

BUG5

BUG5



**FLEMISH – POLISH
BOOT2LUBELSKIE PROJECT
MID TERM REPORT
SEPTEMBER 2010**

I - Introduction

'Bug 5' is the report of the visitation committees within the Boot2Lubelskie project. The report is presented at the midterm conference organised in Koden the 22nd September 2010. The aim of the report is double: provide a list of screened initiatives which can lead to successful project implementation and offer policy advice. We strongly believe that projects only have a chance for success if the regional and local policy supports and stimulates this kind of initiatives. This is at the heart of the Polish-Flemish project cooperation, dealing with developing sustainable water bound tourism in rural areas of Lubelskie region and the Westhoek in West-Flanders.

Maybe the title is a surprise? The **BUG5** is a wordplay referring to "the Big 5". As 'The Big 5' tells people about the specific tourism potential in Africa, 'the Bug 5' is what makes Lubelskie region special.

The notion was first used in the Boot2Lubelskie visitation committees in the springtime of 2010. The field visits and many contacts with local people in Lubelskie near the Bug river area the project team and the expert teams noticed and experienced the many assets these locations have.

The rich and unspoiled natural environment of the Bug river, the landscapes and country side with slow routes, the regional products, traditions and hospitality near the border inspired the Flemish visitors to refer to the phrase, the Big 5, which refers to the five most difficult animals to hunt on foot, the most respected hunting trophy: lion, leopard, buffalo, elephant and rhino. None of the experts have spotted one of these wild life animals ... but they wanted to catch the "Bug experience" in one word.

That is what the BUG5 means: an attractive river network(1), many sandy and slow roads and routes for walking, riding a horse or mountain biking (2), a rich culture of traditions, regional products and handicrafts (3), warm hospitality (4) and the natural border at your fingertips (5).

Part **1** gives an overview of the general framework in which the Boot2Lubelskie project is operating. Important to mention is that the initiative came from a local and private organisation. With the operational support of a provincial public body and financial resources of a national governmental level a public private partnership was born. It also illustrates that the bottom up approach works and that it can lead to international partnerships, project ideas and cooperation agreements.

Part **2** describes the Boot2Lubelskie project in fact and figures and the planned work plan, which can change during the course of the project. In this case a change was needed to pursue a greater chance of success.

Part **3** presents the used methodology to collect, screen and analyse the necessary information, but also describes the premises and how the project want to reach the final goal: the implementation of a smart, sustainable and small scaled project to be used as an example for other sub regions, to link these initiatives in a network and to adjust the regional policy.

Part **4** contains a tourism policy SWOT-analysis. Projects need good policy support and tourism policy needs good projects. All actions need concrete actions plans and well developed methodologies. The experience in West-Flanders has lead to some general recommendations to improve the territorial and product development, the BUG 5.

Part **5** is a list and description of the six (6) selected initiatives chosen by the Flemish project team, based on the knowledge described in part 3 & 4. For each of these six initiatives a four element analysis was made up. With this list of best practices the discussion and selection of one (1) initiative can be launched. This is an invitation for all Polish project partners and policy levels to use the offered support from all Flemish partners.

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1. General framework

The Boot2Lubelskie project (B2L) is a 18-month Flemish-Polish pilot project on capacity building and exchange of best practices in the field of rural development and sustainable tourism between public and private partners in Lubelskie Region in Poland and the Province of West-Flanders in Belgium. The project is stimulated and financially supported by the Flemish Government through the cooperation programme between Flanders and Central and Eastern Europe – call 2009. The project runs from January 2010 until June 2011. The project is a cooperation between 7 partners in Flanders and Poland.

The Polish partnership has 4 Polish partners: the Marshal's Office Lubelskie Region, Lubelskie Regional Tourism Office, the House of Europe and the Bialskopodlaska Local Action group. The improvement of rural development and development of sustainable tourism is one of the focuses of Eastern Poland. Lubelskie Region is one of the Eastern regions bordering Ukraine and Belarus, with whom it constitutes the Bug Euro region.

The Flemish partnership has 3 Flemish partners: Province of West-Flanders, vzw De Boot and the Polish Information Office. The province of West-Flanders has a long tradition in (sub)regional and international (cross border, transnational) activities. The private local partners vzw De Boot has developed during the last decade sustainable water bound tourism in the area of the Westhoek in close cooperation with the province of West-Flanders. This cooperation is at the core of the West-Flemish knowledge transfer to Lubelskie.

The goal of the B2L project is to find very specific cooperation in the field of ecotourism, sustainable and rural development between the Westhoek area in West-Flanders (the IJzer river area) and a Bug river area in Lubelskie Region. The link between both sub regions is the development of sustainable water bound tourism.

The West-Flanders department of External Relations and the sub regional Westhoek team (Leader area) committed to work together during this project with vzw De Boot, a local private partner based in the Westhoek area in West-Flanders, to explore the possibilities for cooperation with Lubelskie Region. West-Flanders believes that the confrontation with another culture can be used as a mirror for the Westhoek. Ultimately this could lead to a more structured cooperation within the framework of European programs and the current Leader program Westhoek.

This pilot project approach fits into a more general cooperation between West-Flanders and Lubelskie Region and wants to be a first step in a long term and wider European cooperation between the two regions.

During 2008 the cooperation between the province of West-Flanders and Lubelskie region started on the request of the local private partner vzw De Boot and the representative of the Flemish Government in Warsaw, Mr. Koen Haverbeke. West-Flanders was already active in Hungarian and Romanian border regions. In November 2008 there was a political agreement to start a project based cooperation with Lubelskie Region. A first fact finding mission was planned a few weeks later. This was followed by the Lubelskie agreement in January 2009 and a project team visit to West-Flanders in February 2009 to prepare the project application. The project was submitted in March 2009 and was fully approved in July 2009. The start of the project was foreseen for January 2010.

