



# Vital Update 2

## Vital Rural Area Newsletter



In this newsletter we look at Regional Branding, the focus of Vital Rural Area's Work Package 2.

## Developing a Regional Brand

The Vital Rural Area partners active in Work Package 2 have established a five-step programme for developing a regional brand. The five steps are: defining the region, analysis, strategy development, implementation and evaluation.

### Defining the Region

In order to brand and promote a region effectively, it is crucial that its geographical area is well defined. But a region is also a combination political, economic and cultural influences as well as administrative practices.

### Analysis

A region has to look to the future setting long-term goals and targets. In order to do so, it has to analyse its current situation. What does the region offer? What is its image? How do the offer and image compare with other regions? Several tools can be used to analyse the region's position: think tanks, discussion panels, baseline measurement, SWOT-analysis, image analysis, competitor analysis and benchmarking.

### Strategy Development

Strategy development is the most important step in the regional branding process. Choices have to be made based on the analysis. The region has to determine its ambition and long term objectives. Before you can agree a strategy for your region, it is important to fully understand the process of regional branding. It is a continuous interaction between brand positioning and product development. The image that is created must correspond with the reality of what the region offers.

### Implementation

Once the regional branding strategy has been established, it must be brought to life. The vision moves from paper to become the beating heart of the region enhanced by new projects.

### Evaluation

Once the region has started to implement its regional branding strategy, the process should be monitored and evaluated to achieve an understanding of the effectiveness of the work.

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### Vital website

[www.vitalruralarea.eu](http://www.vitalruralarea.eu)

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### Leiedal - Towards a Regional Strategy

South-West-Flanders is working to make the organisation of the region's network more efficient. All levels of government and private sector are involved in developing the Cooperative Agreement Approach. At the same time we are working on a methodology (the 'States-Regional') that will allow us to define strategic options and projects to make our region distinct from others.



Conference December 7, 2010

On December 7, 2010, the results of the first year of the project were presented to a conference attended by 300 stakeholders, many of whom are now involved in the implementation phase of the project. The central and innovative methodology to be applied to every regional initiative in future is called the 'Three Tracks Strategy'. It includes 'Vital Coalitions' between the public sector and civil society, 'a Networking Government' and 'Free Havens' to ensure that creative ideas are picked up by the conventional network.

### Langenhagen - Improving the Local Economy



Horse riding competition

The City of Langenhagen has a long history combined with some of Europe's best marshlands, which are rich in wildlife. The City wants to use its historic and natural heritage as hooks to encourage people to visit the area and develop it as a shopping destination to support small businesses.

Events like the famous annual international military competition, horse riding and polo competitions are used to promote the area, along with a new series of seasonal food events. An advisory board considers all promotional plans. Events and activities are promoted in the new 'Langenhagen Magazin' (circulation 5000), which has been well received by residents.

### Finnøy - Defining Values and Key Words

Finnøy Kommune organised a series of public meetings for residents, politicians and local entrepreneurs, attended by nearly 350 people, to define the values and key words that are special to Finnøy. As a result, those who attended feel that they own the project. A project group of local ambassadors from Finnøy will present the six key words and values at a conference planned for August 2011. The next step will be to define the kind of activities that are going to be developed to promote the key words and values.



Finnøy public meeting



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### West-Flanders - Enjoyment. It's us

In 2003, the province of West-Flanders launched a marketing project to promote the region as a unique location to work, live and relax using the straplines: 'West-Flanders Quality, It's us; Enterprising. It's us; Enjoyment. It's us.'



*Enjoyment. It's us*

The results of a 2010 telephone survey showed that 91% of the 400 people questioned thought it was important that the province should describe West-Flanders as a region where it is good to work, live, and relax. In 2008, the figure was 87%. In 2010, 83% thought that the regional government should promote West-Flanders. In 2008, this was only 75%. This demonstrates that there is a good basis for the province's marketing efforts.

Last year, in association with the tourism department, the province of West-Flanders launched an image campaign focussed on 'Enjoyment'. This campaign promoted holidays in Leiestreek, Greater Bruges, the coast and Westhoek on national TV. Tourism, recreation, cultural and sport activities were included in the print and online campaign.

### Meetjesland - Measurement is Knowledge

In 2007 Streekplatform+ Meetjesland organised a survey to measure the overall image of the Meetjesland. People from both inside and outside the region were interviewed about image, the regional brand, education, public transport, health care and business. In 2010 the survey was repeated and progress evaluated. A comparison has been made between the results of 2007 and those of 2010. This has provided an insight into the effectiveness of the branding strategy.



*Young people promoting Meetjesland in the sea*

The 2010 results were quite similar to 2007. However familiarity with the Meetjesland brand increased substantially in the region. In 2007 41% of residents knew of the brand and in 2010 it was 77%. This increase of 36% is an excellent result according to marketing specialists and Artevelde University College. It also means that the tools used to improve brand awareness were well chosen and will be maintained.

### Entrepreneurial Norfolk



*Employees at Virgin Money*

UK-based national and international business publications, including the Financial Times, Director Magazine and Real Business have featured Norfolk companies, promoting the county as having entrepreneurial and forward-thinking businesses. This is as a result of a national PR campaign undertaken by the economic development partnership, Shaping Norfolk's Future to promote Norfolk as a place for thriving businesses. The readership of the Financial Times is especially important, as they are business leaders – the newspaper and website is read by 1.2 million globally each day. The success is due to two key elements – working with a business PR specialist who has excellent contacts and identifying interesting and exciting local businesses to feature.



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### NOFA - North-East Fryslân - 'Dwaande' Launched

This new promotional campaign for North-East Fryslân was launched on February 7, by Queen's Commissioner John Jorritsma, who posted the first message on Twitter. North-East Fryslân's campaign is now really 'Dwaande' (doing things).



*'Dwaande' in North-East Fryslân*

The campaign is based on promoting the region as a tourism destination. In the past this information was either provided verbally or was included in travel publications. Today social media is an important information tool and is playing a prominent role in the campaign, linking the countryside and culture of North-East Fryslân with the present-day and the needs of visitors.

North-East Fryslân has a lot to offer, but is little known. The campaign aims to give the tourism economy a boost. A key part of 'Dwaande' is the new website [www.dwaande.nl](http://www.dwaande.nl), which is promoting activities, attractions and accommodation in the area.

### Zeeland-Flanders - Your New Future

Regional branding for Zeeland Flanders is organised by the 'Your New Future' task force [www.uwnieuwetoeekomst.nl](http://www.uwnieuwetoeekomst.nl). Launched in 2008, the taskforce features members from trade and industry, institutions and local councils. The board includes the Zeeland-Flanders mayors, plus representatives from industry, property, development, tourism, education, medical care, housing, banking and public services. This concentration of knowledge and experience gives 'Your New Future' a broad base. The task force works together to promote Zeeland-Flanders, develop the labour market and encourage people to move into the region.



*Mrs Karla Peijs Queen's  
Commissioner Zeeland-Flanders  
opens the Houten exhibition*

One of the most prominent activities so far this year was the fourth visit to the international emigration fair at Houten Exhibition Centre, attended by more than 11,000 people. This year the theme was jobs. Zeeland Flanders was publicised on national TV news and on the radio. Several newspapers wrote articles about the region and its work and self-employment opportunities as well as our good housing.



### 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.