

**Résolution CM/ResDip(2008)1  
concernant le règlement révisé du Diplôme européen des espaces protégés**

*(adoptée par le Comité des Ministres le 20 février 2008,  
lors de la 1018e réunion des Délégués des Ministres)<sup>1</sup>*

**Annexe 5 : Plan type pour les rapports annuels**

**Rapport annuel pour l'année 2019**

Country : ITALY

Site name : GRAN PARADISO NATIONAL PARK

Année et nombre d'années depuis l'octroi ou le renouvellement du Diplôme européen des espaces protégés : 2006 - 2016

**Autorité centrale concernée :**

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<sup>1</sup> Telle qu'amendée par la Résolution CM/ResDip(2014)2 le 2 juillet 2014, lors de la 1204e réunion des Délégués des Ministres.

**1. Conditions:** List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. *Management plan:* The management plan of the Gran Paradiso National Park (GPNP) was finally approved by the two regions (Council resolution n. 349, on 22 march 2019 of the Regione Autonoma Valle d'Aosta, and resolution n. 32-8597, on 22 march 2019 of the Regione Piemonte). The management plan of the park is therefore finally and fully operational. The management plan contains the maps that represent the different areas subject to different protection constraints: these areas are now fully operational. The contents of the Plan and the relative maps will be presented to local people in the coming months. The most relevant topics to be explained will be those relating to the maximum protection areas (Areas "A"), in which even the grazing (by domestic herbivores) activities will not be permitted.

**2. Recommendations:** List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. *Ensure that funding is primarily provided by the state, regions and provinces, and adequately integrates other sources of funding:* In the last 8 years the GPNP received ordinary contributions from the Italian State ranging from € 5.834.794,65 (in 2017) to € 6.552.395,87 (in 2015) (Fig. 1). This means an average annual contribution of € 6.126.923,86 with variations of ± € 261.899,35 (St.Dev.).

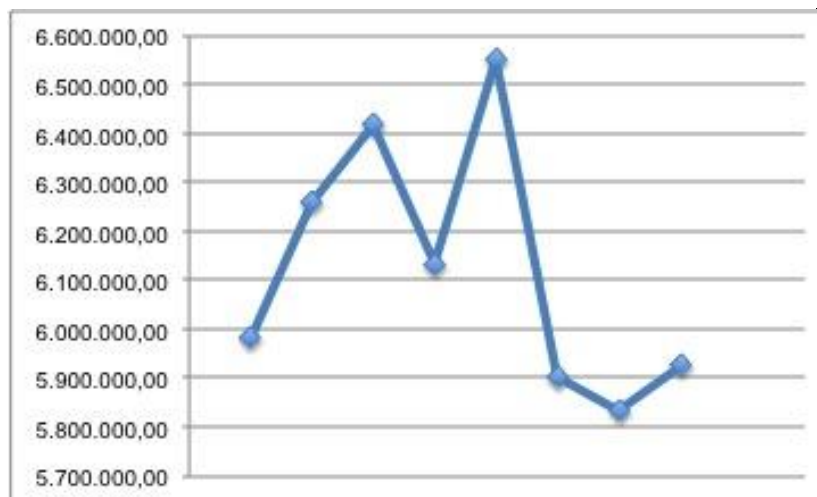


Fig. 1 - Trends in GPNP ordinary contributions from the Italian State from 2011 to 2018

Other funding are supplied on specific projects from the Valle d'Aosta Region and Piedmont Region. European Union financed some projects with Interreg-Alcotra and Life-Nature funding. The ratio between total income (ordinary contribution and European fundings) and expenditure is shown in the following table. The personnel costs amount between the 38 to 48% of total expenditures.

Year	Incomes	Total expenditures	Personnel expenditures
2016	€ 7.980.256	€ 7.973.953	€ 3.905.116
2017	€ 9.450.911	€ 9.432.484	€ 3.605.652
2018	€ 7.756.993	€ 7.676.284	€ 3.595.045

The resources available to the Park are sufficient to cover management costs and therefore to maintain a high conservation level of the GPNP. However, active conservation actions and important works for restoring the integrity of some habitats cannot be financed with these funds. An important part of funding is allocated to local community development actions.

