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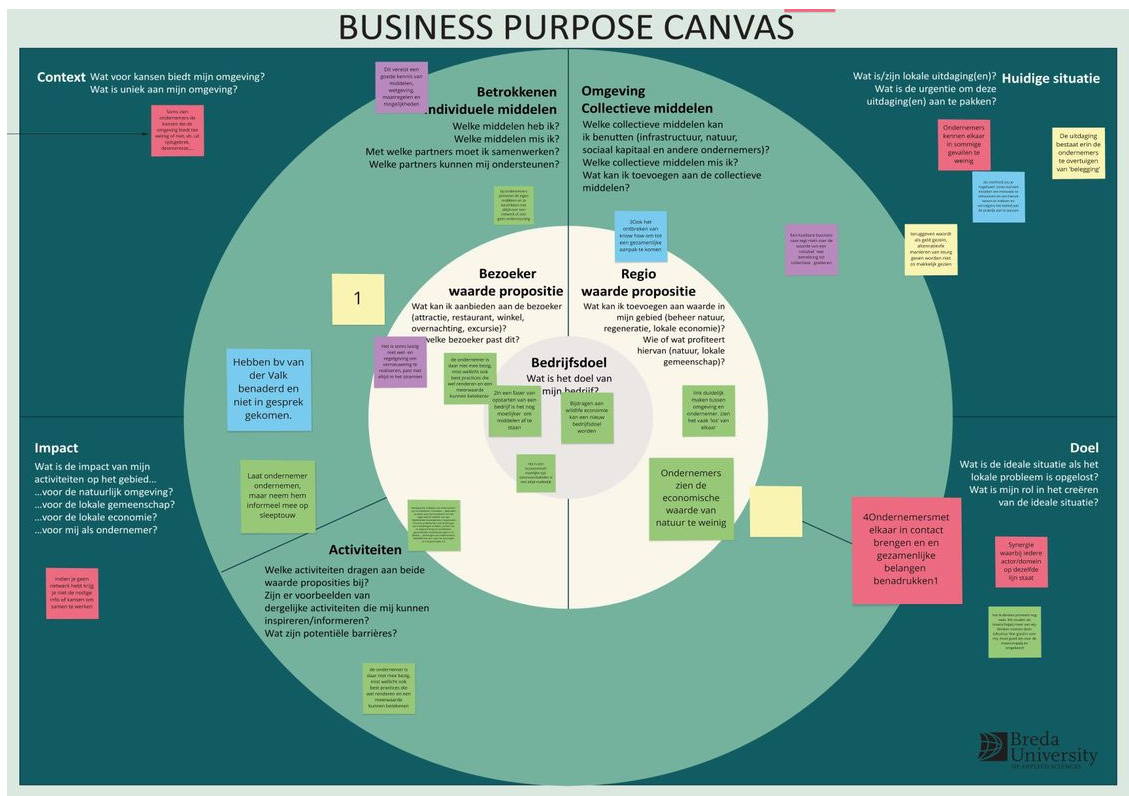
European Union
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WLE Interreg Europe Newsletter #4

Welcome!

This bi-annual newsletter is dedicated to sharing news, events and updates about the WLE project.



Studies on sustainable business models

Both the provincial council of Alava as the Regionaal Landschap Kempen en Maasland conducted a study on sustainable business models.

The council of Alava developed a model that promotes the sustainable economic use of environmental assets. The study aims to be a tool to promote smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in Montaña Alavesa, with the Natura 2000 framework as an instrument of opportunity, and through a model that promotes the sustainable economic use of the territory's cultural and environmental assets. In particular, it addresses two projects: **Greenway of the Old Basque-Navarre Railway** (the recovery and rehabilitation of the old motor vehicle pavilion) and the environmental restoration of the mining landscapes of the former natural asphalt mines of Montaña Alavesa and **the development of ecotourism activities related to the Lucía Mine.**

The Regionaal Landschap Kempen en Maasland developed in a participatory way a methodology to draw up sustainable business models for entrepreneurs in the tourism and agribusiness sector in the region.

These sustainable business models must also contribute positively to the wildlife economy of the region. Central to the sustainable business models to be developed must be economic activities which on balance make a positive contribution to nature and/or the community without (permanently) affecting the natural or cultural value of the area, or they must be forms of value creation in the ecological and/or social and/or cultural domain with economic effects. The models were co-developed during 3 workshops to stakeholders in the region who later will be able to introduce the models to entrepreneurs.



Study Visits

During this semester all partners were able to go on a study visit, despite the Covid19 situation.

The Dutch/Belgian partners went to Hainich National Park and Crawinkel. In Hainich they were able to admire the primeval beech forest in which the core areas have not been interfered with in 50 years. Hainich is the largest continuous area of deciduous forest in Germany. In Crawinkel they were introduced to an organic extensively managed grassland farm of 2500 ha where cattle and horses dominate the landscape all year round on large pastures.



