



EUROPARC
FEDERATION



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

Joining forces

How the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas is successfully implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity guidelines for biodiversity and tourism development



THINK GLOBALLY ...



The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) was signed at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992 and entered into force on 29 December 1993. It is the first global agreement to cover all aspects of biological diversity.

The CBD Guidelines for Biodiversity and Tourism Development are based on the three main aims of the Convention on Biological Diversity:

- the conservation of biological diversity;
- the sustainable use of its components;
- the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits from the use of genetic resources.



The CBD Guidelines are applicable to all tourism development that may have an impact on biodiversity. They provide practical guidance on ways of working together with key stakeholders involved in tourism and biodiversity to policy makers, decision makers and managers with responsibilities covering tourism and/or biodiversity, whether in national or local government, the private sector, indigenous and local communities, non governmental organizations or other organizations.

The main thrust of the guidelines is that tourism management should be based on a consultative process involving multi-stakeholder participation and should consist of ten steps, including: the development of an overall vision for sustainable development of tourism activities; the setting of short-term objectives to implement vision; the review and building of regulations and tourism standards; the assessment of the potential impacts of tourism projects; the monitoring of impacts and compliance; and the implementation of adaptive management in relation to tourism and biodiversity.



Within the guidelines protected areas and their surroundings have a crucial strategic part to play:

“Authorities and managers of protected areas have a special role for the management of tourism and biodiversity. To this end, there is a need for government support and resources for managers, including training to perform their role effectively. In addition, it is necessary to establish and review mechanisms and funding policies to ensure the availability of adequate resources for maintaining biodiversity and promoting sustainable tourism. International institutions and development agencies should be involved as appropriate.” [CBD Guidelines, p. 7]

**THE CBD GUIDELINES CAN BE DOWNLOADED AT:
[HTTP://WWW.CBD.INT/TOURISM/GUIDELINES.SHTML](http://www.cbd.int/tourism/guidelines.shtml)**

... ACT LOCALLY

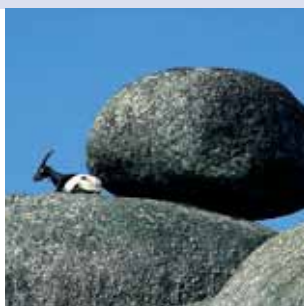


The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism – an important contribution to the conservation of biological diversity at protected area level

Across Europe, vital reserves of biodiversity are looked after in protected areas. These places provide more than safekeeping – they also allow well-managed access, understanding and enjoyment. This close relationship between people, place and nature is at the heart of national and nature parks, and other protected areas. It means that they are ideally placed to help deliver the conservation of biological diversity.

The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas is a practical management tool that enables protected areas to develop tourism sustainably. It was created as a contribution to Agenda 21, the sustainable development programme of the United Nations agreed at Rio de Janeiro in 1992.

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 on the basis of a thorough situation analysis. The aim of all Charter projects and activities is the protection of the natural and cultural heritage and the continuous improvement of tourism in the protected area in terms of the environment, local population and businesses as well as the visitors.



Working in protected areas: the 10 Charter Principles

1. To involve all those affected by tourism in and around the area in its development and management.
2. To prepare and implement a sustainable tourism strategy and action plan.
3. To protect and enhance natural and cultural heritage, for and through tourism, and to protect it from excessive tourism development.
4. To provide visitors with a high quality experience in all aspects of their visit.
5. To communicate the special qualities effectively to visitors, tourism businesses and residents
6. To encourage specific tourism products which enable discovery and understanding.
7. To increase knowledge of the protected area and sustainability issues amongst all those involved in tourism.
8. To ensure that tourism supports and does not reduce the quality of life of local residents.
9. To increase benefits from tourism to the local economy.
10. To monitor and influence visitor flows to reduce negative impacts.

A decade of successfully linking tourism and biodiversity

The European Charter has been successfully implemented for ten years. 46 protected areas in seven European countries already belong to the network providing various model examples of how to develop and implement tourism activities that are ecologically, economically and socially balanced.

