



EUROPARC

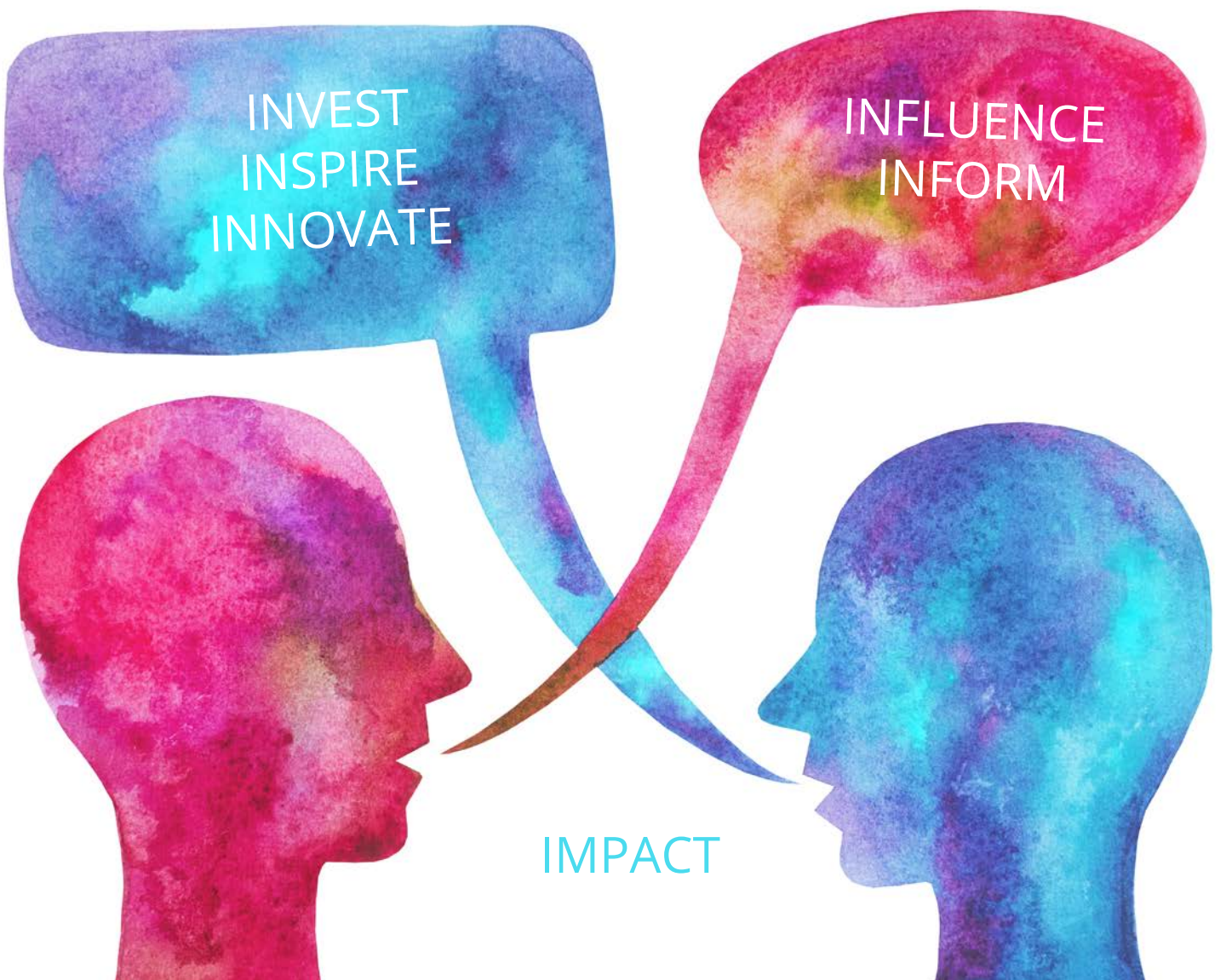
Strategy

TO 2030

INVEST
INSPIRE
INNOVATE

INFLUENCE
INFORM

IMPACT





EUROPARC
F E D E R A T I O N

The EUROPARC Federation is the voice of its members: our members are the voice of Protected Areas across Europe.

As the principal organisation representing those who work in and for Protected Areas, this strategy reflects their needs and aspirations. EUROPARC is uniquely placed to deliver the changes required to improve our natural and cultural heritage and people's connection to it – we do this by working at political and at policy levels and by improving management practice.

This strategy gives focus and direction to our work to strengthen and grow our network in size and influence. Also, the strategy provides a framework to build further on the unique partnerships, participation and professional development that membership of the Federation provides.



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Through this strategy we will

Invest in our staff, our members' skills and capacities and our inputs to projects and programmes to help take forward our goals and bring added-value to our members and partners.

