

Greening Businesses in Protected Areas

Joint Study for Activity Package Three

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Greening Businesses in Protected Areas

A final report on activity undertaken by The Tourism Company for STEP partners under AP3.

The Broads Authority has been the lead partner for one of three ‘activity packages’. Activity Package 3 (AP3) covers ‘actions and investments aimed at stimulating and supporting companies with regard to measures and products in the field of sustainability.’

During the past two years, The Tourism Company has carried out a number of tasks in relation to AP3, including:

- Facilitating a study tour and active learning workshop in the Broads in November 2011.
- Conducting an ongoing audit of public-private activities involving each of the STEP partner areas.
- Comparing the two environmental certification schemes for tourism enterprises which are in use in the partner areas.
- Preparing outline content of a guidance leaflet for tourism businesses on ways to work with their protected area, and producing final text of a version for businesses in the Broads.
- Providing advice to W&Z to support consideration of future opportunities for involvement of private businesses in tourism activity in the Polders of Kruibeke.
- Participation in three further STEP partner study tours/active learning workshops, providing opportunities to meet and share ideas with tourism entrepreneurs from all three STEP partner areas.

Actions relating to these tasks have previously been reported to partners and all output materials have been made available to them.

Thanks to everyone involved who has taken time to contribute to this work by talking, walking, thinking and writing. The most important outcomes can be seen in the efforts that have been made, and continue to be made, in each of the STEP partner areas, by members and officers of the protected area authorities and by tourism businesses, to work ever more closely together in these very special wetland areas. The ongoing audit of public-private activities provides significant evidence here.



The following sections elaborate on activity under each of the tasks.

Study tour and workshop based on improving sustainability in the tourism sector in the Broads

This programme was designed to accompany the 3rd combined meeting of the International Steering Group which took place in Norwich on Monday 7th November 2011. The intention was to explore the experience that had been acquired in the Broads of co-operation between tourism businesses and the Broads Authority in order to improve the sustainability of the tourism sector. The programme was planned and delivered by The Tourism Company, with support from the Broads Authority and Broads Tourism.

Twelve participants from the visiting STEP partner areas included a number of entrepreneurs. The three days of the visit were planned as a whole, although participants varied from day to day. On Days 1 and 2, visits were made to six tourism businesses. Briefing notes were prepared on each of the Broads tourism businesses, whose experience of the Green Tourism Business Scheme ranged from just starting out through to one business holding the Gold Award.

A final workshop on Day 3 involved a further three Broads tourism businesses. The theme of the workshop was 'Actions and investments aimed at stimulating and supporting companies with regard to measures and products in the field of sustainability – some examples from the Broads'. Workshop aims were elaborated as:

- Learning from tourism businesses in the Broads with experience of highlighting sustainable practices
- Thinking about why green certification for tourism businesses might matter to a protected area
- Considering how protected areas and tourism businesses can work together to a) encourage and b) benefit from the best practice in environmental and sustainable management.

Headline findings from the STEP study on communication about sustainability from JAI, which became available in September 2011, were incorporated into a short presentation during the workshop.

The three day event was written up in a detailed report, which was circulated to partners and made available on the STEP website at http://www.step-projects.eu/uploads/_website%20documents/Report%20of%20STEP%20partner%20visit%20to%20Broads%20November%202011%20FINAL.pdf.

Keeping up to date with partner activity

An initial record of activity in the three STEP partner areas in relation to public-private co-operation was prepared and entered into a spreadsheet in May 2012, based on a trawl of www.step-projects.eu, STEP results, reports and newsletters, and supplemented by knowledge of partner activity, especially in the Broads, UK. At



this initial stage, it was not completely comprehensive of all relevant activity. STEP partners were then invited to review their information and to make amendments and additions in order to fill out the record and bring it up to date.

Based on the workshop that was held in the Broads in November 2011, a number of ways were identified to describe the possible intentions and outcomes of public-private co-operation activities between protected areas and tourism businesses, as follows:

- Developing new product in partnership with the private sector
- Providing opportunities to the private sector for increased exposure in association with the Protected Area
- Extending a welcome to new private sector businesses to become involved with the Protected Area
- Supporting new environmental activity amongst tourism businesses
- Supporting quality development amongst tourism businesses
- Supporting new thinking about sustainable tourism amongst tourism businesses
- Increasing understanding of Protected Areas amongst tourism enterprises
- Increasing understanding of tourism enterprises amongst Protected Area teams
- Enlisting support of tourism businesses in delivering outputs on behalf of the Protected Area
- Involving tourism enterprises in planning the future development of the area.

Where an activity delivered on more than one of these outcomes, it was repeated with a second associated outcome; in some instances as many as four different outcomes were identified.

Updates were undertaken in August and December 2012. On each occasion, the process involved:

- inviting new content from partners
- identifying new content through trawling websites, newsletters etc..
- addressing specific queries to partners



On completion of the final update in June 2013, the various activities were reviewed and differences noted in the approach to public-private co-operation between the three STEP partners. The final spreadsheet and short review note have been submitted with this report.

Review of quality and certification systems

A review was undertaken of the standards and certification systems currently in place in each country. This focussed on the Green Tourism Business Scheme in the UK and GreenKey in the Netherlands and Belgium, with a special emphasis on accommodation enterprises and hireboat companies and their craft.

The review outlined some key features of each scheme, and how each has been applied in the relevant partner Protected Area participating in the STEP programme. It also looked at:

- the content of each standard;
- the certification process;
- uptake in the Broads and in the Biesbosch;
- examples of other relevant schemes, including EUROPARC Charter Part 2.

The paper was based on a review of the documentation for each scheme. In the UK, this included publicly available information (<http://www.green-business.co.uk/>), prior knowledge and material provided by the Broads Authority. In the Netherlands, it was drawn from information on the websites of Green Key International (<http://www.green-key.org/>) and Green Key Netherlands (<http://www.greenkey.nl/>), material provided by Stichting KMKV on behalf of Green Key Netherlands, and information from Nationaal Park De Biesbosch.

The document was circulated in September 2012 to the Broads Authority, Nationaal Park de Biesboch, and W&Z.

Development of guidance for tourism businesses in the Broads protected area

Content has been prepared for a short publication designed to offer guidance for businesses in the Broads on working with and within their protected area, including examples, practical steps and links to further information.

The aims of the publication for the Broads are:

- To capture the attention of tourism businesses that currently do not engage with the protected area on a regular basis and may not be aware of the opportunities and benefits of working more closely together, or why this might be important;



- To share key messages from the Broads Authority with them about why the area is special and needs special care;
- To suggest ways in which they can, if they wish, become more engaged with the Broads Authority and in delivering on its vision for the future;
- To suggest ways in which they can, if they wish, change some of the ways in which their business operates to be more respectful of their location in, or near, a protected area;
- To suggest ways in which they can, if they wish, offer advice to their visitors about ways in which they can get the most out of their visit by suggesting ways to experience, enjoy and understand the special qualities of the protected area;
- To tell them about why the Broads Authority thinks that these things are important and the ways in which they can offer help to tourism businesses to make them happen.

The booklet was developed from an outline prepared in July 2012, which was shared with STEP partners in September 2012. The outline was based on web research and consideration of key strategic and information documents, and agreed as the basis for the Broads publication.

Content for the booklet has been informed by the various study visits, partner visits and workshops which have taken place during the STEP programme, together with material gathered from web research and other sources to us. As well as several discussions with Bruce Hanson, consultation took place with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Broads Tourism Forum, the Education Officer and the Landscape Officer for the Broads Authority. To retain a consistent message and to make sure that the publication is aligned with current policies and practices of the Broads Authority, the publication has drawn on published sources wherever possible.

It was possible to respond to various requests that were made for the inclusion of specific material. The text is available to be used in a number of ways, including extracting parts to support other opportunities as they arise. It is intended that the structure of future day courses planned by the Broads Authority and Broads Tourism for tourism businesses in the Broads will also mirror content from the booklet.

The full text was submitted to the Broads Authority in January 2013, and subsequently circulated to STEP partners.

Visit to the Polders of Kruikebe

A two day visit to the Polders of Kruikebe was arranged by W&Z, designed to explore the potential for co-operation between W&Z, as project managers for the Flood Control Area, and local entrepreneurs who may find opportunities to gain commercial value from the expected new flow of visitors.



