



Manual

European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas



Manual

EUROPARC European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas



European Charter - Contents page

1. Introduction to the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas

2. Application materials
 - ❖ Application procedure for parks
 - ❖ 10 Principles for sustainable tourism in protected areas
 - ❖ Application report - Framework and guidance

3. Flowchart of the application and verification process

4. Costs and conditions

5. Charter full text

6. Optional implementation guide

7. Additional documents supplied with this manual
 - ❖ Brochure "*Protected Areas and Tourism - The European Charter*"
 - ❖ Report "*Loving them to death?*"

Introduction to the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas

Decades of economic growth and large increases in tourist numbers in Europe and throughout the world have meant that sustainable development and the management of tourism have become highly important issues. The need to find a balance between economic development and the needs of a fragile environment has never been clearer.

The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas has been developed by the EUROPARC Federation – Europe’s umbrella organisation for protected areas - to enable parks to make a contribution to sustainable development by generating best practice in the management of tourism in protected areas. Indeed the European Charter should be regarded as a contribution to Agenda 21, the sustainable development programme of the UN agreed at Rio de Janeiro in 1992.

The impetus for the European Charter emanated from the 1993 EUROPARC Federation report entitled *‘Loving them to death? Sustainable tourism in Europe’s Nature and National Parks’*, which demonstrated the important and sensitive relationship between tourism and protected areas. It is provided with this manual. The Charter was developed through actions taken by a number of pilot parks and the advice of an extensive steering committee. The principles and approach behind the Charter were rationalised in 1999/2000 and a verification process was established. The first seven parks were awarded the Charter for recognition by the EUROPARC Federation in October 2001 and a further ten in 2002 and 2003.

Charter Parks as at 28 June 2007

- Hohe Tauern National Park, Austria
- Syöte National Park, Finland
- Koli National Park, Finland
- Les Cevennes National Park, France
- Luberon Regional Nature Park, France
- Vexin Français Regional Nature Park, France
- Marais du Cotentin et du Bessin Regional Nature Park, France
- Vercors Regional Nature Park, France
- Pilat Regional Nature Park, France
- Scarpe-Escaut Regional Nature Park, France
- Livradois-Forez Regional Nature Park, France
- Avesnois Regional Nature Park, France
- Boucles de la Seine Regional Nature Park, France
- Association Rhin Vivant (Réserves naturelles de la bande rhénane), France
- Mercantour National Park, France
- Steinhuder Meer Nature Park, Germany
- Frankenwald Nature Park, Germany
- Usedom Nature Park, Germany
- Pfälzerwald Nature Park, Germany
- Harz National Park, Germany

- Monti Sibillini National Park, Italy
- Alpi Marittime Nature Park, Italy
- Adamello Brenta Nature Park, Italy
- Mourne Area of outstanding Natural Beauty, Northern Ireland
- Cairngorms National Park, Scotland, UK
- Forest of Bowland AONB, England, UK
- Broads Authority, England, UK
- Peneda-Gerês National Park, Portugal
- Serra da San Mamede Nature Park, Portugal
- Zona Volcanica de la Garrotxa Nature Park, Spain
- Sierra de Grazalema Nature Park, Spain
- Sierras de Cazorla Segura y Las Villas Nature Park, Spain
- Sierra de Aracena and Picos de Aroche Nature Park, Spain
- Alcornocales Nature Park, Spain
- Sierra Nevada National and Nature Parks, Spain
- Doñana National and Nature Park, Spain

General information about the Charter can be found in the Brochure "*Protected Areas and Tourism - The European Charter*" which is enclosed with this manual.

The full official text of the Charter is presented later in this folder.

One of the important aspects to appreciate about the European Charter is that it seeks to recognise parks which are following the right approach in developing and managing sustainable tourism. It is concerned with structures, objectives and actions, including their comprehensiveness and sustainability. It does not seek to measure the absolute qualities of the parks in terms of landscape and facilities.

We hope you will find all the information you need in this manual and wish you the all the very best for your implementation of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas.

If you have any further questions on the European Charter or the registration, application and verification process, please address them to:

EUROPARC Federation, Kröllstraße 5, Postfach 1153, D-94475 Grafenau
Tel: +49 (0)8552 96100, Fax: +49 (0)8552 961019
E-mail: info@european-charter.org
Internet: <http://www.european-charter.org>

Application materials

Please read the “Application procedure for parks” together with “10 principles for sustainable tourism in protected areas” and “Application report - Framework and guidance” Thoroughly. These documents provide

Guidance for Candidate Charter Parks

Completion and presentation of the Application documents, Strategy and Action Plan

Please prepare two complete sets of the application documents listed under points 1-5 below, for dispatch as explained under point 6.

1 Agreeing to the Charter Principles

All holders of the European Charter must agree to abide by a set of principles for sustainable tourism in protected areas. The principles are set out in document [2](#). They are based on the full Charter text¹, and present the undertaking of the authority responsible for the protected area in summarised and simplified form.

Please sign and date the principles to signify your acceptance of them, and return with your application.

2 Fulfilling the Charter criteria

The Charter seeks to encourage park authorities to implement a process together with local stakeholders towards sustainable tourism development within and around the protected area. It is recognised that protected areas may start on this process from very different levels – as well-developed tourist destinations, or regions which are just starting to think about tourism and its potential benefits. Nevertheless, there are some **basic thresholds which apply to all candidates** and are essential for award of the certificate. The verifiers and Evaluation Committee will be looking for:

- A working, **permanent forum** or similar **partnership structure** for sustainable tourism development in the area; documentation of its work (e.g. minutes, decisions) and evidence that it involves **all relevant stakeholders**
- A live and working **Strategy and Action Plan** which are publicly available; an Action Plan which identifies the relevant stakeholders for each action; a budget for the Action Plan and staffing which correlate to the level of action foreseen
- Evidence that the protected area and its partners are taking **action** to address each of the **key issues** specified in the Charter Principles 3-10, and to progress or maintain high standards in these fields.

3 Completion of Application Report

The application report is a key document, and will be used as the main reference point for assessing your application. It serves as an overview or summary of your activities for both the verifier and Evaluation Committee. Furthermore, it represents an important record of your work which can be referred to again later, e.g. during re-evaluation after 5 years.

¹ As prepared originally by the Fédération des Parcs Naturels Régionaux de France in 1999, and revised and updated by the EUROPARC Federation in 2002

The application report should be submitted in the attached format ³, and all questions must be answered. The most essential points, which are critical for successful evaluation (see “basic thresholds” under Point 2 above), are marked with grey shading in the report format ³. Although the document may seem long, by asking you these questions now we can be sure that no aspect of the Charter is overlooked in your application. The verifier is able to concentrate on key aspects which emerge from your answers during his/her visit, rather than having to ask you these detailed questions then.

The application report should be submitted in one of the following languages: **English, French, German or Spanish** (see also information on language in section 4 below).

For each question in the application report, you should provide a short summary response which can be clearly understood on its own, plus a cross-reference to the place where further evidence or information can be found. Yes/No answers should be supplemented in each case with a short elaboration.

Much of the evidence required is likely to be contained in the Sustainable Tourism Strategy and Action Plan for the park, and we anticipate that the Application Report will make cross-references to these documents, stating the relevant page and paragraph numbers. This is particularly the case in the report questions relating to Principles 3-10, under “Planned activities”. Similar cross-references may be made to other documents. However, it is important that the report itself provides an overview of how you are fulfilling Charter requirements, and is not just a collection of cross-references.

The application report should be signed and dated. It should be submitted as a hard copy and in electronic format (if possible as a “Word” document).

4 Strategy and Action Plan

The Strategy & Action Plan for Sustainable Tourism should be prepared in accordance with Charter Principle 2 in document ². They should be presented as a separate, self-contained document / documents, i.e. not just included within wider documents such as park management plans. This is important for increasing the sense of “ownership” of the final strategy and action plan amongst the park’s partners, particularly as they are implicated in the implementation.

Language: The Strategy and Action Plan should ideally be presented in English, French, German or Spanish. If this is not possible, they may also be presented in your country’s language, provided that your Application report (see above) gives good summary responses to each question and clear cross-references to the precise location of details in the Strategy and Action Plan. EUROPARC will try to provide a verifier who speaks your language; however this may not always be possible.

Please submit a copy of your Strategy and Action Plan for the next five years as part of your application documents.

5 Supporting Documentation

We ask you to submit a number of additional supporting documents, whether or not they are referred to in the Application Report.

Please submit the following with your application:

- A map (1/100 000 scale if possible) showing: the boundary of the protected area; any other relevant strategic zoning; indications of any tourism policies and actions that can be shown spatially/ graphically.
- The overall park/area management plan (if exists)
- A small selection of key visitor/tourism communication documents relating to the protected area which are of relevance for your park's application (maximum of 5 key documents)
- A list of other available documentation on the protected area which can be viewed on site (background analyses and studies, tourist information and leaflets, other relevant literature etc.)

Please do not send additional background studies, analyses or scientific assessments with your application. Any such work undertaken as preparation for your tourism strategy may be viewed by the verifier on site, if necessary.

6 Dispatch of the Application

You are required to prepare **two** complete sets of the application documents listed under points 1-5 above, one for dispatch to EUROPARC Consulting GmbH, and one for dispatch directly to the expert verifier appointed for your park.

Please send your completed application (one set of documents) to the following address:

Wilf Fenten
EUROPARC Consulting GmbH
The Shaws
Selside
Settle
North Yorkshire BD24 0HZ
England

Your application should arrive at the above address by 28th February 2008 at the very latest. Please respect the deadline: applications arriving after this date cannot be considered until a later round of verifications.

On receiving your application, EUROPARC Consulting will check it for completeness and appoint an expert in sustainable tourism in protected areas as the verifier for your park. You will be notified of his/ her address and requested to send the second set of application documents directly to the expert.

Please ensure that both sets of application documents are complete, and that the Principles and Application Reports are signed.

Please retain a copy of the full application for your records.

7 Application fee

Administering the Charter - including analysing the application, planning and undertaking the verification visit, and making the final evaluation - carries a cost. It is therefore necessary for protected areas making an application to pay a fee to cover these costs if the process is to be viable.

The standard fee per application is EUR 4000 + VAT². You will also be required to pay the travel expenses and local costs (accommodation, board and local travel) for the verifier's visit to your protected area (these are not included in the fee).

The fee will be paid to EUROPARC Consulting GmbH, which will administer the verification and evaluation process on behalf of the EUROPARC Federation. Upon receipt of your full application, EUROPARC Consulting will send you a contract for the verification in your protected area. This is to be signed and returned, and 50% of the verification fee (EUR 2000 + VAT) transferred to EUROPARC Consulting's bank account prior to the start of the verification visit. The final instalment (EUR 2000 + VAT) plus travel expenses are to be paid upon completion of the verification.

8 Verification visit and report

The expert verifier appointed by EUROPARC will check the application, visit your protected area and make an assessment report. The verification visit will usually take c. 2 days.

The verifier will conduct interviews with personnel of the protected area responsible for tourism. Arrangements should also be made for him/her to meet a selection of other stakeholders involved in tourism in the area, including representatives of tourism enterprises.

The verifier will be asked to pay particular attention to the processes you have adopted in your protected area, including liaison and consultation with stakeholders, the analysis undertaken, the balance and consistency of your strategy and action programme, how it relates to the Charter principles, and the resources you are applying to insure that proposed action is achievable.

The dates, timing and programme for the visit will be agreed with you in advance.

The verifier will submit a report to the Evaluation Committee in a standardised format. You will receive a copy of this report for your information, to show the strengths and weaknesses which the verifier has identified and possible opportunities for improvement.

The verification visit will take place in April – May 2008.

9 Evaluation Committee meeting

An evaluation committee of experienced experts in protected areas and sustainable tourism has been appointed by the EUROPARC Federation. It will consider your full application together with the verifier's report. It will meet in summer 2008 (applicants will be notified of the date nearer the time).

² Where VAT is due – either in the applicant park's country or in the country where EUROPARC Consulting's office is based – will depend upon the tax status of the organisation/authority paying for the evaluation. This must be clarified for your individual case following submission of your Charter application and prior to implementation of the verification visit. VAT will be applied at the relevant national rate.

10 Communication of results

The committee's decision will be communicated to you. This will be either:

- a) To award the Charter
- b) To defer the award subject to specific changes being made, or
- c) To reject the application.

In case of (b) and (c), reasons will be given.

In the case of (b), you will be asked to provide evidence that sufficient steps have been taken to rectify the problems identified, by a time to be agreed with you.

11 Award of the Charter

Protected areas that are awarded the Charter will be identified publicly, and arrangements made with them for an official signing of the Charter certificate. They will be allowed to use the Charter logo and encouraged to promote the principles and obtain as much media coverage of their success as possible.

The Charter is awarded for 5 years. At the end of this period you will be invited to submit an updating application to EUROPARC.

12 After the Award

In signing the Charter certificate, protected areas commit themselves to implementing their strategy and action plan together with their partners over the coming five years. At the same time, it is expected that the new "Charter parks" will also participate in the Charter network. Contributions by all Charter parks to networking activities – contributing their own experience, sharing ideas or problems, attending networking meetings etc. – are essential to make the network a live one, and to bring real "added value" for all Charter parks! At the same time, the network is a basic tool for EUROPARC and Charter parks to maintain contact during the 5 years following the award. The commitment to participate in the Charter network is included on the Charter certificate signed by all new Charter parks.

CHECKLIST

Documents to be sent as your application for Charter verification

- Charter Principles, signed and dated

Application Report, completed and signed:

- Hard copy
- Electronic version

- Strategy and Action Plan for the next five years

Supporting documentation:

- Map (1/100 000 scale if possible) showing: the boundary of the protected area; any other relevant strategic zoning; indications of any tourism policies and actions that can be shown spatially/ graphically
- Overall park/area management plan (if exists)
- Small selection of key visitor/tourism communication documents relating to the protected area which are of relevance for your park's application (maximum of 5 key documents)
- List of other available documentation on the protected area which can be viewed on site (background analyses and studies, tourist information and leaflets, other relevant literature etc.)

10 Principles for sustainable tourism in protected areas

These principles are based on the official text Charter which you will find enclosed in this manual. Please sign, date and return two copies of the principles (one for EUROPARC Consulting GmbH and one for the expert verifier) to signify your acceptance of them, and retain a copy for your own record. Two prepared copies are enclosed in this folder.

PRINCIPLES FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN PROTECTED AREAS

Underlying aims of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas

- ***To increase awareness of, and support for, Europe's protected areas as a fundamental part of our heritage, that should be preserved for, and enjoyed by, current and future generations.***
- ***To improve the sustainable development and management of tourism in protected areas, which takes account of the needs of the environment, local residents, local businesses and visitors.***

The Charter Principles for Sustainable Tourism

Working in partnership

- 1 *To involve all those implicated by tourism in and around the protected area in its development and management.***

A permanent forum, or equivalent arrangement, should be established between the protected area authority, local municipalities, conservation and community organisations and representatives of the tourism industry. Links with regional and national bodies should be developed and maintained.

