

6. International project meeting

**WaterTour**  
**Improvement of competitiveness of SMEs and**  
**watertourism regions by innovative strategies**  
**and technologies**

Report of the results

6<sup>th</sup> June until 9<sup>th</sup> June 2007  
Greifswald, Fischstrasse 11, Germany

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# 1. Objectives of the event

From the 6<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> June 2007, the final international meeting in the context of the project “WaterTour - Improvement of competitiveness of SMEs and water tourism regions by innovative strategies and technologies” took place (Appendix 1: Programme). The meeting included a project group meeting and a study trip.

In total, up to 13 participants from the five partner regions attended the meeting (Appendix 2: List of participants).

The official welcome as well as the opening of the starting event took place on the 6<sup>th</sup> June 2007 during a common dinner.

## 2. The Final International Conference

### 2.1 *Opening of the meeting on Thursday 7th June*

The meeting was opened by the managing director of the Regional Tourism Board Vorpommern Tobias Valentien. He welcomed the guests from the partner regions and Ms Kellner gave a short overview of the meeting program.

### 2.2 *Presentation of the future cooperation possibilities in Interreg IV C*

Ms Christin Kellner introduced the present status of the Programme manual Interreg IVC. (See attached presentation)

Lahit University of Applied Science presented a project proposal, which thematically was agreed by all partners (see attached presentation)

#### **Development of tourism destinations connected to water tourism in Päijänne and Metropolitan area**

##### **with following objectives:**

- Development of tourism destinations connected to water tourism in Päijänne and Metropolitan area
- To develop complete tourism products including water related products and additional services
- The product development from the waterway and attraction point of view
- Co-operation across country boundaries
- Together the small destinations support one another
- Extended stays and better use of the services
- Better understanding of the diverse needs of
  - Water tourism destinations
  - SME:s offering water tourism services
  - SME:s offering additional services like accommodation, program services and a variety of other services
- Enhancing the co-operation of different actors at the areas
- Product development and quality of services

- Problems connected to seasonality
- Individual travellers and development of products offered to them
- Sustainable use of the resources

Ms. Kellner pointed out the importance of priorities of Interreg IVC and suggested a new more technical approach of the new project idea (See attached presentation)

**Exchange on regional business support structures and approaches to assisting tourism service providers (SMEs) in rural regions**

- Promotion of the development and use of ICT-based (Information and Communication Technology) services and products esp. by SMEs
- Strategic cooperation and networking between regions focusing on the development of sustainable tourism in the hinterland
- Improving the qualification of SMEs personnel
- Enhancement in value of regional potential for marketing and tourism product development by SMEs

E-Commerce	& SME
+ Quality	& SME
+ Landscape	& SME
EQL	SME <sup>3</sup>

Proposed working components:

**CP 1: E-Commerce and SMEs**

**CP 2: Quality & SMEs**

**CP 3: Landscape and SMEs**

Within a brainstorming session the project structure and proposed working components were filled with specific activities



<b>CP1: E- Commerce and SMEs</b>	<b>CP2: Quality and SMEs</b>	<b>CP3: Landscape and SMEs</b>
Improving the Water tour webpage by a Programme Package Recommending System	good practices based on quality standards	Small scale infrastructure filling gaps of the complete product: e.g. bench, swimming play ground, pontoon
Develop Electronic Tourist Info Points or add to existing Info Points	Tourism standards: identify, compare, and communicate for: T-Infos Holiday houses Water tourism SMEs Others (awareness)	Building in some specific programmes (trainings, trips) into the tourism product to raise the tourists' awareness
Mp3 guide tours	Training on implementing quality standards adapted to tourism	Promoting/ awareness, cultural & natural landscapes and protected ? Touring/ signs areas ? part of products
Improvement of existing booking software for: Canoe rental & tours Cycle tours House boat ....	Training & awareness of importance of quality (tourists more discerning)	Journeys with journalists to introduce the nature to the public
Internet map based planning tool for: Cycle tours Canoeing tours Houseboat holidays Horse riding	English lesson for SMEs	Organising 1-1 events (in a chain) in each region to promote "nature friendly" tourism possibilities
Online booking system	The complete product: "water tourism is creeping onto land"	Improving the cooperation among the national park and the SMEs
Internet/ Web- Based Information Mapping	Staff exchange program	Sign posting & info related to nature protection
Intranet for SME`s to update Info & Product offerings	Individual consulting in product development & quality for SMEs	Valorise natural sites and landscapes
Education & training in E-Commerce for SMEs	Consulting for SMEs in ecological, questions, methods, tools	Implementation of the good practise
Web-based Mapping link to GPS	Tools to internationalize products & marketing	Sign positioning system
	Develop packages	Sign posting for special landscape related products: paths, routes, tours
	Dissemination of the packages	Examine niche products: eco tours, heritage tracks etc.

