



EUROPEAN CHARTER PARKS—A GROWING NETWORK FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN PROTECTED AREAS

Agnese Balandina^{1*}, Lasse Lovén², Olaf Ostermann³ and Richard Partington⁴

* Corresponding author: Email: agnese.balandina@daba.gov.lv

¹ Kemer National Park, Latvia

² Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services, Finland

³ Ministry for Agriculture, Environment and Consumer Protection, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Germany

⁴ EUROPARC Consulting GmbH, Regensburg, Germany and North Yorkshire, England

ABSTRACT

Currently there are 107 protected areas in 13 European countries certified and working under the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas (ECST). Annually, some 10-15 new candidates strive for the Charter Award Certificate. The Charter methodology has been under continuous development since 2000 including definition of the criteria, harmonisation of the target and action standards, and giving more attention to the benefit opportunities and options of the Charter process. In this development process, the common framework has been the CBD sustainable tourism guidelines and their application in the European context. The other major focus has been in developing benefit indicators. This study analyses how the ECST criteria cover the basic CBD framework expressed in the CBD Aichi Targets, how successfully the sustainable development indicators have been developed, and how they can be used for verifying the system benefits. According to our analyses the ECST methodology strongly supports most of the Aichi Targets, out of 20 Targets, 11 directly and five indirectly. The analyses of key indicators for the social and economic benefits are based on case studies from the European Charter Network, especially in the Baltic Sea Region in Europe.

INTRODUCTION

European national parks and other protected areas management, created the EUROPARC Federation in 1973 to realize strategic visions discussed and recommended in the first United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm in 1972 (UNEP, 1972). Since then, the EUROPARC Federation has been actively developing its international membership, which now includes 430 protected areas in 35 countries. EUROPARC members have had an important role in the rapid development of European nature-based tourism during last 20 years. Under the umbrella of EUROPARC Federation, 107 protected areas in 13 European countries have become a special sustainable tourism oriented sub-community called the Charter Network. These parks are certified by the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism (ECST). ECST accredited protected area management conduct network

meetings, electronic communication and joint international project cooperation activities. (See: www.european-charter.org).

From the early 1990's, EUROPARC worked with partners to develop a basic tourism management concept for its member parks, producing a key report and initiative called, *Loving them to death?—Sustainable tourism in Europe's Nature and National Parks* (1993). This work became the IUCN network report, *Parks for Life* (1998), in which 'good practice' cases about biodiversity protection integrated with nature tourism development in European protected areas and landscapes were presented. In 2000, the EUROPARC Federation launched a practical ECST toolbox to benefit its member protected areas management and their tourist customers; this has been updated in EUROPARC, 2010.

The methodology of the ECST was developed to cover co-operation between park administration, local communities and tourism business partners. The basic methodology for the *European Charter Business Partnership* scheme was launched in 2007 (EUROPARC, 2009). The key objective of EUROPARC's tourism development process has been the protection of the natural values of protected areas. This means that maintenance of geodiversity, biodiversity and landscapes are the first priority. This paper demonstrates how ECST methodology contributes to the standards presented in the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) guidelines for developing an integrated tourism-biodiversity relationship (CBD, 2004).

OUTLINE AND METHODOLOGY

This paper reports analysis of ECST's effectiveness in contributing to CBD Aichi targets. The key components of the ECST methodology are described and content analysis was used to determine the level of coherence between ECST activities and CBD Aichi Targets. A European CharterNET project report on benefit indicators of ECST performance, based on questionnaires sent to the all of the Charter accredited protected areas, was reviewed (Castro et al., 2008). Critical difficulties in developing such practical indicators are discussed. Finally, three case studies from the Baltic Sea Region in Europe are examined to look at social and economic benefits of the ECST processes and the possibility of launching the Charter Network of protected areas in the northern part of Europe.

THE EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN PROTECTED AREAS (ECST)

The ECST is a tool and a regional certification system for sustainable tourism development. It has ecological, social and economic dimensions, which help stakeholders to achieve multiple targets for sustainable development. The ECST has a flexible process oriented methodology; it does not have the standardized and fixed target orientation that common eco-labelling methodologies (i.e., EMAS - EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme), have (EU Commission, 2011).

