



# Sustainable Tourism & Nature Conservation

An Investment in our Future

November 2011

This report was prepared by:

Klara Brandl, Environment Agency Austria



Authors:

Klara Brandl, Environment Agency Austria

Christian Baumgartner, NFI

Margaret Birkett, Environment Agency Wales

Stefanie Dymak, Austrian Federal Forests

Colette Price, Countryside Council for Wales

Petros Protopapadakis, Prefecture of Preveza

Layout:

Plus One Design, Bristol

Printing:



Asiantaeth yr  
Amgylchedd Cymru  
Environment  
Agency Wales

Cover photo:

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Thank you to everyone who commented  
and contributed to this report.

This report was published in 2011 by the  
SURF-nature project. [www.surf-nature.eu](http://www.surf-nature.eu)



This project is funded by the EU's  
European Regional Development Fund through  
the INTERREG IVC programme.



**European Union**

European Regional Development Fund



# Sustainable Tourism & Nature Conservation

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# Introduction

European funds provide opportunities to complement the financing of nature conservation measures in the Member States, contributing to the preservation of precious natural assets and cultural landscapes. The European approach for financing Natura 2000 suggests that nature conservation measures should be integrated into all EU funds. The current funding period 2007-2013 has shown good potential for financing the promotion of biodiversity and nature within the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). Indeed, 3.8 billion € have been potentially made available for nature investments across all ERDF Operational Programmes. However, the allocation of funding varies enormously between projects and between countries across Europe.

In light of this, the Sustainable Use of Regional Funds for Nature (SURF Nature) project has been developed. The overall objective of the project is to improve regional policies and practices for nature conservation and biodiversity. This will be achieved by increasing the opportunities for financing these measures from the ERDF, whilst giving them a greater impact. The SURF partnership consists of 14 public bodies from 10 EU countries which are

responsible for the implementation of ERDF funding, or have experience in applying for these funds. Within the project, the partners chose one of five topics which also serve as their main focus. The five topics for publication of thematic booklets for the SURF Nature project are:

- Sustainable Tourism
- Natura 2000 Management
- Green Infrastructure
- Environmental Education
- Forest and Biodiversity

All booklets will build a bridge between the topic and the ERDF as a financing opportunity, and contain project examples for the thematic focus from the partner regions as well as best practice case studies.

# 1. Sustainable tourism development

## 1.1 ■ Priorities and objectives of sustainable tourism

Tourism is one of the world's largest industries and has become one of the fastest growing economic sectors. The management of tourism affects the conditions of destinations and host communities, and more broadly the future of ecosystems, regions and nations. Tourism has a multitude of impacts; it can be a positive force, bringing benefits to destinations, or an engine for degradation. Tourism can be seen as a complex adaptive system combining socio-cultural values, quality of life aspirations, and the biophysical and economic systems in which tourism takes place over time. This calls for an integrated approach and a procedural and holistic understanding of sustainable tourism development (Liburd, 2010). Sustainable tourism is not a new form of tourism, as sustainability should be applied to all different forms; for example eco-tourism, cultural tourism, beach tourism.

The history of sustainable tourism is set in the early 1980s with the publication of Robert Jungk's theses on hard and soft travel (Jungk, 1980). Jungk contributed to an incipient discussion on the environmental impact of tourism. The discussion was soon extended to include cultural aspects, and later widened to regional economic

and social considerations. In the interim, sustainable development of tourism has become a standard feature of the industry. Customer demand for sustainable travel, designed to have a lasting impact on the positive development of the regions visited, is consistently increasing even though terminology may vary. The growing number of tourism experts acknowledges this through expressing their sustainable development intentions; however this does not always translate into practice.

Policy-makers have also been responding; the European Commission now refers to 'sustainability' as one of the 'four indispensable pillars of tourism development'<sup>1</sup>. Whilst the 1987 Brundtland Report definition of sustainable development is widely recognised, there is not a universally acknowledged definition of sustainable tourism.



<sup>1</sup> EU Commissioner Tarjani presenting the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: 'Europe, the worlds No 1 tourist destination – a new political framework for tourism in Europe.' (COM(2010), 352 final).

There are however generally accepted aims of sustainable tourism development:

- Unspoilt natural environment landscapes as well as measures for environmental protection are prerequisites for the tourism of the future.
- Tourism should make optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity.
- Tourism should be embedded in a sustainable, regionally-specific, networking economy. It should provide fairly distributed, socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders including stable employment, income earning opportunities and social services to host communities.
- Tourism should respect the socio-cultural authenticity and self-determined cultural dynamic of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance. It should serve both the social well-being of the local population and the employees in the tourism sector.
- People are the central focus for a policy on tourism. The local population should have access to all information and be able to participate equally in all decision making processes.
- Intensively exploited tourist destinations have to implement environmental management systems for companies and the region itself, as well as regional sustainability strategies. Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) have to be carried out for the construction and enlargement of tourism related infrastructure and responsible authorities should make sure that splitting projects into subprojects for the purpose of avoiding the EIA requirement are avoided.
- All levels of the political system; regions, states and the EU, and the source areas of the tourists, have to take responsibility for the effects and impacts of tourism in the respective destinations.

(Baumgartner 2009, combined with UNWTO 2004)

## 1.2 ■ Approaches of the European Union for sustainability in tourism policy

The European Lisbon treaty (2007/C 306/01) created room for manoeuvre for the European institutions to take leadership in the development of European tourism. The treaty acknowledged the importance of tourism and outlined a specific competence for the European Union in this field, allowing

for decisions to be taken by qualified majority. Article 195 on tourism<sup>2</sup> specifies that “the Union shall complement the action of the Member States in the tourism sector, in particular by promoting the competitiveness of Union undertakings in that sector”.

2 [http://europa.eu/lisbon\\_treaty/glance/better\\_life/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/lisbon_treaty/glance/better_life/index_en.htm)

Nevertheless, the main competence still rests with the Member States, who remain the principle driving forces. Looking at strategic approaches and national policies, it is clear that nearly all countries mention sustainability as a key factor for tourism, but hardly any State has a concrete sustainable tourism strategy. Consequently, funds and subsidies, the biggest motivators for development, usually lack clear definitions of sustainable tourism.

