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European Commission

Sustainable tourism and Natura 2000

Guidelines, initiatives and good practices in Europe



OFFICE FOR OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS
OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

L-2985 Luxembourg

ISBN 92-894-1443-X



9 789289 414432 >

See our publications catalogue at:
<http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/pubs/home.htm>

A great deal of additional information on the European Union is available on the Internet.
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Cataloguing data can be found at the end of this publication.

Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2001

ISBN 92-894-1443-X

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Printed in Belgium

PRINTED ON WHITE CHLORINE-FREE PAPER

Environment DG – European Commission

Sustainable tourism and Natura 2000

Guidelines, initiatives and good practices in Europe

**Final Publication
Vol. I**

based on the Lisbon seminar, December 1999

28/10/00



SECA
Société d'Eco-Aménagement

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Introduction

Who is the document for?

This document is for all stakeholders concerned with the development of sustainable tourism within a Natura 2000 site and, by extension, in protected areas in general. These include managers of Natura 2000 sites or protected areas, suppliers of local tourism services, tour operators and local authorities. It should help inspire local politicians, and be of interest at the national and regional government level.

What kind of area does it concern?

It is relevant to all Natura 2000 designated sites in Europe. These areas are incredibly diverse and include a wide range of ecosystem, from wetlands to mountain areas, and including rural areas. It can be extended to Eastern European areas. It is also relevant to all types of protected area in general.

What is it based on?

The document is the result of the organisation of a European seminar held in Lisbon in December 1999 carried out by the contractor SECA, Société d'Eco-Aménagement (France) in association with ECOTRANS (Germany), THE TOURISM COMPANY (United Kingdom), and the FRENCH FEDERATION OF REGIONAL NATURE PARKS (France). Examples of good practice, existing initiatives and general principles selected and presented at the conference, are analysed here.

In the preparation of the conference, 866 people were contacted from all over Europe, including Eastern European countries, and 70 projects were analysed, of which 47 examples of good practice were selected and presented. The final short list of 47 was chosen to reflect a wide spread of types of area, geographical location, tourism context, organisations, and initiatives. 129 participants attended two plenary sessions and four workshop sessions over three days. The 15 Member States were well represented, and there was a good balance between both the tourism and the environment sectors.

The document is the result of active participation throughout the seminar and in its follow-up, of the many comments gathered in an evaluation form completed by the participants, and of the constant review of the publication in its draft form.

In what context was this document produced?

The EU has established a legislative framework for protecting and conserving Europe's wildlife and habitats in order to encourage its Member States to take nature conservation further.

At the centre of this policy is the creation of a coherent ecological network of protected areas across the EU, known as Natura 2000. This is based on two European directives: *Birds* (1979) and *Habitats* (1992). Each Member State is responsible for the choice of sites and management tools in line with European requirements.

Recently, sustainable tourism has been promoted and supported through several European initiatives: studies, publications, workshops, funding programmes. These initiatives address rural and coastal areas and protected areas in general.

As these initiatives have evolved, it has become increasingly important to address tourism in Natura 2000 sites. These sites are notably more sensitive and vulnerable than traditional protected areas because of their characteristics (size, status, management...).

In order to promote sustainable tourism, the European Commission prepared a seminar in Lisbon in December 1999 which was due to be followed by the publication of a new set of guidelines. Contrary to the original aim of the seminar, **the participants all agreed it was not necessary to draw up new specific guidelines for sustainable tourism in Natura 2000, and on the need to adapt and promote existing initiatives.**

In consequence, this document aims to reinforce previous initiatives and focus on the Natura 2000 network. It aims to introduce the concept of sustainable tourism in the network, to encourage managers and stakeholders to follow and adopt certain guidelines and to promote existing initiatives and good practice from all over Europe.

What does it cover?

This document is in four Parts:

Part 1. Describes the Natura 2000 network, its requirements, the benefits of being designated Natura 2000 and belonging to the network. It analyses the Habitats Directive from a sustainable tourism perspective and gives advice on how to translate it into guidelines and general principles for Natura 2000 stakeholders.

Part 2. Provides a brief description of 17 initiatives relevant to protected areas, which have developed specific recommendations, charters, codes and guidelines for sustainable tourism. A detailed analysis and comparison of two important European initiatives (WWF PAN Parks and the EUROPARC Charter) provides further information for the reader.

Part 3. Presents a list of priorities and general principles for sustainable tourism which are relevant to the characteristics of Natura 2000 sites. These principles are based on the examples of good practice presented at the Lisbon seminar.

Part 4. Provides a summary of specific recommendations and advice addressed to Natura 2000 stakeholders in the light of the Habitats Directive described in Part 1 and based on the general principles in Part 3.

A second volume (annex) gives a description of 21 selected examples of good practices, which illustrate some of the main principles and provide insight into the application of sustainable tourism in practice.

Part 1. Natura 2000, Characteristics and requirements

Introduction au réseau Natura 2000

. **LE RÉSEAU NATURA 2000 : COMMENT ET POURQUOI ?**

La conservation de la nature est une préoccupation majeure de la politique environnementale de l'Union Européenne depuis les années 1970. Depuis plus de trente ans, les textes législatifs et réglementaires pour la protection de la nature se sont développés également dans les pays de l'Union Européenne. D'autres mesures réglementaires concourent indirectement à la protection de la nature aujourd'hui : lois pour l'aménagement du territoire et sur les études d'impact, planification sectorielle ou territoriale du développement économique et des transports, programmes contractuels, notamment entre les Etats et le niveau local, en faveur du développement économique durable. La mise en place de ces mesures est cependant très variable d'un pays à l'autre et n'a pas permis de voir disparaître les menaces sur certains habitats et espèces.

Au regard de ces menaces persistantes, la Commission Européenne a créé un outil novateur à l'échelle européenne, qu'elle a voulu le plus performant possible en faveur de la protection d'un patrimoine commun à l'ensemble des pays de l'Union : le **Réseau NATURA 2000**. Ce réseau est le symbole de la conservation des ressources naturelles de l'an 2000 et au delà. La protection et la gestion efficace des sites qui constituent ce réseau auront une importance vitale pour la survie à terme de nombreuses espèces ou habitats. Mais plus encore, NATURA 2000 donne l'occasion unique de démontrer que les préoccupations environnementales peuvent être intégrées à d'autres politiques. La conservation de la nature fait partie intégrante de la politique d'aménagement du territoire et peut être compatible avec l'agriculture et les autres activités économiques. Elle peut aussi stimuler la création d'emplois.

Assurer le futur du riche patrimoine naturel de l'Europe suppose la pleine participation de tous les partenaires impliqués et des groupes d'intérêts locaux. Une saine gestion patrimoniale n'est pas du seul ressort des administrations nationales et européenne. Le succès du réseau NATURA 2000 devra s'appuyer sur une large adhésion et sur l'engagement de tous ceux qui sont propriétaires ou gestionnaires ou qui apprécient notre patrimoine naturel.

. **QUELLES SONT LES QUALITÉS D'UN RÉSEAU ?**

Si jusqu'ici, il a surtout été appliqué dans les fédérations de sites ou d'acteurs de la conservation de la nature, le concept de réseau de sites naturels, apparaît ou est sous-entendu dans les directives européennes et les traités internationaux en faveur de la conservation de la nature. Le principe du réseau est aussi très développé dans certains pays où la conservation de la nature est déjà ancienne, par les organismes publics ou des associations (Grande-Bretagne, Pays-Bas, France).

Dans la conservation de la nature, **le réseau est d'abord une réalité biologique** : protéger des espèces et des habitats, c'est connaître l'ensemble des sites présentant les mêmes habitats ou des habitats similaires, et accueillant les mêmes espèces (voire les mêmes individus) à tout moment de leur cycle biologique. **Le réseau, est un lien entre les acteurs pour améliorer la cohérence des actions** dans un secteur qui se professionnalise progressivement. La bonne conservation du patrimoine naturel repose sur **l'harmonisation des méthodes (de la gestion et de sa planification) et des suivis essentiels à la bonne évaluation des mesures mises en place.**

Il est reconnu, que localement, les différents groupes d'intérêts s'entendent généralement pour mettre en place des projets concertés. La Commission Européenne a d'ailleurs permis de mener à bien des expérimentations ponctuelles au travers des financements ACE et ACNAT, puis grâce aux LIFE Environnement mais surtout aux LIFE Nature. **Pour que ces expériences localisées, servent à l'intérêt général, les réseaux sont essentiels à la valorisation et à l'extension des bonnes pratiques.**

. LA SPÉCIFICITÉ DU RÉSEAU NATURA 2000

Constitués sur la base volontariste de ses membres, les réseaux nationaux ou internationaux de sites protégés ne sont pas représentatifs des enjeux de conservation du patrimoine naturel de l'Union Européenne.

La politique de l'Union Européenne en faveur de la conservation de la nature sur le territoire communautaire repose essentiellement sur deux textes législatifs : la Directive 79/409/CEE du Conseil, adoptée en avril 1979 et qui concerne la conservation des oiseaux sauvages (aussi appelée "Directive Oiseaux") et la Directive 92/43/CEE du Conseil, adoptée en mai 1992 et qui concerne la conservation des habitats naturels ainsi que de la faune et de la flore sauvages (aussi appelée "Directive Habitats"). Ces deux Directives constituent le cadre législatif de la protection et de la conservation des habitats et des espèces sauvages d'Europe. Le réseau écologique cohérent d'espaces protégés NATURA 2000 comprendra :

- des Zones de Protection Spéciale (ZPS) visant la conservation des 182 espèces et sous-espèces d'oiseaux figurant à l'Annexe I de la Directive Oiseaux ainsi que des espèces migratrices
- des Zones Spéciales de Conservation (ZSC) visant la conservation des 253 types d'habitats, des 200 espèces animales et des 434 espèces végétales figurant aux Annexes de la Directive Habitats.

Son objectif est d'assurer le maintien ou le rétablissement des habitats et des espèces dans un état de conservation favorable au sein de leur aire de répartition naturelle.

Le réseau NATURA 2000 fonctionnera sur tout le territoire européen et permettra d'inclure des espaces naturels qui ne sont pas pris en compte par les réseaux actuels de la conservation. Ainsi, le réseau NATURA 2000, tous types de site confondus, et constitué sur la base de critères européens, est une première.

Un site NATURA 2000, bénéficiera d'un gestion planifiée et de mesures en faveur de la préservation des espèces et des habitats pour lesquels il a été désigné. Les actions de gestion

seront mises en place au regard des moyens techniques et financiers à disposition et en fonction des exigences socio-économiques et culturelles.

La cohérence du Réseau NATURA 2000 reposera sur la bonne application des directives dont la responsabilité revient aux Etats. Il est d'ailleurs préconisé dans la Directive Habitats, de traduire cette directive en droit national afin de permettre le cas échéant, de compléter les règlements nationaux en faveur de la protection de la biodiversité. De nombreux pays disposent déjà de textes réglementaires et législatifs dans l'esprit des Directives Habitats et Oiseaux. La Directive tend ainsi à harmoniser ou à renforcer des mesures déjà prises ou à prendre.

. COMMENT SERA CONSTITUÉ LE RÉSEAU NATURA 2000?

La constitution du Réseau NATURA 2000, s'effectue en constante collaboration entre la Commission Européenne et les Etats. Sa mise en place, telle qu'elle est définie dans la Directive Habitats se fait en trois étapes:

Etape 1 : Sélection au niveau national

Elle est effectuée sur la base d'**inventaires complets** ou **des connaissances acquises**. Chaque Etat fait l'évaluation de l'état de "santé" de chaque espèce ou habitat visé en fonction des éléments d'information dont on dispose.

Les habitats et les espèces figurant aux Annexes I et II de la Directive Habitats sont reconnus comme étant menacés à l'échelle européenne. Cependant, le niveau de connaissance sur leur répartition et leur état de conservation dans chaque Etat Membre est assez disparate. C'est pourquoi, la première étape du processus de désignation a consisté, pour chaque Etat Membre, en une évaluation précise à l'échelle nationale de chaque habitat ou espèce visé, présent sur leur territoire. Sur cette base, les sites importants pour leur conservation ont été identifiés et soumis sous la forme d'une liste nationale à la Commission.

Le choix des sites est effectué sur la base de critères de sélection standards (définis à l'Annexe III de la Directive). Cela signifie que les décideurs doivent tenir compte de la *représentativité* du type d'habitat sur le site considéré, de la *superficie qu'il y occupe* au regard de la superficie nationale de l'habitat considéré et de la *qualité écologique* de ce type d'habitat sur le site (en intégrant les possibilités de restauration).

De même, pour les espèces, ces critères doivent prendre en compte *la taille et la densité* de la population de l'espèce sur le site considéré en comparaison de la population nationale, la *qualité* du site pour l'espèce visée (en intégrant les possibilités de restauration) et son degré d'isolement sur le site par rapport à l'aire de répartition naturelle de la population.

Dès lors que le Réseau NATURA 2000 vise la conservation des habitats et des espèces sur l'ensemble de leur aire de répartition, il est essentiel que les informations fournies par les Etats Membres soient standardisées. C'est pourquoi, un formulaire NATURA 2000 a été conçu; il doit être complété pour chaque site et transmis en accompagnement de la liste nationale. La précision des informations demandées est importante. Elle est un élément essentiel non seulement pour l'aboutissement du Réseau NATURA 2000 mais aussi pour tout futur débat sur la conservation d'un site dans le cadre d'autres initiatives d'aménagement du territoire (ex: création d'une nouvelle route, ou projet d'écotourisme).

Etape 2 : Sélection au niveau européen : Les Sites d'Importance Communautaire

Les **Sites d'Intérêt Communautaire** *, sont sélectionnés au travers d'une analyse commune aux Etats et à la Commission au sein de 6 grandes régions biogéographiques : alpine, atlantique, boréale, continentale, macaronésienne et méditerranéenne.

Carte des régions biogéographiques

Les sites proposés par les Etats sont retenus au niveau européen lorsqu'ils contribuent de manière significative au maintien ou au rétablissement dans un état de conservation favorable des types d'habitats et des espèces visés, à la cohérence du réseau Natura 2000 et/ou au maintien de la diversité biologique des zones biogéographiques concernées. La liste n'est pas fermée. En novembre 1999, près de 10 000 sites ont été proposés par les Etats membres pour une superficie d'environ 350 000 km². Le Natura 2000 Barometer donne des informations régulières sur le nombre de sites proposés par les Etats (site web de la Commission Européenne et la revue Natura 2000 Informations).

La Communauté abrite six régions biogéographiques distinctes. Chacune possède ses propres caractéristiques et sa propre originalité en matière d'habitats et d'espèces, même si certaines sont communes à plusieurs régions. Du point de vue écologique, il est cependant important de considérer les objectifs de conservation de l'Union Européenne dans leur contexte biogéographique.

La sélection des Sites d'Importance Communautaire est menée sur la base des critères définis à l'Annexe III de la Directive. Ces critères évaluent les sites selon leur *valeur* relative à l'échelle nationale, leur *importance* en tant que voie de migration ou de site transfrontalier, leur *surface* totale, la *coexistence* des divers types d'habitats et d'espèces visés et leur valeur en terme d'unicité pour les régions biogéographiques ou pour l'Union.

