

Output Factsheet

Output title:

Quality Guidelines for Education for Sustainable Development, Nature- and Landscape-Interpretation and Sustainability Communication in the Danube basin

Summary of the output (max. 2500 characters)

LENA deals with synergies between Nature Conservation and Local Economy in the Danube Region. Therefore, water and water-influenced landscapes as well as interdependencies between societies and those landscapes are the important focuses in themes and experiences of educational activities, that are the goal of the trainings within the Danube Guide system (Danube Trainers and Danube Guides).

Persons and institutions offering environmental education have responsibility in regard to the quality and mode of implementation: Not only the content of the environmental education activities highlights the nature, environment and the necessity for protection, but also the way of its implementation reflects this philosophy. Therefore, any disturbance of nature in general or special species or negative impacts on the environment through educational activities have to be avoided.

The quality guidelines frame those goals into 10 quality-chapters: Content / Mission statement / Target Group / Marketing and Information / Methods / Qualification / Language / Accessibility / Mobility and public transport / Evaluation. Those chapters are based on the idea of sustainable development as content and guiding philosophy and on the idea that those offers support the sustainable regional development of the respective region.

A concluding check-list enables the users already to analyse existing environmental education offers or improve the quality in the planning phase of new ones.

Contribution to the project and Programme objectives (max. 1500 characters)

The guidelines should serve as common understanding and visionary quality statement that is the base for the development of the Danube Guide and Danube Guide Trainer curricula and the further implementation of the Danube Guide System.

Furthermore, the project partners are encouraged to use and implement the guidelines within their own educational work - within and beyond the LENA project.

The quality guidelines collect existing experiences and distillate it into a knowledge source that guides interested stakeholders on how environmental educational offers can successfully contribute to economic development with full respect of biodiversity, regional culture and societal processes. It is therefore a base for innovative and nature-friendly economic practices in and out-side of Protected Areas.

Transnational impact (max. 1500 characters)

The quality guidelines were developed on base of existing similar guidelines from other geographical regions or other specific focus. Feedback from the LENA project partners from all countries and DANUBEPARKS, the network of protected areas along the Danube was included.

There will be a clear transnational impact, as they have been developed in consultation on their relevance with all project partners. All comments and concerns expressed about the applicability at country level have been

considered and incorporated into the final version

- the Danube Guide system, which is based on the quality guidelines will be implemented within LENA project in at least six Danube countries. Furthermore, the continuous further development of the system including widening to other Danube countries to - at the end - cover the whole Danube area is foreseen.

- the LENA project partners and others will use the quality guidelines to check, analyse and up-grade their existing educational offer and by that increase their contribution to economic benefits for local people and a sustainable development in general within the Danube region.

Beyond the transnational approach the quality guidelines aim also on a trans-sectoral and transdisciplinary approach.

Contribution to EUSDR actions and/or targets (max. 1500 characters)

The quality guidelines contribute directly and indirectly to the objectives of PA 3 (tourism and culture) of the EUSDR. Based on the guidelines the Danube trainers and Danube guides will develop series of educational tourism offers (Target 4 - 'Develop green tourist products along the Danube region').

The guidelines (and the trainings) will enable them to develop high-quality products in the interest of different domestic and international target markets. Those touristic products will contribute to the image of the Danube region as a green, sustainable tourism destination.

Target 1 of PA 3 aims at the development of a common brand for the Danube region - here the quality guidelines can contribute with criteria for a sub-brand for eco-tourism products that focus on environmental education.

Performed testing, if applicable (max. 1000 characters)

- N/A

Integration and use of the output by the target group (max. 2000 characters)

The quality guidelines were developed on base of existing similar guidelines from other geographical regions or other specific focus. Feedback from the LENA project partners from all countries and DANUBEPARKS, the network of protected areas along the Danube was included.

The guidelines serve as base for the development of concrete touristic products by the Danube Guide and Danube Guide Trainer (trained in the next periods of the LENA project), therefore they are directly relevant (within the project) for approximately 15 Trainers and 90 guides from different Danube countries and their future touristic products (after the project).

