

Governance and Public Participation in PAs

Case Studies Austria, Italy and Slovenia

SCHOLARSHIP REPORT



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Photos on cover page clockwise from top left: Prealpi Giulie Nature Park, Biosphärenpark Großes Walsertal, Triglav National Park

Forward

The given report presents findings of the study tour carried out thanks to the Alfred Toepfer Natural Heritage Scholarship and the EUROPARC Federation. The aim of the study tour was to analyse existing governance and public participation practices in the three mountain protected areas in Europe: Biosphärenpark Großes Walsertal (Austria), Triglav National Park (Slovenia) and Prealpi Giulie Nature Park (Italy). The report gives general information on governance and public participation issues; provides background information, governance aspects (including transboundary cooperation) and public participation issues for each protected area gathered during the study tour.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background Information

Protected Areas play an important role in ensuring nature conservation, promoting sustainable management of natural resources and encouraging transboundary cooperation and significantly contributing to achieving environmental cooperation in situations of latent or open conflict.

The management of protected areas appears within a social, political and institutional environment. Thus, management of PAs should consider many interests and priorities of different stakeholders. Accordingly, in order to ensure effective management of protected areas involvement of all stakeholders is essential. Most PAs in the world are managed by government agencies or governmental bodies, playing a crucial role in the PAs governance. However, during the past decade, more collaborative decision-making has been encouraged. Governmental bodies increasingly engage stakeholders in order to secure legitimate, effective and equitable management outcomes. Public involvement in management of PAs has become a standard good practice world-wide. The management approaches have shifted from very limited levels of public participation to much more inclusive levels.

1.2. Aim and Objectives of the Study Tour

The aim of the study trip was to visit three protected areas in the Europe: Biosphärenpark Großes Walsertal (Austria), Triglav National Parks (Slovenia) and Parco Naturale Prealpi Giulie (Italy) and to study existing governance approaches and public participation issues. More specifically, the studies objectives were to:

- Analyse existing governance practices in Biosphärenpark Großes Walsertal, Triglav National Park and Prealpi Giulie Nature Park;
- Analyse governance practices in transboundary park of Triglav National Park and Prealpi Giulie Nature Park;
- Analyse exiting practices of public involvement in the management of Biosphärenpark Großes Walsertal, Triglav National Park and Prealpi Giulie Nature Park.

1.3. Methodology

Several data sources and methods were used to develop this report. The relevant information was gathered through literature review and official sites. A significant part of the information was obtained during the study trip through interviews with management staff and other persons, as well as informal conversations and observation. The obtained information was analysed and present report developed.

1.4. Stages of the Study Tour

At the initial stage the aim and objectives have been developed and three protected areas (in Austria, Italy and Slovenia) were selected for the study tour.

While attending the EUROPARC conference 2010 at Parco Nazionale d'Abruzzo, Lzio e Molise in Pescasseroli I had the opportunity to meet colleagues from Austria and share with them my study visit plans. After discussing, I was advised to change destination place in Austria and include in the study tour Biosphärenpark Großes Walsertal.

Due to the significant distance of all three protected areas from Georgian, it was decided to combine visits in all three protected areas in one trip.

Travel plan has been arranged together with selected protected areas directors. The schedule of the study tour has been changed because of some difficulties in obtaining Schengen visa, and with the help of the all protected areas directors the study tour has been held in the period from 21st March to 9th of April.

Study programme has been developed prior to the study tour. The meeting arrangements have been ensured with the help of the protected areas directors prior the trip and during the stay in the protected areas.

2. Governance and public participation in protected areas

2.1. Governance of Protected Areas

Many important decisions have to be made regarding protected areas, such as: determining where the protected area is needed, where it should be established and what should be its status; deciding who is entitled to say about the issues related to the protected area; establish the rules about land and resource use, establish zoning; deciding distribution of financial and other resources; etc. Who takes the decisions about above mentioned issues, who has a power, responsibility and accountability and how it is done, all this is governance setting of the protected areas. Governance setting determines whether the management objectives will be achieved, whether it is equitable and sustainable. Governance setting depends on formal authorities, institutions, processes and relevant customary and legal rights. It might be influenced also by history and culture, economic outlook, access to information and many others.

Four broad types of governance of protected areas are distinguished by IUCN:

Governance by government (at federal/state/sub-national or municipal level) – Most people are familiar with this type of governance. In this type of governance governmental body (e.g. ministry or park agency reporting directly to the government) holds the authority, responsibility and accountability for managing the protected area, determines its conservation objectives and develops and implements its management plan. In most cases the government also owns the protected area's land, water and related resources. Sub-national and municipal government bodies can also be in charge of declaring and managing protected areas and also own land and resources in protected areas. In some cases, the government holds the control or oversight of protected area, but delegates planning and/or management to the parastatal organization, private operator, NGO or community. Information or consultations with stakeholders before set up of protected areas and making or enforcing management decisions may or may not be a legal obligation of the government. However, participatory approaches are becoming generally more common and desirable.

Shared governance – This type of governance has also become increasingly common. Various actors (national, sub-national and local government authorities, local and indigenous people, user associations, private entrepreneurs, landowners, etc) share management authority and responsibility to make and enforce decisions. Under the shared governance, which sometimes is also called as co-management, subtypes may be identified. In “collaborative” management one agency (often national governmental agency) is a decision-making authority and holds responsibility and accountability. But, by law or policy, the agency at least is required to inform or consult other stakeholders. In its strong form, multi-stakeholder bodies are assigned to be

responsible of developing technical proposals for protected area regulations and management, which then are submitted to a decision-making authority for approval. In “joint” management decision-making, authority, accountability and responsibility is shared amongst various actors. In its strong form, decision-making is carried out by consensus. In any its forms, once decisions are made, their implementation needs to be delegated to agreed bodies or individuals. One of the forms of shared governance is transboundary protected areas, which involved at least two governments and other local actors.

Private governance – This type of governance has a long history – kings and aristocracies often preserved areas, mainly for hunting. Today, private ownership is still an important force in conservation. In this type of governance the lands are under individual, NGOs, cooperative or corporate control and/or ownership managed for biodiversity conservation with or without formal government recognition. It can be managed under non-for-profit or for-profit schemes. The examples of such governance are areas own by NGOs explicitly for conservation. Incentive mechanisms, like revenues from ecotourism and hunting, reduction of levies and taxes, often support this type governance of protected areas. The authority for managing the land and its resources, rests with the landowner. They determine the conservation objectives, develop and enforce management plans and are responsible for decision-making. The accountability of private protected areas to society can be limited in case where areas are not officially recognized by the government. Some forms of accountability may be negotiated with the government in exchange for specific incentives.