Les sites des listes nationales identifiés comme abritant des espèces ou des types d'habitats prioritaires du fait de leur risque imminent de disparition ou d'extinction (signalés par un astérisque dans l'Annexe de la Directive) seront automatiquement sélectionnés en tant que Sites d'Importance Communautaire (sauf si ces sites "prioritaires" représentent plus de 5% du territoire national). De même, la Commission pourra dans des cas exceptionnels proposer d'ajouter un site à la liste, s'il peut être démontré sur des bases scientifiques que ce site est essentiel à la préservation du type d'habitat ou de l'espèce concerné.

Etape 3 : Les Zones Spéciales de Conservation

Une fois retenu comme SIC par le Comité Habitats, un site doit être **désigné Zone Spéciale de Conservation** par l'Etat d'ici à 2004. Cela signifie que l'Etat s'engage à mettre en place, si besoin est, les mesures nécessaires pour sa conservation (plan de gestion, actions de restauration, mesures réglementaire ou contractuelle, etc.). De nombreux sites proposés par le Etats bénéficient déjà de telles mesures.

Les Etats Membres devront traiter prioritairement les sites les plus menacés ou les plus importants en terme de conservation. Cette période préalable à la désignation sera mise à profit par les Etats Membres pour préparer les plans de gestion et de restauration de ces sites afin de leur assurer un état de conservation favorable.

. ENTRETENIR LE RÉSEAU NATURA 2000

La plupart des sites constituant le Réseau NATURA 2000 devraient être protégés de fait. Cependant, cela ne signifie pas que le processus s'arrête là ou que le Réseau NATURA 2000 sera figé une fois pour toutes. Il sera essentiel de maintenir une démarche dynamique qui devra être ajustée en fonction des réussites ou échecs relatifs des mesures de protection entreprises. Par conséquent, à l'instar de la Directive Oiseaux, il sera hautement recommandé que des sites continuent à être intégrés au Réseau NATURA 2000 dans l'éventualité où une espèce ou un habitat continuerait de décliner du fait de la dégradation des habitats.

Il est de la responsabilité partagée de la Commission et des Etats Membres de contrôler la réussite du Réseau NATURA 2000 en matière de réalisation des objectifs de conservation de la Directive.

La constitution du réseau NATURA 2000 est un travail ambitieux et progressif. La difficulté technique principale pour proposer des Sites d'Intérêt Communautaire représentatifs au niveau européen et de surface pertinente est de disposer des connaissances nécessaires à l'analyse par les experts du Comité Habitats. Le manque le plus important étant des bonnes cartographies, les données socio-économiques, voire les données naturalistes pour certains sites. Il existe néanmoins nombre de cas où l'on "a fait du NATURA 2000 avant l'heure et sans le savoir" et pour lesquels la désignation en ZSC ne soulèvera aucune contestation. Valoriser ces expériences acquises est aussi l'un des moyens d'illustrer au mieux les implications de l'application de la Directive Habitats. Les promoteurs et les partenaires de ces expériences sont souvent les meilleurs ambassadeurs et constituent les premières éléments de la chaîne de compétences qui va se constituer au sein du Réseau NATURA 2000.

Voir un territoire devenir site NATURA 2000 est plus qu'un label. C'est d'abord la reconnaissance de l'importance d'un site pour le patrimoine européen. C'est ensuite, pouvoir mettre en place des actions concertées de préservation et de développement économique durable avec le soutien de la Commission Européenne et de l'Etat. C'est aussi participer à une œuvre commune avec le volonté affirmée de travailler en concertation avec le plus grand nombre des acteurs (services publics, exploitants, gestionnaires, aménageurs). C'est prendre conscience qu'on a à rendre des comptes aux générations futures par le biais d'une autorité commune. C'est enfin, faire partie d'un groupe, donc ne plus être isolé.

Tourisme durable au regard de la Directive Habitats

Les sites du réseau NATURA 2000 seront des sites protégés pour lesquels les mesures seront prises par les Etats membres (outils réglementaires, financiers, en fonction des contextes locaux, des stratégies nationales...). Le poids réglementaire du réseau Natura 2000 repose sur la responsabilité des Etats. Il est donc nécessaire de pouvoir opposer un règlement ou des obligations à tout promoteur de projet. La Directive Habitats donne les grandes lignes et les règles pour une planification efficace de projet de développement durable sur un site protégé.

Les directives Oiseaux et Habitats servent de base à l'élaboration du réseau NATURA 2000. La Directive Habitats, plus récente, comporte les préconisations faites aux Etats pour la mise en place de ce réseau. Ce sont les articles 2 et 6 qui clarifient le lien entre la conservation et les usages possibles sur les sites NATURA 2000. C'est donc dans ces articles que nous trouvons le cadre possible du développement d'un projet touristique sur les sites Natura 2000 qui constituera un exemple de tourisme durable.

Article 2.3 Les mesures prises en vertu de la présente directive tiennent compte des exigences économiques, sociales et culturelles, ainsi que des particularités régionales et locales. L'homme ou ses activités n'est pas exclu aujourd'hui ou demain. La directive Habitats cherche à promouvoir le développement durable.	On favorisera donc la concertation et le partenariat en - Développant et en mettant en place des projets répondant à une stratégie de tourisme durable - Tenant compte de la culture locale - Soutenant les productions traditionnelles et l'activité économique locale - Créant ou développant des écolabels, de nouveaux produits, des modes d'hébergement adaptés
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. L'ARTICLE 6 DE LA DIRECTIVE HABITATS

L'article 6 de la Directive Habitats crée le cadre de la conservation et de la protection des sites. Il s'applique aux Zones de Protection Spéciale (ZPS) classées en vertu de la Directive Oiseaux (sauf article 6.1) et aux sites visées dans la Directive Habitats (ZSC).

L'article 6.1 prévoit le régime de conservation général que les Etats membres doivent instaurer **pour les Zones Spéciales de Conservation (ZSC) désignées**. Il s'agit de mesures dites positives (établissement de plans de gestion, mise en place de mesures réglementaires, administratives ou contractuelles) à prendre en faveur des espèces et des habitats présents sur le site en cause, sauf ceux dont la présence n'est pas significative.

Le régime de conservation des Zones de Protection Spéciale (ZPS) classées est prévu dans les articles 4.1 et 4.2 de la Directive Oiseaux. Les articles 6.2, 6.3 et 6.4 de la Directive

Habitats, comprenant les mesures préventives et les procédures dans le cas de projets d'envergure, s'appliquent au ZPS comme aux ZSC.

L'article 6 de la Directive Habitats incite les Etats à gérer les espaces protégés d'une manière durable et fixe des limites aux activités susceptibles d'avoir un impact négatif, tout en permettant des dérogations dans certains cas. Il constitue l'un des principaux moyens de concrétiser le principe d'intégration environnementale et d'instaurer, à terme le développement durable.

. ZOOM SUR LE TOURISME DURABLE DANS L'ARTICLE 6 DE LA DIRECTIVE HABITATS

A. Les mesures actives

*Article 6.1 Pour les zones spéciales de conservation, les États membres établissent **les mesures de conservation** nécessaires impliquant, le cas échéant, des **plans de gestion** appropriés spécifiques aux sites ou intégrés dans d'autres plans d'aménagement et les **mesures réglementaires, administratives ou contractuelles** appropriées, qui répondent aux **exigences écologiques** des types d'habitats naturels de l'annexe I et des espèces de l'annexe II présents sur les sites.*

Les projets touristiques sont possibles sur les sites Natura 2000 dès lors qu'ils respectent la biodiversité et les objectifs de la Directive Habitats et de la Directive Oiseaux.

Tout projet touristique devra tenir compte des mesures nécessaires mises en place pour la conservation.

Il devra s'intégrer dans une démarche de planification existante ou à mettre en place.

Il devra s'inscrire dans une stratégie de tourisme durable.

Le plan de gestion n'a rien d'obligatoire et peut prendre toute forme selon le choix des Etats membres. Le plus important étant qu'il prenne en compte les exigences environnementales. Il doit au mieux s'intégrer dans les cadres de planification existants.

Un plan de développement touristique sur un site Natura 2000 peut être développé par un groupe privé, une collectivité publique, l'organisme gestionnaire du site. Si la méthodologie d'élaboration de plan de gestion du site existe, elle peut intégrer une partie spécifique au tourisme durable pour aider le concepteur du projet. Le caractère durable d'un projet de tourisme durable repose sur la bonne méthode de sa planification, de son évaluation et de son actualisation.

Il existe une grande diversité de types de planification au niveau territorial ou sectoriel, au niveau local ou national, voire transfrontaliers, qui peuvent concerner un projet touristique quelque soit son importance :

- plan de développement des infrastructures de transport
- plan territorial de développement économique
- plan de gestion de l'urbanisation, de l'occupation de l'espace
- plan de gestion et d'exploitation des ressources naturelles
- programme de préservation du patrimoine naturel, historique, culturel
- plan de gestion de sites naturels protégés de tout type.

Un projet touristique durable tiendra compte de ces plans. On peut d'ailleurs y trouver des données socio-économiques, écologiques, historiques nécessaires à analyser ou à intégrer dans le projet. Dans l'idéal, le projet touristique s'inscrit dans la procédure d'élaboration de l'un de ces plans et bénéficie du cadre de concertation que cela peut offrir.

La planification d'un projet n'est efficace que dans une démarche partenariale et de concertation. Elle devra être suivie par une approche d'évaluation régulière du projet et par son actualisation avec l'ensemble des partenaires et acteurs concernés.

Les exigences écologiques : définissent tous les besoins écologiques nécessaires pour assurer un état de conservation favorable des habitats et espèces concernés. Cela implique une bonne connaissance scientifique, au travers de critères que l'Etat est appelé à identifier avec l'aide de la Commission si nécessaire.

Un projet de développement touristique sera d'autant mieux appréhendé qu'on aura une bonne connaissance du site et de ses exigences écologiques. En l'absence de bonnes connaissances, le principe de précaution peut amener à limiter fortement les projets. L'élaboration d'un projet de tourisme peut comprendre l'amélioration des connaissances.

Pour tout projet, on doit mettre l'accent sur la recherche de tous les éléments d'information, et garder en mémoire la vulnérabilité des espèces et des habitats qui sont à l'origine de la désignation en site Natura 2000.

Pour cela on doit :

- connaître les limites du site, même si le projet est en dehors du site
- s'informer sur la teneur des mesures réglementaires (lois nationales, réglementations sur les sites qui bénéficient d'un statut de protection) ou contractuelles (dans le cadre de conventions visant la gestion des milieux naturels) qui s'y appliquent.
- se procurer ou à défaut, faire réaliser les cartographies aux échelles adaptées au projet, les études sur les exigences écologiques des espèces et des milieux concernés et leur degré de vulnérabilité, dans le site ou en dehors.
- identifier et évaluer les menaces et les enjeux sur la conservation durable des espèces et des habitats.

<i>Les mesures réglementaires, administratives et contractuelles sont très variables selon les pays et les sites et sont laissées à la discrétion des Etats, de par le principe de subsidiarité. Elles doivent être positives, comme signifier la non intervention, la définition de zones interdites d'accès, etc.</i> Le tourisme, même s'il est durable, ne se développera pas dans tous les sites Natura 2000. Tout site Natura 2000 n'est pas un site potentiel pour le développement touristique, ou de n'importe quelle activité économique, même considérée comme durable par ailleurs.	Un site Natura 2000 peut être un espace nécessitant une protection stricte ou destiné à des actions minimales de gestion pour le maintenir dans un état de conservation favorable. S'il est envisageable, un projet touristique devra tenir compte des mesures réglementaires mises en place au niveau national et local. Elles sont parfois nombreuses et d'origines diverses : conditions d'accès aux sites, d'exploitation des ressources naturelles, nécessité d'autorisation spéciale pour l'aménagement ou l'exploitation, etc. Tout promoteur de projet se doit de les connaître, que ce soit les mesures de protection de site, ou les mesures contractuelles dont pourra bénéficier le projet s'il répond aux critères des contrats mis en place. Le projet pourra avoir pour objectif de participer à la conservation et pourra éventuellement faire appel au soutien financier des Etats ou de la Commission Européenne lorsqu'ils existent.
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B. Les mesures préventives

<i>Article 6.2 Les États membres prennent les mesures appropriées pour éviter, dans les zones spéciales de conservation, la détérioration des habitats naturels et des habitats d'espèces ainsi que les perturbations touchant les espèces pour lesquelles les zones ont été désignées, pour autant que ces perturbations soient susceptibles d'avoir un effet significatif eu égard aux objectifs de la présente directive.</i>	C'est le principe de prévention qui s'applique à tout type d'activités humaines, comme à des accidents dus à des phénomènes naturels ou non. Cela peut donc concerner des activités en dehors des sites, dont les effets peuvent se faire ressentir à l'intérieur du site. Cet aspect est primordial pour l'élaboration d'un projet économique qui nécessite une bonne connaissance de la fonctionnalité des milieux, de la sensibilité des espaces et des espèces, et des mesures de conservation mises en place. L'information est à diffuser au plus grand nombre. Développer au mieux les outils d'évaluation, de communication, de valorisation et sensibiliser. Avoir une image vraie de la nature et pas une représentation.
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Indicateurs de détérioration

L'aire de répartition naturelle de l'espèce" diminue ou risque de diminuer ou remet en cause l'existence et la probabilité d'existence d'un habitat suffisamment étendu pour que ses populations se maintiennent à long terme".

Pour le tourisme, cela concerne tous les projets d'infrastructures, de modes de transport, d'augmentation de la densité de la fréquentation, d'aménagements pour l'accueil du public... qui doivent être envisagés selon leurs conséquences au long terme, donc suivis et maîtrisés.

Un projet de tourisme durable peut comporter des aménagements, voire la création d'infrastructures nouvelles qui auront une incidence paysagère, au minimum.

Pour éviter de conduire à une détérioration, il faut avoir une très bonne connaissance des habitats et des espèces autant dans le site, qu'à l'extérieur. Il existe des organismes et des personnes ressources dans ce domaine qu'il peut être nécessaire d'intégrer dès l'élaboration du projet afin d'évaluer au mieux l'impact potentiel du projet.

Si les aménagements et les infrastructures nouvelles impliquent la création de nouvelles activités, une fréquentation plus élevée, on doit en évaluer également l'impact au préalable.

Un projet de tourisme durable doit également promouvoir autant que possible la réduction des pollutions, l'utilisation minimale d'énergie et l'exploitation raisonnée des ressources naturelles, qui sont par ailleurs préconisées pour favoriser le développement durable.

Indicateur de perturbation

Sur un site, la perturbation est relative au statut de conservation des espèces au regard de la contribution du site au réseau Natura 2000. Tout événement contribuant à la diminution de la taille de l'habitat des espèces à l'intérieur du site peut être considéré comme une perturbation significative.

Cela peut concerner des projets de parcours sur des milieux sensibles, de visites régulières de l'avifaune en particulier. L'absence de limitation de certaines activités (tout genre confondu) est le cas le plus courant de perturbation.