We have developed this brochure to showcase the extensive work that has been done so far by a wide range of European protected areas to protect and enhance biodiversity. In it you will find a brief explanation of the charter's main principles, as well as how they are being put into practice, their ongoing effects and how the charter is helping to strengthen links between people and nature. The charter has led to an incredible range of well-structured activity. We feature 24 case studies; if we had space, we could have included many more! If you would like further information on any of the projects, please contact EUROPARC.

MORE INFORMATION AT: WWW.EUROPEAN-CHARTER.ORG

The Charter

... working in partnership

The **central element** of the Charter is a **multi-stakeholder process** to involve all those affected by tourism in and around the protected area in its development and management. The protected area authority, local municipalities/population, conservation and community organisations, representatives of the tourism industry and regional and national bodies work together in a permanent forum or equivalent arrangement. The Charter forum is

included in all activities and decisions related to the sustainable tourism development of the protected area. [Charter principle 1]

"THE MAIN THRUST OF THE GUIDELINES IS THAT TOURISM MANAGEMENT SHOULD BE BASED ON A CONSULTATIVE PROCESS INVOLVING MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION." [CBD GUIDELINES, P. 3]



ZONA VOLCÁNICA DE LA GARROTXA, SPAIN: UNITED EFFORTS

Tourism Garrotxa (The Association of La Garrotxa Territory Tourist Welcome) is a private non-profit association that has as its main objective the boosting and promotion of a model of sustainable tourism development of quality and respect for the environment, while following the criteria and strategic directives of the European Charter of Sustainable Tourism. For that purpose it acts as the European Charter Forum, bringing together the protected area administration of Zona Volcánica de la Garrotxa Nature Park, the 21 town councils, protected area administration, different local associations and educational institutions. Tourism Garrotxa unites all the efforts of its members to put together an extensive programme of activities, which ranges from the production of publications to assistance at workshops, including advice to employers and the promotion of training among professionals in the tourism sector.



ADAMELLO BRENTA, ITALY: GROUNDED IN TRUTH

Four territorial forums - relating to the relevant tourism zones - were organised where the specific discussion on each territory took place (an average of 3-4 meetings each), in order to have a consensus for the strategy and the action plan in this nature park. All in all 14 meetings were realised with more than 150 participants from the public and private sector. These territorial forums are the heart of the Charter discussion methodology. Besides the park's staff all the mayors, provincial institutions for tourism and environment education, all kinds of lodging, cable cars, operators, local tourism offices, other socio-economic operators (farmers, crafts, etc.), local environmental NGOs and local press participated. As a result of the meetings it was also possible to define and prioritize the actions to be developed in the action plan.



The Charter

... a strategic approach

The definition of a clear strategy is the basis for sustainable tourism management. Each Charter tourism strategy includes 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; visitor management and enhancement of the quality of tourism offered. It also contains an assessment of the area's natural, historic and cultural heritage, tourism infrastructure, and economic and social circumstances, which considers issues of capacity, need and potential opportunity as well as an assessment of current visitors and potential future markets. [Charter principle 2]

“AN OVERALL VISION FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT [...] IS IMPORTANT FOR EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF TOURISM AND BIODIVERSITY [...]”
[CBD GUIDELINES, P. 10]

PFÄLZERWALD, GERMANY: SELLING EXPERIENCES

The sustainable tourism strategy of the Pfälzerwald Nature Park was developed in the course of eight meetings of the park's Sustainable Tourism Forum and various working group meetings in close co-operation with the local communities, associations and tourism businesses. One major aim of the strategy is the development of tourism products oriented towards the wishes of the visitors and the potential of the region, including enjoyable experiences of nature. Further on, the use of regional products (food, construction materials) is planned in accommodation and restaurants. Special importance will be attached to a common promotion of the Pfälzerwald Nature Park and the partnership with all that have a stake in tourism in the region, and effective structures will be created.

FOREST OF BOWLAND, GREAT BRITAIN: AIMING FOR ACTION

The sustainable tourism strategy for the Forest of Bowland AONB was prepared by independent consultants in 2005. The strategy is largely based on the balance of opinion emerging from a process of local consultation. Consultation took place in stages: a tourism enterprise survey, six public consultation meetings, on site visitor surveys, a staying visitor survey, face to face and telephone interviews with stakeholders, forum meetings, and consultation on the draft survey.