Governance by indigenous people and local communities – This type of governance may be the oldest form of protected area governance, which is till widespread. Throughout the world and over thousands of years people were managing, modifying and often conserving their environment. This mostly was connected with variety of interlocked objectives and values (like spiritual, religious, security related, survival related) which result in the conservation of ecosystems, species and ecosystem-related values. The definition of this governance type by IUCN is: *protected areas where the management authority and responsibility rest with indigenous peoples and/or local communities through various forms of customary or legal, formal or informal, institutions and rules.* This type of governance includes two main sub-types: a) indigenous peoples’ areas and territories established and run by indigenous peoples; and b) community conserved areas established and run by local communities. This type of governance can be relatively complex. In some cases indigenous people and/or local communities are fully recognized as a legitimate authority in charge of protected areas or have legal title to the land. Whatever the structure, the governance arrangements require that identifiable institutions and regulations are in place in order to be responsible for achieving the protected area objective. The community’s accountability to the larger society is usually limited, although it can be negotiated with the national government and other actors.

Protected areas categories and their definitions are independent of who owns, who has responsibility for its management, or who controls. Protected areas can be governed by private parties, communities, NGOs, government authorities or various combinations of these. Both IUCN and the CBD recognize the legitimacy of a range of governance types.

Most of the protected areas in the world are managed by the government. During the past decade, more collaborative decision-making has take place. Governmental bodies have increasingly engaged with stakeholders in order to secure legitimate, effective and equitable management outcomes.

2.2. Public Participation in Protected Areas

Public participation has become an integral component in the management of protected areas. Moreover, involving the public in the management of protected area is now standard good

practice. In recent years, attention has shifted toward greater public involvement in the decision making processes. Several types of public participation can be identified:

Informing – this is the lowest level of participation. It is a “top-down” approach. At this level groups and individuals are provided with the information about proposed actions without any opportunity to change them.

Consulting – Stakeholders are informed about the project or plan and their views are sought. The views of the stakeholders are taken into account, however, not necessarily acted upon.

Deciding together – this participation occurs when affected parties are involved in the decision-making process. They are invited to learn the issue, discuss it and take part in decision-making process.

Acting together – this level gives the possibility for shared decision-making process and shared responsibility for implementation of those decisions.

Supporting independent community interests – Communities are setting their own agendas and implementing decisions they take. The role of experts and other agents is to provide the community with information and help to take informed decisions. This level of participation presents a “bottom-up” approach.

Management planning approaches have shifted from very restricted to much more active participation. Most of public participation appears somewhere in between the lowest and most active participation.

Several methods are used for public involvement, like, press releases, advertisements, radio/TV appearances, open forums, consultations, etc. There are different mechanisms to enhance public participation, e.g. establishment of consultative committees, volunteer programmes, junior ranger programmes, annual park festivals, grants to “friends of the parks”, etc.

3. The Prealpi Giulie Nature Park

3.1. Background

The Prealpi Giulie Nature Park is located in Friuli Venezia Giulia region, in the north-east of Italy, adjacent the Slovenian border and close to Austrian border.

The Prealpi Giulie Nature Park is a regional park established in 1996 by the Law on Protected Areas of Friuli Venezia Giulia Region (30, September 1996, #42). It covers about 100 km² including forest areas, cliffs, pastures and meadows. The highest point is M. Canin (2587 m). The Prealpi Giulie Nature Park corresponds to the IUNC II/V category, it does not have management or buffer zone. The aim of the Prealpi Giulie Nature Park is conservation and protection of park’s biodiversity and social, economic and cultural development of area.

The park includes six municipalities - Chiusaforte, Lusevera, Moggio Udinese, Resia (more than 50%), Resiutta and Venzone in the Province of Udine. The Resia Valley is home for Resia ethnic groups, speaking an archaic dialect of Slav. In Lusevera Municipality are living Slovenian minority group, speaking Slovenian dialect.

The lands within the protected areas are municipal and private. Human activities in the park are small forestry and agriculture. The products produced are famous local garlic, batter, cheese, ham, salami. Adjacent to the park, on each of six municipalities is located hunting reserves. A sky resort is located also adjacent to the park.