Preparing and implementing a strategy

- 2 *To prepare and implement a sustainable tourism strategy and action plan for the protected area.***

The strategy should be based on careful consultation and be approved and understood by local stakeholders. It should contain:

- A definition of the 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, tourism infrastructure, and economic and social circumstances; considering issues of capacity, need and potential opportunity
- An assessment of current visitors and potential future markets
- 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.***
- An action plan to meet these objectives
- An indication of resources and partners to implement the strategy
- Proposals for monitoring results

Addressing key issues

Each protected area is different. Strategic priorities and action programmes should be determined locally, using the approach described above. However, the following key issues should be addressed:

- 3 *To protect and enhance the area's natural and cultural heritage, for and through tourism, and to protect it from excessive tourism development***

by:

- monitoring impact on flora and fauna and controlling tourism in sensitive locations
- encouraging activities, including tourism uses, which support the maintenance of historic heritage, culture and traditions
- controlling and reducing activities, including tourism impacts, which: adversely affect the quality of landscapes, air and water; use non-renewable energy; and create unnecessary waste and noise
- encouraging visitors and the tourism industry to contribute to conservation

4 To provide all visitors with a high quality experience in all aspects of their visit,
by:

- researching the expectations and satisfaction of existing and potential visitors
- meeting the special needs of disadvantaged visitors
- supporting initiatives to check and improve the quality of facilities and services

5 To communicate effectively to visitors about the special qualities of the area,
by:

- ensuring that the promotion of the area is based on authentic images, and is sensitive to needs and capacity at different times and in different locations
- providing readily available and good quality visitor information in and around the area, and assisting tourism enterprises to do so
- providing educational facilities and services that interpret the area's environment and heritage to visitors and local people, including groups and schools

6 To encourage specific tourism products which enable discovery and understanding of the area,
by:

- providing and supporting activities, events and packages involving the interpretation of nature and heritage

7 To increase knowledge of the protected area and sustainability issues amongst all those involved in tourism,
by:

- providing or supporting training programmes for staff of the protected area, other organisations and tourism enterprises, based on assessing training needs

8 To ensure that tourism supports and does not reduce the quality of life of local residents,
by:

- involving local communities in the planning of tourism in the area
- ensuring good communication between the protected area, local people and visitors
- identifying and seeking to reduce any conflicts that may arise

9 To increase benefits from tourism to the local economy,
by:

- promoting the purchase of local products (food, crafts, local services) by visitors and local tourism businesses
- encouraging the employment of local people in tourism

10 To monitor and influence visitor flows to reduce negative impacts,
by:

- keeping a record of visitor numbers over time and space, including feedback from local tourism enterprises
- creating and implementing a visitor management plan
- promoting use of public transport, cycling and walking as an alternative to private cars
- controlling the siting and style of any new tourism development

SIGNED:

DATE:

Application report - Framework and guidance

This report will be used as the main reference point for assessing your application. Please submit two signed and dated copies of the application report and retain one copy for your own use. Two prepared copies are enclosed in this folder.

European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas

APPLICATION REPORT FRAMEWORK AND GUIDANCE

This paper provides the framework for the report that should be submitted by each protected area in applying for the Charter. The report is based on the Charter Principles set out in paper 2; its purpose is to show how you are meeting them. Each heading should be repeated in your report, and the evidence requested supplied underneath. Please note that we are looking for short summary responses to the questions, which can be easily understood by the external verifier. You are encouraged to make cross-references to other documents as appropriate for evidence or further information.

SECTION A – GENERAL INFORMATION

A1 *Name of the protected area*

A2 *Contact details*

Give named person and position, address, phone, fax, e-mail

A3 *Type of designation*

The status of the area, including IUCN category. Indicate any zones of varying designation.

A4 *Relationship to surrounding area/region*

Indicate any formal or informal surrounding buffer zones or other areas of influence (administrative or in terms of tourism policy)

A5 *Size of area/ zones*

Total size of designated area in hectares. Also give size of other relevant zones within or outside the area.

A6 *Population*

Give population within the protected area and in any identified surrounding zones.

A7 *Legal structure relating to the protected area*

Indicate the type/status of protected area authority, relationship with other relevant local authorities and structure of landownership.

A8 *Type of environment/heritage and reason for designation*

Very brief description

A9 *Management and staffing*

Total numbers of managerial and other staff. Please give organisational diagram if relevant.

A10 *Overall park management and relationship to tourism*

Does the protected area have a Management Plan?

Yes No

Indicate briefly the main priorities of park management (may be provided by cross reference to the management plan)

A11 *Total annual budget*

Please indicate total turnover of the protected area authority (including overheads and project expenditure). Explain briefly how the authority is funded, and indicate any external resources that are regularly available.

A12 Annual visitor numbers

Day visitor arrivals. Staying visitor arrivals and total nights. Estimates or actual known totals (state which).

A13 Tourism structure

Give a brief overview of the tourism history and type of tourism in the area.

A14 Infrastructure and tourism offers

Give a brief overview of the amount and type of accommodation, attractions, activities, events, and visitor services

SECTION B – MEETING THE CHARTER PRINCIPLES

PRINCIPLE 1 – PARTNERSHIP WITH LOCAL TOURISM STAKEHOLDERS³

1.1 Has a forum or other partnership structure been established to enable the Park Authority to work with others on the development and management of tourism?

Yes No

Briefly describe this structure, including size and membership of partnership forum(s), frequency of meetings etc.:

1.2 Are local tourism enterprises involved?

Yes No

Brief explanation _____

1.3 Is the local community involved?

Yes No

Brief explanation _____

1.4 Are local conservation interests involved?

Yes No

Brief explanation _____

1.5 Are the wider (regional) bodies responsible for tourism, conservation and regional development involved?

Yes No

Brief explanation _____

PRINCIPLE 2 – SUSTAINABLE TOURISM STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Preparation

2.1 Have a tourism strategy and action plan been prepared for the park?

Strategy only

Strategy with integrated action plan

Strategy with accompanying but separate action plan

Other (please explain) _____

³ Areas in grey shading indicate particularly important points which are critical for successful evaluation.

The strategy and action plan are presented:

- As a single, self-contained document
- As two individual, self-contained documents
- Within another document (state which) _____

- 2.2 Briefly describe the process(es) and timetable(s) for preparing both the strategy and action plan.
- 2.3 State briefly the main objectives for sustainable tourism identified in the strategy.
- 2.4 How does the tourism strategy relate to the park management plan?

Consultation process

2.5 Give precise details of how local stakeholders were involved in drawing up the strategy and action plan, including nature and number of meetings, information supplied to them and obtained from them, and other consultation processes or surveys. Make reference to the forum / partnership structures described under Question 1.1 as appropriate.

2.6 Was there consultation with local tourism enterprises in preparing the strategy and action plan?

Yes No

Brief explanation _____

2.7 Was there consultation with the local community and other interests/ stakeholders in preparing the strategy and action plan?

Yes No

Brief explanation _____

Assessment of resource needs, constraints and opportunities⁴

2.8 Was there an assessment of the natural and cultural resources, their sensitivities (capacity) and opportunities for tourism?

Yes No

Source of evidence / brief indication of results: _____

2.9 Was there an assessment of needs of the local community and economy?

Yes No

Source of evidence / brief indication of results: _____

2.10 Was there an assessment of strengths/weaknesses of tourism infrastructure/services?

Yes No

Source of evidence / brief indication of results: _____

⁴ The questions on assessment are asked for the information and interest of the verifier, as background information. It is expected that basic assessment in these fields will have been undertaken to inform preparation of your strategy, but detailed technical studies are not a requirement for the Charter. Please do not send additional studies or assessments with your application. Such documentation may be reviewed on site if necessary.

Assessment of existing visitors and their needs²

2.11 Was there an assessment of existing visitor patterns and needs?

Yes No

Source of evidence / brief indication of results: _____

Assessment of future visitor markets²

2.12 Was there an assessment of future visitor markets offering potential?

Yes No

Source of evidence / brief indication of results: _____

Implementation

2.13 Does the action plan include an indication of phasing/staging of action over time?

Yes No

2.14 Does the action plan indicate the relevant stakeholders or partners for each action?

Yes No

2.15 What is the size of the **budget** that the Protected Area Authority is devoting to the implementation of the action plan per year, excluding staff costs?⁵

What is this as a percentage of its total budget? _____

2.16 Have funds been provided (or are they being sought) from other sources?

2.17 Do you judge the level of funding already secured / applied for to be sufficient to meet the action proposed?

Yes No

Comments _____

2.18 What is the **staffing** that the Protected Area Authority is devoting to the implementation of the action plan?³

2.19 Is staffing being provided from other sources?

2.20 Do you believe the action proposed can be implemented with this level of staffing?

Yes No

Comments _____

⁵ Questions on budget and staffing: The verifier will be looking for a realistic assessment of what resources will be required to implement the strategy and action plan and where these resources are likely to come from. It is appreciated that a detailed budget or staffing plan for the next 5 years can probably not be given at this stage, and that some funding or personnel resources may still need to be secured.

Commitment of partners

2.21 Please comment on the commitment of the partners to implementing the strategy and action plan, and any methods for motivating them and ensuring this commitment.

2.22 Have any formal arrangements been made with partners for implementation of the strategy and action plan?

Yes No

Details _____

Monitoring results

2.23 Have indicators been identified for monitoring the results of the strategy / action plan?

Yes No

2.24 Please set these out and explain how they will be measured.

ADDRESSING KEY ISSUES

Under the following headings, please indicate what actions have been undertaken or are proposed relating to each of the key issues of the Charter, as set out in Charter Principles 3 to 10. We will be looking for evidence that action is being taken to address each of these issues, either to make progress or to maintain existing high standards.

PRINCIPLE 3 - PROTECTING NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

3.1 Monitoring impact on flora and fauna and controlling tourism in sensitive locations

Activities already undertaken / current activities: _____

Planned activities: _____

3.2 Encouraging activities, including tourism uses, which support the maintenance of historic heritage, culture and traditions

Activities already undertaken / current activities: _____

Planned activities: _____

3.3 Action to control development (including tourism) which would adversely affect the quality of landscapes, air and water; use non-renewable energy; and create unnecessary waste and noise

Activities already undertaken / current activities: _____

Planned activities: _____

3.4 Action to reduce tourism activities which adversely affect the quality of landscapes, air and water; use non-renewable energy; and create unnecessary waste and noise

Activities already undertaken / current activities: _____

Planned activities: _____

3.5 Encouraging visitors and the tourism industry to contribute to conservation (e.g. "visitor payback" schemes)

Activities already undertaken / current activities: _____

Planned activities: _____

PRINCIPLE 4 – MEETING VISITOR NEEDS / QUALITY OF EXPERIENCE

4.1 Surveys to measure visitor satisfaction

Activities already undertaken / current activities: _____

Planned activities: _____

4.2 Assessment of future visitor markets and their needs

Activities already undertaken / current activities: _____

Planned activities: _____

4.3 Specific provision of facilities and information for disabled people

Activities already undertaken / current activities: _____

Planned activities: _____

4.4 Provision of facilities for economically disadvantaged people

Activities already undertaken / current activities: _____

Planned activities: _____

4.5 Action to check the quality of facilities and services

Activities already undertaken / current activities: _____

Planned activities: _____

4.6 Action to improve the quality of facilities and services

Activities already undertaken / current activities: _____

Planned activities: _____

PRINCIPLE 5 – COMMUNICATION ABOUT THE AREA

5.1 Sensitive promotion of the protected area as a destination using authentic images and reflecting capacity/needs of the area, including times and locations.

Activities already undertaken / current activities: _____

Planned activities: _____

5.2 Influence on the promotional activities of others (region, enterprises etc).

Activities already undertaken / current activities: _____

Planned activities: _____

5.3 Provision of clear information material on where to go and what to do when in the area (guides, maps, websites – relevant languages).

Activities already undertaken / current activities: _____

Planned activities: _____

5.4 Provision of accessible information centres/points for visitors.

Activities already undertaken / current activities: _____

Planned activities: _____

5.5 Processes for ensuring that others (especially tourism enterprises) provide good information.

Activities already undertaken / current activities: _____

Planned activities: _____

5.6 Provision of guiding services and an events programme for visitors and local people, including groups and schools.

Activities already undertaken / current activities: _____

Planned activities: _____

PRINCIPLE 6 - TOURISM PRODUCTS RELATING TO THE PROTECTED AREA

6.1 Provision/development of tourism offers (special events, holiday programmes etc.) involving the discovery and interpretation of natural and cultural heritage