Current European policies focus much more on sustainability issues than do national approaches. According to the EU ‘Action Plan For A More Sustainable European Tourism’ (COM(2007) 621 final), European tourism faces eight key challenges with regard to sustainability:

- reducing the seasonality of demand
- addressing the impact of tourism transport
- improving the quality of tourism jobs
- maintaining and enhancing community prosperity and quality of life, in the face of change
- minimising resource use and production of waste
- conserving and giving value to natural and cultural heritage
- making holidays available to all
- using tourism as a tool in global sustainable development

The action plan of the new Communication ‘Europe, the world’s No. 1 tourist destination – a new political framework for tourism in Europe’ (COM(2010) 352 final) highlights several concrete measures for the ‘Promotion of the development of sustainable, responsible and high-quality tourism’:

- indicators for sustainable management of tourism destinations (this work is already in the finishing phase; DG Enterprise, Tourism Sustainability Group,)
- awareness-raising campaigns for European tourists
- European ‘Qualité Tourisme’ brand
- identification by the European tourism industry of risks linked to climate change and exploration of opportunities for alternative tourism services
- a charter for sustainable and responsible tourism
- a strategy for sustainable coastal and marine tourism
- cooperation between the European Union, the main emerging countries and
- Mediterranean countries to promote sustainable and responsible tourism development

Another important part of international tourism policies lies hidden within the new approach of the European macro-economic regions. The EU, mainly through DG Regio, developed the Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region in 2009 (COM(2009) 248 final) and the Strategy for the Danube Region in 2010 (COM(2010) 715 final). Strategies for the Mediterranean region and the Alps are due to follow. These strategies focus on several issues, amongst which tourism is identified as an important development factor in almost all regions. The Danube Strategy shows that lobbying can lead to directing the aims and measures of tourism development towards sustainability. Although there is no direct funding allocated for the implementation of these strategies, the Cohesion Policy for the next financing period (2014-2020) will provide ways to support the implementation of the measures mentioned in the strategies.

## 1.3 ■ Tourism and Nature conservation

Tourism and nature conservation are interdependent, and their relationship has been a lengthy one (Jafari, 2000). Tourism often stimulates measures to protect or conserve nature, but at the same time, and somewhat paradoxically, presents a significant environmental risk because of its demands on the natural environment. These risks are intensifying as domestic and international tourism demand for natural areas is growing. Furthermore, the nature of that demand is such that tourists are seeking more spontaneity, independence and participation in their experiences, and thus contributing to the growth of sustainable tourism.

There are three different relationships with respect to tourism and nature conservation: **conflict, coexistence or symbiosis**. These can exist between those promoting tourism and those advocating nature conservation.

- Conflict occurs when conservationists see that tourism can have only detrimental effects on the environment.

- Coexistence is noted when a positive effect, though sometimes small, is recorded between the two groups. However, such coexistence rarely continues indefinitely, particularly when an increase in tourism activity may cause substantial changes to the environment.
- Symbiosis is reached when the relationship between tourism and nature conservation is organized in such a way that both derive benefit from the relationship.

Conflict and coexistence are common, symbiosis is perhaps least represented. Tourism and protected areas often take on a symbiotic relationship since protected areas provide values, settings and resources attractive to visitors.

Tourism can cause both environmental degradation and enhancement. Sustainable tourism requires the conservation of nature, and thereby can support the maintenance or substantial enhancement of natural

areas and subsequent increases in visitors' satisfaction. The viability of recreational and tourism resources, rather than conflicting with conservation, actually supports it, otherwise visitors' satisfaction is reduced as the inherent appeal of the natural resources decline.

Tourism provides an economic impetus for conservation of the environment because protected and scenic areas are attractions for both domestic and international tourists. This can also contribute to a wider appreciation of nature conservation by promoting and increasing accessibility to specific sites and aspects of nature. However, the role of tourism as a consistent contributor to nature conservation is often debated as tourists trample vegetation, disturb wildlife, leave litter, carry pathogens and weeds and thus do not always behave in ways which promote a symbiotic relationship between the tourism industry and conservation. Furthermore, tourism has fostered intensive viewing of nature, with resulting disturbance or damage, and export of protected and

endangered species. It is estimated, that the global share for CO<sup>2</sup> emissions attributable to tourism through transport, accommodation and activities is around 5 % (UNWTO 2008). The tourism sector contributes to climate change, which also has varied impacts on biodiversity; for example the effects on rare and isolated populations, loss of keystone or iconic species, extinction of endemic species and dissemination of invasive species.

The interrelationships between tourism and nature conservation are therefore extremely complex and dynamic, with conflict being most acute where tourism development occurs rapidly and without strategic planning. The successful integration of tourism and nature conservation objectives is of increasing importance because it enhances people's choices and helps maintain or even enhances the quality of the environment.



## 2. Financing opportunities for sustainable tourism and nature conservation

### 2.1 European Funds for sustainable tourism and nature conservation

#### Sustainable and innovative tourism

practices are highlighted as criteria in the different objectives of the various European financial instruments, in particular:

- The Commission has foreseen the possibility of funding sustainable tourism related projects through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) in support of social and economic development. Under its three objectives, "Convergence", "Regional Competitiveness and Employment" and "European Territorial Cooperation", the ERDF supports more sustainable patterns of tourism to enhance cultural and natural heritage and to develop accessibility and mobility related infrastructure.
- The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) also encourages tourist activities as part of diversification of the rural economy. Specifically, EAFRD provides support for improving the quality of agricultural production, environment and the countryside, encouraging tourist activities as part of the diversification of the rural economy objective.
- The European Fisheries Fund (EFF) has already introduced as a priority theme for the period 2007-2013 the sustainable development of fisheries areas. One of the

areas to which fishermen are redirecting their activities is eco-tourism. Small scale fisheries and tourism infrastructure are also supported through the EFF.

- Research supported under the 7th EU Framework Programme for Research, Technological Development and Demonstration may result in benefits for the tourism sector.
- The Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP), which supports the competitiveness of EU enterprises and especially small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), focuses on investing in innovation activities, including eco-innovation.

**Nature conservation activities** can be funded by various financial instruments:

- LIFE is the EU's financial instrument supporting environmental and nature conservation projects throughout the EU. The current phase of the programme, LIFE+, runs from 2007-2013 and covers both the operational expenditure of DG Environment and the co-financing of projects. LIFE encourages many direct biodiversity projects and nature promotion activities which help to find compromise between tourism and conservation goals.

- The Structural Funds (ERDF and Cohesion Fund) can fund nature conservation activities but usually require them to be linked with promotional and investment aspects supporting access to protected areas. If well designed, investments can help to reduce visitor pressure on natural areas.
- The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) provides support for improving the environment and the countryside.
- The European Fisheries Fund (EFF) focuses on the sustainable development of fisheries areas.
- The 7th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7) may result in benefits for the nature conservation as there are specific actions funded for the sustainability of the natural and man-made environment.
- DG Development (Thematic Programme for Environment and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources Including Energy – ENRTP) and DG External Relations (European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument – ENPI) also offer limited possibilities for nature conservation activities.