Meetings were arranged with Mieke Vander, Stefaan Nollett, Pia de Monie and Rita Pawels (both of whom came on the study tour of the Broads in November 2011) and with various entrepreneurs who had expressed an interest in having a future commercial involvement in the area.

Notes were provided of the interviews held, together with two short papers for W&Z.

The first paper set out thoughts on future opportunities to involve entrepreneurs in gaining commercial value from the expected new flow of visitors, and addressed the following questions:

- What aims are there for the Flood Control Area of the Polders of Kruikebeke?
- What is the proposition for the Polders of Kruikebeke?
- Based on this, what are the flows of residents and visitors predicted to look like?
- What are the opportunities to capture commercial value from the flow of residents and visitors?
- What has happened so far to involve businesses and alert them to the opportunities that may arise from the Flood Control Area?
- Who has and has not expressed an interest to date? What more can and should be done to encourage further interest?
- Where are the key points where value can be created?
- What part can W&Z play?
- How and when should entrepreneurs make their ideas known to W&Z?

Finally, possible approaches to provision of commercial services in the Flood Control Area were reviewed and consideration given to whether there could be any conflict of interest for W&Z.

The second paper was a response to an additional request from W&Z, and looked at the pros and cons of placing demands on the sustainability of future partner businesses. This paper addressed the following questions:



- Why should W&Z be considering such a requirement or preference?
- What opportunities are available to W&Z to exert influence over business operations?
- What factors should be taken into account when selecting 'appropriate' operators?
- What adverse consequences might arise from W&Z demanding high environmental standards?
- What adverse consequences might arise from W&Z failing to demand high environmental standards?
- How can W&Z arrive at requirements which will achieve the best balance?
- What can be learned from the experience of other STEP partners?

Participation in additional STEP partner study tours

The Tourism Company agreed to attend those STEP partner meetings in each country at which AP3 formed a fundamental part of the agenda. In addition to facilitating the study tour and workshop in the Broads in November 2011 (described earlier), this has involved participation in:

- A STEP excursion which took place in June 2011, giving an introduction to, and overview of, the partners, the personnel involved, and the partnership approach. The tour covered a wide geographical area, but also gave a very brief introduction to the Biesbosch and, through a presentation, the Polders of Kruibeke.
- A workshop on communicating sustainability, which took place at the Biesbosch Museum on 14th February 2012. This involved participating in discussions as well as writing up the record of two workshops sessions, made available through the STEP website at http://www.step-projects.eu/uploads/_website%20documents/VWS3%20notes.pdf and http://www.step-projects.eu/uploads/_website%20documents/VWS4%20notes.pdf. The following day, two meetings were arranged with tourism businesses in the Biesbosch, to hear about their engagement with the Protected Area and their involvement to date with GreenKey certification.
- A STEP partner visit to the Lake District in September 2012, looking at the role of tourism entrepreneurs in facilitating visitor gifting. This provided a useful opportunity to meet and share ideas with tourism entrepreneurs and representative bodies of the industry sector, such as tourism associations, from all three STEP partner areas.

June 2013



APPENDIX I

A short review of the standards and certification systems currently in place in the UK and the Netherlands for sustainable tourism businesses

As part of our work for the STEP (Sustainable Tourism in Estuary Parks) programme, we have been asked to undertake a short comparative review of the standards and certification systems for sustainable tourism businesses currently in place in the UK and the Netherlands. In effect, this means the Green Tourism Business Scheme (UK) and Green Key (Netherlands), and is focusing on accommodation enterprises and hireboat companies and their craft.

In fact, the differences between the schemes in each country are quite small. This note will outline some key features of each scheme, and how each has been applied in the relevant partner Protected Area participating in the STEP programme. The note has been based on a review of the documentation for each scheme. In the UK, this has been a combination of publicly available information (<http://www.green-business.co.uk/>), prior knowledge and material provided by the Broads Authority. In the Netherlands, it has been drawn from information on the websites of Green Key International (<http://www.green-key.org/>) and Green Key Netherlands (<http://www.greenkey.nl/>), material provided by Stichting KMKV on behalf of Green Key Netherlands, and information from Nationaal Park De Biesbosch.

Green Key The Netherlands

The Green Key is a voluntary eco-label for tourism facilities promoting sustainable tourism.

Green Key is run by the international Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE). The programme began in Denmark in 1994 and was adopted by FEE in 2002 to become its fifth international programme. Other FEE programmes include Blue Flag and Eco-Schools (both of which operate in the UK).

The international organization publishes International Baseline Criteria for the main tourism sectors: Hotels, Campsites, Attractions, Restaurants and Small Accommodation. For example, baseline criteria have been published for hotels for 2012-15. These are made available in English on the website <http://www.green-key.org/>. International criteria are revised every three years.

Internationally, Green Key Certificates have been awarded to 1800 establishments in 34 different countries.



Green Key establishments report many benefits such as savings on water, energy and waste; a noticeably better environment for guests and staff; a better environmental image; marketing advantages; and increased activity and sales. Additionally, member programs have access to Green Key management tools and services.

Each country involved in the Programme has a national operator. The National Operator is responsible for the Green Key Programme, acting under the supervision of the FEE organization of its country.

In the Netherlands, this is Stichting KMKV/Foundation KMKV, whose contact details are as follows:
Nederland Stichting Keurmerk Milieu, Veiligheid en Kwaliteit, PO Box 102, 3970 AC Driebergen
Telephone: +31 343 524720
Fax: +31 343524780
Mail: erik@kmvk.nl
Web: www.greenkey.nl

The National Operator is Erik van Dijk. (There is an equivalent national operator for Belgium-Wallonia). I would like to thank Erik for the help that he gave with providing information for this part of the report. The national website is entirely in the Dutch language. However, Erik was able to provide a rough English translation for some of the material. Google Translate was also very helpful! Apologies for any errors that may have been caused by a lack of precise understanding.

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Each individual country decides on the tourism sectors of relevance to them, and designs its own national scheme for each sector based around the international criteria. Each set of criteria includes some standard chapters, as well as sector specific criteria.

In the Netherlands, a number of different standards have been prepared for different sectors of the tourism industry. The following are indicated on the website www.greenkey.nl:

- Outdoor sports
- Bungalow park
- Camping (mini)
- Charter boats
- Congress location



- Hotel/Conference Centre
- Group accommodation
- Day recreation
- Passenger transport
- (annual) Public Event
- Beach pavilion

I have looked in particular at the criteria for the hotel sector and for charter boats (Chartervaart). Chartervaart cover traditional sailing ships converted as a small floating hotel, with a skipper and crew. The Association of Ship Owners asked KMKV to develop a set of criteria for the 12-20 Chartervaart in the Netherlands. More recently, a separate standard has been under development for Passagiervaart, day trip boats; two companies are interested in this.

Certified businesses are listed on the national website and also on the international website. Green Key Netherlands is responsible for updating Green Key International on new certifications – they may perhaps do this once a year. The national operator for The Netherlands is also responsible for uploading newly certificated businesses onto the international website.

In August 2012, www.greenkey.nl showed that a total of 513 certificates had been awarded, as follows:

- 335 Gold
- 122 Silver
- 56 Bronze

The Netherlands therefore accounts for over one quarter of the international total, and celebrated achieving its 500th certified business in July 2012.

Awards are determined by an on-site assessment of performance against the standard. A transparent scoring system is set out near the beginning of each set of criteria, with requirements to achieve a set number of mandatory and optional criteria.



For example, from 2012 Green Key for the sector Chartervaart has the following requirement in order to achieve certification: Mandatory criteria (V): 27 (up from 25) **plus** a number of optional criteria (O): >10 (up from 9) for Bronze; >16 (up from 12) for Silver; and >22 (up from 16) for Gold.

The criteria are specified so as to make it as clear as possible to an auditor whether an applicant business does or does not meet any individual criteria. The control for each of the criteria is also specified (eg physical check, written record etc.). Sometimes, a mandatory criterion specifies a minimum standard, and an optional criterion can be achieved through reaching a specified higher standard. The award of certification can also be contingent on certain things being done.

Green Key certification is re-authorised annually.

Criteria for each Green Key sector standard are routinely reviewed every two years. A proposal is made, and then discussed with the owners of business holding the relevant Green Key certification. Once the new standard is adopted and published, certified businesses have one year to meet the new criteria. For Handleiding Chartervaart, new criteria were adopted for 2012 -14 on 1st April 2012.

