

## DRAFT MINUTES

### Working Group Tourism (WSF) November 15<sup>th</sup> 2006 – Wilhelmshafen

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#### **Participants:**

Constanze Höfinghoff, Yoram Krozer, Herman Verhey, Steef Engelsman, Alwin Theesen, Jens Enemark, Piet Smit, Wilhelm Loth; assessor is Lin ...; she is from Vietnam, the Unesco world heritage area.

#### **1. Opening and Constitution**

Mr. Jens Enemark welcomed the participants and presented the agenda.

He tells the participants that the CWSS is settled in this building for already 19 years. The scope of the WSF is sustainable development of the Wadden Sea; within that framework the focus of this Working group is tourism.

Mr. Piet Smit is supposed to take over the chairmanship after the introduction.

#### **2. Adoption of the agenda**

The agenda is not adopted as proposed.

Mr. Yoram Krozer makes the proposal not to discuss the added former IRWC draft of a marketing group, but to make a fresh start by means of an inventory of the existing ideas of sustainable tourism in the Wadden Sea Region.

Introduction of the participants:

Constanze Höfinghoff:

She approaches the item tourism from a marketing perspective. She represents the North Sea Region Husum and environment.

She is occupied by the question: "what is the main purpose of this working group?"

Is it networking, connecting ideas here and there, image, making the economy grow?

Addressed to whom?"

She gives the advice not to do too much in a short time, make it workable!

She proposes to focus on just one action a year.

Wilhelm Loth is from Norderney. He is working at the Nordseebad. He makes a concrete proposal by saying that the Marketing Group has to try to acquire the formal status of UNESCO World Heritage. That status offers the opportunity to do a lot of things on marketing. He names an exchange-programme with Yokohama as an example of operational marketing.

We can address our messages to our guests.

Yoram Krozer: he is the director of the Cartesius Institute in Leeuwarden.

He is working on innovations for sustainable development, among others tourism. The Cartesius Institute has hosted the former Marketing Group a couple of years ago. Yoram defines the aim as: "The great European Sandreef". The marketing group's task is to get all the things together in one 'picture' that make the Wadden Sea region attractive. What has the Wadden Sea region to offer towards tourists? At the moment everything is much diffused.

Herman Verhey is thinking about the touristy products. He names the common identity of Wadden Land. There is enough to be seen, but one can not compete on one single issue. He is not thinking about product development, but about selling the products which are already there.

Steeff Engelsman is representing the ANWB, a Dutch equivalent of organisations like CAA, etc. He names as a central aim the support of some main products, linking them together by developing a Wadden Route or Old Skipper towns. He emphasizes to work from one perspective.

Alwin Theesen is from Dornum and representing a Tourismus GmbH. He was interested in this group after Else Christensen-Redzepovic had introduced him to Jens; in the framework of the Gastronomy-award. He is thinking about networks and names as a possibility the ART-days.

Annemarie Lübke looks at the theme of tourism in the Wadden Sea Region from the perspective of the Euregion Wadden Islands (Nordsee Inseln). She finds it necessary to take more action in the field of tourism. She is asking if there is something possible; are we willing to do something together or not?

She got the information that the local and regional authorities are willing to participate in common actions, more than to participate in a common strategy.

She proposes the following: The Euregion Wadden wants to participate; the organisation she is representing wants to push and support the WSF Tourism Group.

Jens Enemark (CWSS). The CWSS is facilitating the Wadden Sea Forum. The WSF is not able to do the job alone; the region has to join the WSF in working out the task fields as appointed in the meeting on Schiermonnikoog.

He is looking at the Wadden Sea Region as a multi-aspect attraction; further more he emphasizes the necessity of putting 'sustainable development' on the Workgroup agenda.

Pieter Smit raises the question: "Where do the tourists come from?" and "How are we able to communicate with more people; and "we" is standing for islands and mainland/coastal zone?"

He is asking what the issues are; he believes in a sustainable tourism and, derived from that, in a sustainable economy.

He has the feeling that we are talking on diverse levels of abstraction. He considers the WSF Tourism Group as a group that gives direction in the process of working together on tourism; his scope for attracting more and other tourists is Europe and the World.

He is naming the following project: delimitation and formal status of the Wadden Sea Region.

### **3. Discussion about what and how of the WSF Tourism Group.**

Constanze H. thinks that some parts of S-H like to get assignation of World Heritage Status; other parts do not like that status, because of political reasons.

She suggests establishing a BRAND. She wants to address the message and brand towards German speaking people; she cannot effort more money for more actions. The guests are coming for the North Sea and for nothing else.

By saying so the group becomes aware of a complicating thing: not everyone is naming the Wadden Sea as that; in Germany, and in the German speaking neighbour countries of Germany, people use the name North Sea.

So if we want to establish a common brand then maybe it is necessary to compromise on the manner how to communicate with the several target groups. It will take a long time to get Germans used to the concept Wadden Sea, since they are used to define their part of the Wadden Sea as Nordsee.

Apart of this Constanze raises the question how much money we want to spend on changing that notion.

Further on she likes to combine the diverse effort on marketing the region.

Annemarie asks to approach the activities of this marketing group from a touristy perspective. She wants to lift the problem on a political level: what is the vision; we have to work out such a vision before we can ask for money.

As an example she names the status of Unesco World Heritage; she tells that the application is being to be completed.

By the way she is of the opinion that the activities of this tourism group comprehend more than only marketing.

