



# EUROPARC Federation

Sustainable Tourism Working Group  
2013-2014

Final report 15.1.2015



Foto:MEK-Finland

Sustainable Tourism Working Group 2013-2014 (STWG)

**Final Report to the Council of EUROPARC**

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STWG activated the brain storm in the snow storm following a world class Aurora borealis episode during the Lapland meeting in December 2014. This photo was taken in 10.12.2014 in front of the Pallas-Yllästunturi visitor centre, which is the oldest national park visitor centre in Scandinavia. From left: Dr Pekka Sulkava, Park director of Pallas-Yllästunturi National park (Finland), Stefania Petrosillo (Italy), Dr Richard Denman (United Kingdom), Monica Herrera-Pavia (France), Päivi Lapiolahti, Tourism coordinator of the municipality Muonio (Finland), Lasse Lovén, chair of STWG (Finland), Giacomo Benelli (Italy) and Joel Erkkonen (Finland). Foto: Stefania Petrosillo.

# Introduction

- Initiative for STWG 2013-2014
  - Proposal of STWG 2011-2012
- Launching by Council and Directorate
  - April 2013
- The list of invited members and external experts of the STWG is as follows:
  - Representatives from Charter Protected Areas and EUROPARC Sections:
    - Lasse Lovén, Finland, member of EUROPARC, chair of STWG;
    - Giacomo Benelli, Italy;
    - Joel Erkkonen, Finland, Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services;
    - Monica Herrera-Pavia, France;
    - Martin Kaiser, Germany, Müritz NP.
    - Mike Pugh, UK, Forest of Bowland AONB;
    - Josep Maria Prats, Spain, La Garrotxa;
    - Stefania Petrosillo, Italy, Federparchi;
    - Julia Steiner, France.
  - Representative from EUROPARC Council and Directorate
    - Paulo Castro, Portugal
  - Representative of EUROPARC Consulting
    - Richard Partington, UK
  - External sustainable tourism experts
    - Ricardo Blanco, Ministry of Tourism of Spain, the Segreteria General de Turism;
    - Agnese Balandina, Latvia, Kemer NP;
    - Richard Denman, , UK , EUROPARC Evaluation Committee;
    - Barbara Engels, Germany, BfN;
    - Amanda Gutzman, Spain, ECOTONO;
    - Bettina Kreisler, Germany;
    - Marja van Loef, the Netherlands;
    - Günther Loiskandl, Austria;
    - Hans Schiphorst, the Netherlands, Weerribben;
    - Richard Tyler, UK, Brecon Beacons NP.
- Meetings and other working
  - Task groups organised for drafting the STWG recommendations
    - Task group Charter finances
    - Task group for Charter internationalization and strategic partnerships
    - Task group for Charter methodology
    - Task group for Charter Strategy and Action plan
  - 4 face-to-face meetings
  - Several Skype meetings
  - Three progress reports to the Directorate and Council during the WG period
- Processing the final report to Council
  - Drafting in four Task groups

- STWG Task Group for Charter internationalisation and co-operation; meeting in Vienna in July 2013
- STWG Side meeting in Conference 2013 in Debrezen, Hungary
- STWG recommendations to Council and Directorate on co-operation MoU with PanParks Network, common platform for sustainable tourism destinations and Charter internationalisation in 2013
- STWGs recommendation to Directorate on Charter internationalization in 30.4.2014
- Active participation on workshop for development in Charter methodology and management in Vilm in April 2014
- Informative meeting for STWG and Sustainable Tourism experts in Killarney in November 2014
- STWG meeting in Lapland in Finland in 9.-12.12.2014
- Communication with STWG members and external experts about reports of Task Groups for finalisation of the STWG report until 15.1.2015
- Communication with TBWG experts about the harmonisation of the EUROPARC Charter and Transboundary certification systems.
- STWG recommendations about the Charter Strategy and Action plan 2015-2021 to the Council dated on 15.1.2015

### **What are the main outputs and recommendations of the STWG 2013-2014?**

Sustainable Tourism Working Group (STWG) has followed the Work Plan accepted by the Directorate so far it has been possible. Some tasks have changed during the work period because Directorate has taken them in its own responsibility (Charter management and Charter templates). The following outputs and recommendations we can deliver to the Council:

- The Council should decide the Charter Strategy and Action plan 2015-2021 according to the Chapter A in this report after communication about it with the Sections, Evaluation Committee and the EUROPARC Consulting. The decision should be made before the 31.5.2015.
- The Council should decide the new official text for Charter Part I methodology according the Annex 2.
- The Council should decide the harmonisation of the Partnership methodology for Charter Part II according the Annex 3.
- The Council should decide the sustainable financing for the Charter process according the budget plan, which is developed in Action 4.3 a-d.
- The Council should mandate the Directorate to make necessary revisions to the different guidelines and application documents and verifiers working templates for Charter processes in different language versions. This recommendation was made already in the STWG 2011-2012 final report in 31.12.2012.
- The Council should mandate the Directorate to negotiate and draft necessary MoUs and agreements on Charter internationalisation according to the Action 3.1c.
- The Council should mandate the Directorate to negotiate, decide, manage and disseminate the presence of the Charter in the best Sustainable Tourism platforms in Europe according to the Action 3.1b.
- The Council should decide to launch a new Sustainable Tourism Working Group 2015-2016.

The STWG opinions, recommendations or proposals are written in the report in red colour. The general structure for the STWG output is composed of analyses of issues or special items, proposed solution and who may be responsible to do the step forwards.

### **In what has the STWG implemented the EUROPARC strategy priorities?**

- STWG has analysed and developed all the Charter oriented items in the new EUROPARC Strategy 2015-2021 according the EUROPARC Strategic priorities
  - Harmonising the Charter methodology to create credible and environmentally friendly partnerships in and around Charter protected areas
  - Developing strategic partnerships with the 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
  - Training the staff and other Charter stakeholders
  - Developing internal and external communication and promoting the awareness rising actions among our customers and partners
  - Promoting remarkable increment in EUROPARC memberships

### **What are the benefits of STWG working for members and their organisation?**

- STWG has clarified on the practical level how the EUROPARC Strategy can be delivered to positive actions for development.
- STWG has made clear recommendations on how to create improved communications and better understanding of the needs and pressures in the Charter process for different members and Sections. Possibility of trying to make a consensus between them for common benefit.
- STWG has proposed clear roles to different Charter actors for more effective governance in the Charter process including review and clarification of the Charter administration, official rules and standards, management in the application and validation process.
- Better recognition of the need to find a process/structure to make the Charter self-financing and economically sustainable. Better understanding the needs for a 'Charter business plan' on each level of the organisation.,
- Better understanding on the secondary benefits to the EUROPARC members created by the Charter.

### **What have been the limitations in taking STWG work forward?**

- STWG has met difficulty of getting STWG members together - budgetary constraints from Directorate and background organisations
- The internet meetings for this size of working group are not yet technically possible.
- When no secretary contribution from the head office and no resources to hire an external helping hand or cover the travelling costs, the practical work in the STWG has been almost completely on voluntary bases with low effectiveness.
- 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 needs continuous support.
- We have not got any feedback about STWG 2011-2012 proposals after delivering them to Directorate.

# A. Charter Strategy and Action Plan 2021

## 1. Brief description of the Charter state-of-art and the historical background

### 1.1 Summary description

The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas is a unique practical management tool that promotes and encourages all types of protected area as well as local tourism businesses to develop nature based tourism in a sustainable way.

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 based on a relevant situation analysis. The aim of all Charter projects and activities is the protection of both the natural and cultural heritage as well as the continuous improvement of tourism in connection to a protected area. The Charter benefits the environment, the local population, businesses and visitors.

The European Charter was originally based on 10 Principles for sustainable tourism and comprises a set of guidelines, check-lists and sets of procedures. Over the last fifteen years it has become the oldest (since 2001) and the largest network of 135 (Dec 2014) sustainable tourism destinations based in and around protected areas across Europe.

### 1.2 Practical application

#### Charter Part I

After four years in development the Charter became operational in 2000 and was designed to be in three parts. (Refer to ANNEX 1 - Charter history)

To be awarded the Charter, a protected area is required to submit an application which demonstrates whether to what extent, and in which ways the candidate satisfies the 10 Charter principles, especially:

- All stakeholders are permanently integrated in the management process since the beginning of the planning 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 application is examined by independent experts (Verifiers) currently commissioned by EUROPARC Consulting. Following an initial desk evaluation of the documents the Verifier is required to visit the locality, during which representatives of the most important stakeholder groups are consulted. The Verifier produces a comprehensive report within an agreed format, which is proofed,



language/sense checked and edited by EUROPARC Consulting, then passed to the independent Charter Evaluation Committee.

The Evaluation Committee is appointed by the EUROPARC Federation Council. It consists of experts, who possess significant experience of tourism in protected areas, as well as a representative of the wider tourism industry. The Evaluation Committee analyses the verifiers' reports and recommends to the Federation Council whether the application be accepted or rejected. The Committee also identifies any particular recommendations for the protected area, reflecting the verifier's report. Final decision rests with the Council and if awarded it is for a period of five years, after which a renewed evaluation is required.

## **Charter Part II**

Protected areas that have gained Charter status (Part I above) can bestow Charter Partner status on tourism businesses operating within Charter area sustainably and are committed to the Charter principles and ethos. The method by which this Charter Partner status is awarded must satisfy the general requirements of the Charter and be approved by the Council.

Generally the method for awarding businesses the status of Charter Partner is developed by Sections of the EUROPARC Federation for all protected areas within the catchment area of a particular Section. By December 2014 methods have been developed by the Spanish, Italian, French, Atlantic Isles and Nordic- Baltic Sections.

Requests to approve these methods for the award of Charter Partner status to businesses are addressed to the Federation Council. The Charter 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 agencies also as Charter partners, who then may operate with charter areas and charter businesses completing the circle of excellence for a sustainable tourism destination. The process for Charter Part III is not yet fully operational. The French Section of the EUROPARC Federation is piloting their model and methodology in 2014.

## **2. The Charter and the New EUROPARC Federation Strategy 2015-2021**

The EUROPARC Federation General Assembly accepted a new Strategy for the Federation in Killarney Conference in Ireland in September 2014. There are several key points in the EUROPARC Strategy 2015-2021, which connect directly to the Charter process and methodology. These strategic points are here written with *cursive letters* and **the STWG comments and recommendations on it are written after the bullet point with red colour with normal letters**. The underlined headlines of this text are from the Federation Strategy.

### **Our Purpose**

*... in order to sustainably and effectively manage these natural resources, EUROPARC believes that the future protection and conservation of nature and landscapes is best achieved through networking and cooperation.*

- The STWG indicates that the Charter is a tool for networking and cooperation.

### **Our Network**

*The EUROPARC Federation network is dedicated to practical nature conservation and sustainable development of Europe's biodiversity, fostering holistic landscape approaches. This involves and requires effective conservation, restoration and management of functioning ecosystems, where Protected Areas are integral components of the natural and cultural European landscape areas beyond designated sites. Protecting Europe's natural heritage through fundamental principles of international cooperation and inclusivity will be central to our network.*

- The STWG indicates that the Charter process covers the Charter Area, which is a holistic landscape where the core is the protected area. The Charter Network works on international cooperation and inclusivity.

### **Our Founding Aims**

*EUROPARC's founding aims are enshrined in our statutes and commit the organisation to promote 6 different groups of activities for the natural and cultural heritage.*

- The STWG indicates that the Charter promotes especially the management skills of park authorities, sustainable activities of park partners and social networking capacity of park stakeholders. The Charter process rises environmental awareness and education potential among all the actors and park visitors. The Charter also promotes the valuation of natural and cultural heritage in the regional development.

### **Our Goals**

*EUROPARC will renew the organisation and enlarge the bases for membership to deliver better the services to its sections, members and partners.*

- The STWG indicates that the Charter can help EUROPARC to enlarge the bases for memberships especially among the park stakeholders like municipalities, local, national and international businesses and legal bodies of the 3rd sector in local social communities.

### **Our Values**

*EUROPARC will work on 6 main groups of values; Fun, Respect, Sharing, Learning, Cooperating, Sustainability.*

- The STWG indicates that all of the six value clusters integrate with the Charter in one way or another, but the highest priority is on the values in Sustainability, Respect and Cooperation.

### **Our Strategy 2015-2021; big picture**

*The strategy reflects how we might build the EUROPARC Federation for the future, giving both a bigger role to sections and opportunities for members to be involved. These may require some changes to the Federation's statutes and how we operate, to which members will need to agree. The details of governance change cannot be detailed here in the strategy document, but instead indicate that a more federated structure should evolve to deliver the strategy.*

- The STWG indicates that the Charter process is already organised on three different levels like the Federal, sections and park or Charter area. The roles and responsibilities of the Charter Actors need still more clarifications and rules for harmonised operations. This is task for the Council.
- The STWG has made its recommendations on roles and rules for Charter actors in its earlier final report 31.12.2012.

### **Our Vision**

*Sustainable nature, valued by people.*

- The STWG indicates that the Charter system can work on that general vision.

### **Our Mission**

*EUROPARC works for our natural and cultural heritage, to improve and champion the policy and practice of Protected Area management, in order to deliver sustainable nature, valued by people.*

- The STWG indicates that the Charter works to realise that mission.

### **Strategy Components**

*The strategy uses **four main STRATEGIC THEMES** of work. The themes are analysed in **five components** like 1) Priority Areas, 2) Strategic objectives, 3) Strategic Actions, 4) Work Outputs, and 5) Outcomes.*

- The STWG indicates that all the Strategic themes and components have connection to Charter.

### **Main Strategic Themes:**

- 1) Working for Nature
- 2) Helping People and Organisations learn
- 3) Promoting Sustainability: Role of Protected Areas in Sustainable Development
- 4) Working Together: Building our Organisation

The EUROPARC Federation consists of several components – namely the Council; Members, Working Groups and Sections; the Directorate and EUROPARC Consulting. All these components need to be involved in delivering this strategy if it is to be a success. These different ways of working include: exchange and networking amongst members, training and capacity building, development of management tools and improved communications in lobbying, campaigning and information provision.

- The STWG indicates that
  - The Charter process consists of activities in all the Strategic themes, especially in promoting sustainability.
  - All the components of EUROPARC have roles in Charter process.
  - Also all the key working models, especially the development of management tools, are involved in the Charter for delivering the EUROPARC Strategy.

### **Strategic Theme 1. Working for nature**

Through EUROPARC network, working groups and sections, with strengths in different fields related to nature conservation, e.g. sustainable tourism, economics and health, the EUROPARC Federation is able to support cross-cutting integration of EU policies.

- The STWG indicates that the Charter Network, Sustainable Tourism Working Group, the Sections, the Charter Evaluation Committee and EUROPARC Consulting are working with specified roles for Nature in the Charter Process.

### **Strategic Theme 2. Helping people and organisations learn**

#### **Priority Area 2.3 Training**

*Strategic objective: To increase expertise, in interested members, on specific EUROPARC programmes to deliver the present strategy.*

*Action 2.3a: Training to support the EUROPARC products, such as Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas, Transboundary, and Junior Ranger programmes.*

*Outcome: More skilled and trained staff able to deliver sustainable tourism, working with youth and transboundary cooperation, which will increase the success of these programmes.*

- The STWG indicates that the training of park staff but also the other groups of Charter stakeholders to understand the Charter method and process is crucial for the successful management of the Charter and for the development of sustainable tourism on Charter area.
- The STWG recommends that Directorate together with the sections and E Consulting organise the necessary training actions for all the Charter stakeholders. The first step is to analyse the special needs for training for different target groups and produce a “Training plan for the Charter process”.

### **Strategic Theme 3. Promoting Sustainability - Role of Protected Areas in Sustainable Development**

*EUROPARC believes that not only are parks themselves facing challenges and pressure from visitation and misuse on the land they manage, but have the opportunity and potential to act as catalysts for sustainability and life style changes at a local and regional and indeed national level. Based on strong connections and identity that many people have with natural places, parks have evolved more participatory and inclusive models of working.*

*EUROPARC seeks to mainstream Protected Areas as models for sustainable development, to deliver social, economic and environmental benefits, with stakeholders across relevant sectors. EUROPARC has a long established success in bringing business, in particular in the tourism sector, to be involved in Protected Areas associated in implementing EU policy, to deliver a resource efficient Europe. That experience will be further developed.*

#### **Priority Area 3.1 Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas**

*Strategic objective: EUROPARC will consolidate the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Area (ECSTPA) network and promote the ECSTPA as a tool for the sustainable tourism development at international level.*

*Outcome: Protected Areas will be managed with collaboration from tourism businesses to ensure that the resources are more sustainable and a wiser use of Protected Areas.*

*Action 3.1 a: Consolidate the network of ECSTPA in individual parks, with tourism Partners and with travel agencies. Outputs: Charter strategy approved and 150 certified Parks, 2000 tourism Partners and 50 travel agencies*

- The STWG indicates very critical turning points in the development and commitments in the Charter Network. These include the increasing numbers of parks withdrawing from the Charter Network after one or two awarding periods, difficulties to create sustainable financing to cover the Charter costs and growing disharmony in applying the Charter method and in regional distribution of the Charter areas.
- The STWG recommends that this Charter Strategy is the document in the process of realisation for the Action 3.1a. The Charter Strategy should be approved by all the Charter Actors and decided by the Council.
- The STWG recommends the following key Actions to control the Charter processes and to ensure the sustainable development in the Charter Network
  - To analyse the reasons of the growing number of drop-outs in the Charter Network. This is a task for Directorate and Sections.
  - To consolidate the Charter service and management in Directorate, Sections and E Consulting according to the key roles of each actors.
  - To harmonise the Charter method with the revisions in the official texts decided by the Council.
  - To renew the Charter Partnership model on bases of EUROPARC Memberships and integrate the national partnership models to the Charter Part II process.
  - To analyse and make necessary revisions to the Charter financing to make it sustainable in costs and revenues
- The STWG recommends in Chapter 5 points 6, 8 and 10 the necessary Actions when developing the sustainable economy and social cohesion for the Charter area. These are tasks, which the Directorate and Sections should coordinate.

*Action 3.1 b: Promote a common platform with other awarding schemes for Sustainable Tourism Destinations based on Protected Areas in order to lobby effectively for at European and international levels. Output: 1 platform*

- The STWG indicates that a common platform for all the organisations, which are developing Green Tourism in connection to protected areas, is urgently needed for better visibility and informing potential customers. See more in details in Annexes 4, 10 and 11.
- The STWG recommends in Chapter 5.4 point 3 the practical actions to realise the common platform. This is task for Directorate.

*Action 3.1 c: Gain international recognition of the Charter as an efficient tool for sustainable tourism development and disseminate it outside Europe. Outputs: 2 international recognitions, 1 country outside Europe with Charter established.*

- The STWG indicates that the international recognition on European level and in global level are important to the credibility for the Charter system. The necessary background analyses are in the Annexes 4, 10 and 11.
- The STWG recommends in Chapter 5.4 point 3 and 4 the necessary actions when developing the efforts to find international recognition for the Charter. This is task for the Directorate and Council.

#### *Priority Area 3.4 Climate change in Protected Areas*

*Strategic objective: To support Protected Area managers to increase the role of Protected Areas in climate change mitigation and adaptation.*

- The STWG indicates that EUROPARC has not developed proper tool for estimating the carbon footprint of tourism in and around protected areas. The Charter process does not include any analyses or planning guidelines to mitigate or develop adaptation to the climate change.
- The STWG recommends in Chapter 5 in Action 5.1 the minimum standards for Charter planning and more in details to include the Climate change item as a key Action in the minimum planning procedure (see more in details in Annex 2). This is task for the Council to decide and all the Charter Actors to realise in practise.

#### *Priority Area 3.5 Future Proofing - New Topics for Protected Areas*

*Strategic objective: Explore new topics to support Protected Area managers' contribution to sustainable development.*

- The STWG indicates that Charter Strategy shall be open to adaptive updating when new environmental issues arise and need attention. The Charter process does not include until now any standard procedure to assure necessary updating in the method and process..
- The STWG recommends in Chapter 5 in Action 5.1 the necessary actions, when developing the Charter for exploring new topics for sustainable development (see more in details in Annex 2). This is task for Council to decide and all the other Charter Actors to monitor and realise in practise.

## **Strategic Theme 4. Working Together- Building Our Organisation**

### *Priority Area 4.2 People power - Human resources*

*Strategic objective: Develop the potential of human resources, needed for the implementation of the strategy, across the EUROPARC Federation network.*

*Outcome: Greater participation by a larger number of members, bringing great effectiveness to the work of the Federation.*

*Action 4.2a: Coordinate efficiently with the active involvement of Sections, through contribution of resources to the implementation of the strategy by all actors taking clear responsibilities. Annual work plan jointly agreed and developed with Directorate and Sections, designated members.*

- The STWG indicates that the work of volunteering experts like in the work of STWG itself and in the work of Charter Evaluation Committee, creates remarkable value added for the benefit of the whole Federation.
- STWG agrees to develop its annual work plan in co-operation with Directorate and Sections.
- STWG recommends that independent external evaluation for the Charter process should continue as a core component for the Charter methodology with long term contracts between the Directorate and E Consulting. The contract should be based on in-house service model, which covers all the real costs of the evaluation process. The standards for the Evaluation process should be defined in the mutual agreement, it cannot be only on the responsibility of the consultant.

*Action 4.2d: Support working groups as think and do tank s and project development units for contributing to the work of the Federation.*

- The STWG indicates that the Charter system needs a specified innovative development unit as an actor in the Charter family.
- The STWG recommends that the role of STWG must be seen as a permanent unit in the EUROPARC Federation to update and develop the Charter and support the Directorate in Charter oriented project development.

### *Priority Area 4.3 Federation Finances*

*Strategic objective: Identify new innovative ways to be more sustainable, and to save and gain funding for Federation activities.*

*Action 4.3a Develop a transparent collaborative efficient system within the Federation to increase the financial resources through involving Sections and members and EUROPARC Consulting.*

- The STWG indicates the statistics and understanding of the Charter costs and revenues is weak in all the levels of Federation.
  - The Federation is not monitoring the costs of Charter processes in the level of Charter areas or Sections.
  - The E Consulting keeps the cost structure in the Evaluation process as a "business matter".



- The information on the external subsidies or external project contributions in the Charter costs is missing.
- We have no transparent and valid data about the Charter costs before the awarding and during the 5 years period after that.
- There is no valid estimate of costs in Charter Part II process in Parks, Sections or in Directorate.
- There is no audition on the cost - revenue relation in Charter process.
- The STWG recommends in Chapter 5.4 point 8 the necessary practical actions, when Federation is developing more sustainable financial bases for the Charter processes and Networking. (See more in details in Annex 5). This is task for Council, Directorate, Sections, Charter parks and E Consulting.

*Action 4.3b Encourage members and Sections to contribute to development and implementation of an income generation / fundraising strategy in order to increase the financial capacity across the Federation by sharing and developing expertise and know how.*

- The STWG indicates that new sources for the Charter revenues are needed to cover all the Charter management costs in Directorate, Sections and Charter parks. In many countries the sustainable tourism is a strategic sector for economic and regional development. This give better opportunity to get external funding for Charter development in parks seeking Charter candidature and Sections supporting them in that process.
- The STWG recommends in Chapter 5.4 points 8 and 10 the necessary practical actions to find new revenue options, when Federation is developing more sustainable financial bases for the Charter processes and Networking. (See more in details in Annex 5). This is task for Council, Directorate, Sections, Charter parks and E Consulting.

*Action 4.3c Maintain the security of the income provided by the membership fee to deliver the functionality of the critical staff group of the Federation.*

- The STWG indicates the alarming shrinking in membership numbers and fees during several last years. The number of dropouts in Charter Network is also growing and causing more pressure to the core funding of Federation when it is trying to cover the costs of Charter management.
- The STWG recommends in Chapter 5.4 points 2 and 8 the necessary practical actions when Federation is developing more sustainable financial bases for the Charter processes and Networking. (See more in details in Annex 5). This is task for Council, Directorate, Sections and Charter parks.

*Action 4.3d. Develop a wider base of the EUROPARC membership to increase support for and increase the profile of the work of the EUROPARC Federation. Increase membership by 20 %*

*Outcome: A more secure financial base to invest in the Federations activities and services for members.*

- The STWG indicates that number of members is shrinking and on the same time EUROPARC is little by little losing its credibility. In the Charter process normally only the protected area is the member of EUROPARC. Very often the other stakeholders and partners are there in the Charter process only receiving benefits, but not having any responsibility of the costs. Deeper connection and involvement in the Charter Network may create stronger support to the Charter park and produce also better results in the Charter



performance, when partners can better compare the process and actions with the other Charter Areas. The target to find 20 % increment in the memberships is not realistic if we do not encourage and attract the Charter partners and other Charter stakeholders like municipalities, local enterprises, 3<sup>rd</sup> sector associations and tour operators to join to EUROPARC as a member.

- The STWG recommends that the Charter partners and stakeholders are encouraged to join to the EUROPARC Federation in a special category of membership. This initiative and its financial impact in the sustainable economy of the Charter and the whole Federation is analysed more in details in Chapter 5.4 point 10 and in Annex 5. This is task for Council, Directorate, Sections and Charter parks.

#### *Priority Area 4.4. Talking and listening: Smarter Communications*

*Strategic objective: Develop smarter communications to increase the effectiveness and visibility of Federation work amongst members and towards key stakeholders.*

*Outcome: The work of the EUROPARC Federation and its members is more visible and effective.*

*Action 4.4a Increase effectiveness of delivering focused messages about the work, products and services of EUROPARC with the aim to gain support for and increase the profile of the Federation.*

- The STWG identifies that EUROPARC has severe problems in external Charter communication. These issues are analysed more in details in Chapter 5.4 points 3, 9 and 10 and in Annexes 4, 5a and 7.
- The STWG recommends that Directorate and Sections increase visibility for the Charter as a methodology and especially for the benefit of Charter Areas and Partners, who have valuable inputs and stakes in the Charter process and Networking. The following first steps must be taken as soon as possible:
  - Produce a Communication plan for the Charter
  - Develop a new informative and attractive Charter logo and substantial increase in the visibility of the logo in the Charter Parks and partners.
  - Renew the name of the Charter system and make it attractive and clear like “the EUROPARC Tourism Charter (ETC)”.
  - Create relevant and attractive visitor information on Charter in internet, prints, media relations, personal face-to-face communication material.
  - Create information about the benefits/outcomes of Charter to the nature, local communities and regions and visitors using the popularization like the “Magic Numbers” and using national languages.

