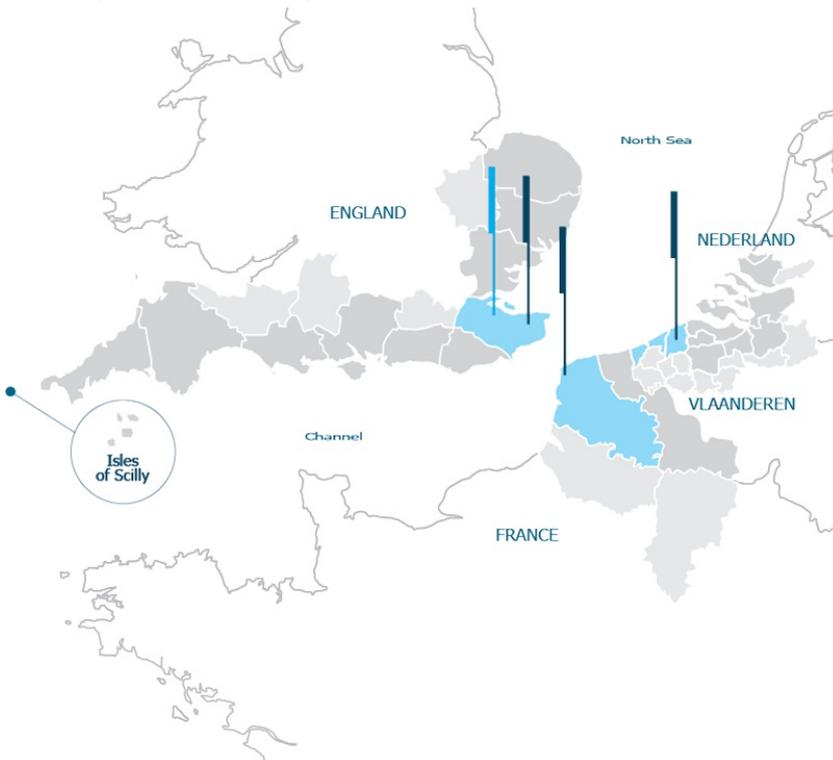


# CAST

## Coastal Actions on Sustainable Tourism

### ■ Project summary



The CAST project aims to strengthen coastal tourism by identifying new opportunities to attract and retain visitors and improve products and services while guaranteeing the sustainability of tourism. Kent, Pas-de-Calais and West-Flanders experience similar issues in coastal tourism, the partners therefore seek common solutions. Coastal tourism in the partner regions is of significant value but it is in decline. To develop this important economic activity in a sustainable manner, improvements in product, quality, communication, marketing and research are vital. In order to achieve these objectives the project will focus on a joint analysis of the area, common

marketing actions, and a pilot study in coastal management. They will strive to change perceptions through tools such as jointly branded maps and campaigns, study trips, a joint website about coastal activities in the partner areas. Young people, second home owners and tourism businesses will be the main focus of these efforts, with coastal activities and other new initiatives to inspire them and keep them interested.

### ■ Activities

#### What was the project trying to achieve?

The objectives of the CAST project were defined in a series of sub-actions that were regarded as vital for the future development of the coast in Pas-de-Calais, West-Flanders and Kent by the project partners: - To gain insight into the current coastal product and to develop a visionary image for the future; - To change perceptions of the coastal areas of both the local population and the domestic market by coordinated marketing campaigns; - To reposition the coast as active, vibrant seaside resorts to be able to compete in a very competitive market; - To increase the involvement of young people, inhabitants, second home owners and tourism businesses in the coastal area (e.g. by developing new concepts such as 'Active Coast Week(end)') - To raise the cross border profile of the area as a destination fit for short and long

holidays; - To exchange knowledge and experiences through a coordinated program of partner meetings and study tours. These objectives contributed to the development of the cross border area through joint activities and the sharing of intelligence and expertise. The principle partners learnt from each other in all activity areas on tourism product development, destination marketing and quality of our businesses. The result have been enhanced skills, improved quality and, through the shifting perceptions Programme of marketing a raised profile and better awareness of the destination with more visitors to the coastal regions. The project's maritime dimension is that the sea is core to the tourism offer in Kent, West Flanders and Pas de Calais. Tourism developed along the coast in the first place because of the sea and its health giving and life enhancing attributes. The challenge has been to re-interpret and re-present this huge asset in new and exciting ways to effectively re-invent coastal tourism for the modern age by working in partnership across borders.

