

EUROPARC Federation



Report to Council

September 30th 2010

Title:

Working Groups

Summary :

Following the call for new EUROPARC working groups, 4 have submitted plans for action . The guidelines for the operation of working groups have also been revised in light of the outcomes of the Siggen meeting.

Recommendations :

Approve the guidelines for EUROPARC working groups and the formation of these working groups.

EUROPARC Federation Working Groups Paper

General Assembly 2010

Creation of working groups 2010

Following the adoption of the guidelines for working groups (Annex 1) by the EUROPARC council in Sept 09, information was sent to member to gauge interest in the setting up of working groups to take forward the work of the Federation.

Expressions of interest from members were noted in the following subject areas: climate change and biodiversity, health, sustainable tourism, economic and ecosystems, wilderness, Natura 2000, transboundary protected areas and lobbying.

Each working group was mandated to examine subjects of relevance to protected areas in Europe and deliver activities and output that would benefit the wider membership. The working groups session in Siggen in July helped formulate draft workplans for those groups attending. These will be available on the EUROPARC website when finalized.

Proposals to amend the statutes and regulation of the Federation to reflect the creation and role of working groups will be put to the General Assembly at its meeting in Pescasseroli in September 2010.

Following further discussions with EUROPARC Council in its March and June meetings, and the submission of action plans the working groups in Table 1 below have now officially been established.

Other working groups still in development include:

- Economic and Ecosystems
- Natura 2000
- Climate change and biodiversity

The Lobbying Forum of the Federation was established after the workshop in Montagne de Reims and will take forward the Lobbying plan.

The standing evaluation committees for the Charter and Transboundary will remain. These are chaired by Patrizia Rossi (It) and Martin Šolar (SL) respectively.

All working groups activities will be reported by the Directorate in the annual report to members, and an annual meeting of working group chairs, section and council is proposed to facilitate strategic planning.

Working group are established for two years and subject to a review by the EUROPARCC council after that time.

Table 1: EUROPARC working groups that now officially exist

Working Group	Chair	Outputs for EUROPARC members	EUROPARC council member representative	Comments
Health and Protected areas	Matti Tapaninen, Metsahallitus(Finland) or Lyn Crowe, Sheffield Hallam University (UK)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to an increased collected body of knowledge on health and protected areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Desktop study of existing work and good practical examples. ○ Communication through eg. Workshops at conference 2010. • One post-2012 goal is to make a toolkit/guidelines to be used by protected area managers, practitioners. Show how Healthy Parks Healthy People concepts can be integrated into Protected Area management. • Access to a network – extending beyond the protected area sector. • Contacts with health sector. Communication of collated existing work to health sector. • Increase awareness of protected area’s contribution to health – within the health sector, among the general public, etc – increasing the interest in protected areas. 	Rolands Auzins	
Sustainable Tourism	To be agreed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing, evaluating and piloting the methodology of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas especially in Charter Part 1 and 2; • Designing a Capacity Building program for members and partners on Charter; • Updating and stabilizing the EUROPARC organisation on communication and networking the Charter; Designing the lobbying & marketing methods and schedules for events and actions with/about the Charter; 	Paulo Castro	This is separate from the Charter evaluation committee

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European level coordination of quality development for ecotourism/sustainable nature tourism together with valid partners; • Designing on EU level Project development including external fund raising. 		
Transboundary	Martin Solar (To be agreed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing Transboundary projects • Identifying funding sources for the Tranboundary work of the Federation • Producing promotional material for certification and TransParcNet • Coordination with other Working Groups • Lobbying for cross border funding • Capacity building across Europe • Expertise exchange 	To be agreed	Separate from the Transboundary evaluation committee)
Wilderness		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to development of the Wilderness Register, advising on criteria and functions of the software that will be developed for the Register • Identify funding for future wilderness management support and training • Contribute to the Wilderness conference in Brussels 2010 • Input into the Development of the Wild Europe website 	Erica Stanciu	Set up in partnership by WWF, PAN Parks and EUROPARC Federation. Funding achieved for work through Wild Europe to July 2011

ANNEX 1

Operational Guidelines

Working Groups/Task Groups/Commissions/Forum.

Following the governance review throughout the Federation, it is pertinent that similar scrutiny is given to working groups of the Federation and a re-vitalisation and re-energising of these groups is necessary. These groups could be a strong “working arm” of the Federation, where issues of importance to Protected Areas of Europe are examined and developed, BY protected areas FOR Protected areas, with high membership participation and involvement.

Purpose

Working Groups of the EUROPARC Federation are set up to serve a specific theme or topic of interest to members of the Federation.

The principal purpose of the groups - is to serve the interest of the members through delivery of specific aspects of the Federation’s strategy and work plan.