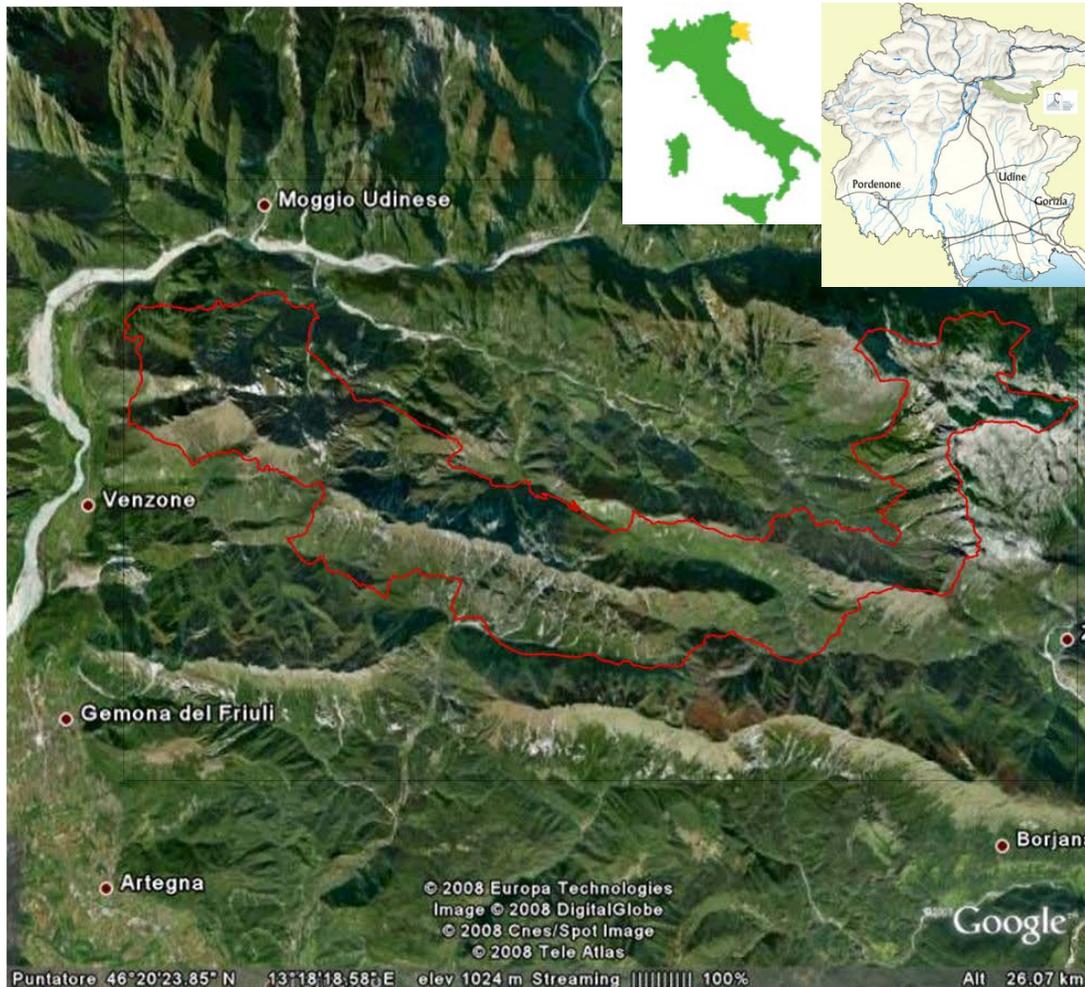


Figure 1. The Prealpi Giulie Nature Park.

Source: The Prealpi Giulie Nature Park administration, <http://www.grosseswalsertal.at>

The Natura 2000 site designated in the region covers most of the park area, extends it and covers the Nature Reserve Val Alba. Preparation of the management plan of Natura 2000 site is responsibility of Prealpi Giulie Nature Park Administration.

3.2. Governance of Prealpi Giulie Nature Park

The legal entity of the Prealpi Giulie Nature Park is Regional Department of Protected Areas (Region) of Friuli Venezia Giulia. The Region defines annual budget, checks resolutions approved by Board of the Park (on budget, plans and activities, rules on organization structure of the park). The Region checks the work of the Board of the Park and Administration.

Board of the Park is a decision-making body, composed of 12 members: mayors of municipalities (6), 1 additional representative of municipality of Resia (as more than 50% of municipality is within the borders of the Prealpi Giulie Nature Park), 3 representatives of different organizations from region (forestry, agriculture, environmental NGO) and 2 experts. If needed, Board can request opinion of external experts. The Board is responsible for: 1). definition of

PCS (conservation and development plans - including definition of borders; conventional zoning for conservation and development activities; possible activities for socio-economic development) and Code of the Park (providing rules on where and how the activities can be carried out in the park); 2). review and approval of plans (wildlife and tourism), the budget (distribution of money for activities), projects in the park, rules for Administration of Park and the work of the Administration (even more precisely than Region). The decisions are made based on the majority votes. The members of the Board are selected for 5 year period. The Board gathers 8 times per year. 3). selection of the President of the Park (from six Mayors presented in the Board, but can be other political person from municipality). The President is a legal representative of the Park, who is the main person communicating with Region. He is responsible for Board calls, verification of the resolutions of the Board, works on fundraising, takes political decision (on financing, applications of the law, possible changes in the law). The president is chosen for 5 year period.

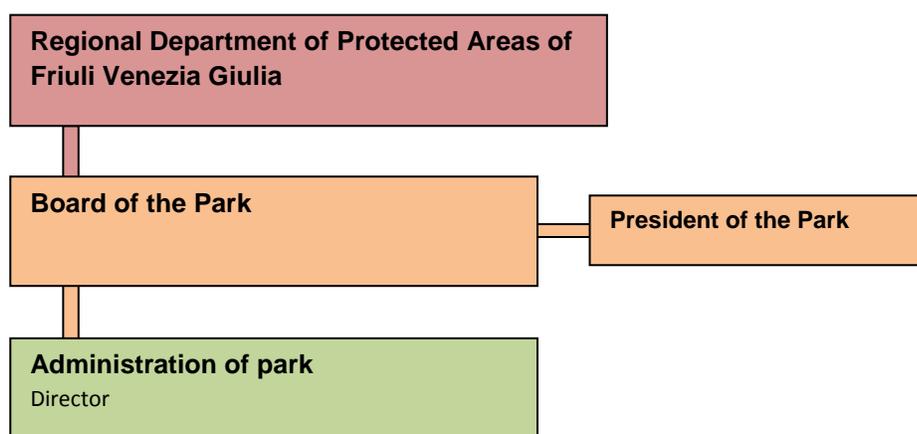


Figure 2. Organisation Structure of The Prealpi Giulie Nature Park.

The Prealpi Giulie Nature Park Administration represents the autonomous public body situated in village Resia. The Administration is represented by administrative, technical and touristic offices, in sum 10 employees. There is 5 information centers in 5 municipalities. The Administration develops 3 year wildlife plan and tourism management plan and forwards it to the Board for approval. The Director of the Administration is responsible for execution of the resolutions adopted by the Board of the Park and implementation of the management activities. The Administration is accountable to the Board of the Park. Depending on issues, the Director of the park is in charge to communication with Region directly. The Prealpi Giulie Nature Park, additionally, is the administrator of the Regional Nature Reserve of Val Alba since 2008.

Monitoring and protection are carried out by the Rangers' Units under the regional department. The separate regional law regulates rangers' work. The tasks for the rangers are monitoring (of fauna, flora, construction activities, tourist, sport activities, violation of law and regulation, etc.) of total area of region. The information gathered within the area of park is delivered to the Regions, as well as to the park administration. In Friuli Venezia Giulia region there are five regional ranger stations.

At present, park does not have a management plan. Its development was at the beginning responsibility of the Region; however, in 2006 it was delegated to the parks Administration. The management plan should be develop by 2012. The Administration regularly prepares 3-year wildlife management (action) plan (under the objectives of conservation) and tourism plans, which are forwarded to the Board of the Park and Region for approval. Eight tourism plans has

been developed and approved and 5th wildlife management plan is currently under development.

