

Activity report – DCC 2010

Main activity areas

1. **Networking and partnerships**
2. **Building up the organizational body: technical, logistical and capacity set up**
3. **Capacity building of members, employees and volunteers**
4. **Research work**
5. **Promotional activities**
6. **Project development**

Due to the numerous operation fields in which DCC was active in 2010, the report focuses on the main activities undertaken by the DCC management.

The report includes the time frame from February to December 2010. Since the supporting GTZ –DCC project was established already in 2009 some of the networking activities were initiated before the official set up of the DCC.

1. **Networking and partnerships**

The idea, concept and mission of DCC as well as the planned structure was presented on several Danube conferences, i.e. in Ulm, Ruse and Novi Sad. The intention was to integrate the DCC in the Danube's political framework, to raise interest and awareness and to show, how the DCC could fit into the upcoming Danube strategy.

During international fairs the DCC was several times invited to speak at fair conferences, where the subject of regional cooperation, sustainable tourism and branding Danube were discussed. Media and possible future members got information about the DCC and their intended field of engagement. The DCC was represented on the following conferences and international tourism fairs: ITB Berlin, Reisepavillon Hanover, Global Connect Stuttgart as well as at the touristic fairs in Belgrade and Odessa.

In a number of face-to-face meetings, the DCC was presented and its field of operation discussed with other Danube and international tourism stakeholders. The DCC was during the whole year in the permanent contact and dialogue with the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), the Danube Tourism Commission, the ICPDR, the Assembly of European Regions (AER), the German Bundestag tourism council, the IUCN, the "Ulm"-Danube offices, Tourism Associations of the western (Danube) countries (i.e. DZT), EU-Representatives of the EU-Commission and EU-Parliament for the Danube, river-cruising companies, and German political foundations such as Conrad Adenauer Stiftung, Friedrich Ebert and Friedrich Nauman Stiftung.

As results of these networking activities, DCC developed a solid basis for cooperation with ICPDR, AER, IUCN and the network of Danube offices.

The Danube Tourism Commission promised to come back with a decision about their interest in cooperation after DTC General Assembly which was held on Nov. 29th and 30th 2010. The DCC offered an open partnership and shared opportunities for marketing activities, e.g. during the Brussels fair and the Iron Gate event in 2011.

2. Building up the organizational body: technical, logistical and capacity set up

In February 2010, GTZ DCC organized an initial workshop with more than 80 tourism stakeholders from the public, private and NGO sector. On this occasion, 22 partners from 6 different countries agreed and signed the founding Charter of the Danube Competence Centre (DCC). By beginning of December 2010, the number of DCC members rose on 31 active members. The set up of the organizational structure was done: guiding documents and strategic papers for DCC operational framework were developed, management resources of DCC improved, the elected Board of Directors started to work.

Thanks to the GTZ and its financial support for the start-up phase of the DCC, the membership fees for 2010 were limited to min. 200 and max. of 5,000 Euro. For the year 2011, DCC developed, with the help of an international expert, a new membership structure and strategy for funding through EU- and other donors' funds and DCC Web portal as a commercial activity.

Besides of the GTZ, the DCC got support from NTOS Serbia, providing the DCC with office facilities and CIM, providing financial support for DCC management and staff. We are working in the moment on agreements for the DCC to use the resources of local ("ULM")-Danube offices.

DCC communication priorities in 2010 were focused on increasing DCC visibility, its forms and regulations (i.e. the final DCC logo, website, application forms, fees, sales papers, promotional materials etc.).

3. Capacity building of members, employees and volunteers

In May and August 2010, the DCC organized two workshops for members, including topics such as eco-standards and EU fundraising. During the two day seminar the members worked in plenary and in working groups on developing of the regional offer. In addition to August workshop, a study tour for DCC members to Ulm, Germany, was organized. DCC members had opportunity to meet the stakeholder community of the whole Danube and got an in view of major regional event organization.

4. Research work

To provide more profound information about tourism in the middle and lower Danube, the DCC hired a number of experts to start necessary regional market researches, reports on status in nautical and ferry conditions and the international market acceptance of the region – building up a DCC database and having facts & figures for day to day activities of DCC work too.

Other DCC experts reviewed the relevant EU –calls and started to identify fundraising possibilities and strategies.

5. Promotional activities

For the promotional purposes, the DCC not only developed own marketing materials, but presented itself in the media as well. A lot of time and resources were invested into preparation and delivery of the interviews in the printed media, radio and TV – regional and international programs. The stories about DCC were published and

presented in the travel magazines and newspapers, e.g. in European Parliament Magazine, Brussels; advertisement was placed in the Dumont published travel guide - "Donau".

As already mentioned DCC in 2010 participated on the several international tourism fairs - in Belgrade, Berlin, Odessa, Sofia. In Belgrade, all DCC members had a joint booth; in Berlin, the DCC members were supported to take part in their national both as a "Danube corner", in Odessa, they organized a "round table" and in Sofia, DCC were presented through Bulgarian and Serbian members. During 2010, the DCC started to prepare its partnership (together with NTOS Serbia) with the Brussels fair (to be held from 3rd to 7th February 2011) and engagement of European partners into the DCC presentation during this event.

The preparation of the media and VIP event in June 2011 was also underway during 2010. A number of activities took place in 2010: identifying an available cruising ship, drafting the program, identifying conference partners and relevant VIPs, developing press material and network with relevant stakeholders. After the details are finalized, commercial partners will to be contacted and activity time lines and responsibilities will be established.

The media and VIP event/conference will be a part of the "Blue week" - regional event as an DCC contribution to the development of a new tourism offer in the Iron Gate region. The event will be timed around celebration of the signing of the Danube strategy and Danube Day celebration which gives great opportunities to bring different Danube stakeholders together.

6. Project development

In the reported year the DCC members decided to start developing the following pilot projects:

- children holiday camps, with DCC partners from Croatia and Serbia
- Danube Delta –nature tourism, with partners from Ukraine, Moldavia, Romania, Austria
- DCC-Web portal and brochure (joint working group from all countries)
- Hiking and biking between Bulgaria, Serbia and Romania

The DCC supported the partners of the different pilots with in organizing the workshops and other activities (logistical support and expertise). Additionally DCC started to develop a project application system and prepare the initial draft of the forms for new projects and identified the financial sources for project activities in the DCC for the following years.

Beside this, the DCC was advising some members in preparing EU-application (RSDP2) and planning small scale investments.