



## Strategy and Action Plan 2026–2028

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### BACKGROUND

EUROPARC Atlantic Isles (EAI) unites Protected Areas across England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and the Republic of Ireland. It promotes good practice in protected area management and training through networking and ensures the continued relationship with the wider European network of protected landscapes. The EAI aligns with EUROPARC's goals while tailoring initiatives to its unique coastal and island landscapes.

### VISION

Protected landscapes across the UK and Ireland are thriving, inclusive, and resilient, supported by a dynamic network of organisations sharing knowledge and leading innovation across Europe.

### MISSION

To connect, support, and amplify the work of protected area professionals in the Atlantic Isles through collaboration, learning, and advocacy within the wider EUROPARC Federation.

## STRATEGIC GOALS 2026–2028

### 1. Deepen Member Engagement and Value

**Objective:** Strengthen the network by increasing participation, visibility and relevance to members.

**Why this matters:** Members require clarity on what EAI offers to *them* individually. Engagement varies and can be strengthened through clearer value propositions and more personalised opportunities.

**Priority Actions:**

- Launch a “Member Value Charter” outlining benefits and expectations.
- Develop a member-led content calendar (webinars, blogs, case studies)
- Get more member feedback via annual member survey and listening sessions.
- Promote EAI as a career development opportunity (mentoring, learning, leadership).
- Increase engagement through targeted communications.

**Success Indicators:**

- Membership retention and growth.
- More active participation in events, working groups, and consultations.
- Increased contributions to case studies, learning exchanges and conferences.

**Key Performance Indicators:**

- **Membership Growth:** Net increase of 10% in active members by 2028.
- **Participation:** 75% of members attend at least one event/webinar annually.
- **Feedback:** 80% satisfaction rate in annual member survey.
- **Content Contribution:** 50% of members contribute content (case studies, webinars, blogs) over the 3-year period.

### 2. Strengthen Policy Influence and Thought Leadership

**Objective:** Shape the future of protected landscapes through strategic advocacy and knowledge sharing, working closely with our existing policy members.

**Why this matters:** EAI plays an important bridging role between UK/Ireland practice and European thinking. Stakeholders expect clarity, expert input, and leadership. This is still an emerging strength for EAI, but an important one.

**Priority Actions:**

- Host thematic webinars.
- Build relationships with policymakers in all five nations.

#### **Success Indicators:**

- EAI is recognised by both national policy organisations and national agency members as a reliable source of policy updates as well as a supportive and influential advocate.
- Regular two-way flow of information, with a structured mechanism to gather collective feedback from members.
- Increased presence at national and cross-border conference programmes.
- High-reach digital communications demonstrating effective sharing and amplification of policy developments.
- Increased invitations to contribute insights, evidence, or summaries to policy and government forums.

#### **Key Performance Indicators:**

- **Consultation Responses:** Submit responses to at least 6 national consultations over the 3 years.
- **Thought Leadership Events:** Host a minimum of 2 webinars/workshops per year on strategic themes.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Establish formal relationships with policy leads in all 5 nations.

### **3. Lead on Inclusion, Diversity and Youth Engagement**

**Objective:** Position EAI as a progressive organisation in equity and future leadership in protected landscapes.

**Why this matters:** Inclusion and youth engagement are essential for keeping protected landscapes relevant and representative. EAI recognises that involvement is the next step to engagement higher up the youth participation ladder.

EUROPARC is known for its strong youth programmes, giving EAI a unique platform to lead on this. This is another emerging strength that required more focus.

#### **Priority Actions:**

- Develop an informal network of those people in member organisations who are involved in diversity, inclusivity and youth engagement.
- Host thematic webinars and publish relevant case studies.
- Partner with youth organisations and universities for joint initiatives.

- Develop a structured youth engagement offer like a “NextGen Nature Leaders” programme with mentoring and training.
- Ensure website and communications meet accessibility standards.

**Success Indicators:**

- Youth participation increases (roles, events, exchanges). Baselines to be established and active participation measured from 2026 onwards.
- Strong inclusion content on the website and in communications.
- Member organisations report improved practice through shared EAI resources.

**Key Performance Indicators:**

- **EDI Representation:** 25% increase in diversity of speakers by 2028.
- **EDI Events:** Deliver 1 EDI-focused webinar or workshop per year.
- **Accessibility:** Website meets industry standards by end of 2026.

## 4. Enhance UK and European Collaboration

**Objective:** Strengthened collaboration with EUROPARC Federation and build new strategic partnerships across the UK, Ireland and Europe, enhancing EAI’s relevance and opportunities.

**Why this matters:** Workshop discussions highlight the need for both a stronger relationship with the Federation and the need to enhance and demonstrate EAI’s unique offerings. Partnerships can unlock resources, learning, and influence.