La fréquentation humaine est parfois la source de perturbation la plus importante. Elle repose souvent sur une méconnaissance des espèces et des habitats. On doit donc évaluer les capacités de charge des sites, maîtriser les flux de visiteurs, à l'intérieur ou à l'extérieur des sites.

Le promoteur du projet doit aussi envisager une démarche active de sensibilisation, voire d'éducation à l'environnement, qui ne soit pas qu'un outil de promotion ou un slogan.

On peut ainsi favoriser les programmes d'éducation à l'environnement, des codes de bonne conduite, les nouvelles technologies, et les modes d'appréhension de la nature par l'interprétation.

Le discours "naturaliste" ou "environnemental" est l'une des spécialités en plein développement dans les espaces protégés, le monde de l'éducation. Des organismes et des personnes ressources existent donc et peuvent être étroitement associés à l'élaboration du projet comme à la mise en place de programmes de sensibilisation. Il existe des fonds spécifiques pour ces objectifs à différents niveaux.

C. Les procédures d'évaluation d'un projet

*Article 6.3 Tout **plan** ou **projet** non directement lié ou nécessaire à la **gestion** du site mais susceptible d'affecter ce site de manière significative, individuellement ou en conjugaison avec d'autres plans et projets, fait l'objet d'une évaluation appropriée de ses incidences sur le site eu égard aux objectifs de conservation de ce site. Compte tenu des conclusions de l'évaluation des incidences sur le site et sous réserve des dispositions du paragraphe 4, les autorités nationales compétentes ne marquent leur accord sur ce plan ou projet qu'après s'être assurées qu'il ne portera pas atteinte à l'intégrité du site concerné et après avoir pris, le cas échéant, l'avis du public.*

Cet article met l'accent sur l'avis officiel à

Un projet d'écotourisme peut comprendre partiellement ou totalement des infrastructures ou des travaux importants. Il importe dans ce cas de prévoir parallèlement des mesures d'atténuation et les solutions alternatives qui pourraient assurer l'absence d'effets négatifs sur le site.

L'étude préalable ou évaluation du projet est alors indispensable et doit être réalisées au regard des objectifs de conservation du site qui sont définis dans le formulaire descriptif du site voire détaillés dans un plan de conservation préétabli (plan de gestion, plan d'action, document d'objectif de conservation) et généralement consultable auprès de l'autorité compétente.

délivrer par une autorité compétente sur tout projet (travaux de construction ou interventions sur l'environnement naturel par exemple) ou sur tout plan (aménagement du territoire, programmes sectoriels par exemple) afin d'évaluer leur compatibilité avec les objectifs des deux directives.

La procédure décrite est déclenchée par la seule probabilité d'effets négatifs de plans ou projets situés à l'extérieur ou à l'intérieur du site. On doit également considérer des projets ou plans au regard des éventuels effets conjugués de plusieurs plans ou projets, qui sont proposés effectivement et pas seulement prévus.

Si un projet est susceptible d'avoir une incidence négative au regard des directives, il doit comporter des solutions alternatives que l'autorité compétente pourra évaluer à leur tour.

L'évaluation du projet peut suivre la procédure envisagée dans le cas d'étude d'impact environnemental de projets publics ou privés. La Directive européenne 85/337/CEE modifiée par la directive 97/11/CE définit la notion de projet et la forme de l'évaluation à envisager. Elle est un référent incontestable. Les lois nationales sur l'étude d'impact environnemental peuvent également être utilisées dans certains pays qui en disposent.

Plus l'étude est détaillée et motivée plus la décision de l'autorité compétente sera facilitée.

Cette étude a l'avantage de rendre l'avis émis non critiquable sur un projet, et éventuellement de favoriser le débat, voire la concertation locale.

En l'absence de plan de gestion de site on suggère ici au meneur de projet d'avoir une méthode stricte, rigoureuse. Ce qui peut être le cas d'un site Natura 2000 ne bénéficiant d'aucune mesure de protection avant sa désignation.

*Article 6.4 Si, en dépit de conclusions négatives de l'évaluation des incidences sur le site et en l'absence de solutions alternatives, un **plan** ou **projet** doit néanmoins être réalisé pour des raisons impératives d'intérêt public majeur, y compris de nature sociale ou économique, l'État membre prend toute mesure compensatoire nécessaire pour assurer que la cohérence globale de Natura 2000 est protégée. L'État membre informe la Commission des mesures compensatoires adoptées. Lorsque le site concerné est un site abritant un type d'habitat naturel et/ou une espèce prioritaires, seules peuvent être évoquées des considérations liées à la santé de l'homme et à la sécurité publique ou à des conséquences bénéfiques primordiales pour l'environnement ou,*

Les mesures compensatoires doivent être nouvelles (la désignation supplémentaire de site n'en est pas une en soit mais peut l'être exceptionnellement) et vraiment compenser les dommages en allant au delà de la simple application des directives.

Elles doivent être mises en place avant et prouver qu'elles fonctionnent quand les atteintes au site visés par le projet sont effectives. Elles peuvent prendre les formes suivantes :

- recréation d'habitats sur un site nouveau ou agrandi et incorporation dans le Réseau Natura 2000
- amélioration d'un habitat sur une partie du site ou sur un autre site Natura 2000 dans une mesure proportionnelle aux

après avis de la Commission, à d'autres raisons impératives d'intérêt public majeur

Un projet pourra être justifié pour **raison impérative d'intérêt public majeur**, dans le cas d'initiatives ou de politiques visant des valeurs fondamentales pour la population (santé, sécurité, environnement), dans le cas de politiques fondamentales pour l'Etat et pour la société, dans le cas de réalisation d'activités économique ou sociale visant à accomplir des obligations spécifiques de service public.

Les mesures compensatoires qui visent à contrebalancer les effets négatifs sur l'espèce ou l'habitat en cause ne sont que le dernier recours.

pertes provoquées par le projet

De nombreuses expériences de récréation d'habitats ont été menées par les organismes porteurs de projets de conservation de la nature et constituent des références techniques et scientifiques reconnues.

Le principe pollueur payeur signifie que le concepteur ou responsable du projet prend en charge les frais des mesures compensatoires.

Le promoteur du projet doit prendre en compte l'appartenance du site qu'il vise à un réseau de sites protégés dont la cohérence doit être maintenue, soit par l'atténuation des effets négatifs de son projet, soit par les compensation envisagées si son projet est reconnu d'utilité publique.

Un formulaire d'information pouvant aider à préparer l'évaluation est disponible au auprès des services compétents (Etat ou Commission Européenne).

Les spécificités et caractéristiques des sites Natura 2000

L'objet de la directive Habitats est d'assurer la protection de la biodiversité dans l'Union au travers de la conservation des habitats et des espèces sauvages présentes dans les pays où s'applique la Directive. Elle propose la mise en place de mesures pour le maintien et la restauration d'habitats dans un état de conservation favorable, en tenant compte des exigences économiques, sociales et culturelles, ainsi que des particularités régionales et locales.

Si les critères de désignation dépendent d'espèces et d'habitats considérés comme prioritaires à protéger, les facteurs anthropiques sont également pris en compte. Les sites Natura 2000 sont des espaces protégés qui n'excluent pas l'homme ou les activités socio-économiques dès lors que cela ne porte pas atteinte aux espèces ou aux habitats pour lesquels le site sera désigné. Il est d'ailleurs reconnu que certaines activités humaines concourent directement à la bonne conservation d'espèces ou d'habitats. De même, le réseau Natura 2000 peut participer au maintien d'activités socio-économiques voire au développement de nouvelles, par le biais de mesures réglementaires ou contractuelles mises en place par les Etats ou leurs déclinaisons locales. Le tourisme durable est l'une des activités qui peut trouver sa place.

. QUELS TYPES D'ESPACES SONT CONCERNÉS?

Le réseau Natura 2000 est en cours de constitution. Il s'agit principalement d'espaces ruraux, forestiers ou naturels (montagne, littoral, zones humides). A noter qu'au regard de la directive Oiseaux, des sites urbains en particulier portuaires ont été désignés en ZPS et seront intégrés au réseau Natura 2000.

Espaces protégés partiellement ou complètement

En premier lieu, sont proposés par les Etats les sites ou parties de sites bénéficiant de mesures nationales en faveur de la préservation de la nature.

- Les plus communs sont les parcs nationaux, les réserves nationales (réserves naturelle, de chasse, de pêche).
- Les parcs régionaux (ou parcs naturels) constituent des territoires où le développement des activités économiques dépend de mesures contractuelles en faveur de la protection de l'environnement dans son sens le plus large.
- Certaines grandes forêts bénéficient parfois de règlements nationaux spécifiques imposant une forme stricte d'exploitation (publique ou privée).
- Enfin des sites d'intérêt patrimonial international bénéficient de protection par la maîtrise foncière en vue de leur protection, opérée par des organismes publics comme privés.

La majorité de ces sites disposent de plans de gestion formels ou en auront à moyen terme. Tout projet de tourisme durable peut donc s'y intégrer en tenant compte des critères exposés dans le chapitre précédent. Par ailleurs des expérimentations ou des principes ont été élaborés pour de nombreux types de sites, comme détaillé dans le reste de ce rapport.

Espaces non protégés

Les SIC aujourd'hui proposés par des Etats ne bénéficient pas tous d'un statut national de protection réglementaire.

On trouve pour certains pays, des zones désignées par les Etats comme pilotes pour le développement d'une agriculture raisonnée, soutenue par les Etats et la Commission Européenne, accompagnés parfois d'écotax ou d'écotaxes offrant des produits à valoriser dans le cadre de projets de tourisme durable assez aisément.

Enfin, la plupart des sites désignés par les Etats ont un label au travers d'un traité ou d'une convention internationale : site Ramsar, réserve Man and Biosphère, etc. Il apparaît évident que ces zones doivent concourir à la constitution du Réseau Natura 2000. Les différentes guidelines proposés dans ce rapport présentent un panel de planification de projet adaptable à chaque type de site.

. QUELLE EST LA DIVERSITÉ DES SITES?

Les réalités socio-économiques sont très diverses d'un pays à l'autre de l'Union. Il en est de même des politiques publiques et des initiatives privées ou associatives en faveur de la conservation. Le niveau de préservation des habitats/espèces et les connaissances que l'on en a sont aussi divers.

On peut citer schématiquement deux extrêmes qui participent à la richesse du patrimoine naturel européen :

- . Les unités nationales ou régionales ayant bénéficié d'un développement économique favorable qui n'aura pas toujours tenu compte de l'environnement et ayant une densité de population élevée, où l'on aura des espaces de nature réduits ou des sites nécessitant une gestion constante pour être maintenus en un état de conservation favorable. C'est d'ailleurs dans ces pays ou ces régions qu'on trouvera les initiatives les plus anciennes de conservation de la nature, un haut niveau de professionnalisation de cette branche et des budgets importants privés comme publics sont consacrés à la gestion de sites protégés.
- . Les unités nationales ou régionales qui ont un développement économique limité ou qui accusent une déprise dans certains secteurs (industrie, agriculture) et qui laissent des espaces de nature vastes, presque intouchés au côté d'espaces entièrement dégradés. Certains de ces espaces très dégradés étant la conséquence d'un développement touristique non raisonné parfois.

. LES SITES NATURA 2000 ONT-ILS TOUS UNE VOCATION TOURISTIQUE?

Les projets de développement de tourisme durable devront tenir compte de cette typologie, aussi schématique soit-elle. Le tourisme durable, en plus du développement économique qu'il peut permettre, peut pourvoir aux besoins financiers de la gestion écologique, sous la forme de taxes professionnelles, de séjour, de location, d'écotaxes à destination de la gestion des sites Natura 2000.

Le tourisme durable à différentes déclinaisons, selon les situations locales.

La pédagogie est primordiale sur des sites très fréquentés. L'éco-citoyenneté peut participer à révéler la citoyenneté à proximité des zones urbaines en crise. Le tourisme peut être une activité économique de substitution dans les régions ou pays en déprise. Il revient aux Etats ou

aux collectivités locales de dresser en premier les objectifs prioritaires d'activités touristiques ou de loisirs durables qui pourront servir de critères de sélection aux projets proposés.

Les destinations touristiques littorales restent les plus importantes pour le loisir ou les congés, pour les activités terrestres et maritimes qu'elles proposent. Elles sont par ailleurs très peuplées (60 % de la population mondiale vit sur une bande de 100 à 150 km des côtes). Il est nécessaire d'envisager dès maintenant des projets de tourisme durable sur les zones côtières selon un mode de gestion intégrée qui englobe un espace plus large que la stricte bande littorale. Dans une moindre mesure, il en est de même pour les zones de montagne.

Des espaces de nature moins connus ou moins prisés, peuvent cependant bénéficier de la création d'activités touristiques. Pour déterminer au mieux la vocation touristique d'un site, il est conseillé de se reporter aux principes généraux déclinés dans le fin de ce rapport.

En tout état de cause, un projet de tourisme durable sur un site Natura 2000 ou à proximité, doit s'intégrer dans une démarche planifiée dans l'espace et dans le temps, qu'elle soit spécifique au projet ou qu'elle soit préexistante. Le projet doit éviter les incidences négatives sur le site, voire concourir à la conservation du site dans la mesure du possible. La planification de la conservation est en cours ou existe sur les sites Natura 2000, il appartient donc au promoteur de projet de s'y intégrer le mieux et le plus tôt possible. Les principes de planification et d'évaluation de projet dans le cas de l'Ecotourisme sont le garant de l'appropriation locale des projets et d'une concertation efficace entre l'ensemble des acteurs et des responsables de la conservation des sites.

L'information disponible sur Natura 2000

La Lettre d'information Nature de la Commission Européenne DG XI "Natura 2000" avec en particulier le baromètre

La brochure "Natura 2000, gérons notre patrimoine"

La brochure "Natura 2000 : protection via le partenariat"

Le site web : <http://europa.eu.int/en/comm/dg11/>

Part 2. The description and analysis of existing initiatives (codes, charters, recommendations...)

Why promote existing initiatives?

The participants of the Lisbon seminar came to the conclusion that it was better to promote existing initiatives than develop new ones specifically for the Natura 2000 network.

Out of the twenty-five initiatives collected for the purpose of the seminar, seventeen have been selected and analysed. Two initiatives, considered to be of the most relevance to Natura 2000, are analysed in more detail. These are EUROPARC's European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas and WWF's PAN Parks Principles and Criteria. A comparison of the two initiatives provides insight into their use and application in practice. Complete lists of the criteria and principles developed by these initiatives are provided in annex. Similarly, more detailed information on all the seventeen selected initiatives is to be found in annex.

The seventeen initiatives do not target Natura 2000 sites specifically, but are relevant to stakeholders of Natura 2000 sites. They have been selected because they are relevant to the development of sustainable tourism in sensitive areas in general.

The purpose of this chapter is to help Natura 2000 stakeholders make better use of existing documents in the development of a sustainable tourism strategy.

It should be used in conjunction with the following chapter (part 3) which is the result of this compilation of existing initiatives and contains the suggested principles and guidelines presented at the Lisbon seminar and illustrated by examples of good practice (cf. Annex).