The basic ECST targets for sustainable tourism in protected areas are defined by 10 Charter Principles (EUROPARC, 2008). These Principles focus on the following strategic item:

1. Connecting stakeholders.
2. Preparing and implementing a sustainable tourism strategy and action plan.
3. Addressing key protected heritage issues, globally and locally.

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Picture 1: Charter Meadow Day connecting local community, the protected area staff and tourism business' in Kemeru National Park, Latvia © Aija Pendere

4. Providing quality experiences for visitors.
5. Communicating and interpreting effectively.
6. Encouraging site and heritage specific tourism products.
7. Training and increasing a knowledge base for stakeholders.
8. Supporting the quality of life for local residents.
9. Focusing on local products and labour.
10. Monitoring impacts and proceedings and managing adaptively.

The ECST methodology aims to realize these strategic objectives derived from the 10 Charter Principles. The ECST 'Charter Toolbox' defines the necessary criteria, minimum standards and monitoring indicators for process and performance. The key objective is strengthening the connection between protected areas, local communities and nature and a connectivity approach is the key methodological activity in the ECST process. Practical implementation of this approach is demonstrated and evaluated through the Baltic case below.

Table 1. ECST process activities that directly support Aichi targets

Aichi target	Supporting ECST process activity
Strategic Goal A: Targets 1 and 4	Produces a common vision and goals in the development strategy in order to maximize the benefits of tourism on biodiversity, ecosystems, and regional development, while minimizing negative impacts.
	Produces a plan to raise awareness for biodiversity, conservation and sustainable use.
Strategic Goal B: Targets 5, 7 and 10	Produces a plan and zoning solution to reduce pressure on biodiversity and promote sustainable use of protected areas and landscapes.
	Process includes the collection and assessment of baseline information for the Charter area.
Strategic Goal C: Targets 11 and 12	Produces a plan for the improvement of the status of biodiversity, species and genetic resources within the Charter area.
	Generates commitments from Charter area stakeholders, including local communities and businesses.
Strategic Goal D: Target 14 and 15	Creates plans to increase ecosystem, service-based benefits for the well-being of visitors and the livelihoods of local communities.
	Produces plans to control the carbon footprint of visitors in the Charter area.
	Activates joint actions to implement these plans and mutual commitments with tourist businesses and local communities.
Strategic Goal E: Targets 18 and 19	ECST itself is a knowledge-based tool for sustainable development.
	Process encourages partnerships.
	Process includes participatory planning and capacity building.

The Charter process involves several steps, which are taken by park management and park partners. The first step is the creation of a Charter forum by the candidate-protected area, with the cooperation of stakeholders such as the local community, regional political bodies, third sector actors and tourism businesses. The forum then develops a sustainable tourism strategy for the potential Charter area. The protected area and the possible ecological and economical buffer zone, or direct local impact area around the core area, create the Charter area. The protected area; however, is the focus for Charter planning and development. The indirect, regional impact area around the Charter area is also important, especially when monitoring the effects of the Charter area on the wider regional level.

The candidate protected area then makes a resourced action plan for operational performance according to the strategic rules for the five years following Charter certification. An action plan would include activities like energy-saving renovations, waste water purification upgrades, trail construction, increasing the availability of visitor information, protecting vulnerable species from tourism pressure, park safety developments, GPS-guide introduction, foreign language training for rangers, etc.

Strategy and Action plans are produced, which are then reviewed and verified by an external expert. The EUROPARC Federation has organised an expert body, called the Charter Evaluation Committee to evaluate the Charter application and the basic planning documents

provided by each candidate-protected area. The Evaluation Committee gives its evaluation to the EUROPARC Council; when the evaluation is positive the park is granted an ECST Charter certificate for five years.

Networking between protected areas and local tourist businesses increased in 2007, when EUROPARC launched the new Charter Partnership Programme (EUROPARC, 2010). Parks now have a standard framework for making mutual commitments and development plans with local businesses that have permanent service points inside or outside the park – where park visitors are their main customers. The tourism businesses have the opportunity to receive international visibility and substantial benefits as a reward for their commitment to partnership and environmental development. To date, 385 local tourist businesses in 23 Charter Areas in France, Great Britain and Spain, have distinguished themselves through Charter partnership.

