

EUROPARC Federation

Report to Council

1st Feb 2013

Title: Charter Management

Summary:

A considered and comprehensive report by Lasse Loven and Norbert Hoekemes was prepared at the invitation of the President to analyse the management and financing

Recommendation :

- ❖ To consider the recommendation of the President and the report of the ad hoc working group.

Agenda item 7 Charter future

The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas is a unique practical management tool that enables protected areas to develop tourism sustainably. The core element of the Charter is working in partnership with all relevant stakeholders to develop a common sustainable tourism strategy and an action plan on the basis of a thorough situation analysis. The aims of all Charter projects and activities are the protection of the natural and cultural heritage and the continuous improvement of tourism in the protected area in terms of the environment, local population and businesses as well as visitors.

The European Charter is a vital and practical tool that supports protected areas of all kinds, as well as local tourism businesses to develop and implement sustainable tourism. It is based on 10 Charter principles for sustainable tourism and comprises a set of guidelines, check-lists and methodologies.

Over the last ten years it has become the largest network of protected areas in Europe dedicated to sustainable tourism development.

At the EUROPARC Council meeting in October 2012 there was a discussion on the Management of the Charter. The task was initiated from The Treasurer and the financial subgroup that had proposed a change in the responsibilities. However the EUROPARC Consulting had an separate opinion sent to all Council members just before the meeting.

At the meeting no decision was taken due to partly insufficient supporting documents. The President was mandated to write a more detailed report on the current charter situation and present it to the EP Consulting board (meeting in December 2012) and the EP council (meeting in January 2013).

Norbert Heukemes and Lasse Loven accepted to be an ad hoc group to prepare a report on the current and proposed charter management situation. The report was asked to be presented at the EUROPARC Consulting advisory board meeting in December in order to be ready for the Council in January. At the Advisory Board meeting Norbert Heukemes made an oral presentation of the findings.

The report has now been delivered to the President and is attached as a discussion background for the Council. I have made some minor corrections in the report and there could be reason for more before it becomes public.

The report is describing the current situation and is showing possible options for Charter Management as well as Recommendations.

My proposal to the Council is:

- To consider the report and the former material we received in October .
- To take this strategic decision on the Charter management :

Directorate should be responsible for the totality of the Charter, with appropriate elements of delivery sub-contracted to Consulting for an appropriate fee including Consulting's management cost.

This approach will require better service focus and cost control by all parties.

- To require the Directorate to develop and present a charter management structure that can be in function from 2014
- Directorate report in May on development

Thomas Hansson
President

Charter Management

Final report

21.01.2013

by Lasse Lovén, Finland and Norbert Heukemes, Belgium

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Appendix 1

Appendix 2

1. Brief description of the Charter and the historical background

1.1. Summary description

The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas is a unique practical management tool that enables protected areas to develop tourism sustainably.

The core element of the Charter is working in partnership with all relevant stakeholders to develop a common sustainable tourism strategy and an action plan on the basis of a thorough situation analysis. The aims of all Charter projects and activities are the protection of the natural and cultural heritage and the continuous improvement of tourism in the protected area in terms of the environment, local population and businesses as well as visitors.

The European Charter is a vital and practical tool that supports protected areas of all kinds, as well as local tourism businesses to develop and implement sustainable tourism. It is based on 10 Charter principles for sustainable tourism and comprises a set of guidelines, check-lists and methodologies.

Over the last ten years it has become the largest network of protected areas in Europe dedicated to sustainable tourism development:

1.2. Practical application

Charter Part I

In order to be awarded the Charter, a protected area submits an application according to the agreed format, from which it should be demonstrated whether, in which ways and to what extent the protected area's management of tourism satisfies the 10 principles of the Charter. Above all it has to be demonstrated that:

- All stakeholders are permanently integrated in the management process;
- A comprehensive analysis (assessment) covering the area's natural and cultural resources, the needs of the population, economic development, tourism products and the needs of visitors, has been carried out;
- A strategy for tourism development and a five year action plan have been prepared in partnership with all stakeholders on the basis of this analysis;
- The strategy and action plan are in accordance with the principles of the Charter.

The protected area's application is examined by independent experts; in addition to the initial desk evaluation of the documents this examination comprises a visit to the locality, during which representatives of the most important stakeholder groups are consulted. The verifier produces a comprehensive report according to an agreed format, which is proofed, language/sense checked and edited, then passed to the Evaluation Committee.

The Evaluation Committee is appointed by the Council. It consists of experts, who possess significant experience in the field of tourism in protected areas and the Charter, as well as a representative of the tourism industry. The Evaluation Committee analyses the verifiers' reports and recommends to the EUROPARC Federation Council whether the protected area's application be accepted or rejected. The final decision rests with the Council. The Charter is awarded for a period of five years, after which a renewed evaluation using the same method is necessary.

Charter Part II

Protected areas that have gained Charter status can bestow Charter status on tourism businesses operating in their tourism region. The method by which this award is undertaken must satisfy the requirements of the EUROPARC Federation and be approved by the Federation.

The general rules envisage that methods for awarding businesses the status of Charter businesses can be approved by Sections of the EUROPARC Federation for all protected areas within the catchment area of a particular Section. Until now methods have been approved for the Sections in Spain, Italy, France, the Atlantic Isles and the Nordic-Baltic region.