The strategy contains 11 strategic objectives based on the principles of sustainable tourism advocated by the Charter including protection and gaining value from the natural environment and cultural heritage, increasing economic and social benefits from tourism and protecting and improving the quality of life of local people. The action plan defines distinct actions and priorities in order to deliver those strategic objectives.



The Charter

... protecting and enhancing the natural and cultural heritage

Both for and through tourism, Charter protected areas protect and enhance their natural and cultural heritage and protect it from excessive development. This includes monitoring impacts on fauna and flora and controlling tourism in sensitive locations. This means both encouraging activities which support the maintenance of natural heritage, culture and traditions and controlling and redu-

cing activities which adversely affect the quality of landscapes, air and water. [Charter principle 3]

“THESE [TOURISM] ACTIVITIES SHOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY.” [CBD GUIDELINES, P.5]

STEINHUDER MEER, GERMANY: A FAIR SHARE

Visitor management in the Steinhuder Meer nature park works through diversified zoning, which allows nature protection and visitor activities to take place side by side. Zones where water sports, biking and hiking have priority are defined, as are sensitive areas, where nature can develop without disturbance. An important aspect of the visitor guidance is the combination of infrastructure and an attractive range of services, so that visitors can be successfully concentrated in particular areas.

Visitors are offered an insight into the experience of natural areas through observation platforms, a fen nature trail, huts for bird watching and attractive trail routes. Areas that are especially sensitive are excluded from tourism use.



RHINE, FRANCE AND GERMANY: LIVING RIVER

The Association Rhin Vivant offers 1-3 day tours in France and Germany, accompanied by nature guides that know the banks of the Rhine and explain the specific characteristics of this trans-frontier area, fauna and flora, the typical alluvial milieu. Activities include nocturnal bird-watching, bicycle visits to the German nature reserve Taubergiessen, guided trips afloat to the isle of Rhinau and tasting local products. All activities are sustainable.





ALPI MARITTIME, ITALY: LISTENING TO VISITORS

Knowing the visitors' needs is fundamental: that's why every four years Alpi Marittime Nature Park carries out a survey on a sample of about one thousand visitors. A standardized questionnaire is used, with the help of interviewers in strategic places in the park (trails, parking, information centers) or with the help of the local tourism businesses for their clients. The aim is to know the visitors' profile, their needs and interests, their level of satisfaction regarding the services and the offer provided. It is repeated regularly, in order to monitor the evolution in time and test the efficacy of the policies and strategies put in place.



The Charter ... guaranteeing high-quality nature experience

High-quality visitor experience needs to be based on knowledge of the visitor's needs. Research on the expectations and satisfaction of existing and potential visitors therefore forms part of the European Charter methodology. The aim is to work with people and provide them with opportunities that they will want to take, thereby changing their behaviour to help protect biodiversity. [Charter principle 4]

“THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TOURISM MAY INCLUDE [...] TOURIST SATISFACTION AND EXPERIENCE GAINED AT TOURIST DESTINATION.” [CBD GUIDELINES, P.17]



DOÑANA, SPAIN: QUALITY CONTROL

At present Doñana National Park has six visitor centres offering information, visitor reception, exhibitions and audiovisual displays, and three travel programmes for discovering the national park organised by concessionary tourism businesses. In order to offer high-quality infrastructure and service, Doñana has become the first protected area in Andalusia certified with the quality label “Q” established by the Spanish Institute for Quality in Tourism (Instituto de Calidad Turística Española). The quality programme includes the establishment of a questionnaire system to measure the degree of visitor satisfaction and the establishment of indicators to evaluate the quality together with a process oriented improvement plan for all infrastructure and services in the park.

