

RE-EVALUATION

Verifier's Report to the Evaluation Committee

Name of protected area: Garraf, d'Olèrdola I del Foix Parks, Spain

Name of verifier: Azucena de la Cruz Martín

Date of submission of re-evaluation application by protected area: Click or tap here to enter text.

Date of verification visit: 22nd to 24th of may, 2023

Date of completion of this report: 30th of july, 2023

NOTES FOR THE VERIFIER

Where is shown, verifiers are asked to indicate a score, using the following system:

- X Not relevant
- 0 Not happening
- 1 Weak – little action
- 2 Moderate – action happening in this area, sufficient at present
- 3 Good – significant action, totally satisfactory

A star * may be added to a “3” score to indicate an excellent example of best practice (3*).

Verifiers are asked to comment on individual questions to provide further information or explanation, keeping their answers concise. In particular, the reasons for any score under 2 should be briefly explained, highlighting any particular causes for concern.

The reasons for any score of * awarded should also be explained: what makes this an example of best practice? The star should be used sparingly, and only for outstanding initiatives or actions which can serve as models at the European level.

The format for this verifier's report is linked closely to that of the Application Report completed by the protected area. You should have received the Application Report in electronic format. You may copy information from the Application Report into this report to support particular answers where this is helpful.

If you do this, we would ask you to indicate very clearly (e.g. by use of a different typeface, highlighting, etc.) the text which has been copied from the Application Report.

Your own observations relating to the information provided by the protected area and gained on site are, of course, particularly important – the Committee will have the full Application Report available to refer to as necessary.

Please attach a list of any documents received from the protected area or presented during the visit which were not included in the original application.

Programme of visit, key sites and partners visited:

Please attach a full list of people interviewed and job titles as an appendix

Garraf, Olèrdola and Foix Parks Charter Verification Visit Programme

NOTES:

Due to the proximity to the municipal elections in Spain, it was not possible to meet with many of the municipalities majors from the territory, however, I believe the officers that participated in the visit allowed a clear view of the commitment of their municipalities.

In **bold**, I indicate the first meeting with each stakeholder.

Sofia Paricio, head of socio-economic development of the Network of Natural Parks of the Diputació de Barcelona and coordinator of the Charter for the parks of the Diputació de Barcelona, will accompany the auditor during the 3 days.

Monday 22 May:

10:10 | Meeting at Sants AVE station (Sofia) and transfer to La Pleta (Main office and information centre of the Garraf Park) for the introductory meeting with the consultancy company that prepared the documents (REPTE Territorial s.l) and a representation of the officers that participate in the charter Working Groups.

Interviews:

- **Santi Llacuna, director of the Garraf i Olèrdola Park**
- **Agnès Manchón, public use and environmental education officer at the Garraf, Olèrdola and Foix Parks.**
- **Emili Valbuena, conservation officer of the Garraf, Olèrdola and Foix Parks.**
- **Xavier Roget, tourism advisor of the Diputació de Barcelona. Natural Parks Network department**
- **Montserrat Bové, tourism officer of the Diputació de Barcelona. Tourism department**
- **Mariona Oliva, consultant that supported the re-evaluation process and documents, REPTE Territorial s.l**

14:00 | Lunch at the Restaurant del Parc a Taula El Cafè del Mar, Passeig marítim, 63, Vilanova i la Geltrú.

Interviews:

- Xavier Roget (Tourism advisor to the Diputació de Barcelona),
- Agnès Manchón, public use and environmental education officer.

16:30 | Visit to the Charter company Roc Roi at the Port of Vilanova i la Geltrú.

No meeting at this company, since this was just a detour and they were busy at the moment, but it was possible to see the publicity of the Charter and the information they provide.

17:00 | Visit to the information point of Vilanova i la Geltrú, Charter Information Point.

Interviews:

- **Xavier Arrojo, Vilanova i la Geltrú tourism officer**
- **Natàlia Albarracín, Vilanova i la Geltrú information officer.**

18:30 | Visit to the Vega de Ribes winery, Charter company.

Interviews:

- **Enric Bartra, Owner of Vega de Ribes winery, Charter company.**
- **Eva Galera, Sant Pere de Ribes Tourism officer.**

20:00 | Masia Pou de la Vinya, Charter company (dinner, sleep and breakfast).

Interviews:

- **Juan Arias and Irina, Owners of Masia Pou de la Vinya Charter accommodation.**

Tuesday 23 May:

9:00 | Pick up at Masia Pou de la Vinya by Sofia Paricio

10:00 | Visit to the ecological restoration of the River Foix Estuary and visit the information points in Cubelles.

Interviews:

- **Roser de Finques Ferrer, Charter company,**
- **Imma Laborda, tourism officer from Cubelles,**
- **Esher Toledo, environmental officer from Vilanova i la Geltrú,**
- Santi Llacuna, director of Parc del Garraf and Olèrdola,
- **Paula, intern from Cubelles Town Council,**
- **Jaume, environmental informer at the River Foix Estuary,**
- **Teresa Vidal, officer from the Consell Comarcal del Garraf i dels Colls i Miralpeix**
- **Irene Olivella, travel agency Turismo Vivencial. Charter company**

12:00 | Visit to Can Foix Holiday Camp House, Charter company to see environmental education activity: The Forest through the senses (Cubelles) and talk about Gamification action.

Interviews:

- **Laia Tarafa, Head of the Casa de Colonies de Can Foix at Descoberta, Charter Company**
- **Roger Gatnau, manager of Descoberta, Charter Company**
- **Pau Mundó, Director of the Foix Park.**

13:00 | Visit to Castellet, Foix Park offices and Foix River reservoir.

Interviews:

- Roger Gatnau, manager of Descoberta,
- Pau Mundó, director of Foix Park.

14:30 | Lunch at El Peixet Restaurant in Cubelles.

Interviews:

- Imma Laborda, tourism officer from Cubelles,
- Pau Mundó, Director of the Foix Park.
- **Pilar, Agricultural Association Mas d'en Safont, Charter company,**
- Santi Llacuna, director of Parc del Garraf and Olèrdola,
- Roger Gatnau, manager of Descoberta, Charter Company
- **Sònia Marcé, coordinator of Local Development of Cubelles Town Council.**

17:00 | Visit to Olivella, forestry work with the Association of Forest Owners.

Interviews:

- **Rat Cabré, works and maintenance officer of the Garraf and Olèrdola Park,**
- **Gemma Juncosa, forestry officer of the Garraf-Penedès Mancomunitat,**

- **Marta Verdejo, Major of Olivella,**
- **Teresa Bonjoch, president of the Massís del Garraf Forest Owners Association,**
- **Marcel Fontanilles, president ADF Sitges;**
- **Pilar, Agricultural Association Mas d'en Safont, Charter company,**

19:30 | Activity at the Garraf Astronomical Observatory, a Charter company.

Interviews:

- **Manuel Edo Benaiges, President of CIPAG (Collective for the Investigation of Prehistory and Archaeology of the Garraf-Ordal),**
- **Esteban Muñoz, Owner of Cal Simó accommodation, Charter company;**
- **Juan Arias, Owner Masia Pou de la Vinya,**
- **Josep Enric Alarcón i Batlle, President of the Sustainable Tourism Association of Garraf Olèrdola i Foix Parks and owner of Mas d'en Giralt, Charter company**
- **Pilar, Agricultural Association Mas d'en Safont, Charter company,**
- **Imma Laborda, tourism officer from Cubelles,**
- **Xavier Font, Head of the Technical Office of Tourism, Diputació de Barcelona**
- **Rat Perellada and Carles Schnabel, managers of the Garraf Astronomical Observatory and tourist entrepreneurs on astrotourism.**

20:30 | Snack at Can Grau and visit to the Holiday Camp House (Fundesplai)

Interviews (apart from the ones on the previous visit):

- **Albert Bescós, head of maintenance of the Fundesplai holiday camp houses and**
- **Sandra Feixas, head of the Fundesplai houses and hostels department.**

22:00 | Masia Pou de la Vinya, dinner, sleep and breakfast, Sofia Paricio

Wednesday 24 May:

9:00 | Meeting at Masia Pou de la Vinya by Sofia Paricio

9:30 | Visit to the Buddhist Monastery of Garraf, Charter partner.

Interviews:

- **Pilar Carbó, Owner of la Fassina de Jafre, Charter company**
- **Anna Mestres, from the Regional Council of Alt Penedès,**
- **Isma and Lau, guides from the Buddhist Monastery.**

12:00 | Meeting at the Port of Sitges to talk about marine issues with the Asociación Cetácea, Charter partner.

Interviews:

- **Marina Gibernau from Saphira Dive CHARTER diving company,**
- **Clara Carbonell from Turisme de Castelldefels,**
- **Jaume Martí from Roc Roi CHARTER kayak company,**
- **Rubén, Edulis from CHARTER environmental education company,**
- **Jaume Puyol from Nootka Kayak, CHARTER company,**
- **Agnès Manchón, public use and environmental education officer and**
- **Montse Valls and Fernando, members of l'Associació Cetàcea.**

14:00 | Lunch at the Club Náutico del Garraf and farewell meeting.

Guests:

- Mariona Oliva from Repte, technical secretary of CHARTER,
- **Rubén Hernández, manager of The Nautic Club of Garraf, CHARTER company,**
- *Santi Llacuna, director of Garraf and Olèrdola parks,*
- Agnés Manchón, public use officer of Garraf and Olèrdola parks,
- Roser from Finques Ferrer, Charter company
- **Clara Carbonell, tourism officer from Castelldefels municipality**

15:30h Return to Barcelona to Sants Estació AVE with Santi Llacuna

Brief details of the PA and overall impressions

Please indicate very briefly:

- **Location, size, population, IUCN Category (or equivalent), nature of the PA Authority, key features of the PA, level of tourism**
- **Context of the re-application (e.g. any issues relating to the decision to reapply)**
- **Overall impressions of the PA**

Note on the administrative framework of Catalonia and its territory

Catalonia is an autonomous community and as such has a parliament and a regional government (*Generalitat de Catalunya*). It also has two main supra-municipal structures that assist the municipalities in providing services to the population: the County Council (*Consell comarcal*), which covers a historic county (*Comarque*), and the Provincial Council (*Diputació*), which covers an entire province. These two supra-municipal bodies are formed by the elected members of the municipalities and they provide services to these municipalities, therefore their competences and areas of work can vary from one to the other.

