

PARKS & BENEFITS - Generating socio-economic effects by a sustainable management of protected areas for the benefit of their regions

Project Title: Parks & Benefits - Baltic Protected Areas and Tourism
Period: February 2009 to January 2012
Donor: Part financed by EU - Baltic Sea Region Programme



Background:

The **Baltic Sea Region (BSR)** holds many sites of typical Baltic or even outstanding natural heritage which are preserved in protected areas. When Nature Tourism respects their conservation and development objectives, it has the potential to be an important and sustainable element of regional economies within and around these protected areas.

Up to now this economic potential is on the one hand underdeveloped and offers vast possibilities for the development of tourism, of public-private partnerships and improved nature conservation. At the same time can existing economic performance be widely underestimated, which often results in misled discussions and prejudices about the use of nature protection. On the other hand all stakeholders within regions with protected areas need to practice cooperation and communication on an equal footing for truly sustainable development.

Aims:

PARKS & BENEFITS wants to ensure the sustainable regional development in eight large protected areas in six countries around the Baltic Sea. The project's main instrument will be the transfer of the "European Charter For Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas" to the Baltic Sea Region and its joint implementation in National, Regional and Nature Parks and a Biosphere Reserve.

PARKS & BENEFITS will research and point out the economic, ecological and social benefits of sustainable tourism for both the parks and the regional stakeholders. Among the results there will be a network of protected areas around the Baltic Sea, new nature tourism products and enlarged commitment of citizens and tourism entrepreneurs to the Charter and their protected Parks.

Organization and Partners:

PARKS & BENEFITS is a 1st round “Baltic Sea Region Programme” project, running from February 2009 to January 2012.

PARKS & BENEFITS partnership consists of 18 partners from 6 different BSR countries: It is built by 8 large protected areas across the BSR, regional authorities, stakeholders in tourism and environment and academic institutions.

The network is lead by the *Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Environment and Consumer Protection of Mecklenburg Vorpommern- DE* and backed by *EUROPARC Federation* as European umbrella organization and strategic project partner.

For more information on the PAME Europe project and related information, please visit the project website <http://www.parksandbenefits.net/> or contact [Diana Gallrapp](mailto:d.gallrapp@europarc.org) (d.gallrapp@europarc.org).