It is clear that co-ordination and collaboration for improved coherence between the promoters of the following initiatives is necessary in Europe and would be useful to the Natura 2000 network.

What does the term “ initiative ” mean?

The term “ initiative ” is used here to describe a vast range of documents, which are available to the public. These documents are principles, codes, charters, recommendations, declarations, and statements of commitment... They have been developed by diverse promoters, for different interest groups, and disseminated in different forms (publications, leaflets, kits, and conference proceedings...). Their common objective is the promotion of sustainable tourism in sensitive environment.

Which criteria have been used to select these initiatives?

These seventeen initiatives have been selected according to various criteria. The main selection criteria were the relevance of the initiatives to Natura 2000 in particular, and to protected areas and sustainable tourism in general. The initiatives were analysed and described with the help and verification of the promoters. Promoters were interviewed with the following questions as a basis for discussion.

Context: What type of initiative? Why was it prepared? With what objective? By whom? For whom? Under what circumstances?

Content: What does the initiative refer to? What is the key issues? What are the implications? What are the main requirements?

Impact: What impact has the initiative had in practice? What did the initiative generate? Are there examples of the practical application of the initiative? Will it be developed further in the future?

Diffusion: How widely was it diffused? How wide an audience was reached?

Relevance to Natura 2000: In what ways is the initiative relevant to managers of Natura 2000 sites? How could the initiative be applied to Natura 2000 sites?

What were the results of the interviews?

Impact and influence

Some of the selected initiatives are particularly significant because of their impact and subsequent influence. These are the initiatives which, when placed in context, were especially innovative or generated other initiatives. The World Charter for Sustainable Tourism (1995), for example, had a large media impact internationally and conveyed a message about sustainable tourism that has served as a base-line reference for other initiatives. The charter has been widely distributed in a form of a booklet and is now available on the WTO and UNEP Internet site.

Content

In other cases, it is the content of the initiative that stands out. Several initiatives provide guidelines for a specific type of ecosystem (mountain, coastal, rural...) or protected area (national park, nature park...) such as those mentioned from the Council of Europe which provide recommendations for protected areas (1995) and coastal areas (1997). In contrast, other initiatives refer to sustainable tourism in more global terms or present wide general principles.

Format and intended audience

The format of each initiative depends on the purpose of the document and the audience it intends to reach. Selected initiatives, which are widely read and easy to use, are highlighted as being especially accessible. "Loving them to death?" (1993) and "Integrated Quality

Management in Rural Destinations" (1999) are examples of documents which are easy to use, are well laid out and include case studies illustrating good practice in action.

Relevance to Natura 2000

The initiatives selected are of relevance to Natura 2000 to a greater or lesser extent. The EUROPARC Charter and the PAN Parks Principles and Criteria are the most relevant initiatives today, because they are aimed at protected areas and they promote a conservation and tourism strategy. They constantly refer to the protection of endangered habitats and species. However, some other initiatives will be of importance as well when contracting with the tourism industry. For instance, the Tour Operators' Initiative (1999) supported by UNEP, is very likely to be of relevance to Natura 2000 sites as it envisages supporting conservation projects in natural sites.

Why are these initiatives so diverse?

The selected initiatives illustrate the diversity of existing initiatives concerning sustainable tourism. This diversity does not facilitate the use of these initiatives by those in the field. Moreover, many of the initiatives do not specify who they are aimed at, and why exactly they were developed. This analysis is an initial attempt to clarify their status and facilitate their use.

They address protected areas in different ways. According to their different objectives, they focus on areas ranging from specific destinations and types of protected area or ecosystems to more global issues.

They address different interest groups. They are often aimed at several players: The tourism industry, managers of protected areas, Member States, tourists, host populations, administrations...

They have different spheres of influence: Member States of the European Union (4 of the selected initiatives), Europe extended to the EEC (2), the Mediterranean (2) International (8),

They are named after different types of document: Six recommendations; one charter (a kit with methodology, action plan, strategy, statement of commitment), one conference report, one statement of commitment, one set of guiding principles, two sets of guidelines, two codes of conduct or ethics, one certification process (criteria for developing a strategy and action plan for the certification process), one declaration (consensus at the end of a conference)

They are promoted and supported by different types of organisation: International organisations (UNEP, Council of Europe, INSULA, UNESCO, and WTO), NGOs (WWF, IUCN), Institutions (Secretariat Convention on Biodiversity, European Commission), Intergovernmental organisations, Tourist industry associations (on a local, regional or international scale), Consultative bodies (MCSD)

They are disseminated according to their format: Official document or report for Member States, publications, conference declarations, contractual commitment, working document, examples of good practice.

They are disseminated in different ways: Printed and disseminated on request, available on an Internet site, or are not for public distribution.

Which initiatives were selected?

The following initiatives have been selected and summarised in a table. More comprehensive details and practical information about each initiative can also be found in annex where each initiative is presented individually in a common framework.

1. LOVING THEM TO DEATH? 1993

(EUROPARC Federation, Kröllstrasse 2, D-8352 Grafenau, Germany, Tel. +49 8552 2839).

The result of a study of the management of tourism in protected areas by a working group to provide guidelines for managers of protected areas. The publication includes special guidance for developing tourism in particularly sensitive areas (mountains, coasts, Mediterranean regions, wetlands) and makes recommendations for action by international organisations, national governments and the tourism sector.

2. THE EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN PROTECTED AREAS, 1999

(FFPNR, 4, rue de Stockholm, 75008 Paris, France, Tel. +33 1 44 90 86 20)

An initiative which emerged from the report "Loving them to death?", the Charter addresses protected areas, providers of tourism services and tour operators. It contains principles for sustainable tourism, and a detailed methodology for the preparation and implementation of a sustainable tourism strategy. Those who sign the Charter commit themselves to defining a strategy and action plan.

3. PAN PARKS, 1999

(WWF International, Avenue du Mont Blanc, 1196 Gland, Switzerland, Tel. +41 22 364 9426, Internet site: <http://www.panparks.org>)

A follow-up to the World Conservation Union's (IUCN) recommendations in 'Parks for Life' (1992), this initiative aims to create a pan-European network of large-scale, well-managed protected areas awarded the PAN Parks quality mark. It includes principles and criteria to be met for the development of a sustainable tourism strategy and for the award of the logo.

4. TOWARDS QUALITY RURAL TOURISM - INTEGRATED QUALITY MANAGEMENT (IQM) OF RURAL TOURIST DESTINATIONS, 1999

(European Commission Enterprise Directorate, 200 rue de la Loi, B-1049 Brussels, Belgium, Tel. +32 2 296 9700)

The result of a study into how the concept of IQM can be applied to the management of sustainable tourism in Europe's rural tourist destinations. Aimed at all those concerned with the management of rural areas, it sets out recommendations based on the analysis of 15 case studies of good practice.

5. PARKS FOR LIFE: ACTION FOR PROTECTED AREAS IN EUROPE, 1994

(IUCN Publications Services Unit, 219c Huntingdon Road, Cambridge, CB3 0DL, UK)

A well-detailed publication intended as an action plan for protected areas in Europe. It sets out the policies and actions which each country should make to ensure an adequate, effective, well-managed network of protected areas. Important initiatives are endorsed, recommendations are made to governments and 30 priority projects are highlighted. This action plan was updated in 1997.

6. TOUR OPERATORS' INITIATIVE, 1999

(Secretariat Tour Operators' Initiative for Sustainable Tourism Development, UNEP, division of Technology, Industry and Economics, 39-43, Quai André Citroën, 75739 Paris Cedex 15, France, Tel. +33 1 44 37 14 50, Internet site: <http://www.toinitiative.org>)

A voluntary, non-profit-making initiative open to all tour operators regardless of their size or geographical location. Tour operators sign a statement of commitment committing themselves to putting into practice the various principles of sustainable development.

7. ECOTOURISM DIAGNOSTIC AND PLANNING GUIDELINES FOR PROTECTED AREAS MANAGERS, 1992

(WWF US, 1250 24th Street N.W., Washington D.C. 20037, USA, Tel. +1 202 778 9624)

A concise method for creating an ecotourism strategy developed by WWF in the USA for managers of protected areas in the form of a technical paper. This document has been widely used in the Southern Hemisphere by protected area managers.

8. TOURISM, ECOTOURISM AND PROTECTED AREAS, 1996

(IUCN, IUCN Publications Services Unit, 219, Huntingdon Road, Cambridge CB3 0DL, UK/ IUCN Communications Division, rue Mauverney 28, CH-1196 Gland, Switzerland)

A comprehensive publication, which reviews the state of nature-based tourism internationally and provides guidelines and case study examples targeted at protected area planners and managers for its development.

9. GUIDELINES: DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL PARKS AND PROTECTED AREAS FOR TOURISM, 1992

(IUCN, WTO, c/Capitan Haya, 42, 28020 Madrid, Spain, Tel. +34 1 571 0628/ UNEP, Tour Mirabeau, 39-43 Quai André Citroën, 75739 Paris, France, Tel. +33 1 40 58 88 50)

Guidelines, which aim to encourage appropriate tourism development, targeted at those concerned with the management of national parks and protected areas, particularly in less economically developed countries.

10. COUNCIL OF EUROPE RECOMMENDATIONS, 1993/1999

(Council of Europe, F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex, France, Tel. +33 3 88 41 22 64)

The Council of Europe has produced two official documents, which concern environmentally friendly tourism development in protected areas directly. It has provided recommendations for sustainable development in protected areas (1995) and in coastal areas (1997). Both are aimed at the 41 Member States, EEC included and are approved by the Committee of Ministers.

11. WORLD CHARTER FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM 1995

(INSULA, Internet site: <http://www.insula.org>)

The declaration made at the World Conference for Sustainable Tourism in Lanzarote (27-28 April 1995) comprising principles and criteria for sustainable tourism. With 1000 participants and significant media coverage, the conference declaration aimed to contribute to the implementation of sustainable tourism initiatives and policies, by raising awareness among international, national and local authorities.

12. CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY 1992

(Convention on Biological Diversity Internet site: <http://www.biodiv.org>)

An international legal instrument for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity opened for signature on 5 June 1992 at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (the Rio "Earth Summit") and ratified in 1993 with 168 signatures.

13. DRAFT PRINCIPLES FOR (THE) IMPLEMENTATION OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM, 1998

(UNEP Division of Technology, Industry and Economics, Internet site: <http://www.uneptie.org/tourism/new.html>)

An official report that consolidates existing guidelines into a set of key principles aimed at guiding governments, intergovernmental, private sector and other organisations in the integration of sustainable tourism into their overall policies for sustainable development.

14. BLUE PLAN, 1999

(Blue Plan, 15, rue L. Van Beethoven, Sophia-Antipolis, 06560 Valbonne, France, and Tel. +33 4 92 38 71 30)

A document produced by the Blue Plan, one of the regional centres of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP), which presents recommendations and proposed action for tourism and sustainable development in the Mediterranean adopted by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention.

15. INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES (SIDS) AND OTHER ISLANDS, 1998

(WTO, UNEP Division of Technology Industry and Economics, Internet site: <http://www.uneptie.org/tourism/confer.html>)

A report produced following the conference held in Lanzarote (25-28 Oct. 1998). It includes recommendations to the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) which focus on the specific requirements of small islands and in particular of small island developing states (SIDS).

16. GLOBAL CODE OF ETHICS FOR TOURISM 1999

(WTO, Internet site: <http://www.world-tourism.org>)

A 10 point code of ethics aimed at tourist destinations, governments, tour operators, travel agents, workers and travellers. It includes the creation of a World Committee on Tourism Ethics to act as a conciliation mechanism to ensure the implementation of the Code.

17. RESPONSIBLE TOURISM IN THE MEDITERRANEAN, 1999

(WWF Mediterranean Programme, Via Po 25c, 00198 Rome, Italy)

A set of general principles and a code of conduct developed to address specific issues related to tourism in the Mediterranean, which target tourists, the tourist industry and government authorities.

Summary table of 17 selected initiatives relevant to Natura 2000 stakeholders

Name of the initiative	Promoter	Type of promoter	Focus area	Type of initiative	Aimed at	Date	Sphere of influence	Format	Place of distribution	Langs.
1. Loving them to death?	EUROPARC Federation	European voluntary organisation	National Parks Nature parks	- Guidelines for the development of tourism in protected areas - Recommendations for developing tourism in particularly sensitive areas - Recommendations to international organisations, national governments and the tourism sector	- Managers of protected areas - Governments - International organisations - Tourism professionals	1993	European Union countries	- Publication - Recommendations 15 case studies of good practice	FFNPE Kröllstrasse 5 8352 Grafenau Germany Tel +49 8552 2839 Fax +49 8552 3242	Eng. Fr. Ger. Sp.
2. European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas	EUROPARC Federation, French Federation of Regional and Nature Parks (FFPNR)	European voluntary organisation	National parks Nature parks	- Charter - Principles - Methodology for the preparation of a strategy and action plan - Checklist for evaluation - Case studies	- Managers of protected areas - Tourism businesses - Tour operators and transport companies	1999	European Union countries	3 reports: - Brochure of official text - Principles and methodology - Brochure of case studies	Fédération des Parcs Naturels Régionaux de France 4, rue de Stockholm 75008 Paris France Tel +33 1 44 90 86 20 Fax 33 1 45 22 70 78	Eng. Fr. Ger. Sp. Catalan It.
3. PAN Parks	WWF	Independent conservation organisation	Protected areas	Principles and Criteria (final draft in process)	- Managers of protected areas - Tourism businesses - Other private sector organisations	1997	European	Draft document	WWF International Avenue du Mont Blanc 1196 Gland Switzerland Tel +41 22 364 9426 Fax +41 22 364 3239 Internet site: http://www.panparks.org	Eng.

4. Towards quality rural tourism : Integrated Quality Management (IQM) of Rural Tourist Destinations	European Commission DG Enterprise	Institution	Rural tourist destinations	- Recommendations - Code of practice 15 case studies	Organisations responsible for tourism in rural destinations: - Local authorities - Governments - Politicians - Managers in related sectors	1999	European Economic Area Countries	Publication	Enterprise Directorate General (Tourism Unit) 200 Rue de la Loi 1049 Brussels Belgium Tel +32 2 296 9700 Fax +32 2 295 6969	Eng. Fr. Ger.
5. Parks for Life : action for protected areas in Europe	IUCN	Non-governmental organisation	Protected areas	An action plan for Europe's protected areas made up of: - The endorsement of existing initiatives - Recommendations 30 priority projects	- Decision-making governmental and non-governmental organisations - Managers of PA - Local communities - Businesses - Land owners - The general public	1994	All Europe, EEC countries included	Publication	IUCN Publications Services Unit 219, Huntingdon Road Cambridge CB3 0DL UK	Eng. Fr. Sp. Ger.
6. Tour Operators' Initiative for Sustainable Tourism Development	UNEP	International organisation	Global	- Statement of commitment - Principles for sustainable tourism - Programme of activities	Tour operators	2000	International	Statement of commitment Constitution Questionnaire	Secretariat The Tour Operators' Initiative for Sustainable Tourism Development UNEP DTIE 39-43, Quai André Citroën 75739 Paris Cedex 15 France Tel +33 1 44 37 14 50 Fax +33 1 44 37 14 74 E-mail uneptie@unep.fr Internet site: http://www.toinitiative.org	Eng.
7. Ecotourism Diagnostic and Planning Guidelines for Protected Areas Managers	WWF US (Author: E. Boo)	Independent conservation organisation	Protected areas	- Guidelines - Methodology for the creation of an ecotourism strategy	Managers of protected areas	1992	International	Technical paper	World Wildlife Fund 1250 24 th Street N.W. Washington D.C. 20037 Tel +1 202 778 9624 Fax +1 202 293 9211	Eng. Fr. Sp.

