



DEVELOPMENT OF A METHODOLOGY
AND A TOURISM MANAGEMENT PLAN
FOR THE SPECIAL NATURE RESERVE ZASAVICA
- SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO -

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A PREFACE

The concept of privately providing biodiversity products and services for the purpose of biodiversity conservation is not new. These types of initiatives share the understanding that natural and genetic resources are valuable and could provide economic benefits once they are marketed. We, at UNEP, see no reason why this understanding cannot be applied in the pan European region where, unfortunately, the biodiversity and landscape resources have generally been considered 'public goods', and the goods and services derived from biodiversity are freely available, and no incentive to conserve them exists. Although in some economic sectors subsidies for the conservation of some natural resources are made available, there are few programmes that assist the 'biodiversity-owner' (particularly local communities) to market the goods and services and receive a direct payment for providing them.

The design of sustainable tourism strategies, now promoted at the international level through the Guidelines developed and adopted by the Convention on Biological Diversity, could assist in the creation of new markets in Central and Eastern Europe and, at the same time, assist in the conservation of biological diversity of global importance that exists in this region. Under these strategies, public-private partnerships should also be promoted, where the biodiversity goods and services are valued, and markets are created to allow provision of goods and services in return for a payment. This in turn creates an incentive hence to conserve biodiversity and biological resources and provides the basis for sustainable use of biodiversity. The involvement of all stakeholders in these processes is therefore crucial.

The conditions for successful partnerships between the economic sectors and the biodiversity sectors are many and varied – but most is the recognition that the success of economic activity greatly depends on the diversity of our landscape and biological resources. Promoting and translating this recognition into increased co-operation in managing our natural resources, is the real challenge we face in pan-Europe today. UNEP hopes that the dissemination of the Guidelines and the preparation of sustainable tourism management plans inside and outside of protected areas, such as the one prepared for Zasavica, offers promising rewards for the region.

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B BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE PROJECT

I. INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT AREA AND PRE-CONDITIONS

Serbia is located in the central part of the Balkan Peninsula, on the most important route linking Europe and Asia, occupying an area of 88.361 km². Serbia is referred to as the crossroads of Europe. The international roads and railways passing down its river valleys make up the shortest link between Western and Central Europe on one side, and the Middle East, Asia and Africa on the other. Northern Serbia is mainly flat, while its central and southern areas consist of highlands and mountains. The flatlands are mainly in Vojvodina (the Pannonian Plain and its rim: Macva, the Sava Valley, the Morava Valley, Stig and the Negotin Marches in Eastern Serbia). About 55 % of Serbia is arable land, and 27 % is forested. Of its mountains, 15 reach heights of over 2.000 meters, the highest being Djeravica in the Prokletija range (2.656 m). The territorial order of the Republic of Serbia is regulated by the Law on Territorial Organization and Local Self-Government, adopted in the National Assembly on July 24, 1991. Under this Law, the municipalities, cities and settlements form the basis of the country's territorial organization. By its enactment on January 29, 1992, the Government of the Republic of Serbia defined the state administration affairs that shall be run by the competent Ministries within the districts as regional centres of state authority, i.e. the republic inspectorate is detached from the main office in Belgrade and instead situated in the regional districts. The Republic of Serbia is divided into 29 districts. Vojvodina, Kosovo and Metohija are provinces within Serbia. Vojvodina province makes almost one quarter of the Serbian territory or 21.506 km². Vojvodina consists of 45 municipalities and seven districts whose seats are Subotica, Zrenjanin, Kikinda, Pancevo, Sombor, Novi Sad and Sremska Mitrovica.

The Project area comprises the Special Nature Reserve Zasavica, the town of Sremska Mitrovica and seven neighboring villages of the Special Nature Reserve Zasavica as well as two connected villages in the Bogatic municipality. The municipality of Sremska Mitrovica is situated in the northwest of Serbia (province of Vojvodina), at the crossroads of three different morphological areas: the plane of Srem, the plane of Macva and the hills of Fruska Gora at the average altitude of 82 m. The municipality consists of the town of Sremska Mitrovica (composed of Sremska Mitrovica and Lacarak at the left bank of the Sava river, and Macvanska Mitrovica to the right), and 23 villages. Sremska Mitrovica covers 762 km² and

has a population of 85.902 inhabitants (according to 2002 census). Beside the city Sremska Mitrovica (39.084 inhabitants), the second largest place within this territory is Macvanska Mitrovica (3.896). The gross national income level is 21.2% lower compared to the average in the Republic of Serbia (2002). In August 2004, average earnings in Sremska Mitrovica were 13.1% lower than the average in Serbia. The total agricultural land covers 57.180 ha and the total land with forests covers 8.705 ha.

The Nature Reserve Zasavica is a wetland located in the close vicinity of Sremska Mitrovica. It is bordered by the river Drina in the east and the river Sava in the south, occupying a territory of 1.821 ha. Inside this protected area, the strict protection regime (zone II) encompasses 671 ha, of which 472 ha are publicly owned, 138 ha state-owned and another 60 ha belonging to private owners. Based on the initiative of "*Goransko ekoloski pokret*", an NGO from Sremska Mitrovica, the area has been protected since 1997 through the legal framework of the "Decree on protection of the special nature reserve" on previous protection of the area of the Government of the Republic of Serbia. Following the recommendations and studies on natural values prepared by the Institute for the Protection of Nature of Serbia, Zasavica was designated a Special Nature Reserve of category I according to the national categorization system (IUCN Category IV – Habitat and species management area) by the Government of the Republic of Serbia on May 12, 1997. In Sremska Mitrovica, the NGO "*Goransko ekoloski pokret*", as the initiator and the most active promoter of needs to protect the area, has been given the management responsibility (official Gazette No. 19, 12 May, 1997).

Tourism is so far not an important economic branch in the municipalities of Sremska Mitrovica and Bogatic. There are very low numbers of arrivals and overnight-stays, especially as foreign tourists are concerned. But there is no doubt that the municipality of Sremska Mitrovica has valuable natural and cultural resources for tourism-related development. The Special Nature Reserve Zasavica and the archaeological findings of the roman town Sirmium, preserved in the Museum of Srem, are the most important resources. Furthermore, the National Park Fruska Gora is located not far from Sremska Mitrovica, which is characterized by its linden forests and beautiful meadows, as well as by its famous monasteries. Unfortunately, all these resources are not appropriately used. One of the main shortages of the tourist product is the lack of appropriate accommodation facilities and tourism infrastructure in general.

II. ACTUAL STATE

The project area consists of two main attractions: the small town Sremska Mitrovica and the nearby special nature reserve Zasavica with its connected villages.

Sremska Mitrovica

The small town is situated in the north of the country, in the southern part of Srem, one of three regions which belong to the autonomous province Vojvodina. It was first mentioned by name – *Sirmium* – by the Romans that conquered the town in the year 34 B.C. from the Celts. Especially during the 3rd century, the city played a very important political role as it was one of the four capitals of the Roman Empire. At some points in the town, even nowadays the ancient Roman heritage (in form of ruins or remains of old streets) is still visible.

The town centre is characterised by the Roman ruins as well as by nice buildings remaining from the early 19th century, inviting squares and also some new built bars and shops. The river Sava, which confines the city towards the S-W, also contributes to this image with its nice waterfront.

In terms of tourism, Sremska Mitrovica established the "Blue Line", a tourist self-guidance system. Tourism-related highlights are e.g. the museum of the town with a permanent exhibition of Roman relics or churches of different religions and ages.

Special Nature Reserve Zasavica and the connected villages

This part of the project area is a very rural region consisting of the special nature reserve Zasavica with its river and some small surrounding villages.

These villages in general do not have any major attractions to persuade tourists to stay. However, one exception are the one-day farm-stays for domestic tourist groups offered by a family in Zasavica I. Such farm-stays combine an introduction into rural life and also communicates a first approach towards nature by a visit in the nearby special nature reserve.

There are further tourism potentials existing in the region, such as the ethno-museums in Sovljak and Salac Nocajski. Also, a distinct structure of traditional housing, which still can be

found in nearly all villages, might be a remarkable feature for tourism. These old properties consist of a large inner courtyard with fruit trees, old granaries called "ambar" and "chardak" and a small house for living in the back of the yard.

The special nature reserve itself has got some good starting points for tourism, but is at this stage not fully developed. Some direction signs on the street, a hiking trail through the reserve and the visitors' meeting point with a landing stage for boat trips on the river Zasavica are the only existing features.

Although the region has got its potential tourist attractions, the project area these days is not sufficiently prepared for tourism. The main reason for this might be a general lack in tourism-related standards (as to accommodation, infrastructure, etc.). Having in mind the general conditions in Serbia related to tourism shown in SWOT analysis, it is important to develop a strategy for tourism development based on an appropriate methodology for the development of management plans.

General overview: Potentials and risks on the basis of a SWOT-Analysis

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Easy access to the area Suitable cultural and historical heritage Attractive natural surroundings: Special Nature Reserve Zasavica Natural diversity and endemic species in the nature reserve Enthusiasm of PAM Thermal waters 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No common strategy for tourism development / No tourism network (offers) No/Low visibility of tourist information and offers Low attractiveness and quality of tourism facilities (e.g. accommodation) and offers No/Low availability of foreign language information Lack of skilled tourism/environment staff Lack of environmental awareness of the people Ownership structure Chemical treatment in agriculture Wild dumps
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close to tourist areas (e.g. Novi Sad) Cultural features and history Existing traditional/local events Existing museums Existing traditional handicrafts Local food production Existence of the special nature reserve Active local individuals Training and education of local people Hunting and fishing tourism Scientific research Educational tourism Thermal waters 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political instability Serbian laws and regulations not adequately supporting tourism Breaking of existing law regulations Existing national tourism strategy is not implemented and new tourism strategy is not prepared Lack of cross-sector cooperation Lack of financial funds

III. PROJECT STEPS / PROCEDURES

The first project step was the realization of a workshop, which already included the local population of the project area (PA). The main goal of this **Workshop I** was to inform the local stakeholders about the principles of sustainable tourism development and to convince them of the need for an appropriate tourism management plan for the protected area, i.e. for the Special Nature Reserve (SNR) Zasavica.

In order to gain a first impression of the surrounding conditions for the project, an **assessment and a review** of compiled databases of the national and regional legislation, action plans and relevant projects on tourism and/or biodiversity conservation in Serbia and the PA was accomplished. According to this process, an **assessment of tourism products and potentials** was also conducted in the PA:

Assessment of tourism products and potentials

In order to provide a first review on already existing tourism facilities on one hand and on future tourism potentials on the other hand, a *four-days survey* was conducted in the PA.

Within the scope of this assessment, the ascertained strengths and weaknesses of the PA were contrasted in a *SWOT-Analysis*, along with the resultant threats and opportunities for the regional tourism development that have been identified by this analysis method. Starting from the attained insights in the actual conditions of the PA, the main goals of the project was defined and appropriate *recommendations* on how to achieve them were elaborated. These recommendations are pointed out partly in a rather general manner, partly they are very precisely illustrated.

In an additional step, some specific *future tourism highlights* were presented, e.g. "*Zasavica I + II - pilot region for an integrated tourism management plan*" or the "*development of a tourist office*".

Based on the results of Workshop I and the assessment, a suitable **methodology** was developed. The further principles for its elaboration were:

- the compilation of best practices
- the consideration of the IUCN/UNEP Guidelines for Sustainable Tourism and Protected Areas

- the consideration of UNEP/CBD Guidelines on Biological Diversity and Tourism Development, and also
- the consideration of specific circumstances for adaptation needs.