### **What were the activities implemented?**

Activity 1 consisted of the coastal audits each partner tendered for a consultant to undertake this work, apart from Westtoer who could do this in house. Visitor surveys on walking and cycling routes also took place. Pas de Calais concentrated on Berck sur Mer, Kent covered the coastline of East Kent with a particular focus on Shepway and Westtoer conducted their survey for the whole of the Belgian coast. Three study trips of the partner regions were organised for the partners and the consultants working on the audit to inspire and inform. The 2 best practice trips were organised for the partners and consultants to inspire the coastal audit and vision. Activity 2 consisted of a number of marketing campaigns; using themes such as water sports to present the coast in a new way, the partnership cross promoted the partner regions in the campaigns. Westtoer produced a series of Highlights of the Coast with a map in three different languages, the partners collaborated with Lonely planet to produce a guide to the coastal regions 'Re-discover the coast' this project went out to tender and Lonely Planet was selected following a robust scoring system. Westtoer organised a big Kick off weekend for the coast and a new geo-caching trail was developed in the cross border region, 12 caches were hidden and promoted through the geo-cache website geocaching.com. This was aimed at attracting a new audience of visitors and to capitalise on the growing trend in geo-caching. In Activity 3, a quality programme for tourism businesses was set up and businesses were able to receive one to one support on a range of issues relating to the quality of the product, this enables the business to be more competitive and to raise standards. A volunteer network was established across the partner regions, walking and cycling experts/greeters were developed in Kent and Pas de Calais and Westtoer set up a new greeters system based on the system in Kent.

## **■ Results**

### **What were the key results of the project?**

Activity 1: 3 x Coastal Audit reports 1 x Best Practice guide to Signing in Kent 1 x Pilot Coastal Management Strategy in Shepway 3 x Study trips to Kent, Pas de Calais and West Flanders 2 x Best Practice trips to Copenhagen/Malmo and Benidorm/Valencia 1 x Visionary Image of the Coast Activity 2 1 x coastal branding strategy 3 x Highlights of the Coastal maps in three languages 3 x Lonely Planet - Re-Discover the Coast guides in English, French and Flemish/Dutch 1 x Active Coast campaign 1 x active Ramsgate campaign 1 x Campaign for

Women Opale Coast 1 x User generated content digital platform 1 x Transmanche Treasure trail - 12 caches hidden (Geo-cache trail) Iedereen Kust campaign generating publicity in different media, local television, online media, newspapers 3 x Outdoor contemporary campaigns for the coast in Kent Activity 3 1 X Quality survey and new quality software 1 x website for the walking volunteers and a booking tool 3 x Press and PR campaigns dedicated to the coast (1 per annum) 106 businesses on Kent's coast received quality business advice 50 x Network of Belgian coastal greeters 200 x Greetings on the Belgian coast