8. Tourism, Ecotourism, and Protected Areas	IUCN (Author: H. Ceballos-Lascurain)	Non-governmental organisation	National parks Protected areas	Essential guidance on: • Tourism and the Environment • Negative tourism impacts • Government policy • Creating and managing tourism in protected areas • Assessing, monitoring and management techniques • Preparing protected areas for tourism	Protected area planners and managers	1996	International	Publication	IUCN Publications Services Unit 219, Huntingdon Road Cambridge CB3 0DL UK IUCN Communications Division Rue Mauverney 28, 1196 Gland Switzerland	Eng.
9. Guidelines : Development of National Parks and Protected Areas for Tourism	WTO, UNEP, IUCN (Authors: H. Ceballos-Lascurain, J.A. McNeely, J.W. Thorsell)	International organisations	National parks and protected areas in less economically developed countries	Guidelines on: • Costs and benefits of tourism • Tourism considerations in the selection of areas for National Parks • Capacity limits • Planning • Guidelines for the development of facilities • Hunting in protected areas • Guidelines for providing education and interpretation programmes	Organisations responsible for the management of national parks and protected areas: • Managers of protected areas • Administrations • Local communities	1992	International	Publication	WTO C/ Capitan Haya, 42 28020 Madrid Spain Tel +34 1 571 0628 Fax +34 1 571 3733 UNEP Tour Mirabeau 39-43, Quai André Citroën 75739 Paris France Tel +33 1 40 58 88 50 Fax +33 1 40 58 88 74	Eng. Fr. Russ. Sp.
10. Council of Europe Recommendations	Council of Europe	Intergovernmental Organisation	Protected areas Coastal areas	• Recommendations • Principles and guidelines	41 Member States	1993/99	Europe, EEC countries included, 41 Member States	Official document approved by the Committee of Ministers	Mme Bouguessa Council of Europe 67075 Strasbourg France	Eng. Fr.

11. World Charter for Sustainable Tourism	WTO, Insula, UNESCO, UNEP, UN, European Commission, Spanish authorities	Intergovernmental organisations	Tourist destinations world-wide	• Declaration • Set of principles and criteria	• The international community • Governments • Public authorities • Decision makers • Tourism professionals	1995	International	Booklet	Insula internet site: http://www.insula.org	Eng. Fr. Sp.
12. Convention on Biodiversity and Tourism	Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity	Institution	Global	• International agreement on biological diversity and tourism • Principles • Recommendations	Contracting States	1997	International	Official report	Internet site: http://www.biodiv.org	Arabic Chinese Eng. Fr. Russian Sp.
13. Draft principles for the implementation of sustainable tourism	UNEP	International organisation	Global	Set of proposed principles (the consolidation of existing guidelines)	• Governments • Intergovernmental organisations • Private sector organisations	1998	International	Draft	Not for public distribution UNEP Division of Technology, Industry and Economics Internet site: http://www.uneptie.org/tourism/new.html	Eng.
14. Blue Plan	Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD)	Consultative body	Mediterranean	• Recommendations on tourism and sustainable development in the Mediterranean • Proposed actions	21 Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention	1999	Mediterranean regions, EU plus all Mediterranean countries	Official document	Blue Plan 15 rue L. van Beethoven 06560 Valbonne France Tel +33 4 9238 7130 Fax +33 4 9238 7131 E-mail planbleu@planbleu.org Internet site: http://www.planbleu.org	Fr. Eng.
15. Conference on Sustainable Tourism in small island developing states (SIDS) and other islands	WTO, UNEP	International organisations	Small islands and in particular Small Island Developing States (SIDS)	• Recommendations • Key issues • Case studies	• Governments in small island (and in particular SIDS) • Private sector organisations • The international community	1998	International	Report	UNEP Division of Technology, Industry and Economics Internet site: http://www.uneptie.org/tourism/confer.html	Eng. Fr. Sp.

16. Global Code of Ethics	WTO	Intergovernmental organisation	Tourist destinations world-wide	10 point code of ethics: • 9 articles outlining 'rules of the game' for tourism • 10th article for the creation of a World Committee on Tourism Ethics	• Destinations • Governments • Tour operators • Travel agents • Workers • Travellers	1999	International	Code	WTO internet site: http://www.world-tourism.org	Eng. Fr. Sp.
17. Responsible Tourism in the Mediterranean	WWF	Independent conservation organisation	Mediterranean destination	• Principles • Code of conduct	• Tourists • Tourism industry • Government authorities	1999	Mediterranean	Short publication	WWF Mediterranean Programme Via Po 25c 00198 Rome Italy	Eng.

A detailed presentation of the two most relevant initiatives

Two initiatives have been identified as the most relevant to characteristics of Natura 2000. They address protected areas specifically on a European level. They have been developed through a wide consultation process with the help of a steering committee and tested throughout several pilot parks. They are widely disseminated in Europe.

They are:

- ☞ The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas (EUROPARC / FFPNR) resulting from the recommendations of "Loving them to death?",
- ☞ The W.W.F. PAN Parks Principles and Criteria,

The guidelines for implementation of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism and the PAN Parks Criteria and Principles (3rd draft), are provided in annex.

THE EUROPARC CHARTER FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN PROTECTED AREAS

The EUROPARC Federation (the Federation of National and Nature Parks of Europe), founded in 1973, is a politically independent pan-European organisation that works to support and enhance the full range of European protected areas.

Since the 1990s, the question has been raised of the compatibility of nature conservation and tourism in Europe's protected areas. Europe's protected areas are becoming increasingly popular tourist destinations, although most of these fragile regions are ill prepared to receive crowds of visitors.

In 1991, the EUROPARC Federation, aware of this threat, launched an initial study of protected areas and the tourist trade involving more than fifteen European representatives. The project aimed to define guidelines for developing sustainable tourism within and around protected areas and to identify case studies illustrating how sustainable tourism was being developed.

The publication "Loving them to death"

Their work culminated in the publication of the report "Loving them to death?" in 1993, a highly practical guide dealing with the appropriate control of tourism in protected areas

The publication reviews tourism and protected areas, and provides:

- **General guidelines** for the development of sustainable tourism in and around protected areas
- **Special guidance** for developing tourism in special areas (mountain areas, coastal areas, Mediterranean regions, wetlands)
- **Recommendations** for action by international organisations, national governments and the tourism sector

One of the publication's recommendations was for the creation of a '**European Charter for Sustainable Tourism**' which would regulate relations between the Parks, providers of tourism services and tour operators. The Federation of National and Nature Parks of Europe had taken part in the report, and was asked to put this into practice.

The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism

In 1995 the European Commission DG Environment financed a LIFE project led by the FFPNR, on behalf of EUROPARC, to establish the Charter.

The preparation of the Charter was based on two ideas:

- bringing together tourism professionals and managers of Protected Areas to form a working group
- basing their work on pilot projects in several Member States of the EU

The Charter was drafted by a Steering Committee made up of representatives of protected areas, the tourism industry and international organisations. Ten pilot parks from six European Union countries took part in the trial phase of the Charter over a period of three years. The text of the Charter was officially presented in April 1999 in Lilles, France.

The Charter consists of three documents:

- ☞ **The official text of the Charter**
- ☞ **A guide to the implementation of the Charter which includes an extensive evaluation checklist**
- ☞ **A brochure outlining the experiences of pilot parks**

Using the Charter

The Charter seeks to be a practical tool in the hands of protected areas, tourist service providers and tour operators. It is presented in kit form:

- The **main principles** and a **detailed methodology** for the preparation and implementation of a sustainable tourism strategy
- An **evaluation process** for the definition of the strategy and the action plan. This is based on a table of criteria aimed to help form an accurate diagnosis of the strengths, weaknesses and potential of the area, and to evaluate how efficient the measures taken have been at the end of the period. Points from 1 to 5 are allocated for various criteria, based on the judgement of their initial state, their level of relevance and level of improvement.

It is aimed at the authorities responsible for the protected areas, the tourism industry and the local community.

Its purpose is to act both as a standard and guidelines, helping each signatory develop high-quality, sustainable tourism, defined as:

"any form of development or management of tourism activities ensuring the long-term protection and preservation of natural, cultural and social resources and contributing in a positive and

equitable manner to the economic growth and well-being of individuals living in, working in or visiting the protected areas".

Participation in the Charter is both voluntary and contractual. Protected areas who sign the Charter commit themselves to respecting the principles of sustainable tourism, and defining a strategy and an action plan.

- **The protected area** is committed to a strategy and a 5 year action plan, defined in partnership with local tourist businesses and local residents. This intervention ensures consistency between policies and actions in the area.
- **Tourism service-providers** define a strategy and a 1-year action plan contributing to the achievement of the area's objectives. In particular, they undertake to adopt management methods, which respect the environment, to value the natural and cultural heritage and to make customers environmentally aware.
- **Tour operators and transport companies** are not generally present in the area. Their responsibility is to inform visitors and make them aware, select suppliers who are signatories to the Charter, and support the areas in the marketing of tourist products.

10 principles for sustainable tourism as set out in the Charter

- ✓ *Respect the limits of carrying capacity*
- ✓ *Contribute to heritage conservation and enhancement*
- ✓ *Preserve natural resources*
- ✓ *Support the local economy*
- ✓ *Promote the involvement of local residents*
- ✓ *Develop appropriate high-quality tourism*
- ✓ *Make protected areas accessible to everyone*
- ✓ *Develop new forms of employment*
- ✓ *Encourage behaviour that respects the environment*
- ✓ *Serve as a model for other economic sectors and influence their practices.*

The definition of a strategy and an action plan

The definition of a strategy takes these principles into account, and follows a standard pattern set out in the Charter:

1. Diagnosis
Complete diagnosis of the needs and constraints of the area (environmental, social, economic)
2. Consultation and involvement of all partners
Involvement of local authorities, the local community and providers of local tourist services
3. Definition and implementation of an action plan
The action plan must include a description of the current situation, the main development objectives, and improved criteria and tools for evaluation
4. Evaluation
In theory, the Charter comprises an evaluation process whereby a technical committee evaluates the results of the strategy and the five year action plan and recognises the area as an "area of excellence in the development of sustainable tourism in protected areas".

The key issues surrounding the Charter at present are:

- the actual make-up of the technical committee and the evaluation process
- the form that the final product will take (label, quality mark...)
- sources of funding

As it stands, the Charter has developed a process aimed at improving quality in protected areas. The structure of the Evaluation Committee is still to be defined, and the question of what is to be awarded to the successful protected areas remains as yet unresolved.

The practical application of the Charter

In 1995, 10 European parks became involved in the Charter as pilot parks and made possible the testing of the criteria, which were being developed. During this trial phase, the Charter was tested in different kinds of protected area (national and regional nature parks) and in different situations.

In 2000, 18 parks have signed the Charter, out of which two parks (Zona Volcanica de la Garrotxa Nature Park and Alpi Marittime Nature Park) have reached the final stages of the definition of their strategy and action plan and are ready to undergo evaluation. 10 of these Park are French. Other than in France, parks in Austria, Germany, Italy, UK, Portugal and Spain have become signatory parks.

The Charter's Pilot Parks

Austria	Hohe Tauern National Park
Belgium	The Hautes Fagnes-Eifel Nature Park
France	Cévennes National Park
	Vosges du Nord Regional Nature Park
Italy	Abruzzes National Park
	Alpi Marittime Nature Park
Spain	Sierra de Cazorla Segura y las Vilas nature Park
	Zona Volcanica de la Garrotxa Nature Park
UK	Broads national Park
	Exmoor National Park

The signatory parks today

Austria	Hohe Tauern National Park
Germany	Naturpark Frankenwald
	Naturpark Steinhudermeer
	Naturpark Insel Usedom
France	Avesnois Regional Nature Park
	Cévennes National Park
	Lubéron Regional Nature Park
	Marais du Cotentin et du Bessin Regional Nature Park
	Martinique Regional Nature Park
	Scarpe Escaut Regional Nature Park
	Vercors Regional Nature Park
	Verdon Regional Nature Park
	Vexin français Regional Nature Park
	Vosges du Nord Regional Nature Park

Italy	Abruzzes National Park Alpi Marittime Nature Park Monti Sibillini National Park
Portugal	Peneda Gerês National Park Serra de S. Mamede Nature Park
Spain	Zona Volcanica de la Garrotxa Nature Park
UK	Exmoor National Park

The future of the Charter

The Charter is listed among the priority projects adopted by the World Conservation Union (IUCN) in its action programme for European Protected areas 'Parks for Life'. It also pursues the principles for sustainable tourism as formulated by the 1995 World Conference on Sustainable Tourism held in Lanzarote.

The successful application of the Charter depends to a great extent on the protected area itself. The protected area must decide how to translate the Charter in practice, adapting it to the characteristics of their site.

Some parks, such as the Zona Volcanica de la Garrotxa Nature Park in Catalonia, have developed the Charter further than others. The case study of La Garrotxa Nature Park is described in chapter 5, good practice in action.

The FFPNR is currently working on the definition of a mechanism for labelling and evaluating the work of the signatory parks. The next step will be to ensure funding and supporting funds for signatory parks.

Once these are resolved, the FFPNR plans to help implement strategies by means of training programmes and assistance and publicise the Charter to encourage its implementation in other protected areas. A Leonardo training programme and manual is under way to help implement the charter.

Key principles of the Charter:

- ☞ Starting from the needs of the area (environmental, economic, social and tourism needs)
- ☞ Carrying out a complete survey of the strengths, opportunities, needs and weaknesses
- ☞ Working in partnership with all stakeholders, establishing ways of working together
- ☞ Designing and implementing a strategy and an action plan
- ☞ Setting up criteria to follow up the strategy and monitor results regularly.

. THE PAN PARKS PRINCIPLES AND CRITERIA

Initiated by the WWF and the Molecanten Group (a Dutch leisure company), **PAN (Protected Area Network) Parks** is an initiative which aims to establish a recognisable pan-European network of unique and well-managed protected areas which welcome visitors while giving priority to nature conservation.

The PAN Parks project began as an idea in 1997, and has generated a lot of enthusiasm. As a result, the PAN Parks process is now well underway.

The central idea of the concept is that nature can become the driving force for healthy economic development in the rural areas of Europe. PAN Parks aims to change tourism in Europe's protected areas from a threat into an opportunity by building partnerships with nature conservation groups, travel agencies, the business community and other interest groups on a local, national and international level.