COMPARISONS OF ECST PERFORMANCE TO CBD TARGETS

The ECST, as a process methodology, was developed to contribute to key international environmental schemes, such as Agenda 21, CBD, COP decisions and CBD's guidelines on biodiversity and tourism development (United Nations, 1992; CBD, 1992; IUCN, 1998; COP 5, 2000; CBD, 2004). After the COP 10 conference it was necessary to analyse how the ECST process fulfils the Aichi Targets (COP 10, 2010).

Table 2. Results of the pilot project, developing impact indicators for monitoring of Charter performance (Castro et al., 2008)

Impact indicator 'Magic Number'	Average per park	Total	n
1. Number of local organisations participating in Charter forum	33	1,300	40
2. Coverage of the Charter area in km ² <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of Natura 2000 sites 	1,030	46,000 50 per cent	45
3. Amount of protected biodiversity values in Charter area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natura 2000 sites, in km² EU Habitat Directive sites EU Bird Directive species 	625 18 33	20,000	32
4. Number of annual visitors using the Charter park services	1.2 million	61 million	50
5. Number of school class visits annually in the Charter park	49	1,315	27
6. Number of inhabitants in the 1.5 hours regional impact area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> representing percentage of total population in country 	1.7 million 23 per cent	75 million	44
7. Environmental investments in Charter park based on the Action plan during last 3 years (€)	2.9 million	55 million	19
8. Number of businesses co-operating with the Charter park <ul style="list-style-type: none"> of which are Charter partner certified 	121	2,300 196	19
9. Number of Charter park products (rough estimate)		several hundred	
10. Economic impact of Charter park tourism in regions (method under development, see chapter 'Tools for monitoring economic impacts ...'). Numbers not available	-	-	-

Note: n=number of parks that answered the question; Nature 2000 is an ecological network of protected areas in the European Union (ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/index_en.htm); EU Habitat Directive together with the EU Birds Directive form the cornerstone of EU nature conservation policy (ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/legislation/habitatsdirective/index_en.htm).

EUROPARC's publication, *Joining Forces* (2009) describes how the ECST is successfully implementing CBD guidelines (2004). The key result from a two-year study describes how local action is delivering global policy through 24 good practise case projects. In this study the ECST process activities derived from the Charter Principles (EUROPARC, 2008) in the process guidelines (EUROPARC, 2010) were analysed and compared to the set of Aichi Targets (Table 1). The content analysis of these two sustainable development models indicates that the ECST based activities, which were planned and later realised by Charter parks and Charter partners, directly support most of the strategic CBD's Aichi Targets.

The Charter also indirectly supports most of the Aichi targets, which are not mentioned in Table 1. ECST produces a Strategy and Action plan that can be adopted by regional and national plans for land use and social development (Strategic Goal A: Target 2). Through effective media communication, ECST may increase political awareness and reorganise the regional and national incentive systems for biodiversity conservation (Strategic Goal A: Target 3) and/or the protection and fair use of genetic resources (Strategic Goal D: Target 16). ECST also helps to raise awareness when higher-level political bodies are developing national policies and action plans for biodiversity conservation, and allocating resources for those actions (Strategic Goal E: Targets 17 and 20).

The ECST process does not cover some of the Aichi Targets because those specific sector themes are not included in sustainable tourism planning. However, protected area managers generally produce other thematic plans, focusing on agriculture, forestry, professional fishing, and genetic conservation as well (Strategic Goal B: Targets 6, 8, and 9; Strategic Goal C: Target 13).

EVIDENCE OF THE POSITIVE EFFECTS OF THE ECST

The ECST monitoring system, defined in Charter principle 10, is under development and therefore, a statistical analysis of the performance of Charter parks is not yet complete. In Charter vocabulary, pilot indicators are called 'Magic Numbers'. They numerically describe some of the key ecological, economic and social outputs of Charter performance during the post-creation five-year period, as well as the socio-geographic dimensions of the effective local or regional Charter impact area.