Activities already undertaken / current activities: _____

Planned activities: _____

6.2 Effective promotion of these offers.

Activities already undertaken / current activities: _____

Planned activities: _____

PRINCIPLE 7 - TRAINING

7.1 Providing or supporting training programmes for staff of the protected area, in sustainable tourism.

Activities already undertaken / current activities: _____

Planned activities: _____

7.2 Providing or supporting training of other organisations and tourism enterprises in sustainable tourism.

Activities already undertaken / current activities: _____

Planned activities: _____

PRINCIPLE 8 – MAINTAINING LOCAL QUALITY OF LIFE

8.1 Involving local communities in the planning of tourism in the area

Activities already undertaken / current activities: _____

Planned activities: _____

8.2 Communication between the protected area, local people and visitors

Activities already undertaken / current activities: _____

Planned activities: _____

8.3 Mechanisms for identifying and seeking to reduce any conflicts that may arise.

Activities already undertaken / current activities: _____

Planned activities: _____

PRINCIPLE 9 - BENEFITS TO THE LOCAL ECONOMY

9.1 Promoting the purchase of local products (food, crafts, local services) by visitors and local tourism businesses

Activities already undertaken / current activities: _____

Planned activities: _____

9.2 Encouraging the employment of local people in tourism

Activities already undertaken / current activities: _____

Planned activities: _____

9.3 Development of tourism in association with traditional economic activity (e.g. agriculture)

Activities already undertaken / current activities: _____

Planned activities: _____

PRINCIPLE 10 – MANAGING VISITOR FLOWS

10.1 Keeping a record of visitor numbers over time and space, including feedback from local tourism enterprises

Activities already undertaken / current activities: _____

Planned activities: _____

10.2 Creating and implementing a visitor management plan

Activities already undertaken / current activities: _____

Planned activities: _____

10.3 Promoting use of public transport, cycling and walking as an alternative to private cars

Activities already undertaken / current activities: _____

Planned activities: _____

10.4 Controlling the siting and style of any new tourism development

Activities already undertaken / current activities: _____

Planned activities: _____

Signed _____

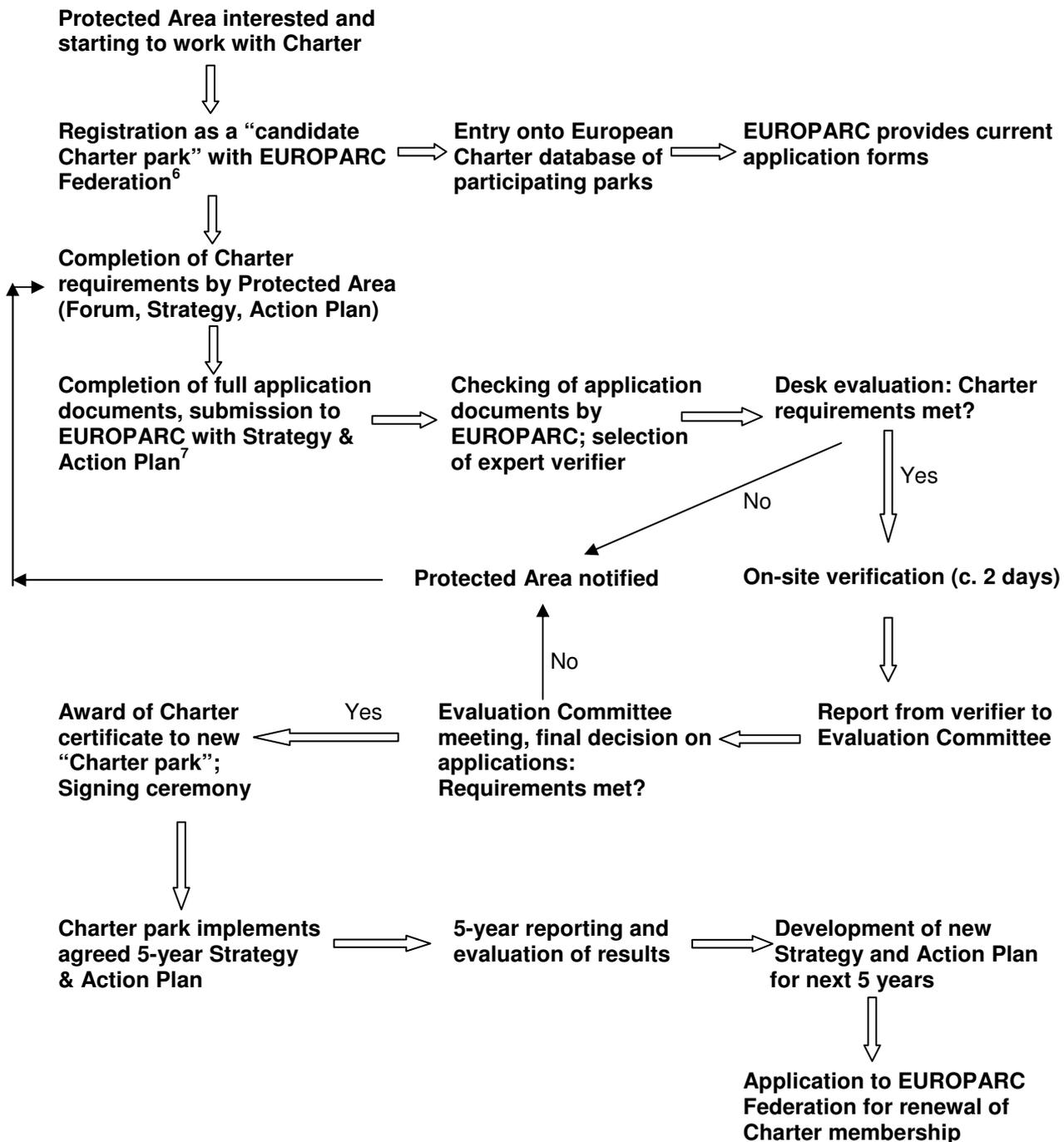
Date _____

Please submit your application report as a hard copy and in electronic format (if possible as a “Word” document).

Thank you!

Flowchart of the application and verification process

Flowchart – Application and verification process
European Charter for Sustainable Tourism



⁶ A protected area is required to be a **member of the EUROPARC Federation** in order to join the Charter. If the protected area is not a EUROPARC member by this stage, it will be required to join the Federation upon registration and before applying for Charter verification.

⁷ The period between registration as a candidate Charter park and submission of the full application will generally be at least 1 year (to enable satisfactory completion of the Charter requirements). The number of applications which can be accepted and processed in any one year is limited. For this reason it is important that Protected Areas register with the EUROPARC Federation as soon as they start to work with the Charter, providing an estimate as to when they expect to complete their Strategy and Action Plan.

Costs and conditions

Becoming a member of the
European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas

Costs and conditions

The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas brings varied benefits to participating protected areas. Besides opportunities to strengthen relationships with tourism stakeholders and influence tourism development at the local level, these benefits include:

- A higher profile in the European arena as an area devoted to sustainable tourism
- Public relations and awareness-raising opportunities with visitors and local and national media
- An opportunity to work with and learn from other European “Charter parks” in a network
- Helpful internal and external assessment, leading to new ideas and improvements
- Greater credibility amongst potential funding partners

However, the process of running and coordinating the Charter carries considerable costs, which participating protected areas are required to contribute to. The costs for participating protected areas are summarised as follows:

Candidate Charter parks

- Registration fee (for registration as a candidate park): **EUR 500**
- Verification fees (for administration of the application and verification process); standard fee: **EUR 4000 + VAT⁸**
In addition, the protected area authority is required to cover the costs of **travel, accommodation and board** for the visiting verifier.

Full Charter parks (following successful verification)

- Mid-term monitoring/evaluation visit (after 2 ½ years) – optional, upon request by the protected area, fees subject to extent of work required.
- Evaluation for renewal of Charter membership (after 5 years): **EUR 4000 + VAT⁹**
In addition, the protected area authority is required to cover the costs of **travel, accommodation and board** for the visiting verifier.

Networking

Networking fee will only be due when the network will be fully activated.

Networking fee (minimum contribution towards on-going co-ordination and facilitation of the Charter parks’ network): **EUR 500 per year**

All Charter parks are required to be members of the EUROPARC Federation. Protected areas which are not already EUROPARC members will be requested to join the Federation upon registering as candidate parks.

⁸ Process administered by EUROPARC Consulting GmbH, VAT subject to clarification on where this is due in each individual case.

⁹ Process administered by EUROPARC Consulting GmbH, VAT subject to clarification on where this is due in each individual case.

Charter full text

The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas

Full Text

Updated version of May 2007

INTRODUCTION

The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas reflects world-wide and European priorities, as expressed in the recommendations of Agenda 21 adopted at the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992, and by the European Union in its 6th Environment Action Programme and Strategy for Sustainable Development.

The Charter belongs to the EUROPARC Federation, the umbrella organisation of protected areas in Europe. It was developed by a European group representing protected areas, the tourism industry and their partners, under the EUROPARC umbrella, and builds on the recommendations of the 1993 EUROPARC study "Loving Them to Death? Sustainable Tourism in Europe's Nature and National Parks"¹⁰. The Charter was one of the priorities defined in the World Conservation Union's action programme for protected areas in Europe, "Parks for Life" (1994).

The growing importance of sustainable tourism development as an area of international concern has been underlined by the recent elaboration of "International Guidelines for Sustainable Tourism" under the Convention on Biological Diversity. The European Charter directly addresses key principles of these International Guidelines, and represents a practical tool for their implementation at the regional level of protected areas.

Implementing the concept of sustainable development

This Charter promotes implementation of the concept of sustainable development, i.e. "development that meets the needs of present generations, without compromising the capacity of future generations to meet their needs"¹¹.

This form of development involves the preservation of resources for future generations, viable economic development and equitable social development.

THE CHARTER

Developing tourism in protected areas according to the principles of sustainable development

The underlying aims of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism are:

- To increase awareness of, and support for, Europe's protected areas as a fundamental part of our heritage, that should be preserved for and enjoyed by current and future generations.
- To improve the sustainable development and management of tourism in protected areas, which takes account of the needs of the environment, local residents, local businesses and visitors.

The Charter reflects the wish of authorities managing protected areas, of local stakeholders and representatives of the tourism business to support and encourage tourism that accords with the principles of sustainable development.

¹⁰ First published 1993, republished 2001, by EUROPARC Federation, Grafenau, Germany

¹¹ "Our common future" Brundtland report, World Commission on Environment and Development

It commits the signatories to implementing a local strategy for "sustainable tourism" defined as : "any form of tourism development, management or activity which ensures the long-term protection and preservation of natural, cultural and social resources and contributes in a positive and equitable manner to the economic development and well-being of individuals living, working, or staying in protected areas".

In order to put this form of tourism into practice, it is necessary to take a global view of tourism in and around a protected area, to engage in a process of wide consultation, and to strengthen the positive interactions between tourism and other economic sectors in the area.

Finally, the aim of this type of tourism is to respond to the expectations of European visitors by making travel meaningful again, by allowing time to explore and meet other people, and to gain from the experience by giving something of oneself.

Promoting partnerships for tourism planning and development

The Charter recognises that protected area authorities should not work alone in the management of tourism, but rather that all those implicated by tourism in and around a protected area should be involved in its development and management.

Signatories to the Charter for sustainable tourism agree to adopt working methods based on partnership. This will apply to every stage of activity, from development of a sustainable tourism programme to its implementation. It will take the form of clear agreements and co-operation between the protected area authorities, tourist service providers, and local people.

The Charter is a tool for putting this partnership into practice. It encourages the sharing of responsibilities and outlines the individual and collective commitments of the protected area and its partners.

Adopting a strategic approach

Subscribing to the Charter means taking a strategic approach to sustainable tourism development in protected areas. This means making a diagnosis, consulting and involving partners, establishing strategic objectives, allocating the appropriate resources, following through an action plan and evaluating the results.

In order to subscribe to the Charter, candidates must draw up a sustainable tourism development strategy and commit themselves to an agreed action plan for the area.

The Charter has been conceived in **three sections**:

I. Sustainable tourism for the protected area: The Charter is for individual protected areas of all kinds. Implementation by the protected area authority entails carrying out a diagnosis of the needs of the area (problems and opportunities) recognised and accepted by local partners. The aim of this approach is to find the most appropriate future direction for tourism throughout the whole area. The strategy subsequently proposed by the protected area within the context of the Charter must be developed and implemented in partnership with local tourism representatives, other business sectors, local people and authorities.

*In
implementation*

II. Sustainable tourism for local tourism businesses: The Charter represents a framework for securing the involvement of local tourism businesses based in protected areas. Local businesses are vital partners of the protected area authority for development of the area's tourism strategy and must be involved in this process as described in Section I (see above). Section II of the Charter envisages taking this involvement a stage further, enabling tourism businesses working with the protected area authority to receive individual recognition as Charter

*For future
implementation*

signatories. This will entail a diagnosis by the respective business of all its activity, i.e. the balance between what is on offer and what visitors expect, and measures to be taken to enhance the local heritage. The environment and sustainable development should also be taken into account in the running of the business. The business will formulate its own ideas for sustainable tourism and their practical application, in partnership with the protected area.

III. Sustainable tourism for tour operators: This section represents a framework for securing the involvement of tour operators who incorporate the principles of sustainable development into their tourism product, and who are organising tours to and within protected areas. Tour operators working under this framework will agree to work in partnership with the authority responsible for the strategy in the protected area and the local tourist service providers, analysing the compatibility of its products with the objectives of the area. The visitor flow they attract to an area must not destroy the heritage resources that the tourists come to see.

*For future
implementation*

Current stage of development and implementation

Section I of the Charter is in full implementation in protected areas of varied European countries. Protected areas which fulfil the requirements detailed in the following text may apply to become full signatories or “members” of the European Charter and receive the formal recognition which goes with this. The procedures governing this process are tested and in place.

Section II of the Charter has been approved in May 2007 and is starting implementation in protected areas of varied European countries. A number of individual pilot initiatives are looking at the practical implementation of Section II.

Section III, for tour operators; has not yet been taken forward to this stage of implementation. A number of individual pilot initiatives are looking at the practical implementation of Section II.

SECTION I

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM FOR THE PROTECTED AREA

Tourism offers a privileged means of raising environmental awareness among the general public. It also represents a valuable opportunity to support traditional economic activities and to improve the quality of life.

In order to meet the needs of the protected areas as well as the expectations of European visitors, it is essential that tourism preserve the environment on which its activity is based.

By subscribing to the Charter, the protected area chooses to adopt tourism development that is compatible with the principles of sustainable development. It agrees to favour a coherent approach to projects within its own area and to take a long term view of the management of the area.

The protected area prioritises co-operation and the sharing of responsibilities in order to improve the effectiveness of its mission to protect the environment.

Benefits of the Charter for protected areas:

The Charter brings participating protected areas:

- A basis for strengthening relationships with local tourism stakeholders and the wider tourism industry
- The opportunity to influence tourism development in the area
- A higher profile in the European arena as an area devoted to sustainable tourism
- Public relations and awareness-raising opportunities with visitors and local and national media
- An opportunity to work with and learn from other European "Charter parks" in a network
- Helpful internal and external assessment, leading to new ideas and improvements
- Greater credibility amongst potential funding partners

Fundamentally, parks and protected areas which meet the requirements of the Charter will benefit from the economic, social and environmental advantages of well managed, sustainable tourism.

Undertaking by the authority responsible for the protected area

- 1. To accept and abide by the principles for sustainable development as set out in this Charter, whilst adapting them to the local context**
- 2. To involve all those implicated by tourism, in and around the protected area, in its development and management**

In order to ensure sustainable tourism development, the protected area will organise public consultation meetings, and will set up a permanent forum or equivalent arrangement between all those directly concerned: the protected area authority, local municipalities, conservation and community organisations and representatives of the tourism industry. Links with relevant regional and national bodies should be developed and maintained.

The protected area will thus facilitate a process of cooperation, enabling local tourism businesses and other sectors to work together, encouraging better integration of tourism in the local lifestyle and better understanding of sustainable development objectives by local people.

3. To define a medium term strategy (5 years) for sustainable tourism development in its area

The aim of the strategy is to improve the quality of the tourism product while taking into account the conservation and sustainable development objectives of the area. It guarantees the best possible integration of tourism within the natural, cultural, economic, and social environment, and its coherent development in time and space.

The strategy should be based on careful consultation and be approved and understood by local stakeholders. It should contain:

- A definition of the 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, tourism infrastructure, and economic and social circumstances, considering issues of capacity, need and potential opportunity
- An assessment of current visitors and potential future markets
- 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
- An indication of the resource allocation and partners for implementation of the strategy, the sharing of tasks, and the order of priorities
- Proposals for monitoring the strategy (methods and indicators).

4. To present this strategy in the form of an action plan

The action plan specifies the measures which have been or will be taken to achieve the objectives established in the strategy. It covers the 5-year period of the strategy, and defines the commitment of the partners to each of the Charter's key issues.

Each protected area is different. Strategic priorities and action programmes should be determined locally, using the participatory approach described above. However, the Charter requires that the following **key issues** be addressed.

Protection and enhancement of natural and cultural heritage

A fundamental aim of the strategy and action plan is to protect and enhance the area's natural and cultural heritage, for and through tourism, and to protect it from excessive tourism development. This will involve:

Monitoring impact on flora and fauna and controlling tourism in sensitive locations

Based on the results of monitoring, specific measures will be introduced to ensure tourism development remains within the carrying capacity of the environment of the area. Certain areas may not be open to the public due to their fragile nature.

Encouraging activities, including tourism uses, which support the maintenance of historic heritage, culture and traditions

The tourism development of the area will value its cultural and historical heritage. Measures, equipment and facilities will be provided to encourage public access and activities based on this heritage.