Furthermore, the project partners are encouraged to use and implement the guidelines within their own educational work - within and beyond the LENA project. Within the development of the guidelines they expressed their willingness to do so. Specific feedback from the Danube Office Ulm (responsible PP) and the Danube Competence Centre (DCC), a multistakeholder network, based in Belgrade, for the sustainable tourism development of the whole Danube region, expressed their intention to use the guidelines in their educational projects.

Geographical coverage and transferability (max. 1500 characters)

The Guidelines will be directly used within the LENA project in the following countries, where the Danube Guide pilot model is implemented: Germany, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Bulgaria and Romania.

But eco-touristic offers based on environmental education are existing in more or less all Protected areas and in several other regions along the Danube. They provide one of the touristic sectors with the largest growth rates: therefore, high-quality is both in the interest of the tourists that buy those products and of the institutions / destinations offering such tourism products.

The guidelines have therefore relevance for the complete Danube basin and their dissemination together with the Danube Guide system will reach also countries and regions that are not covered by the project area, as e.g. DANUBEPARKS (associated partner in LENA) and the Danube Competence Centre (important external partner) have members from all Danube countries, including Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Moldova and Ukraine.

Furthermore, the guidelines are transferable beyond the Danube Guide system (and by them beyond the geographical area of the Danube basin) to all existing and future offers in the frame of environmental education or education for sustainable development.

Durability (max. 1500 characters)

The quality guidelines have been developed with a long-lasting perspective beyond the duration of the LENA project: The project will provide the institutionalisation of the Danube Guide system based on the guidelines.

Furthermore, project partners and others (e.g. DANUBEPARKS) will use the guidelines to analyse and improve their educational offers. They are encouraged to come up with suggestions and plans on how the guidelines will be promoted to and by national/regional institutions (e.g. different relevant ministries, tour operator associations, etc.)

As an example, in Bulgaria it is possible to distribution the guidelines to and through established entities, such as the Association of Parks in Bulgaria, Association of Danube Municipalities, Bulgarian Alternative Tourism Association, etc.

The Danube Office and the City of Tuttlingen plan to share and distribute the guidelines among German and Austrian partners, which deal with environmental education, e.g. BUND, Deutsche Wanderakademie, Umweltakademie etc. A concrete cooperation with WWF Austria and the project "coop-MDD" is already planned.

Synergies with other projects/ initiatives and / or alignment with current EU policies/ directives/ regulations, if applicable (max. 1500 characters)

The quality guidelines were developed on base of existing similar guidelines from other geographical regions or other specific focus, especially they are an adaptation and upgrade of similar guidelines (by the same author) of the DANUBEPARK network, there focusing only on administrated Protected Areas.

The Danube Office and the City of Tuttlingen are in contact with the project “coop-MDD” and especially WWF Austria. The project coop-MDD aims at establishing eight so called “RIVERS’COOLS”. These “RIVERS’COOLS” will serve as outdoor learning areas in which pupils of local schools, tourists or any other target groups will be informed about values of the river ecosystem. Therefore, the project team of coop-MDD is highly interested in the Danube Guide Training and the elaborated materials including the Quality Guidelines, will be shared with them. The quality guidelines of the Danube Guide system can serve as well as quality guidelines / standards for the RIVERS’COOLS. Besides, the cooperation with the project coop-MDD and the WWF Austria enables to bring the Danube Guide system to a further country.

Besides the Danube Office and the City of Tuttlingen plan to share the developed quality guidelines with regional interest groups and continuing education institutions in Baden-Württemberg, e.g. BUND, Heimat- und Wanderakademie, Umweltakademie Baden-Württemberg.

The guidelines are furthermore used in different related areas, e.g. in the development of European / international standards for mountain guides (an initiative of an Austrian tour operator); furthermore included into lectures at different universities of applied science (in BAs and MAs of tourism economy; environmental and sustainability management; and others.

Output integration in the current political/ economic/ social/ technological/ environmental/ legal/ regulatory framework (max. 2000 characters)

The quality guidelines, especially the checklist, will help to improve nature education. The future Danube Guide trainer will use the guidelines for the regional training in Germany in order to comply to the common standard of quality for the Danube guides. Furthermore, the guidelines can help to improve already existing trainings within the institution that offer education for tour guides and offer material for nature education.

An Austrian tour operator started to use them in its development process of international standards for mountain guides.