Inspire our members, other organisations and wider society to value Protected Areas and join us in partnership with exciting networking events and communications.

Innovate continuous development and take forward the practice of Protected Areas management by seeking new ways to advance our goals, engage, communicate with and provide training.

Influence political and policy decision-makers to ensure that the values and benefits of Protected Areas are recognised and integrated in their work.

Inform our members, partners and colleagues across sectors about progress, how to participate and get involved in our work.

Our strategy will result in actions that will lead to positive change across all areas of our work.

These IMPACTS will be the OUTCOMES of our strategy by 2030.

Where are we now?

A short summary of the current Strategy from 2015 to 2021.

The EUROPARC Federation Strategy to 2021 saw a renewal of the commitment to build on the legacy inherited from our almost 50 year history. Our membership has grown and with Fedenatur coming into our organisation, we joined forces with the periurban parks.

Working Together - Building our Organisation

We renewed our internal governance, strengthened the role of sections and instigated new ways of working with the Directorate, which now operates over 6 countries. In particular, we invested in new, innovative and effective communications and embraced the changes in technology to create new online services to members. The work of the Federation was delivered by a wider range of actors with new task forces and commissions bringing in member expertise. Sections within EUROPARC have fulfilled a greater role, taking part in projects, leading in conferences and being the interface of European issues for regional and national members.

Working for Nature

Our lobbying work has grown across multiple agendas from human-large carnivore interaction, to sustainable agriculture and the Youth Manifesto. Our investment in relationship building and passionate advocacy has increased our status and ensured that EUROPARC is now regarded as the “go-to” professional body for European organisations for inputs and advice on matters relating to the work of Protected Areas.

Helping People and Organisations Learn

Throughout the 2015-2021 strategy, we created greater opportunities to complement core member services by securing projects in areas that reflect members' priorities, such as capacity building, green energy, sustainable tourism, sustainable regional development and the work of Regional Nature Landscape parks.

A multitude of webinars, seminars, often with the generous support of the Alfred Toeper Stiftung at Siggen, conferences and workshops, have ensured that members can share, learn and work together. We have skillfully managed the move online in response to COVID19, attracting larger audiences than ever.

Promoting Sustainability - Role of Protected Areas in Sustainable Development

The established programmes of The Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas and Transboundary have been refreshed and Junior Rangers has been complemented with a Youth + programme. A new Healthy Parks Healthy People Europe programme and toolkit has been created. We have advanced our advocacy work on sustainable agriculture, in particular gaining stronger recognition about the need to have environmental organisations as a necessary part in the creation of national strategic plans.

EUROPARC has survived challenging financial times and the tumultuous impact of the coronavirus pandemic: the long-term effects of COVID will take us well into the period of the next Strategy.

Nature knows no boundaries and during the period of the current strategy EUROPARC has remained committed to facilitating international cooperation in all aspects of Protected Area management. Through networking, advancing policy and practice, sharing best practices and developing new solutions to the challenges of Protected Area management, we will continue to deliver our vision of Sustainable Nature: Valued by People and ensure that the value of Protected Areas is recognised at the heart of Europe.

