

Call for a MSc research project

Sustainable tourism: analysis of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism (ECST) implemented in the natural park of Sant Llorenç del Munt

Research context: The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism (ECST) is an initiative of the EUROPARC Federation which seeks to implement the concept of sustainable development in some of Europe's most treasured places (Europarc Federation, 2007). The overall objective of ECST is to promote the development of sustainable tourism by establishing a voluntary commitment between the managers of protected areas and relevant stakeholders. In order to ensure sustainable tourism development, the managers of the protected area organise public consultation meetings, and set up a permanent forum or equivalent arrangement between all those directly concerned: the protected area authority, local municipalities, conservation and community organisations and representatives of the tourism industry. The protected area thus facilitates co-operation and the sharing of responsibilities to improve the effectiveness of its mission to protect the environment.

Description and objectives: The aim of the MSc thesis will be to analyse the performance of the ECST policy instrument implemented in the natural park of Sant Llorenç del Munt (Catalonia, Spain) based on certain criteria such as effectiveness, equity, legitimacy, monitoring and control, creation of incentives, consistency with institutional-cultural context and so on. The study shall include primary data collection. The student is expected to 1) review relevant documents of the ECST and meeting minutes to evaluate the policy and characterise the evolution of stakeholders participation in the ECST; 2) undertake non-participant observation of ECST meetings to observe the dynamics of the participatory body; and 3) conduct semi-structured interviews with relevant stakeholders of the natural park. The student shall further analyse the data collected through qualitative content analysis.

Requisites: Student of the Master in Interdisciplinary Studies in Environmental, Economic and Social Sustainability (MEISAES, ICTA-UAB) or alike. The student must be fluent in Catalan (read, written and spoken) and have good command in English. He/she shall be familiar with qualitative methods of data collection and analysis.

Technical details: The thesis will be directed by Sara Maestre Andrés (ICTA) and Laura Calvet Mir (ICTA). We expect that a revised version of the MSc Thesis could be submitted to a peer-reviewed journal for publication.

If you are interested on writing your MSc thesis on this topic, please contact
sara.maestre@uab.cat/laura.calvet@uab.cat

Literature:

Europarc Federation 2007. The Charter. European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas. Europarc Consulting Limited, Regensburg, Germany.