors had a lack of knowledge on the Protected Area and its code of conduct, from which originated inappropriate behaviour and insufficient respect of its natural values. Likewise, the Park managing body had a limited knowledge of the visitor profile in terms of number, origin, behaviour and mobility preferences.

▶ SOLUTION

A Video Content Analysis (VCA) System equipped with 3 video surveillance cameras connected to an Artificial Intelligence based processor was deployed inside the reserve's integral protection area (Zone A), to collect information on:

a. number of people (divided by their means of transport); b. number of cars (with distinction of travel direction); c. number of trespassers of Zone A fences (distinguishing between people and animals), with video recordings of the events; d. maps of density of use (heat map) of the Zone A walking paths; e. time-lapse video sequence to portray the evolution of the landscape and the morphology of the mud volcanoes.

The information provided by the VCA system allows the Park to determine both the visitor's number and behaviour and plan the most suitable ways to provide them with adequate information on the correct rules of conduct.



CONTAINING TOURIST FLOWS INSIDE EXISTING SKI ROUTES

▲ PARK DESCRIPTION

▲ SÖLKTÄLER NATURE PARK, AUSTRIA.

Situated in the Lower Tauern massif, the Park covers 28.800 ha of mountain landscapes with altitudes between 694 and 2747 meters above sea level. In winter this area offers some attractive backcountry skiing tours.

▲ CHALLENGES

Ski touring in the mountains is a massively booming sport. Ski tourers are constantly discovering and publishing new “insider tips”. Factual refuge areas for wild animals, which are essential for their survival in winter, are becoming smaller and smaller, also inside the Nature Park.

▲ SOLUTION

By evaluating the entries in summit books over a year, it was possible to filter out the peaks that are particularly attractive for winter tourists.

The Park management authority then produced a brochure including only some “old” common ski tours in the area. This brochure not only describes the ski tours in detail and maps them. It also shows refuge areas for wild animals that should not be entered. Further ski tours are not advertised.

In most of these zones, voluntary compliance is requested to not to enter them. Lots of information about wild animals, their winter habitats and their struggle for survival in winter should create a general understanding of their needs. Ski tourers are thus encouraged to respect the refuge zones.

The positive outcome of this activity can be verified by analysing the further entries in the summit books, monitoring of ski tracks and indirect evidence of endangered species in these areas (black grouse, ptarmigan).



ESTABLISHING VISITOR ´S PROFILE THROUGH PERSONAL INTERVIEWS

▶ PARK DESCRIPTION ▶ UNESCO BIOSPHERE RESERVE SALZBURGER LUNGAU, AUSTRIA.

In 2012 the Salzburger Lungau together with the Carinthian Nock Mountains, was awarded as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. The Lungau is in the southernmost district of Salzburg and comprises 102,000 hectares of mountain landscapes with several mountain lakes. It is characterized by traditional structures with small agriculture and organic farms.

▶ CHALLENGES ▶ In the special case of the area around the lake Prebersee the Park management authority did not have enough information on visitors, regarding their reasons to visit this area, their mobility preferences and their knowledge and level of awareness about the Biosphere Reserve.

▶ SOLUTION ▶ A survey based on personal interviews of the visitors of the area around the lake Prebersee was carried out in order to acquire a better knowledge of their characteristics, choices and level of awareness. The survey was implemented according to a pre-established calendar and featuring a random choice of people to interview in order to better understand different aspects regarding:

- a. Transport: the visitor ´s choice of transport, the reasons for using or not using the public transport, the knowledge of the bus links and options and willingness to use them, the level of satisfaction with the public transport offered and suggestions for improvement;
- b. Natural values: the awareness and knowledge about the Biosphere Reserve and what it represents and the satisfaction with the quality of information received about it;
- c. Visitor ´s profile: the age, gender and origin of the visitors, the length of their stay, whether they come alone or with a partner or their family and how many times they visited the area.



INFLUENCING VISITOR'S BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS A MORE RESPECTFUL USE OF THE AREA

▶ PARK DESCRIPTION UNESCO BIOSPHERE RESERVE SOUTHEAST RÜGEN, GERMANY.

▶ PARK DESCRIPTION

This Park joined the network of UNESCO Biosphere Reserves in 1991. The coastal landscape belonging to Mecklenburg-Vorpommern is characterised by peninsulas and coastal promontories that are connected by narrow strips of land and include wide sandy beaches, alternate with rugged cliffs.

▶ CHALLENGES

The Park management and local stakeholders noticed insufficient knowledge of visitors regarding the natural peculiarities of the area. This often resulted in inappropriate behaviour and a lack of following the Park's code of conduct.

▶ SOLUTION

To tackle the lack of awareness among visitors, an audio-guide was created for the Zicker Berge hiking area. It provides information and includes stories from the local stakeholders in German and English to help raising awareness among visitors.