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The new criteria include a number of changes, but the most significant is the new chapter on Social Responsibility. Prior to this, the scheme was purely environmental. When it came to considering new criteria relating to a wider sustainability agenda, consideration was given to the fact that the Netherlands laws are comprehensive in their cover of employment requirements, so such criteria are expected to be met as a matter of course; but the law is less specific in areas such as cultural heritage and some other social issues.

The new standard includes the following Chapters:

1. Sustainability management
2. Staff involvement
3. Guest information
4. Water
5. Washing and cleaning
6. Waste
7. Energy



8. Food and drink
9. 'Green and space' or 'Indoor environment' (uncertainty may be due to translation)
10. Transport
11. Buildings and suppliers
12. Community involvement
13. Bonus standards

These changes bring the Charter criteria in line with the sustainable tourism standard recognized internationally by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC). To be formally 'Recognised' by the GSTC, a standard should contain performance-based criteria based on the triple bottom line: economic, socio-cultural, and environmental. The standard must have at least one criterion that matches each of the 37 Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria (GSTC Criteria). FEE joined GSTC in April 2011.

A further step can be taken with GSTC, to gain 'GSTC Approval'¹. 'Approval' applies to sustainable tourism certification programs that use a GSTC-Recognised standard and that also follow internationally accepted procedures for third-party certification.

The website lists 13 Charter certified businesses, of which 9 are Gold, 3 are Silver and 1 is Bronze.

Green Key in and around the Biesbosch

In December 2011, it was announced that seven Biesbosch entrepreneurs had received a Green Key certification (3 Gold, 3 Silver, 1 Bronze). The successful businesses are: 'Maia Ligfietspunt' (Dordrecht); Mini camping 'In de Polder' (Lage Zwaluwe); Hotel De Korenbeurs (Made); Team Biesbosch (Hank); Hotel Golden Tulip (Zevenbergen); Hotel De Watertoren (Dordrecht); and Visitor Centre Nationaal Park De Biesbosch (Dordrecht). Through KMKV, Parkschap Nationaal Park De Biesbosch has been able to arrange support, including financial support, for entrepreneurs wishing to make their company more sustainable. Businesses have also been offered a 'sustainability scan', to give them an idea of how they would be positioned if they wanted to go forward for formal assessment under Green Key. It is the first National Park in the Netherlands that has tackled sustainability in this collective way. It is worth noting however that, in a recent report following an Evaluation Visit for an application from the Biesbosch National Park for the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas, the verifier sounded a note of caution about the possible future costs of Green Key certification.

¹ To be phased out by 31st December 2014, when 'Approval' will be superseded by full Accreditation



KMVK has also been working with the Biesbosch National Park to develop a set of criteria for rental boats (in the Biesbosch these are mostly day boats). They have drawn on the work that has been done in the UK on the Green Boat Mark (see below), so most of the sector specific criteria are similar. These criteria have not yet been made available publicly² but the intention is that the new scheme will at some point be made available across the Netherlands.

The chapters are as above for Chartervaart, but an additional Chapter 14 has been included, title 'Specific standards for motor boat hire'. Criteria in this chapter cover:

- Shampoos and soaps (V)
- Wastewater (V)
- Alternative sustainable heating/CHP (O)
- Shore power supply (V)
- Overfill (O)
- Environmentally propellant/fuel (O)
- Particulate filter (O)
- CCR (standard arising from CCR2 ROSR) (O)
- Stern (propeller shaft) (O)
- Grease (biodegradable for lubrication/maintenance) (O)
- Optimal adjustment (O)
- Lubrication (O)
- Dry bilge (O)
- Insulation (O)
- Sustainable batteries (O)
- Sustainable maintenance of rental items (O)
- Manual for sustainable use of the boat and motor (V)

² Erik van Dijk has kindly supplied me with a copy



Issues arising from the treatment of blackwater within the Green Boat Mark are referred to below. In the Netherlands, disposal of blackwater has been illegal since 1st January 2010. Approved treatments include tablets and dry toilets. The rules are different for commercial and for private boats.

Green Tourism Business Scheme

In 2008, VisitEngland introduced the notion of validation of sustainable tourism certification schemes to the UK. With many different and often local schemes in operation, and mindful of their duty of care in promoting tourism providers, they wished to devise a transparent process by which to distinguish those schemes that were operating to high standards. The process of validation is carried out independently by the International Centre for Responsible Tourism (ICRT). The validation process is now endorsed by Visit Wales, Northern Ireland Tourist Board and Failte Ireland.

Endorsement of a certification scheme by the national tourist organisations confers on all businesses certified under the scheme the benefit of access to online and offline marketing, through sustainability filters within product search engines.

The process of validation is well documented and publicly available at <http://www.visitengland.org/busdev/accreditation/greenschemes/Validation/why.aspx>.

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Certification schemes are assessed on:

- The appropriateness of the standard they are certifying against, including the range, depth, currency and validity of criteria; and
- The quality of the process and systems of certification, including timely and professional provision of support, documentation and verification visits.

Validation requirements for certification schemes include:

- Participation to be voluntary, and certification cannot become a requirement to trade nor a technical barrier to trade
- Where applicable, at least 75% of the tourism service suppliers certified under the scheme to be quality graded, rising to 95%
- An indication is given of the correspondence between a scheme and Global Sustainable Tourism Standard through preparing a matrix mapping the requirements of one against the other



- Demonstration of a clear difference in sustainability management between certified and non-certified businesses
- On site inspections at least every second year
- Awaiting grading for no more than 6 months
- Provision or availability of technical assistance (although aware of the possible conflict of interest³)
- Qualifications of personnel
- Publicly available procedures to grant, maintain, withdraw and suspend certification
- Review of criteria every 2-5 years (3 years recommended)
- Record of appeals, complaints and disputes
- Information (Awaiting grading/having a current award grade) forwarded to relevant National Tourism Organisation on a regular basis (minimum monthly).

Validation remains valid for a period of three years.

The Green Tourism Business Scheme (GTBS) is a national sustainable tourism certification scheme for the UK. Originally developed in partnership with VisitScotland, since January 2012 it has been the only national⁴ scheme to be independently validated by the International Centre for Responsible Tourism (ICRT) on behalf of VisitEngland, VisitWales and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board. The current validation for GTBS runs to January 2014. GTBS is also endorsed by VisitScotland and Failte Ireland.

GTBS has over 2,400 certified businesses in Britain and Ireland. A commitment to quality is a prerequisite for businesses joining the scheme. For tourism accommodation this means a quality grading assessment to the NQ Assurance Scheme (NQAS) standard.

GTBS members are drawn from across a wide range of tourism sectors, including:

³ Technical assistance is one of the main reasons why tourism companies will apply for certification, particularly for small firms. Yet it is understood that the provision of technical assistance by a certification body is usually seen as a conflict of interest. Fully aware of that risk, this validation process will expect more technical assistance to be provided than is typically expected of certification bodies.

⁴ Two international programmes (SGS, certifying to BS8901, and Sustainable Travel International, certifying their Sustainable Tourism Eco-certification Programme) and one local programme (Peak District Environmental Quality Mark) have been validated



Green places to stay:

Hotels

Bed and Breakfasts

Guest Houses

Self-Catering Units and Agencies

Serviced Apartments

Holiday Parks/Campsites

Hostels

Campus Accommodation

Inns

Green places to visit:

Visitor Attractions

Tourist Information Centres

Restaurant / Café

Shops

Other places to visit

More green businesses:

Activity Centres

Activity Providers

Tour Operators

Corporate Offices

Conference/Event Venue

Other businesses, like English Language Schools



A joining fee is payable, plus an annual fee thereafter. Awards are based on a grading visit from a qualified assessor. A grading report is provided, with comments on advice on measures implemented and an action plan with recommendations for improvements and guidance on how to gain a higher grading on the next visit. GTBS re-visits take place every 2 years. A members' area of GTBS website gives access to technical information and advice, and also to supplier discounts and special offers.

Like Green Key, GTBS is awarded at Bronze, Silver and Gold level. Recently, an additional category, Gold Plus, has been introduced. As with Green Key, there is the opportunity to award certification contingent on certain things having been done.

At no extra cost, a searchable website entry is included for all certified businesses on <http://www.green-business.co.uk/>. The site has a Google analytical score of 6 and receives around 10,000 individual sessions per week.