The *Generalitat de Catalunya*, at the highest level of government, is ultimately the authority responsible for nature conservation in Catalonia, although it can delegate some or all of these powers to the *Diputació* or the *Consells Comarcals*, or to other management structures created for the purpose of managing a specific protected area (a specific council).

The Charter area of Garraf, Olèrdola and Foix is covered by a Provincial Council (*Diputació de Barcelona*) and three County Councils: *Garraf* (all the municipalities in the area), *Baix Llobregat* (3 of the 29 municipalities in the area) and *Alt Penedès* (5 of the 27 municipalities in the area).

PROTECTED AREAS

The Garraf, Olèrdola and Foix is a territory that includes several protected areas with different managing entities, namely the Garraf, Olèrdola and Foix Natural Parks and some areas included in the Natura 2000 network (*Espai Natural dels Colls i Miralpeix i Costes del Garraf and Espai Marí del Baix Llobregat-Garraf*).

The Garraf, Olèrdola and Foix Natural Parks are part of the 14 Natural Parks included in the Natural Parks Network of the *Diputació de Barcelona* and are directly managed by this entity.



Fig 1. *Diputació de Barcelona* Natural Park Network

The Garraf Natural Park was protected in 1986 and has an area of 12,376.50 hectares, the Olèrdola Natural Park was protected in 1992 with an area of 608.23 hectares and the Foix Natural Park was created in 1993 with an area of 3,098 hectares. All three parks would be included in IUCN Category VI.

Although they are three different parks, P.N. Garraf and P.N. Olèrdola have the same director and share with P.N. Foix the public use and conservation officers. In fact, the three parks have the same Management Plan, approved in 2016 and valid until 2026, and the same Public Use Plan, approved in 2009 and soon to be reviewed.

The Espai Natural dels Colls i Miralpeix i Costes del Garraf includes several Natura 2000 sites, namely:

- Colls i Miralpeix area and Foix estuary, which belong to the Serres del Litoral Central SPA (ES5110013), which also includes the Garraf, Olèrdola and Foix parks (total area 25,068.7 hectares).
- SPA Garraf Coast: marine protected area created in 2006 (ES5110020) with a total area of 26,473.78 hectares.
- SPA Baix Llobregat - Garraf marine area: (ES0000513) created in 2014, which actually corresponds to an extension of the Garraf coast with 38.661 more hectares of marine area.

This area is currently managed by the Consorci de Coll i Miralpeix - Costa del Garraf, made up of the municipalities of Sitges, Vilanova i la Geltrú, Cubelles and San Pere de Ribes, the Consell Comarcal de Garraf and the Generalitat de Catalunya, which has signed an agreement with the Diputació de Barcelona to ensure its support for some management actions.

The Espai Natural dels Colls i Miralpeix i Costes del Garraf does not yet have a management or public use plan, but it has been the subject of several preparatory studies and some conservation actions carried out either by the Consorci de Coll i Miralpeix - Costa del Garraf or by the municipalities.



Source: Re-evaluation report produced by the territory.

The Garraf, Olèrdola and Foix Nature Parks are part of the Garraf massif, a karst massif that extends a few kilometres from the city of Barcelona, the second most populous city in Spain with more than 1.6 million inhabitants. They include some important Mediterranean habitats, namely:

- 1150(*) - Coastal lagoons
- 1170 - Reefs
- 1240 - Vegetated sea cliffs of the Mediterranean coasts with endemic *Limonium spp.*
- 1410 - Mediterranean salt meadows (*Juncetalia maritimi*)
- 3270 - Rivers with muddy banks with *Chenopodium rubri* p.p. and *Bidention* p.p. vegetation
- 3290 - Intermittently flowing Mediterranean rivers of the Paspalo-Agrostidion
- 5330 - Thermo-Mediterranean and pre-desert scrub
- 6220(*) - Pseudo-steppe with grasses and annuals of the Thero-Brachypodieta
- 6420 - Mediterranean tall humid grasslands of the Molinio-Holoschoenion
- 6430 - Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels
- 8130 - Western Mediterranean and thermophilous scree
- 8210 - Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation
- 8220 - Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation
- 8310 - Caves not open to the public
- 9240 - *Quercus faginea* and *Quercus canariensis* Iberian woods
- 92A0 - *Salix alba* and *Populus alba* river galleries
- 9340 - *Quercus ilex* and *Quercus rotundifolia* forests
- 9540 - Mediterranean pine forests with endemic Mesogean pines

Source: Natura 2000 Viewer (<https://natura2000.eea.europa.eu/>) - Legend (*) – Priority habitat.

The parks are also home to some important species of fauna and flora, such as the palmito or maragalló (*Chamaerops humilis*), the only palm tree native to mainland Europe, the Mediterranean turtle (*Testudo hermanni*) or the Bonelli's eagle (*Aquila fasciata*), as well as other species of birds of prey that nest on the cliffs, and important cave communities associated with the karst complex.

The protection of these parks has its origins in the strong urban pressure felt in this area due to its proximity to Barcelona in the 60s and 80s of the last century, which led to several attempts to illegally urbanise the parks with holiday homes for people from Barcelona. These attempts led to the existence of some illegal houses and settlements, which were gradually legalised as they were occupied or demolished. The proximity to Barcelona has not only led to high urban pressure, but also to the degradation of the landscape through the creation of quarries, landfills and industries that pollute the water of the river Foix.

The parks were created in order to limit this degradation and to solve some of these problems, and they encompass all the problematic areas with the aim of gradually returning them to their original natural landscapes. For these reasons, the management of the parks poses some major challenges, as well as some safety issues for visitors, leading to restrictions on access to certain sites and activities.

In terms of tourism, the territory has two very different areas, the coast and the interior. While the coast is the main coastal area of the city of Barcelona and receives thousands of visitors on a regular basis, apart from tourists who come to stay in the coastal towns or people who have a holiday home, the inland municipalities receive much fewer tourists and only a few visitors who can enter the park from them.

According to the report on public use of the parks, which includes information on visitors to the information points and equipment, the Garraf and Olèrdola parks received 76,443 visitors in 2021 and the Foix park 4964. However, the actual number of visitors is certainly higher, as the 5 ecocounters in Garraf Park recorded 241,004 visitors in La Clota and 200,160 visitors in La Morella. This indicates that many people visit the park and carry out activities without passing by the park's information points. During the five years of implementation of the previous Charter Action Plan (excluding 2020), the number of visitors to the parks has increased, making it more relevant to implement an ecotourism strategy.

In addition, the Charter area received a much higher number of tourists (almost 2 million overnight stays in the area in 2021). As the coastal municipalities are consolidated coastal destinations, there are most likely tourists and visitors who only use the coastal areas and do not visit the park. The average length of stay of these tourists is 4.4 nights and they mostly stay in hotels (64%) and campsites (21.2%).

The majority of visitors come from Spain (including Catalans, who are probably the most numerous), followed by French, German, British and other Europeans. From outside the EU, the most frequent tourists in 2021 will be from the United States or Canada (18613) and Russia (4296).

There is also a big difference between coastal and inland municipalities in terms of tourist infrastructure. The coastal municipalities currently receive a large number of "beach and sun" tourists, but they have recently started to implement quality and sustainability certifications in order to move quickly towards less mass and more quality tourism. However, the seasonality of tourism is still very pronounced, with a reduction in bed availability to 50% in winter.

With regard to the promotion of sustainable tourism, the region has implemented several instruments, such as the Biosphere certification, which applies to the entire region, with many certified businesses as well as the municipality of Sitges; the "Citta Slow", which aims to increase well-being in the territories and includes a specific mention of tourism management in Begues, and the implementation of sustainability destination plans funded by the Next Generation funds in Sitges and Vilanova I la Geltrú.

Comments on the application from the Charter area and re-evaluation visit:
Please raise any points and issues relating to the process

The Garraf, Olèrdola and Foix Parks Territory has done a good job in maintaining the Charter process, despite the Covid-19 pandemic, which has obviously affected the implementation and periodicity of the meetings, but has not led to a loss of momentum in the firm decision to move towards the implementation of a sustainable tourism activity both inside and outside the protected areas.

The application documents were complete and clear, which helped me to prepare the visit and to write this report.

In relation to the verification visit, it was very interesting to personally see the dynamics between the stakeholders, especially between the business owners and the representatives and public bodies in the Charter. This dynamic is very collaborative and constructive and there is a genuine interest in implementing a strategy to promote sustainable tourism in the parks. In this regard, it was very interesting that they even used the verification visit as a networking and training opportunity, inviting the companies and entities to get to know each other and work together.

The visit also allowed me to see on the ground some of the actions implemented in the previous Action Plan and some of the difficulties they still face in implementing conservation and sustainable tourism.

Verifier's assessment

Please provide your overall assessment of the management of sustainable tourism and the content and delivery of the strategy and action plan in the protected area, in relation to the European Charter. Please include an overall comment on the progress of the Charter area and its partners over the past five years:

The Garraf, d'Olèrdola I del Foix Parks, Spain, have made significant progress towards sustainable tourism over the last 5 years. The commitment of all the entities involved has been remarkable, especially the commitment of the tourism businesses in the parks and throughout the territory. Also, the efforts developed in terms of sustainability of tourist activities are very important and a sign of deep commitment with sustainable tourism and ecotourism in the territory.

