



**WILD**  
**EUROPE**

**Preliminary outline for a Pre-Action Feasibility  
Study**

***Realising the enterprise benefits of wilderness in  
Sumava National Park***

## **Background**

Sumava National Park is a unique area which supports a wide variety of habitats and species and has the potential to form one of the largest areas of natural forest and wetland habitat in Central Europe.

A significant level of nature-based tourism already exists in and around the National Park, connected to its wilderness areas. Two million visitors annually bring substantial spending to the local area, where unemployment is below the national average.

There are substantial opportunities to further promote nature-based tourism, ancillary businesses and ecosystem services involving an expanded and consolidated non-intervention zone, while not compromising the ecological integrity of the National Park.

## **The Pre-Action Feasibility Study**

The Study Pre-Action Feasibility will focus on identifying and developing the enterprise benefits of wilderness areas in Sumava National Park, particularly for local communities and landholders.

This will in turn promote better protection and understanding of such areas and their ecological processes. It will also enable practical implementation of the 2014 EFTEC Report which highlighted the economic benefits of wilderness.

The Study is labeled a “Pre-Action Feasibility Study” to reflect its more practical tenor, designed to lead towards enactment. It is intended to apply exclusively to low impact non-extractive activities and thus does not include agriculture, timber production or hunting within designated core or buffer areas of wilderness in Sumava National Park. The definition of such areas will aim to be as per the Wild Europe criteria.

Enterprises related to the Study would be run within a clearly defined Code of Practice involving adherence to wilderness principles, Leave no Trace, waste recycling and other aspects of sustainable practice.

## **Objectives of the Study**

- 1) To facilitate lucrative and sustainable opportunities for livelihoods and employment related to wilderness areas within and adjacent to the National Park
- 2) To enable widespread and indepth awareness of the full range of benefits offered by these wilderness areas: economic, biodiversity and spiritual.
- 3) To thus entrench long-term support for their restoration and protection of large wilderness areas within the National Park among local communities, landholders, local and regional authorities, politicians, visitors and the general public.
- 4) To help promote opportunity, if and where felt appropriate by all relevant parties, for linkage with wilderness areas in the adjacent BayerischerWald National Park.

## Key elements of the Study

- 1) **An overview of enterprise opportunities** related to the wilderness agenda and the potential these offer across the NP in respect of:
  - wildlife species: current and reintroduced
  - habitat locations: current and restored
  - activities and related events (eg nature watching, low impact recreation - including winter cross country skiing , ‘wilderness festival’)
  - education (eg experiential courses, holiday camps), research (a centre has been previously proposed)
  - facilities (eg including hides, trails, guided tours, visitor centres, information posts)
  - ancillary support (eg accommodation, camp sites, catering, crafts, small retail, transport, cultural entertainment)

There would be linkage to the zonation layout, modulating installations and activities accordingly – with minimal impact in the core zone.

- 2) **Linking this to specific identified actual and potential businesses** and business people and entrepreneurs, as related to the 22 local communities linked to the National Park, the wider corporate sector, the NP Authority and other entities.

Business categories could include for example:

- Nature tourism,
- Combined regional packages (agri-tourism, culture, history)
- Recreational, general sporting
- Specialist sporting
- Corporate events, training
- Healthcare, physiology, eco/psychology
- Social: youth development, youth at risk
- Education (child, adult), research

Different approaches will be required for different business formats eg: private, community, NGO, public/local authority

- 3) **Identifying requirements for strengthening local capacity** to provide and benefit from such opportunities – for example:
  - certified standards for provision of accommodation, restaurants, retail and other facilities
  - training, language skills, business planning
  - networking, sales and marketing (including international promotion and nature-based multi-package regional tours also encompassing recreation, healthcare, culture, history)
  - advice on design, location, capacity
  - possible fund sourcing (private and public), provision and FR application
  - general business counseling & support – including accountancy, financial management, legal, employment, property planning
  - nature and clarity of legal title for ownership or usage of property or land
  - organizational requirements for appropriate coordination, business support and collective promotion at regional level in Sumava

- 4) **Promoting the opportunity for a prospective joint approach by Sumava NP and adjoining BayerischerWald NP**, which has a large wilderness core and some 750,000 visitors pa, to coordinate tourism logistics, product offer and marketing.