Preserving natural resources

Measures will be taken to control and reduce activities, including tourism impacts, which adversely affect the quality of landscapes, air and water; use non-renewable energy; and create unnecessary waste and noise. Cooperation with local authorities will be sought for the development of water, energy and land management programmes.

Encouraging visitors and the tourism industry to contribute to conservation

Schemes will be devised for tourism to contribute to the conservation, maintenance and enhancement of the natural and cultural heritage. Voluntary subscription schemes which involve visitors, tourism businesses and other partners in this task are encouraged.

Improving the quality of the tourism experience

A key goal is to provide all visitors with a high quality experience in all aspects of their visit. The protected area will carry out a programme with its partners to improve the quality of the tourism which it offers. This will involve:

Researching the expectations and satisfaction of existing and potential visitors

It is important to develop a marketing approach, to gain an understanding of the expectations and requirements of current and potential visitors. This will help produce a better match between supply and demand. Tourism products and activities should be designed for clearly identified markets as well as meeting the objectives of conservation. Furthermore, the protected area will seek to identify new visitors who are sensitive to the quality of the environment.

Meeting the special needs of disadvantaged visitors

The protected area will pay particular attention to certain types of visitor who are often overlooked by other destinations such as disabled, ill or convalescing people, young people and low income groups. Any form of elitism is to be avoided so far as visitor access is concerned.

Supporting initiatives to check and improve the quality of facilities and services

Initiatives will be taken to achieve quality in every aspect of the tourism experience: visitor centres, tourist equipment and facilities, all visitor services, tourist products, marketing and promotion - and last, but not least, after-sales service. The protected area will strive to assure quality in its own facilities and services, and to support quality initiatives for the services provided by its partners.

Raising public awareness

The protected area will seek to communicate effectively to visitors about the special qualities of the area. This should be achieved by:

Ensuring that the promotion of the area is based on authentic images and is sensitive to needs and capacity at different times and in different places

Promotion and marketing of the protected area can help increase visitors' awareness of the authentic values of the area and the principles of sustainable tourism development. Care will be taken that the way the area is promoted reflects and supports visitor management aims.

Providing readily available and good quality visitor information in and around the area

High quality information will be readily accessible for visitors and the local community, highlighting both the outstanding richness and sensitivity of the natural environment as well as the tourist resources available. The public will also be kept informed of heritage conservation and sustainable development objectives.

Furthermore, the protected area will ensure that tourism businesses receive a regular supply of information for their clients (leaflets, maps, etc.).

Providing educational facilities and services which interpret the area's environment and heritage to visitors and local people

Environmental education and heritage interpretation will constitute a priority in the area's tourism policy. Activities or facilities based on cultural heritage and the environment will be offered to visitors, local people and particularly to young visitors and to school groups. The protected area will also help tourism businesses to include an educational element in their activities.

Development of tourism specific to the area

The protected area will encourage specific tourism products which enable discovery and understanding of the area, by:

Providing and supporting activities, events and packages involving the interpretation of nature and heritage.

Training

Training will be an essential tool for implementing the sustainable tourism development strategy in the area. The aim is to increase knowledge of the protected area and sustainability issues amongst all those involved in tourism. This will be achieved by:

Providing or supporting training programmes for staff of the protected area, other organisations and tourism enterprises

The action plan will include training programmes to benefit different target groups, with particular regard to the organisation of seminars on the local environment for the tourism businesses. Training activities will be based on an analysis of the training needs of the area.

Protection and support of the quality of life for local residents

The tourism strategy will seek to ensure that tourism supports and does not reduce the quality of life of local residents. This will be achieved by:

Involving local communities in the planning of tourism in the area

The protected area will work closely with local communities for the development and implementation of its tourism strategy and action plan.

Ensuring good communication between the protected area, local people and visitors

The protected area will foster the promotion of exchange and contact between local residents and visitors. This includes keeping local communities and businesses informed of activities and public events being organised in the protected area.

Identifying and seeking to reduce any conflicts which may arise

Social and economic development

The protected area will aim to increase benefits from tourism to the local economy, encouraging initiatives which will have a positive impact on various economic sectors. These will include:

Promoting the purchase of local products by visitors and local tourism businesses

Local food and crafts as well as local services will be promoted. Schemes will be developed to raise the profile and facilitate the distribution of the area's typical produce.

Encouraging the employment of local people in tourism

The protected area will support the promotion of new forms of employment in tourism. In the field of training and job creation, it will favour versatility and social integration with due regard to the needs of women, those in difficult economic circumstances and disabled people.

Control of tourist numbers

Visitor flows will be monitored and influenced to reduce negative impacts on the environment, landscape and heritage of the area. This will involve:

Keeping a record of visitor numbers over time and space

Schemes to monitor and analyse visitor numbers will be put in place as the basis for adapting methods of visitor management. Feedback from local tourism enterprises will be included in the data collected.

Creating and implementing a visitor management plan

A strategic approach will be taken to visitor management, including measures to channel visitor flows and regulate visitor activities in the protected area. The location of tourism amenities, the planning of discovery trails and the provision of information and interpretation will all contribute to visitor management, with the aim of preserving the natural, cultural and social environment and the quality of the visitor experience. Effective visitor management planning should allow an increase in economic contribution from tourism whilst reducing the disadvantage of seasonality.

Promoting use of public transport, cycling and walking as an alternative to private cars

Promotional activities will be carried out to encourage the use of public transport both for access to the protected area and within its boundaries. The reduction of traffic by private vehicles, as well as the promotion of cycling and walking will be a priority.

Controlling the siting and style of any new tourism development

Preference will be given to the renovation of existing buildings rather than to the construction of new ones. Guidelines should be made available to ensure the appropriate design and management of facilities in the protected area. The use of local materials and reflection of architectural traditions is a priority.

5. Ratification of the project

Protected areas which have fulfilled the requirements specified under Points 1 - 4 above are invited to apply for recognition by the EUROPARC Federation as a member of the European Charter, or "Charter park". Details of the application and verification procedure are available from the EUROPARC Federation. The European Evaluation Committee will verify the protected area's commitment to the sustainable tourism development process, its cooperation with local partners, the quality of its strategy and action plan. The evaluation process includes a verification visit to the area by an independent sustainable tourism expert appointed by EUROPARC.

The strategy and the action plan must meet both the requirements laid down by the Charter and the local needs revealed by the diagnosis.

Upon successful verification a certificate will be awarded, which is signed by both the authority responsible for managing the protected area and the EUROPARC Federation. With its signature the protected area reaffirms its commitment to further cooperation with local partners, to implement the agreed strategy and action plan, and to continue striving for excellence in the management of tourism in its region.

6. Evaluation of the strategy's results

The protected area will monitor and evaluate the results of its strategy. After five years it will submit a detailed report on these to the European Evaluation Committee. As part of the process for renewal of Charter membership (see below) the protected area will be visited by a sustainable tourism expert for evaluation of the area's achievements and the efforts being made to reach its fixed objectives.

7. Renewing commitment to the Charter

The procedure for renewing commitment to the Charter will involve development of a new 5-year strategy and action plan. Renewal of membership by the EUROPARC Federation will be subject to satisfactory progress over the past 5 years.

SECTION II¹²

Working with Tourism Businesses in and around the Protected Area with the European Charter For Sustainable Tourism

1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this element of the Charter (Section 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 utilises and develops local skills and resources.

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.

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 **European Charter Partnership Programme** but it should be based around the **Charter Principles** i.e. using an integrated approach to sustainable development taking into account economic, social and environmental factors. A **European Charter Partnership Agreement** signed by the protected area authority and the tourism business, is a positive way of demonstrating mutual commitment.

2. BENEFITS TO BUSINESSES¹³

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.

A **European Charter Partnership Programme**, as a mutual commitment between the protected area authority and individual businesses, will create multiple mutual benefits. The protected area

¹² General agreement on the principles underlying this text was reached at a meeting of the European Charter Parks 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 by a smaller group of European Charter Park representatives during and after the meeting of Iberian Charter Parks held in Geres / Xures in November 2006.

¹³ 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.

authority will achieve its long-term conservation objectives through sustainable use of the area and businesses will increase and maintain profitability through:

- (i) increased visitor satisfaction and repeat bookings;
- (ii) reducing operating costs through audit and sustainable use of resources (energy, water, etc);
- (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;
- (iv) engagement with the protected area staff and other local stakeholders in the joint development of the area's tourism strategy;
- (v) examples of other benefits may include being recognised at European level or developing new commercial opportunities, by:
 - targeting new customers attracted by the protected areas;
 - offering tourism based on discovery of the environment;
 - creating off-season tourism;
 - working with other economic sectors in the area and purchasing products and services locally;
 - receiving information on tourist numbers in the protected area and future forecasts of potential visitors;
 - better organisation and management in the area as a whole;
 - providing high-quality information about the protected area.

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.

3. EUROPEAN CHARTER PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME

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 Section I.

Incorporating the Charter principles of sustainability into a wide cross section of private sector tourism products and businesses is an essential goal of success. Section 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 encouraged which reflects the Charter principles, existing quality marks and eco-labels, 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 to¹⁴:

- (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 practical application, in line with the protected area management plan;
 - measures to encourage visitors to positively contribute through volunteering or visitor payback to enhance the local heritage or natural environment.

4. GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Several key principles guiding the process to certify individual businesses as European Charter Partners have been identified. The process should:

- (i) Be a practical application of the **Charter Principles**.
- (ii) Be based on an effective, mutually supportive and individually-tailored partnership between the protected area and the tourism business.
- (iii) Seek to ensure continuous improvements.
- (iv) Be based on an integrated approach to sustainable development, tackling together environmental, social and economic issues.
- (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.
- (vi) Encourage protected areas to promote and support the engagement of businesses.
- (vii) Encourage businesses to promote and support the role of protected areas.

¹⁴ 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.

5. COMMITMENTS OF THE PROTECTED AREA

The protected area (or another organisation charged with and agreed during the implementation of Section I of the Charter) will:

- Propose to EUROPARC the documents with the protected area requirements and other documentation stated in Chapter Six¹⁵;
- Provide the information needed for the application process of each business;
- Verify that the businesses fulfil requirements set at both European and protected area level;
- 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;
- State the protected area commitments to businesses. Examples of commitments that could be assumed by the protected areas include:
 - Positive discrimination in favour of European Charter Partners in training and information campaigns of the protected area.
 - Listing the European Charter Partners in promotional and information materials and activities of the protected area (web, brochures, visitor centres, fairs, etc.).
 - To facilitate the relationship of the businesses with other public bodies.
 - Active participation in the Charter Parks Network and transmission of benefits to the European Charter Partners.
- State the conditions of use of the European Charter Partners corporate image;
- Review and sign the agreement;
- Evaluate the implementation of actions, at least every three years.

6. COMMITMENTS¹⁶ OF THE TOURISM BUSINESS

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 area.

At European level, the following conditions are required of the tourism business:

- (i) It should be located, or carry out its activities, in the Charter area as defined in Section I. Exceptions can be made if the protected area regards this as relevant for its sustainable tourism strategy.
- (ii) It should fulfil any relevant legislation at the time of certification.

¹⁵ As stated in Chapter Six, protected areas are responsible for their own Section II proposal to 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 Charter Parks when drawing up their own proposals. Meanwhile each EUROPARC Section or national or regional Charter network is encouraged to work on their own guidelines.

¹⁶ In order to begin working towards a European Charter Partnership Agreement, these requirements should be met by the tourism business.

- (iii) The activities of the tourism business should be compatible with the sustainable tourism strategy and the management plan of the protected area.
- (iv) It should join and aim to participate in the activities promoted by the Sustainable Tourism Forum defined in Section I of the Charter¹⁷.
- (v) It should commit to working towards a **European Charter Partnership Agreement** with the protected area, where mutual commitments will be defined (objectives, actions) for a period of three years.

At protected area level, the specific requirements for tourism businesses will be agreed by each protected area's Sustainable Tourism Forum. Some examples are listed in Chapter Three.

7. EUROPEAN CHARTER PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

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.

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 in **Annex 1** 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.

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 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.

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.

8. VALIDATION OF THE CHARTER PARK'S METHODOLOGY

To ensure the required commonality in implementation across Europe, as well as compliance with the principles of Section II of the European Charter, EUROPARC will validate the proposed schemes. This will be done in partnership with EUROPARC Sections and national or regional Charter networks where appropriate¹⁸.

The protected area would send EUROPARC the following documentation

¹⁷ How the participation works in practice can vary depending on how the sustainable tourism forum is structured in each protected area. Tourism businesses can participate directly on an individual basis or through a representative association.

¹⁸ 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 countries will contribute to others drawing up guidance, which will in turn facilitate harmonisation in approaches and the development of networking activities.

- (i) **List of the requirements set at protected area level.**
- (ii) **List of indicative actions, their monitoring indicators and its application methodology** for both protected area and tourism business, from which the **European Charter Partnership Agreement** will be derived.
- (iii) A template of the **European Charter Partnership Agreement** setting out the commitments of the protected area and the tourism business (actions and measurable monitoring indicators).
- (iv) A **European Charter Partnership Certificate** template. See **Annex 2**.

9. SIGNING THE EUROPEAN CHARTER PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

Once the above requirements have been met the **European Charter Partnership Agreement** can be negotiated and signed.

The tourism business then becomes a **European Charter Partner** and:

- a) is committed with an individual Action Plan for three years;
- b) will benefit from the actions promoted by the protected area or other Charter partners;
- c) will know the general conditions for the use of the brand European Charter (name, logo, etc);
- d) is able to get support from the protected area;
- e) is entitled to use the charter logo together with the protected area or other appropriate logo¹⁹.

After this period of three years, the business can request renewal of the award, subject to an evaluation by the protected area. See **Annex 1**.

¹⁹ 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 to comply with the relevant regional or national regulations.

Annex 1: MODEL PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

The(add name of protected area) was awarded the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas by the EUROPARC Federation on(date) for a period of three years until(date).

The aims of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism are:

- To increase awareness of, and support for, Europe's protected areas as a fundamental part of our heritage that should be preserved for and enjoyed by current and future generations.
- To improve the sustainable development and management of tourism in protected areas that takes account of the needs of the environment, local residents, local businesses and visitors.

The (add name of tourism sector establishment /business) is working in partnership with(add name of protected area) contributing to sustainable tourism.

As a Charter Partner we are committed to implementing each of the following actions ...

**Insert list of actions assumed by
the business and by the protected area²⁰.**

²⁰ During 2007 the Charter Parks Network will provide information as guidance for the protected areas that want to start the part II process. EUROPARC Sections will also be able to start working on their own guidelines to be presented to EUROPARC to become officially approved guidelines in the protected areas of their country / area.

Annex 2: EXAMPLE OF PARTNERSHIP CERTIFICATE

(Adapt as appropriate. European Charter logo to be provided)

The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas

This is to certify that *(add name of tourism sector establishment /business)* is working in partnership with*(add name of protected area)* contributing to sustainable tourism.