Main strengths: (relating to the Charter process and sustainable tourism management)

- **Interest and initiative of private companies to join the Charter:** The interest and involvement of the Charter companies in developing a differentiated tourism product within the Park is remarkable. They have already formed a sustainable tourism business association and are very active. It is also very interesting that not only the businesses inside the park are involved, but also the businesses on the coast, which already have a consolidated beach destination.
- **Proximity to a consolidated tourist destination (the coast) and to a large city such as Barcelona:** This proximity could provide visitors to the park and customers for the tourism businesses involved without major communication efforts and costs;
- **Variety and uniqueness of the tourist offer linked to the Park and to sustainability;**

- **The offer of local products and food from km 0 in the area and efforts to promote local products in unique tourist experiences (e.g. Parc a Taula).**

Main weaknesses: (relating to the Charter process and sustainable tourism management)

- **Proximity to a consolidated tourist destination (the coast) and a large city such as Barcelona:** It may also pose a risk of increasing the level of tourism in the park to a point that could exceed the capacity for safe and sustainable visitor flows;
- **Forest fire risks** - The whole park is at significant risk of forest fires and this is likely to increase with the effects of climate change. This will lead to more frequent closures of the park due to high wildfire risk. There is already an evacuation plan and forest fire protocol in place, which is quite adequate, however
- **Some degree of risk in terms of accessibility that should be managed:** Due to the orography of the area, the roads are quite narrow and many of them are sand roads, which can pose some risks, especially for access by bicycle or car if drivers are not used to this type of road.
- **There are significant differences in development and tourist activity between the coastal towns and the more inland municipalities.**

Conclusions and recommendations for the Charter area:

Please set out briefly your main conclusions and recommendations that you wish to draw to the attention of the protected area

- **Define and measure indicators of sustainability in the area and impact indicators of the Action Plan:** Although the Charter has a well-defined monitoring plan for the implementation of the Charter Action Plan, in order to understand where the Park stands in terms of sustainable tourism, it would be interesting to establish a set of impact and sustainability indicators for the Charter area that can be monitored along the implementation of the Charter Action Plan and used to inform new actions in the future.
- **Include access risks and information on accessibility conditions in communication and tourist information:** Although it is not desirable to create easy access to the whole area, especially not to sensitive areas, it would be important to consider the constraints and promote different routes for each mode of transport (pedestrian, bicycle and car) and ensure that tourists are adequately informed about the road conditions when entering the Park to avoid accidents. The Map of Accesses and Activities (MACAO) would be a good tool for this.
- **Find ways to link the interesting conservation actions being developed in the area with tourism activities:** The Park and the Municipalities are promoting very interesting nature restoration and conservation actions that could become a tourist resource, while securing funds or human resources (through volunteering) to continue and expand these efforts.
- **Ensure a link in terms of tourist activities between the coastal areas and the more inland municipalities in order to promote a better territorial connection:** While the coastal municipalities are well consolidated "beach and sun" destinations,

the more inland municipalities are still struggling to find development opportunities. The Charter could be a good tool to ensure greater territorial cohesion by promoting these municipalities and their activities from the coastal towns, while ensuring that the level of visitation is in line with the carrying capacity of these areas;

- **Improve knowledge of the visitor profile of the protected areas themselves, as distinct from the general tourist in the area:** Although there is good knowledge of the profile of tourists visiting the area, there is less information on the proportion of them who actually visit the protected areas and engage in ecotourism activities. In order to better plan communication and marketing strategies for the charter companies and the parks, it would be important to improve this knowledge.

Recommendation on re-award of the Charter:

You are asked below to give your recommendation on the re-award of the Charter. Please indicate here any clarification or qualification that you may wish to make concerning your recommendation, including any suggested conditions relating to the award.

I strongly recommend that the Charter be re-awarded to the area, as it is an excellent example of collaboration between different public bodies (Diputació de Barcelona and City Councils mainly) and also with the private sector (tourism companies and associations).

Please check one box

I recommend that the protected area be re-awarded the Charter.

I do not recommend that the protected area be re-awarded the Charter.

SECTION A – GENERAL INFORMATION

A.1 Has full and clear factual information been supplied by the Charter area in answer to sections A1 – A15 of the Application Report framework? **3**

Yes

A.2 Additional/amended information not contained in the protected area's application:

I also asked for the Map of Accesses and Organized Activities in the territory (MACAO) created within the previous Charter Period and the safety protocols in terms of forest fires and rescuing as complementary information.

A.3 Any information not available, and reasons for this:

Nothing to report

A.4 Are you satisfied that the information supplied is accurate? **3**

Yes

A.5 Are there any factual issues that might affect the eligibility of the protected area for re-award of the Charter?

No

SECTION B – Sustainable Tourism FORUM

B.1 Is there a permanent stakeholder structure, with a defined membership, that enables the protected-area authority to work with others on the development and management of tourism, including in taking decisions and implementing and reviewing the strategy?

3

Yes

Briefly describe this structure, including size and membership, frequency of meetings, responsibility, functions etc. Please identify, and distinguish between:

- ***Any Executive Committee/Working Group – e.g. responsible for delivery of the action plan***
- ***Any wider structure – e.g. enabling wider stakeholder engagement and communication***

There is an open forum that brings together all the different stakeholders in the area, and a working group that consists mainly of the bodies responsible for implementing the actions in the Charter Action Plan, as well as representatives of the public bodies (Diputació de Barcelona and municipalities) in the area that are responsible for spatial planning and tourism management.

The Charter Forum has met once a year (with a small gap in 2020 due to the pandemic) and allows all stakeholders to participate in the definition, implementation and review of the sustainable tourism strategy. 142 different people have participated at least once in the Forum and 696 contacts are directly invited to participate.

How has this forum developed or changed over the past five years (in terms of its work, membership and the stakeholders within it)?

There has been a slight increase in forum membership. The number of participants is not limited and all participants in at least one Forum are considered members of the Forum. In terms of its work, the Forum has remained similar throughout the period; each meeting of the Forum includes specific issues to be discussed and is open to contributions from any participant regarding the implementation of the Charter Action Plan. In general, the Forum always includes a briefing on the state of development of the actions in the Charter Action Plan.

B.2 Are local tourism enterprises involved?

3

Yes, that is probably one of the strengths of this Charter, the involvement of the companies is very strong and they are even pushing to get the award and to work towards sustainability in tourism. There are 34 companies in the Forum, 18 are already in Charter Part II and 10 are in the process of joining the Charter.

Please describe how the Charter area has progressed and strengthened relationships with local businesses:

The business owners were the first promoters of the Charter in the area and it was their insistence that the area started the Charter process in the first place. However, as the process has progressed, the relationship between the park and the businesses has strengthened considerably, firstly through the Forums and more recently with the implementation of Charter Part II.

Have any schemes been set up to link businesses more closely with the Charter area/Charter implementation?

Such schemes are not obligatory for re-award of the Charter

The Park has recently started to implement the Charter Part II and already counts 18 companies, with 10 more to join soon. These companies have created an Association for Sustainable Tourism, which demonstrates its commitment to the principles of the Charter and its participation in the Charter.

B.3 Has involvement of the following key groups progressed satisfactorily over the past five years?

Yes

B.4 Local government?

3

There is strong participation in the Charter by all the municipalities in the area. Even the coastal municipalities, which have a consolidated tourism based on the beach and the sun, have a continuous participation and include actions in the Charter Action Plan.

B.5 The local community? (e.g civil society bodies, interest groups etc.)?

3

Yes, there are several local associations that participate in the Charter Forum and represent local interests. These interests are also represented in the councils of the Garraf and Foix parks, so in general the local population, and more specifically the population that is more closely associated with the park, is very strong not only in the Charter but also in the management of the parks.

B.6 Conservation interests?

3

Yes, there are 10 conservation associations participating in the Forum and they represent a wide range of interests from cultural heritage to natural heritage and from more inland interests to coastal and marine conservation.

B.7 Wider (regional) bodies responsible for tourism, conservation and regional development?

2

The parks are managed by the Diputació de Barcelona, a regional body of the province of Barcelona. This body is the leader of the process and the Charter Forum counts with the participation not only of the Environment Department, but also of the Development and Tourism Departments. The forum also counts with the participation of the Consell Comarcal del Alt Penedés - Turisme, Consell Comarcal del Garraf - Node Garraf, Consorci Baix Llobregat, Mancomunitat Penedés – Garraf. However, it could be interesting to increase the involvement of the Regional Government of Catalonia (Generalitat), especially given the interest in including coastal and marine areas in the protected area..

B.8 Any other key groups (please state which), either within or outside the formal partnership structure described above, which have been actively involved? **3**

I did not identify any other groups that should be involved in the Charter Forum.

SECTION C - SUSTAINABLE TOURISM STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

PREVIOUS STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN - Implementation over the past 5 years

C.1 Overall comment on the progress of the Charter area towards excellence in sustainable tourism, bearing in mind where it started from five years ago

The territory of the Garraf, Olèrdola and Foix Parks has made good progress towards sustainable tourism and coordination between stakeholders, even in a period complicated by the Covid-19 pandemic, which created insecurity and reduced the capacity of institutions to implement their actions in the Action Plan.

Despite all these circumstances, the territory has ensured the continuity of an active process and a very good implementation of the Action Plan.

In terms of environmental sustainability, the territory had already taken some steps before the start of the Charter process, namely with the inclusion of the Costa de Barcelona destination in the Biosphere certification, in which the municipality of Sitges and many companies, mostly related to coastal tourism, participated. The Charter process has made it possible to involve companies located further inland in the parks and in more rural areas that do not receive high flows of tourists, and to establish closer contact with coastal companies, offering them training and support on their way to promoting more sustainable tourism.

In terms of social and economic development, the Park and other stakeholders had already developed some projects (such as Parc a Taula), but the Charter has allowed for better coordination between entities to ensure more efficient and effective work in this regard.

In this five-year period, I would say that the greatest efforts and best results have been in terms of coordination, involvement of local businesses and training, which will provide a good basis for the next Charter Action Plan.

C.2 Could all of the planned actions be implemented? If not, how much of the action plan was implemented (estimate)?

No, only 75% of the actions were completed and 16% were started but not completed. However, considering that the Charter period includes the Covid-19 pandemic, this is a good implementation rate. In total, the action plan contained 32 actions, 1 was abandoned during the process and only 2 actions were not implemented at all.

C.3 Main reason for the Charter area not being able to complete the full programme (if applicable)?

The main reason for the difficulties in implementing the action plan, apart from the pandemic, was the availability of human resources, due to the nonreplacement of officers on maternity leave and the increase in responsibilities of Sofia Paricio, who is the main person responsible for implementing the Charter in the territory.