The initiative aims to provide a nature based response to the growing market of nature-oriented tourism by creating a quality mark standing for:

- an expanding network of well-managed protected areas with high conservation value,
- sustainable tourism development of regions and local communities surrounding protected areas,
- responsible high quality nature-based experiences for visitors and tourists,
- the creation of public awareness, appreciation and support for nature conservation,
- the generation of wide political and financial support at all levels for nature conservation.

Once created, the network of highly protected areas will be co-ordinated by a PAN Parks managing body. As well as being a tool for joint marketing and communication, PAN Parks will create economic incentives for nature conservation through the building of partnerships with the private sector.

This quality mark will be awarded to protected areas and companies that fulfil the PAN Parks Verification Principles and Criteria. When finalised, these principles and criteria will form the basis of PAN Parks.

In 1998, seven pilot parks signed a letter of intent to co-operate as pilot areas. Since then, a PAN Parks logo has been developed. The third draft of the Principles and Criteria (October 1999) has been tested in 17 protected areas and is currently being finalised. The network of PAN Parks is expected to be in place by mid 2001.

Principles and Criteria

The Principles and Criteria (P&C) for the award of the PAN Parks logo form the core of the PAN Parks programme. The process of developing this document began in autumn 1998 and has been prepared on the basis of literature and experts' interviews and comments, and on the basis of best practices found in Europe's protected areas. Currently in its third draft, the final document is due to be finalised by July 2000.

PAN Parks Principles and Criteria consists of five principles (cf the complete list of principles and criteria in the annex)

Principles 1-3 cover criteria and indicators for the protected areas and management body (it is the protected area which becomes the actual PAN Park)

Principle 4 sets criteria for a sustainable tourism development strategy to be developed by park managers and relevant interest groups in the region, which will be evaluated

Principle 5 covers criteria and indicators for commercial partners (including tourism accommodation etc.)

The guiding principle in the P&C drafting process has been to elaborate strict quality standards, applicable to different types of nature and administration of protected areas in Europe. The PAN Parks label must prove that endangered flora and fauna of a protected area are protected, and that tourists can visit the park without causing any harm to nature conservation.

Principles 1-3:

These cover detailed criteria necessary for a protected area to become a PAN Park. **PAN Parks will be large areas; strictly protected core areas must be at least 10,000 hectares.** This is important because large protected areas are necessary for the long term conservation of ecological processes and threatened species. There are 2 levels of PAN Parks:

Candidate PAN Park	Areas, which, according to independent verification, meet all essential criteria, but have some minor shortcomings. These parks can get Candidate PAN Parks status, provided they are committed to overcoming all of these shortcomings in 5 years, after which time, they will be reviewed.
PAN park	Areas that, following independent verification meet all PAN Parks P&C.

The PAN Parks logo will only be awarded to parks with high-standards of nature protection, which offer a variety of nature-based activities and facilities, and where visitors can observe and experience wildlife and other natural based features without causing disturbance to nature.

The implementation of a management plan for nature protection will be necessary and must be supported by relevant research and monitoring. Similarly, a visitor management plan is required, including, for example, an inventory of the number and type of visitors, and an estimate of the future trends.

Principle 4:

PAN Parks require the preparation of **a strategy for conservation and sustainable tourism development** for the area concerned. Park managers and relevant interest groups set out numerous criteria and indicators for the development of this strategy. Commercial partners wishing to use the PAN Parks trademark and logo must follow the strategy.

The aim is to ensure that tourism supports nature conservation in the protected area. This means, for example, that a certain share of the profits that tourism brings to the region must return to the “green magnet”, for investment in the protected area and its management.

Principle 5:

In order to ensure that nature-oriented tourism brings long-term benefits and jobs to local communities surrounding the protected area, criteria are set out concerning local businesses.

Between December 1999 and March 2000, the Principles and Criteria (third draft) were tested on a large scale. Results of the consultation process and field-testing will be analysed and from that basis, the final version will be prepared. The ultimate responsibility to approve the final document lies with the PAN Parks Supervisory Board. These are vital steps towards the implementation of a full scale PAN Parks system across Europe.

The Practical application of the Principles and Criteria

Pilot areas

WWF is working closely with seven pilot areas on the concept of PAN parks. The areas have signed a letter of intent stating their willingness to work on the initiative.

April 1998:	Bialowieza (Poland) Slovensky raj (Slovakia) Dadia Forest Reserve (Greece)
September 1998:	Duna-Drava (Hungary) Sumava (Czech Republic) Abruzzo (Italy)
April 1999:	Biebrza (Poland)

These will not necessarily be among the first PAN Parks. However, in return for their valuable input, the PAN Parks Organisation provides the pilot areas with support, promotion and funding for small scale projects.

Self-assessment participants

17 protected areas, most of them National Parks, from 14 European countries participated in a self-assessment process between December 1999 and March 2000. The aim of self-assessment was to test the third draft of the Principles and Criteria.

The participating protected areas range from well-established national parks, to newly established nature reserves. The geographic make-up of these protected areas is diverse and includes such ecosystems as deciduous forests, river valley systems, coastal island groups and wetland habitats.

These areas were selected on an ad hoc basis and will not necessarily become the first PAN Parks.

☞ Bulgaria	Strandzsa National Park
☞ Czech Republic	Sumava National Park
☞ Finland	Oulanka National Park
	The Southern Archipelago National Park
☞ France	Mercantour National Park
☞ Greece	Dadia Forest Reserve
☞ Hungary	Duna-Drava National Park
☞ Latvia	Kemer National Park
☞ Poland	Bialowieza National Park

	Bieszczady National Park
	Biebrza National Park
☞ Portugal	Guadiana National Park
☞ Romania	Retezat National Park
☞ Slovakia	Slovensky raj National Park
☞ Sweden	Fullfjället Nature Reserve
☞ The Netherlands	Terschelling National Park
☞ Turkey	Dilek Peninsula National Park

The self-assessment participants completed a comprehensive self-assessment questionnaire focusing on management policy, visitor management and sustainable tourism development. This questionnaire was based directly on the third draft of the PAN Parks Principles and Criteria. It was evaluated by the PAN Parks European Management Organisation.

The self-assessment process highlighted the following issues:

- ✓ Out of the 17 protected areas, about 4 or 5 already meet most of the necessary criteria to become PAN Parks
- ✓ Although the areas have found the PAN Parks criteria strict, they do not think that the standard should be lowered

The self-assessment process has been a way of turning the initiative into an operational programme by testing the Principles and Criteria on the ground. The results have provided feedback necessary for the finalisation of the PAN Parks Principles and Criteria document.

Steps to becoming a PAN Park:

- | | |
|--------|---|
| Step 1 | Complete the PAN Parks Self-assessment Questionnaire |
| Step 2 | Compile a working report on the results of self-assessment |
| Step 3 | Carry on an evaluation of the site by an independent certification body |
| Step 4 | Submit the evaluation report to the PAN Parks Principles and Criteria Standard Committee |
| Step 5 | The PAN Parks European Management Organisation will review the result of self-assessment and check whether the PAN Parks label can be awarded |

Once a protected area has been certified as a PAN Park, commercial partners in the region of the park can also apply for the PAN parks logo. They too have to meet special conditions and undergo an independent certification process.

The future of PAN Parks

The Principles and Criteria are due to be updated and finalised by July 2000. Once a network of PAN Parks is in place (expected in mid 2001), the PAN Parks product will be launched and a promotional and communication strategy put into action.

Key principles of PAN Parks:

- A basis for partnership between relevant stakeholders
- Raising awareness, pride and a sense of ownership
- Action on a pan-European scale
- Incentive to allow external verification
- Providing economic support for conservation

A comparative analysis of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism and PAN Parks

. TWO INITIATIVES SUPPORTED AND PROMOTED BY THE SAME ORGANISATIONS

The EUROPARC Charter and the PAN Parks initiative are in line with "Parks for Life: Action for Protected Areas in Europe", the first ever action plan for protected areas in Europe. The plan was prepared by the IUCN, together with the EUROPARC Federation, WWF, BirdLife International and WCMC, in co-operation with around 200 contributors from all around Europe. The aim of the Parks for Life programme was simple: "An adequate, effective and well-managed network of protected areas in Europe".

This short comparison and analysis of two initiatives on sustainable tourism and protected areas in Europe, supported and promoted by the "Parks for Life" is an extract from a paper presented at the Lisbon conference by Andrej Sovinc, "Parks for Life" co-ordinator at IUCN. The presentation is based on summarising the main points of the two initiatives and the points raised might sometimes be simplified.

The preparation of the Charter was listed as one of the "Parks for Life" Priority Projects. The IUCN/World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) was represented at the Steering Group for this project. "Parks for Life" was also involved in the process of setting up the PAN Parks process (an ongoing co-operation) from its early stages as the PAN Parks concept is foreseen as a "recognisable network of well-managed protected natural areas which welcomes visitors and avoids potentially conflicting activities". This viewpoint clearly indicates the links with the above-mentioned overall aim of "Parks for Life".

. SIMILARITIES, DIFFERENCES AND COMPLEMENTARITIES

Some of the similar or indetical principles of both initiatives

Both the Charter and PAN Parks initiatives:

- 1) provide concepts for encouraging and managing tourism in protected areas in harmony with the suitable management of natural resources and for the socio-economic benefits of stakeholders.
- 2) are built on the concepts on partnerships between protected areas, tourism and other businesses and the local population, and of supporting conservation and socio-economic development through tourism.
- 3) Aim to develop a 'quality brand' for partners involved in the process (protected areas and businesses) which must undergo an independent certification process. (It should be noted that several "labels" for tourism industry already exist such as the Council of Europe's "European Diploma" for well-managed protected areas).
- 4) Require the preparation of a strategy for conservation and sustainable tourism development in the area concerned.
- 5) Involve a "testing phase" in evidence in the Charter's "10 Pilot Parks" and PAN Parks's self-assessment process.

- 6) Aim to involve mainly large protected areas, such as National and Regional Parks, with high tourism ambitions and high potentials for the conservation of species, habitats and landscapes. The PAN Parks concept, in principle, defines the minimum size of protected areas to be involved (25.000 ha).

Complementary points of both initiatives

Geographical influence

- Although both initiatives aim to become Pan-European, the Charter, at present, is designed for the EU Member States only (and therefore needs adapting for the CEE countries).
- The PAN Parks initiative started in the CEE National Parks (at present there are seven National Parks from the EU Member States involved). This initiative originated in so-called "forest" parks.

Participation process

- The Charter requires close consultation between all participatory parties in the preparation of a sustainable tourism strategy and action plan for the protected area. In addition it makes provision for local tourism businesses and for tourism operators using the area to prepare separate Action Plans for their enterprises.
- PAN Parks promotes the establishment of a joint independent executive organisation to define a widely supported plan for conservation and tourism development in PAN Parks.

Main conceptual differences between the two initiatives

- 1) The PAN Parks initiative aims to include only well-managed protected areas, especially those with outstanding conservation values ("must-see" sites in Europe; and therefore an "exclusive club"), while the concept of the Charter sets no such conditions.
- 2) PAN Parks strives to become a new organisation to be managed by a European management organisation (supported by the Supervisory and Advisory Boards and Certifying Organisation), whereas the Charter is only a strategic approach and a widely used tool for sustainable tourism development and conservation in protected areas.

General conclusions and recommendations

- 1) Both initiatives provide effective guidelines for developing and managing tourism in protected areas which could be applied, after some amendments, to various types of protected area networks, including European and international designations, IUCN Protected Area categories on a national level and also to Natura 2000 sites.
- 2) Both initiatives are mutually dependent. The Charter, at present, is in need of a good marketing and communication strategy, whereas WWF's PAN Parks concept should be supporting the use of the Charter's principles and their application in less well-managed protected areas for them to become potential future candidates for PAN Parks. On the other hand, the PAN Parks concept could take advantage of existing EUROPARC principles and criteria so that partners are involved in the process of the creation of the conservation and sustainable tourism strategy for protected areas.

The need for collaboration and co-operation between the 2 initiatives

These 2 initiatives have been promoted by the same organisations and are originally the result of the same analysis. They have been developed separately with similar tools (criteria, pilot sites, tests, validation, signatories, and communication...). They both constitute excellent working material for the Natura 2000 network and could be the testing ground for the development of a specific tool for Natura 2000. They could also be merged into one initiative for all the sensitive and remarkable areas in Europe, made up of a variety of tools according to the different characteristics of such a diversity of sites: size, level of knowledge, stage reached in the drafting of a management plan, status and geographical situation.

The other initiatives described here should serve as a reference and should be used to encourage their partners (tour operators, the tourism industry in general, Member States, Administrations...) to adopt a sustainable tourism strategy and to commit themselves alongside protected areas.

Part 3. Suggested General Principles for Natura 2000

Principles based on existing experience

In preparation of the seminar, a draft list of general principles was drawn up as part of the process of putting together the seminar programme, identifying the examples of good practice and selecting the workshop topics.

This list was submitted to the participants during the seminar and served as a basis for discussion and debate in the workshop sessions. It helped the participants reach the main conclusions, including a general consensus that new detailed guidelines specific to Natura 2000 were unnecessary.

The principles, which are set out below, have been confirmed during the workshops and in the post-seminar evaluation phase. They were based on an analysis of the main principles reflected in the existing initiatives described in Part 2.

The principles can form the basis for the development of charters, strategies, and action plans for sustainable tourism.

Although the principles are not specific to Natura 2000 sites, they reflect general Natura 2000 processes, such as initial inventories, monitoring, environmental impact assessment (EIA), buffer zone co-operation, and local participation.

The principles also form a framework and basis for recommendations made in the final chapter of this report, which emphasises particular issues pertaining to Natura 2000 sites in the light of analysis of the Habitats Directive. Examples of good practice, presented at the seminar, and described in the following chapter, also help to refine the principles and inform the recommendations made in the final chapter.

Priorities for sustainable tourism in protected natural areas

. STRATEGY – POLICY – PLANNING

Resource assessment – characteristics of the protected area - carrying capacity – consultation and partnership in developing and implementing a sustainable tourism strategy

Assessing resources, recognising vulnerability, choosing appropriate tourism

- ***Reflect existing designations and plans***

Keep in mind the requirements of the designation, such as directives 6.1-6.4 for Natura 2000 sites. Integrate the Natura 2000 sustainable tourism strategy into existing management plans. Refer to existing regional and national plans and strategies.

- ***Start by understanding the site***

Base all that you do on a full knowledge of the site's needs and sensitivities. Carry out an inventory of natural and human resources, assessing their well being and need for conservation, and potential to benefit from tourism. Use, for this purpose, the information available in the Natura 2000 form that was filled in for the designation of the site.

- ***Undertake further research***

If necessary, bring in new expertise to research areas under pressure and endangered species, to have a better idea of their vulnerability.

- ***Know your existing visitors***

Use surveys to understand exactly who is visiting the site at the moment, when, why and with what impact.

- ***Be aware of market potential and pressures***

Be realistic about the volume and type of visitors who might come in future. Be alert to growing pressures as well as market potential.

- ***Identify capacity limits***

Decide whether, where and when there are limits to the number and types of visitor the site should receive in the future if the environment and heritage is not to be degraded. Consider environmental, social and inter-user capacity limits.

