



EUROPARC Federation

Report to Council

21st October 2012

8_Working Group's report

Annex 3 "Sustainable Tourism Working group"

Report on the EUROPARC Sustainable Tourism Working Group activities

Lasse Loven
Chair of the STWG
10.10.2012

Drafted with STWG members contributions

1. List active members of the working groups

The list of invited members of the STWG is as follows:

Representatives from Charter Protected Areas and EUROPARC Sections:

Lasse Loven, Finland, Metsähallitus that according to the Council nomination chairs this WG;
Richard Tyler, UK, Brecon Beacons NP;
Mike Pugh, UK, Forest of Bowland AONB
Josep Maria Prats, Spain, La Garrotxa;
Stefania Petrosillo, Italy, Federparchi;
Monica Herrera-Pavia, France, Parc National du Mercantour;
Hans Schiphorst, Netherlands, Weerribben;
Barbara Engels, Germany, BfN

Representative from EUROPARC Federation

Paulo Castro, Portugal,

Representative of EUROPARC Consulting

Richard Partington, UK,

External expert

Ricardo Blanco, Ministry of Tourism of Spain, the Segretaria General de Turism

2. What have been the main achievements in the past two years.

- Defining and clearing the roles of different actors and expertises in the Charter processes (ready)
- Proposal on the harmonisation of the Partnership methodology for Charter Part II (ready)
- Analysing the need for developing the different guidelines and working templates for Charter processes in different language versions and making a plan for the rewriting project for them (ready)
- Developing project ideas for Charter to find external funding sources for developing the system and Charter performance
- Commenting other sustainable tourism initiatives like
 - STEPPA project; including 3 commenting documents,
 - EU-DG initiatives; commenting on European ecolabeling and European Charter,
 - BfN project; commenting on magic numbers,
 - Global Sustainable Tourism Council in initiative Travel forever; comments on the possible joining or co-operation

- Charter dissemination by the STWG members in magazines and several international and national seminars
- Analysing the economy for Charter process and developing a proposal for better sustainable economy for Charter (to be discussed in STWG Genk meeting)
- Developing the training program for the charter actors (to be discussed in STWG Geng meeting)
- Developing the strategic partnerships for Charter with PanParks and Geopark systems (to be discussed in STWG Geng meeting)
- Planning a Charter dissemination seminar in 2013 (to be discussed in STWG Geng meeting)

a. How much of your original plan have you undertaken

Approximately 80 % of the original working plan is done until now and the rest shall be produced till the end of this year. The final report of the STWG shall be delivered to the EUROPARC Council in December 2012 after communication with the sections.

More detailed see Appendix 1

b. What have the benefits of working in this working group been for members and their organisation

- Improved communications and better understanding of the needs and pressures for different members and Sections. Possibility of trying to make a consensus between them for common benefit.
- Review and clarification of the Charter administration, application and validation process - again background of vacuum at Federation level /3 years
- Recognition of the need to find a process/structure to make the Charter self-financing and **sustainable**. Understanding the needs for a 'business plan',

3. In what was has the working group implemented the EUROPARC strategy priorities

- STWG has analysed and developed the following items according the EUROPARC Strategic priorities
 - Harmonising the Charter methodology to create credible and environmentally friendly partnerships in and around Charter protected areas
 - To develop strategic partnerships with the other green certification systems integrated in the protected areas
 - Developing the sustainable economy for the EUROPARC network
 - Transferring good practises inside and outside the EUROPARC membership
 - Promoting the awareness rising among our customers and partners

4. What have been the limitations in taking your work forward

STWG has met difficulty of getting STWG members together - budgetary constraints from their PAs (national governments' austerity plans!)

- Ecomical limitations to work in the STWG has increased all the time during the working time. At the end of the working period there is only 4 of 10 members active and no active external experts from other organisations.

The internet meetings for this size of working group are not yet technically possible.

- The core team skype meetings for 2-3 persons has been the only possibility to communicate orally outside the 2 face-to-face meetings.

STWG members have felt low support (morale as well as financial) from Federation.

- When no secretary contribution from the head office and no resources to hire an external helping hand or cover the traveling costs, the practical work in the STWG has been mostly on voluntary bases with low effectiveness. Several competing projects and working groups outside the STWG, covering partly the same issues that STWG and using EUROPARC resources.

The level of commitment from Charter PAs is low.