Requests to approve methods for the award of Charter status to businesses are addressed to the Federation. The Evaluation Committee analyses the proposed methods and makes a recommendation to the EUROPARC Federation Council. The Council makes the final decision.

Charter Part III

The aim of the third part of the Charter is to designate tour operators and travel agents as Charter businesses. The procedures for this part of the Charter have not yet been put in place.

1.3. Historical background

The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas was developed during the years 1995-1999 as a European Life-project led by "Fédération des Parcs naturels régionaux de France". The goal was to create a practical tool for protected areas for managing tourism according to the principles developed during the best practice study "Loving them to death" (1993). Ten pilot parks all over Europe were involved in the project. The project steering committee involved representatives of protected areas, the tourism industry, international organizations as well as some tourism consultants.

As the project had finished, the up-coming Charter areas turned to EUROPARC Federation and expected the Federation to carry things forward. In 2000 the Federation assumed responsibility for the project and established a working group which reformulated the Charter requirements and developed and initiated the accession and evaluation procedure. On the occasion of the EUROPARC Conference in October 2001 the Charter was initially signed by a total of seven European protected areas.

In October 2001 the Federation Council dissolved the working group and created the Evaluation Committee. The Federation Deputy Director was asked to coordinate the Charter work in close cooperation with two highly involved tourism consultants.

A key problem was that the EU project funding for development of the Charter had finished and that the Charter therefore had to become self-sufficient from there on, i.e. the parks involved had to pay for evaluation. The Council at the time concluded that the EUROPARC Federation, as a non-profit organisation with registered charitable status, could not be paid for these sorts of services. So the obvious solution was for EUROPARC Consulting -as the business arm of the organisation -to take this on, as it is no problem for them to raise an invoice for a service provided. However, since then, the Directorate has concluded that the Federation can accept payment for such a service as long as it is considered a service to its members. The original evaluation fee was 4000 Euro but the work involved produced a loss; therefore in 2006, the fee was raised to 5.000 Euro plus travel and accommodation costs for the verifier. The evaluation fee is paid to EUROPARC Consulting and the travel and accommodation costs paid by the protected area directly to the Verifier.

There were further discussions about how to steer the Charter project as a whole, which led to the introduction of a €500 registration fee for new Charter parks, with these funds intended to help the Federation manage the Charter network, whilst Consulting took care of the verification side. The registration fee is paid to EUROPARC Federation.

Since the EUROPARC Federation took sole responsibility for it the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Europe has developed continuously. The evaluation process has been refined and verifiers have been trained. Charter Part II has been developed and has already been implemented in a number of protected areas. In parallel to this a network of Charter areas has been established, which has already come together several times for annual networking meetings, organised by the Directorate and one of the members. The work involved in implementing the Charter has been documented on a dedicated website. The cultivation and maintenance of the network is undertaken by the EUROPARC Federation. The intensity of this cultivation is dependent on the resources available. Today more than 100 protected areas enjoy Charter status; many have been evaluated for a second time, and some for a third time.

The division of labour around the Charter into tasks, which are directly undertaken by the EUROPARC Federation and those taken on by EUROPARC Consulting on behalf of the Federation, has evolved over the years. In the wake of the worldwide financial crisis the EUROPARC Federation too is confronted by financial problems. The Federation's Treasurer has therefore looked at whether a new division of labour, in particular to the tasks relating to the evaluation of protected areas, could help to diversify the revenues of the Federation and alleviate the financial problems.

As a result of questions from the EUROPARC Federation President about this proposal, this report examines the division of tasks and makes recommendations for a management system for the Charter.

2. Main tasks for Charter management

2.1. Charter system management

The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism is a complex system which involves a number of players all over Europe. To consolidate the system it is important that the strategic direction is clear, that the procedures are well defined and that all the actors concerned are kept informed and feel involved. The Charter is not a system that is frozen once for all. It has to develop further and to adapt to the needs of a changing world. These changes too have to be managed.

The Charter is not only a management system based on principles, rules and procedures. At all levels, there is a high degree of personal commitment to the Charter. A number of contributions are based on voluntary work, within the protected areas, the group of verifiers, the Evaluation Committee, the Sustainable Tourism Working Group, EUROPARC Consulting, the Directorate or the Council. The Charter management system has to take that into account.

The overall management of the Charter system has to be considered as a task in its own right.

Tasks

- Define a three year development plan for the Charter, discuss it with relevant actors involved in the management and submit it to the Council
- Submit an annual budget for the Charter system to the Council and communicate about it with the members during the annual Conference and Charter Network Meeting
- Organize the distribution of information related to the Charter management between all actors involved
- Update and improve the quality of the Charter procedures in a way that all actors involved in

a given procedure can contribute to the improvements. This includes the updating of Charter documents and templates.

- Organise and assist any working group the Council mandates with specific tasks related to the Charter management system.
- Organise all external services needed for the Charter management, e.g. technical support of the IT-system
- Raise external funds for Charter development projects
- Take any measures to maintain a high level of personal motivation of professionals and volunteers involved in Charter management.

