

Project Update: April 2010

During the first months we had a lot of activities setting all possible and relevant conditions for beginning the project. We started with project team meetings, where we agreed on next steps for project development and sharing the roles. Main activities in this period were: first contacts with all stakeholders in the region where Djerdap National park spreads this territory (three municipalities); and collecting all data relevant for developing strategy for sustainable ecotourism in the national park. At that time we had help from employees in national park authorities and two of them voluntary joined the project team. After the meetings, we undertook interviews and distributed questionnaires amongst relevant stakeholders living in this area: NGOs (women associations and local tradition keepers), local tourism organisations, cultural institutions, and also interested people living in this area. We also consulted all relevant already existing documents on local, regional and national level and formed database for further strategy development.

In next period, after analyzing the existing database, the project team started to consult external experts in this field. We contacted and met representatives from national and international institutions and organisations. On a national level we contacted and met representatives from: Ministry of Economy and Regional Development, Sector Tourism; National Tourism Organization of Serbia; Institute for Nature Conservation; Center for Tourism Research and Studies; and University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Sciences, Department of Geography, Tourism and Hotel Management. On an international level we contacted and meet representatives from: Ecological Tourism in Europe, Bonn, Germany; and CEEweb for Biodiversity – Sustainable Tourism Working Group, Budapest, Hungary.

After all this consultations, the project team started to work on document development. Currently, the document (Strategy of Development of Sustainable Tourism in Djerdap National Park) is in its final phase and, after the final consultations with National Tourism Organization of Serbia, we expect to be finish by the end of May 2010. After that, we'll organize a public presentation and, after final comments from the public, the document will be submitted to the Djerdap National Park Authorities for official approval.

In parallel, the project team worked on promotion of natural and cultural potentials of Djerdap National Park through activities of Young Researchers of Serbia (a capital-based NGO in which some of project team members are active). Existing promotional material was given from Djerdap National Park authorities and was distributed at several fairs (civil society fair, ecological fairs, etc.). Then, the project team concluded that there was a space for improvement of promotional material, and we are now in process of designing and printing new promotional material for Djerdap National Park with approval of the national park authorities.