### 2.2 European Funds – be aware of conflicting impacts

While the majority of EU funds listed in section 2.1 have sustainable tourism and/or nature conservation as a consideration, these considerations may not achieve the expected result. Despite the commitments for investing in the fields of nature conservation and sustainable tourism, other activities financed by the European funds may cause negative impacts on nature and biodiversity in the EU. There are several cases which provide examples of conflicting funding in the EU. Some continuing threats which can potentially harm the effectiveness of investing in sustainable tourism and biodiversity include:

- Overexploitation of natural resources, fishing, collection and trade in species and parts of species, and in some instances hunting

- Urban sprawl, intensive agriculture and forestry and associated infrastructure
- Extension of road, rail, inland navigation and electricity networks which fragment habitats and displace some species
- Promotion of alternative forms of tourism e.g. adventure tourism and wildlife tourism which are contrary to the principles of sustainable tourism

In general the European funding system is multifaceted, but certain opportunities for EU funds to promote sustainable tourism activities and halt the biodiversity loss can be easily recognised. Many win-win projects have already been realised, with potential for further gain in future projects. However, increased research is needed on both the opportunities for win-win projects, and the values of nature protection.

## 2.3 ■ Current opportunities in the ERDF for financing sustainable tourism

The aim of the EU regional policy is to promote coherent development within the EU and reduce gaps between the poor and rich regions within the Community area. Traditionally, the Community's regional policy has paid little attention to issues related to nature conservation and biodiversity. Furthermore, the initiatives supported by Structural and Cohesion Funds have frequently been criticized for having negative impacts on biodiversity (WWF 2006).

The EU regional policy is supported by three specific funding instruments: the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Cohesion Fund, from which the ERDF is the most relevant for funding sustainable tourism and biodiversity. The SURF Nature project analysis of Operational Programmes has shown that although many Regional Competitiveness and Employment Programmes identify nature as an asset for development, little co-financing for biodiversity and nature protection is provided. However, some programmes support indirect nature protection measures such as sustainable use of cultural and natural areas as regional resource. Opening of, and easier access to protected areas, will support the linkage between protected areas and regional development, and can also enhance sustainable development of leisure and tourism in the region. Such projects could be funded under the intervention Code 56, protection and development of natural heritage. As investments are primarily focused on

income generation and promotion of new economic activities, nature conservation is mainly addressed through promotional or awareness activities.

In contrast, Cross-border and Trans-national Programmes provide good opportunities for funding of biodiversity and nature protection. Projects targeted on sustainable tourism development and biodiversity can be funded under activities such as cooperation and management of protected areas and increasing of public awareness where Code 51 as well as Code 56 is included in the Programme. These activities allow the nature component to be stronger and good practice examples show that the link of conserving nature and tourism activities is more direct.

Figure 1 opposite illustrates some possibilities provided by the current framework of the ERDF regulation, including possible links to the categories of expenditure within the fund. This table shows potential opportunities, however the actual availability of funds and relevant measures is based on the regional or national Operational Programmes (OP).



Figure 1: Examples developed by SURF-Nature, adapted from EC Regulation No. 1080/2006, categories of expenditure No. 1080/2006

Article	Possible application for sustainable tourism/biodiversity	Categories of expenditure which could already cover the investments
4	<b>Convergence</b>	
4(4)	Environment, including investments connected with water supply and water and waste management; wastewater treatment and air quality; prevention, control and fight against desertification; integrated pollution prevention and control; aid to mitigate the effects of climate change; rehabilitation of the physical environment, including contaminated sites and land and brown field redevelopment; promotion of biodiversity and nature protection, including investments in Natura 2000 sites; aid to SMEs to promote sustainable production patterns through the introduction of cost-effective environmental management systems and the adoption and use of pollution-prevention technologies;	
	Restoration of flowing waters and bogs, connect ecologically valuable natural and cultural landscapes Establishment of visitors centres and visited zones in protected areas – tourism infrastructure Development and construction of nature trails, hiking trails and climbing paths Promotion and raising awareness of environmental issues in order to enhance visitors' sustainable attitude Enhance multifarious types of accommodation for a balanced allocation in sensitive regions Develop measures to motivate SMEs, destinations, tourism regions to adapt certifications for environment and sustainability (eco-label, EMAS, CSR etc.)	49 Mitigation and adaptation to climate change 51 Promotion of biodiversity and nature protection (including Natura 2000) 67 Other assistance to improve tourist services
4(6)	Tourism, including promotion of natural assets as potential for the development of sustainable tourism; protection and enhancement of natural heritage in support of socio-economic development; aid to improve the apply of tourism services through new higher added-value services and to encourage new, more sustainable patterns of tourism;	
	Recreational use of waters Development and establishment of networks of cooperative between SMEs and National Parks Development of eco-tourism packages Strategies to attach value to nature and landscape for tourism Development of nature protection criteria for tourist accommodation near nature reserves	55 Promotion of natural assets 56 Protection and development of natural heritage 57 Other assistance to improve tourist services

Article	Possible application for sustainable tourism/biodiversity	Categories of expenditure which could already cover the investments
4(7)	Investments in culture, including protection, promotion and preservation of cultural heritage; development of cultural infrastructure in support of socio-economic development, sustainable tourism and improved regional attractiveness; and aid to improve the supply of cultural services through new higher added-value services;	
	Utilisation and marketing of regional products Integration of industrial heritage, cultural heritage and traditional agricultural in packages Planning of combined cultural and environmental maps in regions, in order to promote cultural heritage and environmental protection	58 Protection and preservation for the cultural heritage 59 Development of cultural infrastructure 60 Other assistance to improve cultural services
4(8) and 5(3)a	Transport investments, including improvement of trans-European networks and links to the TEN-T network; integrated strategies for clean transport which contribute to improving the access to and quality of passenger and goods services, to achieving a more balanced modal split, to promoting intermodal systems and to reducing environmental impacts;	
	Development and establishment of sustainable tourism mobility to and in sensitive regions to avoid motorised traffic and its negative environmental impacts such as emissions and noise Development of trans-national measurements for sustainable transport from major source regions of tourists to sensitive tourism regions (E.g. new or additional direct train connections, measurements of luggage transfer, packages, travel information systems and best-price systems for day trippers and tourists staying over night) Improvement of soft mobility systems in the tourism regions e.g. development/enlargement/adoption of soft transportation systems such as public transportation, cycle paths to sensitive areas Awareness raising measurements in the source and tourism regions Design and establishment of cycle paths to reduce car traffic close to protected areas Development of small scale recreational ports along waterways using and keeping natural riverine structures	16 Railways 17 Railways (TEN-T) 24 Cycle tracks 26 Multimodal transport 28 Intelligent transport systems 31 Inland waterways (regional and local) 32 Inland waterways (TEN-T)