The Spanish partners also went on their study visit. They visited Pola de Somiedo where wildlife thrives and hence the local economy also is doing great. In 2017 the bear population (approx. 320 individuals in the Cantabrian Mountains) generated 20M€ and 350 full-time direct jobs. More than one job per bear! The partners also stopped at Valle de Turon in Langreo where a local association driven by former miners and citizens led to the rehabilitation of some former coal mine infrastructures. Now it's being developed as a tourist attraction along an 11km green path over the old mine railway.

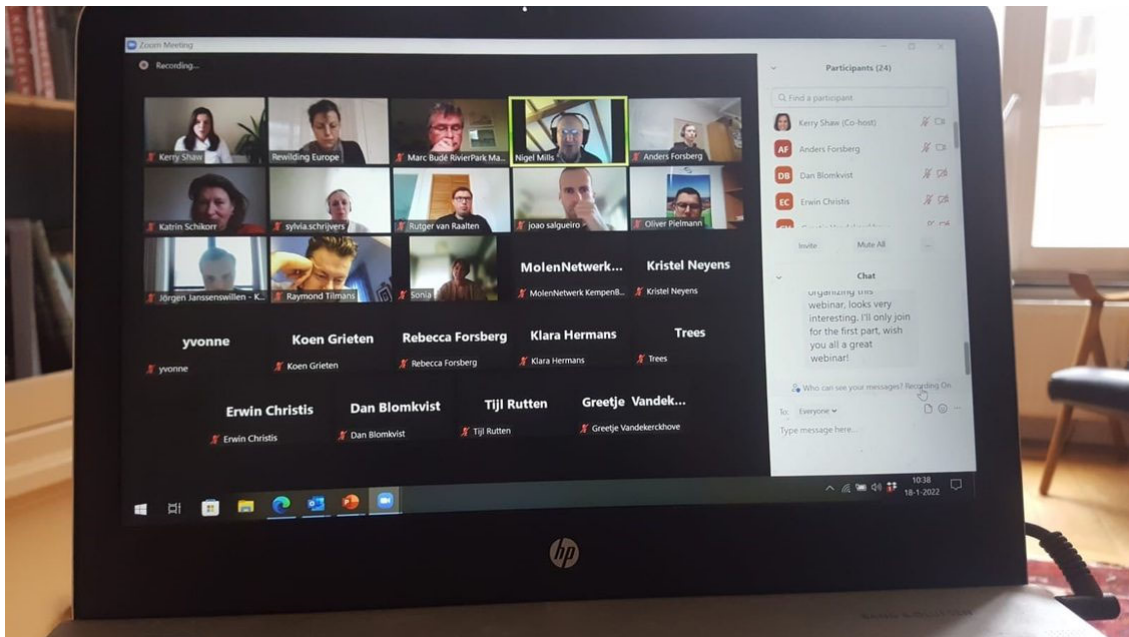
The German partners went to the Danube Delta in Rumania. They visited the Skua Hides and learned that this good practice can be an example and inspiration for other areas. There are around 30 hides, used mainly by photographers and visitors are limited per week. There exists a keen management system, which is based on the expertise and constant monitoring by biologists and ornithologists. Nature improved and the economy in the region bloomed because of the well balanced nature-tourism situation!

A study visit themed around salmon management was made by the Norrbotten region to Estonia. During three intensive days representatives from the County Administrative Board, Rewilding Sweden, Rewilding Europe, the Swedish Board of Agriculture, the Baltic Salmon Fund, the Swedish Anglers Association, Kiruna Lapland tourism center and Destination Jokkmokk met representatives from the Estonian Ministry of Environment and local fishing stakeholders for a tour to key learning sites around Estonia.



Partner and Steering Group meeting Oder Delta

At last we were able to have a partner and steering group meeting again in real life! The meeting on 29-30 September in the Oder Delta was a success. We visited with director, Mr Ulf Wiggerthe, the Nature Park at the island of Usedom which is a tourism hotspot. We were able to discuss strategies of visitor management, conflict management in different user claim situations, cooperation with tourism and tour operators, opportunities for combined strategic development of nature conservation and economy. We went on a solar boat on the Peene river which is a nice example of wildlife economy. During the meetings we addressed different topics like the minutes of the last conference call September, the study visits, the monitoring plans, the financial situation, the best practices for the Interreg Europe Platform and communication. A presentation on the landscape business model was given, we had a workshop and discussion about the RAP's and discussed the details of phase 2. Moreover, we got the chance to experience another wonderful experience of wildlife economy: the Weisse Düne Tour von Usedom Neppermin to Peenemünde, the link between the island of Usedom and the “back-country” – Peenestrom & Achterwasser.



Peer2peer meeting in form of webinar

The peer to peer meeting for the stakeholders was held online. We were presented with some interesting case studies from Northern England. Nigel Mills and Kerry Shaw from Hadrian's Wall held presentations about management and sustainable tourism in the area and the volunteering programmes which are extremely succesful. They were both asked a lot of questions by the participants who were interested in learning how they dealt with the difficulties in the area.

During 2 moments, the proposed cases were discussed and experiences on the topics in the different WLE areas were exchanged.

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