



Assessment of Competencies Gained during Volunteer Work

for “Volunteers in Parks”

Guidelines for assessing knowledge, skills and competencies



Based on: “Assessment of Competencies Gained during Volunteer Work”

Developed by:



Financed by:



Assessment of Competencies Gained during Volunteer Work

for “Volunteers in Parks”

**Use the competencies assessment
to gain awareness of your experiences,
to document what you have learned,
and to rate the competencies at your disposal!**

**Use the results
for planning your future,
for your ongoing volunteer work,
for your continued vocational development,
and for your career advancement!**

This competencies assessment is your personal property. You are examining here your volunteer work for the National Natural Landscapes and the knowledge, skills and competencies that you have (further) developed during this experience. What you are doing here is entirely your own private matter. You alone decide which parts and which results from this competencies assessment you will pass on, who will receive it, and how you will do this! What you give to whom and how you do this will primarily depend on what you want to achieve with this assessment.

This competencies assessment is the personal property of

Last name:

First name:

What you can expect – an overview

Introduction

- **What can be achieved with an assessment of competencies gained during volunteer work?** **Page 4**
- **How does the competencies assessment work?** **Page 6**

How to proceed

1. **An overview of your volunteer work** **page 7**
2. **Your area of involvement in volunteer work** **page 8**
3. **Your activities and learning experiences** **page 10**
4. **Your knowledge, skills and competencies – the self-assessment** **page 14**
5. **Your knowledge, skills and competencies – the external assessment** **page 18**
6. **The result: your competencies assessment** **page 19**

How you can further use the competencies assessment **page 20**

Appendix

- **Activities of “Volunteers in Parks” – list for worksheet 3** **page 21**
- **Knowledge, skills, competencies – list for worksheet 4** **page 22**
- **The external assessment – worksheet 5** **page 28**
- **Sample certificate** **page 31**

What can be achieved with an assessment of competencies gained during volunteer work?

The competencies assessment highlights your learning experiences

You do volunteer work for the National Natural Landscapes: By doing so, you make an important contribution to the conservation and care of our natural treasures and the most beautiful landscapes in Germany. You help to ensure that the national parks, nature parks and biosphere reserves are places where animals and plants find habitats and where people can experience nature and pursue activities in harmony with their natural surroundings.

In addition to doing volunteer work for the National Natural Landscapes, there are many other forms of voluntary activities. But they all have one thing in common: volunteer work brings people together, provides an opportunity to initiate relationships, experience new things and gain insights.

The assessment of competencies gained during volunteer work offers you an opportunity to establish the knowledge, skills and competencies that you have (further) developed during your volunteer work for the National Natural Landscapes. It also provides you with ideas of how you can put these competencies to work.

The competencies assessment helps you evaluate your skills:

This allows you to enhance your self-image and gain a better understanding of your current knowledge, skills and competencies, to identify where

your strengths are and where you may need further development. Perhaps you are also changing careers and are looking for new challenges? Perhaps you are interested in further developing yourself on a professional level and want to see where your strengths lie? Perhaps you want to specifically plan your future volunteer work?

Based on the competencies profile that you will create here, you can actively decide how you want to use your knowledge, skills and competencies in the future. And you can decide what areas you want to focus on for your personal further development.

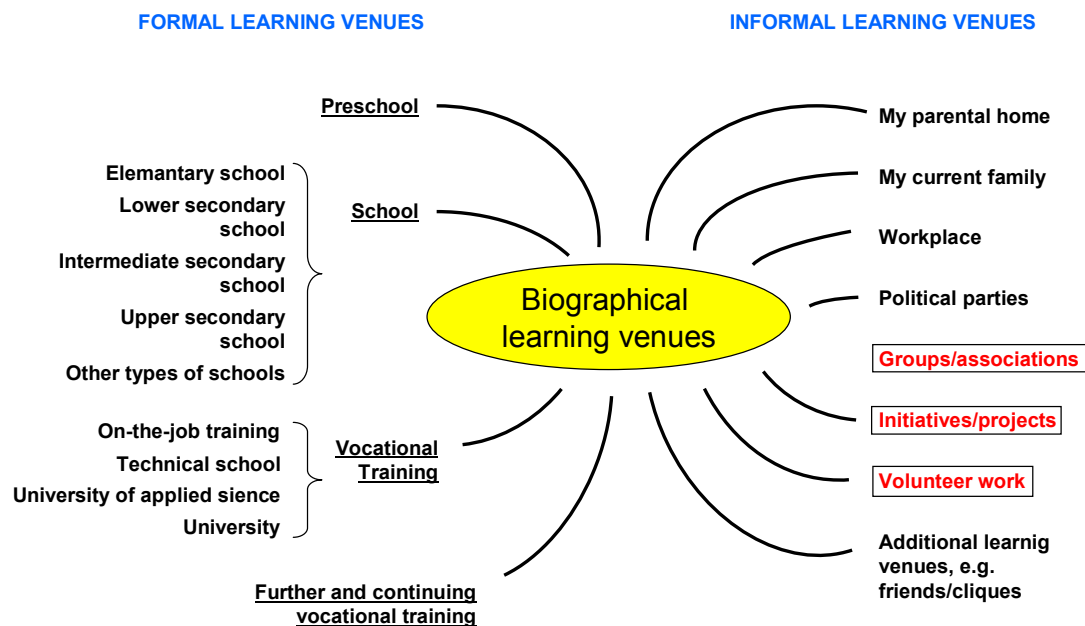
Allow us to show you how you can view your volunteer work from another perspective: Discover what you have learned and the knowledge, skills and competencies that you have acquired or further developed as a volunteer.

