 

**Minutes of the Agenda**

Exchange of experiences: 1st Interregional learning session

(Dedicated towards learning the best practices and innovation policies in deltas)

**Venue:** Meetings are in the office of Parc naturel régional de Camargue;

 Mas du Pont de Rousty – RD 570, 13200 Arles; Tel: +33 490 97 10 40

**Day 1: October 1st 2018**

**9:00 - 9:15 Registration**

The registration list is enclosed. Scanned list of signatures is enclosed.

**9:15 - 9:30 Welcome by the host partner**

Director of the Camargue Regional Park, Régis Vianet, welcomes all and wishes success in our work.

**9:30 - 9:45 Introduction by the Lead partner**

**Yoram Krozer,** project leader, explains that deltas turned from rich to poor areas when the agricultural income declined during last century. The idea about development of these periphery regions through ecosystems services is raised ten years ago in the Frisian regions and embraced by six regions after more contacts with the European river deltas.

[Slides about economic performance of delta are available].

**Maia Lordkipanidze,** communication manager, recalls that the Delta Lady project aims at improvement of the policy instruments with respect to ecosystems services (ESS) in the delta regions as contributors to the natural diversity and socio-economic development. Exchange of experiences and sharing of good practices should foster development of action plans and improve regional policy instruments. The project evolves along these lines: interregional learning, involving regional stakeholders, identifying good practices in the past, developing case studies on new practices, contributing to the Interreg Policy Learning platform and finally producing action plans. All these refer to the 1st phase of 36 months in 6 semesters of half year each; every semester one project meeting followed by report. In the 2nd phase the plans are implemented and monitored.

[Slides about the project outline are available].

**9:45 – 12:30 Presentations of partners**

**France: Stéphan Arnassant and Julie Walker** present the Camargue delta. Regional Natural Park of Camargue (820 km2) is established in 1970, followed by UNESCO Biosphere in 1997, Ramsar Convention 1986, Natura 2000 after 2011. There are zones with various levels of protection. Next to nature, tourism, agriculture and salt production are important. Cultivation of rice and reed beds, husbandry of bulls and horses, and fisheries are important in agriculture, birds and wild horses are majors for tourism. Changing coastal line is a major issue. Program lines related to development of the fisheries, markets of reed, as well as agro-tourism and rice cultivation.

**Italy: Federica Focaccia and Enrico Cancilla** present the Emilia Romagna Regional Development Agency – ERVET. ERVET serves 8 provinces and 334 municipalities with turnover of € 8 mln and 100 employees. It participates in the Interreg, LIFE, and FP7 projects. Participation in the Delta Lady is within department on Economic Development and Environment and focused on green infrastructure and the ecosystem services. Particular attention is Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) as an instrument to the Po Delta (next to exchange of experience, collecting best practices, stakeholders’ involvement).

**Italy: Maria Pia Pagliarusco** and **Giuseppe Castaldelli** present Po Delta. Regional Park (5.4 km2) is established in 1988; the territorial revision is expected to start in 2019. The Park covers Ramsar zones, community interest zones, special protection zones and 40 km coastline. Large part is the UNESCO World Heritage and Biosphere. The park participates in several LIFE projects on maintenance of habitats, ecology of lagoon, integrating salt and wildlife, integration of wildlife and clam farming. Focus in the Delta Lady is on the Territorial plan with particular attention to valuation of ESS, managed lagoons and forested-agricultural districts. Next to the Park the ESS of the Valli de Commacio (115 km2) is addressed. It is a shallow water and forest area with high biodiversity, ecotourism, eel farming and duck hunting, mushroom collection.

**Ireland: Darragh O’Suilleabhain** presents Cork County Council, southwest Ireland, 7 459 km2 417 211 people in 8 municipal districts. The Council has 55 elected members with 2 480 staff involved in several Interreg projects. Interest in the Delta Lady is to increase the political buy-in of ESS because the Cork County championed this issue in Ireland. Particular attention is meeting Water Framework Directive based on the community engagement and link that to regional spatial and development plans.

**Ireland: Tim O’Higgins** presents Ecosystem services of the Blackwater catchment. The ESS refers to the supporting, provisioning, cultural and regulating services. The analytical framework is production, then the intermediary and final services and the societal benefits due to the complementary capital. That capital is focal in the Delta Lady project. A challenge is to link the costs of complementary capital with the benefits across regional policies. An important issue is milk production (1.3 mln ton a year) produced with benefits in a few regions within the catchment but social costs of damaged ecosystems. A balance needs sound allocation of the complementary capital across the regions. Policy instruments are pursued that enable such allocation.

