

This is the Periodic Report number

4

for this particular project

1. Partner and project information					
Project information					
Title		Business and Environment linked through Small-Scale Tourism			
Acronym	BESST	Measure	1.3		
Project number	1-16-31-7-20-03	ERDF	€ 1,050,000.00		
Homepage (if any)	www.besst.org				
Lead Partner information					
Organisation		Peak District National Park Authority			
Address		Aldern House, Baslow Road, Bakewell (Town added to information from Secretariat)			
Postcode, City/Town		DE45 1AE Derbyshire (Correction to Secretariat information)	Country	United Kingdom	
Telephone		+44 1629 816331	Fax	+44 1629 816310 (Correction to template provided by Secretariat)	
e-mail		kjp@peakdistrict-npa.gov.uk or ken.parker@peakdistrict.gov.uk (new email address)			
Information on partners					
Partner no	Organisation	Country	Partner no	Organisation	Country
Partner 02	Hylte Municipality	Sweden			
Partner 03	Fyresdal Municipality	Norway			
Partner 04	University of Derby	United Kingdom			
Certification by Lead Partner					
Name	Ken Parker				
Position	Director of National Projects				
Signature					
Date	5 August 2005				

2. Time period (12 months)
This Activity report covers the time period from: 1 July 2004 until : 30 June 2005

NB: Projects that are running in accordance with the timetable indicated in the application should not fill in the section below.

3. New project timetable				
Starting date	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>			
Estimated completion date	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>			
Phases	Phase	Start	Completion date according to application	Estimated completion date
(list starting/completion dates)				
Explanation for change of the project timetable:				

NB: In this section you should only report on the time period covered by this Activity Report.

4. Project activities, outputs and results

a) Describe the main project activities that have been carried out:

* **Two full Team Meetings and Business-to-Business exchanges have been held (Fyresdal in October 2004 and Peak District in April 2005). These meetings have set the direction of the project and have been inspiring for businesses. Now that all three areas have been visited there is mutual understanding of 'What is Special' in all three areas – through a “seeing ourselves as others see us” analysis.**

A quote from Fyresdal following their visit to the Peak District illustrates the value of these Exchanges - “To see how small-scale businesses are working in other countries and how the BESST projects are developing was an inspiration for us. This also made us look more critically at our own businesses and at Fyresdal as a holiday destination.”

The Peak District arrangements with businesses participating in the Exchanges required them to spend time after the event in reflecting on the experience. They were then asked to write down the lessons and ideas that could be considered under three basic headings - for the host area, for the other partners (and the BESST project generally) and for their own businesses. This business feedback was consolidated into a 'Synopsis of Experiences'. A draft Synopsis was shared at a Peak District Reunion about six weeks after each Exchange. It was then finalised and shared with the other partners. This 'Peak Method' was applied gently by Fyresdal and Hylte following the Fyresdal meeting in October 2004. It was applied more methodically by them following the Peak District meeting in April 2005. A composite 'Synopsis' of the event was produced with contributions from all three partner areas (a copy forms one of the enclosures).

* **A total of 10 different public sector projects have been approved for implementation in the three areas using an electronic approval process based on a standard BESST 'Activity Template'. This is followed by refinement of the proposals and commissioning work that will lead to their implementation. On-site implementation of many of these projects is now underway. Other projects are still at the design stage while some still await approval through relevant local organisations or confirmation of complementary funding arrangements. By December 2005 it will be much clearer which projects are definitely proceeding (indeed several will have been completed). A full report on all the BESST Development Fund projects which are fully approved and in some stage of implementation will be included in the next Activity Report**

* **A website was set up in November 2004 by the University of Derby on an experimental basis. www.besst.org Feedback from potential customers, from businesses and from administrations was sought. An analysis of user behaviour was also carried out. This information was considered at the BESST Team meeting in April 2005 and various changes were agreed. The main criticism was that it was unclear whether the website was for customers to buy something or whether it was just information about the BESST project. Therefore the main change will be to focus the website on encouraging potential customers to BESST businesses - to buy their products and services. Administrative information on the BESST project is also accessible but it is subservient to this customer focus. As at 30 June 2005 the website revisions were being implemented. Promotion of the website will start when there are more business offers for potential customers.**