The Charter **... education and awareness-raising**

Informing the general public as well as professionals about impacts of tourism on biological diversity and good practice in this area is essential. The Charter encourages protected areas to provide education facilities, activities, events and packages for visitors and local people, including groups and schools. [Charter principles 5, 6]

“AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS EXPLAINING THE LINK BETWEEN CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY WILL NEED TO BE TAILORED FOR VARIOUS AUDIENCES, PARTICULARLY STAKEHOLDERS INCLUDING CONSUMERS OF TOURISM, DEVELOPERS AND TOURISM OPERATORS.” [CBD GUIDELINES, P. 27]

SYÖTE, FINLAND: NEW MATERIAL



The Syöte Visitor Centre works closely with the area's schools. New study material for schoolchildren and other groups is drafted every year. There are special teachers' pages on the internet site of the Syöte Visitor Centre, which help teachers to find ideas for their teaching programmes on ecological, cultural and environmental aspects of the area.

Guided tours are arranged both in the visitor centre and the national park. The main exhibition at the visitor centre presents the nature and cultural heritage of the park. Part of the exhibition is renewed four times a year. Several times a year there are nature events and other public happenings in the visitor centre or in the park, some arranged with local people.

FOREST OF BOWLAND, GREAT BRITAIN: FESTIVAL CELEBRATION

The Bowland Festival celebrates the birds, wildlife, landscape and culture of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The festival enables visitors and the local community to discover the Forest of Bowland's exceptional birds and wildlife, explore its heritage, enjoy its landscape and sample its delicious food and drink through a series of events and activities led by local experts.



BREÑA Y MARISMAS DEL BARBATE, SPAIN: MAGIC OF NATURE

With the aim of building the values of the Breña y Marismas del Barbate Nature Park and to support changes of attitude together with a respectful behaviour towards the protected area, the park administration started an awareness-raising programme, divided into different activities. Within the programme for environmental education, school classes can take part in a magical nature tour to reveal and explain the wonders of nature. The awareness-raising programme is aimed at the local population, and encouraging them to get to know the values of the nature park on a guided walking tour on the trail "Torre del Tajo". 452 Students, 31 teachers and 105 representatives from 14 associations have already participated in the programme.



The Charter

... authentic and clear communication

Communications in words and pictures need to reflect an attractive image of a destination that promotes the area as well as providing a sense of matching visitor expectations of scope and scale. The Charter ensures that promotion is based on authentic and realistic images and attempts to match visitor needs with destination carrying capacities. Also Charter communication methods and techniques are encouraged to suit all levels of interest and abilities with consistent provision of information in and around the area through both the public and private sector tourism enterprises. [Charter principle 5]

“THE PRIVATE SECTOR, AND, ESPECIALLY, TOUR OPERATORS, COULD PROVIDE INFORMATION MORE WIDELY TO THEIR CLIENTS – THE TOURISTS – ABOUT TOURISM AND BIODIVERSITY ISSUES [...]” [CBD GUIDELINES, P.27].



ALPI MARRITIME, ITALY: PROMOTING NATURE AND CULTURE

The park and the Association Ecoturismo in Marittime have joined forces to promote the two “pillars” on which is based the tourism experience in the area: nature and culture. So a big promotion campaign was launched on national newspapers and magazines, spreading two messages with attractive pictures and two slogans: “Natura da vivere” and “Cultura da vivere” (nature and culture to be experienced). Nature is: mountains, lakes, forests, pastures, flora and fauna, but also the botanical garden, the nature trails, the visitors centers, the guided walks. You can enjoy it alone, in perfect silence, or join one the various activities offered by the park together with the association. Culture is: local people, their special language (occitano), their history, the local products, the traditional festivals. You can appreciate a delicious “tuma e bodi” (cheese and potato) dinner in one of the restaurants of the association, or take part as special guest in “Festa della segale” (the rye festival, with local music and dances, and traditional threshing).



LA GARROTXA, SPAIN: TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION

To offer high-quality information about the Nature Park is one of the principal objectives of Tourism Garrotxa and La Garrotxa Volcanic Zone Nature Park. It is for this reason that in 2001 the accreditation of tourism services as Points of Information was started. A training course that is open to anyone interested in improving their knowledge of aspects of tourism in La Garrotxa is organised annually. Those who complete it and who are involved in some entity connected to Garrotxa Tourism (accommodation, tourist offices etc) can be accredited as an Information Point. In this way, the number of accredited Information Points grows every year and improves the information available to people who approach the Tourist Offices and to those responsible for private tourist services. The Information Points gather the complaints and suggestions that are left in the boxes made available for this purpose, so that Tourism Garrotxa and La Garrotxa Volcanic Zone Natural Park can guarantee procedures are correct.