**Netherlands: Simon Tijsma** presents the Frisian objectives in the Delta Lady project. Whole Frisian region (3 250 km2) is delta of the northern branch of Rhine, including islands in the Wadden sea. Turnaround of the regional policy into an innovative approach will be addressed. The conventional way is setting of the policy goals (macro), followed by regulations (meso), and programs with action plans (micro), entailing projects as the Delta Lady. However, the implementation of policies aiming at innovations is obstructed, which causes little innovations. An alternative approach is to generate the mission-oriented innovations through opportunities for innovators (“a dance floor for innovators”). Key is to embrace uncertainties as opportunities for innovations. It is aimed to define operational instruments based on such approach.

**Romania: Jenica Hanganu** introduces the Danube delta (4 152 km2). The Danube Delta Institute (from 1970) is the main research, development and policy institute for the delta; involved in various European projects on the delta management. Delta Lady priorities are related to the natural and cultural heritage and diversification of local economy through sustainable tourism. Envisaged are: co-creative workshops with stakeholders, inter-regional seminars, good practices and cases studies with proposals and action plans. The following will be addressed: living in the delta, landscape and activities, reed production and handicrafts, as well as best practices such as design with reed, promotion of cultural heritage, workshop and summer school in Letea, slow tourism, food and film festivals, and sport challenges.

**Spain: Ana Benito** introduces the Valencia Chamber of Commerce (CCCV) and Delta of Albufera (2.1 km2). The CCCV is focused on small and medium scale businesses in pursuing sustainable development in the region. It participates in many European projects. The Albufera delta has high value nature, e.g. Ramsar convention, bird protection, Natura 2000 area, but it is populated with 13 municipalities. The fishing, hunting and agriculture (largely rice) are main activities next to tourism. The envisaged activities (preliminary) are: information and education on nature, infrastructure for bird watching, recovery of the cultural and ethnographic heritage, connections for cycling. These relate to the Territorial Strategy of the Valencia Region for 2030 with new business models for the ESS, link administration to ESS, socio-ecological systems and innovative business models for wetlands.

[Slides about partners’ backgrounds and objectives are available].

**12:30 – 13:30 Elaboration of the detailed work plan by the lead partner**

**Work plan:** Maia Lordkipanidze presents key outputs for the 1st semester.

Each region, as a minimum, should execute 1 meeting of the Regional Stakeholders Group (RSG), show 2 good practices, make 1 press release, print 1 poster (for public space) and 1 banner. The following is agreed: (a) minimum for the Regional Stakeholders Group is the list of members and minutes of the meeting with signatures of participants though the Interreg secretariat recommends a contract that shows the stakeholders commitment to participate. **Note from the Interreg Secretariat about RSGs: Please, make sure that within one project partner’s organisation the involvement of the stakeholders is formalised in the same way. This means for instance that “PP3” may decide to opt for written contracts, while “PP4” may decide to formalise the involvement of stakeholders through e-mail exchange. However, it is recommended that within the same partner’s organisation the same approach is applied.** (b) format for the press release is shown on the website of Interreg but regions are free as long as the EU and project logo are used, (c) the lead partners will provide format of the banner but each region prints it.

The Camargue region should present 2 best practices and prepare 1 case study. Format for the best practices is on web (these are questions to be answered). Note short time: 2 months for work and 2 months for reporting.

The Lead Partner should finish contracts and communication plan, make a newsletter on social media, as well as deliver the finance and administrative handbook based on Intereg standard, and create the data sharing platform. On request it can help with resolving the region-specific issues, e.g. in Camargue with regard with time pressure.

[Slides about the project outline are available].

**Administrative issues: Project management, communication, finances**

**Maia Lordkipanidze** briefly presents the project management scheme (spreadsheet). The Interreg format for communication and stakeholders’ involvement are also shown. The central message of the project is presented and the communication activities to be executed by the Partners. It is agreed that the Lead Partner elaborates on a spreadsheet with activities of each partner during 1st and 2nd semester.

[Slides about the project management are made available].

**Sabri Dogan presents the formats for finances**. Per semester, all financial reports should be certified by the independent Financial Leading Controller (FLC) and delivered to the Project Leader on time; this certification can take even 2 month. The report should include the time writing unless the country’s FLC agrees on goal setting per semester (partners will ask FLC about the procedures as soon as possible). All reporting is online – iOLF system. Deficient reporting can cause negative financial consequences.

[Slides about the project management are made available].

**13:30 - 14:30 Lunch**

**14:15 - 18:30 Study tour to the Camargue Delta**

* Visit to the rice farming with bulls and horse and diversification into tourism
* Visit to the salt winning and production location
* Visit to the (“moving”) sea coast line

**20:00 - Dinner / Evening event**

* Funding by the Lead Partner

 

**Day 2: October 2nd 2018**

**9:00 - 9:30 Partners’ reflections on day 1 and presentation of the Steering group**

All Partners are satisfied with the content, management and study tour of the first day. Expectations about the implementation in the region and cross-regional learning are high.

