A.T3.5. STAKEHOLDER ALIGNMENT

D.T3.5.2 Work paper on stakeholder alignment

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PROJECT PARTNER: PP11

COUNTRY AND REGION: AUSTRIA, UPPER AUSTRIA, STYRIA, CARINTHIA, BURGENLAND

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1. Background information and plans

a. Starting situation in Austria

The situation in Austria in regards to the ECRR was different than in other partner countries, when beginning the ECRR project: The Trail of the Book already exists in Austria for several years; PP11 established cooperation and a multi-stakeholder approach from the very first moment on. This participatory approach is continued with regular meetings of different stakeholders in three model regions (Inneres Salzkammergut / Upper Austria; Ossiachersee - Gerlitzen / Carinthia; Oberes Gailtal - Hermagor - Weissensee / Carinthia) - in which the ECRR as further European development of the Trail of the Book is one continuing issues.

Due to the nature of the Trail of the Book - the smuggling routes of the Lutheran Bible in the times of the counter reformation - the topic is well present throughout the region, most of the tourism associations are quite open and welcoming to cooperation and already doing the marketing for common spiritual-touristic products.

b. Further trails planned with the experiences from the existing one

The existing trail has plans – very much driven by the stakeholders along the trail – to develop prolongations to the North (to create a connection with the German Luther trail network) and to the South (to create a connection to the planned Slovenian Primoz Trubar trail).

One additional region is planning a further part of the ECRR for the future - the Tolerance trail from Bratislava (the SK-AT border) along and on both sides of the Austrian-Hungarian border to Slovenia. This trail will be linked to the planned Primoz Trubar Trial in Slovenia and meet the Trail of the Book in Trieste (IT). The model region Neusiedlersee - Rosalia / Burgenland follows the lessons learnt and the same approach as the model regions along the Trail of the book.

c. Challenges

The Trail of the Book was - together with the German Luther Trails - the nucleus for the ECCR project, the goal within the project is more the deepening of the relations and the internationalisation of the experiences.

What was needed to be improved is the better involvement of accommodation owners and other tourism service providers; the links do exist (also via the tourism associations), but e.g. only some accommodations are signed as pilgrimage-friendly stay.

Some tour operator and hiking guides offer specialised tours and travel-packages using the content of the Trail of the Book.

2. Stakeholder engagement in the frame of ECRR

a. Objectives

Deepening of the existing involvement goes into improvement of the common marketing activities, widening and formalising the partnership.

Internationalisation is on the one hand connected with the prolongation of the Trail of the Book – as mentioned above to the North and to the South to Trieste. In both cases first contacts with stakeholders have been established but no formal stakeholder meetings were held.

On the other hand, internationalisation means the sharing of the experiences from the Trail of the Book development with the other ECRR partners, whch happened throughout the whole project and within specialized Peer 2 Peer meetings.

Additionally, PP11 wants to develop another trail, using the experiences from the Trail of the Book. This new trail should join the ECRR partnership after its realisation. Within this INTERREG project know-how transfer is planned, but no further steps (e.g. infrastructure, etc.) are envisaged.

b. Means and methods

The main engagement instruments are

- personal contacts: The PP11 project team and the volunteers (see next points) keep regular personal contacts with all different stakeholders: public administration at municipal, regional and national level, tourism businesses, etc.
- Volunteering: A group of Austrian volunteers from different regions was identified and links different tasks: keeping regular contact with the regions; identifying new prolongations and changes in existing

stages; recording GPS coordinated of the routes; creating maps illustrations; providing background texts for stages of the trail, etc.

- regular regional workshops: the four identified model regions (three along the Trail of the Book; one in the future ECRR member Tolerance Trail) held three to five workshops per year. Workshops are organised jointly between a local key person in every region and the PP11 project team.

- annual Austrian stakeholder workshop: an annual workshop brings the different model regions together. This workshop is mainly organised by the Austrian Trail of the Book volunteers.

- newsletter: PP11 plans an ECRR networking newsletter (per e-mail) that should be published three times a year to deepen the exchange of information towards and in between the stakeholders. First edition will be published in autumn 2019.

c. Identified stakeholders in the region

The stakeholders were identified through

- personal knowledge, especially by the volunteers and the tourism expert in the PP11 project team

- local knowledge, especially by the local parishes

- systematic research; e.g. tourism associations, tourism authorities in the municipalities, etc.

The identification and categorization of stakeholders in the region has been carried out through the elaboration of a mapping exercise and filling of a matrix

The list of stakeholders contains e.g.