*Action 4.4b Review and improve as necessary the internal communication media to ensure EUROPARC messages are effectively transmitted.*

- The STWG identifies that the Charter system needs effective coordinating expertise to communicate inside the Federation from Directorate to Sections and Charter parks and candidates, but also to the Charter Forums and Partners

and international tour operators and the other green tourism organisations in Europe, at least.

- The STWG recommends that better communication is developed in the Charter family between different actors of the Charter management;
  - Development for a new Charter home page service for members including all the relevant Charter documents like forms and templates, guidelines and manuals, reporting models and best practise reports for the park managers, STWG reports, annual monitoring reports from Charter parks and partners, reports from the Evaluation Committee and Verifiers.
  - Effective communication from the Directorate and Sections is needed to increase the awareness of the Charter parks about proper timing and benefits of the re-evaluation process and to encourage the parks to continue in the Charter Network.
  - The networking means in this case that the Charter coordinators in Directorate and Sections must stay constantly in touch with all Charter areas and remind them already two years beforehand to make a budget available for the re-evaluation. Then, a year in advance, they must remind them again and after that stay in constant dialogue with them.
  - A clear transparent agreement with the evaluation service consultancy is a must and Directorate and EUROPARC Consulting must make their mutual contracts in early enough time and give necessary respect on that and inform all the other Charter Actors about this agreement.

### **3. The Operational Key Goals for the Charter 2014-2016**

The Federation Council committed in 2013 to further develop and improve how the Charter is managed during the years 2014-2016. These key goals are partly included in the Federation Strategy for years 2015-2021. They are included also here in the Charter Strategy. The STWG shortly refers those “Operational Key Goals” as background information for its recommendations in the Annex 8.

### **4. Key SWOT based Challenges in the Charter Strategy 2021**

The STWG has discussed the prospects for the future, the trends in the external world and realistic scenarios for the 2021 horizon and the challenges for the specified Charter development strategy. In the SWOT process the STWG have identified some basic issues in prioritisation or in choosing the most favourable path to achieve the Charter principles to make the progress, which is in harmony with the Federation’s new Development Strategy. The STWG have listed the following items for deeper analytical discussion in Annex 9.

## 5. STWG recommendations for Charter Strategy and Actions 2021

STWG has commented and, with its recommendations, further developed several Charter based Actions in the EUROPARC Strategy 2015-2021 in Chapter 2. In addition to that contribution, STWG has analysed the practical short term goals of the Council for the Charter processes (Chapter 3 and Annex 8) and made its own SWOT analyses about the development objectives of the Charter (Chapter 4 and Annex 9). After that the STWG still considers it necessary to clarify some Actions, which already were defined in the EUROPARC Strategy (in Chapter 2) and emphasize some critical points in the Charter development as follows.

- STWG considers that the process itself is the most valuable part of the Charter. The process should be logical, not bureaucratic and it should have a favorable cost-benefit ratio. It should bring consistency and transparency to the co-operation between PA's and its partners.

In Charter Actions we use the same model than is used in the EUROPARC Strategy, when pointing the responsible actor and the priority of the task and estimating the need of resources in the development process:

### PRIORITY

- 1 = this work MUST be done
- 2 = this work SHOULD be done
- 3 = this work COULD be done

### Need of RESOURCES in Action

- S = Small
- M = Medium
- L = Large
- XL = Extra large

## 5.1 Development of the Charter Part I methodology

### **Action 5.1: Development of Charter Vision, Mission, Principles, Components and minimum criteria on key topics in Charter Part I**

The STWG indicates that the official text for the Charter Part I is now out of date and needs a complete revision. The 10 Charter Principles are valid as they are now, but they represent more the practical objective clusters for sustainable tourism development than common principles to be used, when working in the sustainable development process. In the future the Charter Strategy should use the global terminology, which has developed during last 15 years.

1. The STWG recommends the following revisions of the Charter Principles to the Vision, Mission and Principles of Charter:

- a) The core of the former key principles for the Charter should be expressed in the Vision and Mission of the Charter. The new text for the Vision and Mission was previously drafted at the event in Vilm on 1.4.2014. The STWG has agreed with this text. (See Annex 2).
- b) The Principles should be simplified for easier understanding and translation into different languages, which continuing to cover the same meaning as agreed in Vilm. The STWG recommends the wording for five Principles as in Annex 2.

The Charter methodology as a process consists of some key task clusters, which we may call Charter “Components”. In the current Charter system there are three main components, which are Forum, Planning and Partnerships.

The STWG recognizes that the Charter system also includes two other sub-procedures, which should be included in the basic components of the Charter. These are Evaluation and Monitoring. We should also refer to Partnerships (with Charter II and III indicated as optional opportunities).

2. The STWG recommends that the basic five components of the Charter process are defined as follows.

- a) Forum as an actor for the participation of stakeholders in the planning process, management for partnerships and Charter monitoring. The STWG recommends the detailed wordings for the “Forum” as in Annex 2.
- b) Strategy and Action Plan as the method for developing the sustainable tourism plan and favourable actions for the Charter Area. The STWG recommends the detailed wordings for the “Planning” as in Annex 2.
- c) Evaluation by independent expertise in the “Evaluation Committee” and reviews by the external “Verifiers”. The STWG recommends the detailed wordings for the “Evaluation” as in Annex 2.
- d) Monitoring to follow-up the realisation and impact of the plans and auditing needed to develop the Charter method. The STWG recommends the detailed wordings for the “Monitoring” as in Annex 2.
- e) Partnership is an optional component in the Charter , which includes the mutual commitments for the development and realisation of the mutual sustainable development plans with tourism businesses and local communities. The STWG recommends the detailed wordings for the “Partnerships” as in Annex 2.

The STWG recognizes that the Charter methodology needs a transparent minimum set of Criteria for the successful application and performance. This can be covered with the clear and permanent existence of the Components and with the new ten (10 ) “Key Topics” and a short list of 2-4 “Key Actions” demonstrated under each key topic for Charter planning (Action plan) and for evaluation and monitoring the progress. The set of “Key Topics” and “Key Actions” were originally drafted as an idea at the Vilm event on 1.4.2014. The STWG has developed them trying to keep the minimum standards for the Charter as simple and harmonised as possible. Further work is however needed in agreeing and finalising the optimum list of key topics and actions.

3. The STWG recommends

- The 10 “Key Topics” and on topic specified “Key Actions” are defined in the Charter Part I methodology as the minimum standards for the system. The “Key Topics” shall be analysed in the Action plan. The Action plan shall cover on minimum level all of the “Key Actions”. This is examined during the verification procedure in monitoring the Charter progress. The final Action plan may cover also other items, which are important or specified for the park and make the Action plan more practical and detailed in the local conditions and needs. The Key Topics and Key Actions should be revised and updated when necessary.
- The detailed wordings for the “Key Topics and Actions” as in Annex 2. The minimum standard list of Key Topics and Actions shall be further considered and communicated

with the Sections, Evaluation Committee and the EUROPRC Consulting before the final decision in Council.

The STWG recognizes that the best way to develop the final versions of the points 1-3 above is the participatory method.

4. The STWG recommends that the Directorate communicates the draft version of points 1-3 above to the STWG, Sections, the Evaluation committee and verifiers before finalisation. At a future point the Federation Council should decide the new Official text for Charter Part I before the summer 2015.

## 5.2 Development of the Charter Part II methodology

### **Action 5.2: Development in Charter Part II**

The STWG recognizes that once the Charter Parks have experience of the Charter process over some years, they should derive added value and wish to continue. Charter Part II covers the co-operation in sustainable tourism development with business partners and local communities. This should bring added value to the PA's and their partners, but until now there is only modest evidence of positive impact. Due to this fact, several national sustainable partner programs have been developed, like those in Austria, Germany, Finland and Spain. The national partnership programs cover even more business partners than the Charter Part II.

The STWG recommends the following Strategic developments to be included in the Charter Part II:

- a) The Charter Part II methodology should be harmonized within one integrated system, which includes the adaptive capacity but creates a credible standardized basic structure. STWG has made in 2012 (The final report of STWG in 31.12.2012, Chapter 3 and Annex 1 in that report) its recommendations concerning the harmonised Part II method (here see Annex 3). STWG renews this recommendation and adds the following points to the solution.
- b) When developing one method for EUROPARC Charter Part II, a specific solution for harmonization on the Section level between Charter Part II and several national partnership methods is also needed. Basically all the national Partners should be accepted also in the Part II Partnership, if the basic Criteria are fulfilled.
- c) Charter Part II should be one in the family of Charter management tools for EUROPARC members. This means that the proper membership category for Charter Partners should be created in the basic statute for EUROPARC.
- d) The role of deciding who should be certified as a Charter Partners should be mandated to the Charter Forum (or its sub-group), a local voluntary steering committee for Charter process. The Charter Forum is a neutral local actor, who can give awards and monitor performances and can also make decisions on penalties in the case of misuse of the Charter Certificates. This task should be mandated in the official text for Charter Part II.
- e) The idea of different models that illustrate the quality of sustainable business performance should be introduced in the basic official text for ECST Part II.
- f) The minimum standards for Part II partnerships should be written in the revised ECST Part II official text. This means written criteria about how the Charter Partner candidates should

participate in the development of the sustainable tourism strategy or accept it in the partnership commitment. Also the minimum content for the mutual Action plan for the Charter Partnership period should be defined.

- g) The monitoring of Part II performance and impacts should be developed at the protected area level with summaries by the Section and the Federation levels.
- h) Clear rules are needed to control the misuse and cancelling of any Charter certification. Also the continuum of the Partners certificate, in any case where the Park itself is not continuing it's Part I should be clarified in the Official text for Part II.

### 5.3 Development of the Charter Part III methodology

#### **Action 5.3: Development in Charter Part III**

The process of the Charter Part III was activated in France in 2013, when the French methodology for the Charter Part III was recognized by EUROPARC Council. Seven travel agents are certified in the frame of the French Charter Part III model in 2014. The STWG has not received any documents in English, which describe the French Part III method in details.

The STWG recognizes that there is a lot of hard work to be done in maintaining and developing the processes of Part I and Part II. Therefore the STWG does not see that Part III development as a Strategic target for developing the Charter system now. There could be some practical pilot projects testing ideas for Part III methodology, but do not develop the common Part III methodology during the next Strategic period. The easiest and most cost-effective model in developing co-operation with the national and international quality controlled tourism industry could be on the levels of Sections and Federation itself. Controlling the tour operators on the park-level may be too ambitious, create administrative issues and bring too much cost to parks.

- STWG recommends
  - A new cost-effective recognition and awarding method should be developed for those Part III tour operators, who are active in national or international level and who already have a green certificate. The recognitions in these conditions should be accredited by the Sections, when tour operator is active on national level and by EUROPARC Council, when tour operator is an international company.
  - Those tour operators, who apply Charter partnership with one park, should follow the procedure in Part II.
  - In all cases the tour operators in Part III partnerships should be members of EUROPARC in a proper membership category.

### 5.4. Ten strategic points to develop Charter system until 2021

#### 1. Charter vs eco-labels

The Charter currently is a practical management tool for park managers to develop sustainable tourism as a management process, which is flexible in time and quality. The necessary Actions have

been planned in this report to develop the framework of the Charter Principles, Components and key Topics and Actions covered as minimum standards for the Charter.

- STWG refers to Actions 5.1-3.
- STWG does not see any need or resources to administer, monitor or control an eco-label-type of quality certificate. For the new Charter parks the process itself is the most important aspect (Part I). Later on there shall be more added value and international visibility for the parks and the partners as outcomes from Part II and Part III.

## 2. Charter as a membership service vs open service

The Charter currently operates as a member service, where partnerships are supported strongly by members' resources.

- STWG refers to Actions 5.1-3.
- STWG recommends keeping the Charter as a membership service from EUROPARC members and volunteers to members. This means that the Charter Partners in Part II and III should also be members of the Federation. This creates a positive option to increase the number of members, which is now a strategic target for the Federation.

## 3. Charter in Europe vs Global context

The Charter is currently a member service for the EUROPARC family in the European context. Do we want to operate Charter wider than in Europe?

- STWG refers to Actions 5.1-3. Charter method as a registered trade mark creates practical way to control the use of the basic method.
- The STWG recommends that, at this moment, we should stay within the European context, but we could learn something from the global market when developing the Charter process. The process should work very well in Europe before expanding it globally. Expanding may not be realistic yet, but perhaps later on closer to 2021. Some pilot projects are recommended.

Charter is now a self-sufficient wide network for Charter PA's and partners. Do we want to find strategic partners for international co-operation and networking?

- STWG refers to Actions 3.1b and 3.1c.
- The STWG recommends that ECST should seek to be at the forefront of "best practice" in sustainable tourism, trying to reach a favourable position on communication platforms and recognition for itself, but not join in other networks in a formal (or cost incurring) sense. EUROPARC should make cooperation through MoUs and partnerships with other European Sustainable Nature-Tourism networks like ECOTRANS, global programs and organisations like UNEP Sustainable tourism program in the 10YFP Framework and Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) and project partnerships with Global sustainable tourism networks like Rainforest Alliance and Travelife. See the Annex 4, 10 and 11 about the international networks and comparisons.

#### 4. Charter in the EU context

The EU is developing their own EU Sustainable Tourism Charter and also possibly wants to develop control for Tourism Quality Certificates. To support European destinations in this direction, the European Commission is developing the European Tourism System of Indicators for Sustainable Management at Destination Level (ETIS): a comprehensive system, simple to use, flexible and especially suitable for tourism destinations. How do we want to develop the EUROPARC Charter in this context?

- STWG refers to Actions 5.1-3. See more in details in the Annex 4.
- The STWG recommends that
  - we should continue with our Charter but HARMONIZE it with EU Charter (ETIS). The EUROPARC Charter should meet the EU criteria recognising that the Charter is not to be an eco-label.
  - we shall consider the possibility to use ETIS indicators in the diagnoses phase of the Charter process
  - the Charter experience could be used to improve ETIS methodology in connection to forum and an action plan,
  - the Directorate should study the opportunity in the future to make an agreement EUROPARC-EU by which the Charter Parks could be recognized automatically also as ETIS destination.

#### 5. Harmonisation of the Charter for Sustainable Tourism and the Transboundary Protected Areas

EUROPARC owns two separate certification systems, Charter for Sustainable Tourism (ESCT) and Transboundary Protected Areas (TBPA). Certification systems have significant differences in target areas, objectives and stakeholder groups but also clear similarities in methodology, administration and evaluation and awarding procedures. Do we want to harmonise or even more integrate these two toolboxes for park managers? Can we find better cost-benefit ratio if we rationalise some of the key procedures for both of them?

- STWG refers to Annex 6.
- STWG recommends that Council and Directorate pays attention to the following, when developing EUROPARC certification systems (ECST and TBPA):
  - The profiles (brands) of both certification systems should be clarified and sharpened remarkably
  - Overall communication about both certification systems inside the EUROPARC bodies should be enhanced remarkably. The internal and external platforms for effective communication should be harmonised.
  - Both systems should be introduced and engaged more consistent way to the local partners and stakeholders of the parks
  - The training of verifiers in both systems can be partly integrated
  - The Awarding ceremonies should be integrated annually in connection to the EUROPARC Conference
  - An integrated lobbying event with presentations of best practise cases in some particular theme could be organised in Brussels, when necessary resources are available



- The administration in Directorate for both systems should be integrated
- The financial rules of these two systems should be harmonised
- The governance structure of those two systems should be harmonised so that the evaluation and steering /development are separate independent components in both of them
- Both systems need annual working plans agreed with the Directorate and budget frames in Federation budget. Both systems should aim at cover the management costs of the certification processes.

## 6. Charter partnerships

Currently the Charter partners get support and priority from the park/protected area managers. Several local 3.rd sector NGOs also work on tourism development in co-operation with Charter Parks. How do we want to develop it?

- The STWG refers to EUROPARC Strategic Actions 4c and 4d, and STWG recommendations on Charter Strategic Actions 5.2 and 5.3.
- The STWG recommends that the development service to the partner should be given with membership commitment with EUROPARC and charging a membership fee, which covers the real costs of the guidance and planning service. Charter Part II is a partnership model to motivate and recognise the contribution made by tourism businesses in connection to the PAs. Charter Partner status should be as widely applicable as possible, like an exclusive club under the EUROPARC umbrella giving better visibility in green tourism markets to the Charter Partners. EUROPARC can expect to get the costs of this support covered when it can deliver tangible business benefits to the Partners. The main EUROPARC offers for the Charter partners should be as follows:
  - Opportunity to Charter partners to participate in conservation and reservation of the protected area as their key commercial resource
  - Visibility and linkages in the EUROPARC Charter homepages; better visibility in the green tourism markets
  - Right to use the Charter Partner logo during the partnership period
  - Charter E-News 2-4 publications annually
  - Training events and full best practise information in the Charter Network
  - International connections to other Charter Network members
  - Realisation of the Charter parks commitment according the mutual development plan
  - Direct contacts to the park authorities for better communication and information about the Charter park plans
  - Opportunities to join to development projects with external partial funding
  - Basic membership services in the EUROPARC Federation including conferences, Charter Network seminars, best practise guidelines and manuals
- The STWG recommends that the local associations and societies, when they are legal bodies, should be encouraged into the Charter partnerships and join to EUROPARC as members.

- The STWG recommends that both business partners and local NGOs should be organised within the EUROPARC member services as a sub-group of Charter Network in a new low fee member category “Charter Partner”.

## 7. Charter planning and mutual commitments with partners

Currently the Charter Awarded period is 5 years in Part I. In some countries like in France, the strategic planning period in a protected area may be 10 -15 years and the 5 years rotation in the Charter process creates extra work with extra costs, which should be avoided somehow. This non-harmonize schedule causes also severe issues in the renewing the Charter Certificate for the Park but also for the Charter Partners. The planning is currently a black box, when considering the minimum content for the plans, in all levels for planning in Charter method. The same issue is there both in the Part I plans and in the Part II plans. How do we want to develop it?

- The STWG refers to Actions 5.1-3.
- The STWG recommends developing a method with standard minimum criteria for planning and to develop monitoring of the actions and outcomes in Part I process and within the Part II partnership. This data will be valuable in the Charter dissemination. The recommendations are in details in the Annex 2 and 3.
- The SWG recommends that the rotation time for Charter certificates should be basically 5 years, but also more flexibility to use up to 10 years rotation shall be possible. When longer than 5 years period is to be used, then the Charter park should commit to monitor the progress and impacts of the Charter process on annual reports and cover the extra costs of the annual Charter services delivered by the Directorate and the Sections. This commitment, which must be mutual with the EUROPARC Directorate according the new Charter rules, which the Council should decide. The new rule should allow the Charter park to use the Charter logo and the Charter services during the extra time after the 5 years basic period.

## 8. Charter within the sustainable economy of the EUROPARC Federation

The Charter management and updating the Charter information currently creates costs to be covered by members. Originally the costs to Charter Parks were aimed just to cover the costs for administering the professional and independent Verification-Evaluation process and its Evaluation Committee. Today only part of the costs is covered by evaluation and registration fees, which have lost their original values, through inflation, several years ago. The ECST is not "self-sufficient" at present and does not earn enough from fees to provide active service to the PAs and Partners. But has that service been identified and estimated precisely? Is it reasonable to expect that any Charter service should be operated by the Federation Directorate team with costs covered by Federation membership fees, which is the case, when all the members take part of the Charter costs even not being in the Charter Network. How do we want to develop it?

- The STWG refers to EUROPARC Strategic Actions 3.1a and 4.3a-d, and STWG recommendations on Charter Strategy Actions 5.2 and 5.3.

- The STWG recommends the following
  - The reasons of the withdrawals from the Charter Network and re-evaluations shall be carefully analysed and all the necessary encouraging and communications shall be done to keep the Charter parks interested to continue after the first Charter period in the Charter Network
  - All the Charter services to members should be identified and costs covered.
  - The fees should be updated on a real cost basis with today's cost structure as a base but with some minimum subvention from future core funding by the Federation.
  - The Directorate should collect all the fees and the Council should decide how the Partner fees are divided between the Directorate, Sections and Charter parks.
  - Federation should audit the current Charter evaluation component (Verification and Evaluation committee) to consider if alternative and more cost-effective ways can be developed to carry out the evaluation process suitable to the state-of-art Charter methodology.
  - However we must also keep in mind that with elevating costs it may be that the interest of many potential good partners will be lost. Therefore Charter benefits must always be demonstrated to the PAs and Partners. See the Annex 5a about Charter budget frame.

#### 9. Charter documents for parks, partners and park visitors

The Charter is a tool for the Charter Actors concerned. The content for communication about the Charter on the EUROPARC website is rather poor. Partners of Charter areas may feel they are not actively supported or at least promoted by EUROPARC institutions.

There is no comprehensive collection of Charter documents and other resources for Charter candidates and Network members. Currently there is no valid information about the Charter to the park visitors. How do we want to develop it?

- The STWG refers to EUROPARC Strategic Actions 4.4a-d.
- The STWG strongly recommends Directorate and Sections to make a detailed analysis on the communication of the Charter to different target groups like park managers, businesses, local authorities and politicians, local communities and visitors and customers in the Charter Area. Following the analyses we need a new detailed action plan for better communication (Charter communication plan) on the Charter (see more in details in Annex 7). This means the necessity to allocate resources on the communication actions.

#### 10. Charter in tourism marketing

The Charter is currently a toolbox for park managers developing their management skills and transferring good practice in developing partnerships. How do we want to develop it when extending the mode of partnerships?

- The STWG refers to EUROPARC Strategic Actions 2.3a and 4.4a-d and STWG recommendations on Charter Strategy Actions 5.2 and 5.3

- The STWG recommends the following key developments:
  - Necessary support and training to PA managers for better understanding the Charter system and the needs of the Charter partners.
  - Renaming the Charter tool for public use is necessary for better marketing capacity of the brand. The new name should be simple and informative, oriented to EUROPARC profile and with better marketing capacity than the name today. The STWG recommends the new name to be as follows: “The EUROPARC Tourism Charter”. In internal Charter Network jargon we can talk about “the Charter”
  - We also must create more positive visibility to park destinations and Charter Partners on site and on the internet. An attractive modern webpage for Charter businesses in Charter parks instead of the unsatisfying database on <http://www.european-charter.org/charter-network/charter-partner-businesses> is recommended.
- Charter parks should be the top quality destinations on external internet “Green Booking” services. This could be developed in a EU partly funded project according the Spanish partnership model presented by [turebe.org](http://turebe.org) or [soyecoturista.com](http://soyecoturista.com). Also Travelife offers an interesting model for better internet dissemination for sustainable tourism destinations. See the Annexes 4 and 11.

### 5.5 Summary on the Actions for the Charter development and STWG recommendations to develop the Charter Strategy and Actions on 2015-2021

Action	Responsible actor	Priority
<b>EUROPARC Strategy –Action 2.3a</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Training plan</u> which covers all the Charter stakeholders and Actors</li> <li>• Training of the staff to know the Charter</li> </ul>	Directorate, Sections, Park manager, E Consulting	1M
<b>EUROPARC Strategy –Action 3.1 a</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Charter Strategy and Action plan</u></li> <li>• Consolidating the Charter Network</li> </ul>	Council, Directorate, Sections, STWG, Evaluation Committee, E Consulting	1L
<b>EUROPARC Strategy –Action 3.1 b</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• External platform for lobby and dissemination for Charter integrated with other sustainable tourism actors</li> </ul>	Directorate	2S
<b>EUROPARC Strategy –Action 3.1 c</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International recognition for the Charter and one pilot project outside Europe</li> </ul>	Council, Directorate, Italian Section	2S
<b>EUROPARC Strategy –Priority Area 3.4 Actions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate change and Charter areas - a minimum standard in plans</li> </ul>	Council, Directorate STWG	2L
<b>EUROPARC Strategy –Priority Area 3.5 Actions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Future Proofing - New Topics for the Charter</li> </ul>	Council, Directorate STWG	2S

<b>EUROPARC Strategy– Action 4.2a</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual work plan for the Charter process</li> </ul>	Directorate, Sections, STWG	1S
<b>EUROPARC Strategy –Action 4.2d</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteering in development for the Charter</li> </ul>	Council, Directorate, Sections, STWG, Evaluation committee	1L
<b>EUROPARC Strategy –Actions 4.3a–d</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustainable finances for the federation and the Charter</li> <li><u>Budget plan</u> for sustainable Charter finances</li> </ul>	Council, Directorate, Sections, Parks, STWG, E Consulting	1L
<b>EUROPARC Strategy –Actions 4.4a–b</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>External and internal communication in the Charter process</li> <li><u>Communication plan</u> for the Charter</li> </ul>	Council, Directorate, Sections, Parks, STWG, external consultant	1L
<b>Charter Strategy –Action 5.1</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>STWG recommendations on necessary <u>revisions to the official text of Charter Part I</u></li> <li>Harmonisation with EU/ETIS</li> </ul>	Council, Directorate, Sections, Evaluation Committee, STWG, E Consulting	1S
<b>Charter Strategy –Action 5.2</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>STWG recommendations on necessary Development in the Charter Part II-<u>revisions to the official text of Charter Part II</u></li> <li>Harmonisation with EU/ETIS</li> </ul>	Council, Directorate, Sections, Evaluation Committee, STWG, E Consulting	1S
<b>Charter Strategy– Action 5.3</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>STWG recommendations on necessary Development in the Charter Part III-revisions to the official text of Charter Part III</li> <li>Harmonisation with EU/ETIS</li> </ul>	Council, Directorate, Sections, Evaluation Committee, STWG, E Consulting	3S

## **B. ANNEXES**

**Annex 1.** Charter History

**Annex 2.** Fundamentals of the Charter

**Annex 3.** Development of the Charter Part II official text.

**Annex 4.** Internationalisation of the Charter

**Annex 5a.** Recommendations on the sustainable Charter financing

**Annex 5b.** Budget frame for the Charter management

**Annex 5c.** Explanations for the units, cost and revenue items in the Charter management budget frame table

**Annex 6.** Comparisons between the Awarding systems Charter and Transboundary Parks

**Annex 7.** Items for the Charter communication plan

**Annex 8.** The Operational Key Goals for the Charter 2014-2016

**Annex 9.** Key SWOT based Challenges in the Charter Strategy 2021

**Annex 10.** Comparing the European Charter with other Sustainable Tourism methodologies

## **ANNEX 1. Charter History**

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 from 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 accepted responsibility for the project and established a working group which reformulated the Charter requirements and developed and initiated the accession and evaluation procedure. In October 2001 the Federation Council dissolved the working group and created the Evaluation Committee.