As a Charter Partner we have been awarded the Partnership Certificate for adopting actions that will contribute to sustainable tourism in*(add name of protected area)*:

**Insert list of actions assumed by
the business**

**Signed and dated by CEO/Chairman of Protected Area Authority
(valid to / from.....*(add dates)* and by*(the tourism business)*)**

SECTION III

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM FOR COMPANIES ORGANISING TOURS TO AND WITHIN PROTECTED AREAS

Travel companies are increasingly offering “discovery tours” in protected area. This confirms their willingness to promote new forms of travel and the discovery of natural environments, and plant and animal life.

These tours, which are voluntarily limited to groups of 12 to 15, encourage contact with people living in the places visited. They have been devised by men and women who love nature, who want to help others discover it, and to pass on their knowledge of the world of protected areas.

In subscribing to this Charter, the travel company managers undertake to adopt a new tourism ethic, which will contribute to the development of sustainable tourism in the areas which they cover. This is aimed at increasing satisfaction for customers who are increasingly concerned about the environment and heritage, and reducing the impact of their activities.

Benefits of the Charter for travel companies

The Charter allows the travel company to:

- Be recognised at European level
- Develop new business opportunities, by:
 - targeting customers who are environmentally aware
 - offering a product which meets the expectations of new European customers
 - forming partnerships with travel companies in other European countries creating off-season tourism
- Strengthen the quality of its product by:
 - providing a better reception for their customers in the protected area
 - involvement of local people during the visit
 - support from the protected area during the development of the holiday including help in selecting sites, availability of staff of the protected area, help in identifying local personalities to meet during visits etc.
- Increase visitor satisfaction by:
 - Demonstrating commitment to the development of sustainable tourism in protected areas
 - Participation in small groups accompanied by qualified guides.
 -

Undertaking by the travel company

- 1. To accept and respect the principles of sustainable development incorporated in this Charter whilst adapting them to its own activity**
- 2. To define a strategy (1 year) in close partnership with the protected area authority**

This strategy will put its commitment to the area into practice, with regard to:

- Respect for the environment
- Support for local economic and social development
- Preserving quality of life
- Customer satisfaction

The strategy will define the principle objectives to be achieved by the company.

To contribute to the development of sustainable tourism in the area, the company will strengthen its links with local service-providers (hoteliers, local travel agencies, restaurateurs, craftsmen, and local personalities who can contribute during the visits).

The company will become involved wherever possible in the life of the region visited by taking part in meetings organised by the protected area and by contributing new ideas for implementing and monitoring its sustainable tourism development strategy.

3. To present this strategy in the form of an action plan

This action plan will specify actions which have been or will be taken to achieve the objectives set by the strategy. It will define the company's commitment to the following **key issues**:

Protection and enhancement of natural and cultural heritage

Respect for capacity limits

The activities proposed by the company will be compatible with the conservation objectives of the protected area. With this in mind, it will ensure that they have minimum impact on the environment. It will take account of policies and recommendations specific to the protected area and will seek advice from the area's staff when developing new activities.

Enhancement of local heritage

The company will, wherever possible, help to enhance natural, cultural and historical heritage. This means, in particular, that its activities will be based on discovering and understanding this heritage.

Conservation of natural resources

The company will give preference to local service providers which demonstrate commitment to the environment. These will have in place a programme of environmental management covering water management, energy efficiency and land use, as well as waste reduction.

The company will seek to reduce the impact of its own activities on the natural resources.

Contribution to heritage conservation

The company will assist the protected area in its mission of protecting and monitoring the natural surroundings, by notifying any changes observed by its customers or tour guides. It will introduce a return-on-capital programme, including a percentage of its tour prices to be donated towards conservation and heritage preservation, and it will notify its customers of this.

Improving the quality of the tourism experience

In order to meet the expectations of European customers, the travel company will assist the protected area in its quality procedure, by means of advice and recommendations. It will apply the same quality assurance procedure to its own product.

Market research

To improve customer satisfaction, the company will keep the protected area authority informed of the expectations and needs of its customers. This will allow the area visited to adapt according to demand.

Quality procedure

The tourism product will be based on a total quality approach, covering reception, services provided, equipment and facilities, marketing and promotion, and of course after-sales service. Careful selection of the local service providers will help the company to reach this objective.

Identifying new customers

The company will identify new customers who are sensitive to the quality of the environment. It will pay particular attention to certain types of visitors who are often ignored in tourism promotions, such as disabled, ill, or convalescing people, young people and low income groups. The company will avoid any form of elitism in the selection of its customers.

Raising public awareness

Education and interpretation

All the company's tours and stays in the protected area will be aimed at raising awareness and education visitors on the environment. They will seek to enhance customers' respect for nature and their understanding of the environments visited.

Visitor information

Wherever possible, the company will arrange meetings in preparation for the visit, and will also provide complete information about the protected area with the travel documents. This is to make visitors aware of the natural and cultural heritage and traditions of the region which they will be able to see during the tour. Throughout the tour, visitors will be provided with additional high-quality information by the tour guides and other participants.

Visitors will also be given advice, in particular with regard to purchasing souvenirs. They will be told how to respect local flora and fauna and the general life of the region throughout the visit.

Customers will also be informed about the objectives of heritage conservation and sustainable development.

Appropriate marketing and promotion

The marketing and promotion activities of the company will help visitors understand the true value of the protected area. Care should be taken in describing the wildlife which may be seen – never guarantee the sighting of a particular species but rather encourage the discovery of its habitat.

All promotional material should emphasise the fragile nature of the areas visited. Any brochures and other sales material produced by the company could contain advice to future visitors to the protected areas. Finally, the fact that the company is a signatory to this Charter should only be mentioned on products which are the subject of a contract with the protected area and the European evaluation committee.

Development of tourism specific to the area

The travel package developed by the company will especially encourage the discovery and appreciation of the local cultural and natural heritage, increased environmental awareness and an understanding of the role of the protected area.

To achieve these objectives, the company will arrange for nature guides to be present during the tours. These guides will present the environment using a systematic approach, explaining details about the eco-system and the various habitats. These guides should have a good understanding of the region and the individual sites visited.

Training

Training is an essential tool in putting the company's commitment into action. All employees, including sales staff, contractors, tour guides etc. should be made aware of the concept of sustainable development. This will complement their existing knowledge about the natural and cultural heritage of the region being visited, and will contribute to better information and satisfaction for visitors.

Protection and support of the quality of life of the inhabitants of the protected area

To guarantee friendly relations between visitors and local residents, the company will at all times seek to preserve, and even to improve, the quality of life for the latter. Priority will therefore be given to respecting the life of the community and local customs.

To this end, the company will organise each visit with a limited number of participants (between 12 and 15 people). It will give appropriate advice to visitors on avoiding behaviour which might offend the local inhabitants. This will especially be the responsibility of the tour guides.

Finally, the company will become involved in local life by helping to promote cultural events organised by the people living in the protected area.

Social and economic development

Support for the local economy

To support the local economy, the company will encourage development of tourism based on local initiatives, by taking full advantage of local services in its tours, using local guides, accommodation, restaurants and shops wherever possible.

Development of new employment opportunities

Wherever possible the company will encourage social integration by offering employment to local people with special needs and to young people, and providing equal opportunities for men and women.

Control of tourist numbers

Monitoring visitor flows

The company will contribute to monitoring of visitor flows by providing the protected area with regular information on its itineraries and the time and duration of its visits.

Channelling of visitor flows

The company will commit itself to directing its customers towards the less sensitive parts of the area. It will also encourage discovery of the protected area at times when it is less busy, in line with the promotional efforts of the protected area.

Traffic control

Travel to and within the protected area should wherever possible be by means of public transport, walking or cycling. The company will therefore provide its customers with information on getting to the sites by public transport. It will also endeavour to arrange assembly points at stations or public transport termini.

Moreover, all motorised vehicles used for leisure purposes (e.g. 4 x 4 vehicles etc.) will be excluded from all tourist facilities.

Management and integration of visitor facilities

To support the area's efforts to enhance local architecture, the company will favour accommodation facilities which are typical of the region and which have been well integrated into their surroundings.

4. Ratification of the travel company's commitment, evaluation, and renewing commitment to the Charter

Procedures are to be developed for ratification of the travel company's commitment to the Charter, based on the above requirements.

The **EUROPARC Federation** is the umbrella organisation of protected areas in Europe. The Federation is a pan-European, politically independent, non-governmental organisation, whose purpose is to support and promote the full range of protected areas in Europe. It brings together a membership of some 500 national parks, nature parks and biosphere reserves. The Federation is winner of the World of TUI Environmental Award 2001.

Impressum

The official text of the Charter was first published by the Fédération des Parcs naturels régionaux de France, 1999

Revision and update: EUROPARC Federation 2007

EUROPARC Federation
Kröllstraße 5
D-94481 Grafenau
Tel : +49 (0)8552 96100
Fax : +49 (0)8552 961019
e-mail : info@european-charter.org

For further details on the Charter see also www.european-charter.org

Implementation guide

This is an ***optional*** tool for protected areas, proposing a methodology for development and evaluation of the strategy and action plan. Some protected areas have found these a useful model on which to base their work with the Charter. Other approaches are also possible and acceptable.

Guide to Implementation of the Charter by Protected Areas and Evaluation Process

Presentation of the implementation guidelines

To become a signatory to the Charter, you undertake to submit a sustainable tourism development strategy and an action plan to achieve the aims of the area.

In order to help you in this work, we have produced these implementation guidelines, which are based on the experience of 10 European pilot parks which have contributed to the creation of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas.

This guide is made up of 5 parts

- I. An introductory section which presents the main principles for preparation and implementation of a sustainable tourism strategy.
- II. A detailed method for preparation of your strategy.
- III. A list of concrete measures to implement in order to achieve your objectives.
- IV. An evaluation guide for your action plan.
This guide presents the essential actions to be taken with regard to each of the themes presented in the Charter.
- V. The evaluation process for your strategy and action plan.
This will be used by the expert responsible for evaluation of your action plan and by the European Committee for Evaluation.

In order to allow the evaluation of the quality of your project and to facilitate the audit of the results achieved after a period of five years, you must state the objectives of sustainable tourism development (in the fields of protection of the environment, economic and social development, preservation and enhancement of the quality of life of the local people and improvement in the quality of tourist facilities). These objectives must be specific enough to be used as indicators for the monitoring and evaluation process.

For the same purpose you must then select indicators for the monitoring of your action plan. This approach will allow us to measure the efficiency and relevance of the actions taken and to plan correctives actions.

I. Principles for preparation and implementation of a sustainable tourism development strategy

Reminder

The tourism development strategy must be drawn up according to the principles presented in the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas.

Start from the needs of the area

Tourism can be used as a powerful lever for sustainable development. It has many effects, on the local economy as much as on the environment and quality of life. General tourism management must aim to find out how tourist activity can best contribute towards achieving the aims of a protected area. Needs will differ according to the areas concerned, but nevertheless it is always possible to adopt a global approach linking environmental protection, social and economic development, quality of life and visitor satisfaction.

A strategy for sustainable tourism development must therefore be based on a complete diagnosis of the needs of an area and its tourism potential.

Work in partnership

The concept of sustainable tourism development necessarily involves all those concerned with the effects of tourist activity in the area. This partnership, affirmed by those involved locally, works towards better distribution of the benefits of tourism in the area and promotion of ways of receiving visitors under the best possible conditions with regard to nature conservation, local residents, visitors and those involved in tourism in the area.

This partnership must be supported by the institution responsible for managing the protected area, local authorities and the area's tourism businesses²¹ taking their full share of responsibility. In other words, general tourism management means : overall awareness of what is involved in sustainable tourism, agreement between all those concerned, and effective co-operation between the different partners who are all working to promote better tourism management in the area.

Raise general awareness

Drawing up and implementing a sustainable tourism development strategy needs the involvement of everyone in the area who is in any way connected with tourist activities, directly or indirectly.

Their participation, essential for the success of this strategy, is often linked to a general awareness of the issues involved in sustainable tourism development.

You must therefore obtain some objective information on the problems of managing tourism in the area (Inventory, research, analysis phase).

You must motivate an initial working group (consisting of people who are recognised by all those involved in the sustainable tourism development project), then raise general awareness of what is at stake. This can be achieved by visiting a park and tourism professionals who are already signatories to the Charter. It may also follow a festive occasion or take place in reaction to a crisis situation.

Mobilise and involve partners

Those concerned locally must be mobilised and involved if your project is to succeed. The success of sustainable tourism development will depend on the amount of co-operation and integration between all those concerned, because neither the private nor the public community sector have adequate skills, resources and/or information to take into account, in their individual actions, all the factors which influence planning and tourism development over the whole area.

²¹ These enterprises directly or their local representatives

Launch the strategy officially

You must obtain the actual commitment (sometimes financial) of your partners in the sustainable tourism development strategy. For this, you must show them that they are taking part in a real and sustainable project.

You must then officially launch the preparation phase of the strategy for sustainable tourism development, followed by its implementation phase.

This could take the form of an event (official meeting, festive occasion, etc.).

Maintain your partners' motivation

Your partners will want to see rapid results for their commitment, but sustainable tourism development is a long-term procedure and some results will only be visible over a period of time.

You must therefore make sure that you implement sustainable tourism development actions whose initial benefits will be visible in the short-term so as to sustain your partners' motivation.

Allocate the necessary resources

Drawing up the strategy for sustainable tourism development in your area will take a good deal of time and money. It is certainly difficult to imagine how this strategy can be drawn up without the almost exclusive services of a project co-ordinator.

The concerted action of all those involved also requires their regular participation. Finally, the help of a consultant may be necessary when the strategy is being put into words.

You and your partners must be aware of these implications if you wish to guarantee the success of your sustainable tourism development project.

II. Method for preparation of your strategy

The key questions to be answered

Defining a strategy for sustainable tourism development consists of answering a series of key questions summarising the diagnosis and underlining the tourism issues for the area. In other words, the diagnosis must answer the following questions:

- What problems exist in your area with regard to tourism?
- What are the issues at stake for protecting the heritage?
- How can this heritage be enhanced?
- What are the issues at stake for environmental protection?
- What part can tourism play in the area's economic and social development?
- What kind of tourism should be developed to respect and help to improve the local environment and services to the population?
- How can the area's tourist facilities be improved?
- What sort of consumer group should be given priority?
- How can tourism in the area be managed so as to handle all these issues in a better way?
- How can tourism be better organised to increase the profitability and feasibility of the tourism businesses in your area?
- How can the environmental awareness of all those involved in the area be raised to improve their knowledge of the heritage?

Phases in the preparation of your strategy

To guide you through preparation of your strategy, we suggest that you follow a 6-phase programme:

Phase 1: Defining the main aims of sustainable tourism development

Starting with an initial consultation with those principally involved in the area, and analysis of various existing studies you will identify the main aims of your area and its tourism.

- Aims for protection of the environment and the heritage.
- Socio-economic aims.
- Aims relating to the quality of life of local people.
- Tourism aims.

