



# Action Plan Province of Fryslân

## Part I General Information

### Part I – General information

Project: Night Light

Partner organisation: Province of Fryslân

Other partner organisations involved (if relevant): -

Country: Netherlands

NUTS2 region: NL12

NUTS3 Country: The Netherlands

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## Part II Policy Context

The Action Plan aims to impact:

- Investment for Growth and Jobs programme
- European Territorial Cooperation programme
- X Other regional development policy instrument

Name of the Policy instrument Adressed:

- Marketingplan Fryslan (storytelling)
- programm Dark Sky Experiences "The darkness of the Wadden Sea" (creating dark Sky experiences)

In Fryslan we have been working on the 'Streekplan/"omgevingsvisie"' during the Night light project. This is an overarching policy framework for territorial development at regional/provincial and local level for the whole province of Fryslân.

The Province of Fryslân has included Darkness as a core value in this new spatial plan, the omgevingsvisie (this plan was called 'Streekplan' in the Nightlight Application). The plan will be finalised in 2020. Our promised Night Light policy instrument will be ready by that. But: because this policy instrument is a bit strategic we as the Provincial government were looking for some actions and for translation of our Night Light goals to new policy instruments with a more practical approach. Instruments that make other political bodies, entrepreneurs and citizens aware of the value of darkness and make it possible to enjoy darkness, instruments that make more stakeholders responsible for this theme. That is why the Province of Fryslan agreed with 2 new policy instruments and actions that can be linked to the Night Light project.

The inspiration to elaborate the action Plan has been generated on the basis of good practices identified and presented in the project by the other partners, and the main findings of the peer reviews and especially the one held in Fryslan June 2018.

- Recommendations of peerreview, Netherlands Fryslan June 2018
- Storytelling herdsmen, Hajdú-Bihar county, peerreview 2017, presentations projectmeetings
- Involving entrepreneurs, La Palma, several presentations in projectmeetings and Peer review 2019.
- Good practice Marketing Astrotourism Avila, Spain
- Events for awareness raising on Samsø, Denmark

The background of first action Linking the Night Light project to new action and new policy instrument  
Storytelling

In the Night Light peer report that was written for Fryslân, one of the recommendations was to do more with storytelling: "Storytelling is what connects us to our humanity and landscape. It is what links us to our past and provides a glimpse into our future. One important aspect that was brought to our attention several times during the meetings was the extraordinary potential of storytelling to communicate the values and uses stories to hold a mirror up to nature and identity of Fryslân Region. Use the

story telling as a tool to connect to Dark sky tourism regarding biodiversity, energy savings, organic farming, branding etc. The region has many stories to tell, just organize a proper standard framework, and make local population feel proud of their rural area, their roots, and their traditions". In the policy instrument "Omgevingsvisie" Darkness is mentioned as a core value that needs attention by all spatial developments. A solid marketing campaign strengthens the awareness that Darkness is a special value, also by policymakers and politicians of municipalities.

We also learned about the importance of storytelling during several project meetings and in the peerreview in Hajdú-Bihar (sept. 2017) where they use the story of herdsman to tell about the importance of darkness. Tourist learn about the way the herdsmen used the stars to navigate to Europe. This attract the cultural tourist, higher educated who want to learn more about regional traditions and legends. By telling about darkness and its importance by storytelling people indirectly learn about darkness and this influences decisionmakers/ politicians as well: to be a destination that tells about darkness really needs to be a place that is dark as well.

In Avila (Peerreview 2018 en presentations project meetings) we saw good examples of professional marketing of the theme Dark sky en how to use the theme to attract the tourists you want in the region. Avila also was a good example of how to influence politicians as well in this way: if you tell you are a good Dark Sky Destination you have to act like one.

The background of the second action Linking the Night Light project to new action and new policy instrument Creating Dark Sky experiences

One of the recommendations of the peerreview report for Fryslan June 2018 was : "develop and provide facilities for night activities. By combining the seemingly broad network of active and supportive actors, a selection and definition of necessary facilities for night-time activities could help to strengthen a conceptually coherent approach to creating a tourism product. Important facilities could be: designation, installation and maintenance of special observation points for the night sky, designation and signposting of night trails, information boards or centers, rental points for lenses and night vision devices, special benches or hammocks for sky observation, accessible observatory for amateur astronomers, planetarium for bad weather phases, sky tents for overnight stays outdoors, etc." .

We saw good examples on La Palma about how to involve entrepreneurs in developing experiences and we will try to work that way in Fryslan as well with the entrepreneurs working towards Dark Sky menu's, souvenirs, excursions, package deals.

On Samsø (Peerreview 2018 and project meetings presentations) we saw good examples of experiences / events with Dark Sky (Dark Sky Walks) in which a lot of local people were involved and learned about the Dark Sky and the need to protect Dark Skies. The awareness raising effect of the event for citizens and politicians was great. This inspired to organise more events ourselves as well.