During the project discussions an additional opportunity to work together was explored and discussed. The European Leader Program offers the possibility to start an international project between two Leader areas. In September 2009 a Leader fact finding mission to the BLGD area was planned. During a Leader visit to the Westhoek area in March 2010 more detailed project proposals were prepared for 2011-2012.

The Boot2Lubelskie project and the Leader cooperation fit into the more general cooperation framework between West-Flanders and Lubelskie. The official cooperation agreement has been signed during a political visit to West-Flanders in October 2009. The cooperation agreement ensures the continuity of the contacts and offers additional support and opportunities for cooperation.

The five (5) main cooperation areas between the two regions are:

1. rural development,
2. tourism and culture,
3. regional development,
4. education,
5. European cross border and transnational cooperation .

The Boot2Lubelskie project and the Leader project cover two areas of cooperation: rural development and tourism and culture. The other areas: regional development (economy) and education are being explored and many opportunities will be covered by actions and projects in Lubelskie and West-Flanders.

The by Flanders financially supported Boot2Lubelskie project is already a success in many ways ... As pilot project it paved the way for the bilateral cooperation between the two regions, which is still developing in several areas. The project also launched several spin offs, not only the international Leader project, but also Leonardo project ideas, cross border project ideas and touristic promotion of both regions. The project brought together many different people and expert from many different organisations.

2. Boot2Lubelskie project approach

2.1. Fact and figures

- Total project cost is 213.806,92 EUR (850.000 PLN).
- Financial support Flemish Government: 99.984,75 EUR = 46,76%
- Duration: 18 months, from January 2010 until June 2011.
- Public-private partnership of 7 organisations; 4 Polish and 3 Flemish partners.
- Project goal: transfer of knowledge and expertise, no material investments.
- Project focus: rural development and sustainable tourism.

2.2. Work plan:

Phase 1: Kick-off with detailed in-depth field study of the Bug area. Finalising and refining the inventory on possibilities and sustainable touristic opportunities in the area of the Bug river. Making the long list (ideas) to short list with specific locations and initiatives.

Phase 2: Team creation and illustration of policy and best practices in the Westhoek area, based on the short list created in first phase, with regards to sub regional policy making on sustainable recreation. Illustration best practice of vzw De Boot. Discussion about the inventory on initiatives in opening up the river Bug for sustainable tourism. Explanation of the working method: visitation committee.

Phase 3: the screening of the 3 selected locations and initiatives via expert teams in visitation committees in May, June and July 2010 focused on shortlist of initiatives followed by analysis of findings.

Phase 4: Symposium in Koden, September 2010.

Presentation by the Flemish partners of the visitation commission **report** with findings and advice on the screened initiatives. With the advice an invitation comes along to work together on the implementation of some preferred initiatives.

First feedback by the Polish partners on the selection, advice, etc. Focused on local municipalities, local companies, NGOs and other regional, local and national stakeholders. Important moment in promoting the project and the partnership towards press and local, regional and national authorities. Press delegation from Flanders invited.

October 2010. Final motivated **selection** by the Polish partners of best initiatives for concrete implementation. Selection of minimally 1 project to be realised jointly with the Flemish partners within the Boot2Lubelskie project. Selection of other best initiatives in which Flemish cooperation can be of help. The realisation could be part of project formats like Leader, Leonardo da Vinci, ...or fit within other cooperation formats (exchanges, traineeships, etc).

November 2010. Draft approach for **implementation** of selected initiatives, stating fields of required input from the Flemish partner, timing, finances required, etc.

December 2010. **Joint Polish-Flemish** steering group session in Flanders evaluating project, discussing implementation approach and determining further fields of (project) **cooperation**.

Workshops on project implementation for both policy makers as for local actors. Workshops include practical extensive exchange with experts from i.a. visitation committee, participation in similar Westhoek projects and development of own joint project implementation action plan.

Phase 5: Promotion of the Bug and Westhoek area as sustainable tourism spots. Promoting Flanders & Poland, West-Flanders & Lubelskie. Promoting the project and partnership using brochures, web space, fair attendance, marketing campaign, ...

Headlight is a joint Flemish/Polish participation in 'Vakantiesalon/Salon des Vacances' in Brussels promoting sustainable tourism in Lubelskie and de Westhoek, offering visit in summer of 2011.

Phase 6: Organization implementation of the chosen initiative in Lubelskie and participating in chosen project calls for i.a. Leader and Leonardo da Vinci, or others.

3. Screening and Analysis

3.1. Visitation Committees

Following the different phases of the project **three (3) locations** were selected by the partnership to screen several initiatives in the field by expert teams (visitation committees).

Three visits, three sub regions, three different expert teams. The first visitation committee was sent to the sub region around Wlodawa in May 2010, the second to the area of Slawatycze and Koden in June 2010 and the third to the region of Terespol and Janow Podlaski in July 2010. All three regions are located near the river Bug. During the three visits by the experts information, findings, reviews have been collected. Every visitation committee delivered as short report with analyses. After every visit a meeting was organised to exchange ideas and opinions.

Out of a wide range of offered visits **a list of initiatives** was selected. This was not easy as the visits were characterised by very enthusiastic people, with many times a good explanation. But sometimes a lack of clear purposes, actions, timing or budget as well.

An even bigger challenge was the limited access to written information, due to a lack of knowledge of the Polish language or because it apparently does not exist in a written form. It made the use of the quick scan (annex 1) to get the same information and answers on questions at each visit, not so profound as intended.