In any case, and in view of the results and commitment observed during the visit, I do not believe that these problems have had a significant impact.

C.4 What are the most positive achievements in your view?

In my opinion, the most positive results have been:

- The involvement of local businesses and the creation of a sustainable tourism association that is really active and can be a driving force for the implementation of the Charter;
- The gathering of conservation actions promoted by different entities and their inclusion in the Charter Plan, which recognises that conservation can be a tourism resource and creates a link between conservation and sustainable tourism, thus promoting real ecotourism;
- The will and the effort to include coastal areas in the protected area in order to increase conservation and nature protection actions in these areas;

- The beginning of the identification and organisation of the tourist and recreational activities that take place in the Park and the definition of a management plan that includes the associations related to these activities;
- To work on the compatibility of the different sustainability labels in the area, namely the Biosphere label with the Charter, and to define and disseminate good practices for the development of most of the activities that take place in the Park and even in coastal and marine areas outside the Park;
- The adaptation and improvement of the Diputacion de Barcelona's volunteering, environmental education and visitor programmes (such as "Parc a taula"), which provide structural support for the implementation of the Charter's Action Plan and for the promotion of the area as a tourist destination;
- The launch of Part II of the Charter, with the involvement of tourism companies in the Charter, with a good level of interest from tourism companies and all the training in sustainability carried out for these companies.
- Networking with other parks in Catalonia, within the Catalan Charter network and with other Charter parks in Europe by participating in Charter meetings;
- Encouraging visits by public transport, by providing information on how to visit the park by public transport;
- Improving the information available on visitors and their needs.

C.5 What are the main challenges still faced?

The Garraf, Olèrdola and Foix area still faces some challenges in terms of promoting sustainable tourism, such as:

- Climate change with increased drought and fire risks will be a constant challenge that should be taken into account in any planning of the Park;
- The concern for the safety of visitors by taking into account the accessibility conditions and the state of the roads in the park and by communicating this to the visitors;
- Improving knowledge of visitors to the park, their flows and needs, in order to improve planning of public use and resources.
- Improve the interaction between the public and private sectors in the implementation of actions in the area, so that they can be synergistic and the private sector can collaborate and benefit from public initiatives (for example, by collaborating in volunteer activities or offering educational activities to their guests, or even by co-creating activities that can be included in the activity programme);
- Communicating the park as a sustainable tourism destination and the values of the park to visitors, perhaps starting with potential visitors closer to Barcelona;
- The creation of complete ecotourism products for the area, which can involve several businesses and be offered to visitors and tourists;
- The extension of the protected area in the coastal and marine areas. This is a challenge both in terms of obtaining the area to be protected and in terms of ensuring the adequate management of a larger area, especially given the specificities of management in the marine environment.

C.6 Has the Charter area monitored the results of its action plan over the past five years? 3

Yes, there has been an annual monitoring that has been presented and approved by the Charter Forum.

C.7 Have the specific recommendations made by the verifier and Evaluation Committee at original evaluation 5 years ago been addressed?

3

Please list the recommendations and give a score for each:

Need to manage the Marine Protected Areas 2

This is a complex issue, as the responsibility for the MPAs lies with the Catalan Regional Government (Generalitat). The extension of the responsibility of the Deputation de Barcelona for the MPAs of this territory is under study, as it will require the transfer of competence and also the allocation of resources to deal with a different type of protected area to be managed.

However, during the last period of the Charter, an important action was taken to promote training in sustainable tourism for coastal and marine tourism operators and to involve them in Part II of the Charter.

Municipalities, which are also responsible for some coastal areas, are also doing very interesting work in the restoration of coastal ecosystems, and for the next five years they have included an action to promote the sharing of knowledge in order to promote even more restoration actions.

Finally, the creation of a coastal working group with many relevant stakeholders is another important step towards improving the management of marine protected areas.

Boost the participation of tourism enterprises in the Charter 3

This recommendation has been taken so seriously that the participation of businesses in the Charter is currently very enthusiastic and they are the first promoters of the process.

The implementation of Part II of the Charter has already allowed to count with 18 Charter companies and entities and they have another 10 companies in the process of accession.

These companies have also created an Association of Sustainable Tourism Enterprises, which will also contribute to the implementation of the Charter Action Plan.

Coordinate the different environmental labels in the territory 3

The Charter Action Plan included an action to work on the coordination of all environmental labels in the territory (Action 1.1.2). This action led to the creation of a coordination document between the Biosphere label and the CETS Part II and to the creation of a validation system for companies that want to have both labels, in order to reduce their workload for double certification. The Diputació de Barcelona has an official in charge of this cross-validation.

C.8 Were the envisaged financial resources available for the implementation, and where they sufficient?

Yes

C.9 Have there been changes in staffing levels, both in the protected area generally and in the staff dealing with tourism issues, over the past five years? Has the level of staffing affected implementation of the action plan?

There have been a number of changes in staffing levels which have caused some difficulties in the implementation of the Charter Action Plan, mainly due to maternity leave which has not been filled by other staff.

There have also been changes in the responsibilities of some of the staff involved, in particular Sofia Paricio, who has been the main face and motor of the process and who has taken on responsibility for public use in the entire network of protected areas under the jurisdiction of the Diputació de Barcelona. Despite this change, she has remained linked to the Charter process in Garraf, Olèrdola and Foix and is still the main contact with the companies. She has managed to ensure that the work with companies and other stakeholders is compatible with her new responsibilities.

In conclusion, and despite all these changes, she has managed to ensure a reasonable level of work and a continuous effort to keep the process active and the implementation in place.

NEW STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN - Plans for the next five years

Revision of strategy, new action plan

C.10 Has the tourism strategy been revised for the next five years? 3

Yes, there is a new strategy with the following objectives (Translated from: ESTRATÉGIA CARTA EUROPEA DE TURISMO SOSTENIBLE 2023 – 2027)

1. PLANNING AND MANAGING PUBLIC USE, INFRASTRUCTURES AND PUBLIC FACILITIES FOR VISITOR SERVICES.

Specific objectives:

- To know and regulate the influx of visitors and their activities in the protected natural areas.
- To make uses and activities within the CETS area compatible.
- Improve and manage facilities, routes and spaces for the visit.
- Generate the necessary conditions for inclusive and universal tourism.
- Ensure good visitor services
- To monitor and characterise tourism in the CETS area.

2. TO PROMOTE DECARBONISATION AND THE EFFICIENT USE OF RESOURCES IN TOURISM ACTIVITY.

Specific objectives:

- Promote the change towards sustainable mobility within the territory of the CETS Garraf, Olèrdola and Foix area.
- Promote sustainable municipal management in the land and coastal areas.
- Promote and accredit the sustainability of establishments, activities and services.

3. STRUCTURING AND DISTINGUISHING THE ECOTOURISM OFFER OF THE CETS GARRAF, OLÈRDOLA AND FOIX AREA

Specific objectives :

- To structure a 4D, innovative and high quality tourist offer.
- Incorporate and promote new product typologies with potential in the territory, health tourism and mindful travel.
- To support local commerce and production.
- Coordinate a promotion and dissemination clearly adjusted to the visitor profile we want to attract.
- Organise a specific training offer to improve the competitiveness and sustainability of companies in the tourism sector.

4. TO CONTRIBUTE TO AND PARTICIPATE IN THE CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION OF THE NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE IN A CONTEXT OF CLIMATE CHANGE.

Specific objectives:

- To educate and raise awareness among the local population and visitors about the values of the territory and the differential features of the CETS Garraf, Olèrdola and Foix area.
- Involve the local population and visitors in the conservation, protection and improvement of the natural and cultural heritage (volunteering, land stewardship, create pay-back visitor systems).
- Promote research and transmit knowledge (citizen science, scientific studies, information gathering, etc.).
- Plan and manage risks linked to climate change.

5. ESTABLISHING AN EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE MODEL BASED ON PUBLIC-PRIVATE COOPERATION

Specific objectives:

- To define an effective organisational structure for the management of the CETS
- Ensure a broad consensus among tourism stakeholders
- Strengthen public-private collaboration.
- Define adequate internal communication tools and channels for tourism management.
- Share knowledge/experiences and cooperate with other CETS territories.
- Assess the achievement of objectives within the CETS framework for continuous improvement.

C.11 Has a new action plan been prepared for the Charter area and its partners? 3

Yes, there is an Action Plan that includes 37 actions of the responsibility of all the main stakeholders and structured in 5 main strategic lines defined in the strategy. The actions in the action plan are the following (Translated from PLAN DE ACCIÓN CARTA EUROPEA DE TURISMO SOSTENIBLE GARRAF, OLÈRDOLA Y FOIX 2023 – 2027)

Strategic line 1: PLANNING AND MANAGING PUBLIC USE, INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC FACILITIES FOR VISITOR SERVICES

- 1.1. DISSEMINATING GOOD PRACTICES IN ACTIVITIES ORGANISED IN THE PROTECTED NATURAL AREAS OF GARRAF, OLÈRDOLA AND FOIX
- 1.2. COASTAL ENVIRONMENT FORUM
- 1.3. TOURISM FOR ALL IN THE GARRAF, OLÈRDOLA AND FOIX NATURAL PARKS
- 1.4. COORDINATING AND BOOSTING VISITOR SERVICES AT INFORMATION CENTRES AND POINTS OF INFORMATION
- 1.5. EXPAND THE VISITOR INFORMATION SERVICE
- 1.6. TO VISUALISE THE NETWORK OF TRAILS IN THE AREA OF CETS GARRAF, OLÈRDOLA AND FOIX
- 1.7. JOINTLY ANALYSE DATA ON VISITOR PROFILES AND VISITOR NUMBERS IN THE AREA OF CETS GARRAF, OLÈRDOLA AND FOIX
- 1.8. AGREEING ON AND IMPLEMENTING THE VISITOR SURVEY FOR THE CETS GARRAF, OLÈRDOLA AND FOIX AREA
- 1.9. AUGMENTED REALITY FOR THE INTERPRETATION OF THE MOUTH OF THE FOIX RIVER