## Part III Details of the Actions envisaged

### 1. Action 1 Storytelling

#### 1. The background

The peerreview in Fryslan and some examples in the partner countries inspired us to formulate this action, see part II.

#### 2. Action

Now nearly ten years after the Wadden Sea became a UNESCO World Heritage Site it's high time this area - with its exceptional universal values: top nature, dynamic landscapes, appealing culture and Wadden-specific activities - takes pride and place on the map. That is exactly what marketing organisations Merk Fryslân, Marketing Groningen and Holland boven Amsterdam want to do in the coming years.

There are very few natural World Heritage Sites that are as vast yet so densely populated as the Wadden Sea UNESCO World Heritage Site. Where man and nature meet, stories are written. The marketing organisations work with stories: "Discover the Wadden area through these stories as they take you to unknown places, interesting meetings and surprising flavours."

One of the storylines will be Dark sky, so stories will be told that the Dutch wadden Sea region is a region were Dark sky can be experienced, activities around Dark Sky can be done. This storyline Dark Sky is part of the broader marketingcampaign. <https://www.visitwadden.nl/nl/verhalen/bundel/come-to-the-dark-site>



Figuur 1 Marketing Dark Sky by beautiful pictures @Marcel van Kammen

The Province of Fryslân decided to fund this new broader marketing campaign including darkness. We influence the marketing plans of the marketing organisations, in that case it is a new policy change. It is funded by Waddenfonds and Waddensea provinces Noord-Holland, Groningen and Fryslân. The Board of the Province decided about it so it is a public intervention.

### **3. Players involved**

Merk Fryslân, the marketing organisation of Fryslân, leads the project and works together with the marketing organisation of the Provinces Noord-Holland and Groningen in this campaign Visitwadden. In the campaign they work together with all kinds of regional stakeholders who deliver content for the campaign, like entrepreneurs, National parks, Nature organisations, cultural organisations, Festivals, public transport/ferry companies and more. All these partners deliver input for the storyline Dark sky, please have a look on Discover the Dark [www.visitwadden.nl/en/story-lines/story-bundle/come-to-the-dark-site](http://www.visitwadden.nl/en/story-lines/story-bundle/come-to-the-dark-site)

### **4. Timeframe**

This action Dark Sky storytelling starts end of 2019 and will go on until 2023

### **5. Costs**

The whole campaign costs 1.071.000 euro a year, the storyline Darkness is a part of that (10% of the budget, € 100.000 a year).

### **6. Funding sources:**

The costs of the whole campaign are paid by Waddenfonds and the 3 provinces Noord-Holland, Groningen and Fryslân .

## Action 2 Creating Dark Sky experiences

### 1. The background

The peerreview in Fryslan and some examples in the partner countries inspired us to formulate this action, see part II

### 2. Action

A group of stakeholder has been brought together by the Province of Fryslan to produce a coherent plan for creating Dark Sky activities and facilities, to create a real and coherent product Dark sky (that can be input/content for the Marketing Campaign see Action 1). They made the plan together end of 2019 and applied for funding. The provinces Noord-Holland, Groningen en Fryslan decided about co-financing in their boards and accepted the plan.

The darkness is still (too) often underestimated core quality of the wadden region. The Wadden Sea Wadden Sea Heritage is not only the last real nature in the Netherlands, but also the last real darkness. More and more is becoming known about the role that a dark night plays in the well-being of humans and animals and for biodiversity in general. Apart from the beauty of a clear starry night. At the same time Light pollution continues to increase worldwide. If nothing happens, in 25 years nowhere else in Europe will it be possible to see the Milky Way. So people have to see the Milky Way!

The programm Dark Sky Experiences "The darkness of the Wadden Sea Region" aims to allow residents, recreationists and tourists in the Wadden Sea Region to experience the core quality of darkness of the Wadden Sea World Heritage. If special tourist product and to raise awareness about the need to preserve darkness. These two components form the combination for World Heritage tourism. The ambition is that it Wadden Sea Region with World Heritage Wadden Sea in 2025 is known as one of the most beautiful areas in Europe to experience the real darkness of the night. To achieve this ambition, the program ensures that darkness can be experienced from different angles. The goal is to give new experiences to holiday makers and tourists on the islands offering them to discover the (even) lesser-known qualities of the Wadden Sea Region and to attract new tourists to the Wadden Sea coast. Because the darkness can be experienced in the evening and at night. The theme of darkness attracts above average many resident tourists (half of the intended 50,000 visitors), who spend on average about four times as much as day tourists. It also contributes to this quality of life, because it contributes to the maintenance of facilities in particular, the coastal area. The program focuses on the conscious recreational tourist who is also targeted by Visit Wadden. This tourist makes the largest possible contribution to the economy with the smallest possible footprint. He or she comes for the core qualities of the area and does not ensure that his / her behavior does not make them affected. "The darkness of the wadden region" thus ensures a sustainable economic development. In addition, it enhances recreational-tourist hospitality and provides networking around the theme darkness and aims to initiate new recreational-tourist traditions.