Herman Verhey is pointing at the fear of some people for more limitations in their daily work and so on. He thinks that the tourism group only has to identify the common characteristics in/of the region. We don't re-invent the wheel again and again. As an example he names the in the Netherlands used brand of Waddengoud (Waddengold).

Yoram thinks that it is not good to put the spotlight on one issue. He is wondering who decide about the speed of the process, which maps we are going to use etcetera.

He proposes the following:

1. A common Brand; he thinks a common brand is necessary; make an inventory by linking the diverse qualities (thematically en geographically);
2. we have to formulate some pre-conditions for what we think is common; e.g. the quality of the water, the maximum height of buildings;
3. get realized a rather large number of attractions, activities, events etc.

### ***What to do with this information?***

The chairman asks the group to speak out everyone's priorities.

#### **Constanze H.**

Establish and communicate a Wadden Sea mainframe in the European Market. Plus set up a Communication Strategy!

#### **Wilhelm I.**

The distribution of touristy products related to the Wadden Sea Region shows the dilemma: the sub-regions differ, politics differ.

He finds it necessary to organize more discussions in the region itself; we have to make the people in the region conscious of the intrinsic meaning of the touristy potentials, we have to convince the regional stakeholders to get some support; wellness and health as a test.

#### **Yoram Kr.**

1. Make an inventory of the qualities; try to not to cover the whole 'gamma' of themes all at once;
2. Communication; try to estimate why people from UK should or would go to the W.S. Region.

He thinks it will take some time to get result (in the mid or end of 2007).

In the mean time the Cartesius-institute can offer some support in the field of technical solutions, linking solitaire attractions to a route for e.g. ships.

#### **Annemarie L.**

She thinks of the following fields of communication:

- between islands and the mainland;
- between the diverse regions;
- between the region or sub-regions and external regions, groups etcetera.

She wants to reach a commitment of all the present parties about the transfer and exchange of ideas. Is it possible to end the day by formulating a statement of this kind?

What are our common themes and how do we transfer information on these themes to each other?

**Herman V.**

He thinks that the protection of nature has to be the main objective for this group.

Within that framework, for the whole region more or less the same, he is willing to find some space for tourism and touristy activities.

He suggests formulating a common notion/concept of sustainable tourism in the Wadden Sea Region. He can not name target groups in particular to be focussed at.

Special attention he will ask for logistics and transportation.

**Steef E.**

He marks the relative unknowingness by the tourist groups with the product "Wadden Sea".

He wants to communicate with a broad public the whole area from Den Helder to Esbjerg. He suggests developing a route, a map, which can be used as a umbrella of products in the communication with both existing tourists and new.

**Alwin Th.**

Alwin suggests developing a strategy for regional marketing. Based on a common sense of what our product is. He wants to seduce more tourists to come over to the Wadden Sea Region; people take more often a week or two off.

He wants to bring co-operation on a higher level. At the moment Lower Saxony and Sleswick Holstein are already co-operating without the official politics.

He rather wants to use the name Nordsee in stead of Wadden Sea.

***Formulating a common statement***

**Constanze H.** wants to define the problem we have to cope with as follows.

She refers to the statement of Yoram; pre-conditions, defining the supply-side, communication.

the 'Deutsche Seebäder' do the communication and have the money (partners, sponsors) for marketing their specific product, but that is not covering the issues of today.

She distinguishes between three levels:

1. European Market;
2. Wadden Sea Region;
3. National or regional parts of the Wadden Sea.

ref. 2. What we have is obvious; the Wadden Sea itself is of a added value to the rest of attractions etc. The question is: what is the message we want to communicate in common, and addressed to whom?

ref. 3. Oriented on specific markets; each sub region can develop individual activities.

There are two processes, one is top-down, the other is bottom-up and somewhere in the middle they meet. This Tourism Group is the platform to mix and to work out signals of these two processes.

**Herman v.** is curious to the number of tourists; he is wondering if it's possible to integrate the demands of sustainability in developing products; e thinks of education, edutainment, image, economic values, nature experience etc.

***It is agreed that the WSF Tourism Group:***

- ***focussing on Europe***
- ***pointing out the qualities of the regions***
- ***co-operating in offering products***
- ***making a inventory of the white spots.***

**Wilhelm I.** asks if the WSF Tourism Group is working on tourism in the broad sense or on touristy marketing.

Attracting more tourists over the whole year is much more important than realizing more beds for the high-season.

**Alwin Th.** emphasizes the interest of lengthening the season; that implicates not needing a new touristy vision for the region. He is aiming for a healthy economy.

**Constanze H.** thinks that is not be discusses the interest of nature protection. We have to avoid conflicts between touristy marketing and nature protection.

**Yoram K.** makes the remark that when we are only talking and working on marketing he will quit this group.

**Jens E.** likes to remember the group to the purpose of the WSF: developing strategies for sustainable tourism.

He suggests combining the purpose of the WSF and the group's objectives.

**Next step!**

1. Making a summary of the WSF purpose (breaking the ice); that will function as the framework within the Tourism Group will work;
2. Defining three fields:
  - a. how and whom
  - b. what
  - c. what do we need to keep this 'what' (nature, economy).

**Appointment:**

***Mailing this two documents before the first of January.***

***Go, no go decision in the next meeting, which is planned for 15 January 2007.***

**4. *International Gastronomy-award***

**Agreed!**

**5. *Wadden Sea Safari***

**Agreed!**

**6. *Any other business***

**Next meeting: January 15<sup>th</sup> at Bremen.**

**Details: Coming soon!**

REF: WM/WSFMG