The stories were professionally written and translated and recorded by German and English mother tongue voice-over professionals. The audio-guide, including pictures and short descriptions can be accessed online and offline (download option) via the Smartphone application "izi.TRAVEL" or directly via the website. The app has an auto-play function – if the GPS tracking system is activated, the audio guide will automatically play the linked GPS sequence.

Additionally, a promotion campaign for the audio-guide was carried out. This included different publications such as press releases, publications on the Biosphere Reserve's website, and articles on social media channels of partners, printed QR codes in the field linking to the izi.TRAVEL application and printed promotional postcards.



SUPERVISING THE ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS IN THE “PEAK ZONE”

▲ PARK DESCRIPTION

NATURE PARK MEDVEDNICA, CROATIA.

Founded in 1981 and covering an area of 17,938 hectares, this Park is located in the vicinity of Zagreb and covers a wide variety of forests, grasslands and mountain streams. During the winter season, it is highly visited due to the existence of a ski resort of international recognition.

▲ CHALLENGES

The environmental impact originated by the high influx of tourists during the winter season, especially during the FIS Cup competition that the Park hosts regularly, was unwell understood and needed to be assessed.

▲ SOLUTION

A complete analysis was carried out by the Park’s management authority in order to inspect and monitor the tourist negative impacts on the nature and the environment.

The analysis was done by comparing the characteristics of a part of the skiing area and its buffer zone. The indicators taken into account to carry out the analysis were divided into:

- a. Natural value indicators: records of flora and fauna of the streams and the springs, biodiversity indicators of meadows, and the invertebrates community;
- b. Environmental indicators: hydrological, soil, edaphic and climatological indicators.

The supervision activities were carried out before the high peak of visitors, and it was foreseen to complete the observation with snow and water conditions after the FIS Cup and after the ski facilities are closed.



IMPROVING THE TOURISTIC OFFER AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACCORDING TO SUSTAINABLE PRINCIPLES

▲ PARK DESCRIPTION

▲ STRUNJAN LANDSCAPE PARK, SLOVENIA.

Created in 2008, this Park embraces the longest stretch of natural seashore in the Gulf of Trieste, the highest flisch cliff on the Adriatic coast, the northernmost saltpans in the Mediterranean basin, the only marine lagoon in Slovenia and a rich cultural landscape.

▲ CHALLENGES

The objective of the regulation of the Belvedere terraces is to control the movement of the visitors, offer them several sustainable activities outside the Park, relieve some of the pressure on the Protected Area and to establish rules that will allow an environmentally friendly tourism in the area.

▲ SOLUTION

Through the Belvedere Terraces Development Plan, different actions were set to improve the touristic offer and to enhance the possibilities of fruition of the Park according to environmental sustainability criteria. These actions included the construction of:

a. a. an eco-green hotel; b. glamping facilities; c. a wellness centre; d. a restaurant; e. a coffee shop; f. a picnic area; g. event venues; h. a beach; i. a funicular connecting the lower and the higher part of the Terraces.

The Plan also included different actions to raise awareness among the visitors about the Park, which included the creation of an info point in which educational and performance-related content will be displayed, and a playground inspired by different elements present at the Park.

After completing the project plan, the Park carried out a technical research on the infrastructure needed to implement the development plan of Belvedere Terraces.



CEETO HANDBOOK - SUCCESSFUL AND INNOVATIVE PRACTICES ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM



The Handbook portrays the current state of affairs and sustainability policies on tourism management in the countries participating in CEETO Project. It summarizes the principles on Sustainable Tourism, provides recommendations for practitioners and presents a considerable number of good practices coming from all over the world, with a particular focus on Europe.

The Handbook contains also the “Inventory of Planning/Management/Monitoring tools and Success Stories”, related to both the common and the most innovative techniques for tourist flows analysis: quantification, profiling, movements recognition and monitoring, preferences, etc., along with some examples of the related best-practices application.

These techniques, ranging from simple questionnaires up to the most complex solutions like Automatic Video Content Analysis (VCA), GPS Tracking or telephone cells and social Big Data analysis, are very useful to build-up the base knowledge for the planning and programming of the Sustainable Tourism development by both the Protected Area managers, their relevant Policy Makers, Destination Management Organizations and others.

The CEETO Handbook is available to download it in six different languages (DE, EN, HR, HU, IT, and SI).



CEETO GUIDELINESS - HOW TO DEVELOP SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN PROTECTED AREAS



The CEETO Guidelines have been designed as a tool to support policy makers at international, national and regional level in the process of shaping the tourism planning and management within and around Protected Areas. Their main objective is to facilitate the integration of nature conservation, sustainability criteria and principles for concrete environmental and socio-economic benefits into the design process of these plans.

