

DE BIESBOSCH

EUROPE'S MOST SUSTAINABLE VISITOR CENTRE

SUMMARY



OCTOBER 2011

"Investing in your future"
Crossborder cooperation programme
2007-2013 Part-financed by the European Union
(European Regional Development Fund)



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SUMMARY

Three estuary parks in the Netherlands, England and Flanders are working together to further develop sustainable tourism. This co-operation has organised itself under the name of STEP (Sustainable Tourism in Estuary Parks).

The three parks participating are The Biesbosch National Park in the Netherlands, The Broads in England, and the Polders of Kruibeke in Flanders.

This is a vision of the Biesbosch as Europe's most environmentally sustainable visitor centre.

The visitor centre to end all visitor centres: that is The Biesbosch National Park itself. It is a natural attraction drawing nearly a million visitors annually. Here you can hike, bike, run with your dog, watch birds, kayak, swim... Experience nature.

Part of the attraction includes the three visitor centres, which "receive" a portion of the visitors. There, and thereafter, you immerse yourself in the Biesbosch.

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Expert meeting

On 30 June 2011, experts and Biesbosch stakeholders met to exchange thoughts on the Biesbosch as the most sustainable visitor centre in Europe. The results, together with those of previous projects and policy memoranda, are the basis of this vision.

Permanence

That which is the most "sustainable" today won't necessarily be so tomorrow. That is why "De Biesbosch, Europe's most sustainable visitor centre" is not a detailed plan, but a vision. Support, cooperation and a coherent operating policy are more important for the ongoing process of making national park and visitor facilities more sustainable than a checklist of sustainable criteria based on the knowledge and experience of today.

Ambitious

This vision connects a number of sustainable developments and initiatives of The Biesbosch National Park, including those under STEP, to the goal of becoming the most sustainable visitor centre in Europe. The National Park wants to profile itself as such to visitors and expand its base.



This will demand a different way of looking at the plans we make and the things we do. And, of course, it will include many interfaces with the strategy and action plan for the sustainable Biesbosch.

Sustainable quality

In the recreative policyplan 'Ondergedompeld in de Biesbosch', The Biesbosch National Park describes a different ambition along the same lines: to become a model area for sustainable tourism. This is to be realised through the planning and use of the area, boosting the park identity, improving the infrastructure, attracting new target groups and achieving greater economic and societal impact.

Route guide

The Biesbosch National Park's goal is to be sustainably accessible, available and enjoyable. It is to include energy-efficient facilities, an infrastructure with ample, well-designed rest areas, charging stations for the rapidly increasing use of electric bicycle and boat.

Your own personal motivations will guide you, whether you are looking for a short marked (or unmarked) hiking route, a starting point or lay-by for a nature adventure, by kayak, by bicycle or on foot. And you will come back with exciting personal experiences and a lasting memory to take home.

Sustainable visitor centre

"Sustainable" is synonymous with energy-friendly, efficient, responsible. It means looking out for future generations. It means genuine, authentic, touchable and in touch. It means integrated into the natural environment and with the needs and initiatives of visitors and business. It means that in everything you do, you think about your impact on the three Ps: people, planet and profit. Not just with words, but more importantly, with deeds, with passion and partnership.

When used properly, a sustainable approach is an impulse for sales, attendance and use. And for developing and driving new policy and innovation.



Schedule of requirements

1) Identity: Recognisable and visible

- Every visitor experiences moment of arrival (being welcome, nature)
- Park style projects sustainable values and qualities of the National Park
- Businesses and institutions in the National Park are identifiable as part of the NP
- There is a strong relationship between the facilities, the natural environment and the surroundings. Appropriate, self-communicating

2) Innovative and innovating (on a permanent basis)

- Visitor experiences continuous change and innovation, like the seasons very visitor experiences moment of arrival (being welcome, nature)
- Applications are open: inside is outside; use of dynamic (flexible) systems, moveable and modular
- Applications are Expositions are flexible (flex positions), independent of time and space, use of I-applications (QR, layar, GPS devices)
- Innovative applications for traffic (direction, parking), transport, waste, water, etc.
- Businesses and institutions in the National Park are identifiable as part of the NP

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3) Content

- Visitors find information quickly and easily. Adequate routing of the different types of users according to activity, interests (routes, etc.)
- Far-reaching cooperation - programming - educational/informative/other providers in service area
- Thematic flex positions with the option to expand (delta issue, etc.) and deepen through I-applications

4) Interaction

- Visitors get hospitable reception. With "meeting," this is the (most important) function of physical points
- Continuous focus on new target groups and range of motivations
- Increasing support for nature and park/park organisation. This is expressed in knowledge, knowledge building, positive attitude and behaviour (visit, buy, support/"Friend of the Biesbosch," recommendation, sponsoring, volunteer work, etc.)



- Active participation and exchange (workplace)
- Design of digital portal: Build community (web 3.0)

5) Configuration

- Cooperation in operation of facilities, shared management
- Application of the most recent standards of sustainable construction and sustainable enterprise; self-sufficient in energy use
- Materials use: CO2-neutral
- Multi-use
- All designs address security/safety and vandalism-resistance

