

DRAFT MINUTES

Working Group Tourism (WSF) January 15th 2007– Bremen

Participants:

Constanze Höfinghoff, Herman Verhey, Alwin Theesen, Jens Enemark, Folkert de Jong, Piet Smit, Willem Meerdink, Hans Jansen, Oliver Melchert, Stephan Beck, Karsten Jens, Jens Albowitz, Annemarie Lübcke.

Absent:

Joram Krozer, Hans Verbree,

1. Opening and Constitution

Mr. Piet Smit welcomes the participants and presents the agenda.

2. Draft minutes nov. 15th 2006

Page 1: Annemarie Lübcke is by error not mentioned as participant;

Page 2: just under 3; Constanze did not suggest establishing a BRAND, it was Joram Krozer who did the suggestion;

Page 4: first line; HV did not say that the protection of nature should be the main objective of this group; he said or he meant to say that the protection and so on.... has to be **the point of departure**.

With these comments the minutes have been accepted and agreed.

3. Announcements

Constanze H. is surprised that nobody of the National Parks is participating in this group; nevertheless the National Parks could be very important as a partner in marketing the coastal zone.

After a discussion about sensibilities and formalities it is agreed that the WSF makes a formal invitation to both the National Park of Nieder-Sachsen and Sleswick-Holstein.

Furthermore Pieter/Willem will take action to invite someone of the provincial administration to join this group; Karsten Jens is asked to send a list of names of persons who are willing to join this group.

4. International Gastronomy-award

There are 3 'projects' that run at this moment in Sleswick-Holstein which have something to do with gastronomy.

The government is running a new tourism concept; an award for restaurants. Then there is a Leader-project called Nordsee-teller; and there is the West-coast Competition.

Only after raising money for the national contest, there is a possibility for raising money referring an international contest. The international contest is not earlier to be expected than in the spring of 2008.

It is agreed that the Award Group will make an inventory of what is possible and on what time. The Award group will make a proposal for the next meeting. Annemarie is taking care. Folkert will send an invitation to the Award Group.

5. Wadden-Sea-label.

At stake is a discussion about taking which steps to a decision about the feasibility of a Wadden-Sea-label and the promotion and marketing of Wadden-Sea-products.

The question is how to develop a Common Wadden-Sea-label? Further on the meeting has to work out a definition and purport of WaddenSea-products.

There is already a label, called Wadden-Sea Gold, a Wadden-Sea-wide network. Nevertheless the common history and many similarities within the region, one has to cope with the different systems, criteria, regulations and so on when one wants to develop a common label. The WaddenGoldlabel is working with a sharp criterion that the products are being produced no farther than 20 km's from the coast inwards the mainland.

The difficulties become obvious on distribution and logistics, pricing the products, continuity in quality and production volume.

One other question is whether there is a need of branding; it is hard to implement branding as an operational definition in the real world. That has to do with the system in supermarkets. One needs a certain co-operation between supermarkets, distributors and producers.

Despite this there is a positive development; for example the co-operation between WaddenGold and 5 Danish farmers.

Then there are the tension between local thinking and the need of regional marketing. That has to do with the scale of thinking and operating of the individual entrepreneurs and the wish of upgrading the level of marketing. You cannot reach new target groups with local facts and sceneries, it is necessary to do the marketing on a higher level. At least higher than local.

Pieter Smit, summarizing the discussion, distinguishes between:

1. products
2. control
3. producers/distributors
4. Who is going to do what and what is the next step?

On what point in defining regional products we are at this moment and what do we need more to complete the phase of definition?

There are 2 ways along which we can move on:

- local sales
- branding or labelling.

At this moment 'branding' is too early in the process of developing a common label.

Focussing on one common label is for time being sufficient; you can compare it with the development of the phenomenon 'Blue flag'.

Two appointments are made:

1. make an inventory; some questions for entrepreneurs and local tourist boards:
 - what are you doing
 - how things go
 - How can you make what you are doing now bigger?
2. Organise a meeting with the experts.

6. WSF Tourism Strategy

At stake is a discussion paper made by Willem. Pieter offers a reading pause for not everyone has received this document in time.

In short the items are as follows:

- networking
- what is everybody doing in the field of tourism and marketing
- Which themes are worthwhile to be picked up and worked out?

The following comments on the document are noticed.

Oliver:

At work! Develop and define some projects. For example island-hopping under one label.

Annemarie:

Collect what is going on. We have to learn from our projects, whether they are successful or not. We are a kind of learning touristy region. We should take advantage of the Universities being present in the region.

Hans Jansen:

We should try to work with small projects; make them not too big. Let us keep the big targets and goals a little behind; they could be useful, when we are dealing with a lot of rather small projects. In that case it can be useful to have some big ideas or initiatives left; with that type of projects we are able executing a series of interdependent and comprehensive project ideas on a strategic level. Question who is feeling responsible and who take care of setting up a kind of management.

Alwin Theessen agrees on what Jansen had to say; he proposes to realise a project, whatever and by doing so 'breaking the ice' for other projects.

Karsten Jens has the same opinion. He suggests LEADER as an instrument for the take-off of the development of sustainable tourism projects. Maybe Interreg can take over in the further future.

Herman Verhey makes the suggestion developing the attitude along the Waddensea from a reacting one to a pro-acting one; listing up cross-boarder activities, setting up a common calendar of activities, events, festivities and so on.

Further he wants monitoring of prospects fitting the goals in "Breaking the Ice".

Jens Albowitz signs on 'wellness' as an item for people above 50 years; he is asking attention for the frequently visiting guests.

Constanze Höfinghoff rises the question if and how "Breaking the Ice" is communicated. She agrees on working from one common point of view. But she thinks we should not work out the goals and targets as too technical, we should not forget the emotional aspects.

She asks a good communication about and regarding the projects being set up by this group.

The question is who is interested in what?

The meeting finds that we can start with:

- exchange between experiences and working methods and ways of marketing of the diverse tourist boards;
- projects on whaling and fishery.

It is agreed that:

- after making some adjustments the paper will be send to all members of the group
- every member can make her/his comments and do some suggestions for working out the paper.

7. Representation in the Steering Committee

Jens Enemark gives an explanation of the working procedures of the WSF. One of them is working with a Steering Committee as a kind of daily board.

He asks if Pieter Smit is willing to participate in the Steering Committee. That means that Pieter should become a representative of this group preparing the agenda of the meetings of the Committee.

Pieter promises to think about this request.

8. EU Green Paper

One of the themes addressed in the Green Paper is Coastal Tourism. A copy of this section of the Green Paper is attached.

The Green Paper ends with the following questions:

How can innovation in services and products related to coastal tourism be effectively supported?

What specific measures promoting the sustainable tourism development of coastal regions and islands should be taken at EU level?

The meeting sees a great deal of congruency between the questions raised in the Green Paper and the goals in "Breaking the Ice".

Herman Verhey is willing to make a draft of a comment!

9. *Next meeting*

10. *Any other business*

Next meeting: March 26th at Hamburg

Details: Coming soon!

11. *Closing at 15.00 h.*

REF: WM/WSFMG