- The question "What does the Charter do for us?" is common in the Charter PA network. The caretaking of the motivation and basic level of actions in doing what has been planned and committed in the accreditation process is remarkably low. The monitoring of the Charter proceedings is poor and economical thinking is not enough developed among the Charter PAs. The communication on Charter to the public park visitors is almost forgotten. These issues are not managed by the Directorate or Sections with active Charter Network management.

If EUROPARC wants productive and cost-effective working groups, it should provide the following minimums:

- secretary for the practical drafting
- cover the travel costs of the WG members, the members can cover normally their salaries with the support of their background organisation
- call the external members to the WG in time in the beginning of the working period
- not compete with the WG with some other WG:s
- use the WG experts to represent the EUROPARC in the external WG:s when possible
- arrange a practical working site like Siggen Gut for WGs for 2-3 days intensive work camps every year

5. What are your main objectives for the coming 2 years (were the council to agree your plan)

The Charter is a key strategic instrument in the EUPARC working plan, so the continuous updating and development of the system and Charter Network is most necessary. To continue the STWG work 2 years with the following objectives:

- to develop the necessary criteria for the EUROPARC co-operation with the Tourism operators
- To develop the Charter guidelines about the minimum standards for the content of the Charter Sustainable tourism Strategy and the Action Plan
- To further develop the monitoring method for the Charter Part I and Part II
- To negotiate and possibly draft the mutual commitments for co-operation and possible integration of European Charter for Protected Areas system, PanParks certification and Geopark certification.
- To introduce more practical tools to develop sustainable tourism in the condition of climate change
- To organise a dissemination seminar on sustainable tourism development models in protected areas.

In details the ECST system development shall include the following items:

- Define and perform a Business Plan approach to plan revenue and costs for the Charter entry and renewal
- To identify and demonstrate benefits to Charter PAs - support - e.g. training, promotion, marketing, networking, etc - to ensure loyalty and retention of existing as well as recruiting new candidate PAs
- To further develop Charter Part 2 Methodology for Charter Partnership agreements in the light of:
 - changes in national standards and practices on quality assessment and eco-label accreditation.
 - in the face of increasing number of competing 'brands' - national and global and EU - for Sustainable Tourism

6. How do you hope to maintain the work of the working group given the increasing limitation of EUROPARC resources.

- With stronger members contribution through the membership fee and the annual budget of EUROPARC
- With the participation of the Charter Business Partners for covering the Charter Partnership costs
- The “Business plan” for Charter management must include also the costs for the system development
 - The Charter Business Plan must either generate a 'surplus' to fund STWG work or
 - generate funding to support (see above answer to question 5) PAs which enables them to justify releasing and funding STWG representatives for travel/meetings
- By increasing the credibility and visibility of the Charter system for rising the awareness of political decision makers and the tourism industry for more successful external fund rising operations
- Investing EUROPARC budget funds on the better project development skills for creating better externally funded project applications.

Appendix 1 below on pages 7-8

EUROPARC Federation - Sustainable Tourism Working Group

Memo for the STWG activated in April 2011

Report on progress in 10.10.2012

EUROPARC Sustainable Tourism Working Group (STWG) work program; items and schedule

Task	2011 1st half	2011 2nd half	2012 1st half	2012 2nd half
Roles of the Charter Actors	x	Done		
Coordination of STWG work with STEPPA and BFN Project development	x	Done with Steppa	Continuing with BfN	Done
Comments on the STEPPA research	x	x	Done	
Evaluation of the results of STEPPA		x	Done	
Evaluation of the BFN project results - magic numbers - criteria and indicators for ST Destinations - Charter re-evaluation methodology - Best practice cases in the CharterNet		x x x x	x x x x	Done Not seen results Not seen results Not seen results
Comments on DG Charter related initiatives; European ecolabel and European Charter			Done	
Comments on Travel Forever initiative			Done	
Coordination with Transboundary WG and the Healthy Parks WG		x	x	Continuing
Review of the Charter Templates		x	x	Analyses and Plan ready
Review of the official Charter text (Part I and II) introducing new challenges like climate change		x	Done for P2	STWG has not the P1 on work plan any more
Charter Part II methodology - regional specifications	x	x	Done	
Charter Part III			Pending	STWG has not that task any more
Coordination of different ecolabel approaches (like PanParks and Geoparks)– international event			x	Working on
Capacity building programme			x	Working on
Sustainable economy for Funding models for Charter	x		x	Working on
Charter “Brand” and Marketing			x	Done
International development project with EU funding – drafting for application	x	x	Done	

Meeting with Charter Net		x		Working on the dissemination seminar plan
STWG Meeting on site	x in Olot		x in Forest of Bowland	23.10.2012 in Genk