There are over 150 individual measures in the GTBS criteria, which focus on 10 different areas:

1. **Compulsory** - compliance with environmental legislation and a commitment to continuous improvement in environmental performance
2. **Management and marketing** - demonstrating good environmental management, including staff awareness, specialist training, monitoring, and record keeping
3. **Social involvement and communication** of environmental actions to customers through variety of channels and range of actions, e.g. green policy, promotion of environmental efforts on the website, education, and community and social projects
4. **Energy** - efficiency of lighting, heating and appliance, insulation and renewable energy use
5. **Water** - efficiency e.g. good maintenance, low-consumption appliances, flush offset, rainwater harvesting, as well as using eco-cleaners
6. **Purchasing** - environmentally friendly goods and services, e.g. products made from recycled materials, use and promotion of local food and drink, and use of FSC wood products
7. **Waste - minimisation** by encouraging, the 'eliminate, reduce, reuse, recycle' principle, e.g. glass, paper, card, plastic and metal recycling; supplier take-back agreements; dosing systems; and composting
8. **Transport** - aims to minimise visitors car use by promoting local and national public transport service, cycle hire, local walking and cycling option, and use of alternative fuels



9. **Natural and cultural heritage** - on site measures aimed at increasing biodiversity, e.g. wildlife gardening, growing native species, nesting boxes, as well as providing information for visitors on the wildlife on and around the site
10. **Innovation** - any good and best practice actions to increase a business's sustainability that are not covered elsewhere

Each business is scored on up to 60 measures and the results will determine the award that they have achieved.

Whereas Green Key criteria are published in full and made publicly available on their website, it is made very clear that the detailed GTBS criteria and other scheme materials are solely for the use of businesses wishing to join the Green Tourism Business Scheme. The scheme was developed by Shetland Environmental Agency Ltd (SEA Ltd) and this company holds the primary copyright and intellectual property rights to all scheme material, criteria, workbooks, audit & report forms etc. SEA Ltd provides technical and management services to the GTBS. Green Business UK Ltd is a not-for-profit organisation established in 2001 to deliver the GTBS and provide auditing, advisory and membership services.

Membership of GTBS brings both technical and promotional benefits, which include:

Technical

- A grading report with comments and advice on measures implemented and an action plan with recommendations for improvements.
- Guidance on how to gain higher grading at next visit.
- Access to a Members Area on the website which includes downloadable technical datasheets, supplier discounts and special offers, and an 'Ask the Expert' page for technical queries.
- Regular e-update with technical information and new offers and discounts from green suppliers.
- Assessment once every two years by an experience environmental advisor who will identify cost savings and highlight advise on appropriate measures.

Promotional

- Ability to use green grading in promotional material and website to inform guests of commitment to sustainability.
- Summary of achievements which can be used for PR purposes.
- Free website entry on www.green-business.co.uk



- Promotion through PR, press and editorials

GTBS in the Broads

In 2007, a project was undertaken in the Broads by the Green Tourism Business Scheme (GTBS) with the aim of helping businesses in the Broads to work towards more sustainable practices. Arising from this work, and with support from the Broads Authority Sustainable Development Fund, guidance was prepared which was designed to provide a framework for businesses to reduce their environmental impact, improve economically and encourage interaction with their customers and the community. 'Greening the Broads – a guide to good practice for businesses in the Broads' was published in July 2008. The guide was based on an abridged version of the GTBS Version IV 2007 criteria which pertained at the time. (These have subsequently been reviewed and amended). Case study material was included, based on the experience of fourteen Broads tourism businesses.

At various times, the Broads Authority has been able to offer support through measures such as subsidising entry to the Green Tourism Business Scheme (GTBS), providing consultancy support to new entrants, highlighting businesses that have achieved GTBS certification in certain visitor publications, and choosing to showcase GTBS certificated businesses when planning itineraries for visiting dignitaries or delegations.

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Currently, 18 tourism businesses in the Broads hold certification from the Green Tourism Business Scheme: 5 hold a Gold award, 11 hold Silver, and 2 Bronze. A further four businesses are 'Awaiting Grading'. In addition, on the edge of the Broads there are 3 hotels in Norwich and 3 holiday parks in Great Yarmouth which have been awarded GTBS.

A STEP partner visit to the Broads and associated workshop was arranged in November 2011 to learn more about the involvement of tourism businesses with GTBS. This was written up as a separate STEP report.

Green Boat Mark

For some time a group of environmentally aware people in Norfolk has been campaigning for a greener option for boating. The members of this Eco Boat Project in close partnership with Broads Tourism, the Broads Authority and the Green Tourism Business Scheme have been working to produce a set of grading criteria for Water Based Activity Providers. The scheme in the Broads has been funded with money from the European Regional Development Fund as part of the STEP Interreg Two Seas Programme which promotes sustainable tourism in estuarine parks.



Version I of the resulting 'Green Boat Mark' Criteria for weekly or residential hire fleet vessels was released in July 2011. The criteria are now being used as the basis for assessment of Broads hire fleet boats. They are still under development, and may be adapted as lessons are learned from testing in real life situations.

The award is based on 25 measures specially developed for boats including eco-friendly design, energy efficiency, waste management and providing 'green' information for hirers. Each measure is scored from 0-5, 5 being best practice and indicating that the measure is fully complete. The maximum score possible is therefore 125 (100%). To gain a Bronze award, vessels must score over 60 (>48%); for Silver, over 80 (>64%); and for Gold, over 100 (>80%).

Compulsory (all must score 3+ to gain an award)

1. Phosphate free cleaners
2. Regular service/maintenance
3. Green guidance manual for hirers
4. Sewage water disposal

Water quality issues

5. Showers – water saving measures
6. Fuel handling/spill kit
7. Formaldehyde free toilets
8. Cooking oil (disposal of waste)
9. Eco-sensitive antifoul

Engine performance and boat design

10. Speed display system
11. Low drag hull design
12. Engine efficiency
13. Effective engine silencing
14. Heat recovery from engine
15. Recycled materials used in construction



16. Alternative drive options

Hirer information

17. Responsible marketing

18. Local food/organic/Fair Trade welcome pack

Energy and resource efficiency

19. Energy efficient appliances

20. HFC free refrigerators

21. Segregated waste storage for recycling

22. Solar panels and other renewables

23. Grey water storage

24. LED lighting

Innovation

25. Bonus credit for new technologies/innovative management techniques and exemplary actions.

To participate in the Green Boat Mark scheme, the hire yard must first have achieved a minimum of a GTBS Bronze level certification for its yard operations. Once this has been achieved, then each class of boat is separately assessed for a Green Boat Mark grading.

Broads boat hire company Norfolk Broads Direct of Wroxham was the first business in the country to have one of its boats awarded the new Green Mark accreditation. The company received the grading when the Green Tourism Business Scheme launched its Green Boat Mark as part of Green Tourism Week (June 6-12 2011) in partnership with Broads Tourism and the Broads Authority.

Fair Sovereign, the hire cruiser which was assessed, has a low wash hull and its engine meets the current EU Stage 3 emissions requirements. Water is heated as a byproduct of the engine cooling and the majority of lighting is provided by LED bulbs. Norfolk Broads Direct sends customers information about the impact of phosphates on water quality prior to their arrival and advises them to use phosphate free toiletries and washing up liquid, as well as stocking some for purchase.

Barbara Greasley, Director of Norfolk Broads Direct, presented a case study to STEP partners during their visit



in November 2011, based on the assessment process undertaken on all classes of boat in their fleet under the Green Boat Mark criteria. This was written up in the separate report of the visit and workshop.

Richardson's, the Broads' biggest operator, is currently 'Awaiting Grading' of its hire fleet under the Green Boat Mark Criteria.

Other initiatives to promote sustainability amongst tourism businesses and water users

In this final section, we mention a small selection of programmes in the UK which have been designed to complement the Green Tourism Business Scheme in addressing the challenge of promoting best sustainability practice amongst tourism businesses. We have also included information about a programme specifically designed to help boat users of all kinds to reduce their impact on coastal and inland waters.

Entry level programmes

The **Green Start** programme was introduced by VisitEngland in 2010 as a one stop information shop on sustainability, which would be available free of charge to all tourism businesses within England, regardless of whether or not they are quality assessed. This programme, which can be accessed online at <http://www.better-tourism.org/default.aspx>, is primarily an awareness raising, entry level training and business review tool for those businesses that seek to reduce their impacts on the environment or community in which they are located. The tool helps the user to develop an easy to follow action plan that can ultimately support an application for sustainable tourism certification. Green Start does not involve any third party audit. It cannot be used as a marketing label and businesses who use Green Start are not able to promote themselves as being 'green' unless they become part of a recognized certification programme.

