
4.3 Basic Standards for Transfrontier Cooperation between European Protected Areas

Roland Stein

- Member of EUROPARC's Task Force on Transfrontier Protected Area Cooperation
 - Coordinator of "Pfälzerwald - Vosges du Nord" Transboundary Biosphere Reserve
 - Member of IUCN / WCPA's Task Force on Transboundary Protected Areas
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Preamble

Cooperation between protected areas that adjoin across or lie adjacent to international borders makes a significant contribution to the conservation of both natural and cultural heritage and the achievement of sustainable regional development. Such cooperation also promotes international peace and understanding, and makes an important contribution to the development of a common Europe.

The importance of community involvement in the planning and management of protected areas is widely acknowledged. In transfrontier protected areas in particular, local communities often reside on each side of and move freely across the national border. As such, local people play a fundamental role in transfrontier cooperation and should be involved from the outset.

Nine quality criteria and five fields of work are presented in the following paper. These represent the basic standards required for successful cooperation. The standards focus on the practical aspects of transfrontier protected area work. They are relevant to all IUCN protected area categories, and to the variety of combinations of category, which may occur within a transfrontier, protected area (for example, where a category II protected area shares a border with a category V protected area). It is anticipated that the standards will provide a motivation for the continual advancement and improvement of cooperation. Furthermore, they provide a basis for an objective evaluation of the transfrontier cooperation.

It is a fundamental requirement that, in meeting these standards, the national sovereignty and socio-cultural differences of all cooperating parties are acknowledged and respected.

Primary Criteria

Vision

In addition to the vision for their respective areas, the managing bodies of the transfrontier protected area should have a *common* vision, a future orientation that can only be implemented together with the respective partner(s). This vision should consist of primary and secondary aims of cooperation. The common vision should reveal that the wider benefits of transfrontier cooperation for the entire protected area have been recognised by all partners, independent of financial considerations.

Official Agreement

An official agreement should have been signed at the appropriate management and political decision-making levels for facilitating the creation and progress of the transfrontier protected area within a given time frame. Where appropriate, multilateral and bilateral agreements and conventions should be used to support / provide a framework for transfrontier cooperation.

Fields of Work

All fields of work of the cooperation should be determined jointly. They should be set within the frame of a mid-term work plan and include work in the primary and secondary fields indicated below, administrative capacity-building and the training of staff from the partner protected areas. The fields of work should also correspond to national objectives and work schemes.

Staff

Permanent communication involving all levels of staff in a process of familiarisation should have been established and (a) facilitator/s for collaboration identified. Staff with responsibility for cooperative activities

should meet regularly to discuss project management, evaluate progress and exchange knowledge and experience. In addition, staff should periodically carry out joint field trips and on-site activities in all partner areas. A joint steering committee is recommended.

Secondary Criteria

Guiding Rules for Cooperation

The partners should have established and put into practice compatible rules which guide cooperation and ensure permanent exchanges of information, the running and documentation of joint meetings, joint decision-making and dispute settlement. The rules should be based upon the mutual consideration of each partner's working methods, time management, native language, administrative structure and decision-making procedures.

Exchange of Data

The mutual exchange of data between all partners on the natural, historical and cultural aspects of the area should be in progress.

Foreign Language Communication

Foreign language communication, translation arrangements and facilitation should be ensured in the main areas of transfrontier cooperation.

Ecological Monitoring

The partners should have commenced the systematic linking of their resources for the ecological monitoring of the shared ecosystem.

Basis of Financing

The financing of joint transfrontier projects should be secured. Project proposals for international funding are to be jointly prepared and submitted. The use of funding from international programmes e.g. EU, GEF is to be mutually agreed.

Primary Field of Work

Nature and Landscape Conservation

The joint activities shall be compatible with the guidelines and recommendations for the application of the IUCN Protected Area Management Categories in Europe. Cooperation in the field of nature and landscape conservation should be developed through concrete activities and projects, e.g. the establishment and management of cross-border systems of inter-connected habitats and biotopes, the practical implementation of agreed management aims and plans, joint projects on biodiversity / species conservation, habitat restoration etc.

Secondary Fields of Work

Education and Communication

Transfrontier cooperation in the field of 'education and communication' should cover a range of joint activities providing information, raising awareness and communicating the message of the transfrontier protected area as a whole. This work will include, for example, the development of a common identity, the publication of joint, bi- or multilingual publications, maps, and video / internet presentations, the organisation of guided visits for different target groups on both sides of the border, bi- or multi-lingual events for pupils and schools, as well as periodic cooperation with the media. This field of work also includes the development of a serviceable strategy for a cross-border system of ranger service.

Recreation and Sustainable Tourism

Transfrontier opportunities for people to experience nature and enjoy the landscape should be developed. This includes, for example, coordinated visitor management systems, visitor facilities and trails, and transfrontier public transport systems. This field of work also includes the development of sustainable transfrontier tourism initiatives covering, for example, the contribution of tourism to regional development, or the support of protected areas for marketing of local ecological products.

Research and Monitoring

The partners should develop and implement common mutually agreed research activities and monitoring programmes.

Mutual Understanding and the Promotion of Peace

The partners should stimulate and support joint activities, which promote cultural understanding and the sharing of cultural experiences, and which facilitate the building of communication and trust between neighbouring communities and peoples.