

PRINCIPLES FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN PROTECTED AREAS

Underlying aims of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas

- *To increase awareness of, and support for, Europe's protected areas as a fundamental part of our heritage, which should be preserved for, and enjoyed by, current and future generations.*
- *To improve the sustainable development and management of tourism in protected areas, which takes account of the needs of the environment, local residents, local businesses and visitors.*

The Charter Principles for Sustainable Tourism

Working in partnership

- 1** *To involve all those implicated by tourism in and around the protected area in its development and management.*

A permanent forum, or equivalent arrangement, should be established between the protected area authority, local municipalities, conservation and community organisations and representatives of the tourism industry. Links with regional and national bodies should be developed and maintained.

Preparing and implementing a strategy

- 2** *To prepare and implement a sustainable tourism strategy and action plan for the protected area.*

The strategy should be based on careful consultation and be approved and understood by local stakeholders. It should contain:

- A definition of the area to be influenced by the strategy, which may extend outside the protected area
- An assessment of the area's natural, historic and cultural heritage, tourism infrastructure, and economic and social circumstances; considering issues of capacity, need and potential opportunity
- An assessment of current visitors and potential future markets
- A set of strategic objectives for the development and management of tourism, covering:
 - ***conservation and enhancement of the environment and heritage;***
 - ***economic and social development;***
 - ***preservation and improvement of the quality of life of local residents;***
 - ***visitor management and enhancement of the quality of tourism offered.***
- An action plan to meet these objectives
- An indication of resources and partners to implement the strategy
- Proposals for monitoring results

Addressing key issues

Each protected area is different. Strategic priorities and action programmes should be determined locally, using the approach described above. However, the following key issues should be addressed:

- 3** *To protect and enhance the area's natural and cultural heritage, for and through tourism, and to protect it from excessive tourism development*

by:

- monitoring impact on flora and fauna and controlling tourism in sensitive locations
- encouraging activities, including tourism uses, which support the maintenance of historic heritage, culture and traditions

- controlling and reducing activities, including tourism impacts, which: adversely affect the quality of landscapes, air and water; use non-renewable energy; and create unnecessary waste and noise
- encouraging visitors and the tourism industry to contribute to conservation

4 To provide all visitors with a high quality experience in all aspects of their visit,
by:

- researching the expectations and satisfaction of existing and potential visitors
- meeting the special needs of disadvantaged visitors
- supporting initiatives to check and improve the quality of facilities and services

5 To communicate effectively to visitors about the special qualities of the area,
by:

- ensuring that the promotion of the area is based on authentic images, and is sensitive to needs and capacity at different times and in different locations
- providing readily available and good quality visitor information in and around the area, and assisting tourism enterprises to do so
- providing educational facilities and services that interpret the area's environment and heritage to visitors and local people, including groups and schools

6 To encourage specific tourism products which enable discovery and understanding of the area,
by:

- providing and supporting activities, events and packages involving the interpretation of nature and heritage

7 To increase knowledge of the protected area and sustainability issues amongst all those involved in tourism,
by:

- providing or supporting training programmes for staff of the protected area, other organisations and tourism enterprises, based on assessing training needs

8 To ensure that tourism supports and does not reduce the quality of life of local residents,
by:

- involving local communities in the planning of tourism in the area
- ensuring good communication between the protected area, local people and visitors
- identifying and seeking to reduce any conflicts that may arise

9 To increase benefits from tourism to the local economy,
by:

- promoting the purchase of local products (food, crafts, local services) by visitors and local tourism businesses
- encouraging the employment of local people in tourism

10 To monitor and influence visitor flows to reduce negative impacts,
by:

- keeping a record of visitor numbers over time and space, including feedback from local tourism enterprises
- creating and implementing a visitor management plan
- promoting use of public transport, cycling and walking as an alternative to private cars
- controlling the siting and style of any new tourism development

SIGNED:

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