Since the EUROPARC Federation took sole responsibility for the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Europe, it 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 met several times for annual networking meetings, organised jointly by the Directorate and one of the members.

The work involved in implementing the Charter has been documented on a dedicated website ([www.european-charter.org](http://www.european-charter.org)). 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 135 protected areas enjoy Charter status; many have been evaluated for a second time, and some for a third time.

*New Charter logo here*

## **Annex 2.**

### **THE FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENTS OF THE CHARTER**

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The EUROPARC Tourism Charter is built around the following fundamental elements, which include its purpose and principles and the requirements to be met. **All applicant protected areas are required to commit to them.**

#### **1) Vision**

**Tourism in European protected areas provides a meaningful quality experience, safeguards natural and cultural values, supports local livelihoods and is economically viable.**

#### **2) Mission**

**The Charter provides an effective model to deliver sustainable tourism in European protected areas, increases awareness of natural and cultural heritage and sustainability, improves management of tourism and supports local partnerships and international cooperation.**

#### **3) Principles**

The following principles should govern how tourism is developed and managed in protected areas:

##### **1. Giving priority to protection**

A fundamental priority for the development and management of tourism should be to protect the area's natural and cultural heritage and to enhance awareness, understanding and appreciation of it.

##### **2. Contributing to sustainable development**

Tourism should follow the principles of sustainable development, addressing all aspects of its environmental, social and economic impact in the short and long term.



### **3. Engaging all stakeholders**

All those affected by tourism should be able to participate in decisions about its development and management, and partnership working should be encouraged.

### **4. Planning tourism effectively**

Tourism development and management should be guided by a well researched plan that sets out agreed objectives and actions.

### **5. Pursuing continuous improvement**

Tourism development and management should deliver ongoing improvement in environmental impacts, visitor satisfaction, economic performance, local prosperity and quality of life, requiring regular monitoring and reporting of progress and results.

## **4) Charter Components**

The Charter requires that all protected areas have in place and engage with the following components:

### **A) Forum**

A permanent Sustainable Tourism (Charter) Forum, or equivalent arrangement, should be established between the protected area authority, local municipalities, conservation and community organizations and representatives of the tourism industry. The constitution and numbers involved in the Forum and any associated Executive Committees or other structures, and the regularity of their meetings, should be sufficient to enable effective discourse and decision making. Links with regional and national bodies should be developed and maintained. The Forum should also engage with other Forums in the Charter Network.

### **B) Strategy and Action Plan**

A Strategy and Action Plan for Sustainable Tourism should be prepared, which:

- has three main elements: an analysis; a strategic direction; and a practical action plan;
- is based on inclusive and effective consultation and is approved and understood by local stakeholders, and
- covers a five year period (with some flexibility to allow for different planning cycles).

The Strategy and Action Plan should contain:

- A definition of the area (Charter Area) to be influenced by the strategy, which may extend outside the protected area.
- An assessment of:
  - The area's natural, historic and cultural heritage;

- The area's tourism and recreation infrastructure;
- Current visitors and potential future markets;
- Impacts of tourism on the environment, economy and local communities, and
- Issues of capacity need and opportunity associated with the above.
- A set of strategic objectives for the development and management of tourism, covering
  - conservation and enhancement of the environment and heritage;
  - economic and social development;
  - preservation and improvement of the quality of life of local residents, and
  - visitor management and enhancement of the quality of tourism offered.
- An Action plan to meet these objectives, which must address the Key topics and Actions set out later in section 5.
- An estimation of resources and indication of partners to implement the action plan.
- Proposals for monitoring results.

### **C) Evaluation**

All protected areas seeking award of the Charter must engage in and facilitate the evaluation process. This involves:

- Submission of a completed application form, the Sustainable Tourism Strategy and Action Plan, and any other supporting material. which will be checked by an appointed verifier who is an expert in sustainable tourism and protected areas.
- A visit to the area by the verifier, which will include a programme of meetings and discussion with relevant stakeholders.
- Preparation of a report by the verifier, which is subsequently made available to the protected area.
- Assessment of the application and the verifier's report by the Charter Evaluation Committee, which makes a recommendation to the EUROPARC Council on whether to award the Charter, including any conditions or comments to pass on to the protected area.
- Subsequent attention to any matters raised by the verifier and Council.

The evaluation process, including engagement with the verifier and receipt of their report, provides the protected area with valuable feedback and views on their sustainable tourism activity.

### **D) Monitoring and review**

Monitoring actions and impacts of sustainable tourism should be built into the process from the beginning, leading to review and adaptation. The Strategy and Action Plan should contain indicators and monitoring actions which cover:

- Progress with the implementation of actions
- Results and changes in tourism performance and impacts.

Key data from the monitoring should be submitted to EUROPARC as part of an overall benchmarking and assessment of the Charter process as a whole.

The Charter is normally awarded for a period of five years. At the end of this period, compliance with the Charter requirements is reviewed through a repeat of the evaluation process outlined above.

#### **E) Partnership and communication**

Protected areas that have been awarded the Charter join the family of protected areas as partners in the Charter Network. They are required to publicise and make visible their award. They are also encouraged to engage in networking and communication events and processes.

At a local level, the protected areas are encouraged to follow a partnership approach in developing and managing sustainable tourism. The Charter process itself makes provision for the development and recognition of partnerships between protected area authorities and tourism businesses through the award of Charter Partner status to tourism businesses that meet agreed criteria under Part II of the Charter (for local tourism businesses) and Part III of the Charter (for tour operators). Engagement of protected areas with Part II or Part III of the Charter is optional.

Businesses recognised as Charter Partners receive the following benefits:

- Closer engagement with protected area authorities.
- Right to use the Charter Partner logo.
- Basic membership of the EUROPARC Federation.
- Visibility on Charter websites.
- Engagement with training and marketing opportunities as may be developed.
- Networking with other Charter Partners.
- Possible engagement with projects and funding.

### **5) Key topics and actions**

The Sustainable Tourism Strategy and Action Plan should be based on local circumstances and priorities as assessed and agreed through the consultation process. However, to comply with the requirements of the Charter it must demonstrate coverage of the following key topics and associated actions in the Action Plan. *(These topics and actions require further discussion and possible development before they are finalised.)*

<b>Key Topic in Action Plan</b>	<b>Key Action in Action Plan</b>
<b>1. Protection of valuable landscapes and heritage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Actions to influence in land use planning</li> <li>2. Actions to control and minimise the potentially damaging tourism developments</li> </ul>
<b>2. Visitor management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Visitor management to protect sensitive areas and sites</li> <li>2. New constructions and services for visitors</li> <li>3. Actions for encouraging volunteering and educational visits</li> </ul>
<b>3. Reducing carbon footprint, pollution and wasteful resource use</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Actions to estimate and reduce carbon footprint of tourism</li> <li>2. Actions to reduce clean water use and waste</li> <li>3. Actions to encourage public transport in the area</li> </ul>
<b>4. Accessibility for visitors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Actions and investments to develop safety and accessibility on the area</li> <li>2. Information for disabled visitors</li> </ul>
<b>5. Training and capacity building</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Actions for training of staff</li> <li>2. Actions for training local businesses and societies in sustainable tourism</li> <li>3. Actions to develop organisation for local co-operation and partnerships</li> </ul>
<b>6. Social cohesion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Actions for controlling the possible conflicts on tourism</li> <li>2. Actions to organise the change information between park and local communities</li> </ul>
<b>7. Economic benefits for the local communities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Actions to analyse the tourism revenues on the region and local communities</li> <li>2. Actions to employ local people in tourism</li> <li>3. Actions to develop local park oriented products and services</li> </ul>
<b>8. Project development and fund raising</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Options for development projects and external funding</li> <li>2. Actions to develop visitors participation on conservation costs</li> <li>3. Actions to encourage tourism business for investments in the Charter area and for conservation of valuable heritage</li> </ul>
<b>9. Monitoring of progress and impacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Actions for monitoring and reporting of the actions in plan</li> <li>2. Actions for visitor monitoring and customer feedback</li> <li>3. How to make adaptive changes and revisions in the plan?</li> </ul>

<b>10 Communication and dissemination</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Actions to provide effective visitor information and interpretation</li><li>2. Actions to develop communication on Charter and sustainable tourism in internet and social media</li><li>3. Engagement in Charter Network activities</li><li>4. Actions to promote and renew the Charter Award</li></ol>
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## Annex 3

**EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM  
IN PROTECTED AREAS**

**METHODOLOGY FOR WORKING WITH TOURISM BUSINESSES IN CHARTER AREAS**

**Proposal recommended by the STWG 2011-1012 in 31.12.2012 and STWG 2013-2014 in 15.1.2015**

Official Text now	Official text Updated
<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>
<p>The aim of this element of the Charter (Part II) is to strengthen the links and deepen understanding between protected area managers and their partners in the business community. Through the development of partnerships, sustainable tourism satisfies the needs of visitors, businesses and local communities without damaging the environment now or for the future. Tourism can make a positive contribution to a healthy, mixed economy, which utilizes and develops local skills and resources.</p>	<p>The aim of <b>the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas (ECST)</b> and especially the Charter Part II methodology is <u>to strengthen the links and deepen understanding and trust between protected area managers and their partners in the business community</u>. Through the development of partnerships, sustainable development partners strive to satisfy the needs of visitors and local communities and at the same time to reduce the impact of tourism on the environment now and for the future. Tourism can make a positive contribution to a healthy mixed economy that is in balance with the environment and social needs utilising and developing local skills and resources.</p>

	<p>Using the protected area as the central focus for the <b>Charter Area</b> as a destination, development of partnership will create positive attitudes and understanding between the authorities, the numerous and varied tourism sector businesses and their customers. It will also create a sense of shared ownership, management, strategic direction and common purpose. This will be important in building and maintaining network relationships as well as in marketing and promotional opportunities e.g. website dissemination and training.</p> <p>Commitment to the principles of sustainable tourism by, generally, private sector enterprises should be rewarded and it is reasonable that a business should be able to capitalise on its commitment to sustainability. Individual businesses often provide the interface between the consumer or tourist and the protected area and they can provide a great source of knowledge and information to enhance the visitor's experience as well as influence their behaviour and attitudes.</p> <p><b>The Charter Partnership Agreement</b> is the basis for establishing and further development of commitment and partnership between the protected area and the business.</p>
<p>The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas is an award to protected areas that have demonstrated partnership working, developed and implemented a tourism strategy based on the area's special qualities, as well as following a resourced work plan to address sustainability issues.</p>	<p>The ECST includes an award to protected areas (Part I) and to the partner businesses (<b>Charter Partners</b> in Part II) that have demonstrated partnership working, developed and implemented a mutual tourism strategy based on the special qualities of the Charter Areas, as well as following a resourced mutual work plan (<b>Action Plan</b>) to address sustainability issues.</p>

	<p>Incorporating the <b>Charter Principles</b> of sustainability (see Annex I) into private sector tourism products and businesses is an essential goal for success. Part II of the ECST enables individual businesses in the tourism sector, working with the Protected Area authority, to become recognized as Charter Partners at the European level. A flexible partnership approach is encouraged which reflects the Charter Principles, existing quality marks and eco-labels, differing local needs and varying situations together with the commitment of the tourism business to sustainability.</p>
<p>To maximise mutual benefits, close collaboration between the ‘partners’ (local tourism businesses, tourist service providers, travel companies, tour operators, other social and economic local stakeholders, protected area managers) is essential and to assist in this a flexible approach is encouraged in each protected area. It will be necessary to reflect individual or local circumstances when developing a <b>European Charter Partnership Programme</b> but it should be based around the <b>Charter Principles</b> i.e. using an integrated approach to sustainable development taking into account economic, social and environmental factors. A <b>European Charter Partnership Agreement</b> signed by the protected area authority and the tourism business, is a positive way of demonstrating mutual commitment.</p>	<p>To maximize mutual benefits, close collaboration between the ‘partners’ (local tourism businesses, tourist service providers, travel companies, tour operators, other social and economic local stakeholders and Protected Area managers) is essential and to assist in this a flexible approach is encouraged in each Charter Area. It will be necessary to reflect individual or local circumstances when developing at the Charter Area level the Charter Partnership, but it should always be based on the Charter Principles i.e. using an integrated and adaptive approach to sustainable development taking into account economic, social and environmental factors. A Charter Partnership Agreement signed by the Protected Area authority and the tourism business, is a positive way of demonstrating mutual commitment.</p> <p>The Charter Part II process can contribute to generating identity at regional, national and trans-national levels.</p>
	<p>The EUROPARC Federation is the owner of the ECST methodology and the Charter logos (registered trade mark). The general conditions of using the Charter logo are defined by EUROPARC. The conditions of use of the European Charter Partners corporate image (Charter Partner logo) will need</p>



<p>1 General agreement on the principles underlying this text was reached at a meeting of the European Protected Areas Network held in Strasbourg in June 2006, hosted by the Conseil Régional d'Alsace and the Association Rhin Vivant, and organised together with the Fédération des Parcs Naturels Régionaux de France and the EUROPARC Federation. Further developmental work was undertaken</p> <p>by a smaller group of European Protected Area representatives during and after the meeting of Iberian Protected Areas held in Geres / Xures in November 2006.</p>	<p>to comply with the relevant regional or national regulations.</p> <p>The ECST methodology includes continuous quality management. To ensure that this methodology is always up to date with the latest knowledge and experiences, the EUROPARC Federation should revise it every 5 years.</p> <p>The permanent <b>EUROPARC Charter Evaluation Committee</b> validates the methodological updates before the formal decision. On behalf of the EUROPARC Federation the EUROPARC Council makes the formal updating decisions.</p> <p>The management of the Charter Part II process is in the responsibility of the <b>EUROPARC Directorate</b>. This includes overall coordination, registration, monitoring and dissemination of the European Charter. It can contract the necessary technical management for the ECST.</p> <p>The Protected Area is responsible for management of the Charter Part II at the Charter Area level. The EUROPARC Federation (see Annexes) and EUROPARC Sections will develop further guidelines and templates for the Charter Part II process by drawing on the experience of Protected Areas that have already been working with businesses.</p> <p>The Protected Areas, which are awarded with the European Charter, together with their Charter Partners, create a <b>Charter Network</b>. EUROPARC Directorate coordinates and supports the Charter Network in its activities.</p> <p>General agreement on the concept underlying Charter Part II was reached at</p>
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	<p>a meeting of the European Protected Areas Network held in Strasbourg in June 2006. Task Force of European Protected Area representatives undertook further development in November 2006. The updated version is based on the proposal of the EUROPARC Sustainable Tourism Working Group, which integrates the best practises and specific requirements defined by the EUROPARC Sections to the common Charter Part II methodology.</p>
	<p><b>2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR IMPLEMENTATION</b></p>
	<p>The key principles guiding the process to certify individual businesses as European Charter Partners should:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Be a practical application of the <b>Charter Principles</b>.</li> <li>2. Be based on an effective, mutually supportive and individually-tailored <b>partnership</b> between the protected area and the tourism business.</li> <li>3. Seek to ensure <b>continuous improvements</b>.</li> <li>4. Be based on an <b>integrated approach to sustainable development</b>, tackling together environmental, social and economic issues.</li> <li>5. Be <b>flexible</b> enough to be adapted to the specific situation of each protected area (within local, regional and national context) whilst at the same time containing the broad requirements set at European level.</li> <li>6. <b>Encourage</b> protected areas to promote and support the engagement of businesses.</li> <li>7. Encourage businesses to <b>promote and support</b> the role of protected areas.</li> </ol>

2. BENEFITS TO BUSINESSES <sub>2</sub>	3. BENEFITS TO PARKS AND BUSINESSES
<p>Commitment to the principles of sustainable tourism by, generally, private sector enterprises should be rewarded and it is reasonable that a business should be able to capitalise on its commitment to sustainability. Individual businesses often provide the interface between the consumer or tourist and the protected area and they can provide a great source of knowledge and information to enhance the visitor's experience as well as influence their behaviour and attitudes.</p> <p>2 The concept "business" is used in the widest sense: every organisation, regardless of its legal status, public or private bodies, developing relevant products and services for visitors and the local community, and participating in the sustainable tourism strategy of the Charter protected area.</p>	<p>The term "business" is used here in the widest sense. Every organization, regardless of its legal status, developing relevant products and services for visitors and the local community, and participating in the sustainable tourism strategy of the Charter Area can be a Charter Partner.</p> <p>Individual businesses often provide the interface between the consumer or tourist and the protected area and they can provide a great source of knowledge and information to enhance the visitor's experience as well as influence their behaviour and attitudes.</p>
<p><b>A European Charter Partnership Programme</b>, as a mutual commitment between the protected area authority and individual businesses, will create multiple mutual benefits. The protected area authority will achieve its long-term conservation objectives through sustainable use of the area and businesses will increase and maintain profitability through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) increased visitor satisfaction and repeat bookings;</li> <li>(ii) reducing operating costs through audit and sustainable use of resources (energy, water, etc);</li> <li>(iii) retaining visitor spend in the local economy through use of distinctive local food and other products as well as promoting local events, festivals and customs;</li> </ul>	<p><b>A Charter Partnership Agreement</b>, as a mutual commitment between the Protected Area authority and individual businesses, will create multiple mutual benefits.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Protected Area authority will achieve its long-term conservation objectives through sustainable use of the area.</li> <li>• The Charter Partnership concept encourages and welcomes the sustainable performance of local tourism businesses and tourist service providers.</li> </ul>

<p>(iv) engagement with the protected area staff and other local stakeholders in the joint development of the area's tourism strategy;</p> <p>(v) examples of other benefits may include being recognized at European level or developing new commercial opportunities, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- targeting new customers attracted by the protected areas;</li> <li>- offering tourism based on discovery of the environment;</li> <li>- creating off-season tourism;</li> <li>- working with other economic sectors in the area and purchasing products and services locally;</li> <li>- receiving information on tourist numbers in the protected area and future forecasts of potential visitors;</li> <li>- better organisation and management in the area as a whole;</li> <li>- providing high-quality information about the protected area.</li> </ul> <p>Additionally by informing customers, in marketing material and in customer service, that a business is a credible partner with a protected area that has been awarded the Charter this can be a positive marketing tool.</p>	<p>Businesses will increase and maintain profitability through practical benefits like:</p> <p>1. Positive actions promoted by the Protected Area and other Charter Partners like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engagement with the Protected Area staff and other local stakeholders in the joint development of the area's tourism strategy</li> <li>• Improved tourism development, organization and management in the Charter Area;</li> <li>• Stronger visitor flow on low and shoulder seasons</li> <li>• Increased visitor satisfaction and repeated bookings;</li> <li>• Reduced operating costs through focusing on the mutual Action plan and sustainable use of resources (energy, water, etc);</li> <li>• Retaining visitor spend in the local economy through use of distinctive local food and other products as well as promoting local events, festivals and customs;</li> <li>• Business to business benefits when working with other economic sectors in the area and purchasing products and services locally;</li> </ul> <p>2. Improved information on the actions and plans of the Protected Area through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to high-quality information about the Protected Area when developing the marketing profile for its own products.</li> <li>• Receiving information on tourist numbers in the Protected Area and future forecasts of potential visitors;</li> </ul>
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	<p>3. Permitted use of the Charter logo (and/or the Protected Area logo or other appropriate logo) will improve visibility and credibility through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive marketing impact with the key message that a Charter Partner awarded with the <b>Charter Partner Certificate</b> is a credible partner with a Protected Area in sustainable tourism development</li> <li>• Dissemination through the channels of both the Protected Area and the EUROPARC Federation enables distribution of information at local and international levels.</li> <li>• EUROPARC, when granting the Protected Area the right to use the Charter logo also entitles the right to use the Charter logo for the benefit of the Charter Partner. Conditions for the use of the European charter logo are in Annex 7.</li> </ul> <p>4. Other benefits, when developing new commercial opportunities, may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better information and access in the mutual development projects on Charter Area with external fund rising opportunities.</li> <li>• Finding new customers attracted by protected areas;</li> <li>• Innovations on new green tourism products based on discovery of the environment;</li> </ul>
<b>3. EUROPEAN CHARTER PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME</b>	<b>4. BASIC CRITERIA FOR CHARTER PARTNERSHIP</b>
	<p><b>1. Preparatory actions for the Protected Area</b></p> <p>a) The ECST (Charter Part I) must first be awarded (or re-awarded) to the Protected Area and the awarding period must be valid during the time they are managing the Charter Partnership with their local businesses (Charter Part II).</p>

<p>Local businesses are vital partners of the protected area authority in the development of the area's sustainable tourism strategy and must be involved in its process. The Charter encourages and welcomes the involvement of local tourism businesses and tourist service providers that are based in or develop their activities in the Charter area as defined in Part I.</p> <p>Incorporating the Charter principles of sustainability into a wide cross section of private sector tourism products and businesses is an essential goal of success. Part II of the Charter enables individual businesses in the tourism sector, working with the protected area authority, to become recognised as European Charter Partners. A flexible partnership approach is</p>	<p>b) The Protected Area must first register to the EUROPARC Federation for Charter Part II. After approval by EUROPARC it can start the Charter II process with Charter Area businesses. After registration the Protected Area is permitted to use the Charter logo and the Charter Partner Certificate template and make the Charter Partnership Agreement with the relevant businesses.</p> <p><b>2. Preconditions and preparatory actions for the business</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) It is located, or carries out its activities in the Charter Area as defined in Charter Part I. Exceptions can be made if the Charter Forum regards this relevant for achieving its sustainable tourism strategy.</li> <li>b) It fulfils any relevant legislation at the time of certification.</li> <li>c) The activities of the tourism business are compatible with the sustainable tourism strategy of the Charter Area and the management plan of the Protected Area.</li> <li>d) Aims to participate in the activities promoted by the Sustainable Tourism Forum.</li> <li>e) Supports Sustainable Tourism Strategy of the Charter Area</li> <li>f) Demonstrate steps taken towards sustainable development. This may include the presentation of accredited eco-label or active membership of the Tourism Quality Programme, which the Charter Forum has accepted to be credible to the Charter Area and provides valid evidence on these preliminary actions.</li> </ul> <p><b>3. Mutual strategic commitments</b></p> <p>The partnership between any tourism business and the Protected Area</p>
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encouraged which reflects the Charter principles, existing quality marks and ecolabels, differing local needs and varying situations together with the commitment of the individual tourism sector business to sustainability.

Essentially the partnership between any individual tourism sector business and the protected area requires commitment to 3:

(i) an understanding of needs and the impact that tourist activity has on the natural environment.

(ii) mutual agreement that tourism creates a positive contribution to the social and economic development of the area thus contributing to a better place to live in for local people.

(iii) analysis and agreement of the compatibility of tourism products and services within the protected area to ensure they do not destroy the natural or cultural heritage.

(iv) diagnosis by the respective business on all its activity. For example:

- the balance between what is on offer and what visitors expect;
- provision of local, protected area and environmental information (excellent customer service & ongoing staff training);
- a review of environmental, energy and transport in the operation of the business;
- formulation of own ideas for environmental sustainability and their

requires mutual commitment to the following development objectives:

- a) A common understanding of the impact that tourist activity has on the natural environment and the need to develop sustainable tourism to maintain the basic values of the environment.
- b) Mutual agreement that sustainable tourism creates a positive contribution to the social and economic development of the area thus contributing to a better place to live in for local people.
- c) Analysis of the compatibility of tourism products and services within Charter Area is necessary to ensure they do not destroy the natural or cultural heritage.
- d) Diagnosis of the business activities is necessary to assure the sustainable performance For example:
  - Provision of information concerning local and environmental matters and the Protected Area. This may include activities on customer service and staff training;
  - a review of environmental aspects, i.e. energy, transport etc., in the operation of the business;
  - formulation of own ideas for environmental sustainability and their practical realisation;
  - measures to encourage visitors to positively contribute through volunteering or visitor payback to enhance the local heritage or natural environment.
- e) Mutual Commitment to the sustainable tourism development strategy for the Charter Area published in Charter Part I.
- f) Active participation in the **Charter Forum**.