Article	Possible application for sustainable tourism/biodiversity	Categories of expenditure which could already cover the investments
5	<b>Regional competitiveness and employment</b>	
5(2)b	Promotion of the development of infrastructure linked to biodiversity and investments in Natura 2000 sites where this contributes to sustainable economic development and/or diversification of rural areas;	
	Restore old waterways as elements of green infrastructure improving recreational values e.g. for cycling Development of protected areas as model region in connection with regional development	51 Promotion of biodiversity and nature protection (including Natura 2000) 56 Protection and development of natural heritage
5(2)f	Protection and enhancement of the natural and cultural heritage in support of socio-economic development and the promotion of natural and cultural assets as potential for the development of sustainable tourism;	
	Promote ecosystems goods and services including provision of services such as food, fibre, and fresh water, and cultural services such as spiritual and religious values, education and inspiration	55 Promotion of natural assets 56 Protection and development of natural heritage 57 Other assistance to improve tourist services 58 Protection and preservation for the cultural heritage 59 Development of cultural infrastructure 60 Other assistance to improve cultural services
6	<b>European territorial cooperation</b>	
6(1) and 6(1) e	Development of cross-border economic, social and environmental activities through joint strategies for sustainable territorial development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>by encouraging and improving the joint protection and management of natural and cultural resources, as well as the prevention of natural and technological risks;</li> <li>by developing collaboration, capacity and joint use of infrastructures, in particular in sectors such as health, culture, tourism and education;</li> </ul>	
	Cross-border initiatives for a more diversified tourism together with nature conservation, forestry, fishery and/or farming to promote sustainable tourism for example in intermediate seasons Creation of regional research teams for monitoring biodiversity and nature protection issues	51 Promotion of biodiversity and nature protection (including Natura 2000) 53 Risk prevention (...) 55 Promotion of natural assets 56 Protection and development of natural heritage 57 Other assistance to improve tourist services



Article	Possible application for sustainable tourism/biodiversity	Categories of expenditure which could already cover the investments
		58 Protection and preservation for the cultural heritage 59 Development of cultural infrastructure 60 Other assistance to improve cultural services
6(2)b	Establishment and development of trans-national cooperation • Environment: water management, energy efficiency, risk prevention and environmental protection activities with a clear trans-national dimension. Actions may include protection and management of river basins, coastal zones, marine resources, water services and wetlands; fire, drought and flood prevention; the promotion of maritime security and protection against natural and technological risks; and protection and enhancement of the natural heritage in support of socio-economic development and sustainable tourism;	
	Trans-national initiatives to analyse and establish carrying capacities of protected areas, natural assets and so on in different types of landscapes Development of proposals for common policies on sustainable tourism whilst involving local inhabitants Cooperation between National Parks in order to be developed in a sustainable way, especially concerning tourism activities and guidance	51 Promotion of biodiversity and nature protection (including Natura 2000) 53 Risk prevention 54 Other measures to preserve the environment and prevent risks
10	<b>Areas with geographical and natural handicaps</b>	
10	Without prejudice to Article 4 and 5, the ERDF may in particular contribute towards the financing of investments aimed at improving accessibility, promoting and developing economic activities related to cultural and natural heritage, promoting the sustainable use of natural resources, and encouraging sustainable tourism;	
	Areas with geographical and natural handicaps Effectively face cohesion challenges through relevant investments: increase tourism capacity and intensity, access to natural areas	55 Promotion of natural assets 56 Protection and development of natural heritage

## 2.4 ■ Funds for sustainable tourism and nature conservation in Austria

Austria has a Climate and Energy Fund for climate protection and climate change (Klimafonds, see [www.klimafonds.gv.at](http://www.klimafonds.gv.at)) that could be used for projects or research on adaptation or mitigation measures including in tourism and nature conservation. This is important as there are no regular funds dedicated to sustainable tourism. Projects for sustainable tourism and nature conservation are either financed on a case-by-case base or, more likely, using European funds.

Sustainable tourism and nature conservation in Austria are mainly funded through the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), which is implemented by the Austrian Programme for Rural Development 2007-2013. Measured against its national territory, Austria substantially profits from the funds allocated to rural development. During the 2007-2013 programme period, a total of 3.9 billion € is provided by the European Union. As these EU funds have to be doubled from national budgets, provided by the Federal Government and Provinces, a total of 7.8 billion € is available.

The Rural Development Programme sets four priorities:

**Axis 1:** Improving the Competitiveness of the Agriculture and Forestry Sector

**Axis 2:** Improvement of the Environment and the Countryside

**Axis 3:** Quality of Life in Rural Areas and Diversification of the Rural Economy

**Axis 4:** Leader

Austria is not eligible for financing from the Cohesion Fund. Within ERDF, the Austrian Regional Competitiveness and Employment Programmes worth 912 million € provide few application opportunities for sustainable tourism and nature conservation funding. However, the seven Cross-border Programmes, worth 223 million €, in which the environment is represented and in which Austria is involved, provide sound funding potential for biodiversity and nature conservation in connection with sustainable tourism development. Austria is also involved in the three Trans-national Programmes worth 551 million € in total which can provide funding opportunities for biodiversity and nature conservation related tourism in Alpine Space, Central Europe and South East Europe.

In addition, funding for selected nature conservation projects in Natura 2000 areas is available from the instrument LIFE+Nature which has a budget of 2 billion € in the Programme period 2007-2013.



## 2.5 ■ Funds for sustainable tourism and nature conservation in Greece

Sustainable tourism and nature conservation in Greece are primarily funded through the Sectoral Operational Programme (OP) “Environment and Sustainable Development” which has a total budget of 2.25 billion €. The OP is divided into distinct intervention sectors that are operationally organised into two priority axis groups, one for the Cohesion Fund and the other for the European Regional Development Fund:

- **Group A** Priority Axis – funding from the Cohesion Fund
  - Specific goals: safeguarding and managing water resources, preventing and mitigating environmental hazards etc

- **Group B** Priority Axis – funding from ERDF
  - Specific goals: protecting the natural environment and biodiversity, managing climate change etc.

The “Rural Development Programme (RDP) of Greece 2007-2013”, which focuses on boosting Greek agriculture competitiveness and improving the environment, also provides many funding opportunities for investing in sustainable tourism and nature protection. RDP investment is supported by funding from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). The total budget of the RDP is approximately 5.3 billion €.



