



WORK PROGRAMME

1. INTRODUCTION

Management of protected areas is the main focus of the Nordic-Baltic Section. The section will facilitate the cooperation between protected area managers in various ways, for instance by providing best practices and examples. Special emphasis is put on the need for cooperation and exchange of experiences and knowledge between protected area managers throughout Europe.

The Work Programme outlines the objectives of the Section and identifies priority areas of cooperation 2009-2011. It is in line with the corresponding work of the EUROPARC Federation and contributes to the fulfilment of the goals of the strategy of the EUROPARC Federation (EUROPARC 2008-2012 Strategy).

The Section plays a major role in helping to deliver the EUROPARC Federation's work programme and meeting the expectations of its pan-European membership.

The Work Programme provides a framework outlining the scope of activities to be undertaken. It also delineates the main working modes of the section. An annual Work Plan identifies more specific activities of the section and is a tool for daily work of the coordinator and the president of the section.

The climate change issue will permeate all work of the section. Protected area management will have to adapt to the effects of climate change by increasing focus on potential impacts. Networking will become more important in helping to find solutions for adaptations for climate change. Issues like nature and biodiversity; health and environment; marine issues; resources and waste will also permeate all work.

The activities of the section rely on the active involvement of the section members and continuous efforts will be made to increase membership in all member countries.

2. KEY OBJECTIVES

The key objectives and role of the Nordic-Baltic Section are to:

2.1 *Contribute to* the fulfilment of the goals of the EUROPARC Federation, and especially to:

- Facilitate exchange of information and expertise between the members of the section
- Facilitate exchange of information and expertise between the section and other EUROPARC sections and the EUROPARC office.

2.2 *Contribute to* the consolidation of the EUROPARC Federation as the most important European organisation for managers of protected areas, by:

- Implementing joint projects and other activities in the Nordic and Baltic countries,
- Emphasising the role of the section members as key actors in the management of protected areas,
- Increasing the membership of the EUROPARC Nordic-Baltic section in all member countries.

2.3 *Contribute to* raising issues regarding environment, biodiversity and cultural heritage as being a basis for a healthy society and a sustainable economic development, by:

- Disseminate related knowledge and experience
- Communicate and interpret related knowledge and experiences

3. AREAS OF COOPERATION

A priority task for the Nordic-Baltic section, according to its statutes, is “to promote the aims and strategy of the EUROPARC Federation”. In order to complete a high-quality cooperation the focus will be on supporting members and contribute to fulfilling the members interests and requests, and to demonstrate the wealth of experience of the EUROPARC membership in the management of protected areas.

Four priority areas of cooperation have been identified in the Nordic-Baltic section’s work programme:

3.1 *Management of protected areas*

Goal:

The work of the section will contribute to improved management of protected areas in the Nordic and Baltic countries. The activities aim above all to an increased exchange of experiences and knowledge between the members on practical management topics. The goal will be fulfilled through the organisation of workshops, seminars, study visits, staff exchange and information exchange.

Three themes are identified as priorities:

- Visitor management and nature interpretation
- Research and monitoring, including favourable conservation status
- Specific management topics. One example is biodiversity issues.

However, this does not exclude activities on other topics.

3.2 Transboundary cooperation

Goal:

EUROPARC works with transboundary protected areas through the initiative “Transboundary Parks – following nature’s design”. The work of the Nordic-Baltic section will contribute to better management of transboundary protected areas in the member countries. It will further develop already established cooperation in transboundary regions using concepts and experience of the EUROPARC cooperation up to this date as a framework.

Two themes are identified as priorities:

- Support existing networks (TransParcNet)
- Support potential transboundary networks

3.3 Sustainable tourism in protected areas

Goal:

In order to promote sustainability of tourism in protected areas, the section will contribute to the improvement of management practices and tools such as the European Charter for sustainable tourism in protected areas.

Three themes are identified as priorities:

- Contribute to the knowledge and the awareness of sustainable tourism and the process of sustainable tourism
- Support existing European Charter Parks and other similar initiatives
- Encourage members to participate in projects like European charter and other similar initiatives

3.4 Other activities

Goal:

To further develop external and internal communication to facilitate contact between members and spreading of best practise.

Two themes are identified as priorities:

- Inform and communicate European Day of Parks. European Day Of Parks will be promoted through the activities of the section members
- Support further development of Junior Ranger programmes, the Coastal marine working group and other working groups

The section will further encourage and support the work with different cooperation programmes, if the members show their interest.

4. WORKING MODES

The section will above all function as a forum for exchange of information as well as a forum for capacity building and communication of best practices.

Upcoming events, such as conferences, seminars and workshops arranged by the members and/or other international organizations, will be communicated by the section, using the webpage, email list and newsletter as information channels. Topical workshops and seminars will also be arranged by the section itself. Workshops and seminars will not only function as a method for capacity building, i.e. transferring experiences and knowledge, but will also be utilised to promote project preparation. Exchange of staff for shorter or longer periods will be facilitated.

4.1 Project partner search

The section will provide the members with help for project partner search in project preparation, both within the Nordic-Baltic member countries and in relation to other EUROPARC members and sections. Section members will be able to get assistance from the coordinator as a focal point for project partner search. Project preparation relies otherwise mainly on the activity of each section member. The coordination effort will not be restricted to new projects only, but also provide information about ongoing activities and “lessons learned” on specific topics.

4.2 Funding

Most of the funds needed for management of protected areas are provided through state budgets. However, funding options provided by different organisations constitute another important aspect of the future management of protected areas systems in the Nordic and Baltic countries. The Nordic-Baltic section will promote funding such as LIFE+ (2007-2013), Interreg IVC (2007-2013), Grundtvig and provide options for transnational cooperation in the field of environment.

4.3 Internal communication

The section will meet once a year for a members assembly. At the members assembly the work plan for the year is to be approved. Section meetings will also be held at the annual EUROPARC conference.

Regular contacts with the EUROPARC Federation will be maintained as a part of the communication routine. A connection to the EUROPARC council will also be guaranteed. The members of the section will be provided with information about the work of the other EUROPARC sections, and the Nordic-Baltic section may seek cooperation with other sections on specific topics. Options for cooperation's are to be identified in the annual work plans of the sections concerned.

4.4 External communication

Communication with international organisations, such as WWF, IUCN, Eurosite and others is important in order to maintain a high level of information exchange to members.