#### 4. Quality and monitoring

- a) The Charter Partner shall be committed to continual quality management and improvement in tourism development; when the

<p>practical application, in line with the protected area management plan;</p> <p>- measures to encourage visitors to positively contribute through volunteering or visitor payback to enhance the local heritage or natural environment.</p> <p>3 The actions within the model partnership agreement should correspond to these actions. Further guidelines will be developed by the Charter Network and EUROPARC Sections, drawing on the experience of parks that have already been working with businesses.</p>	<p>business is accredited to an eco-label or Charter Area Quality Programme, it shall maintain this or similar accreditation during the Charter Partnership Agreement period. If this is not possible the Charter Partner shall develop a new mutual action plan together with the Charter PA according to the rules defined in Chapter 6.</p> <p>b) The realisation of the strategic commitments is to be assured and the environmental performance of the partner business is to be monitored and reported using the tools which are introduced later in this document.</p>
<p><b>4. GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR IMPLEMENTATION</b></p>	
<p>Several key principles guiding the process to certify individual businesses as European Charter Partners have been identified. The process should:</p> <p>(i) Be a practical application of the <b>Charter Principles</b>.</p> <p>(ii) Be based on an effective, mutually supportive and individually-tailored partnership between the protected area and the tourism business.</p> <p>(iii) Seek to ensure continuous improvements.</p> <p>(iv) Be based on an integrated approach to sustainable development, tackling together environmental, social and economic issues.</p> <p>(v) Be flexible enough to be adapted to the specific situation of each protected area (within local, regional and national context) whilst at the same time containing the requirements set at European level.</p> <p>(vi) Encourage protected areas to promote and support the engagement of</p>	<p><i>(see above in Chapter 2)</i></p>



businesses.  (vii) Encourage businesses to promote and support the role of protected areas.	
	<b>5. ROLE OF THE CHARTER FORUM IN PART II</b>
	<p>The Protected Area and its stakeholders organise the <b>Charter Forum</b> according to local specific needs in the Charter Area, as an essential element of Charter Part I. The Charter Forum allows businesses and the Protected Area to form an equal partnership and round table for discussion in which all parties can bring forward ideas for improvement etc.</p> <p>In the Charter Part II process the Charter Forum has shared ownership and responsibility in deciding the specific requirements relating to the Charter Area.</p> <p><b>The tasks of the Charter Forum in the Part II process are:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Decides the specific requirements for the Charter Area before Protected Area registers the Part II process to EUROPARC. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This includes the acceptable quality assurance options for controlling the Action plan of the business partners, who are seeking the Charter Partnership agreement.</li> <li>• Forum decides the acceptable eco-labelling schemes and other quality assuring schemes to be used for the businesses in the Charter Area either concerning the preparatory activities and/or concerning the valid sustainable actions for the forthcoming Charter Partnership Agreement period.</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Encourages businesses to participate in the Charter Partnership process and promotes awareness among them.</li> <li>3. Supports Protected Area and the partner businesses.</li> </ol>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Makes partnership agreements in their territories more visible.</li> <li>5. Discusses the annual monitoring reports of the both Charter Partnership Agreement bodies and decides the possible communication activities and other necessary interventions.</li> <li>6. Awards the Charter Partners with the Charter Partner Certificate. The Charter Partner Certificate is valid for as long as the business partner has a valid Charter Partnership Agreement with the Protected Area, and the Protected Area has a valid Charter Part I Award.</li> </ol> <p>The participation of the businesses to the Charter Forum work in practice can vary depending on how the Forum is structured in each Charter Area. Tourism businesses can participate directly on an individual basis or through a representative association.</p>
<b>5. COMMITMENTS OF THE PROTECTED AREA</b>	<b>6. PRACTICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PROTECTED AREA</b>
<p>The protected area (or another organisation charged with and agreed during the implementation of Part I of the Charter) will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Propose to EUROPARC the documents with the protected area requirements and other documentation stated in Chapter Eight<sup>4</sup>;</li> <li>- Provide the information needed for the application process of each business;</li> <li>- Verify that the businesses fulfil requirements set at both European and protected area level;</li> <li>- Verify the appropriate formulation of businesses commitments, and develop together with the partner indicators that will be used to verify how requirements are being fulfilled;</li> </ul>	<p><b>To develop Charter Part II the Protected Area must:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Designate a person to be in charge of the Charter Partnership process, e.g. the responsible contact person in the Charter Area.</li> <li>2. Provide the information needed for the negotiations and agreement process to each business;</li> <li>3. Offer technical support to the tourism business for developing their part of the mutual Action Plan</li> <li>4. Ensure that the businesses fulfil the criteria and special requirements set at both wider European and Protected Area level (e.g. checking the compatibility of the business in the mutual Action plan);</li> <li>5. Negotiate the appropriate businesses commitments, and develop</li> </ol>

<p>- State the protected area commitments to businesses. Examples of commitments that could be assumed by the protected areas include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive discrimination in favour of European Charter Partners in training and information campaigns of the protected area.</li> <li>• Listing the European Charter Partners in promotional and information materials and activities of the protected area (web, brochures, visitor centres, fairs, etc.).</li> <li>• To facilitate the relationship of the businesses with other public bodies.</li> <li>• Active participation in the Charter Protected areas Network and transmission of benefits to the European Charter Partners.</li> </ul> <p>- State the conditions of use of the European Charter Partners corporate image;</p> <p>- Review and sign the agreement;</p> <p>- Evaluate the implementation of actions, at least every three years.</p> <p>4 As stated in Chapter Eight, protected areas are responsible for their own Part II proposal to</p>	<p>together with the partner the specific indicators that will be used to monitor how these commitments are being fulfilled;</p> <p>6. State the Protected Area commitments in a mutual Action plan to businesses.</p> <p>Examples of commitments by the Protected Areas include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing Charter Partners with training and information campaigns concerning the Protected Area.</li> <li>• Disseminating the Charter Partners in promotional and information materials and activities of the Protected Area (web, brochures, visitor centres, fairs, etc.).</li> <li>• Facilitating the relationship of the businesses with other public bodies.</li> <li>• Active participation in the Protected Areas Networks on different level of EUROPARC organisation and transmission of the received information and other benefits to the Charter Partners.</li> </ul>
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<p>EUROPARC. During 2007, the EUROPARC Charter Network will seek to make available to everyone a collection of existing texts from different sections or parks to assist other Protected Areas when drawing up their own proposals. Meanwhile each EUROPARC Section or national or regional Charter network is encouraged to work on their own guidelines.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. State the conditions of use of the Charter Partners corporate image;</li> <li>8. Review and sign the Charter Partnership Agreement;</li> <li>9. Provide a certificate template to Charter Partner for display. The document shall certify that the Charter Partner supports both the Protected Area and the ECST.</li> <li>10. Assists the Charter Partner to display logos (Charter logo and the park logo) in its informational and promotional materials in relation to the service or business referred in Charter Partnership Agreement.</li> <li>11. Communicate new partners and changes in partners information to EUROPARC Federation at least annually.</li> <li>12. Monitor the implementation of mutually agreed actions annually together with the Charter Partner.</li> <li>13. Monitor the proper use of the European Charter corporate image in all its possible forms, including the logo and partnership certificate.</li> <li>14. Report the progress of the Charter Partnership Agreement using the agreed indicators and Charter Part II templates annually to the Charter Forum and to the EUROPARC Federation.</li> <li>15. Organize the renewing of the partnership agreement before the end of the valid agreement period.</li> </ol>
<p><b>6. COMMITMENTS OF THE TOURISM BUSINESS</b></p>	<p><b>7. PRACTICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE TOURISM BUSINESS</b></p>
<p>The tourism business needs to fulfil requirements at two levels: at European level and at protected area level. The European level will guarantee that all participating businesses comply with certain requirements and ensures commonality in implementation across Europe. The protected area level enables protected areas to define requirements specific to their Charter</p>	<p>The tourism business shall fulfil two sets of requirements to achieve a Charter Partnership Agreement:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The broad European Charter Part II criteria (see chapter 3) will</li> </ol>

<p>area.</p> <p>5 In order to begin working towards a European Charter Partnership Agreement, these requirements should be met by the tourism business.</p>	<p>guarantee that all participating businesses comply with minimum standard requirements, which ensure commonality in Part II implementation across Europe.</p> <p>2. The requirements at a Charter Area level enable Protected Areas to define complementary requirements for adaptation to the local conditions.</p>
<p>At European level, the following conditions are required of the tourism business:</p> <p>(i) It should be located, or carry out its activities; in the Charter area as defined in Part I. Exceptions can be made if the protected area regards this as relevant for its sustainable tourism strategy.</p> <p>(ii) It should fulfil any relevant legislation at the time of certification.</p> <p>(iii) The activities of the tourism business should be compatible with the sustainable tourism strategy and the management plan of the protected area.</p> <p>(iv) It should join and aim to participate in the activities promoted by the Sustainable Tourism Forum defined in Part I of the Charter<sub>6</sub>.</p> <p>(v) It should commit to working towards a <b>European Charter Partnership Agreement</b> with the protected area, where mutual commitments will be defined (objectives, actions) for a period of three years.</p>	<p><b>To develop Charter Part II the Charter partner business must:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Designate a person to be in charge of the Charter Partnership process, e.g. the responsible contact person in the Charter Area.</li> <li>2. Provide the information needed for the negotiations and agreement process;</li> <li>3. Ensure that the criteria and special requirements set at both wider European and Protected Area level shall be fulfilled;</li> <li>4. Negotiate the appropriate businesses commitments, and develop together with the park representative the specific indicators that will be used to monitor how these commitments are being fulfilled;</li> <li>5. State the business commitments in mutual Action plan to Protected Area. Examples of commitments by the Protected Areas include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using the training, which the Protected Area is providing for Charter Partners</li> <li>• Disseminating the Protected Area in promotional and information materials and activities of the business (web, brochures, visitor services, fairs, etc.).</li> </ul> </li> <li>6. Active participation in the Protected Area Networks</li> <li>7. State the conditions of use of the business corporate image in</li> </ol>



	<p>mutual Action Plan for development of the sustainable environmental performance during the coming Charter Partnership period. The actions referred in the Action Plan and the Charter Partnership Agreement should correspond to basic commitments to Charter criteria (in Chapter 4).</p> <p>The mutual Action Plan is produced for the Charter Partnership period. The Action plan part shall cover the broader European sustainability requirements and the specific area/region and business related requirements decided/agreed by the Charter Forum.</p> <p>The Action plan is based on the diagnosis by the business on all its valid activities. It identifies the actions contributing to sustainable tourism, which the business already is carrying out. It also defines the development targets, which the business identifies and agrees with the Protected Area for the forthcoming agreement period. For these development targets, the Action plan will estimate the necessary resources and time scale .</p> <p>The Action plan shall cover the following focus items, their indicative actions, their monitoring indicators and approximate estimation of resources and time schedule needed to achieve the Action plan:</p> <p>1. Improve its offer and its relation with the Charter Area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information and communication</li> <li>• Visitor services, visitor contributions</li> <li>• Visitor flow monitoring, visitor satisfaction</li> <li>• Accessibility</li> <li>• Training of staff</li> </ul>
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	<p>2. Improve its environmental credentials.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Energy consumption</li> <li>• CO2 production</li> <li>• Waste management and recycling</li> <li>• Water consumption</li> <li>• Transport and logistic</li> </ul> <p>3. Support local development and the preservation of the natural and cultural heritage.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local product purchases</li> <li>• Safety management</li> <li>• Landscape management</li> <li>• Impact on and actions for living nature and biodiversity</li> <li>• Partnerships in network for sustainable tourism development projects</li> </ul> <p>To achieve and to be awarded the Charter Partner Certificate, the business must choose a minimum of three actions from each block above, which it has not yet carried out and which it plans to realize in the coming Charter Partnership Agreement period.</p> <p>At the Charter Area level the Action plan covers the actions (specific requirements), which Charter Forum has decided to be used as the criteria, which the business shall undertake to become a Charter Partner.</p> <p>Businesses, individual Protected Areas and Charter Forums are encouraged to expand the above lists of Action items in details, especially with local and relevant issues.</p>
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	<p>If the business has accredited themselves in an business level eco-label quality scheme (e.g. green tourism eco-label or park label or parca marca etc. label) or in a network based development scheme in Charter Area, which is accepted by the Charter Forum, the valid eco-label provides a credible evidence for the Charter Partnership about the sustainable development performance of the business. In this case the development actions are mutually negotiated and agreed between the Protected Area and the business when drafting the Charter Partnership Agreement.</p>
	<p><b>9. REGISTERING THE CHARTER PART II PROCESS</b></p>
	<p>To ensure the required commonality in implementation across Europe, as well as compliance with the principles of the European Charter, EUROPARC will control the proposed Charter Part II processes. This will be done in connection to the Part II registration process.</p> <p>The Protected Area should send to EUROPARC the following documentation for registering to the Part II process:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. List of the specific requirements set for the Charter Area.</li> <li>2. List of indicative actions, their monitoring indicators and applied monitoring method for both Protected Area and tourism business, from which the European Charter Partnership Agreement will be derived.</li> <li>3. A template of the European Charter Partnership Agreement setting out the commitments of the Protected Area and the tourism business including resourced actions and measurable monitoring indicators.</li> <li>4. A European Charter Partnership Certificate template to be used in Part II process. See Annex 3.</li> </ol>

	Without accepted registration the Protected Area cannot use the Charter Part II process and not make any commitments to business concerning the use of the Charter logos.
<b>7. EUROPEAN CHARTER PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT</b>	<b>10. EUROPEAN CHARTER PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT</b>
<p>Using the protected area as the central focus will create positive attitudes and understanding between the authority, the numerous and varied tourism sector businesses and their customers. This will be important in building and maintaining relationships as well as in marketing and promotional opportunities e.g. website listings, training and networking plus a sense of shared ownership, management, strategic direction and common purpose.</p> <p>To establish or further develop the commitment between the protected area authority and its individual Charter business partners the signing of a European Charter Partnership Agreement should form the basic approach. A 'model' agreement provided by EUROPARC shows the minimum content drawn from the Principles of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas which identifies protected area and business commitments as well as setting out actions and monitoring indicators.</p>	<p>The Charter Partnership Agreement between the Protected Area and the Charter Partner must include mutual commitments for sustainable development. These include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objectives,</li> <li>• Resourced indicative actions,</li> <li>• Monitoring indicators and</li> <li>• Reporting about the proceedings during the Charter Partnership period.</li> </ul> <p>The Charter Partnership Agreement is valid up to a period of 5 years and cannot be extended beyond the Charter Part I awarding period of the relevant Protected Area.</p> <p>A 'model' agreement provided by EUROPARC (Annex 2) shows the minimum content for Agreement, which identifies the commitments by the Protected Area and the business as well as setting out actions and monitoring indicators.</p>
Making the partnership work in a simple, yet effective, way is vital. To become a European Charter Partner, an individual business should fulfil the requirements	<i>(Double information, not necessary here any more)</i>

<p>set at European level (see Chapter Six) and protected area level, follow the application process guidelines and sign the Partnership Agreement with the protected area. The European Charter Partner will be recognised with a certificate for three years.</p>	
<p>In order to maintain recognition as a European Charter Partner the business should demonstrate at the end of the three year period that they have fulfilled the commitments made and then negotiate and sign a new European Charter Partnership Agreement with the protected area.</p>	<p><b>The Charter Partner Agreement must cover the entire tourism business operation on the Charter Area. It is not endorsing any particular tourism product or service. Both bodies sign the Charter Partner Agreement.</b></p> <p><b>The Agreement includes also the terms of validity and terms of cancelling the Agreement. After the termination of this contract the Charter Partner may not use the Charter logo for any purposes and it will not receive any other benefits described in the Agreement.</b></p> <p><b>EUROPARC may at any time produce additional restrictions, conditions or limitations on the use of the logo, which will be notified to the Protected Area. The Protected Area will then inform the Charter Partner of these conditions and monitor on its compliance.</b></p> <p><b>Once the criteria and the specific requirements have been met the <b>European Charter Partnership Agreement</b> can be signed.</b></p> <p><b>In order to maintain recognition as Charter Partners the Protected Area and the business should demonstrate that they have fulfilled the agreed commitments before the end of the Charter Partnership Agreement period and then negotiate and sign a new one.</b></p>

8. VALIDATION OF THE CHARTER PROTECTED AREA'S METHODOLOGY	
<p>To ensure the required commonality in implementation across Europe, as well as compliance with the principles of Part II of the European Charter, EUROPARC will validate the proposed schemes. This will be done in partnership with EUROPARC Parts and national or regional Charter networks where appropriate<sup>7</sup>.</p> <p>The protected area would send EUROPARC the following documentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) <b>List of the requirements set at protected area level.</b></li> <li>(ii) <b>List of indicative actions, their monitoring indicators and its application methodology</b> for both protected area and tourism business, from which the <b>European Charter Partnership Agreement</b> will be derived.</li> <li>(iii) A template of the <b>European Charter Partnership Agreement</b> setting out the commitments of the protected area and the tourism business (actions and measurable monitoring indicators).</li> <li>(iv) A <b>European Charter Partnership Certificate</b> template. See <b>Annex 1</b>.</li> </ul> <p><sup>7</sup> EUROPARC encourages the use of methodologies developed and agreed at Section or national network level first. It realises that this may not always be possible, particularly in the early stages of implementation, so is at present happy to receive schemes worked out solely at protected area level. Indeed work already being undertaken in some</p>	<p><i>(not valid any more)</i></p>

countries will contribute to others drawing up guidance, which will in turn facilitate harmonisation in approaches and the development of networking activities.	<i>(not valid any more)</i>
<b>9. SIGNING THE EUROPEAN CHARTER PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT</b>	
<p>Once the above requirements have been met the <b>European Charter Partnership Agreement</b> can be negotiated and signed.</p> <p>The tourism business then becomes a <b>European Charter Partner</b> and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) is committed with an individual Action Plan for three years;</li> <li>b) will benefit from the actions promoted by the protected area or other Charter partners;</li> <li>c) will know the general conditions for the use of the brand European Charter (name, logo, etc);</li> <li>d) is able to get support from the protected area;</li> <li>e) is entitled to use the charter logo together with the protected area or other appropriate logos.</li> </ul> <p>After this period of three years, the business can request renewal of the award, subject to an evaluation by the protected area.</p> <p>§ In addition to the general conditions of use defined by EUROPARC for the Charter logo, the other conditions of use of the European Charter Partners corporate image will need</p>	

to comply with the relevant regional or national regulations.	
	<b>11. Monitoring and reporting</b>
	<p>Charter Part II performance is monitored mutually in annual meetings between the Protected Area and the business. The indicators used in monitoring are included in the Charter Partnership Agreement (Annex 1 in the Agreement). The key indicators are basing on development criteria included in the Action Plan (scheduled and resourced development targets and monitoring indicators listed in the Action Plan). Charter Partners shall use the self-monitoring templates provided by EUROPARC (Annex 6).</p> <p>The Protected Area collects the monitoring reports and delivers them to the Charter Forum and to the EUROPARC Federation annually.</p> <p>EUROPARC Federation produces annual report summary on the proceedings of the Charter Partners to Charter Network members. EUROPARC Directorate can contract this technical operation to an external consulting.</p> <p>Any conflicting opinions on the interpretation on the Charter Partnership Agreement or its practical use shall be negotiated and agreed when possible between contracting partners. The Charter Forum studies and decides on the interpretation for possible contradictions. The decision of the Forum can be claimed to the Charter Evaluation Committee, which makes the final decision when necessary.</p>
	<b>12. Guidelines and toolkits for Charter Part II performance</b>
	EUROPARC produces detailed guidelines for the performance in the Charter

	<p>Part II process (see Annex 5). EUROPARC Sections can also produce the Section Specific Guidelines and other dissemination material for adaptation of the Charter Part II to the regional circumstances.</p> <p>EUROPARC together with the regional EUROPARC Sections produce supporting tools and templates for Protected Areas and the Charter Partners for producing the Action Plan (e.g. a Model Action Plan, self-monitoring template, etc). These supporting tools will establish the standard data to be collected by everyone in order to have comparable monitoring information inside the Charter Network. Protected Areas and Partners are informed of these supporting tools in the Charter homepages (<a href="http://www.european-charter.org">www.european-charter.org</a>) and on EUROPARC Sections homepages.</p>
<p><b>The EUROPARC Federation provides a Model Partnership Agreement for Charter protected areas.</b></p> <p><b>Annex 1: EXAMPLE OF PARTNERSHIP CERTIFICATE</b></p> <p><i>(Model Certificate can be provided)</i></p>	<p><b>Annex 1 Charter Principles (link)</b></p> <p><b>Annex 2 Model for European Charter Partnership Agreement</b></p> <p><b>Annex 3 Model Charter Partner Certificate</b></p> <p><b>Annex 4 Charter Partnership annual report - Template</b></p> <p><b>Annex 5 Guidelines for Charter Part 2 performance (document)</b></p> <p><b>Annex 6 Self monitoring template for Charter Partner</b></p> <p><b>Annex 7 Conditions for the use of the European Charter logo</b></p> <p><b><u>(The Annexes shall be developed by the Charter manager in Directorate together with the STWG)</u></b></p>





## **Annex 4**

### **Internationalisation of the Charter**

**Drafted by Richard Denman<sup>1</sup>, 11.01.15**

*This paper relates to the STWG Plan – Section 5.4, point 3 (with also some relevance to point 4 and 10).*

The development of the Charter should take account of its international positioning and what benefits can be gained from this.

It is important to consider the objectives of any internationalisation. These include:

- Contributing to, and learning from, international thinking and understanding on sustainable tourism and protected areas
- Increasing the profile of the Charter within Europe and globally
- Being aware of relevant international standards and ensuring broad compliance with them
- Gaining possible financial benefits for EUROPARC and the Charter from international engagement and participation in projects and programmes
- Identifying possible opportunities for strengthening links to global markets for Charter partners.

The following are some of the main international players, programmes and initiatives to consider in the internationalisation of the Charter. This is not necessarily comprehensive.

#### **The UN 10YFP on Sustainable Consumption and Production – Sustainable Tourism Programme**

This tourism programme was launched, as one of five sector programmes, at the end of 2014 and stems from structures and processes following the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development and Rio+20. It is led by UNWTO with support from UNEP and there is a 22 member Advisory Committee which includes various international bodies. There are four

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<sup>1</sup> This paper has been based on my direct and ongoing engagement or relationship with most of the bodies and initiatives identified here.

Programme Areas, one of which includes development of guidelines and instruments for sustainable tourism. The Programme will fund and support a number of projects, but how this will happen is still to be clarified. Bodies are able to join the Programme as partners, so linking them into further information and networking – this could be an opportunity for EUROPARC/The Charter. This Programme and related structures supersedes the Global Partnership for Sustainable Tourism.

### **Global Sustainable Tourism Council**

This is an independent body with members that include various international organisations, NGOs and private sector interests. Its main function has been to establish standards in the form of Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria, for hotels/businesses and more recently for destinations. Broad compliance with these standards is increasingly considered and referred to in the international world of sustainable tourism. The GSTC has established an Accreditation Programme for international and local level sustainable tourism certification schemes. It has also been piloting the application of the destination criteria in different parts of the world. Engagement in these initiatives is based on payment of fees. The main implication for the Charter is to show broad compliance with the standard.

### **IUCN – WCPA**

IUCN has an overarching interest in tourism issues in protected areas. The World Commission on Protected Areas has a Tourism and Protected Areas (TAPAS) Specialist Group, made up of a number of experts working in this field, which shares knowledge and has produced various publications on the subject. Individuals at IUCN have expressed interest in seeing if the Charter approach can be applied in other parts of the world. Contact should be maintained by Directorate and Sections in concern with these networks.

- Federparchi , Italy is working with IUCN about ECST. IUCN-MED (Office of Mediterranean in Malaga) is partner of MEET project to develop tourism in Medit. according to the Charter principles and methods. Federparchi collaborates with Green List IUCN program (new IUCN program to evaluate efficient management in PAs) , to introduce Charter principles and methods in the Green List criteria.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Information provided by STWG member Stefania Petrosillo

## **Convention on Biological Diversity**

The CBD's Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development stem back to 2004. Broad compliance between the Charter and the Guidelines was clarified at that time. The Secretariat of the CBD (SCBD) has been revisiting the Guidelines and their use and has been developing new material for users. This refers directly to the Charter as an example of good practice. The SCBD is keen to work with others to support initiatives and projects.

## **European Commission**

The various interests and initiatives of the EU are clearly of great importance for EUROPARC and the Charter. These include programmes of DG Environment and DG Enterprise (Tourism Unit) as well as others. Within Europe, opportunities for further support and funding should be pursued. In terms of technical alignment, work on the sustainable tourism charter that was proposed by DG Enterprise appears to be parked at the moment, with attention focussed on piloting the European Tourism Indicator System (ETIS) for sustainable destinations. Further consideration should be given to how the Charter can relate to this system. Internationally, the EU has been providing support for sustainable tourism outside Europe. Some Charter partners have been engaged with programmes, supported by the EU, that include neighbouring states, such as Mediterranean Programme. More widely, DG DEVCO is promoting the use of sustainable tourism as a tool for international development, building on relevant European experience. Close engagement with the European Commission and its various programmes should be maintained.

## **Initiatives supporting certified destinations and businesses and providing market linkages**

Various international programmes and projects, NGOs and commercial bodies provide support services for sustainable tourism, including business to business (B2B) and business to consumer (B2C) market linkages.

- Rainforest Alliance<sup>3</sup>, although largely working outside Europe, provides an interesting model. It currently promotes all businesses that participate in its sustainable tourism certification programme on the website SustainableTrip.org.

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<sup>3</sup> Information provided by STWG member Monica Herrera Pavia

- Travelife is a certification programme with two separate strands, for tourism service providers (e.g. hotels) and for tour operators. Training is available around these standards. Awarded bodies are featured in B2B and B2C marketing.
- A number of other groups, consultancies and NGOs in Europe are supporting training and market access for sustainable tourism businesses and destinations, including initiatives by ECOTRANS, ECEAT, EUCC (Coastal and Marine Union), ECNE (European Centre for Nature Conservation) amongst others.
- Various commercial online travel agencies have brands and webpages restricted to sustainable tourism products.

It is important to appreciate that the above coverage is not comprehensive and there will be a number of others bodies and initiatives relevant to the Charter and its internationalisation.

## **Annex 5a**

### **Recommendations on the sustainable Charter financing**

#### **Charter budget frame**

##### **1. Sustainability as a basic budget target**

In the beginning of the Charter management the Federation Council set the sustainable financing target for the Charter services. This meant that the costs from Charter should be covered by the Charter generated incomes. Then the registration cost and the evaluation cost for Charter was decided, but the control and the updating for the sustainability was neglected because the Charter management was organised as an externalised process as the service of EUROPARC Consulting. However, the Charter evaluation fees have been decided on a healthy level, because the E Consulting has been able to pay to the Federation part of it (about 10-15 %) as a royalty, when using the registered trade mark of EUROPARC in the projects and using some resources of Federation in the service.

The registering fee (500 € for new candidates) for Charter has been under control of the Federation Council and Directorate. That has been used to cover the costs of Charter communication, Awarding ceremonies, Charter lobbying and the Charter Networking activities. All together the available Charter revenues have been on the level of €1000-1300 per one new Charter park per year (registration fee 500 € plus the royalty 500-800 € per park) from E Consulting). Since the year 2014 the resources for other Charter services than the evaluation process have been about 2300 €. The variations in numbers of annual awarded parks have caused an unpredictable variation also to the funds available especially for the Charter Network services. This has been one main reason for the critical comments by EUROPARC members about the quality and capacity of Directorate to deliver Charter services and practical support to the Charter Network members.

## 2. Forecast for the Charter Network until 2021

In the Charter Network there are now 135 Charter awarded parks. In 2014 we got 14 new Charter parks and 2 re-awarded parks. During the years 2000-2014 the Charter Network has reached its practical limits in numbers. When in EUROPARC we have about 360 members, one of three is in the Charter Network. There still is room for new ones but on the same time we are losing old Charter parks, which do not want or cannot afford to renew its certificate any more. Some of the old Charter parks consider the decision to continue and some are postponing the decision over several years. In this case we have to estimate as drop-outs those parks, who have not renewed the Charter certificate within 5 years period or who have not even started to renewing process 5 years after the last awarding. The year 2009 is the critical change year. No one of those parks, who were awarded in 2009, renewed their Charter certificate in the right time after the 5 years period. The numbers of new candidates and drop outs is presented in the table 1.