**Priority Actions:**

- Co-host events or webinars with other EUROPARC sections.
- Facilitate exchange visits or virtual learning sessions.
- Promote European case studies and best practices to UK/Ireland members.
- Ensure EAI representation at Federation conferences and task forces to increase joint learning and share outputs with members.
- Develop new partnerships across the EAI area and with European protected areas (for example, shared Ireland fund, cross-border research programmes, professional bodies and non-protected-area organisations)

**Success Indicators**

- Two joint events and webinars with EUROPARC Federation or sections.
- An annual exchange visit or virtual learning sessions.

- Stronger networks and partnerships across Europe.

#### **Key Performance Indicators:**

- **Joint Initiatives:** Deliver 3 collaborative activities with other EUROPARC sections.
- **Exchange Programme:** Facilitate 2 member exchanges or virtual learning visits.
- **European Content:** Feature 9 European case studies in newsletters or webinars.
- **Conference Participation:** Minimum of 5 EAI representatives attend, lead sessions or speak at EUROPARC Federation events bi-annually.

## **5. Diversify and Grow Resources**

**Objective:** Build financial resilience through a mix of funding sources.

**Why this matters:** EAI is missing a long-term financial plan and relying on membership subscriptions from Protected Landscapes is risky when their own funding is uncertain and under close scrutiny. EAI must diversify its income to secure core funding and support sustainable growth.

#### **Priority Actions**

- Develop a fundraising strategy targeting trusts, foundations and sponsorships.
- Explore joint bids with EUROPARC Federation and other sections.
- Secure funding for youth and inclusion programmes.
- Identify and apply for alternative funding sources similar to Erasmus-style exchanges (foundations, bilateral schemes).

#### **Success Indicators**

- A three-year financial plan in place that's reviewed annually to support long-term organisational sustainability.
- Year-on-year growth in non-membership income, to start reducing the proportion of total revenue coming from subscriptions.
- At least one successful project bid per year.
- Sustainable replacement model to Erasmus established for exchanges and practitioner mobility.

#### **Key Performance Indicators:**

- **Funding Mix:** Secure at least 3 new funding sources beyond membership fees by 2028.
- **Income Growth:** Increase non-membership income by 50% over 3 years.
- **Funded Projects:** Deliver 2 externally funded projects in the next 3 years (e.g. youth, inclusion, events).

## 6. Build Organisational Resilience and Maintain an Effective Board

**Objective:** Ensure strong governance, leadership and succession planning.

**Why this matters:** Succession planning is progressing well, but the Board needs better tools to collaborate as well as more clarity on its role vs EUROPARC Federation.

### Priority Actions

- Introduce a more effective shared workspace (e.g. SharePoint, Basecamp, Teams).
- Conduct 2-year skills audit and align with strategic needs.
- Ensure representation from all UK nations and Ireland (notably Northern Ireland).
- Introduce Board development sessions and peer mentoring.
- Maintain a programme of face-to-face and virtual meetings.
- Improve new Board member onboarding.
- Develop a succession plan for key roles including Chair and Treasurer.

### Success Indicators

- Clear, efficient workflows and shared documents.
- Full Board representation across nations.
- Board evaluations show improved confidence and clarity.

### Key Performance Indicators:

- **Skills Audit:** Conduct bi-annual skills audit and align with strategic needs.
- **Board Objectives:** 100% of Board members have agreed personal objectives.
- **Succession Plan:** Succession plan in place for Chair, Treasurer and Development Advisor by mid-2027.
- **Board Development:** Deliver a Board development session each year.

## 7. Strengthen Communications: Clear Outreach and Engagement

**Objective:** To incorporate communications into the main EAI strategy rather than it being a separate plan. Develop consistent, high-quality communication that tells EAI's story, shares practice, and enhances visibility and generates more active engagement.

**Why this matters:** EAI's communications are fragmented and sporadic, making it harder for stakeholders to see its value. A clearer, targeted outreach approach will strengthen visibility, learning, and engagement across the network.

### Priority Actions

- Evaluate replacement webinar software to ‘Go-To-Webinar’ that is expensive and over-engineered for EAI webinars and often causes firewall challenges for public sector organisations. To be done by July 2026).
- Produce an integrated communications schedule around a calendar of EAI activities and important days, such as World Wetlands Day, International Parks Day etc.
- Use multimedia formats (webinars, case studies, short videos, podcasts, newsletters, online survey, social media channels). Try new ways of doing things that’s suitable to different audiences.
- Build an archive of learning materials on the EAI website that’s not out of date.
- Ensure every project or event yields three outputs (e.g., summary, video, case study).
- Improve accessibility of online materials.

### **Success Indicators**

- Increased digital and webinar engagement.
- Members and partners report clearer understanding of EAI work.
- EAI visibly leads on sharing UK/Ireland practice into Europe.
- More personal communications that allow for a two-way flow of information and more member-to-member networking opportunities.

### **Key Performance Indicators:**

- Increase webinar attendance levels to a minimum of 50 attendees with additional registrations to receive shared recording.
- Host a minimum of 6 webinars a year and send a minimum of 6 newsletters/case studies.
- Increase LinkedIn followers from 490 to 750.
- Social media to be led by strategic messaging rather than reposting of member news.
- Increase (clean) EAI Mailchimp database from 1,480 to 2,000.