The Green Start programme can be accompanied by **Green Edge** training, which has been designed as part of the national Welcome to Excellence suite of courses <http://www.welcometoexcellence.co.uk/trainingprogrammes/greenedge.asp>. When launched in 2010, it was in practice dependent on public funding, and is rarely offered now as an open course. However, it can be offered 'in house' by a company or destination. Currently, a one-day course for a group of up to 16 participants can be booked through a national or regional contact at a cost of £850.

Despite the popularity and success of the Green Tourism Business Scheme in Scotland, just 10% of Scottish businesses currently take part. In a similar bid to encourage more businesses to become more sustainable, VisitScotland has developed '**Going Green**' a free-of-charge initiative for Scottish tourism businesses. This checklist can be used to help prepare for participation in the Green Tourism Business Scheme. Going Green is only open to businesses participating in one of VisitScotland's Quality Assurance schemes. This initiative has now been supplemented online by a new Sustainable Tourism Resource Centre which can be found at http://www.visitscotland.org/business_support/sustainable_tourism.aspx.



European Charter Partnership Programme for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas

The Broads Authority and Nationaal Park De Biesbosch have both been awarded Part I of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas. Part II of the Charter is concerned with working with tourism business partners. Tourism businesses within a protected area which has already been awarded the Charter and working in close co-operation can sign a partnership agreement with the protected area.

For the UK⁵, guidelines have been prepared for the implementation of Charter Part II by EUROPARC Atlantic Isles (EAI) which brings together organisations and individuals who manage protected areas in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales, the Republic of Ireland and Iceland. EAI acts in this case on behalf of the EUROPARC Federation. The intention to develop Part II of the Charter must be notified to EAI and ultimately approved by them. As with the main Charter, there is an evaluation process for Charter Part II, which includes a verification visit.

A programme of training and support has to be devised for businesses seeking to become partners of the Protected Area, and agreed by the Sustainable Tourism Forum for the PA.

Criteria specified for business partners can be summarized as:

- Sign up to the vision of the Sustainable Tourism Strategy
- Sign up to the concept of partnership working and engage in some way in management of the destination
- Gain and retain a recognized eco-certificate
- Participate in training provided by the Protected Area
- Deliver protected area information and interpretation to guests
- Participate in any visitor payback scheme run by or on behalf of the destination
- Have achieved a recognized quality grade
- Develop a simple three year action plan for business development for sustainability
- Sign up to any appropriate codes of conduct

⁵ We understand that guidelines have been prepared for implementation of Charter Part II for the Netherlands, which are currently being considered prior to submission to the EUROPARC Federation Council for approval.



- Facilitate consumer feedback through web questionnaire, suggestions box or feedback form.

It can be seen that one of the criteria specified is that the business shall have achieved a form of eco-accreditation recognized by the Protected Area Authority, normally one recognized by the national tourism body (eg GTBS).

These criteria can be adapted by an individual Protected Area to incorporate a local interpretation of individual requirements and to include the use of local schemes as evidence of compliance.

Once designated, businesses are entitled to use the Charter logo.

The **Brecon Beacons National Park** and the **Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty** are two of the Protected Areas to have taken forward Charter Part II in the UK.

Since 2007, a number of tourism businesses that have been working in partnership with the **Forest of Bowland AONB** to contribute to the development of sustainable tourism have been able to gain their own recognition and have become **European Charter Businesses**.

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In 2012, 32 businesses have qualified for certification as a European Charter Partner, by demonstrating that they will:

- Participate in the Forest of Bowland Sustainable Tourism Network
- Support the Bowland Tourism and Environment Fund
- Achieve Green Tourism Business Scheme accreditation
- Maintain a relevant quality accreditation

The full list of European Charter Businesses is published on the website of the Forest of Bowland AONB website at http://www.forestofbowland.com/visit_european_charter_business. All businesses in the Forest of Bowland with GTBS accreditation have also chosen to become European Charter Businesses.



The **Brecon Beacons National Park** have adopted use of the term ‘**Sustainable Tourism Champions**’ for partner businesses in their scheme. Recently, travel content media specialist Greentraveller created a series of short videos to showcase Sustainable Tourism Champions. Funded by the new Rural Alliances project, the three minute videos highlight seven Sustainable Tourism Champions and how they are at the forefront of sustainable tourism in the Brecon Beacons National Park. The videos can be viewed on [Greentraveller's website](#): or on [Greentraveller's Youtube Channel](#):

The Green Blue

The Green Blue (<http://www.thegreenblue.org.uk/>) is a joint environment programme created by two national organisations in the UK, the British Marine Federation and the Royal Yachting Association, to help boat users, boating businesses, sailing clubs and training centres to reduce their impact on coastal and inland waters. The strapline of the organisation is ‘Making the environment second nature’.

The Green Blue raises awareness, conducts scientific research, identifies environmentally friendly products and offers easy best practice advice, guidance and money saving tips to anyone wishing to make boating in the UK as sustainable as possible and to help keep coasts and inland waters as pleasant places to enjoy.

The Green Blue publishes an environmental checklist for boats, covering the main environmental issues faced by boat owners and giving advice about steps to take to reduce the footprint of a boat while out on the water. A simple scoring system allows owners to work out what they have already achieved and how far they have to go to reduce their impact on the environment. Areas covered include: oil and fuel; the engine; cleaning; resource efficiency; sewage and waste; and wildlife.

A number of Boating Fact Sheets have been published, for example ‘*Boating Fact Sheet 2:*

What We Know About.....Sewage and Waste Water Discharges from Boats’ dated 15th January 2009, exploring the impact on water quality of grey and black water discharged from recreational craft. This explains the international legal framework for coastal waters, and regulations governing discharge to inland waters, and offers some best practice advice.

The Green Blue has worked with The Yacht Harbour Association (TYHA) to develop criteria to ensure that, on re-launch in 2011, the prestigious Gold Anchor Scheme for marinas embraced sustainability by incorporating environmental criteria in its standards.

September 2012



APPENDIX 2

Joint Action of AP 3 – some thoughts for the Polders of Kruibeke

Based on a two day visit⁶ by Jackie Denman of The Tourism Company on Monday 25th and Tuesday 26th June 2012, hosted by Mieke Vander Elst on behalf of W&Z

The visit was designed to explore the potential for co-operation between W&Z, as project managers for the Flood Control Area, and local entrepreneurs who may find opportunities to gain commercial value from the new flow of visitors.

What aims are there for the Flood Control Area of the Polders of Kruibeke?

Government partners in Flanders (Waterwegen en Zeekanaal NV (W&Z) and Agentschap voor Natuur en Bos (ANB)) have two main primary aims for the Polders of Kruibeke Flood Control Area: *safety* (protection against future floods), and *nature development* (conservation of existing nature, development of valuable tidal nature and creation of bird habitats). *Recreation*, which includes the development of sustainable ecotourism, has emerged as a third aim. It is important because the three adjacent communities of Kruibeke, Bazel and Rupelmonde will have the opportunity to gain benefit from the redevelopment of the Polders, which can be seen as some recompense for the long term and significant change to the traditional Polders on their doorstep and their relationship with them, and the temporary removal of access to large parts of the area.

What is the proposition for the Polders of Kruibeke?

A recreational access plan exists (Recreation and Visitor Service Plan, November 2011) and is currently under further development by Antea Group. There is a clear idea of where access routes will be, including quality of surface and user types for each route. A small number of routes into sensitive nature areas will be restricted to access on foot, but otherwise all access routes will be available to bikes and mobility vehicles. The question of allowing (limited) motorised vehicle access remains unresolved; this is a particular issue in relation to access across the Polders for residents of Bazel to the Ferry Hemiksen.

The greatest choice of routes on foot (by direction and distance) offered by the access network will be around Bazel, which also offers good connectivity to the historic village centre through the parkland associated with the castle. The least options on foot are offered from Scheldelei, where the distance to the nearest crossing point of the Polders is greatest, giving particular importance to creation of Scheldelei as a base for cycling. A proposed boardwalk to cross the new route of the Barbierbeek, to the south of Scheldelei, will give an important opportunity for a shorter circular walk and will offer a special experience of being 'out in the Polders', close to nature.

