



Vital Update 4

Vital Rural Area Newsletter

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New Project Management



Wietse Hermans

In February 2012 the new Vital Rural area project management, Wietse Hermans and Peter Laan took over the task of external project manager from Jan Walburg.

Wietse is now responsible for the overall project management, together with Oeds and Andree; Eise van der Sluis as project director and our financial officers Michiel Delsman and Jaap de Jong. Wietse has experience with managing and developing other (mainly INTERREG) projects, also working on 'sister' projects such as the now finalised community development project (also North Sea) MP4, www.mp4-interreg.eu, and the regional sustainable energy project (NW Europe) ACE, www.aceforenergy.eu.

Peter, with the support of the Scientific Team, is responsible for the content of the Rural Power Pack ("RPP"), and will work towards developing and implementing this resource, in our partner regions and beyond. Peter has extensive experience in managing and developing rural development projects across EU funding streams including the LEADER-programme.

Fourth International Policy Forum Meetjesland September 2013

The next and final Policy Forum is now scheduled for 26 and 27 September 2013, with a brief programme outlined in draft and the location confirmed. We will be hosted by our partner Meetjesland, who has suggested the historic 'Godshuis' in the tiny village of St. Laureins on the Dutch border north of Ghent and Bruges. 'Het Godshuis' was formerly a sanatorium and monastery, set up by a local industrial family in the mid-1800s for workers and their families who had encountered health problems. It had several other owners and users in the mid-1900s until it fell into disrepair in the final decades of the last century. It was eventually rescued by new owners and has been carefully restored and transformed into a conference hotel and holiday resort.

At this meeting we will present our main project results to a substantial group of policy makers, experts and other stakeholders, from regional (partner) level and national level up to EU and North Sea Programme level. The Policy Forum, as such, will take place during a day and a half of interactive presentations and discussions, with various side events organised by Meetjesland and contributions from all of the other Vital partners! It will showcase examples from the Rural Power Pack and individual pilots, and give a first insight into Vital family follow up activities and project ideas.

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Vital Partner Meeting – Rogaland Norway 31 May-1 June 2012

Indoors

The partner meeting gave us an initial insight into the Rural Power Pack (see Newsletter number 5 for further details). Anne-Mette Hjalager, leader of the Scientific Team, and Peter Laan, as co-ordinator for the RPP, presented a first overview of the results so far together with plans for the upcoming months.

We were also introduced to our new Project Officer from the North Sea Programme, Sine Dannemand Sørensen. Together with her colleague Matt Nichols, who had temporarily been responsible for Vital. Sine participated in Day 1 of our partner meeting, presenting an update on activity within the programme and a first glimpse of what we can expect for the new 2014-2020 programme period. This provided some good anchor points for our future dissemination to other regions, and the follow up activities some of us are already thinking about.



Peter Laan presents the RPP overview

Jan Olav Runestad, the vice-mayor of Finnøy, arrived at the meeting in style in his sailing boat (“the fastest and easiest way for me to get here!”), and gave us an introduction to his municipality, telling us the population (at least on the main island) has been growing since the road tunnels were opened some years ago. Jan Olav also highlighted some of Finnøy’s developing economic strengths, for example how the area is now the biggest tomato growing region in Norway, producing well over 30% (and growing) of all tomatoes in Norway. This is also part of the regional branding

now leading to some offshoot activities, such as an annual Tomato Festival in September.

In the discussion we had a good exchange about ongoing and new pilots and the tasks that we can expect next year, when we start the dissemination of our Rural Power Pack.



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...and outdoors!

One of the charms of international partner meetings is always the additional 'leisure' activities organised by the local partners. Some of us already took advantage of the good weather for a walk on Klosterøy island in Renessøy Kommune, and most of us shared this experience in our evening walk for the dinner in Utstein Kloster, the namesake of our hotel. This ancient and atmospheric monastery, which has a



fascinating history, including a ghost, was a splendid environment for our 'formal' dinner on the evening of our first meeting day.