## 2.6 ■ Funds for sustainable tourism and nature conservation in Wales

Obtaining adequate sustainable tourism and nature conservation funding is a challenge in Wales. There are several small to medium term sources of funding but not all are applicable to public sector bodies, with many sources geared towards voluntary and charitable organisations. The largest source of funding for direct nature conservation projects in Wales is through EU LIFE + Nature & Biodiversity.

ERDF Convergence does provide funding for sustainable tourism activities under the theme Environment for Growth. Environment for Growth is a priority of the Convergence programme, worth £50m over 7 years, which aims to realise the economic potential of the natural environment by:

- Promoting the enhancement and protection of the natural, built and heritage environment; and
- Increasing the economic potential of the environment.

However, there are very few opportunities in Wales for directly funding nature conservation through ERDF Convergence as Code 51 is not included in the Welsh Convergence OP. This means that nature conservation can only be included as an added benefit of a Convergence project and not as its main focus. The main way that nature conservation can be included in a Convergence bid is when it is seen as a way to increase tourism and recreation in order

to support economic growth, or as an added value element within a physical regeneration project. An example of this is the £14.5 million Communities & Nature (CAN) project which seeks to improve green infrastructure and facilities for visitors at natural heritage sites, in order to bring economic benefits to communities. The CAN project is managed by Countryside Council for Wales and delivered by partners including Environment Agency Wales who manage the Wild Fishing Wales component which is described in Section 3.3.

Other sources of funding for sustainable tourism or nature conservation include:

- **Rural Development Plan (RDP) for Wales 2007 – 2013**

The RDP funds schemes which are aimed at improving the quality of life in rural areas by developing locally based approaches to rural development and the environment, countryside, agriculture and forestry. The RDP has a total budget of £795 million, with £195 million coming from the European Agriculture Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).
- **EU Framework Programme 7 (FP7)**

FP7 has been used to fund the ERNEST Sustainable Tourism Research Network Project in Wales. The project will undertake joint research activities on sustainable tourism over the next two years.

### 3. Good practices and innovative approaches

The following projects illustrate the potential of Cohesion Funds to finance tourism related projects that also serve the protection of nature, environment and biodiversity. Nevertheless, these projects show that there are further opportunities for improvement, and that lessons learnt from the projects could make future projects even more effective and sustainable.

#### 3.1 Austria - Bog Alliance in the Alps

##### ERDF Context

The application to Interreg was enabled by already existing networks on bogs in Bavaria, Tyrol and Salzburg. The project built on good practice learnt from previous Interreg funded programmes and thus further strengthened existing networks which will facilitate opportunities for further Interreg bids in the funding period 2007-2013.

##### Operational Programme:

European Territorial Co-operation  
Germany/Bavaria – Austria 2007-2013

##### Activity field 2.2:

preservation of natural and cultural resources by environmental and nature protection and prevention measures as well as sustainable regional development  
Code 56: protection and development of natural heritage



##### Funding:

Overall project budget: 1.89 M €  
EU intervention rate: 60% in Austria

#### Project aims and implementation steps

##### Development of bog environmental education instruments:

- creation of a map with information about the bogs in the different regions for teachers and bog guides; target group: teenagers and children
- development of a concept for bog excursions especially for teenagers and children
- multiplier instruction: how to present the bog map and how to use it for the work in classrooms or at excursions
- development of training sessions for bog guides "Moorführerausbildung"
- creation of a bog environmental education backpack to be used by the bog guides
- holding of test excursions to evaluate the bog guide training sessions

##### Development of trans-national marketing instruments:

- creation of a project homepage ([www.alpen-moorallianz.eu](http://www.alpen-moorallianz.eu))
- creation of a film about the regions and their bogs
- design of display panels to present each region and the whole bog alliance
- design of a partnership board to present all partners and their project targets in the regions
- development of an information folder / package / material to present each partner and the whole bog group



### Development of sustainable eco-tourism, particularly with regard to the protection of the bogs and sensitive habitats:

- construction of interesting eco-tourism infrastructure for seniors, adults, teenagers and children. Infrastructure varies between regions as each area has its own target groups and could include for example observation platforms or towers, playing fields in the forest, permanent or temporary exhibition



### Development of management plans:

- sustainable management of the bogs aiming to protect, conserve or ameliorate them
- gain more know-how about the different habitats

### Other targets:

- formation of cooperations and networks between the different regions
- effective communication and public relations



## Partners:

Who were the project partners and their motivation to implement the project?

Who had the project idea?

Austria/Salzburg: Leader management region National Park Hohe Tauern

Austria/Tyrol: Tourism association Wilder Kaiser, community of Walchsee

Germany/Bavaria: Community of Raubling, eco-tourism association Achentel

## Success:

How did the project define success?

What are the main factors of success?

- development of traceable cross-border cooperation and mutual learning in intention and in practice
- wellfounded project content plan including development of a common project concept with regional and supraregional targets of each project partner
- early involvement of the funding authorities with face to face meetings to discuss intended targets and receive suggestions for the project.
- technical support for the preparation of the funding application including expert advice from previously successful bidders
- implementation of a project coordination plan to collate all documents for the funding application within a clear time frame
- open discussion and honest communication between the project partners
- clearly defined, target-oriented working of all members of the project team
- sound time management for the project application including the formulation of project objectives, activities and budget to maximise effectiveness of project implementation

## Difficulties:

What were the most difficult moments in

- **planning the content**
- **finding the right partners**
- **applying**
- **implementing**
- **and what lessons were learnt for future project**

Difficulties were avoided at the project planning and application stages due to open communication and clear definition of targets between partners. The time lag between the submission of accounts and the receipt of funding resulted in cost accounting errors in the first year of the project.

**Lessons learnt:**

detailed preparation of the project accounts is essential to ensure claims and reports are correct and that payments are received as soon as possible.

## Follow-up:

**What are the follow-up plans? By whom – partner or other stakeholders?**

**What remains 5 years after the end of the project?**

- continuation of the network of project partners
- establishment as one bog region in the Alps
- promotion of further bog activities in all bog regions
- common marketing to invite interested people
- periodical meetings for exchange of experience
- opportunity for preparation of an continuative bog project

## Contact data / (project) website

Austrian Federal Forests, Stefanie Dymak, Klausgasse 11, 5730 Mittersill  
phone: 0043 664 4144442 stefanie.dymak@bundesforste.at www.alpen-moorallianz.eu

## 3.2 ■ Greece - Network of Aegean Islands for Sustainability DAFNI

### ERDF Context

DAFNI Network promotes an innovative approach in the field of sustainable tourism in Greece. The main focus of the project is to promote and facilitate investments financed through ERDF. Many sustainable tourism projects have been supported by ERDF using this approach.