Strategic line 2: PROMOTING THE DECARBONIZATION AND EFFICIENT USE OF RESOURCES IN TOURIST ACTIVITY

- 2.1. INVENTORY THE NETWORK OF CYCLE PATHS AND SERVICES ASSOCIATED WITH CYCLING IN THE CETS GARRAF, OLÈRDOLA AND FOIX AREA
- 2.2. PROMOTE THE USE OF THE PUBLIC TRANSPORT NETWORK AND ITS CONNECTION WITH ROUTES AND ITINERARIES IN THE CETS GARRAF, OLÈRDOLA AND FOIX AREA.
- 2.3. TO PROMOTE THE BIOECONOMY OF FOREST RESOURCES
- 2.4. DISSEMINATING AND REWARDING GOOD PRACTICES IN TOURIST ACTIVITY

- 2.5. TO ADHERE TO AND RENEW THE COMMITMENT OF COMPANIES AND ORGANISATIONS IN CETS GARRAF, OLÈRDOLA AND FOIX
- 2.6. TO INITIATE THE ADHESION OF TRAVEL AGENCIES TO CETS GARRAF, OLÈRDOLA AND FOIX
- 2.7. SHARING ACTIONS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE SITGES BIOSPHERE LABEL

Strategic line 3: STRUCTURING AND DISTRIBUTING THE ECOTOURISM OFFER OF THE CETS GARRAF, OLÈRDOLA AND FOIX AREA

- 3.1. INVENTORYING THE ECOTOURISM OFFER IN THE CETS GARRAF, OLÈRDOLA AND FOIX AREA
- 3.2. CREATING A JOINT AND DISTINCTIVE TOURIST OFFER OF THE CETS GARRAF, OLÈRDOLA AND FOIX AREA
- 3.3. PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES TO DISCOVER THE NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE OF THE AREA OF CETS GARRAF, OLÈRDOLA AND FOIX
- 3.4. BIRDWATCHING TOURISM MARKETING PLAN
- 3.5. COMMUNICATION PLAN
- 3.6. CREATION OF THE TOURIST MAP OF THE CETS GARRAF, OLÈRDOLA AND FOIX AREA
- 3.7. CETS TRAINING FOR PROFESSIONALS AND PRESCRIBERS OF THE TERRITORY
- 3.8. TO ENHANCE THE GASTRONOMY OF THE CETS AREA AS A TOURIST ATTRACTION RESOURCE
- 3.9. GAMIFICATION
- 3.10. STRUCTURING AND DISTINGUISHING THE ECOTOURISM OFFER OF THE CETS GARRAF, OLÈRDOLA AND FOIX AREA

Strategic line 4: CONTRIBUTE AND PARTICIPATE IN THE CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION OF NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE IN A CLIMATE CHANGE CONTEXT

- 4.1. REVIEW AND CREATE RESOURCES TO INFORM AND RAISE AWARENESS OF NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE VISITORS
- 4.2. TRANSFERRING KNOWLEDGE IN THE MANAGEMENT AND CONSERVATION OF THE NATURAL VALUES OF BEACHES AND DUNE SYSTEMS
- 4.3. TRAINING AND DISSEMINATION OF GOOD PRACTICES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ACTIVITIES IN THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT.
- 4.4. PLAN FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND VOLUNTEERING IN THE GARRAF, OLÈRDOLA AND FOIX PARKS
- 4.5. DRY STONE WALLS AS A TOOL FOR ADAPTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE
- 4.6. RECOVERING THE RIVERSIDE WOODLAND AT THE MOUTH OF THE RIVER FOIX FOR THE VISITATION OF THE RIVER FOIX

Strategic line 5: ESTABLISHING AN EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE MODEL BASED ON PUBLIC-PRIVATE COOPERATION

- 5.1. ORGANISATION OF THEMATIC WORKSPACES
- 5.2. PARTICIPATION AND GOVERNANCE OF THE CHARTER GARRAF, OLÈRDOLA AND FOIX
- 5.3. NETWORKING OF THE CHARTER
- 5.4. MONITORING AND ANNUAL EVALUATION OF THE CHARTER
- 5.5. RENEWAL OF THE CHARTER FOR GARRAF, OLÈRDOLA AND FOIX PARKS

(Source: Strategy and Action Plan)

C.12 How are the strategy and new action plan presented (in terms of documents)? Please comment briefly on the strategy/plan documentation (e.g. level of detail etc.)

The Strategy and Action Plan are presented in two separated documents related by the 5 strategic lines defined.

C.13 How does the tourism strategy relate to the protected-area management plan?

The Strategy and Action Plan are complementary the protected-area management plan. The objectives and actions defined for the Charter fall within the scope of all the conservation and public use conditions and objectives defined in the management plan.

C.14 Are there any apparent contradictions between tourism and protected-area management objectives and actions?

No

C.15 What process has been used to review/revise the strategy and develop the new action plan and how have local stakeholders been involved?

Please describe briefly the process, making reference to the role of the stakeholder structures described under Question B.1, as appropriate.

The process was launched in early 2022. The working group met on the 18th of March and the kick-off of the process took place on the 31st of March 2022 in the forum that approved the reapplication for the Charter Award. In this forum, they carried out a questionnaire to the stakeholders on their perception of the implementation, successes and shortcomings of the Charter in the last 5 years, based on the Charter Principles, in order to identify the strategic lines for the next 5 years.

Between March and April, the working group worked on the definition of the strategy and on the 9th, 10th and 11th of May they held thematic discussion groups to discuss important topics such as: conservation, public use, communication, coastal protection and business needs.

After that, each entity in the working group started to define its actions and between June and September they worked to define the structure of the action plan. To this end, they held a meeting of the Working Group on 13 June, a working session within the public sector only on 20 July, bilateral meetings with entities identified as relevant during the discussion process and a final meeting of the Working Group on 27 September to finalise the Action Plan.

The Action Plan was endorsed by the Charter Forum on 10 November and from then until the end of the year, work was undertaken to finalise the application dossier and documents.

C.16 Was there wider consultation with local tourism enterprises in preparing the revised strategy/action plan?

Yes, they carried out an online survey that gathered the opinions of 40 people, including local businesses, and counted 51 participants in the forum. In addition, the territory includes businesses and the local association for sustainable tourism in the working group, so we can say that local businesses have been deeply involved.

C.17 Was there wider consultation with the local community and other interests/stakeholders in preparing the revised strategy/action plan?

Yes, either through their representatives in the working group in which all the municipalities participated and through their presence in the forums and the possibility of responding to the public survey carried out at the beginning of the process..

C.18 Has there been any further assessment of natural and cultural resources, their sensitivities (capacity) and opportunities for tourism? 3

Yes, many of the results of the previous Charter period made it possible to have better information on the natural and cultural resources of the territory and their potential for tourism, namely the Map of Activities and Trails (MACAO).

C.19 Has there been any further assessment of visitor patterns and needs? 2

Yes, they included this issue in the survey carried out at the beginning of the process, but also during the implementation of the previous Charter Action Plan, they improved the knowledge of visitor patterns and needs, especially through the information collected by the Diputació de Barcelona Tourism Department and the "Labtourisme" (Tourism Observatory). However, it would be interesting to obtain more detailed information on the visitors who actually visit the park and their perceptions, since the area includes very touristy coastal areas, which could give a certain bias to the results.

C.20 Has there been any further assessment of future visitor markets offering potential? 3

Yes, by the Tourism Observatory "Labtourisme" of the Diputació de Barcelona.

Implementation

C.21 Does the new action plan include an indication of phasing/staging of action over time? 3

Yes. Each action has a table summarising the objectives, the responsible entities and agents to be involved, the foreseen budget and the timetable for its execution.

C.22 Does the action plan indicate the relevant stakeholders or partners for each action? 3

Yes. Each action has a table summarising the objectives, the responsible entities and agents to be involved, the foreseen budget and the timetable for its execution

C.23 What is the approximate size of the budget that the protected-area authority is devoting to the implementation of the new action plan per year, excluding staff costs?

The foreseen budget of the implementation of the Charter Action Plan is 1.754.747,22€ and 12.667 hours of staff, of which the Park and the *Diputació de Barcelona*, which is the entity that manages the parks, will provide 376139,07€ and 5335 hours of staff.

C.24 What is this approximately as a percentage of its total budget?

It is difficult to define an specific percentage, because it is not possible to estimate the percentage of the staff cost that is provided for the implementation of the Charter Action Plan. However, we can consider it to be a significant amount regarding the total hours accounted.

Considering the annual budget of the parks in 2021 (3 376 703,24€) as the parks annual normal budget, the foreseen of the Charter Action Plan would represent around 2 to 3% of the park total budget.

C.25 Have funds been provided (or are they being sought) from other sources?

Yes, a relevant amount of the Charter Action Plan will be funded by municipalities and other Charter partners, namely

- Begues City Council - ERDF (action 1.3 & 1.5) - 541.287,21 €.
- AEI grant fromm the Ministry of Industry) (action 3.10) - 100.000,00 €.
- Cubelles Town Council (actions 1.9 & 4.6) - 95.594,18 €.
- Town councils of Vilanova i la Geltrú and Sitges (action 1.5) - 37.500,00 €
- Charter companies (actions 2.5 & 2.6) - 22.393,47 €
- Parc a Taula" programme for Garraf, Olèrdola and Foix parks (actions 3.4 & 3.9) - 10.500,00 €
- Subsidies for training (action 4.3) - 7.500,00 €
- Other (action 4.2) - 2.000,00 €
- TOTAL - 1.384.108,15 €

(Source: Charter application form)

C.26 Do you judge the level of funding already secured/applied for to be sufficient to meet the action proposed?

3

Yes, the amount and the clear definition of the sources of the funding seem to be adequate for the proposed actions.

C.27 What is the staffing that the protected-area authority is devoting to the implementation of the action plan?

The park is devoting 5335 hours of staff

C.28 Is staffing being provided from other sources?

Yes, 7 332 hours of staff are being provided by the other Charter Partners, mostly Town councils but also touristic companies.

C.29 Do you believe the action proposed can be implemented with this level of staffing?