3.3. Public Participation

Involvement of local communities in the management of the park mainly is ensured by presentation of municipality mayors (who present interests of the municipalities) in the Board of the park. The challenge of work of the Board is existence of different interests of each municipality, trying to have their influence in decision-making.

Another instrument for public involvement, defined by the Law on Protected Areas of Friuli Venezia Giulia Region (30, September 1996, #42), is Consulata - a kind of advisory board with 12 representatives from local communities (representatives of villages, farms, tourism organization, restaurant, etc.). The Consulate may develop recommendations to the Park's Administration on different issues. However, the Consulate does not work as there is no interest from local communities for meetings, discuss and preparation of recommendations. This might be because there is no interest for the member positions at Consulate are not paid, in comparison to e.g. Board of the Park.

Proper information and involvement of public already at initial stage of parks establishment was low. No proper information was provided to the land owners regarding inclusion their lands into the parks territory. They expected that there will be restrictions in cutting of wood and hunting. Because of protests from hunters (as based on national law (1988), hunting in the PAs is forbidden), instead of including 4 times more territory as it had been proposed initially, park was designated within the present borders. Inclusion of private lands in the park did not affect owners' activities, as those are regulated by municipal and regional planning (not depending whether they are or are not within the protected areas borders).

Involvement of local communities has been increased in last years. Development of wildlife management plans (starting from the 4th one) is carried out in cooperation with local communities. The communities are informed about plans, sometimes meetings and discussions are held with general public and/or with community leaders. However, the involvement of local communities is low, because the communities are mostly inhabited by old people, who have less interest in park and do not believe that their participation will change something.

Different other methods and mechanisms are used for the involvement of public in management of the park. From time to time news/information about the park is on radio, TV and local newspaper. The representatives of local communities and region (after obtaining Nature Guide license) can work as guides at the park. The volunteers programme is carried out every year. For one week period, volunteers participate in small construction, trail rehabilitation and cleaning up activities. The school children are involved in educational programmes. The group of pupils from local municipalities are involved in the Junior Rangers Programme.

The administration supports production of local products (famous local garlic, cheese, butter, salami, ham) and supports its promotion - gives park's brand certificate and at the same time gives recommendations for the certification organization. The park promotes and support public participates (by presenting their products and culture) in different regional and international Fairs carried out under different projects. Existence of park in Lusevera Municipality helps Slovenian minorities to promote their existence and ensure their visibility in the region.

The park's administration cooperates with different tourism companies, e.g. there is collaboration with local tourism organizations running activities (like climbing and Mougly) in the park and provincial tourist association "Pro Loco Pro Venzone", supports and promotes Prealpi Giulie Nature Park and is involved in the Park Feasts held in Venzone.

4. Triglav National Park

4.1. Background

The Triglav National Park (TNP) is located in the north-west of Slovenia, in the Julian Alps. The park extends along the Italian border and is located close to the Austrian border.

The Triglav National Park (which corresponds to the IUNC II/V category) is the only National Park in Slovenia. It is one of the earliest parks in Europe. The first protection of the area started in 1924 when the Alpine Conservation Park was established (covered 1600 ha). The park got its present name in 1961. It was named after the highest mountain in Slovenia - the Triglav ("tree headed"), located in the park.

At present the park covers 83.807 ha, which is 4% of the territory of Slovenia. The altitude ranges from 180 m to 2 864 m above sea level. According to the new Triglav National Park Act (2010) three different zones are identified (previously were only two zones). The aim of the park is to preserve the areas' outstanding natural and cultural assets, protect native animal and plant species and ecosystems of the central part of the Julian Alps, as well as promotion of development and enjoyment of nature and culture.

Eight municipalities are in park: Bovec (30.9%), Bohinj (26.1%), Kranjska Gora (16.5%), Bled (4%), Tolmin (8.5%), Kobarid (3.9%), Gorje (10%) and Jesenice (0.1%). In the park there is in total 25 settlements with 2 352 inhabitants. The landownership in the park is different; there are state, community and private ownership (even in the core zones).

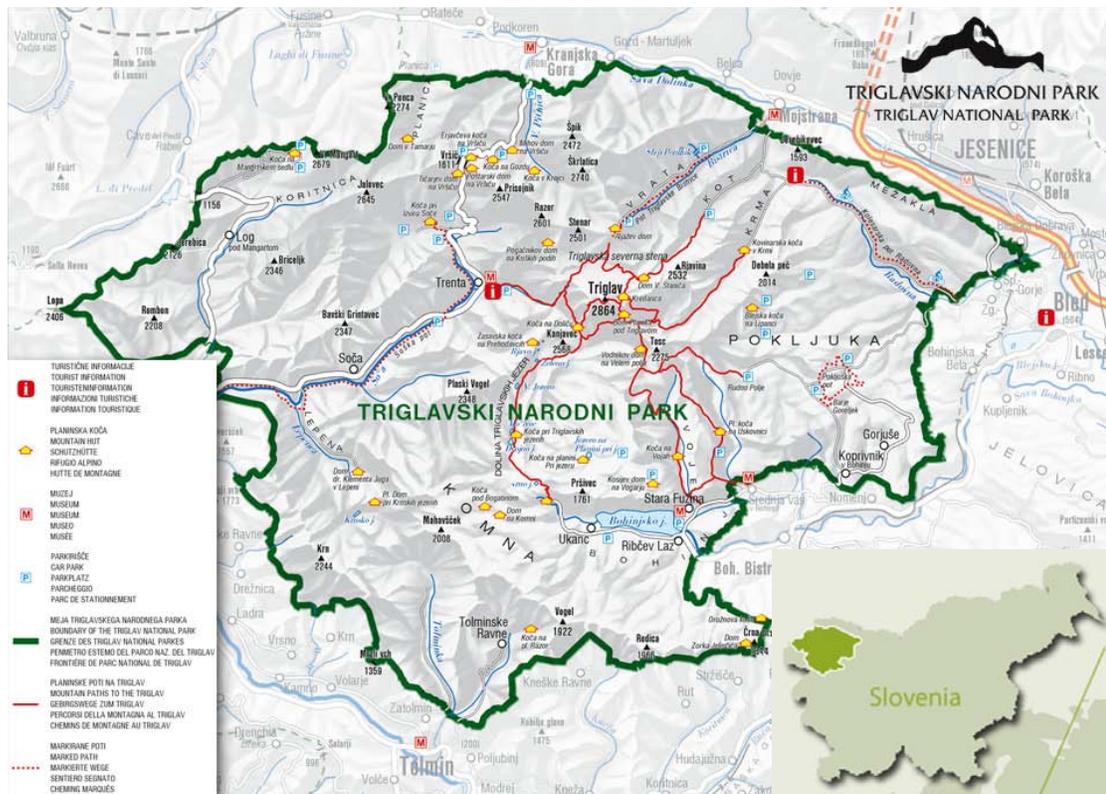


Figure 3. Triglav National Park.