2.2. Coming to the Charter: information and dissemination

Finding out about the Charter and then obtaining the necessary information to become, first of all, Charter candidate and then later on Charter member generally is a gradual process over several years. Basically, this is the matter also with Charter Partners under Charter Part

II. The tools involved are

- A complete manual of the Charter requirements and the processes available in several languages. This manual needs to be kept up to date in all the different language versions available. Changes are to be documented.
- A website as a general source of information and as a platform for exchange between EUROPARC and the Charter areas as well as between Charter areas and Charter Partners.
- Presentation of the Charter at conferences, seminars, workshops etc
- Reports and articles in targeted press
- The presence of experienced staff and informed others during the EUROPARC Federation's annual conference and during the national sections' annual conferences;
- A central system for processing questions concerning the Charter procedure, prompt answers, following up and regular evaluation of questions.

Tasks

Information tasks relate to the development, the deployment and the regular maintenance of these communication instruments.

2.3. Evaluation for Charter Part I

This work for the initial evaluation can be divided into four unified, albeit complex, task groups. Five years later, the work for the re-evaluation follows a similar pattern:

- (a) Task group 1: registration with the EUROPARC Federation as Charter area applicant
- (b) Task group 2: from submission of Charter application documents via evaluation visits to completing the evaluation reports and submitting them to the Evaluation Committee. These tasks have been carried out by EUROPARC Consulting.
- (c) Task group 3: organising the annual meeting of the Evaluation Committee, providing its secretariat, preparing a report of its recommendations for the EUROPARC Federation Council and drafting the Decision Letters. This task group, too, has been undertaken by EUROPARC Consulting. The company also dealt with liaison between members of the Evaluation Committee in-between meetings.
- (d) Task group 4: sending out the Decision Letters, preparing the Charter certificates and work leading up and including the handing over of the Charter. Some of these tasks have been carried out by EUROPARC Consulting, other work by the EUROPARC Federation.

Task group 1

- Charter applicant registers with the EUROPARC Federation the intention to apply for the Charter. The Federation notes registration, sends out invoice for registration fee and awaits payment of that fee into its accounts. Currently, the EUROPARC Federation informs EUROPARC Consulting when that has happened so that EUROPARC Consulting is fully informed when the Charter process actually happens.
- Once the registration fee is paid all the necessary documents (full Charter text, Charter manual and form for Charter application report) are sent out to the now registered Charter candidate (work currently undertaken by EUROPARC Consulting). The name of the Charter candidate is published on the Charter website.
- At any time after the registration (no time limit) the Charter candidate submits the Charter application dossier. This marks the official start of the Charter administration process. At this stage the Charter candidate must be a bona fide member of the EUROPARC Federation.

Task group 2

Currently, EUROPARC Consulting carries out all necessary steps for the evaluation of the Charter applicant's work in respect of the Charter as listed below, plus any other work necessary in this context.

- Initial appraisal of the application dossier for completeness.
- Archiving an electronic copy on computer.
- Confirming arrival of the dossier to applicant.
- Informing applicant of any Charter network meetings. This is a task of Directorate
- Selecting and appointing verifier.
- Liaison between EUROPARC Consulting, verifier and Charter applicant.
- Requesting applicant to send a full second copy, this time to the verifier. This is not necessary
- Send verifier details to Charter applicant and establish contact between applicant and verifier.
- Prepare verifier's contract and send out contract to verifier. Sign, countersign, file.
- Obtaining VAT details from applicant and check with German tax authorities. Send out relevant forms, check validity on Europa VIES system to confirm international validity

- and follow through.
- Contract with applicant: Ask who will sign contract and to which address to send contract. Prepare contract and send to client. Contract received back from client, duly signed.
- Ask who will pay invoice and to which address to send invoice. Prepare invoice for first instalment and send out. Follow through until payment, reminders as necessary. Check that invoice has been paid.
- Prepare invoice for second instalment and send out. Follow through until payment, reminders as necessary. Check that invoice has been paid.
- Arrange for and monitor evaluation visit. Ensure payment of expenses from Charter candidate to verifier.
- Receive and edit evaluation report. Submit to Evaluation Committee in good time before its annual meeting.

Task group 3

Looking after the Evaluation Committee is currently the task of the Evaluation Committee Secretariat. This work is carried out by EUROPARC Consulting and includes the “maintenance” of the Evaluation Committee during the year as well as looking after the meeting of the Evaluation Committee once a year.

- Fix date and venue of Evaluation Committee.
- Send out agenda papers.
- Ensure all reports are submitted on time to all members.
- Act as secretariat for EUROPARC Consulting including keeping in touch with all its members, prepare minutes of meetings, etc.
- Ensure that Evaluation Committee recommendations after its annual meeting are fully captured and disseminated including report to EUROPARC Federation Council and drafting of decision letter to each Charter applicant.

Task group 4

- Draft decision letters finalised and signed by EUROPARC Federation President. Send out decision letters to each protected area.
- Preparing Charter certificates in different languages, have them printed and make them available at EUROPARC Conference for presentation.
- Organising Charter ceremony and handing over Charter certificates at the EUROPARC Conference each year.

Re-evaluation tasks

They are similar to the tasks carried out at the first evaluation. The only additional point is that potential candidates for re-evaluation are to be advised of the necessity of re-evaluation two years in advance.