Indeed, throughout Europe such so-called informally acquired competencies are viewed as increasingly important. To aid this process, the European Qualification Framework was developed, along with its German counterpart, the German Qualification Framework (Deutscher Qualifikationsrahmen – DQR), whose intentions and goals have been incorporated into this competencies assessment. This also includes the key competencies of “Education for Sustainable Development.”

How can you use the competencies assessment?

You can use the competencies assessment as a volunteer:

- For your **personal development**: Learn what your strengths are, and possibly also your weaknesses, where your interests lie, and how you can incorporate these into your life goals;
- For your **professional development**, for example, when applying for jobs. This is where you can contribute your knowledge, skills and competencies gained during volunteer work. It can also be used as the basis for the targeted planning of your vocational reorientation or to prepare for a performance review, etc., or to determine a new orientation after changing careers, for instance, after a period of unemployment;
- And for your **ongoing volunteer work**: this offers an opportunity to effectively put your identified knowledge, skills and competencies to work; Based on the competencies assessment, you can actively reflect on which competencies you would like to further develop or acquire in another, new area of activity.



Your life history as a learning history

We learn in many ways: for example, when someone shares knowledge with us, when we listen or read, and when we practice new skills. We learn most intensively, though, when we (have to) overcome challenges.

And we learn in many places and on many occasions – throughout our lives. During the course of your life, you have without a doubt already overcome many challenges, some with overwhelming success, and others perhaps with disappointing results. In any case, you have gained experiences and learned something in the process.

Schools and training are just one part of our learning history; professional everyday life, family activities and involvement in our social surroundings constitute additional learning venues where we gain experience, learn new things and acquire competencies. In contrast to schools, we do not learn here according to a syllabus; we take no examinations and receive no certificates. The focus here is not on testable and predictable knowledge and skills, such as would be expected in connection with a vocational qualification, but rather a person's ability to successfully deal with a certain situation.

Appropriate considerations and steps are required to highlight the knowledge and skills that you have acquired so you can put them to use. **This is precisely what the competencies assessment allows you to do: You can use it to list, evaluate and use the knowledge, skills and competencies gained during your volunteer work!**

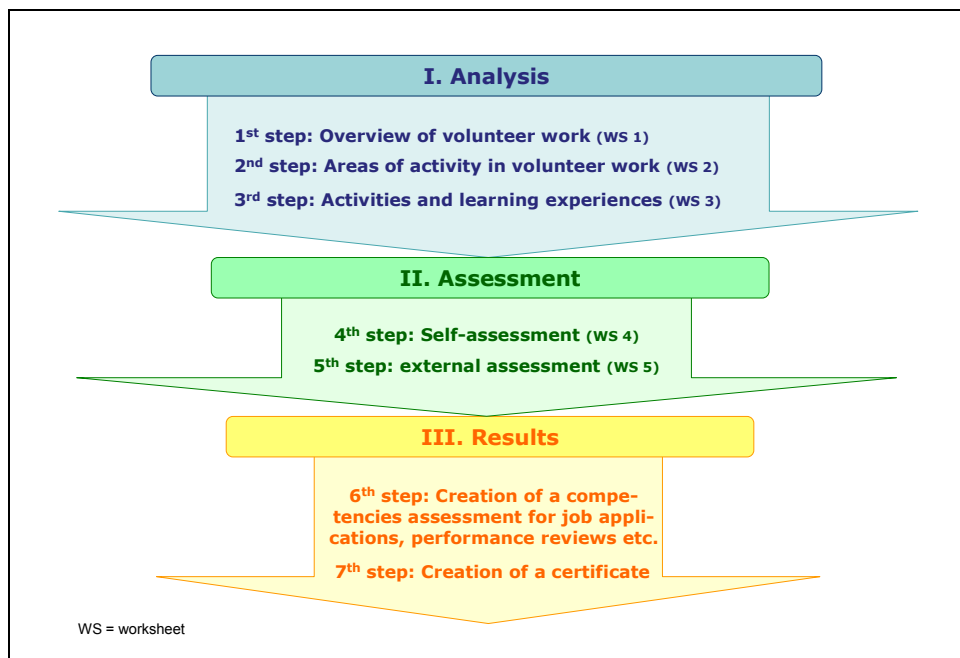
In the above diagram, "biographical learning venues," you will find an overview of the diverse learning venues:

1. The **formal learning venues**: where learning takes place according to a predetermined syllabus so the acquired knowledge can be tested, for example, at a school, during training and continuing education.
2. The **informal learning venues**: We meet the demands that arise in diverse situations in accordance with our own goals and possibilities, meaning that we approach them in a highly personal manner. Informal learning areas include the family, the workplace and volunteer activities.

How does the competencies assessment work?

The competencies assessment – step by step

1. You create an overview that shows where you currently volunteer or where you used to perform volunteer work.
2. You describe your area of activities, including the general conditions.
3. You list your activities and the learning experiences that you have gained in the process.
4. Use this to create your own personal assessment of your knowledge, skills and competencies and, based on your self-assessment, evaluate them.
5. You use an external assessment to get feedback on your self-assessment.
6. You compare your self-assessment with the external assessment, and use this to develop your personal competencies assessment.
7. You use the competencies assessment in line with your personal requirements. If you want to use your competencies in a professional situation or for volunteer work, you can create a certificate with the staff of the conservation area.