Yes

C.30 Is there a good indication of commitment from partners/stakeholders to implementing the new action plan? **3**

Yes, all interviewed stakeholder seemed fully committed to the implementation of the Charter Action Plan.

C.31 Does the Charter area have any formal arrangements with partners for implementation of this action plan?

Yes, there is a formal arrangement of all the City councils in the territory committing to the participation in the Charter process that was signed in the previous period and is still active. Additionally, the park has bilateral accords with some entities and within the Charter part II, the park has signed

C.32 Has a process been put in place for monitoring and reporting on progress with the implementation of the Action Plan? 3

Yes, the Charter Action Plan has a set of indicators of execution defined for each action.

C.33 Have indicators been identified for the impact/success of the strategy and action plan, including how these will be monitored? 2

There are indicators related to the implementation of each action in the Charter Action Plan and some of them can provide information on the impact of the actions. However, it would be interesting to define a broader set of impact and sustainability indicators in order to better understand the impact of the implementation of the Charter Action Plan on achieving sustainability of tourism activities in the territory.

SECTION D – ADDRESSING THE KEY TOPICS

Please indicate below:

- [A] The level of current activity
- [B] Progress over past five years – including in implementing of the previous action plan
- [C] Level of planned activity in the new plan

Please provide brief comments of explanation, as indicated in at the start of this form.

D1 Protecting valuable landscapes, biodiversity and cultural heritage

D1.1 Influencing land use planning and the control of potentially damaging developments A 3 B 3 C 3

Unlike many protected areas, the protected areas of Garraf, Olèrdola and Foix were created to stop the uncontrolled urban development that was taking place in the area in the 1980s, and since the creation of the protected areas, this development has been halted and in some cases reversed.

Although the Park Authority has had to deal with the consequences of the previous development (water pollution, the existence of a landfill in the karst massif and some initially illegal urbanisations that have been legalised), no new damaging developments have taken place or are likely to take place.

There are even some projects, both inside and outside the protected area, for the renaturalisation of previously urbanised areas. An example of this remarkable effort is the restoration of dunes and riverine habitats carried out by the municipalities of Castelldefells and Cubelles.

There is no specific action in the Charter Action Plan in this area, as it is not considered a problem and all the municipalities agree. However, there are actions to share knowledge in order to improve the restoration of coastal habitats (Action 4.2).

D1.2 Influencing the location, type and design of tourism developments

A 2 B 3 C 3

Within the park, any tourism development is subject to the park's management plan. Outside the park, the municipalities also seem committed to ensuring that tourism development is sustainable and does not harm the environment.

Probably the most threatened areas are the coastal areas, which are already a consolidated beach destination with a large influx of tourists from Barcelona. The extension of the park to include coastal and marine areas and the discussion on the sustainability of the coastal environment (Action 1.2) would certainly help to further ensure that harmful tourism developments do not take place in coastal areas.

In addition, there is a significant effort by the City Council to restore dunes and coastal habitats, which will be expanded in the next period (Action 4.2).

D1.3 Managing visitor flows, activities and behaviour in sensitive areas and sites

A 2 B 3 C 3

In the previous Charter Plan, significant measures were taken to monitor and influence visitor flows in the park and to protect sensitive areas. The creation of a map of routes for organised activities in the park (MACAO) and the promotion of various rules and good practices for activities such as climbing and fishing will contribute to this. Several counters and a counting methodology have also been installed to improve information on the number of visitors to the park.

This action should be extended to marine and coastal areas, and the extension of the park and the creation of a forum to discuss coastal issues (Action 1.2) will contribute to this. In addition, several actions in the new Action Plan will contribute to improving the management of visitor flows, namely the study of the connection and coordination of the Map of Trails for Organised Activities in the Park (MACAO) with the municipalities to promote walking and cycling visits (Actions 1.6 and 2.1), the better analysis of the visitor profile and flows (Actions 1.7 and 1.8) and the training of tourism businesses in sustainability (Action 3.8).

D2 Supporting conservation through tourism

D2.1 Encouraging visitors and tourism businesses to support conservation, through donations, volunteering and other activity A **2** B **3** C **2**

The parks have a consolidated programme of environmental education and volunteer activities that can be linked to tourism businesses. Some work in this area was carried out in the previous Action Plan, involving tourism businesses mainly through their participation in Charter Part II, with great success.

In the present Action Plan, there are three actions that could be relevant to this objective: the continuation of Charter Part II and the involvement of new businesses (Action 2.5), the start of the implementation of Charter Part III (Action 2.6) and the continuation of the environmental education and volunteering plan linked to the tourism businesses involved in the Charter (Action 4.4).

D2.2 Using revenues obtained from tourism-related activity to support conservation A **1** B **2** C **1**

In the previous Action Plan, there was an interesting action to redirect the tourist tax that already exists in Barcelona to the conservation of the park, but this action could not be completed due to legal restrictions and has been dropped in the new plan. In the previous Charter Action Plan, there was also an action to create a prize to recognise companies that collaborate in nature conservation.

This prize required the implementation of Charter Part II and the association of companies, so it has been moved to the new Action Plan (Action 2.4) and will most likely be implemented by extending existing prizes such as the "Parc à Taula" prizes and by encouraging companies to participate in the Star Awards. This action could indirectly promote the involvement of tourism businesses in conservation actions.

D2.3 Establishing, supporting and promoting tourism-related investments, projects and activities that help to conserve the natural and cultural heritage A **2** B **3** C **3**

In the Charter territory of the Garraf, Olèrdola and Foix Parks, there have been some very interesting initiatives in terms of nature restoration linked to tourism use, such as the restoration of the Foix estuary in Cubelles and the restoration of the dunes in Castelldefels. Both of these projects are ongoing and are compatible with the tourist use of the sites. The new Action Plan includes an action to extend this dune restoration to other municipalities in the territory (Action 4.2) by sharing knowledge and good practice.

Although the marine area of the territory is not yet a protected area, the Diputació de Barcelona (which manages the Garraf, Olèrdola and Foix parks) is analysing the possibility of extending the parks to include the marine area, together with the Government of Catalonia.

In any case, from the first action plan of the Charter. Although the coastal area in the park is reduced and the marine area is not managed by the park, the Charter Action Plan included and includes for the next period actions to improve the sustainability of marine areas and includes very interesting restoration actions in coastal areas.

Another very important action in terms of nature conservation is the fight against the threat of forest fires. This threat is very important in Mediterranean forests and is predicted to increase in the future due to climate change. The Park Authority and several other partners are putting in place interesting measures to reduce the risk and impact of forest fires. These range from a safety plan, which establishes risk levels and prohibits access to the park at higher risk levels and certain uses such as barbecues and lighting fires at lower risk levels, to forestry measures and innovative actions to reduce the impact if a fire does break out. These actions include the removal of dead wood to reduce the amount of combustible material in the area, the opening of firebreaks and the use of traditional stone walls to reduce the impact of forest fires and to help mitigate the effects of drought, also due to climate change (Action 4.5).

D3 Reducing carbon footprint, pollution and wasteful resource use

D3.1 Working with tourism businesses to improve environmental management, including use of energy and water, waste management, and noise and light pollution A 2 B 2 C 2

In general, the tourism businesses in the Garraf, Olèrdola and Foix parks have a good level of sustainability. However, the first Charter Action Plan included several actions to improve selective waste collection in tourism activities (3.1.1) and in urban areas (3.1.2). There was also an action in the previous Charter Action Plan to promote the implementation of sustainable energy action plans in the territory (3.2.1), based on the Agreement of Municipalities for Sustainable Energy. These actions were initiated in the previous action plan and will be completed in the next one, although they are not included as specific actions in the plan. In addition, and with regard to tourism businesses, significant efforts have been made to coordinate sustainability awards in the territory, thus encouraging businesses to comply by simplifying the process.

In the Charter Action Plan (2023 - 2027), the strategy will focus on the companies that adhere to the Charter Part II by increasing the number of companies (Action 2.5), including travel agencies (Action 2.6) and promoting awards and recognition for those companies with outstanding practices (Action 2.4). In addition, as the Diputació de Barcelona also promotes Biosphere certification to improve the sustainability of tourism, the Charter will also encourage other municipalities to apply (Action 2.7). The main objective is to get all municipalities to reach the Gold level, as Sitges has done.

The parks are also promoting the circular use of wood removed in forest fire prevention activities as pellets for heating in winter (Action 2.3).

D3.2 Promoting the use of public transport and other alternatives to cars

A 2 B 3 C 3

Like most protected areas, the Garraf, Olèrdola and Foix parks are difficult to visit by public transport because of the small population actually living in the park and the fact that the number of visitors is not large or continuous. However, the coastal villages have good access by public transport and this has been used to promote the use of public transport to access the parks.

In the last five years there has been a significant effort to promote the use of public transport to visit the parks. The Diputació de Barcelona has produced information leaflets to promote visits to the park by public transport, linking it to the walking and cycling routes in the park.

In the new Charter Action Plan, they will continue to promote visits to the park by public transport (Action 2.2) and improve cycling routes to promote cycling visits (Action 2.1).

D4 Providing safe access, quality facilities and special experiences of the protected area, available for all visitors

D4.1 Providing a wide range of access opportunities, with attention to safety and risk management A 2 B 3 C 3

The parks of Garraf, Olèrdola and Foix offer various possibilities for ecotourism, which includes a wide range of activities, from walking and cycling to astronomy and cultural visits. The park is also used for sports by the local population, which also promotes the importance of the parks in promoting human health.

The creation of a Map of Tourist Activities in the Park (MACAO) is a very good first step in inventorying and organising these activities and can be a good source of information for the creation of larger visitor programmes and ecotourism products. The definition of good practices and leaflets with advice for these activities also helps to increase safety and risk management when participating in these activities.

In terms of safety, the park's management carries out a series of actions to ensure the reduction of the main potential risks for visitors, mainly by closing the park during periods of high fire risk, ensuring the control of fauna species that can pose a risk to health, and ensuring that visitors are informed of risks and safety measures in risky routes. The park also has a risk management and emergency plan that has been revised and improved over the last five years to include more points and ensure the best action in the event of an emergency.

