

Terms of Reference

Name of Group: Sustainable Tourism TASK FORCE	
<p>Purpose Why is this group being formed</p>	<p>The European Charter of Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas (ECST) is one of the most successful programs of EUROPARC Federation. It is in fact a program strongly linked to the very image of the Federation. Many of our EUROPARC members are members because of the ECST.</p> <p>The ECST awarded for the first time in 2001, was developed originally in 1995 as a LIFE project. It grew up and created many expectations in Protected Areas and, in particular after 2008, within the economic sector -- business and after 2013 in the tour operators.</p> <p>After 22 years of existence, however, the ECST is at a point where strategic decisions need to be taken by the Federation. While in a few countries the ECST is growing, in many others the ECST is not present at all or members are leaving.</p> <p>In addition, new labels and certifications, either national or international (Biosphere, Natura 2000, Marque Parc, green destinations, etc.) have appeared and are creating strong concurrence with the ECST; this is especially true for French parks and their Marque Parc.</p> <p>A first diagnosis and proposals about the current needs have been already expressed by many ECST stakeholders on repeated occasions.</p> <p>Therefore, given the current context, a working group should be formed in order to work on all these aspects. One of the first actions should be the analysis of the proposals already existing and the prioritization of the actions to be taken by the Federation as the promotor and main responsible of the ECST programme.</p>
<p>Links to Strategy What specific area of the strategy this work is linked to?</p>	<p>It is linked to Goal # 4 "Promote sustainable development tools and approaches for people and nature", specifically to the theme "Improve visitor management and sustainable tourism".</p> <p>The outcome sought is that by 2030 Sustainable Tourism is thriving as a result of new strategies, guidance, and processes developed and implemented through the Charter of Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas.</p>
<p>Membership</p>	<p>In order to give response to the different goals, the composition of the Task Force should be formed in two stages.</p>

Who is membership of the group open to? What kind of expertise or skills are needed.

Are representatives from external organisations included, who and why?

Please list proposed members and their organisation

1. In the first stage, the WG should focus on discussion on strategic decisions that can only stem from EUROPARC members, i.e. Sustainable Destinations, which must belong to EUROPARC.
2. In a second stage, in order to have a composition of the WG that fully reflects the ECST program, the WG should be enlarged with the incorporation of entities involved in ECST part II (business) and III (tour operators). Furthermore, because Sustainable Tourism is a very important economic and dynamic sector, it is key to count on external experts in order to get a better insight into current trends in the sector.

List of proposed members

For the 1st Stage (1 yr) November_2022 – November 2023

EUROPARC members invited to attend

- . Nele Sober - Sustainable tourism focal point in Nord Baltic Section
- Fátima Rodrigues - ADRIMAG - Portugal
- Phil Holden - Shropshire Hills AONB
- Cati Carrillo - Sierra Espuña
- Fabrizio Santini - Parco Nazionale delle Colline Metallifere

Note: All other EUROPARC members can bring their contributions, proposals and suggestions and, when appropriate, are encouraged to work together and designate focal points that will be the liaison member with the staff member of EUROPARC responsible for the Charter.

2nd Stage (2 yr) (November 2023 – November 2025)

We would propose a new membership which would include some Sustainable Destination representatives and enlarged with external members. The WG would decide who these external members could be. As a first approach, these could be as follows:

External members

ECST part II Representative

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 1 Italian representative ● 1 SoyEcoturista Association from Spain representing the largest tourism business association involving several brands and certifications where Charter Partner II and III are the most relevant and qualified members. However, we need to take into consideration that they are involved in other labels that at some point are competing with the ECST. It could be good and risky at the same time to have them on board. <p>ECST part III Representative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 1 Trescàlia from Spain as an incoming travel agency awarded Charter Partner <p>Sustainable Tourism experts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Richard Denman, Evaluation Committee chairman. ● Bettina Kreisel, ECST verifier ● Mary Mulvey , Ecotourism Ireland ● Pete Crane, ex Cairngorms National Park.
What benefits will membership of this group bring to its members.	Networking, exchange of experience, and collaboration towards the improvement of the ECST
Chair of Group	Paul Castro will chair the group on a temporary basis until the group is established a chair agreed.
Council Liaison	Designated By Council invitation
Directorate Liaison	Teresa Pastor, Project Development & Charter Sustainable Tourism Manager
Term What is the anticipated duration?	A duration of three years would be desirable, until the end of 2025
Outcomes/Results What are the intended results or conclusions of the group?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●A European project that allows to contract a part-time employee fully dedicated to the promotion of the ECST ●The ECST is recognised and valued as the Sustainable award for Protected Areas by citizens (tourists), travel platforms (Booking, Google, etc.) and policymakers (European, national and regional authorities). ●There is an increase of Parks and countries embracing the ECST as a tool to achieve sustainable tourism – new awards and renewal applications as Sustainable destinations ●There is an increase of tourism businesses and tour operators becoming part of the ECST as a tool to achieve sustainable tourism – new awards and renewal applications as Charter Partners

<p>Outline workplan What do you plan to do and achieve for the period to 2025</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reflexion on the direction of the ECST (with clear objectives) and preparation of a viability plan (financing mechanisms) ● Draw up a European project (INTERREG MED, EUROPE, etc.) as a way to finance the maintenance of the ECST ● Work with the sections (Atlantic Isles, Eastern & Central Europe, Germany, France) to boost the ECST ● Organisation of XII European Charter Network meeting in 2023 and XIII in 2025. ● Approval of a common European ECST phase III methodology to provide Travel Agencies and Tour operators from countries that do not have in place ECST III, II and/or I methodologies with a European methodology that allows them to be awarded with ECST part III and thereby operate in Sustainable Destinations across Europe ● Increase the visibility of the ECST by promoting it on social media, on travel platforms and on our webpage. ● Update the application dossier with new climate change targets (ZeroNet, etc.) and restorative tourism
<p>Challenges and Opportunities what do you envisage being the main challenges to a successful achievement of your workplan and what opportunities can you take advantage of that would support assist or multiple your efforts.</p>	<p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Enough personnel and economic investment at the Directorate ● Weak sections do not have the resources to boost the ECST ● The travel platforms are not interested in our award system ● The other certification systems have a better promotion and visibility becoming more popular <p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● More than ever, there is a high interest in sustainable tourism ● The ECST in Italy and Spain is working well. Recent ECST III is in place. This can further boost the ECST.
<p>Working methods How will the group function? Meetings/online access/F2f etc. approx. how many/when How will the group be managed?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Online meetings ● 1 F2F meeting associated with each European Charter Network meeting ● Annual EUROPARC Conference when programmed

<p>Reporting How will the group report its work, when and by whom? All working groups will need to ensure their work is recorded in EUROPARC's annual report and may too be subject to technical reports from funders if the work is related to projects or NGO grant.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The work will be reported by the Council member participating in the working group.
<p>Review How and when will the work of the group be reviewed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Mid-term review● Final review at the end