**10:00 - 10.30 Partners mention their Stakeholders groups (3 - 5 minutes per partner)**

So far, the execution differs per region. Po delta, Camargue delta and Danube delta have already more or less clear picture about the participants in stakeholders groups; a Romanian stakeholder (the Ministry Regional Development ) is at the meeting . The Frisian, Cork and Valencia regions have to approach the stakeholders for the stakeholders group. It is suggested to set a core group of a few stakeholders and define a broader group with various stakeholders.

**All partners agreed to set up a stakeholders group after the meeting within the 1st semester.**

**10:30 - 12:00 Camargue stakeholders group presents its view with Questions and Answers:**

* Rice. The issue is presented *by Cyrille Thomas from the Centre France Rice* (*Centre Français du Riz,* *CFR*) in Camargue is the main crop though productivity is lower than in Spain and Italy. Higher salinity of soil is a major issue. Promotion of local rice can increase value but herbicides are needed because of invasive species while intercropping (e.g. trifolium) reduces productivity. The challenge is how to continue.
* Reed beds. The issue is presented by *Laurent Prevost, reedbed farmer*. Delivery of low cost reed is possible thanks to the mechanization but sales price and sales volume are difficult to reach. Changes of climate must also be anticipated, moisture and salinity. The Danube delta shows their capabilities in the reed products and designs. It is agreed on cooperation.
* Fishery is presented by *Patrice Cardona, Fisherman* (Camargue Natural Park). Fishery covers fish, shrimps and mussels. Balancing of the fishery yield with regeneration is the major issue. Eel is particularly sensitive. Breeding of eels is under development in Camargue. The Po delta shows film about their positive efforts and results with simple methods. It is agreed on cooperation.

[Slides about the project management are made available].

**12:00 - 12.15 Finances and reporting: template for the finance, template for the reporting**

Sabri shows spreadsheet as a possibility for the financial reporting in case the Partners need to show their work hours. It is agreed that the reporting on line is preferred and the spreadsheet is used only if necessary.

Maia presents communication requirements and templates of the good practices and press release

[Slides for reporting and communication are made available]

**12:15 – 12:30 What did I learn and how can I use it?**

Summary of the findings:

* All Partners address policy instruments for valorization of ESS in the delta’s for the ecological – economic development. A few partners start from the perspectives on tangible activities (e.g. Po, Danube, Rhone with fishing, reed, rice, tourism, education) whereas a few others address methods (distribution of benefits, effectuation, and collaboration). There are opportunities for the cross-regional learning.
* Cross-regional contacts and with the Lead Partner (web-based and in-person) are embraced in addition to the Partners meetings per semester. Possibly a few joint themes can be identified for the overarching EU instruments, such as nitrification of water, design based on local resources, payment for ecosystem services, tools for development of regional capabilities.
* There are differences in the speed of execution between partners. More speed can be needed for timely deliveries; it is to avoid troubles with payments. On request, Project Leader can help but not when late.
* The Steering Group (SG) is the decisive body of the Delta Lady project. We aims to resolve all issue unanimously in the Partners meetings. If unresolved we aim to resolve within the Steering Group unanimously and only if not possible the representatives vote.

**12:30 - 13:30 Closure and next meetings**

The following dates for the Partners meetings are set:



**14.00 - 14:30 Steering Group: practicalities**

The Steering Group members/participants:

Stéphan Arnassant (Camargue, Julie Walker is add-in), Enrico Cancilla (ERVET, Federica Focaccia is add-in), Maria Pia Pagliarusco (Po delta), Darragh O’Suilleabhain (Cork County Council), Tim O’Higgins (University College Cork), Thea Bijma (Province of Friesland), Jenica Hanganu (Danube Delta, Madaline Sbarcea is add-in), Ana Benito (Valencia Chamber of Commerce), Yoram Krozer (University of Twente, Maia Lordkipanidze is add-in). In the ultimate case, only members can vote.

[List of participants with signatures is available]

The following main findings are observed:

* An overarching strategy is to put ESS on agenda of the EU Regional Development with illustrative operational instruments for deltas.
* The best practices address issues that are resolved in the past and the case studies address the upcoming issues.
* In addition to the best practices and case studies we can identify a “wish list”, it is what policies can be introduced/what can be done in the future.
* We should use more visualization media (photos, video, etc) and present showcases.

**14.30 – 16.00 Dinner offered by the Camargue Regional Park and Good-bye**

**16.00 - 2nd study tour about integration of nature and tourism**

It is an impressive example of a successful integration of biodiversity and touristic facility with hundreds of people at the time of visit without disturbance of birds and other animals. Wonderful case!