

## Track Record and services Hermanns Consultancy

May 2011

### Track record

#### **Project support MP4, municipality of Emmen/NL (2008-ongoing)**

After supporting the municipality of Emmen in writing the application for the INTERREG IVB North Sea project "Making Places Profitable" (MP4), Hermanns Consultancy has been asked by the municipality of Emmen to participate in the project management. This includes the coordination of transnational activities, 6-monthly reporting, counselling the lead partner in the UK, as well as organising and preparing meetings and events. The MP4 project focuses on improvement and maintenance of public open space (parks, squares, facilities etc.) by stimulating local participation in both urban and rural areas.

#### **Project identification and management GreenCook, Proeftuinen Foundation/NL (ongoing)**

Mid 2009 a match was established between the Dutch Foundation, which is active in sustainable food projects and training, and the GreenCook partnership that was still looking for additional partnership. After the project was approved late 2009, HC has now started supporting the Foundation with project management, including (financial) reporting. GreenCook focuses on behaviour and policy change, to prevent wastage/spillage of food. This objective will be achieved by training of restaurant chefs, public authorities and caterers, support of shops and communication with the general public with practical tips. Examples are a focus on regional/seasonal food, re-use of leftovers competitions for home and professional cooks.

#### **Project identification and development on sustainable energy, Apeldoorn municipality, Province of Gelderland and Climate Fund Zeeland/NL (ongoing)**

For a Strategic Initiative on sustainable regional energy agencies, which has been submitted in the April 2011 call for the NWE INTERREG IVB programme, the Dutch partnership has been set up. Their contribution to the overall project has been formulated and submitted to the lead partner in Ireland, it will consist of a pilot on a biomass-based carbon neutral village and (financial) model for a regional energy and climate fund, linked to a climate-neutral village award competition.

#### **Project development and application municipality of Almelo/NL (2007-ongoing)**

For the municipality and her partner cities (UK, D, TR) a training, project identification and an application (mid 2010) for the INTERREG IVB programme on "Age sustainable communities" has been developed and supported. The project focuses on sustainable solutions for housing and inner city development issues in smaller cities, confronted with demographic change and environmental challenges. The partnership has been extended, involvement in follow-up of this proposal (implementation) is in discussion.

#### **Participation in several tenders and external projects (2008-ongoing)**

Together with other consultancies shortlisted for the assignments, Hermanns Consultancy participated in several tenders. For a recently approved MATRA project, a twinning programme of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, training on cross-border cooperation issues between Georgia and Armenia has been provided in June 2010 on request of the project leader, VNG International (NL).

Other projects include evaluation and delivering expertise input for rural development programmes and projects, a technical assistance tender for LIFE+ and LEADER, and

training of Bulgarian civil servants on EU funds as part of the Dutch MATRA programme. In these tenders Hermann's Consultancy participated on request of several partners, including Berenschot /NL, ECOTEC/UK, Kretz/DE and NEA/NL.

## **Cooperation on rural development issues (2007-ongoing)**

Hermann's Consultancy is participating in several (Dutch) projects on rural development, together with the Faculty for Regional Transition and Rural Development of the University of Applied Sciences Larenstein, part of the Wageningen University and Research cluster, and other (regional) partners. Some of these projects are intended to develop into international (EU) networks, for example a cross-border sustainable planning project "Shared Space", based on a successful INTERREG IIIB project with the same name. Other projects are focusing on twinning, such as a MATRA project proposal between the Northern Netherlands and the Kaliningrad Region (Russia) on sustainable rural development. These projects are mainly based on the "Workspace" ("Werkplaats") approach developed by the aforementioned Faculty, which focuses on the involvement of local stakeholders as well as students and academics to build a strong network for generating projects in a "bottom-up" manner.

Related issues include assignments for the "Green knowledge cooperation" network from the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, supporting innovative project and curriculum development for the "Green Education and Knowledge" partners (including Universities, polytechnics and vocational schools and training centres). Other projects were development of exchange programmes for LEADER networks and participation in the "RURACT" network, to encourage cooperation and exchange of information on (innovative approaches in) rural development projects.

## **Other project development and smaller assignments (2003-ongoing)**

Other projects being developed, so far only on a non-commercial basis, include the "Climate Valley" initiative that similar to "Silicon Valley" focuses on regional (public, NGO, private, knowledge) partners joining forces to respond to climate, environmental and economical challenges on a local or regional level, also by cooperating with similar regional initiatives. Alongside this idea a (sustainable) investment fund is planned.

On a voluntary or "no cure no pay" basis so far project ideas have been supported on reducing food wastage, development of a heritage park and country house, redeveloping a former industrial site for (sustainable) housing and tourism, and reopening of a cross-border railway line, all in the Eastern regions of the Netherlands. Outside the Netherlands Hermann's Consultancy has participated voluntarily within an agricultural cooperation project between the region of Bentheim (Germany) and Slawsk (Kaliningrad Oblast, Russia) and contributed to various other project ideas, such as a NATURA 2000 network.