Two areas have been earmarked for fishing: a nature area (tidal) north of Scheldelei, and in the Rupelmonde Kreek. From conversation with Mieke, it seems that there will not be any provision for watercraft, including small, non-motorised craft, to use the FCA. (Of course, many boats of all speeds and sizes make regular use of the River Scheldt; VVW Kruibeke is based at Scheldelei and moorings have recently been provided at Rupelmonde, just upriver from the boundary of the FCA)

A house style has been developed to be used for infrastructure and furniture (the first prototype was recently installed outside the W&Z Scheldelei offices).

⁶ A programme of the visit is included as Appendix One



Four primary 'reception zones' have been identified in the Recreation and Visitors Services Plan (Rupelmonde, Bazel, Scheldelei, Kallebeek). Three of these points are accessible by a frequent ferry service across the River Scheldt; Rupelmonde is a seasonal service only. There is also good road access to all reception zones other than Kallebeek, although car parking is limited. A number of cycle routes pass through the area, using ferry crossings to connect with longer distance routes along both banks of the Scheldt.

Three levels of reception service have been proposed, but no final decisions have been taken about the level of reception service will be offered at each reception point. A number of visitor services are already available in the villages of Rupelmonde and Bazel, including a seasonal tourist information office in Rupelmonde, while opportunities exist at Scheldelei and Kallebeek for reception services to be developed based on improvement or replacement of existing buildings as follows

1. It is intended to demolish the recently closed inn at Kallebeek, now used as offices, as it will not meet the requirements of the FCA;
2. The site of the W&Z offices at Scheldelei, located close to the ferry terminal, will be available for redevelopment; major improvements are currently being made to the service road and car park.

Based on this, what are the flows of residents and visitors predicted to look like?

The Recreation and Visitor Service Plan indicated estimates of the annual number of expected visits by walkers and cyclists to the Polders of Kruikebeke, under three scenarios as, over time, the area becomes increasingly established and recognised. The plan also suggests how visits will be spread across the area. There is a desire to avoid overloading already busy and vulnerable zones (Bazel axis, Bazel-Kallebeek ferry). However, the first version of the plan does not really address the opportunity for managers of the FCA to influence the spread and flow of visitors through the distribution and location of particular visitor services.

What are the opportunities to capture commercial value from the flow of residents and visitors?

Once the FCA is completed and accessible to the public, it is fully expected that there will be a flow of local residents and visitors into the area, using the newly created infrastructure to explore and enjoy the natural surroundings.

Many local residents may make no use of any commercial services on a regular basis – they may simply take a short walk or cycle ride, starting and finishing at their home. Findings from a UK survey⁷ indicate that around a quarter (26 per cent) of visits to the natural environment incurred expenditure; expenditure was most likely to be incurred for food and drink (21 per cent of all visits); and that certain types of visits were more likely than others to incur expenditure, particularly longer visits (64 per cent of visits of three hours or more).

Although caution should be exercised over transferring findings from one country to another, it seems highly likely that food and drink will be the most frequently made purchase on a visit to the Polders of Kruikebeke. Depending on their location in relation to the start and finish points of a visit, existing food and drink businesses in the three villages may be well placed to take advantage of additional demand. They will need to address the question of whether this can be captured within their existing opening hours/capacity/staffing levels or whether they wish to make changes over time to take full advantage of any opportunities that arise. There may also be opportunities for some new businesses in this sector.

⁷ Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment, Annual Report 20011-12, Natural England 2012



Other opportunities to capture new spending may include: guiding services; cycle hire; hire of mobility vehicles; fishing licences and hire of fishing tackle; and light shopping. There may also be opportunities to develop simple packages which bring together some of these services.

We understand that there is very little accommodation within the Community of Kruikebe, which could be a limiting factor in the future as the area becomes better known. However, certainly in the early stages, we would not expect the Polders of Kruikebe to generate a large number of overnight stays in its own right. The combination of heritage and nature certainly has appeal.

What has happened so far to involve businesses and alert them to the opportunities that may arise from the Flood Control Area?

Since work began on the Flood Control Area, and supported by the Sustainable Tourism in Estuary Parks (STEP) programme, a number of actions have been taken to encourage local entrepreneurs to think about the new commercial opportunities that may become available as newly developed access to the Polders becomes available and as additional visitors are attracted to the experiences that will be on offer. As a result, key representatives of the local community have come forward who are prepared to play a part in this process. These include Pia de Monie, a local alderman, and Rita Pauwels, local chairman of UNIZO. Their involvement has been important in creating a channel for information, and a source of advice for project partners about the best ways to approach businesses in the area.

An Open Yard day has been organised by W&Z with ANB in early summer each year, to invite the public to take a look at how plans are progressing for the safety and nature project for the Polders of Kruikebe. In April 2012, the Scheldt Happening included Kruikebe, Bazel and Rupelmonde, with opportunities to participate in activities such as walking, biking, ferrying while enjoying the Scheldt and its surrounding areas. These activities have demonstrated the growing public interest in the area and what it will offer in future. Special workshops have also been held over the past 18 months for local entrepreneurs. Originally, these were arranged in order to gain their input into plans for access and recreation once the FCA is complete; more recently, the emphasis has been on discussing future opportunities for entrepreneurs.

Rita Pauwels and Pia de Monie have also taken part in an exchange visit to the Broads which was organised in November 2011 through the STEP programme, enabling them to meet a number of tourism business operators based in the Protected Area and to learn from their experience. In particular, they looked at the experience that has been acquired in the Broads of co-operation between tourism businesses and the Broads Authority in order to improve the sustainability of the tourism sector. All tourism businesses involved in the visit had some experience of the UK's Green Tourism Business Scheme, from those just starting out with the scheme through to one that has achieved a Gold Award. STEP partners are also looking for new ways to communicate sustainability and influence behaviour. In February 2012, Pia de Monie attended a conference which was held in the Biesbosch about 'communication on sustainability', with participants including tourism interests from partner areas.

Who has and has not expressed an interest to date? What more can and should be done to encourage further interest?

A considerable amount of effort has gone into encouraging local entrepreneurs to think about commercial opportunities which may arise in relation to the Polders of Kruikebe, and quite a number of businesses have attended workshops and some have indicated their interest in a general way. To date, there has been no formal process for the registration of interest. The informal role of Rita Pauwels (UNIZO) and Pia de Monie has



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continued to be important as the eyes and ears of W&Z, and in acting as a two way channel for information. A number of entrepreneurs responded positively to an invitation to meet with me during my two day visit, in order to tell me about their ideas. The majority of these entrepreneurs were from Kruiabeke itself. Unfortunately, two of the entrepreneurs were not able to come on the day.

It would appear from discussion that there is still work to be done to encourage interest, especially amongst entrepreneurs in Bazel and Rupelmonde where tourism is already more established. Rita and Pia have expressed a willingness to tackle this through personal contacts, but further input may also be required from W&Z as the FCA moves closer to becoming a reality.

Where are the key points where value can be created?

There are a number of natural points within a visit where it may be possible to create commercial value from the new flow of visitors. These will include:

- Points of entry, where visitors may pause while collecting information and organising themselves before starting their visit;
- Midway points along a route, where a rest stop may be taken;
- Points of departure, where visitors may take a final opportunity to sort out their belongings, say goodbye to friends or family, linger a little while or wait for transport (especially a ferry) to leave the area.
- Activity areas where payment is required to participate in a particular activity (eg fishing).

Value can also be created through the provision of charged-for facilities which will enhance the visitor experience. These may include:

- Guided tours, on foot or by bike; these may be open to individuals or to pre-booked groups;
- Bike hire, with a range of bikes for adults and family users;
- Hire of vehicles for those with limited mobility, including specially adapted bikes; mobility scooters, and electric or manual wheelchairs;
- Hire of specialist equipment eg fishing tackle.

The co-location of commercial services (eg food and drink, retail) with free visitor services (eg public toilets, information) will increase the opportunity to spend money while making use of public services.

Car parking can be viewed as a public service or as a commercial service; this may differ from one place to another.

It will be important to plan a phased introduction of services, such that growth in capacity is designed to meet growth in the number of visitors. If growth in visitor numbers outstrips service capacity, opportunities will be lost and the visitor experience will be diminished. If growth in capacity outstrips visitor numbers, then commercial providers will at best become frustrated and, in the worst case, there may be business failures.

What part can W&Z play?

A number of options are available to W&Z over the part that it may play in the provision of commercial services. Each option offers a different degree of control over where, when and which facilities are provided, and over their quality and sustainability. Table 1 presents a brief review of a selection of approaches.