The goal was and still is to select **for implementation** one (1) sub region/area and one (1) initiative after the presentation of the general report of phase 3. The selection has to be done by the Polish partnership on the different levels local (BLGD) and regional (Lubelskie) supported by LROT and House of Europe.

This selected initiative will be **jointly developed** by the **Polish** partners with support of **Flemish** support during workshops and training in West-Flanders. Other initiatives can be developed and implemented within cooperation formats as the Leader cooperation, regional development funds or Life Long Learning funds.

3.2. Quick scan tool

The quick scan tool is developed by the West-Flemish provincial tourism organisation, Westtoer, and fits within a larger strategic development plan. Here it is mainly used in a basic form as a checklist to screen initiatives starting from certain premises and offering a project driven focus. This methodology made it possible to compare the visited initiatives in a objective way.

3.3. Premises

The following premises are derived from practice in West-Flanders and might be applicable in Lubelskie as well. The content of what is brought, is a viewpoint from partners but nonetheless outsiders. It is to be shared, discussed intensively and to be adapted to the needs in Lubelskie.

The core theme within the Boot2Lubelskie project is **sustainable tourism**. Sustainable tourism in this case means balance between **Profit, People, Planet and Politics**.

Profit : Can the initiative survive? Does it has a business plan? Does it contribute to the economic development of the region? Is it directed to viable local, national or international target groups?

People : is the project embedded in the local society? Does it not harm the people in the countryside or the village: annoyance, dirt, mobility,... ? Is it embedded in the identity of the region? What is the code of conduct in landscape maintenance: architecture, urban planning, does it pay attention to the local heritage?

Planet : does the initiative pays attention to biodiversity (richness of fauna and flora and their way of living together)? Does it save energy and raw materials?

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Politics : does the initiative fit into the vision on tourism of the region, or – even better- is it a lever for tourism in the region? Does it want to connect to other touristic partners/networks in the region?

We believe that every region has its own specific assets. We have found many assets in Lubelskie, but this our **'BUG 5'**:

- Traditions
- Hospitality
- 'Network of Slow Routes': quiet sandy roads that allow you to explore the countryside of Lubelskie
- The border
- The rivers: Bug and the lower Krzna

Initiatives should be preferably connected to one or more of them. E.g. is the initiative connected to Bug, does it has a potential for cross border cooperation?

Furthermore:

- Does the initiative include supra local potential in its content and towards the target group?
- Preference goes to a public-private cooperation.
- Preference also goes to an ongoing and continuous (sustainable) investment.
- Is the initiative well defined: clear goals and definitions on timing, finances and partners?
- Is there a project driven approach?
- Is Flemish know-how available if it comes to the further implementation of the initiative?

4. Tourism Policy

Initiatives tend to be more successful if they are supported by the policy for tourism developed by the different government levels and local businesses.

This document is not an extended paper, made by an external consultancy agency, but only a plan of actions to be taken made by the partners of the B2L project. The tourist organization of the province of West-Flanders (Westtoer) has developed during the past couple of years a standardized method to develop such a strategic plan.

In the annex 1 there is a short summary of the methodology. During the three visits to the BUG area we saw a lot of opportunities for tourism and discussed about a possible strategic plan. We thought this could be useful information although this was not the main objective of our visits to the BUG area. It is not a view from inside, but from outside combined with our experiences in the Westhoek and West-Flanders. Our knowledge of the BUG area is too limited; the language barrier and the short stay made it difficult to make a thorough analysis. Our main objective is to convince the local stakeholders to screen the BUG area and to start making a strategic touristic plan themselves.

Although we had limited information we tried to make a SWOT of the BUG area and give some recommendations together with some examples of best practices which could be implemented in this region. We used the methodology of Westtoer, annex2.

4.1. SWOT-analysis

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A lot of initiatives are supported by an enthusiastic team of volunteers. - The presence of starting local businesses which develop agro tourism and product development - The connection with the university school on tourism development 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tourism as an instrument for rural development is not supported by the local population. - Limited cooperation and networking both on the level of policy makers as on the level of product development. - Agro touristic farms (B&B's) are starting to develop, but without quality standards and are not using the rich and beautiful architectural heritage. - Limited tourism information points and limited signposting. - The cultural heritage and the rich history is not presented on a modern way. - Limited knowledge of foreign languages, lack of English speaking guides. Lack of cohesion, identity and strategy in the promotion - The Bug is not present in the international guidebooks and programs of the international tour operators. International visitors to Poland do seldom visit this region.
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A rich diversity of local gastronomy - A beautiful, nearly unspoilt, but not unique landscape. BUG and the valleys around are of an exceptional beauty. A lot of cultural heritage, tranquillity and biodiversity - The story about the border with a multiplicity of cultures and religions. A border with a rich history. - Craftsman, storytelling, traditions and traditional music are still alive in the local day to day life. 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New initiatives do not care enough for the identity of the region ; the image of a village or landscape, biodiversity (reforestation of wetlands, new industrial activity, new houses) - Competition with other rural areas in Poland and Northern Europe with a similar landscape. Poland has a lot of beautiful touristic top locations. The competition is big. - Livability of the countryside is under pressure. Young and high educated

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A lot of architectural heritage (often not well maintained) - A network of beautiful sandy tracks make the area easy accessible. - Horse riding and its traditions are strongly embedded by the local inhabitants. - Hospitality - Availability of a touristic board. - European programs and guidelines are a challenge : Leader, cross border cooperation, water basin management, Natura 2000. - Cross border developments : beginning cross border Polish-Belarus initiatives. 	<p>people tend to emigrate to Warsaw or Lublin. For them the countryside is not attractive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agriculture is in a big development due to European rules and the need of sustainable agriculture.
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4.2. General recommendations

4.2.1. Destination areas and territorial development

For promotion and product development it is very important to mark a recreational area. The province of West-Flanders has been divided into 4 green areas next to the coastline and the heritage cities. The Westhoek is one of the green areas. For every area there exists an active contact and consultative structure, there has been developed a strategic tourism plan and every year an annual trend report is prepared. An important first step is to gather information about tourism in the region.