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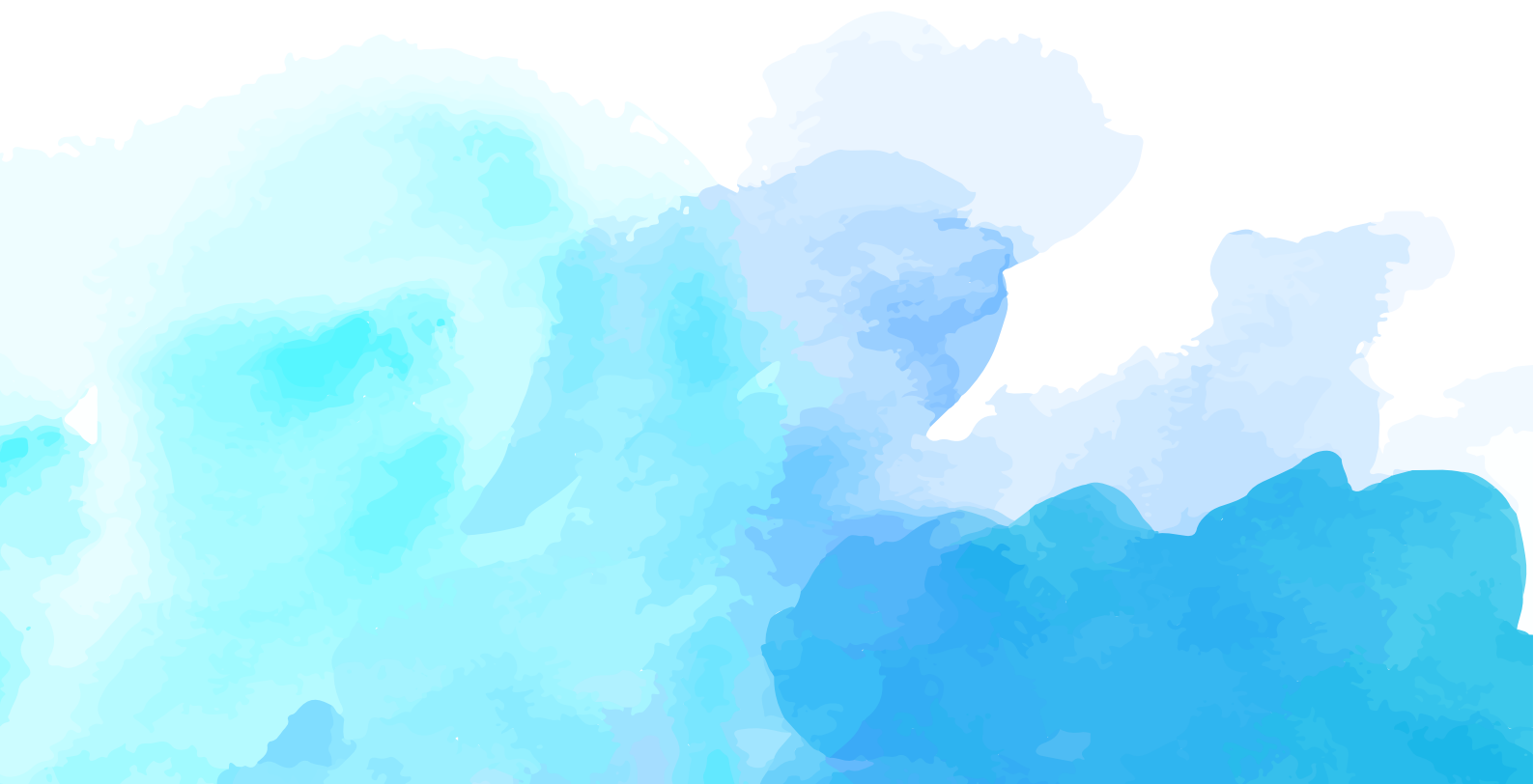


What was our process?

As EUROPARC enters its 5th decade, we embarked on an ambitious consultation exercise to ensure members could express their needs and wishes for a new strategy. This was due to start in Spring 2020, just as lockdowns were happening all over Europe. Thankfully our investment in technology paved the way for the entire consultation to take place online. The process engaged with 77% of member countries through the various consultation processes, with additional input from sections.

The strategy reflects how we might build the EUROPARC Federation for the future, endeavouring to scan the horizon for trends and challenges ahead.

Naturally, the strategy takes a “big-picture-view” of the Federation, showing the areas we will work across and what will be achieved overall. As the strategy timescale has been extended to cover the period to 2030, indicative 3 year work programmes will be produced, with annual work plans giving more details, whilst yet allowing for a flexible and opportunistic approach to the complexities and vagaries of changing conditions and the need to identify resources.





Who is this strategy for?

This strategy is for the EUROPARC Federation and is based on the extensive consultation with members. It is a mechanism to bring clarity to the purpose of our organisation and to enable us to discover “imaginative” means to achieve our mission and vision.

The strategy too, is important for our partners and funders to understand better who we are and support our work. The strategy is both aspirational and inspirational and will enable EUROPARC to show area of mutual interest with other sectors that intersect with Protected Areas. It will enable us to build on exiting patnership and create new alliances that will forward a shared vision for people and nature.

The success of the strategy will require the involvement all parts of EUROPARC including the Council, Directorate, Sections, Commission and other structure by which members can shares, utlise and expand their expertise.

The strategy is the basis of the work of the Directorate, determining priorities and investment in human and financial resources. The strategy gives direction to the development of projects that will deliver outcomes that benefit all members of the Federation and will enable Sections to align their national and regional work.

The EUROPARC Council has ultimate ownership of the strategy and oversees the work of the Directorate who accomplish it on behalf of the Council and the membership. All annual workplans and 3- year work programmes are derived from the strategy and annual reports will inform the members of progress in achieving the strategic goals.

Throughout the implementation of the strategy, we will seek to inspire, innovate, invest, influence and inform in order to have the IMPACT we seek for our Parks and the People who live and work in them.

What is our operating context over the next decade?

The Journey to 2030

The world in which we live is increasingly complex and constantly changing: more than ever before, Protected Areas have to deal with complex climate, natural, societal, technological and political changes and their associated effects.

