

National parks management approaches and parks financing principles: practical findings

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The paper has a character of findings on National parks (NP) management approaches and parks financing principles towards applying the business approach to financing NPs, Latvia.

Data from 2009 shows that there are 273 NPs in Europe covering 98 000 km² in total, but 182 of them are in the European Union (EU 27) and four of them are established in Latvia during 1975 till 2007 (EUROPARC 2009, WDPA, 2009). Traditionally, NPs have been managed by government agencies (GoBi Research Group 2009). Funding for the NPs management is usually insufficient – a deficit in the USA and Canada approximately 70%, in Europe – 80% of protected areas are under-financed (Eagles 2008, PANParks, 2008). Protected areas in developing countries receive an average of less than 30 % of the funding that is necessary (Spergel 2001); Latvia is not an exception. Defined development problem objectives in the Guidelines of Environment Policy of Latvia for 2009 till 2015 include indications that there is no practical collaboration with land owners which is mainly a private sector (LR VIDM 2009). We believed the reasons must be searched by investigating: (1) the form of maintaining and managing NPs; (2) finance attraction as money generation. We analyzed examples of USA and Canada to determine differences in these fields. We used qualitative methods in the research as content analyse of scientific literature and practical information.

Our main findings of the research are as follows:

- In the 20th century in the agencies of NPs operate under two management models: (i) “exclusive” and (ii) “inclusive”. The first is largely adopted in the USA, and the second model is more frequently adopted in Western Europe. While “exclusive” management approach is generally successful, the “inclusive” approach, which widely expanded in Europe including Latvia, still affects local quality of life and development (Borrini-Feyerabend 1996). According to the latest scientific literature, there is a new trend in the world: new management approaches to nature protection and development; for instance, in effective stakeholders’ collaboration (Buckley et al. 2003) Therefore, problems and new objective setting become similar in the NPs territories where both management models are represented.
- New models are emerging by changing the governance forms of the protected area and putting more stress on collaboration (Eagles 2008) in the USA as well as in Canada.
- Partnerships are an accepted mechanism to generate additional park and recreation resources that otherwise could not be provided with public funds. Partnerships are increasingly important in the management of public agencies, specifically parks and recreation service providers. Citizens’ heightened awareness of broader social issues creates demands to find solutions to financial, human, and capital problems through alternative methods such as collaborative agreements. Through collaboration managers of park agencies provide goods for supporting their agencies (Weddell et al. 2009).
- Existing tendency to perceive each protected area as a separate entity is being broken. Good practice now recommends that they be planned, managed and financed as a system (Borrini-Feyerabend 2003).
- Ways of financing NPs fall under three basic categories: (i) Annual budget allocations from a government’s general revenues; (ii) Grants and donations from individuals, corporations, foundations, and international donor agency; (iii) User fees, conservation taxes, fines, and

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other revenues. Most protected areas in developing countries will need to rely on a combination of all these sources (Spergel, 2001).

- At a World Parks Congress Eagles (2003) outlined 17 trends for 25 next years of what will affect park management, park management shifts to financially flexible and entrepreneurial forms (Eagles, 2003).
- Income of NPs in Latvia is basically formed by state budget allocations that does not provide full accomplishment of all NP functions. The other and most important source of income for NPs in Latvia is forest cutting or selling in low protection status areas. Maintenance organization forms of NPs include voluntary agreements, positive support mechanisms, state and private partnership, although the use of them in Latvia is not widely spread (LR VIDM, 2009).
- In the management approaches of NPs, Latvia could be recommended to integrate the “collaborative management” elements because stakeholders are usually aware of their interests in the management of the NP. They usually possess specific capacities (knowledge, skills) and/or comparative advantage and they are usually willing to invest (e.g., time, political authority, money) (Borrini-Feyerabend 1996).
- The road ahead: continue to collect the financial relations statistical information to determine opportunities for a business approach to financing NPs, as well as how stakeholders financial relations impact on parks attendance.

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