The Charter

... first-hand capacity building

The people in and around a protected area play a key role in the development and management of sustainable tourism. In order to increase knowledge of the protected area and sustainability issues amongst all those involved in tourism, Charter protected areas provide and support training programmes for protected area staff, other local organisations, local communities and tourism enterprises, based on assessing training needs. [Charter principle 7]

“CAPACITY-BUILDING ACTIVITIES SHOULD AIM TO DEVELOP AND STRENGTHEN THE CAPACITIES OF GOVERNMENTS AND ALL STAKEHOLDERS TO FACILITATE THE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PRESENT GUIDELINES, AND MAY BE NECESSARY AT LOCAL, NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS.” [CBD GUIDELINES, P. 28]



CAIRNGORMS, GREAT BRITAIN: TRAINING FOR ALL

In partnership with Tourist Board Training, Cairngorms National Park developed a training course, for front-line staff in local tourism businesses. The course includes information on the natural and cultural heritage of the Cairngorms, details of local attractions, an explanation of the work of the CNPA and suggestions for closer working between businesses. Project Cairngorms Awareness and Pride (CAP) offers local people the chance to take part in free courses to promote, teach and train in areas that are central to the park's aims. In 2007, twenty courses ran, from 'Leave No Trace' training on countryside respect, to courses on Wildflower Identification, Pond Creation and Wildlife Appreciation. The courses are open to all local residents and help is available for transport and childcare costs to ensure participation from a wide cross-section of the population. For young people living in the National Park, Cairngorms Action on Training & Skills (CATS) provides bursaries for vocational training related to the aims of the National Park, such as land management skills and outdoor instruction qualifications. This allows young people to continue to live and work in the National Park, and helps employers to find qualified staff locally.



DOÑANA, SPAIN: NATURE GUIDES

For almost ten years, Doñana has been implementing a training programme directed to professionals working in the protected areas of Doñana – nature guides from local tourism businesses as well as the official nature guides from the protected area. The content of the 25-30 hours programme was developed by experts including university professors, staff of the protected areas and the regional ministry of the environment of Andalusia and is organised by the national centre for environmental education (Centro Nacional de Educación Ambiental). Between 20 and 30 participants are professionally trained in issues related to the protection and management of the natural area. The training includes public use management in the national park, environmental management, nature interpretation, hiking in the rural area, fauna and flora in Doñana, investigation and attention to disabled people and tourism quality.



The Charter

... local development and benefits

Enjoyment of speciality local food and handicrafts provides a special experience for visitors in rural areas. Through them, local destinations can demonstrate their special qualities and distinctiveness. Increasing the purchase of local foods and handicrafts by visitors and indirectly by tourism enterprises can considerably strengthen the proportion of tourism spending retained within the local economy and support traditional rural trades. The Charter therefore seeks to promote the purchase of local products by visitors and local tourism businesses as well as encouraging the employment of local people in tourism. A focus of the Charter also lies in supporting and not reducing the quality of life of local residents through involving local

communities in the planning of tourism in the area and ensuring good communication between the protected area, local people and visitors. [Charter principle 8, 9]

“PROPOSED MEASURES TO MAXIMIZE THE LOCAL BENEFITS OF THE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT OR ACTIVITIES ON SURROUNDING HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AND COMMUNITIES, BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEMS, WHICH MAY INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO: (I) USING LOCAL PRODUCTS AND SKILLS; (II) EMPLOYMENT; (III) RESTORATION OF BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEMS.” [CBD GUIDELINES, P. 27]



AVESNOIS, FRANCE: MARKETING KNOW-HOW

The network “Boutiques de l’Avesnois” was established in 2003 with the aim of promoting the regional products and services, developing the regional economy and reinforcing the social links in the rural areas of the Avesnois regional nature park. Today it has 10 “boutiques” displaying a diversified offer of local products together with high quality customer reception and consultation. As ambassador of the region, each merchant has to offer a minimum of 15 local products naming the producer and describing the product, establish an information point for the park Avesnois, financially contribute to the network and participate in collective promotion of the network. In return the “boutique” receives promotional material from the protected area. Through the network of “Boutiques de l’Avesnois” the local producers are able to market their products and establish a constructive collaboration with the merchants. The merchants are able to distinguish themselves by using the image of a quality label and can exchange knowledge and know-how.

