



Access for all to protected areas – the PARKS & BENEFITS approach

Experiencing unspoiled nature has become one of the most important leisure and holiday activities in our fast moving every-day-life in a mostly cemented surrounding. But what most people enjoy very easily and in different activity forms provides a barrier for those who have got a physical handicap either in mobility or perception. Those who are dependent to wheelchair fail at sandy or muddy paths as well as steps and stairs. Blind people do fail at only visually provided information and have severe difficulties to orientate themselves within nature or a building. For deaf people the audio information in communication situations, in guided tours and nature films is not accessible. Whereas people with limited cognitive skills cannot percept sophisticated language with many technical expressions.

There are a large number of barriers for people with a handicap. Against the background of an aging society it is not the special solution for specific groups of handicapped people that is needed but a planning that considers “accessibility for all”. This is the barrier free approach the partners of the PARKS & BENEFITS project have applied in their project activities. The partnership provided a perfect opportunity to develop and test blue print solutions of an improved infrastructure within the protected areas adapted to the needs of handicapped and elderly people. The result is a set of guidelines, which highlights needs and demands regarding barrier-free solutions in nature areas, the criteria for infrastructure solutions to guarantee the accessibility of the park, the mobility within and the barrier-free usability of its attractions and furniture. It furthermore includes best-practices of different outdoor and indoor solutions.

[Download the set of guidelines](#)