



PARKS & BENEFITS
Baltic protected areas and tourism

COLLECTION OF EXAMPLES IN THE FIELD OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM





CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
...working in partnership	4
...a strategic approach	5
...enhancing and protecting the natural and cultural heritage	7
...education and awareness-raising	8
...first-hand capacity building	10
...authentic and clear communication	12
...local benefits and development	14
...monitoring and managing impacts	16
...responding to climate change	18
More Information on sustainable tourism.....	19



INTRODUCTION

The [EUROPARC Federation](#) is the umbrella organisation for Europe's protected natural areas. It has been working in the field of sustainable tourism in protected areas before the establishment of its [European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas](#) in 1999. Through this work EUROPARC has not only had the pleasure to work with some of the most enthusiastic experts in this field, it has compiled an archive containing a large variety of examples of innovative projects and activities that exemplify sustainable tourism in protected areas.

This publication offers partners of the [Parks & Benefits project](#) a few of these examples, giving an insight into the great work that protected areas across Europe are doing in this field. The examples were taken from evaluations of Charter areas that have taken place since 2008 and a presentation on best practice examples given by Richard Blackman in the Parks & Benefits project in 2009. They were chosen for their relevance to the topics listed in the contents. Additionally they offer ideas for projects to other protected areas that are starting work in this field. Some of the examples chosen may however no longer be being implemented in that protected area but are still considered to be creative concepts that may provide inspiration to others. A more comprehensive best practice brochure will be produced in 2012 through the EUROPARC project [Sustainable Tourism Destinations](#), funded by the German Federal Agency for Nature Protection.

This list of best practice examples was created within the framework of the Baltic Region funded Parks & Benefits programme that ran from 2009 until 2012. The project aimed to ensure the sustainable regional development in eight large protected areas in six countries around the Baltic Sea. The project's achieved this amongst other activities by implementing the "European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas" to National, Regional and Nature Parks and a Biosphere Reserve in the Baltic Sea Region. The Charter is a practical management tool which helps protected areas to continuously improve the sustainable development and the management of tourism taking account of the needs of the environment, the local population and the local tourism businesses.



...WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

WHO

ZONA VOLCÁNICA DE LA GARROTXA, SPAIN

WHAT

The creation of a participatory tourism association

HOW

Tourism Garrotxa (The Association of La Garrotxa Territory Tourist Welcome) is a private non-profit association that acts as the Permanent Forum for the European Charter. It brings together the protected area administration of Zona Volcánica de la Garrotxa Nature Park, the 21 regional town councils, as well as different local associations and educational institutions.

[More information](#)

WHO

LOCH LOMOND & THE TROSSACHS NATIONAL PARK, UNITED KINGDOM

WHAT

A park plan created by the community

HOW

The Park Plan of Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park is the product of extensive consultation with stakeholders in the Park. It requires all key partner agencies, including the National Park Authority (NPA), to integrate the Park Plan's priorities into their corporate plans and future actions. Sustainable tourism is an integral part of this plan.

To achieve this level of consultation the National Park Community Futures programme was established. Community Futures provides communities with a way of thinking about and planning their future. The programme is designed to enable communities to become better organised, more informed and have greater capacity to be partners in their own development. The Community Futures programme worked positively with communities to develop the Park Plan, the sustainable tourism strategy and other strategies. It also helps communities to develop their capacity to pursue projects themselves. Every community in the Park currently participates, and each one has generated a community profile and prioritised action plan which was then fed into the Park Plan process. In addition, various communities agreed to come together at a regional level to explore joint issues and initiatives, and four area networks were established.

[More information](#)



WHO

PARC NATUREL REGIONAL DU PILAT, FRANCE

WHAT

Community farm selling local products

HOW

The regional park Du Pilat worked with the community to create Pilat Farm. “Pilat Farm” is a place where several categories of producers - farmers, breeders, wine growers, etc. – see local products that reflect the territory of the Park. The Farm sells these products directly to the local inhabitants for very good prices. Through buying the produce they can discover more about their Park and they are the first beneficiaries of the initiative. In addition, the house used for the farm is a good example of “ecological architecture”. Pilat Farm at Pélussin is a successful example of partnership between the Park, the farmers and the inhabitants.