* **Criteria for businesses to become BESST businesses have been agreed. There are slight variations to suit local conditions but there are five basic criteria being applied in all three countries:**

- 1. Active participation in the BESST project.**
- 2. Reasonable existing standards of environmental performance.**
- 3. Meeting relevant quality standards for the business sector (eg Tourist Board approved accommodation).**
- 4. Commitment to collaboration with other BESST businesses and with the BESST administration.**
- 5. Commitment to continuous improvement in the business itself.**

A mechanism for assessing business applications has been developed in each country and a total of 60 different businesses had been accepted as BESST businesses by 30 June 2005 - 37 from the Peak District (PD) + 11 from Hylte (H) + 12 from Fyresdal (F).

b) Has there been any change in the activities compared to how they were outlined in the Application Form? **No (but some aspects of the project are slightly behind schedule).**

* **The project is fully on schedule in Fyresdal, despite some changes in personnel.**

* In Hylte there were significant delays caused by the impact of a devastating hurricane in January 2005. This flattened large areas of forest and cut electricity and telephone connections for several weeks. Momentum on BESST has now been recovered and by the end of 2005 the programme should be on schedule again.

* There have been significant delays in the Peak District as a result of the amount of time needed for the lead partner role (not anticipated at application stage).

The complexities of the two main BESST Development Fund projects (Heritage Walks and Trails Triangle) are requiring more time than originally anticipated. Because these are both major demonstration projects, exploring new ways of achieving ambitious ideas, this is to be expected. It is believed to be more important to spend time getting them right than to try to keep to push partners and local businesses too hard in order to meet funding timetables. Such an approach would have a strong risk of complete or partial failure.

A further part-time member of staff has been appointed which is enabling progress to be maintained but there will almost certainly be delays in completing projects on site. The Secretariat has been asked to consider adjusting the Peak District budget to deal with this issue - by email 20 June 2005. A reminder has been sent and a response is awaited (as at 2 August 2005).

c) If there has been a change: what were the reasons for changing the activities?

Not applicable

d) Describe the outputs and results of the project:

The spreadsheet attached gives the progress as at 30 June 2005. This was 18 months after the project was approved and 12 months after the partnership agreement was signed and major activity started. The project will conclude in 2008, almost three years hence. So the project is effectively 30% into its planned timescale. The concept of the 'BESST spiral' envisages participation and impacts growing over the life of the project. Already our Activities easily exceed 30% of the targets. Our Outputs and Results, where these are currently measurable, are also easily 30% of the target figures. We are therefore well on course to reach our targets by 2008. Much will now depend on business uptake of the BESST idea, making it into something customers will want to buy – and on customer response.

It is too soon to report on those outputs and results which relate to improved business performance, tourist numbers etc.. These will only emerge when the BESST Development Fund projects are completed, when new holiday offers have been developed and when customers have been able to make use of these new BESST opportunities. However already some clear business benefits are emerging from the project as described elsewhere in this Activity Report.

e) Where have the activities been located?

In all three partner areas with website development being carried out for the Partnership by the University of Derby.

f) What have been the transnational features of the activities?

* **Component 1 – New 'Offers'**. Ideas shared between businesses from the three areas are helping individual businesses to develop new products and services. This is also stimulating collaboration between businesses to develop new tourism offers. Examples are as follows

1. The 'Meet the Bees' experience, set up in the Peak District by honey producer Mark Dennison using inspiration from Mats Helge from Hylte, has now been operational for 12 months. It is producing real benefits for the farm accommodation providers and the honey producer through providing a special experience for visitors.
2. "It was inspiring to see collaboration between many small businesses produces real results". This Hylte business feedback from their Peak District visit is being used to set up a BESST Business Association in Hylte.
3. Four different Fyresdal and Hylte businesses participated in 'The Great Peak District Fair' in October 2004 and learned how to give a cookery demonstration, give radio interviews and

sell at a major event (13,200 visitors over the weekend).