## **Trainer of trainers and support for cross-border cooperation Georgia-Armenia VNG-International (2010)**

As part of a Dutch Twinning programme for Georgia (and Armenia), a 2-day training of trainers on cross-border cooperation issues (best practices, project and programme development, EU programmes, useful contacts for the Caucasus region) was provided. Follow-up sessions on practical project development are still foreseen in the near future.

## **Project identification and development, Hardenberg municipality/NL (2008-2010)**

The possibilities to participate in INTERREG (mainly IVB) projects have been identified for the municipality of Hardenberg. For 2-3 projects matches have been found so far, one of which has been developed into a project application – delivered October 2009 - for the INTERREG IVB NWE programme, for which both Hardenberg and the lead applicant VLM (Flemish Land Agency, Belgium) have been supported. Although the resubmission of this proposal in September 2010 was not successful, Hardenberg expects to pursue a similar project in INTERREG A or B in the near future.

## **Evaluation LIFE programme 1996-2006 (2008-2009)**

In early 2008 the LIFE Unit in DG Environment tendered the evaluation of the LIFE programme 1996-2006 within both the Environmental (ENV) and Nature (NAT) themes, to review the performance and success of individual projects as well as the countries and categories of beneficiaries involved. This evaluation should also generate input for improvements in the current LIFE+ programme and future programmes. As subcontractor in a consortium led by the Danish consultancy COWI, the programme and selected projects (8 out of more than 100) in the Netherlands and several individual projects in Flanders were evaluated.

## **Project evaluation INTERREG IVC (2008-2009)**

In the INTERREG IVC programme so far two calls have been carried out, for each call some 500 project applications were received, distributed within the 4 themes and various sub-themes. For each (sub-)theme external experts were invited to assess the project applications thematically and/or on content. For the sub-theme of Sustainable Transport, belonging to theme 2 "Environment and Risk Prevention", 8 applications were assessed so far in 2008 (1) and 2009 (7).

## **Project evaluation 7th Framework Programme (2008)**

For the 7<sup>th</sup> Framework several calls within the various themes were issued in 2008, including one within in the Environment theme where input from Hermanns Consultancy was requested. For each call or sub-theme experts are invited to evaluate the applications. This evaluation or assessment was carried out in two phases, one being an initial assessment (desk research) of 6 projects by the individual experts, the second phase being a discussion among the experts, led by DG Environment to achieve consensus on the evaluation of the projects. This consensus is the basis for the final decisions by the EU on which project application(s) are to be approved.

## **Project application "Work in the Village" Beverwijk/NL (2007-2008)**

For the network of "Cultural Villages in Europe" a project proposal on developing new employment strategies for rural villages was supported (beside a training of the project partners on EU funding), especially to counteract the "brain drain" of higher educated youth rural areas are confronted with. An application within the INTERREG IVC programme (early 2008) was not successful, but the network has been developing several activities based on the proposal.

## **Training EU project development Salaj County Romania (2006-2007)**

Training to civil servants of the Salaj county on project development and management using the EU funding. Included all of the subjects mentioned in the first section of this note. A practical manual for the county was written as a result of this project. Also, a project list from the regional council was screened and commented on the possibilities for EU funding, both nationally/regionally and in cooperation with neighbouring regions or countries. The training was part of a Dutch twinning project (LOGO East programme) with the municipality of Aalten.

## **LARA Toolbox project VNG International and follow-up projects (2004-2008)**

Together with VNG International (as applicant of the project) the INTERACT project "Local and Regional authorities toolbox for INTERREG projects (LARA Toolbox)" was developed and carried out in the Netherlands and in Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary. This project included a training of trainers (in CZ, PL and HU), followed by training of local (and regional) government officers, also in NL, on developing new project ideas for EU Structural funds in general and INTERREG in particular.

The training and toolbox consisted of:

- information on EU funds, both in the old and new (2007-2013) funding period;

- analysis of the priorities, existing partnership(s) and requests for cooperation for each of the participants;
- theoretical and practical background of project development following the methods of Project Cycle Management (PCM) and Logical Framework Analysis (LFA);
- development of project ideas and next steps towards project application.

The project resulted in a manual and 30-40 project ideas per country, some of which have lead to application for the INTERREG IVA, B or C programmes or other funds. See also [www.laratoolbox.net](http://www.laratoolbox.net) for more details on the project.

### **Training for CEE civil servants and NL-twinning (2004-2007)**

For a delegation of Bulgarian civil servants in October 2004 a 3-day training on financial issues of the EU acquis and EU funded projects was given. Hermanns Consultancy provided a short training/presentation on priorities, themes and programming of EU (Structural and other) Funds in general and the importance of cross-border cooperation (INTERREG) in particular, focusing also on project examples relevant for the (future) EU member states.