[More Information](#)

...A STRATEGIC APPROACH

WHO

PFÄLZERWALD, GERMANY

WHAT

Selling experiences in a sustainable tourism strategy

HOW

The sustainable tourism strategy of the Pfälzerwald Nature Park was developed in the course of eight meetings of the park’s Sustainable Tourism Forum and various working group meetings in close cooperation with the local communities, associations and tourism businesses. One major aim of the strategy is the development of tourism products oriented towards the wishes of the visitors and the potential of the region, including enjoyable experiences of nature.

[More Information](#)



WHO

PARCO NATURALE DI ADAMELLO BRENTA, ITALY

WHAT

Mutual agreements

HOW

The Adamello Brenta Nature Park has worked out a very interesting way of involving the partners, in particular the ones that assume a leadership role in the Action Plan. For each partner that is a leader in one or more actions, the park will sign a mutual agreement, a Cooperation Pact, which states the different engagements from the two parts. Even if this Pact does not have a financial commitment, the fact that there is a contract signed by both, in a public ceremony with all stakeholders invited, gives a very impressive and strong idea of the commitment the park has reached with his partners.

[More Information](#)

WHO

PARQUE NACIONAL DE GARAJONAY, SPAIN

WHAT

Integration of local stakeholders in planning and development

HOW

Garajonay National Park follows a Participatory Rural Appraisal approach, comprising a set of participatory methodologies extensively used worldwide in international development contexts. These agreements aim to integrate local stakeholders in the planning and development of projects and programmes. The promoters of the project contract a consultant on participatory methodologies to train them on how to carry out the consultation themselves. They also learn how to promote local engagement in the whole process. The process may have taken longer than usual but the Park was very explicit that it was the only way to be able to develop this kind of work on the Island because of the absence of previous practices of involvement and consultation of communities and businesses.

[More Information](#)



...ENHANCING AND PROTECTING THE NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

WHO

STEINHUDER MEER, GERMANY

WHAT

Visitor management through zoning

HOW

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

[More Information](#)

WHO

COMUNITÀ MONTANA ALPI LEPONTINE, ITALY

WHAT

Environmental education about the park

HOW

The project "Adopt the territory", is the second stage of a wider project of education about culture and art. It aims to involve students of primary and secondary schools directly in the conservation of the local environmental, cultural and artistic heritage with particular emphasis on tourism. The final aim of the project was to integrate the activities of several actors (museums, decision makers, schools) in the field of the promotion of local heritage and to raise the awareness of the importance of the safeguarding of local resources amongst students. An environmental education campaign was set up and promoted by Adiconsum (consumer association) involving the territory of Lombardy Region, about sustainable consumption and the rational use of energy and waste management.

[More Information](#)



WHO

PARC NATUREL RÉGIONAL DU VERDON, FRANCE

WHAT

Écogardes – a different kind of ranger

HOW

“Écogardes” are similar to rangers. They have various jobs that are essential for the Du Verdon Regional Park (PNRV). Off-peak they travel all over the park checking sensitive locations and footpaths. During the summer season more of them are present at sites with a risk of fire, and on hot spots along the lake banks. They also organise patrols, are involved in national forestry management and participate in tourism enquiries. Together with the LPO PACA and local climbing clubs, the Écogardes encourage climbers do not use climbing routes that could disturb nesting birds, raptors, etc.

[More information](#)

...EDUCATION AND AWARENESS-RAISING

WHO

BREÑA Y MARISMAS DEL BARBATE, SPAIN

WHAT

Raising awareness about nature values

HOW

The Brena and Marismas del Barbate park administration started an awareness-raising programme, divided into different activities. The aim of the programme was to promote the values of the park to the local population and to bring about a positive change in attitude, such as respectful behaviour towards the protected area. 452 Students, 31 teachers and 105 representatives from 14 associations participated in the programme.