2.4. Evaluation for Charter Part II methodology

The Evaluation Committee has recommended a minimum structure for a Charter Part II methodology. Following this structure, any national version of the Charter part II methodology should include the following elements:

- a brief reminder of or reference to the general context: the European Charter for sustainable tourism in protected areas, Section II of the Charter, Principles of the Charter;
- a definition of the geographical area covered by the methodology;
- a definition of the role and the responsibilities of the different bodies involved in the implementation and the application of the methodology;
- a reminder of, and if necessary a specification for the conditions under which the protected areas and business can use the Charter part II provisions;
- a reminder of, and if necessary a specification for the kind of commitment any protected area makes under Charter part II;
- a description of the business commitments at European level and a list of the business commitments at protected area level (these specific requirements can refer to existing labels, brands or certificates);
- a list of indicative actions which should be part of the business action plan;
- a template for a partnership agreement setting out the commitments of the protected area and the partner business;
- a template for a European Charter partnership certificate;
- a description of the applications process for the businesses;
- a description of the evaluation process.

Tasks

The current procedure for establishing a version of the methodology is as follows: A EUROPARC Section submits a draft version to the Evaluation Committee to technical appraisal. If the Evaluation Committee considers the draft version as sufficient it then asks its secretariat (currently EUROPARC Consulting) to draft a report to the EUROPARC Federation Council. The Council takes the final decision. If the draft is not sufficient, the Evaluation Committee returns it to the applicants and informs them that it needs further work.

There is no evaluation of the application of the different national methodologies by the National Sections, nor an evaluation of the use made of the methodology by single protected areas.

2.5. Animating the network of Charter areas and Charter Partners

Protected areas that have been awarded the European Charter want to share with other Charter areas their experience in tourism management and in working with the Charter. Most of them consider this as an important aspect of the European Charter and as a service that is somehow linked to the registration fee and evaluation fee they pay.

Tourism businesses who are partner under Charter Part II may also be integrated in the network and protected areas with Charter status may want to exchange knowledge and experience especially about Charter Part II aspects of their work.

In the past, the Charter areas have come together several times for annual networking meetings, organised by the Directorate and one of the members. The Directorate has developed a web site with special information for Charter areas.

Tasks

- Prepare and organise the annual Charter Network Meeting
- Maintain and develop further a members' and partners' area on the Charter website and a Newsletter for positive promotion of Charter Network members and partners
- Give guidance to protected areas with Charter status on questions related to the implementation of the Charter and to tourism management in protected areas
- Maintain a central database on Charter partners under Charter Part II

These tasks may develop further according to the Charter areas demand and the resources available.

2.6. Training the verifiers

The training of verifiers used to be organised by EUROPARC Consulting who also found funding for it, for example through TUI. In 2009 and 2011, the Directorate arranged training sessions on the isle of Vilm funded by the German nature protection agency (Bundesamt für Naturschutz) and partly by TUI. The aim of the seminars is to train new verifiers, to harmonize working methods between existing verifiers and to allow an input from the verifiers to the constant enhancement of the whole management system.

Tasks

- Define the training needs together with the Evaluation Committee and the verifiers
- Contract the trainers and produce the training material
- Organise the venue
- Evaluate the training seminar

2.7. Development of Charter Part III

The procedures for the implementation of Charter Part III have not been developed yet. First discussions are taking place in some French Parks with the support of the Directorate.

Tasks

- Mandate a working group to develop the procedures for Charter Part III
- Define a project schedule for developing a first draft of procedures
- Test the draft procedures with different protected areas, different tour operators and in different European countries
- Have the final procedures for Charter Part III approved by the Council
- Integrate the procedures in the overall management of the Charter

2.8. Monitoring the whole system

There has been no structured monitoring of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism so far. It is important to monitor the Charter performance and impacts in the protected areas at area level and at European level. The efficiency of Charter management by EUROPARC federation will also need to be kept under review.

Tasks

- Performance and impact monitoring
 - o Work out a system to monitor the impact of the Charter in a given Charter area based on the recommendations of the EUROPARC Federation Sustainable Tourism Working Group 2011-2012 (see final report of 31.12.2012).
 - o Develop a system to collect the necessary data from protected areas with Charter status
 - o Collect the necessary data on an annual basis
 - o Integrate and analyse the data
 - o Report every three years on the Charter's performance and impacts at a European level

- System auditing
 - o Define the terms of reference for auditing the overall Charter management system. The audit covers every aspect and every actor of the Charter management
 - o Contract an auditor every three years
 - o Give feedback of the auditing to all the actors involved and organize the follow up of recommendations

3. Estimate of the cost of Charter management

We have analysed both the documents 1) Extraordinary Report to EUROPARC Consulting Advisory Board of 9.10.2012 and 2) Charter Task List report to Council of 21.10.2012. We have also tried to get more detailed data from the Directorate and the Consulting to create a better understanding of the complexities of the Charter finances. The key findings are as follows:

- Neither the Directorate nor the Consulting have sufficient accounting data on the Charter costs. The two reports are based on rough estimates on the amount of work needed and the cost of the work in its entirety.
- There are a number of basic differences on the task list contents and some of the key activities are missing completely (Charter partnership management, monitoring and development).
- The Directorate is calculating costs on the basis of working hours with figures showing a remarkable underestimation of the workload and cost of the work. The salaries do not cover social costs, insurances, holiday salaries, training times, illness periods or possible bonuses.
- Consulting is undertaking Charter management tasks which have not been formally mandated to them and is using high costs on the administration.
- The structure of Charter budget is very complicated and is not transparent, which has generated misunderstandings and unnecessary conflicts between the Directorate and Consulting.

