



Health and Protected Areas Commission

Terms of Reference

Overall Mission

To develop the agenda of Health and Protected Areas on behalf of EUROPARC Federation.

Background

We can all agree that physical activity and contact with nature is essential for human health, and that ‘Green exercise’ can make a significant and sustained contribution to good physical and mental health and well-being. However, as this is a relatively new field of work there has been a clear need to build the evidence base to demonstrate the public health benefits that Protected Areas provide.

EUROPARC had been a leader in this field and seeks to develop this work further into practical advice for parks managers. EUROPARC’s previous Health and Protected Areas Working Group took the first steps in building this evidence base. The group compiled a suite of [case studies](#) from the EUROPARC network to demonstrate the important work that Protected Areas are doing in the field of health. They show the work that Protected Areas and agencies in Finland, France, Latvia, Spain and the UK are undertaking in different health policy areas. Furthermore, they demonstrate the significant contribution that parks make to human health and well-being through the development of policy or the delivery of projects and programmes. With the creation of this new commission, EUROPARC will take this work further.

Link to EUROPARC strategy

The activity and the results of the Commission will be based on, and coherent with, the [EUROPARC Strategy 2015-21](#) (in particular Strategic Theme 3 and related specific actions) as following:

| STRATEGIC THEME 3 PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY - ROLE OF PROTECTED AREAS IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT | |
|---|---|
| Priority AREA 3.3 | Raise awareness of the benefits of nature for human health and facilitate action by Protected Area managers and the health sector. |
| Strategic OBJECTIVE | To promote people and nature friendly agriculture across Europe |
| OUTCOME | Protected Areas are shown to be a valuable tool in increasing the health of society and are recognised as a valuable tool in increasing public health and well-being. |



Planned outputs over 2 years

- Meeting needed once a year to manage and maintain Commission workplan.
- Short briefing paper on why parks should be involved in health agenda, utilizing case studies previously gathered.
- Completion of the Health and PA toolkit and revision to promote new IUCN Healthy Parks Healthy People (HPPH) guidelines - improve communication material and promotion of good case studies.
- Preparation of practical guidance for parks on how to establish health-orientated agenda in their parks – as part of / following on from toolkit
- Steer EUROPARC's relationship with HPPH and WHO - Commission to provide advice/ assistance to Directorate and Council.
- Planning of workshops (can be part of EUROPARC conference) as needed - subject to resourcing and being clear about purpose
- Planning and application of projects, or seeking of funds to commission research

Indicators

- briefing paper produced and widely disseminated
- toolkit published online
- one funded workshop realised
- one project application prepared and submitted

Potential members

The group should establish a chair and a secretariat.

Resources, and potential sources

EUROPARC will support the initial meeting in 2016 or 2017 and set up the communications platform to encourage online interaction.

One EUROPARC staff member or council member will oversee the group.

A possible project or funding should be sought by the group.



General Information

Why does EUROPARC have Member's Commissions?

The EUROPARC Federation is a membership organisation. It exists to serve the needs of our members as they have identified them in the statutes of the organisation and its recently approved strategy.

However the services expected by the members may not always be able to be provided fully by a team of staff, further one might want to consider that as a membership organisation, the role of and functions of the members in running the organisation and delivering on its goals should form a part of the Federation's governance and structure.

With that in mind the creation of the new strategy offers an opportunity for some renewed thinking on how members can have a role in the functions of EUROPARC.

It may be useful to suspend the attachment to the current structure, or order to pause and consider what is needed and achievable.

The strategy was written with the then existing structure, this does not compel EUROPARC to retain that, as the delivery of the aims and action expressed, should in most cases, take precedence. Further, the need for change to the delivery structures was already indicated in the strategy.

What makes a Good Group?

Groups working together with a common purpose, are good for people in that they can provide members with important social interaction, support and enriched opportunities for learning.