[More information](#)



PARKS & BENEFITS

Baltic protected areas and tourism

WHO

SYÖTE NATIONAL PARK, FINLAND

WHAT

Close cooperation with schools

HOW

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

[More information](#)

WHO

YORKSHIRE DALES NATIONAL PARK

WHAT

Encouraging visitors and the tourism industry to contribute to conservation

HOW

In order to access funding from the lottery for environmental works the Yorkshire Dales National Park established with the partners the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust. The work of the Trust takes place in the whole of the Yorkshire Dales area. The funds of the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust contribute to major projects connected with maintaining the natural and cultural heritage of the area. The fund is able to grant-aid others but also runs projects itself. Examples which are connected with the park and AONB are the "Hay Time" Festival and meadows restoration project and the "Learning Limestone Country" education programme. The tourism partnership together the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust operate the "Donate to the Dales", a visitor payback scheme which has existed since 1990. It is operated via collection boxes and badge sales and is advertised, for example, on the partnership and park's websites.

[More information](#)



PARKS & BENEFITS
Baltic protected areas and tourism

WHO

THE FOREST OF BOWLAND AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY, GREAT BRITAIN

WHAT

Nature Festival

HOW

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

[More information](#)

...FIRST-HAND CAPACITY BUILDING

WHO

PARQUE NACIONAL DE DOÑANA, SPAIN

WHAT

Training Nature Guides

HOW

For almost ten years, Doñana National Park has been implementing a training programme directed to professionals working in the protected areas of Doñana – nature guides from local tourism businesses as well as the official nature guides from the protected area. Between 20 and 30 participants are professionally trained in issues related to the protection and management of the natural area.

[More information](#)



PARKS & BENEFITS

Baltic protected areas and tourism

WHO

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK, GREAT BRITAIN

WHAT

Training for all

HOW

In partnership with Tourist Board Training, Cairngorms National Park developed a training course, Cairngorms Connections, for front-line staff in local tourism businesses. For young people living in the National Park, Cairngorms Action on Training & Skills (CATS) provides bursaries for vocational training related to the aims of the National Park, such as land management skills and outdoor instruction qualifications.

[More information](#)

WHO

FOREST OF BOWLAND AREA OF OUTSTANDING BEAUTY, GREAT BRITAIN

WHAT

Sense of place

HOW

An excellent series of training and support activities has been undertaken in the Forest of Bowland AONB, partly due to the support made available by the Lancashire Green Tourism Project. The "Sense of Place" training and toolkit seems to have been an excellent approach to drawing people together and promoting local values.

Training has included:

- Sense of Place training, to supplement the Toolkit
- Marketing training, initially a general course, now more tailored to help owners to promote their green businesses in the AONB
- One-to-one website support
- Familiarisation days for TIC staff and businesses
- Support for Welcome Walkers and Cyclists training provided by LBTB
- Introductory and Green Ideas Days linked to the GTBS programme to encourage participants to get involved in accreditation

[More information](#)



...AUTHENTIC AND CLEAR COMMUNICATION

WHO

ALPI MARITTIME NATURE PARK, ITALY

WHAT

Promoting nature and culture

HOW

The Alpi Marittime Nature Park and the Association Ecoturismo have joined forces to promote the two “pillars” on which the tourism experience in the area is based: nature and culture. A big promotion campaign was launched in national newspapers and magazines, spreading two main messages using attractive pictures and two slogans.

[More Information](#)

WHO

WEERRIBBEN-WIEDEN NATIONAL PARK, THE NETHERLANDS

WHAT

Visitor centres and information points

HOW

Three visitor centres and one information point are located in major tourist locations in Weerribben-Wieden National Park combining parking, tourist information, Park information, canoe and cycle rental, guided activities and gastronomy. This strategy of creating “TOPs” (tourism gateways) to discover the area and manage visitors will be further developed in the future. In particular the visitor centre in Sint-Jansklooster deserves to be mentioned. Situated in traditional buildings its modern exhibitions, facilities for school groups, tourist information service, guided tours, trails and picnic ground make it a perfect attraction able to promote the qualities of nature.

