

<b>1 Project information</b>			
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Title	Business and Environment linked through Small-Scale Tourism		
Acronym	<b>BESST</b>	Measure	1.3
Lead Partner Name	Peak District National Park Authority	Country	United Kingdom
Project number	1-16-31-7-20-03	ERDF	€ 1050000

<b>2 Certification by Lead Partner</b>	
Name	Ken Parker
Position	Director of National Projects
Signature	
Date	2 February 2007

<b>3 Time period</b>
This Activity report covers the time period from: 1 July 2006 until: 31 December 2006

NB: In this section you should only report on major deviations from the application. Minor changes should be reported on in the standard activity report.

<b>4 Are there major changes in the project set-up (e.g. partnership, schedule, activities) compared to how they were outlined in the Application Form?</b>
<p>The University of Derby has been unable to carry out the full scope of the work envisaged in Component 2 to the satisfaction of the other three partners. Therefore the working arrangements have been changed so that the Peak District National Park Authority takes responsibility for leading the general promotion and publicity for the project with the University only providing the function of managing the website. The financial implications of this change will be worked out as part of the budget review following the claim related to this Activity Report. It is likely that the University will make a financial contribution to PDNPA to recognise that PDNPA is carrying out work that the Partner Agreement specified should be managed by the University.</p> <p>The University will continue to provide an analysis of business interest in BESST and the business benefits generated by BESST as a research project not funded by BESST. The analysis of initial views from Peak District and Hylte businesses was included in Activity Report 6. Returns of the completed questionnaires from Fyresdal have been delayed because the project manger changed and the new project manager needed time to pick up all the ingredients of BESST as well as her other duties. This research will be made available to BESST as an important ingredient in the final report's evaluation of the project against its targets</p>

NB: In this section you should only report on the time period covered by this short activity Report. It is not necessary to fill in an indicator sheet. Please keep this section within 2 pages.

### **5 Describe the main activities, outputs and results since last report.**

The sixth **Business Exchange and Team meeting** was held in the Peak District 28 October – 1 November involving many new businesses in BESST for the first time. In total 8 businesses travelled from Fyresdal and 6 businesses came from Hylte. In addition 17 different Peak District businesses were actively involved in different parts of the visit. There was an emphasis on customer skills at one of the workshops and ideas for revising the website to make it more useful to businesses featured in another. The participants experienced one of the Heritage Walks and cycled part of the new section of the Trails Triangle (see below). The composite Feedback from the participants is attached. A photo-album is in production and will be included with Activity Report 8 in August 2007.

The **BESST Lecterns** were finished and delivered to the three country partners in December. These lecterns will be used as an unusual promotional tool. They are also a permanent record of the BESST project as they are designed for use in public meeting rooms in the three partner areas. These lecterns were a co-production by craftsmen from the three countries using three different woods sourced from each partner area and three different metals symbolising the old mineral working industries of the three areas. An article is being produced telling the story of the production of the lecterns aimed at the 'glossy magazines' market and a copy will be included in Activity Report 8.

Part of the October Business Exchange was a visit to the **Great Peak District Fair** where 5 BESST businesses from Fyresdal and Hylte shared a large stand with the BESST project. The stage area was also used for a dramatic presentation in words and music of the story of Ebbe Skammelson by the Kabel family from Hylte.

In July the **Bolmen day** in Hylte was attended by two Peak District businesses as part of a BESST stand.

In Hylte the production of '**In the Wake of Ebbe Skammelson**' was finished. This is a family of 15 illustrated leaflets in a special folder featuring places around Lakes Bolmen and Unnen (the setting of the legend of this Viking Warrior). 24,000 copies of this new publication were produced (10,000 each in Swedish and German and 4,000 in English). A copy is enclosed.

Also in Hylte, preliminary work started on the production of a **Botanical Heritage** publication and a '**Border Story**' record (Hylte was formerly on the border between Denmark and Sweden) with the commissioning of high quality photographs. The aim is to develop new high quality publications and linked holiday offers.

An important meeting was held with representatives of several Fishing Associations in Hylte to explore the potential for **fishing holidays** as part of the BESST project.

In Fyresdal the BESST **Walking guide and Fishing Guide** were both published in German (English copies were included in a previous activity report). A history of the medieval **Moiseberg Iron Mines** in Fyresdal which was already being published in book form by the Norwegian Mining Museum now has a short section on the BESST project and copies are being purchased for use by BESST businesses. In 2007 it is hoped to produce a BESST funded walking route explaining the history of these mines which are unique in Norway.