Source: www.tnp.si

Existing human activities in the park are: forestry, agriculture with pastoral economy, crafts (wood and wooden products) and tourism. Three big sky resorts are situated in the TNP. Annually about 2 - 2.5 million tourist are visiting the park. The products produced in the park are: several kinds of cheese and wood and wood products.

The Julian Alps and the Triglav national Park are included into the UNESCO MaB (Man and Biosphere) network since 2003. The Triglav National Park became the core and buffer zone of Biosphere Reserve Julian Alps. Natura 2000 sites are situated in the municipalities of Bovec and Kobarid within the UNESCO MaB Julian Alps Biosphere Reserve.

4.2. Governance of the Triglav National Park

The management authority of the Triglav National Park is Triglav National Park Institution, based on Bled. The Triglav National Park Public Institution is operated under the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning of Republic of Slovenia. The Triglav National Park Public Institution is represented with different units: planning, management and development control; land management; research; office for agriculture, forestry and rural development; environmental education; public relations; protection of cultural heritage; wildlife protection and management; legal department; general administration department; finance and accounting; promotion and marketing; technical maintenance and property management; In addition there is professional ranger service and 3 information centers. In total there are 63 employees (including full-time and project employees).

The tasks of the TNP Public Institution include: planning, management and development, spatial planning and land management, direct protection of nature and cultural heritage, monitoring, environmental education and awareness-raising, management of wildlife, cooperation with local communities and other institutions. More over, the management authority performs control and exercise the preemption right on the land within the park.

The conservation guidelines are elaborated to be observed in municipal spatial acts. The expert opinions/recommendations are provided by the TNP Public Institute on the planned construction projects (in municipalities, sky resorts, etc.), Final decisions are made by the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning. The TNP carries out different project, is involved in international cooperation.

The Council of TNP represents top management body. Based on the new Act it is now represented by 20 members of different institutions and organizations (representatives of municipalities (9, 2 from Bohjin municipality), TNP (1), government (4 from different ministries), other organization (6 - Alpine Association, NGO, land owners, forestry, climbing, hunting). The council gathers 4-5 times a year. The role of the Council is discussion and approval of different issues and documents, which later are sent to the Ministry for final review and approval. The decision by the Council are made based on majority votes (requires a 2/3 vote). The Council members are chosen for 4 year period.

The final decision-making body is the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning.

The commission of Expert Knowledge Group is presented as well. It involves representatives of different organizations: forestry, NGOs, TNP (3 representatives), non-profit organization of Nature, agency of knowledge and art, Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, etc. This body has existed already before with only 9 members, but was not actively involved in the management of the TNP. With the new Triglav National Park Act, more members are presented in the commission. The commission reviews all documents before they are discusses and reviewed by the Council of Park. The meetings of the Commission are held before the Council meetings.

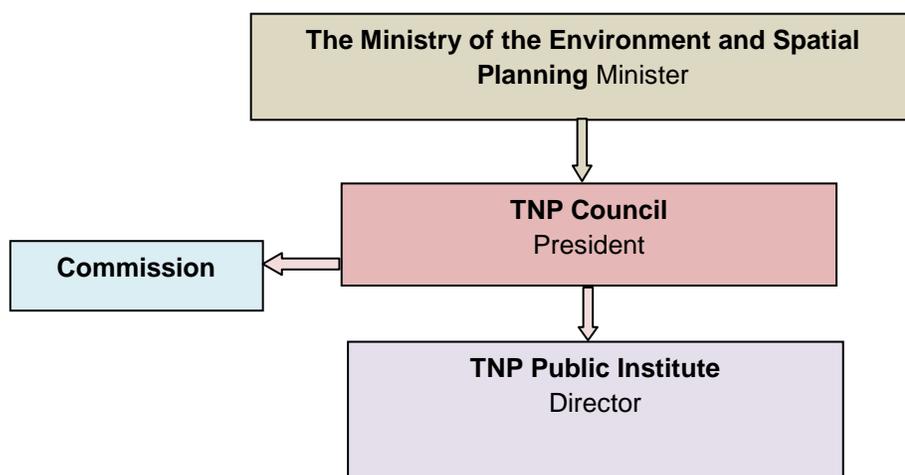


Figure 4. Organisation Structure of Triglav National Park.

The hunting in the park is regulated by the Park Institute. Hunting is allowed in II and III zones, except core zone. It is carried out in order to regulate the number of certain mammals. Hunting associations (after obtaining state licenses) are able to hunt together with Park's rangers.

The forestry is regulated by the Forest Agency in Slovenia, including territories of protected areas. The wood cutting is mainly carried out in II and III zones, with the license obtained from the Agency. Generally, the selection cutting is practiced in Slovenia.

The park does not have a management plan. According to the new law, the management plan should be developed by TNP by 2012.

4.3. Public Participation

Involvement of public in the establishment and management of the TNP under the Soviet system was very limited. Only in recent year involvement of public has been increased and several ways and methods have been developed.

The TNP Council ensures representation of different interests groups: government, municipality, land owners, forestry, Alpine Association, NGOs, hunters. The involvement of local communities (8 municipalities) in the council is ensured by presence of municipality representatives. Involvement of the local population in decision-making process should be based on the regulations proposed in the new Triglav National Park Act (2010). According to the Act, each municipality should establish it's own council body, where municipality representatives should discuss with local population the issues proposed for discussion at the Park's Council.

Even development of the new Act has been carried out with active involvement of local population and different stakeholders.