[More Information](#)



WHO

FRANKENWALD NATURPARK, GERMANY

WHAT

Tourism marketing

HOW

A campaign was carried out to promote the Frankenwald Nature Park as a tourism destination. The campaign used original images and reflected the capacity/needs of the area. The tourism authority adopted "Naturpark Frankenwald" as the name for the destination in their tourism marketing. Welcome boards have been put up at the entrances of the park to indicate the Frankenwald region. The park also gets mentioned in the tourism media, especially those of the tourism authority, and on two of the districts websites. A special brochure with articles on themes of the region's nature and culture was published by the tourism authority.

[More Information](#)

WHO

CORNWALL AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY, GREAT BRITAIN

WHAT

Promotion of local products

HOW

Promotion of local products is central to the work of the Cornwall Sustainable Tourism Project (CoaSt) and features clearly in the work of other key AONB partners such as the National Trust and Visit Cornwall. Much has been done to raise the profile of the AONB and its products and it is a strong theme in the strategy and action plan. Web-based promotion is particularly strong and www.foodfromcornwall.co.uk is an excellent guide to local produce; the www.visitcornwall.com site also features a strong local-produce message. There are many other web-based promotions including tourism enterprise websites. Training, workshops and the work of CoaSt ambassadors build upon the strong belief in the quality of Cornish products and the value of local purchasing are well promoted. There are also many local food and drink festivals promoting and celebrating local produce. These feature clearly in local literature and web-based guides, particularly those produced by tourism agencies.

[More Information](#)



...LOCAL BENEFITS AND DEVELOPMENT

WHO

PARC NATUREL REGIONAL DE L'AVESNOIS, FRANCE

WHAT

Marketing Know-How

HOW

The network "Boutiques de l'Avesnois" was established in 2003 with the aim of promoting regional products and services, developing the regional economy and reinforcing the social links in the rural areas of the Avesnois regional nature park. Today it has 10 "boutiques" displaying a diversified offer of local products together with high quality customer reception and consultation.

[More Information](#)

WHO

BRECON BEACONS NATIONAL PARK, GREAT BRITAIN

WHAT

Black Mountains recipe book

HOW

The Black Mountains Breakfast recipe book project proved highly successful as has the "speed-dating" event putting tourism businesses in touch with food producers. The parks Visitors Guide promotes the purchase of local food and arts & crafts products by visitors. The strategy envisages this work being developed further with a food website, food newsletter, and further promotion of the area as a good food destination. It also envisages using the web to generate lists of local service providers for use by tourism businesses. The approach taken to stimulate interest in local food and particularly the "Black Mountain Breakfast" cooking competition and speed-dating between producers and businesses is an excellent way of stimulating interest in the private sector. This exciting project has been a significant part of building stronger relationships with the private sector.

[More Information](#)



WHO

PARQUE NATURAL HOCES DEL RÍO RIAZA, SPAIN

WHAT

Employment creation for the local community

HOW

Interesting initiatives concerning employment have taken place in Hoces del Rio Riaza Natural Park. In the Natural Spaces of Castilla y Leon a manual for Entrepreneurs and Employment was published which included best practices and funding opportunities. The national programme “Abraza la Tierra” (Embrace the Land) was also established. The programme, led by CODINSE, aims at stopping the exodus from rural areas and attracting new people and entrepreneurs to these depopulated areas. They support their relocation, job uptake or creation, access to project funding, etc. Furthermore, an initiative was developed to convert the old school buildings in the village of Valdevacas into a hostel for group accommodation and this will have a very significant impact in the local community in terms of employment creation. The village has only 35 inhabitants, and the hostel will cater for groups of up to 55 people and provide restaurant service for lodgers and general public.

[More Information](#)

WHO

HARZ NATIONAL PARK, GERMANY

WHAT

Certifying tourism businesses

HOW

Since 2006 the Harz National Park has certified businesses offering accommodation as being “national park friendly”. Companies achieve the award for their special achievements in environment oriented quality and service. On the basis of criteria developed by Viabono, the German umbrella label for sustainable tourism, the business taking part must fulfil criteria in various key sections, e.g. “well being of the visitor”, “energy & climate”, “sustainable mobility”, “regional products”.