According to the applied methodology, a **tourism management plan** was elaborated. This plan includes measures relevant to biodiversity conservation, it is connected to sustainable tourism planning, management and monitoring and it is set within a timeframe of 2 years.

This tourism management plan, as well as the foregoing local analysis (assessment), were presented to the local stakeholders on a second workshop, **Workshop II**.

Besides the presentation of these documents, the second workshop primarily aimed at ensuring the contribution from the local stakeholders and thereby their effective participation within the project.

The final **Workshop III** was basically a national stakeholder meeting. Its main goals were:

- to present and discuss the recommendations and other findings of the project
- to identify necessary future actions for the promotion of the methodology, and
- to discuss the potentials for its application in other protected areas of Serbia and Montenegro.

C SUMMARY OF NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEGISLATION, ACTION PLANS AND RELEVANT PROJECTS ON TOURISM AND/OR BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

Environmental Protection

In 1991, the *Environmental Protection Act* was first enacted. It serves as a so-called “umbrella” law, comprising diverse sub laws regarding special issues in its seven chapters. In 2004, the Act was transformed to the *Law on Environmental Protection*, which consists of ten sub-chapters and includes the management of natural values (chap.2).

Whereas the *Ministry of Environment* (MoE) and the *Inspectorate of Environment* (IoE) are responsible for the law’s implementation, the professional activities dealing with nature conservation are put into practice by the *Institute for Protection of Nature of Serbia* (IPNS).

Conservation of Biodiversity

Regarding the conservation of biodiversity, the *Law on National Parks* (Official Gazette RS, No.39/93) is the main document. It was established according to the *Environmental Protection Act*, constituting a joint document for all national parks (NP) in Serbia. Five Serbian NPs are described in detail in the third chapter.

In general, the Rule does not only give a definition of NPs (chap. 1), but also dictates the “protection and development of the NP” (chap.2, art.1) and its adequate “management” (chap.2, art. 2). These guidelines, as well as the fact that the NP director and the management board are appointed by the Serbian Government, are decisive factors regarding the further development of a NP area.

Moreover, the Law determines the organization of each NP according to a three level protection regime, similar to the one used by the UNESCO/MAB Programme.

Additionally to this *Law on National Parks*, several Decrees (e.g. on natural rarities protection) and Rules (e.g. on forests, hunting or fishing) are existing that aim at preserving the biological diversity in Serbia.

Tourism

The Serbian Government also provides a special *Law on Tourism* (Official Gazette RS, No. 35/94, 48/99), with the responsibilities shared between the Ministries responsible for Tourism, Health, Sports and Environment.

Admittedly, the development of sustainable forms of tourism is not considered in the seven chapters of this Rule.

Beyond these three main issues, several sub-laws are existing in Serbia. They address the following topics:

- water and water quality
- air quality
- waste and hazardous materials
- noise
- agricultural land

D METHODOLOGY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF MANAGEMENT PLANS FOR PROTECTED AREAS IN SERBIA / MONTENEGRO

I. APPROACH – WHY A SPECIFIC NEW MANAGEMENT PLAN IS NEEDED FOR SERBIA

A lot of countries (e.g. Australia) already have good management plans for their protected areas at their disposal. And also a lot of countries can profit from each others experiences and elaborated programmes. This is possible due to the fact that most of these countries have similar environmental laws and procedures concerning the management of protected areas.

The case of Serbia and Montenegro is different, as both of them have completely different systems as to environmental law and PA management.

As mentioned in chapter C above, the management of protected areas follows the *Rule on National Parks*. This rule already determines the organization in charge for the PA management and it also prescribes how the PA has to be managed.

Moreover, every PA has its own stipulated decree. Contents of these decrees are e.g. the zoning of the PA, the flora and fauna set under special protection, using obligations and restrictions, etc.. The management plan for a PA in Serbia and Montenegro is therefore determined by law to a high degree.

The project in the SNR Zasavica therefore aims at two different goals:

- a) to develop an *holistic adaptive management approach*, that improves the situation of the natural environment in the SNR as well as of the people living in its vicinity by a long-term, regionally based and multi-stakeholder learning-by-doing process
- b) to develop a *model management plan*, applicable for all different kinds of protected areas in Serbia and Montenegro; this, at a later point, could be integrated into national legislation in order to grant a more flexible and adequate form of environmental protection in the PAs

II. METHODOLOGY FOR THE ELABORATION OF A PROTECTED AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

ACCORDING TO THE *INTERNATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR BIODIVERSITY AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT* OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY AND TO THE METHODOLOGY PROVIDED BY THE CONSERVATION FINANCE ALLIANCE (CFA)

1. WHAT IS A MANAGEMENT PLAN? WHY IS A MANAGEMENT PLAN NECESSARY?

According to IUCN, a **management plan** is defined as "a tool to indicate how a park is to be protected, used, developed and managed." (IUCN, p.41)

First of all, a management plan is based on the present state of a region; it describes the project area (PA) referring to its specific characteristics (e.g. landscape, ecosystems, natural values, etc.), based on an assessment conducted in the PA.

In addition, it evaluates and corresponds to needs and threats within the PA that might occur in the future.

The function of a management plan is therefore not only to show the "most efficient and equitable path to the future" (IUCN, p.41), but also to develop "strategies and specific activities designed to address (those) threats" (cfa).

The early integration of varied stakeholders on local, regional and national level into the preparation of the management plan is of vital importance as to continuing compliance of the protected area's population.

Furthermore, a management plan needs to be designed for flexible application. As future developments are hardly predictable and changes within the management are usual, it should not be a "static piece of paper but rather a dynamic plan that has to be updated at regular intervals to adjust to changing conditions" (cfa).

A PA management plan nevertheless is still a technical document. Therefore, it already needs to be precise, referring to time schedules for achieving goals and/or benchmarks (or indicators) to measure progress and the resource needs.

2. TARGET GROUPS

The **management plan** as well as the **methodology** (on how to develop a management plan) are respectively designed for special target groups.

Management Plan

- national/regional planning authorities
- spatial planning office/municipalities
- local stakeholders affected by the management plan (fishing and hunting associations, tourism boards, agricultural associations, etc.)
- PA managers

Methodology

- regional/national planning authorities
- spatial planning office/municipalities
- organizations/institutions concerned with management planning in protected areas
- PA managers

3. INVOLVEMENT PLAN

3.1. Government departments and ministries

At the stage of completing a management plan, the cooperation with Government departments and ministries should be sought in order to ensure coordination between the different levels of decision-making (see CBD, art. 6), especially regarding the implementation process.

At this time, the defined vision and goals for tourism and biodiversity at the local and community level will also be set and ready to "be taken into account by Governments when preparing the national level vision and goals" (see CBD, art. 25).

In case Governmental agencies are integrated into the management process from the beginning, they have to provide full and timely advance notice to all stakeholders who may be affected, including indigenous and local communities, of proposed developments (see CBD, art. 83).

3.2. Local authorities and stakeholders

Local municipalities, local administration, protected area managers, local stakeholders and the local public in general have to get informed at a very early stage about the management planning process. However, information should only be seen as a pre-condition for further cooperation with the local population. The establishment of a consultative process, aiming at the "ongoing and effective dialogue and information-sharing with stakeholders" is intended. It may also perform the task of resolving conflicts that might arise in relation to tourism and biological diversity and build consensus (see CBD, art. 8).

Accordingly all stakeholders should be actively involved in the planning process, e.g. regarding the collation of baseline information (see CBD, art. 15) and its review (see CBD, art. 17). Also, the next step of the management planning process – the formulation of vision and goals - should be the result of joint consideration and based on a multi-stakeholder process (see CBD, art. 21).

The same applies to the final implementation of the adaptive management plan (see CBD, art. 63, 79).

Principles of public participation

As a principle, public participation has to be regarded as an integral part of the protected area management. The participation of diverse local stakeholders groups and the local public is essential for a joint development of the project region. This is especially important regarding the claim on sustainability of the management plan; the vision and goals – the core part of the plan – and the appropriate activities can only be successful if they get supported and respected by the gross of the local population in the project area.

"The public" has to be separated into two groups, both of them requiring an own way of integration in the process. These groups are a) professional public, and b) general public.

Professional public

The professional public consists of individuals, groups and organizations that are involved in tourism and/or spatial development of the project region.

In addition, professionals – experts in various fields (e.g. tourism, regional development, legislation, nature and historical monuments conservation, etc.) can be part of this group.

General public

The general public includes individuals, groups and organizations that are neither directly involved in tourism development nor immediately affected by tourism. In spite of this, their participation in the process is extremely important. As tourism is an important economic and social tool for guaranteeing or even increasing the living standard of the people, communication with the public and their consultancy with issues of tourism development in “their” region is of great importance.

It is also worth mentioning that the contact with local people highly contributes to the impression tourists get of the visited region. The behaviour of the people therefore is often crucial to the success of the project region.

Public participation techniques

First and foremost, comprehensive **information** has to be provided to the public in order to maintain an effective communication throughout the management (planning) process. This pre-condition opens up the possibility of cooperation for all interested persons.

Information

- *providing information*: presenting significant documents and plans, providing reports about important activities, sharing experiences and findings, consulting proposals and conclusions, etc.;
- *motivating local people* to get involved in the process, to increase their interest in the process, etc.;
- *guiding through* an intricate process of tourism development, informing about achievements and things that yet need to be done, background information and implementation measures, etc.;
- *promoting tourism* and its development, explaining its importance to local people in order to include it among other activities and tasks that exist in the region and/or are considered important;

Other requirements include a sufficiently wide time schedule and adequate human, financial and technical resources. Skilled staff for public education and training are as important as persons with knowledge and experiences in designing participation processes.

Furthermore, special public participation techniques are necessary to grant the success of the different programmes. Some of these techniques are listed below:

a) *Public Relations*

- information leaflets, info-sheets, bulletins (handed out or mailed)
- exhibitions and expositions (e.g. in public buildings)
- video-series and picture series (e.g. at public accessible sites, in local TV and the like)
- information centre (e.g. in the Municipal Tourist Information Office, at the relevant Town Hall department)
- information stalls (e.g. at festivals, fairs, markets)
- lectures and seminars for public
- internet pages
- regular electronic mailing of reports and publications
- representation on statutory boards

b) *Media*

- press releases
- press conferences
- media interviews

These activities can take place in local, regional and national media both individually and as campaigns.

c) *Publications*

- brochures
- information slips in newspapers
- special issues of newspapers
- specialised newspapers or occasional releases
- manuals
- guides
- activity reports (both content and financial)
- books

d) *Activities and events*

- ***seminars, workshops***
- fairs, markets
- ***exhibitions, presentations***
- discussion fora, public fora, public hearings

- ***round tables, panel discussions***
- open-door days, information days
- study trips, excursions
- trips, hikes, walks
- competitions, races
- questionnaire surveys
- telephonic meetings (answering telephone calls of citizens by publicly known people)
- seminars and trips for journalists

e) *Established facilities*

- ***advisory committees / boards***
- local management committees
- park management committees
- conservation partnerships with the community, landholders and industry
- task forces

Round tables / Panel discussions

Round tables and panel discussions form an opportunity to network with organizations, institutions and local stakeholder(groups). Each round table or panel discussion addresses a specific topic. The main advantage is that, in the course of the conservation, a great variety of different perspectives and opinions will be heard and taken into account.