2. *Provide the national park with adequate staff at the executive level to enable the director to focus on key tasks, including strategic:* The GPNP's staff reaches, in the past, 88 units; nowadays the staff is made up of 77 units. The division between the different functions and tasks is as follows:

Direction: 1 director;

Park rangers: 51 rangers, out of 60 indicated in the planned staffing;

Technical and planning sector: 6 employees (4 architects, 1 surveyor and 1 worker);  
 Scientific and veterinary/botanical sector: 1 veterinarian, 1 biologist, 1 botanist out of 4;  
 General affairs: 10 office worker, out of 11;  
 Administrative sector: 7 office workers;

N. 12 other people are employed in the GPNP Visitor Centers, but these are not part of the Park staff: they are temporary workers.

The current organic structure, which for a long time allowed to reach the Park's conservation objectives, will have to be slightly modified in the future, to allow the director and top management to devote more time to the elaboration of suitable conservation strategies and to activate new ones active monitoring and conservation plans and projects.

3. *Actively defend the role and the importance of the nature and landscape conservation inside the urbanization plans and management decisions:* The GPNP is located on the territory of 13 municipalities. Of these, only one is completely inside the Park (Valsavarenche). The others are included in the Park area for a lesser extent of territory (minimum: Villeneuve, 7,9%), generally concerning the most mountainous parts. Due to the topography of the valleys, lacking in flat areas with wide woody slopes, in all the municipalities the urban development tends to concentrate at the bottom of the valleys, around the historical settlements. This is the reason why most of infrastructural intervention are very limited.

Many municipalities have specific implementation regulations for the interventions in the historical center. With the approval of the GPMP, the relationship between the management choices of the municipalities and those of the protected area will be even clearer. This is mainly because the rules of the Park plan were included in local urban planning, as required by the Italian Law on Protected Areas. These regulations concern in particular the methods of recovery and conservation of the historical, cultural and landscape heritage.

The structures for tourism are generally concentrated in the inhabited centres; some huts and a road at a high altitude involve tourist flow concentrations in summer months that locally create conservation problems. Since 2003 the Park regulated and limited the traffic on this road.

4. *Integrate the values of forests as ecosystems in the development of forest management plans:*

The Park territory is covered for about 22% by woods, including bushes and pioneer invasion woods, mainly represented by larch. The lands were not managed for decades, or are only minimally used, and this is also combined with the abandonment of pastures and ancient cultivated areas that suffered the shrubs expansion. Regarding the wood management, in the Park there are some public-owned forests for which planning tools were drawn up, mainly in the north side of the Park (Aosta Valley). These management plans, which involve minimal woodland surfaces, were implemented to a minimum extent.

The GPMP identifies, as a management objective, the naturalistic forestry aimed at the conservation of forest habitats. The Park Plan also includes the Management Plan of the SIC (IT1201000) which provides conservation measures for all forest habitats and specific measures for forest habitats of Directive 92/43 - EEC. Finally, it should be underlined that, in the GPMP, relevant forest areas were identified: in these areas any management activity is totally excluded, to allow the natural evolution of the forest.

In the GPMP were also included some areas (one per valley) defined as "Ancient Woods", according to the guidelines of the Italian Ministry (published in 2007). These areas (geographically identified on the GPMP maps) respond to very specific characteristics: they must contain plants of considerable size, with standing and ground wood and lack any management action for the last 60 years. In these areas any human intervention is prohibited.