Working Groups should be established on request from members or by the Council and should be approved by the Council only if a comprehensive, clear plan is presented by the initiator to present the aims and a tentative road map to complete the agreed task.

The working group’s mandate comes from the EUROPARC council through the agreement of a remit and workplan, linked to EUROPARC’s strategy. Terms of reference would be agreed with each group.

The functions of the groups would be some or all of the following,

- to address a given theme of interest to protected areas of Europe,
- to provide analysis,
- to propose and develop policy,
- to develop projects that deliver outputs of relevance to protected areas,
- to investigate and develop funding streams to resource projects

Themes

The themes or topic selected by the Federation need to both reflect the priorities in the Federation Strategy and also have some sense of future –proofing...looking ahead to issues of relevance to Europe’s Protected Areas.

Current suggestions include:

- **Sustainable Rural Development** – incorporating the work of the ECST, and its evaluation committee as a subgroup
- **International Co-operation** – incorporating Transboundary and its evaluation committee as a sub group
- **Climate change and Biodiversity** –incorporating wilderness
- **Communications and Education** - incorporating junior ranger and training
- **Europeans Habitats** – incorporating wetlands, marine , natura 2000 and European habitat Forum

Every group should develop a lobbying aspect to its remit.

Structures

Groups can take different forms. The model of a convened group, gathering 2-3 times a year for 2-3 day meeting is NOT the only format to be considered. E-forum utilising electronic means of communication should also be utilised.

Given the differing roles and format a new suite of terminology needs to be considered for use. Some could be considered.

- **Commission** – used extensively by French Federation. Tends to imply authority and perhaps has a more investigative function.
- **Working /Task Group** – Is generally a group brought together to work collaboratively on an assigned task
- **Sub-Group** - a purely technical group dealing with details of a specific theme, STEC and ECST evaluation committees would be one such example
- **Forum** – tends to be a discussion platform, seeking a consensus or range of views and opinions about a given subject under discussion.
- **Other terms can be explored! Suggestions welcome.**

Composition

A EUROPARC working group is intended to be a forum of co-operation and participation. Participants represent the interests and views and of members, from disparate sectors of the Federation, but bring expertise and experience of the theme or topic of the group.

Working Groups should be composed of a wide range of “experts” in a particular topic drawn from the membership of the Federation. Somewhere between 6-8 members would be considered ideal as it allows of a breath of experience yet is not a financial burden on the Federation. As many countries and types of members (agency and parks) should be represented as offer expertise on the theme .

Some external membership could be anticipated from non protected area experts, including academics and others.

Membership of the working group should be agreed by the Council and CVs should be submitted to secure a place.

Circulation of members is also important to ensure a wide representation of members as well as a good mix of experience. Membership will be reviewed every 2 years and some circulation of members will be anticipated, i.e. some will stand down. Chairs will be up for re-election every 2 years and internal procedures within the group need to be created to facilitate that process.

IN some situation sub groups may need to be established, particularly to deal with detailed technical aspects. These will follow the same procedures of official recognition of the Federation, or may be informal groups with no formal financial support.

Chairs and working group members may be asked to represent the Federation at events/conference etc relevant to the theme and topic under study

Outputs

It is important that the work of the groups is closely aligned to the Federation strategy. As such all outputs need then to be reported to the Federation, its members and to funders. Therefore maintaining and strengthening communication lines with all parties involved is essential.

To facilitate this Federation Directorate staff will be assigned, where possible to support and assist groups.

Additionally a council member will be allocated as the advocate of the theme/topic within the council.

Further an annual meeting of council/section and chair of groups will be convened to discuss strategy and forward planning.

Outputs of groups will be indicated in the Federation's annual report and indicated to members.

A working group would be expected as possible outputs, to develop project proposals, based on EUROPARC's strategy, or produce reports, or publications indicating best practice in a particular aspect of park management. Outputs need to be agreed with the Directorate and embedded in the workplan, which is the operational planning tool of the strategy.

Finances

All Federation monies are accountable to the members and to specific donors. Procedures for eligible expenses will be provided. Working groups would be supported with travel and expense costs for maximum 2 meetings per annum, within a given allocation. This allocation is speculative on an anticipated income, therefore is regularly monitored and reassessed. This allocation would be for a maximum of 2 year should no project or other tangible work be realised then working groups would be dissolved and an e-forum of interested parties set up in place. Whilst the Federation would endeavour to reimburse travel and accommodation within agreed limits, contributions to some of these costs from the member organisations, in recognition of the benefits of their staff member in a Federations working group is appreciated.

A workplan indicating the groups anticipated output for the forthcoming year should be lodged to the directorate and agreed no later than October of the preceding year to enable budgets to the coming year to be prepared.