

Public-private partnership develops innovative, regional, tourist services, Wieringen - NL

1. Policy Objective & Theme

- SUSTAINABLE USE OF RESOURCES: Sound use of resources and promotion of less resource intensive processes/products
- SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH: Balancing economic, social, cultural development whilst enhancing environment
- SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH: Improving competitiveness

2. Key Approaches

- Integration
- Ecosystems based approach

3. Experiences that can be exchanged

The formation of a group of local people and entrepreneurs to co-operate and develop a number of activities related to the promotion of local products and tourism services to visitors.

4. Overview of the case

This Leader+ agricultural funding programme case shows the development of a new type of cooperation with local entrepreneurs in order to develop new products, to improve quality management and to enhance the image of the area.

5. Context and Objectives

a) Context

Wieringen is a former Wadden Sea island which is likely to become a separate island again in roughly 10 years' time according to a large-scale plan called the Wieringerrandmeer. The plans include residential developments for both permanent and holiday homes although local inhabitants are concerned about the developments as they wish to preserve the area's typical ambience and character. The Kop Van Noord-Holland and Texel Leader+ Local Activity Group (LAG) is located in the north of the Netherlands along a peninsula surrounded by the North Sea, the IJsselmeer and the Wadden Sea. Transport links consist of a railway line and two main roads which run north to south of the peninsula. There are three urban concentrations in the region and Amsterdam lies some 70 km to the south. The most important economic sectors in the region are agriculture, horticulture, fishing, recreation and tourism. In 2002, the local municipalities along with the LAG took the initiative to reinforce the economic situation of Wieringen. They developed a new type of co-operation with local entrepreneurs in order to develop new products, to improve quality management and to enhance the image of the area. By 2004, 30 entrepreneurs had created the foundation 'Wonderful Wieringen' and, since then, local business communities have joined forces to try and preserve and enhance Wieringen's character and attractions by developing local products and offering tourists excursions and package deals. The area is very popular among tourists as it is an ideal location for adventure cycling and walking. The winding country lanes take visitors to small villages and hamlets, fishing ports and beaches each of which have their own characteristics and featur

b) Objectives

This Leader+ project aimed to promote the area's identity, history and attractive landscape. The whole project strategy is based upon the best use of cultural and natural attractiveness of the area so that it can develop new incomes and opportunities through recreational tourism, local products and services to visitors. The overall aim was to promote a multi-purpose landscape through the development of nature, landscape, water and households in a sustainable way. The project also promoted the island's cultural identity.

6. Implementation of the ICZM Approach (i.e. management, tools, resources)

a) Management

The Wieringen Foundation is in charge of local financing and management and they were especially created to manage funds and activities appropriately.

b) ICZM tools

The project is based around developing new services in the region by involving local people and entrepreneurs who formed themselves into a Foundation called the Wonderful Wieringen. Its members receive support from an enthusiastic board and develop activities on a voluntary basis exemplifying the bottom-up approach. Developing successful cooperation among 60 local entrepreneurs has been a particularly innovative element of the project. Networking and cooperation have been very important. The Foundation has co-operated successfully with the Wadden Sea Foundation and its regional 'Wadden gold label' to help further promote and develop local products. It has also developed a number of activities related to the promotion of local products and tourism services to visitors. The foundation and municipality have further co-operated with a neighbouring province to jointly promote tourism. More specifically the following activities have been developed throughout the pro

- the creation of a central brand and logo for the area, using a Viking image;
- the creation of an Internet site which tells the story of the secret Wadden island in both Dutch and German;
- the generation and dissemination of a publication and map which highlight the treasures of the area and how to discover them – this is free of charge and is readily available at the tourist office and many outlets and shops;
- the promotion of a number of local products, including Wieringer honey, cigars, Jewish wafers, Viking cakes and tulip bulbs;
- the promotion of activities and events around the area, such as the fresh sea fish market and the flower festival; and
- the design of new services for visitors, in cooperation with local entrepreneurs, so that tourists can easily discover all the interesting places on the island.

All attractions are clearly marked on the map which helps them save time when planning their visit.

7. Cost and resources

The total project costs were €171,194.

8. Effectiveness (i.e. were the foreseen goals/objectives of the work reached?)

The project has generated new activities and increased visitor numbers over a short period of time. On a more long-term basis, the project forms part of a whole strategy supported by a shared vision among local businesses, social organisations and the municipality for the Wieringen area. Together they have adopted a report, *Wonderlijk Wieringen, aan de slag*, which forms the basis for cooperation and describes common ambitions for 2010 to keep Wieringen as attractive as possible for local inhabitants and tourists.

The most important results which will impact the future development of the area have been the development of tourism services (restaurants, transport links, museums, campsites, trips and excursions, etc.) which has led to an increase in visitor numbers and also in return visits to the area. Visitors often stay in the local bed and breakfasts/hotels/campsites which benefit the local economy and encourage businesses to innovate and continue with their activities. The membership of the foundation doubled in size to 60 members by the end of the project.

9. Success and Fail factors

The foundation found that, in order to promote local products, more experience was required. Therefore it was necessary to cooperate with the Wadden gold label, another local produce initiative in the area, where they were able to transfer experience in certification and chain management. The activities are totally dependent on the voluntary commitment of its members which, for some entrepreneurs who often work on their own, is quite difficult. Therefore, the project showed that it was beneficial for the entrepreneurs to cooperate with each other towards common goals and to develop joint services. It was also found that the services provided were not adapted enough to meet everyone's needs and specific demands, therefore efforts are now underway to improve and diversify the services and activities offered on the island.

The Leader+ programme itself was very helpful as it has enabled local entrepreneurs to cooperate among themselves and with the municipality. It has also provided an opportunity for gaining professional support in order to invest in the promotion of materials and the sustainability of Wieringen.

10. Unforeseen outcomes

None reported

11. Prepared by

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12. Verified by

It has not been possible to verify this case.

13. Sources

- A Selection Of Leader+ best practices (2008) European Communities, Luxembourg
- Het Schorrenplan Masterplan en beeldkwaliteitsplan Wieringerrandmeer (2007) Palmboom & van den Bout
- <http://www.hetgeheimewaddeneiland.nl>
- <http://www.leader-plus.org>
- <http://www.wieringerrandmeer.nl>



Het Schorrenplan Masterplan en beeldkwaliteitsplan Wieringerrandmeer (29.53 MB)