W&Z will need to weigh up the costs and benefits of each option, before making a final decision about the approach that it will take. It is highly likely that they will choose to adopt some combination of approaches which they consider will achieve a good balance between the following factors:

- Wise use of capital investment;
- Generation of revenue stream(s);
- Control of appropriate (including quality and sustainability) activity within, or associated with, the FCA;
- Encouraging and managing new flows of visitors;
- Managing competition for new business and capacity to cope with it;
- Managing or avoiding conflict;
- Earning the goodwill of the local community.

Table I Review of possible approaches to provision of commercial services in FCA

Approach	Examples	Costs	Benefits
W&Z as a provider of public services, free at the point of delivery.	Public toilets; car parking; information.	Full cost met by public sector	Complete control over introduction, location, opening times, quality and operation. May be used to influence the location of opportunities for commercial services and gain community goodwill.
W&Z as a provider of commercial services	Car parking; food and drink outlets; small retail outlets	Capital and running costs. Possible loss of community goodwill due to local competition/loss of opportunity for local entrepreneurs. Commercial risk borne by W&Z	Complete control over location, opening times, quality and operation. Creation of revenue stream (Direct income).
W&Z as a controller of commercial services	Letting concession eg food and drink outlet, cycle hire on FCA land	Partial cost met by public sector Administrative cost (procedure for letting concession)	Complete control over location; partial control over opening times, quality and operation. Selection of appropriate commercial partner(s) meeting specified criteria. Creation of revenue stream (concession). May be used to influence the location of opportunities for commercial services and gain community goodwill. Commercial risk borne by entrepreneur.
W&Z as gateway for licensing or approving commercial activities	Allowing commercial activity eg cycle hire, wheelchair hire based on	Administrative cost (licensing and monitoring)	Partial control over location, opening times, quality and operation.



where base is sited on FCA land	FCA land		May be used to influence the location of opportunities for commercial services and gain community goodwill. Commercial risk borne by entrepreneur.
W&Z as gateway for licensing or approving commercial activities which make use of/take place in FCA but base is not sited on FCA land	Allowing commercial operators access to FCA eg tour guides	Administrative cost (licensing and monitoring). May be viewed as over-restrictive and lose community goodwill.	Partial control over appropriate use. Possible revenue stream through charge for commercial use.
W&Z as gatekeeper for allowing appropriate use of FCA	Restricting or banning activity which is considered not to be appropriate within FCA eg use by watercraft, motorised vehicles	Administrative cost (monitoring and enforcement).	Complete control of appropriate activity by commercial users
W&Z as bystander	Nearby food and drink business, independent of FCA	No control over location or quality, which may reflect on visitor experience associated with FCA.	No costs involved.

It will be important to offer support to those businesses which enter into any form of relationship with the FCA through including their details in visitor information, in print, digital media, websites, information boards and signs. Such an association with the FCA will be important for the future success of their business, and will also encourage the highest standards of responsible operation.

Could there be any conflict of interest?

It can be seen from Table I that W&Z will have a considerable degree of power over the choices that are made about the provision of services and the opportunities provided to capture commercial value from the FCA. It is therefore important that they exercise this power with responsibility. In order to manage any potential conflict of interest between themselves and independent entrepreneurs in the provision of commercial services, the following principles will be important:

- **Clarity** – being completely clear at the earliest possible stage about what commercial opportunities will be actively encouraged within or adjacent to the FCA, and when they will become available.
- **Consistency** – releasing the same information to all interested parties at the same time and keeping to a consistent line of information on these opportunities once they have been made known.
- **Transparency** – making sure that all relevant information is publicly accessible; being clear about the basis on which commercial opportunities will become available, on what basis and which, if any, of them will be reserved by W&Z; being open about any selection criteria, including quality and sustainability, which will be used to determine which businesses will be chosen as future partners.

How and when should entrepreneurs make their ideas known to W&Z?



As the FCA project nears completion, the emerging resource is becoming more of a reality in the minds of local residents and entrepreneurs. It is clear from conversations during my visit that there are individuals who are beginning to formulate plans, and have invested time in exploring commercial opportunities. To avoid frustration and disappointment, it will be important to lay down a clear process by which potential entrepreneurs can make their interest known. In the immediate future, the priority is to create a formal system which will require W&Z to keep those who have registered a general interest fully informed about plans and procedures. In the short to medium term, when the first decisions have been made about reception zones and the services that will be required, a process should be put in place to enable entrepreneurs to register a formal interest in a particular commercial opportunity. This will be a simple way of capturing and recording the interest that has been generated by W&Z to date, and will continue to be generated, amongst local entrepreneurs. It will be over and above any process which may be determined for the formal announcement of any concession, which will in all likelihood be the subject of open competition. It will be designed to make sure that none of these entrepreneurs misses out on a future opportunity for lack of information at the appropriate time.

Agenda 2-day meeting on the Joint Action of AP 3

Date/time: Monday 25th and Tuesday 26th of June 2012

Place/location: Kruikebe, Infobarrack, Scheldelei

Monday 25th June

- 9.00 – 10.15 First interview: Dirk Gorrebeeck and Nine Van Hoyweghen, members from a recently set up organisation of Nature-guides which are connected to the Polders of Kruikebe.
- 10.15 – 11.00 Second interview: Stefaan Nollet; project-engineer of the Polders of Kruikebe. Also Mieke Vander Elst
- 11.00 – 12.00 Interview with Martine, keeper of nearby restaurant De Lusthof
- 12.30 Lunch – little more time with Stefaan Nollet
- 13.00 – 15.00 Interview with **Jan Pauwels**, owner of neighbouring site where yacht club VVW Kruikebe has been based for many years.
- 15.00 – 16.00 Called by at bicycle shop of Laurent Deprez; interested in bicycle rental – no-one at home. Quick tour of villages.
- 16.00 – 17.30 Interview with pharmacist Paul Van Deun; several ideas for supporting seniors in recreations (eg. outdoor wheelchairs).
- 17.45 Heading to Antwerp.

Tuesday 26th June

- 10.00 – 12.00 Visit to the Flood Control Area, plus village centres of Bazel and Rupelmonde



12.00 – 14.00 Lunch combined with second interview with Pia De Monie (aldermen) and Rita Pauwels (director of UNIZO)

14.30 Heading to Antwerp

Missing interviews:

The following interviews were planned but were not able to take place...

Laurent Vanden Abeele (ANB – PP4)

Laurent Deprez (Bicycle shop in Kruiseke)

Hein De Brauwer (river pilot on Scheldt, lives in Kruiseke; interested in starting a business with boat rental).



APPENDIX 3

Waterwegen en Zeekanaal NV and the Polders of Kruibeke: the pros and cons of placing demands on the sustainability of partner businesses

Following receipt of a report based on my visit to the Polders of Kruibeke on 25-27th June 2012, Mieke has asked me to offer some thoughts about the pros and cons of forming partnerships with businesses that involve a requirement or preference for businesses that can demonstrate best sustainable or environmental practice.

The original report outlined a number of different options available to W&Z for forming partnerships with businesses, and suggested some of the costs and benefits that may be associated with each option. Benefits listed included the degree of control that W&Z would retain over business operation and the opportunity to select appropriate commercial partners meeting specified criteria. This note has been written to elaborate on some of the issues to be considered by W&Z in establishing a requirement or preference for businesses that can demonstrate best sustainable or environmental practice.

Why should W&Z be considering such a requirement or preference?

A number of reasons might be valid, some of which may be set out elsewhere in background material for the project which we have not seen or for which no translation has been provided. They may include:

- Policy requirements, at local, regional or national government
- Conditions attached to permissions to proceed with the project
- Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) statements of Waterwegen en Zeekanaal NV (W&Z)
- Climate change policy and associated messages
- Expectations arising from the prevailing culture for development in Flanders
- Brand values to be espoused by the project area when completed
- A desire to deliver a unified visitor experience of the highest quality
- A commitment to sustainable use of the Polders of Kruibeke
- Expectations arising from involvement with the STEP programme
- Future possibility that the area may be included in a proposed National Park
- A desire to influence visitor behaviour – on site and elsewhere – through conveying environmental and sustainability messages

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What opportunities are available to W&Z to exert influence over business operations?

W&Z are looking for appropriate operators to be partners in delivering an experience of the Polders of Kruibeke to future visitors. A number of 'carrots' or incentives are available to them to encourage businesses to come forward. These include:

- Creating opportunities for business operations and bringing them to the attention of operators
- Offering exposure to appropriate operators in marketing and visitor information
- Offering the opportunity to appropriate operators become associated with W&Z (and perhaps in future with the National Park)

What factors should be taken into account when selecting 'appropriate' operators?