4.2.2. Product development BUG 5

1. The river Bug and its blue network
2. Unlocking the countryside through its sandy roads
3. Regional identity
4. Hospitality
5. The border as theme

1. The River Bug and its blue network:

work on the recreational use of the area, the explanation of the rich nature and history, good balance between body (move) – soul (experience) – mind (knowledge), the levers for further tourism development and its link with the theme border rivers Bug and Krzna – binding recreation and tourism – biodiversity.

2. Unlocking the countryside through its sandy roads:

create gradually in a first phase a common road network for horse riders, hikers, mountain bikers and later cyclists on (half) paved roads. Equally important is to create special arrangements with several partners and to find products who appeal to sportsmen, ordinary tourists and families with children. Examples: donkey rides, overnight wagon trips.

Reference biking: <http://www.westtoer.be/westtoer/fietsen.aspx?id=100073>

Reference walking: <http://www.westtoer.be/westtoer/fietsen.aspx?id=100078>

Reference horse riding: <http://www.westtoer.be/westtoer/paard.aspx?id=100087>

3. Regional identity

Create regional identity by developing a policy around craftsmanship, stories, traditions, folk music, by mapping regional products and dishes in a contemporary way and bring it to

the visitor.

References popular sports: <http://www.volkssportroute.be>

4. Hospitality:

further develop hospitality as strength, support small scaled projects of local people, increase involvement in the policy, make local people ambassadors of the region, develop new methods for guiding, additional efforts are needed to involve farmers.

Agricultural network: <http://www.samendeboerop.be>

5. The border:

create step by step a network and products: preparation of a roadmap, supporting initiatives, joint promotion. Don't forget contemporary stories.

4.2.3. Strategy

- Cooperate with tourist attractions in the region and further away : Sobibor, Chelm and Bialowieza.
- Use European funds for local inhabitants and organisations so that they feel involved.
- The cooperation with the school should be extended. In Europe there are a lot of examples where such cooperation resulted in innovative knowledge centers where practice, research and training meet each other.
- The knowledge of several languages and the general knowledge about the region should be increased. This demands cooperation with education centers and demands languages training for inhabitants.
- Promotion is expensive. Together it must be possible to raise sufficient funds to concentrate the promotion on target groups. Cooperation is needed between local governments and businesses to promote together the identity of a region.
- It is important to create an information and access point network that cooperates with attractions, hotels, restaurants and local shops.
- The development of overnight stays is essential if tourism wants to have an important role in the rural development. LEADER gives the possibility to support, coach, develop packages and develop a network of providers for starting initiatives.
- Moreover it is important that the villages and landscape stay attractive and beautiful. This demands a specific strategy of conservation combined with development which cares for countryside and environment.
- At last it is important to stress the need that tourism is embedded in the local community, that seeks for consulting and cooperation. The province of West-Flanders has developed the last couple of years a network of decentralized offices.

References:

Touristic plan for the Westhoek : <http://www.westtoer.be/westtoer/onderzoek.aspx?id=100117>

document 'Strategic policy plan Tourism and Recreation for the Westhoek 2008-2013

Innovative and similar landscape is Drente (NL):<http://ontdek.drenthe.nl>

5. Analysis of the selected initiatives

5.1. List and description

Based on these premises and after an intense discussion, the experts that participated at the visitation committees came to the **list of 6 selected initiatives**:

1. Kayak on Bug, Krzna and Włodawka.
2. Touristic – recreative network Krzna-BUG
3. Fortification around Brest
4. The Milky Way
5. Educational Ecological Route "Miedzy Wieprzem a Bugiem"
6. Poleskie National Park (Poleski Park Narodowy)

For each initiative you will find a **description containing 4 elements**:

1. Short description based on the quick scan
2. SWOT-analysis
3. Recommendations
4. References of initiatives we know that might be inspiring

5.2. Selected initiatives

5.2.1. Kayaking along BUG, Krzna and Włodawka

5.2.1.1. Description

- The River BUG is approximately 800 km long, springs in Ukraine - 185 km from the border – and constitutes the national border between Poland, and with it the European Union, and Ukraine and Belarus on a stretch of almost 400 km (from Gołębie to Niemirów) and in its lower course joins the Narew 223 km from Niemirów. The total stretch of BUG river in Lubelskie is approximately 400 km, all of which is navigable for kayaking.
- The Bug river is one of the longest non-canalised rivers in Europe of a natural beauty seldom encountered in the rest of Europe.
- During the three visits to the BUG region we were able to experience kayaking on the BUG from 1/ **Włodawa to Rozenka** (2 km on Włodawka, a tributary of the river BUG and 15 kilometre on the river BUG) with a stop at the national water-level indicator next to Włodawa; 2/ **Slawatycze to Kodon** (42 km) with stops on the sandy beach of Sugny and the Orthodox monastery of Jableczna; 3/ **river Krzna from Husinka to Malowa Gora** (canalised river during 20 km) and from **Malowa Gora on river Krzna (unspoiled river) to Pratulin** on river BUG for 40 km with a stop in Neple.
- Experience of kayaking on nearly 120 km of river BUG and its tributaries Włodawka and Krzna.

