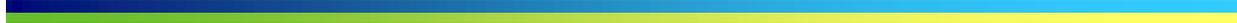


***ECNC LAND & SEA GROUP***

***HEADLINES POLICY PLAN - INTEGRATING FOR IMPACT***

**Tilburg, Leiden, Barcelona, December 2013**



## 1. Introduction

The international organizations The Coastal & Marine Union (EUCC), ECNC-European Centre for Nature Conservation and the Mediterranean Centre (MedCentre) are in a process of integration for a number of years now.

The ultimate aim is to create one coherent organization, which will be the holding or umbrella of the organizations involved in the integration process.

The collaboration structure is referred to as the ECNC Land & Sea Group. The current formal umbrella structure is the European Economic Interest Grouping (EEIG), a legal entity based on EU law, to facilitate and encourage international and cross-border cooperation. The ECNC Land & Sea Group is governed by the ECNC Group Board, consisting of representatives of the governing councils of ECNC, EUCC and the MedCentre.

The purpose of such a EEIG grouping is to facilitate or develop the activities of its members by a pooling of resources, activities or skills and to simplify entering into joint activities without the need for subcontracting to the constituent partners. This will produce better results than the members acting alone. Through the creation of this legal entity a new structure is formed that brings together expertise on terrestrial, coastal and marine biodiversity and sustainable development, that includes over 45 co-workers and provides access to wider European expert networks.

The ECNC Group EEIG is registered in 2011 in Barcelona, Spain, at the MedCentre of the ECNC Group. Its formal (registered) name is ECNC Land & Sea Group EEIG.

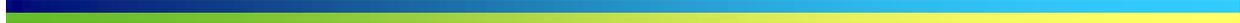
## 2. Integration for impact – strategic reflections

The world is changing fast. The global economic and financial crisis is impacting significantly on many parts of society: citizens, governments, business, scientific institutions and NGOs. Governments are withdrawing more and more from society; decentralizing or slimming down their tasks; cutting down on subsidies for sustainability in a major way; and putting more emphasis on the role of businesses and civil society.

NGOs, especially those working in the field of nature, coastal and marine management, and biodiversity, are increasingly being 'left on their own'. The demands on NGOs are still high and sometimes may even be increasing due to slimmed-down government structures, but the possibilities for maintaining their on-going operations with traditional resources are becoming more and more problematic.

EUCC, ECNC and the MedCentre, presently cooperating in the form of the ECNC Land & Sea Group, are all facing a similar challenge: survival in the short, medium and long-term.

As long as almost 10 years ago, ECNC-European Centre for Nature Conservation (ECNC), the Coastal & Marine Union (EUCC) and Centro Mediterráneo (the MedCentre) agreed on institutional



integration. In 2008, they set out their intentions in relation to integration in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), titled: 'Integration for Impact'. The current Integration Action Plan builds on that MoU and motto.

### **Other associated structures**

The following structures are currently associated with the ECNC Land & Sea Group:

- Large Herbivore Network (operated by the ECNC Group).
- European Learning Network on Regions and Biodiversity (Secretariat with the ECNC Group).
- European Learning Network on Agro-biodiversity (secretariat with the ECNC Group).
- EECONET Action Fund (secretariat with the ECNC Group).
- Dolphin Fund (operated by the ECNC Group).
- Healthy Seas Fund (operated by the ECNC Group).
- Stichting Duinbehoud (project-bureau) (in the offices of the ECNC Group).

### **Benefits of cooperation**

The overall benefit of cooperation and, if so decided, integration is to combine efforts in order to maximize the synergies available through an enhanced platform of skills and experience, networks, partnerships and funding opportunities.

Through the process of strong cooperation the involved organisations have better and more chances to pursue the missions of the individual organizations and make them part of one integrated mission and vision.

The overall benefits and revenues which the cooperation and integration process seeks to achieve are:

- More resilient pool of staff and stronger governing structure and more flexibility in staffing. Increase career opportunities for staff and/or offer them increased opportunities of new working fields.
- Identification of 'blue', 'green' or 'land'-sea' cross-cutting themes from one coherent perspective and vision.
- More and wider services to clients and potential clients.
- Less dependence on grants and other governmental funds.
- Significantly increased potential for large-scale projects.
- Creating a network of networks from all the partners and networks the three organization, resulting in higher visibility, outreach and impact.
- More potential to facilitate the voice of local partners and people.

## **3. The ECNC Land & Sea Group strategic aims and objectives**

### **Aims and objectives**

The Strategic View towards the future is that the ECNC Land & Sea Group:

1. is valued and known as one of the most renowned and influential Pan-European and international expertise groupings for land & sea, with a focus on biodiversity, integrated coastal zone management, marine issues, and ecosystem services;
2. is a powerful 'Network of Networks' in the field of 'blue' and 'green', providing: both added value to the expertise of associated NGOs and expertise centres; and also empowering their combined voice;
3. is dedicated to the empowerment of civil society and the interested public and to giving these people a voice;
4. is one of the leading certifying bodies in the field of biodiversity and coastal and destination qualities;
5. is not only sustained by 'traditional sources', such as subsidies and grants anymore, but also increasingly via the revenues from profit/VAT activities (land and sea restoration, commercial training) and by Internet-based income.

The ECNC Land & Sea Group is one of the leading European expertise centres for land- and sea-based biodiversity and sustainable development. It will operate as a bridge-builder and network of networks on 'green' and 'blue'.