**Table 1. The balance of Charter park network during 2005-2014.**

Year of Awarding	Candidate parks	Drop out parks	Drop outs %
2001	5	1	20
2002	4	2	50
2003	4	2	25
2004	6	0	0
2005	6	2	33
2006	5	0	0
2007	12	1	8
2008	13	7	54
2009	16	16	100
2010	5		
2011	12		
2012	18		
2013	13		
2014	18		
Sum	137	31	43

The rate of drop-outs is now extremely alarming. The numbers show that there is an increasing and now about 43 % probability that a new Charter park will not continue its Charter status

after the first 5 year period. The probability is over 50 % that it drops out after 2 certification periods. Another indication is that the Charter parks do not keep the 5 years period for renewing. They tend to postpone the preparing and activation of the new evaluation to 6- 10 years intervals. When using the Charter Network services and showing their Charter certificate, they have neither organised the renewing process nor paid the evaluation fee after the 5 years periods.

This clearly indicates that we have to develop Charter as a service for members for a longer perspective than for the first 5 years after candidature. Otherwise we at the end of following 15 years will have only a few parks as the last survivors in the Charter Network. This is a key issue to be analysed and solved in the EUROPARC Strategy.

The STWG recommends that the following actions shall be done to solve this problem as soon as possible:

- To develop better Networking service,
- Inform and encourage the parks proactively in good time and effectively to prepare the new application for renewing the Charter Certificate,
- To create better visibility in the green tourism markets to the Charter parks,
- Encourage the Partnership development in the Charter Area,
- Organise the adaptive planning system,
- Organise a lighter evaluation and annual monitoring of the Strategy and Action Plan
- Organize annual collection of the Charter Network fee.

### **3. Analyses of the Charter costs and revenues**

The STWG has analysed the structure of costs for current Charter Part I management and the proposed development plans for Charter Part II. The different partial costs have been pointed in the excel table in Appendix 5b. The costs are from the labour costs of the staff, travel costs, Charter networking costs like events and trainings and communication. Also the Evaluation and production of Charter information and dissemination on documents and electrical information systems create costs. Sustainable Tourism Working Group and Evaluation Committee works mainly on volunteering or with the resources of its member's background organisations, but need resources to have meetings, studies and reports on their findings and recommendations.

The main responsibility of the Charter management is in the Directorate, which also controls the flow of Charter fees through the process. The Charter administration and management costs are coordinated by the Directorate. Some of the Sections support the candidate parks to develop the Charter application with the necessary organisation and the documents. The largest costs are on the Charter parks when they produce the Charter process. The Charter Evaluation has been externalised in Charter management with the contract between Directorate and EUROPARC Consulting.

The costs and revenues are analysed in the excel table (Appendix 5b) in three versions; minimum, medium and maximum. In minimum frame we assume that 6 parks are in the evaluation process annually. In maximum version there are 18 parks. In medium model there are 12 parks. In these versions the administrative work in Directorate and Sections varies according to the number of evaluated parks. Some of the costs on the Network still remain on the same level more or less as fixed costs. The table 2 shows the rough estimates for the comparison for Part I and theoretical calculation of the balance in Part I plus optional Part II.

**Table 2. Comparisons of cost-revenue relation in Directorate with three levels for Charter evaluations.**

Number of evaluations	Cost – revenue balance in Part I	Cost- revenue balance in Part I + Part II (optional)
6 evaluations	- 42 000 EUR	+ 5000 EUR
12 evaluations	- 36 000 EUR	+ 10000 UR
18 evaluations	- 33 000 EUR	+ 13000 EUR

The main result is that Charter Part I is not fully sustainable in the economics. Part I service needs extra resources from the Federation Core funding €36000 ± €5000 annually if we do not find savings in the tasks of the Charter services or if we cannot increase the revenues including the external subsidises. Now, when the annual budget frame for Federation is about 350 000 EUR and we are losing members and member fees every year, this is a critical issue. It means that if we do not receive external funds for supporting the EUROPARC activities (like BfN, EU/NGO Grant, etc.) or external project money, which can be allocated to Charter management, all the EUROPARC members are funding special Charter services, which are delivered only to one third of all the members.

The Evaluation Committee and Sustainable Tourism Working Group are doing their tasks on volunteering bases. All together these two expert groups save about 15 000 € annually EUROPARC budget, when doing their strategic work for the benefit of Charter Network in EUROPARC.



The STWG has developed optional ideas to cover the missing resources for Charter services. This means that we have to develop a membership category for the Charter Partners, to whom the organisation now delivers remarkable services currently free. When using those new optional models for fund rising through new memberships for Charter Partners, we have estimated it possible to cover all the Charter management expenses and costs in Directorate and Sections. The costs for Sections in the budget frame here are more or less theoretical, because only some Sections have organised effective support for Charter process.

The production costs of Charter Certificate in the Charter Awarded parks can be substantially lower, if the revenues generated by Charter partners can be allocated directly to the Charter parks in concern. The balance of Charter management costs in Directorate and Sections is in harmony, when about 10 new evaluations are realised and 1200 Charter Partners are new EUROPARC members paying the smallest possible fee (100-200 EUR per year) for membership, registration in Part II partnership, sustainable tourism planning and Charter network services. If the numbers of partners in the EUROPARC membership is lower than the 1200 in the calculation exercise, the fee for Partners shall be higher to make the budget in balance.

The budget frame (Annex 5b) is a tool to make sensitivity analyses about different options of costs and revenues. It makes it more easy to find reasonable balance between costs and revenues and allocate the possible revenues to different levels of the Federation.

A new annual Charter service fee is the solution to the changes in the budget, which is caused by the variations like postponing in the Charter renewing. This can be optional for those parks who want to use it. We should accept the rule that each year when the parks are using the Charter services and logo, they shall pay a minimum service fee, which is 20 % of the evaluation fee for 5 years certification periods.

### Recommendations for budget options:

#### 1. Effective fund raising for the Charter

- To reduce costs of the system is needed, but not reducing the efficiency and the quality of the system. At the contrary, if we want to increase the Charter network and the Charter tool, efficiency and quality must be improved. To support the all system, a much stronger effort of Directorate is absolutely necessary in order to present more project proposals to national, European and international calls, in order to promote the Charter and to sustain the Directorate costs. For this task EUROPARC Directorate must collaborate deeply with

national sections and involve other human resources around Charter with a good knowledge of international financing programs.

## 2. Updating of the Charter fees or finding savings in the costs

- The Charter registration fee and the Evaluation fee have been on the same level since 2008. STWG does not see any realistic option to have higher Charter fees for Charter candidate parks. The candidate parks can cover these costs normally only when receiving extra funding from some external source for the Charter process. The only possible way to find balance in the cost-revenue structure is to make the tasks with lower quantity, quality or with lower costs. The salaries are not too high in Directorate to deliver the Charter services. We have to be ready to pay such a salary to Charter coordinator that he/she can successfully do the demanding international expert work. The rationale savings can be found in the amount of work done for one candidate in Directorate and in Evaluation management. Also we can analyse as an option to save costs of events if we integrate the EUROPARC Conference, Charter Awarding ceremony and Charter Network meeting.

## 3. Registration fee for Part I renewing

- In Part I the candidate parks are paying only once the Charter registration fee. When renewing the Charter Certificate they pay only the evaluation fee. If the awarding rotation is done in 5 years intervals, there is no need to pay a new registration fee. Now when the Directorate is controlling the whole flow of fees from the park to EUROPARC, there is no need to renew the registration procedure either. But if park is not using the 5 years rotation or other longer options for reasonable Strategy period according to the possible revisions in the Part I methodology, the park should be considered as a drop-out, and a new registration fee should be obligatory when they want to come back to the Charter Network..

## 4. Lower costs for Charter evaluation

- Charter Evaluation process is too complicated and expensive when we think the Charter as a tool for good park management, which is not an eco-labelling system.
- The Evaluation Committee is an important actor in Charter process assuring the harmonisation and credibility of the Charter method. If the minimum standards for Charter are more clear than today, it is possible that the Evaluation committee can do its volunteering work with 3 members, when now they use 6 evaluators.

- The templates for verification are now too complicated and need too much work on them in the Park and in the verifiers report. To simplify the verifiers document is most necessary.
- Also the costs of verification are much too high in relation to the needs of the Charter system itself. The administrative costs are now 44 % of the all evaluation costs, when the acceptable level is less than 20 % in similar tasks in European projects. The verifiers report should be estimated to consume max 40 hours (2 days for travels and checking the basic application documents, 2 days on site, 1 day for reporting). With salary level 250 e/day the maximum fee on verifying in a candidate park is 1250 e. With the travel costs in can be 1800 e. The evaluation procedure should cost not more that 2500 e per candidate Charter park.
- With continuous training and harmonisation of the Verifiers work we can focus in Evaluation more to the critical cases and make it more easy to the candidates who have positive verification report. Only the conflicting cases could be studied more carefully in the Evaluation Committee. This simplified control could save administration costs without losing the quality and harmony in the evaluation process.

#### 5. Annual fee as an option for Charter services

- Annual membership fee for the members in the EUROPARC Charter Network is an option in covering the Charter costs. The membership fee does not include the VAT tax, which gives 7 % saving to parks, who cannot use VAT as a compensated cost in the accounting.

#### 6. Membership category for the Charter Partners with low membership fee

- The statute of EUROPARC allows also business enterprises to be understood as organisations. The EUROPARC Strategy sets a target to increase the number of members during the Strategy period 20 %. This increment is not realistic, if the Charter Partners are not actively encouraged to be members. Also the Charter costs-revenues cannot be balanced enough. The Charter Partners should be members with low membership fee, like 100-200 e /year. The necessary visibility and other members services shall be allocated for the benefit of partners, in case they apply the membership.

## 7. Service fee for Part II services as an option

- Charter Partners have the possibility to use the EUROPARC Charter logo, they receive planning advice, even free services on planning from Park authorities, they can find better visibility among customers through EUROPARC communication platforms. These are extra value adding Charter services for the Charter Partners. In the excel table (Appendix 5b) of this report, the STWG has made an exercise to estimate the level of costs, which the Charter partners should cover, if they receive special member services. Most (80 %) part of this fee should be allocated to the budget of Sections and parks. If the number of Charter Partners exceeds 1200, some 20 % of those revenues cover all the negative balances of the whole Charter service in EUROPARC Directorate. The rest of that revenue can cover effectively the costs of the Sections and important part of the costs of partnership management in the Charter parks.

## Annex 5c

### Explanations for the units, cost and revenue items in the Charter management budget frame table

#### Part I costs

##### 1. Salaries and social costs of local staff

Salaries for Directorate are calculated on bases of minimum level to be paid to the persons, who are qualified experts for international coordinating work. The days in the table are so called effective working days, which are needed to deliver the task in the row in concern. The value of the labour cost equals to the basic paid salary + legal holiday salary + social costs and insurances paid by the employer. This labour cost does not include possible annual bonus salaries or costs of annual trainings or days with illness. These costs are assumed to be covered under the EUROPARC core funding.

The calculation of the value of the working day is presented in the Table 1. The social costs of the employer are according the German taxation level.

The time consumption on different work packages is estimated as days needed to do the work in concern. The understanding of the needed tasks and the needed days comes from the experience of the STWG members in such Charter projects we are talking here. The average Charter coordination work needed for one Charter candidate park is estimated in 3 work days.

Charter management staff cost is estimated with basic salary 2500 e/month, which equals 170 e/effective working day . This is the minimum salary for organising the jobs. It is clearly lower than the normal salary for academic consulting expert, who we need in the task. In the costs for Parks and Sections we estimate the level 200 e/day and managers of Directorate we estimate the labour cost on the level 244 e/day. For the expert work in the evaluation, STWG and training tasks we estimate 250 e/day, as the value of the paid or volunteering work.

Technical assistant staff labour cost equals here also 170 e/day. Directorate can use volunteers, internships or low cost employed workers, whose salaries are subsidized by the German government or some other external sources. This can save resources on marginal level. It was not possible to get the real salaries of technical assistance and level of subsidies for this report.

**Table 1. Charter management labour cost estimate for staff.**

Item	Charter coordinator and technical assistance
1. Annual salary (12,5 * 2500 e)	31250 e
2. Social contributions and insurances 20 %	6250 e
3. Labour costs in a year	37500 e
3. Annual amount of working days	250 days
4. Annual amount of effective working days	220 days
5. Cost per effective working day (3./4.)	170 e

## **2. Travel costs**

Travel costs are estimated according to the level the Directorate is using in normal activities.

The travel costs of the Evaluation Committee are covered in the costs of the Consulting as part of the evaluation administration costs. In the future the travel costs of the Evaluation Committee should be covered directly by the Directorate. This is for maintaining the neutrality of the members of the Committee and for savings in the VAT cost.

## **3. Other costs, external costs**

3.1 Charter publications include Guidelines, Best practice report, Monitoring report, verification templates, evaluation applications etc. See Appendix 2 in Sustainable Tourism Working Group 2011-2012 Final report of 31.12.2012. Here we estimate one publication to be published per year, which is a minimum level for information.

3.2 STWG; there is always something to be analysed or tested and it needs an annual budget frame. We estimate the need of STWG reports to the minimum level 1000 e/year.

3.3 Share of common auditing costs for directorate is included in the overheads. Charter system may need a separate accounting position for controlling the self-coverage of the costs.

3.4 Costs for Evaluation Committee members is estimated salary, which currently is basing on volunteering (cost in-kind). The same amount is also counted as in-kind income, if not paid to the Evaluation Committee members. The Evaluation process is taking min 4 days per member and 6 persons in the Committee annually (drafting, analysing, meetings, travelling).

3.5 Cost of the management in the Evaluation process includes the work on organising the verifiers work, contracting the verifiers' visits, analysing and editing the verifiers draft reports to the Evaluation Committee, organising the evaluation meeting and reporting to the Directorate the recommendations of the Evaluation Committee plus all the needed accounting and invoicing.

3.6 Language versions of Charter documents are produced by the Charter coordinator, who has skills for min three languages. The other language versions are produced by the Sections or national projects outside the Directorate Charter management

3.7 The Network and training seminar costs can be smaller when external subsidies are available. The Network seminar is here estimated to be organised in every other year and 4 experts costs are covered from the Budget of EUROPARC. The training seminar costs are coming from the salaries and travel costs of 5 days training which is organised in 3 years intervals and where 6 persons plus the Charter coordinator are participants. In this calculation we take 2 days per year for the Charter coordinator to organise this training meeting and 10 +2 participants during 5 days including travelling, 4 nights, and EUROPARC covers all travel costs up to a maximum of 12\*350 e. Third of these costs are allocated in the table to one year.

3.8 Charter marketing costs such as costs of photos, roll-ups, events in European tourism exhibitions and EU-days, extra travels, tables etc. This is a real minimum of the costs of the better visibility for the Charter activity.

3.9 Charter homepages need continuous technical updating, which is produced on external service base, minimum once a year.

3.10 STWG is normally working on the costs of members' background organisations or volunteering. This in-kind work for Federation is estimated here at 6 persons in 2 days meetings twice a year =24 days plus drafting and writing the report 16 days = 40 days with in-kind salaries €250 per day.

3.11 Charter verifier cost is now €1800 per park, when effective time needed is 5-6 working days per park.

#### **4. Reserves**

Currently there are no reserves for Charter development or Charter conflict management from Charter incomes. In sustainable system it should be considered some 5 % reserve budgeting. Here we include 1000 e for the reserves for development and also 1000 e for possible Charter conflicts.

#### **5. Overheads**

Charter management overheads are estimated here to 7 % of total direct costs. In the table all the rents of office, telecommunication costs and tools in the office like computers, copy machines, Charter cost auditing etc. are included in the overheads. Currently these costs are covered by the Federation core funding.

#### **6. Charter revenues**

Currently there are no fees for re-evaluation registering, partnership memberships or registering, no partner's fee for planning or Charter Network visibility service. These fees should be considered as options to balance the Charter budget, when the target is the self-financing system.

Verifiers' travel and accommodation costs have currently been paid separately by the PA candidate because of the variability due to distances and the possibility of PAs providing no-cost or low-cost accommodation locally from sympathetic tourism operators. We consider it is in the future more rational and for the sake of the neutrality of the verifiers to include them in the average evaluation fee and costs of Consulting to be covered on contract based with Directorate.

Evaluation Committee members salaries are not covered from Charter incomes but with Committee members volunteering in-kind support. We assume that this model can continue in the future.



STWG members' salaries are not covered with Charter incomes but with resources of Committee members background organisations or members volunteering. They are pointed out here as in-kind incomes for the Charter financing.

Charter Network seminar and Charter Training are using experts, who come to the program as volunteers. Also the trainees in the training seminar are volunteers. Their travel costs are however covered from the budget of EUROPARC. The in-kind value of the training experts is not included in the table, but we can estimate to the annual level of 2000 e for the benefit of Charter trainees and Network members.

### **Part II Costs and revenues**

In the current Charter management the Part II process has no specified structure for costs and revenues. Here we use the combination of costs and optional fees which we see relevant in connection to develop the financing for sustainable Part II management.

## Annex 6

### Comparison of the certification systems for the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism and the Transboundary Parks in EUROPARC Federation

Drafted in STWG Task group and TBWG experts by Joel Erkkonen, Lasse Lovén and Leo Reyrik.

Target Areas	
European Charter (ECST)	Transboundary Protected Areas (TBPA)
All kinds of protected areas and their eco-social environment	An area composed of two or more neighbouring protected areas in two or more countries
Open to protected areas that are member of EUROPARC	Open to protected areas that are member of EUROPARC
119 protected Charter areas since 2001	10 TB areas (23 protected areas in 13 countries) since 2003

Aims	
ECST	TB
The aim of ECST is the protection and promotion of both the natural and cultural heritage as well as the sustainable development and management of tourism in protected areas.	Transboundary Protected Areas (TBPA) represent a commitment of two or more countries to common management and development of their shared ecosystems in the protected areas along the border. Moreover, transboundary protected areas help to reduce possible political tensions and are a symbol of peace with great political and public visibility.

Benefits for the Areas	
ECST	TBPA
Certificate: European Charter for Sustainable Tourism	Certificate: Transboundary Parks – Following Nature's Design

Networking, sharing experience and knowledge is one of the main aims of the European Charter of Sustainable Tourism → Charter Network	TransParcNet is the network of the certified Transboundary Protected Areas (TBPA's)
Useful participatory tool for the park manager. The Charter process itself seems to be the most valuable part of the Charter (promoting partnerships)	Regular transboundary cooperation with TBPA's as well as within TransParcNet for a common and efficient cross border management (including sustainable recreation/tourism)
The process brings consistency to the co-operation between PA's and its partners.	Learning and exchanging ideas and best practice examples within TBPA's as well as TransParcNet
EC Status and visibility is not clear enough	TBPA status and good public visibility
Mutual projects	Several mutual projects
ECST gives great credibility for the project funding!	TBPA gives credibility for the project funding

Basic Standards	
ECST	TBPA
10 Charter Principles	9 quality criteria
Flexible standards, no minimum standards in planning Criteria and indicators on quality not clearly defined	5 fields of work indicators; 10/14 basic standards must be achieved
Local FORUM to be organised Plans on Strategy and Actions	No local FORUM No plans
Costs	
ECST	TBPA
Charter registration 500 EUR, evaluation fee 5 000 EUR + VAT (valid for 5 years)	Total registration fee 500 EUR + VAT (for registration as candidate protected areas)
Costs of 1 verifier (travel, accommodation, etc.)	Total verification fee 3 000 EUR + VAT (for administration of the application, verification process and travel costs) Costs of 2 verifiers (accommodation etc.)

Re-evaluation fee 5000 EUR+VAT after 5 years (for renewal of the certificate) + Cost of verifier (travel, accommodation, etc.)

Re-evaluation fee 2 000 EUR after 5 years (for renewal of the certificate and travel costs) + cost of 1 verifier (accommodation, etc.)

Cooperation	
ECST	TBPA
Close co-operation between PA's and its local partners.	Very close and regular transboundary cooperation with TBPA's as well as within TransParcNet
Charter Network meetings every other year	Learning and exchanging ideas and best practice examples within TBPA's as well as TransParcNet

Certification Process	
ECST	TBPA
Individual protected area (PA) decides to participate in the certification process.	TransBoundary Protected Area (TBPA) decide to participate in the certification process
EUROPARC Directorate registers new application	EUROPARC directorate registers new application
PA itself and the partners work through the main areas (accepting the principles, involving FORUM, defining a strategy and developing an action plan) and complete all application forms.	TBPA's work themselves through the basic standards and fields of work complete all application forms
EUROPARC nominates independent verifiers and E Consulting engage them?	The Transboundary Steering and Evaluation Committee (STEC) proposes independent verifiers which are engaged by the directorate
The Charter system has not any special Steering Committee, Directorate has the role for Steering	
<b>Evaluation</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
Charter Evaluation Committee after receiving the verifiers report is responsible for the process of recommendation for awarding Charter parks	After receiving reports from the verifiers the (STEC) gives recommendations to the EUROPARC Council
EUROPARC Council formally decides about awarding the certification or re-evaluation	EUROPARC Council formally decides about awarding the certification or re-evaluation.
	The Transboundary certificate of EUROPARC

	is awarded to the partners of the TBPA complex
EUROPARC Sustainable Tourism working group (STWG) is mandated by the Council for providing expertise to Directorate and Council on projects and development of Charter system (method, processes, roles of actors, guidelines)	The Transboundary Working Group (TBWG) is a task group for the further development and support the transboundary work of the EUROPARC Federation. The TBWG is mandated by the Council.
Some EUROPARC Sections work in order to support and take the Charter forward in their countries or regions	
EUROPARC Consulting are responsible for the practical management tasks for evaluation part of the Charter	The EUROPARC Transboundary Steering and Evaluation Committee (STEC) coordinates the Trans-boundary Parks Programme. STEC is mandated by the EUROPARC Council to coordinate the Trans-boundary Parks Programme. There are four members in STEC.

Main similarities
The certification process
The role of the EUROPARC directorate with a designated contact person within the directorate and council
Need for training the park managers and the verifiers

Main differences
Target areas
Aims
ECST works actively in a participatory way between PA and local partners
TB works actively across the border as a network of PA managers
Costs; the level of fees and many cost details
The role of EUROPARC consultancy (ECST)
TB is now awarded in General Assembly and ECST is awarded in Brussels

## Recommendations for development

**The STWG considers important to study the following options for harmonisations, when developing the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism (ESCT) and Transboundary Protected Areas (TBPA) as management tools. The Recommendations are formulated and agreed together with the TPWG experts. These are tasks for the Council and Directorate.**

- The profiles (brands) of both ESCT and TBPA certification systems should be clarified and sharpened remarkably. This fundamental work includes especially clarification of the target images of the systems as well as clear promises to parks and partners and visual outlooks.
- Overall communication about ESCT and TBPA (aims, areas, actions, development, best practices etc.) inside the EUROPARC bodies should be enhanced remarkably. Communication should work fluently as two-way communication between working groups, sections, Directorate and Council.
- Both ECST and TBPA should be introduced and engaged more consistent way to the local partners and stakeholders of the parks. Clear profiles of the ECST and TBPA systems will be crucial as well as good communication and marketing. Acceptance of local partners is a necessity for a future success of both systems.
- The Awarding ceremony for both the ECST and TBPA should be organized in connection to the annual EUROPARC conference. This action would be a sign of engagement of the federation towards the members and would probably interest more participants attend to the conference. The cohesion in the ECST and TBPA can grow, when the representatives of certified parks can meet the newcomers. The positive feelings in Awarding ceremony would also attract new candidates.
- The ECST Award Ceremony in Brussels is an important experience for parks and a good opportunity for EUROPARC, especially considering that EU lobby is a priority: for this reason it still is important develop this event and keep it on the agenda. When organizing the special Awarding event in Brussels, the TBPA Awards should be included in the program due to the high political value of the Transboundary co-operation.
- STWG and Transboundary working group (TBWG) should have an active focal person in the Council and active coordinator/manager/secretary in the Directorate. One managerial expert in Directorate for both systems could be a rational solution.

- STWG and TBWG need an annual budget for planning the work plan and doing the work. Especially the travel costs should be covered by the Federation annually on agreed level.
- STWG and TBWG need to change information and also best practices regularly. This could be done, for example, during annual EUROPARC conferences.
- The training for the ECST and TBPA Verifiers should be integrated (at least to some extend) to save the costs and to create better cohesion between the experts of both systems. The Directorate should be responsible to organise the necessary trainings.
- The level of costs and the financial administration should be harmonised as much as possible.

## **Annex 7**

### **Items for the Charter communication plan**

Drafted by STWG Task Group by Jacques Deguinniers and Lasse Lovén

#### **1. How to increase the visibility of EUROPARC through a more efficient website and contribution from Charter areas**

The communication contents about the Charter on the EUROPARC website is rather poor. Partners of Charter areas may feel they are not actively supported or at least promoted by EUROPARC institutions.

At the Charter area level it is understood that the more Charter areas there are, the more tourism businesses are certified and the more it is expected a higher-level promotion on a European level, as a response to the Charter areas' commitment and to the partners' pride in being "Park Partners". As a pan-European body EUROPARC would not necessarily be able to answer all these calls with its own means and owing to its position as a NGO. This should be more clearly explained to Charter areas.

The Charter areas themselves hold part of the clue. Once awarded, the Charter areas could be requested to commit themselves into the promotion of the ECST: The more the Charter areas themselves communicate about the Charter, the more they will help the whole process.

As EUROPARC cannot promote the Charter just by itself and with its own means, it could be considered that - in addition to EUROPARC sections - the Charter areas should promote it in different ways like, for example, on their websites, documents, with links to other Charter areas, etc., but following guidelines to be formulated by the EUROPARC Federation. Contributions of EUROPARC sections could be more visible thanks to improved access to their respective websites, which would be displayed under a commonly agreed design.

There is a great deal of goodwill for closer cooperation between Charter areas. This should be considered as a positive signal, as such closer cooperation would mean a convergent search for



effective results from the Charter process. Charter areas would take advantage of sharing of good examples of sustainable tourism from other Charter areas: diagnostics, strategies and action plans, supported by an active forum, monitoring and evaluation, etc; something wider than news and web messages.

As active components of 'EUROPARC Forum', sections could be invited to deliver (in their own language) something like summarised progress reports that could be then disseminated to all EUROPARC members, thus making the whole network more lively and the EUROPARC family more visible. Items for the Charter communication plan.