Assessment of competencies gained during volunteer work – process and results
(based on German Youth Institute, 2006)

Tips for working with the competencies assessment

Three things are necessary in order for the competencies assessment to achieve the desired effect:

- Sufficient **time**: You should set aside at least three – and preferably more – hours to conduct the competencies assessment.
- An **appropriate place**: A nice quiet place where you can work undisturbed and leave your documents lying about while you take a break.
- **Working materials**: Paper and pencil contribute to achieving good results. Diagrams and drawings help you reflect.

How to proceed

1. An overview of your volunteer work

What needs to be done?

- Describe where you are currently volunteering or where you have volunteered in the past.
- Explain what your job involves, or what it involved in the past.
- Include information on when and for how long you have been working (or worked in the past) as a volunteer.

Worksheet 1: An overview of your volunteer work

	Where? Where are you currently working, or where did you work, as a volunteer? (XY National Park, XY Nature Park, XY Biosphere Reserve, other areas of volunteer work, if applicable)	What? What does (did) your job involve?	How long? Since when (from when to when for each placement) have you been working/did you work?
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			

2. Your field of activity in volunteer work

What needs to be done?

- This concerns the general conditions surrounding your field of activity: Select your volunteer activity for a national park, nature park or biosphere reserve from the list on worksheet 1. If you want to conduct a competencies assessment for other volunteer activities that you perform, use a separate worksheet for each activity (please copy this page and the additional worksheets prior to beginning).
- Describe in greater detail your area of activity in each park: How is it organized, what is your position? What is the target group of your work? What can you learn there?
- Give some thought as to why you are active in this particular area.
- Clarify how you are integrated and how you can help to shape your work!

Worksheet 2: Information on the selected area of activity
--

Selected area of activity	
My area of activity is in the following conservation area...	
My activity serves the goal...	
My reason/motivation for getting involved here was...	
I work here alone/together with...	
I am (was) familiar with the challenges that I face(d)/I've had to face entirely new challenges...	

<p>I can determine my tasks alone/ I only work according to instructions</p>	
<p>I can make my own schedule/my schedule is determined by someone else...</p>	
<p>I always perform the same job/ I take on various tasks...</p>	
<p>I monitor the results and quality of my activities myself/there are joint assessments/there is quality management...</p>	
<p>The park offers me the following continuing education opportunities...</p>	

3. Your activities and your learning experiences

What needs to be done?

The starting point is the involvement that you have selected as a "Volunteer in Parks."

In order to transform learning experiences into knowledge, skills and competencies that you can use time and again in a wide range of situations, you have to gain an awareness of these experiences and be able to name them. This requires intensive reflection.

On the worksheet 3 below, you will find various activities listed in the first column. If examples can help you in your selection of activities, please see the list in the appendix.

- Start out by going through this list: Which of these activities applies to you? Select these and then indicate what exactly it is that you do during these activities. The focus here is on the challenges that you overcome and that convey learning experiences.

- Which of these things do I enjoy doing? This is also a key aspect of your learning experiences because the learning benefit is greatest where the job and the demands are fun and constitute a challenge.

- What is the importance of the individual activities? Please indicate the activities that constitute the main focus of your volunteer work.

- Inevitably, not all of the activities in your volunteer work will be found on this list; Please add other activities that you have discovered as well.

- Based on these various considerations, you will be able to pinpoint your learning experiences: try to label these as precisely as possible.

- Please also keep in mind the practical activities and the learning experiences that you have gained from them!

Worksheet 3: Activities and learning experiences

(List of explanations of the activities in the appendix)

Type of activity	What do you do during the activity?	Focus? (X)	Do you enjoy it?	I learned in the process
Acquiring information				
Artistic activities				
Consulting				
Data collection and/or archiving				
Facilitating events				
Guiding				
Landscape conservation, gardening				
Managing employees				

Type of activity	What do you do during the activity?	Focus? (X)	Do you enjoy it?	I learned in the process
Manual work				
Monitoring visitor facilities				
Nature observation				
Networking with others				
Other activities				
Photography/Filming				
Planning and organizing				
PR work				
Solving technical problems				

Type of activity	What do you do during the activity?	Focus? (X)	Do you enjoy it?	I learned in the process
Species protection				
Supervising, conducting				
Teaching and instructing				
Technical communications				
Writing and editing texts				

4. Your knowledge, skills and competencies – the self-assessment

What needs to be done?

You now have a very good overview of your learning experiences, and thus also of the knowledge and skills that you have gained during volunteer work. The self-assessment is carried out in three steps:

1. **To translate** your learning experiences into concrete knowledge, skills and competencies (divided into personal competencies and social-communicative competencies), you will find a list of terminology explanations in the appendix.
2. **To list** them, enter your diverse knowledge, skills and competencies, one after another, on worksheet 4 – focusing on the ones that appear to you to be the most important and most applicable. If you have described learning experiences that you cannot categorize according to these knowledge areas, skills and competencies, then you should definitely also include these experiences on the list. This holds true above all for vocational-professional competencies.
3. **To evaluate** them, use worksheet 4 to rate on a four-point scale the breadth and depth of the knowledge and skills that you have acquired, enhanced/improved and/or (further) developed. Please also note on the table which competencies you have either (further) developed or brought with you and successfully utilized.