Based on new Triglav National Park Act, the general public (population of Slovenia) involvement is ensured at the national level by introducing Public Forum. It should be held once in two years. The information about the Forum is announced by Council in state newspaper and website. The procedures of the Forum should be defined by the Ministry. The first Forum has been held, information general public on establishment of Public Forum itself and on the development of the management plan for the TNP, which will be carried out with all necessary public involvement procedures.

Different other methods and mechanisms are used for the involvement of public in management of the park. The news/information about the park is announced on newspapers, radio and TV.

Many representatives of local communities are employees of the Triglav National Park Public Institution. Representatives of adjacent villages are involved in the volunteer groups, after taking special training programmes. School children are involved in school and park's educational programmes. Regular workshops, exhibitions, special in-door and out-door activities on international environmental days are held for children. Additionally, Schoolchildren are involved in the Junior Rangers Programmes.

The administration supports farmers' work and promotes local production (milk, cheese, meat, vegetables, fruits). Fairs are held on monthly bases. Under different projects local farmers participate in the regional and international fairs.

The park's administration cooperates with tourism organizations in municipalities, e.g. the tourism strategy of Bohinj municipality was developed in cooperation with the park. The park's administration is involved in joint projects.

5. Transboundary Cooperation

As it was already mentioned one of the forms of the shared governance is related to the transboundary protected areas, which involves at least two governments and possibly other stakeholders.



Figure 5. Transboundary Area Ecoregion Julian Alps.

Source: Šolar, M. (2010), ppt presentations.

The Triglav National Park/Julian Alps Biosphere Reserve (Slovenia) and The Prealpi Giulie Nature Park (Italy) were recognized as a transboundary park by EUROPARC Federation in 2009. The official name of the areas is Transboundary Area Ecoregion Julian Alps, which

includes the Triglav National Park, the Prealpi Giulie Nature Park and Julian Alps Biosphere Reserve areas in Slovenia (the territory of Triglav National Park and Prealpi Giulie Nature Park together does not form a transboundary protected area).

The cooperation between the two parks started after establishment of Prealpi Giulie Nature Park (1996). The two parks have been cooperating on different issues like, administration and management, education and communication, sustainable development, recreation and tourism, monitoring and conservation issues.

Several bilateral and multilateral cooperation agreements have been signed at regional and local levels. The two parks have been cooperating under four Interreg projects. Two EU Interreg projects (2002-2006) were focused on cooperation between countries (Alpine national parks) on joint planning and collaboration on management issues. Under Interreg project "ERA – EcoRegioAlpeAdria" (2004-2006) (involved Nockberge National Park, Triglav National Park and The Prealpi Giulie Nature Park) aimed to strengthen joint tourism strategy and promoted rural development (e.g. promotion of local products, common participation in fairs and events, cooperation between schools, promotion of tourism through "Giro dei parchi"). The Interreg project "PALPIS" (2005-2007) promoted cooperation and development of cross-border management plan for conservation of important areas in the southern Julian Alps, including Prealpi Giulie Nature Park, pSPA of the northern part of the Prealpi Giulie and Natura 2000 sites in the municipalities of Bavoc and Kobarid (topic and aims: Natura 2000, Management planning for Natura 2000 sites, broaden stakeholders involvement and raising public awareness for Natura 2000). The project "Climaparks" (2007-2013) concerns development of management strategies on the effects of climate change on protected areas.

Joint educational activities are regularly organized by Triglav National Park and Prealpi Giulie Nature Park since 2003. Children, living in both parks areas are involved in the exchange educational programmes. Children from Slovenia visit their transboundary fellows in the Prealpi Giulie Nature Park and vice versa and participate together in educational activities. This project strength the relationship between the two parks and involves not only teachers, park's staff and children but also their families.

At initial stage the coordination between the Triglav National Park and The Prealpi Giulie Nature Park was ensured by close cooperation of directors of both parks, who had regular meetings under different project or activities. In addition, depending on projects and topics staff members of the parks and related representatives of the local communities were having personal contacts and meetings, combining formal and informal events. Main language of communication is English, some staff members in both parks speak or learn the language of neighboring country.

Presently, the cooperation between Triglav National Park and The Prealpi Giulie Nature Park are managed by Steering Committee where representatives (3 from each) of both parks are involved. Officially, Steering Committee meets are held twice a year. Though, meetings/communication between Committee members and/or other staff members of both parks is held very regularly on different issues and projects. The five year strategy and action plan (2011-2015) is developed to achieve the goals of Transboundary Area Ecoregion Julian Alps. The planned activities involve: development of joint loco for area Ecoregia Julian Alps; preparation of promotion brochures in four languages; determining joint monitoring practices; wider cooperation in schools and Junior Rangers; organization of meetings of parks representatives; staff and expert exchange; meetings of steering committee.

Public Involvement in the development of Transboundary Park has been ensured through the different activities under projects listed above. Very intense work on public involvement is being done under "PALPIS" project concerning cooperation and development of cross-border management plan for Natura 2000 sites. Despite existing difficulties (different country laws and government levels) the participatory processes are lead by institutions at different levels (municipal, provincial, state (Slovenia)) from both countries.

6. Biosphere Park Großes Walsertal

6.1. Background information

The Biosphere Park¹ Grosses Walsertal is located in alpine side valley in the west part of the Austria, in the district Bludenz of federal-state (Land) of Vorarlberg. The Biosphere Park covers 19 200 ha, including pastures, meadows, forest, alpine farmland and some agricultural lands. The altitude ranges from 580 to 2 704 m above sea level. Six communities - Thüringerberg, Blons, St. Gerold, Raggal, Sonntag and Fontanella - are situated in the Grosses Walsertal with approximately 3 500 inhabitants.

The Biosphere Park Grosses Walsertal was recognized by UNESCO in 2000. It is one of the six Biosphere Parks in Austria. “Making use of nature without causing harm” – is the philosophy of the Biosphere Park Grosses Walsertal.



Figure 6. Biosphere Park Grosses Walsertal.

Sources: <http://www.gruppenfreizeiten.de/locationMap.php?plz=6733&land=3>
http://www.walsertal.at/home/img/site/gwt/de/map_anreise_detail.jpg

¹ The Biosphere Park is the same as Biosphere Reserve

The lands within the Biosphere Park Grosses Walsertal are both: Municipal and private. Up to 95% of agricultural lands are under private ownership, 80% of forest area owned by municipalities or forest associations. Faludriga-Nova, which is one of the core zones is a private land, and was included as a core zone by initiative of currant owner.