But it got even better on Friday afternoon for those (most) of us staying on, as our Norwegian friends had organised a special treat. For our transport to Finnøy they had replaced

the normal ferries by jetfoils, giving us an exhilarating ride across the waves, so we could take in the wonderful seascape of Rogaland! On Finnøy we had lunch in the local vocational school, after which we received a presentation on the lifestyle project, covered more extensively in our previous newsletter.

After this most left for home. For the few of us remaining, short holiday trips in Norway were waiting, or – as was the case with our new management – a fantastic walk up to Preikestolen, closing this partner meeting (again) in style!



Next partner meeting

The next partner meeting is scheduled for 15, 16 and 17 April 2013 in Cambridge (UK) situated close to Stansted Airport – and to our friends in Norfolk.

Apart from having a more elaborated version of the Rural Power Pack available we will discuss its dissemination to other regions outside the North Sea area, the preparation of Policy Forum in Meetjesland, and the role and tasks of each individual partner once the majority of pilot activities have been finalised or shortly concluded.

Following Newsletters

After a (too) long pause we have planned newsletters to follow in the next months, starting with:

Newsletter 5 (early 2013): the Rural Power Pack

Newsletter 6 (Spring 2013): on several pilots, especially in Flanders and Vejen

Newsletter 7 (Spring 2013): on WIP 3 (formerly WPI)

We will update you on the forthcoming issues through our website and twitter!



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Follow-up Meeting in Badhoevedorp, 14-15 November



In our previous partner meeting in Badhoevedorp the focus was almost entirely on the Rural Power Pack, with presentations and workshops on the content of the RPP: the main themes established, the virtual structure, best practices illustrated in Vital and elsewhere. Peter, with the support of Eise (and the rest of our team) led us through the main steps in great style despite his illness - we are happy to hear he has now fully recovered! We now have a

timetable for the first version of the RPP to go online shortly (on our refreshed website), and the dissemination of the RPP 'toolkit' to all of the partners in early 2013, and to other regions in Europe in the second half of 2013. More on this in the next newsletter!

Carola Simon represented the Scientific Team at this meet and delivered a presentation focusing on some of the findings of the team, and briefly presented the scientific articles that will soon be published. Moving away from the RPP, Jaap de Jong guided us into the difficult world of financial control and some tougher guidelines that are likely to be in place during the final stage of our project.

Partners' News

Preparing the progress report as part of the seventh payment claim gave us the chance to learn about some of the partner's pilots and their successes. Here's just a small selection - most of these and others will be presented in more detail in the next newsletters:

West-Flanders successfully launched their smartphone app 'Iedereen Westvlaams' (translating phrases into and from the West Flemish dialect) in early summer, making it at one stage the most downloaded app in Belgium! Also in Belgium, Leiedal presented its book on 'Ugly Spots', where citizens have selected and voted on ugly locations in their community and ideas for their improvement were submitted. The best ideas are covered in the book, and will receive funding (local and federal) for the actual improvement of the 'spots'.

Langenhagen has successfully staged a culinary cycling tour as part of their online 'Pferdestärken Langenhagen' campaign, with many participants both cycling and presenting their products. In Fryslân, the "Dorpshuis nieuwe stijl" had a good launch both virtually and physically in opening the doors of a new premises.

Finally, Vejen hosted visitors from NOFA and Rogaland, showing interests in the Innovationshus and the glass fibre pilots. The Innovation house will receive followers in both regions; for NOFA the preparation has already started!



Partners Vital Rural Area Project

NOFA, Buitenpost, The Netherlands - lead partner, Norfolk County Council, Norwich, United Kingdom - chair WP1, Streekplatform+ Meetjesland, Eeklo, Belgium - chair WP2, Province of Fryslân, Leeuwarden, The Netherlands - chair WP3, City of Langenhagen, Germany, Wirtschaftsakademie Schleswig-Holstein, Büro Husum, Germany, Vejen Kommune, Denmark, Municipality of Sluis, Oostburg, The Netherlands, Rogaland Fylkeskommune, Stavanger, Norway, Finnøy Kommune, Judaberg, Norway, Friese Poort Bedrijfsopleidingen, Leeuwarden, The Netherlands, Intercommunale Leiedal, Kortrijk, Belgium, Province of West Flanders, Brugge (Sint Andries), Belgium.