For the next five years, the Charter Action Plan includes actions that build on previous work and create more structural products. These include continuing the inventory of ecotourism activities (Action 3.1), creating and inventorying routes and resources for cyclotourism in the park (Action 2.1) and promoting the creation of a birdwatching offer (Action 3.4). Significant efforts are also planned to create and promote ecotourism products involving businesses and the Park (actions 3.2, 3.3 and 3.10).

Finally, the new Charter Action Plan includes an innovative initiative to combine new technologies and ecotourism by promoting the gamification of the park visit (Action 3.9). The aim of this action is to create a series of virtual characters that can be found at points of interest in the park, providing information about the area being visited and proposing challenges for participants to earn points. This initiative could be extended to other parks managed by the Diputació de Barcelona and could be a very interesting initiative to involve the younger generations in discovering and taking an interest in nature. There is also an action to use augmented reality to discover the Foix estuary (Action 1.9). This offer will complement the one already existing in Vilanova I la Geltrú, which has already developed several games to discover the cultural heritage of the town.

D4.2 Improving the quality of visitor facilities and services

A 2 B 2 C 2

With regard to private and municipal facilities and services for tourists, important efforts have been made to promote their participation and improvement through the implementation of Part II of the Charter. The Park also has interesting facilities such as the Astronomical Observatory and some traditional houses, which are currently used for educational activities and stays for school children. These spaces are managed by private companies that can also comply with the Charter Part II, which is considered as an advantage in the punctuation to be awarded the management of the spaces.

The parks have also made an effort to improve information facilities and train staff to provide useful information to visitors. During the last charter period, they have promoted the installation of new information points in partnership with the municipalities.

On the other hand, some of the information panels and small facilities are a little dilapidated and would benefit from some maintenance, which is included in the Public Use Plan and will certainly be improved in the short term.

For the next Charter period, the creation of a tourist map of the parks (Action 3.6) will certainly contribute to improving the information provided to visitors and, within the Public Use Plan of the parks, there will also be other actions that will improve the services and facilities of the park.

D4.3 Providing visitors with specific tourism offers which involve discovery, interpretation and appreciation of the area's special natural and cultural heritage

A 2 B 2 C 3

During the first period of implementation of the Charter, the Park focused on identifying and mapping the activities taking place in the Park and providing good practices and rules to ensure safety and environmental protection in their development. The focus was also on involving the companies in the Charter and starting to build a good working relationship with them. This work led to the creation of an Association of Sustainable Tourism Enterprises linked to the implementation of Part II of the Charter. The municipalities, on the other hand, were already promoting interesting offers related to cultural heritage.

This work has created a very good basis for coordinating businesses and promoting ecotourism in the parks, even though the creation of ecotourism packages has not yet begun.

For the new Charter Action Plan, the stakeholders have proposed a series of actions aimed at creating an organised ecotourism product of cyclotourism (action 2.1) and birdwatching (action 3.4) and promoting the co-creation with local businesses of products and activities that can be promoted as ecotourism in the Garraf, Olérdola and Foix Parks (action 3.2).

The Diputació de Barcelona, which manages the park, already has a very interesting programme of activities called "Passejades guiades", which take place throughout the year in the park and which will be continued and expanded (Action 3.3). These activities are also promoted in conjunction with the gastronomic offer in the "Parc à taula" programme, and this action will also be expanded and promoted during the next Charter period (Action 3.8).

D4.4 Providing facilities and information for visitors with special needs

A 2 B 3 C 2

The parks have a number of facilities and activities adapted to visitors with special needs, such as the botanical trail at La Pletá (Garraf Park Information Centre), which is accessible to wheelchair users and provides information in Braille. In fact, the Garraf Park is part of the Catalan Network of Sites for Inclusive Tourism.

The "Passejades guiades" programme also includes inclusive activities, and the environmental education programmes "Viu el Parc" and "Coneguem els nostres parcs" provide materials and adapt activities to ensure the inclusion of all children in the activities. And the Diputació de Barcelona can provide accessible equipment such as joelletes, guides in Braille, etc. to groups that request it.

There are also two adapted beaches in the area, in Sitges and Cubelles.

In the new Charter Action Plan, there is an action that brings together all the measures to promote accessibility for visitors with special needs and to promote the parks as tourism for all (Action 1.3). For example, there are prospects of developing an adapted route in Foix Park, which was not included in the Charter Action Plan.

D5 Effectively communicating the area to visitors

D5.1 Ensuring that marketing materials and activities promote the area effectively and responsibly

A 2 B 3 C 3

The territory of the Garraf, Olèrdola and Foix Parks has several different institutions that work to promote tourism. In addition to the Diputació de Barcelona, the Consells

Comarcals of Garraf, Baix Llobregat and Penedés and the municipalities have their own communication strategies for the areas they cover. This can lead to confusing and fragmented information about the parks and the rest of the territory, which is difficult to organise and coordinate.

During the first Charter period, the work with the municipalities and the Consells Comarcals was focused on building trust and starting to work together, so it was not considered appropriate to start discussing the communication of the territory. Instead, the Park Authority has focused on organising information within the Diputacion de Barcelona, since the tourism department is different from the protected areas department. This internal work has led to a better tourist communication of the Chartered Parks, with a specific website (<https://parcs.diba.cat/es/web/turisme-sostenible-als-espais-naturals>).

Over the next five years, these efforts will be extended to the rest of the Charter stakeholders, with the aim of creating a communication plan for the Charter area, involving the municipalities and the Consells Comarcals (Action 3.6), and of creating a database of interpretative information that can be used by all stakeholders to promote visits to the parks (Action 4.1). These two actions will be coordinated.

D5.2 Providing good quality and effective visitor information and interpretation

A 2 B 3 C 3

The parks of Garraf, Olèrdola and Foix have a good network of information points, coordinated with the municipalities and expanded with the support of the companies in Charter Part II. In addition, during the first period of the Charter, they proposed an action to reorganise internally the networks of information points under the responsibility of the Diputació de Barcelona. This internal organisation will be extended to the other information points under the responsibility of the municipalities and the consells comarcals, in order to create a common information strategy and ensure coordination between all stakeholders (actions 1.4 and 1.5).

The aim is also to create a database of information that can be used to promote the territory and provide accurate information to visitors (actions 4.1 and 4.2).

D5.3 Ensuring that tourism businesses and other local stakeholders are well informed about the area and provide relevant and accurate information to visitors

A 2 B 3 C 3

The training of tourism businesses and staff has been one of the main actions carried out during the first period of implementation of the Charter in the territory. Training has been provided for the staff of the information points and for the owners and employees of the tourism businesses that have signed up to Part II of the Charter.

In addition, the Diputació de Barcelona has made an important effort to improve the online information about the parks.

A very interesting action that has taken place in this regard is the organisation of a monthly meeting - training of park staff, stakeholders and tourism companies, which

includes a theme related to the park and a visit to a company. This is a very good initiative to promote knowledge of the Park's tourism offer. Even during the verification visit, the business owners were invited to visit the Astronomical Observatory and I saw how this led to the development of interesting networking and business ideas.

D5.4 Providing specific information and interpretation for young people, schools and student groups A 3 B 3 C 3

The Diputació de Barcelona runs an extensive environmental education programme for schools and other educational groups in the Park, as well as a volunteer programme. This programme will be continued over the next five years and will create synergies with some of the Charter Part II companies (Action 4.4).

D6 Ensuring social cohesion

D6.1 Anticipating, monitoring and minimising any existing and potential conflicts with local residents

A 3 B 3 C 3

The three parks that are part of the territory count with a coordinating council that allows the representation of local population through the majors of each municipality. Many of the municipalities also count with spaces that allow the citizens participation. Additionally, the park of Garraf has a consultive council that allows direct participation of the citizens organized by sectors of interest that include touristic sector and local associations.

To all this participation spaces, after the beginning of the Charter process they included the Charter Forum that is open to participation of any citizen interested.

For the next Charter Action Plan, the territory will create a new participation forum for the activities linked to coastal and marine areas (action 1.2), they will also create thematic discussion groups (action 5.1) and maintain the Charter Forum (action 5.2).

In terms of conflicts, they have not identified any significant conflict between tourism and local residents, most likely because the most visited municipalities have been consolidated tourism destinations for quite some time and the more inland municipalities do not have much tourism at this moment.

D6.2 Maintaining good communication and engagement between local residents, businesses, visitors and the protected area authority

A 3 B 3 C 3

The parks have promoted communication with local people through many different media. In this first period of the Charter, they have increased their communication on social media in order to better reach the local population and visitors. At the moment, in addition to the parks' website, the count has a Facebook and Instagram account.

For a more direct communication, the parks maintain regular meetings with the tourism companies that manage the infrastructures of the park and other tourism companies, with special attention to the companies in the Charter Part II.

In order to receive feedback from visitors and the local population who use the park, the parks' website offers the possibility to send opinions about the park (<https://parcs.diba.cat/es/web/garraf/opineu-sobre-el-parc>) and to receive suggestions (<https://parcs.diba.cat/es/bustia-de-suggeriment>).

For the new Charter Action Plan, they will also continue to improve internal communication through the Charter Communication Plan (Action 3.6).

D6.3 Encouraging and developing appropriate partnership activity with and between stakeholders A 3 B 3 C 3

This is the first re-evaluation of the Charter process in Garraf, Olèrdola and Foix, but promoting networking between all the partners and stakeholders of the Charter was a priority not only for the Park, but especially for the businesses that have already created an association of sustainable tourism businesses.

As explained in D5.3, they organise regular meetings that include some training on a Park topic and a visit to a tourist resource in the area, which encourages mutual knowledge between the different businesses and stakeholders and promotes networking.

In the new Charter Action Plan, they will promote networking even more by aiming to develop complete eco-tourism products involving Charter Part II businesses (Action 3.2). Also, in the new Charter Action Plan, they will promote the participation of Charter Part II businesses in Charter Network events so that they can learn more about other Charter experiences (Action 5.3).