5.2.1.2. SWOT Analysis

Strength	Weakness
Safe River for kayaking Border control gives more safety on the river in case of danger Unspoiled River Longest European non-canalised river Easy accessible Border/Schengen Wired border reminds at "check-point-charly" Natural beauty which does not exist anymore in Western Europe	No jetties Border control formalities Need of a guide (cost!) Far away Weak network with other municipalities Coordination on larger scale not present yet
Opportunities	Threats
Clear interest of many people along the BUG River to facilitate the access for kayaking of river Bug: Local government of Wlodawa - Rozanka, Slawatycze – Koden and Pratulin and local businesses in Wlodawa, Slawatycze and Husinka – Malowa Gora and Pratulin. Creation of access points in Wlodawa, Slawatycze, Koden, Malowa Gora and Pratulin, from where exploration of rivers can start. Potential cross border cooperation within EU regional and other structural funds	How will EU Eastern Neighbour Policy with regards to Ukraine and Belarus develop?

5.2.1.3. Recommendations

- There is a clear interest of many people along the BUG River to facilitate the access for kayaking of river Bug. Local government of Wlodawa - Rozanka, Slawatycze – Koden and Pratulin and local businesses in Wlodawa, Slawatycze and Husinka – Malowa Gora and Pratulin have plans to attract more visitors.
- Due to the lack of cooperation between local government and private businesses all efforts are rather small and mostly not well coordinated. Every local municipality promotes and facilitates only 50 km of BUG-river, whereas the total length is 400 km.
- For local governments it is not easy to coordinate this promotion of the full length of the river, so this should be coordinated on a larger scale.
- Next to this regional coordination, local government and local businesses can start with a 'pilot-project' of promoting and facilitation of one stretch of 50 km, which can be used as an example and test-case for other regions.
- Later the effects of this example can be evaluated, modified and adapted where necessary and implemented on the whole BUG River and tributaries, so that the whole river has one image, one logo, one way of signposting and one general website.
- Need of creation of access points from where the further exploration of the rivers can start. Possible access-points are Wlodawa, Slawatycze, Koden, Malowa Gora and Pratulin.
- Use BUG River as a general attraction point for the whole region by using the "BUG 5" (similar as "BIG 5"; the animals which you must have seen when travelling the national parks in Eastern and Southern Africa).
- Stimulate local entrepreneurship e.g. Marek
- Care more about sustainability

5.2.1.4. References

Example of a trip by canoe on the River Lahn in Germany:

- An excellent 'road book' on the Lahn in Germany
http://www.kanu-verlag.de/go/dkvgmbh/_dbe_products,210000.xhtml
- An example of guidelines of an information panel
<http://www.kanu-lahn-dill.de/files/grune-tafel-hinweistafel.pdf>
- An example of an indication of distance
<http://www.kanu-lahn-dill.de/files/die-lahn-und-ihrekilometrierung.pdf>

Meetcentives of Westtoer

<http://www.toerismewesthoek.be/westhoek/meet.aspx?id=22959&LangType=1033>

5.2.2. Touristic recreative network Krzna - Bug

5.2.2.1. Description

- Circular route around Biala Podlaska; "the valley of the Krzna" of 150 km connecting agro touristic farms, horse studs and places where you can experience handicrafts.
- This route of 150 km is perfect for a 3 day horse riding trip.
- The landscape around Biala Podlaska is a mixture of agriculture land and forests.
- There is a large network available of sandy tracks. Those are perfect for horse riding or riding a horse carriage.
- The initiative consists of making a sign posted network for horse riding, cycling and walking. Tourists can experience this by using a guide or by exploring themselves.

5.2.2.2. SWOT Analysis

Strength	Weakness
<p>There is a lot to be seen. Enthusiastic local stakeholders Landscape with agriculture and forests Network of agro touristic farms Landscape is easy accessible for a non trained visitor (no hills,...) Distance is perfect for Weekend trip from Warsaw Child friendly Extended network of sandy tracks give access to rural life</p>	<p>Landscape is not unique (typical for all North East of Europe) Lack of organisation and promotion There are no entry points or 'gates' yet Handicrafts are not a strong attraction (sometimes old-fashioned image) if not translated in a actual way Not for an international target group</p>
Opportunity	Threat
<p>Ecotourism is a 'hot' item, attracting attention of many EU funds Within Flanders 'slow routes' and their potential to explore and access rural life is a</p>	<p>With ageing population handicrafts and its link to 'authenticity' of the region evaporates if not actualised Spatial planning focused on hard economic</p>

<p>trend. Possibilities for cooperation!</p> <p>These 'sandy tracks' could be used and developed in combination of walking, horse riding and cycling.</p> <p>Joint LEADER project with Westhoek on rural access</p>	<p>tourism neglects sandy tracks and authenticity</p>
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5.2.2.3. Recommendations

- Importance of good guides.
- Next to the handicrafts there is need of explanation on the (history of the landscape)
- Handicrafts – route is a teaser for further exploration of the region of Biala Podlaska
- Need of good promotion
- Need of one leading theme and name
- Creation of one entry point, where you can have information, where you can start the route and where you can make reservations
- Signposting must be adapted for the different users such as horse riding , cyclists and walkers.
- Try to connect this region with the border region and integrate border-stories in the Biala Podlaska route
- Promotion could be done by
 - o Folder with cycle/walk/horse-riding 'knot-system-network' which is well used in Flanders
 - o Folder with guided tours
- Offer horse carriage tours on the Sandy tracks around Biala Podlaska. This is a perfect combination of recreation and accommodation which is well used in the province of Drente in the Netherlands.
- Use existing traditions such as festivals to attract visitors. E.g. Harvest festival in august, or St Hubertus,
- Use existing traditions of the River such as 'dolls on the River on march 21st' or St John on June 21st.
- Creation of an integrated route with nature (flora and fauna), culture, traditions and history.
- Better use of the tradition of story tellers. Guides should be storytellers.
- Create a route of several days for cycling, walking or horse riding with transport of luggage.
- This is a network of 12 farms, but it could be a good idea to cooperate with hotels and campsites

