



EUROPARC Federation Report to Council 1st February 2013

Title:
Working groups future mandates

Recommendation;

to decide whether to give mandates to working groups noting the recommendations provided.

Working Group Mandates

Working Groups of the EUROPARC Federation are set up to serve a theme or topic of interest to members of the Federation. Guidelines for the creation and management of EUROPARC working groups was approved by the general assembly in 2010.

A working group's mandate comes from the EUROPARC Council through the agreement of a remit and work plan, linked to the EUROPARC 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

At the Council meeting in Genk. October 2012, Council felt that the information provided in some working groups, notably the economics group , although that was felt to be an interesting topic for PA was not focused on some specific task or project development.

Council members were tasked with contacting the working groups and ascertaining the main priorities they envisaged fr 2011-2014 and to ensure action were generally inline with EUROPARC fields of work

the results of that follow up is contained in this report. Council member are advised to conclude the working groups discussion giving direction and mandate further to the recommendations and information now received

this will enable plans for the coming year and budgets to be agreed with working groups, if funds become available though the NGO grant application.

Report from Sustainable Tourism Working Group- contact Paulo Castro

Recommendations :

- ❖ To note the report.

- ❖ To decide a new mandate for a STWG 2013-14

Working groups future mandates

Report from Sustainable Tourism Working Group

The STWG has produced a 35 pages report on the work done in the past two years plus annexes. Being a member of the STWG, I only can say that we have reached a good level of achievement compared to our initial road map. I will transcribe the conclusions of the STWG:

“The STWG proposal to Council for continuation of the STWG work

STWG proposes to Council to continue the STWG work for next 2 years (2013-2014) with the following objectives:

- 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 performance and impacts;
- 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 develop the necessary Charter criteria for the EUROPARC co-operation with the international and national Tourism operators (Charter Part III);
- To introduce more practical tools to develop and monitor 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 identify the benefits the Charter system and management produces to the other members of EUROPARC who are not in the Charter Network;
- 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.

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

- secretary for the practical drafting;
- cover the travel costs of the WG members, the members may 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 WGs;
- use the WG experts to represent the EUROPARC in the external WGs when possible;
- arrange a practical working site like Siggen Gut for WGs for 2-3 days intensive work camps every year;

How do we 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, including also the core funding;
- With the participation of the Charter Business Partners for covering their part of 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 development fund to cover STWG work expenses or
 - generate funding to support 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.”

In my personal opinion as a Council member:

About the STWG 2011-2012 Report: there is a lot of work done and a lot of proposals to be considered. Yet part of these proposals has to be revalidated under the new perspective after the Council decides what will be the management model for the Charter in the future. In any case/model decided there is a clear need for a new two years mandate for a STWG.

About the next STWG task list: The task list should be much shorter than it was during 2011-2012. From the above proposals from the STWG, I believe the more relevant are:

- 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 performance and impacts;
- 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 develop the necessary Charter criteria for the EUROPARC co-operation with the international and national Tourism operators (Charter Part III);

As soon as the Charter management model is decided the proposals should be discussed and further developed by the next STWG;

About the option for STWG 2013-2014: there is a clear need for more support to the WG and the Charter management model in any case/solution points out the need for a Charter manager. Composition of the WG should be reviewed for a shorter list since it is not viable more than 5 people working on Skype and unless costs are supported, it becomes too expensive for life meetings. A list of members is an open issue and should depend on the policy decided for WG.

WORKING GROUP LIAISON: 'Health and Protected Areas' - Contact Eric Baird

Introduction

What follows is a response to the EUROPARC Council decision, 'Council members will attend the workshops' side meetings at the conference and contact the working groups to identify two key outcomes of their future work.' (1)

Rationale

The purpose of this paper is to identify 2 key outcomes of the Working Group, over the next 2/3 years. This is to enable EUROPARC to provide effective support to the Group. It will also encourage the Working Group to focus its efforts.

Context

The Health and Protected Areas Working Group (WG) is Chaired by Matti. It comprises members from many countries, including UK ,Scandinavia, Netherlands (2): significantly, however, Southern/Mediterranean Europe is not represented.

There is a tremendous amount of material 'out there' which elucidates the value- to human well-being- of activity in natural areas.(3) There is also a range of good practice, amongst our members, which mediates and promotes this encounter. (4)

There is great enthusiasm within the WG that this good practice is promoted more widely, both within EUROPARC, and to external agencies. Various suggestions/attempts have been made to do this: several initiatives have been successful, others less so.(5)

The WG is keen, therefore, to extend its remit, so that the work done so far may come to fruition.

Outcomes

The WG sees 2 main strands to its work:

1. Share good practice within EUROPARC.

- a. Good practice would be disseminated throughout the membership. Learning would come from members themselves, and also from outwith the organisation.
 - b. This would ensure that EUROPARC has a soundly-based reputation for facilitating the encounter between people and nature, and thus enhance our ability to promote our second outcome-
2. .Position EUROPARC as a key agency within the 'health and well being' debate, at a European (and wider?) scale.

Currently, obstacles to this work include: lack of funding (a recently produced grant application failed); lack of a visible 'platform', both within EUROPARC, and vis-a-vis the 'outside world'.

Potential outputs could include: the creation of a web-based 'platform' (or platforms); the production of a 'toolkit' for managers(principles/good practice/benchmarking); a 'well-being' strategy within EUROPARC; the integration of the values of the WG within European 'health' strategy(lobbying); participation/presenting at relevant conferences/forums.

Working Group Transboundary - contact Rolands Auzins

This group only formed in Novemeber 2012 and are currently preparing a workplan.

A verbal update is expected

Working Group Economics and Ecosystems - contact Marian Woltens

No report.

compiled by

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Jan 2013