## **2. How to disseminate of EUROPARC messages?**

Volunteering is a basic mode of contribution to EUROPARC activities and, of course, to those of many parks in Europe.

Combined with some definite accreditation by EUROPARC it could contribute to better dissemination of its messages. EUROPARC section members, verifiers, associate experts, etc could be seen as "messengers", "spokespersons" or "message transmitters" in order to make EUROPARC more visible.

This is what some parks do in their area to make their activities, events and messages more disseminated and better understood and also to favour local involvement.

Those "spokespersons" would receive dedicated information from EUROPARC and they could play a useful role as EUROPARC "representatives" during events like Europarc section forums, regional tourism events around the Charter, etc.

## **3. How to activate the re-evaluation process?**

Some Parks deplore the lack of communication from EUROPARC, after the re-evaluation the verifier has completed his report. In fact, more communication is expected, especially during such crucial phases.

Once again a EUROPARC section could be responsible for keeping in touch. It could be useful to explain the process and at least to give an acknowledgment of application and verification report with dates of decision.

It is essential that EUROPARC be viewed as a close partner or a guide in the Charter process. Before the final "judgment" is made, there could perhaps be discussion, perhaps even an appeal, to encourage positive reactions.

#### **4. Charter communication in connection to the EU projects**

In addition, any European cooperation project related to the Charter should include communication actions, of course for the project itself, but also for EUROPARC and for the Charter in general.

## Annex 8

### The Operational Key Goals for the Charter 2014-2016

The EUROPARC Council defined the operational Charter key goals 2014 – 2016 as follows:

- 1) Enlarge the Charter Network with more members and new countries.
- 2) Guarantee the Charter Network with higher % of re-evaluations and on time.
- 3) Consolidate the Charter Network with more Charter Partners and new Charter Parks with Charter Part II.
- 4) Implement the Charter Network at Charter Part III level.
- 5) Prepare Charter methodology for Internationalisation.
- 6) Integrate procedures with TransBoundary Parc.
- 7) Improve quality of procedures and actors.

STWG has analysed these operational goals and commented them as follows.

- Goals 1 and 3 cover the practical Charter Networking. This is largely dependent on the actions and communication organised by the members, Sections and Federation Directorate.
- Goal 2 covers the key issue of continuity in the Charter Network. The Charter re-evaluation rate is shrinking in an alarming way and the Directorate and Sections should activate as soon as possible the analyses on the reasons of drop-outs. Effective communication from the Directorate and Sections is needed to increase the awareness of the Charter parks about proper timing and benefits of the re-evaluation process and to encourage the parks to continue in the Charter Network. The networking means in this case that the Charter coordinators in Directorate and Sections must stay constantly in touch with all Charter areas and remind them already two years beforehand to make a budget available for the re-evaluation. Then, a year in advance, they must remind them again and after that stay in constant dialogue with them.
- Goal 4 should be activated after development and piloting of Charter Part III methodology. It requires actions by the Sustainable Tourism Working Group (STWG) and Sections.

- Goal 5 requires actions in developing the Charter methodology and also in developing the strategic partnerships outside the Federation. Work needs to be coordinated between the Directorate, STWG, Sections and Evaluation Committee.
- Goal 6 requires the analyses of the Charter and TransBoundary Parc procedures and the pros and cons of the deeper integration by the TB STEG and the STWG.
- Goal 7 means simply the revision and development of the basic Charter procedures in the official texts, management procedures, templates and skills of those within the Charter system. These are tasks which require all the relevant Charter actors to become involved.

### **Collaborative Actions Required**

A cost-effective and transparent but flexible organisation that enables necessary actions and activities with relevant and realistic resources is needed for the Charter system as a whole. It also requires strategic direction for the future goals of the Charter system and an improved service for the Federation members, Charter protected areas and Charter Partners.

## Annex 9

### Key SWOT based Challenges in the Charter Strategy 2021

Drafted in STWG Task Group by Richard Partington and Lasse Lovén

#### What we need or want for Charter

Looking beyond the short term horizon of 2014 - 2016, the STWG have identified the key objectives, which we want to be realized, when developing the Charter until 2021. These objectives indicate remarkable challenges and issues that require improvement and most of them can be seen as specified Actions within the wider EUROPARC Strategy 2015-2021.

These Key Objectives are:

Concerning the Charter mechanisms/system:

- A permanent expert for coordinating the Charter in the Directorate with understanding of the needs of parks and capacity and resources to coordinate the Charter Network
- Better communication in the Charter family between different actors of the Charter management; especially a clear transparent agreement with the evaluation service consultancy is a must and Directorate and EUROPARC Consulting must make their mutual contracts in early enough time and give necessary respect on that.
- Effective Charter training for park staff and experts like verifiers
- Financially secured and sustainable system
- Activities based and developed on EUROPARC membership and members services
- Strong engagement with the tourism marketing experts
- Development and impact analyses for monitoring the Charter performance and progress including contacts to research institutes

Understanding /Recognition of the Charter:

- Charter recognized as a management tool of excellence within EU and wider
- Increasing knowledge and awareness of Charter actors
- Charter area is understood as a wider concept like destination than the park itself
- Intrinsic value of Charter to the Federation identity understood
- Network values and capacity to create social capital are clear and visible

Functioning/Role of the Charter:

- Charter raises awareness on ethics, principles, and public relationships

- PAs better connected to IUCN and other sustainable tourism actors or ecotourism destinations
- PAs, businesses and other stakeholders work closely together on sustainable tourism
- Visitor experience better than before
- Connecting visitors to Charter areas
- Visitors are more giving (tools for it developed like parks.it or ecotone.es)
- Critical mass of Charter parks undertaking cooperation and networking

#### Credibility of the Charter:

- Charter parks are credible and appreciated
- Not green washing in Charter process
- Protection status in park is successful and sustainable
- Charter remains as a process certificate for members, not an eco-label

#### Cooperation with the tourism industry:

- Travel offices integrated to Charter system – wider business approach sought
- Information and booking portal for sustainable travel available for Charter park visitors
- Work in partnership with the tourism associations and operators
- Better visibility for Charter partners and marketing capacity of Charter to be raised significantly

The STWG is aware that the brand of the Charter is not clear enough, neither to the PA's nor the partners, even less to the visitors and customers in the Charter area. However, the Charter process itself is valuable. In order to make it broadly interesting and attractive, the brand (i.e. target image) of the Charter should be clarified and sharpened remarkably.

### **ECST Internationalization**

The STWG considers that a well-known and widely accepted global standard of sustainable nature tourism is a good idea. However, we think that wider ECST internationalization is not relevant at the moment or in the near future. There is already a lack of human and economic resources to manage the current situation. The most critical issues of the current system should be solved and improved before any wider expansion of the ECST beyond Europe.

However, the STWG strongly supports global co-operation and mutual recognitions and joint projects in this field. There are several benefits in global co-operation and it should be tested by sharing Charter, as an example of best practice, through networks other than the EUROPARC network. EUROPARC should carefully benchmark what UNEP, UNESCO, IUCN, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Conservation International (CI), Geoparks, Global Sustainable Tourism Association, Travelife, WWF and other truly international players are doing in this field. One practical way could be to test the Charter concept outside of Europe as a pilot project, if good candidates can be found and development follows the previous approval and membership of the Federation and is organized in common mutually agreed terms.

## Annex 10

### Comparing the European Charter with other Sustainable Tourism methodologies

Drafted in STWG Task Group by Martin Kaiser and Lasse Lovén

#### 1. Introduction

The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas (ECSTPA) was developed during the years 1995-1999. The goal was to create a practical tool for protected areas for managing sustainable and responsible tourism.

Parallel, the target of sustainable tourism was picked up by several other international institutions or NGO's by developing different methodologies. This shows the high relevance of this matter in tourism development. Main content of this report is an overview of the six following methodologies referred to the principles of the European Charter of Sustainable tourism.

- Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria (GSTC)
- European Tourism Quality Label (ETQ)
- European Tourism Indicator System (ETIS)
- IUCN Park Tourism guidelines
- European Wilderness Quality Standard and Audit System
- Naturens Bästa system criteria and indicators

By this, a further development of the European Charter is intended in order

- to revise the official text of EUROPARC Charter
- increase the consistency and accuracy and
- improve the practical performance of CHARTER method

Protected areas can't be directly compared to a tourism destination and definitely not when using only tourism definitions. Elements of a protected area, i.e. a landscape of outstanding beauty, can be a part of a destination, but more is needed – tourism offer, tourism activity and in times of globalization and economization an effectual size of a destination. Charter Area is more near the tourism destination in the niche of eco-tourism or nature based tourism. In a global view, many protected areas are too small

for being a destination, sometimes they are part of a destination and above this, most of the protected area managers generally don't want to be recognized as green tourism destination managers.

The following report reviews the above mentioned methodologies with short descriptions, compares the methodologies by a scheme of the most important indicators of sustainable tourism ([see Chapter 4 in this Annex](#)) and gives finally a summary with recommendations for the European Charter.

## 2. Overview

Together with the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas, six other methodologies were checked.

Generally, the European Tourism Indicator System (ETIS) and the IUCN Park Tourism guidelines aren't certification systems. ETIS are a toolkit and IUCN method is like a guideline for World Heritage sites. The European Tourism Quality Label (ETQ) is still under development; it should function as an umbrella system for controlling the practical Quality Certification systems. In relation to the capacity of the European Union as the initiator, it's remarkable that principles and criteria are still vague.

The Global Sustainable Tourism Council has developed their dedicated criteria, which have been used as background of several green tourism marketing brands and platforms, like in the offers by SustainableTrip.org. which is a marketing tool created by the Rainforest Alliance. In comparison between the GSTC and the ECST-criteria it has to be realized that the target group of both methods is different, although there is a wide intersection in issues of biodiversity, ecosystem and landscape conservation, social and cultural matters and reduction of pollution. However, the GSTC Criteria and its indicators offer now the best reference point when we want to find the necessary items for further development in the ECST Criteria.

The former PanParks criteria are not in use anymore, but a new European Wilderness society has been established to run a new ecotourism brand. It is remarkable, that the high standards of the former criteria (only a few protected areas in Europe were certified) are now created more flexible, so nature areas with a lower part of strictly protected wilderness – a core zone of at least 1,000 ha - can be approved. Until now, the criteria refer to protected areas, so there is a strong analogy to the European Charter. The focus is more on wilderness conservation or restoration, until now tourism related to wilderness area plays not a major role.

Naturens Bästa –method is a certification for nature tourism enterprises or products in Sweden with high requirements and with a remarkable agreement with 148 businesses involved.

Most of the methodologies focus on tourism destinations or tourism entrepreneurs, who should fulfil ambitious and broad criteria. But the success of the methodology is strongly dependent on the acceptance: Which amount of businesses is willing to undergo a long term and partly costly certification process? What's the clear benefit for the business to be awarded? In most of the methodologies, this aspect is neglected – the more vague the advantages, the lower the participation of the entrepreneurs.



Greenwashing might be an exception: Global businesses have the resources to undergo a complicated and expensive certification process and use the award to brush up the company image – sometimes they (i.e. TUI – <http://www.ecoresort-tui.com>) invent their own certification to provide the supply to cover the demand on sustainability their possible customers might expect.

Protected areas with a tourism relevance have the strong advantage that local tourism businesses regularly identify themselves strongly with their region. By this, they are willing to cooperate and – in positive cases – they can be involved in voluntary work to the benefit of the landscape and nature: conservation means the preservation of this commercial resource. This is the strongest benefit a protected area can count on! Tour operators with no regional integration lack this strong identification by picking out several destinations in different countries or continents. In case of economic decline or environmental degradation they check out alternative destinations – a step a local tourism business hardly can do.

Due to the fact that identification is based on a local scale and efforts in cooperation and networking are easier achievable on this level, certifications with a wider spatial area of operation – Europe or even worldwide – face the challenge to convince businesses to join. Intensive cooperation with a nationwide tourism organisation can be a solution if the objectives match to the tourism image of the country. Naturens bästa –method seem to be a good example for a smart performance of high standards and acceptance, maybe even economical success.

### 3. Recommendations

STWG has drafted several recommendations to EUROPARC Federation for the further development of the European Charter. The best reference system for developing the Charter Criteria and standardized indicators for good practise performance and sustainable impacts are those, which the Global Sustainable Tourism Council has developed for the Destinations.

STWG recommends that EUROPARC Directorate together with the STWG analyses carefully the GSTC Criteria and Indicators and introduces the new ones and reformulates the older ones according to the global best practice experience. This should be done keeping up the special focus of the ECST method as a management tool for park managers and not developing a new eco-label as a certification procedure.

When developing the ECST methodology, the following points should be noted:

- a cooperation and – if achievable – harmonization with other sustainable tourism standards should be implemented. EUROPARC could apply for the recognition of the ECST to the GSTC destination criteria. Generally, the uniqueness of the Charter as a methodology for protected areas and tourism in protected areas must be secured.
- ETIS is strong in monitoring and indicators. When developing the Charter we shall consider the possibility to use ETIS indicators in the diagnoses phase of the ECST process. ETIS has a forum and an action plan, but these aspects are very weak in ETIS's methodology. ETIS could use the

ECST experience to improve them. The Council and Directorate should work in the future to make an agreement Europarc-EU by which ECST Parks could be recognized automatically also as ETIS destination.

- Due to a different key aspect on businesses in protected areas in the Charter Part II, external expertise is needed to analyse, how to reach different target groups. We need to highlight the benefits of the European Charter especially for the businesses and the customers. EUROPARC Federation has contacts to companies, which definitely can manage this challenge, i.e. Futerra in London.
- As a key task, a revision on the communication of the Charter in reference to the wording and the corporate design is necessary. The brand “European Charter for sustainable tourism in protected areas” doesn't fulfil any customers demands and wakes no wishes to visit a protected area. The labelling reaches the brain, not for the heart: This might be still attractive for some park managers, but not for tourism entrepreneurs or even visitors.
- A new online brand like i.e. “myparks.eu” (still available) could promote the ideas of the Charter / transboundary Parks with better international visibility plus present the protected areas and related local tourism businesses. The existing website “european-charter.org” is useful for the internal communication between Charter parks, but not to raise more attention for potential visitors in Charter Parks.
- To implement this “visibility” aspect, European funding with start of the new program period is favourable: Due to the European character of the Charter, several European funding programs are suitable for this challenge. Furthermore, common multinational projects partly funded by EU with Charter content are able to tighten the relations of Charter parks and provide additional benefits i.e. for Charter businesses.
- EUROPARC should support the national sections in communication of the Charter on the nationwide level to reach a higher knowledge about the Charter for visitors of protected areas.
- To rise the benefits related to the Charter, exchange of expertise is necessary: Not only with a biannual Charter network meeting, EUROPARC should take initiative to intensify the training oriented meetings related to the Charter.
- In summary, this would extend an additional field of activity for EUROPARC Federation. The Council has to decide, whether the charge for that brings a worthy output. If not, in relation to the core business of EUROPARC Federation, it's sincere to reduce the requirements of the Charter, especially for Part II, an introduction of Part III should be fully reconsidered.

#### 4. Detailed comparison of the European Charter with other Sustainable tourism methodologies

<u>Methodology</u>	<u>European Charter of Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas (ECSTPA)</u>
1. Initiator	EUROPARC Federation
2. Partners	National sections of EUROPARC
3. Date of establishment	2001 (Part I for Charter parks and other Pas and Charter Areas), 2005 (Part II for Charter Business Partners)
4. Target group	Part I. Protected areas and their eco-social environment called as Charter Areas  Part II. Tourism businesses in and in connection to protected areas / Charter Areas
5. Membership	Membership of protected area in EUROPARC Federation required for Part I, no membership requirement for park oriented tourism businesses in Part II.
6. Certification costs	For Charter park a 500 € registration fee, 5.000 € verification fee + VAT + travel costs and accommodation for verifier in 2014. No fee or other costs for Charter Partner businesses.
7. Area where used	Europe
8. Objectives	1. To increase awareness of, and support for, Europe's protected areas as a fundamental part of our heritage, which should be preserved for, and enjoyed by, current and future generations.  2. To improve the sustainable development and management of tourism in protected areas and their surroundings (Charter Area),  3. To take into account the needs of the environment, local residents, local businesses and visitors.
9. Principles	Refers to ECSTPA Part I  1. To involve all those implicated by tourism in and around the protected area in its development and management.  2. To prepare and implement a sustainable tourism strategy and action plan for the protected area.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. To protect and enhance the area's natural and cultural heritage, for and through tourism, and to protect it from excessive tourism development,</li> <li>4. To provide all visitors with a high quality experience in all aspects of their visit,</li> <li>5. To communicate effectively to visitors about the special qualities of the area,</li> <li>6. To encourage specific tourism products which enable discovery and understanding of the area,</li> <li>7. To increase knowledge of the protected area and sustainability issues amongst all those involved in tourism,</li> <li>8. To ensure that tourism supports and does not reduce the quality of life of local residents,</li> <li>9. To increase benefits from tourism to the local economy,</li> <li>10. To monitor and influence visitor flows to reduce negative impacts.</li> </ol>
10. Criteria / indicators	No specified criteria other than the Principles. Minimum Criteria are the Creation of a permanent Forum and the Strategy and Action Plan for sustainable tourism existing. No specified standards and indicators for quality in plans, performance or environmental output. No practical monitoring of practical performance or impacts.
11. Verification/evaluation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Registration,</li> <li>2. Application including the ST Strategy and Action Plan,</li> <li>3. Pre-check,</li> <li>4. Verifier visit and verifiers report,</li> <li>5. Feedback and recommendation from the Evaluation Committee,</li> <li>6. Decision by EUROPARC Council</li> <li>7. Awarding Certification</li> </ol>
12. Validation	After 5 years
13. Number of participants	135 protected areas certified in ECSTPA Part I
14. Communication	<a href="http://www.european-charter.org">www.european-charter.org</a>

## 15. Remarks

ECSTPA is a management tool for park managers. It is not an eco-labelling certification system or a marketing method for ecotourism destination.

**Methodology****Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria**

1. Initiator	Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC)
2. Partners	<p>The Dutch Association of Travel Agents and Tour Operators,</p> <p>The Global Travel &amp; Tourism Partnership (GTTP) program of Global Initiatives Inc. a registered charity in the State of New York, USA and tax exempt, public foundation</p> <p>The Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA), a not-for profit membership association</p>
3. Date of establishment	2007
4. Target group	<p>1. Tourism destinations worldwide</p> <p>2. Hotels, tour operators</p>
5. Membership	<p>Annual fee</p> <p>\$ 100 Individual Membership</p> <p>\$ 350 Micro Organizations (&lt;\$3 million US\$)</p> <p>\$ 750 Not-For-Profit Organization (&gt;3 million US\$)</p> <p>\$ 750 For-Profit Organizations - Small/Medium (3-30 million US\$)</p> <p>\$ 3.000 For-Profit Organizations - Large (&gt;30 million US\$)</p> <p>\$ 2.500 Destinations: Municipal or Provincial</p> <p>\$ 3.500 Destinations: National</p> <p>\$ 10.000 Sponsors</p>
6. Certification costs	\$ 30.000 (for destinations)
7. Area where used	Worldwide
8. Objectives	Establishing management standards for sustainable tourism. Promoting the widespread adoption of global sustainable tourism standards to ensure the tourism industry continues to drive conservation and poverty alleviation.
9. Principles	Effective sustainability planning, maximizing social and economic benefits for the local community, enhancing cultural heritage, reducing negative impact for the environment.
10. Criteria / indicators	<p>Two sets of Criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GSTC Sustainability Criteria for Hotels and Tour Operators since</li> </ul>

February 2012

- GSTC Sustainable Destination Criteria (GSTC-D) since November 2013. The list of the Destination Criteria and the 1.version for GSTC Destination performance criteria (see below) are including also comments referring the ECST Criteria.

11. Verification/evaluation	<p>Two step system:</p> <p>a) Sustainable tourism certification programs (i.e. ECST) can be <u>recognized</u> by the GSTC aligned to the Global Sustainable Tourism criteria. Costs: \$7.000 (\$ 6000 for current GSTC members), which covers the cost of the review of the standard by the staff of the GSTC Secretariat and Accreditation Panel.</p> <p>b) Because (a) says nothing about how the standard is verified in the field, an additional process called “<u>Approval</u>” is required to ensure that certified businesses, activities, and destinations comply with the standard and that the certification program complies with good practice in third-party certification. Costs: \$ 8000 (\$7000 for current GSTC members) which covers the cost of the review of the certification program’s procedures and processes by the staff of the GSTC Secretariat and Accreditation Panel.</p>
12. Validation	<p>The Recognition of a standard is permanent, until either the recognized standard changes or the GSTC Criteria change. The following revision of the GSTC Criteria is scheduled for 2016 for Hotels &amp; tour operators and 2017 for Destinations.</p>
13. Number of participants	<p>Worldwide 19 sustainable tourism standards have already been <u>recognized</u> by GSTC so far, but only one standard was <u>approved</u>. Additionally, 12 international regions have been recognized as <u>early adopting destinations</u>.</p>
14. Communication	<p><a href="http://www.gstccouncil.org">www.gstccouncil.org</a></p>
15. Remarks	<p>The GSTC Destination Criteria represent the best state-of-art set of Criteria to be compared with ECST and to be used when developing the ECST methodology. EUROPARC could also apply for the <u>recognition</u> of the ECST in referring to the GSTC criteria. A cost/benefit analysis is recommended before that.</p>

## **GSTC Destination Criteria**

Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria for Destinations
<b>SECTION A: Demonstrate sustainable destination management</b>
<p><b>A1 Sustainable destination strategy</b></p> <p>The destination has established and is implementing a multi-year destination strategy that is publicly available, is suited to its scale, that considers environmental, economic, social, cultural, quality, health, and safety, and aesthetic issues, and was developed with public participation.</p> <p>ECST reference: Principle 2</p>
<p><b>A2 Destination management organization</b></p> <p>The destination has an effective organization, department, group, or committee responsible for a coordinated approach to sustainable tourism, with involvement by the private sector and public sector. This group is suited to the size and scale of the destination, and has defined responsibilities, oversight, and implementation capability for the management of environmental, economic, social, and cultural issues. This group's activities are appropriately funded.</p> <p>ECST reference: PA and Forum</p>
<p><b>A3 Monitoring</b></p> <p>The destination has a system to monitor, publicly report, and respond to environmental, economic, social, cultural, tourism, and human rights issues. The monitoring system is reviewed and evaluated periodically.</p> <p>ECST reference: Principle 10, but not organised in practise</p>
<p><b>A4 Tourism seasonality management</b></p> <p>The destination dedicates resources to mitigate seasonal variability of tourism where appropriate, working to balance the needs of the local economy, community, cultures and environment, to identify year-round tourism opportunities.</p> <p>ECST reference: Not as a Criteria but in the planning guidelines</p>
<p><b>A5 Climate change adaptation</b></p> <p>The destination has a system to identify risks and opportunities associated with climate change. This system encourages climate change adaptation strategies for development, siting, design, and management of facilities. The system contributes to the sustainability and resilience of the destination and to public education</p>



Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria for Destinations
<p>on climate for both residents and tourists.</p> <p>ECST reference: Not as a Criteria but in the planning guidelines</p>
<p><b>A6 Inventory of tourism assets and attractions</b></p> <p>The destination has an up-to-date, publicly available inventory and assessment of its tourism assets and attractions, including natural and cultural sites.</p> <p>ECST reference: Principle 3 and in the planning guidelines</p>
<p><b>A7 Planning Regulations</b></p> <p>The destination has planning guidelines, regulations and/or policies that require environmental, economic, and social impact assessment and integrate sustainable land use, design, construction, and demolition. The guidelines, regulations and/or policies are designed to protect natural and cultural resources, were created with local inputs from the public and a thorough review process, are publicly communicated, and are enforced.</p> <p>ECST reference: Principle 2 and 3 and the planning guidelines</p>
<p><b>A8 Access for all</b></p> <p>Where appropriate, sites and facilities, including those of natural and cultural importance, are accessible to all, including persons with disabilities and others who have specific access requirements. Where such sites and facilities are not immediately accessible, access is afforded through the design and implementation of solutions that take into account both the integrity of the site and such reasonable accommodations for persons with access requirements as can be achieved.</p> <p>ECST reference: Principle 4 and 6 and the planning guidelines</p>
<p><b>A9 Property acquisitions</b></p> <p>Laws and regulations regarding property acquisitions exist, are enforced, comply with communal and indigenous rights, ensure public consultation, and do not authorize resettlement without prior informed consent and/or reasonable compensation.</p> <p>ECST reference: Charter parks and PAs are protected by the law</p>
<p><b>A10 Visitor satisfaction</b></p> <p>The destination has a system to monitor and publicly report visitor satisfaction, and, if necessary, to take</p>

Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria for Destinations
<p>action to improve visitor satisfaction.</p> <p>ECST reference: Principle 4 and 10</p>
<p><b>A11 Sustainability standards</b></p> <p>The destination has a system to promote sustainability standards for enterprises consistent with the GSTC Criteria. The destination makes publicly available a list of sustainability certified or verified enterprises.</p> <p>ECST reference: Charter Part II guidelines but not fixed standards</p>
<p><b>A12 Safety and security</b></p> <p>The destination has a system to monitor, prevent, publicly report, and respond to crime, safety, and health hazards.</p> <p>ECST reference: Principle 4 and the planning guidelines</p>
<p><b>A13 Crisis and emergency management</b></p> <p>The destination has a crisis and emergency response plan that is appropriate to the destination. Key elements are communicated to residents, visitors, and enterprises. The plan establishes procedures and provides resources and training for staff, visitors, and residents, and is updated on a regular basis.</p> <p>ECST reference: Not in the Principles, nor in the planning guidelines</p>
<p><b>A14 Promotion</b></p> <p>Promotion is accurate with regard to the destination and its products, services, and sustainability claims. The promotional messages treat local communities and tourists authentically and respectfully.</p> <p>ECST reference: Principle 8 and 9</p>
<p><b>SECTION B: Maximize economic benefits to the host community and minimize negative impacts</b></p>
<p><b>B1 Economic monitoring</b></p> <p>The direct and indirect economic contribution of tourism to the destination's economy is monitored and publicly reported at least annually. To the extent feasible, this should include visitor expenditure, revenue per available room, employment and investment data.</p> <p>ECST reference: Principle 9, but no monitoring</p>

Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria for Destinations
<p><b>B2 Local career opportunities</b></p> <p>The destination's enterprises provide equal employment, training opportunities, occupational safety, and fair wages for all.</p> <p>ECST reference: Not in ECST</p>
<p><b>B3 Public participation</b></p> <p>The destination has a system that encourages public participation in destination planning and decision making on an ongoing basis.</p> <p>ECST reference: Principle 1 and Forum and planning guidelines</p>
<p><b>B4 Local community opinion</b></p> <p>Local communities' aspirations, concerns, and satisfaction with destination management are regularly monitored, recorded and publicly reported in a timely manner.</p> <p>ECST reference: Principle 8 but no monitoring</p>
<p><b>B5 Local access</b></p> <p>The destination monitors, protects, and when necessary rehabilitates or restores local community access to natural and cultural sites.</p> <p>ECST reference: Principle 8</p>
<p><b>B6 Tourism awareness and education</b></p> <p>The destination provides regular programs to affected communities to enhance their understanding of the opportunities and challenges of tourism, and the importance of sustainability.</p> <p>ECST reference: Principle 6,7 and 8</p>
<p><b>B7 Preventing exploitation</b></p> <p>The destination has laws and established practices to prevent commercial, sexual, or any other form of exploitation and harassment of anyone, particularly of children, adolescents, women, and minorities. The laws and established practices are publicly communicated.</p> <p>ECST reference: Principle 8 and national laws</p>

Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria for Destinations
<p><b>B8 Support for community</b></p> <p>The destination has a system to enable and encourage enterprises, visitors, and the public to contribute to community and sustainability initiatives.</p> <p>ECST reference: Principle 8 and 9</p>
<p><b>B9 Supporting local entrepreneurs and fair trade</b></p> <p>The destination has a system that supports local and small- and medium-sized enterprises, and promotes and develops local sustainable products and fair trade principles that are based on the area's nature and culture. These may include food and beverages, crafts, performance arts, agricultural products, etc.</p> <p>ECST reference: Principle 9</p>
<p><b>SECTION C: Maximize benefits to communities, visitors, and culture; minimize negative impacts</b></p>
<p><b>C1 Attraction protection</b></p> <p>The destination has a policy and system to evaluate, rehabilitate, and conserve natural and cultural sites, including built heritage (historic and archaeological) and rural and urban scenic views.</p> <p>ECST reference: Principle 3</p>
<p><b>C2 Visitor management</b></p> <p>The destination has a visitor management system for attraction sites that includes measures to preserve, protect, and enhance natural and cultural assets.</p> <p>ECST reference: Principle 3 and PA management</p>
<p><b>C3 Visitor behavior</b></p> <p>The destination has published and provided guidelines for proper visitor behaviour at sensitive sites. Such guidelines are designed to minimize adverse impacts on sensitive sites and strengthen positive visitor behaviours.</p> <p>ECST reference: Principle 4,5 and 10</p>
<p><b>C4 Cultural heritage protection</b></p> <p>The destination has laws governing the proper sale, trade, display, or gifting of historical and archaeological</p>

Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria for Destinations
<p>artifacts.</p> <p>ECST reference: Principle 3</p>
<p><b>C5 Site interpretation</b></p> <p>Accurate interpretive information is provided at natural and cultural sites. The information is culturally appropriate, developed with community collaboration, and communicated in languages pertinent to visitors.</p> <p>ECST reference: Principle 5 and 6</p>
<p><b>C6 Intellectual property</b></p> <p>The destination has a system to contribute to the protection and preservation of intellectual property rights of communities and individuals.</p> <p>ECST reference: Principle 8</p>
<p><b>SECTION D: Maximize benefits to the environment and minimize negative impacts</b></p>
<p><b>D1 Environmental risks</b></p> <p>The destination has identified environmental risks and has a system in place to address them.</p> <p>ECST reference: Principle 3 and 10</p>
<p><b>D2 Protection of sensitive environments</b></p> <p>The destination has a system to monitor the environmental impact of tourism, conserve habitats, species, and ecosystems, and prevent the introduction of invasive species.</p> <p>ECST reference: Principle 3 and 10 and PA management</p>
<p><b>D3 Wildlife protection</b></p> <p>The destination has a system to ensure compliance with local, national, and international laws and standards for the harvest or capture, display, and sale of wildlife (including plants and animals).</p> <p>ECST reference: Principle 3 and PA management</p>
<p><b>D4 Greenhouse gas emissions</b></p> <p>The destination has a system to encourage enterprises to measure, monitor, minimize, publicly report, and</p>

Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria for Destinations
<p>mitigate their greenhouse gas emissions from all aspects of their operation (including emissions from service providers).</p> <p>ECST reference: Charter Part II but no system criteria</p>
<p><b>D5 Energy conservation</b></p> <p>The destination has a system to encourage enterprises to measure, monitor, reduce, and publicly report energy consumption, and reduce reliance on fossil fuels.</p> <p>ECST reference: Charter Part II but no system criteria</p>
<p><b>D6 Water Management</b></p> <p>The destination has a system to encourage enterprises to measure, monitor, reduce, and publicly report water usage.</p> <p>ECST reference: Charter Part II but no system criteria</p>
<p><b>D7 Water security</b></p> <p>The destination has a system to monitor its water resources to ensure that use by enterprises is compatible with the water requirements of the destination community.</p> <p>ECST reference: Charter Part II but no system criteria</p>
<p><b>D8 Water quality</b></p> <p>The destination has a system to monitor drinking and recreational water quality using quality standards. The monitoring results are publicly available, and the destination has a system to respond in a timely manner to water quality issues.</p> <p>ECST reference: Principle 4 but no system criteria</p>
<p><b>D9 Wastewater</b></p> <p>The destination has clear and enforced guidelines in place for the siting, maintenance and testing of discharge from septic tanks and wastewater treatment systems, and ensures wastes are properly treated and reused or released safely with minimal adverse effects to the local population and the environment.</p>

Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria for Destinations
ECST reference: Principle 4 but no system criteria
<b>D10 Solid waste reduction</b>  The destination has a system to encourage enterprises to reduce, reuse, and recycle solid waste. Any residual solid waste that is not reused or recycled is disposed of safely and sustainably.  ECST reference: Charter Part II but no system criteria
<b>D11 Light and noise pollution</b>  The destination has guidelines and regulations to minimize light and noise pollution. The destination encourages enterprises to follow these guidelines and regulations.  ECST reference: Charter Part II but no system criteria
<b>D12 Low-impact transportation</b>  The destination has a system to increase the use of low-impact transportation, including public transportation and active transportation (e.g., walking and cycling).  ECST reference: Charter Part II but no system criteria

### **GSTC Criteria for Destinations – performance indicators V1.0, Dec 13**

STWG comments: The following performance indicators cover in details all the 41 GSTC Destination Criteria. Some of the indicators give more detailed and focused information about the Criteria, but some are just repeating the text of the Criteria. It is evident that the set of indicators is to be developed later and they are getting more focused in the future. The indicators should be valid in evaluation of the key Charter performance and impact of the Criteria in concern, in quantity and quality. ECST Principles, Forum and Planning guidelines cover most of the GSTC Criteria and indicators, in one way or another. The clear lags in the ECST set of criteria and indicators are in the environmental control, for instance in energy, waste, water and climate issues and in the monitoring itself. The wording in ECST is rather old and today already old fashion in many details. The ECST 10 Principles cover quite well about ¾ of the range of GSTC Criteria. The standardisation in the ECST Planning model for the planning (key contents for Strategy and Actions) would give more accurate set of Criteria and minimum standards to the favourable and sustainable level in park tourism management. These should be such indicators, which are to be monitored in Charter verification process and later in the annual monitoring reports about the Charter performance and impacts.

CRITERIA	INDICATORS
<b>SECTION A: Demonstrate sustainable destination management</b>	
<p><b>A1 Sustainable destination strategy</b></p> <p>The destination has established and is implementing a multi-year destination strategy that is publicly available, is suited to its scale; that considers environmental, economic, social, cultural, quality, health, and safety, and aesthetic issues; and was developed with public participation.</p>	<p>IN-A1.a. Multi-year destination strategy that includes a focus on sustainability and sustainable tourism and includes environmental, economic, social, cultural, quality, health, and safety issues</p> <p>IN-A1.b. Multi-year destination plan or strategy that is up-to-date and publicly available</p> <p>IN-A1.c. Multi-year destination plan or strategy that was developed with public participation</p> <p>IN-A1.d. Political commitment to implement the multi-year destination plan and evidence of implementation</p>
<p><b>A2 Destination management organization</b></p> <p>The destination has an effective organization, department, group, or committee responsible for a coordinated approach to sustainable tourism, with involvement by the private sector and public sector. This group is suited to the size and scale of the destination, and has defined responsibilities, oversight, and implementation capability for the management of environmental, economic, social, and cultural issues. This group's activities are appropriately funded.</p>	<p>IN-A2.a. An organization has responsibility for a coordinated approach to the management of sustainable tourism</p> <p>IN-A2.b. The private sector and public sector are involved in the organization and coordination of tourism</p> <p>IN-A2.c. The tourism organization is suited to the size and scale of the destination</p> <p>IN-A2.d. Individuals within the tourism organization have assigned responsibilities for sustainable tourism</p> <p>IN-A2.e. The tourism organization is appropriately funded</p>
<p><b>A3 Monitoring</b></p> <p>The destination has a system to monitor, publicly report, and respond to environmental, economic, social, cultural, tourism, and human rights issues. The monitoring system is reviewed and evaluated periodically.</p>	<p>IN-A3.a. Active monitoring and public reporting of environmental, economic, social, cultural, tourism, and human rights issues</p> <p>IN-A3.b. Monitoring system is reviewed and evaluated periodically</p> <p>IN-A3.c. Tourism impact mitigation procedures funded</p>



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	and active
<p><b>A4 Tourism seasonality management</b></p> <p>The destination dedicates resources to mitigate seasonal variability of tourism where appropriate, working to balance the needs of the local economy, community, cultures and environment, to identify year-round tourism opportunities.</p>	<p>IN-A4.a. Specific strategy for marketing off-season events and attracting year-round visitors</p>
<p><b>A5 Climate change adaptation</b></p> <p>The destination has a system to identify risks and opportunities associated with climate change. This system encourages climate change adaptation strategies for development, siting, design, and management of facilities. The system contributes to the sustainability and resilience of the destination and to public education on climate for both residents and tourists.</p>	<p>IN-A5.a. Current system for climate change adaptation and risk assessment</p> <p>IN-A5.b. Laws or policies to mitigate climate change and encourage technologies to mitigate climate change</p> <p>IN-A5.c. Program to educate and raise awareness among the public, tourism enterprises, and visitors about climate change</p>
<p><b>A6 Inventory of tourism assets and attractions</b></p> <p>The destination has an up-to-date, publicly available inventory and assessment of its tourism assets and attractions, including natural and cultural sites.</p>	<p>IN-A6.a. Current inventory and classification of tourism assets and attractions including natural and cultural sites</p>
<p><b>A7 Planning Regulations</b></p> <p>The destination has planning guidelines, regulations and/or policies that require environmental, economic, and social impact assessment and integrate sustainable land use, design, construction, and demolition. The guidelines, regulations and/or policies are designed to protect natural and cultural resources, were created with local inputs from the public and a thorough review process, are publicly communicated, and are enforced.</p>	<p>IN-A7.a. Planning or zoning guidelines, regulations and/or policies that protect natural and cultural resources</p> <p>IN-A7.b. Guidelines, regulations, and/or policies that address sustainable land use, design, construction, and demolition</p> <p>IN-A7.c. Planning guidelines, regulations, and/or policies were created with local inputs from the public and a thorough review process</p> <p>IN-A7.d. Planning guidelines, regulations, and/or</p>

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	policies are publicly communicated and are enforced
<p><b>A8 Access for all</b></p> <p>Where appropriate, sites and facilities, including those of natural and cultural importance, are accessible to all, including persons with disabilities and others who have specific access requirements. Where such sites and facilities are not immediately accessible, access is afforded through the design and implementation of solutions that take into account both the integrity of the site and such reasonable accommodations for persons with access requirements as can be achieved.</p>	<p>IN-A8.a. Policies supporting access to tourist sites and facilities, including those of natural and cultural importance, for individuals with disabilities and others who have specific access requirements, where appropriate</p> <p>IN-A8.b. Accessibility solutions are designed to take into account the integrity of the site while making reasonable accommodation for people with disabilities</p>
<p><b>A9 Property acquisitions</b></p> <p>Laws and regulations regarding property acquisitions exist, are enforced, comply with communal and indigenous rights, ensure public consultation, and do not authorize resettlement without prior informed consent and/or reasonable compensation.</p>	<p>IN-A9.a. Policy or legislation, including enforcement provisions, exist</p> <p>IN-A9.b. Policy or legislation that considers indigenous rights, ensures public consultation and authorizes resettlement only when there is informed consent and/or reasonable compensation</p>
<p><b>A10 Visitor satisfaction</b></p> <p>The destination has a system to monitor and publicly report visitor satisfaction, and, if necessary, to take action to improve visitor satisfaction.</p>	<p>IN-A10.a. Collection and public reporting of data on visitor satisfaction</p> <p>IN-A10.b. System to take action to improve visitor satisfaction based on monitoring information</p>
<p><b>A11 Sustainability standards</b></p> <p>The destination has a system to promote sustainability standards for enterprises consistent with the GSTC Criteria. The destination makes publicly available a list of sustainability certified or verified enterprises.</p>	<p>IN-A11.a. Industry-supported sustainable tourism certification or environmental management system</p> <p>IN-A11.b. Sustainable tourism certification or environmental management system recognized by the GSTC</p> <p>IN-A11.c. Monitoring of tourism business participation in tourism certification or environmental management</p>

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	<p>system</p> <p>IN-A11.d. Publicly available list of sustainably certified or verified enterprises</p>
<p><b>A12 Safety and security</b></p> <p>The destination has a system to monitor, prevent, publicly report, and respond to crime, safety, and health hazards.</p>	<p>IN-A12.a. On-going compulsory inspections of fire, food hygiene, and electricity safety for tourism properties</p> <p>IN-A12.b. Safety precautions such as first aid stations at beaches/tourist attraction sites</p> <p>IN-A12.c. System to prevent and respond to crime</p> <p>IN-A12.d. Taxi licensing system with clear pricing and an organized taxi dispatch system at points of visitor entry</p> <p>IN-A12.e. Public reporting of safety and security</p>
<p><b>A13 Crisis and emergency management</b></p> <p>The destination has a crisis and emergency response plan that is appropriate to the destination. Key elements are communicated to residents, visitors, and enterprises. The plan establishes procedures and provides resources and training for staff, visitors, and residents, and is updated on a regular basis.</p>	<p>IN-A13.a. Publicly available crisis and emergency response plan that considers the tourism sector</p> <p>IN-A13.b. Financial and human capital to implement the crisis and emergency response plan</p> <p>IN-A13.c. Crisis and emergency response plan developed with input from the tourism private sector and includes communication procedures for during and after a crisis or emergency</p> <p>IN-A13.d. Crisis and emergency response plan provides resources and training for staff, visitors, and residents</p> <p>IN-A13.e. Crisis and emergency response plan is updated on a regular basis</p>
<p><b>A14 Promotion</b></p> <p>Promotion is accurate with regard to the destination and its products, services, and sustainability claims. The promotional messages treat local communities and</p>	<p>IN-A14.a. Destination promotional messages that represent local communities and visitors authentically and respectfully</p> <p>IN-A14.b. Destination promotional messages that are</p>

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tourists authentically and respectfully.	accurate in their description of products and services
<b>SECTION B: Maximize economic benefits to the host community and minimize negative impacts</b>	
<b>B1 Economic monitoring</b>  The direct and indirect economic contribution of tourism to the destination's economy is monitored and publicly reported at least annually. To the extent feasible, this should include visitor expenditure, revenue per available room, employment and investment data.	IN-B1.a. Regular monitoring and reporting of visitor expenditure data, revenue per available room, employment and investment data  IN-B1.b. Regular monitoring and reporting at least annually of direct and indirect contributions of tourism  IN-B1.c. Collection and public reporting at least annually of tourism-related employment data, disaggregated by gender and age group
<b>B2 Local career opportunities</b>  The destination's enterprises provide equal employment, training opportunities, occupational safety, and fair wages for all.	IN-B2.a. Legislation or policies supporting equal opportunities in employment for all, including women, youth, disabled people, minorities, and other vulnerable populations  IN-B2.b. Training programs that provide equal access to all, including women, youth, disabled people, minorities, and other vulnerable populations  IN-B2.c. Legislation or policies supporting occupational safety for all  IN-B2.d. Legislation or policies supporting fair wages for all, including women, youth, disabled people, minorities, and other vulnerable populations
<b>B3 Public participation</b>  The destination has a system that encourages public participation in destination planning and decision making on an ongoing basis.	IN-B3.a. System for involving public, private, and community stakeholders in destination management planning and decision making  IN-B3.b. Public meeting(s) to discuss destination management issues each year
<b>B4 Local community opinion</b>	IN-B4.a. Regular collection, monitoring, recording, and public reporting of data on resident aspirations,

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Local communities' aspirations, concerns, and satisfaction with destination management are regularly monitored, recorded and publicly reported in a timely manner.	concerns, and satisfaction with destination management  IN-B4.b. Collection, monitoring, recording, and public recording of data occurs in a timely manner
<b>B5 Local access</b>  The destination monitors, protects, and when necessary rehabilitates or restores local community access to natural and cultural sites.	IN-B5.a. Programs to monitor, protect, and rehabilitate or restore public access by locals and domestic visitors to natural and cultural sites  IN-B5.b. Monitoring of behaviour and characteristics of local, domestic and foreign visitors to tourist sites and attractions
<b>B6 Tourism awareness and education</b>  The destination provides regular programs to affected communities to enhance their understanding of the opportunities and challenges of tourism, and the importance of sustainability.	IN-B6.a. Program to raise awareness of tourism's role and potential contribution held in communities, schools, and higher education institutions
<b>B7 Preventing exploitation</b>  The destination has laws and established practices to prevent commercial, sexual, or any other form of exploitation and harassment of anyone, particularly of children, adolescents, women, and minorities. The laws and established practices are publicly communicated.	IN-B7.a. Laws and a program to prevent commercial, sexual, or any other form of exploitation, discrimination or harassment of residents or visitors  IN-B7.b. Laws and program are publicly communicated
<b>B8 Support for community</b>  The destination has a system to enable and encourage enterprises, visitors, and the public to contribute to community and sustainability initiatives.	IN-B8.a. Programs for enterprises, visitors, and the public to contribute donations to community and biodiversity conservation initiatives and/or infrastructure development
<b>B9 Supporting local entrepreneurs and fair trade</b>  The destination has a system that supports local and	IN-B9.a. Program to support and build capacity of local and small- and medium-sized enterprises

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<p>small- and medium-sized enterprises, and promotes and develops local sustainable products and fair trade principles that are based on the area's nature and culture. These may include food and beverages, crafts, performance arts, agricultural products, etc.</p>	<p>IN-B9.b. Program encourages enterprises to purchase goods and services locally</p> <p>IN-B9.c. Program to promote and develop local sustainable products based on local nature and culture</p> <p>IN-B9.d. Program to include local artisans, farmers, and suppliers in the tourism value chain</p>
<p><b>SECTION C: Maximize benefits to communities, visitors, and culture; minimize negative impacts</b></p>	
<p><b>C1 Attraction protection</b></p> <p>The destination has a policy and system to evaluate, rehabilitate, and conserve natural and cultural sites, including built heritage (historic and archaeological) and rural and urban scenic views.</p>	<p>IN-C1.a. Management system to protect natural and cultural sites, including built heritage and rural and urban scenic views</p> <p>IN-C1.b. Management system to monitor, measure, and mitigate tourism impacts on sites and attractions</p>
<p><b>C2 Visitor management</b></p> <p>The destination has a visitor management system for attraction sites that includes measures to preserve, protect, and enhance natural and cultural assets.</p>	<p>IN-C2.a. Administrative mechanism responsible for implementing visitor management plans and operations</p>
<p><b>C3 Visitor behaviour</b></p> <p>The destination has published and provided guidelines for proper visitor behaviour at sensitive sites. Such guidelines are designed to minimize adverse impacts on sensitive sites and strengthen positive visitor behaviours.</p>	<p>IN-C3.a. Cultural and environmental guidelines for visitor behaviour in sensitive sites</p> <p>IN-C3.b. Code of practice for tour guides and tour operators</p>
<p><b>C4 Cultural heritage protection</b></p> <p>The destination has laws governing the proper sale, trade, display, or gifting of historical and archaeological artefacts.</p>	<p>IN-C4.a. Laws or regulations to protect historical and archaeological artefacts including those located under water, and evidence of their enforcement</p> <p>IN-C4.b. Program to protect and celebrate intangible cultural heritage (e.g., includes song, music, drama, skills and crafts)</p>

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<p><b>C5 Site interpretation</b></p> <p>Accurate interpretive information is provided at natural and cultural sites. The information is culturally appropriate, developed with community collaboration, and communicated in languages pertinent to visitors.</p>	<p>IN-C5.a. Interpretive information available to visitors in tourist offices and at natural and cultural sites</p> <p>IN-C5.b. Interpretive information is culturally appropriate</p> <p>IN-C5.c. Interpretive information is developed with community collaboration</p> <p>IN-C5.d. Interpretive information is available in languages pertinent to visitors</p> <p>IN-C5.e. Tour guide training in the use of interpretive information</p>
<p><b>C6 Intellectual property</b></p> <p>The destination has a system to contribute to the protection and preservation of intellectual property rights of communities and individuals.</p>	<p>IN-C6.a. Laws, regulations or programs to protect intellectual property rights of local individuals and communities</p>
<p><b>SECTION D: Maximize benefits to the environment and minimize negative impacts</b></p>	
<p><b>D1 Environmental risks</b></p> <p>The destination has identified environmental risks and has a system in place to address them.</p>	<p>IN-D1.a. Sustainability assessment of the destination within the last five years, identifying environmental risks</p> <p>IN-D1.b. System in place to address identified risks</p>
<p><b>D2 Protection of sensitive environments</b></p> <p>The destination has a system to monitor the environmental impact of tourism, conserve habitats, species, and ecosystems, and prevent the introduction of invasive species.</p>	<p>IN-D2.a. Maintained and updated inventory of sensitive and threatened wildlife and habitats</p> <p>IN-D2.b. Management system to monitor impacts and to protect ecosystems, sensitive environments, and species</p> <p>IN-D2.c. System prevents the introduction of invasive species</p>
<p><b>D3 Wildlife protection</b></p>	<p>IN-D3.a. Convention on International Trade in</p>

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The destination has a system to ensure compliance with local, national, and international laws and standards for the harvest or capture, display, and sale of wildlife (including plants and animals).	Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)  IN-D3.b. Regulations and standards for controlling harvesting or capture, display, sale, of plants and animals
<b>D4 Greenhouse gas emissions</b>  The destination has a system to encourage enterprises to measure, monitor, minimize, publicly report, and mitigate their greenhouse gas emissions from all aspects of their operation (including emissions from service providers).	IN-D4.a. Program to assist enterprises to measure, monitor, minimize, and publicly report greenhouse gas emissions  IN-D4.b. System to assist enterprises to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions
<b>D5 Energy conservation</b>  The destination has a system to encourage enterprises to measure, monitor, reduce, and publicly report energy consumption, and reduce reliance on fossil fuels.	IN-D5.a. Program to promote energy conservation and measure, monitor, reduce, and publicly report energy consumption  IN-D5.b. Policies and incentives to reduce reliance on fossil fuels, improve energy efficiency, and encourage the adoption and use of renewable energy technologies
<b>D6 Water Management</b>  The destination has a system to encourage enterprises to measure, monitor, reduce, and publicly report water usage.	IN-D6.a. Program to assist enterprises to measure, monitor, reduce, and publicly report water usage
<b>D7 Water security</b>  The destination has a system to monitor its water resources to ensure that use by enterprises is compatible with the water requirements of the destination community.	IN-D7.a. Management system to ensure that water use by enterprises and water requirements of the destination community are balanced and compatible
<b>D8 Water quality</b>  The destination has a system to monitor drinking and	IN-D8.a. Management system to monitor and publicly report on drinking and recreational water quality



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recreational water quality using quality standards. The monitoring results are publicly available, and the destination has a system to respond in a timely manner to water quality issues.	<p>IN-D8.b. Monitoring results are publicly available</p> <p>IN-D8.c. System to respond in a timely manner to water quality issues</p>
<p><b>D9 Wastewater</b></p> <p>The destination has clear and enforced guidelines in place for the siting, maintenance and testing of discharge from septic tanks and wastewater treatment systems, and ensures wastes are properly treated and reused or released safely with minimal adverse effects to the local population and the environment.</p>	<p>IN-D9.a. Regulations for the siting, maintenance, and testing of discharge from septic tanks and wastewater treatment systems, and evidence of their enforcement</p> <p>IN-D9.b. Regulations to ensure the size and type of waste water treatment is adequate for the location, and evidence of their enforcement</p> <p>IN-D9.c. Program to assist enterprises to effectively treat and reuse wastewater</p> <p>IN-D9.d. Program to ensure proper treatment of wastes and safe reuse or release with minimal adverse effects to local population and environment</p>
<p><b>D10 Solid waste reduction</b></p> <p>The destination has a system to encourage enterprises to reduce, reuse, and recycle solid waste. Any residual solid waste that is not reused or recycled is disposed of safely and sustainably.</p>	<p>IN-D10.a. Waste collection system that maintains public records on the amount of waste generated</p> <p>IN-D10.b. Solid waste management plan that is implemented, and has quantitative goals to minimize, and ensure safe sustainable disposal of waste that is not reused or recycled</p> <p>IN-D10.c. Program to assist enterprises to reduce, reuse, and recycle waste</p> <p>IN-D10.d. Program to reduce the use of bottled water by enterprises and visitors</p>
<p><b>D11 Light and noise pollution</b></p> <p>The destination has guidelines and regulations to minimize light and noise pollution. The destination encourages enterprises to follow these guidelines and</p>	<p>IN-D11.a. Guidelines and regulations to minimize noise and light pollution</p> <p>IN-D11.b. Program to encourage enterprises to follow guidelines and regulations to minimize noise and light</p>

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regulations.	pollution
<p><b>D12 Low-impact transportation</b></p> <p>The destination has a system to increase the use of low-impact transportation, including public transportation and active transportation (e.g., walking and cycling).</p>	<p>IN-D12.a. Program to increase the use of low-impact transportation</p> <p>IN-D12.b. Program to make sites of visitor interest more accessible to active transportation (e.g., walking and cycling)</p>