3.1. EU project cost model

In Appendix 1 we have tried to combine all the available data into a comprehensive budgetary framework following the budget model used in EU projects. The budgetary framework takes into account all the different types of costs, including also the external services, risk and development reserves and the overheads. This budget model is though as rough and as weak as the input data. The summary of the budget table is explained in more detail here. The details of the budget model concerning the units, cost per units and the structure of costs are explained in Appendix 2.

The Charter budget model includes three main columns. In each of them we analyse the theoretical case where 6 parks are candidates for evaluation and 6 for re-evaluation:

1. The first column contains all the Charter tasks of both the Directorate and Consulting, estimates the work load of each work package in the task list when just the necessary work is done to a good level of service. It sums up the expenditures and the possible sources of incomes to cover the costs. We redisplay the data received from the Directorate and the Consulting, adapted according our best understanding to the case of 12 evaluations per year and using the role structure of actors which we recommend later in Chapter 4.
 - Below the last line we calculate a negative result of approximately 42.000, -€, but to cover that cost there still exists some non-used resource options, including for example a revision of the Charter fees. Approximately 10.000, -€ of Federation core funding is used to cover Charter management costs. The value of in-kind work in volunteering and external funding support is supposed to be on the level of 27000,-€.
 - If we want the whole Charter system to be self-financing, we have to find new income sources and to cut and update some costs.
 - If we introduce new fees, for example a registration fee for the re-evaluation, a registration fee for Charter Part II or a fee for Charter partners, the negative result to be covered by the Federation core funding may drop to the level of 10.000,-€.
2. In the second column we analyse the cost structure of the current Charter management where not all the necessary tasks are executed. The figures are based on our best understanding of the reports presented by the Directorate and Consulting, in case of 12 evaluations.
 - The second column shows a negative result of approximately 2.000, -€ for the current Charter management. Approximately 7.000, -€ of Federation core funding is used to cover the Charter management costs. The value of in-kind work and external support is currently approximately 30.000, -€.
3. The third column breaks down the current cost structure of EUROPARC Consulting in case of 12 annual evaluations.
 - The analysis shows that, with the current work package for the Charter evaluation, an approximate balance is achieved when the evaluation payment to Consulting is on the level of 4.350,-€ per protected area. The cost of managing the process of Charter evaluation seems to be more than 80 % of the verifiers' production costs. This certainly needs further investigation.

3.2. Real cost of evaluation 2010/11 and 2011/12

EUROPARC Consulting has given the current costs for evaluations for two recent periods 2010/11 and 2011/12 (see Table 2 and 3 below). The bookkeeping of Consulting is not organised in such a way that these figures could be taken directly out of there. Some approximations had to be made and we can understand that, although the global costs are definite, the breakdown of the costs in specified partial costs is less accurate, especially when talking about the administrative costs and the overheads. The years in concern are also the most active years ever, and the global costs shown here present in a way the maximum cost level for the evaluation process.

The real cost tables create better transparency to the current work package related to the Charter Part I evaluation. When considering the overall Charter management system, we have to analyze if cost reductions are possible in the future.

According to the basic Federation Charter strategy, the Charter evaluation should be self-financing. The data received from EUROPARC Consulting show that a continuous production of surplus from the evaluation management is possible. This surplus is partly forwarded to the Federation. In fact, around 10 percent of the overall Consulting turnover is paid to the Federation in form of resource recompense.

2010/2011

In the period 2010/2011 EUROPARC Consulting organised the evaluation process for 21 Charter candidate areas. The average costs were approximately 3.990, -€ per protected area, the surplus generated was approximately 840, -€ per park. The number of invoiced Charter evaluation fees and the number of verifications are not necessarily the same on a one year period, which reasonably explains the difference in surplus (approx. 150, -€).

Table 2. - Total cost of Charter process implementation from EUROPARC Conference 2010 to EUROPARC Conference 2011					
Income				Expenditure	Total gross
Abruzzo			5.000,00 €	Administration, organisation, liaison and communication (Assistance)	10.135,57 €
Broads			5.000,00 €	Administration, organisation, liaison and communication (Management)	15.807,00 €
Cairngorms			5.000,00 €	Charter certificates 2010 & 2011	1.360,69 €
Causeway Coast GHT			8.400,00 €	Verifier fees plus travel cost as invoiced	31.158,21 €
Cotswolds		Paid 5000 € in 2009.		Administration, preparation, liaison and general expenses, Evaluation Committee*	3.515,00 €
Donana			5.000,00 €	Preparation WF, verifier training, Vilm	1.500,00 €
Hornachuelos			5.000,00 €	Estimated share, EC operational cost, excluding salaries	20.280,00 €
Livradois			5.000,00 €		
Marismas			5.000,00 €		
Monfrague			5.000,00 €		
Monts d'Ardeche			5.000,00 €		
Montseny			2.500,00 €		
Müritz			5.500,00 €		
Redes			5.000,00 €		
Sant Llorenc			5.000,00 €		
Sila			5.000,00 €		
Syöte			5.000,00 €		
Kemeri, Kurtuvėnai, Maribo, Südost-Rügen		4 fees received for evaluation in 2012	20.000,00 €	* The Evaluation Committee cost was unusually low as it took place in Serbia during a Charter network meeting with many expenses paid for by Serbia.	
Total invoiced			101.400,00 €		83.756,47 €
				Surplus	17.643,53 €