Worksheet 4: Your knowledge, skills and competencies gained during volunteer work – a self-assessment

I have (further) developed the following KNOWLEDGE from my learning experiences and/or successfully applied it to my area of work:	And this is the extent of this KNOWLEDGE:			
	I have gained initial insights into this topic and have basic knowledge.	My specialized knowledge is more than superficial; it is broad and deep general knowledge.	I have comprehensive knowledge, which also includes theoretical background knowledge.	I have comprehensive, detailed, specialized and systematic knowledge based on the latest scientific findings.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

I have (further) developed the following SKILLS from my learning experiences and/or applied them to my area of work:	And this is how I master these SKILLS:			
	With this skill, I can handle simple tasks (possibly according to instructions) and evaluate their results.	With this skill, I can usually plan and handle tasks independently and evaluate the work results.	I am specialized in this skill. I can use it to independently plan, handle and evaluate complex tasks and find new solutions to problems.	I am highly specialized in this skill. I can use it to recognize and solve highly complex or new problems and conduct demanding research and development.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

I have (further) developed the following PERSONAL COMPETENCIES from my learning experiences and/or successfully applied them to my area of work: (Recommendation: name approx. 3 to 6 in your work area that have been most useful)			I have (further) developed the following SOCIAL-COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCIES from my learning experiences and/or successfully applied them to my area of work: (Recommendation: name approx. 3 to 6 in your work area that have been most useful)		
	(further) developed	previously acquired, successfully applied		(further) developed	previously acquired, successfully applied
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Your knowledge, skills and competencies – the external-assessment

What needs to be done?

The image that we have of ourselves is often not identical with the one that other people have of us. We behave differently in our diverse roles and areas of life, for example, we act differently as a daughter/son than we do in our role as an employee or manager, and so on. The external assessment offers an opportunity to check your own perceptions of yourself and your competencies by receiving feedback from other individuals.

- Convince one or more people (for example, the volunteer coordinator in your protected area) to assist you and, with the help of an external assessment, provide feedback on your self-assessment.

- Make sure in any case that you have sufficient time for a follow-up conversation where you can ask questions. It is only through this exchange that the external assessment can achieve its full impact.

- In order to ensure that your evaluating assistant understands the procedures used in the competencies assessment, you should inform him/her – if he/she has no prior knowledge – of the methods, approaches and goals involved and provide him/her with a list of the terminology explanations (knowledge, skills, competencies; see appendix).

- The individual(s) who you have selected for the external assessment receive worksheet 5 "external assessment." You will find this in the appendix. Start out by entering here the knowledge, skills and competencies that you have discovered during your self-assessment, but WITHOUT evaluating them.

- The evaluating assistant who conducts the external assessment should do the following:

- Examine the list of competencies gained during volunteer work on worksheet 5 (which you have transferred from worksheet 4). During this process, the evaluating assistant will add knowledge, skills and competencies that he/she feels are missing and, wherever applicable, add comments to listed competencies which, from his/her perspective, are not present.

- In the second step, the evaluating assistant assesses your command of the knowledge, skills and competencies listed – and this is based on the same approach that you used for your self-assessment.

- When the external assessment is complete, you will meet with the person who conducted it.

Go through the knowledge, skills and competencies one by one to determine where the assessments diverge. Exchange information on the justifications for each assessment. Provide examples of how you reached individual conclusions in your self-assessment of your knowledge, skills and competencies; ask for examples or more detailed information on how your evaluating assistant reached conclusions in his/her external assessment. This exchange is not about being "right" or "wrong." The idea is rather to exchange perceptions in an open dialogue and mutually understand your assessments.

6. The result: your competencies assessment

What needs to be done?

You have before you:

1. Your list of your knowledge, skills and competencies with your self-assessment,
 2. Your list of your knowledge, skills and competencies with the external assessment (possibly even a number of external assessments).
- Based on the results of the external assessment, take another careful look at your self-assessment. It could be that your external assessment diverges from your self-assessment. You decide which aspects of the external assessment you want to take into account, and how much weight you want to give them. In other words, it is entirely up to you to decide what knowledge, skills and competencies will actually stand in the assessment and how they will be rated.
 - Where there are divergences, refer back to your self-assessment. What prompted you to assess yourself in this way? Try to reconstruct your own justification at the time. You should also consider: In what other situations do I show this competency? Does this reinforce my self-assessment or the external assessment? In what situation am I observed by the person who has conducted of the external assessment? What experience etc. forms the basis for their assessment of this particular competency?
 - If the external assessment causes you to change your self-assessment, make the appropriate changes on your list of knowledge, skills and competencies. It is suggested that you use a different color pen for this. This revised version is your competencies assessment.

How you can further use the competencies assessment

What needs to be done?

You now have your personal assessment of competencies gained during volunteer work.

It is entirely up to you to decide how you want to use this and which results you convey to the outside world.

You should consider the following possibilities:

- You can use this as inspiration for how you can continue to develop on a personal level.
- You can organize your personal and professional continuing education accordingly.
- You can decide for yourself which strengths you want to further develop.
- You can also reflect on whether you want to make changes in your volunteer work.
- You can use the results for your professional (further) development.

In the appendix you will find an example of a certificate for your volunteer work and the acquired knowledge, skills and competencies. If you have chosen the volunteer coordinator or another full-time staff member from your protected area as your evaluating assistant, this person will certainly be prepared to sit down with you and write up a certificate. You can use the ratings on the four-point scale and the list of terminology explanations (knowledge, skills, and competencies) to help formulate your text.

If you want to determine what knowledge, skills and competencies you have acquired in other learning areas and learning venues, you can also extend the guidelines and worksheets to other learning venues, such as family and workplace. This will allow you to create a comprehensive competencies profile.

You can also use other tools, for example, the family activity competency assessment (Kompetenzbilanz Familientätigkeit – www.dji.de/familienkompetenzen) and the ProfilPASS (www.profilpass.de).

You have reached the end of your competencies assessment, but certainly not the end of your competencies development and your volunteer work because we never stop learning! If you look at this competencies assessment on a regular basis, you will discover which competencies you have newly acquired and where you may need further development.