**Methodology****European Tourism Label for Quality Systems (ETQ)**

1. Initiator	European Commission, DG Enterprise and Industry, Tourism Policy Unit
2. Partners	
3. Date of establishment	under development, not ready
4. Target group	1. Tourism destinations, 2. Tourism service providers
5. Membership	no
6. Certification costs	not known
7. Area where used	Europe
8. Objectives	<p>ETQ is an initiation to control and harmonize the ecolabels and certification processes concerning the quality for tourism. For Europe, it is a competitive instrument and a promotion tool: it aims at improving the profile of Europe as a set of high-quality destinations in order to remain Nr 1 Tourism Destination of the world. For tourism businesses, it is a management tool: it provides tourism establishments and organisations with the possibility of constant monitoring and improvement of their performance to win the confidence of consumers and business partners. It also seeks to facilitate business connections and the exchange of best Practices. For consumers it is an information tool: its aim is to empower consumers by raising their awareness on what they could expect from establishments, which bear the logo which is recognized by the ETQ Label, in comparison with those not recognised by the ETQ Label.</p>
9. Principles	<p>ETQ criteria should cover the following quality items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consumer satisfaction and confidence (e.g. consumer surveys, complaints handling);</li> <li>• Provision of information (e.g. reliability of information, languages used, information on the requirements of the ETQ, on local heritage, etc.);</li> <li>• Respect of local customs, heritage;</li> <li>• Trained/experienced employees;</li> <li>• Environmentally healthy service processes (cleanliness, maintenance, etc.).</li> </ul>
10. Criteria / indicators	Not defined yet

11. Verification/evaluation	No info available
12. Validation	No info available
13. Number of participants	No participants yet
14. Communication	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/quality-label/public-consultation-etq/index_en.htm">http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/quality-label/public-consultation-etq/index_en.htm</a>
15. Remarks	Under development

**Methodology****European Tourism Indicator System (ETIS)**

1. Initiator	European Commission, DG Enterprise and Industry, Tourism Policy Unit
2. Partners	EU Tourism Sustainability Group
3. Date of establishment	2013 pilot
4. Target group	Tourism destinations
5. Membership	no
6. Certification costs	not known
7. Area where used	Europe
8. Objectives	<p>Set of destination level targets that are used by regional/national bodies, provide a benchmarking system for destinations all over Europe, enable destinations to measure their progress over time, establish trend analysis, assist in the justification of future public investment in tourism development and management:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Raise awareness,</li> <li>2. Creating a destination profile,</li> <li>3. Form a stakeholder working group,</li> <li>4. Establish roles and responsibilities,</li> <li>5. Collect and record data,</li> <li>6. Analyse results,</li> <li>7. Enable on-going development and continuous improvement</li> </ol>
9. Principles	<p>Section A: Destination management,</p> <p>Section B: Economic value,</p> <p>Section C: Social and cultural impact,</p> <p>Section D: Environmental impact</p>
10. Criteria / indicators	27 core and 40 optional indicators covering the four themes of principles
11. Verification/evaluation	no info available

12. Validation	no info available
13. Number of participants	over 100 destinations for the first pilot phase
14. Communication	Information only on EU-website; <a href="http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/sustainable-tourism/indicators/index_en.htm">http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/sustainable-tourism/indicators/index_en.htm</a>
15. Remarks	<p>toolkit</p> <p>1. ETIS is strong in monitoring and indicators. In Italy the Section is considering the possibility to use ETIS indicators in the diagnoses phase of the ECST process.</p> <p>2. ETIS has a forum and an action plan, but these aspects are very weak in ETIS's methodology. ETIS could use the ECST experience to improve them.</p> <p>In the future we see it necessary to seek an agreement EUROPARC-EU by which Charter Parks could be recognized automatically also as ETIS destination</p>

**Methodology****IUCN Park Tourism guidelines**

1. Initiator	UNESCO and IUCN
2. Partners	World Heritage Committee
3. Date of establishment	2011
4. Target group	World Heritage sites
5. Membership	no
6. Certification costs	no
7. Area where used	worldwide
8. Objectives	<p>UNESCO's World Heritage mission is</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• encourage countries to sign the World Heritage Convention and</li> <li>• ensure the protection of their natural and cultural heritage;</li> <li>• encourage States Parties to the Convention to nominate sites within their national territory for inclusion on the World Heritage List;</li> <li>• encourage States Parties to establish management plans and set up reporting systems on the state of conservation of their World Heritage sites;</li> <li>• help States Parties safeguard World Heritage properties by providing technical assistance and professional training;</li> <li>• provide emergency assistance for World Heritage sites in immediate danger;</li> <li>• support States Parties' public awareness-building activities for World Heritage conservation;</li> <li>• encourage participation of the local population in the preservation of their cultural and natural heritage;</li> <li>• encourage international cooperation in the conservation of our world's cultural and natural heritage.</li> </ul>

## 9. Principles

- (i) to represent a masterpiece of human creative genius;
- (ii) to exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;
- (iii) to bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;
- (iv) to be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;
- (v) to be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;
- (vi) to be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance. (The Committee considers that this criterion should preferably be used in conjunction with other criteria);
- (vii) to contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance;
- (viii) to be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features;
- (ix) to be outstanding examples representing significant on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals;
- (x) to contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation.

## 10. Criteria / indicators

Criteria related to tourism: Existing plans related to municipality and region in which the proposed property is located (e.g., regional or local plan, conservation plan, tourism development plan) are required for nomination, existing development pressures, i.e. visitor/tourism pressure



	have to be reported.
11. Verification/evaluation	World Heritage Committee
12. Validation	every 6 years
13. Number of participants	197 Natural Heritage sites, 31 mixed sites (2014)
14. Communication	<a href="http://whc.unesco.org/en/criteria/">http://whc.unesco.org/en/criteria/</a>
15. Remarks	Guideline in relation to the objectives of the World Heritage sites. The UNESCO List of World heritage sites in danger shows, that tourism – in relation to i.e. war, mining and building conflicts - is not a major threat.

**Methodology****European Wilderness Quality Standard and Audit System**

1. Initiator	European Wilderness Society
2. Partners	Wildland Research Institute, WWF Österreich, E.C.O Institute of Ecology, ÖTE-Stiftung
3. Date of establishment	2014
4. Target group	wilderness in protected areas
5. Membership	Not mentioned, involvement by donation only
6. Certification costs	no info available
7. Area where used	Europe
8. Objectives	Protection of wilderness areas. Wilderness areas represent a vital element of Europe's natural and cultural heritage. In addition to their intrinsic value, they offer the opportunity for people to experience the spiritual quality of nature in the widest experiential sense – beyond mere physical and visual attributes, and in particular its psychological impact. They also provide important economic, social and environmental benefits, including ecosystem services, for local communities, landholders and society at large. Wilderness performs several functions better than modified landscapes.
9. Principles	<p>Improved Compliance with all recent and existing wilderness definitions;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safety and reliability helping to ensure visitor satisfaction, reliability and environmental care;</li> <li>• Improving effectiveness by SWOT analysis related to wilderness criteria;</li> <li>• Support from government policies and legislation;</li> <li>• Networking with other wilderness areas;</li> <li>• Encourage research;</li> <li>• Creation of marketing possibilities; cost reduction; conservation by benchmarking</li> </ul>
10. Criteria / indicators	Requirements: Wilderness, only limited extractive uses, restoration measures if necessary, research and monitoring, management plan,

low disturbances, international relevance, generous and zoning size (minimum 1000 hectares as a strictly protected core zone). Criteria related to tourism: Wilderness area has clear rules on tourism and recreation activities, with strict 'leave no trace' rules plus Wilderness zone has integrated tourism and recreation activities to wilderness concept

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|-----------------------------|---|
| 11. Verification/evaluation | Assessment report by Wilderness Society                                     |
| 12. Validation              | no info available   |
| 13. Number of participants  | 7 protected areas   |
| 14. Communication           | <a href="http://wilderness-society.org/">http://wilderness-society.org/</a> |
| 15. Remarks                 |   |

**Methodology****Naturens Bästa -quality system**

1. Initiator	Swedish Ecotourism Association
2. Partners	Swedish Travel and Tourism council
3. Date of establishment	2002
4. Target group	Swedish tour operator or service provider with products (max. 5 products)
5. Membership	No
6. Certification costs	Application fee: 500 SEK (min.) to 3.500 SEK (max.); annual fee: 1.000 SEK (min.) to 15.000 SEK (max.)
7. Area where used	Sweden
8. Objectives	enhance the quality of ecotourism, significantly increase its volume
9. Principles	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Respect the limitations of the destination - minimize negative impact on nature and culture;</li> <li>2. support the local economy;</li> <li>3. make all the company's operations environmentally sustainable;</li> <li>4. Contribute actively to conservation;</li> <li>5. promote the joy of discovery, knowledge and respect;</li> <li>6. Quality and safety all the way through. All principles are broadly justified.</li> </ol>
10. Criteria / indicators	Set of standard and bonus criteria (at least 10 %), one day introductory training course for staff with customer contact, additional specific criteria for special activities. The set of criteria is accurate, broad and specific. Travel destination analysis and environmental plan required.
11. Verification/evaluation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Application, 2. pre-check by labelling committee (3-7 participants),</li> <li>3. visit on the spot and report, 4 decision-making, in case of doubt assistance by specialists,</li> <li>5. labelling of up to 5 products</li> </ol>
12. Validation	3 years, first from 2002 till end of 2004
13. Number of participants	148

## 14. Communication

- Nature's best logotype, current year and individual company's registration;
- common website with marketing for every certified operator / product differed by region, activity or season

## 15. Remarks

## Annex 11

### Developing Charter with benchmarks to Rainforest Alliance, Travelife and UNEP - Sustainable tourism program

Drafted in STWG Task Group by Monica Herrera-Pavia and Lasse Lovén

#### 1. Benchmarking Rainforest Alliance

The Rainforest Alliance is an NGO that has been working since 1986 to “*conserve biodiversity and ensure sustainable livelihoods by transforming land-use practices, business practices and consumer behaviour*”. The Rainforest Alliance (RA) has three main fields of intervention: Forestry, Agriculture and Tourism. They seek to work with farmers, foresters and tourism entrepreneurs to conserve natural resources and ensure the long-term economic health of forest communities.

Rainforest Alliance is present in a dozen Latin American countries, supporting sustainable tourism **training and technical assistance** for hundreds of tourism businesses and community-based operations whilst also connecting them to the **marketplace**. RA assisted the creation of the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), together with the European “Visit” initiative, and sat on its board of directors from 2010 to 2012. In addition, RA is member at the UNEP’s Partnership for Sustainable Tourism.

RA started their first project in 1993 to bring sustainable practices to a tourism business in Costa Rica, an initiative that motivated them to create the sustainable tourism (ST) program. RA developed the ST program and together with other partners they identified the sustainable tourism criteria. They called them “Best Practices for sustainable tourism” and they developed them for each type of tourism business such as **Hotels and lodges, restaurants and tour operators**. Later on, they specialized this method for every environment such as **maritime, rainforest and even community based tourism**.

In 2008 RA helped to develop the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria together with its partners with whom they created the Sustainable Tourism Network of the Americas (STCNA) and chaired its secretariat from 2003 to 2010.

RA started offering training and technical assistance to **tourism businesses** providing them with tools and techniques they need to run efficiently and sustainably, especially in environmentally and socially-sound management. Recently, RA is also offering certification standards and marketing to hotels, restaurants, transportation companies, and other tourism businesses in Latin America.



Businesses that have completed their program earn the right to use the Rainforest Alliance Verified™ mark on promotional materials. In order for a tourism business to be verified it must meet rigorous **standards** designed to protect ecosystems, safeguard the wellbeing of local communities and improve productivity. At the beginning RA did not develop the certification and did not certify businesses, because they were supporting the certifications programs recognized by the STCNA. Nevertheless, RA developed, later on, their own certification program that follows the verification process.

In the last years RA has been linking qualified business to the consumers through “the green frog seal”, which is the recognized brand/logo used in the trade market created by RA to help RA certified or verified products (agriculture, wood or tourism business) to commercialise. The Rainforest Alliance Certified™ or Verified™ seal is an internationally recognized symbol of environmental, social and economic sustainability that helps both businesses and consumers do their part for environment.

In 2008 RA launched SustainableTrip.org, a trilingual database of sustainable verified hotels and tour operators in Latin America and the Caribbean. Through [SustainableTrip.org](http://SustainableTrip.org) and other tools, the Rainforest Alliance provides travellers, tour operators, and travel agents with a comprehensive listing of qualified businesses that are not only beautiful, but also benefit communities, flora and fauna.



In the last three years, RA realized the importance of playing a linking role between customers and qualified tourism businesses. They focused their work to establish alliances and training for **travel businesses. Hotels, tour operators, travel agencies** and **wholesalers<sup>2</sup>** play a major role in influencing industry standards through the vacation packages they design and offer to their customers. RA works with major local and international, inbound and outbound, tour operators around the world to promote ecologically and socially responsible **best practices for tourism** businesses in Latin America.

RA's relationship with local tour operators in Latin America begins when they sign an MoU (Memo of understanding) in which they accept the best practices and commitments by both parties. Afterwards, RA starts their intervention by providing introductory seminars about **best practices** and **tourism certification programs**, including an introduction to their program. Next, they organize workshops with the staff members and other affiliated enterprises to make them understand more deeply the subject of sustainability, and study successful businesses that have implemented best practices or have earned eco-labels (members of their qualified businesses network).

RA proposes other services to their qualified businesses, which have the possibility to choose additional support, such as customized technical assistance and marketing support. Tour operators are responsible for organizing seminar and training events for their partners (tourism businesses) and motivating them to join the sustainable tourism best practices program. These tour operators also agree to give priority to hotels and lodges that adopt ST best practices in tour packages offered to international tourism wholesalers in North America and Europe.

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<sup>2</sup> Wholesalers are big out bounding tour operators located in North America or Europe that sell tours to Latin America or other developing countries.



Travel agencies and wholesalers that enter into formal collaborative agreements with the Rainforest Alliance commit the requirement that at least half of the hotels and other providers for package tours be certified by one of the leading tourism certification organizations (STCNA) or can otherwise demonstrate that they have adopted sustainable practices. The wholesalers agree to contact customers when they return from their trips to survey them about their experiences. They also commit to trying to raise customers' awareness for sustainable development, and encouraging them to convince friends and families to take similar trips.

RA offers updated lists of qualified tourism businesses in Latin America to the travel agencies and wholesalers, and organizes educational trips (FAM trips) for the company's managers to areas that obtain a critical mass of sustainable hotels and other tourism businesses.

In 2011, RA launched **Tour Operators Promoting Sustainability (TOPS)**, a global platform for eco-conscious tour operators. The aim of this initiative is to create a place where direct competitors from the private sector come together to help conservation of nature and provide livelihoods for the local communities where they work, at the same time improving their standard of living. Together with RA, these tour operators are influencing industry standards, helping to mitigate tourism's impact and finally, they are ensuring the financial sustainability of their own operations.

Tour operators affiliated with TOPS contribute directly to local economic development and the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystems by transforming their business practices and providing incentives for change among their **suppliers**. They obtain several benefits for being part of this initiative, such as:

- Improving their image,
- Having direct savings in operating costs and improving management practices by adopting best practices,
- Accessing approved sustainable tourism suppliers around the world,
- Being part of the network
- Being able to participate to "fam trips" or trainings, special promotions or collaborative marketing opportunities
- Appearing on the RA website.

The Tour operators' members of TOPS have to sign a cooperative agreement and to commit themselves to being verified by RA and recognized by GSTC. They need to have at least 30% of their suppliers engaged in applying good practices as well. TOPS started with 114 tour operators that now have sustainable tourism products and this number has increased by 41% in these three years. One of the results of TOPS project, showed that inbound tour operators reported an additional 21 % jobs generated, which represents 65% increase compared with 2008 numbers. This demonstrates a direct positive impact on local economic development.

## 2. GLOBAL SUSTAINABLE TOURISM 10YFP

The 10YFP is a global program on sustainable consumption and production pattern, a framework program that leads international cooperation to develop, replicate and scale sustainable consumption, production and resource efficiency initiatives around the world. It was established at Rio + 20 summit in 2012 as a contributor to poverty alleviation and transition to low-carbon green economies. UNEP leads the secretariat and administers its Trust Fund. UNEP is the environmental entity for UN system; they encourage partnerships by inspiring, informing and enabling nations and people to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations.



The 10YFP program has several programs; the third one is about sustainable tourism and ecotourism. It is the continuity of the “Sustainable tourism task force (STTF)” that has been created in 2006 in Paris. The STTF has been working the last 8 years to establish different ways to create policies and guidelines for destinations and enterprises for developing sustainable tourism. Following the Rio +20 summit they decided to establish concrete actions for sustainable tourism. That is why they decided that the principal objective of the program is to **promote transformation for sustainability through efficiency, innovation and adaptability**. It will be supported by evidence-based decision-making; adopt a life cycle approach for continuous improvement, emphasize collaboration among stakeholders and results-based project implementation. It seeks also to enhance sustainable tourism investment and funding. This program looks at the resources efficiency, conservation, new technologies and the focus of new international partnership on sustainable tourism.

### Objectives of the Programme

1. Integrating sustainable consumption and production (SCP) patterns in tourism related policies and frameworks
2. Collaboration among stakeholders for the improvement of the tourism sector's SCP performance
3. Fostering the application of guidelines, instruments and technical solutions to prevent and mitigate tourism impacts and to mainstream SCP patterns among tourism stakeholders

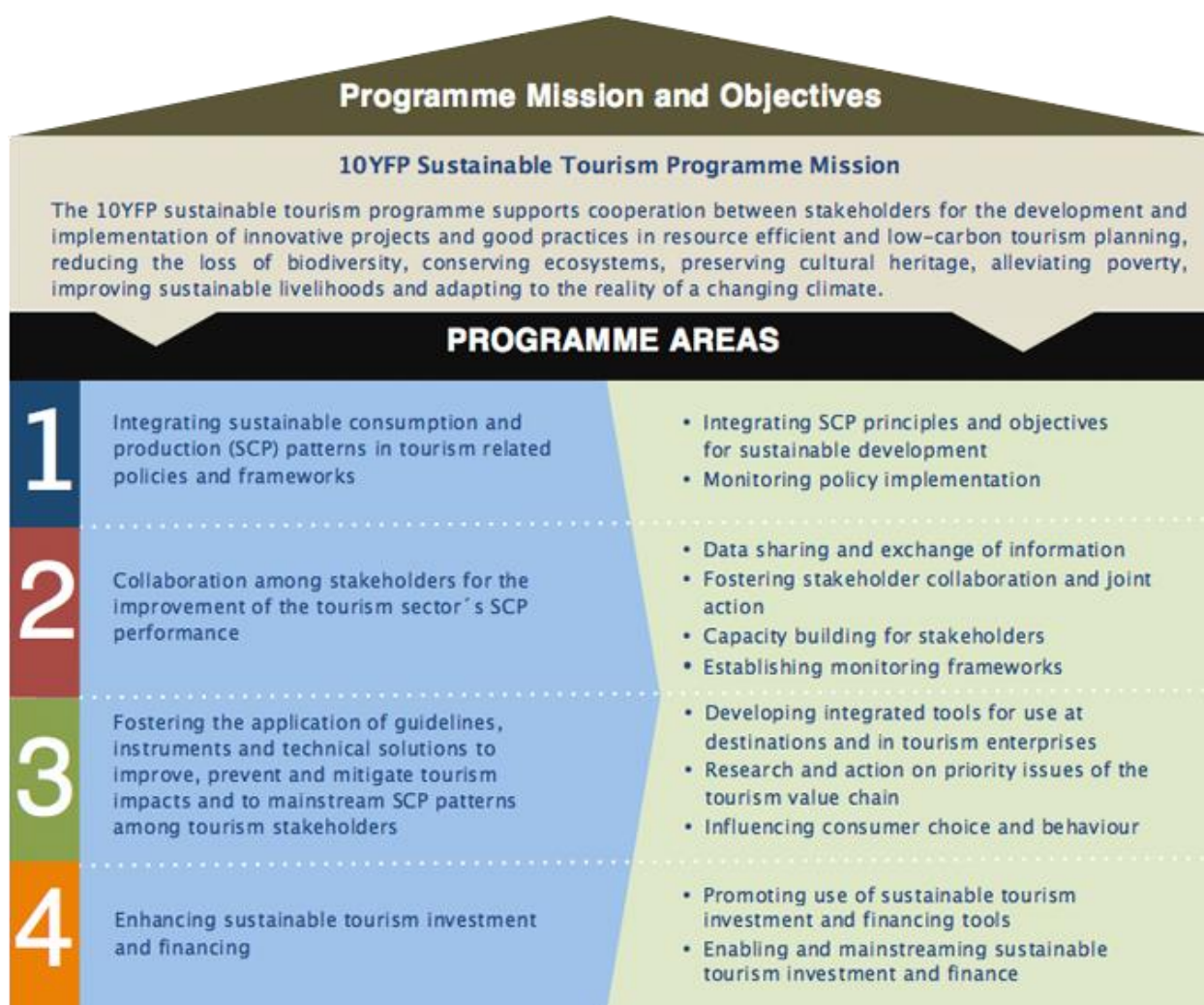


Table 1. The 10YFP programme mission and objectives for sustainable tourism and the program areas.

This program will be led by UNWTO, the French Government, the Republic of Korea and the Kingdom of Morocco, and will be supported by UNEP. There is also, a Multi-stakeholders advisory committee of 22 members that is formed by some governments, enterprises, NGOs, networks, etc.

The Sustainable Tourism Programme is open to all organizations and individual experts that are interested in joining a collaborative platform to support the implementation of the Programme. They will have to send their expression of interest to the UNWTO.

### 3. Lessons learned

Rainforest Alliance has a great deal of experience working with sustainable tourism in the developing countries of Latin America. Their main objective of protecting forests and environment, led them to **work directly with tourism businesses**. For that, they developed several specialised **tools** to qualify tourism services such as accommodation, restaurants, tourist guides and tour operators. These tools are very complete instruments to support tourism businesses in their territories. They can be

compared with some of the methodologies of **Charter Part II**. The most interesting in this experience is how they developed the tool for each business and later on, with the aim of having global coherence, how their work for the standardization of this criteria led the creation of the “STCNA” and later on, to the “GSTC”. Finally, and much more importantly for the destinations, this standardisation made communication and marketing much more clearer and easier for businesses and customers.

Charter partners of Part II, the tourist businesses, need to follow standardized criteria and follow the same guidelines, so as to be clear and identified in the international market. Each country and each Park can choose to have a recognized label or certification scheme, but it will be useful to follow the same criteria.

- **Recommendation** for developing Charter Actions: In terms of international market needs it will be useful to be recognized by the GSTC Criteria, especially for all the methodologies which we want to develop for partnerships with businesses (Part II and Part III). This is task for Directorate.

RA understood the needs of the “qualified” businesses of their territory (certified or not). The businesses see it important when being recognized by their work in the sustainable tourism field, but especially, of entering the “travel market” world and to be able to sell their “specialized products. That is why, RA created the [www.sustainabletrip.com](http://www.sustainabletrip.com) Internet platform, which is a database of all the businesses ready to trade in the sustainable tourism travel market and recognized by the NGO. In addition, **Travelife**, another sustainable tourism certification scheme, has been building an international database of “qualified in sustainable tourism” businesses worldwide, and they will be very interested to be partners of EUROPARC in this process and include Charter partners in this database platform. **Travelife** made an alliance with RA in which both recognize each other’s tools for qualification.

The Charter Partners seek support from the EUROPARC to enter the international travel market and to start selling their products internationally. The logical step forward is that Federations makes some alliances with other organizations that have been successful in this field and let its partners benefit from this external experience and service.

- **Recommendation** for developing Charter Actions: The business partners of the Charter Part II and III need to be visible, identifiable, and easy to find. This is task for Directorate and Sections. The both parties will benefit if EUROPARC supports Partners as EUROPARC members in a common platform, where their job will be enhanced.

In terms of marketing and travel market, RA works with tour operators, through the specialized “Good practices” tool and with the TOPS network. The members of TOPS get several benefits and marketing opportunities from them and their suppliers. The Tour Operators as members of the network should give incentive to their suppliers to be qualified themselves. For Charter Part III this TOPS network experience is very interesting, because we can learn about the specialized tool for Tour Operators.

The Charter Partners need to be supported by the Federation to enter the international travel market and to start selling their products internationally. The Federations should make some alliances with other organizations that have been successful in this field and let its partners benefit from this external experience

- Recommendation for developing Charter Actions: Charter partners in Part III need to be supported by EUROPARC Directorate and Sections and guided in this process, especially to help them to determine and coordinate their interaction with business partners in Part II. Charter partners in Part II will need to be guided as well, because they will need to have clear vision and guidelines on how to enter into this “sustainable green travel market” world. If we can use incentives between Part II and Part III members and help to organise business-to-business networking, we can save resources in the EUROPARC.

The Global Sustainable Tourism 10YFP is building the future of sustainable tourism policies. They have some funding to build this project and create guidelines for destinations and enterprises for developing sustainable tourism. It is important that EUROPARC is part of the 10YFP Global Sustainable Tourism project. The members of EUROPARC represent a wide territory and it will be important to involve them in development of international policies for sustainable tourism. This will strength local governments, give them access to international partnerships in the field but also share its experience worldwide and lead them to the sustainable tourism responsibility. In addition, Charter partners will improve the visibility of their work.

- Recommendation for developing Charter Actions: EUROPARC Directorate should send as soon as possible, an expression of interest to join to the 10YFP project to the UNWTO.

**See more:**

<http://www.rainforest-alliance.org/multimedia/tourism-overview>`[http://www.unep.org/10yfp/Portals/50150/Guidance\\_Doc\\_10YFP\\_Proamme%20development\\_1\\_V1\\_March14.pdf](http://www.unep.org/10yfp/Portals/50150/Guidance_Doc_10YFP_Proamme%20development_1_V1_March14.pdf)





The STWG members met Santa Claus on the Arctic Circle after the meeting in Finnish Lapland on 12.12.2014. We gave good promises and told to Santa our secret wishes. We wished peace on Charter Network and positive and visible development for the EUROPARC Charter on the coming years. (Photo: Santa Clause Land-Giacomo Benelli).