Name of the institution/ stakeholder involved	How are they involved in the project/selection of routes/application?	How are they locally involved in tourism?	How can they help to make the project/selection of routes/application successful?	LEVEL OF INTEREST 1-5 / very low - very high	LEVEL OF INFLUEN CE 1-5 / very low - very high	Relationships with other stakeholders. Conflicts and critical points to highlight.
Protestant Parishes (detailed list available)	They are situated along the existing Trail of the Book	Some of them do already have cooperation with tourism association and / or tourism service providers.	They will be target group for the trainings, might be directly or indirectly involved in the management structure; they are committed to the project	5	2	Different from region to region; sometimes existing cooperation with tourism / service providers; regional contacts and networks with each other. Usually good contacts with municipalities.
Municipalities (detailed list available)	They are situated along the existing Trail of the book; might be directly or indirectly involved in the management structure	They are involved in basic decision making, via their touristic units / associations in the strategic development.	Political support at regional and national level.	3	3	Contacts / cooperation with local tourism providers. Usually good contacts with parishes.

| Local /
regional
tourism
associations
(detailed list
available) | They are situated
along the existing
Trail of the book;
might be directly or
indirectly involved in
the management
structure | They coordinate the
tourism, do mainly
marketing;
sometimes function
of an DMO | Political support at
regional and national
level. In cooperation
with the parishes in
the development
and marketing of
touristic products | 4 | 3 | Close relationship with
municipalities and
tourism service
providers. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| PCAs
Volunteer
Group 'Weg
des Buches' | Active contribution
to development and
implementation of
the trail, networking
at local level, ... | They are partly
touristic service
providers (tour
operators, hiking
guides, ...) offering
products in relation
to the Trail of the
Book | Support the
networking with and
motivation of local
stakeholders (mainly
municipalities,
parishes) | 5 | 3 | Usually close relation
with municipalities,
parishes, with some
service providers. |

3. Main outcomes

a. General feedback

Both main groups, church representatives and tourism representatives had positive feed-back:

- *Important valuation of the protestant history*

- *Motivation for improvement of professionalism (e.g. in project management)*

- *Important impetus for the development of the regional tourism*

- *Good media and guest interest in this important topic*

PP11 developed before and within the ECRR project multi-stakeholder approaches and stakeholder groups in four model regions.

The stakeholder work together with the implementation of the further development of the Trail of the Book and other Austrian trails, that probably will become member of the Routes of Reformation (RoR) association.

Different stakeholders fulfil different functions - from guiding and organising tours along the trails, marketing the touristic products to all parts of the touristic service chain.

The project created an increasingly better understanding of different working cultures - especially visible in the differences between professional touristic structures, e.g. the marketing units of the tourism authorities, and e.g. the motivated persons from local parishes, working mainly on a volunteer base.

b. Formal outcomes

Outcome of the three model regions along the Trail of the Book (Weg des Buches):

- Consolidated regional groups that will continue after the lifespan of the ECRR project
- Review of the 39 stages of the Trail of the Book; some corrections due to land owner wishes; parallel development of a cycling trail
- Annual programs with touristic offers: Cultural hiking tours; events; guides tours; services at the lakes, mountain peaks, etc.
- Upper Austrian Model Region: Route description for the prolongation to the North
- Upper Austrian Model Region: Idea and starting phase of a completely new route: Route of the Landler (the protestants that were forced to migrate from central Austria to Transylvania)
- Carinthian Model Region: Route description for the prolongation to the North

Outcome of the additional model regions (Burgenland):

- Initiative for AT-HU cross border route – Tolerance Trail
- Annual programs with touristic offers: Cultural hiking tours; events; guides tours; services at the lake, etc.
- Improved cooperation between AT and HU in tourism product development

c. Main challenges and difficulties arisen

- Multi-stakeholder approaches need openness from all partners to get acquainted with different working cultures and different stages of professionalism. Tourism marketing has e.g. much longer planning horizons than local parishes, for the latter it is a challenge to fix activity dates for a whole year already on October of the previous year.
- Financial resources are always a matter on local level. Pre-financing and taking (even small) financial risk for activities / touristic offers along the trail is hardly possible for local parishes.

- The 'natural' key-person of the local parishes, the priest, is regularly overloaded with different tasks; therefore, it needs a sharing of the responsibility amongst different representatives from the presbyteries.

d. Main lessons learned and practical recommendations

- start with your stakeholder involvement as early as possible
- better to have regular personal contacts and small workshops than large meetings
- find key-persons within every region
- network the persons on the same eye-level, e.g. majors with majors, etc. from different regions
- stakeholder alignment is an individual process per region, role-models are hardly possible
- Different stakeholders fulfil different functions. It is important to clarify the different roles in the project.