SYÖTE, FINLAND: LOCAL WORKERS

Every year Metsähallitus employs between 10 and 20 local people on fixed-term contracts to tend and maintain the Syöte National Park or work at the Visitor Centre. Metsähallitus also buys most of the services it requires from local entrepreneurs, for example snow shoveling, cleaning up and security of the Visitor Centre. At the Visitor Centre tourists can buy products that are made by local people, such as knitwear and handicrafts made of wood or glass. The Syöte Tourist Association has been established to promote cooperation between the area’s tourism businesses and to market the area through Internet pages, brochures and advertisements in the media. Metsähallitus participates actively in the association’s work.



The Charter

... linking biodiversity and tourism businesses

One aim of the Charter 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 utilises and develops local skills and resources.

“THE TOURISM SECTOR AS A WHOLE, ALONG WITH TOURISTS SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO MINIMIZE ANY NEGATIVE IMPACTS AND MAXIMIZE POSITIVE IMPACTS ON BIODIVERSITY AND LOCAL CULTURES ASSOCIATED WITH THEIR CONSUMPTION CHOICES AND BEHAVIOUR, FOR EXAMPLE THROUGH VOLUNTARY INITIATIVES.” [CBD GUIDELINES, P. 28]



EUROPARC, SPAIN: GUIDE FOR TOURISM COMPANIES

In the run up of the implementation of the European Charter Partnership Programme a detailed and practical guide for tourism companies was developed by a Spanish working group including EUROPARC Spain, the foundation Andanatura, the Regional Ministry of the Environment of Andalusia and the EAGGF. The guide is a working tool to help tourism companies that decide to be a Charter partner to better develop their businesses in a sustainable way thereby increasing their profits. It contains a discussion about sustainable tourism in protected areas and a description of the application process of the European Charter and its implication. Finally it offers a variety of good practices: examples of how tourism businesses can contribute to sustainable tourism in the protected areas, e.g. by improving the range of services offered, saving energy and water, supporting the local economy.



Guía para la adhesión de las empresas turísticas a la Carta Europea de Turismo Sostenible



HARZ, GERMANY: FRIENDLY BUSINESSES

Since 2006 the Harz National Park has been certifying accommodations as “national park friendly” for their special achievements in environment oriented quality and service improvement. On the basis of the criteria developed by Viabono, the German umbrella label for environmental oriented tourism, the applying accommodation facility must fulfil criteria in different key sections, e. g. “well being of the visitor”, “energy & climate”, “sustainable mobility”, “regional products”. A special focus lies on the information and management oriented towards the Harz national park, highlighting the identification and collaboration with the protected area. This includes naming the national park in the accommodation’s informative material, dispatch of information about the national park, indication of national park events etc. So far 27 accommodations have been certified all located in the Charter area of the Harz National Park.

The Charter

... monitoring and managing impacts

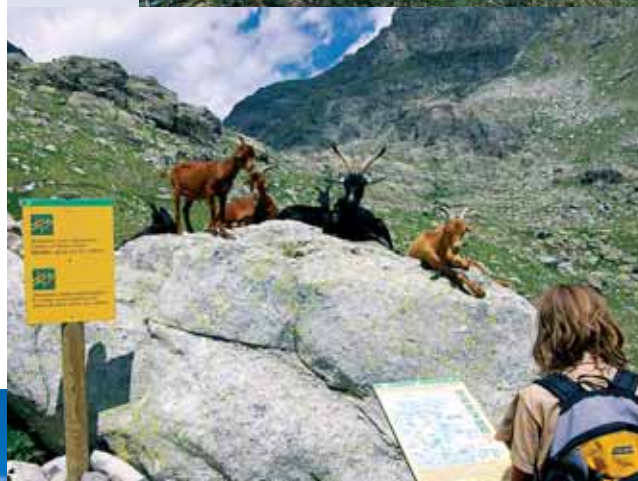
Especially in sensitive natural areas, impacts of tourism activities on fauna and flora but also on the socio-economic environment of the local population need to be monitored and managed. Within the Charter indicators are identified to monitor all results of the strategy and actions plan and adapt the activities in order to reduce negative impact. [Charter principle 10]