Phase 2: Producing a diagnosis of the area

In order to define the objectives of your strategy, you will need to produce an inventory of the heritage as well as a more precise diagnosis of the needs of the area in relation to the aims of tourism. You will have to determine the strengths, weaknesses, threats, restrictions and opportunities for tourism in the area. This diagnosis will form the basis for discussion leading to definition of the sustainable tourism development strategy. This must be a partnership procedure, shared by and appropriate to all those involved locally.

This diagnosis also plays an essential role in producing an appraisal of your strategy and must therefore provide a number of precise indicators which are easy to quantify.

This diagnosis must include:

The inventory of the local heritage

- Make an inventory of the heritage:
 - sensitive natural environments, flora and fauna, natural features,
 - architectural heritage and vernacular buildings,
 - local heritage excluding buildings (local culture, traditions).
- Assess this heritage's need for protection.
- Assess its tourism potential including the host capacities.
- Identify those elements of the heritage to be developed for purposes of tourism.
- Identify the image and values to be developed for purposes of tourism. Analyse how they are perceived by residents and visitors.

The economic and social diagnosis

- Identify the area's economic and social aims.
- Classify the area's economic activities according to their impact on the quality of the heritage and select those which should be supported as a matter of priority by tourism activity.
- Identify the various opportunities for the development of certain economic activities with tourism in mind (visits to local craftsmen or businesses, farmhouse accommodation, distribution of local products by restaurants, etc.).
- Identify the opportunities for developing new types of jobs, particularly multi-purpose activity, presentation of nature by local residents etc.
- Identify partnerships to be developed between those involved in tourism and others concerned with the area, to promote environmentally friendly activities and social and economic development in the area.

The diagnosis of the issues at stake with regard to improving the local environment and maintaining services

- Assess how the area's permanent inhabitants view tourism.
- Study the opportunities for involving the area's inhabitants in tourism activities.
- Find out what the permanent inhabitants' expectations are with respect to services and leisure activities in the area.
- Find ways of maintaining services to the population through tourism.

The diagnosis with regard to tourism

- Assess current tourist numbers.
- Analyse tourist market trends.
- Analyse specific tourist markets for products to be developed.
- Analyse the adequacy of current tourist facilities with respect to the expectations of targeted tourist markets (current consumer group and new markets to be targeted).
- Assess the quality of the area's tourist facilities.
- Identify the need to improve quality and adequacy of the offer in line with new expectations.
- Identify the partnerships to be developed between those concerned with tourist activities to improve the organisation of tourism in the area.

The Study of the flow of visitors

- Analyse visitor flows in space and time.
- Define the objectives for controlling visitor flows in accordance with the objectives of heritage protection, support for economic and social development, improving the local environment and enhancing the quality of experience for the visitors.

The Diagnosis with regard to education and interpretation

- Identify the aims of environmental education and interpretation of the heritage.
- Assess the quality of the current educational and interpretation facilities available in the area.
- Identify the targeted consumer groups and possible instructors for education and interpretation.

Phase 3 : Evaluate the costs and resources required by the strategy

- Evaluate the financial/human needs and resources, where these can be found, including the requirement for and costs of training to implement this strategy.

Phase 4 : Redefine objectives and strategic choices on the basis of resources available and priorities

At this stage, you will redefine, together with your partners, the objectives of the sustainable tourism development strategy, which means making strategic choices, defining the order of priorities in time and space, and allocating tasks. Choices will be made on the basis of the resources available.

This phase is two-fold :

- Correlate the ecological, economic, social and tourism data.
- Discuss and decide on new objectives for the strategy of sustainable tourism development with key partners, taking into account the results of the global analysis of the needs of the area, the threats and opportunities.

1. Heritage protection and development objectives

You will define the main themes of the strategy for sustainable tourism development, providing maximum protection of resources and development of the heritage on which tourist activity will be based. At this stage, you will also define the main aims of controlling tourist numbers.

2. Economic and social development objectives

Together with your partners you will define the main trends in the tourism economy and its contribution to the area's economic and social development. The various interactions developed must be such as to maintain the area's economic diversity, support traditional activities, and play a role in maintaining the quality of the heritage.

3. Objectives relating to the preservation and enhancement of local residents' quality of life

You will define objectives relating to tourism's contribution to the preservation and enhancement of local residents' quality of life. You will also define objectives for tourism to help to improve the environment and provide support for public services such as transport, leisure activities, etc.

4. Objectives relating to improvements in tourist facilities

In close co-operation with all those involved in tourism, you must define objectives with regard to improving facilities, to achieve:

- a better balance between supply and demand,
- improved profitability of tourist facilities linked to better management of visitor flows in space and time,
- better organisation of tourism in the area,
- new consumer groups for the destination,
- a high quality tourist experience specific to the protected areas.

Phase 5 : Defining indicators and tools for monitoring and evaluating the strategy

Any strategy preparation procedure must include a phase for selection of indicators enabling evaluation of the results (achievement of objectives). These indicators must be clear and precise and easy to quantify. They must also be expressed in terms which are understood and shared by all the partners.

Phase 6 : Defining the action plan with reference to the objectives of the strategy and the resources available

III. The content of your action plan

Your action plan must be established with reference to the objectives of protecting and enhancing the local heritage, protecting the environment, economic and social development, improving the surroundings in which local residents live, and the services provided to them, and enhancing the experiences of visitors. This constitutes the operational phase of the area's strategy for the development of sustainable tourism, and consequently it will deal with all the issues brought to light by the diagnosis made.

Improving the quality of tourism on offer

1. Define the priority consumer groups.
2. Develop new products to meet the needs of the target consumer groups.
3. Introduce a quality procedure throughout the area.
4. Develop the partnerships necessary to improve the quality of the tourism on offer.

Creation of a specific type of tourism

5. Identify and develop products and activities appropriate to the specific nature of tourism in the protected areas. This may be tourism which involves meeting the local people, discovering the natural surroundings and learning to understand them etc. In any event, this kind of tourism must satisfy the criteria of authenticity and quality and be compatible with environmental protection objectives.

Raising public awareness

6. Develop educational and interpretation activities.
7. Involve tourism professionals in these tasks.
8. Introduce a visitors' information programme (tourism and environmental information) supervised by the protected area team and tourism operators.
9. Produce tourism advertising messages which will help to raise public awareness.

Training

10. Set up the training courses needed to achieve the objectives defined by the strategy.
Training people involved in tourism about the heritage, environmental management and welcoming the public.
Training the protected area teams.
Training other people involved in tourist activities.

Preserving and improving the local environment and maintaining services

11. Define measures to ensure that tourism development respects the local environment.
12. Define measures which will enable public services to be supported by tourism.
13. Introduce leisure programmes for local residents.

Protection and enhancement of the heritage

14. Specify measures to protect and develop sensitive environments, flora and fauna.
15. Decide on heritage conservation and enhancement procedures.
16. Define measures for environmental protection and the reduction of nuisance.
17. Specify measures necessary to ensure that the development of tourism is kept within the limits imposed by the area's natural, cultural and social environment.
18. Identify, with partners, opportunities for tourism to contribute to the maintenance of the heritage.

Economic and social development

19. Introduce measures whereby tourism can support the local economy.
20. Introduce measures whereby tourism can support social development.
21. Introduce measures for better distribution of the benefits of tourism.
22. Introduce measures for the development of new types of employment.
23. Develop the partnerships necessary to improve tourism's contribution to the local economy and a broader consideration of the environment.

Controlling tourist numbers

24. Introduce measures to channel the flow of visitors in space and time.
25. Introduce transport management measures (hiking routes, cycle tracks, service for collecting visitors from the station, etc.).

Monitoring and evaluation of the action plan

26. Agree with the partners indicators for monitoring the action plan and methods for collecting these data.

IV. Guide to evaluation of your action plan

This guide lists the essential actions to be taken within the framework of a strategy for the development of sustainable tourism.

Its objective is two-fold: to guide you in the preparation of your action plan and to serve as a reference for the expert responsible for evaluating the plan for your area.

How does it work?

Presentation and classification of actions with reference to the area's objectives

This guide provides a scale of 0 to 5 for the classification of actions for your area, in terms of levels of achievement, planning and relevance.

5 corresponds to the highest level of achievement, planning or relevance.

We would ask you to fill in this form, indicating each action's classification level.

Some of these may not be relevant to your area. If this is the case, indicate level 0 and attach a note.

If actions taken or provided for by your plan are not included in this list, please enter them, using the terminology proposed in this document.

This will facilitate the work of the evaluator.

Definition of the indicators for monitoring your action plan

To adopt an evaluation procedure, you should choose, together with your partners, a series of indicators that will allow you to monitor and assess the effectiveness and relevance of the actions taken. This guide suggests a number of appropriate indicators (positive effects of tourism on the environment, the economy, improvement in visitor satisfaction, etc.) as well as threat indicators. The latter correspond to the negative effects of tourism on the area, which must be kept under surveillance.

This procedure will allow you to monitor and quantify the effectiveness of actions and if necessary to consider corrective measures after a period of five years.

Improving the quality of tourism on offer

Reminder of the actions to be taken

- Define the priority consumer groups.
- Develop new products to meet the needs of the target consumer groups.
- Introduce a quality procedure throughout the area.
- Develop the partnerships necessary to improve the quality of the tourism on offer.

Improving the quality of tourism on offer

1.1. Strategy to promote a better understanding of potential visitors

Essential actions	<i>Level of achievement</i>	<i>Level of planning</i>	<i>Level of relevance of the area to</i>	Comments attached
Level of achievement, planning and relevance to the area (5 = strong priority for the area)	0 to 5	0 to 5	0 to 5	Annexes
Setting up of an observation post to monitor tourist numbers				
Implementation of a market study to identify new products to be developed				

Indicator proposed by the area (opportunities/risks)? :

Examples of indicators :

Example: balance between supply and demand
 Example: increase in the number of enterprises which have developed activities/facilities aimed at the destination's priority consumer groups. (Special offers for families : crèches, child reductions - Special menus for ramblers, etc.)

Method of collecting information: supply and demand audit

1.2. Strategy for a quality assurance procedure

Essential actions	<i>Level of achievement</i>	<i>Level of planning</i>	<i>Level of relevance to the area</i>	Comments attached
Level of achievement, planning and relevance to the area (5 = strong priority for the area)	0 to 5	0 to 5	0 to 5	Annexes
Implementation of a programme to evaluate visitor satisfaction				
Implementation of a quality plan for all tourist facilities available in the protected area, in partnership with service providers in the tourism industry				
Implementation of an ongoing programme of improvements in quality (covering the welcome, equipment and facilities, services, advertising, marketing and customer support)				
Setting up a quality assurance committee				

Indicator proposed by the area (opportunities/risks) ? :

Examples of indicators :

Example : level of customer loyalty / obtained by questionnaire

Example : level of customer satisfaction / obtained by questionnaire

Proposed questionnaires (Source : World Tourism Organization) :

How would you describe your experience during your last visit to the Park ?

Excellent	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
10 9 8	7 6 5	4 3 2 1

Method of collecting information : asking visitors

1.3. Strategy to attract new consumer groups

Essential actions	<i>Level of achievement</i>	<i>Level of planning</i>	<i>Level of relevance to the area</i>	Comments attached
Level of achievement, planning and relevance to the area (5 = strong priority for the area)	0 to 5	0 to 5	0 to 5	Annexes
Carrying out market studies with a view to attracting new consumer groups who meet the objectives of tourism management and improvement in the profitability of existing tourist establishments				
Measures to welcome disabled people in the area				
Measures to welcome sick or convalescent people in the area				
Measures to welcome young people or people on low incomes in the area				

Indicator proposed by the area (opportunities/risks) ? :

Examples of indicators :

Example : increase in the number of visitors corresponding to the new consumer groups targeted - statistics relating to numbers of visitors by type of consumer group/ Example : increase in the number of packages sold to young people and students in the area

Method of collecting information : collecting of figures from tourism operators and in the main facilities in partnership with local/regional tourism institutions

Creation of a specific type of tourism

Reminder of the actions to be taken

- Identify and develop products and activities appropriate to the specific nature of tourism in the protected areas. This may be tourism which involves meeting the local people, discovering the natural surroundings and learning to understand them etc. In any event, this kind of tourism must satisfy the criteria of authenticity and quality and be compatible with environmental protection objectives.

2.1. Strategy to produce a type of tourism specific to a "Protected Area"

<i>Essential actions</i>	<i>Level of achievement</i>	<i>Level of planning</i>	<i>Level of relevance to the area</i>	Comments attached
Level of achievement, planning and relevance to the area (5 = strong priority for the area)	0 to 5	0 to 5	0 to 5	Annexes
Implementation of a low-volume tourism activity programme promoting the discovery and interpretation of the natural and cultural heritage and integration of visitors and local residents under the best possible conditions				
Training and support for providers of tourism services and tour operators to develop tourism products based on discovery of the local natural and cultural heritage and compatible with environmental protection objectives				
Support for local freelance nature guides to develop «nature» activities				
Implementation of promotional activities				

Indicator proposed by the area (opportunities/risks) ? :

Examples of indicators :

Example : increase in the number of activities based on discovery and interpretation of surroundings

Method of collecting information : analysis of sales documents by the main local tourism operators / Sales analyses

Raising Public Awareness

Reminder of the actions to be taken

- Develop educational and interpretation activities.
- Involve tourism professionals in these tasks.
- Introduce a visitors' information programme (tourist and environmental information) supervised by the protected area team and tourism operators.
- Produce tourism advertising messages which will help to raise public awareness.