Workshops / Seminars

Workshops and seminars – with special invitations or/and open to the public - are an efficient means of a) informing about the actual state of the project, and b) jointly elaborating further steps, incorporating local standpoints.

Exhibitions / Presentations

Well prepared and presented exhibitions and presentations are appropriate to also attract those who are not particularly interested in sustainable tourism and protected area development.

Advisory committees / boards

The purpose of an advisory committee is to obtain advice or recommendations in order to facilitate cooperation between affected/involved groups at the local level (e.g. agricultural associations, fishing and hunting societies) and skilled professionals.

4. PHASES OF MANAGEMENT PLANNING

The **planning process** consists of steps to be gone through in preparing a plan, which usually highly involves public participation and debates at all stages. (IUCN, p.41)

4.1. Identity phase

Guiding questions: What do we want to achieve? What are the means we are planning to use? What benchmarks/indicators will be helpful to measure the progress?

Main emphasis at this stage lies in the identification of visions & goals for the protected area. During this phase, the institutions involved have to be identified together with their specific tasks.

What are the mission and goals of the protected area?

What are the indicators or benchmarks against which to measure progress towards these goals?

4.2. Environment phase

In this second phase, the main focus lies on the environment, especially on the institutional, social, economic, cultural, political and religious circumstances in the project region. The aim of this phase is to receive an impression about the future working context. Aspects of observations are:

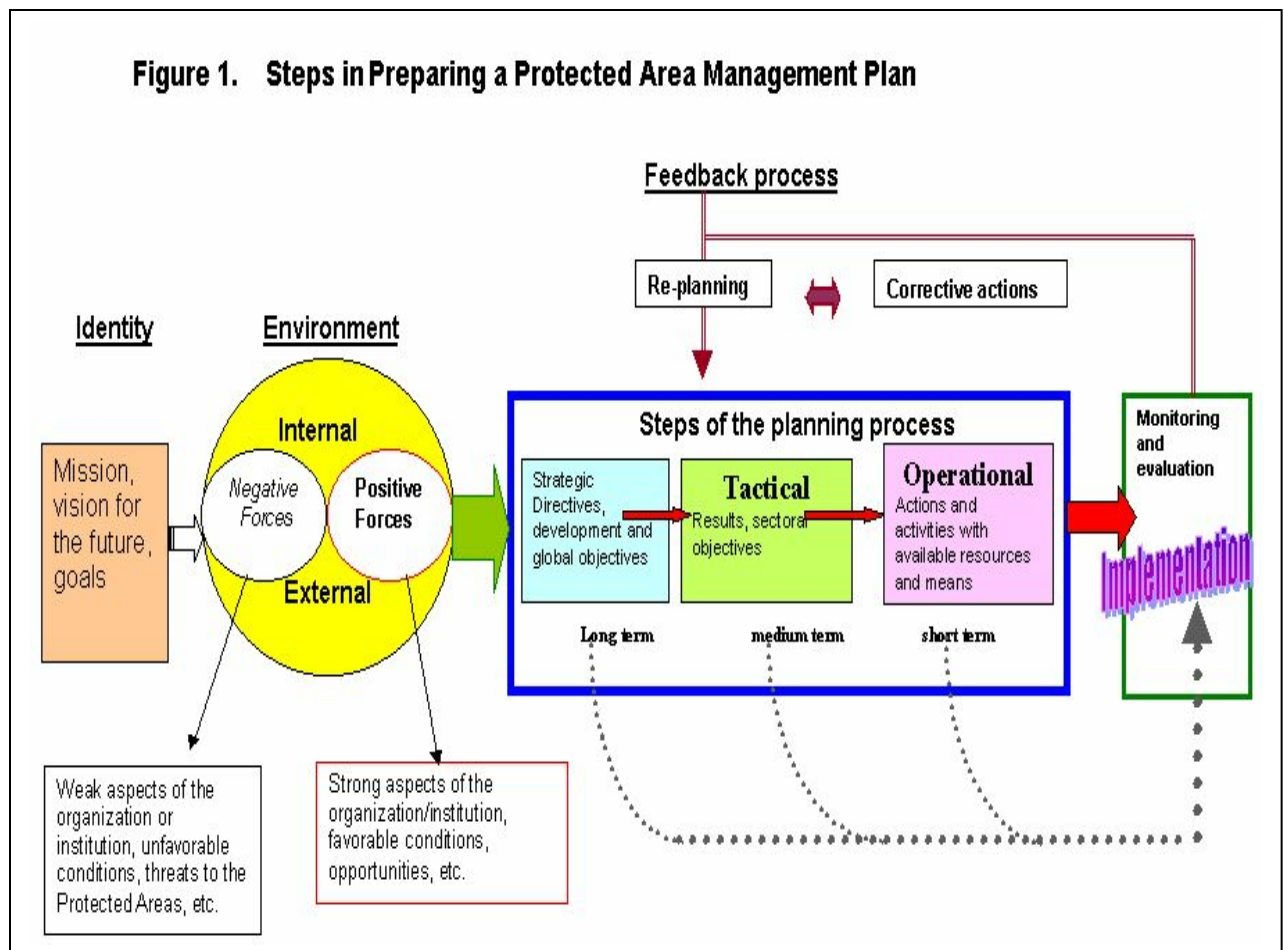
- positive external forces (political commitment, NGO support, economic stability, good opportunities, etc.)
- negative external forces (civil unrest, political instability etc.)
- positive internal forces (capable institutions, qualified staff, adequate budget, good leadership, etc.)
- negative internal forces (weak or marginalized institutions, lack of staff, lack of operational funds etc.)

4.3. Preparation phase of the protected area management plan

When the identification of visions, goals and involved institutions is completed and the working circumstances for the project are checked, the real planning process may be started. In order to ensure coordinated progression of the project work, the process needs to be divided into different stages – each of them with respective main and sub-targets. According to the methodology of the Conservation Finance Alliance, the division is as follows:

- Long-term or "**strategic planning**"
Long-term planning aims at the implementation of broad objectives. Nevertheless they have to be realistic.
Time-frame: five to ten years
- Medium-term or "**tactical planning**"
Tactical planning also relates to broad objectives, but is already more detailed in its steps, activities and time schedule. Moreover, it specifies methods on how to achieve the broad objective.
Time-frame: up to five years
- Short-term or "**operational planning**"
Operational planning refers to immediate objectives and the related activities. Therefore it is possible and necessary to be very precise and realistic in formulations.
Time-frame: one year

Steps in Preparing a Protected Area Management Plan



Source: The Conservation Finance Alliance (cfa)

5. THE POLICY-MAKING, DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT PROCESS

Institutions

Involved institutions are a summary of all kinds of stakeholders who are responsible for and affected by tourism and nature conservation at national, sub-national and local level. The Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development propose the establishment of a **multi-stakeholder body** (art. 8), which should include:

- government departments and agencies (at local, regional, and national level)
- international institutions and development agencies
- the tourism sector
- non-governmental organizations
- indigenous and local communities
- other stakeholders

EXTRACTS FROM THE CBD-GUIDELINES	Practical Application/Implementation for the Special Nature Reserve Zasavica
<p>6. Inter- and intra-departmental and inter-organizational structures and processes should be established in order to ensure coordination between the levels of decision-making in Government departments and agencies</p>	<p>In order to conduct this project, various organizations from Serbia, Hungary and Germany have been working together. Thus, an inter-organizational process at the non-governmental level could be granted. The governments and departments got involved in the process at the 3rd workshop, where the information gained about the PA and the corresponding management plan had been presented to the affected Serbian ministries. Subsequently, further steps towards protected area management in Serbia and appropriate projects have been discussed.</p>
<p>7. There is the need to improve awareness and exchange of knowledge between those responsible for and affected by tourism and nature conservation at a national, sub-national and local level. Therefore existing documents, strategies and plans should be coherent or revised and amended to that effect as applicable.</p>	<p>The main objectives of Workshop I, which was designed especially for the local stakeholders in the PA, were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. increasing the local stakeholders' knowledge on biodiversity on the development of sustainable tourism and on the CBD Tourism Guidelines 2. raising their environmental awareness and their motivation to cooperate in further steps of the project <p>The two following workshops (II and III) also fostered local participation, exchange with the involved organizations and a joint documentation of the results.</p>

<p>8. A consultative process should be established to ensure an ongoing and effective dialogue and information-sharing with stakeholders, as well as to resolve conflicts that might arise in relation to tourism and biological diversity and build consensus. To assist in this process, a multi-stakeholder body should be established including Government departments, the tourism sector, non-Governmental organizations, indigenous and local communities and other stakeholders, to ensure their engagement and full participation in the whole process, and encourage the establishment of partnerships.</p>	<p>In S. Mitrovica, the PA manager provided broad information displayed at an information board at his office. Following his active invitations, a large number of local stakeholders participated in the workshops. Moreover, he spread information through the local media (TV, radio, press).</p> <p>The establishment of a multi-stakeholder body will be a necessary next step within the planning process.</p>
<p>10. Review mechanisms and funding policies should be established to ensure the availability of adequate resources for maintaining biodiversity and promoting sustainable tourism. International institutions and development agencies should be involved as appropriate.</p>	<p>As a result of the 2nd workshop, it turned out that there are no adequate national financing facilities.</p> <p>So at present, mostly international funds are available, e.g. the <i>United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP)</i> as well as the <i>UN Development Program (UNDP)</i> are the two main funding organizations. Some money is additionally contributed by EU funds.</p>

BASELINE INFORMATION

The baseline information is divided into three essential parts that characterize at large the protected area and the internal and external impacts, which are affecting the area.

a) Ecological Systems and Components

Descriptions and maps of key ecological processes, priority natural communities, and endemic, threatened, and migratory species.

b) Socio-Economic Conditions and Compatible Development

Descriptions and maps of important access routes, land tenure and resource uses. Social organization and important cultural aspects of local communities and governance issues are also of note.

In addition, a list of all environmental goods and services produced by the area is important.

c) Threats to Ecological Integrity and/or Species

Descriptions and maps of the location, the type and magnitude of stresses induced by human use (or misuse) of the ecosystem or other natural phenomena. Moreover, scientific understanding of the sources of these threats will be the basis for defining priority actions to ensure compatible uses of the natural resources

EXTRACTS FROM THE CBD-GUIDELINES	Practical Application/Implementation for the Special Nature Reserve Zasavica
<p>12. A minimum of baseline information is needed to enable impact assessment and decision-making and it is recommended that its compilation follows the ecosystem approach.</p>	<p>The collation of baseline information in its principles was carried out according to the ecosystem approach. Admittedly, the outcome of the information process was not satisfactory. Not all information needed was available.</p> <p>A general structure with its own methodology – referring to the CBD-Guidelines - is required.</p>
<p>14. Baseline information should take into consideration all sources of knowledge</p>	<p>The collation of baseline information was primarily carried out according to the scheme of the CBD-Guidelines.</p> <p>Also, the national (Serbian) strategies for forest and agricultural management were kept in mind while collecting information.</p>
<p>15. All stakeholders may contribute relevant information to this process. To this end, there is a need for capacity-building and training to assist stakeholders in documenting, accessing, analysing and interpreting baseline information.</p>	<p>The contribution of stakeholders was guaranteed by the workshops and by a continuous information supply through the PA manager.</p> <p>Programmes of capacity-building and staff training were part of the priority plan for the SNR. Although already existing, the enlargement of these programmes should be increased according to the management plan.</p>
<p>16. Collation and synthesis of information provided will need to be undertaken by an appropriately qualified team, drawing on a range of expertise, including expertise in tourism and in biodiversity issues, and in traditional knowledge and innovation systems</p>	<p>An appropriate collation of information and its synthesis were granted by the close cooperation between expert tourism organizations (ETE, CEEWEB, CenORT, E-Team) and local experts that contributed with their experiences and expertise in tourism/biodiversity issues. Local stakeholders added traditional and regional knowledge.</p>
<p>17. In order to ensure that all relevant information, its credibility and reliability, are considered, all stakeholders should be involved in review of the collated baseline information available, and in the synthesis of</p>	<p>On workshop II, the so-far elaborated results (of the assessment on tourism potentials, the draft management plan) were presented to the interested public and local stakeholders in S. Mitrovica. Moreover, the results were</p>

this information.	reviewed by and discussed with the participants.
18. Baseline information should include maps, geographical information systems and other visual tools, including already identified zoning schemes.	Basic geographical maps of the project region were existing. Furthermore, the spatial planning office in S. Mitrovica developed an appropriate digital map. Beyond this, further maps, e.g. GIS-based maps, are needed.
20. Requirements for site-specific information in relation to proposals for tourism development and activities at particular locations are set out in the notification process. Its compilation should follow the ecosystem approach.	The assessment on tourism potentials in the PA was conducted, translated and provided to the public of the PA during workshop II. Proposals according to tourism development in the future were submitted by ETE.