We wish you a lifetime of new and exciting challenges and learning experiences and hope that you will continuously expand your knowledge, skills and competencies!

Appendix

For worksheet 3: List of possible activities of “Volunteers in Parks” with examples

ACTIVITY	EXAMPLES
Acquiring information	Conducting specialized research work, for example, for informational materials, exhibits and events
Additional activities	Areas of activity in your volunteer work that have not been mentioned here
Artistic activities	Graphic design work for informational materials, exhibits
Consulting	Consulting, for example, in the area of tourist offers, use of plants, garden design, nutrition/food preparation with wild and cultivated plants
Data collection and/or archiving	Administrating, sorting, archiving of monitoring data, photo/slide archives, press archives, etc.
Facilitating events	Facilitating workgroups, discussions, presentations, acting as a spokesperson for projects
Guiding	Guiding groups of children/young people, participants of all ages at events on topics such as identifying species, cutting trees, bird watching
Landscape conservation, gardening	Mowing meadows, planting and maintaining trees, returning moors to their natural state, removing brush and saplings on heaths, design/maintenance of gardens and outdoor facilities of information centers
Managing employees	Recruiting, briefing, supervising, continuing education of volunteers, writing job descriptions for volunteers
Manual work	Building and renovating signs, trail markers, facilities for hikers, nature trail exhibits, putting up and dismantling fences
Monitoring visitor facilities	Monitoring the usability, functionality, cleanliness, etc. of hiking trails, facilities for hikers, forest playgrounds, signs
Natural observation	Mapping out plant habitats and biotopes, collecting data on animal populations
Networking with others	Establish and strengthen ties and collaborations with other organizations and partners
Photography/Filming	Photographing and filming landscapes, plants, animals and events for the protected area archive and for PR work
Planning and organizing	Creating work schedules for groups, projects, work assignments, events, logistical/organizational implementation of projects, events and work assignments
PR work	PR work in and for the National Natural Landscapes, designing promotional campaigns and materials
Solving technical problems	Setting up informational/trade show stands, installing lights/loudspeakers, showing films
Species protection	Building amphibian fences, nesting boxes, breeding burrows, developing bat colonies
Supervising, conducting	Supervising and conducting people with physical and mental disabilities, park guests who speak foreign languages
Teaching and instructing	Guided tours for park guests, working at informational/trade show stands, educational grants for children/young people
Technical communications	Using the Internet, e-mail, creating/administering a website, data collection and evaluation, for example, for monitoring purposes
Writing and editing texts	Writing texts for exhibitions, informational materials, websites, proofreading, translating into other languages

For worksheet 4: List of possible knowledge, skills and competencies of “Volunteers in Parks”

KNOWLEDGE (Theoretical and/or factual knowledge)
ECOSYSTEMS – FUNCTIONS AND IMPORTANCE IN THE REGION
I am familiar with the ecosystems in the region that play an important role in achieving the goals of the protected area, including their components and functions. I am aware of their relevance for nature conservation and/or land use in the region.
EDUCATIONAL METHODS AND/OR APPROACHES TO EXPERIENCING NATURE
I am familiar with methods that allow a target group or a number of target groups to experience nature and/or to convey park-related knowledge to them, such as guided tours and playful ways of experiencing nature.
KNOWLEDGE OF THE AREA
I am familiar with the goals, structures and development of the protected area and the key ecosystems in the region. Furthermore, I know the relevant actors and partners in the region.
LANGUAGE(S)
I have a working knowledge of one or more foreign languages.
MEASURES TO PROTECT SPECIES
I am familiar with professionally recognized methods applied in protected areas to protect plant and animal species and support their (renewed) prevalence.
METHODS OF DOCUMENTING SPECIES
I am familiar with professionally recognized methods applied in protected areas to keep records of plant and animal species and clearly document their populations.
PRESENTATION AND FACILITATION TECHNIQUES
I am familiar with the methods and equipment required to clearly present factual information to an audience and, in a group (in official or informal settings), to effectively direct and facilitate a fair and productive exchange of ideas.
REGIONAL OFFERS
I am familiar with offers in the region, for example, in the areas of tourism and recreation, culture, agricultural, forestry, fishing products and crafts.
SPECIES AND THEIR HABITAT REQUIREMENTS
I am familiar with the plant and animal species that are relevant for the region, how they live, their function in each ecological system and their habitat requirements, and, where applicable, their level of endangerment and the causes.
STRUCTURING/ADMINISTRATING ARCHIVES
I am familiar with one (or more) archiving system(s) that serve(s) the needs of protected area management, for example, for photos or slides, including the required techniques, and am familiar with how this is (they are) structured, used and administered.
USE OF CULTIVATED AND/OR WILD PLANTS
I am familiar with methods for the planting, care and use of important cultivated and/or wild plants in the region.
VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT METHODS
I am familiar with the generally established methods of volunteer management, such as developing assignments, advertising, initiating and supervising volunteers, recognizing and evaluating volunteer work.

SKILLS

1. cognitive skills = involving the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking
2. practical skills = mastery and use of methods, materials, tools and instruments

APPLYING INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

I can apply information technology, for example, work with computers, including software like Internet browsers, e-mail programs, word processing and presentation programs; in more demanding situations, I can also administer and program software.

BUILDING, CONSTRUCTING

I can plan and carry out minor structural and building jobs.

FILMING

I can film subjects in a manner and quality that meets the requirements of their intended usage.

GRAPHIC, ARTISTIC DESIGN

I can graphically and/or artistically design products such as publications, websites, exhibition elements, souvenirs, construction components, etc. to meet the requirements of their intended usage.