5.2.2.4. References

- Touristic recreational networks in Flanders
- www.andersreizen.be (tour operator specialised in walking holidays)

5.2.3. Fortification around Brest

5.2.3.1. Description

Originally it was the largest 19th century fortress of Russian Empire, one of the western Russian fortresses. It is located at the confluence of the Mukhavets and Western Bug rivers with total area 4 km². Its plan was developed by Russian general Opperman in 1830. The initial phase of the construction lasted from 1836 until 1842. The fortifications were then progressively modernized

and expanded throughout the 19th century, with **forts added around the original fortress**. The final works were carried out in 1914, the first year of World War I, resulting in a fortified area 30 km in circumference.

During World War I the fortress was captured by the German army in August, 1915, after the Russian army abandoned it during its general withdrawal from Poland that summer. The fortress changed hands twice during the Polish-Soviet War and eventually stayed within Polish borders, a development that was formally recognised by the Treaty of Riga in 1921. In 1930 the fortress became infamous in Poland as a prison in the aftermath of the so-called "Brest elections" and the Brest trial. During the Invasion of Poland in 1939 the fortress was defended for 4 days by a small garrison of four infantry battalions and two tank companies under Gen. Konstanty Plisowski against the XIX Panzer Corps of Gen. Heinz Guderian. After four days of heavy fighting the Polish forces withdrew southwards on September 17.

On 17 September 1939 the Soviet Union invaded Poland in accordance with the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact and occupied the Eastern part of Poland including the Brest Fortress.

In the summer of 1941 it was defended by Soviet soldiers against the German Wehrmacht in the first days of Operation Barbarossa, earning it the title of Hero Fortress. The fortress had become a symbol of the Soviet resistance during the German-Soviet War along with Stalingrad and Kursk.

In Terespol there are four (4) forts around the original fortress. In one there is a bar and the three others are in ruins. Bats use those forts for hibernation.

5.2.3.2. SWOT Analysis

Strength	Weakness
<p>A local NGO under initiative of the director of Culture of the city of Terespol is looking for conservation</p> <p>Very close to River BUG</p> <p>There are a lot of border-stories to tell</p> <p>Rich history both national and European (could attract a lot of international visitors)</p> <p>Those forts form a part of a big complex of 15forts and 100 other objects.</p>	<p>Nearly nobody cares about the forts</p> <p>The forts are neglected and in a bad state of conservation</p> <p>Nearly no cooperation with Belarus</p> <p>Important site for Russian occupier, Polish people are not to interested in this part of history.</p> <p>No defined plans for restoration yet</p> <p>Restoration might cost a lot of money</p> <p>No funds for restoration available yet</p>
Opportunities	Threats
<p>Link with the border region offers access to cross border funding and potential infrastructure works in CBC</p> <p>Remembrance of WOI in '14-'18 is an important element for Flanders and offers new fields of cooperation</p>	<p>How will relations with EU Eastern Neighbour Belarus develop?</p>

5.2.3.3. Recommendations

- Need for a cross border cooperation with Belarus.
- Good way to attract international visitors as this part of the European history and gives a good overview of the history of this border region.
- This fort could be linked with other points of interest of the border region
- Strong need for good guides with a historical knowledge combined with good storytellers.

- In this fort there could be a good combination of nature, recreation, culture and history similar as what is done in the Ypres ramparts in the Westhoek.
- The local technical school could be involved in the planning, restoration and maintenance of the complex. By doing this the local community is more involved and implicated and will care better of the maintenance. By this way vandalism will be less or even excluded.
- Involvement of all local stakeholders such as schools, local government, regional government and local businesses needed.

5.2.3.4. References

- <http://www.ieperdigitaal.be/vestingen.html>

During one or two visitation committees some people spoke about the huge amount of stories. The link below explains how you can collect and preserve those stories.

http://dohistory.org/on_your_own/toolkit/oralHistory.html

Several museums in Westhoek region try to design some educational activities for children. The museum Merghelynck and the castle of Beauvoorde are a good example. The site is in Flemish but can be translated with for instance Google Translate.

http://www.erfgoed-vlaanderen.be/nl/index.cgi?s_id=324&id=524&basis=|324|447|524

5.2.4. The Milky way

5.2.4.1. Description

Thematic village Sosnowska around the different aspects of milk.

- Visit to the local community centre (which started two years ago). In one room there is small exposition on traditional clothes and old handicrafts and tools.
- Visit to a small local farm where retired farmers show and explain how to milk a cow in the traditional way. Fresh cow milk tasting.
- Visit to an industrialised farm with 112 cows which are milked with a computer controlled machine.
- Visit to the 'Milkchamber'. Exposition of old tools which were used in making butter. Workshop on how make butter. Visitors can participate and taste.

Every year there is an open day with more than 2000-3000 visitors. They want to welcome groups for prestige and for agricultural education (primary school children). Making money of the visits is not a goal.

Recently famers are allowed to develop activities and sell farm products up to 5% of their turnover. Until now not one famer who dared to start this kind of activities.