VISION AND GOALS

Descriptions of anticipated future conditions with clear goals, priority strategic actions for resource management, public use and administration of the protected area. Measurable benchmarks should be defined at this stage to assist in the monitoring progress.

VISIONS

EXTRACTS FROM THE CBD-GUIDELINES	Practical Application/Implementation for the Special Nature Reserve Zasavica
21. The overall vision for sustainable tourism development should be in harmony with the goals and objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity and other related conventions. It should be based on a multi-stakeholder process.	The CBD guidelines served as the basis for the development of the site specific visions and goals. Due to cooperation with a wide range of participants, the workshops I-III could be seen as a basic form of a multi-stakeholder process.

GOALS

EXTRACTS FROM THE CBD-GUIDELINES	Practical Application/Implementation for the Special Nature Reserve Zasavica
22. The main goals are established to maximize the positive benefits of tourism to biodiversity, ecosystems, and economic and social development, and of biodiversity to tourism, while minimizing negative social and environmental impacts from tourism	The goals for the future management plan, according to the principles of sustainable development, were approved by the local stakeholders.
23. The benefits may take various forms, including: job creation, fostering	Granting benefits for the local economy and raising the employment were aspects taken

<p>local enterprises, participation in tourism enterprises and projects, education, direct investment opportunities, economic linkages and ecological services.</p> <p>Appropriate mechanisms need to be established / evolved to capture the benefits.</p>	<p>into consideration in the management plan as well as in the spatial plan of the PA.</p> <p>Appropriate mechanisms still need to be established.</p>
<p>24. The vision and goals will form the basis of national strategies or master plans for sustainable development of tourism in relation to biodiversity</p>	<p>Visions and goals are at present not existing at the national level. Their elaboration will be one of the main objectives for the future.</p>
<p>25. Where local and community level vision and goals for tourism and biodiversity have been set, these may be taken into account by Governments when preparing the national level vision and goals, for example through workshops at the local level.</p>	<p>The visions and goals developed in the PA are applicable for adoption by the national level. Therefore they have been presented to the accordant ministries and departments within the scope of workshop III.</p>

OBJECTIVES

EXTRACTS FROM THE CBD-GUIDELINES	Practical Application/Implementation for the Special Nature Reserve Zasavica
<p>26. Objectives may include clear activities and the time by which these will be achieved. The objectives should be performance-based and process-based. It is important to involve and consult with all relevant stakeholders.</p>	<p>During Workshop II, specific activities for the respective objectives were developed in cooperation with the local stakeholders in S. Mitrovica. The activities were also complemented by a timeframe and sorted according to a priority scale elaborated by the workshop participants.</p>
<p>27. Objectives should be specific and should include specific areas identified in clearly delineated zones listing the types of activities and infrastructure that would be acceptable and should be developed.</p>	

LEGISLATION AND CONTROL MEASURES

EXTRACTS FROM THE CBD-GUIDELINES	Practical Application/Implementation for the Special Nature Reserve Zasavica
<p>30. Review of legislation and control measures</p>	<p>A special feature of the Serbian legislation is the fact that each protected area has its own management plan. Everyone of them is very briefly providing a couple of specific laws for the management of the area. The consequences are twofold: 1) the management plans are kept rather general, and 2) the management planning process might get complicated due to law restrictions. For better site-specific management planning, a change in legislation in the future would be helpful.</p>

As a matter of course, "Impact assessment" (VI) as well as the following chapters "Impact management and mitigation" (VII) and "Monitoring and Reporting" (X) are essential for a sound management process.

However, in this PA these projects steps are not part of the planning process. This is dispositional because at this stage tourism development in the area has not proceeded far enough to have negative impacts on the region.

These chapters could therefore be added to the management plan in the future.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

EXTRACTS FROM THE CBD-GUIDELINES	Practical Application/Implementation for the Special Nature Reserve Zasavica
<p>34. Impact assessment for sustainable tourism development in ecosystems should be based on the "Guidelines for incorporating biodiversity related issues into environmental impact assessment legislation and/or processes and in strategic environmental assessment"</p>	
<p>36. Proposers of tourism developments or activities should assess the potential impacts of their proposals and provide information on this through a notification process.</p>	
<p>40. Information should be provided in forms that are accessible and comprehensible to all the various stakeholders involved.</p>	

IMPACT MANAGEMENT AND MITIGATION

In this PA these projects steps are not part of the planning

EXTRACTS FROM THE CBD-GUIDELINES	Practical Application/Implementation for the Special Nature Reserve Zasavica
<p>45. Tourism should be planned and managed using the internationally accepted planning methodologies (such as the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum and the Limits of Acceptable Change).</p>	
<p>48. There is a need to identify those who will be responsible for implementing impact management and the resources that will be required for impact management.</p>	
<p>49. Impact management for tourism development and activities can include the adoption and effective implementation of policies, good practices and lessons learned</p>	

DECISION-MAKING

EXTRACTS FROM THE CBD-GUIDELINES	Practical Application/Implementation for the Special Nature Reserve Zasavica
<p>54. The decision-making process should be transparent, accountable, and apply the precautionary approach</p>	<p>It is planned that the PA manager, together with the municipality, will organize a broad information event, providing insight into the establishment of a future strategy for the entire area and into the plan for the PA.</p>
<p>55. The proposers for tourism development will normally be required to provide the information set out in the notification process. This should apply equally to public-sector development and infrastructure projects, as well as to private-sector development.</p>	

IMPLEMENTATION

EXTRACTS FROM THE CBD-GUIDELINES	Practical Application /Implementation for the Special Nature Reserve Zasavica
<p>63. Local stakeholders should be given an ongoing opportunity to express their wishes and concerns to those managing tourism facilities and activities. As part of this process, clear and adequate information regarding implementation should be provided for review by the stakeholders, in</p>	

forms that are accessible and comprehensible to them.	
64. Availability of information on policies, programmes, projects, and their implementation, including information on existing and future guidelines, should be ensured and exchange of information fostered, for example, through the clearing house mechanism of the Convention on Biological Diversity.	

MONITORING AND REPORTING

In this PA these projects steps are not part of the planning

EXTRACTS FROM THE CBD-GUIDELINES	Practical application / Implementation for the Special Nature Reserve Zasavica
65. It is necessary to establish a monitoring and control system for the management of tourism activities and biological diversity.	<i>This aspect is part of the management plan, but it is not developed yet.</i>
67. Developers and operators of tourism facilities and activities should be required to report periodically to designated authorities and to the public.	
68. An inclusive monitoring and reporting system should be put in place, with indicators to track how tourism actions are mitigating threats to biodiversity, along with agreed upon quantifiable standards indicating thresholds of acceptable change. These should be developed in conjunction with all key stakeholders including indigenous and local communities.	<i>This aspect is part of the management plan, but it is not developed yet.</i>
69. Indicators to cover aspects of management of biodiversity and sustainable tourism, including socio-economic and cultural aspects, should be identified and monitored at global, national, and local levels	
70. Monitoring results depend largely on the appropriate set of data to be collected. Guidelines on how to collect data in a way that can be used to evaluate change over time should be developed.	<i>This aspect is part of the management plan, but it is not developed yet.</i>

ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

EXTRACTS FROM THE CBD-GUIDELINES	Practical application / Implementation for the Special Nature Reserve Zasavica
<p>79. Implementing adaptive management in relation to tourism and biodiversity will require the active cooperation of all stakeholders in tourism, and especially those in the private sector, with biodiversity managers.</p>	<p>Management plans following the principles of adaptive management have to be updated at regular intervals (at least every six months) to adjust to changing conditions.</p>
<p>82. Where necessary, legal frameworks may need to be reviewed and amended to support adaptive management, taking into account experience gained.</p>	<p>The management of this PA is applied to adaptive management principles.</p>

NOTIFICATION PROCESS AND INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS

<p>83. Proposals for tourism development and activities at particular locations in relation to biodiversity are to be submitted through the notification process. Proposers of tourism projects, including Government agencies, should provide full and timely advance notice to all stakeholders who may be affected, including indigenous and local communities, of proposed developments.</p>	
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EDUCATION, CAPACITY-BUILDING AND AWARENESS-RAISING

<p>86. Education and awareness-raising campaigns need to be addressed to both the professional sectors and the general public and should inform them about the impacts of tourism on biological diversity, and good practices in this area</p>	<p>Throughout the entire process, the local population was involved and their education and raising of their awareness for environmental issues was fostered. Also referring to capacity-building activities, the emphasis was put on local stakeholders.</p>
<p>92. Capacity-building activities should aim to develop and strengthen the capacities of Governments and all stakeholders, to facilitate the effective implementation of the present Guidelines, and may be necessary at local, national, regional and international levels.</p>	<p>Professional sectors and governments were not explicitly addressed.</p>
<p>94. Such activities should include ensuring that local communities are equipped with the necessary decision-making abilities, skills and knowledge in advance of future tourist in-flows, as well as with relevant capacity and training regarding tourism services and</p>	<p>To grant comprehensive provision of information and thereby informed participation of the local population, a certain amount of time needs to be scheduled. Also, training to increase decision-making abilities is necessary. Concerning this project, time as well as</p>

environmental protection.	money to fulfil these pre-conditions were lacking.
<p>96. Information exchange and collaboration regarding sustainable tourism implementation through networking and partnerships between all stakeholders affected by, or involved in tourism, including the private sector, should be encouraged.</p>	<p>Information exchange and collaboration took place at different levels:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) between the local NGO in S. Mitrovica and the local population 2) between the local NGO and national NGOs 3) between national NGOs and international NGOs <p>Of course also interconnected cooperation was used.</p>

III. RECOMMENDATION FORMULATED TO NATIONAL NATURE CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES ON HOW TO MAKE FULL USE OF THE METHODOLOGY FOR OTHER PROTECTED AREAS

The basis for the designation of protected areas in Serbia / Montenegro is the *Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia* (1996), which is effective for all major PAs (major = large or important at the national level). The network of protected areas in Serbia presented in the Spatial Plan has been developed by the *Institute for Protection of Nature of Serbia (IPNS)*, and is approved by the Ministry of Environment (MoE) as well as harmonized with other political sectors, such as water, forestry, agriculture, energy, industry, mining, tourism, etc.. The IPNS proposes protection regimes (according to the Law on Environment from 1991, three protection regimes are existing) according to the corresponding buffer zones, and it also prescribes allowed and prohibited activities within the area, depending on the different zones.