[More Information](#)



...MONITORING AND MANAGING IMPACTS

WHO

MERCANTOUR NATIONAL PARK, FRANCE

WHAT

Management of sensitive sites

HOW

The Valley of Marvels in the Mercantour National Park is an example of the good management of a highly frequented site, weakened by increasing tourism. In order to prevent its complete degradation, access for motorised vehicles has been forbidden for several years and regularised for pedestrians. People wanting to access the area are obliged to go with a nature guide recognised by the national park and DRAC (Direction of culture). The exception to this rule is access via for the signed trails. A public service of guided visitor tours is available at fixed times.

[More Information](#)

WHO

DELTA DE L'EBRE NATURAL PARK, SPAIN

WHAT

CARRYING CAPACITY

HOW

The Delta de l'Ebre Natural Park developed and carried out a thorough study on the carrying capacity of the protected area. The study's aim was to create a technical support for the adequate regulation of tourism flow in the park and to protect the protected area's ecosystem services against the impacts caused by tourist activities.

[More Information](#)



PARKS & BENEFITS

Baltic protected areas and tourism

WHO

CORNWALL AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY, GREAT BRITAIN

WHAT

Promoting the use of sustainable transport

HOW

Action to promote non-car transport in the AONB is being taken in many ways and at many different levels. It includes:

- local initiatives to develop town maps which give an easily understood guide to public transport for places of interest;
- provision of leaflets by tourism enterprises to their visitors, promoting days-out by public transport or walking;
- the Fal River links project which brings together boats, buses, trains and walking/cycling;
- an incentive scheme offering discounts to National Trust visitors arriving by public transport.
- promotion of public transport throughout the AONB.

[More Information](#)

WHO

WEERRIBBEN-WIEDEN NATIONAL PARK, THE NETHERLANDS

WHAT

Recording visitor numbers

HOW

In Weerribben-Wieden National Park there is a monitoring programme on cycling and the use of waterways. Over the last decade monitoring is undertaken fully automatically 365 days per year/24 hours per day. The system will be modernized in the future through the evaluation of detailed data from Google Earth.

[More information](#)



...RESPONDING TO CLIMATE CHANGE

WHO

FRANKENWALD NATURE PARK, GERMANY

WHAT

By bus and bike

HOW

On Saturdays, Sundays and bank holidays visitors to the Frankenwald Nature Park can use a bus with bike trailer to some of the most attractive routes in the Frankenwald. By establishing the Frankenwald-mobile-network with its three bus lines and link to the German Bundesbahn the parks has created a means of public transport for the citizens and visitors to the Frankenwald region that is unique in Germany.

[More Information](#)

WHO

EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK, GREAT BRITAIN

WHAT

Carbon-free National Park

HOW

Exmoor National Park has made a commitment in its management plan to achieve carbon neutral status by 2025 as part of its contribution towards efforts to mitigate climate change. The commitment has been made in response to significant concerns about the potential impact of climate change on Exmoor's landscape, wildlife, agriculture and way of life.

[More Information](#)



MORE INFORMATION ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

- **The EUROPARC Federation:**
www.europarc.org/home/

- **The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism:**
www.european-charter.org/home/

- **The Parks and Benefits project:**
www.parksandbenefits.net

- **EUROPARC Consulting:**
www.europarc-consulting.org/about-us

- **A Guide to Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas:**
www.europarc.org/uploaded/documents/858.pdf

- **Tourism development in protected areas, German Federal Agency for Nature Protection:**
<http://www.bfn.de/fileadmin/MDB/documents/skript95.pdf>

- **The International Centre for Sustainable Tourism:**
www.icrtourism.org

- **Sustainable Tourism in the European Union:**
http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/llp/jm/more/forum07/notarstefano_en.pdf
http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/index_en.htm

- **Sustainable Tourism in the Baltic Region:**
http://baltic-ecoregion.eu/downloads/10_Perspectives_Tourism.pdf

- **Tour Operators' Initiative for Sustainable Tourism Development (TOI):**
www.toinitiative.org