INSTALLING TECHNICAL EQUIPMENT

I can install technical equipment, such as computers, video projectors, light installations and/or loudspeakers.

PRACTICAL MEASURES TO MAINTAIN LANDSCAPES

I can carry out practical measures to maintain landscapes, like mowing meadows, planting trees and hedges, pruning trees, bush removal, etc., in a manner that fulfills their purposes.

PRACTICAL MEASURES TO PROTECT SPECIES

I can employ practical measures to protect species, such as building nesting boxes and shelters for birds to rest and spend the winter, protective fences, etc., in a manner that fulfills their purposes.

USE OF ELECTRIC/MOTOR-DRIVEN MACHINES

I can operate electric/motor-driven machines and use them to meet park management requirements.

USING HAND AND POWER TOOLS

I know how to work with hand and power tools and use them to meet park management requirements.

COMPETENCIES
Taking on responsibilities and independence
1) PERSONAL COMPETENCIES
ABILITY TO ADAPT
I can adjust to new circumstances and can easily adapt to changing situations. I react appropriately to new challenges; I am skilled at integrating myself into new teams.
ABILITY TO MAKE DECISIONS
I am familiar with my own scope for making decisions and the responsibility that this entails. I gather information, develop alternatives, can set priorities and find solutions within an appropriate timeframe; at the same time, I also consider the possible consequences.
ABILITY TO DELEGATE
I can differentiate between tasks that I can delegate to someone else and those that I have to handle myself. I can recognize the individual abilities of others and thus delegate tasks according to their personal strengths. I trust in the abilities of others and the fact that they can handle their tasks independently and assume responsibility for them.
ABILITY FOR SELF-REFLECTION
I can critically examine my goals and actions. In doing so, I can recognize cause-effect relationships. I know my strengths and weaknesses. I see constructive criticism as an opportunity for my own personal development and I actively seek feedback.
ABILITY TO SUPERVISE
I can recognize tasks that need to be checked and do an appropriate amount of supervising, without being suspicious.
ABILITY TO NAVIGATE WITHIN STRUCTURES
I can recognize the structure of organizations as well as where I can find information that is important to me. I can recognize my place and behave in accordance with my position.
ABILITY TO TAKE INITIATIVE
When I undertake something independently, I go beyond ideas and wishes and actually implement it. I take pleasure in my work and my abilities and act of my own accord.
ANALYTICAL SKILLS
I can rapidly analyze wide-ranging and complex relationships, filter out key aspects, and present them in a generally comprehensible manner.
ASSERTIVENESS
I can confidently express an independent opinion that differs from the opinions of others and plausibly argue in favor of its merits. I can also develop strategies to achieve recognition for my position, even over the interests of others.
AUTHENTICITY
Based on my natural behavior, I am a credible and reputable individual for the people in my surroundings. I neither avoid certain situations nor put on an act in front of others; I always endeavor to just be myself.
CONCEPTUAL ABILITIES
I can analyze a situation and draw adequate conclusions from this. I can translate ideas and concepts into goals and content, and develop the appropriate steps to take. At the same time, I also take into account the existing general conditions.
COPING WITH STRESS – RESILIENCE
Even when I have a heavy workload, I don't get stressed, but rather approach my assignments in a systematic and focused manner. This means that even in stressful situations, I stay in control and emotionally stable, and can maintain my level of performance as evenly as possible. I relieve work stress by engaging in suitable activities, like exercising.
CREATIVITY
I like to experiment and I am prepared to explore new ways and directions. I can develop unconventional, groundbreaking new ideas and implement them accordingly. I am full of ideas, have a great deal of imagination, and like to try out new things.
CUSTOMER ORIENTATION
I can recognize the needs of customers and partners and, with regard to service and quality, appropriately meet these needs. I value my customers, and in doing so, I neglect neither my own interests nor those of my customers.

DILIGENCE
I carry out tasks conscientiously, thoroughly, completely and dependably. To accomplish this, I stay on top of things by keeping my documents in order, examining procedural documentation and paying attention to important details.
FLEXIBILITY
I can adapt my usual thinking and approaches to new and different situations. By the same token, I can take on new tasks and challenges and deal with them without fear or anxiety.
GOAL-ORIENTED APPROACH
I establish ambitious and attainable goals with suitable steps to achieve them. I can also work together with others to develop and establish goals. In addition, I don't lose sight of them even in difficult situations or under changing conditions, and continue to diligently pursue them within the agreed timeframe.
INITIATING AND IMPLEMENTING CHANGES
I am open to new and unfamiliar things. I see changes as opportunities for the future. I like to develop new visions and am aware of the new conditions, solutions and directions that this entails. I pursue changes without losing sight of other participants.
JUDGEMENT
I have the ability to analyze situations, individuals and processes from an appropriate distance, and to objectively judge what consequences can be drawn from this.
LOGICAL THINKING
I draw correct conclusions from the available facts. I can rapidly recognize how things are interconnected and summarize this information. I am quick and precise with numbers.
LOOKING TO THE FUTURE
I see future developments as a challenge. Thanks to information that I have gathered myself and my own reflections, I can anticipate future developments and act accordingly in a forward-looking manner. I adjust my behavior in line with my own vision of the future.
ORGANIZATIONAL ABILITY – PLANNING
I can translate goals into tasks and, at the same time, optimally make use of the available resources. In doing so, I take past experiences into account and consider future developments. I can coordinate diverse tasks and organize them in a logical sequence.
PERSEVERANCE – STAYING POWER
I can constructively deal with difficult conditions such as intense pressure, resistance, disruptions, etc. and, at the same time, can produce solid and convincing results during long difficult phases.
PERSONAL CONDUCT
I can behave in a confident, trustworthy and convincing manner that is appropriate to the situation. I am aware of my personal impact and can consciously use this for a successful presentation.
PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY
I know that I am solely responsible for my life and my decisions. This also means that every situation in my life is decisively shaped by my actions.
PROBLEM-SOLVING ABILITY
I can see what makes a problem a problem, and in doing so, I can recognize the relationship between cause and effect. Based on this knowledge, I can identify and assess the risks and opportunities connected with the problem, and develop suitable solutions which involve everyone.
SELF-ASSERTION
I am confident in my abilities and prepared to meet the challenges that I face. By the same token, I am aware of my own needs and goals, can confidently express them, and can stand up for them, even in the face of diverging opinions and interests. Indeed, I clearly distinguish myself from others.
TIME MANAGEMENT
I accomplish assigned tasks and goals within the agreed timeframe. For larger projects, I always develop a time plan and stick to it. Furthermore, I always allow sufficient downtime to recharge my batteries.
USE OF KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION
I realize that I don't have to know everything, but I know where to find information. At the same time, I can differentiate between important and superfluous information. I am aware of the tasks and interests of others and can present my information in an appropriate manner.

VERBAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS
I can get to the heart of ideas, plans, goals and presentations and convey these clearly and succinctly. I stick to the key points, but express myself completely and clearly. This is where my large vocabulary serves me well. I form grammatically correct and complete sentences, and I am quick on my feet with a witty repartee.
WILLINGNESS TO LEARN
I am open to new things and learn from my successes as well as by mistakes. I am highly interested in new developments and information, and I can acquire new knowledge and skills within an appropriate timeframe.
WILLINGNESS TO PERFORM
I am willing and motivated to take on tasks voluntarily and I show a high level of commitment in my work. Indeed, I can achieve excellent results, both in terms of the quality and quantity, without allowing myself to be discouraged by failures. I can always re-motivate myself, even after setbacks.
WILLINGNESS TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY
I can anticipate the consequences of my decisions and form an independent opinion. I therefore act prudently and deliberately, can take initiatives, make decisions and accept responsibility for the consequences, both internally and externally.
WILLINGNESS TO TAKE RISKS
I am willing to explore new and untested approaches. Nevertheless, I proceed with caution: I can properly assess a given situation, acquire information and consult experts when making a decision. Based on this, I weigh the risks and opportunities, and even risk failure, if it paves the way to new experiences.
WORKING WITHOUT SUPERVISION
I can independently identify my tasks and responsibilities in my surroundings, and develop steps to achieve these goals. I plan and organize my daily schedule based on my personal goals and responsibly use my own resources to attain them. In addition to meeting the demands of my job, I make sure I get enough rest and relaxation to maintain my health.
WRITTEN LANGUAGE SKILLS
My writing is very clear and intelligible. I have a comprehensive vocabulary and excellent sense of style, which guarantees 'le mot juste' for every situation.

2) SOCIAL-COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCIES
ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE
I can establish contacts and start up a conversation. By the same token, I can carry on a conversation with a number of different people, attentively listen to individuals, and maintain a dialogue, even under difficult circumstances. In addition, I convey respect and appreciation to my conversation partners.
ABILITY TO MOTIVATE OTHERS
When I am confident about something, I can inspire others to get on board. I ensure a high level of motivation by giving positive feedback and recognizing the work performed.
ABILITY TO NEGOTIATE
I develop strategies for my approaches and enter into negotiations in a confident and convincing manner, and can effectively represent my own interests. I successfully and diplomatically reach joint results with my negotiating partners.
ABILITY FOR TEAMWORK – WILLINGNESS TO COOPERATE
Working in a team, I have the ability to jointly define and achieve goals in a fair and friendly manner. I can fully commit myself to achieving these shared goals. In addition, I can constructively contribute my own abilities, but also deal with criticism. Furthermore, I have no problems contributing my own information to reach joint solutions and compromises. I can also easily accept and offer support.
CONFLICT MANAGEMENT
I can constructively deal with different views and interests in a conflict situation. I recognize the roots of conflicts, can address various viewpoints, and am able to develop solutions where no one is the loser.
CRITICAL FEEDBACK
I can address problems and give critical feedback to people and their work in a way that shows respect and appreciation, making it acceptable and beneficial for others. I can accept other points of view and am grateful for critical feedback.
DEPENDABILITY
I respect rules and agreements that I have arranged with others. Others can rely on what I say; I carry out my work in accordance with the agreed quality standards.
EMPATHY
I am interested in other people and their issues and situations and can make contacts at any time. I can empathize with other people's problems by listening to them and paying attention to what they say and how they say it. At the same time, I maintain sufficient distance to avoid making other people's troubles my own.
INTERCULTURAL SKILLS
I am aware of the predominant differences among diverse cultures and know that political, economic and social circumstances can influence people's way of thinking. I respect and appreciate other cultures, and this allows me to communicate and work with people from other cultures.