2011/2012

During the period 2011/2012 EUROPARC Consulting organised the evaluation process for 34 Charter candidate parks. The average costs were approximately 4.030, -€ per protected area, the surplus generated was approximately 610, -€ per park. The number of invoiced Charter evaluation fees and the number of verifications are not necessarily the same on a one year period, which reasonably explains the difference in surplus (approx. 350, -€).

Table 3. - Total cost of Charter process implementation from EUROPARC Conference 2011 to EUROPARC Conference 2012				
Income			Expenditure	Total gross
Adamello Brenta		5.000,00 €	Administration, organisation, liaison and communication (Assistance)	14.079,35 €
Alpi Marittime Nature Park		5.000,00 €	Administration, organisation, liaison and communication (Management)	17.690,00 €
Andalucia: 6 parks for re-evaluation		33.000,00 €	Charter certificates 2012	1.090,58 €
Avesnois PNR		5.000,00 €	Verifier fees plus travel cost as invoiced	64.378,35 €
Azores		5.000,00 €	Administration, preparation, liaison and general expenses, Evaluation Committee	8.424,32 €
Biesbosch National Park (NL)		5.000,00 €	Estimated share, EC operational cost, excluding salaries	31.600,00 €
Brecon Beacons NP		5.000,00 €		
Cevennes National Park		5.000,00 €		
Colli Euganei Park (IT)		5.000,00 €		
Delta de l'Ebre		5.000,00 €		
Dune Costiere	Together with Salento	15.000,00 €		
Fragas do Eume		5.000,00 €		
Grands Causses, PNR des		5.000,00 €		
Haute Languedoc PNR		5.000,00 €		
Kemerí	Pd. in 2011			
Koli National Park		5.000,00 €		
Kurtuvėnai	Pd. in 2011			
La Garrotxa		5.000,00 €		
Maribosoerne	Pd. in 2011			
(De) Meinweg National Park		5.000,00 €		
Mercantour NP		5.000,00 €		
Monte Rufeno riserva naturale		5.000,00 €		
Muranska planina		5.000,00 €		
Préalpes d'Azur PNR (FR)		5.000,00 €		
Salento group of PAs	See Dune Costiere	- €		
Shropshire Hills AONB		5.000,00 €		
Sierra Espuña		5.000,00 €		
Südost-Rügen	Pd. in 2011			
Vexin français, PNR du		5.000,00 €		
Total invoiced		158.000,00 €		137.262,60 €

Surplus

20.737,40 €

4. Recommendations for a Charter management system

After careful analyses and discussions with interested persons and bodies we make the following recommendations for a more effective, transparent and sustainable organisation of the Charter management for the benefit of EUROPARC members:

4.1. Strategic leadership for the Charter

The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas belongs to and is owned by the EUROPARC Federation. It has developed over the last ten years to a strategic activity and provides high visibility to the Federation's work. More than hundred protected areas have work with the European Charter; they have spent substantial resources to be awarded the Charter and to implement their Sustainable Tourism action plan. These protected areas have high expectations with regard to the further development of the European Charter.

Recommendations

The Council should take the strategic leadership for Charter management and ensure that there is a Council member charged with the Charter portfolio.

In the Directorate, one staff member with the necessary qualifications should be assigned the task of Charter manager. Sufficient resources in time and money have to be allocated to the different tasks related to Charter management.

4.2. Operational management of the Charter

Given that the Federation owns the Charter:

- The EUROPARC Council can organize the management of the Charter according to evolving needs and opportunities, for the benefit of EUROPARC members;
- The development of Charter management should be based on real strategic decisions in the Council;
- The Council can and may delegate or mandate managerial / coordination tasks to operational units within EUROPARC, including the Directorate, the Charter Evaluation Committee and EUROPARC Consulting;

The Council may decide to organize the operational Charter management in three different models. We have analysed three basic models and possible options for Charter management.