4. Students from the Wilderness school in Hylte visited Fyresdal to learn new approaches to wildlife management.
5. Sue Prince, a Peak District artist, has been inspired by the Hylte tradition of bonads (simple paintings in naïve style using natural pigments etc). She has re-orientated her own business to produce a modern interpretation of the bonad tradition for a variety of purposes. She is now, by invitation, training Swedish businesses in their own tradition! Sue's bonad paintings of the BESST Team meetings are on the BESST website.

* **Component 2 - Marketing and Sales.** The website has information on all three areas and has been developed with feedback from all three areas. Businesses from all three areas have website entries to a common format. Meetings held with businesses in each country have helped them to develop new approaches to marketing their business using the website.

* **Component 3 - Environmental Links.** The 'Seeing ourselves as others see us' technique has been vital in defining 'What is Special' about each area. It has also helped to define what special features we have in common that can be used for collaborative marketing of the three areas. This is being done through five phrases which make a different version of the BESST acronym. These five phrases are being used on the home page of the BESST website. So BESST can also mean....

Buy local products

Experience history and wildlife

Savour local food and drink

Stay in traditional buildings

Take a walk, cycle or ride.

In Fyresdal this BESST experience is being used by businesses, the local Kommune and consultants employed by the Kommune to identify a new tourism development and marketing strategy based on the concept of 'Authentic Norway'. The consultant's final report is awaited.

* **Component 4 - A family of ecolabels.** In the Peak District a new 'Peak District Environmental Quality Mark' has been in operation since 2003 (not BESST funded). It is cross-sectoral and focuses on the conservation of the special features of the Peak District as well as having general standards of environmental performance. PDEQM has now made 33 ecolabel awards to businesses. This experience has been shared with Hylte and Fyresdal at Team meetings and discussed in the partner areas with businesses and the local administration. The conclusion is that these two municipalities are too small to support their own place-based ecolabel but could form part of a regional initiative. Both municipalities have therefore been exploring this idea with their regional administrations (Halland and Telemark respectively).

Fyresdal has taken the idea furthest with the idea of a Telemark regional environmental quality scheme managed at the Telemark (Regional) level but using local names - eg 'Fyresdal Quality' in Fyresdal. Fyresdal would be used as the pilot area with the environmental standards based on the Peak District system but probably simplified to be more appropriate to the businesses and the administrative capacity to manage the scheme. Peak District officials are being invited to Telemark later in 2005 to develop this idea.

In Hylte a self-assessment scheme has been developed for businesses to use to evaluate their own environmental performance and to identify ideas for improvement. Some businesses may then consider applying to national sectoral ecolabels (eg for tourism businesses). The Fyresdal experience might also prove to be transferable to Hylte where the situation is similar.

g) How many transnational meetings have been held and how many participants attended?

Three main events as follows with a total of 94 participants. Many individual participants were at more than one event.

- * Great Peak District Fair October 2004 (8 participants on BESST business stands). This was followed by a meeting involving the guest businesses from Fyresdal and Hylte together with Peak District BESST businesses and Fair managers (20 participants)
- * Fyresdal Team meeting and Business-to-Business Exchange - October 2004 (30 participants)
- * Peak District Team meeting and Business-to-Business Exchange - April 2005 (44 participants)

h) How many local and regional meetings have been held and how many participants attended?