In Fyresdal the Kommun has started working with '**Authentic Norway**' (a tourism development and marketing consultancy) to improve the marketing of Fyresdal as a holiday destination. This is largely using non-BESST finance but is complementary to the BESST project and will make use of many products and services that have been the result of BESST.

Also in Fyresdal the **new slaughter-house and dairy** was opened in November. This was not funded through BESST but is another direct result of the BESST project. These new facilities will provide new market outlets for milk and meat from the local Telemark cow and will add to 'What is Special' about Fyresdal. The butcher who will manage the enterprise came to the Peak District in October and met a Peak District business where he picked up many ideas for packaging, marketing and distribution.

In the Peak District the **Heritage Walks book** (copy enclosed with Activity Report 6) has been very well received by businesses and already 500 copies have been sold or otherwise used for the benefit of the project. In November the book received an Award from the Friends of the Peak District - a voluntary

conservation organisation.

The contract for signing the first part of the new 'third side' of the '**Trails Triangle**' in the Peak District was let and this work should be completed in early 2007. The new off road link from the High Peak Trail is already being well used even without being signed or officially 'open'. The final part in the third side is dependant on reaching agreement for the construction of a new 700 metre section of off-road cycle-path with three owners. Negotiations have taken two years but at last seem close to conclusion. The aim is to complete the whole of the Triangle and open it for public use in Spring 2007. The costs of the third side are now much higher than envisaged two years ago for a variety of reasons. An application for supplementary funding to the East Midlands development Agency was successful and will generate almost €100,000 to enable the project to be finished.

12 **new businesses** have been accepted as BESST businesses in the Peak District in the past six months. Now that the Trails Triangle seems certain to be finished it is expected that many more new businesses will join in that area. 6 new businesses have joined in Fyresdal. We have therefore easily exceeded our target for business participation with more than a year of the project still to run.

Many **business benefits** have already been generated by the project through the inspirations business participants have gained through meeting other similar rural businesses and exchanging ideas and experiences. Businesses and public administrations have learned from exposure to the different approaches and working environments in different countries. New public sector/private sector working arrangements have been developed in all three partner areas as a direct result of BESST which meet regularly to guide the future of the project and to maximise its impact.

In July a second three-way **press release** was organised by our international Media Consultant, Ian Weightman, featuring the new walking opportunities in the three countries (Heritage Walks, Ebbe Skammelsson and the Fyresdal guides). However this was not used by the target market of international travel writers. Ian reports that there is still strong interest in BESST from his travel writer contacts so the challenge is for us to produce more interesting stories that they will use. Perhaps the opening of the Trails Triangle in Spring will be an opportunity to generate interest in Activity Holidays in the three partner areas.

To help provide **promotional materials** that can be used by anyone associated with the project a series of three leaflets have now been produced (copies of each attached) together with a cardboard three-slot leaflet rack summarising the BESST holiday experience. These leaflets are being used in Tourist Information Centres in the partner areas and at Travel Fairs attended by the partners. The aim is also for this leaflet rack to be used by BESST businesses themselves on the basis of... "if you've enjoyed your visit with us why not have a similar but different experience in the other two partner areas?" Investigations were carried out into the possibilities of distributing these BESST leaflets at other outlets (eg ferry terminals and major tourism destinations). However the costs and organisational effort that would have been involved meant that it was not a sensible use of limited BESST project time and money.

The main promotional effort is concentrated on the **BESST website**. This was reviewed at the October Business Exchange. A new perspective on the issue was also brought by Kristin Vedum, the new project manager in Fyresdal, who is from a marketing background. Three problems were identified.

- It is not clear from the home page what the website is about – is it mainly a project website or mainly a tourism website?
- Secondly it is not clear what the BESST offer is or how to take advantage of it.
- Third there are hundreds of thousands of Ecotourism websites (eg a google websearch identified over 443,000 websites as 'Ecotourism Sweden'). In this vast number, the BESST website is currently not easily found by potential customers of this type of holiday experience.

We are now redesigning the website home-page and examining ways to improve the 'searchability' of [www.besst.org](http://www.besst.org). The issues were also discussed with the Secretariat at the Lead Partner Seminar in Lubeck in November. The aim is to launch the improved website in February.

**Conclusion.** Business commitment to the project remains very strong and is steadily growing. There are now a number of new BESST financed small-scale public sector projects now available for people to use and for businesses to make use of. We also now have a range of promotional materials that can be used and we have ideas for making the website more effective. The challenge for the coming summer is to use the investments already made to generate customers for the BESST businesses. If we are successful we will have made a further significant step in proving the BESST 'virtuous spiral' really does work.