Four different zones are identified in the Biosphere Park Grosses Walsertal. These are: core zone, buffer zone, development zone and regeneration zone. The 6 core zones (Flack- und Hochmoorkomplex Tiefenwald; Lutz, Faludriga-Nova, Rote Wand, Gadental, and Kirschwald-Ischkarnei) make up 20% of total area of the Biosphere Park Grosses Walsertal. First protection sites which now are presented as a core zones within the Biosphere Park had protected status earlier (Law of Conservation and Landscape Development LGBI.No. 22/1997), before the announcement of the biosphere park.

Natura 2000 site is located within Biosphere Park which coincides with one of the core zones.

Different activities are carried out in the Biosphere Park Grosses Walsertal. Forest cutting is carried out by regional organization (mainly selective cutting). Small timber production companies are presented; small plant agriculture and farming (sheep and cattle) are carried out; the sky resort is located in development zone; the hunting in specific areas during certain period of the year is permitted based on license system.

6.2. Governance of the Biosphere Park Grosses Walsertal

The legal entity of the Biosphere Park Großes Walsertal is REGIO - Verein Regionalplanungsgemeinschaft Grosses Walsertal (Grosses Walsertal Regional Planning Association) with the 12 members (mayors and vice-mayors) representing all municipalities. This body is responsible for general planning of region.

REGIO Haubpausschuss=Biosphärenpark Kuratorium (REGIO's Main Committee= Biosphere park Steering Committee) is the body responsible for planning and implementation of different issues at regional level. After establishment of Biosphere Park the Steering committee become also responsible for the strategic leadership of the biosphere park Großes Walsertal. The Committee members are represented by all six municipalities - one mayor² from each, plus one representative from Bludenz district (as the biosphere park is located in district Bludenz) and the chairmen of the committee selected by mayors. The members of the committee are selected for five year (as the period of mayor's selection is five year). The chairmen holds his position since 1997. The decisions are made based on the discussions at the Committee meetings. Presently meeting of Steering Committee is carried out once in a month (in future it is planned to have meetings once in 2 months). The Committee receives supported from Fachbeirate (Expert Advisory Board). The municipalities trying to have influence on decision-making and to putsh the project which do not fall under Biosphere Park concept.

REGIO Unterausschüsse represents the body where representatives (on cultural, energy, water, etc. issues) from all municipalities are involved, including one mayor. However, this body most of the time does not function.

Fachbeirate (Expert Advisory Board) – includes experts from nature protection, energy and future affairs. Involvement of representatives of Expert Advisory Board is based upon request. The communication and work is carried out in informal way (people in the region know well each other). There are no specific regulations on expert involvement. Even giving recommendations do not require any official procedures (e.g. official letter). The expert (based on the needs) is

² Mayors is a part-time position (mayors are representatives of villages, their occupation can be different, like farmer, hotel or restaurant owner, etc).

asked to provide their input on specific issues. The expert is asked for meeting, the issue is discussed and recommendations are given.

Biosphärenpark Management – is the Management Body of the Biosphere reserve with manager and two assistants on tourism issues. An administrative office is a central communication centre in the valley. The Management Body (manager) develops Year Plans in very close cooperation with locals, which are approved by the Steering Committee by simple resolution. The management body is accountable to Steering Committee and is generally the communicator to the UNESCO. Biosphere park management team initiates and coordinates projects in collaboration with local population. Amongst other things, management body is committed to raising awareness and acceptance of ecologically important areas and to biological diversity. The tourism assistants working at the administration represent at the same time the employees of Biosphere reserve, Vorarlberg tourism association and Austrian tourism association.

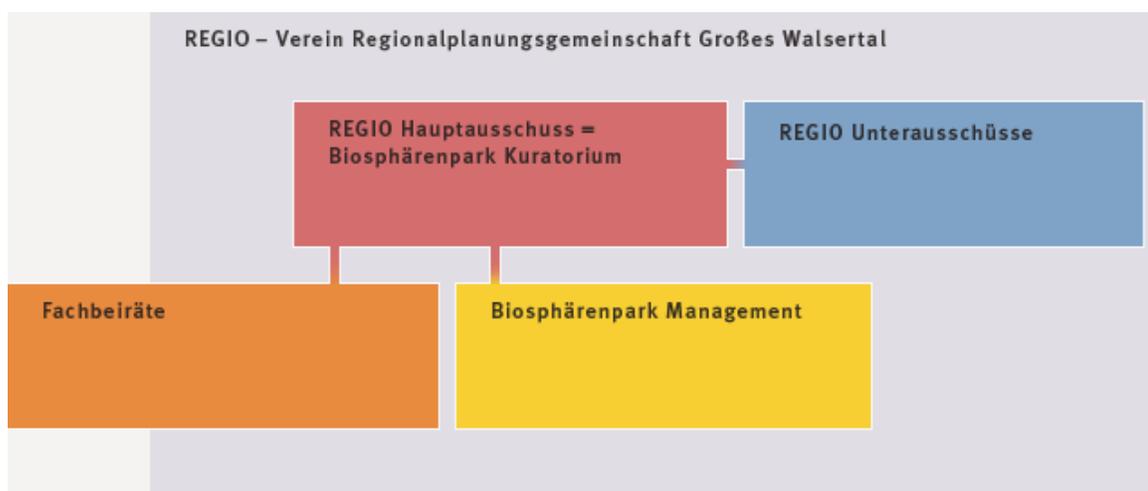


Figure 7. Organisation structure of Biosphere Park Großes Walsertal.

Source: <http://www.grosseswalsertal.at>

The overall concept or Charter of Biosphere Park Grosses Walsertal is “Leitbild”, where the vision, objectives and principles are given. The “Leitbild” defines five year goals. First document was developed in 1999 with involvement of local people. The revised versions were prepared in 2003 and 2010. The document is discussed and approved by Steering Committee.

The annual management (action) plan is developed by manager of the Biosphere Park in close cooperation with local population. The activities in the annual plan should correspond to the general goals listed in “Leitbild”.