A total of 38 major meetings - 14 (PD) + 13(H) + 11(H) involving 971 participants - 305 (PD) + 236 (H) + 430 (F). Details are as follows:

- * Peak District. Four business network meetings – two ‘Reunions’ after the Fyresdal and PD Team meetings and two BESST Businesses Selection Panel meetings (total 34 participants). Many other meetings included BESST on the agenda - eg Peak District Sustainable Tourism Forum (120 participants), 4 x New Environmental Economy Programme meetings (total 100 participants), PDNPA Member meeting (25 participants). Four Parish Council meetings to discuss the Heritage Walks project (26 participants) Many other meetings within PDNPA and with individual sub-partners on different aspects of BESST.
- * Hylte. 11 different business network meetings held between the BESST Team and Hylte businesses (total 181 participants). Monthly meetings with relevant staff of Hylte Kommun. 2 meetings at regional level specifically on BESST and its linkage to regional initiatives (55 participants). One of these regional meetings concentrated on EU programmes and used BESST as model project. Various meetings on individual BESST Development Fund projects.
- * Fyresdal. Regular meetings have been held between the BESST administration and the growing number of BESST businesses. During the year 6 such meetings were held with a total of 85 participants. Recently a new joint Committee has been formed with three businesses elected to guide the project. A ‘Village Day’ (Bygdedagen) was held in June 2005 to explain the BESST project and the work underway and proposed in Fyresdal (300 participants). There is now a separate BESST section of the new Fyresdal website (www.fyresdal.kommune.no). Meetings have also been held at the Regional level including with the County Governor (4 meetings with 45 participants).

i) How have the different partners contributed to the project?

- * PDNPA is the lead partner and is responsible for overall project management and for all communications with the Interreg Secretariat. PDNPA attends Lead Partner and similar events etc. on behalf of the BESST partnership (4 events over this 12 month period – at Brussels, Lund, Ringsted and Vlissingen). PDNPA provides the Chairman and Secretarial role at BESST Team meetings and distributes notes identifying follow up action responsibilities.
- * In Hylte, Peak District and Fyresdal work is carried out using a common BESST philosophy and sharing information and ideas. There are agreed procedures for accepting BESST businesses, for authorising BESST Development Fund projects etc. Implementation in each area is designed to meet the local circumstances. For example PD work engages with four different existing sectoral business associations and seeks to form links between them and their member businesses. In Fyresdal and Hylte BESST has been instrumental in setting up new collaborative business associations which are deliberately cross-sectoral – involving farms, tourism businesses, craft businesses etc.
- * The University of Derby is advising on marketing and sales techniques that are relevant to small businesses in all three areas. The main focus of this role so far has been the development of the BESST website. This work has recently been formalised into a written contract between PDNPA (acting as lead partner) and the University.

j) What different sectors have been involved and how have they contributed to the project?

The partnerships reported in Activity Report 1 have continued to develop. The main initiative in the past 12 months has been the engagement of many more businesses and the development of ideas into action through BESST Development Fund projects. This has developed four types of links.

1. **Between different business sectors.** Farming, fishing, timber processing, artists, furniture makers and local shops are all BESST businesses as well as more obviously tourism businesses (like bed and breakfast, holiday cottages and activity providers). This helps to generate the BESST philosophy of using tourism as a way to influence many different business sectors in rural regeneration. This is based on the unifying theme of creative use of the environment as a business asset and maximising 'what is special' about each area. In Fyresdal two new 'offers' are being tested in 2005. Both are developments of existing events to develop new 'holiday packages'. The annual motorcycling 'Troll Rally' now has three new package offers involving a total of seven different BESST businesses. The Saint Olav's day package includes accommodation and tickets for the historical play at the Open Air Museum.
2. **Between different public sector bodies.** One example is the link between Hylte and a regional tourism initiative focused on a road corridor. This brings regional interest in what Hylte is doing in the BESST project into the development of special tourism offers along the corridor. In Fyresdal, BESST is helping to generate investment from Telemark Region into farming and food projects that will complement the BESST activity. In the Peak District, the Trails Triangle is forging new links between the National Park Authority and various departments of Derbyshire County Council and Derbyshire Dales District Council
3. **Between the public sector and business sector.** Various partnership arrangements are now in place to build this collaboration. An example is the new arrangements for approving BESST businesses and convening meetings of these approved 'BESST businesses' - which is now operating in all three partner areas. This also fosters collaboration between the businesses and stimulates businesses to make use of the public sector organised BESST activities (eg website, Development Fund projects). An example of practical application of this approach is the new 'Wilderness Fishing' trail in Fyresdal which involves public sector work in creating trails to the BESST fishing locations with a guidebook (including fish recipes) linked to local accommodation which will also provide equipment hire.
4. **Within local administrations.** This is at the heart of several BESST Development Fund projects which require new combinations of skills to translate new concepts into reality. For example, the Peak District National Park Authority's Heritage Trails project requires new collaboration arrangements between the Archaeology Service, Communications specialists, Graphic Design Team and the Footpath Maintenance Team.