5.2.4.2. SWOT Analysis

Strength	Weakness
Old and new items linked with milk close to each other	Only of local interest
Conservation of cultural heritage and local farming traditions	Relies on Volunteers
Initiated and supported by the local community	

Opportunities	Threats
Fits within EU LEADER projects for educational centres in cooperation with local schools, governments and stakeholders	CAP Policy of Poland curbs growth of original and commercial initiatives of farmers to diversify their services Ageing farming population with limited skills and interest in developing new services

5.2.4.3. Recommendations

- 'The milky chamber' and community house with the small exposition are close to each other, but could better be joined in one exposition.
- Some items are signposted but are not very visible
- Construction of a petting zoo and educational centre where next to expositions there is room for workshops.
- Need for cooperation with the local schools and local governments.
- Cooperation with other thematic villages such as Rozanka (Rose village). Maybe LROT could help with the promotion of the thematic villages of BUG area.
- Select only one (1) target group such as school children and make good promotion for them.
- Make a link to the cultivation of camomile. This is something more special which might attract other visitors (included foreign visitors). Link the camomile with the cultivation of herbs in general.

5.2.4.4. References

5.2.5. Educational ecological route "Miedzy Wieprzem a Bugiem"

5.2.5.1. Description

The route "Miedzy Wieprzem a Bugiem" is a route and cooperation between 5 small companies in the vicinity of Wlodawa on the theme of preserving Slavic traditions, horse riding and cultivation of ecologic fruit.

a. Slavic Burg City :

Reconstruction of early-medieval Slavic burg city; different ways of presenting Slavic traditions. Meeting with living history, knights, craft, cuisine. The name of the centre ' Tsuga - Horodysche is a combination of the current determination of the local population - " Tsuga ", and the Old Ruthenian - Horodyszczze ", which means castle. The idea for constructing this castle began in spring 2004. A year later they began working with groups of for the historical reconstruction and the first visitors began to arrive . So far they have built : ramparts and a moat , " Polish fence " on all the walls, a gate , a tower and a tunnel, a small museum with a model originally existing in the nearby city Klarowie , bread oven and firing pottery. This city has all the characteristic elements of the daily work for the defence of a semi- wooden fortification. Considerable attention and a lot of work has gone into the construction of this iconic building, which plays a central role in the festival that takes place regularly, " Encounters with the Living History". The entire construction makes it possible to live on a very spectacular way the presentation of life, fighting and weapons ,

rituals and worship of ancient Slavs. These performances were enthusiastically received. There are regular visits of schools in Lublin province, as well as sophisticated participants in other similar projects in historical Poland. Professional patronage of the Centre for Scientific Circle of Students' exercise of Archaeology University, Maria Curie Skłodowska University in Lublin, supported by the scientific community and the museum. This centre carries out field work of experimental archaeology and reconstruction, which further contributes to the continuous improvement of the quality and attractiveness of the place. In addition, they work with groups for the historical reconstruction and organization of battle scenes, battles, combats and weapons.

b. Agritourism farm with horseriding „Cyganówka” in Wólka Cycowska

This farm offers demonstration of field works, horse riding and Hippo therapy for 3 target groups namely disabled people, people with internet addiction and people with computer stress.

c. Ecological farm in Zabrodzie :

A farm specialised in the cultivation of raspberries, strawberries, black currants and fish breeding

d. Mini open-air museum (living farm museum)

e. Konie Huculskie, Horse Breeding Centre "Żurawiejka " in Beech, near Chełmski National Park and Sobiborski Polesie Landscape Park and National Park. Next to offering all horse riding activities next to the centre there are two authentic Mongol yurts for rent for visitors.

5.2.5.2. Evaluation

Strength	Weakness
Enthusiastic people Each member has a good knowledge on his topic Beautiful settings Combination of culture, entertainment, education, tasting of local food, ... New and original ideas Horses are a regional speciality Good starting point for further exploration of the Włodawa region.	Lack of funds for maintenance Route is not signposted No local support Few accommodation available Big distance between the five centres Mainly local visitors
Opportunities	Threats
Similar experiences in West-Flanders	Competition

5.2.5.3. Recommendations

- Offering a package for visitors with a half-day tour, a day tour and an package with visits to the five centres with an overnight stay. This way the potential customer can choose himself which package is best for him.
- Better cooperation between the five companies. Antoni Kobiela of Karczma Poleska in Kolacze could offer those packages as this is a well operated hotel with restaurant and a private tourist information point.
- Creation of one website with information on those packages and individual information on the five locations. On this website it could be possible to make reservations.
- Creation of a network of volunteers, especially for the Slavic Burg city.

- Need of information on the amount of actual visitors
- Definition of target groups; school groups, daytrip of weekend trip from capital Warsaw,...
- Better promotion of the route and cooperation with university and local government
- There is a need of good guides and storytellers. Training of local, regional guides.

5.2.5.4. References

5.2.6. Poleskie National Park (Poleski Park Narodowy)

5.2.6.1. Description

Poleski National Park is situated in the western part of the Leczynsko-Wlodawska Plain, in the centre of Polesie Lubelskie. The plain itself lies between the valleys of the Wieprz River and the Bug River. The Park protects the environment, which is typical in eastern Poland. Its total area is 9,759 ha, approximately 65 km of tourist trails invites visitors to tour the Park.

Natural values : Poleski National Park was the first National Park in Poland that was established with the mandate to protect peat bog and swamp areas. The Parks' area includes a unique territory, which is a miniature of tundra at its extreme southwest European location. It includes lakes and floodplains, swamps, peat bogs and karstic lakes, which survived until now in a relatively unaltered shape. Preservation of the Park habitats depends critically on the water balance in this complicated ecosystem, therefore the management of the water resources at the level ensuring equilibrium in the environment is essential. In the last several dozen years before the Park was established, an accelerated drainage of the area has occurred. It was caused by human activity and resulted in changes, which would not come by any natural process. It is expected that the protection offered by the Park should prevent such undesirable drainage from reoccurring, and that restoration of the natural conditions and shape of these areas may be achieved.