#### *Mission and Vision*

**Mission:** The ECNC Group promotes sustainable, integrated policy approaches to land, sea and coast and actively stimulates interaction, communication and bridges between science, society and policy.

**Vision:** The ECNC Group is the European Expertise Centre for Biodiversity and Sustainability, dedicated to a 'Beautiful Europe' for present and future generations, based on rich biodiversity, healthy ecosystems and strong linkages between nature and society.

The longer version of vision is: 'The ECNC Group is dedicated to a sustainable and beautiful Europe for present and future generations, based on rich biodiversity, healthy ecosystems and strong linkages between nature and society. It promotes sustainable, integrated policy approaches to land, sea and coast and actively stimulates interaction, communication and bridges between science, society and policy.'

The ECNC Group aims to implement its mission and vision while balancing the three elements of sustainable development: people, planet and profit.

#### *Geographical focus*

The ECNC Group's geographical focus is on Europe, adjacent and related overseas territories and on global approaches for issues which require cross-continental cooperation. The ECNC Group definition of Europe follows the UN-ECE (which includes Caucasus and Central Asia) and also includes the entire Mediterranean and Black Sea region.

## 4. Organizational structure

Our longer-term institutional view/position is to pursue the existence of the ECNC Group as one coherent organization, which will act as a holding for the 'Land' and 'Sea' pillars of the organization. The separate parts of the 'holding' will work within one coherent organization but can still have separate legal identities, communication means and financial responsibilities.

On the short run, the focus of cooperation is on the ECNC Land & Sea Group EEIG.

### Governance

#### Boards

One integrated and active Board will be guiding and supervising the operations of the ECNC Land & Sea Group. This Board will be responsible for the overall operations of the ECNC Group and supervise the work of the management team of the ECNC Group. The Board will also supervise the activities of the ECNC Group EEIG, approve work plans and financial annual accounts, etc.

The ECNC Land & Sea Group Board ensures coherence between the governance, operations and policies of the separate legal entities as regards the common ECNC Group projects and other activities it will coordinate and implement.

#### Daily management

The management teams of the ECNC, EUCC and MedCentre work in synergy in order to maximize the benefits and potentials of the three separate organizations and the ECNC Group EEIG.

The directors of the above-mentioned organisation together form the overall management team of the ECNC Land & Sea Group and its EEIG.

The chairman of the management team of the ECNC Land & Sea Group is the Chief Executive of the Group and the general manager of the EEIG.

## 5. Themes

The ECNC Land & Sea Group EEIG programmes' themes are cross-cutting, which take into account the strengths and niches of the ECNC Group, while retaining the strengths and niches of the three legal entities.

Key themes include:

- Business, biodiversity and sustainability, including integrated coastal zone management.
- Greening economies of regions and municipalities along the coasts and inland.
- Process management, facilitation and communication, which is getting more and more important for nature and biodiversity and integrated coastal zone management and marine protection.

- Science-policy-society interface land & sea.
- Green and blue infrastructure.

## **6. Regional Offices**

The main regional office of the ECNC Land & Sea Group is the Mediterranean Centre in Barcelona.

The other – already existing - regional office for the ECNC Group will be the Baltic Office, based in Lithuania. ECNC's German Green Welcome Centre can function as a representation unit of the ECNC Land & Sea Group.

The ECNC Group will continue to explore the possibility of a Nordic Regional Office and a Regional Office which would represent the ECNC Land & Sea Group in the wider Black Sea and Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) region.

## **7. How ECNC Land & Sea Group manages its funds**

ECNC Land & Sea Group's financial accounting system is integrated into the financial accounting systems of the ECNC, EUCC and MedCentre. The system is set up to monitor budget spending, distance from target, and cash flow on a continuous basis. Apart from project-specific financial reporting (based on requirements by the respective funders), the ECNC Land & Sea Group also will ask, if so required, for an external auditor approval of the financial accounts.

The ECNC Group strives for reaching cost-effectiveness by applying the following considerations:

- Realistic time planning;
- No double counting;
- Reductions of travels to a minimum, where possible replaced by video-conferencing or other cost- and environment-efficient measures;
- Preference for digital publication over hardcopy;
- Inclusion of activities that aim at reducing overhead time and costs.

## **8. Communication and marketing**

Internal and external communication and information about the ECNC Land & Sea Group and required activities (information, launch, new communication materials and means, including website(s))

The ECNC Land & Sea Group communication plan will be developed into a communication and marketing plan. A digital strategy will be developed, in tune with the communication and marketing plan.



## 9. Fuelling the operations of the ECNC Land & Sea Group

On the short run, the ECNC Land & Sea Group will focus on common projects, run by the ECNC Land & Sea Group EEIG.

The midterm funding will be ensured via a number of ways:

- Subsidies and grants
- Working with businesses
- Private foundations
- Crowd-sourcing
- Donations of a Revenue Based Entity (RBE) working with the ECNC Land & Sea Group.

The mission and vision of the RBE are regarding its contents, linked to that of the ECNC Group but it pursues this by application of a market-driven approach.

RBE's mission is to implement the mission and vision with revenue based instruments, while creating a profit which will largely be donated to the ECNC Land & Sea Group for its not-for-profit operations and activities.

The RBE is not part of the NGO structure of the ECNC Land & Sea Group, but will be associate via a Memorandum of Cooperation, or similar declaration of intent.

It is expected that the RBE will be established in 2014.