k) What different levels (local/ regional/ national/ transnational/ international) have been involved and how have they contributed to the project?

- * **Local level collaboration is mainly through the active involvement of local businesses and local organisations. In Hylte, local village societies are one of the main means of implementing BESST Development Fund projects.**
- * **At regional level Telemark (Fyresdal), Halland (Hylte) and Derbyshire (Peak District) are actively involved in funding or implementing BESST-inspired activities within the partner areas. They are also beginning to see the BESST approach as a potential model for work elsewhere in their region (eg the use of BESST as a model EU project in Halland)**
- * **At national level BESST is part funded by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (UK). In Fyresdal the BESST project is likely to feature in a national conference on rural regeneration.**
- * **At international level, BESST was selected as a project to feature in the Lund seminar in September 2004 on tourism projects from several different Interreg areas. A Paper 'The BESST approach to Rural Regeneration' was accepted for presentation at the International Federation of Landscape Architect's conference held in Edinburgh in June 2005 (copy of paper attached together with a CD of the Powerpoint presentation).**

l) What contacts have been made to other projects or programmes?

- * **Previously established contacts with the Urbal and NSRural projects have been maintained and a meeting between all three projects was organised at Ringsted after the Lead Partner seminar in May 2005. Website links between these projects are being established.**
- * **A new contact has been established with 'Farmers for Nature'. English Remembrance Poppies were supplied to this project for use at their conference in Ypres in November 2004.**
- * **Other exchanges of experience and ideas happen all the time at lead partner events.**
- * **In the Peak District close collaboration is achieved with the business support programmes managed under the Objective 2 ERDF programme**

m) What publicity and dissemination activities have been carried out and what have been the target groups?

- * **In all three partner areas local publicity for the project has been through meetings targeted at local businesses. General leaflets on the BESST project have been produced in all three areas (target = local people and enquiries generally). Specific 'BESST for Business' leaflets are also being produced (explaining the criteria for becoming a BESST business and the benefits and obligations that will follow for accepted businesses). Examples of leaflets from the Peak District and Fyresdal are attached. The Peak District provides an 'English language polishing' service for publications from Hylte and Fyresdal**
- * **Promotional material on BESST has been used by Hylte in Tourism Fairs in Hamburg, Copenhagen and Goteborg. Hylte has also published a leaflet on its first BESST holiday offer – a horse-riding trail with six different businesses offering B&B for horse and rider, pony hire etc (copy enclosed). The Peak District has produced a 'BESST banner' for use at BESST events and a 'pop-up' display for use at conferences and promotional events.**
- * **Press releases have been issued in all three partner areas following BESST Team meetings. (Copies of printed articles in local and regional press are attached).**
- * **The national and international events referred to at (k) above have brought the BESST approach to national and international audiences as an interesting model of the sustainable development approach to rural regeneration.**
- * **The website had already received over 1,000 hits after three months even though it was at an initial test stage and had not been actively promoted. The analysis of these hits was used to revise the website design - as described at (a) above. Since then some businesses are reporting customer inquiries from the website – even though until there are more 'offers' for customers to buy we are still not actively promoting the site.**
- * **Two live local radio broadcasts on the BESST project have been given. BBC Radio Derby**

(October 2004) featured Fyresdal and Hylte participants at the Great Peak District Fair as well as a general explanation of the BESST project (see Fyresdal photo-album enclosed). Radio Vest-Telemark (June 2005) included a description of the BESST project and the results being achieved.
Comments:

NB: Projects that have not completed a phase during the time period covered by this Activity Report should not fill in the section below.