## Project aims and implementation steps

DAFNI Network is a voluntary scheme of island communities aiming towards:

- a balance of economic growth with environmental standards and social concerns
- regional development through sustainable tourism, social participation and innovative structures including e-governance
- new energy and water management schemes including renewable energy sources and desalination

## Partners:

**Who were the project partners and their motivation to implement the project?**

**Who had the project idea?**

37 island municipalities of the Aegean Sea are members of the network.

Motivation: The Aegean Sea comprises 90 inhabited islands, the majority of which have an inestimable ecological and archaeological value. The present model of development which includes massive tourism and extensive construction, combined with the scarcity of resources such as energy and water, is seriously threatening the fragile ecosystems and social cohesion.

Project idea: Municipality of Ios



## Success:

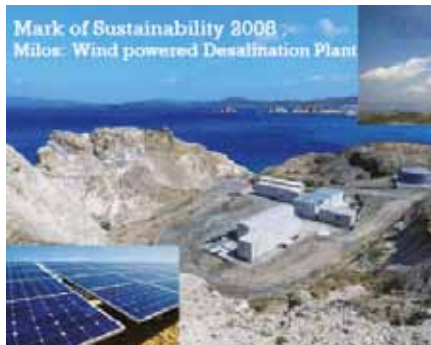
How did the project define success?

What are the main factors of success?

The members of DAFNI Network are undertaking and implementing sustainable actions and they are being awarded with the 'Mark of Sustainability'. Specifically, there is an annual assessment through which the municipalities which collect the required score gain the Mark.

This implies that islands, in order to maintain or increase their score, should continue the successful implementation of sustainable actions which may concern different sectors such as energy, water resources, sustainable tourism, waste management and nature conservation.

In this frame, the strong competition among islands facilitates win-win situations.



## Difficulties:

What were the most difficult moments in

- planning the content
- finding the right partners
- applying
- implementing
- and what lessons were learnt for future project

The establishment of the sustainable network of islands has encountered some methodological difficulties as the framework regarding the definition of sustainability has not been defined clearly. As a result, practical problems may arise because of lack of "sustainable" data, such as indicators of growth, economic and environmental characteristics.

## Follow-up:

What are the follow-up plans? By whom – partner or other stakeholders?

What remains 5 years after the end of the project?

The Network can develop multiple relationships including partnerships, exchange of experience and joint efforts with other relevant networks across the Mediterranean Sea, or even worldwide. There is also significant potential for cooperation with educational institutions and non-governmental organizations.

## Contact data / (project) website

<http://www.dafni.net.gr/en/home.htm>

## 3.3 ■ Wales - Wild Fishing

### ERDF Context

Wild Fishing Wales is a component of the Communities and Nature project (CAN), which seeks to maximise the economic value of Wales' natural assets.

**Operational Programme:**  
ERDF Convergence

**Priority:**  
Creating an Attractive Business Environment:  
Theme 3, Environment for Growth

**Funding:**

- CAN total project budget £14.5M  
EU intervention rate 45%
- Wild Fishing Wales total project budget of £2.6M of which £1.17M ERDF



## Project aims and implementation steps

The projects aims are

1. To maximise the economic value of wild fishing venues in Wales, by promoting and improving access to a network of high quality sites.
2. To provide economic opportunities for local communities through developing people's skills to help manage and provided guided access to these sites.
3. To enhance the ecological function of these sites so that they provide high quality fishing, and an improved environment for wildlife.

The project aims to enhance environmental quality and improve access to a network of river and still water fisheries throughout the Convergence Area of Wales. The project supports third sector organisations to undertake a programme of habitat interventions aimed at promoting good ecosystem function, sustaining wild fish stocks and enhancing biodiversity. Such activity will :

- enhance the quality of the wider environment, not simply the environment for fish
- empower local community ownership and custodianship
- protect these fisheries from the impacts of climate change
- mitigate against potential increased exploitation by angling by encouraging sustainable fishing practices.

The project aims to develop suitable sites in economically deprived areas, and through improvement and promotion of sites benefit visitors and local communities. The project will ensure that people from disadvantaged communities are not excluded from sites due to excessive participation costs.



Wild Fishing Wales includes a training programme to develop a network of local angling guides whose role will be to promote sites, facilitate access and add value to visits. These guides will be from the local community so the project will provide new employment opportunities.

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### Partners:

**Who were the project partners and their motivation to implement the project?**

**Who had the project idea?**

Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) manage the CAN project. Environment Agency Wales (EAW) manage the Wild Fishing Wales as an activity within the larger CAN-project. There are a wide range of delivery agents carrying out habitat and fisheries access improvements, including angling clubs, rivers trusts, private fisheries and community groups.

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### Success:

**How did the project define success?**

**What are the main factors of success?**

Wild Fishing Wales uses the following targets to measure success:

- km of enhanced river
- still water fisheries habitat enhancement programmes
- improved access to river fishing
- sites with improved access to still water fishing
- enquiries generated by marketing campaigns
- guiding course developed
- minimum of 30 angling guides trained

Main factors of success:

- good communication with potential delivery agents
  - having sufficient staff time available to provide guidance and advice to partners and to help them with project claims
  - having a dedicated and experienced project manager
-

## Difficulties:

What were the most difficult moments in

- planning the content
- finding the right partners
- applying
- implementing
- and what lessons were learnt for future projects

Implementation of the guiding course has been delayed by waiting for approval to proceed from Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO) which manage EU funds in Wales. More clarity was required on guiding course delivery and outcomes from the start.

Managing claims from inexperienced or under resourced partners.

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## Follow-up:

What are the follow-up plans? By whom – partner or other stakeholders?

What remains 5 years after the end?

It is expected that a proportion of the additional income to WFW fisheries will be used to maintain and extend the environmental and access improvements delivered through the project.

The project may facilitate the development of a fisheries booking system / passport scheme that will continue to promote partner fisheries. It is anticipated that angling guiding will become an more common aspect of angling tourism in Wales.

---

## Contact data / (project) website

richard.hancox@environment-agency.gov.uk  
ben.wilson@environment-agency.gov.uk



## 4. Recommendation for successful project application

A successful project application consists of several different aspects:

- the specific requirements of the respective programme (e.g. concerning partnership)
- strategic knowledge
- bringing the right proposal at the right time
- having the lead partner from the 'right' country and
- the quality of the project itself.