D7 Strengthening prosperity in the local community

D.7.1 Promoting the provision and identity of local produce and services and their purchase and use by visitors and tourism businesses A 2 B 3 C 3

Even before the Charter process, the Diputació de Barcelona had a very interesting work to promote local products and services through a series of programmes such as "Parc à taula", which proposes activities and gastronomic experiences in the parks managed by the Diputació, and the "Xarxa de Productes de la Terra" (Network of Products of the Land), which involves several supra-municipal entities to promote local products of the province of Barcelona.

There is a traditional cabbage of the Garraf, the espigall, that has been the target of a very interesting programme to recover its production, disclose it, involve the schools and promote its use in the restaurants of the territory, this work is linked to the Parc à Taula programme and involves several partners in the territory.

There have been other municipal initiatives to promote local products, such as the Slow Food association, which organises farmers' markets, a medicinal herb fair and a cava and tapas fair.

During the first period of implementation of the Charter, the focus was on the Parc à Taula programme, promoting and expanding the programme in the territory and on the adhesion of companies to the Charter Part II. These two actions have made it possible to create a better knowledge of the products of the territory and to share this knowledge with interested local tourism companies.

For the next Charter period, they propose a specific action to promote gastronomy with local products of the territory (action 3.9), based on the Parc à Taula programme. In addition, the extension of the Charter Part II (Action 2.5) and the implementation of the Charter Part III (Action 2.6) will also contribute to this objective..

D7.2 Supporting the economic viability and performance of local tourism businesses and the provision of local employment in tourism A 2 B 2 C 2

Some of the municipalities in the area, especially those on the coast, have a very consolidated beach and nautical tourism. In this sense, some of these municipalities have specific policies to support local businesses, mostly related to this type of tourism.

However, the Charter process has started to involve and promote the businesses and communities that are more inland, creating opportunities for these businesses in the long term. Five years is a short time to achieve results in this area, but the Charter partners have started some actions that can lead to a better situation for these businesses. Namely, the creation of the Association of Sustainable Tourism Businesses, the promotion of networking through the organisation of meetings and visits to tourist resources and the extension of programmes that promote a different type of visit, such as the Parc a Taula programme, and the implementation of Charter Part II, which also allows businesses to improve their own management and promotes the use of local products and services.

For the next five years, the Charter will continue the implementation of Charter Part II (Action 2.5), the beginning of the implementation of Charter Part III (Action 2.6) and they will create a marketing plan that will contribute to the promotion of these businesses more linked to ecotourism activities (Action 3.5).

D8 Providing training and capacity building

D8.1 Providing relevant training for staff of the protected area authority in sustainable tourism development and management

A **3** B **3** C **3**

In the Garraf, Olèrdola and Foix areas, training for protected area staff, partner staff and businesses was delivered jointly. In fact, many of the training sessions were addressed to all of them and they attended the training together. In my opinion, this is a very good approach to creating moments of exchange and building trust between all stakeholders.

The Park Authority (Diputació de Barcelona) developed a survey on training needs for all stakeholders in 2018 and, based on this information, they created a training plan that began to be implemented in 2019, with good results in terms of participation and satisfaction of participants. Despite the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and changes in the park's staffing, the training has continued and been implemented in line with the five-year Charter Action Plan.

For the new Charter Action Plan, they have defined two actions that include training; a general action to create a new training plan and develop training for all stakeholders as in the previous period (Action 3.8) and specific training actions linked to the use of local products in gastronomy (Action 3.9). In addition, networking with other Charter areas is a training opportunity and the Park has sought to encourage the participation of business owners and Park staff in these meetings.

D8.2 Providing and encouraging relevant training and capacity building for tourism businesses and other stakeholders in sustainable tourism

A **3** B **3** C **3**

See answer above (D8.1)

D9 Monitoring tourism performance and impacts

D9.1 Monitoring of visitors – volumes, patterns, spending and satisfaction

A **2** B **2** C **3**

There are several bodies in the region that monitor tourism at different scales and with different methodologies: The Parks, the LABturisme of the Diputació de Barcelona and the Municipal Tourist Information Centres, which use the system created by the Regional Government of Catalonia). The main challenge is to coordinate at least some of the information collected by these bodies, so that the information on the territory is more detailed, rigorous and consistent.

To this end, the Charter process has created a working group and defined an action aimed at coordinating all the information collected on tourists in the territory. This working group meets annually and has so far managed to improve the visitor counting

system in the parks (more counters have been installed) and to produce an annual description of the profile of the park visitor. In addition, this group has served to coordinate the information about the Park that is communicated to visitors in all the information points.

In the new Charter Action Plan, they will maintain the working group, jointly carry out the analysis of visitors to the three parks and, in partnership with the Charter company, carry out a survey of visitors to the parks (actions 1.7 and 1.8).

D9.2 Monitoring of tourism businesses – performance and needs

A 2 B 2 C 2

Although there was no specific action for this purpose, the partners analysed the data and produced a report on the state of the economy in the area, with particular attention to the tourism sector. This information was shared with the businesses in the Foruns and the working groups that served them, as well as the training opportunities and the process of joining businesses to the Charter, in order to listen to the businesses and their needs and to include them in the planning of the Charter Action Plan and the participating entities.

For the next Charter Action Plan, the aim is to continue the monitoring of business performance and needs in the same way, including a working group with businesses to focus more on these needs (Actions 5.1 and 5.2) and the expansion of Charter Part II (Actions 2.5 and 2.6) and the implementation of Charter Part III will allow more businesses to participate and contribute to this information.

D9.3 Monitoring of tourism impacts – on the environment, economy and community

A 3 B 3 C 3

The territory of the Garraf, Olèrdola and Foix Parks is included in the Costa de Barcelona Biosphere Certification with a Platinum Award. This certification monitors the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and provides information on all these areas of sustainability. The coordination between the Biosphere certification and the Charter also helps to share this information with the Charter partners.

In terms of specific impacts in the parks, park management monitors visitor flows and counts visitors in all parks, identifying any potential impacts that may occur and using this information to change public use rules and improve best practice for activities. The best practice documents for activities in the parks that have been produced over the last five years are based on this knowledge.

D9.4 Monitoring progress in implementing the action plan.

A 3 B 3 C 3

The Charter Action Plan has been evaluated annually in terms of implementation, and the new Charter Action Plan includes a monitoring plan that will also allow an annual evaluation of implementation to be presented in the Foruns.

D10 Communicating actions and engaging with the Charter

D10.1 Communicating sustainable tourism actions and results to local stakeholders and more widely at a local, regional and national level

A 2 B 3 C 3

The Charter communication plan in this first period focused mainly on improving the communication of the parks and included the awarding of the Charter in all the media in which they now communicate, from the website to social media.

The new Charter Action Plan will be more ambitious in terms of communication and will include the promotion of destinations as sustainable tourism destinations as well as an internal communication plan. This is likely to strengthen their communication at local, regional and national level (actions 3.5 and 3.6).

D10.2 Promoting and making visible the award of the Charter

A 3 B 3 C 3

All partners use the symbols of the Charter in all materials related to sustainable tourism and the parks. The Diputació de Barcelona

An interesting example of the commitment of local businesses to the Charter and its promotion is the contact that an owner has made with Booking (the online accommodation platform), which will most likely lead to the Charter Award being recognised on this platform with the symbol of sustainable travel.

The next Charter Action will include a communication and marketing plan that will also contribute to the promotion of the Charter Award (Actions 3.5 and 3.6).

D10.3 Engaging with EUROPARC and the Charter Network, including participating in related events and activities A 3 B 3 C 3

All the Charter parks in Catalonia are part of a network of Charter parks that meets regularly to share experiences. In addition, the staff of the Garraf, Olèrdola and Foix parks and other stakeholders have participated in the Charter network meetings over the last five years.

For the next period, the partners maintain their commitment to participate in the Catalan network and all other Charter network meetings (Action 5.3).

D10.4 Taking steps for re-application and renewal of the Charter.

A 3 B 3 C 3

The Charter territory kept the process active during the COVID-19 pandemic and ensured the reapplication in the year it was supposed to take place with a well-organised participatory process. The dynamic between the stakeholders is very good and cooperative, which provides a good basis for continuing in the same way.

The new Charter Action Plan includes an action to ensure the continuity of the process in these five years and to renew the award, which also shows the commitment of all stakeholders (Actions 5.4 and 5.5).

SECTION E – EXPERIENCE AND FINAL COMMENTS

Please comment briefly on any points made by the applicant in this section which you believe are of particular interest.

E.1 Examples of excellence and best practice

Please mention briefly the best examples of excellence or best practice you have seen in this Charter area (by cross-reference to the above questions if appropriate)

- Extending conservation beyond the protected area and even promoting the extension of the protected area to include marine ecosystems (see D2.3);
- Fire-fighting and development of new protection techniques based on traditional techniques such as dry-stone walls (see D2.3).
- Gamification and the link between new technologies and the discovery of the natural and cultural heritage of the parks (see D4.1);
- Monthly meetings - training with park staff, stakeholders and business owners to learn and experience the park's tourism offer (see D5.3) and joint training for all stakeholders (see D8.1 and D8.2);
- The promotion of local products in general, with specific programmes such as Parc a Taula, and specifically the work developed with espigalls, from production to use in gastronomy (see D7.1);
- The efforts made by businesses to promote the Charter Award as an indicator of sustainable tourism (see D10.2).

E.2 Marketing and promotion of the Charter

Is the protected area helping to promote the Charter, e.g. in its publications, website, etc.?

The effort to promote the Charter in the territory, both to visitors and to the local population, is very important.

The Diputació de Barcelona, which manages the protected area, has made an important investment in social media as a means of reaching a wide audience.

Some examples of communication from the Garraf, Olèrdola and Foix area that I find interesting is the following video about the involvement of tourism businesses in the Charter: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5a3UnJVTw0Y>

E.3 Experience of working with the Charter – final comments

The Park Authority and all stakeholders have had a very positive experience with the Charter as a tool to promote participation and coordination between them and as a forum for discussion on how to promote sustainable tourism in the area and to encourage networking between businesses.

On the other hand, they feel that it would be important for Europarc to make an effort to increase the recognition of the Charter as an award for sustainable tourism and as an indicator of good eco-tourism destinations and businesses. They feel that this tool is not well known and this reduces the interest of some stakeholders to get involved.