“IMPACT MANAGEMENT CAN INCLUDE, INTER ALIA, MEASURES FOR THE SITING OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING ESTABLISHING APPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES IN DIFFERENT DESIGNATED ZONES, DIFFERENTIATION BETWEEN THE IMPACTS OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF TOURISM, AND MEASURES TO CONTROL TOURIST FLOWS IN AND AROUND TOURIST DESTINATIONS AND KEY SITES [...]” [CBD GUIDELINES, P. 17]



DELTA DE L'EBRE, SPAIN: CARRYING CAPACITY

The Delta de l'Ebre has developed and realised a thorough study on the carrying capacity of the protected area, in order to create a technical support for the adequate regulation of tourism flow and seeking to guarantee the protection of the protected area's values in view of the impacts caused by tourist activities. The carrying capacity of all different zones of the protected area have been analysed based on the actual situation. The limits for carrying capacity and a monitoring system have also been established.



MERCANTOUR, FRANCE: PROTECT TO SURVIVE

The Valley of Marvels in the Mercantour National Park is an example of management of a highly frequented site, weakened by increasing tourism. Classified as a special site of history and nature, sheltering an archaeological heritage from the very first protection category by legislation on ancient monuments (classified site, at the heart of the national park) for its rock engravings outside, dating from the Bronze age. In order to prevent its complete degradation, access has been forbidden for several years for motorised vehicles and regularised for pedestrians. Except for the signed trails, a nature guide recognised by the national park and DRAC (Direction of culture) is obligatory. A public service of guided visitor tours has been set up at fixed times.



The Charter

... process oriented

Evaluation itself is a valuable process. Particularly in the case of re-evaluation the Charter is an opportunity for protected areas to use an expert verifier's on-site visit to discuss their experience and any problems encountered, to gain an outside perspective and advice for their work in the future. Re-evaluation is a consultative process between the protected areas and the verifiers, from which the protected areas gain.

"[...] ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT MUST INVOLVE A LEARNING PROCESS, WHICH HELPS TO ADAPT METHODOLOGIES AND PRACTICES TO THE WAYS IN WHICH THESE SYSTEMS ARE BEING MANAGED AND MONITORED." [CBD GUIDELINES, P. 24]



LUBERON, FRANCE: LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE

Re-evaluation gave Luberon Nature Park a major opportunity to look back at the projects achieved and to consider its experiences. Initially, tourism was considered as a second rank mission for the protected area and in the park's management aims, despite its significant place in the local economy. Owing to its global approach the European Charter placed tourism as a much more important mission for the nature park, and today it is clearly included in its stated management aims. The re-validation process covered all aspects of sustainability in relation to tourism, and the park paid special attention to weak points mentioned during the first evaluation. The Charter process led the park to realize that although it was involved in 'upstream' infrastructure investments for tourism, it needed a clearer strategy and action plan to be in a position to cooperate with private businesses, the 'true' economic operators of tourism in its territory.

The evaluation process also underlined strong points and for example that helped the park to decide a clearer promotion of bike activities in its territory and to update and sign a special agreement with Vélo Loisir en Luberon, the professional association now numbering 60 members in 2008.

The environment and tourism department of Provence Regional authorities were very interested in the Charter process benefits. After different contacts with the Luberon RNP and on site visit they decided to mention the European Charter in the regional strategic documents for tourism in regional protected areas and to affect special funding for application to the Charter, sections I and II. As a consequence the four other regional parks are now involved in the charter process.