A well-functioning participation group can be

- Good at finding problems;
- Promoting innovation;
- Can make better decisions than individuals on some kinds of tasks;
- Can be good tools for implementation, in that group decisions to which members are committed will be carried out willingly;
- Can also help fend off the negative consequences of large organisational size, by keeping communication lines short and hierarchies relatively flat.

However, it must be noted that, groups can turn sour and be ineffective. The Federation would need to be aware of any difficulties that arise in order to manage.

EUROPARC should endeavour to create differing types of groups, suited to the needs and task required by the Federation, but ensure we maximise the positive opportunities indicated.

What types of Groups will EUROPARC have?



| Types of Participation Groups of the EUROPARC Federation | | |
|--|--|--|
| Internal Participation groups of EUROPARC | | |
| Technical standing committees | to analyse specific aspects of EUROPARC work, particularly existing programmes such as charter and TB | Guidelines of the work of these groups already exists. |
| Commissions | To undertake a piece research or advise on a given topic or theme , develop a project and prepare a report with recommendations for EUROPARC | Will take over the function of previous working groups with a great emphasis on evidence gathering and outputs |
| Forum | Predominately e-forum to explore area of works, stimulate discussion | All commissions should have their own platform as well as exchange across the Federation. |
| Advisory panels | to give overview or audit the work of the Federation on a given topic | International work of the Charter is one such example |
| External working groups | Groups which the Federation is asked to join a group managed by other organisations. Can also be called “platforms” e.g. large carnivores | Current groups and platforms we are involved in |

The creation of new commissions

It is important that the work of the groups is closely aligned to the **Federation strategy**. As such, all outputs need then to be reported to the Federation, its members and to funding bodies. Therefore maintaining and strengthening communication lines with all parties involved is essential. As per current working groups guidelines

To facilitate this, Federation Directorate staff will be assigned, where possible, to support and assist groups. Additionally the council may decide to act as an advocate of the theme/topic within the council if the group does not include a council member. This does not presume financial support to attend commission meetings.

Given an analysis by council and directorate, a call for creation of commission is then made. The strategic remit of each will be identified in the call. Council should give some consideration as to the chairing of such commissions, there can be nominated by council or selected by a group.



Other suggestions by sections and members can be considered but there is a danger of “spreading ourselves too thin” as resources and capacity are limited. Groups can for e-forums at any time and any reasonable suggestion from sections and member will be considered.

Interested parties in a commission should identify a chair, through which a basic proposal for the specific workplan remit of the commission.

This plan would include

Strategic theme addressed by the commission (the directorate will complete any aspects related to the NGO grant or other projects)

- objective,
- planned outputs over 2 years
- indicators
- potential members if the proposal comes from a group of members,
- resources, and potential sources

Plan of meetings, schedule of work will be agreed by the Directorate and the group.

CVs of working group members should be submitted when the request for the establishment of the commission is submitted or soon thereafter.

The numbers of commission the Federation can support will be dependent on the Federation’s income, so the Council will agree by a list of priorities which commission will be supported.

Outputs

Annual meetings of council and chair of commissions should aim to take place at the annual conference. Groups are expected to produce an annual forward plan, directly related to the strategy of the Federation. Outputs of commissions will be presented in the Federation’s annual report and promoted to members in its communications, annual reports and to funders where applicable.

Finances

All Federation monies are accountable to the members and to specific donors. Procedures for eligible expenses will be provided. Ideally working groups would be supported with travel and expense costs within a given agreed allocation. This is our aim although the allocation is speculative, based on an anticipated income, and is therefore regularly monitored and reassessed. Should no project or other tangible work be realised then working groups would be dissolved and an e-forum of interested parties set up in its place. Whilst the Federation would endeavour to reimburse travel and meeting costs within agreed limits, contributions to some of these costs from the member organisations, in recognition of the benefits of having their staff member in a Federation working group, would be appreciated.

A work plan indicating the groups anticipated output for the forthcoming year should be lodged to the directorate and agreed no later than October of the preceding year to enable budgets to the coming year to be prepared.



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