Further, the IPNS develops studies for each PA, which describe elementary facts of the area according to various classifications and lists: location, size, land use, description of borders, legislation basis, history of protection, morphology, climate, geology, vegetation, flora, fauna, as well as endangered and threatened species and habitats.

Such a study forms the basis for the *Decree on Protection or the Law* (for National Parks). The proposed Decree is harmonized with all relevant sectors, including legislation, and is submitted by the MoE to the Parliament or Government for adoption. The MoE also proposes a part of the decree to concern the management of authorities. Additionally, a map of the area and the description of borders could be included in the decree. This document actually serves as the basis for the management, because it already defines restrictions and admissions in PAs.

The current situation shows that recreational and tourism activities are likely to occur as a management objective in all protection levels; excluded is merely the strict nature reserve, or - according to the present legislation in Serbia - the area of zone I.

This also shows that biodiversity protection, though a critically important function of many protected areas, is far from being the only purpose and often is even not the primary purpose of a protected area. Thus it is recommended that any protected area should always have a special policy to protect and maintain biodiversity.

Many protected areas have the commemoration of cultural and historic integrity as one central element of their management. These areas are often very important tourism destinations.

The designation and the declaration of a protected area does not per se guarantee the conservation of the protected area's values.

Protected areas do not offer one single homogenous level of 'protection' and, as noted, they may have diverse management objectives.

There is wide agreement that much more efforts are needed to improve the effectiveness of protected area management. Therefore it is essential that, in consideration of growing tourism in the region, management frameworks and strategies are established to ensure ongoing support and maintenance of the protected area's natural and cultural values. Managers have a mandate and the responsibility to protect the natural and associated socio-cultural values of the protected areas. They must also ensure adequate and appropriate access for tourism and recreation. This is a substantial challenge, involving difficult judgments on the trade-offs that occur between tourism development, the protection of resource values for which protected areas are established and the interests of the local community.

The proposed methodology addresses this challenge by assisting park managers and others to be effective in their management of tourism. Therefore it is recommended that the main provisions of the methodology should be incorporated in the study (the basis for the Decree on Protection and the basis for the future management plan) in the form and to the extent depending on the category of the protected area.

I. INTRODUCTION: PRE-CONDITIONS AND PROCEEDINGS

The first goal of this project was to elaborate a methodology for the development of protected area tourism management plans in Serbia and Montenegro, and to test it in the Special Nature Reserve of Zasavica. To achieve this goal, a project team consisting of national and international experts developed and implemented a project process, which is described below.

The following segments have been comprised during the project:

- 1) Analysis and description of the actual state (in the protected area and its wider territory, defined as the »Project Area«) in the field of sustainable tourism
- 2) Analysis of available documentation of the protected area and its surroundings, including ecological, economic and social aspects
- 3) Setting up the strategic goals and developing a common vision of tourism development in the Project Area
- 4) Development planning and efficient operating of the SNR Zasavica's managing organization

Within this process, special emphasis was put on local stakeholders' participation as well as on informing and consulting experts and authorities at the national level.

During the preparation period, the following activities have been undertaken:

- establishment of contacts with managers from other protected areas in order to discuss and to share relevant information
- preparation of a list of local stakeholders who should participate in all the phases of the management plan development

In the course of the project, local stakeholders participated actively in diverse activities. In this context, one-day-meetings/workshops were organized with local stakeholders in July and November 2004, aiming at sharing information about the project, its goals and activities - first of all, issues related to the development of the Tourism Management Plan were considered.

Among the stakeholders representatives of the management authority, non-governmental organizations, schools, media, local authorities, cultural institutions and business as well as

inhabitants of the local villages interested in tourism development in cooperation with the SNR Zasavica's management were present.

In December 2004, a meeting at the national level with representatives of relevant institutions had been organized; again also local stakeholders participated. In between these meetings, the wider range of stakeholders had been informed and included in the process by using different media.

Each of the meetings mentioned above resulted in valuable inputs incorporated into the Draft Management Plan:

- 1) The results of a SWOT analysis, conducted by small groups during the first meeting, served as the starting point in the process of developing a vision and strategic goals on how to introduce sustainable tourism in the project area; the analysis further addressed the main problems and disadvantages that were taken into consideration while planning future steps. It was therefore decided to conduct an Assessment of Tourism products and potentials, which was not originally planned in the project proposal.
- 2) The strategic goals of the tourism development were formulated by the project team and offered to the participants of the second meeting; the participants were not only giving their feedback, but they also had an opportunity to propose new goals, to prioritise these goals and to list the necessary activities in order to meet the goals; working in both plenary and small groups, the participants contributed significantly to the final contents of the Draft Tourism Management Plan for the SNR Zasavica.
- 3) The local stakeholders contributed decisively with their insider knowledge also to other segments of the management plan; valuable data had been collected in cooperation with the SNR Zasavica's managers (previous studies within the protected area, plans, etc.) with the local urban planning authorities, the Museum of Srem and the local tourist agencies.
- 4) A draft version of the management plan was presented to the wider audience – representatives of relevant national institutions and organizations. Their comments were valuable for deciding upon the methodology applied as well as upon the final version of the plan, which will serve as a potential model to be implemented in other protected areas in Serbia and Montenegro in the future.

Besides that, the wider public could get involved in each of the phases of the draft management plan development, using:

- information published on the web sites of CENORT and CEEWEB
- information and call for cooperation announced through the local media
- information and contact details provided by leaflets prepared for fairs and other events in the field of tourism and environmental protection

It would have probably been possible to develop a Draft Tourism Management Plan without the active participation of local stakeholders and information-sharing with national institutions in charge. However, such a procedure would be certainly missing important elements, such as:

- perceptions of difficulties and opportunities in sustainable tourism development in the comprised area, from the point of view of local people and stakeholders who are highly familiar with the area;
- perceptions of visions and strategic goals and their prioritising by the local people, who are the potential actors of sustainable tourism development in the area;
- relation with realistic potentials of the area as well as with the plans of other relevant actors of its economic and social development.

The participatory approach applied for the development of the Draft Tourism Management Plan for the selected area highly contributed to mutual learning: about the authentic needs (project team) on one hand and about biodiversity and sustainable tourism concepts in the specific local context (interested stakeholders) on the other hand. Thanks to that cooperation, the project team, including the protected area managers, has been extended by a group of local stakeholders, who now accept the Tourism Management Plan for the SNR Zasavica as their own product. Therefore, it may be expected that in the near future they will be ready and motivated for its implementation.

II. DRAFT TOURISM MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE SNR ZASAVICA

1. Introduction

2. Ecological Systems and Components

3. Socio-economic Conditions and Compatible Development

4. Threats to Ecological Integrity or Species

5. Vision, Goals and Strategies

6. Development Phases

7. Budget – Organisation – staff

1. Introduction

The project area consists of the Special Nature Reserve Zasavica, the town of Sremska Mitrovica, seven neighbouring villages and two connected villages in the Bogatic municipality.

The municipality of Sremska Mitrovica is situated in the northwest of Serbia, at the crossroads of three different morphological areas: the plane of Srem, the plane of Macva and the hills of Fruska Gora which has an average altitude of 82 m. It consists of the town of Sremska Mitrovica (composed of Sremska Mitrovica and Lacarak at the left bank of the river Sava and Macvanska Mitrovica on the other riverside) and 23 villages.

The municipality's area comprises 762 km² and it has a population of 85.902 inhabitants, according to the census in 2002. Of these, 39.084 inhabitants account for the city of Sremska Mitrovica itself.

The Special Nature Reserve Zasavica is a wetland located in the close vicinity of Sremska Mitrovica. It is bordered by the river Drina in the east and the river Sava in the south, occupying a territory of 1821 ha. Inside this protected area, the strict protection regime (II) encompasses 671 ha, of which 472 ha are publicly owned, 138 ha state-owned and another 60 ha belonging to private owner.

The river Zasavica, which flows through the special nature reserve, forms the basis of this wetland. It has a length of 33,1 km at a width of 80m and a maximum depth of 3m. The Zasavica receives its water from the Drina by ground sources and from ground water springs in the Cer Mountain region. Additionally, it has a direct connection to the river Sava through the Bogaz Canal near Macvanska Mitrovica. Further sources feeding the wetland of the

special nature reserve are surface waters from the Jovaca and Prekopac Canals as well as the afflux from the Batar River.

The first initiative in order to conserve the nature reserve was taken by the NGO *Goransko – ekoloski pokret* (Nature conservation and environmental movement) in Sremska Mitrovica. *Goransko – ekoloski pokret* alluded to the legal framework of the Decree on Previous Protection within the Area, enacted by the Government of the Republic of Serbia.

This NGO suggested to conduct a research on natural values within the nature reserve's area. As a consequence of this research and according to recommendations prepared by the Institute for Protection of Nature of Serbia (IPNS), the area close to the river Zasavica, together with an appropriate buffer zone, was designated a "Special Nature Reserve (SNR) of category I" on the 12th of May 1997 by the Government of the Republic of Serbia. The wider area of the Zasavica nature reserve, however, is ranked as protection regime II. This categorization corresponds to the national Serbian system, which divides the PA's into three classes of protection regimes, always including corresponding buffer zones. It further prescribes allowed and prohibited activities within the area, depending on the zoning. Compared to the categorization system of IUCN, Zasavica's protection regime conforms to category IV "habitat and species management area". This means that the main target within the PA shall be to "manage the nature reserve mainly for conservation through management intervention" (IUCN).

According to the Law on Environment, as well as to international regulations, only limited and controlled human interventions are allowed inside the SNR's area, in order to protect species and ecosystems which are the main values of Zasavica.

Protection activities and a wise use of resources - including scientific research, habitat restoration, species (re-)introduction, controlled breeding of autochthonous cattle varieties and improvement measures – are allowed. Also controlled and well organized tourist and education activities, harmonized with protection measures and the principles of sustainable development, are possible forms of using the protected area.

The NGO *Goransko – ekoloski pokret* has got the management responsibility (Official Gazette No. 19, May 12, 1997) for the SNR and is therefore accountable for both present activities and future plans concerning the reserve. Admittedly, *Goransko – ekoloski pokret* lacks human capacities, funds, and logistic support. But its grass-root character, the

enthusiasm of those contributing to the NGO's work, as well as the excellent relations with the local government and other stakeholders, predominated in finding the right solution for the area's management (proposal offered by the Institute and approved by the National Government, through the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Serbia).

The main responsibilities of the management organization are to establish and to maintain activities that 1) promote the area and 2) assure an appropriate access to particularly designed public places (e.g. visitor spots at *Valjevac* and *Sumareva cuprija*) for all different users/visitors of the area. These activities have to be defined by the mid-term management plan, which is developed by the management organization and approved by the Ministry for Protection of Natural Resources and Environment (at the moment it is the Ministry of Science and Environment).

The following general goals have been recognized within the last mid-term Management Plan (for the period 2002 – 2006):

1. *development of an inventory of the area's flora and fauna*
2. *development of a vegetation map*
3. *protection of the main ecosystem in the area*
4. *definition of the main threats, its mitigation and elimination*
5. *monitoring of the natural values inside the area, according to the site's protection regime*
6. *development of a data basis and information system*

Moreover, capacity-building has been highlighted in this document as one of the most important tasks of the management organization; it refers, inter alia, to human, financial and infrastructure-related capacities.