Vegetation : Peat bogs, meadows and forests predominate among the vegetation formations of the Park. Forests occupy 4,131 ha. 930 species of vascular plants have been found in the Park. Among some 170 rare species, 57 have been protected. Poleski National Park is unique in Europe because of simultaneous presence of a large number of plants typical for a northern climatic zone and for an Atlantic zone.

Fauna : The park is inhabited by 35 species of fish and reptiles. Turtles, which used to be typical of this region, and fire-bellied toads, are the most interesting among the amphibians and reptiles. Mammals noted in the Park include ermine, otter, elk (North American - moose), beaver, and large predators such as wolves. 146 bird species nests here, among them the hen harrier and red-legged falcon, are endangered species. Some 15 other species, including great snipe, short-eared owl, blue throat, redshank, lesser spotted eagle, black stork, scarlet rose finch, crane, tattler, curlew, aquatic warbler and Montagu's harrier are considered to be rare.

5.2.6.2. SWOT Analysis

Strength	Weakness
Enormous potential Good guides (even one in English) A lot of funds due to the fact of being a NP There is already a 'nice' animal to promote the NP (European mud turtle) Highly educated staff Foreign visitors are willing to travel far for a NP. A great diversity of habitats Peripheral area is still unspoilt There are already cycle and walking paths in the peripheral area Preserved landscape which has mostly been lost in Western Europe	First focus is conservation of nature, visitors are secondary Poor knowledge of foreign languages Local community is not very willing to attract more visitors A NP has a strict organisation
Opportunities	Threats

<p>Use the national touristic campaign focused on Eastern Poland to promote all NP in East Poland</p> <p>International project cooperation to use EU best practices in opening NPP to sustainable tourism (cfr. development in Flanders)</p>	<p>Competition with Bialystok NPP and Bieszczady</p>
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5.2.6.3. Recommendations

- NPP Headquarters to become the main access point of the NPP with an exposition on the park and a educational guided tour on the mud turtle hatchery.
- The mud turtle is selected as the symbol of Lubelskie (together with four other animals for Eastern Poland). This symbol must be used to promote the park as there will be a big promotion campaign for the region in Poland and neighbouring countries.
- "Nature for the people" ; Better visitor management.
- Creation or extension of trails in and around the NPP.
- formation of (Foreign languages) guides,
- cooperation with the local community around the park such as hotels, Agro tourism farms, restaurants,... so that the benefits of more visitors is well distributed.
- Cooperation with other National Parks in Poland. The national parks of Bialystok region have too much visitors. Some could visit this not so well known but interesting park.

5.2.6.4. References

6. Conclusion

With this report the joint Polish-Flemish Boot2Lubelskie project on the development of sustainable water bound tourism reaches a crucial moment.

The long list of actions and activities along the river Bug was brought down to a shortlist of selected initiatives with an interesting project potential by the project team. Three (3) very specific sub regions were selected to send out Flemish visitation committees. These visitation committees consisted of experts in policy development and experts from similar activities in Flanders. The group of enthusiastic volunteering people became even more enthusiastic after they discovered many beautiful sites in Lubelskie.

The general feeling within the visitation committees is that the advice is not going deep enough, due to lack of accessible information and language barriers. The experts had many questions but did not receive enough answers to give in-depth advice. This however also offers an opportunity for intensified cooperation within the next stages of the project. This report is an advice, which our Polish partners are free to follow (or not). But it is also an invitation to explore together further opportunities for joint action planning and implementation of the chosen initiatives.

The Flemish partners believe in the sustainable touristic potential of Lubelskie and are willing to involve themselves actively! Not only when promoting the area at the main touristic fair in Flanders 'Vakantiesalon', but also to support with guidance in policy development and developing of specific touristic products in the Bug area.

This is also a commitment which lasts longer then the project life cycle of the Boot2Lubelskie project and which can and will lead to project or policy development initiatives.

September 2010,

Province of West-Flanders
Vzw De Boot
Polish Tourist Organisation

Annex 1 – Steps to prepare a tourism plan (Source: Westtoer)

Step 1: Where to go to with the Westhoek: mission, principles

Step 2: Where are we with the Westhoek

- Situation analysis
- Diagnosis: SWOT – problem formulation

Step 3: What do we want to achieve the next 3 years: strategic goals

Step 4: Which marketing strategy?

Step 5: How to achieve the objectives?

product development – marketing – organization – knowledge

Step 6: Indicators

This is done in constant interaction with policy and regional actors

Annex 2 Situational analysis (Source: Westtoer)

Internal analysis

1. Current tourist-recreational offer
 - 1.1. Tourist and recreational attraction elements
 - 1.1.1. Landscape
 - 1.1.2. Green fields
 - 1.1.3. Road networks
 - 1.1.4. Cultural heritage and visitor attractions
 - 1.1.5. Visitor attractions
 - 1.1.6. Couleur locale
 - 1.1.7. Events
 - 1.2. Supporting tourism facilities and services
 - 1.2.1. Lodging offer
 - 1.2.2. Tourism offices
 - 1.3. External and internal accessibility
2. Current tourist-recreational demand
 - 2.1. Residential tourism
 - 2.2. Day tourism
3. Economic significance of tourism and recreation
 - 3.1. Turnover of tourism
 - 3.2. Employment
4. Organization
5. Implemented product policy
6. Implemented marketing policy

External analysis

1. External resources
2. Policies of other sectors important to tourism products
3. Opportunities and threats