- ***Select types of tourism to match resources and markets***

Based on the assessment of needs, resources and markets, identify the kinds of tourism appropriate to the site in the future.

Creating a strategy based on consultation and partnership

- ***Involve all stakeholders from the beginning***

Involve a wide range of local partners from the beginning. Consider holding an open forum at the outset. Make sure the strategy is based on a wide consultation between site managers, conservationists, tourism operators and local communities.

- ***Establish partnership groupings***

Take the strategy forward through establishing working groups and seminars. Encourage an association of local tourism professionals to become official partners responsible for the strategy.

- ***Raise awareness and commitment***

Promote widespread awareness of the strategy process. Involve local media. Organise field trips locally and to other areas. Ask all stakeholders to formally commit themselves to the strategy, including signing any resulting charter.

- ***Allocate necessary resources***

Allow sufficient time to create the strategy (minimum of 6 months). If necessary use external consultants to help with methodology, drafting and evaluation. Designate and train a specialist in sustainable tourism to co-ordinate and oversee the strategy.

- ***Ensure the strategy is simple and clear***

Produce a strategy document, which is well-focused, easy to read and understand and well disseminated.

- ***Keep everyone involved and informed***

Inform your partners at every stage. Have a wide discussion on early drafts. When finalised, launch the strategy officially through an event and promote early results and visible benefits.

- ***Widen the scope of the area***

Address strategic issues of tourism management and development in the areas around the site, including buffer zones.

**Implementing, evaluating and updating a sustainable tourism strategy.
Relating it to national policy.**

- ***Establish realistic action programmes and plans***

Prepare annual action programmes based on the strategy which are realistic and can be implemented.

- ***Select monitoring indicators***

At the outset, consider what kinds of indicators of performance and impact should be used to monitor the strategy and judge success.

- ***Identify responsibilities for action***

Through the action programme allocate responsibility for specific actions to appropriate partners.

- ***Use a range of direct action, incentives and controls***

Include action to be undertaken directly by the site management, as well as incentives and controls on others. Use relevant local and regional laws and measures such as financial incentives, planning controls, labels and awards. Include corrective measures and actions to rectify problems as well as pursuing new opportunities.

- ***Seek evaluation and recognition for the strategy***

Ask external consultants to evaluate the strategy and results or refer to official national or European assessment processes.

- ***Reflect and influence regional/national strategies***

Make sure your approach reflects national and regional strategies on sustainable tourism and nature conservation. Through your work, seek to influence policy, laws and actions at these higher levels.

- ***Review the strategy every 3-5 years***

See the strategy as a dynamic process. Seek to review it every 3 to 5 years.

OFFER – MARKET – PRODUCT

Market studies – Targeting new markets – Product design – Innovative programmes and packages – Contribution to local economy and conservation – Joint venture and partnership with tour operators

Knowing and targeting new markets, creating new innovative packages

- ***Reflect new trends in nature tourism***
Refer to existing national and international data on new trends in nature related tourism, and relate this to your knowledge of existing visitors.
- ***Explore new markets which fit the needs of the area***
Identify specific niche markets which can be easily targeted and which fit the needs of the site in terms of special interest, volume, timing of visits and environmentally friendly activities.
- ***Reflect the needs of disadvantaged visitors***
Pay particular attention to visitors with special needs, especially disabled people but also families, young people and those with limited financial means.
- ***Work with people who are in touch with markets***
Build up partnerships from the start with specific tour operators that have developed their own sustainable tourism policy, code of ethics and partnership with Natura 2000 sites. Ask them to help design new packages. Ask specialist associations for advice on how to adapt your offer to the needs of specific clientele, such as associations of disabled people.
- ***Design and test innovative packages***
Identify specific visitor experiences that reflect the real value of the site, and environmental management and educational priorities. Where appropriate, work up packages with tour operators and events with local communities, and test the market reaction to them.
- ***Explore new types of marketing***
Create specific events to target new markets. Focus on specialised & alternative forms of marketing (fairs on different topics such as birds, trekking and nature...)
- ***Network with other protected areas***
Work with other sites and protected areas to promote a range of show case packages based on enjoying and learning about nature and cultural aspects of these areas.

Improving the offer; supporting traditional and local products and appropriate accommodation; providing guidance to local entrepreneurs

- ***Assess the quality of the existing offer.***

Give priority to improving existing facilities and services before developing new ones. Introduce quality checks and improvement procedures based on obtaining feedback and setting standards.

- ***Consider including new themes and sites***

Make a list of new locations or themes that have not been identified or promoted but have potential for tourism. Consider, in particular, opportunities for observing wildlife, developing new nature guided tours, understanding and participating in local traditions, visiting farms and craft producers, etc. Pay particular attention to opportunities in the buffer zone.

- ***Ensure tourism development which reflects local heritage***

Favour small-scale tourism developments, which use existing resources and reflect natural and historic heritage in style, design and setting.

- ***Encourage use of local products***

Identify locally produced food, crafts and other products. Encourage sale to visitors and use by tourism enterprises. Support networks of local producers and improve distribution systems.

- ***Support the local culture***

Support local events, traditions, dialects, art and music, especially where these reflect the special heritage and themes of the area. Use these creatively to interpret the site.

- ***Provide recreation opportunities that reflect environmental conditions***

Pay attention to a growing demand for outdoors-recreational activities. Where appropriate identify walking and cycling routes away from the most fragile areas and of a length to meet the demands of different kinds of visitor. Control intrusive recreational activity.

- ***Provide appropriate guidance and training***

Provide direct advice, seminars and training programmes for local tourism enterprises to help them understand the special sensitivities and qualities of the site, as well as improve their own performance.

- ***Link product providers together***

Encourage small accommodation enterprises, attractions, nature guides and other local services to work together. Encourage tourism enterprises to work more closely with other sectors, such as agriculture.

Supporting conservation and local economies and communities, applying sustainable management to accommodations

- ***Encourage tourism operators to support conservation***

Seek direct support from tourism enterprises for conservation schemes. This may be financial or support in other forms (in kind, voluntary & environmental holidays...).

- ***Provide mechanisms for visitors to support conservation***

Ensure visitors are fully aware of the conservation needs of the site. Explore with tourism businesses specific mechanisms for raising voluntary financial contributions from visitors (visitor payback schemes). Encourage programmes for direct participation by visitors in conservation. Ensure the results of action supported are regularly communicated.

- ***Support traditional economic activities through tourism***

Support forms of tourism or specific initiatives, which in turn support other traditional sectors, and the maintenance of traditional landscapes, such as low intensity agriculture and wildlife management.

- ***Promote local employment***

Favour the employment of local people in tourism and educational services. Encourage young people to take up opportunities and provide relevant training.

- ***Involve local residents in tourism planning***

Ensure local residents are involved in the tourism strategy and have a regular opportunity to express their views and concerns.

- ***Support facilities and services for local residents***

Support ways of improving the quality of life of local residents, including access to the site and the use of local facilities and services.

- ***Apply environmentally friendly management to accommodations***

Encourage local accommodation establishments to adopt good environmental practice. Reduce waste by avoiding the use of individually wrapped products and favouring fresh products. Recycle waste as much as possible. Use recycled or partially recycled products as often as possible

- ***Reduce energy consumption***

Reinforce insulation to avoid heat loss. Reduce CO₂ emissions by using energies such as wind or solar power. Install low-energy bulbs for lighting and low consumption electrical equipment.

- ***Communicate your environmentally oriented strategy***

Explain the measures you have taken and the reasons for them to your guests and clients through an information leaflet and/or posters. Insist on the results achieved (savings in energy consumption and costs). Inform your guests of rules, which are very

simple to observe, and that can save energy. Organise special events to inform guests about environmentally friendly management through games or competitions.

- ***Encourage the use of environmentally friendly products***

Encourage the use of environmentally friendly products by "eco-taxing" non-environmentally –friendly products.

COMMUNICATION – PROMOTION – AWARENESS

Image – Messages – Information – Interpretation – Environmental education – Codes of Conduct – New technologies - Ecolabels – Guidelines

Developing the right image, messages, information and interpretation

- ***Identify the core values of the area***

Identify and discuss the current strengths and weaknesses of all aspects of the tourism and nature product: landscape, biodiversity, living and built culture, facilities and relationships between local people and visitors.

- ***Consult and agree on images and messages***

Compare the core values with images held by local people, visitors, local tourism enterprises and tour operators (via mixed discussion groups and surveys). Agree on an image to promote and, where appropriate, use experts to help to articulate this.

- ***Develop a communication strategy***

Establish a working group to prepare a communication strategy. Seek support and involvement from all those who influence the image and its promotion (local people, tour operators, media etc.).

- ***Work with others to implement communication***

Identify a programme for improving communication and changing images held about the site. Identify the right way of communicating with specific target groups (local people, tourism enterprises, and visitors) and also of improving communication by them to others.

- ***Use creative tools in communication delivery***

Choose the most appropriate communication tools – word of mouth, local newsletters, regional guides, Internet, etc., - for the target audience. Provide mechanisms for joint promotion between local enterprises and organisations. Form promotional alliances with other sites (horizontal links) or tour operators, conservation bodies, etc. (Vertical links) at a local, national or European level.

- ***Assess and improve on-site information***

Pay particular attention to the quality of on-site information, including signposting, brochures, visitor centres and guiding services, which can have a significant influence on visitor experiences and behaviour. Ensure it is located and available where and when it can have maximum impact on visitors.

- ***Extend environmental education***

Assess the impact of any educational programmes provided, such as guided walks, and seek to extend their outreach. Consider establishing codes of conduct for visitors.

- ***Use innovative methods to put across educational messages***

Use original techniques and methods to work with specific targeted groups. Make the learning fun when working with children (video, internet..)

- ***Provide a follow-up to the initiative***

Produce material on the initiative implemented, emphasising objectives and results achieved. Distribute it to all those who participated. If possible, use it as a tool.

Developing and communicating Eco-label and certification schemes

- ***Communicate good practice in your area***

Identify examples of good practice (e.g. in accommodation, guided tours or local food and products) and identify their specific strengths with respect to your own priorities. Promote awareness of them within and outside the local area (e.g. through articles in media).

- ***Investigate existing Eco-labels and awards***

Research and compare existing Eco-labels (from the Internet or experience of others). Check their criteria target groups and achieved success or weaknesses. Compare them with your interests and identify potential for co-operation.

- ***Join suitable existing schemes***

Discuss with others the “pros & cons” for joining regional, national or international Eco-label and certification schemes. Join or recommend an existing scheme if compatible with your desired image, criteria and target groups.

- ***Develop your own Eco-label if appropriate***

Develop your own scheme if nothing appropriate already exists. Establish a clear, achievable and dynamic set of criteria. Give advice and support to those who are interested in being awarded, through seminars, individual checking, consultation, manuals and guidance on sources of information. Make sure that the awarding process is transparent and that the awarding institution is independent from and accepted by the applicants.

- ***Promote the awarded products and services***

Support the marketing of the awarded facilities, services and entrepreneurs through your own communication tools. Co-operate with external information services, networks and

media to multiply the information about your Eco-label and the awarded suppliers and products.

Developing and implementing guidelines

- ***Assess the different guidelines available***

Find out about the various guidelines available for sustainable tourism in protected areas and sites. Set their objectives, content and approach against your own situation and requirements.

- ***If necessary adapt guidelines to your own situation***

If existing guidelines do not meet your needs, consider how they can be adapted or improved. Relate them to other accreditation or training schemes for individual facilities in your area.

- ***Provide feedback to producers of guidelines***

Work with other sites and the agencies developing guidelines to improve them. Give feedback on your impressions and any results arising from implementation.

- ***Encourage consistency between different guidelines***

Encourage all agencies producing guidelines to ensure consistency between their core principles and approach. Avoid confusion amongst site managers, tourism operators and visitors.

. ASSESSING AND MANAGING IMPACTS – IQM – TRANSBORDER CO-OPERATION

Environmental Impact Assessment – Indicators – Monitoring – Zoning – Conflict Management – Environmental Management – Visitor and traffic management – Soft transportation – Renewable energy – Quality management – Benchmarking

Assessing and measuring the impacts of tourism

- ***Prepare a baseline audit***

Understand the current state of the natural environment and heritage resource. Make an inventory of existing assets, to form a benchmark against which to observe and measure change.

- ***Use EIAs***

Ask for an environmental impact assessment of all proposed development of tourism facilities and infrastructure, irrespective of size. Use established methodologies for EIAs.

- ***Work with others to assess impact***

Form partnerships with local conservation bodies. Encourage, and train local people (including tourism operators) to observe impacts on the environment. Ask visitors to report on changes and problems they encounter. Work with users, groups and clubs to monitor their impact.

- ***Measure tourism flows***

Keep a regular check on volumes of visitors, including traffic flows and car parking. Concentrate on most densely visited areas, and also on most fragile areas.

- ***Use global and site specific indicators***

Consider general measurements, such as air and water quality, as well as observational changes on selected sites. Work with local research institutions.

- ***Assess impact on local people***

Obtain feedback from local people on the impact of tourism. Assess the contribution made by tourism to local jobs, as well as negative impact from congestion and intrusion.

- ***Seek to rectify adverse changes***

Use measures of impact positively, as a basis for introducing action to reduce negative impact and restore damage caused.

Managing visitors and traffic, reducing energy consumption and pollution

- ***Influence land planning policies***

Make sure that policies to control and influence the form of tourism development and promote conservation are closely integrated into the statutory planning legislation for the area, and the local management plan for the site.

- ***Use zoning techniques***

Identify areas most suitable for different forms and levels of tourism activity. Seek to manage tourism and influence development in a buffer zone around the site. Work with neighbouring areas to identify alternative sites to promote away from the more sensitive locations.

- ***Restrict access if necessary***

If the environment is threatened, be prepared to restrict or reduce access. If necessary, restrict traffic on certain roads or at certain times. However, be aware of the needs of disabled visitors and local residents.

- ***Use information positively***

Influence visitor behaviour and visit patterns with information, which is positive, explaining the reason for any restrictions and promoting alternative opportunities.

- ***Reduce seasonality***

If appropriate to the site, promote access at less busy times and discourage over-promotion of the busiest periods. Take account of the natural seasons of the site and species it supports, in terms of how this affects visitor interest as well as vulnerability.

- ***Encourage non-polluting transport***

Favour access by walking, cycling, non-polluting vehicles and public transport, both to and within the area. Work with local bus and rail operators. Consider providing shuttle services. Promote alternative transport as a positive opportunity for visitors, not just a restriction.

- ***Promote good environmental practice and management***

Provide advice and training to local tourism enterprises on visitor management and information as well as reducing waste and the use of energy and water. Promote alternative energy systems suitable to the local environment.

Developing integrated quality management, benchmarking and transborder cooperation

- ***Obtain regular visitor feedback***

Provide a means for all visitors to give their reaction to the site and services offered. Undertake a regular survey of visitors to measure levels of satisfaction.

- ***Obtain regular feedback from staff and partners***

Ensure everyone working on site management is involved in delivering quality and can make suggestions for improvement. Obtain regular feedback from local tourism enterprises on their needs and opinions.

