



EUROPARC Federation
Report to Council
9th October 2013

Title:

**Status update EUROPARC/EUROSITE Working
Group on Ecosystem services and economics**

Recommendations :

- ❖ To note the report.

Nature's needs - realising the ecosystems' promise

Goal

“By 2023, Europe’s nature is a recognized source of economic, added value investment, that is capable of generating income for its care, protection and sustainable management: also, that the management of protected areas is co-funded through earnings from ecosystem services, which nature provides”.

Working Group

A working group has been formed to give this subject the attention it deserves and initiate necessary actions. By gathering data, experience, best practice examples to-date and providing information, the group will support network members to participate in the process. In addition, the group will take the necessary first steps towards potential stakeholders and new partners, look for ways to integrate them, define shared benefits and grow opportunities to involve the political, social, economical and financial sectors. The working group consists of 9 members (see figure 1 below) and had its first meeting on

Participant	Organization
Mrs. Katja Artz	Europarc Deutschland
Mrs. I. Bouwma	Alterra
Mrs. Gordana Beltram	Park Skocjanskejame
Mr. P. Graves	Northumbria University
Mrs. J. Luttik	Alterra
Mr. N. McIntosh	Eurosite
Mr. P. Leadbitter	North Peninens AONB
Mr. L. Reyriink	Maas-Schwalm-Nette Nature Park
Mrs. N. Sengers	Staatsbosbeheer
Mr. H. Schiphorst	Samenwerkingsverband Nationale Parken
Mr. J. Veenstra	Staatsbosbeheer
Mrs. Fransesca Visentin	Centre for Theoretical and Applied Ecology

figure 1: Participants Working Group

Context

Conservation and development of Europe's nature requires money, and all over Europe, resources are scarce. Currently, there are generally two ways to cover costs and fund the practical management of Europe's nature: public funds – EU project funding/ national, regional and local subsidies- and private sources such as donations, sponsorship, membership fees, public contributions, charitable grants etc.

The vast majority of funding for nature at present comes from public sources. In all cases, funding is increasingly uncertain and relatively speculative - there are decreasing project funding opportunities and subsidies are under increasing pressure, whilst the threats to biodiversity remain very real. Given this situation, it is an absolute necessity

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to rethink current experience, whilst finding bold, new structural ways to fund the management of Europe's nature in future.

Ecosystem services can provide the answer, or, at least, be part of sustainable solutions. Nature provides many services and goods that are potential money-makers. Think of food, medicinal ingredients, opportunities for recreation and tourism: but also pollination, oxygen production, cleaning air and water, and biomass production. And protected areas contain a wealth of cultural and societal values that deliver intangible but very real goods such as a sense of belonging, spiritual enrichment and aesthetic experience. To put these services to use can provide a major chance to generate earnings in order to fund core nature management tasks.

Eurosite and EUROPARC are working to create a new network organisation, combining forces in order to better support and unite their members. This is a key momentum to take bold steps and make funding of nature through ecosystem services a mutual priority. It is also a new opportunity to convince and engage external organizations and potential new partners to invest in ecosystems. Nature is worth it.

Roadmap

1. Getting the need to invest in nature and its ecosystems 'firmly on the agenda' of the new Eurosite and Europarc network, making it a top priority and shared opportunity for innovation. This is an ongoing action towards both all European members and toward the Eurosite and Europarc organizations themselves;
2. Promote our goal within the new network organization in 2013 through planned events, like workshops and conferences, in order to build attention and momentum;
3. Gather and compile case studies and best practices from members - these will help to achieve short-term successes and quick wins;
4. Seek innovative practices and examples of new financial mechanisms in order to expand and develop them together with our members as well as with non-member organisations;
5. Promote results outside of the network to engage and involve potential partners (stakeholders, investors) - by including sectors other than nature and environment alone, the working group aims to take the necessary first steps towards potential partners and enable them to look at nature as an interesting investment opportunity and solution, rather than a limitless expense;
6. Researching innovative partnerships and projects within our network - identifying successes, failures, gaps and new opportunities. This will lead to greater understanding about the wider forms of partnerships and cross-sector joint working opportunities available for and with nature, especially in terms of:

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- What type of organisations are involved;
- What their motivations for cooperating are;
- How the organisations operate together – for example, to formalise tasks, responsibilities, and funding processes;

In our new network, looking at the scale of the tasks and taking European nature's needs into account, no one can achieve what is required for nature and society alone – we all need each others' help and cooperation as we grow new approaches required in "Networking for Nature".

Current results

1. Agenda:

Both Eurosite and Europarc are aware of the importance and necessity of Ecosystem Services and Economics for their members.

2. Promotion:

A positioning paper in which Ecosystem Services and Economics is explained, as well as the position of the working group itself, was sent out to the members.

Eurosite and Europarc conferences:

The conferences in September and October 2013 will be paying attention to the subject of Ecosystem Services and Economics. Hans Schiphorst will be facilitating a workshop in the October conference.

3. and 4. Case studies, best practices and examples:

A questionnaire was sent to all members of Eurosite and Europarc (the latter through the Europarc News Bulletin). First results provide insight in how well known the subject is and in what extend it is (going to be) used in managing and funding sites. They show a need for support and a willingness to combine forces and work on this together.

4. Questionnaire:

This summer a questionnaire was sent out to all members. Irene Bouwma from Alterra Wageningen has gathered and processed the first results. These will be shared later with all members. These also provide a guideline to what we can and cannot expect from our members. More important maybe the question: "what will we do for our members?".

What's next

We invite the members to share their knowledge and experience about working with, for and through ecosystem services - we need their experience, information and practical examples on, for example:

- case studies on current related projects/activities (like the result of the questionnaire mentioned above)

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- plans/studies on future projects currently being considered or developed;
- information on innovative partnerships they are involved in or know about;
- information on dynamic and integrated local/regional/national initiatives;
- ideas and suggestions on how we can take 'the message' beyond the nature conservation community and engage new partners in new ways of working together for nature
- further steps also depend on the outcome of the workshop during the Europarc Conference

Hans Schiphorst

Chair Eurosite/Europarc working group on ecosystem services and economics