Worksheet 5: Your knowledge, skills and competencies gained during volunteer work – an external assessment

(To be filled out by the evaluating assistant, for example, a volunteer coordinator)

KNOWLEDGE gained during volunteer work, (further) developed and/or successfully applied:	He/she has the following KNOWLEDGE:			
	He/she has gained initial insights into this topic and has basic knowledge.	His/her specialized knowledge is more than superficial; it is broad and deep general knowledge.	He/she has comprehensive knowledge that also includes theoretical background knowledge.	He/she has comprehensive, detailed, specialized and systematic knowledge based on the latest scientific findings.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SKILLS gained during volunteer work, (further) developed and/or successfully applied:	He/she has the following SKILLS:			
	With this skill, he/she can handle simple tasks (possibly according to instructions) and evaluate their results.	With this skill, he/she can usually plan and handle tasks independently and evaluate the work results.	He/she is specialized in this skill. He/she can use it to independently plan, handle and evaluate complex tasks and find new solutions to problems.	He/she is highly specialized in this skill. He/she can use it to recognize and solve highly complex or new problems and conduct demanding research and development.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

PERSONAL COMPETENCIES gained during volunteer work, (further) developed and/or successfully applied: (Recommendation: name approx. 3 to 6 in your work area that have been most useful)			SOCIAL-COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCIES gained during volunteer work, (further) developed and/or successfully applied: (Recommendation: name approx. 3 to 6 in your work area that have been most useful)		
	(further) developed	previously acquired, successfully applied		(further) developed	previously acquired, successfully applied
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Logo Schutzgebiet

**Nationale
Naturlandschaften**



***Certificate
confirming the acquisition of
knowledge, skills and competencies
as a “Volunteer in Parks” ****

sample

Name

Date of birth: ...

LOCATION(S) AND TIMEFRAME OF THE VOLUNTEER WORK

XY Biosphere Reserve, XY Visitor Center
February 2008 - March 2010

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

- Support at the information desk and providing help at the XY Visitor Center; 14 days, 6 hours: advising guests on tourist offers and regional attractions that appeal to nature lovers
- Guiding people with impaired vision through the visitor center: Designing, carrying out and evaluating the guided tours (total of 14 tours); creating a flyer on the visitor center exhibition for people with impaired vision
- Organizational support for the event “XY Biosphere Reserve Celebrates Its 10th Anniversary” on August 22, 2009: Assembling, dismantling and designing the market stands; filmic documentation of the event, including archiving of photographic material
- Taking part in the park-internal continuing education event “Constructively Resolving Conflicts – Dealing with Inappropriate Behavior by Park Guests” on October 18, 2008

KNOWLEDGE:

Name

Knowledge of the area

has comprehensive knowledge and solid, theoretical background knowledge of the XY Biosphere Reserve.

Presentation and facilitation techniques

has broad knowledge of presentation and facilitation techniques and is familiar with the equipment required to clearly present factual information to an audience and, in a group (in both official and informal settings), direct and facilitate a fair and productive exchange of ideas.

Educational methods

has a wide range of methods to convey park-related knowledge to the target group – people with impaired vision – during tours of the visitor center.

SKILLS:

Filming

has acquired initial insights into the techniques of filming and can film simple subjects in a manner and quality that meets the requirements of their intended usage.

PERSONAL COMPETENCIES:

Personal responsibility

has significantly developed his/her own awareness of what it means to be responsible for his/her own decisions and be able to decisively shape situations based on his/her own actions.

Customer-orientation

has developed the competency to recognize the needs of guests at the visitor center and act appropriately with regard to service and quality, without neglecting his/her interests nor those of his/her customers.

Willingness to learn

has brought a distinct willingness to learn, which is manifested in an openness to new things and the ability to learn from successes and failures. This willingness to learn also includes a keen interest in new developments and information and the competency to acquire new knowledge and skills within an appropriate timeframe.

SOCIAL-COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCIES:

Ability to motivate others

has significantly further developed the ability to motivate others when he/she is convinced of the merit of a task. At the same time, he/she ensures a high level of motivation, for example, by giving positive feedback and recognizing the work performed.

Ability to communicate

has successfully used the distinct ability to establish contacts, conduct conversations with a number of partners, listen attentively to each one and maintain a dialogue, even under difficult circumstances, while conveying a sense of respect and appreciations to conversation partners.

This certificate was issued within the scope of a multi-stage competencies assessment by the certificate holder together with an evaluating assistant.

Certificate holder

Evaluating assistant

XY National Park, Nature Park, Biosphere Reserve

Place, date

This analysis was based on the method "The Assessment of Competencies Gained during Volunteer Work," developed by the German Youth Institute (DJI); further developed under the auspices of the "P.E.T.A.L. – Passport to Environmental Training and Learning" project with financial support from the European Commission, EUROPARC Deutschland e.V. and the German Academy for Volunteer Work..



Legal notice

Project implementation

EUROPARC Deutschland e.V.
Friedrichstr. 60
10117 Berlin
Germany
Tel.: +49/(0)30/2887882-0
Fax: +49/(0)30/2887882-16
E-mail: info@europarc-deutschland.de

In close collaboration with

Akademie für Ehrenamtlichkeit Deutschland
fjs e.V.
Marchlewskistr. 27
10243 Berlin
Germany
Tel.: +49/(0)30/2754938
Fax: +49/(0)30/2790126
E-mail: akademie@ehrenamt.de

Prepared by

Anne Schierenberg (EUROPARC Deutschland)
Thomas Kegel and Volker Paknin (Akademie für Ehrenamtlichkeit Deutschland)

Acknowledgments

EUROPARC Deutschland e.V. would like to extend its heartfelt thanks to the German Youth Institute/DJI for making documents available on the "Assessment of Competencies Gained during Volunteer Work" and to Dr. Andrea Reupold, Munich Center of the Learning Sciences (MCLS)/Ludwigs Maximilian University, Munich, for her professional support.

Project funding

The "Assessment of Competencies Gained during Volunteer work for Volunteers in Parks" was developed within the scope of the "P.E.T.A.L. – Passport to Environmental Training and Learning" project (October 2008 - September 2010). This product was financed with support from the European Commission. The author alone was responsible for the content of this publication; the Commission is not liable for any further use of the information contained herein.