5. Completion of a phase			
a) State what phase has been completed and its starting and completion date			
Phase	Phase 1 completed June 2004 – included in Activity Report 1.		
Start		Completion	
Project related issues:			
b) What have been the main outcomes and results of the completed phase?			
c) What have been the main benefits and difficulties of working transnationally in this phase?			
d) How has this phase contributed to the aim and objectives of the project, as they were stated in the Application Form?			
Programme related issues:			
e) How have spatial development issues been taken into consideration in this phase?			
f) How have environmental, social and economic issues been taken into consideration and integrated?			
Comments:			

6 Enclosures		
	Description	No. of pages/photographs
1.	'BESST by Name, BEST by Nature' general leaflet and 'BESST for Business' - both PD leaflets	4
2.	Two Fyresdal leaflets 'Experience What's Special in Fyresdal' and 'Welcome to BESST Businesses in Fyresdal' (English translations provided).	4
3.	Paper given at IFLA Conference June 2005 by Ken Parker (and CD of the Powerpoint presentation used).	5 +CD
4.	Hallands Ridled Genom - Horse riding offer in Hylte	16
5.	Trails Triangle Concept – Map with explanation (PD Project)	1
6.	'Synopsis of Experiences' A report of the Peak District Team meeting April 2005 (including business feedback from all three areas).	15
7.	Three newspaper items on Hylte BESST activity + 6 Peak District articles + 3 from Fyresdal.	3(H) + 6(PD) + 3(F)
8.	Photoalbum from Fyresdal meeting October 2004	5
9.	Photoalbum from Peak District meeting April 2005	4

7 Indicators

Please fill in the separate Excel sheet.

In case that not all of the result and/or impact indicators are quantified, please shortly explain here the progress you have made towards the targets.

The completed Excel spreadsheet of indicators gives an impression of the scale of activity now underway. However these figures do not convey other important aspects of the BESST project.

In particular there is a strong 'BESST magic' effect. This includes at least three different aspects.

- 1. *New links.*** The generation of a new dynamic within local communities which goes far beyond 'tourism' or 'economic development'.
 - * In Fyresdal BESST has become central to the direction of many aspects of work in the municipality and has engaged the interest of a high proportion of the population.
 - * In Hylte BESST has generated new collaboration between business sectors, has stimulated new training initiatives for the business sector and has ensured the engagement of Hylte into wider regional initiatives.
 - * In the Peak District the main impact has been on the stimulation of businesses to try out new ideas and new forms of collaboration. It has also enabled two significant new and difficult infrastructure projects to be developed that without BESST would not have been progressed.

- 2. *Ideas.*** A particularly powerful 'magic' has been created through businesses from three different areas meeting each other. They are sharing ideas in the spirit of learning from and inspiring each other. This is only possible because of the intense periods of activity (the exchanges last four working days) and because these businesses are not in economic competition with each other.

- 3. *Friendships.*** The project has stimulated the formation of strong personal relationships between businesses - both within the areas concerned and on an international basis. This is already generating other activity outside the BESST project itself with businesses meeting each other - building on the contacts made at BESST Exchanges.

BESST is already being used as an example of 'Sustainable Development' in working practice at regional, national and international events. The BESST project started active work just over 12 months ago, following the completion of the partnership agreement but it is already being identified as a model for use in other areas. BESST was approved as a 'demonstration project' - so this is powerful evidence that it is already achieving a 'demonstration' function.