3.1. Strategy for education and interpretation

<i>Essential actions</i>	<i>Level of achievement</i>	<i>Level of planning</i>	<i>Level of relevance to the area</i>	Comments attached
Level of achievement, planning and relevance to the area (5 = strong priority for the area)	0 to 5	0 to 5	0 to 5	Annexes
Development of activities for education and interpretation of the local flora and fauna				
Development of activities for education and interpretation of the area's local history and skills				
Development of activities for education and interpretation specifically designed for young visitors and schoolchildren				
Development of activities for education and interpretation offered by tourist service providers				

Indicator proposed by the area (opportunities/risks) ? :

Examples of indicators:

Example 1 : increase in the number of participants in educational and interpretation activities

Example 2 : increase in the number of tourism businesses offering activities linked to education and interpretation

Example 3 : evaluation of the quality of educational and interpretation activities by analysis of visitor behaviour

Method of collecting information : Example 1 : numbers participating in the activities proposed by the protected area

Example 2 : analysis of activities offered by tourism businesses in the area

3.2. Strategy for providing information to the public

<i>Essential actions</i>	<i>Level of achievement</i>	<i>Level of planning</i>	<i>Level of relevance to the area</i>	Comments attached
Level of achievement, planning and relevance to the area (5 = strong priority for the area)	0 to 5	0 to 5	0 to 5	Annexes
Setting up of information centres within the Park				
Involvement of tourism establishments and businesses located in the Park in providing information to the public				
Creation of public information programmes on the Parks' missions and the issues involved in sustainable development				
Distribution of high quality information in the main languages spoken by visitors				
Setting up of information centres outside the park area boundaries				

Indicator proposed by the area (opportunities/risks) ? :

Examples of indicators :

Example 1 : availability of information outside opening hours of the visitor centres run by the Park
 Example 2 : quality of information provided to the public

Method of collecting information : Example 1 : analysis of opening days and hours of all establishments and facilities providing information to visitors :
 Example 2 : quality audit

3.3. Strategy for responsible marketing and promotion

<i>Essential actions</i>	<i>Level of achievement</i>	<i>Level of planning</i>	<i>Level of relevance to the area</i>	Comments attached
Level of achievement, planning and relevance to the area (5 = strong priority for the area)	0 to 5	0 to 5	0 to 5	Annexes
Advising tourist service providers to use advertising material compatible with the image and values of the park				
Implementing a public relations plan permitting identification of the charter signatories and stressing their commitment				

Indicator proposed by the area (opportunities/risks) ? :

Examples of indicators :

Example : development in the number of businesses, institutions and other partners which have used advertising messages and selling strategies inconsistent or incompatible with the overall image

Method of collecting information : Analysis of sales records from all those involved in the area's tourism, or studying the way the destination's image is viewed by visitors

Training

Reminder of the actions to be taken

- Set up the training courses needed to implement the action plan.
 - Training people involved in tourism about the heritage, environmental management and welcoming the public.
 - Training the protected area's teams.
 - Training other people involved in tourist activities.
-

4.1. Strategy of training to achieve objectives

Essential actions	<i>Level of achievement</i>	<i>Level of planning</i>	<i>Level of relevance to the area</i>	Comments attached
Level of achievement, planning and relevance to the area (5 = strong priority for the area)	0 to 5	0 to 5	0 to 5	Annexes
Introducing training programmes on sustainable tourism for staff of the protected area				

Indicator proposed by the area (opportunities/risks) ? :

Examples of indicators :

Formation

4.2. Strategy for training those involved in tourism

<i>Essential actions</i>	<i>Level of achievement</i>	<i>Level of planning</i>	<i>Level of relevance to the area</i>	Comments attached
Level of achievement, planning and relevance to the area (5 = strong priority for the area)	0 to 5	0 to 5	0 to 5	Annexes
Setting up of training programmes on the use of renewable energy for those involved in tourism				
Setting up of training programmes on sustainable development for those involved in tourism				
Organisation of training sessions on the local natural and cultural heritage for tourist service providers in the area				

Indicator proposed by the area (opportunities/risks) ? :

Examples of indicators:
 Example: match between the training programmes proposed and the needs of the area
 Method of collecting information : general study of the area with reference to all the training on offer and analysis of needs

Preservation and Enhancement of Local Residents' Quality of Life

Reminder of the actions to be taken

- Define measures to ensure that tourism development respects the local environment.
- Define measures which will enable public services to be supported by tourism.
- Introduce leisure programmes for local residents.

5.1. Strategy to encourage the preservation and improvement of local residents' quality of life

<i>Essential actions</i>	<i>Level of achievement</i>	<i>Level of planning</i>	<i>Level of relevance to the area</i>	Comments attached
Level of achievement, planning and relevance to the area (5 = strong priority for the area)	0 to 5	0 to 5	0 to 5	Annexes
Participation of park residents in decisions relating to tourism				
Improving the appearance of local towns and villages				
Taking into account the specific needs of local residents in the organisation and management of tourism in the area				
Taking into account the specific needs of local residents for leisure activities				
Contractual measures to manage conflicts between the rights of residents and those of visitors (See access management)				
Measures to promote quality encounters between residents and visitors such as giving preference to small groups and making visitors aware of the local culture				
Reduction of noise nuisance in villages (See 6.8: Strategy for reducing noise nuisance)				

Indicator proposed by the area (opportunities/risks) ? :

Examples of indicators :

Example : developments in the number of complaints made by local residents (conflicts regarding use)

Method of collecting information : letters sent by local residents to the authority responsible for managing the protected area

Protection and Enhancement of the Heritage

Reminder of the actions to be taken

- Specify measures to protect and develop sensitive environments, flora and fauna.
- Decide on heritage conservation and enhancement procedures.
- Define measures for environmental protection and the reduction of nuisance.
- Specify measures necessary to ensure that the development of tourism is kept within the limits imposed by the area's natural, cultural and social environment.
- Identify, with partners, opportunities for tourism to contribute to the maintenance of the heritage.

6.1. Strategy for protection and development of sensitive natural environments, flora and fauna

Essential actions	<i>Level of achievement</i>	<i>Level of planning</i>	<i>Level of relevance to the area</i>	Comments attached
Level of achievement, planning and relevance to the area (5 = strong priority for the area)	0 to 5	0 to 5	0 to 5	Annexes
Inventory of biological assets				
Implementation of protection measures for identified sensitive environments				
- Regulatory measures for biotopes and biological nature reserves, classification of Ramsar zones or application of the directive on Habitats				
- Contractual measures (Subsidies for economic partners)				
Partnership with nature conservation associations				
Implementation of a system for the monitoring of the areas, the flora and fauna				
Actions for the restoration of damaged fragile areas				
Advice to tourist service providers and tour operators to develop tourism products compatible with environmental protection objectives				
Creation of special facilities to reconcile the presence of visitors and protection of sensitive areas, flora and fauna				
Creation of a centre for the study and protection of flora and fauna				

Indicator proposed by the area (opportunities/risks) ? :

Examples of indicators :

Example 1 : development of the population of a species characteristic (indicative) of the quality of a specific habitat; Example 2 : number of animals injured on the road; Example 3 : reduction in the birth rate of certain species (disturbance of nesting sites)

Method of collecting information : Examples 1 and 3 monitoring of populations

Conservation and enhancement of the architectural heritage and vernacular buildings

6.2. Strategy for conservation and enhancement of the architectural heritage and vernacular buildings

Essential actions	<i>Level of achievement</i>	<i>Level of planning</i>	<i>Level of relevance to the area</i>	Comments attached
Level of achievement, planning and relevance to the area (5 = strong priority for the area)	0 to 5	0 to 5	0 to 5	Annexes
Public information on measures to conserve and enhance vernacular buildings				
Development of tourism based on the architectural heritage and vernacular buildings (accommodation with special character, museums, etc.)				
Maintaining public areas of «character» in the villages				
Restoration of the vernacular heritage				
Training programme aimed at teaching craftsmen traditional building techniques				

Indicator proposed by the area (opportunities/risks) ? :

Examples of indicators :
 Example 1 : increase in acts of vandalism on the local heritage; Example 2 : enhancement of sites promoted to tourists
 Method of collecting information : Example 1 : monitoring the annual costs of site maintenance and restoration (Source : World Tourism Organisation);
 Example 2 : numbers visiting heritage sites

Conservation and enhancement of the local heritage (not buildings)

6.3. Strategy for conservation and enhancement of the local heritage

<i>Essential actions</i>	<i>Level of achievement</i>	<i>Level of planning</i>	<i>Level of relevance to the area</i>	Comments attached
Level of achievement, planning and relevance to the area (5 = strong priority for the area)	0 to 5	0 to 5	0 to 5	Annexes
Measures to encourage residents to preserve their local culture				
Emphasising the local culture in tourism promotion for the area				
Creation of amenities highlighting the local culture (resource centre, ecomuseums, museum of art and traditions)				
Creation of festivals highlighting the local cultural heritage				
Support for research and documentary work concerning the local cultural heritage				
Training programme for the enhancement of traditional skills				
Programmes to raise awareness of local cultural traditions amongst schoolchildren (visitors and local residents)				

Indicator proposed by the area (opportunities/risks) ? :

Examples of indicators :

Example : evidence of local culture: (number of residents participating in local events, ability of residents to organise or suggest the creation of events in their town or village, etc.)
 Method of collecting information : analysis of the local calendar of events, monitoring the numbers of local residents attending such events

Preservation of resources and safeguard of spaces

6.4. Strategy for land use control and landscape management

<i>Essential actions</i>	<i>Level of achievement</i>	<i>Level of planning</i>	<i>Level of relevance to the area</i>	Comments attached
Level of achievement, planning and relevance to the area (5 = strong priority for the area)	0 to 5	0 to 5	0 to 5	Annexes
<u>CONTROLLING LAND USE</u>				
Existence of town planning documents ²²				
Control of urban development				
Preservation of open spaces				
Preservation of traditional farmlands contributing to land management				
Preservation of natural areas (See 6.1 Strategy for protection and development of sensitive natural environments, flora and fauna)				
<u>PRESERVING DIVERSITY OF LANDSCAPES</u>				
Preservation of landscape characteristics (hedgerows, terracing, dry stone walls, etc.)				
Protection and enhancement of the architectural heritage and vernacular buildings (see 6.2. Strategy for conservation and enhancement of the architectural heritage and vernacular buildings)				
<u>LANDSCAPE QUALITY IMPROVEMENT</u>				
Addressing landscape problems				
Concealment of above-ground networks (power, gas, waste water treatment, etc.)				
Landscaping of highways (overpasses, etc.)				
Regulating information panels				
Regulating advertisements				
Panoramic views				
Landscape/Environment Charter signed with local authorities				
Guidelines for the use of local plant species in landscaping				

²² Give a description of the legal context

Indicator proposed by the area (opportunities/risks) ? :

Examples of indicators :

Example 1 : quality of tourism development in the area : (threats : uncontrolled tourism ; problem of the countryside becoming built-up, intensive housing development in the area) ; Example 2 : land allocation (threats : abandonment of agricultural land in favour of tourism); Example 3 : quality of landscapes

Method of collecting information: Examples 1 and 2 : ongoing mapping of towns and villages adhering to a land occupation plan, monitoring by a land management geographical information system; Example 3 : asking visitors

Preservation of resources and safeguard of spaces

6.5. Strategy for the preservation of air quality

<i>Essential actions</i>	<i>Level of achievement</i>	<i>Level of planning</i>	<i>Level of relevance to the area</i>	Comments attached
Level of achievement, planning and relevance to the area (5 = strong priority for the area)	0 to 5	0 to 5	0 to 5	Annexes
Measures to ensure good air quality for visitors and residents				
Measures to reduce airborne effluents from tourism activities				
Programme to promote clean-air energy sources				
Programme for reduction of pollution caused by emissions from private motor vehicles (See 8.4: Transport Control Strategy)				
Setting up of an air quality monitoring station				

Indicator proposed by the area (opportunities/risks) ? :

Examples of indicators :

Example 1 : level of air pollution; Example 2 : index of pollution caused by tourist facilities

Method of collecting information : monitoring air quality by a fixed monitoring station (example of indicators: nitrogen oxide, particulates etc.); number of enterprises which are signatories to the Charter having set up an air-pollution reduction programme (changing or regularly checking their refrigeration or air-conditioning system)

Preservation of resources and safeguard of spaces

6.6. Strategy for the preservation of water quality

Essential actions	<i>Level of achievement</i>	<i>Level of planning</i>	<i>Level of relevance to the area</i>	Comments attached
Level of achievement, planning and relevance to the area (5 = strong priority for the area)	0 to 5	0 to 5	0 to 5	Annexes
Measures to preserve the quality of water in rivers				
Measures to preserve the quality of water for swimming				
Measures to preserve the quality of wetlands (Ramsar areas, directive on habitats) (See 6.1: Strategy for protection and development of sensitive natural environments, flora and fauna)				
Existence of special water treatment equipment in the tourism industry (particularly connecting tourism facilities to special wastewater processing plants).				
Measure to reduce discharge into natural water from tourism activities				
Measure for better management of consumption of potable water in the tourism sector				
Training of tourism professionals on water management methods				
Measures to improve water quality at polluted locations				

Indicator proposed by the area (opportunities/risks) ? :

Examples of indicators :

Example 1 : quality of water for swimming; Example 2 : quality of wetlands; Example 3 : quality of river water; Example 4 : availability of fresh water
 Method of collecting information: Examples 1, 2, 3 : analysis of water pollution (e.g. concentration of heavy metals, coliform count); Example 4 : estimation of flow rates and comparison between the average volumes used by tourists and local residents respectively (with reference to seasonal variations)

Preservation of resources and safeguard of spaces

6.7. Strategy for the preservation of energy resources

<i>Essential actions</i>	<i>Level of achievement</i>	<i>Level of planning</i>	<i>Level of relevance to the area</i>	Comments attached
Level of achievement, planning and relevance to the area (5 = strong priority for the area)	0 to 5	0 to 5	0 to 5	Annexes
Measures to reduce consumption of non-renewable energy sources in the tourism sector				
Promotion of the use of renewable energy sources (taking care that these new techniques do not have a negative impact on the environment. They must be adapted to the objectives for sustainable development of the territory).				
Training programme on the use of renewable energy sources for tourist service providers				
Drawing up of an energy consumption plan for the whole area				

Indicator proposed by the area (opportunities/risks) ? :

Examples of indicators :

Example : development of non-renewable energy consumption in the tourism sector
 Method of collecting information : seasonal variation in energy consumption between the low season and the tourist season; increase in the number of enterprises adopting an energy plan to reduce their consumption

Preservation of resources and safeguard of spaces

6.8. Strategy for the reduction of noise nuisance

<i>Essential actions</i>	<i>Level of achievement</i>	<i>Level of planning</i>	<i>Level of relevance to the area</i>	Comments attached
Level of achievement, planning and relevance to the area (5 = strong priority for the area)	0 to 5	0 to 5	0 to 5	Annexes
Measures aimed at limiting noise nuisance from road transport (cars, motorbikes etc.)				
Measures aimed at limiting noise nuisance from air transport (flights over the area by military aircraft, model planes)				
Measures aimed at limiting noise nuisance from sea transport				
Measures aimed at limiting noise nuisance from rail transport				
Contractual measures concerning deliveries to tourist establishments (low noise, no dawn deliveries, etc.)				

Indicator proposed by the area (opportunities/risks) ? :

Examples of indicators :

Example : Noise levels in the area, existence of quiet places within the area, noise levels in the towns and villages

Method of collecting information : questionnaire on satisfaction of visitors and other users of the area, asking the local residents (quantifying their satisfaction); locating noisy activities to be dealt with (helicopter flying over in the vicinity of hiking trails, etc.)

Preservation of resources and safeguard of spaces

6.9. Strategy for the processing, reduction and recycling of waste

<i>Essential actions</i>	<i>Level of achievement</i>	<i>Level of planning</i>	<i>Level of relevance to the area</i>	Comments attached
Level of achievement, planning and relevance to the area (5 = strong priority for the area)	0 to 5	0 to 5	0 to 5	Annexes
Measures for processing of waste within the area				
Waste reclamation programme within the tourism industry				
Training programme on waste reduction and reclamation for tourist service providers				
Awareness campaign to encourage visitors to take their waste home from hiking or cycling tours in the park				
If necessary, a programme to remove unauthorised rubbish dumps				

Indicator proposed by the area (opportunities/risks) ? :

Examples of indicators :

Example 1 : development of the costs of processing waste in the tourism villages ; Example 2 : development of the problem of unauthorised dumping and other waste dropped in natural areas by ramblers, climbers or other users of the area

Method of collecting information : Example 1 : collection of information from the villages and compilation or estimation of the development of costs by tourism professionals who are signatories to the Charter; Example 2 : regular monitoring of sensitive sites, in partnership with guides, or estimation of the costs of cleaning up natural environments or routine reports by wardens and staff of the protected area

Social and Economic Development

Reminder of the actions to be taken

- Introduce measures whereby tourism can support the local economy.
- Introduce measures whereby tourism can support social development.
- Introduce measures for better distribution of the benefits of tourism.
- Introduce measures for the development of new types of employment.
- Develop the partnerships necessary to improve tourism's contribution to the local economy and a broader consideration of the environment.