	Building in nature friendly quality, criteria into the quality recommendations	
	Compiling recommendations for the SMEs on the basis of the analysis (best practices)	
	Analysing the exiting quality systems/ requirements of the partner regions	
	Benchmarking, personal training + consultation, product quality	
	Product selection meeting demand (training (standards) implementing)	

### **2.3 Presentation of the regional results**

Short reports about the work and the results of the last milestone in the partner regions. (see presentations in the attachment).

- WaterTour in Lahti Region by Ms. Virve Kärkkäinen
- „WaterTour” - Hungarian results of the last period by Balázs Borkovits
- Presentation of brochure “A guide to the Midland Region” by James Stone
- Presentation of Water tourism press journey in Vorpommern by Tobias Valentien
- Presentation of AFLOPS results presented by Mafalda Evangelista

## **3. Future of the Water Tour partnership**

In generally the partners decide to continue the common project work within the water tour partnership. They discussed the following topics:

- **Who will be the new lead partner:**

? The Regional Tourism Board Vorpommern is in general interested in being a lead partner. But due to the long refinancing period and financial shortage it seems difficult without having financial support from regional stakeholders. Discussions with regional stakeholders concerning a common solution for this problem will be done by the tourism board within the next weeks.

? Lahti University of Applied Sciences is interested in become lead partner, they will discuss this with responsible people within university

? Southtransdanubian Development Agency does have the experience in being lead partner from a present EU project. They will discuss this within the next weeks

? Midland Regional Authority advised to announce a lead partner from the eastern part of Europe in order to increase the chances for the proposal

? Due to the status of AFLOPS and the amount of own contribution (which will be higher as a lead partner) it is not possible for them to be lead partner

- **It was a good international cooperation**

- ? the partners still want to be in cooperation, but they search after two or three new partners. Not so many, because of the good in close collaboration
- ? Southtransdanubian Development Agency has contacts to partners in Bulgaria and Rumania and will introduce the project proposal to them
- ? Vorpommern will contact the communities of the curonian spit in order to get a new project partner

## **4. Excursion through the region of Vorpommern**

During an excursion the participants were introduced to important sights and water tourism related attractions of the hosting region:

- Visiting the new built marina in the city of Loitz
- Visiting the Birds sanctuary Marlow
- Canoeing around Bad Sülze with picnic
- Castle Schlemmin (restaurant and hotel), with a guided tour through the castle and at the end a dinner

## Appendix 1.

### **Schedule**      *International Meeting „WaterTour“ 06. – 09.06.2007* Greifswald, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Germany

06.06.	Arrival	Hotel "Kronprinz", Lange Str. 22
	20.00	table reserved in restaurant "Zur Sonne"

07.06.		<i>Seminar center of Regional Tourism Board, Fischstr. 11</i>
	9.00	Opening
	9.00 - 13.00	Presentation of the Operational programme of Interreg IVC Recommended project structure Presentation of Projekt ideas by partners
	12.45 - 14.30	Lunch in the restaurant Le Croy
	14.30 - 17.00	Workshop Identifying of Working compoments Identifying of Activities, cost positions, pilot projects Identifying of partners
		<b><i>Questions, problems anything regarding the conclusion of Watertour</i></b>
	18.00 - 22.00	Sailing trip on a traditional sailing boat with dinner

08.06.	8.00	Departure to visit the new built marina in the city of Loitz
	10.00	Birds sanctuary Marlow with a bird show
	ca. 12.30	Canoeing with picknick
	18.00	Castle Schlemmin (restaurant and hotel) guided tour through the castle
	20.00	Dinner
	ca. 22.30	Return to Greifswald

09.06.	departure	
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## Appendix 2.

### *Participants Meeting WaterTour*

<b>Nr.</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Land</b>	<b>Institution</b>
1	Marjaana Salomaa	Finland	Lahti University of Applied Sciences
2	Mr Reima Kauhanen	Finland	Lahti health control and environmental protection centre
3	Virve Kärkkäinen	Finland	City of Lahti
4	Mr James Stone	Ireland	Midland Regional Authority
5	Mr Balázs Borkovits	Hungary	South Transdanubian Regional Marketing Office
6	Ms Tímea Fehér	Hungary	South Transdanubian Regional Development Agency
7	Ms Mafalda Evangelista	Portugal	AFLOPS
8	Ms Sofia Marques	Portugal	AFLOPS
9	Mr Tobias Valentien	Germany	Regional Tourism Board Vorpommern
10	Ms. Anja Valentien	Germany	Regional Tourism Board Vorpommern
11	Ms. Grit Noack	Germany	Regional Tourism Board Vorpommern
12	Mr. Kai Homberg	Germany	International Auditor
13	Ms Christin Kellner	Germany	Vorpommern Tourism Development plc

Project coordination office – WaterTour  
 Fischstr. 11  
 D – 17489 Greifswald  
 Tel. ++49 (0)3834 891 132  
 Fax. ++49 (0)3834 891 130  
 Email: [getev@getev.de](mailto:getev@getev.de)  
 Contact person: Christin Kellner

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