The Guidelines provide recommendations on how to integrate Sustainable Tourism principles in public policies. Furthermore, this document capitalizes the synthesis and results of the Pilot Actions implemented in eight Protected Areas in Central Europe during the implementation of CEETO project, some of which are included in this brochure.

The contents of the Guidelines are divided in three parts. The first part covers the general background and principles of Sustainable Tourism. The second includes a detailed insight of the CEETO Pilot Actions and their results. To end with, the third part consists in a review of those institutional elements that are important for developing tourism in Protected Areas and various approaches for planning.

The CEETO Guidelines are available to download it in six different languages (DE, EN, HR, HU, IT, and SI).



CEETO MANUAL - HOW TO IMPLEMENT A SUSTAINABLE GOVERNANCE OF TOURISM IN PROTECTED AREAS



The CEETO Manual of Sustainable Tourism Governance in Protected Areas is an operational document intended for both Protected Area managers and local stakeholders.

It is based on the experience of eight Protected Areas in Austria, Croatia, Germany, Italy and Slovenia that tested various management and monitoring tools of visitors flow, aimed at reducing environmental impacts and pressures of tourism and enhance the socio-economic benefits that can come from a Sustainable Tourism approach.

The aim of the document is to improve the managing capacities of Protected Area managers and local stakeholders and implement an actual sustainable use of nature and its assets.

In the Manual you will find:

- a. the principles of Sustainable Tourism;
- b. a step by step guidance on Sustainable Tourism set up and management in Protected Areas;
- c. practical hints and recommendations on how to manage processes of Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas (including participatory approach in planning, communication and monitoring);
- d. guidance on cooperation mechanisms between Protected Areas and tour operators to improve the efficacy of sustainability models.

The CEETO Manual is available to download in English language.



HELP US PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

You can contribute to the promotion of Sustainable Tourism by distributing the following media among travellers, inhabitants of Protected Areas and whomever may be related with tourism and nature preservation.

THE FILM “A SUSTAINABLE JOURNEY”

This film portrays the story of a traveller seeking to escape the pressures of everyday life to a different kind of tourism that he believes will be good for nature and good for people too.

Produced by EUROPARC Federation and internationally awarded in international Film Festivals, it is available for online distribution in five different languages (DE, ES, EN, FR and IT). For more information on premieres you can contact EUROPARC Federation at europarc@europarc.org.



LEAFLETS FOR TRAVELLERS AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES

This series of two Leaflets offer information on Sustainable Tourism in order to raise awareness on its importance among specific target groups:

For Travellers:

It offers recommendations on how to be respectful with the places they visit and to contribute to their socio-economic development.

For local communities:

It targets inhabitants of Protected Areas to increase their sense of belonging and provides them with recommendations to do a better promotion of them.



GET INVOLVED!



CEETO project has set the foundations to create a network of professionals in Europe aimed to grow and remain after the project's life.

CEETO NETWORK - BUILDING SUSTAINABLE RELATIONSHIPS

The CEETO Network is formed by practitioners in nature conservation and Sustainable Tourism in Europe that share a common goal: to valorise natural heritage, to contribute to its conservation, and to achieve well-being of local communities through the appropriate management of tourism.

This network wants to open a dialogue about Sustainable Tourism and facilitate the exchange of knowledge, ideas and innovations among its members. Furthermore, the Network hopes to collect different visions, build new relationships, engage stakeholders with existing projects and encourage the development of new projects.

CEETO ONLINE PLATFORM - THE MEETING POINT FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM EXPERTS

Built in the framework of the CEETO Network, the CEETO online platform offers a meeting point for Sustainable Tourism experts to publicly and privately discuss ideas, share knowledge and get support from other members.

Becoming a member of the CEETO Network is easy: register to the CEETO Online Platform and start sharing your views in lively discussions, participating in the posts discussions or creating your new ones! Furthermore, you will find a repository of CEETO products and valuable international documentation on Sustainable Tourism!

Registration and use is free of charge!

WWW.CEETO-NETWORK.EU



Produced by EUROPARC Federation & CEETO Interreg CE project partners:

Emilia-Romagna Region – Protected Areas, Forestry and Mountains Development Department.

EUROPARC Federation.

UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Salzburger Lungau.

Sölk­täler Nature Park.

NIMFEA Environment and Nature Conservation Association.

Authority for the Biosphere Reserve Southeast Rügen.

The Italian Federation of Parks and Nature Reserves - EUROPARC Italy.

Regional Development Center Koper.

Public institution Nature Park Medvednica.

Public institute Landscape Park Strunjan.

WWF ADRIA – Association for Nature Protection and Biodiversity Conservation.

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