With the spectrum of tasks, demands and expectations upon Protected Areas' management seemingly more challenging than ever, management responses increasingly need to be proactive and clear. This requires Protected Areas' staff to have much greater awareness of wider trends: they need to be equipped with tools and skills for faster responses and have a willingness to test scenarios in new situations, whilst doing this within nervous political systems that do not tolerate mistakes.

The EUROPARC Federation must also navigate this demanding environment as an international NGO supporting the needs of its membership. Within a context of increasing uncertainties, especially when sudden change can overwhelm, EUROPARC is needed more than ever to provide support, developing skills and exchange of best practises that build vital capacities, through the network.

Through our common endeavour, we will continue to increase resilience, create innovation and find new solutions for the Protected Areas community.



This new strategy, developed by the EUROPARC members, sets the framework for that to take place.

Currently, and just prior to COVID, Global, European, EU and National policymakers had formulated policies and strategies such as CBD Aichi Targets, UN SDGs, climate treaties, and the EU Green Deal with the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030. Many are under revision, adjusting their goals for recent and forecasted trends. This is the world that Protected Areas inhabit: now and in future, EUROPARC will monitor the development and revision of global, European and EU policies closely and strive to ensure that the role of Protected Areas is increasingly recognised and is greater in prominence.

The EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, 'Bringing Nature back into our lives', should transform "30% of Europe's lands and seas into effectively managed protected areas". Protected Areas should be the major driver for nature management in Europe, empowered to utilise experiences gained so far and to share and extend that knowledge widely across sectors. Biodiversity loss remains critical, but does not yet appear to have societal consensus, and lacks action and knowledge.

Protected Areas must not become islands disconnected from wider cultural and natural landscapes or from people and we need to clearly identify and communicate our role in tackling the climate and biodiversity crises.

At the same time, Sustainable Development Goals and CBD 30:30 implementation are gaining increasing political traction and again will position Protected Areas in the centre of action.

Protected Areas need to be at the forefront in protecting nature, restoring what is degraded and connecting what is fragmented.

Protected Areas will actively contribute to bringing back the adaptive capacity of communities and territories to face the climate change and nature emergencies that will dominate the next decade.

Where do we want to be by 2030

Our members support a forward-looking view of Protected Areas in Europe.

Through delivering the ambitions and outcomes of our strategy, we want our Protected Areas to be:

- Valued by society at political, policy and personal levels for the many ecosystem services they deliver, ensuring that citizens are informed, engaged and enabled to contribute to sustainable society.
- Staying true to their core values, Protected Areas are recognised for the added-value they provide in terms of benefits to society's health and wealth and are seen as natural health centres for improving health and well-being for all, regardless of background or income.
- Included as vital contributors to green recovery, locally, regionally and nationally, not only as sustainable tourism destinations, but as catalysts of regional sustainable development and sustainable agriculture, forestry and fishing.
- Increased in range and effectiveness by appropriate designations and management agreements on land and sea. Protected Areas are recognised at global, European and EU policy levels as effective tools to deliver integrated management processes which ensure that healthy and sufficient life support systems are realised and resourced, and where biodiversity is thriving and restored.

- Recognised as being critical to address the interlinked climate and nature emergencies.
- Appropriately managed and resourced with well-trained staff, cooperating to commonly agreed goals, with differing sectors and across national boundaries, and able to support communities across living working landscapes, that protect and conserve biodiversity and provide opportunities for enjoyment and learning.
- Across all Protected Areas **local communities and stakeholders are proactively involved in the decision-making processes** governing the Protected Area. As the next generation, young people will be supported to engage actively at all levels.

The EUROPARC Federation itself, will be a thriving, resilient and sustainable organisation, with active member participation across all its work areas, recognised for its inspirational leadership and innovative communications.

It will deliver capacity-building and networking that result in increased recognition of the value and benefits of Protected Areas politically and across the policy framework.

The Federation will generate tangible improvements in Protected Areas management practices vital to enhanced conservation of our shared natural and cultural heritage as Sustainable Nature is Valued by People.



Our Principles

Cooperative

To learn and work with each other across Europe in order to develop and innovate Protected Area management.

Enjoyable

To create fun and useful networking experiences where cultural and professional barriers can best be overcome and positive approaches to common issues developed.

Inclusive

To actively listen and engage in all aspects of our operations, ensuring we treat everyone with respect, care and empathy and are equal, fair and welcoming in our actions.

Sustainable

To track the impacts that the work of our organisation has on the natural and cultural heritage and seek to maximise innovative solutions and practices.

Excellence

To adopt the practise of continual improvement by providing networking opportunities for learning that offer and develop an understanding of best practice across all areas of our activities.

We believe it is important that our work is underpinned by a set of values that should permeate our organisation.

All the work of the strategy has been identified in order to accomplish the mission and work towards the vision. We will also ensure that the set of values promoted by EUROPARC is embedded in both what we do and how we do it. These underpin the ethos of the Federation and are central to our corporate thinking and actions.