Autour du Luberon en Vélo

Cycling around the Luberon

Itinéraire touristique de découverte
Discovery itinerary for cycle-tourists

De village en village sur les routes buissonnières de Provence
From village to village on the country roads of Provence

Parc Naturel Régional du Luberon
NAB



FRANKENWALD, GERMANY: BY BUS AND BIKE

On Saturdays, Sundays and bank holidays visitors to the Frankenwald Nature Park can use a bus with bike trailer on some of the most attractive routes in the Frankenwald. By establishing the Frankenwald-mobile-network with its three bus lines and link to the German Bundesbahn a nationwide unique means of public transport has been created for the citizens and visitors to the Frankenwald region. Besides the satisfaction of mobility needs also on the week-ends and bank holidays, public transport has been established as a regional constant for tourism and leisure-time offers through this attractive network and tariff. This means not only a contribution to looking after the environment, but also the support of the aim to establish the Frankenwald region as a region for sporty cyclists and families. The consequent marketing of the Frankenwald mobile project has caused an additional advertising effect for region. The network is revised and developed on a yearly basis, and its services are used to full capacity.



The Charter ... responding to climate change

Climate change is a global challenge to biodiversity. Protected areas are responding with mitigation and carbon-limitation strategies. In the growing tourism sector, there is much to be gained from their approach, which sets a benchmark for others and has encouraged and allowed the trial and testing of many ideas.

“ECOSYSTEM PROCESSES AND FUNCTIONS ARE COMPLEX AND VARIABLE. [...] THEREFORE, ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT MUST INVOLVE A LEARNING PROCESS, WHICH HELPS TO ADAPT METHODOLOGIES AND PRACTICES TO THE WAYS IN WHICH THESE SYSTEMS ARE BEING MANAGED AND MONITORED [...]” [CBD GUIDELINES, P.24]



EXMOOR, GREAT BRITAIN, CARBON-NEUTRAL NATIONAL PARK

Exmoor National Park has made a commitment in its management plan to achieve carbon neutral status by 2025 as part of its contribution towards efforts to mitigate climate change. The commitment has been made in response to significant concerns about the potential impact of climate change on Exmoor’s landscape, wildlife, agriculture and way of life. Achieving carbon neutral status in the Park will require action on a number of fronts. For example, steps will be taken to reduce energy use through encouraging the adoption of more energy efficient technologies and behaviour. There will be a significant drive to encourage greater use of renewable energy sources to meet local energy needs. Exmoor’s peat, soils and woodland will be enhanced to increase their capacity to act as carbon sinks. Efforts are also likely to be made to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions arising either directly or indirectly from travel, food, waste disposal and other aspects of daily life.

The Charter is appropriate for all types of protected area. It encourages all relevant stakeholders to work in partnership to develop and implement a sustainable tourism strategy and action plan (Part I). The next stage (Part II) is the development of partnerships between the protected area management body and local tourism businesses to work in closer co-operation securing strong links between conservation and enjoyment of the protected area through goods and services provided by private sector businesses.

Benefits for protected areas

- economic, social and environmental benefits;
- a higher profile nationally and across Europe;
- new ideas and improvements through evaluation;
- strengthening of existing structures;
- new links to organisations in the tourism sector at local, regional and national level;
- opportunities for exchange of expertise and experience;
- public relations opportunities with visitors and media;
- greater credibility amongst potential funding partners organisations.

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The Charter ... looking ahead

The first European Charter for Sustainable Tourism was awarded in 2001. Since then, 46 protected areas have gone through the process and become accredited. As you will have read, the Charter is about much more than status. It is about being part of a growing network, where information and support is shared, and knowledge of best practice is developed in a supportive and creative atmosphere. It is also about robust self and peer criticism, where actions are analysed, assessed and changed to fit defined objectives.

These objectives seek through sustainable development to make tourism work for people, places and nature. By joining forces and working together, much more can be achieved. Improvements for the environment have been astonishing and significant, but there is much still to be done.

Europe's new member states are starting to benefit from the Charter's network, and the Charter itself is gaining from a constant process of revision, to strengthen and reinvigorate its process. With the ongoing success of the network, much more can be achieved as part of the challenge to conserve and sustainably manage the world's biodiversity.

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