Figuur 2 Spots for Dark Sky experiences

The project 'The darkness of the Wadden Sea Region' program provides physical locations on the islands and along the coast where tourists can experience the night and where they are informed about the wealth of stories (astronomy, flora and fauna, cultural history, health and well-being) and value of darkness. With a year-round activity program, it brings these locations to the attention of residents, recreationists and tourists (for which there is close cooperation with Visit Wadden).

After the signing of the declaration of intent Dark Sky World Heritage Wadden Sea has been and is being worked on in many places to make the wadden region darker. However, there is no program yet (or policy) aimed at enhancing the perceptibility of darkness to promote conservation through awareness and to use this core quality as an innovative tourist offer economically. The program "The darkness of the Wadden Sea Region" is therefore additional. It reinforces and uses a Wadden Sea-specific quality to increase the awareness of the Wadden Sea World Heritage, to broaden the knowledge about the exceptional value of the heritage and to preserve the darkness for humans and animals. By executing this project governmental organisations will be influenced as well to incorporate darkness in their policies.





*Figuur 3 A spot to experience darkness*

The Province of Fryslân decided to fund this program Dark Sky Experiences "The darkness of the Wadden Sea. The Board decided this autumn 2019 so it is a public intervention. We add this program as a new Night Light Policy Instrument.

### **3. Players involved**

The project "The darkness of the Wadden Sea Region" is a collaboration program of:

- Frisian Environmental Federation, Nature and Environmental Federation North Holland (coordinator) and Nature and Environmental Federation Groningen (already organizers of the Night of the Night event)
- University of Groningen (on behalf of three sub-organizations: Science LinX, Kapteyn Institute and GELIFES)
- Staatsbosbeheer (also as manager of and on behalf of the two Dark Sky Parks in the wadden region)
- Nature monuments (Schiermonnikoog National Park)
- Keunstwurk (also on behalf of Foundation Feel the Night / Nynke Rixt Jukema)

The partnership is open to new participants for phase II (from 2022). Discussions are already underway with a number of parties and organizations that want to join this phase and develop projects. These are: The Groningen Landscape, Noord-Holland landscape, Municipality of Ameland, Municipality of Vlieland, Prince Hendrik on Texel.

#### **4. Timeframe**

One of the co funders, the Waddenacademie, will decide about the funding beginning of 2020. The project will start after that and takes 4 years 2020-2023.

#### **5. Costs**

The project costs the Province of Fryslan € 156,031,05 for the first years (2020 en 2021) en € 80.000,- for the second phase (2022 en 2023)

#### **6. Funding sources**

This action is funded by the Waddenfonds (to be decided) , provinces Noord-Holland, Groningen en Fryslân, stakeholders joining the project (see players involved).

## Part IV Monitoring process

### Monitoring activities

Province of Fryslan will monitor the implementation of the actions defined in this Action Plan to see the progress and determine the impact of the collaboration.

Province of Fryslan will check how the actions introduced are actually implemented and what results are experienced when actions completed.

Partners will continue the mutual learning process during the implementation phase of the action plan.

Province of Fryslan will stay active during the monitoring phase:

- ✓ regular check of different actions will take place
- ✓ regular contact and common work will be ensured with involved stakeholders in the case of each action
- ✓ relevant events organized within an action will be documented
- ✓ final monitoring report will be compiled by the end of Phase 2
- ✓ At the end of each year Province of Fryslan will take part in interregional project meeting to discuss all regions' achievements.

NIGHT LIGHT (Improving regional policies to reduce light pollution and protect and valorize dark night skies) project (2017-2021) brings together two significant challenges: the need to preserve dark skies and to utilize the potential they have in a sustainable way.

The project was planned to introduce packages of regional policy measures for each of the partner regions that will result in a lasting reduction of light pollution, the designation of nature areas where dark skies are protected and the introduction of new services and facilities to attract eco-tourism to these dark sky areas.

### Partners

- Province of Fryslân- Lead Partner
- Hajdú-Bihar County Government (HU)
- Avila County Council (ES)
- Nature Park Our (LU)
- Samsø Energy Academy (DK)
- BSC, Business support centre Ltd. (SI)
- Basilicata Region (IT)
- Matera-Basilicata 2019 Foundation (IT)
- Island Government of La Palma (ES)



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For further information about the NIGHT LIGHT project please visit:  
[http:// www.interregeurope.eu/nightlight](http://www.interregeurope.eu/nightlight)

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