Given appropriate agreement, this could also involve mutual assessment of best practice and relative applicability. Much groundwork here has already been laid in past cooperation between their directorates.

- 5) **A review of long-term funding opportunities** related to:

- enterprise support: EC, national government, other institutions in public, NGO and private sector
- biodiversity grants: wildlife species and habitat locations, current and reintroduced/restored)
- ecosystem services: eg carbon storage and flood mitigation (the PES agenda) especially as related to habitat restoration
- General support

- 6) **Assessment of enterprise potential in adjacent areas** related to wilderness in the National Park: product value added enhancement for agricultural products, marketing support (logo, packaging, placement, distribution), sourcing of funds and business support.

There may also be limited potential for hunting outside core and buffer areas to capitalize on existing culls undertaken for ongoing management.

- 7) **Specific actions for follow-up** will be attached to recommendations from the Study wherever possible – hence the Feasibility Assessment being an action document. These could include for example:

- implementation reports for individual community based enterprises
- signposting to available sources of funding
- business development counseling, linkage to market opportunities
- international marketing and agency networking plans
- promotion of organizations/individuals with relevant capacity to support implementation
- appropriate support from EC, government and other institutions
- appropriate monitoring and measurement systems

It is likely that a second phase will be required for the Study, facilitating appropriate implementation of the above recommended actions. The format and scale here will depend on findings from Phase I.

- 8) **Emphasis on maximizing benefits for local communities** and spreading enterprise opportunity as widely as possible within the community - eg smaller local hostels and other accommodation types rather than a very large remotely owned hotel.

### **Linkage with long-term wilderness objectives**

Given appropriate agreement, it is suggested that this enterprise Study, along with its economics-based EFTEC predecessor, could be linked to the likely extra enterprise potential offered by plans for expansion of wilderness coverage of the National Park within a specific timescale – involving enlargement, restoration, linkage and amalgamation.

There is also official support for using the Study for other National Parks in the Czech Republic.

## **Methodology and content of Study**

As part of the preparatory process, key individuals from local communities will liaise widely within the communities over an 18 month period, to identify existing and potential enterprise opportunities from the 'wilderness agenda' which have significant potential to provide local income and employment benefits.

Content and methodology generally will be proposed by the contractors.

## **Participants**

A number of prospective participants have so far been identified at this stage – tasked with different but linked lines of approach:

### **1) Contractors**

- Lead contractor. Enterprise and funding (private and public) opportunities and instruments, support.

Roles:

- 1) An overview of enterprise opportunities
- 2) Linking this to specific businesses
- 3) Identifying requirements for strengthening local capacity
- 4) Promoting a joint approach by Sumava NP & BayerischerWald NP
- 5) A review of long-term funding opportunities related to enterprise
- 6) Assessment of enterprise potential in areas adjacent to the NP
- 7) Recommending specific actions for follow-up

Plus overseeing promotion and information collection by local personnel (two years)

- Second contractor: Macro economic, policy and institutional support (including EC, IDB, innovative funding etc).

Roles:

- 1) A review of long-term funding opportunities related to biodiversity and general support
- 2) Specific actions for follow-up, in respect of EC, government and institutional support

- Environmental Economics Group source: Ecosystem services: net calculations and mechanics of realization.

Role:

- 1) A review of long-term restoration and protection opportunities to enhance ecosystem services, particularly carbon sequestration and flood mitigation
- 2) Recommendations on securing fund-raising potential related to these.

## **Management of the Study**

The project group will be coordinated by the lead contractor appointed, in tandem with partners, with support from Wild Europe and other entities.

There will be close liaison with personnel from Sumava and Bayerischer Wald National Parks, with prospective formation of a joint project Working Group to identify key objectives, the means of achieving these and appropriate linkage to content and management of the Study.

## **Timescale**

To be discussed with contractors. This is iterative, depending on the scale and content of the project, but rapid implementation is envisaged following confirmation of appropriate funding.

Toby Aykroyd

[tobyaykroyd@wildeurope.org](mailto:tobyaykroyd@wildeurope.org)

+ 44 7793 551542