Option A: Charter management is mandated to the Directorate

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Greater transparency in the Charter management and budget• Clear lines of organization• Co-operation with sections straightforward as part of normal way of working• Support from and to the Charter Network strong• Opportunities for Charter dissemination improved• Clearer window into the Charter system• Opportunity to use internships and socially supported workers for technical assistance in supporting Directorate staff• Stronger profile for EUROPARC in lobbying	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No long term experience of Charter management• More administrative work for Directorate• Seasonal stresses• Needs more expertise in the Directorate• Needs increased revenue for the Charter economy

Option B: Charter management is mandated to EUROPARC Consulting

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Effective service for the members in evaluation• Clear business organization owned 100 % by the EUROPARC Federation• Long term experience of Charter evaluation and management• Less administrative work for Directorate• Seasonal stresses can be covered with flexible business organisation• Supports the pre-funding needs of EUROPARC Consulting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Less complete transparency in the Charter management and budget as arrangement more complicated• Possibly less Charter Network support as some organisations prefer to contribute their volunteer time / resources to NGO rather than to a company• Possibility to use internships and socially supported workers for technical assistance weak• Lower profile for EUROPARC in lobbying• Window into the Charter system less clear• Co-operation with sections more complicated as no plans for joint working• Continuous need to communicate and update the contract between Directorate and Consulting• Needs increased revenue for the Charter economy

Option C: Charter management is divided between the Directorate and Consulting

The Directorate covers the following Charter work packages described in detail in Chapter 2:

- Charter system management, including Evaluation for Charter Part II methodology and Charter Part III development
- Charter information and dissemination,
- Evaluation for Charter Part I : Task Group 1, Task Group 4 and partly Task Group 2
- Animating the Network of Charter Areas and Charter Partners
- Monitoring the whole system

EUROPARC Consulting covers the following work packages:

- Evaluation for Charter Part I: Task Group 3 and partly Task Group 2, taking into account the modifications of the management system described in Chapter 2 related to the fact that the Directorate signs the contract with the protected area
- Evaluation for Charter Part II methodology so far as the Secretariat of the Evaluation Committee is concerned
- Training the verifiers

Consulting may take also other additional tasks, which Directorate contracts with Consulting annually.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong contribution to the Charter parks networking and exchange of good practices • Clear identity for the Charter system • Effective service for the members in evaluation • Co-operation with sections over organization borders easier • Clear business organization owned 100 % by the EUROPARC Federation is doing the external expert service for the members using self-financing in-house prices • Long term experience on Charter evaluation management can be continued • Less administrative work for Directorate than in Option A • Seasonal stresses can be covered in both parts of the management • Supports the pre-funding needs of both managing partners • Better transparency in Charter management and economy than today • Best possible neutrality in the evaluation and verification • Charter dissemination possibility strong • Strong profile for EUROPARC Federation in lobby 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No complete transparency in the Charter evaluation work package management and economy • Continuous need to communicate and update the contract between Directorate and Consulting • Needs increased revenue for the Charter economy

Recommendation

We propose that Council decides to develop the Charter management on the bases of Option C. That option has the best strong points and the less weak points. When making the decision on development of Charter management, the Council shall be aware that all the options include an increase of resources to cover the costs of the activities which have not been developed yet.

There are good reasons to use Federation core funding partly for Charter management, because the Charter as a strategic activity for Federation creates positive secondary benefits for all the members, for instance in connection of EU project funding applications, different governments' support to Federation and Sections, and in international dissemination and lobby. However, in the long term, the self-financing Charter management is a reasonable target.

4.3. Decision about Charter Certificate

The final decision about the acceptance of the Candidate park's Charter application rests currently with the EUROPARC Federation Council. The Council can mandate this task to the expert advisory committee (Charter Evaluation Committee) if it finds it more practical to do so. The technical possibility to make the Council decision is purely theoretical, because the timeframe is not wide enough between the Evaluation Committee meeting and drafting the Awarding ceremony.

Recommendation

We see it as more practical, in accordance with the subsidiarity principle, and also more professional to mandate the final decision of Charter certification to the Charter Evaluation Committee. The awarding ceremony should however be organized as part of the EUROPARC annual conference. When creating the new permanent mandate to the Charter Evaluation Committee, the Council should be aware that the costs of the Evaluation Committee have to be covered completely, in case the voluntary engagement of the committee members is not possible in future.

4.4. Training the verifiers

It is essential to the work of the Evaluation Committee that the verifiers use common standards for their different verification tasks and for their report to the Committee. Although they use a very detailed standard template for the report, the documents vary widely in form and quality.

Recommendations

- The terms of reference for the Evaluation Committee should include the monitoring and control of the verifiers work. This means
 - For each single report, the Committee should give a feed back to the verifier on strong and weak points.
 - The Evaluation Committee should indicate general aspects that have to be included in the next verifiers' training session
- Training of the verifiers should be organized by EUROPARC Consulting on a regular basis. We suggest having a training session every two years.

4.5. Agreement on Charter management tasks

The division of work between the Directorate and EUROPARC Consulting has developed historically. It is based partly on formal decisions of the Federation Council and partly on informal talks between the parties concerned.

Recommendation

The proposed contracting of EUROPARC Consulting with clearly defined tasks should be based on a written agreement. The following points should be taken into account:

- EUROPARC Consulting undertakes support services for the Directorate to ensure informed decision-making in the Evaluation Committee.
- The essential tasks of EUROPARC Consulting are the evaluation of the application dossiers by the verifiers as well as functioning as the secretariat of the Evaluation Committee. Additional tasks can be included in the agreement.
- The contract with the protected areas relating to the evaluation of the Charter application dossier will be concluded with the Directorate. EUROPARC Consulting prepares the contracts with the verifiers.
- The remuneration of EUROPARC Consulting includes the direct costs (payment to the

verifiers, cost of training events for the verifiers, etc) as well as reasonable administrative costs of performing the tasks. The normal rules for VAT inside the European Union apply.