### The quality of a project application is often defined by:

- Clear aims of the project
- Understanding of background and challenges that led to the project
- Wise partnership for implementation of different project tasks
- Financial ability to handle the project (e.g. co-financing)
- Project design that achieves comprehensible lasting effects after the project period

The complete (ideal) circle of tourism related projects is shown in Figure 2 and demonstrates best practice in project activity. The reality however is that 'participation processes' are neglected and that 'planning' directly precedes 'implementing'. Another common drawback is that the development cycle ends in the management phase without completing 'monitoring' and 'evaluating'. Both 'shortcuts' could lead to substantial problems and negative effects and shall be avoided.



Figure 2: The complete development circle of tourism related projects (Baumgartner not published)

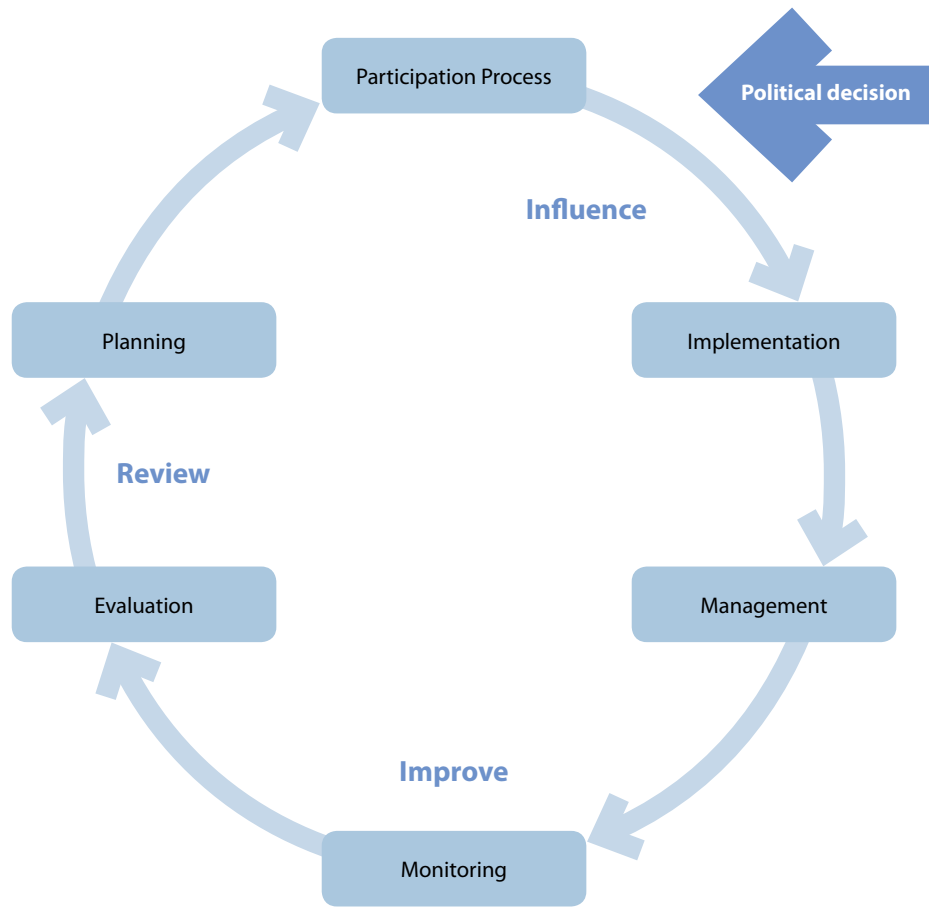
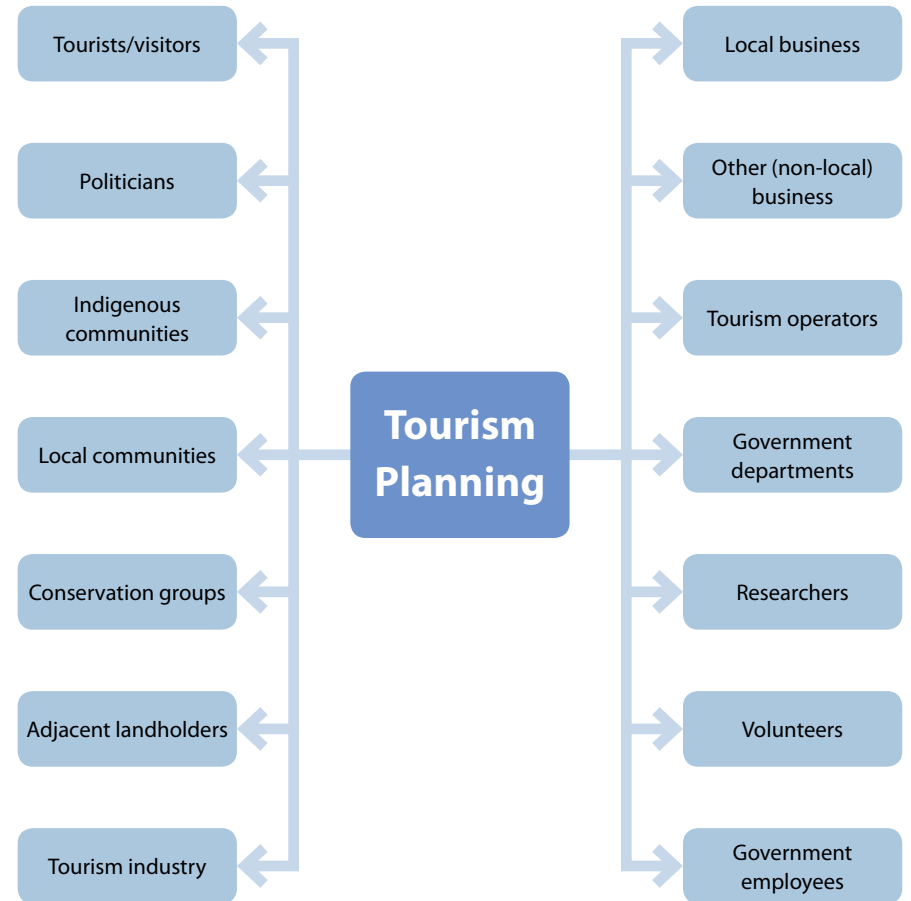


Figure 3: Stakeholders in Tourism Development (Baumgartner not published)





Furthermore tourism planning and management in sustainable tourism development should bring together the interests and concerns of a diverse group of stakeholders in a sustainable and strategic way.


In the case of applications to ERDF Funds, the understanding of tourism, sustainability and its application to tourism play an important role.