7.1. Strategy to support the local economy

Essential actions	<i>Level of achievement</i>	<i>Level of planning</i>	<i>Level of relevance to the area</i>	Comments attached
Level of achievement, planning and relevance to the area (5 = strong priority for the area)	0 to 5	0 to 5	0 to 5	Annexes
Establishment of links between tourist activities and other local economic sectors (e.g. promotion of local farm products through tourism)				
Label awards for environmentally friendly local products and promotion of these to tourism establishments and visitors				
Advising tourism companies to adopt a local purchasing policy				
Creation of country markets and/or Park shops				
Organising visits to local companies or craftsmen				
Organising a network to distribute local products to tourism establishments				

Indicator proposed by the area (opportunities/risks) ? :

Examples of indicators :

Example 1 : increase in the proportion of local products in purchases of tourist service providers;
 Example 2 : amount of economic diversity in the area (making it possible to quantify the area's level of dependency on tourism and the effectiveness of the strategy in maintaining certain important traditional activities to preserve the quality of the heritage)

Method of collecting information: Example 1 : collation of information provided by tourism operators; inventory of traditional activities helping to maintain the quality of the heritage and monitoring their situation in partnership with the Chambers of Commerce

7.2. Strategy for a better sharing of the benefits of tourism

<i>Essential actions</i>	<i>Level of achievement</i>	<i>Level of planning</i>	<i>Level of relevance to the area</i>	Comments attached
Level of achievement, planning and relevance to the area (5 = strong priority for the area)	0 to 5	0 to 5	0 to 5	Annexes
Measures to promote the employment of local people by the tourism industry				
Measures guaranteeing access to rented accommodation for local residents				

Indicator proposed by the area (opportunities/risks) ? :

Examples of indicators :

Example : level of employment of local people in the tourism sector
 Method of collecting information: analysis of data on employment in the tourism sector available from institutions on an ad hoc basis (Chamber of Commerce etc.)

7.3. Strategy to promote development of new types of employment

Essential actions	<i>Level of achievement</i>	<i>Level of planning</i>	<i>Level of relevance to the area</i>	Comments attached
Level of achievement, planning and relevance to the area (5 = strong priority for the area)	0 to 5	0 to 5	0 to 5	Annexes
Measures to promote development of versatile activities such as agricultural tourism and nature promotion activities				
Promotion of new forms of employment connected with sustainable tourism (ecology-advisers, etc.)				
Measures to promote employment of the young, women, the economically deprived, as well as the disabled in tourism activities				

Indicator proposed by the area (opportunities/risks) ? :

Examples of indicators :

Example : increase in the number of new jobs created in the sustainable tourism sector, number of people benefiting from an integration or reintegration programme to provide access to employment
 Method of collecting information : study in partnership with local or regional associations and institutions providing access to employment

Control of Tourist Numbers

Reminder of the actions to be taken

- Introduce measures to channel the flow of visitors in space and time.
- Introduce transport management measures (hiking routes, cycle tracks, service for collecting visitors from the station, etc.).

8.1. Strategy for finding out about the flow of visitors

Essential actions	<i>Level of achievement</i>	<i>Level of planning</i>	<i>Level of relevance to the area</i>	Comments attached
Level of achievement, planning and relevance to the area (5 = strong priority for the area)	0 to 5	0 to 5	0 to 5	Annexes
Establishment of an observation post, monitoring the flow of visitors in time and space ²³				
Assistance from tourist service providers in monitoring the flow of visitors in the area				

Indicator proposed by the area (opportunities/risks) ? :

Examples of indicators :

Example :

²³ The tourist watch should provide data on the categories of visitor, where they come from, how they came to the Park, their activities at the Park, the average length of stay and type of accommodation for each category of visitor, how each type of customer booked his/her stay, and the time of the stay (week-end, high season, low season, etc.).

8.2. Strategy for management of visitor flow in the protected area

<i>Essential actions</i>	<i>Level of achievement</i>	<i>Level of planning</i>	<i>Level of relevance to the area</i>	Comments attached
Level of achievement, planning and relevance to the area (5 = strong priority for the area)	0 to 5	0 to 5	0 to 5	Annexes
Provision of an alternative tourist attraction to properly manage the flow of visitors in the protected area				
Development of a plan to manage the flow of visitors within the area				
Setting up of reception facilities (information centres, museums and accommodations) based on the plan for management of the flow of visitors within the area				
Providing tourist signposts in accordance with the plan for management of the flow of visitors within the area				
Contribution of tourist service providers to the plan to channel the flow of visitors within the area (advising visitors, suggesting less travelled paths, etc.)				

Indicator proposed by the area (opportunities/risks) ? :

Examples of indicators :

Example 1 : development in the numbers visiting the most fragile sites; Example 2 : development in the number of conflicts of use; Example 3 : visitor satisfaction Example 4 : increase in the number of villages benefiting from the economic consequences of tourism

Method of collecting information : Examples 1 and 4 : numbers visiting the sites; Example 2 : systematic recording of letters and complaints sent to the institution responsible for managing the protected area; Example 3 : asking visitors

8.3. Strategy for management of visitor flow in terms of time

<i>Essential actions</i>	<i>Level of achievement</i>	<i>Level of planning</i>	<i>Level of relevance to the area</i>	Comments attached
Level of achievement, planning and relevance to the area (5 = strong priority for the area)	0 to 5	0 to 5	0 to 5	Annexes
Promotion of products that favour an all-year-round season, particularly those linked to nature watching (Panda Lodges)				
Development of a programme of out-of-season activities				
Development of partnerships designed to maintain tourist services out-of-season (transport, tourist offices, etc.)				
Assistance of tourist service providers in promoting off-season tourist activities				

Indicator proposed by the area (opportunities/risks) ? :

Examples of indicators:

Example 1 : extension of the period when hotels and other accommodation are full; Example 2 : quality of welcome in high season
 Method of collecting information : Example 1 : statistics on tourist numbers ; Example 2 : management audit

8.4. Strategy for traffic control

<i>Essential actions</i>	<i>Level of achievement</i>	<i>Level of planning</i>	<i>Level of relevance to the area</i>	Comments attached
Level of achievement, planning and relevance to the area (5 = strong priority for the area)	0 to 5	0 to 5	0 to 5	Annexes
Introduction of a plan to control mobility in line with the plan for management of the flow of visitors in the area				
Development of footpaths, cycle tracks etc.				
Setting up of a system to provide information to visitors on access by public transport, walking or cycling				
Implementation of a programme to encourage visitors to leave their vehicles in the car park and use public transport (park and ride systems)				
Measures to ban or regulate use of all-terrain vehicles (4x4 vehicles, off-road motorbikes)				
Participation of tourist service providers in the promotion of public transport, hiking and cycling to visitors				
Establishment of a service to collect visitors from the railway station				
Establishment of all-in prices covering local public transport				
Establishment of special prices for visitors arriving by rail				
Reduction in entry fees to amenities for visitors arriving by non-motorised forms of transport				
Development of a tourist package using the public transport system				

Indicator proposed by the area (opportunities/risks) ? :

Examples of indicators :

Example 1 : quality of living conditions for local residents; Example 2 : frequency of traffic jams on the main approach roads to the tourism sites;

Example 3 : development in level of use of public transport

Method of collecting information: Examples 1 and 2 : observation, and possibly photographs of the centres of towns and villages during the tourist season;

Example 3 : monitoring of numbers using public transport (turnover or number of tickets sold to visitors)

8.5. Strategy for the management and integration of tourist facilities

<i>Essential actions</i>	<i>Level of achievement</i>	<i>Level of planning</i>	<i>Level of relevance to the area</i>	Comments attached
Level of achievement, planning and relevance to the area (5 = strong priority for the area)	0 to 5	0 to 5	0 to 5	Annexes
Guidelines, directives and advice on the construction and development of tourist facilities				
Measures to promote the use of traditional building techniques when constructing tourist facilities				
Measures to encourage tourist service providers to respect the local style of architecture when constructing or renovating tourist facilities				

Indicator proposed by the area (opportunities/risks) ? :

Examples of indicators :

Example 1 : increase in the number of tourist businesses consulting the protected area's architectural advice department or one of its partners;

Example 2 : monitoring of the number of buildings that do not fit in with the landscape

Method of collecting information: Example 1 : report on activities by employees of the protected area or the partner association/institution;

Example 2 : inventory and monitoring operations carried out by the architectural advice department

V. Protocol for Evaluation of the Strategy and Action Plan with a view to signing the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas

Your strategy and action plan will be evaluated on the basis of :

1. *The quality of the area*

The area must meet certain definitions

- **Category V** of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) : Protected landscape/seascape : “area of land, with coast and sea as appropriate, where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinct character with significant aesthetic, ecological and/or cultural value, and often with high biological diversity.”

Or

- **Category II** of the IUCN. National Park : “Protected area managed mainly for ecosystem protection, and for recreation.” In this case the sustainable tourism development project must be carried out in partnership with those involved in tourism in the surrounding area.

2. **The quality of your sustainable tourism development strategy**

The quality of your sustainable tourism development strategy is evaluated with respect to the objectives you have freely set yourselves together with your partners based on the needs of your area.

This strategy must specify objectives relating to :

- conservation and enhancement of the environment and heritage,
- social and economic development,
- maintaining and enhancing the quality of life for local residents,
- visitor satisfaction.

3. **Respecting the sustainable tourism development process set out in the Charter in the preparation of your strategy**

Forming a diagnosis

Your strategy must be based on a global approach taking into account all the needs of the area. The necessary studies and evaluations must be made and together with and accepted by all partners involved in the strategy.

Your choices must have been guided by the results of these studies and analyses, which will be used as a basis for evaluation and monitoring of your strategy.

Actions resulting from this diagnosis will cover :

- the needs and constraints of the area, reflecting the objectives of conservation, enhancement of the environment and heritage, economic and social development and improvement in the quality of life for local residents, and the experience of visitors,
- an inventory of the attractions of the area, such as natural and cultural features, their development and their potential for tourism,
- the image and values of the area,

- a qualitative and quantitative statement of what is on offer to tourists (including both strengths and weaknesses),
- the flow of visitors through the park, in terms of time and space, and improvements to be made,
- the profile and expectations of existing consumer groups,
- tourism market trends,
- the characteristics of specific markets for products to be developed,
- improvements to be made with regard to education about the environment and interpretation of heritage.

Consultation and involvement of partners

Your partners must be involved in the preparation of this strategy. The evaluation will aim to verify their full involvement in this process.

For this purpose, the auditor will assess the quality of information submitted to the partners.

He may, in particular, ascertain that consultation meetings have been held, or that the results of the diagnosis have been published, or check the level of acceptance by your partners of the objectives set by the strategy.

You will also have to confirm that a permanent forum has been set up, bringing together all those involved in the sustainable tourism development strategy or their representatives, and state how often meetings are held.

4. Your ability to reach the objectives set by the strategy

The auditor will have to assess your ability to reach the objectives set by you together with your partners.

This assessment will be based on the following points :

- the conviction and motivation of the various local players, based on the specific nature of the commitments contained in the strategy (It will be explained what measures are taken by the partners as part of the strategy, e.g. reciprocal and regular provision of information, management agreements etc.),
- the skills and the human and financial resources allocated to meet the objectives set by the strategy,
- the consistency between the resources allocated to implement the strategy, the order of priority of the objectives, and the constraints to be managed,
- the formulation of political commitments, particularly the sequencing and scheduling of actions.

5. Details of your objectives with regard to follow-up evaluation

Your sustainable tourism development strategy must set clear, easily quantifiable objectives. These should be established with respect to items revealed by the diagnosis as scoring zero in terms of the strategy.

6. Respect for the principles of sustainable development

It is also the task of the auditor to verify that the fundamental principles of sustainable development are being respected, i.e. :

- the balance between ecological, economic, social and ethical objectives,
- the balance between short, medium and long-term objectives,
- the fair treatment of the various groups benefiting from the strategy (local residents, visitors, nature conservation organisations etc.),
- the balance between the level of involvement of the various associated partners,
- adoption of the precaution principle : have all precautions been taken to ensure that choices and achievements have a minimum impact on the environment ? - Are all consequences of the actions to be taken assessed before they are carried out ?

7. The quality of your action plan

Your action plan must address all the sustainable tourism themes covered by the Charter.

The auditor will assess its quality on the basis of :

The consistency of actions

The various actions must be consistent with one another. It must also be possible to assess this consistency from the point of view of space.

The relevance of actions

The various actions must be suit the objectives of the area. The order of priority for actions taken or planned must correspond to the needs of the area (relevance level).

The accuracy of indicators for monitoring and evaluation of the action plan

The indicators proposed must be precise enough to allow the effectiveness of the actions taken to quantified. The method used for collecting information must also be specified.

8. Mapping your strategy

You must also provide with your strategy a map providing an overall picture of the present situation and future prospects. The map should make it possible to identify the main actions to be taken : sensitive areas to be protected, the principal tourist routes to be proposed, and specific actions to be taken with your partners. The map should also make it possible to locate your area in its geographical context. It should include topographical features and be on a scale of at least 1:100 000.

Protocol for Follow-up Evaluation with a view to Re-subscribing to the European Charter on Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas

1. Criteria for evaluation of your strategy at the end of a five-year period (follow-up evaluation)

Attainment of the objectives set by the strategy

With a view to classification as an «area of excellence in sustainable tourism» at European level and re-subscribing to the Charter, you must provide a statement of your strategy for sustainable tourism development and your action plan. This will include an evaluation of the results obtained with reference to the objectives set.

It will be used as a basis by the external auditor appointed by the European evaluation committee.

Utilisation of the resources necessary to achieve the objectives set by the strategy

Some objectives can only be attained subject to external factors, independent of your partnership with those involved in the tourism strategy. This should not call into question your classification at European level. However you must describe these restrictive factors and demonstrate that you or your partners have made every endeavour to attain the objectives set.

2. Criteria for evaluation of your action plan (follow-up evaluation)

Your action plan will be evaluated on the basis of the following :

Effectiveness of actions

This will be evaluated with reference to the indicators set out in your action plan.

Consistency of actions

This will be evaluated on the basis of the consistency of the actions themselves and with regard to space.

Relevance of actions

This is concerned with the balance between the priorities set by your strategy and the actions taken (resources allocated, level of priority).

3. Re-subscription to the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas

The procedure for re-subscription has the same stages as that for initial signature of the charter. This re-subscription procedure should be initiated early enough to ensure that it is completed by the end of the initial strategy.

Additional documents

The additional documents are not included in this PDF-Version of the Manual but can be downloaded at:

- ❖ www.european-charter.org
- ❖ Report "*Loving them to death?*"