

Exploring new models to balance exploitation and conservation of protected areas

Welcome!

This bi-annual e-newsletter is dedicated to sharing news, events and updates from IMPACT project. Enjoy reading!

Issue #1 - October 2016

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- Sustainable development in Protected Areas - setting the basis.

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- Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas - nineteen protected areas to become sustainable destinations this year.
- EUROPARC Conference - IMPACT project was well represented at EUROPARC Conference, which recently took place in Parc Jura Vaudois, Switzerland.
- WTTC Tourism for Tomorrow Awards 2017. Call for entries.

Introduction to IMPACT Project.

Protected areas are primarily defined to preserve biodiversity. However, is it possible to combine their function with the development of controlled, biodiversity-friendly, economical activities?

Allowing certain **economic activities within the boundaries of protected areas** has been identified as an effective way to add economic resources to maintain their otherwise expensive management. Likewise, there is an urgent need to create employment, especially for young people, and protected areas are an opportunity for green jobs creation.

Innovative Models for Protected Areas: exChange and Transfer, or simply **IMPACT**, is an interregional cooperation project developed with the support of the EU European Regional Development Fund. Its objective is to **introduce new management models** in protected areas to **promote socioeconomic activities** that are respectful with nature.

During a four years process, the following **six partners** will be sharing best practices, designing **Sustainable Development Plans** for their respective protected areas and implementing them:

- *Regional government of Andalusia (Spain), as the Lead Partner.*
- *EUROPARC Federation (Germany), as the Advisory partner.*
- *EUCC Baltic office (Lithuania).*

- *Molise region (Italy).*
- *National Institute for Research and development in Tourism (Romania).*
- *Espaces Naturels Regionaux (France).*

However, this task is not free of challenges. How can we combine profitable activities, such as eco-tourism, recreational fishing and outdoor sports, while we preserve nature? Or, how can we mediate with different stakeholders with different interests? These are just some of the questions that the project partners will need to address in order to achieve the project goal. Don't miss the projects updates.

Partners overview



The EUCC Baltic Office

In this bulletin, we want to have a closer look to one of our partners, The Coastal & Marine Union (EUCC) Baltic Office. This institution has more than 20 years of experience in supporting and advising protected areas on management issues along the southern and eastern Baltic coastal arc in Poland, Kaliningrad (Russia), Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

Since May 1994 over 50 regional cooperation and community development projects have been implemented in the field of coastal conservation and management, many of them focused on protected areas management policy improvement and coastal nature-based tourism development.

The EUCC Baltic Office has facilitated the adjustment of coastal protected areas and municipalities of Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia to EC directives and other EU policy instruments requirements. It developed the Law of the Coastal Zone of Lithuania, it was involved in the Curonian Spit designation as a cross-border UNESCO World Heritage Site. Nowadays, the EUCC Baltic Office is providing advice to the Lithuanian Ministry of Environment on sustainable coastal nature conservation and recreational fisheries management.

Within IMPACT project, the main goal of EUCC Baltic Office is to facilitate policy improvement in coastal protected area management in Lithuania by acquiring and implementing innovative approaches developed by the IMPACT project team and experts.



Curonian Spit National Park.

*Size: 26.464 hectares (9.764 ha of land, -16.700 ha of water).
IUCN Category: II.
Protection categories: NATURA 2000 (SAC and SPA), Baltic Sea marine protected area (HELCOM MPA).*

The Curonian Spit is a unique and vulnerable, sandy and wooded cultural landscape on a coastal peninsula. In 2000, it was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Human habitation on this elongated sand dune peninsula dates back to prehistoric times. Throughout this period, it has been threatened by the natural forces of wind and waves. Its survival to the present days has been made possible only as a result of ceaseless human efforts to combat the erosion of the spit, dramatically illustrated by continuing stabilization and reforestation projects.

[Discover the park.](#)



Nemunas Delta Regional Park.