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Our Vision

Sustainable
Nature,
Valued by People

In order to describe succinctly and encapsulate our aspiration as an organisation we have condensed our thinking into a vision, mission and strategy.

Our vision is that Europe's natural and cultural heritage should be protected, managed and restored and that people, through their actions and choices, value Nature. This is the collective ambition of EUROPARC members who will support, champion and deliver actions that contribute to that vision.

To improve and champion the policy and practice of Protected Areas to ensure that our natural and cultural heritage is protected and enhanced for current and future generations.

Our Mission

Our Strategy

With the complex deliberations arising from the members consultation, a simple strategy structure showing what we are seeking to achieve, the tools we will utilise and how we will measure the impacts of our work has been devised.

The **STRATEGIC GOALS** are the elaboration of the ambitions of the members across 4 areas in which the EUROPARC Federation has competency to operate. These relate to not only to how we function as an organisation, but what we seek to do on behalf of our members and what we do collectively as a community of Protected Areas. This effort is to further the bigger vision of a Sustainable Nature, resilient, thriving, well-managed and resourced within and outwith Protected Areas that are Valued by People who recognise the consequence of societal choices on nature and make changes to address that.

These strategic goals have been divided into a series of **THEMES**. These are areas of work that enable the Federation to align with relevant policy and practices that are relevant to Protected Areas. The **OUTCOMES** are descriptions of the final results of the work we will have delivered to achieve the goals and have the desired impacts we are seeking.

To achieve these **OUTCOMES**, EUROPARC has a number of **TOOLS** at our disposal. These “tools” are what we deploy to do the work we do. They are what members and other external stakeholders will most often recognise and see in action. These tools are:

- Communications
- Networking and Capacity Building,
- Governance,
- Lobbying and Policy engagement, Development of Projects and Programmers

By utilising these tools across the spectrum of the themes of the strategy, and indeed by developing HOW these tools will themselves be improved, we describe how we will work to achieve our goals.

Our Strategic Goals to 2030

1 Strengthen and grow our network to deliver our vision.

The virtual world is here to stay and we will utilise its potential to connect and equip our members, whilst reinforcing the bonds we will make when face-to-face. As a family of European parks, we stay and stand united as we Strengthen and grow our network. EUROPARC will continue to embrace the change in how we and our members work, with new digital tools, reinstating the importance of international cooperation and connection as well as ensuring a place for our youth to be involved.

Through our networking and convening platforms, during the period of the strategy EUROPARC will seek to work with our members to generate collective foresight for Protected Areas policy and practice. By being open to an approach of continual development, we will stimulate new ways of thinking and learning from each other that will enable different ways in which our shared future can unfold.

Protected Areas need not be passive bystanders of a future shaped by others, but be empowered to bring to bear the huge experience, wisdom and potential of the biggest Protected Area network to shape that future themselves.

2 Strengthen the Status of Protected Areas for a Stronger more Sustainable Nature.

In response to environmental and societal challenges, including climate change, health and well-being and the green recovery, the role of Protected Areas needs to be fully recognised with improved investment in and the people and place resources. EUROPARC will look for financing models that will help Protected Areas lever both public and private investments for linked agendas on climate change mitigation, restoration and biodiversity.

Change will continue to be a theme of the coming decade as Protected Areas respond to new EU policies on climate, biodiversity and agriculture and of course the response to COVID-19 - these all warrant new skills and capacities from Protected Areas.

The choices we make now, about where we invest our time and resources as Protected Area managers, will determine the future landscape within which we work.

3 Enhance the status of nature on land and sea and people's connection to it.

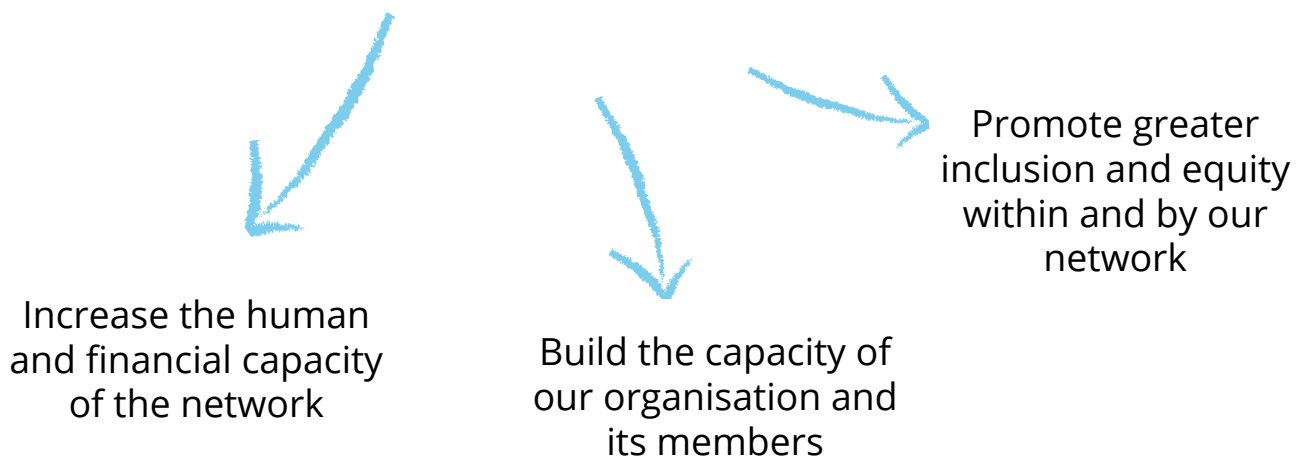
Being able to provide ways in which people are more and better connected to nature in sustainable ways, we will contribute to a society where equity to access and enjoy nature are no longer hoped for goals but are achieved in practice.