2. Ecological Systems and Components

The SNR Zasavica is composed of a mosaic of different ecosystems, such as aquatic, pasture, forest and wetland ecosystems. Altogether it contains an area of 671 ha, with a corresponding buffer zone of 1150 ha.

Pastures	43.61%
Aquatic surface	23.88%
Forest	16.74%
Reed	11.53%
Arable land	3.92%
Other	0.32%

Table 1: Land structure in Zasavica SNR

Ecosystem I: The aquatic ecosystem

The main river of the nature reserve is the homonymous river Zasavica. A regular monitoring of phytoplankton within the river was established for the first time, when the area was set under protection. Thus preliminary researches of the area (1995/1996) – measured by the indicator organisms *Spongillia lacustris* and *Batrachospermnum algae* – pointed out that the organic amount in the river Zasavica is rather low, with a low intensity of eutrophication in general, but in some spots, where the river narrows down, aquatic flora is overgrowing. Nevertheless, in some areas the saprobe index was over 2,5 (class II-III). These areas were mainly locations with higher human impact.

The plankton of the Zasavica contains valuable rare and new species for the fauna of Serbia, including species that were so far unknown in the scientific world. There are over 600 plant species in the Reserve, of which 45 are macrophytic.

The aquatic vegetation in the river Zasavica and in the Jovaca pond is mainly represented by the following species: *Lemna triscula*, *Utricularia vulgaris* (on the "Red List of Flora" in Serbia), *Nymphaea alba* and *Nuphar luteum*; the submerse vegetation is represented by species like *Ceratophyllum demersum*, *Myriophyllum spicatum*, *Lemna triscula*, *Potamogeton pusillus* and *Stratoides aloides*.

The predominant fish species is the cyprinid family, but there are also other, including rare, species represented in the area.

Species	Status	
Fam. Umbridae		
<i>Umbra krameri</i>	A	V-E
Fam. Esocidae		
<i>Esox lucius</i>	A	I-V
Fam. Cyprinidae		
<i>Rutilus rutilus</i>	A	
<i>Scardinius rhyrophthalmus</i>	A	V
<i>Alburnus alburnus</i>	A	I
<i>Blicca bjoerkna</i>	A	I
<i>Abramis brama</i>	A	
<i>Abramis sapa</i>	A	R-V
<i>Abramis ballerus</i>	A	V
<i>Tinca tinca</i>	A	I
<i>Pseudorasbora parva</i>	+	
<i>Rhodeus sericeus amarus</i>	A	R-V
<i>Carassius carassius</i>	A	R-V

<i>Carassius auratus</i>	+	I
<i>Cyprinus carpio</i>	A	V-E
Fam. Cobitidae		
<i>Misgurnus fossilis</i>	A	R-V
Fam. Ictaluridae		
<i>Ictalurus nebulosus</i>	+	
Fam. Centrachidae		
<i>Lepomis gibbosus</i>	+	
Fam Percidae		
<i>Perca fluviatilis</i>	A	

Table 2: Composition of fish species in Zasavica SNR

(A – autochthonous species; + - introduced species; E – endangered; V – vulnerable; R – rare; I – intermediary)

Ecosystem II: Wetlands

The largest and - from the aspect of biodiversity - most valuable part of the reserve is the wetland area.

Unfortunately, there is no constant monitoring of habitats and species, therefore it is not possible to record changes that have been affecting the area over decades of its misuse. A lot of wet meadows have been irrigated and transformed into pastures or poplar plantations. There are no exact records on the size of the previous wet meadows and irrigated parts of the land. There is also no positive record on the presence or absence of certain species. However, within the last decade some forms of research started in the area.

Since the beginning of the protection of the area, it has been a constant effort from the side of the managing authority to provide enough water resources to maintain existing and restore previous wetlands. It is also targeted to enlarge the area by encompassing neighbouring privately owned wet meadows.

Besides being a source of high biodiversity in the area, the wetlands are also a feeding base for waterfowls. The backwaters, however, are excellent areas for spawning of fish and amphibian species. The vegetation furthermore offers some very good spots for nesting and for raising young birds.

The wetland vegetation is consisting of semi-aquatic species like *Phragmites communis*, *Typha angustifolia*, *Ranunculus lingua*, *Schoenoplectus lacustris* and *Acorus calamus*.

Species	Natural rarities in Serbia	Red List of Flora	Status to be determined
<i>Nymphae alba</i>	+	+	
<i>Nuphar luteum</i>	+	+	
<i>Stratiotes aloides</i>	+	+	
<i>Ranunculus lingua</i>	+	+	
<i>Acorus calamus</i>	+		
<i>Utricularia australis</i>		+	
<i>Schoenoplectus triqueter</i>		+	
<i>Urtica kioviensis</i>			+
<i>Trapa natans</i>			+
<i>Utricularia vulgaris</i>			+

Table 3: Significant floristic species in Zasavica Special Nature Reserve

Species	STATUS		
	END	IUCN	Natural rarity
cl. Amphibia			
o. Caudata			
fam. Salamandridae			
<i>Triturus vulgaris</i>			*
<i>Triturus dobrogicus</i>	BSEND	VU	*
o. Anura			
fam. Discoglosidae			
<i>Bombina variegata</i>		VU	**
fam. Pelobatidae			
<i>Pelobates fuscus</i>		VU	*
fam. Bufonidae			
<i>Bufo bufo</i>			**
<i>Bufo viridis</i>		VU	**
fam. Hylidae			
<i>Hyla arborea</i>		VU	**
fam. Ranidae			
<i>Rana sp. (complex)</i>			
<i>Rana dalmatina</i>		VU	**
cl. Reptilia			
o. Testudines			
fam. Emydidae			

<i>Emys orbicularis</i>		VU	*
o. Squamata			
subo. Sauria			
fam. Anguillidae			
<i>Anguis fragilis</i>			
fam. Lacertidae			
<i>Lacerta agilis</i>		CD	
<i>Lacerta viridis</i>		VU	
<i>Podarcis muralis</i>		LR	
subo. Serpentes			
fam. Colubridae			
<i>Coronella austriaca</i>		VU	**
<i>Elaphe longissima</i>		VU	*
<i>Natrix natrix</i>			**
<i>Natrix tessellata</i>		DD	

Table 4: The list of amphibian and reptile species in Zasavica SNR

(END – endemic species; BSEND – Balkan sub-endemic; VU – vulnerable, LR – low risk, DD – data deficient; CD – conservation dependent; * - protected in the whole Serbia; ** - protected in Autonomous Province of Voivodina.)

Ecosystem III: Forests

The forest vegetation has been highly influenced by human activities, as in the end of the 19th century clear cutting was the favourite measure in order to enlarge the area of arable land. Not only fragmentation but also the aspiration of uniformity within the forest associations (monoculture) by means of selective exploitation degraded the area. Oak forests are rather scarce, where *Fraxinus angustifolia* and *Salix sp.* have been preserved. *Populus alba* and *Salix cinerea* co-exist, where the progradation of *S. cinerea* indicates a change in vegetation structure from marshland to wetland forests.

Forests have mainly been in private tenure; only 130 ha were owned by the state, of which 110 ha are planted with *salix* and *poplar*.

It is planned to convert plantations of different allochthonous species into autochthonous *Fraxinus* forests.

Fauna (forests/pasture)

The whole area is especially known and important for its bird fauna, as it serves as a nesting, resting and feeding spot. 90 out of 170 species existing in Serbia are nesting in the SNR. Compared to the situation approximately 100 years ago, the number decreased by 30-40%. More details about the bird fauna in the reserve is described in the following:

- Former colonies of *herons* completely disappeared during the 70s. The only remaining representative is *Ixobryichus minutus*.
- Zasavica is rarely used as a feeding spot. Only in spring time a few pairs of the following (migratory) species can be spotted: *Nycticorax nycticorax*, *Egretta garzetta*, *Ardea cinerea* and *Ardea purpurea*.
- Some common birds of prey can be spotted: *Buteo buteo*, *Accipiter gentiles*, *Falco tinnunculus* and *Falco subbuteo*; but in the last 100 years several species disappeared: *Aquila heliaca*, *Haliaetus albicilla*, *Milvus migrans*, *Chrysaetos aeruginosus* and *Falco vespertinus*.
- Sadzak is an important locality for waterfowls and other species: *Remiz pendulinus*, *Galinula chloropus*, *Podiceps ruficollis*, *Fulica atra*, *Acrocephalus arundinaceus* and *Anas platyrhynchos*.
- The *Valjevac* pasture is another important ornithological site: *Emberiza calandra*, *Saxicola torquata*, *Acrocephalus palustris*, *Coturnix coturnix*, *Galerida cristata* might be seen. It serves as an important resting and feeding spot for migratory species, such as: *Ciconia nigra*, *Anas sp.*, *Anser sp.*, *Grus grus*, *Gallinago gallinago*, *Vanellus vanellus* and *Charadrius dubius*.

A specific research on mammals has not been conducted. It is known that *Lutra lutra* is native and that *Castor fiber* had been introduced (both species are closely related to aquatic habitats). Further common species are small mammals like rodents and game – e.g. *Lepus europaeus* and *Sus scrofa*.

The integrity of the ecological systems in Zasavica has been compromised by fragmentation and human impact. In order to diminish the influence of these factors, it is necessary to enlarge the area. The functioning of the eco-systems can't be preserved but by preventing further negative human impacts. Therefore it will be essential to introduce a range of measures like the re-introduction of certain flag-species (e. g. birds of prey) or the provision of good conditions (for feeding and breeding) for other water dependent species in the area.

3. Socio-economic Conditions and Compatible Development

Socio-economic Conditions

On the territory of Sremska Mitrovica's municipality, 22 different nations are living, mostly Serbs (87,3%), Croats (3%) and Hungarians (0,9%). In both the city and the villages, the gender distribution is rather equal; there is only a slightly higher percentage of women (51.26%) compared to men (48.73%).¹

According to the Statistical Bureau of the Republic of Serbia, 23.086 persons, out of 55.707 persons of working age living in the municipality of Sremska Mitrovica, are employed (data for 2002), . According to the data of 2002, 69.1% of the employees are working in enterprises, institutions, cooperatives and other organizations. Independent workers make up 30.9%.

The gross national income level is 21.2% lower compared to the average in the whole of the Republic of Serbia. In August 2004, the average earnings in Sremska Mitrovica were 11.9% lower compared to the total average in Serbia. At this time the average income in Serbia was 14.444 Dinars, compared to an average income of 12.732 Dinars in Sremska Mitrovica.

The total area of agricultural land covers 57.180 ha, while the one cultivated with forests comprises 8.705 ha. The total road length in the municipality is 265km (besides the highway), of which 247km are hard surface roads. Most of the roads, especially those in the vicinity of the protected area, are not equipped with road signs; this will be necessary in order to grant tourism traffic.

The project area also includes two villages belonging to the Bogatic municipality. While Sremska Mitrovica belongs to the district Srem, Bogatic is situated in the Macva District (Central Serbia). The total number of inhabitants in the municipality of Bogatic is 32.990, the total number of settlements within the municipality is 14.

Industry

Industrial production plays an important role in the town of Sremska Mitrovica. The most important industries are: cellulose and paper production, food, steel and wood industry, ship building, electricity production, sand and gravel production as well as clothing and footwear industry. Cellulose and paper production has by far the greatest importance for the

¹ Source for all statistical data: Statistical Bureau of the Republic of Serbia (<http://www.statserb.sr.gov.yu>).

community, as the cellulose and paper factory "Matroz" is the only paper production company in the country. This factory used to employ over 2000 workers, representing 45% of the gross industrial production and 60% of the total exports within the commune of Sremska Mitrovica. Today, the company has constant problems and is waiting for the implementation of a process of restructuring and/or privatisation. The food industry includes the largest number of companies and represents 36% of the gross industrial production.