- ***Set quality standards for all tourism services***

Ensure all tourism operators meet optimal standards of safety and comfort. Promote existing quality assessment schemes where appropriate. Set quality standards for all services delivered by the site management team.

- ***Maintain a programme of improvement and training***

Introduce initiatives to improve quality, especially through appropriate training programmes for staff and local enterprises.

- ***Make comparisons with other areas***

Compare issues, approaches, lessons learnt and quality achieved, with other sites and protected areas. Encourage mutual study tours. Maintain close relationships with

neighbouring sites. Work within networks to improve visitor management and promote sustainable tourism.

- ***Foster cross-border co-operation***

Where sites are close to international borders, seek partnerships with sites and protected areas across the border. Identify common conservation and visitor management issues and opportunities for co-ordinated programmes. Extend the principles of Natura 2000 and Sustainable Tourism across the whole of Europe, East and West.

Part 4. Summary of advice and recommendations to Natura 2000 stakeholders

This chapter summarises the most relevant recommendations to the Natura 2000 network, following the analysis of the Habitats Directive in Part 1, and of existing initiatives (charters, codes, recommendations...) in Part 2. It reinforces and refines the principles for sustainable tourism for Natura 2000 suggested in Part 3 and which are illustrated by examples of good practice in the annex. These recommendations are based on the comments made by the participants at the seminar and in the follow-up evaluation questionnaire.

This summary of recommendations is addressed to all actors concerned with the implementation of a sustainable tourism strategy in Natura 2000 sites. It casts further light on aspects, which are specific to Natura 2000 such as **biological inventories, the participation of all actors, management plans, zoning, the restoration of degraded sites...**

These recommendations should be read in conjunction with the general principles set out in Part 3. In order to avoid repetition, the summary does not duplicate all these principles, but picks up and elaborates on a number of them. It highlights the main points concerning the Habitats Directive, which require detailed attention and call for particular vigilance on the part of Natura 2000 actors.

Seeking a level of involvement appropriate to the site

There are a number of reasons why Natura 2000 sites should be engaged with tourism:

- Bringing economic benefit to local communities, thereby winning more local support for the designation and management of the site as Natura 2000.
- Improving the management of visitors, reducing adverse impacts from visitor pressure.
- Increasing understanding and appreciation of the special qualities of the site, and hence support for its conservation, amongst local people and visitors.
- Reducing negative impact of existing and future tourism enterprises, while encouraging them to promote and benefit from the site in positive and sensitive ways.

Natura 2000 sites vary greatly in their size, location, and purpose of designation, management regimes and resources. The balance of the above objectives and resultant priorities and actions will vary from site to site. For some sites, it will make sense for them to have only a limited involvement in tourism; for others it will be a key issue. The purpose of this document is to encourage all sites to consider what their relationship should be with tourism, and to set out principles, approaches and examples to follow. Each site should address and interpret these in relation to their own circumstances and resources.

Some sites may wish to develop their own action programme for tourism based on these principles. In some circumstances it may make sense for a joint approach to be adopted for a number of smaller Natura 2000 sites in the same district or region.

Larger protected areas and parks already have emerging mechanisms at the European level for stimulating and recognising sustainable tourism strategies. These have been described elsewhere in this report. The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas sets out a process and accreditation system for all such areas to follow. Major parks of significant size, providing a high level of wilderness and wildlife experience, may also seek recognition as PAN Parks.

Specific recommendations

. STRATEGY, POLICY, PLANNING

Widen and deepen the knowledge you have about your site

"For the designation of a site as Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area for Conservation (SAC), the Directive requires preliminary inventories. In the absence of good knowledge of the site and its requirements, caution may lead to tourism projects being limited and the Natura 2000 designation itself being abandoned. Good knowledge of a site and its requirements will help understand the potential impacts that a tourism project could have." (cf. Part 1.)

- Review what data is available, make a summary of scientific inventories carried out in the preliminary selection phase.
- Carry out additional research and investigations into areas, which are less well covered such as socio-economic data, employment, and the expected benefits of the Natura 2000 designation, impacts and monitoring.

Develop a specific management plan for your site with a section on sustainable tourism

"For special areas of conservation, it is advised to produce an adapted management plan incorporated into other development plans, which takes into account the environmental requirements of the site".

- If the site is situated in a protected area, which already has a management plan, adapt the existing document to the specificity of the Natura 2000 site and characteristics.
- If the Natura 2000 site already has a management plan, incorporate a strategic approach to sustainable tourism into it.
- Use the suggested principles in Part 3 and the EUROPARC and PAN Parks initiatives in Part 2, which provide tools for the development of a sustainable tourism strategy in protected areas (criteria in the annex). Refer also to the guide produced in your country on how to produce strategic documents for Natura 2000 sites.

- Encourage national representatives to draw up guidelines and a national handbook on how to develop a management plan and a sustainable tourism strategy.
- Refer to the analysis of the Habitats Directive in Part 1 and the implications the Directive has on tourism projects at all stages of the elaboration of a strategy and a plan.
- Associate all the actors of the site from the very beginning when carrying out inventories, and in the development of a strategy and an action plan. Encourage participation and wide consultation.
- Encourage managers of related projects to refer to the site's sustainable tourism strategy and use it to validate their project.

Encourage the consultation and the implication of all actors involved in the Natura 2000 site at all levels

- After the planning phase, it is necessary to support all forms of participation in the protection of species, the management of the site, and in the better use of traditional activities and local products
- Develop partnership models between managers, the local population and private tourism operators in Natura 2000 sites (conditions, contracts, concessions, charters of commitment, codes of ethics, codes of conduct) which encourage different parties to commit themselves to the conservation of the sites.
- Develop partnerships for maintaining and developing biodiversity in protected areas, semi-natural areas and agricultural areas.
- Associate all sectors (tourism, agriculture, and forestry), including scientists, in the concertation phase. Ensure that environmentalists and private companies have the opportunity to discuss tourism projects.

. OFFER, PRODUCT, MARKET

Check how vulnerable your site is and whether developing tourism is appropriate. Remember that the main objective is to conserve habitats and species

"Not every Natura 2000 site is necessarily a potential site for tourism development. It may be an area, which requires strict protection or is intended for minimal conservation actions. While one site may be under great pressure, often due to the proximity of an urban area, another site may receive few visitors and hope to attract new tourists thanks to the Natura 2000 designation."

- Identify the potential of a site carefully in order to determine how appropriate tourism development is and define the desired level of development. Measure existing flows and work on targeting the most appropriate types of visitor for the site's characteristics.
- Seek a balance, at all times, between tourism and the protection of habitats and species. Establish precise limits between protecting the natural heritage and landscape and favouring economic development and the needs of the visitors.

Develop services which reflect the ecological characteristics of the site

- Work in partnership with the tour operators from the beginning who market products promoting habitats and species to the types of visitor you would like to attract (conservationists, visitors interested in participating in conservation projects...).
- Emphasise cultural, agricultural and industrial activities, which conform to certain conditions and environmental standards.

Develop and encourage different ways for tourism to contribute to the management of sites

- Consider different ways of raising support for conservation from visitors. Various approaches are analysed in the EU publication " Visitor Payback ". Refer to experiences in the following examples of good practice, which highlight collaboration with the private sector - " Discovery Initiatives " and the Lake District National Park's " Pathway Appeal ".
- Develop partnerships with local tourism operators and other private sector companies (sportswear companies, transport companies...) which are likely to be interested in becoming involved in the conservation of a site. Do so from the moment the site is designated, especially if the site does not benefit from any existing management system (sites which are not already part of a protected area).
- Use a diversity of forms of contribution and partnership. These can be financial (professional taxes, ecotaxes.), in kind (donation of material, voluntary work..), or intellectual (contribution of advice and know-how).
- On the basis of these contributions, contract with tourism partners to make the signature of a charter of sustainable tourism one of the prerequisites for obtaining a label or becoming certified. Let the visitors know about this type of initiative.
- Make sure that the tour operators with whom you work are involved in operations such as UNEP's " Tour operators' initiative " (cf. Part 2).

. COMMUNICATION, PROMOTION, AWARENESS**Become informed and keep your partners informed and up-to-date about the Natura 2000 procedure**

- Disseminate Part 1 of this document widely. It can be used as a brief introduction to Natura 2000 from a sustainable tourism perspective.
- Send off for documents produced by the administrations in charge of implementing the directive and Natura 2000 in your country (usually the Ministry of the Environment) and in neighbouring countries ("documents d'objectifs" in France.).
- Make good use of the documents available on the European Union internet site (the Natura 2000 newsletter, examples of good practice, the LIFE Nature procedure).
- Produce your own documents on Natura 2000, which are adapted to your particular situation.
- Refer to Natura 2000 and the Habitats Directive frequently, in any documents you produce.

Be proud to belong to a European network and make it known

- Use the Natura 2000 designation as an advantage. It shows the importance of your site and its interest at the European level.
- Make it known that your site was identified and designated a site of community importance.

Develop communication and interpretation tools specific to the characteristics of your site

- Create or refer to codes of conduct and codes of ethics which concern particular habitats or threatened species or activities which are likely to cause disturbance (photography, nature observation, canyoning, climbing...).
- Make knowledge about your site and the inventories that were carried out for its designation as SCI accessible to the public. Turn them into interpretation and nature discovery tools.
- Distribute local existing documents widely or develop your own educational tools to promote understanding of the sites and the species and raise awareness about nature conservation.
- Make documents on discovering nature and cultural heritage and codes of conduct for improving nature protection available to visitors.
- Use the guidelines and general principles developed in Part 2 and 3, and on Internet sites, which develop good practice, such as ECOTIP and ECOTOUR, to raise awareness and develop training material, particularly for tour operators.

Work with eco-label schemes as appropriate, to encourage good practice

- Consider the range of existing schemes to promote and identify good sustainable tourism practice in destinations and enterprises in Europe and contact those that appear most relevant and appropriate to your Natura 2000 site. Look at the table comparing European eco-labels from the Internet site ECOTIP in annex.
- Consider joining the eco-labelling initiatives that are currently being developed for protected areas (such as EUROPARC and PAN Parks) if the size and character of your site make it eligible and appropriate. Where it is not, but you are part of a larger protected area, draw these to the attention of the wider protected area management.
- Encourage local service providers on or near your site to join existing regional and national eco-labels aimed at accommodation, restaurants, sites and activities. Look at the following examples of good practice; the FFPNR "Nature Hotels", ECEAT farm accommodation, the Luxembourg eco-label.
- Study the possibility of developing your own eco-label on a local and regional level to help encourage good practice and formalise partnerships with local suppliers of tourism services. Consider with others how this might relate to the concept of a label for Natura 2000 nationally and at a European level.
- In assessing criteria for an eco-label relating to Natura 2000 sites, emphasise environmental management, renewable energies, reducing the consumption of traditional energy sources (electricity, water, fuel), waste management, the maintenance of traditional landscapes, the restoration of degraded sites, the protection of native species, the creation of private voluntary nature reserves, and the promotion of natural heritage. (cf. the Guadeloupe National Park Mark of Confidence).

. EVALUATE AND MANAGE IMPACTS, DEVELOP AN INTEGRATED APPROACH, ENCOURAGE CO-OPERATION

Carry out Environmental Impact Assessment systematically for all tourism projects

" Any project likely to affect the site, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. It shall not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned." art. 6.3.

- Ask for an Environmental Impact Assessment to be carried out systematically for all projects concerning tourism infrastructure.
- Ask for Environmental Impact Assessment to apply to development projects which are located in the periphery of Natura 2000 areas at the first suspicion that they would have an impact on the site itself.
- Get hold of and study Environmental Impact Assessment methods for tourism projects, which are available at the European level.

Evaluate, limit and manage impacts and disturbances related to tourism

" While waiting for the publication of the list of the SIC selected to be designated as SAC, the Member State must avoid any activity likely to deteriorate the sites which it has selected and submitted to the Commission "

" The Member States shall take appropriate steps to avoid, in the SAC, the deterioration of natural habitats and the habitats of species as well as disturbance of the species for which the areas have been designated. " Art. 6.2.

- Develop indicators of impact to measure any disturbance or deterioration of the habitats and species and the effects of activities, visitor flows and existing infrastructure on natural sites.
- Encourage eco-audits and self-assessment based on these indicators and criteria for eco-labels.
- Measure impacts regularly and develop appropriate management tools (limiting visitor numbers, authorisations, bookings, guided visits, traffic flow plans, nature observation areas, and restricted zones...). These make it possible to control, assess and limit impacts, which can cause species to become scarce, and habitats to disappear.
- Encourage tourism developers to restrict or to avoid development in sensitive natural areas.
- Encourage the owners of tourist establishments to participate in the rehabilitation and the restoration of the degraded natural habitats (planting native plant species, eradicating pervasive or exotic plant species...).

Set up zoning and differentiated management systems in your site from the very beginning

Natura 2000 sites can be small. They can be isolated and not form part of an existing protected area. They can be highly visited and very exposed to the development of leisure activities. Zoning must respect the conservation objectives of Natura 2000, while, at the same time, meet the needs of visitors in terms of nature and other leisure activities (cf. the experience of Terschelling in Holland). Administrative and contractual legal measures, which the Member

States have to establish should include the definition of restricted access zones and sanctuaries.

- Develop a zoning system and detail it in the management plan. It should treat each type of zone separately; intensively used zones (sports activities), vulnerable zones (nesting, reproduction...), zones for interpretation and nature observation, zones for research.

Develop all types of soft and non-motorised transport

- Develop innovative and non-motorised forms of transport, on the basis of 0 " cars ". Develop cycle tracks, shuttle services...
- In sites, which receive a significant number of visitors, include these forms of transport in a traffic flow and transport management plan.

Develop an IQM (Integrated Quality Management) approach which is specific to Natura 2000

- Look at ways of improving the quality of the site to achieve a range of tourism, community and biodiversity objectives in an integrated way. Pursue an integrated quality management approach, which involves checking and improving all aspects of visitor experiences and impacts, obtaining regular feedback from visitors, enterprises and local people. The EU publication " IQM in rural tourist destinations " explains the approach and provides examples of good practice.

Participate in the creation of a network of sites in your area or country

- Ask for the list of other people who are in charge of Natura 2000 sites. Contact them and exchange information.
- Seek out collaboration between sites, which have the same characteristics.
- Take joint and concerted action with other Natura 2000 sites for conservation and economic development.
- Request the means to carry out workshops, field visits, training, and to exchange know-how.
- Ask local and regional authorities to bring the Natura 2000 network to life through co-ordination and regional events.

Develop transborder co-operation with Eastern European countries

- Set up twinning and transborder co-operation projects between Natura 2000 sites. Contribute to the establishment of a similar network in Eastern European countries.
- Exchange experiences, good practice and other information with other countries or areas interested in this type of action in order to widen your knowledge and understanding of tools used in other areas.

European Commission

Sustainable tourism and Natura 2000. Guidelines, initiatives and good practices in Europe

Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities

2001 — 63 pp. — 21 x 29.7 cm

ISBN 92-894-1443-X