This EUROPARC strategy will seek to build individual and organisational capacity to enhance the status of nature on land and sea and people's connection to it.

4 Promote sustainable development tools and approaches for people and nature.

As a framework, this strategy will ensure that the Parks and Protected Areas of Europe can and should be the Change Makers of the Future - for the future of our climate, our biodiversity and the health of our Parks, Protected Areas and our People, so that we can fully realise a Sustainable Nature: Valued by People and Championed by EUROPARC members.

1 Strengthen and grow our network to deliver our vision



THEMES

OUTCOMES

Increase the human and financial capacity of the network

- The membership of EUROPARC has grown by at least 30% net, with more marine protected areas becoming members.
- The organisation will have diversified its income, with at least 10% coming from corporate funding, and will be more financially sustainable.
- EUROPARC has a sustainable and sustained Directorate with capacity to meet members' expectations and build on current strengths.
- Operating processes, training and skill-sets to ensure strong governance at all levels of the organisation have been refreshed and delivered.


Build the capacity of our organisation and its members

- EUROPARC has created a centre of excellence on Protected Area capacity building, delivering online and blended learning opportunities for all EUROPARC members.
- Networking, on and offline, across the membership remains integral to EUROPARC's work.
- The governance of our organisation is strengthened by developing the role and contribution of Sections and ensuring opportunities for direct member participation across the Federation's work.

Promote greater inclusion and equity within and by our network

- The principles of the Federation are embedded in work programmes and organisational processes and procedures.
- Following a review, gathering and promotion of best practice and new alliances with inclusion and equality groups on this issue, EUROPARC and its members are more reflective and inclusive of wider society in their management and visitor profile.

2 Strengthen the Status of Protected Areas for a Stronger more Sustainable Nature



Champion the value and benefits of Protected Areas in response to environmental and societal challenges



Develop and nurture cross-sectoral partnerships



THEMES

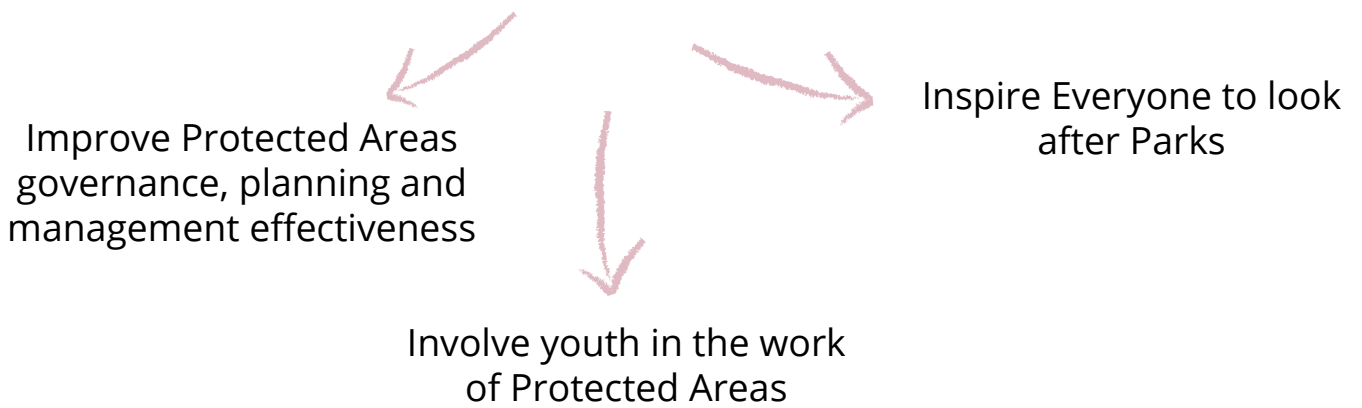
Champion the value and benefits of Protected Areas in response to environmental and societal challenges

- The status of Protected Areas, ecosystems and biodiversity conservation is identifiably improved and strengthened through good governance, improved legal frameworks and political acceptance.
- The visibility, functions and roles of Protected Areas has been highlighted to policy and decision makers, through enhanced advocacy, ensuring, protected areas will have contributed to policy and implementation of international, EU or other regional, and national targets for Protected Areas.
- Financial investment and management practices have been improved through considering, in particular, financing and implementation at both the Protected Area and national Protected Area network levels.