In 2008, the Sustainable Tourism Working Group of the EUROPARC Federation organised a survey with the Charter parks (n=58). The number of Charter parks that answered each survey question varied, either because the data was not available or they did not have the resources to provide the answer in time. However, the acquired data, especially the average numbers per park, provide an interesting view of the major development tracks



Figure 1. Locations of partners in *PARKS & BENEFITS* project around the Baltic Sea in Europe

generated by the Charter performance. The 10 Magic Numbers in 2008 are summarized in Table 2 (Castro et al., 2008).

Indicators 2 and 3 specify ecological impacts; 7 to 10 indicate economic impacts and 1, 4, 5 and 6 indicate social impacts. These data provide information about: key resources for development; basic environmental status; customer potential; the status of park business activities; and, the social network. Indicator 6, the number of inhabitants in the region within one and a half hours of the protected area, is more of an indirect indicator of the importance of the Charter area than an indication of the Charter efficiency. The other social development indicators

are more valid for measuring the direct gain of social capital through the Charter performance. Economic impact indicator 10 is still in the early pilot stage and the 2008 survey question: ‘What is the value adding impact of the Charter park in the regional economy?’ could not be answered. This issue was analysed in more detailed below during an evaluation of some recent studies in the Baltic Sea region of Europe.

This pilot survey on Charter impacts only measured numbers at the beginning of Charter performance or at the one-year point for those protected areas that started ECST performance earlier. Unfortunately, EUROPARC does not have the resources to conduct annual monitoring. If monitoring were done annually, then impact changes would be visible.

PARKS & BENEFITS PROJECT AS A BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLE FOR ECST NETWORKING

The Charter parks network started in the Mediterranean Region and is now relatively widespread in mid- and west-European countries. Until 2009 only three protected areas in the European Baltic Sea Region (BSR) were certified under ECST: Nature Park Insel Usedom in Germany, and Syöte and Koli National Parks in Finland. A BSR project, partly financed by the Regional Development Fund of European Union, *PARKS & BENEFITS*, with 18 partners from six countries in the BSR, was designed to introduce the Charter on a broader scale and with a more systematic approach into the Baltic Sea Region of Europe. This required work from a network of parks, regional authorities, and stakeholders in tourism, environment and universities. The protected areas administrative, research and field units involved as project partners are shown in Figure 1. As a result of the *PARKS & BENEFITS* project, seven protected areas have either started or finalised their Charter accreditation process.

Table 3. Critical steps in the ECST process in Kemeru National Park

Step	Activity
1	General meeting on the Charter to find out if interest existed.
2	Personal interviews with the stakeholders.
3	“Dreaming about the future” – creating the vision of the Kemeru Charter area.
4	Assessing the ways to get there and the current situation (SWOT analyses, covering Charter principles one by one).
5	Immediate reaction to problems and indicated needs – seminars, excursions, research etc.
6	Bringing everything together in a strategy, action plan, presentation and agreement.

Table 4. Local economic impacts of Finnish national

National park	Total income Million €	Total employment effect (person years)	Number of visits in 2009
Koli NP (Charter park)	5.3	70	127,600
Syöte NP (Charter park)	3.0	40	39,700
All NP's (35)	85.7	1,100	1,943,000
Mean/NP	2.4	31	55,500

EUROPARC Federation's Nordic Baltic Section, which is the regional organisation of protected areas in Scandinavian and Baltic countries, has been involved in the project's development. As well, the German Section of the EUROPARC Federation is linking its work with the Charter. It is expected that in the future, even more protected areas in the BSR will start implementing sustainable tourism principles, including the enhancement of cooperation with tourist businesses.

Analyses were carried out on possible target groups for tourism in and around protected areas as well as on tourism brands and logos. Accessibility for sustainable means of transport and protected areas accessibility for disabled people were other focuses of the project; some pilot-investments in specific visitor infrastructure were made.

Tourism in natural areas always includes the risk of excessively strong ecological or social pressures. The *PARKS & BENEFITS* project provided guidance on the carrying capacity of protected areas in order to deal with those risks (Brandt & Holmes, 2011). Carrying capacity is systematically derived from the standards provided by the Natura2000-system of the EU. A new pragmatic approach analysing the main social conflicts—conflict-types, levels on which conflicts are dealt with, related indicators and standards, ways of conflict-management—has been undertaken.