5. *Pursuing the search for compatibility and synergies between farming and preservation of biological diversity:* In the last 20 years farming activities progressively reduced. Currently inside the GPNP there are very few professional breeders, mostly devoted to cattle breeding, for the production of milk (typical local cheese) and meat: most farms are managed part-time. Although the percentage of people employed in agriculture is very low (3.5%, while in industry it is 35%, 55.6% of people are employed in the tertiary sector) the impact of domestic grazing is far from irrelevant: this is due to the fact that on the alpine pastures of the Park the transhumance of the herds and flocks is important, mainly during the 4 summer months. This is the reason why, for some years the Park carried out research on the impact of domestic grazing on animal biodiversity (Ministerial Project for Monitoring Animal Biodiversity) that will be fundamental for the management of these activities in all the territories that belong to the Park or that the park rents in order to preserve biological diversity. The monitoring project on animal biodiversity, started in 2006, was shared with 4 other mountain national parks: this survey network will allow to increase useful data for the management of high mountain open areas. Apart from domestic grazing, agricultural activities are practically absent in the Park.

6. *Avoiding new water abstraction projects for electrical generation, except micro-centrals licensed by the National park:* The territory of the Park (mainly the southern side) is characterized by the presence of important water collection infrastructures (dams and complex and multiple collection sites) for the purpose of energetic production. These are infrastructures that were designed and built over 70 years ago. These dams, and the relative power lines, have obviously impacts on the environment. The territory of the Park is also characterized by hydrogeological upheavals that mainly affects the torrential parts of the bottom of the valleys: these events are due to the geological characteristics of this area. In some districts, the dams, built so many years ago, represent a form of mitigation of the effects of such extreme events. These mitigation effects are mainly connected with the conservation of the fish fauna which, in the southern slope of the GPNP, is present with better distributed and more abundant populations. Among these populations are also included the populations of marble trout *Salmo marmoratus* recently found in a secondary stream, a tributary of the Orco creek (Noasca, Piedmont). To minimize the consequences of water withdrawals, a careful monitoring is carried out by the Park and any other new project of dam building is banned by the Park. After the approval of the Park Management Plan, only the small water withdrawals, only for local energetic purpose, can be authorized.

7. *Establishing a scientific advisory council to allow the scientific community to influence the Park management guidelines:* The National Law on Parks (Law n. 394/1991) does not provide and does not allow the establishment of a scientific advising commission. Nonetheless, the GPNP has, for many years, established scientific relations with Italian and foreign universities, in order to implement research projects useful for guiding the conservation of the protected area. In 2019, with the nomination of a new director, a selection was made to identify some university researchers who were able - and available - to participate in a scientific commission. This commission will not be able to express binding opinions on the choices made by the council but will aim to address species and habitat research and monitoring, in order to obtain useful results for conservation. This commission should be implemented for the year 2020. Some members of this commission will participate in Scientific Commission of the Vanoise National Park, to create joint research projects and therefore to manage the two neighboring protected areas.

**3. Site Management:** List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

No changes to the European Diploma holding site management were recorded, in relation to terrestrial and aquatic environments. The same applies to financial contributions that are sufficient to achieve the Park's conservation objectives. About the Park staff, there was a reduction in the number of Park rangers, due to the sharp reduction in turnover, imposed by the last Italian governments. However, this reduction, linked to the retirement of many old rangers, did not affect the functioning of the Ranger service, allowing the continuation of the long historical series of wild ungulates census (Alpine ibex and Alpine chamois) and of the environmental and wildlife monitoring planes, indispensable for a good conservation policy.

**4. Boundaries:** Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

No changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site were recorded.

**5. Other information:** List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

Since in Italy, as in other EU countries, the culture of conservation of natural resources has yet to be affirmed, the presence of efficient surveillance services is still today of strategic importance, even within the protected areas. This is the reason why it is of the utmost importance to maintain efficient surveillance services, dedicated, in addition to protection, to active conservation actions and periodic monitoring of habitat changes. In order to carry out their functions in the best way, the surveillance services must functionally depend on the Park Director. This type of organization is still maintained in the GPNP and this is the reason why many intensive monitoring and scientific research actions were still possible. However, the GPNP is the latest example of this organization at the national level. The characteristic of this European Diploma holding site should be taken as an example of organization also for other national protected areas, which, on the contrary, tend to modify and reduce the role of surveillance.