Develop and nurture cross-sectoral partnerships

- There will be more alliances and cooperation on management, in particular in transboundary areas across geopolitical boundaries.
- Allies in new sectors for dialogue and change and to connect people to nature will result in a broadened and strengthened connections directly relevant for Protected Areas' work and networks: new guidance and tools will be created for Protected Areas to create new alliances at a local level.
- Partnerships with key land and marine sectors will be built and enhanced.
- Protected Areas will have an enhanced role in supporting sustainable agricultural policies and practice.

3 Enhance the status of nature on land and sea and people's connection to it



THEMES

OUTCOMES

Improve Protected Areas governance, planning and management effectiveness

- The competency and capacity of those working across Protected Areas management is improved, specifically by creating a new accessible online centre of excellence.
- Protected Areas on land and sea are better managed, have adaptive management plans and monitoring tools in place that support measurement of management effectiveness.
- There is more strategic cooperation and networking between Protected Areas to enable networking and sharing best practice.
- Protected Areas apply good governance and stakeholder engagement to ensure sufficient participation in decision-making and management of the Protected Areas.

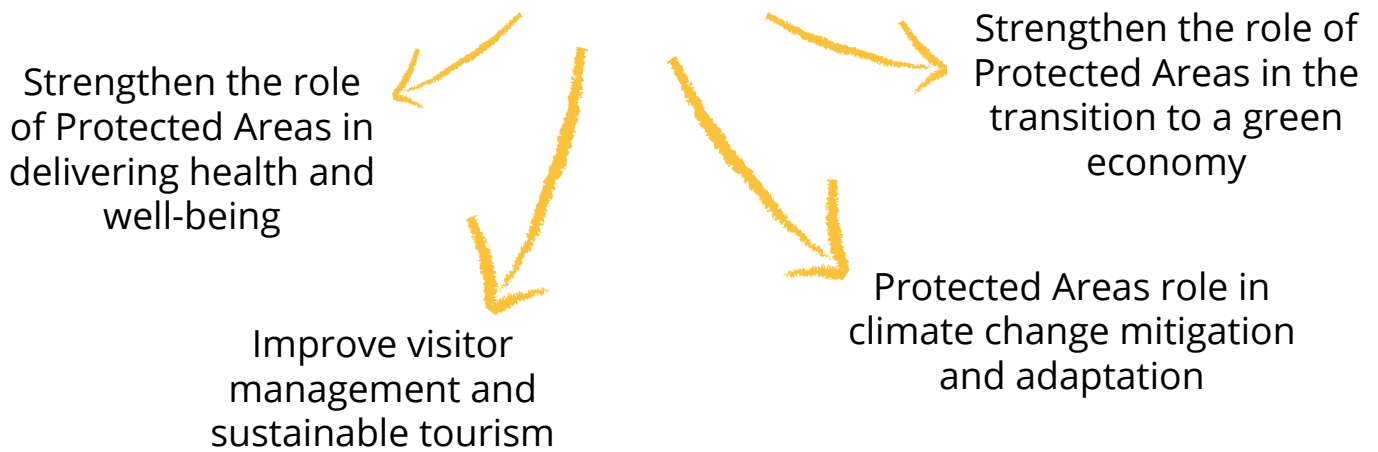
Involve youth in the work of Protected Areas

- Youth are engaged in decision making and delivery across all areas of Protected Area work integral to our work.
- Youth+ and Junior Rangers are experienced ambassadors and advocates for biodiversity in protected areas, and for taking forward the youth manifesto, through taking part in on and offline capacity building networking and training.
- EUROPARC Youth have been given opportunities to represent their views at European policy and decision makers.

Inspire Everyone to look after Parks

- More citizens across Europe are increasingly aware of the role of Protected Areas in Society.
- People across Europe are more aware and have an interest in Protected Areas through engagement with European Day of Parks.
- Protected Areas are competent to encourage and manage volunteering and citizen science activities.
- Through enhanced networking to share and innovate good practices, interpretation and parks' communications are refreshed and speak to people from all backgrounds: by applying messaging that does not inadvertently exclude, but invites participation by all people, will encourage new sectors of society to visit and enjoy protected areas and know more about their work.
- Environmental education in and by Protected Areas is better linked to regular school practice that helps connect greater numbers of young people to nature and encourages positive pro-environmental behaviours, skills and careers.