The activities under the year plan do not concern core zones. Core zones are managed by Department of Nature Protection at Vorarlberg and at the district level by representative of Nature Protection unit. There are no management plans for these areas, only regulations.

Natura 2000 site (which coincide with one of the core zones) is managed by Department of Nature Protection at Vorarlberg (by the person who is a member of Fachbeirate - Expert Advisory Board of the Biosphere Park) and representative of municipality or province. Six year management plan for Natura 2000 sites are developed by the Department of Nature Protection at Vorarlberg.

6.3. Public Participation

The Biosphere Park Grosses Walsertal was established more than a decade later than other four Biosphere Parks in Austria, and in contrast to them the Biosphere Park Grosses Walsertal is more strongly orientated towards the participation of the local population and consideration of regional specificities.

Already two years before the designation of Biosphere Reserve (1998), by initiative of the Regional Planning Association Grosses Walsertal, 60 volunteer inhabitants of the valley worked together to develop a “Leitbild” – the overall concept (charter) of the valley, where interests of all stakeholders were taken into account. The “Leitbild” provides the common future vision, objectives for the first five years stage and principles. Next two versions of “Leitbild” also were developed with public involvement. The logo of the Biosphere Park was developed and selected via a painting competition held in the local schools.

Despite the absence of legal bases for the involvement of local communities and other stakeholders in the Biosphere Park management, their involvement is ensured. If needed, the local public can address the management body of the Biosphere Park or Steering Committee directly or in written form.

Local inhabitants are involved in the development of the annual action plans of the Biosphere Park. Locals provide information on programmes and activities (like, guiding tours, sky resorts, restaurants, concerts, performances, etc) for the seasonal brochures developed by the Biosphere Park management body. In addition to existing funding, the six communities concerned (about 3 500 inhabitants) pay 10 Euros per inhabitant per year.

To promote the Biosphere Park and to involve local communities there are several methods used. Once in 3 months a newspaper, posters, calendars are developed and distributed. Schoolchildren and families are involved in the educational programmes. 15 local guides (with appropriate qualifications) are involved in the park’s programme. Numerous projects have been carried out in the Grosses Walsertal contributing to the sustainable development of the region. These are projects concerning production and marketing of agriculture products (like mountain herbal tea, cheese, “köstliche Kiste” (box of regional delights), etc.) The locals are promoted also by involving them in different Fairs (cheese or agriculture product exhibitions, etc).

7. Lessons Learned

During the study tour, visiting three different protected areas (Triglav National Parks, Parco Naturale Prealpi Giulie and Biosphärenpark Großes Walsertal) in different countries, I learned about existing different governance approaches and public participation methods.

The protected areas appear within a different social, political and institutional environment and should consider many interests of different stakeholders. The existing practices show involvement of different interests in decision-making and present examples of shared governance.

The case of Transboundary Area Ecoregion Julian Alps showed that cross-border cooperation can be started without formal agreements. Initiative from both sides, common and joint projects and exchange programmes ensured close cross-border cooperation at the initial stage of cooperation. In addition, informal communications between directors, different staff members as well as between community members play a significant role.

All three cases show different ways of public participation. The case of Grosses Walsertal showed involvement of local communities at the initial stage of the establishment of the Biosphere Park, involvement of locals in development of park's overall concept and logo. The Triglav National Park ensures general public involvement via public Forum. Educational programmes are carried out in all three protected areas. Development programmes and promotion projects are practiced in all these protected areas supporting public involvement. Involvement of communities in the transboundary cooperation has been started early before establishment of Transboundary Park.

Some aspects of the governance and public participation issues presented in this report can be applicable to Georgia and therefore the report will be send to the Agency of Protected Areas at the Ministry of Environment Protection of Georgia in order to share knowledge gathered during the study trip.

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<http://www.grosseswalsertal.at>

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www.tnp.si

Annex 1. List of Respondents

The Prealpi Giulie Nature Park

21 March 2011, Resia	Stefano Santi, director of Prealpi Giulie Nature Park
22 March 2011, Udine	Elena Maiulini, freelancer, expert in public participation, PhD student in Social Science at Udine University
23 March 2011, Resia	Sergio Shinese, president of Prealpi Giulie Nature Park; Mayor of the Resia
23 March 2011, Resia	Alessandro Benzoni, administrative office, Prealpi Giulie Nature Park
23 March 2011, Resia, Prealpi Giulie Nature Park	Marco Favalli, naturalist, freelancer, guide
24 March 2011, Verzone	Aldo di Bernardo, manager of Tourist association "Pro Loco Pro Venzone", municipality Verzone
24 March 2011, Lusevera	Igor Cerno, office for promotion of Slovenian language and culture, municipality of Lusevera (Bardo)
25 March 2011, Resia	Verdiana Morandi, EU project consultant
25 March 2011, Maggio	Daniela Marcoccio, mayor of Moggio municipality

The Triglav National Park

28 March 2011, Trenta, TNP	Marko Pretner, head of the information centre in Trenta, TNP; Trenta inhabitant
29 March 2011, TNP	Iztok Butinar, guide at TNP (former Ranger)
30 March 2011, Bohinj Municipality	Klemen Langus, head of the Bohinj tourism office
31 March 2011, TNP	Ales Zdesar, advisory in nature conservation, TNP
01 April 2011, Bled	Aleksandra Zumer, head of the management department, lawyer, TNP
01 April 2011, Bled	Majola Odar, head of the info centre in Bled, TNP
01 April 2011, Bled	Mojca Smolej, department of marketing and promotion, TNP

Biosphärenpark Großes Walsertal

04 April 2011, Thüringerberg	Ruth Moser, manager of Biosphärenpark Großes Walsertal
04 April 2011, Thüringerberg	Monika Bischof, manager of Tourism organization; Biosphärenpark Großes Walsertal
05 April 2011, Thüringerberg	Josef Turtscher, chairman of the Steering Board; head of the Farmers Board; speaker of the farmers in the provincial Parliament
06 April 2011, Thüringerberg	Max Albrecht, nature protection department Vorarlberg, expert of the steering board
06 April 2011, Bregenz	Manfred Hellrigl, Vorarlberg State Bureau for Future Affairs, expert of the steering board
07 April 2011, St. Geroldz	Elisabeth Burtscher, former had cultural and educational unit Fontanella, volunteer in development of first "Leitbild"