### **Did all partners and territories benefit from the results?**

Target groups: The partners targeted local resident populations in the programme area to establish cross promotional marketing methods in partner regions. Visitors from other European countries were also targeted in the campaign activity, Holland and Germany being principal secondary markets. There was strong recognition in this programme that the partner destinations are target markets for each other and the programme aims were to encourage movement of visitors across the region. Within this domestic market two specific target groups: young people (under 26) and YEEPIES (Young Energetic Elderly People Into Everything) were particularly targeted. After research it was decided that the young people were not an easy market to target and the focus changed to other sectors, Pas de Calais targeted women as the decision makers and Kent developed niche campaigns such as water sports to attract enthusiasts keen to learn. Final beneficiaries: - local governments within the partner regions did gain a better insight into the current situation and have been given tools to help plan for more specific investments (because of the analysis of coastal infrastructure, the study trips and the future visioning programme); - tourism businesses received quality business advice which enables them to be more motivated (because of the quality programs); - the local population were engaged in workshops/conferences as part of the Activity 1 developments and have a better insight into the opportunities this presented. - visitors were able to enjoy a quality welcome and gain greater insight into tourism products through the delivery of targeted marketing campaigns (e.g. coastal map, new websites, Lonely Planet production, new product development such as watersports, campaign for women, walking and cycling activities). - the project partners benefited from working towards the development of a new and invigorated coastal destination with strong growth potential.

### **What were the effects / outcomes for the territories involved?**

The Kent Coastal Vision has been drafted with wide consultation with politicians and coastal decision makers through workshops and electronic, the vision formed part of the development opportunities. This was created as part of the coastal audit. It is now being used by local authorities as a tool for inward investment, it has been highlighted to businesses and entrepreneurs to show the business opportunities that exist on the coast. Signage was highlighted as an issue in Kent and a best practice guide has been produced which will be used by the coastal districts for any future installation of signs, this reduces the clutter and mismanagement of signs which has a positive impact on the public realm's quality of life for local residents and for visitors. In Westtoer the study will serve for several regional policy plans. As a result of this study a range of different infrastructure investments have been made which will provide a long lasting legacy for the programme. The study in the Berck Sur Mer region has been widely used by practitioners and political leaders to highlight the issues of this particular coastal zone and actions can be delivered in future planning policies. Activities 2 and 3 engaged

local residents as ambassadors and this is an ongoing legacy using volunteers as ambassadors for tourism. Marketing campaigns were profiled widely throughout the region to the visitor market, coastal practitioners and residents. A coastal week was established aimed at residents and this received wide promotion and attracted over 11,000 residents per annum. Businesses in Kent and Westtoer received quality advice, some 200 businesses across the coastal region.

### ■ Distinctiveness

#### **What was the real added-value of doing this cross-border project?**

The partners in CAST have similar tourism products and share similar markets with similar challenges and common opportunities – for each activity the partners collaborated, sharing methodology, adding value to current practices and presented a new coastal visitor destination. Without cross border co-operation, the opportunities to present a new coastal destination would not have happened there would be no exchange of knowledge and experience, new marketing initiatives or quality programmes. The input of all the partners was vital for the activities that took place and a whole new programme of cross border initiatives was developed. The impact of the project activities was significantly greater by working in partnership rather than carrying out limited activities in isolation. Every partner made use of the expertise of other partners by exchanging previous experience, methods and results, which lead to a more efficient use of resources, a more solid foundation for future working and the development of higher professional skills. It also reduced duplication of effort by developing common solutions for common problems.

#### **Have any synergies been developed with other projects or networks?**

We have developed synergies with Seaconomics.

#### **What are the key messages , key lessons learned you would like to share?**

It is important to have a strong and robust partnership who: - Share the same goals and objectives - Understand the cultural and political differences in the partner area - Clear understanding of the issues faced - Pro-active and responsive to deadlines - Clear understanding of the importance of partnership working - Understanding of added value and cross border opportunities

## ■ Project Information

<b>Title</b>	Coastal Actions on Sustainable Tourism
<b>Total project budget</b>	€ 2 809 609
<b>ERDF</b>	€ 1 404 804
<b>Priority &amp; objective</b>	Priority 1 d. Support the tourism and promote sustainable tourism
<b>Timeframe</b>	2010-01-01 - 2013-06-30
<b>Lead partner</b>	Kent County Council
<b>Project Coordinator</b>	Frances WARRINGTON(ruth.wood@kent.gov.uk)