The project developed minimum standards regarding visitor monitoring (Sommer, 2011) and provided resources for pilot investments into visitor counting techniques. The *PARKS & BENEFITS* project communicated the mutual benefits of protected areas for regional development to the public and local and regional politicians as a campaign to raise awareness (See www.parksandbenefits.net).

The eight participating parks gained multiple benefits; they were provided with tools, guidance, advice and the financial resources they needed to take major steps forward. The project also transferred and made available best practise management tools and experiences from other parts of the Baltic Sea and Europe to the eight project parks. The Nordic Baltic Section of EUROPARC works to replicate positive results for the benefit of parks in that region. The following section describes a project pilot park as an example.

A LATVIAN EXPERIENCE OF ECST: KEMERI NATIONAL PARK

Kemeri National Park was founded in 1997, covers 381.65 km² and has a capacity of 4,000 inhabitants. It is located approximately 40 km west of Riga, Latvia's capital city, from where the park is easily accessible by train and highways. Kemeri National Park is mainly a wetland area; it has a high diversity of raised and transitional bogs, fens, wet forests, floodplain meadows, shallow coastal lagoon lakes, rivers and seacoast sand dune habitats. Lake Kanieris is one of the six Ramsar sites in Latvia (Balandina, 2011). For centuries, sulphurous mineral water and mud have been used for curative purposes in the Kemeri Charter Area. Resorts have been a famous retreat for people from Riga, the former Soviet Union and other countries.

Before participating in the *PARKS & BENEFITS* project and the ECST, the Kemeri National Park Authority concentrated on creating and implementing a management plan, research and ranger work. There was regular contact with all five municipalities around the park but there was a tourism co-operative in only one municipality and only a few contacts with tourist businesses and small amounts of cooperation with NGOs. Park visitors were registered at the information centre, on nature education excursions and other organized events. Despite the existence of sensitive park issues with tourism, no public discussions on tourism took place.

In 2008 The ECST process was initiated and six steps (Table 3) were carried out to bring all stakeholders and their knowledge together in order to discuss and agree on how sustainable tourism should be developed in the Kemeri Charter area.

After the initial six steps a Tourism Strategy and Action plan was made; this was in addition to the National Park management plan. These plans included the evaluation of tourism, and potential of nature and cultural values. In addition the 'Kemeri Charter Forum' was created, which



Picture 2: Innovative Charter Barefoot Trail in Kemer National Park, Latvia Photo: Viesturs Serdāns

regularly brought stakeholder groups together. The stakeholder groups were protected areas management, municipalities, tourist businesses, local residents, NGOs and tourist organizations.

Innovative recreation activities and structures were created and realised during the *PARKS & BENEFITS* project in Kemer NP, through the cooperation of a local tourism business and the park's managing authority. One of the park's activities, the Charter Meadow Day, provided expert information about protected plant species, common species and local cultural traditions. It was a recipe for success in Kemer NP in 2012, and set the right mood for the Midsummer Night festival (Picture 1) and another successful initiative, the Charter Barefoot Trail (Picture 2), which is the first of this kind in the Baltics.

The key to success in Kemer National Park has been to establish direct and personal contacts between park staff and tourism stakeholders, creating a basis for long-term relationships and cooperation. Strong personal relationships have led to a new approach to nature protection; it is now easier to focus on positive actions—

what can be done—rather than focusing on restrictions—what cannot be done. To the Kemer National Park staff, it is obvious that the acceptance of nature conservation and perhaps even the willingness to actively support biodiversity targets is stronger than before the ECST process started.

TOOLS FOR MONITORING THE ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF TOURISM IN PROTECTED AREAS IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION

The economic demand on protected areas is growing; protected areas create jobs and income flows within their boundaries and in surrounding regions. In all BSR countries, the government allocates budget funding to parks for basic nature tourism recreational infrastructure and private businesses create the tourism services enjoyed by, and paid for by, park visitors.

In Finland, the Finnish Forest Research Institute and Metsähallitus—the state natural heritage services—developed an application for estimating the local economic impact of national parks and other nature recreation areas (Huhtala et al., 2010). The U.S. MGM2 method (Stynes et

al., 2000) served as a basic model for the Finnish application, which largely relies on the Metsähallitus' visitor monitoring system. The application produces comparable economic impact information across areas and over time. It also allows for an annual follow-up on impact measurements.