It is for W&Z to specify the different factors that they consider to be important when selecting business partners, and their relative priority. They may include:

- Environmental credentials
- Social responsibility eg working hours, wage levels etc



- Links to local community eg use of local produce, local labour
- Quality
- Reliability
- Level of service eg minimum opening hours
- Previous experience of similar operations

It can be seen that sustainable and/or environmental best practice is just one of many material factors.

What adverse consequences might arise from W&Z demanding high environmental standards?

Adverse consequences of demanding the highest environmental standards might include:

- Reducing the pool of possible interested parties
- Placing unnecessary restrictions or burdens on potential operators, making successful commercial operation too risky or indeed impossible
- (Possibly) excluding existing local businesses from consideration unless support can be offered to help them fulfil conditions.

What adverse consequences might arise from W&Z failing to demand high environmental standards?

Advert consequences of being insufficiently demanding over environmental standards might include:

- Reflecting poorly on W&Z
- Conflicting with brand values for the Polders of Kruikeke
- Failing to meet visitor expectations (which may increase in future if designated as part of a National Park)
- Producing inconsistent messages around the area

How can W&Z arrive at requirements which will achieve the best balance?

It is difficult to arrive at a clear conclusion without a better understanding of the prevailing culture in Flanders over these issues. However, we are very clear that there is a very real opportunity here to start as you mean to go on. The moment to set a demanding standard is now. It will be much more difficult to achieve change in the future.

A possible way forward might involve:

- Setting a minimum threshold for environmental/sustainable practice of potential operators
- Being reasonable in initial expectations
- Using third party measures such as Green Key to establish evidence of compliance
- Stating an expectation of future change (setting a clear direction and targets over time)
- Offering support to help achieve this change
- Providing preferential market access through restricting inclusion in visitor information to operators demonstrating compliance
- Linking renewal of partnership agreements or contracts to a review of progress against targets
- Inserting clauses into contracts or partnership agreements which can trigger termination if operators fail to deliver

What can be learned from the experience of STEP partners?

It is possible to learn some lessons from experience elsewhere, especially through the experience of STEP partners, although in each case the context is rather different.



The well-established pool of existing business operating in the Broads will continue to trade whether or not they are working in partnership with the **Broads Authority**, so the focus here has been on finding ways to offer advantages to partner businesses while at the same time encouraging them to take steps to act in ways which are most appropriate to their location in a National Park. All tourism businesses have been invited to take up the opportunity to work with the Broads. Some have responded positively and have gained some advantage from increased exposure or association with the National Park. Of these, a number have taken significant steps to improve their environmental performance. At various times, the Broads Authority has been able to offer support through measures such as subsidising entry to the Green Tourism Business Scheme (GTBS), providing consultancy support to new entrants, highlighting businesses that have achieved GTBS certification in certain visitor publications, and choosing to showcase GTBS certificated businesses when planning itineraries for visiting dignitaries or delegations. The Broads Authority can also call on this pool of businesses when it comes to the introduction of new initiatives, as most recently with the visitor gifting scheme. These issues were the subject of the STEP partner visit to the Broads in November 2011. Unlike some protected areas, the Broads Authority has not chosen to restrict all of the benefits of working together solely to tourism businesses meeting specified criteria, such as GTBS certification. For example, the Broads branding, Britain's Magical Waterland, is available for use by any business. The Broadcaster visitor newspaper, a free circulation and the piece of information print with the largest distribution to visitors, carries advertising from a whole range of tourism businesses. Its production and publication is contracted out to a third party, and advertising is available to any tourism business prepared to pay for space.

The STEP programme has provided an opportunity for **Nationaal Park de Biesbosch** to find its own way of addressing some of the issues involved with working in partnership with businesses. Two measures in particular have been taken forward: recruiting and training Ambassador businesses and encouraging take up of Green Key certification. 2010 saw the graduation of 21 Ambassador businesses. In 2011, ten tourism businesses signed a covenant to make their businesses more sustainable, and the National Park recruited help from KMKV to help them achieve this goal. Businesses were offered a 'sustainability scan', to give them an idea of where they are if they wanted to go for the Green Key. Seven businesses were awarded Green Key certification in December 2011. Earlier this year, the Biesbosch National Park was working together with the ambassadors on setting out regulations for ambassadorship which would benefit both the National Park and the ambassadors themselves.

Jackie Denman
The Tourism Company
20th August 2012



APPENDIX 4

A short review of AP3 activity in the three STEP partner areas (Commentary on Spreadsheets)

This note has been based on a retrospective review of the entries made into the spreadsheet which form an ongoing record of partner activity during 2012 in each of the three STEP partner areas in relation to public-private co-operation.

An initial record of relevant activity in the three STEP partner areas was prepared and entered into a spreadsheet in May 2012, based on a trawl of www.step-projects.eu, STEP results, reports and newsletters, and supplemented by knowledge of partner activity, especially in the Broads, UK. At this initial stage, it was not completely comprehensive of all relevant activity. STEP partners were then invited to review their information and to make amendments and additions in order to fill out the record and bring it up to date. It should be noted that while most activity has occurred as a result of the STEP programme, this was not a condition for inclusion.

Based on the workshop that was held in the Broads in November 2011, a number of ways were identified to describe the possible intentions and outcomes of public-private co-operation activities between protected areas and tourism businesses, as follows:

- Developing new product in partnership with the private sector
- Providing opportunities to the private sector for increased exposure in association with the Protected Area
- Extending a welcome to new private sector businesses to become involved with the Protected Area
- Supporting new environmental activity amongst tourism businesses
- Supporting quality development amongst tourism businesses
- Supporting new thinking about sustainable tourism amongst tourism businesses
- Increasing understanding of Protected Areas amongst tourism enterprises
- Increasing understanding of tourism enterprises amongst Protected Area teams
- Enlisting support of tourism businesses in delivering outputs on behalf of the Protected Area
- Involving tourism enterprises in planning the future development of the area.

These are described in the spreadsheet as 'Aim of activity' and appear in Column A. Where an activity was intended to deliver, or has delivered, on more than one of these aims, it was repeated with a second associated outcome; in some instances as many as four different outcomes were identified for one activity.

Updates were undertaken in August and December 2012. On each occasion, the process involved:

- inviting new content from partners;
- identifying new content through trawling websites, newsletters etc.;
- addressing specific queries to partners.

Some entries flowed over into 2013, as information has been made available which provides a more recent update on some initiatives. It has proved impossible to attach an accurate date to all of the entries, and they should be treated as indicative. It should be noted that no AP3 activity in the Polders of Kruikeke has been reported by W&Z since summer 2012, due to the scheduling of the overall flood control project.



The most recent version of the spreadsheet (AP3_Activity_2013_sorted_by_date.xlsx) is attached. Entries are colour-coded by area, and there is an additional column for combined partner activity that has taken place under the STEP programme. (This version of MS Excel allows the user to filter by colour).

The spreadsheet has been designed to be interrogated using auto-filter in order to consider activities relating to a particular intention or outcome. For example, filtering the first column on 'Increasing understanding of protected area amongst tourism enterprises' produces ten entries which relate to this particular aim, comprising five activities undertaken in the Broads, two each by Biesbosch National Park and Polders of Kruikebe, and one partner activity.

It is important to recognise that there is considerable variation between the three areas in the relationship between tourism businesses and the relevant STEP partner. The Broads is an IUCN Category V protected area, managed mainly for landscape/seascape protection and recreation, with a large number of tourism businesses that are well established and have operated on and around the Broads for many years. The National Park de Biesbosch is an IUCN Category II protected area, managed mainly for ecosystem protection and recreation, and this position may offer more opportunities to exercise influence over the businesses that are present in the Park. The situation in the Polders of Kruikebe is different again, as this newly developing flood control area does not yet include any tourism operations.

Each of the STEP partners therefore has chosen a slightly different approach to the way that it works with tourism businesses, and this has influenced the range of initiatives that have been taken.

An overall challenge, reflected in the thinking of all of the partners, has been to achieve a balance between extending a welcome to as many private sector businesses as possible to become involved with the protected area, while at the same time supporting new thinking and best environmental practice amongst tourism businesses who are associated with, and operate in and around, the special wetland environment.







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