4 Promote sustainable development tools and approaches for people and nature



THEMES

OUTCOMES

Strengthen the role of Protected Areas in delivering health and well-being

→ Better health outcomes for society and better investment in parks that help deliver it, by connecting with the health sector through the **Healthy Parks Healthy People Europe** network.

Improve visitor management and sustainable tourism

→ Sustainable Tourism is thriving as a result of new strategies, guidance and processes developed and implemented through the Charter of Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas.

→ Recreation and Sport in Protected Areas is well managed and communication through collaborative work with relevant organisations

→ Visitor management and biodiversity carrying capacity, particular in periurban parks is better understood with management practice and tools devised to support managers.

Protected Areas role in climate change mitigation and adaptation

→ The role of Protected Areas in climate change mitigation and adaptation has been demonstrate and promoted, with new tools, models and approaches to support managers created.

→ Parks are able to create a carbon budget and adopt model sustainable practices in their own management that have contributed to further implementation of SDGs and EU Green Deal goals.

Strengthen the role of Protected Areas in the transition to a well-being economy

→ New thinking and practices developed about the role that Protected Areas play in providing jobs and sustaining healthy and resilient communities across Europe have been developed and implemented.

→ Natural capital accounting by Protected Areas as a means to better capture the value of the ecosystems services they provide has been utilised.

Tools

EUROPARC TOOLS that will deliver the strategy.

Communications

This will include all internal and external on and offline media, by which we use to create and disseminate information across our networks. **This means our Website, Social media, Print and publications, Video and graphics, Online meeting and conferencing.**

Throughout the strategy we will seek to ensure our communications remain high quality, relevant and inspiring to our members, with messaging that engages the audiences we seek to work with. We will be alert to new media and utilise that as appropriate. At the commencement of the strategy, a new communications plan will be generated which will guide the communications outputs of EUROPARC.

Networking and capacity building

Sharing learning and working together are integral to the work of EUROPARC. They build knowledge, skills and capacity in the staff who work for Protected Areas, as well as progress a sense of a shared natural and cultural heritage through international cooperation. So, we will continue to advance, improve, diversify the networking and capacity building opportunities for members, both on and offline, throughout the period of the strategy.

To do this we will:

- Build and utilise the membership database as a mechanism to produce more specific content for members
- Continue to develop the eNatura2000 app as an online forum of exchange for members
- Further produce online Webinars, conferences and other types of events
- Create in person workshops, seminars and conferences at a European and regional /national level with EUROPARC sections
- Build the online 'European Natura Academy' and continue to innovate in the delivery of capacity building for members, in multiple languages.

Governance

Governance is the concerned with structures and processes for decision-making, accountability and management of our Federation. Over the course of the strategy, we will review and adapt the work of the Council and Sections to ensure that good governance models are applied and create participatory structures that enable the expertise of members to be utilised in forming policy and programmes. In so doing, a common approach to the ambitions of the strategy will be achieved.

Governance will consider:

- The work of Council
- Ensuring that the role of youth is integrated throughout the work of the Federation
- Integration of Sections and relations between members, Sections and the Federation
- The creation of member-led Commissions, Task Forces and other Structures

Lobbying & policy engagement

EUROPARC works across multiple European and national organisations to highlight the importance of Protected Areas and the need to include biodiversity conservation, restoration and climate policies in all major European programmes. We also look to ensure that the role of Protected Areas in rural development is recognised and seek support for the work of our members. To this end, we will continue to seek funds that support the policy work based from the Brussels office and to work across all themes indicated in the strategy.

At the commencement of the strategy a new lobbying and advocacy plan will be developed and implemented across the strategy period. The role of Sections and members will be enhanced and elaborated in this plan.

Programmes

EUROPARC already operates a number of successful and mature programmes and these will continue and be further developed over the course of the strategy, ensuring that they are aligned to our strategic goals. We will review all programmes to ensure their relevance and that they are 'fit for purpose' for Protected Areas. Further, we will seek to develop new programmes that are relevant and useful for Protected Areas and take forward the goals of our strategy.

They include:

- European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas
- Transboundary Parks Programme Following Natures Design
- Healthy Parks Healthy People Europe
- Junior Rangers and Youth +
- European Day of Parks
- Sustainable Agriculture
- Periurban Parks
- Climate Change working group



Projects

The strategy will give guidance to the types of projects EUROPARC will develop. There is of course never any guarantee of funding; however, working with Sections and members, we will develop projects at European and national levels that deliver the goals of the strategy.



**We do not
see nature
with our eyes,
but with our
understandings
and our hearts.**

William Hazlitt

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