The number of visits and the average visitor trip expenditure are the key data items of the application. Its focus is on the flow of primary visitor expenditure into the local impact areas of parks and the jobs created by direct tourist services. Regional, secondary impacts are analysed with multiplication coefficients calculated by the national and regional statistical accounting system. Government expenditures on park staff and external park services are not included in the economic impact generated by tourist expenditures.

Finnish ECST Charter awarded national parks Koli and Syöte are included in the economic impact monitoring (Table 4). In the pilot calculations it was not possible to see any differences between impacts in the Charter parks and non-Charter parks. The average impacts are higher in those two Charter parks than in the other national parks, but this cannot be explained by the Charter effect. After several years of monitoring it may become clear whether the ECST certification provides any value to parks and their communities.

Statistics indicate that the economic benefits in the regional and local economy are often largest at remote tourist resorts, which are integrated within national parks and where visitors stay overnight and use multiple services over several days. The semi-urban parks near population centres, where visitors only visit the park for day trips, are not generating as much customer spending.

Another way to monitor the positive socio-economic effects of large scale protected areas (e.g. national parks, biosphere reserves and nature parks) is through the use of a method developed in 2004 by Professor Hubert Job from the University of Würzburg in Germany (Job et al., 2005; Job et al., 2006; Job & Harrer, 2009). The main data collection methods for this application are visitor surveys and interviews that determine visitor numbers and spending related to the protected area and statistical data and information from suppliers.

The eight steps that make up this method have been described by Job et al. (2006) and Scharrenberg and Fieber (2009). They are:

1. Determination of gross turnover (number of visitors multiplied by daily spending).
2. Description of the industries benefiting.
3. Differentiation of sales by market segments.
4. Determination of the net sales (gross sales minus VAT).
5. Determination of direct income effects (net sales multiplied by value added ratio).
6. Determination of indirect income effects (net sales minus direct income effects).
7. Determination of the total income effects.
8. Analysing employment effects.

Within this method, a critical question asked to visitors is, "what role did the park you visited play in your decision to plan a visit to that region?" There are five possible responses: no answer, no role, small role, big role and very big role. Only the figures from visitors answering big role and very big role (2004: 43 per cent; 2010: 47 per cent) were taken forward into the further calculation.

One of the protected areas that used this method for the first time was the Müritz National Park in North-Eastern Germany. It was found that tourism created 628 job-equivalents (Job et al., 2006). This is a lot of jobs, especially when considering the fact that this part of Germany is an economically weak region, so the economic value of Müritz National Parks is regionally beneficial. This became an important argument for politicians discussing the role and benefits of national parks in society. The *PARKS & BENEFITS* project made it possible to repeat the analysis in Muritz National Park (Jeschke, 2010) and it was found that tourism created 651 job-equivalents around the park. The German pilot analyses of local economic impacts does not provide value outputs to the ECST methodology yet; although, it provides strong data about the major socio-economic impacts of park tourism on site.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper analysed the principles and activities processed by the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas (ECST) in protected areas and compared them to the CBD Aichi targets on biodiversity and tourism development. The findings show that the core methodologies of the ECST support the Aichi targets. The CBD's and ECST's guidelines on tourism and biodiversity both define sustainable tourism by three basic approaches:

1. community involvement and participation;
2. community benefit; and
3. environmental preservation.

The ECST process activities directly support 11 and indirectly support five of the 20 Aichi Targets. Four of the Aichi Targets are realised through planning processes other than the sustainable tourism strategy and action plan.

The early focus of ECST was on developing environmental management skills and during the last five years it has also been about developing partnerships and networking. Until now, active development of impact monitoring indicators in the ECST methodology has been weak. The coverage of the Charter network has recently been growing in Northern Europe in the Baltic Sea Region due to project work, which has been partly funded by EU and partly by national environmental authorities.

