Parks & Benefits

Final evaluation of the project partners implementing the European Charter for sustainable tourism in protected areas
Overview of the evaluation

- Obligation to finalise the project
- Based upon the midterm evaluation of Europarc Consulting
- Questions were clarified with the project management
- Interviews were held between 7\textsuperscript{th} June - 25\textsuperscript{th} August 2011
- Although not registered for the Charter, Matsalu NLP was involved for additional results regarding the project
Regional situation

Typical indicies for rural areas:
- Low population rates
- Higher unemployment rates compared to the national level
- Loss of inhabitance - mainly younger people
- Baltic states strongly affected by economical crisis
- Regions affected by administrational reforms (municipality - district level - environmental administraton)
Situation on tourism

Tourism organized mainly by municipalities or districts
Between one and up to six responsible associations covering the area
Low occupancy rates, especially in Norway and the Baltic states
Short season for tourism
Tourism is for many stakeholders only an additional income
Many investments in infrastructure
Conflicts

Pressure by erecting buildings (ZNP, MÜR, KNP, KRP, SBR)
Limits of tourism capacity (SBR)
Erosion of trails, littering, illegal camping (KNP)
Tourism related motorized traffic (SBR, MÜR)
Water sports and fishing (MÜR, MAR)
Conflicts with landowners (MAT, MAR)
Charter process

Experiences vary dependent on the different preconditions:
DNP: the process shortened the decision making and implementation of investments
=> first bookable tourism products
KNP: Charter guidelines helped to start cooperation with stakeholders
Forum is a network between tourism entrepreneurs and municipalities
MAR: Charter is a basis to sign partner agreements
MÜR: Common approach of tourism association and Park authority
Improvements

Charter methods are integrated on state level in Norway, sustainable tourism development becomes a model for other parks in Lithuania, establishment of a nature tourism working group in Latvia
Charter process helped to improve the acceptance of the Biosphere Reserve
Parks&Benefits project positively influenced the difficult local situation by the reorganisation of the environmental administration for MAT
In KRP, Charter process is the basis for first cooperation between neighbouring municipalities and Regional parks
In ZNP, ideas out of experience exchange helped to improve relations with Stakeholders municipalities and stakeholders take over proposals of protected areas (KRP, KNP)
Challenges in the Charter process

Stakeholder mobilisation, especially during the season
Long term process in relation to high expectations for short term improvements
Lack of strategical thinking on side of the nature conservationists and tourism entrepreneurs
Turn from the concepts to implementation of measures, especially if stakeholders should contribute
Challenges regarding the measures

Every Charter park mentioned money as a problem, for 4 its the biggest challenge (KRP, MAR, DNP, KNP)
3 Parks see the small staff as a central problem (KNP, MÜR, SBR)
Political will to decide on measures (MAR)
Complicated internal responsibilities (KNP)
Priorities and reachable targets (ZNP)
Changes of responsibilities on governmental or municipality level (ZNP)
Expectations

Combine 1\textsuperscript{st} and 2\textsuperscript{nd} part of the Charter to allow a closer stakeholder cooperation

Practical consulting on the Charter within the project and in the Europarc Network

Improvement on public relation about the Charter

Clarification on the target groups for the Charter
Satisfaction with the Charter process

Dvofjell-Suldalsfjella National Park
Kemeri National Park
Kurtuvenai Regional Park
Maribo Soere Nature Park
Matsalu National Park
Müritz National Park
Southeast Rügen Biosphere Reserve
Zemaitija National Park

Part-financed by the European Union
(European Regional Development Fund)
Every registered park recommends the Charter process, but check of financial, personnel and tourism ressources essential

Research on reasons, why out of 85 Charter parks only 16 follow the 2\textsuperscript{nd} part of the Charter
Check up of the intension of the 3\textsuperscript{rd} part of the Charter
Further practical Charter improvements needed
Charter business communication

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Only download on http://www.european-charter.org/charter-network/charter-partner-businesses
A better Charter business communication

www.myparcs.eu ??

Hotel am Müritz-Nationalpark
Spoder Straße 71
17192 Waren (Müritz)
Tel.: +49 (0) 3991 82 19 0
Fax: +49 (0) 3991 62 19 91
www.hotel-nationalpark.de

Ferien-Aktive
Fähranwaltstraße 25
17102 Waren (Müritz)
Tel.: +49 (0) 3991 66 26 66
Fax: +49 (0) 3991 66 26 56
www.ferien-aktive.de

Familienferienpark Dambuecker Park
Damböck
17287 Katzolding
Tel.: +49 (0) 30622 2 02 25
Fax: +49 (0) 30622 2 02 152
http://www-sani.de/indoor-fjps.html

Part-financed by the European Union
(European Regional Development Fund)
Elements for a successful Charter process

Average values on importance

Criteria
- Size of the protected area
- Year of establishment
- Status of the protected area
- Personnel
- Administrative responsibility
- Budget
- Municipal structures
- Inhabitation
- Distribution of urban / rural population
- Touristical density
- Touristical cooperation
- Visitor numbers
- Communication

Results on criteria for a successful implementation of the European Charter

Results of the Parks & Benefits protected areas

Average values on importance
Charta communication in P&B protected areas

- Number of events dealing with the Charter
- Number of press releases mentioning the Charter

Protected areas:
- Dovrefjell-Sunndalsfjell National Park
- Kemer National Park
- Kurtuvenai Regional Park
- Maribo Nature Park
- Matsalu National Park
- Müritz National Park
- Southeast Rügen Biosphere Reserve
- Zemaitija National Park
Follow-up project?

Protected areas have to face high expectations to secure a progressive regional development in the future.

Strong marketing to gain additional benefits on cooperation.

At the start of the next funding period project partners still work on their action plans.

With improvements, the 2nd Charter part is an useful topic for a project continuation.

Focus on intensive consulting of sme´s as a tool to raise competitiveness.
New key aspect in accordance to targets of the funding period 2014-20 is essential. European key aspects are globalization, demographic change, climate change and energy challenge. Protected areas have a closer relation to issues of climate and demographical changes. Wellness aspects are in strong relation to future tourism trends. A future project can underline the importance of protected areas as perfect recreational spaces within easy reach of urban agglomerations.
Downtimes are required for maintaining oneself, for developing oneself, this is true not only for the individual subject, but also for the external nature! A lessening of its economical exploitation means a supporting of its development.

Athanasios Karathanassis, greek sociologist