Agriculture

The agricultural production is significant for the economic activities in Sremska Mitrovica. The agricultural area in use covers 54.860 ha of top quality soil. Apart from soil, the favourable climate serves as a good basis for the development of all agricultural sectors. The crops that get mostly grown include high yielding corn varieties, high quality cereals and recently also industrial crops. The producers are mainly farmers, as 75% of the total agricultural area belong to private owners.

Tourism

Tourism is so far not an important economic branch in the municipalities of Sremska Mitrovica and Bogatic. There are very low numbers of arrivals and overnight-stays, especially as foreign tourists are concerned. But there is no doubt, that the municipality of Sremska Mitrovica has valuable natural and cultural resources for a tourism-related development. The Special Nature Reserve Zasavica and the archaeological findings of the Roman town Sirmium, preserved in the Museum of Srem, are the most important resources.

Furthermore - not far from Sremska Mitrovica - there is the national park Fruska Gora, characterized by its lime woods and beautiful meadows, as well as by its famous monasteries.

Unfortunately, all these resources are not used appropriately. One of the main shortages of the tourist product is the lack of appropriate accommodation facilities and tourism infrastructure in general.

Culture

Sremska Mitrovica was built on the site of Sirmium, which was the capital of the Roman province of Lower Panonia or Panonia Secunda. It achieved an extraordinary position within the Roman Empire, when Sirmium became one of the four capitals of the Roman Empire. Highlights of the ancient city were the emperor palace, the hippodrome, a coin factory, the

amphitheatre, a "normal" theatre, many workshops, public baths, temples, as well as a great number of public palaces and luxurious villas.

What is left of Sirmium are ruins, the majority of them still hidden underground. Only some parts of this Roman town have been archeologically explored. The most impressive architectural remains have been unearthed almost in the very centre of today's Sremska Mitrovica, where the superb palace with devices for heating the premises (hypocaust) has been partly excavated.

The main cultural institution is the Museum of Srem, founded in 1885. It deals with the research on material culture and with the ancient heritage of Sremska Mitrovica and Srem in general. Its activities include permanent and periodic exhibitions.

The museum itself is divided into several sections: archaeology, (arts) history, ethnology, nature and numismatic collection.

4. Threats to Ecological Integrity or Species

Ecosystem I: The aquatic ecosystem

Water

The water surface forms the second largest area in the reserve. Therefore it is very positive that the responsible management organization of the SNR has got the managing rights for fishery within the area. Fishing is restricted to sport fishing, with daily and annual permits, and to boat renting. It is prohibited to use nets, baskets, electric devices, explosives, etc. for fishing. These regulations are controlled by the ranger service.

As for the fishing activities, the reserve's management has designated an area rather close to the reserve. Still, it is isolated regarding the source of water and a connection to the river Zasavica itself. Daily licences and a certain fish stock are provided for the fishing ponds.

Nevertheless, cases of poaching and illegal fishing in the reserve have been reported, as it is - due to several reasons - very difficult to control the area: there are not enough rangers, some parts are hard to access and in the small community, where people know each other or are even related to one another, it is not easy to establish an authority which is strong enough to efficiently control illegal activities.

The two main problems concerning water are both based on inadequate water regime management. One of the problems regarding the quantity of fish is the unfavourable water regime during the spawning season.

The other problem concerns eutrophication of the river Zasavica, leading to a decrease of the water level in the river bed.

The river Zasavica receives its water from the river Drina by ground sources as well as from the river Sava through a system of channels. There is a system of dams and locks on the channels, which is managed by the public enterprise for water management. A general agreement between the public enterprise and the reserve's management is existing on how to regulate the inflow of water to the Zasavica. This is important for several reasons and - as stated above - for spawning and eutrophication. The prevention of eutrophication could be managed by cleaning the riverbed from overgrown aquatic vegetation, and it is also recommended to deepen the riverbed. It is further necessary to maintain the channel network, which is connecting the Jovaca and Prekopac locations as well as the Bogaz and Batar channels.

Monitoring the water level is essential because in spring and late autumn, when the waters are high, the pastures get flooded and the backwaters may serve as excellent spawning sites or feeding grounds for waterfowls. If in this sensitive moment the channel locks get closed, the river Zasavica does not receive sufficient water to maintain the proper functions of a wetland ecosystem.

The reduction of the water surface in the reserve thus directly leads to a decrease of food sources for waterfowls and - as a consequence - also for birds of prey. The chances to re-introduce, or at least to maintain, the existing level of abundance therefore will not be maintainable.

An other threat worth mentioning is that the direct contact between the rivers Zasavica and Sava enabled allochthonous species to enter the river Zasavica (*Lepomis gibosus* and *American catfish*) what leads to an endangerment of the autochthonous fish fauna.

Ecosystem II: Forests

The forest area covers 16,5% of the reserve. A large part of the forests is privately owned, while the rest is managed by the public enterprise for forestry management prior to protection. The nature reserve's management has no influence on the forestry management.

The basic negative impacts in private forests in general are the results of incompetent management. In private forests it is mainly the unplanned cutting of autochthonous forests, while in state-owned forests the introduction of allochthonous species (e.g. of the Euro-

American poplar) is the main threat. The plantation area covers an area of 110 ha, and is planned to be substituted with autochthonous tree species (*Fraxinus*) after the clear cutting of the poplar.

Hunting and fishing

It is explicitly forbidden to hunt or fish inside the reserve.

Still, the surrounding area has good pre-conditions for this activity, especially taking into consideration the variety of the hunting game: wild ducks and geese, wild boars, hares, pigeons and some other birds. The hunting society, however, which is responsible for the hunting area, does not pay proper attention neither to breeding nor to the introduction of game. Unfortunately the influence of the nature reserve's management concerning this aspect is very low. Due to the latest improper management strategy and due to poaching, the hunting game has a rather poor state in this area.

Pastures

In former times, certain agricultural activities such as the grazing of cattle or the dwelling of pigs implicated an increase or at least the maintenance of the current state of biodiversity in pastures and meadows. The discontinuation of these customs nowadays results in a decline of biodiversity. There are feeble attempts by the management to re-introduce these activities by breeding autochthonous sorts of pigs and sheep, and by making arrangements with local farmers about the utilization of the pastures.

Arable land

The use of chemicals in agriculture is almost completely uncontrolled. Arable land alongside a large part of the river Zasavica pollutes the river water with fertilizers and other chemicals through the ground water. Also, the dumping of used packs of chemicals is not regulated.

Consequently, there is a series of dumping sites along the river Zasavica where communal waste has been disposed, which also threatens aquatic and terrestrial habitats inside the reserve.

Tourism

Present tourism-related activities are not representing serious threats to ecological integrity and species. There are a few problems to be solved, especially the access of cars to the protected area, dumping sites (especially wild dumping sites) and the regulation of boat use.

Settlements

There are 9 settlements along the river Zasavica who do not have organized sewage systems. They all have cesspools, but these are constructed without consideration of any kind of standard. Again, wild dumping sites located at the entrances of the villages, e.g. near bridges, are a threat to the environment.

5. Vision, Goals and Strategies

The vision, as well as the goals and strategies connected with it, form the core part of the management plan. Without the existence of an overall central idea, which is agreed on by all involved organizations and stakeholders from the beginning, it would not be possible to guarantee the success of the management strategy. This is especially true as the management of a PA like the special nature reserve Zasavica affects a lot of different sectors, groups and actors; therefore an integrated management plan is essential.

The main vision of this project is to guarantee the conservation of biodiversity within the SNR Zasavica by developing sustainable tourism (as a form of environmental-friendly utilization) in the PA.

Dealing with the planning and development of sustainable tourism in the SNR Zasavica, at least three aspects have to be integrated simultaneously: nature conservation, sustainable tourism and sustainable agriculture. Keeping these three key points in mind, several parties were engaged in the elaboration of the appropriate goals and strategies: the management authority and experts with their mid-term management plan "*program zaštite i razvoja*" as well as the participants of the project's first stakeholder workshop. Further, the results of the conducted assessment on tourism potentials in the PA were paid attention to.

The following strategic objectives and measures were proposed as a result of the considerations:

1. Objective: Preservation of the unique ecosystems (wetlands) of the SNR Zasavica, including its rare and endemic species

The special nature reserve with its natural values forms the main basis for the development of tourism-related offers in the wider area of Zasavica. But, unfortunately, exactly this pre-condition for tourism – the sound environment – gets highly endangered by human impacts. The PA comprises so called fragile ecosystems, i.e. that the disturbance of only one element can cause drastic and irreversible changes in the whole area. This may additionally also lead to a decrease in or the loss of biodiversity.

The conservation of the specific conditions within the area - according to international standards - will therefore be one of the main goals.

The existing system of channels and locks is extremely vital for the maintenance of an optimal water regime within the river Zasavica in order to provide sufficient quantities of fresh water.

The following issues were recognized as a threat to ecosystem and biodiversity preservation and need to be focused on:

- Water quantity and quality entering the Zasavica influence the level of eutrophication in the area
- Clear cutting is still usual in the forest belt
- A small part of the forest area is managed by the public enterprise "*Srbijasume*", which introduced poplar plantations (allochthonous) instead of conserving autochthonous forest species

2. Objective: Development of a quality management system for the PA as a pre-condition for the implementation of a management plan and sustainable tourism development

The improvement of the organizational structure of the local NGO, which is responsible for future implementations, is essential in order to guarantee an adequate realization of the management plan and the proposals for tourism development.

With the purpose of protecting the values the area was established for, and contributing to the sustainable development of the wider area, the managing organization should improve its policy and planning work. Furthermore, it should open up opportunities for a collaborative management together with the local community (civil society, local authorities, institutions, land owners), visitors, media, tourism operators and other interested business sector representatives. In this sense, the following weaknesses have been identified:

- the management plan does not equally consider all aspects of the development of the protected area (scientific research and measures are dominating)
- not all aspects of the PA's management are included (tourism/visitor management, other economic activities, human resources management, etc.)
- the grand part of the responsibility is taken over by the manager alone, instead of building partnerships with locals and other interested stakeholders
- there is a lack in quantity and, in particular, in qualified and trained PA staff, especially keeping in mind a continuous tourism development in the wider area

3. Objective: Establishment of partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders in order to encourage their active participation in the development of sustainable tourism and with the purpose of granting an appropriate management in the protected area

In order to successfully develop sustainable tourism in the PA and its surroundings, it is necessary to build up and maintain close partnerships with all persons affected, i.e. with the local community and with associates from different institutions and organizations on both national and international level.

Therefore it is necessary to improve the existing situation, which is characterized by following threats:

- neither the collaborative management plan, nor the plans for future tourism development show sufficient measures of involvement for the local community
- the role of the stakeholders concerning management is not clearly defined in the protected area management plan
- no adequate forms of direct participation for associates from the different local and national institutions in the PA management and in tourism development in the wider area (boards, councils, bodies...)
- lack of international cooperation and exchange in terms of: planning and realization of activities, participation in conferences, workshops, exchange of visits/experiences, joint application for projects, international training events, etc.