- In order to keep costs as low as possible, all options for prepayment and part payment should be examined.

The reduction in income to EUROPARC Consulting associated with this approach is likely to be around 30% of the income currently generated by the Charter evaluation process and could be absorbed financially.

The exact details of the proposed agreement should be negotiated between the Directorate and EUROPARC Consulting. It would help EUROPARC Consulting's cash flow and stability if the arrangement is initially for three years and reviewed after two.

4.6. Charter fees

As we have already stated, in the long term, the self-financing Charter management is a reasonable target. All costs should be covered by the different fees. The Council decides the level of Charter fees. The fees should be reviewed because they have been held at the same level for more than five years.

Recommendations

- The Charter fees shall be reviewed every other year.
- The fees should be based on the comprehensive Charter budgeting and include the following elements:
 - o Charter registration fee for access to all Charter services: candidature, candidature for renewing the Charter, Charter partnership
 - o Charter evaluation or re-evaluation fee
 - o Option 1: Annual Charter network membership fee (optional if other funding sources cover the costs)
 - o Option 2: Charter Partner membership fee in the Federation membership categories, with a modest amount
- All the Charter fees are invoiced from and paid to the Directorate. Align with VAT regulations.
- The fees the Directorate pays to EUROPARC Consulting include the in-house costs of EUROPARC Consulting relating to the work undertaken, and in accordance with the written agreement
- The costs of Consulting should also include the verifiers' travel costs to strengthen the neutrality of the verification procedure
- The Contract between Directorate and Consulting shall cover also the prefunding possibility of the Charter evaluation management with the flow of the Charter evaluation fees coming into the Directorate. To save administration, we suggest that Consulting receives 50% of the contract fee from the Federation in the January of each year and 50% on completion in July.
- The Charter budget should cover all the income and expenditure required by the Directorate. This may be extremely challenging for the Directorate at the beginning, as sustainable conditions for the Charter budget will need to be created. It means cutting of unnecessary costs, reviewing the fees, widening the basis for fees and actively seeking external project funds.

4.7. Charter monitoring and auditing

A key new task within the management of the Charter is the monitoring of Charter performance and impacts. The efficiency of Charter management will also need to be kept under review. Charter monitoring has been discussed since the establishment of the Charter system, but has not been integrated into its management.

Recommendations

- The Directorate should develop a system to monitor the outputs and impacts of Charter Part I and II based on the model presented in the Sustainable Tourism Working Group report of 31.12.2012. The so called Charter Magic numbers create a good set of indicators to be developed as tools to monitor the outputs and impacts of Charter Part I. The Part II monitoring indicators introduced in the Sustainable Tourism Working Group report require more practical development in the future.
- The effectiveness of Charter management, in particular that of the organisation and roles of different actors, needs continuous auditing by independent Charter experts, who can also analyse the cost-benefit ratio produced by the Charter system to the Federation. An audit of the Charter management should take place every three years and should cover of the Directorate, EUROPARC Consulting and the Evaluation Committee.

4.8. Charter Part II management

The Official Charter Text, agreed on by the Council, defines minimum rules for Charter Part II methodologies and gives the possibility to National Sections to define, within that European framework, a national methodology for protected areas situated in their zone of influence.

After the first five years period of implementation of the Charter Part II system, we are concerned about the fact that the current five national methodologies differ strongly from each other in form, content and quality. Therefore, in its final report from 31.12.2012, the Sustainable Tourism Working Group proposed several rationalisations and harmonisations to the CPII management.

Recommendations

- The Official Charter Text should be amended in a way to oblige to a greater harmonization between national methodologies by being more precise about the minimum standards for such methodologies. It should also foresee that national methodologies have to be reviewed every five years. These amendments should force the harmonization of existing and future methodologies over the coming years. The Charter Part II methodology should be seen as one, with national sections' versions as special guidelines for the practical implementation.
- The coordination and "help desk" for CPII management should be available for Sections and members in the Directorate

4.9. European Charter annual budget

During our work, we had a great deal of difficulties to estimate the overall costs of the European Charter for one year. Their doesn't seem to be a common understanding inside the organization as a whole on how to calculate real staff costs on a year's basis, social costs, effective day costs, etc. In addition, there are different views on how to apply tax rules, each view being based on external professional expertise. The different regulations in the different countries make a common understanding even more difficult.

We have tried to work out a project cost model for the European Charter which would easily fit in a cost model commonly used for EU-projects (see Appendix 1). The figures in that cost model are approximate calculations based on our experience and partly, we have to admit, pure assumptions. Although we believe that an economically sustainable management of the Charter is impossible without such a comprehensive financial view, we would not recommend to base single decisions on our model without further investigation.

Recommendations

We strongly recommend to the Council:

- to definitively clarify the application of VAT and other taxes in connection with the whole Charter management process and the relationship between EUROPARC Federation and EUROPARC Consulting . This clarification has to be done with the help of the external professional experts of both organizations;
- to engage the Directorate to prepare a comprehensive budget to be worked out over three years, based on the EU project cost model presented under 3.1. but with more accurate figures.