*Size: 29.149 hectares (23.269 of land, 5.800 of water).
IUCN Category: V.
Protection categories: Ramsar Convention site, NATURA 2000 (SAC and SPA), Baltic Sea marine protected area (HELCOM MPA).*

The Nemunas Delta wetlands are considered globally significant and are protected under the Ramsar Convention. The Nemunas Delta Regional Park was created in 1992 to safeguard the delta's wildlife and facilitate its research. It extends across 29.149 hectares and consists of 14 reserves and one water reservoir. About 20% of the area is

covered by water. When it reaches the Baltic Sea, the Nemunas river splits into a maze of river branches and canals, forming polders and wetlands that make it a very attractive destination for eco-tourism. Furthermore, the Park lies on the East Atlantic Flyway, which is a major bird migration route in Europe.

[Discover the park.](#)



Pajurio (Seaside) Regional Park.

Size: 29.149 hectares (23.269 of land, 5.800 of water).

IUCN Category: V.

Protection categories: Ramsar Convention site, NATURA 2000 (SAC and SPA), Baltic Sea marine protected area (HELCOM MPA).

The Pajurio Regional Park is located on the coast of the Baltic Sea, in Western Lithuania. The park boasts unique features as the residual Lake Plaze (Plocis), continental dunes, a 20 m high bluff on the Baltic Sea, glacial boulder fields on the coast, and the Olando kepure Hill, which is and has been a navigational guide for sailors and fishermen. It also hosts a unique flora and fauna specific to the fields and forests of the dunes and the coastal plains. To end with, this area is also important for water birds, which nest and make migratory stopovers in the Baltic Sea, Lake Kalote, and Lake Plaze.

[Discover the park.](#)

IMPACT events



First stakeholders meeting in Romania.

The National Institute for Research and Development in Tourism (INCDT) organised their 1st Stakeholder Meeting in Bucharest, on Tuesday 27th September 2016.

Stakeholders invited included ministries, central, regional and local authorities, protected areas, associations and organisations with an active role in the development and promotion of protected areas and sustainable tourism in Romania.

The aim of this workshop was to identify best practices, to share information and to raise awareness among the relevant target groups about the need to combine conservation measures with sustainable exploitation of protected areas assets.

This workshop led to the selection of the 3 most appropriate protected areas (with best practices), that will be the object of the IMPACT project:

- Dinosaurs Geopark-Tara Hategului Natural Park.
- Danube Delta Biosphere Reservation.
- Vanatori-Neamt Natural Park.

[More information on IMPACT website news page.](#)

Sustainable Development in Protected Areas.

On July 1st, the Lead Partner - Andalusian Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, met with researchers from the Autonomous University of Madrid (UAM).



The objective of this first meeting was to explore innovative ways of re-designing Sustainable Development Plans for Protected Areas, which will constitute the main outputs of IMPACT Project.

[Follow IMPACT Project events in the web.](#)

Related news

Nineteen Protected Areas to become "sustainable destinations" this year.

Last August, the Evaluation Committee of the European



Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas met in Regensburg.



The objective of this meeting was to assess the Verification Reports submitted by the applicants for the Charter. Nineteen candidates opt to be awarded this year, from which eleven are first time applications and eight re-evaluation candidates.

The Charter is a practical tool that enables protected areas to develop a common sustainable tourism strategy and action plan. The awarded candidates will be soon disclosed.

[Stay tuned on the Charter news.](#)



IMPACT present at EUROPARC Conference 2016.

From the 18th to the 22nd of October, representatives of protected areas from all around Europe met at Parc Jura Vaudois, Switzerland.

During a four days event, the participants exchanged experiences and learned about the current management strategies being implemented in our continent. Two partners from IMPACT project - the EUROPARC Federation and Espaces Naturels Régionaux (ENRx) - were present in this big gathering for protected areas professionals.

Information about the IMPACT project was displayed in the special Market Place event, having a good acceptance among the participants.

[Learn more about the Conference.](#)

2017 WTTC Tourism for Tomorrow Awards



The Tourism for Tomorrow Award, organized by the World Travel & Tourism Council, are aimed at recognising best practice in sustainable tourism within the industry globally, based upon the principles of environmentally friendly operations; support for the protection of cultural and natural heritage; and direct benefits to the social and economic well-being of local people in travel destinations around the world.

Deadline for the 2017 Tourism for Tomorrow Awards' submissions is 14th of November 2016.

[Find more information at WTTC website](#)

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