4. Objective: The development of sustainable tourism in the PA including an adequate tourism infrastructure

The rich cultural heritage of Sremska Mitrovica and the natural values of the special nature reserve Zasavica possess a lot more tourism-related potential than is being used at the current state. As pointed out in the results of the assessment on tourism potentials, some small initiatives (e.g. the establishment of visitor spots and information boards, or the production of promotion material) could serve as a first basis for an organized, environment- and visitor-friendly tourism management.

In the scope of this insight, the following weaknesses have to be dealt with:

- lack of entrance points to the PA
- lack of nature/education trails through the PA and the neighbouring villages
- lack of an appropriate visitor centre within the PA
- lack of appropriate accommodation facilities in the reserve or in its close vicinity
- lack of information spots and boards within the PA and in its vicinity

5. Objective: Support of the local economy through activities connected with the development of sustainable tourism in the PA and its vicinity

One of the essential points of sustainable tourism development is to contribute to local business initiatives and opportunities. In Zasavica, the local economy could be supported by engaging local guides, operators and services providers (such as transport, food, etc.) or by promoting and distributing local products. The local communities in the project area also started some initiatives of their own: the museum of Srem promotes and revitalizes traditional local production, agricultural and manufactured products are offered at visitor spots in cooperation with several households, locals as engaged as guards and logistic staff in within the nature reserve. All these attempts are aiming at the same target.

To further improve their effectiveness, the weaknesses listed below need to be faced:

- lack of local initiatives concerning the development of different forms of tourism services (local agencies, shops, guides, accommodation); all in cooperation with the PA manager
- lack of employment opportunities in the area
- unsatisfying market and insufficient promotion of local products

6. Objective: Development of training and awareness-raising programs for the PA staff and the local community

Due to its implemental character, a carefully planned training and awareness-raising program would bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical skills among the local people. This is true not only for the staff of the PA, which would be able to work more competent within their sector of activity, but it also has an impact on the every-day behaviour of the local public. Moreover, such programs could be very helpful in order to improve the cooperation within the community. Currently there are still several problems to overcome in order to make the realization of this goal more efficient:

- lack of training programs for PA managers in the field of sustainable tourism planning and management
- lack of programs that enhance the competences (as to sustainable tourism) of tourist guides, rangers and other PA staff
- lack of information and of awareness raising/training activities for the local population

7. Objective: Development of a carefully thought out concept of organic farming

Such a concept should include the supply of information and assistance regarding different forms of organic agriculture. Moreover the cultivation of autochthonous sorts as well as the harmonization of economic and environmental aspects, that are concerning ecological agriculture inside the PA and its vicinity, need to be emphasized.

What makes the conversion to organic farming even more difficult is the fact that the size of arable land is very small and fragmented; therefore it is often unsuitable and unfeasible for the introduction of sustainable techniques which could lead to better (or cheaper) crops.

A solution would be to prepare the land for organic production. This procedure is time-consuming, it takes several years in row only to prepare the land, but it would justify the high costs of production, contrary to the present situation, and it is a sustainable activity of using nature in a nature protected area.

Currently the following problems are existing:

- over- and uncontrolled use of fertilizers and chemicals in agriculture
- introduction of allochthonous sorts of vegetables, fruits and live stock
- small and fragmented pieces of arable land
- small production scales

8. Objective: Utilization of diverse sources for funding for development projects

Secure funding is one of the basic pre-conditions for the development of any activity in the protected area and its surroundings. Comparable with the situation of numerous other PA's in Serbia, the organization managing the SNR Zasavica relies on a very limited financial background. The financial support is mainly based on the ad hoc help of sponsors – in particular of local businessmen - as well as on voluntary work of members or friends.

Aiming at the above defined goal, the following topics need to be worked on:

- lack of financial support from the national government
- lack of continuity in the support from the local level, which is always depending on political decisions
- lack of initiative and capacity for applying for international funds/donations
- underdeveloped sources of self-income of the managing organization

6. Development Phases

SHORT-TERM PLANNING (1 YEAR)

Objectives	Activities
Administration	
Support to the elaboration of applications for (project) co-funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establishing a network with experienced organizations or institutions • exchange of experience and knowledge on funding sources and application procedures
Elaboration of new solutions for self-financing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • introduction of entrance fees for the PA • selling of regional products: agricultural products, handicrafts, souvenirs, etc. • establishment of tourism-related small-scale services, e.g. horse riding, private accommodation facilities, etc.
Introduction of a proper ranger service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • training of local people as rangers
Improvement of PR and information activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establishment of a skilled PR team • regular maintenance of the information board at the PA manager's office • public informative events: presentations, fairs, workshops • inclusion of different kinds of media (TV, radio, press)
Introduction of penalties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • defining objects of prohibition • appointing appropriate penalties for the individual prohibitions
Participation	
Introduction of organic farming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • education and training on organic production • establishment of an advisory board for the farmers • establishment of a cooperation of organic farmers until

	<p>the year 2005/2006</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • control of organic farming by an appropriate institution • campaign on the appropriate use of chemicals in agriculture • campaign on proper disposal of chemical packages • cooperation between small producers • informing about the advantages and the importance of growing and preserving old sorts of vegetable and live stock
Strengthening the involvement of PA staff and local populations into all development and implementation processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • joint meetings, round tables • transparency as to mutual information supply

MEDIUM-TERM PLANNING (2-5 YEARS)

Administration	
Establishment of international cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identification of a person in charge for international cooperation • gaining membership in relevant international associations • participation in international conferences/events • fostering exchange of experiences
Strengthening of cooperation between the individual PA managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establishing a network between the different PA's • thematic expert workshops • mutual visits in the respective PA's
Development of internal human capacities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • training on soft skills: communication, interpretation, languages, conflict resolution, lobbying, team work, etc. • manager and senior staff training • technical/scientific training of rangers
Support of the junior staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • education and training of junior staff on the fields of administration & management, marketing, solid waste management, village tourism, environment interpretation, ranger services, etc.
Establishment of entrance points to the SNR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creation/construction of adequate information boards (with route descriptions) • putting up information boards • at regular intervals maintenance of the information boards
Development of a visitor centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • modifications or new constructions concerning buildings and infrastructure • creation of regular tourist offers (tours, events, etc.) • creation of a programme/events on environmental education • training of rangers or tourist/visitor guides • putting up information boards • positioning of a ethno-and natural history collection within the centre • arranging the sale of souvenirs, agricultural products, etc.

Participation	
(Institutional) strengthening of the local NGO for PA management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improvement of materials (equipment) • strengthening of human resources (new employees, volunteers, etc.) • enlargement of ranger service and specialist staff by junior employees
Development of external targeted human capacities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • training for planning and implementing village tourism • training for farmers in organic production
Delegation of more responsibilities to local authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assignment of competences to the local government with regard to the PA's management is desired, e.g. inspection, decision making process, planning, financing,
Establishment of a network of producers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • organization of joint meetings of all producers in order to develop a forum/ network for local food and/or handicraft production
Involvement of representatives from local authorities in the review of the plan and the corresponding activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • public workshops or presentations followed by joint discussions on the specific topics of the management plan
Involvement of different experts and locals in the review of the management plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • public workshops with follow-up discussions • inviting (foreign) experts to the workshops
Project Area Maintenance	
Construction of pumping stations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • financial support • logistic support • designation of appropriate locations for setting up the pumping stations (according to water system, housing areas, etc.)
Replacement of poplar plantations through autochthonous species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • purchase of autochthonous species
Maintenance of the water regime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • construction of bridges • removal of biomass at narrow areas within the river and at the watersides • removal of sludge in order to deepen the riverbed • maintaining the channel network
Socio-Economic Management	
Establishment of advisory boards and partnerships in all important fields of tourism development with the intention to achieve a more efficient management Target groups: institutions, organizations, interest groups and media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • building regular networks with all relevant actors • creating an interdisciplinary team • involvement of both national and local level
Development of appropriate accommodation facilities in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The kind of accommodation going to be supported will mainly be the so-called village tourism. (<i>Cikic</i>)

the reserve and its close vicinity (Not in responsibility of the SNR)	
Development of nature/education trails (see also "education & awareness raising")	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establishing starting points and appropriate information signs on the road • placing info panels/presentation boards at the entrance and on the trail itself (contents: route map, flora & fauna, ecosystems, etc.) • establishing "activity-stops" for children
Improvement of tourism-related marketing on existing offers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establishing a over-regional marketing team • involving all different kinds of media (radio, TV, press) • exchange with other PAs • collecting best practise examples with the aim of implementing appropriate ones in the own PA
Establishment of a market for regional (agricultural) products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creation of a regional label with the appropriate image • designing of regional products • consideration of different target groups: households, tourists, etc.
Scientific Management	
Monitoring of water quality in Zasavica	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • introduction of a suitable monitoring system (e.g. indicator organisms) • training/education of staff

LONG-TERM PLANNING (5-10 years)

Administration	
Purchase of surrounding land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • designation of appropriate areas (according to the buffer zone management) for enlarging the SNR • financial support • collaboration/negotiation with landowners

7. BUDGET – ORGANISATION – STAFF

BUDGET

Five-year plan of investments in environmental protection and tourism development in the SNR Zasavica (2005-2010)

a) Transport of fresh water from the river Sava into the river Zasavica

Project preparation: 20.000 \$

Project works: 160.000 \$

Time line:

Year	Amount (\$)	Application
2005	20.000	source: Pokret gorana (managing organization)
2006	20.000	preparation works
2007	40.000	electric power infrastructure
2008	80.000	construction of pumping station
	160.000	

Sources:

Pokret Gorana: 20.000\$

Ministry of Environment: 20.000\$

Ministry of Trade and Tourism: 20.000\$

Donor (to be identified): 100.000\$

b) Restoration of wetlands in the Special Nature Reserve

The project area consists of:

- pasture Valjevac 10 ha + 8 ha
- Simeunovica meadows 6 ha
- Stara Zasavica 60 ha

84 ha

Construction works: 105.000 \$

c) Reparation of the old bridges and construction of a new bridge

In total seven bridges with 10m span shall be erected.

The costs per each bridge are: 25.000 \$

The total sum for the bridges is: **175.000 \$**

ORGANISATION

Investments in the tourism development in the PA

- Tourist Information Boards Investments: 10.000,00 \$
- Building/Maintenance of the road to the visitor centre Valjevac: 5.000,00\$
- Building/Maintenance of the road to Šumareva Cuprija: 2.000,00 \$
- Construction of a road to the lake: 25.000,00 \$
- Building of an ethno department at the Valjevac: 6.000,00 \$
- Building of public sanitation facilities at the visitor points Valjevac and Sumareva Cuprija: 2.000,00 \$
- Building of an additional building at the existing visitor centre Valjevac, with a room for exhibitions and education-training activities: 50.000,00 \$

STAFF

Employment Plan for the SNR Zasavica

It is planned to employ 6 more people within the next five years:

- a captain of the boat
- a tourism expert
- three rangers
- one worker

The dynamic of employment is as follows:

- 2005: 2 employees
- 2006: 2 employees
- 2007: 1 employee
- 2008: 1 employee

The total funds needed will be 6.000\$ per employee per year.

Transportation / Vehicles

- a pick-up car 30.000 \$
- tractor and trailer 10.000 \$
- office vehicle 20.000 \$

ANNEX I PHOTOS

1. *Workshop I: 5. July 2004, Sremska Mitrovica, Serbia*



2. *Workshop I: 5. July 2004, Sremska Mitrovica, Serbia*



3. *Workshop II: 11. November 2004, Zasavica Special Nature Reserve, Serbia*