The table below illustrates the connections between a 'successful sustainable tourism project' and a 'successful application for a sustainable tourism project':

Sustainable Tourism Project Development	Important Questions for Application
<b>Step 1 What do we want to do?</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define the aim</li> <li>Understand the context</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What kind of natural environment is to be protected?</li> <li>Why is tourism the right means for the protection purpose?</li> </ul>
<b>Step 2 Who is, could be or needs to be involved?</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify stakeholders</li> <li>Consider when and how people should be consulted and involved</li> <li>Work out how to develop effective working relationships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are all necessary stakeholders involved in the project? See figure 3</li> <li>Is the composition of sectors and nationalities according to the program and call?</li> </ul>
<b>Step 3 What is known?</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify existing studies, similar projects, or other sources of information relevant to your project</li> <li>Locate and summarize available information on the current and potential market for tourism</li> <li>Determine the heritage and nature assets, their values and themes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check projects especially financed under the same or similar budget lines</li> <li>Check similar projects in the same region</li> </ul>
<b>Step 4 What makes this region, place or project special?</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify what is special about the region, place or project</li> <li>Establish how well its special values are recognised and currently communicated</li> <li>Establish if further potential exists to use those special values in tourism and interpretation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is special about the nature, landscape, ecosystem, and species to be protected?</li> <li>Is it already communicated to public and tourists?</li> <li>Which other protection measures are already in place?</li> </ul>

Sustainable Tourism Project Development	Important Questions for Application
<b>Step 5 What are the issues?</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand the key issues effecting your region, place or project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Why is protection necessary?</li> <li>What are the recent threats?</li> <li>How does tourism in the region, at this specific spot actually work? Which tourists come, why? What are their activities?</li> </ul>
<b>Step 6 Analysing the issues</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Further analyse, clarify and prioritise issues</li> <li>Prepare a succinct summary of the outcomes of your analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are the recent tourism development trends?</li> <li>What happens without the project?</li> </ul>
<b>Step 7 Principles or objectives to guide action</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a clear written statement to guide future actions, such as a set of principles, a set of objectives, or both</li> <li>Seek agreement on those objectives from key partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check if all project partners and key stakeholders have the same aims, and find a comprehensive formula for those aims</li> </ul>

Sustainable Tourism Project Development	Important Questions for Application
<b>Step 8 What are the ideas and options?</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further refine and, if necessary develop options</li> <li>• Work through your ideas and options with key stakeholders and decision makers</li> </ul>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the project also accepted in the region? Is there benefit for several stakeholders?</li> <li>• Will main tourism stakeholders support the project? e.g. suppliers, regional tourism organisation, marketing.</li> <li>• Does the project design include training and education of the relevant stakeholders to implement and follow up the project?</li> <li>• Is there local, regional, national financial support for the project?</li> <li>• Is the focus on existing tourism target groups or does the project specifically require especially developed marketing methods in order to be successful?</li> <li>• Will there be commitment to complete follow up work after the end of the implementation period?</li> </ul>
<b>Step 9 How to do it?</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop action to implement your ideas, proposal or preferred option</li> <li>• Present them in a clear and logical form</li> <li>• Ensure they are included in other relevant plans and strategies</li> <li>• Develop monitoring and evaluation methods</li> <li>• Consider additional factors that will influence achieving your objectives</li> </ul>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare a project time line that fits to the given conditions within the call but gives enough time to implement the project and prepare the follow-up plan</li> <li>• Did you consider effects on and synergies with as many parts of the tourism product chain? E.g. souvenirs, agricultural products, etc.</li> <li>• Did you consider transport to and mobility within the destination, is the project accessible by public transport?</li> </ul>

Sustainable Tourism Project Development	Important Questions for Application
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are the finances well balanced between input and output? Is the co-financing clear, and maybe already committed?</li> <li>• Which indicators of success could you identify? Tourism projects often need longer time to reach the market than given in the project frame.</li> <li>• What unplanned, negative side effects could occur?</li> </ul>
<b>Step 10 Statement of directions</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare a brief statement summarising the output of the process and your proposals, identifying the key heritage, nature and tourism assets</li> <li>• Key issues</li> <li>• Agreed actions and future directions</li> </ul>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can you explain the project, its aims and implementation process in two paragraphs?</li> <li>• What should the follow-up look like?</li> </ul>

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[www.surf-nature.eu](http://www.surf-nature.eu)



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Other Project Partners:

AT | Umweltbundesamt – Environment Agency Austria

AT | Austrian Federal Forests

AT | Donau-Auen National Park

CZ | University Olomouc

ES | Direction General for Nature Environment & Biodiversity of the Region of Murcia

ES | Forest Sciences Centre of Catalonia

FR | Cotes d'Armor General Council

GR | Municipal Enterprise for Planning & Development of Patras

GR | Prefecture Preveza

IT | Province of Rieti

PL | Marshal Office of Warmia & Mazury Voivodship

RO | Giurgiu County Council

SI | Development Agency Savinja

UK | Environment Agency Wales

Project Partner:

**Environment Agency Wales**

29 Newport Road  
Cardiff  
Wales  
UK

CF24 0TP

Contact:

David Letellier

Phone: +044 29 20466160

[David.letellier@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:David.letellier@environment-agency.gov.uk)

<http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/>

Leadpartner:

**Environment Agency Austria**

Spittelauer Lände 5  
1090 Wien  
Austria

Contact:

Peter Tramberend

Klara Brandl

Phone: + 043 1313 045935

[coordination@surf-nature.eu](mailto:coordination@surf-nature.eu)

[www.umweltbundesamt.at](http://www.umweltbundesamt.at)

Project coordination:

**WWF Germany**

Reinhardtstraße 14  
10117 Berlin  
Germany

Contact:

Peter Torkler

Melanie Hillmann

Julia Steinert

Phone: + 049 30 31177222

[coordination@surf-nature.eu](mailto:coordination@surf-nature.eu)

[www.wwf.de](http://www.wwf.de)



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## PFLANZENGEMEINSCHAFTEN IM MOOR

### Wiesens mit zwei Abteilungen

Die Wiesens mit zwei Abteilungen sind typisch für die Moorlandschaften. Sie sind durch die unterschiedlichen Wasserstände in zwei Abteilungen unterteilt. Die obere Abteilung ist eine offene Wiese, die die untere Abteilung ist ein sumpfiges Gebiet.



Diagramm zur Darstellung der Pflanzengemeinschaften im Moor.



### Die verschiedenen Pflanzengemeinschaften im Moor

Die verschiedenen Pflanzengemeinschaften im Moor sind durch die unterschiedlichen Wasserstände und die Bodenbeschaffenheit bedingt. Sie sind in verschiedene Typen unterteilt, die jeweils charakteristische Pflanzenarten haben.



Quelle: [unleserlich]