A Charter pilot project produced a set of impact indicators called the 10 Magic Numbers for monitoring ECST performance. Analysis of the indicator content and the use of the indicator numbers suggest that they are insufficient and are poorly used in practice. The need for economic impact tools is evident and several pilot projects to develop them have been conducted around the Baltic Sea Region, for example, the Finnish model and the German model. These models are still in the early stages of development and so when comparing parks against each other in time and space; they still cannot assess the value of the ECST in the regional economy. These innovative developmental steps however, strengthen our scientific base and our understanding of the issues in sustainable tourism development under biodiversity based restrictions.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Agnese Balandina is a senior adviser in Kemer National Park, Latvia. She has acted as a partner coordinator in the project *PARKS & BENEFITS*.

Email: agnese.balandina@daba.gov.lv.

Lasse Lovén is senior adviser in Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services in Vantaa, Finland. He has been involved as park director and development manager with Finnish national parks since 1994 and acting as chairman of the Sustainable Tourism Working Group of EUROPARC Federation from 2011-2012. Email: lasse.loven@metsa.fi.

Olaf Ostermann is desk officer in the Ministry for Agriculture, Environment and Consumer Protection Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Germany. From 2008-2011 he acted as the Lead Partner coordinator for the project *PARKS & BENEFITS*, partly funded by EU/INTERREG IVB program. Email: O.Ostermann@lu.mv-regierung.de.

Richard Partington has had a long career in the Natural Heritage of England and has been an ECST verifier since 2010, Chairman of EUROPARC Consulting GmbH. He is a IUCN/WCPA member.

Email: richard.partington@btinternet.com.

RESUMEN

Actualmente, hay 107 áreas protegidas en nueve países europeos que están certificadas y operan conforme a la Carta Europea para un Turismo Sostenible en las Áreas Protegidas (CETS). Cada año, unos 10-15 nuevos candidatos procuran la certificación. La metodología de la certificación ha estado en continuo desarrollo desde 2000, incluyendo la definición de los criterios, la armonización de las normas y acciones óptimas, y una mayor atención a las oportunidades y opciones de beneficio en relación con el proceso de la Carta. El marco común en este proceso de desarrollo han sido las directrices del CDB para un turismo sostenible y su aplicación en el contexto europeo. El otro punto importante ha sido el desarrollo de indicadores de beneficios. Este estudio analiza cómo los criterios de la CETS cubren el marco básico del CDB expresado en las Metas de Aichi del CDB, cuán exitosamente se han desarrollado los indicadores de desarrollo sostenible, y cómo pueden utilizarse para verificar los beneficios del sistema. De acuerdo con nuestros análisis, la metodología de la CETS apoya la mayoría de las 20 Metas de Aichi, 11 directamente y cinco de manera indirecta. El análisis de los indicadores clave en materia de beneficios sociales y económicos se basa en estudios de caso de la Red de la Carta Europea, sobre todo en la región del Mar Báltico en Europa.

RÉSUMÉ

Il existe actuellement 107 aires protégées dans neuf pays européens certifiées et conformes à la Charte européenne du tourisme durable pour les aires protégées (CETD). Tous les ans, entre 10 et 15 nouvelles aires postulent pour obtenir le certificat de la Charte. La méthodologie de la Charte évolue continuellement depuis 2000, notamment la définition des critères et l'harmonisation de la cible et des normes de l'activité, et une attention particulière est portée aux possibilités d'avantages et d'options du processus de la Charte. Dans ce processus évolutif, les directives liées au tourisme durable de la Convention sur la diversité biologique (CDB) et leur application dans le contexte européen ont été prises pour cadre général. Par ailleurs, la Charte concentre son action sur la mise en place d'indicateurs d'avantages. Cette étude analyse dans quelle mesure les critères de la Charte européenne du tourisme durable incluent le cadre basique de la Convention sur la diversité biologique exprimé au travers des Objectifs d'Aichi de la CDB ; elle s'interroge sur le succès des indicateurs de développement durable mis au point ; et enfin évalue comment ceux-ci peuvent être utilisés pour vérifier les avantages du système. Selon nos analyses, la méthodologie de la CETD soutient directement onze et indirectement cinq des vingt Objectifs d'Aichi. Les analyses des principaux indicateurs des avantages socio-économiques sont basées sur des études de cas du Réseau de la Charte européenne, notamment dans la région européenne de la mer Baltique.