Preceding the "LARA Toolbox" project also a training on EU Structural Funds in general to local and regional governments in Poland on EU funds was given. This 2-day training was provided in 4 regions in Poland, and included project development, application of funds and project management issues. Issues addressed by other trainers from VNG International in this course where the structure of the EU (political, financial etc.) and EU environmental policy. A similar training to local and regional governments in Lithuania was provided in late 2005.

For the Dutch municipality of Deurne and their partner city Leszno (PL), a training was provided in 2007, consisting of brainstorming, workshops on EU funding and project management. Also included was a discussion on project ideas and funding possibilities for joint projects and cooperation with third parties, both inside and outside the EU.

### **Freelance support various projects Province of Gelderland (2003-2008)**

For the Dutch province of Gelderland several projects lead by different departments have been supported on a freelance basis, including editing of the Provincial Traffic and Transport Plan, and several sections of the Reconstruction Plan (for rural areas) for the region of Achterhoek en Liemers (both in 2003-2004). For the spatial planning department the main tasks included management of a scheme allowing farmers to replace (part of) their stables and outbuildings, used for intensified meat production, by private housing (2004-2008). Besides, input in a new spatial plan for the province and support in reviewing municipal plans was provided.

### **Prior to 2003: professional assignments Wietse W. Hermanns**

Professional assignments prior to 2003 cover almost 20 years of working experience, including more than 12 years as a project coordinator on cross-border projects for the EUREGIO in Gronau (Germany), and a 1 year assignment as a senior expert for the Avalon foundation (NL), dealing with agri-environment, organic farming and nature projects in Central and Eastern Europe.

An extended CV with more details can be provided on request.

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## Services

From our experience as a consultancy we have learned that training on EU funds, especially in Eastern European and EU accession countries, has to be started with a general training on problem solving by projects. Due to historical circumstances, project based work has not a very long history in Eastern Europe and even though it has been adopted during the last decennia, there is still need for deeper knowledge on project management, on methodology, on knowledge transfer on new approaches and best practice. It is also crucial to touch upon communication matters, involvement of civil society, building partnerships (including public-private partnerships (PPP)). Our experience has showed that project management has to be presented as a component of a set of circumstances which are interdependently linked and which all together lead to regional development.

Training programmes usually work the best if they offer comprehensive tools to the trainees which they can apply into practice. Presentations of the desired situation are usually not sufficient. Therefore the trainings where Hermanns Consultancy has taken part at as trainer, have consisted of explanation of the following issues and tools:

- Project Cycle Management (PCM) – a method for project management advised for regional development projects and programmes by the European Commission,
- Logical Framework Approach (LFA) – project planning method which gives a structure to a single project, also recommended by the EC,
- Public-Private-Partnerships (PPP) – cooperation schemes for carrying out complex as well as smaller scale projects,
- Methodology for evaluation of projects and programmes,
- Methodology for identification of needs, brainstorming etc.,
- Importance of communication - communication plan and implementation strategy,
- Best practices, knowledge transfer, examples of projects,
- Funding (and investment) opportunities, combination of projects, alternative financing sources, transnational knowledge exchange projects,
- General overview of EU funding programmes and principles of those.

The trainings and support on project development, management and evaluation that Hermanns Consultancy is offering, are set up rather broadly. That means we are not specialized in a certain field like environment or transport infrastructure. Instead we offer a general training and support, which encourages the participants to use the tools acquired in their own field of work. We prefer interactive sessions, letting the participants exchange and enhance their knowledge (and skills).

## About Hermanns Consultancy

Two consultants form the team of Hermanns Consultancy – Wietse W. Hermanns and Baiba Hermanns-Vagule.

After having worked with EU programmes (mainly INTERREG) for more than ten years for a Dutch-German border region, **Wietse** spent several years working on a freelance basis, in spatial planning and rural development assignments within different governmental organisations and an international NGO in the Netherlands. Since founding Hermanns Consultancy in July 2002 (and fulltime since 2006) he has been working as an independent consultant, expert and evaluator, mainly for cross-border and interregional cooperation projects funded by the EU.

**Baiba** has been involved in Hermanns Consultancy since 2004, along with achieving a Master's Degree in economics and communication (MSc, 2009) at Wageningen University in the Netherlands. She is originally Latvian and beside her knowledge on project management methodologies and EU policies she is familiar with the mentality and

situation in the new member states of the EU. As of September 2009, after joining the University of Nijmegen (until March 2010) and NIVEL Foundation in Utrecht (ongoing) for a full-time job as project officer on EU research grants, her role in Hermanns Consultancy will be mainly supportive on developing (new) project ideas.

Hermanns Consultancy cooperates with various other consultancies, networks, (local and regional) authorities and knowledge institutes, and can act as an intermediate in finding additional expertise, project partnerships or (investment) opportunities, if required.

Hermanns Consultancy participates in various networks, such as the Dutch organisation for responsible and sustainable entrepreneurship MVO Nederland, and is listed in several professional and expert networks, including EU databases on cooperation, training and sustainable development, the Dutch (VNG International) local government expert database on international cooperation, LinkedIn and Plaxo.

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